The spread of the ethnic/nationalist divide over post-communist Europe

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Abstract

The divide that separates ethnic minorities from the titular nation and civic-liberal oriented parties from nationalist parties is one of the most present political divisions in post-communist Europe. I define the ethnic/nationalist divide as a continuous axis, with ethnic minority parties at the one pole, and ultra-nationalist parties at the other, and civic-liberal parties in the centre. First, I show how both party types are spread across the countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and account for inter-country differences. We can see that differences between the countries of Central and Southeast Europe can be explained through different degrees of ethnic heterogeneity, the occurrence of wars or violent conflicts, and electoral institutions, whereas the countries of the former Soviet Union show a slightly distinct development of the ethnic-nationalist axis. Finally, I discuss interactions of ethnic minority mobilisation and the formation of nationalist political parties along the ethnic-nationalist axis and the need for further research in order to establish a dynamic model.

Introduction[1]

Party systems in the new democracies in post-communist Europe are often characterised as *lacking strong social cleavages*: Most of the parties lack deep roots in society, inter-election volatility is high. Whereas the divide between old regime forces and reformers has lost importance in many party systems of the region, ethnicity and nationalism have gotten probably the most common denominator of party systems across post-communist Europe – from the Balkans to the Baltics (cf. Whitefield 2002; Kitschelt et al. 1999; Moser 2001).

The ethnic/nationalist divide is two-folded: integrative parties with a civic-liberal program in nationality issues are challenged from two sides: ethnic minority groups claiming more group rights and autonomy on one side, and nationalist and ultra-nationalist parties of the titular nation on the other side: they demand cultural homogenisation, the denial of minority rights, stronger political and economic centralisation, or they promote irredentism.

We can show the *salience* of the ethnic minority cleavage in numbers: Out of the over 130 million citizens of 18 Central and Eastern European democracies, 12% belong to an ethnic minority. At the most recent elections, 7% out of the 54 millions of voters voted for ethnic minority parties, and many more for ethnically non-defined parties that advocate minority rights (source: my database on elections in post-communist Europe; excl. Russia/Ukraine due to operationalisation problems

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[1] I am thankful to Alex Fischer and Stela Garaz for their comments.

related to the large number of independent candidates[2]). At the opposite extreme of the ethnic/natio-nalist axis, nationalism among the titular nation has become an even stronger basis for voter mobilisation in many countries under study, and one of the important dimensions in a number of post-communist party systems. In recent elections, nationalist and ultra-nationalist parties have won 27% of the votes in post-communist Europe (excl. Russia/Ukraine; 26% if Russia and Ukraine are included).

Previous work has spent attention to the phenomenon of ethnic minority parties in Central and Eastern Europe on a single-case basis or for a small number of countries.[3] Further, there have been a number of studies covering racist or far-right parties. In my paper, I apply a broader definition of the field of nationalist parties, and I offer a broader systematic comparative view with a focus on all the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. I include for some parts 18, for other parts 20 post-communist countries in Europe. The cases constitute an entity of similar regimes to study. The countries of the region have a rather high ethnic heterogeneity and went through a process of state and nation transition in the last two decades. On the other hand, the inclusion of a larger number of cases, half of which located in Southeast Europe,[4] provides a number of cases that facilitates the use of quantitative and semi-quantitative analysis methods, and helps us to distinguish the peculiarities of a single country or a sub-region from general patterns that apply to all the countries with a similar socio-economic and political background.

In the first section, I discuss the upcoming ethnic-nationalist axis in the party systems post-communist Europe and the structure of this axis. Based on the definition of this axis, I can relate political parties in the region to it, and compare their strength across the countries. Differences are accounted for with regression and QCA analyses. Electoral laws, the share of ethnic minorities in a country, the occurrence of violent conflicts, and regional peculiarities shall be introduced as main explanatory factors. Finally, I discuss research perspectives that might relate both sides of the ethnic-nationalist axis in a dynamic model.

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[2] Central and Eastern Europe is defined as all formerly communist countries under Soviet influence in Europe, including Southeast Europe, and further Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and the Baltic States. Belarus is excluded because of a lack of democracy; the question how to treat Russian, Ukrainian and Serbian/Yugoslavian elections in autocratic periods of theses countries might be re-evaluated.
Russia and Ukraine needed to be treated specially, due to the massive presence of independent candidates (Ukraine: at the time when the original dataset that was used for this study was constructed, 2005). If a very substantial share of the parliaments consists of independents, it is not possible any more to judge to what extent they might represent ethnic minority organisations. This is why both countries needed to be excluded for the discussion on ethnic minority parties (cf. Bochsler 2007a). When however nationalist and ultranationalist parties are treated, we can measure their share of the parliamentary seats that are allocated by PR. This is why Russia and Ukraine, along with Lithuania, are included in the analysis of the strength of nationalist and ultranationalist parties, however only the PR part of the parliaments is considered.
[3] Studies have brought deep insights into the ethnic cleavage at the level of single cases (for instance Barany 2005; Caspersen 2006; Friedman 2005), or small numbers of countries (for instance Kostelecky 2002; Trifunovska 1999).
[4] We define former Yugoslavia except Slovenia, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria and Moldova as Southeast Europe; Kosovo is counted as separate entity, because de facto the province is not represented any more in the Serbian parliament, but is about to develop its own political system.

1 Ethnic minority rights versus titular nation dominance

Post-communist party systems have often been discussed as party systems that lack strong social cleavages. During half a century of communist rule, the differences in society levelled off, some speak of "flattened societies" (Wessels/Klingemann 1994). One view argues that the countries lack a social base of collective identity, so that in result there are no cleavages to form out a stable party system (Elster et al. 1998). Indeed, whereas in Western European democracies voting decisions are strongly based on membership to social groups, social cleavages are less dominant in Central and Eastern European political systems. Voters make more pragmatic voting decisions, and consider the personality of the candidates and party leaders, salient political issues or the ideology of political actors to a greater extent than in Western democracies (see for instance Miller et al. 2000: 486-7). The hypothesis that post-communist rule leaves societies that are completely deprived of any social divides ("tabula rasa") has however been contested in many studies. Particularly the non-economic political divides are present across Central and Eastern Europe; these are typically the conflict between the supporters and opponents of the old regime, the religious, ethnic-cultural, or the urban-rural conflict (Whitefield 2002; Tavits 2005: 287; Johannsen 2003). One dominant non-economic political conflict dimension across post-communist democracies however has been the dimension of ethnicity and of ethnic nationalism. It is particularly visible in countries that experienced armed conflicts between ethnic groups, but is as well present in most other cases (Moser 2001).

Different from the duality that many of the cleavages discussed in the literature represent, I understand the ethnicity-nationalism dimension as a continuous axis along a spectrum of positions regarding the definition of nationhood and statehood and regarding the rights and inclusion of ethnic minorities. Figure 1 shows this axis and some positions that parties might take along it.

Ultra-nationalists: The state is exclusively for the titular nation. Minorities are seen as hostile.	Nationalists: State primarily as nation state. If needed, minority rights might be introduced for pragmatic reasons.	Civic-liberal orientation: For equality of all citizens.	Moderate advocates of the minority: Improving the minority situation.	Ethnic separatists: Separatist option for ethnic minority.

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Domination of the titular nation   **Rejection of majority dominance**
Hostility towards minorities   **Stressing minority rights**

Figure 1: The ethnic-nationalist dimension of party systems.

On the right end of the ethnic-nationalist spectrum, we find the ethnic minority parties. As such, I define parties that define themselves as representatives of an ethnic minority and whose program is focussed on a conservation or improvement of rights of their minority group, such as cultural rights, political autonomy, or – in the case of the most radical option of ethnic minority parties – the right

to secession or irredentism. On the left end of the same axis, we find the nationalist political parties of the titular nation. These are parties that favour the dominance of the titular nation in state institutions, in society, and/or in the economy, and sometimes they have a national expansionist program that wants to move the state borders or that covers other forms of irredentism, for instance regarding minorities in other countries. Civic-liberal orientation without an ethnically based orientation are squeezed between these two poles. They are not defined neither as ethnic minority nor as ethnic majority parties, but they appeal to all ethnic groups. They have a liberal program in the sense that they promote a state that treats its citizens equally no matter their ethnic affiliation, or that takes – where appropriate – measures for equal chances among them.

