



Maiken Ana Kores

## **Powerful posters – A multimodal analysis of Slovenia's 2018 parliamentary elections**

### 1 Introduction

In Slovenia and other European countries there has been a rise in populism and far-right politics, especially in relation to the refugee crisis. Mass migrations have influenced the tone of the political rhetoric, particularly on the right. Such discourse has served to create a climate of fear, reflected in certain policies and people's attitudes towards certain individuals and social groups. Discourse can also function as a means of expressing ideology and a potential vehicle of change, be it positive or negative. The aim of this paper is to provide a critical analysis of certain discursive tactics used by Slovenian political parties in the lead-up to the 2018 parliamentary elections, specifically in light of their intentional or unintentional ideological function and impact.

#### 1.1 The political poster

Recent decades have seen the increased professionalization of politics in rising campaign expenditure levels, voter research and refined feed-back mechanisms (Vreese 2009, 7). The length and structure of a political campaign depend on the level of polarization of the political space, elite disagreement producing higher media coverage and more aggressive campaigns (Vreese 2009, 8; Novelli 2017, 94), and as much as campaign slogans structure and shape public opinion, the latter also structures the discourse of political parties (Morse 1949, 508). Furthermore, research has shown the more control a party has over a subject, the more likely it is to share positive messages about it (Campbell, Lee 2016, 56). Novelli's (2017, 111) study of European political posters finds iconographic models for political communication influence each other internationally (Novelli 2017, 92).<sup>1</sup> Studies also show national campaigns have come to adopt the serial nature of product advertising (Novelli 2017, 112), and during an electoral campaign a political party establishes its brand through the use of distinctive logos, slogans and colours (Campbell, Lee 2016, 49). These processes differ depending on the national political culture, which impacts whether the focus is on the political

---

1 Slovenia's SDS was, for example, influenced by Hungary's Fidesz party in the 2018 parliamentary election (Kořak 2018).





candidate or the party, the type and degree of advertising, and the recourse to ideological arguments. However, despite these complexities the poster remains an important and vibrant tool of political communication. (Novelli 2017, 94–96) It functions as a tool of persuasion, familiarization and engagement, as well as establishing a party's physical presence (Campbell, Lee 2016, 49). Visually, it is characterized by distilled text and a distinctive visual component, usually with vibrant colours (Stepanov 2016, 523). The increasing prevalence of social media has seen the emergence and proliferation of online political posters (OPPs), circulated on parties' social media channels. In comparison to a static billboard these can be disseminated continuously and shared by the party's supporters, thus establishing a two-step flow of persuasion and influence (Campbell, Lee 2016, 49–51).

## 2 Methodology

The analysis is based on posters that were displayed in public settings across the country and extracts indicative of the parties' stances chosen from their electoral programmes.<sup>2</sup> The first section critically examines how lexical elements indicate ideological positions; how syntax structures information to achieve a desired effect; and how the issues parties choose to highlight reveal their core political concerns. The methodological framework draws on the model outlined by Theo van Leeuwen (2008). It draws on the notion that all texts are fundamentally representations of social practices (Leeuwen 2008, 5), and electoral campaigns are especially significant in this context, given that the messages and images represent social groups and aim to persuade their audience to elect them as their representatives. A text like a political slogan or programme may therefore not depend on the actual reality of the social practice but on how the producer of the text chooses to recontextualize it. When representing social actions, "socially regulated ways of doing things", these are recontextualized; the more times this happens, the more they can move away from the initial action they are describing (Leeuwen 2008, 6–13). As images are also significant in relaying a party's message, the analysis takes into account the accompanying imagery, with Kress and van Leeuwen's work (2006) providing the necessary framework. The second section focuses on five key topics highlighted in all political programmes. It does not intend to provide a comprehensive insight into parties' stances, but rather to lay the foundations for a more comprehensive analysis. A brief extract indicative of each party's overall stance is analysed to compare how the parties' differ or coincide in relation to their positions on the political spectrum.

---

2 Considering this article adopts a critical discourse analysis approach, it is necessary to point out that, as it is impossible in the scope of this article to include the entirety of parties' programmes and all their positions on the chosen issues, it is acknowledged that the choice of the extracts is itself ideological in nature.





### 3 The Slovenian political space

The Slovenian political space can be divided into two blocs, the left and right. The political and social arena exhibit strong polarization due to opposing views of the country's socialist past and World War II collaboration (Adam, Tomšič 2012, 59–61). Religion is also a strong factor in determining political opinion, the left-right divide overlapping with a contest between liberalism and clericalism (Jou 2011, 37–41). The difference between urban and rural environments is also reflected in parties' discourse, right-wing parties appealing more to voters living in rural areas.<sup>3</sup> The parties that, according to Tiran, can be categorized as being “urban” are the United Left<sup>4</sup>, SAB, SMC, SD and DeSUS, whereas “rural” parties are the SDS, NSi and SNS (Tiran 2015, 271–285). The left-right divide thus also overlaps with the urban-rural divide.

### 4 Analysis

This section will present a linguistic analysis on two levels. The first will focus on the parties' political posters, whereas the second will deal with issues that all or most parties chose to focus on, to see how parties from varying ends of the political spectrum frame certain social actions.

