

CLEAVAGE-THEORY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF POLITICAL LINGUISTICS

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Abstract

In this article, we try to explain the formation of the language of the Slovak political elite through sociological-political cleavage-theory. With this interdisciplinary approach, we want to prove that the individual cleavages that have influenced the formation of political parties and the party system in Slovakia after 1989 can also be identified on the basis of a content analysis of lexical units characteristic of political discourse in a certain period. First of all, we explain how cleavage-theory was discussed in analyzing the transformation of post-communist party systems in academic discourse. Consequently, we find that all the important cleavages of the 1990s were characterized by a certain political vocabulary. Individual expressions dominated in a certain period, which was characterized by tensions between the two opinion camps. After ceasing to exist a certain cleavages, the identified lexical units either disappeared from the political elite's communication, or were marginalized, and now appear only as residues of overcome tension.

Key words: *Cleavages, Political Linguistics, Language, Party System, Slovakia, Political Vocabulary.*

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of Central and Eastern European political regimes in the 1990s prompted social scientists to answer the question of whether the concept of cleavages of Stein Rokkan and Seymour Martin Lipset [1967] could explain the emergence and formation of political parties and party systems in new democracies. There have been several studies on this topic [see eg Kitschelt 1995, Kitschelt et al. 1999, Beyme 1997, 2000, Zielinski 2002, Hlubek, Kopecek 2004, 2005, Evans 2006, Kopecky 2006, Tieman 2008, Hooghe, Marks 2017], which under the conditions of Czech and Slovak political science inspired a fruitful debate. The conclusion of the discussion was, as a rule, that the new cleavages in transforming democracies are generally different from the classical cleavages as they were defined by Lipset and Rokkan [Kopeček 2006, Tieman 2008]. The main feature of classical cleavages was, among other things, the stable link of a social group to a political party that was absent in the new democracies. Indeed, the lack of stable social fission characterized the new democracies, as we knew it from Western European countries [Evans, Whitefield 1993]. The high instability in voter behavior characterized the cleavages in the new democracies. This was not the result of a heterogeneous social structure, but it was often created under the influence of contradictions between political actors, with whom the electorates of political parties identified [Kopeček 2006].

In this paper, we want to use this sociological-political science concept to move further. We want to use it to analyze the language of the Slovak political elite in the 1990s. By combining the political and linguistic approach, we want to answer the question of how the cleavages determining the formation of the Slovak party system were reflected in the political language of the party elite. We map the most important moments of the development of political communication of systemic political parties. At the same time, we are testing how the evolution of cleavages can be observed through research into the political vocabulary of relevant party actors.

Our reasoning is based on the hypothesis that each dominant cleavage, which manifested itself in the development of the Slovak party system, was characterized by a certain language, or political vocabulary. It either ceased to be used after the conflict had lost its intensity or it became irrelevant or else it appears in the political communication up to this day if the cleavage persists. The intensity of the existing cleavages was not the same. Their intensity depends on the degree to which a particular topic resonates in society, which is subsequently reflected in the use of terms typical of a particular cleavage. It cannot be ruled out that some of the expressions typical of worn off cleavages are still used as residues in political communication to this day. However, they are marginalized in political communication, and the bearers are usually the former actors of the conflicts from the 1990s who are still active in political life.

We come to the findings through a content analysis of three categories of sources. The first source consists of relevant historical documents (constitution, laws, decla-

rations). The second source comprises the political statements of the Members of Parliament and Ministers. These are now recorded not only in the form of articles from the press or electronic media but also in the parliamentary digital archive, which contains transcripts of parliamentary speeches that are an important source of knowledge for the research of political language. Looking at the language of the Members of Parliament, it is necessary to distinguish the pragmatic and lexical-textual level. While pragmatic-communication factors such as the formation of speech, the organization of plenary debate, the length of the speech or the whole debate, or the choice of text type, such as the form of addressing, are formalized, the content of the speech and the individual lexical and textual principles are generally free [Burkhardt 2003]. Yet, it is necessary to have in mind that the content of the speech has to relate to the topics discussed, which are laid down or else they are voted by the legislative body. This aspect applies not only to the parliamentary speeches of the keynote speakers but also to the factual remarks on individual contributions made by the Members of Parliament.

The third examined source of the political vocabulary is the language of the election campaign. It comes in several forms [Toman-Banke 1996, Niehr 2014]. In the written form we are confronted with the language of the election campaign eg. when reading party programs, or shorter text such as slogans on election posters. In a spoken form, it can be encountered in election meetings, political discussions on television, the Internet or radio. This level of political language serves to mobilize voters in a variety of ways, either through program presentations, emphasizing one's strengths, or vice versa, the negative aspects of political opponents.

1. THE THEORETICAL DEFINITION OF CLEAVAGE CONCEPT

The consideration of Martin Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan [1967] is primarily captured in the collective monograph *Party Systems and Voter Alignments* published in 1967. The authors deal with issues of origin and transformations of cleavages, relations between voters and political parties and how they influence the formation of party systems. They work on the assumption that society is categorized into diverse social groups (eg workers, employers, farmers, Catholics, Protestants, townspeople, etc.). For the emergence of cleavage, it is necessary to be aware of the collective identity within the social group. Based on the different interests, goals, and values of the various social groups, an antagonistic relationship may develop among them, which may result in latent or even open conflicts. In the case that individual groups are represented in politics, their mutual contradictions are also transferred to the political level by creating their political organizations.

