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An Opportunist Journey

*Analysis of Andrej Babiš's
ANO Movement*

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The present analysis of the political movement ANO 2011 (hereinafter referred to as ANO) aims to provide a comprehensive picture of a political formation that has significantly influenced the Czech political scene over the past fifteen years. Its purpose is not to offer an exhaustive historical account of ANO's development, but rather to present a contextualized depiction of the movement within a historically defined framework.¹

¹ The analysis and writing are grounded in publicly available studies and data sources. From a broader social science perspective, the paper does not claim analytical neutrality; rather, the author explicitly acknowledges their positionality. The analytical framework is informed by the methodology of critical theory (Strydom, 2011) and draws upon elite theory (Hartmann, 2007; Khan, 2012; Korom, 2015). More specifically, it engages with the theory of oligarchy developed by American political scientist Jeffrey A. Winters, which offers a comprehensive lens for examining the influence of extreme wealth in politics and society (Winters and Page, 2009; Winters, 2011).

1.

The Origin of ANO²

The political movement ANO was founded in 2011, with its name being an acronym for Akce nespokojených občanů (“Action of Dissatisfied Citizens”). According to ANO’s official website, Andrej Babiš established the movement as a reaction to corruption and the inefficiency of the state. In the 2013 parliamentary elections, ANO received 18.65% of the vote (see Section 2 below) and entered government, where Andrej Babiš served as Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister. According to its self-presentation at the time, the movement promoted policies aimed at combating tax evasion, introducing electronic sales registration, and implementing public contracts register. Following its victory in the 2017 elections, ANO formed a minority government led by Andrej Babiš, focusing on economic growth, support for families and pensioners, and investment in infrastructure. After the 2021 elections, ANO moved into opposition, positioning itself as the main alternative to the government of Petr Fiala and emphasizing the protection of the interests of “ordinary citizens” (ANO 2011, 2025a). Andrej Babiš is one of the wealthiest individuals in the Czech Republic, placing him not only within the broader economic elite (Tuček *et al.*, 2006, pp. 44–66), but also among the narrowest top tier of that elite formed after 1989. As a result of Babiš’s direct entry into politics, his path to wealth has become the subject of numerous media investigations (Pergler, 2014; Kmenta, 2017; Vlasatá and Pa-točka, 2017), although this issue lies beyond the scope of the present analysis.

What events transpired prior to the establishment of ANO? The 2010 parliamentary elections were won by the Social Democrats (hereinafter referred to as SOCDEM). However, the government was formed by Petr Nečas from the Civic Democratic Party (hereinafter referred to as ODS), which secured a vote of confidence in the Chamber of Deputies in August 2010. The governing coalition was supported by ODS, TOP 09, and Public Affairs (VV). The right-wing ODS had been in power (with a brief interruption by a caretaker government) since 2006. This period of right-wing governance can be characterized as one of “fiscal responsibility” and, from 2010 onward, as a policy of austerity. The Nečas government pursued policies that significantly curtailed public spending and were, to varying degrees, directed against the poorer segments of society. This situation

rapidly mobilized opposition within civil society: numerous initiatives emerged and later coalesced into the Stop the Government platform, which, together with trade unions, organized in April 2012 the largest anti-government demonstration since 1989. The government, which ultimately failed to implement most of its program, fell in 2013 as a result of a personal scandal involving the prime minister. The mobilization of civil society likely played an important role in accelerating Andrej Babiš’s motivation to enter politics directly.

The end of the ODS government in 2013 marked the beginning of a gradual yet highly visible restructuring of the Czech political field. The previously relatively strong and traditional political parties—characterized by sizable memberships, such as SOCDEM and ODS—began to weaken. Although these parties had long-standing ties to economic elites, they remained, to some extent, connected both to their membership base and to various segments of the broader population. In contrast, the emerging political entities—such as Public Affairs (VV) and later ANO—were much more directly linked to the economic interests of specific actors. This period thus signaled **the open entry of extremely wealthy individuals into Czech politics.**³

Between 2002 and 2013, the post-1989 Czech economic elite experienced both moderate transformation and a phase of stabilization. During this period, the “old” and “reconstituted old” elites gradually disappeared, as approximately half of the economic elite had begun their professional careers around 1989 or, more commonly, somewhat later. Key positions within the elite were increasingly occupied by representatives of the “new” elites, recruited primarily from the post-transition environment—participants in voucher privatization and the grey economy, as well as managers and founders of privatization funds and banks (Frič *et al.*, 2011, pp. 86–88). The new economic elite faced two principal constraints during this period: first, the structural influence and dominance of enterprises with foreign capital; and second, the degree of state intervention in business activities, for instance through progressive taxation.

