

The Risks of growing Populism and the European elections:

The populism and the Slovak republic

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This research paper deals with issue of populism in case of Slovak republic with special accent on upcoming European election. We assume that in European elections in Slovakia are parliamentary parties key actors; all up to date MEPs were in moment of elections members of parliamentary parties.

We will be examining parties election documents according to our concept of populism, which will be specified especially at Slovakia's case- We will use methods of content analysis and discourse analysis. We will be concluding anylysis on three main research questions:

- *Is there trend of populism in Slovakia?*
- *Do the parliamentary parties in Slovakia have a tendency to behave in populist way?*
- *Is there a risk of populism influence on European elections in Slovakia?*

Answering those questions along with information provided on issue of populism will allow us to evaluate development and current state of populism, challenges populism is bringing to upcoming Eurpoean election and our suggestions to how to deal with populist appeals.

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1. Introduction

This paper will be focused on populism and its risk in the area of Slovak republic. Issue of populism resonates in area of Slovak republic not only from its independent beginning in early 90s.³ There have been proven populist tendencies during two decades after fall of communism and in this moment we can see new development in an issue.

Populism is evident even today after long years of transformation; it can be seen in the results of regional elections, where right extremist won the post of the Chairman of region just more than a month ago. The reasons of his victory vary starting from frustrated voters, through bringing quick solutions for most delicate problems to weak opposition candidates. Populist tendencies we can see also in mainstream parties. These trends are necessary to be examined and identify starting not only on regional or local levels but also on European level, including the human inclinations to the topic through Europe in order to prevent any damages on people, society, management of political systems, democracy, freedom or peace guarantee. Our contribution to the debate will be researching this issue on current parliamentary parties in context of European election.

The research paper will contain following parts. Introduction provides topic overview and theoretical frame of our analysis, where the attention will be paid to theoretical frame of researched issue, attitudes, and concepts. We conceptualise the word populism, which will help us better understand the issue and settle our research. Introduction also presents our methodology, hypothesis and research question.

Main body of our article consists of crucial empirical findings. First part presents situation in the past and then focuses on current situation of researched issue. This part will analyse problem according to chosen methodology. Next part will introduce findings of perspective future development. Last part will provide conclusions on possible reasons and will answers stated questions. The question of term “populism” is very delicate and discussed nowadays on European level also in terms of future policies and what will be the influence for the Europe of

³ Scientific literature widely covered this topic and concluded that political parties in Slovakia have populist tendencies. For example Rupnik or Deegan –Krause; or from Slovak political scientists Mesežnikov alebo Gyarfášová. We will be examining this issue more deeply in the text.

tomorrow. This paper is written with emphasize on forthcoming European election and is focused primarily on challenges linked with populism in Slovak republic.

Theoretical part

As Churchill said: Democracy is not the perfect, but it is only way which is working. To democracy also belongs populism. If we would like to operationalize this definition, we need to define it and settle a framework for our study. If we take the Oxford English Dictionary 's definition of a populist as being '*one who seeks to represent the views of the mass of ordinary people*', then most democratic political parties today are populist, and can hardly object to being called so.⁴ In this sense, as the dictionary records, one could write of populists '*who love the people*'. In case we would use this particular definition, every democratic leader would be a populist. We need to conceptualize this term in current political and sociological connotations.

We can say definition of populism presupposes a theoretical grid giving sense to what is defined. This sense as the very notion of definition asserts - can only be established on the basis of differentiating the defined term from something else that the definition excludes. This engages us immediately in a complicated and ultimately self-defeating task: finding that ultimate redoubt where we would find 'pure' populism, irreducible to those other alternative characterisations.⁵ In literature we could find many definition of populism. The common way how the populism is defined is: it offers you the simple and immediately solution for any type of crises.

Jack Hayward sees populism as a response to the perceived shortcomings of democratic elitism. Critics say that in the case of the European Union, elites no longer act in the public interest and corruption at the highest levels discredits them.⁶ Hayward put elitism and populism on the opposite poles and describes populism as degeneration in the quality of elite leaders, with civil societies turning against their governments and the elite mediators between the powerless and the powerful, which grow up from the crises as Second World War.⁷

Most scholars namely Peter Worsley define populism as a dimension of political action rather than an ideology position. Worsley's way of saying that populism cannot claim any conceptual

⁴ Weaver, Eric Beckett. „The Communist Legacy? Populist but not Popular - The Foreign Policies of Hungarian Radical Right.“ In *Europe for the Europeans, The Foreign and Security Policy of the Populist Radical Right*, edited by: Christina Shori Liang. Ashgate Publishing, 2007. p 177.

