

Europeanisation of Slovak Parties' Programmatic Documents for EP Elections: A Drop in the Bucket, or a Light at the End of the Tunnel?

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Europeanisation of Slovak Parties' Programmatic Documents for EP Elections: A Drop in the Bucket, or a Light at the End of the Tunnel? Elections to the European Parliament fall within the category of second-order elections. Because there is less at stake in these types of contests voters behave differently when casting votes. But the question remains: do political parties also perceive that there is less at stake in these elections and behave differently than in national first-order elections? This paper conducts a content analysis, within a comparative framework, of selected Slovak political parties' programmatic documents for EP elections to explicitly link the SOE model to independent behaviour of political parties. The results show that Slovak parties' Euromanifestos feature an apparent degree of Europeanisation and exhibited only limited second-order characteristics. Consequently, these findings are discussed in the light of relevant literature.

Key words: European Parliament elections; second-order elections; political parties; Europeanisation; election manifestos; Slovakia

Europeizace programových dokumentů slovenských stran pro volby do Evropského parlamentu: kapka v moři nebo světlo na konci tunelu? Volby do Evropského parlamentu spadají do kategorie voleb druhého řádu. V takovém typu voleb je méně v sázce a proto se v nich voliči chovají odlišně než v prvořadých volbách. Otázkou však zůstává: vnímají také politické strany, že je v druhořadých volbách méně v sázce a chovají se tedy odlišně než v národních volbách prvního řádu? Tato studie provádí komparativní obsahovou analýzu volebních programů pro volby do Evropského parlamentu vybraných slovenských politických stran s cílem integrovat teorii voleb druhého řádu s chováním politických stran. Výsledky ukazují, že volební programy pro volby do Evropského parlamentu slovenských politických stran vykazují zjevný stupeň europeizace a zároveň vykazují pouze omezené druhořadé charakteristiky. Tyto výsledky jsou v závěru zhodnoceny ve světle relevantní odborné literatury.

Klíčová slova: volby do Evropského parlamentu; volby druhého řádu; politické strany; europeizace; volební programy, Slovensko

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Introduction

The fact that European Parliament elections are different from national parliamentary elections in the European Union (EU) member states with parliamentary systems and from presidential elections in the EU member countries with presidential regimes has been evident ever since the very first of these EU-wide elections were held in June 1979. Writing in their immediate aftermath, Reif and Schmitt (1980) suggested that the first direct EP elections are ‘second-order national elections’ (for an overview, see Marsh and Mikhaylov, 2010). An operational definition of second-order elections (SOEs) was proposed by Reif (1997, p. 117) more than a decade later: ‘All elections (except the one that fills the most important political office of the entire system and therefore is the first-order election) are “national second-order elections”, irrespective of whether they take place in the entire, or only in a part of, the country’. After seven sets of elections to the EP since Reif and Schmitt (1980) postulated that these contests are SOEs, the SOE model has become one of the most widely supported theories of voting behaviour in EP elections (Hix and Marsh, 2011; Marsh, 1998; Schmitt, 2005).

Nevertheless, recent scholarly work reports that results of EP elections in the ‘new’ member states, those that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, do not correspond to the propositions of the SOE model as results of EP elections of the ‘old’ member states (Hix and Marsh, 2007; Karvai and Plenta, 2010; Koepke and Ringe, 2006). Moreover, given their aggregate nature², the propositions of the SOE model have been overwhelmingly tested using aggregate electoral data and election-related survey data³. Using such data, analyses of EP elections tend to focus only on strategies of voters, practically leaving the model blind to independent actions of other actors that potentially make up the electoral circle: the *media*, and the *political parties* and *independent candidates* (cf. de Vreese et al., 2007; Tóka, 2007; Weber, 2007).

² The SOE model is built around three broad propositions: (1) lower level of voter’s participation; (2) brighter prospects for small parties; and (3) government parties lose.

³ It may be noted here that Slovak Republic achieved the lowest voters turnout in the European Parliament elections both in 2004 (16.9 %) and in 2009 (19.6 %) (Macháček, 2011a) and several mobilization projects were therefore conducted in Slovakia in order to increase voter’s electoral participation. “In case of 2009 EP election, we verified the hypothesis that electoral participation may differ in different social segments of “old” or “young” generation age categories. Studying youth, predominantly university students as the future social elite, connect their future with possibilities to apply in the EU. Therefore, also electoral participation of university students – first time voters was the highest among all structural groups of voters in 2009 EP election not only in Slovakia.”(Macháček, 2011, p. 55)

Given that perhaps the most important aspect of the SOE model is that there is less at stake in SOEs (Reif and Schmitt, 1980, p. 9), it is plausible to assume EP elections being of lesser importance not only to voters, but also to political parties and media. The logic of the SOE model is that all main electoral actors perceive that there is less at stake in EP elections (e.g. Linek, 2004). It may be even argued that in SOEs campaign efforts of parties, candidates, and media are more important than in national FOEs exactly because there is less at stake in SOEs and voters are 'less prepared to accept "campaign news" as important and relevant' (Reif and Schmitt, 1980, p. 13, see also Havlík and Hoskovec 2009: 30).

Empirical research analysing political parties' and media' strategies in EP elections, usually without explicit link to the SOE model in their research design, show that (1) parties allocate fewer resources for campaigns in SOEs than in national first-order elections (e.g. Brants et al., 1983; Ehin and Solvak, 2012; Hertner, 2011; Petithomme, 2012); (2) EP election campaigns have second-order character, meaning that they are (a) of low intensity, (b) less professionalised than campaigns for national FOEs, and (c) dominated by national rather than by European issues (e.g. Ervik, 2011; Irwin, 1995; Tenscher, 2005; Tenscher and Maier, 2009); and (4) parties put forward low-profile candidates who are either young and inexperienced or old and about to retire (e.g. Hobolt and Høyland, 2011; Kovář and Kovář, 2013; Scarrow, 1997).

In this paper, my aim is thus to contribute to the literature by directly linking the SOE model to independent actions of political parties. I attempt to do this through analysis of one of the aspects of political parties' supply for EP elections: election manifestos. The main research question of the paper hence is: to what extent do Euromanifestos⁴ offer EU-level issues or, in other words, to what extent is the EP election campaign *Europeanised*, or conversely, *domesticised* through political parties' election manifestos? To this end, I conduct a content analysis, within a comparative framework, of selected Slovak political parties' manifestos prepared for the 2004 and 2009 elections to the EP. It is worth noting here that elections to the EP of May 2014 will be held soon and hence campaign activities slowly but surely begin in individual EU member states. This offers fresh opportunity for future research to examine Euromanifestos prepared for these elections and to probe to what extent they correspond to Euromanifestos analysed in this paper. The remainder of the

⁴ Following tradition terminology, from now on, I will use the terms 'Euromanifesto' and 'election manifesto for EP elections' interchangeably.

