Media coverage of far right parties in Slovakia and the Czech Republic (research design)

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Introduction

On April 15, 2012, a 15-year-old boy was admitted into the hospital and claimed he had been brutally beaten up by Roma in the Moravian town of Břeclav. The teenager was left in serious condition and lost a kidney, all as he stated because he did not have a cigarette for the attackers. The Czech media immediately reported about the incident and took two different approaches. The first group of the media informed about unknown attackers with headlines such as “Three men beat up 15-year-old boy over a cigarette” (e.g., Czech television, TV Nova, Lidovky.cz, iDNES.cz). The second group's media concluded that offenders were of Roma ethnicity with headlines stated that “Boy beaten up by Roma, lost a kidney” (e.g., blesk.cz, TV Prima, Aha!). In the next days the media were broadly covering the incident, often suggesting the beating was the Roma attack (e.g., TV Nova, Novinky.cz) and shortly afterwards the story crossed the borders. Slovakian media noticed the alleged beating and with headlines such as “Roma beat up a 15-year-old over a cigarette” (TV Markíza, Cas.sk, Topky.sk) informed the audience about the incident.

The incident stirred strong anti-Roma sentiment in the town of Břeclav and raised racial tensions around the Czech Republic. A week after the alleged attack Workers’ Youth (Dělnická mládež), a youth movement of the far right political party Workers’ Party of Social Justice (Dělnická strana sociální spravedlnosti, DSSS), organized an anti-Roma march through the town. Some two thousand citizens of Břeclav took to the streets, joined Workers’ Youth and members of DSSS in what they called a “march against gypsy violence”. Protesters were demonstrating against Romani people whom they accuse of terrorizing the local inhabitants and were holding slogans such as “Let’s stop terror of Gypsies”. During the march the speech was given also by chairman of DSSS Tomáš Vandas and members of the party were collecting signatures in support of the presidential candidacy for him. The singer Michal David held a benefit concert, raising 100,000 Czech crowns that were donated to the boy’s family. As a direct result of the alleged beating and the pressure from citizens, town approved a number of security measures and invested money in a better camera system.

Some parts of the media both in the Czech Republic and Slovakia in next three weeks reported about “another Roma attacks”. Television station Nova broadcasted story about young girl attacked and cut by unknown offenders in which reporter concluded that the girl was attacked by Roma. Another television station Prima broadcasted various alleged incidents of “Roma criminality” in the Czech Republic. In Slovakia television station Markíza informed

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about “almost the same situation as in Czech Břeclav”, in which “Roma fellow citizens beat up older bus driver over a cigarette”. News server Topky.sk informed with headline “Roma attacks continue” about “increase of brutal attacks of the Roma gangs on children in the Czech”. Also popular newspaper Nový Čas reported about “another drunk Roma attacker”.

On May 23, 2012, media informed that the police in Břeclav called off an investigation into three Roma who allegedly beat up a 15-year-old boy. Boy admitted that he caused his injuries himself by falling from a railing and confessed that the attack never took place. He said he had fabricated the attack because he was afraid of his mother’s reaction.

This story illustrates how media may produce the environment that forms favorable breeding ground for far right parties by stressing ethnic themes, in this case anti-Roma sentiment. Media may thus in times contribute to the success of the far right parties by emphasizing their issues and reporting about the parties and leaders themselves. Bobo (1997: 7) says that “images of racial minority groups in the media at once reflect and shape the attitudes and beliefs others will hold toward those groups” and the media may play a special linking role between the public and political elites. He states that it is important to assess whether the media environment is one that encourages or discourages thinking of racial inequality. After the case of Břeclav and “following attacks” racial tensions among citizens and news about the crimes assigned to the Roma minority with the main emphasis on race have increased in the media significantly. Some parts of media reported about alleged attacks as part of the continuing Roma brutality. The media might have thus framed the complex issue into the simplified and exaggerated pattern of Roma violence. In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), as we present in the paper, the issue of Roma minority is one the most important themes emphasized by far right parties.

The paper proposes a research design for analysis of the media coverage of the far right parties and their issues in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. We identify the media content as external supply side factor (an independent variable) influencing the opportunities for the far right parties and claim the media play an important role in the success and failure of the far right parties. As observed by Mudde (2007), the role of the media and news media content in the success and failure of parties of the far right has been mostly neglected in previous research and received little serious attention in social scientific studies. The most previous studies trying to explain the success of the far right have ignored environment provided by media. Only recently has been media content identified as an independent variable (Goot 1999; Mazzoleni el al. 2003; Walgrave, De Swert 2004; Boomgarden, Vliegenthart 2007, 2009; Ellinas 2010; Akkerman 2011). We further consolidate the argument that news media content may be important as a factor explaining the success or failure of the parties of the far right.

The research asks two questions: 1) how the media frame the far right parties and their issues and 2) whether the media contribute to the success of the far right parties by emphasizing their issues and by covering the parties themselves. We will build upon agenda-setting and framing frameworks. The research will sum up the main issues that the parties focus upon and analyze the salience of these issues in media as well as refer to the intensity of the reporting issues and parties. The paper in first part deals with the inconsistent
conceptualization and terminology which describes parties of the far right. Second part resumes the existing research on far right parties and role of the media in success of these parties. The third part introduces outline for the framework which will be used in the thesis. The fourth part deals with the far right in CEE. It shows the differences between the far right in Western Europe (WE) and CEE and proposed the main issues of the far right identified by literature. The fifth part of the paper continues with the methodology of the analysis and the summary.

