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THE ROLE OF ETHNIC PARTIES IN THE EUROPEANIZATION
PROCESS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

(Doctoral Thesis)

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2013

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Keywords: ethnic parties, post-communism, europeanization, European Union, party system, minorities, ethnic groups, diversity.

Introduction

The breakdown of communist rule in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and the disintegration of the USSR in the early 1990s represented a turning point in the history of almost 30 states from Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. One of the biggest challenges these countries faced at the beginning of their transition period was the accommodation of minorities and their re-emerging identities. Except in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic (after the ‘velvet divorce’ from Slovakia), almost all post-communist countries were confronted with inter-ethnic issues. Violent clashes broke out between Romanians and Hungarians in Transylvania, Bulgarians and Turks in Bulgaria, and Hungarians and Slovaks in Southern Slovakia, while in the Baltic states, especially in Estonia and Latvia, restrictive legislation towards Russians was introduced. The complex ethnic landscape in Yugoslavia was disbanded after an interethnic war, while Moldova was confronted with violent separatism in Transnistria.

These visible ethnic disputes were not solved mainly through violence (which was rather exceptional); in most cases they were brought inside the political arena through the formation of ethnic political movements meant to ensure the representation of ethnic interests. However, although this was a logical step on the road to democracy, political mobilisation did not take place in all post-communist states where ethnic minorities existed. There is a puzzle therefore around the question of why some ethnic minorities mobilised and even formed more than one party and others failed to do so.

After the fall of Communism in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, many studies approached, from both a normative and an empiric perspective, the issues of nationalism and ethnicity in Central and Eastern Europe and throughout the entire post-Communist space. The issue of ethnic parties has usually been tackled in relation to one other aspect of the broader picture, such as the outbreak of ethnic conflicts or the representation of minorities. However, in the political and social landscape generated throughout the CEE by the fall of Communism, ethnicity gained additional salience. Consequently, ethnic parties or ethnic political movements hold a very important position in the party systems, either as established actors or

as potential new entries. Moreover, benefiting from relatively stable electorates, ethnic parties generally display, with a few exceptions, a high level of stability – a low electoral volatility, respectively – compared to other “non-ethnic” parties and when placed in the context of the party systems. Following this line of reasoning, the importance of ethnic parties should not be underestimated at the social level, having in mind the complex transformations underwent during the period of transition in post-communist states.

The purpose of this thesis is to address the issue of ethnic parties in Central and Eastern Europe from multiple perspectives, in order to contribute to a better understanding of how and why they appear, what are the factors that shape their behavior and what is the role they played in the transition of multi-ethnic post-communist states to relatively stable democracies and, in most of the cases, membership in the European Union. I chose this particular region because it offers numerous cases for study and significant variation across countries and time - there is variation in the size or the geographical concentration of minorities, in their level of mobilization, in the number of ethnic parties, in the discourse of ethnic parties and minority elites, in their relation to mainstream parties, in the role they play in the national legislatures or governments and so on. Moreover, I chose to study the time period starting with the fall of communism throughout the region - end of 1980's/early 1990's - until today because it covers significant transformations occurring in each of the former communist countries, with ethnic politics often being a crucial element of national politics, with a significant impact on political outcomes. This study acknowledges the importance of ethnic politics and emphasizes the behavior of ethnic parties and its causes, as a key aspect that contributes to a better understanding of the transition throughout post-communist Europe.

Bearing in mind the premises of this complex study, I approach the study of ethnic parties in post-communist states from a logical perspective, building a deductive multi-stage comparative research, seeking an answer to the following research questions, each corresponding to a particular stage of the study:

1. *Why and how do ethnic parties form? What are the conditions that favor the political mobilization of minorities?*
2. *What role did ethnic parties play in the transition of post-communist states to democracy and Europeanization?*
3. *Why do they enter governments and why not?*

4. *When and why does intra-ethnic competition occur? What favors the formation of more than one ethnic party competing for the electoral support of the same ethnic electorate?*

These research questions reflect the natural evolution of ethnic politics from the absence of any form of legal mobilization at the end of the communist rule to the complex intra-ethnic dynamics existing in some post-communist states today – especially Macedonia or Slovakia. The figure below illustrates this process.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis' structure follows the logic of the research questions. Before the QCA-based analysis, I first provide a general theoretical framework that presents the main concepts and the most important theoretical considerations on the complex topic of ethnic politics covered in the broad existing literature. I then explain QCA, the method used in this study. The next two chapters are more narrative and use a classic qualitative approach meant to provide an overall picture on the history of the main ethnic parties included in the subsequent analysis and on their behavior as political actors in the national and European political scenes. The following chapters are each an analysis in themselves and each will complement the initial theoretical framework with additional relevant concepts when that will be necessary, will explain the case selection for each section of the analysis and will provide the interpretation of the analysis' results. In turn, each will constitute the basis for the next chapter. The final chapter is dedicated to a game theoretical model aimed at explaining intra-ethnic competition from the appearance of ethnic parties to the electoral competition in itself. Finally, I draw the conclusions and present the premises of further research.