From now on, I will use capital letters when referring to conceptual metaphors. Statements which refer just to metaphors without any adjectives apply to both conceptual metaphors and metaphorical expressions.

paper is structured as follows. The next section, before unveiling theoretically-informed propositions, outlines the theoretical background. The third section discusses methodological issues, operationalises concepts, presents the data, and delimits the analysed time period and political parties. The fourth section presents the results of the analysis, and, finally, the last section discusses the implications of the findings of the paper in the light of relevant literature.

Second-Order Election Model and (Europeanisation of) Political Parties

More than three decades ago, Reif and Schmitt (1980) labelled EP elections ‘second-order national elections’ (for an overview, see Marsh and Mikhaylov, 2010). The defining features of SOEs are that (1) there is less at stake in SOEs compared to national FOEs for the simple reason that they do not determine the composition of government (Reif and Schmitt, 1980); and (2) results of these contests as well as respective campaigns are influenced by political constellation of the national – first-order – political arena and are characterised by the dominance of the first-order arena national political issues (Norris, 1997; Reif, 1984, p. 247).⁵ In other words, the essence of the SOE model is that the issues remain the same as in the FOEs – domestic political issues (Auers, 2005; Irwin, 1995). A few studies conducted in Germany analysed election manifestos that parties produce for EP elections and, at the same time, relate their studies to the SOE model. These studies find that Euromanifestos are of ‘second-order’ nature in terms of (a) resource allocation, (b) manifestos’ content, and (c) ideological distance between different parties’ manifestos (Brunsbach et al., 2012; Wüst, 2009). Put differently, EP elections are generally considered to be highly domesticised rather than Europeanised whereas they ‘should be about European politics and the questions of Europe itself’ (Mair, 2000, p. 43).

The same can be argued concerning Europeanisation of political parties’ behaviour in EP elections. But, let me now take a step back and turn to the literature on Europeanisation in general before proceeding to discussion of Europeanisation of political parties. The research agenda on Europeanisation is somewhat recent; only since the second half of the 1990s has the term ‘Europeanisation’ come to denote a distinctive research area in EU studies (Sedelmeier, 2011, p. 5). There is considerable debate about how to define Europeanisation (Börzel and Risse, 2003; Cowles et al., 2001; Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003), but the literature generally uses the concept as shorthand for

⁵ Note that the SOE model does not preclude a potential influence of European issues on national elections but it does suggest a strong role for non-European issues (Marsh and Mikhaylov 2010: 13).

‘domestic impact of the EU’ or ‘influence of/on the EU’ (Börzel and Risse, 2000; Ladrech, 2002; Poguntke et al., 2007b).⁶

The research programme on the domestic impact of the EU has been applied to all three standard dimensions of political science research: *polity*, *policies*, and *politics* (see Börzel and Risse, 2000). Nevertheless, probably the latest as well as the least-researched area is the EU’s impact on the *politics* dimension, that is, on political actors and their interactions as well as processes of political contestation and interest aggregation (Fiala et al., 2006). Specifically, the Europeanisation of national political parties, party systems, and interest groups has emerged only recently as a separate research area (Ladrech, 2009, pp. 4-5; Mair, 2006), particularly as it relates to the new EU member states (MS) as well as the candidate countries in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, given their historical detachment from the European integration process (Enyedi, 2007; Haughton, 2010; Sedelmeier, 2011, pp. 20-21).

Following the pioneering work of Ladrech (1994; 2002), most of the studies focus on one or more areas in which evidence of Europeanisation could be reflected: (a) programmatic change; (b) organizational change; (c) patterns of party competition; (d) party-government relations; and (e) relations beyond the national political system. So far, the research of the pre-2004 EU MSs (Ladrech, 2002; Mair, 2000; Poguntke et al., 2007a) and the candidate countries from the Balkans (Fink-Hafner, 2008; Ladrech, 2008) has shown no significant impact of European integration upon national political parties and party systems, while studies of the Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 have reported a more significant impact of the EU (Enyedi, 2007; Hloušek and Pšeja, 2009) – of course, with some notable exceptions (Ágh, 2006; Sikk, 2009).

According to Ladrech (2002, p. 396), one of the most obvious and explicit areas in which the impact of European integration unfolded is that of programmatic changes (see also Haughton, 2010). Thus far, research on the Europeanisation of political parties’ programmatic documents has reported ambiguous results in terms of qualitative and quantitative changes incurred by the European integration process. One strand of literature concludes that party programmes tend to embody only limited qualitative and quantitative EU-incurred changes (Hloušek and Pšeja, 2009; Ladrech, 2008; Pennings, 2006), while the other strand of literature reports much more intensive EU-related changes of political parties’ programmes (Baun et al., 2006; Deželan, 2007; Havlík, 2010). More precisely, studies dealing with the Europeanisation of parties’ programmes for EP elections report more intensive changes incurred

⁶ For a ‘maximalist approach’ (Featherstone, 2003) that does not limit Europeanisation only to the processes related to European integration see, e.g. Flockhart (2010).

by the EU than research dealing with manifestos for national parliamentary and/or local elections (Kritzinger et al., 2004; Wüst, 2009).

Propositions

Based on the previous discussion, I draw theoretically-informed propositions regarding Europeanisation of political parties' election manifestos for SOEs. The aim of this paper is to integrate the SOE model with behaviour of political parties. In consequence, there are several reasons why election manifestos constitute a good source for analysis of whether political parties' behaviour can be considered as second-order election behaviour. Most important of all, there are several factors related to how EP elections are institutionally set. EP elections are organised as separate national elections where national political competition remains crucial for structuring vote choice and where national political parties: establish the procedures governing these elections (e.g. electoral laws), control the candidate selection process; set the funding for, content and dynamics of electoral campaign – usually attempting to mobilize voters on issues of national concern; formulate election manifestos; and structure the label under which parliamentarians are elected (Hix and Lord, 1997; Linek and Outlý, 2006; Thorlakson, 2005). In other words, national political parties are pivotal actors in EP elections much like in national FOEs and hence remain the main actors for aggregation of interests in EU politics in general and EP elections in particular (Hix, 2008; Mair, 2000, p. 38).

Taken these arguments together, the SOE theory should be integrated with the behaviour of political parties and the media instead of focusing only on voters in order to better understand SOEs (see also Strömbäck et al., 2011, p. 13). As in all elections, the behaviour of voters in SOEs cannot be perceived in isolation from the behaviours of political parties and independent candidates or of the media because it is not only voter's perceptions that are important in making European elections 'second-order' (Marsh, 1998). Moreover, given the extremely 'national' setting of elections to the EP, and following the characterisation of EP elections as SOEs, where the national political arena provides the dominant frame of reference (Reif and Schmitt, 1980), it is hardly surprising that the campaigns should be nationally differentiated and dominated by nation state-level political issues.

