

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN CHALLENGES TO REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

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SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN CHALLENGES TO REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

Levente Salat

Democratic theory is coming under scrutiny. While representative government and the rule of law seem to be the underlying principles of legitimate power throughout the world, theories on democratic systems bring to the fore several conundrums in democratic practice.

There are at least three critical aspects of democratic rule which are being addressed by attempts to theorize democracy: (1) What is the range of the term 'democracy' and what exactly is the line between democratic and non-democratic regimes? (2) What are the main, most frequently occurring lapses in democratic practice and on what grounds can those practices be criticized? (3) What are the chances for successful democracy in deeply divided, ethnoculturally diverse societies?

While these issues are of legitimate concern everywhere in the world where democracy is a viable prospect, they are particularly salient in Southeast Europe and in post-Soviet countries where democratic consolidation faces unexpected challenges. In the particular context of the post-communist transition, the legacies of totalitarianism, unaddressed diversity and the nationalist threat—exploited by both majorities and minorities—require innovative practices and thinking in order to foster the consolidation of the new democracies in post-communist Europe.

The Definition Conundrum

What Samuel P. Huntington has called “the third wave of democratization”¹ has further enhanced the relevance of Robert A. Dahl’s statement in 1989: “It may seem perverse that this historically unprecedented global expansion in the acceptability of democratic ideas might not be altogether welcome to an advocate of democracy... Yet a term that means anything means nothing. And so it has become with ‘democracy,’ which nowadays is not so much a term of restricted and specific meaning as a vague endorsement of a popular idea.”²

The conditions that favor abusing the term have a lot to do with the twofold duality of its meaning. As Dahl notes, both in theoretical contexts and everyday speech the term ‘democracy’ may be encountered as referring to both an ideal, and to actual regimes that fall con-

¹ Huntington 1996: 3-26.

² Dahl 1989: 2.

siderably short of that ideal. The most difficult task is to find indicators that allow us to differentiate between democratic and non-democratic regimes, which implies moving from the normative perspective of justification towards the empirical approach of evaluation. Several difficulties in attempts to theorize democracy follow thus from the fact that the extension of the concept includes both the *ideal vs. actual* and *normative vs. empirical* dualities.³

There are several possible ways of trying to define democracy properly. One could look at countries commonly considered democracies and define the concept according to the characteristic features of their institutional systems and decision-making patterns. This would lead, however, according to Barry Holden, to a definitional fallacy, since it is illogical to define a term by induction from the practice of one political unit, and then use the term for the appraisal, among others, of the same political unit.⁴

The etymological—"rule of the people"—definition is probably most commonly used, though it means different things to different authors. An attempt to escape ambiguity, by defining the term as a matter of degree with respect to some characteristics, may lead to a lack of clarity and exactitude as in Sartori: "There are hosts of characteristics or properties eligible for selection; not only majority rule and participation, but also equality, freedom, consensus, coercion, competition, pluralism, constitutional rule, and more... These characteristics are so interrelated that any single measure of any selected category is likely to produce highly erratic rank orderings."⁵

The most promising recent attempt to offer a nuanced definition of democracy probably belongs to M. Saward, who focuses on the logically necessary conditions for democracy, instead of trying to identify the empirically sufficient conditions that sustain that particular type of political system. The conditions he identifies refer to rights and freedoms as well as decision-making mechanisms—twenty-four criteria altogether, which can be grouped in five categories: (1) basic freedoms, (2) issues related to citizenship and participation, (3) administrative codes, (4) measures concerning publicity and (5) social rights.⁶ Taken togeth-

³ *Ibid.*: 6

⁴ Holden 1994: 6.

⁵ Sartori 1987: 184.

⁶ In Saward's view, the 24 indices of democratization are the following. *Basic freedoms* include the right of each citizen to: freedom of speech (1), freedom of movement (2), freedom of association (3), equal treatment under the law (4), freedom to worship (5). *Citizenship and participation* refer to: a common and standardized form of legal membership in the political community compatible with basic freedoms (6); equal right to run for elected office (7); the right to be equally eligible to serve, and, in non-elective representative and decisional bodies, equal probability of being selected for service, (8); equal right to vote in all elections and referendums (9); presence of a decisive quality for voters in all decision-making mechanisms (10); direct voting on substantive outcomes; if elected officials deem a decision inappropriate for direct decision, the burden of demonstrating the grounds of such inappropriateness lies with those officials (11); presence of a voting system (such as two-stage contests) which allows for the expression of a majority preference in multi-sided contests (12); regular renewal of representatives' mandates (13); regular opinion polls conducted by an appropriate agency on all issues of substantive importance, whether or not these issues are to be decided by representative decisions; the burden of demonstrating the appropriateness of not following citizen preferences on a given issue lies with the elected representatives (14); a presumption that all issues will be decided by referendums, with clear guide-

er, these twenty-four conditions can be considered and used as *indices of democratization*, with which one can assess the performances of real-world democracies.

An alternative approach is presented by David Beetham, who introduces the concept of the *democratic audit* and identifies thirty questions to which the auditing process has to yield answers. The questions are divided into the following categories: main features of the electoral process (1-5), open and accountable government (6-18), civil and political rights (19-23), the character of civil society and of the formal institutions (23-30).⁷ Both Saward's and Beetham's approach may be considered applications of the Sartori principle according to which "*What is (democracy)?*" and "*How much (democracy)?*" are both rightful and complementary, not mutually exclusive, questions."⁸

How effective these instruments may or may not be, real-world democracies are without doubt records of simultaneous—or sometimes successive—successes and failures, which can be best evaluated according to a series of values arranged in a continuum, rather than an absolute phenomenon that is either present or lacking. Measured against the ideal type (represented by a hypothetical political system that provides the most positive evaluation based on Saward's indices or Beetham's audit), each democratic practice embodies hopes and criticism, and, as Dahl notes, "stretches human possibilities to their limits and perhaps beyond."⁹ Before moving on to the critiques of democracy, it is worth recalling that in spite of all the difficulties in finding an exhaustive definition, democracy remains "*a vision of a political system in which the members regard one another as political equals, are collectively sovereign, and possess all the capacities, resources and institutions they need in order to govern themselves.*"¹⁰

lines as to when a referendum may be forgone (15); majority decision on all issues not specifically excluded from such process (16). *Administrative codes* imply the following: there must be appropriate codes of procedure for employees in public bodies (17); there must be regularly produced evidence that public decisions are being put into effect (18); there must be appropriate time limits placed on the realization of the substance of public decisions (19); there must be instituted adequate appeals and redress mechanisms with respect to public bodies and their functions (20); there must be freedom of information from all government bodies; the burden of proof of demonstrating the inappropriateness of full freedom of information in specific cases lies with the elected representatives (21). *Publicity* means that there must be a constant and formal process of public notification of decisions, options, arguments, issues and outcomes (22). *Social rights* include the right of every citizen to adequate health care (23) and to adequate education (24). See M. Saward, *Op. cit.*: 16-17.

⁷ For details see Beetham 1994: 36-39.

⁸ Sartori, *Op. cit.*: 185. (Italics in the original.)

⁹ Dahl, *Op. cit.*: 311.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* (Italics added.) It is worth recalling that in the end of his influential book, Sartori proposes the following *negative* definition: "Democracy is a system in which *no one can choose himself, no one can invest himself with the power to rule and, therefore, no one can arrogate to himself unconditional and unlimited power.*" Sartori, *Op. cit.*: 206 (italics in the original).

Critiques of Democracy

It is enough to think of the major difficulties in determining what democracy is to realize that democratic theory must have attracted much criticism throughout the history of political thought. As Frank Cunningham notes, Winston Churchill's often quoted opinion that democracy is "the worst form of government except for all the others" goes back, as a matter of fact, much further in history—expressed by, among others, Aristotle.¹¹

According to Dahl, critics of democracy have been roughly of three kinds: (1) those who believed that democracy is inherently undesirable, though it may be theoretically possible (like Plato and his followers in the belief in totalitarian guardianship, or Godwin, Kropotkin, Bakunin, Proudhon and, more recently, Robert Paul Wolff's stances taken in defense of anarchism); (2) those who argued that though it might be desirable, in reality it is unattainable and thus practically impossible (like Machiavelli, Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto and Robert Michels); and (3) those committed to its goals and nonetheless critical of it in some important regard. The first two categories are labeled by Dahl as "adversary critics," the latter as "sympathetic critics."¹² Though arguments of the second type of adversarial critics and those of the sympathetic critics may overlap (Carl Schmitt and Joseph Schumpeter, for instance), I will concentrate in what follows on some instances of sympathetic criticism.

The most common forms of critical arguments offered by the sympathetic critics have to do with the etymological definition of the term: "rule by the people." What this definition implies is often source of controversy, due both to the equivocal sense of the term "people," and to conflicting views on how the democratic process—the "rule"—should be organized. Interpretations of the term "people" lead to controversy not only as a result of restricted inclusiveness (which often translates into exclusion from the realm of political rights of certain members of the community), but due mainly to the lack of consensus on the proper answer to the question: what constitutes "a people" for democratic purposes, or, in other words, when does a collection of people constitute a political unit entitled to govern itself democratically? The issue of origin and moral justification of political units, which may or may not qualify as democracies, is largely blurred by democratic theory, and attempts to solve that problem by shifting the focus to the merits of the democratic process are usually less than satisfactory. As Dahl notes:

We cannot solve the problem of the proper scope and domain of democratic units from within democratic theory. Like the majority principle, the democratic process presupposes a proper unit. *The criteria of the democratic process presuppose the rightfulness of the unit itself.* If the unit is not proper or rightful—if its scope and domain is not justifiable—then it cannot be made rightful simply by democratic procedures.¹³

The inevitable imperfections of real-world democratic performances have drawn criticism mainly with regard to the shortcomings of the democratic process: unintended consequences and side-effects or failures to render the public good. An interesting recent account

¹¹ Cunningham 2002: 7.

¹² See Dahl, *Op cit.*: 37-65, 265-279.

¹³ Dahl: *Op cit.*: 207. (Emphasis in the original.)

of democracy's most common failures is given by Cunningham, who identifies seven consequences that beset the real-world cases of democratic practices. In his view, democracy permits majorities to tyrannize minorities (1), favors massification of culture and morals (2), generates ineffective government (3), invites conflict (4), favors demagoguery (5), masks systemic oppression (6) and is irrational (7).¹⁴

(1) The first misgiving concerns what is frequently referred to, following de Tocqueville, as "the tyranny of the majority": the institutionalized conditions under which the interest of the majority is permanently protected, while the interests of the minority are recurrently thwarted or ignored. Though it may not necessarily translate into open-ended oppressive treatment of the minority, democratic practices based on unbalanced majority rule may preclude the possibility of a minority affecting public policy.

(2) Massification of culture and morals is understood by Cunningham as an outcome of the dominance of a political class that tends to set the cultural and moral standards, which may have two main consequences: lack of incentives to endorse educational and cultural alternatives, and the instauration of a kind of thought control, that may lead to the marginalization and social exclusion of "people with refined sensitivities."¹⁵

(3) In defining what he means by ineffective government, Cunningham builds on a report called *The Crisis of Democracy*, published in 1975 by an international think tank, the Trilateral Commission.¹⁶ According to the main charge of the report, democracy in North America, Western Europe and Japan has lost the ability to formulate and pursue common goals, and has increasingly become an arena for the assertion of conflicting interests. Democratic access to government by a large number of interest groups has made the effective aggregation of interests impossible; long-range and society-wide goals become impossible to be pursued due to the fragmented structure of interests that change mandates for governments after each election. In addition to favoring conditions that produce low culture, democracy—according to de Tocqueville's warnings—also produces mediocre leaders, who are no more than "slaves to slogans."

(4) Democracy may foster conflict, argues Cunningham, both internally and externally. In addition to the concern of the Trilateral Commission Report, he quotes Carl Schmitt (without endorsing his political views, however), who holds that if democracy can function effectively at all, it requires a relatively harmonious population. Should that not be the case, democracy exacerbates discord and deepens the persistent division of society. Attempts to forge national unity may foster hostility to common enemies outside the nation.¹⁷ This view is echoed by the Trilateral Commission, too, which stated in its report that in the absence of internal sources of coherence, it is likely that in order to foster unity, political leaders will encourage attitudes of ethnic or national chauvinism. Cunningham also cites René Girard, according to whom democracy cannot be credited as an effective means for avoiding hostility, either internally, or in international context, since human nature is prone to mutual fear and violence.¹⁸

¹⁴ Cunningham, *Op. cit.*: 15-26

¹⁵ *Ibid.*: 17.

¹⁶ Crozier, Huntington, Watanuki quoted by Cunningham, *Op. cit.*: 17-18.

¹⁷ Cunningham refers to Schmitt 1988.

¹⁸ Cf. Girard 1979.

(5) Building on Claude Lefort and Schumpeter, Cunningham warns that demagogues and populist authoritarians are “experts at taking cynical advantage” of certain features of democracy, sometimes with active complicity within the population. Demagoguery and masked authoritarianism are favored by what Lefort calls “the empty place”—the majority that decides what will happen in a democracy is like a monarch or a ruling aristocracy, which, instead of being actual and identifiable people, is represented by a shifting mass. Thus “the locus of rule in democracy is void of real people,” and those who claim that they represent “the people” may carry out authoritarian measures in the name of democracy for their own benefit.¹⁹

(6) The idea that democracy may mask oppressive rule is far from being heretical amongst theorists: there is a wide recognition of the historical cohabitation of democracy with widespread subordination or exclusion of large societal segments on grounds of their class, gender, ethnic or racial membership. These compromises of democratic practices have been either ignored, or justified within democratic theories of the times. While some, like Schumpeter, are enthusiastic with regard to the efficiency of properly designed electoral policies in preventing the perpetuation of group subordination, others, like Cunningham, remain concerned that even after forms of legal exclusion are removed, prejudicial attitudes may perpetuate political discrimination in everyday life, and may continue to “masquerade as universally accessible democracy.”²⁰

(7) Following Russell Hardin and Anthony Downs, Cunningham exhibits some of the irrational consequences of democracy that arise from social or collective choice theories. One of the challenges to the rationality of democracy arises in the form of the question whether it is ever rational for individuals to make use of democratic means to further their interests, since democratic decision-making accrue to both those who take the time and energy to participate in the political process, and those who do not make this effort, the so called “free-riders.” Another critique is formulated by Kenneth Arrow, who reviews the conditions applied by rational choice theorists to individuals, and demonstrates that majority vote often violates one or more of these conditions.²¹

If we have a closer look at the misgivings inventoried by Cunningham, we can easily discover that three of them (1, 2 and 4) are overtly pernicious to diversity, and the consequences of at least three of the remaining four (3, 5 and 6) are considerably amplified by diversity. It is not without justification, then, to raise the question regarding the chances of democracy and of representative government in deeply divided, ethnoculturally diverse societies.

¹⁹ Cunningham, *Op. cit.*: 19-20.

²⁰ *Ibid.*: 21.

²¹ Cunningham refers to Hardin 1993: 157-172, Down 1957, Arrow 1951. It is worth mentioning here that Cunningham reads Putnam's effort to find the ingredients of “social capital” as an attempt to meet two of the criticisms of democracy: as inefficient and irrational. See Cunningham, *Op. cit.*: 23-24.

The Challenge of Diversity

In a celebrated essay from 1787 entitled *The Federalist No. 10*, considered to be the most authoritative interpretation of the freshly issued American Constitution, James Madison must have been among the first to face the dilemma that a country such as the United States, consisting of several groups with different interests, was too large to be ruled democratically by a single government. Apparently, there are only two solutions, both of them equally unacceptable, to a dilemma perceived in this way: “the one by destroying the liberty which is essential to its existence; the other, by giving to every citizen the same options, the same passions, and the same interests.”²² Whereas the first alternative would be unwise, the second was impracticable in Madison’s opinion, who reached the conclusion that the idea of “federalism” (his term for constitutional, representative democracy), already included in the Constitution, was the solution to allow the different factions to be represented in the state institutions to an extent sufficient for their opinions to be reflected in the government decisions, and at the same time so that none of these interest groups would be able to exercise tyrannical control over the others.

Only a few years later, Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, in his inaugural address in 1801 reiterated the idea that “only by allowing people full freedom to differ (...) could democratic society thrive.”²³

De Tocqueville, in his momentous work on *American Democracy* (published in two volumes in 1835 and 1840), dedicated ample space to the issue that became notorious later as the “tyranny of the majority.” He showed a deep concern for the future of democracy, which he perceived as evolving towards exactly what has been epitomized later by Cunningham as “massification of culture and morals”—an egalitarian leveling ideal. De Tocqueville foresaw in these evolutions the germs of a new type of despotism, under the guise of a centralizing and omnipotent government, which could end by denying liberty.²⁴

The issue of the tyranny of the majority also preoccupied John Stuart Mill, who, in his influential work on representative government, published in 1861, reached a conclusion that could confirm, at least in part, the fears of his predecessors: “Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist.” When the institutional system of representative democracy exists in principle, “when there are either free institutions, or a desire for them, in any of the peoples artificially tied together, the interest of the government lies in an exactly opposite direction. It is then interested in keeping up and envenoming their antipathies; that they may be prevented from coalescing, and it may be enabled to use some of them as tools for the enslavement of others.”²⁵

²² Madison 1994: 45.

²³ Cf. Urofsky, *Op. cit.*: 73.

²⁴ “I think that the type of oppression which threatens democracy is different from anything there has ever been in the world before... The nations of our day cannot prevent conditions of equality from spreading in their midst. But it depends upon themselves whether equality is to lead to servitude or freedom, knowledge or barbarism, prosperity or wretchedness” (de Tocqueville 1994: 691 and 705).

²⁵ Mill 1998: 428 and 430.

It is not without interest to mention here two stances taken by Central and Eastern European theorists of the time. The defeated Central European revolutions of 1848, the restoration and the return of absolutism that followed, influenced not only Mill (who included in his cited work references to the defeated upheavals of the Austrian Empire), but József Eötvös, a distinguished Hungarian liberal theorist of the time. In an impressive work on *The Impact Upon the State of the 19th Century's Dominant Ideas* (published in two volumes in 1851 and 1854), Eötvös reached the conclusion that “the principles of liberty and equality, in the form they have been conceived, cannot be made practical without all existing states falling apart.” His arguments remarkably resemble Mill's:

We either admit the omnipotent right of the majority, and if so, all majorities will use their power, during the time of pursuing national scopes, to enslave minorities until the state becomes coterminous with the nationality, or we provide all minorities with unalienable rights, with no majority infringement permitted, and from that moment the principles of equality and liberty cannot be used in their conventional sense.²⁶

About half a century later, Aurel C. Popovici, a leader of the Romanian national movement, offered, from the perspective of the sizable Romanian minority seeking national and political emancipation within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, a powerful example of what Eötvös had anticipated. Though admitting in principle the merits of universal suffrage, Popovici considered that for a minority democracy is pernicious: “between nationalism [his term for national emancipation] and democracy there is an organic antithesis, disastrous for the former.”²⁷ His deeply antidemocratic stance was motivated, on the one hand, by his fear that the interest of a minority cannot be protected against the will of a democratic majority (12 million Hungarians will always outvote 5 million non-Hungarians, he argued), and on the other hand, by what he considered to be the de-nationalizing consequences of universal vote: though members of the minority communities may see, in the first instance, an advantage in having access to universal vote, in the long-run they could lose interest in their cultural membership and become victims of a leveling, assimilationist state policy.

The outbreak of the First World War and the subsequent Pax Americana mastered by Woodrow Wilson confirmed most of what was anticipated by 19th century theorists preoccupied by the relationship between representative government and democracy, on the one hand, and ethnic and cultural diversity of the states, on the other. The approximately one hundred-year period that came to an end with the new ethnopolitical rearrangement of the world subsequent to WWI is exactly what Huntington calls “the first wave of democratization.” The so-called “second wave” started roughly with the adoption, in 1948, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly, which seemed to close a glorious chapter of the history of human emancipation and open a new era in which conflict between democracy and diversity should wither, due to the comprehensive code of conduct undertaken to be respected by the large majority of the

²⁶ Eötvös, József 1991: 114-115, 127 (translation by the author).

²⁷ Popovici 1910: 16 (translation by the author).

international community of states with respect to their internal government and to the behavior of the state regarding its citizens.

It did not take long, however, until the problems resurfaced. Beginning with the late fifties and early sixties, literature on political development started to bring to the fore the problems of a large number of developing countries (mainly in Asia, Africa and South Africa) in which political development seemed to be plagued by the deep diversity of the society. Persistent divisions between different segments of the population and lack of unifying consensus raised apparently insurmountable barriers in front of the democratic prospects of the newly independent states. After the initial optimism concerning the promises of what has been epitomized later as “the second wave of democratization,” the theoretical literature on political development, nation-building and democratization started to include more and more references to an essentially non-Western type of political development, in which pluralism and communal identification play a key role, and the main questions remain related to the old dilemma whether a plural society of that kind can or cannot sustain a democratic government.²⁸

The stances taken with respect to this conundrum of democratic theory echo Mill in most cases, and converge in considering that homogeneity must be an input rather than an output of democratic development.

Walker Connor offers an early example in modern political thought of a similar stance, by quoting Ernest Baker. Baker found Lord Acton’s defense of the chances of democratic governments in multinational states, as articulated in an article published one year after Mill’s *Considerations on Representative Government*, an unpragmatic rebuttal of the views expressed by Mill.²⁹ Baker argues that Lord Acton could have observed even in the 1860s that “in a multi-national State the government either pits each nation against the rest to secure its absolutism, or allows itself to become the organ of one of the nations for the suppression or oppression of the others.” For this reason he foresees, in 1927, a worldwide “scheme of political organization in which each nation is also a State, and each State is also a nation.”³⁰ Connor, in turn, analyzing the consequences of the Mill–Lord Acton–Baker debate on the question of heterogeneity leading to authoritarianism or democracy, admits that several postwar developments “indicate a link between multinationalism and a pressure for non-democratic action.” He mentions three tendencies of modern multinational states that sustain his statement. First, he observes that the concern of governments to stress

²⁸ For details see Lijphart 1977: 16–21. The concept of the “plural society” is understood here in the sense suggested by J. S. Furnivall: a society characterized by geographical mixture but mutual social avoidance, in which “different sections of the community [live] side by side, but separately, within the same political unit.” Cf. Furnivall 1948. The concept of “non-Western political development” has been described in details by Pye (1958).

²⁹ In the article entitled “Nationality,” published in *Home and Foreign Review* in July 1862, Lord Acton wrote the following: “The presence of different nations under the same sovereignty (...) provides against the shadow which flourishes under the servility of a single authority, by balancing interest, multiplying associations and giving to the subject the restraint and support of combined opinion. . . . The coexistence of several nations under the same State is a test as well as the best security of its freedom.” Quoted in Connor (1994: 6).

