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8. Slovakia

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In its ‘us or them’ politics of the mid-1990s, Slovakia emerged with one of the most polarized political systems in the post-communist sphere. The chasm between coalition and opposition parties went so deep that voters simply did not cross it, no matter how dissatisfied they became with their own side. Yet even when the gap was at its deepest, a well-trained student of Slovak public opinion could not have boarded a random tram and predicted which passers – young or old, expensively-dressed or shabby, well educated or not – supported which side. In fact, the deep divide among parties cut across many underlying social and cultural differences.

The tram-watcher’s observations would not be useless, however. The same characteristics that offered little insight into preference between opposition and coalition at the same time offered enough information for very good guesses about the riders’ attitudes on a whole variety of questions, particularly the desirability of economic reform. Divisions between these groups were also strong and not easily crossed, but they had little to do with political choice.

Slovakia during the 1990s thus possessed a sharp political divide without strong social roots and a strong social divide without much political relevance. In such cases, many of the standard tools for dealing with societal and political divisions break down. By rigid standards of definition, Slovakia lacked much in the way of cleavages. Its political divisions were softer, less rooted, and its more deeply rooted divisions remained largely non-political. And yet Slovakia’s political divisions still played a peculiarly strong role in shaping political outcomes, particularly the outcome of its democratic consolidation. An unusual configuration of attitudinal differences among successive coalitions and oppositions caused violent oscillation between near-authoritarianism and a reverence for democratic principles and began to weaken only with the most recent parliamentary election.

The peculiarities of Slovakia’s case provide strong motivation to study the phenomena associated with cleavages, but the absence of many ‘true’

cleavages in this environment suggests that the concept require some reconsideration. This chapter revisits the question of cleavage, finding important subsets – partial cleavages – that may be used to draw important distinctions even when society and politics are not driven in the same way at the same time. Applying the concepts of partial cleavage to Slovakia helps to explain the country’s political change since 1989 and to show the interaction between social roots and political party choice through the mediation of attitudes on questions of economy, national identity and authority. Further investigation uncovers the relative importance of social forces, institutions and even powerful individuals in shaping political outcomes in new – and established – democracies.

Cleavages and Partial Cleavages

Although Lipset and Rokkan began the serious study of cleavage as a political question in 1967, their work avoided both explicit definitions and offered a relatively cursory treatment of European political development after the 1920s (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Application of the cleavage concept to more contemporary developments requires a more explicit definition, as does any effort to apply quantitative data from surveys or elections. In 1970, Rae and Taylor obliged by identifying three fundamental types of cleavages: (1) ascriptive or ‘trait’ cleavages such as race or caste; (2) attitudinal or ‘opinion’ cleavages such as ideology or, less grandly, preference; and (3) behavioural or ‘act’ cleavages such as those elicited through voting and organizational membership (Rae and Taylor 1970, 1). In 1990, Bartolini and Mair employed a similar set of relationships but suggested a high degree of interconnection:

[T]he concept of cleavage can be seen to incorporate three levels: an *empirical* element, which identifies the empirical referent of the concept, and which we can define in social-structural terms; a *normative* element, that is the set of values and beliefs which provides a sense of identity and role to the empirical element, and which reflect the self-consciousness of the social group(s) involved; and an *organizational/behavioural* element, that is the set of individual interactions, institutions, and organizations, such as political parties, which develop as part of the cleavage (Bartolini and Mair 1990, 215).

In contrast to their predecessors, Bartolini and Mair explicitly define cleavages as consisting of all three aspects *together*, and this connection entails a new understanding of how cleavages function: ‘cleavages cannot be reduced simply to the outgrowths of social stratification; rather, social distinctions become cleavages when they are organized as such [...] A cleavage has therefore to be considered primarily as *a form of closure of social relationships*’ (Bartolini and Mair 1990, 216). This definition possesses certain intuitive advantage. ‘Cleavage’ as defined by Rae and Taylor exists everywhere and always; ‘cleavage’ as defined by Bartolini and Mair is far less common and depends on the overlapping of a variety of particular differences. The more completely these difference overlap, the

more complete is the closure of social relationships and the more significant are the political consequences.

Between ubiquitous but shallow ‘difference’ and deep but uncommon ‘cleavage’ lies an intermediate realm. Partial overlap between particular differences may play an important role in politics even if the resulting relationships do not approach the levels of closure found in full cleavages. Figure 8.1 offers a schematic explanation of the relationships between the concepts of difference and cleavage and the intermediate level defined in this chapter. Whereas differences can emerge in any of the three categories – hence demographic difference, attitudinal difference or behavioural difference – a full cleavage requires all three differences to overlap. Cases, where only two differences overlap, represent a third and often understudied category of partial cleavages; they take three distinct forms, based on the three possible pairings of two differences; looked at in the negative, these can also be understood as a full cleavage *minus* each particular kind of difference. Each of these partial cleavages – this chapter will use the label ‘divides’ – displays distinct characteristics and has its own distinct effects on the social and political fabric:

1. A *structural divide* consists of overlap between demographic and attitudinal elements. A structural divide involves a relationship between particular material conditions or identities and specific sets of beliefs such as, for example, pro-redistribution sentiments of working classes or attitudes favouring majority elections in a dominant ethnic group that may create a wide and enduring split in society. Yet without a behavioural component that produces, say, labour unions or labour parties, the split may yield little conflict and even less change. This corresponds quite closely to Mainwaring’s description of ‘salient social cleavages without clear party expressions’ (Mainwaring 1999, 46).

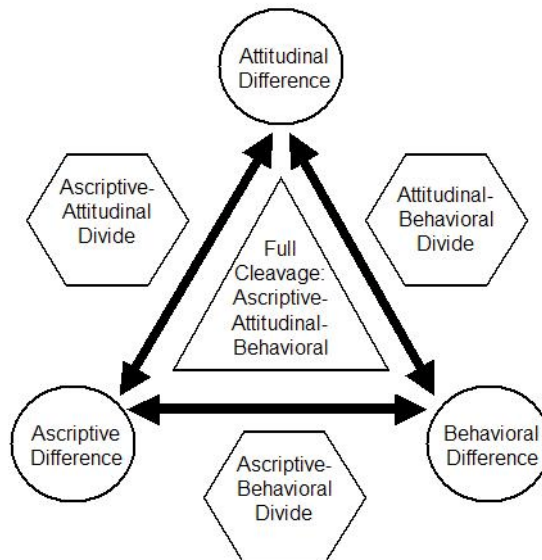
2. An *issue divide* consists of overlapping attitudinal and behavioural elements. As such, it involves a relationship between particular beliefs and particular party choices. These divides may have an immediate political impact, but they may not endure from one election to the next because they lack roots in society. In fact, observers often refer to such cleavages as ‘political cleavages’ to distinguish them from ‘social cleavages’ that involve ties to particular social groups. These cleavages also correspond closely to the ‘issue dimensions’ of party competition discussed by Lijphart (1984).

3. A *caste divide*, finally, consists of a direct overlap between ascriptive or demographic elements, on the one hand, and behavioural elements, on the other. Lacking an attitudinal component, this is the least familiar of the three divides, but it may come into being when social groups have not consciously articulated the nature of an underlying group identity. If the

members of a group can agree on questions of identity and formulate corresponding demands, this divide can develop into a full cleavage. If they cannot, caste divides are vulnerable to political entrepreneurs, who may try to seek support by emphasizing attitudinal factors that cut across group and party lines.

In Central and Eastern Europe, where few full cleavages have emerged, these divides provide useful tools of analysis. Furthermore, because cleavages do not always spring into existence fully formed, study of partial cleavages may offer insights into where cleavages come from and how they decline. The remainder of this chapter analyses the types of partial cleavages that have emerged in Slovakia and how they have interacted with one another.

Figure 8.1: Three-level model of cleavages and partial cleavages



Issue Divides in Slovakia

The notion of partial cleavages offers a useful framework for studying Slovakia. In particular, it is helpful to begin with the strongest of the partial cleavages, the attitudinal-behavioural or issue divide. Such divides emerged almost immediately, are easy to trace and played a demonstrably important role in Slovakia's political outcomes over time. The most convenient means of tracing Slovakia's issue divides is to look briefly at the country's recent political history, with particular emphasis on the attitudinal basis of party appeals and coalition agreements. During the 1990s, Slovakia experienced four cycles of parliamentary elections. Two successful no-confidence votes

meant mid-cycle changes in government, bringing the total to six governments between 1990 and early 2003 when this chapter was completed.

