

Ideological Worlds Colliding: Questioning Smer's Alliance with the Political Radical Right

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Vienna, 30 May 2025

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Author's Declaration

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Abstract

For many, Robert Fico's or his political party's, Smer's, position on the political spectrum is murky and vague. This is often due to frequent switches in position, but also to Fico's ideological differences from other political leaders who are part of the radical-right family. Furthermore, Fico built a good relationship with Victor Orbán from the ruling Hungarian Fidesz party, who is not only part of the radical right-wing but also plays on Hungary's grievances that time-to-time go against Slovakia's territorial integrity. To overcome this puzzle, a text analysis based on Maerz's and Schneider's (2019; 2021) research method was conducted. Speeches by Fico and Orbán were collected, uploaded to *R studio*, turned into data-feature-matrices where a dictionary, a list of ideological keywords was applied. After the keywords were counted by *R*, the sum of keywords was put into ratio log-odds equations to determine Fico's ideological positions from 2016 to 2024 and to what extent these positions align or collide with Orbán's. A two-dimensional ideological space was created to better locate Fico and Orbán in a shared political landscape. Overall, this research helps to clarify Smer's position and the logic behind its collaboration with Fidesz.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Ever since the 1990s, academics and political figures have pondered over the political positioning of Smer and its party leader, Robert Fico, and their overall relationship with the right-wing parties. Smer considers itself to be part of the party family called ‘social democrats’. However, over two decades of liberal democracy in Slovakia, Smer has a history of deviating from the agendas of the Party of European Socialists (PES) and was finally suspended in 2023. What was observed instead are characteristics common to illiberal right-wing parties, such as preference for national sovereignty, disregard for minorities and intermediary institutions, protection of traditional values and norms, and centralization of power. Not only that, but Smer also collaborated or even created governments with ‘radical right-wing’ parties such as SNS (Slovak National Party) and HZDS (People’s Party – Movement for a Democratic Slovakia) (Bútorová & Bútor, 2019; Marušiak, 2021). Outside the Slovak borders, Smer has over the years developed good relations with Fidesz, led by Victor Orbán. This is even more puzzling, since Orbán on occasion brings forth Hungarian grievances over lost land in Slovakia, Serbia, and Romania (Toomey, 2018) and holds hostile attitudes toward the socialist era, when Fico, on the other hand, was well-adapted and promised a successful career, i.e., before the fall of the Berlin Wall (Bárdy, 2023). The confusion surrounding this alliance is understandable and likely stems from simplistic assumptions about the dynamics between two nationalist parties seemingly positioned at different ends of the left-right economic dimension. There are two possible ways out of the paradox: 1. More than one ideological dimension is needed to capture a party’s position and 2. Parties can collaborate even if they are ideologically contradictory. This thesis explores both possibilities.

Looking at any party or movement from the left-right perspective has been shown to produce a reductionist and limiting picture of political reality (see Bos & Minihold, 2022; Hellwig,

2014; Song & Moyer, 2017). Take for example conferences such as the 2025 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), held in Washington DC, February 19-22, where many illiberal, populist leaders, from libertarians like the Argentinian president, Javier Milei, to a considered leftist like Fico, sought collaborations with protectionist right-wing leaders despite holding contradictory ideologies (Farivar, 2025). This might suggest that ideologies on the economic left-right level might not matter to these party leaders. What matters to them is ideology on a socio-cultural level. However, this leads to a paradox about why political leaders with preferences for exclusion for everything foreign would work with other ‘foreign’ political leaders. Despite the paradox, there are many historical examples of exclusivist parties and movements working together, since at the end of the day, they do have more similar goals compared to inclusive progressives. For example, Feffer (2021) sheds light on how neo-Nazi and ultra-right leaders and movements – despite being ultranationalists longing for extremely exclusivist ethno-states – have global ambitions and commonly strategize with similar movements beyond their respective borders.

There are many global goals which exclusive movements and groups strive for. For political and party leaders such as Fico and Orbán, one of the goals of adopting illiberal discourse as a strategy is to distract voters of their respective countries from noticing democratic backsliding, corruption, and economic failures under their governance. This point even survives the counter point that voters want the illiberal bills amended, since most democracies are representative in a way that not all of us can be politicians and it is the role of a politician to both listen to, and on the other hand, tell voters what is realistic and what is not. My point is supported by Von Soest's (2015) and Weyland's (2017) research about cooperation and diffusion of strategies between non-democratic regimes. The diffusion can be separately ideological (e.g., the spread of communist-socialist ideology by the USSR) or resource-based (e.g. present-day Russia or China), but in most cases, leaders adopt both.

Here, Fico and Orbán share ideological strategies in the socio-cultural dimension to gain control over their respective countries and direct access to resources without any distractions such as checks and balances, or the possibility of losing elections.

However, why would Fico need help from a foreign leader to dominate culture in Slovakia? First, as Schneider and Maerz (2017) suggest, autocratic leaders can gain greater legitimacy during resource crises when they control cultural influence without interference from a cultural elite embedded in media, arts, humanities and social media platforms. In such cases, leaders can scapegoat cultural issues rather than addressing relevant problems or curbing corruption from which they benefit. Second, alliances with other leaders who reject liberalism in terms of power-sharing, checks and balances, and human rights, might share strategies which worked on a basis of trial-and-error. This dynamic is clear when it comes to the relationship between Fico and Orbán, though it extends beyond these two public figures. It can be seen in the increase of diplomatic meetings, the sharing of narratives (e.g., George Soros as an “umbrella enemy” (Krekó & Enyedi, 2018, p. 48)) and the utilization of similar policies (e.g., foreign agent laws) to centralize power and to discredit organizations that expose their use of cultural scapegoating as diversions from governance failures among other human rights concerns in the wide sense. Despite the growing visibility of these illiberal networks, academic coverage of this topic is insufficient. Further research is needed to examine how illiberal and populist parties in power collaborate across borders and ideological differences. What makes foreign leaders with different ideological positions and interests work together and exchange talking points and strategies? And if the collaboration is evident, is their cooperation connected in some ideological dimension?

I began this research by analyzing Fico’s and Orbán’s ideological positions separately along two dimensions in 2024, while also contextualizing Fico ideologically by comparing him with other Slovak political leaders, such as Richard Sulík and Andrej Danko. I then traced the

evolution of both Fico's and Orbán's ideologies over time, examining whether their socio-cultural stances converge, even as their economic positions remain relatively distinct.

1.1 Literature Review

Relying on a single dimension to analyze any current political phenomenon can lead to a coverage bias. For example, neglecting diverse voter demographics or ideological positionings of political actors potentially creates a large gap between research and reality. To solve this issue many scholars constructed a second dimension to add nuance to their analysis of political phenomena starting from demographics of voters to positionings of parties at either domestic or international levels.

Lack of explanation of political phenomena was realized by many researchers. For example, Song and Moyer (2017) stated that one cannot explain the political values of a political elite and general public with the left-right dimension. They found that the Cultural Theory (CT) values of individualism, egalitarianism, hierarchism and fatalism predict people's political belief system better than the left-right dimension. They showed that political values cannot be explained by means of left and right. However, these researchers confused left-right with the liberal-conservative dimension where the latter is value-based, and the former consists of economic views. Still, this research shows that ideologies and values should not be measured exclusively through economic lenses. Bos and Minihold (2022), on the other hand, used three ideological dimensions: economic left-right, socio-cultural GAL-TAN¹, and a populist-mainstream dimension to predict the types of moral appeal used by political parties. Although Song & Moyer (2017) do not believe that cultural beliefs are ideology while Bos and Minihold (2022) believe that populism is a thin ideology rather than a political style (see

¹ GAL means Green, Alternative and Libertarian and TAN means Traditional, Authoritarian and Nationalist.

Moffitt, 2017), they are all still aware that more nuance is needed when trying to look at the beliefs, values, or morals of political actors.

Hellwig (2014) also found that the economic left-right dimension is not enough to categorize parties and their policy preferences within the industrialized European countries and thus included dimensions on views of immigration and open borders. Snegovaya (2024) also utilized two dimensions similar to Hellwig's (2014), but with different ranges. For the economic dimension, she decided for distribution of resource policy preferences of left-right political parties, and for the socio-cultural dimension the range was set from nativism towards cosmopolitanism. With these dimensions in mind, she examined Slovakia and the Czech Republic, where the former socialist parties strategically positioned their economic ideological stances to the left in response to harsh neoliberal austerity measures, while she briefly touched on the socio-cultural ideological stances of the same parties after the refugee crisis of 2015.

In terms of positioning on the left-right political spectrum, Fico and his party Smer does not get the same attention as Donald Trump or Vladimir Putin. However, this does not mean that Fico does not get any coverage. There is quite some literature discussing Fico's decisions and actions and what they mean, and how he should be labeled ideologically. For instance, while Mesežnikov (2024) conducted descriptive research about the parliamentary elections in 2023, he also discussed ideological preferences and changes in different parties and provided a table with ideological descriptors. Without explicitly talking about dimensions, Mesežnikov (2024) labeled Smer as "radical national populists with left rhetoric" (p. 30). This is a good start; however, the author's perspective on ideology is still unidimensional since he attributes Smer's approach to cultural issues to economically right-wing parties. Marušiak (2021), on the other hand, provides the most up-to-date timeline on Fico and his party's ideological shifts. He states that Smer initially emerged as an anti-establishment party, aligning with the

‘Third Way’ (also see Snegovaya, 2024), before transitioning to a more *Europeanized* and mainstream social democratic stance. He continues to say that eventually, Smer started to shift to a populist and Euroskeptic position. Even though Marušiak (2021) adds nuance to his research by looking at the evolution of Smer, he does not separate economic ideology from socio-cultural ideology. Each of these authors either do not attempt to directly separate these two dimensions from each other or make some characteristics (nationalism, nativism, traditionalism) essential to a specific economic ideology (i.e., right-wing).

Henderson (2017) and Snegovaya (2024), on the other hand, are more successful at categorizing ideological stances of political actors with their more nuanced approaches. Henderson (2017) examined Slovak politics by utilizing Kitschelt's (1992) perspective on Western and Eastern political culture. Kitschelt (1992) claimed that while parties in the West are centered around a pro-market/authoritarian versus anti-market/libertarian² axis, while Central and Eastern European parties are centered around a pro-market/libertarian versus anti-market/authoritarian range of positions. Henderson (2017) proceeded to apply this perspective to Slovak politics and determined that people tend to vote for Smer and SNS³ for their left-wing, nativist and protectionist policies. Snegovaya (2024) also recognized this dual pattern and as mentioned above, examined Smer from two dimensions: the economic left-right and the socio-cultural nativist-cosmopolitan dimension. From 2002 to 2006, she saw that Fico's party positioned itself on the cosmopolitan left-wing side of her graph (see p. 174) while for 2010, the party was still left-wing but nativist. This shows Fico's ideological stances more accurately than from a unidimensional left-right analysis.

² Kitschelt (1992) says “libertarian” but he probably meant pro-liberty or liberal since he already used pro-market as the opposite of anti-market.

³ Bútorová and Bútor (2019) and Marušiak (2021) did label SNS right-wing, however, Henderson (2017) claims that SNS is left-wing and Snegovaya (2024) even supports this economic position on her graph (see p. 174).

With Henderson (2017), Marušiak (2021) and Snegovaya (2024) in mind, Fico and Smer's ideological positioning thus appears to shift over time. During the '90s and into the next century, Smer became increasingly Euro-optimistic, economically open, and culturally mainstream. After the killings of the Slovak investigative journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancée in 2018, Fico's resignation and his temporary exile from mainstream politics, Smer, along with other parties, became more culturally conservative, nationalistic, and Euro-skeptic (Mesežnikov, 2024). It is not known with certainty why Fico switched position after his resignation, but it is more likely he wanted to tap into a demographic group of voters who are anti-establishment, anti-EU, anti-NATO and anti-liberal democracy.

However, many of these articles either do not use dimensions to map out political leaders' and their parties' overt ideologies, or they do but their concepts are specific to immigration and redistribution of wealth. With my socio-cultural dimension going beyond immigration and distribution of wealth put into the economic dimension, the findings for Fico's ideological position will not change, but his positioning in the socio-cultural dimension will reflect whether his text comes from pre-2020 or post-2020.

H1.1: Smer-SD's choice of words will position the party to the left in the economic dimension and illiberal in the socio-cultural dimension.

H1.2: From 2016 until 2020, due to Europeanization and mainstreaming, Smer moved to the right in the economic dimension and towards liberal in the socio-cultural dimension.

H1.3: From 2020 until 2024, after the killing of Jan Kuciak, Smer's socio-cultural dimension over time became more illiberal and its economic positioning went further to the left.

Right-wing parties who embrace conservatism, illiberalism, and populism get more exposure than left-wing parties in academia (Fagerholm, 2018). When listing examples of leftist populist leaders, Moffitt and Tormey (2014) only mention Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales.

Sometimes, Bernie Sanders is mentioned, but barely analyzed (e.g., Schroeder, 2020). With the exclusion of leftist parties like Smer from academic analysis, it seems that left-wing parties that are illiberal and populist almost ceased to exist on a mainstream level after the end of the Cold War.

Unlike Fico, Orbán and his party Fidesz are no strangers to being labeled ‘right-wing’ when it comes to both their ways with the Hungarian economy and ‘solving’ cultural issues.

