

Get Americanized?

The presidential election in Slovakia¹

Viera Žúborová

Americanization and the transformation of communication in the social dimension starts to influence the character and transformation of political subjects in Central Europe. Fluctuations of voters pushed political candidates to develop new strategies, which could influence their potential position after elections. On the other hand, these countries were not able to adapt to the whole scales of these processes in their political and media systems. Americanization, mediatisation and other „izations“ started to create visible contours in the structure of political subjects, in their position in the relation f. e. state – society, and etc.

Such „izations“ as professionalization, personalization, negativity, emotionalizations are

visible more than ever in the Central Europe², especially in the parliamentary elections in this region. There have been studies focused on the campaigns and political communication of political parties from various perspectives. Many authors dealt with the negativity in the campaigns³, personalization of the politics⁴, position of political marketing in the elections⁵, professionalization of political parties⁶ and use of new media by political parties including web pages in the election⁷ and etc. But at this moment we are not able to recognise if there is any case study or comparative study that is dealing with the presidential election in the context of some „izations“.

¹ Parts of this findings were also presented 02.12.2014 at the conference in Trnava “Premeny postavenia prezidentov v politických systémoch”.

² P. Šaradin, *Česká republika a Slovensko: Dvojí cesta k negativní reklamě* [in:] *Negativní kampaně a politická reklama ve volbách*, ed. E. Bradová, Olomou 2008, p. 45–57; V. Žúborová, *Get negative – the case of offensive campaign in 2010 Slovak Parliamentary Election*, „Slovenská politologická revue“, 2011a, Vol. 11, No. 3, p. 71–87.

³ *20 rokov transformácie: postavenie politickej komunikácie v Českej republike a na Slovensku*, eds. V. Žúborová, Trnava 2012; V. Žúborová, *Get negative – the case of offensive campaign...*, op. cit., p. 71–87.

⁴ R. Štefančík, *Professionalisierter Wahlkampf in der Slowakei. Präsidentschaftswahlen 2009*, „Slovenská Politologická Revue“ 2009, No. 3, p. 31–53; R. Štefančík, *Fenomén personalizácie vo volebnej kampane* [in:] *Volby 2006 v štátoch V4*, ed. M. Gbúrová, Prešov 2007, p. 327–337; V. Žúborová, *Marketizácia vonkajšej reklamy v parlamentných voľbách 2010 v slovenskej republike*, „Acta Politologica“ 2011, No. 3, p. 1–16, http://acpo.fsv.cuni.cz/ACPO-27-version1-2011_03_01_a.pdf [accessed: 08.07.2015].

⁵ A. Čemez, M. Klus, *Politický marketing v podmienkach SR a ČR* [in:] *20 rokov transformácie: postavenie politickej komunikácie v Českej republike a na Slovensku*, ed. V. Žúborová, Trnava 2012, p. 104–120; V. Žúborová, *Re-definícia typológie politických aktérov v kontexte s politickou komunikáciou a politickým marketingom*, „Slovenská Politologická Revue“ 2010, Vol. 10, No. 4, p. 59–85.

⁶ R. Štefančík, *(Web)blogovanie ako prostriedok politickej komunikácie* [in:] *20 rokov transformácie: postavenie politickej komunikácie v Českej republike a na Slovensku*, ed. V. Žúborová, Trnava 2012, p. 121–140.

⁷ A. Čemez, M. Klus, *Politický marketing v podmienkach...*, op. cit., p. 104–120; V. Žúborová, M. Žúborová, *Metodický pohľad na funkciu a činnosť webových stránok politických strán v podmienkach Slovenskej republiky*, „Slovenská Politologická Revue“ 2013, Vol. 13, No. 4, p. 305–329.

Americanization of politics

The literature points out several factors and characteristics of Americanization that are used in the analysis of campaigns world-wide. For this article I selected those which are useful in comparative studies and I easy to analyse in any national context: personalization of politics, catch-all policies, media-centricity, professionalization and political marketing.

