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Chapter 12

PARLIAMENTARY PARTY GROUPS IN SLOVAKIA[1]

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In Slovakia a party's seats in parliament are notable not only for how many there are but also for where they are located within the parliamentary chamber. How MPs choose to arrange seating indicates a great deal about how those MPs expect parliament to function. During the communist era, MPs were seated in parliament according to alphabetical order. After the 1990 elections, seats were grouped according to party and parties were ranged from largest to smallest. After the 1994 elections, seating arrangement continued according to party size but within blocs representing the governing coalition and the opposition. Simultaneous with these changes, Slovakia's parliament as a whole has changed from an environment where party membership could be ignored to one where party membership played a decisive role. As with seating, party position in parliament has subsequently been shaped by sharp divisions along government-opposition lines.

This paper documents these changes by focusing on three important aspects of Slovakia's PPGs: their institutional framework, their internal organisation and cohesion,

and their position within party-as-a-whole, including both the external party organisation and the party in government. We argue that all of the major parties, which survive in Slovakia, emerged first within the parliamentary arena or quickly adapted to orient themselves around parliamentary competition. As a result, the development of the party system within Slovakia has depended largely upon developments within parliamentary party groups (PPGs) and the leadership of the party as a whole has become inextricably bound to the PPG. In recent years, however, the strong parliamentary position of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) and its solutions to the problem or PPG cohesion have shifted the focus of leadership from parliament to government both within the party and within the country as a whole.

THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF PPGs

The fall of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia (KS S) from its leading role did not topple most of the political institutions which the party had once occupied. Free from communist domination, these institutions gained the actual use of the powers to which they were constitutionally entitled. Among the most powerful of these institutions were parliaments at both the Czecho-Slovak level and at the level of the separate Slovak and Czech republics. The parliament of the Slovak republic of Czecho-Slovakia--formally called the Slovak National Council--came into being during the Communist-era federalisation of Czecho-Slovakia as a 150 seat unicameral legislature with authority to set policy within the Slovak republic. With the end of Communist party dominance in 1989 and subsequent decentralisation in late 1990, this body obtained significantly more control over the use its powers and acquired even wider

prerogatives (see Siváková 1994b; Wolchik 1991). The passage of a new constitution for Slovakia and the republic's independence in 1993 further increased the powers of Slovakia's parliament. As before, the parliament retained the exclusive rights to approve legislation, to remove a government or an individual minister through a vote of no confidence, to call early parliamentary elections, and to make a variety of other legally binding decisions. New provisions reflected Slovakia's new status as an independent state. These included the power to approve treaties and the right to amend the Slovakia's new constitution and to appoint and recall individuals to the new position of President of the Slovak Republic

As the key to virtually all political power in Slovakia, membership in parliament became extremely attractive for the politically ambitious in Slovakia. Electoral law ensured that this ambition would be channelled through political parties by establishing a system of proportional representation with a five percent national threshold which effectively excluded independent candidates. Slovakia's system of party funding achieves the same effect by providing substantial per-vote subsidies only to parties gaining more than three percent of the vote. Smaller parties have gained seats in parliament in coalitions with other parties, but these parties remain highly dependent on the co-operation of their larger partners.

Institutional structures ensure that parties retain some usefulness for members of parliament after elections. This is in part because members who hope to be re-elected must retain ties to a party organisation, and in part because crusades by lone individuals

influence outcomes much less than efforts within larger groups. Party membership in parliament also remains attractive in part because of certain institutional benefits. PPG's, called ‘MPs' clubs’ (*poslanecké kluby*), receive a small office within the parliament building as well as a yearly per-MP subsidy. According to the Christian Democratic Movement--one of few parties willing to declare its finances in detail--this subsidy amounted to 18,000 Sk (approximately 600 USD) per MP in 1995. Given the amount of work expected of MPs, this subsidy is not particularly large, but it allows most parties to support one or two full-time support staff member and provides a convenient, if cramped, space from which to co-ordinate party parliamentary activity. Other small advantages are available only to MPs within PPGs. For example, MPs speaking as official representatives of a PPG receive twenty minutes of uninterrupted speaking time during floor debates as opposed to only ten minutes for other deputies. Furthermore, unaffiliated MPs in practice are excluded from certain important committees whose membership is ordained according to proportional representation of PPGs.

The new rules of order for Slovakia's parliament approved in 1996 (Act no. 350/1996) tighten the conditions for establishing PPGs. Where the previous rules allowed any group of five MPs to form a PPG, the new rules raise this number to eight (§64.1), approximating the minimum number of MPs that can be won by a party which surpasses the five percent electoral threshold. The new rules also restrict the possibilities of so-called ‘clubs of independent MPs’ by requiring parliamentary approval for any PPG which does not correspond an elected party or coalition or does

not result from a formal party split or merger (§64.1-3). The new regulations also implement a procedure for monitoring the spending of the PPG subsidy (§65.3-4) and delegate enforcement of this and a variety of regulations to the Chairman of Parliament (§65.1-4).

While the electoral and parliamentary framework offers a variety of incentives for members to establish formal PPGs and remain members, the broader constitutional framework of Slovakia does not provide PPGs with many mechanisms to ensure that MPs remain loyal. Although Article 29.2 of the Slovak Constitution guarantees citizens the right to 'form political parties and political movements and associate therein,' party-based electoral system is by contrast not established in the constitution and can be changed by a simple majority of MPs. Furthermore, according to Article 73.2 of the constitution, members of parliament 'shall be the representatives of the citizens, and shall be elected to exercise their mandates individually and according to their best conscience and conviction. They are bound by no directives.' Without recourse to such directives, no party can legally compel a member of its PPG to remain a member, to resign, or to vote according to a party line. In building a PPG which functions cohesively and reliably, a party can rely only on the amorphous power of peer pressure, ideology, the small rewards of PPG membership, and the distant threat of exclusion from future electoral lists. Parties have done their best to assemble these incentives into workable combinations. Those unable to find an effective balance did not remain long on Slovakia's political scene.

