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NEWCOMERS IN POLITICS? THE SUCCESS OF NEW POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE SLOVAK AND CZECH REPUBLIC AFTER 2010?

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ABSTRACT

The last election in the Slovak and Czech Republic was special. It not only took place before the official electoral period (pre-elections), but new political parties were “again” successful. The article focuses not only on both elections in the last two years in a comparative perspective, but it analyses the opportunity structure of success as well, including types of new political parties (according to Lucardie). The article seeks to answer the question: why are new political parties electorally successful, able to break into parliament and even become part of a coalition government? We assume that the emergence and success of new political parties in both countries relied on the ability to promote “old” ideas in a new fashion, colloquially referred to as “new suits” or “old” ideological flows in new breeze.

KEYWORDS

New political parties, prophetic parties, purifiers parties, prolocutors parties

INTRODUCTION

The research on the electoral success of new parties in Central and Eastern Europe still lacks depth. Most studies are general not only in their character, but also in the particular individual party success. As Lewis¹ observed, the research on the success of new political parties in Central and Eastern Europe is focused more on describing the process of new political party emergence and less on analysing the particular outcomes of party systems, including the emergence and entry of newcomers.

In this article I will analyse the foundation and electoral success of new political parties in the Slovak and Czech Republic in the context of three types of new parties as described by Paul Lucardie². Lucardie analyses the electoral success of new parties by considering three factors, which describe three types (*prophetic parties, purifier parties, and prolocutor parties*), and which have also been used in similar cross-national comparative studies³ in the post-communist area. Lucardie⁴ also includes specific features of the countries such as political systems, or institutional settings that explain the main differences in this area.

1. THE EMERGENCE OF NEWCOMERS IN POLITICS (THE THEORY OF THE EMERGENCE OF NEW POLITICAL PARTIES)

According to Lucardie, "prophetic parties" are new political subjects in the political market that position themselves around new issues, or those that are ignored by established parties, but are in favour with citizens⁵. Rochon calls them "mobilizers"⁶. The second type of new parties is the "purifying" or "challengers"⁷ type, which looks very similar in comparison to the prophetic type, but the main difference lies in political ideology. Purifying parties are connected with "traditional" ideology, and they are dissident–original members of established parties that formed a new subject. This process is mainly visible when an established party tries

¹ Paul G. Lewis, "Party funding in post-communist east-central Europe"; in: Peter Burnell and Alan Ware, eds., *Funding Democratization* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); see also Paul G. Lewis, "Political Parties"; in: Stephen White, Judy Batt, and Paul G. Lewis, eds., *Developments in Central and East European Politics 3* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

² Paul Lucardie, "Prophets, Purifiers and Prolocutors: Towards a Theory on the Emergence of New Parties," *Party Politics* Vol. 6, No. 2 (2000).

³ Li Bennich-Björkman, "New Political Parties in Central and Eastern Europe," *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift* Vol. 108 No. 2 (2006); see also Allan Sikk, "Successful new parties in the Baltic states: similar or different?" Paper presented at the conference *The Baltic States: New Europe or Old?* (University of Glasgow, January 22–23, 2004); see also Allan Sikk, "How Unstable? Volatility and the Genuinely New Parties in Eastern Europe," *European Journal of Political Research* Vol. 44, (2005).

⁴ Paul Lucardie, *supra* note 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Thomas Rochon, "Mobilizers and Challengers: Toward a Theory of New Party Success," *International Political Science Review* Vol. 6 (1985).

⁷ *Ibid.*

to adopt a new program to draw in more potential voters, or, as Lucardie observed, "shifts to a more radical position".⁸ The senior members who form a new political party declare they defend of the original political ideology, "even if they began to deviate surreptitiously or unwittingly from it as time went on".⁹

The last type of new parties is called "prolocutors" and it articulates particular interests, but excludes any ideology. They represent a specific type of group that tries to raise its political and economic position in the system. We can add here groups that are characterised by their working position such as occupation (farmers, teachers, workers and et.), by their age, social status, by their geographical position (regions, local communities), or by their ethnicity. Some of these new subjects, after they have realized their interests, tend to disappear. But as Lucardie observes, if such a type of party "lives" longer in the system, it can reorganize itself, redefine its own manifesto, create political ideology that keeps permanently stable electorate, stable position in the party system and also in the parliament. This could be, according to Downs,¹⁰ a "real" type of new political party, which has the ability not only to win election, but also to cover the needs and beliefs of a large number of citizens who were not "absorbed" by the established parties.

From the perspective of electoral success, Lucardie observes that if a new political project wants to be successful it will need specific resources for having the potential to gain seats. These specific resources are characterised by activities such as mobilization of members and of their financial resources, and also by self-presentation in the media. Lucardie points out that if a party wants to be successful in a campaign and win seats, it needs "a minimal number of members, a minimal campaign budget and a minimal amount of publicity".¹¹ As Anthony Downs observes in his book *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, new political parties emerge and establish themselves at the moment when they are able to snip a large number of electorate from some other (established) political party. This means that a new movement must also have political opportunities to do so and to transform it into a new political subject. This transformation process is described by Kitschelt and Kriesi¹² as a "political opportunity structure". Kriesi defines four forms (aspects) of a political opportunity structure. The first is formal access to the state,

⁸ Paul Lucardie, *supra* note 2: 177

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957).

