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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Translated Name of the Party	Original Name of the Party	Acronym
United Kingdom		
United Kingdom Independence Party	United Kingdom Independence Party	UKIP
Brexit Party	Brexit Party	Brexit Party
Spain		
Spanish Socialist Workers' Party	Partido Socialista Obrero Español	PSOE
People's Party	Partido Popular	PP
VOX	VOX	VOX
United We Can	Unidas Podemos	PP
Citizens	Ciudadanos	C's
Italy		
Go Italy	Forza Italia	FI
Brothers of Italy	Fratelli d'Italia	FdI
League	Lega	Lega
Five Star Movement	Movimento 5 Stelle	M5S
Democratic Party	Partito Democratico	PD
France		
National Rally	Rassemblement National	RN
Indomitable France	La France Insoumise	LFI
The Republic on the Move	La République en Marche	LREM
MODEM	MODEM	MODEM
Democrats and Independants' Union	Union des Démocrates et Indépendants	UDI
Socialist Party	Parti Socialiste	PS
Greens	Les Verts	EELV
The Republicans	Les Républicains	LR
Germany		
Alternative for Germany	Alternative für Deutschland	AfD
Federal Minister of Health	Bundesministerium für Gesundheit	BMG
Christian Democratic Union	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	CDU
Christian Social Union in Bavaria	Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern	CSU
Liberal Democratic Party	Freie Demokratische Partei	F.D.P.
Green Party	Bündnis 90/Die Grünen	Grüne
The Left Party	Die Linke	Linke
Robert Koch Institute	Robert Koch Institut	RKI
Social Democratic Party	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	SPD
Hungary		
Fidesz	Fidesz	Fidesz
Christian Democratic People's Party	Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt	KDNP
Hungarian Socialist Party	Magyar Szocialista Párt	MSZP
For a Better Hungary	Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom	Jobbik
Democratic Coalition	Demokratikus Koalíció	DK
Another Politics Is Possible	Lehet Más a Politika	LMP
Momentum	Momentum	Momentum
Dialogue	Párbeszéd	P
Czech Republic		
ANO 2011	ANO 2011	ANO
Freedom and Direct Democracy	Svoboda a přímá demokracie	SPD
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia	Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy	KSČM
Poland		
Law and Justice	Prawo i Sprawiedliwość	PiS
Confederation 'Freedom and Independence'	Konfederacja 'Wolność i Niepodległość'	Confederation
Civic Platform	Platforma Obywatelska	PO
Polish People's Party	Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe	PSL
Democratic Left Alliance	Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej	SLD

CHAPTER 8

CZECH REPUBLIC: RUNNING THE STATE LIKE A FAMILY BUSINESS

Abstract

The chapter considers three Czech parties that display populist features: the ruling party ANO and two non-governmental parties, Freedom and Direct Democracy and the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia. In our text we first explain the broader political context, the spread of COVID-19 and the political measures to address the virus in the Czech Republic. It looks at the populist discourse of the three parties and, finally, their strategies of (de)politicisation regarding the COVID-19 issue. The chapter shows that the COVID-19 epidemic has not yet transformed their rhetoric but has brought to light its most important features. In the case of ANO especially, there was a strong tendency to try to depoliticise the issue by involving experts and especially epidemiologists in the discussion.

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Introduction

Populism has become a ‘new and ubiquitous dimension of politics’ (Zanatta, 2013) and we may very well be living in the ‘epoch of populism’ (Liogier, 2013). This is not just a general argument; it also applies to the contemporary Czech Republic, where, after being on the margins, it became part of the political mainstream after 2015 (Čisář & Štětka, 2017). Our chapter considers three parties that display populist features: the ruling party ANO 2011 (ANO) and two non-governmental parties, Freedom and Direct Democracy (Svoboda a přímá demokracie – SPD) and the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy – KSČM), which nevertheless both often back the government in the parliament, KSČM officially. Embodying different faces of populism, all three represent different versions of what the mainstream literature labels as populist parties. This chapter shows that the current crisis has not yet transformed their rhetoric but has brought to light its most important features. In our text we first explain the broader political context, the spread of COVID-19 and the political measures to address the virus in the Czech Republic. It looks at the populist discourse of the three parties and, finally, their strategies of (de)politicisation regarding the COVID-19 issue. In the case of ANO especially, there was a strong tendency to try to depoliticise the issue by involving experts and especially epidemiologists in the discussion.

