

# Cleavages, Protest or Voting for Hope? The Rise of Centrist Populist Parties in the Czech Republic

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Over the past two decades, populist parties have become a well-established part of many European party systems. Their rise has provoked extensive scholarly discussion aiming both at the conceptualization of and explanations for the reasons behind their electoral success, analyses of their electorate and the impact of populist political parties on the structure of party competition.

Nevertheless, these conclusions have been derived from studies focusing either on the populist radical right (Betz 1994; Mudde 2007) or populist radical left parties/social populists (Barker 1998; March 2012), while the relatively new species of centrist populist political parties (Pop Eleches 2010; Učeň 2004) has been neglected in this regard.

The article contributes to filling the described gap in the research on populism by analysing the supporters of centrist populist parties (CPPs) in the Czech Republic. Certainly, the Czech Republic is not the only country that has experienced the emergence of CPPs, with Bulgaria (Cholova 2012), Slovakia (Spáč 2012) and the Baltic states (Balcere 2012) being other interesting cases. Moreover, Slovenia underwent a party system change of a similar intensity in the early 2010s. Nevertheless, there are serious doubts about the populist character of the newly emerged parties in Slovenia (Krašovec 2012).

Consequently, there are at least two reasons that make the Czech Republic a more suitable case for conducting an analysis of CPPs supporters. First, the Czech party system has experienced long-term stability. While the party system in the Czech Republic enjoyed a high level of stability until the emergence of the CPPs, both in terms of volatility and cleavage structure (Casal Bértoa 2014; Powell and Tucker 2014), the rise of centrist populism in Slovakia took place in an environment of continuous change characterized by a transformation of the main political conflicts. Although it was possible to trace some signs of stability in Bulgaria before 2001, the level of both extra-system and intra-system volatility was considerably higher in comparison to the Czech case (Powell and Tucker 2014). The argument about the higher level of volatility applies to the Baltic countries as

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well. The second reason for this is the richness of empirical material. The analysis is based on an examination of how different factors shape support for CPPs in comparison to support for the established parties that have been present in the Czech party system since the 1990s (ODS, ČSSD, KSČM, and KDU-ČSL). Both parties analysed here can be described as centrist populist. All the same, they differed in proposed solutions, which had implications for the profile of their voters and it is also important for the discussion about both the unique species of centrist populist parties and populist political parties in general, as we will later show.

The paper is structured as follows. First, we introduce the concept of centrist populism as part of a description of the rise of the new CPPs in the context of the relative stability of Czech party politics. Second, employing the most widely used approaches in electoral behaviour research, we will analyse who supports CPPs. Since there has been very little effort dedicated to the analysis of CPPs, we seek to test various approaches in order to understand the electoral base of the new populist challengers in the Czech Republic. We then describe our data and our method of analysis before presenting the results. Our conclusion sums up our findings and considers their implications.

### **Centrist Populism – The Concept and the Czech Context**

It has become some sort of a cliché to state that there are very few terms in the contemporary comparative political research as contested as populism (Canovan 1999; Stanley 2008). Nevertheless, recent research has led to the emergence of a consensus on the “nucleus of populism” (Rooduijn 2014) constituted around three interrelated elements: 1) the virtuous people that are 2) betrayed by the essentially bad/corrupt elites, and 3) the restoration of the people’s sovereignty allegedly driven by populists themselves. As Stanley stated, the “thin nature [of populist ideology] means that it is unable to stand alone as a practical political ideology: it lacks the capacity to put forward a wide-ranging and coherent programme for the solution to crucial political questions” (Stanley 2008: 95). Indeed, history has shown a wide variety of populist actors that reflected the specifics of the environment, in which they arose, including populist radical right parties, agrarian populism and social populism (Pauwels 2014) as the most prominent empirical expressions of the “chameleonic” (Taggart 2004: 275) populist ideology.

At the end of the 1990s, however, East-Central Europe witnessed the emergence of political parties, which lacked a clear ideological foundation and, at the same time, expressed very strong populist appeals. The term CPP has been used to capture the unusual identity of these new political parties based solely on populist appeals. In his analysis of party politics in post-communist Europe, Grigore Pop-Eleches (2010) defined new/centrist populism as one of the four types of unorthodox parties. New/centrist populist parties do not present a radical ideology. In contrast, they try to sidestep any ideology altogether and claim that they represent a non-ideological, anti-political alternative to the established parties. Their programmes are based on the claim that they fight the corrupt elite and pursue the interests of the people, promising to enhance living standards. As Pop-Eleches states (2010: 231), “such parties are almost completely unencumbered by ideological constraints and are therefore free to tell the voters what they want to hear”.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Peter Učeň (2004) used the term centrist populism to describe

<sup>2</sup> A similar argument was also formulated by Sikk (2005) who studied “genuinely new political parties” in Europe.

political parties that entered the Slovak parliament in the 1998 and 2002 general elections. Učeň explains the “centrism” of these populist parties in terms of their self-presentation as alternatives to mainstream parties without taking extremist positions and being located “directly or indirectly [in] the ideological or geometric centre of the party system.” (Učeň 2004: 47). Not only do these parties not present extreme or radical political attitudes, they lack a clear ideological profile altogether. Therefore, instead of a coherent ideology, the appeal of CPPs is often based on the promised competence of the leader, or on the claim to increase the participation of the people in the policy-making process. Both variants are supposed to lead to the same outcome – a better representation of the people. Going back to Stanley’s argument (Stanley 2008), CPPs lack a clear and coherent host ideology, the core of their identity is populism itself and solutions stemming from it, be they a competent leader, “common sense” or introduction of different forms of participatory or direct democracy.

After the fall of communism and the first “grounding years” characterized by the turbulent development of political parties, Czech party politics became one of the most stable party systems in Central and Eastern Europe, typified by low levels of volatility (Powell and Tucker 2014) and a structure of well-institutionalized party competition established around the dominant left-right divide (Casal Bértoa 2014; Hloušek and Kopeček 2008). However, the 2010 and 2013 parliamentary elections called the previous stability of party politics into question (Havlík 2015a; Hanley 2011). The most spectacular feature of the general elections in 2010 and in 2013 was the success of CPPs, namely of Public Affairs (*Věci veřejné*, VV) and Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (*Akce nespokojených občanů*, ANO) – see Table 1.<sup>3</sup> On the contrary, TOP 09 – another newcomer from the 2010 general election – is not a part of the analysis. Although TOP 09 showed some elements of an anti-establishment appeal and an anti-corruption agenda, the anti-establishment appeal was not in the core of the profile of the party. The party presented itself as a “purifier” seeking to heal a right-wing part of the spectrum. As Séan Hanley (2011: 124) put it, TOP 09 “tried to present itself primarily as representatives of the mainstream centre-right, offering purer versions of conservatism or liberal conservatism [...], as actors that could fix the failure of the established parties to transform the Czech Republic into a modern Western-like market-based society”. In other words, TOP 09 does not see itself as an alternative to all *established parties* (as the CPPs did) but merely as an alternative in the centre-right part of the party system. Similarly, Tomio Okamura’s Dawn of Direct Democracy (6.9% of votes in the 2013 general election) was also not included in the analysis, as the profile of the party was not clear before the election, and its occasionally anti-Roma statements placed it close to the family of populist radical right parties.

What the two CPPs had in common was a strong anti-establishment appeal, which depicted the old political parties as incompetent and corrupt. Indeed, corruption was presented as the most important feature of the established parties and the way they approach politics and governance (Havlík 2015b). VV, for instance, called politicians from the entire political spectrum “robber barons” or “political dinosaurs”, i.e. those “who [have] been in politics for more than ten years, can’t do anything other than politics, [understand] it as his trade and [start] to make deals... who[’ve] lost touch with reality

<sup>3</sup> In 2010, two other small parties (the Party of Citizen’s Rights – the Zemanites and Sovereignty) were quite successful in running on a platform containing populist appeals (gaining over 3% and 4% of votes, respectively). Nevertheless, neither of them crossed the electoral threshold we set as a criterion of relevance.