⁵ Laclau, Ernesto. „Populism: What's in a Name?“ In *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, edited by: Francisco Panizza. Verso, 2005. p 32.

⁶ Arditì, Benjamin. *Politics in the Edges of Liberalism. Difference. Populism, Revolution, Agitation*. Edinbrugh University Press, 2007. p 43.

⁷ Arditì, Benjamin. *Politics in the Edges of Liberalism. Difference. Populism, Revolution, Agitation*. Edinbrugh University Press, 2007. p 43-44.

purity for itself, or that the ‘as such’ of populism is not such as it is always already contaminated and cannot be determined outside a context. All populisms refer to common analogical basis – the people. There have been paths to give populism conceptual clarity, discussion varied from type of the people appearing to what other claims must appear.⁸

Also new definitions are seeking theoretical clarity in political conflict between *them* and the rest of *us*.⁹ They are presented as the powerful and corrupt and us people represent values of the society. Populist leader appeals to the people to regenerate the nation, declare to combat the privileged groups, declare to transform the corrupt established institutions,¹⁰ emphasize is on an ideology which divides society into *pure people vs. corrupt elite*.¹¹

The populism is not an ideology; it is a political attitude which grows in crises and shows people how important they are in the finding of solution. It comes from the nature of indirect democracy, where the little elites are chosen to govern. And during the period of non-comfort of citizen always arise the populism, which always bring immediate solution, as for example according someone the solution for Euro-crisis is quit EU project.

“Finally, populism exploits the tension between ‘democratic institutions and the alienation to which they inevitably give rise’, that is, between the romanticism of a spontaneous expression of the will of the people on the one hand and, on the other, the institutions and professional expertise that are required to mediate that will. Populist movements react against this by empowering charismatic leaders who promise to break with the routine of bureaucratic institutions and to turn politics into a more personal experience”¹²

Populism - manipulating clever people by asking questions, popular promises and favours on behalf of mutual benefit to consolidating personal power. The much cited definition of book Political science fundamentals. When speaking about populism the discussion if it's positive or negative is useless. We could conclude that in any case it is political tactic which consists in

⁸ Reyes, Ascar. „Skinhead Conservatism: A Failed Populist Project.“ In *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, autor: Franzisco Panizza. Verso, 2005

⁹ Deegan-Krause, Kevin, a Tim Haughton. „Toward a More Useful Conceptualization of Populism: Types and Degrees of Populist Appeals in the Case of Slovakia.“ *Politics & Policy (Wiley Periodicals) Volume 37 (No.4 2009): 821 - 841. P 822*

¹⁰ Deegan-Krause, Kevin, a Tim Haughton. „Toward a More Useful Conceptualization of Populism: Types and Degrees of Populist Appeals in the Case of Slovakia.“ p 822.

¹¹ Deegan-Krause, Kevin, a Tim Haughton. „Toward a More Useful Conceptualization of Populism: Types and Degrees of Populist Appeals in the Case of Slovakia.“ p 822.

¹² Arditi, Benjamin. *Politics in the Edges of Liberalism. Difference. Populism, Revolution, Agitation*. Edinbrugh University Press, 2007. p 45.

getting the public so that emphasises understanding the problems of people and possibly find the promises without real background, with aim to attract at any cost, regardless the case.

In these connotations populism should be understand as a characteristic not indefinitely as an identity. This view allows us to see the fact, which populism it its core is allied with other ideologies.¹³In the next part we will present our conceptualization of term populism, what kind of behaviour or representation we consider populist and how will be this concept applied on situation in Slovak republic.

¹³ Deegan-Krause, Kevin, a Tim Haughton. „Toward a More Useful Conceptualization of Populism: Types and Degrees of Populist Appeals in the Case of Slovakia.“ p 822.

Methodological part

Main aim of this paper is examine issue of populism in current situation and in connotations with upcoming European elections. Paper identifies and examines key characteristics, reasons and background of populism across Slovak political parties. We will also design possible future development and its expected influence on European election. This paper is also aiming to present proposals to eliminate negative risk and bring positive growth of the public awareness in order to call the people for election participation.

