New Breakaway Parties in Slovakia: Exploring Intra-party Democracy Shifts[1]

Tomáš Cirhan, Michal Malý[2]

Abstract

Many new parties are electorally succeeding across European party systems, including in post-communist countries. This is especially true in Slovakia, where it is accompanied by another very specific phenomenon, which in our perspective defines recent parliamentary elections – the prevalence of new breakaway parties. These newly formed parties created by splitting from parliamentary parties are now competing alongside them in early parliamentary elections. The 2020-2023 period, in addition to seeing the fall of governments, and a general political crisis and instability, was also characterized by frequent party factionalism. During this period, turbulent development within SMER-SD, ĽSNS and OĽaNO translated into the formation of three new parties – HLAS-SD, Republika, and the Democrats, which represent our case studies. The aim of our paper is to analyse how these new breakaway parties differ from their original parties organizationally, in the processes associated with intra-party democracy (IPD). We empirically explore their leadership selection, candidate selection and membership policies. The existing data (based on the Populism and Political Parties Database) indicate that their three parent parties are highly personalized with low IPD. The findings of our comparative analysis reveal that the new breakaway parties have incorporated more transparent approaches to intraparty processes compared to their parent parties. However, concerning candidate selection, they have not embraced greater inclusiveness than the parties they originated from. Overall, despite a noticeable trend towards intra-party depersonalization, the opportunity for a broader membership base to participate in the decision-making process remains largely unrealized.

Keywords: intra-party democracy; breakaway parties; party origin; party organization; personalization of politics; candidate selection

2 Tomáš Cirhan, Institute of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, tomas.cirhan@fsv.cuni.cz, U Kříže 661/8, 158 00, Praha 5, Czech Republic, ORCID: 0000-0002-5612-3160. Michal Malý, Institute of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, michal.maly@fsv.cuni.cz, U Kříže 661/8, 158 00, Praha 5, Czech Republic, ORCID: 0000-0002-4782-2672.

1. Introduction

New parties make electoral breakthroughs and even participate in government in many European countries, especially in central-eastern Europe (CEE). Although these newcomers naturally gain the interest of the media and the public, relatively little attention is devoted to how they function internally and, more specifically, to their level of intra-party democracy (IPD). Many such new parties are established by splitting away from established parties that have existed within the party system for a while, so-called breakaway parties. Considering the prevalence of highly personalized charismatic leadership in new parties, these non-compromising individuals likely not only stand behind their party's breakaway, but the experience of breaking away also strongly affects IPD within the new parties. Based on existing political theory, we expect that the new breakaway parties do not repeat the same approach towards party organization that was practised in the parent party, in order to avoid the same fate of further factionalism. The individuals who establish break-away parties will likely design the institutional structures of their new parties in reaction to what they perceived as weaknesses within the organization of their parent parties. Based on such experience, it can be expected that the newly formed parties will not replicate the practices that led to party splits in the past. This article thus contributes to the party politics literature by examining the internal structures of such new parties.

The contemporary academic debate concerning IPD encompasses several areas and indicators of this process. In this paper, we empirically pay attention to some processes associated with IPD, a concept we map by looking at leader selection, candidate selection and the position of the party leader of these breakaway parties. Some research regarding the concept of IPD (von dem Berge and Obert, 2018), as well as the process of leader and candidate selection, already exists in the CEE context (Kopeček & Hloušek, 2018; Hloušek & Kopeček, 2019; Kubát & Hartliński, 2020). A large part of the theory that deals with IPD overlaps with that on political personalization, a complex process in which the importance of the institution (like a political party) declines while that of individuals (like party leaders) increases (Rahat & Kenig, 2018, p. 1; Pedersen & Rahat, 2021). Measured in three dimensions – media, institutional and behavioural – increasing personalization is said to have a direct relationship with decreasing IPD (Gunther, 2001; Scarrow, 2005). Ignazi (2020) explains this link by stating that rising personalization, evidenced for example by more and more decision-making powers concentrated within the centralised party leadership structures, logically goes hand in hand with a diminished role for the rest of the party organization. Notably, others have looked into intraparty processes from the perspective of the theory of institutionalization and its impact on parties' electoral outcomes (see Rybář & Spáč, 2020).

Our paper explores these theoretical relationships between different party organizational features and IPD using a set of three case studies of new breakaway

parties that competed in the recent general elections in Slovakia. Prior to the 2023 general elections, Slovakia witnessed some of the most chaotic and fragmented eras of governing – even within the context of post-communist countries of CEE, where the bar is already set relatively low. Such instability at the level of national governance, in our view, has its origins in the country's party system itself, and is evident even at the level of individual parties plagued by factionalism. This phenomenon of factionalism is embodied by the trend of new party formation, when over time groups of MPs broke away from three existing parliamentary parties, founding new parties. Specifically, in June 2020, eleven MPs led by former PM Pellegrini broke away from SMER-SD, establishing a new party called HLAS-SD. In March 2021, following a problematic change in the party statutes of the far right ĽSNS, five of its MPs, and one MEP, Milan Uhrik, founded the Republika party. And finally, the collapse of Eduard Heger's government in 2023 led to yet another split in OĽaNO, when Heger with eleven other MPs from took over the Blue Coalition party, renaming it the Democrats, establishing another new party. As such, three new breakaway parties were created in the parliament, without their parent parties disappearing.

As such, not only have most Slovak parties been divided by these frequent splits, but these new factions successfully turn into newly formed parties (i.e. breakaway parties) running alongside their original parties (i.e. parent parties) in elections. The prevalence of these new breakaway parties in the Slovak party system in our view defines not only the recent parliamentary elections, but the overall state of political development in the country. To that end, our paper explores how these new breakaway parties differ from their original parties in regard to their party organization, analysing which aspects may have been adopted.

Notably, the parties considered in our analysis can be perceived from many angles. For instance, some can be viewed as far-right, populist or anti-establishment (De Vries & Hobolt, 2020; Jankowski et al., 2022). According to some scholars, organizationally, the closest definition for them would be entrepreneurial parties, as they are closely related to their party leader, the so-called political entrepreneur who establishes the new party independently of other existing groups or institutions (see Paolucci, 2006; Hloušek, Kopeček, & Vodová, 2020). As opposed to such entrepreneurial newcomers, the existing theory that deals with new party formation also distinguishes other types of new parties – so-called rooted parties. They differ from entrepreneurial parties by being 'supported by already existing organisations or groups, which promote the new formation and contribute resources to build a party infrastructure' (Bolleyer, 2013, p. 777). Other scholars may also categorize some of our parties under the more dynamic category of so-called challenger parties, solely on the basis of their office-holding experience, since such parties did 'not have the opportunity to control policy or government' per their definition (De Vries & Hobolt, 2020, p. 21).

Independently of this conceptual discussion, all our concerned parties share certain ideological as well as rhetorical approaches. Specifically, the populist anti-establishment and anti-corruption rhetoric present among some of our cases reflects changes that took place in Slovak politics in the past. Strong feelings of protest have resonated among large segments of Slovak society for some time. Low trust in parties, and in politics in general, corruption scandals of major parties and other challenges are behind the overall political change that our selected parties represent. Our theoretical discussion will illustrate how the demand for strong charismatic politicians (who try to utilize the growing frustration of the electorate) fuels the personalization of parties and diminishes their IPD. Vis-à-vis the theory of IPD, we explore how the new breakaway parties differ from their parent parties regarding party organization, concretely in the selection of leaders and candidates and in the role of party leaders. Our research objective is to identify which of these party organizational features were adopted from the parent parties, and how this affects the IPD of the breakaway parties. We expect that the breakaway parties will likely organise differently, adopting a more inclusive party organisational model, motivated by the desire to avoid the highly personalised and strictly top-down hierarchical modus operandi used in their parent parties, where the party leadership, or the party leader himself, makes the vast majority of decisions. To that end, our analysis deals chiefly with the following research question:

RQ: What are the party organisational features and IPD of new breakaway parties in comparison with their parent parties?