Table 1: : Electoral Results of Centrist Populist Parties in the 2010 and 2013 General Elections

Political party (election)	Number of votes	Share of votes	Seats
VV (2010)	569127	10.9	24
ANO 2011 (2013)	927240	18.7	47

Source of data: Volby.cz

and [ceased] to be useful.” (Právo 2009) Three years later, ANO spoke of the “corrupt system of political parties” (ANO 2013). Both parties can be classified as populist – using strong anti-establishment appeals to construct a moral division between the two homogeneous groups – the “pure people” and “the corrupt elite” (Mudde 2004; Stanley 2008), although the purity of the people expressed mostly through numerous references to the common sense of the people and their ability to make right decisions was more visible in the case of VV than in the case of ANO (Havlík 2015b). All the same, none of the Czech populist newcomers presented a coherent programme in terms of “host ideologies”. Instead, VV stated that it pursued “common sense” in contrast to standard ideological solutions, claiming that “ideologies are totally empty” (Česká televize 2010). Similarly, ANO’s electoral platform was typical of the high proportion of valence issues as opposed to positional issues (Eibl 2014), and they stressed common sense, and added an emphasis on “simple and effective managing of the state” (ANO 2013). In other words, the populist appeals and programmatic vagueness of the two new political parties fit the definition of CPPs.

### Voting for Centrist Populist Parties in the Czech Republic – Theoretical Expectations

Since there have not been any systemic CPP studies published of yet, our study is partly explanatory in its character, relying on both the established literature on populist voting and on the specifics of the supply side of the CPPs described above. The literature has provided many explanations for why people vote for populist political parties. We agree with Pauwels, who stated that “there is no reason to believe that ‘populist voters’ would make their choice fundamentally different from other voters” (Pauwels 2014: 53). Because it is reasonable to expect that specific populist factors drive the concrete voting choice, we use socio-demographic voting (i.e. cleavage-based), protest voting, issue voting, spatial and valence voting to explain the electoral support of CPPs in the Czech Republic.

**The sociological approach** which emphasises the importance of people’s social positions has a long tradition in the study of voting behaviour, going back to research conducted in the 1940s in the United States and to cleavage theory (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). The main assumption is that voting behaviour is shaped by social divides such as social class, religion or by place of residence. A social divide has to have three dimensions (structural, normative and organizational) to be considered a cleavage. In this part, we deal only with the structural dimension when we examine the effect of social structure. Deegan-Krause (2006) calls this aspect of cleavage voting the census divide. The results of the research applying a sociological approach to the study of populist parties show that these parties are supported by the “losers of modernization” (Betz 1994) who face the changes in social dynamics with difficulties, as a consequence of the “integration-demarcation” cleavage (Kriesi et al. 2008). Indeed, empirical research has shown the overrepresentation of some

groups in society among voters of populist radical right parties that are supported by male, less educated, unskilled workers or members of the old middle class (Ivarsflaten 2005; Lubbers et al. 2002). Regarding the analysis of voting for CPPs, the problem is that these studies were focused on populist *radical right* parties. Similarly, the results of analyses of radical left populist parties, which describe their supporters as unemployed, less educated people are hardly applicable to CPPs.

Consequently, to analyse the sociodemographic characteristics of new populist parties in the Czech Republic, we need to start with the supply side. The crucial thing here is that the discourse of Czech CPPs is characterized by the lack of a coherent host ideology and specificity of the “people” (in contrast to the “working class” of social populists or “the nation” of the populist radical right). In other words, it does not predict the existence of a linkage to a specific population group. The study of the electorate of similar political parties in Slovakia (Učeň et al. 2005) or Italy (Maggini 2014) confirms the heterogeneous sociodemographic profile of supporters of these parties. In other words, while there has been broad agreement about the establishment of the socio-demographic (social class, religion) determination of the electoral bases of party competition in the Czech Republic after the fall of communism (Evans and Whitefield 1998; Hloušek and Kopeček 2008), we expect that socio-demographic characteristics do not explain the support for the new CPPs. Therefore, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H1: The effect of the sociodemographic characteristics of voters will be lower in explaining of support for CPPs in comparison to support for the established<sup>4</sup> political parties.

Segments of the population, as determined by the census, are interconnected with political values. Basically, a value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is preferable to the opposite modes or end-states (Rokeach 1973). Therefore, values can be seen as guidelines of peoples’ attitudes and behaviour regarding political issues (Campbell et al. 1960; Fuchs and Klingemann 1990). In the literature, two types of political values are often distinguished. Values connected to opposite sides of the “old” socio-political cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan 1967) are usually labelled as old political values. The second category captures new political values including Inglehart’s materialist/post-materialist values, environmental and economic growth values and libertarian/authoritarian values. Moreover, in the area of the former east bloc, the communism/post-communism dimension is important (Hloušek and Kopeček 2008). The literature shows that values are an important factor in the explanation of support for right wing populist parties. Oesch (2008) frames this explanation as “cultural”, with attitudes towards community and identity playing a crucial role (Kitschelt and McGann 1997). The emergence of RPPs thus represent the authoritarian response to the dominance of libertarian values and multicultural models of living (Ignazi 1992; Minkenberg 2001). Accordingly, it is argued that the RPPs’ success is explained by people’s unease about the cultural challenges posed by the inflow and presence of an increasing number of foreign residents.

Much like the cleavage explanation of CPP, the “classic set” of political values (e.g. economic, libertarian/authoritarian) should not play a great role in voting for CPPs. This is due to their general programmatic “emptiness” in these categories. In contrast, since CPPs present themselves as an alternative to the old political parties and the old political

<sup>4</sup> By the term “established political parties”, we mean ČSSD, KDU-ČSL, KSČM and ODS.

conflicts, the lack of value rootedness should distinguish voting for CPPs from support for the old political parties.

H2: The effect of value voting will be lower in explanation of support for CPPs in comparison to support for the established political parties.

Another approach explaining why people vote for populist parties is based on **issue voting**, linked mostly to the host ideology of populism. In contrast to value voting, issue voting is driven rather by the actual situation (see Carmines and Stimson 1980), whereas value voting reflects one's persistent patterns of thinking (Knutson and Kumlin 2005). Deegan-Krause (2006) differentiates between value voting and issue voting more subtly. He uses the term "attitudinal voting" to refer to "normative" or "value" categories of cleavage voting. The word "issues" then refers to the interplay between attitude and partisanship. Van der Brug et al. (2000) and Ford and Goodwin (2014) point out the anti-immigration positions of voters of populist radical right parties in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Scandinavia. Pauwels (2014) identified the demand for a more regulatory role of the state in the economy as one of the drivers of voting for the populist left in Germany and in the Netherlands. While immigration, law and order and protectionist economy are not important issues for CPPs, the issue of corruption is a focal point of their populist discourse (Pop-Eleches 2010; Učeň 2007). As shown by Hanley and Sikk (2016), corruption was an important contextual factor behind the electoral success of anti-establishment reform parties in Central and Eastern Europe. Similarly, Engler (2016) showed an important effect of the perceived relative level of corruption on the electoral fortunes of new political parties, including the new populist challengers.

Therefore, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H3: Voters who perceive corruption to be a salient issue are more likely to support CPPs.

**Valence voting** is one of the newest strands of voting behaviour research. Valence can refer to various phenomena, including issues with one-sided opinion distribution, how leaders are evaluated or party competence in general (Clarke 2004; Ho et al. 2013). Economy and healthcare are good examples of valence issues, with everyone preferring a prosperous economy and accessible and affordable healthcare. Two assumptions are crucial for understanding the valence model. First, the valence issues are supposed to dominate the political agenda (see Clarke 2004; Green 2007; Galasso and Nannicini 2011). Second, political parties and leaders are evaluated according to their perceived competence in solving the issue. Despite the fact that the valence model has not been tested specifically in the study of populist parties, there is no reason to expect that the model should work differently. On the contrary, given the nature of populism and the stress it puts on the alleged incompetence of the established parties to deliver policies that meet public demands makes the valence model even more suitable for explaining populist voting. This thesis is also strengthened by the specific discourse of the CPPs in the Czech Republic, where "traditional", ideologically-driven policies (positional statements) were replaced by "non-ideological" common sense solutions offered by leaders who were presented as being competent due to their experiences in everyday life (either as an investigative journalist or a successful businessman). Therefore, we formulate the following hypothesis related to the valence model of voting:

H4: Voters who perceive CPPs to be more competent in solving the most salient political issues are more likely to support them in comparison to the established political parties.