1. Political Context

The most successful Czech populist party has been the ANO party. It was established in 2011–2012 and enjoyed a fair amount of success from early on. In the 2013 parliamentary elections ANO gained 18.65% of the votes and 23.5% of the seats.³⁸ The movement became part of the government of the Social Democrats, while its founder, sponsor, and unquestioned leader, Andrej Babiš, a billionaire entrepreneur, became Minister of Finance. ANO won the subsequent 2017 parliamentary elections, receiving 29.64% of the votes and 39% of the seats, and became the dominant party. It is then that Babiš, winner of the elections, became Prime Minister.

The second populist party – the SPD – was formed in 2015. It was founded by a Czech-Japanese businessman, Tomio Okamura, who had previously disbanded his first party, Dawn of Direct Democracy (Úsvit přímé demokracie – ÚPD). To some extent, Okamura established his second movement ‘just in time,’ in that the immigrant crisis had just started to flare, and that mobilised not only the SPD but the whole populist political scene (Čisář & Navrátil 2019). In the parliamentary

³⁸ The source of this and following electoral data is the Czech Statistical Office

elections of 2017, SPD entered the Chamber of Deputies with 10.64% of the votes and 11% of the seats.

What binds and what differentiates these two populist parties? ANO is an ‘extreme form of a business-firm party’ (Kopeček, 2016), which is heavily dependent on its leader (Kubát & Hartlínski 2019). It was established at the initiative of its leader as a kind of ‘personal vehicle’ (Lucardie, 2000) that serves the leader as a means of fulfilling his ambitions and needs. Whilst SPD is also a business-firm party, it is not as much a business-firm party as ANO is. Both parties present themselves as anti-establishment and anti-elitist and focus on the alleged ubiquitousness of political corruption. While they have many shared features, the two parties are not identical. While ANO represents an anti-political (rejecting ‘traditional corrupted parties’) and technocratic or expert form of populism (‘experts’ should rule instead of ‘incompetent politicians’), SPD is clearly professing far-right nationalism and xenophobia (Balík *et al.*, 2019; Císař & Navrátil 2019; Kopeček *et al.*, 2018).

KSČM represents a different case, both in terms of how the party was established and how it evolved in time, and in terms of its political identity and orientation. KSČM is the direct successor of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (Komunistická strana Československa – KSČ), which was founded in 1921 and from 1948 to 1989 was the ruling hegemonic party in Czechoslovakia. After the fall of communism in 1989, the party changed its name but, in the end, failed to shed its Marxist-Leninist identity. It never transformed itself into a non-communist socialist or social democratic party (Kunštát 2013). Nevertheless, KSČM has been the most stable Czech party since 1989. Its electoral support has long been around 10–15%, falling to 7.76% only in the last parliamentary elections in 2017. KSČM has never directly participated in any governmental coalition since 1989; however, following the 2017 elections, it became part of a pro-government parliamentary alliance.

KSČM can be described as a ‘non-exclusively populist party’ (Havlík & Pinková, 2012: 29), in which populism is accompanied by another clear set of ideological preferences, in this case vulgar Marxism-Leninism. KSČM is a dogmatic Marxist-Leninist party, nostalgic for the *ancient regime*. It is an anti-system party according to Sartori’s (1976: 138) narrow definition of the concept. But can it be classified as a populist party? While KSČM does not fulfil all the defining features of populism, from a longitudinal perspective we can detect strong social populism in its programme (Císař & Štětka, 2019; Havlík, 2012) and that populism is linked to nationalism. It is a combination of social and national protest (Kubát, 2016).

