

Mobile Voters: Patterns of Electoral Volatility in Slovakia¹

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Abstract

Electoral volatility is a perennial feature of Slovak general elections. Furthermore, volatility has increased over time, suggesting party-system stabilization is unlikely. As the vicious cycle of new party emergence continues, high volatility complicates the attribution of responsibility, and thus accountability. The 2023 early general election found Slovakia in a very precarious political and social situation – trust in political institutions was historically low and public sentiment about future prospects was pessimistic. Focusing on this election, and using aggregate election results as well as exit poll data, this study analyses: (1) trends in volatility; (2) dynamics of volatility within and between two major political blocs; (3) individual vote switching between consecutive elections; (4) the vote choice of remobilized former non-voters; and (5) the motivations that underpin vote switching. The findings indicate that although some voters have made ideological commitments to certain political parties and are therefore loyal between elections, large parts of the electorate remain ‘floating voters’, dissatisfied with political parties generally. As such, volatility is at an all-time high and may increase in future elections.

Key words: Slovakia; voting; elections; volatility; aggregate volatility; individual volatility; intra-bloc volatility; inter-bloc volatility; polarization

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1. Introduction

Due to complex transitions to political plurality, party systems in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are generally more unstable than their West European counterparts (cf. Bakke & Sitter, 2005; Sikk, 2005; Tavits, 2005, 2008; Powell & Tucker, 2009, 2014; Haughton & Deegan-Krause, 2015, 2020). Much of the research on this instability has focused on the overall fluidity of party systems, the frequent emergence and electoral success of new political parties, and voter transitions between parties. These patterns of instability have even led scholars to characterize CEE party systems with metaphors from the field of natural disasters – e.g., ‘hurricane season’ (Haughton & Deegan-Krause, 2015) – or to write about the ‘stability of instability’ (Haughton, 2014) and the ‘strength of instability’ (Gyárfášová et al., 2017).

Slovakia – due to its ‘zig-zagging’ path to consolidated democracy (Szo-molányi, 1999) – is a common case study for research focusing on the causes of instability and for demonstrating and clarifying the general features of volatility during the CEE transition to democracy. When it comes to the volatility of voter decisions in Slovakia, scholarship has focused on the fact that the Slovak political system has long been divided into two polarized, antagonistic blocs. Thus, previous studies differentiate between intra-bloc and inter-bloc volatility. Findings suggest that volatility occurs more frequently within political blocs, and that moves between blocs are less frequent (Baboš & Malová, 2013; Bútorová et al., 2012; Linek & Gyárfášová, 2020). However, given the frequency of new party emergence in Slovakia (Haughton & Deegan-Krause, 2020), another type of volatility is also relevant: the movement of voters from existing blocs to organizationally new parties that enter the ‘in-between-space’ of the dominant conflict (Haughton et al., 2016; Linek & Gyárfášová, 2020; Powell & Tucker, 2014).

In this article, we build on earlier work and analyse electoral volatility between the 2020 and the 2023 Slovak general elections. We focus on: (1) trends in volatility; (2) dynamics of intra- and inter-bloc volatility; (3) individual vote switching between consecutive elections; (4) the vote choice of remobilized former non-voters; and (5) the motivations that underpin vote switching. We base our analyses on data from an exit poll survey conducted on 30 September 2023 by Focus for TV Markíza and earlier exit polls conducted by the same agency.

Our analyses offer four conclusions. First, electoral volatility – whether aggregate (net) or individual (gross) – reached the highest level since Slovakia’s transition from state socialism in 1989 (the founding election in 1990 aside). We suggest that the drastic collapse of voter support for OLaNO, the emergence of Peter Pellegrini’s Hlas as a viable, left-wing alternative to Smer, Smer’s radicalization on sociocultural issues and foreign policy, and Hlas and Smer’s ability to remobilize voters who stayed home in 2020 are responsible.

Second, voter loyalty was positively correlated with both programmatic and ideological motivations. The most substantive motivations associated with

supporting the same party in 2020 and 2023 were that the party: (1) fights corruption; (2) fights high prices; (3) is socially liberal; and (4) is socially conservative. Thus, it appears that some parties have built certain programmatic and ideological brands that help them maintain a core, loyal electorate – e.g., OĽaNO as an anti-corruption movement, KDH as a religious party, or Smer as the guarantor of a strong, social state.

Third, in 2023, both Smer and Hlas successfully mobilized voters who stayed home in the 2020 election. These remobilized voters were motivated by the leaders of the two parties, echoing findings from previous work on Slovakia's highly personalized party system (Gyárfášová & Hlatky, 2023). The remobilization of former non-voters may indicate that, after the tumultuous years of OĽaNO-led governance, segments of the Slovak electorate are willing to forget the events that led to Smer's loss in the 2020 election. Moreover, these voters also indicated that they supported Hlas and Smer because the parties represented the 'lesser evil'. In fact, the 'lesser evil' justification was the most frequently mentioned motivation amongst all respondents, not just those who supported Hlas and Smer. Importantly, this motivation is positively associated with vote-switching between elections. This association suggests that while segments of the Slovak electorate may have ideological commitments that lead to consistent choices between elections, a substantially larger portion of the electorate is composed of 'floating' voters without firm commitments to any party. In 2023, these voters were convinced by Hlas and Smer.

Finally – and more broadly – our results indicate that high levels of electoral volatility in Slovakia are not solely a product of new party entry (e.g., Powell & Tucker, 2014). Only one 'new' party surpassed the representation threshold in the 2023 election; and, given the strong organizational and personal continuity between Hlas and Smer, the extent to which Hlas can be considered 'new' is debatable. Moreover, the 2023 election saw volatility reach an all-time high, providing suggestive evidence that democratic longevity may not be as stabilizing of a factor as once thought (e.g., Tavits, 2005). In fact, given the substantial portion of voters without loyal commitments to parties, volatility may further increase in subsequent elections. These results suggest that the stability and institutionalization of parties may be the most relevant factors for explaining electoral volatility (Casal Bértoa et al., 2024). Only when parties present a coherent, ideologically rooted message over multiple electoral cycles, can we expect voter loyalty to develop and persist.

In the next section, we proceed with a discussion of the various conceptualizations of volatility and review related literature. We briefly discuss research that focuses specifically on electoral volatility in Slovakia before turning to a discussion of the political and social contexts of the 2023 Slovak election. The subsequent section introduces our methodology and presents results. We conclude with a discussion of our findings.

2. Conceptualizing and measuring volatility

Haughton and Deegan-Krause suggest that ‘volatility is the most frequently used quantitative tool to assess and compare the degree of continuity and change in party system[s]’ (2020, p. 94). The importance of measuring volatility is also emphasized by Casal Bértoa et al.: ‘Scholars agree that volatility in political party systems matters for democracy, and they use calculations of party vote shares as an indicator of a wide variety of phenomena and as an independent variable in studies about the health of democracy’ (2017, p. 143). Tavits underscores the consequences of volatility, saying that: ‘Unpredictable fluctuations of voter decisions do not allow political parties to make long-term political commitments, which are necessary for the stable development of politics’ (2005, p. 283). Voter volatility affects not only the quality of representation, but also the quality, stability, and predictability of governance and policymaking.