We decided to use in this paper content analysis and discourse analysis. We would like to analyse and compare main political parties through their policy programmes in the relation to our populism definition. We will be using substantive content analysis and at the same time structural content analysis. Substantive content analysis focuses on what is said; it is in particular cases possible to quantify the appearance of some indicator. Structural content analysis is focused on how are things said, so we will be analysing accent and meaning used.¹⁴

We have chosen to include only parliamentary parties for two main reasons. In past election we have experienced broad support of citizens to those particular parties; we mean that on this sample we can fully examine trends in society preferences. The second reason is that our conclusions will be drawn upon European election issue. With European elections are linked with the theory of second order elections.¹⁵ According to this theory domestic political competition cast a shadow on European election; domestic political issues resemble on these elections more than European topics, then we assume also tendencies above the ideology such as populism will be similar. We will deeply analyse this issue in particular chapter.

As we said above, populism is not independent theory it is more tendency, approach, “style” of campaigning; populism stands above ideological paradigm of parties. Populism itself is not necessary ideology; populism appears on top of any ideological background. We have decided to mainly conceptualize populism on three basic roots.

¹⁴ Harrison, Lisa. *Political Research: An Introduction*. Routledge, 2001. p. 90.

¹⁵ Marsh, Michael. „Testing the Second - Order Election Model after Four European Elections.“ *British Journal of Political Science* (Cambridge University Press) Vol. 28, No. 4. vyd. (Oct. 1998): 591 - 607. p 591 – 593.

According to Deegan-Krause and Haughton¹⁶ we use his parameters of presented ideas on society construction. Our first two characteristics of populist approach:

- existence of two homogeneous units, the people and the elite, consequently appears an accent on homogeneity of people and on the other hand homogeneity of elite;
- glorification of the people vs. denigration of elite;
- current democracy is broken.

According to study "The European Union and the challenge of extremism and populism" from European Humanist Federation¹⁷, we have chosen following ideological direction of populism.

- it promotes direct democracy, claims a direct link between the government and the people and rejects the established political system - it offers immediate and demagogical solutions to people's day to day problems;
- it spreads simplistic and antagonistic images such as the sovereign nation, the "sane" people vs. the "corrupted" and "technocratic" elites;
- it idealise the nation and its perceived traditions, fuelling the criticism of any supranational political system;
- it holds an anti-globalisation discourse aimed at protecting vulnerable people from the consequences of the competitive capitalist market.

Mesežnikov, Gyarfášová, Bútorá and Kollár researched populism particularly on Slovak case.¹⁸

We have chosen following indicators and we assume that these indicators will be clear and often used on researched documents:

- an unclear or ambiguous political program, emphasizing declarations regarding 'popular' character of own political line rather than specific policy proposals;
- efforts to appeal to broadest possible masses, combined with declaratory description of certain population groups as separate from "the people" (e.g. the rich, capitalists, sophisticated intellectuals, etc.);

¹⁶ Deegan-Krause, Kevin, a Tim Haughton. „Toward a More Useful Conceptualization of Populism: Types and Degrees of Populist Appeals in the Case of Slovakia.“ p 825.

¹⁷ European Humanist Federation. „The European Union and the Challenge of Extremism and Populism.“ 2013. p 20.

¹⁸ Mesežnikov, Grigorij, Oľga Gyarfášová, Martin Bútorá, a Miroslav Kollár. „Slovakia.“ In Populist Politics and Liberal Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. p 101.

- proclaimed 'know-how' to tackle existing problems in society;
- promises of swift changes to the better;
- advertising of 'popular' solutions and meticulous efforts to put given promises in line with prevailing trends in public opinion.

These chosen sources examine issue of populism in specific connotations with political parties and also are sufficient for specific Slovak conditions; we have created 6 indicators which presence will be examined in elections documents.

1. people vs. elite approach; glorification of people and denigration of elite;
2. claims at current broken democracy, strong need for a change and promises to immediate change to better;
3. tradition perceiving;
4. antiglobalisation approach;
5. direct democracy claims;
6. popular declarations before specific proposals, popular solutions in compliance with public opinion trend;
7. simplistic and antagonist images such as sovereign nation.

We will be finding the answers on our research questions. We will search for these indicators of populism mainly in election programs or other official documents of each party. Other sources such as interviews, public speeches and so on will be used secondary for specific situations.

- Is there trend of populism in Slovakia?
- Do the parliamentary parties in Slovakia have a tendency to behave in populist way?
- Is there a risk of populism influence on European elections in Slovakia?

Our hypothesis is:

In these days are populist tendencies still a part of political competition in Slovakia; tendencies of party use populist appeals is in Slovak society inherent from times of communism. Society was used to put all believes and hopes into one man, who should lead society to good times; populist tendencies usually rise from unpleasant times - transformation problems, economic problems, identity crisis etc. In situation where European parliament are presented as *second order* election and candidates are growing mostly from relevant domestic parties, main attributes of these parties will be preserved also in European elections.