³⁰ E. Baker quoted by Connor, *Op. cit.*: 7.

their political and territorial integrity has not been “conducive to democratic responses to the growing problem of cultural-political consciousness” On the contrary, “multinational states have tended to become less democratic in response to the growing threat of nation-alistic movements.” Second, he remarks the self-evident, though generally obfuscated paradox that while so many governments exist due to the exercise of self-determination, and regularly “pay lip-service” to it, “the instances in which a government has permitted a democratic process to decide a question of self-determination within its own territory are rare indeed.” Third, he calls attention to the tendency to view self-determination movements within the state as threats to its survival, and to react “violently and to justify the cruelest of treatment accorded to implicated leaders by branding them as rebels or traitors and therefore something worse than criminals.” Connor also mentions the frequency, in multinational countries, of emergency acts or detention acts authorizing the internment of persons “acting in a manner inimical to the interests of the state.”³¹

Lijphart gives further examples of skepticism regarding the chances of democracy in plural societies. He recalls the position of Furnivall, who argued, based on a study of plural societies in colonial system, that the unity of these societies could only be maintained by the non-democratic means of colonial domination. Lijphart also cites M. G. Smith, probably the most outspoken supporter of Mill’s “gloomy assessment” on the chances of representative democracy in conditions of diversity, who believes that “cultural diversity or pluralism automatically imposes the structural necessity for domination by one of the cultural sections... Many of the newly independent states either dissolve into separate cultural sections, or maintain their identity, but only under conditions of domination and subordination in the relationships between groups.”³²

A similar inventory is offered by Alfred Stepan who mentions among the followers of Mill theorists like the functionalist Ernest Gellner, the nation-building conceptual founder Dankwart Rustow, and a major social choice and game theorist, Kenneth Shepsle and his co-author, A. Rabuska. Their views converge in the belief that “the democratic game cannot be played well in ethnically plural societies,” since societies of that kind “do not provide fertile soil for democratic values and stability,” being characterized by “incompatible, intense ethnic feelings held by members of communal groups.” The “strong sense of national unity” which would be the prerequisite for democratic government is exactly what is missing, and “the central issue of most multi-national polities during the democracy-building phase is precisely how to manage the question of national and cultural diversity within the unity of a single democratic territory.”³³ Stepan concludes on his turn, that the stability of a culturally homogeneous polity is due in most cases to the fact that the public agenda does not include questions that concern the official language, rights claims by national minorities that are perceived as a threat to the state, or requests to grant a significant degree of territorial autonomy to a national minority, which could encourage separatism and territorial disintegration. Where these questions are on the agenda, “the democratic consolidation of a single state in that territory is very difficult, and in fact, highly unlikely.”³⁴

³¹ For details see Connor, *Op. cit.*: 12-17 and 22-25.

³² Leo Kuper and M. G. Smith cited by Lijphart, *Op. cit.*: 18-19.

³³ Stepan 2002: 7-8. The cited works are: Rustow 1970, Rabuska, Shepsle 1972, and Gellner 1994.

³⁴ Stepan, *Op. cit.*: 8-9.

The list of scholars who have expressed skepticism about the stability and performances of democracy in divided societies could be continued.³⁵ Nevertheless, in spite of the wisdom of the inventoried views, while diversity seems to remain an enduring feature of our contemporary world,³⁶ no powerful competitor has emerged to challenge the unparalleled global legitimacy of democratic rule.³⁷

The Central and Eastern European Context

The relationship between the chances for democratic consolidation and ethnic diversity is particularly salient in the context of the transitional societies of Central and Eastern Europe, a region characterized by deep ethnocultural diversity both within and across neighboring states, where democracy has never had a strong foothold, and a new political elite, interested in political reform, cannot rely on sound traditions of democratic reasoning or institution-building.

After the collapse of communist regimes, early predictions of the rapid unraveling of communism, effective democratization, swift consolidation of economic liberalism and institutions of liberal democracy failed, as well as pessimistic warnings on the imminent Balkanization of the region due to the rise of ultranationalism and perpetual ethnic conflict. As Janusz Bugajski notes, those observers of the region's political development who took the above mentioned stances, either ignored or overestimated a number of essential variables, including the legacies of the communist past, the social and cultural context in which the new institutions were supposed to function, the conditionalities of effectiveness of those institutions, and the threats and challenges to democratic reform. In a more balanced account, the eastern half of the continent "has witnessed enormous diversifica-

³⁵ Many expressed views on that matter. See: Binder 1964, Huntington 1968, Lind 1994, Gottlieb 1994, Lichtenberg 1996 and Bauböck 1998.

³⁶ In one of his writings, Walker Connor offers the following relevant information. A survey of the 132 entities generally considered to be states in 1971 found that only 12 (9.1%) could be justifiably described as nation-states; 25 (18.9%) contained a nation or a potential nation accounting for more than 90% of the population, but also contained at least one important minority; another 25 (18.9%) contained a nation or a potential nation accounting for between 75% and 89% of the population; in 31 (23.5%) the largest ethnic group comprises between 50% and 74% of the population; in 39 (29.5%) the largest nation or potential nation accounts for less than half of the population. See Connor, *Op. cit.*: 96. Though the tendency toward an increasing number of states (to 192 as of 2002) logically should have diminished the gap between the ethnocultural diversity and the ethnopolitical arrangement of contemporary world, the contrary is true: the states that have come into being since 1971 have increased rather than reduced the diversity indicators of the countries recognized as sovereign by the international community.

³⁷ According to the 2001-2002 Freedom House Report, 144 out of 192 countries were found to be free or partly free, which means that rule in those countries was based on full-fledged, "semi" or "formal" democracy. Regarding the relevance of unaccommodated diversity to the prospects of democratization, it is important to mention that all 12 cases listed by the report as "Disputed Territories" were registered in countries that fall in the "not free" category. See Karatnycky 2002: 729-731.

tion in the pace and content of political and economic transformation, and numerous challenges to the ‘completion’ or consolidation of the democratization process. Indeed, the region as a whole can be viewed as an ongoing experiment in pluralism and liberalism, the results of which continue to vary from state to state.”³⁸

Following Sherman Garnett’s classification,³⁹ Bugajski distinguishes four categories of post-communist states: (1) regimes with functioning democracies and robust civil societies; (2) pluralist systems with weak democratic institutions and nascent civil societies; (3) regimes that place order above democracy; (4) unstable regimes, in which the outcome of the post-totalitarian transition is still uncertain. The first two categories include most of the Central European and Baltic countries, which have displayed greater success in building stable pluralistic democracies, the latter two describe the majority of the post-Soviet and Southeast European states as societies burdened by bureaucratism, corruption, the absence of an effective judicial system, manipulation of populist and nationalist themes, cliquish politics and patronage networks in which the elements of the old *nomenklatura* continue to dominate.⁴⁰

Though this classification needs further nuancing, it is beyond doubt that one of the explanatory variables of the gap between the post-communist political development of Central Europe and the Baltic states, on one hand, and Southeast Europe and the post-Soviet countries, on the other, is the degree of diversity and the prominence of identity politics. While states in the first category—with the notable exception of the three Baltic countries and Slovakia—are closest to the nationalistic ideal of congruence between political and ethnic boundaries, and thus there is no ethnopolitical stake for actors on the political scene; countries of the second category are burdened without exception with the historical legacy of competing communal identities, as well as with the consequences of historically unaccommodated diversity. It is not by accident, then, that ethnically focused political action—“ranging from ethnic voting to ethnic cleansing,” as Jonathan P. Stein notes⁴¹—is a distinctive feature of the political development in Southeast Europe and in a large majority of the post-Soviet states.

Indeed, several aspects of the transition to democracy in the region bear the evidence of strong ethnic bias, and the democratization process has conflict-generating consequences which are usually not salient in more ethnically homogeneous post-communist societies. Ethnic bias is present in constitutional design, in the way in which separation of powers in the state has been institutionalized, in choice of electoral systems and dis-

³⁸ Bugajski 2002: xv.

³⁹ Garnett, *Op. cit.*: xxi.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Ibid.* Based on a different methodology, where the “democratization score” includes indicators of the political process, civil society, independent media, governance and public administration, a report of Freedom House offers the following “democracy ranking”: *consolidated democracies* are considered to be (in decreasing order of the scores) Poland, Slovenia, Lithuania, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Slovakia, Czech Rep., Bulgaria, Croatia; *transitional democracies* are Romania, Yugoslavia, Albania, Macedonia, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Bosnia, Ukraine, Russia, Kyrgyz Rep., Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan; while Uzbekistan, Belarus and Turkmenistan are *consolidated autocracies*. See Karatnycky, Motyl, Schnitzer 2002: 22.

⁴¹ Stein 2002: 1.

districts, in territorial-administrative design of the state, in organizing local and regional authorities and devolving the centralized power to them, in property restitution and resource allocation. Ethnic cleavages influence party politics and amplify authoritarian challenges and nationalist threats to the consolidation of democracy.

In terms of constitutional design, for instance, most of the new constitutions adopted in Southeastern Europe define statehood in ethnic, national or cultural terms, rather than in civic-territorial language. As a consequence, the respective constitutions “have singled out the majority ethnic group as the state-forming nation, with attendant privileges, whereas all other ethnicities are considered minorities and invariably confront discrimination,” according to Bugajski,⁴² and “proclaimed the dominant ethnic group’s symbolic ownership of the state,” as J. P. Stein puts it.⁴³ The “constitutional nationalism”⁴⁴ is also manifest in several non-negotiable symbolic issues, like the character of the state (unitary or federal), anthems, national flags and official holidays, which are least amendable to negotiation and compromise, excluding the often sizeable minorities from the chance to include in the agenda of public debate issues of their concern. Regarding the unitarianism versus federalism debate, for instance, Bugajski mentions Romania, Slovakia and Macedonia as states in which “suspicions have been voiced... that support for federalism among the major ethnic minorities could lead to eventual calls for separatism.”⁴⁵

The way in which the political systems of the region’s states were chosen also bares relevance to the ethnic focus in political action. Most states in Eastern Europe have established parliamentary forms of government in which the executive (prime minister and cabinet) are responsible to Parliament, combined with direct presidential elections. The chosen systems are thus neither purely presidential nor parliamentary, but mixed in complex ways, which offers opportunities to the president to increase his or her influence, particularly in the conditions of purely institutionalized and fragmented party systems. For some observers, this alternative has the advantage of allowing presidents to use their popular mandate in overriding the “corrosive effects on ethnic relations of party formation and competition,” and to “carve out political space for managing tension.”⁴⁶ While in a few instances this has been indeed the case, in most Southeastern European countries the directly elected presidents view themselves as representatives of the dominant ethnic group, who exercise their role as a national, rather than a state guardian.⁴⁷

Electoral systems, too, bear the consequences of improperly accommodated diversity. Though in the case of the region’s sizeable minorities, capable of mobilizing sufficient electoral support to surpass the established threshold, the adopted electoral systems of proportional representation has provided regular representation in Parliament, the pres-

⁴² Bugajski, *Op. cit.*: xxxv.

⁴³ Stein, *Op. cit.*: 10.

⁴⁴ Robert Hayden’s term. See Hayden (1992: 654-674) and Julie Mostov quoted in Stein, *Op. cit.*: 10.

⁴⁵ Bugajski, *Op. cit.*: xxviii.

⁴⁶ Stein, *Op. cit.*: 12.

⁴⁷ Stein mentions Croatia and Serbia under the presidency of Franjo Tudjman and Slobodan Milosevic as eloquent examples; Romania under the first two mandates of president Iliescu, Slovakia under Michal Kováč, together with Macedonia headed by Kiro Gligorov are more ambiguous instances. *Op. cit.*: 13.

ence of minority representatives in the legislative bodies of most post-communist states has a mere symbolic or decorative role, which proves to remain insufficient to allow a more substantial incorporating of the ethnic minorities' concerns in the political agenda. Besides this major disadvantage from the minorities' point of view, the electoral system based on proportional representation started to disappoint the expectations of majorities also, as is the case in Romania. However, due to the lack of a viable alternative to Parliament as the dominant institutional site for ethnic conflict management, the debate on the need to modernize electoral systems will probably trigger further controversies between majorities and minorities in the region.

The circumstances of deep diversity have a considerable impact on the interest-aggregation and party formation habits of the region, too. Bugajski identifies three categories of political actors that might be considered responses to the challenge of diversity: nationalist parties, ethnic minority and religious parties, and regionalist parties, all of which are characterized by a certain focus on "ethnic community, as the subject of unity, sovereignty and statehood."⁴⁸

Under the heading of "nationalist parties" Bugajski further differentiates five distinct categories. (1) *Independence-focused formations* were active during the disintegration of the Yugoslav, Soviet and Czechoslovak federations. After achieving statehood, many of these parties split into moderate and extremist successor formations. (2) *Moderate or democratic nationalists* are tolerant to ethnic diversity, but are often assimilationist, and generally oppose the expansion of collective rights to ethnic, religious or regional minorities, as this would undermine, in their view, the democratization of the state. Moderate nationalists are active, however, on behalf of sizeable ethnic groups in neighboring states, like moderate nationalist parties in Albania and Hungary. (3) *Conservative nationalist parties* display a more pronounced degree of ethnic chauvinism, their ideologies including elements of clerical radicalism, folk traditionalism and ethnic populism. The leadership of parties of that kind consists of former communists who have adopted nationalist position, or former anti-communist dissidents who have become xenophobes. They usually oppose and blame foreign involvement in the national culture and economy, launch regular attacks against secularism and liberalism, and scapegoat minorities for supporting alien interests and unfairly benefiting from economic reform. Parties of that kind have played a more significant role, according to Bugajski, in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (as ruling parties), in Serbia and Montenegro (as components of the opposition movement), in Romania and Slovakia as coalition partners with ex-communists, and in Hungary and Macedonia as holders of a significant percentage of seats in the Parliament. In Poland, Ukraine, Albania, Bulgaria, Slovenia and the Czech Republic they proved, at least in the first decade of the transition, marginal players in national politics. (4) *Socialist nationalist formations* have their origins in that part of the *nomenklatura* that remained active after the collapse of the communism. Their ideology and political program are flexible, but usually exploit nationalist themes, their discourse evolving around the protection of "national interests" against internal and external subversion. Ethnic minorities, perceived as a threat to "national integrity," are targeted occasionally in repressive campaigns, in

⁴⁸ Bugajski, *Op. cit.*: xxxiv.

order to broaden their constituency. Socialist nationalist parties have ruled for at least one mandate in Serbia, Romania, Slovakia and Bulgaria. (5) *Neofascist formations* are the most radical ultranationalist groupings that share many of the features of conservative and socialist nationalists, but, in addition, they lay a strong emphasis on the leadership principle, on strict party hierarchy and open hostility toward ethnic and religious minorities, who, together with foreigners of all kinds and neighboring nations, are considered inferior to the majority they represent. Neofascist formations are viewed by Bugajski to have been most active and visible in Serbia, Croatia, Romania and Hungary, where they have tried, though with limited influence, to resuscitate the memory of the pro-Nazi regimes during WWII.⁴⁹

Bugajski's extensive survey of political parties and formations identified five categories of ethnic or religious parties as well, with the common feature of "focus on issues of direct and often exclusive concern for a distinct segment of population" and a tendency "to collectivize political life and invariably limit the political or ideological choices minority populations make."⁵⁰ (1) The first category of politically mobilized ethnic groupings includes organizations oriented toward *cultural revivalism*, usually among small or dispersed ethnic, religious or regional minorities, with limited experience of sovereignty or statehood. These formations focus on demands targeting freedom and resources to rebuild, sustain and develop their cultural, religious and educational institutions, to redefine their history or reinforce their identity. (2) The formation oriented toward *political autonomism* is characteristic for minority populations that constituted majorities in previously existing states or that possess traditions of political activism within a multiethnic state-formation. Their objectives aim at pronounced forms of self-organization within a territory traditionally inhabited by members of the respective community. Political autonomy is also preferred to territorial self-government in ethnically mixed regions where no single group predominates. (3) The tendency toward *territorial self-determination* can be observed among large, well-organized and territorially compact ethnic groups that form the relative or absolute majority of the population in a particular region. Their interest lays in the reorganization of the state into administrative subunits (federal or confederate) due to which the specific region is expected to gain some degree of autonomy or full republican status. (4) *Separatism* occurs in the case of territorially compact ethnic groups with some tradition of statehood of their own, who oppose their continuing inclusion into the current political framework, and, due to the fear of loss of status, campaign for their own, independent state structures. (5) *Irredentism* is characteristic for those separatists who seek to join neighboring state-formations, either as autonomous regions or as integral administrative units. They are sometimes directly assisted by neighboring states that wish to expand their borders.⁵¹

Finally, regionalist parties are defined by Bugajski as those political formations that are (1) based around a single, territorially compact ethnic group that seeks administrative or territorial autonomy within the state; (2) multiethnic groupings which campaign for political devolution or regional autonomy; (3) other regional movements which may

⁴⁹ For details see *Op. cit.*: xl.

⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*: li.

⁵¹ For details see *Op. cit.*: lii.

involve political formations in different regions that seeking broad decentralization from the state, or stronger positions to negotiate with the central government.⁵²

This wide array of ethnopolitical actors have influenced the path to democratization in post-communist Europe in several ways. By and large, “the emergence of a pluralistic political spectrum has been obstructed in several Eastern European countries by nationalist, ethnic and regionalist politics,” as Bugajski puts it.⁵³ The evaluation of the impact of the three categories of actors has to be nuanced, however. While most observers agree that nationalist parties have generally obstructed the democratization process, there are views according to which ethnic and regionalist parties may play in some cases—at least a circumstantial—role in smoothing the progress of transition.

The nationalist parties’ “contribution” to transition consists mainly in aggravating the consequences of communism’s legacies and fostering authoritarianism, by means of capitalizing on the nationalist sentiment and exploiting minorities and foreigners (and sometimes neighboring states) as scapegoats.

As far as its ethnopolitical consequences are concerned, the inheritance of the communist regimes is highly contradictory. One has to take into account, on one hand, the rich experience of multinational states in trying to accommodate diversity through various instruments ranging from promotion and cooption of an ethnic minority elite (as in Albania, Bulgaria and Romania after 1968), providing territorial autonomy (as in Romania until 1968, Kosovo and Vojvodina until 1980), to ethno-territorial federalism (as in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia).⁵⁴ It is not less true, on the other hand, that in addition to these top-down solutions, the anti-democratic political culture of communism did not favor the development of principles for mediating and resolving intergroup conflicts, particularly not disputes of competing ethnic identities and interests. Instead, as Bugajski notes, “cultural, ethnic, and political diversity was depicted as a threat to both nation and the state.”⁵⁵

This double-sided legacy has been—and still is, in several cases—diligently exploited by nationalist parties and elites. First and above all, the bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia—completed by the more peaceful falling apart of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union—has discredited the ethno-federal arrangement as a solution for accommodating deep diversity. Secondly, governing elites belonging to today’s majorities in the newly or reestablished post-communist states were, as J. P. Stein remarks,⁵⁶ minorities in previous federal states who tend to see—now confronted with the demand for autonomy, partner-nation status or ethno-federalism on behalf of their own minorities—the same slippery slope to secession on which their own history slid down.

Being faced with such a “threat,” it is no wonder that nationalist parties prove efficient in focusing political life around collective national questions rather than civic issues and priorities of the democratic reform. In a carefully maintained atmosphere of collective

⁵² Cf. *Op. cit.*: lii-liiii.

⁵³ *Op. cit.*: xli.

⁵⁴ Cf. J. P. Stein, *Op. cit.*: 7.

⁵⁵ Bugajski, *Op. cit.*: xxx.

⁵⁶ Cf. Stein, *Op. cit.*: 8. In a similar context, Stein mentions as one of the region’s particularity that “today’s majority oppressors were yesterday’s oppressed minorities.” *Op. cit.*: 21.

fear, it is relatively easy to push through “simplistic populist, nationalist and xenophobic solutions to complex structural problems,”⁵⁷ or to divert public attention from the burdens and necessities of political and economic reform by identifying minorities, aliens or neighboring states as enemies seeking to subvert both society and the state.

As Bugajski warns, this popular perception of internal and external threat can act as catalyst for the emergence of authoritarian regimes, or, at least, obstruct and delay progress toward liberal democracy, rule of law and the development of a participatory civic society. Even where nationalist parties do not hold political office, by attacking the government for neglecting the country’s “national interest,” they may play a destabilizing role, and the long term impact of their activity may seriously hinder “democratic consolidation, institution building, political competition, cross-party consensus building, economic stabilization, administrative decentralization, trans-ethnic citizenship, and legalized minority rights.”⁵⁸ The topics pushed on the public agenda by nationalist parties may also force even democratically elected administrations, fearing loss of control over decision-making, to rally around nationalist and xenophobic topics, drawing on Carl Schmitt’s logic according to which the perceived domestic or foreign threat helps unite people.

As far as ethnic parties are concerned, their impact on the democratization process of post-communist countries is more controversial. While Bugajski admits, for instance, that “ethnic parties may enter into coalition governments with reformist forces that recognize the importance of minority rights and that seek minority representation in the administration to buttress their reform program”⁵⁹ and accepts, thus, that parties or political groupings of that kind are in some instances agents of democratization, J. P. Stein observes several drawbacks for the democratic consolidation posed by the existence, activity and prolonged success of ethnic parties in post-communist Europe. Though he admits that the existence of ethnic parties is justified, in a way, in the conditions of a “confluence of ethnic groups’ fears about the future and electoral competition in a context of weak state capacities and uncertain national identities,”⁶⁰ Stein sees several negative consequences, for the prospects of democratization, of that particular kind of response to the challenge of unaccommodated diversity. First, he considers that minority groups headed by ethnic parties are “ethnically bounded communities” within which intra-group competition is successfully blocked. Secondly, he seems to be convinced that ethnic parties impede the formation of cross-ethnic coalitions, preventing situations in which moderate minority leaders join forces with moderate players of the majority. Third, ethnic parties recurrently reproduce the division of labor on the political marketplace between ethnic and non-ethnic issues, precluding that reform-minded political parties of the majority include in their program or agenda issues of identifying institutional solutions meant to accommodate diversity.⁶¹

The problem of coalition politics and cross-ethnic coalitions is addressed by Bugajski, too, who reaches a somewhat different conclusion as compared to Stein’s. Acknowledging the difficult nature of the question whether multiparty or multimovement coalitions are

⁵⁷ Bugajski, *Op. cit.*: xxix.

⁵⁸ *Op. cit.*: xli.

⁵⁹ *Op. cit.*: li.

⁶⁰ Stein, *Op. cit.*: 18.

⁶¹ For details see *Op. cit.*: 18-24.

fostering political transformation or, rather, they obstruct and unnecessarily prolong democratization, he identifies in the end of his survey several reasons that, in multiethnic or “multi-regional” states, minorities or regionalist parties are incorporated in the government. Such reasons are the sincere effort (1) to resolve ethnic disputes, regional demands and minority grievances; (2) to meet international criteria of human or minority rights and recommended standards of state behavior; (3) to secure membership in various international organizations such as NATO and the EU; (4) to prevent ethno-regional polarization and provide minority and regional communities with a stake in implementing political and economic reform.⁶² These efforts or attempts were found by Bugajski to result in various power-sharing formulae, in which minority coalition partners receive the key ministries which most closely correspond to their policy priorities, or obtain a proportional share of seats in the cabinet in turn for their participation in the coalition. The fundamental question is, though, the effectiveness and the ability of coalition politics to implement the desired policy reform. In such a context, Bugajski mentions two of the cases studied in the present volume, the “multiethnic governments” of Romania and Slovakia, as “valuable examples” which he finds to have recorded, however, a misfit between commitment to stability and commitment to reform: while they proved efficient in preventing the escalation of ethnic or regional divisions, the price of postponing the implementation of far-reaching economic reforms had to be paid, nevertheless, for this achievement, due in essence to the main concern of the government to keep the coalition together rather than pursuing unpopular reforms.⁶³ Bugajski also warns about the possibility that the failure of such coalitions, particularly in the absence of credible democratic alternatives, may create political space for the return of authoritarian, post-communist or other autocratic forces.