There are two main approaches for measuring volatility. Aggregate or net volatility uses aggregate election results and expresses summarized changes in political party support between two consecutive elections. Individual or gross volatility uses individual data from surveys and expresses overall change caused by voter transfers between individual parties. While there are two different approaches for calculating volatility, ‘Pedersen’s index remains the starting point for most attempts to capture electoral volatility’ (Casal Bértoa et al., 2017, p. 142). The Pedersen index measures electoral volatility in party systems by calculating ‘the net change within the electoral party system resulting from individual vote transfers’ (Pedersen, 1979). Differences in calculations stem from variations in how scholars deal with party mergers and splits, as well as organizational and personnel-related discontinuities in party structures. Importantly, the literature ‘offers little guidance’ about setting relevant ‘thresholds that separate continuity from discontinuity’ (Haughton & Deegan-Krause, 2020, p. 31). It is particularly difficult to determine these boundaries in fluid party systems, like those in CEE.

Nonetheless, scholarship has settled on two main methods for identifying the thresholds and boundaries of party change: linkage and inclusive aggregation. The linkage method focuses on identifying party continuity over time. A strict linkage approach considers any splits or mergers involving a name change or other significant alteration between $t-1$ and t as a new party – i.e., one with no formal linkage to predecessors or successors. A relaxed linkage approach treats party name changes continuously, and when a party splits or merges, the largest predecessor and successor are considered linked, while other parties are considered unlinked (Casal Bértoa et al., 2017, pp. 147–148).

The inclusive aggregation method (Casal Bértoa et al., 2017, p. 148), also called the combined votes method (Sikk & Köker, 2019, pp. 764–767), accounts for the volatility induced by the behaviour of political elites. Therefore, changes

in voting patterns due to party mergers and splits are not considered volatility. Party rebranding and joint electoral list formation are considered continuities of the parties involved. As such, this type of volatility reflects vote switching between non-continuous parties rather than organizational changes orchestrated by party leaders (Linek and Gyárfášová, 2020, p. 308). Consequently, inclusive aggregation leads to more conservative volatility estimates than the linkage methods. Due to the major splits that occurred in Slovakia's party system between the 2020 and 2023 elections (Hlas and Smer, Republika and ĽSNS, and – to a lesser extent – Demokrati and OĽaNO), we apply the strict linkage method as it accounts for electoral shifts between predecessor parties and their splinters. We return to this point in greater detail below.

2.1 Disaggregating volatility

To make volatility estimates more precise and useful, the scholarship has further disaggregated the measure. Powell and Tucker (2009) introduced Type A and Type B Volatility. The former captures extra-system volatility: vote switching to new parties and away from disappearing parties. The latter measures volatility amongst stable parties. In other words, Type A Volatility refers to volatility caused by 'A new party', while Type B Volatility refers to volatility 'Between existing parties' (Powell & Tucker, 2009, p. 2). An analysis of 80 pairs of elections in 21 post-communist countries (including Slovakia) demonstrated that much of what was previously labelled simple electoral volatility in post-communist countries is Type A Volatility (Powell & Tucker, 2009). For example, between 1992 and 2006, the average net volatility in Slovakia was 51%; yet, 42% was accounted for by Type A Volatility (Powell & Tucker, 2009, p. 31).

Another disaggregation of volatility focuses on the difference between intra-bloc and inter-bloc volatility. This approach can be traced back to Bartolini and Mair (1990), who focused on the volatility of Western European party systems and voters (cf. Linek et al., 2023). This disaggregation became relevant for characterizing dynamics in fragmented and volatile post-communist party systems. As suggested by the authors of the extensive comparative project *The Post-Communist Party System*, inter-bloc volatility reflects chaotic dynamics within the party system, as large segments of the electorate shift between blocs and established or new parties. In such patterns of 'deep' (rather than 'shallow') volatility, the electorate is susceptible to a wide range of appeals and is not engaged in structured party relations (Kitschelt et al., 1999, p. 400).

A final type of volatility concerns the switch between voting and not voting. As Linek et al. (2023) argue, these changes in participation are relevant for volatility. Voters can be demobilized, remobilized, or first-time eligible. Demobilized voters are those who, after having voted in the previous election, decide

not to participate in the current election. Remobilized voters are individuals who did not cast ballots in the previous election, but have cast ballots in the past, and do so again in the current election. First-time eligible voters are those who can cast ballots for the very first time – i.e., those who have recently turned the voting age. This heterogeneity of action encompasses the full range of decisions available to voters, and we consider such decisions important in the investigation of voter volatility (Linek et. al, 2023, pp. 34-35). Moreover – and as is often the case in Slovakia – patterns of mobilization and demobilization can have consequential impacts on election results. In this study, we focus on individual-level (gross) volatility, analysing the motivations that underpin not only vote switching between parties, but also the decisions of former non-voters to once again cast their ballots. We also distinguish between shallow, intra-bloc volatility and deep, inter-bloc volatility.

4. The 2023 election: context, key results, and aftermath

Prior to discussing the context of the 2023 election, we overview some of the literature that focuses on electoral volatility in Slovakia. Baboš and Malová (2013) focus on ‘swinging’ voters. According to their analysis, approximately 43% of voters changed their party preference between the 2010 and 2012 elections. However, as they state, this number is only a lower limit, as it does not include voters who only voted in one of the two analysed elections. Their results also show that the probability that an individual changes their intra-bloc party preference increases with age, education, and locality size. Conversely, younger and less educated voters – if they decide to change their party preference at all – are more likely to vote for a party from another bloc. The study also examines the volatility of ethnic Hungarian voters and suggests that their preferences are four times more stable than the voting preferences of Slovaks (Baboš & Malová, 2013, p. 142). These findings were later echoed by Linek and Gyárfášová (2020), and we re-evaluate them in this study.

Existing work on Slovakia also identifies the remobilization of former non-voters as a consequential determinant of volatility. For example, in the 2016 election, these voters were mobilized by new radical-right parties like LSNS and Sme Rodina. These two parties received almost a third of former non-voters’ ballots (excluding first-time eligible voters), and thus made it to parliament for the first time (Gyárfášová et al., 2017). In fact, non-participation in previous elections was the strongest predictor of voting for these radical-right newcomers (Gyárfášová et al., 2017). The offer of right-wing extremism – anti-immigrant, anti-establishment, and based on protest appeals – combined with novelty to

remobilize segments of the electorate. As these studies illustrate, Slovakia has generally followed the wider Central European trend: within-system (Type B) volatility has been lower than extra-system (Type A) volatility. Yet, the 2020 election saw some deviations from this pattern. While new parties, like PS (Progressive Slovakia)/SPOLU and Za ľudí, contested the 2020 election, much of the election's volatility was driven by shifts away from governing parties to opposition ones – especially from Smer to OĽaNO. Unsurprisingly, perceptions of corruption were the primary cause of these shifts (cf. Linek and Gyárfášová, 2020, p. 318).

Leading up to the 2020 election, the public had an enormous desire for a decent government that respected the rule of law. As such, the main goal of the four-party, pro-Western coalition that emerged from the 2020 election was to fight corruption and bring the most prominent cases of political corruption from the previous term to justice. Some of these changes did occur. Smer was electorally defeated and removed from power, and many anti-corruption proceedings were pursued successfully. Yet, the government faced external and internal challenges, often failing to meet expectations. Challenges included the Covid-19 pandemic, high inflation, various energy crises, and the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine and the resulting wave of war refugees. Moreover, the government suffered various intra-coalition conflicts and animosities (Freedom House, 2023).