PPG ORGANIZATION AND COHESION

The legal framework instituted after the revolution made establishing a PPG a simple affair but ensuring that such a group would work together, much less vote together, proved more difficult. Potential solutions appeared gradually and spread unevenly across the party system.

Cohesion in Voting

Since most parliamentary parties come into being to pursue at least some common interests, the question of co-operative effort on legislative efforts is extremely important. As if in response to the imperative mandate and unanimous party-line voting of the communist era, MPs after 1989 often exercised their freedom to vote their conscience regardless of the opinion of their party (Malová 1994), but this phenomenon lasted for only a few years. Unfortunately, the change is difficult to document since not even Slovakia's Parliamentary Department of Information and Analysis has access to computerised records which would permit basic assessments of party-line voting, and since requests by researchers for raw data have encountered political resistance. There are, however, other techniques for estimating cohesion, and these indicate that the parliaments elected in 1990 and 1992 showed a marked lack of cohesion in party voting. During these periods significant pieces of legislation proposed by individual members and opposition parties often found their way through the committee system to floor sessions, sometimes with substantial support from members of the governing parties against their own leadership. Individual MPs outside the context of a PPG (Malová and Siváková 1994) submitted One quarter of all legislation enacted during this period.

These MP-proposed bills were often joint proposals whose sponsors included both coalition and opposition MPs. In a similar lack of party cohesion, MPs from parties in the governing coalition occasionally voted against ministers of their own party in no-confidence votes. In a 1993 series of formal interviews with Slovakia's parliamentary MPs, 52 per cent of interviewed MPs reported that their decision on draft legislation was determined by the position of party clubs, while 27 per cent reported that they decided for themselves on such issues (Malová 1994). Asked in a separate survey how they *would* vote if they did disagreed with the decision of their PPG, only 17 per cent of MPs claimed they would vote with the PPG anyway, while 26 per cent claimed they would vote against it and 57 per cent felt their answer would depend on the case (Brokl & Mansfeldová 1993). Yet while demanding the freedom to vote their conscience, MPs also seemed concerned about the consequences of all MPs behaving in the same way. Only three percent believed that the 'demands of party discipline' were too great while nearly half (47 per cent) believed that discipline should be stronger (Malová 1994).

Those who expressed these desires in 1993 received their wish in the following years. In the absence of access to official records, voting cohesion for this period can be approximated on the basis of high-profile votes for which results have been recorded by outside sources. Party line voting on such issues shows a dramatic increase over time. The successful vote of no-confidence in the government in early 1994 marked the beginning of a period of increased partisanship, and voting along party lines on many key issues has approached 100 per cent, with the small numbers of absences and abstentions regularly exceeding the number of MPs dissenting from fellow party

members. Abstentions and absences could themselves represent a problem of cohesion since they provide a lower-visibility method of avoiding the party-line, but the parties of the governing coalition consistently appear able to ensure sufficient cohesion in attendance as well as in voting. In fact, party line voting on the part of coalition parties has been so strong since December of 1994 that only one major government initiative has failed to gain majority support on a floor vote and this occurred because of intra-coalition rather than intra-party disputes. Major government initiatives, of course, are not the best standard by which to judge party cohesion, since they are rarely introduced before the sponsoring party--or the sponsoring coalition--has reached internal agreement. Nevertheless, the ability to reach such accommodation is itself a sign of a reasonably high degree of cohesion. By any of the measures available, cohesion around party legislative goals has increased dramatically since the early days of Slovakia's democracy and has reached quite high levels.

Cohesion in Organisation

With the exception of the Communist party of Czecho-Slovakia (KS S), first PPGs in Slovakia's parliament after the revolution of 1989 were little more than informal groups of like-minded MPs. Some of these MPs, drafted into parliament to prepare the legislative basis for free elections, took steps toward establishing formal structures, and several of these became political parties capable of competing at the electoral level. The seven parties elected to parliament in 1990 included five with origins in these informal parliamentary groups, and only the Slovak National Party (SNS) had no prior parliamentary presence. In many cases, however, the broad agreement about ending

Communist rule which had united the members of these groupings gave way to differences on other issues, and the weak internal problem-solving mechanisms of most PPGs proved unable to maintain unity. As table 12.1 indicates, by April 1992 the original number of eight PPGs had increased to eleven. In some cases peacefully, in other cases with enmity, all PPGs except for those of KS S and two Hungarian parties lost MPs between the elections of 1990 and 1992. In some cases the losses were severe. As figure 12.1 shows, the PPG of Public Against Violence (VPN) split into three separate groups, while the PPGs of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and the Slovak National Party (SNS) both lost members to a new PPG called the Slovak Christian Democratic Movement (SKDH). In fact, *every* new PPG--as well as several newly independent MPs--went on to establish separate party structures at the electoral level, encouraged by a still open electoral market which offered the hope of victory even to a new party.