Chapter 2

The existing literature in the fields of ethnicity and nationalism includes numerous studies of ethnic minorities, ethnic parties and mobilisation of minorities but a comparative study of the mobilisation of ethnic minorities or the success of ethnic parties, with a specific focus on post-communist countries has not yet been conducted.

Hence, there is no coherent theory on these topics that explains the life of ethnic parties, including their formation and the potential stages of their behavior within the national party systems and their international outreach, which might be tested by a subsequent study. This is a significant gap I try to fill by addressing the specific cases of European post-

communist states and by gathering relevant pieces of theory covering various aspects on ethnicity and ethnic parties.

While a more detailed case selection will be provided in the analytical chapters, it is worth mentioning from the offset that the post-communist states are a fertile ground for the study of ethnic parties, for several reasons. While displaying many cross-country differences, they share some commonalities. All of them have been, until recently, ruled by dictatorial regimes and have experienced major societal changes. In the early 1990s, all of them went through deep transformations and faced transition challenges, including the re-accommodation of ethnic identities. This process resulted in different outcomes in inter-ethnic relations and intra-ethnic political dynamics and compelling explanations are yet to be found.

The definitions of ethnicity often refer to groups' common features: religion, language, culture, mythology, physical resemblance, and combinations of these elements. Closely tied to ethnicity is the concept of nation, defined by Kymlicka (1995, p. 11) as 'a historical community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and culture'. Smith (1991, p. 52) defines a nation as 'a named population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for its members'. Ethnic minorities are sometimes also referred to as 'subnations' (Ragin 1989, p. 133). There are two main approaches to the formation of nations – primordialism and constructivism. The first, mainly built on Smith's work, presumes that a nation is an organic entity and membership in it is genetically determined (Smith 1987, 1991, 1999), while the latter presumes that nations are fluid structures that change over time (Chandra 2005, pp. 235–52). I view ethnicity according to this second approach.

The next concept I deal with is that of *ethnic group*. An ethnic group has, according to Weber (1978), a shared collective identity, built on the features of ethnicity. There is some overlap with Kymlicka's (1995, p. 30) understanding, but he sees this as a more appropriate definition for (ethnic) national minorities, usually associated with the existence of a kin-nation, while ethnic groups do not have this sense of common identity, being formed usually of immigrants or their descendants. However, Kymlicka's definition does not accurately capture the phenomenon of re-emerging identities in the second or third generation immigrant communities, a good example in this respect being the Turkish community in Germany.

My working definition of ethnic minority captures the essence of the definitions above, maintaining the constructivist approach. I include both national minorities and minority ethnic groups formed as a result of immigration under the single category of 'ethnic

minority', defined as a group which has a shared collective ethnic identity and is less numerous than the dominant group in the society (regardless if the latter is a majority or not).

I define the political mobilisation of an ethnic minority as the process through which an ethnic minority pursues collective goals by means of political actions, usually through the formation of ethnic parties. This definition is in line with the perspective on ethnic mobilisation of Olzak (1983, p. 355). Mobilisation can also be discussed in relation to ethnic conflict where ethnic minorities mobilise but do not seek to fulfill their goals through political means, but through violent, non-conventional, ones. Also, a combination of political and non-political mobilisation is possible (such as in the Basque country in Spain). In this study however, we focus only on political mobilisation associated with the formation of ethnic parties.

Based on the considerations above, I provide the working definition for an ethnic party, the concept at the core of this analysis. Despite the multiple definitions provided by the literature, covered only in part above, there is little doubt on which parties are "ethnic" in post-communist Europe (although the nature of ethnic parties is disputable as the size of the minority increases; for instance, Latvia and Estonia are problematic in this respect). I will rely mainly on the definition of Ishiyama and Breuning, because it is well placed on the road between minimal and maximal definitions and provides the easy empirical tools necessary to recognize and ethnic party. Thus, an ethnic¹ party is "an organization that purports to represent a particular ethnic group and seeks political power to impinge on the relative power or position of ethnic groups." Ishiyama (2009, p. 64) also provides another definition: „An ethnic party is identified as the first party to either (a) proclaim itself as the primary representative of the ethnic group and only that group OR (b) is widely regarded as the first party to represent the interests of that group and only that group.”

Ishiyama and Breuning's use of the term 'organisation' (instead of 'party') in the definition is useful because in some Central and Eastern European states the political movements representing ethnic minorities are not legally parties and do not exist on the basis of the laws that regulate the existence of political parties. However, they have candidates who compete in elections and behave as a regular party in or outside the parliament or in the government. For example, *Uniunea Democrată a Maghiarilor din România* (the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania) is a civic organisation, representing the Hungarian

¹ Ishiyama and Breuning use the term "ethnopolitical party".

minority,² whereas the *Dvizhenie za prava i svobodi* (Movement for Freedom and Rights, MRF) in Bulgaria is established as a civic organisation rather than as an ethnic party.³ Both compete in elections with their own lists, form groups in parliament and name representatives in local and central governmental structures. Thus, defining parties according to national legislation would be misleading and lead to conceptual stretching: similar movements would be parties in some countries, but not in others.