Catch-all policies and personalization are linkage together because these two characteristic influenced campaigning trends of the political subjects. While catch-all policies are associated with the shift in strategy from ideology to these politics, personalization of politics is associated with the shift in strategy from ideology to the leaders⁸.

As Swanson and Mancini⁹ observe that this shift to catch-all policies was influenced by the loos of connection between political parties and society (their voters). Nowadays the political parties tend to promote agendas, attitudes that are not related to any segment of society and are more or less over the segments without any ideological colouring. In fact political parties are able at the same time to promote not only different policies but also policies that are contradictory. At this moment, we can also observe, that the decline of party ideologies and power gives not only to rise of catch-all policies but also give space for party leaders to be more visible in media.

Personalization of politics is a worldwide phenomenon and it's not only related to the process of dealignment in the party system and weakness of traditional bounds of citizens to

the political parties, but it is also related to the on-growing role of media. In other words, the role of political leaders and politicians at all is to tend increase in all political systems around the world. Also Swanson and Mancini noticed that personalization of politics is one of the major characteristics that is associated with the Americanisation¹⁰.

As the media gain a growing role in the political communication, also the media centricity changed the relations between political subjects and society. In fact the media helped political leaders to be more visible during the campaigns. Again Swanson and Mancini notice „*mass media emerge in modern democracies as an autonomous power centre in reciprocal competition with other power centres*“¹¹. Media produce environment where political leaders were displayed as spokesman of political parties and have the ability to reengage voters with political parties.

These processes (according to media-centricity) go hand by hand with the need of media experts, PR consultants that were able to manage the campaign and we able to create strong charismatic leaders. This refers to Habermas term „*scientificization*“ of politics (1978), „*which makes politicians use technical and scientific expertise in conducting their campaign but also in taking political decisionse*“¹². According to Swanson and Mancini¹³ the main goal of scientificization of political campaign is electoral victory and the result of a weakened link between political organization and society within the changes in political systems.

⁸ D. Kavanagh, *Election campaigning: The new marketing in politics*, Oxford 1995, p. 288; L. Swanson, P. Mancini, *Politics, media and modern democracy: An international study of innovation in electoral campaigning and their consequences*, Westport 1996, p. 288.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 288.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 288.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 11.

¹² W. Cwalina, A. Falkowski, B.I. Newman, *Political marketing: Theoretical and strategic foundations*, New York 2011, p. 44.

¹³ L. Swanson, P. Mancini, *Politics, media and modern democracy...*, op. cit., p. 288.

The last characteristic of the Americanization of politics and political campaign is the rise of political marketing. Political marketing is a part of the whole complex of political communication. Political communication goes through a special communication channels, where the political marketing „acts“ and have the potential to influence the consumer behaviour for his own property. It includes a number of tools, strategies (targeting voters, concentrating resources, focus groups, positioning and etc.) which could influence the whole spectrum of political communication. Political marketing in the sense is seen as a process of creation, supplying goods to the consumers (voters) for gaining profits¹⁴ or as a permanent contact of a political actor with a consumer through „reading their need, developing a product“ that will be use in their outputs (political program) and express their purposes to the voters¹⁵.

Methodology and research design

In this paper, the question presented is if Americanization trends can be observed in Slovak politics especially in the 2009 and 2014 presidential elections. In these two elections commentators and PR specialists observed similar patterns as in the US campaigns. This paper will focus mainly on the electoral spots that were transmitted through television and other media channels.

The main aim is to analyse the Americanization, not as a whole term, but as specific fragmented term. In this case to cover up all the main characteristics of Americanization (catch-all politics, personalization, profession-

alization, political marketing) we must find an adequate analysis, therefore discourse analysis is considered as the main approach. But in this case, again, it must be observed that there are plenty of types of discourse analysis focus on specific discourse in relations to politics, society and etc. Discourses defined itself as “*language use as a social practice, language used within a specific field and a way of speaking which gives meaning to experiences from a particular perspective*”¹⁶. To cover up all the characteristics of Americanization and “go behind the scenes” a critical discourse analysis approach is adequate for this article.

