

New Perspectives

Interdisciplinary Journal of Central & East European Politics and International Relations

Vol. 26, No. 1/2018

ÚSTAV
MEZINÁRODNÍCH VZTAHŮ
PRAHA  INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
PRAGUE

Contents

Editorial

- The World Is (Not) Heated 7
Benjamin Tallis

Special Section: The Prague Agenda 15

*Michal Smetana, Anastasia Kazteridis, Matthew Kroenig,
Sadia Tasleem, Richard Price, Jeffrey Fields, Jason Enia,
Angela Kane, Dieter Fleck*

Research Articles

- Writing Kafka's Soul: Disciplinary Power, Resistance & the
Authorship of the Subject 63
Nicholas Dungey

- History, Nationalism, and Democracy: Myth and Narrative in
Viktor Orbán's 'Illiberal Hungary' 87
Michael Toomey

- The Fourth Generation: From Anti-Establishment to Anti-Systém
Parties in Slovakia 109
Olga Gyárfášová

Cultural Cut

- HHhH & The 7th Function of Language 135
Laurent Binet

- Notes on Contributors 155

The Fourth Generation: From Anti-Establishment to Anti-System Parties in Slovakia¹

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Abstract: The party systems in many democracies are in flux due to the emergence and electoral successes of new, alternative political parties. This phenomenon has a particular dynamic and, drawing on a case study from Slovakia, it is argued that compared to their predecessors the most recent political newcomers may have a more radical, even anti-system character. The paper deals with theories of new political parties and the conceptual definitions of anti-system parties in general while the empirical part focuses on the developments, characteristics and profiles of two political parties in Slovakia, namely the anti-establishment group Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (OĽaNO) and the extreme right-wing People's Party – Our Slovakia (ĽSNS), which represents an anti-system party. Based on empirical data from several surveys the study points to variance in the profiles of anti-establishment and anti-system voters. It is argued that the voters of the anti-system party (ĽSNS) show an ideological distance from other political parties, as well as a strong identification with the party of their electoral choice as opposed to the voters of OĽaNO. The concluding discussion displays the differences between anti-establishment and anti-system parties in general, and in this specific perspective the Slovak case fits into the much broader debate about illiberal tendencies in Central and Eastern Europe. Anti-system political parties – the next generation of the new alternative parties – could be a real threat to liberal democracy in the region.

Keywords: Slovakia, political parties, anti-establishment and anti-system parties

INTRODUCTION

New political parties have been attracting increasing attention in recent years. Regardless of what we call them – new, alternative, non-traditional, non-standard, unorthodox, populist, extremist or protest parties – they are changing the political landscape and challenge traditional party-voter alignments. But it's not just about this. Radicalized new political parties could challenge the principles and values of liberal democracy.

Even a fleeting glimpse at the political map of established western democracies reveals that it has undergone fundamental changes during the past two decades,

and over the last two or three years the speed of change has been increasing. Mass parties, which were systematically analysed by M. Duverger in the 1950s as parties with a large membership, distinct ideological profiles, and intra-party democracy (Duverger, 1954), started to lose significance in the late 1960s. Later on the importance of catch-all parties (Kirchheimer, 1966) also declined substantially. According to Kirchheimer a catch-all 'people's' party attempts to transgress the socio-economic and cultural cleavages among the electorate in order to attract a broader 'audience' (ibid.: 184). Furthermore, the decline of party membership in contemporary western democracies is very well empirically documented in several studies (cf. van Biezen et al., 2012). These phenomena are closely related not only to shrinking partisanship (as in Dalton's famous 1998 term 'parties without partisans') but also to the loosening of traditional ties between political parties and their voters, which tests the classic party representation model. We observe that "[t]he decline of traditional party affiliation and the fiercer competition resulting from this for the political parties have, in the meantime, become standard diagnoses in Western European party studies" (Plasser & Ulram, 2000: 6).

In Western democracies, party alignments, as identified and examined by Stein Rokkan and Seymour M. Lipset in their fundamental publication (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967), were formed after World War II and reflected how parties and political representation were anchored within a society's social structure. However, the societal configuration of developed democracies underwent fundamental changes during the 1970s and the 1980s as the importance of differences in value orientation increased. The loosening of traditional ties (de-alignment) and the establishing of ties with other political parties (re-alignment), or failing to establish new ties altogether, creates favourable conditions for voters to make noncommittal, *ad hoc* choices. As a result, voters without any partisan ties become more 'mobile' and tend to change their preferences from one election to the next without being re-aligned (cf. Dalton, 1998; Schmitt & Holmberg, 1995; Mair, 1997; Plasser & Ulram, 2000, and many other sources).

This greater voter volatility is further reinforced by the media and, in recent years, above all by social media and networks, which have proved extremely effective in generating quick and emotional but often short-lived mobilizations of voters. Fritz Plasser and Peter Ulram illustrate it empirically on the case of Austrian voters: "Floating voters who did not decide which party to vote for until the final phase of the election (late deciders), reported exceptionally frequently that they were strongly influenced in their personal decision by the mass media's political coverage of the campaign" (Plasser & Ulram, 2000: 14). Hand in hand with the de-alignment process and the loss of loyal electorates which they could rely on, traditional political parties have been faced with the problem of voter disenchantment. As a consequence of

all these processes, the stable party system came to an end and the resulting unstable system opened up to new actors.

In newer, less established democracies the alignment between political parties and their electorates does not have the sort of historical roots that exist in more mature democracies. The ties to parties in the newer democracies have only been built up during some two decades of political pluralism so it is rather difficult to talk of de-alignment in such cases since no proper alignments have been established in the first place. We are witnessing a form of quasi-de-alignment in such cases since any alignments that had previously existed there were not strong and socially embedded. Further catalysts for the fluctuation of party support are the organizational instability of political parties (cf. Deegan-Krause & Haughton, 2015), voters' dissatisfaction with traditional, established political parties, and crises of political trust. These lead to lower electoral engagement, marginal numbers of partisan voters and an increasing proportion of independent voters. Even though new, alternative parties are not just a phenomenon typical for the post-communist world, new democracies are more severely affected by this phenomenon because of several reasons related to post-communist development, and this situation has been analysed in numerous studies (cf. Sikk, 2011; Rovny, 2015; van Biezen, 2005). It is argued that whereas in Western democracies parties usually emerged as strong movements of society, in new democracies they are formed as 'agents of the state' (van Biezen, 2005). In other words in new democracies parties are often created on the basis of 'politicized attitudinal divisions' and not on the basis of 'politicized social stratification' (ibid.: 154). The shallow rooting of the political parties in the given society (social structure) is among the factors which make political parties (and the entire party systems) in new democracies more fragile and unstable than their counterparts in established democracies.