Based on this discussion, I propose:

Proposition 1: Political parties' election manifestos in Slovakia will be characterised by a low level of Europeanisation or, on the contrary, they will be characterised by domination of national political issues.

In addition to this, prior research on SOEs posits that the so-called 'first-time boost' influences behaviour of electoral actors in elections to the EP. In

practice, it means that the first EP elections ever held in each country embody a lower level of second-order characteristics than subsequent elections and second-order characteristics of elections deepen with subsequent EP elections held in a country (Reif, 1984; van der Eijk et al., 1996). As the 'novelty' aspect of EP elections disappears with subsequent elections more intensive manifestation of second-order characteristics can be expected. (Franklin, 2007; Hobolt and Høyland, 2011; Siune et al., 1984). My second proposition therefore is:

Proposition 2: Slovak parties' election manifestos for the 2004 EP elections will be more Europeanised than election manifestos for the 2009 EP elections.

Data and Methods

First of all, since I want to analyse Europeanisation of political parties' Euromanifestos it is inevitable to elaborate on my conceptual understanding of Europeanisation. In this paper, Europeanisation as a concept, following the mainstream approach, is employed here in its most generally understood sense. Europeanisation is understood as a process by which domestic actors adapt to the institutional framework and logic of the EU. Put differently, Europeanisation is understood as the responses of national actors to the impact of European integration (e.g. Cowles, Caporaso and Risse, 2001; Ladrech, 2002; Radaelli, 2000). The application of the Europeanisation concept in this paper is thus limited to the top-down approach as opposed to the bottom-up or bottom-up-down approaches (Exadaktylos and Radaelli, 2009). In practice, I understand Europeanisation of election manifestos as a process of transformation of these manifestos that is inspired by European integration. In other words, my definition of Europeanisation includes reflection of European integration in national political discourse in general and in election manifestos in particular.

After clarifying the understanding of Europeanisation, it is necessary to delimit analysed time period, political parties included in the analysis and the choice of election manifestos. First, the criterion of relevance for including a party into the analysis, the party had to have gained representation in both the sixth and the seventh European Parliament (2004-2009; 2009-2014). I decide to use this selection criterion for simple reason: in order to the Proposition 2, it is necessary to include at least two time period in the analysis. Concretely, I will analyse election manifestos of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), Direction – Social Democracy (SMER-SD), the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK-MKP), the People's Party – Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (ĽS-HZDS), and the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party (SDKÚ-DS).

Second, the choice of Euromanifestos as a data source for the analysis is obvious: given that the intent of the paper is to analyse one aspect of political parties' supply side for SOEs, the choice of Euromanifestos (that parties prepare for EP elections) is self-evident. Third, since Slovakia became a member state of the EU in May 2004, only two sets of EP elections for which parties drafted Euromanifesto has taken place so far. Hence, the analysis concerns with the 2004 and 2009 elections to the EP. The final issue that needs to be addressed before the analysis itself is the question of what method will be used to determine the extent of *Europeanisation* of Euromanifestos of Slovak political parties. The method used to achieve this goal is a content analysis of relevant Slovak parties' Euromanifestos, conducted within a comparative framework. Content analysis belongs to the most frequently used methods to analyse political parties' election manifestos (Havlík, 2008, pp. 352-354).

Building on the previous definition of Europeanisation of political parties' programmes (see above), and postulating that relevant changes incurred by the process of European integration may be observed in terms of qualitative and quantitative transformation, I use an approach developed by Havlík (Havlík, 2010; Havlík and Vykoupilová, 2008) in which the extent of the Europeanisation of election programmes is examined on the basis of two interconnected dimensions: *quantitative* and *qualitative*. This methodological approach was initially developed for the analysis of manifestos for national legislative elections, and not EP elections. But later it was slightly amended in order to make it suitable for the analysis of election programmes issued by political parties for EP elections (Hrabicová, 2010; Kovář, 2013). The quantitative dimension reflects the space devoted to European integration-related issues, while the qualitative dimension addresses the detailed elaboration of 'EU' themes in the analysed programmes (see Havlík and Vykoupilová, 2008).

The quantitative dimension is sub-divided into four layers: (0) Absence of EU issues – a political party leaves out European integration in its election programme (less than 1%; strong-second-order character); (1) Dominance of national issues – national issues are combined with EU issues but national issues prevail (1–49.9%; strong second-order character); (2) EU issues mixed with national issues – the issue of European integration is combined with national issues in the election programme but is in majority (50–74.9%; weak second-order character); and (3) Dominance of EU issues – European integration constitutes the major subject of the programme as a whole (75–100%; no second-order character). In order to assign issues into categories for the quantitative dimension, it is necessary to come up with specific

operationalisation of issues.⁷ I will differentiate between A) national issues, B) EU integration issues, and C) international, global, and other issues. For the elaboration of these categories, see Appendix 1.

The qualitative dimension is also sub-divided into four layers: (0) Absence of issues – European integration issues are not elaborated on in the programme; (1) General mention of European integration – involving normative evaluation of the entire integration process; (2) Reaction to individual (long-term) aspects of European integration and agenda of the EU – involving EU policies and their reform, institutional structure, and model of organization; enlargement in general; and (3) Reflection on current issues having to do with the European integration process – concerning heretofore unapproved or discussed aspects of European integration such as the Treaty reform, reform of the EU's institutional framework, enlargement in concrete terms, and others.⁸ See Appendix 2 for more reflection on which issues fall into which of these categories.

Analysis of Election Programmes

A content analysis of political parties' programmes for EP elections in 2004 and 2009 was carried out in order to study the Europeanisation of the supply side of EP, second-order, elections. Two out of the five analysed parties – the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK-MKP) and the People's Party – Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (ĽS-HZDS) – did not prepare a Euromanifesto for the 2004 EP elections. All analysed Slovak parties prepared a Euromanifesto for the 2009 EP elections.

The Christian Democratic Movement (KDH)

The title of the Euromanifesto for EP elections in 2004 was *Election Program of KDH for the Elections to the EP—2004*⁹ and it was divided into seven sections. The Christian Democrats addressed predominantly EU issues in the 2004 Euromanifesto, with only a limited inclusion of national issues. National issues in the programme included taxation policy, competitiveness of SMEs, (lifelong) education and R&D, employment strategy, economic development,

⁷ Issues can be expressed in several ways in the programme: either in a form of a short mention, sentence, and passage, or as a whole chapter. The smallest unit that is categorised is a sentence; eventually, a quasi-sentence.

