Uniting the Enemy: Politics and the Convergence of Nationalisms in Slovakia

Kevin Deegan-Krause*

Although aggregate popular support for particular nationalisms in Slovakia showed little change during the 1990s, relationships between nationalisms changed significantly. This article uses categories of nationalism derived from the relational typologies of Brubaker and Hechter to analyze surveys of postcommunist Slovak public opinion and demonstrate that popular nationalisms against Czechs, Hungarians, the West, and nonnationalist Slovaks bore little relationship to one another at the time of Slovakia's independence but converged over time. With the encouragement of nationalist political elites, a large share of the Slovak population became convinced that Slovakia faced threats from all sides and that the country's enemies were actually working together to undermine its sovereignty. The example of Slovakia thus provides an important case study for understanding how the complex and interactions between distinct nationalisms creates opportunities for the influence of political leadership.

Keywords: nationalisms; ideological coherence; minority groups; political parties; Slovakia

Out of many nationalisms in Slovakia during the 1990s, political leaders helped to shape one dominant combination. At the beginning of the decade, Slovakia's nationalists shared a sense of fear for the future of the Slovak nation, but they disagreed about the real source of the threat. Some saw Czechoslovakia as dominated by Czechs and therefore sought independence, some worried about Hungary and Hungarians living in southern Slovakia, and some feared that European integration would undermine Slovakia's culture. These national desires and fears persisted

651

through the decade, but the relationships between them gradually changed. By the end of the same decade, Slovakia's nationalists were more likely to see the threats to their country coming from all sides at the same time, and many speculated that enemies of the Slovak nation were actively working together in their attempt to undermine Slovakia's sovereignty.

The development of nationalist attitudes in Slovakia offers an important reminder that even the most integrated nationalist ideology contains multiple strands. In fact, there are many nationalisms, each with a different bête noir and with a different kind of attraction for voters and policy makers. The relationships between these nationalisms are complex and fluid, and some forms of nationalism may overlap others in full or in part. Some combinations of nationalisms emerge more frequently than others, but the patterns are rarely obvious or easy to explain. Nor is it always clear how and why certain nationalisms emerge. The demographic mix of minorities and majorities obviously plays a role in the development of nationalisms, as do historical and international circumstances, but rapid changes in the interrelationships between nationalisms also point to the strong influence of politics and the decisions of political leaders.

Slovakia offers a useful case for illuminating the development of multiple nationalisms. Slovakia offers a rich mixture of ethnic minorities and the challenges of new statehood, as well as a wealth of survey data obtained during the first decade of postcommunism. Opinion surveys document a broad range of popular attitudes over time and provide evidence for a better understanding of public attitudes on national questions and their relationship to the attitudes of political elites. When understood in terms of competing, relational nationalisms, Slovak public opinion data demonstrate the complexity of connections among a variety of different nationalisms and the process by which that complexity gave way to relative simplicity over the course of the 1990s. Surveys show that a superficial stability of opinion on national questions in Slovakia actually concealed a major shift in the relationship between nationalisms. Furthermore, the relational typology of nationalisms reveals not only the process by

which Slovakia's nationalisms converged but also the influence exerted by political parties in promoting the convergence.

Nationalisms and Slovakia

The most common typologies of nationalisms array them in opposition to one another as mutually exclusive alternatives: Western against Eastern, civic against ethnic, inclusive against exclusive.[1] These schemes tend to differentiate nationalisms according to the ways in which nations understand their own boundaries, particularly on questions of who can be a member and how membership may be acquired. While these distinctions may prove useful in some circumstances, they are not always the most useful tools for understanding the multiplicity of nationalisms or their interactions. Without an understanding of how nations view their position relative to other national groups, it is difficult to understand the complex and changing interactions between nationalist attitudes or the integral role of political leadership.

Relational nationalisms

In the past decade new typologies, particularly those of Brubaker and Hechter, have begun to identify nationalisms as interconnected elements in a "relational nexus."[2] Although these relational typologies differ significantly in their methods and approaches, they ultimately derive similar sets of categories. Hechter, echoing Gellner, defines nationalism as "collective action designed to render the boundaries of the nation congruent with those of its governance unit."[3] Brubaker, by contrast, attempts to "reframe" the nation as "practical category, institu-

---

1. Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1944); Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*, 1st American ed. (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1994); Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991).
2. Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Hechter, *Containing Nationalism*.
3. Hechter, *Containing Nationalism*, 7.

tionalized form and contingent event."[4] Yet the two typologies bear notable similarities. Both authors identify a "state-building" or "nationalizing" form of nationalism characteristic of majority groups who seek "to assimilate or otherwise incorporate culturally-distinctive territories"[5] and use "state power to promote the specific (and previously inadequately served) interests of the core nation."[6] Both authors also identify a "peripheral" or "minority" nationalism characteristic of "a culturally-distinctive territory" that "resists incorporation into an expanding state,"[7] often by demanding "state recognition of [its] distinct ethnocultural nationality, and the assertion of certain collective, nationality-based cultural or political rights."[8] Finally, both also identify nationalisms characteristic of national groups with states that form common cause with kindred national populations across state borders, either by merger or seizure of territory or, less overtly, by asserting the right to "monitor the condition, promote the welfare, support the activities and institutions, assert the rights, and protect the interests" of their ethnonational kin.[9]

Although these relational typologies provide a useful framework for comprehending other nationalisms, they are limited in scope. Hechter defines his nationalisms in terms of territorial control and therefore cannot easily incorporate late-twentieth-century phenomena such as the "virtual" nationalism of Hungary's Status Law designed to benefit Hungarians living abroad[10] or cultural forms of globalization that affect the processes of cultural reproduction without the formal change of borders. Brubaker's event-based understanding of nationalism offers greater potential for handling newer forms of nationalism but does not deal explicitly with nationalisms outside the triadic nexus. It is therefore necessary to introduce further distinctions. Brubaker's attention to the role of external minority homelands suggests an important categorical distinction between the nation-

4. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 7.
5. Hechter, *Containing Nationalism*, 15.
6. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 5.
7. Hechter, *Containing Nationalism*, 15.
8. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 6.
9. Ibid.
10. Zsuzsa Csergo and James M. Goldgeier, "Nationalist Strategies and European Integration," *Perspectives on Politics* 2:1(2004): 1-17.

alism of minorities that can look to the support of another state and the nationalism of those that cannot. Separating Hechter's notion of peripheral nationalism from strictly territorial concerns makes it possible to explore new possibilities. Just as minorities may resist incorporation by a state-building majority, so might even majority groups engage in a form of peripheral nationalism based on resistance to the increasing power of "political, economic, cultural frameworks at a regional or global level."[11] In addition, any useful relational typology must account for the rarely discussed phenomenon of nationalist dynamics *within* an otherwise homogeneous national group. Recent scholarship on nationalism shows not only the heterogeneity of national feeling within particular groups[12] but also the ways in which the relationships between conationals may come to resemble the relationships between majority and minority national groups.[13] Postcommunist Europe offers numerous examples of leaders who lament the insufficient nationalism of their conationals and use the absence of national feeling as the basis for the same sort of political exclusion and cultural assimilation normally used by state-building nationalists against *other* national groups.[14] This state-building nationalism against conationals in turn produces expressions of resistance that are akin to peripheral nationalism among the excluded members of the majority.

Unlike the categories of ethnic and civic nationalism, these relational nationalisms do not necessarily stand in opposition to one another. Nationalisms differ not only in their response to the question, "Who are *we?*" but also in their understanding of the threat posed by "*them*." Since most nations face more than one

11. Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. Mcworld* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996).
12. Dmitry Gorenburg, "Not with One Voice: An Explanation of Intragroup Variation in Nationalist Sentiment," *World Politics* 53:1(2000): 115-42.
13. Valere P. Gagnon, "Serbia's Road to War," in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); Vesna Pusić, "Croatia at the Crossroads," *Journal of Democracy* 9:1(1998): 111-24; Zsuzsa Csergo, "Language and Institutional Legitimacy: A Comparative Study of Romania and Slovakia" (Doctoral diss., George Washington University, Washington, DC, 2000); Sharon Fisher, "The Rise and Fall of National Movements in Slovakia and Croatia," *Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs* 1:2(2000): 12-23; and Kevin Deegan Krause, "Accountability and Political Party Competition in Slovakia and the Czech Republic" (Doctoral diss., University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN, 2000).
14. Gagnon, "Serbia's Road"; Fisher, "Rise and Fall"; Krause, "Accountability and Political Party Competition."

"them," a wide range of nationalisms may emerge within a single country at a single time.[15] Unlike the well-defined mutual exclusivity of civic and ethnic nationalisms, the connections among relational nationalisms remain fluid. A regionally concentrated minority, for example, may engage in peripheral nationalism against a majority while at the same time pursuing state-building efforts against an even smaller minority within its own territory. The peripheral and state-building nationalisms need not coincide.

A relational typology also offers insight into the processes by which particular clusters of nationalisms appear and disappear. To the extent that nationalisms depend on external threat as well as self-definition, changes in international or domestic circumstances may elevate the role of some nationalisms and diminish the role of others and thus change the overall pattern of nationalist sentiments. Furthermore, since such circumstances are subject to multiple interpretations, the prevailing combination of nationalisms will depend heavily on public perceptions of national threat and on the efforts of the leaders who can best shape those perceptions.[16]

To date, empirical studies have offered little help in defining the most likely patterns of affinity among various nationalisms or the ways in which those patterns might change over time. Part of the difficulty derives simply from the scarcity of appropriate data, survey data that permit a comprehensive, cross-national exploration of relationships over time. Most surveys conducted across

15. Brubaker pays only indirect attention to the possibility that a single nation may occupy several positions on his relational nexus depending on the nature of the interaction. His 1996 *Nationalism Reframed* alludes to two sets of relational nationalisms that emerged in the conflicts between Serbs and Croats: a dyadic account of minority Croats against nationalizing Serbs and a triadic account of nationalizing Croats, minority Serbs within Croatia and Serb external homeland (see Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 69-75). In the interest of demonstrating the utility of the triadic approach, Brubaker compares the triad favorably to the dyad rather than acknowledging that both sets of nationalisms existed simultaneously and played separate, distinct roles.
16. Snyder acknowledges the limitations of existing "civic" and "ethnic" categories and emphasizes the potential for sharp alterations in nationalism as the result of political leadership. See Jack L. Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: Norton, 2000). Snyder's reclassification, however, responds to the inadequacies of existing dichotomies simply by adding new, mutually exclusive categories—"revolutionary" and "counterrevolutionary"—rather than looking to overlapping, relational categories of nationalism.

postcommunist Europe simply did not ask the sort of questions about national issues that could allow for differentiation of attitudes according to specific relational typologies described above. A few studies make use of the limited available data. Csergo and Goldgeir suggest distinct patterns of alliance and competition among four relational nationalisms—"traditional," "sub-state," "transsovereign" and "protectionist"—on the basis of elite-level public statements and legislative efforts.[17] Miller, White, and Heywood, using opinion data from their 1993 multicountry survey, find only weak links between "cultural," "centralist," and "external" nationalisms and note that the relationship differed substantially in strength depending on country and region.[18] Mungiu-Pippidi's analysis of surveys from six postcommunist countries finds relatively strong relationships between anti-Western, antineighbor and antiminority attitudes during the late 1990s and early 2000s but also finds a relatively high degree of regional variation.[19] These survey-based works, however, depend on a single survey for each country and therefore provide only a snapshot of the region with little basis for analyzing how the relationships between nationalisms changed over time. Efforts to find linkages among relational nationalisms have also at times been too quick to build typologies on the basis of empirical affinities. The "external" nationalism of Miller, White, and Heywood, for example, assumes an inherent link between irredentism and peripheral nationalism against the West.[20] Similarly, the category of "protectionist" nationalism introduced by Csergo and Goldgeier (along with "traditional," "sub-state," and "transsovereign" nationalisms) implicitly links a form of state-building nationalism (against immigrants) with a form of peripheral nationalism (against the forces of global integration).[21] Where data are available, it is useful to disaggregate

17. Csergo and Goldgeier, "Nationalist Strategies," 3-9.
18. William L. Miller, Stephen White, and Paul Heywood, *Values and Political Change in Postcommunist Europe* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998).
19. Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, "Milosevic Voters: Explaining Grassroots Nationalism in Post-Communist Europe," in Ivan Krastev and Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, eds., *Nationalism after Communism: Lessons Learned* (Budapest, Hungary: Central European University Press, 2004).
20. Miller, White, and Heywood, *Values and Political Change in Postcommunist Europe*.
21. Csergo and Goldgeier, "Nationalist Strategies and European Integration," 3-9.

the categories further and thereby determine how particular clusters of nationalism form and dissolve over time.

