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# Why do parties fail? Cleavages, government fatigue and electoral failure in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary 1992–2012

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## **Abstract**

During the first two decades after the collapse of communism 37 political parties won representation in the Czech, Slovak or Hungarian Parliaments. By 2012, 22 of these parties had failed in the sense that they have fallen below the five-percent electoral threshold at least once. This set of failed parties includes a wide range of parties, from the far right and nationalist flanks to unreconstructed communists, including centre, green, agrarian, Christian and social democrat parties. Some were represented in parliament for one term only, others were in parliament for two decades. In this article we explore how and why these parties fell out of parliament. Beyond the obvious answer – that they failed to win enough votes – five factors involve particularly high political risk for political parties. Two system-level factors are somewhat beyond the control of the smaller parties: changes in the salience of cleavages and the electoral system. However, the other three are directly linked to the parties' strategies for competition: whether they participate in coalition government as a junior partner, how they manage internal dissent, and the party's organisational strength.

## 1. Introduction

Why do Political parties fail? The comparative literature on political parties commonly holds that parties have four aims: to win representation in the legislature, to form or support governments, to shape policy, and most fundamentally, to survive as organisations. Indeed, these goals lie at the heart of the definition of political parties (e.g. Sartori 1976), even if particular parties might also pursue other goals such as the personal enrichment of their members. Much of the literature on political parties, both in Western and East Central Europe, focuses on the success stories. Less has been written about parties that fail (but see Lawson and Merkl 1988, Buelens and Hino 2008, Brug et al 2005, Winclawska 2010). This is hardly surprising, since, as Pridham once observed (1988, p. 230): ‘party failure [in Western Europe] in any absolute or quasi-absolute sense is a rare phenomenon and almost certainly attributable to exceptional circumstances.’ Party failure has of course been more common in post-communist Central Europe, even in the more stable party systems, but until recently most of the parties that failed were relatively short-lived and their failure could be seen as part of the process of party system consolidation (Bakke and Sitter 2005). In Poland the mergers and splits on the post-Solidarity right is a case in point: Solidarity Electoral Action fell apart after one electoral cycle because it failed to institutionalise and develop a ‘structure and ideological profile that could hold together a fractious and eclectic grouping in the long term’ (Szczerbiak 2007, p.56). This picture changed with the 2010 earthquake elections in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, when five long-standing political parties failed to win representation in parliament and all but disappeared from the political scene. Their failure raises broader questions about what puts parties at risk; which is the reason why we focus on these three particular countries.

What does it mean for a party to fail? Is it enough that a party loses representation in parliament, and thereby ceases to fulfill key functions such as representation and policy making, or should failure be equated with the organisation ceasing to exist or operate? (Lawson and Merkl, 1988, p.4). We have chosen to label the former ‘failed’ and the latter ‘defunct’ parties. We return to what happens to parties after they fail in a separate article (Bakke and Sitter, forthcoming). The purpose of the present article is to explain why parties fail in the sense of losing their parliamentary representation. Fully 22 of the 37 parties that won representation in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia since 1990 subsequently failed. In most cases electoral failure led to organisational death as well: only one of the 22 parties that failed returned to parliament on its own (it failed again later). Of the rest, five

merged with other parties, eight maintained some kind of activity (regional or European representation), and another eight are defunct or maintain only a ‘zombie-like existence’.

In what follows, we draw on the comparative politics tradition associated with Lipset and Rokkan (1967) and Sartori (1968) to suggest five factors that increase the risk of a party failing to win enough votes to cross the electoral threshold. The two first are related to the opportunity structure that parties face, and are normally beyond the control of small and medium-sized parties: 1) the electoral system and 2) the main dimensions of the party system and the salience of cleavages. Party strategy is to some extent a matter of how a party decides to deal with these constraints. Political parties have more control over the remaining three factors: 3) whether parties assume the role of a junior coalition partner, 4) how parties manage internal dissent about strategy or personnel politics, and 5) how parties organise. These factors are not wholly independent (dissent and divisions often reflect disagreements about coalition strategy or policy), and merit investigation through case studies that allow us to explore the causal mechanisms at work. The main research strategy applied below is therefore based on qualitative analysis, and the data is drawn from party programmes, official party documents and statements, interviews and media reports, as well as from the national electoral offices. This is supplemented by a simple OLS regression designed to test the effect of membership, incumbency, party split and size on electoral failure, to complement the qualitative findings.

## **2. Strategy and Risk**

The central research question in this article concerns the strategic choices that parties make that might expose them to loss of support and ultimately, the risk of electoral failure. The theoretical starting point is therefore party strategy – defined as a broad formula for how a party is going to compete, a combination of what its ends should be and by which means these should be pursued – and the risks that different strategic choices expose parties to (Sitter 2003, Bakke and Sitter 2005). Political parties can be defined as organizations that pursue four broad goals – votes, office, policy, and continuous survival (Smith 1966, Sartori 1967, Panebianco 1980, Mair 1997). Maximising one goal may entail merely satisfying another, or even fully-blown trade-offs, and herein lies the dilemmas of party strategy (Sartori 1976, Müller and Strøm 1999, Katz and Mair 1995). Focussing on policy goals that are salient to a specific group of voters might help mobilize that segment of the electorate, but limit a party’s broader appeal (Kirchheimer 1966, Epstein 1967, Smith 1993). Joining a

governing coalition secures access to office and influence over policy (Budge and Keman 1990, Budge and Laver 1992), but might come at a cost of association with unpopular policies and internal dissent (Laver and Schofield 1990, Strøm 1990). Building a strong organisation might constrain the leadership's freedom of manoeuvre with regard to the pursuit of policy and office (Luebbert 1986, Tsebelis 1990, Maor 1992). Conversely, maintaining a more leadership-dominated, less institutionalised party may expose a party to the risk of formal splits if disagreements on leadership, policy or coalition strategy cannot be contained (Gunther and Hopkin 2002, Heinisch 2003, Luther 2011). Each of the goals that a party pursues thus entails one or more risks.

The first set of risks is related to the parties' pursuit of votes and the rules of the game. Competition for votes takes place within the institutional logic shaped by electoral laws and by regulations about the operation and financing of political parties. Both tend to favour large parties, not least because these parties normally play the key part in drawing up the rules in the first place and amending them later (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, Rokkan 1970, Lijphart 1992, 1995). Because state funding is normally allocated proportionally according to the parties' share of votes and/or seats in the latest election (IDEA 2003), electorally small parties get lower state subventions. They are also less attractive to corporate and private sponsors (and anecdotal evidence suggests that this holds for patronage and illegal party finance as well). Their ability to finance costly election campaigns to win re-election will therefore be limited. Moreover, because the rational voter may not want to waste his vote on a party that is not likely to win representation, the risk of electoral failure increases when party support declines to a critical level – or in our case, drops below the five-percent electoral threshold in the opinion polls.