In Slovakia, which is the focus of this study, we can observe several waves of newcomers to the national political arena. The most significant breakthrough came in the 2002 parliamentary election, which was also marked by the highest percentage of aggregated volatility within the relatively short history of democratic elections in Slovakia: 40% (Haughton et al., 2016). This was mainly caused by the electoral success of parties which mobilized voters from both of the extremely polarized political camps at the time, thereby placing themselves in the political centre or beyond the existing political conflict. Based on the way they appealed to voters and how they positioned themselves strategically, they have been described as a case of centrist populism (Učeň et al., 2005).

Later on, a new generation of new parties emerged (in 2010 and 2012), and these can be characterized mostly by their anti-establishment, anti-elite appeals from different ideological positions (for example, the party Freedom and Solidarity using a neo-liberal background); they claim to be alternatives to mainstream parties. Not

only by their profiles and their ways of addressing voters but also by their organizational structures, they want to demonstrate their 'alternativeness'; they intentionally do not aim at mass membership, they avoid calling themselves a 'party' and they have not built organizational networks, as they are centred around their respective leaders. However, with the next wave of newcomers, which came in the 2016 general election, we see a shift from anti-establishment to anti-system parties, which indicates a clear, observable radicalization of the new alternatives.

In the case of Slovakia it was manifested by the electoral success of the extreme right-wing nationalist People's Party-Our Slovakia (ĽSNS), and partially also by another successful new project called We Are a Family (Sme rodina). Both entered the national parliament in the 2016 parliamentary elections. The radical right-wing alternative – ĽSNS – is not just a newer new party; it shows features of 'anti-systemness'. As for Sme rodina, it is still an insufficiently profiled case – in some aspects it shows a neoliberal face in regard to economic and social issues, but on the other hand it has made radical statements on the refugee issue; moreover, their ultra-traditional position on cultural values is combined with some liberal tendencies. Nevertheless, its impact on political processes and political discourse is relatively limited, and it is definitely not comparable with that of ĽSNS.

This paper explores the several generations of successful new political parties in Slovakia. The main objective of the study is to document the radicalization of the successful new alternatives and the partial move from anti-establishment, anti-elitist positions towards anti-system parties, which represent a different kind of challenge to liberal democracies.

The key objective of this study is to more accurately characterize the new alternative parties in Slovakia. The following objective is to demonstrate the process of their radicalization and the emergence of anti-system parties. We focus on two cases in the context of the political parties' development in Slovakia since 2002. Two Slovak political parties that recently achieved representation in the national parliament have been selected as cases of empirical evidence for our arguments: 1. Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (OĽaNO) as a typical anti-establishment party/anti-elite movement; and 2. the People's Party-Our Slovakia (ĽSNS), which represents a radical, anti-system alternative. We explore both parties from two major perspectives: firstly, that of their ideological stances and agenda as well as their organizational structures and, secondly, the perspective in which we explore the differences between the voters of anti-establishment alternatives and those of the radical, anti-system alternatives in terms of their attitudinal profiles and partisan loyalties, as well their relationships to or views of other political parties.

The paper is structured as follows: The first section deals with theoretical concepts of new political parties, and the conceptual definitions of anti-system parties. The second section describes the context of the successful entries of the newcomers in

both Slovakia and other states. It identifies the forms, faces and stages of the emerging alternatives in Slovakia with a focus on the most illustrative cases of a Slovak anti-establishment party (OLaNO) and a Slovak radical anti-system party (LSNS). Both cases are examined in the context of the party political dynamics in Slovakia. The third part offers empirical data comparing the electorates of the two new parties, which can be classified into the categories of anti-establishment challengers and radicalized alternatives. The final section then discusses the results of the study and their implications for Slovakia as well as what they mean when they are placed against the background of recent political developments in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).

WHAT'S SO NEW ABOUT THE 'NEW' POLITICAL PARTIES?

Clearly, new political parties are not really a new phenomenon. However, within the last two or three decades their emergence and electoral successes have accelerated massively. The corresponding theoretical literature can be traced back to Paul Lucardie's prominent study (2000), which is primarily focused on the structural pre-conditions (the political opportunity structure) of the appearances and electoral successes of new parties. He identified four ideal types of new political parties based on the kind of political project they pursue (Lucardie, 2000):

- 1) 'Prophetic' parties, which articulate new ideologies, and are successful if they are able to link these ideologies to latent or 'subterranean' traditions and mobilize sufficient resources;
- 2) 'Purifiers' or challengers, whose ambition is to 'cleanse' the political system of the corruption that benefits the establishment and traditional parties;
- 3) 'Prolocutors', which represent interests neglected by the established parties, and depend mainly on the political opportunity structure and specifically on the established parties' positions on salient cleavages and issues, as well as on the electoral system; and, finally,
- 4) Personal vehicles (or idiosyncratic parties).

In many later analyses the reason for the emergence of a new party is identified with new issues or new cleavages. As Simon Hug put it, the emergence of new parties is "a sign that the old parties have failed to incorporate new issues or assimilate new cleavages" (Hug, 2001, in Sikk, 2011: 466). However, some authors, such as Lucardie (2000) and Krouwel and Lucardie (2008), explicitly considered the possibility that new parties may not actually be based on a new issue, but they may still enter the party political landscape on a territory occupied by established parties (Sikk, 2011: 466). For both of these explanations, a disappointment with existing political parties (be it the incumbent, or the possible alternatives in the opposition) on the part of citizens has to be identified. This can be seen as an important but definitely not a suffi-

cient condition, however. Offering another explanation, Allan Sikk (2011) develops the idea of an attractive newness on the part of new parties which appeals to voters: a kind of *carte blanche* which has not disappointed expectations – yet. In other words, ‘newness’ is a winning formula, a quality in its own right. Based on his analyses of four empirical cases (two parties from Latvia and two from Estonia) Sikk empirically proves that newness itself without any ideological position or opposition is appealing for voters who are disappointed by the parties they chose previously (Sikk, 2011).