A key process illustrating the interconnection between economic and political elites in the Czech Republic during this

² This section is based on revised passages from the analysis *Wealth and Power* by Ondřej Lánský and Pavel Novák. See (Lánský and Novák, 2022).

³ American political scientist Andrew Roberts examines the influence of the super-rich in Czech politics. In a 2019 study, he states that although Andrej Babiš entered politics ostensibly to fight corruption, he believes the real reason was to reverse the developments after 2006, when he began to lose influence in politics (Roberts, 2019, p. 437).

period was the gradual transfer of media ownership from international corporations to domestic magnates.⁴ After 2008, several members of the economic elite entered the media sector. In terms of market share, two major daily newspapers—*Mladá fronta DNES* and *Lidové noviny*—were acquired in June 2013 by the Agrofert holding company, owned by Andrej Babiš. These outlets were subsequently sold in 2023 and 2024, respectively. For roughly a decade, this development gave rise to a business–media–political “triple empire” under Babiš, encompassing Agrofert, the Mafra media group, and the ANO political movement.

In this context, the political movement ANO emerged. Its very name reveals that it responded to a pronounced and relatively widespread dissatisfaction with the politics and governance of the post-1989 political elites. However, ANO did not transform the ethos of anti-government protest (from the period 2010 to 2014) into a political project emphasizing critique or seeking to define a new societal direction. Instead, it identified themes through which this protest ethos could be absorbed and therefore neutralized by ANO. In essence, ANO picked up where *Public Affairs* (VV) had left off, employing similar narratives that framed corruption and the general conduct of politicians as the central problems of Czech society. What was new, however, was the way ANO approached these core issues—not through confrontation, but through a more positive framing. One of its main slogans was “Yes, we can.” This proved to be a shrewd political move, as in the wake of the ODS scandals, the theme of corruption—and of political critique more broadly—had once again become highly appealing to voters.

Babiš’s political movement ANO is, rather than a standard political party, effectively a business-firm party (Kopeček, 2016). It complements the key components of power that Babiš has been systematically constructing around his broader empire, at the latest since his acquisition of major media (particularly MAFRA). At the outset of his governmental involvement, it became evident that Babiš had only a limited understanding of politics and the mechanics of governance. Yet over time, he managed—at least in the media sphere—to transform this initial disadvantage, his lack of political experience, into a perceived strength. At the same time, **ANO adopted elements of the social-democratic agenda, which initiated a gradual outflow of SOCDEM voters either toward ANO or to other political parties.**

The coalition of SOCDEM, Christian Democrats, and ANO governed—despite numerous problems and disagreements—until the end of its electoral term in 2017. This period of governance was marked by political instability linked to the European migration crisis, which peaked in 2015. During this time, a distinct political discourse emerged at

the European level, framing migration as an alleged cause of multiple political and economic difficulties within European societies. This trend did not bypass the Czech Republic. Most political parties adopted, to varying degrees, elements of this discourse and its associated vocabulary, and many continue to employ it to this day. The phenomenon was most visible and systematically articulated within Tomio Okamura’s party Svoboda a přímá demokracie (hereinafter referred to as SPD). Nonetheless, the discourse on migration permeated the majority of political programs and the rhetoric of most significant political actors in contemporary Czech politics.

In October 2017, elections to the Chamber of Deputies took place, in which ANO emerged as the winner. SOCDEM finished only in sixth place, receiving 7.27% of the vote, which translated into fifteen parliamentary seats (out of 200). This result represented a profound electoral and political defeat for the party. Andrej Babiš’s first attempt to form a government consisted of creating a minority cabinet based solely on ANO’s support; however, this first Babiš government failed to win a vote of confidence in January 2018. The second Babiš government was subsequently formed as a coalition with SOCDEM, securing parliamentary backing through the votes of the Communist Party (KSČM), which signed a formal agreement of tolerance with ANO in July 2018. This arrangement continued the alignment between Babiš’s habitually center-right movement and a traditional left-wing party, which, through this alliance, gradually lost the remnants of its political standing.

In 2021, ANO finished just ahead of the right-wing coalition SPOLU (TOGETHER) in the elections (Chamber of Deputies), but was unable to secure coalition partners. It thus became the main opposition force in the Czech parliament.

