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Failure after success

A study of extreme right party failure in Eastern Europe

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This thesis analyzes failures among extreme right parties (ERPs). A majority of studies describing ERPs has been devoted to party success and parties on the ascent. More rarely are ERPs studied when incumbent or when they are in the process of failing or have recently failed. Using data from five countries in Eastern Europe, six ERPs that have failed between 1989 and 2012, are studied in this thesis. The question posed is if these failures can be interpreted causally by previous established supply based explanations. And if not, what is needed for a better explanation of the process of failure after success? The thesis identifies four areas that shed more light on the process of failure: First, a failure to appeal to purity, meaning that anti-establishment parties fare badly when promises of incorruptibility are broken. Second, the changing competition from both left and right may contribute to ERPs losing their oppositional role in parliament. Thirdly, authoritarian leadership hampers flexibility in the changing role of outsider to incumbent. And last, ERPs fare badly when faced with endogenous organizational shock due to defections or party splits. The conclusion of the thesis is that more understanding is needed for the process of transition from outsider party to an incumbent position of power. This transition brings with it a new set of challenges, choices and problems which in many cases are handled badly by ERPs.

Key words: Extreme right parties in Eastern Europe, party failure, incumbent party failure

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1. Introduction

Many studies and much thought have been put into the issue of western European extreme right parties (henceforth ERP) and what drives their success. Success is fairly well understood and the research field has been developing steadily for more than two decades. The first dominant explanation for ERP success was based on the notion that fertile breeding grounds like unemployment, immigration, social unrest and societal change created opportunities for ERPs. This so called “demand” explanation was later challenged by scholar advocating more “supply”-based explanations. Supply meaning what was being offered, namely the ERPs themselves, their choices and tactics as well as external factors such as party competition and electoral systems.

This important shift in the study of ERPs acknowledged that the parties were in themselves important and independent actors shaping their future and destiny and not just passive actors waiting for voters to flock around them.

What stands out in the research concerning ERPs is that it is a study primarily of success. Not failure. This is both the case for the demand and supply oriented explanations. They primarily serve to explain why ERPs either rise or not, not how they fail after having risen, in other words how *failure after success* works, meaning failure from a position of incumbency, either in government or parliament.

Cas Mudde has noted that little attention has been paid to electoral failure of ERPs even though these cases are far more numerous than the clearly visible success stories (Mudde 2007: 201 & De Lange & Mudde 2005: 481). As far as I know at the time of writing, the number of studies dealing specifically with electoral failure after success is few and far between. Occasionally, failure after success is treated briefly in case studies of some parties (See Mares 2011 & Cinpoes 2010), sometimes failure in the absence of success (See Auers & Kasekamp 2009) but seldom as the focal point of the study or in concord with theories on ERP success (See Heinsch 2003).

This thesis is an attempt to explore that gap in the understanding of ERPs. We seem to have some rough understanding of why they succeed, but do we understand why they sometimes first succeed and then fail?

This is not only a study of failure after success among ERPs in Europe in general. This thesis uses data from five countries in Eastern Europe, a region which has not been graced by the same generous amount of studies on ERPs as Western Europe. Six parties are studied, parties that have at some point, entered and left the political scene during the time frame between 1989 to 2012.

Can failure be understood by previous established academic theories on ERPs? If not: what is better needed to understand the process of failure? If the already established explanations are not sufficient then what areas need more attention?

Thus the aim of this thesis is both to explore a gap in understanding, namely failure after success, and to conduct this study of a region where ERPs are not well understood or have not been covered with enough detail. The purpose is also to hopefully add some knowledge to a subject that is often debated in the public sphere of Europe but seldom with knowledge of less known phenomena (failure) and areas (Eastern Europe).

1.2 Disposition

The thesis is divided into eight parts. In (2) I explain the central concepts used in the thesis and how I define “failure”, “ERPs”, and if they are different in Eastern Europe from Western Europe. In (3) I explain ERP theory: which explanations have so far been used to explain the emergence, support and success of the parties. In (4) I describe previous studies made on ERP in Eastern Europe as well as the field of research of “party failure”. In (5) I present the method used and research questions. In (6) I present the data and the party case studies that have been made to understand failure after success. And last, in (7) I analyze the data and in (8) reach a conclusion with recommendations for further research in (9).

2. Definitions and central concepts

2.1 Failed parties

What exactly is a failed party? One can assume a number of things about a failed party, either that the party has lost a large number of voters or parliamentary seats. Or that the party in some way has lost public trust and confidence. Internal power struggles, organizational collapse, corruption, theft of party savings are all symptoms of “failure”. The nature of failure is manifold.

The definition I use in this thesis, of party failure, is that the party **has lost representation in the national parliament during an election and/or merges into another party as a weak partner**

So either a party loses parliamentary representation in an election without being connected to an electoral alliance or having entered into a party merger or the party disappears as an independent organization through a merger with another party. In this case it disappears in as an independent organization but does also not gain any influence in the new form. The party has failed in the party merger. The opposite, merging as a dominant partner, is in fact not a failure for the party but a change of shape.

Typically a party merger is either a strategic pooling of political clout and resources into one political organization or a process of almost hostile takeover. Competing political factions within a party may choose to abandon the party, hijack it or connect it to another party. A weak party merger is when a party has been absorbed into another party without gaining any strong political leverage in the new political constellation.

There can be numerous *paths* to failure after success but the *results* are almost always the same: the party loses legislative influence and is either disbanded, has marginal support outside of parliament, or is absorbed into another party. Both of the definitions for failure after success result in the same, or nearly same, consequences.

One must also make a distinction between failure in the total absence of success and failure after success. In the first case, success was never reached, and the party has therefore never succeeded in reaching parliament and a position of incumbency, in the latter case, success predates failure.

Some parties do linger outside of parliament and return and then fail again, these instances I treat as several failures (the Slovakian SNS is an example of this). The reason for this is that they are still cases of “failure after success”, only that they have succeeded and failed multiple times.

2.2 ERPs

Ruud Koopmans has described the definition debate as a “question of labels, not of substance” (Giugni & Koopmans 2007: 489). He may be right but the question is still relevant if we want to do cross-country studies and compare party development in different political systems. Parties are not exact structures; they cannot always accurately be easily measured and delimited.

Choosing the term ERP (extreme right party) is in a way both flexible and restrictive. According to Mudde the term denotes parties that share a “core ideology that features xenophobia, welfare chauvinism, and law and order” (Mudde 2000: 1). In a sense it is more applicable if one wants to analyze parties in all of Europe, both WE (West Europe) and EE (East Europe), as anti-immigration and populist descriptions are too narrow in order to explain the variety of parties with some form of ideological connection.

There are examples when, for example, only a “populist” or “anti-immigration” criteria is not sufficient. Both the British conservative party and the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU) have taken anti immigration stances but have not presented nationalism or nativism as a core feature of their parties (Giugni & Koopmans 2007: 488). Therefore, the concept “ERP” offers a broad enough delimitation in order to take in the many variants and historical backgrounds the parties have taken.

Some parties that are studied in this thesis can be argued to be more left-wing in an economic perspective, some are direct descendants to communist parties. What they have in common is sharing of some core ERP-concepts that form a common lowest denominator.

When categorizing parties for the study I have taken into account party programs, views taken by leading politicians, views by journalists and political scientists as well as international party affiliation. In some cases choices of which party to include or not have been difficult, these choices are explained when applicable in the data presentation.

My criterion for a good definition is that it strives to be as clear, simple and as descriptively accurate as possible. Conveying an actual connection between parties, separated by country borders, but connected in an approximate family of political parties which is mirrored both by the stated self-image of the party and external analysis.

A party program can convey an idealized political image the party, or at least what some individuals within the party, want. It does on the other hand, badly represent the realities in which the party operates within; the confined of parliamentary practice or governmental compromises. All these factors have, when available, been taken into account. A party can not only be defined by what it wants politically and how it wants to be portrayed, but also how it acts and is perceived in practice.

2.3 ERPs in Eastern Europe

As I mentioned above the ERP concept lends itself to a broader range of countries and parties, without losing its analytical usefulness. Still, there is need to understand the specific context of EE ERPs.

Using a sub-system of definitions for EE parties strengthens the saliency of these parties as parts of a larger ERP family. Using a west-European definition of ERPs directly without taking into account regional history would be a mistake as west European ERPs are often, primarily, anti-immigration based. This is a rare among EE ERPs as immigration is often a non-issue (Van der Brug & Fennema 2009: 590). Instead minority politics, nationalist rhetoric, relation to Europe and attitude towards sexual minorities are more pronounced traits.

This typology is according to Mudde not meant to be a static tool. Some parties stray outside of the typology and some parties are combinations of the above described categories. What they all have in common is a “core ideology that features xenophobia, welfare chauvinism, and law and order” (Mudde 2000: *ibid*). But all delimitations are limited in scope and saliency because the very subjects of the delimitations are fluid and organic organizations in different political climates and cultures.

Cas Mudde has presented a clear categorization on EE ERP parties. Taking into account the region-specific history he has built on previous research and construction of typologies by Michael Waller (Mudde 2000: 8-23). The four different categories of EE ERP parties are as follows.

2.3.1 Pre-Communist ERPs

This category of parties has had some form of connection to pre-world war two ERPs. These parties are most often nothing more than small groups harking back to pre-war days. Almost none of these party organizations survived a half century of communist rule and thus are all but absent from the post-communist era. Nonetheless, few of these groups have attained any parliamentarian support. According to Mudde, the only notable example of a Pre-Communist ERP is the Slovakian Slovenská národná strana (SNS), founded in 1990 and led by Jan Slota. The party has viewed itself as a direct successor to the pre-war SNS party that existed between 1871-1938, even though it can be debated if it is a direct successor (Mudde 2000: 10-13). A more appropriate example is the Polish LPR, League of Polish families.

2.3.2 Communist ERPs

The label “communist ERP” may sound like a contradiction in terms. But it was not uncommon for communist parties to draw upon nationalist imagery and discourse in order to marshal support for

the government. In the post-communist era some of these parties have survived and continued to use nationalist symbols and rhetoric. An example of this category of parties is the Romanian Partidul România Mare (PRM). The PRM has been tightly connected with the particularly nationalist version of communism that was espoused by the Romanian regime of Nicolae Ceausescu. The smaller Romanian ERP Partidul Unitatii Nationale Romane (PUNAR) that preceded PRM has also falls under this category. This category of parties has only been strong in countries with a markedly nationalist version of communism as was the case in Romania.

2.3.3 Post-communist ERPs

To those familiar with WE ERPs this is perhaps the most recognizable category. These are parties with identities and organizational structures located firmly in the post-Communist period, meaning that these organizations are newly established and their focus is on current political issues. In contrast with the first category or the communist ERP this category of parties is more centered on current issues. They are not, as Mudde writes “caught in the nostalgia for either the pre-Communist or Communist period” (Mudde 2000:18).

3.1 Theoretical framework

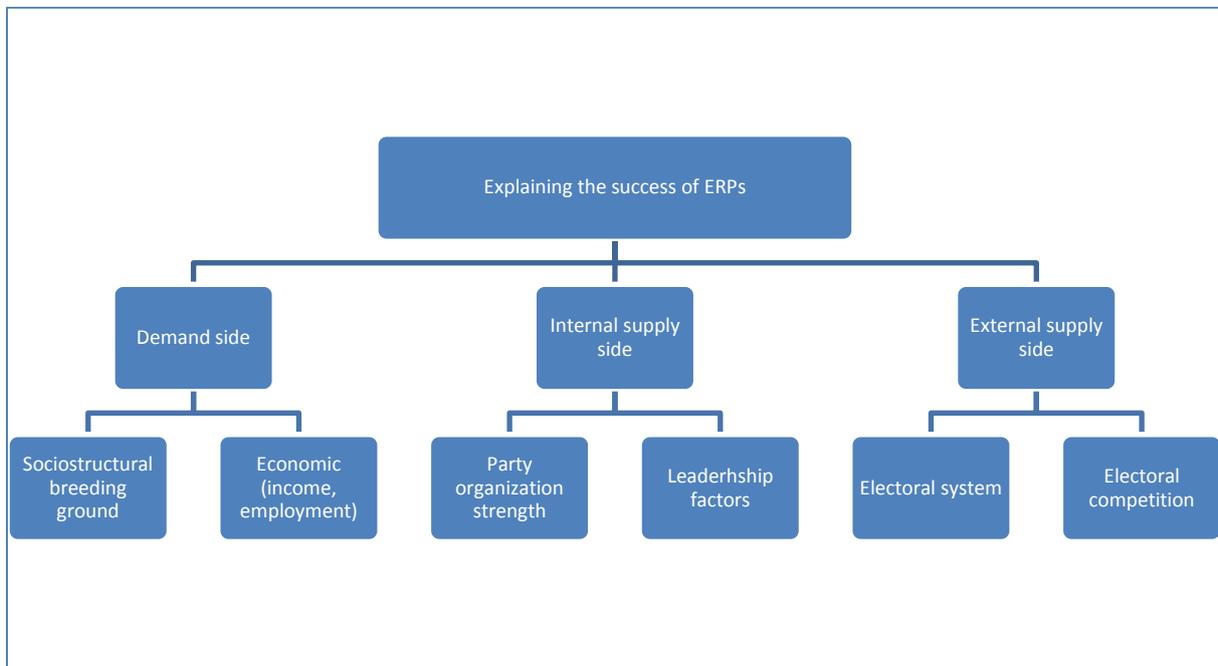
Why do ERPs grow and why do they succeed? Those words seem to be on everyone’s lips during the 2010s in Europe. And to no surprise, during the last thirty years, ERPs of different flavors and types have become mainstay in most European countries. In WE they gained traction during the 1980s and in EE the advent of democracy brought with it a wide range of ERPs. In this sense, WE and EE with their many regional characteristics are no different from each other when it comes to the persistence of ERPs.