I therefore use the term ‘ethnic party’ throughout this thesis to account for those organisations acting as parties, according to the definition elaborated above.

The literature on ethnic parties as a phenomenon and on intra-ethnic competition in particular can be divided according to two perspectives: in chronological order, a negative one (the centrifugalists) and the positive one (the centripetalists).

Rabushka and Shepsle (1972) are the first to set the “slippery sloap” type of argument with respect to ethnic polarization and later many authors (such as Cederman et al. 2012; Cederman et al. 2009; Anderson and Mendes 2005; Reilly 2001; Horowitz 1985, 1991, 2000; Mansfield and Snyder 1995) write about strong ethnic cleavages as a risk to democratic stability, especially in electoral contexts. Essentially, Rabushka and Shepsle (1972) claim that the higher the number of political entrepreneurs representing an ethnic group, the higher the risk of ethnic outbidding and formulation of mutually exclusive group claims.

More recent developments shed a more positive light on intra-ethnic political competition. It is perceived as a positive aspect in a divided society, preventing excessive ethnic polarization, which in turn may increase the risk of ethnic conflict and undermine democracy. This is further put in relation with the design of the electoral system.

Chapter 3

The choice of the appropriate method for a study is based primarily on the theoretical demands and on the research design, no particular method being superior in itself to other ones. The numbers of cases, the number of relevant variables, the type of the data, the theoretical knowledge on the relationship between the variables work together in determining the choice for the appropriate method. This research relies mainly on Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), a method introduced by Charles Ragin in 1987, in *The Comparative Method*,

² Other minorities in Romania (Ukrainians, Italians, Macedonians, etc.) have similar types of organisations.

³ Article 11, paragraph 4, of the Bulgarian constitution forbids the formation of ethnic parties: ‘There shall be no political parties on ethnic, racial, or religious lines, nor parties which seek the violent usurpation of state power’ (The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, available at: <http://www.online.bg/law/const/const1.htm>, last accessed 21 June 2009).

and developed since then by Ragin and other authors.⁴ QCA is based on Boolean algebra and set theory, and relies on dichotomous variables, logical operations between variables (causal conditions and outcomes in QCA terminology), logical operators (AND, OR, and NON), and truth tables.⁵ This method has rarely been used to explain issues related to ethnic politics in post-communist Europe (Bochsler 2012; Gherghina and Jigla 2011, 2012). Most studies on ethnic minorities or ethnic parties are qualitative by nature, due to the small or medium number of cases, but often remain at the level of simple or comparative case studies. The QCA approach allows for complex models that can be tested with the use of logical operations and capture not only the importance of individual explanatory factors over the phenomenon under study, but also the interaction between them. Thus, the method itself is a useful tool for providing new insights into minority politics as a whole.

QCA allows a case-oriented approach in the research and requires good case knowledge in order to explain the link between the theory, the cases and the empirical facts, and the findings of the analysis. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, focus on variables, paying much less attention to the cases. This research deals with a particular type of cases – minorities in post-Communist states – that require a good understanding of inter-ethnic relation in each state taken into consideration. The results of QCA analyses are not conditioned by limitations to the number of cases; while rules of thumb in statistical methods require hundreds of cases for meaningful results, QCA can deal with both a low and a high number of cases. This research deals with small-medium N's; they would not be suitable for the use of statistical methods (such as linear or logistic regressions). QCA also has the advantage of dealing with several issues⁶ that are not captured by statistical methods, such as sufficiency, necessity, equifinality, or conjunctural causality.

Apart from QCA, in this research I also conduct an in-depth case study, relying on process tracing, on Romania, meant to illustrate the behavior of the DAHR on the national and European political stage in order to attain national political goals. Also, at the end of the research I develop a game theoretical model in order to explain the dynamics of intra-ethnic

⁴ One example is Lasse Cronqvist, who developed a new extension of QCA, called "Multi-Variate Qualitative Comparative Analysis" (mvQCA).

⁵ For a comprehensive presentation of QCA based on crisp sets, see Ragin, *The Comparative Method*.

⁶ Bernard Grofman and Carsten Q. Schneider, „It might look like a regression equation ... but it's not! An intuitive approach to the presentation of QCA and FS/QCA results." Available at [<http://www.compass.org/WPShort.htm>], last accessed 31 May 2007. See also Carsten Q. Schneider, "Causal complexity and the change of political regimes: a QCA analysis of Howard and Roessler's (2006) study on 'liberalizing electoral outcomes'".

politics. I will provide more detailed insights on game theory and the how the model is constructed in the respective chapter.

Chapter 4

The goal of this chapter is to present an outline of the organizational and political development of the main parties taken into consideration throughout the thesis: the Movement for Rights and Freedoms of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, and the Hungarian Coalition Party in Slovakia.

Before analyzing and explaining the different stages in the political life of ethnic parties, I consider appropriate to provide a narrative presentation of the main moments and the main leaders that marked the development of the three main parties included in the analysis throughout the past 23 years.

The Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS) was created on January 4, 1990 by members of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria (Ishiyama and Breuning 1998). It did not take part in the round table talks in which the Bulgarian communist party invited the union of democratic forces (UDF) – the only party acknowledged as legitimate opposition.

Constitutional article (11) forbids the formation of any ethnic party and that is why DPS was always registered as a civic organization (Johnson 2002, 4). DPS rapidly gained significance on the political scene and became a pivotal actor with which numerous parties formed formal or informal alliances and coalitions. From its beginnings, DPS used a combined discursive approach, based on interplay of anticommunism and minority-oriented stances. The DPS' anticommunist attitude helped it become a credible coalition partner for the UDF following the 1991 elections. Kolarova (1993, 31) claims that ethnicity was not the main issue on the minds of dissident Turks at the time communism fell, but rather anti-communist and anti-regime feelings.

The electoral stability of the DSP can be associated with the stability in its leadership. Ahmet Dogan has been the undisputed leader of the party ever since he founded it after the fall of communism. His charismatic style of rule, as well as his capacity to turn the DSP into a partner for both left and right-wing parties, consolidated his position. In its program, DPS firmly rejected from the beginning any form of Islamic fundamentalism or other forms of fanaticism or totalitarianism, promoted a “united and democratic” Bulgaria and opposed any form of separatism (Volgyi 2007, 38). It thus minimized the early-transition BSP discourse emphasizing the threats of a strong Turkish minority towards the endangerment of state sovereignty (Johnson 2002). Bulgaria experienced only mild forms of nationalism and that the

DPS, due to its moderate discourse, played a significant part in the democratization process in Bulgaria, especially in its early stages (Kolarova 2002, 154).

Right after the National Salvation Front (NSF) took over power in December 1989, the UDMR was included in the National Unity Committee formed in January 1990. Several decrees were issued by the new government, granting minimal facilities for the minorities in Romania, regarding education in their own languages. However, more radical demands of the UDMR were rejected (e.g. the recognition of Hungarian language as the second official language in Romania).

The formation defines itself as a center-right party. But more important, it should also be regarded as a mix of radicals and moderates, with respect to the interests of the Hungarian minority. In the beginning of the transition period, UDMR was dominated by radicals. One of its most prominent figures was bishop Tokes Laszlo, who was acting as honorary president of the party and had a radical approach, frequently calling for territorial and political autonomy for the regions where Hungarians form the majority of the population.

Returning to the political trajectory of UDMR in the first part of transition, the pivotal role of UDMR – accepting alliances both with former communists and right-wing forces – could have not been possible without a discourse change, from radicalism to gradual moderation. The first shift was noticed in 1993 when the moderate Marko Bela became president of the party, replacing Domokos Geza. Under his leadership, the calls for autonomy were toned down. Instead, the UDMR started calling for greater administrative decentralization, although self-determination on ethnic basis, as a political objective, was not taken out of the political program. UDMR maintained this general moderate line of discourse in the following years, which resonated with a general moderation of inter-ethnic relations in the entire Romanian society and within the party system. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the UDMR is not completely without intra-minority political opposition.

The existence of the Hungarian parties in Slovakia can be split in three distinct periods. The first period is marked by the existence of three separate parties representing the Hungarian minority. They appeared in 1989 and 1990: the Hungarian Civic Party (MOS) in November 1989, the Coexistence Movement (E) in February 1990 and the Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement (MKDM) a month later. Starting with the first elections following the independence, in 1994, the three parties ran under a single label – the Hungarian Coalition (MK) – and won a solid 10.2% of the votes. Without the certainty that any of them can pass the 5% electoral threshold on individual basis, the three parties decided to merge and formed the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK), marking the entrance in a second stage

of the ethnic parties' existence in Slovakia. In 2009, the Hungarian parties entered a third stage of existence, following the first splinter within the SMK. In June, former SMK leader Bela Bulgar and a few other significant figures defected and formed Hid-Most ("bridge" in Hungarian and Slovak), claiming that ethnic Hungarians represent only two-thirds of the party's membership, the rest being ethnic Slovaks.

We notice that the existence of an ethnic party system did not lead to a radicalization of the ethnic minority's representatives (in fact it led to the prevalence of the moderates), and even more important it was associated with the attenuation of the strict ethnic vote existing until then in Slovakia. Dostal noticed a radicalization of the SMK's discourse, by re-bringing to the fore the question of territorial autonomy (Dostal 2005, 184). To some respect, the label applied by Podoba in 1996 still holds for the state inter-ethnic relations in Slovakia: "a conflict of words and pathetic gestures" (Podoba 1996, 280).

Chapter 5

The role of ethnic parties in the Europeanization process is approached by Kelly (2004), but they are not at the center of her study, which focuses mainly on the role of international institutions. However, this is an important step in acknowledging the role of ethnic parties in the dynamics of inter-ethnic relations in CEE states. Europeanization is defined by Grabbe (2003) as "the processes (a) construction, (b) diffusion, and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things', and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and sub-national) discourse, identities, political structures, and public policies". When I speak about the Europeanization of a CEE state, I refer to the process of integration in Euro-Atlantic institutions, such as NATO, the EU, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE.