However, when it comes to research into Orbán’s economic ideology and the handling of the Hungarian economy, contradictory information is found. I will begin with information that fits with the conception of Orbán being an economically right-wing politician. Following the former prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsány’s tape scandal (Krekó & Enyedi, 2018; Timmer et al., 2018) and the overspending on welfare by socialist and center-left governments (2001-2008) which led to rising public debt (Csillag, 2020), Fidesz and thus Orbán consistently won elections. But they could not have done it without the co-opted Hungarian “capitalist elite” or the “oligarchs” (see Hénin & Insel, 2021; Scheiring, 2021). Throughout Orbán’s long rule, he was able to pass budgets without any transparency and constitutional oversight, pressured the private sector to sell stocks to his allies, lowered the corporate tax rate, and significantly reduced the welfare state (Csillag, 2020; Pogátsa, 2023). This led to the Hungarian regime being described as NACa (National Authoritarian Capitalism) by Hénin and Insel (2021) or “state capitalism” (Scheiring, 2021). Not only does this information provide evidence that Orbán is economically right-wing, but it also introduces confusion. How can somebody be a “state capitalist” when most right-wing ideology – sourced from the West – has been a long-time proponent of the open market? Again, this might be confusing on the unidimensional level, yet quite clear when looking at Orbán through two-dimensional space. Unlike the right-wing open market proponents, Orbán’s right-wing politics interacts with his cultural ideology.

Although Orbán seems like a typical right-wing politician, he often pushes left-leaning policies and sometimes even takes them to extremes. For example, even though Orbán significantly reduced welfare and cut the corporate tax, he also introduced policies which benefit the poor, such as providing employment and free lunches for kids (Krekó & Enyedi, 2018). These left-wing policies are also found in Csillag (2020) and Enyedi (2024), where they both mention the tax reduction for Hungarian mothers. Timmer et al. (2018) also add that foreign capitalists who do not have friendly relations with Orbán can be vilified and shamed in the Hungarian media. National capitalists are also not off the hook, since Hénin and Insel (2021) revealed that if a national capitalist opposes Fidesz, their property and resources can be confiscated, nationalized, and sold to a loyalist. This also seems to affect his speeches, as from time-to-time he appears left-wing, differentiating himself from right-wingers in the West. This could make it harder to place Orbán in the right-wing sector of the economic range. To avoid this problem, the measurements and indicators for right-wing ideology should be further diversified beyond words and narratives of Western right-wingers, especially those leaning towards libertarian territory.

In terms of the socio-cultural dimension, the research literature is unified on the fact that Fidesz is an illiberal party promoting hard conservatism, nationalism, chauvinism, and xenophobia (Enyedi, 2024; Hénin & Insel, 2021; Lamour & Varga, 2020; Mayer, 2018). According to Hénin and Insel (2021), Hungarian identity politics is based on the perception of a homogenous Hungarian community rooted in the pre-communist, colonial, and proud past. They continue to say that Orbán calls on this perceived Hungarian identity to justify the censorship of media, repression of the national opposition, violation of individual rights and most importantly, the implementation of NACa. According to Timmer and his colleagues (2018), Orbán cannot allow the media to be free, liberal, and unchecked since it then becomes the enemy of the state. Hénin and Insel (2021) add to this statement that if news broadcasts

are in check, nobody can say that NACa is a dictatorship. Human rights and liberties of Hungarian citizens are guaranteed by protection from the EU level, but at the national level in Hungary, rights are neglected or violated (Bozóki & Hegedűs, 2018). The group of people whose rights are being violated the most are of the identities that go beyond the heteronormative, Christian, and ‘Hungarian national identity’. The main reason for these violations is to again preserve the nationalist economic policies by using the victims as scapegoats for the economic dissatisfaction of Hungarian voters and to delegitimize criticism by non-nationalist actors.

Unlike the diverse mix of ideologies promoted by Fico, Orbán will place on the right in terms of economics and illiberal with regard to openness to a diversity of cultures to participate in political and economic activities within the state.

H2: Orbán’s choice of words will position the party to the right when it comes to the economic dimension and illiberal in the socio-cultural dimension.

The collaboration between the two leaders is nothing new, since autocratic leaders have influenced and collaborated with each other since the dawn of history. The academic topic that ties all of these positions together is the collaboration and diffusion of ideas between two or more non-democratic leaders. Both Von Soest (2015) and Weyland (2017) mention two ways in which non-democratic powers can collaborate or have their ideas diffused from one to the other, such as interest-based or ideological collaboration. The former type is when two or more countries collaborate in terms of helping to stop democratization to preserve resource and geopolitical advantages. The latter type or diffusion is based on persuasion or coercion of other countries to adopt an ideology. Weyland (2017) added that these two types of collaborations can intertwine and it is then hard to separate them. This may be seen in the collaboration between Fico, Orbán and Putin, which has started to become both resource-based and ideological. To preserve or maximize his power in Slovakia, Fico may draw

support from Orbán and Putin, who have successfully advanced their resource-based agendas in their own countries. Using their proven strategies and tools, they could also aid Fico in promoting conservative and illiberal narratives to counter the spread of liberal democracies and Western governing systems (such as the EU and NATO), which they perceive as threats to their shared interests in resource accumulation and power consolidation.

H3: Over time, the socio-cultural positions of Fico and Orbán will align, while their economic policies will remain relatively stable.

Chapter 2: Concepts, Methodology and Data Collection

2.1 Definitions, Concepts and Indicators

2.1.1 Defining Ideology

Before delving into ideological dimensions and constructions of concepts, I will provide a brief, working definition of ideology and further clarify which parts or aspects of political leaders' actions provide a measure for ideology and which do not. Berger (2020) in his glossary defines ideology as “logically coherent, integrated explanation of social, economic, and political matters that helps establish the goals and direct the actions of some group or political entity” (p. 431). It is a kind of blueprint that starts in a purely communication form and eventually unevenly materializes through office terms, passing of policies, public protest, civil disobedience, and, at times, political violence. This divides ideology into two parts, the communicated part and the acted-on part. A similar but not the same distinction was mentioned by Enyedi (2024) who brought attention to Magyar's and Madlovics's (2020) distinction on how different regimes use ideology. They claim that regimes either are “ideology-driven” or “ideology-applying” where the former regimes act upon their ideologies, and the latter ones use ideology as a cover. In this research, I only focused on the spoken or performative part of ideology by looking into speeches of each respective political

leader. But that does not mean that whenever a political leader is either “ideology-driven” or “ideology-applying”, cannot be seen during their performances i.e., public speeches. Either type can be shown on a bi-dimensional ideological graph if supported with a sufficient qualitative analysis.

2.1.2 Dimension Building and Choice of Basic Concepts

My research utilizes economic and socio-cultural dimensions to redefine and clarify Fico’s ideological positioning and how it has aligned with Orbán’s over time. Before delving into the construction and conceptualization of extreme points of each dimension, it is important to address the complex discussion about what makes somebody left-wing or right-wing. This problem was brought up by Henderson (2017) and Kitschelt (1992) who highlight key differences between conceptualizations of left-right based on geography. For instance, while the Western right-wing ideology often values open markets, the Eastern right-wing tends to be protectionist. Similarly, the Western New Left supports the rights of marginalized communities, whereas the Old Left overlooks them. This demonstrates how left-right ideology, originally rooted in Western to Western-Central Europe, has been interpreted and translated in Eastern Europe – similar to how the Enlightenment was interpreted in Central Europe during the 18th century (see Fillafer, 2017; Kontler, 2006). Despite the ‘mistranslation’ and ‘misinterpretation’ of left-right ideologies, the two mentioned perspectives do not cancel each other out, but collaborate when an additional socio-cultural dimension is added. The confusion over left-right conceptualization is due to emergent, overlapping characteristics. When these are isolated, they can be used to create a new dimension.

While this research is influenced by Hellwig (2014) and Snegovaya (2024), this research does not base its second or socio-cultural dimension on ranges such as from protectionist to open borders or from nativism to cosmopolitanism. Instead, it adopts a range from liberalism to

illiberalism inspired by Maerz and Schneider (2021, 2019), while drawing on Laruelle's (2022) article on the conceptual distinction between the two ideologies. In her article, Laruelle lists “five scripts of liberalism” (p. 312), of which “classical political” and “cultural liberalism” will be used to conceptualize liberalism in this research. However, when it comes to the “classical political” script, the preference is for sovereignty of nation-states or a nation’s rights over human rights or minority rights. This was done in a way for me to create an additional definition of the core liberalism which prefers rights of individuals over the imagined community a state presents. Additionally, the “economic liberalism” or “Manchester liberalism” that might be expected to be part of the “classical political liberalism” was also excluded due to the former script’s insistence on an economic system that practices privatization, deregulation, globalization and austerity measures. For an ideology that insists more on freedom over regulation should not be essentialized as a single economic system. My conceptualization of illiberalism is also inspired by Laruelle (2022).

Conservative-to-liberal as a socio-cultural dimension was also considered. My focus is on the most extreme form of conservatism – specifically, the kind of conservatism that is generally considered anti-liberal (see Fawcett, 2020). Using Fawcett's (2020) clarifying concept of conservatism, this paper distinguishes conservatism practiced by figures such as Margaret Thatcher or the pre-2012 US Republicans from Victor Orbán and Republicans post-2012. Conservative ideology practiced by the latter figures takes the unquestionable faith in traditional authorities, class societies, and restrictions on identities to the extreme. This does not mean that extremists on the liberal side necessarily want to enable chaos and lack of order, instead, authority is only considered legitimate if used justly and questioned for every decision by the people affected (Fawcett, 2020).

As seen in Hénin's and Insel's (2021) and Scheiring's (2021) analysis of Orbán’s ‘dream come true’, socio-cultural issues do not exist in a vacuum, devoid of economic context. In my

research, the socio-cultural dimension contains Fico's and Orbán's use of words to suggest an ideology based on how much their state should interfere into who should have rights or engage into activities normally permitted to people who are considered citizens. For example, the more illiberal the ideology is, the more the state is restrictive about who can engage in business, who can be represented in the government or media, whose language is an official language, who can get married, who can adopt children, etc. In other words, a purely illiberal state allows only people with a shared religion, language, race and ethnicity to engage in business, politics, knowledge creation, media representation and overall existence without any harm from the state or its people. To visualize my point, I created a diagram consisting of the two ideological dimensions, economic dimension on the horizontal axis and socio-cultural on the vertical axis.

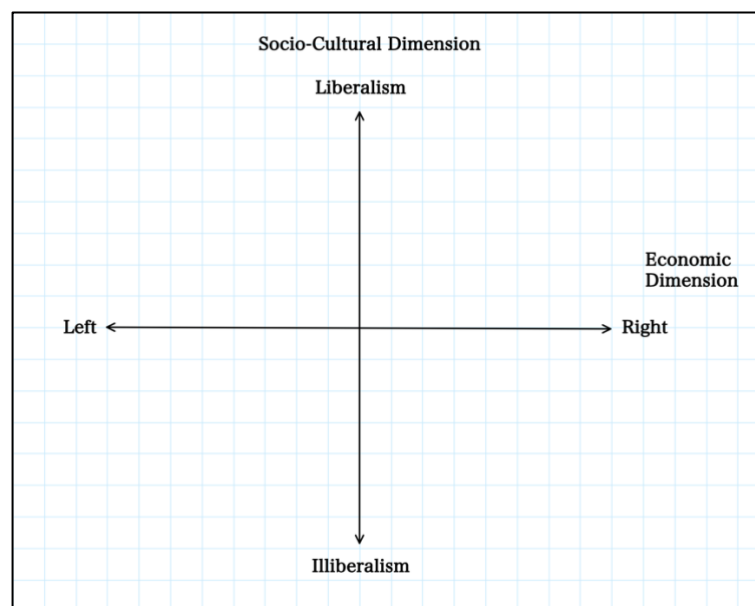


Figure 1: Economic (x-axis) and Cultural (y-axis) Dimensions

As seen in *Figure 1*, the horizontal sector at the bottom contains ideologies that are more restrictive. They are based on an identity constructed by a state during nation-building – a process often involving ethnic and cultural cleansing, forced emigration of minorities, and territorial annexation (Bibó, 2015; Gellner, 1997). This identity is then formalized into a kind of citizenship that grants its members political representation and access to basic human

rights. However, these privileges can be revoked by an authority if a member is deemed to not belong to the same nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexuality and culture or alters their gender. This can be done either by a direct way of disenfranchising part of a possible voter base or making it harder for an individual to live a normal life. In this category, proper cases include national socialism, nationalist capitalism and nationalist communism. The latter rejects communist internationalism and does not see foreigners from other communist nations as potential and eligible citizens. Its right-wing equivalent is nationalist capitalism, which was described in the literature review above, in reference to Orbán's governing regime in Hungary.

The optimal regimes in the liberal section on the top are quite opposite from the illiberal side. In this category, regimes generally advocate for minimal to no state control over citizenship and its qualifications. Every kind of regime on the liberal side supports a limited state, with its ideal roles ranging from protecting private property to resolving disputes within a community or between communities. The purest form of liberal regime – or rather, system of non-oppressive governance – is anarchism. It is positioned centrally because, according Davis (2019), what anarchist scholars such as Ritter, Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin strive for is communal solidarity without sacrificing individual autonomy, i.e., they strive for so-called *communal individuality*. Additionally, anarchist communities operate through voluntary cooperation, maintaining a balance between individual autonomy and communal solidarity by negotiation, communication, and self-reflection (Davis, 2019). This principle extends to anarchist economic systems. For example, in mutualism, individuals and communities like worker cooperatives own the means of production unlike a class of capitalists; there is a distinction between private and public property unlike in communism where private property is not recognized; and lastly one cannot own and also rent out extra

property or charge high interest for loans, anything that can create wealth inequalities (Wilson & Kinna, 2014).