**Conceptualization of terminology**

The terminology both in the literature and the media used to describe parties of the far right is rather inconsistent and confusing. Until the 1980s the term extreme right was synonymous with that of neo-fascism (Ignazi 2006). Since the 1980s the new parties emerged and older ones innovated themselves different terms have been used interchangeably. The most used terms include extreme right, far right, right-wing extremism, far right extremism, radical right, populist radical right, anti-immigrant, ultra right, ultra-nationalism, radical right-wing populism, xenophobic populism, populist nationalism, racist extremism, (neo)-fascism, (neo)-Nazism. Some authors also instead of categorizing parties together into a single family, point to the existence of different subgroups within the larger family of the far right (Carter 2005; Kitschelt, McGann 1995).

The most basic distinction recognized by scholars is the one between extremism and radicalism. While extremism is associated with the antithesis and rejection of democracy, radicalism only questions fundamental aspects of the liberal democratic rule of law but does not ultimately seek its replacement (Eatwell 2000). The term extremism is thus not suitable for describing political parties since parties with anti-democratic attitudes are being banned in contemporary democracies. The most frequently used terms to describe political parties in the work of the Western European researchers are extreme right and radical right. However, the term extreme right does not stand for extremist and is often overused, especially in the media in order to deliberately de-legitimize groups with the “extreme” label (Mareš 2003).

There has been a growing tendency to use the term populist to refer to a subgroup of the parties of the far right. Most typically, the term populism usually used to describe voter-driven politics, where parties offer the electorate what is currently popular (Eatwell 2000). Betz (1994) in his book used the terminology of radical right-wing populism and radical populist right parties to describe the parties of late 1980s and early 1990s that "are radical in their rejection of the established socio-cultural and socio-political system and their advocacy of individual achievement, a free market, and a drastic reduction of the role of the state without, however, openly questioning the legitimacy of democracy in general” (Betz 1994: 4). Mudde (2007) later provided a new term describing these parties - populist radical right. Parties of the populist radical right are according to Mudde characteristic of combination of nativism (nationalism and xenophobia), authoritarianism (the belief in a strictly ordered society) and populism (wisdom of a ‘little man’). Main critique of this concept is that the definition of the populist radical right might be useful to capture the parties that Mudde
examined, but will be less useful outside the temporal confinements of his study because the concept is frozen within time and space (Zaslove 2009).

Whereas many of the terms have various weaknesses, the term ‘far right’ presents certain advantages. The concept is well-established in the region of CEE and is the most used in the work of CEE political scientists as well as among some of the WE researchers (Fiala, Mareš 2000; Mareš 2003; Bale 2003; Cole 2005; Kopeček 2007; Kupka, Laryš, Smolík 2009; Smolík 2010; Van Spanje 2011). The term also does not provide as much semantic confusion as the term extreme right and is so far mostly unburdened by the media. The paper will therefore follow the concept of the far right.

Notwithstanding these terminological disputes, according to Mudde (2000) there is a rather broad consensus in the field that the term describes primarily an ideology in one form or another. But the question is what this ideology holds. Although some scientists define the far right on the basis of single feature (especially the immigration), Mudde (1999) in his work examines the single-issue thesis based on immigration and rejects the thesis on all counts. Most of the scholars define the term as an ideology that is constituted of a combination of several different features varying from one to more than ten. Eatwell (2000) argues that four features figure the most prominently in the academic literature: hostility to democracy, racism, support for strong state and nationalism. Other authors among the factors include also rejection of the multiculturalism and immigration from outside of Europe (Betz 1994), revisionism, exclusionism and traditional ethics (Mudde's maximum definition), critique of the political elites (Hainsworth 2008), etc.

Mudde (2000) in his work established the four ideological features of the parties of the far right – nationalism, xenophobia, welfare chauvinism and law and order. Nationalism represents the belief that the state (political unit) and the nation or ethnic community (the cultural unit) should be congruent. Xenophobia presents fear, hate or hostility to groups that are perceived as ‘strange’, such as foreigners or immigrants. Feature of Law and order represents the belief in order and authority, accompanied by the demand for strong punishment of breach of the rules and a strong police force. Welfare chauvinism expects that socio-economic policy (jobs, social benefits, etc.) should be directed first and foremost to the ‘own people’. This includes not only foreign people, but also ethnic minorities. In this paper we will follow conceptualization of Mudde's four features' definition.

The far right and media
In most discussions on politics in general, and on far right parties in particular, a lot of power is ascribed to the media. Notwithstanding that there is a growing academic literature on the role of the media in the success and failure of far right parties in the last decade, the research has so far received little serious attention when comparing with other variables affecting fortunes of the far right.

Eatwell (2003) argues that although media are in general hostile to the far right, they may at times pander to racial stereotyping and there have been occasions when parts of the media have overtly supported far right parties. The rise of the Italian Social Movement (MSI)/Allenaze Nationale during the 1993-94 “coincided with remarkably favorable coverage
from Berlusconi media empire, which included three most-watched private television channels” (Eatwell 2003: 57). Haider’s electoral success “would almost certainly not be nearly so impressive were it not for the support he receives from the Austrian daily Neue Kronen Zeitung” (Wodak, Pelinka 2002: 197). The newspaper Kronen Zeitung has the highest circulation rates per capita in Western Europe2 (Akkerman 2011). Since Haider became leader of the Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) in 1986 Kronen Zeitung endorsed Haider’s views on “foreigner problem” and supported his anti-immigration initiative petition (Wodak, Pelinka 2002: 197). According to Mudde (2007) Kronen Zeitung not only pushed the issues of the FPÖ, it also presented the party as the political voice of common sense on the issues. Similarly, in Poland there used to exist deep relationship between the far right and Catholic Radio Maryja (Maria) and its extensive media network. The radio station supported especially the party Solidarity Electoral Coalition (Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność, AWS) and in the 2001 parliamentary elections it was essential in getting the newly founded League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin) to the Sejm (polish parliament) (Mudde 2007).

Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2007) provided evidence for the relevance and importance of taking media content into account when explaining the rise and decline of anti-immigrant populist parties. They found a significant positive influence of news on vote intention for anti-immigrant parties in the Netherlands from 1990 to 2002. The more news media reported about immigration-related topics, the higher the aggregate share of vote intention for anti-immigrant parties, even when controlling for real-world developments. In another study Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2009) have shown that news about immigrants matters for attitudes towards immigration and immigrants. Stewart et al. (2003) argue that the media do play a role in the emergence of the parties of the far right by selecting stories that are known to appeal to the public.

Art (2006: 8) states that when the media denounce parties of the far right and launch campaigns against them, "some contumacious voters might be attracted to the far right, but the net result is to weaken public support for it". But when parts of the media are either quiet or supportive of the far right, this can allow the far right parties to overcome their marginalization and attract more supporters (Art 2006). This is supported also by Ellinas (2010) who concluded that the far right is more likely to thrive in those political contexts in which the media is willing to grant it exposure. He argues that in some settings the media may help the far right to capitalize on the political opportunities available in the electoral market and to achieve electoral breakthrough, whereas in others it may block its entry into the mainstream political discourse.

The media may help far right parties through their agenda-setting function (Eatwell 2003). Walgrave and de Swert (2004) analyze the impact of media coverage on support for the Flemish Block (Vlaams Blok, VB) between 1991 and 2000 and built their argument on the agenda-setting by the media and issue ownership by parties. They investigate whether Flemish media contribute to the success of VB by emphasizing the themes of the party. They

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2 The newspaper Kronen Zeitung’s daily readership is estimated to approximately 2.7 million readers, which represents around 38 percent of the Austrian population.
identify four main issues that VB "owns" and find that certain topics (in this case crime and immigration) receive extensive and growing media attention and series analysis shows that this rise parallels the electoral growth of the far right party.

The success of far right parties is sometimes ascribed to alleged nativist or populist campaigns of parts of the media, especially tabloids and commercial television, or there is even suggested a relationship of mutual dependence (Deutchman, Ellison 1999). The popular press is supposed to address issues of direct concern to ordinary people, to display an anti-elite bias\(^3\) and to focus on conflict and drama. These newspapers most compulsively target mass audiences and therefore tend to display an anti-elitist popularization and express hostility to political elites (Blumler, Kavanagh 1999; Mazzoleni et al. 2003; Hallin, Mancini 2004). It is argued that the media effects are likely to be most pronounced when messages are unambiguous and repetitive, while these characteristics are supposed to be hallmarks of tabloid newspapers (Art 2007). Tabloids which use the techniques such as conflict, emotionalisation, melodrama, anti-elitism or infotainment are thus supposed to be a platform for far right parties because of sharing some of the key traits.

In these respects, the popular press is supposed to offer favorable opportunity structure for far right parties (Akkerman 2011) and should therefore devote more attention to issues of the far right than serious press. However, research shows that quality newspapers devote as much attention to these issues as tabloids (Walgrave, de Swert 2004; Boomgaarden, Vliegenthart 2007). The opposition between serious and popular press regarding a bias towards far right politics cannot be taken at face value (Akkerman 2011). Moreover, Akkerman (2011) states that findings throw into doubt whether the popular press can be clearly and consistently distinguished from the serious press in subject matter and political orientation. According to his study popular newspapers are neither more sympathetic towards far right parties nor more supportive towards leaders of these parties than quality papers.

Moreover, there is a tendency to define tabloid and serious press in a dichotomous way or to locate newspapers along single tabloid-quality dimension. However, Sparks and Tulloch (2000) argues that all newspapers can be located along the single dimension that ranges from exclusive attention to sports, scandal and popular entertainment in the ideal tabloid to exclusive attention to politics, economics and society in the ideal quality newspaper. In this definition the tabloid and quality press is not considered binary opposition, rather a continuum, which raises a question whether there are clear-cut differences between tabloids and serious newspapers in subject matter (Akkerman 2011).

An alternative theory explaining the affinity of the media is based on the personalization and is related to the concept of infotainment. Media increasingly compete for audiences and for advertising revenues by focusing less on substantive news and more on personalities, conflict, the need for drama and "the new". This trend could also explain why the quality newspapers, as Akkerman (2011) argues, devote as much attention to issues of the far right as popular press. When the media, especially television, tend to focus on personality,

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\(^3\) The anti-elite thesis holds that tabloids share an anti-establishment attitude with far right parties (Akkerman 2011).
this helps leader-oriented parties and encourages more questioning of mainstream politicians, especially about broken promises and corruption (Eatwell 2003).

That said, sections of the media (either quality or popular) which use techniques to attract the interest of readers such as anti-elitism and emotionalisation mentioned above and the far right parties do share very similar issues and discourses. Consequently, these parts of the media are setting a public agenda highly favorable for far right parties, which raise similar issues and present solutions in line with those suggested in these media (Walgrave, de Swert 2004; Mudde 2007).