⁸ For more information about the methodological approach and its application to Euromanifestos, see Kovář (2013).

⁹ Volebný program KDH do volieb do Európskeho parlamentu – 2004, 2004, KDH EP Election Manifesto, Available at <http://www.kdh.sk/volprog.html>, accessed 6 December 2009.

pension system, and family and social policy, which it said should 'stay in the competence of nation-states' (p. 3).

A noticeable part of the Euromanifesto dealt with general references to European integration issues and normative evaluation of the integration process. The KDH stressed the values that the EU would fulfil and pointed out that:

[I]t feels like a carrier of Schuman's vision of the development of Europe. It endorses the peaceful cooperation of European nations. Peace, adherence to human rights, respect for freedom, economic development, common security policy, social justice, and solidarity are the principal attributes that a uniting Europe, and Slovakia as part of it, must develop further (p. 1).

The party also generally mentioned values such as cultural values and traditions, protection of life beginning at conception, the environment, and dialogue with churches. Furthermore, in terms of general references, the KDH elaborated on the liberalisation of job markets at the EU level, adherence to the Stability and Growth Pact, and initiatives to increase 'unemployed qualification by means of EU funds' (p. 3).

Most of the EU issues mentioned in the programme were in terms of the concrete (long-term) agenda of the EU. The issues discussed involved immigration and asylum policies, cross-border cooperation in criminal matters, the Schengen information system, Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and its 'fundamental reform' (p. 4), the EU's foreign and security policy¹⁰, development policy, Slovakia's integration into the EU's Sixth or Seventh Framework Programme, neighbourhood policy and enlargement 'particularly for the Western Balkans' (p. 2), adherence to subsidiarity, and cohesion policy and funds.

An indispensable part of the Euromanifesto consists of the party's discussion of preferences concerning actual issues having to do with European integration, which the document's appendix elaborates on. These current issues were the Constitution for Europe, whose title 'shall be the Constitutional Treaty of the EU' and whose 'preamble shall include reference to Christian roots' (p. 5), reform of the EU's decision-making procedures, maintenance of the rotation presidency in the European Council and of the principle of one commissioner per MS, Slovak entry into the eurozone, and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as the EU's 'recognition of jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights' (p. 5).

In sum, the European integration issue constitutes the major subject of the KDH 2004 Euromanifesto. In terms of content, the Christian Democrats

¹⁰ The party argued for retention of unanimous decision-making in this policy area.

predominantly presented rather general preferences concerning the concrete (long-term) agenda of the EU. The party also included general/normative mentions of European integration as well as elaborate discussion of the priorities towards current aspects of European integration, particularly in relation to the Constitution for Europe.

*We Believe As You Do in the Strength of Our Europe*¹¹ was the title chosen by the KDH for its 2009 Euromanifesto. It was divided into seven broadly defined sections. European integration issues were the major issues on which the Christian Democrats discussed its preferences in the programme. Nonetheless, national and international issues were included as well. National issues addressed in the programme involved measures to tackle the financial crisis, support for SMEs, reduction of red tape, social and taxation policy, Slovakia's energy security, education and R&D, food security and their price stability, and cultural-ethical issues to be decided 'exclusively within the individual EU member states' (p. 2).¹²

The KDH presents EU issues predominantly in terms of discussion of preferences concerning the individual (long-term) agenda of the EU, but general and normative references to the EU and discussion of certain current EU issues were included too. Among the general references to the EU, the Christian Democrats stressed the importance of the values the EU is based on and should maintain (such as freedom and democracy, family values and protection of life, inter-generational solidarity, economic prosperity, and political stability). The party understands the EU as a 'community of sovereign states' (p. 7) and argues that 'being a full-fledged member state of the European Union has an immense significance for Slovakia' (p. 1). In terms of the long-term agenda of the EU, the KDH elaborated on adherence to the subsidiarity principle, EU cooperation with NATO and the United States in military and security cooperation, effectiveness of development policy, EU-level health services, student and teacher mobility, energy policy, CAP, enlargement that encompasses 'the Balkan countries (...) once they fulfil all inevitable conditions' (p. 3), efficient use of EU funds, and an immigration and asylum policy that 'would eliminate abuse of asylum by economically motivated migrants' (p. 3).

The party also discussed a few current issues to do with European integration. This discussion revolved around the Lisbon Treaty, which, it was

¹¹ Volebný program KDH do volieb do Európskeho parlamentu 2009, 2009, KDH EP Election Manifesto, Available at http://verime.kdh.sk/program_kdh_ep/?id=2, accessed on 15 December 2009.

¹² The party also advocates that decision-making in taxation, social, health, and retirement policy must remain at the national level in order 'to support the success of the whole European project' (p. 7).

said, 'does not sufficiently respect the sovereignty of member states' and thus the KDH 'did not support the adoption' of the Treaty (p. 7). Moreover, the party mentioned the construction of the Nabucco pipeline as a means to 'decrease energy dependence on Russia' (p. 5) and cooperation with Turkey at the level of privileged partnership. In summary, European integration issues constituted the major subject of and clearly overshadowed national issues in the 2009 Euromanifesto. From a content standpoint, the party provided general as well as normative references to the EU, but provided an especially general description of its preferences concerning the long-term EU agenda. Lastly, only a few current EU issues were discussed in the programme.

The Direction – Social Democracy (SMER-SD)

The Euromanifesto for the 2004 EP elections was titled *Stronger Slovakia in Welfare Europe*¹³ and was divided into seven main sections. Most of the programme of the Social Democrats reflected their opinion on European integration issues. Only roughly one-sixth of the Euromanifesto related to the discussion of national-level issues which included national economic policy and employment policy whereby the party will 'pursue economic policy with primary the purpose of creation of job opportunities' (p. 3). Among other national issues were infrastructure and tourist industry. Moreover, current national government is accused of many failures made during the EU accession process. A noticeable part of the programme reflected on EU issues in terms of general and normative references to the EU. The party stated that membership in the EU 'is an entrance into the competitive areas where everybody, while respecting the fundamental common principles (...), defends its own needs and interests' (p. 2). In addition, SMER argues that it prefers Europe that will have welfare character, mentions generally EP elections and competences of the EP, and refers to its membership in the Party of European Socialists and respective political group in the EP.

