

**RISE AND DECLINE OF RIGHT-WING
EXTREMISM IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC
IN THE 1990s**

**Martin Kreidl
Klára Vlachová**

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Address all correspondence to Klára Vlachová, Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Jilská 1, 110 00 Praha 1, Czech Republic; or email to vlachova@soc.cas.cz and/or kreidl@mbox.cesnet.cz.

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VZESTUP A PÁD PRAVICOVÉHO EXTREMISMU V ČESKÉ REPUBLICĚ V 90. LETECH

Martin Kreidl, Klára Vlachová

ABSTRAKT

V této práci se věnujeme analýze nedávné historie, geografických faktorů a sociálního zázemí pravicového extremismu v České republice. Obracíme pozornost zejména na republikánskou stranu (SPR-RSČ). Úvodem stručně popisujeme vývoj pravicového extremismu v České republice během posledního desetiletí. Podáváme přehled sociologických teorií o růstu extrémní pravice v Evropě a zjišťujeme, zda jsou tyto teorie aplikovatelné i v případě SPR-RSČ. Naše zjištění vedou k závěru, že se sociální zázemí SPR-RSČ nikterak neodlišuje od zázemí podobných stran v ostatních evropských zemích. Je také analyzována pozice republikánských voličů na mezi levou a pravou částí politického spektra. Tato pozice je velmi nestabilní a analýza přisuzuje SPR-RSČ pozici na levé straně politického spektra. Věnujeme se také analýze některých geografických faktorů českého pravicového extremismu. Vyšší inklinace k tomuto extremismu byla nalezena ve venkovských oblastech s vyšší nezaměstnaností a vyšší kriminalitou. V závěrečné části studie předkládáme možná vysvětlení volební prohry SPR-RSČ ve volbách do Poslanecké sněmovny v červnu 1998. Byla to zřejmě sociální nejistota a rostoucí nezaměstnanost, která vedla řadu příznivců SPR-RSČ k volbě levice. Podstatným faktorem volebního neúspěchu SPR-RSČ byl však také fakt, že se jí nepodařilo zmobilizovat nevoliče a prvovoliče.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

SPR-RSČ, republikáni, volby do Poslanecké sněmovny v roce 1998, pravicový extremismus, radikální pravice, extremismus středu, regionální faktory, sociální zázemí, prvovoliči, nevoliči

RISE AND DECLINE OF RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN THE 1990s

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores recent history, geographical correlates and social background of right wing extremism in the Czech Republic, namely of the Republican party (SPR-RSČ). First, we briefly describe the development of right-wing extremism in the Czech Republic over the last decade. Further, we review sociological theories about the rise of the extreme right in Europe and we test the applicability of these theories to SPR-RSČ. Our findings reveal that social background does not distinguish republican voters from their counterparts in other European countries. Consequently, electoral volatility between left- and right-wing parties and SPR-RSČ is analyzed placing the party somewhere into the left part of the Czech political spectrum. Next, some environmental correlates of the Czech right-wing extremism are investigated. Higher inclination towards right wing extremism is found in rural regions with high unemployment and crime rates. In the final section of the paper we suggest possible explanation of electoral failure of SPR-RSČ in the elections to the Chamber of deputies in June 1998. We argue that social insecurity and rising unemployment may have lead a number of SPR-RSČ supporters to vote left. Furthermore, SPR-RSČ failed in mobilizing non-voters and first-time voters in 1998.

KEY WORD

SPR-RSČ, republicans, elections to the House of Representatives in the 1998, right-wing extremism, radical right, extremism of the centre, regional correlates, social background, first-time voters, non-voters

AUFSTIEG UND FALL DES RECHTSEXTREMISMUS IN DER TSCHECHISCHEN REPUBLIK IM JAHR 1990

Martin Kreidl, Klára Vlachová

ANNOTATION

In dieser Arbeit werden die jüngste Geschichte, die geographischen Faktoren sowie der soziale Hintergrund des Rechtsextremismus in der Tschechischen Republik analysiert. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wird der Partei der Republikaner (SPR-RSČ) gewidmet. Einleitend wird die Entwicklung des Rechtsextremismus in der Tschechischen Republik in den letzten Jahrzehnten kurz beschrieben. Wir geben eine Übersicht soziologischer Theorien zum Anwachsen der extremen Rechten in Europa und untersuchen, ob diese Theorien auch im Falle der SPR-RSČ anwendbar sind. Unsere Ergebnisse führen zur Schlußfolgerung, dass sich der soziale Hintergrund der SPR-RSČ nicht vom Hintergrund ähnlicher Parteien in anderen europäischen Ländern unterscheidet. Es wird auch die Position der Wähler der Republikaner an der Grenze zwischen dem linken und dem rechten Teil des politischen Spektrums analysiert. Diese Position ist äußerst instabil und die Analyse misst der SPR-RSČ eine Position an der linken Seite des politischen Spektrums zu. Zudem werden einige geographische Faktoren des tschechischen Rechtsextremismus analysiert. Eine höhere Tendenz zu diesem Extremismus wurde in ländlichen Gebieten mit höherer Arbeitslosigkeit und höherer Kriminalität verzeichnet. Im abschließenden Teil der Studie legen wir mögliche Erklärungen für die Wahlniederlage der SPR-RSČ bei den Wahlen in das Abgeordnetenhaus im Juni 1998 vor. Sicherlich war es die soziale Unsicherheit sowie die ansteigende Arbeitslosigkeit, die eine Reihe der SPR-RSČ - Anhänger zur Wahl der Linken führte. Der wesentliche Faktor des Wahlmisserfolgs der SPR-RSČ war allerdings, dass es ihr nicht gelang, Nicht- und Erstwähler zu mobilisieren.

SCHLÜSSELWORTE

SPR-RSČ, Republikaner, Wahlen in das Abgeordnetenhaus im Jahre 1998, Rechtsextremismus, radikale Rechte, Extremismus der Mitte, Regionalfaktoren, sozialer Hintergrund, Erstwähler, Nichtwähler

1. RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST PARTIES AND CREATING A DEMOCRACY AFTER COMMUNISM

Post-communist transformation involves a number of antinomies and dilemmas that are difficult to overcome. Creating “democracy without democrats“ was one of the biggest challenges post-communist societies faced in 1989 (Sztompka 1992: 20). Was it feasible to expect that the process of creating and running a democracy would be trouble-free when fundamental resources of a working democratic society were lacking after forty years of communist rule? Sztompka argues that among all the post-communist deficiencies, the lack of education, political culture and democratic civic virtues were the most serious. Moreover, post-communist societies had neither professional politicians nor loyal bureaucrats.

In the course of the 1990s, it turned out that many post-communist citizens really restrained from accepting democratic civic virtues. For instance, many extreme right-wing parties enjoyed significant public support.¹ The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Slovak National Party, Slovenian National Party, Hungarian Justice and Life Party and Bulgarian Business Block achieved parliamentary representation (consult Table 1 for details). In the Czech Republic, Sdružení pro republiku - Republikánská strana Československa (Association for the Republic - Republican Party of Czechoslovakia, hereinafter referred to as the “SPR-RSČ“) played a substantial role in parliamentary politics between 1992 and 1998.

This paper aims to describe one of the post-communist right-wing extremist parties, namely the Czech SPR-RSČ. In the introduction, we will briefly outline its history. The party was founded in 1990, successfully entered high parliamentary politics in 1992 and did not re-gain parliamentary representation in the 1998 elections. We seek to explain its initial success and subsequent failure. An overview of theories of right-wing extremism in Western countries in the 1980s and particularly a description of its social base form the background of the analysis. May these concepts be successfully applied to SPR-RSČ? First, we try to locate the party in the Czech political spectrum. Further, we show how voting for SPR-RSČ is associated with regional characteristics such as unemployment and crime rates, urban/rural character, and average wage as some of the theories predict. The social background of SPR-RSČ is analyzed next. In conclusion, we attempt to forecast the future of extreme right-wing parties in Czech parliamentary politics.