Regarding our research question, we firstly expect that the party organizational setup of our breakaway parties will follow that of their parent parties (reflecting in the level of personalization and IPD). Regarding candidate selection, we predict that the leader selection etc. of the new breakaway parties will be highly similar to the parties they split from.

Secondly, we expect the party leaders of breakaway parties to maintain control over the leader selection process as a safeguard of their position. Our last expectation is that the decision-making power of the party leaders over the party structures of our breakaway parties will be significant.

Regarding the structure of this paper, the theoretical section below will incorporate the conceptual debate regarding breakaway parties, followed by a discussion concerning political personalization and IPD. The next part of the article deals with the case selection, followed by a discussion related to the backgrounds of these cases. The methodological section explains how the empirical analysis is operationalized, and what kind of data it relies on, followed by the empirical section where the actual analysis takes place. Finally, the conclusions section summarizes our findings and comments on their relevance in light of the existing theory that was reviewed at the beginning of the article.

2. Theoretical discussion: breakaway parties, personalization and IPD

> Parties, especially newly formed and newly governing parties, are as far from being unitary actors as any organization can be considering the different pressures they face, such as the need to hold the party together, to communicate and coordinate between the central party organization and the party in public office, and to manage internal conflicts and relations within the organization as well as with coalition partners (Deschouwer, 2008, p. 7).

To begin our theoretical discussion, it is first vital to define the concept of breakaway parties within the universe of new parties. A vast body of theory concerning new party formation exists, both globally (see Rochon, 1985; Lucardie, 2000; Hartleb, 2012) as well as within the CEE context (Sikk, 2005; Bennich-Björkman, 2006; Hanley, 2012). There are many types of newly formed parties that differ in regard to their raison d'être and circumstances under which they emerged. There are multiple vantage points from which the emergence of new political parties can be examined, including institutionalization (Bolleyer, 2013), electoral success, responses to corruption (Engler, 2015), and their overall success and decline (Haughton & Deegan-Krause, 2020). This article aims to contribute to the literature by examining the intra-party structure of new parties.

Generally, three ways in which new parties can be formed are known – firstly, as first-time electoral contenders that have no organizational or personnel links with established parties. Secondly, as persistent minor parties that previously contested elections, but never broke through independently (Hanley, 2012). Thirdly, new parties can come into existence as breakaway parties, defined as new parties that form either by splitting from established parties or by elites breaking away from such parties (Hanley, 2012). Our research focuses chiefly on the breakaway parties. Such parties have a unique place in political science theory, as their formation is closely connected to the question of the organizational stability of parties, and in turn to party factionalism (see Spirova, 2007; Bos & Van Der Brug, 2010).

Parties by nature function as collective entities, within which divided views and opinions have the potential to create internal pressures. Such pressures can eventually 'trigger the formation of factions that render the unitary actors' (Boucek, 2009, pp. 455–456). Such factions, when not muted in the party structure, can potentially strive for, and even succeed, in splitting the party. By the end of this process, the party dissenters may establish a new party, i.e. a breakaway party. Factionalism as a process does not occur in vacuum; certain conditions, such as scandals and pressures associated with participating in government, for instance, can trigger it. For parties trying to avoid or minimize the chances of such developments, party cohesion is something to strive for (see Cirhan, 2023).

Such risks are even more relevant to newly formed and especially newly governing parties. We focus on the concrete breakaway moments in our case studies below.

As we discuss in the next section, we selected our cases based on the level of personalization in their parent parties, with the assumption that it will have an impact on their party organizational structures, and in turn affect their IPD. The term political personalization relates to the on-going theoretical discussion concerning the importance of political institutions, like parties, versus that of individual actors, like their leaders. Personalization takes place when these individual political actors become more prominent at the expense of their institutions (parties) (Karvonen, 2010; Rahat & Kenig, 2018). As a process, it is associated with the development of the media, especially with televised political debates and the spread of online communication, enabling an easier and more direct relationship between voter and politician (McAllister, 2007).

The conceptualization of the term personalization involves three layers: behavioural, institutional, and media (see Balmas et al., 2014; Rahat & Sheafer, 2007; Rahat & Kenig, 2018). For the purposes of our analysis, we are interested solely in institutional personalization, a process in which the internal party rules are amended in such a way as to favour the decision-making power of the party leader at the expense of the rest of the party, a so-called centralized personalization (Balmas et al., 2014), sometimes also referred to as the presidentialization of politics (Hloušek, 2015; Poguntke & Webb, 2005).

The above arguments in this theory overlap with, or better, stand opposite to IPD. In a nutshell, institutionally personalized parties, dominated by influential individuals, tend to have lower levels of IPD.

The three parent parties in our study, SMER-SD, ĽSNS, OĽANO, are amongst the most highly personalized parties in Slovakia. For this reason, we explore whether or not our three breakaway parties developed organizationally along similar lines and thus have limited IPD.

With the decline of mass parties, caused in part by a general lack of interest in membership (Van Biezen & Poguntke, 2014), some new parties attempted to attract new supporters by making the internal decision-making process more inclusive, even for those not holding membership status (Ignazi, 1996, 2020). Many scholars expected this trend of fuelling IPD by promoting the rights of members regarding selecting party leaders and candidates would be part of the new development (Scarrow, 2015).

But things developed differently. The growing personalization increased the gap between rank-and-file members and party leaders (Ignazi, 2020). To map this development, Poguntke et al. (2016) came up with a methodological scheme to measure and compare the IPD of different parties, comprising three categories: structures, resources, and representative strategies. We follow this method in our empirical analysis, looking at party structures using a set of three indicators – leader selection, candidate selection, and the role of party leaders in parties.

Selecting leaders is without doubt one of the most important and challenging steps for a party. In regard to IPD, it is crucial who can participate in this process of leader selection (Cross & Blais, 2012), whether all grass-roots members, or a closed group of selected party elites. The inclusiveness of the candidate selection process is an equally important indicator of IPD, which is why this process is subject to many studies (see Hopkin, 2001; Katz, 2001; Barnea & Rahat, 2007; Rahat, 2009; Hazan & Rahat, 2010). Finally, the autonomy and overall position of territorial party branches is an important part of IPD. The absence or diminished role of these units often indicates a centralized organization where the leader holds all the power (Gunther & Diamond, 2003).