Lipset and Rokkan [1967] distinguish four socio-economic cleavages: work vs. capital, state vs. church, city vs. rural and center vs. periphery. They were created during two processes equally important for the formation of political parties. Namely, during the "National Revolution" and the "Industrial Revolution". The national revolution

stimulated the nation-building process. But creating a modern nation was not easy. Complications occurred mainly in countries with heterogeneous nationality. The attempts to create a modern nation were mainly opposed by inhabitants from the center of different regions. Based on the national revolution, there was created a dispute in the society between the dominant center and the subordinate, more precisely oppressed periphery. Characteristic features of the periphery were, according to Lipset and Rokkan [1967], the ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences of the smaller group of inhabitants from the center. Different regional party entities were based on this cleavage.

The conflict between the center and the periphery is characterized by the mobilization of oppressed groups whose aim is to create cultural or political independence from the majority population to prevent the loss of their identity [Ištók 2016]. Concurrently with the process of national revolution, the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism was in motion, more precise the efforts of absolutist states to limit the influence of the Church. In addition to direct attacks by non-Catholic monarchs, the Church was also threatened by the gradual secularization of the society. The consequence was the more active involvement of Catholics in politics, which was reflected in the formation of religious parties. In this way, a cleavage between the Church and the State was created in society.

The process of the industrial revolution is characterized by a conflict between agricultural and industrial interests, as well as between employers and employees [Lipset, Rokkan 1967]. The industrial revolution did not exclusively mean the industrialization of much of Europe, but it brought substantial interventions in the demographic, social and political structure of European society [Kopeček 2006]. Western and Central Europe had changed under the influence of urbanization. As the cities expanded, their political and economic significance also increased, and the rural population responded negatively. The industrial revolution thus created the conditions for the emergence of a conflict between the city and the countryside, resulting in the emergence of agrarian political parties.

The industrial revolution resulted in the emergence of a large group of workers whose living conditions differed significantly from those of wealthy employers. Lipset and Rokkan described the dispute as a conflict between labour and capital. Workers were represented by socialist and social-democratic parties, but they did not play a significant role in forming the party system in the territory of today's Slovak Republic. The reason was the undersized state of the Slovak industry which resulted in a low number of employees.

Lipset and Rokkan [1967] described the contradiction between labour and capital as the most important cleavage in the Western European nation-states. Since this concept is also suitable for the conditions of Hungary in the 19th and 20th centuries, the emergence of the first Slovak political parties can be perceived as a result of the first-mentioned process - national revolution, i.e. the conflict between the superior

culture of the Hungarian center and ethnically, linguistically and religiously different Slovak population settled in the territory of the upper Hungarian periphery. However, our task is not to explain the causes and circumstances of the establishment of historical parties, so we pay attention solely to political parties that emerged immediately in the Slovak Republic after the systemic change in 1989.

After the introduction of this concept, an intense debate started in the social sciences, what cleavage exactly means, what causes cleavage, or how it influences the development of other party systems. According to Holländer [2003], there is still no generally accepted definition of this term. Despite various controversies, this concept is one of the most cited in the social sciences and has found its application among political scientists in post-communist states.

2. POLITICAL PARTIES IN SLOVAKIA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CLEAVAGE-THEORY

The end of the communist regime in Central and Eastern Europe and the establishment of new political systems prompted discussion whether the establishment of political parties in transformed democracies can be explained by the same concept as the establishment of historical parties in Western European countries. In the political science discourse, it is thought that in the case of post-communist political systems cleavages were not based on the traditional socio-economic split of society [Tieman 2008], which Lipset and Rokkan observed on the examples of the Western European democracies. This concept cannot be automatically applied to the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe [Hloušek, Kopeček 2004]. According to Hloušek and Kopeček [2004: 47], “during the period of the real socialist regimes in Central and South-Eastern Europe, there were so profound social and political changes that traditional socio-political structures, including historical cleavages and pluralist party systems, were destroyed and replaced by the new ones”. Thus, in the case of new democracies cleavages were more based on contradictions which followed on from current political issues.

In the case of Slovakia, several dominant and several marginal new cleavages could be observed during the first years of systemic change. The first dominant cleavage, which emerged in the Central European environment immediately after the collapse of the old regime, was based on a dispute between communism and anti-communism [Berndt 2001, Krekovičová 2005, Kopeček 2006]. This conflict played an important role at the beginning of the transformation process, not only in Central Europe but in all countries of the former Communist bloc. As a rule, it only existed until the first free elections, or more precisely until the victory of the anti-communist parties, which was also in the case of Slovakia. The rapid transformation of the Communist Party of Slovakia into a Western type of social democracy also helped to end this conflict [Rybář, Deegan-Krause 2008].

According to Lubomir Kopecek [2006], the cleavage communism vs. anti-communism

can exist in a new form. It contains rules for the functioning of the new political regime, i.e. the new political elite decides whether democratic rules will be accepted. According to Kopeček, this conflict can be renewed. It was also in the case of Slovakia. He calls the new cleavage “mečiarizmus” vs. “antimečiarizmus”.