⁴ After 1989, the vast majority of Czech media underwent a rapid and largely spontaneous privatization, followed by their subsequent sale to foreign owners between 1993 and 2000. Between 2001 and 2007, the structure of media ownership in the Czech Republic became relatively stable, with most of them owned by foreign investors; their share of the media market exceeded 80% (Vojtová, 2017, p. 31).

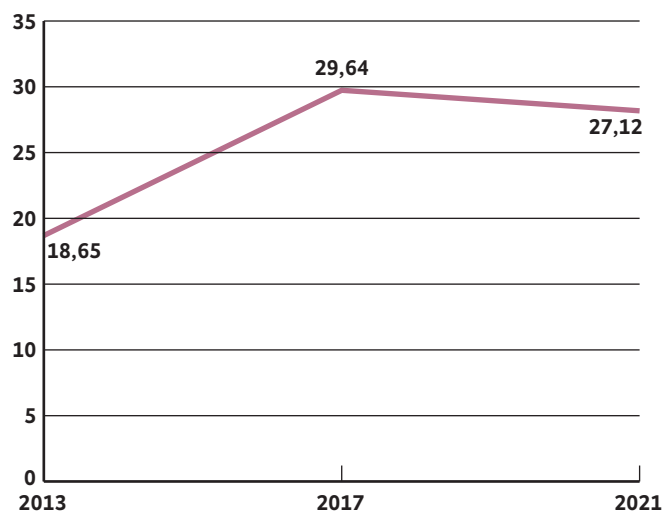
2. The Electoral Results of ANO

This chapter presents the electoral results of ANO from its founding through 2025. For the sake of clarity, it is divided into two parts: the first provides an overview of ANO's performance in key Czech elections between 2013 and 2021, while the second focuses on the 2025 elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic.

2.1. Elections between 2013 and 2021

The political movement ANO has participated in elections since 2013. This analysis focuses exclusively on elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, the European Parliament, and the regional assemblies. Arguably the most important elections within the Czech political system are those to the lower house — the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. The results of ANO are summarized in Graphs 1 and 2 below.

ANO (%) in Parliamentary Elections

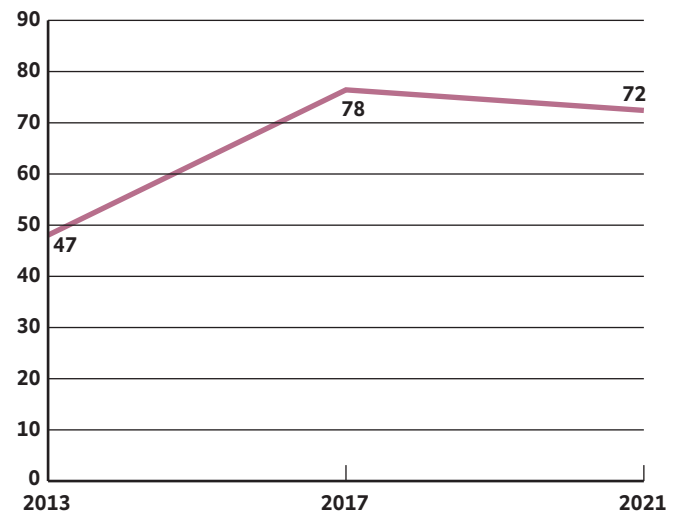


Source: Český statistický úřad, 2021

Election gains of the ANO 2011 movement in percentages, elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic in 2013, 2017, and 2021

Seats won by the ANO

Graph 2



Source: Český statistický úřad, 2021

Seats won by the ANO movement, elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic in 2013, 2017, and 2021

These results demonstrate that ANO has been able to achieve consistent success in key Czech elections. **In effect, it has replaced SOCDEM as one of the two principal political forces in the country.** This is further illustrated by ANO's overall performance in the regional elections (see Table 1), which can be understood as contests that, in a sense, serve as a test of the incumbent government, as they take place between parliamentary elections.

Focusing on the most recent elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic—held while ANO was in government—and using the map of ANO's electoral results by district, it is evident that the movement achieved stronger results outside major urban areas and, to some extent, also in the Sudeten regions. According to the post-election analysis of the 2021 parliamentary elections published by PAQ Research, ANO received relatively little support among younger voters. The party's vote share increases significantly in the age category above 55 years, where 32% of voters supported ANO. It is even more successful among voters aged 65 and older—47% of whom cast their vote for ANO (Prokop, Komárek and Fabšíková, 2021, p. 8).