The field of research dealing with ERPs and the mechanics of their rise has been through several phases and a myriad of explanations have been put forward in order to explain how they rise, develop and gain political strength. In order to understand what this thesis aims to explore and answer, it is appropriate to understand the current theories and thus the starting point for further research.

The rising support for ERPs during the early 1980s was by scholars mainly described as a response to the changing character of western democracies. The stable post-war industrial economies were rapidly changing. Economic globalization challenged traditional western industries and increasing immigration from former colonies and by guest workers from poor countries like Turkey was changing previously ethnically and religiously homogenous countries. In this rapid economic and societal change there were winners and losers.

Hans-Georg Betz dubbed the latter group the “losers of modernity”; a term that stuck because it easily described what disgruntled voters were (Betz 1994). But this explanation was soon challenged and in 2002 even Betz dropped his claim about the explanatory value of his concept. The support for ERPs, was argued, could not be so easily explained (Van Der Brug & Fennema 2009: 592). Nevertheless, the term has stayed on and remains a powerful overarching theory that is well suited to describe the political and societal reality in which ERPs have developed. It may not provide an easy answer to the *variation* of success between ERPs but it explains *why* they exist at all.

In the 1990s several new theories were being introduced to explain the success of ERPs. Mudde has divided the three major explanations into (1) Demand Side, (2) Internal supply side and (3) external supply side (see model 1) (Mudde 2007: passim). The purpose of this chapter is, with Muddes taxonomy of explanations as a framework, to describe theories that describe the fortunes of ERPs. In addition to this the aim of this chapter is to describe previous research done on ERPs in Eastern Europe and describe what studies have been made on the topic of party failures.



Model 1

3.2 Demand side explanations

For a long time the overarching explanation given to explain success of ERPs was demand based. Demand, or in other words, preferences among voters can be constructed from a number of factors like income, social class, education level, visible crime etc (2005: 6-8). These can in short be described as “breeding grounds” for values that strengthen ERPs, and are factors that can, but not necessarily must, create conditions for ERPs like societal crisis, immigration, minority conflicts and authoritarian legacy in the country (Mudde 2007: 201-223). Summarizing the demand side explanations Erlingsson et al write that:

The emergence of social problems as a consequence of, for example, increasing immigration and rampant unemployment, have made many scholars believe that voters will be increasingly prone to make new, not seldom outright xenophobic, anti-liberal, anti-system and anti-immigration demands (Erlingsson 2010: 822).

Xenophobic attitudes, populist tendencies and nationalism in the population are often present among extreme right voters. But as Mudde explains the demand side explanations can account for the "potential electorate" but not the "why" and "who" votes for extreme right parties (Mudde 2007: 230). Mudde continues to describe that demand side theories are necessary to understand the support for extreme right wing parties but not a sufficient explanation for their emergence and success in European countries. Demand side theories have been important in order to understand the *raison d'être* of ERPs but not necessarily how they fare in competition with other parties, how they act as an organization and how they tackle both voting system and the situation of incumbency.

The transformation of large parts of Europe from industrial economies with small immigrant populations to post-industrial multicultural societies is a breeding ground for disillusioned voters and xenophobia. But this then begs the question: Why then are not the electoral results for ERPs similar in various European countries? Some natural variation should be expected but not to a degree where in some countries, extreme right wing parties are all but absent.

This lack of explanatory value has brought on a shift from demand side explanations to supply side explanations (See Bustikova 2009 & Luther 2011). But rather than replacing the demand side explanations, supply side theories add knowledge where the demand side explanations have been failing (Öhrvall: 2012: 820).

3.3 External supply side

Supply side explanations which have gained in importance during the last decade can roughly be categorized into two categories, either “internal supply” or “external supply”. Internal supply is related to the characteristics of ERPs and their choices as party organizations. External supply relates to factors outside the parties like electoral system and competition from other parties (Mudde 2007: 232). Examples of external supply side studies are Heinsch 2003, Carter 2005, Bakke & Sitter 2005 and Tavits 2008. These studies are roughly grouped into two categories, one detailing the electoral competition, i.e. the existing party competition facing ERPs. The other explores the connection between electoral system and party success.

Even though these two categories are the two most commonly studied there are other, less used, but still important external supply side factors. Mudde mentions the cultural context of a country. This factor is more difficult to measure and understand as it pertains to cultural contexts and “political mores and values/..consequently, some cultures may be more conducive to the populist radical right than others” (Mudde 2007: 244). Naturally, measuring the connection between meta-political factors like popular culture, literature, history and the success of ERPs is more difficult than the connection between electoral systems and success. Operationalization of the latter is easier whereas the first category is more open to speculation and rougher categorizations.

Mudde concludes that external supply side explanations facilitate rather than determine the success or failure of the parties; they explain why voter support does or does not lead to electoral success. In this sense the external supply side explanations better explain the first phases of party life, not the long-term staying power in a parliament (Mudde 2007: 254-255).

3.4 Internal supply side

Internal supply side explanations focus on the parties as “independent variables” shaping their own destiny. Mudde argues that “Populist radical right parties must be put at the center of research on the phenomenon. Populist radical right parties are not just dependent variables “passively molded by structural factors but they are also independent variables, actively shaping part of their own destiny” (Mudde 2007:293).

What this entails is that in order to understand the success of ERPs one must understand how organizational choices and leadership issues and factors affect the party. Within the umbrella of organizational factors one can also count ideological choices, party leadership, the level and effectiveness of local party branch organization and strategies during incumbency (Carter 2005: 64-65).

In her book *The extreme right in Western Europe* Elisabeth Carter concludes that party characteristics such as party organization, leadership, choice of ideology explain electoral fortunes (Carter 2005: 213).

Internal supply side explanations are necessary as demand theory can only account for the core reasons for ERP demand, not their relative failure or success. For example Rydgren noted that Sweden had both large immigration and unprecedented unemployment at the same time (Rydgren 2002, see also Rydgren 2003). In other studies of the Sweden Democrats Erlingsson, Loxbo, Öhrvall found that "no obvious socioeconomic factors, e.g. local 'fertile grounds', brought SDs success about. Rather, what decided its fate was whether or not the party had an organizational presence and actual candidates running for seats" (Erlingsson et al 2009: 18).

4. Previous research

4.1 Studying ERPs in Eastern Europe

So far, the majority of research, both demand and supply oriented has been devoted to Western European parties. A longer time frame to study and more accurate data has resulted in a mass of studies. What of EE? The situation for ERPs has not been widely studied, but when comparisons have been made between WE and EE many similarities have been found. Bustikova claims that the differences in studying ERPs in EE from WE are not big:

The literature on the Eastern European right can be conveniently categorized using an analytical framework deployed to study the radical right in the west: the distinction between the supply side and the demand side of the political process. (Bustikova 2009: 224)

With some exceptions, EE ERP have been studied in the same way. What of the differences? Some scholars have shown that the rise of Eastern European ERPs stem from the need for "protection against the destabilizing effects of the transition to competition and the market" (Tismaneanu 2007: 37).

Minkenberg also point out that the losers of the post-communist transition, people in the countryside, lower income classes are the core of the ERP support. In a sense, these explanations are naturally connected to Betz claim about the 'losers of modernity' which was primarily used to understand WE (Minkenberg 2002: 356). But even in EE this simple explanation is not sufficient if one wants to understand success and failure of the ERPs. Bustikova argues that:

Crude measures of the size of ethnic minorities, inequality, unemployment, levels of development and the structure of the economy cannot account for the variation in the success of the extreme right in the East and the cross-national level (Bustikova 2009: 236).

She concludes that the still nascent literature on the extreme right in Eastern Europe "suggests that efforts to identify a clear-cut socio-economic base for the extreme right may be futile" (Bustikova 2009: 237). Even a shallow analysis of EE ERPs shows that there is much truth to this claim. The support is varied over countries. In Poland and Hungary the supporters for ERPs mainly come from the poor eastern parts of the respective countries (Bustikova 2009: 224). The Greater Romania party had a support base mainly centered around large cities and the middle class, with many young voters under forty (Minkenberg 2002: 353-354). The supporters of the Hungarian Truth and Life Party were

not from the poor eastern half of the country where Jobbik draw their current support from but from the “three most fashionable districts of Budapest” (Karsai 1999: 146).

Different parties marshal support from different areas, countries have different political contexts and competitive environments which result in a varied array of situations. Simple comparisons between socio-economic data like unemployment, income levels and education do not explain the variation in fortunes and failures that the ERPs have experienced. Demand for ERPs is not sufficient for electoral success, being on the ballot and existing as an independent organization, supply in other words is also required.

Added to that, the study of ERPs in EE is generally overlooked. This is both with regards to longitudinal studies as well as supply based case studies. There are quite a few case studies of specific ERPs (See De Lange & Guerra 2009). One study by Mares studied the failure of the extreme right in the Czech Republic as a case study, although studies of this type are few and far between (Mares 2011).

The studies that so far have been made that directly or indirectly touch upon the subject of ERPs in Eastern Europe fall into a number of categories. Some, like Mudde have written studies of general trends, other with a similar method offer micro-level case studies of particular ERPs (Mudde 2000, 2005 & De Langue & Guerra 2009). Some studies of ERPs in EE have used quantitative methods in order to measure demand side factors in a way common in the study of the ERPs in Western European counterparts (Van Der Brug & Fennema 2005). All these studies have in common their direct approach, i.e. the main topic of the studies is ERPs.

4.2 Failure after success

So far I have described the previous research on ERPs in EE and the development from demand to supply styled analysis of ERPs. What connects most of these theories though is that they primarily focus on “success” of ERPs. Not why and how the parties at some point, sometimes, fail.

For some reason, failure *after* success is not studied with the same eagerness and detail as the road to success. On the contrary, study of parties that have reached parliament, thus being examples of party success on some scale, but then left parliament for some reason, is somewhat overlooked. Even when failure is described, it is rarely done with the purpose of testing or developing party theory.

This puts my thesis in a precarious situation. There is little work to directly build upon or develop. Studies about party longevity, death and failure made by Deegan Krause are the only that specifically deal with party failure, longevity and death (Deegan Krause 2012). Heinsch has also studied what happens to ERPs in incumbency, meaning when they have actually succeeded, and tried to understand what happens when they fail (Heinsch 2003). But these studies stand out in their isolation. An analogy could be that the thesis does not have parents or grandparents, only uncles and cousins.

It is worth noting that some of the studies on failure do in fact study failure in the *absence* of success, meaning that they examine parties that have never had any success to begin with. The major work on the subject by Lawson & Merkl dealt with party failure as a phenomenon where some parties never succeeded to begin with (Lawson & Merkl 1988). Thus Lawson & Merkl studied party failure in

a broader sense, including failure in budget negotiations and recruiting new members. Studies of a more narrow definition of failure, the loss of parliamentary representation seem to be much rarer.

The same goes for the category of qualitative studies, there is a small amount of case studies but few delve into the topic of failure, instead what is commonly described is the rise of ERPs and movements, seldom their decline and failure. There are exceptions in studies that attempt to describe the entire history of a party, including their failure in some cases, but it is rarely treated as a separate subject (See Cinpoes 2010 & Mares 2010).

That there are few studies specifically targeted at party failure after success does not mean that all explanations, especially internal supply oriented ones, are not applicable to understand party failure. Both Spirova and Tavits have argued that there is a direct connection between party organization and party longevity (Spirova 2007 & Tavits 2012). Tavits argues that party organizational strength makes the party more viable in general, the reelection probability goes up and the voters can easily base their opinions on the party brand rather than individual reputation of the party leaders. This is supported by Öhrvall which showed that demand side factors were not as important the Sweden Democrats actually appearing on the ballot and having local branches and candidates (Erlingsson et al 2009).