Most of the EU issues reflected in the programme pertain to individual (long-term) aspects of European integration such as the EU cohesion and structural funds, regional development policy where resources need to be allocated to 'disadvantaged, economically and socially backward European regions' (p. 4), (reform of) CAP and related aim to negotiate an 'increase in direct payments to national agriculturalists at least to the levels of Visegrád countries' (p. 6), EU student mobility programmes and EU-wide cooperation among universities, and the reduction of bureaucracy within the EU. Only short part of the Euromanifesto consists of the party's presentation of priorities towards current issues related to European integration. SMER reflected on the

¹³ Silnejšie Slovensko v sociálnej Európe, 2004, SMER-SD EP Election Manifesto, Available at <http://www.niejetojedno.sk/prog.htm>, accessed on 2 June 2004.

transitional periods for the movement of labour imposed on citizens of the 2004 enlargement member states by some 'old' EU member states and promises the make an effort in order to 'cancel these restrictions against Slovak citizens' (p. 6). The party also shortly mentions the Constitutional Treaty and declared support for its adoption.

In sum, European integration issues constitute the dominant subject discussed in the 2004 Euromanifesto. In terms of qualitative elaboration, according to our framework the Social Democrats discussed European integration issues largely in terms of general references to EU issues, including normative statements. The party also provided rather general discussion of its preferences concerning the specific-long term aspects of European integration. In the Euromanifesto, SMER discussed some current issues related to European integration only to a limited extent.

The SMER-SD Euromanifesto for the 2009 EP elections, titled *Social Europe – A Response to the Crisis*¹³¹⁴, was divided into six broadly defined sections. The party predominantly reflected on European-integration-related issues in the programme. Nevertheless, discussion of national-level issues featured in the 2009 Euromanifesto as well. National issues discussed included Slovak energy security, nuclear energy development in Slovakia 'as a crucial source of energy security for the future' (p. 3), and criticism of the previous right-wing SDKÚ-DS government in Slovakia. The SDKÚ-DS government is accused of causing the financial crisis, waging an 'antisocial struggle' (p. 3), and preparing poorly for the adoption of the euro, accession to the Schengen Area, and ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. Most of the document reflected EU issues in terms of general references to the European integration process. Thus SMER-SD stated that it offers a 'way of Europe of solidarity' (p. 1) and a 'combination of experiences as well as new ideas and a strong social voice in Europe' (p. 6); it stated that the EU and the EP 'need less bureaucracy and more efficiency' (p. 5).

Furthermore, the party understands the EU as a project that 'builds on values such as freedom, solidarity, and the fellowship of member states' (p. 1) and argues that the EU must have a 'social character' (p. 1). The Social Democrats also presented generally their candidates for EP elections in the last section of the Euromanifesto and stated that these candidates – unlike those of other parties – would 'uncompromisingly protect Slovakian interests in the European Parliament' (p. 4). To a lesser extent, SMER-SD presented its priorities towards individual (long-term) aspects of European integration. The

¹⁴ Sociálna Európa - odpoved' na krízu, 2009, SMER-SD EP Election Manifesto, Available at <http://www.strana-smer.sk/937/volebny-program-socialna-europa-odpoved-na-krizu>, accessed on 12 December 2009.

party reflected on, for instance, the European welfare model, regional development policy and structural funds, and greater utilisation of the European Social Fund for 'integration of the unemployed into the job market and the education of the working man' (p. 2), and energy policy and security of energy supplies. Only a few references were made to current issues pertaining to European integration. The Social Democrats briefly mentioned the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and its impact on the EU's decision-making and the creation of the European Pact for Future of Employment as a development ensuring that EU decisions have a better impact on employment. Furthermore, the party argued that the financial crisis was caused by the right-wing majority (also) in the EP and that citizens should vote for left-wing (SMER-SD) candidates in order to solve the crisis at the EU level.

Overall, the reflection of preferences concerning EU issues dominated over national-level issues in the 2009 Euromanifesto. From a content viewpoint, SMER-SD mostly dealt with EU issues in terms of general references and normative evaluations. The party also discussed individual (long-term) aspects of European integration and provided a limited and rather general description of priorities towards specific current EU issues.

The Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK-MKP)

The SMK-MKP is a party that represents particularly the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. The party consistently receives representation in the National Council of the Slovak Republic and their members hold crucial positions in local government in many towns and villages in southern Slovakia (Macháček, 2011b). The party did not put together a Euromanifesto for the 2004 EP elections. This alone can be seen as a strong second-order characteristic of this aspect of parties' supply for SOEs. According to our framework, when a party does not invest resources into drafting the Euromanifesto, we consider the party to be clearly treating these elections as second-order elections.

The Euromanifesto for the 2009 EP elections was an online-only document and was entitled *Our Future in Europe*¹⁵. The document consisted of an introduction and 11 broadly defined sections. The issue of European integration was the major issue for which the party discussed its preferences in the programme, but national and other issues were included as well. National-level issues addressed in the Euromanifesto involved, for example, Slovak-Hungarian political dialogue, which 'needs to be given a new dynamic' (n.p.); protection of consumers; integration of (immigrant) minorities; measures to tackle the financial crisis (including creating job opportunities and the

¹⁵ *Naša budúcnosť v Európe*, 2009, SMK-MKP EP Election Manifesto, Available at http://www.mkp.sk/eu/volebny-program---nasa-buducnostv-europe_61.html, accessed 8 December 2009.

knowledge economy); the fight against (child) poverty; family policy and the pension system; the environment; and the right to education in one's mother tongue.

The party presents the EU issue predominantly in terms of discussion of preferences concerning individual (long-term) aspects of European integration but also includes general and normative references to the EU as well as a wide range of current EU issues. In terms of long-term aspects, the SMK-MKP elaborated on EU-level cooperation in education including Erasmus and Comenius programmes, cohesion policy whose realisation at the 'national and lower level be in accordance with purposes (...) of local communities' (n.p.), EU energy policy, enlargement, cross-border cooperation in security matters, harmonisation of social security systems, EU neighbourhood policy and Eastern Partnership, and CAP within which the party calls for 'abolition of differences between old and new MSs generated by the agricultural subsidy system' (n.p.). Among the general and normative references to the EU, the SMK-MKP stressed the values that the EU would fulfil (protection of human dignity, fight against intolerance, democracy, rule of law, protection of economic rights, peace and human rights) and its involvement in the EPP-ED. The party 'considers it its success' that Slovakia has become an EU member and argues that 'European integration is one of the most successful chapters of the continent's history. It provided not only peace but also freedom and stability as well as unprecedented prosperity' (n.p.). The party also discussed current issues having to do with European integration. Among these were the change in size of the EP and in the number of Slovak MEPs, the inclusion of the Council of Europe 'into the activities of the EU' (n.p.) in the human rights field, the creation of a committee of human rights in the EP, the abolition of temporary restrictions for new member states' citizens to access the job market in old MSs, the construction of the Nabucco pipeline, the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and the 'earliest possible' accession of Croatia into the EU (n.p.).

Overall, the European integration issue constitutes the major subject of the 2009 Euromanifesto. From a content viewpoint, the party presented general references to the EU, but mostly a description of its preferences concerning individual (long-term) EU issues and very often also a rather general discussion of priorities towards specific current issues having to do with the European integration process.