Both poles, ethnic minority representation and titular nation nationalism, are aspects of the same axis. The conflict between ethnic minority representatives, civic-liberal parties, and nationalists regards the same political issues, although the positions of the players vary in the direction and radicalism. We might ask why the conflict between ethnic minorities and ethnic majorities and between civic-liberal parties and nationalist parties is mapped on the same dimension, instead of characterising them as two conflicts that are independent from each other. There are several reasons to this. First, we need to look at the programmatic closeness of political parties along the axis: Although ethnic minority parties might stress the national character of the voter group that they represent, they have mostly very similar positions as civic-liberal parties. The main point in common is that they deny nationalist programs that would favour the titular or majority nation over a country's minority. For instance, in multiethnic countries, the question of whether to build a nation state or a pluralist democracy unifies the civic-liberal field and the ethnic minority representatives (for instance in Slovakia, see Csergó 2002: 5). In other questions however, similarities might be found between ethnic majority nationalists and civic-liberally oriented parties, opposed to ethnic minority demands. Second, mapping the dimension as one axis stresses the character of the parties in the centre of the dimension. Whereas in other models they might be perceived as extreme competitors in a political conflict, on the ethnic-nationalist axis they appear as the central actors that stand in for a moderate position in between more radical parties that aim at representing group interests of the ethnic minority or majority. With this regards, the concept of the axis is similar to the economic left-right axis, where left and right parties address the exclusive demands of either labour or capital, whereas centre parties have a more integrationalist perspective. Third, we need to consider that parties might slightly change their program, either radicalising their program, or moving closer to a moderate position. The definition of an axis allows us to measure shifts in party position over time and to capture minor cross-country differences.

When the conflict gets polarised, radicals of each pole can profit from each other. They mobilise their voters rising fears about the danger of the enemy's policy: Minority right claims by minority

parties can be rephrased by nationalist parties into fears about discrimination of the titular nation and fears of ethnic (step-by-step) separatism. Often, ethnic groups that are now a minority were once part of the titular nation of a vanished empire, such as for instance Hungarian minorities in Slovakia or Romania, Russian minorities in post-Soviet states, or Muslim or Turkish minorities in all the Balkan countries with an Ottoman past. In order to create ethnic tensions, these minorities and their representatives can be stigmatised "as allies or collaborators with external powers that have historically oppressed the majority group" (Kymlicka 2002: 20). The same is true for the opposite direction, where minority leaders might instrumentalise nationalist policies of the titular nation in order to mobilise ethnic minority voters, even these that previously were voting for civic parties. In brief, if the ethnic-nationalist dimension gets politicised, this might often have consequences at both ends of the spectrum. Often, but not always: we might imagine situations where the ethnic-nationalist divide does not have the whole width as shown in figure 1. In some cases, one of the poles might be absent. In ethnically homogeneous states, there are simply no (or not sufficiently large) ethnic minorities to mobilise, but nationalists might address diffuse fears in order to create the nationalist political issue, they might support national minorities in the neighbouring states (for instance, the support of Hungarian/Russian minorities abroad is an important issue for Hungarian and Russian nationalists), or have a irredentist agenda (Wolff 2002: 13). The other asymmetric case (although to my knowledge purely hypothetic for the region) would be the one-sided mobilisation of ethnic minority interests in a tolerant political system (absence of nationalists). This might be the case if the minority fears the loss of its group identity in a too tolerant social-political environment, or if an economically well-off minority would go on distance from economic solidarity with the rest of the country.

Is the ethnic-nationalist divide a classical *cleavage* as identified by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) for Western democracies? Cleavages are defined through three characteristics (Bartolini/Mair 1990): First, it represents an identifiable distinction of social groups; second these groups need to be aware of this distinction and perceive it as a collective identity; third a cleavage needs to be reflected through social and political organisations. Lipset and Rokkan (1967: 13-14) define four such historical cleavages: urban-rural, state-church, class cleavage (capital-labour), and the cultural cleavage or centre-periphery cleavage. Partly, the ethnic-nationalist dimension contains the *cultural cleavage*. Ethnic minorities – in old Western democracies as much as in new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe – are a socially distinct group, are often aware of this distinction, and this divide has an organisational basis; often ethnic minorities build up a whole social sub-system. When we look at the other end of the ethnic-nationalist divide however, we cannot find such clear social denominators that define who votes for nationalist or ultranationalist parties. Voters of extreme nationalist parties are often characterised as losers of the economic transition, however this

social segment is much more fuzzy and less organised than the ethnic minorities groups, so that we can difficultly speak of an outright cleavage in the classical sense. This is why I stick to alternative expressions as *divide, dimension or axis*.

The dimension of ethnicity and nationalism has – apart from some highly salient conflicts – not been a major and consequent division in Western political systems.[5] Central and Eastern European countries offer some reasons for the ethnic-nationalist axis to be particularly accentuated. First, the historical basis and ethnic structure are prone to be politicised. Most Central and Eastern European countries are ethnically more heterogeneous than Western democracies (Fearon 2003: 206-9). Whereas ethnic conflict did not have its place on the political agenda during the communist regimes, ethnic affiliations were well conserved, and in many cases had a certain importance in public life. Tensions were further based on the nationalist programs that were implemented by some of the communist regimes, whereas in other cases legacies of the pre-communist period were re-activated (Hockenos 1993[6]). Second, the post-communist transition provided the opportunity for the activation of ethnic conflicts. On the one hand, border questions and national questions got salient during the state building and nation building process that occurred in many of the countries under study. Third, the region experienced "the exchange of entire social systems" what created "high levels of social disorientation and ambivalence toward the new order" (Minkenberg/Perrineau 2007: 32). This is related to a climate of political and social insecurity, which might be the basis for growing of ethnic tensions (Evans/Need 2002: 656). Fourth, hardly any country of the region was not affected by the dissolution of either the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, or Yugoslavia, either being part of one of these entities or having irredentism questions related to an external minority (or perceived "blood brothers") in one of these countries.

In the 1990s, the nationalist and the ethnic parties have be seen as a phenomenon of the first phase of the political transition, and the nationalist parties as a fluctuating appearance nurtured by protest voters (Ágh 1998: 213-4). In the meantime, the divide has been established all across Central and Eastern Europe. Indeed, the ethnic-nationalist axis has been described as an important dimension of party orientation in a number of countries of Central and Eastern Europe.[7]

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[5] There are several conflicts in Western Europe around which ethnic minority parties were formed (cf. Tronconi 2006); however, the ethnic-nationalist dimension is then often less symmetric than in Central and Eastern European countries, since we often do not have a nationalist or ultranationalist player that would act as the counterpart to the ethnic minority party (for instance: there is party that might be perceived as the nationalist enemy of the South Tyrolean autonomists in Italy). On the other hand, nationalist or ultranationalist mobilisation in Western Europe often occurs independently from the existence of an ethnic minority party (for instance: the Front National in France opposes migrated groups, but they are not organised politically in a party). And, if both ethnic minority parties and nationalist/ultranationalist parties exist, they do not necessarily have opposed interests (for instance, the Italian Lega Nord defines itself as the representative of the Northern Italians/Padanians, however it still closely collaborates with nationalist Italian parties such as Alleanza Nazionale).
[6] Cited in Minkenberg (2002: 335).
[7] Henderson (1999: 149) for instance writes that „domestic political surveys carried out within Slovakia [...] have repeatedly shown that Slovak political parties are differentiated by views on national and ethnic issues rather than by the left-right divide". See as well Evans/Need (2002); Whitefield (2002) and many others.

2 The success of ethnic minority parties

After having discussed the basis of the ethnic-nationalist divide, I shall first have a look at one of the poles of the axis, the ethnic minority parties. In this section, I describe how strong they are and explain differences between the countries.