Krause & Haughton argue that party age is a central factor determining the longevity of parties in EE: the longer a party exists the more resilient it becomes to shock, both internal and exogenous. It has more time to build a professional party organization. But, as Krause & Haughton note: "as with human beings or plants, some deaths occur despite precautions" (Krause & Haughton 2012: 24). They conclude that: "The key to parties (lack of) durability lies in a combination of organizational development, leadership choices and the shelf-life of appeals employed" (Krause & Haughton 2012: 2).

Weak parties, according to Tavits have to "experiment in high-stake national politics where policy failures and campaign debacles are costly and likely to subtract from rather than add to collective electoral benefit" (Tavits 2012: 86). This shows that mainly internal supply side theories are used to explain the incumbent strategies of parties. Thus it would be reasonable to assume that, as the demand condition for success has already been met, further success, or the lack thereof (i.e. failure) is dependent on one or more supply side factors dependent on the party itself.

Another supply side explanation used to study parties was done by Kessel who studied Polish, British and Dutch study incumbent strategies and found that: "established parties may hamper the development of populist parties" (Kessel 2012: 5). Kessel cites the work of Bale who proposed that a "black widow effect" may take place when mainstream parties in office seize the electoral support of "their radical junior coalition partner by copying its policy positions" (Kessel 2012: *ibid*, see Bale 2003). Also Meguid argues that an "accommodative strategy" by a mainstream party can lower support for certain niche parties (Meguid 2008). These are all theories explaining potential failure for ERPs during incumbency and thus fall close to my criteria for theories that concentrate on the latter part of a party's life and not the ascent.

Another problem for incumbent parties highlighted by Kessel is the failure of "appealing to purity". Many ERPs style themselves as anti-establishment and anti-corruption parties. Kessel notes that:

././it can be difficult for populist parties to stick credibility to their anti-establishment appeal and to present themselves as 'outsiders' in a convincing way once they enter government. After all, they then have to become part of the system they previously vehemently opposed (Kessel 2012: 6)

Failing as an outsider party is a different process than failing as an incumbent party. Previously failure for ERPs has been treated as a failure in reaching parliament. Thus my departing point from the established explanations is the ones dealing with the supply side factors focusing on incumbent parties. Although these theories have been developed in order to understand success in this thesis they will be employed in studying failure after success.

5. Methodological approach

In the previous chapter I recounted the numerous ways academia has tried to understand the success of ERPs in Europe. As the object of interest of this thesis are the failed ERPs of EE I have tried to find those explanations that come as close as possible in describing and understanding the situation which soon-to-be failed ERPs find themselves in, namely the position of incumbency.

But few explanations specifically deal with "failure". Therefore the nature of this study is both theory testing and exploratory. Building upon previous research on ERPs but trying to understand a little studied part of their existence. An exploratory study is made when the objective is: "to identify key issues and key variables." And one "outcome might be a better system of measurement for a specific variable." The cases studied in this thesis have all in common that they are examples of party failures; therefore key variables to explain their failure are researched.

Although this is not done *carte blanche*, without any prior hints of what might be relevant and important to look for. Therefore this study is also, at least partially, a study where explanations and theories are tested.

Testing a theory might result in a couple of results: A) one may fill theoretical gaps in understanding of a phenomenon. B) The theory or explanation may altogether be disproved and a competing explanation is put forward or C) A causal mechanic that a theory sets out to explain is better understood (Esaiasson 2007: 124). Esaiasson et al argue that there is a fine line between "theory developing" and "theory testing". This blurred distinction is appropriate to describe this thesis, some theories may very well be well suited to understand ERP failures, but as few case studies of failures exist this thesis is also testing previous explanations.

5.2 Research questions

The aim of this thesis is to understand if "failure after success" can be understood with supply oriented explanations, or if additional, or other explanations should be used. In order to reach this aim the following questions need to be answered:

Q1: Which factors could be identified leading to failure of the post-cold war ERPs in EE?

Q2: Can these factors be interpreted causally by previous established supply based explanations?

Q3: If not: what is needed for a better explanation of the process of failure after success?

6. Data presentation

This chapter is divided into six parts; the first describing geographical data delimitation then six parties in five countries is analyzed.

6.1 Geographical delimitation

The data used for this thesis is ERPs in Eastern Europe excluding the ex-Yugoslavian states, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldavia. These have been excluded for two reasons: All countries included in this study: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria have had free elections since the fall of the communist bloc. The number of elections is nearly identical. Secondly, these countries were all independent states in the inter-war period and have thus had a longer tradition of party politics, some had to large degree free elections in the inter-war period. Yugoslavia was during this period one united country. Belarus, Ukraine and Moldavia were part of other countries (more specifically Poland, Soviet Union and Romania).

6.1.2 Data type and delimitation

Using election databases each election in the chosen countries from 1989-2012 has been studied in order to find failed parties. When a party failure has been found the party has been analyzed to determine if it fits the description as an ERP. Disappearances of parties due to party mergers and electoral coalitions have also been studied in order to find failed ERPs. See appendix 1 for a complete overview of party failure.

The party failure analysis was done with help of second-hand sources like European Journal of Political research or specific party case studies. In most cases, English language party studies, electoral studies and articles have been used as the primary source material on the parties described in the study.

Country	Failed parties	Total failed ERPs	Total failed parties
Estonia	11	0	11
Latvia	11	0	11
Lithuania	13	0	13
Poland	16	1	17
Czech Republic	9	1	10
Slovakia	12	1	13
Hungary	5	1	6
Romania	10	2	12
Bulgaria	5	0	0
Totalt	92	6	98

Source:European Election Database (EED), European Election Studies (EES), Parties and Elections in Europe. For complete list and results see Appendix 1.

6.2 Poland

Before describing object of the analysis here it is pertinent to explain on the precarious delimitation dilemma posed by the case of ERPs in Poland. Two parties, which have reached parliament, have

since the fall of communism been described as ERP, Samoobrona (SO) and Liga polskich rodzin (LPR). In this study I have chosen only to study LPR, not SO.

LPR places itself firmly in a pre-communist tradition of radical nationalism, xenophobia and catholic extremism. The party's political programme is highly focused on traditional catholic family values, rebirth of the nation and pragmatic isolationism with neither overtly left-wing nor right-wing leanings with regards to economic factors (Sczerbiak 2003: 735-738). In many respects the party resembles traditional ERPs in catholic countries like Belgium and Spain.

In a poll conducted by Czubinska et al, it was found that polish voters placed SO and LPR at the center of polish politics, between the social-democrats and the UW, Unia Wolnosci, which later became PO (Czubinska et al 2002). In a sense it is hard to describe either LPR or SO as ERPs. In order to fit the specific polish tradition of extreme nationalism into a wider framework of ERPs one must work with a more reductionist approach, taking apart the ideological and historical dimensions or parties in order to understand their political placement.

SO stands out with its rather unique leftist and agrarian populism, its electorate identifies as leftist and agrarian. The party has portrayed itself neither as populist and neither left nor right, an image that it's shared with the party's voters according to Czubinska et al. They classify SO as "left-wing populist" and not as a traditional ERP, (Se also Gwiazda 2007, Sczerbiak 2003, Jasiewicz 2007 for a similar definition). On the other hand, they note that the electorate of SO has more anti-Semitic views although this is not equally mirrored by the party's own views where LPR has been more outspoken on Jewish issues, whereas SOs leader, Andrej Lepper, has distanced himself from any anti-Semitic views. In contrast, LPR places itself firmly in the extreme-right of polish politics both with regards to the perception of the polish public but also when one takes into account the positions of the party.

6.2.1 Liga Polskich Rodzin 2001-2007 (LPR)

The 1990s were not a successful period for ERPs in Poland. Although several parties styled themselves as extreme right none of them had any broad appeal. It was first in 1999 when LPR (Liga polskich rodzin) was created when the ERPs gained a parliamentary foothold in Poland. The party was a union of several of the nationalist and extreme catholic groups that had populated the polish political scene during the 1990s but which had never raised any serious electoral support. The party also incorporated the pre-war organization the "All polish youth" as its youth branch. The party did not have any obvious connections to the Solidarnosc opposition of the 1980s but was instead rooted in the pre-war ideology of ND, the national democrats, Endecja (Jasiewicz 2008: 427).

LPR was in a sense, through family connections, deeply rooted in the pre-communist ERP movement of Poland. The party leader, Roman Giertych worked alongside his father, professor Maciej Giertych whose father, Jędrzej was a leader and radical ideologue of the Endecja during the 1930s (Pankowski & Kornak in Mudde). The newly formed LPR showed that it had not severed ties with the radically nationalistic and anti-Semitic Endecja of the pre-war era, several members of the party, including Maciej Giertych, the father of the party leader, published articles and pamphlets with apparent anti-Semitic and racist themes. Support was also given to the holocaust-denier Dariusz Ratajczyk (Pankowski & Kornak in Mudde2005: 159).

It has been argued that a primary reason for the rapid increase in support for LPR during the early 2000s was the assistance of the popular catholic Father Tadeusz Rydzyk and his radio station Radio Maryja. A radio channel which was and still is a focal point for catholic extremism in the country. This support quickly propelled LPR to the forefront of Polish politics largely due to the large base of listeners of the radio station (Pankowski & Kornak in Mudde 2005: 160).

The lack of any strong ERP party during the 1990s also contributed to the relative ease with which LPR gained a foothold in Polish politics. De Lange & Guerra suggest that there was a gaping hole in Polish politics ready to be filled: "As a result the religious authoritarian nationalist quadrant of the Polish political space has been virtually empty" (De Lange & Guerra 2011: 544). They also argue that the success of LPR in the 2001 elections when the party first gained parliamentary representation was largely due to the upcoming EU accession which was by some in the extreme nationalist camp viewed as an attack on Polish sovereignty and values (De Lange & Guerra 2011: *ibid*). The early years of the 2000s were a fertile breeding ground for nationalism which was not being used by any established party, thus, LPR provided the "supply" needed to capitalize on the latent support. Uniting disparate factions within the nationalistic and extreme catholic bloc around a clearly recognizable pre-war banner, *Endecja*, could also have contributed to the quick ascent of the party.

Although the LPR were not alone in their EU-skepticism in the successful 2001 election, there was also *Samoobrona* (SO). The years around the EU accession led to surprisingly high election results in both national elections and elections to the European parliament, LPR was the second largest party in the EU parliament elections of 2004 gaining 15,9% of the vote. De Lange and Guerra conclude that as the EU accession lessened in importance, so did the support for LPR:

Given that the LPR mainly campaigned on cultural issues, most notably Euroscepticism, the electoral appeal of the party was limited. Consequentially, it did not manage to expand its vote and seat share. With the accession secured and the EU referendum passed, the LPR lost momentum. (De Lange & Guerra 2011: 537)

In order to understand the failure of LPR one must perhaps understand its success, De Lange & Guerra write that:

LPR correctly assessed the Polish political opportunity structure and skillfully located itself in a quadrant of the Polish political space in which many voters, but no other parties were located. Second, the party campaigned on issues that were highly salient to its potential voters and took up distinct positions on these issues. Hence, the LPR cleverly matched its supply to an already existing demand. (De Lange & Guerra 2011: 538)

The government that took power in 2005 led by the conservative *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* (PiS) government styled itself as an anti-establishment force in Polish politics. When it took power, it promised to sever all ties with the social democrats which were often accused of having strong ties with the communist party pre 1989. Several leaders of the social-democratic party had previously been members of the communist party and during the early 2000s a large debate brought these issues to the forefront of politics (the so called "Lustracja"). A large upheaval in Polish politics which completely marginalized the influence of the social democrats led to a large change in political power.

PiS formed a government with LPR and SO, an unfortunate move for LPR which quickly ran into problems. The government was marred by scandals and representatives from LPR were unable to present a less corrupt façade than they had previously criticized, for example several members left

the governing coalition to form an independent parliamentary group called the “National-Agrarian Movement”, party stability was an issue with several defections from the parliamentary group . Roman Giertych entered the government as minister for education and quickly promised to sanitize education and re-organizing it along four pillars: order, patriotism, prestige and truth and “without any homosexual influences” (Kosc 2006). The reforms were unpopular with the electorate and contributed to the large loss of support between the 2005 and 2007 election.

Therefore it was the more polished PIS which also had its roots in the Solidarnosc movement which captured the ear of voters with populist preferences; the party had been created around the same time as LPR but with a markedly more moderate ideology at its core. Kessel argues that the PIS-led government captured a flow of electoral support from LPR and its coalition partner, the left-wing populist SO. An effect Kessel describes as an example of a ‘black widow effect’. Kessel concludes that what happened was that, “a mainstream party managed to present itself as a more credible agent of the dissatisfied voters” (Kessel 2012: 15).