Slovakia's nationalisms

Fortunately, public opinion surveys conducted in individual countries help to clarify the process of change in particular countries and reveal underlying patterns that apply across the region. Slovakia's extensive reservoir of opinion surveys offers nearly ideal conditions for studying the relationships between nationalisms and their changes over time: the surveys asked a wide variety of nation-related questions and used similar or identical questions in surveys repeated at regular intervals over the course of nearly a decade.

Surveys of national attitudes in Slovakia are particularly useful because of the exceptionally wide variety of nationalisms that emerged in Slovakia in the postcommunist period. Slovaks expressed almost every possible variant of the relational nationalisms described above. The following list identifies the full range of the particular Slovak national antagonisms explored in survey research during the 1990s according both to the abstract categories and to the specific national antagonist:

- *Peripheral nationalism against a domestic majority: Czechs.* Some Slovaks viewed the position of Slovaks within the common Czechoslovak state as peripheral and subordinate to the position of Czechs. Some of these Slovaks sought a formal renegotiation of the relationship between the two republics or even the dissolution of the common Czechoslovak state.[22]
- *Peripheral nationalism against regional or global institutions: The West.* Some Slovaks believed that Slovakia's territorial and cultural integrity stood at risk in the face of closely interrelated threats from the European Union, NATO, and their member states as well as by their foreign economic actors.[23]
- *Peripheral nationalism against a foreign state: Hungary.* Some Slovaks sought to combat what they perceived to be a threat of

22. Carol Skalnik Leff, *National Conflict in Czechoslovakia: The Making and Remaking of a State, 1918-1987* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); and Carol Skalnik Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation versus State* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997).
23. Dušan Slobodník, "Prečo Európa kritizuje súčasnú Slovenskú vládu," *Slovensko do toho!*, 25 July 1998.

Hungarianization faced by Slovaks in the Hungarian-majority areas near the country's southern border and by Slovaks still living in Hungary.[24]

- *State-building nationalism against a homeland minority: Hungarians.* Some Slovaks supported state-building efforts to expand the use of Slovak as an official language in the realms of administration, education, and culture primarily at the expense of offerings in the Hungarian language.[25]
- *State-building nationalism against a nonhomeland minority: Roma.* Some Slovaks saw the country's large Roma population as a barrier to an integrated Slovak state. Proposed solutions ranged from the assimilation of Roma into Slovak society through language and cultural instruction to the formal dissimilation of Roma and their isolation away from Slovaks and other groups.[26]
- *State-building nationalism against conationals: Nonnationalist Slovaks.* Some Slovaks argued that the process of building of a truly *Slovak* state faced its greatest danger from those members of the Slovak group who were insufficiently conscious of or loyal to the Slovak nation. These suspicions of disloyalty led to calls for a variety of measures that ranged from the increase of national consciousness to withdrawal of "anti-Slovak Slovaks" from public life.[27]

Survey evidence about the complex interactions between these six sets of attitudes in Slovakia provides the basis for a better understanding of how nationalisms interact and why they cluster into some patterns rather than into others.

Stability and convergence

On the surface, postcommunist Slovakia appears to reaffirm the conventional understandings of nationalism as unitary and stable. Overall support for nationalist positions changed little over time, and Slovakia's nationalists exhibited support for a

24. "Program Slovenskej Národnej Strany" ([Bratislava?]: Slovenská Národna Strana, 1995).
25. Csergo, "Language and Institutional Legitimacy."
26. See *Tlačová agentúra Slovenskej republiky*, 30 December 1996, 1546 Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). Some Slovaks also expressed resentment against other minority groups including Jews, Vietnamese, refugees from Southeastern Europe, and other immigrants from Africa and Asia; but during the 1990s, these remained relatively marginal in Slovakia's political discourse, as did general anti-immigrant sentiment of the sort employed by Jörg Haider in neighboring Austria.
27. "Prečo HZDS nepodporí kandidáta SDK," *Slovensko do toho!* 21 January 1998, http://www.hzds.sk/spravy/Spravy/3_98/HOF0301.html.

range of nationalisms that included peripheral nationalism against Czechs and the West as well as state-building nationalism against Hungarians and nonnational Slovaks. The apparent stability of Slovakia's nationalisms, however, conceals a process of continually shifting relationships culminating in the convergence of initially unrelated nationalisms during the middle of the 1990s.
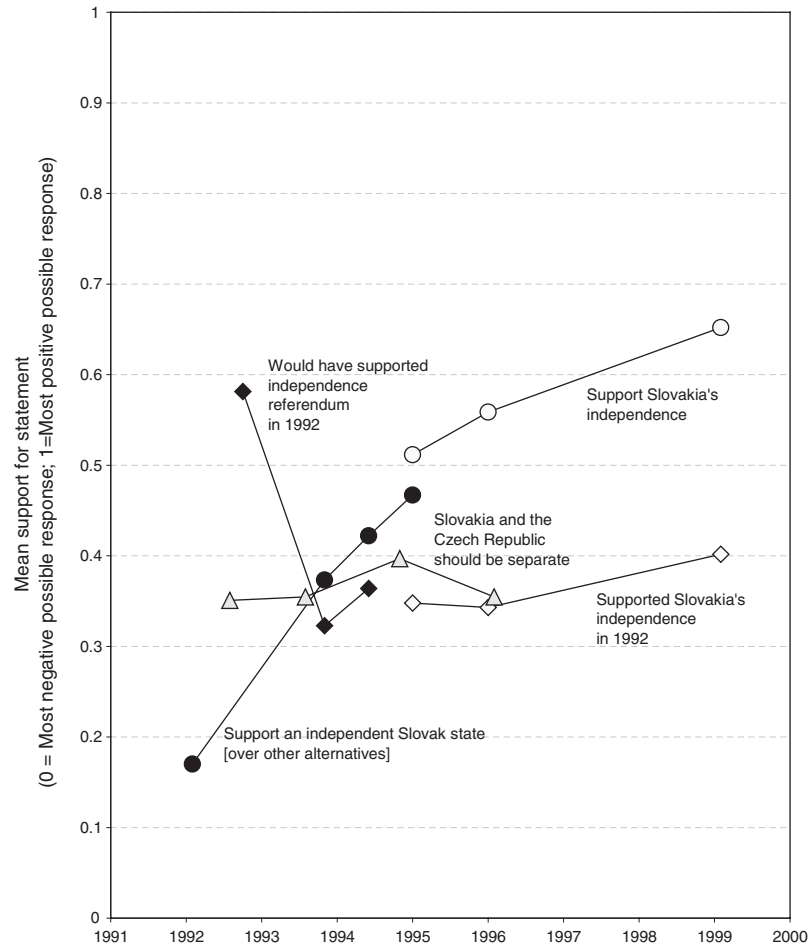
Overall stability, "The more things stay the same . . . "

Support for each of Slovakia's main nationalisms remained highly stable during the 1990s. Those that did change, furthermore, did so in a slow and stable manner and did not measurably affect the overall support for nationalist sentiments.

Peripheral nationalism against Czechs. A variety of surveys conducted in 1991 and 1992 show strong antipathy among Slovaks toward the internal structure of Czechoslovakia and toward the position of Czechs within the power structure (though not necessarily toward Czechs themselves). These questions, however, disappeared from surveys after Slovakia became independent, leaving only questions on Slovakia's independence as long-term indicators of the role played by anti-Czech peripheral nationalism. Even these indicators are hampered by the absence of a consistent use of particular question wording. Figure 1 reports the results of questions on Slovakia's independence from multiple surveys. In the period before the split at the end of 1992, surveys yielded apparently contradictory results. A January 1992 survey conducted by the opinion-polling firm FOCUS shows only 13 percent of respondents supporting an independent state over other options, while a survey by the same company in September of the same year shows that more than 50 percent of likely participants in a referendum on Slovakia's independence would have voted in favor.[28] Accordingly, surveys conducted dur-

28. The discrepancy can be resolved to some degree by Wolchik's argument that focusing solely on those who supported Slovakia's independence ignores the significant share of the population that sought some sort of change in the position of Slovakia within Czechoslovakia, many of whom might have chosen independence in a referendum if it had been offered as the *only* alternative to the status quo. See Sharon L. Wolchik, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Post-Communist Czechoslovakia," *East European Politics and Societies* 8:1(1994): 153-88.

Figure 1. *Levels of public support for Slovakia's independence in Slovakia, 1992-99*

Mean support for statement
(0 = Most negative possible response; 1=Most positive possible response)

Would have supported independence referendum in 1992

Support Slovakia's independence

Slovakia and the Czech Republic should be separate

Supported Slovakia's independence in 1992

Support an independent Slovak state [over other alternatives]

Source: FOCUS, "Public Opinion Surveys" [computer file] (1992-2002), data results obtained by the author from FOCUS as part of a data-sharing agreement.

ing this period by the Sociological Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences show a considerable increase in support for a yes vote on such a referendum. FOCUS surveys show that acceptance of Slovakia's statehood continued to rise after 1993 but at a more stable and moderate rate of just greater than 3 per-

centage points per year. Surveys by Central European University (CEU) between 1992 and 1996 show a smaller rate of increase (less than 1 percentage point per year).[29]

Peripheral nationalism against the West. Attitudes toward international actors show great stability. Two survey questions in particular allow for a long-term assessment of changes in Slovakia's national climate: "To what extent do you trust the European Union?" and "Should foreign firms have an open field for investment in this country?" Figure 2 presents the results obtained with these survey questions between 1990 and 1999 and shows a high degree of consistency. The range of average responses to the EU question varies by less than 10 percentage points over the decade, and the trend line for the results suggests a change of only slightly more than one-third of a percentage point per year. Results for trust in NATO show an almost identical pattern but with a higher level of distrust. Questions of foreign investment produced greater variation, with sharp upward and downward jumps between 1994 and 1996, but the overall trend shows a gradual decline in opposition to foreign investment at a rate of less than 2 percentage points per year.