	Central Bohemian Region	South Bohemian Region	Plzeň Region	Karlovy Vary Region	Ústí nad Labem Region	Liberec Region	Hradec Králové Region	Pardubice Region	Vysočina Region	South Moravian Region	Olomouc Region	Zlín Region	Moravian-Silesian Region	CZECHIA
2016	20.76	17.67	21.52	22.91	23.24	17.08	25.18	19.17	17.04	20.84	23.77	15.68	25.70	21.05
2020	18.54	18.12	22.50	24.79	25.88	17.85	22.04	19.61	18.48	19.76	27.01	19.08	30.24	21.82
2024	33.35	24.13	38.63	44.03	39.47	32.87	34.54	29.78	34.77	28.79	40.42	37.27	47.22	35.38

Source: Český statistický úřad, 2021

Electoral gains of ANO in regional elections (in percent), 2016, 2020, and 2024

This analysis, in addition, indicates that the electoral shifts toward ANO in these elections originated partly from former non-voters and partly from “the left, SPD, and other smaller parties” (Prokop, Komárek and Fabšíková, 2021, p. 33). Moreover, due to the electoral threshold, more than 795,000 votes were effectively wasted—those cast for SOCDEM, the Communist Party, and the Příklad movement.

2.2. Results of the 2025 Elections to the Chamber of Deputies

At the beginning of October 2025, elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic were held. Compared to the 2021 elections, voter turnout increased by 3.5 percentage points. According to an analysis by PAQ Research from October, voter turnout rose most significantly in less socioeconomically developed regions (Stuchlík *et al.*, 2025).

In these elections, **the ANO movement achieved a clear and overwhelming victory**, obtaining 34.5% of the votes and securing 80 parliamentary seats. The parties of the incumbent governing coalition collectively received 34.6% of the votes: the three-party coalition TOGETHER—comprising Civic Democratic Party (ODS), Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL), and TOP 09—gained 23.4%, while Mayors and Independents (STAN) obtained 11.2%. If we also include the Pirate Party, which was part of the government until September 2024 and received 9% of the votes, these groupings together accounted for a total of 43.6% of the vote. In addition to these political entities, the Freedom and Direct Democracy Party (SPD)⁵ entered the Chamber

of Deputies with 7.8% of the vote, along with a new political formation, Motorists Themselves, which obtained 6.8%. From a regional perspective, the ANO movement prevailed in all regions except Prague, where TOGETHER won. The distribution of seats is summarized in Table 2 (Český statistický úřad, 2021). The results show that ANO strengthened its position, and the newly formed Motorists for Themselves party entered Czech parliament for the first time, while the governing coalition parties experienced a slight decline. In contrast, the Pirate Party, which had governed together with SPOLU and STAN until 2024, made significant gains. The SPD lost approximately one quarter of its parliamentary seats (in comparison to 2021).

Conversely—and somewhat unexpectedly—the Enough! alliance (Stačilo!) failed to enter the lower chamber, gaining only 4.3% of the vote. The alliance brought together Social Democrats, Communists, and several smaller parties. Enough! defined itself as a left-wing and patriotic movement; however, both its political program and the conduct of its representatives revealed that it was an ideologically incoherent and, at times, rather radical formation. Its apparent aim was to attract voters with both leftist and nationalist leanings. In this respect, the Enough! movement significantly overlapped with the program of the Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD) party, and, to a more moderate extent, with the promises of the ANO movement.

As indicated by the above-mentioned analysis conducted by the PAQ Research team, voters evidently preferred the ANO movement over smaller parties, including SOCDEM (Stuchlík *et al.*, 2025). It was precisely the choice of these smaller parties that, in the 2021 elections, led to a significant number of votes being wasted—votes that can be

⁵ Notably, the SPD's candidate list included several figures affiliated with various other political groupings.