The public perceived the governing of the coalition as continuous chaos. Trust in the government reached historical lows. In early 2023, the public had the lowest level of trust in the government since 1993 – only 14% of the population trusted the government led by Eduard Heger (Standard Eurobarometer 98). By the end of 2022, the government lost a no-confidence vote in parliament, and thus governed in demission. Only a few months later, in May 2023, the government resigned and President Zuzana Čaputová swore in a government of experts to lead the country until the early election. Thus, the early election took place in a very tense atmosphere preceded by over three years of unprecedented political instability. The electoral campaign was also highly personalized, uncivil, and appealed to fear and anger to mobilize potential voters.

Sociocultural issues and foreign policy featured prominently in the election campaign. Nationalist conservatism – rooted in traditional family values, a hierarchical social order, and a 'sovereign Slovak foreign policy' – stood against liberal progressivism – advocating the protection of minority rights and a pro-West, pro-Ukraine Slovakia. The former camp, represented by the newly radicalized Smer and various smaller, radical-right parties, took positions against LGBT+ equality and attempted to mobilize the electorate with anti-migrant appeals and anti-Ukraine rhetoric. The latter camp, most strongly represented by PS, presented a pro-European, pro-West, socioculturally liberal direction for Slovakia.

However, this polarizing line was not only about cultural values; it was also about the basic principles of liberal democracy. In many ways, this was an existential election for Smer. Smer's loss in the 2020 election allowed the new

government to pursue sustained – and successful – anti-corruption efforts. These efforts slowly unravelled the system of corruption and patronage that Smer had built over multiple years in power (Freedom House, 2024). The investigations even reached the party leader, Robert Fico, and some of his closest allies, like the current Defence Minister, Robert Kaliňák. The 2023 election offered Smer the chance to regain control over state institutions, and thus stop the investigations. This motivation – and the emergence of Hlas as a more moderate, social democratic alternative – underpinned Smer's vote-seeking radicalization. This radicalization drew the party to positions reminiscent of Viktor Orbán's Fidesz – not only in terms of foreign policy and LGBT+ rights, but also in terms of the illiberal tendency to limit independent institutions.

As Zsolt Enyedi argues, 'illiberal conservatism is hostile to checks and balances, state neutrality, and the ability of the mass media and civil society to hold decision-makers accountable' (Enyedi, 2023, p. 12). Linked to civilizational ethnocentrism and paternalist populism, illiberal conservatism represents the toxic combination responsible for democratic regress which can be observed in some CEE countries since the 2010s (Enyedi, 2023). An inevitable consequence of this process is the reduction of political competition to a contest between two polarized blocs, one of which represents a regress to authoritarianism, while the other tries to save the rule of law and liberal democracy. These dynamics were already present in the 2023 election campaign. Smer promised voters the protection of a strong social state and stability – guaranteed through the return of the old system. PS offered voters the opposite: the charting of a new liberal, pro-European path, one that would also guarantee the rule of law. These opposing visions are why many considered Slovakia's 2023 election 'critical'; it decided not only the routine alternation of power, but also the future direction of the country.

Turnout in the election reached 68.5%, which was higher than in 2020 (65.8%). Twenty-five political parties contested the election. The winner, Smer, received 22.9% of votes and 42 mandates (a gain of four seats compared to the previous election). This victory continued Smer's long record of success in Slovak politics – the party has now won five elections and has been the formateur of four governments. PS finished second with 18% of the vote and 32 seats. Third place went to Hlas (14% and 27 seats). Hlas split from Smer after the 2020 election and was led into the election by the former electoral leader of Smer and former Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini. During the election campaign, Hlas attempted to portray itself as a moderate social democratic alternative to Smer. The winner of the 2020 election, the culturally conservative, anti-corruption, anti-establishment OĽaNO won 8.9% of the vote and 16 seats. KDH, a long-standing conservative force in Slovak politics, returned to the national parliament after a two electoral cycle absence with 6.8% of the vote (12 seats). Likewise, the ethnonationalist Slovak National Party (SNS) celebrated a comeback to national politics with 5.6% of the vote and 10 seats. Finally, the economically rightwing and socioculturally

liberal Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) received 6.3% of the vote and 11 mandates. Three parties – Smer, Hlas, and SNS – quickly formed a government coalition, with Robert Fico, the leader of Smer, serving as Prime Minister. The coalition has a narrow majority of 79 out of 150 seats in the parliament.

It is also worth mentioning the parties that failed to achieve representation. After a breakthrough in 2016, the extreme right-wing, represented by ĽSNS, as well as its splinter party, Republika, failed to achieve parliamentary representation. One possible explanation for this failure is the radicalization of Smer, which may have attracted voters who would have otherwise supported the extreme right. A newly established party, Demokrati, led by the former Prime Minister of the centre-right coalition, Eduard Heger, and several other former ministers, received less than 3% of the vote. Another member of the former coalition, Sme Rodina, had the same fate. The fourth coalition party, Za ľudí, only made it to parliament by joining an electoral coalition with OĽaNO. Thus, the party originally founded by former President Andrej Kiska in 2019 practically disappeared. The fragmented political representation of the Hungarian minority completes the list of unsuccessful parties. No Hungarian party managed to surpass the required threshold of 5%. The most successful Hungarian ethnic minority party, Szövetség-Aliancia – the de facto successor of the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (MKO-MKS) – received 4.4% of the vote. These results highlight that the 2023 election broke a longstanding pattern when it comes to Slovak politics: no genuinely new political parties succeeded. Hlas, perhaps the only party that could be considered ‘new’, had strong personal and organizational continuity with Smer. Demokrati and Republika – which had strong continuity with OĽaNO and ĽSNS, respectively – failed to cross the threshold for representation.

Having outlined the dynamics of the 2023 election and its results, we proceed with the primary aim of our study: evaluating electoral volatility.

5. Research objectives and research design

While we also calculate net or aggregate volatility, we primarily focus our analysis on individual-level volatility. Individual volatility (and loyalty) can be summarized through the following five categories (Ondruška, 2022, p. 283). First, voters can be loyal: they can vote for the same party in consecutive elections. These voters are non-volatile in the sense that they provide stable support for the same party across two elections. Second, voters can abstain from both the election at time $t-1$ and from the election at time t . These are stable non-voters. The third category comprises newly eligible voters and remobilized voters. New voters cast their ballots for the very first time; remobilized voters did not cast ballots in the previous election but

did cast ballots in the current election. Fourth, former voters voted in the election at $t-1$ but abstained in election t . The last category is volatile voters – those who participated in both elections, but switched from one party to another.

Due to the nature of exit poll data, which surveys only participating voters, we cannot include the second category, voters who abstained in both elections, or the fourth category, those who voted before but abstained in the current election. Thus, we focus on categories one, three, and five. Specifically, we use aggregate electoral results as well as exit poll data to analyse: (1) trends in individual volatility, operationalized as vote switching between consecutive elections; (2) loyal and mobile voters, both in general and for concrete political parties; (3) intra- and inter-bloc volatility; (4) the vote choice of mobilized former non-voters; and (5) patterns of volatility and mobilization associated with the two strongest parties, Smer and PS.

To measure volatility, we use the sum of the absolute changes in percentages of voter support for each party between two consecutive elections, divided by two (so that gains and losses are not counted twice) (cf. Charvát and Just, 2016, p. 20). We do not consider vote changes due to electoral coalitions (e.g., Za ľudí), party mergers (e.g., Dobrá voľba), or party renaming (e.g., Hlas ľudu) as vote switching. However, parties that emerged through splits (e.g., Hlas, Republika, Demokrati) were coded as different from their predecessors. Thus, if a voter cast their ballot for a predecessor party in 2020 and said predecessor's successor in 2023, this would count as vote switching.