#### 4.1 Party-by-party analysis

The right-wing parties are the SDS, SNS and NSi (Tiran 2015, 281–285). The Left can, based on its program (Levica 2018) and name (Margulies 2014, 4) be classified as left-wing. The SMC, SAB and LMSŠ are liberal, as, according to Margulies (2014, 5), this label is applicable to newer parties that self-identify as centrist or as opposed to left-right conceptions. The SD and DeSUS are categorized as centre-left based on their political programs and self-identification as such ((DeSUS 2018), (SD)).

##### 4.1.1 Right-wing

Right-wing parties that won parliamentary seats were the SDS, SNS and NSi (DVK 2018). All highlight safety and the need to safeguard borders, differentiating between native Slovenes and immigrants. The parties support deregulation, local farmers, entrepreneurs and families, increasing the birth-rate, maximizing pensions, cutting

---

3 The SDS's Janez Janša is known for using rhetoric that is disparaging of Ljubljana to earn voters' favour. This can be explained by more rural inhabitants experiencing a feeling of being marginalized due to Ljubljana being the economic, employment and political centre of the country (ibid.).

4 The United Left (Združena Levica) party no longer exists, but it was succeeded by the Left (Levica); given the lack of any substantial differences in the parties' political agendas, it is fair to assume that the Left as it is now known would also fall into this category.





red tape, healthcare reform, and lowering foreign tax and personal income tax (SDS; SNS 2016; NSi). This individualistic rhetoric demonstrates their neoliberal streak (McGregor 2001, 84–85; Harvey 2005, 64).

The Slovenian National Party (SNS) won 37,182 or 4.17% of the votes and four parliamentary seats (DVK 2018). The poster shows the party president, Zmago Jelinčič Plemeniti, staring straight ahead, one eyebrow slightly raised. The accompanying text reads “Zmago!”, his name that also means “Victor!” The subject’s interaction with his audience makes this a demand image (Kress, Leeuwen 2006, 118); the text eliminates practically all participants in the social action, including the social action itself (Leeuwen 2008, 28–30). Instead the poster could be highlighting Zmago’s importance and leadership capabilities, or lead readers to infer that victory is what the country would be moving towards with a vote for the SNS.



Image 1: Victor! Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA.

The Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) won 222,042 or 24.92% of votes and 25 parliamentary seats, winning in all constituencies (DVK 2018). Their slogan is “Zate” or “For You”, a one-word slogan suitable for a variety of contexts. It establishes a direct connection to voters by addressing them in the second person singular form. This focus on the individual is in line with some neoliberal characteristics of the party’s rhetoric.

The SDS’s campaign received funds from Hungary (Mekina 2018) and had a prominent social media presence, spending the largest sum of money for the campaign,



even developing an interactive map and mobile application. When the user pointed their phone's camera at the map, the local candidate popped out and explained why they were deserving of their vote. (SDS 2018, 2018) They also uploaded several videos to their YouTube channel; one, *We Will Put Slovenia First* (SDS TV 2018), employs the same imagery as their posters, contrasting nature, families and professions with fires, migrants and violence to create the perception of a people in danger.



Image 2: €1,963 for a migrant. Photo: Aljoša Kravanja.

The above poster is read from left to right. The background shows a large crowd of migrants to give the image of a horde flooding the country, with the individuals genericized (Leeuwen 2008, 36). The party's stance is highlighted with the STOP sign on the left that can be tied to the text "€1,963 for a migrant"<sup>5</sup> and the mass of migrants in the image. It is an offer image due to the lack of interaction of the individuals with the viewer (Kress and Leeuwen 2006, 119). The euro figure given is an example of one of the false facts circulated during the SDS's campaign (Košir 2018).

The following poster features a picture of wheat and the text "Slovenian Farm. Slovenian Family. Safe Food." Elements of the social practice are excluded and left for the reader to infer. Since they all possess the syntactic structure of a noun phrase pre-modified by an adjective, the reader associates the three by way of a causal relation,

5 Interestingly, the Slovenian People's Party's campaign poster also showed a figure supposedly given to migrants; however, in their poster this was €1,930 (Petrovčič 2018).



which is aided by the repetition of the adjective Slovenian that foregrounds this as the most important characteristic (Leeuwen 2008, 19).



Image 3: Slovenian farm. Slovenian family. Safe food. Source: SDS.

Another poster features a photo of grandparents and their grandchildren. The right side, “For a lovely old age”, is read from top to bottom, followed by the capitalized phrase “€500 Christmas bonus”. The bottom right corner has the “For You” umbrella slogan.



Image 4: For a lovely old age. Source: SDS.

There is a marked difference between this image and that of the migrants above, illustrating the effect of abstractly representing a group versus portraying them as individuals; the second poster is also an example of a populist promise to help “the people” (Enyedi, Mölder 2019, 73).





The next party to win parliamentary seats was NSi, New Slovenia – Christian Democrats, who won seven parliamentary seats and 63,792 or 7.16% of votes (DVK 2018). Their slogan is “Misli Resno” or “Really Means It”.



Figure 5 Tonin Really Means It. Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA.