Also the strong support of the catholic radio station ‘Radio Maryja’ turned from LPR to PIS in the election of 2007, when LPR went from a result of 8,0 in 2005 to 1,3. This move thus withdrew the essential religious component of LPR: s initial success. PIS embodied several of LPRs core characteristics: anti-establishment rhetoric, anti-communism, catholic values, nationalism and criticism of the liberal reforms of the 1990’s (Millard 2010:146). PIS avoided anti-Semitism and outright racist representatives and were portrayed as a more moderate and stable party. During the 2007 re-election PIS mainly drew support from LPR and SO which in the end was not enough to win the election (Jasiewicz 2008: 1106).The leading duo of the party, the Kaczynski brothers had with their background in the Solidarnosc movement a wider appeal but could also draw some of the religiously and nationalistic elements of the LPR electorate to PIS. The failure of LPR must be seen in connection with the rise and consolidation of PIS as an economically leftist, socially reactionary and catholic party with anti-establishment views and soft nationalism. Both LPR and its coalition partner SO fared badly in comparison with the more stable and accountable PIS. The fate of the 2005 seems to be essential when understanding the fall of LPR.

Another important factor to take into account is the observation made by Szczerbiak who argued that the polish election of 2005 was mainly a battle between “social Poland” and “liberal Poland”, a battle between liberal and social-democrat positions on the economy; this is also true for the election of 2007 when LPRs support completely evaporated (Jasiewicz & Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz 2006: 1244). After the 2005 election LPRs comparative advantages disappeared. The LPR had mainly campaigned on a cultural agenda with strong catholic symbolism and rhetoric. After the EU accession the opposition of LPR for membership ceased to be politically viable as a large majority of Poles supported membership. De Lange & Guerra conclude that “the LPR was no longer able to capitalize on the issues that had initially promoted the success of the party.” (De Lange & Guerra: 537).

Although this view is not corroborated by Czubinska & Markowski who find that the EU accession was not an important issue in the 2001 election when LPR first entered parliament, instead they argue that positions on EU had more of an effect on the support of SO whereas LPR voters were more motivated by worries on the position of the church within Poland as well as moral degradation (Czubinska & Markowski 2002: 11). A way to reconcile these two positions is that LPR presented a

mixes bag of cultural and nationalistic views where EU-skepticism was only one part of a larger nationalistic discourse.

PiS had a great deal in the demise of the LPR. Instead of isolating themselves from LPR they gave the prominent roles in the government, Giertych was named vice minister In addition to his position as minister of education. PIS were in a good position to capitalize on the mistakes of LPR during its incumbency. Shortly after the 2005 election PiS first negotiated with PO on forming a majority government, after these talks broke down, PiS invited LPR and SO to negotiations. Had a PiS/PO government formed one can assume that the 'black widow' effect would not have taken place as LPR could have taken up the role as a major opposition party. Paradoxically, it was LPRs time in government which coincided with the largest drop in support, whereas the period 2001-2005 (outside of government) was rather stable for the party. The electoral support even increased marginally between the 2001 and 2005 election. Worth noting is that it was PiS which called for the re-election in 2007, a result of bitter infighting within the coalition between PiS, SO and LPR (Jasiewicz 2008: 1096). As early as in 2003 Sczerbiak noted that the electorate of PIS and LPR overlapped and was similar in many respects, this clearly proved to be LPRs undoing when PIS managed to inherit the electorate after during the 2007 election (Sczerbiak 2003: 730).

Everything that made LPR a unique force in polish politics was thus reduced to either relative obscurity (opposition to EU), taken over by a larger political force (the anti-establishment and anti-corruption positions of PIS) or made irrelevant by a more important division alongside economic cleavages. This re-configuration of polish politics which took place in 2005-2007 has been surprisingly long-lasting and at time of writing PIS and PO are still the major players in polish politics. The populist, catholic oriented vote has stayed faithfully with the PiS and both LPR and SO has since their exit from polish politics in 2007 languished on the margins of political life.

6.3 Czech Republic

The post-communist 1990's have been dubbed "Golden era of the extreme right" in the Czech Republic (Mares 2011: 284). A number of factors made the decade suitable for the rise of extreme right movements. The revolutionary zeal during the fall of communism soon faded among many democratic activists and many turned to populism, some émigré dissidents with extreme right views returned to the country and rampant unemployment due to layoffs in the public sector all contributed to the creation of various extremist groups. As the communist repression had lifted reactionary extremist organizations were able to work in the open, this also spawned a number of extreme catholic organizations marshaling against the perceived decadence of post-communist Czech Republic. As in many EE-countries the breeding ground for ERPs was excellent, economic crisis, high unemployment and large regional differences in income all contributed (Mares 2011: 285-287).

6.3.1 Sdružení pro Republiku Republikánská strana Československa 1992-1998 (SPR-RSC)

Among the many extreme right organizations to emerge during the early nineties only the Association for the Republic Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (Sdružení pro Republiku Republikánská strana Československa, SPR-RSC) gained any traction in elections. And this is the only party during the period 1989-2012 that qualifies as an successful post-communist ERP that had an initial run of success but later floundered, failed in elections and was subsequently disbanded without any come back. The main success of the party is to be found during the mid-nineties.

The founder and central leader of the party, Miroslav Sladek, positioned himself as the anti-corruption candidate, criticizing the new democratic government as well as espousing anti-immigration and anti-roma views. The small Vietnamese minority which had arrived during communist times was targeted. Another important issue for SPR-RSC was opposition to the split of Czechoslovakia, this put the party on a collision course with the Slovak National Party (Mares 2011: 285).

The SPR-RSC main role in Czech politics was that of the anti-establishment party that not only criticized the government but also the opposition for being in cahoots with the ruling regime. SPR-RSC entered parliament in the 1992 election with 6 % of the vote and gained 18 seats in parliament. The 1996 election was an even larger success and the party raised its share of the vote to 8 % and 18 seats in parliament. Although during both terms the party lost parliamentarians due to defections. It was during the 1998 election that the party, surprisingly, after the previous increase in support, failed to reach the 5 % threshold. Thus the party had a rather rapid rise to fame, a short time in incumbency and then rapidly lost all major support. The failure was not a slow drudging process marked by a gradual decline; the failure of SPR-RSC was quick and offered the party little opportunity to return. But how could the success of the 1996 so quickly turn to failure in the election of 1998? Mares writes that:

The most often cited cause of their failure is a change in political culture, with many voters refusing any longer to recognize Sládek's excesses as a credible alternative. SPR-RSC's voters left the party for other parties, mainly those of the left (Mares 2011: 285)

The party was autocratically run by Sladek and shortly after the failed 1998 election the party was declared bankrupt, an event that eventually led to Sladek being charged and sentenced by the Prague city court. After the failed 1998 election and the bankruptcy Sladek formed a new party, although in the eyes of the electorate this party did not in practice appear to be any new party but a slight variation of the old SPR-RSC. Hanley focuses especially on the role of Sladek in the decline. Groups of activists were either expelled or left voluntarily due to the mismanagement of the party. In addition to this funds were misused by Sladek and he was accused of nepotism when his wife was given an important position within the party (Hanley 2010: 25).

SPR-RSC time in parliament was short, only two terms in office. This period was marred with frequent splits due to Sladek's authoritarian leadership style. In 1995 two MPs left the party to form the Patriotic Republican party. SPR-RSC was a party that tried to unite a large number of disparate populist and extreme right groups, united only under the umbrella of anti-establishment and anti-corruption and centered on Sladek's leadership the party was vulnerable to splits, in-party fighting and sudden changes in the personal appeal of Miroslav Sladek. The success of SPR-RSC came during a time when the party was still having a great deal in-party fighting between cliques. The 2000s were also testament to the fragmented nature of ERPs in the Czech republic, no less than 9 ERPs ran in elections, all gaining none or miniscule support.

In addition to the intensive internal party conflicts the SPR-RSC were treated harshly by the other parties in parliament, even the communist party which was often isolated completely distanced itself from the SPR-RSC. Even after the electoral success of 1996 the party was electorally isolated and completely ignored by other parties in parliament. Important to note was that the success of SPR-RSC meant that there was a deadlock in parliament, without any clear majority, so even at a time

when cooperation with SPR-RSC could have been tempting neither bloc attempted this (Hanley 2010: 36).

Hanley speculates that the establishment of the Democratic Union with its populist agenda devoid of racism could have stolen away some of the more moderate voters, the electoral success of the Bohemian communist party with its staunch anti-German positions (a key issue for the SPR-RSC) could also have contributed to the lost appeal of the SPR-RSC. Eventually, according to Hanley, the SPR-RSC was really only unique with its attacks on the Roma minority, not a position with enough appeal to lift the party on its own (Hanley 2010: 30).

A core feature of the SPR-RSC according to Hanley was the claim that the party represented a true oppositional force to the supposedly opposite left and right in the political spectrum of the Czech Republic. In lieu with the self-image of being a mass movement for the common man in the country was espoused in order to contrast with the corrupt establishment. This image was tougher to maintain during the late 1990s both the social democrats and the communist party gained support from disaffected voters. Hanley concluded that the sudden disappearance of the SPR-RSC was confusing for observers:

Their failure to re-enter parliament in the early elections of June 1998 despite having performed strongly two years earlier and mounted a costly and apparently effective billboard campaign puzzled contemporary observers (Hanley 2010: 22).

Hanley concludes that the main advantage of SPR-RSC, and which was lost, was the oppositional quality as an outsider, but when the endurance of the party was tested in incumbency this was not enough:

The party was always electorally and organizationally vulnerable. Its vulnerabilities became more marked as Czech party competition became more structured and Czech parties shifted towards more professionalized party organization and campaigned. (Hanley 2010: *ibid*)

As Czech parties found their respective positions within the political landscape and a more markedly polarized political structure developed the SPR-RSC was not as successful in positioning themselves against the rest. In this newly polarized political spectrum the SPR-RSC voters found that they gravitated to the left-wing of the political spectrum (Vlachová & Kreidl 2000: 18-24). This electoral failure quickly spelled doom for the SPR-RSC, as the party was unstable and completely dependent on Sladek's leadership. Thus the electoral failure quickly translated into a complete disintegration of the party itself as there was not much behind Sladek to soften the fall of an electoral failure.

Mares argues that the failure of the Czech extreme right, in general, and the failure of Sladek after his initial success must be understood with reference to the general opposition to the extreme right in the country. In addition to this he argues that: "The Czech party system is able to produce Non-extreme right anti-establishment alternatives and strong position is occupied by the "patriotic" communist party" (Mares 2011: 295).

This is in line with the argument of Hanley and Kreidl & Vlachova who both argue that the general differences in Czech politics intensified during the late 1990s diminishing the position of SPR-RSC as the major anti-establishment party (See Hanley 2010 & Vlachova & Kreidl 2000). In conclusion, it

seems that the short lived success of the SPR-RSC evaporated when populist antics and the role of the contrarian were not sufficient, Hanley concluded that:

././absence of a coherent programme and a strong leader; strong internal tension; constant pressure within new parties pushing them towards disintegration; inability of the parties to appeal to wider segments of the electorate; and the turn of the protest electorate to other parties (Hanley 2010: 36).

The failure of SPR-RSC was clearly a combination of several factors, what links them, according to Hanley, is the failure to endure the position of incumbency: “the party lacked both intellectual and leadership to capacity to adapt and improve the strategies that had brought initial build on its initial success.” (Hanley 2010: *ibid*). The position of being a constant pariah, in both society and politics and the lack of any credible legislative influence in combination with the autocratic and at times catastrophic leadership of Miroslav Sladek all contributed to the eventual failure of the party, even though the “breeding ground” for ERPs existed. The populism of the party was enough to lend it some initial success but both the competition from other parties, left-nationalistic and anti-establishment parties, made the transition to lasting success very tough during the late 1990s.

A couple of factors stand out as central to the failure of SPR-RSC to remain in parliament. The party was tightly clustered around its founder Miroslav Sladek, an authoritarian and volatile leader prone to being involved in drastic media moves. Focus on the dramatic personae of Sladek could also have contributed to both the success and misfortune of the party. At times, Sladek's antics garnered the party massive attention; in other cases it only strengthened the image of the party as chaotic, destructive and populist.

First time voters were, after the initial success, not attracted to the party who in the 1996 election constituted an important part of the electorate. (Kreidl & Vlachová 2000: 18-20). No cordon sanitaire was made in the party and various extremist groups were allowed to remain within the party and the youth branch, the Republican Youth (Republikánská mládež z RM), which existed from 1998 to 2002 was eventually banned by the ministry of interior. According to Hart about a third of the electorate of the party did not vote at all or were difficult to motivate to the ballot box during the losing election of 1998, partially due to weak party organization (Hart cited in Mares 2010: 285).

Difficulties in maintaining a coherent structure during incumbency hampered the party's time in incumbency, nine of the party's 14 federal deputies broke with the party after the first electoral success. This, among other problems made consolidation in parliament difficult. The party also remained virtually inactive in the legislative process (Hanley 2010: 8). And finally the comparative advantages of SPR-RSC were lost when other parties, both on the left and right, started using anti-establishment rhetoric. Voters were given other, more credible, alternatives concentrating on issues that SPR-RSC had previously been connected to.