¹ For a more detailed analysis of this term and related terminology (such as radical right, marginal right, national-populist right, etc.) and relationships among them, please, see for example Dvořáková (1997), Fiala (1998), Fiala and Mareš (1998), Strmiska (1998) or Westle and Niedermayer (1992).

Table 1 Electoral Support of Extremist Parties in Last Elections by Country

Country	Name	Election result (%)	Year
Australia	One Nation (ON)	8,4	1998
Austria	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ)	21,9	1995
		26,9	1999
Belgium	Vlaams Blok (VB)	7,8	1995
		9,9	1999
Bulgaria	Balgarski Biznes Blok (BBB)	4,9	1997
Denmark	Dansk Volkeparti (DV)	7,4	1998
	Fremskridtspartiet (FrP)	2,4	1998
France	Front National (FN)	14,9	1997
Germany	Die Republikaner (REP)	1,8	1998
	Deutsche Volksunion (DVU)	1,2	1998
Hungary	Magyar Igazság és Elet Pártja (MIÉP)	5,5	1998
Italy	Movimento Sociale Fiamma Tricolore (MSI)	1,7	1996
Norway	Fremskrittspartiet (FP)	15,3	1997
Russia	Liberalno-demokratitšeskaja partija Rossiji (LDPR)	11,2	1995
		6,0	1999
Slovakia	Slovenská národná strana (SNS)	9,1	1998
Slovenia	Slovenska nacionalna stranka (SNS)	3,2	1996
Switzerland	Schweizer Demokraten/ Démocrates Suisses/ Demokratici Svizzeri (SD)	3,1	1995
		1,8	1999

Note: The year is that of the last election into the Lower House of the parliament; percentage is the percentage of votes won by the party (in case of 2 round elections, we note the first round's gain)

Source: European Political Resources (<http://www.agora.stm.it/politic/europe.html>).

2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SPR-RSČ

The existence of political parties was restricted in communist Czechoslovakia. Sartori accurately describes the situation as a political system of a hegemonic party (Sartori 1976). After November 1989, however, political competition was enabled and there was room for the establishment of new parties, the re-establishment of parties that existed prior to the Communist's seizure of power or those that survived the communist era as members of the National front² under the leadership of the Communist party. In June 1990, the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic registered 35 new political entities (Fiala, Mareš and Pšeja 1999). However, only 13 parties and coalitions competed for votes in June's elections.

The SPR-RSČ was one of the new political players and its history is quite straightforward and typical of that period. The committee in charge of establishing the *Republican Party* met on December 2, 1989 for the first time (Fiala, Mareš 1997a: 110). In February 1990, the constituent convention met and Republican leaders declared that SPR-RSČ was an "extreme

² From 1948 all legal political parties were organized as a single entity called National front.

right-wing party“ (Fiala and Mareš 1998: 99). In the 1990 elections, SPR-RSČ ran in a coalition with Všelidová demokratická strana (Democratic Party of All People, “VDS“) and failed, gaining only about 1% of all votes (see Table 2).³ The coalition did not last long, though. Soon after it broke up, the percentage of SPR-RSČ supporters rapidly increased. Within one year, i.e. by June 1991, the percentage of voters supporting the Republicans rose from 1% to 6% (ibid.). Moreover, surveys showed that shortly after the elections the social composition of Republican voters already resembled voters of right wing extremist parties in Western countries. Republicans were mainly supported by younger, less educated men, particularly manual workers living in large cities (Boguszak 1990). By June 1991 the fundamentals of the party’s success were set up. The party found its target voters and succeeded in attracting a substantial part of them.

Table 2 Election results of SPR-RSČ⁴ by year and type of assembly (in %)

	ČSFR		ČR	
	1990*	1992	1996	1998
FS – SL	0,94	6,48		
FS – SN	1,00	6,37		
ČNR (PS)	1,00	5,98	8,01	3,90
Senate	-	-	n/a	n/a

Source: Czech Statistical Office

Notes: * In 1990, the party also ran in the election in Slovakia. But the percentage of votes gained was even smaller than in the Czech Republic. In 1990 and 1992 we note the election gains in the election to the Czech National Council; for the years 1996 and 1998 we note the gains in the election to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament. In 1990 SPR-RSČ ran in a coalition whose complete name was “Všelidová demokratická strana - Sdružení pro republiku – Republikánská strana Československa”.

During the period from 1990 until the second post-communist elections, the political system was being shaped. The era of more traditional political parties followed (Fiala, Mareš and Pšejja 1999). In the elections of June 1992, however, only two parties that had not been represented in the Parliament before gained parliamentary seats: center-oriented Liberální a sociální unie (Liberal and Social Union) and the extreme right-wing SPR-RSČ. The SPR-RSČ gained 5.98% of votes (see Table 2) and 14 seats in the Czech National Council. Between 1992 and 1996 the party was not yet consolidated internally and lost half of its deputies as they switched to other political parties. There were only five Republican deputies left in October 1995 (Fiala, Mareš 1997b; Olson 1997).

³ In the Czech Republic, elections have been and continue to be organized according to the proportional rule. Thus, only parties that receive more than 5% of valid votes gain seats in the Parliament.

⁴ For explanation of abbreviations see app. 2.

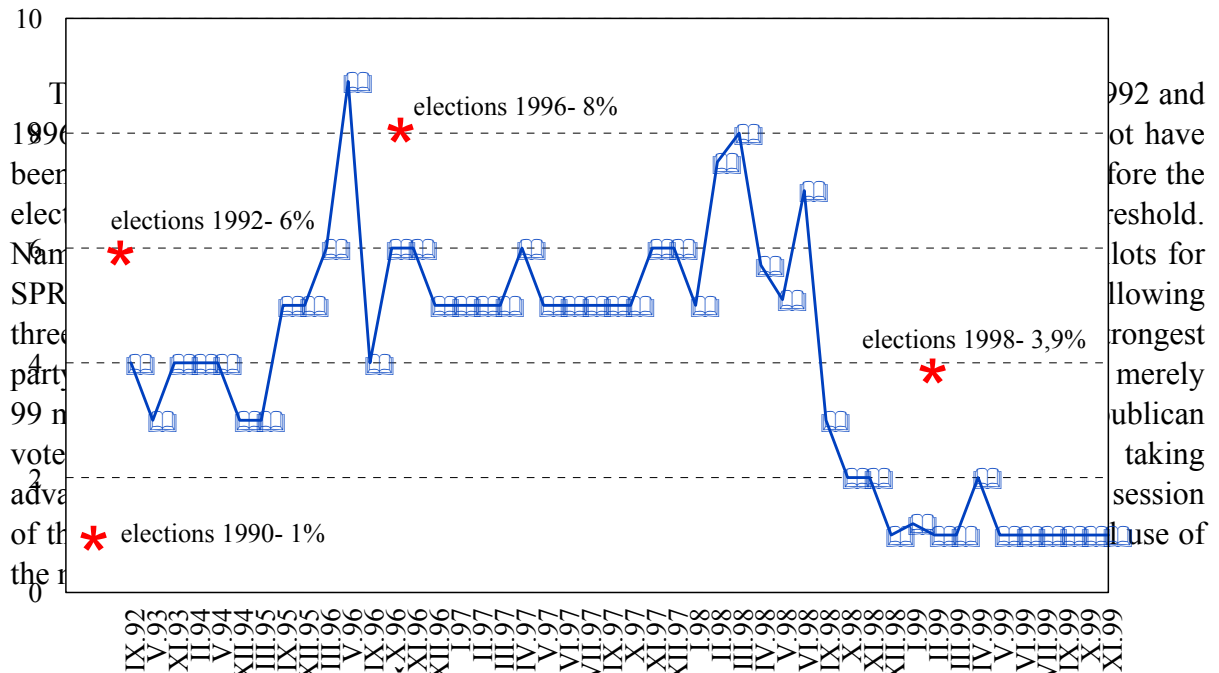


Figure 1. Support for SPR-RSC in public opinion polls and in elections, 1990- 1999 (in %)

Source: Czech Statistical Office , STEM (Trends)

The sequence of Republican successes was slightly interrupted in fall 1996 when the first elections to the Senate, the upper chamber of the Czech Parliament, took place. The Republicans decided not to run in these elections long before. Their reasons were quite salient. First, they rejected the existence of the Senate as such, and second, the electoral formula gave them only a slim chance that any Republican candidate could be elected⁵. Since the Republican decision regarding Senate elections received considerable media coverage, it further contributed to their established, anti-system status.

