Chapter X: All jointly or everyone on its own? On fissions and fusions of ethnic minority parties[1]

Edina Szöcsik / Daniel Bochsler[*]

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In many countries of Central and Eastern Europe, transition towards democracy was linked to important political challenges for ethno-national minority groups. In former Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and in the Soviet Union, the breakdown of the communist regimes also meant the end of multiethnic federations – whether ordered and peaceful, or chaotic and violent, and the creation of new nation states, which required minorities to find their place in a new political space. In states with unaltered borders (Hungary, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania), on the one hand the political liberalisation either was accompanied by an awakening of old nationalisms, and revisionist ideas, along with a re-activation of links to external minorities. On the other hand, the new political geography and the changing political situation in neighbouring states also altered the relation of the states to their minorities. Hence, both domestic factors and relations to neighbours were altering ethnic relations fundamentally (Brubaker 1996).

Therefore, the political exponents of ethno-national minorities needed to adopt to the new political situation, feeling attracted by their kin state, or relying on its external support for growing political demands, but also feeling the need to voice concerns and demands, against the threat of a new or re-defined nationalising state.

The politicisation of ethnic relations was also reflected in the creation of parties of ethnic minorities across countries of the region. Divisions along ethnic lines are not only one of the most common, but also one of the most stable denominator of party systems in Central and Eastern Europe (Moser 2005).

Much of the literature deals with ethnic minorities as united, homogeneous actors, neglecting that many minorities groups are politically split (e.g. Rabushka and Shepsle 1972b). An important strategic decision for the political mobilisation of ethnic minorities is however, their internal organisation. This chapter sheds light on the principle conflict between unity and political differentiation.

In quite a few cases in the region, there is vivid competition among rivalling parties of ethnic minorities. This is the case for Albanian minorities in Serbia, Macedonia, and in Montenegro, the parties of the Hungarian minorities in Romania, Slovakia and in Serbia, and the parties of the Bosniak minority in Serbia (see also Bochsler 2007). In many countries of the region, ethnic minority parties, which have emerged in the early 1990s, are not only those with the most stable party history, but also with the most loyal electorate. In several countries, this has changed at once, as parties of several significant minorities have very recently become challenged by rivalling parties.

Yet, the pluralism of political interest organization within minority groups is beginning to be acknowledged, but only few studies have started to study the determinants and effects of intra-ethnic party competition. Empirically, we study ethno-national minority groups, whose political organisations have altered. We look at four cases, where ethnic minority parties have recently experienced new intra-group divides, or have recently merged.

These cases regard particularly the Hungarian minorities, which are most numerous in Romania, in Slovakia and in Serbia. After the democratic transition, they were confronted with the Hungarian state seeking new ties to its external minorities, revived ideas of Hungarian irredentism, which also affected the policies of the neighbouring states that were targeted by this agenda. All the host states of the Hungarian minorities have also developed or revived their own nationalisms in the 1990s.

Slovakia, after the split of Czechoslovakia, had a new ethnic majority, and the new state was mainly identified with the Slovaks and their language. The ethnic Hungarians of Slovakia found themselves for the first time in the position of the largest minority, and in the first period also excluded from government. After joining the national government in 1998, the united Party of Hungarian Coalition (SMK) was in power for eight years, During the period in the government internal tensions emerged and once it was ousted from government in 2006

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*Edina Szöcsik, ETH Zurich, edina.szocsik@eup.gess.ethz.ch; Daniel Bochsler, NCCR Democracy, University of Zurich, daniel.bochsler@uzh.ch, www.bochsler.eu.

the partychanged its leadership. It split in 2009 and since then it is challenged by a new, moderate, and declared multi-ethnic party Most-Híd (Slovak and Hungarian for bridge). The Most-Híd gains its main support from the Hungarian minority, and has in first national elections even put at stake the survival of the Party of the Hungarian Coalition.