The poster depicts party president Matej Tonin with no accompanying visual support. He is foregrounded and individualized (Leeuwen 2008, 146), and does not engage with the audience but stares towards something in the distance, possibly his goals. The lack of contact with the viewer makes this an offer image (Kress, Leeuwen 2006, 119). His smart clothes highlight his professionalism, and the absence of a tie creates a more approachable image (Lirola 2016, 257). Whereas the party and its president are nominated and placed in the active role of agent, the “it” in “really means it” remains undetermined and abstract; as with the SDS, it is a short, catch-all slogan that can be attached to a score of other messages.

#### 4.1.2 Left-liberal

Liberal parties that won seats in parliament were the List of Marjan Šarec (LMŠ), with 112,250 or 12.6% of votes and 13 seats; the Modern Center Party (SMC), with 86,868 or 9.75% of votes and 10 seats; and the Party of Alenka Bratušek (SAB), with 45,492 or 5.11% of votes and five seats (DVK 2018). In contrast with the right-wing parties, these parties' discourse, although also emphasizing safety, focuses on progress, confidence and unity. They call to fight climate change, eradicate corruption, increase pensions, and promote health and human rights (LMŠ, SMC 2018, SAB).





Figure 6 Marjan. Community. Country. Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA.



Figure 7 Determined. Experienced. Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA.







Figure 8 Better for Everybody. Photo: Aljoša Kravanja.

The above posters exhibit similar characteristics. All use a white background and a simple colour palette of blue and white with perhaps another colour. All are demand images (Kress, Leeuwen 2006, 118). The slogans make use of ellipsis; they are concise and composed of two or three nouns or adjectives, as with LMS's "Individual. Community. Country.", the gradational structure of which creates the impression of building something. They reference progress and efficiency and, alongside their smart clothes, present the politicians as a serious and stable option.

#### 4.1.3 Centre-left

The centre-left parties that won parliamentary seats were the Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (DeSUS), with 43,889 or 4.93% of votes and five seats, and the Social Democrats (SD), with 88,524 or 9.93% of votes and 10 seats (DVK 2018). They advocate the eradication of poverty, the rule of law, and emphasize welfare and social dialogue (DeSUS 2018; SD).

The DeSUS's poster shows its smartly dressed president, Karl Erjavec, his name printed on the left side of the poster and appearing as the most prominent feature (Leeuwen 2008, 41). The bottom left bears the party logo, followed by their campaign slogan "Let's Give the People Back their Dignity" that, printed directly underneath the image of the speaking president, creates the impression he is the one uttering the statement.





Figure 9 Let's Give the People Back their Dignity. Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA.



Figure 10 Social Dialogue. Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA.





In the poster for the SD, the academic title of the candidate, Dušan Semolič, a key figure in Slovenian trade unions and long-time chair of the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (Žerdin 2017), is listed above the hashtag #ConfidentSlovenia, the SD's slogan. His forearms read "Social Dialogue", and he stands staring into the audience, wearing a polo shirt. The inclusion of his academic title was done presumably to invoke authority (Leeuwen 2008, 41).

The posters of the centre-left parties share certain common features. They foreground their candidates, in the case of the DeSUS in the form of an offer image, whereas the SD employs a more direct demand image (Kress, Leeuwen 2006, 118–119); DeSUS's candidate is smartly dressed, while the SD's candidate is wearing informal clothes, most likely because the SD appeals more to a working-class audience.

#### 4.1.4 Left-wing

The Left won 83,108 or 9.33% of votes and nine parliamentary seats (DVK 2018). It advocates raising wages and pensions, reforming healthcare, stopping privatization, protecting the environment, exiting CETA, TTIP and NATO, and removing the barbed wire fence from the border (Levica 2018). Their slogans emphasize unity or make concrete demands. Aside from their main of "Welfare for the Many, not the Few", they used four additional slogans. They did not opt for a short, catch-all phrase, choosing to posit concrete demands, as in the following poster that reads "Let's Raise Wages and Pensions!"



Figure 11 Let's Raise Wages and Pensions! Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA.





Posters are either simple text on a black background and no supporting images, foregrounding the message, or a photograph paired with one of the party's slogans; here, too, demand images are employed (Kress, Leeuwen 2006, 118). In contrast to the right-wing, left-liberal and centre-left parties, where the party leader or candidate is singled out, the Left depicts a group of people, presumably to emphasize cooperation and invite trust (Lirola 2016, 261).

## 4.2 Framing and representing social action

This section analyses the parties' thoughts on safety, healthcare, finance, pensions, and corruption to see if similarities can be drawn based on their political orientations.

### 4.2.1 Pensions

All parties, while differing in tone, are unified on raising pensions. The SNS critiques the then-current government: “[...] **rights should not be curtailed or changed, which is precisely what the current government is doing** when it comes to pensioners and workers” (SNS).<sup>6</sup> The NSi propose instituting a three-tier pension system that: “combines a necessary **system of solidarity and individual retirement saving**” (NSi, 140).<sup>7</sup> They ascribe a lot of importance to the hard work of an individual in guaranteeing their future. The liberal LMŠ speaks of ensuring “pensions **at least above the poverty line** for individuals **with a full occupational record**” (LMŠ)<sup>8</sup>, while the SMC plans to raise the retirement age: “[...] we advocate for a **high-quality system of long-term care, raising the retirement age and using existing state funds to ensure decent pensions** for future pensioners” (SMC 2018, 23),<sup>9</sup> revealing a neoliberal streak (Harvey 2005, 65). Decent pensions and raising expenditure are mentioned by all other parties: “We must ensure **decent pensions and long-term care** for security in old age” (SAB)<sup>10</sup>; “With us, **expenditure on pensions will be the highest of all EU countries**” (SD)<sup>11</sup>; the DeSUS, true to its name, demands a specific percentage increase: “[...] **pensions should be raised by at least 8.5%**” (DeSUS 2018).<sup>12</sup> The Left's

---

6 “Zastopamo stališče, da se pridobljene pravice ne smejo odvzemati, spreminjati ali krčiti, kar zdaj počne aktualna vlada na segmentu upokojencev in delavstvu.” This and all subsequent translations were done by the author of this article.