Our study probes the impact of Slovakia's fragmented party system – characterized by the existence of several factionalized (parent) and newly formed (breakaway) parties – on party organizational structures, and in turn their IPD. IPD in theory primarily concerns power distribution within parties, encompassing the location of power, its holders, and member participation (Cross & Katz, 2013). These trends and relationships can be assessed by looking at different factors like the candidate selection process (Barnea & Rahat, 2007; Hazat & Rahat, 2010; Katz, 2001; Rahat, 2009), the leader selection process (Aylott & Bolin, 2016; Cross & Blais, 2012), and the various organizational aspects of the party, such as the autonomy of grass-roots networks or territorial party structures (Poguntke et al., 2016). The theoretical debate focuses largely on different indicators of IPD, but does not tell us much about the relationship between parent and breakaway parties in regard to IPD. We attempt to supplement the existing body of theory by looking into this relationship. In particular, we aim to understand the organizational differences between breakaway parties and their parent parties, focusing on the dimensions of IPD. Thus, our analysis of the three Slovakian breakaway parties' organizational structures maps their IPD by looking at these indicators – leader selection, candidate selection and the role of party leaders concerning party membership, territorial party structures and other key party organizational features. The breakaway parties are HLAS-SD, Republika, and the Democrats, which split from SMER-SD, ĽSNS and OĽaNO, respectively. We explain the reasons for the selection of these cases in the next part.
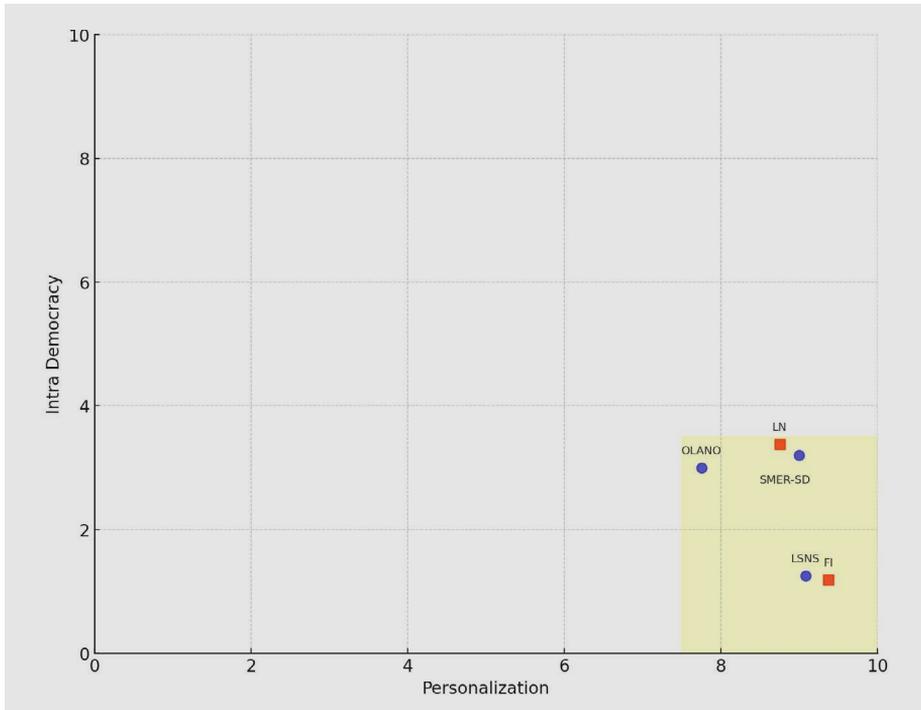
3. Case selection

We have selected three cases of breakaway parties for our analysis, HLAS-SD, Republika, and the Democrats. Our case selection is based on the similar levels of personalization within their three parent parties – SMER-SD, ĽSNS and OĽaNO, according to the Populism and Political Parties Database. The available data from the Populism and Political Parties Database (Meijers & Zaslove, 2021) indicate that

these three parent parties are highly personalized with low IPD (see Figure 1 for details). Indeed, scholars have noted the dominance of party leaders within the party structures of SMER-SD and OĽaNO (Rybář & Spáč, 2020). To illustrate the levels of personalization amongst these parent parties, two examples of highly personalized parties, Forza Italia (FI) from Italy and PVV (the Party for Freedom), are included in Figure 1.

SMER-SD, ĽSNS, OĽANO are characterized by high institutional personalization and low IPD. Although these three parent parties are of course not identical when it comes to organizational matters, in all of them the vast majority of formal power is vested in the party leader. The selection of these three specific parent parties that are highly personalized puts us in a position to analyse how the breakaway parties that split from them approach party organization in a comparative perspective.

The strong position of party leaders (in regard to other party structures) seems to be co-facilitated by the legal setup of the Slovak electoral system and legislation on political parties. Concretely, the system has a single national district for parliamentary elections, meaning each electoral list may not geographically cover all the regions of the country. This system favours parties founded on a single individual (see Haydanka, 2021). Similarly, the legal conditions for political parties are not particularly stringent. The law requires some organizational prerequisites for establishing a political party, such as the existence of supreme, executive, arbitration, and audit bodies. Each party body, apart from the statutory body, must have at least three members, the executive body must have at least nine members, and the supreme body of the party must have at least 27 members. Additionally, for participation in parliamentary elections, a party must have either 45 members in the supreme body or a total of 300 members (Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej Republiky, 2005). Such a legal framework indeed seems to influence how parties in Slovakia organized, supporting the establishment of highly personalized parties with dominant party leadership. The relative lenience of the rules concerning political parties is visible for instance in the development of OĽANO, which comprised only four party members (Cirhan, 2023).

Figure 1:
Personalization and IPD of parent parties

Source: Authors' elaboration based on POPPA dataset.

3.1 Background of the selected cases

This section deals with the backgrounds of the three breakaway parties with a particular focus on how they split from their parent parties and what preceded such events. The cases are described in chronological order according to when the splits took place.

4. New - born party in the midst of government crisis

SMER-SD has been present in the Slovak political space since 1999, and since 2002 it has been a part of the Slovak parliament. Robert Fico has been leading the party since its inception. Due to the low consolidation of the Slovak political system, SMER-SD is considered one of the most organizationally and electorally

stable parties. Similarly, the party has been stable in terms of governance, always holding the position of the Prime Minister. SMER-SD formed a government for the first time after the 2006 elections, marking the first government led by Robert Fico. Then, with a two-year break, SMER-SD returned to power from 2012 to 2016, where it was able to form a government independently. The SMER-SD government continued from 2016 to 2020, albeit with significant complications (Marušiak, 2021). On 15 March 2018, the party chairman and Prime Minister Robert Fico resigned, ending his third government. The trigger for this downfall was the murder of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée (Hájek, 2018). Kuciak's investigation had uncovered corruption at the highest levels of the Slovak political and justice systems, particularly within the governing SMER-SD. He revealed connections between high-ranking politicians and Italian mafia networks, leading to the largest protests in Slovakia since the Velvet Revolution (Harris, 2019). Although the opposition demanded early elections, SMER-SD proposed a government restoration. The popular Minister of Investments and Informatics, Peter Pellegrini, became the new prime minister. The power structure within SMER-SD resembled that of Poland's PiS, where the party was led by Jaroslav Kaczyński, but the prime minister was Mateusz Morawiecki (Kern, 2018). Additionally, Pellegrini became the leader of SMER-SD for the 2020 elections, campaigning under the slogan 'responsible change'. It was the first time that Robert Fico was not the leader. However, this change did not prevent SMER-SD from suffering a defeat at the hands of Igor Matovič and the OĽANO movement (Havlík et al., 2020). Following the electoral defeat, Peter Pellegrini urged Robert Fico to step down from the presidency and leave the party:

> If Mr. Chairman Fico wants to help SMER-SD, social democracy in Slovakia, the time has come for him to step down from the helm of the party. It will help SMER-SD become stronger, significantly increase its coalition potential, and create space for a new generation of politicians ready to fight (Echo24.cz, 2020).

Fico offered Pellegrini the chairmanship but was unwilling to leave the party. As Pellegrini's conditions were not met, he announced his departure from SMER-SD and the founding of a new political party. Along with Pellegrini, 10 MPs left SMER-SD. On 11 September, the party HLAS-SD was officially formed, with Pellegrini as its chairman (Krkoška, 2020).