¹¹ Paul Lucardie, *supra* note 2: 179.

¹² Herbert Kitschelt, "Formation of Party Cleavages in Post-Communist Democracies: Theoretical Proposition," *Party Politics* Vol. 1 (1995); see also Hanspeter Kriesi, "The Political Opportunity Structure of New Social Movements: Its Impact on Their Mobilization"; in: Craig J. Jenkins and Bert Klandermans, eds., *The Politics of Protest. Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements* (London: UCL Press, 1995).

especially “function of its (territorial) centralization and the degree of its separation of power, the degree of decentralization, and the wider of formal access”.¹³

The second includes informal procedures and strategies (political culture), especially in electoral and party systems. Informal procedures are also determined by electoral system; for example, a majoritarian system does not offer space for new political projects for their interaction, cooperation, or success. Proportional systems are in favour with such new initiatives, as Kriesi observes, “the more proportional an electoral system, the greater is the number of parties, which again increases the possibility of access”.¹⁴

From the point of view of cultural opportunities, it is described by dominant strategies in a party system, or by the potential of the articulation of new kinds of social or cultural conflicts (as a prophetic party type), or by the opportunity to promote historical traditions and ideologies that were dismissed by the established parties (as a purifying party type), or by the cultural opportunity structure to promote “salient” cleavages in society. Finally, the last aspects of a political opportunity structure are interest associations and configuration of power in a party system. Opportunities could arise from a political crisis—especially from a leadership crisis, or from an economic crisis of a country (rising unemployment, inflation, rising taxes, etc.).

2. NEW TRENDS DRESSED IN OLDER FORMS?

New parties are not only described as new subjects that enter a political market with new ideas and visions. New political parties are also subjects that try to resurrect traditional ideologies or ideas that were forgotten and placed in “the corner” of established parties.

In the case of both republics, we can observe such political parties where members of new subjects were dissidents of already established parties such as a new political party TOP 09 that gained seats after the 2010 election in the Czech Republic. This positive electoral showing was a result of party structure reformulation from a group of politicians that came from the established party KDÚ-ČSL (Christian Democrats). The tension among Christian Democrats had started a little bit earlier than TOP 09 was founded – we can go back to 2006 when Miroslav Kalousek, leader of Christian Democrats and recently also founder of TOP 09, resigned from his post of the party leader after a few misleading steps to form a new government with the ODS party. A new conflict appeared when Christian Democrats led a coalition government with both ODS and the Green party. In

¹³ *Ibid.*: 170; also in Paul Lucardie, *supra* note 2: 180.

¹⁴ Hanspeter Kriesi, *supra* note 12: 170.

January 2009, the party central structure decided to strip Kalousek of his ministerial post. Miroslav Kalousek left the party in May 2009 and announced the founding of a new political party. But this was something he had foreseen, because in April 2009 he had already registered the brand TOP 09¹⁵.

As Peter Spáč¹⁶ observes, the power position of the party was particularly influenced by two main factors after its founding. The first factor was the membership which not only included popular politicians – dissidents from KDÚ-ČSL (Vlasta Parková, Pavel Seifert as well as the former chairman, Miroslav Kalousek), but a powerful injection to the party structure was given by Karel Schwarzenberg, a former senator and popular and well-known aristocrat. The second factor that increased party relevance was the alliance with the movement known as Mayor and Independents.

In the case of the Slovak Republic, a similar process was visible in the established Hungarian minority party, SMK. After the party election, a new chairman was elected, Pál Csáky, who was not in favour with one wing in the party led by former SMK party leader, Béla Bugár. A new party, Most-Híd, was founded in 2009 and described itself as a new alternative subject to the established political party, SMK, which led to a more radical attitude in relation with the ethnic Hungarian interest in Slovakia. As Oľga Gyárfášová and Zora Bútorová observed, "Most-Híd emphasized the need for peaceful coexistence between Slovaks and all national minorities, canvassing not only among ethnic Hungarians but also among members of other minorities as well as Slovaks".¹⁷ Also the party name, "Bridge", was created for this reason, to call for unity and cooperation. This concept brought the new party a successful entry into parliament after the election in 2010, in contrast to SMK which remained outside parliament.

Both parties – Most-Híd and TOP 09 – confirmed their parliamentary positions also in the pre-election but after the early election, both parties remained in the opposition camp, unlike before. In the comparative perspective, the electoral results of both parties changed the same way: they lost their votes and seats after their second runs in the parliamentary election. The electoral results from the early parliamentary election were influenced by the crisis in both governments as well as by the rise of new political parties that promoted new agendas, and by new politics without (again) corruption, non-transparency, with new order and new political culture. In the Czech Republic, the early election was the result of a government

¹⁵ The name of the party TOP 09 consists from the words "Tradition", "Responsibility" and "Prosperity".