7 “Je kombinacija obveznega solidarnostnega sistema in individualnega pokojninskega varčevalnega sistema.”

8 “Pokojnine za polno delovno dobi (sic) vsaj nad pragom tveganja revščine.”

9 “Zaradi neugodnih demografskih trendov se zavzemamo za kakovosten sistem dolgotrajne oskrbe, kasnejše upokojevanje ter uporabo obstoječega državnega premoženja za zagotovitev dostojnih pokojnin za bodoče upokojence.”

10 “Zagotoviti moramo dostojne pokojnine in dolgotrajno oskrbo za varno starost.”

11 “Izdatki za pokojnine se bodo pri nas povečali najbolj med vsemi državami Evropske unije.”

12 “Zato se morajo pokojnine v naslednjem mandatu zvišati vsaj za 8,5 odstotka.”





stance is in line with other parties, promising to ensure “**pensions that will guarantee a safe old age**” (Levica, 14).<sup>13</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Corruption

Likewise, there is a consensus regarding increased judicial accountability – “To minimize human rights violations in judicial processes, **we will ensure judges are held accountable for their decisions**, including through criminal proceedings that are possible according to the law, and yet are never implemented” (SDS)<sup>14</sup> – and financial accountability – “Slovenian taxpayers are rightfully angry when their taxes go towards closing the **budget gaps caused by irresponsible bankers**” (NSi, 68);<sup>15</sup> “We will make sure **those responsible** for the gap citizens had to contribute 5 billion euros to **never occupy important positions in banks or state-owned companies again**” (DeSUS 2018).<sup>16</sup> The LMŠ and SMC are more oriented towards systemic change: “Ensuring **transparency in court rulings and judicial decisions**” (LMŠ);<sup>17</sup> “We must **strengthen systemic controls over the work of the prosecutor’s office [...]**” (SMC 2018, 22).<sup>18</sup> Corruption and crime are referenced by the SMC and SAB: “We will demand **more efficient persecution of financial and organized crime**” (SAB).<sup>19</sup> The SD focus on unjust power structures: “One of the biggest risks is represented by **wealth and power held in the hands of the few**” (SD);<sup>20</sup> and the Left calls for “**(independent) forensic investigations of state projects and investments** rife with suspicions of corruption and clientelism” (Levica, 80).<sup>21</sup>

#### 4.2.3 Finance

Right-wing parties focus on lowering taxes – “**Less for taxes, more for you!**”<sup>22</sup> (SDS)<sup>23</sup> – and property rights: “Baselessly high taxes would mean an **unjust intervention into**

13 “Pokojnine, ki bodo omogočile varno starost.”

14 “Za odpravo ali minimaliziranje kršitev človekovih pravic v sodnih postopkih bomo zagotovili dosledno izvajanje odgovornosti sodnikov za svoje odločitve, vključujoč kazenske postopke zoper sodnike, ki so po veljavni zakonodaji mogoči a se nikoli ne izvajajo.”

15 “Slovenski davkoplačevalci so upravičeno jezni, ko s svojimi davki krpajo milijardne luknje, ki so jih v proračunu izkopale neodgovorne osebe v bankah.”

16 “Preprečili bomo, da bodo posamezniki, ki so odgovorni za nastanek bančne luknje, za katero smo državljani prispevali 5 milijard evrov, še kdaj zasedli pomembne položaje v državnih bankah in državnih podjetjih.”

17 “Zagotovitev transparentnosti sodb in odločitev konkretnih sodnikov.”

18 “Okrepiti moramo sistemski nadzor nad delom tožilstva za učinkovitejši pregon organiziranega kriminala in korupcije.”

19 “Zahtevali bomo učinkovitejši pregon gospodarskega in organiziranega kriminala.”

20 “Koncentracija bogastva in moči v rokah peščice predstavlja eno od ključnih tveganj.”

21 “(Neodvisne) forenzične preiskave državnih projektov in investicij, ki so prepletene s sumi korupcije in klientelizma.”

22 Incidentally, also one of their campaign slogans.

23 “Manj za davke, več za vas!”