In 1997, the Czech Republic experienced not only a political crisis and the fall of Klaus minority government but also rising economic problems (external economic instability, rising unemployment and stagnating economic growth). Since an economic crisis creates a favorable environment for militant, extremist and authoritarian attitudes (see e.g. Legget 1964; Street, Legget 1961; Večerník 1995; Zeitlin 1969), it seemed that in the early elections to the Parliament in June, 1998, the SPR-RSČ would gain even more votes than in 1996. Public opinion polls also reported an increasing and more openly declared support for the Republicans (see Chart 1). Since fall 1996, the Republicans did not drop below 5% in the polls, climaxing in spring 1998 with 8%. In spite of the many optimistic anticipations, the SPR-RSČ gained only 3.9% in the elections and disappeared from parliamentary politics.

A brief survey of the history shows that a number of extreme right-wing parties that had been successful in the past ended up losing. The Danish *Fremskridtspartiet* almost doubled the number of its votes in 1988 (its actual gain was 9%). Ten years later it is no longer a relevant political party any more as only 2.4% voted for the party in the last elections (see Table 1). In Sweden, *Ny Demokrati* gained 6.8% in 1991, i.e. one year after the party was established. Currently, the party has no say in top politics as only a minimum number of voters support it.

Giovanni Sartori asserts that a political system will usually absorb anti-system parties. He claims: “The historian will inevitably discover that in the long run, revolutionary parties lose their original impetus and accommodate themselves to the regimes they have been unable to overthrow” (1976: 140-141). On the other hand, he admits that “the long run”, however, usually turns out to be too long for living players and for the political system (1976: 140-141). Radical right-wing parties may also experience a decrease in support and marginalization. The Republican party in Germany is another salient example. In spite of being rather successful at the beginning, they do not play an important role on the country-wide level any more. Bettina Westle and Oskar Niedermayer assert that other parties have re-gained a significant share of the protest voters that had joined the Republicans for a while (Westle, Niedermayer 1992: 98). However, there are a number of Western countries in which extreme right-wing parties have been and continue to be successful. The following section sums up theories regarding the rise of the extreme right in modern societies.

3. EXPLAINING THE SUCCESS OF THE EXTREME RIGHT

Piero Ignazi (1996: 557- 560) suggests that the success of the extreme right-wing parties stems from a post-industrial crisis of identity. He asserts that racist and xenophobic demands of national identity protection are a reaction to atomization of modern life where “the

⁵ The elections to the Senate are organized according the absolute (i.e. two-round) majority principle.

success and individualism interferes with a protective network of traditional bonds“. Consequently, anomie is strengthening; and thus Ignazi links “the loss of affective roots“ with authoritarian attitudes.⁶ All sorts of extremists easily operate on this ground. A stricter stand on national identity, refugees, law, order, the role of political parties, and democracy in general then results in the domination of the right by extremist parties.

Betz (1996) attributes the rise of extreme right-wing parties to the emergence of post-industrial society and to the increasing costs of accelerated modernization (cf. Robejšek 1997). The importance of skilled labor in management, research, development and consulting is increasing, as is the demand for higher education, more skills and longer work experience. On the other hand, the rewards for unskilled or semi-skilled work in manufacturing are continually decreasing. Post-industrial society splits into two parts. Two thirds comprise the rich and educated middle class individuals (employees, public administrators, professionals and blue collars employed in a post-fordian factory). The remaining one third consists mainly of unskilled and semi-skilled workers in manufacturing sectors, the long-term unemployed and undereducated young people with minimal work experience.

In another article, Betz (1993) attributes the success of the extreme right-wing parties to a coincidence of interests of a fraction of the working class and segments of the lower middle and new middle classes. He argues that workers feel threatened by constrained opportunities, rising unemployment, insufficient education and poor housing conditions and ventilate their anger on immigrants. On the other hand, parts of the lower middle and new middle classes identify with the program of lower taxes, bureaucracy cut-downs, dismantling welfare programs and limited state intervention into the private lives of citizens. The political success of the extreme right-wing parties is thus based not only on socially marginalized groups, i.e. “losers“ in the process of modernization, but also on its “winners“ (ibid. 423).

A high unemployment rate is usually positively correlated with the rise of the extreme right (Dvořáková 1997, Kříž 1998). The co-existing influx of immigrants and high unemployment rate provides the extremists with a strong argument. They frequently publicly declare that immigrants “take jobs away from our people“. Moreover, immigrants are said to contribute to a high crime rate. Right-wing extremists usually also employ a protection- of- national- interest- and- identity argument (Heywood 1994: 175)⁷. They also often claim that the right of other cultures’ development should be protected (Dvořáková 1997: 15-16).

Kitschelt (1991) assumes that the situation is the most favorable for the rise of right-wing extremists when existing parties fail to satisfy demands for open economy and authoritarian politics. Furthermore, frictions among existing conservative parties or their shift towards the center may open room for right-wing radicalism. If left-oriented parties gravitate towards the center as well, the chances of extremists rise even more. The similarity of left- and right-wing parties may then alienate more authoritarian voters and drain them to extremist parties.

The ability to mobilize non-voters is a key feature of the extreme right (Betz 1993; Veugelers 1997). Ignazi (1996) asserts that the mobilization of new resources, i.e. citizens

⁶ Rabušić and Mareš (1996) showed that right-wing extremists tended to display the highest degree of anomie in all of the population.

⁷ See e.g. Betz’s quotes official documents of the French National front (Betz 1993: 417).

that do not support the system and feel alienated from politics, is a principal trait of right-wing extremism. Previously non-politicized topics such as morals, immigration, national pride, etc. are in the core of their agenda. Lipset (1960), for example, demonstrated that mobilization of non-voters in the early 1930s significantly contributed to NSDAP's electoral success. Italian fascism also came to power by mobilizing non-voters (Brustein 1991).

Radical political programs also often attract first-time voters. They usually lack political stability, tend to be less conservative, incline to radical solutions and are more sensitive to emerging political topics. Betz (1993) believes that younger people are disproportionately disadvantaged by modernization and are therefore more strongly motivated to join protest parties. This is the case of the French National Front (Veugelers 1997), the Progress Party in Norway, FPÖ in Austria and Republicans in Germany (Betz 1993), and the National Front in the U.K. (Husbands 1981). Although existing empirical evidence is rather scattered (due to insufficient representation of voters and supporters of extremist parties in the polls) and unequivocal judgements are hard to make, Harrop and Miller (1987: 203) believe it is a general pattern of behavior of politically younger generations. However, young people join extremists only under specific circumstances. It is because young people most frequently absentee from the polls (c.f. Freedman, Goldstein 1996, Pattie, Johnston 1998). Non-voting and extremist voting appear to be in some sense substitutes in the political behavior of young generations.

The relationship between deviant voting behavior and inconsistent social status is a classical sociological topic (see Lenski 1967; Rush 1967; Matějů and Kreidl 1999). However, "deviant" may have different meanings in this context. While Lenski argues that status inconsistency leads to stronger liberalism, Rush refers to right-wing extremism. Since Slomczynski (1995) concluded that post-communist countries show high levels of status inconsistency, right-wing extremism might possibly flourish there. Recent analyses, however, show that high status inconsistency is associated with higher odds of left voting (Matějů and Kreidl 1999).