¹⁶ Peter Spáč, *České strany a jejich kandidáti: případ voleb do Poslanecké sněmovny v roce 2010* (Brno: Fakulta sociálních studií, Mezinárodní politologický ústav, 2013).

¹⁷ Oľga Gyárfášová and Zora Bútorová, "Rise and Fall of New Political Parties in Slovakia": 88; in: Zora Bútorová, Oľga Gyárfášová, and Grigorij Mesežnikov, eds., *Alternative Politics? The Rise of New Political Parties in Central Europe* (Bratislava: IVO, 2013).

crisis. In Slovakia, the early election was the result of a successful vote of no-confidence in the Government.

The last political party successful in the parliamentary election in the Czech Republic in 2010 was Věci veřejné (Public Affairs). The roots of this political party go back to 2001. Even before the official registration of the political party, its political activities were limited around the capital city, Prague. Therefore, in the view of its spatial action it can be regarded as a communal party. As Čemez and Klus observe, "after the entrance of a famous person from the media environment and changing the political strategy, Public Affairs proportionally changed to a political party at the national level."¹⁸ Their main success was due to the help of Radek John, a famous person who helped this party to break into the Czech national media market. Especially before the parliamentary elections in 2010, this political party declared itself a party promoting direct democracy, based on collaboration with registered supporters and promoting the referendum. In the election, the political party gained 24 seats based on 10.88% (569,127) of votes in the new parliament.

However, after a huge change in the political strategy as well as in the territorial scope, the party held its position for two years only (2010–2012). A crisis inside the party, which culminated in uncovering deceptive financing of some party members, led to the departure of prominent members such as Radim Vysloužil, Karolína Peak, Dagmar Navrátilová, Jana Suchá, Viktor Paggio, Jiří Rusnok, and Martin Vacek. Some of the mentioned persons founded their own political party LIDEM (Liberal Democrats), while others became independent such as Jaroslav Škárka and Kristýna Kočí. In the early election of 2013, only popular members were involved in the campaign, but they appeared only on electoral lists of other political parties.

3. BUSINESS IN POLITICS

In recent years we can observe the rising ambitions of business interests. In the Czech Republic, this case was visible only after the early election, but in the Slovak Republic these trends were visible a little bit earlier. In the parliamentary election in 2002 a new party Alliance of new citizen (ANO) gained parliamentary seats and also was one of the main partners in the new coalition government. This political party with the former leader Pavol Rusko filled the gap in the party system, typically reserved for liberals. As a former owner of the biggest commercial

¹⁸ Alexander Čemez and Martin Klus, "Politický marketing v podmienkach SR a ČR": 113; in: Viera Žúborová, *et al*, *20 rokov transformácie: Postavenie politickej komunikácie v Českej Republike a na Slovensku* (Trnava: Fakulty sociálnych vied, 2012).

television in Slovakia, Rusko was involved before 2002 in political activities. For example, he helped to promote the centrally leftist political party SOP in the parliamentary election of 1998 with success. However, after the outbreak of the "case notes" relating to the confusion surrounding the bills of about 100 million dollars, Pavol Rusko was dismissed as the Minister of Economy (24 august 2005). Subsequently, ANO left the ruling coalition and the party broke apart.

The "last" successful businessmen who entered the Slovak political sphere was Richard Sulík with his political party Sloboda a Solidarita - SaS (Freedom and Solidarity), which was a new member of the Slovak parliament and also the government coalition after the 2010 election. The uniqueness of the new political party was found in its founding. The 'buzz' occurred when the current party chairman Richard Sulík announced the creation of a new political party on his blog (November 2008), one of the most widely read in the Slovak Republic. In a comparative perspective, the party was unique also in its communication, because the politicians dominantly communicated via the internet and new social media.¹⁹

The dominant themes of this new party were economic questions, but to encourage more votes the party also opened "hidden" questions that were covered by the socio-economic dimension in recent years such as the issue of registered same-sex partnerships, or the idea of decriminalization of marijuana.

In the early 2012 Slovak parliamentary election SaS defended its parliamentary seats, but not the coalition position; which resulted in SaS remaining in the opposition. By comparison, in the election of 2010 the political party reached 12, 14% (307 287) votes while in the early election of 2012 the party fell to 8, 5,5% (218 537) of the vote share. The party agenda remained the same in the 2012 campaign but it was hit by scandals of the party leader as well as one of the party ministers. In an attempt to deflect this negative attention, the party reopened a new issue regarding the position of the Slovak Republic in the European Union and announced itself the dominant player in the fight for independence from Brussels. Therefore, SaS became the political party profiled as Eurosceptic.