Our analysis is based on data from an exit poll survey conducted on 30 September 2023 by the Focus research agency for TV Markíza. To make comparisons over time, we rely on exit polls from previous elections (Focus Agency, 2012, 2016, 2020). The 2023 exit poll sample is composed of 19,945 voters. Data collection took place in 170 out of approximately 6,000 electoral districts. Focus chose these 170 districts due to their representativeness of the overall electoral results in previous elections. We weigh observations to more closely represent the overall electorate. The exit poll estimates were broadcast by TV Markíza shortly after polling stations closed.

6. Results

6.1 Aggregate and individual volatility in the 2023 election

Aggregate (net) volatility in the 2023 election reached 41%, which was 7% higher than in 2020 and the highest of any Slovak election (Linek & Gyárfášová, 2020, p. 306). The increase is related to several circumstances: (1) the significant departure of voters from the winner of the 2020 election, OĽaNO; (2) the substantive

electoral gain of PS (coded as a continuation of the coalition PS/SPOLU from 2020); and (3) strong voter support for Hlas, a de-facto new party. These large movements, combined with other, smaller inter-election shifts, led to a higher level of aggregate volatility than in 2020. Thus, Slovakia's ninth election since the transition from state socialism saw an increase in instability compared to previous elections.

We calculated individual voter transfers between elections based on data from exit polls (from 2012, 2016, 2020, and 2023). For the sake of comparability, the same procedure was applied. As Table 1 indicates, the share of stable party voters has decreased in every election since 2010. As such, individual (gross) volatility has increased, and in the 2023 election, it exceeded 50% – the highest level in Slovakia's history.

Table 1:
Individual volatility 2010-2023

Volatility Type	Election Pairs (%)			
	2020-2023	2016-2020	2012-2016	2010-2012
<i>Individual volatility</i>	54.0	45.8	38.9	32.9
<i>Stable voters</i>	38.6	44.6	50.7	60.3
<i>Intra-bloc volatility</i>	35.5	29.9	23.2	19.1
<i>Inter-bloc volatility</i>	15.1	12.7	10.6	6.8
<i>Volatile voters (small parties difficult to categorize)</i>	3.4	3.2	5.1	7.0
<i>Non-voters (except for first-time voters)</i>	7.4	9.6	10.5	6.7

Source: exit poll data, Focus for TV Markíza in 2023, 2020, and 2016, and for RTVS in 2012.

Due to the relevance of the two competing blocs in Slovak politics, we also calculated intra- and inter-bloc volatility. In line with earlier studies, we define two blocs: (1) the civic right and (2) the nationalist left-wing (Baboš & Malová, 2013). We present the composition of these blocs for each pair of elections in Table 2. We do note, however, that other dividing lines may also be relevant – e.g., the governing coalition that emerged from the 2016 election was composed of parties from both blocs. Yet, after the 2020 and 2023 elections, the logic of this division was reflected in the creation of both government coalitions.

Table 2:
Structure of blocs between 2010 and 2023

Election Pair	Bloc 1	Bloc 2
2010-2012	KDH, Most-Híd, MKP-SMK, OĽaNO, SaS, SDKÚ-DS, Zmena zdola	ĽS-HZDS, KSS, Smer, SNS
2012-2016	KDH, Most-Híd, MKP-SMK, OĽaNO, SaS, SDKÚ-DS, #Sief, Sme rodina,	ĽSNS, Smer, SNS
2016-2020	KDH, Most-Híd, MKP-SMK/MKO-MKS, OĽaNO, PS/SPOLU, SaS, Sief, Sme Rodina, Za ľudí	Dobrá voľba, ĽSNS, Smer, SNS, Vlasť
2020-2023	Aliancia, Demokrati, KDH, OĽaNO, PS/SPOLU, SaS, Sme rodina	ĽSNS, Hlas, Smer, SNS, Republika

Source: Baboš & Malová (2013) and the authors.

Table 3:
Bloc dynamics of volatility 2010-2023

Volatility Type	Election Pairs (%)			
	2020-2023	2016-2020	2012-2016	2010-2012
<i>Intra-bloc volatility – Bloc 1</i>	22.4	23.4	16.8	15.2
<i>Intra-bloc volatility – Bloc 2</i>	13.1	6.5	6.4	3.9
<i>Inter-bloc volatility – to Bloc 1</i>	1.8	9.3	7.0	3.5
<i>Inter-bloc volatility – to Bloc 2</i>	13.3	3.4	3.5	3.3

Source: exit poll data, Focus for TV Markiza in 2023, 2020, and 2016, and for RTVS in 2012.

Table 3 presents intra- and inter-bloc volatility for Slovak elections since 2010. In general, intra-bloc volatility has been larger in magnitude than inter-bloc volatility. This is primarily due to vote switching between the parties of the ‘civic right’ (Bloc 1). For example, OĽaNO received only 8.6% of votes in 2016, but won 25% of the vote in 2020, having successfully mobilized a significant portion of Bloc 1 voters. A similar example is that of PS, which failed to make it into parliament in 2020, but finished second in 2023. We note, however, that intra-bloc volatility within Bloc 1, while high, was relatively constant in the last two pairs of elections.

Intra-bloc volatility in Bloc 2, the nationalist left-wing, has generally been low. However, in 2023, Bloc 2’s intra-bloc volatility increased substantially – in fact, it doubled in size compared to both 2016-2020 and 2012-2016. This increase is due to two developments. First, in 2023, voters moved away from radical-right parties towards Smer. For example, almost 30% of former ĽSNS voters and 20% of former SNS voters voted for Smer in 2023 (see Table 4 below). The radicalization of Smer – primarily on sociocultural and foreign policy issues – during the election campaign seemed to attract voters who had previously cast their ballots for the more radical options in Bloc 2. Furthermore, many former supporters of the

radical right may have been dissuaded from supporting these parties because: (1) some of the most notable personalities in LSNS left the party to form Republika, and (2) Republika toned down some of its extremist rhetoric to make the party more acceptable to both a broader electorate and potential coalition partners. Second, 26% of Smer's 2020 electorate cast their ballots for Hlas in 2023. The presence of a 'new', moderate, social democratic alternative to Smer also led to shifts within Bloc 2.

Between 2010 and 2020, low levels of inter-bloc volatility characterized the Slovak party system. Vote switching between the civic right and the nationalist left-wing was rare. However, in 2023, inter-bloc volatility increased, as voters shifted from Bloc 1 to Bloc 2. In other words, former supporters of coalition parties voted for the opposition – likely due to dissatisfaction with the disorder of governance between 2020 and 2023. The largest movements were away from OLaNO and Sme Rodina towards Hlas and Smer. These movements, from government to opposition, parallel similar – though smaller in magnitude – voter movements in 2020. Prior to that election, anti-corruption sentiment and public frustration with the state of the country drove many voters away from Smer and SNS towards opposition parties. Importantly, very few voters moved from Bloc 2 to Bloc 1 in 2023, suggesting that even PS – not part of the government and the most successful party on the civic right – failed to convince Bloc 2 voters. More generally, these findings indicate that increasing numbers of voters are starting to move between blocs, and that government versus opposition dynamics drive these movements.