Peripheral and state-building nationalism against Hungarians. Opinions regarding the danger posed by Hungary and the Hungarian minority in Slovakia exhibit no obvious trends, ether on peripheral nationalism questions of defending Slovaks against "Hungarianization" or on state-building nationalism questions about efforts toward uniformity and integration. Fears that Slovaks in Hungarian-majority regions of southern Slovakia might be Hungarianized did not change appreciably between 1992 and

29. The stability of retrospective views toward the split offers impressive confirmation of the importance of the question of Slovakia's independence in Slovaks' own self-understanding. Surveys suggest that Slovaks remember quite accurately how they felt at the time of the split and that their reports of their positions in 1992 are consistent regardless of significant changes in their subsequent beliefs. Retrospective questions on other types of questions do not reveal the same consistency or accuracy. The clustering of retrospective support around 35 percent offers an alternative mechanism for analyzing the widely varying results of opinion surveys conducted during the more chaotic 1992 to 1993 period. See FOCUS, "Public Opinion Surveys" [computer file] (1992-2002), data results obtained by the author from FOCUS as part of a data-sharing agreement.

Figure 2. *Levels of public opposition to Western institutions in Slovakia, 1992-99*
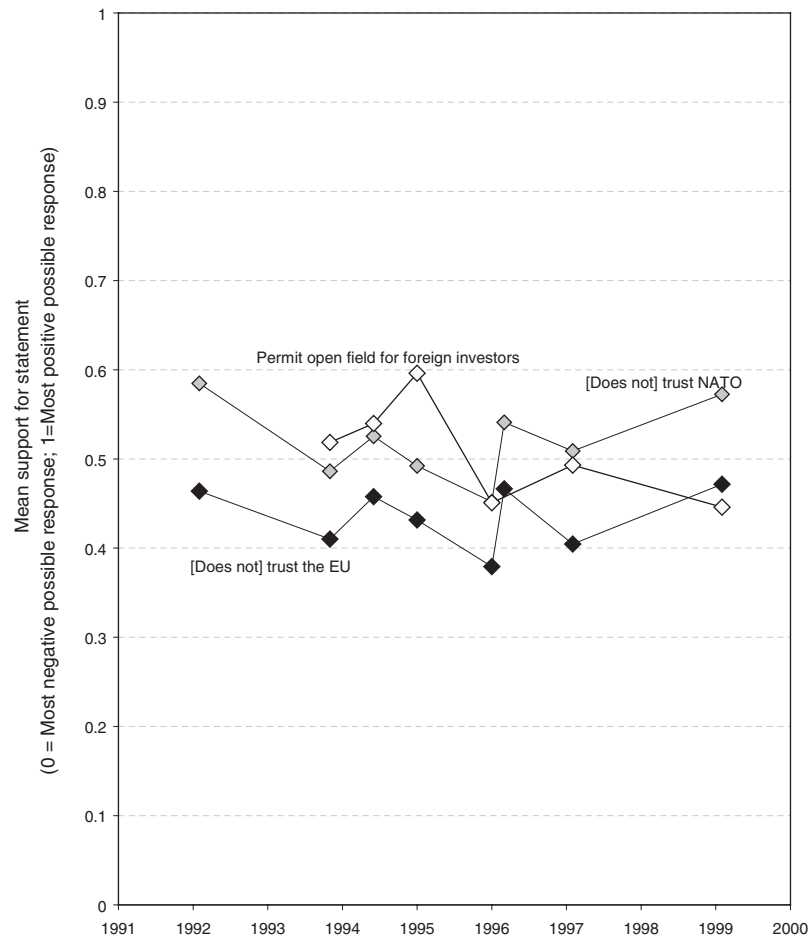
1999, though fears about Hungarian irredentism toward southern Slovakia declined by about 2 percentage points per year. Questions on the use of bilingual signs and names on official documents and on the relative privileges and burdens of Hungarians in Slovakia proved remarkably stable, with very little variation

Figure 3. *Levels of public opposition to minority rights and minority populations in Slovakia, 1992-99*
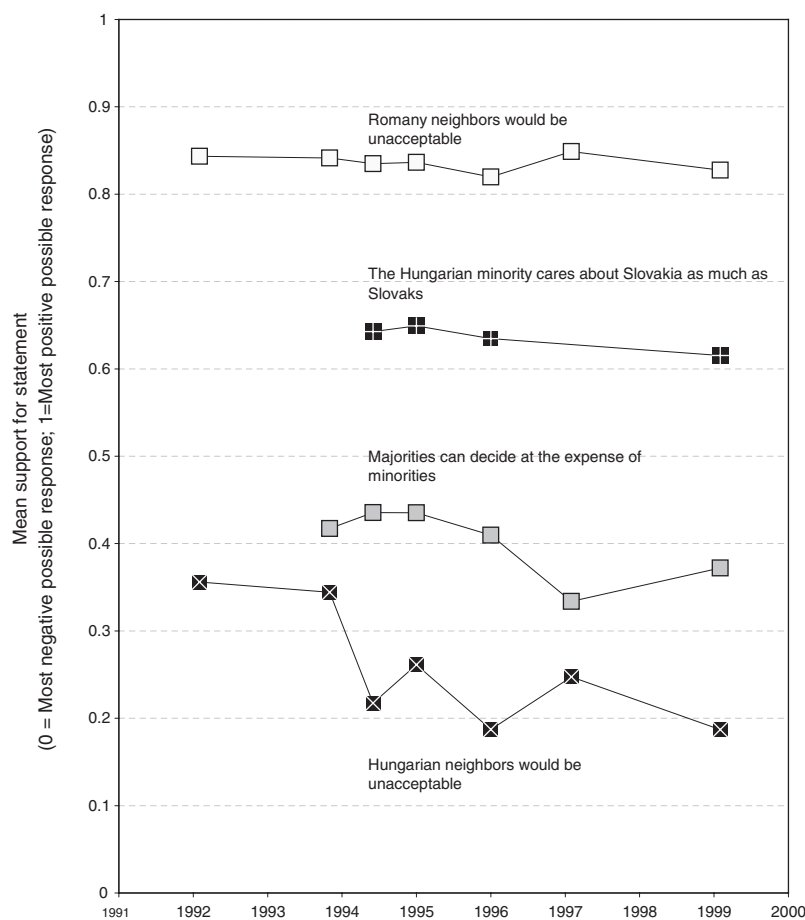
between 1992 and 1999. As Figure 3 shows, the same stability appears in more general questions concerning willingness to accept a Hungarian neighbor and whether "the majority should have the right to decide at the expense of the minority." Fewer than half of Slovak respondents expressed support for this state-

ment in surveys conducted between 1993 and 1999, and support gradually declined at a rate of about 2 percentage points per year.

State-building nationalism against Roma. Opinions of Slovaks about Roma exhibit a strong stability over time. As Figure 3 shows, Slovaks consistently and almost unanimously refused to accept Roma neighbors. On other, more complex questions, rejection of Roma was less stark but no less stable over time. In 1993, just more than half of Slovak respondents agreed that Roma should be subject to special, stricter laws; in 1999, the share of agreement was exactly the same.[30]

State-building nationalism against nonnationalist Slovaks. It is difficult to assess change in the feelings of Slovaks about the nationalism of their compatriots because surveys contain few relevant questions, and even fewer such questions appeared on multiple surveys. Three questions asked by CEU surveys between 1992 and 1996 come closest to measuring such feelings over time: (1) Is nationalism always harmful? (2) When choosing a politician, do you prefer a patriot to an expert? and (3) To what extent do you favor strengthening patriotism? As Figure 4 shows, support for patriotism dropped sharply during 1992 but thereafter remained extremely stable. The nationalism question remained at a strikingly consistent level throughout the four years of the study. A comparison of similarly phrased questions on sources of pride used on the 1995 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) survey and the 1997 FOCUS survey also shows considerable stability.[31]

Thus, in the decade of the 1990s, respondents in Slovakia exhibited a stable range of opinions on nearly all nationalism-related questions. Support for an independent Slovakia showed a slight increase, while opposition to minority rights and foreign

30. Over the same period, the number of Slovaks who agreed that "among the Roma were many decent people" declined significantly, but the change may rely heavily on the absence in 1999 of the question's prologue, "People form attitudes based on the worst Roma."
31. International Social Survey Programme, "National Identity" [computer file] (1995). http://webapp.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/ICPSR-SERIES/00124.xml.

Figure 4. *Levels of public support for nationalism and patriotism in Slovakia, 1992-96*
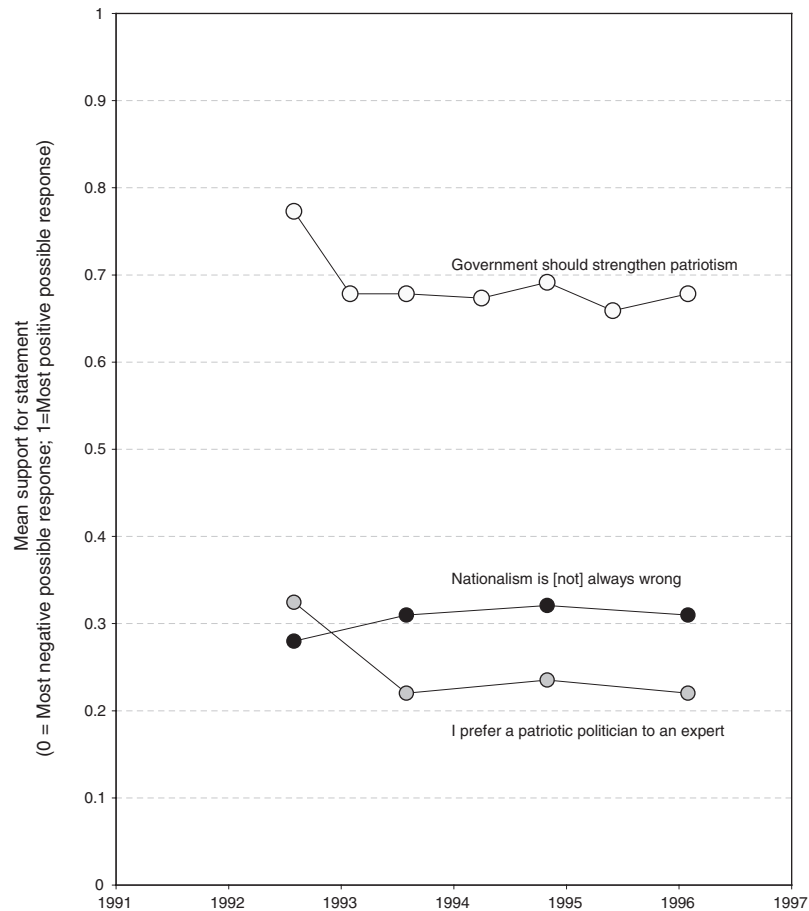
investment showed a slight decrease. The stability applies not only to the average score on survey questions but also the pattern of responses. The spread of responses, as measured by standard deviation, shows no consistent movement on any of the questions cited above during the 1990s, and responses on nearly all

questions exhibit a standard single-peak pattern. Finally, the average level of support for all nationalist statements combined remained almost unchanged during the 1990s.

Underlying convergence: " . . . the more things change."