Ethnic minority parties get some 7% out of the 54 millions of votes in post-communist Europe (except Russia and Ukraine). Ethnic minorities are a relevant political factor in terms of voting power all across Central and Eastern Europe; their parties have frequently been included into governing coalitions in many countries of the region. Data for the most recent elections to the national parliaments show that ethnic minority parties, as defined above, are present in 14 of the 18 countries under study. I understand these parties as ethnic minority parties that clearly and overwhelmingly address an ethnic minority electorate, and whose main political goal is the representation of an ethnic minority.[8] The classification is based on an analysis of country-based studies and on expert interviews (Bochsler 2006).

Their relative size of the ethnic minority parties (measured as seat share in the first chamber) counts from 0.3% in Poland (German minority) up to approximately 20% in the cases of Macedonia (Albanian minority), Montenegro (Serbian and Albanian minorities) and Kosovo (several minorities). Namely, many Southeast European countries are among the front-runners with regards to ethnic minority representation (figure 2). Bosnia is a special case, because none of the three main ethnic groups forms a majority of the population, and almost all the political parties are ethnically based, so that if we count all the parties which appeal to their own ethnic group we come to 81% of the seats in parliament; however, there is a big diversity in the degree of radicalism and moderation of the ethnic claims. These seat shares have remained rather stable since 1990, if neglecting two main exceptions: Before Serbia cleared its 5% electoral threshold for ethnic minorities in 2007, there were no independent ethnic minority parties represented in parliament; and in Estonia, there was a Russian minority party in parliament during two legislatures (1995-2003).

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[8] In some cases, a minor clarification might be important: The exclusive appeal to the ethnic minority does not always need to be explicit. This is crucial if we consider that some countries do not allow parties that are based on ethnic grounds. However, such bans on ethnic parties can in some cases easily be avoided if parties do not state explicitly that they are ethnically based, but de-facto they are overwhelmingly elected by ethnic minorities and it is their goal to represent these. (In other cases, to be discussed below, the ban on ethnic parties is enforced more consequently, and covers such de-facto minority parties too.)

Ethnic minority parties in Central and Eastern Europe, 2007
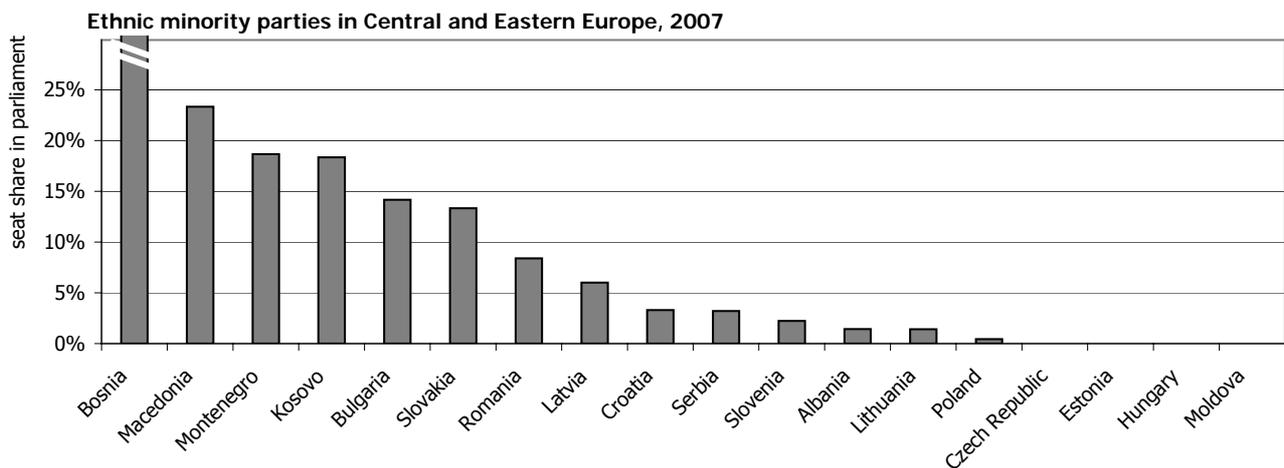
Figure 2: The strength of ethnic minority parties in parliaments in Central and Eastern Europe.

Some of the differences in the strength of ethnic minority parties can be explained easily:

■ Hungary and Poland are countries with no large ethnic minorities, so that there are no or hardly any parties that could mobilise an ethnic minority electorate. Or: the share of ethnic minorities among the population of a country matters. (In the cases where substantial parts of ethnic minorities do not have voting rights, Latvia and Estonia, the share of the ethnic minority among voters matters.)

■ Often, the organisational capacity of ethnic minorities is employed in order to explain their (non-)representation with their own parties. Whereas German and Hungarian minorities are told to be (politically) rather well organised, and in some occasions their parties even managed to win a vote share that was slightly higher than their share of the country's population, Roma and Ashkali minorities are told to lack political mobilisation and organisation (Sobotka 2001; Alionescu 2004: 62).[9]

In my analysis, I add five additional variables to these first obvious determinants:

■ First, I account for the particular political situation in the post-Soviet countries. Ethnic Russians are the main ethnic minority in the region (besides mainly Slav minorities). They were particular losers of the transition, having been the dominant nationality in the Soviet Union, and being perceived sometimes as occupiers or colonialists in the new independent states, or having significant economic losses to face (Chinn/Truex 1996). Under this circumstance, we might expect that ethnic minority voters in post-Soviet countries cluster with other voter groups that perceive themselves as losers of the transition. This would explain a voting behaviour where ethnic minorities vote more often than in other countries for mixed ethnic parties that appeal for transition losers (see below).

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[9] Barany (2005: 85) opposes this hypothesis, arguing that political organisations of the Roma received more financial help and advice from Western and international organisations than any other minority organisation, so that their non-success appears rather astonishing.

■ Second, I look at the particular impact of the electoral systems in use. For that purpose, I employ the results of a study which identified (using the Qualitative Comparative Approach QCA) the electoral systems which would allow ethnic minority parties to win seats in the national parliaments of the 18 countries (Bochsler 2007a). All the countries under study apply either proportional representation (PR) systems or mixed electoral systems with a very substantial part of PR mandates. Usually, PR is discussed as an electoral system that enables minorities to be represented in parliament. However, further elements can be more relevant: If the country is divided in small constituencies, only territorially concentrated minorities can win seats. National legal thresholds (frequent in Central and Eastern Europe) require a party to win a minimal amount of votes in order to get represented, and often they are so high that they do not allow the electoral success of ethnic minority parties. Further, some countries (Albania, Bulgaria) generally ban parties of ethnic minorities (although there are some unlawful exceptions of the rule). And finally, some countries facilitate ethnic minority party representation through special electoral rules. Taking all these factors into account, only 57 out of 111 minorities contained in my database can be represented by own parties – for the other 54 cases the electoral system rules out this possibility. Namely, this possibility relies on the size of an ethnic minority, its concentration in conjunction with the size of electoral districts the existence of national legal thresholds, and special provisions regarding ethnic minorities (Bochsler 2007a). I identify electoral systems that allow ethnic minority parties to win seats in parliament with a dummy variable.

■ Further, I look at the peculiarity of ethnic minorities that live concentrated in a small area of the country, of the electoral system used in Kosovo and of mixed electoral systems (three dummy variables, one for each category). We might hypothesize that concentrated minorities have a stronger group identity and are politically easier to organise, so that they might be better represented. The ethnic minority parties in Kosovo might be expected to be very large, because the electoral system used in this province provides for a strong over-representation of ethnic minorities. And mixed electoral systems might be of disadvantage for ethnic minorities, because they provide two different mechanisms of representation (plurality and PR), and many minorities might only succeed with one of both mechanisms and get under-represented.

All the variables are multiplied with the two main variables of the model, the population share of the ethnic minority, and with the dummy variable for the electoral system.

