THE CONCEPT OF NATION IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE SLOVAK RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS[1]

Radoslav ŠTEFANČÍK and Eva STRADIOTOVÁ[2]

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The aim of this study is to find out how the Slovak right-wing extremists perceive the term nation. We assume that nation is the crucial communication category of the Slovak right-wing extremists. In researching the language of right-wing extremists, we proceed from the hypothesis that this kind of political language has specific features, especially in the lexical level. Since the political communication of extremists is based on provoking the fear of an (often fictitious) enemy, we assume the existence of a dichotomous definition in the sense of a friend vs. an enemy, more precisely we vs. they, or us vs. others. This means that extremists perceive the nation as a homogeneous group of people who are threatened by external or domestic enemies. In this context, we are discussing who is in the perspective of the right-wing extremism marked as the nation's enemy and what kind of communication means extremists use to designate these social groups.

Key words: nation; right-wing extremism; Slovakia; political communication; enemy; ĽSNS.

1 INTRODUCTION

Right-wing extremism has also become a challenge in Slovakia not only for professionals in the social sciences and humanities, but also for the political elite from the democratic centre. Although in the Slovak Republic it captured the general public attention only after the parliamentary elections in 2016, the research in the right-wing extremism has a long tradition in Western Europe (e.g. Backes 1989; Backes and Jesse 1993; Mudde 2000a, 2000b, 2007; Jesse and Thieme 2011; Pfahl-Traughber 2001, 2019). The right-wing extremism caught the scientific community's attention in the mid-1990s because of the achievements of originally marginal political parties. A part of the general public

[2] **Radoslav ŠTEFANČÍK**, Ph.D, is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Applied Languages at the University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia, Department of Intercultural Communication. Contact: radoslav.stefancik@euba.sk. **Eva STRADIOTOVÁ**, PhD, is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Applied Languages at the University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia, Department of English Language. Contact: eva.stradiotova@euba.sk.

ceased to trust in the established ways of addressing some of the obvious problems not only associated with the social situation but also with European integration, international migration and began to believe in the simple suggestions how to solve the complex issues. Presenting simple solutions for solving complex problems is one of the characteristic features of the political communication of far-right populist parties.

In the social sciences and the humanities, there are various methodological approaches to research of right-wing extremism. Generally, the authors from Slovakia and Czech Republic deal with the historical context of right-wing extremism (Drábik 2019), the causes of the success of contemporary right-wing extremists (Kluknavská 2012; Strážnická 2017), the structure of the party organization and the electorate (Mesežnikov and Gyárfášová 2016), the relationship of extremists to certain national, ethnic or sexual minorities (Mareš 2014), or compare several extremist parties in a particular region (Smolík 2013). However, we believe that in the context of research into right-wing extremism, political communication of this type of political actors can also be explored from the perspective of political linguistics.

In view of the fact that exploring all aspects of the political communication of right-wing extremists would go beyond the scope of this study, we decided to introduce only the view of the Slovak right-wing extremists on the nation. We assume that the priority of right-wing extremists is nation as the main communication category, which is the basis for their thinking in relation to other themes (history, minorities, religion, conspiracy theories). Our research into the language of right-wing extremists is based on the hypothesis that this kind of political language has specific features, especially in the lexical level. Since the political communication of extremists is based on provoking the fear of an (often fictitious) enemy (Wodak 2016; Kluknavská and Smolík 2016), we assume the existence of a dichotomous definition in the sense of a friend vs. an enemy, more precisely we vs. they, or us vs. others.

In the text, we focus primarily on the content analysis of the program documents of the political party Kotlebovci – ĽSNS (People´s Party Our Slovakia). This party is the main representative of the right-wing extremism in Slovakia. Until 2016, it was only a marginal subject. Right-wing extremists from ĽSNS experienced extraordinary success in the 2016 parliamentary elections, when they entered parliament for the first time and won 15 seats in the 150-seat national parliament. ĽSNS repeated its success in February 2020, when the right-wing extremists won two more seats in the Slovak parliament.[3] In the European elections in 2019, this party took third place and won two seats in the European Parliament. ĽSNS manages to maintain a stable electorate but according to Peter Csanyi (2019, 71), "there is a serious threat that Kotleba becoming more mainstream may contribute to growth in support, especially among the youngsters, who have long been his loyal base. Many from the young generation are frustrated, but they don't ask questions and are not interested in politics. They just follow the person who gives the simplest answers".

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[3] The party's parliamentary group was extremely unstable after the 2020 elections. First, three parliamentarians left the group, in January 2021 another five parliamentarians left the party. The main reason was that the party leader Marian Kotleba had extraordinarily strengthened his leadership in the party.

