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Welcome Madam President:
Effects of a female presidential candidate on the mobilisation of young, female voters in Slovakia.

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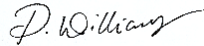
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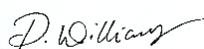
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Abstract

Slovakia did not appear frequently in international media headlines until the election of the first female President to the republic, Zuzana Čaputová, in 2019. Women are underrepresented in Slovak politics, and young women are particularly underrepresented and frequently deemed to be disinterested in politics.

This research examines whether having a female presidential candidate effects the mobilisation of young, female voters in Slovakia.

Twelve in-depth interviews were undertaken with young women in Slovakia, using questions based on a modified version of gender-strategic mobilisation theory. The theory has three core tactics (1. appealing to young women directly, 2. evoking women's multiple gendered identities; and 3. promising change that appeals particularly to young women). Interviews were transcribed and analysed using predominantly deductive themes.

Čaputová was able to mobilise young, female voters in her campaign largely through her transparency, liberal politics, and anti-corruption stance. She was a symbolic change for Slovakia, as the first elected female president, as an ardent defender of human rights, and through her decorum and respect in politics and political discourse. Nonetheless, other factors during the 2018-2019 period threw Slovak politics into flux, and serendipitous timing aided her campaign. These factors help to contextualise Čaputová's entrance and success in contemporary Slovak politics.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Conceptual Framework

Introduction

1st January 1993. This date changed the landscape of Slovakia, as the country transitioned from part of Czechoslovakia to the independent Slovak Republic. Slovakia is a small nation with a vast and rich history. It remains an underreported country in international media, particularly in comparison to its Visegrád Four (V4) neighbours. February 2018 marked another change in Slovakia. The assassinations of Ján Kuciak, an investigative journalist, and his fiancée, Martina Kušnírová, projected the country into the international media and created a frenzy around corruption in Slovakia. Prior to these events, Slovakia was experiencing a developing political crisis and corruption was growing under the leading political party, Smer-sociálna demokracia (SMER), led by Prime Minister (PM), Robert Fico. Concurrently, the nation joined the majority of its V4 neighbours in praising traditional gender roles and rejecting the advancement of women's rights (Juhász & Pap, 2018). A gradual rise in discriminatory dialogue permeated through the V4's politics, centring in Hungary, with Viktor Orbán claiming that few women could manage in politics (Walker, 2018a).

The arrival of Zuzana Čaputová, supported by her former party, Progresívne Slovensko (Progressive Slovakia- PS), to the presidential race in 2018 changed Slovakia and its politics, nationally and internationally. Čaputová was a lawyer, who had international acclaim for her work, and was seen by many as a symbol of civil society. Her presidential campaign was victorious in 2019. She represented a diametric opposition to SMER and Fico, and corruption. Čaputová became an emblem of change. Her campaign advocated for liberalism, justice, respect and anti-corruption; a new political path for Slovakia. Čaputová equally embodied another change, she was the first female elected to the Presidency in the Slovak Republic. Women's political representation in Slovakia is low (Štatistiky úrad Slovenskej republiky, 2020; Štatistiky úrad Slovenskej republiky, 2016; Štatistiky úrad Slovenskej republiky, 2012). By 2020, there has only been one other female as head of the country, Iveta Radičová; her term in office as PM was the shortest held since the country's independence.

Čaputová's presence as the first female president, in the wake of 2018, has generated national and international attention, praising her and Slovakia. However, women's representation and place in politics is still limited; young women are seen as the demographic least interested and least involved in politics (National Democratic Institute, 2018, p. 26; Gyárfášová, Bútorová, & Filadelfiová, 2008, p. 241). This thesis will examine whether Čaputová and her presidential campaign appealed to young women, and will determine whether having a female presidential candidate mobilises young, female voters, on the basis of women's gender identity.

Conceptual Framework

Research Question (Explanandum)

What is the effect of having a female presidential candidate in the presidential race who uses gender-strategic mobilisation to mobilise young, female voters? (Slovakia: a case study)

The hypothesis is therefore: Young, female voters are mobilised to vote in a presidential election when a female candidate employs gender-strategic mobilisation.

To remove possible ambiguity from the research question, a conceptualisation of the key elements is provided. 'Mobilisation' is understood in terms of the description proposed by Kriesi, "political mobilisation in a democratic regime, where elections constitute the decisive institution, the key resource of the citizen is his or her right to vote. In other words, mobilising in a democratic society, first of all, involves the mobilisation of electoral participation or the pooling of votes" (Kriesi, 2008, p. 150). Citizens' votes are thus the currency which political actors must obtain. Kriesi furthers this understanding by emphasising that "political mobilisation is not restricted to electoral campaigns, but takes place in between elections as well" (Kriesi, 2008, p. 150). Political mobilisation is critical to being a successful political actor. Within the context of young, female voters in Slovakia, political mobilisation is of significance as they are perceived as the demographic group who are least engaged with

politics and voting. If the mobilisation of this demographic occurs, it could increase support for a candidate.

A 'young, female voter' is conceptualised as a female (who is of voting age, which is 18 years, or above) on the day of the election between the ages of 18-30 years (https://europa.eu/).

The Slovak case study of this research will focus on the presidential candidate (and subsequent election winner) Zuzana Čaputová. The research question will be answered within the context of her presidential campaign and her ability to mobilise young, female voters in Slovakia in the 2018-2019 campaign.

Approach and Variables

The framework of this research will be constructivist, using the theory of gender-strategic mobilisation, posited by Reyes-Housholder (see Chapter 4). Since this work is qualitative, and involves no statistical analysis, the terms of *dependent* and *independent variables* will not be employed, however, following Reyes-Housholder's approach (Reyes-Housholder, 2018, p. 75), the dependent variable within this research is the way, and the extent to which, a candidate targets young, female voters. The independent variables are the candidate's identity and strategy[1].

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[1] The strategy in this research will be composed of several factors: the appeal of the candidate, their breakthrough status, political association, social media use, strategic timing of their campaign, unknown status in politics, and an ability to connect with youth.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Research about female presidential candidates contains analysis and examination of the hypothetical, historic, and current female figures to take up the position of President. This topic is important within feminism and gender equality research, as the female president is still a rare phenomenon. Globally, there have been only 41 female presidents since World War II, including the 11 serving female presidents in 2020[2]. There is limited global literature analysing the general effect and importance of female presidential candidates, which reflects the paucity of such candidates worldwide (Alexander & Jalalzai, 2020, p. 24). Whilst the presidential position in several countries is not the leading executive role, the President is often the symbol of the nation (Linz, 1994, p. 6). In the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, Goal Number 5 is gender equality; it "is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world" (The United Nations, n.d.). Part of the mission to increase gender equality is tackling and challenging women's weak representation in politics, particularly in countries which are denoted as democracies, where ensuring gender equality and equal representation is a fundamental element of their philosophy. Since the position of the President is of immense symbolic significance (Linz, 1994, p. 6; Jalalzai, 2013), it is essential, in the development of gender equality and democracy, that women have sufficient opportunities to be presidents.

However, it is important to highlight that research suggests it is often the impact of the political party and the candidate's ideology that either swings voters in their favour or against them; their gender is a secondary position (Dolan, 2014; Martin, 2019). The role of candidate ideology is central when examining why women are less frequently seen in politics. There are suppositions that women will support women, and that women must be scrupulously transparent to enter politics; the more female leaders that one sees leading countries will showcase depth and variety between female presidents (Adler, 1996). Lawless' research highlighted that women who do not support the female candidate often face

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[2] The current female presidents in the world are: Jeanine Áñez (Bolivia), Kersti Kaljulaid (Estonia), Sahle-Work Zewde (Ethiopia), Salome Zourabichvili (Georgia), Katerina Sakellaropoulou (Greece), Bidhya Devi Bhandari (Nepal), Halimah Yacob (Singapore), Zuzana Čaputová (Slovakia), Simonetta Sommaruga (The Swiss Federation), Tsai Ing-wen (Taiwan), and Paula-Mae Weekes (Trinidad and Tobago), as of September 2020.

accusations of 'betrayal', even if the candidate and voter's ideologies do not align (Lawless, 2009). Until women are perceived as mainstream and a regular option as President, it will be unfeasible to remove gender as a bias or label in presidential campaigns.

United States Context

A large proportion of global literature has focused on the lack of female presidents and presidential candidates, particularly within the context of the United States (US), which is yet to elect a female president (Rosenwasser & Seale, 1988; Jalalzai & Krook, 2010; Powell & Butterfield, 2011; Gist, 2017; Streb, Burrell, Frederick, & Genovese, 2008). As one of the most powerful nations in the modern world, with an extremely powerful presidential position, the US can help to strengthen norms and promote democracy via example if it elected a female president (Jalalzai, 2018, p. 1). If used purposely, the election of a female US president would promote the development of gender equality in the US and, in turn, could help to galvanise gender equality and democracy promotion efforts abroad (Jalalzai, 2018, p. 2). This desire was propelled forward during the 2016 US Presidential race with the prospects of Hillary Clinton becoming the first female president. Her election loss cemented the concept that the "presidential glass ceiling remains fully intact in the United States now and perhaps the foreseeable future" (Jalalzai, 2018, p. 7). It reinforced the assumption that when female candidates and female stereotypes face the masculinised space of the presidency, which has been curated by men and has stereotypes attributed to men, that this space is fundamentally not designed for women (Heldman, Carroll, & Olsen, 2005; Jalalzai & Santo, 2015, p. 122; Anderson & Sheeler, 2014). For societies to have a representative democracy, they need to represent the population (Tremblay, 2007); a woman becoming a president as frequently as a man would constitute equal representation in high politics.

Research focused on Clinton and her loss in the presidential race (Jalalzai, 2018; Knuckey, 2019; Taylor & Pye, 2019; Lawless, 2009) demonstrated the political environment surrounding her presidential campaigns in 2016 (and 2008) was sexist (Lawless, 2009) and that sexist views of women still prevail in the US (Knuckey, 2019). It also demonstrated that the characteristics which made Clinton a successful First Lady: she was "a diplomat, senator, and wife" were the same factors that made her a threatening and unsuitable President (Taylor

& Pye, 2019, p. 807; Jalalzai, 2018). This research helps to explain why there have been very few successful female presidential candidates, globally (Murray, 2010; Montecinos, 2017). The reasons for women's low numbers as presidents is clearly multifaceted[3]. The consensus in the literature, beyond the fact that politics are predominantly designed for and by men worldwide, is that there are two major impediments to successful female candidature. First, negative gender stereotypes exist, particularly that women in every stratum of politics, are better suited encouraging compassion and being maternal (or focusing on areas stereotypically within the frame of women's interests). Secondly, there has been a lack of women who have held the presidential position (Sheeler & Anderson, 2013; Eagly & Chin, 2010).

Gender Stereotypes

Women face many gender stereotypes, particularly when running for a presidency. Women are typically presented, in society and the media, as "'puppets' and 'pioneers' as 'beauty queens' and 'bitches', as 'Madonna' and 'Eve'" (Sheeler & Anderson, 2013, p. 18; Conroy, 2015); these contradictory stereotypes highlight that the problem of female candidates is their gender, irrespective of anything else. Shapiro and Mahajan's research found that women candidates (and women voters) were more capable in dealing with "compassion issues" highlighting that "women's greater concern than men for certain needy groups and for the well-being of society may have occurred because of their upbringing and other experiences in life", namely gendered raising (Shapiro & Mahajan, 1986, p. 51; 55). This stereotyping of women is one of the most lingering perceptions. Huddy and Terkildsen's study, nearly 10 years later, concluded that this perception of women was informed by two versions of stereotyping, "gender-belief" stereotyping which supposes that women are invariably politically left-leaning (in the US context, Democrats) and "gender-trait" stereotyping which concludes "typical female traits such as warmth, sensitivity, and compassion" were the traits that made women more competent with compassion issues and weaker with issues such as crises, military, and defence issues (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a, p. 120; 140). Women succeed as potential leaders if the nations' focus is introspective; in turn,

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[3] Importantly, within nations (particularly the US) race plays a powerful role in determining the success and failures for female candidates (and presidential candidates in general).

their position is weakened if the nation is in an external conflict situation (Van Vugt & Spisak, 2008, p. 857). Women become an embodiment of the maternal image and stereotyping (Somogyi, 2019). Research shows "gender-trait" stereotyping is the most pervasive form of stereotyping which affects female political candidates (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a, p. 120). Whilst set in the context of the US, these studies' findings appear to be applicable internationally.

The gender stereotyping of women as compassionate, generous, and kind, which is perceived as an invaluable asset for some political issues and by some voters (Herrnson, Lay, & Stokes, 2003) simultaneously asserts that women will be weaker leaders when it comes to making 'tough decisions'; a fact which can harm their chances of election (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993b, p. 504; Alexander & Andersen, 1993). Yet, as Eagly and Chin and others highlight, "female leaders are expected to take charge and approach leadership in the same ways as their male colleagues" and "are expected to deliver the warmth and friendliness that is culturally prescribed for women"; women as leaders are shamed if they deviate from cultural narratives imposed upon them and faulted if they adopt a stereotypically male approach to leadership (Eagly & Chin, 2010, p. 218; Mendoza & DiMaria, 2019; Ono & Yamada, 2020, p. 488). The argument of "damned if they do and damned if they don't" features frequently in the literature about the impact and reception of gender stereotyping on women candidates (Conroy, Martin, & Nalder, 2020, p. 18; Halevi, 2012, p. 205).

Nonetheless, there is research which counters these findings and suggests that female presidential candidates are not reduced to stereotypes immediately, but are instead only stereotyped when 'stereotype activation' occurs (Bauer N. M., 2015, p. 704). Stereotype activation will predominantly occur through methods of communication "such as television advertising, news media coverage, or speeches connecting female candidates with stereotypic traits", which reinforce assumed gender stereotypes (Bauer N. M., 2015, p. 693). If stereotype activation does not occur, Bauer argues that women do not face any additional challenges related to their gender when competing against male opponents (Bauer N. M., 2015, p. 693; 705). However, in presidential races, gender stereotypes are nearly always projected onto women by media outlets and male opposition candidates (Shotter, 2019; Bock, Byrd-Craven, & Burkley, 2017; Ratliff, Redford, Conway, & Smith, 2017; Anderson,

Diabah, & hMensa, 2011; ADL, n.d; Kahn, 1996, p. 135). Studies have shown that gender ideology, which assumes women are not suitable for politics, is the most important factor preventing women from entering into high politics (Paxton & Kunovich, 2003; Chowdhury, Nelson, Carver, Johnson, & O'Loughlin, 1994; Molinelli, 1994); an ideology which is reinforced by opposition candidates and media. It is a phenomenon that female presidential candidates cannot escape.

Novelty Factor

Another challenge which affects women's ability to become executive leaders is the persistent rarity of female political leaders. They are outsiders. Gender stereotypes, through "their tendency to operate below conscious awareness, [mean] fully qualified individuals from 'outsider' groups often appear to lack the 'right stuff' for leadership" as they have never been seen in the position before (Eagly & Chin, 2010, p. 218). Therefore, if women have never really been political leaders before, how do they know what they are doing? This is a pernicious argument which questions and impedes women's ability to reach high politics. If there have been few female presidents, there is less trust in the female president. Beyond this, if there is little trust, and women in society do not see themselves represented in the presidential position, it is hard for them to push and desire to reach the position. This is one of the elements which led to criticism of postfeminist theory[4] (Sheeler & Anderson, 2013; Anderson & Sheeler, 2014) in the context of the US Presidency. Regarding the role of the president, postfeminist theory inexplicably suggests that society has moved beyond the needs of feminism, and that powerful high political positions can be attained by anyone, regardless of gender (Sheeler & Anderson, 2013, p. 2).

The unqualified women archetype is examined by Sheeler and Anderson who focus on a particular element of the argument: the "pioneer frame" (Sheeler & Anderson, 2013, p. 17). Pioneer framing creates a presentation of women attempting to become the president as pioneers. Whilst superficially this may seem positive, it reinforces the implicit assumption that women are applying for the Presidency with no experience. The pioneer tag implies

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[4] Postfeminist has become a challenging term. It encompasses theories and understanding that feminism is historical and not necessary, and simultaneously it can denote a new kind of feminism within feminist theory. Within Anderson and Sheeler's research, the theory assumes feminism is an historic and completed event.

entering into a territory without any knowledge of what is ahead and implies that women are marginal political figures as opposed to an equal proportion of the population who historically have been intentionally excluded from politics (Sheeler & Anderson, 2013, pp. 17-18; Meeks, 2012). Eagly & Chin and Sheeler & Anderson present two different arguments which arrive at the same conclusion, that women are unqualified and designed to fail in the position of the presidency, as they are not following in the footsteps of those (women) who have managed before. The dilemma that arises is if women are not allowed into the position, and they are subsequently ridiculed for attempting, on the grounds they have no one to emulate, they will never succeed in achieving the position. This is a trope which can be applied to several countries and regions of the world.

Positive Effects

Research has been compiled on the effect and benefit of having women in politics, as representatives of women. Some research focused on the interplay of women voters and the female president (Bauer J. , 2009; Thomas & Adams, 2010; Morgan & Buice, 2013). Bauer's research on Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has emphasised that the interplay between women in society and women in leadership is connected; women helped to make Sirleaf the first African female president. Sirleaf, in turn, became an emblem of women, their political power, and women as leaders (Bauer J. , 2009). Thomas and Adams compared Sirleaf and Michelle Bachelet, citing that a core success of both their campaigns was the confrontation of gendered disadvantage and emphasis on women's capabilities (Thomas & Adams, 2010). Morgan and Buice found that a unity of "consciousness-raising experiences among women together with economic prosperity and a pro-female political environment could promote broader acceptance of female leadership"; the symbiosis of women in society and women in leadership is essential for political and democratic development of nations (Morgan & Buice, 2013, p. 660).

Another segment of the research focused on how women leaders encourage women's representation and political participation (Tremblay, 2007; Norris, 1996; Jalalzai, 2013). Tremblay emphasised that "electing female surrogate representatives of women improves the chances of it [substantive representation] happening because these political

women feel that they have a responsibility to represent women" (Tremblay, 2006, p. 508). Even if substantive representative does not appear, this encouragement of women supporting women and representing their interests changes the global, political landscape to include women and their interests. Norris' work focused on mobilising women across a "gender-generation gap" as women's political leanings shift through life; having women who represent women across the ideological spectrum increases the chances of women's representation in politics (Norris, 1996, p. 333).

Jalalzai's research emphasised that women, since 2000, are increasingly achieving higher political offices, thus increasing women's representation in politics. However, she emphasises that the presidential role is still predominantly held by men, unlike the PM role which is becoming more equal (Jalalzai, 2013). This means that women, in the PM role, "still suffer from important vulnerabilities common to all premiers […] Women's greater tendency to hold prime ministerships likely relates to the depiction of women as consensus-driven players rather than autonomous actors" (Jalalzai, 2013, p. 179). Therefore, the role of the president is important for women to hold; if they can achieve this position, it could redirect opinion that women are capable, autonomous leaders and deserve to show their political prowess (Jalalzai, 2013). Beyond this, research has shown that increasing women's leadership styles and position in politics produces symbolic change, which benefits women, and on a wider scale, society; this change can reinvigorate a nation's image and structure (Adler, 1997).

Methodological Approaches

The global research examining female presidents and their effects (hypothetically and in practice) tend to adopt one of two methodological approaches: media content analysis and survey analysis. Media content analysis is frequently used, particularly when examining news articles surrounding the presidential campaign and the female candidate (Adams, 2010; Anderson, Diabah, & hMensa, 2011; Bauer J. , 2009; Halevi, 2012; Heldman, Carroll, & Olsen, 2005; Meeks, 2012; Piscopo, 2010; Reyes-Housholder, 2018). This methodological approach is useful in examining how female presidential candidates and their campaigns are interpreted and portrayed to the voting population, and also in international media. This approach enables the examination and representation of the mood and reception of a female

presidential candidate. Other research has used different content for their media analysis, namely Anderson and Sheeler, who examine meme culture and social media (Anderson & Sheeler, 2014). It is likely that more analysis of social media platforms and internet culture will arise in coming years as social media continues to be an essential and growing element of a candidate's ability to connect to the public and potential voting bases.

However, media often dictates a simplified image of a political candidate and can be a corrupted and unregulated source of information and thus introduce bias into research findings. Media tends to dictate a certain interpretation of a political candidate; and research shows that media platforms are one of the epicentres for sexism and stereotypes which are projected onto women (Shotter, 2019; Bock, Byrd-Craven, & Burkley, 2017; Ratliff, Redford, Conway, & Smith, 2017; Anderson, Diabah, & hMensa, 2011; ADL, n.d; Kahn, 1996, p. 135). It is essential to use additional methodological approaches to examine the reception and effect of a presidential candidate through the lens of the voting population. Survey use and analysis is an important methodological approach for collecting and interpreting a voting population's attitudes. This approach was used in a variety of studies examining presidential candidates and the reception of a female presidential candidate. Some research used representative samples of a US state (Conroy, Martin, & Nalder, 2020) or nation to draw reliable inferences from the data (Dolan, 2014; Ono & Yamada, 2020; Herrnson, Lay, & Stokes, 2003). Other research used smaller, less representative survey samples, particularly of university students (Bock, Byrd-Craven, & Burkley, 2017; Powell & Butterfield, 2011).

Alexander and Jalalzai's recent work uses multilevel analysis and draws upon data from 62,000 individuals across 40 different countries (Alexander & Jalalzai, 2020, p. 32). Their research found that the presence of women (in the highest electable office) "is associated with enhanced symbolic empowerment" and that "women and men are more supportive of female leaders and demonstrate higher levels of political interest in countries with a female head of state or government" (Alexander & Jalalzai, 2020, p. 24; 37). Meta ethnographic analysis was used in the work of Adler (Adler, 1996) which reported on global female world leaders. Research encompassing largescale survey data, such as Alexander and Jalalzai's and Adler's, provides robust outcomes which can inform about the role and significance of a female presidential candidate or a female president/leader (Alexander & Jalalzai, 2020). The

approach of meta-ethnographic analysis can be viewed as the most representative and comprehensive assessment of attitudes and reactions to a female presidential candidate.

Individual Cases

Whilst the global literature output is dominated by the US, there is literature which focuses on successful female presidential candidates in specific countries. Notably, with Chandrika Kumaratunga who followed her mother, Sirimavo Bandaranaike (the first female leader of a government) in Sri Lanka, to become the first modern female President of Sri Lanka (Wickramasighe & Kodikara, 2012; Zompetti, 1997). This pattern which focuses upon specific countries is mirrored, for example, in the case of Liberia, after the election of Johnson Sirleaf, as Africa's first democratically elected female president (Adams, 2010; Mikell, 2009; Scully, 2016; Bauer J. , 2009; Cooper, 2010; Adams, 2008); Iceland, through the election of the first democratically elected female president in the world, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, in 1980 (Snaebjornsson, 2016; Björnsdóttir, 1996); and Taiwan, with the election of Tsai Ing-wen in 2016 (Tseng, 2018; Singh, 2020). This research is helpful within the context of these particular nations, however, elucidating transferable elements from each of their presidencies is difficult as many of these positions arose from the specific political contexts of the individual countries.

Latin America

Beyond specific nations, there is substantially more information about female presidential candidates in the region of Latin America (Franceschet, Piscopo, & Thomas, 2016; Skard, 2015). This region is significant as it is the global leader in democratically electing female presidents (Reyes-Housholder, 2018, p. 70). Latin America, by 2020, has elected eight female presidents (Pollmann, 2017; BBC, 2019) with Chile and Argentina having elected female presidents twice to the position. Jalalzai's extensive research in Latin America (Jalalzai, 2016) focused on four of the eight female presidents and the symbolic significance of women in the presidential office, but, importantly, the research showed a variety of leadership styles and progress or regression under certain presidents (Jalalzai, 2016). This is significant as her research shows variety and differentiation between female presidents; it is important that

society sees that women are fallible in the position, as well as successful; this makes them 'human'. Research about Brazil's Dilma Rousseff and her presidency concluded that her success was her ability to intertwine the maternal with the managerial (Macaulay, 2017), as well as her origin from civil society (as opposed to political heritage) (Jalalzai & Santo, 2015). Comparably, Chile's Michelle Bachelet was able to appeal through maternalism and, similarly, was elected with popular support rather than family connections (Montecinos, 2017). Bachelet was a powerful figure in the role of the president, particularly as she appeared to challenge every preconceived notion of how women achieve the position: she ran as a feminine woman and gendered the campaign against the backdrop of a conservative nation (Franceschet & Thomas, 2010; Tobar, 2008). However, in juxtaposition, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner of Argentina was associated with political elites through her husband's position in politics, and during her campaign was seen as a "spotlight-hungry starlet" (Piscopo, 2010, p. 215). Unlike Rousseff and Bachelet, she explicitly did not gender her campaign and avoided labels like "the *female* candidate", yet, her femininity was dissected and critiqued; she was "constructed as artificial, cold, and aloof" (Piscopo, 2010, p. 215). This region provides the opportunity to compare a variety of female presidents and to showcase their multifaceted candidature approaches.

Women Encouraging Women

Latin America, due to the relatively large number of elected female presidents can produce repeatable and evidence-based research on the effect of female presidents (Reyes-Housholder, 2016; Reyes-Housholder & Thomas). The region provides the possibility to examine the effect of female presidents on the female (voting) population; in particular, women's ability to mobilise women (Reyes-Housholder, 2018). Falling within the realm of a "gender affinity effect" (Goodyear-Grant & Croskill, 2011, p. 223), the ability of women to mobilise women is important, as not only are women underrepresented in high politics but, as a demographic, are underrepresented by politics in general. The research on the topic is still slim because female presidential candidates, and even more so female presidents, are not a frequent occurrence worldwide. Latin America provides the opportunity to specifically compare several female presidents and their effect within one region. Reyes-Housholder's research and theory examine whether women mobilise women based on gender identity, and

to what extent this is effective (Reyes-Housholder, 2018). Her research confirmed that women do mobilise women on the basis of gender (Reyes-Housholder, 2018, p. 91). Having women in politics means an ability to fight and encourage pro-women change in the government from within, as opposed to outside the political structures through NGOs or advocacy. A female president can positively encourage women in politics and the female voting population to vote (Brians, 2005; Campbell & Wolbrecht, 2006; Wolbrecht & Campbell, 2007).