We consider his thesis in the case of Slovakia to be questionable. The political style of Vladimir Mečiar’s Third Government certainly cannot be attributed to liberal democracies [Tudoroiu, Horváth, Hrušovský 2009], but his regime did not have common features with the Communist regime which had lasted until 1989. Wolfgang Merkel and Aurel Croissant [2003] count the regime of the third Mečiar’s government among “illiberal democracies” with certain elements of delegating. This term is used for marking a regime in which freely elected governments violate fundamental human rights and civil liberties, or more precisely they do not respect the rule of law or they do not try to build it. Vladimir Mečiar’s third government, however, came from free parliamentary elections. At the same time, the political party founded by Mečiar “Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko” (HZDS - Movement for a Democratic Slovakia) was not only controlled by the opposition but also by coalition partners. An independent constitutional court remained on the executive branch of state power, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were well organized. Although controlling mechanisms of the opposition were limited, the four-year election rule was maintained and led to an exchange of political representation in 1998. Therefore we did not perceive Mečiar’s government 1994-1998 as a continuation of the conflict communism vs. anti-communism. A different name is, therefore, more appropriate for this cleavage, namely orientation to the West vs. orientation to the East (abbreviated as West vs. East). On the one hand, there were political parties whose aim was not only to integrate the country into Western European structures, but they also wanted to acquire the values typical of liberal democracies. On the other hand, there were political parties whose political style did not correspond to the principles of the rule of law and liberal democracy.

With the question of what type of political style would be pursued in the administration of public affairs after the collapse of the old regime, the question of the future of the common state of Czechs and Slovaks also emerged. Unlike Poland, Hungary and, the Czech Republic, the nationalist wave affected Slovakia to a much greater extent. Czechoslovakia, like Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, was one of the states where the national question played an important role in the formation of party entities. German author Wolfgang Merkel [1996] sees one of the causes of the break-up of the Czechoslovak Federation in the inability of political elites to form a common, federal party system. Kopeček describes this cleavage as nationalism vs. regionalism/ethnicity, or more precisely nationalist cleavage [Kopeček 2006]. Within this cleavage, we can observe certain features of the classical cleavage of Rokkana and Lipset, center vs. periphery. In the case of post-communist countries, according to Hloušek and Kopeček [2004], it can arise from three different reasons:

1. In the state exists a national minority or ethnic group which is trying to equalize and recognize its minority rights.
2. Next to the state is another state which is in political mythology considered to be a traditional enemy or a certain danger.
3. There is a dispute over the form of the regime. Nationalists and civil society supporters face each other.

Taking over the concept of Hlousek and Kopecky as well as the Uwe Berndt study, we distinguish three cleavages, which had played an important role in the development of political parties in Slovakia in the 1990s:

- secessionism vs. federalism [Szomolányi, Meseznikov 1997],
- Orientation to the West and orientation to the East;
- national minority vs. majority population.

Despite overcoming the three major conflicts of the 1990s (communism vs. anti-communism, secessionism vs. federalism, orientation to the West and orientation to the East), the development of the party system has not stabilized to this day. After 1998, the development of political parties was influenced by institutional conditions. In 1998, Mečiar's government majority passed electoral legislation that merged the four constituencies into one. Today, this legislation can be considered as an important factor supporting the low degree of institutionalization of the Slovak party system [Filipec 2019]. However, the emergence of new political parties can also be explained by the strong degree of personalization of politics. Of course, this does not mean that there are no topics in Slovakia that would divide society into two opinion-forming camps. One of the main cleavages today is the view about the socio-economic transformation of a country that divides political parties into left and right. However, there are also new cleavages, such as system vs. antisystem, or some, initially marginal, gain in intensity (eg state vs. church) [Sekerák 2019].

While analyzing the formation of party systems, the structural character of political parties in post-communist states should not be forgotten either. Political parties in Slovakia were characterized by a low degree of institutionalization, weakly reworked organizational structure and low membership [Segert 2008]. New Slovak political parties often did not try to imitate political organizations, as we know them from Western Europe. Some of them are understood by their founders, often entrepreneurs [Marušiak 2017], or by oligarchic groups standing in the background [Školkaý 2018], rather as a way of financial investment. They are not built from the bottom of the membership base up to the party headquarters, but on the contrary, even without the ambition to increase the number of members [Ondria, Kováčik, Kosír 2010]. The program does not play an important role in these parties, but rather short-term marketing strategies [Climate 2014]. The founder also plays an important role. Because they are highly personalized, they are often linked to only one political leader

[Axer 2019]. They are unable to survive multiple parliamentary terms, and after a few years in parliament, these parties definitively end.

3. THE POLITICAL LANGUAGE OF SLOVAK CLEAVAGES

Academics still discuss what exactly political language means. However, one thing is certain: politics and language have always been directly linked. According to Jörg Kilian [1997: 2], language is “the most important instrument of political action, regardless of historical period or form of government”. As an actor, a politician faces before each of his/her public output the dilemma which of the means of expression he/she should use, and as he/she should name certain facts [Girnth 2015].