Table 2

Political party/ movement	2021	2025
ANO 2011	72	80
Civic Democratic Party (ODS; part of TOGETHER)	34	27
Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL; part of TOGETHER)	23	16
TOP09 (part of SPOLU)	14	9
Mayors and Independents (STAN)	33	22
Pirates	4	18
Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD)	20	15
Motorists for Themselves	0	13

Gains in Seats in the Elections to the Chamber of Deputies in 2021 and 2025

broadly characterized as center-left in orientation. At the same time, a new political formation, Motorists for Themselves, entered the Chamber of Deputies. This party defines itself as conservative and, in many respects, positions itself in opposition to progressive and left-wing values. It questions the relevance of combating climate change (including the rejection of the coal phase-out) and contrasts such progressive ideals with traditional and conservative notions of social and family roles. On a symbolic level, the party places strong emphasis on the role of automobilism in society, presenting the car as a symbol of freedom and of what it considers to be genuine progress. The party is clearly connected—both in terms of personnel and historical continuity—to Václav Klaus Sr. (founder of the Civic Democratic Party, ODS, and the second President of the Czech Republic from 2003 to 2013) and, indirectly, to certain oligarchic networks. A prominent public figure representing Motorists Themselves is Filip Turek, who serves as the party's honorary president.⁶ Upon his election to the Chamber of Deputies, Turek's mandate as a Member of the European Parliament—obtained in the 2024 elections on behalf of the same party—expired. Like ANO, Motorists for Themselves are part of the European parliamentary group Patriots for Europe.

Tomio Okamura's party, Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD), obtained a number of parliamentary seats that is essentially consistent with its usual electoral performance, although five fewer than in the previous term. The party can thus be considered a relatively stable political actor. SPD has long succeeded in attracting the votes of dissatisfied and disillusioned citizens. The core of its political platform lies in a combination of Euroscepticism and nationalism. Its representatives frequently employ anti-immigration

and anti-Islamic rhetoric. At the same time, however, the party's discourse tends to gradually radicalize a segment of disaffected voters. Since its establishment in 2015—following a split from Okamura's previous political project, Dawn of Direct Democracy—SPD has not yet participated in government.

Immediately after the elections, Andrej Babiš initiated negotiations on forming a future government with these two parties — SPD and the Motorists. **Consequently, a distinctly right-wing-oriented government can be expected, one that will likely attempt to balance its policies through partial and unsystematic social measures.** Following the 2025 elections, the situation persists in which there is no clearly left-wing party represented in the Chamber of Deputies. The prospective coalition partners of ANO are therefore likely to exert influence pushing the movement further to the right. From an overall perspective, the development of ANO between 2013 and 2020 reveals a shift from the center-right toward the left (primarily at the rhetorical level), followed by a gradual movement to the right, which continues to the present day, as will be shown in the following section.

⁶ Both before and after the elections, Filip Turek has faced a series of controversies: allegations of violent behaviour towards his partners, racist and xenophobic statements on social media, and purported threats made against an employee of the Saudi Arabian embassy. The matter is particularly serious given that Turek has been considered a potential nominee for the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs (Chastand, 2025).

3.

Ideology and Current Political Program of ANO for 2025

The ideological position of ANO has evolved over time.

Focusing on the four key elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic—in 2013, 2017, 2021 and 2025—it can be observed that ANO underwent certain ideological transformations. The movement originally presented itself as an alternative for disillusioned voters of the right-wing Civic Democratic Party (ODS), a framing that was reflected in its early political ideology and agenda. Following its electoral success in 2013 and subsequent participation in government, however, ANO came to be increasingly characterized as a centrist party. This is corroborated by the empirical research of Lukáš Hájek, who examined how ANO's members of parliament actually voted during the 2013–2017 legislative term. His analysis shows that during this period, ANO occupied a centrist position—situated closer to SOCDEM than to right-wing parties. “It is true that ANO cannot be considered to be a classic subject of the political environment. It is a business-firm party owned by one of the wealthiest entrepreneurs interconnecting all economic, political and media powers...” (Hájek, 2017, p. 292).

The gradual shift of ANO from its original right-wing orientation (from 2013 to approximately 2017) toward the political centre—and, in certain respects, even further to the left—can also be observed in the subsequent period, when ANO and SOCDEM exchanged their positions as senior and junior partners in a coalition government (2018–2021). This joint governance, however, was heavily affected by the global Covid-19 pandemic. It can be argued that during this period (2018–2021), ANO moved closer to the left side of the political spectrum, at least at the rhetorical or narrative level.⁷ However, following the 2025 elections, after which ANO is preparing to form a government with SPD and Motorists, a shift back to the right can be anticipated (see below).