Table 8.1 Main Czech political parties (>5% in the last general election)

Political party	2017 general election		2019 European election	
	Vote shares	Seats	Vote shares	Seats
<i>In power</i>				
ANO	29.64	78	21.18	6
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia*	7.76	15	6.94	1
Czech Social Democratic Party	7.27	15	3.95	0
<i>In opposition</i>				
Civic Democratic Party	11.32	25	14.54	4
Czech Pirate Party	10.79	22	13.95	3
Freedom and Direct Democracy	10.64	2	9.14	2
Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People’s Party	5.80	1	7.24	2
TOP 09	5.31	7	11.65**	3**
Mayors and Independents	5.18	6		

* Communist party is not a part of the cabinet, but it supports it in the parliament.

** Electoral coalition of TOP 09 and Mayors and Independents.

2. COVID-19 diffusion and political measures

News about the global spread of COVID-19 reached the Czech Republic before any individuals tested positive for the virus in the country. In the *first 'pre-COVID-19' phase*, for months the Czech media followed the situation in China and northern Italy, especially as the latter is a popular vacation spot for many Czechs. Despite the mounting information, the Czech government did not take any serious action until the country had its first positive cases on March 1, 2020.

All the key measures that were supposed to slow down the spread of the COVID-19 were taken during March, when the *second phase* of the epidemic started. Initially, at the beginning of March, travel conditions were tightened and quarantine was introduced for Czech citizens returning from high-risk areas. On March 11, all schools were closed. The following day, the government declared a state of emergency, which, among other things, restricted free movement of people. Most shops and all restaurants were closed on March 14, the state borders were closed on March 16, and wearing masks in public was made mandatory on March 19.³⁹

The Czech Republic was ultimately only mildly impacted by the first wave of the epidemic (see figure 8.1 and table 8.2), and most hospital emergency beds were never occupied. Therefore, after the country entered the *third phase* of the epidemic (the mitigation of contagion) early on, by April 14, 2020, the government approved a five-stage plan, during which it gradually lifted most of the measures introduced earlier. Life in the country, with some exceptions, returned to a new normal.

During the state of emergency, a number of problems, controversies, and discussions arose, three of which were the most noticeable. However, none of them globally posed a serious challenge to the government's strategy to fight COVID-19. The first controversy emerged right at the beginning of the epidemic and was related to the purchase and distribution of medical protective equipment for health professionals. There was a lack of personal protective equipment and their distribution to medical and social facilities was both limited and disorganised. The situation with masks (or their lack of) was characteristic. Sewing masks at home and self-distributing them not only to family members and friends but also to nurses and doctors became a society-wide phenomenon.

The issue of purchasing medical protective equipment also had a strong political line. While some countries, including Taiwan, donated personal protective equipment to the Czech Republic, the government bought most of it in China and at exorbitant prices. The opposition criticised the government on two accounts. First, for favouring expensive and opaquely transacted purchases from China over inciting Czech production. Second, for its responses, as, according to the opposition, the government showed devotion to China but failed to thank Taiwan enough.

The second controversy, which mostly unfolded among different experts, revolved around what constituted appropriate epidemiological measures. The essence of the dispute was that the experts (epidemiologists, biologists, and other medical professionals) themselves disagreed on the most basic points: what caused the COVID-19, how dangerous COVID-19 really is, and whether we were in the midst of a pandemic or not. Related to this were the differing views of experts and also of the public on the country's lockdown, and then also on the gradual lifting of restrictions. The critics of strict measures, mostly various types of experts, pointed out that the country's lockdown would have far worse social and economic and ultimately health (neglecting preventive medical care) effects than the epidemic itself.

Related to this is the economic impact of the crisis, which is the third central point around which debate has revolved. The government recently approved the highest budget deficit in the country's history (up to CZK 500 billion)⁴⁰ and the expected economic downturn is [and the economy is expected to shrink by] between 5.5 and 6.5%⁴¹ or even as much as 8%.⁴² The crisis has hit tourism and related areas (restaurants and pubs, hotel industry) the most, as well as the automobile industry,

³⁹ A list of all the measures taken by the Czech government is available on a special website set up by the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic: <https://koronavirus.mzcr.cz>.