The modern relationship between language and politics exists in various forms, occurs in the form of different genres. The preparation of public speeches, written texts, discussions among party colleagues or political rivals is one of the main activities of any politician. According to Josef Klein [2010: 8], “politicians use language in public as a means of exercising power or as a means of legitimizing their power claim by creating institutional specific texts and speeches, conducting political discussions and presenting their speeches through the media and using different terms, arguments, slogans and appeals to present their opinion”. Thus, language is not only an instrument of politics, “it is the first condition of its existence” [Grünert 1974: 1].

Based on the used language, it is possible to reveal the ideological and programmatic orientation of politicians. Party supporters are mobilized through language, undecided voters are convinced and political rivals are attacked. Language is used to convey different content, present personalities, defend political messages, and challenge the opinions of opposition politicians. Truth is conveyed by language, but it can also be manipulated. Power can be acquired, performed, maintained and controlled via language [Grünert 1974]. In the following cleavages, we try to identify through the analysis of political language the main cleavages present during the development of the Slovak party system after 1989. In view of the fact that some expressions do not have an exact equivalent in English, we decided to include them in Slovak language. For the same reason, we translate some terms by description.

Communism vs. Anti-communism

The systemic change in 1989 on the territory of today’s independent Slovak Republic brought not only new political, social and economic conditions. The processes and results associated with the “Velvet Revolution” also influenced the process of word formation and lexical neologism, which can be easily identified on the political vocabulary of contemporary political and economic elites. However, to understand these changes in language, it is not enough to know only the meaning of individual words. It is also necessary to have a socio-cultural knowledge of socio-political mechanisms that influenced the creation of political language before and immediately after the transformation of the regime.

Hand in hand with fundamental political changes, new lexical units or expressions that were used in the former regime but with a different meaning, came to the center of public debate after 1989. These were, in particular, political and economic keywords that, in established democracies, are a natural part of communication between politicians and voters, such as *demokracia* (democracy), *solidarita* (solidarity), *práva národnostných menšín* (national minority rights), *právny štát* (rule of law), *spravodlivosť* (justice), *deľba štátnej moci* (a division of state power), *ľudové hlasovanie* (popular vote), *stranícka súťaž* (party competition), *opozícia* (opposition), *ľavica* (left), *pravica* (right), *občan* (citizen), *občianska spoločnosť* (civil society), *sloboda pohybu* (freedom of movement), *populizmus* (populism), *pluralizmus* (pluralism), *parlamentarizmus* (parliamentarian), *mandátový a imunitný výbor* (mandate and immunity committee) or *trhové hospodárstvo* (market economy), *privatizácia* (privatization), *reštitúcie* (restitution), *podnikateľ* (entrepreneur), *hospodársky rast* (economic growth), *inflácia* (inflation).

In view of the fact that the communist regime formally envisaged the division of power into legislative, executive and judicial, the political vocabulary associated with the institutional division of power was minimally affected by the new conditions. However, the terms, which name institutions, organizations or processes characteristic for parliamentary democracy either immediately after the systemic change (*mimovládny sektor* - NGO, *referendum*, *ľudové hlasovanie* - popular vote) or in the period when it came to their establishment in the political system of Slovakia (*ombudsman*, *europeizácia* - Europeanisation), started to be used more often.

Not all expressions carried a positive connotation. Some means of expression referred to new phenomena that either did not exist in the authoritarian regime of the Communist Party or were not publicly spoken about. Alternatively, communist propaganda used them to criticize Western democracies. These were the terms referring to social and economic phenomena that usually worked in a market economy with the existence of private capital, namely unemployment, unemployment benefits, poverty, the homeless, inflation.

The post-November political conditions brought to the formation of the lexical level of the political language also the content shift of the commonly used expressions. Some of the original “flag words” [Hermanns 1982, Niehr 2014], which were directly linked to the former undemocratic regime, were marginalized in political communication and for the representatives of the democratic elites, they took on the character of stigmatizing words (*ľudová demokracia* - people’s democracy, *bratská pomoc* - fraternal help, *komunizmus* - communism, *socializmus* - socialism, *trieda* - class, *revizionizmus* - revisionism, *kolaboranti* - collaborators, *klérofašisti* - clergymen, *imperialisti* - imperialists, *päťročný plán* - five-year plan, *pionier* - Young Pioneer, *pioniersky tábor* - a camp for Young Pioneer, *aktív* - caucus, *Brigáda socialistickej práce* - Brigade of Socialist Labour, *proletariát* - the proletariat, *diktatúra proletariátu* - the dictatorship of the proletariat, *pozemková reforma* - land reform, *vykorisťovanie* -

exploitation). As new expressions entered the political vocabulary in the context of systemic change, some of the words directly related to the former regime were quickly marginalized and finally disappeared from the political dictionary.

These were mainly expressions based on the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism. Some of them were replaced by new expressions. As an illustration, the word “trieda” (class) was replaced by the term “vrstva” (social strata). With the word, “trieda” disappeared the phrases created by the adjective “triedny” f.e. triedny nepriateľ (class enemy), which were typical of communist propaganda.

Before 1989, this type of political communication became an everyday routine also in other spheres, such as businesses and education. The characteristic sign of communist propaganda was to place political slogans in various public and easily visible places to emphasize its content priorities.