Also as Paltridge, Phillips – Jørgense, Fairclough¹⁷ observed, that the main aim of critical discourse is to help to cover up hidden values, attitudes and positions, or perspectives. In terms of the selection of an adequate conceptual framework I have chosen Fairclough model CDA (critical discourse analysis)¹⁸, which consists of three interrelated processes of analysis linked to three inter-related dimensions of discourse, namely:

- A. the object of analysis (including verbal, visual);
- B. processes in which the object is created or received (writing, speaking, designing, reading, listening, viewing) people;
- C. socio-historical conditions that affect these processes.

The sampling method for TV electoral advertisements followed the main criteria. The first was focused on political / electoral ads aired in television after or before the “Main News” (6:00 pm – 8:30 pm), the second was

¹⁴ P. Kotler, G. Armstrong, *Principles of marketing*, New Jersey 2001, p. 785

¹⁵ Less-Marshment, *The marriage of politics and marketing*, „Political Studies“ 2001, Vol. 49, No. 4, p. 692–713.

¹⁶ M.W. Jørgensen, L.J. Phillips, *Discourse analysis as theory and method*, London–California 2002, p. 67.

¹⁷ B. Paltridge, *Discourse analysis: An introduction*, London 2006, p. 296; M.W. Jørgensen, L.J. Phillips, *Discourse analysis as theory...*, op. cit., p. 229; N. Fairclough, *Discourse and social change*, Cambridge 1992, p. 272.

¹⁸ N. Fairclough, *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*, Oxon 1995, p. 608; idem, *Discourse and social change*, op. cit., p. 272.

to analyse adequate number of ads that cover up more complex messages – a messages that present complex programs and view of selected candidates. On this basis of, we picked up one TV ads from each presidential candidate of 2009 and 2014 elections. After presenting the methodological scope of this text is to outline the need for basic research questions, which will be included in the analysis of the text.

The aim is not only to point out the possibility of adaptation Americanization characteristic in the Slovak Republic, but also to clarify some of the issues that go hand in hand with the main objective:

- a) Is there a specific discourse, which is perceptible across all analysed texts?
- b) Is there a specific “imaginary” image, which we do not say with words?
- c) What Americanization trends were used in the relevant candidates selected ads?
- d) Could we observe any difference in the political discourses of candidates, who’s differed in their starting position?

Presidential election in Slovakia: Voting for “lesser evil”?

When we look at both presidential elections in the Slovak republic we can observe many similarities but also differences. In both presidential elections the second round was necessary for a victory of a candidate. Also in both elections one of the candidates had the support of the ruling leftist party, *Direction – Social Democracy* (Smer-SD). The first was Ivan Gašparovič and the second in the election 2014 was the current prime minister and the leader of *Direction* Robert Fico. In the election of 2009 only 7 people

were official candidates in comparison to the election in 2014 where there were 14 official candidates. Also in the gender aspect, these elections differ, especially in the second round, where in the election 2009 one male and one female competed with each other (Iveta Radičová vs. Ivan Gašparovič – winner), in 2010 two men competed with each other (Andrej Kiska – winner vs. Robert Fico).

In order to be able to further understanding of the various discourses that were used in both elections in 2009 and 2014, we need to analyse in detail not only the common situation before the election but also electoral spots that were used by these candidates. When interpreting the data obtained from the content analysis, we also work with public opinion surveys carried out before and after the elections, including research focusing on non-verbal communication of selected candidates.

Results and interpretations: Americanization of Slovak presidential election?

The research will analyse campaign advertisements broadcast in television of four presidential candidates in 2009 and 2014 presidential elections. The research decided to apply Fairclough’s (1992) three – dimensional model of critical discourse analysis because it is able to cover the hidden messages and discourses and also because it was already used in our area in the comparative perspective¹⁹. As Doolan²⁰ wrote, that these analysis will be applied in two levels one is the micro level (including an analysis of television ads) and other is the macro level (the interpretation of the results in the context of literature and research questions).