The first government of Vladimír Mečiar, June 1990 to April 1991

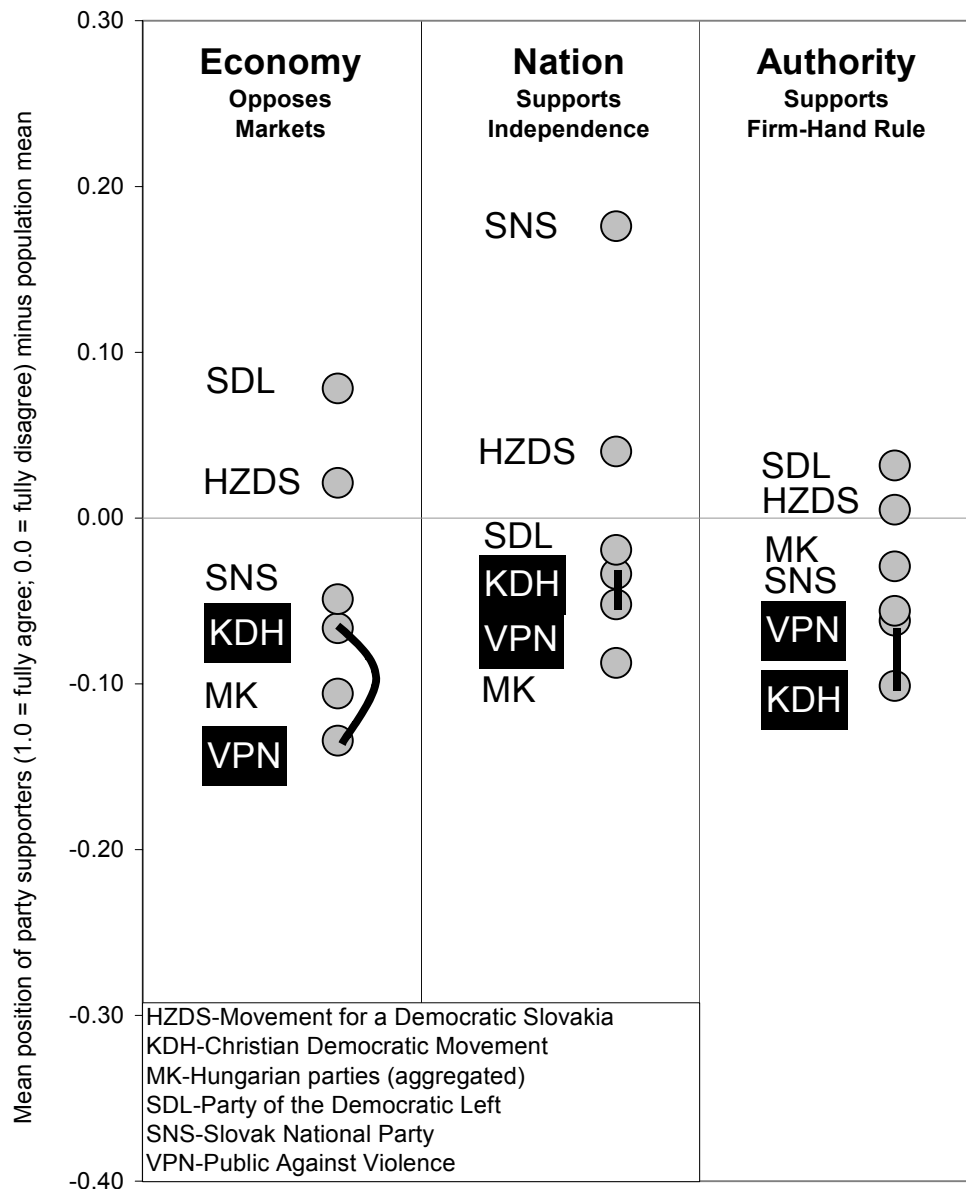
Public Against Violence (VPN), the broad anti-communist movement that led the 1989 revolution in Slovakia, took the largest single bloc of seats in Slovakia's first popularly elected parliament, but the movement fell far short of a majority and found it necessary to form a governing coalition that also included the second-place Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and representatives of smaller parties. Although far from unified on the role of the Church and national identity, the parties shared a common commitment to dismantling the institutional legacies of communism and creating a market economy. Opposition to the coalition, furthermore, remained divided into two groups with few common preferences: former communists with an interest in a common state, on the one hand, and the proponents of an independent Slovakia who tended to prefer open markets, on the other. The few methodologically sound public opinion surveys from this period show clear divisions only in a few areas: a sharp difference in attitudes on economic policy between the former communist Party of the Democratic Left (SĽ) and all other parties, and a similarly sharp difference in attitudes about Slovakia's place in Czechoslovakia between the pro-independence Slovak National Party (SNS) and all other parties.

As might be expected in a broad anti-communist movement without a coherent opposition, conflict emerged more from within than from without. Coalition conflicts followed no clear ideological course either, and the major internal division centred around personality and leadership style, ultimately leading to a sharp division within the top-echelon of VPN and ultimately the creation of two separate parties. A splinter party led by Premier Vladimír Mečiar, lured away the vast majority of VPN's voters, but the VPN leadership and other Mečiar opponents retained a majority of seats in the parliament's presidium and removed Mečiar from the premiership in the spring of 1991.

The government of Jan Čarnogúrsky, April 1991 until June 1992

After Mečiar's removal 1991, remnants of Public Against Violence (VPN) remained in government in a coalition led by the chair of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), Jan Čarnogúrsky. In the reshuffle the government did not much alter its pro-market and pro-Czechoslovakia orientations, but the emergence of an effective opposition party in the hands of a popular leader changed the political landscape.

Figure 8.2: Positions of party supporters on key issues during the Čarnogúrsky government (1991-92). Coalition parties highlighted, linked by line.



Source: Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Sociological Institute surveys, December 1991 and June 1992

Mečiar in opposition exhibited a stronger scepticism toward economic reform than had the VPN, but his big innovation came on the question of Slovakia's international position, on which he succeeded in formulating a position that called for greater autonomy for Slovakia without necessarily committing himself to Slovakia's independence. VPN voters overwhelmingly shifted to Mečiar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) and he succeeded in attracting supporters of other parties as well. Figure 8.2 provides the positions of party supporters on three key issue areas: the economy, the nation, and the exercise of political authority.

In staking out popular middle-ground positions on both national and

economic issues, Mečiar radically transformed the relationship between attitude and party support in Slovakia, adding a second, larger party to those who sought renegotiation of the Slovak–Czech relationship and at the same time undercutting left-right differences on economic questions, pulling voters away from parties at both extremes. The magnitude of these differences intensified as the issue of Slovakia's place within Czechoslovakia became increasingly important in the 1992 election campaign. On authority issues both the parties and their voters remained extremely diffuse. The former communist party in becoming the Party of the Democratic Left (SDE) abandoned hard line politics, though voters were slow to follow; Mečiar, while showing some hints of a ruthless political style did not yet begin to attract more hard-line voters.

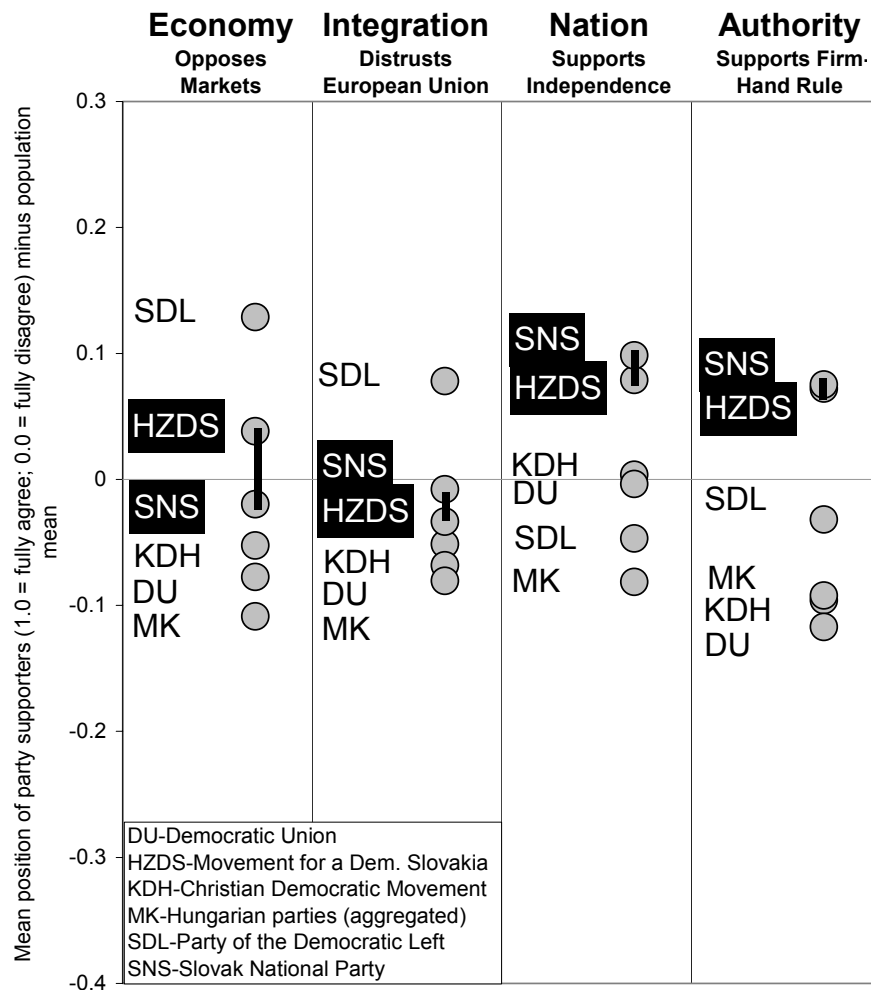
During this period, the institutional basis of Slovakia's party system also remained in flux and party organization remained fragile. In fact, the break-up of the VPN signalled the beginning of a wave of reshuffling that over the course of two years affected all major Slovak parties.

The second government of Vladimír Mečiar, June 1992 until March 1994

Mečiar returned to power in June 1992 in a major electoral victory, with the parliamentary deputies of his Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) outnumbering those of the next largest party by more than two-to-one and falling just two seats short of a majority. The combined force of Mečiar's victory in Slovakia coupled with the victory of an equal and opposite force in the Czech Republic – Vacláv Klaus – led quickly to negotiations about the status of Czechoslovakia between the two premiers and from there to separation. The respective goals of Mečiar and Klaus remain in dispute, though evidence strongly suggests that responsibility for separation lies as much with Klaus as with Mečiar (Innes 2001). Whatever his initial goals, Mečiar proclaimed the outcome as a victory and soon began to take credit for it. Unlike the Czech Republic, which could rely on a higher degree of institutional continuity and *de facto*, if not *de jure* status as Czechoslovakia's successor state, most Slovaks found the split to be traumatic, and many retained a strong preference for continued union with Czechs. Once independence had become reality, few of the leaders who had opposed the split dared to revisit the question, but the hostility between the two sides found its way into other issues and became increasingly sharp. Mečiar's aggressive political style created further rifts, some along the same opposition-coalition lines and others within his own party and within the closely associated Slovak National Party (SNS). The defeat and expulsion of more centrist factions within HZDS and SNS further pushed the governing parties even further toward extremes.

Figure 8.3: Positions of party supporters on key issues during the second Mečiar government (1992–94). Coalition partners highlighted, linked by

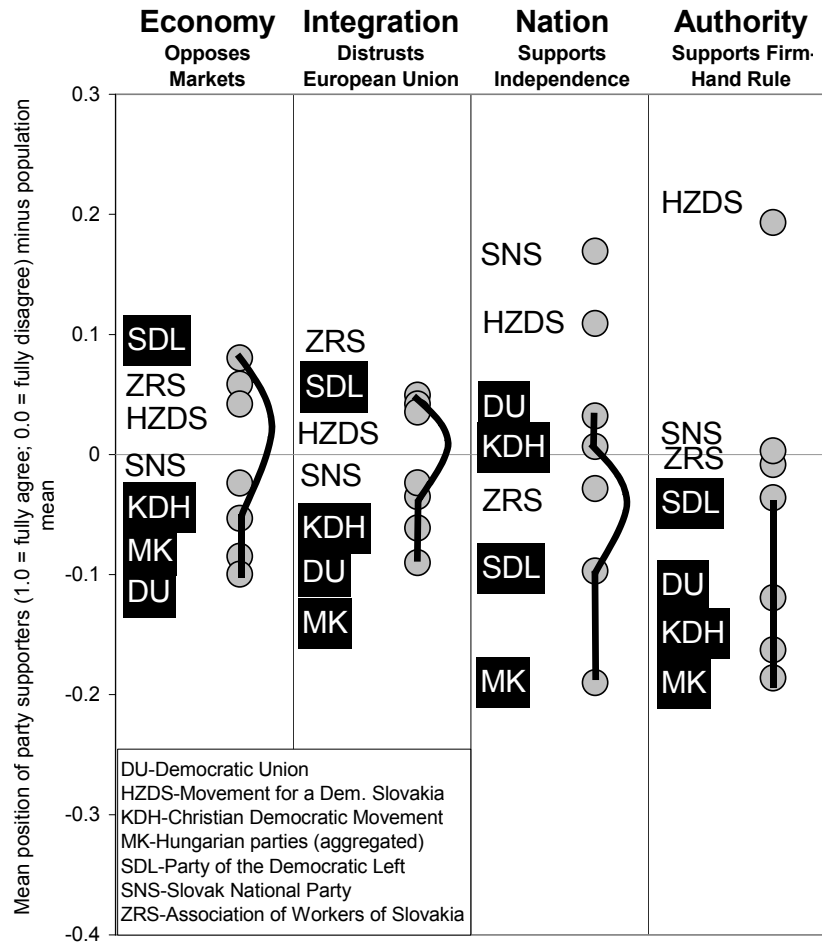
line.