Central European Context

Can research about female presidential candidates mobilising women in politics be transferred into the region of Central Europe since 2019, with Čaputová's election in Slovakia? Latin America and Central Europe parallel significant aspects of one another's histories. Both had authoritarian regimes, and both experienced radical economic transitions that were implemented to move their countries towards capitalism (Bitušíkova, 2005; Jaquette & Wolchik, 1998). Whilst Europe has had significant developments with regards to gender equality, if examined through the lens of women's representation and elected female presidents[5], Central Europe lags. Nonetheless, the election of Čaputová in 2019 is changing this narrative; with Čaputová's election, it is now possible to examine a female president's ability to mobilise women in Central Europe. Čaputová's election provides the opportunity to examine Reyes-Housholder's theory of gender-strategic mobilisation in the Central European context. This research will benefit Europe, the Central European region, and Slovakia which remains one of the most underreported countries in Europe. Slovakia is often seen as the lesser-known twin of Czechia (Henderson, 2002, pp. xiv-xv) and the quietest member of the V4. Slovakia, by comparison to its neighbours, appears less frequently in international media. Consequently, it can be a challenge to piece together a comprehensive image of the country and to understand the intricate details of how Slovak politics and society operates, particularly regarding gender and politics.

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[5] In Europe, since the interwar period, there have been 13 female presidents elected, with Malta and Ireland having elected two female presidents. Within the region of Central Europe, Zuzana Čaputová is the first elected female president, in 2019.

Chapter 3: Background

In order to frame Čaputová's entrance to Slovak politics, it is necessary to first examine Slovakia's challenges with corruption and gender inequality. Corruption is a persistent feature in Slovak politics. Vladimír Mečiar entered Slovak politics in 1990, leading the party, Public against Violence[6] (VPN) the Slovak equivalent of Vaclav Havel's Civic Forum (Kirschbaum, 2005, p. 253; 277; Nicholson, 2001). Mečiar was tasked in 1990 with forming a government in Slovakia, then still part of Czechoslovakia, and led the VPN from 1990-1991, as PM. In 1991, Mečiar left the VPN, was accused of encouraging independence, and his departure resulted in his removal from office and the splitting of the party. Despite these events which destabilised Slovak politics, he used his reactionary persona to become an "ardent defender of Slovak interests and the continued attacks against him merely increased his popularity in Slovakia" (Kirschbaum, 2005, p. 259). Mečiar became the founding politician of the Slovak Republic, with responsibility for the initial political infrastructure, a national agenda, and ensuring the state's viability.

The coalition, Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko[7] (HZDS)- Slovenská národná strana (SNS)[8]- Združenie robotníkov Slovenska[9] (ZRS), under Mečiar "almost destroyed [Slovakia's] fledgling democratic instructions and also brought it warnings from Western governments and the press"; Mečiar behaved as though "his coalition government perceived the political process as one of total political control by the party or parties in power" (Kirschbaum, 2005, p. 279). Mečiar's time in office, known as Mečiarism, was characterised by rampant corruption across society. The corruption was epitomised in the kidnapping of Michal Kováč Jr in 1995, the first Slovak President's son, which was linked to Slovak authorities (Kirschbaum, 2005, p. 281; Shepherd, 2000, p. 155). Amnesties of members accused of involvement in the kidnapping informed international and national communities of the depths of Mečiar's involvement in corruption and cemented negativity surrounding his name, and Slovakia (Haughton, 2003, pp. 276-7; Henderson, 2002, p. 51). The consequences of the kidnapping

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[6] In Slovak, the party is: Verejnosť proti násiliu.
[7] In English, the party is: Movement for a Democratic Slovakia. This party was created by Mečiar.
[8] In English, the party: Slovak National Party.
[9] In English, the party is: Union of the Workers of Slovakia.

(assassination accusations, car bombs, and hush money) are part of an expansive list of corruption and allegations during the 1990s in Slovakia (Henderson, 2002, p. 51). During this period, Mečiar maintained proximity to Russia; "the economic imperatives that brought the two states together left the impression in the West" that Slovakia's gaze was still facing East (Kirschbaum, 2005, p. 283).

The succeeding government after Mečiar, under PM Mikuláš Dzurinda, contributed profound changes in Slovakia. Dzurinda was responsible for strides in pro-democracy and anti-corruption. His government sought to repair the Slovak-European Union (EU) relationship and to ensure Slovakia's entrance to the Union (Pridham, 2002, p. 204; Kirschbaum, 2005, p. 286; Gyárfášová & Henderson, 2018, p. 90). This paved the way for Slovakia to enter the EU[10] and to ensure an improvement in living and welfare standards within that decade (Fisher, Gould, & Haughton, 2007, p. 981; Bútorová, Filadelfiová, & Gyárfášová, 2012, p. 252). There was keen interest in Slovakia to stand alongside its V4 counterparts; "joining the EU primarily meant becoming part of the political 'West'" (Vikarská & Bobek, 2019, p. 843). This was a firm indicator of Slovakia's geopolitical direction. During the 1990s, Slovakia had moved West, joining the Council of Europe in 1993 and expressing interest in joining NATO and the EU (Henderson, 2002, p. 89). However, the process of joining the EU demanded Slovakia tackle the issues of "independence of the judiciary, fighting corruption and the rights of the Roma minority" (Pridham, 2002, p. 204). Numerous changes to the Slovak Constitution occurred through Constitution Act No. 90/2001[11] (referred to as the 'EU Amendment') (Vikarská & Bobek, 2019, p. 839), which prepared (and enabled)

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[10] As noted by Fisher, Gould, and Haughton, measures such as "an increase in excise duties on cigarettes, fuel, and alcohol" enabled to country to meet EU standards.

[11] This Act was adopted on 23 February 2001, in force since 1 July 2001.

Slovakia, in 2004, to join the EU and NATO; Article 7.2[12] and 7.3[13], respectively (Rolková, 2017, p. 69; Vikarská & Bobek, 2019, p. 839). Slovakia's entrance to the EU and NATO distanced the nation from Russia's sphere of influence and redirected Slovakia politically westward.

The pro-Western leaning, under Dzurinda, did not survive in full under the next government led by Robert Fico. Corruption bubbled in Slovakia under Fico's party, SMER. Fico spent 12 years playing a central role in Slovak politics. His first term (2006-2010) cemented his character and redirected the nation away from Dzurinda's pro-Western, anti-corruption stance. Fico managed this very effectively. His strength was in his ability, initially, to be critical of his predecessors and yet cautious in maintaining the positives of their governments. Notably, Fico was simultaneously critical and cautious of Dzurinda's economic reforms, yet, entered Slovakia into the European Exchange Rate Mechanism in 2005, and joined the Eurozone in January 2009, the only V4 member in the Eurozone (IBP Inc., 2015, p. 32; 209; Spáč & Nemček, 2020, p. 246). Despite joining the Eurozone, Slovakia, under Fico, reoriented towards Russia. Whilst Slovakia did not publicly challenge the EU's position on Russia, it was "considered by some of the radical left or nationalistic Russian media as Russia's main ally in Central Europe", in a further step, it was referred to as a Russian Trojan Horse in the EU (Marušiak, 2013, p. 56). These claims were strengthened by the close relationship of Fico and Vladimir Putin which was "not an obstacle to their [Slovakia's] increasing Europeanization" and democratisation but concerned many in Slovakia and the West who perceived this as regressive (Marušiak, 2013, p. 57).

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[12] Article 7.2 from Constitution (**in Slovak**): "Slovenská republika môže medzinárodnou zmluvou, ktorá bola ratifikovaná a vyhlásená spôsobom ustanoveným zákonom, alebo na základe takej zmluvy prenies výkon časti svojich práv na Európske spoločenstvá a Európsku úniu. Právne záväzné akty Európskych spoločenstiev a Európskej únie majú prednos pred zákonmi Slovenskej republiky. Prevzatie právne záväzných aktov, ktoré vyžadujú implementáciu, sa vykoná zákonom alebo nariadením vlády poda čl. 120 ods. 2" (Rolková, 2017, p. 69). (**In English**): "The Slovak Republic may, by an international agreement ratified and published in a manner specified by constitutional law, or on the basis of such an agreement, delegate the implementation of a part of its rights to the European Community and the European Union. Legally binding acts of the European Community and the European Union have priority over the laws of the Slovak Republic. The delegation of legally binding acts requiring implementation is effected by a law or a directive of the Government according to Art. 119, para. 2" (anon., 2020, p. 4).

[13] Article 7.3 from Constitution (**in Slovak**): "Slovenská republika sa môže s cieom zachova mier, bezpečnos a demokratický poriadok za podmienok ustanovených medzinárodnou zmluvou zaradi do organizácie vzájomnej kolektívnej bezpečnosti" (Rolková, 2017, p. 69). (**In English**): "The Slovak Republic may, for the purpose of preserving peace, security and democratic order, take a place in the organisations of mutual collective security, under the conditions specified by an international agreement." (anon., 2020, p. 4).

Fico was one of Slovakia's most popular politicians (Spáč & Nemčok, 2020, p. 242). His popularity remained even during Radičová's brief Prime Ministership (2010-2012). Fico is currently the longest serving Slovak PM (Spáč & Nemčok, 2020, p. 244), and a symbol of SMER (Spáč & Nemčok, 2020, p. 246). He was well trusted; in 2007, "while only one in five citizens trusted the previous government of Mikuláš Dzurinda, every second Slovak trusts Robert Fico's populist government" (Krastev, 2007, p. 59). Fico (and SMER) were considered staples of Slovakia's political landscape until 2018.

Under Slovakia's first female PM, Slovakia saw change. Iveta Radičová, a sociologist, NGO founder, and activist, was the first and only female to hold the PM office (Wolchik, 2017, pp. 239, 242). Radičová belonged initially to VPN, Mečiar's party, and served under Dzurinda as Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (Wolchik, 2017, p. 241). She was a well-qualified politician in the political sphere (Wolchik, 2017, p. 250). Radičová was asked to form the government as leader of Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia – Demokratická strana (SDKU-DS),[14] after Fico was unable to form a government with his desired coalition partners. Radičová's time in office is in stark contrast to other Slovak PMs, through her gender, and her political and academic expertise, and yet, of all the Slovak PMs, she served the shortest term (2010-2012). During her time in office Radičová noted "that she received no support from women's groups, but rather was very frequently criticized by them", despite her long history of activism for women (Wolchik, 2017, p. 252). Radičová's time as PM, her failed presidential candidacy in 2009, and the weak female representation in Slovak politics in the succeeding decade, demonstrates the persistence of a gender quandary.

Fico replaced Radičová in 2012. His time in office and SMER were championed by President Gašparovič who remained a supporter of Fico and SMER until the end of his Presidency in 2014. Under Mečiar, the Slovak government and judiciary had several accusations and examples of corruption, despite the efforts to fight corruption under Dzurinda, this was not continued by Fico. Fico's government "did not feature anti-corruption measures in its program" and after entering office, Fico "repeatedly defended political clientelism and attacked NGOs. He also presented a draft law to restrict media freedom" and

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[14] In English, the Party is: Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party.

encouraged the belief that Slovak media produced disinformation (Gallina, 2013, p. 205). Fico was combative over the topic of anti-corruption. Efforts that were lifting Slovakia out of corruption were returning.

However, in 2014, Slovak politics shifted. Fico ran for President and in the first-round polled higher than the opposition, Andrej Kiska. Nevertheless, in an unexpected second round result, Kiska won clearly with 59.38% of the vote (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2014). Kiska was the first of the Slovakian presidents to "remain outside party politics and came very close to the ideal of an 'above-parties' presidency" (Brunclík & Kubát, 2019, p. 116; Ovádek, 2020, p. 7). This was chiefly because he was not a career politician, had independent wealth[15] and, therefore, could finance his presidential campaign (NATO Parliamentary Assembly, n.d.); although this brought allegations of corruption (Jancarikova & Muller, 2019).

Kiska and Fico were fundamentally in opposition during their times in office (Ovádek, 2020, p. 8). Kiska was openly pro-West and condemned Russia's involvement in Ukraine during 2014 (Duleba, 2015, p. 44; Spectator Staff, 2015). Notably, Kiska "was one of a rare few politicians who suggested that Slovakia should grant asylum to several hundred or even thousand asylum seekers fleeing from Syria in 2015", a stance which contradicted the SMER government's anti-immigration rhetoric (Ovádek, 2020, p. 20). Kiska's time in office emphasised the importance of the Slovak Presidency. He opened the role of the presidency to the public through active public engagement (Ovádek, 2020, p. 20). Kiska sought to unite the public and the President, paving the way for following Presidents to have stronger public connection. Kiska, as a pro-democracy candidate, was vocal in his opposition against corruption, SMER, and Fico. His character and opposition to Fico was tangible and in 2018 he "oversaw Fico's downfall" (Ovádek, 2020, p. 8).

Whilst 2016 indicated that Fico's power was weakening, the extent of SMER's relations to corruption erupted into national and international attention in February 2018. Ján Kuciak, an investigative journalist, and Martina Kušnírová, his fiancée, were assassinated in their home. Two weeks before the murders, Kuciak published an article on Slovak

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[15] Notably, Triangle and Quatro, established in 1996.

businessman, Marian Kočner[16], linking him to organised crime and embezzlement; the article also linked Kočner to SMER and Fico (Turček & Kuciak, 2018; The Economist, 2019; Davis, 2018). This was the final report in a series which had linked Kočner to a series of crimes and investigations over two decades in Slovakia[17]. Despite Slovakia's best efforts, the immortalised words of former US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, who claimed Slovakia, in 1998, was "a hole in the heart of Europe" (Školkay, 2018, p. 182), were again in the spotlight. The murders, linked to the Italian mafia, shook Slovakia and led to the largest protests seen in the country since the Velvet Revolution (Davis, 2018; Walker, 2018b). The murders collapsed the credibility of Fico, who resigned as PM following the demonstrations, and undermined public opinion of SMER (Walker, 2018b; Balogová, 2020; Spectator Staff, 2020).

In May 2018, Zuzana Čaputová launched her presidential campaign (Spectator Staff, 2018a). An environmental activist and lawyer from VIA IURIS, a non-profit NGO, Čaputová ran her campaign on: anti-corruption, human dignity, representation of civil society, and as a liberal candidate (Ovádek, 2020, p. 20). She was supported by the new political party, PS (and their coalition partner, Spolu[18]), for whom she was previously Vice Chair (Ovádek, 2020, p. 8). In the second round of voting, she defeated Slovak diplomat and European Commission Vice-President for the Energy Union and EU Space Policy, Maroš Šefčovič, to become the youngest and first female President of Slovakia. Her entrance to Slovak politics ushered in a defiant change in Slovakia's approach to corruption. Although capitalising on the successes and attitude of former President Kiska, Čaputová has appeared as a more trustworthy and positive representation of Slovakia in the aftermath of 2018 (Ovádek, 2020, p. 19).

Framing Feminism and Gender in Slovakia

One feature in Slovak society that often persists out of sight is gender inequality. During 2001, Slovakia's desire to join the EU created constitutional amendments concerning human rights.

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[16] https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/562609/dalsie-podozrive-prevody-kocnerovej-firmy-vo-five-star-residence-sud-ju-chce-zrusit/

[17] One of the cases linked to Kočner was the Pezinská landfill case; the case won by Zuzana Čaputová in 2016, which resulted in her winning the Goldman Environmental Prize and becoming an internationally recognised defender of human rights and anti-corruption in Slovakia.

[18] In English, the party is: Together.

Notably, Article 154c, emphasises that international treaties which are ratified by Slovakia regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms, if they provide a greater breadth of rights, will be ensured and not limited by the Slovak constitution (anon., 2020, p. 50; Vikarská & Bobek, 2019, p. 842). The initial human rights, defined in the 1992 Constitution, were expanded by Article 154c to increase Slovakia's breadth of human rights to align with the EU. The 2001 constitutional amendment created a particularly important expansion, an Ombudsman; the first working Slovak Ombudsman entered Slovak politics in 2002 (Schuster, et al., 2004, p. 38). This amendment to Article 125 enabled Slovakia to have a defender of human rights. Nevertheless, gender inequality is a lingering feature of Slovakia, beyond the concerns of corruption which were (and are) being tackled.

Gender equality is a complex issue in Slovakia, as it is internationally. However, the situation in Slovakia deserves attention especially concerning the imbalance of the genders, particularly in comparison to its EU counterparts. Dzurinda and Kiska, but mostly importantly, Radičová, ushered in positive change towards gender equality. Yet, even in 2019, Slovak women are the most disadvantaged in the EU, regarding "employment, salaries, care for the family and the establishment of their own businesses" (Spectator Staff, 2019a). Furthermore, Slovakia, along with its V4 neighbours Hungary and Czechia, and Greece, rank the least gender balanced in the EU "with the largest over-representation of men in political, economic and social decision-making" (Barbieri, et al., 2020, p. 52). Since 2011, there has not been a female leader of any major political party; it was only in 2020 that Slovakia changed this (Barbieri, et al., 2020, p. 53) when Irena Bihariová was elected as party chair of PS (Progresívne Slovensko, 2020). Progress of gender equality is slow; in 2019 Slovakia scored 54.1% in the Gender Equality Index, considerably below the EU average at 67.4% (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019). Despite the election of Radičová, it has been challenging to increase women's position in high politics (Wolchik, 2017, p. 248). During the protests of the Velvet Revolution, and the creation of the VPN, despite men and women (including notable women such as "Soná Szomolányi, Zora Bútorová, Iveta Radičová and Helen Wołekova") (Wolchik, 1998, p. 159) being integral, the VPN was composed of "mostly men. And nobody found that strange; there were no public voices that would criticise this asymmetry" (Bútorová, Filadelfiová, & Gyárfášová, 2012, p. 253).

Injustice to women is exacerbated in Slovakia especially in relation to women in minority communities, particularly Roma women and women belonging to the LGBTQI+ community. Women in these communities intersect with a variety of other challenges. Historically, the Roma community lived in substandard settlements, were neglected by the state, and had their culture and heritage steadily eroded (Kirschbaum, 2005, p. 292). Issues which are still present in 2020 (Kahanec, Kováčová, Poláčková, & Sedláková, 2020). In the 2000s, the plight of the Roma population, and particularly Roma women, was dominated by reports of forced sterilisation in Eastern Slovakia (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2003). This joined a long list of challenges which impact Roma women exponentially; such as poor employment opportunities, poor education, and poor housing (Kahanec, Kováčová, Poláčková, & Sedláková, 2020, pp. 10, 13, 38, 16), and noticeably minimal political representation (Degro, 2015, p. 32; 35).

The LGBTQI+ community in Slovakia has some freedoms which are protected, unlike neighbouring countries who seek to eliminate their human rights (Herbert, 2019, p. 24; Takács, 2018, pp. 76-78; Leibetseder & Griffin, 2018, p. 6). However, in Slovakia, support for liberal developments are not welcomed often. Same-sex marriage is banned, with major political parties suggesting homosexuality (and rejection of heteronormativity) is damaging to young children; similarly, there is resistance to allowing same-sex couples to adopt. In 2015, a referendum failed to pass a ban on same-sex couple adoption and this led to a protest march encouraging the banning of abortion; these issues are deeply divisive in Slovakia and affects the community's rights, but acutely women's human rights and freedoms (Mendos, 2019, p. 34). The position of women and the challenges they may face in society are not at the forefront of political debate and change. Nonetheless, women's position in society is shifting in some areas, and 2018 marked a significant change in Slovakia in women's representation in politics.

Examining women's position and equality in Slovak society is complicated. Feminism, as understood in Western philosophy, is not always directly translatable into the Slovak context. Feminism, at times, is equated with stupidity, negatively challenging heteronormativity, and Western imperialism in the region (Matuščáková, 2020; Bútorová, Filadelfiová, & Gyárfášová, 2012, p. 256; Jaquette & Wolchik, 1998). Often the lens through

which gender equality in Slovakia is viewed is through Western structures, like the EU, which drives reports and activism on behalf of gender equality. Slovakia has a mixed response to Western feminism, due to its history as a socialist state and women's place therein. As Bútorová et al note, some Slovak women's aversion to western feminism "lies in the nature of the so-called socialist emancipation of women", which provided amenities for children, pregnant women, and mothers, yet these services were provided "by the socialist state that needed their labour force […] this enforced inclusion of women into the public sphere was a painful experience" (Bútorová, Filadelfiová, & Gyárfášová, 2012, p. 253). Second wave Western feminism, in particular, stressed the importance of women in the labour market, with equal pay and employment opportunities (Evans, 1995, p. 74). There was a subliminal undertone that the private sphere and emphasis on motherhood and domestic life was incompatible with feminism (Castle-Kanerova, 1992, p. 110). This potentially marginalises women emerging from socialist and communist nations who had not had the opportunity to just be a mother and remain in the private domain (Bútorová, Filadelfiová, & Gyárfášová, 2012, pp. 254-255; Castle-Kanerova, 1992, pp. 101-102).

Whilst Western feminism can satisfy many of the struggles which women face in Western nations, it has the potential to alienate many of the women who joined Western institutions, from former socialist and communist nations. This is compounded as many of these institutions stated women had privileges under socialism and communism; they had "relative economic independence and 'visibility' in the public sphere" and were provided amenities to help their work-home balance (Castle-Kanerova, 1992, p. 101). Within this framing one can understand why there is explicit support of traditional gender roles and values within former socialist and communist societies (Castle-Kanerova, 1992, p. 104). It is important to consider this view when examining women's place and role within contemporary Slovak society; particularly when considering why some reject Western feminism and the institutions that support it. These institutions appear to voice only one 'right' way to understand, implement, and be a feminist. Aware of this dichotomy, this thesis will examine women in politics in Slovakia and the reception of a growth of women in politics, which contributes to affecting change for women's human rights, political participation and support for issues which affect women.

Voter Turnout

Beyond corruption and gender inequality, which affect Slovak politics and society, is one particularly notable feature that developed in Slovakia post-1998, the voter turnout conundrum (Gyárfášová & Henderson, 2018, p. 89; Fisher, Gould, & Haughton, 2007, p. 989; Lukáš & Ivan, 2016). Presidential elections and referendums are witnessing, on average, a steady decline in voter participation (Election Guide, 2020). This has spilled into the international stage, with Slovakia's electoral turnout in the European Parliamentary (EP) elections in 2004 being the lowest ever recorded of a member state, at 16.9% (DeBardeleben & LeDuc, 2009; Mesežnikov, Kollár, & Vasecka, 2007, p. 640). Slovakia then "beat its own record for the lowest nation turnout ever" in 2014 when its turnout decreased to 13.05% (Gyárfášová & Henderson, 2018, p. 77). Low turnout was a recurrent until 2019, when participation increased for the EP and national parliamentary elections (Joannin & Maurice, 2019, p. 2; 17).

In summary, Slovakia is a thriving nation, however, since independence it has faced substantial obstacles. The developments in 2018-2019, starting with the murders of Kuciak and Kušnírová, then Fico and SMER mirroring features of Mečiarism, projected Slovakia onto the world stage. Nonetheless, this scene, in part, has been rewritten with the election of Zuzana Čaputová as President, an ardent defender of human rights and anti-corruption. Her presence in Slovak politics explicitly challenges the democratic deficiencies and questions the stereotypes of Slovakia, nationally and internationally.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

During the collapse of authoritarian dictatorships, guised as socialism and communism in Central and Eastern Europe, hopes for many people who had lived under oppression were sustained by the promise of democracy. Power to the people was an initial step after living under a political ideology that suppressed people's ability to vote freely and be represented by freely elected politicians. Whilst democracy was introduced to some of the former communist and socialist states, there has been a lag in the full and proper representation of women. Whilst this is an issue faced to some extent in every European nation, it is seen acutely in some nations and in particular some in Central and Eastern Europe.

Women in Slovakia are insufficiently represented in high level politics. An issue which has been present at least since the inception of Slovakia in 1993. Čaputová's presidential campaign, and her presence within contemporary Slovak politics, has challenged many preconceived national and international stereotypes of the country. To understand the effect of Čaputová's presidency; her ability to mobilise young, female voters; and, the success of her presidential campaign, this research is framed by feminist and gender equality research theory, particularly the theory of gender-strategic mobilisation. This research explores whether the presidential candidate, Čaputová, employed three core tactics which enabled her to appeal to young female voters and encouraged their mobilisation into politics in Slovakia in 2019.

Gender-strategic mobilisation theory

Reyes-Housholder's gender-strategic mobilisation theory provides the template for the theoretical framework of this research. This was a novel theory, developed in 2017, and was tested within the context of Latin America and its wealth of female presidential candidates. As it is a relatively newly developed theory, it was an exciting opportunity to move the theory to a different region (Central Europe), experiencing a female president for the first time, namely Slovakia. Reyes-Housholder's theory postulates that women are better at mobilising women than their male political counterparts on the basis of gender identity (Reyes-Housholder, 2018, p. 70). The theory provides a template for understanding how female

presidential candidates are successful at mobilising female voters in their nation. The theory highlights three core tactics (i.e. attributes) of female presidential candidates which can ensure success in mobilising women on the basis of gender identity: "(1) Meeting with groups of women; (2) evoking women's multiple gendered identities; and (3) promising pro-women change" (Reyes-Housholder, 2018, p. 74). As Reyes-Housholder notes, it is a given assumption that candidates, in the presidential race, will seek "the most efficient, effective way to earn popular support" as this is integral to a campaign's success (Reyes-Housholder, 2018, p. 73).

Reyes-Housholder's gender-strategic mobilisation theory was first proposed in the context of Latin America which has had the largest number of democratically elected female presidents in the world (Reyes-Housholder, 2018, p. 70). Whilst, superficially, Latin America and Central Europe may appear very different, they are, in fact, intrinsically connected with a similar historical context. These regions, in recent history, have both experienced a radical shift to democracy from authoritarianism, which dominated the political landscapes for decades. This shift has had profound impacts on the state of economics, societal construction, and politics. As with any radical shift, the transition to democracy is still visible in their contemporary societies. The developments of democracy in Latin America, which have enabled the democratic election of several female presidents and many more women to run viable campaigns, is something not yet seen in the region of Central Europe.

Nonetheless, the progress of gender equality, seen through the election of female presidents in Latin America, could hold promise for the shift in gender relations in the region of Central Europe in the future. Reyes-Housholder's theory is pertinent and applicable to the Central European region (Reyes-Housholder, personal communication April 2020). It is particularly relevant to the changing political scene which has developed in Slovakia since 2018 and was brought into international attention with the election of Zuzana Čaputová. Her election, in 2019, has provided the opportunity to transplant Reyes-Housholder's theory to a different region and showcase whether female presidential candidates are able to mobilise women on the basis of gender identity in another global region.

