A Hint at Entrepreneurial Parties? The Case of Four New Successful Parties in Slovenia

Alenka Krašovec*

Abstract

Since the 2011 elections several new Slovenian parties have recorded exceptional results and two newcomers even received a plurality vote in the 2011 and 2014 elections. Some scholars believe that, along with the successful new parties, a new party model has also developed. Therefore, we employed several key dimensions to find out whether four Slovenian new successful parties (List of Zoran Janković – Positive Slovenia, Citizen List of Gregor Virant – Citizen List, Party of Miro Cerar – Party of Modern Centre, and Alliance of Alenka Bratušek – Alliance of Social-Liberal Democrats) have exhibited elements of entrepreneurial parties. Analysis of several dimensions (party origin, resources in election campaign, party organisation and electoral appeals) reveals many similarities among the four parties but also that they can be classified as entrepreneurial parties (mainly when the minimal conceptualisation of this party model is used) only in some fragments and with some important reservations.

Key words: political party; entrepreneurial party; new party; electoral success; Slovenia

DOI: 10.5817/PC2017-2-158

1. Introduction

In the last two elections in Slovenia, several new political parties recorded very good, even exceptional, electoral results. According to several scholars (e.g. Harmel, Robertson 1985; Lucardie 2000; Krouwel, Lucardie 2008; Bolleyer 2013), the success of new parties is influenced by many determinants. We shall briefly present the most important ones in the Slovenian case, but above all the article will deal with the question of whether successful newcomers exhibit some common characteristics, particularly those typical of the entrepreneurial party model. Some scholars (see e.g. Arter, Kestilä-Kekkonen 2014; Hloušek 2015) are namely convinced that especially new parties have a potential to develop as entrepreneurial parties.

* Alenka Krašovec (alenka.krasovec@fdv.uni-lj.si), Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana.

First, we shall present the main contours of the party system and the established parties in Slovenia together with the electoral results of the last two (early) elections held in 2011 and 2014. Given that institutional rules have been almost completely stable, economic and political opportunity structures will mainly be employed as determinants of the new parties' electoral success. In the second part, the four most successful new parties will be analysed in line with the key dimensions of the entrepreneurial party presented in the introductory chapter of this volume.

2. Characteristics of the Party System and Parties in Slovenia

In the liberalisation phase of the socialist regime at the end of the 1980s in Slovenia, the old political parties started to transform on one side while, on the other, some opposition, at the time transitional new parties, started to develop. Although early in the 1990s Slovenia's party system was highly fragmented, it gradually and moderately changed and became one of the least polarised systems in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (Fink-Hafner, Krašovec 2013). The Slovenian party system was regarded, together with the Hungarian and Czech party systems, as the most stable until the early 2010s (Lewis 2001; Enyedi, Casal Bertoa 2011; Fink-Hafner 2012; Casal Bertoa 2014; Haughton, Deegan-Krause 2015). With the 2011 elections, the hurricane season, as Haughton and Deegan-Krause (2015) vividly describe the important changes in party systems in CEE, hit Slovenia badly. These changes have indeed remained relatively dynamic phenomena despite tendencies toward consolidation of party systems (Enyedi, Casal Bertoa 2011). It seems a new subsystem has emerged, where not only established parties lose electoral support due to new parties but also newcomers are rapidly losing out to even newer parties (Haughton and Deegan-Krause 2015: 61). Given this radical change, one could describe the new circumstances not merely as the creation of a new subsystem but even as an emergence of a new party system. Following Hopkin and Paolucci (1999: 307), this is the most suitable environment for developing a new party model, called the business-firm party model. Hloušek and Kopeček (2017) indeed equate the business-firm party model with the maximal conceptualisation of the entrepreneurial party model in the introduction of an edited volume.

Speaking about the party model, we have witnessed important signs of the partial cartelisation (as defined by Katz and Mair 1995) of the established parties in Slovenia; it is obvious these parties have depended heavily on the state for the financial and other resources needed for their activities, and in terms of parliamentary parties have used their position in the legislature to channel state resources to advantage themselves at the expense of those outside the legislature, with evidence suggesting the established Slovenian parliamentary parties have behaved as a relatively homogeneous bloc in a cartel-like manner (Krašovec, Haughton 2011: 207–208). In several other aspects (e.g. internal power relations), the established Slovenian parties have more resembled the mass party model (Krašovec 2000; Krašovec, Haughton 2011).

Despite the quite stable party system, one can speak of the presence of new parties in the Slovenian parliament ever since the democratic system was introduced. Formally speaking, establishing a new party has been relatively easy; only 200 voter signatures along with a party programme, internal party rules and minutes of the founding meeting with names of elected members of the party bodies are needed to register a party. In addition, the electoral system (PR system with a 4% threshold[1] and a quite high district magnitude of 11) has been relatively friendly to new parties. Yet, in Slovenia up until the 2011 elections only one new party had managed to cross the parliamentary threshold at each election (in 2004 there were no newcomers), and none had ever received more than 10 % of the vote (Fink-Hafner, Krašovec 2013). However, it is precisely these small new parliamentary parties that for a long time managed to play an important role in mitigating the population's anti-party sentiments (Fink-Hafner 2012).