After the most recent parliamentary election in the Czech Republic many of the analysts started to characterise the system and the processes by the use of the term "Berlusconization" of politics. The main reason for this characterization was the success of the second richest man in Czech businessman and entrepreneur Andrej Babiš who was, in the election of 2013, leading another new political party ANO 2011. The political party gained more votes than analysts predicted and the party itself expected. The party "finished" in second place with 18,65% (927 240 votes). In comparison, the winner of the early election 2013 ČSSD-social democrats

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

gained 20,45 % (1 016 829 votes). The political party defined itself an alternative to the established system, the new wind that should blow the old politics to the corner, the party that "works" not only "speaks", the party that is calling for a complete reconstruction of the state. ANO 2011 is ideologically linked to a civic association called "Actions of dissatisfied citizens", which was founded in the fall of 2011 after several public appearances of Andrej Babiš in media. The party leader himself promoted the new management and new running of the state, he declared that politicians cannot manage the state since they were not able to save money, the state should be managed by good farmers and by the use of common sense.²⁰ For many analysts, ANO 2011 is described as a new centrist Populist Party without any programmatic orientation, which built its success on defending ordinary people and criticizing the current established parties.²¹

4. POLITICAL AND POPULIST "DREAMERS"

In the previous decade, new political parties that emerged were calling for a new beginning; they were calling for direct democracy and declared themselves political movements that were different to the already established parties. These movements emerged in the society as the result of apathy and disgust about politics, some of them gained entrance to parliament through protest votes, others gained entrance to parliament through the new and fresh image, an unlikely alternative, not visible in the political system till now.

In the Slovak Republic such a movement was visible already in the parliamentary election in 2010 in the political party SaS, in which some members came from the movement called Obyčajní ľudia (Ordinary People). It was an initiative of a few individuals that competed for votes in the election on the last places of the candidate list of SaS. They gained many preferential votes, which made it possible to take seats also in the parliament. After entering the parliament, the group started an opposition strategy not only against all established parties, but also against the party that gave the position to be elected – SaS. In the early election the leading member of the Obyčajní ľudia and the leader of this group of few announced new political party under the name OĽaNO – Obyčaní ľudia a nezávislé osobnosti (*Ordinary people* and independent personalities).

As Grigorij Mesežnikov noted, the idea for the creation of such a party was "to lay a sort of cuckoo's egg into the Slovak party system, which would give birth to

²⁰ Ct24, "Věk, vzdělání ani příjem nehrají roli – Babiše volili lidé napříč populací" (October 2013) // <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/domaci/248670-vek-vzdelani-ani-prijem-nehraji-rol-babise-volili-lide-napric-populaci/>.

²¹ Vlastimil Havlík and Aneta Pinková, "Populists, protest parties, outsiders? A few notes to the conceptualisation of populist political parties," *Rexter online časopis pro výzkum radikalizmu, extramizmu a terorizmu* Vol. 10, No. 2 (2013).

an alien element that formally operates outside of the country's party system and refuses to perform the role of a standard political party...".²²

This sentence was permanently presented by OĽaNO party leader Igor Matovič, who stated that there are not standard political parties; rather, the parties see themselves as political movements or unity that brought popular individuals, personalities and independent people together for one main reason, to be the dominant alternative of already established and rooted parties while calling for abolishing, freezing and reducing the parties in the Slovak parliament. The main ideas were to abolish the immunity of the parliamentary deputies, abolish the severance pay for politicians who are not re-elected, abolish the quorum regarding the validity of plebiscites. They were also calling for fewer numbers of deputies in parliament and government.

After the early parliamentary election in 2012 OĽaNO received 8,55%, which placed the party in third place following the dominant social democrats (Smer-SD) and Christian Democrats (KDH). After OĽaNO entered the parliament its opponents started to call for the party unification and transformation to a "standard" political party. There were calls for a transformation to a standard political party with standard party structure, network and ideology, but the "group of few" (mainly four members of the past Ordinary people and the founder of the new 'party') refused such changes. They still kept the old way with "free and independent" personalities without any ideological and party barrier.

But ANO 2011 was not one of the biggest surprises in the early election. New political movement was most surprising that announced existence in the same election year (May 2013). The new political movement was founded by the senator Tomio Okamura after his petition of the presidential candidature was rejected due the lack of signature amount. The name of the movement was influenced by the name of the book of the economist Pavel Kohout called "Úsvit" (Dawn). The book supports the idea of a fundamental change in the political system and the direct election of deputies. The new political unit Úsvit přímé demokracie Tomia Okamury (Dawn of the direct democracy of Tomio Okamura) surprisingly gained 14 seats in the parliament after the 2012 early election.

Many Czech analysts defined this political party as radical right movement that presented itself via nationalist populism. But the party presented itself (again) as an alternative of established political parties, as a party that would like to establish direct democracy into the political system, a party that would like to create a new political system where citizens of the Czech Republic would be able to

²² Grigorij Mesežnikov, "Rise and Fall of New Political Parties in Slovakia": 67; in: Zora Bútorová, Oľga Gyárfášová, and Grigorij Mesežnikov, eds., *Alternative Politics? The Rise of New Political Parties in Central Europe* (Bratislava: IVO, 2013).

recall their elected representatives. In the party manifesto it called for radical changes in the political system, including the personal, tangible and criminal liability of politicians. The main electoral target of the political party was to rewrite the Constitution to direct democracy. But according to Vladimíra Dvořáková, the idea of direct democracy was not the main argument to vote for; voters voted for "Úsvit" because of their rhetoric. Tomio's rhetoric was being heard by the undecided voters who wanted change. Although they did not know how the party would do it, they knew that it offered this possibility. According to Ľubomír Kopeček, these new political parties (including ANO 2011) were able to reach voters across a broad ideological spectrum because of their appeals that were not explicit left wing or right wing and literally these parties were taking ideas and voters virtually from everywhere.²³