Considering Čaputová's identity was overtly liberal and she was a newcomer to politics, it is probable that she relied upon young, urban voters as the demographic who

would likely vote for her. Moreover, as Čaputová did not shy away from topics concerning gender equality and women's rights, it is likely that she wanted to appeal to young, female voters. Considering this milieu, this research uses the fundamentals of Reyes-Housholder's theory, however, the tactics are modified to address the specific hypothesis of this research, namely mobilising young, female voters. The modified tactics are: 1) appealing to young women directly, 2) evoking women's multiple gendered identities; and 3) promising change that appeals particularly to young women.

Modified Tactics

In relation to the first tactic, this will be characterised by the female presidential candidate's ability to appeal to young women directly. This will be determined by the reception of the politician's use of social media by young, female voters. Social media, and the variety of platforms encompassed within this term, enable an inclusive and flexible means to communicate locally and globally. Social media offers an unfiltered and free space for young women (and young men) to engage with politics and to participate (Schuster J. , 2013, p. 10). Although, some researchers have concluded that young people's participation with politics, particularly feminist politics, through social media is a lazy form of political engagement[19] (Christensen, 2011). Morozov speculated that "'slacktivism' is the ideal type of activism for a lazy generation" and queried whether this method of engaging with politics and activism was superficial and whether it had any merits above more traditional forms of political and activism engagement, which also achieve desired outcomes (Morozov, 2009).

'Slacktivism' has been countered by other research which emphasises the importance of the intersectional benefit and access provided by social media, and social media's ability to "function as a leveller in terms of motivating political participation" for young citizens (Holt, Shehata, Strömbäck, & Ljungberg, 2013, p. 1). As Lupia and Sin emphasised, the internet enables individuals to post, message and share content openly and globally for the first time in history; "as recently as the early 1990s, such actions were

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[19] Authors who have concluded that political participation through social media is lazy or self-serving have reversed the original meaning of 'slacktivism' and have the concept a pejorative remark on society's desire for the 'feel-good factor' through participating without achieving anything significant.

impossible for all but a few world leaders, public figures and entertainment companies – and even for them only at select moments" (Lupia & Sin, 2003, p. 316). Thus, if social media is used intentionally by female presidential candidates, it is a platform which is convenient and widely accessible for young women and can therefore help the female candidate appeal to this demographic. It is also a tool which can be used effectively or ineffectively; if a candidate is able to use social media concisely and to communicate in a meaningful, transparent way, this can encourage young people to consider this candidate and connect with their campaign. On the other hand, poor use of social media can discourage young people from respecting and supporting a candidate.

The second tactic, of evoking women's multiple gendered identities, will be retained unchanged from Reyes-Housholder's template. This tactic emphasises that women are able to connect with women on the grounds of common gender experiences; "only female candidates can convincingly argue to have personally experienced motherhood or sexism, while male candidates almost never can. Female candidates, therefore, enjoy a credibility advantage in claiming to understand challenges related to gender-specific roles and stereotypes" (Reyes-Housholder, 2018, p. 74). Authenticity and credibility when speaking of issues that resonate with women from women are vital in mobilising women on the basis of gender identity. Since this research will focus on young women, this tactic will be expanded beyond women's ability to connect on the grounds of maternity and sexism. There will be an additional focus on women's roles as career figures and the power of strong, intellectual, and career-driven women, as this is an aspect that clearly resonates with young women. Women's multifaceted nature and their capability and success at a variety of public and private roles can be encouraging for young women to see in politics. A viable female presidential candidate can be the prime embodiment of these ideals and become a positive role model for young women (Atkeson, 2003, p. 1053; Campbell & Wolbrecht, 2006, p. 234; 238).

The final tactic will be modified from the initial tactic posed by Reyes-Housholder of promising pro-women change, as this research is centred on young women. Therefore, the final tactic is promising change that appeals particularly to young women. In the case of Čaputová, her resonance with young, female voters will be investigated through her overtly liberal political image, intertwined with her respect for human rights, and her personal image

in politics. Reyes-Housholder noted that "any candidate can promise pro-women change, but female candidates likely possess another credibility advantage" (Reyes-Housholder, 2018, p. 74). Modifying this tactic for this research, any candidate can promise change which appeals to young women, however, a candidate who is rigorously transparent and appears authentic, within Slovakia, is likely to be seen as a particularly credible candidate. Transparency is a rarely seen phenomenon in Slovak politics and lacking transparency has plagued several high-profile politicians in Slovakia, often regarding finance and corruption (Šípoš & Kostelanský, 2019). Similarly, a candidate in Slovak politics who has an awareness and a desire to improve the state of human rights (and tackle elements of abuse of human rights) is likely to garner support from young, female voters, as these candidates are seldom seen. Promising change that is appealing to young women is important, and this is likely achieved through transparency, authenticity, and a desire to improve the democratic practices of the nation.

Slovakia: case study

Reyes-Housholder notes that "female candidates are more likely than male candidates to have affinities with both unorganized and organized" women's groups (Reyes-Housholder, 2018, p. 74). This is important within the context of this research; unlike in Latin America, women in Slovakia participated in dissident movements and opposition to socialism and communism "but rarely as women or as feminists" (Jaquette & Wolchik, 1998, p. 7; Bútorová, Filadelfiová, & Gyárfášová, 2012, p. 256). Čaputová's ability to connect with young female voters, and the three tactics examined in this theory, focus upon her ability to connect with this demographic because of ideological alignment, rather than simply because she was a woman.

Although Čaputová's campaign deviates from the campaigns of the female, Latin American presidential candidates examined in Reyes-Housholder's work, it is still possible to place her theory within the political and social context of Central Europe. Whilst Čaputová did not seek to explicitly gender her campaign, this is not to suggest that she could not appeal to young, female voters on the basis of gender identity. Instead, this research will look at the ways that Čaputová appealed to young women and incorporated gender and gender affinity in a way that was suitable to the political and social environment of Slovakia at the time.

Gender and gender equality have a particular interpretation in Central Europe, in comparison to Latin America and the West (see Chapter 3). Therefore, the modifications to the tactics in this theory are important in enabling it to be used in the context of Slovakia. Moreover, the modifications enable the research to examine what appeals to young female voters in Slovakia and how a female presidential candidate can appeal to and mobilise their votes.

Reyes-Housholder used the 'most different' approach when positing and subsequently proving her theory by examining the most different female presidential candidates (Reyes-Housholder, 2018, p. 91). When applying the theory to the research presented in this thesis it is therefore with the assumption that the theory is valid. As this thesis' research question is embedded within a single case study, the methodology cannot use the 'most different' approach. Instead, this research will centre on the mobilisation of young, female voters, Čaputová's capabilities during the presidential campaign, and the strategies that enabled her to succeed in the presidential race in 2019. Reyes-Housholder uses media content analysis to illustrate the theory. Reyes-Housholder examines candidates from Chile and Brazil, basing "the analysis on about 1,000 newspaper articles covering these elections, as well as the ones immediately preceding them" (Reyes-Housholder, 2018, p. 71). This methodological approach enabled the theory of gender-strategic mobilisation to be verified. However, in order to maximise gender-strategic mobilisation theory in the context of Čaputová's presidential election, this research will use a different methodology. This research will use face-to-face in-depth interviews with Slovaks to elucidate and examine their opinions about, and reception of, Slovakia's first successful female presidential candidate. The benefit of this methodology, as opposed to examining media sources who interpreted Čaputová's presidential campaign, is that it enables the research to directly examine young female voters' opinions and reactions to Čaputová.

In summary, the initial theory proposed by Reyes-Housholder was verified by research which found that use of the three core tactics enables a female candidate to be better equipped at mobilising women on the basis of gender identity. The modification of the theory, which has been implemented for this research, should uphold the premise that female candidates are successful at mobilising young women on the basis of gender identity and appealing specifically to the interests of the young female demographic. This research will

examine whether the modified three tactics were used to target and mobilise young women and, in the process of the presidential campaign, whether Čaputová employed these tactics which helped her to mobilise young female voters.

Chapter 5: Methodology

Study Design

Face-to-face interviews were designed to collect data on whether and how young, female voters felt mobilised in Slovak politics by Čaputová's campaign, their assessment of women in politics, and their opinions of having a female candidate in the presidential race in 2018-2019.

Sampling Method and Interviewees

Two groups of interviewees were invited to participate in this research: non-experts and experts.

Interviewees were selected through the assistance of Dr Jaroslav Ušiak (University of Matej Bel, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia). Dr Ušiak contacted potential non-expert interviewees and, with their consent, passed on their email address to the researcher. After confirming their interest and willingness to participate in the study, students were formally invited to take part. This University was chosen because of its political (and political science) expertise.

A list of individuals who could constitute the expert group was provided by Dr Ušiak due to his affiliation with the University of Matej Bel and his work with academics of political science and political experts in Slovakia. Additional, potential experts would be sourced by the researcher. They would be a mix of politicians, political experts, and those who played a critical role in PS and Čaputová's presidency.

The interview sample was a volunteer sample which is unlikely to be representative of that student body or young, female voters in Slovakia. Similarly, for expert interviewees, it is unlikely to be fully representative. The purpose of this novel research is to elicit the opinions of young, female voters to validate the hypothesis and to provide a foundation for substantial research in the future that could be representative of that demographic.

The non-expert interviewees were young, female voters aged between 18 to 30 years, and a Slovakian national. As interviews were conducted in English, the interviewees had to be able to speak English to the level of a sufficient independent user (in line with the Common European Framework of References for Languages [CEFR] standard B2 for speaking a foreign language) (Council of Europe, n.d.). This level of proficiency was to ensure the interviews did not cause undue stress to the interviewees. The university setting was proposed as a good environment to find young, female interviewees who were likely to speak a B2+ level of English. The university also offered the possibility to undertake face-to-face interviews in an environment which was safe for both interviewees and interviewer.

Setting

As the majority of the non-experts were recruited from Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, interviews were arranged to take place at the University of Matej Bel over the course of one week in mid-March 2020, in order to suit the schedule of the interviewees prior to their exam period and to ensure the data were collected efficiently. The experts were to be recruited preferably from Banská Bystrica and Bratislava, due to the wish to have experts from the academic profession and politics. The interviews were to be arranged on the basis of the schedules of the expert interviewees. All interviews were to be undertaken by the researcher *in-situ*.

Measuring Instruments

Face-to-face interviews were designed to collect the data as they enable the interviewees to have the freedom to express their opinions and provide the opportunity to ask, or follow up on, spontaneous questions arising during the interview. Whilst there are benefits to group interviews, as highlighted by Oppenheim, one of the challenges of group interviews can be controlling the dynamics if there is a very dominant personality present or if discomfort is caused to some interviewees if they are concerned their opinion opposes the group's consensus opinion (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 79). Considering some of the political and social challenges that have occurred in recent Slovak history, and the variations in opinions which can arise over such developments, it was concluded that face-to-face in-depth interviews would be the most appropriate methodology for this research.

Open-ended questions were designed for the interview schedules. The benefit of this "'narrative' approach", as outlined by Silverman, is the wealth of in-depth, culturally rich data that are generated (Silverman, 2000, pp. 122-3). The questions were formulated deductively from the theoretical framework provided by Reyes-Housholder's gender-strategic mobilisation theory. Deducing the questions from the theory, enabled a clear structure to appear when designing the questions.

A set of questions, which were connected but slightly different, were designed for the expert interviewees and non-expert interviewees. The differentiation in questions aimed to enable the experts' opinions to frame some of the understanding of the responses of the non-experts. The questions were not asked in a specific order so that interviewees had the opportunity to move the interview in the direction that they preferred. The number of questions was limited so that interviews would likely last between 30 - 60 minutes. This was essential for two reasons. Firstly, the open-ended nature of the questions should allow for sufficiently lengthy answers to the questions within the time frame. Secondly, the interviewees will likely be using English as a second language, thus an interview schedule limited to around one hour seemed reasonable. In order to mitigate undue concern about the interview, the questions were sent to the interviewees one week in advance of the interviews. It was vital that the questions would be interesting and engaging for the interviewees and would not cause any concern due to complexity or length.

Pilot Studies

To ensure that the questions were suitable and that the interviewees would be able to engage with the questions energetically and in a comfortable manner, a series of pilot studies were conducted for both the expert and non-expert questions. These studies were conducted in interview settings, with audio recording, and in the style of a one-on-one interview. The expert and non-expert questions were posed to different individuals (representative of the age, gender and expertise to be recruited to the full study) to trial the reception and understanding of the questions, the engagement of the interview schedule, and the ability to comfortably formulate an answer. The initial pilot studies highlighted minor issues with the formulation of some questions; therefore, the questions were revised for clarity and the

leading construction of some questions was removed. Following the first round of pilot studies, the interview questions were restructured so that the opening questions were engaging and provided the opportunity for the interviewee to examine their own opinion of the political scene in Slovakia, the wider gender equality situation, and their peers' interactions with the 2019 presidential campaign in Slovakia. The questions were then piloted a second time with different individuals before the definitive set of questions was agreed (Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1: Non-Expert Questions

Non-Expert Questions

• Did Čaputová being a presidential candidate feel like a promise for change, for example, a message of hope?
 	
    o Did her political image, along with Progressive Slovakia, mark a change in Slovak politics, in your opinion?
 	
    o Do you feel her election was an anomaly in Slovakia politics?
 	
• Was Čaputová's nomination as a presidential candidate and subsequent election win a breakthrough?
 	
• How do you feel Čaputová engaged the public?
 	
    o Did she appeal to a particular type of voter? Age or gender?
 	
• Did you feel the topics of gender and gender equality were high on the political agenda of Čaputová's campaign?
 	
• Do you think Čaputová's identity as a female, and her use of gender, was an important part of her campaign? Did any other aspects of her campaign strike you?
 	
    o Is Čaputová's victory and popularity a consequence of 'smart feminism', through blending modern gender norms with traditional values?
 	
• Do you think there is an equal gender balance in high politics in Slovakia presently? Do you feel women's representation in the government is sufficient?
 	
• Do your peers/close friends express the same opinions as you about Čaputová?
 	
• Did you find, on the candidate list, a candidate who you trusted in the presidential election?
 	
• Do you feel you and your peers changed your political leaning significantly in this presidential election in comparison to the previous election? (If you were not of voting age before, please ignore)
 	
• Do you still trust Čaputová in the capacity of the presidency? Do you believe she is the same person she presented in the campaign?
 	
• Do you anticipate that Čaputová and her political breakthrough is here to stay in politics in Slovakia? Please expand.

Expert Questions

• Do you think Čaputová's election is an anomaly in Slovak politics? Was her success a breakthrough into the male dominated political elite?
 	
    o Do you think her campaign successfully challenged the political stereotype in Slovakia, in 2018 and 2019?
 	
• Do you believe her campaign mobilised groups who were not active in politics prior to her? Are there any particular groups that come to mind?
 	
• Do you believe she was successful in appealing to young, female voters?
 	
• Do you believe gender equality is considered a serious issue in Slovak political debate?
 	
• Do you think that her gender was a significant factor in her campaign? Were there particular aspects of her campaign that you believe were particularly politically successful?
 	
• Do you think her success would have still been guaranteed if Robert Mistrík had not withdrawn from the race?
 	
    o Was she strong candidate? Would her success have been as substantial if the political competition was very different?
 	
• Appealing to women's diverse, multi-layered personas is cited as a success in other female presidential candidates globally, do you think this was one of her successful strategies? Please elaborate on your opinion.
 	
    o Is Čaputová's victory and popularity a consequence of 'smart feminism', through blending modern gender norms with traditional values?
 	
• Due to the political landscape of Slovakia in 2018, do you believe that Progressive Slovakia and Čaputová, as anti-establishment figures, were able to secure success through their challenge to the status quo?
 	
• Do you anticipate that Čaputová and her political breakthrough is going to remain successful in Slovak politics? Please expand.
 	
• How do you see the evolution of Progressive Slovakia as a party? Equally, how do you see the evolution of Čaputová and her presidency?

Sample Size

The target sample size for the non-expert group was between 12 and 15, and, for the expert group, five. These numbers were considered sufficient to enable a variety of responses and opinions to be expressed.

Data Collection

At the start of the interview, the interviewees were given a Plain Language Statement (Appendix 1) which described the purpose of the research, the conduct of the interview, and outlined the rights of the interviewee. The interviewee was invited to ask questions about the research and the process. Once the interviewer believed that the interviewee was able to give informed consent to take part, the interviewee was asked to read and sign a Consent form (Appendix 1). All interviews were audio-recorded for transcription and later analysis. Immediately after the interviews, notes were made to summarise the feeling, tone, and key points of the interview. All data collected from non-experts were anonymised to ensure the interviewees felt comfortable to express their opinions freely. Experts would be offered whether they would like to be anonymised or quoted by name in the subsequent research. Both approaches were confirmed through the Consent Form signed at the beginning of the interview. All interviewees had the opportunity, as signposted by the Plain Language Statement, to request a transcript of the interview. Similarly, it was highlighted at the end of the interviews that if interviewees had any questions or concerns that communication with the researcher was always open.

Data Analysis

Word-for-word transcripts of interviews were made from the audio recordings of each interview. The transcripts were anonymised; each interview was given an unique identification number. Any personal data from the non-expert interviews (and experts who chose to remain anonymous) were omitted in the transcripts to ensure anonymity. Audio recordings and identification codes were kept on a password-protected computer file and backed-up on a password-protected USB stick. Transcripts are stored on the researcher's password protected OneDrive, to ensure the safety of files.

The interviews were transcribed initially into a Word 365 document. For analysis, the data were exported from Word to an analytical software package NVivo version 12 (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2020). NVivo allows the data to be collated and displayed on the basis of researcher identified themes (called nodes by NVivo). Seven key themes were identified using primarily deductive logic but with additional themes provided by inductive or abductive

logic. The main themes were: Appeal of Candidate, Breakthrough, Political Association, Social Media, Strategic Timing, Unknown, and Youth Connection.

Description and Validity of Nodes

The nodes were chosen on the basis of the theoretical framework which was encompassed within the interview questions (deductive nodes) and the themes emerging from the interviewees (inductive nodes). The nodes represent the core themes that arose from interviews and which focused on how and why Čaputová was able to garner success in her presidential campaign. The deductive nodes were identified during the design of the study. The inductive nodes were identified during the reading and consolidation of the interview data and through examination of the Word Clouds (see p.51). Abductive nodes were a mixture of deductive and inductive elements.

1. The first node, **Appeal of Candidate**, was chosen deductively, as this element corresponds to the gender-strategic mobilisation theory in how female presidential candidates are able to mobilise women in politics. This node was stratified into specific elements which made the presidential candidate, Čaputová, appealing. These sub-nodes were a mix of deductive and inductive components:

   a. **Answering Questions** was inductive as this component was mentioned by some interviewees as being a focal aspect of her appeal: it is implicit within the general appeal of presidential candidates.

   b. **Authenticity** was chosen inductively. Čaputová's appeal was through her ability to connect with her femininity, publicly sharing her personal, liberal opinions throughout the presidential race, and through her transparency.

   c. **Career** relates to Čaputová's career as a lawyer, which she practised before entering the presidential race. This node was chosen deductively, as the theory cites one of the core successes of female presidential candidates wanting to mobilise women in politics is through "evoking women's multiple gendered identities"; this interplay of career, domesticity, and gender helps to showcase

the success and diversity of modern women which helps to mobilise and connect female presidential candidates to female voters (Reyes-Housholder, 2018, p. 79).

d. **Diplomatic**, was inductively chosen and is conceptualised as "skilled in the art of diplomacy; showing address in negotiations or intercourse of any kind" (OED, 2020). This node helps to show how Čaputová was appealing for young, female voters.

    i. This category was given the sub-node, **International Diplomacy**. Whilst both are intrinsically linked, it appeared important to distinguish the diplomatic characteristics and rhetoric presented by Čaputová, and her use of international diplomacy as a prominent characteristic in its own right. It was conceptualised as of "pertaining to, or concerned with the management of international relations; of or belonging to diplomacy" as another definition of diplomatic (OED, 2020). This sub-node is inductive and aids in the understanding of her appeal as a presidential candidate.

e. **Human Rights** was deductive, as Čaputová's liberal, pro-human rights stance was a part of her ability to promise change that was desired by young women, as related to the theory.

f. **Intellect** was chosen deductively as it is tied to the theory and the evocation of women's multiple identities related to their gender.

g. **Personal image**, with the sub-node political image, was chosen deductively and relates to the role that the personal image of Čaputová played in the presidential race. Regarding gender-strategic mobilisation theory, this focused on the evocations of women's multiple gendered identities and how presidential candidates could promise pro-women change.

i. **Political image** became a sub-node of personal image because it can be complex to examine a candidate's political image objectively in the absence of an understanding of their personal image. The political image was created deductively. Čaputová's political and personal image were intertwined; however, her political image played a significant role in how she was received by Slovak voters, particularly young women.

h. **'Smart feminism'** was deductive. The term, 'smart feminism' is conceptualised as tactical feminism which enables feminist ideology to be infused into political debate and political image without explicitly referencing feminism. Whilst feminism is accepted and supported in aspects of Central European society, it is not in others (Jaquette & Wolchik, 1998). It is important then to frame the concept of feminism within the Slovak understanding (see Chapter 3). 'Smart feminism', in this research, examines whether a form of tactical feminism was employed in the 2019 presidential race.

i. **Trust** was an inductive node. It is presented as a critical element of Čaputová's appeal. It was mentioned by many interviewees during the interviews.

2. **Breakthrough** was the second node. This node is abductive to inform a general picture of whether Čaputová, as a presidential candidate, was considered a breakthrough. Breakthrough will be conceptualised two-fold; a breakthrough in terms of gender stereotyping of women in Slovakia (Zdrálek, 2019, p. 199), and a breakthrough in terms of liberal political ideology entering Slovak politics (Guasti & Bustikova, 2020, p. 240; Nič, 2020). An aspect of this node is related to the gender-strategic mobilisation theory as to whether Čaputová's win of the 2019 presidential campaign was considered a breakthrough in terms of gender and women's position in Slovak politics. This theme compiles the data which verify or reject the belief that Čaputová's presidential campaign and subsequent election win was a breakthrough in Slovak politics.

3. **Political association** was abductive. This node is conceptualised as her political association to separate political powers: association with former Slovak President,

Andrej Kiska, and association with the pro-democracy and pro-Western political party, PS. Each political association was important to her campaign and her reception as a new political candidate in Slovak politics. This node seeks to examine whether these political associations were important to her presidential campaign.

4. **Social media**, a deductive node, is related to the modified gender-strategic mobilisation theory. Its connection to the theory is in relation to how women are able to mobilise young women, particularly. This is also a platform that allows a variety of different forms of connection. Social media was mentioned frequently throughout the interviews as a source of importance for the presidential candidate, particularly in enabling presidential candidates to connect to young voters.

5. **Strategic timing** is deductive and relates to how Čaputová was able to capitalise on the challenges of the current political situation and how her campaign was interpreted in light of the contemporaneous situation. The timing of her campaign and her entrance into Slovak politics was in a watershed moment. The sub-nodes are all deductively chosen. Whilst message of hope, political crisis, and promise for change are not specified as important elements of a candidate's appeal in gender-strategic mobilisation theory, this is because the theory was posited within the context of Latin America. By 2020, female presidential candidates have won eight times. In Slovakia, by contrast, Čaputová is the first female president. To ignore whether her candidacy was a message of hope, promise for change and due to the political crisis, would be to ignore a fundamental element of importance in her campaign.

   a. **Message of hope**. Gender-strategic mobilisation theory focuses on women's ability to mobilise women voters, and since female presidential candidates are a rarity in Slovak politics, this node focuses on whether Čaputová's position in the presidential candidate race was significant for the interviewees.

   b. **Political crisis** is conceptualised as the troubled politics which Slovakia has witnessed since its inception as an independent nation. Mečiar, corruption and

the social and political crises that were associated with the political party, SMER, are all encompassed under this node.

    c. **Promise for change**, is related to whether Čaputová was perceived, in the presidential campaign, as a promise of change. This is in relation to her gender, but will also examine her campaign in light of Pareto's theory of the 'circulation of elites' and whether she scored highly in terms of social value, namely knowledge and the power of civil society (Zetterberg & Pareto, 1991, pp. 7-8).

6. **Unknown** is conceptualised as Čaputová's unknown political status before the 2019 presidential election. This node was deductive as it was constructed through the theory. The node description does not specify whether this is a positive or negative intentionally, as this unknown status can be seen as a double-edged sword; a positive example of change for some, and a clear reason to be sceptical for others. This node helps to contextualise why Čaputová's campaign was successful and also helps to place her political image and its significance in the political uncertainty of the 2018-2019 period in Slovakia.

7. The final node is **Youth connection**, which is deductive. Youth connection is conceptualised as an ability to connect with young people, through campaign strategy (notably Social media), political agenda, and the candidate's personal and political image. This theme is significant in assessing the drawbacks and successes of Čaputová's campaign. A female presidential candidate's ability to connect with youth is an integral part of their ability to mobilise young women to engage to vote. This node examines whether interviewees felt Čaputová was able to connect with young voters, and particularly young, female voters.

The content of each question in each interview was coded in NVivo 12 by the researcher into one (or more) nodes. For instance, the sentence: "she is now the most trustworthy politician in Slovakia" would be coded to the node 'Trust'; whereas: "she's progressive yeah and she also is very active on social media" would be coded to the node 'Social Media' and 'Appeal of Candidate'.

Reliability of Data Coding

As interpretation of the data rely heavily on the accuracy of the coding, the reliability of coding was undertaken in a random number of responses; a two-step procedure was used. First, a random numbers generator was used to select two interviews to review (https://www.randomdraws.com/uk/random-number-generator). Secondly, 10% of the responses of the two interviews were randomly selected (using the random numbers generator) and the coding checked. NVivo 12 gives each interviewee paragraph an unique number, which enabled the random selection to be made.

If discrepancies were identified during the checking process, all of the transcribed data for all of the interviewees would be checked and the reliability of the 'new' dataset confirmed. This cycle would be repeated until the discrepancies were <5%.