2. Development, trends, possible reasons and communism legacy

Independent Slovak republic has a quite short history and at this point we will be presenting how issue of populism resonated over two last decades. Existence of not quite small amount of researches on populism topic focused on Slovak republic is itself a proof that Slovak society is dealing with this issue for a long time. Scientific literature has proven that populism was used by every party in every election. As we said above, populism is linked with democracy directly and every democratic leader is most of the times populist of some sort. Even today populism is not able to rid of negative connotations.¹⁹

Since the beginning of modern independent Slovakia in 1993 most of Slovak parties used mainly accent on homogeneity of people, trying to appeal to the population as a whole. But on the other hand we can find parties which have chosen particular groups to be “the people as a whole”. The Slovak National Party (SNS) was aiming at ethnic Slovaks, Communist party of Slovakia (KSS) or Movement of Workers of Slovakia directed appeal at social groups loosing from the economic transition. To the debate about populist tendencies in Slovak politics also contributed situation from late 90ties with an ideological a political dispute between Movement for Democratic Slovakia of current prime minister and he Slovak Democratic and Christian Union, which was formed as anti – Mečiar coalition.²⁰ According to our definition from the first chapter this is one of signs of populism and we could presume that the person of Mečiar starts to be the first populist leader in nowadays Slovakian politics history. This prevails in domestic and also in foreign politics where Slovakia was excluded from NATO expansion and its action was called undemocratic all over Europe. Victory of Slovak Democratic and Cristian Union put Slovakia back in track in political and also economic context.

In this concept of chosen topic we have to also look at legacy from communism and its relation with populism. The long period of dictatorship and strange way of democracy has its marks on Slovak citizens. Because ideas of communism were taught to people who are still teaching the next generations, even the people are fighting the corruption in justice, health care, they have to fight with old stereotypes, which are still alive in the regions. We can say, that people are used to think that one can be handled just between friends, there’s no trust in the basic human rights as

¹⁹ Deegan-Krause, Kevin, a Tim Haughton. „Toward a More Useful Conceptualization of Populism: Types and Degrees of Populist Appeals in the Case of Slovakia.“ p 822.

²⁰ Deegan-Krause, Kevin, a Tim Haughton. „Toward a More Useful Conceptualization of Populism: Types and Degrees of Populist Appeals in the Case of Slovakia.“ p 825 – 838.

equality and simply democracy. People are used “to help it” and they are fighting this reality in their ordinary lives starting with scholar system to sanity, justice and so on.²¹

These are the results of Slovakian history taking part of Soviet Union through the years. The development from communism where people in 50-ties work with enthusiasm for better future of their children – slowly continue in the 60-ties and 70-ties (years of normalisation) and lead into to lethargy of people and frustration from governing promises about better future that never came true.

Legacy of communism is essential also because, this dynamic in politics linked with strong populist approaches are not that extraordinary in Slovak republic. This party dynamic is related to development all over the post - communist Europe.²² Similar conclusion presented also Deegan Krause, similar attributes of party system can be found in the systems of post-communist states; almost every party in postcommunist area showed populist tendencies.²³ Rupnik classifies situation in Poland as a right-wing populism, in Slovakia he is talking about left-wing populist tendencies. For other examples Hungary and FIDESZ or Bulgaria. According to Rupnik in presidential election were confronted 2 candidates; one ex –communist and one proto – fascist,²⁴ which speak itself about party situation and populist tendencies across ex-communist states.

²¹ European Commission. „*EU Anti - corruption report*; COM (2014) 38 final.“ Report from The European Commission to The Council and The European Parliament, 2014. p 5 – 7.

²² Deegan-Krause, Kevin, a Tim Haughton. „Toward a More Useful Conceptualization of Populism: Types and Degrees of Populist Appeals in the Case of Slovakia.“ p 832.

²³ Deegan-Krause, Kevin. „Populism and the Logic of Party Rotation in Postcommunist Europe.“ (Institute for Public Affairs) 2007.p 2 – 4.

²⁴ Rupnik, Jaques. „Populism in Eastern Central Europe.“ Transit, 2007. p 1 – 2.

