5. Government formation with radical right parties in Central Europe: The Visegrad Four

This chapter introduces the cases from the four Central European countries covered by this study, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. All country case studies follow the same structure: First, they describe the formation and composition of governments when radical right parties were present in parliament. Second, the case studies turn to party system fragmentation and bipolar opposition. The third and final section in each country report covers the parliamentary strength of radical right parties and their ideological proximity to the formateur on the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions.

5.1 Czech Republic

5.1.1 Government formation with radical right parties in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the first radical right party entered parliament in 1992. However, the Rally for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (SPR-RSČ) was only able to survive for a few years. In the early elections of 1998, the party failed to pass the electoral threshold and quickly disappeared from the political scene thereafter. The SPR-RSČ was ostracised by all other parties in parliament and even regarded itself as a fundamental opposition to the system with no intention of participating in government (Čakl and Wollmann 2005, 48; Minkenberg and Kossack 2015, 351; Minkenberg 2017, 106).

Government formation after the 1992 elections was strongly influenced by the negotiations over the dissolution of the Czechoslovak Federation. The clear winner of the elections, Václav Klaus' Civic Democratic Party (ODS) formed a coalition with three other conservative parties, the Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA), the Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-ČSL) and the Christian Democratic Party (KDS), with whom it had run in an electoral alliance (Grotz 2000, 349). The ODS also won the following parliamentary elections in 1996, albeit by a thin margin over the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD). However, the incumbent

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coalition no longer controlled a majority in parliament, which is why the ČSSD was also included in the negotiations. In the end, ODS, KDU-ČSL, and ODA formed a minority coalition that was tolerated by the ČSSD. In return for its support, the ČSSD received the post of parliamentary speaker and other offices (Grotz 2000, 367–68; Novák 2003, 154–55).[1]

After the early termination of the Klaus II cabinet in 1998 and the electoral demise of the SPR-RSČ, it took 15 years for another radical right party to enter the Czech parliament. In the 2013 parliamentary elections, Dawn of Direct Democracy (Úsvit), which had just been established prior to the elections by political newcomer Tamio Okamura, passed the electoral threshold. The victorious ČSSD, however, was not interested in cooperating with Úsvit and instead formed a coalition with the Christian democrats and the populist anti-establishment party ANO 2011 (ANO) (Hloušek and Kaniok 2014, 12). Úsvit's participation in government was out of the question for all other parliamentary parties, and even Okamura himself, whose anti-establishment stance had been instrumental to his party's success, showed no interest in entering coalition negotiations (Hloušek, Kopeček, and Vodová 2020, 132).

In 2017, ANO won the parliamentary elections and its founder, and leader, Andrej Babiš became the formateur of the next government. Neither Okamura nor Babiš ruled out cooperation between ANO and Okamura's new radical right party, Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD).[2] They even held exploratory talks, thus cutting the cordon sanitaire against radical right parties that had existed in the Czech Republic ever since the fall of the Iron Curtain. These talks did not result in SPD's participation in government, though. Eventually, ANO and the ČSSD formed a minority coalition, which enjoyed the formal support of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM). Thus, the SPD remained in opposition, although there was occasional cooperation with the governing parties (Hloušek, Kopeček, and Vodová 2020, 158–61). The ANO-ČSSD minority government thus brought a major change to Czech politics, as it marked the end of the cordon sanitaire vis-à-vis both the radical right as well as the KSČM.

1 The KDS formally merged into the ODS in the run-up to the 1996 parliamentary elections (Grotz 2000, 360).

2 Due to massive internal conflicts between Okamura and other Úsvit parliamentarians shortly after the 2013 elections, a "coup" finally took place in the 9-member party assembly. Okamura's opponents decided to found a new party without him. After being virtually expelled from his own party, Okamura launched the SPD (Hloušek, Kopeček, and Vodová 2020).

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Table 5.1: Format and ideological range of governments in the Czech Republic

Formation year	Cabinet name and parties*	Radical right party		Coalition type**	Minimal range***		Minimal connected winning	
		Name	*Status*		*Socio-economic*	*Socio-cultural*	*Socio-economic*	*Socio-cultural*
1992	Klaus I ODS, KDU-ČSL, ODA, KDS	SPR-RSČ	Opposition	MWC	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1996	Klaus II ODS, KDU-ČSL, ODA, (ČSSD)	SPR-RSČ	Opposition	MinC	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
2013	Sobotka ČSSD, ANO, KDU-ČSL	Úsvit	Opposition	MWC	No 3.64 (2.52)	No 3.21 (1.07)	No	No
2017	Babiš ANO, ČSSD, (KSČM)	SPD	Opposition	MinC	No 3.46 (0.87)	No 3.15 (1.31)	No	No

Source: Own compilation based on data from Casal Bértoa 2021; Bergman, Ilonszki, and Müller 2019a; Jolly et al. 2022.
* Parties in parentheses = support party of a minority government.
** Abbreviations: MWC = minimal winning coalition, MinSP = single-party minority government, MinC = minority coalition government, Surplus = oversized coalition.
*** Values indicate the ideological range between the most distant parties in government, including support parties of minority governments. Values in parentheses indicate the smallest possible ideological distance of a majority government

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Table 5.1 provides an overview of the governments that were formed while radical right parties held parliamentary seats in the Czech Republic. As regards their numerical format, two of the four governments were minimal winning coalitions and minority governments, respectively. Data on the ideological range is only available for the two most recent coalitions. Neither of them meets the criteria for the open minimal range or the minimal connected winning theory, since socio-economically and socio-culturally more homogeneous coalitions would have been possible.[3] In the case of the Babiš government, however, it should be noted that it is considerably more homogeneous when the support party KSČM is taken out of the equation. Overall, the instances of coalition formation observed here reflect a general tendency to form ideologically heterogeneous "rainbow coalitions" in the Czech Republic (Mansfeldová and Lacina 2019, 145–46).

5.1.2 The configuration of the Czech party system

Fragmentation

The Czech national assembly elected in 1992 consisted of 4.8 effective and eight actual parties and was thus quite fragmented (see Table 5.2). Even an ideologically incompatible coalition of ODS and KSČM, the two largest parliamentary groups, would have controlled only a very slim majority. All realistic majority alliances required the cooperation of at least three parties. In 1996, the fragmentation had decreased considerably, but the formation of coalitions remained complex. Again, only a coalition of the two largest parties, ODS and ČSSD, would have permitted a two-party majority government.

Table 5.2: Fragmentation of the Czech party system

Formation year	Total number of parliamentary parties	Effective number of parliamentary parties
1992	8	4.8
1996	6	4.2
2013	7	6.1
2017	9	4.8

Source: Own compilation based on data from Casal Bértoa 2021; Nordsieck 2021.

3 The Babiš government does not fulfil the majority criterion either, which is required by both theories.

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During the following decade, which was marked by the absence of radical right parties, the Czech party system developed into one of the most compact ones in Central and Eastern Europe. The average effective number of parties in the 2000s was only 3.4 (Enyedi and Casal Bértoa 2018, 442). From 2010 onwards, however, there was significant dealignment, characterised not only by a marked increase in fragmentation but also by one of the highest levels of volatility in Central and Eastern Europe during this time period (Enyedi and Casal Bértoa 2018). After the 2013 parliamentary election, the effective number of parliamentary parties peaked at 6.1. Here, no party managed to control more than a quarter of the seats in parliament. Hence, at least three parties were needed to form a majority government. Despite the complexity of this bargaining situation and the limitations from the cordon sanitaire vis-à-vis the radical right Úsvit and the Communist successor party, KSČM, government formation ultimately went rather smoothly, resulting in the above-mentioned three-party majority coalition.

After the 2017 parliamentary elections, nine parties entered the Czech parliament. Fragmentation remained relatively high, and government formation continued to be rather complex. The decrease in the effective number of parties, from 6.1 to 4.8, resulted mainly from ANO's strong position. The party controlled 78 of the 200 seats, more than three times as many as the ODS which came in second. Mathematically, only these parties were large enough to successfully form a two-party majority government. The other seven parliamentary groups were so small that ANO would have needed at least two of them to reach a majority. A majority against ANO, in turn, would have required the cooperation of at least six of the other eight parliamentary parties.

Bipolar opposition

Soon after the founding elections in 1990, socio-economic divides were most salient in Czech politics. The main contenders were the liberal-conservative ODS on one side and the social democratic ČSSD on the other. The Christian democratic KDU-ČSL stood between the two parties and was coalitionable in both directions (Vodička 2005, 147; Cabada, Hloušek, and Jurek 2014, 93; Mansfeldová and Lacina 2019). In addition to the socio-economic divide, however, territorial issues, such as the status of the Czechoslovak federation and aspirations for Moravian autonomy, played an important role in 1992. Furthermore, the interpretation of the Communist past was still on the agenda. ODS leader Václav Klaus, for instance, believed that even the ČSSD, and some of his former companions who criticised his neoliberal policies, were too comfortable with the former regime (Grotz 2000, 327–29; Balík and Hloušek 2016, 105–6). Most Czech parties supported the existence of the Czechoslovak federation, and with the exception of the SPR-RSČ and the KSČM, there was also widespread agreement on the general path toward the country's Western integration (Keudel-Kaiser 2014, 92–93). Since parties' positions on these divides were

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not aligned with those on the socio-economic one, there was no clear-cut bipolar opposition in the Czech party system in 1992 (Balík and Hloušek 2016, 110; Kitschelt et al. 1999, 226–30).

By the 1996 parliamentary elections, the socio-economic conflict had deepened, undergoing qualitative changes. The debate over the transformation of the economic system was increasingly sidelined by distributional conflicts (Keudel-Kaiser 2014, 92; Balík and Hloušek 2016, 110; Mansfeldová and Lacina 2019, 133). The balance of power between ODS and ČSSD became more equal due to the latter's increasing popularity. Already in 1996, the conflicting socio-economic positions made a joint government composed of these two parties hardly conceivable (Novák 2003, 154; Keudel-Kaiser 2014, 94). Some of the other divides that were relevant in 1992 still played their part in 1996. The regime divide, for instance, lost intensity but did not cease to exist. All parties had agreed on a cordon sanitaire vis-à-vis the KSČM, which constituted a serious constraint on coalition formation (Grzymała-Busse 2001, 97–98; Vodička 2005, 144; Mansfeldová and Lacina 2019, 132). The divide between the liberal democratic mainstream as well as the KSČM and the radical right SPR-RSČ also remained intact. Hence, the bipolar opposition between ODS and ČSSD was much more decisive in 1996 than in 1992, but there were still too many relevant divides to speak of a bipolar opposition between two camps. In the following decade, when no radical right party was present in the parliament, Czech politics remained dominated by socio-economic issues and the opposition between ODS and ČSSD. However, some secondary issues always remained salient and prevented a clear-cut bipolar opposition from emerging (Balík and Hloušek 2016, 108–9).

In the 2010s the ideological configuration of the Czech party system changed significantly. Various populist anti-establishment parties emerged and sparked debates over the corruption among elites after 1989 (Balík and Hloušek 2016, 109). Against this background, Mansfeldová and Lacina (2019, 134) speak of a tripolar party system, which consists of the "traditional, established centre-right, represented by the ODS, KDU-ČSL, and TOP 09 […], the traditional left represented by the ČSSD and KSČM", and "the new populist, 'non-political politics' protest pole made up by ANO 2011 and Úsvit". They add that the left cannot be regarded as a coherent pole, since its constituents are quite divided as well. Whether the KSČM's support for the minority government of ANO and ČSSD in 2017 marks a permanent break in the cordon sanitaire vis-à-vis the Communists remains to be seen. In any case, there is no bipolar opposition in the Czech party system in the 2010s. Table 5.3 summarises the ideological configuration of the Czech party system in the periods when radical right parties were present in parliament.