In the first place, we looked into the election documents published on the ĽSNS website.[4] In addition to the party documents and periodicals, we also analyse parliamentary speeches given by the members of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on behalf of the ĽSNS. With respect to the fact that some of the relevant topics of the right-wing extremists are not included in the party manifestos (for example, because of the fear of criminal proceedings for statements related to repressing the fundamental human rights of certain groups of people), the research corpus is also made up of speeches published as videos and the comments posted on Facebook. Nowadays, the internet, and in particular the social networks with their interactive functions comprise an important communication tool (not only) for the right-wing extremists (Schuppener 2013; Seresová 2017; Kluknavská and Hruška 2019). The Internet communication, used by political advocates, is a natural means of influencing public opinion in the period of digital media (Salzborn and Maegerle 2016). The profiles of the members of the ĽSNS and their voters, which are published on Facebook, are suitable material to prove the extremist orientation of this party.

We understand the following considerations as our contribution to the study of political language, which is the focus of politolinguistics research. Political linguistics is one of the young (Niehr 2014) but rapidly developing sub-disciplines of linguistics (Zavrl 2016). The main goal of this young border discipline between linguistics and political science (Burkhardt 1996; Kvapil 2017; Cingerová and Dulebová 2019), which was defined in 1996 by the German scholar Armin Burkhardt (1996), is the investigation of political language, political media language and the language of politicians (Niehr 2014). Research into the political language and communication of one political party is important in order to create a basis for further comparative research. We consider that the communication strategies of right-wing extremists are similar across Europe. Emphasizing the importance of one's own nation is, in our view, an important common feature of right-wing extremists from several European countries. In this text, we will present how Slovak right-wing extremists perceive the importance of the Slovak nation.

In this paper, we do not have the ambition to compare the political communication of ĽSNS with some other ideologically similarly oriented party in another European country. However, we will use the diachronic comparative method to identify content and language changes in the political communication of the same party over several years. Specifically, from the election campaign before 2016 to the present. In this period, three fundamental factors have influenced the style of political communication of Slovak right-wing extremists appeared. The first, the success in the parliamentary elections in 2016. The second, the proposal of the Slovak General Prosecutor Jaromír Čižnár to dissolve this party. However, the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic rejected it. Finally, the third factor comprises the lawsuits against the party's leaders for spreading extremism. We believe that extremists under the influence of these three factors have changed communication strategy, from the open spreading of hatred, which we can identify in their statements before elections in 2016, to moderate, albeit still radical expressions of certain ethnic, national, religious, or sexual minorities.

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[4] The analysed website of Slovak right-wing extremists (naseslovensko.net) no longer works at this moment (October 2020). Due to criminal proceedings against the chairperson of the ĽSNS, Marian Kotleba, extremists turned this web page off. There was a lot of evidence on this website about the anti-democratic thinking of Slovak right-wing extremists.

2 A BRIEF LOOK AT THE THEORY OF RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM

In view of the fact that our primary concern is to explore the lexis of right-wing extremism in relation to the category *nation*, we try to focus only on the main features of right-wing extremism. The term right-wing extremism is used as a collective term for expressions such as racism, fascism, neo-fascism, Nazism, neo-Nazism, nationalism, ultra-nationalism, right-wing populism, anti-Semitism, or hostility towards foreigners. This means that it is used as a common name for a number of anti-democratic political ideas, sets of ideas, or activities that, on the one hand, may show several common attributes, on the other hand, they may differ significantly from one another (Pfahl-Traughber 2001).

Backes and Jesse (1993) understand right-wing extremism as an anti-individualist movement that negates the basic principles of democracy and its major achievement - the constitutional state. Instead of a state that is based on the principle of equal political rights for every citizen, according to right-wing extremists there should be a political order that institutionalizes inequality based on origin, performance, national, ethnic and racial affiliation. In Western Europe, the right-wing extremists are characterized primarily by their sympathy for national socialism, or more precisely neo-Nazism. Despite their intrinsic heterogeneity, according to the German author Armin Pfahl-Traughber (2001, 14–16) they share the following features:
- Rejection of the principle of equality. The ideology of inequality is expressed in the social discrimination of certain people, or whole groups, and it is based on ethnic, physical or mental differences.
- Overestimating of one´s own ethnicity. The highest criterion for identifying identity is categorisation of people according to ethnic, national or racial origin. Their own category is rated as the highest, which in turn creates inferior members of other races, ethnicities or nationalities.
- Anti-pluralism. Pluralism, arising from value, interest or opinion conflicts, is seen as a factor undermining the integrity of the community. For this reason, extremists strive for creating a closed society that is made up of one unit - racial, religious and national.
- Authoritarianism. The state is the dominant player in governing society. Every individual must submit to the authority of the state.

Since right-wing extremism is intrinsically differentiated, right-wing extremist parties differ from one another. Richard Stöss (2008) steadily differentiates among 1) moderate nationalists and foreigner-haters who act in a rather conformal manner towards the political system, 2) nationalists and neo-racists who are more critical of the existing system, 3) (neo) fascists and (neo) racists who are generally hostile to the existing system.

In a similar vein, Cas Mudde (2000b) distinguishes between consistently anti-democratic extreme right and nominally democratic, but populist radical right. This Dutch political scientist concludes that this is a group of parties sharing a common ideological or programmatic basis (Mudde 2000b). This is primarily based on nationalism, which includes, among other things, hostile attitudes towards immigrants.