TABLE 12.1 ABOUT HERE

The 1992 elections disappointed most of those hopes. Just six parties were returned to parliament, only one of which could be considered a splinter party. PPGs during this second electoral period became more visible and influential through changes in the internal organisation of parliament and through increases in the PPGs' own organisational capacity. A survey of parliamentary MPs taken during this period found that MPs claimed to spend an average of 4.2 hours per week in meetings with their PPG, less than they spent working for the party at the national (11.3 hours) or regional (9.0

hours) levels, but it was still significant and greater than the amount of time spent with non-party organisations and groups (3.7 hours), with government representatives (2.0) or with state administration (2.5 hours) (Brokl & Mansfeldová 1993). For four of the six parties, this period proved to be one of relative cohesion as well. Neither the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) nor either of the two small Hungarian parties lost any MPs. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KS S), newly reorganised and renamed as the Party of the Democratic Left (SD), lost only a single MP during this period. Only the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) and the Slovak National Party (SNS) lost their organisational cohesion. Because of severe conflicts between MPs and the party leader, HZDS lost eight MPs in each of two splits between early 1993 and early 1994, reducing its strength in parliament by over 20 per cent. During the same period, an abrupt change of leadership within SNS lead to the departure of the former party chairman and four other of the party's original fifteen MPs. As with previous splits, the MPs departing HZDS and SNS established not only new PPGs but also new electoral parties. A similar effort, without a PPG, was made by the lone departing member of SD, who formed the Workers' Association of Slovakia (ZRS).

FIGURE 12.1 ABOUT HERE

The 1994 parliamentary elections introduced a new challenge to PPG cohesion in the form of increased numbers of coalitions gaining entry to parliament. The eight electoral lists which passed the 5 per cent threshold actually contained representatives of sixteen

different parties. Only nine of these parties held the five seats necessary for a PPG, so the remaining seven small parties were forced to choose between going without a PPG and remaining within the PPG of their electoral coalition. All chose the latter option. Although this increased the complexity of intra-PPG co-ordination, it does not appear to have overwhelmed the groups' capacity. In fact, the difference between the most recent term of parliament and the previous two is striking. Between the elections of 1990 and 1992, forty-four parliamentary seats out of 150 changed hands from one PPG to another. Between 1992 and 1994, the number of seats changing hands was twenty-eight out of 150. Between 1994 and mid-1997, only *five* seats changed hands. None of these five joined another PPG and only one attempted to establish a new electoral party, so far with little success. The three-year period without a single major rupture of a PPG is by far the longest such period in Slovakia's post-revolution history.

Explaining Increased Cohesion

The notable shift in Slovakia's party system toward cohesion and discipline beginning in 1994 reflects a decline in motives for departing from PPG's combined with an increase in mechanisms for enforcing cohesion.

The rapid formation of PPGs and their electoral machinery in 1990 produced a variety of ungainly alliances between political elites who often knew little about their new partners. Four years of high parliamentary volatility helped to sort out many of the personal and ideological conflicts which resulted. Contrasting relatively small and well-defined parties with large, broadly defined movements can show the role of this slow

sorting process. PPGs with stronger identifying characteristics faced fewer internal strains. Between 1990 and 1997, the PPGs of the Hungarian parties did not experience a single defection. The Party of the Democratic Left (SD) with its former Communist Party core lost only one MP. The Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) experienced a significant loss in 1992 over emphasis on national issues but has since remained quite cohesive. The Slovak National Party (SNS) also experienced a significant break over continued emphasis on national issues once the party's main goal--Slovak independence--had been achieved. These PPGs together held over half of all parliamentary seats between 1990 and 1994, but they were responsible for less than one third of those seats which changed hands during this period. Together their ratio of stable to changing seats was almost six to one.

By contrast, almost two thirds of seats changing hands between 1990 and 1994 belonged to the PPGs of the Public Against Violence movement (VPN) or the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS); their ratio of stable to changing seats was less than two to one. Most of the prominent personalities of VPN in 1990 remained prominent at the end of 1997, but by then they were split among five different parties. With little to unify its members except opposition to communism, VPN's PPG soon separated along ethnic lines and over issues of personality and commitment to democracy. Personality conflicts and mutual accusations of authoritarianism continued within HZDS's PPG, leading to the departure of MPs who later formed the Democratic Union (DU).

With each departure the heterogeneity of PPGs declined, reducing the likelihood of further splitting. The splits within Public against Violence (VPN) and its successor Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) helped to create a fuller political spectrum with more coherent and more cohesive parties. Yet this factor alone does not explain all of the increased cohesion among Slovakia's PPGs, particularly the increased cohesion within HZDS after mid-1994. Participants in the splits of both VPN and HZDS have attributed them to both to the movements' broad goals and to the difficult personal style of Vladimír Meciar, a leader of VPN and chair of HZDS. Yet even though these conditions continued--the party continued to define itself as ‘a movement of the wide centre,’ and Meciar remained party chair--departures from HZDS's PPG dropped to almost zero after the 1994 elections.

The leadership of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) has not left future cohesion to chance. By 1994 HZDS found itself able to compensate for personality conflicts and the lack of programmatic coherence through mechanisms for *imposing* cohesion. Other parties had tried such mechanisms before, but they always encountered the constitutional prohibition against binding MPs by ‘directives.’ Before the 1992 election, Slovak newspapers reported that parties had asked candidates to promise sign ‘letters of commitment’ as a condition of their candidacy (Malová 1994). These letters were dismissed as merely symbolic statements, however, because their provisions violated the constitution and would thus be legally unenforceable. By finding means of enforcement outside of contractual obligation, HZDS achieved a significant advantage over other parties. One of the new methods required HZDS candidates to pledge

payment of Sk 5,000,000 (approximately USD 166,000, a sum more than ten times the annual salary of an MP) should they leave HZDS while still remaining in parliament. While no more legally enforceable than the letters of commitment, the *financial* risks and other costs involved in making a legal challenge added a tangible burden to the risks of defection (Constitution Watch 1995).