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Table 5.3: Bipolar opposition in the Czech party system

Formation year	Bipolar opposition in the party system
1992	Socio-economic divide was most salient, but other salient divides existed; no clear-cut bipolar opposition and ODS as a dominant party
1996	Socio-economic divide was most salient, but other salient divides existed; no clear-cut bipolar opposition
2013	Multi-polar oppositions in the party system
2017	Multi-polar oppositions in the party system

Source: Own compilation.

5.1.3 Characteristics and preferences of Czech radical right parties

Parliamentary strength

The SPR-RSČ entered parliament for the first time in 1992, when it was still the Czech National Council in the Czechoslovak Federation. Even though the Czech Republic was not yet independent, the 1992 elections are included in the analysis because the Czech and Slovak National Councils showed significant similarities to national parliaments and functioned as such after the Velvet Divorce in January 1993. For instance, an almost entirely different set of parties competed in each part of the federation, the campaigns focused on specifically Czech or Slovak issues, respectively, and these parties took decidedly different approaches to the federal question (Grotz and Weber 2011, 200).

The radical right SPR-RSČ managed to enter parliament twice in 1992 and 1996, but it never achieved substantial electoral successes (see Table 5.4). In the fragmented parliament of 1992, the SPR-RSČ was one of six parliamentary groups, each of which controlled between 14 and 16 of the 200 available seats. From a purely numerical point of view, the bargaining position of these small parties, including the SPR-RSČ, was relatively weak. In 1996, the party fared better at the polls and won 18 seats, but it still remained one of the smallest parties in the Czech parliament with rather limited bargaining power.

In the 2000s, the soon-to-be-banned Workers' Party (DS) and its successor were the only radical right parties of any significance in the Czech Republic, even though they never threatened to pass the threshold of representation (Mareš 2015). In 2013, however, Tamio Okamura's first party, Úsvit, entered parliament with 6.9 per cent of the votes and 7.0 per cent of the seats. Yet, this party proved incapable of parliamentary work and dissolved almost as quickly as it had emerged. Okamura's new party, the SPD, was somewhat more successful at the polls in 2017, achieving the first double-digit result of a Czech radical right party at the national level. In the nine-party

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parliament, this result put the SPD tied for third place with the Pirates in terms of parliamentary seats.

Table 5.4: Election results and parliamentary strength of radical right parties in the Czech Republic

Formation year	Party	Vote share (in %)	Representation in parliament	
			Number of seats	*Seat share (in %)*
1992	SPR-RSČ	6.0	14	7.0
1996	SPR-RSČ	8.0	18	9.0
2013	Úsvit	6.9	14	7.0
2017	SPD	10.6	22	11.0

Source: Own compilation based on data from Nordsieck 2021.

Ideological distance to the formateur

Because the SPR-RSČ entered parliament in the 1990s, there is no quantitative expert survey data available. Therefore, the socio-economic and socio-cultural positions of this radical right party and the formateur must be obtained through a qualitative assessment using secondary literature (see Chapter 4.4.2).

The ODS received the mandate to form the 1992 and 1996 Czech governments. More than most other parties, the ODS of the early 1990s, with its leading figure Václav Klaus, supported a big-bang approach to economic transformation. The party's economic agenda at that time favoured the privatisation of state-owned property and quickly establishing the institutions of a neoliberal free market economy. ODS' attempt to prioritise Czech investors in the privatisation process constitutes an outlier in the party's otherwise comprehensive privatisation policy. It was not until the mid-1990s that some members in the party began calling for certain elements of a social welfare state. To the SPR-RSČ, socio-economic issues were less salient compared to their socio-cultural concerns. However, the radical right party had a rather favourable position towards the privatisation of state property, because it viewed this as an expression of its distinctly anti-Communist stance. Otherwise, however, the party had a rather left-leaning agenda, including strong elements of welfare chauvinism, which differed from the neoliberal programme of the ODS (Vodička 1997, 114, 130, 2005, 162; Bugajski 2002, 237, 246). In light of these positions, the ODS is placed on the liberal end of the socio-economic dimension, with a score of 8.50 in 1992 and 7.50 in 1996, while the SPR-RSČ is placed slightly on the protectionist side, with a score of 4.00 in both years. Overall, therefore, there is a relatively large ideological distance between the radical right SPR-RSČ and the conservative ODS

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on the socio-economic dimension in both years of government formation (see Table 5.5).

As far as the socio-cultural dimension is concerned, the ODS of the early 1990s focused on building a liberal democracy founded on individual rights and freedoms. The party's privatisation policies involved minor nationalist tendencies, but otherwise, the conservative elements in the party were clearly subordinate to the goals of democratisation, liberalisation, and integration with the West. Only after several liberals left the ODS in 1998, the party began developing into the conservative and Eurosceptic party it is today (Bugajski 2002, 246). The SPR-RSČ agreed with the ODS on the nationalist approach to privatisation and was even more vocal in this regard; however, the two parties had little else in common concerning socio-cultural issues. The SPR-RSČ favoured an authoritarian regime, including the reinstatement of the death penalty. In addition, the party held firm anti-minority sentiments, particularly against Roma, Jews, Germans, and the foreign workers who had come to the Czech Republic from former Communist allies. Party leader Miroslav Sládek advocated for a Czechoslovak state based on the 1918 borders, which entailed irredentist claims to reintegrate Carpathian Ruthenia (Bugge 1994, 161; Bugajski 2002, 257; Čakl and Wollmann 2005, 32). Sládek upheld this position even after the Velvet Divorce, when this part of Ukraine no longer shared a border with the Czech Republic, and established a symbolic branch of his party there (Mareš 2015, 212). Accordingly, the SPR-RSČ receives a score of 9.0, close to the TAN end of the socio-cultural dimension in 1992 and 1996. The ODS is placed at the GAL end of the dimension, albeit somewhat closer to the centre in 1996 (4.00) than in 1992 (3.50) due to the emergence of more conservative tendencies since the mid-1990s.

The ideological profile of the radical right Úsvit was less clear than that of the SPR-RSČ in the 1990s. At the beginning, Úsvit's 2013 election campaign focused on strengthening direct democracy as a core plank in the party's populist anti-establishment platform. Okamura increasingly adopted racist positions, however, most notably directed against Roma (Havlík 2014, 45; Hloušek and Kaniok 2014, 6; Hloušek, Kopeček, and Vodová 2020, 130–31). It is difficult to gauge the positions of this leader-centred flash party, but Okamura has been less radical than other figures from the radical right, such as his Czech "predecessor" Sládek, and this is reflected in Úsvit's GALTAN placement in the CHES (7.71). Úsvit's socio-economic positions were even less clear. Okamura's rare statements on these topics remained vague and contained both pro-business elements and promises of social safety (Hloušek, Kopeček, and Vodová 2020, 131; see also Stegmaier and Linek 2014), which led the CHES to assign Úsvit a centrist score of 5.33 on the socio-economic dimension.

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Table 5.5: Socio-economic and socio-cultural distance between radical right parties and formateurs in the Czech Republic

Formation year	Parties	Socio-economic position	Socio-cultural position
1992	SPR-RSČ ODS	(4.00) (8.00) distance: 4.00	(9.00) (3.50) distance: 5.50
1996	SPR-RSČ ODS	(4.00) (7.50) distance: 3.50	(9.00) (4.00) distance: 5.00
2013	Úsvit ČSSD	5.33 2.71 distance: 2.62	7.71 4.43 distance: 3.28
2017	SPD ANO	4.67 4.50 distance: 0.17	9.37 5.73 distance: 3.64

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al. 2022), amended by the author. Values in parentheses indicate author's placement based on a qualitative assessment of party positions.

In 2013, the ČSSD acted as the formateur. With its roots in the opposition to the Communist regime, the ČSSD is one of the few successful members of the social democratic party family in Central and Eastern Europe that is not a Communist successor party. Its positions are rather typical of European social democratic parties. The ČSSD generally favours a market economy but criticises its neoliberal manifestation. It prefers a certain degree of state regulation of the economy and a strong welfare state (Vodička 2005, 157). The party's 2013 manifesto includes, for instance, demands for a higher minimum wage, progressive taxation, and tax increases for large enterprises (Havlík 2014, 46). On socio-cultural issues, the ČSSD is located at the liberal end, which sets it apart from some other (nominally) social democratic parties in the region, such as the Slovak Smer (see Chapter 5.4). The party's core programmatic documents advocate for the rights of ethnic and social minorities. There is, however, a certain gap between the rather progressive party elite and large parts of the party's membership and electorate (Koubek and Polášek 2017, 16). These positions are reflected in the party's CHES scores of 2.71 and 4.43 on the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimension, respectively, resulting in a moderate distance between ČSSD and Úsvit.

Okamura's second party, the SPD, emphasised nativism as the core component of its radical right ideology. The Roma minority remained one of the main targets of Okamura's agitation, but in the context of the "migration crisis", he also presented the SPD as a hard-line anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim party. Okamura's party

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was instrumental in politicising the immigration issue in the Czech Republic and claimed ownership of this essential radical right issue. In addition, the SPD opposed the EU, whose policies it blamed for increasing immigration. Okamura even called for the Czech Republic to leave the EU (Hloušek, Kopeček, and Vodová 2020, 158–61). The party's placement at 9.37, near the TAN pole of the socio-cultural dimension, reflects these positions. Similar to his previous party, Okamura remained largely silent on, and indifferent to, socio-economic issues, as the party's CHES score of 4.67 on this dimension indicates.

ANO shares Okamura's populist anti-establishment appeal, even though its leader, Andrej Babiš, is one of the wealthiest entrepreneurs in the country. In one of his main campaign slogans, Babiš argued that the country must be run like a firm in order to be successful (Buštíková and Guasti 2019; see also Hanley and Vachudova 2018). When it comes to tangible policy positions, however, the party's profile is rather vague. In the socio-economic sphere, the CHES places ANO slightly left of centre (4.50), which adequately reflects the party's position. When Babiš founded ANO, he criticised the incumbent government for its neoliberal policies (Stegmaier and Linek 2014) and in the 2013 coalition negotiations, he opposed tax increases (Havlík 2014, 48). Other research, however, places the party right of centre on the socio-economic dimension. It characterises ANO as a party with a clear pro-market orientation and an "economically liberal vision of empowered citizen-consumers", but also acknowledges some rather left-leaning ideas, such as support for elements of a sharing economy (Hanley and Vachudova 2018, 281). ANO's socio-cultural positions, for instance on gender issues, remain vague and indifferent. At the same time, however, Babiš' anti-establishment appeal entails a somewhat authoritarian and anti-pluralist thrust (Hanley and Vachudova 2018, 281–82). Hence, the CHES places the party slightly to the TAN end of the socio-cultural dimension (5.73).

5.1.4 Summary

The Czech Republic is the only Central and Eastern European country in this study where a radical right party has entered parliament but not government. The long-standing cordon sanitaire vis-à-vis the radical right prevented the SPR-RSČ and Úsvit from joining a government coalition. Together with poor internal organisation, intra-party conflicts, and scandals, the non-negotiable stance taken by the mainstream parties might have also contributed to the short lifespan of these two radical right parties (Čakl and Wollmann 2005, 32–33; Tavits 2013, 217; Hloušek, Kopeček, and Vodová 2020, 127–34). Whether Okamura's new party will be able to establish itself in the long term remains to be seen, but the eroding cordon sanitaire and Okamura's improved organisational skills put the SPD in a favourable position (Hloušek, Kopeček, and Vodová 2020, 157–66).

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However, like its unsuccessful predecessors, the SPD was not included in government after the 2017 parliamentary elections. Instead, the pattern of ideologically broad coalitions typical of the post-Communist Czech Republic continued. This general pattern is, at least in part, a result of the non-coalitionability of the radical right parties and the KSČM until the second half of the 2010s. In this respect, too, it will be interesting to see whether the formats of future coalitions will change following the dealignment in the party system and the erosion of the cordon sanitaire surrounding the radical left and right. In light of these changes, it is not certain that the success of radical right parties in the Czech Republic will remain limited to a strong showing on the opposition bench in parliament.