The Fourth Generation

Many studies focus specifically on the explosion of new political projects in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (Haughton & Deegan-Krause, 2015; Rovny, 2015; Pop-Eleches, 2010). In order to better frame these “undefined emerging objects” Pop-Eleches introduced the term “unorthodox political parties” (UOPs) and conceptualized them through what these parties are not: “they are not orthodox or mainstream political parties” since “a political party is classified as mainstream if its electoral appeal is based on a recognizable and moderate ideological platform rather than on the personality of its leader and/or extremist rhetoric” (Pop-Eleches, 2010: 225). In spite of a certain vagueness in this definition, in his more detailed description of UOPs he developed a typology of them, and in particular, through his listing and categorizing of these types of parties in the CEE countries covered by his research, the image of what UOPs are and what they are not is made clearer.

Pop-Eleches connects the concept of UOPs with the “third-generation elections of [the] post-communist era” and according to him this “wave” is characterized by the return of the anti-party and by the “protest vote (or anti-vote) – an electoral option driven less by the positive appeal of the chosen party’s ideological/policy platform than by the rejection of other possible political choices” (Pop-Eleches, 2010: 236). He argues that “[p]rotest voting is the practice of voting for a party not because of the actual content of its electoral message but in order to ‘punish’ other parties” (ibid.: 223). In this conceptualization we can see that UOPs are a good choice for someone wishing to cast a protest vote.

The concept of three generations of elections in post-communist countries became an inspiration for this study. According to it the first generation is represented by the founding elections, which were usually won by broad anti-communist coalitions; the second generation of elections brought an alternation of power among the mainstream political parties and were characterized as ‘normal years’; and in the third generation elections both of the main camps already have well-established and usually not entirely positive track records and so the protest vote mechanism disrupts the established political elites and seemingly consolidated party systems, and gives a chance to new alternatives. All in all, in the third generation of elections many voters are likely to opt for alternative, unorthodox parties (Pop-Eleches, 2010: 233–237).

Following Pop-Eleches' arguments, in the Slovak case we could say that the phase of third generation elections opened with the entrance of centrist populist parties in 2002 and continued with new anti-establishment alternatives in 2010 and 2012. However, Pop-Eleches' concept could be further developed (his cross-country comparative analysis covers only the period until the mid-2000s) and extended by a fourth generation. Undoubtedly, elections coming later repeat to a certain extent the 'third generation' pattern, which means that in each electoral competition newer new alternatives are emerging and are successful. Nevertheless, the character of these alternatives is changing, and in Slovakia we can observe their radicalization.

Protest parties are also broadly characterized by the Polish author Bartolomiej Michalak (2011), who summarizes their distinct characteristics in four points: (1) Protest parties are relatively young, weakly institutionalized and frequently not deep-rooted within their party systems, (2) their genesis is related to the deep structural and mental transformations which began in Western Europe in the second half of the 20th century (including the silent revolution in values), (3) the emergence and later electoral success of protest parties were the consequence of the crises of democratic representation, including the shift of political competition from centrifugal to centripetal competition (centripetal party competition is traditionally associated with the need to capture the median voter in a two-party system, whereas the existence of center parties is associated with centrifugal party competition; in other words once the protest parties step into the political competition its logic is modified) and (4) protest parties exceed (in some measures) the traditional model of inter-party competition, which is closed within the left-right dimension (Michalak, 2011: 112–113).

Whereas Michalak argues that protest parties are conceptually identical to anti-system parties, we challenge this argument. We argue instead that while perhaps they are a part of the broad category of protest parties, anti-system parties are specific and distinct from other types of protest parties. This definitional argument will be supported by demonstrating the differences between two generations of new alternative parties.

Going back to Lucardie's typology, most of the new alternatives in CEE countries fit very well into the categories of purifiers and prolocutors, and some of them also provide an ideological platform which fills an existing niche. However, many of them, including those in the Slovak case, belong to the category which Sikk described as parties based purely on newness and without ideological motivation: "Such parties based on the project of newness do not attempt to salvage an ideology..." (2011: 467). Lucardie's conceptualization, and in more general terms the literature on protest/unorthodox/anti-elite parties, is about non-radical alternatives, which often emerge as centrist populists and/or as any of Lucardie's types. They belong in the anti-establishment rather than the anti-system category. The radicalized alternative ĽSNS, which gained a surprising electoral success by entering the national parliament with 8% of the votes in the 2016 Slovak election, would not fit into any of those

types. That's why we decided that the radicalized new alternatives should be explored not 'just' as anti-establishment but as anti-system parties. Summing up, most of the new parties which emerged within the third generation of elections could be categorized as anti-establishment, but relatively few are anti-system. ĽSNS, however, belong in the latter category.

Conceptualizing 'Anti-Systemness'

In order to understand and conceptualize the distinction between anti-establishment parties and their more radical versions I resolved to explore the older concept of anti-systemness, which was not necessarily originally related to new emerging parties; among anti-system parties typical for Western democracies are extreme right and fascist parties but also 'old' communist parties, secessionists and those close to anti-system groups or even terrorist groups such as the IRA and ETA (Capoccia, 2002). However, with the spiral of new and newer parties we can observe a radicalization of new alternatives – there are new challengers not just for the establishment (traditional/mainstream political parties and elites) but also for liberal democracy as such. It does not mean that the radical alternative would replace or become a successor of an earlier anti-establishment party, since its rise and electoral success normally follow specific political and discursive opportunity structures. For example, ĽSNS took an opportunity to fill a specific niche when the Slovak National Party (SNS), which previously had a monopoly on nationalist issues (cf. Gyárfášová & Mesežnikov, 2015), smoothed its nationalistic appeals. However, this context does not explain the key argument of this study.