The second set of risks is directly linked to the question of how parties chose to pursue votes, given the rules of the game, by appealing to voters on policy issues. Strategies for electoral competition are about how parties interact with each other in the pursuit of votes, given the rules of the game and their competitors' strategies. Even if many parties use PR techniques from the world of advertising and some draw on charismatic leaders, clientelism and patronage, or even illegal party finance and corruption (Gunther and Diamond 2003, Kopecký 2006), electoral competition across Europe is still fundamentally a matter of a party presenting a more or less coherent programme to the electorate. The main dimension of political competition in a party system emerges as the biggest parties parcel together salient issues: in Western Europe this has predominantly been a socio-economic left-right dimension (Sartori 1968, Bartolini and Mair 1990, Lijphart 1984), whereas post-communist Europe

initially saw more variation across states (see e.g. Lijphart 1992, Smith 1993, Mair 1997, Lewis 2005, Bakke and Sitter 2005). The central question for smaller parties is how to position themselves in the party system: whether to compete with the biggest parties along the main axis of the party system (the catch-all strategy); develop their own niche that cross-cuts the main dimension (the issue party strategy); or position themselves as ‘protest parties’ on the flanks (the flank strategy). Each entails its own risk. When cleavages or issues change in salience, should parties respond by adapting their policies and electoral appeal or maintain the focus on their (declining) core? This question lay at the heart of the de-/re-alignment debate in West European politics (Rose and Urwin 1970, Inglehart 1971, Wolinetz 1979; Daalder and Mair 1983, Arter 2001); in post-communist Central Europe it is linked to the changing salience of regime change and state-building (Kitschelt 1992, 1995). The risk to small or niche parties is that the salience of their core issues declines, their target group becomes smaller or they are crowded out by larger competitors moving onto their policy turf.

The third set of risks is related to how political parties seek to influence policy directly by forming a government or joining a government coalition, or indirectly by supporting a government in return for policy concessions. Participation in government can improve the party’s chances in the next election if handled well (Dunleavy 1990), but it can also harm the party’s prospects. The risk associated with the pursuit of office has long been clear: government parties in Western Europe lose more electoral support than opposition parties (Rose and Mackie 1983, van der Brug et al 2005, p.539, Buelens and Hino 2008, p.159–60). studies of minority coalitions in Western Europe (Strøm 1990, Müller and Strøm 1999) have concluded that smaller parties achieve their policy goals at lower costs when they support minority coalitions from the outside rather than join them. Formal participation in government might entail costs in terms of taking the blame for unpopular policies over which they had little control. Given that, as a rule, incumbent governing parties in Central Europe lost elections in the first two post-communist decades, the price of power may have been higher than in Western Europe. Political parties that served as junior partners in a coalition were at risk: much rested on their ability to influence government policy, and to take credit for this.

The fourth and fifth sets of risks are both linked to how parties organize: how robust the party organization is and how well it copes with dissent. According to Enyedi (2006, p.234), party organizations in post-communist countries vary considerably in terms of complexity (number of branches and hierarchical levels) and membership, but they typically mimic the mass party model, with national congresses, by-laws and full-time staff. While the

pursuit of policy and office may entail risks of losing votes, a strong organization should be an advantage: a well-organised party will have a larger pool of candidates and volunteer election workers, multiple financial sources, and therefore better capacity to remain visible ‘on the ground’ than a weaker party. Conversely, weak institutionalisation and internal strife and defections may cause parties to lose votes, and weak parties may be more vulnerable to elite defections. Organisational weakness, particularly in terms of a small membership base, can therefore be seen as a potential risk in and of itself. This is somewhat distinct from a second aspect of party organisation: a party’s capacity for managing internal divisions. The risk of collapse where cohesion is lost over an important policy issue, coalition strategy or a generational change of leadership, and a party formally splits into two parliamentary caucuses or organisations, is therefore our fifth risk factor.

### **3. Institutions, party systems and failed parties in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary**

Under normal circumstances political institutions may be considered exogenous factors as far as most political parties are concerned. However, in exceptional circumstances the parties can combine to shape key institutions that set the parameters for political parties’ competition – the electoral system, the rules for making and breaking governments, rules on party organisation, finance and electoral competition – that work in the interest of the very parties that design them. This helps explain the stability of West European party systems (Rokkan 1970, Lijphart 1995), and the constitutional choices made in Hungary and Czechoslovakia and its two successor states during the transition from communism (Lijphart 1992).

In Hungary, the new institutional set-up was negotiated at the roundtable in 1989 and adopted during the spring of 1990. The 1989–90 roundtable compromise included a mixed electoral system that saw 176 of 386 MPs elected by majority vote in single-member constituencies; up to 152 seats were distributed based on regional proportional list votes; and the remaining seats were distributed on a national basis. Over the next two decades, this system generally worked in favour of the biggest parties, leaving the smaller parties to struggle to cross the five-percent electoral threshold.<sup>1</sup> As Benoit (2005, p.243) observed, “Hungary’s electoral system was created for the parties, by the parties, and of the parties.”

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<sup>1</sup> The electoral threshold negotiated in 1989 was 4 percent, but this was raised to 5 percent prior to the 1994 election.

In contrast, the roundtable in Czechoslovakia left the most important institutional decisions to the first democratically elected parliament. After the break-up in 1993, the former republican assemblies became the Czech lower house and the Slovak (unicameral) parliament, respectively. The 200 members of the Czech Chamber of Deputies are proportionally elected in multi-member districts; the 81 senators by majority vote in single-member districts. The 150 members of the National Council of the Slovak Republic are proportionally elected. The electoral threshold is five percent for parties in both countries and higher for electoral alliances.<sup>2</sup> In Slovakia the five-percent threshold is an absolute hurdle; in elections to the Czech Senate and Hungarian unicameral parliament, parties with concentrated support can (and do) win seats in single-member districts without polling five percent at national level.