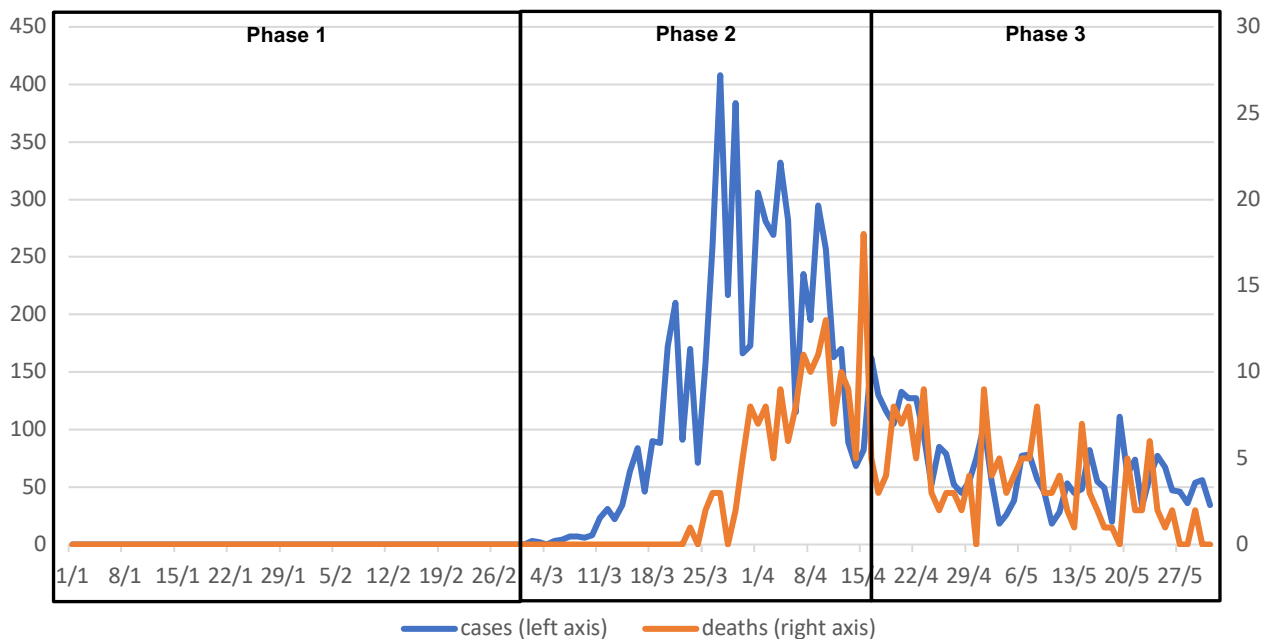
⁴⁰ Vláda schválila schodek rozpočtu 500 miliard. *Novinky.cz*, 8/06/2020.

⁴¹ Skvělý rok Netflixu i obří ekonomický pokles. Projděte si rekordy kolem koronaviru. *Aktualne.cz*, 2/05/2020.

⁴² European Commission. Economic and financial affairs website, Czech Republic.

which is important for the Czech economy. The opposition disagreed with the measures that the government introduced to boost the economy.

Figure 8.1 Daily death toll and new cases in Czech Republic



Source: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

Phase 1: pre-Covid-19; Phase 2: spread and containment measures; Phase 3: contagion mitigation

Table 8.2 COVID-19 pandemic in France

Cases	9,787
Total deaths	330
Total recovered	7,111
Cases for 1 M pop	914
Deaths for 1 M pop	31

Source: www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/ (update 10/6/2020)