The situation of the Hungarian minority in Serbia was not less challenging, as the dissolution of Yugoslavia was connected to the increasing domination of political institutions by the Serbian political leadership under Slobodan Milošević. Those minorities within Serbia – most importantly ethnic Hungarians and the Bosniaks of the Serbian Sandžak – were experiencing the shrinking of Yugoslavia and the realisation of the Serbian nation state within the state borders. In both cases, this lead to a multitude of minority parties, competing for votes and offices. In 2008, however, the parties of the Hungarian minority have formed a political alliance, and thereafter run jointly in national and provincial elections. Since 2008 the Hungarian Coalition participates in the government – a novelty for the political representation of the Hungarians in Serbia. The Hungarian Coalition, however break soon apart based on internal tensions on the course of the Hungarian Coalition and on its relation to the Democratic Party who is leading the government coalition.

Differently, the Bosniaks in Serbia experienced an important political re-formation only little later. In early 2011, the new Bosniak Democratic Community (BDZ) of the main mufti (Muslim religious leader) has joined the competition, and might become the most powerful party of the community, after winning the plurality of vote in the elections to newly formed minority councils. The party is politically radical and a serious threat to the two main incumbent parties, which have both lowered their tones in the 2000s when they have entered the national government.

Certainly, Romania is not a new nation state, but nevertheless the political context of the Hungarian minority of Romania has dramatically changed after 1989. It was confronted with the new nationalist wave of politics in Hungary, but also with nationalising pressure of a part of the Romanian political scene. Internally, Romania experienced a wave of nationalism in the 1990s, not at least as the Hungarian politics towards its external minority changed, but also as Moldova, with a population culturally oriented towards Romania, became independent. After a nationalist government, lasting until 1996, the organisation of the Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) was been included into government, and stayed there – or was closely supporting the government – over 12 years. This has put it under increasing intra-ethnic under pressure by dissidents who finally formed the new Hungarian Civic Party in 2007 and other political interest organizations, and ask for more radical ethno-national claims.

In this book chapter, we analyse the causes of the recent fissions and fusions of these political parties of these four national minorities in three countries. In particular, we focus on the role of government participation and are interested in the following research question:

What influence does government participation have on the fragmentation respectively unity of the political representation of ethnic minorities?

We argue that two logics of political representation account for the emergence of intra-group competition. As a starting point, we argue that if once ethnicity becomes politically salient and members of the group have diverse political preferences that generate a genuine need for **political pluralism** within the group. The basic divide takes place between moderates and radicals respectively on the extent of the favoured minority rights. Pragmatic and office-seeking politicians might rather opt for moderation, which allows them to join government coalitions, but they are challenged by more radical, opposition-oriented actors. Having this in mind, we argue that **government participation** puts the political unity of ethnic minority groups at stake and accelerates internal splits or sharpens competition between the existing rival organizations of the minorities.

This chapter proceeds as follows. In the next section, we develop our arguments on the effect of government participation on the form of political representation of national minorities. Our arguments are illustrated through an analysis of parties of four minority groups in Central and Eastern Europe in changing roles in government and opposition, and resulting fissions and fusions: we discuss the emerging of new challenger parties of the previously dominant Hungarian parties in Slovakia and in Romania, the creation of a third political bloc of the Bosniaks in Serbia, and the attempt to merge by the three most important Hungarian minority parties in Serbia.

Theory on Intra-ethnic Party Competition

Intra-ethnic competition is largely a neglected topic in ethnic politics. Most common large-N quantitative studies in the field of ethnic politics still analyse ethnic politics on the level of ethnic groups (MAR 2009; Cederman et al. 2009). Research on elections in divided countries often assumes that minority groups are politically homogenous units. For the plurality of their political organizations and the referring political positions of these organizations are not accounted. When dealing with intra-group competition, the literature mainly

argues it leads to a race to the extreme: each competitor will need to position as the most credible representative of minority interests – and this often involves the presentation of the more radical arguments, and this eventually undermines democratic stability (Mitchell 1995; Gormley-Heenan and Macginty 2008; Rabushka and Shepsle 1972a; Horowitz 1985, 342-60). Yet, recently, research has emerged and is growing on the question under which circumstances ethnic parties radicalize. Radicalization appears only one among many strategies in political competition that can be chosen (Zuber 2011; Coakley 2008). Flexible institutions and intra-ethnic plurality might also create varying majorities over the time, intercepting the radicalization of a group.