Source: FOCUS survey, October 1993

Mečiar's embrace of independence and his increasingly aggressive political tactics cost him some votes but attracted others. The reshuffling of voters that began after independence deepened the differences among the support bases of various parties on questions of authority and independence, and in the process it erased many differences on economic questions. As Figure 8.3 indicates, HZDS and its closest ally, SNS, remained close to the centre on questions of economic policy, flanked on either side by opposition parties, though it maintained closer relationships with the left-leaning Party of the Democratic Left (SDE) than with the more market-oriented Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and the Hungarian coalition parties.

Figure 8.4: Positions of party supporters on key issues during the Moravčík government (1994). Coalition partners highlighted, linked by line.



Source: FOCUS Survey, May 1994

The government of Jozef Moravčík, March 1994 until December 1994

The brief Moravčík government is notable for the formal emergence of a coalition against Mečiar, in effect splitting the party system into roughly equal halves. Formed specifically in opposition to Mečiar's increasingly combative tactics toward his political opponents, the coalition brought defectors from the Slovak National Party (SNS) and Mečiar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) together with both the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and the former communist Party of the Democratic Left (SDL) with the tacit support of Slovakia's Hungarian parties. Since the coalition had little in common except a distrust of Mečiar, its members almost immediately agreed to call new elections for later in the same year. In their few efforts at policymaking, the coalition found it extremely difficult to negotiate the conditions for an additional round of voucher privatisation.

Surveys show that the voters of the coalition parties, like their party leaders, differed significantly. As Figure 8.4 indicates, coalition supporters occupied both poles of the socio-economic spectrum and differed widely on

questions of authority (with SDE standing closer to opposition parties than to its own partners). A similarly wide spread emerged on the question of independence, where most coalition party voters took mean positions closer to those of HZDS and SNS voters than those of the Hungarian minority parties upon whom the coalition depended for its majority.

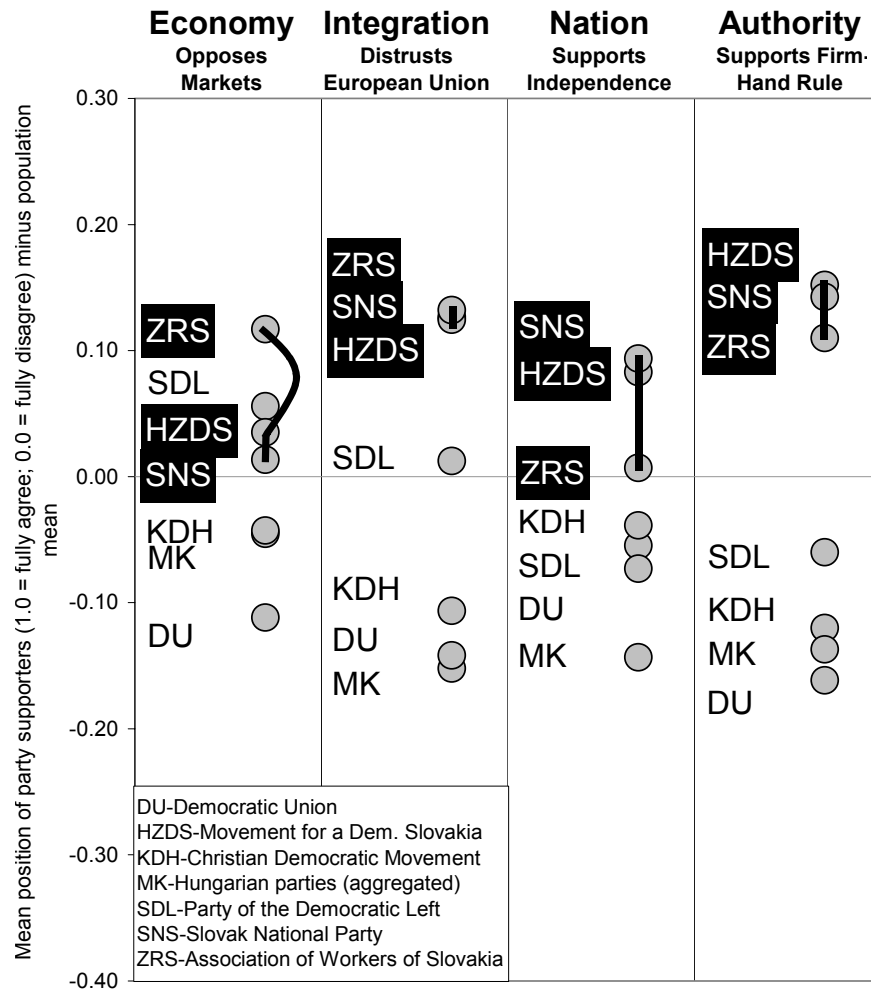
The party system during this period experienced continued moderate levels of fragmentation; both HZDS and SNS lost a large share of their parliamentary deputies while SDE lost significant numbers of voters to a splinter group from its own delegation. The process of reshuffling that occurred between early 1992 and mid-1994 did, however, contribute to a subsequent stabilizing of the political party system. Parties during this period show a slow progress toward increased organizational capacity, but still remained highly centralized, such that when serious disagreements emerged, party leaders opted to leave or to push others out rather than find compromise solutions.

The third government of Vladimír Mečiar, December 1994 to October 1998

In retrospect, it is clear that the Mečiar's third government marks not only the most serious post-communist threat to Slovakia's democratic development, but also the high point in the emergence of a authority- and nation-related questions as the dominant issue divide within Slovakia's politics. The coalition created by Mečiar in late 1994 shared a strong common focus on Slovak national identity and the dangers posed by non-Slovaks. Coalition parties shared a willingness to accept leadership by strong hand with little regard for the checks and balances necessary for the endurance of democracy. The parties opposing Mečiar held the opposite views on these questions. They defended the prerogatives of rival institutions and over time became more vocal in opposing the government's xenophobic rhetoric and in emphasizing the positive aspects of Western integration.

Even economic issues became subsumed within this framework. The Mečiar government did not abandon economic reform but re-oriented it to align with the needs of authority and nation: in public discussion, the government justified a switch from voucher privatisation to direct sales as 'creating a layer of *Slovak* capital'; in its actual distribution, the government heavily favoured those who were already tied to the regime or who were willing to remit some of their significant financial gains.

Figure 8.5: Positions of party supporters on key issues during the third Mečiar government (1994–98). Coalition partners highlighted, linked by line.



Source: FOCUS Surveys, December 1994, December 1995 and August 1997

As Figure 8.5 shows, public support for political parties mirrored these developments. The parties of the Mečiar coalition formed an increasingly coherent bloc on questions of authority and national questions. Furthermore, not only did the coalition parties become closer together on national issues, but attitudes on those very issues also became more coherent. Over time it became increasingly possible to predict Slovaks' attitudes toward the European Union, for example, on the basis of their attitudes toward Czechoslovakia or the Hungarian minority. By 1997, hostility toward Czechs, Hungarians, the West and 'non-national Slovaks' closely overlapped. On economic questions, HZDS and SNS supporters remained solidly in the middle, surrounded by opposition parties. Not until the mid-point of this government did this profile show any signs of change on economic questions. Although survey results offer an ambiguous picture, a number of polls conducted in 1997 and 1998 show the emergence of a left-wing orientation among HZDS and SNS voters.

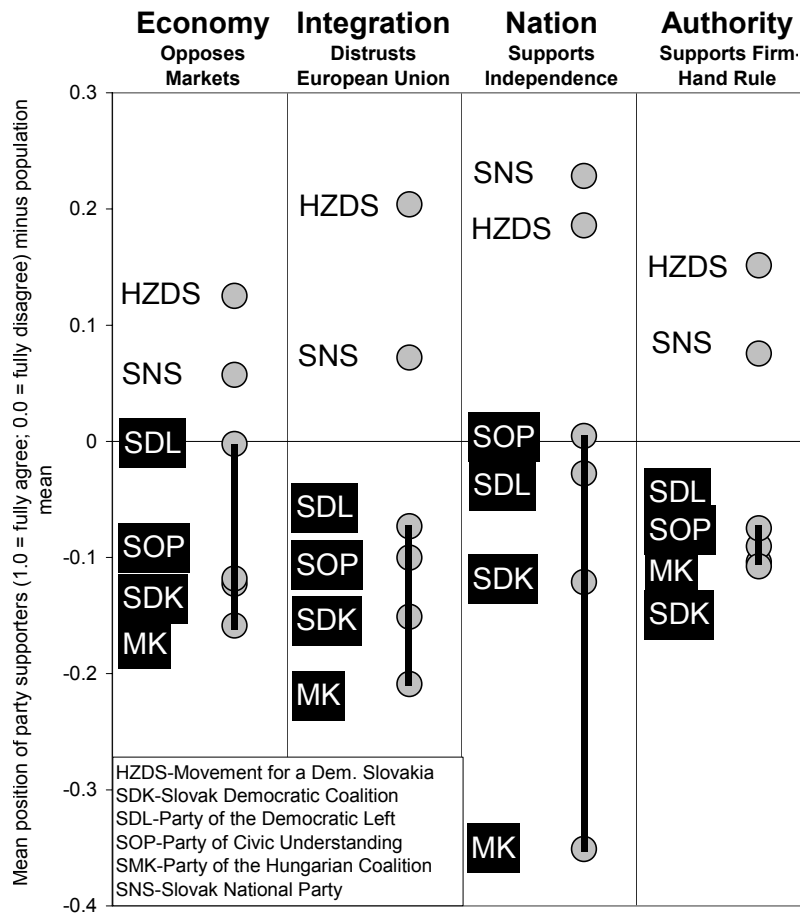
The first government of Mikulaš Dzurinda, October 1998 to October 2002

The polarization of Slovak voters around national and authority issues appears to have helped Mečiar maintain political control during the mid-1990s and to sustain the impression that the party did not need to adjust its increasingly xenophobic and authoritarian policies. The polarization worked against Mečiar in the long run, however. As Mečiar's violations of democratic norms became increasingly severe, opposition parties began to fear for their survival and began to engage in an otherwise unlikely degree of cooperation, even though they had little in common except an antipathy to Mečiar and a fear of authoritarianism and international isolation if he remained in power. Already by 1997, a coalition of parties ranging from Christian democratic to social democratic and green had begun to discuss an electoral coalition to defeat Mečiar. Changes in the electoral law aimed at disrupting this coalition only produced further integration, forcing the opposition coalition to re-invent itself as a single party: the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK). This party proved a strong rival to Mečiar's HZDS, and in the 1998 parliamentary election nearly matched its vote totals. In a repetition and amplification of the brief Moravčík coalition, SDK joined with the former communist SDE and the new Party of Civic Understanding (SOP) to form a coalition that also included (for the first time) the open participation of Slovakia's Hungarian parties. But having achieved its primary goals of removing Mečiar from office and re-opening dialogue with the West, the coalition members found it difficult to come to terms on other issues and engaged in long and bitter conflicts over economic reform, religion in schools, and the reform territorial administration, among other issues.