Research suggests that leadership strength and personal affinity effectively influence voting behavior and it appears to be important even more in explaining the success of far right political parties (Boomgaarden, Vliegenthart 2007). While leaders of the parties are the most visible representative of the party in the media, and as such they determine to a large extent party's image among public, according to Bos, Der Brug and De Vreese (2011) there are two theoretical reasons to expect that party leaders are particularly important for far right parties. First, these parties are new, and are thus even more dependent upon the media to provide them with a platform than leaders of more established parties to bring across their message and image. Second, these parties are loosely organized around the central leader (Bos, Der Brug and De Vreese 2011). Some of these parties do not even have formal organizational structure as other parties which is in line with their antiparty rhetoric (Mudde 2007). In 2000 Romanian presidential elections, leader of Greater Romania Party (Partidul România Mare, PRM) Corneliu Tudor performed the best of all candidates in the television debates before the first round of the election, shifting the opinions of a considerable portion of the electorate, and placed the second in the elections (Mudde 2007).

Even a lot of power is given to the media on politics in general, and on the far right parties in particular, within the far right parties there is an opposite view on the role of the media. Mostly the smaller far right parties and their leaders blame media for the lack of opportunities to be presented in the media, for intentional blockage of their actions and agenda (Eatwell 2003), or for manipulating the information against them. Far right parties in Slovakia Slovak national party (Slovenská národná strana, SNS) and People's Party Our Slovakia (Ľudová strana Naša Slovensko, ĽSNS) both criticize behavior of the domestic media. SNS talks about deformed informational environment and blockage of the party in Slovak media. ĽSNS argues that the party achieved the same results without the help of the “incapacitated Jewish media owned by foreigners” (Kluknavská 2012).

Theoretical framework
The paper builds the theoretical framework on the agenda-setting and framing of the media. According to the agenda-setting theory the media influence the salience of issues held by the public. When media emphasize a topic, public receiving the message will consider this topic to be important (Cohen 1963; McCombs, Shaw 1972). It comes from the basic idea that although different people may feel differently about the same issue, they may think about the same issue as of important one. The first assumption that underlie research on the agenda-setting is that the media do not (and can not) reflect reality, but filter what is happening and
then shape the informational environment, and thus shape the perceived reality. The second assumption lies with the argument that media attention on a few issues leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other ones. Those problems that receive prominent attention in the national media then become the problems the viewing public regards as the nation’s most important ones (Art 2007).

Numerous studies established correlations between media and public priorities (Dearing, Rogers 1996; McCombs, Shaw 1993). According to Cohen (1963) media may not be successful much of the time “in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about”. Various media outlets establish a broad informational and cultural environment (Bobo 1997) in which certain issues and perspectives are dominant compared to others.

While the agenda-setting approach by emphasizing the salience of issues may miss valuable contextual information about the issues, the framing approach needs to be incorporated into our theoretical framework. The basic argument of the framing is that an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple considerations (Chong, Druckman 2007). According to Entman (1993: 55) to frame is to "select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in the communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation". While the media should ideally provide a balanced account of all the issues, the media necessarily provides a particular framing of reality and thus a partial or biased account (Fryberg et al. 2011).

Framing has been useful framework in understanding the media’s role in political life. Specifically, the way in which the media frames arguments plays an important role in how social and political issues are presented in the national debate, as well as how people respond to this controversial issue (Fryberg et al. 2011). Although the media often use the frames that political elites construct, they play a key role in choosing which frames to use. Moreover, the media can also create their own frames. The framing of media coverage can create societal discourse or also affect public understanding. For example, presenting a story from an political, economic, moral or conflict perspective may lead the public to give more salience to these aspects of the issue and less salience to other aspects.

Far right parties in Central and Eastern Europe

The majority of research on far right parties has focused on countries in Western Europe, either as monographs (e. g. Carter 2005; Givens 2005; Art 2006; Ignazi 2006; Ellinas 2010; Norris 2005; Hainworth 2008) and edited volumes (e. g. Mazzoleni et al. 2003; Merkel, Weinberg et al. 2003) or journal articles (e. g. Eatwell 2000, Bale 2003; Van Der Brug 2005; Art 2007; Rydgren 2007; Arzheimer 2009). Only little research has been done on Central and Eastern Europe (but see Ramet 1999; Minkenberg 2002; Mudde 2005; Kupka, Laryš, Smolík 2009; Bastl et al. 2011). The majority of the literature on the far right in CEE consists of journal articles and edited volumes or handbooks.

According to Mudde (2005, 2007) much literature on CEE argues that the region is fundamentally different from "the West", including WE, and should therefore not be studied
with similar theories. Kopeček (2007) for example argues that the situation in Central Europe after 1989 has led to differences in the profiles of the region’s far right groups. Mudde (2007) who holds the opposite idea states that when comparing the far right in both regions the differences seem less striking than is often assumed. Even though differences do exist, concepts primary developed in WE can explain developments in contemporary CEE (Clark 2002; Mudde 2007). Along with this argument we reject that the concepts and theories that are used to study far right parties in the WE can not be a priori applied to the countries in CEE.

According to Mudde (2005) some clear developments are noticeable within much of the region of the CEE. The vast majority of far right parties in CEE is addressing post-communist issues such as corruption, minority issues or European Union (EU) rather than recall a communist or pre-communist past. In organizational terms, far right groups are increasingly mobilizing independently, instead of as parts of larger umbrella organizations (Mudde 2005).