**individual property rights**” (NSi, 44);<sup>24</sup> here, the right's neoliberal focus on individualism is most salient (Harvey 2005, 64), and this is echoed by the liberal SMC: “A just Slovenia starts with basic human rights and ensuring the fundamental right to **create a decent life through your own hard work and entrepreneurship**” (SMC 2018, 3).<sup>25</sup> DeSUS and the SAB emphasize the economy: “We believe there can be no strong and just welfare state without a **successful economy**” (SAB);<sup>26</sup> “We will devote special care to **developing craft industries and family businesses**” (DeSUS 2018),<sup>27</sup> whereas the LMŠ and the SD focus on raising wages: “**Raising the minimum wage and pensions [...]**” (LMŠ);<sup>28</sup> “We will **eradicate poverty through systemic measures**” (SD).<sup>29</sup> The emphasis on welfare is the most obvious difference between right- and left-oriented parties. For example, the Left demands “Immediately **raising the minimum wage to 700 euros**” (Levica, 24).<sup>30</sup>

#### 4.2.4 Healthcare

The left-right split is very apparent in healthcare. The right-wing's discourse is clearly neoliberal (McGregor 2001, 86–87) – “The citizen, patient and his needs must be at the centre of the healthcare system, **the money must follow the patient**” (SDS)<sup>31</sup>. The SNS contrasts the rights of citizens to those of other groups: “We advocate for **the right of every citizen to have access to basic healthcare**, emphasizing that no marginal groups and communities, **especially not migrants**, should take precedence when providing basic healthcare” (SNS).<sup>32</sup> The NSi supports the power of individuals to choose between their own healthcare providers, calling for “**state-regulated competitiveness**” (NSi, 28).<sup>33</sup> The left-wing parties are unified, highlighting the importance of accessible healthcare: “We will never allow only the wealthy to have access to **quality healthcare**” (DeSUS 2018);<sup>34</sup> “In a healthy Slovenia all citizens have a right to **public healthcare**” (SMC 2018, 3).<sup>35</sup> Calls are made to abolish or reduce waiting

24 “Neutemeljeno visoka raven davčne obremenitve bi namreč pomenila nepravilčen poseg v lastninsko pravico posameznika.”

25 “Pravična Slovenija se začne pri temeljnih človekovih pravicah in zagotavljanju osnovne pravice, da si z lastnim delom in podjetnostjo ustvarjaš človeka dostojno življenje.”

26 “Mi verjamemo, da brez uspešnega gospodarstva ne more biti močne in pravične socialne države.”

27 “Posebno pozornost bomo namenili razvoju obrti in družinskih podjetij.”

28 “Dvig najnižjih plač in pokojnin ter olajšanje življenja ljudem v stiski.”

29 “Odprave revščine se bomo lotili s sistemskimi ukrepi.”

30 “Nemuden dvig minimalne plače na 700 evrov.”

31 “Državljan, pacient in njegove potrebe morajo ponovno postati središče zdravstvenega sistema, denar mora slediti bolniku.”

32 “Zagovarjamo pravico do osnovnega zdravstva za vse državljanke in državljane, s tem, da pri zagotavljanju osnovnega zdravstva ne smejo imeti prednosti marginalne skupine in skupnosti, še najmanj pa migrantske skupine.”

33 “Regulirano konkurenčnost, in sicer s strani države.”

34 “Nikoli ne bomo dopustili, da bi le bogati lahko dostopali do kakovostnih zdravstvenih uslug.”

35 “V zdravi Sloveniji vsi državljani in državljanke uživamo pravice javnega zdravstva.”





lines: “**Reducing waiting times** in healthcare [...]” (LMŠ);<sup>36</sup> “We will make order in health care and **abolish waiting lines**” (SAB);<sup>37</sup> “Equal access to all forms of treatment **with no waiting or privileges**” (SD); the Left emphasizes the problems faced by low-income individuals, proposing to “replace supplementary health insurance with a **solidarity levy**” (Levica, 33).

#### 4.2.5 Safety

One of the most salient topics of the campaign was safety or as it was framed on the right, immigration, for example: “The SNS will continue to **oppose any and all immigration** from Asia and Africa” (SNS),<sup>38</sup> with certain statements meant to incite fear: “Alongside a rise in terrorism practically all countries that have experienced a large increase in immigration have seen a **drastic increase in violence, robberies and rapes**” (SDS).<sup>39</sup> This underpins references to the importance of the armed forces: “The defence policy of the Republic of Slovenia will be focused on **ensuring the defensive capabilities needed** to ensure all aspects of national defence and broader collective defence” (NSi, 257).<sup>40</sup> The LMŠ, SAB and DeSUS also echo these calls: “Ensuring **adequate financing** of all three subsystems: the internal (regularization of police officers and their gear), **the defensive** (regularization of the status and gear of soldiers and the gradual provision of funds towards 1.5% of GDP [...])” (LMŠ);<sup>41</sup> “We will actively strive to **maintain peace on the EU's outer borders** and advocate for respect of human rights” (SAB);<sup>42</sup> “A reinstatement of **compulsory military service** for men” (DeSUS 2018).<sup>43</sup> Others emphasize it differently, the SMC addressing violence and hate speech – “[...] **we have a zero-tolerance policy towards family violence and public hate speech**” (SMC 2018, 3)<sup>44</sup> – and the SD addressing cyberattacks – “So Slovenia can defend and protect itself from all contemporary security risks and threats, such as **cyberattacks**,

36 “Skrajševanje čakalnih vrst v zdravstvu z učinkovitejšo porabo sredstev ter boljšo organizacijo in izrabo obstoječih kapacitet.”

37 “V zdravstvu bomo naredili red in ukinili čakalne vrste.”