The anti-system party is a key element of Giovanni Sartori's theory of party systems, specifically in polarized pluralism (Sartori, 1976 [2005]). Sartori offers two definitions of an anti-system party: the broad and the narrow definition. The broad definition is conceived as encompassing all possible variations in time and space of the attitudes of such parties and their electorates, ranging from alienation to protest, but "these variations and varieties find their minimal denominator in a common *delegitimizing impact*. [...] Accordingly, a party can be defined as being anti-system whenever it *undermines the legitimacy* of the regime it opposes" (ibid.: 117–118).² The narrow definition focuses on the ideological characteristics of the party and the fact that "an anti-system party would not change – if it could – the government but the very system of government. Its opposition is not an 'opposition on issues' (so little that it can afford to bargain on issues) but 'an opposition of principle'" (ibid.: 118). And Sartori follows up on this by adding the ideological aspect: "...anti-system parties represent an *extraneous ideology* – thereby indicating a polity confronted with a maximal ideological distance" (ibid.).

In the context of Sartori's theory, Giovanni Capoccia argues that the definitional attribute of anti-systemness is relational, being given by the ideological difference be-

tween one or more parties and the other parties in the system (Capoccia, 2002: 10) and he later states that “Sartori’s concept is ‘relational’ in a two senses [sic]: first it involves the ideological distance of a party from the others along the political (left-right) space of electoral competition and, second, it refers to the delegitimizing impact of the party’s actions and propaganda on the regime in which it operates” (Capoccia, 2002: 14). The attributes of relational anti-systemness and their systematic consequences are summarized in the following table:

Table 1: Attributes of relational anti-systemness and their consequences for the party system mechanism

Attribute of a party’s relational anti-systemness	Systemic consequences
A distant spatial location of its electorate from those of the neighbouring parties	Unequal spacing between parties (or space disjunction)
Low coalition potential	Multi-polarity
Outbidding propaganda tactics/ delegitimizing messages	Centrifugalization and an increase in polarization (process)

Source: Capoccia, 2002: 15.

As we will demonstrate in more detail later, LSNS displays all three of the attributes postulated by Capoccia, and their consequences for the party system and political competition listed in the table above can be demonstrated in its case too.

Combining the two dimensions of anti-systemness – the ideological and relational dimensions – Capoccia identified five types of anti-systemness, whereas “the assessment of relational anti-systemness is based on a general evaluation of a party’s coalition and propaganda strategies, rather than on its location on the ideological space – although all examples share the common property of being located at one extreme of the competitive space” (Capoccia, 2002: 24–25). The five types are listed and mapped out in the table below.

Table 2: The typology of political parties according to their anti-systemness

Relational Anti-systemness (‘isolationist’ strategies, a separate ‘pole’ of the system)			
Ideological Anti-systemness (outbidding propaganda tactics, refusal of basic joint values)	Yes		No
	Yes	Typical anti-system parties	Irrelevant ASPs Accommodating ASPs
	No	Polarizing parties	Typical pro-system parties

Source: Capoccia, 2002: 24, additional explanations by the author.

As indicated in the table a party which demonstrates relational and ideological anti-systemness (yes on both dimensions) adopts 'isolationist' strategies, tends to build a separate pole of the system and refuses to enter coalitions, and resorts to out-bidding propaganda tactics and systematically opposes and discredits founding values of the regime, on which all other parties agree, which is the most significant characteristic of such a party (cf. Capoccia, 2002: 25). A party which meets the conditions of relational and ideological anti-systemness is classified as a typical anti-system party. The other parties which belong to the 'no' types are either irrelevant or accommodating, or if they are characterized by a "no" on both dimensions, they are typical pro-system parties.

In the Slovak case, ĽSNS would be placed in the top left-hand cell ("yes" on both dimensions) of this typology since it adopts isolationist strategies and is isolated by the other parties (all the other parties declared that they would not build a coalition with it), and at the same time it systematically opposes some founding values of the regime on which the other parties agree. On the other hand the anti-establishment alternative – OĽaNO – does not fit into the category of ideological anti-systemness. It demonstrates a rather fuzzy but not extreme or anti-system profile; moreover, as we will show later, as for its spatial location there is a relatively small distance between its electorate and those of the neighbouring parties. As for the relational dimension, in its 'earlier life', as a part of its mother party Freedom and Solidarity, it was a part of a center-right government coalition (2010–2012). However, for the electoral cycles 2012–2016 and 2016–2020, it would fit into the category of 'polarizing parties' since its coalition potential is low and its relations to other parties are problematical.

Recently, in the literature there has been a revival of anti-systemness. The established Sartorian perspectives on anti-system parties (celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2016) are now challenged and revisited (Zulianello, 2017). Mattia Zulianello is developing a revised concept of anti-systemness and "a novel typology by focusing on two salient dimensions for any political actor: its core ideological concepts and its visible interactions at the systematic level" (ibid.: 24). This two-dimensional typology enables one to make a major distinction between populist parties as well as to follow the development of individual cases in time. However, for the purposes of this paper's objectives – to identify the distinction line between the anti-establishment and anti-system cases – the classic Sartorian approach applied also by Capoccia is more productive.

FORMS, FACES, AND STAGES OF THE NEW ALTERNATIVES IN SLOVAKIA

In previous sections of this paper I have explained Pop-Eleches' concepts of the protest vote and the generations of post-communist elections and connected them

to a theoretical analysis of the anti-system parties and their distinct positions in the party systems. The following empirical part focuses on the developments, characteristics and profiles of the two examined Slovak political parties, namely the anti-establishment group Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (OĽaNO) and the extreme right-wing People's Party – Our Slovakia (ĽSNS), which represents an anti-system party. The Slovak case is a case of a specific country; however, it has many similarities with the cases of other countries in the Central European region.

An Anti-Elitist Appeal to ‘Ordinary People’

The new political parties which got the label ‘centrist-populists’ (Učeň et al., 2005) entered Slovakia's political system in the 2002 general election. As has already been stated, this election perfectly matches Pop-Eleches' concept of a third generation election. The next poll, in 2006, was the only one since 1990 in which no new party emerged at national level. The 2010 election then concluded a four-year period during which the country was governed by a nationalist-populist coalition of Direction-Social Democracy (Smer-SD), led by Prime Minister Robert Fico, the Slovak National Party (SNS) and the People's Party-Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (ĽS-HZDS), which was then still led by the semi-authoritarian former Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar. The new alternative parties which successfully participated in this election were the Hungarian-Slovak party Bridge (Most-Híd) and Freedom and Solidarity (SaS).