Neither Fico nor Orbán likely endorse or aspire to ideologies such as anarchism or libertarianism. Even though there are elected political leaders who are libertarian and there are parties who might even be at the extreme ends of the liberal-left sector; however, looking over political leaders in the liberal sector is not within the scope of this thesis. It is here to serve as a demonstration of where the opposite of Fico and Orbán can go.

Even though Fico has not achieved as much governing and informational control as Orbán has with his national capitalism, he has still managed to fill the judicial branch with his own loyalists, leaving out judges that do not seem to be challenging. The legislative branch still has power, but since Fidesz and its aligned parties win elections consistently, the opposition does not have that many seats to influence voting results. In Slovakia, on the other hand, Fico has problems with strong opposition parties, media, and activists, and a sometimes-uncooperative business sector. This means that the regime and the economy therefore does not (yet) resemble the ideology that Fico promotes. With liberal democracy remaining a key criterion for EU membership and still regarded as ‘the only game in town,’ (Schedler, 2024), a swift and overt power grab according to Lührmann and Lindberg (2019) would likely fail for Fico in Slovakia. However, Hungary, the first country to liberalize and later transition into an “illiberal democracy” in 2010, managed to consolidate power step-by-step while retaining EU membership. This successful model could make Fico keen to seek guidance from his neighbor. Inspired by Orbán, Fico will not adopt right-wing rhetoric in terms of the economy, but over time, he would move upwards in the diagram towards a similar level to Orbán’s in terms of adopting illiberal word choices. How this will be measured will be revealed by developing second-level concepts and a dictionary which will serve as an indicator of each second-level concept.

2.1.3 Second-Level Concepts

As seen in the two dimensions, concepts such as ‘right-wing’, ‘left-wing’, ‘liberal’ and ‘illiberal’ are basic-level concepts which are high on the level of abstraction. One hundred people would produce one hundred definitions. To facilitate a concrete understanding of what makes somebody left-wing or liberal, more concrete concepts or second-level concepts need to be named. Second-level concepts not only help to define, but also to construct a dictionary of words which will serve as indicators.

Left	Right
Public Rights	Private Rights
Nationalization	Privatization
Collectivism	Individualism
Worker Centered	Employer Centered
Distribution of Wealth	Concentration of Wealth
History	History
Hostility Towards Competing Ideology	Hostility Towards Competing Ideology

Table 1: Second-Level Concepts of Left and Right

An extreme case of a right-wing political leader is to promote a vision of what Chomsky (1998) calls the “capitalist state”. Such a vision prioritizes private rights, privatization of public utilities and necessities, individualism, employers’ needs and concentration of wealth supported by the claims of self-made individualism and meritocracy. The prioritization of private rights aims to “protect the minority of the opulent against the majority” (Chomsky, 1998, p. 42), in other words, for the state to protect private ownership and land from the majority (middle and working class). Such a capitalist state also demands privatization of welfare goods, or any type of public goods formerly subsidized by the state with tax-payer money. Individualism, in this context, refers to the atomistic individual as the primary moral unit, emphasizing self-reliance on personal resources and life without state assistance (or interference). The concentration of wealth means that those who own capital are neither

required to pay higher taxes for redistribution nor encouraged by the state or supranational entities like the EU to demand where their wealth circulates.

The pure left-wing is the opposite of the optimal right-wing model, where a political leader prioritizes the paternalistic role of a state. This vision prioritizes public rights, nationalization of public necessities, collectivism, workers' needs over the employers' needs and the redistribution of wealth from the top down. Public rights, in this case, means that the law prioritizes communal ownership over individual property rights. Nationalization of public necessities is when a government assumes responsibility for its citizens by providing public welfare, education, public banks, policing and punishment for crimes. Unlike individualism, collectivism considers the community as a moral unit, where individuals are part of a collective that shares resources and talents, with the state ensuring that this system functions effectively. Lastly, the distribution of wealth ensures that individual wealth is redistributed to the benefit of the entire community and addresses its collective needs.

Illiberalism	Liberalism
Ultra-Nationalism	Cosmopolitanism
Centralization	Decentralization
Exclusivism	Inclusivism
Compulsory Heterosexuality	Pro-LGBTQ+
Fundamentalist Religiosity	Freedom of Religion
Hostility Towards Competing Ideology	Hostility Towards Competing Ideology

Table 2: Second-Level Concepts of Illiberalism and Liberalism

What my socio-cultural dimension again is supposed to measure in an ideology is about who is worthy of belonging to an organized community or a state and thus worthy of receiving rights to resources that a community or a state provides. This right to participation and these rights to resources also extend to participation in social life, culture and traditions, business and politics.

Starting from pure illiberalism, political leaders with these ideologies promote nationalism, exclusivism, compulsory heterosexuality, fundamentalist religiosity, and centralization of power. National identity is central to illiberal ideologies, typically defined by the cultural and linguistic nationalism established during a region's nation-state formation (see Bibó, 2015). For instance, a "true" Slovak is someone who speaks Slovak, knows its literature, and is taught a Slovak retelling of history. However, a national identity alone is insufficient for full citizenship and acceptance in this framework. To qualify as a "proper" citizen, one must also meet additional criteria. Exclusivism reinforces ethnic and racial homogeneity to ensure that outsiders are prevented from legitimately transmitting citizenship to future generations despite being born in the territory where the legitimate citizens live. Compulsory heterosexuality demands their citizens to be in heteronormative, monogamous relationships to ensure demographic continuity of citizens, workers, and soldiers. Religious fundamentalism demands conformity to a one or few belief systems – which can include monotheistic, polytheistic, or even secular outlooks– as long as they align with the dominant ideological framework. Centralization or centralization of power does have the traditional meaning of centering governing power to the national level but in illiberal ideologies, it also means that a political leader has a claim over the spread of information through media and more privilege over checks and balances than those of the opposition and independent judiciary. This consolidation of power is justified not through democratic legitimacy but through appeals to protecting the ingroup's identity and resources from perceived external threats. In short, illiberalism cloaks authoritarian ambitions in the language of cultural preservation and moral order.

On the other hand, pure liberalism promotes cosmopolitanism, inclusivism of different groups and identities, acceptance of non-heterosexual relationships, freedom of religion and, unlike realism, it views the world through flexible constructivism. Liberal ideologies provide

access to citizenship to anybody who contributes to the existence of a community. For example, in liberal ideologies that are on the left, one needs to contribute to the community to receive the fruits of other people's labor. Inclusivism makes sure that people can contribute and receive resources despite their race and ethnicity. Pure illiberal ideology demands from people not to reproduce for any kind of reason, whereas liberalism is open to multiple ways of raising children. When it comes to freedom of religion, members are not expected to be practicing one or a few dictated religions but are free to worship Gods or ideas of their liking. Decentralization like centralization ties all the other concepts together in a way that power is spread throughout a governing unit to prevent a few from dictating who should gain citizenship or who has a claim to resources.

2.1.3.1 Challenges on The Second Level

When going through different ideology indicators, I found that some keywords indicate a specific ideology but do not indicate any of the second-level concepts. Thus, additional categories beyond *Table 1* and *2* were included, such as 'history' and 'hostility towards competing ideology'. History was added only for the economic dimension since both left and right-wing ideology share a common history and sometimes political leaders manifest their ideology by mentioning certain words. 'Hostility towards competing ideology' was added since every political leader with an ideology will attack a competing ideology by mentioning their competitor's ideology (e.g., liberals, progressives, etc.) or comparing their ideology to an extreme, different ideology as a pejorative (radical left, communists, etc.).

Developing the second-level concepts in themselves was also challenging due to past conceptualizations and categorizations of different ideologies in a singular dimension. This caused difficulties in separating a right-wing ideology from an illiberal ideology and a left-wing ideology from a liberal ideology in terms of their values, policy proposals, and solutions. For example, in the article *Left-Right & New Politics: Party Positions on European*

Integration, Hooghe et al. (2002) claimed that when it came to EU skepticism, nationalism, and protectionism, extremes on both the left and right were characterized by these topics. They continued by stating that only mainstream parties placed near the center promote EU integration, cosmopolitanism and the open market. Seeing leftist parties oppose immigrant rights is confusing due to the long-held idea that leftist parties are supposed to support the rights of the working class, especially those of immigrant workers who take jobs in Europe for lower salaries than citizens. Thus, it is necessary to develop a two-dimensional framework, dividing ideologies into four sectors, to explain core values and implications.

2.1.4 Indicators

The indicators for concepts in *Table 1* and *2* are specific keywords that are used by politicians who currently hold or represent a certain ideology. The collected keywords consist of singular words (unigrams) or two words (bigrams) since some terms are made from two words which lose meaning if separated. For instance, “united” and “states” as keywords are not as important and meaningful as the bigram, “United States”. These keywords will be put in a dictionary which will be discussed in the methodology and analysis section.

2.2 Methodology, Measurement, and Data Collection

2.2.1 Methodology

Although hypotheses were set during the discussion of present literature, my research is purely descriptive. Descriptive is meant in a way that the goal is not to explain, but to instigate understanding, to provide information on what is known and what is unknown, and to discuss what is missing and needs further improvement (Gerring, 2012). The aim of this research is to clarify and set criteria for concepts of different ideologies, influence more research in multi-dimensional analysis of ideologies, and to understand that economic preferences are not what makes different political leaders collaborate. This is why a methodology used for causal effects such as logistic regression analysis cannot be utilized for

this research. Instead, the primary methodology employed here is rule-based text classification or a text analysis via a dictionary which examines collected data of speeches delivered by selected political leaders. This is an appropriate method, since, just like content analysis, it can provide a qualitative data analysis that utilizes “[...] word and term searches to identify patterns in language use” (Rucks-Ahidiana, 2024).

The “rule-based method” part refers to my use of the dictionary which is filled with lists of keywords separated by chosen categories. In this case, I collected keywords and assigned them to one of the four ideologies (economic: left-right; socio-cultural: liberal-illiberal). Construction of any dictionary is difficult since there are two ways to make one, with each having its own benefits and trade-offs. The first option is to outsource an existing dictionary, and the second one is to make a custom dictionary for specific research. There are many measurements for left and right ideologies such as the *Manifesto Project*. However, these measures are not dictionaries and many of these measures essentialize socio-cultural policies/issues to a specific economic ideology. For this research, the second option is therefore an optimal decision, although it comes with a couple of disadvantages.

Custom-constructed dictionaries such as mine are not peer-reviewed or confirmed by other academics like the already constructed dictionaries usually are. Another disadvantage – which can also be seen as an advantage – is that custom dictionaries can be crafted according to the researcher’s needs. However, these dictionaries suffer from lack of external validity. In other words, custom dictionaries have a lack of external validity since they may be overfitted to the sample they are studying. To increase external validity, I used some textual data from other Slovak politicians, Richard Sulík and Andrej Danko, and added some of their keywords to my dictionary. Additionally, like in any study, there also might be some issues with internal validity i.e., do my keywords really indicate the ideology they were assigned under? To mitigate the issue with internal validity, I conducted a robustness test, testing findings

from my custom-created dictionary with two other dictionaries. The first one was outsourced from Maerz's and Schneider's (2021) liberal-illiberal dictionary and from the *Manifesto Project* codebooks' variables measuring economic views (see Volkens et al., 2021; Werner et al., 2021). The second one was generated by AI by using prompts such as 'I am creating a text analysis dictionary for different ideologies, could you generate keywords for right-wing ideology?'

To construct ideological keywords for my dictionary that were not from exogenous data, I also used unsupervised learning techniques to look for textual patterns within my data such as the topic modeling. My main methodology is in no way a machine learning endeavor due to my application of a rule-based dictionary. However, before conducting this methodology, I used topic modelling that treated my data as unsupervised data. 'Unsupervised' in the sense that machine learning – topic learning in this case – was used for ungrouped and unlabeled data, where only input (X) is available without a corresponding output (Y) (James et al., 2021). My data have additional labels such as the name of the speaker, link to a post, and the date the speech was published on the internet, but my interest in treating my textual data as if they were unsupervised is to use topic modeling to find keywords possible to categorize as ideological. Topic modeling is an unsupervised machine learning technique that learns from text input and generates topics that are prevalent. This is done by looking at patterns of which words are used together, generating paragraphs of keywords, each representing one topic (see Appendix A). However, topic modeling does not include bigrams or context. To fix this, I created bigrams and used term frequency and inverse document frequency (tf-idf) weighting to only gain the most accurately prevalent keywords consisting of bigrams.

To conduct the rule-based text classification, topic modeling, and tf-idf weighting, I used an open-source software called the *R Studio*. Similar to Maerz and Schneider (2021, 2019), I used the package *quanteda* and base R (*R Studio* default language) for the creation of my

dictionary and the application of that dictionary to my data. For topic modeling I used the package *stm* (structural text mining) package which had many helpful pre-processing functions for my data and provided the ability to conduct topic modeling based on the pre-processed data.