This brief survey of ethnopolitical actors and techniques in post-communist Europe may suffice to help us conclude that ethnic bias and ethnically motivated political action is indeed an important explanatory variable for the relationship between deep diversity and democratic consolidation. Yet, it is not more self-evident than at the outset whether democracy in Southeastern Europe is possible in the standard, Western sense of the term, or whether some region-specific alternative must be devised.

The Need for Innovation

The briefly explored Southeastern European context has yielded some of the conceptual difficulties which have to be taken into account when formulating policy responses appropriate to fostering democratic development in deeply divided societies, seriously burdened by the communist legacy.⁶⁴

⁶² For more details see Bugajski, *Op. cit.*: liii-lv and lvi-lvii.

⁶³ *Op. cit.*: lvi.

⁶⁴ J. P. Stein offers two examples of the ambiguities incurred both by domestic elite and international organizations when looking for solutions in ethnically driven politics: (1) the incoherence of the term “communitarian autonomy” included in the program of the ethnic Hungarian party in Romania (DAHR), and (2) the ambiguity of the Council of Europe’s 1201 Recommendation, “whose vague and incomplete language provides ammunition for all sides and clarity for none.” Stein, *Op. cit.*: 23.

The first difficulty lies probably in the inadequacy, as compared to the particularities of the region, of the most frequently used terms. *Multicultural democracy*, for instance, perceived according to the western standards (ignoring here, for the sake of brevity, the variations of the idiom's significance across the most developed liberal democracies) remains a pure declarative target in diverse societies like the ones in the Balkans; recommendations to deploy *civic nationalism* instead of ethnic loyalties remains inapplicable not only amid ethnic minorities but for state-forming majorities, too; and the standards of *acceptable state behavior* recurrently prove to be in conflict with the objective of consolidating democracy in the region.⁶⁵

Beyond the sterility of the recommendations, one attempt to break the vicious circle may prove to have a critical look at the Western senses of the frequently cited phrases.

Building on the work of Will Kymlicka,⁶⁶ we can deduce, for instance, that the success of *liberal democracy* throughout the world has required three conditions: (1) the ethnocultural homogeneity of the society; (2) special group rights, differentiated according to the nature of the problem, where homogeneity is not provided; (3) a certain ambiguity of the official discourse, treating the institutionalized group rights as marginal phenomena, a pragmatic response to particular needs which are not worth opening to normative or standard setting approaches. Based on Kymlicka's extensive research that brought to the surface those contingencies of liberal democracy which are obscured by the official discourse, we can conclude that the term itself implies more than is regularly assumed, when reference is made to its applicability in post-communist contexts—it includes protective measures for minority interests against the majority, where required. Since in certain regions of post-communist Europe diversity is a prevailing feature and, as we have seen, group rights protecting minority interests against decisions of the majority are perceived as pernicious, liberal democracy in this form seems inapplicable, and alternatives are needed that are more suitable to the peculiarities of the region.

One alternative at hand would be what several observers call, following Sammy Smooha, an *ethnic democracy*. According to Smooha,⁶⁷ the distinctive features of an *ethnic democracy* are the following: (1) ethnic nationalism installs a single core ethnic nation in the state; (2) the state separates membership in the single core ethnic nation from citizenship; (3) the state is owned and ruled by the core ethnic nation for its primordial benefit; (4) the state mobilizes the core ethnic nation; (5) non-core groups are granted incomplete individual and collective rights; (6) the state allows non-core groups to conduct parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggle for change; (7) the state perceives non-core

⁶⁵ J. P. Stein, in his study extensively quoted in the above, finally reaches the conclusion that the chances of the region to “unbind” itself from ethnically driven politics and develop civil politics is obscured by the paradox formulated, among others, by Huntington: “authority has to exist before it can be limited” (Huntington 1968: 8). Indeed, since liberal democracy has historically followed, not preceded, effective institutionalization of the rule of law, for weak states in post-communist Europe there is limited room for maneuver to avoid relying on ethnically motivated policy-making.

⁶⁶ Kymlicka 1995.

⁶⁷ Smooha 2002: 475-503. The model initially elaborated, in 1989, for Israel, subsequently has been applied by different authors to Estonia, Latvia, Northern Ireland and Slovakia.

groups as a threat to the survival and integrity of the core-nation. The threat varies both in nature (real or apparent) and contents. Threats regularly include demographic increase and preponderance, excessive political power, unfair economic competition, downgrading of national culture, dilution of the “pure ethnic stock,” national security risks, loyalty to an external homeland and unrest and instability amid non-core groups. As one of Smooha’s followers remarks, “Perceived threats are widespread in different kinds of democracy, but only in ethnic democracy they are an integral part of the system, enduring and obsessive.”⁶⁸ Smooha’s comment on the same topic: “If the majority feels well established and no longer threatened, ethnic democracy may become redundant and change to another type of democracy.”⁶⁹

Smooha observes that factors conducive to the emergence of this particular kind of democracy are present in several Central and Eastern European countries: the pre-existence of ethnic nationalism which seeks to take precedence over the state; the perceived threat that results in the mobilization of the majority in order to protect its own interests; the majority’s (pragmatic or ideological) commitment to democracy; appropriate (manageable) size of the minority. Since most of these conditions are given in several post-communist countries, political elites of the region are prone, in Smooha’s views, to develop into ethnic democracies.

Indeed, ethnic democracy is closest to the political reality in some of the investigated states, and farthest from the Western ideals. As Smooha acknowledges: “ethnic democracy meets the minimal and procedural definition of democracy, but in quality it falls short of the major Western civic (liberal and multicultural) democracies.”⁷⁰ To accept it as a normative solution to the region’s problems would mean to give in to the anti-democratic interests of nationalists and post-communists, and would be, in essence, against the spirit of the democratization project in Central and Eastern Europe.⁷¹

A second alternative to liberal democracy in the Central and Eastern European context could be what different authors in different contexts call a *multicultural*, *multinational* or *multiethnic democracy*.⁷² Though the three terms are most frequently considered to

⁶⁸ Järve 2000: 22.

⁶⁹ Smooha, *Op. cit.*: 479.

⁷⁰ *Op. cit.*: 478.

⁷¹ It is interesting to note here that the term *ethnodemocracy*, in the sense comparable to Smooha’s *ethnic democracy*, occurs in a recent work of Jack Snyder: *From Voting to Violence. Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (2000). With the help of several historical and contemporary case studies, including Germany, Britain, France, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, India, Rwanda and Burundi, the book seeks to demonstrate the thesis according to which democratization increases the risk of nationalist conflict. In context, Snyder expresses firm conviction that the different forms of ethnodemocracy one can meet in the democratizing states of the world, including post-communist Europe, are a threat to democratic peace. See *Op. cit.*: 352-353.

⁷² Though Kymlicka’s name is frequently and in several ways associated with *multiculturalism*, it is important to mention here that the Canadian philosopher remains an advocate of liberal democracy, which he considers applicable, through a lengthier process of adaptation and innovations, to the Central and Eastern European context. He goes on to say that there are actually quite a few viable alternatives to Western models of accommodating diversity, the essence of which he sum-

be coterminous, they refer usually to very different and often incompatible things. An eloquent proof of this statement can be found in a recent book edited by Alain-G. Gagnon and James Tully,⁷³ in which an attempt is made to define multinational democracy as opposed to its liberal, multiethnic or multicultural equivalent. According to the editors, the term *multinational democracy*, instead of denoting a set of uniquely defining properties, refers to a complex of political phenomena with the following four particularities: (1) In contrast to single-nation democracies, which are often presumed to be the norm, multinational democracies “are constitutional associations that contain two or more nations or peoples (...) recognized as self-governing peoples with the right of self-determination as this is understood in international law and democratic theory.” Since the members of the association are nations, they aspire to recognition not only within the frameworks of the multinational association they are member of, but also in international law and different international regimes, like, for instance, the four nations of the United Kingdom. (2) Multinational democracies tend to exhibit both federal and confederate features, citizens and their representatives participating both in the political institutions of their self-governing nations and in those of the larger, self-governing multination. Jurisdictions, modes of participations and of representation, national and multinational identities of citizens overlap and are subject to negotiation. (3) The composite nations and the multination are all constitutional democracies. Thus, it runs against the prevailing norms of a single-nation democracy, which is why it is condemned as unreasonable or abnormal by both the defenders of status quo and the proponents of secession. (4) Both the composite nations and the multinational association are also multicultural, comprising different ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities who seek recognition of and accommodation for their diversity. The struggles over minority and multinational diversity overlap, compete and are subject to democratic negotiation as well.⁷⁴

An important consequence of the above definition is that the members of the multination “become citizens of the larger multinational society by participating in the process of identity formation and discussion of the proposed identity of the multinational democracy.”⁷⁵ This means that the forms of recognition of the members can no longer be determined from outside the political process itself, but, “in virtue of direct and indirect participation in the struggle for reciprocal disclosure and acknowledgement,” members are “free to initiate constitutional change,” as they develop and amend their modes of recognition and cooperation.⁷⁶

Though he is not very explicit in this concern, Tully’s view on multinational democracy can be read as a vision of a society in which struggle for recognition of cultural identities is an enduring feature, reason for which the freedom of the members to initiate change in constitutional rules of mutual recognition, disclosure and cooperation has to be provided in order to facilitate their adaptation to the conditions as their identities devel-

marizes as “immigrant multiculturalism and multination federation.” “Whatever the limits of these models,” he argues, “the alternatives may be even worse” (Kymlicka, Opalski 2000: 7).

⁷³ Gagnon, Tully 2001.

⁷⁴ For details see Tully, *Op. cit.*: 2-4.

⁷⁵ *Op. cit.*: 25. (Italics in the original.)

⁷⁶ Cf. *Op. cit.*: 30-33.

op and change. As opposed to the prevailing wisdom, the institutional setup of multinational democracy is meant, thus, in Tully's account, to deal *not* with the consequences of the past, but with foreseeable evolutions of the future.

Multinational democracy, in Tully's sense, may be desirable in some countries of post-communist Europe and conducive, probably, to narrowing the gap between Western and post-communist interpretations of democracy. But since it says nothing about the way in which the main of its tenets—the mutual recognition of self-governing people—can be reached, it is yet quite far from the political practices of the most problematic cases in Southeastern Europe and elsewhere.⁷⁷

The third alternative to liberal democracy is the *consociational, power-sharing arrangement*. The theory of consociational theory, though emblematically linked with Arend Lijphart's name, was developed over three decades ago, due to the simultaneous, though largely independent works of Lijphart,⁷⁸ Daalder,⁷⁹ Lorwin,⁸⁰ Lembruch⁸¹ and Steiner.⁸² Initially, it was a descriptive-explanatory theory that sought to explain the conditions and determinants of political stability in states with deeply segmented political cultures. It operates with the concept of “vertically encapsulated and mutually hostile political sub-cultures,” across which elite political behavior may build “arches” of cooperation and accommodation, ensuring thus the system's—regularly fragile—stability.

The theory has triggered lively debate, and opinions on its merits and relevance are divided. While Kurt Richard Luther, for instance, considers that “consociational theory undeniably constitutes one of the most influential post-war contributions to the comparative study of West European politics,”⁸³ J. P. Stein, in turn, sees that a “vision of shared state ‘ownership’ by *nationally defined* citizens departs considerably from the civic notions of collectively exercised individual rights that animate the operative and proposed legal instruments promulgated by IGOs such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE.” This is “illiberal in the name of stability” since “its requirement of highly disciplined constituencies discourages democratic practices within ethnic groups.”⁸⁴

It would be beyond the scope of the introduction to go deeper into the complexities of this debate. For our present purpose it may suffice to rely on a recent paper by Lijphart,⁸⁵ in which he summarizes his most recent position regarding the topic, and reacts briefly to some of the recurrent accusations against his theoretical stand.

Acknowledging that consociational theory has undergone a significant evolution during the past thirty years, Lijphart reinforces the essence of his earlier stances and admits the modifications he endorsed during the past years with regard to: (1) the terminology, (2) the constitutive elements of a consociational democracy and (3) the relevance problem.

⁷⁷ For recent writing on this topic, see: Cornwell, Stoddard 2001 and Ghai 2000.

⁷⁸ See also Lijphart 1969: 207-225.

⁷⁹ Daalder 1971: 355-370 and “The Consociational Democracy Theme” 1974: 604-621.

⁸⁰ Lorwin 1971: 141-175.

⁸¹ Lehbruch 1975: 377-391.

⁸² Steiner 1969, 1981 and 1998.

⁸³ Luther 1999: 3.

⁸⁴ Stein 2002 (*italics in the original*).

⁸⁵ Lijphart 2000: 425-431.

As far as the issue of the relevant terminology is concerned, he admits that the idea of consociational democracy has undergone, indeed, “a conceptual stretching,”⁸⁶ and for the time being he considers that “consociational democracy” is coterminous with “power-sharing” and closely related to, though not identical with, “consensus democracy.”

The accusation of “conceptual stretching” also refers to the fact that Lijphart resumed his earlier definition of the term from five to four constitutive elements: grand coalition of the main political subcultures, segmental autonomy of the subcultures, proportionality and mutual veto. By relegating to the fifth position the criterion of a plural, deeply divided society present in earlier versions of his theory, the concept became applicable beyond the realm of ethnically divided societies, wherever deep divisions among well articulated political subcultures are provided.

As far as the relevance problem is concerned, Lijphart seems convinced that in real world democracies there is an undeniable strong correlation between the degree of pluralism and the degree of consensus democracy.⁸⁷ With respect to the question whether consociational theory has any normative relevance at all, or it remains a powerful empirical instrument only, in the foreword (written in 2001) to the Romanian edition of his *Democracy in Plural Societies*, Lijphart reinforces his earlier stand concerning the strong normative relevance of consociationalism: “consociational democracy is the *most promising* form of democracy for plural societies and is *the only form of democracy possible* in deeply divided societies.”⁸⁸

Despite Lijphart’s open-ended encouragement for “consociational engineering” in deeply divided societies, many observers see in consociational forms of democracy a diminished subtype, which lacks those attributes of inclusion and integration that are present in a full-fledged liberal democracy.⁸⁹ Regarding the applicability question, for instance, some critics argue that the model is out of the question in deeply divided societies where segmentation or “pillarization” (the occurrence of organizational networks that share and uphold the identity of the rival subcultures) is not provided at the outset.⁹⁰ Others believe that the problem of sequence or causality may be more complicated: pillarization may also be regarded as the consequence of the accommodative consociational techniques, not only as that threat to stability which consociational arrangements are supposed to overcome.⁹¹

Since none of the alternatives to liberal democracy inventoried above appear both plausible and desirable in the specific context of post-communist Europe, we have hopefully

⁸⁶ Matthijs Bogaards’ term used in Bogaards 2000: 395-423.

⁸⁷ Lijphart, *Op. cit.*: 428-429.

⁸⁸ Lijphart 2002: 14. (Italics in the original.)

⁸⁹ Tully for instance remarks in *Multinational Democracies* that in consociational democracies it might happen that a consociational elite negotiates forms of recognition or accommodation “behind the backs of citizens,” “outside the political process itself.” Tully, *Op. cit.*: 24.

⁹⁰ A similar debate occurred recently, concerning the consequences of the participation in the government of the Hungarian minority’s political organization in Romania (DAHR), within the *Provincia* group, initiated by distinguished Romanian and Hungarian intellectuals in Transylvania. The texts of the debate are available—in Romanian and Hungarian languages—on the group’s website: <http://www.provincia.ro>

⁹¹ See Luther, *Op. cit.*

explored plenty of arguments sustaining the need for innovation. Innovation in the explored context can be justified and conceived in several manners. It can be understood in the sense recommended by Will Kymlicka and Magda Opalski, for instance, who believe that:

Many intellectuals and policy-makers in Eastern Europe have no clear idea of the principles underlying... Western standards. They are told that respect for minorities is an essential part of democratization, but are not told why minority rights are linked to democracy, or how these rights relate to principles of justice or freedom. Under these circumstances, it is essential to establish a genuine dialogue on this issue involving both Western and Eastern European scholars and practitioners.⁹²

Such an explorative dialogue has to resolve difficult tasks since:

In any plausible scenario for the foreseeable future of ECE [East Central Europe], we will face the need to balance nation-building and minority rights. No matter how complex the emerging web of transnational institutions, we will still face the problem that some circumscribed set of people will have the power to make decisions regarding issues of language, culture, education, media, mobility, citizenship and naturalization, and so on. Wherever these powers are located, we can reasonably predict they will be exercised in a way that promotes and privileges the language, culture, and identity of the dominant group... Minorities will respond by demanding the sorts of rights and powers that will protect them from the potential injustices implicit in these majoritarian nation-building policies. The site of these decision-making processes may change, but the dialect of nation-building and minority rights will continue.⁹³

Innovation can also be envisaged in the sense of the concluding reflections of J. J. Linz and A. Stepan's book, who recall that "democratic institutions have not to be only created, but crafted, nurtured and developed." As far as the possible content of the innovation is concerned, they go on saying:

It is time to problematize and transcend 'illiberal liberalism' and also to theorize and socially construct integrative identity politics, as opposed to endlessly fragmenting identity politics. Further, to argue that democracy is better than any other form of government once alternatives have been in crisis is not sufficient. Democracy has to be defended on its own merits. Clearly, more research should also be devoted to learning about the great variety of democratic regimes that actually exist in the world. Most important, new *political projects*, as well as research endeavors, must be devoted to improving the *quality* of consolidated democracies.⁹⁴

⁹² Kymlicka, Opalski, *Op. cit.*: 5.

⁹³ Kymlicka, *Op. cit.*: 397.

⁹⁴ Linz, Stepan, *Op. cit.*: 457.

About This Book

The present volume is a modest attempt at such a research endeavor that intends to explore the policy impact of a similar policy project, aiming at improving the quality of transitional democracies, which occurred almost simultaneously in three Central Eastern European countries, Macedonia, Romania and Slovakia. The project consists in incorporating representatives of ethnic minority parties in governing coalitions, on behalf of sizable constituencies in the respective states.

Of the cases included in the volume, the first multiethnic coalition in post-communist Europe occurred in Romania after the 1996 elections, when the political organization of the Hungarian minority, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) was unexpectedly invited, as the result of political necessity rather than an act of good will, to join the coalition that was preparing to rule the country for next four years. In 1998 similar coalitions were formed in Macedonia and Slovakia.⁹⁵

The importance of such a political project in Central and Eastern Europe cannot be underestimated. In Romania, for instance, the previous six years of transition have yielded plenty of evidence regarding the deep gap between the demands and expectations of the minority and the perception of the majority on what democracy is or should be about. Representative democracy undeniably has been in place in Romania; proportional seats for the minority in Parliament were provided—a minority, however, remains a minority in the Parliament, usually being outvoted by the majority. Endless debates on standards of minority rights, forms and definitions of the state, decentralization, desirable forms of integration of the minority (*collective*, conducive to autonomy, or *individual*, resulting in proportional representation)—issues declared, in most cases, non-negotiable by representatives of the Romanian majority—as well as property restitution, went on for years. The accumulated reciprocal mistrust has been seriously burdening the process of democratization, overloading it with considerable ethnic bias on both sides.

The conditions being evidently different, similar difficulties hindered the success of development of a multiethnic democracy in Slovakia and Macedonia, too.

One of the most frequent forms of mutual mistrust and lack of confidence in agreements between minorities and majorities has to do with the concept of *political integration* in multicultural societies. The guiding principle, in line with liberal democracy, which representatives of the different majorities frequently invoke in similar contexts is “integration yes, forcible assimilation no.” The lack of institutional solutions, however, short of assimilation and of secession at the same time, which could give concreteness to the principle, keeps the competing communities entrapped in a strange vicious circle, in which the minimum of the minority demands are perceived by the majority as the first step to secession, while the maximum of what the majority can offer, consistent with its perception of democracy, is usually interpreted by minorities as the first step to assimilation.

Lacking solid ground for consensus on the debated topics, the political practices of the three investigated post-communist states were pretty close to establishing full-fledged

⁹⁵ More recently, a representative of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria was offered a ministerial portfolio in the Bulgarian government, and a representative of Hungarian minority in Serbia became one of the five deputy prime ministers of the Serbian government.

ethnic democracies, in the sense suggested by Smootha. Though like-minded political practice in the three states constantly generated ambiguities about the authenticity of democracy, it seemed to serve the interests of regional stability, at the cost of sacrificing ethnocultural equity. It seemed, once more, that consolidating democracy in the post-communist conditions of deep diversity requires minority nation-destruction, or at least the deep democratic deficit of symbolic, and thus ineffective, representation.

Though its outcomes are yet far from being unequivocal, the political project of incorporating minorities in governing coalitions can be read—besides several other possibilities of interpretation—as an innovative attempt to offer an alternative to ethnic democracy in Central and Southeast Europe.

Following a methodological introduction are three case studies and updates on the situation. The volume concludes with a comparative analysis of the three country reports. Two useful appendices, referring to legislative provisions concerning minorities in Central and Eastern Europe and a comparative table of the relevant legislation in the three investigated countries complete the volume.

All the contributors to the book express the hope that the project will be found useful by those interested in the policy consequences of ethnic minority participation in post-communist governing coalitions and in the conditionalities of and prospects for democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. All express gratitude to those who facilitated or assisted in the project, as well as the publishers of the present report: LGI–OSI Budapest, where Petra Kovács acted as an experienced consultant, guiding elegantly but firmly throughout the process. In addition, EDRG–Cluj, Romania, offered its infrastructure for accomplishing the project, and many research and academic institutions have backed the three research teams: Fórum Institute in Slovakia, Eurobalkan Institute in Macedonia and the Sociology Department from Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj, Romania. Special thanks are due to Mária Kovács and Brad Fox for translation, copy-editing and proofreading.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Monica Robotin and Zoltán Kali

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METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Monica Robotin and Zoltán Kali

In the perspective of the eastern enlargement of the European Union, the striking significance of solving minority problems and building institutional frameworks for accommodating ethnocultural difference is emphasized in all the reports and recommendations of the international forum. Europe's recent history displays several good practices and patterns of peaceful interethnic cohabitation; however, the particularities of Eastern Europe require a thorough and careful redesigning of these models according to local peculiarities.

The inclusion of the minorities into the executive decision-making body of the country proved to be one attempt in creating patterns of accommodating minorities and assuring the preservation of their ethnic identity. The practice is recently present in Eastern Europe with considerable ongoing effects. But it is still to be analyzed on a case-by-case basis whether the existing examples may be considered models of handling the minority questions in certain countries or they are mere outcomes of political circumstances.

Undoubtedly the implications of minority participation in governance are significant in the perspective of the future of democracies in the region. Therefore, the purpose of the *minorities in government* project was to offer a comprehensive analysis of the consequences of these experiences.

The Research

In 1996 in Romania, a coalition government was formed including the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR), the party representing the Hungarian minority in Romania. In 1998 the Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK), a coalition of parties representing the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, was included in the Slovak government. After the 1998 elections in Macedonia the newly formed government included one of the parties representing the Albanian population: the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP-A).

A number of studies focused on the aspects of ethnic minority parties' participation in governance in the three countries. However, none of these investigations gave a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the power-sharing model on the democratization of the country and on the viability of the model as an instrument of improving majority–minority relations.