Data Presentation

The data are presented in Results (Chapter 6) using two approaches: as individual interviews, using narrative summaries and Word Clouds, and as a collective summary using the themes of the node structure. Word clouds are a visualisation of word frequency and help give an insight into free text. The more frequently a word is used within the interview, the larger the word appears in the word cloud. Prepositions, first names, and some words were removed prior to word cloud analysis to prevent obscuration of the findings in the interviews; language errors were amended or omitted (Appendix 3). Key findings from interviews were those given most prominence by the interviewee and/or were considered pertinent to the interpretation of the research question.

The data collected from the interviews were collated and analysed by the seven themes as described previously: Appeal of Candidate, Breakthrough, Political Association, Social Media, Strategic Timing, Unknown, and Youth Connection.

Ethics Approval: University of Glasgow

All research work involving human subjects undertaken in the United Kingdom must have the approval of the Local Research Ethics Committee before it starts. All relevant documents and

study plan were sent to the University of Glasgow's Ethics Committee, with the assistance of IMCEERES Coordinator, Dr Ammon Cheskin. This included the Plain Language Statements, Consent Forms, completed Ethics form, and the sets of questions for experts and non-experts (Table 1; Table 2). Approval to undertake the research described in this thesis was received on 27.02.2020 (Appendix 2).

COVID-19

The data collection timetable was kept until the final possible minute. However, as interviews and dates were finalised for March 2020 and due to take place in Slovakia, lockdown measures were introduced across Europe and Slovakia and Poland closed their tertiary education institutions. This was followed by border closures of the countries. This meant that it was impossible to do interviews in Banská Bystrica, as travel was banned. This posed significant challenges to the research due to how the qualitative data were to be collected. These challenges were compounded by the University of Glasgow's considered decision to suspend all interviews, in person and online, in order to prevent potential stress to interviewees and the NHS[20] due to the COVID-19 situation. This decision initially affected all students affiliated with the University.

After talks, the University of Glasgow offered to release interview restrictions for students gaining data abroad provided they were respectful and thoughtful of the challenges posed by COVID-19. I was able to appeal to the University's Ethics Committee to resume my non-expert interviews online, provided this did not pose concern or risk to the interviewees. In the process of gaining re-approval for my research, it was concluded that it was best not to undertake expert interviews, due to the significant challenges faced at the time by politicians and academics, as their workloads were heavily increased as work/business moved online within a week. This decision was also to comply as much as possible with the preference and rationale of the University of Glasgow's decision to suspend all interviews.

The Ethics Committee approved the amended research application (received 02/04/20) and interviews were able to be carried out online. However, due to the challenges

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[20] National Health Service of the UK.

of COVID-19 and as the interviews moved online, some of the interviewees decided not to participate and so a number of previously confirmed interviewees were lost. As I could access a wider audience through online resources, I wrote again to the Ethics Committee requesting to remove the age limit and to access a wider audience outside of the University setting. Approval for this subsequent amendment was received (on 27/05/20). This enabled me to find non-expert interviewees, from across the age spectrum and from a variety of locations in Slovakia. Whilst the challenges of COVID-19 made the data collection challenging, this opportunity to expand my interviewee pool and to access different interviewees via snowball sampling was very beneficial for the project (Noy, 2008). Although I was unable to attain the initial research target outlined in my proposal, in light of the dynamic and complex situation of COVID-19, sufficient research was still able to be obtained.

Chapter 6: Results

Interviewees

Twelve people were interviewed as non-experts. Interviewees were from across the map of Slovakia. All interviewees were Slovakian, and all identified as women. The interviewees ranged in age from 18-30 years. Over half of the interviewees (7/12) were university students at the University of Matej Bel, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia; the other interviewees worked in a variety of jobs, with the majority working in Slovakia.

Transcriptions

There were 12 transcriptions, which correspond to the number of interviews which took place. One of the interviews was carried out in a questionnaire format (i.e. written) because the interviewee's internet connection did not work during the interview slot nor during the rearranged time. This interviewee still wished to be a part of the study and, consequently, provided written answers to the interview questions.

The mean duration for an interview was 53 minutes with standard deviation of 27 minutes. The total number of minutes transcribed was 9 hours 43 minutes.

Reliability of Coding

The first round of reliability testing of the coded data indicated some discrepancies in the coding. In light of these findings, all of the transcribed data were recoded from scratch and the coding reliability test was performed again. In the second round of testing, no issues in reliability arose. This enabled the research to be categorised as reliable and ensured the research could move on to the next step, analysing the aggregated data.

The results are divided into two categories: results from individual interviews (accompanied by Word Clouds and quotes) and results by theme analysis (accompanied by quotes). To mitigate repetition, the quotes from interviewees in the individual analyses are referred to by number in the text and written in full in Appendix 4.

Individual Interviewee Data Analysis

Each interviewee provided a rich source of data. The Word Clouds highlight the most important words and themes present in each interview.

Nine out of the 12 interviewees voted for Čaputová, two expressed that they voted for another candidate throughout the elections, and one interviewee stated she voted for a different candidate in the first round of elections, and as this candidate did not make it to the second round, she then voted for Čaputová.

Interviewee 1

The most frequently used words in this interview were: hope, change, trying, situation, mother, first, Kuciak, vote, and example, which correspond to the key findings of this interview. These words focus the attention towards Čaputová's identity as a woman, the political (and social crisis), and the prospects of hope for Slovakia's future (Figure 1).

The importance placed on the political (and social crisis) in Slovakia in 2018-2019 informed how Čaputová was presented as a candidate to Interviewee 1. In particular, the murder of Ján Kuciak and his partner, Martina Kušnírová, was in a prominent position (Quote 1.1; 1.2). This interviewee also focused on Čaputová's candidacy in comparison to that of her political opponent, Maroš Šefčovič. This was notable as this was one of the interviewees who spoke of how competent Šefčovič was as a political candidate, and yet, the interviewee still stressed that she was hopeful, and developing trust, for Čaputová (Quote 1.3; 1.4; 1.5). This interview presented, in some ways, a juxtaposed opinion to some other interviews, which perceived Čaputová to be a more viable candidate than Šefčovič, particularly on the grounds of trust and authenticity. Finally, this interviewee focused on Čaputová's personal image, highlighting that her success was due to her presentation as a mother figure and her femininity (Quote 1.6; 1.7).

Interviewee 2

The most frequently used words in this interview were: women, good, Instagram, men, better, smart, and first. These corresponds to the main points of this interview: Čaputová's status as a first successful female candidate and the hope that produced, her connection to young voters, and the use and importance of social media in the presidential campaign (Figure 2).

This interviewee focused on the fact that Čaputová was a message of hope and promise for change, through her status as a woman, and as the first female Slovak President (Quote 2.1). This was an important comment which was repeated in subsequent interviews (i.e. interviewees 5, 8, 1, and 10). This interviewee also noted that Čaputová had success with young voters, in perhaps an unexpected way; that young male voters found her appealing (Quote 2.2). The interviewee also suggested that young voters tend to vote for the same party as their family; a finding which was repeated in other interviews (i.e. interviewees 1, 3, 4) (Quote 2.3; 2.4). The interviewee suggests that people tend to vote the same as other family members and that family discussions regarding who to vote for were common. The final key finding was the importance of social media. Interviewee 2 noted that Čaputová used social media well and that this was important (Quote 2.5). This interviewee also compared

Čaputová's use of social media to others; she cited the social media campaign of presidential candidate, Milan Krajniak, as a bad example (Quote 2.6). This focus on the importance of strategic social media use to increase support and connection with young voters, is important in examining Čaputová's ability to connect to young voters.

Figure 2: Word cloud of Interviewee 2

Interviewee 3

The most frequently used words in this interview were liberal, good, women, lawyer, harder, and change, which align to the key findings that: Čaputová's entrance created change, her personal image was well-received, and the focus on women in politics and women's relations to politics in Slovakia (Figure 3).

This interviewee emphasised that despite the national and international press attention centred on Čaputová's campaign and election win, she was nevertheless sceptical of whether this momentum would hold (Quote 3.1). She furthered this opinion by reflecting on the results of PS in the 2020 parliamentary elections (Quote 3.2). This key finding deviated from the narratives of some other interviews. The interviewee emphasised that whilst Čaputová's campaign and election may have been a promise for change for parts of society, the momentum created by Čaputová's election was not translated into the national parliamentary elections. Consequently, change stagnated after her election. Another key

finding of this interview was how Čaputová's personal image was received by society, and particularly young people (Quote 3.3; 3.4). This opinion confirmed the statements of Interviewees 2 and 10. Interviewee 3 furthered this opinion by stating young men are likely to have voted for Čaputová (Quote 3.5). This opinion echoes Interviewee 2. However, she furthered this statement, later in the interview, by elaborating upon the role and perception of women in politics (Quote 3.6). This finding of the different voting behaviours of young Slovaks and young women's relationship to Slovak politics is noteworthy. The perception of women in politics, and what attributes women present in politics, can make them either positive or negative politicians in the eyes of Slovak society. The interviewee caveated her opinion about young voters by stating that Čaputová's campaign and election may have inspired young women (Quote 3.7). This final key finding helps to address the various stereotypes attributed to women and how these stereotypes can be challenged.

Figure 3: Word cloud of Interviewee 3

Interviewee 4

The most frequently used words in this interview are: satisfied, European, Šefčovič, women, good, way, and gender. These mirror the key findings in Interview 4: the importance of political association when examining Čaputová, Maroš Šefčovič's successes (the opposition candidate), and the differentiations in young people's perceptions of Čaputová.

Regarding political affiliation, Interviewee 4 noted that Čaputová's affiliation with PS was a hindrance to her campaign (Quote 4.1; 4.2). This opinion, in contrast to some of the other interviewees, highlights the duality in Slovak society's perception of Čaputová's association with PS. Additionally, Interviewee 4, like Interviewee 1, pointed out that the opposition candidate, Šefčovič, was reliable because of his role in the EU (Quote 4.3). Nonetheless, she believed that both Čaputová and Šefčovič were good presidential candidates (Quote 4.4). This view acknowledged how young people perceive the EU and its place within the Slovak context. The final key opinion was that young women tended to prefer Šefčovič, and young men tended to prefer Čaputová, in her circles (Quote 4.5; 4.6). This opinion reflects the statements of Interviewee 2 and Interviewee 3.

Figure 4: Word cloud of Interviewee 4

Interviewee 5

The most frequently used words in this interview were: women, believe, conservative, old, new, example, social, and Progressive (Slovakia); these reflect the key findings in this interview which were Čaputová's breakthroughs, and her prowess with social media (Figure 5).

Interviewee 5 believed Čaputová's campaign and subsequent election was a breakthrough on several fronts (Quote 5.1; 5.2; 5.3; 5.4). A breakthrough that she was the first elected female president; a breakthrough that she represented new, liberal ideas; and a breakthrough that she was diplomatic and brought polite rhetoric into high politics. The second key finding was the importance that social media played in her success. A finding which mirrored that of Interviewee 2 (Quote 5.5). Social media use was cited as a success in Čaputová's appeal to voters. Equally, this was emphasised in comparison to other candidates whose use of social media was not beneficial (Quote 5.6).

Figure 5: Word cloud of Interviewee 5

Interviewee 6

The most frequently used words in this interview were good, woman, gender, newcomer, liberal, equality, propaganda, and SMER which relate to the key findings of the importance of Čaputová's unknown status and her political association, her personal image, and her honest opinions presented in politics (Figure 6).

The key points raised by Interviewee 6 were the perception that Čaputová's campaign and election breakthrough was due to her unknown status and political party association, but not her gender (Quote 6.1; 6.2). Her association with PS was believed to be a particular breakthrough (Quote 6.3). The focus on how her unknown status and association

with a new political party was a surprise for people in Slovakia, and a prominent feature of her campaign, was mentioned throughout the interview. Interviewee 6 commented that Čaputová's successes, and her appeal to young voters, were her personal image and her honesty, particular with LGBTQI+ support (Quote 6.4; 6.5; 6.6). This honesty which she showed in politics, by publicly regarding issues which can cause controversy in Slovakia was an attribute which Interviewee 6 felt enabled Čaputová's success. She emphasised this throughout (Quote 6.7; 6.8). This melange of characteristics, which are rounded off by Čaputová's aesthetics, emphasise the diversity of factors which encouraged voters to vote for her, in the interviewee's opinion. A belief echoed by interviewees 8, 10, 11 and 12.

*Figure 6: Word cloud of Interviewee 6*

Interviewee 7

The most frequently used words in this interview were: change, political, personal, SMER, female, women, and represented. These relate to the key findings in this interview: Čaputová as a promise for change and the trio of factors that enabled her to appeal to young, female voters: her gender, her honesty, and her diplomatic persona (Figure 7).

Interview 7 emphasised that Čaputová's campaign and election were a promise for change (and a message of hope) within the political crisis in Slovakia in 2018-2019 (Quote 7.1;

7.2; 7.3). Another key finding from this interviewee was that Čaputová's appeal to young, female voters was threefold: her gender (i.e. she had an ability to appeal to young women through her own female identity), her liberal and honest values, and her diplomatic style of rhetoric (Quote 7.4; 7.5; 7.6; 7.7). This presentation of Čaputová as honest, respectful, and demonstrating liberal values was a recurrent theme through many of the interviews (i.e. interviewees 4, 9, 10, 11, and 12); it was cited as one of her core successes in appealing to young, female voters.

Figure 7: Word cloud of Interviewee 7
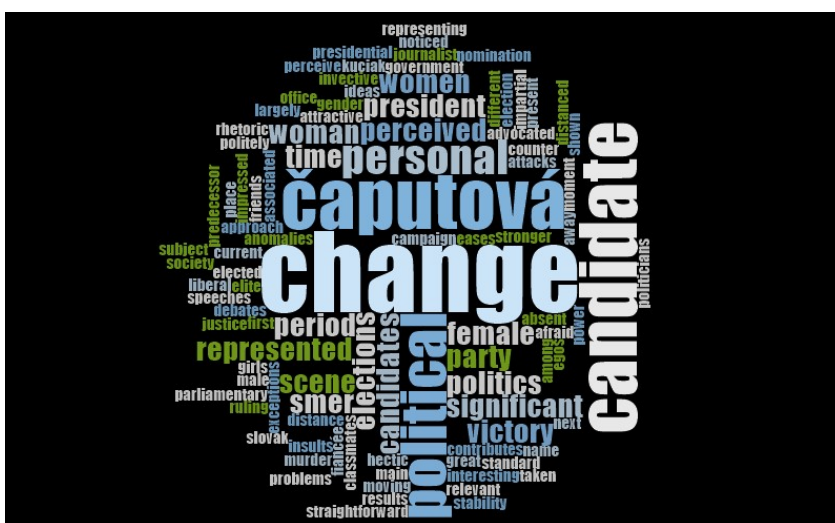
Interviewee 8

The most frequently used words in this interview were fact, hope, progressive (and PS), gender, liberal and international. These mirror the several key findings of this interview: the reception and reaction to women in Slovak politics, Čaputová has an international success, the success of Čaputová's femininity, and Čaputová being part of a trend in Slovak politics as opposed to inciting a trend herself, through her election (Figure 8).

The first finding was a focus on how women are perceived in Slovak politics, and how, the interviewee believes, they have been let down. The Interviewee spoke of the 2009 presidential election and the candidate, Iveta Radičová (Quote 8.1; 8.2). This focus upon how

Radičová was a highly successful professional, who was a woman, who lost to a male career politician, oriented the interview towards an examination of female politicians' historical treatment in Slovak politics. Therefore, it was possible to compare Čaputová's success 10 years after Radičová's loss. The Interviewee emphasised that Čaputová has become internationally important for Slovakia and the V4 (Quote 8.3). The international element is furthered, in the interviewee's opinion, by Čaputová's success at owning her female identity and incorporating this into her campaign, despite the gender stereotypes which, the interviewee felt, in Slovakia could have limited her (Quote 8.4; 8.5). Čaputová appeared to lean into her femininity and use it as part of her political and personal appeal and this was cited a success. Čaputová's overt femininity was a highlight of her personal and political image (and equally noted by Interviewee 1). Another key finding was that Čaputová was perceived as being part of a trend of change that had been happening in Slovak politics, as opposed to being a trendsetter herself; an opinion mirrored by Interviewee 10, 11 and 12 (Quote 8.6). However, Interviewee 8 stated that in Slovakia, there are some who perceive Čaputová as unrelated to a trend and an irregularity in Slovak politics (Quote 8.7).

Figure 8: Word cloud of Interviewee 8

Interviewee 9

The most frequently used words in this interview were different, attacks, kind, issues, liberal, traditional and family. These words align to the key findings of the interview: the success of Čaputová's personal image and politeness in politics, that Čaputová has not sparked a change, and that it was a positive aspect that she was affiliated with PS (Figure 9).

Interviewee 9 emphasised that the real success of Čaputová's campaign and election was her decorum and diplomacy, which she had infused into Slovak politics since 2018. The change she brought (and continues to bring) to Slovak politics is an outstanding emblem of appeal to voters, particularly the young (Quote 9.1; 9.2). However, where this interviewee diverged from other interviewees was regarding whether or not Čaputová has sparked change. This interviewee believed she was an anomaly, as opposed to being a trend (or part of a trend) of new politicians in Slovakia (Quote 9.3). Another key finding of this interviewee was how positively PS appeared in politics, and therefore, this reflected well upon Čaputová as she was (and is) associated and endorsed by the party (Quote 9.4; 9.5; 9.6). This is notable as Čaputová and PS are closely affiliated. As Čaputová was Vice Chair of the party, prior to her presidential campaign, and she shares the same liberal values espoused by PS, this finding suggests that how the party is perceived influences the reception of Čaputová.

Figure 9: Word cloud of Interviewee 9
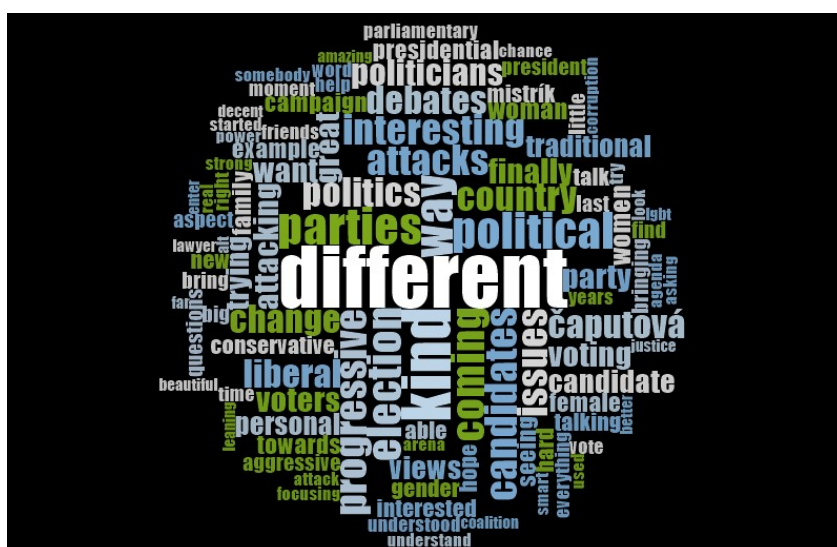
The most frequently used words in this interview were kind, liberal, women, great, parliament, symbolic and Progressive (Slovakia) which support the three key findings of this interview: the role of the political crisis in Slovakia, Čaputová's association with Andrej Kiska, and her endorsement by Robert Mistrík (Figure 10).

Interviewee 10 emphasised that the political crisis was entrenched in Slovak politics, and that part of this crisis is still evident in 2020. She commented upon the candidate, Šefčovič, and his public connection to SMER which, in her opinion, was concerning (Quote 10.1). This representation of Šefčovič deviated from some of the other interviewees' opinions, (Interview 1 and 4) who believed him to be a viable and trustworthy candidate, particularly because of his affiliation with SMER. From this, the interviewee equally stressed that Čaputová was closely allied with Kiska and the achievements under his presidency. This was an appealing element of her candidature; she was extending the successes he had achieved in office (Quote 10.2; 10.3). This was a key finding mirrored in other interviews (i.e. Interviewee 8, 9, 11, and 12). Kiska appears as the initiator of a trend which is growing pro-democracy and transparency in the presidency. Čaputová, as opposed to being the trendsetter, is developing a trend already established. The final finding was the importance of Mistrík's endorsement of Čaputová to the success of her campaign. This interviewee believed this is essential in understanding how Čaputová was able to appeal to young, female voters and how her campaign success rose exponentially (Quote 10.4; 10.5). The focus on Mistrík's decision to withdraw from the race and endorse Čaputová, and his acknowledgement that voters were split between the two liberal candidates (Mistrík and Čaputová) is important in understanding her campaign success.
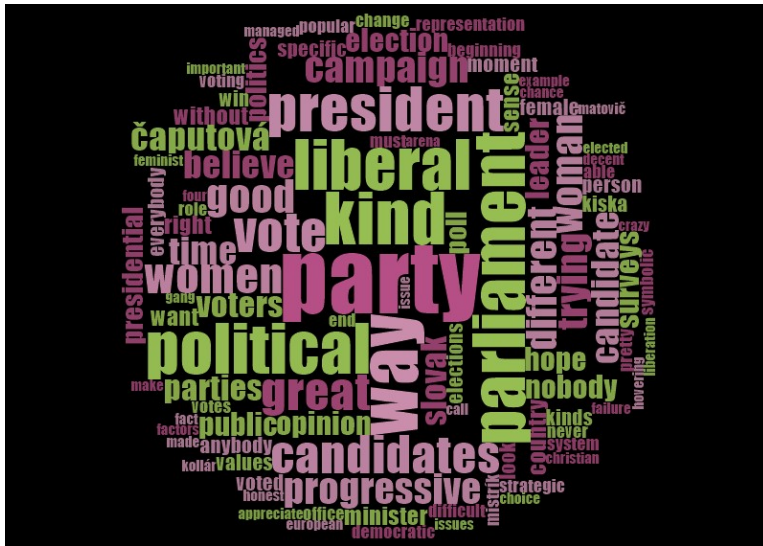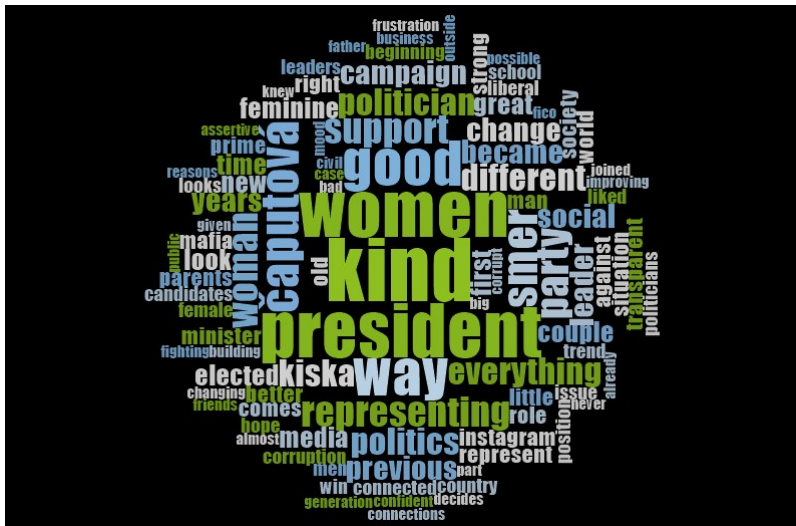
Interviewee 11

The most frequently used words in this interview were: women, Kiska, representing, feminine, SMER, mafia and different which correspond to the key findings: Čaputová's continuation of Kiska's progress and democracy development, Čaputová success through her status as a newcomer to politics and as a lawyer, and the importance of the political crisis in fuelling her campaign (Figure 11).

Interviewee 11 emphasised Čaputová's continuation of Kiska's progress and democracy development in the presidential office, as well as her unknown status in politics as being key to her appeal and success of her campaign. Regarding the association with former President Kiska, she noted, he was a good president, and liberal (Quote 11.1; 11.2). She furthered this point, in a similar vein to Interviewee 10, by stating that Čaputová was elevating the change through her unknown status in politics and her career (Quote 11.3; 11.4). This key finding was expanded upon by the suggestion that Čaputová's increased the developments and transparency which Kiska was praised for by society. This success was ameliorated by the fact she was unknown to politics and a representative of civil society, due to her NGO background and focus on justice. Within these findings, the interviewee also commented that whilst Čaputová was new, she was not a breakthrough. Instead, she

emphasised, that alongside Čaputová's continuation of Kiska's work, that she capitalised on the political crisis which had distressed society and was encouraging voters to look for an alternative to the political stagnation that existed under SMER's leadership (Quote 11.5; 11.6).

Figure 11: Word cloud of Interviewee 11

Interviewee 12

The most frequently used words in this interview were: Progressive (Slovakia), debates, women, SMER, natural, Mistrík, representation, and LGBTI which align with the prominent findings of this interview. Interviewee 12 focused on the successes due to Čaputová's politeness in political debates, Mistrík's withdrawal, and her public support for minorities and human rights (Figure 12).

There was a focus on Čaputová bringing diplomacy and decorum to politics, which was perceived as a success and break from political tradition in Slovakia (Quote 12.1; 12.2; 12.3). In line with Interviewee 10, Interviewee 12, focused upon the importance of Mistrík's withdrawal for the success of Čaputová's campaign and ability to succeed with young voters (Quote 12.4; 12.5). The final key finding from this interview was the success in Čaputová's public support for minorities, whether they were ethnic or sexual, and her support for human

rights which made her an appealing candidate, particularly to young voters (Quote 12.6). Čaputová's unapologetically pro-human rights stance was an appealing factor of her campaign, and subsequent presidency, which was also cited by Interviewee 2, 5, and 6.

Figure 12: Word cloud of Interviewee 12
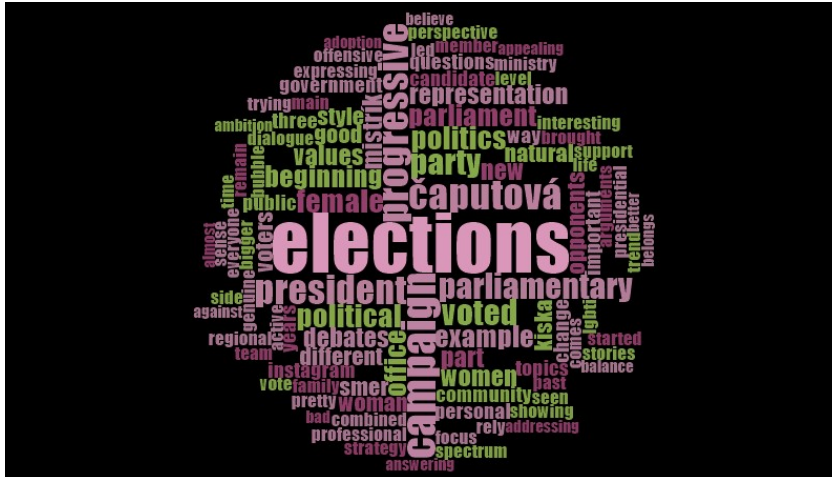
Summary of key findings from all Interviews

Whilst each interview produced its own key findings, there were some common opinions expressed by many of the interviewees. A notable feature was the emphasis on families, and how voting is discussed and decided upon as a family unit. This key finding seemingly reflects the alleged importance of family homogeny in voting for the Slovak president and will be discussed in the following chapter.