Table 1: Results of the 2011 and 2014 parliamentary elections

	2011	**2014**
Party	**Percentage of votes (Number of seats)**	**Percentage of votes (Number of seats)**
List of Zoran Janković – Positive Slovenia; later just Positive Slovenia – Lista Zorana Jankovića – Pozitivna Slovenija (LZJ – PS; PS)	**28.5 (28)**	**2.9 (0)**
Slovenian Democratic Party – Slovenska demokratska stranka (SDS)	26.2 (26)	20.7 (21)
Social Democrats – Socialni demokrati (SD)	10.5 (10)	6.0 (6)
Citizen List of Gregor Virant; later just Citizen List – Državljanska lista Gregorja Viranta (DLG; DL)	**8.4 (0)**	**0.6 (0)**
Party of Miro Cerar; later Party of Modern Centre – Stranka Mira Cerarja (SMC)	**/**	**34.5 (36)**
Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia – Demokratična stranka upokojencev Slovenije (DeSUS)	6.9 (6)	10.2 (10)
United Left – Združena levica (ZL)	**/**	**6.0 (6)**
New Slovenia – Christian Democrats – Nova Slovenija – Krščanski demokrati (NSi)	4.9 (4)	5.6 (5)
Alliance of Alenka Bratušek; later Zavezništvo socialno-liberalnih demokratov – Zavezništvo Alenke Bratušek (ZaAB; Zavezništvo)	**/**	**4.4 (4)**
Zares	**0.6 (0)**	**/**
Liberal Democracy of Slovenia – Liberalna demokracija Slovenije (LDS)	1.5 (0)	/
Slovenian People's Party – Slovenska ljudska stranka (SLS)	6.8 (6)	3.9 (0)
Slovenian National Party – Slovenska nacionalna stranka (SNS)	1.8 (0)	2.2 (0)

Results of all parliamentary parties in the 2008–2011 and 2011–2014 periods are shown.
Bold: new parties.

Source: Electoral Commission of Slovenia.

3. The Global Crisis and Economic and Political Opportunity Structures for New Parties

In the last several years, many changes which obviously have represented good opportunity structures for new parties occurred. Economic and political opportunity structures in particular hold important explanatory power regarding the recent good electoral success of new parties. Although many of them had already existed in Slovenia in previous years, they intensified with the global crisis and became important determinants of the newcomers' success.

As pointed out by Guardiancich (2012), for almost 20 years Slovenia had enjoyed the reputation of a post-socialist success story. Although Slovenia seemed destined to consolidate its democracy and successful economy (Krašovec, Johannsen 2016), the democratic and economic fairy tale has recently been sputtering. The consequences of the global economic crisis which hit Slovenia hard also impacted the political arena with some delay. Difficult economic times have obviously also brought difficult times for democracy (Diamond 2011); Freedom House and the Bertelsmann Foundation recorded some deterioration in the status of democracy in Slovenia.

In the longer term, the first step in privatisation that was chosen, unlike the general pattern seen in CEE countries, helped empower the existing economic elite and network with cross-membership from and circulation among business, politics and administration (Fink-Hafner 1998). The SDS-led government in the 2004–2008 period wanted to dismantle these old socio-politico-economic networks and thus announced a radical privatisation (Guardiancich 2012). In this situation, many managers felt the best option was for them to become owners of the companies they managed. As a rule, a massive wave of managerial buy-offs of the best Slovenian companies followed. In reality, these buy-offs were all based on loans that typically burdened the companies (Mencinger 2012). The public did not accept such privatisation. The negative public attitude to such managers, labelled *tycoons,* culminated in the economic crisis which turned into a fiscal crisis as well when it became clear this form of privatisation had completely exhausted the companies and simultaneously held harmful consequences for Slovenia's banking system, which had to be saved by the taxpayers in 2013. In this context, the inability of the parties, also burdened by their (in)formal links to the *tycoons* and parties' long-lasting problems with legitimacy, to govern efficiently and transparently in late 2012/early 2013 led not only to mass (occasionally also violent) demonstrations against certain (proposed) austerity measures to curb the crisis, but also to calls to reconstruct the model of democracy and the role of parties or 'at least' establish a new political elite.

Moreover, while the corruption problem was long neglected due to relatively favourable Transparency International rankings (CPI) and World Bank indicators, where the criminal state capture problem or problem of systemic corruption were both largely neglected (Krašovec et al. 2014), the corruption problem has come to the fore in the last several years. In 2011, the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption not only pointed to the existence of 12 out of 13 indicators of systemic corruption in Slovenia (Komisija za preprečevanje korupcije 2011), but it also empirically confirmed that many companies' business activities were strongly correlated with the 'colour' of a government. It is thus not surprising that in 2011

74 % of Slovenians (the biggest share of all respondents in the EU) evaluated the corruption level as having increased in the last 3 years (Eurobarometer 2011). In 2011 83 % of respondents in Slovenia perceived national politicians as corrupt (the average in the EU was 57 %) (Eurobarometer 2011).

A new impetus for the corruption issue came in January 2013 when the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption announced the findings of a year-long investigation into the holders of the highest political offices. The Commission's investigation revealed that current PM Janša and Mayor of Ljubljana Janković (then also the head of the country's new and the biggest parliamentary party) had systematically and repeatedly violated the law.

In these circumstances, the huge disappointment of citizens with politics and democracy is probably no surprise. Satisfaction with democracy had indeed been falling since the early 1990s. Although the trend was especially evident after 2005[2], in the post-2009 period one could speak about the collapse of trust in democratic institutions and in the democratic arrangement in Slovenia generally (Vehovar 2012), since less than 10 % of citizens were satisfied with democracy. The prospects have also not been very optimistic, since in 2013 only 15 % of respondents expected democracy to function well in the next ten years (Toš, Broder 2013). However, even though Slovenian citizens have held many reservations regarding the democracy's functioning, they have clearly preferred a democratic system over an authoritarian one (Toš 1999; 2004; 2009; 2012) or, as Vehovar (2012: 88) said, it is obvious the attitude to democracy in Slovenia has been instrumental and not substantial.