2.2.2 Measurement and Scaling

To measure ideologies in both dimensions, I counted instances of words attributed to each ideology (left-right and liberalism-illiberalism) per document based on my dictionary, described above. To get my final verdict where each prime minister and other political leaders are positioned in the two-dimensional plane, I used Lowe's Logit Scaling, present in Lowe et al.'s (2011) article, *Scaling Policy Preferences from Coded Political Texts*. Lowe's Logit Scaling is a scaling method based on log odds-ratios (Lowe et al., 2011) which was also utilized by Maerz and Schneider (2021; 2019), but only in one dimension. This ratio works by counting instances of opposing ideologies and calculating an average ideological leaning of speeches, party manifesto or other units of analysis. For example, instances of right-wing coded words are divided by instances of left-wing coded words, which then spits out the average leaning of a political party or leader (see *Equation 1*).

$$\theta^{(L)} = \log \left(\frac{R + 0.5}{L + 0.5} \right)^4$$

Equation 1: Original Log Odds-Ratio Formula from Lowe et al. (2011)

As already implied above, *Equation 1* was set in a way where positive values would mean that a political leader is right-leaning, while negative values indicate a left-leaning leader. This assignment of values to specific ideologies – based on Lowe et al.'s (2011) study – was also applied to my iteration of the equation (see *Equation 2*). For the socio-cultural

⁴ The L in $\theta^{(L)}$ stands for log odds-ratio and is a leftover from Lowe et al.'s (2011) article where they introduced multiple equations and each letter stood for a different equation to reduce confusion in readers. I kept it in my research to indicate which equation I am using.

dimension, following Maerz and Schneider (2019), liberal-leaning ideologies were assigned positive values (placed in the numerator), while illiberal ones were given negative values (placed in the denominator).

$$\theta_{ED}^{(L)} = \log \left(\frac{Right + 0.5}{Left + 0.5} \right)$$

Equation 2: Log Odds-Ratio Formula for Ideological Scores in the Economic Dimension

$$\theta_{SD}^{(L)} = \log \left(\frac{Lib + 0.5}{Illib + 0.5} \right)$$

Equation 3: Log Odds-Ratio Formula for Ideological Scores in the Socio-Cultural Dimension

According to Lowe et al. (2011), previous scaling policy measures are too bounded. In other words, these equations are able to produce only a range of numbers from -1 to 1. This does not look like an issue at first, but bounded scales can categorize two differently illiberal parties with the same value of -1 which can remove nuance from findings. This can be remedied by adding logarithms to introduce an unbounded value range. The wider range then gives two different parties a proper representation. As seen in both my numerator and denominator, there is 0.5 added (see *Equation 1 to 3*). This prevents the logarithm from categorizing the value of zero into an infinite number.

Since the ideological party positions were not based on the whole population of video speeches but only on a moderate sample, variability and uncertainty were introduced into my results. Thus, confidence intervals were also conducted to address this possible variability. For example, my sample might have skipped important months when the economic right-wing is emphasized more than ever. As also seen in Lowe et al. (2011), to address uncertainty, I used confidence intervals and a Bayesian approach (see *Equation 4 to 10*).

$$\theta^{(L)} | Right, Left \sim \text{Normal}(\mu, \sigma)$$

Equation 4: Formula for Normal Distribution, Economic Dimension

$$\theta^{(L)} | Liberal, Illiberal \sim \text{Normal}(\mu, \sigma)$$

Equation 5: Formula for Normal Distribution, Socio-Cultural Dimension

$$\mu_{ED} = \log \left(\frac{\Sigma Right + 0.5}{\Sigma Left + 0.5} \right)^5$$

Equation 6: Mean Formula for the Economic Dimension Scores

$$\mu_{SD} = \log \left(\frac{\Sigma Lib + 0.5}{\Sigma Illib + 0.5} \right)$$

Equation 7: Mean Formula for the Socio-Cultural Dimension Scores

$$\sigma_{ED} = \sqrt{(Right + 0.5)^{-1} + (Left + 0.5)^{-1}}$$

Equation 8: Standard Deviation Formula for the Economic Dimension Scores

$$\sigma_{SD} = \sqrt{(Lib + 0.5)^{-1} + (Illib + 0.5)^{-1}}$$

Equation 9: Standard Deviation Formula for the Socio-Cultural Dimension Scores

$$[\theta^{(L)} - 1.96\sigma, \theta^{(L)} + 1.96\sigma]$$

Equation 10: Confidence Intervals for Each Dimension

As seen above, a normal distribution was used by calculating mean (Equation 6 and 7) and standard deviation (Equation 8 and 9) for each dimension separately. This was used to calculate 95 percent confidence intervals (Equation 10). This confidence interval showed how my findings are certain if, for example, a right-wing party is on the right side of the economic dimension even if I collected different samples of the whole population of data. If the confidence intervals are too long, this could be problematic in the sense that in different samples, a right-wing party might actually be centrist or even reaching the left-wing part of the economic dimension, thus introducing uncertainty.

2.2.3 Raw Data Collection

The data collection was restricted to the video recordings of speeches made by Fico and Victor Orbán. To access these videos, *Juno Gerulata*, an analytical website, was used. With

⁵ ED means the Economic Dimension while SD means the Socio-cultural Dimension.

the help of this website, I was able to single out posts based on time, social platform, and a user. The data were temporally restricted to the years: 2016, 2018, 2022 and 2024, each including transcribed video speeches that were posted within two months of each year: April and May. The time restrictions had to be introduced due to politicians preferring to communicate with their voters on social media more as time passes. The videos were only taken from three social media platforms: Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok along with the Hungarian government website (Magyarország Kormánya) in cases when Orbán's PR team only posted short clips on social media. The reason why my sample consists of transcribed text from videos is because there are more words in videos than in simple text-dominant posts.

During the first two years, *Juno Gerulata* provided transcribed text for every video posted by anybody. However, during 2018 and afterwards, the videos were no longer transcribed and an AI powered website called *Revoldiv* had to be used. The grammar from all the transcripts also had to be corrected by AI such as *Chat GPT* and *Deep Seek* since *Revoldiv* made mistakes if an audio recording was of lesser quality or if words were swallowed, mumbled, or interrupted by external noises. Some words and sentences were corrected by me, but this was only done for Slovak politicians, for Orbán, AI or the excel translation tool had to be used. The transcripts of every sampled video were then separated into time-stamps [HH:MM:SS] consisting of 210 letters into 1 line. The reasons why I separated all transcripts into small time-stamps is due to *Juno Gerulata*'s style of transcribing videos and my wanting to keep homogeneity in terms of the data presentation. This form of presentation was also beneficial in a sense that it resembles the quasi-sentences which are used by the *Manifesto Project* (see Volkens et al., 2021; Werner et al., 2021).

All of the sampled texts were translated into English due to my lack of proficiency in the Hungarian language and preference for more homogenous data and ideology indicators.

Homogeneous ideology indicators were used because I wanted to apply the same keywords within one dictionary to multiple text samples without creating one Slovak dictionary and the second one for the Hungarian language. This could also have engendered slightly different results, and I wanted to make sure that each political leader was measured with the same measure.

Chapter 3: Dictionary Construction

3.1 Unsupervised Learning: Structural Topic Modelling

To create my dictionary and use it to label my text documents, I utilized topic modeling used for unsupervised data (i.e., data without classifications; Xs without Ys) while also looking at simple word frequencies which increase weight for more important commonly used words.

For each of the political leaders, I pre-processed and prepared text for model processing to create eight topics (Appendix A). I separated their texts and generated topics for each of them, since one topic modeling for a big chunk of text would reveal less rather than more keywords. Additionally, each of the political leaders have hypothesized ideologies, as shown in previous works (e.g., Snegovaya, 2024), but not only would they contribute keywords to a single ideology, they could also contribute to opposing ideologies. Before generating topics, the plan was to generate only four topics resembling the four years from which I sampled my data, however, the keywords within those topics were nonsensical and much information was lost. Eight topics made more sense, and a lot of keywords were generated by each political leader.

3.1.1 Robert Fico

Starting with Fico, keywords were found from left-wing and illiberal ideology while the rest of the ideologies were left unrepresented by any keywords. This could indicate more

enthusiasm for a left-wing stance in the economic dimension and an illiberal stance in the socio-cultural dimension, but at this stage it is still hard to tell.

Starting with left-wing ideology, there were many keywords added for different second-level concepts. For instance, keywords like “job”, “work”, “farm”, “wage” and “salary” were grouped under ‘centering around workers’, reflecting an emphasis on labor over business interests. These keywords suggest a political focus on employment and income security rather than corporate efficiency and benefits. “farm” or “farmers” were included as well, especially in EU member-states, particularly due to backlash in the EU member-states against policies perceived to favor large agricultural businesses at the expense of local producers, a stance that aligns with leftist protection of workers. Beyond topic modeling additional keywords like “agriculture”, “locals” and “rural” were also added. “antimonopoly” was added to ‘distribution of wealth’ due to leftist opposition against cartels owning most of the goods and exercising unfair control over prices. Other terms like “age”, “retirement”, “pension” and “care” fit under ‘nationalization’ and the provision of ‘public goods’, indicating a state-centric approach to welfare. In addition, these words were combined or further specified into “retirement age” and “minimum pensions” while keeping keywords like “age”, “retirement” and “pension” in my dictionary. While these keywords make up a good amount of left-wing ideology, they also bring up limits within Fico’s leftism in a way that he prefers pensioners and farmers over youth. To address more forms of leftism beyond Fico, more keywords addressing the youth demographic were added (see Appendix B)

Fico’s keywords are also a great indication for illiberal ideology with his appeal to ultra-nationalism with frequent usage of words such as “nation” and “tradition”. Keywords like “slovakia” or “hungary” were also good candidates. They are a good measure of nationalism, but not of ultra-nationalism. Every politician of any ideology uses names of their own country, but that does not make them ultra-nationalist, it makes them nationalist at the most.

With the existence of the nation-state and it still being a popular unit of governance, numerous politicians are going to be nationalistic. Thus, the constant use of “nation” (singular) and “tradition” will suffice to indicate ultra-nationalism. “nation” since it is mostly paired with “united” and “sovereign” to construct the “united nation” (not United Nations) and the “sovereign nation”. “tradition”, on the other hand, is an exclusive word mostly used to exclude people whose ancestors did not contribute to nation-building or people who do not act according to the imagined tradition. Every politician might use that word, but not as much as illiberal leaders. It constitutes a good measure of illiberalism, especially an exclusivist ultra-nationalism.

Other illiberal keywords such as: “media”, “prosecutor” and “opposition” were also added but under the concept ‘centralization of power’. The reason behind this decision is due to Fico’s and Orbán’s constant attack on these actors. The word “prosecutor” was found to be the trickiest since both prime ministers have friends in the judiciary branch and thus was replaced by a bigram: “special prosecutor”. This refers to a special court that investigated Fico and his party colleagues with accusations of corruption and serious crimes under a previous Slovak administration.

3.1.2 Victor Orbán

When it comes to the socio-cultural dimension, only illiberal words were found for Orbán’s topic modelling, while in the economic dimension both right-wing and left-wing keywords were found. This would indicate that Orbán could possibly be categorized as illiberal, but when it comes to the economic dimension one ideology might overshadow the other.

For illiberal ideology, I used “nation”, “anthem”, “loyalty”, “betray” and “leader” to indicate ultra-nationalism; “opposition”, “puppet” and “constitution” to suggest centralization of power; and “migrant” and “protect” to indicate exclusivism. Just like with Fico, Orbán’s country of origin, Hungary or any other synonyms for the state was not used in my

dictionary. Instead, I utilized keywords such as “nation”, which is a frequent marker of ultra-nationalism or “anthem” which is a symbol used for national pride. However, words for symbols such as “flag” were not used since they might also be used to remove rainbow “flags” from government buildings. For ‘centralization of power’, “opposition” was chosen due mostly its common use by the illiberal leaders to delegitimize the opposition parties and “puppet” as a general term to delegitimize any regulatory organization or a group from national (opposition or media) to transnational levels (EU or Council of Europe).

“constitution” was also added to centralization of power, but just like “prosecutor” for Fico it had to be specified and turned into multiple bigrams since different political leaders might use keywords like “constitution” or “constitutional” in different ways. For instance, illiberal leaders would insist on changing the constitution while liberal leaders might insist on the status quo in order not to lose power. To address this distinction between different ideologies, the keyword was specified to “new constitution”, “constitutional turnaround”, “change constitution” and “constitutional change”. Orbán’s act in changing the Hungarian constitution might have been due to the constitution still being built on the old 1949 basic law (see Krekó & Enyedi, 2018), but in 2018, Orbán’s proposal for constitutional change was not due to the Hungarian constitution being based on old law. Instead it was to add the 7th Amendment which would restrict immigration and protect ‘Christian culture’ in Hungary (Amnesty International, 2018). “migrant” and “protect”, on the other hand, were used to imply ‘exclusionism’ since most of the time, they are both used in a context when a political leader is trying to prevent migrants from entering a nation-state. These last keywords also inspired me to add words like “immigrant”, “illegal migration”, “defend” and “defence”.

Lastly, “brussels” was added but since it cannot be exclusively categorized under one second-level concept, it was categorized as ‘hostility towards competing ideology’. Brussels may be mentioned during the discussions of failed immigration policy, deterioration of traditional

values and interference with national sovereignty. As seen in the Appendix B, similar keywords beyond topic modeling were also added such as “america”, “west”, “nato” and “globalists”. Like “brussels”, keywords are used in many contexts there but still indicate illiberal ideology.