¹⁹ M.A. Doolan, *Exploring the ‘Americanization’ of political campaigns Croatia’s 2003 and 2007 general elections*, “Media@LSE Electronic MSc Dissertation Series” 2009, http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/mediaWorkingPapers/MScDissertationSeries/Past/Doolan_final.pdf [accessed: 08.01.2015].

²⁰ Ibidem.

- **Presidential election in Slovak Republic 2009**

Iveta Radičová: “We can do it!”

For the purpose for this research campaign advertisement of Iveta Radičová was selected with the main slogan “We can do it” (total duration 01:02). In the spot, Iveta Radičová is talking in front of a black wall (space). After six seconds of her speech, famous Slovak personalities (actors, singers, sportmen, musicians and etc.) appear and start to repeat the main key campaign messages of Iveta Radičová.

During the entire campaign ad Iveta Radičová was displayed in front of this black wall (space) without any other scene changing; only actors were changing. When we are analyze the wording, we can observe the use of strong and short sentences that include words as “acts/ achievement” and “courage”, “live decently”, or “be better”. At the beginning of the spot Iveta Radičová mentioned problems that have occurred in Slovak republic “we are living in breaking period and good times aren’t waiting for us”.



Image No. 1: Campaign advertisement of Iveta Radičová, presidential candidate

Source: YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23A7zbQTDqQ>)

It is also important to place the text into the context of the Fairclough model²¹, especially on the social practice. In her campaign ad the need

for change and building positive goals resonates strongly. These two messages underlined by the call “We can do it!” In addition to the requirements of “courage to be better” in the campaign she spoke of “the right to a decent life”, which can evoke paraphrasing election slogans of the Party of the Democratic Left “Live better”, successfully used in the 1998 elections.

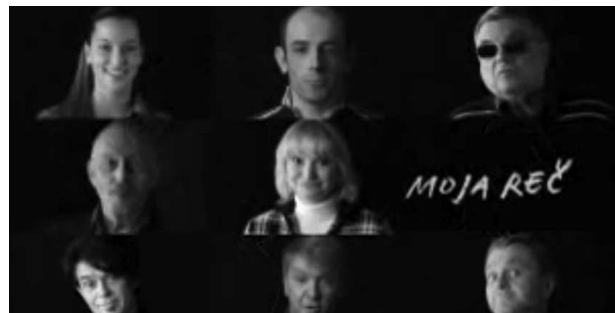


Image No. 2: Campaign advertisement of Iveta Radičová, presidential candidate

Source: YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23A7zbQTDqQ>)

At this moment, I would like to also mention that the advertisement can evoke the campaign ad of President Barack Obama, which was successfully used in the election in 2008. Not only the slogan sounds similar “We can do it” (Radičová) with “Yes we can” (Barack Obama), but also the whole spot visual with the black wall and famous person repeats the main campaign words of him/ and her.

Ivan Gašparovič: “I think nationally, I feel socially”

For the purpose for this research campaign advertisement of Ivan Gašparovič was selected with the main slogan “I think nationally, I feel socially” (duration 4:34 minutes in total, when Gasparovič speaks 2:11 minutes in total and after his wife speaks till the end of the spot). The spot shows talking Ivan Gašparovič in front of

²¹ N. Fairclough, *Discourse and social change*, Cambridge 1992, p. 272.

his library and after in front of an old historic poster displayed the historic roots of Slovaks and Czechs.



Image No. 3: Campaign advertisement of Ivan Gašparovič, presidential candidate

Source: YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7cVqc3t8qc&list=PL67073482337DE6A0>)

During his campaign speech in the spot, he presents himself in specific situation, with well know politicians, common people or famous persons. People acting in the spot cover all age groups, including old people, ordinary people in the streets, children in the kindergarten, and etc. In this point it appears that former president Gašparovič is trying to target the average voter with his speech. However, with the spoken message he tried to promote one powerful context, that he and the former government are working together and have the same goals, visions, pillars of their policies.