**Economic voting** is one of the most widely used explanations in the study of electoral behaviour. The main argument of the theory is that economic evaluation is an important factor for electoral behaviour in general. At the same time, the economy, as well as a moment of economic crisis and the feelings of frustration stemming from it in particular, is considered to be one of the most important driving forces of populist electoral success (Betz 1994; Kriesi and Pappas 2015). The main reason why economic voting is supposed to explain support for CPPs is that the established political parties are blamed for the economic malaise, while populist parties promise an economic turnaround either by returning the power directly to the people or through a populist leader who uses common sense to run the economy effectively. Although the economy was not of primary importance for the appeal of the Czech CPPs, it was a part of their general anti-establishment discourse, with political elites having been blamed for wasting public money and causing the state debt (Havlík 2015b). Since we are focusing on the individual level, we follow the approach based on the perception of economic conditions. This approach includes two basic perspectives: sociotropic and pocketbook voting. For pocketbook voters, it is how they evaluate their individual economic situation that matters. People who perceive that their economic situation got worse during the electoral term or could get better in the next term tend to look for an alternative. In contrast, sociotropic voters put emphasis on the performance of a country's economy in general (for an overview of economic voting see e.g. Harper 2000; Powell and Whitten 1993). The data allow us to test only sociotropic retrospective and pocketbook prospective voting related hypotheses. While retrospective sociotropic voting is based on an evaluation of the past state of the economy, prospective pocketbook voting is oriented around the evaluation of one's future economic situation. Consequently, we formulate the next two hypotheses.

H5a: Voters who evaluate the past state of the country economy negatively are more likely to support CPPs.

H5b: Voters who evaluate their future economic situation negatively are more likely to support CPPs.

**Political cynicism** has had a prominent position in the study of populist voting. This is not surprising if we take into consideration the core of populism defined by people-centrism closely tied to strong anti-establishment appeals. Nevertheless, the question of how to define the targets of the populist protest vote arises. Two options are apparent. First, a populist protest appeal negatively targets the representatives of established political parties who are usually depicted as corrupt, incompetent, self-enriching, and otherwise incapable of representing the people, and thus form a specific political class (Schedler 1996). Although populism does not attack democracy as such (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012), populist criticism is aimed at the particular face of democracy, i.e. the functioning of democracy as embodied in political practice represented by the established parties (Canovan 1999: 11). In his analysis of the populist radical right in Sweden, Rydgren (2006) showed the positive effects of political discontent on the vote for Sweden Democrats. Similarly, Pauwels (2014; see also Oesch 2008) identified the effects of low political trust and satisfaction with democracy on different populist political parties in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. As shown by Schumacher and Rooduijn (2013) in their study of voters for Dutch populist parties, "only protest attitudes distinguish voters for populist parties from voters for mainstream parties" (Schumacher and Rooduijn 2013: 124). On the other hand, Ivarsflaten (2008) and van der Brug et al. (2000) did not

confirm that political cynicism is a common feature for voting for populist radical right parties. Although it seems that the effects of political cynicism on the support of populist parties vary, the *anti-elite* appeal aimed at the functioning of democracy run by the established parties has had a particular importance in the discourse of CPPs in the Czech Republic, while lacking a coherent ideological core.

Therefore, we formulate the following hypotheses:

H6: Voters who do not trust politicians are more likely to support CPPs.

H7: Voters with low satisfaction with democracy are more likely to support CPPs.

One of the most classical approaches to the study of electoral behaviour is the **spatial model** going back to Anthony Downs (1957). According to Downs, parties are strategic vote-maximizing actors, and voters have exogenously determined preferences on positional issues that present clear “pro-con” continua that divide public opinion. The basic assumption of the model is that voters choose political parties whose programme is closest to their political preferences. Van der Brug et al. (2000, 2005) showed that ideological proximity on the left-right scale (combined with anti-immigration stances) is a good predictor of voting for populist radical right parties in seven West-European countries, although this effect was moderated by the size of the preferred political party. Their conclusion supported the previous studies of populist radical right parties in the Netherlands (Tillie and Fennema 1998) and in other West European countries (Marsh and Wickham 1996). The position of CPPs in political space is more complicated in comparison to standard (“ideological”) political parties, for their centrism stems from two different sources. The first is the lack of extreme policies (Hanley and Sikk 2016), in terms of both economic and cultural conflicts. Second, there is an intentional lack of a clear position that results from the refusal to self-position in the political space, or there are combined contradictory political attitudes, which lead to a centrist position “on average” (see above). Nevertheless, if not “truly” centrist, the moderate policy and unclear electoral platforms of CPPs lead us to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

H8: Voters who position themselves close to CPPs are more likely to support them, but the effect of proximity on support for CPPs is weaker than the effect of proximity on voting for the established parties.

## Data and Methods

This part presents the strategy toward answering the questions given in the introduction and testing the introduced hypotheses. The employed method and source of data are also introduced here. The aim of our article is to examine the effect of the individual factors, which can explain support for CPPs. For this purpose, the coefficients for individual variables from a multinomial logistic regression will be used. A logistic analysis is conducted because the dependent variable contains several unordered categories and therefore, in order to estimate the effect of the independent variables, a specific link function must be used. In the event that there are alternative specific independent variables, the model is designed as a conditional logit. In principle, multinomial logistic regression works as set of binomial logistic regressions while maintaining the same reference category; in our analysis this is support for CSSD. This party is selected because it is the strongest party in the given period and because it remains stable in the political



space (see Linek et al. 2016). Because of the limited number of cases, the distinctive models are built to test different hypotheses. The dependent variable of analysis in all models is the nominal variable “party support”, recoded from party choice. The categories of our variable do not cover people who vote for a given party, but people with a high propensity to vote for parties. In constructing a new variable, we follow the procedure used by Aichholzer et al. (2014) (see appendix for a detailed description).

As Mood (2010) points out, the odds ratios themselves, as a basic outcome of the logistic regression, are not suitable for comparisons across models. Therefore, our interpretation relies on predicted probabilities. These quantities for CPPs are printed into plots. Moreover, since showing the difference between CPPs and the established parties is crucial for the analysis, we also plotted predicted probabilities of the support for ČSSD, ODS, KSCM and KDU-ČSL.

The analysis is run on the 2010 and 2013 Czech election studies conducted by the Sociological Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences (Sociologický ústav Akademie věd ČR 2010, 2013). In our analysis, we use several sets of independent variables, which represent the factors mentioned in the theoretical part. A list of variables with a brief explanation of operationalization is included in table 2. More detailed information and descriptive statistics can be found in the Appendix.

## Results

The next part of the paper examines the effects of different variables on support for political parties. According to the first hypothesis, we assume a weaker effect of ‘cleavage variables’ in the case of CPPs compared to the established political parties. The results in Figure 1 lend some support to this hypothesis. Established parties usually have a different probability of being supported by distinctive social groups, especially in regard to occupation (see Figure 1). On the contrary, there are only a few significant differences between different social groups in their probability to support CPPs. The only important finding is related to age: young voters were more likely to vote for CPPs than older ones. This may be explained by young people’s generally lower levels of party identification and/or the tendency to be attracted by simplified populist promises. Moreover, in the case of ANO, there is a significant difference in party support between religious and nonreligious people. However, this pattern may just be a reflection of the takeover of some KDU-ČSL supporters. In general, the socio-structural model does not provide a sufficient explanation for the support of the centrist populist parties.

Political values enable us to identify who supports the established parties, but they provide us with only limited information about CPP supporters. Figure 2 illustrates that there is almost no effect of any value included in our analysis (left-right, libertarian-authoritarian, religious-secular and post-communist/communist) on the probability of support for VV and only a moderate effect on the probability of support for ANO. In the case of VV, we can see substantively different probabilities for party support only on the economic left-right scale, with a higher probability in the centre than on both edges of the scale. However, in the case of ANO, there is a more important increase in the probability of support for this party with more secular and more rightist values. This indicates that the rise of ANO in 2013 was partly a “substitution” in the centre-right part of the political space. ANO’s greater ability to appeal to centre-right voters is logical in the sense that corruption scandals, the decline of the economy during the crisis and several policy measures that went against promises formulated by the centre-right governing