The effect of these arrangements on the prospects for big, small and medium-sized parties differed somewhat across the three cases: the mixed Hungarian system favoured large parties (Benoit 2005), because qualification for the PR part was based on participation in the majoritarian part of the system, and because the PR section rewarded the parties that came second in the majoritarian section. Parties that entered parliament but won less than 20 percent of the vote were consistently underrepresented (the single exception is the Hungarian Democratic Forum in 1998, which won 17 single member seats but fell below the threshold to qualify for PR seats). In contrast, the List PR systems adopted in the Czech Republic and Slovakia generated more proportional outcomes and favoured a multi-party system (Lijphart 1992, Birch 2003), but more so in the Slovak than in the Czech case, because of consistently larger constituencies (Slovakia has been one constituency since 1998).

Laws and regulations governing the operation and financing of political parties have also worked against small (and new) parties. State funding primarily benefits large parliamentary parties, and the election laws of all three countries have included stipulations requiring parties to collect signatures, pay election deposits or both, in order to run. In Hungary, the requirement has been 750 signatures per candidate in single member districts, a minimum of 11,000–15,000 signatures to run at national level, and a maximum of 132,000 signatures to run in all constituencies. In the two other countries, the initial requirement was 10,000 members and/or signatures – which has later been replaced by election deposits, returnable only if the party crosses the electoral threshold (Czech Republic) or a separate

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<sup>2</sup> In Slovakia, the electoral threshold for parties was 3 percent in the 1990 elections to the National Council. The present threshold for electoral alliances is 10–20 percent in the Czech Republic and 7–10 percent in Slovakia (it was 10–20 percent in the 1998 election).

threshold (2 percent in Slovakia at present). For small parties there is thus an economic risk involved in running (Bakke and Sitter, forthcoming). Therefore, given the rules of the game in these three cases and the comparative lessons from Western Europe, it came as no surprise that by the end of the second decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall the three party systems seemed relatively stable and featured a solid core of large and mid-sized parties combined with the collapse (or precarious survival) of some of the smaller parties along the road (Bakke and Sitter 2005).

In Hungary the first two decades after 1989 saw a transformation from a party system of three blocs and six parties to a two-bloc system. In the 1990 election, a broad three-party 'Christian national' bloc with the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) at the helm defeated both the socialist party and the liberal bloc. In addition to the MDF, this bloc comprised the agrarian Independent Smallholders' Party (FKgP) and the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) – both resurrections of historical parties. However, the three parties failed to develop a consistent centre-right program; and both the bloc and its constituent parties fell apart over the next decade. Fidesz, one of the two liberal parties, responded by adopting a right-populist stance, and became the leading party on the right by the 1998 elections. On the left the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP), the successor of the former communist regime party, established itself as the dominant force when it triumphed in the 1994 elections. Its offer of an alliance to the liberal Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz) established the centre-left bloc, and a pattern of enduring bipolar centrifugal competition. By the 2010 election this two-bloc contest had been reduced to a two-party contest between Fidesz and MSzP; four of the original six parties had failed, as had one new splinter party which only won representation once (the Justice and Life Party, MIÉP).

Party system trajectories in the Czech Republic and Slovakia were similar in the early 1990s: broad opposition movements won the first free elections, but fell apart in 1991, and the major successors (the Civic Democrats and the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia) won the 1992 election. In the Czech Republic, party competition stabilized along a left–right dimension already in the run-up to the 1996 elections, with the Civic Democrats (ODS) and the Social Democrats (ČSSD) as the two main competitors, and the Communist Party (KSČM) in the role as pariah. The fourth long-term party, the Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL), participated in one centre-left and three centre-right coalitions before falling out of the lower house in 2010. In addition, a succession of centre-right parties have filled the space between the KDU-ČSL and the ODS: the failed Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA), Freedom Union (US, later US-DEU), and the Greens (SZ) – and most recently *Tradition* –

*Responsibility – Prosperity* (TOP 09), founded in 2009. The failed parties in the Czech Republic also include one regional party, the Moravian Autonomy Movement (HSD-SMS), and the nationalist Republicans (SPR-RSČ): both failed before the turn of the Millennium.

In Slovakia the party system stabilized partially around a set of five parties in the mid-1990s, in a pattern of competition largely centred on support for or opposition to Vladimír Mečiar's governments. Mečiar's own Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) and the Slovak National Party (SNS) were pitted against the ex-communist Democratic Left party (SDL), the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), and the Hungarian Coalition (SMK). After the turn of the Millennium party competition stabilised along a left–right dimension, with *Smer* Social Democrats (Smer-SD) as the dominant party on the left, and (until 2012) the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKÚ-DS) on the right. Of the original five, the SDL failed in the 2002 election, the SMK and HZDS fell below the electoral threshold in 2010, while the SNS failed in 2002, made a come-back in 2006, and failed again in 2012. Two parties won representation because of the lower three-percent threshold in 1990, but failed to cross the higher five-percent threshold in 1992: the conservative Democratic Party (DS) and the Slovak Greens (SZS). Both returned (temporarily) as a part of the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK) in 1998, as did the liberal Democratic Union (DÚ). In addition, four parties entered parliament in one election, only to disappear in the next: the leftist Labour Union of Slovakia (ZRS), the Communist Party (KSS), the populist Party of Civic Understanding (SOP) and the Alliance for the New Citizen. Consequently, Slovakia has the largest number of parties that fell below the electoral threshold: a total of 11.

#### TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Table 1 lists all parties that won representation in the three national parliaments on their own at least once, but subsequently failed (see also appendix 1). The table shows that two thirds of the failed parties had been represented in parliament for only one or two election periods when they fell below the threshold. However, five of the six parties that failed in 2010 were long-term parties with a continuous presence since the early 1990s. All party families are represented among the failed parties, as well as among the present parliamentary parties, and no party family seems to be particularly more vulnerable than others, with the possible exception of liberal parties. We now turn to our research question: why do parties fall below the electoral threshold? The following sections are structured around the five broad risk factors set out in the brief literature review above.

#### **4. Taking their fate in their own hands: party organisation, coalitions and divisions**

We start with the factors parties have some control over: participation in government, management of internal dissent and the robustness of the party organization. As we argued in section two: if government participation comes at a price, junior partners should be more vulnerable to the wear and tear of government than larger government parties, and they should also be more likely to fall below the threshold than opposition parties. Likewise, it might be reasonable to expect internally divided and weakly organised parties to be more at risk of failing than united and well organised parties with many members.