5. Criminal conviction as a trigger of new party formation

The People's Party Our Slovakia (ĽSNS) was established in February 2010. The party didn't follow the conventional path of formation but emerged through the rebranding of the Wine Friends Party, which Marian Kotleba and a few friends took control of. Shortly after assuming leadership of the party, they changed its name to the People's Party of Social Solidarity, and after a few months, the party was renamed ĽSNS (Mesežnikov & Gyarfášová, 2016). Kotleba's involvement with the Wine Friends Party followed the dissolution of his previous Slovak Togetherness party. This party openly embraced the legacy of the World War Two-era fascist Slovak State, evident in actions such as wearing Hlinka Guard uniforms and condemning the Slovak National Uprising (Jancura, 2016). The party's activities were deemed unconstitutional, leading to its dissolution by the Supreme Court in 2006, after operating for about a year (Pravda, 2006). Consequently, within the ĽSNS leadership, Kotleba had to adopt a different rhetoric that didn't openly challenge parliamentary democracy or violate the constitution (Drábik, 2023). Despite toning down its rhetoric, the party remained quite radical, particularly in its anti-Roma appeals (Kluknavská, 2013).

ĽSNS's first significant electoral success was Marian Kotleba's victory in regional elections, specifically in the Banská Bystrica region. In 2016, the ĽSNS party entered the Slovak parliament for the first time with an 8.04% share. The party maintained its parliamentary position in the 2020 elections with a 7.97% share. At the start of 2021, Kotleba amended the ĽSNS statutes without consulting the rest of the leadership. Kotleba's motive was to solidify the chairman's position and retain control of the party even from prison, as he was sentenced to four years for promoting Nazism. In response to the statute changes, numerous significant ĽSNS politicians departed from the party, led by MEP Milan Uhrík and MP Milan Mazurek. Former ĽSNS politicians were offered the already existing HLAS LUDU party by former MP Peter Marček in order to bypass the requirement of gathering 10,000 votes to establish a new party, which was challenging during the COVID-19 period. The party was subsequently renamed Republika, with MEP Milan Uhrík assuming the chairmanship (Kyseľ, 2021).

6. A broader coalition attempt gone wrong

The Ordinary People and Independent Personalities party (OĽaNO) emerged in 2011 under the leadership of media sector businessman Igor Matovič. His ownership of regionPRESS, overseeing 36 newspapers across Slovakia, significantly

aided OĽaNO in gaining public visibility (Žúborová, 2015, p. 104). Matovič frequently utilized his media outlets to disseminate political messages (Malová and Dolný, 2016). His foray into politics commenced with a civic initiative focused on combating corruption and clientelism (Rolko, 2013, p. 27). OĽaNO's genesis took root when four of its members were elected from the candidate lists of the SAS party. The reception of preferential votes bolstered their resolve to establish an independent party. However, the early 2012 elections resulted in only modest success, with just over an 8% vote share. Despite this, the party managed to maintain its parliamentary presence in 2016, securing 8.8% of the vote. The pivotal shift for OĽaNO took place in the 2020 elections. The scandal surrounding journalist Kuciak's murder, which implicated the ruling Smer party, led to a seismic shift in the electorate (Havlík et al., 2020). OĽaNO capitalized on this wave of public dissatisfaction and swept the 2020 elections. Matovič orchestrated a broad coalition comprising three parties (SAS[3], For the People[4], and We Are Family[5]) and assumed the office of prime minister.

Matovič earnestly sought to fulfil his pre-election promises and formed a government that excluded SMER-SD. Yet, the coalition's inherent weakness, with SaS under Richard Sulík, For the People led by Andrej Kiska, and We Are Family under Boris Kollár, lay in the clash of strong leaders unable to forge sustained compromise and cooperation. This fragility became glaringly evident with the immediate challenge posed by the Covid-19 pandemic shortly after the government's formation. Matovič's clandestine negotiations with Russia for a supply of the Sputnik vaccine triggered a political crisis, ultimately resulting in his resignation (Holroyd, 2021). Although Matovič stepped down as PM, the tumultuous conflicts within the coalition persisted (Zuzelka, 2022). Eduard He-

---

3   Sloboda a Solidarita (SaS), established in 2009 with Richard Sulík as its founder and long-standing leader, is positioned on the liberal-conservative spectrum, emphasizing economic freedom, reduction of national debt, and the support of personal freedoms. SaS has been part of several Slovak government coalitions, such as the Iveta Radičová administration from 2010 to 2012 and again from 2020 in a coalition led by Igor Matovič. In the 2023 elections, the Sloboda a Solidarita party secured 6.32% of the vote.

4   The For the People party, established in 2019 by former Slovak President Andrej Kiska, is centrist to centre-right, focusing on the rule of law, transparency in public administration, and support for social and economic reforms. It emphasizes the importance of civil rights, democratic principles, and sustainable development. In March 2020, Za ľudí became part of a four-party government coalition led by Igor Matovič's OĽaNO party. During the parliamentary elections in 2023, Za ľudí ran in coalition with OĽaNO and successfully secured one seat in the parliament, illustrating its ongoing, albeit limited, presence and influence on the Slovak political scene.

5   The 'Sme Rodina' party, established by Boris Kollár, positions itself within a populist and somewhat right-leaning ideological framework, with a focus on traditional family values, a sceptical stance on immigration, and calls for direct democracy and adjustments in social welfare policies. It highlights national interests and support for small and medium-sized businesses, aiming to represent the 'common people' against the established political elites. However, during the parliamentary elections of 2023, Sme Rodina obtained 2.21% of the votes, which resulted in the party not meeting the threshold for parliamentary representation, leading to its exit from parliament.

ger, the Minister of Finance from OĽaNO, assumed the role of prime minister, seeking to restore stability.

However, irreconcilable personal animosities between Matovič and SaS leader Sulík proved fatal for the coalition. Even after SaS's departure from the government in autumn 2022, internal strife continued within the coalition and OĽaNO itself. Eventually, by late 2022, another organizational crisis within OĽaNO led to ten of its MPs leaving its parliamentary club (Biró, 2022). This led to the collapse of the government through a vote of no confidence, compelling the president to call for snap elections due to the inability of existing parliamentary parties to resolve the deadlock.

Following the government's downfall, former Prime Minister Heger left the OĽaNO movement, expressing a commitment to unite right-wing political forces for early elections. Alongside four ministers from his interim government, he joined the Blue Coalition, formerly known as SPOLU. The party later rebranded itself as the Democrats, with Heger assuming the role of chairman (Hanák, 2023).

In summary, what the selected cases have in common is that the split from the parent parties was the only chance for the departing party elites to carry through their vision of the party. There was no, or very little, probability of alternation in the party leadership, and no possibility to reform the parent parties from the position of party leadership. The leaders of the parent parties did not permit any change in the leading post. For instance, although Fico formally offered Pellegrini the post of party leader, he did not agree to leave the party, nor was he willing to lose his influence over party affairs. Although the secondary motivations may have varied between one party and another, ranging from a chaotic leadership style, to the public image of the leader, to personal animosities, the main motivation for setting up a new party was the same for all the concerned parties – the inability to replace the leader in control of the parent party.

7. Data and Methods

As mentioned previously in the introduction, our research objective is to explore how breakaway parties differ from their parent (highly personalized) parties in regard to their party organization and in turn in regard to IPD. To that end, we analyse which party organizational features were adopted from the parent parties and how they affect the IPD of the breakaway parties.

This section examines how the analysis is operationalized and what kinds of data it relies on, starting with the methodology. In regard to the methodology, we explore the levels of IPD based on qualitative analysis of party organization. Concretely, this analysis involves assessing three different indicators that the literature considers as influencing IPD. These are the processes of leader selec-

tion and candidate selection and the position of the party leader within the party organization.

Simply put, the first indicator identifies who selects the party leader within the party, whether it is the delegates of the party congress, the party presidency, or any other arrangement. In this leader selection dimension, we are also interested in the length of a leader's term.