6.2 Volatility at the individual level: gains and losses of political parties

We proceed by taking a closer look at individual-level volatility between the 2020 and 2023 elections. First, we consider the extent to which voters remained loyal – i.e., the rate at which voters repeated their choice in the two elections. Second, we evaluate the most popular 'destinations' of voters who were not loyal. Table 4 presents these results. The rows of Table 4 represent the electorate for each party in the 2020 election. The second-to-last row represents voters who cast their ballots for the first time in 2023. The last row represents voters who did not vote in 2020 but had voted previously. Each column in Table 4 signifies a potential 'destination' for each of these 2020 electoral groups; thus, the cells represent the percentage of each electoral group going to one of these 'destinations' in the 2023 election.

Table 4:
Loyal and volatile voters

2020 Vote Choice	2023 Vote Choice											
	Smer	PS	Hlas	OLaNO	KDH	SaS	SNS	Republika	Aliancia	Demokrati	Sme Rodina	LSNS
Smer	63	1	26	1	1	0	4	3	0	0	1	0
PS/SPOLU	2	81	4	1	1	6	1	1	0	3	0	0
OLaNO	8	22	9	28	8	6	4	3	1	6	2	0
Za ľudí	2	44	7	6	7	12	2	1	0	12	2	0
KDH	2	5	2	5	75	2	3	0	1	3	0	0
SaS	4	34	7	2	2	41	2	1	0	4	1	0
SNS	20	1	14	1	2	1	51	5	1	1	1	0
MKO-MKS	2	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	88	0	0	0
Sme Rodina	21	8	22	5	5	3	8	8	1	2	15	0
LSNS	29	1	7	1	2	1	12	33	0	1	1	12
First-time voters	17	35	10	7	6	6	3	7	3	2	2	1
2020 non-voters	25	12	21	9	4	3	5	8	5	2	3	1

Note: numbers are percentages; the share of loyal voters is marked in bold; source: exit poll data, Focus for TV Markíza, 30 September 2023.

As in previous years, the most loyal voters were those of ethnic minority and religious parties. Of voters who supported MKO-MKS (the Hungarian ethnic minority party) in 2020, 88% supported Aliancia, the successor party, in 2023. Likewise, 75% of KDH voters remained loyal between 2020 and 2023. The voter base of PS was also highly loyal: 81% of voters who supported the PS/SPOLU coalition in 2020 cast their ballots for PS in 2023. Given the division of Smer, it is worth examining the extent to which voters remained loyal to the party: 26% of 2020 Smer voters switched their vote to Hlas in 2023, while 63% remained loyal. The fact that only around one-fourth of Smer's former 2020 electorate supported Hlas in 2023 suggests that the electorates of the two parties are relatively differentiated. A parallel case – albeit one less consequential in terms of the overall results – is that of LSNS and Republika. While the leaders of Republika all reached the highest levels of politics as members of LSNS, only about one-third of LSNS's 2020 electorate supported Republika in 2023. About 12% of LSNS's 2020 electorate remained loyal to the party, while 29% supported Smer. Similarly, Smer also attracted the voters of another radical-right party: 20% of voters who cast their ballots for SNS in 2020 voted for Smer in the 2023 election.

The high level of support for Smer from former radical-right voters seems to confirm that the party's radicalization successfully attracted new voters. At

the same time, the fact that 63% of the party's voters remained loyal shows that this radicalization did not discourage Smer's traditional electorate. A combination of leftism on socio-economic issues – particularly the emphasis on a strong state that takes care of its people – and conservative positions on sociocultural issues proved to be effective for Smer. Moreover, if we consider Hlas and Smer as representatives of social democracy, their split seems to have had a positive effect on the party family's electoral fortunes. The split enabled Smer to get closer to the positions of the radical right on sociocultural and foreign policy issues, while also allowing Hlas to appeal to a more socioculturally liberal, though still left-leaning, electorate.

Importantly, remobilized voters – i.e., those who had voted before, but did not do so in 2020 – also helped Smer succeed in 2023. About one-fourth of these voters decided to cast their ballots for Smer. A similar number (20%) of remobilized voters supported Hlas. These voters were likely demobilized in 2020 by the exposed political corruption and oligarchic connections of Smer, which surfaced after the murder of Ján Kuciak and Martina Kušnírová. In 2023, some of these voters returned to the ballot box due to frustration with the government, the radicalization of Smer, and the 'novelty' of Hlas. When it comes to first-time voters, PS was most successful – more than one-third of individuals casting their ballots for the very first time supported the party. PS was also somewhat successful at remobilizing former voters, capturing 12% of their support. In contrast to previous elections, Smer was also able to appeal to first-time voters in 2023. While in 2020 the party's share of first-time voter support was minimal, it reached 17% in 2023.

The centre-right, former government parties – OĽaNO, SaS, Sme Rodina, and Za ľudí – only won 17.4% of the vote (compared to 45.3% in 2020), and thus lost approximately 70% of their parliamentary seats. This massive shift in voter support resulted from unmanaged governance and gradual defections from the original constitutional majority. Due to the unstable economic situation and widespread corruption, 'punishing' the government is often a strong motivator of voter decisions in many post-communist countries (e.g., Gherghina, 2011). The potential for incumbents to be punished was evident and manifested in various attitudinal indicators long before the election. For example, evaluations of the government's performance and levels of trust in political institutions reached historic lows in early 2023 (Standard Eurobarometer 98).

Unsurprisingly, coalition parties largely failed to maintain voter support. Sme Rodina retained 15% of their former voters, but this was not enough to achieve even 3% of the total result. In the case of OĽaNO, which had achieved an extraordinary result in the previous election, only 28% of 2020 voters remained loyal in 2023. Only SaS, which left the government coalition in the summer of 2022, maintained a certain degree of stability: 41% of 2020 voters remained loyal to the party. In general, the exodus from these parties benefited PS. 45% of former Za ľudí voters supported PS, as did 33% of former SaS voters and 22% of former

OLaNO voters. We also note that 43% of Sme Rodina voters supported Smer (21%) and Hlas (22%), confirming the oppositional nature of this party even within the (former) coalition government.

Table 5 breaks down the electorates of the three most successful parties in 2023 – Smer, PS, and Hlas – compared to 2020. To further clarify, Table 4 (above) shows that 81% of PS’s 2020 electorate remained loyal to the party in 2023. In contrast, the first cell of Table 5 shows that this 81% of voters composed only 24% of PS’s total 2023 electorate. In other words, 2020 PS voters were largely loyal, but made up only about one-fourth of the party’s 2023 electorate. Thus, 76% of PS’s 2023 electorate supported other parties or did not vote in 2020, with the largest segments having previously supported OLaNO and SaS. Likewise, Table 5 shows that 2020 Smer voters comprised 60% of Smer’s 2023 electorate, but that the party also successfully attracted voters who cast their ballots for other options or did not vote in 2020. Perhaps most significantly, 40% of Hlas’s 2023 electorate were 2020 Smer voters, but the party also mobilized former supporters of OLaNO, Sme Rodina, and voters who stayed home in 2020.