Table 2: Independent Variables and Their Operationalization

model	New variable	Original variable	operationalization	range	
class	<b><i>Generation_war_comm</i></b>	Year of birth	Born before 1944	0/1	
	Generation_spring		Born 1945 - 1953	0/1	
	Generation_normalization		Born 1954 - 1973	0/1	
	Generation_revolution		Born 1974 - 1983	0/1	
	Generation_disillusion		Born after 1984	0/1	
	Male	Gender		0/1	
	<b><i>Worker</i></b>	Employment + occupation		0/1	
	Employee			0/1	
	Entrepreneur			0/1	
	Inactive		Retired, students, parental care, unemployed, housewives	0/1	
	<b><i>No religion</i></b>	Denomination + church attendance	No denomination	0/1	
	Religious		Denomination, not regular attendance	0/1	
	Churchgoers		Denomination, regular attendance	0/1	
	<b><i>Primary</i></b>	Education		0/1	
	High school			0/1	
	University			0/1	
	<b><i>Village</i></b>	Size of municipality	Less than 5000 inhabitants	0/1	
	Town		5001 – 80000 inhabitants	0/1	
	City		More than 80 000 inhabitants	0/1	
	values	Religious	Opinion on church in politics and on abortions	Adjusted sum of scales	0-10
		Economic left-right	Opinion on privatization, public services, taxes, state intervention and priorities	Adjusted sum of scales	0-10
		Post-communist	Opinion on former regime	Adjusted scale	0-10
		Libertarian/authoritarian	Opinion on immigration and on freedom or order	Adjusted sum of scales	0-10
proximity	Proximity	Left-right self-positioning, Left-right positions of parties		0-10	
satisfaction	Distrust	Trust in institutions	Adjusted sum of scales	0-10	
	<b><i>Government positive</i></b>	Evaluation of government		0/1	
	Government neutral			0/1	
	Government negative			0/1	
	<b><i>Democracy positive</i></b>	Democracy in the Czech Republic		0/1	
	Democracy positive			0/1	

Table 2: Continued

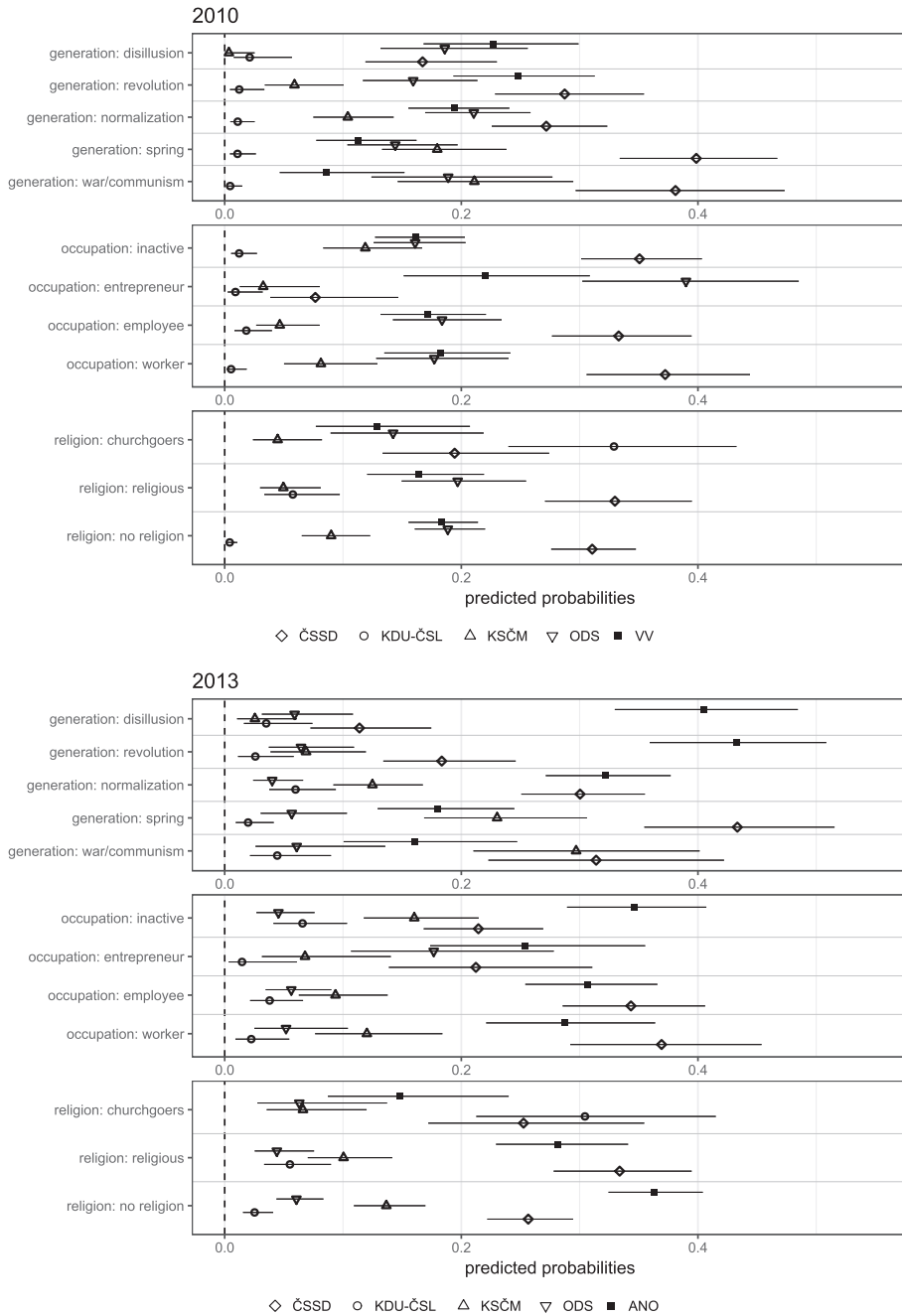
model	New variable	Original variable	operationalization	range
cynicism	Cynicism	Politicians lose contact; government does not care; candidates care only about votes	Adjusted sum of scales	0-10
issue and valence	<b>Solution – party</b>	Party solves most important problem	ČSSD, ODS, KSCM, KDU-Č SL	0/1
	Solution - nobody		No party solves problem	0/1
	Solution - others		Other than listed above	0/1
	Solution - dnk		Do not know	0/1
	<b>Issue – socio-economic</b>	Most important problem of the Czech Republic		0/1
	Issue - corruption			0/1
	Issue - politicians			0/1
	Issue - other			0/1
economic	<b>Sociotropic positive</b>	Economy of the Czech Republic in previous year		0/1
	Sociotropic negative			0/1
	Sociotropic neutral			0/1
	<b>Pocketbook negative</b>	Household in next year		0/1
	Pocketbook positive			0/1

Reference categories in **bold**.

parties (see e.g. Havlík 2015b) resulted in their former voters being more inclined to change their voting preferences. However, these effects are hardly comparable to those of ODS. In other words, there are different probabilities to vote for ČSSD, KSCM, ODS and KDU-ČSL among people with different preferences in the organization of the economy and society, but the differences in these preferences do not affect the probability of support for VV or ANO in such an important way. We know that CPP supporters are mostly in the middle on the left-right value scales, but their position in the centre expresses their ambivalent opinions on the role of the state in shaping economic and social life. In other words, unlike the established political parties, the value-based models provide a clearer picture of the electorate of the centrist populist parties.

The most important result of the model, which combines issue and valence voting is that, in contrast to our expectation, supporters who perceive corruption as a salient issue do not have a higher probability of support for a CPP than supporters who emphasize the importance of any other issue (see Figure 3 and Table 3). Predicted probabilities in Table 3 indicate that citizens who consider any party from the group ČSSD, ODS, KDU-ČSL and KSCM (labelled as “established parties”) as competent have an equally low probability of supporting CPPs regardless whether they identified corruption or some socio-economic issue as the most important issue. For example, the number in the first row in the column ČSSD shows that citizens who think that one of the established parties (any party from the set ČSSD, ODS, KDU-ČSL and KSCM) can best solve the corruption issue have a 0.27 probability to support ČSSD. Furthermore, there is a higher probability of support for ANO if voters consider social or economic issues to be most important than if they see corruption as the most important factor. Nor can the

Figure 1: Predicted Probabilities of Supporting Parties Depending on Cleavages



*Note:* The prediction is made for each variable separately. The values of other variables are fixed: residence = town, religion = noreligion, occupation = employee, generation = spring, gender = male. Only variables mentioned in the interpretation are printed here. See the full plot in the appendix.