I tested these explanatory variables using a database that contains 111 ethnic minorities from post-communist countries in Europe (excl. Russia/Ukraine). Each minority is treated as a single unit of analysis. The regression model attempts to explain the seat share that the parties of these ethnic minorities hold in parliament.

Dependent variable: seat share of minority parties in the national parliament		
	B	S.E.
Constant	.00	.00
Population share of the minority	.00	.00
Electoral system dummy	-.27	.21
Population share * electoral system dummy	.80**	.08
Former Soviet Union[a]	-.56**	.13
Kosovo[a]	.51**	.19
Mixed electoral system[a]	-.22	.17
Roma[a]	-.61**	.16
Concentrated minority[a]	.06	.14
N	111	
R^2	.926	

Table 1: Regression results, dependent variable: Seat share of ethnic minority parties (in %). OLS regression with robust standard errors.
[a] Variable multiplied with population share of the ethnic minority and with the electoral system dummy variable.
**significant at p < 0.01; *significant at p < 0.05; (*) significant at p < 0.1.

The support that ethnic minority parties generate across the region is very precisely captured. My multivariate analysis shows that in countries that did not belong to the Soviet Union (thus: Central and Southeast European cases), ethnic minority parties can easily mobilise ethnic minority voters, provided that the electoral system facilitates the representation of minorities by their own parties. Typically, in countries with electoral systems that are minority party friendly (see above), these hold a seat share that is almost equivalent to the share of ethnic minorities of the national population. More precisely, ethnic minority parties typically hold a seat share of about 80% of their population share. Most Roma and Ashkali minorities are excluded through the electoral system,[10] and where the electoral system allows their representation in parliament (namely in Kosovo, Serbia, and Romania), they are much less efficient in mobilising their voters. On average, and in cases where the electoral systems allows their representation, they win only a seat share of approximately 20% of their population share. In Kosovo, the seat share of the ethnic minority parties is much higher than in the other countries of the region; on average, their seat share counts 1.3 times[11] the share of the ethnic minority population. And, mixed electoral systems do not appear as particularly minority friendly, since they lead to under-representation of minority parties (however the effect is below significance).

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[10] Roma and Ashkali minorities live spread throughout the countries of their residence, whereas many other minorities are concentrated in a small area. This is a disadvantage in some countries, simply because this makes the access to parliament impossible under some electoral systems. Namely, this is the case if there are small or medium-sized regional/local electoral districts, where only large parties (of locally large minorities) can succeed, such as in Macedonia. This is accounted for by the variable that looks at the electoral system.
We need to be aware of that all the estimations were based on the share of the population that *identifies* as Roma and Ashkali, based on the national censuses and other sources (see Bochsler 2007a). We know however that often members of the Roma and Ashkali community do not identify as such. In theses cases, we would not treat them as Roma and Ashkali voters.
[11] Adding the "average share" of 0.8 and the Kosovo dummy of 0.5.

Besides these minor divergences (Roma, Kosovo, mixed electoral systems), ethnic minority parties can be seen as a quite constant factor throughout the region, with a seat share in national parliaments only little below their share of the population, if the electoral system is in their favour.

The exceptionality of post-Soviet cases

Noteworthy exceptions to this rule are the ethnic minorities in the countries of the former Soviet Union. The seat share of ethnic minority parties in the national parliaments of these countries is much lower: On average, they win four times less seats than the population share of the ethnic minorities that their represent. Although ethnic Russians are the main minority in all five European post-Soviet democracies, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Moldova, only in Latvia we find a major party that clearly identifies as a Russian party, but its vote share and seat share remains far behind the actual size of the enfranchised part of the Russian minority. Often, the Russian and other Slavic minorities are included into and vote for non-ethnically defined parties which are in opposition to political and economic reforms or which are located on the left of the economic left-right axis. Many Russian and members of other Slavic minorities belong to the losers of the break up of the Soviet Union and many of them are losers of the reform policies. It should thus not expect us that they frequently vote for less reform friendly or less Western oriented parties than the members of the titular nation.

In Estonia, Russian minority parties failed after a few elections, since ethnic Russians were politically divided and many of them aligned with the Centre party (Keskerakönd) (Mikkel 2006). In Moldova, many members of the Russian minority vote for the Communist Party, which takes stands in favour of the Russian language and against approaching Romania (a perspective which many ethnic Russians might perceive as threatening) (Guaragata 2005: 12). In Latvia, several left wing and protest parties are dominated by Russian politicians and voters.[12] The case of Ukraine (not included in the database) would be similar; no parliamentary parties in Ukraine identify as ethnic Russian parties. The party cleavages in Ukraine do not strictly follow strictly ethnic lines (that are less clear than in other countries of the region). Mainly the Russian minority votes for the Moscow-oriented left wing party bloc that is strong in Ukraine's East (Birch 2000; Katchanovski 2006).

3   Nationalists and ultranationalists: A process of homogeneisation

It has been shown that ethnic minority parties manage to mobilise a large part of the members of their minorities to vote for them in national parliamentary elections, if the electoral laws are in their favour. The supporters of nationalist and ultranationalist parties of the ethnic majority might as well belong rather to certain social groups, but they are less clear-cut than in the case of ethnic minority

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[12] Auers (2004); interview with Allan Sikk.

parties, and in consequence, we have fewer grounds how to predict their success (in terms of the number of parliamentary mandates) precisely.

A few comparative studies dealt with parties in Central and Eastern Europe that often might be characterised as nationalists. These studies have a slightly different focus from mine. A range of studies dealt with euroscepticism in Central and Eastern Europe (Mudde 2005a; Taggart/Szczerbiak 2004; Minkenberg/Perrineau 2007). Further, there have been – astonishingly few – investigations into the presence of racist and far-right parties in the region (Beichelt/Minkenberg 2002; Mudde 2002, 2005b; Dawisha/Deets 2006: 718). (According to the definition used by the authors, the definitions of "racist" or "far-right" might be very close to my concept of "ultranationalist" parties.[13]) Some studies look at the situation in single or few countries: Trifunovka (1999) studies Croatia, Slovakia and Estonia in the 1990s and Kasekamp's (2003) looks at the radical right in Estonia.

Beichelt and Minkenberg (2002: 251) come to the conclusion that the basis for the radical right is particularly fruitful in post-communist Europe: The broad processes of political, economic and social transformation and modernisation create high social costs, and thus a potential of voters that can easily be mobilised for a radical vote. Moreover, after the fall of the communism, the political left appears de-legitimised, whereas right argumentations are popular. And finally, many of the countries lack positive experiences of democracy, what makes it easier to promote an authoritarian ideology.

Against these expectations, the mentioned empirical studies came however to an astonishing result: far right parties in Central and Eastern Europe are weaker than in the West. Mudde (2002) argues that in Western Europe, voters which are unsatisfied with politics would often vote for extreme political competitors such as the radical right. In Central and Eastern Europe however, there is a large set of anti-establishment, anti-corruption or anti-party parties that woo this voter segment, without a hardcore nationalist political platform (Mudde 2002; Kasekamp 2003; Sikk 2006; Dawisha/Deets 2006: 719). These "have nearly monopolized the protest vote […] [and are thus] squeezing out extreme-right parties" (Kasekamp 2003: 410). Dawisha and Deets (2006: 716) found that the voter basis of the extreme right parties "fluctuates significantly from election to election".

The image looks quite different however if we broaden our focus in three perspectives: First, including a broader time span that reaches until the most recent elections; second, looking at a larger number of countries, namely through the inclusion of the Western Balkans; thirdly, widening the field of parties under consideration. Previous studies looked at *far-right*, *racist*, or *ultranationalist* (dependent on the way how they are defined) and often mono-thematic parties, instead I opt for an inclusion of nationalist parties into the study. The difference between ultra-

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[13] See Beichelt/Minkenberg (2002: 249); Minkenberg (2002: 337).

nationalist (or far-right) parties and nationalist parties relies only on the radicalism of their claims, and is often fluid. Both political ideologies relate the state to its titular nation; they orient upon a "nationally defined community", and favour collective national identity as a "counter-concept to individuallization" (Minkenberg 2000: 174). The reduction to the ghetto of ultra-nationalist parties might leave aside a broad field of political actors that are slightly more moderate, but that are situated very close to the ultra-nationalist end of the ethnic-nationalist conflict dimension. Programs of nationalists and ultra-nationalists are not always fundamentally different.