Although the overall support for nationalist attitudes in Slovakia changed little during the 1990s, the patterns of individual opinion changed. Between 1992 and 1999, the weak, almost imperceptible relationships between nationalisms became quite robust, and Slovaks increasingly became divided into two opposing camps on national questions. These shifts call into question the static quality of nationalist attitudes detailed above. Apparent stability at the aggregate level proves to be a mirage created by equal-sized populations moving in opposite directions.

The task of measuring the relationships between opinions over time makes high demands on data sources. Not only must questions appear regularly, but they must appear regularly *together*. Questions on FOCUS and CEU surveys allow for at least a glimpse at the connections between the opinions of Slovakia's citizens over an eight-year span. Relying on only two sets of surveys limits the reliability of conclusions, but both produce clear and consistent patterns.

FOCUS surveys offer a cluster of five questions included on each of five surveys between 1993 and 1999 and a cluster of eleven questions asked (with slight variations in wording) in 1993 and again in 1999. A cluster of four questions asked on four CEU surveys between 1992 and 1996 provide a useful supplement. Table 1 presents correlations between responses on the eleven nationalism-related questions for surveys conducted in late 1993 and early 1999. Whereas just more than one-third of the correlations were statistically significant at the .01 level in 1993, more than two-thirds were statistically significant in 1999. As part of this shift, the average level of correlation across all questions more than doubled from .09 to .20. Cronbach's alpha (a measure of internal consistency) for the full set of questions likewise rose from .49 to .71. Particularly sharp increases in correlation occurred between questions on peripheral nationalism with

Table 1. *Correlations between Attitudes on Nation-Related Questions among Ethnic Slovaks in Slovakia, 1993 and 1999*

1993	Laws for Romany Should Be Stricter	Foreign Companies Should [Not] Have Open Field	[Does Not] Trust the European Union	[Does Not] Trust NATO	Disturbed by Hungarian Neighbor	Hungarians Not as Committed to Slovakia as Slovaks	Government Should Stop Hungarian Irredentism	Majority Can Rule at the Expense of the Minority	Prefer Slovakia as an Independent State
Disturbed by Romany neighbor	.20**	−.02	−.06	−.04	.15**	.06	.02	.09*	.01
Laws for Romany should be stricter		.07*	.06	.07*	.14**	.13**	.17**	.09**	−.03
Foreign companies should [not] have open field			.24**	.35**	.05	.07*	.04	−.01	−.01
[Does not] trust the European Union				.66**	.07*	.06	.07	.09*	.03
[Does not] trust NATO					.04	.04	.04	.04	−.04
Disturbed by Hungarian neighbor						.36**	.10**	.16**	.09*
Hungarians not as committed to Slovakia as Slovaks							.14**	.16**	.05
Government should stop Hungarian irredentism								.02	−.02
Majority can rule at the expense of the minority									.08*

668

1999	Laws for Romany Should Be Stricter	Foreign Companies Should [Not] Have Open Field	[Does Not] Trust the European Union	[Does Not] Trust NATO	Disturbed by Hungarian Neighbor	Hungarians Not as Committed to Slovakia as Slovaks	Hungarians Seek Autonomy for Southern Slovakia	Majority Can Rule at the Expense of the Minority	Prefer Slovakia as an Independent State
Disturbed by Romany neighbor	.06*	.03	.00	.04	.15**	.07*	.04	.09**	.04
Laws for Romany should be stricter		.04	.08**	.09**	.01	.08**	.07**	.03	.03
Foreign companies should [not] have open field			.39**	.44**	.10**	.28**	.23**	.25**	.14**
[Does not] trust the European Union				.75**	.17**	.36**	.32**	.32**	.13**
[Does not] Trust NATO					.19**	.40**	.34**	.37**	.14**
Disturbed by Hungarian neighbor						.37**	.23**	.24**	.07*
Hungarians not as committed to Slovakia as Slovaks							.56**	.38**	.20**
Hungarians seek autonomy for southern Slovakia								.38**	.17**
Majority can rule at the expense of the minority									.18**

Source: FOCUS, "Public Opinion Surveys" [computer file] (1992–2002), data results obtained by the author from FOCUS as part of a data-sharing agreement.
*Significant at *p* < .05. Significant at *p* < .01.

669

regard to the West, peripheral and state-building nationalism with regard to Hungarians, and peripheral nationalism with regard to Czechs. Questions involving Roma, on the other hand, show little positive—and sometimes even negative—change in correlation with other questions. In fact, *all* nine of the statistically insignificant correlations in the 1999 survey involve Roma. When these questions are excluded, the change in average correlation from 1993 to 1999 nearly triples—from .11 to .29—and Cronbach's alpha in 1999 rises from .71 to .77.

An alternate method for calculating the degree of coherence of opinions on nationalism questions involves a summation for each individual respondent of the number of answers that fall on the nationalist side of the population mean (out of the ten questions). Between 1993 and 1999, the distribution of these patterns shifted by a small but noticeable degree away from a cluster in the center of the scale toward the extremes of "all nationalist" or "no nationalist" statements (and in particular toward the nationalist extreme).

Table 2, based on a smaller cluster of questions, shows that the changes between the 1993 and 1999 surveys were not the result of survey anomalies but were, rather, the product of a sustained process by which various nationalisms became more internally coherent and, at the same time, more closely linked with other nationalisms. Cronbach's alpha shows a steady rise between 1994 and 1999, as does each individual correlation. Whereas only five of the ten correlations were statistically significant in 1993, all ten had become significant by 1999.

Although there are no consistently conducted surveys that include questions about feelings toward "Czechoslovaks" or "anti-Slovak Slovaks" or other manifestations of state-building nationalism against conationals,[32] CEU surveys from the same period include questions about patriotism ("Support for the goal of strengthening patriotism" and "In the case of a political leader I

32. The October 1993 FOCUS survey included the question, "The Slovak Republic is a young state and therefore people should not criticize its representatives?" Answers on this question exhibited above-average correlations with answers on all of the five questions except "trust in the European Union." A similar question on a 1997 FOCUS survey showed similarly high levels of correlation with nationalist questions despite the absence of the prefatory clause about the youth of the Slovak state. See FOCUS, "Public Opinion Surveys."

Table 2. *Correlations between Responses on Nation-Related Questions in Slovakia on FOCUS Surveys, 1993–99*

	Date of Survey						
	October 1993	May 1994	December 1994	December 1995	October 1997	January 1999
Disturbed by Hungarian neighbor and rejects open field for foreign investment	.05	.04	.15**	.04	.11**	.10**
Does not trust EU and disturbed by Hungarian neighbor	.07*	.04	.15**	.07	.24**	.17**
Does not trust EU and rejects open field for foreign investment	.24**	.25**	.35**	.35**	.43**	.39**
Believes majority can rule at the expense of minority and disturbed by Hungarian neighbor	.16**	.16**	.16**	.19**	.22**	.24**
Believes majority can rule at the expense of minority and rejects open field for foreign investment	−.01	.05*	.08**	.13**	.23**	.25**
Believes majority can rule at the expense of minority and does not trust EU	.09*	.07**	.15**	.24**	.33**	.32**

(continued)

671

Table 2 (continued)

Prefers independent Slovakia and disturbed by Hungarian neighbor	.09*	.14**	.13**	.14**	.16**	.07*
Prefers independent Slovakia and rejects open field for foreign investment	−.01	.04	.04*	.19**	.23**	.14**
Prefers independent Slovakia and does not trust EU	.03	.03	.08*	.17**	.19**	.13**
Prefers independent Slovakia and believes majority can rule at the expense of minority	.08*	.10**	.20**	.21**	.17**	.18**
Cronbach's alpha for five-variable set	.26	.29	.39	.47	.59	.57

Source: FOCUS, "Public Opinion Surveys" [computer file] (1992–2002), data results obtained by the author from FOCUS as part of a data-sharing agreement.

*Significant at $p < .05$. Significant at $p < .01$.

prefer a strong patriot to an expert") that allow for some approximation. Unfortunately, the CEU surveys include reference only to one other particular nationalism—a question about the split of Czechoslovakia—but change in correlation corresponds to those obtained for other nationalisms. Between 1992 and 1996, correlations between the Czechoslovakia question and the patriotism questions jumped dramatically, in the case of "patriot versus expert" from .07 to .21, and in the case of "strengthening patriotism" from .17 to .30.

Beyond general conclusions about an increase in overall coherence among various nationalisms in Slovakia, the results of these and other tests yield more specific findings on the changing relationships between Slovaks' nationalisms. First, the process of convergence depended more on the identity of the national adversary than on whether the nationalism was peripheral or state-building. Although most of Slovakia's nationalisms began the 1990s with weak or nonexistent relationships to one another, questions tapping state-building nationalism against Hungarians and peripheral nationalism against Hungary began the decade with close connections. The interrelationships between questions tapping these two nationalisms were among the strongest in the FOCUS set between 1992 and 1999, and factor analysis of the surveys reveals nearly identical patterns of response for any questions using the word "Hungarian," regardless of the specific subject or wording of the question. Most Slovaks simply did not make distinctions between state-building and peripheral nationalism and viewed resistance to irredentism and Hungarianization as integrally related to the extension of Slovak control over the territory of the Slovak Republic.[33] State-building and peripheral

33. Surveys conducted as part of the New Democracies Barometer (NDB) project offer more evidence of this linkage. On three occasions between 1992 and 1998, NDB surveys asked respondents about the degree to which they feared the United States, Russia, Germany, neighboring countries, domestic national minorities, and immigrants. Factor analysis yields a consistent two-factor pattern for all three surveys conducted over a period of six years: one factor related to a peripheral nationalism against external threats (the United States, Germany, and Russia), another related to a state-building nationalism against internal threats (national minorities and immigrants). The element common to both factors is "fear of neighboring countries," reinforcing the previously mentioned linkage between perceived internal threats from Hungarians and perceived external threats from Hungary. In fact, the three studies show a steady increase in correlation between fear of "neighboring countries" and *both* fear of the United States and fear of immigrants, with the secondary

nationalism, while a useful analytical distinction, can be collapsed into a single category with regard to opinion toward Hungary and Hungarians.

Second, the process of convergence was uneven. Questions related to state-building nationalism and peripheral nationalism against Hungarians and peripheral nationalism against international and transnational institutions showed a slightly greater increase in overall correlation with other attitudes than did attitudes toward Slovakia's independence. Particularly strong relationships emerged between the Hungarian-related questions, among the questions concerning Western institutions, and between the Hungarian and Western categories overall. Factor analysis of the 1993 survey revealed distinct patterns of responses on Hungarian-related and Western-related questions, but by 1999, responses to the two sets of questions actually resembled one another so closely as to produce a single overarching factor.

Third, not all changes in relationships between nationalisms pointed in the direction of convergence. As Table 2 shows, the relationship between the question of Slovakia's independence and other nationalist questions reached a peak between 1995 and 1997, after which many correlations showed a slight decline. This decline reflects in part the overall increase in support for Slovakia's statehood. As Slovaks softened in their opposition to independent statehood (a change that, by 1999, nearly 45 percent of Slovaks explicitly acknowledged having made[34]), the breakup of Czechoslovakia began to lose its peripheral-nationalist characteristics. Whereas in 1992 there existed a significant relationship between support for independent Slovakia and rejection of Czech neighbors, by 1999 the relationship had almost

---

effect of increasing the direct correlation between otherwise distantly related fears of immigrants and of the United States. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine the degree to which this relationship reflects shifts in Slovakia's Hungarian population rather than its Slovak population because the NDB surveys omit the crucial question of ethnicity. Excluding voters of Hungarian parties from the sample (in the one survey where this information is available) produces no appreciable affect on the overall results (Sten Berglund, Joakim Eckman, and Kevin Deegan-Krause, "Comparing Cleavages in Central and Eastern Europe" (Manuscript, 2004).