In regard to the second indicator, candidate selection, we investigate who has the autonomy to select candidates, and how this process is managed in the breakaway parties. We are chiefly interested in the selection process for candidates in general elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

The third indicator in itself is operationalized to include three aspects of the decision-making capacity of the party leader. This entails the leader's role and autonomy in regard to membership, party congresses and territorial branches. Regarding members, we investigate who approves and cancels party membership status. Concerning party congresses, we explore who summons them, and how often these events are held. In regard to territorial branches' autonomy, we study who is in the position to establish and dissolve them.

Altogether, the analysis of leader selection, candidate selection and decision-making power over membership, party congresses and the affairs of territorial branches will give us a clear picture of how each breakaway party approaches self-organization, and what this means for its IPD. In regard to data, our qualitative in-depth analysis draws from different types of primary data. Concretely, this includes various internal documents such as annual party reports, media reports, and party statutes. It is noteworthy that this methodological approach naturally has its limitations, as there always exists a certain space for disparity between the formal rules set forth in party documents and the informal practices within party organizations. The challenge to empirically capture this variation in party politics research is often bridged by conducting interviews with individuals from these institutions, which is a method we would like to include in our future studies on this topic.

8. Empirical evidence

In this section, we focus on the analysis of our findings and discussion of their implications for our three breakaway parties. Concretely, we focus on three aspects of party organization vis-a-vis the theory of political personalization and IPD – leader selection, candidate selection, and the role of party leaders within party structures. The latter indicator itself includes three dimensions – the decision-making capacity of the party leader in regard to membership, party congresses and territorial branches.

9. **Leader and candidate selection**

First we analyse who selects the party leader and candidates. Figure 2 illustrates the details of leader and candidate selection in for each case.

Starting with SMER-SD and its breakaway party HLAS-SD, our findings show that in regard to party leader's selection, these two parties are relatively similar. In both of them, the delegates of the party congress are solely responsible for selecting the party leader. The only difference between them is in the length of term of office of party leader. While in the former, the party leader serves in his/her position indefinitely until he/she is expelled by the congress delegates, in the latter case, party leaders are selected for a period of four years.

In regard to candidate selection, SMER-SD's candidates are selected by the party presidency, but the party leader must first propose this step (Article 12, SMER 2020). HLAS-SD's party statutes do not stipulate that party leaders be involved in this process, making the process less personalized and less dependent on the party leader (Article 5, HLAS 2021).

Regarding OĽaNO, the party statutes state that the party leader is selected only by party members participating in the party congress (Article 7, OLANO 2017), which in itself is a relatively restrictive measure considering the low number of party members – 61 in 2022 (Výročná správa, 2023). Although at first sight the rule does not seem to be strict, in reality only a relatively small circle of close associates decides about the post of party leader. For the Democrats, a more standard procedure is in place: party congress delegates select the party leader, who serves for only two years (Article 11, DEMOKRATI 2023). In contrast, in the parent party OĽaNO, party leaders remain in position for four years. In addition, another rather symbolic step towards 'de-personalization' within the Democrats was made when the party leader Heger stepped down as an electoral leader ahead of the recent election, allowing the former For the People MP Letanovská to take his place as the main face of the party in elections (Denník N, 2023), which at least publicly was a crucial decision.

As for SMER-SD (and unlike HLAS-SD), in OĽaNO the party leader proposes the candidate selection, which is executed by the party presidency; in the Democrats, only the party presidency runs the process without involving the leader individually.

Moving on to ĽSNS, the party congress delegates select the party leader (Article 9, LSNS 2021), but his/her appointment in this position is not time-limited (we will explain the relevance of this measure later in our analysis). Republika's party leader is selected by congress delegates for a period of four years (Article 8, REPUBLIKA 2021). In both ĽSNS and Republika, candidates are selected by the party presidency. In Republika, however, the personalized nature of the party was diminished by publicly de-radicalizing its rhetoric, and simultaneously by focusing on presenting two main faces in the recent campaign – Milan Uhrík and

Milan Mazurek, instead of single party leader (which was the custom in ĽSNS in the past).

The findings here illustrate that in regard to leader and candidate selection, the parent parties are more personalized than their breakaway parties. SMER-SD and ĽSNS do not limit the period for which leaders hold office at all, while OĽaNO effectively restricts who can select the party leader by having a limited number of party members. Concerning candidate selection, in contrast to all the breakaway parties (which are already relatively centralized by having the party presidency selecting candidates), two of the parent parties (SMER-SD and OĽaNO) go even further by having their party leader involved as the initiator of selecting them.

Figure 2:
Leader and candidate selection

Party Name	Who selects leader/their term of office	Who selects candidates
SMER-SD	Party congress delegates/Limited to the expel by party congress delegates	Party presidency on the proposal of the party leader
HLAS-SD	Party congress delegates/4 years	Party presidency
OĽaNO	Party members that participate on the party congress/4 years	Party presidency on the proposal of the party leader
Democrats	Party congress delegates/up to 2 years	Party presidency
ĽSNS	Party congress delegates/Limited to the expel by party congress delegates	Party presidency
Republika	Party congress delegates/ 4 years	Party presidency

Source: Authors' elaboration based on party statutes.

10. Role of party leader in party structures

In this part of our analysis, we examine the role of party leader in party organization in regard to three dimensions of the leader's decision-making capacity. Concretely, this involves the party leader's power to make decisions about party membership, party congresses and territorial branches. See Figure 3 which illustrates the role of the party leader in regard to these three dimensions in each case.

Figure 3:
Role of party leader in party structures

Party Name	Who approves/removes members	Who summons congress/congress frequency	Who establishes/dissolves territorial branches
SMER-SD	District organization/District organization. The party presidency can expel a member who resigned from the party's parliamentary or MEP club	Party presidency/Minimally once per two years	Party presidency/Party presidency
HLAS-SD	Party presidency (or a regional organization authorized by it)/Party presidency	Party leader/Minimally once per two years or if requested by the refereeing commission, half of the party presidency or 4 regional councils	Party presidency on the proposal of the party leader/Party presidency on the proposal of the party leader
OĽaNO	Party leader or party presidency/Party leader or party presidency	Party leader/Convened by the party leader. No regularity is prescribed.	Territorial structures are not present
Democrats	Party presidency on the proposal of the general secretary/Party presidency on the proposal of the general secretary	Party presidency/Minimally once per two years	Party presidency on the proposal of the general secretary/Party presidency on the proposal of the general secretary
ĽSNS	Party leader/Party presidency	Party leader/When it is called by 2/3 of party presidency	Party leader/Party leader
Republika	Party presidency (or a regional organization authorized by it)/Party presidency	Party leader/Minimally once a year or when it is called by 2/3 of party presidency	Party presidency on the proposal of the party leader/Party presidency on the proposal of the party leader

Source: Authors' elaboration based on party statutes.

In this analysis, we start with party membership. Regarding SMER-SD and HLAS-SD, our data show that the breakaway party actually follows a more centralized and hierarchical model than the parent party. In HLAS-SD, the party presidency is solely responsible for approving and removing all party members

(although in regard to approval it may authorize the regional branch on its be-half) (Article 5, HLAS 2021). In contrast, SMER-SD has a much more IPD-friendly decentralized approach towards accepting and removing members (Article 7, SMER 2020). Our expectation is that this party membership strategy in SMER-SD comes from its social democratic roots.

In contrast, for OĽaNO and the Democrats, the parent party follows a far more personalized mode of membership, since all members are approved and removed by the party leader himself/herself. The party presidency is also involved, but the party leader maintains the main decision-making power in this regard (Article 8, OLANO 2017). Likewise, in ĽSNS the party leader has a decisive role in admitting all new members to the party. The party presidency only decides on removal from the party, but anyone wanting to join the party needs to be ap-proved solely by the party leader himself/herself (Article 11, LSNS 2021). In this respect, the breakaway Republika is far less personalized than its parent party. While the party presidency removes party members, it may delegate the approval of new members to regional branches, which represents a relatively decentralized compromise in regard to IPD (Article 6, REPUBLIKA 2021).