6.4 Slovakia

It can be argued that the party dominating Slovak politics during the 1990s, The LS-HZDS (People's Party-Movement for a Democratic Slovakia) was in fact an ERP party. Although the LS-HZDS did use a nationalist discourse at times it was not in any sense an extreme right party (Haughton 2001: 749-753). The party used nationalist and protectionist rhetoric without subscribing to other core features of ERPs.

6.4.1 Slovenska narodna strana 1990-2012 (SNS)

The smaller SNS (Slovenska narodna strana) which falls into the category of pre-communist ERPs, its forerunner was established in 1871, has lost parliamentary support twice. It was founded in February 1990 and quickly gained a foothold in Slovak politics. Early on, critics labeled the party a vehicle for ex-communists and its leader Vitazoslav Moric was accused of opportunistically choosing nationalism without any firm commitment to the ideology (Bugajski 2002: 313). Later on the party served in a government where 10 of 16 ministers were members of the communist party prior to 1989 (Malova & Ucen 2007: 1104). During the early 1990s the party was marred by frequent leadership crisis and intra factional bickering between different nationalist factions within the party. Although at this early moment in the history of the party it did not affect the election results more than marginally, SNS was even part of the government between 1994 and 1998 (Bugajski 2002: 314).

Unlike many other nationalist parties the primary base of the SNS was mainly urban and centered on the capital, Bratislava, although the primary voting base of the party was older or unemployed ethnic Slovaks. The program of the party was chiefly concerned with the national sovereignty of the Slovak nation and a frequent target of criticism was the large Hungarian minority in the south of the country and the roma minority who the SNP proposed to house in "reservations" (Bugajski 2002: 315 & Carpenter 1997: 215). The party leader Jan Slota went as far as claiming that: "the Hungarian [minority] political subjects should be outlawed because their true and direct objective is the destruction of the Slovak Republic as a state" (Carpenter 1997: 215).

The party was also alone in Slovakian politics with a positive view of the Josef Tiso regime that existed, nominally independently, under Nazi Germany between 1939-1945 (Leslie et al 2002: 344). The extreme confrontational nature of the party led to the defection of several party MP:s. Nonetheless, SNS stayed in one piece during the 1990s.

The SNS has on two occasions failed to remain in parliament but then reappeared. Both these failures can be attributed to leadership issues, internal division and party splits. Before the 2002 election a splinter party was created under the name "True Slovak national party" led by Anna Malíková (presently Anna Belousovová). The party split divided the SNS vote into two almost equally large voting blocs, 3,43 % for SNS and 3,65 % for PSNS, thus preventing either from reaching above the 5 % barrier into parliament. The party split was mended after the election which paved the way for the very successful 2006 election when the party gained 11,6% of the vote and ended up ruling together in an unlikely government coalition together with the social democratic SMER.

The success of the 2006 election was not used to consolidate a perception of SNS as a reliable coalition partner. Three SNS ministers in the government were dismissed as a result of scandals and mismanagement of public finances. Under the second environment minister from SNS, Mr Izak, close to half a million euros that were intended for solar panels were instead given to people close to the SNS. Under the third SNS minister, Mr Chrbet, 30 million euros were lost (the total budget being 323 million) in a botched carbon emissions deal. Finally the SMER-run government under Robert Fico refused any further ministerial applications from SNS. In addition to the repeated government scandals SNS leader Jan Slota came under media scrutiny when it was found that he had not declared any income since 2008 and had not declared large assets, among them a large yacht (Terenzani 2009 & EU Reporter Correspondents 2009).

Support for the SNS was halved during SNS time in the government, resulting in a meager result of 5,08% in the 2010 elections. Stanley argues that the government of Robert Fico contributed in part to the decline of SNS by adopting a more “loser friendly” and nationalist rhetoric (Stanley 2011: 260, see also Krause & Haughton 2011: 224). Although SMER started capturing SNS voters Haughton & Rybar show that starting with the 2006 election the economic dimension in Slovak politics, with a strong left-right dimension at the center, started gaining strength (Haughton & Rybar 2008: 238). Although they conclude that nationalism was still a viable dimension in Slovak politics a stronger focus on left-right issues in combination with a more nationalist focused rhetoric from left and right parties could be attributable to the diminishing potential of SNS in gaining electoral success.

The dramatic drop in support during incumbency led to the establishment of several small, and more extreme, ERPs, as well as a larger party split. Before the 2012 election SNS found itself in a familiar situation with a splinter group exiting the party and founding the NaS (Nation & Justice party). The party, according to its leader Anna Belousovová, would be characterized by a more “civilized, democratic, non-confrontational and non-xenophobic patriotism” (Spectator 2011). Its result, 0,63%, was worse than that of the earlier splinter PSNS but was enough to prevent the SNS, which got 4,55% of the vote, from reaching over the parliamentary threshold of 5%. But the splinter group was probably not the only reason the SNS failed to stay in parliament, another, much more extreme anti-roma, nationalist party with roots in the skinhead movement, the People’s Party-Our-Slovakia (LS-NS) gained 1.6% of the vote. The splintering and factionalism within the nationalist camp thus showed that although the electoral potential was still rather big, around 8 %, the organizational chaos and factional bickering prevented the nationalists from gaining any influence in parliament. Deegan-Krause commented on the results as an example of “supply-side volatility”:

“/./ it is worth noting that while Slovak-national parties have disappeared from parliament; the Slovak-national party vote has actually changed relatively little. Together, parties which appeal to the Slovak-national themes managed to win nearly 8%, only about two percentage points less than what they achieved two years ago. As with most other changes in Slovakia’s politics, the collapse of parliamentary representation for the Slovak-national bloc lies in the interaction between party splintering and the 5% threshold” (Deegan Krause 2012: march 14)

The electoral failure of the SNS is a special and peculiar case. In a sense, the SNS has not been a failure at all; it has been exceptionally durable and remained in Slovak politics from the start of the post-communist era, building on a long party tradition. It has to a large extent been helped by the large demand for ERPs in Slovakia. This potential has not diminished to a large extent during the two decades of democracy but the SNS has continuously been an unstable party marred by corruption and scandals.

What was minor party splits and defections in the 1990s increased into two fully fledged party splits in the 2000s which both resulted in loss of parliamentary representation. As Deegan-Krause notes, the electoral potential of nationalist parties in Slovakia has been rather stable. Thus it seems that the problem of SNS is not primarily the demand side, there is a rather large demographic bloc that habitually votes for ERPs or parties that in some way espouse nationalist views, and rather the problem seems to be Jan Slotas unpopular rule which led to two major party splits within a decade. The supply of parties using nationalist rhetoric has also increased, both small more moderate nationalist parties (NaS), more extreme ones (LS-NS) as well as the soft nationalist of the social-democrat SMER, thus contesting for the nationalistic voter bloc.

Incumbency in government did not affect the party much during the LS-HZDS coalition of 1994-1998, only a 2 % drop in support, but the coalition with SMER ten years later halved support for the party. Paradoxically, after a rather stable decade the problems of SNS began in earnest in the 2000s, instead of stabilizing as a permanent player in Slovakian politics around 5-8 % the party began splintering and falling apart. This was in addition to the failure of the party to show responsibility in the SMER-run government formed in 2006. More moderate politicians left during the 1990s to form Democratic Union (DU) and some groups left to form the Nation & Justice (NaS). Deegan Krause comments on the future of the SNS that:

It is possible that a new leader could emerge to replace Jan Slota in SNS or that a new national party could supplant SNS entirely, but with Slota's party still dominating the (vastly diminished) national bloc and with Slota still dominating his party, it is difficult to see alternatives in the short term (Deegan Krause 2012: march 14).

Slota was still in 2012 honorary chairman of the party, thus staying as a central figure in the party, the formal party leadership has been taken up by Andrej Danko. If the extreme right factions unite the potential for electoral success is not far away. The last decade has been chaotic for SNS and the failures due to splits and leadership conflicts seem to have been persistent. Although in comparison with the total disintegration of Miroslav Sladeks Czech RMS-SPC, SNS durability gives the party a modicum of staying power. The party outlived its first term in government and it was not until the second term in government that both decreased support and party splits affected the party seriously.

6.5 Romania

The rise and fall of Romanian ERPs is a story of two parties, the PUNR and PRM, a story which begins with the initial success of PUNR during the 1990s which is then, taken over and greatly superseded by its competitor PRM which went on to become, to this date, most successful ERP party in EE (Cinpoes 2010: 88).

6.5.1 Partidul Unitatii Nationale a Romanilor 1990-2000(PUNR)

The roots of post-communist Romanian ERPs must be understood in tandem with the strong anti-Hungarian views that have historically been a part of Romanian society. Due to a very large historical Hungarian minority in the north west of the country, in the large mountainous region of Transylvania, a loose confederation of nationalist groups, main among them Romanian Hearth, were united in 1990 to form a political party, the PUNR which claimed to represent the interest of Romanians in Transylvania (Bugajski 2002: 857& Verdery 1993: 200). This strategy proved to be moderately successful as it capitalized on the strong regional, as opposed to socio-economic, character of voting behavior in Romania (Roper & Fesnic 2003: 122-124)

The group was a response to the rapidly created Hungarian interest groups that sprung up after the fall of communism (Cinpoes 2010: 88). The newly elected mayor of Cluj-Napoca, a town with a substantial Hungarian minority, Georghe Funar, took up leadership of the party. The program of the party was initially mainly focused on anti-minority policies, abolishing multi-lingual language signs and working against any organized Hungarian political activism and representation.

In a statement from Funar in 1994 the Hungarians were described as having a "barbarian style" and that Romanians should "Cure them" and turn them into a "peaceful, civilized European people that

will no longer covet foreign lands”(Andrescu in Mudde 2005: 186).The attempt to marginalize the influence of the Hungarian minority met with fierce resistance from Hungarian leaders and sparked serious conflicts between the two groups (Bugajski 2002: 857).

The success of the party was concentrated in the north-west of the country where the Hungarian minority resides. Surprisingly, and in spite of its extremist views, PUNR was invited to the government coalition in 1994 and were given two ministerial posts which made them the major government partner to the Democratic Salvation Front.

But already in the 1996 election, PUNR was losing support rapidly, almost halving its electoral support. It seems that PUNR's time in government was not beneficial for the party. Cinpoes argues that the diminished support for PUNR came gradually and was due to two factors: the movement of members from PUNR to PRM and the shift of focus for the parties, both contributed to the shift in support from one party to the other (Cinpoes 2010: 93).

The success of the Hungarian representative organization is also cited by Andrescu as contributing to the loss of PUNR (Andrescu in Mudde 2005: 187). In a move to radically change the profile of the party, Georghe Funar was expelled from the party in 1997. The new leadership steered for a more center-right profile with a liberal economic focus, and in the late 2000s the party finally merged with the conservative party. The split with Funar created serious problems within the party and a newly formed party was launched under the name PUNR-Funar, underlining that the party was all about the leadership of Funar and his anti-Hungarian positions (Bugajski 2002: 858).

Bugajski argues that the conflicts between the factions during 1997-1998 and the party's movement to the political center led to mass defection from PUNR to the PRM, among them Funar who went on to become secretary general of PRM, which then saw its rapid rise to power in the 2000 election, an election where PUNR only gained 1,4 % making the party completely irrelevant in Romanian politics (Bugajski 2002: 857). Cinpoes argues that the PRM's broader national focus outshone PUNR's focus on Hungarian minority issues; its “provincial character” was finally what caused its downfall (Cinpoes 2010: 93).

6.5.2 Partidul Romania Mare 1992-2008(PRM)

PRM was established shortly after PUNR, in the early 1990s, just after the fall of the Ceausescu regime. Although unlike PUNR it did not stand in the 1990 elections and got a weaker election result than PUNR in the 1992 elections. The party was in the same way as PUNR built around an all-important leader figure, in the case of PRM Vadim Tudor,

PRM began like many other nationalist groups in Romania as a publication, which only later turned into a party (Andrescu in Mudde 2005: 186 & Cinpoes 2010: 90). The leadership of PRM was firmly rooted in the Ceausescu era regime and both Eugen Barbu and Corneliu Vadim Tudor (the longstanding leader) had background in the infamous Securitate, secret police of the communist regime. It may seem paradoxical that the nationalist movement could emanate from the communist regime but with Mudde's typology the PRM can be understood as a Communist ERP (Pop-Eleches 2008: 469). The fact that the Ceausescu regime stood out as a nationalist and independent regime gave it some credibility in extreme right circles.