The already mentioned cartelisation of parties further exacerbated citizens' feelings that established and/or mainstream parties are indifferent to the desires of ordinary citizens (Katz, Mair 2009), leading to a growing perception of distance between the parties and ordinary citizens. Given such developments, recently recorded extremely low or even alarming levels of trust in political parties (in 2005, 11 % of voters still trusted parties, while in 2011 this share was only 2 %, and 1 % in 2013; Politbarometer 2005; 2011; 2013) cannot be a surprise, although trust in parties in Slovenia since the start of the transition to democracy has never been high (Fink-Hafner et al. 2002).

Although many determinants of the small new parties' success in Slovenia in the 1992–2008 period (see Fink-Hafner, Krašovec 2013) can explain their exceptional electoral results, it has also been obvious that the same types of determinants have recently risen to the fore in a more radical form since the 2011 elections. Together with established parties' great difficulties or even inability to ensure a balance between responsibility and responsiveness (see Krašovec, Johannsen 2016), they have introduced more radical changes to the pattern of the newcomers' electoral results.

4. Successful Newcomers and Key Dimensions of the Entrepreneurial Party Model

Scholars recently dealing with new parties, their success and/or their durability, frequently employ different definitions of a new party (e.g. Lucardie 2000; Barnea, Rahat 2011; Sikk 2012; Arter 2016; Beyens et al. 2016). We shall use an inclusive definition and treat each party that has been established from scratch, or has come into being due to some mergers,

splits or been a successor to some other party (parties) and entered parliament as such as a new party.

Since the 2011 elections represent a crucial turn in the new parties' electoral results, followed by the emergence of the new subsystem or even new party system (Hopkin, Paolucci 1999; Haughton, Deegan-Krause 2015), we will analyse four successful new parties. The List of Zoran Janković – Positive Slovenia (LZJ-PS; PS) and Citizen List of Gregor Virant – Citizen List (DLGV; DL) both entered parliament in the 2011 elections, while the Party of Miro Cerar – Party of Modern Centre (SMC) and Alliance of Alenka Bratušek – Alliance of Social-Liberal Democrats (ZaAB; Zavezništvo) entered parliament in the 2014 elections. The United Left (ZL) coalition which entered parliament in 2014 is excluded from the analysis because it is a coalition of three parties (and one civil movement) with different experiences and electoral results recorded in the past.

As Krouwel (2006) notes, party models develop over time due to the many changes parties undergo and one can identify at least three dimensions in the formation/definition of different party models: organisational, electoral and ideological. As party models serve as an ideal-type classification, hardly any political party completely displays all characteristics of the particular ideal-type. Since parties frequently adapt to challenges and changes in their operating environments – with the aim to survive and thrive organisationally and electorally (Harmel, Janda 1982; Panebianco 1988; Harmel, Janda 1994; Strøm, Svåsand 1997; Harmel 2002) – even established parties can develop towards the entrepreneurial party model. Still, as established parties usually have higher levels of institutionalisation, they also face tougher constraints which some parties manage to overcome while others do not (Panebianco 1988; Bolleyer et al. 2012). New parties usually do not face such constraints and have greater latitude in deciding which kind of party to establish. Therefore, some (Hopkin, Paolucci 1999; Arter, Kestilä-Kekkonen 2014; Hloušek 2015; Arter 2016) believe it is chiefly new parties that can have a good potential to be established as entrepreneurial parties. This also explains why new successful parties deserve special attention in our analysis.

We shall employ several key dimensions to ascertain if the four new successful parties (each established two months or less prior to the early elections in 2011 or 2014) in Slovenia can be classified in the entrepreneurial party model.

4.1. Party Origin

Krouwel (2006: 260) states there are two types of business-firm parties (in the volume this party model is indeed equated with the maximal conceptualisation of the entrepreneurial party model). These types are a) one based on an already existing commercial company whose structures are used for a political project; and b) a new and separate organisation specially constructed for a political endeavour. Yet Arter (2016: 15) contends that only a new political party formed without the backing of an external 'promoter organisation' is usually classified as an entrepreneurial party.

Zoran Janković was publicly known as a very successful manager of Slovenia's biggest retail chain Mercator (he has also been perceived as a *tycoon* for having made a fortune by partly privatising the Mercator chain whilst being its manager). He was forced out of office

during the first government led by SDS and PM Janša in 2006 (Mercator was still partially state-owned). This quickly led him into politics, first at the local level. In 2006, he convincingly won the elections for Mayor of Ljubljana while his List of Zoran Janković (LZJ) received more than half of all members of the municipal council. The situation recurred at the next local elections. Because LZJ has not developed any serious organisational network, especially outside Ljubljana, it is hard to unreservedly say it served as an external 'promoter organisation' for the List of Zoran Janković-Positive Slovenia (LZJ-PS), established in October 2011. He was publicly encouraged to enter national politics by a group of 26 well-known (former) politicians and leaders of civil society organisations (including Veterans of World War II and the Union of Associations of Pensioners), indicating moral sponsorship of the centre-left milieu (Fink-Hafner, Krašovec 2013). Although Janković could not rely on existing commercial company structures like Berlusconi did when he established Forza Italia (Calise 2015), several of Janković's former collaborators from top positions in Mercator have formed his closest circle of supporters or formally occupied important positions such as deputy mayors or vice-presidents of the party.