For right-wing ideology, keywords such as “product” and “ownership” were added since capitalist states often use business terminology to describe political events. They turn a state into a business which sells its products to other countries and its duties to private companies. Citizens then become consumers paying for goods that were supposed to be paid by a state with tax-payer money. Ownership, on the other hand, was not added on its own but turned into more specific keywords such as “homeownership”, “private ownership” and “corporate ownership”. Left-wing ideology, on the other hand, uses keywords such as “community”, “school” and “pension”. “community” indicates collectivism and a focus on the employees over the employer. “school” and “pension” indicate nationalization and public goods. Since “pension” was already included in my dictionary through Fico’s topic modeling, only “school” was added.

3.1.3 Richard Sulík

To increase the external validity of my dictionary, I also included keywords present in political leaders who are not subject of my main analysis. According to Mesežnikov (2024), Sulík is a “libertarian” and that tends to be a general ideology of its own. Thus, my hunch was to find right-wing and liberal keywords; however, I also found illiberal keywords.

For the right-wing ideology, only keywords such as “company” and “market” were included. These are words that would be repeated the most by right-wing politicians who would be concerned about the market and companies every time something threatens their well-being.

The keywords that did not have high beta values but were included nonetheless are:

“expenses”, “tax” and “grow”. Richard Sulík is an economically right-wing politician and

just like leaders of his ideology, they tend to be critical of any increase in taxes and expenses and overly optimistic during periods of economic growth.

Even though Sulík is not illiberal when it comes to ‘centralization’, ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ and ‘fundamentalist religiosity’, his texts tend to be ‘exclusivist’ toward immigrants. For example, keywords like “migrant”, “asylum”, “quota”, “illegal” and “africa” connect to the ‘exclusivist’ perspective that is reluctant to include immigrants to get jobs, welfare, and citizenship within Slovakia. These keywords were thus added to ‘exclusivism’, the second-level concept under the concept of illiberal ideology. The inclusion of a keyword like “africa” may raise concerns but it was included because immigrants are often described as coming from that continent.

Lastly, Sulík also provided some rare liberal keywords which were “fear”, and “fearmongering”. These words were added under ‘hostility towards competing ideology’. These keywords are used to criticize illiberal leaders for using fear as a mobilizing tool during protests and elections and a legitimization tool for getting voter approval for acts that would normally be controversial.

3.1.4 Andrej Danko

When it comes to Danko, only illiberal words were found especially for the concept of ‘decentralization’ such as: “media”, “journalist”, “opposition”, “nonprofit”, “nongovernment”. The logic behind the addition of “media” and “journalist” is that they are not used frequently by politicians who are not being questioned or criticized by the media. Media is the fourth pillar in democracies and a watchdog for democracies and non-democracies alike. If mentioned frequently, it is usually by an illiberal politician trying to silence and delegitimize media that they cannot control. The keyword “opposition” is a bit trickier since Fico, Orbán and other political leaders were also the opposition at some points of their lives. However, since Danko was newly elected in 2023 and Fico and Orbán held

supreme power in their national governments most of the time under consideration, it is still a good indicator that this keyword is used to attack and delegitimize the opposition that they are not part of. Lastly, “nonprofit” and “nongovernment” keywords are used to attack different parts of civil society. Non-profit or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) possess more resources than average citizens and can take on duties of a government which threaten the goals of an illiberal state. For instance, how can a state punish sexual minorities if an NGO provides them with jobs and shelter.

Other illiberal keywords fell under the concept of ‘ultra-nationalism’ or the general ‘hostility towards competing ideology’. Under ‘ultra-nationalism’ the keyword “leadership” was added due to its use to address successes of an illiberal leadership over a nation-state. “liberal” on the other hand, was used for the latter category because it often functions as a general pejorative directed at anyone associated with liberal ideology or its values.

3.2 Term Frequency and Inverse Document Frequency (tf-idf)

Topic modeling turned out to be a successful strategy in the end by providing a quicker overview of more and less frequently used words grouped under eight topics for each political leader. However, there are still some important keywords that did not appear in the topic modeling due to them being made up of two words (bigrams). The reason why they did not appear is because *stm* preprocessing functions do not look for bigrams. Thus, I decided not to employ topic modeling for bigrams only and instead turned my data into document feature matrices which enabled me to separate my text into both unigrams and bigrams. Afterwards, I conducted a simple frequency weighting tf-idf to filter though frequent but irrelevant words (e.g., stop words such as “and”, “to”, “a”). This brought up a list of keywords which I browsed through to add words that were not present in the topic modeling but were still important.

My dictionary gained many different words, starting with those for illiberal ideology. For ‘centralization of power’, keywords like “opposition”, “hungarian left” and “assassination attempt” were chosen. “opposition” was included since most of the time that Fico and Orbán were in power, any mention of the “opposition” was with a negative connotation. “hungarian left” is a more specific keyword. It could indicate more illiberal distaste for Hungarian opposition propagated by Orbán. Other keywords that were not part of tf-idf weighting but were included by me are “opposition party” and “progressivism/progressive”. The former keyword indicates the same thing as “opposition”, but “progressivism/progressive” indicates the opposition in Slovakia rather than the one in Hungary. From now on, delegitimizing opposition and their criticism towards the government are an indication of ‘centralization of power’.

The keyword “assassination attempt” was chosen due to its connotation of the event when Fico was almost assassinated on 15 May 2024 in Handlová, Slovakia. With this keyword, additional keywords were included such as “lone wolf” and “assassinate” since these words were also used interchangeably by both politicians and the Slovak media. These keywords were included because when used by politicians, they were trying to delegitimize and reduce influence by the opposition and the media while also trying to disqualify them from the public sphere.

For the liberal ideology, keyword such as: “single market”, “central europe” and “religious freedom” were found and added to my dictionary. “single market” may seem like it would belong to the right-wing ideology, but besides reducing tariffs between multiple countries, it enables freedom of movement between these countries. Additionally, only liberal leaders are for an open single market while illiberal right-wingers prefer protectionist policies. Thus, the keyword was included to indicate liberalism, especially for ‘cosmopolitanism’. “central europe” or any name that transcends nation-state borders was also considered as an indication

of ‘cosmopolitanism’. However, not all transnational names were included since inclusion of a name has to have a positive connotation in the sample of political leaders and these leaders also must consider themselves as part of that region such as Central Europe. “central europe”, for example, is mostly mentioned by Orbán in a positive light and is one of those times where he sees himself and his country as part of a community beyond Hungary. It is also assumed that this use of “central europe” can be applied to the rest of political leaders, but it does reduce external validity since political leaders from Western Europe do not see themselves as part of Central Europe. Lastly, “religious freedom” is self-explanatory since politicians propagating this right are open to a state without nationalized religion. However, there might be a risk of this keyword being used in a way to excuse illiberal actions behind the veil of liberal language (e.g., freedom of religion being used against LGBTQ+ rights). In addition to “religious freedom”, keywords like “interfaith”, “interreligious”, “secular” and “secularism” were included too.

For right-wing ideology, while “corporate owned” and “automotive industry” were added under the concept of ‘privatization’, “tax vouchers” and “communism”/“communist” were added under ‘employer centered’ and ‘hostility towards the ‘competing ideology’ respectively. “corporate owned” and “automotive industry” were included since a politician who uses these words would probably have an interest in making governance more efficient by giving ownership to companies over a country’s resources and letting them provide jobs instead of the government creating them and providing them. Along with these keywords, I was also inspired to add keywords such as “privatization”, “private ownership”, “efficiency”, “competition” and “outsourcing”. “tax vouchers” was added under the ‘employer centered’ concept since a government issuing a tax voucher typically means that the government is giving businesses tax relief to save an industry or stimulate spending. Normally, I would only include the word “voucher”, but “voucher” also could be given to private citizens or to the

disadvantaged making it a left-wing keyword instead. Thus, “tax vouchers” were added to the right-wing ideology while “recreation voucher”, “recreational voucher”, “employee voucher”, “contributing voucher” and “parents voucher” were added to the left-wing ideology, under the concept of ‘nationalization’ and provision of ‘public goods’.

“communism” or “communist” were put at the end since they belong to a more general marker of right-wing ideology, such as ‘hostility towards a competing ideology’ (the left-wing ideology). The vast majority of left-leaning people do not say how communist they are and how their actions are communist. Instead, right-wing politicians say that someone is a communist as a pejorative term for anybody diverging from right-wing ideas, solutions, or policies. Besides the tf-idf list, a small number of similar keywords were included, such as “socialism/socialist” and “marxism/marxist”.

Lastly, for left-wing ideology, keywords like “assistance allowance”, “skilled workers” and “bourgeois” were added. “assistance allowance” serves as a good indicator for ‘nationalization’ and ‘provision of public goods’ since it is basically a support for people with health problems and disabilities. The keyword “skilled workers”, on the other hand, was included in ‘worker favoritism’ but the claim that this keyword belongs under a left-wing ideology is debatable. Even right-wing political leaders want to have skilled workers for different industries. However, since right-wing politicians also focus on an efficient and quick workforce, they are least likely to be in favor of extra expenses meant to train workers, thus I am including this keyword to the right. “skilled workers” also inspired me to include words such as “worker”, “blue collar”, “labor” and “skilled workforce”. Lastly, “bourgeois” was added too, but for the more general category, ‘hostility towards competing ideology’. This is because, just like the keyword “communist”, the use of the keyword “bourgeois” is tied to negative sentiments towards right-wing political, industrial and cultural leaders, and it is unlikely that right-wingers would address themselves with this label.

3.3 Other Excluded Topics and Keywords

Just like the names of countries mentioned before, there were additional keywords or topics that were excluded from my dictionary. These keywords were either too neutral or trivial toward any ideology or most ideologies used a specific keyword. The first topic was the European Union and other institutions working under the EU, where keywords such as “european union”, “eu”, “meps”, “european commission” and “european parliament” were excluded. This decision was made, since most of the ideologies used those keywords to either promote or criticize the EU. For instance, political leaders with an illiberal ideology use EU keywords to criticize the EU for threatening sovereignty and traditional values and right-wing leaders when it comes to economic regulation. Liberals use them too when it comes to promoting progressivism and internationalism. Not only that, but political leaders can sometimes change their sentiment toward the EU without any major changes in their ideological portfolio.

Second, keywords indicating the Russo-Ukrainian War were also excluded due to them being too complicated to categorize. For instance, not supporting Ukraine could make one illiberal for being uncooperative with the rest of the EU member-states and liberal for supporting choices of Ukrainian separatists in the East at the expense of Ukrainian state rights (right to territory or self-determination). This topic is even complex beyond my conceptualization of liberalism since support for Ukraine is not only coming from classical political liberals.

Lastly, keywords indicating climate change and green policies were also excluded due to uncertainty in categorization to a specific ideology. For instance, green rhetoric and policy change can be propagated by some liberal, left- and right-wing politicians, making green advocacy unessential to any of the available ideologies in this research. Additionally, many politicians advocate and pass green policies which only appear to be green but do not do enough to make any real change.

Chapter 4: Analysis

4.1 Hypothesis 1 and 2

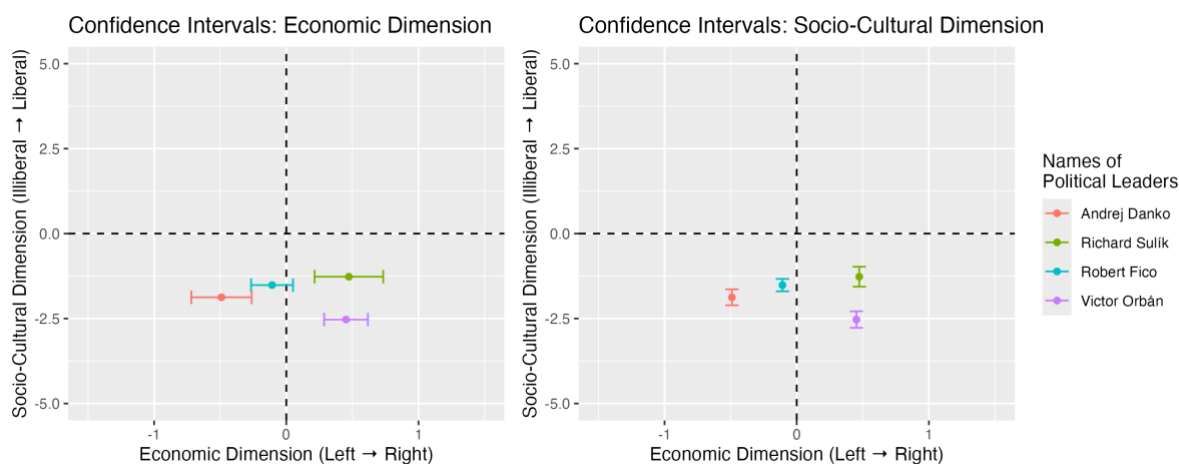


Figure 2: Ideological Positioning of Robert Fico, Victor Orbán, Richard Sulik and Andrej Danko in 2024, April-May

Figure 2 consists of ideological scores for all of the sampled political leaders from texts derived from 2024. From now on, each figure will consist of two combined graphs with the same results on both sides with confidence intervals for the economic dimension on the left side and for the socio-cultural dimension on the right side.