Because it is difficult to find precise information on other aspects of organizational strength for parties that fell below the threshold in the 1990s and early 2000s, we use party membership as a proxy for organizational strength, and the absence of formal splits in the period before the party fell below the threshold as a proxy for coherence. The absence of a formal split is arguably a robust measure: the fact that a faction leaves to help form a new party is clear evidence of lacking unity, and also have the advantage of being fairly easy to detect. And while party membership is not an ideal measure of organisational strength, there is in practice a good match between the size of membership and the complexity of the party organization in the parties we have collected data for. In general, parties with many members have more branches at more levels (typically regional, district and local), while parties with few members have fewer branches and a more shallow organization, albeit with some variation (see also Enyedi and Linek 2008).

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

At first glance, participation in government as a *junior partner* seems to affect the chance of re-election negatively. Of the 22 parties that fell below the electoral threshold in the period 1996–2012, 18 were junior partners either in the incumbent government or the previous government (table 2), and until 2012, only one junior government party survived in the long run: the KDH in Slovakia. Junior government status may appear to be especially risky in two situations: when small, newly founded parties win representation and immediately join a government coalition; and when small parties join coalitions where the main governing party in the coalition is quite far away ideologically. The former applies to

the ZRS, SOP and ANO in Slovakia, which all failed after only one spell. Public Affairs in the Czech Republic now seems to be heading the same way, while the newcomers in the 2010 election in Slovakia, the SaS and Most–Híd, barely survived the early election in 2012. The latter applies to The Czech Greens (in office 2006–2010), the US-DEU (in office 2002–2006) and the SDE (in office 1998–2002): all three rapidly lost support whilst they were junior partners in a coalition where the main governing party was markedly to the left (US-DEU) or to the right of them ideologically. In Hungary, the SzDSz did reasonably well out of the first two of its three coalitions with MSzP (1994–1998 and 2002–2006), when it could point to several policy successes, but suffered badly when the government's fortunes began to decline in the 2006–2010 period.

Upon closer scrutiny, however, it turns out that the effect of junior government status on electoral failure is mainly an effect of size: government participation as such increased the risk of failure only marginally. On average, 43 percent of incumbent junior government parties and 31 percent of small opposition parties failed in any given election. In contrast, every single party that won at least 15 percent of the vote in a given election – whether in government or opposition – was able to secure re-election. The failure of the small parties that were part of the Slovak Democratic Coalition (the DÚ, DS, SZS) was also largely unrelated to incumbency: the two latter were below the electoral threshold also before they entered the SDK and by 2000, the greater part of the DÚ elite had already lost interest in the party and opted for merger with the new SDKÚ (Kopeček 2007, pp.356–357).

Nevertheless, the cost of participation in government has been manifest more indirectly through leadership divisions over coalition policy. This was the case for the Czech Christian Democrats KDU-ČSL, which divided over coalition politics whilst in office (2006–2010), and saw its right wing leave to form TOP 09. In Slovakia the ethnic Hungarian SMK split over a combination of coalition strategy (linked to conflict over how best to serve Hungarian minority interests) and elite rivalry, and the defeated party leader Béla Bugár's moderate wing eventually formed the new Most–Híd (Učeň 2011, p.87). In Hungary the FKgP suffered divisions and splits already in the 1990–1994 government: it left the coalition and split shortly before the election. MDF, KDNP and FKgP continued to divide internally over whether to join Fidesz in potential or actual coalitions, and all three lost factions to Fidesz in the second half of the 1990s. The KDNP and the MDF fell below the threshold in 1998, but the latter won representation in single member districts; the FKgP collapsed on the opinion polls in December 2000, followed by a formal split in May 2001. Other causes of formal splits are elite divisions over broader questions of strategy and ideology, which is

often combined with elite rivalry. The clearest example of the effect of narrow personality clashes is perhaps the SNS, where the splits in 2001 as well as in 2010 were associated with conflicts between two of the party's leading figures, the present chairman Ján Slota and the 2001 leader Anna Malíková (now Belousovová). However, personal rivalry also played an, albeit secondary, role in the demise of ANO in 2006 and the SDL in 2002, as well as the KSS in 2006 (Hloušek and Kopeček, 2010, p.33 and p.58).

Regardless of the cause, a formal split did increase the risk of electoral failure in the subsequent election significantly, and this finding is even stronger when we exclude big parties: Pearson's  $R=0.429$  for all parties and  $0.499$  for parties that got less than 15 percent of the vote in the previous election (both significant at .01 level). Parties that split were more than three times more likely to fall below the electoral threshold in any given election than parties that stayed together, and small and medium-sized parties were most vulnerable (table 3). In some cases the party had dropped below the five-percent threshold in opinion polls before the split, and the split was therefore not the cause of failure. But even if we code these as no split, the correlation between electoral failure and party split remains strong (Pearson's  $R=0.454$  for all parties and  $0.426$  for parties under 15 percent, respectively).

#### TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Finally, the evidence suggests that low membership may indeed be a risk factor: in any given election, parties that won re-election had on average almost twice as many members as parties that failed. However, a statistical analysis with one party in one election as the unit ( $N=103$ ) shows that electoral failure is only weakly correlated with membership in *actual numbers* (Pearson's  $R=0.18$ , significant only at the 10 percent level). For Hungary there is no correlation at all, because of one outlier: the FKgP. If we exclude outliers (parties with more than 100,000 members), Pearson's  $R$  for all three countries increases to  $0.30$ , significant at .01 level. The correlation is slightly higher if we treat membership as a dummy variable with either 10,000 or 15,000 members as threshold, (Pearson's  $R=0.33$  and  $0.32$ , respectively), but stays at  $0.30$  when we control for population size. As table 4 shows, parties with less than 15,000 members were three times more likely to fail than parties with more than 15,000 members. Membership seems to matter the least in Slovakia.

This still leaves the question of causality. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, parties that have won representation in several consecutive elections (failed and present) do tend to have stronger party organisations and more members than parties that fell below the threshold

after one or two election periods. In these two countries, longevity is positively correlated with membership when membership is treated as a dummy variable, and the correlation is even stronger when we control for population size: Pearson's  $R=0.31$ , significant at .01 level. A plausible explanation is that parties that keep winning re-election attract members, while parties in decline lose members. The dominant parties in the Czech Republic (ODS, ČSSD) and Slovakia (Smer-SD) have increased their membership by 10,000 since their electoral break-through. Conversely, the once dominant HZDS in Slovakia lost 60 percent of its members between 2000 and 2010, and the SNS lost 90 percent of its members between 2002 and 2006. In Hungary, on the other hand, longevity is only weakly correlated with membership. Nevertheless, the now dominant Fidesz went from 5000 members in 1990 to over 40,000 today, while the failed SzDSz lost 25,000 members in its last election period and was down to 1100 by the end of 2010. In all three countries, former communist parties and satellite parties have lost members, quite independently of electoral fortunes.<sup>3</sup> This is also the main reason why average membership has declined since the 1990s (table 4).

#### TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

The fairly weak correlation between membership and longevity as well as between membership and electoral failure suggests that a strong organisation is neither a guarantee against failure nor a precondition for success. At the time of their failure in 2010, the formerly dominant HZDS still had the largest membership in Slovakia at 28,873, and the Czech Christian Democrats had the second largest membership in the country at 33,878. Yet, the most striking example is perhaps the agrarian FKgP in Hungary, which reportedly peaked at 120,000 members in 1999 (Batory 2008, p.87), three years before falling below the threshold. In contrast, many of the new parties that have entered parliament since the mid-1990s have had slim organisations with few members. Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) in Slovakia is the extreme case: it won re-election in 2012 with 281 registered members. In Hungary, parties with less than 10,000 members have rarely won election, perhaps because it is hard to collect the required number of signatures without members to do the job.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Czech Communists have lost more than 80 percent of their members since 1991; the MSzP in Hungary nearly half of its members since 1989; the SDL in Slovakia had lost four-fifths of its members when it merged with Smer-SD in 2005; and the Czech Christian Democrats have lost two-thirds of its members since 1991.

<sup>4</sup> The green Politics Can Be Different (LMP) in Hungary is an exception; it entered parliament with less than 700 members in 2010. Yet the LMP compensated for few members by its wide network of civil society organisations. P. Rauschenberger (personal communication, 9 September 2010).

## TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

We conclude this part of the analysis by having a look at how these three risk factors interact with each other and with size. Since no party has failed after receiving more than 15 percent of the votes in the previous election, we have excluded big parties from the analysis. Our units are one party in one election (N=73). The dependent variable is electoral failure, defined as falling below the five-percent threshold, which is dummy-coded (0=yes, 1=no). The independent variables are incumbent government party (0=yes, 1=no), membership (0=below 15,000, 1=over15,000), split in last election period (0=yes, 1=no), and size (0=under 7.5 percent in previous election, 1=over 7.5 percent). Parties that did not win representation in the previous election are omitted. The results are reported in table 5. As expected, the effect of being an incumbent junior partner is close to zero, while the effect of membership is weak and significant only at .05 level in just one of the models. Party split has the strongest effect, followed by size (under/over 7.5 percent in the previous election); both variables are significant at .01 level.

The most lethal combination is a low starting point (under 7.5 percent of the votes in the previous election) and a formal split prior to the election. Add low membership to the mix, and 100 percent of the parties failed. Conversely, medium-sized parties in opposition that kept together won re-election. That small parties are more vulnerable to electoral failure, is a quite straight-forward effect of the electoral system. Voters will not waste their vote on a party they think will fail. At elite level, loss of support tend to augment elite rivalry and conflicts over strategy (and vice versa), as elites start bickering over who to blame and what to do. Parties that for some reason start to lose support thus go into a negative spiral, and once a party has dropped permanently below the electoral threshold on the opinion polls, its chances of re-election are slim. Most parties that failed, were below the threshold two months or more before the election, and the rest were close to the threshold.<sup>5</sup>

However, this is not the whole story about why some parties fail and others not. On the one hand, some parties won re-election against all odds. The most striking example is perhaps the MDF, which was permanently below the threshold on the polls between 1998 and 2006, but nevertheless won re-election on its own in 2006 after leaving the alliance with Fidesz. The KDH in Slovakia went through splits in 1992, 2000 and 2008 without falling

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<sup>5</sup> Opinion data from CVVM, ÚVVM, Factum Invenio, Focus, Medián and STEM.

below the threshold in the following election – in 2002 it was even an incumbent junior government partner, and had dropped below the threshold on the polls for a couple of months after the split in 2000. On the other hand, the once dominant HZDS failed the first time it served as a junior partner (with Smer-SD 2006–2010), even though it had twice as many members as the KDH. Moreover, the MIÉP failed from opposition after only one period in 2002, without having split, as did the MDF in 2010 (both had medium-sized organisations). Finally, the KSS in Slovakia, as well as the regionalist HSD-SMS and the nationalist Republicans in the Czech Republic failed after going through (several) splits, but this was hardly the only cause of failure, perhaps not even the most important. In the next section we therefore turn to the opportunity structure.

## **5. The party system as context: issue salience and opportunity structure**

The final political risk factor identified above is related to changes in the opportunity structures parties face. It depends on three variables that are related to each other: the extent to which the salience of the cleavages or issues change, how the main dimension of competition in a party system changes, and how the party in question adapts to these changes. The three party systems explored in this article all changed in important respects in the 1990s, as patterns of party competition stabilised around a single dominant left versus right dimensions (Bakke and Sitter 2005).

The Hungarian system developed from three-bloc competition between socialists, liberals and conservatives to a two-bloc pattern centred on the MSzP-led social democrat bloc and Fidesz-led right-populist bloc in the 1998-election and thereafter. The Czech party system went through a fairly rapid re-alignment after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1992, with the ODS and ČSSD staking out the main centre-right and -left positions by the 1996 election and thus taking Czech politics beyond the era of the Czecho-Slovak question. The effect of the end of the federation on Slovak politics took longer to play out: HZDS became the dominant non-socialist party for a decade, but its combination of nationalism and interventionist economic policies meant that it could hardly be described as right-wing in comparative European terms. Only as the national issue lost salience (and indeed importance) did a new centre-right bloc led by Dzurinda's SDKÚ emerge to replace HZDS as the main non-socialist party in 2002. The following four-year parliament saw the consolidation of the centre-right, and the emergence of Smer as the main challenge on the centre-left. The central

point here is that party system change during the first decade or so in all three states was shaped by a combination of the changing salience of cleavages (the Czecho-Slovak national cleavage) and the strategies the main parties adopted in their battle to shape the left-right dimension; and that these battles led to the marginalisation of some parties that were not otherwise left vulnerable by organisational weakness, formal splits or participation in government as junior partners alone.

The first set of parties that suffered from party system change were parties that lost some of their *raison d'être* as post-communist party competition developed and consolidated and the cleavages upon which they based their appeal lost relevance. The clearest example of this is the rapid decline in the political importance of questions linked to the Czecho-Slovak federal question, and thus to both the politics of territorial representation and nationalism in the Czech Republic. Two parties suffered directly from this: the Moravian HSD-SMS and the far right SPR-RSČ. The former made an unsuccessful attempt at adapting to the new situation by merging with other centrist parties and redressing itself as a centrist alternative (Springerová 2010, p.121–137), but the organizationally stronger KDU-ČSL already occupied this position. The latter failed for a number of reasons, including the authoritarian style of its leader, combined with internal disputes and splits, and money scandals. As polarization increased along the left–right dimension and unemployment was on the rise before the 1998 election, the party lost voters mostly to the left, and it failed to attract first time voters (Kreidl and Vlachová 2000, p.80, Hloušek and Kopeček 2010, p.198).