34. See FOCUS, "Public Opinion Surveys."

disappeared. By 1999, Slovakia's independence received support even from Slovakia's Hungarians and those Slovaks who had strong positive feelings toward Czechs.

Finally, there is the question of nationalism toward Roma. The tendency of questions regarding Roma to factor completely separately from other questions, and the markedly different behavior of such questions in the correlation matrixes presented above, also calls for further scrutiny. Roma-related questions, whether involving neighborliness, language, or citizenship, do not resemble those of any other nationalism. Whereas questions about Hungarian neighbors and the Hungarian language factor closely with a broad question on majority and minority rights, Roma-related questions do not, suggesting that Slovaks do not think of their relations with Roma in the language of majorities and minorities or of the nation. FOCUS survey questions regarding the acceptability of various types of neighbors offer further insight. In surveys that include only ethnic, regional, and racial groupings, acceptability of Roma neighbors relates closely to the acceptability of various groups of non-Europeans including Vietnamese, Asians, Arabs, and blacks. In surveys that include a broader list of potential neighbors, however, Roma factor together with criminals, alcoholics, drug dealers, people with AIDS, and even former members of the secret police. Perceptions of behavior thus trump national and even racial categories in Slovaks' thinking about Roma. It is perhaps because of this difference in mental categorization that Roma-related questions show none of the change over time that affected each of the other categories listed above. Changes in Slovaks' nationalist attitudes dur-

35. Questions about Jews in Slovakia exhibit a mixed pattern of correlation. A question about the acceptability of Jewish neighbors correlates moderately well with many other nationalism-related questions, particularly those related to the Hungarian minority, offering support to arguments that anti-Semitism in Slovakia has retained a century-old relationship with anti-Hungarian sentiments (see Krause, "Accountability and Political Party Competition"). Between 1993 and 1996, the overall correlation between this question and others increased to a moderate degree, setting it apart from both the unchanged correlations of Roma-related questions and the higher increases of other types of nationalism. Despite a near absence of Jews, anti-Semitism remains significant in Slovakia, though not at present in a form that is clearly distinguishable from other forms of nationalism or one with clear goals.

ing the 1990s did not affect thinking about Roma because Slovaks already did not think about the Roma in national terms.[35]

With the exception of attitudes about Roma—which actually bear little resemblance to other nationalisms in form or content— Slovaks' nationalisms tended to converge during most of the 1990s. From an almost random distribution within the population, nationalisms began to fall into two increasingly well-integrated clusters. Peripheral nationalisms against Czechs, Hungary, and the West found common cause with one another and with the state-building nationalisms against Hungarians and against nonnationalist Slovaks. Advocates of the resulting cluster emphasized the importance of Slovak identity and expressed a general wariness toward all things not Slovak. Opposite this cluster stood its mirror image, a group whose members focused little on their own national identity and increasingly tolerated a wide range of influences from the rest of the world. As the next section shows, this process of polarization depended heavily on changing relationships between nationalisms and politics.

Convergence and politics

As Slovakia nationalisms converged, they became ever more closely linked to political preference. In 1992, only the supporters of a few small parties differed noticeably from average Slovaks on nationalism-related questions. By 1999, voters of almost every major party fit easily into one of the two categories defined above. Certain parties continued to occupy niches that deviated from the overall pattern, but even these distinctions began to disappear over time as party supporters sorted themselves into two opposing political camps. Although the polarization of party choice and the convergence of nationalisms were closely intertwined, evidence suggests that the clustering of nationalisms depended heavily on the efforts of political parties.

The politics of nationalisms

The changing relationship between particular types of nationalism and support for particular political parties closely replicates

changes in relationships among various nationalisms: Roma-related questions remained largely irrelevant; and the critical importance of Czechoslovakia diminished over time; whereas nationalisms involving Hungarians, the West, and nonnationalist Slovaks became increasingly significant.

State-building nationalism against Roma. Not only did attitudes toward Roma bear little resemblance to other nationalisms, but they also bore no meaningful relationship to political party choice. During the full range of available surveys, answers on a variety of questions on attitudes toward Roma and their place in Slovakia's polity consistently showed no relationship to political party preference. Supporters of Slovak parties could not be differentiated according to their acceptance of Roma; only the voters of the Hungarian coalition parties demonstrated above average willingness to tolerate Roma as neighbors (and not by much).[36]

Peripheral nationalism against Czechs. Of all nationalist themes, questions of Slovakia's independence from Czechoslovakia were the first to exhibit a strong and enduring relationship to political party support. The earliest surveys on the question show a cluster near the population mean and only two sets of parties taking distinct positions: supporters of parties representing the Hungarian minority distinctly opposed to the split and supporters of the Slovak National Party (SNS) distinctly in favor.

36. The degree to which respondents identifying themselves as Hungarians were more likely than Slovaks to tolerate members of other minorities is probably not quite as significant as it seems, however, because of the tendency of Roma to claim Hungarian ethnicity on opinion surveys. Central European University (CEU) questionnaires asked interviewers themselves to assess whether respondents are Roma rather than leaving the question open to the interviewee. The results of these surveys show Roma to be three times more likely to claim Hungarian ethnicity than Slovak ethnicity and suggest that up to 10 percent of the electorate of Hungarian parties are Roma (as compared to less than 4 percent for other parties). See CEU, "Party Systems and Electoral Alignments in East Central Europe" [computer file] (1992-1996). www.personal.ceu.hu/departs/personal/Gabor_Toka/DataSets.htm. If the "pseudo-Hungarian Roma" were significantly more likely to tolerate Hungarian neighbors or to oppose stricter laws for Roma, then levels of tolerance among Hungarians would become indistinguishable from the level among Slovaks. While this supposition is likely, it cannot be proven from available survey data because those surveys that ask interviewers to assess whether respondents are Roma do not contain questions about attitudes toward Roma.

For the parties in the middle, the initial pattern is less clear. Supporters of the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL), Slovakia's postcommunist successor party, remained marginally but consistently opposed to the split; while supporters of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) had by early 1992 begun to diverge from their more centrist positions, toward separation in the case of HZDS and away from separation in the case of KDH. Supporters of all parties except those of the Hungarian coalition moved toward greater acceptance of Slovakia's independence through the 1990s, but some moved much further than others. By the second half of 1992 (about the time that Slovak and Czech leaders decided on the split), supporters of particular parties had begun to exhibit distinct positions. The differences continued to widen through late 1994, when the relative positions of the parties finally stabilized in three distinct groups: SNS and HZDS together near the proseparation extreme (with an average of more than 80 percent of party supporters also favoring Slovakia's independence); the Hungarian coalition parties at the opposite extreme (fewer than 20 percent of whom favored independence); and a bloc including SDL, KDH, the Democratic Union (DU), and other smaller parties whose supporters were almost evenly split on the question of separation. Other surveys show identical patterns.[37] By 1999, the overall increase in support for independence had brought the bloc of parties in the center closer to the nationalist extreme (which by 1996 had little room for upward movement), thereby lowering the overall level of difference but not altering any of the relative positions. The relationship between party choice and support for Slovakia's independence had even deeper roots, however. CEU and FOCUS surveys show an identical pattern in the relationship between the strength of voters' support for particular parties and the strength of their support for an independent Slovakia. The pattern is remarkably consistent with other findings and shows a steady increase throughout most of the decade.

37. CEU, "Party Systems and Electoral Alignments."

Nationalism against nonnationalist Slovaks. Since few survey questions speak directly to this question, a closer examination of the politicization of this type of nationalism remains difficult, but the few questions that are available provide at least a rough approximation. From the first CEU survey, conducted in 1992, the views of party supporters on all patriotism-related questions approximate the wide differences that emerged regarding Slovakia's independence. Patriotism-related voting, however, exhibited relatively little change over time, growing little in strength during the period of CEU surveys.

State-building and peripheral nationalism against Hungarians. The pattern of party polarization that emerged first and strongest on the question of Czechoslovakia's dissolution emerged slightly later on questions of nationalism toward Hungarians. Patterns on some questions become visible as early as 1992, but the differences did not become statistically significant until 1993. As with questions of Slovak independence, questions about Hungarian irredentism, Hungarianization, treatment of Hungarians, and use of the Hungarian language produced a sharp division between supporters of the SNS—accompanied after 1993 by those of the HZDS—and supporters of Slovakia's Hungarian coalition, with supporters of the KDH and the SDL in between. Unlike questions about Czechoslovakia's independence, political polarization on Hungarian-related questions did not weaken after 1997.

Peripheral nationalism against the West. Responses on questions about Western political and economic institutions ultimately paralleled responses on questions about Czechs and Hungarians, but the process began much more slowly and did not make its dramatic rise until 1994. Figure 5 shows the mean positions of party supporters relative to the population mean on questions about the EU. The difference in the initial configuration is striking. Whereas questions about Czechs, patriotic Slovaks, and Hungarians produced approximately the same relative positions among parties, questions about the EU (as well as those about NATO and foreign investment) produced an altogether dif-