Furthermore, politics of the far right is not considered to be a major issue in the public and politics of CEE. Mudde (2005) states that mainstream political parties are more reluctant to distance themselves clearly from far right parties than in Western Europe and become active only when their political position is threatened by parties of the far right. Existing political parties can choose to cooperate with, or try to 'tame' far right parties and integrate them into the party system. Art (2006) suggests that cooperation and integration strategies ultimately strengthen parties of the far right. For example, in Slovakia and Romania parties of the far right were multiply times taken into the government. Mainstream parties in CEE are also more often sources of moderate nationalism than mainstream parties in WE (e. g. Slovakia, Hungary).

But both regions, CEE and WE, are not as homogenous as is often assumed and there are clear regional differences both in CEE and WE. First, the quality of democracy, culture, state of economy and social welfare in WE varies quite significantly and so do far right parties. Parties commonly seen as exemplifying the far right in WE such as Lega Nord in Italy, the FPÖ in Austria or the VB in Belgium can be regarded as highly diverse in their ideological appeals, organizational structures and leadership rhetoric (Norris 2005). Second, within the region of CEE mobilization of far right parties for past twenty years has shown diversity in developments of these parties and their electoral results and organizational patterns are far more different than similar.

According to Mudde (2005: 249), far right parties are not a major political force in CEE and if compared to far right parties in WE, they "look somewhat pathetic: (far) more extremist, but (far) less successful". Taking the results of the elections in which each party actually contested, we calculated that far right parties in CEE went from 7.2 percent of votes in first decade of 1990s to 5.47 percent of votes in the second decade of the 21st Century, with a mean decrease of 0.46 percent of vote between the years of 1990-2001 and 2002-2012 (see Table 1). In overall picture we see that the far right parties with exception of far right in Hungary and Bulgaria and a partially also in Poland have more or less declined in their support.
We make the distinction between three groups of countries in CEE according to the position of far right parties during some 20 years of their existence in the region. In the first group are countries where far right parties were electorally successful and were parts of the parliaments (or governments), but in the second part of the first decade of the 21st Century their popularity declined significantly (Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia and Romania). The second group consists of countries where far right parties had some electoral success in the 1990s, but later they have been unable to consolidate further electoral support (Estonia, the Czech Republic and Lithuania). In the third group are countries where far right parties were mostly unsuccessful in the 1990s, but in the second part of the first decade of 21st Century they gained significant electoral support (Hungary, Bulgaria). Latvia is rather ambivalent case with the single high support for the far right in the 1995 elections within the period of 1990-2010.

When concerning the main issues of far right parties in CEE, one finds similarities as well as differences with the WE. During the first decade after the fall of communism, the parties of the far right were more focused on the independency issues and national themes, but after the period of transformation to democracy another ideological features have gotten more salient in the majority of the countries in CEE. The four features identified by Mudde (2000) that are characteristic for parties of the far right are currently shared by parties in both the CEE and WE, but their direction or intensity differs in some cases.

The most striking difference between the far right in CEE and WE is the one of absence of anti-immigrant sentiment, which is due to the absence of immigration from the countries outside of Europe itself. Though in CEE immigration has so far remained a marginal concept, the xenophobia plays a vital role in another form. Xenophobic attitudes are in the

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Table 1. Results of parliamentary elections of far right parties in CEE by country (1990–2012).

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<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>8.14</td>
<td>9.36</td>
<td>7.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>-3.81</td>
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<td>Estonia</td>
<td>9.61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>-4.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>6.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>14.97</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.78</td>
<td>-2.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>-3.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>10.75</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>19.38</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>0.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>6.87</td>
<td>14.84</td>
<td>13.44</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>-2.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>9.07</td>
<td>9.44</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>-1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>10.02</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>-1.98</td>
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Mean vote 7.2 5.36 6.18 5.47 -0.46

Source: European election database (NSD) and calculations by the author.

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4 In 1995 parliamentary election the far right party Popular Movement for Latvia – Siegerist gained 14.97 percent of the vote. In 2010 and 2011 Latvian parliamentary elections the far right party National Alliance 7.67 and 13.88 percent of the national vote, making it the fourth most powerful party in the country.
region of CEE, and especially in the Central Europe, usually directed to Roma people. That is true especially for the region of our concern - the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but for example for Hungary as well.

Figure 1. Relations of the Roma and non-Roma population in the Czech Republic (in %).

In the Czech Republic there is rather strong anti-Roma sentiment when looking at the perceived relations of the Roma and non-Roma population throughout the years. From 1997 to 2012 up to 85 percent of the respondents stated that they feel bad relations of the Roma and non-Roma citizens with the moderately worsening situation in recent years (Figure 1). When comparing the relations of the Roma and non-Roma population in one's neighborhood (Figure 2), the situation is little better – up to 59 percent of the respondents stated they have bad relations between Roma and non-Roma in their neighborhood. The opinion research shows that respondents feel more tension between the two groups as perceived in the general than in one's experience. The Czech far right parties have reacted to this situation by launching campaigns and speeches against Roma.