Were this not sufficient, events in November 1996 revealed the party's other disciplinary mechanisms. The decision of Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) MP Franti ek Gaulieder to leave the party's parliamentary club evoked a wave of sharp personal criticism in the HZDS daily newspaper, *Slovenska Republika*. It also resulted in a murky affair in which parliament's Immunity and Mandate Committee received a letter of resignation signed by Gaulieder, a letter which Gaulieder claimed he signed before the 1994 elections at the insistence of HZDS leadership who kept it on file for such an eventuality (Národná Obroda 1996). Although the validity of this letter was thus highly questionable, and although Gaulieder countered with repeated letters of non-resignation, the Immunity and Mandate Committee--on which HZDS held a absolute majority--voted to accept Gaulieder's ‘resignation’ and to remove his mandate. This move was later confirmed in a floor vote after which, despite Gaulieder's vehement protestations, another member of HZDS filled his newly vacant seat. Gaulieder has since submitted his case to Slovakia's Constitutional Court, which according to Article 129(1) of the constitution has final competency on questions of parliamentary mandates. Even if Gaulieder wins his case and the return of his mandate, the ease with which HZDS could remove him and the difficulties of his court challenge combine to send a

strong warning to any other HZDS member who might wish to follow suit.[2] Should Gaulieder lose, HZDS's would be able to raise the cohesion of its PPG to 100 per cent merely by expelling from parliament any MPs who might try to leave the party.

HZDS is not the only party to introduce techniques which encourage MPs to vote with and remain within a PPG. Many of the other parties have established procedures for monitoring their MPs' performance in such areas as party-line voting, general participation, work on committees, and activity on the floor. The results of these reviews can serve as a mechanism of social pressure and can be used as clear internal standards for determining the position of a current MP on future party election lists (Malová, 1994). But because these sanctions come only from within the party and not from parliament as a whole, they cannot affect MPs who expect to switch to another party or to found their own. For most of these parties the threat of mass exodus appears to have declined with the homogenisation of parties in the early 1990's and the filling out of the political spectrum. It is HZDS which has continued to face the largest threat of such splintering, but it is precisely HZDS which has also obtained sufficient votes in parliament to use formal *parliamentary* mechanisms for enforcing *party* cohesion. While HZDS's disciplinary tools do not hold up to legal or constitutional scrutiny, they do have the backing of a parliamentary majority. In an environment of weak institutional balances, this appears to provide enough deterrent.

PPGs AND THE PARTY-AS-A-WHOLE

Most of Slovakia's current major parties began in parliament or quickly found their way into parliament. As they built and rebuilt organisations capable of competing in mass elections, PPG leaders extended their leadership role to the sphere of party organisation as well. In almost all parties the same leaders dominate both the parliamentary and organisational domains of the party. In the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) a dominant and cohesive PPG has actually allowed a shift in overlap away from the party in parliament toward the party in government.

The Overlap of Leadership

The parliamentary origins of Slovakia's parties reflected the conditions of the new democracy after the revolution. Leaders of the anti-Communist movements entered parliament in early 1990 to replace Communist Party MPs. These new members quickly learned to take advantage of prestige and visibility offered by a seat in parliament. MPs who distanced themselves from the umbrella VPN movement and participated in the creation of new electoral parties found that their ties to parliament helped their parties to prevail over other, similar parties in the crowded political scene of the time.[3] When these parliamentary figures transformed their PPGs into parties, they did not resign from parliament but rather added the role of party leader. In many cases this reflected not only a desire for control but also a simple absence of personnel who were qualified to fill leadership positions in either the PPG or party leadership. Communist rule in Slovakia did not excel in producing charismatic political figures--either Communists or dissidents--who were capable of organising a party and attracting public support. When split among the twenty-five parties and movements which

campaigned for election in 1990, this shortage forced MPs into roles in both the PPG and the external party organisation (EPO).

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KS S) and Public Against Violence (VPN) were the only two major parties which attempted to sustain party leadership separate from the parliamentary delegation. Not coincidentally, both possessed a long list of well-known politicians. Both had origins outside of parliament, emerging not among the political elite but out from social struggle. Both tended, therefore, to regard parliamentary politics as peripheral to a more important fight. Before the 1989 revolution, KS S concentrated its most influential leaders in party structures and government and exerted control over parliament largely from afar. This division of labour continued to some degree after the revolution. Public Against Violence (VPN) organised itself along similar lines. In the 1990 elections many of the party's leaders, including its chairman, Fedor Gál, did not stand for election to parliament, preferring instead to focus attention on the development of VPN as a social force on the assumption that party representatives in parliament and government would respect the decisions of VPN's executive council.

By the summer of 1990, both Public Against Violence (VPN) and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KS S) faced challenges to their model of leadership. Despite decades of using parliament as a rubber stamp, it was KS S which acted earlier and more effectively to take its PPG seriously. A post-election party congress chose most of the party's new leadership from among those elected that year to the Slovak and federal

parliaments (Kubín et al. 1992: 59). In VPN, by contrast, the division of labour led to intra-party conflict as VPN appointees in the government and the party's PPG refused to accept the authority of the party's executive council. In early 1991, the council mustered enough votes to remove its own appointee to the prime ministership, Vladimír Meciar, citing his disloyalty to the party. But even though Meciar lost his position, it was the VPN leadership which suffered most in the long run, losing half of its PPG and nearly all of its public support to Meciar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia.