These were terms such as triedny boj (class struggle), triedny nepriateľ (class enemy), triedna (class), more precisely beztriedna spoločnosť (classless society), triedne protiklady (class opposites), triedne vedomie (class consciousness), víťazstvo robotníckej triedy (working class victory), vykorisťovateľská trieda (exploitative class), beztriedny (classless), etc. After a systemic change the terms such as proletariát (the proletariat), imperializmus (the imperialism), , vykorisťovanie – vykorisťovať, vykorisťovateľ a vykorisťovaní, vykorisťovateľská spoločnosť (exploitation – exploit, exploiter and exploitation, exploitative society), svetová revolúcia (world revolution), päťročný plán (five-year plan), diverzant (saboteur), kontrarevolúcia (counter-revolution), pionierska organizácia (Young Pioneer organization), politbyro (Politburo), Tuzex (Tuzex), nepriateľ ľudu (enemy of the people), etc. were withdrawn from a political vocabulary

Federalism vs. Secessionism

The first cleavage influencing the formation of the Slovak party system Communism vs. anti-communism was overcome in the first free elections (1990), in which the winning parties did not choose the Communist Party of Slovakia as a coalition partner [Berndt 2001]. But in the conflict structure of society, another cleavage started to play an important role. It was federalism vs. secessionism, whose content was a different view of the constitutional arrangement, more precisely the future of the common state of Czechs and Slovaks - Czechoslovakia [Szomolányi, Mesežnikov 1997]. Nationalistic ambitions of some Slovak deputies appeared immediately after the transformation of the regime and gained their intensity during the discussion about the name of the common state of Czechs and Slovaks. These ambitions were reflected in the so-called pomlčkovej vojne (Dash War) [Kopeček 2006]. The content of this conflict was the question of how to ensure that the name of the federation implies that the Slovaks are in an equal position with the Czechs in the common state.

This cleavage had a particularly strong influence on society as a whole in the 1990s, which was naturally reflected in the political language and rhetoric of political actors [Krekovičová 2005]. At the center of political communication were the expressions

corresponding to the dictionary of the ideology of nationalism. Its bearers were first of all deputies of the Slovak National Party and after changing opinion also the chairman of the new entity, Movement for Democratic Slovakia, Vladimír Mečiar.

The cleavage federalism vs. secessionism was articulated through nouns such as *národ* (nation), *republika* (republic), *zem* (country), *vlast* (homeland), *štátnosť* (statehood), *Slovensko* (Slovakia), *nezávislosť* (independence), *vojbytnosť* (self-sufficiency), *samostatnosť* (independence), *sebautvrdenie* (self-assertion), *suverenita* (sovereignty), *identita* (identity), *rovnoprávnosť* (equality), *emancipácia* (emancipation), *zjednotenie* (unification), *spolužitie* (coexistence), *memorandum* (memorandum) supplemented with adjectives such as *národný* (national), *zvrchovaný* (sovereign), *nezávislý* (independent), *rovný vlastný* (characteristic), *cudzí* (foreign) or *slovenský záujem* (Slovak interest), or pronouns emphasizing the difference between Slovaks and the rest of the federation: *our, your, we, you, they, us, them, others*.

A special category in this period were the phrases naming political processes associated with the conflict between Czechs and Slovaks and the efforts to divide the common state resulting from this cleavage. The division of Czechoslovakia and the establishment of the Slovak Republic were presented in the political language of the then supporters of the new state as a *historical moment* or a *thousand-year effort of the Slovak nation to achieve the statehood*. The political vocabulary of nationalists also included terms referring to older Slovak history such as Great Moravia, old Slovaks or names of medieval rulers (Mojmír, Pribina, Rastislav, Svätopluk). In addition to the old myths, new myths appeared in the political language. Krekovičová gives as an example the naming of Vladimír Mečiar as “father the founder” [Krekovičová 2005: 63]. The function of the use of expressions from Slovak or Czechoslovak mythology was to point out the historical context of the formation of Slovak national identity, to provide legitimacy to nationalist efforts and at the same time to confirm the myth of the thousand-year development of the Slovak nation. The reference to the “*a thousand-year effort of the Slovak nation to achieve the statehood*” can also be found in the preamble of the Parliamentary Declaration of Sovereignty of July 17, 1992, or more precisely the myth of the thousand-year struggle of Slovaks for independence emerged particularly intensively during negotiations on the said declaration in the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

The contemporary dictionary is also present in the preamble of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, which is evenly a reflection of the language dictionary of the cleavage of secessionism vs. federalism (“*Bearing in mind the political and cultural heritage of our predecessors and the experience gained through centuries of struggle for our national existence and statehood*”).

In addition to the names of the princes of Great Moravia, the names of the personalities of the Slovak national movement from the 19th century (*Štúr, Hodža, Hurban, Bernolák, Mojzes*), some important Slovak writers and politicians from the first half of the 20th century (*Štefánik, Hlinka, Rázus*) were also often used in the public debate

and their names appeared in the language of nationalists, extremists, and politicians belonging to the democratic center.

In rare cases, usually among the members of the extreme nationalist groups, the names of the First Slovak Republic (1939-1945) were used in the political vocabulary within this cleavage (irrespective of the period before or after the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic). First of all, the name of the president *Jozef Tiso*, whose name some politicians used to mention with his doctoral degree (*Doctor Jozef Tiso*). However, the majority of the political elite rejected this period as the dark side of Slovak history, thus dissociating itself from the crimes of the clerical-fascist dictatorship of the HSLS.

