

## **Abstract**

This thesis looks at how Slovakia, a member state of the EU, but representing a country on the ‘periphery’, became susceptible to Russian influence through pro-Kremlin narratives. To do so, it has looked at how particularly the historical legacy and rising anti-Western sentiment contributed to the revival of Pan-Slavism, a pan-national movement calling for Slavic reciprocity and closer cooperation of Slavic nation. The work aims to contribute to the to the academically scarcely explored topic of contemporary state of Pan-Slavism, particularly from the perspective of it serving as a political tool. The paper's research question is “What factors and tools explain the success of Russian political influence in Slovakia?”

To find evidence of how pro-Kremlin narratives find support in contemporary Slovak society, this thesis relies on primary and secondary sources regarding the shared history of Slovakia and Russia, but also Slovak national identity. This can provide a deeper insight into why a country that is arguably Europeanized – as a member state of the EU, still regards its Slavic legacy as an important component not only of its foreign policy, but as a core of its identity. Furthermore, it provides with analysis of the types of narratives and the vulnerabilities exploited in the spread of the narratives both on a government and societal level. Majority of the data and information in this section were largely collected through a qualitative literature review, as well as official reports and news articles documenting current events.

Finally, this thesis operates with an analysis of social media posts of selected political parties: Kotlebovci – People’s Party Our Slovakia (Kotlebovci – Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko) and Republic (Republika), utilising ten months of Facebook posts shared on the respective official Facebook pages to demonstrate the way the narratives have adapted since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022.