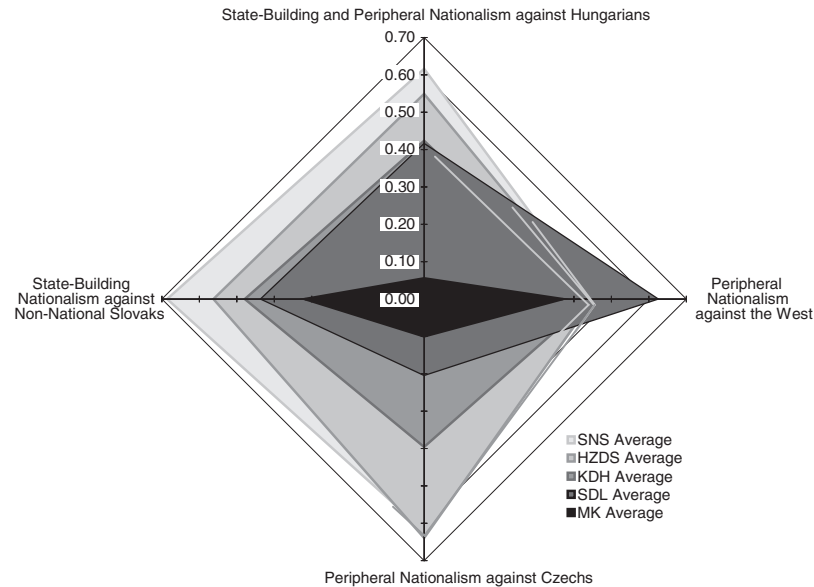**Figure 5.** *Distrust of the European Union by party voters in Slovakia, 1992-2002*
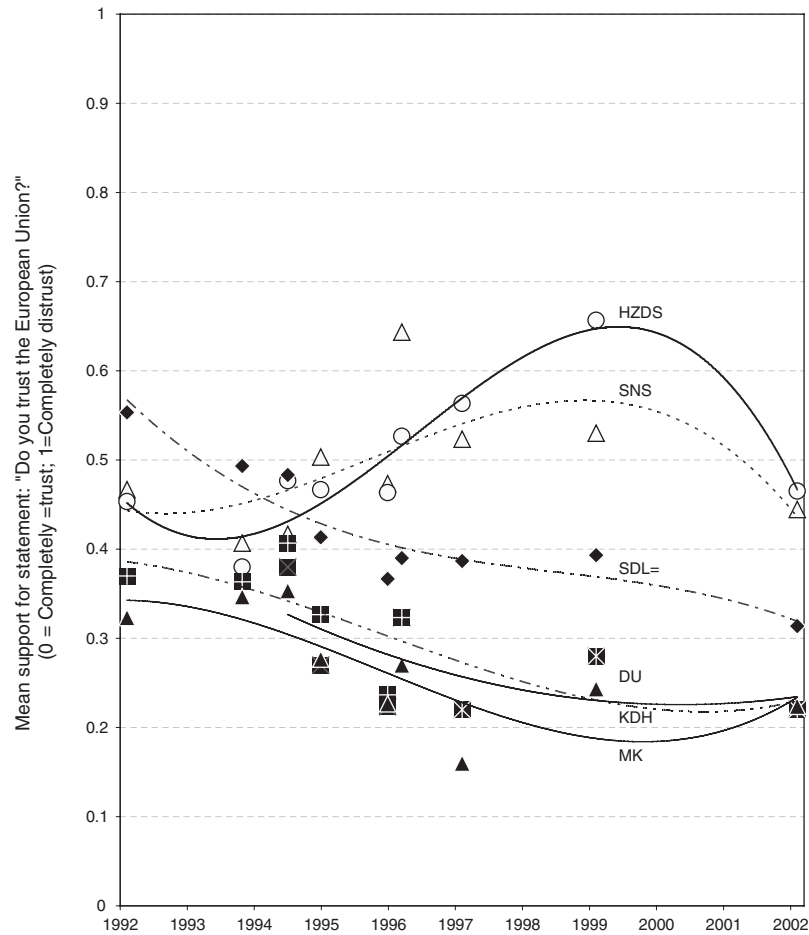
ferent pattern. On these questions, supporters of the SNS and HZDS began not at the nationalist extreme but rather at the population mean. Nor did supporters of the Hungarian parties begin at

the extreme, as they had on questions discussed above. In fact the only consistently outlying group of party supporters was that of the SDL. These relative positions remained stable through 1994 but then underwent a radical shift. SDL supporters rapidly shed their opposition to political and economic integration (though they remained more hesitant on endorsing NATO) and swapped places with SNS and HZDS, whose supporters quickly moved to anti-Western positions at levels higher than any party had approached in previous surveys. At the same time, supporters of other opposition parties—the KDH, the DU, and the Hungarian coalition parties—became increasingly favorable toward all Western institutions. The overall depth of support for parties mirrored these trends. Between 1994 and 1997, survey respondents who opposed integration and foreign investment became sharply more likely to express support for HZDS, SNS, and the small Association of Workers of Slovakia (ZRS) and sharply less likely to support KDH, DU, or the Hungarian Coalition (MK). In 1997, only SDL supporters expressed ambiguity on integration and investment issues, and by 1999, even SDL supporters showed a clearly prointegration profile.

Analyzing Slovaks according to their political preferences reveals a broader aspect of the convergence among various nationalisms. As with the population as a whole, the support bases of particular parties began to move from idiosyncratic combinations of nationalist positions to support for (or opposition to) the full range of possible nationalisms. Figures 6a and 6b offer a comprehensive view of the politicization of nationalisms in Slovakia in the period from 1992 to 1993 and the period from 1996 to 1999.[38] The space occupied by each party represents, by

38. Scores in Figure 6a, Figure 6b, and Figure 7 represent the average support by party voters for statements or indexes of statements summarized by the labels above. "State-Building and Peripheral Nationalism" against Hungarians includes questions on the desirability of Hungarian neighbors, the danger of Hungarian irredentism, and the degree to which Hungarian citizens of Slovakia have allegiance to Slovakia. "Peripheral Nationalism against the West" includes questions on trust in the EU, trust in NATO, and openness to foreign investment. "Peripheral Nationalism against Czechs" reflects opinions on the desirability of an independent Slovakia. All of these questions appeared on FOCUS surveys between 1992 and 1999. "State-Building Nationalism against Non-National Slovaks" includes questions on the preference for patriotism over expertise in political leaders and the need to increase patriotism. These questions appeared on CEU surveys between 1992 and 1996.

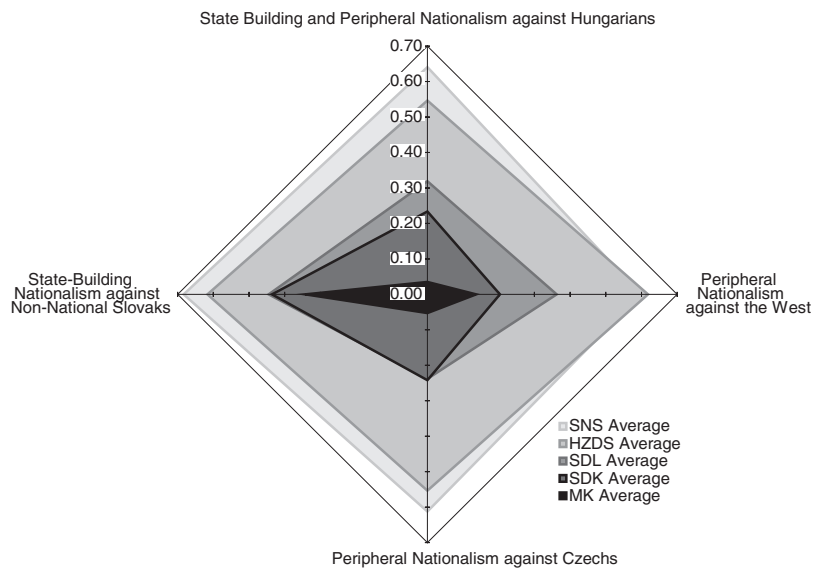**Figure 6a.** *Strength of various nationalisms among supporters of major Slovak political parties, 1993-94*

State-Building and Peripheral Nationalism against Hungarians

State-Building Nationalism against Non-National Slovaks

Peripheral Nationalism against the West

Peripheral Nationalism against Czechs

0.70
0.60
0.50
0.40
0.30
0.20
0.10
0.00

□ SNS Average
■ HZDS Average
■ KDH Average
■ SDL Average
■ MK Average

Source: FOCUS, "Public Opinion Surveys" [computer file] (1992-2002), data results obtained by the author from FOCUS as part of a data-sharing agreement; and Central European University, "Party Systems and Electoral Alignments in East Central Europe" [computer file] (1992-96), www.personal.ceu.hu/departs/personal/Gabor_Toka/DataSets.htm.

Note: SNS = Slovak National Party; HZDS = Movement for a Democratic Slovakia; KDH = Christian Democratic Movement; SDL = Party of the Democratic Left; MK = Hungarian Coalition.

the share of responses on four sets of questions, those that are more nationalist than the population as a whole. A symmetrical diamond pattern represents equal intensity of feeling on all four issues, while the extent of the diamond directly reflects the degree to which respondents hold nationalist views. Supporters of the SNS and the HZDS held strong feelings on questions representing all four nationalist themes, and their positions changed little over time except for a striking increase in distrust toward the West. At the other extreme, MK supporters showed minimal support for any of these nationalist views and changed little except for a major decrease in already low levels of distrust toward the

Figure 6b. *Strength of various nationalisms among supporters of major Slovak political parties, 1996-99*

State Building and Peripheral Nationalism against Hungarians

0.70
0.60
0.50
0.40
0.30
0.20
0.10
0.00

State-Building Nationalism against Non-National Slovaks

Peripheral Nationalism against the West

■ SNS Average
■ HZDS Average
■ SDL Average
■ SDK Average
■ MK Average

Peripheral Nationalism against Czechs

Source: FOCUS, "Public Opinion Surveys" [computer file] (1992-2002), data results obtained by the author from FOCUS as part of a data-sharing agreement; and Central European University, "Party Systems and Electoral Alignments in East Central Europe" [computer file] (1992-96), www.personal.ceu.hu/departs/personal/Gabor_Toka/DataSets.htm.

Note: SNS = Slovak National Party; HZDS = Movement for a Democratic Slovakia; SDL = Party of the Democratic Left; SDK = Slovak Democratic Coalition; MK = Hungarian Coalition.

West. Supporters of KDH (later incorporated into the broader Slovak Democratic Coalition or SDK) and SDL stand between SNS-HZDS and the MK on all four axes and show signs of movement over time in the direction of the MK. For KDH, the shifts toward the center occurred on three of four axes. SDL likewise moved to the center, increasing its support for independent Slovakia but dramatically decreasing its support for nationalist approaches toward Hungarians and the West.

Whereas relative positions in 1992 and 1993 show a relatively incoherent pattern of crossed lines and uneven shapes, the positions in 1996 to 1999 more closely resemble concentric, symmet-

rical diamonds, with an outer diamond of HZDS and SNS separated by a considerable margin from the middle diamond consisting of SDL and SDK and the small inner diamond representing MK.[39] The pattern is particularly significant because it closely replicates Slovakia's overall patterns of opposition and coalition formation during the same period. The four coalitions in power between 1993 and 2002 contained either a core of HZDS and SNS or a core of KDH/DU/SDK and SDL with the support (first passive, later active) of the Hungarian parties. With the exception of opinions about democracy and the use of power, few other issue areas conformed to these same patterns of political alliance formation.

The nationalisms at the center of Slovakia's political conflict played an important role in Slovakia's difficult democratic consolidation. During the mid-1990s, Slovakia gained a reputation as "the problem child of Central Europe"[40] primarily because of the efforts of the HZDS to encroach upon rival institutions and ultimately to avoid any accountability. After exhausting legal and constitutional mechanisms toward this end, the HZDS-led government of Vladimír Mečiar quickly moved toward more shadowy techniques and ultimately into outright illegality.[41] Nationalisms played an important role in Mečiar's appeal, first as the defender of Slovak interests within Czechoslovakia and later as the protector of the newly independent Slovakia within a hostile world. Surveys conducted by CEU show a strong association in the minds of voters between HZDS and Slovakia's national interests.[42] The persistent salience of these national questions helped the party to maintain the support of its voting base. The

39. On questions of minority rights and Slovakia's independence, Party of the Democratic Left (SDL) and Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK) supporters resemble one another more than they resemble Hungarian voters; on questions of international actors, it is the SDK and Hungarian coalition voters who stand closely together while SDL voters show less enthusiasm (though not as little as they did in the 1992 to 1993 period). Only on questions of increasing patriotism did the supporters of the three parties hold nearly identical, relatively moderate views.
40. Neil King, "Meciar's Power Plays in Slovakia Stir Fears of Democracy's Erosion," *Wall Street Journal*, 11 January 1996.
41. Carol Skalnik Leff, "Dysfunctional Democracy: Institutional Conflict in Post-Communist Slovakia," *Problems of Post-Communism* 43:5(1996): 36-50; and Krause, "Accountability and Political Party Competition."
42. Krause, "Accountability and Political Party Competition."

