The Electoral Base of Left-Wing Post-Communist Political Parties in the Former Czechoslovakia

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Abstract: *The goal of this article is to discuss the electoral base of left-wing political parties in the Czech Republic and Slovakia after 1993, i.e., after the breakup of the joint federal state. The main focus of research is the distribution of electoral support in these countries, its evolution, and the mutual stability among parties it has shown in elections to the legislatures of both countries. Each country is divided into fairly similar units. In the Czech Republic, these are municipalities with extended powers and, in Slovakia, districts. The election results presented are compared with the demographic structure of selected individual regions and subsequently analyzed. The result addresses whether and to what extent the electoral base of relatively similar left-wing political parties in these neighbouring countries are alike or unalike.*

Keywords: Elections, Electoral Geography, Czech Republic, Czech Social Democratic Party, Slovak Republic, SMER – Social Democracy, Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia

1. Introduction

After the fall of the nondemocratic regime in the former Czechoslovakia and the breakup of the common federal state, a new political and party system gradually began to take shape in the Czech and Slovak republics. Left-wing parties, especially post-communist parties, also had to find their place within this process and come to terms with the heritage of their predecessors in the earlier nondemocratic regime. The two environments which originated after the countries split might at first glance appear to be similar or even identical, but the party systems which came into being in fact differed from each other. In the Czech Republic, the Social Democratic Party tried to ride the coattails of the Social Democrats of the First Republic and became one of the two chief poles fairly quickly. Yet the Communist Party also managed to survive, being the chief inheritor of the political power of the nondemocratic regime which had ruled for the preceding

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four decades. In Slovakia, however, the Social Democrats and other left-wing entities experienced long-term difficulty stabilizing their voter base. Only after 10 years did the new SMER party manage to formulate its ideas in such a way that it received repeated electoral support. Another decisive factor was that while in the Czech Republic the Communist Party repeatedly took part in elections and won seats in the legislature, in Slovakia, the Communist Party was relegated to the sidelines. With the exception of elections during the 2002-2006 period, the party was not represented in Parliament.

The text which follows will build upon these basic points in focusing on the electoral stability of those left-wing parties which scored repeated successes in elections to the legislature in both countries after 1993. In addition, their variability and evolution over the past two decades will be discussed. After a basic introduction to the tools used in the research, the focus is placed on the basic characteristics of left-wing parties in the Czech and Slovak Republics. Comparative and statistical methods will also be used to attempt to determine where these political parties find their regular sources of support, and how they differ or resemble each other in terms of their basic electoral potential in these two countries.

The chief research hypothesis stems from the conviction that left-wing political parties in both the Czech and Slovak Republics draw upon a similar geographic distribution of voter groups. Given the origin of these parties, an increase in voter support may be expected, with increasing numbers of urban voters and voters from areas with high unemployment and low incomes (Hloušek - Kopeček 2010). The final variable will be purchasing power, with figures coming from the INCOMA GfK database.[2] Because left-wing party values include anticlericalism and an emphasis on civic virtue, we will also look at the level of religious participation, expressed in the proportion of residents declaring adherence to the Catholic faith. We anticipate that the proportion of left-wing voters will correlate inversely with the proportion of those belonging to the Catholic Church.

2. Methodological Background

Several methods will be used to test these hypotheses. First, we identify the areas of support for left-wing political parties. Second, we attempt to confirm or disconfirm the notion that their support is geographically stable. Individual electoral maps will be compared and stability will be assessed using the comparative method entitled *regional electoral support* and the modified version called *regional superelectoral support*. Areas will be defined using straightforward counts. Election

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[2] Purchasing power is defined as purchasing power per thousand residents (or households). This will serve as an index indicating which areas are above or below the average for the Republic in terms of income.

results for particular political parties are sorted by percentage gains, from highest to lowest. Once in this order, they are added together and the midpoint of the total sum is sought. This line is then used to divide the units into two halves, yielding regions representing a 50% voter support concentration level out of the total number of votes cast in that election. The resulting set is labelled the region of voter support for the parties (Jehlička, Sýkora 1991). A second, modified concept was introduced by Pavel Šaradín in his work focusing on the election results of the two chief political parties in 2006 (Šaradín 2006). It consists of dividing the entire set into quartiles. Superelectoral support is then represented by the upper, most successful regions. By comparing units thus defined, we are able to determine the regions of *stable voter support and super support.*

The basic aggregation data used in the following text will be ORP units for the Czech Republic. These comprise 209 units. In Slovakia, districts will be used, 79 units in all,[3] which, given the number of inhabitants, may be considered to provide comparable voter numbers. The database consists of election results for parliamentary elections between 1994 and 2010, along with other variables. To determine the basic stability and mutual dependence of voter support, correlation analysis will be employed,[4] in particular the Pearson coefficient as the basic tool.

In addition to comparing the stability of voter support on the basis of cartographic imagery, the text will attempt to explore whether a dependence exists between voter support for left-wing parties and the variables noted. Comparison and regression analysis will be used with the following variables: district characteristics indicated by the degree of urbanization, i.e. the proportion of inhabitants living in the city as opposed to rural areas, as well as the extent of unemployment, the proportion of religious believers, and the already noted income variable.

3. Left-Wing Parties and Their Position in the Party System

3.1. The Czech Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia

In comparison to the systems of other post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the Czech party system has stabilized over the past 16 years and is relatively easy to classify. Currently, there are four main currents which may be considered established and stable within

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[3] Including five Bratislava districts and four Kosice districts.
[4] The Pearson correlation coefficient, in spite of some deficiencies, remains the "most important measure of the strength of two continuous random variables X and Y." (Hendl 2006) It takes on values in the interval [-1, +1]. If either of the boundary values is reached, the relationship is perfectly correlated, either negatively or positively. It should nevertheless be borne in mind that the coefficient is significantly influenced by outliers. Its values and the interpretations for individual relationships between two variables may be broken down as follows: 0.01-0.09: trivial to none; 0.10-0.29: low to mid; 0.30-0.49: mid to substantial; 0.50-0.69: substantial to very substantial; 0.70-0.89: very substantial; 0.90-0.99: almost perfect.

the party spectrum. There are two chief political parties, these being the Civic Democratic Party, with a liberal-conservative orientation, and the Czech Social Democratic Party, a member of the Social Democratic Party spectrum. Other stable entities include the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, the chief descendent of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. In addition to these, other parties have also taken seats in Parliament, but over the long term, have not been able to defend their gains and have gradually been pushed out of the legislative body. Among these are the Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak Popular Party, which up to 2010 functioned as a long-term centrist actor in the parliament; the Green Party, a more liberally-oriented party which gained seats in 2006; and the liberal Civic Democratic Alliance and Union of Freedom parties, which are no longer active.

Given these facts, it would be possible to classify the Czech party system as one in keeping with Giovanni Sartori's moderate pluralism concept, a type of party system which is primarily defined as being in opposition to the classical bi-party system. It consists of a system of coalition governments and is based upon the existence of at least three, and preferably five or six, relevant political parties (Sartori 1976). Looking closer at the election results, it is possible to identify voter support for the CSSD at a nationwide level of around 30%, with the party's best result coming in the 2006 elections. In that election, the party received 32.32% of votes, guaranteeing it 74 seats out of a total 200, the maximum it has won in its post-1989 history. The party which won first place and formed the government, however, was the ODS, pushing the Social Democrats into opposition after eight years of government. They remained in this position in further years as well, but the distribution of power in the parliament was such that the party maintained its hope that it might cause the government's collapse, something which happened at the end of March, 2009. Over the ensuing 14-month period, the party supported the caretaker government and, in the long-awaited 2010 elections, won the most votes; however, because of the overall distribution of votes, it ended up once again in opposition.