When analysing the wording, we can observe the use of strong words that are related to the social environment and Slovak history, patriotism, nationalism and etc. He speaks about his past experiences with the birth of Slovak democratic state; he also mentioned that he was with Slovak republic in “*bad times*” and also in “*good times*”. Gašparovič also mention about his dream of “*strong and successful Slovak republic*” because if the Republic will have these characteristic it can secure “*social safety and solidarity for their*

citizens”. The former president offers to the voters and to Slovak republic his twenty years of experience in politics. In the advertisement we can also observe a hidden message about his opponent Iveta Radičová. He speaks that [the] “*Slovak republic needs a president that connects citizens together and does not divide*”. This was an allusion to the Hungarian card that was defined from many analysts as main electoral discourse in the presidential election.

Again in this analysis of this advertisement it must be covered also the context of the social practice, especially the text of the advertisement should lie in the context of the Fairclough²². Ivan Gašparovič paid lot of attention to his own actions and activities during his first presidential period, which he says, it was successful. The election campaign is targeted to obtain the maximum number of voters, especially those segments of society which are common with the political party *Direction – Social democracy*, as pensioners, Confederation of Trade Unions and representatives of employers’ organizations. Gašparovič also committed to the values of Christianity, good relationship to both sport and folk culture.

• **Presidential election in Slovak Republic 2014**

Robert Fico: “*I’m ready*”

The first campaign advertisement of the 2014 Slovak presidential election was titled “*All is about experience. Please vote wisely*”. The advertisement shows Robert Fico only in his office and begins with photo frames on his desk with famous statesmen, with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, with working people where Fico is shown in the same work clothes of “blue-collar” workers. Behind him we can also noticed four dominant subjects, the first is the national flag of Slovak Republic, than the flag of European Union. The third is the national

²² N. Fairclough, *Discourse and social...*, op. cit., p. 272.

emblem of Slovak republic and the last one, hanging on the wall is a painting picture displayed traditional Slovak village. On the desk behind him we can also see various historical sculptures including the Christian saints Cyril and Methodius and also Svatopluk the Great, a ruler of Great Moravia. (See more on Image No. 3).

When analysing the wording of the advertisement we can notice that Robert Fico is not trying to open many discourses in the ad rather he is focused on one main / dominant political discourse that is related to two sentences. At the beginning of the advertisement (00:30 of total duration) unknown voice is speaking about Robert Fico as: *“Competent experienced and respected international statesman with a deep relationship with Slovakia, who is active and promotes joint solutions in the interest of people”*. Later, the candidate himself speaks: *“Slovakia needs cooperation, political peace, reconciliation of social partners and reputation abroad. I’m ready”*. He placed himself in the position of a professional politician who is respected on the national and international level and who will be do everything that will be needed to secure the needs and attitudes of Slovak people. In the campaign advertisement we can also notice strong words as *“political peace”*, *“reconciliation of social partners”*. These words are dominant discourses in this campaign.



Image No. 3: Campaign advertisement of Robert Fico, presidential candidate

Source: YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDoo7pWB-5I>)

In the advertisement is also visible a hidden warning (negative appeal) by Robert Fico. In the last seconds of the entire campaign advertisement (00:27 to 00:29) a red frame is displayed. In the centre of this red frame is a sentence visible which is again promoted by an unknown man *“It’s all about experience, vote wisely”*.

In general, we can say that both text and image promote Robert Fico as an experienced politician who is a responsible person in the relation to the society and state (image of a leader in his office) and also as a person / leader who is nationally oriented (Slovak flag, state emblem, images and motives of traditional elements related to history of Slovaks). These discourses are not ideological colored and thus may be more appealing towards the wider population. The main message of the entire electoral spot was that Robert Fico is the only one who can guarantee stability and order in the country and promote (to the voters) common solutions.

From the perspective of three-dimensional model, especially in the context of the last dimension of socio-historical conditions, we can say that so catch-all policies were visible through all his campaign.