By mid-1992, every major party had adopted the model of overlapping PPG and party leadership--including not only the former Communist Party and the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) but also the anti-HZDS faction of Public Against Violence which had previously resisted this model. All of these parties placed party leaders at the top of their electoral lists in the 1992 elections. In the 1994 elections the roster of elected MPs included chair of each major party in Slovakia and well over half of all party vice-chairs. During this period numerous mechanisms emerged to bind the PPG with the leadership of the party-as-a-whole. As of 1997, five of the seven largest parties in Slovakia's parliament provide PPG MPs with automatic membership in the party's executive council.[4] The remaining two--the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and HZDS--guarantee at least some degree of PPG representation in this body. Similarly, five of the seven largest parties also provide automatic membership for at least one PPG member on the party's powerful standing executive committee.[5] Other statutory mechanisms provided these executive bodies with final veto over the composition and order of party electoral lists, thus providing party leaders with the

means for ensuring their own prominent placement on those lists. The effects of these mechanisms are quite significant. A survey of party organisation conducted in 1996 found that members of the PPG comprised between 25 per cent and 71 per cent of the membership of parties' highest executive bodies. The share of PPG members was even higher in the category of party chairs and vice-chairs (Krause & Malová 1996).

In fact, the degree of intertwining and overlap between the PPG, the EPO and the leadership of the party as a whole is so significant that it is difficult in many cases to isolate the direction of influence. A 1993 survey of members of parliament found a similar lack of clarity in responses to questions about influence over PPG decisions. When asked whether the PPG or party leadership held the final say in resolving differences between the two, 29 per cent of MPs surveyed chose the PPG while 16 per cent chose the party leadership. More than half (55 per cent) could not identify a more dominant side. When asked who had the most influence over important decisions taken by the PPG, MPs split their votes widely between ‘club leaders,’ ‘club experts,’ ‘the club chair,’ ‘party functionaries,’ and ‘a majority within the club.’ Of these, club leaders received the most votes (33 per cent) followed by club experts (23 per cent) (Brokl & Mansfeldová 1993). The lack of a clear response on both questions may reflect weaknesses in their formulation. With regard to the first question, since most members of party executive councils were at the time also parliamentary MPs, distinguishing between ‘PPG’ and ‘party leadership’ may have proven extremely difficult. The second question does not remedy this difficulty directly, but it does help to identify certain influences which are less important than others: the chair of the PPG

and the party functionaries. Influence in PPGs in 1993 lay not with the EPO, not with the PPG's own chair but with a group of 'club leaders' and 'experts,' many of whom participated in the highest executive bodies of the party-as-a-whole.

The situation has not changed appreciably. In late 1996, the chairmanship of a PPG remained a largely administrative position without great prestige. Fewer than half of the largest parties included the PPG chair or even a vice-chairman of the party-as-a-whole. The managers of the EPO were more likely to be rewarded with vice-chairmanships in the party-as-a-whole, but they remained outnumbered within the party leadership by those who held seats in parliament. Power within parties resides neither in PPG nor EPO as such, but rather in a relatively small group within the executive organs of the party-as-a-whole, most of who retain both a seat in parliament and a voice in matters of party organisation. Although the organisational structures of Slovakia's political parties have increased significantly in complexity since the early 1990's, and although the reservoir of capable leadership has expanded, the initial model of overlapping leadership is still crucial to a characterisation Slovakia's party organisation.

Over time this model has become institutionalised both through the statutory methods mentioned above and through less formal means. More than half of Slovakia's major parties has had the same party chair since the founding of the party. As these chairs and their vice-chairs have become identified with the party itself, their positions have become increasingly entrenched. Within PPGs, rivals to party leadership have more often responded by forming their own PPGs and party structures than by remaining and

challenging the party status quo. Within the EPO, the absence of active party members and the dependence of local and regional structures on party central offices diminish the opportunities for leadership challenges from below. Local and regional party organisations almost without exception give their support to leadership-sponsored initiatives and their endorsement to party leaders who are nominated for parliament. Only in the Slovak National Party (SNS) has a party leadership been successfully dislodged by a party congress, and even this reflects not so much the triumph of a grass-roots rival as an intra-PPG struggle in which one faction gained victory through the strategic use of EPO mechanisms. PPGs and EPOs have developed their own structures and procedures in Slovakia's parties but remain largely dependent on the decisions of the groups of leaders who founded the parties and who continue to run them.

PPGs and the Party in Government (PiG)

Virtually all of Slovakia's party leaders run for parliament, but not all of them remain in parliament for very long. The overlapping leadership which ties together PPGs and EPOs cannot legally be extend in the same way into government because Article 109 of Slovakia's 1992 constitution forbids the same individuals from serving in parliament and government at the same time. Parties which gain the opportunity to participate in governments find themselves also facing the question of how to distribute party leaders between the PPG and the PiG. The relative strength of PPG and PiG within governing parties has differed according to the needs of the parties involved.

The Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) provides the most prominent, almost the only example of relations between PPG and PiG. It has remained the single strongest party in Slovakia from its inception and has occupied the prime ministership and a majority of ministerships for all but nine months of Slovakia's first four and a half years as an independent state. HZDS has responded to the problem of forbidden PPG/PiG overlap by shifting most party leaders from its PPG into government. In its 1992 government, fourteen of nineteen appointments made by HZDS came from the ranks of elected MPs, including the top-ranked candidates in most electoral regions and second and third ranked candidates as well. In its 1994, eleven of twelve appointments made by HZDS came from among elected MPs and again the list included the top ranked candidates in three of four regions along with a scattering of second, third and fourth ranked candidates. This list included the party's chair along with two of four vice-chairs. In both 1992 and 1994, HZDS left a number of party leaders among the ranks of parliament, but this included few of the party's most prominent faces.