3. Current situation, parties, reasons

For our analysis we have chosen to research populist tendencies on currently parliamentary parties, mainly because that we assume these parties to be most active and successful in European election. According to results of parliamentary election in 2012²⁵ we will be analysing following parties:

Abbreviation	English	Slovak
SMER - SD	Direction - Social Democracy	Smer - sociálna demokracia
KDH	Christian –democratic movement	Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie
ĽANO	Common people and independent personalities	Obyčajní ľudia a nezávislé osobnosti
MOST –HÍD	Bridge	Most - Híd
SDKU - DS	Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party	Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia - Demokratická strana
SAS	Liberty and Solidarity	Sloboda a solidarita

SMER – SD

SMER is according to Mesežnikov marked as *party of soft non - authoritarian populism*.²⁶ Currently SMER is the biggest party with biggest support in society. SMER is critical to elites, but that's not an essential populist approach in its elections documents and speeches. Elections in 2012 were after short period of the broad centre right coalition, which lasted only two years. That's because SMER is aiming at stability a future of the nation and "*repairing previous mistakes*."²⁷ According to our concept of populism SMER does not promote direct democracy, SMER does not mark system as broken but some of its features are bad for *people of Slovakia, citizens*. And also SMER is not holding anti-globalisation discourse to protect vulnerable; SMER

²⁵Štatistický úrad Slovenskej republiky. Počet a podiel platných hlasov odovzdaných pre politické strany. dátum neznámy. <http://volby.statistics.sk/nrsr/nrsr2012/sr/tab3.jsp@lang=sk.htm> (cit. 27. February 2014).

²⁶ Mesežnikov, Grigorij, Oľga Gyarfášová, Martin Bútora, a Miroslav Kollár. „Slovakia.“ In *Populist Politics and Liberal Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*. p 110.

²⁷ SMER-SD. PROGRAMOVÉ ZAMERANIE STRANY SMER- SOCIÁLNA DEMOKRACIA NA VOLEBNÉ OBDOBIE 2012 – 2016.(doc). <http://www.strana-smer.sk/3239/nas-program>.

is and need to be working with this gently, Slovakia has broad international commitments SMER is promoting path of stable and strong Slovakia in European context.

On the other hand according to our definition of populism used, we can say and demonstrate strong appeal on nation, people, citizens which deserves stability, prosperity etc. SMER is claiming that is coming from people a does for the people. Next strong indicator of populism is proclaimed know how of SMER to resolve problems, its promise of change is strong and all over the programmatic documents. These solutions are also *popular*, for a greater good etc.

Accent on people is evident in substantive analysis when in researched *Election programme* was this word citizen found almost 80 times. We can conclude that SMER is glorifying the nation, citizens in it and people's role in state. Citizen's interest,²⁸ citizen's trust, citizen's life, citizen's feeling of security,²⁹ Slovakia and its people,³⁰ citizen's safety,³¹ etc. Structural analysis shows, that in almost every chapter there is an accent on specific action to be taken into people's behalf. These actions accented to people, we define as popular suggestions and solutions for example social policy and its impact on specific groups.

Next indicator of populism we are analysing is appeal to corrupted elite. As we mentioned above, SMER is aiming at in time of election current elite as not in behalf of citizens. But for SMER is this accent a bit difficult, we cannot forget that SMER was a coalition leader for four years.

KDH

Our next subject is Christian – democratic Union. According to our concept of populism the mostly used populist appeals are: idealization of nation and perceived traditions, glorification of people and immediate solutions to day to day problems. Main appeal is at *Christian tradition, work, and ethics*³². This comes from ideology behind this party. As we said in theoretical part populism is built on other ideology. In this particular case is party built on ideal of nation and tradition; the aim is perceive these values. Is in this case appeal on nation and tradition populist appeal or is it biased ideology behind the populism? Answer may vary, we have to also include

²⁸ SMER-SD. PROGRAMOVÉ ZAMERANIE STRANY SMER- SOCIÁLNA DEMOKRACIA NA VOLEBNÉ OBDOBIE 2012 – 2016.(doc). <http://www.strana-smer.sk/3239/nas-program>. p 1.

²⁹ SMER-SD. PROGRAMOVÉ ZAMERANIE STRANY SMER- SOCIÁLNA DEMOKRACIA NA VOLEBNÉ OBDOBIE 2012 – 2016.(doc). <http://www.strana-smer.sk/3239/nas-program>. p 2 – 4.

³⁰ SMER-SD. PROGRAMOVÉ ZAMERANIE STRANY SMER- SOCIÁLNA DEMOKRACIA NA VOLEBNÉ OBDOBIE 2012 – 2016.(doc). <http://www.strana-smer.sk/3239/nas-program>. p 4.

³¹ SMER-SD. PROGRAMOVÉ ZAMERANIE STRANY SMER- SOCIÁLNA DEMOKRACIA NA VOLEBNÉ OBDOBIE 2012 – 2016.(doc). <http://www.strana-smer.sk/3239/nas-program>. p 8.