Robert Fico was presented as the main guarantor of stability and cooperation. In the last days of the first and second round he was trying to develop another discourse, which was also visible within the analysed spot and thus distinguished him from Andrej Kiska. Robert Fico is not only trying to discredit his opponent, but to present himself as an experienced and competent politician who will not only provide good reputation abroad, but also cooperation and political “peace” within the country.

Andrej Kiska: “Heart, mind, character”

The second campaign advertisement was titled *“Heart, mind, character”* (total duration 00:35). The electoral spot displayed Andrej Kiska through pictures in different kind of positions and environments. On the first picture is Andrej Kiska playing with children, on the

second more emotional he is displayed with a boy with cancer, on other he is displayed with a family. Similarly, as in the spot of Robert Fico, this advertisement showed Andrej Kiska in his office, which is not appeared as a dominant part of the whole electoral spot. It is also otherwise furnished (live and in colour). We can't observe any dominant state symbol in his office as in the case of Robert Fico. The only symbol that was promoted in this spot is the symbol of "Good Angel"²³.

When analysing the wording we can also observe different aspect and discourses as in the comparison with Robert Fico. The advertisement starts with the sentence "*I was involved in charity for almost eight years....*" and follows with a negative statement that points on the main problems in the of health and social system. Despite these problems, he displayed himself as an experienced person in the management of well-known projects and as the person who knows "*what helps the economic and what damaged it*".

The main message, which is also gradually morphed into its electoral discourse of Andrej Kiska is the sentence: "*I will always stand on the side of the people, because then the people stand behind me. And in this case a good president can accomplish much more*". He is not showing himself as a professional politician rather he is offering the voters a president that is more similar to them and knows their problems in everyday life.

In general, the whole campaign advertisement is trying the promote Andrej Kiska as a "non-traditional" politician, who is not only willing but know and understand the needs of common people, because he care for people.

He promotes himself as an independent and non-party candidate which management skills and charity experiences. As Robert Fico, also Andrej Kiska promotes themes and discourses without any ideological colour.



Image No. 3: Campaign advertisement of Andrej Kiska, presidential candidate

Source: YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX_TVt0IG14)

From the social context we can notice that the rhetoric and position of Andrej Kiska was displayed through a positive change in the relations to the politics and in the relations between the state and society. As Grigorij Mesežnikov²⁴ observe that Andrej Kiska "*mastered blows below the belt against him*" and presented himself as a new generation of politician who will represent people and defend them.

Conclusion: Macro level of Americanisation in Slovak presidential elections

In the context of the electoral discourses, we can observe that all the analysed candidates tried to creates dominant discourses visible through all levels of their presidential campaigns. We can also observe that in both presidential elections two similar discourses were visible. One was

²³ „Good Angel“ is a non-profit organisation which helps families with sick children. Andrej Kiska was the founder of this organisation and also the holder of this idea in the beginning. More information at: Dobrý Anjel (Good Angel), last modified April 09, 2015, <https://www.dobryanjel.sk/> [accessed: 09.04.2015].

²⁴ G. Mesežnikov, *Prečo vyhral volby Andrej Kiska...*, „IVO“ 2014, <http://www.ivo.sk/7370/sk/aktuality/preco-vyhral-volby-andrej-kiska> [accessed: 08.03.2015].

the image of a professional and experienced politician (Robert Fico, Ivan Gašparovič) and the second image displayed a candidate that is “in such kind” different from established politicians (Iveta Radičová, Andrej Kiska).

From the view of candidates’ image, we can also notice differences, especially if we compare professional politicians with independent candidate. Robert Fico and Ivan Gasparovič displayed themselves as well-know and experienced politicians dressed in suits and wearing ties. They presented themselves as candidates whose had experienced in “doing” politics and are bounded with the Slovak independent history and their position in the world.