5.2 Hungary

5.2.1 Government formation with radical right parties in Hungary

The 1998 parliamentary elections marked a breakthrough for the first radical right party in post-Communist Hungary, the Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP). The Alliance of Young Democrats (Fidesz) won the election and its leader, Viktor Orbán, received the mandate to form the new government. He entered into coalition negotiations with two other conservative parties, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) and the agrarian Independent Smallholders' Party (FKgP), which quickly agreed on a joint coalition (Lomax 1999, 123). Even though the radical right MIÉP remained in opposition, the party supported the coalition during the investiture vote and on several important matters over the course of the legislature. When the FKgP became an uncomfortable coalition partner, the informal support from the radical right provided the government with an additional element of safety. For this reason, Ilonszki (2019, 226) even lists the MIÉP as a support party in the Orbán I government, but she also makes clear that this support was not wanted, or formally recognised, by the governing coalition. Thus, the MIÉP does not fulfil the criteria for a support party applied in this study (see Chapter 4).

As an oversized coalition, the Orban I government fails the criteria of the minimal range and minimal connected winning theories (see Table 5.6). It was nonetheless ideologically quite homogeneous, and the three parties were connected on the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions. Thus, the additional inclusion of the MDF did not increase the ideological range of the government too much.

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Table 5.6: Format and ideological range of governments in Hungary

Formation year	**Cabinet name and parties***	**Radical right party**		**Coalition type****	**Minimal range*****		**Minimal connected winning**	
		Name	*Status*		*Socio-economic*	*Socio-cultural*	*Socio-economic*	*Socio-cultural*
1998	Orbán I Fidesz, MDF, FKgP	MIÉP	Opposition	Surplus	No 0.5 (0.23)	No 1.50 (0.35)	No	No

Source: Own compilation based on data from Casal Bértoa 2021; Bergman, Ilonszki, and Müller 2019a; Jolly et al. 2022.
* Parties in parentheses = support party of a minority government.
** Abbreviations: MWC = minimal winning coalition, MinSP = single-party minority government, MinC = minority coalition government, Surplus = oversized coalition.
*** Values indicate the ideological range between the most distant parties in government, including support parties of minority governments. Values in parentheses indicate the smallest possible ideological distance of a majority government.

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5.2.2 The configuration of the Hungarian party system

Fragmentation

The Hungarian party system of 1998 featured only 3.5 effective parliamentary parties and was thus quite compact (see Table 5.7). Hungary was a forerunner in terms of party system institutionalisation in Central and Eastern Europe due to the rapid concentration of political parties and the consistently low fragmentation of the party system (Enyedi and Casal Bértoa 2018). The transfer of power and the cooperation between the reformed Communist successor, the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP), and the liberal Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz), in 1994 also went smoothly. Hence, the party systems initially showed stable development towards moderate pluralism and centripetal party competition, to use the Sartorian terminology. Since 2010, however, the situation has changed, and Fidesz has become the dominant party, aided by the illiberal reforms Orbán has enacted to consolidate his own power.

From a purely numerical perspective, the bargaining situation after the 1998 elections was of moderate complexity. The effective number of 3.5 parliamentary parties resulted from two dominant parties, Fidesz and MSzP, which controlled 38 and 35 per cent of the seats in parliament, respectively. The third-strongest party, FKgP, held only 12.4 per cent of the seats. Overall, there were six mathematically possible minimal winning coalitions. Fidesz could have formed a two-party minimum winning coalition, either with the MSzP or the FKgP. The MSzP, in contrast, would have required the FKgP and either of the three small parties to form a minimal winning coalition.

Table 5.7: Fragmentation of the Hungarian party system

Formation year	Total number of parliamentary parties	Effective number of parliamentary parties
1998	6	3.5

Source: Own compilation based on data from Casal Bértoa 2021; Nordsieck 2021.

Bipolar opposition

The Hungarian party system of the early 1990s was characterised by multiple salient divides. In the context of the first free elections in 1990, the regime divide played a major role in the country, as did socio-economic and value conflicts, the latter pitting nationalists against cosmopolitans (Grotz 2000, 231; Cabada, Hloušek, and Jurek 2014, 96; Ilonszki 2019, 208). The MDF represented the conservative forces,

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while the SzDSz and Fidesz stood for the more liberal wing (Grotz 2000, 224–225, 239–234). The SzDSz' support for the conservative government's constitutional changes demonstrated, however, that the ideological differences did not prevent the parties on this side of the regime divide from cooperation (Grotz 2000, 240). In the mid-1990s, however, a bipolar opposition between conservative and liberal camps began to take shape. The coalition of MSzP and SzDSz after the 1994 parliamentary elections symbolised the erosion of the regime divide, at least in the sphere of coalition politics, and the two parties constituted the new liberal pole in Hungarian politics. Fidesz, in contrast, turned towards the conservative camp after the electoral defeat in 1994 (Grotz 2000, 265–66).

In the 1998 parliamentary elections, the bipolar opposition consisted of a national-conservative camp, dominated by Fidesz, and a left-liberal camp, led by the MSzP. The conservative parties even ran joint candidates against the MSzP in the constituencies (Grotz 2000, 267). This tactical decision was highly relevant because the Hungarian electoral system had strong majoritarian elements. The bipolar opposition was based on congruent socio-economic and socio-cultural policy positions, but it also entailed an affective dimension that involved and perpetuated elements of the regime divide (Grotz 2000, 275–76; Cabada, Hloušek, and Jurek 2014, 96; Ilonszki 2019, 208). Even though the opposition would become more intense in the times to come, coalitions between the camps were already impossible in 1998 (see Table 5.8).

Table 5.8: Bipolar opposition in the Hungarian party system

Formation year	Bipolar opposition in the party system
1998	Bipolar opposition between national-conservative and left-liberal camps; coalitions across camps were impossible

Source: Own compilation.

5.2.3 Characteristics and preferences of Hungarian radical right parties

Parliamentary strength

The radical right MIÉP managed to enter parliament after its second campaign in 1998, but the party gained only 5.5 per cent of the votes. Due to the complex Hungarian electoral system, the party received only 3.6 per cent of the 386 seats in the Hungarian parliament (see Table 5.9), making it the smallest parliamentary group. In 2002, the party narrowly missed clearing the five per cent threshold and never recovered from this electoral defeat.

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Table 5.9: Election results and parliamentary strength of radical right parties in Hungary

Formation year	Party	Vote share (in %)	Representation in parliament	
			Number of seats	*Seat share (in %)*
1998	MIÉP	5.5	14	3.6

Source: Nordsieck 2021.

Ideological distance to the formateur

MIÉP's radical right ideology is strongly connected to the so-called trauma of Trianon. When signing the Treaty of Trianon after World War I, Hungary lost two-thirds of its territory and large numbers of its population to neighbouring countries (Pytlas 2016, 156). To MIÉP, ethnic Hungarians living outside the country are an integral part of the Hungarian nation, and the party seeks to reclaim former Hungarian territories. The party also considers anyone who does not support their revisionist and irredentist views as a traitor to the nation (Karsai 1999, 136–39; Bernáth, Miklósi, and Mudde 2005, 82). Additionally, MIÉP's ideology includes an ethno-religious concept of the nation which excludes various minorities, such as the Roma, Jews, or LGBTIQ+. Party leader István Csurka was known to be a particularly notorious anti-Semite (Karsai 1999, 142–43; Bernáth, Miklósi, and Mudde 2005, 83; Krekó and Mayer 2015, 187). Consequently, the CHES places the party at 9.67 on the socio-cultural dimension (see Table 5.10).

In the socio-economic sphere, MIÉP advocated national-protectionist policies but it did not reject capitalism per se. The party demanded, for instance, that companies either be nationalised or, if private, be run only by Hungarians. International investors were often portrayed as enemies and part of an alleged international Jewish conspiracy. The party's ultimate goal was to establish a closed, national economic and social system that benefitted only those who belonged to the imagined, homogeneous Hungarian nation or, in Karsai's (1999, 140–41) words, "capitalism controlled by the 'Christian-national' elite" (see also Bock 2002, 285; Bernáth, Miklósi, and Mudde 2005, 83). These positions are also reflected in MIÉP's CHES score of 4.00 on the socio-economic dimension.

After the 1998 parliamentary elections, Fidesz acted as the formateur. Fidesz was established as a liberal opposition movement against the Communist regime, but underwent a double transformation, first into a national-conservative party in the second half of the 1990s and then into a radical right party in the mid-2010s (Bayer 2005; Pytlas 2016; Minkenberg 2017; Mudde 2020; see also Chapter 2.1). This study, however, is only interested in the party's positions during and after the first transformation. Fidesz' pro-market stance during the early 1990s had already vanished by 1998 in favour of a rather national-protectionist socio-economic agenda. In the

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context of the 1998 parliamentary elections, Fidesz called for limiting foreign investments and fortifying a chauvinist welfare state (Lomax 1999, 121; Bayer 2005, 178–79; Pytlas 2016, 40). Accordingly, the CHES places Fidesz slightly to the left of the centre on the socio-economic dimension (4.67).

In socio-cultural terms, the party also adopted the ethno-religious understanding of nationhood held by its conservative and radical right competitors. Shortly before the 1998 elections, Orbán arranged for the Holy Crown of St Steven, an important symbol of Hungary's religious and nationalist forces that is also closely linked to the idea of a Greater Hungary, to be displayed in parliament (Pytlas 2016, 40, 156). This act is only one example of Fidesz' mythical reinterpretation of Hungarian national history (Pytlas 2016, chap. 6; see also Bayer 2005, 184). In the 1998 election campaign, Orbán also accused the incumbent MSzP-SzDSz government of betraying ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring Romania and Slovakia because they had signed treaties with both countries (Bayer 2005, 178). Even the illiberal efforts to weaken the system of checks and balances and a democratic civil society, implemented by the Orbán governments since 2010, were visible as early as the late 1990s (Bayer 2005, 180–81). Fidesz' GALTAN score in the 2002 CHES wave (8.15) aligns with the party's nationalist and authoritarian policy preferences.

Table 5.10: Socio-economic and socio-cultural distance between radical right parties and formateurs in Hungary

Formation year	Parties	Socio-economic position	Socio-cultural position
1998	MIÉP Fidesz	4.00 4.62 distance: 0.62	9.69 8.15 distance: 1.54

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al. 2022).

5.2.4 Summary

When MIÉP entered parliament for the first and only time in 1998, the party system was quite polarised and the national-conservative camp that also included MIÉP emerged victorious. MIÉP was ideologically quite close to Fidesz, the formateur of the 1998 government, but Orbán still excluded the radical right from government. The party's behaviour in parliament suggests, however, that it would have been prepared to cooperate more closely with the conservative government if it had depended on the support of the radical right.

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5.3 Poland

5.3.1 Government formation with radical right parties in Poland

The radical right League of Polish Families (LPR) entered the Sejm for the first time in 2001. In this year, a social democratic electoral alliance between the reformed Communist successor party, the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), and the Labour Union (UP) won the parliamentary elections. SLD's leading candidate, Leszek Miller, considered several options, but ultimately established a minimal winning coalition with the agrarian Polish People's Party (PSL) (see Table 5.11). LPR's participation in government was neither a viable option for the formateur nor for the radical right party itself (Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz 2002; Millard 2010, 114).[4]

During the term, the government lost public support after multiple corruption scandals, internal conflicts within the SLD, and intra-coalitional disputes between the SLD and the PSL. For these reasons, Miller announced the expulsion of the PSL in 2003. The remaining minority coalition continued in office but had to rely on issue-based support from other parliamentary parties (Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz 2003). One day after Poland's accession to the EU, on 2 May 2004, the Miller government resigned, and Marek Belka (SLD) was elected as the new prime minister. However, the partisan composition of the government remained stable (Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz 2004) and the Belka government served as a "de facto caretaker" until the next parliamentary election in 2005 (Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz 2006, 1232).