This chapter proposes a demand-driven and an institution-driven argument to explain plurality in the political representation of ethnic minorities.

The demand for political pluralism within the ethnic group

Institutional constraints influence and constrain the form of the political representation of the ethnic minority. Especially, if the ethnic minority presents rather a small portion of the population and electoral laws are restrictive at the national level, the incentive that the group faces is a unified political representation of the ethnic minority in order to secure the national representation of the group. Therefore restrictive electoral rules e.g. high electoral thresholds prevent the fragmentation of the political representation of rather small and dispersed minorities and hinder the fission of ethnic minority parties and the emergence of alternative split-off parties (Barkan 1995; Bochsler 2011).

However, the members of an ethnic group have diverse interests that are driving for a political plural representation of the minority. There might be different economic interests and different views with regards to cultural liberalism within the group. Additionally, once ethnicity becomes a political salient category diverse political preferences emerge related to the ideal (co-)existence of the diverse ethnic groups in the country in general and to the preferred extent and types of special rights for ethnic minorities in particular. Also, within ethnic groups, there is a demand for the possible alteration of political elites. This creates a demand for political pluralism related to the representation of the ethnic group. The possibility and the demand for a plural representation of minority groups depend crucially on the size and the territorial concentration of ethnic groups. They determine to what extent a minority group is strong enough to win enter the national parliament with a plurality of parties. And the demand for internal differentiation is particularly high if a minority dominates political life in a municipality, city or region. In this case, local politics is an intra-ethnic matter, and local political competition happens within the minority group. Therefore, there is a higher demand for a plural representation of ethnic minorities (Bochsler 2007).

To sum up, we argue that members of an ethnic group – elite and base – have diverse political preferences and therefore there is genuine demand for a diverse political representation. The form of the political representation of the ethnic minority group - unified or fragmented - is shaped by the interaction of institutions, i.e. electoral rules and the structural features of the group such as size and territorial concentration. Independent of the type of political representation intra-ethnic competition takes place either within the unified party or between the several ethnic and multi-ethnic parties competing for the vote of ethnic minority.

Argument 1: *Members of ethnic minorities have diverse political preferences related to a wide range of issues or interests, including cultural, socio-economic and ethno-political topics. Yet, the interaction of the relative size and degree of the territorial concentration of the ethnic minority in the interaction with the electoral system might be a barrier to this.*

The role of government participation

Secondly, the inclusion into national political institutions, being in opposition or part of the governing coalition, might catalyse internal differences within minority groups (Robotin and Salat 2003; Mitchell et al. 2009), as it puts minority politicians under cross-pressures.

We look at situations where the ethnic minority group is represented by one political party, as often the case due to restrictive electoral systems, which do not allow for several parties of minorities to enter parliament. This is especially the case if legal thresholds are almost as high as the relative size of the ethnic minority group.

Minority parties are not different from other political parties, in having different goals; parties look both for a maximum of votes policy change and for offices.[2] But united parties that are aiming for the representation of the entire minority group include exponents who are more or less moderate or radical related to their ethno-political claims and who are weighting the goals of office-seeking and policy-influence relative differently (Strøm 1990).

[2]Sartori (2005) speaks of idea-promotional groups, spoils-power groups and career-seeking politicians.