The other left-wing party, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, has repeatedly managed to win more than 10% of the vote. An exceptional success came in the 2002 elections, in which the party attained its current-era maximum.

In evaluating the Czech party structure, particularly as regards the Communist Party, a problem arises in applying a criterion of general acceptability for participating in coalition governments. The Communists have, over the last 20 years, been subject to an agreement which rules out their participation and effectively makes their coalition potential zero. This is a party which does not currently function as the principal opposition to the system itself, but because of its ideology and platform, is subject to an exclusion agreement. Although the Communists have

regularly taken part in elections and have gained seats in Parliament, they have never taken part in the government (Kostelecký 2001).

Table No. 1: Parliamentary Election Results, 1996-2010

	1996		1998		2002		2006		2010	
	%	of votes	%	of votes	%	of votes	%	of votes	%	of votes
CSSD	26.44	1602250	32.31	1928660	30.20	1440279	32.32	1728827	22.08	1155267
KDU-CSL[5]	8.08	489349	9.00	537013	14.27	680671	7.22	386706	4.39	229717
KSCM	10.33	626136	11.03	658550	18.51	882653	12.81	685328	p1.27	589765
ODA	6.36	385369	-	-	0.50	24278	-	-	-	-
ODS	29.62	1794560	27.74	1656011	24.47	1166975	35.38	1892475	20.22	1057792
SZ	-	-	1.12	67143	2.36	112929	6.29	336487	2.44	127831
SPR-RSC	8.01	485072	3.90	232965	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOP09	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16.70	873833
VV	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10.88	569127

Source: www.volby.cz

3.2. Social Democrats and the Left Wing in the Slovak Party Environment

The recent party-political situation in Slovakia has often been characterized as being possessed of a highly variable party system with a low level of structure. A number of new parties have come into being over the last two decades, gradually replacing entities whose position had been viewed as being unshakable. Under Paul Lewis's conception, five basic political parties may be discerned in the Slovak environment, belonging to individual party families.[6] The post-communist party family includes the Party of the Democratic Left, gradually supplanted by SMER-SD. The liberal pro-market party family is represented by the Slovak Democratic Coalition, later the SDKU-DS. Ethnic interests are represented by the Hungarian coalition party Strana Madarske Koalice, and there are Christian Democrats and traditional conservatives in HZDS, as well as pure nationalists represented by the SNS. This typology characterizes the Slovak environment at the close of the 1990s and directly after the country's entry into the EU. With certain modifications, it survived up until the most recent elections in 2010 (Hloušek - Kopeček 2010).

In examining the election results for individual parties in greater detail, only SMER, established later, may be included in the group of left-wing post-communist parties repeatedly gaining seats in Parliament. This entity came into being with the departure of the popular representative Robert Fico from the Party of the Democratic Left in 1999. Fico gave preference

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[5] 2002 results calculated for the coalition as a whole
[6] Lewis distinguishes six families of political parties: Postcomunist, Social-democrats, Liberals and free trade oriented conservatives, Ethnic groups, Agrarians, Cristian democrats and traditional conservatives, Nationalists (Lewis 2000).

to professionals and experts over old party hands. His style may be characterized as one of "unpolitical politics" (Kopeček 2007). In its first elections in 2002, SMER took 13.43% of the vote. These results did not meet the party's objectives, and it remained in opposition throughout the entire subsequent election period. But important events took place between 2002 and 2006, which led to significant changes within SMER, both from an organizational and ideological standpoint. SMER gradually overwhelmed the minor parties of the left (SOP, SDSS, SDA), including the Party of the Democratic Left, which Robert Fico had abandoned. The party shifted leftward along the right-left axis. Its ideological tendency toward social democratic parties is apparent from the choice of name SMER – Social Democracy. As part of its opposition role, the party began to work closely with unions and learned to function as the chief critic of economic reforms by the right wing government (made up of the SDKU, KDH, SMK and, for a portion of the election period, ANO). In the parliamentary elections of 2006, the party received almost 30% of the vote, making it the clear winner, and formed the government together with the SNS and HZDS-LS. During the period that it has been in existence, therefore, SMER has transformed itself from its original incarnation as an "apolitical formation" based upon the rejection of the classic party model and "managerial enterprise" into a party with a social democratic orientation (Kopeček 2007: 286-287). As was the case with the Czech Social Democratic Party, in the 2010 elections, the party won the election but ended up assuming the opposition role anyway.

Table No. 2: NRSR Election Results, 1994-2010

	1994		1998		2002		2006		2010	
	%	of votes	%	of votes	%	of votes	%	of votes	%	of votes
ANO	-	-	-	-	8.01	230309	1.42	32775	-	-
DU	8.57	246444	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HZDS	34.96	1005488	27.00	907103	19.50	560691	8.79	202540	4.32	109480
KDH	10.08	289987	-	-	8.25	237203	8.31	191443	8.52	215755
KSS	2.70	-	2.80	-	6.32	181872	3.88	89418	-	-
Most/Híd	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8.12	205538
SaS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12.14	307287
SDKU-DS	-	-	-	-	15.09	433953	18.35	422815	15.42	390042
SDK	-	-	26.33	884497	-	-	-	-	-	-
Party of the Democratic Left (SDL)	-	-	14.66	492507	-	-	-	-	2.41	61137
SMER-SD	-	-	-	-	13.46	387100	29.14	671185	34.79	880111
SMK	10.18	292936	9.12	306623	11.16	321069			4.33	109638
SOP	-	-	8.01	269343	-	-	-	-	-	-
SNS	5.40	155359	9.07	304839	3.32	95633	11.73	270230	5.07	128490
Sp. Election	10.41	299496	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ZRS	7.34	211321	1.30	43809	0.54	15755			0.24	6196

Source: www.statistics.sk

Středoevropské politické studie   Ročník XIV, Číslo 2–3, s. 170–192
Central European Political Studies Review   Volume XIV, Issue 2–3, pp. 170–192
International Institute of Political Science, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University   ISSN 1212-7817

4. Voter Support between 1994 and 2010 as Seen Using Electoral Geography

4.1. Czech Social Democratic Party

The Czech Social Democratic Party was a latecomer to the party system. Its first significant win came right at the start of the period in question, in 1996. From an electoral stability point of view, as evidenced in Table No. 2 and the results of correlation analysis, the Social Democrats may be seen to have a stable voter base, but not as stable as, for example, other parties in the Czech environment, primarily ODS and KSCM (Pink 2010). Vis-à-vis other political parties and their voters, there is a clear positive dependency after the year 2000, particularly in regions with a high share of KSCM voters. An interesting factor is the existence of a moderate relationship between the voter base of Social Democracy in 2010, 1998 and 1996 and that of the radical right wing SPR-RSC in 1998 and 1996. With other parties, there is a mutual negative dependence, particularly as regards ODS, the Green Party and the nonexistence of any correlation to KDU-CSL.