Whereas the former cannot be seen as a complete newcomer, since it was established in a split from the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK) with the aim of building a bridge between the Hungarian ethnic minority, which made up ten per cent of the population of Slovakia, and the majority population, the latter was entirely a ‘greenfield’ project. However, SaS does not fully fit into the category of unorthodox challengers without a clear profile. The party had a clear ideology and filled a niche on the political scene, namely the liberal one: on economic issues the party was neoliberal and on cultural issues, it was liberal and in clear opposition to the conservative Christian Democrats. The program and the stances of the party were unambiguous and the profile of its voters and adherents was also clear-cut and coherent (cf. Bútorová & Gyárfášová, 2011). Its novelty and liberal attitudes together with an up-to-date communication strategy via social media made the party very popular among young voters: in 2010 first-time voters made up almost a quarter of its electorate. According to Lucardie's categories SaS would belong among the ‘prophets’ because it occupied a niche which was not fully taken by any of the established parties. However, SaS, like other Slovak new parties, challenges Lucardie's thesis that new parties need to recruit members in order to win voters (Lucardie, 2000: 178). SaS did not recruit members, and even later it only did so in a very limited way.

After the election SaS joined a centre-right coalition which lasted less than two years as it lost a vote of confidence, and thus an early parliamentary election was held in March 2012 and ended with a landslide victory for Smer-SD. Before the early election the demand for new alternatives was enormous. It was mostly due to the huge disappointment of the voters with the traditional parties as a consequence of the 'Gorilla scandal'.³ Twenty-six parties were running in this election (in 2010 there were 'only' 18) and alongside the traditional established parties there were a great number of new, recycled, re-branded or otherwise rehashed subjects that responded to the provoked demand for new parties and faces. However, the only one which got over the five per cent threshold was Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (OLaNO), which had previously stood together with SaS but this time ran as an independent party (cf. Bútorová et al., 2012).

OLaNO represents an anti-establishment, anti-elite alternative *par excellence*. Even its name sends a clear signal about its potential electorate: it is a typical protest party that attracted voters who had become disillusioned with established political parties. The concept of a party that in fact refuses to become one responded effectively to the anti-party sentiment shared by many voters and gave them the chance to express their disapproval of the established party system's representatives. Moreover, OLaNO has striven to be perceived not just as an anti-party or quasi-party but as an antipode to a political party. Based on this concept, OLaNO consistently refuses to evolve into a political party and also refuses to build its own organizational structures or membership base (again, its electoral success was achieved without party members).

During the mobilization phase it portrayed itself as a new actor that came from outside the established political elite. It lacks not only the organizational structure typical for standard political parties but also a clear ideological profile. Its representatives like to describe their entity as a 'party of common sense'. However, when addressing certain issues, the movement betrays a significant inconsistency that at times verges on syncretism. This may be a direct result of the movement's organizational amorphousness and the non-existence of an internal structure that would consider adopting joint positions as a way of advertising the subject's profile. They do not strive for party discipline, and their elected deputies vote according to their consciences. OLaNO insists on being the only party with issue ownership when it comes to fighting corruption. In their manifesto they declared:

However, there is one big problem which we finally want to solve. As long as there is corruption in politics, clientelism and theft of public finances and public property, there will be not enough money for such basic services as health care, education, and support for families, senior citizens or the handicapped (Obyčajní ľudia, 2012: 1, author's translation).

And they argue that this can only be done by new politicians:

Therefore our main objective is to bring new blood into politics, to hold a mirror to the old generation of politicians and to give the citizens the chance to select representatives who will really advocate their interests, and not the interests of the party headquarters and lobby groups (ibid., author's translation).

OĽaNO clearly distances itself from the "old generation" of politicians, claiming "we are new and clean; we did not commit the sin of political corruption" (ibid.).

With regard to ideological profiling, OĽaNO is a rather fuzzy case. It denies any explicit position on the left-right continuum, preferring the adjective "good,"⁴ but implicitly it presents itself as a 'centrist' force that is rather compatible with centre-right parties, yet it mixes pro-liberal proposals in the socio-economic area with clearly statist, leftist ideas. Its positions are similarly varied and non-unified when it comes to cultural issues: some of its representatives declare themselves as liberals who are tolerant towards minorities, whereas others are strictly conservative in this respect.⁵

The same applies to their electorate. OĽaNO voters constitute a quite heterogeneous and incoherent group from the viewpoint of ideological preferences and professed values. On the economic left-right axis,⁶ OĽaNO supporters are closer to the average for all voters than those of any other party. This justifies the conclusion that self-positioning on the left-right continuum is considered important by neither the party nor its voters. OĽaNO voters do not show a strong profile on the liberal-conservative axis either.⁷ To paraphrase Sikk we could say that "fuzziness is the winning formula", since the party offers choices *à la carte*, not coherent programmatic stances; each of its voters can pick their own 'cherries'.

OĽaNO fits two out of the three main categories of newly-emerging political parties that were identified by Lucardie. This quasi-party acts and is perceived as a 'purifier' that has embarked on combating widespread corruption and party political clientelism. Moreover, OĽaNO presents itself as a 'prolocutor' that represents the interests of voters neglected by established parties (that is, ordinary citizens) and focuses on a single issue neglected by traditional parties. It does not act as an 'ideological prophet' as it prefers to stand on non-ideological platforms, which it perceives as a comparative advantage over parties that have a clear ideological profile. Thus OĽaNO is a clear anti-establishment party.

Right-Wing Radicals Enter the Parliament

The 2016 Slovak parliamentary election followed the pattern regarding newcomers and brought several new parties into the parliament: the centrist programmatic alternative Network (Sieť), the newly established Sme rodina and the

extreme right-wing party ĽSNS. Sieť was a very short-lived project and disintegrated shortly after the election. Sme rodina was founded by the controversial businessman Boris Kollár, who ‘purchased’ and renamed a small regional party shortly before the election, thereby circumventing the time-consuming process of collecting supporters’ signatures and applying to become legally registered by the Interior Ministry. The party represents the phenomenon of ‘non-political politics’: it has a very unclear ideological profile, but uses radical anti-migration rhetoric, and is Eurosceptic, and its key issue in the campaign was offering an amnesty for insolvents, a measure which, according to legal experts, cannot be implemented, but which sounds very attractive – to some at least. The question to what extent this party will become anti-system is open: so far it is anti-establishment rather than anti-system.