Mečiar's legacy continued well after his exclusion from government, but without his control over state media and privatisation resources, his party lost its dominant position and the issue basis of Slovakia's politics began to show slow signs of change. Questions of authority and nation continued to unite the anti-Mečiar parties and distinguish them from others, but as support for Mečiar's party declined (particularly in the final months of the campaign), these questions played a smaller role in the shaping of party choice. Almost all of the major new parties that emerged during this period stood on the pro-integration and anti-authority side of the population mean. As national and authority attitudes began to decline in importance, economic questions re-emerged. In a 2002 survey, questions of economic reform continued to show weaker ties to party choice than questions about authority or the nation, but at higher levels than previously recorded. Furthermore, support for the largest of the new parties, *Direction* (SMER) depended more on economic attitudes than authority or national questions.

Figure 8.6: Positions of party supporters on key issues during the first Dzurinda government (1998–2002). Coalition partners highlighted, linked

by line.



Source: FOCUS Survey, January 1999

Despite European and American fears about the possible return of Mečiar, the 2002 parliamentary elections confirmed the party's 1998 defeat. Isolated, plagued by internal strife and haemorrhaging voters, the Slovak National Party (SNS) found itself pushed into a marginal position and was unable to overcome the 5 per cent threshold for parliamentary representation. Splintering also sundered the former communist SDE, as voters opted instead either for the more radical (largely unreconstructed) Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS) or the idiosyncratic SMER. As a result of weakness among both of these families of parties, Mikulaš Dzurinda managed not only to retain the premiership but to do so on the basis of a smaller but more ideologically coherent coalition of parties with moderate pro-market, and pro-integration positions and a categorical rejection of Mečiar's authoritarian political tactics. After nearly a decade in which economic questions remained secondary or tertiary, Slovakia thus found itself again moving toward an economic issue dimension (*Figure 8.6*).

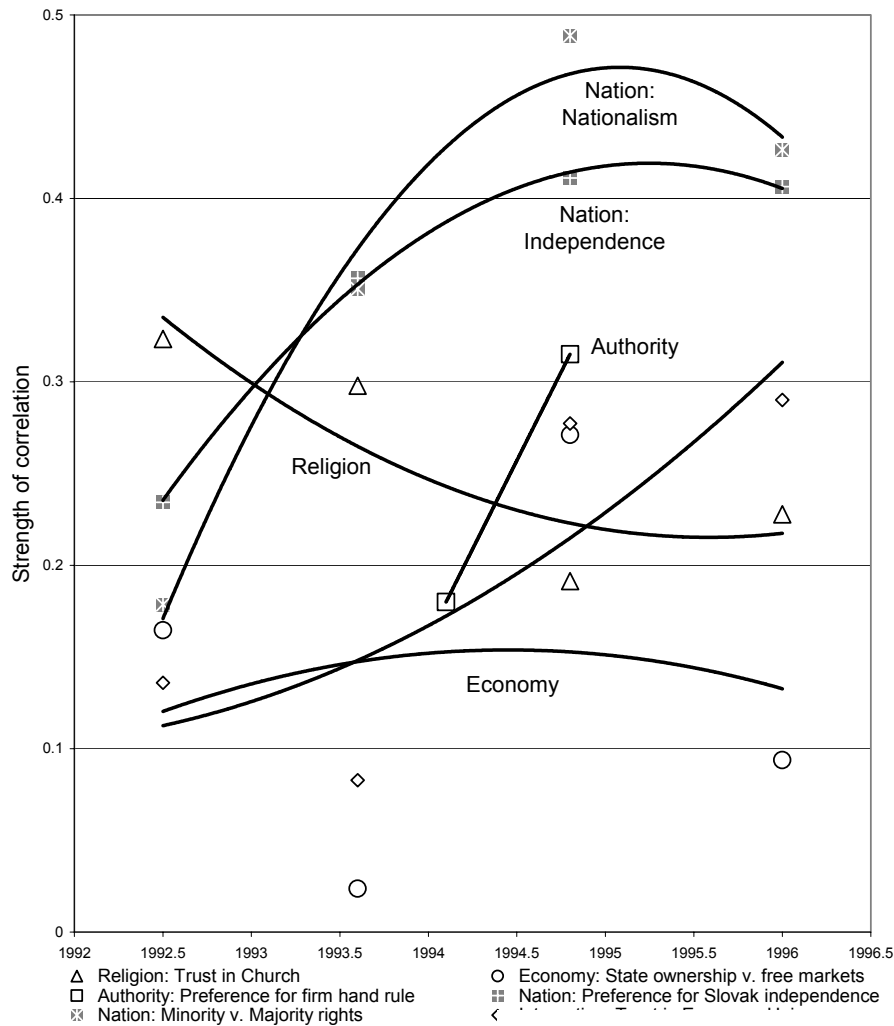
Issue Divides in Comparative Perspective

Close attention to the configuration of Slovakia's coalitions and its coalition voters suggests the emergence of strong issue divides involving national questions that began to emerge during 1992 and became the central focus of party competition and voter party choice during the 1990s. In parallel, Slovakia also experienced the emergence of a dimension based on questions of authority and its proper exercise within democracy. Although hampered by irregular sequences and changes in questions, survey evidence allows for a more systematic test of this pattern.

Kitschelt et al. measure the breadth of party positions, the coherence of positions within each party, the association of multiple issues, and the relationship to left and right (Kitschelt 1999). Slovakia challenges the presumption that 'left' and 'right' offer a universally meaningful scale for judging issue divides (Krause 2000). Other methods compare the attitudes of respondents on particular issues to their party preference. In a two party system, the relationship is not problematic but in multiparty systems the task becomes more difficult. Torcal looks at each possible pairing of major parties in an attempt to determine the attitudes most closely related to voter choice (Torcal and Mainwaring 2000). Knutsen and Scarborough use multinomial discriminant analysis and logistic analysis to explore the distinctiveness of voting within for the system as a whole (Knutsen and Scarborough 1995). The author, in previous works, uses thermometer scores of sympathy for or trusts in major parties to conduct a one-dimensional array of party preferences that can be compared to arrays of supporters on other issues (Krause 2000). Using the available data, all of these methods point to a similar set of developments.

Unfortunately, the data itself does not lend itself to a systematic analysis of issue divides. Ideal circumstances would involve long-term and frequent repetition of a stable questionnaire that included questions on economic policy, authority and democracy, religion and various aspects of national identity and sovereignty as well as detailed questions about political party preference. Most regular surveys fall far short in one or more of these categories, with too limited or unstable a set of questions or insufficient party information. The most comprehensive set of surveys – those conducted by the Central European University (CEU) – includes a wide set of questions consistently repeated. The time span of CEU surveys covers only a four-year period, however, and omits regular questions on authority or Western integration. Surveys conducted by FOCUS are less systematic and consistent in the phrasing of questions over time, but they cover a large number of important issues and span the entire decade of the 1990s.¹

Figure 8.7: Correlations between party preference and attitudes over time

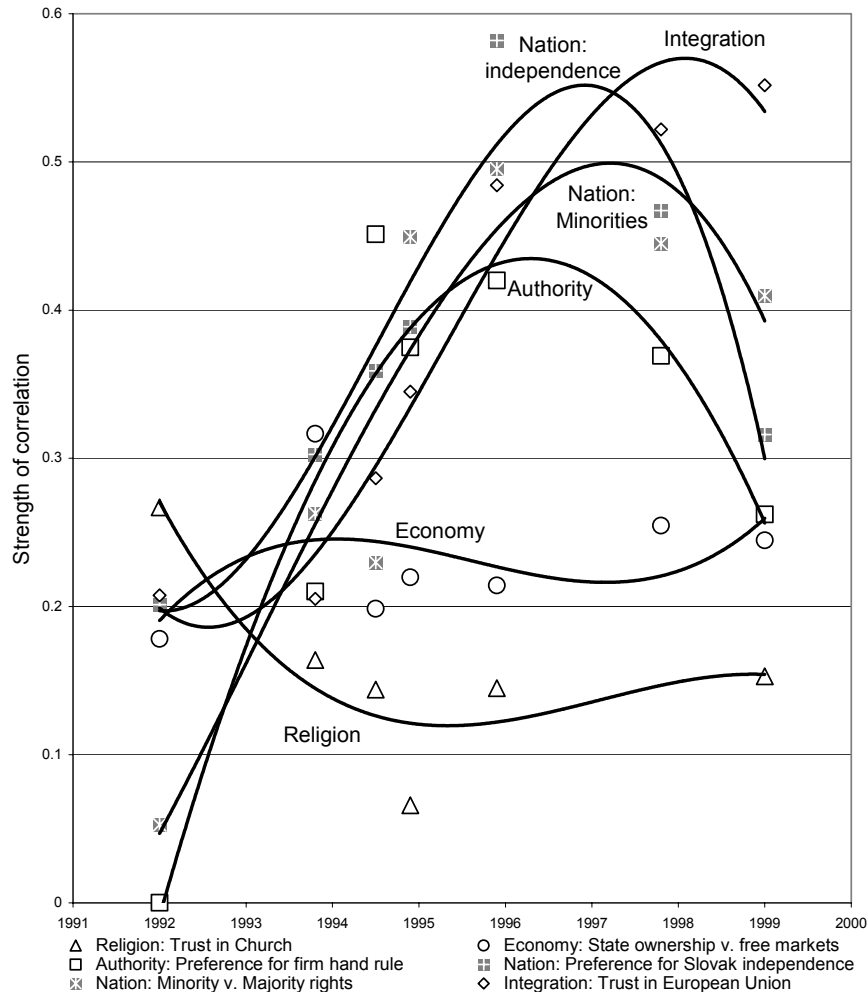


Source: CEU surveys 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996.