heightened prominence of various nationalisms also served to minimize the negative impact of the party's increasingly bold attacks against its opponents. In public statements, HZDS leaders made frequent reference to threats from Hungary, the West, and "anti-Slovak Slovaks" not only as a way of justifying the need for a strong leader but also as a means of undercutting the credibility of critiques leveled by opposition leaders and international observers against Mečiar's methods of government.[43] While these efforts at deflection gained the party few new voters, they do appear to have helped the party maintain its existing base.[44]
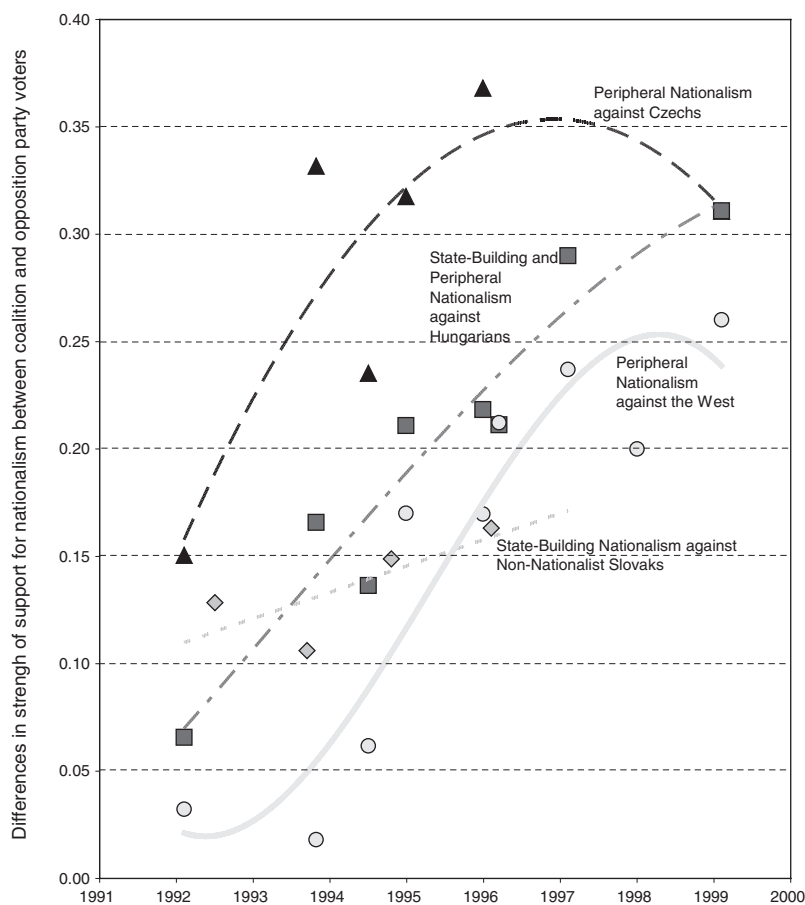
The politicization of nationalisms

Slovakia's nationalisms became increasingly political at precisely the moment that such politicization proved useful for the country's largest party. This coincidence suggests a closer analysis of the relationship between nationalisms and party support. Figure 7 shows the chronological development of polarization on nationalist issues between supporters of Slovakia's two major political blocs.[45] The polarization of anti-Czech peripheral nationalism traces a sharp rise in 1992 and 1993, followed a year later by a nearly identical pattern for anti-Hungarian nationalism and two years later by anti-Western peripheral nationalism. The timing is significant because it closely matches changes in the electoral strategies of Slovakia's political parties. Content analysis of party programs for the 1992, 1994, and 1998 elections indicates a distinct set of shifts in the frequency of references to various national issues. As Table 3 shows, the focus of programs shifted from an emphasis on issues related to peripheral nationalism (primarily against the Czechs) in the 1992 election, to a greater emphasis on state-building nationalism (much of it stated in general terms but clearly applicable only to Hungarians) in the 1994 election campaign, and then back toward a renewed emphasis

43. Ibid.
44. Kevin Deegan Krause, "The Ambivalent Influence of the European Union on Democratization in Slovakia," in Paul Kubicek, ed., *The European Union and Democratization* (London: Routledge, 2003).
45. Between 1993 and the present, the government has shifted back and forth several times between two blocs of parties, but no party crossed bloc lines.

Figure 7. *Differences between supporters of coalition and opposition parties on various nationalisms, 1992-99*

Peripheral Nationalism against Czechs

State-Building and Peripheral Nationalism against Hungarians

Peripheral Nationalism against the West

State-Building Nationalism against Non-Nationalist Slovaks

Source: FOCUS, "Public Opinion Surveys" [computer file] (1992-2002), data results obtained by the author from FOCUS as part of a data-sharing agreement; and Central European University, "Party Systems and Electoral Alignments in East Central Europe" [computer file] (1992-96), www.personal.ceu.hu/departs/personal/Gabor_Toka/DataSets.htm.

on peripheral nationalism in 1998 (this time directed toward the West).[46] Fisher notes a similar shift in Slovakia's nationalist dis-

46. Kevin Deegan Krause, " ' . . . Their Own Worst Enemies . . . ' National Issues and Party System Polarization in Slovakia" (Paper presented at the Conference of the American Political Science Association, Boston, 5 September 1998).

Table 3. *The Relative Proportions of State-Building and Peripheral National Issues as a Share of All Nationalist Statements in Electoral Programs of Slovak Parties, 1992-98*

	Election		
Category	1992	1994	1998
State-building nationalism			
General	.25	.3	.19
Regarding Hungarians	—	.03	.01
Regarding Roma	—	.01	.01
Regarding nonnationalist Slovaks	.07	.1	.11
Total	**.32**	**.44**	**.32**
Peripheral nationalism			
General	—	.13	.16
Regarding Czechs	.51	—	—
Regarding the West	.18	.42	.52
Total	**.68**	**.56**	**.68**

Source: Author's coding of political programs of all major parliamentary parties.

courses from an emphasis on an external other (Czechs) to an enemy within the country's borders (Hungarians) and finally to "the internal 'enemy' within the nation itself," referring primarily to nonnationalist Slovaks.[47]

Analysis of the relationship between particular party decisions and the opinions of supporters strongly suggests that voters shifted their attitudes to bring them into alignment with the positions of party leaders. The role of leaders in shaping nationalist attitudes receives considerable attention from several authors, including Gagnon, Todosijević and Snyder.[48] In Slovakia, the first clear evidence that political leadership shaped nationalist attitudes involves the supporters of the HZDS and the changes in

47. Ibid.; and Fisher, "Rise and Fall of National Movements in Slovakia and Croatia."
48. Gagnon, "Serbia's Road to War"; Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*; and Bojan Todosijević, "Serbia," in Sten Berglund, Joakim Eckman, and Frank H. Aarebrot, eds., *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2003).

their attitudes toward Slovakia's independence during the year 1992. Two separate surveys conducted in early 1992 show that with the exception of supporters of the SNS, the views of all major party supporters on the question of Slovakia's independence were statistically indistinguishable from one another. In surveys conducted just before the June 1992 election, HZDS supporters still remained closer to the population mean on that question than supporters of any other major party.[49] However, after negotiations led by HZDS leader Vladimír Mečiar resulted in Slovakia's independence, the view of independence among his party's supporters shifted toward independence to a degree that dwarfed the shifts found among supporters of other parties.[50]

A similar shift emerged quite clearly between 1995 and 1997, when the attitudes of HZDS toward the European Union moved from a neutral position at the population mean to a position of strong distrust that was further from the population mean than that of any other party. Analysis of press reports and statements by party leaders show that during the same period, the party's rhetoric shifted in the same direction in response to EU criticisms and demarches. Although it is more difficult in this case than with Slovak independence to determine whether the actions of party leaders preceded or followed their supporters' opinions, there are strong reasons for doubting that the initiative for change came from supporters rather than party leaders. It is not impossible that a large number of Slovaks might rapidly change their opinions on a question such as the EU, but it is unlikely that such a change could remain confined only to the supporters of certain parties, unless those party supporters faced some outside stimulus that affected no one else. Survey evidence, however, reveals that as late as 1995, Slovakia's Eurosceptics had few distinctive demographic or attitudinal characteristics other than their politi-

49. Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) supporters were more likely than supporters of most other parties to support a loose confederation rather than the then-existing federation, but when forced to choose between independence and the status quo, they were no more likely to opt for an independent Slovakia than the average Slovak respondent. See Center for Research on Public Opinion, "Periodic Surveys of Public Opinion" [computer file] (1990-2001). http://archiv.soc.cas/cz/czindex.phtml.

50. Institute of Sociology, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences/Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, "Economic Expectations and Attitudes Survey I-IX" [computer file] (1990-1996), http://archiv.soc.cas/cz/czindex.phtml; and FOCUS, "Public Opinion Surveys."

cal preferences and their opinions on already politicized issues such as use of authority and Slovak independence.[51]

Furthermore, politicization of anti-Western peripheral nationalism took place through changes in the views of loyal party supporters rather than in the realignment of voters from one party or another.[52] The changes in most Slovaks' nationalist beliefs occurred *after* their political preferences had already become fixed. Considerable reshuffling of voters across coalition-opposition lines did take place between 1990 and 1994, but after 1994 the main blocs of parties experienced little change in the composition of their electorates.[53] Whereas before 1994 HZDS and SNS were often able to lure adherents of various nationalisms away from other parties, after 1994 they tended instead to concentrate on increasing support for nationalisms among their existing supporters.

The sequence by which peripheral nationalism toward the West became politicized in Slovakia supports top-down explanations of shifts in nationalisms. In view of the weak party mechanisms for transmitting member demands upward to party leaders, it is unlikely that even a fundamental change in member attitudes about the EU could result in such a thoroughgoing and rapid shift in the pronouncements of party leaders. Internal party dynamics instead point in the other direction and suggest that party supporters simply followed the lead of party elites. The largest shifts on anti-Western nationalism in the mid-1990s occurred in those parties that had experienced significant leadership changes in the years immediately prior. Slovakia's opposition parties maintained considerable continuity in upper-level leadership throughout the 1993 to 1997 period.[54] SNS, by contrast, underwent a bitter struggle for control in late 1993 that resulted in the

51. FOCUS, "Public Opinion Surveys."
52. Kevin Deegan-Krause, "Elected Affinities: Nation, Market and Democracy after Czechoslovakia" (Manuscript, 2003).
53. In a May 1994 survey, 17 percent of supporters of the HZDS-led bloc claimed to have voted for parties of the opposing bloc in the election just two years previous. In a November 1997 survey, by contrast, only 5 percent of supporters of the HZDS-led bloc claimed to have voted for parties of the opposing bloc in the election three years previous. See FOCUS, "Public Opinion Surveys." Surveys conducted in 1995 and 1996 show even smaller shifts.
54. The SDL changed its party chair in 1996, but the new chairman's ability to make changes remained limited by the powerful and mostly unchanged executive committee.

party's radicalization under a new leader, and HZDS lost most of its popular, second-tier leaders to party splits in 1993 and 1994. The new leader of SNS and the newly unconstrained leader of HZDS both adopted stronger nationalist rhetoric, particularly toward the West, and party supporters quickly adopted similar attitudes.[55] Party elites—particularly HZDS chair Vladimír Mečiar—thus played a critical role in shaping support for particular nationalisms by altering the views of party loyalists through constant repetition of nationalist themes.