The Citizen List of Gregor Virant (DLGV) was also established in October 2011. Virant, a university law professor, had held national government office and been a popular minister in the 2004–2008 SDS-led government, despite never being a member of that party. A group of prominent politicians close to SDS and neoliberal economists, including the former director of the Governmental Office for Macroeconomic Analysis, joined him (Fink-Hafner, Krašovec 2013). The party's establishment came as a complete surprise for SDS since Virant had even helped SDS prepare part of its election programme. If reactions inside SDS to the establishment of DLGV went as far as to describe Virant as a traitor, the left, in contrast, speculated that DLGV's creation was a plot hatched with Janša to ensure disaffected SDS voters did not stray too far, allowing a future coalition to be formed (Krašovec, Haughton 2012). With certain other parties, DLGV indeed participated in the SDS-led government in the 2011–2013 period, formed after Janković, as the winner of the 2011 elections, could not do this. However, in the 2013–2014 period DL was also a junior partner in the governmental coalition led by PS.

The Party of Miro Cerar (SMC) was established in early June 2014. Although Cerar was new to politics prior to SMC being established, he definitely was not unknown in Slovenia. He was a highly regarded law professor and expert on constitutional matters who appeared in different media giving many expert explanations of constitutional affairs. Before establishing the party, together with several like-minded people, Cerar in 2013 formed a civil society group of, as he put it, responsible citizens who wanted to assure Slovenia's sustainable and successful development. Although Cerar stated that the group had no ambition to develop into a party, at least in the first phase, less than a year later this is precisely what happened. As several media outlets reported, in its initial organisational development step the new party to some extent used the local network of LDS, which had been the leading governmental party for a long time. The party's *founding fathers* namely included an LDS bureaucrat, long responsible for its territorial organisational network. Given the many rumours and guesses about the existence of an external 'promoter organisation' or 'promoter individuals' in establishing the party, Cerar several times publicly reassured voters that the party was an independent political subject, without any (secret) godfathers.

The Alliance of Alenka Bratušek (ZaAB) was founded at the end of May 2014 by former PM Alenka Bratušek, previously an MP of LZJ-PS. Bratušek had become acting leader of PS after Janković stepped down as leader of PS (at the beginning of 2013) due to the anti-corruption commission's findings that he had systematically and repeatedly violated the law. Since the Commission had also revealed similar suspicions regarding PM Janša as those Janković faced, a constructive vote of no-confidence against him was issued and Bratušek was elected PM. In spring 2014, Janković successfully challenged Bratušek to become leader of the party he had founded, but his desire to take back the reins of PS not only created a split in the party, but saw the governing coalition collapse as the smaller parties in the coalition refused to work alongside PS with its charismatic but controversial Janković at the helm (Krašovec, Haughton 2014a). Early in May 2014, Bratušek submitted her resignation (and thereby the resignation of her government) and some weeks later the split in PS led to a new party being established – ZaAB.

Obviously, all four new successful Slovenian parties' origins differ, yet it is possible to say that none of them had an important external 'promoter organisation' and therefore in this regard can be described as parties fulfilling one of the criteria of an entrepreneurial party.

4.2. Election Campaign Resources

Financially, no party under scrutiny crucially depended on their *founding fathers*' resources; in their first election campaigns, all relied on donations by companies or individuals (an individual or company could donate up to 10 average monthly salaries to individual party in Slovenia; since 2013 donations by companies are no longer allowed). They also relied on bank credits. Interestingly, the election campaigns proved to be much more expensive in 2011 than in 2014. While in 2011 the highest amount invested in a campaign[3] was approximately EUR 683,000 (SDS), followed by the newcomers LZJ-PS (approximately EUR 598,000) and DLGV (approximately EUR 342,000) (Računsko sodišče 2012a; 2012b, 2012c), in 2014 all parties invested much less money; the most was spent by SD (approximately EUR 246,000), and similar amounts were spent by PS and DeSUS, while the newcomer and election winner (SMC) only invested approximately EUR 90,000 (ZaAB approximately EUR 189,000) (Računsko sodišče 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2015e).

Parties decided to invest less money in their campaigns partly due to their recent considerable financial problems, and partly because public appearances in the media, particularly in TV debates, had become much more important than other campaign forms. In Slovenia, the public TV broadcaster has to provide payment-free access to all candidates and parties (also non-parliamentary ones although they are entitled to a smaller amount of such access) running for seats in parliament. At commercial TV stations it is completely up to them to decide on parties' access to TV debates. Lately, mainstream media have organised more debates among party leaders, claiming to offer the public more information, but at the same time these debates have indeed transformed into *infotainment*. Some success-seeking newcomers were granted equal access to the biggest commercial TV station as the established parties had, while public TV has also invented different ways to offer some success-seeking newcomers important opportunities to participate in debates. Given these developments

and that Slovenian parties have very shallow social roots (Krašovec 2000; Krašovec, Haughton 2011; Tomšič, Prijon 2015), it is perhaps no surprise they have started to prefer to appeal the electorate via payment-free media access or even to run a blitz campaign in the media, with this being especially true for the new parties established just before elections which were unable to rely on a party organisational network, even if they had wanted to do so (Krašovec, Johannsen 2016). In 2011, TV debates clearly focused for the first time on the search for a new Prime Minister (Haughton, Krašovec 2013), and since then they have been in personal battles for the post. The new personality-based parties across CEE countries have often benefited from such developments and it seems this includes Slovenia (Krašovec, Haughton 2014b).

Although none of the four analysed parties could importantly rely on their *founding fathers*' financial resources, the *founding fathers*' public reputations represented a crucial resource for all four parties' emergence and will be discussed more in-depth later.

4.3. Party Organisation

The question of party organisation has in many views been recently determined by discussions on presidentialisation[4] or more narrowly on centralisation of power around the leader in a party.