Classification of nationalists

In order to study the strength of nationalist and ultra-nationalist parties empirically, I need first to classify them according to their program. To my knowledge, there is no systematic classification of Central and Eastern European parties according to these criteria. Several studies capture far-right, racist or euro-sceptic parties in some of the countries of interest (Beichelt/Minkenberg 2002; Mudde 2005b; Minkenberg/Perrineau 2007). In my scheme, I would consider many of these parties to be nationalist or ultra-nationalist. Attention is required however when dealing with "euro-sceptic" or "far-right" parties. Euro-sceptic parties might have other than nationalist reasons for the rejection of European Union membership. "Far-right" might be an ambiguous category; we should consider that the left-right axis regards first of all the economic conflict, and "far-right" might include not only ultra-nationalist parties, but as well parties with extremely liberal-conservative stands in economic issues. On the other hand (and particularly in Central and Eastern Europe), nationalist ideas might be promoted by left parties with a nationalist-protectionist program.[14]

Due to the absence of a systematic classification of all parties that might be considered nationalist and ultra-nationalist parties in the region, I built up an own, tentative classification of these that shall allow an assessment of the nationalist strength in the region. I include parties that carry the dominance of the ethnic concept of the nation as the central point of their program or policies. Facing a lack of systematic and complete quantitative or quantifiable data, that would allow a reliable measure across countries and across time (cf. section 4 of this paper), my classification is based on the discussion of far-right, racist, or nationalist in the comparative literature (Kopecký/Mudde 2002; Minkenberg 2007; Taggart/Szczerbiak 2004: 13), and on additional information on party orientation found in single country-studies (Kasekamp 2003; Biberaj 1998;

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[14] The Comparative Data Set for 28 Post-Communist Countries (Armingeon/Careja 2004) classifies all parties in post-communist countries according to their party families. However, a multinominal classifycation by families is fundamentally different from the ranking of parties according a dimension. For instance, some parties that are generally considered to be strongly nationalist might have a religion-oriented program and are in consequence classified as religious parties and not as nationalist ones; other parties that are located at the nationalist end of our dimension might be categorised as agrarian, populist, or socialist. This kind of data is thus difficult to employ for our purposes. Dawisha and Deets (2006: 718) provide a classification that seems to include only the early 1990s.

Wegren/Konitzer 2006; Hasakuka et al. 2004). The parties included are listed in the appendix to this paper.

I calculated the seat share and the vote share of nationalist and ultranationalist parties in parliaments in Central and Eastern Europe for the period 1990-2007.[15] Figures 3 and 4 show the seat share of these parties in the mid-1990s[16] and in the most recent elections.

Nationalists and ultranationalists in 1993-1996

Nationalists and ultranationalists in 2003-2007
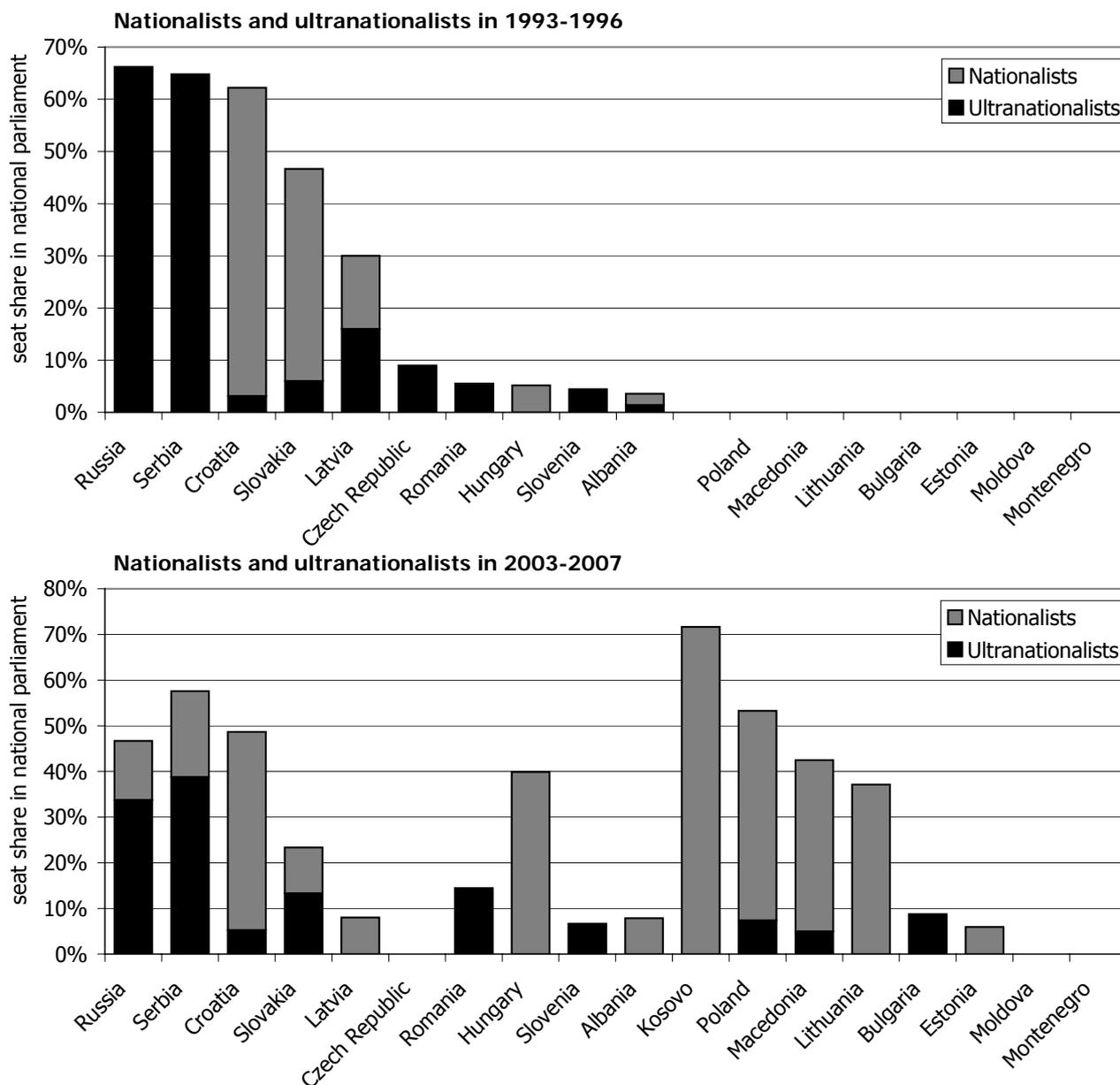
Figures 3, 4: The seat share of nationalist and ultranationalist parties in national parliaments in the mid-1990s and in the most recent elections by country.

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[15] Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo are treated as separate entities, because Serbia and Montenegro had distinct party systems since 1990 and did not hold any more common elections to the federal parliament since 1996. After having boycotted Serbian elections, Kosovo has developed its own political institutions. For methodological reasons, instead of including the Czechoslovak elections of 1990 and 1992, we include the elections to the Czech and Slovak sub-national chambers in the same years (with a very similar vote distribution).

[16] Elections in the period 1993-1996; if several contests were held in this period, the one that is closest to 1995 was taken. In most of the cases, these are the second or third multiparty elections; showing them might make more sense than showing the very first elections, because the party system in the first elections was often completely different from the following elections, and thus little representative.