Figure 2: Predicted Probabilities of Supporting Parties Depending on Political Values

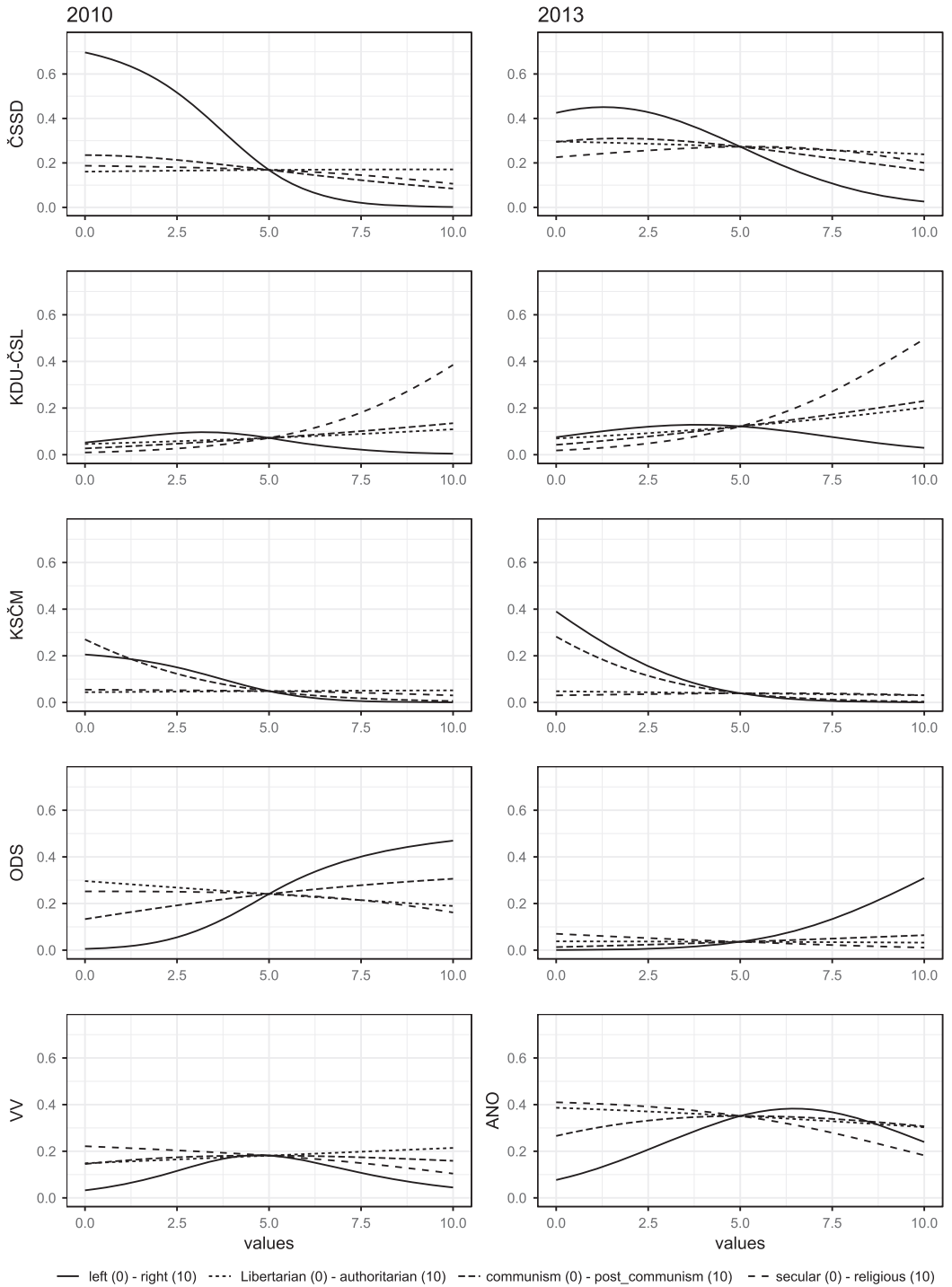


Figure 3: Predicted Probabilities of Supporting Parties Depending on Issues and Valence

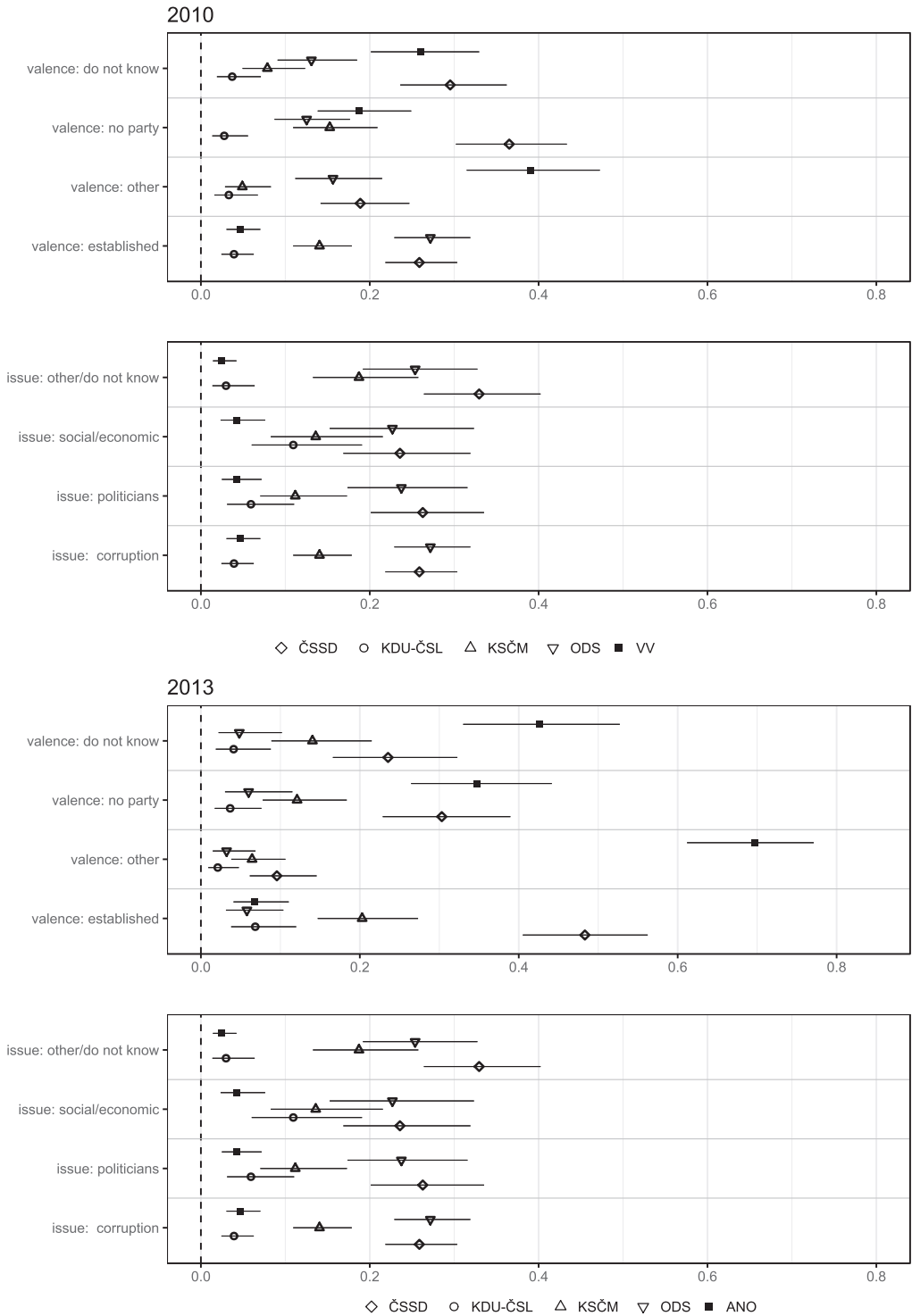


Table 3: Probabilities of Support for Party Depending on Combination of Valence and Issues

2010 valence	issue	CSSD	KDU	KSCM	ODS	VV
established parties	corruption	0.27	0.06	0.11	0.24	0.04
established parties	socio-economic	0.26	0.04	0.14	0.27	0.05
CPPs	corruption	0.19	0.05	0.04	0.14	0.35
CPPs	socio-economic	0.18	0.03	0.05	0.16	0.37
2013 valence	issue	CSSD	KDU	KSCM	ODS	ANO
established parties	corruption	0.39	0.11	0.22	0.05	0.05
established parties	socio-economic	0.48	0.07	0.20	0.06	0.07
CPPs	corruption	0.08	0.04	0.08	0.03	0.50
CPPs	socio-economic	0.10	0.02	0.06	0.03	0.70