The 2005 parliamentary election heralded the demise of the crisis-ridden SLD. Moreover, it witnessed a duel between two parties from the post-Solidarność camp, the liberal-conservative Civic Platform (PO) and the national-conservative Law and Justice (PiS). Although many observers expected these two parties to form a governing coalition, fierce competition in the presidential election, scheduled shortly after the parliamentary election, ultimately prevented them from cooperating. Instead, PiS forged an alliance with the populist Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland (SO) and the radical right LPR, led by PiS backbencher Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz.[5] The LPR and the SO initially served as support parties for a PiS minority government

4 This coalition is classified as an oversized coalition in Table 5.11 since the SLD and the UP did not form a joint parliamentary group despite their electoral alliance, and a coalition of the SLD and PSL would have controlled a majority in parliament (Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz 2002).

5 PiS' party leader Jarosław Kaczyński spearheaded the 2005 campaign, but he gave way to Marcinkiewicz in order not to jeopardise the presidential candidacy of his twin brother, Lech Kaczyński (Millard 2010, 143).

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(Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz 2006; Millard 2010, 136–38). Later in 2005, however, PiS entered into negotiations with the two support parties and the PSL in order to form a more stable government. These negotiations resulted in a formal coalition between PiS and its former support parties, LPR and SO. The Marcinkiewicz II majority government assumed office in May 2006 and two months later, Marcinkiewicz was replaced as prime minister by PiS party leader Jarosław Kaczyński (Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz 2006, 2007; Millard 2010, 143–44). After a little more than a year of continuous quarrels, scandals, and ministerial resignations, the Sejm finally removed the incumbent government and voted for early elections in September 2007 (Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz 2008; Millard 2010, 144–47). This transition marked the demise of the LPR, which fell well short of the five per cent threshold and subsequently disappeared from Polish politics.

Although LPR's participation in government was fraught with conflict between the ruling parties, the coalition was ideologically very homogeneous. When PiS, SO and LPR entered a formal coalition in 2006, it met the requirements for both the minimal range and the minimal connected winning coalition on the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions. Ideologically, these parties were already proximate in 2005, but it was not until a year later that they also met the majority criterion required by both formats. The two governments under prime minister Miller in the previous term were ideologically more heterogeneous. In socio-economic terms, SLD, UP, and PSL were quite close, but a more homogeneous majority coalition was still possible. On the socio-cultural dimension, however, the ideological range of the 2001 Miller I government was rather large. It narrowed considerably after the expulsion of the PSL in 2003. Yet, the coalition no longer controlled a majority and was thus neither a minimal range nor a minimal connected winning coalition by that point.

5.3.2 The configuration of the Polish party system

Fragmentation

The Polish party system has become less fragmented and more institutionalised since the early 1990s (Enyedi and Casal Bértoa 2018, 443). After the first free elections in 1991, a total of 29 parties entered parliament and the effective number of parliamentary parties reached as high as 10.9 (Toole 2000; Casal Bértoa 2021). However, after the introduction of a parliamentary threshold rule, both figures dropped rapidly, so that the effective number of parties in Poland has been near the Central and Eastern European average since the 2000s (Enyedi and Casal Bértoa 2018).

The fragmentation scores for the 2001 and 2005 legislatures are slightly below and above four, respectively (see Table 5.12). The increase from 2001 to 2005 resulted from the sharp electoral decline of the SLD after Miller's term in office. While the

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SLD almost gained an absolute majority in 2001, the party struggled to re-enter parliament in 2005, thus leaving room for new parties. PiS and PO emerged as more or less equal competitors, which led to a relatively even distribution of power within the Polish party system, and a higher effective number of parties. After the 2001 elections, the majority situation in parliament resulted in a bargaining situation of limited complexity. The SLD was in such a strong position that it could have formed a minimal winning coalition with any of the other six parliamentary parties, except its ally UP. In 2005, the bargaining situation became more complex since both PiS and PO could have formed various minimal winning coalitions, even though victory left PiS with more options than PO.

Bipolar opposition

The regime divide between the reformed Communist successor party, SLD, and the alliance of post-Solidarność parties structured the Polish party system of the 1990s (Grzymała-Busse 2001, 94–96; see also Millard 2010). The situation began to change around the turn of the millennium, however.

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Table 5.11: Format and ideological range of governments in Poland

Formation year	**Cabinet name and parties***	**Radical right party**		**Coalition type****	**Minimal range*****		**Minimal connected winning**	
		Name	*Status*		*Socio-economic*	*Socio-cultural*	*Socio-economic*	*Socio-cultural*
2001	Miller I SLD, UP, PSL	LPR	Opposition	Surplus	No 2.00 (0.38)	No 6.25 (2.50)	No	No
2003	Miller II SLD, UP	LPR	Opposition	MinC	No 2.00 (0.38)	No 0.5 (2.50)	No	No
2005	Marcinkiewicz I PiS, (SO), (LPR)	LPR	Support party of single-party minority government	MinSP	No 0.83 (0.83)	No 2.29 (2.29)	No	No
2006	Marcinkiewicz II / Kaczyński I PiS, SO, LPR	LPR	Junior partner of a majority coalition	MWC	Yes 0.83	Yes 2.29	Yes	Yes

Source: Own compilation based on data from Casal Bértoa 2021; Bergman, Ilonszki, and Müller 2019a; Jolly et al. 2022.
* Parties in parentheses = support party of a minority government.
** Abbreviations: MWC = minimal winning coalition, MinSP = single-party minority government, MinC = minority coalition government, Surplus = oversized coalition.
*** Values indicate the ideological range between the most distant parties in government, including support parties of minority governments. Values in parentheses indicate the smallest possible ideological distance of a majority government.

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Table 5.12: Fragmentation of the Polish party system

Formation year	Total number of parliamentary parties	Effective number of parliamentary parties
2001	7	3.6
2003	7	3.6
2005	6	4.3
2006	6	4.3

Source: Own compilation based on data from Casal Bértoa 2021; Nordsieck 2021.
* The government is classified as an oversized coalition since the SLD and the UP did not form a joint parliamentary group despite their electoral alliance, and a coalition of the SLD and PSL would have controlled a majority in parliament (Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz 2002).

The 2001 parliamentary elections saw the collapse of the two hitherto dominant forces from the post-Solidarność camp, the Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) and the Freedom Union (UW). Some of their voters turned to PO and PiS (Millard 2010, 113). Moreover, two new parties, the radical right LPR and the populist SO also entered the Sejm. These developments altered the conflict structure in the Polish party system. The regime divide was still present but, for the first time, a coalition between the SLD and former opposition parties seemed possible (see Table 5.13). The differentiation within the post-Solidarność camp also highlighted the divide between liberal and conservative forces. Hence, the oppositional constellations in the Polish party systems had become somewhat more diverse in the context of the 2001 parliamentary elections (Millard 2010, 114).

The 2005 elections yielded a similar result for the SLD as the 2001 elections for AWS and UW, even though the SLD did not drop completely out of parliament. These shifts in the balance of power were accompanied by another change in the ideological configuration of the Polish party system. The regime divide became less salient, while the importance of the divide between liberal and conservative forces, in particular between PO and PiS, gained momentum. Both parties differed in their socio-economic and socio-cultural policies, but these issue-based differences were still reconcilable. The affective polarisation between both parties grew rapidly during the 2005 presidential election, however, and rendered cooperation impossible (Szczerbiak 2007; Millard 2010, chap. 7; Keudel-Kaiser 2014, 183–87). Thus, the 2005 elections mark the beginning of the deep bipolar opposition between "'social-solidaristic' and 'liberal' visions of Poland" (Szczerbiak 2007, 204) that continues to shape the Polish party system even today.

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Table 5.13: Bipolar opposition in the Polish party system

Formation year	Bipolar opposition in the party system
2001	Regime divide was decreasing but still present; emerging multi-polar oppositions in the party system
2003	Regime divide was further decreasing; multi-polar oppositions in the party system are increasing
2005	Rapidly increasing affective polarisation between PO and PiS; coalitions across camps were already impossible
2006	Consolidated bipolar opposition between PO and PiS based on affective and ideological polarisation between the parties; coalitions across camps were impossible

Source: Own compilation.

5.3.3 Characteristics and preferences of Polish radical right parties

Parliamentary strength

The LPR was founded shortly before the 2001 parliamentary elections and immediately won 7.9 per cent of the vote (see Table 5.14). The party benefitted from an electoral system reform which changed from the d'Hondt to a modified Sainte-Laguë formula, resulting in 8.3 per cent of the seats for the radical right. Nevertheless, the LPR was the smallest parliamentary group in the Sejm between 2001 and 2005 (Millard 2010, 112).

Because the new electoral formula prevented the SLD-UP coalition from winning a majority in parliament in 2001, the Miller government decided to return to the d'Hondt formula, which benefits large parties, in the 2005 parliamentary election (Millard 2010, 112). Therefore, the LPR obtained only 7.4 per cent of the Sejm seats in 2005, despite a slight improvement at the polls. The party thus fell well short of its result in Poland's first elections to the European Parliament in 2004, in which it gained almost 16 per cent of the vote, a result due in part to very low voter turnout (Millard 2010, 125). Thus, the LPR remained among the smallest parties in parliament in the 2005 legislature.

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Table 5.14: Election results and parliamentary strength of radical right parties in Poland

Formation year	Party	Vote share (in %)	Representation in parliament	
			Number of seats	*Seat share (in %)*
2001	LPR	7.9	38	8.3
2003	LPR	7.9	38	8.3
2005	LPR	8.0	34	7.4
2006	LPR	8.0	34	7.4

Source: Nordsieck 2021.

Ideological distance to the formateur

During its two terms in parliament between 2001 and 2007, the LPR faced quite different formateurs, the reformed Communist successor party, SLD, and the national-conservative PiS. The LPR itself was deeply rooted in Poland's national Catholic right wing. The origins of the party's ideology go back to Roman Dmowski's inter-war endecja movement. The LPR picked up on this tradition and carried an ethno-religious idea of the Polish nation, an ultra-conservative image of the family, and a virulent anti-Semitism into parliament (Pankowski and Kornak 2005, 159; Grün and Stankiewicz 2006; see also Kasprowicz 2015; Pytlas 2016). It was also the only parliamentary party at that time to unequivocally oppose Poland's accession to the EU based on an alleged threat to national sovereignty (Pankowski and Kornak 2005, 159; Millard 2010, 134). Pytlas (2016, 92) describes LPR's Euroscepticism as being rooted in the idea that the Polish nation is a "bulwark of Christianity" defending against the EU, which is the embodiment of a morally corrupted, Western "civilization of death". In a similar vein, the party advocated for a comprehensive ban on abortion, presenting itself as a fierce opponent of gender diversity and the LGBTIQ+ community (Pytlas 2016, chap. 4; see also Hennig 2010).

The LPR was clearly positioned on the left end of the socio-economic spectrum. The party's socio-economic policies were based in Catholic social teaching and connected to the socio-cultural core issues of the party (Łapiński 2004). As for specific policies, the party campaigned for the re-nationalisation of key industries, against cuts in the welfare system, and for taxation and social systems which supported their traditional understandings of the family (Millard 2010, 131–33).

The SLD had clearly dissociated itself from its Communist past and developed a moderate social democratic profile. The party preferred a "sensitive privatisation" and sought to reduce unemployment, to moderately increase social benefits, but also to reduce taxes (Millard 2010, 106). As regards the socio-cultural sphere, the SLD took a secular, liberal stance, calling for gender equality and a liberal abortion policy. It was also staunchly pro-European (Millard 2010, 104–6). Thus, there is a certain prox-

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imity to the LPR on socio-economic issues, but the socio-cultural distance between the two parties could hardly be greater (see Table 5.15). Hence, LPR and SLD were both located on the left side of the socio-economic dimension, but the formateur was more moderate than its radical right competitor. This is also indicated by the parties' CHES scores of 2.00 (LPR) and 4.25 (SLD), respectively. In line with the parties' positions, however, the CHES places both parties on opposite ends of the GAL-TAN dimension. The LPR is close to the TAN pole (9.75), whereas the SLD occupies a position in the liberal spectrum (1.88).