The EU accession perspective brings to the fore the need for well-established democratic institutions and the guarantee of political stability in these countries. None of the

countries in focus have a historical tradition of coalition governance, much less the tradition of including minorities in central decision-making. Therefore a thorough knowledge of the recent experiences would constitute the basis for further similar practices in these states or in the region.

The effects of globalization in modern society increase the cultural awareness of minorities and make minority members more conscious of differences between *self* and *other*. In such a situation, attempts to force minorities to assimilate into the dominant society will inevitably contribute to increased social conflict, which may turn into ethnic wars. Scholars consider institutional set-ups meant to preserve ethnic and cultural differences as viable options for nation-state building in our contemporary world.

According to the hypothesis of the research, the participation of the minorities in governance enhances the acceptance of minorities as communities of equal citizens, in spite of their cultural differences. The acceptance and official recognition of difference in both the public and private spheres is one important consequence of minority participation in governance. The balance has to be carefully designed, however, since a more inclusive concept of citizenship should not undermine the integrative capacity of a political community. The analysis of occurring backlashes against minority participation in the act of governing or examples of eventual scapegoating will complete the objectives of the study.

The period of coalition governance with minorities—two years for Slovakia and Macedonia and four in the case of Romania—give sufficient background for concluding policy recommendations and best practices related to minority participation in governance.

An evaluation of the impact of the minority parties' participation in government requires an analysis of the effects of governance. In the first place we will analyze how the minority parties contributed to shaping public policies during the mandate of the government, because, as Almond *et al.* wrote "policy making is the pivotal stage in the political process."¹ Another important aspect considered here is the impact of the minority participation on the democratization process of the country, emphasizing majority–minority relations.

The policy-making process is not an entirely transparent process. Policy-making can not be understood just in terms of how decisions are made. The process can be broken down into four distinct stages: policy initiation, policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation.² Relevant for our analysis are the first three phases of the process.

Policy initiation is the stage when the political agenda is set, both by defining certain problems as issues and by determining how these issues are to be addressed. A variety of factors political, ideological and social and a multitude of actors—political parties, interest and pressure groups, mass media and the general public opinion—determine which issues appear on the public agenda.³

The next step is policy formulation: the policy-makers decide on a course of action.⁴ Policy formulation may not always result in an act. Policy-makers may decide not to take positive action on a problem. They also may be confronted with several competing pro-

¹ Almond, Powell *et al* 2002: 107.

² Heywood 1997: 386-399.

³ Howlett, Ramesh 1995: 105.

⁴ Howlett, Ramesh, *Op. cit.*: ch. 6.

posals for dealing with a problem.⁵ In the process of transforming the demands of the electorate—the *inputs*—into policies—*outputs*—several institutions and actors may be involved: political parties, interest groups, the legislature, the executive, the courts and the bureaucracy, all the components of the political system. What happens inside the political system—the black-box, as it is often called⁶—and the elements that determine what political options are chosen, are often hidden from external observers.

The last stage of the policy-making process, of interest for the present analysis, is policy implementation. Policy implementation is an important part, due to the gap often found between the decision and the actual delivery of goods. Although those who make policy may enjoy democratic legitimacy, those who implement it: civil servants, local government officers, police officers, teachers, doctors and so on, may have a different understanding of what will work and what will not. Moreover, especially in transition societies, the state is facing serious limits in ensuring a proper and unitary interpretation and implementation of the decisions.

How can the impact of minority participation in governance be evaluated? A first aspect does not concern the direct effect of participation, but rather its characteristics: first, the position of a minority party in the power structure of the governing coalitions. The positions held in government structures are an indirect indicator, not entirely reliable but relevant to the potential influence of the party on public policies.

Several aspects characterize the position of the minority party in the governing coalition. The first element is the coalition-building process, as this reflects the ensuing political realities—the formal and informal rules that outlined the scope of minority parties' activity. Another element is represented by the positions held by the minority parties' members in the structure of government (ministries, secretaries, directors of national agencies). Budgeting is also a good indicator of the positions held in the structure of the coalition by the minority parties. Further, the field of activity—whether of general (e.g., economy, health) or minority interest (e.g., culture, education)—of the ministries and agencies including representatives of minority parties is also relevant. The type of decision-making in the governing coalition (consensual, majoritarian, veto rights) constitutes the fourth aspect. The last component considered in the analysis is made up of the rates of agreements and disagreements and the number of crisis situations during the mandate of the coalition.

Coalition governments further darken the transparency of the policy-making process. Unlike unitary governments, coalition government centers on a bargaining process. The involvement of several actors in the decision-making process imposes a degree of uncertainty about the outcomes.⁷ Since these negotiations and agreements among coalition members are not always public, the responsibility for the policy outcomes can not be easily assessed to just one political party or actor.

The direct effect of participation can be considered through the following dimensions. Legislative action initiated and supported by minority parties can be seen to define their policy interests. The inclusion in governance of these parties brought certain issues of interest to the Hungarian and Albanian minorities to the public agenda. Minority needs were

⁵ Anderson 1997: 113-114.

⁶ Hague, Harrop, Breslin 1992.

⁷ Muller, Strøm 2000: 7-8.

then considered public needs, which demand specific public policies. The impact of their participation can be seen on two levels. The first level regards modifications to the public agenda; the second refers to the effective results. Failure to achieve the transformation of the issues on the public agenda in an official act or to bring certain issues to the public agenda is also a good indicator of the achievements and failures of participation.

Poor relations between ethnic groups hinder the development of effective democracy.⁸ The participation of minorities in government, then, has to be analyzed from the perspective of the democratizing effect it had upon Romanian, Slovakian and respectively, Macedonian societies—its effect on relations between minority and majority ethnic groups. The analysis was conducted here in three stages. On a general level, trends in public opinion were investigated in order to assess the evolution of the majority–minority relations during the mandates of the coalitions. On a more specific level, the minority participation in governance was evaluated as positive or negative, efficient or inefficient. The participation of the minority parties in governance was also analyzed from the perspective of being an ethnic advocate only, or contributing to solving problems of more general interest.

The analysis focused on both central and local levels of governance. On a central level, issues like legislation, policy priorities, education and regional integration constituted the subjects of research, while on the local-level, policy implementation, inter-group cooperation, bilingualism, equal opportunities, forms of local autonomy and institution-building were the key issues.

The priorities of “governing minorities” are usually oriented towards peculiar cultural and educational issues considered critical for the preservation of ethnic identity. In each case a considerable contribution of these parties to “non-ethnic fields” of governance, such as social policy, infrastructural development, health, etc., needs to be taken into account as well. The analysis of these fields will highlight the contribution of minority representatives to the overall effort of modernizing their country.

The paper on Macedonia is based on analysis of political parties programs, which participated in the government coalition, quantitative and qualitative evaluations of the minutes of government meetings, of the parliamentary debates and of the main Macedonian newspapers and periodicals. Interviews with public persons supplemented the research.

The research on Romania is based on extensive analysis focused on government agendas, party programs and budgetary documents. Interviews with high-ranking officials of the former coalition as well as top level party representatives and mid-level employees from public institutions were conducted. Content analysis of the speeches delivered in Parliament and interventions in committee meetings constitutes another basis of the study. Analysis of public opinion polls was also conducted.

The study on Slovakia is based on analysis of the manuscripts supplied by relevant ministries and government offices as well as of the contemporary news media. The analysis was supplemented with content analysis of party programs and parliamentary debates. The analysis of these issues highlighted the contribution of minorities in governance to improving legislation, improving majority–minority relations and the democratization of the countries.

⁸ Fukuyama 1992.

The comparative analysis also examined to what degree examples can be considered models of management of ethnic diversity in former communist countries or mere outcomes of political circumstances. Undoubtedly the implications of the participation of the minorities in governance are significant in the perspective of the future democracies in the region.

Finally, prior to presenting the case studies, due to the fact that there are limits to deriving propositions about the power-sharing models analyzed here, we will briefly discuss the advantages and constraints of the comparative method employed in the present study.

The Comparative Method: Advantages and Limitations

The goals of social research are diverse: to identify general patterns and relationships, make predictions, interpret significance, explore diversity and advance new theories.⁹ Of these, the primary goals of comparative research are to explore diversity and advance new theories. The secondary goals of the comparative approach are to identify general patterns and relationships, test and refine theories, make predictions and interpret culturally or historically significant phenomena. As several scholars have warned, there are several limitations or constraints on the method.

In a famous article, Sartori points to a common error in comparative research: “comparing apples with pears.” The first step is to establish what is “comparable with respect to which characteristics and incomparable to which other properties.”¹⁰ The level of comparison has to be settled; otherwise it is of no scientific value.

Too many variables, too few countries, or the ‘*small-N*’ problem, is another well-known dilemma of comparativists. The complexity and diversity of these cases imply the impossibility of testing all the explanations of a political difference between the countries.¹¹

Comparative research implies identifying the factors that account for certain characteristics of the cases analyzed. In order to do so, one encounters another constraint: the need to control all the background factors. Just like the small-N problem, the *interdependence* of the observations creates supplementary difficulties for cross-national research.

The bias of the *sample selection* occurs because the cases are not randomly selected; thus they are not statistically representative for the entire population. This imposes further constraints on the possibility to generalize the findings of the research. A particular type of selection bias comes from analyzing only positive cases. King, Keohane and Verba note that one common mistake and limit on the inferences drawn from the cases analyzed happens when the dependent variable is not allowed to vary.¹²

Despite all these challenges, the comparative method has proved to be one of the most useful approaches in political science. As Dogan and Pelassy stated, by comparing “we discover our own ethnocentrism and the means of overcoming it.”¹³ Works demon-

⁸ Fukuyama 1992.

⁹ Ragin 1994: 31-33.

¹⁰ Sartori 1991: 246.

¹¹ Hague, Harrop 2001: 69.

¹² Gary King, Keohane, Verba 2000: 126.

¹³ Dogan, Pelassy 1984: 4.

strating the value of the method include Barrington Moor's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba's *The Civic Culture*, Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan's *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, and Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.

The foci of these comparative studies were the institutions of government and the behavior of citizens. Comparison may be more difficult in the case of public policies, because their evaluation in different political systems requires the analyst to consider the political goods that motivate policies.¹⁴ Still, there are cases where such a method is successful, such as *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, by Gosta Esping-Andersen.¹⁵

¹⁴ Almond, *Op cit.*: 136-165.

¹⁵ Peters 1998: 213.

PART TWO

CASE STUDIES

MINORITIES IN POLITICAL LIFE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Aneta Jovevska and Natasha Graber

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MINORITIES IN POLITICAL LIFE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Aneta Jovevska and Natasha Graber

Foreword

Intense processes of social and political democratization are taking place in Central and Eastern European countries—part of the inevitable movement toward a new, more global, pluralistic society. Although pluralism refers primarily to multiparty processes, it encompasses influences and represents other social categories—class, ethnicity, religion, etc.—that do not always have direct political representation. At the same time, social and political relations are influenced by history and cultural traditions. Multiparty systems have been widely accepted by emerging democracies, bringing about quick, even sudden transformations in political structure, institutions and cultural practices. Interests and viewpoints that were suppressed previously, unable to find articulation in the former systems, have already emerged.

Starting in 1990, the Republic of Macedonia coped with several upheavals simultaneously. A multiparty system was created and has gradually grown and matured out of the existing social heterogeneity. With a variety of languages and religions, as well as varying standards of living and rural-urban relations, one of the deepest fault lines in Macedonian society is ethnicity. This was vividly and disturbingly illustrated by recent armed conflicts.

In a context such as Macedonia, minority political parties can become the best way to represent those interests in a wider context—countering the policy of the majority ethnicity while retaining the system of representation.

Political and Cultural Characteristics of the Republic of Macedonia

The political culture in Macedonia is defined by a high level of cultural heterogeneity in a context without a democratic tradition. Historical subordination to autocratic rulers has resulted in resentful attitudes toward any agent that exercises “power.” This is countered by the connectedness of local communities and ethnic groups (defined by religion and language). Topped by the communist legacy of resignation and apathy, the road to real democracy appears long and painful.

Table 1. Population Structure According to National Affiliation in the 1994 Census¹

Macedonian	Albanian	Turkish	Roma	Vlach	Serb	Others
1,259,964	441,104	78,019	43,707	8,601	40,228	38,309
66.6%	22.7%	4%	2.2%	0.4%	2.1%	1.9%

Table 2. Ethnic Origin of the Population by Percentage (1953–1994)

	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	1994
Macedonian	66%	71%	69%	67%	65%	67%
Albanian	12%	13%	17%	20%	22%	23%
Turkish	16%	9%	7%	5%	4%	4%

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Macedonia, 1998.

Table 3. Ethnic Origin of Members of the National Assembly

	Total	Macedonian	Albanian	Turkish	Roma	Vlach	Serb	Other
1990	120	93	23	-	2	-	-	2
1994	120	98	19	1	1	-	1	-
1998	120	94	25	-	1	-	-	1

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Macedonia, 1998.

Over the last 40 years, while the percentage of citizens of Macedonian origin has remained constant, the Albanian population has doubled in percentage due to immigration from Kosovo and high birth rates. Meanwhile, the Turkish population decreased due to emigration to Turkey.

Political Party Formation

The Macedonian Constitution defines the civic concepts of the state and only addresses ethnic dimensions in the preamble: "Macedonia is established as the national state of the Macedonian people, in which full equality as citizens and permanent co-existence with the Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Roma and other nationalities who live in the Republic of Macedonia." It goes on to state the intention to establish the Republic "as a sovereign, independent, civic and democratic state;... to guarantee the protection of human rights, citizens' freedoms and ethnic equality;... to secure

¹ Ethnic Albanian, Roma and several international organizations have disputed the data in the 1994 census, claiming it downplays minority populations. By some estimates, for example, Albanians form up to 45% of the population.

peace and a common home for the Macedonian people and all nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia.”

The Constitution, through special provisions pertaining to national minorities, creates a framework for effective equality based on the protection of ethnic, cultural and religious identity.

Since 1994 (in accordance with the Census Act), census forms for minorities are printed both in the Macedonian language and in the languages of national minorities.

The Constitution guarantees persons belonging to national minorities the right to establish cultural, scientific and other types of institutions and associations, as well as the right to primary and secondary education in their own language (Article 48).

The 1991 Constitution and the Law on Political Parties of 1994 serve as the legislative basis for the formation of parties, which promote the interests of certain ethnic groups.² More concretely, the establishment of political parties derives from Article 20, paragraphs 2 and 3, stating:

Citizens may freely establish citizens' associations and political parties, join them or resign from them. The programs and activities of citizen's associations and political parties may not be aimed at the violent destruction of the constitutional order of the Republic and may not encourage or incite military aggression or ethnic, racial or religious hatred or intolerance.

According to the Law on Political Parties, any 500 adult citizens of the Republic of Macedonia (Article 7) may form a political party. According to Article 23, if a party is found to be violating the clause which forbids the incitement to violence or intolerance, they will be deleted from the register. This clause in no way forbids the formation of parties based on ethnic, religious or other minority interests.

While actions and attitudes of individuals and elite may change, even becoming radical, institutions determine the context of mutual relations. In this way, acknowledging the existence of different and sometimes opposing interests in Macedonian society, and allowing them to form political parties, is what makes the republic a modern democracy.

The Constitution also guarantees that, in areas where the concentration of a national minority is high, local government may use the language and alphabet of the minority in addition to the Macedonian language and Cyrillic alphabet (Article 7). The use of minority languages is regulated in detail by the Law on Local Government.

According to the Constitution, the National Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia establishes a Council for Interethnic Relations to be composed of the president of the assembly and two members each representing Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Vlachs and Roma, as well as two members representing other national minorities. Unfortunately, this body has not been able to successfully mediate through recent interethnic conflicts, as it has never convened. Similar commissions could be established at the local level under the Law on Local Government (Article 25).

² *Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia*, no. 41, 1994.

The Criminal Procedure Act and the Civil Procedure Act guarantee parties and other participants in the proceedings the right to use their own language and be provided with an interpreter free of charge.

The Law on Identity Cards provides that the names of persons belonging to national minorities are written in the Macedonian language in Cyrillic, as well as in the persons' mother tongue and alphabet. Similar standards are created by the Law on Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

Education

The Constitution establishes the right to education “accessible to all under equal conditions.” This right is articulated further in the Law on Primary Education and the Law on Secondary Education. The laws establish the right to primary and secondary education—and in some cases higher education—in one’s own language when the number of pupils is above 15. Primary and secondary education currently exists in Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Serbian.

Table 4. Elementary Students by Language of Instruction, 1998

Language of instruction	Macedonian	Albanian	Turkish	Serbian	Others
Elementary students	68.5%	29.0%	2.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Secondary students	85.3%	14.0%	0.7%	/	/

Source: *Strategic Management of Cultural and Ethnic Diversity in Public Administration*, technical report, ISPJR/SECOR, January 2000, 43.

The number of minorities accepted to state universities is small and does not reflect their proportion in the population. However, a series of affirmative action regulations enacted after 1992 (quotas for minorities) have increased those numbers. According to the Ministry of Education, the number of minorities in universities in 1992 was lower than 7%, while in 1999, minorities formed 17% of the university student body (9% Albanian, 2% Turkish, 1.5% Vlach, 0.5% Roma and 4% other).

Along these lines, projects are underway which support human rights education and minority rights in police and military academies. At present, the ethnic structure of the police is: 92.3 % Macedonian, 3.3% Albanian, 2.1% Serb, 0.44% Roma, 0.33% Turk, 1.7% other.³

According to the Constitution, any cases concerning discrimination, freedom of expression, freedom of religion or freedom of assembly may be taken to the constitutional court. The number of such cases in administrative procedure is expected to increase.

³ Data provided by the Ministry of the Interior.

The Social Basis of Political Parties

At the beginning of the nineties, Macedonia underwent the sudden pluralization common to transition countries. Political parties emerged out of different communities or “sub-societies”—traditional, communist and liberal.

Table 5. Ethnic and Religious Political Parties

Name of the Political Party	Ethnic/Religious Affiliation
Democratic Progressive Party of Roma in Macedonia	Roma
Republican Party for National Unity (RPNE)	Albanian
Party for Democratic Movement of Egyptians in Macedonia (PDDEM)	Egyptian
Party for Democratic Action—The Real Way*	Muslim
Party for Complete Emancipation of Roma in Macedonia (PCER)*†	Roma
National Democratic Party (NDP)*†	Albanian
Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP-A)*†	Albanian
Turkish Democratic Party (DPT)*	Turkish
Union of Roma in Macedonia (SRM)	Roma
Party for Democratic Action in Macedonia (PDA)	Muslim (Bosniak)
Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia (DPS)	Serbian
Democratic Union of Albanians (SDA)	Albanian
Democratic Party of Albanians (officially called PDPA-NDP, known as DPA)*†	Albanian
Democratic Alliance of Albanians (DSA)	Albanian

* parties that won at least one seat in the 1994 parliamentary elections

† parties that won at least one seat in the 1998 parliamentary elections

Minority Political Party Platforms

Except for Albanian parties, minority parties tend to show a desire for integration and an acceptance of the political system. Among Albanian parties, DPA shows the least acceptance of the country’s legal institutions (ironic as DPA is part of the current government). Some Albanian parties directly or indirectly express a lack of support for the territorial integrity of the state, moving into a gray area at the limit of legality which could be a destabilizing influence.

Other parties tend to accept the principles of the system and seek integration. It would be misleading to say that voters follow ethnic lines completely. Indeed, “Macedonian” parties, especially those of the left-center, include other ethnicities as well.

Party platforms tend to be superficial, lacking concrete operational goals. Most platforms address the manner in which one ethnic group may integrate into general society. Albanian parties, however, often question basic tenets of the political system and could be seen to encourage its disintegration.

Certain characteristic political stances have been outlined below.

1. *Governmental structure*

Two kinds of sovereignty tend to be articulated in political platforms in Macedonia: citizen sovereignty and ethnic sovereignty. All parties (except PDP-A and DPA) support the idea of free and direct elections, with proportional representation of political forces in power. Roughly half of the parties support the current parliamentary system and democracy; parties that disagree mostly differ on the subject of the structure of the National Assembly. RPNE, DPA and PDP-A would like the assembly to have two houses. A special accent on the proportional electoral model is found in PDP-A and DPS. Most Albanian parties and PDA prefer a consensus democracy model, with consensus-building as a basic part of decision-making and legislation. Regarding questions of interconfessional and interethnic relations, support for consensus-building is broad. RPNE, DPT, DPA, SDA are categorical in their refusal to accept unregulated majority decision-making, while RPNE, SRM, DPA and DPS seek a greater decentralization of power.

2. *Rule of law*

All parties incorporate an approach to the elaboration of the rule of law. Their approaches are various. Access to media and information in one's mother tongue is a cornerstone of all party platforms. Six of the minority parties stress an independent judiciary, equality under the law and prevention of discriminatory practices by building concrete normative mechanisms. Three parties stress security and legal protection. In fact, there are no serious differences between parties regarding their attitude toward the rule of law. All are in favor of this basic principle of the modern state. Differences occur when questions of institutional regulation arise. Albanian parties (NDP, DPA and PDP-A) explicitly insist on Albanian being recognized as an official language, while DSA seeks the use of various minority languages only in areas where that language is commonly used. Some seek, additionally, the free use of national flags and symbols.

3. *Economy*

Although the parties differ on specific priorities, all favor a free market economy.

4. *Social, health and communal policy*

Due to their complexity, social issues necessitate the consideration of many sub-topics regarding living conditions of individuals and groups. As deep economic restructuring takes place and economic growth decreases, most parties stress attention to unemployment regardless of ethnic affiliation.⁴ Similarly, most parties stress the importance of a secure social support scheme for the unemployed, pensioners and the disabled, as well as improved and equal health care. Some differences exist regarding the status of women. Albanian parties tend to seek freedom of unlimited births, special care for women with many children, shorter accrued time for women and different working hours for employed women.

Six parties have explicit goals regarding the urbanization of living space and infrastructure development. PDA, DPT and DSA stress the revitalization of urbanized areas with religious buildings.

⁴ See poll results in "Trends in Public Opinion," below.

5. *Education*

As education is viewed as an integral part of cultural transmission, all party programs make it a central concern. All parties make the nourishment of cultural and religious traditions a primary goal. Parties seek the incorporation of defined cultural transmission in primary education, particularly in questions of language. Albanian parties seek the use of their mother tongue at the university level as well. Parties seek educational reform and opportunities for private initiative in this field.

There are certain inconsistencies in these platforms. For example, RPNE seeks the modernization of the educational system, while also seeking more rigorous punishments for students who misbehave and more censorship in order to fight “trash and pornography”—a stance based on religious principles. PDA and DSA request compulsory religious education, while RPNE and NDP seek optional religious instruction. PDP-A’s program of “cultural federalism” is defined as a program where “cultural pluralism and cultural federalism have state support. Because of the aggressiveness of subculture, special institutions should be formed to cultivate values and cultural standards” (PDP-A platform, 1994). Although this statement is ill-defined, it appears to be referring to the ideological concept, found among Albanian parties, that the Republic of Macedonia ought to be a state with two constitutive nations. DPA makes this explicit with its desire for a parallel education system.

Debates over education, because of their politicization, continue to simmer. Under the previous system, religion did not enter into the public school system. Now that it theoretically may, the question is a source of potential conflict.