Regarding party congresses, our findings indicate that SMER-SD as the parent party again represents a less personalized case than its breakaway party HLAS-SD. While in SMER-SD the party presidency calls for new a congress to convene at least once every two years (Article 11, SMER 2020), in HLAS-SD this is the sole responsibility of the party leader (Article 4, HLAS 2021). However, the party leader is bound by several rules stipulating when it should happen – at least once per two years, or if requested by one of the different bodies of the party organization (e.g. the referee commission, half of the members of the party presidency, or four of the party's regional councils).

In the case of OĽaNO and the Democrats, the parent party follows the more personalized model, possibly the most personalized of all the parties being con-sidered here. OĽaNO's leader alone decides whether to summon a party congress, and the party statutes are not even transparent in regard to any timeline for it. This means that in OĽaNO, the party leader de facto has a free hand in organizing party congresses, and nobody else within the party can influence it (Article 8, OLANO 2017). In sharp contrast to its parent party, the Democrats convene a party congress every two years, and the party presidency is transparently responsible for this event (Article 11, DEMOKRATI 2023). However, perhaps the most complex and restrictive system of summoning a congress is found in ĽSNS. The leader's term in office is not time-limited, but he/she can only be replaced by a vote during a party congress. Importantly, ĽSNS can call for a congress only when either the party leader requests it, or when two thirds of the party presidency vote for it, but in ĽSNS the party leader handpicks half of the party presidency (Article 9, LSNS 2021). This means that the party leader de facto secures his position indef-initely. The only set of events that might allow for him/her to be outmanoeuvred

is if the party elite leaves the party and establishes a new one (which is exactly what happened with Republika).

In regard to the autonomy of the party leader over territorial branches, again the rules of HLAS-SD provide more power to the party leader than in its parent SMER-SD party. As such, HLAS-SD is more personalized in this regard, too. While in SMER-SD the party presidency votes and decides collectively on the establishment and dissolving of territorial branches (Article 12, SMER 2020), in HLAS-SD only the party leader has power to propose this (Article 2 and 3, HLAS 2021). Regarding the administration of territorial branches, OĽaNO is the perfect example of a centralized party organization since the party has no territorial branches. Contrarily, in the breakaway Democrats, the party presidency establishes and dissolves branches when instructed to do so by the general secretary of the party (Article 15, DEMOKRATI 2023).

In ĽSNS, all local matters are decided solely by the party leader, making it an extremely personalized party (Article 17, LSNS 2021). Republika follows a similar approach in regard to establishing or dissolving territorial branches, but in a slightly more depersonalized mode. The party presidency makes decisions over these party organizational changes, but only when the party leader proposes to do so (Article 13, REPUBLIKA 2021).

11. Conclusion

Our findings highlight how the party organizational features and IPD of the three Slovak breakaway parties compare to their parent parties. We expected that the organizational setup of our breakaway parties would follow that of their parent parties, which should have been reflected in their levels of institutional personalization and in turn IPD. Our findings do not indicate that the majority of the breakaway parties followed their parent parties in regard to how they are organized (i.e. in the level of institutional personalization and in turn IPD). It seems that, overall, the individuals who established the new breakaway parties may have acted in a reactive way, implementing different rules for organizing their new parties in order to avoid the kinds of developments that motivated them to depart their original parties in the first place.

Interestingly, although our analysis does not cover this, the election results indicate that the longer the break-away parties exist, the greater electoral success they achieve.

The findings related to the organizational features of our breakaway parties are not unambiguous in that regard. In the cases of the Democrats and Republika, these two parties are organized along different, far less-personalized lines their parent parties (OĽaNO and ĽSNS). The party statutes of both of these breakaway

parties lead to a less centralized and less personalized organizational setup than in their parent parties. Unlike OĽaNO and ĽSNS, where party leaders meddle significantly in the vast majority of crucial decisions, for instance in the selection of candidates, assembling party congresses, or making decisions about territorial branches and party membership, the Democrats and Republika opted for a more decentralized approach where decision-making powers are divided and delegated to different bodies of the organization. Overall, the power to make many decisions is not vested solely in the party leader, as is the case for their parent parties.

In contrast to the Democrats and Republika, HLAS-SD is a breakaway party whose statutes clearly favour the more centralized personalized approach to party organization. For HLAS-SD this is the case across the majority of indicators, more so than for its parent party SMER-SD – in regard to decisions over membership, congresses as well as territorial branches. Such a finding is puzzling, considering that HLAS-SD is the only one of the three breakaway parties that succeeded in securing seats in the recent general elections.

We also expected the party leaders of our breakaway parties to maintain control over the leader selection process as a safeguard of their own positions. Our findings do not indicate that the breakaway parties sustain control over the party leader selection process to the degree measured in their parent parties. While the party leaders in SMER-SD and ĽSNS have some sort of guarantee since their positions are not time-limited, the OĽaNO leader's position is more 'secure' since his/her fate is in the hands of only a limited number of party members. In contrast to their parent parties, HLAS-SD, the Democrats and Republika have relatively standard rules regarding leader selection, where leaders are selected by party congress delegates for a specific period of time.

Lastly, we expected that in the breakaway parties, leaders would have significant decision-making power over party structures. Regarding the Democrats and Republika, contrary to our third expectation, the party leaders' role in decision-making processes is not as important as in their parent parties. While within the parent parties the leader selects or removes members (and controls territorial branches, as well as congresses), in these two breakaway parties the decision-making structure is more decentralized and delegated to different levels of party organization, such as the party presidency or regional branches. However, consistent with what we expected, the role of party leader is significant in the third breakaway party – HLAS-SD, where the party leader maintains a relatively significant role. He/she proposes the establishment and dissolution of territorial branches and has more say in summoning the party congresses. Perhaps interestingly, however, is that in HLAS-SD, although it is formally on the more personalized side of our breakaway parties, the negotiation talks held after the elections signalled that the position of party leader Pellegrini may not be as firm. While the party leader attempted to initiate discussing a potential coa-

lition government with Progressive Slovakia, the party elite of HLAS-SD (largely composed of former SMER-SD MPs) overturned this effort and moved towards forming the government with SMER-SD instead (Grim, 2023).

To return to the existing theory and discuss our findings in light of it, our analysis demonstrates that breakaway parties exhibit a higher degree of transparency in their internal workings compared to their parent parties. This transparency is particularly evident in the selection of leaders, demonstrated through regularly held party congresses and clearly defined timelines for the leader's mandate (Cross & Blais, 2012, Scarrow, 2005). However, when it comes to candidate selection, the breakaway parties have not embraced greater inclusiveness, which would allow members to actively engage in this crucial process (Barnea & Rahat, 2007; Hazat & Rahat, 2010; Katz, 2001; Rahat, 2009). Qualitatively speaking, there is a noticeable trend towards intra-party depersonalization in most cases. From the perspective of IPD theory (Cross & Katz, 2013; Ignazi, 2020), this shift does not significantly enhance the opportunity for the broader membership base to participate in internal decision-making processes.

References:

Aylott, N., & Bolin, N. (2016). Managed intra-party democracy. *Party Politics*, *23*(1), 55–65. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068816655569

Balmas, M., Rahat, G., Sheafer, T., & Shenhav, S. R. (2012). Two routes to personalized politics. *Party Politics*, *20*(1), 37–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068811436037

Barnea, S., & Rahat, G. (2007). Reforming Candidate Selection Methods: A three-level approach. *Party Politics*, *13*(3), 375–394. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068807075942

Bennich-Björkman, L. (2006). New Political Parties in Central and Eastern Europe. *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift*, *108*(2).