On the other hand, these different types of goals are more or less easily accessible dependent on the party's role in the political system and at the specific time point of the political cycle. Government participation might help parties to bring some of their goals into the coalition program. The oppositional role gives parties the possibility to maintain and campaign for radical changes, and to keep the pressure for policy moves. During elections, radical claims are more rewarded by the electorate than moderate, whereas between elections, the ability counts to get rewards from the inclusion into political institutions, in terms of offices or in terms of policy influence.

We argue that while moderates profit from government inclusion – as this provides access to offices and requires a moderation of the party, radicals might be more sceptical to agree in compromises that enable to form coalitions with adversary partners. These differences are limited in degree, and do often allow cooperation. In certain situations, however, the trade-off between policy influence and benefits from office holding, and the conflict between moderates and radicals, becomes vital and irreconcilable:

- At the time of government formation, the coalition partners need to accept compromises, which include programmatic concessions. Both moderates and office-seekers might be willing to make the necessary policy moves, and this might accentuate the division from radicals and from policy-seekers, who might be reluctant to give up long standing demands.
- During the governing period, the decision on the most controversial issues might require new compromises and concessions, and the most wide-going promises to the minority party are often not implemented. This accentuates the tensions between rather pragmatic and rather radical positions within the minority party, and the radicals might demand leaving the governing coalition
- After a long time being in government anew being in opposition: the difference between moderates and radicals is becoming particularly pronounced if moderates suddenly in opposition do not enjoy office-related private gains anymore loosing political influence and radicals unrestrictedly can demand the change of the course of the party in a more radical direction.

These situations all fuel conflict between those who are more or less moderate and who weight the goals of policy- influence and office-holding differently. If the minority is organized in one party in a restrictive institutional setting the conflicts emerge within the party that can occasionally lead to splits within the minority party. Yet, if the party have formerly not represented all minority interests, it can be possible that a new political party emerges completely outside of the framework of the party.

Argument 2: *Within unified ethnic minority parties competition takes place between radicals and moderates and between office-seekers and policy-seekers. The conflict about government participation or staying in opposition can accelerate this conflict, and occasionally lead to the split of the party. This opens the opportunity for radicals to mobilise and to outbid with more extreme demands the governing party.*

Discussion of the Cases

Our empirical investigation analyses four cases of such changes, and discusses how the inclusion into national governments has contributed to fissions and fusions of minority parties in the region. We look only at fissions and fusions with the most relevant consequences such as when new parties have emerged that compete independently in elections, and can win offices, or are a credible threat to incumbent parties. We select four minority groups, who experienced major changes in the form of political representation in recent years. In all four cases, the analysis over time allows us to distinguish situations of minority parties in opposition and in government, and the effect of governmental inclusion.

The usage of different available sources allows us to grasp various aspects and perspectives of minority politics and party fissions and fusions. Particularly, we combine own interviews that we conducted with experts and with important actors of minority politics, the analyses of party documents (manifestos, etc.), newspaper articles and relevant secondary sources.

A new, radical challenger of the Hungarian minority organisation in Romania

After its foundation in the end of 1989, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR/RMDSZ) acted as an umbrella organisation, spanning ideological differences within and the diverse organisations of the Hungarian minority in Romania. It also fulfils the functions of a political party of

Hungarians, and was supporting the government, if not part of it in the period of 1996-2008. Given the 6.6%[3] relative share of the Hungarian minority in Romania the legal threshold of 5% that was enacted for national elections in 2000 for national elections provides a strong incentive for a unification of political organization in order to successfully compete in elections.

In the period of the National Salvation Front (FSN) in government (1990-1996), UDMR was in opposition, and after some initial achievements regarding the re-introduction of high schools providing education in Hungarian, UDMR was in growing suspicion of the ethno-nationalist discourse of the FSN since 1991, and even more as two ultra-nationalist Romanian parties joined the government in 1992 (Horváth 2004, 25). Isolated in opposition, internal UDMR dissonances were first manifested related to the question of autonomy. Following, the party platform Reform Bloc autonomy – the most radical platform of the UDMR – cultural and territorial autonomy was an indispensable right of the Hungarian minority while the party leadership wanted align with the mainstream opposition alliance, and rather wanted achieve autonomy through institutional inclusion and step-by-step negotiations (Šutaj and Sápos 2008, 44).

