From Athens to Zagreb and from Riga to Reykjavik, new political parties are bursting into political life and quickly withering away again, one after the next. Why do these new parties achieve such quick success and then collapse whilst other parties endure? Central Europe, where the rapid rise and fall of parties has become routine, provides answers to these puzzles. Building on nearly two decades studying political parties in the region this project’s main goal is to produce a book length study which provides a cogent explanation for the extent, timing and variation in the (in)stability of party politics in the region. Not only does the project offer new measurements of party system change and conceptual innovations such as sub-party systems, it also combines the study of party systems with individual parties themselves and demonstrates the salience of party organization, party appeals and adaptive leadership mechanisms in explaining party success. Moreover, it contributes to broader debates surrounding the state of democracy across the European continent and further afield.