In Slovakia the relations between Roma and non-Roma citizens appear to be similar to those in the Czech Republic. The 2008 opinion research showed that 68.8 percent of respondents residing in Slovakia would not want to have a Roma as a neighbour and 80.1 percent of respondents think that there are tensions or problematic relations between Roma people and the rest of the society around the country (SASD 2008). In 2010 opinion research 69.1 percent of respondents thought that the majority of Roma in Slovakia lives in bad conditions because they do not want to become adapted (SASD 2008).
In our previous work (Klušnavská 2012) we analyzed the 2012 election themes and election results of far right parties in Slovakia and found that both far right parties SNS and LSNS criticized the Roma minority in their electoral programs as well as in their speeches. Moreover, LSNS built its 2012 electoral campaign from the most part on anti-Roma agenda. The party calls the Roma minority "Gypsy extremists" and "lazy parasites". The party gained the most votes in regions with the highest concentration of Roma-settlements (Table 2) in both 2010 and 2012 parliamentary elections.

Table 2. The number of Roma-settlements in the region of Slovakia in 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bratislava</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Žilina</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trnava</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Banská Bystrica</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trenčín</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Prešov</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitra</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Košice</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic Government for Roma Communities.

We also found that the Roma settlement is situated in every town or village (or in a close proximity) in Eastern Slovakia and in the most municipalities of other regions in Central and Western Slovakia, in which LSNS gained more than 5 percent of the vote. In the Trnava region the party gained the most votes in the village of Madunice and in the five neighbouring villages where the party organized a long-lasting campaign against Roma due to the incident in which three Roma beat up a retired man who died as a result of the attack shortly afterwards. The Roma were later convicted of racially aggravated attack. The media reported about the whole incident.
Since 2010 ĽSNS has changed its focus on active campaign against Roma and started to present itself in the media as the only political subject that is really doing something about this issue, the electoral preferences and the electoral results have significantly increased (Figure 3). Moreover, Table 3 shows results from districts in which the party gained the most votes (and three municipalities for each district with the highest vote share). In each of these municipalities (or in a close proximity) we identified a Roma settlement. There is also a massive increase of votes for the party when comparing the results of the elections. This indicates that the anti-Roma campaign which may have been encouraged by the media have had impact not only on a moderately higher election results for the party in an overall picture, but in some areas it might have caused significant increase of votes for the party (Kluknavská 2012).

Another feature of the far right in CEE is nationalist sentiment mixed with xenophobic tendencies which has appeared in the form of the traditional national resentments that existed in the region before the communism, both in relation to neighbours as well as toward various minorities (Kopeček 2007). For example, the Association for the Republic – Czechoslovak Republican Party (Sdružení pro republiku - Republikánska strana Československa, SPR-RSČ) denounced Sudeten Germans and Germany as a neighbour country. SNS has been pushing anti-Hungarian resentments and animosities (leader of the party Ján Slota is well-known for his xenophobic and offensive quotes against the Hungary and Hungarians with numerous references to the 'injustice' in Slovak-Hungarian history) and Hungarian Justice and Life Party (Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja, MIÉP) called for repatriation of former Hungarian territory taken over by neighboring countries after the First World War (Kopeček 2007).
Table 3. Municipalities with the highest vote share gained by ĽSNS in the districts with the most votes for the party in 2012 elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poprad</td>
<td>Studenec</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>6.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mengusovce</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liptovská Teplička</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>6.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stará Ľubovňa</td>
<td>Kolačkov</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.94</td>
<td>9.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nižné Ružbachy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18.11</td>
<td>16.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Podolíneč</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>21.69</td>
<td>12.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spišská Nová Ves</td>
<td>Hrišovce</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>13.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richnava</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>9.45</td>
<td>10.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kojšov</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>8.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brezno</td>
<td>Polomka</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>9.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Čierny Balog</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>8.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beňuš</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>8.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kežmarok</td>
<td>Havka</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>15.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lechnica</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>16.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majere</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical office of the Slovak Republic.

The West European far right parties are mostly hard Euroskeptics rejecting EU and EU membership, and emphasizing national sovereignty. Kopeček (2007) argues that the far right in CEE does not exhibit this prevailing Euroskepticism of the far right in WE. We have analyzed the 2012 parliamentary election themes of far right parties in Slovakia and come to another conclusion (Kluknávská 2012). We state that both Slovak far right parties SNS and ĽSNS strongly refuse the idea of EU and the EU itself. SNS in its monthly magazine writes that the party rejects the "European superstate" because the EU is not "pro-European, but serves the supranational financial groups and globalists" (Slovak nation 11/2011). ĽSNS states that the EU is the end of the traditional Europe and everyone who supports the Union "is becoming a traitor by working against the sovereignty of his own republic and the freedom and independence of his own nation" (Our Slovakia 10/2011).

Another distinctive feature of the far right in Europe – emphasis on law and order – is found in CEE with a moderately different nature. While we have found that the far right in WE and CEE share certain features such as the re-introducing of death penalty (e. g. Jean-Marie Le Pen of NF in 2002 in France and DSSS in the Czech Republic), there are also certain differences. In WE the issue of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been of much less importance for the far right, though most of the parties did take a negative stance (Kopeček 2007). The far right parties in CEE share strong attitudes against the membership in military alliances, especially NATO. ĽSNS considers NATO the "terroristic organization" and calls for establishing the home-defense. The far right parties in CEE also call for the
strong nation state. This has been influenced by the Soviet hegemony, during which the Central European countries were left in a subordinate role (Mareš 2003; Kopeček 2007).