Party and electoral systems are to be included into our analysis as well. Sartori argued that number of anti-system parties number is a primordial characteristic of the so called "polarized pluralism" (Sartori 1976: 132-140). Research inspired by Sartori's ideas showed that a multiparty system and a electoral system of proportional representation are favorable conditions for the rise of radical right-wing parties. It also turned out that a higher election threshold (minimal number of votes necessary for a party to gain parliamentary representation) prevents extremists' rise (Jackman and Volpert 1996).⁸

Numerous authors also note that neo-conservatism throughout the 1980s also played a significant role in the rise of extremist parties. Ignazi (1992) asserts that due to the onset of neo-conservatism in Western democracies, the polarization increased both from the point of

⁸ In France, the National Front has one seat in the National Council (elected in one-mandate districts) in spite of the fact that it gains 15% of votes. Jean Marie Le Pen, the party leader, is a member of the European Parliament which is elected according to a proportional principle. Australia offers yet another example. The One Nation party has only one seat in the Senate that is elected through a preferential system in twelve-seat constituencies and two-seat territorial constituencies. It has no seats in the House of Representatives which is elected in single-seat constituencies. (However, it has eleven seats in the Parliament of the State of Queensland).

view of ideological distance and intensity. Based on Sartori, it could be argued that neo-conservatism cause a rise in the polarization of political systems in the 1980s.

Veugelers (1997) convincingly argues that the long-term success of extremist parties is determined by a more complex set of relationships. Many theories regarding the initial success and entry of radical right-wing parties into politics are correct, Veugelers argues, however they are incomplete. He adds that these parties have to succeed in creating new “party loyalty“ to sustain themselves and thus overcome marginalization. Two steps have to be taken for the party to become successful. While the initial success happens due to the weakened ties of voters to existing parties (issue voting) and non-voters’ mobilization, parties can only remain relevant if new party identification gradually develops.

4. SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE EXTREME RIGHT

Lipset (1960) argued that fascism was not a right-wing movement. He viewed it as an extremism of the center, a typical movement of the old middle class, i.e. of self-employed people, entrepreneurs and craftsmen. Even though middle class individuals desire lower taxes (a typical conservative claim), neither do they favor unbridled capitalism. They feel threatened by multi-national corporations, strong trade unions and national monopolies. Therefore, they call for state intervention and protection (which would rank them on the left). For Lipset, this mixture suggests that it is more correct to place fascism to the centre rather than to the right-wing of the political spectrum. Novák (1997: 57) suggests that the most typical examples of real right-wing extremism are “horthyism” in Hungary and Salazar’s regime in Portugal.

What is the typical social background of right-wing extremism? Veugelers (1997) showed that the social profile of the French National Front voters corresponds to Lipset’s argument. Extreme right voters in France significantly differ from traditional conservative voters (mostly women, older people and active Catholics). Men and young people are also the most frequent voters of the Progress Party in Norway, the Republicans in Germany and the National Front in the U.K. (Betz 1993; Husbands 1981). The Austrian FPÖ was popular not only among workers and employees but also among retired people. The French National front was the most successful among the middle and lower middle classes, receiving also high support from workers. Similarly, the Norwegian Progress Party gained support among white as well as blue collars (Betz 1993). Blue collars were also the key voters of the Republicans in Germany and the Flemish Block in Belgium.

Surprisingly, Jackman and Volpert (1996) did not find a significant correlation between support for radical parties in Germany and France and social status and income. Other researchers, however, argue that there is a relationship between social position and extremist voting. Westle and Niedermayer (1992) concluded that while there was no relationship between low income and extremist voting in Germany, a relationship between subjective deprivation and inclination towards the Republicans existed. A disproportionately high percentage of Republican supporters believed that they were structurally disadvantaged and/or considered their economic situation as bad. However, in Norway, there is a tendency among low-income voters to support the Progress Party (Betz 1993).

Education is another method to operationalize social status and may have a substantial impact on voting behavior. First, more educated people face lower risks of modernization, are usually more successful on the labor market and do not face the competition of immigrants on the labor market, since immigrants tend to be undereducated. In 1989, only 61% of Gastarbeiters in Austria had completed elementary education. In specific subpopulations this percentage is even higher, reaching as much as 84% within the Turkish one. The situation was similar in Germany and France (Betz 1993). Second, education is also closely related to the process of political socialization. Westle and Niedermayer (1992) believe that the higher the level of school a person attends, the more deeply he/she is socialized with valid standards of the political system (see also Klingemann and Pappi 1972). Higher education achieved in a democratic system, then, provides a guarantee of immunity to authoritarian tendencies. Third, the affiliation of less educated people with extremism may be caused by their more pronounced need for a clear worldview. Less educated people may lack the cognitive tools necessary to deal with the changing character of modern society. They may also lack the tolerance and experience needed for understanding complex social and political phenomena (Westle and Niedermayer 1992). However, no relationship between education and political extremism has been reported in most countries. Veugelers (1997) argues that there is often a non-linear relationship that is not so easily discovered. He demonstrated that while graduates of technical and business schools tended to support the French National Front, people with an educational background in the humanities did not (ibid. 34).

Supporters of extreme right-wing parties tend to be concentrated in urban areas where the negative aspects of modernization are more salient (Husbands 1981; Voerman, Lucardie 1992). Furthermore, unemployed youth and unskilled workers usually live in suburbs side by side with their competitors on the labor market, i.e. immigrants. When immigration to lower class suburbs occurs, their original inhabitants feel that their homes are being surrounded and invaded. They may feel trapped in the structure of modern society, abandoned by the better off, and have no hope of overcoming their lot. Traditionally left oriented workers then switch to the extreme right since left-oriented parties did not meet their demands on immigration (Betz 1993). Betz (1993) also suggests that right-wing extremists will enjoy higher popularity in more prosperous regions (such as Lombardy, Flanders, Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg) where dissatisfaction with citizens of poorer regions and disapproval of domestic redistribution complement anti-immigrant sentiments (Betz 1993).

Voters of extreme right-wing parties have a very diverse political backgrounds. Some researchers report that the extreme right attracts voters across the political spectrum (Betz 1993). In the French presidential elections, Le Pen gained support from people who considered themselves clearly left-oriented. These individuals amounted to 15% of Le Pen's supporters (Veugelers 1997). Husbands (1981) emphasizes that almost one a half of the Italian MSI voters belonged to the moderate or extreme left in the 1970s⁹. Similarly, Westle and Niedermayer (1992) show that a significant percentage of voters of the German Republicans claimed to be left-oriented. Moreover, between one fifth and one seventh of

⁹ This classification was based on attitudes and values, i.e. the scale that could be called "objective", in contrast to the more common method of the respondent's self-placement on a left-right scale. Husbands, however, notes that the classification was troublesome methodologically. Moreover, the MSI voters comprised only 2% of the sample and results are thus highly unreliable (Husbands 1981).

them declared that they had voted for social democracy in the previous elections. Most of them came from the CDU-CSU, however. There were no significant differences between Republican and CDU-CSU voters in terms of their position on the left-right scale.

Information on voters' inflows and outflows may help place extreme right voters in the political space and determine which parties are their main competitors. Mair's "theory of persistence" needs to be mentioned (Mair 1989). Mair argues that even though modern party systems experience higher voting volatility, shifts from left- to right-wing parties and vice versa are rather rare. Most of the increase in voters' mobility occurs within relatively stable left- and right-wing blocks. Consequent research confirmed Mair's conclusions (e.g. Heath et al. 1991). Persistence theory predicts that right-wing extremist parties would recruit new voters mostly from the body of moderate conservative voters. Veugelers (1997) and Westle and Niedermayer (1992) supported Mair's theory empirically. On the other hand, Betz (1993) and Ignazi (1992) oppose the persistence thesis, asserting that right-wing extremists are able to mobilize voters from all social strata and political parties and thus cannot be considered rightist.

5. SPR-RSČ IN 1996 AND 1998: SUCCESS AND FAILURE

In the following section, we analyze the results of the 1996 and 1998 elections to the Czech Parliament. We try to show to what extent the above mentioned theories could be applied to right-wing extremism in the Czech Republic. First, we will explore electoral mobility between extreme-right and other left- and right-wing parties. Then we will focus on the relationship between election results and their ecological correlates. The third part of the analysis will discuss the success of the Czech Republicans in addressing traditional extremist voters. Finally, we will summarize the potential causes of their failure in the 1998 elections.