Table 5.15: Socio-economic and socio-cultural distance between radical right parties and formateurs in Poland

Formation year	Parties	Socio-economic position	Socio-cultural position
2001	LPR SLD	2.00 4.25 distance: 2.25	9.75 1.88 distance: 7.87
2003	LPR SLD	2.00 4.25 distance: 2.25	9.75 1.88 distance: 7.87
2005	LPR PiS	1.17 2.00 distance: 0.83	10.00 9.57 (9.00) distance: 1.00
2006	LPR PiS	1.17 2.00 distance: 0.83	10.00 9.57 (9.00) distance: 1.00

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al. 2022), amended by the author. Values in parentheses indicate author's placement based on a qualitative assessment of party positions.

PiS, in contrast, was much closer to the LPR on the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions. Initially, the party championed law and order, as suggested by its name. Quite quickly, however, PiS began emphasising the idea of national Catholicism, although in a slightly more moderate fashion than the LPR. The party's leading figures, the twin brothers Jarosław and Lech Kaczyński, announced that their ideological and historical roots do not lie in Dmowski's national movement but rather referred to the more liberal, inter-war national movement of Józef Piłsudski (Pankowski 2010, 155–57; Pytlas 2016, 30–31, chap. 4). Nevertheless, the Kaczyński brothers believed that it was impossible to "build a patriotic party without people of national-Catholic convictions" (Pankowski 2010, 156). This statement underlines PiS' ethno-religious concept of nationhood and thus signals a crucial similarity to

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the radical right LPR. Several of the parties' policies also reflect this resemblance. For example, PiS aimed to preserve the influence of the Catholic church in society, to establish the traditional family as the backbone of Polish society, and to curb women's reproductive rights as well as the rights of the LGBTIQ+ community. The only major issue where PiS' and LPR's positions differed was Poland's accession to the EU, which PiS did not oppose (Millard 2010, 134). In socio-economic terms, PiS positioned itself on the left. The party advocated progressive taxation, a large-scale social housing programme, and it promised tax and welfare benefits to married couples and (traditional) families. The party generally favoured a private economy, but it also wanted to keep key sectors under state control (Millard 2010, 131–33).

Based on their shared positions, PiS and LPR proposed a comprehensive reform package during their 2005 election campaigns. This proposal for a "Fourth Republic" was initially introduced by PiS but quickly embraced by the LPR. It aimed at transforming Poland into a national-Catholic society with a strong government and a law and order regime, which would be achieved by substantial policy and even constitutional changes, a massive lustration and anti-corruption campaign, and a new social contract that placed the traditional—ethnic Polish and Catholic—family at the centre of Polish national identity (Millard 2010, 127; Pytlas 2016, 30–31). The CHES placements of PiS and LPR in the 2006 wave reflect the parties' socio-economic and socio-cultural proximity. The LPR receives the maximum GALTAN score of 10.00 and a score of 1.17 on the socio-economic dimension. PiS' placement at 2.00 provides an adequate reflection of the party's socio-economic policies, but its GALTAN score of 9.50 seems somewhat exaggerated, probably resulting from inflated perceptions of the polarisation in the Polish party system at the time (Pytlas and Kossack 2015, 117–18). It is therefore adjusted to 9.00.

5.3.4 Summary

At a time of change in the Polish party system, when the regime divide was losing salience and its previous representatives suffered massive electoral losses, the radical right LPR managed to enter the Sejm twice. In 2005, when the opposition between PO and PiS took shape in the context of a heated presidential race, the rift between these two parties even propelled the LPR into power. However, it was not only the bipolar opposition in the party system, but also LPR's ideological proximity to the formateur, PiS, that made the radical right party a viable junior partner. The whole PiS-SO-LPR government is one of the most ideologically homogeneous governments with a radical right party in the entire study.

Nevertheless, the cooperation between PiS and LPR did not last long due to the numerous conflicts within and between the governing parties (Millard 2010, 143–47; see also Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz 2006, 2007, 2008). Moreover, after their joint government, PiS engaged in a strategy of co-optation, taking over positions

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and narratives from the LPR (Pytlas and Kossack 2015; Pytlas 2016). PiS succeeded with these tactics and eliminated its radical right competitor in the 2007 elections. However, the party maintained the radical positions and moved even further towards the right later on. Thus, the LPR contributed to PiS' transformation into a radical right party (see Chapter 2.1), even though it was present in parliament and government for only a short period of time.

5.4 Slovakia

5.4.1 Government formation with radical right parties in Slovakia

Over the last three decades, the Slovak National Party (SNS) has been one of the most electorally consistent radical right parties in Central and Eastern Europe. The party entered the Slovak National Council in 1992, which became the first parliament of the independent Slovak state in 1993. Vladimír Mečiar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) emerged as the undisputed winner of the 1992 elections, but it fell two seats short of a majority in parliament. Of the other four parties in parliament, Mečiar included the radical right SNS as a junior partner in the first coalition government to rule the newly independent Slovak state.

Personal and ideological tensions within the SNS and HZDS parliamentary groups led several members to defect causing the government's majority in parliament to shrink quickly. Mečiar attempted to win further support for his cabinet midway through 1993, but even though his attempts failed and the government was left without a majority in parliament, the opposition was not united enough to vote the government out of office (Malová 1994). It took until March 1994 for the opposition to close ranks and remove the incumbent government from power. The former HZDS parliamentarian, Jozef Moravčík, was elected to replace Mečiar as prime minister. However, the Moravčík government is regarded as a caretaker government, since the parties also agreed to call early elections, which gave the government little room to manoeuvre (Malová 1995).

The HZDS again won the parliamentary elections in 1994, but with fewer parliamentary seats than in 1992. Mečiar initially entered into coalition negotiations with the reformed Communist successor, the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL'), and the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH). Unlike his former coalition partner, both parties controlled enough seats to secure a majority in parliament. Since Mečiar could not convince either one to govern with him, he turned to the smaller parliamentary parties, including the radical right SNS. The SNS agreed to renew cooperation with Mečiar who also managed to secure the support of the Union of the Workers of Slovakia (ZRS), a party that stood in ideological continuity with the Communist regime (Malová 1995). Despite the different ideological backgrounds of the

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constituent parties, this three-party majority coalition lasted the entire legislature and helped Mečiar to establish an autocratic, illiberal and clientelist regime which deeply divided the country.

Even though the HZDS once again emerged as the strongest party in the 1998 parliamentary elections, it was unable to muster the support it needed to form a majority. Mečiar's illiberal rule led the opposition parties to forge a broad alliance prior to the 1998 elections. This alliance, united in its opposition to a common threat, won enough votes to replace Mečiar. Mikuláš Dzurinda of the liberal-conservative Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK) acted as the formateur of the oversized rainbow coalition with the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK), the social-liberal Party of Civic Understanding (SOP), and the SDĽ that placed Slovakia back on track towards democratisation. The SNS, as a member of the former government, joined its coalition partner HZDS in opposition (Malová and Učeň 1999; Bugajski 2002, 296–97).

Due to a party split, the SNS failed to enter parliament for the first time in the 2002 elections (People Against Racism and Milo 2005, 214–15; Pirro 2016, 87). After settling this internal dispute, the party returned to parliament in 2006. In the meantime, the balance of power in the Slovak party system had shifted significantly. The liberal-conservative wing of the anti-Mečiar camp suffered substantial losses, the SDĽ had dropped out of parliament altogether, and Robert Fico's nominally social democratic Direction (Smer) had become the strongest party. In the run-up to the 2006 parliamentary elections, Fico declared that he was prepared to negotiate with parties from both sides of the regime divide. Among the two viable options, a coalition with either SMK and KDH or with HZDS and SNS, Fico opted for the latter and thus paved the way for the SNS to return to power. This coalition with the radical right and former autocratic ruler Mečiar caused international concern, particularly in the transnational Party of European Socialists, which Smer had joined in 2005 (Malová and Učeň 2007; Haughton and Rybář 2008, 248–49; Mesežnikov 2008, 10). These concerns, however, hardly affected Fico and his coalition, which remained in office for the entire term.

Domestically, the coalition did not harm Fico's popularity either. Smer even improved its electoral result in the 2010 parliamentary elections. The junior partners of the incumbent coalition, however, suffered heavy losses. The SNS barely managed to clear the five per cent threshold and the HZDS dropped out of parliament, never to return. Fico initially received the mandate to form the government, but because Smer and the SNS were not large enough by themselves and because the other parties were reluctant to cooperate with Fico and the radical right, he was unable to secure a parliamentary majority. Therefore, the mandate was passed to Iveta Radičová of the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party (SDKÚ-DS), who had already negotiated with the other parties. Radičová eventually formed a majority coalition with the KDH and two new parties, the neoliberal Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) and Most-Híd. The latter had replaced the SMK as the main representative

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of the interests of the Hungarian minority in Slovak politics (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2012). This four-party coalition broke up after less than two years, following conflicts over the European financial crisis. The early termination of this coalition resulted in the 2012 snap election, in which the SNS failed to gain parliamentary representation for the second time (Malová and Učeň 2013).

Once again, however, the party returned to parliament in 2016. With Marian Kotleba's People's Party Our Slovakia (ĽSNS), a second radical right party managed to enter the national parliament alongside the SNS in 2016. Smer once again emerged victorious and its leader, Robert Fico, was tasked with the formation of a new government. Fico had already mentioned his preference for a coalition with the SNS during the election campaign, but the two-party alliance was well short of a majority. Moreover, the composition of parliament had changed significantly compared to the last time these two parties had been in government together. KDH and SDKÚ-DS had disappeared, while three parties, including the radical right ĽSNS, were participating in either their first or second term. Since all parties had ruled out cooperation with the ĽSNS and some smaller parties were unwilling to govern with each other, the only potential partners remaining for Smer and the SNS were the new centre-right party Network (Sieť) and Most-Híd (Rybář and Spáč 2016). Because Slovakia would soon take over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, some parties preferred not to have a caretaker government hold that prestigious position, but they also feared that calling new elections would further strengthen Kotleba. Therefore, the four parties—Smer, SNS, Sieť and Most-Híd—decided to form a coalition despite obvious ideological differences. Even before the investiture vote, some deputies from Sieť and Most-Híd left their parliamentary groups. Sieť lost so many deputies that it fell short of the minimum number required for a parliamentary group. Overall, however, these defections did not threaten the government's majority in parliament, which ultimately assumed office in March 2016. Later that year, however, Sieť withdrew its support for the government completely, which was formally reduced to Smer, SNS and Most-Híd. Since some of the former Sieť deputies had joined Most-Híd, the coalition still had a majority (Baboš and Malová 2017). This three-party coalition remained in power until the next regular elections in 2020, although it was shaken by the massive public protests following the murder of Jan Kuciak and Martina Kušnirova in 2018, which forced several members of the cabinet to resign, including prime minister Fico himself.

The protest movement, and the political parties that emerged from it, achieved great success when their candidate, Zuzana Čaputová, was elected president in 2019. In the 2020 parliamentary elections, however, they narrowly missed the threshold. While support for the representatives of the protest movement dwindled, the populist anti-establishment party Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (OĽaNO) benefited from the discontent with the previous government. OĽaNO won the elections and its leader, Igor Matovič, became the formateur

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of the new government. On the far right, the ĽSNS repeated its result from 2016, although other parties continued to ostracise Kotleba, whereas the SNS dropped out of parliament again. Matovič went on to form an oversized four-party coalition with the SaS, the nationalist anti-establishment party We Are Family (Sme Rodina), and the liberal-conservative party For the People (ZĽ) of former president Andrej Kiska. Matovič indicated that he sought a broad alliance in order to control a three-fifths majority in parliament, which is required to amend the constitution.