**Table No. 3: Mutual Dependence of CSSD Voter Base with Other Parties**

	CSSD10	CSSD06	CSSD02	CSSD98	CSSD96
CSSD10	1	0.952	0.726	0.823	0.714
CSSD06	0.952	1	0.774	0.819	0.735
CSSD02	0.726	0.774	1	0.714	0.614
KSCM10	0.470	0.392	0.168	0.483	0.399
KSCM06	0.459	0.375	0.162	0.482	0.382
KSCM02	0.512	0.430	0.160	0.569	0.472
ODS10	-0.710	-0.698	-0.286	-0.551	-0.515
ODS06	-0.768	-0.778	-0.440	-0.546	-0.468
ODS02	-0.726	-0.738	-0.435	-0.548	-0.465
KDU06	0.023	0.063	-0.059	-0.240	-0.231
SZ06	-0.567	-0.575	-0.412	-0.403	-0.307
SPR-RSC 98	0.357	0.334	0.127	0.422	0.383
SPR-RSC 96	0.309	0.277	0.084	0.355	0.243
US98	-0.763	-0.724	-0.529	-0.778	-0.658

Source: author's calculations; www.volby.cz

Comparative Map No. 1 shows that from 1996 until the most recent parliamentary elections in May of 2010, the voter base of the chief Czech left-wing party was primarily in evidence in central and northern Moravia and partially also in central Bohemia and some adjacent municipalities with extended powers in neighbouring regions. The core voter base may be unambiguously pinpointed in the Moravian-Silesian Region, where, with the exception of Kravarsko, units of electoral support and super support are found. Other highly successful areas

include Svitavy in the Pardubice area, the Bystrice area in Vysocina, and the Kutna Hora – Caslav area, in particular. The extended majority electoral base also includes areas at the borders between the Central Bohemia and Pilsen regions; the Rakovnik, Kralovice and Pribram areas and the adjacent Blatna area; areas around Sokolov; and the Chomutov and Most areas in the Usti nad Labem region. In Moravia, significant areas include those around Konice and Prerov, the border area between the Jihomoravsky, Olomoucky and Zlin regions, and, primarily, the areas of Prostejov, Vyskov and Kromeriz. When comparing the top ten municipalities with extended powers, Karvina, Bohumin and Orlova come up repeatedly. Prior studies have shown that Social Democrats obtained votes in 1996 and 1998 in localities with the highest unemployment and lower entrepreneurial activity. These were border regions which were not, however, impoverished. Support also grew in socially dysfunctional areas. Between 1996 and 1998, the norm was for the chief opposition party to find its voters in areas with the lowest numbers of inhabitants having a secondary or university education and with a higher number of agricultural workers, and in locations where wages had been high in 1980 (Kostelecký 2001). The situation did not change in any fundamental way after 2002. Social Democratic voters were found in areas with a high share of urban voters, high unemployment levels, and larger numbers of religious believers (Kostelecký 2002). At the other end of the scale, support for Social Democrats on the map is marginal for the Liberec and Hradec Kralove regions, as well as for southern Bohemia, with the exception of Blatna.

Map No. 1 CSSD Voter Support Regions
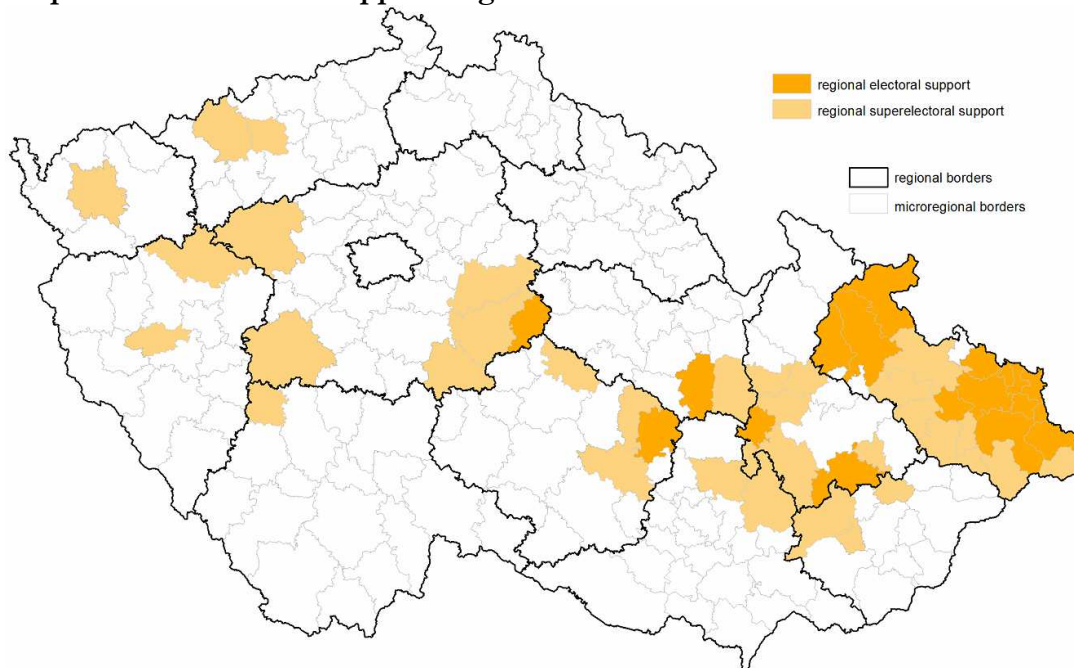
Source: author's map/data www.volby.cz

4.2. The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia

The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia is the main descendent of the party under the undemocratic regime in the former Czechoslovakia prior to 1989 and continues to enjoy stable, relatively unchanging voter support. Trends visible in the period of observation show the party's support lies primarily in peripheral areas. Prior studies of voter support for the Communist Party showed that in 1996 and 1998 the party's voters tended to live in regions with relatively high incomes, where its support was also somewhat high in the semi-competitive elections of 1946, as well as areas of Bohemia where the voter base was distributed between 1990 and 1992. Electoral support then gradually shifted to Moravia, particularly along the border with Austria (Kostelecký 2001). Looking at Table No. 4, it becomes clear that the voter base of the Communist Party is highly stable, with a correlation coefficient for individual elections exceeding 0.9 or coming very close to it. As far as other parties go, there is a repeated positive dependence with the voter base of Czech Social Democrats, as well as SPR-RSC. As with the parties discussed earlier, there is a highly negative relationship to areas with ODS voters and their current and former coalition partners.