The ideology of PRM has been a mix of Christian extremism and a focus on the “messianic character of the Romanian nation” (Cinpoes 2010: 97). Tudor has portrayed PRM as the only worthy caretaker of the Romanian nation with its 1500 year geographical and religious continuity and focusing on nationalism with overtures both to the left and right, some have described the ideology of PRM as a “fascist-communist” threat (Cinpoes 2010: 97& Tismaneanu 2001: 81-83 & Gallagher 2005: 269). In some ways the party has also used inter-war rhetoric and symbolism in order to style the party as the inheritor of the pre-war fascist parties (Frusetta & Glont 2009: 552-554). Similarity to the league of Polish families can be found in the rhetoric used by both parties that criticism of the party was in fact criticism of the Christian religion and the Romanian nation.

Before the 2000 election when PRM went on to become the second largest party in Romania PRM was linked to a possible Coup d'état. A miner riot which was threatening to turn into a fully-fledged uprising was supported by the PRM leader. Although direct support was not proven Tudor stated that the “miners do not need any political force to instigate them” (Cinpoes 2019: 92). Tudor was criticized widely and some politicians even called to outlaw the PRM because of unconstitutional actions in giving support to the miners (Andrescu 2003: 33-35). The rise to power of PRM was fast and occurred at the same time of PUNRs disappearance from Romanian politics. PRM had had some minor support during the 1990s but without playing a major role in either governments or opposition.

Cinpoes identifies three major themes in the politics of PRM: Reclaiming lost Romanian territory, criticism of European integration and fight against corruption. The first point can easily be traced to the name of the party “Greater Romania party”, which refers to the extent of Romanian holdings post world war one which included Moldavia, Bukovina and Transylvania. All three which were then lost, to a degree, following the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939. Included in the territorial claims of PRM is also the fight against Hungarian minority interests in the north-west of the country, Transylvania.

Paradoxically, for an extreme nationalist party, PRM has not opposed either membership in either NATO or the European Union more than in rhetoric. Although this has not prevented Tudor from, at several occasions, claim that membership in either organization contradicts the national independence and aspirations of the Romanian nation (Cinpoes 2010: 103). This two-faced posture toward EU and NATO could have contributed to the success in the 2000 elections (ibid: 104).

At all times PRMs policies corruption on corruption have been at the forefront. Tudor went so far as to compare himself to the infamous Vlad the Impaler, Tudor claimed that he was “born, shaped and genetically programmed to be the terminator of the Mafia” (Cinpoes 2010: 105). Tudor promised to bring order to the country and fight against the endemic corruption in the state and regional system. In contrast with other ERP-leaders which have criticized corruption but later been revealed to be at the center of it, Tudor was, except for some minor incidents free from scandals, thus contributing to his credibility and early success (Cinpoes 2010:105).

Following the quiet rise to power of PRM during the 1990s the party became the largest opposition party in 2000. At this point not much seemed to be in the way of PRM. But the success of the party rapidly declined in the 2004 election, almost halving the support from 19,5 to 13 %, the support for Tudor in the presidential election also dropped from 28, 3 in 2000 to 12,5 in 2004. In the 2008 election the support of the party completely evaporated and the party did not even reach

parliament, a trend that was consolidated in the 2012 election when the party gained 1,47 % of the vote.

Cinpoes argues that the decline of the PRM must be understood in two ways, through direct and indirect factors. Direct factors can conversely be understood as supply factors, meaning that they reflect upon the actions of the party and party leader itself. Cinpoes theory states that Tudor's changing discourse directly changed the party's appeal. Several scandals also emerged during the party's most successful era, diminishing credibility of the anti-corruption profile of the party. The indirect factors, or demand side factors, that contributed to the decline of PRM was the changing political climate in Romania, a stronger polarization between the left and right did not leave any room for PRM in the end (Cinpoes 2010: 150).

In 2003, to the great surprise of his critics, Tudor completely disavowed anti-Semitism; he went even further, declaring himself a "philo-semitic" person. In the next and even more publicly debated step, Tudor hired an Israeli PR-firm to clean up the image of the PRM. These somewhat weird shenanigans were not looked upon favorably and shortly before the election Tudor's past in the Securitate was scrutinized by the media, a review that was met by harsh responses from Tudor himself (Tismaneanu 2008: 176). Even though not much was found, negative media attention on Tudor's person during the election campaign diminished his popularity (Cinpoes 2010: 151-153).

Cinpoes also argues that the enormous support in the 2000-election was in fact more a sign of how much the political right in Romania was unable to show unity, several liberal and conservative parties wither had unpopular leaders or failed campaigns (Shafir 2010 & Mungiu-Pippidi 2001 & Gallagher 2005 & Popescu 2003 for a more detailed discussion on the 2000 election). A fractured right wing in the country left a space open for PRM which seized the opportunity in the nick of time. But as time progressed PRM's position was not as exclusive in the running up to the 2004 election. The center-right alliance made things even worse for PRM when they declared the fight against corruption to be of primary concern (Cinpoes 2010: 156). A much harsher debate between the left and right left the PRM without any comparative advantages. Abandoning some of the more nationalist oriented rhetoric also led to the creation of new ERP-like the New Generation Party (PNG). This could also have contributed to the losing appeal of PRM (Cinpoes 2010: 163-164).

Cinpoes speculated that the choice made by Tudor and PRM to moderate its extreme nationalist rhetoric and policies was in fact a strategic move in order to place the party in a position to be able to form government with the winner, left or right, of the 2004 election. Cinpoes argues that the opportunistic strategy completely backfired and left the party's traditional electorate disenchanted with their party, and on the other hand nobody seemed to be believing in the sudden and dramatic make-over attempted by Tudor (Cinpoes 2010: 159-160).

The 2004 election was the turning point for PRM. The more hard-core nationalist voters went to the vocal but insignificant PGM which did not reach parliament, the more moderate voters went to the center-right Alliance which employed some moderate populist and nationalist rhetoric as well as an extreme anti-corruption stance. The failure of the center-right, which gave PRM its initial impetus in the 2000 election had now turned against them and led to diminishing returns as the center-right mobilized and was able to present a credible alternative to the social democrats.

A dissenting analysis which concluded that the possibilities of PRM were not drained after the 2004 was put forward by Sum (Sum 2010: 26-28). In the study he projected that the anti EU-stance of voters voting for extreme right parties could give PRM more support in the future, the EU parliament election of 2009 did give PRM some renewed support but in the end it did not materialize into any concrete support in the 2012 election. In that election the support of PRM was once more greatly diminished to almost nothing. This proves that even with a willing electoral base RPM could not mobilize voters that had traditionally voted for the party.

Following the failed 2004 elections problems also started emerging internally for PRM. The party activists and members which had so heavily relied on Tudor's popularity and ability to propel the party forward started having doubts. The moderation of the party policies and rhetoric had backfired and leadership conflicts led to the defection of 14 PRM deputies which were led by Corneliu Ciontu which set up a splinter party. This was in fact not a new phenomenon, Gallagher shows that in the 1990 and early 2000 there were minor defections as a result of Tudors aggressive leadership, though none of these defections were important enough to seriously undermine the party (Gallagher 2005: 296-297). The period between 2004 and 2008 also led to a mass migration of senators and deputies in the parliament, seeing that the party was fracturing inside, they left for other parties (Stan & Zaharia 2007: 1093). This last development left the party completely dependent on Tudors persona to attract voters, an advantage that could not be used optimally as the presidential elections were de-coupled from the parliamentary election before the 2008 election (Cinpoes 2010: 172).

In the end, the authoritarian rule of Tudor and frequent purges left the party completely reliant on Tudor and when he lost his appeal, so did the party. Pop-Eleches argues that communist successor parties like PRM are highly dependent on a popular leader and a lack thereof does not bode well for the future of PRM (Pop-Eleches 2008: 477). Cinpoes also reflected after the election 2012 that a possible replacement for PRM was unlikely in the near future (Cinpoes 2012: 175).

6.6 Hungary

During the 1990s a large group of extreme right groups emerged, none had any electoral success and the truth and life party (MIEP) was the only one that succeeded in reaching parliament. Until the ascent of Jobbik in the late 2000s MIEP was the only ERP that had managed to temporarily reach parliament.

6.6.1 Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja 1998-2002 (MIEP)

Founded in 1993 by the playwright and nationalist writer Istvan Csurka which had been expelled by the center right party HDF. Its first platform was built around a revision of the privatization after the fall of communism and an abolition of "anti-Hungarian racial discrimination" (Bugajski 2002: 360). The party was not founded on any pre-war Hungarian party and was, despite its left leaning views on some economic issues, not a communist ERP. Instead it was firmly rooted in a specific post-communist transition era context, thus falling into the category of post-communist ERP, or "hangover" parties as Szôcs calls them in a Hungarian setting. (Szôcs 1998: 1100-1101).

Like many other EE ERPs MIEP largely built its support around revisionist views on Hungarian history, lambasting the Trianon treaty that diminished Hungarian borders in 1919. Csurka became infamous in 1994 when he advocated "Hungarian lebensraum" and rallies organized by MIEP attracted large crowds commemorating important dates in Hungarian history (Bernath in Mudde 2005: 82). MIEPs policies were a mirror image of Slovak SNS and Romanian PRM; all three built on disaffection with

minorities and perceived historical injustices but also a strong identification with anti-establishment views (Todosijević & Enyedi 2008: passim). This rhetoric reached its pitch when Csurka after the environmental catastrophe in the Tisza and Szamos rivers put blame on Romanian authorities and called for an independence Transylvania (Bugajski 2002: 361).

Csurka also gained notoriety for open anti-Semitic remarks targeting “cosmopolitan Judeo-bolshevist plutocrats”. Ironically the primary named targets for these attacks were members of the liberal party SZDSZ as well as the Hungarian born investor George Soros (Bernath in Mudde 2005: 83). The anti-Semitism of MIEP was open and ran parallel with anti-roma statements and policies.

MIEP spent only one term in parliament, after lingering around 1-2 % during the mid-nineties the party gained enough support, around 5,5 %, in the 1998 election to enter parliament. The party got almost the same amount of votes in absolute terms in the 2002, only 3000 votes less, although a larger voter turnout meant that MIEP only received 4,4 % of the total vote. Bernath concludes that the loss in the 2002 election created outrage among the MIEP leadership and a demand for a new election, rhetorical threats of a possible coup d'état were also flouted, although nothing came of these threats.

MIEPs failure in the 2002 happened almost by accident, the party did not lose many votes in absolute terms and during its stay in incumbency it had managed to form an independent parliamentary group, which resulted in additional funds, the party supported the right wing in parliament in most votes.

Ilonszki argues that the failure of both the pre-war Smallholders party as well as that of MIEP in the 2002 election was due to the aggressive expansion and attacks on opponent of Fidesz (Ilonszki 2003: 972). This may be a valid observation but question is if status quo in voter amount between 1998 and 2002 was rather a question of left/right cleavages rise in importance. Another explanation for the failure of MIEP is given by Minkenberg who argues that the character of the election campaign hurt MIEP, meaning that the polarization between left and right increased. Fidesz also decided to focus on the question of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia and Romania, an issue which was previously mainly covered by MIEP (Minkenberg & Perrineau 2004: 43-44).

Nevertheless it is hard to argue that MIEP performed badly in the 2002 election, many other parties performed really well leading to the shrinking space in the parliament. MIEP was not the center of an intensive conflict between the left and the right and many of MIEPs voters later went to the right. Nikolenyi notes that had voter turnout in the 2002 election mirrored that of the 1998 election MIEP would had stayed in parliament, his conclusion is that MIEPs failed election was mainly due to the increased voter turnout (Nikolenyi 2004: 1051& Fowler 2003: 804).

Regardless of the nature of the electoral failure of 2002 MIEP started a slow decline and fared badly in the 2006 election, halving its support and later in the 2010 completely disappearing. The largest failure then seems to have been the period after the first electoral failure, showing that the party did not adapt to a situation outside of parliament. Before the 2006 election discussions were held with Jobbik to create an electoral alliance although bickering and fights seemed only to make MIEP irrelevant and the final result for MIEP was meager in the 2006 election.

Understanding the rather quick failure of MIEP is not easy. No large scandals happened; its leader Csurka was not instrumental in the defeat of the party even though he displayed the common authoritarian leadership style. The party did not change or adapt its posture in incumbency and was rather consistent in its anti-establishment views, both in and outside parliament. And the short time during incumbency did not affect the support of the party more than marginally, neither was the party tested in government position. Other ERPs, like Jobbik, soon took MIEPs place which shows that the demand for ERP in Hungary had not diminished at all, merely MIEPs opportunities to channel electoral preferences.

7. Analysis

The objective of this thesis was threefold: to get an understanding of ERP failures in EE, see if they could be explained according to established supply side explanations, and if not, offer other explanations that could fill the gap.

Almost all parties studied in this thesis found themselves in situations that were original to incumbency. In a sense, that was unavoidable as the focus of the thesis has been to study failure *after* success, not failure in the total absence of success. Thus incumbency and/or government responsibility has been a core experience of these parties, and to an extent, central in understanding the mechanisms that in the end meant failure for the parties.