An ideological position can be fairly well indicated by the political group of the European Parliament in which a given party operates. In the case of ANO, we can observe a particularly interesting development in this regard. ANO joined the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) in 2014, which was essentially a liberal group. It remained within this faction until 2019, when it became part of the newly established Renew Europe group, which re-

placed ALDE. However, following the 2024 European Parliament elections, ANO participated in the formation of the right-wing to far-right faction Patriots for Europe. Here, too, we can thus observe a shift toward the right pole of the political spectrum.

3.1. Electoral Programme for the 2025 Elections

Regarding the current situation, ANO published its programme for the 2025 elections during September 2025, that is, less than a month before the vote. The programme itself (ANO 2011, 2025b) follows a conventional structure, organized according to specific government portfolios—from finance and transport to health care. According to Andrej Babiš, the programme's key priorities include ensuring lower energy prices, promoting the concept of a “healthy country” (i.e., issues related to health care), housing, fair pensions and a functioning social welfare system, and finally, the concept of a “safe country” (which also includes ANO's emphasis on illegal migration).

In the economic sphere, ANO pledges to stimulate economic growth, curb the grey economy, reject the adoption of the euro, and reduce taxes. The programme reflects an orientation toward coal-based energy sources and, in essence, a rejection of the European Green Deal—including opposition to the planned ban on the production of internal combustion engine vehicles after 2035. ANO also aims to promote a more comprehensive social welfare system, particularly for families with children, and to improve the accessibility of social services. It promises higher salaries for teachers and calls for a revision of inclusion policies in education. The ANO programme advocates, in the economic dimension, a relatively strong state in overseeing economic activity (including the reintroduction of the electronic sales registration system, EET, or the acquisition of 100% control of the currently partly state owned electricity provider ČEZ Group through the buyout of shares), while simultaneously pledging tax reductions and a certain strengthening of market-oriented mechanisms.

In the social dimension, it differentiates itself from the SPOLU coalition government by proposing to reinforce so-

⁷ According to several analyses, the political narrative of ANO—and of Andrej Babiš himself—became markedly populist in the period leading up to the 2021 elections (Ostrá, 2022).

cial protections (such as restoring the retirement age to 65 and reintroducing tax deductions for kindergarten fees). In the cultural sphere, the programme foregrounds conservative elements, which is reflected in its rejection of green policies and in its relatively pronounced security-oriented rhetoric (*securitization*). For example, the programme repeatedly employs strong rhetoric directed against migration and integration.⁸ Another problematic element is the plan to abolish the licence fees for Czech Television and Czech Radio and to link their funding to the state budget, a move that may undermine the independence of public service media.

3.2. Policy Statement of the Emerging ANO–SPD–Motorists Government – November 2025

The Draft of Policy Statement of the emerging government formed by ANO, SPD, and Motorists was published in early November 2025 (Anon. 2025). The government plans not to raise taxes and to strengthen certain socially significant measures. It intends to finance these steps by reducing the grey economy and improving tax collection efficiency. It even proposes lowering some taxes; for instance, it seeks to reduce the corporate income tax rate to 19%, arguing that this will support entrepreneurship, investment, the attractiveness of the Czech Republic, and job creation. The government plans to introduce a register of subsidies for NGOs. Non-profit organization's engaging in political activities and simultaneously receiving foreign funding will be required to disclose this information transparently. Moreover, such designated NGOs will be prohibited from financing their activities from public sources. The government commits itself not to adopt the euro and intends to enshrine the Czech koruna and the right to hold and use cash in the Constitution.

In the area of security, the government plans to reduce bureaucracy and strengthen police presence in public spaces. A general objective is to improve the salaries of police officers, firefighters, and related professions. The government plans to tighten asylum policy and manage migration in accordance with labor market needs. It also seeks to enhance recruitment efforts and benefits for members of security forces. Similar attention is devoted to the armed forces. The management of national defense will evidently be subordinated to national interests, while the authors of the declaration express respect for the Czech Republic's binding commitments. The document also reiterates the emphasis on utilizing the capacities of the national defense industry. The declaration further states that the incoming government rejects the creation of parallel defense structures at the EU level.

In foreign policy, the declaration identifies national interests as the fundamental point of departure. The European

Union is to function as a community of sovereign states, evidently without further integration. The text explicitly rejects environmental and other regulatory initiatives. Responsibility for European policy will be placed directly under the Prime Minister. The government also aims to restore the importance of the Visegrad Group. A specific section is devoted to economic diplomacy.