**Table No. 4 Mutual Dependence of KSCM Voter Base with Other Parties**

	KSCM10	KSCM06	KSCM02	KSCM98	KSCM96
CSSD10	0.470	0.459	0.512	0.387	0.239
CSSD06	0.392	0.375	0.430	0.310	0.153
CSSD02	0.168	0.162	0.160	0.118	0.043
KSCM10	1	0.967	0.915	0.887	0.819
KSCM06	0.967	1	0.958	0.937	0.878
KSCM02	0.915	0.958	1	0.915	0.845
ODS10	-0.619	-0.599	-0.598	-0.503	-0.341
ODS06	-0.531	-0.495	-0.454	-0.447	-0.264
ODS02	0.258	-0.494	-0.455	-0.448	-0.272
KDU06	-0.224	-0.278	-0.373	-0.223	-0.315
SZ06	-0.362	-0.337	-0.299	-0.330	-0.207
SPR-RSC 98	0.386	0.450	0.560	0.371	0.338
SPR-RSC 96	0.503	0.570	0.634	0.482	0.451
US98	-0.617	-0.618	-0.667	-0.553	-0.421

Source: author's calculations; www.volby.cz

Looking at the map showing long-term trends after 1992, it is evident that the Communist Party's voter base is located in areas which have been socially marginalized to a certain extent, the former Sudetenland and areas where the transformation of the previous two decades has not been entirely successful. Comparing the party's results to those of the Czech Social Democratic Party, KSCM has its greatest support in Bohemia and Southern Moravia, as opposed to the

industrial Ostrava area. Its highest concentration of voters is clearly located in the Southern Moravian region and along the border between the Usti nad Labem and Central Bohemia regions. In Southern Moravia, the focus is the area around Znojmo and the nearby areas of Ivancice and Oslavany, where previous studies have already shown a higher concentration of KSCM voters[7]. In the Southern Moravia area, the districts around Trebic and Vyskov, [8] as well as the Mikulov area, also show a higher concentration of voters. The situation in the area around the border between Central Bohemia and the Usti region is similar, as well as for Rakovnik, Chomutov and Louny. But the Tachov district is clearly in first place in long-term comparisons. Support for KSCM exceeded 30% in the 2002 elections. Smaller localities which are areas of super voter support also include Cheb and Bruntal. Long-term comparison shows Hradec Kralove and Zlin to be areas with minimum support for the communist program, with the only exceptions being the Kostelec nad Orlici unit for Hradec Kralove and the Kromeriz unit for Zlin.

Map No. 2 KSCM Voter Support Regions 1996-2010
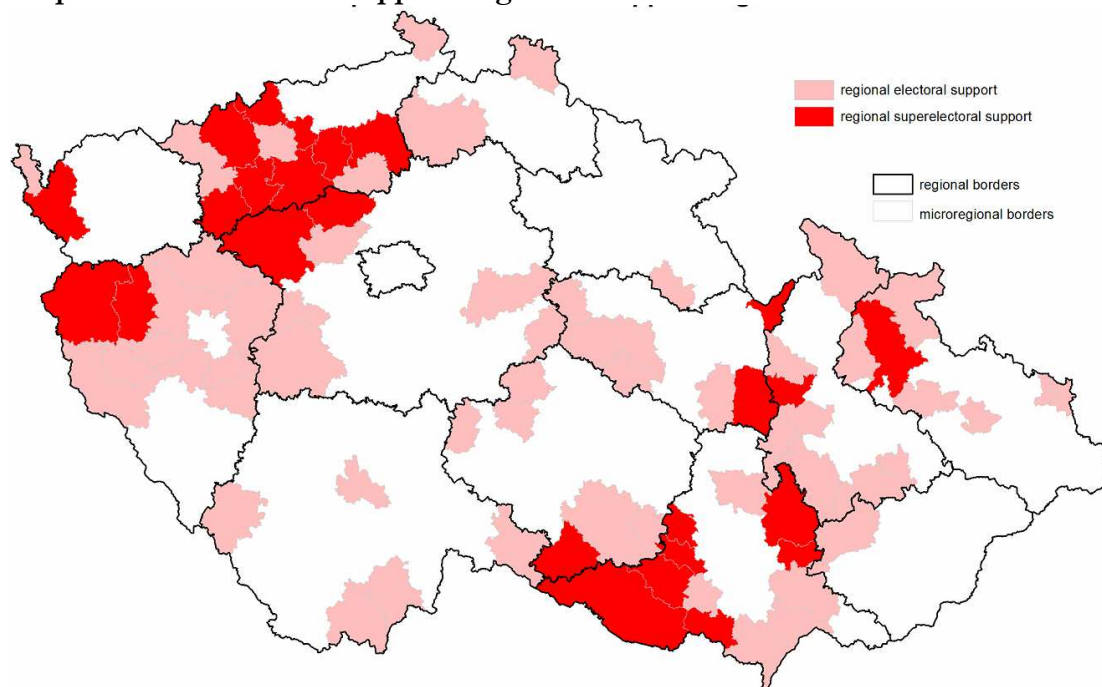
Source: author's map/data; www.volby.cz

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[7] Based upon historical circumstances and long-term monitoring of the above-average support for KSCM, the author is of the opinion that social characteristics based upon historical circumstances are at the root of this (Franěk 1975)

[8] Both Trebic and Vyskov enjoyed a high status under the previous regime because they were the location of military units or nuclear power facilities.

4.3. SMER - SD

Compared to Czech parties, SMER got off to a late start. The party really only became established during the first decade of this century. Its voter support and success in Slovakia, however, has been significant and, at the time of writing, the party is getting ready for early elections in which voter preference polls show it may obtain an absolute majority of parliamentary mandates. However, let us return to the importance of its impact in the short term. After 2002 and another phase of being part of the opposition, SMER definitely set out on the path towards having a social democratic profile, which was, paradoxically, demonstrated by an increase in votes in rural areas (Krivý 2011). In 2006, Robert Fico's party won the elections for the first time and put together a government coalition with the formerly dominant HZDS, which had become a marginal party over the years, and the radical right-wing SNS. After a period of isolation, these parties thus shared power thanks to SMER's victory, with whom they had jointly criticized the right-wing governing coalition. More detailed information on where the SMER voter base may be found comes from studying the relations between a number of Slovak political parties and their voter base.

Table No. 4 Mutual Relations between the SMER-SD Voter Base and Other Parties

	SMER-SD 2010	SMER-SD 2006	SMER 2002
SMER – SD 2010	1	0.940	0.680
SMER – SD 2006	0.940	1	0.737
SMER 2002	0.680	0.737	1
HZDS 2010	0.433	0.479	0.217
HZDS 2006	0.683	0.499	0.470
HZDS 2002	0.807	0.807	0.481
HZDS 1998	0.858	0.858	0.399
SNS 2010	0.514	0.332	0.182
SNS 2006	0.582	0.410	0.275
SDKÚ – DS 2002	-0.446	-0.377	0.025
SDKÚ - DS 2006	-0.394	-0.331	0.092
SDKÚ - DS 2010	-0.472	-0.403	0.05
Most - Híd	-0.775	X	X
SMK 2006	-0.705	-0.688	-0.724
KDH 2010	0.235	0.183	0.147
KDH 2006	0.268	0.203	0.182
KDH 2002	0.284	0.220	0.185
KSS 2002	0.575	0.595	0.439

Source: author's calculations/data; www.statistics.sk

The table shows us in greater detail that, in 2002, SMER underwent a certain evolution and the relation of its voter base to those of other political parties changed. Voter stability gradually increased, with values for the years between 2002 and 2006 reaching almost perfect agreement – a value of 0.94. In terms of its impact on other political parties, it is obvious that the gradual

growth in votes for SMER changed what was originally a nonexistent relationship between SMER and SDKU-DS on the right into a negative one, something which also happened with parties representing the Hungarian-speaking minority in Slovakia. Very high positive values of the correlation coefficient are found for the relationship with HZDS and, in 2002, with KSS, as well. Also interesting is the growing positive dependence between the support for SMER and that for SNS, which has shown a clear growth tendency since 2002. The final party for which there is long-term stable dependence is KDH with a moderately positive relationship with SMER.