5.1. VOTERS' MOBILITY IN 1992- 1998 PERIOD

Vlachová (1997) emphasized that the Republicans were the only relevant political party in the Czech Republic that did not stress the left-right scale in its program. On average, Republican voters defined themselves as right-wing, but with a high variance. Voters perceived the party as a center-oriented one (Šimoník 1996). A value-based analysis of 1996 data showed that Republican voters were located in the center of the left-right scale and were closer to the authoritarian end of the libertarianism-authoritarianism scale (Vlachová a Matějů 1998: 162). Both these findings supported the hypothesis about the "extremism of the center".

Table 3 Inflow and outflow of SPR-RSČ voters. Balance with left- and right-wing parties in 1996 and 1998 elections (in %)

	Left		Right	
	inflow	outflow	inflow	outflow
1996	+7%	-28%	+17%	-9%
1998	+7%	-37%	+14%	-8%

Note: Percentages always refer to previous elections. E.g. 7% of people who in 1992 voted left, voted SPR-RSČ in 1996. Similarly, 28% of people who voted SPR-RSČ in 1992 voted left in 1996.

Source: 1996, 1998 exit poll data, SC&C/IFES for the Czech television.

Voters' mobility between 1992 and 1996 confirmed the position of the SPR-RSČ between the left- and right-wing parties. They surprisingly showed its stronger inclination to the left. This bias however may be because SPR-RSČ joined the left-oriented parties in their opposition within the Parliament. In comparison to 1992, the Republicans gained 17% of voters from right-wing parties (only 7% from left-oriented ones) and lost 28% to left-oriented parties (9% to right-wing ones) in the 1996 elections. In 1998, the situation looked similar. The Republicans were gaining more votes from the right-wing parties (14% in comparison to 7% from left-oriented ones) and losing more votes to left-oriented parties (37% in comparison to 8% to right-wing ones). This corresponded to a new position on the left-right and libertarian-authoritarian scales of the Republican voters discovered in 1998, when SPR-RSČ voters clearly belonged to the left-wing of the political spectrum (Vlachová 1998: 264). We believe that this may help comprehend the failure of Republicans in 1998 elections.

The polls did not indicate that SPR-RSČ was losing voters before the elections. STEM research agency reported that 8% of population was going to vote for SPR-RSČ in March of 1998. It was suspected that the election campaign could draw many new voters to SPR-RSČ. Furthermore, sociologists predicted that actual preferences of SPR-RSČ might be even higher since many SPR-RSČ supporters tend not to indicate their true preferences in the polls. Anticipated SPR-RSČ support was therefore higher than polls actually showed. However, the situation turned out to be exactly the opposite. A significant number of those who originally claimed to vote for SPR-RSČ in the polls must have switched to another party. Where did they go?

Table 4 shows the second votes of the Republican supporters which may provide an answer. A comparison of 1996 and 1998 distributions is particularly interesting here. While 37% of the SPR-RSČ voters specified clearly left-oriented parties (ČSSD, KSČM and DŽJ) as their second choice in 1996, the percentage went up to two thirds in 1998! ČSSD was the most popular second choice party with 21% and 37% in 1996 and 1998, respectively. KSČM was the second most acceptable party with 10.5% and 19.1% in 1996 and 1998, respectively. Also DŽJ (the Pensioners' party) strengthened its position among Republican voters, since its ratio of second votes increased from 5.2% to 9.2%. The increased outflow of Republican voters to the left in the 1996–1998 period (see Table 3) indicates that many voters that had been considering a left-oriented party as a “back-up“ option in the end succumbed to the increasing left-oriented temptation. The following analysis will explain in more detail the reasons for transformed value and voting preferences of the SPR-RSČ voters.

Table 4 Second votes of SPR-RSČ supporters in October 1996 and April 1998. Line percentages and adjusted residuals (in parentheses).¹⁰

¹⁰ During the application of adjusted residual, considering the small representation of republican voters in the

		KSČM	DŽJ	ČSSD	KDU- ČSL	US	ODS	ODA	Other parties
1996	SPR-RSČ voters	10,5% 1,8)	5,3 (0,6)	21,1 (2,3)	7,9 (-0,6)	-- --	10,5 (0,6)	7,9 (-1,5)	36,8 (-1,2)
	Other voters	6,7% (-1,8)	5,4 (-0,6)	18,4 (-2,3)	16,6 (0,6)	-- --	12 (-0,6)	25,8 (1,5)	15,2 (1,2)
1998	SPR-RSČ voters	19,1% (4,0)	9,2 (-0,9)	37,2 (5,0)	4,3 (-3,4)	4,3 (-3,3)	6,4 (-1,0)	-- --	22,3 (0,4)
	Other voters	7,5% (-4,0)	9,4 (0,9)	18 (-5,0)	17,8 (3,4)	17,6 (3,3)	9,9 (1,0)	-- --	19,4 (-0,4)

$\chi^2_{96}=11,32$, sig. 0,079, n=1030

$\chi^2_{98}=55,00$, sig. 0,000, n=1551.

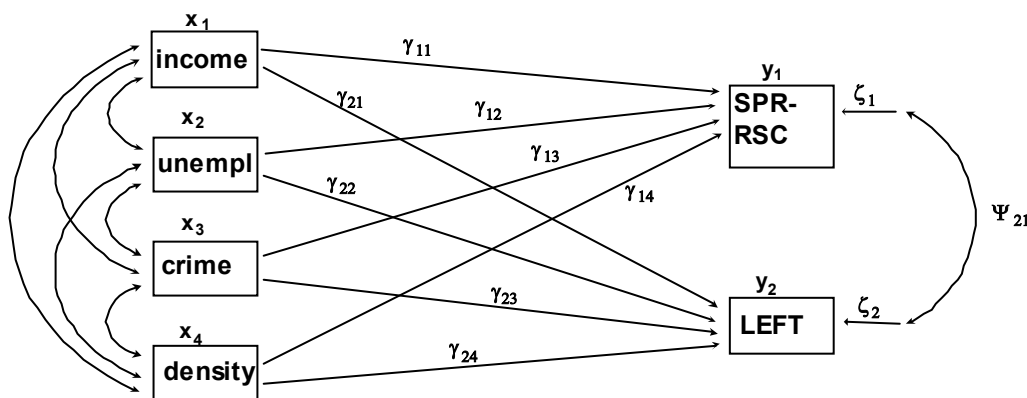
Source: ISSP 1996, "Trends" 4/1998 (STEM)

set, we follow the recommendation of Řehák and Řeháková. They recommend using these statistics in the case that all the minimal expected frequencies in the table are higher or equal to 0,5 (Řehák, Řeháková 1978: 624).

5.2. REGIONAL VARIATION IN RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST VOTING

Voting behavior is affected both by individual and geographical level characteristics. In this section we would like to explore the latter, which usually reflect the opportunity structure individuals face in their lives. We merely focus on the association between voting behavior and some regional characteristics in the two election years of our interest, namely 1996 and 1998. Some scholars assume that a relationship between the economic environment (average wage and unemployment) and extreme right election gains should exist. This should merely be a result of a tension in the labor market. Furthermore, the radical right is usually considered an urban phenomenon. Lastly, we would like to explore the relationship between the extreme right and the criminality rate, since, as we have already mentioned earlier, appeals to a rising crime rate are frequent parts of the extreme right agenda. With regard to the previous subchapter, we would like to offer a more in depth view of the relationship between SPR-RSČ and left-wing parties. Therefore, we decided to employ a simultaneous regression analysis, because it is quite flexible in manipulating specific coefficients in the model. We specified a multisample model to compare the 1996 and 1998 effects (for more convenience the model has been visualized in Diagram 1). We used LISREL software to test the model.¹¹

Diagram 1 Simultaneous regression analysis of election results of SPR-RSČ and left-wing parties on regional characteristics



Note: see Table 5 for details.