5. PROPHETS, PURIFIERS, PROLOCUTORS OR SOMETHING ELSE? NEW POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE SLOVAK AND CZECH PARTY SYSTEM

Before the performance and position of new political parties in this region are analyzed, certain difficulties or barriers to the theories presented here should be acknowledged, not only for the reason that this post-communist region is, according to many authors,²⁴ different from the western countries, especially in the building of party systems. But the main reason could also be seen in the time period within which the political parties act, especially those that came to parliamentary "power" in the period under review (like in the Czech party ANO, or Dawn after the election in October 2013, or OĽaNO – in parliamentary seats from March 2012).

This led to the conclusion that we will compare parties in both countries, not separately, but more in terms of the length of action in parliamentary seats (including the period of announcement and success in the election).

5.1. PARTY LEADERS AND NEW PARTIES: NEW PERSONALITY POLITICS

All the leaders from the first group had been notable for some time. For example, Béla Bugár was a well-known politician, who was in the past the chairman

²³ Ct24, "Úsvit šířitelů dobra. Antistrany mají šanci na úspěch" (May 2013) // <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/domaci/225347-usvit-siritelu-dobra-antistrany-maji-sanci-na-uspech/>.

²⁴ Herbert Kitschelt, "The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe," *Politics Society* Vol. 20, No.1 (1992); see also Herbert Kitschelt, *supra* note 12; also Pavel Kopecký, "Developing Party Organization in East-Central Europe. What type of Party is likely to Emerge?" *Party Politics* Vol. 1, No. 4 (1995); see also Paul G. Lewis, *Central Europe since 1945* (London: Longman, 1994); and also Peter Mair, "What is the Different About Post – Communist Party Systems?" *Studies in Public Policy* Vol. 25, No. 9 (1996).

of the Slovak parliament and he established the political party SMK (Party of Hungarian coalition). His rhetoric was defined as pragmatic and based on compromise, and also belonged to the moderate wing in the party. After the split of these two wings, moderate vs. radical as presented by leading politicians (Pál Csáky and Miklós Duray), Béla Bugár announced a new political party which should bridge the affairs of Slovaks and Hungarians, including every minority in the Slovak Republic. He denied any aggressive communication or negative messages during the parliamentary election in 2010 as well as in 2012. His communication was based on critical reflection of past and current events as well as presentation of compromise and consensus solutions. He actually never used negative messages attacking the personal characteristics of any politicians but he automatically excluded cooperation with the leftist party Smer-SD, while never attacking the party members personally. He presented the old fashioned style of Slovak politicians.²⁵

Richard Sulík was a new face. A freshman in Slovak politics and more well known for his famous online blogs, one of the most visited in the given time. Within the political sphere, Sulík was well known as the expert advisor on tax reforms.

His rhetorical style was different from everything that was visible before the election in 2010. He was never afraid to attack or to use negative messages also against his electoral partners, or after the election against his coalition partners. His stubbornness in maintaining the framework of his own position led to some inter-coalition conflict and resulted, according to some analysts²⁶, to the fall of the government.

In the Czech Republic, mainly in the election in 2010, two partially well-known figures gained seats in the parliament. Both were from the new political party TOP 09 and VV, both were placed to the highest position in the research of politicians credibility. The new political party TOP 09 promoted their main pillars via the leader Karel Schwarzenberg. According Anna Matúšková, the campaign by TOP 09 was different in the relation to other established and also new parties. Their campaign activities, for example, were predominant in the internet sphere, especially in the social networks. Everyone could not only mark their politicians, but also could buy some campaign stuff of the political party, especially a t-shirt that showed the party leader holding a pipe. The pipe and the leader were also the main symbols in the billboard campaign, when the political party bet on playfulness and easy

²⁵ Peter Horváth and Jaroslav Mihálik, "SMER-SD and FIDESZ: The National Interests and Populism in the 2010 Parliamentary Elections," *Innovative Issues and Approaches in Social Sciences* Vol. 4, No. 2 (2011).

²⁶ Pravda, "Horský: Radičová dala Dzurindovi a Miklošovi frčku do nosa" (October 2011) // <http://spravy.pravda.sk/volby/clanok/243619-horsky-radicova-dala-dzurindovi-a-miklosovi-frcku-do-nosa/>; and also SME, "Minúta po minúte (utorok): Vláda padla, euroval neprešiel" (October 11, 2015) // <http://www.sme.sk/c/6091870/minuta-po-minute-utorok-vlada-padla-euroval-nepresiel.html>.

controversial issues, for example a billboard with an X-ray image of a skeleton holding a pipe with the slogan: "The leader (chairman) should be transparent".²⁷

The second newcomer – VV – in the parliamentary election in 2010 in Czech Republic was a political personality operating at the local level. According to some political analysts, the rising popularity and success of this political party was the result of the access of popular person: John Radek, a former journalist on popular commercial television. His personal characteristics were well-known because people knew him from television, and they also knew him as a former journalist when he fought for the rights of ordinary citizens.