When seeking to analyse parties' internal organisation and distribution of power, the starting point should be an analysis of the party statutes which formally determine these aspects. Therefore, the founding statutes (DLGV 2011; LZJ-PS 2011; SMC 2014; ZaAB 2014) and the currently valid statutes of the four new successful Slovenian parties were examined (DL 2014; PS 2013; SMC 2015; Zavezništvo 2016).

4.3.1. Centralisation of Power around Party Leader: Formal Story

The party statutes of established (Krašovec 2016a) and new parties stipulate four broad functions of party leaders: to lead the party's activity and that of several party bodies; to officially, publicly, and politically represent the party; to implement party body decisions; and to propose and sometimes elect candidates for certain party positions. However, some provisions regarding the party leader's power in new parties have (had) deviated from those in established parties. Leaders of new parties have (had) more power than their counterparts in established parties. In some cases leader of new parties have (had) a power to propose candidates for some narrower party bodies (e.g. council, executive committee) formed in all parties to deal with day-to-day matters, or candidates for national elections. In this way new parties' leaders have (had) (in)directly acquired greater formal power than the leaders of the established parties. In DLGV, the party leader nominated one member of the executive committee to be elected by the party congress. However, the executive committee only had three members (party leader, deputy party leader and a member elected by the congress and nominated by the party leader) and the committee was also tasked with selecting candidates for all forms of elections (parliamentary, EP, presidential, local). In LZJ-PS, the party leader proposes a list of candidates to the executive committee for parliamentary and EP elections

as well as presidential elections, while local party organisations are granted autonomy to select candidates for local elections, although over the years their autonomy has narrowed – currently mayoral candidates have to be approved by the party council. Initially, the party's central office clearly dominated in the composition of the party's council, while today the party leader alone has some additional power since he proposes to the council three candidates to be elected as executive committee members. Indeed, the same solutions are to be found in ZaAB/Zavezništvo.

In SMC, the party leader or executive committee has to propose a list of candidates for parliamentary and EP elections as well as presidential elections, which is ultimately prepared by the party council. For the 2014 elections, the party leader was formally required to propose a list of candidates and the executive council decided on it. This party's leader also has the right to influence the council's composition, where he is entitled to: a) propose candidates for the body to be elected by the congress; and b) supplement the council's composition with up to 10 members. The party leader also has an influence on the executive committee's composition; he used to nominate up to 10 candidates to be elected by the council, now he nominates 3.

Party leaders in all parties are elected by party congresses, but in the first three analysed parties all party members compose the congress, and it is thus possible to speak about membership ballots. Concerning the composition of the party congress, SMC has resembled the delegation principle known in established parties with the representation of territorial organisations and the *ex officio* principle of representation (leader, secretary general, members of council/executive committee, MPs…) (Krašovec 2016a).

By introducing membership ballots in party leader selection, three of the new parties have allowed for some democratic innovations. Yet, as Mair (1994: 17) warns, democratisation on paper is often meaningless and/or illusory and may actually coexist with a powerful elite/leader influence in practice. According to him, organised local activists have long represented the biggest restraints on party leaders, while atomised and inactive members empowered by introducing membership ballots hardly represent any serious constraint on the party leader with the outcome that such democratisation can easily bring about greater autonomy/power to a party leader.

Indeed it is possible to say in the new parties some provisions have (had) attributed leaders (in)directly with some additional formal powers, compared to the established parties. However, on that basis alone it would be hard to identify any (serious) trends of centralisation of power around the party leader.

4.3.2. De facto Importance of Party Leader

As van Biezen (2003) warns, although party statutes are a good starting point for analysing party organisation and structures, they can differ from *de facto* characteristics. We must also not forget that Poguntke and Webb (2007) detected that changes toward centralisation of power have in many cases happened in actual practice, without changes to formal documents or structures. As some (e.g. Cabada et al. 2014; Hloušek 2015; Tomšič, Prijon 2015) believe, Slovenia has *de facto* fallen victim to the personalisation of politics, frequently treated as part of centralisation of power around a party leader, a pan-European phenomenon

(Karvonen 2010). Although this trend was not yet in full swing in the 1990s and early 2000s, the importance of several leaders for their respective parties foreshadowed its eventual manifestation (e.g. Janez Drnovšek of the LDS, Borut Pahor of the SD, Janez Janša of the SDS).

The very first indicator of the *de facto* personalisation of the four new successful parties is that they were established under the name of their *founding fathers* and they competed under these names in the first elections in which they participated. Indeed, all of them changed their names within a year of establishment and wiped away the leaders' names. Given the centralisation of electoral campaigns (Deželan et al. 2010) and the high concentration of media attention on the party leaders, their *de facto* role and their personalities were ultimately significant in the new parties' rapid success.