Table 5:
The 2023 electorates of PS, Smer, and Hlas compared to 2020

2020 Vote Choice	2023 Vote Choice		
	<i>PS</i>	<i>Smer</i>	<i>Hlas</i>
<i>PS/SPOLU</i>	24	0	2
<i>Smer</i>	1	61	40
<i>OLaNO</i>	29	8	15
<i>Za ľudí</i>	9	0	2
<i>SaS</i>	15	2	4
<i>Sme Rodina</i>	3	6	11
<i>SNS</i>	0	2	3
<i>MKO-MKS</i>	0	0	0
<i>LSNS</i>	0	5	2
<i>KDH</i>	1	0	1
Other parties	3	4	9
First-time voters	8	3	3
2020 non-voters	5	8	10

Note: numbers are percentages of a party’s total 2023 electorate; source: exit poll data. Focus for TV Markíza, 30 September 2023.

6.3 Analysing volatility patterns according to the self-declared motives of voters

Next, we focus on identifying the motivations that underpin vote choice. We specifically consider the motives of voters who supported the two most successful parties in 2023: PS and Smer. In the exit poll, respondents could choose one reason from a closed list of motives to explain their choice of party. The list was compiled from appeals used by political parties during the campaign. We are aware of limits resulting from the fact that voters could retroactively rationalize their motive, but this risk accompanies any self-declared answers. Table 6 presents descriptive statistics on these vote-choice motives – specifically their frequency amongst exit poll respondents, and the party supporters for whom a given motive resonated most.

Table 6:
Self-declared motives of vote-choice and their relevance for different party supporters

Declared motive	Frequency amongst voters (%)	Party supporters for whom this reason resonated most (% of party voters choosing this reason)
Is the lesser evil	15	Sme rodina (30%)
Fights corruption	12	OLaNO (70%)
Has the best leader	12	Hlas (33%)
Will make us like developed countries	11	PS (37%); SaS (30%)
Protects national interests	11	SNS (45%), Republika (30%)
Will bring order	9	Republika (20%)
Protects us from higher prices	6	Smer (40%); Hlas (31%)
Is conservative	5	KDH (36%)
Stands for the EU/NATO	5	Demokrati (21%)
Is liberal	4	PS (16%)
Represents minorities	3	Aliancia (49%)
Will ensure that the state does not go bankrupt	3	SaS (15%)
Worried they will not have enough votes	2	SaS (5%)
Will cooperate with Russia	2	Republika (5%)

Note: closed list with a maximum of one choice; source: exit poll data. Focus for TV Markiza, 30 September 2023.

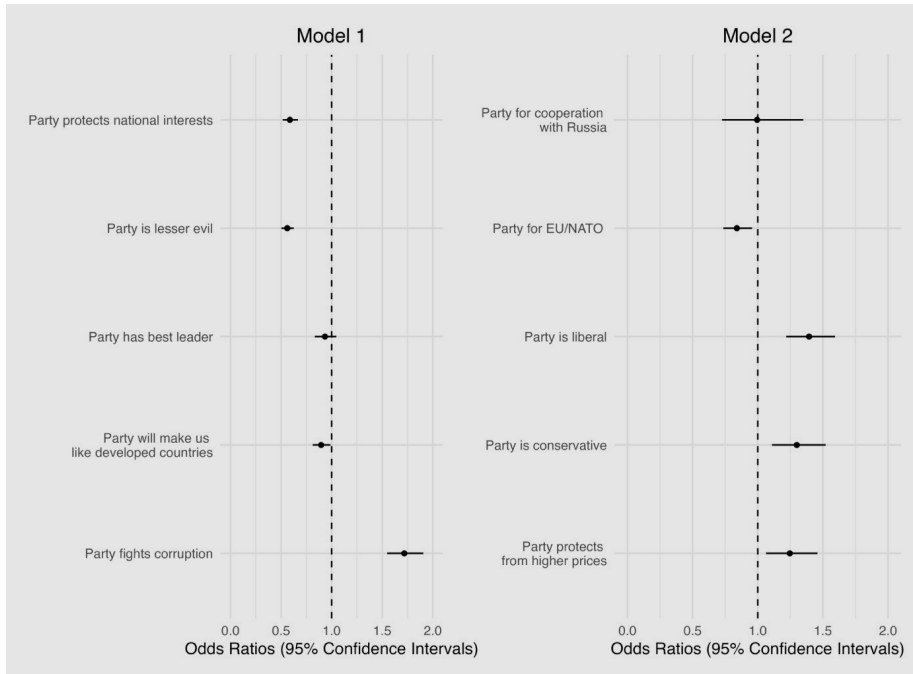
The three most popular motives behind individual decisions at the ballot box were ‘is the lesser evil’, ‘fights corruption’, and ‘has the best leader’. Taken together, the popularity of these motives echoes previous findings on vote choice in Slovakia. First, many individuals are dissatisfied with political parties and tend to choose what they view as the least-worst option. Second, corruption remains a salient motivation (e.g., Haughton et al., 2022). Third, Slovak politics is person-

alized, and voters often make their decisions based on party leader evaluations (Gyárfášová & Hlatky, 2023). A significant portion of voters – particularly those of PS and SaS – are motivated by the parties’ visions for Slovakia’s future trajectory. Likewise, nationalist appeals motivate the supporters of radical-right parties like SNS and Republika. Voters also explained their decision to support Smer by referencing the party’s ability to fight high prices. This suggests that the left-wing economic positions of Smer (and, to a lesser extent, Hlas) continue to motivate voters.

Next, we analyse correlations in the data using regression analysis. Specifically, we consider whether certain motivations are associated with certain patterns of voter behaviour. To do so, we create four different binary dependent variables: (1) loyal versus volatile voters; (2) remobilized versus other voters; (3) remobilized PS voters versus other voters; and (4) remobilized Smer voters versus other voters. From the list of motivations, we create two sets of independent variables. First, we consider the five most popular motivations (see Table 6) versus all others; second, we consider ‘ideological’ or ‘programmatic’ motivations versus all others (i.e., all non-ideological and non-programmatic motivations serve as the reference category). Ideological and programmatic motives include protection from higher prices, stands for the EU and NATO, party is conservative, party is liberal, and cooperation with Russia. We include age, gender, education, and nationality as control variables in all regressions. Models for the first two dependent variables are estimated with binary logit. For the remobilized PS and Smer dependent variables, we rely on Firth’s penalized logistic regression to account for the small number of positive cases, and thus the imbalanced nature of the data.

Figure 1 presents the regression results for loyal voters (coded as 1; N=5,559) versus volatile voters (coded as 0; N=11,623). All coefficients are presented as odds ratios; as such, values above 1 indicate a positive association with loyalty, while values below 1 indicate a positive association with volatility. The results indicate that several motivations had statistically significant associations with loyalty/volatility. First, voters who indicated that they chose to support a party because it protected national interests, was the lesser evil, or stood for the EU and NATO were more likely to have switched their vote between 2020 and 2023 (as indicated by odds ratios below 1). Voters who stated that their choices were motivated by the party’s fight against corruption, its liberal or conservative stance, or its ability to protect against higher prices were more likely to remain loyal than those who cited other reasons.