Biezen, I. van, & Poguntke, T. (2014). The decline of membership-based politics. *Party Politics*, *20*(2), 205–216. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068813519969

Biró, M. (2022, December 16). Z klubu OĽaNO odchádza desať poslancov občiansko-demokratickej platformy. Retrieved from https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/NZGGMtE/z-klubu-olano-odchadza-desat-poslancov-obciansko-demokratickej-platformy/

Bolleyer, N. (2013). *New Parties in Old Party Systems: Persistence and Decline in Seventeen Democracies*. New York, NY: Oxford Oxford University Press.

Bolleyer, N. & Bytzek, E. (2013). Origins of party formation and new party success in advanced democracies. *European Journal of Political Research,* 52, 773–796.

Bos, L., & van der Brug, W. (2010). Public images of leaders of anti-immigration parties: Perceptions of legitimacy and effectiveness. *Party Politics, 16*(6), 777–799. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068809346004

Boucek, F. (2009). Rethinking Factionalism: Typologies, Intra-Party Dynamics and Three Faces of Factionalism. *Party Politics*, *15*(4), 455–485. doi:10.1177/1354068809334553

Cirhan, T. (2023). *Party Organization and Electoral Success of New Anti-Establishment Parties*. Milton Park: Routledge.

Cross, W., & Blais, A. (2012). Who selects the party leader? *Party Politics*, *18*(2), 127–150. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068810382935

Cross, W. P., & Katz, R. S. (2013). *The challenges of intra-party democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

ČTK, & TASR. (2006, March 1). Najvyšší súd rozpustil Slovenskú pospolitosť. Retrieved from https://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/150013-najvyssi-sud-rozpustil-slovensku-pospolitost/

De Vries, C., & Hobolt, S. (2020). The Rise of Challenger Parties. *Political Insight*, *11*(3), 16–19. https://doi.org/10.1177/2041905820958817

Demokrati. (2023). *Stanovy politickej strany*. Retrieved from https://www.smedemokrati.sk/wp-content/themes/demokrati_theme/Demokrati_Stanovy.pdf

Deník N. (2023, June 22). Heger nebude v čele kandidátky strany Demokrati. Retrieved from https://denikn.cz/minuta/1177362/

Deschouwer, K. (2008). *New Parties in Government: In Power for the First Time*. Routledge.

Drábik, J. (2023). 'With courage against the system.' The ideology of the people's party our Slovakia. *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, *30*(3), 417–434. https://doi.org/10.1080/25739638.2022.2164119

Echo24. (2020, May 26). Pellegrini vyzval Fica k odchodu z čela Směru - Echo24.cz. Retrieved from https://echo24.cz/a/Sy4jp/pellegrini-vyzval-fica-k-odchodu-z-cela-smeru

Engler, S. (2015). Corruption and Electoral Support for New Political Parties in Central and Eastern Europe. *West European Politics*, *39*(2), 278–304. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2015.1084127

Grim, J. (2023, October 1). Fico míří ke čtvrtému premiérství, nabízí se koalice Smeru, Hlasu a SNS. S vítězem chce jednat i KDH. Retrieved from https://www.irozhlas.cz/zpravy-svet/robert-fico-slovensko-premier-volby-smer-hlas-sns-kdh_2310010948_jgr

Gunther, R. (2001). *Parties, Politics, and Democracy in the New Southern Europe*. John Hopkins University Press.

Günther, R., & Diamond, L. (2003). Species of Political Parties: A New Typology. *Party Politics*, *9*(2), 167–199. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068803009002836

Hájek, A. (2018, March 15). Fico se smíchem podal demisi. Kiska sestavením vlády pověřil Pellegriniho. Retrieved from https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/zahranicni/fico-slovensko-demise-kiska-kuciak.A180315_075059_zahranicni_aha

Hanák, P. (2023, March 7). NA ROVINU s Eduardom Hegerom: Nie som opozičný premiér. Chcem stranu na dlhé roky. Retrieved from https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/8aJWzNv/na-rovinu-s-eduardom-hegerom-nie-som-opozicny-premier-chcem-stranu-na-dlhe-roky/

Hanley, S. (2012). Dynamics of new party formation in the Czech Republic 1996–2010: looking for the origins of a 'political earthquake.' *East European Politics*, *28*(2), 119–143. https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2012.669733

Harris, C. (2019, February 21). One year on: how has journalist Jan Kuciak's murder changed Slovakia? Retrieved from https://www.euronews.com/2019/02/21/jan-kuciak-murder-how-has-journalist-s-slaying-changed-slovakia?fbclid=IwAR1MhpQ6PxbetdMMCpUg6EJCgphOVtUiI7yR_xN6i27-dEZ7qqopB10h_bo

Hartleb, F. (2012). All tomorrow's parties: The changing face of European party politics. *European View*, *11*(2), 277–277. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12290-012-0230-6

Haughton, T., & Deegan-Krause, K. (2020). *The new party challenge: changing cycles of party birth and death in central europe and beyond*. Oxford University Press.

Havlík, V., Nemčok, M., Spáč, P., & Zagrapan, J. (2020). The 2020 Parliamentary Elections in Slovakia Steadily Turbulent Change of Direction. *Politologický Časopis – Czech Journal of Political Science*, *27*(3), 221–234. https://doi.org/10.5817/pc2020-3-221

Haydanka, Y. (2021). Authoritarization or Democratization: Directions of Electoral Processes in Present-Day Slovakia. *Journal of Comparative Politics*, *14*(2), 2021. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.24224/2227-1295-2020-8-367-382%E2%80%8B

Hazan, R. Y., & Rahaṭ G. (2010). *Democracy within parties: candidate selection methods and their political consequences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

HLAS – sociálna demokracia. (2021). *STANOVY politickej strany*. Retrieved from https://strana-hlas.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Stanovy-strany-HLAS-1.pdf

Hloušek, V. (2015). Two types of presidentialization in the party politics of Central Eastern Europe. *Italian Political Science Review/Rivista Italiana Di Scienza Politica*, *45*(3), 277–299. https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2015.17

Hloušek, V., & Kopeček, L. (2019). How to run an efficient political machine: the billionaire Andrej Babiš and his political-business project. *Politics in Central Europe*, *15*(1), 35–54. https://doi.org/10.2478/pce-2019-0002

Hloušek, V., Kopeček, L., & Vodová, P. (2021). *The rise of entrepreneurial parties in european politics*. Berlin: Springer.

Holroyd, M. (2021, March 28). Slovakia's prime minister steps down amid Sputnik V vaccine scandal. Retrieved from https://www.euronews.com/2021/03/28/slovakia-s-prime-minister-to-step-down-amid-sputnik-v-vaccine-scandal

Hopkin, J. (2001). Bringing the Members Back in? Democratizing candidate selection in Britain and Spain. *Party Politics*, 7(3), 343–361. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068801007003005

Ignazi, P. (2020). The four knights of intra-party democracy. Party Politics, 26(1), 135406881875459. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068818754599

Ignazi, P. (1996). The Crisis of Parties and the Rise of New Political Parties. *Party Politics*, 2(4), 549–566. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068896002004007

Jancura, V. (2016, March 16). Pozor, fašizmus dokáže meniť farbu. Retrieved from https://zurnal.pravda.sk/neznama-historia/clanok/386669-pozor-fasizmus-dokaze-menit-farbu/

Jankowski, M., Juen, C.-M., & Tepe, M. (2020). The impact of anti-establishment parties on the electoral success of independent local lists: Evidence from Germany. *Party Politics*, 28(1), 135406882096543. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068820965430

Karvonen, L. (2010). *The personalisation of politics: A study of parliamentary democracies*. ECPR Press.