Yet, this initial advantage can easily be transformed into a liability when party leaders prove to be corrupt, erratic or ineffective (Haughton, Deegan-Krause 2015: 75), and when they are responsible for the positive and negative results of all decisions taken (Hopkin, Paolucci 1999: 317). Or, as Tomšič and Prijon (2015: 242) say, in Slovenia many party leaders are *de facto* the most important persons in their parties because the success or failure of a Slovenian party depends greatly on the qualities of its leader. This was clearly seen in the case of DLGV. When in the campaign it was revealed that Virant had received unemployment payments despite having worked as a lecturer and consultant after leaving his ministerial position, the party recorded an important drop in support and could not recover, even though it managed to cross the parliamentary threshold. But instead of playing the starring role in the 2011 post-election period it was suddenly assigned only a supporting role (Krašovec, Haughton 2012). The attractiveness of LZJ-PS started to wane when Janković, despite his party having won the plurality of vote and him building a reputation as a 'man who gets things done', was unable to form a government (Krašovec, Haugton 2014a: 1). The party's popularity continued to fall further upon the release of the anti-corruption commission's mentioned findings in early 2013, while Janković's desire to take back the party leadership in spring 2014 triggered a split in the party, the collapse of the government, and the party's marginalisation at the early parliamentary elections in 2014. Having been a loser in the unequal struggle with Janković for the PS leadership produced some sympathy and support for Bratušek when deciding to establish ZaAB. But the last hopes for ZaAB disappeared when Bratušek became involved in an ethical-risk abuse of power when in its last gasps the government, under her leadership, nominated her as candidate for European Commissioner in 2014 and following the peak of disappointment with her after her unsuccessful hearing for the EU Commissioner position. Public support for the party vanished and eventually the parliamentary party group of ZaAB also disintegrated. In addition, the very bright star of SMC has started to fade since the 2014 elections. Running the government has proven to be hard work for experienced politicians but represents an even bigger challenge for new and inexperienced politicians, as Cerar has admitted. At the start of his term as PM, he has primarily been publicly criticised for being an indecisive leader. It later became clear the new party he is in charge of has had some difficulties assuring the high ethical standards it set for itself during the campaign and regarding which the public has developed considerable sensitivity in recent years. SMC does not seem able to fully avoid some of the clientelistic patterns seen in the past, while Cerar has been perceived as not determined enough to clarify such suspicions (Krašovec 2016b).

4.3.3. Level of Development of Party Organisation

The new successful parties' dependence on their leaders and already noted fall of three of them is connected with these parties' inability to develop an identity distinct from the founder-leader (Arter, Kestilä-Kekkonen 2014: 933). This identity can be achieved by developing the party organisation. However, the rapid emergence of many new parties in CEE only allows for rudimentary organisational structures to be developed, especially if the parties have participated in government, since in this situation they must divert their already small membership core away from local-party building (Haughton, Deegan-Krause 2015: 75).[5] The importance of the party organisation for new parties' survival is also reflected by Beyens et al. (2016: 270) when they state that the development of the organisation is precisely the critical difference between future success and failure.

In Slovenia, there is a clear division among the new and established parties, with the former tending to record a lower level of territorial and internal organisational development (Krašovec 2016a). For example, SDS has 210 municipal organisations and 15 regional organisations, SD has 212 municipal and 35 regional organisations and NSi has 211 municipal organisations and 24 regional organisations, while SMC, as both the biggest parliamentary party and the newest, has 60 local organisations and 7 regional organisations. PS has managed to establish 55 municipal organisations, Zavezništvo 20 regional and 17 local organisations while DL has 36 municipal organisations. Political parties usually have some other collateral organisations, such as those for youth, seniors, women, workers etc. and different forums (Katz, Mair 1994). Slovenian parties also vary significantly along the established/new party line in this regard. While SDS has the largest number of such organisations (eight), among the new parties only PS has two such organisations (youth and senior's organisation), while SMC has a youth organisation. The statutes of all four analysed parties envisage the formation of programme or expert bodies to deal with specific policy and procedural questions, and to help the party and parliamentary party group in policy-making and decision-making; formally, these bodies exist (as with the established parties). Although it is true that one can hardly expect the new parties to develop such a party organisation in a few years as the established parties have managed to develop over many years, it seems of the new parties only SMC has indeed internalised the need to develop a broad territorial party organisation and to further develop the party internally. According to the first secretary-general Kopač (2016), SMC is aware of the need to have a well-developed organisation since one reason for the quick decline of new parties is that none have devoted time to seriously develop these parties' aspect. The value of a well-developed party organisation in assuring the long-life of new parties was shown in the case of NSi; also its well-developed party organisation helped it return to parliament after a 4-year absence, an achievement no other party has recorded (Fink-Hafner, Krašovec 2013).

Based on the presented data, it is possible to say the party on the ground in new parties has not been firmly and extensively developed. This is further confirmed by the quite poor results these new parties recorded in local elections, and by the available party membership data. According to Slovenian public opinion polls (Toš 1999; 2004; 2009; 2012; 2013) and membership numbers reported by the parties themselves (see Haute, Paulis 2014), the

ratio of party members to eligible voters in Slovenia has fluctuated between 3.5 % and 6 % over the years. This is indeed slightly above the European average of 4.7 %, but it is necessary to keep in mind that especially in CEE countries the figures are very low and it is exactly these figures that lower the European average to an important extent (Biezen et al. 2012). SDS is the largest party by number of members in Slovenia; it had approximately 30,000 members but, as reported by SDS (Letna poročila strank 2016d), this number was 22,593 in 2015. It is followed in size by other established parties (e.g. SD, NSi, SLS, DeSUS), whereas SMC has approximately 3,000 members, a little less than PS had in 2013, while in 2015 DL only had 356 members (Letna poročila strank 2016f). Generally speaking, party membership in Slovenian parties is relatively limited in established parties and very small in new parties.

According to Krašovec (2000), in the 1990s Slovenian parties only had a handful of people employed in the central part of the parties or at their headquarters (HQ), a phenomenon also recorded lately; for example, in the last few years among Slovenian parties SD had the most people employed at its HQ; 12 people in 2011, 9 in 2015 while, among the new parties SMC was the 'champion' with 4 people employed at its party HQ (Letna poročila strank 2016a; 2016b; 2016c; 2016d; 2016e). These figures show that the party bureaucracy in Slovenian parties, not only in new ones, is kept to a bare minimum. Yet, as Mair (1994) states, nowadays it is hard to completely distinguish those who work at the party's HQ and those working in the party's parliamentary group since many simultaneously work for both 'party faces'. In Slovenia, parliamentary parties, more accurately their parliamentary groups, have also been entitled to receive certain amounts on a monthly basis for additional professional help; further, they have benefited from funding to cover the cost of secretaries, experts and administrative staff working in parliamentary party groups. All of them indeed (can) also work for the party HQ. Since the scope of such support depends on the number of MPs an individual party has, the biggest parties can have even more than 20 employees. Given these personnel characteristics and that already in the first year after their astonishing electoral success the new parties have exhibited huge financial dependence on public subsidies[6] (a pattern also evident in the established parties), we can say that Slovenian parties in general are very vulnerable and highly dependent on electoral success.[7] This is another reason for stating that the developed party organisation can be crucially important when a party faces hard times.