As seen in Figure 2, the most recent ideological positions of both Fico and Orbán confirmed *hypothesis 1.1* and 2 respectively. When it comes to Fico, his positioning on the left was expected, resembling Snegovaya's (2024) graph showing different political parties in Slovakia including Smer. However, unlike Danko who placed more deeply into the left-wing sector, Fico is close to the threshold which automatically changes a left-wing ideology to right-wing. Even if the point is on the left, the confidence intervals are touching the threshold, suggesting that there is a small chance that other samples of text might place him on the right sector. The most obvious reason for this outcome is that Fico is left-wing but not ultra left-wing and there are going to be instances when Fico is leaning more toward the right-wing, especially when he partners with companies and banks. Another reason is that since I did not assign any weights to my keywords or did not train a machine on my texts, many right-wing

keywords used by Fico are not used in a positive connotation. Sometimes, one left-wing keyword rhetorically outweighs other right-wing keywords. For instance, on 3 May Fico said:

As regards the social dimension, I said to the anger of the former Italian Prime Minister, Mr. Enrico Letta, that we cannot continue to talk about what we are going to do for the single market. You're all just asking what people are sacrificing, what companies are sacrificing to have a single market. I know that the single market is a huge and precious thing. But perhaps we should ask ourselves what the single market is capable of doing for people, for the improvement of life as such (Fico, 2024b).

The right-wing keyword “market” is repeated constantly but it does not mean that this text is entirely right-wing since Fico asks how the EU’s single market and sustainable economy is going to help socially. When it comes to the socio-cultural dimension, Fico was positioned in the illiberal sector. Unlike his economic ideology score, the confidence intervals on his illiberal position are quite small which suggests strong certainty that even with different samples of text, Fico would still place on the illiberal side.

Returning to Orbán, his ideological positioning (the purple point) confirms *hypothesis 2* by its placing in the right-wing sector of *Figure 2*. This is also supported by the short confidence intervals in the sense that this position has a possibility to only move between right-wing scores. The socio-cultural positioning for Orbán also confirmed my hypothesis that Orbán will be ideologically illiberal. This is also confirmed by strong confidence intervals.

When it comes to my extra political leaders, they found themselves in different positions in the economic dimension but in the same sector when it came to the socio-cultural dimension. When comparing Sulík and Danko to Fico, there are two findings: Sulík is the most right-wing and Danko is the most left-wing. Since Sulík tends to focus on economic issues first and cultural second, he was placed even further to the right sector than Orbán. Not only do these findings show that the right-wing measure will not be strong enough to move a theorized left-wing politician (Fico) to the right, but it validates such a measure for properly measuring politicians like Sulík who prefer economics from a right-wing perspective. Danko, on the

other hand, was the most surprising since he was theorized as right-wing, however, he placed left-wing. As can be seen in *Figure 2*, his position (red point) is placed further to the left than Fico. However, Danko's left-wing position is even more to be questioned due to even longer confidence intervals. This might be due to lack of textual data; thus, his economic position might vary based on the sample analyzed.

When it comes to the socio-cultural position, both Sulík and Danko positioned themselves on the illiberal side. Their positionings are also quite strong and certain as can be seen by the short confidence intervals on the right graph. What was expected but perhaps still might be surprising is Sulík's position on the illiberal side. This could mean that since economic issues come first for Sulík, he does not focus on cultural issues and topics as much as the rest of the political leaders do. That would mean that if Sulík starts to criticize the EU and Angela Merkel for failing to deal properly with immigration, his position will be easily inflated towards negative values. In other words, Sulík, especially in my sample, barely deals with cultural issues from the liberal perspective to move him at least to the centre of cultural issues. However, although Sulík did place illiberal in the socio-cultural dimension, he should not be considered at the same level as Fico. This is why log ratios had to be utilized, since it can also be seen in the graphs that Fico is more illiberal than Sulík.

Overall, both Fico and Orbán confirm *hypothesis 1.1* and *2* respectively. Both political leaders are with strong certainty placed as illiberal in the socio-cultural dimension, while there is a significant gap between them in the economic dimension.

4.2 Hypothesis 3

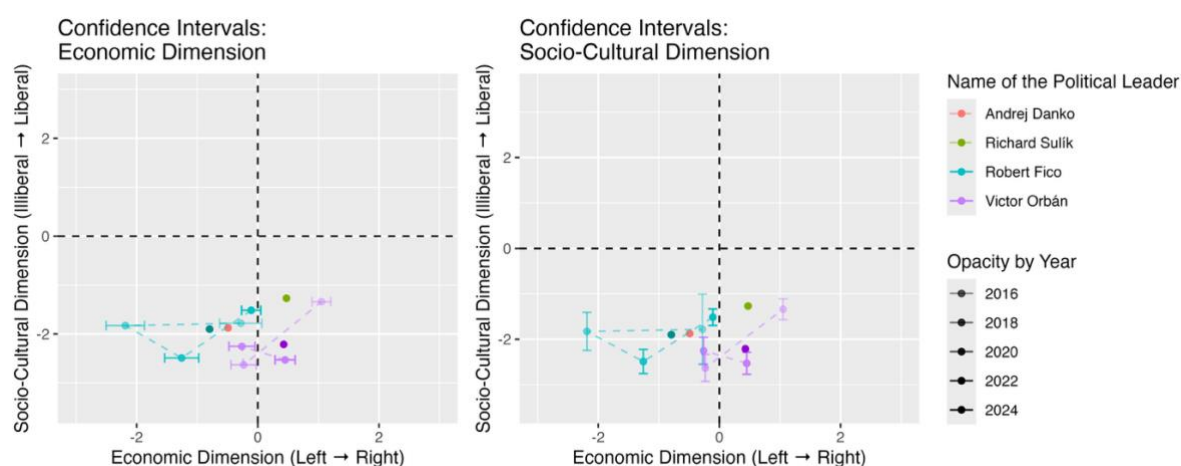


Figure 3: Ideological Positioning of Robert Fico and Victor Orbán from 2016 to 2024, April-May Resp.

Figure 3 visualizes Fico's and Orbán's ideological positioning over time. Each point's recency is indicated by how solid each point is. For instance, points from 2016 are less solid while points from 2024 are the most solid. To further clarify the temporality of my datapoint, I added some dashed pathways. The unlabeled dark points are also ideological scores but for all the texts throughout the years for each political leader. The dark cyan point is an ideological score for all of Fico's texts collected and dark purple for Orbán.

When it comes to the findings from above, *hypothesis 1.2* got rejected. This is due to Fico's movement to the left instead of right in 2018 compared to 2016 when he was more in a center-left position. Similarly, in the socio-cultural dimension, Fico's illiberalism stagnated and there were no signs that Fico's position ever crossed the zero threshold from liberalism towards illiberalism. This means that even before resigning in 2020 and facing political isolation from other parties Fico was illiberal. However, Fico tended to be illiberal long before since he used to insult Roma and the Hungarian minorities in Slovakia and made governing coalitions with other illiberal parties (Bútorová & Bútora, 2019; Marušiak, 2021). The liberal perception might have been due to favorable relationships with the EU and NGOs. However, stances towards EU were not included due to difficulties in constructing keywords which would separate liberal stances against illiberal ones in regard to the EU.

Hypothesis 1.3 was only proven for the year 2022 but disproven for 2024 when Fico's illiberalism decreased to levels similar to those of 2016 and 2018. This is also supported by the confidence intervals, except 2016 when the confidence intervals are too long which introduces uncertainty. That score, based on the population of text from 2016, might fall close to my sample of texts. The increase in illiberalism in 2022 might have been a result of the early resignation in 2020, following political isolation and electoral defeat. Along with Fico (i.e., Smer) being part of the opposition, the new government from 2020 to 2023 was facing two new crises: the Russo-Ukrainian War and Covid-19. This provided Fico with good cards, and he increased his illiberal keywords usage which inflated his illiberal positioning. During his return into government in 2023 and before the attempted assassination, this illiberal usage returned to lesser levels. This might indicate the kind of use of illiberal ideology by Fico, since he might be changing it depending on his political situation.

Lastly, *hypothesis 3* was also unfortunately rejected, though in some parts supported by the academic literature. Instead of Fico increasing his illiberalism to Orbán's level, only Orbán eventually increased his illiberal use of keywords. Fico, on the other hand, fluctuated both up and to the right. However, these findings might reflect academic literature on different uses of ideologies by political leaders or regimes (see Enyedi, 2024; Magyar & Madlovics, 2020). In this case, while Fico's illiberalism appears more performative and constrained by the media and remaining democratic checks and balances – making it more susceptible to change – Orbán consistently tends to act on his illiberal ideology (Enyedi, 2024). When it comes to the economic dimension alone, there are visible differences between Fico and Orbán. This result can be further reinforced by the ideological scores of all texts from each political leader respectively. When looking at the dark cyan and purple dot in *Figure 3*, none of them cross the zero threshold. But when looking at the points again individually, Orbán time and again tends to appear in the left-wing sector. This does not come out of a vacuum since this pattern

was also visible in the academic literature (see also Csillag, 2020; Hénin & Insel, 2021; Timmer et al., 2018).

Chapter 5: Robustness Tests

Although I added confidence intervals to the ideological positions of different political leaders, it is still important to validate my findings by using different dictionaries. However, there are not many dictionaries publicly available and if they are available, they are hard to find. In the end I ended up with two dictionaries, the first one outsourced from Maerz and Schneider (2021) and the *Manifesto Project* codebooks (Volkens et al., 2021; Werner et al., 2021) and the second one generated by AI.

Maerz and Schneider (2021) have a dictionary, but it only covers the socio-cultural dimension and thus, the economic dimension needed to be constructed. In order for the outsourced dictionary not to become another of my dictionaries, the keywords for the economic dimension were picked from two *Manifesto Project* codebooks (Volkens et al., 2021; Werner et al., 2021) and an annotated manifesto from *Manifesto Project* database. Since both liberal and illiberal ideologies already had 64 keywords added by their authors, I decided to set a limit to 64 for both economic ideologies too. However, unlike the already constructed dictionaries by different scholars, codebooks meant for content analysis have an element of vagueness and flexibility. What is meant by this is that both *Manifesto Project* codebooks have descriptions for different variables where I can outsource different keywords, but sometimes a variable is not described properly, leaving me to add keywords based on my hunches. This is present in the variable 415 called “Marxist Analysis” (Domain 4)⁶, where there was no description on what the coder should be looking for. This was solved by adding keywords mentioned by Berger's (2020) chapter on “Marxist Critique” and searching for

⁶ Both codebooks are basically the same but Werner et al.'s (2021) version has more descriptive information about coding and, at the end, provides text samples while Volkens et al.'s (2021) version only provides information about variables.

suggestions online. Additionally, there was a problem in finding 64 keywords for right-wing ideology. This was solved by looking at one of the annotated manifestos by the Union of Democrats and Independents (Manifesto Project, n.d.), provided by the *Manifesto Project's* website.

When it comes to the AI dictionary, its purpose was still to serve as a dictionary that would in some way follow my conceptualization of both the economic and the socio-cultural dimensions, minus the second-level concepts. This means that if I asked *Chat GPT* or *DeepSeek* to give me right-wing keywords, it would also generate socio-cultural keywords which are seen as essential to the right-wing extreme. To prevent the economic dimension from mixing with socio-cultural, I always asked each AI to exclude socio-cultural keywords from economic ideologies. For socio-cultural ideology, the AI was asked to generate illiberal keywords by asking it to generate conservative and illiberal keywords. The word 'conservative' was added for AI to understand what I am looking for since the general public and knowledge created by the mass public does not (yet) use the word 'illiberal' but 'right-wing', 'conservative' or 'populist'. I did the same to liberal ideology by adding words like 'progressive' to my prompts. This was because including only liberal would only generate keywords such as from the classical-political script of liberalism (see Laruelle, 2022). In the end, I had gathered 47 keywords for each ideology. To see all of the dictionaries, see the Appendix B below the bibliography.

5.1 Results

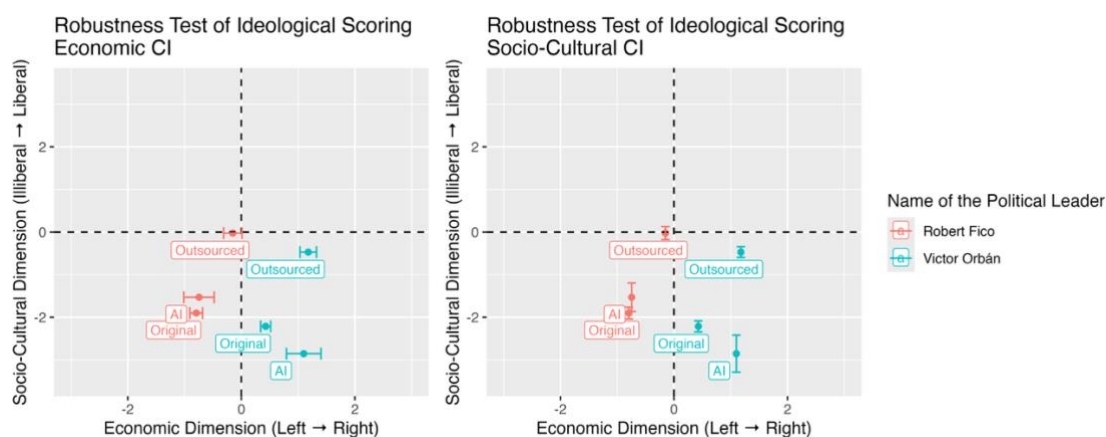


Figure 4: Robustness Test for Overall Ideological Positionings of both Robert Fico and Victor Orbán

As can be seen in *Figure 4*, there are once again two graphs, each possessing confidence intervals (CI) for different ideological dimensions. Each point has a label indicating which dictionary was used for scoring a political leader's positioning. 'Outsourced' means that the dictionary from Maerz and Schneider (2021) and the *Manifesto Project* (Volkens et al., 2021; Werner et al., 2021) was used and the label 'AI' means that an AI-generated dictionary was used. Lastly, 'original' label means that my own dictionary (see Appendix B) was used. The reason why my dictionary was used again was to compare my results with those that would have been generated by a different dictionary. Lastly, each point consists of all data from 2016 to 2024 so as to reduce the complexity of my robustness test.