As figure 3 shows, parties with a nationalist or ultranationalist orientation were particularly strong in the mid-1990s in Russia, Serbia and Croatia, whereas most of the other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, there were no major parties classified as nationalists or ultranationalists.[17]

Ten years later, the picture looks different (figure 4). On the one hand, we can see that there are now much more countries where ultranationalists or nationalists are represented in parliament. In the most recent elections, only three parliaments remained without any party classified as nationalist or ultranationalist. And, in 10 out of 19 countries, nationalist or ultranationalist parties covered more than 10% of the seats. On the other hand, we see a clear decrease of nationalists and ultranationalists in their strongholds in the 1990s (Russia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovakia).

This impression of homogenisation is confirmed through a regression analysis. I try to explain the strength of nationalist and ultranationalist parties (seat share in national parliaments, ranging from 0 to 0.86) with a set of five variables: First, I control for the population share of ethnic minorities in a country (ranging from 0.01 to 0.50). There are two contrary hypotheses related to the ethnic minority share. We might either expect that – because ethnic minorities do not vote for nationalists of the national majority – the larger the ethnic minority is, the fewer seats the nationalist parties win. Or we might expect that the larger an ethnic minority is, the more potential the nationalists among the national majority have to stir up fear and mobilise voters. Second, we might expect that countries that experienced a longer war or violent conflict that put the national integrity of the country (or what would be perceived by nationalists as the "just" borders of their own country), nationalist parties would be stronger.[18] Third and fourth, I control for regional differences. We might expect that countries that belonged to the Soviet Union might show a difference compared to other countries (as argued for above, in the analysis on ethnic minority parties), and, I look at the question if nationalism is a special phenomenon that is related to *Balkanisation*, and control for possible Southeast European peculiarities. Fifth, I control for the time dimension (measuring the number of years since 1990). The time variable is further included in the form of two interactive (multiplicative) terms, in order to control for a different development in the post-Soviet countries and in countries affected by war.[19] We might expect that countries affected by war (in the 1990s) show a *normalisation* of the seat share of nationalist parties over time.

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[17] These numbers explain why previous research (Mudde 2002; Segert 2002; Kasekamp 2003: 410) that covered earlier periods of elections came to the conclusion that there are few ultranationalist parties in Central and Eastern Europe. Namely, we need to take into account that these studies did not include the former Yugoslavian cases, did only cover ultranationalists (not considering governing "Movement for a Democratic Slovakia" party that consequently is dealt as nationalist in the literature), and did not treat the Russian Communist party as ultranationalist (as criticised by Beichelt/Minkenberg 2002).

[18] The variable is operationalised as a dummy. I apply a rather restrictive definition of these cases, including only Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia. Slovenia and Moldova are not included because the violent conflicts lasted short; Russia is not included because the war in Chechnya did never put a larger part of the country's borders at risk.

In a further development of this study, the conflict variable might be operationalised in a different way, in order to investigate the relationship between violent conflicts and nationalist parties in a dynamic model and with more complex hypotheses.

[19] Similar interaction models were calculated for time and ethnic minorities and time and Southeast Europe; however they were dropped, in order to avoid too high levels of multicollinearity.

In my OLS regression estimation, I treat each national parliamentary election held since 1990 as one case; a cluster procedure by country controls for the time-series character of the data. The regression confirms the homogenisation of the seat shares that has been discussed (table 2). The main conclusions are mapped in figure 5.

Dependent variable: seat share of nationalist and ultranationalist parties in the national parliament		
	B	S.E.
Constant	.26*	.10
Time of election (years since 1990)	.01	.006
Ethnic minority (population share)	-1.26	.23
War or violent conflict (dummy)	.58**	.09
Time * war/violent conflict	-.016(*)	.008
Former Soviet Union (dummy)	.16	.15
Time * former Soviet Union	-.01	.009
Southeast Europe (dummy)	-.06	.08
N	89	
R^2	.605	

Table 2: Regression results, dependent variable: Seat share of nationalist and ultranationalist parties (in %). OLS regression with robust standard errors, country panels controlled for with cluster function.
**significant at $p < 0.01$; *significant at $p < 0.05$; (*) significant at $p < 0.1$.
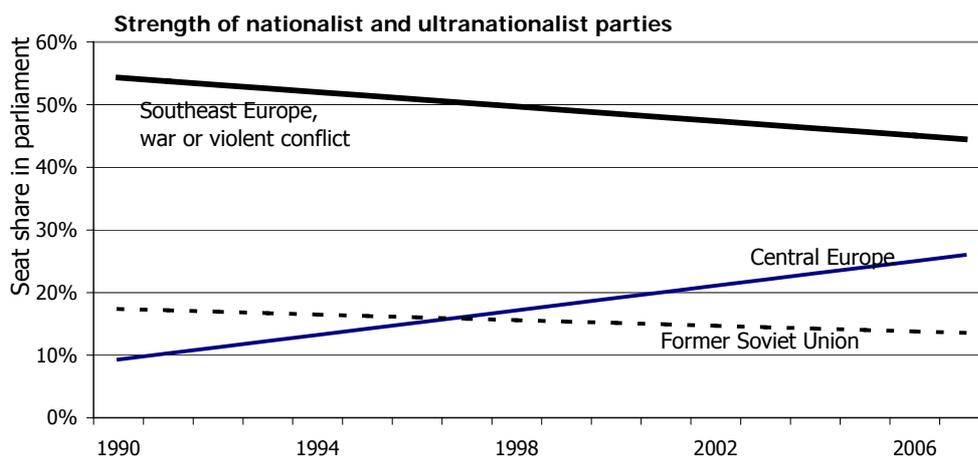
Figure 5: Regression results by country group; development of the strength of nationalist and ultranationalist parties. (The ethnic minority share is held constant at the average of each country group.)

My multivariate analysis identifies a large gap between countries that experienced longer lasting wars or violent conflicts and those without. In countries that have been affected by wars or violent conflicts, the seat share of nationalist and ultranationalist parties was very high in the beginning of the 1990s, and decreased thereafter, at approximately 1% per year (figure 5). Countries that have not been affected to the same extent show exactly the contrary phenomenon – starting at a much lower level, followed by an increase of approximately 1% by year (variable below significance!). By 2007, this difference between both groups of countries was reduced to a share of approximately 10% of the seats (after controlling for the varying ethnic heterogeneity across regions, as calculated from the regression coefficients; if not considering differences in ethnic heterogeneity, the

difference amounts to 20%, as shown in figure 5). We can thus see a clear homogenisation of the strength of nationalist and ultranationalist parties in post-communist Europe.

Further, the share of ethnic minorities among the population matters (cf. table 1): If all the other attributes of a country are held stable (namely the involvement of a country in a violent conflict or war), nationalists and ultranationalists are much stronger in countries with an ethnically homogeneous population than in countries with a heterogeneous composition of ethnic groups. This effect goes far beyond what might be explained by the assumption that ethnic minorities are unlikely to vote for ethnic majority nationalists.[20] (Although, due to high multicollinearity the standard error is too high to make precise indications.) Results suggest that under the presence of ethnic minorities, the voters of the titular nation are more tolerant,[21] or that in countries with strong ethnic minorities, the potential of ethnic majority voters is too small to pass the electoral system threshold with a nationalist party. Indeed, in a few countries with not very large ethnic minority populations, such as Poland or Hungary, nationalist parties are much stronger than in other cases with much larger ethnic minorities.[22] The same applies to the group of countries in war, where Serbia, Croatia and Kosovo count much more nationalists and ultranationalists than the ethnically more heterogeneous cases of Montenegro or Macedonia.

Finally, the countries of the former Soviet Union show a rather stable development of the strength of nationalist parties in their parliaments, if ethnic heterogeneity and the involvement in wars is similar to the Central European countries of comparison. Southeast European countries do not show a particular sign of "Balkanisation". They have – ceteris paribus – fewer nationalists represented in their parliaments (we need to be careful however, the difference is below standard levels of significance).

Why the delay in the formation of nationalist parties in post-communist Europe?