Such elite-led shift changes are not unique to Slovakia or even to new democracies and are quite consistent with studies that show the strong influence of party elites on the attitudes of party supporters of politics in advanced industrialized countries.[56] Kulikinski and Segura's studies of American political behavior find that "individual preferences are typically endogenous, formed on the basis of information and cues provided by elected officials and other political elites."[57] Slovaks took cues about their own positions with reference not only to political leaders they liked but also to those that they disliked. Mečiar's increasingly vocal rejection of European integration helped induce a Europhilia among his opponents that mirrored his own Europhobia.

Politicization and convergence

Elites helped not only to shape public attitudes toward various nationalisms but to align them in particular configurations. In an

55. Voters reacted not only to the exhortations of HZDS leaders about the EU's "double-standard" (see *Tlačová agentúra Slovenskej republiky*, 6 May 1997, 1132 GMT) and "oppressive mentoring" (see Jana Cerna, "Slovakia Wants to Be Part of the European Union," *Slovenská republika*, 17 June 1997, trans. Foreign Broadcast Information Service) but also to the statements of the EU and NATO themselves (as filtered through the press) that criticized the HZDS-led government. *Slovenská republika*, the strongest progovernment daily newspaper of the time, often published without comment long excerpts from Western criticisms of the Mečiar government, apparently convinced that Western origin of the source would be enough not only to blunt its impact but to strengthen support for the government in its courageous opposition to Western imperialism.
56. James H. Kuklinski and Gary M. Segura, "Endogeneity, Exogeneity, Time, and Space in Political Representation," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 20:1(1995): 3-21; Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody, and Philip Tetlock, *Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
57. Kuklinski and Segura, "Endogeneity," 14.

electoral environment like that of Slovakia, where most citizens maintained reasonably strong preferences for some parties over others and where parties took distinct positions on a wide range of national issues, any success in politicizing individual nationalisms would also have a direct effect upon the overall coherence of those nationalisms. If a party succeeded in politicizing several nationalisms, those nationalisms would begin to show a convergence even with no overt intention by party leaders toward that end. In Slovakia, however, convergence did not depend solely on coincidence but rather on explicit efforts by some parties to forge connections among disparate nationalisms.

Slovakia's Hungarian parties were the first to politicize a particular cluster of nationalisms by linking the position of Hungarians within Slovakia to the need for a common Czechoslovak state and increased international integration. Among parties representing ethnic Slovaks, Mečiar's HZDS propelled the integration of multiple nationalisms into a single, increasingly well-articulated message. From a position that Slovaks had faced multiple national threat, HZDS leaders gradually moved to a position that the new country's enemies were in fact one and the same, because opposition leaders—Slovaks without strong nationalist feelings—had conspired with the Hungarian minority and representatives of NATO, the EU, and multinational corporations to eliminate Slovakia's independence. In a 1998 interview titled "The Opposition Wants to Govern Slovakia with the Help of Foreign Patrons," HZDS deputy Jan Cuper argued that an opposition victory would cause Slovakia to "fall under the neo-colonial influence of the Western countries which so vehemently support the so-called [Slovak Democratic Coalition] through media and finances," a coalition that "could govern only with the help of Hungarian political parties, who would compel territorial autonomy." Tying all of these themes together, Cuper concluded that "the coming [1998] election will truly decide whether Slovakia will continue as an independent and sovereign state."[58] As with its politicization of particular nationalisms, HZDS's promulgation of

58. Jarmilla Malecová, "Opozícia by chcela vládnut Slovensku s pomocou zahraničných Mecenášov," *Slovensko do toho!* 5 February 1998.

an integrated set of nationalist positions produced a nearly equal and opposite reaction among opposition parties and encouraged them to link support for Western integration with respect for minority rights and a call for less heated nationalist rhetoric.[59]

This all-or-none approach to nationalisms, while not necessarily the most attractive to Slovakia's voters, offered hidden rewards to party elites, particularly those of HZDS. Mečiar's effort to politicize multiple nationalisms attracted few new voters to the party, but it also drove few away and helped the party to shore up weaknesses in other areas. In particular, the unity of peripheral and state-building nationalisms helped deflect criticism from HZDS's efforts to wrest political power from rival institutions. When domestic critics voiced opposition and when the EU and NATO rejected Slovakia's membership bid, HZDS leaders could attribute the critique to foreign interests and their domestic servants.[60]

Conclusion

Crucial aspects of nationalism are easily overlooked without a relational perspective. According to aggregate measures and mutually exclusive categories, national sentiment in Slovakia remained essentially unchanged during the 1990s, even though the shifts in the underlying relationships between particular nationalisms shook Slovakia's politics to its foundations. Slovakia's example reinforces the importance of specifying both the object of the nationalist antagonism: Roma are a different kind of adversary than are Hungarians or nonnationalist Slovaks, and the EU is a different kind of adversary than are the Czechs. The triad of state-building, peripheral, and irredentist nationalisms found in the works of Hechter and Brubaker and supplemented here allow for relatively precise analytical distinc-

59. Ironically—though perhaps not unintentionally—HZDS helped to encourage precisely the "conspiracy" it warned against by throwing opposition to Slovak politicians, Hungarians, and Western representatives into similar positions of political disadvantage pointing out their common interest in defeating Mečiar.
60. See Krause, "The Ambivalent Influence." When HZDS's needs changed, in the early 2000s, its rhetoric changed to support the EU and NATO, and at least some of the party's supporters began to omit peripheral nationalism against the West from their cluster of nationalisms (FOCUS, "Public Opinion Surveys").

tions. In some cases those prove unnecessary—as the inseparability of nation-building and peripheral nationalisms against Hungarians suggests—but it is important to begin with the broadest practical typology and eliminate categories for *empirical* rather than theoretical reasons. It is only possible to see the process of convergence by first rejecting the assumption that nationalisms are all the same.

Slovakia's example sheds other light on the convergence of nationalisms in postcommunist Europe and on the convergence of other attitudes as well. Although a variety of authors have found some degree of convergence in postcommunist attitudinal measures—particularly socioeconomic attitudes—there remains disagreement about how and why the convergence takes place. Implicit in some accounts is a natural process of transition from communism through which citizens move from inchoate preferences toward more defined patterns as they gain access to new interests and realize their individual interests. Many researchers see the emerging clusters as replications of patterns found in existing Western democracies or another compelling underlying logic. Matějů and Vlachová, for example, explicitly specify clusters of attitudes that they identify as "left" and "right" and evaluate respondents subjective left-right position against their position on the objective left-right scale.[61] Other authors note the process of convergence but take pains to avoid privileging any particular connections between attitudes as natural or inevitable. Kluegel and Mason refer to this process by which attitudes become stable and well-integrated clusters of attitudes as "crystallization,"[62] but the "crystal" metaphor refers more to the solidity of the relationships than to any particular pattern of attitudinal clusters. Likewise, Miller, White, and Heywood cite commonly held beliefs about the interrelationship between attitudes but treat these merely as hypotheses in need of testing.[63] On the basis of their

61. Petr Matějů and Klára Vlachová, "Krystalizace politických postojů, politického spektra a role hodnot ve volebním rozhodování," in Petr Matějů and Klára Vlachová, eds., *Nerovnost, Spravedlnost, Politika: Česká Republika 1991-1998* (Prague, Czech Republic: Sociologické nakladatelství, 2000).
62. James R. Kluegel and David S. Mason, "Market Justice in Transition," in James R. Kluegel and David S. Mason, eds., *Marketing Democracy* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2000).
63. Miller, White, and Heywood, *Values and Political Change in Postcommunist Europe.*

1993 survey data, they accept some and reject others. They also reject a priori notions of coherence in favor of contextual ones, using the attitude clusters of each country's elites as the basis for assessing the coherence of attitudes among ordinary citizens.

Slovakia's experience with various nationalisms offers mixed messages about these broader notions of convergence and coherence. Slovakia's nationalisms underwent a process of convergence[64] to which it is tempting also to ascribe the character of *coherence*. It is possible, of course, to ascribe some sort of coherence to almost any collection of attitudes, but for Slovakia's converging nationalisms the task was uncommonly simple. Taken together, Slovakia's nationalisms reflect the image of a fragile new state whose many enemies—both at home and abroad—conspire to take away its political autonomy. Nationalist leaders could claim that all of the major adversaries—Czechs, Czechoslovaks (later nonnationalist Slovaks), Hungarians, and the West—had common interests in undermining Slovakia's statehood and that all had worked together in the past. Such logic actually became unavoidable, since to omit any one adversary from the list would be to raise fundamental doubts about whether *any* of the four actually sought Slovakia's subjugation.

Yet if convergence of Slovakia's nationalisms resulted from the pull of a straightforward underlying logic, Slovakia also offers evidence of a major role for contingent political decisions. It is striking that the convergence did not happen right away but took years of trial-and-error efforts of major parties. Of course, coherence and contingency are not mutually exclusive alternatives: political leaders may find themselves attracted by the advantages of a particular logic of coherence and then try to bring voters' attitudes into alignment. The calculus of leaders may differ from that of voters, however, and Slovakia's example suggests that the cluster of state-building and peripheral nationalisms emerged at

---

64. Even at its height, the coherence of nationalisms in Slovakia remained far lower than coherence of attitudes on socioeconomic questions. The first major FOCUS survey of opinion in Slovakia after independence in October 1993 shows that opinions on five disparate economic issues—income distribution, state ownership, personal responsibility, free markets, and poverty—yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .60, higher than the above-discussed set of five questions on nationalism at its highest point (FOCUS, "Public Opinion Surveys").

least in part because it served to stabilize the electoral base of a would-be authoritarian leader. The practical affinity between authoritarian rule and fear of foreign powers thus played as important a role as the "natural" affinity—if any—between nationalism against Czechs, Hungarians, nonnationalist Slovaks, and the West.

The convergence of nationalisms also presents other disadvantages. To the extent that nationalisms seem to attract authoritarian leadership,[65] the collapse of multiple nationalisms into a single, integrated whole increases the risk of oscillation between democracy and authoritarianism. More concretely, the all-or-nothing approach obscures the fact that not all national questions are the same and require different policy approaches. The convergence of nationalisms against all foreign and domestic threats in Slovakia forced the nonnationalist opposition into unreflective support for NATO and EU without the latitude to engage in a meaningful discussion of the relative merits of membership or the best methods by which to ensure that integration would produce the maximum gain for Slovakia.

Although individual leaders are rarely strong enough to alter fundamentally the relationships between nationalisms, political leadership can help to strengthen otherwise weak relationships between nationalisms or weaken relationships that had been strong. This apparent malleability of nationalisms gives cause for both hope and anxiety. If particular leaders can bring together various strands of national feeling, then other leaders may be able to defuse tense situations and work to create cross-cutting cleavages that allow a degree of accommodation and even cooperation. But the prominent role of parties and leaders also increases the potential dangers. If leaders hold enough sway to politicize nationalisms and bring multiple nationalisms into alignment, then no country with a mix of unresolved national issues can be considered entirely safe from conflict. Finally, if political strategy can play such an important part in unifying potentially disparate nationalisms, it may also play a role in unify-

65. Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); and Daniel Chirot, *Modern Tyrants* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

ing other dimensions of political competition. The apparently natural emergence of coherent left and right in new democracies and the affinity between nationalism and authoritarianism still depend heavily on ad hoc and fragile accommodations promoted by political leaders.