In the context of catch-all policies differences are also visible, although not all candidates were successful in their ability to cover them. For example Robert Fico presented himself as a professional politicians and experienced leader who is visually presented within the citizens who belonged to more vulnerable social segment of society (workers, pensioners, women is factories and etc.). This visualization indirectly and subliminally creates an ideological bound / coloration which is no related to the context of catch-all policies. The same pattern was visible in advertisement and electoral campaign of Ivan Gašparovič. His promotion of social needs and feelings were related to the pictures and short videos that appeared in the advertisement, including pensioners, women in factories, workers, people dressed in traditional – folklore – clothes and etc. Despite the fact that these two candidates ran for election in interval of five years (2009 and 2014) their policies and “strong” words are similar and focus on targeting voters from the same camp.

On the other hand, two other rival presidential candidates of Fico and Gašparovič used

contrast rhetoric and visual image. In other words, these candidates were seen as right and liberal oriented without any clearer ideological profile (the case of Andrej Kiska) which is associated with the catch-all policies. Andrej Kiska was trying to visualise his person through positive feelings towards the audience and voters. He create an image of a man that people knew him, he was the man who travelled to US and coming back to Slovakia to implemented a successful business project, he was the man who build up the charity foundation Good Angel and he is the man that people recognise him through his philanthropic activities. We can assume that the overall marketing strategy was to focused (target) to disappointment people from established parties, including the constantly presented slogan of the “first independent candidate for president of Slovak Republic”.

On the other hand Iveta Radičová was well known as right wing politicians with liberal orientation. The visual and verbal image of her is in the clear opposition to Ivan Gašparovič. Her campaign is, much more than focus programming issues and values, focused to promotion of her image. Her advertisement is associated with values such as “decency”, “hard work”, which is indirectly linked to contrast with the former president Ivan Gašparovič and with his “strength of character”, “professionalism” and “well-informed”²⁵.

In the comparison of the electoral advertisement of selected candidates it is clear that the main differences are visible in the main electoral discourse of every presidential candidate. For example the electoral discourse of Robert Fico (in 2014) and also Ivan Gašparovič (in 2009) were building on identical grounds as it was visible in the campaigns of the political party *Direction-Social Democracy*. In this moment

²⁵ J. Marušiak, *Analýza: Iveta Radičová*, „MEMO 98“ 2009, <http://www.infovolby.sk/index.php?base=data/prez/2009/analyzy/1237356946.txt> [accessed: 08.03.2015].

we must also notice that the partisan presentation of *Direction* was always generated through Robert Fico²⁶. In the case of advertisement of Robert Fico, it was not only the analysed ad which displayed this specific discourse, but also others that have similar dominant theme. These ads created a story of a man (Fico) travels through Slovakia, he listen to workers in mines and factories, celebrating women day, discussed with students, with heroes of World War II and etc.²⁷

Different electoral discourses were visible in electoral campaigns of Iveta Radičová and Andrej Kiska. For example, Andrej Kiska tried to present himself as not only independent but mostly non-partisan candidate who could be a positive alternative to “*o stly non-partixample, Andrej Kiska tried to present himself as not only independenand alternative against “nd alternative against d to present h... “a an alternative against politicians “an alternative against politicians himself as not... ”*”²⁸.

In the case of campaign of Iveta Radičová, we can also notice again the creation of contrast or alternative politics to the former president Ivan Gašparovič. Her main message is the need of change and the building of positive goals in the system and society. Her optimism is built up on strong words (achievement, courage, live decently, be better and etc.).

Media centrality was obviously visible dominantly in the communication of candidates with strong state position, as in the case of Rob-

ert Fico or Ivan Gašparovič, both candidates for president in 2009 and 2014 prosper from their former position, but only in the first round of the presidential election (especially in the case of Ivan Gašparovič). In the second round was Iveta Radičová (00:21:23 total time in all media) more visible than his opponent (00:21:23 total time in all media)²⁹. From the point of professionalism of the political campaign we can notice and agree with some analysts³⁰, who ranked the campaigns of Iveta Radičová and Andrej Kiska as modern and Americanised, and the campaigns of Ivan Gašparovič and Robert Fico as domestic, traditional and targeting one segment.