The early parliamentary election in both republics showed one common pattern, the growing distrust of politicians, established parties and the electoral success of specific political groupings. In the Czech Republic, again, two new political parties gained access to the parliamentary seats after the election in October 2013 (ANO 2011, "Úsvit"); in Slovakia only one new political party gained access to the parliamentary seats (OĽaNO).

The success of new political parties in the Czech Republic was, according to some public research, obvious. The Czech citizens mainly called for reconstruction of the political system and also for improvement of political culture. For these pillars, they noticed that the emergence and the success of new political parties was necessary.

The main subject of the campaign of ANO 2011 was the leader Andrej Babiš, who promised that he will pass some of his business success to the governmental level and to society. For example, his statement about chairs was the most popular term in his whole public appearance. "So, for example, the Ministry of Industry pay for normal chairs 2,000 crowns and other ministry for 6000 crowns." He simply and clearly described irresponsible handling of public finances of the current government.

Another way to be successful is to criticize the former government and established political parties. This was visible in the rhetoric of the political leader of the new political party "Dawn" Tomi Okamura. In other words, to enter parliament a new political party did not need to do much of anything. *Dawn* did not have a proper, well financed campaign and program, and had no strong personality, except the leader. Tomi Okamura just proved how many undecided voters there really are in Czech Republic. His campaign was based on a populist criticism of all parties in the government, and presented the new way of politics by introducing direct democracy.

²⁷ Anna Matúšková, "Volební Kampaně"; in: Stanislav Balík, ed., *Volby do Poslanecké sněmovny v roce 2010* (Brno: CDK, 2010).

5.2. POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES IN THE CZECH AND SLOVAK POLITICAL SYSTEM

From the first formal aspects developed by Kriesi, both political systems had the same formal access to the state; they both are unitary states.²⁸ According to Müller-Rommel, this means that they do not offer more opportunities for new political entities to develop regional base, offering them instead the possibility to try their luck at the regional level election before the national one²⁹. But in the case of the Czech Republic, the political party "Úsvit" was a successful project of the former senator Tomio Okamura. He was successful in running his political carrier at the beginning as an independent candidate for the seats in the upper chamber (The Senate). After his entry to the Senate he was blinded by personal success and saw the political potential of a presidential run. Therefore, he was a candidate in the 2012 presidential election.

From the view of other procedures, we can define the position of new political parties and their success by a typical pattern that arises from an electoral system, including an electoral threshold, possibility of preferential voting, etc. From the comparative perspective, both systems are using a proportional system, which should offer more possibilities for new entities to be successful in the state (in the system). On the other hand, the electoral threshold, or the "size" of the electoral district and also the "type" of preferential voting (or better – the percentage of success) in both systems differ.

If we look at the most successful candidates, or better defined as the "jumpers" of the year, the most successful party members that are using the institute of preferential voting are the members of the new political party Ordinary people and those independent candidates in the Slovak Republic. They were successful in both election of 2010 and 2012. The leadership of this movement contested from the last positions in the electoral list, but after the election they ended at the first 4 positions. It should be noted that the electoral threshold in both systems is the same, at 5%.

But maybe apart from these formal accesses they are dealing with greater difficulty with the informal access and also with the cultural barriers in both systems. For example the culture in a political system could be more or less tolerant, more or less versatile, etc. One factor that influences the position and success of the new political entity is the mass media. This would be another topic to deal with. Briefly, we can suggest that there is a new trend of specific relations with

²⁸ Hanspeter Kriesi, *supra* note 12: 170.

²⁹ Ferdinand Müller-Rommel, *Grüne Parteien in Westeuropa: Entwicklungsphasen und Erfolgsbedingungen* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2013).

mass media and new political parties. Especially in the Czech Republic, when the political party ANO 2011, specifically, the party leader Andrej Babiš, started to buy various print media, radio, television. According to some political analysts, this can be characterised as a new era in the Czech politics, and that is why they started using the concept *berlusconisation*. The media usage as a party advantage was visible also in the case of Slovakia; the new political party Ordinary people and independent citizens also found a vehicle for spreading its visions, ideas and program. The former owner of the biggest network of printed bulletins and also the party leader of this subject Igor Matovič, was a successful colonist in his own newspapers.

The last important aspect of the opportunity structure relies on the cleavages in society. This is the leading point also for the categorization of new political parties. For example, a prophetic party tries to articulate or construct new societal cleavages, while purifying parties depend more on existing cleavages, or cleavages that are under-represented in the society by established parties.

In both countries we can observe the second type of new political parties – purifying – rather than the first type. The prophetic type of political party could be, in this period, represented only by the Pirate party, which was in the Czech Republic and not successful in the parliamentary elections, but still gained enough votes that it is worth noticing. The Pirate Party articulated a new cleavage in relation to the internet and social media, especially to the freedom on the internet.