3. Populist discourse at the time of COVID-19

In general, Czech political parties that display populist features have not transformed their rhetoric in their reaction to the COVID-19 crisis. There were no substantial changes in the discourse of Prime Minister Babiš and other representatives of his political organisation ANO. In fact, the same symbolism, slogans, and public displays of his direct relationship with the people and its immediate needs have been used during the COVID-19 crisis as were used before it. In fact, Babiš stressed that the crisis provided him with a real opportunity to actually put his signature slogan in practice. In an interview that he gave ten days after the state of emergency was declared, Babiš said: ‘We work twenty hours a day, now we are really running the country like a company, just as when there are floods or there is an accident in a chemical factory. So, online, with immediate decisions and implementation. We are now one family, so we run it like a family business with a population of 10.7 million.’⁴³ After the first wave of the crisis was over, Babiš repeated this stress on company-like effectiveness, his hard-working nature, and his direct and unmediated relationship with the people: ‘The coronavirus changed the scope of work of the government and we ultimately managed it like a

⁴³ Teď řídím stát jako firmu. Ale demokracii neomezím, říká Babiš. *Idnes.cz*, 22/03/2020.

family company, and it was effective, it was concrete, we saw our decisions in practice. I was at work from morning to night, it was crisis management and it's continuing.'⁴⁴

Instead of changes, there were continuities and specific adaptations in Babiš's communication style and discourse. Before the crisis, Babiš regularly stressed his relationship to the needs of ordinary and/or hard-working people. Unlike his predecessors, he would walk out to meet demonstrators in front of the Governmental Office or would personally visit a hackathon that was organised to protest a particular policy of his government and come up with an alternative IT solution. He stylised himself into the role of both a capable manager and the caring father of the nation, for which image he drew on the historical figure of 'Jan Antonín Baťa, the interwar shoe magnate who had extensive (but never realised) plans in the 1930s to remake the country using management and business techniques' (Hanley & Vachudova 2018: 282). Baťa is also remembered for his direct management methods and the programmes and benefits he introduced to support his employees. During the crisis, this political style was further applied when, for example, Babiš himself visited a food warehouse to check out the availability of basic food items for stores. The same pattern was in place when Babiš, with other members of his cabinet, personally welcomed a cargo plane full of masks and respirators from China at Prague airport.

Babiš's relationship to the European Union, or some of its institutions, is complicated and was so even before the crisis. Although ANO and Babiš support the EU in principle, and mostly as an important source of money for the Czech economy in general, and his holding company in particular, Babiš criticised the EU for its alleged lack of effectivity and capacity for action in the past, especially in relation to the proposals to introduce a permanent EU relocation mechanism as a solution to the 2015 migration crisis. As early as the end of January 2020, he targeted the EU for its lack of activity in relation to the coming coronavirus crisis: '*...unless something fundamental happens, because Europe isn't being very active yet, I'll suggest to the government on Monday that we temporarily ban all flights from China*'.⁴⁵ The EU and its policies have been criticised many times since then – for example, when Babiš did not want to support the proposed EU economic recovery plan.

Our observation about the continuity of populist rhetoric also applies to Tomio Okamura's nationalist and far-right SPD. The main target of this party's rhetoric has been the EU, which, according to Okamura, failed in its response to the pandemic. The SPD alleged that the EU was unable to deal with the current crisis in the same way that it failed to cope with the 2015 migration crisis; in the party discourse the two crises are moreover connected to each other. In fact, according to SPD both crises are actively co-created by the EU, which is inviting migrants to the EU as well as forcing individual countries to be dependent on each other in terms of goods and especially food supply. This makes it difficult for individual countries to adequately deal with current challenges, including the COVID-19 crisis. The party sees food self-sufficiency as the ideal and in fact it wants the country's agricultural and, as much as possible also, its economic system to be autarchic, which it contends is the only way to fight current global problems such as migration and the pandemic. In the view of the party: '*The EU does not help, it does harm. The sooner we leave it, the better*'.⁴⁶ The party has actively utilised the COVID-19 crisis to advance its traditional political programme and its focal points such as fight against so-called 'unadaptable' people, or against support for what the party deems 'political' NGOs. It wants any public funding in these areas to be cut and redirected to those who really need the support. The same applies to public support for alternative sources of energy and the planned acquisition of military equipment, which should be stopped or postponed.