6. *Interethnic relations*

Most platforms make statements regarding the importance of interethnic tolerance and dialogue. Although platforms speak of the matrix of ethnicities that must cooperate, policies are not explained or elaborated. The Democratic Alliance of Albanians, for example, may declare their party open and prepared to cooperate with all citizens regardless of nationality and religion, but in practice, it clearly favors working with other Albanian parties.

7. *International relations*

Attitudes toward international cooperation form a veritable “fountain of wishes.” PDDEM and PCER would like closer connection with India; DPT with Turkey; DSA with Kosovo and Albania (and the Islamic world); and DPS with Yugoslavia. Several parties (PCER, NDP, PDA) wish for European integration, while others (PDP-A, DSA, DPA) seek cooperation within the Balkans. Albanian parties show an interest in the Albanian Diaspora. PDA seeks demilitarization. DSA seeks NATO membership.

8. *Family*

Demands regarding women’s rights focus more on the right to stay home with children rather than equal rights to work. Nowhere is the issue of girls’ access to education raised. A vague concern for the emancipation of women is mentioned in NDP and DPA party platforms. In general, all parties ignore women’s issues, and rarely have these parties put forth women candidates.

9. *Environment protection*

Ten of the parties mention environmental protection as a goal, but none elaborate a program.

Participation of the Albanian Minority in Governance

The first competitive elections in 1990, as defined by that year's Election Law, were unable to create a unified Parliament and a stable majority government. National, social, ideological, religious and linguistic differences were, in fact, enhanced. Due to the absence of a structural prerequisite for a one-party government, a non-party, so-called "expert government" was formed based on various party platforms. After a vote of no confidence a year and a half later, this was replaced by a coalition government. Due to the circumstances, SDS and the communist-oriented Alliance of Reformists formed a coalition with PDP-A, an Albanian party. This coalition retained control until 1998.

It is interesting to note that over the ten years of multi-party politics, every government coalition included an Albanian party. In this light, it is interesting to trace decisions which have been made regarding interethnic relations.

Macedonia has largely followed the path of other transition states. A long debate dominated by party elite finally led to a new election law in 1998. The law establishes a Parliament with 120 seats. 85 seats are distributed by majority voting and 35 through proportional representation. Voters are allowed two votes, which they can split between election lists—one countrywide and the other dependent on their area of residence.

Despite the fear that this system would further fragment Macedonian society, the effect has been to streamline the political process: the number of candidates, for example, was cut in half, with a drastic reduction in the amount of independent candidates.

The mixed model has changed parties' electoral strategies—candidates may be selected for the uninominal constituencies or for the list of candidates. Parties used three approaches: (1) individual presentation, (2) in coalition and (3) in partial coalition (only for certain constituencies).

If we compare the voting results and distribution of mandates following the 1998 elections, a disproportion emerges regarding a few parties. VMRO-DPMNE had a proportionally large number of mandates, while SDSM and the coalitions LDP-DPM and SP-DKT had less. There were no deviations from the proportion of votes and mandates regarding the other parties.

The results of the 1998 parliamentary elections allowed the winning coalition (VMRO-DPMNE and the Democratic Alternative) to form the government alone. Following the tradition of the previous governments, however, the parties decided to include an Albanian party as well, in this case DPA. The combination, which combined two radical and opposing parties (VMRO-DPMNE are extreme Macedonian nationalists, DPA are extreme Albanian nationalists) with a civic, more centrist party, could have served as bridge to political and social progress.

In such a coalition, an artificial homogeneity is not formed. Rather, each party retains its perspective within the coalition. This is clearly expressed in the parties' presidential nominees.

Changes in the Government

Between September 1998 and November 2000, the government was reformed three times. All involved the same coalition partners. A vote initiated by the opposition party SDSM failed to bring about a result of no confidence in 1999. There were several ministerial changes.

Two laws were passed immediately following the formation of the coalition: the Law on Change and Addendum to the Law on Administrative Organs⁵ and the Law on Change to the Law on Government of the Republic of Macedonia.⁶ These laws put the positions of the ruling coalition parties into operation. The government declared itself to be following European democratic traditions and created a robust government with 21 ministries. 28 ministers were named (several without portfolios), out of which 6 were given to DPA. The president of Parliament is from the Democratic Alternative (DA) and the vice-presidents are VMRO-DPMNE and DPA (see Annex 1 and 2).

Of special interest was the new Ministry of Local Government. Before, local government had been under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice. Assisted by the Council of Europe, this new ministry was constituted separately and independently. The intent of the ministry is to create a high degree of decentralization of state functions. Its task is to coordinate reforms in local government. In that sense, the strategic aim is to reduce the number of local units (from 123 to 50-70) and to achieve larger financial autonomy. This ministry was given to DPA.

In July 2000 the government enacted a special law (the Law on the Organization and Work of the Organs of the State Administration),⁷ under which the number of ministries decreased from 21 to fourteen. The organization and authorization of the administrative organs is structured as follows: Fourteen ministries, one commission, four agencies and three administrative organizations.⁸ Through an intervention by PDP, ministerial positions were added or restructured to handle specific ethnic, economic and cultural issues: the Bureau for Educational Development in Minority Languages (under the Ministry of Education), the Bureau for Economically Underdeveloped Regions (under the Ministry of Local Government) and a Bureau for Affirmation and Promotion of Minority Culture (under the Ministry of Culture).

The second restructuring of the government divided fourteen ministerial positions among coalition partners in the following proportion 7 : 4 : 3. VMRO-DPMNE took the Ministries of Defense, Interior, Finance, Culture, Health, Agriculture and Transport and Communications. DA took the ministries of Environment, Economy, Exterior and Science and Education. DPA took Justice, Local Government and Labor and Social Policy. Two ministers without portfolios were appointed by DA and DPA. The prime minister is VMRO-DPMNE. After the restructuring in December 2000, the president of the Parliament was appointed by the Liberal Party.

A fourth restructuring occurred in December 2000, where DA split from the coalition and was replaced by the Liberal Party and the Union of Macedonian Roma. A place was offered to PDP-A, but they refused to join because of disagreements on the status of Tetovo University.

Recently, Parliament's decision-making power has been overpowered by the executive branch of government. There was not a single law passed through regular procedures. Most were drafts that were enacted through the protocol for urgent measures. The only

⁵ *Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia*, no. 63, 1998.

⁶ *Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia*, no. 63, 1998.

⁷ *Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia*, no. 58, 2000.

⁸ *Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia*, no. 58, 2000.

law that followed normal procedure (three phases and a public hearing) was the Anticorruption Law, which is yet to be adopted. Decisions voted through by Parliament or the government do not indicate a pure DPA influence.

Even so, certain decisions were politicized, especially in light of the unpublished platform. Four patterns emerged from this process:

1. The initial mutual agreement, which showed relatively coordinated parliamentary behavior, was respected. Conflicts arose, however, regarding the Law on Higher Education, the Law on the National Economy, the Amnesty Law, public administration reform and decisions about integration into international institutions.
2. The party compromise has been disrespected. The question of the presidency is case in point: originally coalition partners agreed on a common candidate, then each entered their own candidates into competition.
3. Issues where agreement could not be made were dropped or delayed. VMRO-DPMNE and DPA disagreed openly when the DPA representative to the joint parliamentary committee asked to introduce Albanian as an official language for parliamentary sessions “according to the coalition agreement.”⁹ VMRO-DPMNE MPs denied that such an agreement existed.
4. Parties in power seek approval of coalition partners after announcing policy—for example, the DA decision to recognize Taiwan (the Ministry of the Exterior was under their control at that time).¹⁰ DPA (through their control of the Ministry of Justice), likewise, organized an exchange of four kidnapped Macedonian soldiers for the release of an imprisoned member of the Albanian militia.

Recent Developments

2001 was an unfortunate year for the ruling coalition. Clashes between ministers, corruption scandals and poor handling of Albanian militias eroded confidence in the state’s leadership. Clashes between DPA and VMRO lead to armed clashes between the Macedonian military and armed Albanian separatists around Kumanovo. One DPA MP even joined the militia himself. In order to maintain the government, the prime minister began negotiating with the largest opposition party, SDSM. SDSM opposed the VMRO administration of defense and interior, and were offered defense. PDP-A was also asked to negotiate. They stated many conditions for entering the government, and under much diplomatic pressure they agreed to join. This was the fifth coalition formed since the 1998 elections. Its composition is as follows:

The prime minister remains VMRO-DPMNE, and his party kept ministries of interior, finance, agriculture, education, culture and transport. SDSM took the ministries of Defense, Exterior and one position without a portfolio. SDSM’s opposition partners took Health (LDP) and Environment (VMRO-VMRO). The Liberal Party held one minister with-

⁹ See: “MPs Argue For the Use of Language.”

¹⁰ The decision for establishing diplomatic relations between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of China is found in the *Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia*, no. 7, 1999.

out portfolio. The two major Albanian parties and two major Macedonian parties nominated four vice-presidential candidates and divided certain lower ministerial positions.

This coalition was formed under intense pressure from the international community in order to prevent war. The government was promoted as a force of “political unity” which would stabilize the country, promote interethnic dialogue, prepare for elections in 2002 and postpone the census (which had been scheduled for October 2001).

Parliamentary Dynamics

A large number of MP transfers colored activity in Parliament. This was partly due to the Law on Parliamentary Elections, which does not allow for mandate cessation.

After local elections took place and the ruling coalition came apart, MPs regrouped and formed a new coalition in order to secure a majority. Three MPs went from LDP to the Liberals. Two left PDP-A to join the newly formed National Democratic Party of Albanians (NDPA). One left PDP-A for the ADA-Liberals. Six VMRO-DPMNE MPs left to form a new party called VMRO-VMRO. Hisni Sakiri, an MP from DPA, resigned to join the Albanian militia groups then engaged in activity in northern and western Macedonia. Another MP left to become the ambassador to NATO. Several other changes and new parties made the entire structure complicated and confusing.

There was a lot of media coverage of the negotiations to form new coalitions, but the final platform remained unknown to the public.¹¹ This limits the ability to analyze the process and participants’ contributions. What follows is a review of data obtained at parliamentary sessions and meetings of the government.

The Legislative Powers of the Macedonian Assembly

The assembly may introduce amendments to the Constitution, laws and amendments, the republic budget and other legal acts and documents (according to Article 68 of the Constitution). Through policy decisions, the assembly may favor certain areas, activities or social groups. It is also able to introduce acts which are not legally binding but reflect policy goals. Such documents may be in the form of declarations, resolutions or recommendations. The ratification of international agreements is also the responsibility of the assembly (under Article 119 of the Constitution).

There was an immense amount of legislative activity in the assembly between 1998 and 2000, mostly regarding the economy.

¹¹ Talks with Haliu Selmani, the deputy secretary general of the government of Macedonia, on February 8, 2001, confirmed the fact that this platform was known only to the narrow party leadership.

Structure of Legislative Acts, 1998-2000

The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia recorded the following legislative activity during this period: 176 Laws (including changes and amendments), 325 decisions (including changes and amendments), two programs, two conclusions, one resolution and six declarations.

Acts of international significance include:

1. A resolution concerning the role of the Republic of Macedonia in the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe.¹²
2. The Declaration for the Protection of Rights by the members of OMO Ilinden-Pirin.¹³
3. A declaration condemning any kind of threats to the personal safety of parliamentary representatives.¹⁴
4. A declaration for enhancing the relations of the Republic of Macedonia with the European Union.¹⁵

Bilateral agreements include ten with Bulgaria, one with Greece and one with Albania. Seventeen bilateral agreements with Albania were passed before 1998 by the previous government. The current government signed the largest number of agreements with Bulgaria. Most agreements concerned railroad, air space and roads; science, culture and education; trade and economic collaboration; social security, crime, ecological protection and tourism.

Several laws and by-laws reflect the needs of particular minorities. These laws were late to be adopted (they should have been considered following the enactment of the Constitution ten years before) and refer to sensitive issues. Two laws concern protection of youth.

A package of laws was also passed concerning administrative reform, following privatization laws already enacted. The laws do not state quotas regarding the ethnic make-up of state bodies.

Legislative Activity of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia

The government of the republic has two basic responsibilities: proposing legislation and determining policy toward the implementation of laws and regulations already passed. From 1998 to 2000, the following acts were endorsed: 25 decrees, 9 amendments to decrees, 525 decisions, 125 amendments to decisions, 2,270 individual decision acts, 10 amendments to individual decision acts, 43 programs and two macroeconomic policies.

¹² *Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia*, no. 9, 2000.

¹³ This organization consists of ethnic Macedonians living in Bulgaria. The declaration emphasizes the Macedonian state's support for the protection of their human rights. *Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia*, no. 20, 2000.

¹⁴ *Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia*, no. 91, 2000.

¹⁵ *Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia*, no. 99, 2000.

Table 6. Structure of By-laws According to Sector

Sector	New decrees	Changes and amendments	Total
Political system	10	4	14
Economic system	15	5	20
Total	25	9	34

Table 7. Structure of Decisions According to Sector

Sector	New decisions	Changes and amendments	Total
Political system	86	23	11
Economic system/sustainability	172	76	248
Concessions	72	4	76
Human resources	16	3	19
Services sector	109	14	123
International cooperation	60	5	65
Total	525	125	650

Table 8. Structure of Acts According to Sector

Sector	New acts	Changes and amendments	Total
Political system	1,131	4	1,135
Economic system	196	1	197
Human resources	423	3	426
Public enterprises	520	2	522
Total	2,270	10	2,280

26 of the programs adopted concerned health; 7 concerned urban planning; 2 concerned economic development and macro-economic reform. All programs were to last one year.

Other initiatives were in the form of reports, analyses, project proposals, strategy studies, etc. This documentation reflects specific areas of interest and helps to aid in legislation. Relevant ministries prepare these documents.

Many by-laws were enacted in 2000 concerning reform of the legal system, public administration structure, education and local government. These topics are of special interest to minorities in that they allow for improved local funding for public activities.

Nevertheless, there are no government programs which directly refer to interethnic relations. The government did not initiate any kind of interethnic dialogue, rather they referred to the shaping of relevant laws and regulations. Three national programs come to bear on interethnic issues: the national culture program, scientific research program and educational development program.

These programs can serve to buffer special problems. The Association of Albanian Publishers, for example, published a document titled "Cultural Genocide of Albanians," complaining of a lack of published material in the Albanian language and pointing out that only 3% of ministerial funds for publishing went to works in their language. The minister of culture responded that the issue was the small number of applications, pointing out that 80% of applications submitted by Albanian publishers in the previous year had been accepted and funded. Ironically, as the Albanian Ministry of Culture does not fund publications, Macedonia has become the largest publisher of works in the Albanian language.¹⁶

The national program, meanwhile, funds two national folklore institutions, one Albanian and one Macedonian, with funds divided in half. This program, drafted by the minister of culture, is intended to affirm cultural pluralism in Macedonia. This program was evaluated and approved by the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Committee for Interethnic Relations and PDP-A.

Major Issues between Macedonians and Albanians

Three issues are assumed to have been part of the internal coalition agreement: presidential elections, local government and higher education.

The Presidential Elections of 1999

The turbulent 1999 elections were the first direct test of the coalition. It was influenced as well by spillover effects from the conflict in Kosovo. The race saw six candidates: Boris Trajkovski from VMRO-DPMNE, Tito Petkovski from SDSM (Social-Democratic Party of Macedonia), Stojan Andov from LDP (Liberal Democratic Party), Vasil Tupurkovski from DA, Muhamed Halili from PDP-A and Muarem Nedzipi from DPA. Although VMRO-DPMNE, DA and DPA were in the ruling coalition, they decided to enter their own candidates as well.

In the second round, only Tito Petkovski and Boris Trajkovski remained. PDP-A ultimately declared a boycott. At the same time, the disappointed DA leader Vasil Tupurkovski called for a silent boycott by his supporters. President Gligorov called on citizens to vote in order to achieve the necessary legitimate turnout. Finally, Boris Trajkovski won the second round, with the help of Albanian voters, especially DPA. This was seen in his overwhelming victory in the predominantly Albanian western part of the country. Petkovski, on the other hand, took most large cities.

DA and PDP-A and SDSM made declarations regarding election fraud. PDP-A leaders claimed voting rights of Albanians had been violated. The Supreme Court found many irregularities in the voting procedure, and certain areas were polled several times. Voting irregularities were also a problem in local elections the following year.

¹⁶ *Utrinski Vesnik*, Skopje, April 17, 2001 and *Nova Makedonija*, Skopje, April 17, 2001.

Local Government

The turbulence during elections in some ways reflected the design of public institutions. To change this, Macedonian authorities have been reacting to considerable internal and external pressure by decentralizing the public administration system. Centralization was originally favored as a way to ensure the integrity of the state and to protect minority rights. However, the reality is a lack of transparency in the distribution of state funds and insufficient trade in ethnically homogenous areas.

Because of the large number of local units (123), the criteria for public finance tend to be geared toward larger areas. Although communities have plenty of legal rights, supervision is centralized. Problems are visible when financing is viewed in relation to communities' party affiliation (Bitola, Tetovo, Kicevo, Kriva Palanka and Lipkovo, for example). Many complaints about favoritism were voiced following parliamentary elections.

This was complicated further when the opposition was voted into power in most large cities in 2000. City councils have the legal right to appoint directors to public enterprises in their jurisdiction. The government, however, has shown a tendency to interfere. Pressure in this case does not bear on ethnicity, rather on party affiliation.

Local government can be a key to achieving harmonious relations between ethnicities. The current Law on Local Government determines special rights for areas where ethnic minorities make up more than 50% of the population. In such areas, minority languages and scripts can be officially used (along with Macedonian and Cyrillic, not replacing them), and locations may be marked with bilingual signs. In areas where minorities make up a "significant" part of the population (over 20%), while minority languages may not be used in city council meetings and other public processes, decisions and acts must be publicized in minority languages as well. Bilingual signs may be decided by the council.¹⁷ Cultural institutions dealing with minority cultural activity must be bilingual, irrespective of the make-up of the local populous. Finally, the Law on Local Government states that the ethnic make-up of administration employees must reflect the make-up of the population so long as this does not "disturb adequate professionalism."

Although the law is new, there have already been many movements to amend and change it. There is also a dialogue concerning the number of local units, which is too large. Inefficiency in public enterprise has also been cited.

In March 2000, following a suggestion by the Ministry of Local Government, the government formed a working team to initiate reforms. The team includes representatives from the Ministries of Justice, Local Government, Finance, Urban Planning and Development. Several other ministries have been tasked with internal decentralization as well. Ministries were asked to carry out reforms in light of the European Charter on Local Government, but as of March 2001, nothing had been done.

¹⁷ Todorovski 2001.

*Higher Education in Minority Languages*¹⁸

Higher education in the Albanian language has been a central topic in Macedonian politics over the last eight years. A summary of the controversy follows.

In 1992, a dialogue began between Macedonian and Albanian groups about the low attendance rates of Albanian students in state universities. Soon after, PDP-A, the dominant Albanian party, joined the ruling coalition, entering higher education into the platform. A government decision ruled that 10% of space in higher education must be reserved for minority students.

This decision was received with resistance by the University of Skopje, because it meant admitting Albanian students who scored poorly on entrance exams while a large number of Macedonians could not be admitted. There were some peaceful protests, but the quotas did manage to strengthen the number of Albanian students in university.

In 1994, two Albanian platforms emerged. PDP-A, participating in the government, sought the establishment of Albanian-language courses at the pedagogic faculty, where primary school teachers are educated. Such courses had existed until 1974, when they were abolished by a Law on Higher Education (there was already a draft law to overturn this previous law, which was largely seen as unconstitutional). DPA, the more extremist Albanian party, demanded the establishment of a new, private Albanian-language university in Skopje. The government opposed this initiative.

At the end of the year, a group of activists established a university in the village of Mala Rečica without legal approval or qualified professors. Most of the professors and administrators came from Kosovo, following the closing of the University of Prishtina. Many were not Macedonian citizens. The university was located in a private house, built without permission and unregistered. More than a hundred students signed up. Police attempts to stop the opening of the university lead to riots that ended with one civilian dead.

Dialogue about Albanian language higher education intensified. The quota system was broadened, where each minority was to be represented by a percentage that reflected the ethnic make-up of the country. The quota for Albanians was enlarged to 23%. This dialogue was internal, but also brought the attention of the High Commissioner of the OSCE in Macedonia, Max Van der Stoel. The commission on the former Yugoslavia was still active under Gerd Arens, who organized regular talks with representatives of Albanian and Macedonian parties on the subject of higher education. Arens' commission ended in 1997, and the commission for Macedonia continued dialogue thereafter.

Possibilities for higher education in minority languages were limited by legislation. The procedure to change that stalled while tension increased.

Albanian- and Turkish-language courses were finally established at the pedagogic faculty, under two conditions:

- A sufficient number of students must register for them.
- Professors must be sufficiently qualified.

This was decreed by the minister of education in 1995. It was intended as a temporary measure while legislation could be properly introduced in Parliament. The Macedonian

¹⁸ Information provided by Dr. Emilija Simoska, former minister of education and one of the authors of the study, *National Strategy for Education in Macedonia*.

population reacted negatively, and the case was taken to the constitutional court. The court supported the minister's decree, and courses began.

The new Law on Higher Education, meanwhile, was being elaborated. It came to bear specifically on the question of language. The following courses were to be offered in minority languages:

- courses for elementary school teachers at the pedagogic faculty;
- courses in the methodology of teaching for special needs;
- courses related to preserving cultural heritage.

The law passed the first phase of hearings in 1995. Albanian parties participated in the discussion but did not vote for the bill. Adoption was delayed due to technical disputes between the Ministry and the University of Skopje. The controversy did not involve issues of ethnicity, but the ensuing delay angered and radicalized Albanian leaders.

At that time, there was a restructuring of the government which left PDP-A with a more central role. They also began to question their participation in the government, dependant on a solution to the problem of higher education. The law was then frozen in process until 1998.

Complications arose surrounding the Albanian courses at the pedagogic faculty when the minister's temporary decree expired. The Parliament adopted a special Law on the Pedagogic Faculty, allowing classes to continue. The adoption of this law led to violent protests by university students and Macedonian political parties (mostly lead by VMRO). The administration of the University of Skopje supported the law, and it was not withdrawn.

Demands for an Albanian university intensified again during the 1998 elections. VMRO was radically opposed. During the elections, however, both sides moderated their language, and minority education was not a central issue in the campaign.

The coalition formed after the elections included two extreme and opposing nationalist parties, VMRO and DPA. PDP-A quieted their demands for a separate Albanian university, while DPA strengthened theirs, adding that the university be officially established by the state.

At the same time, the UN's High Commissioner on Ethnic Minorities released a report on Macedonia which also pushed for new conditions and standards, including the establishment of an Albanian university. A year of open debate led to a new bill being entered into Parliament. Beyond previous regulations concerning courses for primary school teachers, teaching methodologies and courses involving cultural heritage, the final version of the new Law on Higher Education allowed for the establishment of private higher education institutions in any language.

The law also allowed students from the University at Mala Rečica to enter universities dependant on standardized testing. The text of the law is as follows:

Individuals who fulfill the conditions to enter undergraduate studies according to the law, but attended lectures out of public higher education institutions in various forms of civil initiatives in the Republic of Macedonia, until the adoption of this law, are allowed—in accordance with this law and the statute of the particular higher education institution to:

- continue their studies at an adequate higher education institution;
- ask for evaluation of their knowledge, and, based on the results of the evaluation, enroll in the appropriate year.