The Matovič government stands in a certain continuity with the Dzurinda I government that was formed to oust Vladimír Mečiar in 1998. Except for these two oversized coalitions and two brief periods of minority rule, Slovakia was always ruled by minimal winning coalitions. Thus, unlike in the neighbouring Czech Republic, political parties in Slovakia seem to be rather reluctant to form minority governments, even when three or four parties with different ideological orientations are required to secure a majority in parliament (see Table 5.16). Only one of the governments that were formed when radical right parties were present in parliament meets the criteria for a minimal range coalition—the Radičová government of 2010 had the smallest possible ideological range on the socio-economic dimension. At the same time, however, the parties accepted great socio-cultural heterogeneity. When using the less restrictive minimal connected winning theory, the majority of the coalitions for which data are available were connected on the socio-economic dimension. Only the short-lived Fico III government was not.[6]

The governments that included radical right parties also show a relatively high degree of ideological homogeneity. The first government under the leadership of Robert Fico that assumed office in 2006 was even a minimal connected winning coalition on both the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimension. When considering the ideological positions of HZDS and SNS in the 1990s, the 1992 coalition of the two parties is ideologically close on both dimensions as well. After Sieť's defection, the 2016 Fico IV government is connected on the socio-economic dimension. Due to the participation of the SNS and Most-Híd, the Fico III and Fico IV governments are socio-culturally somewhat heterogeneous. Thus, there are some indications that governments with radical right parties in Slovakia might be ideologically more homogeneous than the average government in the country, particularly on the socio-cultural dimension. As for the format, the governments that included radical parties were all minimal winning coalitions.

6 The Matovič government was also socio-economically connected, but it does not fulfil the criteria of the minimal connected winning theory, because it was an oversized coalition.

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Table 5.16: Format and ideological range of governments in Slovakia

Formation year	**Cabinet name and parties***	**Radical right party**		**Coalition type****	**Minimal range*****		**Minimal connected winning**	
		Name	*Status*		*Socio-economic*	*Socio-cultural*	*Socio-economic*	*Socio-cultural*
1992	Mečiar I HZDS, SNS	SNS	Junior partner in a majority coalition	MWC	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1994	Mečiar III HZDS, SNS, ZRS	SNS	Junior partner in a majority coalition	MWC	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1998	Dzurinda I SDK, SDĽ, SMK, SOP	SNS	Opposition	Surplus	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
2006	Fico I Smer, SNS, HZDS	SNS	Junior partner in a majority coalition	MWC	No 3.10 (2.83)	No 2.5 (0.57)	Yes	Yes
2010	Radičová SDKÚ-DS, Most-Híd, SaS, KDH	SNS	Opposition	MWC	Yes 2.07	No 6.79 (0.46)	Yes	No

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2016a	Fico III Smer, SNS, Most-Híd, Sieť	SNS	Junior partner in a majority coalition	MWC	No 4.25 (1.94)	No 4.94 (1.65)	No	No
		ĽSNS	Opposition					
2016b	Fico IV Smer, SNS, Most-Híd	SNS	Junior partner in a majority coalition	MWC	No 2.25 (1.94)	No 4.13 (1.65)	Yes	No
		ĽSNS	Opposition					
2020	Matovič OĽaNO, Sme Rodina, SaS, ZĽ	ĽSNS	Opposition	Surplus	No 3.27 (1.77)	No 5.25 (1.09)	No	No

Source: Own compilation based on data from Casal Bértoa 2021; Bergman, Ilonszki, and Müller 2019a; Jolly et al. 2022.
* Parties in parentheses = support party of a minority government.
** Abbreviations: MWC = minimal winning coalition, MinSP = single-party minority government, MinC = minority coalition government, Surplus = oversized coalition.
*** Values indicate the ideological range between the most distant parties in government, including support parties of minority governments. Values in parentheses indicate the smallest possible ideological distance of a majority government.

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5.4.2 The configuration of the Slovak party system

Fragmentation

Table 5.17 shows that the fragmentation of the Slovak party system has been rather high. The only exceptions were the years 1992 and 2012. The effective number of parliamentary parties in 2012 was 2.9 (Casal Bértoa 2021), but it is not listed in the table since no radical right party was present in parliament. In both years, a single, dominant party, HZDS or Smer, respectively, came very close to, or even reached, a parliamentary majority. In 1992, the HZDS was only two seats short of a majority. Hence, the party was able to form a majority coalition with any of the other four parliamentary parties. The other elections covered here resulted in more fragmented parliaments and thus more complex bargaining situations.

The increased effective number of parties in 1994 reflects the larger number of actual parties in parliament and the less dominant position of the HZDS. The HZDS lost seats and was unable to from a two-party majority coalition with any of the six remaining parliamentary parties. Moreover, a majority coalition no longer required all of the other parliamentary parties to stand united against the HZDS. Thus, the number of possible minimal winning coalitions was much higher in 1994 than in 1992.

Table 5.17: Fragmentation of the Slovak party system

Formation year	Total number of parliamentary parties	Effective number of parliamentary parties
1992	5	3.2
1994	7	4.4
1998	6	4.8
2006	6	4.8
2010	6	4.0
2016	8	5.7
2020	6	4.4

Source: Own compilation based on data from Casal Bértoa 2021; Nordsieck 2021.

In 1998, fragmentation increased even though the number of actual parliamentary parties dropped from seven to six. The increase in the effective number of parties corresponds with HZDS' continuing electoral decline. The party controlled less than a third of the seats in parliament and was only one seat ahead of the SDK. Apart

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from a hypothetical coalition composed of the two strongest parties, at least three parties were needed to control a majority in parliament. From a purely numerical perspective, the bargaining situation was therefore quite complex. Both the HZDS and the SDK could have formed various minimal winning coalitions.

The 2006 parliamentary elections marked the beginning of Smer's electoral success. As in 1998, a total of six parties were present in parliament, but the balance of power between the two largest parties, Smer and SDKÚ-DS, was much more uneven. The option to form a minimal winning, grand coalition remained mathematically possible, but other than that Smer could form only minimal winning coalitions of at least three parties. Likewise, the SDKÚ-DS would have needed three or more junior partners to reach a majority.

In 2010, Smer controlled more than 40 per cent of the seats and was thus in a much stronger position than in 2006. Fico could have formed a two-party majority coalition with any parliamentary party except the SNS. Thus, the bargaining situation in 2010 was of moderate complexity and resembled that of 1994.

Smer's electoral success peaked in the 2012 parliamentary elections when it won 83 of the 150 seats in the Slovak parliament and formed a single-party government. In 2016, Smer remained the strongest party, but its size was reduced to less than 50 seats, while only one of remaining seven parties controlled more than 20. Hence, Smer still dominated the bargaining process. The extremely high fragmentation of 5.7 effective parliamentary parties, however, reflects the multitude of possible three-party, minimal winning coalitions.

The number of parties that competed in 2020 was similar to previous parliamentary elections. Because several parties and alliances failed to reach the threshold of representation by a relatively narrow margin, the effective number of parliamentary parties fell significantly, from 5.7 to 4.4. In total, more than 20 per cent of valid votes were cast for parties that did not enter parliament (Havlík et al. 2020). Smer's loss of popularity continued after the massive public protests against the government. Nonetheless, the party came in second to OĽaNO, which controlled more than a third of the seats. Even though the electoral system kept the fragmentation of the 2020 legislature to a relatively moderate level, the election still resulted in a somewhat complex bargaining situation. Of the ten possible minimal winning coalitions, all but one involved more than two parties.

Bipolar opposition

While the relatively high levels of fragmentation allowed for many different majority coalitions to form in Slovakia, the number of realistic government coalitions was often constrained by the ideological configuration of the Slovak party system. The 1992 elections were still held in a united Czechoslovakia, but the Czech and Slovak party systems were already quite independent. In Slovakia, the future of the federation, and Slovakia's role in it, was the dominant issue in the 1992 campaign. The Slovak

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parties fundamentally agreed on the goal of greater autonomy, but their positions differed significantly regarding how much autonomy they preferred. Initially, only the SNS advocated for a fully independent Slovak state and the end of the federation. The HZDS, however, approached this position in the run-up to the 1992 elections as well. However, fundamentally different views on the federal question existed between the Slovak and the Czech parties rather than within the Slovak party system (Szomolányi and Mesežnikov 1997, 141; Grotz 2000, 338–42; Haughton and Rybář 2008, 235). Thus, there was no bipolar opposition to constrain coalition formation in Slovakia in 1992 (see Table 5.18).

During Mečiar's first term in office, the bipolar opposition between illiberal and democratic forces that characterised the Slovak party system of the late 1990s and early 2000s, began to emerge. In the first half of the 1990s, prime minister Mečiar challenged the authority of Slovakia's democratic institutions and, with the support of the SNS, attempted to establish an autocratic and clientelist regime that stood in opposition to the economic and, in particular, the democratic transformation of the country (Carpenter 1997, 212–13; Grotz 2000, 392–93). By the 1994 parliamentary elections, however, the fronts had still not hardened, and a clear-cut bipolar opposition did not influence government formation. Mečiar himself had referred to the ousting of his government by the broad opposition alliance, centred around interim prime minister Moravčík, as a coup, but he was still prepared to cooperate with individual parties from the opposition camp, as were some parties that had voted him out of office, such as the SDĽ (Malová 1995, 469; Szomolányi and Mesežnikov 1997, 139–40; Grotz 2000, 392).

During Mečiar's second term in office, the opposition between his autocratic government and the democratic opposition intensified considerably. This divide between democratic, pro-Western forces and the autocratic, nationalist camp was the dominant issue in the 1998 Slovak parliamentary elections. Several liberal and conservative parties in the anti-Mečiar alliance merged into one party, the SDK, in order to improve their chances of winning. The SMK and the SDĽ did not join this party, but they were also firmly in the oppositional camp. The aim of this broad anti-Mečiar coalition was to bring the country back on track towards democracy and the rule of law, while ensuring the country's integration into Western alliances, most importantly the EU (Pridham 2002; Vachudova and Hooghe 2009, 201; see also Hloušek and Kopeček 2008; Haughton and Rybář 2008). Hence, at that time, the Slovak party system was clearly divided into two oppositional camps that were unable to cooperate with each other. This opposition included ideological differences and intense affective polarisation between the competing parties.

The oppositional alliance removed the Mečiar government in 1998, which ensured Slovakia's return to Europe. At the end of prime minister Dzurinda's first term in office, the bipolar opposition between the democratic forces and the Mečiar camp still dominated the 2002 parliamentary elections. None of the incumbent parties

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was willing to form a coalition with the HZDS, although Mečiar had promised to break with his autocratic past (Hloušek and Kopeček 2008).

In the mid-2000s, the liberal democratic regime was firmly established in Slovakia and parties competed over socio-economic and socio-cultural issues. The socio-economic dimension was most salient, but socio-cultural conflicts, in particular regarding the rights of the Hungarian minority in the country, played a role as well. Socio-economic issues also dominated the 2006 election campaign. After the collapse of the SDĽ, Smer became the strongest force on the socio-economic left and faced the SDKÚ-DS as the main liberal-conservative contender. The opposition on the secondary, socio-cultural dimension ran primarily between the radical right SNS and the SMK, the political representative of the Hungarian minority in the country (Haughton and Rybář 2008). Both conflict dimensions reinforced each other, thus constituting a bipolar opposition between a national-protectionist camp, consisting of Smer, SNS, and HZDS, and a liberal-conservative one, comprising the SDKÚ-DS, the SMK, and the KDH. This constellation somewhat resembled the situation in the late 1990s, but the affective polarisation between both camps was still mild and coalitions across camps, for instance between Smer, KDH, and SMK, remained a realistic option.