38 “SNS bo še naprej nasprotovala priseljevanju kakršnih koli emigrantov iz področja Azije in Afrike.”

39 “Vzporedno s terorizmom pa se je praktično v vseh državah, v katere je prišlo večje število migrantov, močno povečala tudi stopnja nasilja, ropov in posilstev.”

40 “Obrambna politika Republike Slovenije bo v prihodnje prednostno usmerjena v zagotavljanje takšnih obrambnih zmogljivosti, ki so potrebne za zagotavljanje vseh vidikov nacionalne obrambe kot tudi v širšem sistemu kolektivne obrambe.”

41 “Zagotovitev ustreznega financiranja vseh treh podsistemov: notranjega (ureditev statusa in opreme policistov), obrambnega (ureditev statusa in opreme vojakov ter postopna zagotovitev sredstev proti 1,5% BDP) ter podsistema varstva pred naravnimi in drugimi nesrečami (ureditev statusa in opreme gasilcev, reševalcev...)”

42 “Aktivni bomo v prizadevanjih za ohranjanje miru na zunanjih mejah EU ter pri zavzemanju za dosledno spoštovanje človekovih pravic.”

43 “Ponovna uvedba obveznega sluzenja vojaškega roka za moške.”

44 “Varna Slovenija se ne začne na meji, temveč v družini in medsebojnih odnosih, zato se borimo za ničelno toleranco do družinskega nasilja in proti sovražnemu govoru v javni komunikaciji.”





**terrorism and climate change, [...]** (SD).<sup>45</sup> The Left's stance is diametrically opposed to the right and some of the left, however, with calls for demilitarization and "the EU's exit from the NATO pact and the removal of American forces from EU territories" (Levica 2018, 95).<sup>46</sup>

## 5 Conclusion

Slogans are an important instrument of political propaganda that can serve as tools of manipulation. The issues highlighted by political parties, as well as how they frame this information, serve an ideological purpose; in the case of immigration that is usually to instil fear among the electorate. Consciously deciding to emphasize an issue allows parties to be in control of the narrative, giving the outward appearance of having a solution to the issue at hand. Globalization and Slovenia's membership of the EU means certain issues transcend national borders; decisions in one country potentially impact European and global politics, leading to interference from abroad. The SDS won in most constituencies; however, it was unable to form a coalition government, allowing Slovenia to escape the shift to the far-right suffered by many other countries. Although the liberal left and the Left also fared well, the right's success can be attributed the prominent urban-rural divide (Tiran 2015). Overall, it is immensely important to be conscious of the cultural and ideological impact of framing, especially in a political context, to help us better understand the underlying meaning of discourses, especially at a time when election results can have very important societal implications.

## Works Cited

- Adam, F., Tomšič M., The Dynamics of Elites and the Type of Capitalism: Slovenian Exceptionalism?, *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung: Political and Functional Elites in Post-Socialist Transformation: Central and East Europe since 1989/90* 37, 2012, pp. 53–70.
- Campbell, V., Lee B., Party Branding: A Case Study of Online Political Posters in: *Political Marketing and the 2015 UK General Election* (ed. D. G. Lilleker and M. Pack), 2016, pp. 49–65.
- Enyedi, Z., Mölder, M., Populisms in Europe Leftist, rightist, centrist and paternalist–nationalist challengers in: *Trumping the Mainstream: The Conquest of Democratic Politics by the Populist Radical Right* (ed. L. E. Herman and J. Muldoon), 2019, pp. 54–103.
- Harvey, D., *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford 2005.
- Jou, W., Left–Right Orientations and Ideological Voting in New Democracies: A Case Study of Slovenia, *Europe-Asia Studies* 63 (1), 2011, pp. 27–47.

---

45 "Da se bo Slovenija sposobna obraniti in zavarovati pred vsemi sodobnimi varnostnimi tveganji in oblikami groženj, kot so kibernetški napadi, terorizem in podnebne spremembe, potrebujemo vzdržen in učinkovit sistem za zagotavljanje varnosti ljudi in države, vključno z našim sodelovanjem v sistemu kolektivne varnosti v Evropi in svetu."

46 "Umik EU iz zveze NATO in [za] odslovicev ameriških sil z ozemlja držav članic EU."







- Kress, G., Leeuwen, T., *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, New York 2006.
- Leeuwen, T. van, *Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*, New York 2008.
- Lirola, M. M., Multimodal analysis of a sample of political posters in Ireland during and after the Celtic Tiger, *Revista Signos. Estudios de lingüística*, 2016, pp. 246–267.
- Margulies, B., The future of the liberal party family: a survey of new liberal parties and other trends, *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, 2014, pp. 1–31.
- McGregor, S., Neoliberalism and health care, *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 2001, pp. 82–89.
- Morse, A. J., The Effect of Popular Opinion on Campaign Slogans—an Illustration, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1949, pp. 507–510.
- Novelli, E., Themes, Styles, and Tendencies of the European Political Poster. Analysis of the 2009 and 2014 European Election Campaigns in: *Election Posters Around the Globe* (ed. C. Holtz-Bacha and B. Johansson), 2017, pp. 91–114.
- Stepanov, S., Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Serbian Election Posters, in: *Jezič, književnost, značenje. Jezička istraživanja: zbornik radova* (ed. B. Mišić Ilić and V. Lopičić), Niš 2016, pp. 521–539.
- Tiran, J., Urbano proti ruralnemu: (nov) razcep v slovenskem političnem prostoru?, *Teorija in praksa*, 2015, pp. 271–290.
- Vreese, C. H. de., Second-Rate Election Campaigning? An Analysis of Campaign Styles in European Parliamentary Elections, *Journal of Political Marketing*, 2009, pp. 7–19.