³² KDH. Začína to prácou, cesta pre Slovensko. Volebný program KDH 2012. p 4,15,48,54.

communist legacy on which was KDH created and also essential aim of every party; to be elected; so it is inevitable use appropriate technics.

On the other hand on the contrary of our concept of populism, some indicators cannot be found in election documents. KDH also is not using appeals at direct democracy or anti elitism. KDH is holding pro globalization position on contrary with our concept. “Solution knows how” and traditionalist approach are the strongest populist indicators in analysed documents. Substantive analysis of key words did not indicate any extraordinary numbers, but structural approach reveals what was left in written but it still is clearly said – aiming at family, traditions, values, European and Christian heritage. Party is not using anti elitism approach simply because party was part of elite for two years in government and also before 2006 parliamentary period.

OLANO

OLANO was founded just before 2010 election; this subject is new in political competition, so there is very little data to compare in terms of populism. According to our conceptualization, we have found indicators of populist approach.

The strongest appeal is at citizen and its role in the society and state, reference of people is even in the name of this party/civil association. OLANO is not using this concept of citizens nearer the governance in direct democracy connotations. OLANO is declaring its aim to make state more close to citizens, in the meaning of possibilities to present opinions - to make decision making clearer. Election documents are in this meaning using popular accent on politicians legal responsibility, immunity etc. OLANO as a new party is in comparison to other parties using stronger accent at previous corrupted, mistaken elites.³³ OLANO is using an advantage of novelty in political competition; these politicians have never been a part of elite; so it is safe to call elite corrupted or mistaken in some issues. Across the analysed text is available strong appeal at nation and accent on Slovakia as a country with heritage and potential. As a part of structural analysis, we have recognized contextual nuance; OLANO is positioning itself to the role of citizen, not in the role of a party, ruler or elite. “*WE citizens deserve*” approach on the other hand “*citizens deserve, citizens should have be provided*” as it was for example illustrated at party SMER.

³³ OLANO. Volebný program hnutia OBYČAJNÍ ĽUDIA a nezávislé osobnosti . p 15-17.

MOST - HÍD

Populist appears are presented, but the accent is not strong as we have seen in other parties documents. MOST is a party representing mostly Hungarian minority in Slovakia, but on the opposite of possible assumption is not aiming only at this specific community. The accent is on *cooperation, multiethnicity*³⁴, cooperation between politicians but also in meaning of diminishing minority vs. majority dichotomy. Substantive analysis of chosen documents showed us very little about populist approaches of MOST - Híd. Structural context analysis brought us information about connotations, hidden meanings between the lines. Of course we can find indicators as promises to change or popular solutions to currently resonating problems. According to our definition, we can conclude that MOST - Híd presents very little of populist approach in its election documentation. Beyond our concept is a fact that Most Hid presented clear, structured document with specific and exact layout on the opposite of extensive documents of other parties.

SDKU

Through the collecting the data, SDKU was first party actually using a term populism. Analysed election program says *responsibility and justice instead of populism*.³⁵ According to our definition of populism SDKU is claiming to change things to better, instruments to do that are also *popular* solutions such as budget balance, decision making on lower level, health care reform accent on agriculture and high quality Slovak groceries. SDKU is careful with elitism and corruption accent because of difficulties in the past, SDKU was a coalition leader between 1998-2006 and between 2010-2012; it is not easy to mark ruling elite as corrupted when party was and is a part of it. As it was said above, also SDKU is not using direct democracy approach or anti-globalization appeal. One thing to remember is that majority of examined parties “helped” Slovakia into EU, or is aware of complexity of EU and its costs and benefits in current state, and clearly Eurosceptic position would mean losing political credit.

³⁴ MOST - HÍD. Programové ciele strany MOST - Híd pre parlamentné voľby v roku 2012. p 2-10.

³⁵ SDKU -DS. Silná stredná vrstva spravodlivé Slovensko, programové východiská SDKU-DS. p 3.

SAS

Final party of our analysis is in situation similar as OLANO mentioned before. SAS also is a new party; not touched by long-term parliament or government experience. SAS claims that elites are corrupted and there is a strong need for new solutions.³⁶ Another populist indicator is existence two homogenous unit, citizens versus old politicians sometimes even heritage from communism. SAS does not stand in position of idealising nation a tradition. This fact is concluding form ideals behind party as a whole, where there is strong liberal approach presented.