Figure 1:
Loyal versus volatile voters



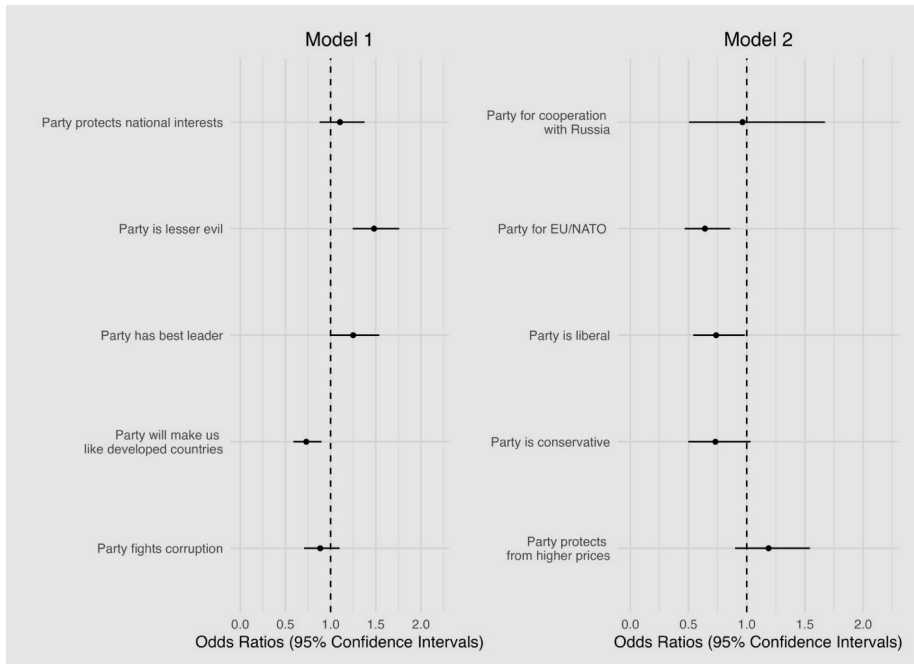
Note: N=17,182; source: exit poll data. Focus for TV Markíza, 30 September 2023.

These results help us make sense of individual volatility. The negative association between national interests and loyalty likely reflects the transition of former radical right voters to Smer. Likewise, the negative relationship associated with the EU/NATO motivation is potentially a product of the increasing politicization of geopolitics during the campaign, and the subset of voters who chose to support PS because of the party's pro-Western orientation. 'The party is the lesser evil' motivation is associated with volatility as it may have been the primary motivation for many voters dissatisfied with the former governing coalition. Finally, the positive association between fighting corruption and loyalty is likely a product of loyal OLaNO voters. Similarly, the conservative and liberal motivations potentially reflect the high rates of loyalty amongst KDĽ, and PS and SaS voters, respectively.

Figure 2 presents the regression results for remobilized voters (first-time eligible voters excluded; N=1,093) versus other voters (N=15,323). The results indicate that the only motivation positively associated with remobilization was the party being the lesser evil. Conversely, motivations related to making Slovakia like other developed countries or to positive stances towards the EU and NATO had a negative association with remobilization. However, this aggregate analysis pools

the remobilized voters of all political parties. This can mask substantial heterogeneity in voter motivations. Therefore, we look at the motivations of remobilized voters who cast their ballots for the two most successful parties: PS (N=219) and Smer (N=217). These results are presented in Figures 3 (PS) and 4 (Smer).

Figure 2:
Remobilized versus other voters



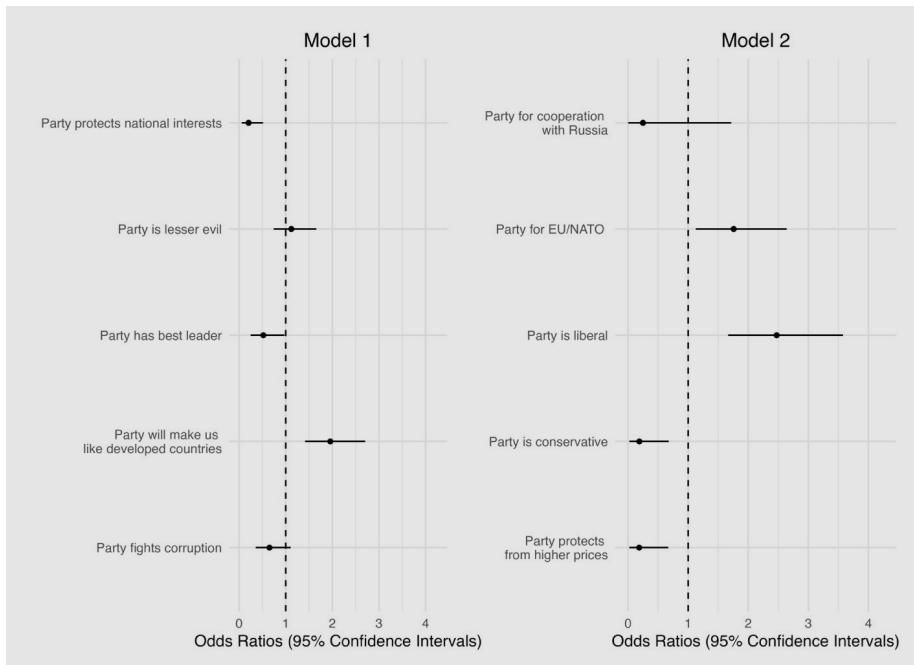
Note: N=16,416; source: exit poll data. Focus for TV Markiza, 30 September 2023.

As expected, Figures 3 and 4 indicate that the newly mobilized PS and Smer voters had very different motivations for casting their respective ballots. Individuals who did not cast ballots in 2020 but decided to vote for PS in 2023 were motivated by the party's stances on the EU and NATO, the party's liberal ideology, and the party's vision for Slovakia's development. Conversely, motivations related to national interests, party leadership, cooperation with Russia, conservative ideology, and the fight against higher prices had a negative association with being a remobilized PS voter. In sum, PS attracted voters on the liberal side of the geopolitical and sociocultural cleavage in Slovakia.

Newly mobilized Smer voters had different motivations. Protecting national interests, being the lesser evil, having the best leader, and the ability to protect against higher prices were all positively associated with being a remobilized Smer voter. Of these four motivations, positive evaluations of Robert Fico's leadership

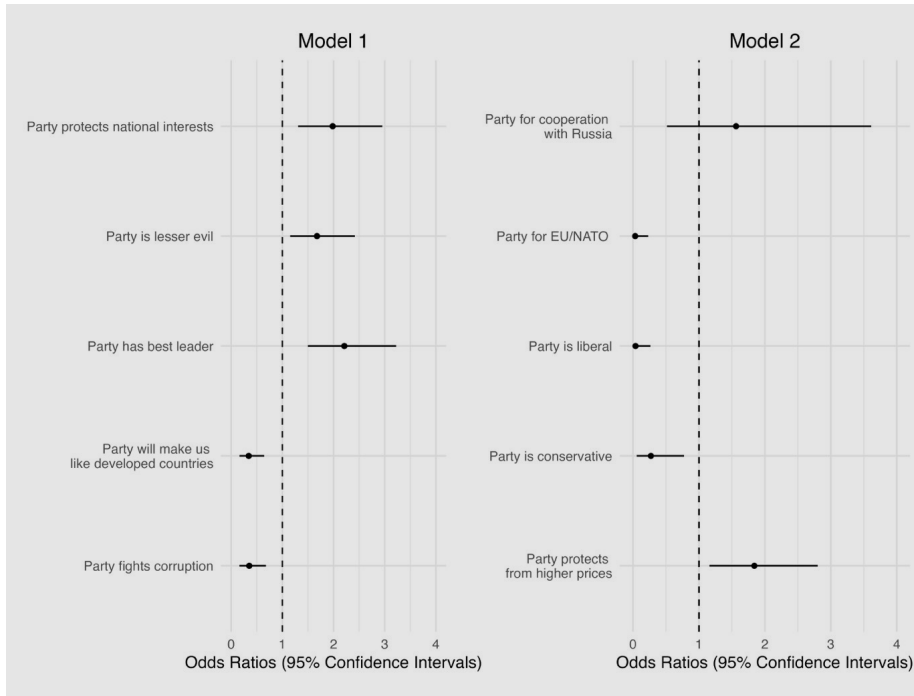
had the largest substantive association. Importantly, these results also indicate that motivations related to Russia did not have a substantive (or statistical) association with being a remobilized Smer voter. However, it is important to note that motivations related to stances on the EU/NATO, as well as motivations related to both liberal and conservative ideology, were negatively associated with being a remobilized Smer voter. Thus, it appears that those who stayed home in 2020 but supported Smer in 2023 were not motivated by Smer's ideological radicalization – apart from the diffuse ‘protect national interests’ motivation. In fact, these results show that voters with ideological motivations – whether conservative or liberal – were *less likely* to be remobilized Smer voters.