The finding about a homogenisation of the strength of nationalist forces in post-communist Europe does not contradict previous research results according to which the radical right used to be weaker in Central and Eastern Europe than in Western democracies. On the contrary, my finding shows that

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[20] Although, the ethnic minority variable is conceptually and statistically highly correlated to other variables of the model. Statistically, this makes the standard error too high to make precise indications; conceptually, the three-sided relationship between ethnic heterogeneity, violent conflicts, and nationalist parties merits further attention.

[21] The question might be dealt with at the sub-national level. A look on Transilvania and on the Vojvodina region might be particularly important with these regards, both are regions where the main ethnic minorities in Romania/Serbia are located, however, in both regions, the titular nation is still a numerical majority. Does the presence of ethnic minorities affect the voting behaviour of the ethnic majority? In both cases, there are claims for an autonomy status of the regions, legitimated through the presence of ethnic minorities, but rejected by the nationalists of the titular nation. Are voters that live in ethnically mixed regions as Transylvania more prone to support non-nationalist parties, because these support a special status for their regions? Or do they on the contrary fear such a special status and support rather nationalist parties which oppose it? Might the majority-minority distribution in the regions with higher concentration of ethnic minorities have particular importance for this? (See for instance Lazăr 1999: 164-6, table 6).

[22] It might be however that nationalist parties in ethnically homogenous societies, such as the League of Polish Families or the Fidesz in Hungary, are less perceived as such, because nationalist policies provoke less intensive reactions in an ethnically rather homogeneous state.

things have changed: After the electoral successes of ultranationalist parties namely in Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and if widening the focus of the research on nationalist parties (namely considering the role of the Fidesz in Hungary), we would rather say that nationalists in the Centre and the East of the continent are about to overtake nationalist and racist parties in the West. Such a development is in line with the hypotheses formulated in earlier articles about the expected development of nationalist parties in post-communist countries (Beichelt/Minkenberg: 2002: 251, as cited above). The key question would thus not be: *"why is the radical right so weak in Central and Eastern Europe?"* (Mudde 2002; free translation), but rather: *"why did nationalists and ultranationalists grow so late in Central and Eastern Europe?"*.

I would argue that for a long time the nationalist segment of the electorate was well served by the mainstream parties. The nationalist and even the ultranationalist ideology was indeed included into the initial reform party coalitions (umbrella coalitions) that brought about democratic change in Central and Eastern European countries. These reform coalitions as a whole are not classified (or were not discussed as) as nationalist per se, what might lead to the perception of an absence of a strong nationalist bloc in Central and Eastern European countries, because the nationalist element might have been perceived as not dominant. Later, the umbrella coalitions did broke apart into successor parties, but these had still a similar image. Thus, in many cases, nationalist stands were well represented in mainstream parties. To speak in the words of Minkenberg (2002: 362): "The political space for radical right-wing parties is rather limited because nationalism informs the ideology of most dominant actors". A typical example for this phenomenon is Bulgaria where before the appearance of the ultra-nationalist "Ataka" party there was no party that would commonly be characterised as nationalist. However, both dominant Bulgarian parties in the 1990s were representing some nationalist ideas or were marked as hostile towards the ethnic minorities: The main centre-right party, the UDF, bases its electoral support on the "'national' credentials" (Elster et al. 1998: 255), whereas the Socialist party was the successor of the Bulgarian communists that stand out through their campaign against the Turkish minority in the 1980s. Many parties in most of the post-communist countries have a program with a strong national appeal, even if they are commonly not part of the nationalist party family (or not treated as such – nor have they been included in this category for my statistical analysis above). Some arbitrarily chosen examples might illustrate this: Mainstream parties in the newly independent Baltic States accentuated the national identity (Bugajski 2002), so did the pro-independence bloc in Ukraine (Birch 2000); in Moldova, the pro-Romanian Christian Democratic party might be attributed as stressing the identity of the titular majority (Guaragata 2005: 12); the Polish Solidarność is considered to have been close to nationalists; and the Romanian Salvation Front (and the Socialist party which followed it) had strong nationalist policies (Minkenberg 2002: 348-349). All these mentioned parties played an

important role in their national party systems of the (early) 1990s. In brief, *when the political mainstream absorbs the national question, then there is less demand for explicitly nationalist competitors.* In this view, the later increase in nationalist parties would rather be the result of the accentuation of clear political programs and programmatic differentiation of political parties with some parties starting to represent the nationalist more visibly. If this hypothesis should be right, the increase in seats held by nationalist parties in Central and Eastern Europe would not represent a shift of the party system towards more nationalism.

4   Perspectives for further research: A dynamic model of ethnic-nationalist mobilisation

Party competition in Western Europe is often characterised by the economic left-right axis. The same axis has been shown to be far less important in Central and Eastern Europe; in some cases there is considerable confusion about who is left and who is right. Are there alternative dimensions that are relevant in party politics in these countries? I am arguing that the ethnic-nationalist divide is an important dimension of party orientation in many of the countries under study. At both poles of the axis, parties are nowadays present in most of the Central and Eastern European democracies. These are parties of ethnic minorities at one end and nationalist parties of the titular nation at the other end.

Where relevant ethnic minorities exist, and electoral systems facilitate the creation and representation of ethnic minority parties in the national parliament, such parties are indeed created and gain a large part of the minority's votes. Only in countries that formerly belonged to the Soviet Union, ethnic minority parties are less frequent, because some minorities do not pass the electoral thresholds, and moreover, because the minorities (particularly the predominant Slav minorities) vote often for left-wing parties with no explicit ethnic appeal.

On the other end of the ethnic-nationalist axis, nationalist and ultra-nationalist parties found their access into party politics. Whereas in the early 1990s nationalists and ultra-nationalists were mostly present in countries that experienced a war or violent conflicts, they are now a common phenomenon of an overwhelming majority of the party systems in Central and Eastern Europe. We can thus observe a homogenisation process of the nationalist strength all across the region, which reinforces the importance of the ethnic-nationalist dimension.

The present analysis shows a tentative estimation of the strength of the ethnic-nationalist divide in Central and Eastern Europe, and the reasons that can explain cross-country differences. The axis is not only relevant because it is one of few dimensions that structure the political space in the region, but as well because the conflict between majority nationalists and ethnic minorities has important implications for the quality of democracy and the stability of the countries under study.

Outlook

As discussed, the study of the ethnic-nationalist divide faces the problem of an unsatisfactory data basis. We need to develop a reliable scale that captures the ethnic-nationalist dimension and to develop data for parties in Central and Eastern Europe (party manifestos; expert surveys). This would not only be a more solid basis for classifications (as made in the present paper), but moreover, such a basis should allow to measure party positions on a continuous scale and to capture minor changes of the party positions over time, and open new perspectives for the research of the dynamics along the axis.

Many research questions regarding the ethnic-nationalist axis can only be investigated in a reliable and systematic comparative way if we can move towards quantitative measures of party positions. Central and Eastern Europe would constitute a very promising set of democracies for the study of ethnic-nationalist dynamics of party politics. Such dynamics of ethnic radicalisation and moderation processes have been subject to a rich literature; and different schools have proposed diverging institutional solutions that should be the most appropriate to incite a moderation of the party system around the ethnicity-nationalist dimension. The consociationalist school proposes power-sharing solutions that should include all relevant parties and minorities (Lijphart 1994), whereas the centripetalist school favours majority-building institutions that should enforce centre, possibly non-ethnic parties (Horowitz 1985; see Fraenkel/Grofman 2006 and Bochsler 2007b for a critique of this school).

The main focus of the different mentioned schools is on institutional solutions in order to settle ethnically based conflicts. Each of these institutional concepts relies on different models about the structure and the dynamics of the political conflict around the ethnic-nationalist dimension that are highly diverging from each other. Institutional engineering for divided society requires thus a more complex investigation of the dynamics around the ethnic-nationalist axis. It is not the goal of this study to build a complex model that might explain different effects. Rather, I shall show some diverging hypotheses that can be derived from the literature and relate them to empirical pheno-mena in Central and Eastern Europe, in order to illustrate the relevance of the research question.