On these grounds, in this chapter I test two hypotheses. The main one is that *the presence of ethnic parties in government led to an acceleration of the Europeanization process*. The secondary hypothesis is that *the European dimension of ethnic parties' political activity led to additional challenges for domestic governments in the Europeanization process*. Thus, by using process-tracing, I show that the moderation of the DAHR had both positive and negative consequences for the process of Europeanization in Romania. I emphasize that ethnic parties are meaningful actors that have a significant influence, combined with other actions of governments, over the Europeanization efforts.

Western states and institutions saw the issue of national minorities in CEE as a potential source of conflict in the beginning of the 1990's. For all major institutions (i.e. the EU, NATO and the Council of Europe) rights for minorities was set as a basic criterion for accession. The EU did not include minority protection as a criterion for accession in the *acquis*. Nevertheless, it was among the first conditions that states had to fulfill, in order to begin negotiations.⁷ The Council of Europe followed a maximal approach, issuing several Recommendations or drafting Conventions that urged member states to give extensive rights to national minorities on their territories. NATO had an intermediary approach; although it is a military organization, it combined criteria related to the military with political criteria for candidate countries, such as good relations with neighboring states and the absence of any cause of conflict within the state.

The DAHR gained an important European voice after its successful bid to become a member of the European People's Party (EPP). It applied for membership in 1998 and it received the statute of Associate Member in 1999.⁸ In Bulgaria, the Turkish MRF joined the European Liberal party, while in Slovakia the Hungarian SMK is also a member of the EPP.

The European dimension of the DAHR's political activity has been very significant. In its demands for greater rights, it constantly appealed to European bodies, such as the Council of Europe or the OSCE. In trying to convince the Romanian authorities of the need to grant further rights for minorities, the DAHR constantly appealed to "European norms and standards;" pointing out the different models of minority accommodation across Western states. The most frequently used examples were the Southern Tyrol region in Italy, the Aaland Islands in Finland or the type of territorial decentralization employed in the UK.

The DAHR was very active also within the Council of Europe. Two examples stand out. In 1995, the Framework Convention for National Minorities was adopted, asking member states to give both individual and collective rights to national minorities.⁹ The UDMR representatives were active in drafting the Convention and then used it as an argument in Romanian domestic politics to ask for more rights. In the same time, the Convention and the

⁷ It was included in the Copenhagen criteria, adopted in 1993.

⁸ See [<http://www.epp.eu/memberdetail.php?partieID=27&landID=31>], accessed on December 27th, 2012. Associate Membership is the statute given to parties from countries outside the European Union. When Romania becomes member of the EU, the DAHR, as the other two Romanian parties affiliated to EPP, will automatically become full members.

⁹ For instance, article 3, paragraph 2, says that "[p]ersons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights and enjoy the freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention individually as well as in community with others". See [<http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/157.htm>], accessed on December 28th, 2006.

UDMR involvement in drafting it fueled anti-Hungarian feelings among the nationalist coalition that was leading Romania at that time.¹⁰

The second example is a more recent one. On the 26th of January, 2006, the PACE adopted Recommendation 1735,¹¹ which refers to the concept of “nation”. The text of the Recommendation was drafted by the sub-committees for Human Rights and National Minorities, under the supervision of Frunda Gyorgy, a UDMR senator and the current president of the Romanian delegation at the PACE. The Recommendation defines nations on ethnic basis and “invites” all member states to modify their constitutions to include clear references to minorities living on their territories.

The Romanian Parliament has had on its agenda since 2006 a controversial law regarding the statute of national minorities. In 2006, the UDMR persuaded the government to include in the law project provisions, which granted the national minorities “cultural autonomy”.¹² While the criticism was scarce at the time of the debates in government, in Parliament two of the then governing parties disagreed regarding this measure. They argued that giving cultural autonomy to minorities is against the Constitution, because the state would lose control over some aspects concerning the minorities and, implicitly, part of its sovereignty. The UDMR had a strong lobbying activity within the EPP, counting on the support of the right-wing nationalistic Hungarian party FIDESZ, which is also a member of this European party. Nevertheless, the law has been silently abandoned and has since only rarely appeared in the discourse of UDMR. Officially, it is still waiting to be debated by the Parliament.

In the context of the vivid debates in Romania in 2006, FIDESZ MEP Gyorgy Schopflin argued in the European Parliament that the Romanian authorities are willingly assimilating the *ceangai* population, which has a Hungarian ethnic background, bringing with him a short movie as evidence. Furthermore, in the country report on Romania issued by the European Parliament in the spring of 2006, the EPP MEP’s managed to impose an amendment urging Romania to take concrete action in order to protect and extend the rights of minorities, explicitly mentioning the need to grant them cultural autonomy.

¹⁰ To make the Convention, the government of a member state had to sign it and ratify it. Although numerous states in CEE had objections with respect to the provisions of the Convention, most European states signed and ratified the Convention, taking advantage of ambiguous expressions such as “where it is possible” or “where this is the case,” which left room for interpretation. However, France and Turkey did not sign and did not ratify the Convention, while Belgium and Greece signed it, but did not ratify it.