A vote of no confidence ended the first Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) government in early 1994, bringing to power the only non-HZDS cabinet to govern Slovakia since independence. Although marked by very different beginnings, the coalition cabinet of DU, KDH and SD came to resolve the PPG/PiG relationship in ways analogous to those of HZDS. Originally, however, the coalition government of the Democratic Union (DU), the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and the Party of the Democratic Left (SD) appears to have been designed to function largely as a government-level delegation of a coalition based in parliament. The government

initially included none of the chairs of the constituent parties and met only after sessions of the *parliamentary-level* Coalition Council had formulated the government agenda. Within several months of the inception of the coalition government both of these conditions had changed: Jozef Moravcik took advantage of his position as prime minister to become chair of his own party, the DU, a move which caused consternation among the other coalition partners whose chairs were not similarly represented in the government; and Coalition Council meetings were rescheduled to take place *after* Cabinet meetings and re-oriented to co-ordinate parliamentary voting on government-proposed bills. After the 1994 election, these parties returned to the opposition and again focused their attention on parliament, the one realm of national public office to which they had regular access. But the establishment of shadow governments composed of prominent party leaders indicate that these parties would follow the example of HZDS and shift their leadership into government should the opportunity present itself.

The strategies adopted by both the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) and the opposition coalition show how the PiG can come to overshadow the PPG. In comparison to parliament, government offers parties and individual party leaders a more dynamic and visible vantage from which to pursue goals and provide patronage. But an internally divided government or one without a reliable majority in parliament may prove more hazardous than no government at all. Hence parties and leaders, while desiring access to the executive, have sometimes continued to concentrate their leaders and their efforts within the PPG in an attempt to ensure cohesion of a party or a

coalition. The continued focus on parliament in some cases reflects a desire to limit conflicts caused by too many leaders of too many parties in the same small government, as was the case in the Democratic Union (DU), Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), Party of the Democratic Left (SD) coalition.). The focus on parliament occasionally also reflects the desire of a party to preserve its options by not becoming too closely identified with a particular government. This seems to be the case not only for the parties of the DU-KDH-SD coalition but also for Slovak National Party (SNS) and the Association of Workers of Slovakia (ZRS) in their coalition with HZDS.

Only the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) has been successful in overcoming these factors that prevent a shift of emphasis to the PiG. HZDS's dominance in parliamentary elections and its ability to ensure cohesion within its own PPG since the elections of 1994 (combined with its apparent ability to compel co-operation from its smaller coalition partners) have allowed the party to use both parliamentary mechanisms and government resources to enhance its hold on power. Although parliament was the birthplace of most of Slovakia's current parties and played a crucial role in their development, this privileged position is threatened by the emergence of a cohesive PPG of a party whose leaders have become concentrated in the PiG. These developments do not relegate parliament to a completely inconsequential position because HZDS must still struggle to obtain parliamentary support from its coalition partners and must still win sufficient parliamentary seats to keep its dominant position. Meciar has frequently proposed changes to the electoral law (Sme 1997), and these seem designed primarily to enhance his party's tally of parliamentary seats (Krivý,

Feglová, & Balko 1996). Should these or similar efforts succeed and provide the party with a majority, the cohesion of the PPG enforced through disciplinary measures similar to those used against Gaulieder could make not only the PPG of HZDS but the entire parliament subordinate to the decisions of the HZDS PiG. In such a case, it would not be surprising to find a HZDS proposal that MPs once again be seated in alphabetical order.

PPGs AND TYPOLOGIES

Evidence concerning the role of PPGs is essential for understanding not only developments in Slovakia but also the interplay of political institutions in any almost any democracy. Volumes such as this one provide the opportunity to compare and contrast political institutions across political boundaries. For this purpose, the typologies developed by Heidar and Koole in their introduction are extremely useful, and it is important to show how the issues discussed above affect the classification of Slovakia's PPGs.

A classification of PPGs' internal organisation in Slovakia depends on the time period under study. In the early years after 1989, a combination of low cohesion and lack of resources prevented most PPGs from becoming anything more than ‘clubs’ in the sense used by Koole and Heidar. Over time, the PPGs' increased cohesion--without a significant increase in resources--mad the ‘fraction’ model increasingly applicable. Slovakia's PPGs, however, do not correspond closely to the common understanding of a fraction as a parliamentary arm of a mass party, organised to express party views but

lacking the resources to shape party policy. A PPG's resources must be understood not only in absolute terms but also relative to the resources of the party as a whole. In Slovakia, many opposition parties lack of financial and technical resources in *all* aspects of their operation. In these parties, the relatively small subsidy received by the PPG and the human resources literally embodied by MPs are often enough to ensure that PPGs do not merely represent a party's views in parliament but also play a major role in the formulation of those views. In the context of the party as a whole, therefore, many opposition PPGs in Slovakia exhibit aspects of a ‘parliamentary party complex’ despite the lack of resources which keeps such complexes limited in size and scope.

Koole and Heidar ask related questions in their classification of the role of PPGs within the party as a whole. In Slovakia the extremely thick overlap of leadership between PPG, EPO and PiG in every major party translates easily into the classification of ‘integrated PPG.’ Legislation which prevents MPs from simultaneously serving as ministers does forbid formal overlap between PiG and PPG, but it does not in practice inhibit close co-operation between these two bodies. Furthermore, key members of these bodies also work together within the executive bodies of the EPO and participate in frequent, informal meetings of party leaders. In almost every party in Slovakia such a core group of leaders, each wearing several hats, ensures that not only the PPG but also the PiG and the EPO operate as ‘integrated’ parts of the party.