The large number and broad range of attitudinal measures in the CEU surveys allow not only for measures of the relationship between attitudes and party support but also for measures of how attitudes cluster together. Factor analysis allows for the creation of broad summary measures corresponding to particular themes. Analysis of data for Slovakia produces the same factors on all four annual surveys: economic reform, the costs of transition, the role of religion, nationalism and the split of Czechoslovakia.² Simple correlation between the mean positions of party supporters on this one-dimensional scale and the attitudinal factors shows high initial levels of correlation for economy, religion and national questions, but the former two decline steeply between 1992 and 1994 leaving the national dimension as the primary dimension (along with questions of authority on the two occasions that those appeared in the CEU surveys). Analysis checking for the positions of individual voters on the same spectrums yields similar results. As Figure 8.7 demonstrates, religion played a more important role in

party choice than economic or national questions. A dramatic rise in the role of national questions coupled with a gentle decline in the role of other attitudes demonstrates the clear supremacy of national issues by late 1994. A multiple regression using all five factors reproduces these same patterns.³

Figure 8.8: Correlations between party preference and attitudes over time



Source: CEU surveys 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996; FOCUS (1992–1999).

Results from FOCUS surveys displayed in Figure 8.8 confirm these same basic patterns and adds some additional information. Like the CEU surveys, the FOCUS surveys show a variety of attitudes related to overall party choice in 1992 and 1993, but by mid-1994 questions about authority and national related attitudes (toward firm-hand rule, the European Union, Slovakia's independence, minority rights, and Hungarians as potential neighbours) far surpass questions about economy or religion. The role of attitudes toward independence and firm-hand rule had declined by 1999 and economy showed a slight rise, but minority rights remained important and the role of the European Union continued to climb in importance from its

already high position.

Application of party coherence and party spread methods to CEU and FOCUS data also suggests that nation-related attitudes played a more important role in Slovakia than any other, though religion produced wider spreads and tighter coherence within parties in the early years of the 1990s and authority produced some of the same effects in the middle years of the decade. Discriminant analysis, which determines the ability of particular variables to distinguish groups of respondents, also suggests a marked distinctiveness in the relationship between religious attitudes and support for particular parties, but not for overall coalitions. Only national issues and occasionally authority issues distinguish party supporters from one another and at the same time distinguish coalition from opposition voters. In accord with previous tests, the role of national and authority issues shows a significant increase over time.⁴

Since none of the relevant series of surveys are available through 2002, it is difficult to offer comprehensive evidence of the emergence of a new, post-authority and even post-national issue divide. It is apparent from FOCUS surveys conducted through 1999 that while national issues overall had not declined in importance, the emphasis shifted from national questions with cultural overtones involving minority groups to national questions with stronger economic overtones, such as European integration.

Issue Divides in Structure and Culture

The interaction among issue divides in Slovakia in the 1990s offers a useful set of circumstances that can help explain not only Slovakia's own political development, but also the relationship among issue divides. In particular, it is important to understand why national questions trumped economic ones in the early 1990s, whereas national and authority questions developed in parallel and even appeared to reinforce one another. To answer these questions, it is necessary to look more deeply at the social and cultural roots of particular issue divides, to understand their relationship to structural divides based on the relationship between ascription and attitude.

The economic divide

The relationship between the economic issue divide and the underlying socio-economic structural divide is so pervasive in twentieth-century democracies that it receives little scrutiny. Lipset and Rokkan noted the pervasive nature of the worker/owner cleavage that linked occupational ascription with redistributive attitudes and support for social democratic, socialist and communist parties (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Rokkan noted the relatively homogeneous character of this cleavage across industrialized countries (Rokkan, Flora, Kuhnle and Urwin 1996), and Lijphart found socio-economic issues to be the only ones that proved at least moderately divisive in every one of the thirty-six countries in his survey (Lijphart

1999).⁵

Slovakia's political developments could in theory be explained by basic underlying weaknesses in the social conditions that might cause voters to take economic questions into account when making their choices. Investigations of social structure, however, show that measures of structural difference for Slovakia – class and occupational structure, income level and income distribution – did not differ markedly from those of the Czech Republic, Hungary or Poland (Matějů 2000; Tuček 1996). Furthermore, a wide range of opinion surveys indicates a relatively robust structural divide among Slovaks on socio-economic questions. Poorer, older and less educated Slovaks were considerably more likely than others to prefer socio-economic redistribution and the slowing of market-oriented reforms. Not only were the differences statistically significant, but rivalling those of the neighbouring Czech Republic which developed one of the most robust economic issue dimensions in the region (Mansfeldová 1998; Matejů and Vlachová 2000). Furthermore, the above evidence suggests that Slovakia had already begun to develop an economic issue divide during the early 1990s. The virtual disappearance of the economic issue divide, furthermore, does not correspond to any weakening of the socio-economic differences in Slovakia or in its structural divide; these actually increased in strength over time.

Slovakia's experience does not directly contradict the notion that social inequality produces certain attitudes about its redress and institutions to enforce redistribution, but it does call into question the strength of this imperative. As elsewhere in the post-communist sphere, the emergence of social inequality in Slovakia did produce the expected attitudinal results and the structural divide does appear to have shaped the development of Slovakia's political party system at least to some extent. Yet so weak was this second link that it could not prevail over a rival basis for political choice.

The national divide

The ubiquity of socio-economic structural divides in industrial societies has a near parallel in the prevalence of national structural divides in societies with ethnic minorities. Slovakia, on the surface, appears to be no exception. Tensions between Czechs and Slovaks within Czechoslovakia and between Slovaks and Hungarians in independent Slovakia provide strong motives for the emergence of differences in attitudes and political institutions, and indeed such differences did appear. But in fact such differences play a relative small role in the account of Slovakia's politics discussed above. Czechs and Hungarians together represented considerably less than one-fifth of Slovakia's electorate and findings regarding the national issue divides discussed in the previous section actually change little even when all non-Slovaks are excluded from the sample. A 'full' cleavage did emerge between Slovaks and Hungarians in Slovakia – ascriptive, attitudinal as well

as behavioural – but it played only a marginal role. Slovakia's issue divide on national questions was not primarily a conflict between Slovaks and other ethnic groups but a conflict *among* Slovaks *about* other ethnic groups.

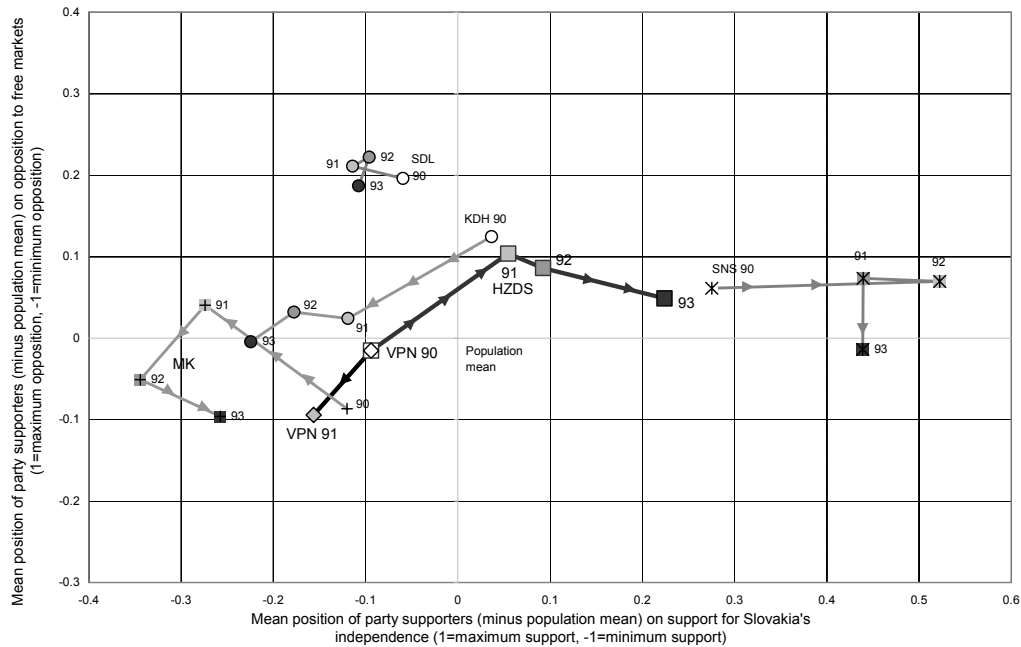
The structural and cultural roots of Slovakia's national divide are harder to identify than are the roots of its economic issue divide. In the first place, the attitudes forming the basis of Slovakia's national issue divide – the independence of Slovakia and the role of the Hungarian minority – show virtually no connection to any underlying socio-economic structures. The vast majority of surveys conducted between 1991 and 1994 show no sustained and statistically significant connections to age, education level, urban residence, occupation, or income. Spatial patterns of residence show a stronger connection, but the relationships are still fairly weak. Residents of eastern Slovakia typically expressed a slightly lower preference for independence, and those Slovaks who lived in mixed Hungarian–Slovak districts were somewhat less likely to express hostility toward Hungarians. Even these patterns, however, explain only a small portion of the propensity to vote according to national attitudes.

A stronger but less tangible structural basis for Slovakia's national issue dimension can be found in the legacies of Czechoslovakia. Slovaks face a relatively recent history of intra-ethnic competition on national issues most notably expressed in the competition between pro-Slovak and pro-Czechoslovak parties during the interwar Czechoslovak Republic, and open military conflict between factions during the wartime Slovak state. In addition, during the communist era the common Czechoslovak state provided a series of cultural and material tradeoffs for Slovakia (far more than for the Czech Republic), and sustained attitudinal differences about the merits of independence.