This article is limited to December 31, 2001, meaning it is relevant only for students from Mala Rečica. It was not discussed in the public debate, but was added at the end of the process. Several of the members of the committee who designed the law reacted publicly, claiming no knowledge of the article. It appears that the government added the article after the law was approved, an illegal act.

PDP-A was unsatisfied because Mala Rečica was not recognized as an official university, nor would it be possible to establish a new Albanian university. Macedonian parties had not supported the law, arguing that Mala Rečica was already given too much support. Students organized meetings regarding the law and were generally unresponsive, but there was no public outrage as before.

An unfortunate effect of the debate was that the issue of minority languages upstaged all other discussion on problems in higher education.

Soon after, an agreement was made with the OSCE to establish a College of Southeast Europe. Lectures would be held in Albanian and English, with some courses in Macedonian. The college would be regional and sponsored by various international institutions. The school was scheduled to open for the 2001-2002 school year, but the process was complicated by funding delays and lack of building permits.

The Macedonian community accepted this initiative quite calmly. The international institutions which applied pressure for the school to be opened then caused its postponement due to funding issues.

Although more Albanians are likely to earn university degrees, separating Albanian and Macedonian students is likely to deepen the gap between ethnic groups. A lack of qualified Albanian professors may result in poor quality teaching, leading to new forms of discrimination. Other minorities who do not have the possibility for education in their own language may resent the changes, leading to an increase in tension.

The process is continuing. PDP-A continue to demand the recognition of the University in Mala Rečica as an official state university. Professors are likely to come from Kosovo, potentially leaving the Albanian communities in Macedonia and Kosovo at odds with each other.

What has now been established, especially through the work of international institutions, is the legal right for Albanians to be educated in their own language at all levels.

Young Albanians, used and abused for political purposes, have paid the price for this process.

The Democratizing Effect of the Participation of Albanian Minority Parties in Governance

Majority–Minority Relations: Trends in Public Opinion

In May of 1998, the Institute for Sociological, Political and Judicial Research¹⁹ conduct-

¹⁹ With financial support from the International Republican Institute.

ed a survey of 1,400 Macedonian citizens concerning political affiliation. The results were VMRO-DPMNE 17%, SDSM 16%, LDP 9%, PDP-A- 7%, DA 7%, DPA 6% and SP 3%. 23% were undecided, a figure which indicates the high volatility of the voters, and 9% said they do not wish to vote at all. The result showed Albanians affiliating primarily along ethnic lines, which has been true since the first multi-party elections in 1990.

36% of Macedonian citizens claim to vote according to political platforms. 22% vote based on confidence in party leadership. 20% vote based on fulfillment of previous pre-election promises. 4% vote based on appearance and behavior of party leadership. 6% believe that "all parties are the same." 5% "don't know," and 3% "don't vote." Albanians and Turks are slightly more likely to vote based on party platform (44% and 41% respectively). Turks are 7% less likely to vote based on party leadership. Albanians are 5% less likely to vote based on pre-election promises.

A public opinion poll conducted by the Institute for Democracy²⁰ after the conflict in Tetovo asked if Macedonia was "closer to peace than war." 48% answered peace. 40% answered war. There was no significant variation along ethnic lines.

25% stated that constitutional changes could improve the positions of Albanians in Macedonia. 67% do not believe such changes will help. Responses to this question were ethnically divided. 67% of Albanians believed in constitutional changes. 79% of Macedonians believed they would not help. 18% of VMRO-DPMNE members and 13% of SDSM members believed changes would help. 74% of DPA members and 77% of PDP-A members do believe constitutional changes would help.

Another poll was conducted in the summer of 2000 about problems facing the country.²¹ 38% believe the largest problem is unemployment. 17% cited the economy. 11% cited social and health services. Only 6% saw state stability as the largest problem.

Party affiliation was as follows: SDSM 31%, VMRO-DPMNE 15%, PDPA-NDP 8%, PDP-A 4.5%, LDP 2%, none 18%, undecided 21%. 53% supported the ruling coalition. 34% opposed.

29% believed the country was "heading somewhat in the right direction." 29% believed it was "heading somewhat in the wrong direction." 29% believed it was "heading in absolutely the wrong direction." Only 7% believed the country was "heading in absolutely the right direction."

17% "strongly support" the current government. 26% "partly support." 13% "partly do not support." 35% "do not support at all." 7% were neutral. 2% were undecided.

As to the previous government, 33% saw "no success." 16% credited it for "preservation of peace during the Kosovo crisis." 10% credited it for "reform." 6% credited it for "improved interethnic relations." 5% credited it for "talks with the EU."

14% saw the current government's largest failure as "the selling out of state property." 12% saw "no increase in employment." 9% saw "unaccomplished reforms." 5% cited "corruption."

²⁰ *Utrinski Vesnik*, Skopje, April 17, 2001.

²¹ Conducted by the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, requested by the International Republican Institute.

Conclusion

The framework for articulating political interests through political representation already exists in Macedonia. Conflicts can be avoided by channeling political energy into growing democracy. The processes of negotiation and education can serve to integrate various groups into a diverse society. The creation of an institutional framework through which these interest groups may express their needs is a constructive step in this direction.

The social fault lines are deep and dangerous, and conflicts have threatened to erode confidence in the system. Ethnic conflicts can be buffered by institutional relations, but that alone cannot eradicate differences. The political system can be threatened in two ways—by its structure or by its participants.

A list of 11 conditions for social continuity follows:²²

1. *Relative equilibrium.* No segment of society must be dominant or inferior. The smaller the gap between groups, the greater the efficiency in administration. In Macedonia, a broad coalition was formed in order to minimize conflicts.
2. *Lack of socio-economic difference.* Successful relations between groups may depend on their socio-economic status. Standards of living, employment levels, etc., vary widely in Macedonia, and this can be traced along ethnic lines as well.
3. *Territorial segmentation.* Groups are concentrated in different areas throughout the territory. Empowering local governments allows these groups to express their interest.
4. *Loyalty to institutions, values and symbols.* Despite differences in population, a certain state loyalty must exist. Symbols must not be too closely connected with one constituent nation. Although Macedonia is ostensibly a multiethnic state, Albanians do not identify with the state and its symbols. Albanian political parties often demand changes on such grounds. Albanians tend to identify with the symbols of the Albanian state (its flag is used in marriages, etc.), which angers and alienates Macedonian Slavs.
5. *Transcendence of societal cleavages.* Political parties tend to be ethnically defined, which makes adequate democratic relations difficult.
6. *Pluralism instead of nationalism.* Political pluralism exists if groups are represented by a variety of parties rather than a single monolithic national front. Over the past decade, a multi-party system in which all groups are able to express their desires has indeed developed in Macedonia. Active participation has led to a dynamic, yet relatively stable coalition government.
7. *Dominant elites.* Political leaders must be able to secure support for compromise. The trust of supporters gives leaders space to maneuver in the negotiation process. This type of collective involvement is characteristic of Macedonia. Although there is some lack of transparency in the decision-making process due to the attitudes of the political elite, the outcome can be viable because the leadership has broad public support.
8. *Respect for the status quo.* No sector of the government must question the endurance of the state itself. Radical and separatist elements exist, but support for the state and system of political representation prevails.

²² The eleven conditions are taken from Schneckener 2000.

9. *Traditions of compromise.* There is a history of mutual understanding and tolerance in Macedonia. This experience helps the state to endure crises.
10. *Comprehensive participation.* All significant interest groups must be represented in the administration. The electoral system must be open and inclusive. A proportional rather than majoritarian system can be a stabilizing force and better reflect voters' interests. This system has increasing support in Macedonia.
11. *Internal compromise, external pressure.* Collaboration has been achieved with difficulty. Coalition partners continue to choose dialogue as the best way to overcome difficulties. In spite of all recent crises, there is still much hope for political solutions and peace.

The more these conditions are met, the more a government is able to work smoothly and be successful. Macedonia has met six of the eleven conditions.

In Macedonia, individual interests are locked into ethnically-defined political parties which contain radical elements. That in itself is problematic. However, the existence of a coalition government which encompasses different ethnicities can build confidence outside ethnic boundaries. This confidence helps the government be more impartial, effective and efficient.

A stable civil society can soften cultural heterogeneity. It can allow citizens to overcome cultural differences, to replace collectivism with individualism. It can lead citizens to cease seeking national enemies and approach problems peacefully, with tolerance. Emotional identification with a nation can be replaced by constitutional loyalty, a rational loyalty to an open state system. The old idea of the nation-state must be replaced by an open, inclusive alternative.

Annex

Annex: Minority Representation in Parliamentary Committees, 1998-2000

Parliamentary Committee	Number of MPs	Minority party-member MPs
Election and Nominations Committee	13	3 (23%)
Constitutional Committee	21	4 (19%)
Legal Committee	13	3 (23%)
Political System Committee	9	2 (22%)
Defense Committee	9	2 (22%)
External Policy Committee	13	2 (15%)
Human Rights Committee	9	3 (33%)
Interethnic Relations Committee	11	President + 4 (45%)
Financing and Budget Committee	11	2 (18%)
Economy Committee	11	2 (18%)
Development Committee	9	President+ 2(33%)
Committee for Monetary Policy and Banking	11	2 (18%)
Committee for Agriculture	11	2 (18%)
Committee for Urbanism	9	President+ 2 (33%)
Committee for Communications	9	2 (22%)
Environmental Committee	9	President + 2 (33%)
Education and Science Committee	11	President +3 (36%)
Committee for Culture	9	2 (22%)
Health Committee	11	2 (18%)
Committee for Labor and Social Policy	11	2 (18%)
Committee for Historic Dates and Celebrations	9	2 (22%)
TOTAL: 21	TOTAL: 229	TOTAL: 55 (24%)

Source: *Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia*, 12/98.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN MACEDONIAN POLITICAL LIFE

Aneta Jovevska and Natasha Graber

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN MACEDONIAN POLITICAL LIFE

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Introducing New Legal Principles through the Framework Agreement

Tumultuous events that took place in Macedonia in 2001 resulted in the signing of a political agreement in August in Ohrid. This agreement was imposed by the international community in an effort to prevent the conflict from escalating and improve the political environment for the Albanian minority. All the principles adopted and signed by the four major political parties in the country and the special representatives of the European Union and the United States were incorporated and adopted as amendments to the new Constitution of Macedonia. Further, they were applied in various laws¹ that refer to different domains of life and parliamentary procedures.² Due to the significance of this document and its implication for further minority³ rights in the country, some of the principles shall be presented below:

Basic Principles

- Macedonia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the unitary character of the State are inviolable and must be preserved. There are no territorial solutions to ethnic issues.
- The multiethnic character of Macedonia's society must be preserved and reflected in public life.
- The development of local self-government is essential for encouraging the participation of citizens in democratic life and promoting respect for the identity of communities.

A revised Law on Local Self-Government was adopted to reinforce the powers of elected local officials and enlarges substantially their competencies in conformity with the Constitution and the European Charter on Local Self-Government, and reflecting the principle of sub-

¹ The Laws on Local Self-Government, Local Finance, Municipal Boundaries, and laws pertaining to municipal police, civil service, public administration, electoral districts and the use of languages.

² Through these rules, it is provided for persons belonging to other ethnic groups (over 20% of the population) to address the plenary session of Parliament or parliamentary committees in their mother tongue.

³ In fact, the word "minority" is nowhere to be found in the text of the document, since it was replaced with the words "community" and "Macedonian citizens."

sidiarity in effect in the European Union. Enhanced competencies relate principally to areas of public services, urban and rural planning, environmental protection, local economic development, culture, local finances, education, social welfare and health care. A law on financing local self-government was adopted to ensure an adequate system of financing.

Municipal borders were to be revised within one year of the completion of a new census, which was to be conducted under international supervision by the end of 2001. The revision of the municipal boundaries would be effectuated by the local and national authorities with international participation.

In order to ensure that police are aware of and responsive to the needs and interests of the local population, local heads of police were to be selected by municipal councils from lists of candidates proposed by the Ministry of Interior, and were to communicate regularly with the councils. The Ministry of Interior would retain the authority to remove local heads of police in accordance with the law.

Non-Discrimination and Equitable Representation

- The principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment under the law is to be respected completely. This principle is to be applied in particular with respect to employment in public administration and public enterprises, and access to public financing for business development.
- Laws regulating employment in public administration are to include measures to assure equitable representation of communities in all central and local public bodies and at all levels of employment within such bodies, while respecting the rules concerning competence and integrity that govern public administration. The authorities are to take action to correct imbalances in the composition of public administration, in particular through the recruitment of members of under-represented communities. Particular attention is to be given to ensuring that the police will reflect the composition and distribution of the population of Macedonia.
- For the constitutional court, one-third of the judges are to be chosen by the assembly, by a majority of the total number of representatives that includes a majority of the total number of representatives claiming to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia. This procedure also will apply to the election of the ombudsman (public attorney) and the election of three of the members of the Judicial Council.

Special Parliamentary Procedures⁴

- On the central level, certain constitutional amendments of the Law on Local Self-Government cannot be approved without a qualified majority of two-thirds of votes, within which there must be a *majority of minority votes*.
- Laws that directly affect culture, use of language, education, personal documentation and use of symbols, as well as laws on local finances, local elections, the City of

⁴ This “double majority mechanism” ensures that members of non-Macedonian ethnic groups may not be outvoted on issues of importance to their community.

Skopje and municipal borders must also receive a majority of votes, within which there must be a majority of minority votes.

Education and Use of Languages

- With respect to primary and secondary education, instruction is to be provided in students' native languages, while at the same time uniform standards for academic programs are to be applied throughout Macedonia.
- State funding is to be provided for university-level education in languages spoken by at least 20% of the population of Macedonia, on the basis of specific agreements.
- Positive discrimination will be applied in state universities until enrollment equitably reflects the ethnic composition of the population of Macedonia.
- The official language throughout Macedonia and in the international relations of Macedonia is the Macedonian language.
- Any other language spoken by at least 20% of the population is also to be an official language. In the organs of the Republic of Macedonia, any official language other than Macedonian may be used in accordance with the law. Any person living in a unit of local self-government in which at least 20% of the population speaks an official language other than Macedonian may use that language to communicate with the regional office of the central government with responsibility for that municipality; such an office is to reply in that language in addition to Macedonian. Any person may use any official language to communicate with a head office of the central government, which will reply in that language in addition to Macedonian.
- With respect to local government, in municipalities where a community comprises at least 20% of the population, the language of that community will be used as an official language in addition to Macedonian. With respect to languages spoken by less than 20% of the population, the local authorities will decide democratically on their use in public bodies.
- In criminal and civil judicial proceedings at any level, an accused person or any party will have the right to translation of all proceedings as well as documents at state expense⁵ and in accordance with relevant Council of Europe documents.
- Any official personal documents of citizens speaking an official language other than Macedonian will also be issued in that language, in addition to the Macedonian language, in accordance with the law.

Expression of Identity

Along with the emblem of the Republic of Macedonia, local authorities are to be free to place emblems marking the identity of the majority community, respecting international rules and usages.

⁵This right was in practice even before the agreement was signed.

Draft constitutional amendments were discussed for quite some time in Parliament. Each draft amendment was voted separately. The amendment that provoked the most emotions and reaction (as expected) was the draft amendment related to the preamble. First, accent was put on the “civic” concept of the state (“The citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, taking the responsibility for the present and future of their fatherland....”), rather than stating that the state belongs to the “Macedonian people living in complete equality with Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Roma and other,” as stated in the first Constitution. This formulation created strong differences of opinion between VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, but also within VMRO-DPMNE itself. After tension, international mediation and negotiations, the final formulation of the preamble was as follows: “Citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, the Macedonian people, as well as the citizens who live within its borders: Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Serbs, Roma, Bosniak and others, taking the responsibility for the present and the future of their fatherland....” A long procedure and endless discussions followed toward shaping the draft amendments, and finally the assembly adopted fifteen amendments on November 2001 by a two-thirds parliamentary decision, with votes from 94 MPs (out of 120).

The New Electoral Model

One of the duties included in the Ohrid Agreement was the creation of a new electoral model. The country was restructured into six large electoral districts with 20 parliamentary seats. The procedural outline required closed party lists and the D’Hondt formula of distribution. There was no minimum for voter turnout.

Parties carefully selected candidates within districts, aiming to create a balance between local and central branch party-members. 30 parties were registered, 8 coalitions and 5 citizens’ lists. There were 153 lists of candidates. Meaning that over 3,000 candidates were competing for 120 seats, a ratio of over 25 to 1.

After the September, the four-year term of the new Parliament was composed as follows:

Table 1. Party Composition of the Macedonian Parliament, 2002-2006

For Macedonia	60
VMRO-DPMNE&LP	33
DUI	16
DPA	7
NDP	1
PDP-A	2
The Socialist Party of Macedonia	1

The coalition “For Macedonia” had great success, but lacked one seat to take an absolute majority in Parliament.⁶ The formation of a government involved much negotiation, cen-

⁶ Represented by the SDSM party in coalition with LDP and numerous other coalition partners.

tered on the inclusion of the “military wing” of DUI (who many held responsible for the armed conflicts of the previous year).

The government includes three vice prime ministers, one for European integration (SDSM), another for the political system (DUI) and a third for the economy (LDP). DUI sought the Ministry of Defense or Exterior, but finally took Transport and Communication, Health, Justice and Education. Other ministries were distributed through separate negotiations including SDSM, LDP and other partners.

The priorities in the government plan submitted on October 31 included: peace, stability, the rule of law, respect for the Constitution, equal protection and economic prosperity. Strategic goals included NATO and EU membership, full implementation of the framework agreement, return of displaced persons, defense of human rights and civil liberties, and strengthening institutions through competitive staffing. The government further planned to create strategies to create employment and reduce poverty. Special mention is given to the fight against corruption. All coalition partners accepted this document.

The New Committee for Interethnic Relations

According to the framework agreement, the Assembly determined the composition of the Committee for Interethnic Relations. The committee includes seven Macedonians, seven Albanians and one representative for each of the other ethnicities mentioned in the preamble. This committee is to present suggestions for solutions to any problems related to ethnicity. In situations when Parliament is not able to resolve disputes, the committee will arbitrate.

Table 2. Members of the Committee According to Party Affiliation

Ordinary number	Party	Number of members
1	SDSM	3
2	DUI	4
3	DPA	2
4	VMRO-DPMNE	2
5	LDP	1
6	LP	1
7	PDP-A	1
8	Democratic Union of Serbs	1
9	Party of Egyptians	1
10	Party of Democratic Action (Bosniak)	1
11	League of Vlachs	1
12	Democratic Party of Turks	1
Total		19

THE IMPACT OF MINORITY PARTICIPATION IN ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT

Dan Chiribucă and Tivadar Magyari

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IMPACT OF MINORITY PARTICIPATION IN ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT

Dan Chiribucă and Tivadar Magyari

The Hungarian population in Romania forms one of the major ethnic minorities in Europe, representing 7.1% of the Romanian population. The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians from Romania was constituted on December 25, 1989, to represent and protect the interests of the Hungarian minority. With seats in Parliament since 1990, it also became part of the governing coalition established after the 1996 national elections.

The Participation of DAHR in the Government Coalition

As a result of the legislative elections in 1996, DAHR obtained 25 representatives' mandates and eleven senators' mandates. In each of the two houses of Parliament, DAHR obtained 6% of the total mandates.

Theoretically, the election results would have allowed for a government coalition with a comfortable parliamentary majority without the inclusion of DAHR, as the Democratic Convention (DCR) and the Social Democratic Union (SDU) totaled over 60% of the parliamentary mandates. The participation of DAHR, however, was assumed from the beginning of negotiations for the new government, both for the sake of "symbolic compensation" for the fact that the votes of the Hungarian minority helped give the presidency to DCR, and for pragmatic reasons: (1) to build image-capital for foreign relations and foster stability in a region shaken by interethnic conflicts; (2) the DCR-SDU coalition was already complicated by ideological differences and a history of troubled interaction; the inclusion of DAHR offered the future government coalition a higher insurance of parliamentary majority and a buffer in the likely power struggle between DCR and SDU; (3) it could provide a genuine opportunity to tackle issues regarding the Hungarian minority.

The DAHR leaders we interviewed¹ cited support for the democratization process and direct involvement in approaching national issues, especially issues of interest to the minority, as their principal motivations for accepting.

Both within DAHR and the governing party, the Christian Democratic National Peasant's Party (NPCDP), there was no consensus regarding DAHR's participation. Members of

¹ DAHR president Markó Béla, as well as Péter Eckstein, the former minister for the protection of national minorities, and Pete Stefan, the former state secretary to the Ministry of Education.

DAHR worried that inclusion in the government would make it difficult to defend the minority by criticizing the government. There was also concern due to the lack of a precise timeline regarding DAHR's policy demands. NPCDP members, on the other hand, worried about including an ethnically-oriented party in their coalition, which was seeking to stay out of nationalist arguments.

The formal position of DAHR in the distribution of power in the government can be indicated by the number and types of posts allocated to DAHR within the executive branch. Comparing election results to the total number of important positions held in the executive branch (ministers, state secretaries, prefects, sub-prefects), DCR's importance was diminished while the positions of DAHR and SDU were strengthened (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of Parliamentary Mandates and Principal Executive Positions between Parties Forming the Government Coalition:

Party	Parliamentary mandates		Ministers, sub-ministers, prefectures and sub-prefectures	
	Number	%	Number	%
DCR	307	73	81	61
SDU	76	18	37	28
DAHR	36	9	15	11

The percentage of DAHR representatives within government structures and top positions held by DAHR (minister of healthcare, minister for the protection of national minorities) indicate a rather peripheral position of this party within the coalition.

Rather than the formal distribution of power, however, it is the cooperation between parties which can be seen as most important. In theory, genuine and effective cooperation within the coalition was ensured by a common core program based on ideas of reform, democratization and institutionalized cooperation. In practice, cooperation was only partial; specific interests of the coalition parties undermined unity at all levels: government, ministries and territorial structures.

Cooperation at government level was negatively influenced by various executive positions held by members of the government in the parties that made up the coalition.

In some government meetings there were discussions that were beyond my grasp both in language and content. Sometimes those who were the most aggressive managed to impose their point of view; sometimes there were no decisions made. There were consulting bodies, but in fact they never worked. In fact, each minister tried to force their perspective and obtain a government decision or force a legislative act through.

Irinel Popescu, NPCDP, state secretary to the minister of healthcare.²

² Taken from interviews conducted by the author. For extended material from interviews, see Annex 1 at the end of this chapter.

Even if cooperation was evaluated positively (as by the minister of healthcare), some hindrances could be noticed, such as transgression of the normal relationship between a minister and a state secretary, based on party affiliation and level of power within the party.

In the case of the Hospital Law, we [NPCDP] wanted to keep the important hospitals directly subordinated to the Ministry of Healthcare, reporting directly to Bucharest, but [DAHR Minister of Healthcare Gabor Hajdu] did not want that; he wanted them to report to the local communities, and therefore the law was never passed. . . Once I signed a protocol on public relations for the Health Insurance House. [Hajdu] did not agree with it. I wanted to give the house the freedom to develop its own information system, without having to ask for the ministry's approval. He did not like that.

Irinel Popescu

The government's activity was constantly complicated when ministers or other members of the executive branch refused or neglected to carry out actions decided by higher offices.

Collaboration at the central level affected collaboration in the provinces—where public policies are really implemented. Problems were mainly caused by the poor quality of personal relations between leaders of territorial offices rather than by the existence of inadequate formal structures.