Figure 3:
Remobilized PS voters versus other voters



Note: N=16,416; source: exit poll data. Focus for TV Markiza, 30 September 2023.

Figure 4:
Remobilized Smer voters versus other voters



Note: N=16,416; source: exit poll data. Focus for TV Markíza, 30 September 2023.

7 Conclusion

The 2023 early election was held in a very tense political and social atmosphere. The government coalition faced a vote of no confidence in late 2022; by May 2023, it had resigned and been replaced by an expert government. Widespread public dissatisfaction and frustration created favourable conditions for opposition parties. Consequently, Smer won the election and formed a coalition with its splinter party Hlas and the nationalist SNS. Robert Fico became prime minister for the fourth time.

Using electoral statistics and exit poll data, this study examined voting behaviour during the 2023 election and focused specifically on volatility. Our findings showed that aggregate as well as individual volatility increased between the 2020 and 2023 elections, and that the overall share of loyal voters decreased (apart from the ethnic and religious vote, as in previous elections). The increase in volatility happened even if we do not consider Hlas and Republika to be new parties due to their personal and ideological continuity with their parent parties, Smer and ĽSNS, respectively.

Intra-bloc volatility continued to be high, especially in the civic-right bloc of Slovak politics. And, compared to all elections since 2010, intra-bloc volatility also increased substantially within the nationalist left-wing bloc. We suggest this latter development was likely driven by Smer's radicalization on sociocultural and foreign policy issues, which attracted former voters of the radical right. When it comes to inter-bloc volatility, our results showed that voters are also increasingly willing to switch between the civic right and the nationalist left-wing in response to poor government performance. In fact, the movement of voters from the civic right to the nationalist left-wing – largely in response to the inefficiency and mismanagement of the OLaNO-led governments – resulted in the highest level of inter-bloc volatility since 2010. A similar, though less drastic, pattern occurred in 2020 when voters, disappointed by political corruption and scandals, flocked to opposition parties. Given that coalition formation largely follows the structure of the two blocs, punishment of incumbents seems to be the primary factor underpinning inter-bloc volatility.

Our analyses also aimed to better understand the motivations underpinning voter volatility and remobilization. In general, we found that ideological and programmatic motivations – e.g., liberal or conservative ideology, or the fight against high prices – were substantively associated with voter loyalty. Conversely, voters who explained their vote by stating that their chosen party represented the 'lesser evil' were more likely to switch their votes. These discrepancies suggest that a portion of the Slovak electorate has strong ideological and programmatic ties with specific political parties, facilitating consistent choices between elections. For example, KDH voters remained loyal between 2020 and 2023 due to the party's consistent ideological position. However, another portion of the electorate does not have strong ties to political parties – likely due to general dissatisfaction – and is thus more volatile. The 'lesser evil' motivation was the most frequently chosen option amongst exit poll respondents. This suggests that the size of the dissatisfied, 'floating' voter group exceeds the size of the ideologically or programmatically motivated portion of the electorate. More broadly, we see this as evidence that volatility could increase in subsequent elections.

Our results also showed that PS and Smer successfully remobilized voters who had stayed home in 2020. Unsurprisingly, PS appealed to voters with liberal ideological convictions – i.e., those motivated by either the party's vision for Slovakia's future development or positive orientation towards the EU and NATO. Smer's remobilized voters were motivated by party leader Robert Fico, their beliefs about Smer's ability to protect both national interests and voters from higher prices, and their assessment of Smer as the 'lesser evil.' Thus, it seems that Smer's remobilized voters were not necessarily motivated by the party's radicalization on sociocultural and foreign policy issues. And, in fact, voters who noted ideological motivations for their choices – whether conservative or liberal – were less likely to be remobilized Smer voters. In contrast to these remobilized voters, Smer's

radicalization did spur former radical-right voters to switch their support to Smer. Thus, in a time of crisis and instability, Smer was able to effectively appeal to radical-right voters, while also successfully addressing the more diffuse feelings of uncertainty and frustration amongst portions of the electorate.

More generally, the 2023 election confirmed that volatility – of all types – is at an all-time high. From the perspective of previous research, the pattern of rising volatility is perplexing. The increases are not necessarily being driven by the emergence of new parties, nor has the length of Slovak democracy seem to have lowered volatility. As in other Central European countries, political competition in Slovakia remains clearly polarized. And while political parties present competing ideological visions to the Slovak electorate – e.g., about Slovakia’s geopolitical orientation, the rights of gender and sexual minorities or, most substantively, about the rule of law and democracy – these competing visions have not necessarily translated into loyal camps of partisan voters. We suggest two primary causes: ineffective governance and a lack of party institutionalization. First, voters punish the poor performance of incumbents, as evidenced by the spectacular collapse of OLaNO. Since voters do not have loyal partisan commitments, punishment comes easy, and the cycle of volatility continues. Second, Slovak parties reposition themselves not only ideologically – e.g., Smer’s radicalization – but also organizationally – e.g., the multiple splits that occurred prior to the 2023 election. These shifts attract new voters, but they also discourage former voters. This was certainly the case for Smer, which lost a significant portion of its electorate to Hlas but gained voters from the radical right. Given these dynamics, a loyal voting base is difficult to maintain. We leave a closer examination of these causes to future research.

The aftermath of the election and the steps undertaken by the Smer-led government to threaten the rule of law have only increased polarization between Slovakia’s conflicting blocs. Parties that seemed like they could stake out a middle ground – like Hlas and Sme Rodina – have either adapted to the positions and policies of Smer or have lost their political relevance. It remains to be seen what the future effects of polarization will be and whether depolarization is possible.

List of Abbreviations:

Hlas	Voice-Social Democracy (Hlas-SD)
HZDS	Movement for a Democratic Slovakia
KDH	Christian Democratic Movement
KSS	Communist Party of Slovakia
LSNS	People's Party – Our Slovakia
MKP-SMK	Party of Hungarian Community
OLaNO	Ordinary People and Independent Personalities
PS	Progressive Slovakia
PS/SPOLU	Progressive Slovakia/Together
SaS	Freedom and Solidarity
SDKÚ-DS	Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party
#Siet	#Network
Smer	Direction-Social Democracy (Smer-SD)
SMK	Party of Hungarian Coalition
SNS	Slovak National Party
Szövetség-Aliancia	Alliance
Zmena zdola	Change from Below

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