In terms of geographic comparisons, Kyloušek and Pink (2009) pointed to a shift of the core voter base for social democratic parties from west to east between 2002 and 2006. Map No. 3 expands this period to take in 2010, as well. Such an extended map depicting electoral support areas includes a number of districts which, however, lie outside the large cities and create two greater groupings. The first lies in Central and Western Slovakia, with the most significant successful districts being Topolcany, Banovce nad Bebravou and Prievidza. This voter core is expanded to include neighbouring districts located outside the city boundaries of Trencin, Zilina, Zvolen and Ziar nad Hronom. The second area with a high level of Smer support lies in Eastern Slovakia along the borders with Poland and the Ukraine. Two units of super electoral support, the Snina and Medzilaborce districts, are found there, as well. In both these locations, the dominant position is held by ethnic Slovaks but due to a number of factors they may be seen as peripheral districts (Gyarfášová – Krivý 2007; Madleňák 2012).

Map No. 3 SMER electoral support area 2002 – 2010

regional electoral support
regional superelectoral support
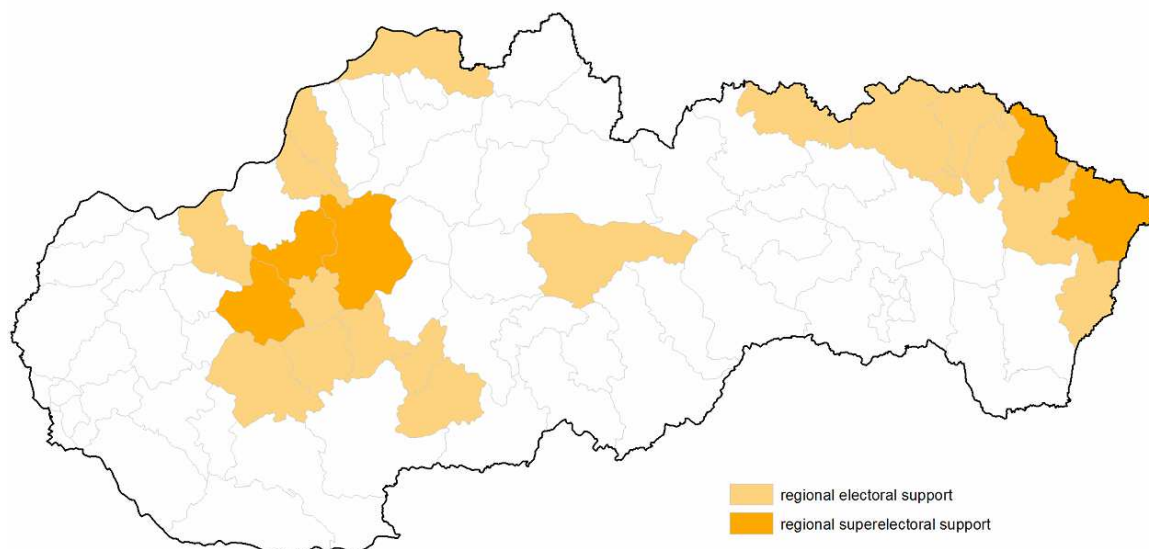
Source: author's map/data; www.statistics.sk

4.4. Party of the Democratic Left

In contrast to the continuous existence and only gradual change of the Czech Communist Party, the Slovak communists carried out peremptory revisions, a transformation leading to the foundation of the Party of the Democratic Left. The basis for this lay in an ideological shift from Marxism-Leninism towards social democracy and a modern left-wing party. Thanks to this transformation, the party managed to cast off the shroud of isolation with which it had been encumbered after the revolution of 1989 (Kopeček 2005). This party, in contrast to the Czech communists, rapidly entered the temporary limited government of Jozef Moravčík in 1994 along with the anticommunist wing of KDH and other representatives of the modern Slovak political scene. In the early elections of autumn 1994, the Party of the Democratic Left joined three other small political parties to form the *Spolocna Volba* (Common Vote) coalition. With regard to external circumstances[9] the election outcome cannot be seen in a positive light. With 10.4% of the vote, it barely crossed the threshold for a four-member coalition. After the elections, the party was in opposition and presented itself as a decided critic of government policy. It also went through an internal crisis (Kopeček 2005).

Table No. 5 Mutual Relations between the Spol. Volba, SDL Voter Base and Other Parties

	Spol. Volba 94	SDL 98
Sp.Volba 1994	1	0,535
HZDS 1994	-0,479	0,152
HZDS 1998	-0,470	-0,008
HZDS 2002	-0,430	-0,047
SNS 1994	-0,409	-0,113
SNS 1998	-0,590	-0,064
SNS 2006	-0,528	0,024
ZRS 1994	0,349	0,560
DU 1994	0,578	0,195
SDK 1998	0,475	0,120
SDKU 2002	0,545	0,206
KSS 2002	0,162	0,327
KSS 1998	0,232	0,429
SMER 2002	0,263	0,519
SMER 2006	0,035	0,433

Source: author's calculations/data; www.statistics.sk

A geographic comparison of voter support depicting the area of electoral and super electoral support shows a change in voters from Smer's prior incarnation. The area with the

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[9] The party had an external competitor, Združení Robotníků Slovenska (Slovakia Workers' Association), whose platform was also social democratic and which, in contrast to the Party of the Democratic Left, was in opposition before the elections. Another factor lay in the nature of early elections and the gradually solidifying Slovak party environment.

highest electoral response in both elections included the southeastern portion of Bratislava and the districts of Myjava, Liptovsky Mikulas, Bardejov and Medzilaborce. In addition to these locations, the electoral support area was extended to include the mainly rural districts of Senica, Krupina, Revuca, Svidnik and Turcianske Teplice, as well the midsize towns of Spisska Nova Ves and Martin. Completing this group were the two purely urban districts of Banska Bystrica and Northwest Bratislava IV. In comparison to its prior distribution, this time SMER voter support combined both urban and rural environments. Bringing the Eastern Slovakia periphery into view, urban central and semicentral sections are also represented.

Map No. 4 SDL Voter Support Regions 1994-1998
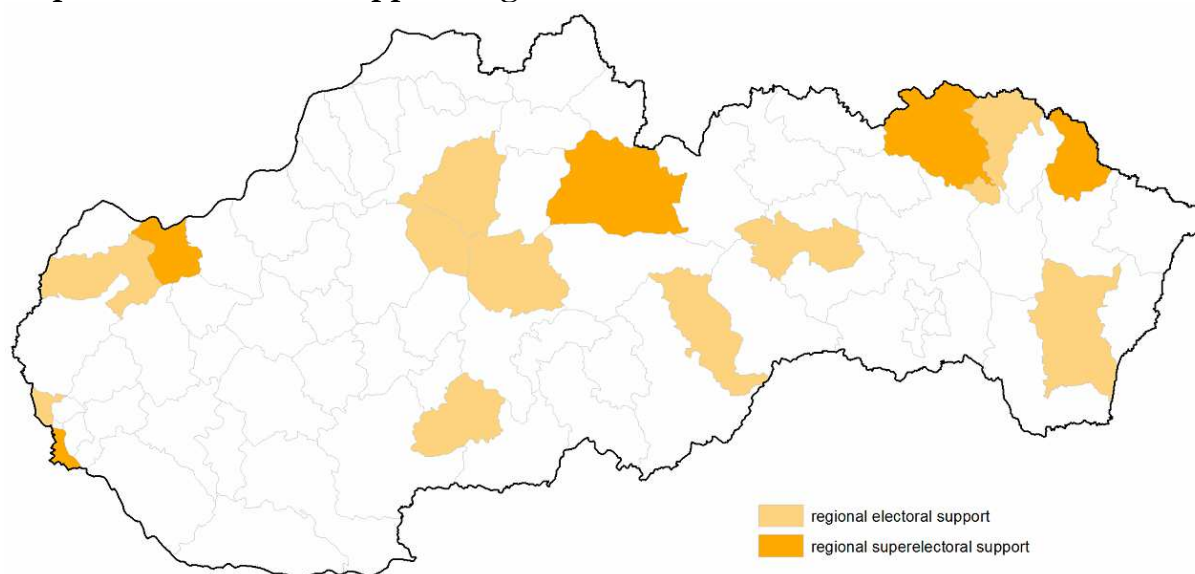
Source: author's map/data; www.statistics.sk