It is for this reason that identifying subtypes of integrated PPGs is a complicated affair. In cases where the relationship between PPG and EPO *can* be disentangled, evidence

suggests that it is extremely rare for an EPO to impose its will on a reluctant PPG. The classificatory scheme thus restricts options for Slovakia's parties to 'ruling PPG' and 'PPG as instrument of government.' Further classification depends on the relationship between the PPG and the PiG. Within the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), party chair Vladimír Meciar has consistently surrendered his parliamentary mandate in favour of the prime ministership, thus giving the PiG a clear edge and relegating the PPG to a role as the government's instrument. Similarly, the brief experience of coalition government by the Democratic Union, the Christian Democratic Movement, and the Party of the Democratic Left was characterised by the success of PiGs at overcoming the efforts of PPGs to control them. Only the smaller parties have shown a tendency to focus on their PPGs at the expense of PiGs. For these parties, emphasis on the PPG offers a way to compensate for barriers which prevent the party from playing a significant role in government. Were such barriers removed, it is likely that even these parties would transfer their prominent MPs to ministerial posts and transform their PPGs into the instruments of party leaders in government.

Table 12.1. Seats in Slovakia's parliament by parliamentary club after elections and key periods of parliamentary re-organisation.

Party/Movement	1990	1992	1992	1993	1993	1994	1994	1994	1997
	June Elec -tion	April	June Elec -tion	May	Dec.	Feb.	June	Sept. Elec- tion	June
AD Aliancia demokratov (Alliance of Democrats)	-	-	-	8	8	8	see DU	-	-
APR Alternatíva politického realizmu (Alternative for Political Realism)	-	-	-	-	-	8	see DU	-	-
DS Demokratická strana (Democratic Party)	7	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	see KDH
DU Demokratická únia Slovenska (Democratic Union)	-	-	-	-	-	-	18 (incl AD and APR)	15 (incl. 2 NDS /NA)	13

ESWS Együttélés (Coexistence)	6	6	9	9	9	9	9	10 (incl. 1 MPP)	10 (incl. 1 MPP)
HP Hnutie po nohospodárov (Movement of Agriculturalists)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	see SD	see SD
HZDS Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia)	-	20	74	66	65	56	54	61 (incl. 3 RSS)	60/61 (incl. 3 RSS)*
KDH Kres anskodemokratické hnutie (Christian Demo-cratic Movement)	31	20	18	18	18	18	18	17 (incl. 1 SKOI)	16 (incl. 1 SKOI /DS)

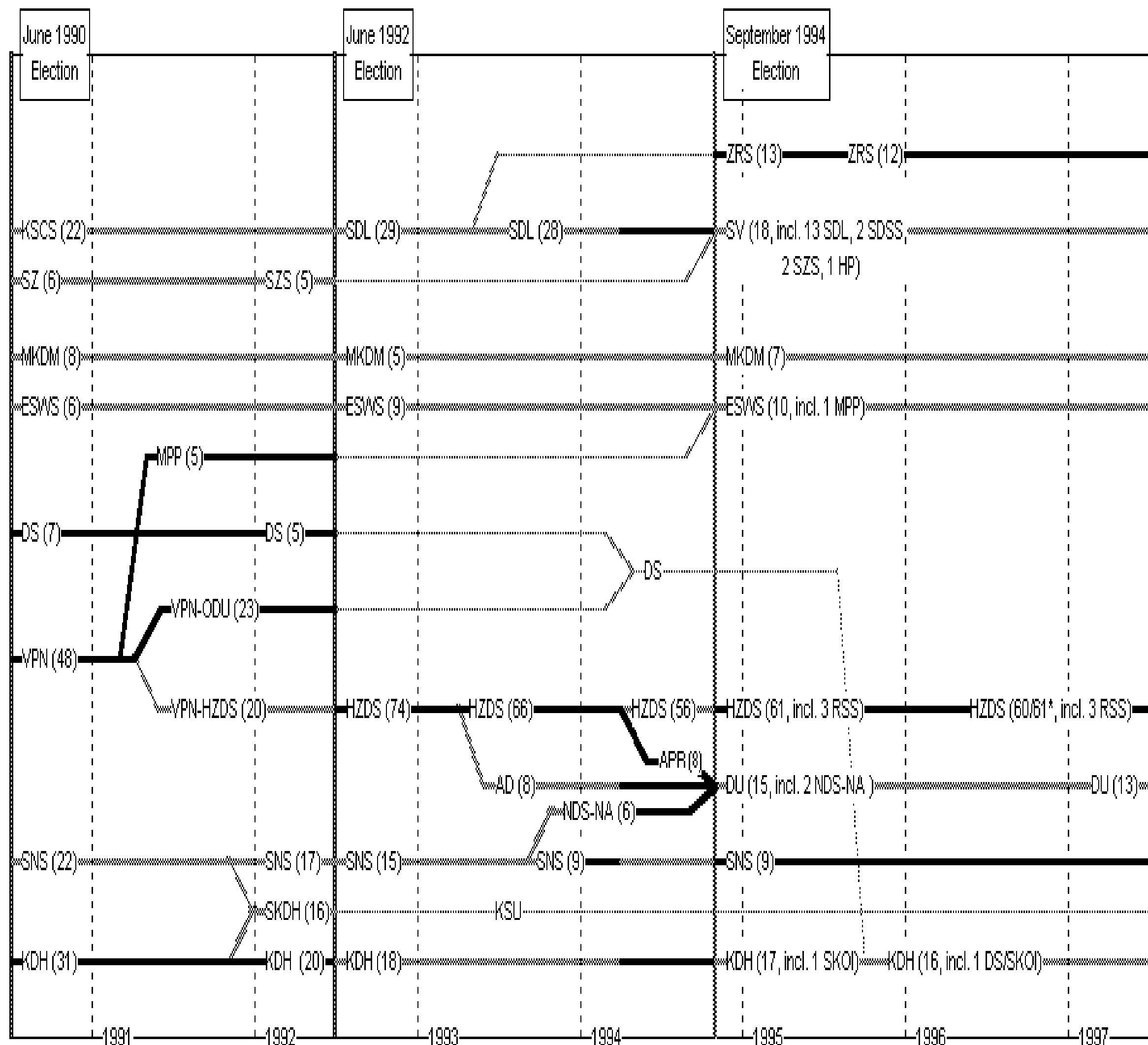
KS S Komunistická strana esko-Slovenska (Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia) SD Strana demokratickéj avice (Party of the Democratic Left) SV Spolo ná vo ba (Common Choice)	22	22	29	28	28	28	28	18 (incl. 13 SD , 2 SDS S, 2 SZS, 1 HP)	18 (incl. 13 SD , 2 SDSS, 2 SZS, 1 HP)
MKDM Magyar Kereszténydemokrata Mozgalom (Hungarian Chris-tian Democratic Movement)	8	8	5	5	5	5	5	7	7
MPP Magyar Polgári Párt (Hungarian Civic Party)	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	see ESW S	see ESWS
NDS/NA Národnodemokratická strana-Nová alternatíva (National Democratic Party-New Alternative)	-	-	-	-	6	5	6	see DU	see DU