The post-federation effect in Slovakia came more slowly: as the central focus of party competition shifted from nationalism to a socio-economic left–right contest driven by the SDKÚ and Smer, Smer replaced the HZDS as the largest party. At its prime, the HZDS program of managed economic reform had been an important part of its appeal, along with the national question (Haughton 2004, p.181–82). The ‘ownership’ to both were lost, as the HZDS tried to moderate its profile enough to become *koalitionsfähig* again. By the time the HZDS returned to government as a junior partner in 2006, Smer had ‘stolen its clothes’ in economic policies, and its most nationalist voters had left for the reunited SNS. The HZDS thus found itself in an awkward middle position with little to show for itself. A similar but weaker problem confronted the two centrist issue-based ‘historical’ parties in Hungary: the Christian national appeal of the KDNP and the FKgP’s smallholders constituencies turned out not to be as substantial as the elites that revived these two post-war parties hoped. Their problems, particularly their internal divisions and formal splits, were directly related to the

question of how to cope with this situation and whether to work with the dominant centre-right parties as junior partners.

The second set of parties that suffered from party system change include parties that sought to position themselves along the mainstream left-right dimension, or even shape this dimension, but failed or were marginalised. This applies to SDĽ, which despite winning the bid for the social democratic left in Slovakia after changing its name and adopting a social democratic platform found itself competing with the HZDS on for the economic left but allying with the broader anti-Mečiar coalition dominated by Dzurinda's centre-right. The decision to govern with centre-right parties and accept the portfolio of finance minister in a situation where a strong austerity policy was necessary did not sit well with the party's core constituencies (Haughton 2004: 185). Paradoxically, it was the failure of the SDĽ (and SOP) in 2002 that paved the way for the establishment of a centre-right government after the election, and the subsequent consolidation of left-right competition. Also the rise and fall of the KSS can in part be explained by the collapse of the SDĽ (Haughton and Rybář 2004). Right before the 2002 election, a window of opportunity opened, as the KSS was the only leftist subject that was even close to the electoral threshold. Once Fico decided to turn Smer into a social democratic party, however, this window was closed. For these parties, as for the Hungarian and Czech parties that sought to establish themselves as the main centre-right parties but failed (MDF, SzDSz, ODA, US-DEU), political risk lay not so much in the decline of importance or salience of particular cleavages as in the risk that they might be outmanoeuvred by Orbán, Klaus or Dzurinda on the right, or Fico on the left.

Finally, small and medium-sized parties that had a stable constituency were less vulnerable to failure, even if one or two of the risk factors were present. The KDU-ČSL won re-election as a government junior partner four times, and failed only when this was combined with a split over coalition strategy. The KDĽ won re-election as a government junior partner three times, even in 2002, after the Dzurinda faction had left for the SDKÚ. In both cases, the party enjoyed a stable constituency consisting of devout Catholics. The SNS won re-election as government junior partner twice, and when it failed, this was due to personal clashes between party elites. The SMK had the most stable constituency of all parties in Slovakia, consisting of ethnic Hungarians, and won re-election as a junior government party twice. The Most-Híd did the same in 2012.

## 6. Conclusion – party strategy and political risk

Given the diversity of the parties examined in this paper, it is tempting to conclude that, like Tolstoy's unhappy families, each failing party is unhappy in its own particular way. Poorly organised parties have failed, but so have several well-organised parties with large memberships. Many have failed after service as junior partners in an unpopular government, but some parties failed from opposition and some failed parties never saw executive office. Parties have failed because they failed to stake out a clear and distinct space on the left-right dimension, but extreme parties and niche parties have also failed. Yet our analysis has revealed that there are some clear patterns. Failed parties are *not* all unhappy in their own way.

First, most failing parties did suffer from a spell as a junior partner in government. 18 of the failed parties had been in government at least once, and when we started to write this article, only one party had ever survived junior government status in the long run: the KDH. (After the 2012 election in Slovakia, the SaS and Most-Híd joined this exclusive club). However, this turned out to be deceptive: most small parties that have had the chance to run for re-election have participated in coalition governments at some point, and the exceptions are either extreme leftist (KSS, KSČM) or extreme rightist parties (MIÉP, SPR-RSČ). The risk of failure is in fact only marginally bigger for junior government parties compared to small and medium-sized opposition parties. Second, a strong organisation with many members seems to be less important than we thought. Parties with few members have a slightly higher risk of failing than parties with many members – at least in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In Hungary most parliamentary parties have had at least medium-sized memberships. This is an effect of the electoral law, which requires parties to collect a large number of signatures before every election. Third, all parties are vulnerable to splits; indeed for many parties this is the single dominant cause of their demise. A formal split increases the risk of failure, especially for parties that won less than 7.5 percent of the votes in the previous election. Here there is a threshold effect at work: no party that had won more than 15 percent of the votes in the previous election failed. If the party kept together, the threshold was 10 percent (cf. table 3). Government fatigue obviously played a role indirectly: the price of power might be measured in terms of lost popularity, but for many parties it is the resulting divisions over strategy that spells the end of the party.

Finally, the opportunity structure played a role. Some parties had a greater chance of surviving a spell in government or a party split than others, simply because they had a stable

constituency associated with salient cleavages. This is true for the Christian Democrats in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, as well as the ethnic Hungarian parties and the Slovak nationalists – and of course the Czech Communists. But as the evidence shows, even such parties are vulnerable to splits when a faction leaves the party to form another party (TOP 09, Most–Híd, SNS). Conversely, some parties were more at risk of failing than the combination of other risk factors would suggest, because the cleavage on which they based their appeal lost salience (HSD-SMS, SPR-RSČ, HZDS), or because they were crowded out by bigger competitors (MDF, MIÉP, ODA, KSS).

In short, parties face difficult strategic choices in their pursuit of votes, office, policy and survival, and these choices open them to different kinds of vulnerabilities. The most lethal combination, judging by the evidence from Central Europe, is a combination of external and internal factors: a low starting point (under 7.5 percent of the votes in the previous election) and a formal split prior to the election.