The perception of nationalism by extremists, as we already mentioned, is based on hostility towards immigrants. We consider every behaviour with a negative impact on national identity that differs from the behaviour of an autochthonous

society as hostile (Mudde, 2000b). Extremists perceive nationalism in their aggressive form, i.e., the nation is understood as a social entity superior to other nations and nationalities. The interests of one's own nation stand on an absolute top and hold precedence over the interests of other nations or supra-nationals, or more precisely international organizations. Emphasis on national supremacy, national traditions, or superiority over other nations is just one branch of right-wing extremists. Another branch emphasizes the uniqueness of its own race over other races. In Central Europe, we encounter hostility especially to the Romani, in Western Europe it is hostility to certain groups of immigrants (especially black and possibly immigrants from Arab countries). Kailitz (2004) notes four signs of racism among right-wing extremists:

- the notion that humanity is composed of genetically distinct racial groups,
- genetic differences create differences between races in terms of behaviour, intelligence and morality,
- some races are superior to others,
- suppressing the rights of certain ethnic groups.

Thus, for Kailitz (2004), racism is an important feature of political extremists on the right side of the ideological axis. For this German author, extremists are groups or individuals who, for racial or nationalist reasons, do not recognize the rights of certain social groups, especially immigrants and asylum seekers. However, the question in this context is which political party will openly proclaim the biological superiority of one nation, or race over another, if for such attitudes the court may prohibit the activity of a political party. For this reason, it is necessary to look at racism from a different perspective than the traditional approach. According to Armin Pfahl-Traughber (2019), racism can be perceived from two perspectives. In the narrower sense, racism is based on the biological argumentative construction of race. In this type of racism, it is the derogatory attitudes of individuals towards different racial groups. In a broader sense, expressions that diminish the seriousness or insult certain groups of people on the basis of their cultural affiliation can also be considered racism. In this case, we are talking about the so-called cultural racism, culturalism or neo-racism (Pfahl-Traughber 2019). This type of racism is not based on the idea of the superiority of some groups or nations over others. It is based on the belief that different lifestyles and traditions are incompatible and that removing any borders is harmful (Balibar and Wallerstein 1992).

In the context of this thinking, it should be noted that Slovak extremists have also undergone development. In the early period of the existence of Slovak right-wing extremism, it was possible to identify several manifestations of open racism. Right-wing extremists used very negative language means to express their superiority over Jews, Roma, Muslims, migrants or homosexuals. Due to concerns about the dissolution of the party (similarly to the predecessor of ĽSNS *Slovenská pospolitosť* (Slovak Brotherhood), which was banned by the Supreme Court in 2006), or from criminal prosecution of individual party members, the communication of ĽSNS leaders is currently adapting to standard political communication. However, as we will see in the analysis of the language of Slovak right-wing extremists, they do not express open racism, but their communication strategies contain elements of cultural racism.

3 EXTREMISTS´ COMPREHENSION OF THE CATEGORY NATION

The language of right-wing extremists, or extreme radical right-wing political parties, is specific, and some authors examine it as a special phenomenon (Schuppener 2013; Štefančík and Hvasta 2019). Right-wing extremists are creative in the creation of new language expressions, or in the rediscovery of historicisms, usually associated with negative historical periods. Jeremy A. Frimer et al (2019) argue, "the language of extremists on both the left and the right is more negative than the language of ideological moderates" (Frimer et al. 2019, 1217). According to Rainer Strobl (2001), three elements are evident in the political communication of right-wing extremists: the dehumanization of foreign groups, verbal aggression against minorities, and the nationalist idealization of one's own (national) group. We also find all these three elements in the political communication of Slovak extremists, whether it is emphasizing the important position of the Slovak nation or verbal aggression towards other, foreign, otherwise thinking groups.

The language of the Slovak right-wing extremism depends primarily on nationalism and several basic themes that are universal for extremist and radical parties across Central and Western Europe. Authors who compare the programmatic priorities of extremist parties in Europe state that today, it is above all a negative delimitation aimed at international migration, Islam, different cultures and ongoing European integration (Smolík 2013; Mareš 2014).

The universal feature of extremist anti-systemic parties is a program orientation towards the nation and an ordinary man (Spier 2006; Smolík 2018). Nation is a special category of extremist political communication. It is perceived as a homogeneous ethnic mass, not as an internally heterogeneous entity, despite the fact that the heterogeneity of nation states is typical of contemporary and modern Europe (Gbúrová 1996). The term nation is understood by extremists as domestic, ethnically homogeneous population based on "biological purity" (Schellenberg 2009), which is usually threatened not only from outside, but also from inside, even though there is, in fact, no homogeneous nation because it is internally differentiated ethnically, religiously, culturally or socially. According to Pfahl-Traughber (2019), extremists defy by this stand one of the fundamental principles of liberal democracy, namely pluralism.