Summary

The Americanization of campaigns is slowly starting to make her way in the Slovak political life. As was already mentioned in the literature and also in this article, the main breakpoint in this context was the electoral campaign of Iveta Radičová in 2009. PR specialists and campaign managers described the campaign of Iveta Radičová as a unique and American way of running for office. Nowadays is more usual that catch-all policies are applying in any level of political system dominantly in the electoral period. But on the other hand, I must point out that the concept “Americanization” has its limits in the relations to the Slovak political system and political environment. For example Voltmer³¹ pointed out, when the modern, western and

²⁶ Also Ivan Gašparovič was displayed on some billboards with Robert Fico and the former prime minister and party leader of the *Direction* in the election 2009.

²⁷ See for more information: FICO 2014 Youtube.com

²⁸ See for more information: Who is afraid of Kiska I., II., III., IV., Youtube.com

²⁹ *Prezentácia dvoch najúspešnejších prezidentských kandidátov v celoplošných televíziách*, „MEMO 98“ 2009, <http://www.infovolby.sk/index.php?base=data/monitoring/1236879074.txt> [accessed: 08.03.2015].

³⁰ J. Marušiak, *Analýza: Iveta Radičová*, „MEMO 98“ 2009, <http://www.infovolby.sk/index.php?base=data/prez/2009/analyzy/1237356946.txt> [access: 08.03.2015].; *Volby hodnotia aj v zahraničí: Radičovej kampaň im pripomína Obamovu*, „SITA TASR“ 2009, <http://www.sme.sk/c/4359822/volby-hodnotia-aj-v-zahranici-radicovej-kampan-im-pripomina-obamovu.html> [accessed: 08.03.2015].

³¹ *Mass media and political communication in new democracies*, ed. K. Voltmer, London–New York 2006, p. 262.

“Americanised” campaign tools and techniques are adapted in the post communism environment we can observe deformation of them. In other words, the traditional Americanised tools and techniques are mixed together with domesticated and so called “hybridization” of political communication appears in this regions³². In fact the Americanisation of political campaigns will be never achieved in the ideal mode as it is visible in the U.S., rather we will be victims of the ongoing hybridization of campaigns.

The main aim of this article was to observe if Americanization trends were observed in the Slovak presidential elections of 2009 and 2014. Four analysed advertisement of presidential candidates brought us interesting results. On one hand, we are able to notice that the Americanisation trends visible in Slovakian politics is partly limited.

Despite the hybridization concept, we can observe that some of selected candidates were able to apply almost in all various range of main characteristic of Americanisation. As Andrej Kiska as a candidate for president in Slovak Republic under the majority electoral system without party affiliation. He was able to target with his non-ideological statements and electoral slogans broader population of potential votes. Despite the fact that Iveta Radičová lost the presidential election in 2009, her electoral campaign was characterised in the academic and journalist area as “Americanised way of election”. The campaign had some similarities with the Barack Obama campaign in 2008,

not only the visual part (official advertisement black – white including celebrities, actors and etc.), but also consensual position in the society (her positive rhetoric to the minorities of Slovak republic, and the willingness of Hungarian party to cooperate and promote her).

On the other hand, we have politicians that have their own ideological or party limitations which makes them difficulties in the application of Americanisation, or perhaps it suits them? For example, Robert Fico was not able to fully exploit the catch-all policies. I claim, that it took place due to fact, that he was targeting mainly voters from his party through dominant party pillars. The same goes also for Ivan Gašparovič who was also limited by his supporters (mainly the party *Direction-Social Democracy* lead by Robert Fico). But if we look on the last electoral results of Robert Fico in the general parliamentary elections 2012, he reached his maximum level (ceiling) of electoral votes and any change in his presidential campaign /rhetoric could only harm him.

At the end, we must notice that to be able to underpin this concept we need a longer – term analysis of campaigning of political entities (parties, candidates, movements and etc.) at all level of the Slovak political system. It is believed that this article will open in the future a new way to look on the campaigns in post-communists states and also on the concept of hybridization of political communication and campaigns.

³² K. Voltmer, *Comparing media systems in new democracies: East meets East meets West*, “Central European Journal of Communication” 2008, No. 1, p. 23–40.