Some of the causes of dysfunction were ideological. Although major objectives were mostly similar, favored approaches were often different, leading to poor cooperation. For each of the parties, the coalition was also a space for electoral competition. Partners sought to maximize their own political/electoral capital and minimize that of the other partners. They were not allies but future competitors. This also happened within parties. Thus, internal struggles within NPCDP infected the government.

Problems were also caused by an inability to bring certain persons into leadership positions (ministers, state secretaries, members of Parliament). This was compounded by a general lack of political discipline. There was permanent uncertainty concerning implementation of government decisions (at times laws were boycotted even by MPs from parties whose leaders supported the law).

Budgeting: An Indicator of Public Policies

Public policy activity involves programs initiated and implemented by government institutions using specifically allocated resources. Consequently, budgetary allocations represent a good indicator of the main sectoral interests of certain governments. Analyzing the sums allocated to the main budget chapters in the interval between 1991 and 2000, one may distinguish the kinds of public policies DAHR participated in (Table 2).

Table 2. Dynamics of the Main Chapters of Expenditure from the Budget of the Romanian State, 1991-2000 (by percentage)

	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991
Education	22.0	18.3	21.7	18.9	19.6	16.7	16.0	18.6	14.8	22.6
Transport	16.6	15.5	10.6	8.3	7.5	8.3	8.5	5.8	5.7	6.5
National defense	13.6	16.0	17.5	14.8	12.7	14.3	14.4	13.6	14.2	–
Public order and national security	12.5	11.2	10.2	7.5	9.7	8.3	8.8	6.6	3.8	–
Social assistance, allowances, pensions, compensations	11.1	12.0	12.8	15.0	7.9	6.8	8.2	7.2	8.7	15.8
Agriculture	7.9	8.2	8.4	11.2	11.6	13.8	14.0	14.5	16.9	10.7
Healthcare	5.0	6.2	8.3	12.6	12.6	14.1	12.7	11.1	12.0	18.4
Industry	4.4	3.4	3.8	5.5	10.1	10.5	13.6	19.5	22.0	23.7
Services and development	3.0	4.2	1.4	1.3	1.3	–	–	–	–	–
Culture	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.2	2.6	1.4	1.1	0.8	0.6	0.8
Scientific research	1.4	1.5	2.2	2.3	3.4	3.6	0.6	0.7	0.9	1.5
Environment	0.8	1.0	0.5	0.4	1.0	–	–	–	–	–
Communal maintenance and housing	–	–	–	–	–	1.8	1.7	1.2	0.4	–
Sports	–	–	–	–	–	0.4	0.4	0.4	–	–

The budgetary allocations confirm the fact that the government coalition's main interest was in economic restructuring. In 1997, with the coalition's first budget, industry was allocated half of the percentage it had been given the previous year, and the budget allocated to social assistance and protection almost doubled in percentage compared to 1996.

Healthcare is the only domain whose budget was reduced to more than half its percentage in the interval between 1997 and 2000. Without asserting a causal relationship between the portfolio held by DAHR (the Ministry of Healthcare) and the dynamics of the budget allocated to healthcare, it is potentially a sign of the real power held by DAHR in the coalition.

We cannot ignore, in this context, that in a society determined to build democracy, the percentage of the budget allocated to public order and national security tripled in the interval between 1992 and 2000, and in the period of the government coalition which included DAHR it nearly doubled.

Issues in the Hungarian Discourse Related to the Participation of DAHR in the Government Coalition

DAHR's participation in the government was accompanied by certain themes and issues in the public discourse on Hungarians in Romania. The discourse is based around a last-ing dilemma: to participate or not to participate.

Therefore, the entire Hungarian media discourse presented a number of arguments and counter-arguments, often invoking successes or failures of minority participation in government. The Hungarian community's criticisms of DAHR as a government party traveled exclusively through 'internal' channels within the minority public sphere. Thus, while the other parties that had formed the coalition were drastically sanctioned by their constituencies in the November 2000 elections, DAHR kept its number of votes³—an indicator of success, at least from the point of view of its own constituency.

Achievements of Participation

Before the general elections of 2000, the DAHR politicians stated their principal achievements as following :

1. increased privatization;
2. increased autonomy for local administration;
3. the creation of institutions to support small and medium size businesses;
4. launching several regional development programs;
5. progress in returning community or private property;
6. providing education at all levels in minority languages;
7. initiating a new system of legal provisions to regulate minority rights.

From the DAHR report on its activity within the government, issued in the fall of 2000, it can be seen that the party divided its attention and political-administrative activity between matters relevant exclusively to the minority (instruction in the language of minorities at all levels) and issues without specific relevance for the Hungarian community (liberalization of tourism or the maintenance of the national stud farm).

In the political discourse they often emphasize (especially in interviews and press conferences of the Hungarian politicians) the idea of Hungarians' involvement in solving the

³ In spite of the pluralism within the Hungarian community, unity within DAHR is assumed to be necessary for effective minority advocacy. It tends to be considered a "national policy interest." All opposition to dominant opinions is repudiated fiercely as an attempt to break the party apart. This leads to a monolithic and anti-pluralistic pattern of politics and policy, effectively a one-party system for ethnic Hungarians in Romania. There have been some initiatives to pluralize the Hungarian "sub-public" sphere. Some Hungarians have suggested "internal" elections where Hungarians could choose between several sub-parties or factions. A DAHR board would then act as a kind of elected pluralistic "Parliament" inside the Hungarian community and as a political party for Romania as a whole.

country's problems—a means of proving loyalty and removing “the image of the Hungarian enemy” (*magyar ellenségkép*). A part of the DAHR opposition,⁴ the Organization for Reform, and the press that supported them (the weekly *Erdélyi Napló*, for example) saw this approach as giving up “doing politics in Transylvania,” and involving Hungarians in activities “that are not our business.”

Another aim of DAHR leaders, especially of the ministers heading the Department for the Protection of National Minorities, György Tokay and later Péter Eckstein-Kovács, was—as already mentioned—to take on issues for all minorities, not only Hungarians. Some public policy aims regarding minorities in Romania are:

- Revise the Statute of the Council for Minorities.
- Set up provincial offices of the Department for the Protection of National Minorities in Constanta, Cluj, Arad and Suceava.
- Initiate anti-discrimination legislation.
- Initiate research on ethnic communities in Romania.
- Modify state budget law in order to legalize financial support for minority organizations.
- Establish an Office for Roma to manage programs financed by the Council of Europe (who granted 3 billion lei, supplemented by 1.8 billion lei from the Romanian government).
- Modify laws on education.
- Include Hungarian language and literature in the basic curriculum.
- Allow religious education in one's mother tongue through Hungarian churches.
- Include a special syllabus on music and Romanian language for grades 1-8.
- Allow the teaching of Hungarian history (for the first time since 1921).
- Establish a separate department within the Ministry of Culture to deal with minority issues.
- Finance traditional publishing houses that publish in languages other than Romanian.
- Grant Hungarian churches a proportional amount of funds (6-7%) for reconstruction.

While in the government, DAHR initiated or supported the following activities in the sphere of public policy outside of minority issues:

- reform of the PR for the governmental palace;
- health insurance legislation;
- restructuring pharmaceutical assistance;
- restructuring emergency services;
- establishing a legal framework for doctors;
- establishing a system of family doctors in the Romanian medical system;
- construction of sewage systems in rural areas through the Ministry of Public Works;
- a legislative initiative regarding ecologically-friendly agriculture;
- restarting a subsidy program for thoroughbred horses and improving the national stud farm;⁵

⁴ DAHR, as a confederation of several organizations and parties, was not unanimous in their assessment of the timeliness of entering the coalition. We will comment on these disputes below.

⁵ According to the arrangements in the coalition, DAHR was tasked with naming the management of the public utility for breeding racing horses.

- liberalizing hotel and accommodation prices;
- privatizing the tourism program without facilitating profitable use of premises claimed by former proprietors;
- establishing a ten-year tax exemption for businesses dealing with rural tourism.

In this context, we find it important to mention that although the interests and activities of DAHR transcend the specific problems of the Hungarian minority, most of the political discourse of the Hungarian elite revolves around some specific interests of the Hungarian community. Table 3 charts the frequency of comments, questions, etc., by Hungarian MPs during parliamentary sessions.

Table 3. Comments, Questions, Answers by DAHR Deputies in the Legislature, 1996-2000

Topic	Frequency	%
Conflicting relations between the Romanian and Hungarian communities	20	18.3
Failure to apply the law of ownership	20	18.3
Conflicts between the opposition and DAHR	13	11.9
Commemoration of certain historical events relating to the Hungarian community	11	10.1
The Hungarian community of Harghita and Covasna	8	7.3
Failure to observe the rights of minorities	8	7.3
Amendments to laws	7	6.4
Issues relating to forest land	5	4.6
Issues relating to transport	5	4.6
The issue of housing	4	3.7
Issues relating to parliamentary activity	2	1.8
Conflicts between the coalition and DAHR	1	0.9
Legislative initiatives	1	0.9
Issues relating to investments	1	0.9
Issues relating to healthcare	1	0.9
Issues relating to tourism	1	0.9
Issues relating to financial legislation	1	0.9
Total	109	100

Source: Shorthand record of the meetings of the House of Representatives.

Thus, out of the total number of interventions, 56% are connected to the Hungarian community.

Beyond that, they claim responsibility for diplomatic achievements between Romania and Hungary such as the opening of a Hungarian Consulate in Cluj-Napoca and the opening of a few new border crossings between the two countries. The underlying idea is that the presence of DAHR in the government has reduced tension with Hungary.

Periods of Focused Discourse and the Political Action of DAHR, 1996-2000

DAHR's discourse has tended to focus on certain successive sets of issues. The following topic-periods can be distinguished:

1. first series of debates on the issue of the Hungarian university;
2. debates on bilingual town signs (summer of 1997);
3. debates on language of instruction of Romanian history and geography for minority students (September-November 1997);
4. debates on the location of the Hungarian university (winter of 1997-1998);
5. third series of debates on the "Four Faculties" as a substitute for a Hungarian university (March-May 1998);⁶
6. further debates on the Hungarian university (June-October 1998);
7. the use of minority languages in local administration (1999).

These topics tended to be covered with great interest by the Hungarian language press, and with some delay by the Romanian press. Issues were intensely debated in the public sphere. Certain topics, such as changes in the language of education connected to the new Education Law, held central positions in public debate nationwide. However, issues tended to fade from the radar quickly and be upstaged by new issues, without clear resolutions.

This process of focusing on a certain issue intensely and quickly characterized DAHR's activity throughout their participation in the government.

At first, DAHR was somewhat cautious and skeptical, advising to wait until political capital was established before pushing their agenda. This policy, it appears, was designed in order not to alienate coalition partners at the beginning of the mandate. By the end of the mandate, however, DAHR members tended to be resigned to a certain level of failure. Faith that significant legislative changes were possible had been eroded by certain failures such as the inability to pass the Local Administration Law.⁷ It appears that this was because of the crumbling political capital of the Romanian parties in the coalition, who lacked the political will to raise support for DAHR's issues. Considering the economic crisis in Romania, DAHR preferred not to press issues either, sometimes preferring alternate methods to achieve their policy goals.⁸

Besides the issues in the list above, which will be discussed at length below, certain other topics that entered public debate should be mentioned:

- restitution of church property that had been confiscated or nationalized;
- restitution of property formerly held by minority organizations;

⁶ See explanation below.

⁷ This law was important because it stipulated the use of languages other than Romanian in local public administration.

⁸ Seeing the failure to push the Hungarian university through Bucharest, DAHR and the Hungarian government opened dialogue on a "Transylvanian Hungarian Private University" (*Erdélyi Magyar Magánegyetem*). The Hungarian state budget contributed over 70 million USD to this project between 2000 and 2001. The university is planned as an extension of the quasi-bilingual Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj.

- restitution of land and common forests (not only a minority issue);
- other topics such as the Odorheiu Secuiesc⁹ orphanage and the case of Gheorghe Funar;¹⁰
- the practice of Hungarian national celebrations.

First debates on the Hungarian University (February-May 1997)

DAHR's first objective was to remove legal obstacles to the establishment of higher education in minority language by modifying the Education Law.

There was some debate within DAHR about the location of the university, but consensus for it to remain in Cluj prevailed. Debate was later characterized by a lack of such consensus on the proper approach to establishing the university (attached to the existing University of Cluj, established independently, privately, with support from the church, etc.). Ensuing conflicts finally brought the issue to the attention of the Romanian press. This opened a broader dialogue, where it first became clear that DAHR's coalition partners did not necessarily support the establishment of a Hungarian university. The more the other parties rejected DAHR efforts to build support for the university, the more the internal opposition within DAHR started to publicly doubt the wisdom of participating in the government at all.

A group of 200 Hungarian professors submitted a proposal to the University Senate which demanded the recognition of the Hungarian Educators' Collective, giving them the right to autonomous decision-making authority within Babeş-Bolyai University regarding the instruction of the Hungarian community. Although the collective did receive a certain amount of authority (mostly over Hungarian-language instruction), the proposal was rejected, essentially putting it back in DAHR's hands.

Debates on bilingual signs (Summer of 1997)

Government Ordinance 22 of 1997 stipulated that minority language place-names could be added to official use in areas where the minority population forms more than 20% of the population.

The Hungarian press was already in the practice of using their own place-names,¹¹ but a general lack of acceptance of the ordinance by the Romanian population minimized its effect. In the end, only signs marking the entrances and exits to cities, as well as signs on official buildings became bilingual.

⁹ Odorheiu Secuiesc is a town of 40,000 whose population is 98% Hungarian. The municipality supported the construction of an orphanage which, due to decisions made by foreign donors, became a possession of an Eastern Orthodox congregation (in Romania, that would be read as an ethnic Romanian congregation, as most Hungarians are Catholic or Protestant). The municipality contested, enjoying the political support of DAHR, claiming the Hungarian identity of the town was important to preserve and that this change could cause a "Romanization" of the community.

¹⁰ Gheorghe Funar is the mayor of Cluj-Napoca, well known for his aggressive anti-Hungarian policies.

¹¹ In day-to-day communication, even highly assimilated Romanians and Hungarians use their own place-names. This can lead to ironic situations where two citizens actually have difficulty communicating about a square or a street in a town where they both live.

Debate over the topic peaked when György Tokay, the DAHR appointee to the Department for the Protection of National Minorities, sent out a list of place-names which were to be made bilingual. Signs were immediately and widely vandalized. DAHR politicians publicized their condemnation of these acts and their powerlessness to fight it (they had no support among the coalition partners) in the Hungarian press.

DAHR Senator György Frunda¹² then notified the Council of Europe regarding the failure to implement Ordinance 22, pointing out that the ordinance carried no legal sanction. Senator Adrian Năstase publicly protested, once again entering the issue into the Romanian press.¹³

This event was meaningful more broadly in that it changed DAHR's position toward the law. They had historically pushed for laws to be altered or ignored, and this was an opportunity for the party to seek the support of mainstream politics to implement a law which had been properly adopted. The ordinance was generally implemented only in areas where Hungarians formed a majority or which had DAHR mayors.

Debates on language of instruction of Romanian history and geography for minority students (September-November 1997)

Emergency Ordinance 36 of 1997 modified and completed Education Law 84 of 1995. The Education Law had been strongly contested by DAHR (in opposition at the time it was adopted). One of the goals expressed by DAHR when signing the coalition agreement in 1996 was the modification of this law.

Emergency Ordinance 36 has 60 paragraphs in three large articles, and it regulates a series of educational aspects (from doctoral studies to military schools), including minor details such as changing the titles of new university faculty. However, only some paragraphs of the ordinance reached the space of public debate, and those referred to instruction in minority languages. Even here, the dispute was focused on minority students' right to study Romania's geography and history in their mother tongue.

We quote the parts of the ordinance that were disputed:

Art. 120 – (1) The discipline of Romanian language and literature shall be taught in primary and middle school according to a curriculum and set of textbooks developed especially for the respective minority. In secondary education, the discipline of Romanian language and literature shall be taught according to a curriculum and set of textbooks identical to those used by students whose language of instruction is Romanian.

(2) In primary education, the discipline of Romanian History and Geography shall be taught in the students' mother tongue according to a curriculum and set of textbooks similar to those used by students whose language of instruction is Romanian. In middle and secondary schools these disciplines may be taught, upon request, in the students' mother tongue, according to a curriculum and set of textbooks that are identical to those used by students whose language of instruction is Romanian, with the obligation to transcribe and learn the toponyms and the proper Romanian names in Romanian.

¹² An influential DAHR senator, a well-known lawyer, twice a candidate for the presidency, delegate to the Council of Europe and reporter on the situation of minorities in Lithuania.

¹³ President of the main opposition party, prime minister after the 2000 elections.

Art. 122. – In the state vocational, secondary and post-secondary education, instruction may be in the students' mother tongue, upon request, in the conditions of the law, with the obligation to learn specialist terminology in Romanian.

The ordinance raised different responses:

1. DAHR leaders were pleased and popularized the new opportunities for Hungarian students.
2. Opposition within DAHR did not see any sound guarantees in the ordinance without effective modification of the law in Parliament.
3. Coalition partners could not come to a consensus regarding the paragraphs discussed.
4. The Romanian opposition was generally opposed to pro-minority modifications.

Much of the debate focused on the ideology of school materials. Some Romanian MPs argued that Hungarians wanted alternative textbooks in order to teach another interpretation of history or, if possible, even of geography.¹⁴ Some Hungarians claimed, meanwhile, that textbooks that were “friendlier” to minorities would in fact be needed. A few Romanian MPs were scandalized to find that Hungarians have actually been using Hungarian toponyms for years.

The debate ended in mild scandal when Romanian opposition groups traveled to Hungarian areas to inspect how much Romanian was used in schools regardless of the ordinance. Eventually protests by DAHR and the school districts stopped this activity.

When the Education Law was finally modified in Parliament, the paragraphs regarding minority-language education were not included.

Debates on the location of the Hungarian university (Winter 1997-1998)

The topic of the Hungarian university reappeared in 1997 when debates turned to a paragraph in Ordinance 36, a modification to the Education Law. The controversy surrounded the following paragraphs:

¹⁴ Hungarians in general are displeased with and even estranged from the history that is taught in schools, because Hungarians are presented as oppressors. They are also dissatisfied with the fact that names of historical persons are Romanized (their names are transcribed into Romanian; for instance—Dózsa becomes Doja, etc.), that Hungarian national events such as the revolution of 1848 are interpreted as mistakes, that entire periods of the history of Transylvania are avoided, and that the multiethnic and multiconfessional specificity of Transylvania and the role of the Hungarian princes and their dynasties in medieval Transylvania are played down or ignored altogether.

On the other hand, Romanians tend to be against any underscoring of the role of Hungarians in medieval and 19th century Transylvania. Moreover, Hungarian historiography cultivates a different discourse about the history of the region, even questioning the continual territorial occupation of Romania by the ethnic group that now calls itself Romanians. Hungarian historiographers may entertain the theory that a neo-Latin people migrated to the territory in medieval times—offensive to Romanian nationalists in that it infers that Hungarians may have been in the Carpathians longer. An attempt to bring out school textbooks that present history without newly extrapolated nationalist discourse has met with strong resistance in both Hungary and Romania.

Art. 123. – (1) State-owned higher education institutions can organize, under the conditions set by the law, upon request, groups, sections, colleges, faculty and educational institutions where instruction is done in the students' mother tongue. In such cases, specialist terminology shall be learned in Romanian also.

This text was initiated by DAHR, with two more paragraphs added at the request of the coalition partners which, according to DAHR politicians, reduced the Hungarian 'specificity' of the issue that bothered Romanian national feelings:

(2) Higher education institutions with multicultural structures and activities shall be encouraged in order to promote harmonious interethnic co-existence and national and European integration.

(3) Training upon request of Romanian specialists in national minority languages shall be encouraged.

DAHR meant this article to establish the distinct status of the Hungarian professors from Babeş-Bolyai University. The other coalition partner, perhaps trying to upset the emotional resonance the University in Cluj has for Hungarians, began suggesting other locations. Meanwhile, the administration of the University of Cluj (and other institutions such as the University of Medicine and Pharmacology in Târgu Mureş) rejected the proposal to set up organizational structures for instruction in Hungarian, making other concessions like delegating certain administrative tasks to Hungarian staff members. Although no legislation was completed, the Hungarian community, DAHR MPs in particular, rallied around Cluj as the only proper location for a Hungarian university.

Debates on the "Four Faculties" (March-May 1998)

Ordinance 36 also stipulated that "state-owned higher education institutions can organize, in the conditions set by the law, upon request, groups, sections, colleges, faculty and educational institutions where instruction is done in the students' mother tongue."

Based on this article, a group of Hungarian professors initiated a project to set up four new faculties within Babeş-Bolyai University, which would be taught in Hungarian. The faculties would include languages, social sciences, theology and economics and law. The plan was rejected by the university administration.

Further debates on the Hungarian University (June-October 1998)

With the help of NPCDP Minister (and university president) Andrei Marga, and especially under the aegis of the department headed by DAHR Minister Tokay, a working commission was established at the governmental level, including Hungarian and Romanian university professors, to create a common, multicultural university.

Hungarian opposition to this plan argued that the term "multicultural" could only be used to describe a university where the component cultures had equal status, where minority languages and symbols could be used freely and which included the mutual influence and interdependence of cultures in its curriculum.

In September 1998, DAHR threatened to leave the coalition if the university issue was not resolved. As no solutions were presented, DAHR MPs stopped attending Parliament

sessions. This led to lengthy coalition discussions mediated by the president.

A few hours before the deadline DAHR had set for a favorable solution, a new proposal arose—the establishment of a “minority university,” effectively a Hungarian-German University. This proposal was more palatable to Romanian nationalist in that it gave no singular treatment to the Hungarian minority. The actual proposal was merely to begin research toward the founding of the university. Even so, DAHR did not leave the coalition and research was begun. DAHR’s internal opposition criticized the project, and the minister of education, attacked the project in court.

Debates on the use of minority languages in local administration (1999)

The issue of use of minority languages in citizens’ relations with local authorities was the major topic of discourse on ethnicity in 1999. A law which allowed this was eventually adopted by the subsequent administration following the 2000 elections, with DAHR support.

Failures of the Participation

The DAHR political elite tend to justify failures in economic reform by citing failures in the overall socio-political situation in Romania (judicial instability, corruption, frequent demonstrations, strikes and marches). Their failures to achieve real local autonomy, secure ownership or complete property restitution tend to be blamed on the coalition (lack of consensus, legislative gridlock, etc.).

There were also complaints by the internal DAHR opposition (what the Romanian media tends to label “the DAHR radicals”) such as the Organization for Reform, the Transylvanian Initiative, the Federation of Youth Organizations, the Christian Democratic Party of Hungarians in Romania, etc.). From the beginning, these groups were opposed to a Romanian Hungarian political party participating in a government coalition and permanently sustained a series of arguments:

- Vague promises instead of guarantees concerning the protection of minority rights;
- The possibility that Romanians would use the situation created by the participation of Hungarians in the Romanian governance for diplomatic and propagandistic ends in foreign policy by attempting to show the world that in Romania “everything is all right”—a claim they do not support.
- The danger of being faced with a situation in which Hungarian politicians could be suspected of “treason,” of ethnic partisanship, etc., by being granted high positions in the state;
- Scapegoating by Hungarians in the case of a government’s failure or unpopularity;
- Balkanization and “Byzantinization” of the Hungarian political culture.¹⁵

¹⁵ In the Hungarian discourse all over the world there appears the self-stereotype according to which the Hungarian political culture would be “more appropriate” or “better” than the one in the Balkans. The later is characterized by judicial and bureaucratic relativism, diplomatic inconsistency, nepotism, autocratic tendencies and lack of Western democratic traditions.