There were some general consensuses across all the interviews. Predominantly, each interviewee agreed that Čaputová appealed particularly to young, female voters. This was due to her being a woman, her explicit liberal values, and, as mentioned in most interviews, her ability to be composed and diplomatic in debates and topics of controversy (i.e. LGBTQI+ rights in Slovakia, gender equality, and corruption). It was generally acknowledged and applauded that she was an eminent lawyer before entering into Slovak politics. Nearly every

interviewee highlighted that her political and personal image was intertwined with justice, and that she was known as a successful lawyer, which influenced her appeal considerably. Whilst Čaputová may not have been a household name prior to 2018, the fact that she was able to tackle the issues of corruption in politics and the judiciary from, what was perceived as, a position of authority, assisted her campaign and helped her construct an image of transparency and accountability. Lastly, the majority of interviewees felt that their peers agreed with their opinions about Čaputová, which were predominantly positive.

Analysis of interview data by Theme

Seven themes, with sub-themes, were identified: Appeal of Candidate, Breakthrough, Political Association, Social Media, Strategic Timing, Unknown, and Youth Connection.

Appeal of Candidate

This theme focused upon the characteristics of Čaputová that made her an appealing candidate to young, female voters and, on a broader scale, voters in Slovakia. The theme was broken down into specific elements (sub-nodes): answering questions, authenticity, career, diplomatic, (with sub-division international diplomacy), human rights (support for), intellect, personal image, (with sub-division political image), 'smart feminism', and trust (Pie Chart 1).

Pie Chart 1: Theme- Appeal of Candidate
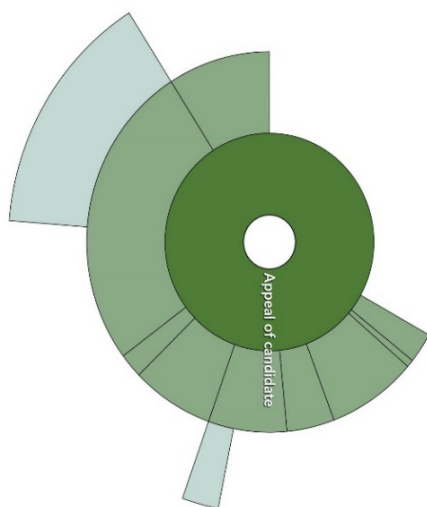
Nodes	Number of Coding References	Number of Interviewees
Appeal of Candidate	205	12
Answering Questions	4	3
Authenticity	49	10
Career	26	8
Diplomatic	29	10
Diplomatic: International Diplomacy	14	6
Human Rights	45	11
Intellect	13	6
Personal Image	71	12
Personal Image: Political Image	91	12
<Smart feminism>	16	10
Trust	56	12

All the pie charts in this section follow the same construction. The central coloured area (dark green) represents all of the responses of the theme, n=205 in this example, Appeal of Candidate. The middle layer represents the responses to the sub-nodes, in this example there are nine, and the outer area represents the two sub-nodes which had further sub-divisions.

The size of the 'slice' is proportional to the number of responses. The number of responses of the sub-nodes do not necessarily add up to the number of responses within the central area, as the nodes are not mutually exclusive.

Appeal of Candidate was the most prominent theme and is largely characterised by responses about Čaputová's Political Image (91 mentions), Personal Image (71 mentions), Trust (56 mentions), Authenticity (49 mentions) and Human Rights (45 mentions) (Pie Chart 1). Appeal of Candidate was mentioned by each interviewee and was a core feature (Table 3).

TABLE 3: APPEAL OF CANDIDATE QUOTES

"we didn't have a female president earlier and she came from the party of Progressive Slovakia and Together, like the coalition [Progressive Slovakia/Spolu], and they also… uh came here with the idea of hope, idea of change, and idea of the modern…modernisation and feminism and gender equality and all the things that are in the modern democracies in the world". (Interview 1)

"she was skilful at hm at not portraying those values [**liberal values**] as in conflict with the values of the rest of the country or communities which may be more conservative". (Interview 10)

"Čaputová's was most transparent and then when it comes to financing and publishing of all the like statements you know like tax statements and stuff, she was like very transparent about everything". (Interview 11)

There are a variety of reasons as to why Čaputová was appealing, however, all rally around the same core understanding: she was interested in representing and supporting the Slovak people.

Čaputová's political image was also acknowledged and touched upon by each interviewee. Čaputová appealed to voters, particularly young women, due to her liberal stance and push for justice and transparency (Table 4).

"her politics is uh accepted like to be open-minded but not to be vulgar". (Interview 5)

"I would say Slovakia's really um pro-European, and she is more concentrated like for Europe and like on the- on the American politic [**NATO/Atlantic relations**]". (Interview 5)

"I think with Čaputová there came definitely a sort of strong liberal kind of um pro-human rights, pro-democratic, um change and I was- I don't want to say that before that we didn't have that hm but we never really had a-a political party [**Progressive Slovakia**] that is so outwardly liberal you know". (Interview 10)

"And then also, she's a good-looking woman you know people like that, she dresses nicely, people comment on it. You know she represents us abroad, so she brings a lot of national pride in that sense you know so I think this all plays into her favour." (Interview 11)

"I liked her way of behave and see- she as a president in Slovakia she is- she should be representative, and she definitely is". (Interview 3)

"She's very distinguished and very pretty but also, she represents the uh opinions that are very like trustworthy and very good and she's very great representator of our country. Yes, I say so. She is very good at what she is doing." (Interview 6)

"Čaputová started using-using quite a lot because she was saying what she's preaching and what she's saying is-is to be tolerant towards these minorities so-so for her, liberal views uh mean tolerance and tolerance is the basis of Christianity so- so she often said there is no- there's no conflict between these two, that it's you know that- she doesn't understand why everybody keeps putting it like its liberal – conservative". (Interview 9)

Čaputová's political attributes are connected and intertwined with her personal image. Nonetheless, her personal image attracted the attention of voters for various different reasons (Table 5).

"what I really like about Čaputová that she is a fem- like she's very feminine, in the way she looks, in the way she dresses, the way she speaks, hm and I think that uh that demon- that demonstrates like, I think that's a cool trend of like different type of female leaders". (Interview 11)

"She's [Čaputová] beautiful, smart and she know how to behave, how to respond". (Interview 3)

"and that's why most of the people connected with her because she is a mother, she has daughters and that's why they took her as a maternity figure". (Interview 1)

"she's a mother of I think two or three daughters […] she's divorced and she-she's sort of like showed this sort of not like ideal image of her […] she combined her professional and family life, for example, hm, and I think you know a lot of women especially maybe good rely [relate] you know to- to this one um or yeah she-and it again like comes um, to me it comes back to being like very natural and-and just not maybe lying, and not idealising herself which is like saying it um as it was for her." (Interview 12)

"Because she presented herself as a mother of- of two daughters […] And she had a partner so she present herself as uh woman who has uh stablish- who has stabled [stability] in her family". (Interview 4)

"[I] felt very much that moment that this is the role model I would want for my children". (Interview 8)

This variety of positive attributes contributing to Čaputová's personal image was an important factor which appealed to voters; even those who did not vote for her were drawn to her and acknowledged that there were many appealing aspects of her and her campaign.

Trust was another noticeable feature of the Appeal of Candidate theme and was mentioned in every interview and coded 56 times (Pie Chart 1). This was a pronounced feature against the background of corruption and the political and social crises that were present in Slovakia between 2018 and 2019. This was exemplified in interviewees' responses (Table 6).

"But just the fact that she [Čaputová] calls these kinds of things out [issues in the government] you know for me it's-it's very good she's got like certain you know let's say boundaries and when somebody appears to cross them, she will call it out, without being overly confrontational or you know. So, to me, this is what she should be doing. She should be a sort of watch dog of the democracy in Slovakia and she's fulfilling that role and I think she's great at-at representing us abroad and-and you know as well." (Interview 10)

"she really tried to engage herself with- with people, and as she is a woman, it was easier for her because they took her as uh the fragile one and the one that they can trust, I think, in my opinion". (Interview 1)

"But I do trust her ability even though I might have a different opinion. I very much trust her ability that she will always think very carefully about everything she does, something that's not to be taken lightly in politics". (Interview 8)

"she's bringing um the rhetorics and the-the things that she was talking about in her-in her uh election campaign, it's you know she hasn't changed from-from that anything so, she-she's staying true to-to what she presented herself hm to be basically, so I think people find that uh find her trustworthy". (Interview 9)

"I fully, fully trust [her]. I like Kiska, I like other- there are a couple of politicians I like but…Čaputová has this like pure kind of- there's nothing you can find against her". (Interview 11)

"Yes, I trusted her for 100% […] Because as I was sceptic at the beginning, right now I really satisfied with her because as I saw every uh every move, every word what she said and will say, I guess that she's doing what she promised to people". (Interview 4)

Čaputová's abilities, and the way she presents herself and Slovakia abroad, interplay to make her a trustworthy character, and presidential candidate. However, some interviewees trusted other candidates more than Čaputová, notably Šefčovič (Interviewee 1 and 4), and Chmelár (Interview 6). Some trusted Mistrík equally or more, before his withdrawal (Interviewee 9 and 12). Nevertheless, Čaputová was able to appeal or garner some trust from young voters who otherwise trusted another candidate equally or more than her.

Regarding Authenticity (Pie Chart 1), many interviewees felt that it was a key feature of Čaputová and her campaign which was welcomed in the climate of political problems and lack of accountability in high politics, as characterised in the party, SMER (Table 7).

"I think Čaputová also showed that it is just as much about the substance as it is about the way that you present it and I think the big lesson we still need to learn from Čaputová is the way she communicated with her voters, that she communicated- again the authenticity". (Interview 8)

"she never like backed down from- from this, she always said uh I- I as I said before um "you are asking me so I'm telling you, I'm not going to- not going to hide from this. I'm not going to evade the question" hm "I do have liberal views and the reason why is that uh I always uh I will always stand up for minorities". (Interview 9)

"she behaves and represents the opinion in the way she represented before. She calls on uh good things and did that she was talking in her campaign." (Interview 6)

"Čaputová clothes we can see the… feminine, the, Čaputová is more feminine and she is more presenting the feminine side and she is doing it really well to… to promote females, not like, she is not like trying to become a male in the politics, because males are the ones who run politics but she is here to present women, mother, and…. The change". (Interview 1)

"this was exactly what you know the abortion topic for example. Everybody was trying to sort of get an answer from President- uh on the potential- from the potential president on that and she even was part of this video clip where she explained to the people you know that she's got like two daughters and that she thinks abortion is a horrible thing but that in the end she believes you know that this is a decision which ultimately should lie with the woman. So, when people engaged her on these topics, she was you know vocal and was honest. Which I also think and appreciate that she wasn't trying to- some of the candidates, even Robert Mistrík were trying to always sort of sneak out of those questions". (Interview 10)

"She was uh very perfect in her rep- representation of herself". (Interview 5)

These quotes illuminate that her authenticity was apparent in every element of Čaputová's personal and political image, from her communication, to her values, and even in her presentation and clothing. This focus on authenticity is a key element of her success in mobilising young women, particularly.

The fourth most frequently cited sub-theme, within Appeal of Candidate, was Human Rights. This is a broad sub-theme which encompasses LGBTQI+ rights, minority rights, women's rights, and reproductive rights. Each of these elements of human rights was supported by Čaputová. Human Rights were cited as either a success or a failure in her appeal to voters; some indicated that issues which are deemed as human rights issues by some, are threats to society for others. These topics are contentious within Slovakia (notably, minority rights, immigration, LGBTQI+ rights, and abortion). Interviewees commented on her public

support for these rights frequently. Their quotes demonstrate the scope of Čaputová's support (Table 8).

"she was very direct in expressing her um her values and also her support for, for example, LGBTI community um for um, for example, single mothers, hm and um and maybe minorities you know and sort of like vulnerable groups of people". (Interview 12)

"And uh, I want equal opportunities for women and men. I want the same opportunities for homosexuals and er um that's why I kinda… I kinda like appreciate and try to- to like her". (Interview 2)

"It was on her political agenda, I mentioned that she was talking about uh rights for everyone, equality within men and women but also with same uh gender [same-sex marriage and equality] and stuff". (Interview 6)

"there were these campaigns against like violence against women you know she was part of it and-and she invited those women who are uh running these kinds of uh NGOs you know to the presidential palace and-and like did a campaign on it." (Interview 10)

"this is the political party [**Progressive Slovakia**], which was like, for example, uh for abortions" [Čaputová spoke for the party and their campaign for this]. (Interview 5)

"she really well represents all the v-vulnerable groups hm you know whether it's like I don't know, Roma people or whether it's like children and all or women and like all underrepresented groups, and that's what I liked about her." (Interview 11)

The variety of human rights which Čaputová publicly supports and advocates for is an unusual feature in Slovak politics. However, as demonstrated through these quotes, the majority of interviewees felt this support was key to the success of her campaign and her appeal to young, female voters, mobilising many to vote in her favour.

The less frequently mentioned themes were also important in charting Čaputová's ability to mobilise young, female voters. The sub-themes of Answering Questions, Diplomacy and International Diplomacy, tie into Čaputová's image of authenticity and help to explain her ability to connect with young, female voters. The theme, Personal Image, is bolstered by the sub-themes, Career and Intellect, which examine, in more detail, why and how Čaputová's personal image and work were well received by young, female voters.

The core concepts within this theme, Appeal of Candidate, indicate how the individual elements which made Čaputová an appealing presidential candidate were the building blocks for success in her election campaign and mobilising young, female voters.

Breakthrough

This theme encompasses those who both agree and disagree that Čaputová's campaign (or election) is a breakthrough. Some perceived her campaign and win as an anomaly in Slovak politics, others as an ordinary political event and, yet others perceived her campaign as part of an already existent trend tackling political staleness and corruption. These opposing opinions were evident in the interviews (Table 9).

TABLE 9: BREAKTHROUGH QUOTES

"So just the first breakthrough was that she was- she- she is, yeah, she is a woman" and "So, um me and my peers as people, we- we seek for something new and then her- her victory was- was that something new that's what we really needed because um Čaputová represented new ideas and the fact that she won proved that our country is no longer a country of stereotype". (Interview 5)

"Čaputová came here in the middle of the social crisis and she bringed [brought] us hope for change, because she is a woman, that's the first thing" and, before Čaputová, "western democracies […] they took us only for, as I already said, the post-socialist country that is connected with Russia, etc" and that changed. (Interview 1)

"Čaputová she you know she was different, hm you know, she was different because she's a woman and [a] woman has actually never held that position in Slovakia before […] in that sense it certainly felt like you know like a chance at sort of breaking the invisible glass ceiling for the first time in Slovak history. So that was great." (Interview 10)

Versus:

"I think it wasn't breakthrough. I think the participation of voters wasn't abnormal… it was much better than before but um not so breakthrough…. Slovak people didn't really go to vote". (Interview 2)

"No, I don't think so. There was one woman that was a Prime Minister couple of years back, and she had a very short career [**Iveta Radičová**]". (Interview 11)

These juxtaposing interpretations of whether Čaputová's campaign and win was a breakthrough demonstrate a discrepancy between observations of what her campaign and persona represented in Slovak politics.

Political Association

This theme is critical to the understanding of Čaputová's political persona, reception, and campaign (as well as her subsequent election win). Each of the political associations, with President Kiska and PS, have the ability to be interpreted as either a success or failure of her political viability. These contrary opinions were highlighted throughout the interviews (Table 10). Whilst in some ways, these political associations are intertwined, each deserves to be explored as to the effect it posed to her campaign.

TABLE 10: ASSOCIATION TO PRESIDENT KISKA QUOTES

"that's why we started to like her more, because he [**Kiska**] posted on Instagram photos with her and trying to you, you know appeal uh… us [young people". (Interview 2)

"she [Čaputová] also declared that during her you know candidacy, during her campaign, she uh from the very beginning was very clear that she wants to continue with this kind of trend that Andrej Kiska has you know put in place". (Interview 10)

Versus:

"for example when Kiska was President, he did not do much for Slovakia". (Interview 1)

"he [**Kiska**]was not really good president of Slovakian Republic because he- he uh- as our constitution said that the presidential elections should be um… without support of any political party". (Interview 4)

The duality is equally replicated in the reception of Čaputová's political affiliation to PS. As a new political party, with an explicit liberal stance, this was projected on to Čaputová's own political and personal image. Her political association with PS and its pro-Western sympathies was reflected throughout the interviews as a positive association (Table 11).

"Čaputová always said that the, this coalition, or more Progressive Slovakia were her, was her alma mater". (Interview 1)

Progressive Slovakia "thought "ok, so we've done well in the regional elections and then we had Čaputová and then we had the parliamentary- uh European Parliamentary elections and now we're just riding this wave, of course we're going to get in" and we all thought that and I think we underestimated a) just how much Čaputová had the ability to connect a wide spectrum of people which Progressive Slovakia somehow couldn't quite do". (Interview 8)

"I would say Slovakia's really um pro-European, and she is more concentrated like for Europe and like on the- on the American politic [**NATO/Atlantic relations**]". (Interview 5)

However, the interviewees highlighted that this is not a complete picture of Slovak society's understanding (Table 12).

TABLE 12: FURTHER POLITICAL ASSOCIATION QUOTES

"for some people she is just this neo-liberal puppet installed by George Soros and-and you know all of these things which are quite popular in Slovakia so you know in my circle, she is you know, she is great and everybody is happy with her performance but, in other parts of Slovakia, I believe that you know… well, don't actually approve of her as much". (Interview 10)

"some people uh aren't really like the uh Progressive Slovakia, it was a new party here, in Slovakia". (Interview 2)

These quotes showcase that there may have been divisions within Slovak society between those who supported Čaputová's liberal stance, or at least understood it, and those who perceived Čaputová as a threat to politics and Slovakia (Table 12). Each of the elements of the theme, Political Association, help to inform an understanding of Čaputová's political presentation and her ability to connect and mobilise young, female voters.

Social Media

This theme is fundamental in the understanding of Čaputová's reception by young people in Slovakia. Social media platforms referenced by interviewees, mostly YouTube and Instagram, played a role in Čaputová's political persona and was important during her presidential campaign. Social media is a vital tool for connecting with youth; politics is no exception. If anything, the ability to use social media effectively and engagingly is an asset for politicians and their campaigns. This was a key finding captured within the data. Čaputová is a candidate who is overwhelmingly supported for her use and presentation on social media, as highlighted by the interviewees (Table 13).

TABLE 13: SOCIAL MEDIA QUOTES

> "her social media is appropriate to who she is and its appropriate to her position, it represents her well. So, it compliments her public image and I think it helps that much more". (Interview 8)
>
> "but I'm following her Instagram and she's the only politician on Instagram that I'm- Slovak politician on Instagram that I'm following, hm and I really like it. Uh I think she's got a really good PR when it comes to social media". (Interview 11)
>
> "now that she's in the office um they are using the um Instagram a lot to reach out to the people like they are um publishing a lot of stories and you know the-the programme of her day quite into the detail". (Interview 12)

These statements tease out why social media is critical to Čaputová's relations with her young population. The theme was mentioned in seven of the interviews, with predominantly positive commentary on Čaputová's use of social media.

Strategic Timing

This theme focuses on the surroundings of Čaputová's presidential campaign and the core elements which affected the reception of her campaign. Strategic timing is divided into three sub-themes: message of hope, political crisis, and promise for change (Pie Chart 2).

Pie Chart 2: Theme- Strategic Timing
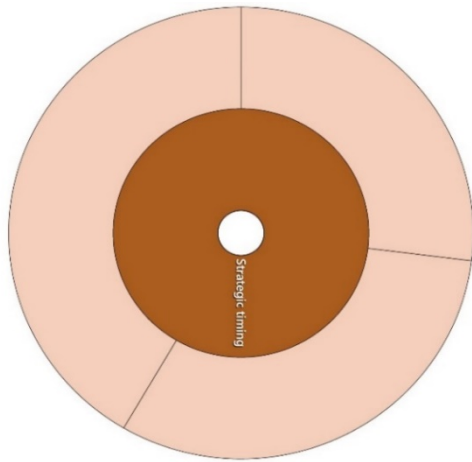
Nodes	Number of Coding References	Number of Interviewees
Message of hope	48	12
Political crisis	56	11
Promise for change	74	12

The element of Message of hope was met with agreement and disagreement, with some interviewees being very supportive and grateful for her entrance into Slovak politics (Table 14), whilst others were distrustful and reticent to support her campaign.

TABLE 14: MESSAGE OF HOPE QUOTES

"it was a massive moment of hope and still is a massive moment of hope for Slovak politics, for V4, for the world like she was such a pinnacle and such a fearful moment that I think it definitely, she is a symbol of hope for a big spectrum of people". (Interview 8)

"some message of- message of hope…yeah kinda because she was talking about discrimination an- she was talking about the position of women in political scene and yeah it was really good what I saw in her". (Interview 3)

This reception was mirrored in the concept of Promise for Change. The majority of the data coded into Strategic timing was coded under Promise for change, where many believed Čaputová's campaign and persona represented a turning tide in Slovak politics (Table 15).

> "Yes, both for me and for most of my classmates and friends, Čaputová and her election represented a change". (Interview 6)
>
> "so for me that was interesting that al- she was actually able to change the entire like political culture a little bit during-during that time because she was able-able to bring a little bit of decency into-into the way these debates were-were-were run". (Interview 9)

Promise for change and message of hope are set against the backdrop of the Slovak political crisis (and social crisis) of 2018-2019. The concept of the political crisis was mentioned by 11 out of the 12 interviewees. It appeared 56 times throughout the interviews (see Pie Chart 2) (Table 16).

> "Slovakia stood up and wanted something else that's why um other candidates were not so successful – or it's my opinion like, yes". (Interview 6),
>
> "And she might have won anyway but if she- if the presidential election happened before the murder, I think her situation would be different because there wouldn't be that public anger of going 'we cannot stand this no matter the free train travel, no matter the pay outs and the bonuses and the pensioners' benefits, this is not- we cannot'". (Interview 8)
>
> "it was not only her it was also the musicians, the actors, and the important people that took place- and that they did speeches in the big cities of Slovakia and they er also presented the id – the idea of change, it was also the er mother of er the fiancée of er Kuciak [Martina Kušnírová] Jan Kuciak, that she also had er … deep speeches about how the change is important because the situation is not as good and er we cannot let politicians have um have corrupted politicians and Čaputová was the first one who was … er elected for the change". (Interview 1)

To understand Čaputová's presidential campaign and her ability to mobilise young women and the wider society, it is imperative to understand her campaign in the context of the political crisis in Slovakia at the time. Her image as a promise for change or a message of hope was galvanised by the political crisis which had erupted and had people seeking change.

The theme of unknown is conceptualised as Čaputová's unknown status as she entered politics in Slovakia in 2018. She was a lawyer prior to her entry into politics and was not a well-known individual before 2018. This theme was recurrent throughout the interviews and interviewees posed opposing opinions (Table 17).

TABLE 17: UNKNOWN QUOTES

"before I didn't want to vote for her just because she was a newcomer". (Interview 6)

"I voted Maroš Šefčovič because I trusted him more, er as… because he was in high politics before and he- I thought that he knows better how to run a country, how to hold the power in hi- his hands than Čaputová". (Interview 1)

Versus:

"Čaputová came suddenly… like something kind of new in a way that she is the first- she's- she's not a politician, she wasn't a politician before. She wasn't a wealthy individual uh but she was someone who was representing civil society which-which for me was like I actually felt really proud about Slovaks". (Interview 11)

"a breakthrough because uh I feel like we have uh- uh a president who is like from the people and not just coming from this like uh group of uh politicians as I said who has been, you know, in the power for the last I don't know 20, 20-30 years". (Interview 9)

Although Čaputová's unknown status was generally acknowledged as positive, it was nevertheless an element that induced scepticism in some; it simultaneously was a sign of relief and hope for others that politics was changing. Commentary on her unknown status was mentioned by 10 of the 12 interviewees.

Youth Connection

This final theme directly addresses the research question, as well as the modified gender-strategic mobilisation theory employed in this research. Youth connection was reflected in the opinions of the interviewees and their reflections on wider society's reception of

Čaputová's presidential campaign. Youth connection was elaborated upon in every interview (Table 18).

"I know she definitely appealed to young people, women, young women I would say". (Interview 11)

"I think she was certainly primarily attractive to young voters, especially because of her liberal ideas." (Interview 7)

"I think she started with the young and liberal ones but I think she gradually expanded her voting base to people who were sick with the way politics was being done". (Interview 8)

"younger people saw- saw in her person really good way so. We saw that younger people follow her and much more younger people give her the vote" and "that she used social media that was really good and no billboards". (Interview 4)

Even if Čaputová was not an interviewee's preferred candidate, they acknowledged her successes with young people, particularly her symbolic importance for young women. At the same time, they felt that their opinion (i.e. not supporting her fully) was the opposite to the general opinion of young people in Slovakia (Table 19).

"to a lot of my colleagues and friends, she's very special because she's a woman candidate and yes, we don't have the same opinion to her. I don't adore her as much as other my friends". (Interview 6)

(The interview did not vote for her), "my family didn't want to vote also [for her] but my friends did". (Interview 1)

"she did… she appeals a lot to women, to young women because they see something in her like something new, what she could promise to women, because she is a woman." (Interview 2)

These data challenge the assumption that Čaputová was the most appealing candidate to (all) young, female voters.