An important conclusion of this thesis is that factors that were central to the rise of the ERPs were also at the core of their failure. The comparative advantages experienced during ascendancy like strong leadership, outsider status, and appeal to purity were in the situation of incumbency turned against them, either by other parties or involuntarily by the party itself.

Many of the challenges of ERP first show themselves when the parties are in parliament and/or government. This is because the different organizational challenges facing an outsider party and an incumbent party. This is easily demonstrated by the different techniques employed by the ERPs before and during incumbency.

A party outside of parliament riding high in the opinion polls adopts a vacant spot in a political cleavage or attracts voters with a charismatic leader playing the outsider card. Whereas an incumbent party is measured to other standards. The honeymoon, so to speak, is over, and voters view the parties in another light.

The still unclear x-factor after this analysis is the Hungarian MIEP. Its demise was not connected to the same factors that bound all other parties together in this analysis. Either the lack of data is to blame or that the party simply does not fit into the rather clear cut pattern that emerges between the other parties studied in this thesis.

The following chapters elaborate on the factors that were central to understanding failure after success as a series of events and challenges specific to the experience of incumbency, either in government or parliament.

A summary of factors standing out in each of the party failures is given in table 2 below.

	Appeal to purity	Failed stress-test	Authoritarian leadership	Black widow effect/Left-Ring cleavage
LPR	X	X		X
SNS	X		X	X
SPR-RSC	X	X	X	X
PUNR			X	
PRM	X	X	X	X
MIEP		X		

7.1 Appeal to purity

Almost all ERPs in this study have relied heavily on being “anti-establishment” movements that represent the common man against the established parties or political order. This appeal to purity can be tainted or lost in three ways: either through internal party corruption, mismanagement of funds, illegal activities of parliamentarians or party workers. Second, corruption in local or state office by representatives of the party. One example of this was the SNS scandals of the 2000s in the department of environmental affairs. The third way of losing the anti-establishment role is by simple competition; another party takes the lead as a major anti-corruption or anti-establishment party and thus outperforms the ERP in its appeal to purity. This was the case in Poland when both LPR and SO lost parliamentary representation. They mainly lost voters to the larger PIS which ran on an anti-corruption campaign. The same can be said for PRMs center-right competitors in the 2004 Romanian election which identified the PRMs role as an anti-corruption voice and aggressively ran on similar issues.

Appealing to purity poses serious risks for an ERP. It is easier to convince the voter of incorruptibility before incumbency and taking posts in government than actually fighting corruption in incumbency or changing the establishment. When the major promises in an election campaign are intense change of the political establishment or perceived corrupt culture the disappointment is two-fold when the reverse happens: the party promising to fight corruption is corrupt and it fails to change the establishment and instead becomes part of it.

It can be argued that all elections are followed by disenchantment from voters, party’s fail to live up to expectations quite often, but failing to live up to voter expectation is not nearly as bad as becoming an example of what was supposed to be the polar opposite of the party: fighting corruption and overturning the establishment which was lambasted when the party was an outsider.

7.2 Leaving a sinking ship (or how to fail in the stress-test)

Even minor electoral failure after success taxes ERPs heavily. LPR, SNS and PRM all experienced multiple defections shortly after and between elections, mostly to center-right and conservative parties but also to new parties and independent parliamentary groups. This weakened support in certain electorates and diminished visibility in constituencies as well as giving the impression of a party in free fall.

This process can be described as a domino effect, when one parliamentarian leaves the group; others follow, perhaps sensing that there is no future in the party and thus leaving for more promising parties. This accelerated domino effect in turn causes small cracks in the façade to become bigger

ones quickly. Minor electoral failures, for example the 2004 election of PRM, quickly led to a rapid organizational disintegration and mass defection from the party which hampered the party in time for the 2008 election.

But not only failure was a reason to fail the stress-test. All parties in this study portrayed themselves as unsullied and pure voices of the people. Ideologically motivated and without any room for petty compromises with established political parties. Faced with situations where compromises had to be made, more radical parts of several of the studied parties simply left, forming new, more extreme outsider parties. This was the case with SNS, MIEP, PUNAR and PRM. Simply put, many ERP-politicians have little patience with compromises and transition to an establishment role.

This part of a failure can be viewed as failing in the failure stress-test: a small setback, either of an organizational or electoral nature, tests the party structure and leadership quality, and either the party is strengthened or fails the stress-test, leaving the party more vulnerable in the next election. Rigid organizations as well as a lack of power-sharing also contributed to mid-level politicians to check for exit from the parties.

7.3 Pros and cons of authoritarian leadership styles

A party on the rise can benefit from a strong and unifying leader. But in a party that has started a decline; an inflexible and authoritarian leader that does not change direction in an appropriate way alienates important party members. This seems to be the case for Miroslav Sladek (RMS), Jan Slota (SNS) and Vadim Tudor (PRM). They were cited as important factors during the ascent of the parties but erratic and authoritarian rule worsened already serious issues after less successful elections.

They were also viewed as the greatest problems of their respective parties in the decline. Competitors that were equally authoritarian left for party splinters or as independents thus splitting the ERP-movement. The case of SNS stands out here. The party failed in two elections due to leadership conflicts which split the party in two. Jan Slotas leadership was central to the success of the party but in incumbency his leadership hampered development of the party and gave rise to splintering factions and defections. Furthermore, leaders that have had a strong populist image during the ascent of party often place themselves in a situation of incumbency where cooperation with other parties can be a problem. Aggressive and confrontational rhetoric works better before an election than during the formation of governments, this was the experience for Vadim Tudor which found his party to be the pariah of Romanian politics after the 2000-election.

Luthers conclusion was not that ERPs necessarily were doomed to failure once they entered political office, but rather that outsider parties likelihood of prospering "once in government will owe much to their leaderships capacity to identify and implement strategies and behaviors consonant with the parties new goal and to deal effectively with the inescapable tensions caused by the transition to incumbency" (Luther 2011: 2). This conclusion is to a large degree analogous with the conclusions of this thesis: incumbency changes the challenges and circumstances of ERPs, perhaps to a larger degree than other parties, as they style themselves as outsider parties, therefore further success is dependent on the choices of the party leadership. This study has shown that this appears to be a remarkably tough feat to accomplish for ERPs in EE.

Luther describes the way the Austrian FPÖ had several setbacks once they went into power. Local politicians and grassroots were dissatisfied with the way top-level leaders were making

compromises. This led to several setbacks for the party which in 2002 lost two thirds of its electorate. And in 2005 the party split amongst along its internal division line. Luther writes that: "the majority of the responsibility for the FPÖs setbacks was attributable to party actors simultaneous pursuit, once the FPÖ had entered government, of strategies and behaviors associated with right-wing populist vote maximization on the one hand, and with office in the other" (Luther 2011). This paradox, between the behavior of an ERP on the ascent, and the changing conditions of incumbency, pose a serious challenge to ERPs, a challenge which was not surmounted by the parties in this thesis.

As my study has showed, ERPs have had strong initial showings in national polls and elections but have had problems in transiting from being parties strongly centered on important party leaders to established poles of political power. Rather than experiencing volatile electoral choices by voters, Tavits argues that we are dealing with "elite level instability", meaning that the parties and their leadership itself, hinders voters from establishing longstanding loyalty towards parties because of their erratic and unstable Behaviour (Tavits 2009: 539).

7.4 Changing face of party competition and the "Black widow effect"

Party system competition is an important determinant for the potential success and failure of ERPs. A fractured center-right or left leaves the field open for fast moving ERPs, but the reverse is also true. Almost all major successes by parties in this study have come as a result of failings of other parties to present a stable left-right political dichotomy. In consequence, failures of the ERPs have often been, partially, a result of the opposite, meaning of more united left or more commonly, a unified and strong right.

This is in line with Bustikovas explanation that the "extreme right in Eastern Europe thrives if major mainstream political parties are indistinguishable and deliver packaged "one size fits all" policies" (Bustikova 2009: 236). The strategies used by conservative parties in Poland and Romania and the social democrats of Slovakia show that supply side actions and decisions by other parties are central to the fortunes of ERPs. Choosing to exploit cleavages, adopting nationalist rhetoric, marginalizes the ERPs, thus creating what Kessel termed the "Black widow effect". SNS lost voters to the social-democrats in SMER who adopted nationalism in their political discourse as well as a more pronounced anti-corruption agenda. The conservatives (PiS) in Poland employed new strategies to provide a more serious, albeit mildly populist, style to attract the attention of LPR voters. These tactics have been efficient in downplaying the importance of ERPs.

8. Summary

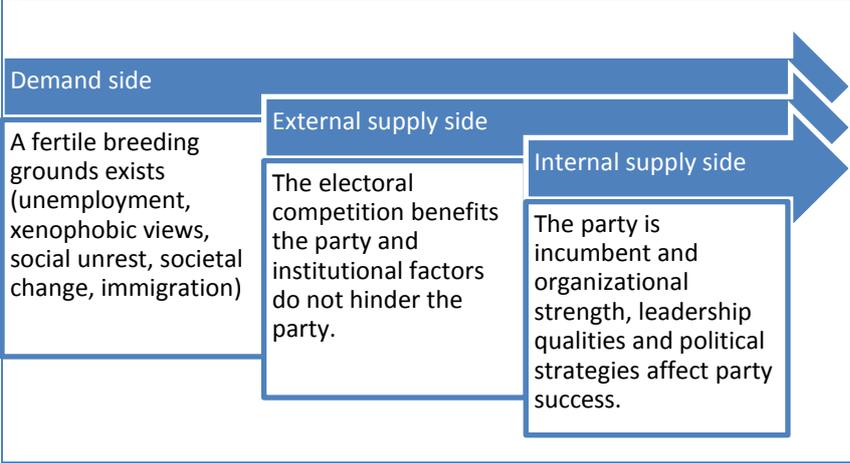
All parties in this study show similarities in the nature of their failures. The notable exception is the Hungarian MIEP which shows all characteristics of an ERP but which is harder to analyze. Its demise was a combination of larger voter turnout in the losing election of 2002 and its time in incumbency was too short to be understood in the same manner as some of the other parties in this study.

Established supply side theories do provide an understanding of success or failure of ERPs. What is lacking is that internal supply side explanations in incumbency do differ to a large extent from explanations of party success. Hence, to better understand both success and failure of ERPs it is probably good to understand that different phases in a ERPs life offer different conditions for the party organization and leadership.

The results of this thesis show that parties are, in the words of Mudde, “independent variables”, shaping their own fortunes, either through positioning within the political landscape or through leadership choices. And these choices become more important at the apex of their success. Much of the empirical data shows that choices of the parties themselves, whether these are organizational or policy oriented, affect the electoral results of the parties when they are in a position of incumbency.

Borrowing a metaphor from Deegan-Krause, the life of a party can be compared to a plant. It starts out as a seed, then a mere sapling, grows, and flowers, sometimes for another season, but in some cases it dies for some external or internal reason. A theory understanding the growth of the plant does not help in explaining why it dies from a disease. The same could be argued with ERPs.

The findings of this thesis are that party failure after success among ERPs is that a somewhat separate category of internal supply side explanations is suited to understand the latter part of an ERP’s life, and in some cases, failure. Demand side theories, as well as external supply side explanations, are important in understanding ERP success, but they tell us something about a confined and specific part of the party life. Rather than viewing the above described explanations as mutually exclusive they describe and explain different parts of the life of ERPs(Se model 2).



Demand side explanations tell us the underlying factors, the breeding ground of the parties. The external supply side factors tell us of the conditions that the parties face when attempting to gain electoral support and last the internal supply side factors explain the internal party factors that can either foster success or doom a party to failure. All are important but benefit from being used to understand different parts of a political party’s life.

The latter part in a ERPs life must be put into the context of a transition from outsider party to an incumbent position of power. This transition brings with it a new set of challenges, choices and problems which in many cases are handled badly by ERPs.

As described above, the process of failing is not merely the inverted process of succeeding. The downward spiral that is the failure of a party has its own characteristics, reasons and puts the party leadership into positions and dilemmas they would not face in a successful upward spiral. From my analysis it is clear that the challenges faced during incumbency are vastly different from the challenges as an outsider party, therefore, understanding failure after success demands that certain care is put into analyzing failure as qualitatively different phenomenon than ascent and success.

10. Further research

Not much of the supply oriented explanations and studies focus on incumbency as a separate, and important, agency oriented part of the supply theory. Heinsch has made the only study where incumbency is treated as an important determinant for the potential failure of ERPs (Heinsch 2003). More studies of the sort Heinsch has made could shed more light on how ERPs work and stand out from other parties. More in depth case studies of ERP party and leadership choices could further shed light on the role of parties as “independent variables”.

The drawback of my study is that detailed information about party development is scarce and uneven. A flash party that emerged in the chaotic early years of the 1990s is not similarly covered as a governing party in a WE. Detailed information on organizational structure, opinion polls relating to national and local perceptions of parties and interviews with politicians within the parties would give a deeper and more detailed picture of the causes of failure.