Katz, R. S. (2001). The Problem of Candidate Selection and Models of Party Democracy. *Party Politics*, 7(3), 277–296. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068801007003002

Kern, M. (2018, March 18). Prečo je Fico stale šéf a Pellegrini bude len polovičný premiér. Denník N. Retrieved from https://dennikn.sk/1064006/preco-je-fico-stale-sef-a-pellegrini-bude-len-polovicny-premier/

Kluknavská, A. (2013). Od Štúra k parazitom: Tematická adaptácia krajnej pravice v parlamentných voľbách na Slovensku. *Politologický Časopis*, 20(3). https://doi.org/10.5817/pc2013-3-258

Krkoška, D. (2020, November 28). Slovenský expremiér Pellegrini se stal šéfem nové strany Hlas-SD. Retrieved from https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/svet/3232950-slovensky-expremier-pellegrini-se-stal-sefem-nove-strany-hlas-sd

Kubát, M., & Hartliński, M. (2019). Party Leaders in the Czech Populist Parties and Movements. *Polish Political Science Review*, 7(1), 107–119. https://doi.org/10.2478/ppsr-2019-0007

Kyseľ, T. (2021, March 8). Uhrík získal stranu Ivana Gašparoviča. Dostal ju od muža, ktorý vybavil stranu aj Kollárovi. Retrieved from https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/871114/uhrik-ziskal-stranu-ivana-gasparovica-dostal-ju-od-muza-ktory-vybavil-stranu-aj-kollarovi/

ĽS Naše Slovensko. (2021). *Stanovy politickej strany Kotlebovci – Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko*. Retrieved from http://www.lsnaseslovensko.sk/stanovy.pdf

Lubomír Kopeček. (2018). *Já platím, já rozhoduji!: političtí podnikatelé a jejich strany*. Brno: B&P Publishing.

Lucardie, P. (2000). Prophets, Purifiers and Prolocutors: Towards a theory on the emergence of new parties. *Party Politics*, 6(2), 175–185. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068800006002003

Malová, D., & Dolný, B. (2016). Economy and Democracy in Slovakia during the Crisis: From a Laggard to the EU Core. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 63(5-6), 300–312. https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2016.1200952

Marušiak, J. (2021). Slovak, not Brussels Social Democracy. *Politologický Časopis – Czech Journal of Political Science*, 28(1), 37–58. https://doi.org/10.5817/pc2021-1-37

McAllister, I. (2007). The Personalization of Politics. In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*. Oxford University Press.

Meijers, M. J., & Zaslove, A. (2021). Measuring Populism in Political Parties: Appraisal of a New Approach. *Comparative Political Studies*, 54(2), 001041402093808. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414020938081

Mesežnikov, G., & Gyárfášová, O. (2016). *Súčasný pravicový extrémizmus a ultranacionalizmus na Slovensku*. IVO – Inštitút pre verejné otázky.

OBYČAJNÍ ĽUDIA a nezávislé osobnosti – OĽANO. (2023). Výročná správa za rok 2022. In *Ministerstvo vnútra* (pp. 1–42). Retrieved from https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/statna_komisia_pre_volby/30_annual_report/ar2022/VS22_OLANO.pdf

OBYČAJNÍ ĽUDIA a pratelia (OĽANO), Nezávislí kandidáti (NEKA), Nova, Slobodní a zodpovední, Pačivale Roma, Magyar Szívek. (2017, August 7). Stanovy. Retrieved from https://www.obycajniludia.sk/stanovy/

Paolucci, C. (2006). The nature of Forza Italia and the Italian transition. *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, 8(2), 163–178. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613190600787260

Pedersen, H. H., & Rahat, G. (2019). Introduction: Political personalization and personalized politics within and beyond the behavioural arena. *Party Politics*, 27(2), 135406881985571. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068819855712

Poguntke, T., Scarrow, S. E., Webb, P. D., Allern, E. H., Aylott, N., van Biezen, I., … Rahat, G. (2016). Party rules, party resources and the politics of parliamentary democracies. *Party Politics*, 22(6), 661–678. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068816662493

Poguntke, T., & Webb, P. (2005). *The presidentialization of politics: a comparative study of modern democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rahat, G. (2009). Which Candidate Selection Method is the Most Democratic? *Government and Opposition*, 44(1), 68–90. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2008.01276.x

Rahat, G., & Kenig, O. (2018). *From party politics to personalized politics?: Party change and political personalization in democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rahat, G., & Sheafer, T. (2007). The Personalization(s) of Politics: Israel, 1949–2003. *Political Communication*, 24(1), 65–80. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600601128739

REPUBLIKA. (2021). STANOVY POLITICKÉHO HNUTIA REPUBLIKA. Retrieved from https://www.hnutie-republika.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/stanovy-konsolidovane-REPUBLIKA-22.6.2022.pdf.

Rochon, T. R. (1985). Mobilizers and Challengers: toward a theory of new party success. *International Political Science Review*, 6(4), 419–439. https://doi.org/10.1177/019251218500600404

Rolko, I. (2013). *Obyčajní Ľudia a nezávislé osobnosti: Formovanie a kampaň k parlamentným voľbám 2012* (Master's Thesis; pp. 1–91). Masarykova univerzita.

Rybář, M., & Spáč, P. (2020) *Social Origin Is No Destiny: Background, Institutionalization, and Electoral Performance of New Political Parties in Slovakia. East European Politics and Societies*, 34(3), 637-662.

Scarrow, S. (2005). Political parties and democracy in theoretical and practical perspectives: Implementing intra-party democracy. Retrieved from https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/1951_polpart_scarrow_110105_5.pdf

Sikk, A. (2005). How unstable? Volatility and the genuinely new parties in Eastern Europe. *European Journal of Political Research*, 44(3), 391–412. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2005.00232.x

Sliz, M. (2023, August 28). Príbeh Petra Pellegriniho: Stál verne pri Ficovi, neskôr ho chcel vymeniť a napokon s ním možno bude vládnuť. Retrieved from https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/luxVkg7/pribeh-petra-pellegriniho-stal-verne-pri-ficovi-neskor-ho-chcel-vymenit-a-napokon-s-nim-mozno-bude-vladnut/

SMER – sociálna demokracia. (2020). *STANOVY POLITICKEJ STRANY SMER – sociálna demokracia*. Retrieved from https://www.strana-smer.sk/storage/app/media/stanovy-smer-socialna-demokracia-18-7-2020-bratislava-uplne-znenie.pdf

Spirova. M. (2007). *Political Parties in Post-Communist Societies: Formation, Persistence, and Change*. Springer.

von dem Berge, B., & Obert, P. (2018). Intraparty democracy in Central and Eastern Europe: Explaining change and stability from 1989 until 2011. *Party Politics*, 24(6), 652–662. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068816688364

Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej Republiky. *Zákon o politických stranách a politických hnutiach*. 6 § (4 C.E.).

Zuzelka, L. (2022, December 15). Od drvivej výhry až po pád vlády. OĽaNO na čele s Matovičom má za sebou turbulentné roky. Retrieved from https://tvnoviny.sk/domace/clanok/387642-od-drvivej-vyhry-az-po-pad-vlady-OĽaNO-na-cele-s-matovicom-ma-za-sebou-turbulentne-roky?fbclid=IwAR3rQWuwFUhRnTssD_VMqVfbgS885uTtf9zhGqQd71mVcPB67iaQ_O9LU8k

Žúborová, V. (2015). Newcomers in Politics? The Success of New Political Parties in the Slovak and Czech Republic after 2010? *Baltic Journal of Law & Politics*, 8(2), 91–111. https://doi.org/10.1515/bjlp-2015-0020