In the period immediately after the systemic change, the expressions more characteristic of communist propaganda returned exceptionally quickly to the political language, although most of them had new, negative connotations. The language of any undemocratic regime is one of the main tools for combating the real or often fictitious enemy [Cassinelli 1960]. The language of communist propaganda was no exception. In the Cold War era, when the world was divided into two antagonistic poles, the Communists created a number of their means of expression, which were, on the one hand, used to identify positively their residue ideas about life and how to govern the society, and on the other hand to present negatively their enemies. However, the enemy in communist propaganda was not only a warrior of the army of another state, but it was also often a fellow citizen who had become an enemy only because of resistance to the central image of the Communist Party about the working-class government [Štefančík, Nemcová 2015], which would lead to the existence of a classless society. The class enemy thus became the central term of communist propaganda. It was anyone who disagreed and publicly presented views that were in contrast to the official views, including people who were interested in living in a free society in the Western world.

The opponents of the idea of dividing the common state were to be seen similarly, as the enemies of the independent Slovak state. The ruling parties and the media regarding them with favour began to characterize people who were either cautious about the idea of independence of the Slovak Republic or openly refused dividing Czechoslovakia negatively. On the substantive level, these were the expressions such as (contemporary) *odrodilec* (renegade), *Židoboľševik* (Jewish-bolshevik), *svetoobčan* (world citizen), *janičiar* (janissary), *judáš*, *zapredanec* (judas), *slobodomurár* (freemason), *zradca* (traitor), *sionista* (zionist), *šovinista* (chauvinist), *maďarón* (Hungarian), *čechoslovakista* (Czechoslovakian), *kozmpolita* (cosmopolitan), *skrachovanec* (loser), *stroskotanec* (down-and-out). The phrase “foul one’s own nest” was a particularly popular phraseological phrase, although it was a very common criticism of opposition politicians to the government. These terms were used by supporters of an independent state to criticize or directly ridicule a political opponent.

Orientation to the East vs. orientation to the West

After the establishment of the Slovak Republic, there still had been a conflict between federalists and secessionists [Szomolányi, Mesežnikov 1997], whose residues had also been reflected in the use of political vocabulary. The opposition had been criticized for several years by the government deputies for voting against the sovereignty of the Slovak Republic, more precisely, against the establishment of an independent state. Some politicians voting against the sovereignty of the Slovak nation only viciously disagreed that the new state should be led by a group around Vladimír Mečiar. Nevertheless, their negative vote in the national voting was a petty argument for criticizing the opposition at the time.

Indeed, an important part of the new tension in society was the style of the governance of the third Government of Vladimír Mečiar (1994-1998), which was notably expressed in the political language. Within this cleavage, the especially popular expression was “*Mečiarismus*”, under which we understand the style of administration of Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar. This term had become so popular that it even found itself in the vocabulary of political scientists [Hloušek, Kopeček 2004, Kopeček 2006], who used it to mark the cleavage “*Mečiarism vs. anti-Mečiarism*”. In the language of opposition politicians, this style was also called a “steam roller”.

The word “*démarche*” had a special function in the political language at that time. The term “*démarche*” in diplomatic language refers to diplomatic protest. In this particular case, it was a critical statement made by some diplomats who expressed concern about the course of the NR SR meeting in November 1994, at which representatives of coalition parties (HZDS, SNS, and ZRS) eliminated the functioning of the opposition in the supreme legislative body and at the same time they dismissed senior public officials who were appointed by the previous coalition government. The parliamentary session under Ivan Gašparovič and the beginning of the functioning of the third Mečiar government began to be called in the following period as a “*noc dlhých nožov*” (night of long knives). In the HZDS language, the word “*demarsh*” had become an expression that was seen as a stigma because it was perceived by the representatives of the ruling parties as foreign interference in the internal affairs of the Slovak Republic. The language of the nationalists, including Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar, was characterized by expressive and unambiguously evaluating expressions. On the other hand, the opposition called the more radical supporters of Slovakia’s independence pejoratively as “*hejslovákov*” (hey Slovaks) „*nacionalistov*“(nationalists) or „*preskakováčov vatier*“ (s.o. who jumps over bonfire).

In the political language of the ruling elite, nouns were often supplemented with adjectives such as anti-Slavic, fascist, or Hungarian to emphasize the negative relationship with opposition parties. At the level of phraseology, we can give examples “*ocitnúť sa na smetisku dejín*” (sink into oblivion), or “*odísť do minulosti*” (pass into history). Expressions more characteristic of communist propaganda also appeared on the verbal level: “*kolaborovať*” (collaborate) or “*zradit*” (betray). On basis of men-

tioned examples, we can conclude that society was extremely polarized during this period and the conflict over the future of the state affected not only the political elite but also the media and ultimately the whole society.

Since it was not only about the nature of democracy, but also about the future of the state, more precisely, whether Slovakia would be able to integrate into European political and economic structures as well as the North Atlantic Defense Community (NATO), in political communication started to emerge terms related to the European Union and North Atlantic Pact policies. However, it was still about the nature of the regime within this cleavage. In the language of the ruling elite, the style of the previous cleavage prevailed, in opposition political parties dominated the terms associated with the rule of law, democracy, order and the European integration process, and criticism of Mečiar's style of politics. The term "Mečiarizmus" has become a superior term for the whole style of politics of Vladimír Mečiar and his ruling coalition. Through expressions such as "*krvavé paprče*" (bloody paws), "*zavlečenie*" (dragging) or "*divoká privatizácia*" (wild privatization), the opposition pointed to the authoritarian signs of Mečiar's third government.