In 1996, UDMR entered an over-sized government coalition of the centre-right Democratic Convention of Romania (CDR) and Democratic Party (PD). While no formal agreement specifying the result of the coalition negotiations existed, it is speculated that UDMR had make programmatic concessions in order to be included in the coalition, especially with regards to territorial autonomy (Horváth 2004, 47; Kántor and Bárdi 2000, 162).

The governmental inclusion and the programmatic concessions have reinforced, however, the internal struggles. The Reform Bloc was ever since suspicious of the participation of the UDMR in the government because of the informal coalition agreement. Further, especially the failure to advance the establishment of a public Hungarian university and of Hungarian faculties at public universities caused heated debates on the purpose of government participation within the party.

After the 2000 elections, the continued government participation lead to first signs of internal splits. As the Romanian Social Democrats (PSDR) came to power, UDMR supported their new minority government. More and more entangled with the PSDR, the claim for cultural or territorial autonomy has completely disappeared from the political agenda of the UDMR. The Reform Bloc was pressuring for a less conciliating strategy, and UDMR faced first internal splits, which lead to a multitude of organizations: A rival Hungarian political organization, the Civic Association for Oderheiu (UPE), ran in the 2000 local elections in the Hungarian-dominated town of Odorheiu Secuiesc, supported by the Reform Bloc, but also by the conservative party in Hungary, Fidesz (Udvardy 2006). In 2004, several local Hungarian associations lead by the UPE, formed the Hungarian Civic Union (MPSZ), under the leadership of a member of the radical UDMR wing, the mayor of Odorheiu Secuiesc, Jenő Szász. After failing to register as a party, MPSZ ran with its candidates in the national and district elections on the list of the non-ethnic People's Action Party (PAP) in two predominately Hungarian counties (Bakk et al. 2004, 35). In 2003, a significant part of the UDMR established the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania (CNMT) and the Szekler National Council (CNS) outside of the framework of the UDMR (Mandel 2004, 97) which main aim is the establishment of autonomy (Eplényi 2006, 65-6). The common denominator of the new rival political organization was the claim for autonomy for the Hungarian minority from that the UDMR and in particular the territorial autonomy of the Szekler Land.

These first intra-ethnic splits made the position of the UDMR more difficult, and it reacted with more pronounced demands. After the 2004 elections, the UDMR changed again its allegiance, and joined the centre-right minority coalition in government, lead by the National-Liberal Party (PNL). This legislature period was dominated by rivalling plans of UDMR and the alternative Hungarian organisations to promote Hungarian minority issues. The UDMR reacted to the intensified inter-ethnic competition and mobilization based on the claim for autonomy by launching a law on minorities that entailed cultural autonomy and a law on the reform of development regions while UDMR representatives who are sympathiser of the new alternative Hungarian organizations submitted a plan for territorial autonomy of the Szekler Land. All of these have been rejected by the Romanian mainstream parties, but also the internal Hungarian struggles impeded the success of each of the propositions.

The Hungarian Civic Union (MPSZ) became a serious challenger to UDMR in 2007, when it registered as Hungarian Civic Party (PCM/MPP). It run with own candidates in the local elections and supported independent candidates in the national elections in 2008 (Kántor and Pászkán 2009, 15). After its rather weak electoral performance and internal disputes around of its president, the PCM was slowly replaced by the EMNT, which could rely on a very popular president. However, none of these vehicles of UDMR dissidents could hope on establishing itself as a strong political option. Accordingly, the claim for autonomy again slowly waned of the political agenda of the UDMR. Whether the UDMR can be challenged by a more radical Hungarian remains to be seen in the elections in 2012 where it is likely that it will need to compete with the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania that will likely to emerge (EMNT 2010).