My study has only been a preliminary study in order to explore the process of failure. In order to learn more, detailed information on these parties, preferably in the native language of the parties are needed. One important conclusion is that failure cannot be easily understood without factoring in micro-level analysis of each individual party. Parties have specific developments and some stand out as erratic, fast moving organizations that are often prone to risk taking and gambles.

Supply side explanations, which this study has been geared towards, suffer from a lack of detailed information. If we are to assume that party agency is important in order to understand the fluctuations of party success we need information of how parties are organized, who the members are and how they combat competitors. This kind of information is not always easy to come by. ERPs are notoriously secretive. Many of the still active ones do not divulge organizational details and the defunct parties have no incentive of keeping party records open to the public. The problems of limitations of this study were therefore to an extent expected.

Further research would benefit the subject with more insight into the demand side factors that determine success, are they also similarly applicable, but negatively, when a party fails? Measuring changing voter opinion in an election campaign could complement and further explain rapid party failure.

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11. Appendix

The appendix contains a list of parties in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria that have failed in elections between 1989-2012. Each election result and number of gained seats (S) in parliament is shown below each election year. The moment of election failure is color coded red. “M” denotes party merger, “U” denotes a political coalition or union the party has taken part of. “Status” is the current state of the party, either merged (M), dissolved (D), not in parliament or in parliament.

Election data 1989-2012

Estonian Parties	Type	Status	1992	1995	1999	2003	2007	2011
PEEK	Conservative	Dissolved	6.89. 6 S	3.61. 0 S	D	D	D	D
ERP (SK)	N/A	Dissolved	7.12 8 S	0.8. 0 S	D	D	D	D
ERSP	Conservative	Merged	8.72. 10 S	M	M	M	M	M
VKR/P	Conservative	Dissolved	0	5. 5 S	D	D	D	D
Constitutional	Minority party	Merged	0	5.9. 6 S	6.13. 6 S	2.2. 0 S	1.0. 0 S	M
EKEK	Cent/Lib	Dissolved	13.6. 17 S	32.2. 41 S	7.6. 7 S	D	D	D
RP: Res Publica	Conservative	Merged	0	0	0	24.6. 28 S	M	M
ERL	Agrarian	Dissolved	0	0	7.3. 7 S	13. 13 S	7.1. 6 S	2.1
ER: Greens	Green	Not in P	2.6. 1 seat	0	0	0	7.1. 6 S	3.8
Pro patria	Conservative	Merged	12.3. 15 S	7.9. 8 S	16.1. 18 S	7.3. 7 S	M	M
EEE	Liberal	Dissolved	2.4. 1 seat	0	0	0	0	0

Latvian Parties	Type	Status	1993	1995	1998	2002	2006	2010
LSDSP	Soc-dem	Not in P	0.7	4.6	12,8. 14 S	4.0	3.5	0.6
PCTVL	Minority/Soc	Not in P	5.8. 7 S	5.6. 5 S	14.2. 16 S	19.1. 25 S	6.0. 6 S	1.4
KDS	Chris-dem	Not in P	5.0. 6 S	6.4. 8 S (EA)	2.3	9.6. 10 S (EA)	3.5	0.4
LZS	Agrarian	In parliment	10.7. 12 S	6.4. 8 S (EA)	2.5	9.5. 12 S	16.7. 18 S	19.7. 22 S
LPP	Conservative	Merged	0	0	7.3. 8 S	9.6. 10 S	M	M
LC	Liberal	Merged	32.4. 36 S	14.17. 17 S	18.4. 21 S	4.9	M	M
TKL	Conservative	Dissolved	0	15. 16 S	1.7	D	D	D
DPS	Soc-dem	Dissolved	4.8. 5 S	15.2. 18 S	1.6	D	D	D
LVP	Soc-dem	Dissolved	0	7.2. 8 S	0.5	D	D	D
TB	Nationalist	Merged	5.4. 6 S	12. 16 S	M	M	M	M
LNNK	Conservative	Merged	13.4. 15 S	6.3. 8 S	M	M	M	M

Lithuanian Parties	Type	Status	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012
New Union	Social-Liberal	Merged	0	0	19.6. 28 S	20.7. 11 S	3.7. 1 seat	M
LKD	Chris-dem	Merged	12.6. 18 S	10.4. 16 S	3.1. 2 S	1.4	M	M
KKSS	Chris-dem	Merged	0	0	2. 2 S	2	M	M
LDDP	Soc-dem	Merged	44. 73 S	10.1 12 S	31.5. 51 S	M	M	M
LLS	Liberal	Merged	1.5	1.9. 1 seat	17.3. 33 S	M	M	M
Lib/Cen Un	Liberal	Not in parl	0	0	0	9.2. 18 S	5.3. 8 S	2

Election data 1989-2012

KDS	Chris-dem	Merged		3.2. 1 seat	4.2. 1 seat	M	M	M
Centre Union	Liberal	Merged	2.5. 2 S	8.7. 14 S	2.9. 2 S	M	M	M
LTJS	Nationalist	Not in parl	3.6. 1 seat	4. 1 seat	1.2. 1 seat	0	0	0
LTS	Nationalist	Merged	2. 2 S	2.2. 6 S	0.9	0	M (Union)	0. 2 S
MKDS	Chris-dem	Merged	0	0	3 S	M	M	M
LPKTS	Independent	Merged	0	1.6. 1 seat	0	M		
NDP	Soc-dem	Merged	0	3.9. 1 seat	M	M	M	M

Polish parties	Type	Status	1991	1993	1997	2001	2005	2007	2011
UP	Soc-dem	Not in parl	2.1. 4 S	7.3. 41 S	4.1	M	M	M	M
ROP	Nationalist	Dissolved	0	2.7	5.6. 6 S	M	1.1	0	0
AWS	Conservative	Dissolved	0	0	33.8. 201 S	5.6	0	0	0
ZcHn	Conservative/Nat	Dissolved	8.7. 40 S	6.4	M	M	M	M	M
RS	Conservative	Dissolved	5.1. 27 S	4.9	M	M	M	M	M
ChDSP	Chris-dem	Merged	1.1. 4 S	M	M	M	M	M	M
POC	Chris-dem	Dissolved	8.7. 44 S	4.4	M	M	M	M	M
KPN	Chris-dem	Dissolved	7.5. 45 S	5.8. 22 S	M	M	M	M	M
PL	Conservative	Merged	5.5. 28 S	2.4	M	M	M	M	M
PPCHD	Chris-dem	Merged	2.4. 5 S	M	M	M	M	M	M
BBWR	Conservative/NA	Merged	0	5.4. 16 S	M	M	M	M	M
UD	Liberal-chris	Merged	12.3. 62 S	10.6. 74 S	M	M	M	M	M
KLD	Liberal-chris	Merged	7.5. 37 S	4.0	M	M	M	M	M
SD	Social liberal	Not in parl	1.4. 1 S	0	0	0	0	0	0
UW/PD	Liberal	Merged	0	0	13.4. 60 S	3.1	2.5	M	M
LPR	ERP	Not in parl	0	0	0	7.9. 38 S	8.0. 34 S	1.3	0
SRP	Agrarian Populist	Not in parl	0	2.8	0.1	10.2. 53 S	11.4. 56 S	1.5	0

Czech parties	Type	Status	1990	1992	1996	1998	2002	2006	2010
US-DEU	Liberal	Dissolved	0	0	0	8.2. 19 S	14.3. 9 S (U	0.3	D
RMS	ERP	Dissolved	1.0	6.0. 14 S	8.0 18 S	3.9	1.0	D	D
ODA	Liberal	Dissolved	0	5.9. 14 S	6.4. 13 S	0	1.5	D	D
SDS	Socialist	Not in parl	0	14. 35 S	1.4	0	0	0	0
CMUS	Regionalist	Not in parl	10. 22 S	5.9. 14 S	0.5	0	0	0	0

Election data 1989-2012

LSU	Liberal	Dissolved	0	6.5. 16 S	0	D	D	D	D
OF	Liberal	Dissolved	49.5. 127 S	4.6	D	D	D	D	D
SZ	Green	Not in parl	4.1	0	0	1.1	2.4	6.3. 6 S	2.4
KDU-CSL	Chris-dem	Not in parl	8.4. 15 S	6.3. 15 S	8.1. 18 S	9.0 20 S	14.3. 22 S	7.2. 13 S	4.3

Slovak parties	Type	Status	1990	1992	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2012
SNS	ERP	Not in parl	13.9. 22 S	7.9. 15 S	5.4. 9 S	9.1 14 S	3.3	11.7. 20 S	5.1. 9 S	4.55
MKP	Minority	Not in parl	8.6. 14 S	7.4. 14 S	10.2. 17 S	9.1. 14 S	11.2. 20 S	11.7. 20 S	4.3	4.28
LS-HZDS	Populist	Not in parl	0	37.3. 74 S	35. 61 S	27. 43 S	19.5. 36 S	8.8. 15 S	4.3	0
KSS	Communist	Not in parl	0	0.8	2.7	2.8	6.3. 11 S	3.9	0.8	0.7
ANO	Populist	Not in parl	0	0	0	0	8. 15 S	1.4	0	0
ZRS	Socialist	Not in parl	0	0	7.4. 13 S	1.3	0.6	0.3	0	0
SDL	Socialist	Dissolved	13.2. 22 S	14.7. 29 S	10.4. 18 S	14.7. 24 S	1.4	D	D	D
SDK	Coalition party	Dissolved	0	0	0	26.3. 42 S	D	D	D	D
SOP	Soc-dem	Merged	0	0	0	8. 13 S	M	M	M	M
DU	Liberal	Merged	0	0	8.6. 15 S	M	M	M	M	M
DS	Chris-dem	Merged	4.4. 7 S	3.3	3.4	M	M	M	M	M
ODU	Liberal	Dissolved	29.3. 48 S	4	D	D	D	D	D	D
SZ	Green	Not in parl	3.5. 6 S	0	0	0	0	0	2.9	0

Hungarian parties	Type	Status	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010
KDNP	Chris-Dem	Merged	6.5. 21 S	7. 22 S	2.3	M	M	M
SZDSZ	Liberal	Not in parl	21.4. 92 S	19.7. 70 S	6.9. 24 S	5.6. 20 S	6.5. 20 S	0.25
MDF	Conservative	Not in parl	24.7. 164 S	11.7. 37 S	2.8. 17 S	41.07. 24 S (U)	5.04. 11 S	2.2
MIEP	ERP	Not in parl	0	1.6	5.5. 15 S	4.4	2.2	0.05
FKGP	Agrarian	Not in parl	11.7. 44 S	8.8. 26 S	13.2. 48 S	0.8	0	0
ASZ	Agrarian	Dissolved	3.1. 2 S	2.1. 1 seat	0	0	0	0

Romanian parties	Type	Status	1990	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012
PNL	Liberal	In parliment	6.4. 29 S	2.6	30.2. 27 S (U)	6.9. 30 S	31.5. 64 S	18.6. 65 S	(U)
PRM	ERP	Not in parl	0	3.9. 16 S	4.5. 19 S	19.5. 84 S	13. 48 S	3.2	1.47
PNTCD	Agrarian	Not in parl	2.6. 12 S	20. 40 S (U)	30.2. 82 S	5	1.9	0	0
CDR	Centrist coalition	Disssolved	0	20. 82 S	30.2 122 S	5	D	D	D

Election data 1989-2012

PUNR	ERP	Merged	2.1 9 S	7.7. 30 S	4.4. 18 S	1.4	0	M	M
PSM	Communist	Merged	0	3. 13 S	2.2	0.8	M	M	M
PER	Green	Not in parl	1.7. 8 S	20. 5 S (U)	30.2. 5 S (U)	0.8	0	0	0
PDAR	Agrarian	Merged	1.8. 9 S	3	0	M	M	M	M
MER	Green	Not in parl	2.6. 12 S	2.3	0	0	0	0	0
PNLCD	Conservative	Not in parl	0	20. 2 S (U)	30.2. 4 S (U)	0	0	0	0
PL1993	Liberal	Merged	0	20. 14 S (U)	1.6	M	M	M	M
PAC	Liberal	Merged	0	20. 11 S (U)	M	M	M	M	M

Bulgarian Parties	Type	Status	1990	1991	1994	1997	2001	2005	2009
NDSV	Liberal	Not in parl	0	0	0	0	42.7. 120 S	19.9. 53 S	3.02
DSB	Conservative	Not in parl	0	0	0	0	0	6.4. 17 S	0
BBB	Non-affiliated	Dissolved	0	1.3	4.7. 13 S	4.9. 12 S	D	D	D
BNS	Conservative	Not in parl	0	0	6.5. 18 S	0	0	5.2. 13 S (U)	0
BSD	Social democrat	Not in parl	0	0	3.8	5.5. 14 S	1.0	1.3	0