ĽSNS, on the other hand, is a radical, extreme right-wing party which bears clear signs of representing an anti-system alternative: the party has a spatial location that is distant from all other political parties in the parliament. Above all, in regard to questions of Slovakia’s core geopolitical orientation, ĽSNS demands Slovakia’s exit from the EU and NATO, and initiated a petition for holding a referendum on this topic. The party also opposes basic principles of human rights: it rejects minority rights, and makes anti-Semitic invectives and dehumanizing proclamations about the Roma minority, promising to protect people from “gypsy extremists” and calling the Roma “parasites” (Kotleba, 2016: 1–2; Kotleba, 2015). Furthermore, the party denies the democratic historical tradition of the Slovak Republic represented by the Slovak National Uprising against the Slovak state in 1944 and praises the fascist state that existed in wartime Slovakia. In their eyes, the Slovak National Uprising against the fascist regime and its ally Nazi Germany was a “national tragedy” and a “communist coup” (Vražda, 2016).

The ten-point election manifesto of ĽSNS includes its promise to fight against corruption, but also anti-migrant rhetoric (including statements like “Slovakia is not Africa”, “We will never give in to foreigners” and “We will not take in a single migrant”), anti-Roma declarations and the anti-EU and anti-NATO positions that were already mentioned. In addition to that it presents itself as conservative: the values of the traditional family are put into the centre field, together with a “fair social policy” that includes very generous social benefits, lowering the pension age and a hundred per cent increase in maternity benefits (Kotleba, 2016). The fight against the “system” is also explicitly written into the motto of the party: “With courage against the system.”

The party also meets the criterion of low coalition potential: when ĽSNS entered the national parliament in 2016, it received 14 out of the 150 seats, but all of the seven other parliamentary political parties formed a *cordon sanitaire* around it, so the party has zero coalition potential. Nevertheless, in accordance

with what Sartori said about anti-system parties, ĽSNS is ready to bargain on single issues, and it has been approached by other parties, both coalition and opposition, to bargain on issues such as the vote on increasing the number of members required for the registration of minority religions (then the ĽSNS deputies voted with the government) or the investigation of allegations of corruption at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (in that case they voted with the opposition).

If we compare the attributes of relational anti-systemness (Table 1) with the attributes of ĽSNS at the level of party positions and actions, we see its congruence with all three attributes, and as for the typology combining ideological and relational anti-systemness (Table 2), we can classify ĽSNS as a typical anti-system party as it is positive on both dimensions. More specifically, we would categorize ĽSNS as a typical anti-system party due to its isolationist strategies and its systematic opposition to Slovakia's founding values: minority rights, its geopolitical position and the democratic traditions in its history. It also recognizes and promotes extreme (fascist, neo-Nazi) ideologies which are contradictory to elementary human rights and are in conflict with the constitution of the Slovak Republic.

In May 2017 the anti-systemness of the party and its threat to Slovakia's democratic regime were recognized by the Prosecutor General of the Slovak Republic when he asked the Supreme Court to ban the party as an extremist group whose activities violate the country's constitution. The court hearing is pending at the time of writing.⁸

CHARACTERISTICS OF SLOVAK ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT AND ANTI-SYSTEM PARTIES' ELECTORATES

Finally, we would like to compare the two examined anti-establishment and anti-system parties in terms of the perspectives of their electorates. We stated that an ideological spatial distance from other parties at the level of the party system is one of the constitutive characteristics of anti-system parties. A similar pattern can be seen at the level of voters. The electorates of seven parliamentary parties evaluated how much they liked individual parties on an 11-point scale, and their answers have been translated into indices ranging from -100 to +100 in the following table.

Table 3: Views of parties' voters about their own and other parties (indices – 100 to +100)

“What do you think about the following political parties? Please rate them on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly dislike that party and 10 means you strongly like that party.”

Party voted for	Party evaluated						
	ĽSNS	MOST-HID	OĽaNO	SaS	SNS	Sme rodina	Smer-SD
ĽSNS	71	-37	-37	-33	-48	-28	-71
Most-Hid	-51	75	5	3	-37	-22	-29
OĽaNO	-34	-30	47	8	-20	-30	-54
SaS	-42	-29	3	57	-33	-22	-57
SNS	-45	-10	-54	3	60	-33	5
Sme rodina	-32	-14	8	4	-4	25	-44
Smer-SD	-53	-4	-62	-48	25	-56	65
Average for SK population	-40	-9	-31	-19	5	-38	3

Note: Average indices on the following scale: +100 (most favourable) to –100 (most unfavourable). The numbers in bold represent the evaluations of the voters of the party of their choice.

Source: CSES/ISSP Slovakia, 2016.

The findings of the party/electorate ‘sociogram’ represent a kind of ‘mental map’, the ‘chemistry’ of voters’ perceptions. But here we will focus primarily on our two cases: ĽSNS is the least favoured party among the Slovak public (its average value in the table is –40; it does not receive a positive rating from any electorate except its own, and its negative ratings range from –53 to –32). The positions of ĽSNS voters towards other parties are symmetrical: its extremist voters dislike all the other parties, be they in government or in opposition. As for OĽaNO, it is perceived slightly more positively (with an average rating of –31) (Table 3).

The party/electorate map reveals one more significant finding about ĽSNS and its voters: a very strong identification of the electorate with its party. ĽSNS voters give their party a higher score than any of the other electorates (+71), with the exception of Most-Hid’s electorate, as its ethnically Hungarian voters may feel a particularly strong link to ‘their’ party. The anti-establishment alternative OĽaNO scored only +47 among its voters, which was the lowest score on this variable for all the parties with the exception of Sme rodina (+25), where the lack of party identification could be partially explained by the novelty of this party. However, when we compare it with ĽSNS, for which strong electoral ties are typical, it shows that Sme rodina is closer to the anti-establishment alternatives – perhaps it is even a sort of OĽaNO for a new generation.