From the results in Table 5 we can see that the structure of effects was nearly identical in both years. However, in 1998 the percentage of explained variation was higher. The effect of unemployment on voting for the SPR-RSČ is apparent. The same holds for the regional

¹¹ Correlation matrices and input LISREL files necessary for reproducing the analysis are available from the authors upon request.

crime rate. It should come as no surprise that a rising crime rate and unemployment contributes to voting for extreme right-wing parties. However, it is surprising that there is a net negative relationship between population density and election gains of the SPR-RSČ. Actually, not only is the net effect negative. Product moment correlations (not reported here) show that this effect is negative even without controls. SPR-RSČ thus appears to be a rural rather than an urban party. There is no relationship between extreme right voting and average wage. Therefore, the hypothesis of a relationship between “regional poverty“ and inclination to extremism does not hold. Betz (1993), on the other hand, stated that support of extreme right-wing parties is stronger in richer regions of the country. This opposing hypothesis, however, does not hold either.

The saturated model (Table 5) suggests that the relationship between the Republicans’ election gains and unemployment strengthened between 1996 and 1998. Can this change be proven as statistically significant, however? To be able to answer this question, we set up an alternative model imposing the condition of equal effect of unemployment on the SPR-RSČ gains in 1996 and 1998 ($\gamma_{112} = \gamma_{212}$). To answer the above question, we need to examine whether the change in chi square exceeded the critical limit defined for the one degree of freedom we gained by the change. As the first line of Table 6 shows, the model is statistically acceptable even when the restrictions are included ($\chi^2 = 1.39$ with 1 degree of freedom). This means that, in spite of a significant increase in unemployment from 1996 till 1998, the election gains of the SPR-RSČ did not increase as anticipated.

There are, however, other questions at stake. If the Republicans did not take advantage of the increased unemployment, did the left-wing parties benefit from it? Did the effects of unemployment on the election gains of left-wing and extreme right parties differ? The second line of Table 6 shows statistics of the fit for model 3, where three condition of equality were specified, We get a chi square of 3.57 with 3 degrees of freedom here, which again meets the basic criterion of acceptability. The conclusion that follows is apparent. All four effects of the regional unemployment rate on the election results of the extreme right and left are identical in 1996 and 1998.

Table 5 Simultaneous regression analysis- of election results of SPR-RSČ and left-wing parties on regional characteristics in 1996 and 1998 - saturated model (N=77)

	1996		1998	
	SPR-RSČ (y1)	Left (y2)	SPR-RSČ (y1)	Left (y2)
Average income (x1)	0,02	-0,08	0,01	-0,17
Unemployment rate (x2)	0,48***	0,65***	0,63***	0,68***
Criminality (x3)	0,33**	0,1	0,36***	0,04
Density of population (x4)	-0,30**	-0,23**	-0,26**	-0,16
Explained variance	0,33	0,51	0,52	0,56

Note: * statistically significant at level 0.1; ** statistically significant at level 0.05; *** statistically significant at level 0.01

Prague is considered as one region in the analysis.

Explanation of variables: Income = average personal income in the region. Unemployment = for the year 1996 we use the average regional unemployment rate calculated for the whole year, for 1998 – we use the unemployment rate as reported by May 31st, 1998. Crime = relative criminality in the region (number of registered crimes per 1000 inhabitants (1996). Density of population per km². Left wing parties are defined for the respective years as follows. In 1996: ČSSD (Czechoslovak Social Democracy), DŽJ (Pensioners for Life Securities), KSČM (Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia), LB (Left Block), SDL (Party of the Democratic Left). In 1998- ČSSD, DŽJ, KSČM. See e.g. Fiala, Mareš, Pšeja 1999 for the party system development and Večerník, Matějů 1999:354- 355 for parties' names and their abbreviations.

Table 6 Simultaneous regression analysis of election results of SPR-RSČ and left-wing parties on regional characteristics in 1996 and 1998 - restricted models

	χ^2	Df	p	RMR	GFI
$\gamma_{112} = \gamma_{212}$	1,39	1	0,24	0,023	1,00
$\gamma_{112} = \gamma_{212} = \gamma_{122} = \gamma_{222}$	3,57	3	0,31	0,019	1,00

Note: Variables and model are defined in Tab. 5 and Diagram 1

5.3. MOBILIZATION OF NON-VOTERS

14% of those who did not participate in the 1992 elections and came to the polls in 1996 (including the first-time voters) voted for the Republicans. In 1998, the absolute percentage of those who did not vote in 1996 and voted in 1998 amounted to 4.8%. The Republicans therefore failed to achieve an above-average mobilization of non-voters in 1998. We argue that the failure to mobilize previous non-voters accounts for the bad election results of the Republicans in general. A specific analysis of first-time voters (otherwise a subgroup of non-voters) provides us with a similar result. 13.3% of first-time voters cast their ballots for the

Republicans in 1996, which comprised 12.6% of all SPR-RSČ voters. No party had a higher representation of first-time voters in its electorate (Vlachová and Kreidl 1998). In 1998, a mere 5.1% of first-time voters voted for the SPR-RSČ. Then, only one out of twenty of the SPR-RSČ voters was a first-time voter (see Table 7).

Table 7 Preferences of first time and other voters in 1996 and 1998 elections in the Czech Republic. Adjusted residuals in parentheses.

		KSČM	ČSSD	SPR-RSČ	KDU-ČSL	US	ODS	ODA	Other parties
1996	Mature voters	10,8 (7,2)	26,5 (0,7)	7,6 (-6,6)	8,1 (0,5)	-- --	29,6 (-0,8)	6,1 (-3,8)	11,2 (1,4)
	First-time voters	3,8 (-7,2)	25,5 (-0,7)	13,3 (6,6)	7,7 (-0,5)	-- --	30,8 (0,8)	9,1 (3,8)	9,8 (-1,4)
1998	Mature voters	11,2 (4,0)	32,3 (-0,2)	3,8 (-1,5)	8,9 (-0,5)	8,6 (-1,3)	27,7 (-0,1)	-- --	7,5 (-1,1)
	First-time voters	5,7 (-4,0)	32,7 (0,2)	5,1 (1,5)	9,6 (0,5)	10,2 (1,3)	28,0 (0,1)	-- --	8,7 (1,1)

1996: $\chi^2=102,76$, sig. 0,000, n= 13,890.

1998: $\chi^2_{98}=18,89$, sig.0,005, n= 13,312.

Source: 1996, 1998 exit poll data, SC&C/IFES for the Czech television.

Young voters, first-time voters in particular, tend to comprise a significant part of the electorate of extremist parties and, as we have seen, probably have accounted for a substantial part of the drop of SPR-RSČ votes between 1996- 1998. We can only estimate to what extent the election results were affected by the fact that the elections were early. This meant that only two one-year population cohorts of the first-time voters participated in the elections rather than four cohorts as is the case in regular elections. According to the statistical data, there were approximately 330,000 first-time voters in 1998 as compared to 770,000 in 1996. However, the smaller body of potential voters shall not overshadow the failure of the recruitment process. As we have seen in table 7, there was not a significantly higher tendency of first time voters to vote for the Republicans in 1998.

First-time voters usually significantly contribute to changing election results. Since their representation in the population is decreasing (a consequence of the 1970s population boom which was followed by a drop in fertility), we might predict more stable election results for the future. Furthermore, it seems that the new generation of voters merely copies the voting behavior of the entire population. A relatively new era of Czech politics seems to be coming, since we observe a pattern different from the early 1990s when young voters tended to vote for moderate and extreme right-wing parties (see Table 7).

5.4. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPR-RSČ VOTERS

In this section, we are going to the individual social characteristics of SPR-RSČ voters and will compare them to a typical profile of an extremist voter in other European countries. We are using a logistic regression in the analysis with a dummy “VOTESPR-RSC” as the dependent variable (1 = voted for the SPR-RSČ, 0 = voted for another party). The analysis is based on data from exit-poll surveys carried out by the SC&C and IFES consortium for Czech Television in 1996 and 1998.¹² We use a bunch of exploratory variables here, all of them are described in the Appendix. The analysis has been performed using 1996 and 1998 exit poll files and a dummy distinguishing both years was included in some models.

For the results of the logistic regression models see Table 8. All three models say with some modifications, the same thing. It seems that the profile of the Czech Republicans corresponds to that of voters of the extreme right in other countries (cf. Betz 1993; Husbands 1981; Schuster 1996; Veugelers 1997; Voerman, Lucardie 1992; Westle, Niedermayer 1992). Furthermore, the inclination of certain social groups to vote for the Republicans seems to be stable throughout time. As we see from the higher level models no interaction effect with the year turned out statistically significant (Table 9).