Summary of key findings across Themes

The themes highlight the core successes (and failures) of Čaputová's presidential campaign. Čaputová's success when appealing to young, female voters was her transparency, honesty, and deviation from the political status quo in Slovakia through her values such as liberalism and support of human rights. This melange enabled her to appeal to young, female voters and mobilise them. In addition, the success of her campaign was also the opportune timing of Slovakia in crisis. The reductionist approach would assume that Čaputová encouraged young, female voters simply because of her status as a woman. However, the data showcases it was the variety of Čaputová's successes that mobilised young, female voters.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This thesis aimed to examine the effect of a female presidential candidate on the mobilisation of young, female voters, in Slovakia. This is an important question to answer as previous research in Slovakia, and long-held stereotypes, have encouraged the belief that women are not particularly interested, nor meant to be involved, in politics (Gyárfášová, Bútorová, & Filadelfiová, 2008, pp. 257-258; Baer, 2015, pp. 155-156) and particularly young women (National Democratic Institute, 2018, p. 26; Gyárfášová, Bútorová, & Filadelfiová, 2008, p. 241). This is consequential as young women (aged 18-30 years) are an appreciable percentage of the voting public (7.5%) (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2019a). No evidenceable data have been collected on the voting patterns and behaviour of young, female voters in Slovakia. Instead, statistical and voting data are arranged by gender or age group (National Democratic Institute, 2018, p. 5; 26; Hajdu & Kupková, 2018; Gyárfášová, Bútorová, & Filadelfiová, 2008). Without data specifically on young, female voters it is difficult to chart trends in voting behaviour and to examine, quantitatively, the impact and effect of a female presidential candidate. False presumptions about the group-wide interests of young women could adversely affect their future engagement with politics. In the context of this thesis, the data demonstrate, qualitatively, that Čaputová's presidential campaign and her subsequent success in the presidential race of 2019 impacted young, female voters. Ensuring young women are not a marginalised demographic helps to ensure the promotion of gender equality and could encourage voter participation and mobilisation into politics. This is a key marker of democracy. By 2020, Slovakia has only seen one female PM (Radičová in 2010) and one female President (Čaputová in 2019).

The interviews undertaken in this research suggest that Čaputová was able to mobilise young women and she achieved this on the basis of gender-strategic mobilisation. Čaputová's success when appealing to young, female voters was her transparency, honesty, and deviation from the political status quo in Slovakia, through her values such as liberalism and human rights. A reductionist reading of Čaputová's election and her success with young, female voters could conclude she only achieved success because of her gender. However, as the data in this research have shown, it was Čaputová's ability to be a multifaceted, strong role model for society and a deviation from the Slovak political norms that made her an

appealing candidate for young, female voters. This does not discredit the significance of her gender and the success of being the first female President of the Slovak Republic. Her gender may have not been the most significant factor for young, female voters in the presidential race of 2019, however, Čaputová's election ushers forth a new political landscape, in a nation run by a competent woman. One year into the role, Čaputová's popularity is still rising, from 78.2% in March 2019 (AKO, 2019a) to 83.5% in April 2020 (AKO, 2020a), and she has been considered the most credible Slovak politician in both these opinion polls. One of the lingering concerns in Slovakia has been the belief that women are not suitable for politics, and since they are not frequently in high politics this is a hard stereotype to counter (Gyárfášová, Bútorová, & Filadelfiová, 2008, pp. 257-258; Baer, 2015, pp. 155-156). Čaputová's rising public support and capability as President can inspire and encourage young women into politics, via example, and helps to demonstrate that women are both capable and necessary in politics, 10 years after Radičová paved the way for women in high politics in Slovakia.

Following Reyes-Housholder's theory of gender-strategic mobilisation, which had three main tactics, this thesis modified the tactics to examine whether Čaputová was able to mobilise young, female voters in Slovakia. This thesis identified 12 themes which were pertinent to Čaputová's campaign and which map onto the Reyes-Housholder's modified theory (see Chapter 4).

Social media played a substantial role in Čaputová's ability to mobilise young, female voters. The data indicated, in particular, that Instagram (and YouTube) enabled Čaputová to engage efficiently and effectively on a transparent, easily accessible platform. Considering that social media plays a central role in young people's lives, as well as politics (Chadwick, 2017; Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2014), this is an essential place to campaign and encourage open dialogue. Previous research found that "if candidates are more active on social networks, voter preferences in election polls increase" and that "Čaputová, who was active on her Facebook page, had higher preferences" (Svidronova, Kascakova, & Bambusekova, 2019, p. 192). Likewise, the data in this research found that Čaputová used social media effectively and that she was able to engage and encourage young people's interest in her campaign. Interviewees commented that Čaputová's competence with social media added to the appeal of her candidacy and expanded her credibility. The interviewees, overwhelming,

noted that she used social media and TV debates over more traditional methods of campaigning, such as billboards. This reinforced a belief in her desire to connect to the young voters.

Čaputová's Instagram account and YouTube channel were first used on 28th May 2018[21] and 13th October 2018[22], respectively. Both platforms opened with Čaputová announcing her candidacy for the 2019 presidential elections. Using these platforms early in the process of the presidential elections and using a media source that is dominated by young people demonstrates that Čaputová had an interest in reaching young people early in her presidential campaign. Alongside Čaputová's tactical use of social media, on 26th February 2019, Kiska used his social media (Instagram and Facebook) to endorse Čaputová as his preferred presidential candidate. GLOBSEC, a global think-tank based in Bratislava, reported that in 2018, for young people, Kiska was considered the politician with the most important opinion, and considered an influencer for young people (Hajdu & Kupková, 2018, p. 6; 20). Kiska's endorsement of Čaputová on social media, alongside his popularity with young people, suggests, as the data highlights, that this helped Čaputová's appeal and credibility with young voters.

In line with Reyes-Housholder's theory, Čaputová's success in mobilising young, female voters was her ability to evoke women's multiple gendered identities, using herself as a demonstration of women's capability. She achieved this through three distinct ways: her career as a lawyer, her personal life, and her personal image.

As the interviewee data highlight, Čaputová's distinguished career as a lawyer, specialising in the case of the Pezinok landfill in Slovakia, was instrumental in her ability to mobilise young women to vote for her. She was a renowned lawyer[23] before entering into Slovak politics in 2018. She was a symbol of a competent, career woman. Alongside her legal career, she was seen as an intellectual, thoughtful person. Her business protocol and her approach to a variety of topics were concise and engaging, according to the data reported in

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[21] First Instagram post: https://www.instagram.com/p/BjVQo7VFpRO/
[22] First YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jihFuftEpfE&t=26s
[23] Čaputová won the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize in 2016 (https://www.goldmanprize.org/recipient/zuzana-caputova/).

this thesis. She was also able to bring contemporary legal expertise and to competently advocate for judicial reform, which had been plagued by corruption. Čaputová's dexterity during the TV debates and through interaction with her rivals was evident during the campaign for the presidency. Čaputová entered politics as a professional with experience, and this presented her as a competent and trustworthy individual.

Beyond her career, Čaputová's persona and the interplay of her various identities enabled her to mobilise young, female voters. Čaputová, as the interviewee data indicated, was interpreted by some as a maternal figure. Her maternal image was bolstered as she is a single mother with two daughters and also through her human rights work, where she became a symbolic figurehead for the community affected by the Pezinok landfill. Čaputová, importantly, was also Christian and she used her campaign to introduce Christian values of tolerance and respect, particularly in line with minority rights (markedly, the LGBTQI+ community) and immigration support, where Christian rhetoric was frequently manipulated to marginalise these groups. This tolerant approach respected the traditional, Catholic values that are present in Slovakia.

However, Čaputová ran as a divorcee and as pro-reproductive rights. This stance can be controversial in Slovakia as it is unusual for a woman to display non-traditional marital behaviour and to agree with non-Catholic values. The issue of reproductive rights is fraught in Slovakia. Nonetheless, Čaputová did not avoid questions or ignore this topic, instead she gave her frank opinion regarding the issue. Notably, she cooperated with PS when they expressed their unwavering support for women's reproductive rights in May 2018 (Progresívne Slovensko, 2018). Čaputová's unity with her former party, the most openly liberal party in Slovakia, over reproductive rights demonstrates that Čaputová was interested in young women in the country. Čaputová's success was the blend of these characteristics which recognised and respected gender modernity as well as traditional values. Čaputová juxtaposed the commentary that women are more suitable in the domestic sphere, and showed that women can simultaneously be mothers, family heads, and career individuals. Čaputová's campaign painted an aspirational picture that helped to increase trust with young, female voters by demonstrating that she was a realistic political candidate. Her honesty and

multifaceted character appealed to young women as it tackled the societal assumptions of women's place in life and politics, yet respected Slovakian tradition.

The final way Čaputová mobilised young female voters, through endorsing women's multiple gendered identities, was through her femininity and use of stereotypically feminine attributes as a successful political tool. Čaputová's presidential campaign was explicitly feminine. She capitalised on the aesthetically pleasing, traditional feminine look, which contrasted the masculine environment of politics in Slovakia and her male opponents. The interviewee data found that young, female voters were encouraged by Čaputová's feminine dress and aesthetics. Many compared her image to that of the well-known global female leaders, namely Angela Merkel, Hillary Clinton, and Ursula von der Leyen. These politicians were noted as dressing and appearing more masculine in style. Whilst interviewees felt there were parallels between these women's political strengths and prowess and Čaputová's, interviewees were encouraged that Čaputová dressed in a traditionally feminine way and appeared to be proud of her femininity. They felt this buttressed her image of authenticity; Čaputová's gender presentation was a strength in her campaign.

Femininity and women are often seen as incompatible with politics in Slovakia (and internationally) and especially during elections where jibs and aggression are commonplace. However, Čaputová used her femininity to challenge the normative understanding of politics. She not only contrasted her opponents physically but also through her rhetoric in discussions and arguments. Čaputová did not use abrasive language, nor slander her opponents, instead she used polite, diplomatic language, structured her arguments, and tackled the faults and drawbacks in her opposition's arguments and in politics in the country, rather than resorting to *ad hominem* responses. She used the stereotypical feminine attributes of kindness, diplomacy, and a feminine image (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a) as a politically shrewd tool which, as the literature reveals, can be very well-received (Herrnson, Lay, & Stokes, 2003). Čaputová successfully demonstrated that politeness, sound and reasoned debate are appropriate for politics. The interviewee data suggested Čaputová is a promise for change and an emblem of hope for the introduction of a new wave of political behaviour. Her use of traditional and stereotypical femininity as a powerful weapon in politics indicates that women, and the way women are socialised in society, are relevant and necessary in politics

(Shapiro & Mahajan, 1986, p. 51; 55). Furthermore, Čaputová's election win has demonstrated, on a wider scale, that Slovak society also supports a change and renewal of politics in the country, spearheaded by a different set of political behaviours than seen previously.

Čaputová's ability to mobilise young, female voters was achieved through promising change that appeals particularly to young women. The interviewee data suggested that Čaputová achieved this through her overall political image combined with her stance on human rights, and the trusted and authentic image she developed.

The liberal stance of Čaputová, intertwined with her gender, was intrinsic to her ability to appeal to young, female voters. Former President, Kiska, encouraged attitudes of tolerance and pro-democracy in office, however, this was in direct opposition to the philosophy of Slovakia's leading political party, SMER. Čaputová's arrival into Slovak politics as SMER's power was weakening and after the resignation of Fico, encouraged her presentation as a candidate promising desired change. During the presidential race, her opposition candidate was Šefčovič, a candidate endorsed by SMER (Spectator Staff, 2019b). Čaputová, by being unconnected to SMER and through her status as a political newcomer, instilled a promise of change for Slovak politics, capitalising on the successful elements of openness and representation found in Kiska's presidency. The "pioneer frame" examined in Sheeler and Anderson's work which traditionally hinders women in high politics, was a major success for Čaputová as she was able to present a new, necessary path forward for Slovakia's politics (Sheeler & Anderson, 2013, p. 17).

Through her political image of liberalism and pro-democracy, Čaputová voiced support for minorities in Slovakia. The data in this research suggested that this was an important issue for young, female voters and that it was a political rarity in Slovakia for a politician to be openly respectful and supportive of minorities. Čaputová used her platform to campaign for equality across society, particularly for same-sex couples and underrepresented groups, namely the Roma community. Čaputová furthered this support by giving thanks in her presidential acceptance speech in Slovak and Romanes (as well as Hungarian, Czech and Ruthenian, emphasising her support for other minority communities in

Slovakia) (ČTK, 2019a; ČTK, 2019b). Her awareness and support for minorities, who are often overlooked in the political sphere of Slovakia, demonstrated Čaputová's deviation from the political status quo.

Čaputová's curation of an image of authenticity promised a change that was appealing to young, female voters. Čaputová's authenticity was encouraged through her trustworthy behaviour; she is considered the most transparent presidential candidate on record in Slovakia (Šípoš & Kostelanský, 2019). She published all property and tax returns, including tax returns from five years prior to 2019; another political rarity to have a candidate be so transparent (Šípoš & Kostelanský, 2019). This aligns with the data found in this research, in which the majority of interviewees felt she was a very trustworthy politician. This was perceived as a message of hope and promise for change for how politicians could behave in Slovakia and encouraged support for her presidential bid. In line with Pareto's theory of the 'circulation of elites', Čaputová, in the body politic, is an unequivocal representation of the innovator, arriving into the political scene to challenge the preconceptions of political behaviour (Zetterberg & Pareto, 1991). She scores the highest in terms of social value, namely knowledge (as an authentic expert) and she holds the power of civil society and the changes they desire in politics (Zetterberg & Pareto, 1991, pp. 7-8). She represents the new elite (Zetterberg & Pareto, 1991, pp. 7-8). Whilst Pareto's theory is ambiguous and relies upon an ideal society where social mobility is possible for all, Čaputová comes the closest to emulating this theory in practice; she was a political newcomer unrelated to the elites and representing the civil masses and their desires.

In 2018, research found that 94% of young Slovaks cited corruption as a serious (33%) or very serious (61%) issue and it was cited as the most serious issue in Slovakia (National Democratic Institute, 2018, p. 29). Čaputová's declaration of tax and property returns presented her as an honest and reliable candidate. Whilst Kiska was seen as a representative of civil society, he was accused of tax fraud in 2014 (Jancarikova & Muller, 2019). Čaputová, in the interviewee data, appeared in a different league from her political predecessors. Her transparency and anti-corruption stance, in politics and the judiciary, align with the values of young people who consider corruption to be the most pressing concern in Slovakia. In lieu, her career as an environmental activist and lawyer meant that she was involved with, and

representative of, civil society. This encouraged an honest connection between Čaputová and young, female voters, as she was not representative of the established Slovak political elite. Her representation of civil society diametrically opposed SMER and the politicians who had led Slovakia previously, namely Fico, who had been ensnared in corruption allegations. Čaputová was able to promise and be the change hoped for by young, female voters.

Unexpected Results

Some surprises arose from the interviewee data. For example, the role that political association and its influence played in Čaputová's campaign. It was notable that some interviewees were deterred by her campaign because of her affiliation to Kiska, or PS. Čaputová's candidacy following on from Kiska, regarding transparency and openness, was a strong appeal for some voters, but some saw her affiliation to Kiska as a negative aspect of her campaign. Kiska's endorsement of Čaputová on social media in February 2019, indicated to some that she would be a replication of his presidency. Due to the allegations of tax evasion and general dislike of his presidency, the interviewee data suggested some felt that this weakened their opinion of Čaputová. Comparably, whilst Čaputová withdrew from PS, their endorsement of her campaign led some to critique her as they believed her political affiliation was in conflict with the protocol of the presidential elections. Some interviewees would have preferred if Čaputová had run as a fully independent candidate without Kiska, or PS's, endorsement.

Beyond the juxtaposing reception to her political affiliations, the importance of Čaputová's unknown status in politics and her subsequent success cannot be understated. As her campaign was set against the backdrop of the Kuciak-Kušnírová murders and a political crisis, her unknown status was met with diametrically opposed responses. The interviewee data suggested many were grateful she was a political newcomer and a representative of civil society; this helped to showcase Čaputová as a rejection of the Slovak political elite in the wake of the crisis. However, the data also uncovered that her unknown status in politics made her an election risk. Čaputová did not possess political experience and was entering into politics at a time when Slovakia needed strong guidance. The risk was whether her inexperience would be successful and bring change, or whether it would weaken the political

sphere further. The international media's interest in Čaputová encouraged the opinion that her campaign was a forgone success, particularly as she was a newcomer unrelated to the established political elite (Jancarikova, 2019; Kalan, 2019). In contrast, the interviewee data revealed that the international media's opinion was a little premature. It is recognisable political behaviour for society to grow fatigued by perceived political staleness (i.e. continual one-party domination, as seen with SMER in Slovakia) and to desire for change, however, in a time of political crisis, a risk could be catastrophic. The interviewee data highlighted that Čaputová's entrance to Slovak politics was met with such polarised opinions by young, female voters.

Finally, whilst the research focused on young, female voters and it is assumed through conventional wisdom that young people tend to be positioned further to the left of the political spectrum, the data in this research appeared to challenge that assumption. Some interviewees stated they would typically vote in line with their family members, particularly parents, irrespective of peer pressure. It was noted that many interviewees discussed their voting options and potential choice with their family, and that families came to a consensus on voting, which challenges the stereotype of the political generational divide (Norris, 1996). Whilst individuals spoke and discussed their political choices with friends and peers, the role of the family decision was integral to some in their voting decision for the presidential election. If this outcome is replicated in other studies representative of young voters, then it could provide a new target and strategy for presidential campaigns.

Zuzana Čaputová: breakthrough or anomaly?

Čaputová as a breakthrough or an anomaly was a question discussed by all interviewees. Čaputová cannot be understood as a typical candidate in Slovak politics. This is evident through: her gender, the unmatched transparency of her campaign, her liberal opinions, and through her rising trust even in a time of political and social uncertainty through the COVID-19 pandemic. However, determining whether Čaputová was a breakthrough, whether she has started a trend of new political leaders in Slovakia, or whether she is an anomaly is complex. The data suggested all of these are plausible conclusions. Some interviewees indicated she was a breakthrough, particularly for women in leadership and for accountability and

transparency in Slovak politics. Many felt this was the first time they had ever been truly represented by a president. Contrastingly, some were more cautious of this conclusion and felt Čaputová was a rare amalgamation of several factors which made her an unique success.

Alongside this query of whether Čaputová's is seen as a breakthrough or anomaly, was the view that she is a part of an already emergent trend in Slovak politics. This trend began with Kiska's time in office, as he made the presidential position more open and he was more representative of civil society than previous presidents, as opposed to being a career politician. Simultaneously, many noted that PS had changed Slovak politics, and that the real breakthrough was with their candidate, Matúš Vallo, becoming Mayor of Bratislava in 2018. Vallo was a breakthrough as a newcomer, liberal politician in Slovakia (Spectator Staff, 2018b). Therefore, Čaputová, as opposed to being a trendsetter, was part of an already emerging trend for change and political renewal in Slovak politics. However, to complicate matters further, this trend is in flux due to PS (and its coalition partner, Spolu) failing to win any seats in the parliamentary elections in 2020 (Praus, 2020). PS in the polls was predicted to receive 9% of the vote (AKO, 2020b), however, in the elections they failed to reach the 7% coalition parties' threshold (Cameron, 2020). This was a shock defeat (Praus, 2020). This questioned the alleged upward trend of PS's support and whether the trend of more liberal politics in Slovakia was steadfast (Hockenos, 2020).

Čaputová arrived into Slovak politics at a time when society was engulfed in internal conflict. The political crisis spearheaded by the murders of Kuciak and Kušnírová decimated the 12-year reign of SMER and collapsed the credibility of Fico. Čaputová's arrival in politics as a supporter of human rights, justice, and civil society was the catalyst for change in Slovakia. As the literature highlighted, female candidates tend to do better if the nation is in internal crisis as opposed to an external conflict, which was present in Slovakia in 2018, as presidential campaigning began (Van Vugt & Spisak, 2008, p. 857). However, Čaputová was running against Šefčovič, a competent well-known male expert, who was a conventionally reliable and strong political candidate. Therefore, it is plausible, as the interviewee data highlights, to see Čaputová as a breakthrough candidate who despite her gender, political inexperience, and overt liberal values managed to win the presidential race. Čaputová may be ushering in a new wave of political candidates and values to Slovak politics.

Furthermore, Čaputová's campaign was assisted by the withdrawal of her political opponent, Robert Mistrík. Polls in mid-February 2019 found that Mistrík was polling at 15.8% support, second to Šefčovič, and ahead of Čaputová at 14.7% (AKO, 2019b). At the end of February, prior to the first election round in March, Mistrík withdrew from the presidential race. This was in line with a decision between him and Čaputová that one would withdraw to prevent the second-round election candidates being Šefčovič and Štefan Harabin (an independent, nativist candidate). Whilst Mistrík polled higher initially, Čaputová's support started to rise particularly as she entered the TV debates. Mistrík's departure insured Čaputová was the only liberal candidate and prevented a split of liberal, pro-democracy voters. This ensured that she would pass into the second round of elections unimpeded. As the data in this research show, many candidates also found Mistrík trustworthy and supported his presidential campaign. Mistrík's decision to withdraw aided voters substantially, as the data implied both candidates were strong and vying for the same voter demographic. Mistrík was initially polling higher, and therefore, if he had remained in the race, is a possibility he could have won.

Finally, a crucial factor to consider when examining Čaputová's presidential bid and win, and whether it was a breakthrough or an anomaly, is the voter turnout conundrum (Gyárfášová & Henderson, 2018). This issue, which has been present in Slovakia since independence, was prevalent in the 2019 presidential election. Voter turnout for the presidential elections in Slovakia has been, on average, steadily declining since 1999. However, for the second round of voting, there is normally an increase in voter turnout (Election Guide, 2020). The presidential election of 2019 provided some unexpected data for voter turnout. In the first round of voting, 48.44% of the population voted (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2019b); in the second round, this decreased to 41.79% (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2019c). The second-round turnout was the lowest ever recorded in presidential elections in Slovakia. In light of how well-received Čaputová and her victory in the elections were, it is noteworthy that the voter turnout was particularly weak in this election. Research has suggested since Slovakia is a post-communist/post-socialist state, habitual voting is not yet societally ingrained and the instability of the Slovak party system means people do not have strong party loyalty in comparison to other nations (Gyárfášová & Henderson, 2018, p. 84). In light of the 2019 presidential election, SMER's credibility had

collapsed and Šefčovič was not a well-recognized national political character. Similarly, Čaputová and PS were political newcomers arriving in 2018. Therefore, it is possible that since they were unknown in Slovak politics and did not have longstanding political loyalty, this depressed voter turnout more than in previous years.

Limitations

One of the key limitations of this research is that the study was conducted fully in English, as I do not speak Slovak. However, if this research were to move forward, it would be helpful for the data to be collected in Slovak/Hungarian/Romanes (and English). The expansion of the research to cover the three major languages of Slovakia would enable this research to examine the opinions of a representative sample of young, female voters, including those from the largest minority communities in Slovakia. The sampling population is all young, female voters and a representative sample must include individuals outside of the university setting and encompass individuals of all backgrounds. This would make the research more representative and useful in charting whether a female, presidential candidate mobilises young, female voters in Slovakia.

Another limitation of this research is that the sample size was very small, and it is not representative of young, female voters in Slovakia. These data cannot reflect the diversity and multitude of opinions that exist for this demographic. Additionally, the 12 interviewees all spoke English and were university educated. Therefore, it is not possible to suggest that this group fully reflects the opinions of society in Slovakia. Due to the small sample size, the results are only valid within the context of this study. This is important to consider when framing the results of this research. Nonetheless, this research is a steppingstone for further research which could examine on a larger and representative sample the effect of a female presidential candidate on young, female voters in Slovakia.

For the future, this research should expand to focus groups and a survey with a representative sample of young, female voters in Slovakia. Moreover, Čaputová's future years in office will provide more information and awareness of her ability in the role and her

reception by young women in Slovakia. It would be possible therefore to examine whether Čaputová has produced a measurable effect on young women's engagement with Slovak politics and whether she has encouraged any developments in politics, beyond Slovakia, in the V4. Following Čaputová's example it is conceivable that Central Europe will produce more female presidential candidates and more female presidents. In this event it would be possible to examine the effect and ability of such candidates to mobilise young, female voters and whether they use gender-strategic mobilisation to achieve support in their campaigns.

Conclusion

This research aimed to examine Čaputová and her presidential campaign's appeal and ability to mobilise young, female voters in Slovakia. It found that Čaputová was symbolically important for women in Slovakia, and her campaign was indeed able to mobilise young, female voters. She did not do this specifically through being a woman, but by using attributes and skills stereotypically attributed to women. Simultaneously, aspects of her campaign directly appealed and involved young, female voters, a demographic perceived to be disinterested and detached from politics. This research was constructed through Reyes-Housholder's theory, initially posited in Latin America, which appears valid to use in the context of Central Europe, and Slovakia. Nonetheless, Čaputová's campaign benefited from opportune timing due to the political crisis exacerbated by the murders of Kuciak and Kušnírová and the collapsing public opinion of the dominant SMER party.

This research has added to the global literature exploring the effect and reception of a female president. Nevertheless, this research is a small step on the path of examining Čaputová's effect on young women. Future research would have to include a representative and sufficient sample of young, female voters in Slovakia.

Whether one deems Čaputová's entrance to Slovak politics as positive or negative, she altered Slovak politics in 2019. She has set several bars for succeeding politicians, through her election as the first female president, her transparency, and her desire to tackle corruption. Čaputová brought Slovakia into the international sphere as a representation of the defeat of illiberal democracy and nativism. She also changed the internal rhetoric of Slovakia and demonstrated a new path forward for the country and its political status quo. The nation is now led by a woman, Čaputová, and new women are emerging in Slovak politics, notably Bihariová as the new chair of PS. More women in high level politics incites hope for the future and for young women, and consolidates the necessity of their place in Slovak politics.

Personal Reflection

Researching and completing this thesis has been an enlightening and challenging experience. I have been reminded of the value of time management and of setting realistic milestones. Having a clear structure with identified outcomes made the completion of the thesis more manageable. This was essential during the COVID-19 pandemic as normal life and established routines shifted significantly. One of the accidental benefits of COVID-19 was the ability to learn and use NVivo 12, due to the extra time I was allotted when I could not complete all my desired interviews. Whilst it was a steep learning curve, I am grateful to have had the chance to learn how to use this software and apply it to my data. This exemplified the importance of maintaining adaptability and working with changes and mishaps that occur. The thesis has given me the opportunity to learn or refine many transferable skills; for example, my editorial abilities have been honed by the challenge of keeping to the word count. On a broader scale, the ability to examine Čaputová's campaign and to have more insight into Slovak politics and society has been an invaluable life experience. I am very glad that I chose to explore such an unreported but intriguing nation as my case study for the IMCEERES Master's thesis.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Plain Language Statement (Non-Experts)

Invitation to participate in a research study

Changing patterns in mobilisation and voting attitudes in young, female voters in Slovakia.