5. Interpretation of Voter Support Distribution

Now we shall examine the data using the tools of multivariate analysis: In our case, the dependable variable will be the electoral base of the parties being studied and the independent variables which will help us delineate the rules of electoral behaviour will include unemployment, urbanization, income, and religiosity, expressed as the proportion of inhabitants in the Catholic Church. Detailed results of the regression analysis, including the Coefficient of Determination,[10] are given in the appendix.

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[10] The Coefficient of Determination shows the ratio of explained variance to total variance and confirms the validity of our individual conclusions. The higher its value, the greater the explanatory power of the variables and the more precise the conclusions it permits, similarly as with the use of the correlation coefficient (Hendl 2006).

5.1. CSSD and KSCM

The tables included in Appendices No. 6 – 9 represent mutual dependencies between the electoral support for Czech Social Democrats and four selected variables. Based upon the values indicated, we may state that with the exception of 2002, when the Social Democratic Party completed its four-year period in government under the opposition compact, the Coefficient of Determination was fairly high and the conclusions of the preceding analysis may be considered valid. In the Czech environment, the major left-wing party found support especially in areas where lower incomes and higher unemployment may be expected and, taking into account 1996 values, in more urban environments, as well. In the last two elections in 2006 and 2010, a greater electoral support was recorded in areas with a higher ratio of inhabitants affiliated with the Catholic Church.

The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia and the Czech Social Democratic Party have their geographic electoral bases in different areas. The Coefficient of Determination for the Communists does not reach the level of its values for Social Democrats, but the conclusions may nevertheless be considered accurate. In the Czech Republic, Communist Party voters are located primarily in regions with a minimum number of religious people, areas with lower incomes, and outside city boundaries. Until 2006, it held true that the increasing proportion of unemployed brought increasing support for KSCM. By 2010, however, this factor had lost its explanatory power.

5.2. SMER and SDL

Mutual dependencies between the individual variables and the left-wing party electoral base point to identical or differing patterns compared with the Czech Republic. The Coefficient of Determination is not always higher but points to the existing relationship between the variables under study. SMER voters were repeatedly located primarily in areas with higher unemployment and lower incomes, along with a lower proportion of Catholic adherents. Contrary to expectation, SMER cannot be seen as a party supported by urban voters, as was apparent especially in the 2010 elections. SMER voters are very likely recruited from socially excluded areas characterized by a higher level of unemployment and lower incomes in smaller municipalities and towns. In contrast, most SDL voters in the 1994 and 1998 elections came from urban environments, where the proportion of people affiliated with the Catholic Church is low - and considering the Slovak environment, well below average. The unemployment and income variables were not as significant for voter support as with SMER, for which they played a significant role.

6. Conclusion

An attempt has been made here to compare the voter base of left-wing parties which have been repeatedly elected to the Czech and Slovak parliamentary bodies after 1993. Based upon basic and geographic comparisons, it may be said that the Czech electoral bases of the Czech Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party differ in terms of environment. While Social Democrats has long relied primarily on voters in the Moravian-Silesian Region, the secondary periphery, and the Ostrava urban zone, the Communist Party finds its strength in Bohemia and border areas. Voter support for the two left-wing parties in Slovakia is much more intertwined than is the case for Czech parties, but differences do exist. In three elections in a row, SMER has found its greatest voter support outside of urban areas in the eastern Slovakia periphery. There is also pronounced voter support for the party in Central Slovakia, particularly in nonurban areas once again. The Democratic Party of the Left, however, in prior elections in 1994 and 1998, also did well in urban agglomerations and failed to achieve significant support in the Central Slovakia region.

These findings are further analyzed and made more precise using regression analysis, in which it is demonstrated that left-wing political parties do not always obtain their voters from the same areas. In the Czech environment, Social Democrats finds voter support primarily in regions hit by high unemployment and with lower incomes. In the initial elections studied, the party's support was much more significant in urban environments, as well. However, the hypothesis that support for the Czech Social Democratic Party would be higher in regions with a lower proportion of religious believers was not confirmed. The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia's support is localized by the explanatory variables to areas with a higher number of residents living in nonurban environments, characteristically with higher unemployment and lower incomes. In contrast to Social Democrats, the hypothesis of an inverse relationship between the level of religiosity and support for the party was confirmed.

In Slovakia, SMER, like the Czech Social Democrats, found voter support primarily in regions with religious believers, higher unemployment and lower incomes. However, its voters do not live in urban environments. Rather, they live in rural areas, just as voters for the Czech Communist Party. The key variables affecting support for the Party of the Democratic Left are location in an urban environment and low levels of adherence to the Catholic faith. These are more important factors than income and unemployment, which form the cornerstone of SMER's support.

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Appendix

Table No. 6. Basic parameter of regress model ČSSD 2010

	B	Beta
Constant	34,476	
Catholic	0,041	0,145
Income	-1,266	-0,300
Unemployment	0,441	0,424
Urbanization	0,013	0,051
Coeff. determination	0,467	

Table No. 7. Basic parameter of regress model ČSSD 2006

	B	Beta
Constant	46,402	
Catholic	0,056	0,186
Income	-1,455	-0,321
Unemployment	0,429	0,384
Urbanization	0,023	0,086
Coeff. determination	0,470	

Table No. 8. Basic parameter of regress model ČSSD 2002

	B	Beta
Constant	24,499	
Catholic	0,045	0,190
Income	0,069	0,019
Unemployment	0,284	0,324
Urbanization	0,017	0,080
Coeff. determination	0,116	

Table No. 9 Basic parameter of regress model ČSSD 1998

	B	Beta
Constant	40,521	
Catholic	-0,023	-0,074
Income	-0,931	-0,202
Unemployment	0,625	0,550
Urbanization	0,008	0,031
Coeff. determination	0,483	

Table No. 10 Basic parameter of regress model ČSSD 1996

	B	Beta
Constant	36,996	

Catholic	-0,027	-0,082
Income	-1,233	-0,250
Unemployment	0,572	0,471
Urbanization	0,040	0,141
Coeff. determination	0,479	

Table No. 11. Basic parameter of regress model KSČM 2010

	B	Beta
Constant	36,865	
Catholic	-0,075	-0,363
Income	-1,542	-0,496
Unemployment	0,073	0,096
Urbanization	-0,031	-0,169
Coeff. determination	0,293	