4. Research questions

At this point we try to conclude an analysis of our first two research questions. Is there a trend of rising populism in Slovakia? We conclude that there is a trend of populism in Slovakia more than two decades. To confirm that this trend is rising we would need wider research that platform given to us. However as we see above, the populist statement are present in each manifesto, there is only differences between how it is served. The elder parties, which are present from the beginning of Slovak republic, are creating their manifesto wisely, because of their history. In the manifesto of the younger parties are populist statements more easily to identify. One of our main aims is to research interaction between populist tendencies in main national parties and upcoming European elections ; to conclude our research we will go through each states question.

Is there trend of rising populism in Slovakia?

In Slovakia populism play its role, from the beginning in 1993. Respected authors the field (Rupnik, Deegan – Krause, Mesežnikov) concluded this fact and have given us wide data, we have presented above. There is a trend of populism, but we need to take into account specific cases of parties. We would like specify “type” of populism in context of whole society. Mesežnikov concluded that in the past there was strong left wing populism represented between Slovak political parties. However we have conceptualized populism a little differently than Mesežnikov; we have used more characteristic – indicator if specific document has or has not populist tendencies. To sum up our answer in Slovakia or Slovak society is rising trend of populism, because of our history, but also thanks to crises and unpleasant time, when people are losing their job.

³⁶ SAS. Volebný prram SAS pre budúce generácie. p 6-8.

Do the parliamentary parties in Slovakia have a tendency to behave in populist way?

Slovak parliamentary parties have tendencies to include populist statements into their essential documents. As was said above this trend is not new; populism as a characteristic is also developing over time in each party. When party reach coalition or parliament abandons some populist tendencies.³⁷ We have focused on last election in 2010, mainly on election documents produced by each party. We can say that some of chosen indicators of populism are not available in parliamentary parties. None of examined parties did not use appeal on anti-globalisation discourse. This can be a result of our history and also of knowledge that Slovakia is really small country and without strong partners we are not able to compete to bigger countries. But on the other hand all parties are building on broken democracy - non-functional state; all parties are bringing unique solutions. Especially younger parties as OLANO, SAS and SMER, which are younger parties are building their programmes on traditions and offering new solutions; which are according to our conceptualisation populist appeals. If we would like to simplify our answer we would say yes, we can find populist tendencies in parliamentary parties.

Possible reasons

We have concluded that the Slovak parliamentary political parties have tendencies to behave in populist ways. In this chapter we will summarize reasons for populism presence from general point of view; also we will examine specific conditions of populism presence in Slovakia.

First we will start from main general reason; *will to gain voters*. We stand behind arguments stated in theoretical part; populism is above ideological paradigm of a party and every democratic leader needs to be elected. This reason is primarily linked with our indicator of promises to change current broken situation, mostly by popular solutions. Will to gain voters is not only characteristic of Slovak republic, it can be found across the Europe or even across the continents.

Our next reasons is more specific to situation of Slovak republic, we would mark communism and legacy it is bringing even today as the second reason why is populism still alive in Slovakia.

Phenomenon of communist legacy is characterises not only for Slovakia, but also for other countries in the region. Even now when quite a time have passed, legacy remains and differs

³⁷ Deegan-Krause, Kevin, a Tim Haughton. „Toward a More Useful Conceptualization of Populism: Types and Degrees of Populist Appeals in the Case of Slovakia.“ p 839.

from culture to culture.³⁸ As Beckett - Weaver concluded populist legacy of communism includes mainly in the style of political communication. Communication in relation to voter is usually low on real content and on the other hand high on emotional appeals and populist promises.³⁹ As we have concluded above, these are tendencies proven in examined parties. Mesežnikov, Gyarfášová, Bútorá and Kollár concluded that in Slovakia case is not only communist legacy which matters but also socio – cultural legacy of authoritarian politics before a communism. Historians, politicians and also common people struggled over interpretation of Slovak state and statehood identity itself. Debate about democratic and undemocratic regime roots in Slovakia escalated over society during 1990s.⁴⁰

Over last two decades political parties tried do offer a solution wide range of problems; they declared to change problems from day to day category to macroeconomic difficulties. First there was post-communist period, transformation challenges and a need to cope with new regime and globalised world. Currently we need to cope with European integration and mostly with economic implications of euro crisis, global market complicated situation or impact of Slovak industry structure.

³⁸ Weaver, Eric Beckett. „The Communist Legacy? Populist but not Popular - The Foreign Policies of Hungarian Radical Right.“ In *Europe for the Europeans, The Foreign and Security Policy of the Populist Radical Right*, edited by: Christina Shori Liang. Ashgate Publishing, 2007. p 177.