You are being invited to take part in a research study. The research study is part of a Master's dissertation for the course: Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies at the University of Glasgow (United Kingdom), University of Tartu (Estonia) and Jagiellonian University (Poland).

Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The planned purpose of this study is to understand how young, female voters, in Slovakia, felt about Zuzana Čaputová and her presidential election campaign between 2018 and 2019. In particular, this research will focus on whether young female voters felt mobilised and how they voted during the

presidential election in 2019. The topic, in a broader sense, is related to the effect of whether women mobilise women in politics and the effect that having a female presidential candidate can have on young, female voters. Therefore, the research question of this dissertation is:

What is the effect of having a female candidate in the presidential running on mobilisation and voting patterns of young, female voters?

Why have I been chosen?

As you are a young, female who had the opportunity to vote in the presidential elections in 2019, this research is interested in hearing your opinions and thoughts about Zuzana Čaputová's presidential election campaign and your place within her campaign.

Do I have to take part?

No. There is no obligation for you to take part in this research. You are free to withdraw at any time. If you chose to withdraw, any and all relevant data about you will be destroyed.

What will happen if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you will be invited to participate in an interview that will last between 40 minutes to one hour. The interview will be conducted only in English. If you do not speak equivalent to B2 English, I would recommend you do not take part in this interview, so as not to cause undue stress. You will be asked a set of questions which are related to you, as an individual, and about your opinions and observations regarding Čaputová's election campaign.

This interview will be audio recorded, with your consent, and later the data will be transcribed and analysed. You will be asked for your written consent upon arrival to the interview. You will not be named during the interview and subsequent transcription. You will not be named in the follow up data.

You are free to stop the interview at any time and are free to leave at any point. Similarly, you are free to ask for clarification and to expand on your points, where you feel it is necessary.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In this unlikely event, the University of Glasgow may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

All interview results will be potentially included in my dissertation and will be used to formulate an understanding of Čaputová's election and its effect on young, female voters' mobilisation and voting behaviour in Slovakia.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by the University of Glasgow's School of Social and Political Sciences' Ethics Committee to ensure this study is in compliance with ethical standards.

Contact for Further Information

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the **School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow**.

Ethics Officer: **Susan Batchelor**

Email: **susan.bachelor@glasgow.ac.uk**

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,

Phoebe Williams (Researcher)

2121058w@student.gla.ac.uk | phoebe.williams@student.uj.edu.pl

Consent Form (Non-Experts)

University of Glasgow
College of Social Sciences

FACULTY OF INTERNATIONAL AND POLITICAL STUDIES OF THE JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY IN KRAKÓW

TARTU ÜLIKOOL · UNIVERSITAS TARTUENSIS · 1632

Consent Form

Title of Project:	**Changing patterns in mobilisation and voting attitudes in young, female voters in Slovakia**
Name of Researcher:	Phoebe Williams
Name(s) of Supervisor(s):	Dr Grzegorz Pożarlik (Jagiellonian University), Dr Raul Toomla (University of Tartu), Dr Ammon Cheskin (University of Glasgow)

(Please Tick)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Plain Language Statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. ☐

I consent to the interview being video/audio-recorded. ☐

(I acknowledge that copies of transcripts will be returned to me, the participant, for verification, if I request.) ☐

I acknowledge that I will not be named during the interview, and in analysis of data. ☐

I acknowledge I will not be identified by name in any publications arising from the research. ☐

I **agree** to take part in this research study ☐

I **do not agree** to take part in this research study ☐

Signatures

Name of Participant: …………………………………………

Signature: ……………………………………………

Date: ………………………………………………………

Name of Researcher: **Phoebe Williams**

Signature:

Date:

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Appendix 2

Approved Ethics Form

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Student Application form for ethical approval

College Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

Before completing this form, you should refer to the guidance notes available at:

https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/undergraduateandpostgraduatetaughtstudents/

And

https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/informationforapplicants/

This application form should be typed, and submitted electronically. **All questions must be answered**. "Not applicable" is a satisfactory answer where appropriate.

Applications should be submitted *at least 4 weeks in advance* of the intended start date for the data collection to allow time for review and any amendments that may be required.

Send to relevant School Ethics Forum (SEF) via email to School ethics administrative contact. *See contact details on College ethics website:*
https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/committee/ethicscontacts/

1   APPLICANT DETAILS

Student I.D.
2121058W

Name of Applicant
Phoebe Letitia Neame Williams

School/Subject
School of Social and Political Sciences
Project Title
Changing patterns in mobilisation and voting attitudes in young, female voters in Slovakia
Undergraduate ☐ Postgraduate Taught ☒
(Programme Convenors Only) Full Course Project within a PGT or UG Programme ☐

1.1 Degree/Programme Title: *All student applicants*

IMCEERES (International Master of Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies)

2 ETHICAL RISKS: The application will NOT be considered if this section is blank or incomplete or unsigned (in some form), both 2.1 and 2.2 must be completed by all Supervisors.

RISK ASSESSMENT: Is this application considered to be a low risk or a high risk application?

*Refer to **Risk Guidance** Document on College ethics webpages for clarification.*
https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/undergraduateandpostgraduatetaughtstudents/

HIGH RISK ☐ LOW RISK ☒

2.1 Explain specifically why the low or high risk distinction has been made.

This project is low risk because information will be gathered from consenting adults (over the age of 18 years) with no vulnerabilities. The researcher and supervisors estimate that the issues addressed in the interviews will not cause distress. All of the information collected will be held and saved on a password protected file and computer.   For non-expert interviews: data will be collected through a semi-structured, verbal interview with open ended questions, which will be audio-recorded. All interviewees will be asked to

agree to this and will be free to answer as many (or few) questions as they wish. Non-expert interviewees will be anonymous.

For expert interviews: data will be collected through a semi-structured interview, which will be audio recorded. Interviewees will be asked to agree to this and will be free to answer as many (or few) questions as they wish. Expert interviewees will be asked to consent to their data, including name and profession, being made public through the dissertation.

2.2 Risk Assessment Comments from Supervisor

Comment on the research ethics risks involved in the project. It should be clear from the comments provided that the potential risks have been considered and information provided on what they are, with evidence of what is to be implemented to mitigate these.

This is an inherently low risk project. The participants will be free to answer (or not answer) all of the questions raised. The researcher will not put pressure on the participants to answer any questions. All participants are over 18 years old, and the non-expert group will be sampled from Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia. The list of questions will be offered to the participants before the interview by email and before the interview itself, on paper, in person. All participants will have time to collect their thoughts. This should minimise any possible stress associated with expounding their opinions.

I do not see any undue risks associated with this project. Lone fieldwork will occur, but will take place on a public university campus and the usual measures will be taken to ensure safety of researcher.

Declaration: I have checked this application and approve it for submission for review to the Ethics Committee.

Supervisor's Name :   **Ammon Cheskin**

Date: 27.01.2020

3   RESEARCHERS

All Researcher(s) including research assistants and transcribers (*where appropriate*)

Title and Surname	First Name	Phone	Email *(This should normally be a University of Glasgow email address)*
Ms Williams	Phoebe	+447812632709	2121058w@student.gla.ac.uk

All Supervisor(s) Principal First (*where applicable*)

Title and Surname	First Name	Phone	Email *(This should normally be a University of Glasgow email address)*
Dr Pożarlik	Grzegorz	+48124296207	grzegorz.pozarlik@uj.edu.pl
Dr Toomla	Raul	n/a	raul.toomla@ut.ee
Dr Cheskin	Ammon	2845	Ammon.cheskin@glasgow.ac.uk

4   EXTERNAL FUNDING DETAILS

Note. If this project is externally funded, please provide the name of the sponsor or funding body.

none

5   PROJECT DETAILS

Start Date for Data Collection: 27/02/2020
(NB: This refers to data collection for the research covered in this application. This must be at least 4 weeks from the date of application submission.)
Proposed End Date of Research Project: 10/09/2020

(NB: This date should be when you expect to have completed the full project and published the results e.g. date of award, allow time for possible retrieval if required.)

6   JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Why is this research significant to the wider community? What might be the impact on your practice or the practice of others? *Outline the reasons which lead you to be satisfied that the possible benefits to researchers; participants and others to be gained from the project justify any risks or discomfort involved.*

The research for this project will add to global feminist literature. By examining the effects of a female presidential candidate on the voting and mobilisation behaviour of young, female voters helps to piece together an understanding of the effect of women mobilising women in the political sphere. Little research, so far, has been conducted on this topic worldwide. The areas where it has had most attention is within Latin America, and pockets of the Middle East (notably, Pakistan) and Western Africa (notably, Liberia). These cases have been famous around the world as these elected, female presidents have challenged the status quo of the male-dominated global political landscape. Zuzana Čaputová is the first elected female president to the independent nation of Slovakia. This provides a fresh perspective within the country's history and within the region, Central and Eastern Europe. By examining her campaign and her strategy towards female voters (particularly young, female voters), this research adds to the global awareness and understanding of the importance of women in high power political positions.

In a national context, this research will provide a platform for young Slovak women to express their views and reflections on the changing political situation in their country, in recent years. For experts related to Čaputová and the politics of Slovakia, their knowledge will provide invaluable information regarding the political landscape prior to Čaputová's campaign, her campaign strategy, and her ability to garner and mobilise voters. Together, the non-experts and experts' inputs will help to construct a succinct image of how Čaputová's campaign was able to mobilise and incentivise young women to participate in the Slovak presidential elections of 2019.

The collected and analysed data will be available for public dissemination in accordance with the policies of the University of Glasgow.

7   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

7.1   Method of data collection *(Tick as many as apply)*

Face to face or telephone interview *(provide a copy of the interview themes in a separate document. This does not need to be an exact list of questions but does need to provide sufficient detail to enable reviewers to form a clear view of the project and its ethical implications.)*	☒
Focus group *(provide details of themes or questions in a separate document. This does not need to be an exact list of questions but does need to provide sufficient detail to enable reviewers to form a clear view of the project and its ethical implications. Also information on recording format)*	☐
Audio or video-recording interviewees or events. Details should be provided, either in theme/question information or separately. *(Ensure that permission is evidenced on the consent form)*	☒
Questionnaire *(provide a copy of at least indicative questions in a separate document, final questions must be submitted as an amendment if not provided in initial application)*	☐
Online questionnaire *(provide the address/ or electronic copy in a separate document if not yet available online)* http://	☐
Participant observation *(provide an observation proforma in a separate document)*	☐
Other methodology *(please provide details here – maximum 50 words)*	☐

7.2   RESEARCH METHODS

Please explain the reason for the particular chosen method, the estimated time commitment required of participants and how the data will be analysed. Ensure that you include reference to methods of providing confidentiality as you indicate below in section 8.1

Overall, the research will use qualitative data analysis. Qualitative data will be collected through semi-structured verbal interviews. This is primarily because the research is taking a constructivist approach. The benefit of semi-structured interviews, with open ended questions, is that it allows the interviewees the opportunity to explore the questions and to reflect, without constraint, on the campaign and their assessment of impact. The focus of the research is to gather multiple interpretations in an attempt to piece together an understanding of a wider response to Čaputová's presidential election. The interviews will be recorded as the researcher's intention is to transcribe the interviews and to analyse, in depth, the response of interviewees.

The intention is for the interviews to be held in Slovakia. These interviews will be conducted between March-May 2020. Primarily, the non-expert interviews will be held in March 2020. They will be identified by their age and by their lack of active participation of the campaign of Čaputová. All non-expert interviewees will be 18 years old or more, and will be university students from Matej Bel University, Slovakia.

Expert interviews will be held between March- May 2020, depending on availability of the interviewees and their schedules. Experts will be identified on their relations to the political landscape of Slovakia. They will be political sciences' academics, members of NGOs, and individuals related directly to Progressive Slovakia and/or Čaputová's election campaign.

The interviews will last between 40-60 minutes. The interviews will be held only in English. The interviewees will be aware of this before their participation. I intend to send a copy of the questions to the interviewees, as well as the Plain Language statement, a week before the interviews take place.

8   Confidentiality & Data Handling

8.1   Will the research involve:

You should select all options that apply to your (different) research methods (insert the name of the method in shaded box at top of each column, e.g. interview / questionnaire) and make clear in section 7.2 above how these will be applied.

DEGREE OF ANONYMITY	(insert method) Interview expert	(insert method) Interview Non-expert	(insert method) Secondary data
De-identified samples or data (i.e. a reversible process whereby identifiers are replaced by a code, to which the researcher retains the key, in a secure location?	☐	☐	n/a
Anonymised samples or data (i.e. an irreversible process whereby identifiers are removed from data and replaced by a code, with no record retained of how the code relates to the identifiers. It is then impossible to identify the individual to whom the sample of information relates)?	☐	☒	☐
Complete anonymity of participants (i.e. researchers will not meet, or know the identity of participants, as participants are part of a random sample and are required to return responses with no form of personal identification)?	☐	☐	☐
USE OF NAMES			

Subject being referred to by pseudonym in any publication arising from the research?	☐	☐	☐
Participants consent to being named?	☒ Experts	☐	☐
Any other methods of protecting the privacy of participants? (e.g. use of direct quotes with specific, written permission only; use of real name with specific, written permission only): *details here:*	☐	☐	☐
Participants being made aware that confidentiality may be impossible to guarantee; for example in the event of disclosure of harm or danger to participants or others:	☐	☐	☐
Participants being made aware that confidentiality may be impossible to guarantee; for example due to size of sample, particular locations etc?	☐	☐	☐

8.2   Which of the following methods of assuring confidentiality of data will be implemented?

*Tick all that apply

Note: The more ethically sensitive the data, the more secure will the conditions of storage be expected to be.

Location of Storage	☒
Storage at University of Glasgow	

Stored at another site *(provide details here, including address)* University of Tartu, Estonia Jagiellonian University, Krakow	☒
Paper Data to be kept secure in locked room/facility/cabinet	☒
Data and identifiers to be kept secure in locked room/facility/cabinet	☐
Electronic Access to computer files to be available by password only	☒
Other Any other method of securing confidentiality of data in storage: *provide details here:* The data will be stored on Microsoft OneDrive, password protected and accessible only by the researcher.	☒

9   ACCESS TO DATA

9.1 Access by named researcher(s) and, where applicable, supervisor(s), examiner(s), research assistants,
☒

transcribers.

9.2 Access by people **OTHER** than named researcher(s)/Supervisor(s), examiner(s), research assistants,
☐

transcribers.

Please explain by whom and for what purpose:

> Data collected in this project will be seen and potentially examined by my supervisors and dissertation examiners.

10   RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF <u>PERSONAL</u> DATA *

Please explain and as appropriate justify your proposals for retention and/or disposal of any <u>personal</u> data to be collected. *(for example names, addresses, contact information)*

It is normally appropriate to destroy the personal data at the end of the research project, if you do not intend to do so, you must provide **substantial** reasons in the box below.

Do you intend to destroy the personal data collected?

YES   ☒   NO   ☐

If no, provide your reasons here:

| |
| |

* 'personal data' means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person;" Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 Chapter 1, Article 4, Definitions

The Data Protection Act 1998 was replaced by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on 25 May 2018.

Further information on the GDPR is available on the webpages of the UofG Data Protection and Freedom of Information Office: https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/dpfoioffice/gdpr/#

11   RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF <u>RESEARCH</u> DATA

Please explain and as appropriate justify your proposals for retention and/or disposal of <u>research</u> data to be collected.

It is normally appropriate to destroy the research data at the end of the research project, if you do not intend to do so, you must provide **substantial** reasons in the box below.

Do you intend to destroy the research data collected?

YES ☐ NO ☒

If no, provide your reasons here:

The electronic transcripts of the interviews will be kept for five years to provide confirmation of results for future independent examination. These data will be stored in accordance with the guidelines of the University of Glasgow.

12 DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

12.1 Results will be made available to **PARTICIPANTS as**: *(Tick all that apply)*

Note: Intended method of dissemination ought normally to take account of the age, capacities and situation of participants.

Written summary of results to all if requested ☒	Presentation to representative participants *(e.g. CEO,* ☐ *school principal)*
Verbal presentation to all (information session, ☐ debriefing etc)	Other or None of the Above ☐ *Please explain here:*

12.2 Results will be made available to **PEERS AND/OR COLLEAGUES** as: *(Tick all that apply)*

Dissertation	☒	Journal articles	☐
Thesis *(e.g. PhD),*	☐	Book	☐
Submission	☐	Conference Papers ☒ (Planned, not confirmed)	
Other or None of the Above	☐		
Please explain here:			

13 PARTICIPANTS

13.1 Explain how you intend to recruit participants. Provide as much detail as you can about each different age/type of group as mentioned in 3.7b

Expert interviewees: my core supervisor has close links to Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica and to members who were active in the campaign of Zuzana Čaputová. He has agreed to provide letters of introduction to these individuals on my behalf. Individuals will be approached from academic fields of political science, NGOs, and political representatives within Slovakia.

Non-expert interviewees: I have received an offer of assistance in identifying a network of non-expert individuals (university students) who will be invited to participate in the semi-structured interviews. I intended to approach these individuals initially via email with an introduction to myself and the research, this will also be verified by my supervisor and his colleague at Matej Bel University.

Interviewees, both non-expert and expert, will be made aware about the framework of the research. Only consenting adults will be interviewed.

13.2   TARGET PARTICIPANT GROUP   (PLEASE INDICATE THE TARGETED PARTICIPANT GROUP BY TICKING ALL BOXES THAT APPLY)

Students or Staff of the University	☒	Adults *(over 18 years old and competent to give* ☒ *consent)*	
Children/legal minors *(under 18 years old)*	☐	Adults *(over 18 years who may **not** be competent* ☐ *to give consent)*	
Young people aged 16-17 years	☐		

If you require information on the age of legal capacity please refer to the Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991 available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/50/contents

14   INCENTIVES

If payment or any other incentive (such as a gift or free services) will be made to any participants please specify the source and the amount of payment to be made and/or the source, nature and where applicable the approximate monetary value of the gift or free service to be used.

Please explain the justification for offering payment or other incentive.

> None offered.

15   NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS *(give details of different age and types of groups involved)*

> **Expert**: 5 interviewees over 18 years
>
> **Non-expert**: 12-15 interviewees aged between 18-26 years (UN Youth age outline for a "young person").

16   Dependent Relationship

Are any of the participants in a dependent relationship with any of the investigators, particularly those involved in recruiting for or conducting the project? *(For example, a school pupil is in a dependent relationship with their teacher. Other examples of a dependent relationship include student/lecturer; patient/doctor; employee/employer)*

YES   ☐   NO   ☒

If YES, explain the relationship and the steps to be taken by the investigators to ensure that the subject's participation is purely voluntary and not influenced by the relationship in any way.

17   LOCATION OF RESEARCH

University of Glasgow	☐
Outside Location *Provide details of outside locations, including as much information as possible.* **Slovakia**: focusing in cities of Banská Bystrica and Bratislava, interviews will be conducted only within these cities. **Poland**: data will be collected in Krakow, Poland	☒

18   Permission to Access Participants

18.1   Permissions/Access

Permission is normally required to gain access to research participants within an organisation (e.g. Private Company; school; Local Authority; Voluntary Organisation; Overseas institution, Academic institution, including GU.)

Is this type of permission **applicable to** this application?   YES   ☒   NO   ☐

If Yes:

Is evidence of this permission **provided with** this application?

YES   ☐   NO   ☒

OR is it to follow?

YES   ☒   NO   ☐

(If this is the case, this must be forwarded to Ethics Administrator as soon as it is available.)

If No:

Please explain any reason why you do not require permission to gain access to research participants.

I will be contacting NGOs, academics in Slovakia and representatives of Progressive Slovakia and Čaputová's election campaign. If they agree to my request(s) for interviews, I will presume this is proof of permission. I have a University contact at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia who will be asked to provide a letter agreeing to my access to the students at the University of Matej Bel.

18.2   Does this application involve contacting University of Glasgow students <u>directly (specifically either via email or within classes)</u> for the purposes of your research?

YES ☐   NO ☒

If YES, separate permission to survey students needs to be obtained prior to any such survey being undertaken. *Normally this permission should be sought from the **appropriate authority after** ethical approval has been granted. (See Information for Applicants* https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/informationforapplicants/ *for details).*

Once obtained, a copy of this permission must be forwarded to the Ethics Administrator.

Please list the student participants that you intend to contact (e.g. *12 students from TESOL course*)

| |
| |

19   IS THIS APPLICATION BEING SUBMITTED TO ANOTHER ETHICS COMMITTEE, or has it been previously submitted to another Ethics Committee?

YES ☐   NO ☒

If YES, please provide name and location of the ethics committee and the result of the application.

| |
| |

20   INFORMED CONSENT

20.1a   Have you attached your Plain Language Statement (PLS) (also known as Participant Information Sheet) for participants? You must consult the guidance at: https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/undergraduateandpostgraduatetaughtstudents/#d.en.412017   for information that you are required to provide in this.

The Plain Language Statement is written information in plain language that you will provide to participants to explain the project and invite their participation**. Contact details for Supervisor and School Ethics Officer MUST be included.**

YES ☒   NO ☐

If No, please explain here.

| |
| |

20.1b   Please note that a copy of this information sheet should be offered to the participant to keep unless there are specific reasons for not doing so. These must be clearly explained below

Not applicable

20.1c   What arrangements have been made for participants who might not adequately understand verbal explanations or written information or who have special communication needs in the preparation of the Participant Information Sheet/Plain Language Statement? *(e.g. the use of child friendly language, or where English as a second language)*

Provide details here.

Interviewees will be told that the interview will be in English only, I will request that the interviewees have a B2 or above level of English for participation. If the interviewees desire, an electronic copy of the interview questions and Plain Language Statement will be made available to them a week before the interview.

21   HOW WILL INFORMED CONSENT BY INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS OR GUARDIANS BE EVIDENCED?

In normal circumstances it will be expected that written evidence of informed consent will be obtained and retained, and that a formal consent form will be used: a copy of which should be should be provided.

*If written evidence of informed consent is **not** to be obtained a **substantial** justification of why not should be provided.*

(Note: Please ensure that you have checked the box for all types of consent to be used, e.g. signed consent form for interviews/ implied for questionnaires.)

Signed consent form ☒	Recorded verbal consent ☒ (At the beginning of the audio recorded interview)
Confirmed *by Return of Survey* ☐ (Clear agreement of consent to use participant data must be evidenced at start of survey, e.g. by tick box)	Other ☐ *Provide details here:*

Justification if written evidence of informed consent is <u>not</u> to be obtained and retained:

22 MONITORING

Describe how the project will be monitored to ensure that the research is being carried out as approved (e.g. give details of regular meetings/email contact).

The research is being monitored by my supervisors in Krakow, Poland and Tartu, Estonia. Monitoring will be through frequent meetings in person (with Dr Pożarlik) and Skype meetings (with Dr Toomla). Summaries of the Skype meetings will be made available to Dr Heiko Pääbo (University of Tartu) and Dr Ammon Cheskin (University of Glasgow).

23 Health and Safety

What are the potential issues of personal safety for you, other researchers or participants involved in the project and how will you manage them? *(Other than lone field work – refer to question 24.1 for this)*

It is expected that this research will not pose any potential issues for anyone's personal safety. The topic, as stated above, is low risk and interviewees will be informed of the framework and intention of the research. Similarly, the topic has been verified and approved by my supervisors. There has been confirmation that this project should not pose any threats or risks.

24 RISK

24.1 Does the activity involve lone field work, lone working or travel to unfamiliar places?   (E.g. Carrying out interviews alone and off-campus)   You should refer to the Risk Guidance at: https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/undergraduateandpostgraduatetaughtstudents/#/

NB: This does not apply to working within an institution such as a school.

YES   ☒   NO   ☐

Give details here of arrangements to minimise risks pertaining to this.

All interviews will be held on a University Campus or public building during normal working hours. My supervisors will have knowledge of when and where interviews will take place.

24.2   How will you ensure that you minimise any possible distress caused to participants by the research process?

The questions of the interview schedule are non-inflammatory, and interviewees will be made aware they are free to not answer questions and are free to terminate the interview whenever they wish.

24.3   How would you respond if you think that the participant has become distressed by any of the issues raised by the research? *(Examples of distress: emotional, psychological, economic, health)*

Contact Supervisor   ☒

Contact details of support organisations provided on PLS/Information Sheet   ☐

Provide details of support organisations at interview   ☐

Any other responses you propose to provide:

24.4   Does this research involve any sensitive topics or vulnerable groups? You should refer to the Risk Guidance at:
https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/undergraduateandpostgraduatetaughtstudents/#d.en.412017

YES   ☐   NO   ☒

Give details here of arrangements to minimise risks pertaining to this.

25   PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

Does this project require Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) clearance?

YES   ☐   NO   ☒

If Yes, evidence that this has been obtained **MUST** be provided with this application.

If PVG registration is held or an application is currently in progress, please provide details here:

The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 came into effect on 28 February 2011. This replaced the previous Disclosure Scotland checking system for individuals who work with children and/or protected adults.

The University is a Registered Body under this legislation.

Please consult the University Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme webpages https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/mgrs-admin/mgr-guidance/pvgscheme/ for guidance.

Further information is available from:

 https://www.mygov.scot/disclosure-types/   (Disclosure Scotland)

26   INSURANCE

Does this research come under the exclusions to the University insurance cover for research?

YES   ☐   NO   ☒

If Yes: Please explain and detail how you intend to cover the insurance needs for this research?

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The University insurance cover is restricted in certain, specific circumstances, e.g., the use of hazardous materials, work overseas, research into pregnancy and conception and numbers of participants in excess of 5000. Please refer to the Insurance and Indemnity advice on the website given below. Advice or authorisation given must be included with this application.

Information may be available at this link:
https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/finance/staffsections/insuranceandrisk/
 (If you have a problem accessing this link, please try a different browser e.g. Firefox instead of Internet Explorer.)