¹¹ The recommendations issued by the PACE are not obligatory for member states, unless they are adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

¹² “Cultural autonomy” is also requested by the MRF in Bulgaria and has been asked by the Hungarian parties when the Slovakian Constitution in 1992. This would mean, in essence, self-governing only on issues related to education or cultural activities in the language of minorities.

The UDMR immediately took advantage of this amendment to put pressure on the Romanian Parliament in the phase of final efforts to finish the necessary preparations for the EU accession in 2007.

However, following Romania's entrance in the EU, UDMR's area of action in the European institutions reduced significantly. With the exception of public debates over the reform of the Education system or the territorial-administrative reform, minority issues have no longer constituted a heated topic on the public agenda, especially in the context of the economic crisis occurring in 2009.

The existence of ethnic parties and their involvement in governing coalitions has had a positive influence. The evolution of the UDMR on the Romanian political stage can be divided in two periods: 1990-1996 (the "radical" years) and from the elections of 1996 onwards (the "moderate" years). The first period overlaps with Romania's efforts to enter the Council of Europe, which was successful in 1993, and its efforts to join NATO, which failed. The second period coincides with Romania's successful – although slower – bid to join the EU and with the successful admission into NATO. In the first period, Romania was ruled by nationalists, experienced inter-ethnic violence, while the UDMR was isolated, even by the opposition parties. In the second period, the relations between Hungarians and Romanians were considerably improved and the UDMR was part of all three government coalitions formed since then.

The role of ethnic parties in the transition process has been primarily a positive one, but also had negative consequences. During the "radical" years, the UDMR, rather than being a credible partner for discussion as a representative of the Hungarian community, contributed to the continuous inter-ethnic tensions that dominated the Romanian political life in the first years of the transition. The moderation of the UDMR's discourse led to its being co-opted by the Romanian reformist governments, which hastened the Europeanization of Romania. However, moderation on the domestic political scene coincided with continuous efforts of the UDMR on the international scene to pressure the Romanian government, with the help of international organizations, to implement more pro-minority legislation.

Chapter 6

The goal of this chapter is to shed light on the political mobilization of ethnic minorities in the post-communist space, using a comparative approach. Rather than emphasizing the political or legal process – how parties are formed, who are the leaders etc. –

I look at its triggers, by showing how different single explanation given so far in the literature are either non-important or work together to explain the decision to mobilize. Building on the theoretical framework, I add some more relevant considerations from the literature, specific to the particular topic of this chapter.

19 significant minorities in 15 countries

Although I include in the initial universe of cases all the states under communist rule until the breakdown of the USSR, I filter those which do not present interest for my research. In total, I remain with a sample of 19 significant minorities in 15 post-communist states.

Table 1: Significant minorities in post-Communist states

Country	Dominant group (proportion in the total population)	Significant minorities (proportion in the total population; proportion relative to the proportion of the dominant group) ¹³
Belarus	Belarussians (81.2%)	Russians (11.4%; 14.03%)
Bulgaria	Bulgarians (83.9%)	Turks (9.4%; 11.2%) Roma (4.7%; 5.6%)
Croatia	Croats (89.6%)	Serbs (4.5%; 5.02%)
Estonia	Estonians (67.9%)	Russians (25.6%; 37.7%)
Kazakhstan	Kazakhs (53.4%)	Russians (30%; 56.17%)
Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyz (64.9%)	Uzbeks (13.8%; 21.26%) Russians (12.5%; 19.26%)
Latvia	Latvians (57.7%)	Russians (29.6%; 51.29%)
Lithuania	Lithuanians (83.4%)	Polish (6.7%; 8.03%) Russians (6.3%; 7.55%)
Macedonia	Macedonians (64.2%)	Albanians (25.2%; 39.25%)
Moldova	Moldovans/Romanians (78.2%)	Gagauz (4.4%; 5.62%)
Romania	Romanians (89.5%)	Hungarians (6.6%; 7.37%)
Slovakia	Slovaks (85.8%)	Hungarians (9.7%; 11.3%)
Tajikistan	Tajiks (79.9%)	Uzbeks (15.3%; 19.14%)
Ukraine	Ukrainians (77.8%)	Russians (17.3%; 22.3%) ¹⁴
Uzbekistan	Uzbeks (80%)	Russians (5.5%; 6.87%) Tajiks (5%; 6.25%)

Source: Compiled based on data from the CIA World Fact Book

¹³ The formula I use to determine the proportion of a minority related to the dominant group is: (proportion of minority in the total population*100)/proportion of the dominant group in the total population. The result needs to be bigger than 5%.

¹⁴ In Ukraine, the Region of Crimea enjoys constitutional autonomy and Russians form about 64% of the population of this region. MAR treats the Russians in this region as a separate group from the Russians in the rest of the country and so will I throughout this study.