KSČM has also continued its pre-crisis nationalist rhetoric. In general, as its Parliamentary supporter, the party was not very critical of the government, with the exception of what the communists saw as the possibly 'endless' extension of the state of emergency. Like the SPD, the party stressed the issue of self-sufficiency, concerning not only food but other strategic commodities as well. The party's traditional fight against globalisation and internationalisation had, in its view, been made even more

⁴⁴ Koronavirus mi umožnil řídit stát jako rodinnou firmu, řekl Babiš. *Idnes.cz*, 7/05/2020

⁴⁵ Česko kvůli koronaviru rozšíří opatření na letištích. *Česká televize*, 30/01/2020

⁴⁶ SPD. See: <https://spd.cz/eu-chce-pretvorit-evropske-institute/>

urgent by the pandemic. Therefore, a strong state, less international economic dependency, and more economic self-sufficiency have become even more important in recent times than before. KSČM also criticised the planned acquisition of military equipment, but mostly on the grounds that it would contribute to an upgrading of NATO, which is an established target for the party. In general, the international environment has represented a traditional source of threat for the party, which was again proven by the current crisis. The most important imperative remains the same as before the pandemic, i.e. not to lose sovereignty and to fight international capital: *‘Either developments will be directed in favour of foreign capital, which wants to concentrate more assets and its power in the crisis, or in favour of our citizens. By supporting further growth in wages and social benefits, despite the debt we are not relinquishing control of our economy to foreign capital at this stage.’*⁴⁷

4. The politicization of the COVID-19 issue by populists

As described above, in the first phase, the situation in China and Italy was covered by the Czech media and political actors. In the beginning, the media played an important role in setting the agenda of the COVID-19 issue. Regarding concrete measures, direct flights to China were discontinued as early as the beginning of February, more than a month before the start of the real confrontation phase. However, at the very same time, the Minister of Health (nominated by ANO), Adam Vojtěch, published an article that explicitly downplayed the seriousness of COVID-19, comparing it and its lethality to what he alleged to be the more dangerous ‘common’ flu and asking the public to calm down: *‘Let’s hope that the coronaviral and media hysteria will soon disappear, the public will realise that we are not in a [catastrophe] film, and we will return to earth. However, the coronavirus did yield one positive thing. People have begun to pay more attention to flu prevention, actually unwittingly.’*⁴⁸ The by now infamous article reiterated what official political representatives were stressing at that time, namely that the country was indeed prepared to deal with the infection should it eventually appear in the country. Only a couple of days before, on 28 January, Bohuslav Svoboda, a gynaecologist by profession, and a well-known politician and opposition MP from the Civic Democratic Party (Občanská demokratická strana – ODS), tried unsuccessfully to initiate a discussion in Parliament of COVID-19 and the country’s preparedness to cope with it.

The confrontation phase started in mid-March. Since ANO is the governing and strongest party in the country, it was actually in the position to react to and solve the COVID-19 crisis. The measures were adopted in March (see above), based on information from countries already dealing with infections, especially Italy, and only after COVID-19 had arrived to the country. In terms of politicisation, we were actually able to observe the opposite trend in ANO’s discourse, as it attempted to de-politicise the issue by stressing the role played by experts, especially epidemiologists, in devising policy. Roman Prymula, the non-partisan deputy minister of care and also an epidemiologist, was originally appointed the head of the crisis management team, and politicians made repeated declarations of their reliance on expertise. When announcing the state of emergency, Babiš stressed: *‘For me, Mr Prymula and his team are the greatest experts. I’m constantly in touch with him, online. The World Health Organization woke up and said there is a pandemic, and Mr Prymula already told me this a week ago.’*⁴⁹

Babiš repeatedly stressed that the decisions about what anti-COVID-19 measures were introduced were based entirely on the expert knowledge of epidemiologists, so much so that he even said that epidemiologists were the ones actually making the decisions at the peak of the crisis. Although Prymula resisted such claims, he did confirm that during the first two months of the pandemic epidemiologists had a big influence on decision-making and nobody questioned their

⁴⁷ KSČM. See: <https://www.kscm.cz/cs/aktualne/aktuality/kscm-jedna-pri-krizi-konstruktivne>

⁴⁸ Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic. See: http://www.mzcr.cz/dokumenty/ceska-koronaviralni-chripka_18483_3693_1.html

⁴⁹ Řídí operaci, jakou Česko ještě nezažilo. *Deník N*, 18/03/2020.

recommendations.⁵⁰ Like some other countries, experts received considerable public support from the population in the midst of the crisis. There was also nearly unanimous political support for the government's general anti-virus measures when they were introduced in March. No visible or substantial criticism from the opposition was formulated in this period; this only occurred later on and was directed at the government's economic recovery plan and, before that, its strategy to acquire protective equipment mostly from China, but was not aimed at the government's general measures to prevent COVID-19 from spreading in the country.