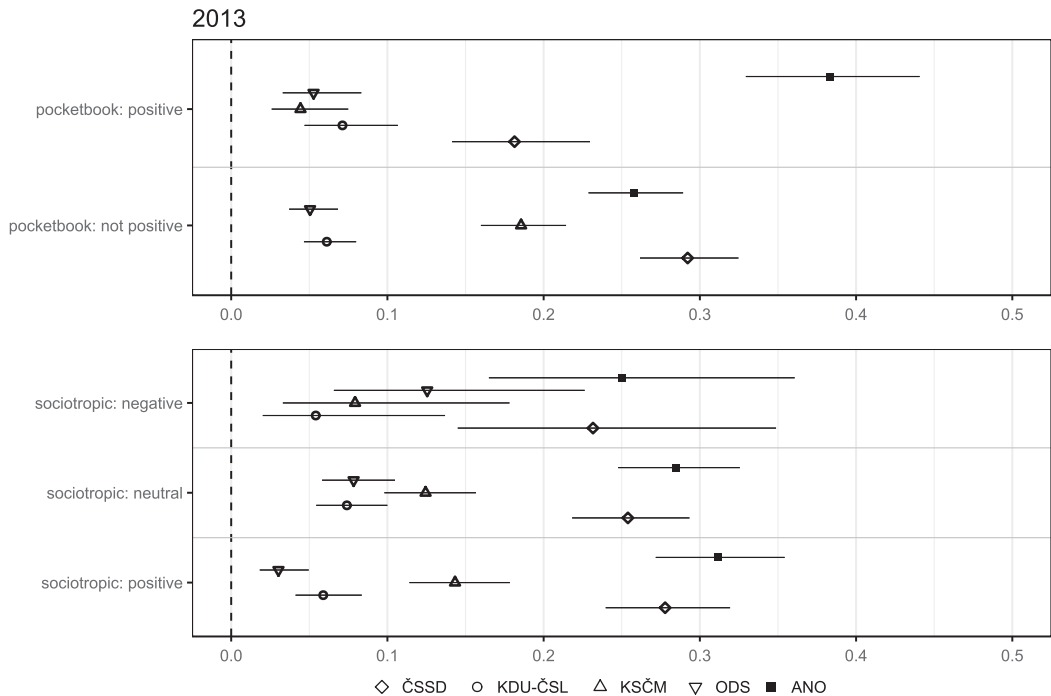
Note: established parties – respondent considers ČSSD, KDU-ČSL, KSČM or ODS as competent, CPPs – respondent considers VV or ANO as competent

importance of the issue of “bad politicians” explain the support for CPPs in a satisfactory way. An explanation for this surprising result may lie in the fact that voters supporting CPPs lost confidence in the ability of the established parties to solve *any* problems. In other words, support for CPPs is not driven by any specific issue but rather by a more general attitude towards how politics should be approached by politicians and what kind of people should enter politics. This interpretation is further supported by the predicted probabilities of categories of the variable measuring valence (see Figure 3). Nevertheless, the importance of issue voting is not unique to CPPs, for the same effect can be observed in the case of KDU-ČSL and ODS.

We hypothesized that voters who perceive CPPs to be more competent in solving the most salient political problems should be more likely to support them in comparison to other political parties. The categories of variables make the distinction between the established parties, other parties, nobody and do not know. The hypothesis was confirmed; voters who see parties other than established parties as being competent to solve problems have a much higher probability to support a CPP than those who consider established parties to be competent. In addition, the same, but to a lower extent, also applies for voters who think that no party is competent or who do not know, which party is competent. This is in line with our expectation emphasizing the importance of the stress on the competence and processual perception of politics rather than on the appeals of CPPs and on explanations related to political cynicism (a sceptical view about the ability of political parties to resolve salient issues). If we turn back once again to the proclaimed theoretical assumption about a necessary combination of populism with another ideology, the emphasis put on competency and/or an alternative vision of politics (be it a managerial way of running the state or a constitutional reform trying to by-pass traditional allegedly corrupt political parties from decision making) play the role of a host ideology here. It is not traditional, issue based ideological politics or the left-right conflict that dominated party competition in the Czech Republic that explained the support for the established parties well but, instead, a populist story about cleaner, more effective or more representative politics offered by leaders who are not “smeared with the dirty world of politics” but who are non-ideological and even have a non-political background.

Besides valence voting, analysis of economic voting brings other important findings about supporters of CPPs. Nevertheless, since economic voting is usually considered to be a good tool for distinguishing between voters of former government and former opposition parties, it is important to be aware of a specific situation of government composition preceding the analysed elections. In 2006, the government formally consisted of ČSSD, KDU-ČSL and US, but in fact, the change in the leadership and strategy of ČSSD shortly before the 2006 election meant a rise in cases when the government was dependent on the support from KSČM (Gregor and Havlík 2013). Before both the 2010 and 2013 elections, the “administrative non-partisan” governments were appointed after the previous falls of right-centre governments consisted of ODS, KDU-ČSL and SZ between 2007 and 2009 and of ODS, VV and TOP 09 between 2010 and 2012, respectively. However, the question on evaluations of economy is included in the 2010 data. The effect of economic voting was relatively weak in 2013. The explanation may lie in the “non-partisan” government that was in office during the last year of the electoral term before the 2013 elections. Regarding the support for CPPs (only ANO in this case), there is no effect of retrospective sociotropic economic voting (see Figure 4). In this case it means that people have the same probability to support ANO regardless whether they see the economic situation of the country as bad or good. On the other hand, the effect of prospective egotropic evaluations is relatively surprising. Unlike findings about economic and/or modernization losers support for both populist radical right (Betz 1994; Mughan et al. 2003; also see research on rejecting the role of the economy or the perception thereof – e.g. Ivarsflaten 2008; van der Brug et al. 2000) and

Figure 4: Predicted Probabilities of Supporting Parties Depending on Economic Evaluations





populist radical left parties (e.g. Bosch and Durán 2017; Doerschler and Banaszak 2007), voters who were optimistic about their future had a higher probability of supporting ANO than pessimistic people had. This means that it would be relatively misleading to see CPP supporters as losers who are sceptical about their future. On the contrary, it seems that a vote for ANO is related to the belief that “things will get better” in the future, as ANO claimed in its campaign. This is an important finding that sheds light on ANO supporters, despite the fact that this relation was not unique and also applies (although to a lesser extent) to TOP 09 and Dawn. This finding is not unique in a comparative context. In his analysis of the support for Chávez in Venezuela, Weyland (2003) came to a similar conclusion: people who were more optimistic about the future of the national economy were more likely to support Chávez. This shows that support for a populist party does not necessarily grow from a negative evaluation of the economy (and protest behaviour in general) but – on the contrary – can be an expression of hope for a better future.

According to hypotheses H6 and H7, evaluation of several aspects of the political system should be important in explaining support for new CPPs. However, no variable covered by the data measuring political satisfaction proved to have a significant effect on support for CPPs. The only exception is the variable about the evaluation of former political governments in the 2010 elections (see Figure 5). Voters satisfied with Topolánek’s government have a much higher probability of supporting ODS and KDU-ČSL (and TOP 09) as former government parties than VV. On the other hand, voters dissatisfied with Topolánek’s government had a higher probability of supporting ČSSD and KSČM than VV. Therefore, people with a neutral evaluation of the former government had a higher probability of supporting VV than people with both positive and negative views. Unfortunately, the evaluation of Nečas’ government is not available in the 2013 election data.

Results do not confirm the hypothesis that voters with low satisfaction with democracy are more likely to support a CPP. In the case of VV and ANO there is no such effect. This indicates that support for CPPs in the Czech Republic cannot be interpreted as voting driven by satisfaction with democracy and/or political institutions but rather – as the presented analysis of valence voting indicates – dissatisfaction with performance of the established political parties in a democratic setting.

On the contrary, political cynicism (or for our situation more precisely “alienation from politics”) increases the probability of support for CPPs. However, also the probability of support for oppositional parties increases as alienation from politics increases, and vice versa, the probability of support for parties in government decreases (see Figure 6). The effect on support for CPPs is weaker in comparison to ČSSD or KSČM, i.e. the opposition before both the 2010 and 2013 elections. Therefore we cannot conclude that alienation is the reason that citizens turn more towards CPPs. Instead, it is a factor, which pulls citizens away from parties in government towards the oppositional parties, including CPPs. As the interaction term shows, the effect of cynicism for the abovementioned parties is usually higher when people are dissatisfied with democracy. However, one needs to be careful with an interpretation, since the variables included in the analysis are not the best indicators of populist protest. The data does not address how voters perceived the performance of the political elites in the preceding term. Since the survey was conducted after the elections, voters already knew who had got the seats and it is questionable how even new party voters could perceive politicians as not being competent, responsive or accountable, since the poll may have also contained their favourites.