The liberal ideas were visible in every manifesto of a political party that was successful in previous period such as in the case of the Smer-SD (Direction – Social Democracy), or other established parties in the Slovak and Czech Republic. But as the parliamentary success repeated, the political parties shifted from the “liberal” position to more socially oriented or conservative oriented entities. They unwillingly created political space for newcomers. As in the Slovak case, the liberal oriented political party “Freedom and Solidarity” (SaS), the main pillars were liberal ideas such as separation of the church and state, sex equality, promotion of same-sex marriages, decriminalization of marijuana, etc. Similar liberal ideas, as the equality of citizens, multiculturalism, and pro-choice, were also presented by the second newcomer in the parliamentary election in 2010 – Most-Híd (The Bridge). For example, in their manifesto it is clearly visible not only the equality of citizens and multiculturalism, including the topic “pro – choice”, specifically, the party described the Slovak Republic as multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural country. For Most-Híd it is important to maintain and strengthen the identity of each ethnic minority in Slovakia, developing the educational system, cultural and social institutions. The main difference was the targeting position, or better said, Most-Híd

was trying to promote the interests of minorities (especially Hungarian interests) and SaS was trying to target young and undecided voters.

The same situation or pattern was visible in the Czech Republic in the parliamentary election of 2010. The new political parties TOP 09 and VV (Public Affairs) were promoting themselves as new political entities that will bring not only new, fresh wind to the political waters of the Czech party system, but they were also calling for the exchange of old political "dinosaurs". For instance, VV promoted itself as a new alternative to the established political parties; it promoted anti-corruption measures that were also the main pillar of the electoral program. In other words, the electoral program of the party did not differ from other, already established parties; it kept the main theses that were dominant in society. Their election program of the party was built around three key themes: support direct democracy, economic affairs and anti-corruption measures.

Also the next political party only recycled old ideas and gave them new suits. The electoral program of TOP 09 was trying to target not only undecided voters, but also young voters (as in the case of VV). The electoral program promoted the party as a new entity that was completely new in the political system and differed from all right-wing parties. The main priority of the party was probably the fastest achievement of a balanced budget, which was reflected in all parts of the manifesto. TOP 09 also promised the reduction of social spending, which was unprecedented in the Czech budget conditions. The party probably tried to present itself as a party that intended to confront the public with the "true" state problems.

Disgust with and distrust of politics was not only the main motto of the election in 2010 in both countries, but also in the pre-election in 2012 in the Slovak Republic and in the pre-election in 2013 in the Czech Republic.

In the Slovak pre-election in March 2012 only one new party was able to pass the electoral threshold; it was the Ordinary people and independent candidates (OĽaNO). The party promoted itself as an open group, or movement of candidates that was built for "one" purpose, to prevent politicians from stealing "everything" in Slovakia. Although the main electoral themes were massively presented by the party (separation of business from politics, the abolition of parliamentary immunity, the same laws for politicians as for ordinary people, receiving good law to the prosperity of our country, tax cuts, etc.) – the ways and objectives how to achieve them were missing. The party also announced (through its political leader) that if the political party was successful in the election, they would be working and voting according to their conscience and not by their "party t-shirt". The main message targeted not only undecided voters, but especially voters who were frustrated by the static nature of Slovak politics, with the same parliamentary parties in the

coalition as well as in opposition. As the research showed after the pre-election in the Slovak parliament, "OĽaNO" was the party that gained votes from voters who tended to vote for all the established political parties and also new units present in the previous parliamentary seats. It could be said that OĽaNO was defined as the punisher of the established parties.³⁰

In the case of the Czech Republic, two new political parties entered the parliamentary seats, one of them also the new coalition formation. The same pattern as in the case of Slovak Republic can be observed in the pre-election. It is the pattern of turnover of voters where the new political parties gained frustrated voters from established parties, especially from the liberal (conservative) camps. The new political party of Andrej Babiš was the second successful political party in the election after social democrats, and it was also the main dominant actor in the creation of new coalition formation. The political party was able to target with their program not only undecided but also frustrated voters. According to the research of two research agencies³¹, a traditional "model" voter of political party ANO 2011 (ANO 2011) was unable to be accurately seen. This was because of the fact that votes were distributed evenly (equally) through the Czech Republic. The balance of support for the political party ANO 2011 was not only visible in the age groups, but also within different social groups. In layman's terms, the balance of support was equally divided into rich and poor, and also into the groups of educated and the uneducated voters.

We can observe that there was no specific group clearly prevailing among the people who vote for the movement. According the sociologist and analyst Daniel Prokop, the "campaign of this new subject differs from the campaign of Public Affairs, because they did not emphasize the corruption of politicians, but rather the agility of politicians"³². The campaign hit a period when voters were frustrated by traditional parties. For example ODS completely fell apart in the summer before the pre-election and Social Democrats suffered the fragmentation into two competitive party wings. Up to 34% of Czechs went to polls to vote for a new political party. This was maybe the same case as in the success story of "Úsvit", the party of Tomia Okamura. It received votes mainly due to popularity of its leader, but also for another reason that was simple: they simply said "we need change to make change". Similarly to ANO 2011, Dawn did not play the role of a traditional party, or right-left orientation.