The strong inclination of ĽSNS voters for their party can also be demonstrated by other findings from the post-election survey. Specifically, when asked the question

“Do you usually think of yourself as close to any particular party?” 68% of ĽSNS voters answered positively, whereas significantly fewer OĽaNO voters – only 48% – did so. Moreover, when the survey asked, “Do you feel very close, somewhat close, or not very close to this party?” 44% of ĽSNS voters but only 16% of OĽaNO voters said they felt “very close” to the party they had voted for. To complete the picture of their high level of identification, the loyalty of the ĽSNS voters can also be demonstrated by the fact that 90% of the party’s voters in the 2016 election said they would repeat their choice 6 months after the election, which was the highest percentage of core loyal voters among all the parliamentary parties (CSES/ISSP Slovakia, 2016).

The electorates of the anti-establishment and anti-system alternative parties are also different in terms of the profiles of their voters. As we already argued, the anti-establishment parties are characterized by an unclear profile and a relatively weak identification with the party on the part of its voters. On the other hand the voters of the anti-system alternative ĽSNS have a very clear profile above all on issues which are constitutive for the party’s program: their views on immigrants are the most hostile out of all the groups of voters, although it has to be pointed out that views on immigration are fairly negative among practically all the parties’ electorates. ĽSNS voters are also extremely negative towards EU integration, and other survey data shows their strong resentment towards minorities and also towards democracy.

Table 4: Views on refugees and EU integration

Voters of	Refugees: a benefit or a threat for EU countries? (0 = benefit, 10 = threat)	St. Deviations	European integration: has it gone too far or should it be continued? (0 = gone too far, 10 = should be continued and deepened)	St. Deviations
ĽSNS	9.37	1.028	3.17	3.054
SNS	8.59	1.545	3.63	2.602
Most-Híd	8.53	1.650	3.91	2.785
Smer-SD	8.51	1.775	4.03	2.844
Average for SK population	8.41	1.837	3.90	2.786
OĽaNO	8.14	2.079	4.42	3.192
SaS	7.87	2.099	3.79	2.316
Sme rodina	7.65	2.230	4.11	3.315

Source: CSES/ISSP, 2016.

The same pattern of the electorates' views can be documented also in connection with other topics and statements. For example, it can be demonstrated by the data from the survey focused on cultural values (including positions on national sovereignty; intolerance towards others in terms of religion, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation; positions on European integration, etc.). The ĽSNS voters are clear outliers whereas the OĽaNO voters are close to the country mean (Table 5). The same pattern emerges when it comes to evaluations of some key historical events, and social distance from or support for Slovakia's NATO membership (Bútorová and Mesežnikov, 2017).

Table 5: Cultural Closedness vs. Openness (averages on a scale from 1, which means the values are perceived extremely unfavourably by the given party, to 7, which means the values are perceived extremely favourably by the given party)⁹

	Cultural closedness, protection of national sovereignty	Multiculturalism, cultural openness, deeper integration
SaS	4.91	4.25
Most-Híd	5.00	4.53
Average for SK population	5.08	3.92
Sme rodina	5.10	4.04
OĽaNO	5.25	4.13
SNS	5.30	3.92
Smer-SD	5.32	3.85
KDH	5.50	4.10
ĽSNS	5.60	3.00

Source: Bútorová & Mesežnikov, 2017: 24.

Summing up the aforementioned empirical findings, we can also see significant differences at the level of electorates between the anti-establishment protest parties and the anti-system alternatives. Whereas the protest voters who voted for anti-establishment choices are only very loosely identified with their selected parties, and such a choice could be a short-term option, the voters of the anti-system party are strongly identified with their party, the electorate is much more homogeneous in terms of their opinions and they are clearly ideologically distant from any other voter groups. So, the voters of an extreme anti-system party are strongly identified with 'their' party: they feel a high proximity to its views and values, and are certain that they will vote for it again. Such intense party loyalty is clearly demonstrated in the case of ĽSNS but not in the case of OĽaNO or even Sme rodina. Thus, we conclude that ĽSNS can be categorized as an anti-system party in a way that other parties in Slovakia cannot.

CONCLUSION: PUTTING THE FOURTH GENERATION IN (REGIONAL) CONTEXT

This article has examined the radicalization of new alternatives among the Central European political parties. As we have illustrated, the emergence and electoral success of new parties is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon. The key objective of this article was to identify the distinction line between anti-establishment and anti-system parties, and to exhibit the growing radicalization of new alternatives in the case of Slovakia. Using a single country case study with a focus on two political actors – the typical anti-establishment party OĽaNO and the emblematic radical anti-system party ĽSNS – we demonstrated that the process of emerging new alternatives continues with each new election in the post-communist countries. However, with its continuation we also see a radicalization of the new alternatives – namely, a shift from anti-establishment to anti-system parties. While the future of anti-system parties in Slovakia is far from certain, looking at the data presented above, particularly in relation to voter loyalty, would suggest that the radicalization is unlikely to be a short-lived phenomenon.

This is relevant to a much broader recent debate about the illiberal turn and the illiberal consolidation, deconsolidation, hollowing and backsliding of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe (for example, see Krastev, 2007; Greskovits, 2015; Dawson & Hanley, 2016) as well as to the discussion of the rise of populism, Euroscepticism and extremism across even more advanced democracies. Compared to Orbán's Hungary and Kaczyński's Poland, Slovakia represents a less prominent case of such tendencies and is not very often mentioned in the 'backsliding literature'. This has two reasons: Firstly, the extreme and anti-system ĽSNS has only recently entered the national parliament and is still rather too marginal to have a crucial impact on the party system and change the broader political profile of the country. Secondly, the ruling party Smer-SD – unlike FIDESZ in Hungary or Law and Justice (PiS) in Poland – is not taking major steps to undermine democratic mechanisms or initiate a populist mobilization (to give some examples of such steps in other countries, Hungary made some constitutional amendments aimed at concentrating power and held an anti-EU plebiscite in autumn 2016, and the new government in Poland established overt state control over public broadcasting and allowed governmental interference with the Polish constitutional court).

But what are the factors that prevent an illiberal turn in Slovakia? Szomolányi and Gál (2016) identified four: the pragmatic-opportunistic two-faced politics of the Slovak political elite; the proportional electoral system which is conducive to coalition governments; Slovakia's strong EU integration, including its integration in the eurozone; and, last but not least, the structure of the Slovak economy, which is export-oriented and very much dependent on the EU single market (Szomolányi & Gál, 2016: 80).¹⁰ Nevertheless, the electoral success of ĽSNS was a signal that under cer-

tain circumstances even an anti-system party can get enough votes to be represented at parliamentary level, not to mention the fact that a large portion of these votes came from young voters and voters who did not vote until they finally found a tempting choice in 2016 (Gyárfášová et al., 2017).