27 UK AND SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION

Have you made yourself familiar with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (May 2018) https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/dpfoioffice/gdpr/ ? This replaces the Data Protection Act (1998)

Also the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Law/FOISA.aspx

YES ☒ NO ☐

If NO please explain

See **Application Guidance Notes** *available from:*
https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/undergraduateandpostgraduatetaughtstudents/#d.en.412017 *for further information.*

In addition visit: https://www.gla.ac.uk/services/dpfoioffice/ *for University guidance on Data Protection.*

The **Freedom of Information Act 2002 ["FOI"]** provides a general right of access to most of the recorded information that is held by the University. The Act sets out a number of exemptions/exceptions to this right of access.

Declaration <u>must</u> be signed/completed.

The application will be returned if this not done

28 DECLARATIONS BY RESEARCHER(S) AND SUPERVISOR(S)

The application will NOT be accepted if this section is blank or incomplete

- The information contained herein is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate.

- I have read the University's current human ethics guidelines, and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application in accordance with the guidelines, the University's Code of Conduct for Research and any other condition laid down by the University of Glasgow Ethics Committee and the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee.
 Full details of the University's ethics guidelines are available at:
   https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/strategy/ourpolicies/ethics/

- I and my co-researcher(s) or supporting staff have the appropriate qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research set out in the attached application and to deal effectively with any emergencies and contingencies related to the research that may arise.

- I understand that **no** research work involving human participants or data collection can commence until I have been granted full ethical approval by the School Ethics Forum (UG & PGT students only).

This section MUST be completed to confirm acceptance of Code of Conduct. If there is no scanned signature then please type the names (or use GUID) and date into the boxes below.

	Signature	Date
Researcher *(All applicants)* Phoebe Williams	Phoebe Williams	27.01.2020
Supervisor Dr Ammon Cheskin	Ammon Cheskin	27.01.2020

For Supervisors – Please note that by submitting this application the supervisor confirms that:

- The student is aware of the College ethics requirements.
- The topic merits further research.
- The student has the relevant skills to begin research.
- If interviewing, the student has produced an appropriate information sheet for participants.
- The procedures for recruitment and obtaining informed consent are appropriate.

……………………….. END OF APPLICATION FORM ………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Applications should be submitted electronically as follows:

*Send to relevant **School Ethics Forum** (SEF) via email to School ethics administrative contact. Please see contact details on College ethics website.*
https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/committee/ethicscontacts/

Important Note: **Either** student e-mails the application to their supervisor, who checks it and submits it to their local SEF contact. (***Education, Social and Political Sciences, Adam Smith Business School, Interdisciplinary Studies requires this process***) **Or** student submits the application and the supervisor sends a supporting email direct to the SEF contact

(***Law allows this option***)

Request for Amendments to an Approved Ethics Application

 (please complete this document and forward it with any supporting documentation to your School Ethics Forum administrative see Ethics Contacts)

Undergraduate Student Research Ethics Application ☐

Postgraduate Taught Student Research Ethics Application ☒

Student id. Number:	**2121058w**
Application Number:	**PGT/SPS/2020/007/IMCEERES**
Applicant's Name:	**Phoebe Letitia Neame Williams**
Project Title:	**Changing patterns in mobilisation and voting attitudes in young, female**

voters in Slovakia

Original **Start** Date of Application Approval: 27/02/2020

Original **End** Date of Application Approval: 10/09/2020

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Amendments Requested

Extension to Approval Period:	☐	Documents to be amended:	☐
Participant Group, change or addition:	☐	Information Sheet/Plain Language Statement:	☐
Methodology:	☒	Consent Form:	☐
Addition/Change to Researcher team:	☐	Recruitment Document:	☐
Other:	☐		

Justification for Amendments proposed: *e.g. extension to approval end date required; addition of new*

participant group; change in project focus.

The justification is the dire impact of COVID-19 across Europe, which has resulted in border closures and the restriction of movement. I was unable to travel to Banská Bystrica (and will be unable to travel to Slovakia in the foreseeable future) for my interviews for which I had received prior approval. I was contacted by my arranged interviewees who requested that we move the interviews to Skype in order that as little was disrupted for the interviewees. I am therefore requesting to use this method for the rest of my interviews. However, I understand that the university policy is to discourage online interviews. I make my case for the use of online interviews, therefore, with a number of careful considerations both ethical and in terms of data protection.

In terms of justification, it is simply not possible to move to desk-based research. I am examining issues in Slovakia and do not, unfortunately, speak Slovakian. Therefore, there is no other way to gather or access data than by conducting new research. My research is being conducted as part of an International Masters that involves three universities. I am therefore under pressure to meet the standards for dissertation research at all three institutions. If I do not collect original data then I run the risk of being severely penalised by the University of Tartu (Estonia) and Jagiellonian University (Poland). I have had to prepare an extensive array of

documentation including an extensive research design for this dissertation. This is an integral part of the assessment process. Therefore, removing the interviews would have a seriously negative effect on the viability of this project and my ability to graduate.

In terms of minimising ethical stress on my participants, I have decided to drop all elite interviews (as approval in the original form). This is because they are government officials and are likely to be swamped dealing with the Covid-19 situation. Therefore, I have altered the methods and will only now focus on non-elite interviews. I will be careful not to push myself on participants, and will make it clear that I do not wish to create extra stress on them at this difficult time. However, I had arranged interviews with all of these people and they have been in touch with me since the cancellation of my planned visit to Slovakia. In fact, they have often asked me if we can move to online interviews. Therefore, I feel that I will not be causing ethical harm to the participants.

In terms of data protection, I will use Skype for Business for all interviews. This follows advice from the Helen McKellar (relayed to me by Dr Ammon Cheskin), the Information Compliance & Records Management Specialist at the university that Skype for Business is covered in university insurance policies. It is also covered because of its high standards in terms of GDPR. All interviews will be audio recorded with a Dictaphone that will be placed next to the computer speaker. No other data will be stored on a computer, including video feeds. All participants will be given the usual consent and PLS forms, and will be made known of these updated procedures for data management. The Consent form and PLS will be emailed in advance of interviews and returned via email with digital signatures. In fact, this means that the process will largely be the same as for face-to-face interviews as I will record the interview and store the recording (password protected) on my computer as stated in the original application.

List of Supporting Documents attached:

Click here to enter text.

Declaration:

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information given above, together with any accompanying

information, is complete and correct.

Signature(s)

Applicant:

Supervisor (if student project):   Neil Munro

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Request for Amendments to an Approved Ethics Application

(please complete this document and forward it with any supporting documentation to your School Ethics Forum administrative see Ethics Contacts)

Undergraduate Student Research Ethics Application　　☐

Postgraduate Taught Student Research Ethics Application　　☒

Student id. Number: **2121058**

Application Number: **PGT/SPS/2020/007/IMCEERES**

Applicant's Name: **Phoebe Letitia Neame Williams**

Project Title: **Changing patterns in mobilisation and voting attitudes in young, female voters in Slovakia**

Original **Start** Date of Application Approval:　　27/02/2020

Original **End** Date of Application Approval:　　10/09/2020

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Amendments Requested

Extension to Approval Period:	☐	Documents to be amended:	☐
Participant Group, change or addition:	☒	Information Sheet/Plain Language Statement:	☐
Methodology:	☐	Consent Form:	☐
Addition/Change to Researcher team:	☐	Recruitment Document:	☐
Other:	☐		

Justification for Amendments proposed:　*e.g. extension to approval end date required; addition of new participant group; change in project focus.*

Due to the situation of COVID-19, I am placed in the position where I need to expand the scope of people for my non-expert interviews. I had intended, as per the original ethics form and other amendment form, to only interview non-experts as students from a university in Slovakia. Therefore, I wrote that the age range of interviewees would be from 18-26 and that I would only interview this group. However, with dispersal of students due to COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown, I am asking if I can amend the ethics form to remove the age cap of 26, in order that I may interview people slightly older than this and from out with the university using the snowball method (i.e. to interview more people via personal recommendation). It does not change the research, nor any of the questions. I would simply like to omit this maximum age limit from my original ethics form, in order that I may interview a slightly older age range. The benefit of being able to interview a wider age group would increase the depth of my data knowledge and will enable me to meet my target number of interviewees in this challenging time.

List of Supporting Documents attached:

Click here to enter text.

Declaration:

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information given above, together with any accompanying information, is complete and correct.

Signature(s)

Applicant:

Supervisor (if student project):   Neil Munro 27.5.20

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Appendix 3

Words/Numbers excluded before running the NVivo Word Cloud feature

000	another	blah	couldn't	each
1673443	anti	Boris	couldn't	Eduard
17th	any	both	course	effectively
28th	anything	breakth	critically	either
2am	anyway	but	currently	elec
2nd	anywhere	by	data03	Elizabeth
419	app	bye	daught	else
883	are	cam	days	english
a	area	came	definitely	epically
about	aren't	camp	dennikn	equally
above	aren't	can	der	erm
absolutely	around	can't	des	especially
according	as	cannot	did	etc
actively	asked	can't	didn't	evalu
actually	at	cap	didn't	even
after	back	certainly	differently	every
again	Balkans	cha	directly	except
Alexander	bas	chan	dis	expertly
Alexandria	basically	check	do	express
Alexia	be	clearly	does	extent
all	because	cock	doesn't	extr
also	been	com	doesn't	extre
although	bef	come	doing	extremely
always	before	completely	don't	facetime
am	being	consequ	Donald	fam
an	below	consider	done	feel
and	Bernie	cos	don't	felt
Andrej	between	cou	down	fem
ano	bit	could	during	femin

few	hasn't	i	ján	Michal
firmly	hasn't	i'd	john	might
firstly	have	i'll	just	Mikuláš
for	haven't	i'm	keeping	more
forgot	haven't	i've	kinda	most
from	having	i'd	kno	mostly
ful	he	ide	know	MPs
fully	he'd	if	laughter	much
further	he'll	Igor	least	mustn't
general	he's	i'll	less	mustn't
generally	he'd	i'm	let	my
genuinely	he'll	immediately	let's	myself
George	her	imp	let's	nah
get	here	in	lib	nervous
gets	here's	individually	liber	no
getting	here's	informations	lif	non
goes	hers	interestingly	like	nor
going	herself	interviewee	lil	normally
goldman	he's	into	literally	not
gonna	hhm	is	lot	now
got	him	isn't	lots	nuhuh
gotta	himself	isn't	making	obviously
gradually	his	ist	many	of
greatly	historically	it	Marian	off
guess	hmm	it's	markable	officially
guy	hopefully	its	Maroš	often
had	how	it's	Martina	on
hadn't	how's	itself	Matúš	once
hadn't	however	Ivan	maybe	one
handl	how's	i've	me	only
happened	https	Iveta	mean	onto
has	hugely	Jan	mer	or

other	prize	shall	stour	they'd
otherwise	pro	shan't	stric	they'll
ought	probably	shan't	strongly	they're
our	prog	she	stuff	they've
ours	put	she'd	successfully	thing
ourselves	q1c	she'll	such	things
out	question	she's	suddenly	think
outrightly	quite	she'd	super	thinking
over	rapidly	she'll	sure	this
overly	rasant	she's	sus	those
own	rather	shit	tell	though
pars	realistically	should	than	thought
particularly	really	shouldn't	thank	through
parts	recently	shouldn't	that	to
Paul	refers	significantly	that's	Tomáš
people	remember	since	that's	too
pep	rep	skype	the	took
perfectly	repres	slightly	their	totally
perso	respectively	slo	theirs	tra
personally	Robert	Slovakia	them	two
peter	safely	slowly	themselves	uhm
pfft	said	so	then	uhuh
phoebe	same	some	there	under
ple	saw	somehow	there's	understandably
point	say	someone	there's	unfortunately
pointed	saying	someth	these	until
pol	says	something	thesis	up
polit	second	sometimes	they	upon
politi	see	sorry	they'd	us
politic	seem	sort	they'll	using
positively	seemed	stabl	they're	usually
primarily	sen	still	they've	

verbally	where	you'd
very	where's	you'll
vot	whereas	your
wales	where's	you're
wanna	whether	yours
wanted	which	yourself
was	while	yourselves
wasn't	who	you've
wasn't	who's	zuzana
we	whole	
we'd	whom	
we'll	who's	
we're	whose	
we've	why	
we'd	why's	
well	why's	
we'll	will	
went	with	
were	womens	
we're	won't	
weren't	won't	
weren't	would	
wester	wouldn't	
we've	wouldn't	
what	yeah	
what's	yep	
whatever	yes	
what's	you	
when	you'd	
when's	you'll	
whenever	you're	
when's	you've	

Appendix 4

Quotes for Individual Interviewees (for *Chapter 6: Results*)

Interview 1

(1.1) "because she as a candidate, as a presidential candidate, came right in the middle of the crisis".

(1.2) "the crisis, or er the bad things that came alive about high politicians about Kočner, etc, etc, etc, that uh the people realised that er maybe the situation is our politics is not as uh good".

(1.3) "I didn't trust and I didn't vote Čaputová I voted Maroš Šefčovič because I trusted him more, er as… because he was in high politics before and he- I thought that he knows better how to run a country, how to hold the power in hi- his hands than Čaputová"

(1.4) "he [Šefčovič] was more trusted because Čaputová was someone they didn't… they, they didn't know because… uh, er, she was unknown for everyone else, and er SMER was here like the political party, it was here for a long time and they thought that … when they will vote for him it will be better… to have someone that they know

(1.5) "As she was trying to work, and as she began to work, it change a little bit and now it is fine, it was really long process of me trusting her but… it's getting better".

(1.6) "that's why most of the people connected with her because she is a mother, she has daughters and that's why they took her as a maternity figure […] and they didn't think that she can hurt them because mother usually don't hurt someone".

(1.7) "Čaputová clothes we can see the… feminine, the, Čaputová is more feminine and she is more presenting the feminine side and she is doing it really well to… to promote females, not like, she is not like trying to become a male in the politics, because males are the ones who run politics but she is here to present women, mother, and…. The change".

Interview 2

(2.1) "I would like to make a good decision, and I think I did because um… as a woman president she is really like a message of something new, of maybe promise of er… better days".

(2.2) "For our presidental or our pre, pre or our president and I was making some … like inter, not interviews but I was talking with my friends about you you know what, who are you going to vote and why? And all my friends, even boys, said they, they prefer Čaputová."

(2.3) "And even my family, it's it's not my kind… it's not the age as me but my my family did vote Čaputová too."

(2.4) And "well hm we had talked about it, and uh, expressed our meanings and feelings about her or about another candidate and we just made a decision that she is the best way".

(2.5) "right now when every young uh every young person is on Instagram […] I think its really important when you want to have a good campaign and you want to like have the audience and have the voters, uh young voters".

(2.6) "it was like uh: every, every person in Slovak history who mea-meant something started with name with 'M', you- you know and he made his campaign, his presidential camp-campaign, of of this that every… every one who made something for Slovakia named uh 'M' something so that's why you should vote me because I'm- my name is Milan, and I was like 'what?'"

Interview 3

(3.1) "For society so yes it was like message that in future there will be change or there gonna be many changes but uh… I'm not sure if uh this changes will be so dramatic as people thought when there were elections in Slovakia."

(3.2) "And um according how it work out we can see that there are changes, definitely, but not so dramatical. There are still almost the same parties, but they are like hm… exchanged to a new parties" [referring to the election of OL'aNO in place of SMER].

(3.3) "But I think most people vote her because of her way of behaviour, also most-m,m,m- also maybe because of she is not politician".

(3.4) "she wasn't politician, she was a lawyer, she was basically hm quite ordinary woman, I would say".

(3.5) "I'm not sure of statistics but I can definitely imagine that most of the voters uh were boys but just in fact because of boys are more interested in politics in Slovakia than women are".

(3.6) "I understand and its harder also because of um, hm let-let's say women has some qualities that are uh bad for politicians… I mean, we are more emotional"

(3.7) "Maybe it's just uh opportunity for young women that they are able to think different way, they don't have to be just mothers"

Interview 4

(4.1) "And that was for me not really good and they manipulated people- not- not in the bad way, they trying uh to get so many quotes, so many people, but uh they manipulated with all people and they didn't think what- what the consequences [**Progressive Slovakia**]".

(4.2) "And I'm a little bit afraid that h-she wanted to be, or she want to- not to create party but become a part of her party [**Progressive Slovakia**] that she comes from."

(4.3) "I trust him because as he- he has a function in European Union [**Šefčovič**]".

(4.4) "So Čaputová and Šefčovič were the people who are- firstly they were representative persons so they will not embarrass the country, that was really […] a good point"

(4.5) "for example my friends like girls […] we really satisfied in other candidate who was a man [**Šefčovič**]"

(4.6) "and uh for example my colleagues hm guys […] They- they are satisfied with her [**Čaputová**] so"

Interview 5

(5.1) "So, um me and my peers as people, we- we seek for something new and then her- her victory was- was that something new that's what we really needed because um Čaputová represented new ideas and the fact that she won proved that our country is no longer a country of stereotype".

(5.2) "people, people, as I said, people were desperate and um mostly that, yeah, yeah… people uh old politics was very conservative".

(5.3) "And her politic is without aggression, and very cultural and- and she's the first women who achieved such a- such a great uh step forward for our country".

(5.4) "So just the first breakthrough was that she was- she- she is, yeah, she is a woman".

(5.5) "she also is very active on social media […] She was on Instagram, Facebook where she posts all her- all her activities in politics. So, she's very- she's very connected with the public, with people".

(5.6) "not in a way like to- to like connect with people. It was like- like post a picture and there are some informations".

Interview 6

(6.1) "No… she was- well uh there are also women in our political system, so it was not so anomaly, anomaly was according to me her [Čaputová's] candidature because she never was uh- was visible or she never a part of the politics as we know it."

(6.2) "So, she was like very newcomer for a lot of people that she was very unknown. And that's why, yes, in- in the terms of this, she was anomaly but not like because she was a woman, I would say so."

(6.3) "And also, breakthrough… so it's like and she was from non-parliamentary party so breakthrough maybe because there is no like uh- uh typical candidates are from parliamentary parties and they are very traditional".

(6.4) "and on the top of it, she looks very nice, she's very pretty".

(6.5) "my classmate they said […] Because they said she was very pretty and beautiful, even the way she spoke and stuff so I- I think".

(6.6) "Uh with her liberal opinions I would say that she was like LGBT community, so it was […] very good with that but it's not part of her responsibilities or what she can do as a president, but she like supporting is her own opinion that she agrees with this and it uh probably started the change in people feel like she is very uh liberal and uh it brings a change."

(6.7) "but as I but as I said before, it was because of her opinions that people voted her".

(6.8) "she represents the uh opinions that are very like trustworthy and very good and she's very great representator of our country".

Interview 7

(7.1) "she was a candidate in a very hectic period after the murder of journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée, and she certainly advocated some change as her main counter-candidate was the then ruling party SMER."

(7.2) "Her victory was perceived by people as wanting a change in the representing political elite."

(7.3) "Both for me and for most of my classmates and friends, Čaputová and her election represented a change."

(7.4) "I think she was certainly primarily attractive to young voters, especially because of her liberal ideas. Maybe she also impressed girls/women, as she is also a woman. However, I think that her rhetoric and approach to the campaign were especially interesting to people who wanted change."

(7.5) "For me, her name is most associated with the subject of justice."

(7.6) "I think that at the moment she really contributes significantly to the stability of our society, she is impartial and eases the great egos of our male politicians."

(7.7) "Unlike the other candidates, Čaputová distanced herself from personal attacks and only tried to present her vision of politics, which she wants to do in the presidential office".

Interview 8

(8.1) "She's a sociologist, I followed her for years, I think she's incredible and she later went on to go to be a Prime Minister [...] I remember I was 19, I was just finishing high school, I was holding out a lot of hope for her to win [the 2009 presidential election] [...] Because she did not. And I remember the disappointment because it was not just- it was- it was the disappoint of um you know a qualified candidate versus a much less qualified one [...] but also it was because in there the gender so very clearly played a role"

(8.2) "I think with Radičová there was- there was a group of people who saw a woman first no matter who she was".

(8.3) "the icon of the V4 as far as the international stage is concerned [...] 1, because I think, and this is where gender plays a role as well, one because I think she's again fantastically qualified

and decent, representative person that you know, world leaders like her because they can have a good, decent conversation with her".

(8.4) "Because you know she was a female, a respected herself and that was a way of bringing gender to the debate but was not bringing it to the debate, that people- I think people tried to speak about the fact that she's a woman I mean there was still people who had it very strongly in their heads that "she's never going to get elected, you know that she won't" my own mum said that, she was like "she's fantastic --- but she's never going to get elected because she's a female and we don't do that" but she didn't bring gender as a separate category I would say that she brought her gender and her femininity into everything she did, in the debates and in the way you talk about- you know when you speak about being a mother you don't have to say "oh mothers need to be more represented" but you naturally appeal to mothers".

(8.5) "in the sense of you know she always looks fantastic like you cannot take that away from her [...] And I see nothing wrong with that, you know, I see that as a- genuinely as a confirmation of the fact that you can be both, you know, that you can be a respected female as a person and as a professional in the same way a male would be respected".

(8.6) "Really when you look into Slovak internal politics, it started with people like Matúš Vallo you know being the mayor of Bratislava".

(8.7) "Even though I would say there is an element of the fact that people within the V4 take her as an anomaly" [and not a part of this political change].

Interview 9

(9.1) "it was her rhetorics were- were completely different because um most of the other or most of the- the politicians were usually just focusing on- on very like personal attacks, always focusing on these like um corruption issues among each other, they were attacking each other's faults, attacking each other's political parties".

(9.2) "she was trying to- to elevate the discussion not to these petty attacks but more to um like she was always saying like 'let's not go into these fights, let's talk about what the people are interested in. So, let's talk about the real issues of the country, people are not interested in us having these like personal- personal feuds they're interested in- in which direction is in the country going, they're interested in their- in their social you know se-securities, they're interested in the justice system, they don't trust the justice system, they don't trust in this and

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this, so- so there's a lot of corruption in the country' … she was always trying this in discussions so that was the theme of hope we were seeing like watching with our mouths open like 'wow, we have never- never seen this kind of thing basically' before."

(9.3) "I think it's just a very unique set of- of characteristics which- which she- she has and she's so good at um but uh so it would be hard to- to- to replicate that with- with other candidates but I definitely think that she has paved the way for other um either women or younger people or people who don't have um political you know experience yet to actually enter uh enter politics because- because they- because she's been so inspiring".

(9.4) "Um well I think from the total beginning she definitely appealed to- to people who were- who were like future voters of Progressive Slovakia um because she was openly saying that she- she has liberal views".

(9.5) "they [Progressive Slovakia's candidates] seemed like um skilled, experienced people and uh to me they showed genuine interest in actually going there to bas- to- to- to help the country and- and change things for the better and uh and what was interesting was you know I could even like see myself in them because a lot of them were younger people finally".

(9.6) "So Progressive Slovakia and Spolu [as a coalition], they were the only ones who said "Ok, we are doing it by- by the official rules. Yes, we are two parties joining so let's go into this" and then unfortunately that has back- backfired".

Interview 10

(10.1) "Because nobody from my circles, nobody wanted to vote for Šefčovič, which is basically just you know a Trojan horse of-of SMER".

(10.2) "Andrej Kiska, I think um he-he was also a very good president. So- so there was a sense of continuity there, hm but with Čaputová she you know she was different, hm you know, she was different because she's a woman".

(10.3) "you know before Kiska we were not really uh used to strong, pro-democratic candidates to you know to this level. But, that being said, I think Zuzana Čaputová is actually raising you know raising the standard even higher in terms of the way she is approaching actually her responsibilities in the office. […] from the very beginning was very clear that she wants to continue with this kind of trend that Andrej Kiska has you know put in place".

(10.4) "I can't remember the time when it happened, but suddenly she became uh a very- she-there were like two democratic candidates that were being considered you know as viable options, in the end which was her and Mr Robert Mistrík um and-and then once she overtook uh him in-in the public opinion poll surveys, he actually gave up his candidacy in her favour".

(10.5) "I know other people were uh choosing you know- were undecided and then Robert Mistrík made the decision for them […] to him goes a lot of sort of gratefulness from a lot of people about making a gesture like this because you know he could be like Bernie Sanders or similar guys you never know to actually leave the state".

Interview 11

(11.1) "the previous president, Kiska, was already a good change hm so I think she is part of trend you know".

(11.2) "Kiska, he was great I really liked him. He was uh you know he was pro-EU, pro-Western, like liberal and everything".

(11.3) "she was the first one who was kind of representing civil society."

(11.4) "Čaputová came suddenly… like something kind of new in a way that she is the first- she's-she's not a politician, she wasn't a politician before. She wasn't a wealthy individual uh but she was someone who was representing civil society which-which for me was like I actually felt really proud about Slovaks that given the situation in the region".

(11.5) "I think it started already with Kiska the previous president then Čaputová and now uh the last parliamentary elections. So, she's part of the trend of this like… people being like really dissatisfied with the situation and frustrated. I don't think she was like a complete breakth- breakthrough out of the blue".

(11.6) "She kind of used this like popular sentiment I feel like that was building up for some time" [for her campaign].

Interview 12

(12.1) "in my perspective she um definitely brought something new in her campaign um it was um like a new style or a new way of rhetoric and a new way of dialogue um how she engaged

in the- in the debates and in the campaign how she presented herself uh it was very much you know not uh what we've seen in Slovakia for the past well… as long as I can remember".

(12.2) "she brought these like very calm and um genuine and-and natural style of presenting herself and being very um also content-wise being very empathetic but also you know using rational arguments and-and showing she's a professional in what she-what she's been doing".

(12.3) "she really came across as this like very like generous and genuine person and you could see that it's not something that she-that she just learnt recently you know in the-in the preparations before the campaign, but that she-she was very natural and she still like she remained being very natural also-also in the office."

(12.4) "I think it was Robert Mistrík um yeah the um the other candidate then-then he then gave up um his candidature um in favour of um Zuzana Čaputová and I think a lot of people also from this spectrum of voters that wanted um-um still like maintaining this um- um you know this balance like um if SMER still uh remained the power you know in-in the parliament and in the government uh the voters who-who wanted to- to balance it out you know with the-with the president uh even like these voters um for sure like in the beginning favoured Robert Mistrík".

(12.5) "he was not as charismatic as-as Zuzana Čaputová um but definitely um two months maybe before elections I think he was- the-the numbers for him were better than for Zuzana Čaputová".

(12.6) "she was very direct in expressing her um her values and also her support for, for example, LGBTI community um for um, for example, single mothers, hm and um and maybe minorities you know and sort of like vulnerable groups of people".