Center vs. Periphery

A special cleavage that influenced the formation of the Slovak party system was the center vs. periphery [Kopeček 2006]. Within it, political parties representing the interests of the members of the Hungarian minority were formed in the territory of southern Slovakia. Initially, three entities were established whose members were predominantly Hungarian living in Slovakia: Spolužitie (Coexistence), Maďarské kresťansko-demokratické hnutie (MKDH, Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement) and Maďarská občianska strana (MOS, Hungarian Civic Party). Because of given the five-percent quorum that prevented small parties from joining parliament, all three entities merged into "Strana maďarskej koalície" (SMK, Hungarian Coalition Party) after the adoption of Mečiar's amendment of the Election Act in 1998. In the first months, the representatives of these entities made it clear that the question of the status of the members of the Hungarian minority would be their party's priority, regardless of whether it was a nationalist, liberal or Christian-democratic entity. One of the first topics of this cleavage was the question of the legalization of Slovak language as an official language and the status of the languages of national minorities, especially the Hungarian language. However, the topic of the position of Hungarians in southern Slovakia also opened the topic of the position of Slovaks in the territory of Slovakia, where the majority of the population were citizens of the Slovak Republic of Hungarian nationality.

Nationalist parties were strongly opposed to the Hungarian minority in the 1990s. In the political vocabulary of this type of party entities, this was evident throughout the last decade of the 20th century, not only during the process of making the Slovak Republic independent. However, the political vocabulary of this cleavage was not

purely negativist. It also includes the neutral expressions on which the parties representing the Hungarian minority-based their communication with their voters, namely “*národnostná menšina* – national minority”, “*jazyk* – language”, “*identita* – identity”, “*autonómia* - autonomy”, “*samospráva* – self-government”, “*maďarský* – Hungarian”. The cleavage Center vs. Periphery was losing its importance especially when representatives of the Hungarian minority participated in the government themselves, especially during the two Dzurinda’s governments (1998-2006), the short government of Iveta Radičová (2010-2012) and finally during the third government of Robert Fico, in which representatives of the Hungarian minority in the party Most-Híd met together with the nationalists from the Slovak National Party. On the one hand, the Slovak National Party, usually a harsh critic of the politics of parties such as Most-Híd or SMK, for strategic reasons ceased to attack the interests of Hungarians living in Slovakia, on the other hand, the right-wing political parties which as traditional long-term partners of the parties Most-Híd, and the SMK, as a rule, did not base their policy on the anti-minority appeal.

Socio-economic cleavage of transformation

Tension in cleavage orientation towards the East vs orientation towards the West was overcome in the 1998 parliamentary elections, when the opposition parties gained a constitutional majority in the National Council of the Slovak Republic and, thanks to the rapid consolidation of democracy, it brought Slovakia to the European Union and NATO. The new political conditions also brought rapid economic growth, which is mainly attributed to the successful reforms of Dzurinda’s second government (2002-2006). The party Smer-SD, stood in opposition to Dzurinda’s second government, focused its policy primarily on criticizing vigorous economic reforms. In this way, the conflict structure of society had reached the level of the traditional dispute of advanced democracies, namely between the left and the right, albeit with specific Slovak features.

The socio-economic cleavage of transformation has practically been spread since the systemic change in 1989, but due to other topics with a significant impact on the individual’s life (a division of Czechoslovakia and consolidation of democracy), it was fully manifested after 1998. At the linguistic level, it is associated with the penetration of new economic terms into political communication.

Initially, these terms were such as *privatizácia* (privatization), *uťahovanie opaskov* (belt-tightening), *globalizácia* (globalization), *liberalizácia trhu* (market liberalization), *trhové hospodárstvo* (market economy), *dane* (taxes), *blahobyť* (welfare), *chudoba* (poverty), *tender* (tender), *verejné obstarávanie* (public procurement), *investičné skupiny* (investment groups), *sociálna spravodlivosť* (social justice) or *sociálne istoty* (social security) later. Depending on the period, the current economic problems and proposals to solve them were transferred to language such as *reforma* (reform), *kríza* (crisis), *Grécko* (Greece), *Euro* (Euro), *eurozóna* (Eurozone), *euroval* (European Stability

Mechanism (ESM), *prvá alebo druhá integračná liga* (first or second integration league). The vocabulary of the political elite also included expressions highlighting the negative aspects of the transformation regime such as *nezamestnanosť* (unemployment), *korupcia* (corruption), *klientelizmus* (clientelism), *nepotizmus* (nepotism) or *oligarchia* (oligarchy). On the contrary, on the edge of political communication, or even completely outside, were expressions such as *janičiar* (Janissary), *svetoobčan* (cosmopolitan), *zvrchovanosť* (sovereignty) or *maďarón* (Hungarian).