Table No 12 Basic parameter of regress model KSČM 2006

	B	Beta
Constant	35,975	
Catholic	-0,089	-0,399
Income	-1,351	-0,401
Unemployment	0,174	0,210
Urbanization	-0,043	-0,217
Coeff. determination	0,314	

Table No 13 Basic parameter of regress model KSČM 2002

	B	Beta
Constant	44,122	
Catholic	-0,134	-0,418
Income	-1,577	-0,326
Unemployment	0,452	0,379
Urbanization	-0,048	-0,171
Coeff. determination	0,428	

Table No. 14 Basic parameter of regress model KSČM 1998

	B	Beta
Constant	27,228	
Catholic	-0,070	-0,337
Income	-0,898	-0,286
Unemployment	0,181	0,234
Urbanization	-0,047	-0,257
Coeff. determination	0,227	

Table No. 15 Basic parameter of regress model KSČM 1996

	B	Beta
Constant	23,678	
Catholic	-0,085	-0,433
Income	-0,644	-0,218
Unemployment	0,113	0,155
Urbanization	-0,044	-0,256
Coeff. determination	0,181	

Středoevropské politické studie   Ročník XIV, Číslo 2−3, s. 170–192
Central European Political Studies Review   Volume XIV, Issue 2–3, pp. 170–192
International Institute of Political Science, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University   ISSN 1212-7817

Table No. 16 Basic parameter of regress model SMER 2010

	B	Beta
Constant	84,865	
Catholic	-0,037	-0,057
Income	-2,455	-0,704
Unemployment	-0,427	-0,258
Urbanization	0,053	0,097
Coeff. determination	0,182	

Table No. 17. Basic parameter of regress model SMER 2006

	B	Beta
Constant	70,923	
Catholic	-0,103	-0,219
Income	-1,925	-0,747
Unemployment	-0,247	-0,202
Urbanization	0,066	0,164
Coeff. determination	0,245	

Table No. 18 Basic parameter of regress model SMER 2002

	B	Beta
Constant	28,746	
Catholic	-0,048	-0,281
Income	-0,544	-0,583
Unemployment	-0,246	-0,556
Urbanization	0,020	0,136
Coeff. determination	0,108	

Table No. 19 Basic parameter of regress model SDL 1998

	B	Beta
Constant	22,175	
Catholic	-0,106	-0,448
Income	-0,092	-0,071
Unemployment	-0,006	-0,010
Urbanization	0,028	0,139
Coeff. determination	0,189	

Table No. 20 Basic parameter of regress model SMER Spol. Volba (Comm. Vote) 1994

	B	Beta
Constant	12,844	
Catholic	-0,103	-0,547
Income	0,100	0,098
Unemployment	0,042	0,087
Urbanization	0,042	0,260
Coeff. determination	0,441	

Map No. 5. Administrative division of the Czech Republic
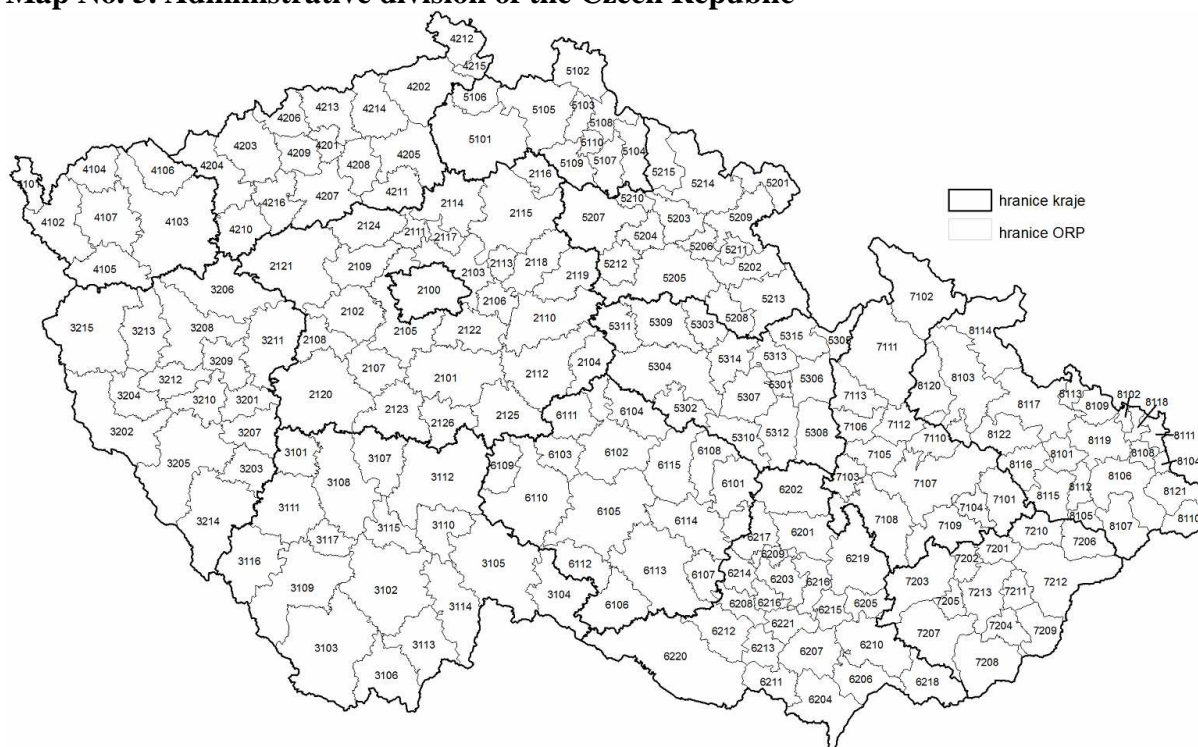
Id mapa	Název ORP	Id mapa	Název ORP	Id mapa	Název ORP
4101	Aš	3205	Klatovy	5311	Přelouč
2101	Benešov	2110	Kolín	7109	Přerov
2102	Beroun	7103	Konice	3210	Přeštice
4201	Bílina	8112	Kopřivnice	2120	Příbram
8101	Bílovec	5208	Kostelec nad Orlicí	2121	Rakovník
6201	Blansko	5305	Králíky	3211	Rokycany
3101	Blatná	3206	Kralovice	6214	Rosice
3201	Blovice	2111	Kralupy nad Vltavou	4211	Roudnice nad Labem
6202	Boskovice	4104	Kraslice	7206	Rožnov pod Radhoštěm
2103	Brandýs nad Labem - Stará Boleslav	8113	Kravaře	4212	Rumburk
6203	Brno	8114	Krnov	5213	Rychnov nad Kněžnou
5201	Broumov	7203	Kroměříž	8120	Rýmařov
8103	Bruntál	6209	Kuřim	2122	Říčany
6204	Břeclav	2112	Kutná Hora	2123	Sedlčany
6205	Bučovice	6210	Kyjov	5107	Semily
6101	Bystřice nad Pernštejnem	5306	Lanškroun	2124	Slaný
7201	Bystřice pod Hostýnem	5105	Liberec	6215	Slavkov u Brna
2104	Čáslav	7104	Lipník nad Bečvou	3110	Soběslav
2105	Černošice	4205	Litoměřice	4107	Sokolov
5101	Česká Lípa	5307	Litomyšl	3212	Stod
5301	Česká Třebová	7105	Litovel	3111	Strakonice
3102	České Budějovice	4206	Litvínov	3213	Stříbro
2106	Český Brod	4207	Louny	3214	Sušice
3103	Český Krumlov	4208	Lovosice	6111	Světlá nad