Through the category nation, anti-systemic politicians integrate different socio-economically marginalized groups of inhabitants, or people who have not been able to adapt to the new conditions created after the economic and political transformation in the 1990s, or to the new challenges of the current globalized world, into one homogeneous community. Extremists provide a sense of importance (or pride), though often only seemingly, to these subjects.

Although ĽSNS has changed several content priorities over the years, nationalism has remained its central ideological basis. According to Jansen and Borggräf (2007), the idea of a nation enables to define one part of society as "we" and the rest as "others", "those of others" or "foreigners". It is therefore a way to include people who are unable to orient themselves in contemporary modern world, helping them return their self-esteem, to free their frustration from their own failures, from the inability to respond to the challenges of the globalization process, and thus help them to gain a sense of importance. However, whether it is real or fictitious importance, it does not play an important role for the individual, because creating a sense of belonging to any community with important roles is important. Dichotomous categorization of individuals into two

groups "we" and "those others" is a simple construct, which is aimed at providing guidance for understanding the world for people without better education.

The ideas of nationalism allow everyone, even a socially unsuccessful individual, to become part of a larger group. This group is usually presented as a community that has been through various injustices (besides other things from others, usually neighbouring nations, or social groups), so it needs to free itself from enemies and build its own sovereignty independently of other nations, or from the will of international organizations. In this context, the idea of the need to protect the nation and defend it from the inner and outer enemies appears. In a nationalist language, the uncritical highlighting of some historical events or personalities associated with them is often present. And it does not matter whether it was a person with a positive tendency to the principles of liberal democracy, or vice versa, people with an anti-democratic approach.

Nationalism can be seen from two perspectives, especially when we distinguish between inclusive and exclusive nationalism (Riescher 2005). Inclusive nationalism, whose synonym is patriotism, has played a positive role in the historical process of the modern European nations. Indeed, this type of nationalism promotes the creation of collective identity, integrates the various parts of society into a common whole, regardless of political belief. Inclusive nationalism has created a value and thought system for individual nations, helping them to build constitutional patriotism. It raised national awareness by justifying the existence of a nation, highlighting its positive role in history, underlining some important historical milestones, a role in international politics, and creating a positive vision of the nation for the next period (Wehler 2001).

In addition to the positive effects on nation formation and national awareness, nationalism can also have the opposite effect, especially when it comes to exclusive nationalism. The synonym of this type of nationalism is chauvinism characterized by aggressive delimitation from other states, nations or ethnic groups, expressions of elevation over other nations, discrimination or, in extreme form, the destruction of other national or ethnic groups (Riescher 2005, 599). Expressions of exclusive nationalism can also be seen in the process of regime transformation and are the part of the political communication of the contemporary extremists. In the 1990s, "nationalism and national populism were the obstacles to the consolidation of the liberal democracy and the integration ambitions of Slovakia" (Mesežnikov and Gyárfašová 2016, 39). Even in the context of right-wing extremists, it is usually "intolerant antiliberal nationalism" (Bötticher and Mareš 2012, 315).

4 WE VS. THE OTHERS

In view of the fact that the central category of political communication of right-wing extremists is the nation, in the language of this ideological group there are regular expressions associated with the nation. The extremists use these terms in the form of a noun or adjective: *nation*, *Slovak nation*, *national* or the name of the country *Slovakia* (or as an adjective *Slovak*) as a synonym for a nation. In order to highlight the positive attitude towards the nation, the extremists use the national prefix *pro* with adjective (*pro-national*, *pro-Slavic, pro-Slovak*). This prefix is intended to emphasize a very positive attitude towards a nation or country. The main features of the communication of the Slovak right-wing extremists are illustrated in the following sentence:

- "*Unlike them, we will never betray a nation or God*" (ĽSNS 2016).

This sentence is stated in the party manifesto of ĽSNS 2016 and represents the way the Slovak right-wing extremists think. In this sentence, it is possible to identify several significant expressions of the political communication of the Kotlebovci – ĽSNS party. Extremists define themselves against the existing treacherous political elite (from them), which is in the language of the extremists the enemy of the people by using personal pronouns (we, us, them,..). The personal pronoun they (or in the form of them) not only embody the political elite, but practically everyone who is against the extremists.

In the given example the nation (whose fundamental part are extremists, i.e., us) is a central category whose interests extremists want to defend, protect, advocate, stand up for. In addition to personal pronouns, the language of right-wing extremists often includes possessive pronouns, e.g., *our* (*our nation, our Slovakia, our country, our homeland, our culture, our traditions, our leader, our president,* even *our women*). Since on the one hand there is always Slovak, even on the example of using adjectives it is possible to identify dichotomous viewing of the sense of friend vs. enemy. The role of these vehicles of expression is to create a contradiction between *our* (*Slovak, Slavic, white, decent, integrity*, etc.) and foreign, i.e., *other* (*black, colour, African, Muslim, non-adaptive, asocial*, etc.). To emphasize the difference between Slovak and foreign, we identify in the language of extremists the use of comparative and superlative adjectives, or hyperbolising nouns (*disaster, terror, explosion, destruction*) and adjectives (*huge, gigantic, record, brutal, awful, disastrous, shocking, dizzying, bloodthirsty*). The right-wing extremists use these language means to highlight a certain moment of criticism by influencing the emotional level of the recipient of the political message.