Figure 5: Predicted Probabilities of Supporting Parties Depending on Satisfaction and Trust

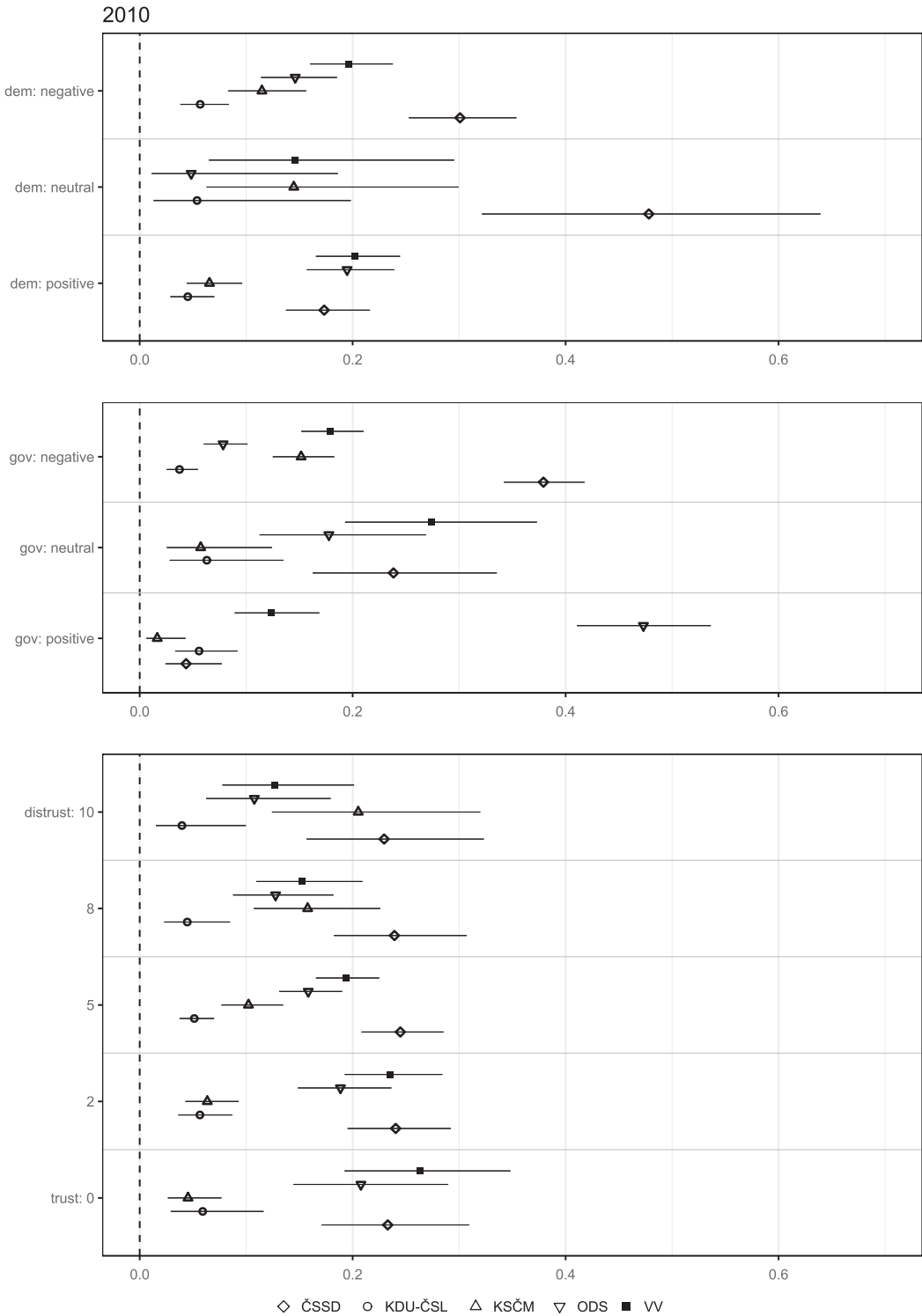


Figure 6: Predicted Probabilities of Supporting Parties Depending on Alienation and Satisfaction

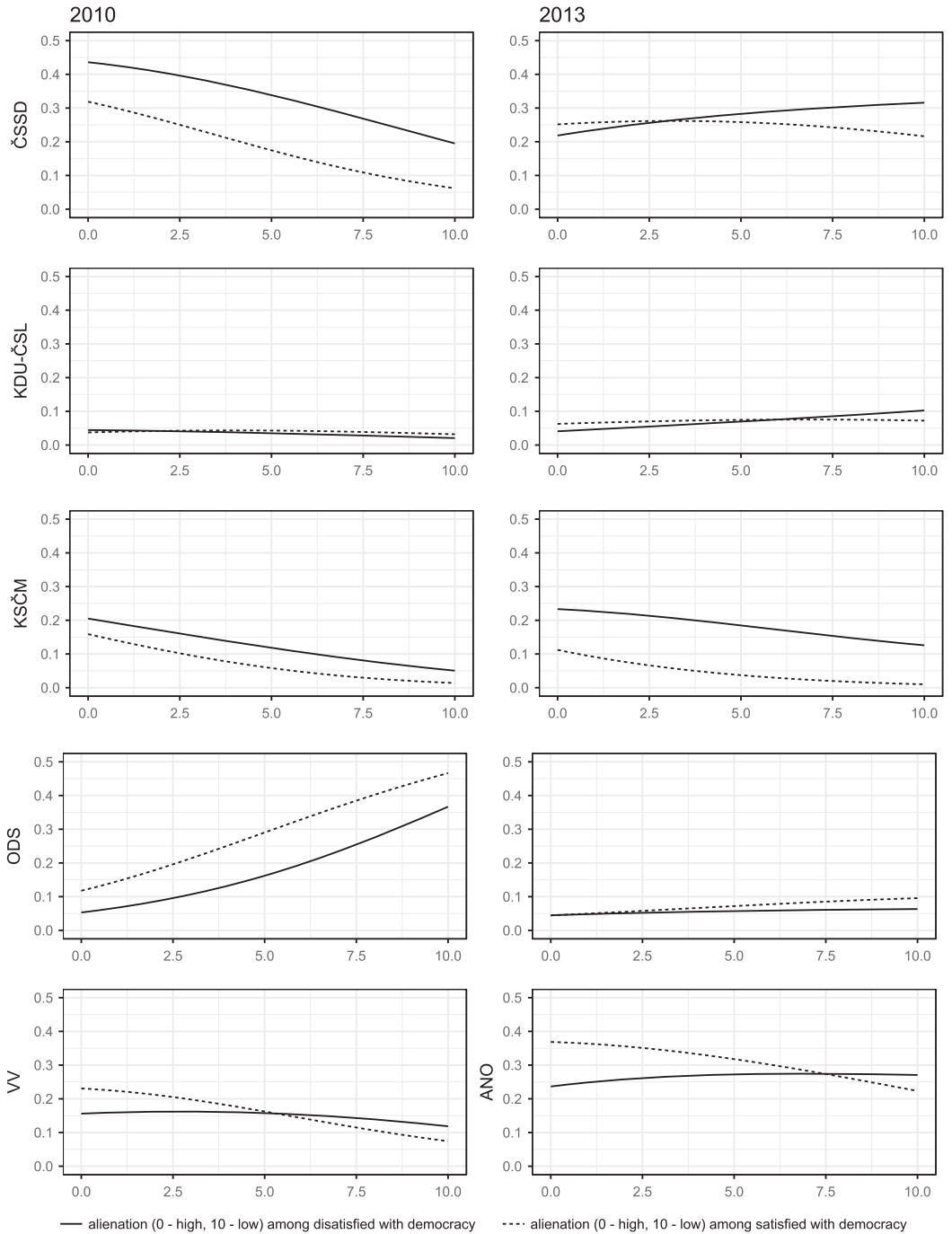
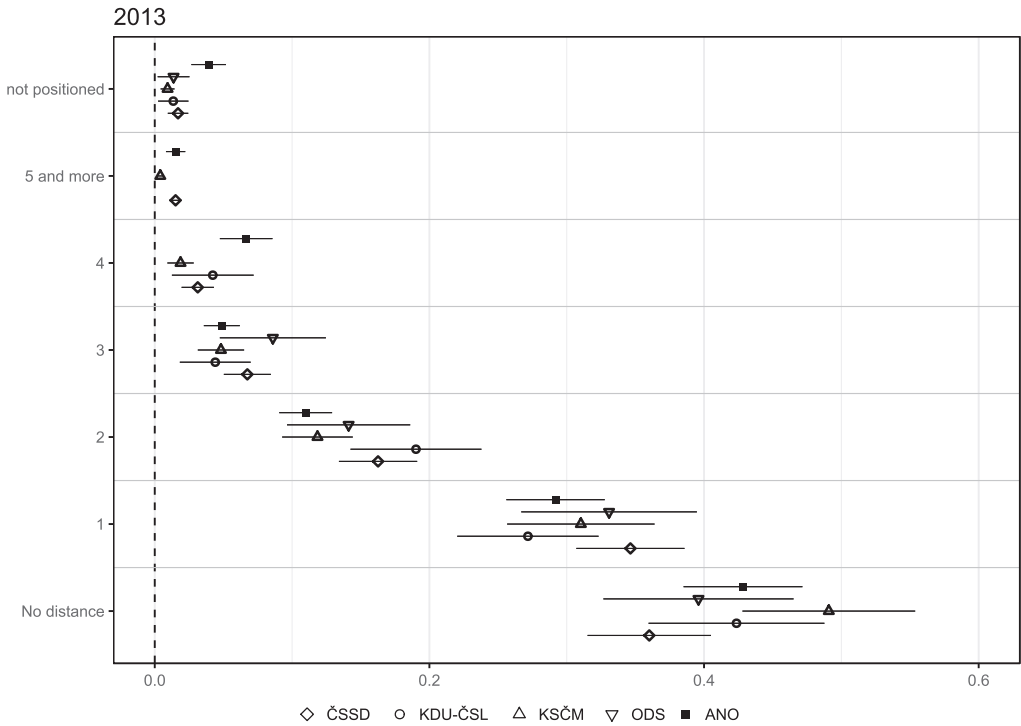
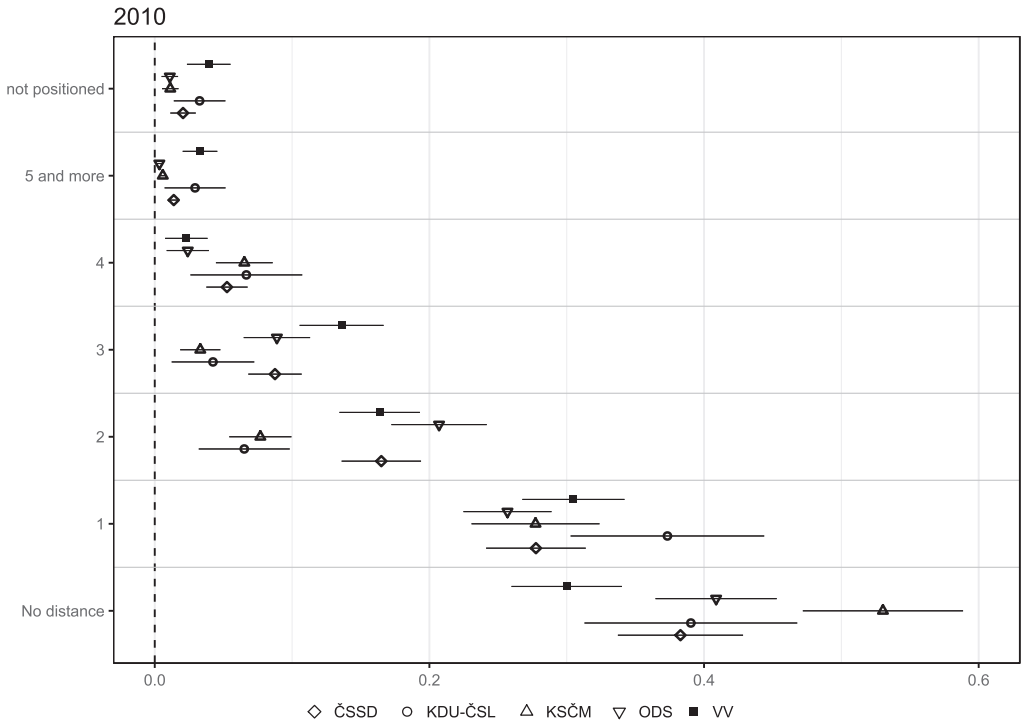