Yet despite these cultural and structural underpinnings, a national issue divide among Slovaks remained slow to develop and remained closely intertwined with the tactics of particular political parties. In the 1990 election, only the Slovak National Party (SNS) pursued the question actively, and it gained in the process less than one-sixth of the ethnic Slovak electorate. Nation-related questions emerged in both the Czechoslovak and Slovak parliaments, but not until the splintering of VPN and the creation of HZDS did they take centre stage. As Figure 8.9 indicates, the emergence of HZDS in the spring of 1991 produced a change in the array of Slovak parties. Mečiar's new party proved extremely successful at attracting voters from all sides of the political space. In fact, a late 1991 survey suggests that he managed not only to hold on to nearly half of the former VPN voters, but also to pull away between 20 and 30 per cent of the supporters of the other three major Slovak parties, communist, Christian democratic and nationalist alike. In doing so, he shifted the political centre of gravity from the moderately pro-market and pro-Czechoslovakia position occupied by VPN to the very heart of both conflicts, simultaneously narrowing the range of competition on the more dominant economic divide and expanding

competition on the then-weaker national divide. Further shifts occurred over time as Mečiar's party – by far the largest party in the country – shifted increasingly to the independence end of the national spectrum while remaining near the centre of the economic spectrum.⁶

Figure 8.9: Mean position of party supporters on questions of separation and free market over time (arrows indicate direction of change).



Source: Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Sociological Institute, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993

The role of political choice here is difficult to assess. Mečiar's political acumen allowed him to occupy a large and largely empty political space, just as it was being abandoned by KDH. Such political insights are usually not limited to just one individual, and it is possible that another party might have found it advantageous to fill the same space. But even though it is likely that another contender would have done so as quickly or as well. The leaders of SNS and KDH certainly did not take full advantage of the moderate non-separatist national position while it was still available to them in 1990 and early 1991.⁷ Individual parties played a role in shaping timing, if nothing else, but with the fast pace of changes in the post-communist era, timing had an important effect on outcomes.

Economy against nation

The relative dominance of economic and national issue dimensions illustrates the same interplay between underlying socio-economic and cultural factors as the more chaotic scramble of political parties for electoral advantage. At least one reason for the ultimate weakness in Slovakia's economic issue dimension can be found in the presence of its powerful rival: the obvious culprit is the national dimension that emerged at the same

time that the role of economics in party choice began to decline. The link is not merely coincidental. Rather than reinforce an existing economic divide – as it did in the Czech Republic – the question of Slovakia’s independence remained almost completely unrelated. Surveys conducted in 1991 and 1992 only rarely show any statistically significant relationship between attitudes toward the split and attitudes toward underlying economic questions.⁸ As long as the two issues remained unrelated, the relationship between the two issue divides followed a zero-sum pattern: any shifts toward voting on the basis of independence would draw similarly from both sides of the economic spectrum and weaken the strength of the economic dimension.

Since the first years after the fall of communism, political scientists have attempted to discern which of the possible issue divides would shape party competition in the post-communist period. Offe’s work on the ‘triple transition’ suggested an implicit hierarchy of cleavages in which questions of economic distribution required the prior resolution of conflict over political institutions, and questions of institutions depended upon a broadly acceptable definition of the national community and its role within the state (Offe 1991). Kitschelt’s work, beginning in 1992 and continuing through a series of books and articles upends this hierarchy, placed more emphasis on historical socio-economic development and its consequences for the structure of political systems and party competition. Kitschelt in his later works suggests that national issue divides would be more likely to emerge where communist regimes had been less ideological in their economic policy (thus minimizing the post-revolution difference between communist and anti-communist forces on economic questions) and where repressive communist parties managed to keep a hold on power in the post-communist period, using national appeals to justify authority and economic isolation (Kitschelt 2001). Both models suggest that post-communist democracies face little real choice in determining their issue divides: Offe’s conception implies choice only to the extent that conflicts at more fundamental levels can be resolved and other conflicts then attended to; Kitschelt’s model sees national issue divides as dependent upon the weakness of economic divides or contingent on the needs of ruling parties for alternative bases of legitimacy.

Since both models predict a national issue divide for Slovakia, it is not possible to test them simply by looking at the success of the prediction. Rather, it is necessary to look at the means by which they reached their conclusions. As Kitschelt and his co-authors note, Slovakia is a difficult case and does not fall readily within any of the model’s categories (Kitschelt 1999). Even accepting that Slovakia can be categorized in the ‘national accommodative’ or ‘patrimonial communism’, Slovakia’s national issue divides can only loosely be understood according to the patrimonial model in which ‘unreconstructed communist-successor parties’ make ethnic appeals or the ‘national accommodative’ model in which communist and anti-communist parties do not offer clear alternatives on economic issues.

Other factors appear to play at least some role in the development of Slovakia's issue dimensions, and while Slovakia's example does not invalidate Kitschelt's otherwise sophisticated and well-grounded model, it does point to weaknesses in the evidence upon which it is based. In particular, the four countries studied most closely by Kitschelt and his co-authors are among the least ethnically diverse in the region (of the four, only Bulgaria has a significant ethnic minority) and among the most established (of Europe's thirteen new post communist states, the study included only the Czech Republic, the member of the group with the fewest traumas related to new statehood). The study, therefore, does not provide adequate grounds for testing Offe's notion that the identity questions of new and ethnically heterogeneous states might overwhelm all other divides.

Offe's insights about the power of national questions to shape issue divides conform quite closely to Slovakia's experience, but require some elaboration from an institutional perspective. Although Slovaks expressed dissatisfaction about their relationships with Czechs and Hungarians from the first post-communist opinion surveys, the national dimension did overwhelm its economic rival until a particular party found a way to use the issue in obtaining political support. Furthermore, if other Slovak parties had quickly followed Mečiar's lead in adopting a moderate nationalist position, his national advantage might have faded and allowed questions of economic reform to remain foremost. In the mid-1990s, the overt role of political institutions became even more pronounced as Mečiar sought to build upon his early success with national issues through a deliberate effort to cast his government as the only viable defender of Slovaks against a range of enemies that included Hungarians, Westerners and unpatriotic Slovaks, as well as the leadership of virtually all opposition parties (Šipošová 1998). Without this state-supported encouragement, the national issue divide might have begun to fade shortly after independence and the question of European integration might have followed the pattern that then prevailed in the Czech Republic and emerged first as an economic divide.

The authority divide

Questions of authority and democracy rarely appear in discussions of issue divides. Support for the democratic exercise of authority does not appear explicitly in the framework of cleavages laid out by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), and plays only a tangential role in either the materialist/post-materialist cleavage proposed by Inglehart (Inglehart 1977) or a global-parochial cleavage alluded to by Kreisi and others (Kreisi 2000). In a framework of 'full' cleavages based on distinct ascriptive bases of support, authority does not provide a compelling case. A focus on partial cleavages, by contrast, suggests such questions as an important area for further research. This is particularly true in Slovakia.

Slovakia's authority divide holds the key to understanding that country's

wide swings between the authoritarian tactics of Mečiar and the more moderate governments that came before and after. The emergence of an issue divide on questions of authority between 1992 and 1994 meant in practice that one side of the political spectrum had ever fewer qualms about the abuse of political power (at least by its own officials). By drawing authoritarians to Mečiar's side and causing democrats to defect, this self-reinforcing divide removed most effective restraints on Mečiar's use of power. Ultimately the process worked to Mečiar's detriment, repelling more voters than it attracted, but in the parliamentary election of late 1994 he achieved perhaps the best possible balance between the goals of 'more voters' and 'more-authoritarian voters'. For four years, Slovakia paid a steep price in political corruption, violations of the rule of law and international isolation. The victory of Mečiar's opponents in 1998 offered at least some compensation, bringing to power a coalition of those who explicitly opposed their predecessor's abuses of power and promised to restore the accountability of political leaders to voters and other institutions.

The presence of an authority dimension played a fundamental role in Slovakia's development and helps to explain how the country could perform so much worse than its neighbours and yet so quickly catch up. Its origins, however, remain poorly understood. Survey evidence shows a moderate structural divide in which authority attitudes related closely to a variety of socio-economic variables including education level, age, urban residence and class, but this divide was no stronger than in the neighbouring Czech Republic, Hungary or Poland and cannot explain Slovakia's unique position. Other authors suggest a unique regional basis for authority attitudes (Buerkle 2002; Krivý, Feglová and Balko 1996) but statistical tests show only a moderate relationship to the authority issue divide.

More significant, perhaps is the role of the political leader. Although Slovaks show no more propensity than Czechs or others in the region to prefer charismatic leaders, the devotion to Mečiar within his party and his central role within his party are unique in the region, resembling more the efforts of Tudjman in Croatia or Milosevic in Yugoslavia than those of any Central European leader. Mečiar managed the difficult task of building a party that was both organizationally dense and yet wholly centralized around himself; he also demonstrated a remarkable ability to connect with Slovak voters. Since personal charisma has difficulty coexisting with institutional restraints and limits on power, it is not surprising that the emergence of a figure like Mečiar could create an authority dimension (Madsen and Snow 1991).

Yet scholars of charisma frequently suggest that the origins of charismatic leadership lay not only in the talents of an individual but in the ability of that individual to tap directly into deep societal needs (Geertz 1983). Since Mečiar was also the champion of Slovakia's national interests against the world, it is useful to ask whether his demand for unrestricted authority and his nationalism were not intrinsically related. The twentieth-

century ideologies of Fascism and Nazism certainly offer ample precedent for the unity of nationalism and authoritarianism, and Greenfeld suggests an inherent connection between authoritarianism and collectivistic ideologies (Greenfeld 1992). But survey evidence for Slovakia suggests certain complications. Most important of these is the almost complete absence of a connection between various expressions of nationalism and authoritarianism in Slovakia in the early 1990s. Not until 1992 do surveys show the beginnings of statistically significant relationships between preference for 'firm hand rule' and distrust of Czechs or Hungarians and even then the relationships remain uneven (FOCUS 1992–1999; Academy of Science of the Czech Republic Institute of Sociology 1990–1996). Only in 1993 do all survey questions begin to point the same way and do so with statistical significance. Furthermore, the connection between the two remained inextricably bound up with the figure of Mečiar himself. When controlling for respondents' trust in Mečiar, we find that the rate of growth in the correlations between 'firm hand rule' and a variety of national questions drops by more than half between 1992 and 1997. Many of the statistical relationships are in fact insignificant until the second half of the decade. The statistical hard evidence corresponds closely to observable developments in Mečiar's own political orientation as he moved from a non-nonsense, straight talking spokesman for Slovak grievances to the 'father of the Slovak nation' and the 'steamroller' of HZDS. Slovakia's independence allowed Mečiar to claim the first title; an increasing fear of political betrayals conferred the second upon him. Although only weakly connected at the outset, the two qualities became increasingly intertwined in Mečiar's persona and in the outlook of both his supporters and his detractors. Mečiar not only played a central role in creating Slovakia's authority divide but in linking it to an increasingly important national divide that in 1992 and 1994 provided enough votes to form a government. As Mečiar's political importance declined, so did the role played by the authority divide.