					Sázavou
8104	Český Těšín	7204	Luhačovice	5312	Svitavy
3104	Dačice	2113	Lysá nad Labem	6216	Šlapanice
4202	Děčín	4105	Mariánské Lázně	7110	Šternberk
5202	Dobruška	2114	Mělník	7111	Šumperk
2107	Dobříš	6211	Mikulov	3112	Tábor
3202	Domažlice	3107	Milevsko	3215	Tachov
5203	Dvůr Králové nad Labem	2115	Mladá Boleslav	5108	Tanvald
8105	Frenštát pod Radhoštěm	2116	Mnichovo Hradiště	6112	Telč
8106	Frýdek-Místek	7106	Mohelnice	4213	Teplice
5102	Frýdlant	5308	Moravská Třebová	6217	Tišnov
8107	Frýdlant nad Ostravicí	6106	Moravské Budějovice	3113	Trhové Sviny
7213	Zlín	6212	Moravský Krumlov	5214	Trutnov
8108	Havířov	4209	Most	6113	Třebíč
6102	Havlíčkův Brod	5209	Náchod	3114	Třeboň
5302	Hlinsko	6107	Náměšť nad Oslavou	8121	Třinec
8109	Hlučín	3207	Nepomuk	5109	Turnov
6206	Hodonín	2117	Neratovice	3115	Týn nad Vltavou
7202	Holešov	5210	Nová Paka	7207	Uherské Hradiště
5303	Holice	6108	Nové Město na Moravě	7208	Uherský Brod
3203	Horažďovice	5211	Nové Město nad Metují	7112	Uničov
3204	Horšovský Týn	8102	Bohumín	4214	Ústí nad Labem
5204	Hořice	5106	Nový Bor	5313	Ústí nad Orlicí
2108	Hořovice	5212	Nový Bydžov	7209	Valašské Klobouky
5205	Hradec Králové	8115	Nový Jičín	7210	Valašské Meziříčí
7101	Hranice	2118	Nymburk	4215	Varnsdorf
6103	Humpolec	3208	Nýřany	6114	Velké Meziříčí
6207	Hustopeče	8116	Odry	6218	Veselí nad Moravou
4102	Cheb	7107	Olomouc	3116	Vimperk
4203	Chomutov	8117	Opava	8122	Vítkov
6104	Chotěboř	8118	Orlová	7211	Vizovice
5304	Chrudim	8119	Ostrava	2125	Vlašim
6208	Ivančice	4106	Ostrov	3117	Vodňany
5103	Jablonec nad Nisou	7205	Otrokovice	2126	Votice
8110	Jablunkov	6109	Pacov	5215	Vrchlabí
5206	Jaroměř	5309	Pardubice	7212	Vsetín
7102	Jeseník	6110	Pelhřimov	5314	Vysoké Mýto
5207	Jičín	3108	Písek	6219	Vyškov
6105	Jihlava	3209	Plzeň	7113	Zábřeh
5104	Jilemnice	4210	Podbořany	6220	Znojmo
3105	Jindřichův Hradec	2119	Poděbrady	5315	Žamberk
4204	Kadaň	6213	Pohořelice	4216	Žatec
3106	Kaplice	5310	Polička	6115	Žďár nad Sázavou
4103	Karlovy Vary	2100	Praha	5110	Železný Brod
8111	Karviná	3109	Prachatice	6221	Židlochovice
2109	Kladno	7108	Prostějov	-	-

Map No. 6. Administrative divisions of the Slovak Republic
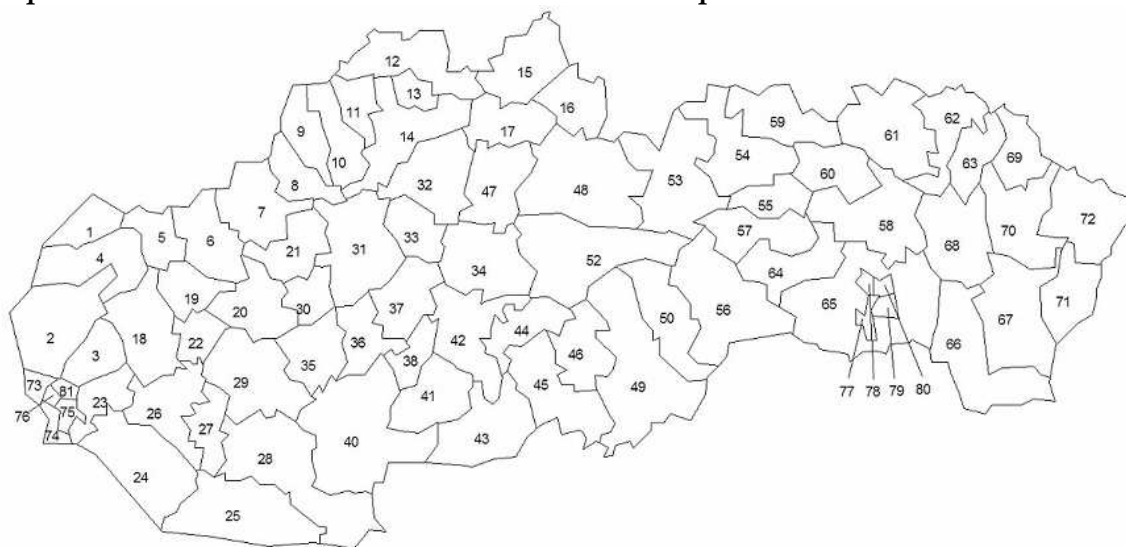
1	Skalica	11	Bytča	21	Bánovce n. B.	31	Prievidza	42	Zvolen	53	Poprad	63	Stropkov	73	Bratislava IV
2	Malacky	12	Čadca	22	Hlohovec	32	Martin	43	Veľký Krtíš	54	Kežmarok	64	Gelnica	74	Bratislava V
3	Pezinok	13	Kysucké Nové Mesto	23	Senec	33	Turčianske Teplice	44	Detva	55	Levoča	65	Košice - okolí	75	Bratislava II
4	Senica	14	Žilina	24	Dunajská Streda	34	Banská Bystrica	45	Lučenec	56	Rožňava	66	Trebišov	76	Bratislava I
5	Myjava	15	Námestovo	25	Komárno	35	Zlaté Moravce	46	Poltár	57	Spišská Nová Ves	67	Michalovce	77	Košice I
6	Nové Mesto n. V.	16	Tvrdošín	26	Galanta	36	Žarnovica	47	Ružomberok	58	Prešov	68	Vranov na	78	Košice I
7	Trenčín	17	Dolný Kubín	27	Šaľa	37	Žiar nad Hronom	48	Liptovský Mikuláš	59	Stará Ľubovňa	69	Medzilaborce	79	Košice IV
8	Ilava	18	Trnava	28	Nové Zámky	38	Banská Štiavnica	49	Rimavská Sobota	60	Sabinov	70	Humenné	80	Košice II
9	Púchov	19	Piešťany	29	Nitra	40	Levice	50	Revúca	61	Bardejov	71	Sobrance	81	Bratislava III
10	Považská Bystrica	20	Topoľčany	30	Partizánske	41	Krupina	52	Brezno	62	Svidník	72	Snina		