The People's Party – Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (ĽS-HZDS)

The party did not present voters with a Euromanifesto for the 2004 EP elections. As mentioned above, this alone is considered – according to our

framework – a strong second-order characteristic of the party's supply for SOEs.

The party's Euromanifesto for the 2009 EP elections, *Slovakia – Stable Heart of Europe*¹⁶, was divided into 13 widely defined sections. EU issues constituted the major issues on which the party presented its priorities. Nevertheless, national-level issues were also included in the Euromanifesto. Among the national issues, the ĽS-HZDS discussed employment and social cohesion, cultural and education policy, development of the Slovak state, taxation policy, housing policy, environmental protection and climate change, military industry and national security, which it said must 'remain the exclusive responsibility of each member state' (p. 5).

The People's Party presented European integration issues predominantly in terms of the (rather general) discussion of preferences concerning individual (long-term) aspects of the EU. The ĽS-HZDS included long-term EU issues such as the introduction of the euro, visa policy towards the United States, enlargement and neighbourhood policy, institutional reform and transparency of decision-making, regional development, European Security and Defence Policy and the European Defence Agency, the Small Business Act for Europe, the Schengen Area and protection of external borders, the cross-border health care system in the EU, and the reform of the CAP. Furthermore, the party supports 'effective energy policy' (p. 4) and the 'liberalisation of energy markets as part of EU energy policy' (p. 9). Occasionally, the ĽS-HZDS talked about the EU issue in the sense of general and normative references to European integration. The party understands the 'EU not only as an economic and political community, but also as a community of values and solidarity' (p. 1). Hence, the EU is a community of values such as freedom, peace, justice, territorial integrity, security, social justice and equality, economic development, and environmental protection. For proper functioning, it is necessary for the EU to gain the 'ability to act and higher dynamics' (p. 2) and to 'increase the presence on the world stage on the world stage' (p. 4).

The ĽS-HZDS reflected on a number of current issues and problems connected with European integration. Thus, the party reflected upon the Lisbon Treaty, which should be 'ratified as soon as possible' (p. 2); the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who 'represents the common position of the member states and the Council of the EU' (p. 19); the reform of the EU's budget and particularly the multiannual financial framework, which has to include mechanisms securing 'necessary budgetary

¹⁶ *Slovensko – stabilné srdce Európy*, 2009, ĽS-HZDS EP Election Manifesto, Available at <http://www.hzds.sk/?mod=clanky&par=volby-do-ep-program&menu=4252>, accessed 14 December 2009.

flexibility' (p. 6); and the question of Turkish integration into the EU, which should remain at the level of 'privileged partnership' (p. 19) amid the ongoing accession negotiations. Overall, EU issues represent the main subject of the 2009 Euromanifesto and dominated over national issues. From a content viewpoint, for the most part the ĽS-HZDS provided a rather general discussion of its preferences concerning the concrete (long-term) agenda of the EU. Nevertheless, an indispensable part of the document is devoted to the discussion of current aspects of the EU as well as to the general and normative references to the process of European integration.

The Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party (SDKÚ-DS)

The Euromanifesto of the SDKÚ for the 2004 EP elections, titled *Manifesto of SDKÚ for the New Europe*¹⁷, consisted of 10 main sections. With minor exceptions, European integration issues represented the main subject of the 2004 Euromanifesto. The party included only a few national-level and international issues. These national issues pertained to (un-)employment and education. EU issues were predominantly reflected in terms of general and normative references to European integration. The SDKÚ states:

We want a European Union in which each state decides its destiny freely and in which all members hold responsibility for the future of Europe, (...) a European Union of coequal member states, (...) a European Union of equal citizens, (...) a European Union firmly based on shared values, (...) a European Union which belongs to everyone, (...) a European Union that speaks with a single voice, (...) a European Union of diversity, (...) a European Union promoting the sustainable economic growth of its members, (...) a European Union which is also characterized by solidarity (pp. 1-2).

The party also concretely stressed the values on which the EU should be firmly based. These values are freedom of the individual, democracy and the rule of law, equality before the law, market economy, gender equality, and non-discrimination in general. The SDKÚ pointed out that it 'will support only such institutional reform that will henceforth secure the equality of all EU member states (p. 3) and that it will support 'decision-making mechanisms which strengthen the security of Europe and the efficient cooperation of member states in this area' (p. 6). Furthermore, the SDKÚ wants 'the EU enriched with the creativity and experience of its member states' (p. 8).

To a far lesser extent, the party reflected on and presented its priorities over the individual (long-term) agenda of the EU. The programme discussed, for example, EU enlargement, particularly by the countries that 'profess the same values and are developing democracy and a market economy' (p. 4); the

¹⁷ Manifest SDKÚ pre novú Európu, 2004, SDKÚ EP Election Manifesto.

subsidiarity principle; protection of external borders and the Schengen Area; accession to the eurozone; the reform of the CAP; EU security and defence policy, which can only 'function in cooperation with the United States and NATO'; and a cohesion policy which 'cannot become an end in itself—[the end] should be to reach a state in which no region of the EU has to ask for an allowance from the structural funds' (p. 10). The only references related to current issues of European integration pertained to the forthcoming party's membership in the EPP-ED political group in the EP.

In summary, references to EU issues dominated the Euromanifesto, compared with national and other issues which were covered marginally. In terms of content, the SDKÚ predominantly reflected on EU issues in terms of general references to European integration. The party also discussed the concrete long-term agenda of the EU and only marginally covered current issues having to do with the European integration process.

The SDKÚ-DS¹⁸ Euromanifesto for the subsequent EP elections in 2009, *For a Prosperous Slovakia in a Strong Europe*¹⁹, consisted of a preamble and 10 broadly defined sections. Most of the programme reflected the party's opinion on European integration issues, but more national issues were included than in the Euromanifesto for previous EP elections. National-level issues discussed in the programme included the criticism that Róbert Fico's government 'underestimated the inevitability to proceed with reforms' (p. 1), measures to tackle the financial crisis, Slovak energy dependency, and support for entertainment and SMEs. A noticeable part of the Euromanifesto reflected on EU issues in terms of general references to the EU. The party stated that the four freedoms represent 'one of the utmost victories the EU has brought to member states' citizens' (p. 2). Furthermore, the SDKÚ-DS mentioned the coordination of R&D projects at the EU level, EU internal market that 'helps member states to develop and grow economically' (p. 5). The SDKÚ-DS also supports 'the deepening of the freedom to provide services' (p. 5) as well as the growth of the 'area of security, freedom and democracy, human rights, and civil liberties' (p. 6).