ODÚ Ob anská demokraticka únia (Civic Democratic Union)	-	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
RSS Ro nícka strana Slovenska (Farmer's hParty of Slovakia)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	see HZD S	see HZDS
SDSS Sociálno-demokratická strana na Slovensku (Social Democratic Party of Slovakia)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	see SD	see SD
SKDHSlovenské Kres anskodemokratické hnutie (Slovak Christian Democratic Movement) KSU Kres anská sociálna únia Slovenska (Christian Social Union)	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SKOI Stála konferencia Ob ianskeho inštitútu (Permanent Con-ference of the Civic Institute)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	see KDH	see KDH

SNS Slovenská národná strana (Slovak National Party)	22	17	15	14	8	9	9	9	9
SZ Strana zelených (Party of Greens) SZS Strana zelených na Slovensku (Party of Greens of Slovakia)	6	5	-	-	-	-	-	see SD	see SD
VPN Verejnos proti násiliu (Public Against Violence)	48	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ZRS Zdru enie robotníkov Slovenska (Association of Workers of Slovakia)	-	-	-	-	-	-		13	12
Independent	-	3	-	2	3	4	3	-	4/5*
Total	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150

Sources: Krej i, 1994 (for June 1990, June 1992, June 1994); Siváková, 1993 (for April 1992); Mese nikov, 1994 (for May 1993); Malová, 1994 (for February 1994); Siváková, 1994a (for September 1994). Asterisks for 'HZDS' and 'Independent' in the June 1997 column reflect the still pending controversy over former HZDS MP Gaulieder.

Figure 1. Chronology of PPG size and cohesion in Slovakia's parliament, June 1990 to June 1997



Notes

1) Party/PPG abbreviations can be found in Table 1.

2) Numbers in parentheses represent the number of seats held by a PPG. Independent deputies are not counted here.

3) Thick lines mark periods of parliamentary representation in parliament.

- Thick black lines mark periods of representation in a governing coalition.
- Thick shaded lines mark periods of representation in parliament but not as part of a governing coalition.

4) Thin lines mark relevant changes in parties occurring outside of PPGs.

5) Asterisk on 1996 HZDS PPG size denotes still pending controversy over the expulsion of HZDS deputy Gaulieder.

NOTES

[1] Research for this article was supported in part by the following grants and fellowships: Grant No. 129/94 under the Research Support Scheme of the Central European University; and a 1994/1995 Mellon Research Fellowship at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies (NIAS); a grant from the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), with funds provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the United States Information Agency, and the US Department of State, which administers the Russia, Eurasian, and East European Research Program (Title VIII); a grant from the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board; a seed-money grant from the Kellogg Institute for International Studies. Data from interviews with MPs of the National Council of the Slovak Republic are a part of a comparative research project on Institutionalisation of Parliamentary Democracy in Poland, Hungary, the Czech republic and Slovakia, financed by the Dutch Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

[2]Shortly after Gaulieder's removal from parliament, his home was severely damaged in a bomb attack. Opposition MPs claimed this was a further example of means used to coerce HZDS members and deter other defections. Coalition MPs characterized the explosion as an attempt by Gaulieder or others to capitalize on his resignation and gain public sympathy for the opposition.

[3]The only party to gain seats in Slovakia's parliament in the 1990 election without strong previous ties to parliament was the Slovak National Party (SNS). Although SNS began its existence outside of parliament, its organisational structures reflect an clear orientation toward parliamentary representation. Beginning in 1990, party leaders appeared at the top of electoral lists, and in 1994 three of the top eight ballot positions were occupied by the party's chairman and two of it two former chairmen.

[4]These councils exist in all major parties in Slovakia. Depending on the party they are variously called ‘statewide,’ ‘republic,’ or ‘central’ councils, contain between 25 and 125 members, and meet four to twelve times per year.

[5]These standing committees also exist in all major parties in Slovakia. Depending on the party they are variously called the ‘Presidium,’ ‘Political Board (*Gremium)*,’ ‘Executive Committee,’ or ‘Political Committee,’ contain between 10 and 30 members and meet nearly every week.