In the field of justice, the government seeks to strengthen public trust in the judiciary while reforming outdated procedures. The document also raises the long-standing SPD demand for a nationwide referendum, while excluding the possibility of holding referenda on membership in the European Union and NATO.

In economic policy, the incoming government positions itself against emissions trading schemes. It plans to introduce regulated electricity prices to support the economy. The government intends to acquire full (100%) ownership of the ČEZ Group. In the energy sector, it intends to rely predominantly on nuclear power. The declaration also includes general references to supporting small businesses, crafts, family firms, and start-ups.

In transport policy, the government plans to continue progress on completing the comprehensive motorway network. It intends to reject the ban on combustion engines in 2035 (a substantially inaccurate and misleading claim, as the 2035 measure concerns the placing on the market of new vehicles with non-zero CO₂ emissions) and the introduction of carbon taxes on fuels. The government intends to reinstate a 75% discount on public transport fares for seniors and students.

In education, the government seeks to maintain free education at all levels. It plans to revise the current system of inclusion, aiming to strengthen special schools and classes. On the other hand, the declaration mentions support for free school meals for disadvantaged families. In higher education, the government plans to adjust funding mechanisms so that study programs better correspond to future labor market conditions and broader societal needs.

In social and employment policy, the government plans to cap the retirement age at 65. It intends to introduce pension indexation reflecting inflation and wage growth. The pension system should also include the option of a voluntary savings pillar.

In family policy, the government plans to reinstate tax deductions for preschool expenses. The declaration states that marriage will be considered the preferred framework for childrearing. The government will revise the “super-benefit” social allowance and aims to motivate benefit recipients toward adequate labor-market participation. The document displays a recurring emphasis on monitoring and

⁸ “We do not want parallel worlds or communities detached from Czech culture in our country.” (ANO 2011, 2025b, p. 14)

preventing the misuse of social benefits.

In environmental policy, the incoming government rejects the current form of the Green Deal, including accelerated decarbonization. Once again, it declares its intention to revise public subsidies provided to non-profit organizations.

In the field of culture, it is noteworthy that the government intends to increase the long-standing low wages of cultural sector workers. At the same time, it plans to support traditional crafts and folklore as pillars of Czech identity. The government also intends to abolish public broadcasting fees and strengthen transparent oversight of financial management.

In housing policy, the incoming government aims to expand construction and improve housing affordability, particularly for young families with children. It also intends to codify housing as a matter of public interest.

Overall, **the declaration of the incoming government is right-leaning** (particularly with respect to reductions in corporate taxation) and **nationalist in orientation** (strengthening national aspects at several levels). At the same time, however, it proposes a number of measures that appear intended to reinforce social cohesion. Given the highly general nature of the text, it remains unclear how many of the proposed measures will be financed, especially in light of the government's stated intention not to increase taxes.

Taken together, ANO's positions across these dimensions reveal **a certain degree of fluidity: from a predominantly right-leaning stance in economic matters, through a somewhat left-leaning approach to social policy, to conservative—at times even far-right—positions in cultural issues**. If one considers an electoral program to be the clearest articulation of a party's or movement's political ideology, it can be argued that ANO now occupies the right side of the left-right spectrum; it may best be described as a form of **right-wing politics with certain social correctives**. In my classification, the economic dimension is treated as the primary axis, which is why ANO is positioned on the right overall, despite incorporating several socially protective—and thus traditionally left-leaning—measures.

From a broader perspective, the movement continues to exhibit a highly dynamic evolution, largely shaped by prevailing societal moods, enabling it to maintain broad electoral appeal. In this sense, ANO lacks a deeper ideological anchoring in the traditional party-political sense. At the same time, the core of ANO's politics essentially aligns with the interests of its founder, Andrej Babiš—one of the wealthiest Czechs. ANO thus remains, above all, a vehicle of political power serving to protect economic power.

Conclusion

ANO represents a unique phenomenon in Czech politics over the past fifteen years. Its rise cannot be understood merely as a reaction to corruption scandals or the loss of trust in traditional political parties, but rather as **a structural consequence of the transformation of the Czech political-economic field after 1989**. ANO embodies the fusion of economic, political, and media power concentrated in the hands of one of the most prominent figures of the domestic economic elite—Andrej Babiš.