What specifically, the Slovak right-wing extremists understand under the term nation (or in the form of an adjective *national*), testify, for example, the status of sympathizer ĽSNS published on Facebook. In this case, the racist content of the statement is evident. Only a person with white skin is considered to be the part of the nation. The others should be a part of different communities. The adjective *white* is therefore as important in the language of extremists as the noun *nation*. Through the adjective *white,* they define themselves against members of other races or ethnic communities. The adjective *white* often occurs in collocations, e.g., *white Slovak, white women, white people, white children, white families, white decent, white workers*, and so on.

"*According to his experience, these patrols are useless because they have not prevented many conflicts between gypsies themselves and gypsies and **whites***" (Milan Uhrík, Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic for the ĽSNS, since 2019 Member of the European Parliament ĽSNS 2017).

"*Instead of **white** children of indigenous inhabitants, the bands of young Arabs are wandering through ravaged cities, and instead of normal, hefty men, there are men dressed up as princesses in skirts on the streets*" (Andrej Medvecký, regional chairman of the ĽSNS in Žilina, the ĽSNS 2018).

If we compare the communication of extremists in the past and today, we find important differences. In view of the fact that the Slovak extremists faced up to an attempt to ban the party's activities by the General Prosecutor at the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic, they are currently wary of commenting on other races. Nowadays, the racist expressions are still typical for supporters and voters of the ĽSNS on the social networks (Kluknavská and Hruška 2019; Miškolci, Kováčová and Rigová 2020), but not for the language of official party

representatives. Although the terms like *gypsy*, *parasite*, and *asocial* are still present in their language, and they have also been dealt with by the Supreme Court in April 2019, when the General Prosecutor submitted the request for the dissolution of the party, the party's representatives consider their use more responsibly. Thus, in the case of the current leadership of the ĽSNS, there can be seen a tendency not to communicate in the narrower perspective of racism, i.e., not to proclaim openly the biological superiority of the white race over other races. However, if we look at racism in its broader perspective, from the point of view of other ethnic groups, cultures or religions, which are offended, then it is possible to characterize the ĽSNS by adjective racist.

5 NATION AND CHRISTIANITY

In view of the fact that the people, i.e., the nation is the central category for the ĽSNS, the names of outstanding personalities from the Slovak history often appear in the language of its representatives. Mostly, those who are connected with the process of creating a modern Slovak nation in the 19th century (Štúr, Hurban, Hodža), the politicians of Slovak nationality in the first Czechoslovak Republic (Hlinka, but also Štefánik), or representatives of the totalitarian regime of the Slovak Republic (1939–1945) during the Second World War (Tiso, Tuka).

"*Šaňo Mach, our leader, protect us from the Jews*" (Richard Boleček 2016, source Benčík 2017).

"*The anniversary of the birth of one of the greatest sons of the Slovak nation who was also the president of the first Slovak Republic, Mr. Msgr. ThDr. Joseph Tiso, sympathizers and members of the People's Party Our Slovakia have not forgotten this year either*" (ĽSNS 2018).

Christianity plays an extremely important role in the language of right-wing extremists. Emphasizing the importance of Christianity for the life of Slovaks forms an integral part of the political communication of the Slovak right-wing extremists. Right-wing extremists often use religious terms (Bible terms) that are more typical for the Catholic Church (such as the Ten Commandments, the culture of death, the Son of God, revelation):

"*The party wants to thank God in the first place*" (ĽSNS 2016).

"*Slovakia will belong to us again, it will be Slovak and Christian*" (Marian Kotleba, source Vražda 2017).

"*Christmas is one of the most important holidays of the year. During these days we commemorate the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ - the Son of God*" (ĽSNS 2018).

God and the Catholic Church are an important part of the extremists' political communication. An explanation for this communication strategy can be found not only in the religious character of a large part of the Slovak population, primarily in the countryside (Bunčák 2001, Csanyi 2020). Religion is important for extremists because through religion they try to find connections with the first Slovak Republic (1939 - 1945). The head of this undemocratic and anti-Semitic state was the Catholic priest Jozef Tiso as a successor of another Catholic priest, Andrej Hlinka. The Slovak extremists started their program with anti-Semitism, however with a lesser voter response (Kluknavská 2012; Kluknavská and Smolík 2016), besides denying the Holocaust by presenting a positive image of the fascist

state, known as the Slovak State, which existed during the Second World War and its leader Jozef Tiso (Just 2019). However, right-wing extremists were unable to mobilize voters with these issues and were therefore on the periphery of the party system (Kucharčík and Řádek 2012).