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**Table 1. Failed parties according to party family and longevity**

Number of periods	4–7 periods	2–3 periods	1 period	In parliament (2012)
Communist/Extreme left			ZRS, KSS	KSČM
Social Democrats	SDE			MSzP, ČSSD, Smer-SD
Liberals	SzDSz, <i>US-DEU*</i>	DÚ		SaS, VV
Christian Democrats	KDU-ČSL	KDNP		(KDNP), KDH
Conservative	MDF	ODA, DS		ODS, <b>TOP 09</b> , SDKÚ-DS, Fidesz
Regionalist/Ethnic	SMK	HSD-SMS		Most–Híd
Nationalist/Extreme Right	SNS	SPR-RSČ	MIÉP	<b>Jobbik</b>
Populists	HZDS		SOP, ANO	OLaNO
Greens		SZ, SZS		<b>LMP</b>
Agrarians		FKgP		

\* The US-DEU started out as a liberal conservative party, but had by 2003 become pronouncedly liberal (Fiala and Mareš 2005, p.1570).

Two broad popular movements (Civic Forum and Public against Violence) and two electoral alliances composed of several parties (Liberal Social Union and Slovak Democratic Coalition) are excluded. The SMK is a merger of three Hungarian parties that started out as an electoral alliance.

Parties in *italics* were elected as part of an alliance once, and on their own once. New parties in the last election in **bold**: The radical right-wing Jobbik – The Movement for a Better Hungary and the green LMP – Politics can be Different in Hungary; the VV – Public Affairs and TOP 09 in the Czech Republic; and OLaNO – Ordinary People and Independents in Slovakia. The KDNP is represented as part of an alliance with Fidesz.

**Table 2. Failed parties according to government status 1992–2012**

Out	Junior partner in incumbent government	Junior government partner in the past	Never in government	Parties that (temporarily) survived junior coalition status
1992	DS		SZ(S)	KDU-ČSL, HSD-SMS
1994				KDNP, FKgP, SNS
1996		HSD-SMS		KDU-ČSL, ODA
1998	ODA, ZRS	KDNP	SPR-RSČ	SzDSz, KDU-ČSL, SNS
2002	SDE, SOP, FKgP, DÚ*, DS, SZS	SNS	MIÉP	MDF, <b>KDH</b> , SMK
2006	US-DEU, ANO		KSS	SzDSz, KDU-ČSL, <b>KDH</b> , SMK
2010	KDU-ČSL, SZ, HZDS, SzDSz	SMK, MDF		SNS
2012		SNS		SaS, <b>KDH</b> , Most–Híd

\* The DÚ was part of the rainbow coalition after the 1998 election, and merged into the newly founded SDKÚ in 2000. It thus did not run in 2002. Neither did the DS.

**Table 3. Failed parties by cohesion and electoral support in previous election**

Previous election	Under 5% or in alliance	5–7.5%	7.5–10%	10–15%	>15%	All
Formal split	83.3	85.7	50.0	50.0	0.0	51.5
No formal split	50.0	38.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	14.1
All parties	70.0	55.0	22.7	18.2	0.0	26.0

Parliamentary parties that failed, in percent. Parties with less than 5% in the previous election had won representation due to a lower electoral threshold (Slovakia, 1990) or in single member districts (MDF in Hungary, 1998).

**Table 4. Failed parties by membership (in percent)**

	Of parties with	Czech Republic	Slovakia	Hungary	Total
Failed parties in %	< 15000 members	50.0	38.5	50.0	42.5
	> 15000 members	12.5	15.8	15.0	14.3
	Total	21.9	28.9	23.1	25.2
Average # of members in failed parties	1990s	21 981	15 000	25 750	21 178
	2000s	12 176	9 468	36 875	16 010
	in total	17 779	10 319	33 167	17 578
Average # of members in successful parties	1990s	76 777	22 836	38 106	45 308
	2000s	40 625	14 355	29 706	26 374
	in total	59 424	18 330	33 906	35 743
Average # of members	all parties	50 314	16 016	33 736	31 158

Failed parties in percent of parliamentary parties that ran for re-election in any given election and average number of members in failed and successful party at election. Own compilations. For details and sources, see also Appendix 2.

**Table 5. The effect of membership, incumbency, party split and size on electoral failure. OLS regression – unstandardized coefficients (B)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Incumbent junior partner/in opposition	.121	.115	.123	.082
Membership under/over 15,000		.195	.225*	.161
Split in last election period/did not split			.482**	.448**
Under/over 7.5% of the votes in previous election				.285**
Adjusted R square	.002	.035	.262	.333

\* Significant at the .05 level, \*\* significant at the .01 level. A logistic regression analysis gave a Nagelkerke pseudo R square of .480, and the same variables as in the OLS regression were significant.