## Sources Cited

- DeSUS, 2018, *Predvolilni program stranke DeSUS*. <https://desus.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Program-DeSUS.pdf> (Accessed 7 Mar. 2019).
- Državna volilna komisija, *Državna volilna komisija*, 3 June 2018, <https://dvk-rs.si/arhivi/dz2018/#/rezultati>.
- Košak, K., Kampanja SDS spominja na Orbanovo. *Dnevnik*, 28 May 2018, <https://www.dnevnik.si/1042822396> (Accessed 9 Apr. 2020).
- Košir, I., Kako potujejo laži. *Mladina*, 30 Mar. 2018. <https://www.mladina.si/184861/kako-potujejo-lazi/> (Accessed 15 June 2019).
- Levica, 2018, Program stranke levica za državnozbornske volitve 2018. *Levica*. <http://www.levica.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Levica-volilni-program-2018.pdf> (Accessed 9 Apr. 2020).
- Levica, 2018, *Blaginja za vse, ne le za peščico: Program stranke Levica za državnozbornske volitve 2018*. <http://www.levica.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Levica-volilni-program-2018.pdf> (Accessed 6 May 2019).
- LMŠ, 2018, *Program – načrt dela – Stranka LMŠ*. <https://www.strankalms.si/o-stranki/program-nacrt-dela/> (Accessed 3 Mar. 2019).
- Mekina, B., Orbán že neposredno financira SDS. *Mladina*, 25 May 2018, <https://www.mladina.si/185643/orb-n-ze-neposredno-financira-sds/> (Accessed 13 June 2019).
- NSi, N.Si misli resno: 15 rešitev za Slovenijo med 15 najboljših držav sveta. Volilni program 2018–2020. *NSi*. [http://www.nsiplus.si/wp-content/uploads/NSi\\_misli\\_resno\\_www.pdf](http://www.nsiplus.si/wp-content/uploads/NSi_misli_resno_www.pdf) (Accessed 4 Mar. 2019).
- Petrovčič, P., Slovenija ni samo Jože, *Mladina*, 25 May 2018, <https://www.mladina.si/185650/slovenija-ni-samo-joze/> (Accessed 25 Sep. 2019).





- SD, *Nova vizija in cilj za Slovenijo - SD*, <https://socialnidemokrati.si/nova-vizija-in-cilji-za-slovenijo/> (Accessed 6 Mar. 2019).
- SDS TV, 2018, *Slovenijo bomo postavili na prvo mesto! #SDSzate*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-JAot5pK24> (Accessed 6 Apr. 2020).
- SDS, 2018, *SDS Zate – Aplikacije v Googlu Play*, [https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=si.panmap.sdszate&fbclid=IwAR0pkW92Xv7r\\_kkHjXneeKAC51RQBHg07EQClldFkY-O4eCWGh88cJ8\\_tO20](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=si.panmap.sdszate&fbclid=IwAR0pkW92Xv7r_kkHjXneeKAC51RQBHg07EQClldFkY-O4eCWGh88cJ8_tO20) (Accessed 6 Apr. 2020).
- SDS, 2018, *SDS Zat*, <https://www.sds.si/search/node?keys=zate> (Accessed 6 Apr. 2020).
- SDS, 2018, *Zemljevid*, <https://www.sds.si/zemljevid> (Accessed 6 Apr. 2020).
- SDS, *Program ZATE - Manj za davke, več za vas!* <https://www.sds.si/zate/program/manj-za-davke-vec-za-vas> (Accessed 2 Mar. 2019).
- SDS, *Program ZATE - SDS za cenejše in dostopnejše zdravstvo za vse*. <https://www.sds.si/zate/program/ceneje-in-dostopnejse-zdravstvo-za-vse> (Accessed 2 Mar. 2019)
- SDS, *Program ZATE - Za pravično sojenje*, <https://www.sds.si/zate/program> (Accessed 2 Mar. 2019)
- SDS, *SDS na področju notranjih zadev*, <https://www.sds.si/sites/default/files/documents/Za%20policijo%20ne%20bo%20več%20privilegiranih%20skupin%20ali%20privilegiranih%20oseb.pdf> (Accessed 5 Mar. 2019)
- SDS, *Zemljevid*, 2019, <https://www.sds.si/zemljevid> (Accessed 25 June 2019).
- SMC, 2018, *Bolje za vse: Program Stranke modernega centra 2018-2022*, [https://www.strankamc.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Program-SMC\\_2018-2022-Končni.pdf](https://www.strankamc.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Program-SMC_2018-2022-Končni.pdf). (Accessed 6 Mar. 2019).
- SNS, 2016, Čistopis dopolnjenega in aktualiziranega programa Slovenske nacionalne stranke, sprejetega na 10. kongresu stranke Na Otočcu, 7. maja 2016. *Slovenska Nacionalna Stranka*. [https://www.sns.si/wp-content/uploads/Program-SNS-2016\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.sns.si/wp-content/uploads/Program-SNS-2016_FINAL.pdf) (Accessed 4 Mar. 2019).
- Stranka Alenke Bratušek, *Odločni. Izkušeni. Program 2022. Slovenija uspešnih in zadovoljnih ljudi*, <https://www.sab.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/2018-04-23-AB-Program-Web.pdf> (Accessed 6 Mar. 2019).
- Žerdin, A., Portret tedna: Dušan Semolič. *Delo*, 6 Oct. 2017, <https://www.delo.si/sobotna/portret-tedna-dusan-semolic.html> (Accessed 9 Apr. 2020).