Conclusion

The issue divides that shaped Slovakia's politics in the 1990s exhibited little stability. An authority divide built on Mečiar's charisma rose and sank with his own political fortunes. A national divide endured for longer but only by transforming from a debate over Czechoslovakia to a debate over Hungarians to a debate over the European Union. An economic divide emerged quickly, but found itself pushed aside by other issues and did not threaten to emerge again until early in the next decade. This volatility reflects both conditions that were specific to Slovakia and others that affect nearly all contemporary democracies.

Slovakia's voters during the 1990s did not reach any long-term consensus answer to the question 'what issue should shape my vote?' The structural and cultural factors that determined attitudes did not determine which attitudes were most important in shaping political choice. In part, this

reflects the nature of the underlying factors: historical and contemporary experiences of national conflict provided Slovak politicians with an alternative that did not exist in countries with less diverse populations and conflictual histories. But circumstances alone do not explain the lack of a stable issue dimension. The historical antecedents of an authority divide in Slovakia were no deeper than in Hungary, Poland or most other countries in the region and yet Slovakia alone found itself with a pervasive conflict on authority questions.

In Slovakia, as in many other countries in the post-communist world, issue divides emerge not only from historical patterns but also from the configuration of post-communist political competition. Issues compete for space in minds just as parties do, and parties encourage competition over issues that will maximize their own voters, members, and funding. Parties use the structural divides that are available to them, but they do not leave them as they found them. Rather, they deliberately seek to elevate some and diminish others, to link issues together or to disentangle them.

Even when political choice in Slovakia did rest on social or cultural roots, these often remained shallow and showed little explicit connection to Slovakia's history. Each of the contending issue divides resembles a divide that once shaped political competition in Slovakia, but often the resemblance was only superficial. The economic divide of the 1990s and the worker/owner cleavage of the 1930s both concerned inequality, but the intervening seventy years – forty under a state socialist regime – radically altered both the class structure and the means of production. Likewise the national and authority divides of the two periods shared common rhetoric, but few in the 1990s would be willing to accept that the 'leader' should have 'supreme right to speak for and make decisions on behalf of the Party and thereby also on behalf of the nation' (Nedelsky 2001) as many did in the 1930s. Many of the broad themes remained – inequality, national recognition, and the need for order – but the specific circumstances had changed dramatically.

In Slovakia these changes are fairly obvious because of the forty year hiatus during which issue divides were not acknowledged, but the change is not unique to Slovakia or even to the post-communist world. Changes in party systems and social structures have reshaped the connection between structural divides and issue divides in many democracies. Whether this marks the gradual erosion of full cleavages or merely a transition period in the emergence of new cleavages remains an open question. In either case, however, the exploration of partial cleavages can help to understand the process.

Acronyms of Parties, Movements and Other Significant Electoral Actors

ANO	<i>Aliancia nového občana</i>	New Citizen's Alliance
DS	<i>Demokratická strana</i>	Democratic Party
DU	<i>Demokratická únia</i>	Democratic Union
ESWS	<i>Együttélés–Spoluzítie–Wspólnota–Soužití</i>	Coexistence
HZD	<i>Hnutie za demokraciu</i>	Movement for Democracy
HZDS	<i>Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko</i>	Movement for a Democratic Slovakia
KDH	<i>Kresťansko-demokratické hnutie</i>	Christian Democratic Movement
KSS	<i>Komunistická strana Slovenska</i>	Communist Party of Slovakia
MK/MKP	<i>Magyar Koalíció/Magyar Koalíció Pártja</i>	Hungarian Coalition
MKDM	<i>Magyar Kereszténydemokrata Mozgalom</i>	Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement
MPP	<i>Magyar Polgári Párt</i>	Hungarian Civic Party
ODÚ	<i>Občianská demokratická únia</i>	Civic Democratic Union
PSNS	<i>Pravá Slovenská národná strana</i>	Real Slovak National Party
DSA	<i>Sočiálnodemokratická alternatíva</i>	Social Democratic Alternative
SDK	<i>Slovenská demokratická koalícia</i>	Slovak Democratic Coalition
SDKÚ	<i>Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia</i>	Slovak Democratic and Christian Union
SDL	<i>Strana demokratickej ľaviče</i>	Party of the Democratic Left
SDSS	<i>Sočiálnodemokratická strana Slovenska</i>	Social Democratic Party of Slovakia
SKDH/KSÚ	<i>Slovenské kresťansko-demokratické hnutie/ Kresťansko-sočiálna únia</i>	Slovak Christian Democratic Movement/ Christian Social Union
SMER	<i>Smer</i>	Direction
SNS	<i>Slovenská národná strana</i>	Slovak National Party
SOP	<i>Strana občianskeho porozumenia</i>	Party of Civic Understanding
SV	<i>Spoločná voľba</i>	Common Choice
SZ	<i>Strana zelených</i>	Party of the Greens
SZS	<i>Strana zelených na Slovensku</i>	Party of the Greens in Slovakia
VPN	<i>Verejnost' proti násiliu</i>	Public Against Violence
ZRS	<i>Združenie robotníkov Slovenska</i>	Association of Workers of Slovakia

NOTES

1. Other long-term surveys – Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, New Democracies Barometer, and Department of State – include relatively meagre information about party choice and relatively few relevant questions in key areas, but in general these confirm the results of other surveys.
2. The CEU questions on nationalism factor closely together with the question on Czechoslovakia's dissolution, but for clarity the two are here detailed separately.
3. This form of measurement suggests a smaller role for attitudes about authority, but still larger than for any other non-national attitudes. Regression analysis for the late 1994 survey shows no relationship for questions about 'firm hand' leadership, but if the closely associated questions on the nation are excluded, firm hand leadership immediately becomes the strongest factor.
4. In Slovakia, questions of religion tend to fall in what Kitschelt refers to as a 'niche market' and usually serve only to distinguish supporters of Christian democratic parties (Slovak and Hungarian) from the rest of the population (Kitschelt 1999). In some surveys, supporters of the former communist SDE occupy a reverse niche, at the anti-religious end of the spectrum.
5. The worldwide pervasiveness of the descriptors 'left' and 'right' with at least some common attributes also contributes to impressions of the inevitability of socio-economic cleavage (Inglehart and Klingemann 1976).
6. This configuration foreshadows the later and even more extreme developments highlighted above. The pattern also corresponds extremely closely to Kitschelt's notion that national parties will choose to occupy economically centrist positions so as to maximize their appeal. Unless the notion of 'non-nationalism' or 'anti-nationalism' develops strong resonance with the population (as it did in Slovakia near the end of Mečiar's third government), parties occupying this position cannot afford to rely on this issue alone and will be more likely to occupy more distinct positions on economic questions (cf. Kitschelt 1999; 2001). Thus, even when national questions become the dominant issue divide, a second economic divide may continue to exist, but will have disproportionate effects on the non-national forces, a fact that nationalists may use to their advantage.
7. Cohen's account of the 'lack of historical consciousness' in Slovakia's political elite supports the notion that unlike leaders of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), some of whom retained consciousness of Slovakia's recent history that compelled them ultimately to move toward a more Western and Czechoslovak orientation, the ahistoric worldview of Mečiar and other 'mass-elites' allowed more flexibility in the combination of issue configurations and therefore a tactical advantage (Cohen 1999).
8. Surveys do show a relationship between attitudes about the split and those concerned with economic reform, but largely because such 'reform' remained tied in the minds of many Slovaks to Czech initiatives that did not consider Slovak needs. Questions that avoid this implication show no meaningful relationship between economy and independence.

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APPENDIX 8.1: ELECTION RESULTS

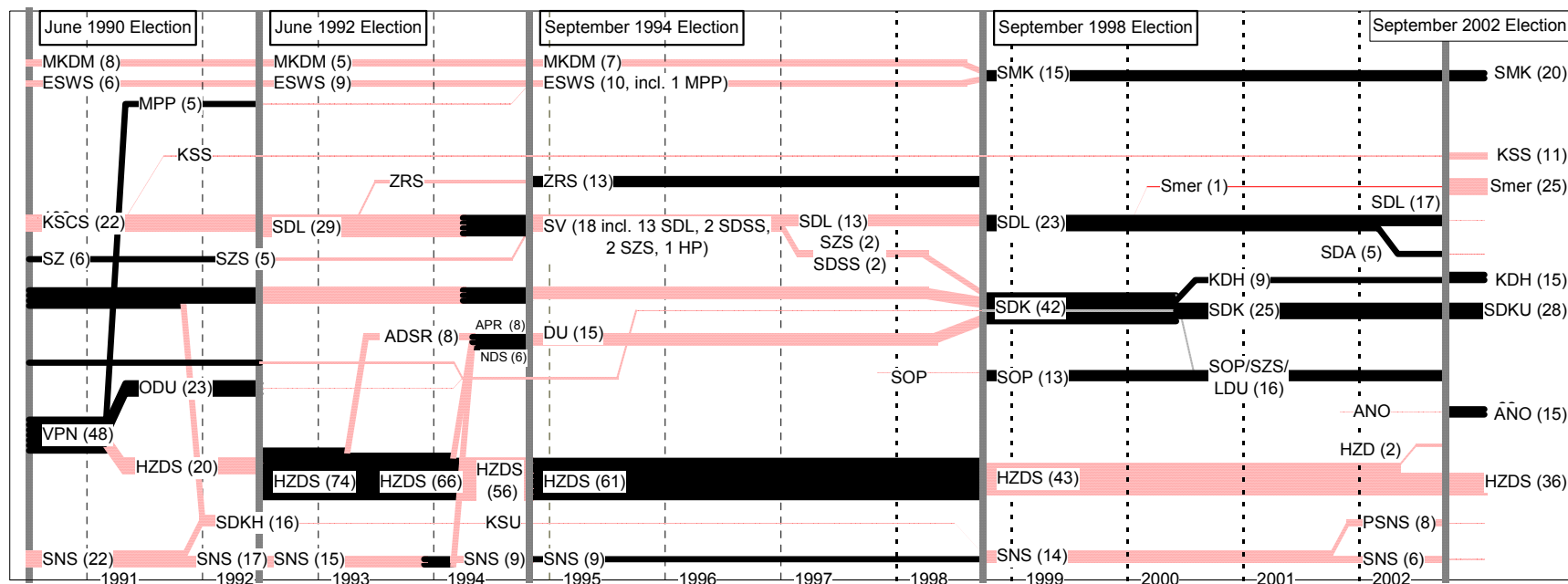
Results of Elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic, 1990–2002