Starting with the outsourced dictionary, the points for both Fico and Orbán have the biggest gap compared to the 'original' and 'AI' dictionary points when it comes to the socio-cultural dimension. Fico, for instance, is marked as centrist in the socio-cultural dimension, more so than Orbán who is positioned on the illiberal side. This finding is also supported by Maerz's and Schneider's (2021, p. 16) figures where both Hungary and Orbán are placed in a similar place on the liberal-illiberal scale, different from mine, but only by a few small units. One of the probable explanations why the outsourced dictionary overinflated every politician to the liberal side is due to Maerz's and Schneider's (2021) conceptualization of liberalism based on democratic values and illiberalism on authoritarian values. My original dictionary, on the

other hand, conceptualizes the socio-cultural dimension based on power centralization and decentralization. This makes the outsourced dictionary introduce keywords that were not in the ‘original dictionary’ such as “vote”, “voting”, “free”, “freedom”, “voice” and “referendum” which were also proven to have strong weight in the final ideological score. However, these keywords are used in multiple contexts with multiple sentiments.

For instance, on May 2, Fico mentions “voting” as the parliament was attempting to vote for an amendment of the Slovak voting system (Fico, 2024a). Under human supervision this would not be showcasing a liberal ideology since Fico here challenges the current proportionality of Slovak electoral system by creating smaller electoral regions with lower number of mandates which would disadvantage smaller parties (Tomečková, 2024). This is a consistent behavior of Fico’s since he claimed that Slovakia has too many political parties (Denník N, 2025). Orbán, on the other hand, calls on his supporters to vote for him since people supporting George Soros will also vote (Orbán, 2018). But this does not make Fico and Orbán centrist or less illiberal since over the eight years of my sample, both political leaders were democrats (not liberal democrats) and were not able to overthrow democracies in their respective countries. They are not yet like autocratic leaders during the interwar period in the 20th century, especially in this era when a global shift in the political zeitgeist (Diamond, 2021) is still at its early stages, when democratic erosion are significantly more prevalent than invasions, military coups and autogolpes (Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019). The same applies to keywords indicating an illiberal ideology, since illiberalism in Europe cannot be indicated by keywords like “almighty”, “monarchy” and “majesty” any longer, but are good for research, also beyond the scope of this thesis. In the economic dimension, the scores differed less from other dictionary scores. However, some of the keywords attempting to cover left-wing ideology were misused on the Marxist Analysis variable since left-wing

political leaders are less likely to use keywords like: “super structure”, “basis” or “productive forces” in the 21st century.

What if the number of keywords affects the ideological scoring of the political leaders? This would have been the case if the AI dictionary had similar results to the ‘outsourced dictionary’, but surprisingly with only 47 keywords, the AI dictionary came closest to my findings. Not only that, but it placed Orbán on a more illiberal and right-wing side of *Figure 4*. There might be two reasons why the AI dictionary was able to get closer to both my findings and *hypothesis 2*: 1. The AI dictionary’s keywords share the same level of complexity with my dictionary by using bigrams 2. It has a similar conceptualization of liberalism and illiberalism without tying democracy to liberalism and autocracy to illiberalism.

Overall, when it comes to economic dimension, the findings are quite robust in a way that all points support *hypothesis 1.1* and 2. It might have been even more robust if more prevalent left-wing keywords were used. However, the socio-cultural dimension is worthy of discussion, mostly about how liberalism and illiberalism should be conceptualized. Should the concentration/decentralization of power range between democracy and closed authoritarianism or between liberal and illiberal democracy?

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Discussion

Although there were some hypotheses that were unsupported, there were also hypotheses that were confirmed. Not only that, out of the unsupported hypotheses, some findings were nevertheless supported by some of the mentioned academic literature rather than my straightforward hypotheses by the results. In this section, all of my findings will be

summarized and weaknesses, limitations, and calls for more research will be introduced and discussed.

One of my first findings was that while some positions tend to oscillate from two years to another two years, there are clear ideological preferences. For instance, when it comes to the economic dimension, both leaders move around a certain range and on average stay within their economic sectors without a desire to take off toward an opposite extreme. In other words, while Orbán tends to go slightly left and on average is right-wing, his positions over time do not seem to even touch values like -1 or even -0.5 on the economic dimension. This was also supported by academic literature by Hénin and Insel (2021) and Scheiring (2021) who clearly show how Orbán and his regime is capitalist. Now only that, but Csillag (2020), Krekó and Enyedi (2018) and Timmer et al. (2018) also indirectly mention Orbán's policies that are not *per se* right-wing (e.g., providing jobs, school lunches and tax cuts for Hungarian mothers). This is similar to Fico, although he barely crosses the economic threshold. While both leaders move around, they do not seem to have an interest in substantially changing these positions. When it comes to the socio-cultural dimension, both political leaders stay within the illiberal sector, but their differences are a mere matter of degree.

Another set of findings are about Fico's and Orbán's ideological progressions or patterns in the socio-cultural dimension. Based on my hypothesis, Fico was supposed to go from a liberal position to an illiberal position while Orbán was expected to have stayed relatively stationary at the same level. What happened instead was that Fico over the time was always illiberal and the only increase in his illiberalism was during 2022 following his resignation as prime minister in 2020 due to alleged connections to the murderer of the investigative journalist, Ján Kuciak, who investigated high-level corruption and organized crime in Slovakia. One of the reasons for the sudden increase was Fico's eventually successful attempt to mobilize voters for the 2023 elections by using the Covid-19 crisis and the Russo-

Ukrainian war to his advantage. When it comes to Orbán, his illiberalism tends to increase overtime.

The last findings were from my robustness test where the results from my dictionary were compared to the dictionary constructed from Maerz and Schneider (2021) dictionary and the *Manifesto Project* codebooks and to the AI-generated dictionary. While the average economic positions for each political leader were confirmed, the socio-cultural dimension was left unconfirmed. This was due to the different conceptualizations of liberal-vs-illiberal which differ on how much power should be concentrated. Should the conceptualization of ‘centralization/decentralization of power’ be restricted from democracy to hybrid regime or to closed authoritarianism?

This introduces both limitations and opportunities for further research. For instance, based on literature by Henderson (2017), Marušiak (2021) and Snegovaya (2024), I speculated that Fico might over time become liberal to illiberal over time. However, unlike the mentioned academic literature, my sample did not go back in time beyond 2016. The literature also mentions Fico in the 1990s, a time when there were no social media and thus there is no large sample of video content from which text could be extracted. Another problem was the lack of time to transcribe video into text, separate text into multiple documents and translate it even if some of these tasks were done by AI (*Revoldiv*, *ChatGPT* and *DeepSeek*). With the inaccessibility of material and lack of time there was no opportunity to enlarge the time range that might reveal a switch to an illiberal position. But there is also a possibility that Fico might have been illiberal from the very beginning of his political career or maybe the scope of ‘centralization/decentralization of power’ should have been extended beyond hybrid regimes.

Even though there were some limitations, there were also some successes worthy of further research, one of them being the bi-dimensional analysis conducted in my research which

proved to be a viable method to measure complexity in ideological positions. As mentioned before, while both Fico and Orbán tend to emphasize elements of illiberalism (e.g., ultra-nationalism, exclusivism, fundamentalist religiosity, etc.), they again each have their own perspectives on the economy. While Fico focuses on pensions and the well-being of farmers, Orbán focuses on production and profits on Hungarian soil. Not only is this applicable to my research, but this method could also be applied to different political leaders and its design could be further refined and improved.

6.2 Conclusion

According to Von Soest (2015) and Weyland (2017) non-democratic leaders actively disseminate strategies to retain power – a phenomenon observable not only in academic literature but also in daily news coverage. Across ideological lines politicians often exchange tactics to manage legitimacy crises and, to again, preserve power. Despite ideological differences, cooperation does not cease to exist when those differences do not threaten mutual power interests. As supported by my research, Fico and Orbán differ in their economic ideologies, yet these differences do not contradict their cooperation nor their common goals when kept on a national level. This conclusion is further reinforced by the similar positioning in the socio-cultural dimension, where both leaders share the goal of power concentration, control over a homogenous community, and exclusion of anybody that might challenge their power and legitimacy. However, the fact that Fico altered his rhetoric post-2020 appears to be caused by pure opportunism rather than continuous influence by Orbán. Fico might have always been illiberal, but what might have changed would be his stances towards liberal democracy and the European Union. To support this hypothesis, further research should focus on systematically measuring the switches in positions. Despite this limitation, this research successfully highlights cooperation on the socio-cultural level over asymmetrical influence

and demonstrates the functionality and potential usefulness of a bi-dimensional framework for analyzing political ideologies of different actors.

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Appendix A

Topic Modeling Output

Topic 1 Top Words:
 Highest Prob: minist, tax, year, physic, univers, financ, studi
 FREX: physic, univers, technic, minist, becam, studi, financ
 Lift: univers, build, chose, defend, garbag, graduat, head
 Score: apart, physic, technic, univers, financ, advisor, becam

Topic 2 Top Words:
 Highest Prob: fico, dont, robert, know, see, gas, singl
 FREX: drink, fico, gas, robert, flat, grow, russia
 Lift: boy, complain, drink, expens, fastest, flat, grow
 Score: flat, drink, grow, russia, ukrain, see, wage

Topic 3 Top Words:
 Highest Prob: migrat, veto, asylum, slovakia, quota, right, europ
 FREX: migrat, asylum, illeg, quota, veto, call, europ
 Lift: africa, appli, applic, asylum, biggest, call, coast
 Score: call, migrat, asylum, illeg, veto, quota, europ

Topic 4 Top Words:
 Highest Prob: year, thousand, market, compani, now, can, heat
 FREX: thousand, heat, swim, market, euro, ten, essenti
 Lift: annual, anoth, child, council, despit, due, employe
 Score: sold, thousand, million, heat, essenti, market, replac

Topic 5 Top Words:
 Highest Prob: european, parliament, mep, vote, slovak, work, can
 FREX: mep, parliament, critic, improv, slovak, pass, work
 Lift: abstain, activ, beat, beg, bloodstream, critic, euroscept
 Score: abstain, mep, vote, parliament, improv, european, petit

Topic 6 Top Words:
 Highest Prob: electr, program, price, construct, compani, manag, water
 FREX: construct, water, taraba, electr, shell, price, program
 Lift: taraba, construct, contract, crew, director, email, gabcikovo
 Score: construct, water, program, electr, particular, taraba, shell

Topic 7 Top Words:
 Highest Prob: will, vote, well, can, say, slovakia, want
 FREX: will, support, vote, voter, nuclear, energi, posit
 Lift: angela, appreci, argument, august, combust, engin, favorit
 Score: vote, situat, support, voter, will, parti, fearmong

Topic 8 Top Words:
 Highest Prob: elect, even, european, program, polici, peopl, honest
 FREX: polici, best, honest, elect, way, wont, make
 Lift: best, comprehens, emot, fear, function, mock, took
 Score: function, best, polici, program, honest, korcok, hatr

Figure 5: Example of a Topic Modeling Output from Richard Sulik's Text Sample

Appendix B

Original Dictionary

This is my dictionary that I constructed with second-level concepts included. Before diving into my dictionary there are two issues that must be brought up. First, some second-level concepts are combined (+) due to difficulty in categorizing different keywords under a single concept. Second, there are some keywords that are offensive and if those keywords cause distress, please skip the illiberal ideology under my dictionary.