The connection between the present and the "war republic" is evident not only at a symbolic level, but we can also identify some contexts in the language area. The motto *For God and for the Nation* was the central motto of the Slovak form of fascism of the first Slovak Republic (Szabó 2017), and it is similar to the present official greeting of the right-wing extremists „*Na stráž!*" (On Guard!) (Sokolovič 2009).

Among the historical personalities, whose merits for the development of the Slovak nation are most emphasized by the extremists, is the President of the first Slovak State in the foreground. Jozef Tiso was not only the head of the state, but he was awarded the title of a *vodca* (in German Führer) by the parliamentary resolution of 1942. The Slovak right-wing extremists celebrate this state formation as the top of the process of forming the Slovak nation. But the regime of this Slovak republic (1939–1945) was unequivocally totalitarian. All organizations that did not stand close to the ruling HSĽS were dissolved at the end of the 1930s. The HSĽS took its cue from the Nazi organizations of Hitler's Germany and established its own organizations with a totalitarian management system, including Hlinka's Guard and Hlinka's Youth (Sokolovič 2009). And besides we would like to mention that this state had sent thousands of innocent people, its own citizens, to death only because of their religion or ethnicity. The extremists plunge the negative aspects of the totalitarian regime of the first Slovak Republic into insignificance. As a rule, they highlight the economic and cultural achievements of this period´s policy**.**

Extremists doubtfully see the role of the government of the first Slovak Republic in the liquidation of European Jews during World War II. During the existence of the Slovenská pospolitosť (Slovak Brotherhood) they took over in the modified form some symbols and uniforms of the clerical-fascist organizations of the war period. The symbols and uniforms were almost identical, but the extremists had to change them because wearing the symbols of the clerical-fascist regime was against the law. However, this form of politics did not provide a sufficient response for the right-wing extremists from the Slovak voters (Kluknavská 2012). They were on the edge of public interest because of the voter preferences, which were below half of one percent.

Undisguised positive relationship of the ĽSNS to the first Slovak Republic is one of the decisive reasons, why several authors characterize this party as extremist, fascist or neo-Nazi (Drábik 2019). The regime of the Slovak Republic between 1939 and 1945 discriminated against groups based on political, national, religious or sexual criteria. The regime was responsible for the physical liquidation of the part of its population (Kamenec 2020). Thousands of inhabitants of the Slovak Republic lived during this period not only in oppression, but they were directly discriminated by the state power and were worried about their lives. Defending this totalitarian regime means to call into question the principles that are fundamental for the current democratic system of liberal democracy and open society.

6 THE NATION AND ITS ENEMIES

Right-wing extremists determine nationality by blood, not by birthplace, residency or citizenship. Thus, in the perspective of right-wing extremism, the category of the nation does not include immigrants, members of other races and, in some cases, representatives of autochthonous minorities, because these "foreign" groups could disrupt the ethnic homogeneity of the majority community, disrupt "homogeneous demos" (Wodak 2016). Social groups, which stand outside a homogeneous nation, are usually attributed responsibility for various social problems by extremists. According to Uwe Backes (1989, 305), "extremist groups create an image of the enemy, into which they project all kinds of negative qualities." The image of the enemy should serve to strengthen the group of individuals and to emphasize their missionary role. The extremist parties use this strategy for developing elitist thinking among their followers. They portray themselves as people with a special mission (for example, to protect a nation, a national identity) who are surrounded by enemies against whom it is necessary to fight relentlessly.

The category of enemies, which in the mental world of extremists threaten a nation, is particularly wide. In this context, it is important whether they are persons, the groups of persons or organizations within the state, or persons or organizations based abroad. Alternatively, they are entire states. The list of enemies is virtually infinite, usually based on the current internal or foreign policy situation. By way of illustration, in the language of right-wing extremists, Romani people and migrants (i.e., immigrants, refugees, Muslims, Africans, which means the people of other skin colour or race) are currently considered to be the most important enemies, while the topic of international migration and the integration of immigrants the Slovak political parties, including nationalist, ignored for a long time. Many Slovak citizens did not have direct experience with migrants from culturally different countries (Letavajová, Chlebcová Hečková, Krno, Bošelová 2020). It is the immediate absence with immigrants that we can consider as the reason why political parties did not articulate this topic before 2015. In the past, far-right parties were building their policy primarily on anti-Hungarian propaganda, in which Hungarian was a threat to the identity of the Slovak nation.

Before the Slovak extremists discovered the topic of international migration, the members of the Romany minority were considered to be the biggest violator of the idea of a homogeneous nation, whose extremists address particularly by derogatory terms such as parasites, Gypsies, Gypsy terrorists, Gypsy extremists, asocial, Indians, black slams (settlements where socially excluded Romani people live). In this context, it should be added that the term parasite (pl. Parasites) was used by Adolf Hitler (2000) to mark Jews in his book *Mein Kampf* (see also Bein 1965). In Hitler's logic, the term parasites referred to the groups of people that, like its original biological significance, have a detrimental effect on the organism, in this case the German nation (Schmitz-Berning 1988). Ötsch and Horaczek (2017) allege that if a politician wants to show hatred to other people or groups, he usually uses an expression from the animal kingdom. In the sense, the others are not "the right" people (Ötsch and Horaczek 2017, 61).