³⁰ Peter Horváth, "The Role of the President in the Context of Political Changes in Slovakia," *Slovak Journal of Political Sciences* Vol. 14, No. 1 (2014); see also Viera Žúborová, "Visibility of Political Leaders in the Media in the Conditions of the Slovak Republic," *Slovak Journal of Political Sciences* Vol. 14, No. 4 (2014).

³¹ STEM/MARK, Median.

³² Ct24, *supra* note 20.

CONCLUSION

The emergence and success of new political parties in both countries relied on the ability to promote "old" ideas in a new fashion, colloquially referred to as "new suits" or "old" ideological flows in new breeze. In the last decades some authors focused on the emergence of new political parties in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), but also in whole Europe and noticed that new parties, at the first place, promoted dissatisfaction with established ones. For example, Florian Hartleb observed "in general politics has been depoliticised..." and "electoral competition has increasingly been reduced to a beauty contest between candidates..."³³. This phenomenon was also noticed by the authors Allan Sikk and Sean Hanley³⁴ who gave them the name centrist or (neo-) liberal populists, or the most preferred term was anti-establishment reform parties (AERPs).

The type "purifying parties" probably fit to existing new political parties in both republics, but this did answer the question of why new political parties are able to electorally break into parliament and in some cases join the government. In other words, the emergence of new political parties is related to the legitimacy of the system, or there is only the path of dependence which makes the established political structure somewhat obsolete.

The first comment to this polemic is the fact that the emergence of new political parties was not preceded by some specific "vacuum"; this trend is visible across all of Europe. Not only the emergence of new political parties, but also the decline of party membership, the decline of trust in politics and also the decline of the position of "old" or well established parties in the European political system. This trend could be related to a new environment that has changing tendencies in society but especially in political subjects and, last but not least, the democratic systems themselves. As Florian Hartleb observed, democracies are changing around the world. There are changes from "party democracies" to more virtual democracies that are dependent on their audience and communication, as the political parties are dependent on these changes.³⁵

But if we look closer within the political environment of both countries, we can observe not only the trends that were discussed by Hartleb, but we can see similar factors or circumstances that create the possibilities for new political subjects to enter the parliamentary level as well.³⁶

³³ Florian Hartleb, *All Tomorrow's Parties: The Changing Face of European Party Politics* (Brussels: Centre for European Studies, 2012), 7.

³⁴ ULC, "Angry mainstream: Eastern Europe's new 'centrist populists'" (January 2012) // <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/2012/01/20/angry-mainstream-eastern-europes-new-centrist-populists/>.

³⁵ Florian Hartleb, *supra* note 33, 7.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

The rise of new political parties could be seen as an expression of political crisis. In other words, new political subjects promote themselves and built up their position from the social and political extremes, dealing with the accountability and democracy. Their vitality is driven by social distrust and disgust within politics, especially in the case of corrupted established political elites. We can notice that space for new subjects is created by the established political parties dealing with common distrust in politics and their activities, but also with their own rigidity in the system.

The second factor that is visible and has already been researched in the countries is the economic factor, which is related to the economic crisis and growing unemployment. This is more visible in CEE countries than in Western countries, because the party identification and also institutionalization is weaker than in the western part of Europe.³⁷ This factor is also connected with the electoral volatility, which again is more visible in these parts of Europe.

However, we can observe that these factors are still related to the as yet unconsolidated party as well as the societal system. The bonds between political parties and society are very weak at the levels of trust and truth. This makes these countries more vulnerable than those in the western part of Europe. Trust in political parties is also decreasing in the western part of Europe³⁸, but in CEE it is even lower.³⁹ Weak established parties are slowly losing their position and votes, and are being replaced by new ones, more populist, weakly organized at the vertical level, and so could be easily replaceable, as it was visible in some electoral periods (for example in Slovakia). At the end we can conclude that the most negative factors are visible in the political system, including party system, the more successful are new political parties to gain the parliamentary or coalition position. The success of such political parties in the future will mean holding the actual position and electoral preferences they have received and keeping them successfully in the next election. Among such things is also the ability to promote their ideas and missions without any "help" tools and factors such as economic crisis, distrust of politics, high level of corruption, and so forth.

³⁷ Scott Mainwaring and Mariano Torcal, "Party system institutionalization and party system theory after the third wave of democratization"; in: Richard S. Katz and William J. Crotty, eds., *Handbook of Party Politics* (London and Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publications, 2009).

³⁸ Russell J. Dalton and Martin P. Wattenberg, *Parties without partisans: political change in advanced industrial democracies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

³⁹ Paul G. Lewis, *Political parties in post-communist Eastern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2000); see also Paul G. Lewis, "Party systems in post-communist Central Europe: Patterns of stability and consolidation," *Democratization* Vol. 13, No. 4 (2006); and Paul G. Lewis, "Party system institutionalisation in east-central Europe: empirical dimensions and tentative conclusions," Paper presented at the ECPR Joint Session, Workshop 1: *The Nationalisation of Party Systems in Central and Eastern Europe* (Rennes, April 11-16, 2008).

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