¹² The surveys comprising 13,000 respondents each year overcome the usual problems related to low representation of the Republican voters. In addition, they include only actual voters, which eliminates distortions due to respondents stating unreliable information related to their participation in elections. However, these surveys are limited to a few questions and, therefore, do not allow for testing all hypotheses on voting behavior. For more detailed information, please check the webpage of the Sociological Data Archive in Prague (<http://archiv.soc.cas.cz>), where these data sets are deposited and publicly accessible.

Table 8 Logistic regression of voting for SPR-RSČ: models without interaction effects

	MODEL I			MODEL II			MODEL III		
	B	Wald	Exp(B)	B	Wald	Exp(B)	B	Wald	Exp(B)
SEX	0,56***	97,17	1,75	0,57***	101,59	1,77	0,57***	99,32	1,76
NONLAST	0,08	0,61	1,08	0,18*	3,09	1,20	0,23**	5,15	1,26
FIRST	0,24**	5,74	1,28	0,66***	49,87	1,93	0,53***	31,60	1,69
YOUNG	0,58***	84,03	1,78	--	--	--	--	--	--
HSCHOOL	-0,73***	143,47	0,48	-0,70***	130,51	0,50	-0,69***	129,34	0,50
WORKER	0,63***	70,62	1,87	0,66***	79,50	1,94	0,62***	69,69	1,86
EMPL	0,43***	32,55	1,53	0,45***	35,67	1,56	0,41***	30,41	1,51
UNEMPL	0,86***	26,80	2,36	0,92***	31,22	2,52	1,07***	41,21	2,91
SELF	0,63***	49,09	1,88	0,64***	51,17	1,90	0,61***	45,89	1,84
RELIG	-0,24***	17,51	0,79	-0,32***	32,83	0,72	-0,36***	40,02	0,70
YEAR	--	--	--	--	--	--	-0,67***	141,72	0,51
Constant	-3,24***	1936,58	--	-3,11	1886,32	--	-2,80***	1393,34	--
R2		0,068			0,060			0,075	
PŘED		94,24%			94,24%			94,24%	

Note: * statistically significant at level 0.1; ** statistically significant at level 0.05; *** statistically significant at level 0.01 Presented statistic R² is shown as suitable scale for explained variation (SPSS 1997).

Source: 1996, 1998 exit poll data, SC&C/IFES for the Czech television.

For a more detailed description of variables see Appendix.

While men showed an above-average inclination to vote for the Republicans, women were significantly less likely to support extremists. SPR-RSČ was attractive for first-time and young voters, failing to attract “experienced“ voters. Consequently the party did not have a stable electorate. Surprisingly, the effect of absenteeism in previous elections (NONLAST) is not significant in model I. For this reason, we did not include the YOUNG variable in models II and III in order to show that it was only due to the overlapping effect of the YOUNG and NONLAST and YOUNG and FIRST variables. That indeed was the case, since the respective metric coefficients increased from 0.08 to 0.18 and from 0.24 to 0.66. The change is not surprising as young people tend both to vote for extreme parties and to be absentee from the elections (cf. Freedman and Goldstein 1996; Pattie and Johnston 1998). Models II and III also confirm the ability of SPR-RSČ to attract previous non-voters. In contradiction to our expectations, the models do not show a decreasing ability to mobilize first-time voters and non-voters.

Table 9 Logistic regression of voting for SPR-RSČ: model with interaction effects

	B	Wald	Exp(B)
SEX	0,56***	96,84	1,75
NONLAST	0,26**	3,95	1,30
FIRST	0,58***	30,28	1,78
HSCHOOL	-0,51***	34,24	0,60
WORKER	0,67***	75,26	1,96
EMPL	0,61***	34,47	1,85
UNEMPL	0,98***	10,90	2,65
SELF	0,71***	34,07	2,04
RELIG	-0,35***	39,02	0,70
YEAR	-0,65***	116,38	0,52
FIRST*YEAR	-0,34	2,14	0,71
NONLAST*YEAR	-0,11	0,27	0,90
UNEMPL*YEAR	0,39	1,35	1,47
EMPL*HSCHOOL	-0,39**	8,00	0,68
SELF*HSCHOOL	-0,24	2,13	0,78
UNEMPL*HSCHOOL	-0,26	0,59	0,77
Constant	-2,87***	1287,70	
PŘED	94,24%		
R ²	0,076		

Note: * statistically significant at level 0.1; ** statistically significant at level 0.05; *** statistically significant at level 0.01 Presented statistic R² is shown as suitable scale for explained variation (SPSS 1997).

Source: 1996, 1998 exit poll data, SC&C/IFES for the Czech television.

For a more detailed description of variables see Appendix.

The voting trend for the Republicans was stronger in 1996 than in 1998, as a logical result of the election output. SPR-RSČ scored a success with people with lower education (no high-school diploma) and occupations of people with no high-school diplomas. Workers (WORKER) that rarely hold high-school diplomas and employees (EMPL) also display higher odds of extreme voting. The statistically significant effect of the interaction term EMPL*HSCHOOL in model IV (Table 9) is important here, because it demonstrates that the probability that an employee would vote for the Republicans is significantly reduced if he/she has obtained higher education. This very finding fits in with the hypothesis that the lower middle class (comprising mostly employees with lower education) votes for extremists. The old middle class is also more likely to vote for the Republicans. We assumed the education would again play the role of a discriminating variable among old middle class members. This assumption was not confirmed, however. Entrepreneurs with both lower and higher education were equally likely to vote for the extreme right. The results also show that voting for SPR-RSČ was strongly related to unemployment even at the individual level. However, the coefficient remains unchanged between 1996 and 1998.

The non-religious tended to vote for the Republicans more frequently than religious people (cf. Lipset 1960). Individualization and atomization of modern life are assumed to give way to right-wing extremists. As we have seen, some institutions, for example the church, appear to be able to prevent people from political extremes. However, religious life need not to be connected to a less atomized life, but may temper political extremism in another way. A different study would be necessary to explore the relationships between religion and political participation in more detail. Westle and Niedermayer (1992: 95) mention trade unions as another institution with a strong socializing effect. In contrast to the church, however, no empirical evidence on trade unions and right-wing extremism has ever been found and we can not provide it in our analysis.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The results of our analysis are hardly astonishing. In the Czech Republic, social groups displaying a higher risk of extremist voting resemble those in other countries, i.e. they comprise young people, predominantly men, workers and employees with no tertiary education, entrepreneurs and non-religious people. Our data cast doubt on the SPR-RSČ as an urban phenomenon, because it shows that supporters of the Republicans are concentrated in less densely populated areas. First-time voters and non-voters were more likely to favor extremists. The salient inclination of SPR-RSČ voters towards left-wing parties challenges the view of the SPR-RSČ as a right-wing party.

Last but not least, we would like to discuss what prospects the Republicans face. There are arguments as well as counter-arguments for their bright prospects. The current position of the SPR-RSČ seems rather unfavorable due to their political strategy combining “within system features” with “outside system strategies” (e.g., financial, media and other benefits). In the past, Republicans could blame the government for not being able to reduce the crime rate, on the one hand, and commit crimes and avoid being prosecuted on the other hand. They could libel the government by calling them thieves and at the same time misuse the state contributions designated to political parties, as well as damage and abuse property of

the Parliament.¹³ The electoral failure in 1998 deprived the Republican party of most of these benefits.

If the psychological effect of the Czech electoral system persisted (Novák 1996: 410-411), the percentage of votes for the non-parliamentary parties should decrease. This trend will most likely apply to SPR-RSČ as well and thus we shall predict a continuous deterioration of their electoral support. Moreover, the number of first-time voters will be decreasing and the importance of these voters for the overall election outcome will diminish. Furthermore, the Republican leaders may not be able to attract their attention, as was the case in 1998. Election results are difficult to predict as first-time voters and non-voters tend to behave in an unpredictable way.