Most of the EU issues reflected in the programme pertain to individual (long-term) aspects of European integration such as the eurozone and financial stability of the euro, equal exercise of the four freedoms for citizens of both 'old' and 'new' EU MS, EU enlargement, EU energy policy, cohesion policy and structural funds, the subsidiarity principle, a regional policy that needs to

¹⁸ In January 2006 SDKÚ merged with Democratic Party (DS). Note that the merger may be relevant to comparison of the 2004 and 2009 Euromanifesto.

¹⁹ *Za prosperujúce Slovensko v silnej Európe*, 2009, SDKÚ-DS EP Election Manifesto, Available at <http://eurovolby.sdkuonline.sk/index.php?program>, accessed 10 December 2009.

be ‘built on the principle of solidarity among the EU member states’ (p. 4), and reduction of the administrative burden that ‘EU institutions often represent for the recipients of Community funds’ (p. 4). A small part of the programme consists of the party’s presentation of priorities towards current issues related to the EU. The SDKÚ-DS reflected on the Lisbon Treaty and declared support for ‘the provisions of the treaty’ (p. 6), the construction of the Nabucco pipeline, and EU-level definition of financial rules and regulation of financial markets.

Overall, the European integration issue constitutes the dominant subject of the 2009 Euromanifesto. In terms of qualitative elaboration, the SDKÚ-DS presented rather general preferences concerning the specific long-term aspects of European integration. The party also included general references to EU issues as well as only limited discussion of the priorities pertaining to current EU issues, particularly related to the Lisbon Treaty.

Results of the Analysis

The analysis of Slovak parties’ Euromanifestos provides evidence that the parties include and reflect on EU issues with varying levels of intensity. On the whole, the intensity of treatment of EU issues decreased from 2004 to 2009 at least for those Slovak parties that put together Euromanifesto for both sets of EP elections. At the outset of the paper, I put forward two expectations related to the Europeanisation of election manifestos for second-order, EP elections. As for the first expectation – that Euromanifestos display a low level of Europeanisation and a high level of domesticisation – the results are presented in Table 1. Contrary to our expectation, out of 8 Euromanifestos analysed, none exhibited a strong second-order character according to the conceptualisation presented in the methodological section. Moreover, two Slovak parties – namely the SMK-MKP and ĽS-HZDS – did not put together an election programme for the 2004 EP elections, which is conceived as a strong second-order characteristic of this aspect of parties’ supply for SOEs, given that when a party is unwilling to invest resources into drafting an election programme for EP elections, we consider it to be treating these elections as SOEs.²⁰ Furthermore, Euromanifestos of one more party embody weak second-order characteristics according to our conceptualisation: SMER-SD in 2009.

²⁰ An objection here may be that if party does not put together an election programme for EP elections, it may do so for the lack of resources (a capacity issue). In fact, it would be very unusual for analysed parties not to produce manifesto for national FOEs. From that point of view, not producing manifesto for EP election may be also considered a second-order characteristic since parties normally manage to raise funds for creation of manifesto for FOEs.

Table 1: Europeanisation and location of parties' Euromanifestos on the quantitative and qualitative dimension

	Quantitative dimension		
	National issues dominate (strong second-order character)	EU issues mixed with national issues (weak second-order character)	EU issues dominate (no second-order character)
Qualitative dimension	General and normative references to the EU	SMER 2009↓ SMER 2004↓	SDKÚ 2004 SDKÚ-DS 2009↑
	Reflection to the long-term agenda of the EU		KDH 2009 LS-HZDS 2009 KDH 2004↓ SMK-MKP 2009↓
	Reflection on current issues related to the EU		

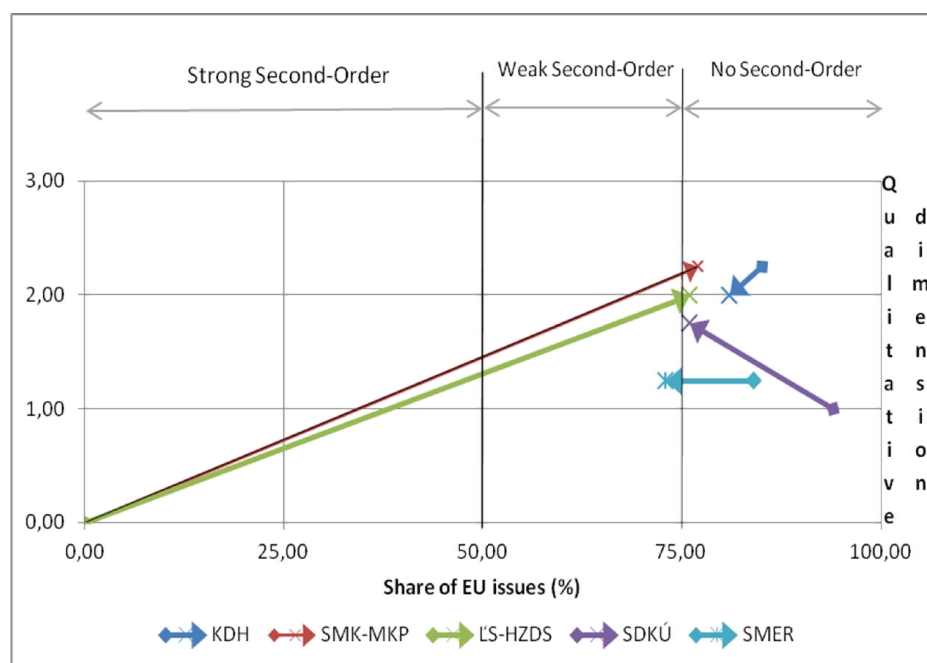
Note: The symbol of arrow (↓ or ↑) showed next to the name of the political party and year for which Euromanifesto was prepared signals that the Europeanisation of election manifesto was on the verge of the two neighbouring sectors, one in which the party manifesto is located and the other to which the arrow points.

Other parties' Euromanifestos embody a reasonably high quantitative level of Europeanisation and the SOE-theory-driven domesticisation hypothesis does not apply to them. Thus, the results show that when parties put together an election manifesto for EP elections, in most cases the Euromanifesto did not display second-order characteristics at all, according to our conceptualisation. When evaluating the qualitative dimension of Europeanization of Slovak parties' programmatic supply, it may be argued that in none of the Euromanifestos did reflection on current issues pertaining to the European integration process dominate the document. In contrast, in three out of 8 analysed Euromanifestos, parties resorted to mere general and normative references without much attempt to reflect on the concrete EU long-term agenda and actual problems and issues related to the EU. Most of the Euromanifestos—four—embody the middle layer of Europeanisation of our conceptualisation that is, the parties reflect on individual long-term aspects of European integration in their Euromanifestos.