The dependent variable for the first stage of the research is *political mobilization (P)* of ethnic minorities. As with all the other variables in the research, I construct this variable as a dichotomous one, thus assigning scores of 0 and 1 for it. I take into account six independent variables, as suggested by the theoretical background of the research. These variables are: existence of past conflictual relations between the minority and the dominant group (A), formal discrimination of the minority (based on official state regulations) after the fall of Communism (B), informal discrimination of the minority (a lower socio-economic status) (C), territorial concentration of the minority (D), existence of strong anti-minority parties (E), and support for the minority coming from the kin-state (F).

Table 6: The simplest causal expressions associated with the political mobilization of ethnic minorities and corresponding cases

Expression	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency	Corresponding cases displaying the outcome
<i>E +</i>	0.363636	0.181818	1.000000	Hungarians in Romania, Hungarians in Slovakia, Russians in Latvia, Serbs in Croatia
<i>BC +</i>	0.363636	0.090909	1.000000	Roma in Bulgaria, Russians in Latvia, Russians in Estonia, Serbs in Croatia
<i>BF +</i>	0.363636	0.090909	1.000000	Russians in Estonia, Albanians in Macedonia, Russians in Latvia, Serbs in Croatia
<i>CF</i>	0.363636	0.090909	1.000000	Russians in Estonia, Turks in Bulgaria, Russians in Latvia, Serbs in Croatia

Solution coverage	0.727273
Solution consistency	1.000000

Source: Table compiled using output results generated by fsQCA and Tosmana.

Past ethnic conflicts, as a significant element of ethnic and national identities, does not seem to have any influence on the formation of ethnic parties, by itself or in combination with other causal conditions. In other words, ethnic parties do not form (or ethnic minorities do not mobilize politically) because of past conflicts with the dominant group. Discrimination can be

seen as an encompassing concept in the light of my findings and it seems to contribute greatly to the formation of ethnic parties. Adding to its importance, the absence of discrimination seems to be decisive in explaining why some ethnic minorities in post-Communist state do not politically mobilize. The kin-state seems to have a greater significance in explaining why ethnic minorities mobilize than the existing theory lets us see. Anti-minority parties are significant political actors whose existence explains the formation of ethnic parties.

Chapter 7

This chapter seeks to identify the causes impeding the ethnic parties to participate in the post-communist coalition governments. I conduct a cross-national and longitudinal analysis in which I take into account all the elections in which the ethnic parties gained parliamentary representation. There are 44 cases over two decades –the party in election is the unit of analysis.

Table 1: Cases Included in Analysis

Country	Elections	Minority	Parties
Bulgaria	1990, 1991, 1994, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2009	Turks	Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF)
Estonia	1995, 1999	Russians	Estonian United People's Party (EUPP)
Latvia	1993, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010	Russians	The National Harmony Party (NHP)/Harmony Center (HC)/Social Democratic Party Harmony (SDPH), Latvian Socialist Party (LSP), Equal Rights (ER)
Macedonia	1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2011	Albanians	People's Democratic Party, Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP), Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), National Democratic Revival (NDR)
Romania	1990, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008	Hungarians	Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR)
Slovakia	1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2012	Hungarians	Party of the Hungarian Coalition (PHC), Most Hid (MH)

Table 2: Variable Codebook

Variables (Conditions and Outcome)	Acronym	Values
Organizational Changes	A	1: splits or mergers between elections 0: no splits or mergers
Party leadership	B	1: different leader than in the previous elections 0: same leader
Pivotal Position	C	1: Hold pivotal position according to Banzhaf index 0: Do not hold pivotal position
Incumbency	D	1: In government prior to elections, for more than half of the term 0: in opposition or in government for less than half of the term
Involvement of parties in ethnic issues ¹⁵	E	1: protests, scandals or other forms of public tensions regarding ethnic issues 0: no involvement or moderate opinions
Success in Joining Government Coalitions	S	1: Ethnic party included in coalition 0: Ethnic party not included in coalition

Table 5: The Simplest Causal Expressions for the Absence from Government Coalitions

Expression	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency	Corresponding Cases
bdE	0.448276	0.448276	0.866667	MRF (BG) 1990, MRF (BG) 1997, PDP ¹⁶ (MK) 1994, DPA (MK) 1998, PDP (MK) 2002, DPA (MK) 2011, UDMR (RO) 1992, PHC (SK) 1994, EUPP (ET) 1995, EUPP (ET) 1999, ER (LV) 1993, LSP (LV) 1995, ER (LV) 2006
bcD	0.172414	0.172414	1	MRF (BG) 1994, MRF (BG) 2009, PHC (SK) 2006, Most Hid (SK) 2012, UDMR (RO) 2008
Be	0.137931	0.137931	0.800000	FHR (LV) 2002, NHP/HC (LV) 2006, SDPH (LV) 2010

¹⁵ The sources are the Minority at Risk reports, mainstream domestic or foreign media. I assess the behavior of the ethnic party throughout the legislature by taking into account not the aims expressed by the ethnic parties or the reaction of non-ethnic parties, but the used means. For alliances, I consider the condition to be present if at least one of the parties was involved in such issues. This variable is much broader than the assessment of radical discourse on the ethnic dimension captured in the Comparative Manifesto project.

¹⁶ I use the full name for this party to distinguish it from the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP).