"*We will make an order with the thieves in ties, as well as with the parasites in the settlements*" (ĽSNS 2016).

"We will remove the advantages of gypsy breadwinners over decent people. We give nothing free of charge to the parasites who refuse to work - no houses, benefits, or allowances" (ĽSNS 2016).

The Slovak extremists see Romani people as an important enemy. At this point, we can emphasize that thanks to the shift of content priorities from the glorification of the undemocratic first Slovak Republic and its political representatives to the criticism of the Romany minority their electorate has been extended in parliamentary elections (Kluknavská and Smolík 2016) and they overcome the quorum needed to join the National Council. In addition to migrants, the international organizations, primarily the European Union and NATO, are considered important external enemies. International organizations are represented as entities that not only threaten the sovereignty of the Slovak nation, but even bring it to bankruptcy, i.e., to a definitive demise. The European Union is presented in the language of extremists as an institution through which Slovakia is losing its national nature, sovereignty, autonomy and the domestic politics is subordinated to the politics of the EU, from which come not only harsh and national sovereignty restricting regulations, but even migrants. The European Union is so presented in the logic friend vs. enemy, i.e., in the sense of we – good Slovakian, and the others, the European, who represent the threat of cultural identity, traditions, society, Christianity, and also security. Right-wing extremists often use the term "*Brussels dictate*" in the context of the European Union. The Slovak extremists regularly use the term *European Union* with various negative-sounding attributes, such as *rotten* or *perverse*.

"*The **dictates of Brussels** are liquidating Slovakia*" (ĽSNS 2015).

"*The EU is against God and the nation. The EU openly supports homosexuals and transgender people and shows them as role models for young people. He promotes mutual marriages of these **perverts***" (ĽSNS 2019).

"*The EU is gradually pushing these **perversions** towards us in Slovakia*" (ĽSNS 2019).

"*We put Slovak interests above **the dictates of Brussels** and therefore reject restrictions on the sovereignty of the member states of the European Union*" (ĽSNS 2020).

In addition to the European Union, the criticism of other international organizations and institutions of West European or American origin appears in the language of extremists. This criticism is primarily directed against NATO. This defensive grouping of sovereign states is presented as an *aggressive, criminal organization* headed by the United States of America, and the member states are just "*personal servants in the hands of the Americans.*" The extremists attribute to the North Atlantic Alliance not only military interventions into the sovereignty of national state, but they also see behind its activities the reasons for the emergence of a migration crisis in 2015. They do not take into account a number of factors that would be more difficult to explain to the public, in this case extremists also use a simple template to justify global problems. They do not take into consideration a number of factors that would be more difficult to explain to the public, they only need black and white vision of the world and a certain factor to which they then attribute the existence of current domestic or worldwide crisis situations.

"*Slovakia has been a member of the NATO **criminal organization** for more than 11 years*" (ĽSNS 2016).

"*NATO is a **criminal and terrorist organization** that serves primarily as an instrument of **American expansionism**. … Being a member of NATO means being an ally of assassins!*" (ĽSNS 2016).

7 Conclusion

By analysing the language of Slovak right-wing extremists, we found that in the political communication of the ĽSNS dominate two language figures: synecdoche and topos. The synecdoche (latin *totum pro parte* – the whole for a part), which is a word or phrase in which a part of something is used to represent a whole or conversely a whole is used to represent a part of something, appears in the case of right-wing extremism especially in using the word nation (Riesigl 2011). Of course, it is not related to all people belonging to a nation, i.e., to a community that is characterized by, among other things, a common language, a common usually bounded territory, or some common cultural specifics resulting from the local traditions. This special rhetorical figure, *totum for parte,* applies mostly to a particular socio-economic group, or more precisely electorate of a populist entity. Rarely are all the citizens of the Slovak Republic of Slovak nationality termed the nation. Extremists use this term to denote only the part of society that supports their program priorities, they consider the citizens on the other side as enemies. Extremist parties deliberately create an enemy image that reflects multiple negative features. Creating an enemy serves to strengthen cohesion within one's own group of voters or sympathizers. In view of the fact that extremists present simple proposals to defeat an enemy, such a communication strategy helps to strengthen the importance of their missionary role. Extremists thus help to build the notion that the nation is surrounded by enemies against whom it is necessary to stand out against and lead a relentless fight.

The second significant and much more significant, if not the most significant, rhetorical figure by which right-wing extremists justify their arguments or allegations, or they question the existing status quo, is the nation's topos and its version is in argumentation theory called as an *argumentum ad populum* (Riesigl 2011). This model expresses argumentation in the sense that if something is required by a nation, the majority of the nation, or at least by some socio-economic group, the extremists perceive them as the ĽSNS voters, and thus that wish should be transformed into reality. Or, on the contrary, if a nation does not like something, it cannot remain or become a reality.