The third phase started in mid-April, when the government approved a five-stage plan to gradually lift the anti-COVID-19 measures that had been introduced and started to discuss and propose measures to help the economy recover. At this stage, the debate focused on a number of issues relating to what types of measures should be introduced and what the adequate extent of these measures should be. These measures were introduced gradually and were often revised on the basis of opposition criticism. It is not our aim here to cover these debates in detail, but we can say that the main dispute was over the state's fiscal strategy. Unlike the previous government and its strategy during the financial crisis, the current government has repeatedly rejected austerity policies and budget cuts, and, on the contrary, it intends to run an exceptionally big budget deficit in order to support public investment and pro-employment policies and to save the economy from a severe recession.

Although there is no principal opposition to this strategy, the government has nevertheless been criticised for its unwillingness to find possible savings in state expenses. Another general critical argument concerns the lack of a more strategic plan on how to tackle the increased deficit and how to consolidate public finances in the future. Critics have pointed to the possible mismanagement of public funds. When the record budget deficit was approved in Parliament on June 8, the condition that KSČM presented to the government in exchange for its support was that the government prepare a plan for fiscal consolidation by the end of September 2020.

A dispute over who was responsible for COVID-19 has been going on mostly outside the arena of party politics and rather on the Internet and social media since the beginning of the pandemic. There are analyses available that monitor the activities of disinformation webs spreading fake news about the fabricated nature of COVID-19 and singling out those who are supposedly responsible for it, whether it be the Chinese or US-based government actors. Out of the parties covered in this chapter, KSČM has probably come closest to entering this discussion in its attempt to clear China of possible responsibility for the pandemic: *'The current historical turning point is caused by the so-called coronavirus pandemic, and all analysts are investigating whether it is an artificial problem or whether it is a problem that is really a part of society's development, who is behind it, and how to evaluate it.'*⁵¹ There is also an EMP from the SPD party who runs one of these disinformation webs, one on which the possibility of COVID-19 being a biological weapon was debated.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed and discussed the measures adopted by Czech political representatives and their discourse relating to COVID-19: the ruling ANO party and two non-governmental parties, SPD and the KSČM. All three represent different versions of what the mainstream literature labels as populist political parties. The chapter most importantly shows that the current crisis has not yet transformed their rhetoric, but has had the effect of amplifying the most important components of that rhetoric. For example, in the case of ANO, the managerial approach to governance has been discursively wielded as the single most important tool for fighting COVID-19. The chapter also distinguished three phases of action and discourse relating to the pandemic: emergence, confrontation, and management. In the confrontation phase especially there was a strong tendency to depoliticise the issue by involving experts, especially epidemiologists.

⁵⁰ Prymula: Epidemie vesele pokračuje, byl bych teď tvrdší, Maďar není odborník. *Reflex*, 8/07/2020.

⁵¹ KSČM. See: <https://www.kscm.cz/cs/aktualne/aktuality/politicky-souboj-o-uzemi-cr-se-vyhrocuje>

Thus far, the crisis has not had any significant effect on support for political parties in the Czech Republic.⁵² The three parties covered here have seen their political support left almost unchanged, and while there was a small but temporary increase in support for ANO and its coalition partner, on the whole there has been no change in the balance of power in the country. Finalising this chapter at the end of July 2020, we can conclude that there is no party that has yet either benefited or lost support due to the crisis.

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⁵² Source: <https://www.politico.eu/europe-poll-of-polls/czech-republic/>