Regarding the relationship between the media and far right in CEE, Mudde (2005) concludes that mainstream media have kept their distance from parties of the far right and their organizations and only few provide space for far right movements. He states that while initial reporting on the far right after the break of Soviet block was quite positive, nowadays the mainstream media report negatively on most events, organizations and parties of the far right, particularly if involving neo-Nazis or neo-Nazi symbolism. However, some of the coverage of incidents of the far right and ethnic minorities (particularly the Roma) has been "highly ambiguous at best and inciting at the worst" (Mudde 2005: 257). It suggests that although the media might not provide a platform for the messages of far right parties per se, they might be extensively covering the issues emphasized by the far right and thus be helping the parties with their agenda.

Methodology
The research will be conducted in three steps: 1) we determine issues of far right parties that they emphasize the most, 2) we analyze the saliency of the coverage of far right parties and their issues and 3) we analyze the frames in which the media present these parties and issues.

In first step we determine the issues of selected far right parties. We will analyze electoral programs and parties' monthly magazines and we will conduct semi-structured interviews with members of the parties. Then in exploring how far right parties and the issues they emphasize have been covered in the media (saliency attached to them), we focus on two aspects of news coverage: first, visibility of the parties and their issues in the media and second, prominence of the parties and their issues in the media. We will thus examine to what extent these issues were covered (intensity of the reporting). To explore the saliency of parties and issues we will use media content analysis. We will not be interested in the valence of reporting, but rather in the salience of the issues of the far right and salience of far right parties itself. In third step we will analyze the way in which the media frames these parties and their issues. Frames can be defined only in relation to a specific issue, event or political actor. Since we will have identified the issues of the party in the first step, in this step an initial set of frames for each of the issues and the actor (political party) is identified inductively to create culturally available frames in the discourse (a coding scheme). We will then analyze a unit of analysis (article) by identifying the presence or absence of one of the predefined frames and deductively adding more frames (if needed).

The country and case selection. The thesis analyzes far right parties in two countries in Central Europe. The first is ĽSNS in Slovak Republic and the second is DSSS in the Czech Republic. In both cases the parties are political subjects that 1) were founded after 2000, but had been formed from previous far right movements, 2) have been dissolved due to violating the Constitution, but re-emerged with slightly different name 3) have never been a part of national parliaments, but run for the office, 4) have been running for offices in regional and local level, but were not successful, 5) are still active preparing for another elections.
The countries of Slovakia and the Czech Republic are not only geographically, but also economically and culturally very close. They were formed together during the period between two world wars and after the WWII for some 40 years were ruled by Soviet Union. Since both republics contain multiple ethnic minorities and during the communism ethnic violence has been artificially contained through repressive practices, the fall of the Soviet block created a fertile ground for the rise of the far right in CEE. On January 1, 1993, the two republics split to form two separate states. They both experienced transitional period and joined the EU in 2004. Notwithstanding many similarities, there are also important differences resulting from independent cultural and political development and economic policies. When regarding the far right parties in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the countries according to our typology presented in previous part of the paper differ significantly. While Slovakia belongs to the group where far right parties were electorally successful and were parts of the parliaments (or also governments), but in the second part of the first decade of the 21st Century their popularity declined, the Czech Republic belongs to the group of countries where far right parties had some electoral success in the 1990s, but later they have been unable to consolidate further electoral support. This creates the ideological space for newer parties of the far right in both countries.

**People's Party Our Slovakia** (Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko, LSNS). The party was officially launched in February 2010. It emerged from the political ambitions of the civic association Slovenská pospolitost’ (Slovak Togetherness, SP)\(^5\). In 2003 the movement started to make public appearances in uniforms labeled by the media as the uniforms of Hlinka Guard (militia in fascist Slovak state). In 2005 the SP registered the political party Slovenská pospolitost’ – národná strana (Slovak Togetherness – national party, SP – NS) which aim was to "built new Slovak state based on national, social and Christian principle" (pospolitost.org 2005). SP-NS was dissolved by the Slovak Supreme Court in March 2006. In 2006 parliamentary elections members of the party joined the list of candidates of the Slovak People's Party (Slovenská ľudová strana, SĽS).

Internal consolidation of the party resulted in 2009 in creating the party Ľudová strana sociálnej solidarity (People's party of social solidarity) which in 2010 transformed into LSNS. The party criticizes other political parties including the far right SNS. In 2009 party leader Kotleba run for to become the regional president in Banská Bystrica Region and gained 10,03 percent of the vote (Statistical office of the Slovak Republic 2009). In 2010 parliamentary elections the party gained 1.33 percent of votes and in 2012 parliamentary elections 1.58 percent of votes. Kotleba in editorial of the first issue of party magazine has written that LSNS is the party "that makes the sleepless nights not only for aggressive parasites, but also for thieves in the government and mercenaries in the parliament" (Our Slovakia, 09/2011).

**Workers' Party of Social Justice** (Dělnická strana sociální spravedlnosti, DSSS). The party was founded in January 2003 by former members of the far right SPR-RSČ under a name of Worker's party (DS). In first years of its existence the party was a marginal political subject

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\(^5\) SP was registered as a civic movement in May 1995.
trying to define itself as an anti-communist party. DS gained more attention by public in 2007 when it started cooperation with more radical movements and changed its focus on the issues more characteristic for the far right in WE (Mareš 2009).

The party was dissolved in 2010 by the Czech Supreme Court. The Court outlawed the party for its xenophobic, racist, homophobic and anti-Semitic language and for being a threat to democracy. Shortly afterwards the party and kept the program with small adjustments. In 2010 parliamentary election the party gained 1.14 percent of vote which made it the biggest success of the party so far. The most known person of the party is its leader Tomáš Vandas who participates in the most of the marches DSSS makes. The party has been accused of sympathizing with the neo-Nazism, although the party itself denies these accusation and members of the party call themselves nationalists or national socialists.