In the language of the right-wing extremists, the dichotomous logic of a friend vs. an enemy comes to the fore. The spectrum of enemies of the nation is extremely wide in the case of Slovak extremists. This includes, in addition to refugees and economic migrants, Muslim migrants, regardless of the reason for leaving the country of origin, as well as members of the Romany minority and Jews, or more precisely organizations and businesses owned by Jews. However, we also find here other thinkers, supporters of the European Union and NATO, supporters of American foreign policy, as well as ruling elites of the democratic centre, Freemasons, banks and large companies with foreign (Western) capital, NGOs, as well as established media and sexual minorities. The enemies of other cultures are represented in the language of right-wing extremists in racist and xenophobic logic, and for this reason, they use a variety of negative substantives or adjectives, including vulgarisms, which are extremely numerous in the language of sympathizers of ĽSNS on the social networks.

The language of the Slovak right-wing extremists is characterized by its specific features in writing, and therefore it is important to examine it as part of the research of the political discourse (Dulebová 2013), but we also find certain specifics in the verbal level. Extremists express their views more strikingly, in a more approachable and simpler way. Their language often includes expressions taken from a military, militaristic vocabulary (Štefančík 2020). The extremist is not interested in explaining, he/she is interested in captivating, fascinating, communicating in a different way than most politicians do, laughing at their opponents, or offending them directly, for their ethnic, religious, social or racial affiliation. Extremists regularly work with the motives of threat and danger in order to cause fears among voters. Fear is considered an important trigger for political action, and it is important means of voter mobilization for extremists. As a rule, extremist formations legitimize their political goals by referring to security requirements (Wodak 2016). Every crisis creates a sense of threat and extremists can work with this sense of fear. However, behind this whole communication strategy there is no effort to help, because the nation – society is often threatened only fictitiously. The first and foremost aim of this communication tactic is to convince the voters about the threat. Regardless of whether or not the arguments they use have or do not have information value and they can be convincingly verified, irrespective of whether it is a real threat or a fictitious one.

By analysing the language of Slovak right-wing extremists, we also observed the developmental shift in the political communication of ĽSNS representatives. We wanted to compare how the communication of a non-parliamentary party differs from the communication strategies of a parliamentary party. Based on a diachronic comparison of individual statements of the representatives of this ideological spectrum, we can state that in a few years (from the election campaign in 2016 to the present) the official language of the representatives of the ĽSNS has changed significantly in terms of absolute extreme towards the acceptable middle. This phenomenon can be explained by the effort to open up to wider groups of the population. However, we cannot exclude the efforts of the party to avoid a ban on the party's activities after their experience of dissolving the party Slovak Brotherhood – the National Party. In this context, it should be noted that the Slovak courts have already condemned two party leaders for disseminating extremist content. While Milan Mazurek (the party's former vice-chairman) received only a financial fine and lost his mandate, Marian Kotleba, the party's leader, was sentenced to four years and four months of imprisonment for founding, supporting, and promoting a movement that suppressed human rights. If the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic confirms this judgment of the Slovak Specialized Court, Kotleba will not only be imprisoned for more than four years but he will also lose the mandate of a member of the Slovak Parliament. The accusation was based, besides other things, on the racist symbolism of the number 1488, which Marian Kotleba used at a party public event (Kyseľ 2010). The diachronic comparison therefore shows that the representatives of the ĽSNS not only replaced uniforms with green T-shirts but also modified their communication strategies. However, the extremists still use many lexical units that incite ethnic, racial, or religious hatred. Besides, if there is an attempt by official party representatives to change the style of political communication, this is absent from sympathizers and ordinary members of the party. Therefore, it is still appropriate for us to continue to label this party formation as a right-wing extremist.

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Koncept naroda v jeziku slovaške skrajne desnice

Cilj te študije je ugotoviti, kako slovaški desničarski skrajneži dojemajo izraz narod. Predvidevamo, da je narod ključna komunikacijska kategorija slovaških desničarskih skrajnežev. Pri raziskovanju jezika desničarskih skrajnežev izhajamo iz hipoteze, da ima tovrstni politični jezik posebne značilnosti, zlasti na leksikalni ravni. Ker politična komunikacija skrajnežev temelji na izzivanju strahu pred (pogosto izmišljenim) sovražnikom, predpostavljamo obstoj dihotomne definicije v smislu prijatelj proti sovražniku, natančneje mi proti njim ali mi proti drugi. To pomeni, da skrajneži narod dojemajo kot homogeno skupino ljudi, ki jim grozijo zunanji ali domači sovražniki. V tem kontekstu razpravljamo o tem, kdo je v perspektivi desnega ekstremizma, ki je označen kot sovražnik države, in kakšno komunikacijo označujejo te družbene skupine.

Ključne besede: narod; desni ekstremizem; Slovaška; politična komunikacija; sovražnik; ĽSNS.