Solution coverage	0.758621
Solution consistency	0.880000

One major implication of the results is that the failure to join government coalitions can be driven by endogenous determinants such as the continuity of leadership and aggressive pursuit of representation. Results indicated that the absence of leadership change and the involvement in ethnic issues explains best the failure of ethnic parties to gain seats on government. As the involvement in ethnic issues is usually done through the voice or at the command of the ethnic party leaders, the combination of the two causal conditions reveals the crucial role played by radical ethnic leaders in the future of their parties. This is further supported by the lack of relevance of organizational changes (mergers and splits) indicating that ethnic electorates are mainly loyal to leaders and less to the ethnic party as an organization. This finding is in line with the theoretical arguments underlining the specific nature of the ethnic parties: they display catch-all features through with the aim to mobilize the electorate within particular ethnic groups. Along these lines, the radical leaders mobilize their electorates better, but are less likely to be considered as desirable coalition partners.

This effect becomes even more relevant if I consider that the organizational changes (splits or mergers or electoral alliances with parties of the same ethnic group) do not play a role in determining whether ethnic parties are included in coalitions or not. The role played by organizational variables in determining whether an ethnic party gains seats in the national parliament is a potential direction for further research. Once these parties gain seats and become potential governing partners for the large mainstream parties, the attitude of the leaders, reflected in their own discourse and in the actions of the party, generates the perception of the other parties over ethnic political movements. This raises another point requiring further exploration: since this pattern is accepted by the ethnic electorates, it is possible for the ethnic groups to perceive their interests as better (or at least well enough) represented if their ethnic parties are in Parliament, but in opposition. This might happen because ethnic minorities might regard the collaboration with mainstream parties as a threat to their own identity and therefore prefer more radical leaders. At the same time, the ethnic electorates may tend to blindly follow their leaders, regardless of their type of discourse, as long as the public political profile of the minority is maintained.

Another important finding is that the pivotal role of the ethnic parties rarely guarantees their presence in government. Accordingly, further research can focus on types of coalitions and investigate to what extent they foster the presence of ethnic parties in government. On a similar note, it is worth checking to what extent the presence of radical right parties in parliament may inhibit – through tensions - the governing potential of ethnic parties.

Chapter 8

The goal of this chapter is to deepen our theoretical and empirical understanding of ethnic politics in post-communist Europe by focusing on the electoral competition among ethnic parties competing for the vote of the same ethnic group.

Bearing in mind the theoretical and empirical considerations existing in the literature, I consider the intensity of intra-ethnic electoral competition to be a function of outbidding strategies adopted by the rival ethnic parties, which in turn may occur in particular contexts, shaped by specific conditions, such as the position of one of the parties with respect the national government (in government or in opposition), the occurrence of organizational changes within the intra-ethnic party system, which may favor the emergence of flank parties, the existence of restrictive or permissive electoral thresholds (in relation to the size of the minority), or the existence of an intervening kin-state.

The outcome under scrutiny is *the intensity of intra-party electoral competition*, which can be *high* (1) or *low* (0). The causal conditions (independent variables) are: an assertive kin-state (A), incumbency of the larger party (B), the existence of ethnic issues prior to the elections (C), splits or mergers within the intra-ethnic party system (D), and the existence of a risky electoral threshold (E).

Table 4: The simplest causal expressions associated with high intensity of intra-ethnic electoral competition and the corresponding cases

Expression	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency	Corresponding cases displaying the outcome
$Ce +$	0.700000	0.700000	1.000000	Russians in Estonia 1999, Russians in Latvia 1993, Russians in Latvia 1995, Russians in Latvia 2006, Albanians in Macedonia 2002,

				Albanians in Macedonia 2008, Albanians in Macedonia 2011
<i>AcE</i> +	0.200000	0.200000	1.000000	Hungarians in Slovakia 2010, Hungarians in Slovakia 2012

Solution coverage	0.900000
Solution consistency	1.000000

Employing permissive electoral provisions does not guarantee the emergence of multiple ethnic parties competing over the same electorate. Moreover, outbidding is not always the effect of intra-ethnic electoral competition, which seems to support the claims of Chandra or Zuber that intra-ethnic competition favors moderation or at least that the parties can choose from a variance of strategies and not necessarily turn to outbidding. The behavior of a kin-state does not seem to influence the tactics adopted by ethnic parties in the host-state. It is likely that this involvement was more significant in the beginning of the transition periods, based on which Brubaker developed his “triadic nexus” theoretical tool, but this importance fades away as national party systems become more institutionalized and ethnic parties become regular actors on the national political stages. Organizational changes within the intra-ethnic party system, in the form of splits or mergers, have little impact and only appear as relevant when electoral competition is not intense. This might indicate that it is not the parties as organizations per se, but the elites, the leaders that matter in the voting decisions made by the electorate, as emphasized also by the analysis in the previous chapter.

Based on the findings of the previous chapters, this thesis will be continued by further research into the dynamics of intra-ethnic party competition and the development of a game theoretical model that takes into account the main stages occurring in intra-ethnic competition in an electoral context.

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