This conflict structure had further intensified by 2010. Due to the economic crisis in Europe, socio-economic issues remained high on the agenda and shaped the conflict between the two dominant parties, Smer and SDKÚ-DS. But the ethnic divide also gained salience following Fidesz' triumph in the Hungarian parliamentary elections earlier that year. The bipolar opposition was further reinforced by Fico's style of government and his controversial personality. Thus, in 2010, the Slovak party system was again divided into two camps that were unable to cooperate with each other (Haughton, Novotná, and Deegan-Krause 2011; Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2012).

When the radical right returned to parliament in 2016, the Slovak party system had undergone another transformation. Various corruption scandals had weakened Smer and the liberal-conservative camp. At the same time, several new anti-corruption and anti-establishment parties, such as OĽaNO, Sme Rodina, and ĽSNS, entered party competition (Rybář and Spáč 2016). The emergence of corruption as an important issue in Slovak politics, as well as the introduction of various new parties with different ideological backgrounds, put an end to the bipolar opposition that had constrained coalition formation at the beginning of the decade. The Slovak party system of the late 2010s was rather characterised by multi-polar oppositions.

The 2020 elections were overshadowed by the political earthquake which followed the murder of Jan Kuciak and Martina Kušnirova in mid-2018. This incident sparked the largest protests in the country since the Velvet Revolution (Havlík et al. 2020, 221–22), boosting the salience of corruption and anti-establishment sentiments even further. Thus, Havlík and his co-authors also argue that populism had a

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decisive impact on the electoral success of parties in 2020: "In sum, the rise of populist parties and the fact that populism became the only viable alternative to the previous government were two of the most important results of the 2020 general election in Slovakia. Yet, a closer look at the ideological and electoral background of the populist challengers provides us with a more complicated picture" (Havlík et al. 2020, 230). The different ideologies that accompanied the populist anti-establishment appeal of the new parties indicate that the oppositions in the Slovak party system have become even more diverse in 2020 than they were in 2016, despite the unanimous rejection of Smer.

Table 5.18: Bipolar opposition in the Slovak party system

Formation year	Bipolar opposition in the party system
1992	Federal question was dominant, but not polarised; government formation was not constrained by bipolar opposition
1994	Moderate bipolar opposition between pro- and anti-Mečiar camps, involving issue-based and affective polarisation; coalitions across camps were still an option for some parties
1998	Strong bipolar opposition between pro- and anti-Mečiar camps, involving issue-based and affective polarisation; coalitions across camps were impossible
2006	Moderate bipolar opposition along reinforcing socio-economic and socio-cultural divides; coalitions across camps were possible
2010	Strong bipolar opposition between a national-protectionist and liberal-conservative camp, reinforced by an affective dimension resulting from Fico's controversial personality; coalitions across camps were impossible
2016	Multi-polar oppositions in the party system
2020	Multi-polar oppositions in the party system

Source: Own compilation.

5.4.3 Characteristics and preferences of Slovak radical right parties

Parliamentary strength

Although the SNS has been represented in parliament relatively consistently over the past three decades, the party's electoral results fluctuate regularly (see Table 5.19). In 1992, the SNS achieved a solid result by winning 7.9 per cent of the vote, which translated into ten per cent of the parliamentary seats and substantial support for the first Mečiar government. In 1994 the party barely managed to re-enter parlia-

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ment. Its meagre seat share of only six per cent rendered it the smallest parliamentary group. Somewhat untypical of incumbent parties in Central and Eastern Europe (Roberts 2008; Bergman, Ilonszki, and Müller 2019b), the SNS made significant electoral gains in 1998, receiving 9.1 per cent of the vote and 9.3 per cent of the seats in parliament. In 2001, the party split and spent one term in extra-parliamentary opposition before rebounding in 2006 to record a result of 11.7 per cent of the vote, becoming the third-strongest party in parliament.

Since then, however, the SNS has struggled. By 2010, it had lost half of its vote share, and in 2012, it failed to enter parliament for the second time in its history. There have even been serious doubts as to whether the SNS would be able to recover from this defeat (Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015). After a change in the party leadership in 2012 and the subsequent expulsion of the notorious long-time chairman, Ján Slota, a year later (Pirro 2016, 88), the party recovered once again and returned to parliament in 2016. The 2020 parliamentary elections, revealed, however, that the SNS' revival was temporary, as it fell well short of the five per cent threshold.

Table 5.19: Election results and parliamentary strength of radical right parties in Slovakia

Formation year	Party	Vote share (in %)	Representation in parliament	
			Number of seats	*Seat share (in %)*
1992	SNS	7.9	15	10.0
1994	SNS	5.4	9	6.0
1998	SNS	9.1	14	9.3
2006	SNS	11.7	20	13.3
2010	SNS	5.1	9	6.0
2016	SNS	8.6	15	10.0
	ĽSNS	8.0	14	9.3
2020	ĽSNS	8.0	17	11.3

Source: Nordsieck 2021.

The emergence of a second, more radical party on the far right, Marian Kotleba's ĽSNS, has contributed to weakening the electoral support for the SNS (Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015; Mesežnikov and Gyárfášová 2017). In 2016, the ĽSNS entered the national parliament for the first time after unsuccessful attempts in 2010 and 2012. The party received a surprisingly strong eight per cent of the votes, due in part to the successful mobilisation of first-time voters (Mesežnikov and Gyárfášová 2017, 32). Kotleba and his party repeated this result in 2020. Due to high levels of dispro-

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portionality in the 2020 election, the ĽSNS received 11.3 per cent of the seats in parliament.

Ideological distance to the formateur

The radical right parties: SNS and ĽSNS

The original SNS was the first political party in Slovakia and existed from 1871 to 1938. When it was founded in 1989, the new SNS reclaimed continuity with this historical organisation (Pirro 2016, 86). The ideology of the SNS built on an ethno-cultural idea of a Slovak national identity that involved references to the threat of Hungarian domination as well as a religious component, most evident in the attempt to rehabilitate the inter-war clerico-fascist state and its central figures, Andrej Hlinka and Jozef Tiso (Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015, 230–31; Pirro 2016, 89–91; Pytlas 2016, chap. 5).

Under this ideological roof, different issues have dominated the party's platform over the past three decades. In the run-up to the 1992 parliamentary elections, when Czechoslovakia still existed, Slovak national independence was the SNS' defining theme. Before the HZDS adopted this position during and after the 1992 campaign, the SNS was the main proponent of an independent Slovakia and voiced strong resentment towards the Czech population in the federation (Cibulka 1999, 116–17; Pirro 2016, 86). Once the country gained independence, the SNS turned towards the Hungarian minority in Slovakia as its main enemy. The SNS blamed the Hungarians for all the ills of the country and accused them of supporting the irredentist policies of their kin state, Hungary. Long-time party leader, Ján Slota, was infamous for his public anti-Hungarian outbursts. Moreover, the SNS' ideological platform included racist policies that targeted the Roma minority and aimed at their social exclusion (People Against Racism and Milo 2005, 113–14; Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015, 234; Pirro 2016, 95–96; Pytlas 2016, chap. 5).

When Slota was replaced as party leader by Andrej Danko in 2012, the latter attempted to moderate the party's positions. Slota's expulsion from the party in 2013 was supposed to send a clear signal in this regard. Overall, however, Danko's strategy of moderation was rather hollow and did not bring about major programmatic changes (Rybář and Spáč 2016; see also Pirro 2016, 88–91). In the second half of the 2010s, and particularly in the 2016 election campaign, the SNS also focused on the omnipresent immigration issue in an attempt to profit from widespread xenophobia. Due to the competition from other parties, such as Smer and the ĽSNS, however, these efforts remained rather unsuccessful (Harris 2019, 551; Rybář 2020, 241). In light of these socio-cultural positions, the SNS receives a GALTAN score of 9.00 in 1992 and 1994. This position resembles the party's placements by the CHES experts,

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which oscillate around 9.00 as well (8.77 in 2002, 8.64 in 2006, 9.21 in 2010, and 8.94 in 2019) (see Table 5.20).

Table 5.20: Socio-economic and socio-cultural distance between radical right parties and formateurs in Slovakia

Formation year	Parties	Socio-economic position	Socio-cultural position
1992	SNS HZDS	(3.50) (3.00) distance: 0.50	(9.00) (7.50) distance: 1.50
1994	SNS HZDS	(3.50) (3.00) distance: 0.50	(9.00) (7.50) distance: 1.50
1998	SNS* SDK	3.67 (7.50) distance: 3.83	8.77 (4.50) distance: 4.27
2006	SNS Smer	5.00 (4.50) 2.36 distance: 2.14	8.64 4.43 (6.50) distance: 2.14
2010	SNS SDKÚ-DS	4.27 7.57 distance: 3.30	9.21 5.14 distance: 4.07
2016	SNS Smer	4.44 3.50 distance: 0.94	8.94 7.88 distance: 1.06
	ĽSNS Smer	3.94 (2.50) 3.50 distance: 1.00	9.81 7.88 distance: 1.93
2020	ĽSNS OĽaNO	3.94 (2.50) 6.00 distance: 3.50	9.81 6.97 distance: 2.84

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al. 2022), amended by the author. Values in parentheses indicate author's placement based on a qualitative assessment of party positions.
* The SNS' placement is based on the 2002 CHES wave, which did not include SDK.

On the socio-economic dimension, the SNS has consistently followed a national-protectionist course characterised by "strong elements of etatism, paternalism, and an inclination to redistributive social policy" (Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015, 229). At the same time, the party held a more positive view on the free market economy than other radical right parties in Central and Eastern Europe (Pirro 2016, 93). The

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SNS clearly favoured privatisation, but only to Slovak investors. The SNS also criticised Prague's neoliberal approach to economic transformation and advocated for a stronger welfare state (Szomolányi and Mesežnikov 1997, 143; Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015, 229–31).

In the 2000s, the party's socio-economic platform became more liberal. Its 2006 election programme, for instance, included the goal of "building an efficient, competitive and effective economy" (SNS 2006, in Pirro 2016, 93), which included the deregulation of the economy as well as the support for small and medium-sized domestic businesses and agriculture. Nevertheless, the fundamental chauvinistic and paternalistic approach to socio-economic policy remained (Pirro 2016, 93). In 2010, the SNS emphasised etatism and protectionism in response to the economic crisis, proposing a plan for the state to control key industries and infrastructure while also replacing the flat tax with a progressive taxation model. In its 2010 manifesto, the SNS explicitly criticised neoliberal economics, and in 2012, it published a memorandum with an even stronger national-protectionist thrust. This document was put aside, however, once Danko became the party's new chair later that year, because, while he still preferred the state to hold a majority position in key infrastructure businesses and favoured progressive taxation, he also acknowledged the need for foreign investment and compliance with European institutions (Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015, 230; Pirro 2016, 93–94). CHES scores for the SNS on the socio-economic dimension reflect the party's positions quite well. Only the position in 2006 is adjusted from 5.00 to 4.50, indicating that the SNS leaned slightly to the left. In the period before 1998, where no quantitative data are available, the SNS is placed at 3.50 on the socio-economic dimension, based on the qualitative assessment of its positions in the secondary literature.

In contrast to the SNS, Marian Kotleba's ĽSNS openly opposes the democratic system itself (Harris 2019) and can therefore be regarded as an extreme right party (see Chapter 2.1). Nevertheless, the SNS and the ĽSNS share an ideological core. The ĽSNS also embraces an ethno-religious concept of the Slovak nation and glorifies the clerico-fascist inter-war state (Mesežnikov and Gyárfášová 2017, 27–30; see also Harris 2019). However, Kotleba's rise in the first half of the 2010s was largely a result of his outspoken racism. He capitalised on widespread resentment against Roma in the Slovak population and used this issue to stand out against the SNS, which primarily targeted the Hungarian minority (Kluknavská and Smolík 2016, 341; Mesežnikov and Gyárfášová 2017, 25; Řádek and Miroslav 2019, 47–48).