One of the characteristics of entrepreneurial parties when speaking about party organisation dimensions is also the importance of professionals in parties, and especially electoral experts. In this regard in Slovenian parties in general, professionalization of electoral campaigns has not been very visible (Deželan et al. 2010). This does not mean that parties in Slovenia have not hired external collaborators and counsellors at all but we can speak mainly about individuals or agencies that have been responsible for performing particular tasks, for example the task of advertising, conducting public opinion polls research, or serving as media experts or experts for styling and public performances. As pointed by Deželan et al. (2010: 66) the use of such professionals has still not been more fully integrated into campaign activities since campaigns in all parties have been under the strong control of party politicians dominating their electoral headquarters. The very successful newcomers in 2011 also followed that pattern to a larger extent, while 2014 newcomers faced important

financial restraints which led them to even lower levels of such professionalization of electoral campaigns.

Taking all the presented data into account, one can say the new Slovenian parties have a relatively light-weight organisation (Hopkin, Paolucci 1999), although in particular respects this is also true for (some) established parties. On the other hand, established and new parties do not greatly rely on the help of professionals, especially of electoral experts.

4.4. Electoral appeals

As many political scientists believe, one of the constituting elements of parties is their ideology, which supposed to be reflected in their party programmes. Due to the importance of the electoral function of parties, parties are expected to also form election programmes. Election programmes are formal documents presented to voters and party members as recognisable statements on policies (Klingemann et al. 1994) and are used to attract voters and mobilise intra-party groups. However, Budge (1987) and Bara (2006) assert that only a small number of voters actually read election/party programmes.

Although in Slovenia personalities have mattered a great deal, especially in the last two election campaigns, still a large share of the debates was focused on policy differences (Krašovec, Haughton 2012; 2014b). Despite some pointing to the ideological emptiness of the new parties[8] and that they scarcely had enough time to prepare their programmes, all four successful newcomers prepared (election) programmes, albeit they were not as elaborate as those prepared by the (large) established parties. However, the TV debates gave the newcomers an opportunity to describe in more detail their positions on a range of issues. While the electorate is quite volatile lately (Krašovec, Johannsen 2016), it is obviously still largely divided into the libertarian-authoritarian dimension (Fink-Hafner 2012) simultaneously also connected to the dilemmas over developments during WWII (i.e. Partisans versus Home Guard or opponents of the occupation forces versus their collaborators) and the socialist past, and clear ideological positions of parties are thus expected. Since the 2004 elections, the economic cleavage among voters has also been more profound.

Unsurprisingly given the economic woes facing Slovenia and the eurozone in 2011, economic topics dominated in the campaign with parties trading conflicting views on the origins, consequences and possible solutions to the economic crisis (Haughton, Krašovec 2013). Whilst it was commonly agreed there was a need for structural reforms, a clear left-right distinction was in evidence in terms of how to proceed. Whereas SD and LZJ-PS sought to emphasise the need to defend the welfare state in the future, the latter also stressed the need for more efficiency and better organisation in the public sector and Janković tried to present himself as the person able to effectively manage the economy given his successful career in business (Haughton, Krašovec 2013). However, as stressed by Haughton and Krašovec (2013), the success of LZJ-PS was not just built on its leader's appeal, but also on the party's agenda for more limited reforms of the welfare state, which many still consider worth fighting for (Kolarič 2012: 295). LZJ-PS clearly aimed to gain the support of disaffected voters from the centre-left, especially SD and former voters of LDS, the once leading

governmental party that held power for a decade, also through positive evaluations of recent socialist history (Fink-Hafner, Krašovec 2013). SDS and especially DLGV advocated a more market-driven vision of reforms, together with radical privatisation, lower taxes and a slimmed-down state concept (Krašovec, Haughton 2012). Due to his legal expertise and experiences with public sector (popular) reforms he had prepared as a minister of public administration, Virant presented himself as an expert in dealing with the public sector, while DLGV also clearly occupied a libertarian attitude regarding the rights of different minorities and promised a tough fight against corruption.

Taking into account the *expert syndrome* of Slovenian society (as shown by Toš 1995; Toš, Malnar 1999; 2005; Malnar 2008; 2011), the democratic political system has enjoyed quite a small advantage over the expert system of managing the country (in the period 1995–2011 on average 75 % of respondents evaluated the expert system as a good or relatively good way of managing the country, while 80 % of them believed that a democratic political system is a good or relatively good way of managing the country), and at both elections the personalities of party leaders and their expertise were important in the campaign. Playing the card of the expertise of their *founding fathers* (Janković a successful manager, even proclaiming himself as a non-politician, Virant and Cerar as law experts, while to a smaller extent Bratušek played on the expertise card[9]) was one of the rare common characteristics of these newcomers exposed in the campaign.