Left-Wing Ideology**Nationalization + Public Rights:**

kindergarten*,
 school*,
 public school*,
 education,
 public education,
 universit*,
 college*,
 dorm*,
 dormitor*,
 student*,
 scholarship*,
 age,
 elderly,
 retir*,
 retirement age,
 pension*,
 pension system,
 minimum pension*,
 famil*,
 family support,
 family allowance,
 parent*,
 mother*,
 maternity leave,
 paternity leave,
 child*,
 disab*,
 disabled child*,
 disabled people,
 healthcare,
 public healthcare,
 public care,
 hospital*,
 public hospital*,
 public insurance,
 benefit*,
 recreation voucher*,
 recreational voucher*,
 employee voucher*,
 contributing voucher*,
 parents voucher*,
 housing, social,
 social insurance,
 assistance allowance,
 personal assistance,
 government* program*,
 care,

Collectivism:

societ*,
 communit*,
 working class,

Worker Focused:

job*,
 labor*,
 labour*,
 employee*,
 blue collar,
 worker*,
 skilled worker*,
 skilled workforce,
 salar*,
 wage*,
 income,
 employment,
 unemployment,
 disadvantaged,
 poverty,
 exploit*,
 farm*,
 farmer*,
 local*,
 agricultur*,
 village*,
 rural,

Redistribution of Wealth:

antitrust law*,
 antimonopoly,

Hostility Towards Competing Ideology:

capitalist*,
 capitalism,
 bourgeois*,

Historical Terms:

warsaw pact,
 red army,
 slavin*

Right-Wing Ideology

Private Rights:

property,
 property right*,
 private property,
 trespass*,

Individualism:

individual*,
 individualism,
 enterprise*,

entrepreneur*,
 entrepreneurship,
 selfmade,
 selfreliance,
 bootstrap*,
 business*,
 small business*,
 homeowner*,
 homeownership,
 earn*,

Privatization:

privat*,
 private ownership,
 deregulat*,
 corporate owned,
 corporate ownership,
 competit*,
 competition,
 competitiveness,
 innovat*,
 efficien*,
 outsourc*,
 bureaucra*,
 insurance,
 bankowned,
 private education,
 private healthcare,
 industr*,
 automotive industry,
 job creator*,
 employer*,
 compan*,
 corporat*,
 profit*,
 expense*,
 tax cut*,
 tax relief*,
 tax voucher*,
 low tax,
 lower tax*,
 shareholder*,
 market*,
 industr*,
 industrialization,
 develop*,
 produc*,
 gdp,
 domestic product,
 grow*,
 debt, budget*,

investor*,
investment*,
fdi,

Concentration of Wealth:

merit*,
meritocracy,
trickle down,
government overreach,
government interference,
hostile takeover,
minimal government,

Hostility Towards Competing Ideology:

anticommunist*,
antisocialist*,
communism,
communist*,
communist dictatorship,
socialism,
socialist*,
marxism,
marxist*,

Historical Terms:

soviet occupation,
satellite state*,
eastern bloc

Illiberal Ideology

Ultra-Nationalism:

nation*,
anthem,
leader*,
loyalty,
betray*,
the people,
patriot*,
citizen*,
countrymen,
homeland,
founding father*,
forefather*,
brother*,
birth right,
birthplace,
independen*,
sovereign*,
veto,
histor*,
united hungary,
united slovakia,

tradition*,
 heritage,
 ansestor*,
 culture*,
 folk*,
 countryside,
 antigovernment,
 new constitution,
 change constitution,
 constitution change,
 constitutional change,
 constitutional turnaround,
 opposition*,
 progressive*,
 hungarian left,
 special prosecutor*,
 lipsic,
 media*,
 state media,
 national media,

Centralization:

antigovernment media,
 woke media,
 media lies,
 fake news,
 bias*,
 journalist*,
 rtvs,
 dennik*,
 markiza,
 aktuality*,
 atlatszo,
 telex,
 klubradio,
 ngo*,
 nonprofit*,
 nongovern*,
 globsec,
 bratislava cafeteria,
 activist*,
 gutmensch,
 assassin*,
 lone wolf,

Exclusivism:

conservative*,
 islam*,
 dei,
 forced diversity,
 woke*,

migrant*,
 immigrant*,
 illegal migration,
 migration crisis,
 asylum*,
 border*,
 schengen,
 mediterranean,
 quota*,
 defend*,
 defen*,
 protect*,
 angela merkel,
 merkel,
 africa*,
 syria*,
 afghan*,
 iraq*,

Fundamentalist Religiosity:

god*,
 jesus,
 christian*,
 value*,
 church*,

Compulsory Heterosexuality:

fag*,
 sodom*,
 unnatural,
 pervert*,
 pedo*,
 pornograph*,
 transsexual*,
 biological woman,
 biological women,
 biological female,
 biological man,
 biological men,
 biological male,
 gender*,
 antigender*,
 famil*,
 children*,
 birthrate,
 abortion,

Hostility Towards Competing Ideology:

west*,
 america*,
 washington,
 nato,

brussels,
 global*,
 world government,
 world order,
 global order,
 nwo,
 soros*,
 george soros,
 biden*,
 joe biden,
 liberal*,
 puppet*,
 dictatorship,
 fascism

Liberal Ideology

Cosmopolitanism:

cosmopolitan*,
 transnational*,
 globali*,
 global citizen*,
 world citizen*,
 pooled sovereignty,
 multilateralism,
 mutual aid,
 mutualism,
 world econom*,
 world market,
 global econom*,
 global market,
 single market,
 brics,
 icj,
 icc,
 international law,
 international court,
 european court,
 central europe*,

Decentralization:

decentrali*,
 devolution,
 federalism,
 municipalit*,
 selfgoverning,
 small government,
 local government,
 pluralism,
 multiparty,
 institutionalized opposition,
 free media,

public media,
 independent media,
 free press,
 independent press,
 impunity,
 jan kuciak,
 kuciak,
 decolonization,
 decolonize,
 autonom*,

Inclusivism:

inclusiv*,
 equal*,
 divers*,
 toleran*,
 acceptance,
 human rights,
 civil rights,
 social justice,
 ecth,
 ecthr,
 strasbourg,
 womens rights,
 reproductive rights,
 independent woman,
 independent women,
 sexual liberation,
 body positivity,
 minorit*,
 minority rights,
 indigenous rights,
 ethnic minorit*,
 disabilit*,
 disabled people,
 accessib*,

Pro-LGBT+:

lgbt*,
 lgbtq*,
 lgbtqia*,
 lgbt rights,
 gay,
 lesbian,
 bisexual,
 trans*,
 trans rights,
 cis,
 cis woman,
 cis women,
 cis man,

cis men,
 queer*,
 gay marriage,
 adoption,
 birthing person,
 birthing people,
 rainbow famil*,
 lgbt famil*,
 two moms,
 two mothers,
 two dads,
 two fathers,

Freedom of Religion:

freedom of religion,
 religious freedom,
 interfaith,
 interreligious,
 secular*,

Hostility Towards Competing Ideology:

polari*,
 dogma*,
 populis*,
 conspira*,
 conspiracy theor*,
 consiracis*,
 scar*,
 scaremonger*,
 scare monger*,
 fearmonger*,
 fear monger*,
 intoleran*,
 oppress*,
 racis*,
 coloris*,
 colouris*,
 colourism,
 sexis*,
 chauvinis*,
 misogyn*,
 misogenis*,
 patriarchy,
 rape culture,
 victim blaming,
 ableis*,
 homophob*,
 transphob*

Outsourced Dictionary

The dictionary starts from the ideologies from the socio-cultural dimension provided by Maerz and Schneider (2021) and ends with the ideologies from the economic dimension provided by the Manifesto Project codebooks (Volgens et al., 2021; Werner et al., 2021).

Illiberal Ideology

almighty,
anarch*,
chaos,
christ,
christianity,
christians,
church,
danger*,
destabili*,
evil,
father*,
god,
hero*,
homeland,
illegal*,
immigra*,
invincible,
islam,
jesus,
migrant*,
migration*,
militar*,
minaret,
motherland,
muslim*,
negative,
patriot*,
police,
pride,
proud,
rebell*,
religi*,
riot*,
separatist*,
soldier*,
spiritual,
stabil*,
subversive,
territory,
uniqueness,
unity,
unlawful,
ancestors,

brothers,
 discipline,
 family*,
 forefather,
 glories,
 glorious,
 heritage,
 honor,
 honour,
 inherit*,
 loyalty,
 majesty,
 monarch*,
 moral*,
 obscen*,
 pervert*,
 pornograph*,
 recapture*,
 reliab*,
 shameful,
 tradition*,

Liberal Ideology

authoritarian*,
 autocra*,
 corrupt*,
 cruel*,
 demilitarization,
 dictator*,
 disarmament,
 discriminat*,
 diverse,
 diversity,
 equal*,
 fair*,
 fascism,
 free,
 freedom,
 harassment,
 inclusion,
 inclusiv*,
 innocent,
 interfaith,
 interreligious,
 liberal*,
 mediat*,
 multicult*,
 negotiation*,
 oppression,
 pluralis*,
 referendum,

repressi*,
 suppression,
 tolerance,
 tolerat*,
 transparen*,
 violat*,
 voluntary,
 vote*,
 voting,
 dialect*,
 ethni*,
 gay*,
 gender,
 genocide,
 girls,
 handicapped,
 harmon*,
 indigenous,
 injustice*,
 intolerance,
 justice,
 lesbian*,
 lgbt,
 marginalize*,
 minorities,
 multiethnic,
 queer*,
 racist*,
 rights,
 sisters,
 solidarity,
 transgender,
 unfair*,
 voice*,
 woman,
 women

Right-Wing Ideology

free market,
 market capitalism,
 laissezfaire,
 laissez faire,
 enterprise*,
 industr*,
 business*,
 compan*,
 corporate,
 private property,
 property rights,
 individual*,
 subsidy,

subsidies,
tax break*,
tax cut*,
low tax*,
taxfree,
tax free,
tax exempt*,
flat tax,
startup*,
tariff*,
economic growth,
growth,
production*,
antiunion,
nonunion,
anticommunis*,
communis*,
antisocialis*,
socialis*,
marxis*,
privatization,
property restitution,
voucher*,
private sector,
private care,
private funding,
private welfare,
private school*,
private universit*,
private healthcare,
private clinic*,
competition,
competitiv*,
social subsidiar*,
study fees,
limited government,
small government,
investment*,
innovation,
more consumption,
creating jobs,
new jobs,
employer*,
efficient,
efficiency,
developed,
development,
underdeveloped,
underdevelopment,
financial autonomy,

purchasing power,

Left-Wing Ideology

fair market,

social market,

plan* economy,

consumer protection,

antimonopol*,

antitrust,

control price*,

wage*,

minimum wage*,

fair wage*,

income,

nationalization,

government ownership*

superstructure,

basis,

productive forces,

class struggle,

proletariat,

commodity fetishism,

class consciousness,

bourgeois*,

antigrowth,

degrowth,

distribution,

fair distribution,

welfare,

health care,

child care,

elder care,

pension*,

social housing,

public interest,

labour,

labor,

working class,

unemployed,

trade union*,

labour union*,

labor union*,

working condition*,

social ownership*,

publicly owned,

public ownership*,

public property,

agriculture,

farm*,

farmer*,

museum*,

national park*,
 public park*,
 state funding,
 librar*,
 public librar*,
 classless,
 classless societ*,
 moneyless,
 moneyless societ*,
 social servic*,
 social security,
 student debt*,
 student*,
 elderly,
 old people,
 child*

AI Dictionary

Left-Wing Ideology

wealth redistribution,
 progressive taxation,
 wealth tax*,
 inheritance tax*,
 tax billionaires,
 nationalization,
 pension*,
 pension security,
 free healthcare,
 public healthcare,
 universal healthcare,
 safety net,
 free education,
 tuitionfree college,
 affordable housing,
 state housing,
 public transit,
 infrastructure spending,
 social welfare,
 food security,
 worker right*,
 worker council*,
 labor union*,
 trade union*,
 unionization,
 wage*,
 minimum wage*,
 livable wage*,
 living wage*,
 income,
 basic income,

regulation*,
 corporate regulation*,
 market regulation*,
 antimonopoly,
 monopoly ban*,
 democratic socialism,
 social democrac*,
 social democrat*,
 government spending,
 poverty abolition,
 abolish poverty,
 public ownership,
 class struggle,
 exploitation,
 exploitative,
 materialism,

Right-Wing Ideology

market capitalism,
 free market,
 economic freedom,
 trade liberalization,
 free trade,
 supplyside,
 trickle down,
 competition,
 competitive,
 competitive market*,
 laissezfaire,
 laissez faire,
 enterprise*,
 free enterprise,
 entrepreneurship,
 investment*,
 automation investment*,
 shareholder*,
 stockholder*,
 deregulation,
 regulatory rollback,
 tariff*,
 tax cut*,
 low tax*,
 lower tax*,
 flat tax,
 tax reduction*,
 privatization,
 private property,
 private healthcare,
 school privatization,
 selfreliance,
 personal responsibilit*,

antiunion,
 nonunion,
 small government,
 limit government,
 limited government,
 hostile takeover,
 anticommunis*,
 fiscal conservatism,
 balanced budget,
 deficit reduction,
 austerity,
 profit,
 profit motive,
 consumer*,

Illiberal Ideology

strong state,
 sovereign*,
 sovereign state,
 executive supremacy,
 loyalty,
 loyalty test*,
 national priorit*,
 dei,
 woke,
 wokeness,
 antiwoke,
 political correctness,
 gender ideology,
 antigender,
 tradition*,
 traditional famil*,
 family values,
 conservativative*,
 conservatism,
 great replacement,
 islamization,
 migration,
 migrant*,
 illegal migrant*,
 immigrant*,
 immigration,
 christian*,
 christianity,
 christian state,
 christian nation,
 christian liberty,
 christian civilization,
 antibrussels,
 ngo*,
 nongovernmental,

nongovernmental organization*,
 nonprofit*,
 nonprofit organization*,
 antingo,
 foreign agent*,
 state media,
 illiberal*,
 illiberal democracy,
 conservat*,
 centralized power,
 fake news,
 fake media,

Liberal Ideology

human right*,
 civil right*,
 civil libert*,
 free speech,
 pluralism,
 diversity,
 equal*,
 equality,
 tolerance,
 antidiscrimination,
 secularism,
 constitutionalism,
 social equity,
 inclusion,
 lgbt,
 gender equality,
 pride month,
 racial justice,
 decolonization,
 reparations,
 antiracism,
 disability rights,
 religious freedom,
 intersection*,
 transparen*,
 accountab*,
 grassroot,
 grassroot democrac*,
 global cooperation,
 humanitarian aid,
 refugee rights,
 international law,
 critical thinking,
 academic freedom,
 media literacy,
 media freedom,
 reproductive rights,

peaceful dissent,
marriage equality,
bodily autonomy,
privacy rights,
multilateralism,
icc,
diplomacy,
diplomatic,
inclusive language,
inclusivity,