The topic of political corruption and clientelism was a rich source of numerous political metaphors and idioms: “*pozadie pre stranu*“ (background for the party = illegal financing of the party from government contracts), “*svet (doba) kešu* (the world (time) of cash in hand = undeclared financial transactions), *dať niečo na Kaliňáka* (deceive openly), *pol na pol* (half and half = partially legal and partially illegal), *strýko z Komjatic* (uncle from Komjatice = nepotism), *teta Anka, kompa* (Aunt Anka, ferryboat = political corruption), *tunel* alternatively *tunelovať* (tunnel = stealing public finances), *nástenkový tender* or *nástenka* (notice board = manipulated tender, in which the winner is certain), *garážová firma*²¹ (a garage company = a company founded only formally and without a clear ownership structure), *sociálny podnik* (a social enterprise = meaning clientelism), *peniaze zabalené v alobale* (money wrapped in aluminum foil = illegally raised funds), *zohnať peniaze vlastnou hlavou* (raise money for the political party and do not to acknowledge it in the annual report), *náš človek* (our man = a person who, thanks to connections with the leaders of the political power or with the representatives of the ruling party may break the law with impunity), *podojiť štát* (milk the state = obtain a favourable public contract at the expense of public finances), *tri minúty predsedu vlády* (three minutes of the prime minister = the period from the detection of a suspicion of corruption of one of the Ministers to his removal from office; in some cases, it takes weeks, months or no dismiss at all), *gorila* (a gorilla = a system of corruption).

From these few examples, it is clear that the metaphor is an important and popular means of communication for the Slovak political elite. Metaphors can explain some of the complex political contexts in a simpler, clearer, but the more effective way [Girnth 2015, Adamcová 2017, Azevedo Camacho 2019]. A characteristic feature of political metaphors and phrasemes of this type is that they are usually aimed at well-known corruption or clientelist cases. For this reason, their other characteristic is their regional validity. The knowledge of local politics is also needed for decoding the meaning of political metaphors and phrasemes. However, in the political vocabulary of the

1 The term garage company usually has in an economic language a positive connotation, which refers to a recently established company that starts its business literally in the garage. From the world of economics, several well-known companies (Ford, Harley-Davidson, Apple, Delta Airlines, Barbie) serve as an example. In the Slovak political vocabulary, however, the term garage company is used figuratively for a company that is only established formally, usually without a clear ownership structure, and its activities are aimed at tunneling public finances or winning lucrative government contracts.

Slovak political elite in the case of the topic of corruption and clientelism, also appeared metaphors that exist in other languages, such as *schránková firma* (letterbox company), but their original meaning is no longer tied to a specific event associated with an illegal policy.

The use of the above expressions was particularly characteristic of the dispute between the left-wing party Smer and the right-wing parties. However, as it was still not only an economic dispute but also a political one, specific terms were also used to depict political opponents negatively. For example, to emphasize the ideological heterogeneity of the government of Iveta Radičová (2010-2012), the then opposition leader Robert Fico succeeded in incorporating the metaphor “zlepenec” (a tangle of parties) into the daily political vocabulary that was later, although not so successfully used to characterize the third Fico’s government (2016-2020). This example illustrates a situation where the same metaphor is used in different contexts, but with different intensity and different actors. Indeed, not every politician has the same talent to identify the topics of political debate, and as well as to supplement them with specific expressions. The charisma of the author of the metaphor and his/her communication skills play an important role in implementing the specific expression into a political debate.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings presented in the previous chapters, it can be stated that the political language in Slovakia developed according to the current topics which were raised in the political debate.

From the facts previously mentioned it is clear that each dominant cleavage influencing the formation of the Slovak party system and political parties is characterized by its specific language. These specifics can be identified primarily in the lexical field, and at the same time, it is true that in direct proportion to how cleavages had been marginalized or completely ceased to exist, also the expressions specific to each conflict topic had retreated or completely disappeared from the political lexicon of day-to-day politics. The only exception is the cleavage of socio-economic transformation, which forms political parties and divides them ideologically into left-wing and right-wing parties even today. At the same time, however, we also pointed out that, in case of politicians who had represented voters for several electoral periods for a long time, or who returned to active political life after several years, it is possible that residues of the vocabulary of the communist politics may occur in their current verbal speeches. We can make an overall statement that the basis of the three most important political conflicts affecting the development of political parties and the party system were the themes: 1. the future position of Slovakia: Slovakia as part of Czechoslovakia or as an independent state; 2. accepting or rejecting the political style of Vladimír Mečiar and his government; 3. slow socio-economic transformation or vigorous steps towards liberalization of market conditions. And according to these topics, the language of the

Slovak political elite had also been formed.

The current party system in Slovakia has been formed by other cleavages. Several conflicts come to the fore. It is the conflict between the state and the Church and demonstration of this tension can be seen in a sharp debate on ethical issues. Another conflict is openness and reclusiveness when it comes to the question of how to deal with international migration, alternatively the conflict between the system and the antisystem. It is the language of right-wing extremist actors that is specific [Schupener 2013, Štefančík, Hvasta 2019] and certainly calls for further research, not only from the point of view of political science but also from political linguistics standpoint. According to the above considerations, we note that the development of political parties and the party system can also be analysed through a view on the development of political language. In the paper, we have tried to point out that thinking about cleavage can not only confirm political or sociological scientific perspectives, but new linguistic experts can also give new impetus to this research [Dulebová 2012]. Our research thus confirms the demand for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the language of politics.

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