## Appendix 1. Results for parties that crossed the electoral threshold (%)

<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2010</b>	
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM)	13.2	14.1	10.3	11.0	18.5	12.8	11.3	
Czech Social Democrats (ČSSD)	4.1	6.5	26.4	32.3	30.2	32.3	22.1	
Civic Democratic Party (ODS)		29.7	29.6	27.7	24.5	34.5	20.2	
Tradition – Responsibility – Prosperity (TOP 09)							16.7	
Public Affairs (VV)							10.9	
Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL) <sup>a</sup>	8.4	6.3	8.1	9.0	14.3	7.2	4.4	
Greens (SZ)	4.1	<sup>b</sup>	–	1.1	2.4	6.3	2.4	
Freedom Union (US-DEU)				8.6	<sup>a</sup>	0.3	† 2011	
Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA)		5.9	6.4	–	0.5	–	† 2007	
Republicans (SPR-RSČ)	1.0	6.0	8.0	3.9	† 2001			
Moravian Autonomy Movement (HSD-SMS)	10.0	5.9	† 1994					
Liberal Social Union (LSU) <sup>b</sup>		6.5	†					
Civic Forum (OF)	49.5	†						
<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2012</b>
Christian Democratic Movement (KDH)	19.2	8.9	10.1	<sup>e</sup>	8.3	8.3	8.5	8.8
Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKÚ-DS)					15.1	18.4	15.4	6.1
Smer – Social Democrats (Smer-SD)					13.5	29.1	34.8	44.4
Bridge (Most-Híd)							8.1	6.9
Freedom and Solidarity (SaS)							12.1	5.9
Ordinary people and independents (OĽaNO)								8.6
Movement for a democratic Slovakia (HZDS)		37.3	35.0	27.0	19.5	8.8	4.3	0.9
Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK) <sup>c</sup>	8.7	7.4	10.2	9.1	11.2	11.7	4.3	4.3
Slovak National Party (SNS)	13.9	7.9	5.4	9.1	3.3	11.7	5.1	4.6
Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS)		0.8	0.8	2.8	6.3	3.9	0.8	0.7
Alliance for the New Citizen (ANO)					8.0	1.4	†	
Labor Union of Slovakia (ZRS)			7.3	1.3	0.5	0.3	0.2	–
Greens (SZ)	3.5	2.1	<sup>d</sup>	<sup>e</sup>	1.0	<sup>d</sup>	<sup>d</sup>	0.4
Democratic Left Party (SDL) – to Smer	13.4	14.7	10.4	14.7	1.4	† 2005		
Party of Civic Understanding (SOP) – to Smer				8.0	–	† 2003		
Democratic Party (DS) – to SDKÚ-DS	4.4	3.3	3.4	<sup>e</sup>	–	† 2006		
Democratic Union (DÚ) – to SDKÚ-DS			8.6	<sup>e</sup>	† 2000			
Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK) <sup>e</sup>				26.3	†			
Public against Violence (VPN)	29.4	†						
<b>Hungary</b>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1994</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2010</b>	
Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)	10.9		33.0	32.9	42.1	43.0	19.3	
Hungarian Civic Union (Fidesz)	8.9		7.0	29.5	41.1	42.0	52.7	
Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) <sup>f</sup>	6.5		7.0	2.3	3.9	<sup>f</sup>	<sup>f</sup>	
Movement for a better Hungary (Jobbik)							16.7	
Politics Can Be Different (LMP)							7.5	
Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz)	21.4		19.7	7.6	5.6	6.5	0.0	
Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)	24.7		11.7	2.8	<sup>g</sup>	5.0	2.7	
Independent Smallholders' Party (FKgP)	11.8		8.8	13.2	0.8	0.0	0.0	
Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP) <sup>h</sup>			1.6	5.5	4.4	2.2	0.0	

Parties that have crossed the 5 percent electoral threshold (3 percent in Slovakia and 4 percent in Hungary in 1990) in at least one election, and later fell out of parliament. List votes in Hungary; elections to the Chamber of Deputies in the Czech Republic. Results in grey = the party was not

represented in the parliament that period. In Hungary, it is possible to win seats with less than 5 percent of the list votes, as the MDF did in 1998 (17 mandates in single member districts).

† Defunct.

<sup>a</sup> *Czech Republic*: In 1990 an alliance of Christian Democratic Party (KDS), Christian Democratic movement and Czechoslovak People's Party (the two latter merged in 1991). Coalition of KDU-ČSL and US-DEU in 2002.

<sup>b</sup> *Czech Republic*: The Greens were part of the loose electoral alliance Liberal Social Union in 1992, with an agrarian party and the Czech National Social Party (a former satellite party). The party did not run in 1996.

<sup>c</sup> *Slovakia*: SMK is a merger of three Hungarian parties that ran together also in 1994, and two of them even in 1990.

<sup>d</sup> *Slovakia*: The Greens ran in Common Choice (SpV) in 1994, with the SDL, the historical social democrats SDSS, and the Agrarian movement, but got no mandates. The party also participated in (unsuccessful) electoral alliances in 2006 and 2010.

<sup>e</sup> *Slovakia*: The Greens, DÚ and DS ran in the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK) in 1998, with the historical social democrats SDSS and the Christian Democrats KDH. All parties got mandates.

<sup>f</sup> *Hungary*: The KNDP split in 1997, had some MPs elected for Fidesz in 1998 and 2002, before reuniting and running on a joint list with Fidesz in 2006 and 2010 (operating effectively as a faction within Fidesz).

<sup>g</sup> *Hungary*: The MDF ran on a joint list with Fidesz in 2002; and thus won 24 seats.

<sup>h</sup> *Hungary*: MIÉP ran with Jobbik in the 'Third Way' alliance in 2006.

## Appendix 2. Failed parties according to organizational strength and cohesion

<b>Cohesion</b>	Formal split in election period prior to failure			No formal split in last election period prior to failure				Present parliamentary parties	
<b>Czech Rep.</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Members</b>
KDU-ČSL	33,878	2010	4.4	US-DEU	777	2006	0.3	KSČM	61990
SZ	1874	2010	2.7	ODA	2925	1998	–	ODS	30717
SPR-RSČ	ca 55,000	1996	3.9					ČSSD	24486
HSD-SMS	10,000	1995	–					TOP 09	4250
<i>Average membership in failed parties: 17,779</i>								VV	1612
<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Members</b>
SNS	1839	2010	4.6	HZDS	28,873	2010	4.3	Smer-SD	15817
SMK	10,750	2010	4.3	SOP	5900	2000	–	KDH	14704
KSS	8601	2006	3.9	DÚ	4486	2000	–	SDKÚ-DS	6481
ANO	3928	2006	1.4	ZRS	ca 10,000	1998	1.3	Most-Híd	4642
SNS	13,000	2000	3.3					SaS	281
SDL	21,223	2000	1.4					OLaNO	4
SZS	900	2000	1.0						
DS	1800	2002	–						
<i>Average membership in failed parties: 10,319</i>								<b>Party</b>	<b>Members</b>
<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Result</b>	Fidesz	40300
FKgP	120,000	2000	0.8	MDF	11,000	2010	2.7	MSzP	33200
KDNP	26,500	1998	2.9	SzDSz	5300	2010	–	KDNP	15500
				MIÉP	11,200	2001	4.4	Jobbik	12400
<i>Average membership in failed parties: 33,167</i>								LMP	700

Membership in present parliamentary parties are as per 31 December 2010 for the Czech Republic and Hungary; as per 31 December 2011 for Slovakia. The figures for the ZRS and the SPR-RSČ may not be very reliable. Membership in the SDL, SNS and the FKgP surely went down after the splits in 2001–2002, but data for 2002 were not available in either case. The figures for the HSD-SMS are for the merged party (ČMUS).

– Party did not run on its own.

Sources for membership data: 2010 figures for the Czech Republic were provided by party headquarters, 2011 figures for Slovakia were retrieved from the parties' Annual reports, available at the webpage of the Slovak parliament. Hungarian data are from Hungarian Political Yearbook, based on data provided by the parties. Other sources: Ondruchová (2000, p.52); Kopeček (2007, p.202, 230, 374); Mareš (2005, p.1596); *Výroční finanční zpráva Unie Svobody–Demokratické Unie* 2006, Linek (2004), table 1; Springerová (2010, p.129, note 148).