³⁹ Weaver, Eric Beckett. „The Communist Legacy? Populist but not Popular - The Foreign Policies of Hungarian Radical Right.“ In *Europe for the Europeans, The Foreign and Security Policy of the Populist Radical Right*, edited by: Christina Shori Liang. Ashgate Publishing, 2007. p 177.

⁴⁰ Mesežnikov, Grigorij, Oľga Gyarfášová, Martin Bútorá, a Miroslav Kollár. „Slovakia.“ In *Populist Politics and Liberal Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*. p 110.

5. Populism and European election in Slovakia

In the beginning we have conceptualize our choice of examining parliamentary parties. Most reflected theory of European elections is *second order elections theory*. This theory on one hand says that European and national election shares same party system and then characteristic of this system; but on the other hand second order election theory predicts that national government parties will lose in European parliament election.⁴¹ In Slovakia otherwise is situation a little different. Even if government parties can lose, we are not examining this particular declaration of second order election theory so we can confirm or deny this claim; but in both election terms, 2004 – 2009 and 2009 – 2014, all members of European parliament were candidates of parliamentary parties. We assume that this trend will continue, though we have examined parliamentary parties, because we expect that successful candidates will come from parliamentary parties.

Is there a risk of populism influence on European elections in Slovakia?

According to arguments discussed above as an answer to our last research question we stay that there is a risk of populism influencing upcoming European election. We have concluded two main arguments to support our answer. We see this situation as a linear transfer of certain qualities. Our conclusion is that in case of election at national level (in our case parliamentary election), political parties have tendency to behave during the campaign in populist way. We confirmed our assumption that parliamentary parties play the main role during the European elections; candidate of these party are the only ones successful.

We admit that in specific current situation of euro crisis impact, and possible “mood changes” in Slovak society;⁴² we cannot exclude possibility of anti - european voices raising. This could be also linked with rising extreme right nationalism and populism in regions; this was shown in regional elections we have mentioned before. But to this day (February 2014) was not announced any candidate coming outside of parliament parties. Even mentioned regional leader Marián

⁴¹ Marsh, Michael. „Testing the Second - Order Election Model after Four European Elections.“ *British Journal of Political Science* (Cambridge University Press) Vol. 28, No. 4. vyd. (Oct. 1998): 591 - 607. p 591 – 593.

⁴²European Commission. Standard Eurobarometer 79, Slovakia factsheet.
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb79/eb79_fact_sk_en.pdf

Kotleba is not a part of any established party. His movement was forbidden and he was registered as an independent candidate. Although the fact is that according to EP election law, only political parties can be registered, but no candidate presents an ideology this strong in nationalist and populist tendencies. Current candidates may have a tendency to be critical about some particular European topics and this point of view can be presented in populist view. Particularly in topics related do euro crisis, negotiation system, sovereignty of state we expect populist tendencies. To examine this deeply in this point are not available needed information, because European election campaign official or unofficial did not start yet. Right now is this issue shadowed by presidential election in March.

Every examined party is calling for strong Slovakia in Europe, exact accent and wording of course vary; no party although showed extreme position towards European integration. There are some parties such as SAS or OLANO, which are sceptic about particular economic questions, linked with European integration topics. They called for independent Slovakia, while they built on unique characters of Slovak republic. Those statements are very dangerous, because people still don't take EU as a body, which is touching them directly. During unpleasant time it will raise dangerous situation, in worst case scenario it can lead to revolution.

6. Conclusion

To sum up our research in Slovakia is populism inherent in people's mind due to our legacy and also to needs to find one person who will save our live and said to us that it will be ok, because we are unique.

Our suggestion how to defend is pay more attention to education young people, pay attention to enlarge critical thinking and also we need time. Because communistic generation learnt our parents they learnt us. It will take couple more generations, because 20 years without communism is really short period to give up all bad habits. Also our problem is that Slovakia is missing dealing with past. After break down of communism we skipped this part, which we feel still in present also in all systems of our republics. There is very little change to diminish these influences immediately; long-term aims and actions are the way to do this. There is a consensus how to proceed this kind a change, and we would also name these specific actions. Investments to education, to support to non-governmental organizations linked with citizens and society.

We also assume that in case of improving economic situation would be populist claims less common; and by that would also risk on using populism in European elections diminished. None of Slovak political parties have ant globalization or clearly antieuropean approach, but SAS or OLANO criticized economic crisis solution and the approach how to explain these issues we can evaluate as populist. Populism in Slovakia is not extreme, but political parties try to be appealing to citizens with promises of changing their situation to better.

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