Conclusion
The aim of this paper was to propose a research design for analysis of the media coverage of far right parties in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The media could be theoretically related to a party’s success in three ways. First, the party and its members receive a great deal of coverage. Second, the issues of the party are overexposed. Third, the framing of the news favors the party (Walgrave, De Swert 2004). The research thus asks two questions: 1) how the media frame far right parties and their issues and 2) whether the media contribute to the success of far right parties by emphasizing their issues and by covering the parties themselves.

The research will build upon agenda-setting and framing frameworks. In line with the argument of agenda-setting theory that a higher salience of issues leads to an electorate that considers the issues of the far right as important to be dealt with (McCombs, Shaw 1972), we believe that media may contribute to the success or failure of the far right by emphasizing or de-emphasizing far right parties and their issues. We also argue that the way how media frame the issues can create societal discourse or also affect public understanding.

The paper has identified the media as independent variable and showed the media may be, as Mudde (2007: 253) puts it, both friend and foe to far right parties. Although media are in general hostile to the far right, there have been occasions when parts of the media have excessively supported far right parties (Eatwell 2003), such as the Kronen Zeitung in Austria in 1990s with Haider's FPÖ, Italian Social Movement (MSI)/Allenaze Nationale during the 1993-94 or Catholic fundamentalist Radio Maryja with AWS or LPR in 2001. We showed that there is the evidence in the academic literature for the relevance and importance of taking media content into account when explaining the rise and decline of far right parties (Eatwell 2003; Walgrave, De Swert 2004; Boomgaarden, Vliegenthart 2007, 2009; Ellinas 2010). The media can play an important role in legitimizing (or de-legitimizing) issues and parties through their agenda-setting function or framing (McCombs, Shaw 1972) by emphasizing the themes of the party or the party itself. A sudden increase in coverage of a margin party seems likely to create a sense that the party is on the move (Eatwell 2003).

The paper has also dealt with the inconsistent terminology. Whereas many of the terms used and presented by scholars have various weaknesses, we have been following the term ‘far right’ which for the research in CEE presents certain advantages. The concept is well-
established in the region of CEE and is the most used in the work of CEE political scientists as well as among some of the WE researchers. The term also does not provide as much semantic confusion as the term extreme right (with extremism) and is so far mostly unburdened by the media. Despite this terminological chaos, there is a rather broad agreement among scholars that the term describes primarily an ideology in one form or another. We have been following Mudde's (2007) conceptualization of four ideological features of far right parties – nationalism, xenophobia, welfare chauvinism and law and order.

The paper presented that the region of CEE is not as homogenous as is often assumed. We calculated that far right parties in CEE went from 7.2 percent of votes in first decade of 1990s to 5.47 percent of votes in the second decade of the 21st Century. In overall picture the far right parties with exception of far right in Hungary and Bulgaria and a partially also in Poland have more or less declined in their support. We therefore made the distinction between three groups of countries in CEE according to the position of far right parties during some 20 years of their existence in the region: 1) countries where far right parties were electorally successful and were parts of the parliaments (or governments), but in the second part of the first decade of the 21st Century their popularity declined significantly (Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia and Romania); 2) countries where far right parties had some electoral success in the 1990s, but later they have been unable to consolidate further electoral support (Estonia, the Czech republic and Lithuania); 3) countries where far right parties were mostly unsuccessful in the 1990s, but in the second part of the first decade of 21st Century they gained significant electoral support (Hungary, Bulgaria). The selected countries Slovakia and the Czech Republic belong to groups where the potential of bigger far right parties is currently declining or has already declined leaving the space for smaller far right parties accommodated to the newest public concerns.

Although much literature on CEE claims that the region is fundamentally different from WE and should therefore not be studied with similar theories, we argue that differences do exist and follow the arguments (Clark 2002; Mudde 2007) that concepts primary developed in WE can explain developments in contemporary CEE. We argue that the four features identified by Mudde (2000) that are characteristic for the parties of the far right are currently shared by the parties in both the CEE and WE, but their direction or intensity differs in some cases. The paper has established that the far right in CEE differs from its western equivalents first and foremost in its choice of enemies. In WE parties of the far right thrive particularly on anti-immigrant issue.

In CEE and especially in Central Europe (e. g. Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary) the main and defining theme of these parties is the minority issue, especially the Roma issue. We showed that in both Slovakia and the Czech Republic there is rather strong anti-Roma sentiment among public and parties of the far right are using these attitudes to gain more supporters. Kluknavská (2012) found that during the 2012 election campaign ĽSNS called the Roma "Gypsy extremists" and "lazy parasites" and gained the most votes in areas where the Roma settlements are situated. Since 2010 ĽSNS have changed its focus on active campaign against Roma and started to present itself in the media as the only political subject
that is really doing something about this issue, their electoral preferences and electoral results have increased.

The analysis will contribute to the existing literature by improving upon previously employed methodology and demonstrating the importance of news media content as an independent explanatory variable. By determining the most important issues of the far right we can analyze the saliency of the coverage of parties and their issues and analyze the frames in which media present them. Since only little research has been done on CEE in the field of the far right, the analysis may contribute not only to the understanding of how the media present parties of the far right, but also to the research on far right parties in Slovakia and the Czech Republic in general.

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