For the most part, Slovak parties' election programmes for EP elections display a medium to high level of Europeanisation on both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions, which contradicts our first expectation derived from the

SOE model. Nevertheless, on the qualitative dimension, which is the more significant regarding the importance the party attaches to European integration in its election programme (Havlík and Vykoupilová, 2008, p. 168), none of the analysed parties attained the highest conceptual level. Thus, while in quantitative terms Euromanifestos are mostly dominated by EU issues rather than national issues, the qualitative dimension suggests that the Europeanisation of parties' programmatic supply does not reach the highest possible level.

Figure 1: European Integration Issues in Slovak Parties' Euromanifestos: (Direction of) Change from 2004 to 2009



Note: The direction of the symbol of arrow show how has Europeanisation of the respective political party Euromanifesto changed from 2004 to 2009. In other words, in the case of leftwards direction of the arrow, Europeanisation of the Euromanifesto on the quantitative dimension decreased from 2004 to 2009. On the other hand, if the arrow points in the rightwards direction, Europeanisation of the Euromanifesto on the quantitative dimension increased from 2004 to 2009.

Second, given the conclusion of previous research documenting the intensification of the second-order character of the EP election with subsequent contests held (Leroy and Siune, 1994), I hypothesised that the 2004 Euromanifestos would display a higher level of Europeanisation – in other words, to be less domesticised – than the Euromanifestos for the 2009 EP elections. Figure 1 presents the spatial positions of parties' Euromanifestos according to

the two-dimensional conceptualisation presented at the beginning of the paper. The results were mixed, largely because two of the analysed parties did not put together a Euromanifesto for the 2004 EP elections. Out of the two parties for which I have a Euromanifesto dyad, the KDH experienced a decline of Europeanisation on both dimensions, and the SDKÚ-DS experienced a decline of Europeanisation on the quantitative dimension and an increase of Europeanisation on the qualitative dimension from 2004 to 2009. If we consider the act of not drafting of a Euromanifesto for the 2004 EP elections as a second-order characteristic of the respective parties' supply, then the two other parties, namely the ĽS-HZDS and SMK-MKP, go against our expectations, since they prepared election programme for the subsequent EP elections and not for the first one, and thus the Europeanisation of this aspect of their supply for EP elections increased from 2004 to 2009. Overall, the second expectation is only partly confirmed by the data. Nonetheless, if we look only at those parties that produced Euromanifesto for both sets of EP elections than—in all cases—we can observe quantitative decrease of references to EU issues in election programmes, suggesting that the second-order character of EP elections usually intensifies in subsequent European contests.

Conclusion

This article has examined one aspect of political parties' supply for SOEs in one of the new EU member states, Slovakia, by analysing the Euromanifestos of 5 Slovak political parties. Using party manifestos for EP elections and the concept of Europeanisation, the analysis has aimed at integrating the SOE model with behaviour of political parties, asking the question: to what extent do Euromanifestos offer EU-level issues or, in other words, to what extent is the EP election campaign *Europeanised* through political parties' election manifestos? Hence, I forwarded two propositions, informed by the SOE model, related to political parties' election manifestos for EP elections. In the analysis, I did not much evidence to support the first theoretically-informed proposition – that Euromanifestos display a low level of Europeanisation and are dominated by national issues. Slovak parties clearly discuss EU integration-related issues in their Euromanifestos. In other words, the programmatic aspects of political parties' supply for EP elections exhibits an apparent degree of Europeanisation.

This finding is consistent with conclusions of studies that analysed Euromanifestos in some of the old EU member states (Brunsbach, John and Werner, 2012; Kritzinger, Cavatorta and Chari, 2004; Wüst, 2009). Concerning the second proposition I forwarded, it was only partly verified in the analysis – Euromanifestos of those parties that drafted election manifesto for both the 2004 and 2009 EP elections exhibited higher level of Europeanisation at the

first EP elections than in subsequent ones held. In other words, the proposition was verified for all three Slovak parties that drafted Euromanifesto for both EP elections that have taken place so far in this country. On the other hand, if we consider the act of not drafting of a Euromanifesto for the 2004 EP elections as a second-order characteristic, then the two other parties, namely the ĽS-HZDS and SMK-MKP, go against our expectations, since they prepared election programme for the subsequent EP elections and not for the first one, and thus the Europeanisation of this aspect of their supply for EP elections increased from 2004 to 2009.

How do these findings dovetail into scholarly literature on the SOE theory and Europeanisation of political parties? First, the fact that Euromanifestos of majority of analysed Slovak parties issued ahead of the 2004 EP elections exhibited higher degree of Europeanisation than those issued ahead of the 2009 EP elections is in accordance with conclusions of previous studies finding that the second-order character of EP elections intensifies as subsequent elections are held in a country (de Vreese et al., 2006; Franklin et al., 1994; Kovář, 2010; Siune, McQuail and Blumler, 1984). Second, against the backdrop of the research on Europeanisation, the results of this study dovetail into patterns reported in other studies arguing that election manifestos for EP elections display higher level of Europeanisation than election manifestos prepared by parties ahead of national legislative elections (Brunsbach, John and Werner, 2012; Kritzinger, Cavatorta and Chari, 2004; Wüst, 2009).

From this point of view, EP elections are not ‘stolen’ by parties to sell national issues during EP elections campaign, at least when it comes to Euromanifestos. In this respect, parties play an important role in EP elections by providing voters with a European view on relevant issues, thus presenting to the people different choices on the EU and European integration. In other words, parties’ programmatic documents for EP elections feature an apparent degree of Europeanisation that can be considered a light at the end of the (second-order) tunnel, given that at least the programmatic part of parties’ supply is about European integration. On the other hand, one should not overestimate the importance of election programmes during EP election campaign, and not just because the ‘real policy’ may markedly differ from the programmatic proclamations.

Finally, even though programmatic documents are one of the central aspects of election campaigns and an important source used by the media and parties to shape discussion in the public sphere (see Hloušek and Pšejka, 2009), they are not the only component of parties’ election campaign. From other analyses of party campaign and media coverage of EP elections we know that these aspects of election campaign feature apparent second-order characteristics (de Vreese, 2009; Tenscher, 2005; Tenscher and Maier, 2009). Put differently, when other

aspects of election campaign ahead of EP elections are characterised by second-order characteristics and low level of Europeanisation, relatively high degree of Europeanisation of Euromanifestos may be less relevant since unlike other aspects of election campaigns, Euromanifestos seem to be the exception rather than the rule. Against this backdrop, the relatively high level of Europeanisation of Slovak parties Euromanifestos can be probably better interpreted as a drop in the bucket when compared to the evident non-Europeanisation of other aspects of parties' supply rather than as the light at the end of the (second-order) tunnel?

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