Figure 7: Predicted Probabilities of Supporting Parties Depending on Proximity to Parties



Finally, we present the results of the analysis of the effect of proximity based on the conditional logit model. Some differences in the pattern of support for parties based on distance are visible in Figure 7. In the 2010 elections, the probability of supporting established parties, with the exception of KDU-ČSL, declines sharply with the increase of distance, but the probability of supporting VV is not much different between people with no distance or distance 3 (the median value). This means that VV supporters are less sensitive to deviation between their positions and the perceived party position, which corresponds to VV's emphasis on non-ideological politics. However, the pattern observed for ANO does not differ from other established parties, and therefore we cannot draw any general conclusion about the role of proximity in political space on voting for CPPs.

## Conclusion

The aim of the presented article was to analyse the supporters of CPPs and put the results into a wider context of the development of party politics in the Czech Republic and, to some extent, elsewhere. First of all, the analysis showed significant differences between the supporters of CPPs and the established political parties. Unlike the established parties (Linek 2015), CPP supporters can hardly be characterized using a socio-demographic model. In other words, it is impossible to describe them in terms of education, occupation, religion or gender. The only significant variable was age, with younger voters more likely to support CPPs; however, this may be related to either party identification or the vulnerability of younger voters to populist promises. Similarly, the lack of a clear profile of CPP supporters was confirmed by an analysis of the values, with supporters of CPPs locating in the centre of the political space. On the other hand, the rise of ANO indicates a partial substitution in the centre right part of the political space. Nevertheless, the effect of centre-right positions on support for ANO was considerably weaker than in the case of the established centre-right parties. Although this finding is not particularly surprising given the “non-ideological” appeals of CPPs, it is still important vis-à-vis the rise (and explanation) of the other types of populist parties elsewhere in Europe. In other words, the Czech case (and also e.g. the rise of the Five Star Movement in Italy) shows that a clearly expressed ideology such as nativism, agrarianism or anti-capitalism is by no means a necessary condition for a successful populist surge. In a society generally dissatisfied with the performance of the established political parties, even an ideologically subtler appeal may serve as a basis for the electoral success of populist actors. This also confirms the emptiness and ‘chameleonic nature’ of populism (Taggart 2004; Stanley 2008). Moreover, many studies have explained the electoral support for (mainly radical right) populist parties with either the notion of globalization or of economic losers, as defined either by their socio-demographic characteristics, or by their perception of the economic situation and/or integration processes (e.g. Bornschier 2010; Kriesi et al. 2008). On the contrary, we did not find any linkage between support for CPPs and groups usually considered to be losers of globalization, i.e. less educated, usually blue collar workers who evaluate the economy or their economic prospects pessimistically. Supporters of CPPs can hardly be defined in socio-demographic terms (besides above average support from younger people, which can be explained in different ways); quite surprisingly, ANO supporters tended to be positive about the economy. In addition, in testing the valence model we found that new populist party supporters believed that those parties (in contrast to the

established parties) are able to solve the most important political issues. Similarly, those who did not know and those who thought that nobody could solve the issues were also more likely to support new populist parties. This shows how sceptically CPP voters evaluate politics and how differently they approach “how politics is conducted”, be it a managerial approach that reflects greater efficiency of political decisions or a desire to introduce direct democracy measures.

Quite surprisingly, the hypothesis that voters with low satisfaction with democracy are more likely to support a CPP was not confirmed. In turn, support for VV and ANO cannot be interpreted as voting driven by satisfaction with democracy and/or political institutions but rather dissatisfaction with the performance of established political parties in a democratic setting. On the contrary, political cynicism (or for our situation more precisely “alienation from politics”) increased the probability of support for CPPs, but not exclusively. Instead, it is a factor that draws citizens away from parties in government towards the oppositional parties, including CPPs.

Placing the results of our analysis into a broader context of party politics in the Czech Republic, support for CPPs clearly shows a move from voting based mostly on a left-right division and social classes (e.g. Hloušek and Kopeček 2008; Linek and Lyons 2013) to a non-ideological perception of politics, which stresses the competency of CPPs to solve the most important issues combined with general dissatisfaction with the abilities of established political parties.

Taking together that political cynicism does not explain support for CPPs, their supporters are rather positive about the economy (at least for ANO support in 2013) and that they believe that CPPs are capable of solving the most important issues, support for CPPs can be seen as “a vote for hope”.

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## Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article:

**Appendix S1.** Cleavages, protest or voting for hope? The Rise of New Populist Parties and in the Czech Republic.

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