Even though the extremists may seem to have disappeared from the Czech political scene, they may unexpectedly reappear at any time. Kitschelt (1991) suggested that if the excessive expectations from the new Social Democratic government were not fulfilled and if Social Democracy did not resist the centripetal trends, radical movements may be born. While Schuster (1996) asserts that the number of manual workers voting for extreme-right oriented parties increased due to their dissatisfaction with the welfare program of the Socialists in Austria, the opposite situation might have occurred in the Czech Republic: the voters were dissatisfied with the SPR-RSČ welfare program. After all, that is what analyses carried out immediately after the elections showed.¹⁴

Another reasons why the Republicans were unable to maintain their position as the “extremists of the centre“ might have been the high polarization of Czech politics. The Czech political environment gradually developed into a scale with two clear poles (Vlachová 1997) that work as centres of gravitation. Therefore, the left- and right-wing parties were not as easily interchangeable as Kitschelt (1991) suggested. In fact, the differences between them kept growing and the parties were only gradually coming to resemble their traditional counterparts (Matějů and Vlachová 1998). The post 1998 elections “Opposition Agreement“ may play a substantive role in overshadowing differences between left and right. By the same token, if unemployment keeps rising while the Social Democratic government is in power, the trend of the Social Democrats attracting extremists voters may reverse and lead the voters back to the Republicans or similar parties. If so the future of the extreme right would not be bad at all.

¹³ As a Member of the Parliament, the SPR-RSČ leader for example damaged a bench in the Parliament and drove an incredible number of kilometers in the car provided to him, reaching an astounding average consumption exceeding 17 liters of gas per 100 kilometers. In the spring of 1998, the party began falling apart. The party members started leaving and alleged the party leaders had humiliated them, put psychological pressure on them, taken away a significant share of their salaries, and spent the funds provided to the party by the government on building villas and purchasing expensive cars. The SPR-RSČ was almost unable to organize a traditional (private) campaign based on handing out promotion leaflets and organizing rallies with Sládek, the party leader. However, it was the only party to run for elections that organized a billboard campaign with populist mottoes throughout the country while other parties decided to refrain from costly billboards during the election campaign due to their financial scandals. The lack of modest attitude on the part of the party leaders combined with allegations of the disappointed party members must have significantly contributed to the traditional Republican voters, egalitarian and dissatisfied with the system, voting for ČSSD that presented itself as the party that will solve all the problems the country was facing.

¹⁴ For example, based on modeling shifts of voters, Spousta (1998) showed that the Republicans “disappeared“ in other left-oriented parties.

SHRNUTÍ

Přestože se západní demokracie těší dlouhé tradici liberální demokracie a stabilitě politických systémů, existuje v nich problematický prvek – strany označované jako „extrémně pravicové“. Extrémně pravicové strany, ne nepodobné těm, které nalzáme v západní Evropě, uspěly také v nových nebo obnovených demokraciích střední a východní Evropy. Ačkoliv jsou tyto strany obecně označovány jako „pravicové“, jejich sociální zázemí a sdílené politické hodnoty hovoří více pro Lipsetovo označení „extremismus středu“.

V české republice byla extrémně pravicová SPR-RSČ přítomna v Poslanecké sněmovně Parlamentu po dvě volební období. Po volbách v roce 1992 získala 14 křesel a po volbách v roce 1996 18 křesel. Analýza ukázala, že voliči republikánů jsou velmi podobní voličům extrémních pravicových stran na Západě – mladí muži, prvovoliči a nevoliči (v předchozích volbách), dělníci a vyučení zaměstnanci, drobní podnikatelé a lidé bez vyznání. Podpora republikánům byla soustředěna v oblastech s nižší hustotou populace, vyšší nezaměstnaností a vyšší kriminalitou.

Ačkoliv SPR-RSČ měla vzrůstající podporu voličstva a ekonomické (recese, bankroty bank atd.), sociální (růst nezaměstnanosti) a politické podmínky (krize menšinové koaliční vlády vedoucí k předčasným volbám) byly příznivé pro růst extremismu, nepodařilo se jí v roce 1998 překročit 5% práh k získání křesel v Poslanecké sněmovně. Důvody tohoto volebního neúspěchu byly neschopnost zmobilizovat prvovoliče – velmi důležitý segment jejich tradičního elektorátu, ztráta dřívějších voličů ve prospěch levicových stran a pravděpodobně také celková desintegrace strany samotné.

SUMMARY

Despite a long tradition of liberal democracy and stability of political systems in Western democracies, there exists a problematic element – parties with the label “extreme right”. Extreme right wing parties, not dissimilar to those parties found in Western Europe succeeded also in new or renewed democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. Although the parties are generally labelled as “right wing”, their social background and shared political values speak more for the Lipset (1960: 131) label “extremism of the centre”.

In the Czech Republic, there was the extreme right wing SPR-RSČ present in the House of Representatives of the Parliament for two electoral terms. After 1992 elections it gained 14 seats and after 1996 elections 18 seats. Analysis showed, that the electorate of republicans has been very similar to the electorate of the extreme right wing parties in the West – young men, first time voters or non-voters (in the previous elections), workers and employees with vocational education, small entrepreneurs and people with no religious affiliation. Support for republicans has been concentrated in areas of lower density of population, higher unemployment and higher criminality.

Although SPR-RSČ had increasing support of the electorate and the economic (recession, bankrupts of several banks etc.), social (rise of unemployment) and political conditions (crisis of minority coalition government leading to the early elections) in the country were favourable for the rise of extremism, but the party failed to cross the 5% threshold to gain seats in the House of Representatives in the third elections in 1998. The reasons of this

electoral failure were the inability to mobilize first time voters – the very important segment of its traditional electorate - and the loss of the previous electorate in favor of left wing parties (namely ČSSD) and, probably, the total disintegration of the party itself.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Description of variables in models and percentage representation in categories on joined set from exit polls from 1996 and 1998

Variable		percentage in category 1	
VOTESPR	1= voted for SPR RSČ	5%	0= voted for other parties
SEX	1= male	50,3%	0= female
NONLAST	1= did not attended last election on his/her own will	5,4%	0= others
FIRST	1= first-time voters	6,2%	0= others
YOUNG	1= age under 29	24,9%	0= others
HSCHOOL	1= graduation + tertiary education	57,7%	0= others
WORKER	1= worker	16,4%	0= others
EMPL	1= employee	31,9%	0= others
UNEMPL	1= unemployed	1,6%	0= others
SELF	1= self-employed	12,7%	0= others
RELIG	1= Christian religion	42,8%	0= others
YEAR	1= 1998	48,6%	0= 1996

APPENDIX 2

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

Party names:

Abbreviation	Name of the party (English)	Name of the party (Czech)
SPR – RSC	Association for the Republic - Republican Party of Czechoslovakia	Sdružení pro republiku - Republikánská strana Československa
VDS	Democratic party of All People	Všelidová demokratická strana
KSČM	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia	Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy
LB	Left Block	Levý blok
DŽJ	Pensioners for Life Guarantees	Důchodci za životní jistoty
SDL	Party of the Democratic Left	Strana demokratické levice
ODS	Civic Democratic Party	Občanská demokratická strana
ODA	Civic Democratic Alliance	Občanská demokratická aliance
US	Freedom Union	Unie svobody
KDU-ČSL	Christian Democratic Union/Czechoslovak Peoples Party	Křesťansko demokratická unie/ Československá strana lidová

Other Abbreviations:

Abbreviation	Name (English)	Name (Czech)
ČSFR	Czech and Slovak Federal Republic	Česká a Slovenská federativní republika
ČR	Czech Republic	Česká republika
FS – SL	Federal Assembly – Chamber of the People	Federální shromáždění – Sněmovna lidu
FS – SN	Federal Assembly – Chamber of Nations	Federální shromáždění - Sněmovna národů
ČNR (PS)	Czech National Council (1.1.1993 transformed into Chamber of Deputies)	ČNR (1.1.1993 Poslanecká sněmovna)
PSP ČR	Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic	Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky
Senate	Senate, Parliament of the Czech Republic (Upper Chamber)	Senát Parlamentu České republiky