Maiken Ana Kores

## Powerful posters – A multimodal analysis of Slovenia's 2018 parliamentary elections

**Keywords:** Slovenia, parliamentary elections, multimodal analysis, political discourse analysis, political posters, political slogans

Given the rise in far-right and populist rhetoric in Europe, particularly in light of the 2015 refugee crisis and the racist and xenophobic responses to it, this paper provides a multimodal analysis of the campaign slogans and posters of Slovenian political parties that gained parliamentary seats during the 2018 parliamentary elections that were, alongside focusing on issues pertaining to the Slovenian political landscape, heavily infused with concerns and potential solutions on





how to tackle the challenges currently faced by Europe. The aim is to examine the linguistic and visual tools used by parties across the political spectrum, and to find out if the use of certain elements is characteristic of a determined political orientation. A brief outline of Slovenian party dynamics and the conditions that have contributed to them is followed by an analysis of the parties' political campaigns. Using the tools of political discourse analysis, the first part is centred around parties' choice of syntax and lexis in their political slogans, as well as the imagery on their posters, whereas the second is devoted to a linguistic analysis of how parties frame and address five key common issues in their political programmes: pensions, corruption, finance, healthcare and safety. Their stances and how these differ or coincide based on their place on the political spectrum are exemplified by short excerpts from the programmes.

Maiken Ana Kores

## **Prepričljivi plakati – Multimodalna analiza slovenskih državnozborskih volitev leta 2018**

**Ključne besede:** Slovenija, državnozborske volitve, multimodalna analiza, politična analiza diskurza, politični plakati, politični slogani

V luči pojava skrajno desne in populistične retorike v Evropi, ki je bila zlasti posledica migrant-ske krize leta 2015, ter rasističnega in ksenofobnega diskurza, ki je bil premnogokrat odgovor nanjo, članek podaja multimodalno analizo političnih sloganov in plakatov slovenskih strank, ki so na državnozborskih volitvah leta 2018 osvojile parlamentarne sedeže. Volitve so bile namreč poleg osredotočanja na problematike, lastne slovenski politični krajini, prežete z govorom o tem, kako se spopasti z izzivi, s katerimi se sooča Evropa. Cilj raziskave je preučiti, katerih jezikovnih in vizualnih sredstev so se posluževale stranke na najrazličnejših straneh političnega spektra in ali bi lahko za nekatere elemente dejali, da so značilni za določeno politično usmerjenost. Kratkemu pregledu slovenskih strankarskih dinamik in pogojev, ki so pripomogli k njihovem razvoju, sledi analiza političnih kampanj strank. Zavzemši držo politične analize diskurza se prvi del osredotoča na leksikalne in skladenjske odločitve strank v političnih sloganih in na podporno slikovno gradivo, medtem ko je drugi del namenjen jezikoslovni analizi načina, kako politične stranke v svojih predvolilnih programih naslavljajo pet glavnih tem: pokojnine, korupcijo, finance, zdravstvo in varnost. Njihova stališča in razlike med njimi glede na politično usmerjenost so ponazorjene z izbranimi izseki iz strankarskih programov.

### **O avtorici**

**Maiken Ana Kores** (1996) je prevajalka in jezikoslovka, ki živi in dela v Ljubljani. Diplomirala je na programu Medjezikovno posredovanje (slo-ang-fra) na Oddelku za prevajalstvo ljubljanske Filozofske fakultete, kjer je trenutno vpisana na magistrski študij. Prevaja iz slovenščine, angleščine, španščine, francoščine in italijanščine, jezikoslovno pa se ukvarja s kritično analizo





diskurza, kritično stilistiko in postkolonialnimi študijami. Zanima jo jezik kot sredstvo družbene moči in posledično tudi področja, na katerih se ta izraža – bodisi kot sredstvo prisile bodisi kot sredstvo emancipacije. Je članica programskega odbora feminističnega Inštituta 8. marec.

### About the author

**Maiken Ana Kores** (1996, Ljubljana) is a linguist and translator currently living and working in Ljubljana. She graduated in Linguistic Mediation (SI-EN-FR) at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, where she is currently pursuing her Master's Degree. She translates from and into Slovene, English, Spanish, French and Italian. As a linguist, she is interested in critical discourse analysis, critical stylistics and postcolonial studies, and thus the societal power of language and the areas where it is realized, be it in the service of either manipulation or emancipation. She is a member of the program committee of the feminist Inštitut 8. marec (The 8th of March Institute).