Centrifugal effect: If a member of one ethnic group knows that other ethnic groups might vote for ethnically defined parties, she will feel that she needs to protect the interests of her own ethnic group, and will be more keen to vote for ethnically more radical parties. The mobilisation of nationalist voters relies on the fear of a loss of national identity or of the territorial integrity. These fears are related to the rights that are accorded to ethnic minorities. For nationalist parties, it is of advantage thus to build their campaigns on the existence of a mobilised ethnic minority or of ethnic minority claims. On the one hand, the pure presence of a strong ethnic minority can be perceived as threatening (cf. Keech 1968; applied on Central and Eastern Europe: Evans/Need 2002: 656). On

the other hand, the mobilisation of an ethnic minority and its claims might strengthen the nationalist political parties. A typical example would be Serbia, where minority demands for autonomy are translated as the will for separatism, and this creates fears and a fruitful basis for ultra-nationalist parties in ethnically mixed regions (Helsinki Committee 2005: 262; Bochsler 2007b). Vice versa, ethnic minority parties can mobilise their electorate on the perceived or real treat through the titular nation. Often, nationalist parties of the titular nation that were in power were reluctant to accept language rights of the minorities or to give autonomy to the ethnic minorities (in form of cultural autonomy or federalism), or were even redrawing administrative boundaries in a way to deteriorate the possibility of an ethnic minority to rule the territory where it is a majority (Kymlicka 2002: 16-17).

Ethnic outbidding effect: If two or several parties compete at the same pole of the ethnic-nationalist axis, this can lead to a process of radicalisation of both these parties. In countries with existing ethnic tensions, radical claims can help a party to win more votes than a moderate policy. Consequently, in a system with several parties of the ethnic minority or several nationalist parties, each of them tries to make more radical claims, in order to appear as the most resolute representative of its ethnic group's interests. Anecdotic evidence describes Kosovo as a typical example, where the parties of the Albanian majority mainly compete about who is perceived to be the most credible representative of Albanian interests. As a result, we would expect that the more parties gather around the ethnic-nationalist axis, the more it is polarised.

Institutional integration effect: In recent years, new voices have appeared that abandon the outbidding logic. Inter-ethnic agreements, such as peace treaties, can change the political landscape of ethnic parties in conflict. These often provide the inclusion of radical players into a country's institutions. This helps to calm their claims and to reduce the polarisation of the conflict. When they are offered to take one part of the political power, hawks convert into doves – or at least into political forces that are willing to collaborate in democratic institutions. Thus, by the way of ensuring radical parties the access to political power, they can be integrated into peaceful solutions (Mitchell et al. 2001; Mitchell et al. 2006). In some of its aspects, the Ohrid peace agreement in Macedonia follows this logic (Friedman 2005: 388). The effect seems to play less in only partly sovereign states (Bosnia, Kosovo) where the international community has a veto power, so that nationalist parties can promote very radical programs, being aware that it will not be implemented.

Extremist alliance effect: Radical parties of the titular nation and of the ethnic minority are not in direct competition with each other. Ethnic minority members will hardly vote for majority nationalists that want to define the state as the one of the titular nation (unless for some obscure strategies where they want to profit from a radicalisation of the conflict); and members of the ethnic majority will hardly support a party that orients (exclusively) towards ethnic minorities (what does

not exclude that a party/coalition with civic-liberal orientation might win with an ethnic minority candidate). Instead, according the centrifugal effect, an increase of one radical party might help radicals at the other end of the ethnic-nationalist axis to win voters. Both radical parties at different poles address completely different groups of voters. However, they compete against the same adversary. Both radical parties – of the titular nation as much as of the ethnic minority – are in competition with non-ethnic moderate parties (civic-liberal parties). Adding to this, both radical parties might have interests in a state that stresses the ethnic affiliation, that separates ethnic groups from each other, and that introduces distributional policies that follow ethnic lines. In consequence, although the opposed radical parties might appear as the most distant parties from each other on the ethnic-nationalist axis, they are natural partners for a pragmatic collaboration. Indeed, collaborations among opposed radicals can be observed in some empirical cases. For instance, *alliances of extremists* are reported to be effective at the municipal level in some Serbian municipalities, and similarly, it has been the case in the first elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1990, where ethnic parties campaigned jointly against the moderate non-ethnic party. Electoral coalitions of the radicals might put institutions that are aimed to incite moderate parties (awarding parties that gain votes from both ethnic groups) out of order (Fraenkel/Grofman 2006). It remains to discuss however if such alliances of the radicals are a sign of pure pragmatism, or of they might rather show moderation, in the sense of the *institutional integration effect*. If the latter would be the case, such extremist alliances might be very important means for institutional engineering.

In brief, the ethnic-nationalist dimension offers an interesting perspective for further studies.

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Appendix

1. Suitable electoral systems for ethnic minorities

Definition of electoral systems that allow the election of ethnic minority parties (taken from Bochsler 2007a):

a) In PR systems, ethnic minorities might win a seat in parliament if they are larger than the national legal threshold (if a threshold is applied), and if they are larger than the share of one seat in an average PR district.
[PRDISTRICT * THRESHOLD]

b) Concentrated ethnic minorities can already be elected if they are larger the share of one PR seat in parliament, and if they pass the national legal threshold (if applied).
[CONC * PRSEATS * THRESHOLD]

c) In electoral systems with single-seat district systems (majority / plurality voting systems), only parties of ethnic minority groups that are geographically concentrated may be represented, if their population share is equal or larger to the share of one of the seats (the share of one of the districts).
[CONC * MAJSEATS]

d) If the electoral law provides special districts for an ethnic minority, then its parties may be represented irrespective of the structure of the minority.
[SPECIAL]

Further, there is an additional *necessary condition* to be fulfilled:
Electoral systems with a ban on ethnic minority parties do not allow the representation of such.
[ban]

2. Nationalist and ultranationalist parties in Central and Eastern Europe

country	party
Albania	PBK
Albania	RP
Bulgaria	Ataka
Croatia	Croatian Democratic Community
Croatia	Croatian Right's Party, Hrvatska Stranka Prava (HSP)
Czech Republic	Republican Party of Czechoslovakia
Czech Republic	Sdruzeni Nezavislych a Europsti Demokrate
Estonia	Eestimaa Rahvalliit
Estonia	Estonian Christian People's Party
Estonia	Estonian Citizen
Estonia	Estonian Independence Party (Eesti Iseseisvuspartei)
Estonia	Estonian National Independence Party (Eesti Rahvuslik Sõltumatuse Partei, ERSP)
Estonia	Republican Party
Hungary	Fidesz
Hungary	Hungarian Justice and Life Party (Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja [MIÉP])
Kosovo	Alliance for the Future of Kosova (AAK - ALEANCA PËR ARDHMËRINË E KOSOVËS)
Kosovo	Democratic League of Kosovo (LIDHJA DEMOKRATIKE E KOSOVËS - LDK)
Kosovo	Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK - PARTIA DEMOKRATIKE E KOSOVËS)
Latvia	Fatherland and Freedom [Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK (TB/LNNK)]
Latvia	People's Movement for Latvia (Tautas kustéba Latvijai [TKL])
Lithuania	Order and Justice - Liberal Democrats [Tvarka ir Teisingumas - Liberalai Demokratai (TT)]
Lithuania	Ruso Sajungos Koalicija "Kartu mes jega!" (LRS) / Darbo Party
Macedonia	VMRO
Macedonia	VMRO - NP
Montenegro	Narodna stranka
Poland	Christian National Union
Poland	Law and Justice
Poland	League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin [LPR])
Poland	Polish Agreement (DNS)
Poland	Self Defence (Samoobrana DNS)
Romania	Greater Romania Party

country	party
Russia	KPRF
Russia	LDPR
Russia	Rodina
Russia	United Russia
Serbia	Democratic Party of Serbia
Serbia	Party of Serbian Unity

country	party
Serbia	Serbian Radical Party
Serbia	Socialist Party of Serbia
Slovakia	Movement for a Democratic Slovakia
Slovakia	Slovak National Party
Slovenia	Slovenian National Party