This latest development shows that radicalization of newly emerging alternatives is a more general phenomenon than previously thought – and that Slovakia is not immune to this issue. To mention a similar case, a further radicalization of the already radical right-wing part of the political spectrum is to be observed in Hungary; the main opposition party, Jobbik, has been moving away from its far-right roots and is staking out a more centrist position while being replaced by a newly established movement called “Force and Determination”, which uses openly racist language to oppose liberalism and immigration. This shows that the process of radicalization of new alternatives is ongoing in the region (for more details, see *The Guardian*, 2017).

When looking at the general social climate in Slovakia we can see a broad spectrum of contextual indicators which could be the background for the recent radicalization, ranging from the consequences of the radical rhetoric used by mainstream politicians on the issue of migration to the growing political corruption and an inefficient judiciary, and the spill-over effect of a radical populist ‘Zeitgeist’ which is currently circulating in the democratic world. It is very difficult to quantify this precisely, or to sufficiently demonstrate the causal effects. However, comparing some indicators from 2010 and 2016 we can see that the general satisfaction with democracy declined, as did trust in the meaningfulness of the democratic electoral process, meaningful voting and effective vote choices, all of which are indicators of institutional efficiency.¹¹

The survey data also show an increasing tolerance for radical statements. In international comparisons, Slovakia used to be a country with an above-average resistance to radical views and activities. Nowadays, however, it is a country where tolerance of such views and activities is above average (Bahna & Zagraban, 2017). The poll conducted in fall 2016 (CSES/ISSP, 2016) showed that there is a connection between attitudes to corruption and the growing tolerance of radical views in Slovakia. Namely, those who believe that politicians are corrupt are more tolerant of radical activities. Eight to ten years ago this connection did not exist (ibid.). So, we can assume that negative changes in the social and political climate might indirectly contribute to the increased popularity of anti-system parties or at least to a continuation of their presence on the political scenes in post-communist countries.

This paper also revealed how the voters of anti-system parties differ from other constituencies: the Slovak case shows that their voters are highly identified with their chosen party, meaning that they would hardly listen to cognitive arguments about the party’s dangerous ideology or the very low policy competence of extremist politicians. To vote for an ideologically extreme anti-system party is very much an act

of an affective nature. This leads us to assume that the stability of such parties' votes could be higher than that of some short-lived anti-establishment parties which emerged in the earlier stages of the third generation post-communist elections.

Consequently, although it has been common in Slovakia and other CEE states for new parties to come and go, the dangers posed to liberal democracy in Slovakia – and to the country's participation in the EU and NATO – by a far right party such as ĽSNS may be greater than they at first seem. As has been shown, this anti-system party differs in many respects from anti-establishment parties, and some of these features may make it likely to be re-elected at the national level, or its anti-systemness may be taken up by other actors. Given the regional context of democratic backsliding and increasingly openly expressed anti-EU and anti-NATO sentiments, this is an issue for Slovakia's neighbours, partners and allies to also pay attention to.

ENDNOTES

¹ This work has been conducted within the project 'Between East and West, Value Integration or Divergence? Slovak Society in the International Comparative Surveys', which was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency (APVV-14-0527). The author would like to thank Prof. Soňa Szomolányi, Dr. Karen Henderson and the two anonymous reviewers for their helpful advice on earlier versions of this paper as well as the Editor and proofreader of *New Perspectives* for their work in improving the piece.

² The pagination is according to the edition published by ECPR in 2005. See the Bibliography.

³ The 'Gorilla scandal' was the biggest political corruption scandal in Slovakia since the 2000s (after the end of the Mečiar governments). Information about politicians, officials and business executives discussing 'businesses' and privatization contracts was leaked from the secret service in December 2011. The Gorilla scandal resulted in a wave of nationwide political protests across the country shortly before the 2012 general election.

⁴ In its program for the 2016 election OĽaNO declares, "good politics; a good state; a good life and a good job" (*Obyčajní ľudia*, 2016b).

⁵ In the 2016 election some long-term Christian Democrat voters argued that they switched to OĽaNO because their representatives are allegedly more authentic in terms of upholding traditional Christian values.

⁶ The left-right economic axis comprises two indicators: paternalism vs. individual responsibility, and for vs. against social redistribution.

⁷ The liberal vs. conservative axis comprises three indicators: pro-life vs. pro-choice, pro- vs. anti-same sex marriage, and the role of the church in society (its strengthening vs. its weakening).

⁸ It is worth noting that the ĽSNS predecessor *Slovenská pospolitosť – Národná strana* (Slovak Solidarity – National Party) was banned in 2006 (the first party to be prohibited after 1989). The Supreme Court ordered the dissolution of the ultra-nationalist party because of its extremist ideology.

⁹ Respondents gave their evaluations of nine different values and political positions. Based on a factor analysis a summary index for two dimensions has been constructed. For more details see Bútorová and Mesežnikov (2017: 24–25).

¹⁰ Let us specify the differences between Slovakia and the other V4 states: Slovakia is the only Visegrad country which already adopted the euro currency (in January 2009). Unlike Slovakia Hungary has a mixed electoral system, since in accordance with the latest amendments introduced by Orbán, in the most recent Hungarian election (April 2018) more than half of the seats were won on a majority 'first-past-the-post' basis in individual constituencies, and the second round was eliminated, which led to even greater advantages for Fidesz. Also, out of all the V4 countries Slovakia has the highest share of intra-EU exports of goods, and Poland the lowest (Eurostat, 2018).

¹¹ The indicators show a quite consistent trend: within six years, the overall satisfaction with democracy decreased by 9 percentage points, the belief that it does make a difference who is in power decreased by 12 percentage points and fewer people think that the elections offer meaningful choices – a decrease by 13 percentage points. The changes over time are statistically significant and illustrate that public trust in democracy has declined (CSES/ISSP, 2016). Also, the widespread complaint that all politicians are the same is more common than it was six years ago.

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