Also in 2014 analysed newcomers prepared (election) programmes. Given that the split in PS led to the establishment of ZaAB, it is probably no surprise that it offered very similar policies and ideological profile as PS. On the other hand, one can say that novelty and the rule of law together with a need to introduce a merit system laid at the heart of Cerar's electoral appeal (Krašovec, Haughton 2014a). Tapping into the huge lack of trust in parties, institutions and democracy, Cerar had ridden the wave of widespread dissatisfaction and claimed that a vote for his party would give a chance for new faces in politics, precisely as demanded by demonstrators in 2013. In addition, he called for re-establishment of the rule of law in Slovenia and a change in the country's political culture, particularly towards more co-operative and respectful conduct between political opponents, and his pitch struck a chord with large sections of the Slovenian electorate who had lost faith in their politicians and political system (Krašovec, Haughton 2014b: 51). Because he was a highly regarded law professor and expert on constitutional matters, without any political experience, the population also clearly treated Cerar as a 'credible messenger of the need to fight corruption' (Bågenholm, Charron 2014). On the other hand, SMC offered no clear stance on the economy, bar some reservations against radical privatisation. Cerar's call for 'controlled privatisation' and his opposition to the privatisation of infrastructure helped create the image of a moderate left-leaning party (Krašovec, Haughton 2014b). His justification for the lack of clarity on his policies was his assertion that it was hard to generate precise solutions without all the information and data necessary, which had only been available to the established parties. At the same time, he managed to avoid giving clear personal opinions and statements on some questions closely connected with the deep libertarian-authoritarian divide in Slovenia, also by simply offering legal interpretations of laws and the constitution on certain matters.

5. Conclusion: New Parties = Entrepreneurial Parties?

In the analysis of the four new successful Slovenian parties we have employed several key dimensions of the ideal-type entrepreneurial party model. The newcomers have demonstrated some common elements attributed mainly to minimal and not to maximal conceptualisation (as presented in the introductory chapter of the volume) of entrepreneurial parties. One of such characteristics is a fact that none of the successful newcomers were a product of a promoter/sponsor organisation. Additionally, it especially seems the new parties' focus on and particularly their dependence on their leaders can be used to potentially classify them among entrepreneurial parties. Still, some established parties have clearly also shown such signs. Speaking about party organisation it is obvious new parties have only light-weight organisation, and a less developed party on the ground. Yet, the established parties required many years to develop their party organisations in their current form and therefore it would be unfair to expect the new parties to be able to develop a solid party organisation in only 2 or maybe 4 years' time, especially since some new successful parties have not even had the opportunity to do this due to the 'live fast die young' norm (Deegan-Krause, Haughton 2010). SMC, contrary to other successful newcomers, clearly expressed a need to develop party organisation in the near future. Last but not least, centralisation of power around a party leader has been visible in all new parties. In certain other aspects, the newcomers have exhibited signs of other party models, like cartel parties, particularly regarding their strong dependence on the state for providing them with financial and personnel resources. However, there have been additional differences among the successful newcomers, for example even lower inclusion of electoral experts in the campaign by 2014 newcomers in relation to 2011 newcomers, which was predominantly connected to new campaign regulation which also resulted in much lower financial inputs of the latter newcomers. The 2011 successful newcomers also proved to be very dependent on changeable electoral support or high volatility, especially in the centre-left camp (Cabada, Tomšič 2016), and in just three years became irrelevant parties; however, even before the new elections, regular public opinion polls indicated their fall. Contrary, SMC, after almost three years after its electoral breakthrough, still has managed to stay close to the highest ranked parties according to public opinion polls.

Based on the presented evidence and some additional explanations, we may conclude that Slovenian new parties can be classified as entrepreneurial parties only in some fragments of their functioning, while some new parties have not even survived long enough to determine what kind of party they wanted to establish.

Footnotes:

1. Before 2000, it was even lower, approximately 3.3 %.
2. As noted by Vehovar (2012: 83), it is interesting that the good economic (statistical) figures in the 2004–2007 period were accompanied by a relatively high level of personal dissatisfaction, indicating that the objective statistical calculations of prosperity were disputable on a subjective level, leading to dissatisfaction with political institutions.

3. In Slovenia, the Law on Electoral and Referendum Campaigns set a spending limit in the campaign (EUR 0.40 per voter); in 2011, the limit was approximately EUR 683,000 while in 2014 it was approximately EUR 685,000.
4. Poguntke and Webb (2007: 5) emphasise that presidentialisation describes a process in which the role of party leader is reinforced in three areas: power resources, leadership autonomy and the electoral process.
5. Although many studies suggest that government participation is detrimental to new parties, research by Bolleyer et al. (2012) proves this is not necessarily an organisational disadvantage for newcomers.
6. Given amendments to the Law on Political Parties in 2013 which completely prohibited donations of companies, parties' even higher dependence on public subsides can be expected.
7. Up until 2000, only parliamentary parties could receive direct monthly public subsidies. In 2000, the eligibility threshold for public subsidies was lowered and all parties that receive at least 1 % of votes are entitled to them. If till 2000 the amount of public subsidies for a party exclusively depended on the number of votes a parliamentary party received at elections, in the 2000–2013 period, parties entitled to public subsidies received 10% of the set amount of finances for public subsidies (total funding from the national budget must not exceed 0.017 % of GDP) in equal shares, with the remaining 90 % being distributed among them according to their electoral success, while under the 2013 amendments a new formula was set, namely 25 % and 75 %, respectively. Parties can also receive public subsidies at the local level, but municipalities are competent to make this kind of decision.
8. Also the affiliation of the successful newcomers to the European parties clearly indicates they have not been ideologically empty; DL, ZaAB and SMC clearly opted for the ALDE affiliation, while also PS is affiliated to it, mainly due to a decision made by Bratušek while she was an acting leader of the party, even though Janković wanted to be affiliated with the PES.
9. When Janković in 2013 in public strongly supported Alenka Bratušek to become PM he was repeatedly referring to her financial expertise.

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