From the theoretical perspective of critical theory and elite theory, **ANO can be understood as an instrument for the reproduction of economic power within the political sphere**. The movement exemplifies the characteristics of a so-called business-firm party — a political organization whose decision-making and ideological structures are derived from the economic interests of its owner. In doing so, it contributes to the erosion of traditional party politics based on ideological identities, membership structures, and internal deliberation. It may be assumed that this phenomenon also affects other political actors (parties and movements), exerting pressure toward a broader transformation of the political field as a whole.

From an ideological standpoint, **ANO is a fluid entity that adapts to prevailing social moods**. In the economic realm, it oscillates between a neoliberal emphasis on the market and a call for a strong state; in the social sphere, it combines elements of redistributive policy with a rhetoric of protecting “ordinary people”; and in the cultural dimension, it gravitates toward national conservatism and securitization. This programmatic fluidity enables ANO to appeal to a wide range of voters, yet it also leads to ideological indeterminacy and a growing personalization of politics. ANO may therefore be seen as symptomatic of a broader transformation of Czech politics toward oligarchization and personalization — a dynamic in which the boundaries between the public and the private, between politics and business, are increasingly blurred.

If we take into account the results of the October 2025 elections, it is almost certain that **ANO has become the hegemon of the Czech political landscape**. Moreover, it dominates the right-wing segment of the spectrum and cooperates with even more radical actors—conservative and openly nationalist ones. **The left virtually no longer exists**, and its former voters now support either ANO or one of the right-wing pseudo-alternatives. The opposition is thus composed

primarily of other right-wing parties: ODS, KDU-ČSL, TOP 09, and, to some extent, the centrist or at least pro-European STAN and Pirates. After fourteen years of ANO's presence in Czech politics, we are witnessing what can essentially be described as the complete twilight of the Czech left.

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About the author

Ondřej Lánský has systematically engaged with several topics at the intersection of political theory, social theory, and political sociology. His research primarily focuses on political thought, with an emphasis on theories of elites and oligarchy. He analyses oligarchic and plutocratic structures of modern society, particularly in the context of the Czech Republic. In addition, he explores the concept of resilience within political theory. He is the Head of the Department of Political Philosophy and Globalization Research at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences. He is also involved in the activities of the National Institute for Socio-Economic Research on the Impact of Diseases and Systemic Risks (SYRI). He lectures at the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, Faculty of Education, Charles University. In 2017, he was a Fulbright Research Scholar at Rutgers University, New Jersey (USA).

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The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung office in Prague has been in existence since 1990. With social democratic values in mind, it provides expertise in a variety of formats, thereby strengthening public debate on topics such as European and foreign policy, labor and social affairs, gender equality, migration, and socially just climate transformation. In these activities, FES cooperates with other scientific institutes and think -tanks, non-profit organizations, and trade unions from the Czech Republic and Europe.

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An Opportunist Journey

- **ANO** has become **the dominant political actor** of the past 15 years, reshaping the Czech political landscape and replacing traditional mass parties—especially SOCDEM—as a core pole of political competition.
- Originating as a reaction to **public dissatisfaction with post-1989 elites**, **ANO** leveraged anti-corruption narratives and the personal authority of Andrej Babiš to absorb, rather than transform, protest sentiments.
- **ANO** to a large extent functions as **a business-firm party**, structurally linked to Babiš's broader economic and media empire. Its organizational logic and ideological flexibility primarily serve the interests of its founder.
- **Electoral performance** since 2013 has been **consistently strong**, with the movement winning the 2017, 2021 (in votes), and 2025 elections. Its support is strongest outside major urban centres and among older voters.
- **The 2025 elections** marked a decisive victory, with **ANO securing 34.5%** of the vote and **80 seats**, while simultaneously absorbing parts of the electorate of smaller anti-establishment or left-leaning parties.
- **ANO's ideological trajectory** is **highly fluid**, shifting from centre-right (2013) to centrist or centre-left rhetoric (2018–2021), and subsequently back toward the right, reflected in its alliance with SPD and Motorists and its move from ALDE/Renew Europe to the Patriots for Europe group in the European Parliament.
- **ANO's rise** is rooted in **deeper structural transformations of Czech post-1989** political and economic fields, especially the fusion of economic, political, and media power and the decline of ideologically anchored mass parties.
- **The Czech left** has effectively **collapsed**, with its former voters largely absorbed by ANO or by right-wing alternatives. The political spectrum is now dominated by **competing right-wing formations**.
- **ANO's success** signals a broader trend toward **oligarchization** and **personalization** of politics, characterized by blurred boundaries between business and the state, and the weakening of traditional party structures and ideological commitments.