All five of these arguments were repeated often at the beginning of negotiations for DAHR to join the government. When President Clinton singled out the Bucharest government as a positive example of dealing with minority issues, again the opposition complained of blanketing over continuing problems. In the beginning of the government's mandate, Hungarian journalists did indeed fear being scapegoated, and were in fact blamed for certain problems by Romanian journalists.¹⁶

Regarding the failure of the coalition, and especially DAHR's role in it, the internal DAHR opposition lists the following:

1. Restitution of community and church goods was not finalized.
2. Failure to properly establish a Hungarian university;
3. Failure to allow Romanian history and geography to be taught in minority languages;
4. Leaving legislation regarding local administration (especially the issue of using minority languages) unfinished;
5. Delaying the structural reform of DAHR ("freezing the existing structures," giving up "internal elections");
6. Abandoning the program of "internal self-determination."¹⁷

DAHR's Democratizing Effect

Though they are not explicitly mentioned in official reports, the Hungarian elite frequently cite three achievements they associate with DAHR's participation in the coalition:

Improvement of Overall Minority Policy

Partly due to history, but also to differences in population, the Hungarian political elite in Romania had no particular success in forming a common group with other minorities (Roma, Germans and Saxons, Lipovani, Ukrainians, Albanians, *et al.*). DAHR politicians were accused of seeking special rights for the Hungarians while ignoring other minorities.

The Department for the Protection of National Minorities was a ministry between 1996 and 2000, led by a DAHR appointee. Administrators in the ministry often made statements supporting the unity of all minorities, special programs for all minorities, etc. Non-Hungarian minorities tended to sympathize with such statements, but as most were quite Romanized already, their identities kept them closer to the Romanian majority

¹⁶ Towards the end of their term, seeing the general failure of the coalition, DAHR gave up on ethnic initiatives, claiming there was neither time nor political will. Romanian public discourse (especially relevant during the electoral campaign of 2000) also saw fewer references to the "Hungarian danger" or "the danger of a parallel Hungarian society."

¹⁷ According to the DAHR program, "self-determination" for Transylvanian Hungarians would mean a type of autonomous organization and management of cultural, educational and religious matters. The term "internal self-determination" is used to indicate that such self-determination does not challenge Romania's current borders.

Majority-Minority relations. The Reduction of the Image of the “Hungarian as enemy”

This term appeared in the mid-1980s in Hungarian intellectual discourse, then in political discourse when Hungarian leadership (that is, the Hungarian state leadership) became concerned with the position of the Hungarian minority in neighboring countries, especially under the nationalist communist regime of Ceaușescu.

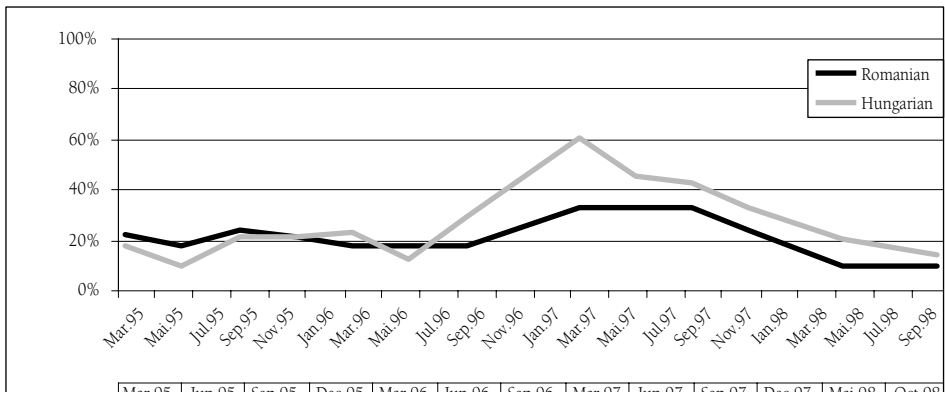
At the beginning of communism, speaking of topics connected with enmities between neighboring ethnic groups was taboo. In Romania, people who mentioned the Hungarian or Transylvanian issue were often imprisoned. At the same time, the Communist Party in Hungary ordered the burning of old maps that represented historical (“greater”) Hungary. Under Ceaușescu, Romanian-Hungarian relationships grew gradually colder and colder. In the mid-1980s, with the emergence of a relatively free press in Hungary, more and more critiques and subtle satires appeared related to the situation in Romania.

Initially, this topic was a source of debate between the central, quasi-communist power in Budapest and its opposition. It was not until after 1990 that Hungarian diplomatic statements began mentioning that this image should be changed or improved.

Increased Sense of Security for Hungarians in Romania

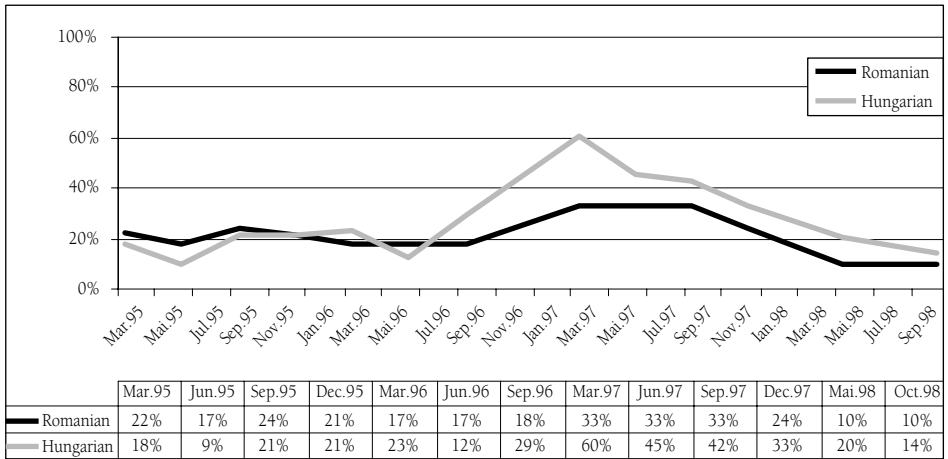
In surveys and polls, Hungarians tend to acknowledge positive outcomes to DAHR’s participation. Following the 1996 elections, polls saw a significant rise in “optimism” regarding the situation of Hungarians in Romania. In fact, according to one poll (see Figures 1 and 2, below), Hungarians could be seen to be more optimistic than the majority.

Figure 1. Comparative Evaluation of Opinions on the Direction of Change



Source: POB surveys 1995-2000. The data represent % of the respondents that answered “the government is headed in the right direction.”

Figure 2. The Dynamics of Contentedness with Political Life of the Romanian and the Hungarian Population Between 1995-2000



Source: POB surveys 1995-2000. The data represent % of the respondents that answered they were “very pleased” or “pleased” with political life in Romania.

Until 1996, the Hungarian minority’s opinions tended not to differ significantly from the majority. Following DCR’s success in September 1996, an especially after DAHR joined the coalition, The Hungarian population tended to be more pleased than the rest of the Romanian population. Optimism peaked in 1997. After a few setbacks during that period, public approval fell.

Annex

Evaluation of the Policy Impact of Minority Participation in Governance in Romania

Selections from Interviews with Leaders of the Coalition: Ministers, State Secretaries and Party Presidents

On cooperation between DAHR state secretaries and the representatives of other parties that were included in the government coalition:

Péter Eckstein, DAHR, minister of the Department for the Protection of National Minorities:

In a way it is natural that we were the smallest component of the coalition, and I think it is natural that we did not have a decisive role in the coalition. On the other hand, the Slovaks, for instance, managed to negotiate better positions in the government; they had a deputy prime minister, just as in Yugoslavia, where the representatives of the Hungarian union have a deputy prime minister. We did not manage to obtain such

a position. We held important positions in the department responsible for issues of the national minorities for four years, and besides that our representatives in the government were the minister of tourism and then that of healthcare, the latter also a state minister. So we did not have access to the so-called important ministries: finance, internal and foreign affairs. At the government level, I think what we did we did well. Our opinion was respected. In some cases we managed to impose our perspective as members of the minority, but we also got involved in issues of general interest...

I believe that there were ministers in the government who had an absolutely positive, European approach to minorities in general, and to DAHR in particular, and to their government colleagues, who we agreed with in most cases, even on issues that did not pertain to minorities. There were also ministers that were reticent toward DAHR ministers, to the participation of DAHR in the coalition... However, there was no enmity or averseness at all...

Mainly, I felt that most of the coalition parties did not do their best when recruiting their MPs. The parties were too weak to impose their perspective in a united manner, which would be desirable so as to have a united position in the legislative body.

Adrian Gorun, NPCDP, state secretary to the minister of national education:

When I came on as state secretary the coalition was already going badly. It was a conglomerate that wanted to be like an alliance, in conditions that seem unnatural. But if I think of the Western alliances, they often rely on this principle of minimal convergence of interests. Here, each party tried to promote some elements in its government program and thus it was often impossible to solve problems. Draft laws were rejected, as were other acts of government, by the coalition partners themselves. The DP members were the most stubborn, though the NLP was not far from them, especially finance. For instance, I did not manage to pass some acts that would have helped the situation of school children's transportation to school, regardless of the distance they had to travel...

As far as [DAHR's] accomplishments are concerned, I would mention their contributions to my field, especially the statute for the teaching staff, and their contribution to passing the Law on Public Servants through Parliament. These were both European-type laws. Emergency ordinances or decisions of the government that aimed at modernizing the system of higher education, the list of specializations that had to be made compatible with specializations in Europe, setting up decentralized organisms, etc. I would also point out the good relationships with the Ministry of Healthcare, especially in the issue of making our legislation compatible regarding the sanitary authorization of schools. I believe that in the crisis of the coalition, especially before the local elections and then during the general elections, the mistake that was made by all coalition partners, including DAHR, was that they could not stand the negative consequences of governance. [NLP] left the coalition, and there were disputes on different topics between NPCDP and DP, all of which abetted the return of RSDP. They had their path cleared, we could say, and DAHR itself was preparing its own path back into the government.

Radu Stroe, NLP, state secretary to the minister of finance:

[DAHR's participation] was very good. I cooperated excellently with Tokay and Eckstein, and with the state secretaries. They were quality people, professionals. We even car-

ried out a survey in 1999 in the NLP organizations. 90% said they cooperated well with DAHR. Only 10% said there were misunderstandings among the representatives of the two parties. Otherwise, they had problems with all the other parties, with DP, NPCDP, but not with us. We always got on well.

Alexandru Sassu, DP vice-president:

Cooperation with the DAHR representatives was generally good. I would mention that their devotion to the specific problems of their minority was too great, always in the first place, and other issues were, in their view, of secondary importance. However, DAHR was a stronghold of the coalition, because in one way or another it was permanently a clear case, a solid spot within the government, as compared to NLP or NPCDP, which were even more bent on their own specific interests.

Stefan Pete, DAHR, state secretary to the minister of agriculture:

I would mention two things: one is political—that working in the coalition was difficult. There were various concepts and diverse parties at work within the coalition, so politically it was hard to work. One could say we were the balance in the coalition. All that we worked for was that the coalition did not fall apart, and to a certain extent we managed. We managed to keep a certain balance among the decisions that were made by different Romanian parties. We more than once mediated between them to keep the coalition together. As for the work of the government, our people were recognized by the Romanian side. We were often there when decisions were made in government meetings. They were not disreputable. I myself would say we worked well together.

Béla Markó, DAHR president:

There were many suspicions at the beginning. Even when we started discussions about our participation in the government coalition, there were some people who said we should not ask for ministerial posts, that we should be pleased with state secretary positions, because the Romanian public would find it hard to accept Hungarians in the government at all. A few of our conditions were accepted with a lot of difficulty, responsibility for the Department for the Protection of National Minorities, for instance. Some suggested that we have patience, that we wait at least six months and then try to set up the department with a ministerial post, but we did not settle for this. We said that if our participation in the coalition was wanted, we would not enter the government “by the back door.” We finally reached a settlement, but, probably due to this initial resistance, DAHR was less involved than other parties. We had two ministers, but one was without a portfolio—the minister for the protection of national minorities. We had state secretaries in Internal and Foreign Affairs, but we had no one in the Ministry of Finance. We had fewer prefects than we should have had proportionally. So probably because of this initial resistance our presence in the government was not up to the percentage that we held in Parliament.

On cooperation in Parliament between DAHR representatives and representatives of other parties in the government coalition

Radu Stroe:

It was quite bad. DAHR had good cooperation with the NPCDP in the first phase, but NPCDP opposed them on some issue, and their relations got worse. They were in permanent conflict with DP, a typical enmity with no discussions. Unlike the others, we perceived a need for democratic change, for a new way to set up issues, even if we found it hard as Romanians. They had no initiative. I told them from the very beginning, “Lads, you have no real party. You are after your own interests, but those who support democracy do not oppose these things.” For instance, while discussing the budget for 2001, they were not upset when I asked them, “Don’t you mind that there is no amount written next to investments in the budget? Don’t you care that no one knows what the government will do with this money? Don’t you mind that it is up to the government and the minister of finance to allocate this budget, which is to be voted on by Parliament and nobody else?” They did not care. All they cared about were minor things, and that is not the right attitude, so we got upset.

Stefan Pete:

It was not smooth. In order to get something across, you had to speak with each of them individually, explain that there was no danger in laws on administration, for instance, or the budget. It was difficult. More than once, we did not reach a consensus. That is the reality. We sometimes supported a law from the government and the coalition voted it through Parliament, too. Some of them voted against our own government. There were such cases.

Béla Markó:

I cannot reproach anyone regarding relations between ministers and state secretaries of DAHR and other parties. But generally, within the coalition and in Parliament, cooperation was very bad. The coalition did not really work. Many people made mistakes. I believe the prime ministers made mistakes, as did the most important party of the coalition, the NPCDP, and President Emil Constantinescu, who never managed to create a core of authority within the coalition. In practice, no person, nor any group in the coalition, had clear authority. Let me give you an example: when the famous coordinating councils for the coalition met, no one took the role of leading discussions. These events were highly democratic and highly inefficient at the same time. If we had an agreement with a party on a certain issue, there was immediately contestation from another party.

On the effectiveness and effects of DAHR’s participation in government

Béla Markó:

Let me give you an example: the Law on Local Public Administration. Though we had the majority, in two years’ time we did not manage to get this law passed. Same with the Education Law. We are talking about laws that we were seriously concerned about

and which include some delicate issues for the majority. It took us two years to adopt the Education Law, and even then with modifications that were not clearly to our advantage. While now, with the RSDP, we managed to adopt the same law in a few weeks, even though we are not in the coalition. What is the difference? In the coalition, we made an agreement at the summit. There was clear political will but there was no discipline among coalition partners. There were partisan choices all the time, disagreements, and you could never count on the coalition.

Irinel Popescu, NPCDP, state secretary to the minister of healthcare:

The dysfunction of the coalition was the greatest failure, because the rest of the problems started there. The coalition had no leader, no working agenda, no internal cohesion.

Péter Eckstein:

Failure number one was insufficient and inadequate communication with the population—the inability to present measures in a way so that everyone could understand they were in the public interest. Otherwise, there were plenty of mistakes, and this could be accounted for by inexperience in managing public affairs. Therefore, they came up against opposition from people who were not committed to the government's principles. Economic policy, especially privatization, was another major failure. Due to the weakness of the coalition, there was no will to carry out any measures... This seems likely to be the case in the future as well as we attempt to privatize huge economic units that work at a loss and generate social problems. We tried to make a step forward, then reconsidered.

The greatest benefit of DAHR's participation—not only for DAHR but for all of Romanian society—was the removal of a few barriers. As a member of a minority, you can now reach the level of national decision-making; you have the opportunity to express your opinion in the government. Beyond that, it had a soothing effect on the population: the realization that it's not a tragedy that a prefect is Hungarian, that other key figures are Hungarian... One cannot say that the coalition did not work for the whole country, but the way it did was less coherent from the political perspective. Political leaders made decisions that were applied in the government, in Parliament. Out in the country it was more complicated. There were varying cases. In some counties they worked regularly from 1996 to 2000 in an institutionalized way. They made decisions that were generally respected. In these cases I would conclude that the system worked well. In other counties, such as Cluj, meetings were random. Sometimes the leaders met before deciding on a certain issue, but there was no constant consultation in order to make decisions that would be accepted and approved by each party.

Irinel Popescu:

Opening towards Hungary is something that needs to happen, regardless of the history of rough relations between our governments and people. In the Europe of the future we will have to live side by side, willy-nilly, with the Hungarian community in Transylvania and our neighbor Hungary. In this respect, DAHR had a positive role. DAHR is not an extremist party, although there are certain extremists included. Generally, I perceive them as a moderate party with European values...

All things considered, I would evaluate DAHR's participation positively. DAHR is a pragmatic party, and they have programs the goals of which are not only ethnically-oriented, but European. They know what they want, and they know how to pursue their goals and to abide by their agreements. They are tough negotiators, and they persevere after their political objectives, but if you make an agreement with them, they respect it. That is a positive thing to me, because at least you know your position...

Unfortunately, there is not much left of the government I belonged to. Maybe there is something that might prove useful in the long-run. It was the first time a governmental rotation was carried out between political parties. I think Isărescu managed to achieve sound economic growth for the first time, which is an admirable thing considering what was happening before that. In healthcare, the biggest success was the establishment of national health insurance.

Generally, I am not sure there was anything that we started in 1996 and finished by 2000 with real success. We failed in many things. The coalition itself was the biggest failure and the basis for all the other failures. Then there were the charges of corruption. This did a lot of harm in foreign relations, too. I wonder why some of those who were involved did not realize the responsibility they had. As politicians, they should have defended their image, both in the country and abroad. If they were guilty, they should have resigned. If they were not guilty, they should have proved it instead of allowing the press to sully them, which did not do anyone any good. It looked as if they did not care, which I find unacceptable. So, generally, these were failures. Particular cases, where, for example, a clerk from the agricultural department in a certain county, a member RSDP, blocks the irrigation system in order to sabotage NPCDP crops... There were many such cases. Once the *[previous government]* retreated, as a result of the disastrous elections in November, the notion of a democratic state weakened. In reality, *[the new government]* is a return to a system we're all familiar with, due to the inability of the alternative to perform well. First, we did not have a credible leader; second, there was hardly a choice—selection in the leftist sphere had been done 50 years before. It was well-structured and coherent. In our case there were merely various people interested in politics.

Adrian Gorun:

There were certain good results, such as opening certain doors to Europe. If we consider the meetings that Constantinescu has had in the three months since Iliescu came back to power, we can see that most representative political personages in Europe have accepted him. This is also due to the fact that we attempted to find solutions to the existing problems—not only for the Hungarian minority, but for all minorities in Romania. The solution I foresee is holistic. Once the framework for respecting human rights and individual freedom is in place, minority issues will be sorted out as well. Second, I think it was a positive thing that certain laws were passed. The negative impact came from populists and nationalists. Interestingly, the Romanian-Hungarian government is not an issue any longer. It depends on who makes the match.

Alexandru Sassu:

There were some positive aspects. We saw the first instance of economic growth. It was relatively small (1.5%), but a good sign altogether. Then, Romania's budget was balanced, after the very heavy burden of external public debt, which totalled a few billion dollars. The national reserve was stabilized, and there was considerable growth in the National Reserve. Of course, these should have led to a better standard of living and a positive impact in the social field, but that did not happen. Reforms were not made in time; they were not supported by the population, so they had an anti-popular flavor. That resulted in delays or undesired effects. At present, Romania risks becoming politically and economically unattractive to Europe and NATO. We are lagging behind. Nevertheless, the prospect in 1990, 1992, and even in 1996 was encouraging, and close to placing us on a rapid path in that direction.

Stefan Pete:

We set sail in 1996 enjoying extraordinary credibility. We had an opportunity to achieve what we had proposed, what people expected. The failure of this government, despite all the positive things I have mentioned, does nothing but decrease popular trust in the institutions of democracy. That is one of the most dangerous results. It decreases confidence in the path toward solid socio-economic development, toward a market economy. And, importantly, it reduces the European Community's confidence that something good may come of Romania. This will have a great long-term impact. Unfortunately, what is happening today does not prove that things are heading in the right direction—rather the opposite.

There was another significant failure politically in that public trust in coalition government decreased dramatically. That is unfortunate for Romania.

There were certain other minor failures—delays in reform, corruption. Many things contributed to the overall picture. If we take the case of corruption, however, which was the most serious problem in the public eye, then the problem is that nothing was done about it. There were structures in place to deal with the problem, even at the presidential level. The fact that these structures failed, that the judiciary was unable to fight corruption, that there was no reform of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the appearance of Mafia-style organizations—all that decreased public trust in Parliament, in all the governmental and political structures. Opinion polls show it.

Béla Markó:

The coalition took on a vast program, and there were positive measures everywhere. The government itself—I don't know if it was a failure, but the electorate interpreted it as such. They expressed that in the elections. Actions taken in reform did not have an immediately visible positive impact, and they were not complete. Regarding DAHR' participation, it definitely bore fruit. The final result has been positive; our decision to participate was a good one. I regret that we did not manage to do more. In my opinion, we should have been able to. In fact, I feel regret when I think of the four years. If only we had had a coherent, solid and convergent coalition, we could have done more.

Alexandru Sassu:

They contributed to all the successes and failures of the government. They did not enter the coalition as supporters of certain public policies, but when they attempted to promote small and medium-sized businesses, it was done more or less openly under the aegis of promoting ethnic interests. However, this was not their plan, nor the government's plan. I had many talks with them in which I tried to persuade them that it would be good to stop pursuing ethnic interests in order to support issues of more general interest. It was clear that their priorities were ethnic issues.

Hunor Kelemen, DAHR, state secretary in the Ministry of Culture:

I would call it a modest success, not an extraordinary one. At least we achieved more than we did during six years as the opposition. Of course, if you ask another person from DAHR who only sees the immediate situation, or maybe thinks of the Hungarian university, he might say it was a total failure. Opinion polls last fall showed that the Hungarian electorate had other priorities than those identified by DAHR politicians. There were changes in the mentality of the Hungarian community also. We must admit that the Hungarian community had a major reticence toward power after 1945. We had party secretaries under communism, and the central administrative structures included Hungarians—politicians and technocrats who held party membership cards and were promoted on the basis of the ideology. But these people were not delegates of the community since there were no free elections, and there were only a few of them. For the Hungarian community, in a way, power and government was something that must not and could not be loved in any way. When we first entered the government, we had to face that problem. After 1996, after four years of governance, the perspective changed. For the Hungarian minority, political power is no longer something to be contested *a priori*. It can be seen as an entity that is there for the electorate and the citizen, not something abstract. Now we have to analyze the situation and see what to do. I think that is part of our success. Of course, if we think of the Hungarian state university—which we don't have—it was a failure. It seems like we should not have promised that in 1996, because it did not happen. From this perspective, we could not have achieved anything more rapidly. Those who judge us reasonably and try to understand what politics mean, what decision-making involves, will understand us, and will criticize us where we made substantial mistakes.