During the "migration crisis" in the mid-2010s, the ĽSNS shifted its focus and campaigned on protecting the ethnic Slovak and Catholic nation from Muslim immigrants. Similar to other radical right—and even some mainstream—parties across Europe, the ĽSNS portrayed immigrants as terrorists and the men as a threat to Slovak women (Mesežnikov and Gyárfášová 2017, 27–30). Here, the ĽSNS clearly outperformed the SNS and competed for ownership of the immigration issue with

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Smer, which held similarly xenophobic and racist positions (Androvičová 2017). In addition, the party targeted the LGBTIQ+ community, was clearly anti-European and anti-Semitic (Kluknavská and Smolík 2016; Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015; Harris 2019). Hence, the ĽSNS' GALTAN score of 9.81 in the 2019 CHES wave provides an adequate reflection of its radical socio-cultural positions.

The ĽSNS' socio-economic positions are deeply intertwined with its nativist ultranationalism. The party rejects foreign investment and the influence of the EU in the country while also seeking to re-nationalise important industries and resources. In the early 2010s, the party even called for the reintroduction of the Slovak koruna as the national currency. In addition, the ĽSNS formulated the goal of full employment and aimed to expand the welfare state, for instance by supporting families or providing free health care. These measures were designed to exclude people who are not considered members of the Slovak nation, particularly Roma (Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015, 238–39; Řádek and Miroslav 2019). In light of these positions, the party's CHES score on the socio-economic dimension (3.94) seems too close to the centre and is therefore adjusted to 2.50.

The formateurs: HZDS, SDKÚ-DS, Smer, and OL'aNO

In the past three decades, the two Slovak radical right parties faced different formateurs. The first one was Mečiar's HZDS in 1992. In the run-up to the 1992 elections, Mečiar approached the SNS' position on the independence issue, using similarly ethno-nationalist rhetoric (Mesežnikov 2008, 11–12, 2009, 41–43; Učeň 2009, 29; Stanley 2011, 258–59). The HZDS was also critical of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. The party argued, for instance, that the Hungarian minority should not be responsible for their own affairs, and Mečiar even suggested that Hungarians should be resettled in their kin state (Bugajski 2002, 294). Mesežnikov (2008, 12) notes that the positions of the nationalist wing within the HZDS did not differ significantly from the SNS. Moreover, Mečiar disregarded the values and principles of liberal democracy and sought to establish an autocratic and illiberal regime. Based on these positions, the HZDS receives a GALTAN score of 7.50 in 1992 and 1994, placing the party clearly on the nationalist end of the socio-cultural dimension but somewhat closer to the centre than the SNS.

The HZDS held rather leftist socio-economic positions, preferring a gradual transformation of the economic system and rejecting neoliberal economic policies. Initially, Mečiar's opposition to the orthodox neoliberalism of Václav Klaus' ODS in Prague (see Chapter 5.1) was the main reason for his scepticism towards the continuation of the Czechoslovak federation in the early 1990s (Szomolányi and Mesežnikov 1997; Bugajski 2002, 312; Vachudova 2008, 870). At that time, the socio-economic platform of the HZDS favoured state regulation of the economy and an incremental approach to the privatisation of state property, including preferential

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treatment for Slovak investors. Clientelism and cronyism were also an essential part of the party's policy in this context, though not in its official programme (Szomolányi and Mesežnikov 1997, 143; Fisher 2006, chap. 4). Therefore, the party is placed at 3.00 on the socio-economic dimension in 1992 and 1994, reflecting a moderate centre-left position.

In 1998, the SDK was tasked with government formation. Since the SDK united several parties, its positions were not always homogeneous. On socio-economic issues, however, the party clearly stood for market liberalism, but its platform also included some elements of a welfare state. In the socio-cultural sphere, the SDK shared the goal of reinstating a liberal democratic regime, and the rule of law, after Mečiar's illiberal rule. The party's agenda also entailed Slovakia's quick integration into NATO and the EU. In addition to the liberals, there were also conservative and Christian democratic factions within the party. They did not adhere to the ethno-religious nationalism found in the SNS and the HZDS, however, which was evident in their positive attitude towards the Hungarian minority (Bugajski 2002, 301; Fisher 2006, 162–64). Since SDK's liberal and pro-democratic positions outweigh the conservative tendencies in the party in 1998, it receives a GALTAN score of 4.50, which places the party on the liberal side of the socio-cultural dimension. As regards socio-economic issues, the dominance of the liberal wing results in a score of 7.50.

In 2010, the re-organised successor of the SDK, the SDKÚ-DS, acted as the formateur. In the 2010 parliamentary election, the SDKÚ-DS positioned itself as a liberal-conservative party with a clear focus on socio-economic issues. Neoliberal ideas, such as support for privatisation, deregulation of the health sector, and the defence of the flat tax featured in the party's economic programme. Since the electoral decline of the HZDS had ruled out the return of Mečiar, the SDKÚ-DS could no longer rally behind opposition to his regime. Despite somewhat stronger conservative currents, when compared to the SDK in the late 1990s, the party remained fundamentally pro-Western, secular, and supportive of the Hungarian minority (Malová and Učeň 2007, 1105; Haughton and Rybář 2008, 237; Štefančík 2008), which is reflected in its GALTAN placement in the 2010 CHES wave (5.14).

In 2006 and 2016, Smer won the election and received the mandate to form the government. In the beginning, the party's ideological platform was rather vague and party leader Fico presented his nominally social democratic party as a third way between the two oppositional camps that had shaped Slovak politics during the turn of the millennium (see above). Over the years, however, Smer's centre-left socio-economic profile consolidated. In this regard, the party filled the void left by the SDĽ after its demise. In the 2006 election campaign Smer opposed SDKÚ-DS' plans for privatising the health and energy sectors. Fico also wanted to introduce progressive taxation and formulated the goal of establishing a comprehensive welfare state in Slovakia—often using populist anti-establishment rhetoric (Malová and Učeň 2007, 1106; Haughton and Rybář 2008, 244; Mesežnikov 2008, 10; Pytlas 2016, 34–35; Mal-

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ová 2017, 10). In 2016, Smer was still a centre-left party regarding socio-economic issues, but after two terms in government, its positions had moved somewhat closer to the centre (Malová 2017, 10–11). The party's CHES scores of 2.36 and 3.50, respectively, mirror this positional shift.

Smer's socio-cultural positions were out of step with other parties in the social democratic party family, which are usually located at the GAL end of the spectrum (Hloušek and Kopeček 2010). Moreover, Pytlas (2016, 142) notes that in the mid-2000s, "the value profile of the party was an enigma" to many observers. However, Smer occasionally used nationalist rhetoric during the 2006 campaign, deliberately playing the anti-Hungarian card in order to appeal to culturally conservative voters (Mesežnikov 2008, 10; Rybář and Deegan-Krause 2008, 511; see also Pytlas 2016, chap. 5). During Fico's first term in office from 2006 to 2010, Smer's framing and policies revealed the party's nationalist leaning (Pytlas 2016, 47–50; see also Pytlas and Kossack 2015). By 2016, there was little doubt about Smer's socio-cultural positions. Fico and his party were among the most prominent voices stirring hatred and mistrust against immigrants and refugees. He opposed a European quota system for the distribution of refugees, and he did not refrain from using blatant racism, repeatedly associating Islam and refugees with terrorism (Androvičová 2017; Rybář and Spáč 2016). In contrast to Smer's previous campaigns which focused on socio-economic issues (Rybář and Deegan-Krause 2008), the growing salience of socio-cultural issues for Smer is also illustrated by the fact that the party used "We will defend Slovakia!" as central campaign slogan in 2016 (Baboš and Malová 2017, 237). Smer's GALTAN score in the 2006 CHES wave (4.43) reflects the party's enigmatic socio-cultural position at the time. Overall, however, Smer's occasional use of nationalist rhetoric in the 2006 campaign and the policies it pursued during its subsequent term in office point to a moderate TAN instead of a moderate GAL position. Hence, the party's placement on the socio-cultural dimension in 2006 is adjusted to 6.50. In 2019, the CHES places Smer even closer to the TAN pole (7.88), matching the party's rightward shift.

The 2020 parliamentary elections changed the political landscape in Slovakia significantly and presented a relatively new party, OĽaNO, with the opportunity to form a government. OĽaNO has been established in 2011, but other than being anti-establishment, it had a vague ideological profile.[7] Consequently, observers characterised OĽaNO as "pro-conservative, but with eclectic and incoherent positions" (Bútora 2013, 20). By the 2020 elections, there was at least some evidence that OĽaNO held rather liberal socio-economic views (Rybář and Spáč 2016). Moreover,

7 Following the anti-establishment appeal of its founding members, first and foremost Igor Matovič, OĽaNO was not registered as a political party but as a political movement, which made no difference in practice (Hloušek, Kopeček, and Vodová 2020, 104).

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the party had expressed support for conservative Catholic values, such as a traditional image of the family and the opposition to a liberal abortion policy (Havlík et al. 2020, 218; Hloušek, Kopeček, and Vodová 2020, 107–8). OĽaNO's CHES scores of 6.00 on the socio-economic and 6.97 on socio-cultural dimension mirror the qualitative assessment.

5.4.4 Summary

Slovakia has been the Central and Eastern European country where the radical right has been in government for the longest time during the three post-Communist decades. The SNS has participated in five coalitions and held public office for a total of 14 years. These coalitions were characterised by a relatively small socio-economic range, which highlights the important role of the radical right for the country's socio-economic left. The coalition of Smer, SNS, and HZDS in 2006 was also quite homogeneous on the socio-cultural dimension. Due to the lack of data on the positions of Slovak parties in the 1990s, it is not possible to draw clear conclusions as to whether the 1992 and 1994 governments were minimal connected winning or minimal range coalitions, but the ideological proximity of the HZDS and SNS suggests that their socio-economic and socio-cultural range was rather small.

Only the unorthodox Fico III and IV governments, which held office between 2016 and 2020, were ideologically rather heterogeneous. Several factors contributed to prime minister Fico's ability to successfully form a government coalition despite considerable socio-economic and socio-cultural differences, particularly between the SNS and Most-Híd. First, Slovak parties were rather sceptical towards forming minority governments in general. Secondly, Slovakia was scheduled to preside over the Council of the European Union, and leaders wanted to avoid forming either a caretaker or minority government during this period. Third, changes in the SNS' leadership and the political representation of the Hungarian minority enabled the formation of the four-party government that included both these antagonistic forces. Within the SNS, long-time chairman and most aggressive anti-Hungarian voice in the party, Ján Slota, had been replaced by the more moderate Andrej Danko after the party's electoral defeat in 2012. One year later, Slota was even expelled from the party. On the other side, the SMK had been replaced by Most-Híd as the representative of Hungarian minority interests in Slovak politics. The new party did not carry the baggage of the deep bipolar opposition between the pro- and anti-Mečiar camps of the late 1990s. Whether the SMK and the SNS under Slota's leadership would have been able to cooperate in a coalition government seems rather questionable.

More recently, the SNS has struggled at the polls and it is uncertain whether the party will be able to recover from its electoral defeat once again. The radical right did not disappear from the Slovak parliament with the SNS in 2020, though. Mar-

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ian Kotleba's ĽSNS, which entered national parliament already in 2016, repeated this success in the 2020 parliamentary elections. The other parties, however, have shown no inclination to lift the cordon sanitaire against the ĽSNS that they had established right after Kotleba's breakthrough in 2013, when he surprisingly beat the Smer candidate in the second round of the regional elections and became governor of the Banská Bystrica region (Mesežnikov and Gyárfášová 2017, 21). Thus, Slovak governments might not include a radical right party anytime soon. Yet, even if this is the case, three decades of party competition with the radical right have primed the mainstream with radical right politics, most of all Robert Fico's Smer.

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