Party/Electoral Coalition	Origins in other party	1990		1992		1994		1998		2002	
		Vote %	Seat %	Vote %	Seat %	Vote %	Seat %	Vote %	Seat %	Vote %	Seat %
Public Against Violence	VPN	29.3	32.0								
Civic Democratic Union	ODÚ			4.0	--						
Movement for a Democratic Slovakia	HZDS			37.3	49.3	35.0	40.7	27.0	28.7	19.5	24.0
Democratic Union	DU					8.6	10.0				
Movement for Democracy	HZD									3.3	--
Slovak National Party	SNS	13.9	14.7	7.9	10.0	5.4	6.0	9.1	9.3	3.3	--
Real Slovak National Party	PSNS									3.7	--
Christian Democratic Movement	KDH	19.2	20.7	8.9	12.0	10.1	11.3			8.3	10.0
Slovak Christian Democratic Movement/Christian Social Union	SKDH / KSÚ			3.1	--	2.1	--				
Slovak Democratic Coalition	SDK							26.3	28.0	15.1	18.7
Hungarian Coalition/Hungarian Coalition Party	MK/ MKP	8.7	9.3	7.4	9.3	10.2	11.3	9.1	10.0	11.2	13.3
Hungarian Civic Party	MPP			2.3	--						
Communist Party of Slovakia	KSS	13.3	14.7								
Party of the Democratic Left	SDE					10.4	12.0	14.7	15.3	1.4	--
Common Choice	SV			14.7	19.3						
Communist Party of Slovakia (reconstituted)	KSS			0.8	--	2.7	--	2.8	--	6.3	7.3
Association of Workers of Slovakia	ZRS					7.3	8.7	1.3	--	0.5	--
Direction	Smer									13.5	16.7
Social Democratic Alternative	SDA									1.8	--
Party of the Greens	SZ	3.5	4.0	1.1	--						
Party of the Greens in Slovakia	SZS			2.1	--					1.0	--
Social Democratic Party of Slovakia	SDSS			4.0	--						
Democratic Party	DS	4.4	4.7	3.3	--	3.4	--				
Party of Civic Understanding	SOP							8.0	8.7		
New Citizen's Alliance	ANO									8.0	10.0
All other parties		7.6	--	3.1	--	4.8	--	1.7	--	3.2	--

Results of Slovakia's Presidential Election, 1999

Candidate	Party	Vote % in First Round	Vote % in Second Round
Rudolf Schuster	SOP	47.4	57.2
Vladimír Mečiar	HZDS	37.2	42.8
Magda Vašaryová	Independent	6.6	
Ivan Majartan	Independent	3.6	
Jan Slota	SNS	2.5	
Other Candidates		2.7	

Timeline of Party Participation in the National Council of the Slovak Republic, 1990–2002



Notes

- 1) Numbers in parentheses represent the number of seats held. Independent deputies are not included.
- 2) Thick lines mark periods of parliamentary representation in parliament. Width of the line is proportional to the number of deputies.
 - Thick black lines mark periods of representation in a governing coalition.
 - Thick grey lines mark periods of representation in parliament but not as part of a governing coalition.
- 3) Hairlines mark periods during which parties had no representation in parliament.

APPENDIX 8.2: GOVERNMENT COMPOSITION

Beg. date	End date	Duration	Prime Minister	Prime Minister's Party	Composition	Share of seats in parliament	Share of seats in gov.ment*	Reason for change
27 Jun. 1990	22 April 1991	10 Months	Vladimír Mečiar	VPN	VPN KDH DS <i>Total</i>	32.0% 20.7% 4.7% 57.3%	52.2% 34.8% 13.0%	Dismissal by parliamentary presidium**
23 Apr. 1991***	24 Jun. 1992	14 Months	Jan Čarnogúrsky	KDH	KDH VPN/ODÚ DS <i>Total</i>	20.7% 15.3% 4.7% 40.7%	39.1% 52.2% 8.7%	Parliamentary election
24 June 1992***	15 Mar 1994	21 months	Vladimír Mečiar	HZDS	HZDS SNS**** <i>Total</i>	49.3% (44.0%) 10.0% (5.3%) 59.3% (49.3%)	93.8% (84.2%) 6.2% (15.8%)	Vote of no-confidence
15 Mar. 1994	12 Dec 1994	9 months	Jozef Moravčík	DU	SDL DU KDH <i>Total</i>	18.7% 15.3% 12.0% 46.0%	38.9% 33.3% 27.8%	Parliamentary election
12 Dec. 1994	30 Oct 1998	47 months	Vladimír Mečiar	HZDS	HZDS ZRS SNS <i>Total</i>	40.7% 8.7% 6.0% 55.3%	66.7% 22.2% 11.1%	Parliamentary election
30 Oct. 1998	15 Oct 2002	48 Months	Mikulaš Dzurinda	SDK	SDK SDL MK SOP <i>Total</i>	28.0% 15.3% 10.0% 8.7% 62.0%	45.0% 30.0% 15.0% 10.0%	Parliamentary election
16 Oct. 2002	-	-	Mikulaš Dzurinda	SDKÚ	SDKÚ MK KDH ANO <i>Total</i>	18.7% 13.3% 10.0% 10.0% 52.0%	38.9% 22.2% 16.7% 22.2%	-

* Includes all ministers nominated by a particularly party without respect to actual party affiliation (or lack of affiliation).
rocedures

from the era of Communist Party rule gave responsibility for appointing ministers to a presidium appointed by parliament. Because of the rapid shifts in party membership during these periods, distribution of seats by party should be regarded / as an approximation.

Between 24 June 1992 and 10 November 1993 the Mečiar-led government included a representative of SNS without using SNS as a formal partner in government. After 10 November 1993, SNS became a formal coalition member. nbers in parentheses represent the distribution of seats after the resulting reshuffling of the cabinet.

APPENDIX 8.3: THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Since the first post-communist elections of 1990, the citizens of Slovakia have chosen their unicameral parliament – the 150 member National Council of the Slovak Republic – through direct elections on the basis of proportional representation using party lists with a minimum republic-wide threshold that has fluctuated within the range of 3–5, and a maximum term of four years. Slovakia applies a quota system for proportional representation based on the Hagenbach-Bischoff formula, which awards parliamentary mandates on the basis of vote quotas derived from the number of seats (the quota for one seat is approximately equal to the number of votes cast divided one plus the number of available seats). Unfilled mandates are awarded to parties with the largest numbers of votes remaining after quotas have been filled.

Within these general parameters, there have been several significant changes in Slovakia's electoral framework:

1 *Electoral Threshold.* The electoral law prepared for the 1990 elections introduced a republic-wide threshold of 3 per cent as a condition for obtaining parliamentary mandates. For the 1992 election, parliament raised this threshold to 5 per cent for a single party, to 7 per cent for coalitions of two or three parties and up to 10 per cent for a coalition of four or more parties. Shortly before the 1998 election, parliament raised the threshold for electoral coalitions to an aggregate of 5 per cent for each participating party, such that a three-party coalition would require 15 per cent.

2 *Electoral Districts.* The electoral law prepared for the 1990 elections introduced four electoral districts (Western Slovakia, Central Slovakia, Eastern Slovakia, and Bratislava) based on the country's then-existing administrative regions. These four electoral districts remained in use even after the administrative regions themselves were abolished in administrative reforms. Amendments to the electoral law approved by parliament before the 1998 election abolished these districts and created a single, country-wide electoral district.

3 *List Voting.* The electoral lists prepared for the 1990 election allowed voters to cast preference votes for one candidate from party list they had chosen. Those candidates receiving the preference votes of more than 25% of a party's voters moved to the top of the list. For the 1992 election, parliament raised the number of preference votes from one to four and lowered the threshold for relevance of preference votes from 25% to 10%.

Slovakia's 1992 constitution established the position of President of the Slovak Republic to be elected by a three-fifths vote of the National Council. A 1999 amendment to the constitution changed the selection procedure to direct election based on a two-round, majoritarian system. Any candidate receiving more than 50 per cent of the vote in the first election round wins the presidency outright. If no candidate receives more than 50 per cent of the vote in the first round, the two candidates receiving the most votes must compete in a second round in which the candidate receiving more than 50 per cent of the votes wins the presidency. Individuals elected to the presidency must suspend party membership for the duration of their stay in office.

All citizens of Slovakia, who have reached the age of 21, possess the right to vote. Permanent residents of Slovakia above the age of 21 are eligible for election to parliament. The office of parliamentary deputy is incompatible with the office of president, judge, prosecutor, or membership in the police corps, prison guard corps or the armed forces. The office of parliamentary deputy is also incompatible with the office of government minister or state secretary; mandates of deputies who are appointed as ministers are suspended during the period in which they serve in government and are restored on resignation from the ministerial positions. Suspended mandates of ministers are filled by substitutes from the ministers' respective party lists.

The details of Slovakia's electoral system are specified by law and not in Slovakia's constitution.

APPENDIX 8.4: THE CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

Since its independence at the beginning of 1993, Slovakia has been a unicameral parliamentary system with a relatively weak presidency.

The National Council of the Slovak Republic is the country's highest and only country-wide legislative body. It is elected for four-year terms on the basis of proportional representation. Parliament drafts, debates and approves legislation. Individual members of parliament, parliamentary committees or the Slovak government may introduce parliamentary bills. Parliament approves government ministers and may vote its lack of confidence in the government as a whole or in specific ministers at any time by majority vote. Parliament appoints a variety of executive and oversight boards including the chief prosecutor, the chair of the Slovak National Bank, the ombudsman, and the boards of state television and radio. Parliament also nominates candidates for the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic.

The Government of the Slovak Republic is the country's highest executive power. The Prime Minister and other government ministers are appointed by the president and approved by a majority vote of parliament. The government drafts legislation, which it may submit to parliament for approval.

The President of the Slovak Republic is Head of State. Between the establishment of the office in 1992 and 1999, Slovakia's President was chosen on the basis of a three-fifths vote of all parliamentary deputies. In 1999, constitutional changes established a directly elected presidency on the basis of a two-round, majoritarian electoral system. All citizens of Slovakia who have reached the age of 35 and are eligible to be elected to Slovakia's parliament are eligible for the office of President. Slovakia's President represents the Slovak Republic in its international relations, appoints and recalls government ministers with the approval of parliament, acts as supreme commander of the armed forces, declares war and martial law, calls referenda, and grants pardons and amnesty. The President also signs laws or returns them to parliament (with comments), may submit draft legislation, may call meetings of parliament, and may dissolve parliament if the policy statement of the Government of the Slovak Republic is not approved after three attempts totalling more than six months. The President may be recalled by a three-fifths vote of parliament for directly undermining Slovakia's democracy or territorial integrity.

Slovakia's Constitutional Court evaluates the constitutionality of legislation and may strike down laws that do not conform to the constitution. The court consists of ten judges appointed by the President to terms of seven years from a list of nominees submitted by parliament that contains twice as many candidates as there are available vacancies.