[3] Census 2002. National Institute of Statistics of Romania (http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/RPL2002INS/vol5/tables/t16.pdf [last accessed on 15 March 2010])

The case of the Hungarian minority in Romania illustrates how the ethnic minority being in government moderated it course which lead to growing internal tensions and finally to the break of a homogenous representation of the Hungarian minority in Romania. (Territorial) Autonomy as the most controversial and radical demand by the Hungarian minority is still rejected by the Romanian majority parties and its abandoning by the UDMR as a condition for government participation was by several political exponents and was over the years not anymore tolerated so that new alternative Hungarian political organizations emerged that all compete for the support of the Hungarian minority.

A multi-ethnic split-off of the Hungarian minority of Slovakia

The Hungarian minority of Slovakia count some 9.7% of the population[4] and live in the South of Slovakia along the Hungarian border. The emerging Hungarian party scene after regime transformation in 1989 was splintered in three main and two minor parties. While in the first governing period, 1990-1992, the largest party (Hungarian Civic Party, MOS/MPP) entered the government of at this time Czechoslovakia and the Slovak government (Öllös 2004, 54), after 1992, all Hungarian parties remained in opposition. The government of Vladimir Mečiar (1994-8) did not only enforce legislation that reduced the rights of the Hungarian minority, but also modified the electoral law, which stepwise reduced the possibility of plural political representation of the Hungarian minority by several parties. It introduced a legal threshold of 5% in national elections, in 1994, which lead to the formation of an alliance of two Hungarian parties (divided they would probably have failed to cross the threshold). Four years later, the threshold was even increased for party alliances, so that all Hungarian minority parties merged into the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK).

After the 1998 elections, the unified SMK joined the new pro-democratic government of Prime Minister Mikulaš Dzurinda (Öllös 2004, 56), and stayed until the new nationalist government of 2006 was formed. Some demands of the SMK were included in the government program, but it abandoned those claims that were the most controversial in Slovak politics such as the abolition of the Beneš decrees[5], the foundation of an independent Hungarian university and territorial autonomy on ethnic basis (Szarka 2002, 128). The overall evaluation of the SMK's success to achieve its goals is mixed. Some regulations of the Mečiar government have been corrected (Hamberger 2004, 110; Némethová and Öllös 2003, 125) and a Hungarian University has been opened in the second period of the coalition government (Hamberger 2004, 112).

The failure to create a region with a Hungarian majority during the process of the administration reform in the first term of the Dzurinda government was read by some internal critics as a failure of governmental participation of SMK. This has fuelled the internal debate about the moderate program of the party, and about governmental inclusion. This debate intensified even more, when after 2006, the economic left-wing and nationalist parties (Smer, SNS, HZDS) formed a new government coalition, leaving SMK in opposition. Béla Bugár, the president of the SMK since its formation, was replaced. Many partisans disapproved the moderate direction of Bugár, and when the SMK relapsed in opposition the demand for a new leadership and more pronounced position on minority issues increased. The modification of the language law by the government, which established Slovak as a mandatory language for all kind of public information and formulated large fines as sanctions in case public information would be only provided in a minority language, provoked heated disputes (Šutaj and Sápos 2009, 7, 12). The new leadership of the SMK reacted by a confrontational course and it reopened the discussion on sensitive issues such as the Beneš decrees which triggered heated internal debates but also irritation with the former coalition partners. Under the lead of the former party president Bugár a high number of representatives of the SMK in summer 2009, and established the new party Most-Híd (bridge) party, and took part in the regional elections in autumn 2009. Most-Híd calls itself as the party of cooperation between the Slovak and the Hungarian and of any other national minority. While the SMK program puts an accent on minority rights in cultural, educational and local matters, Most-Híd puts forward propositions for a reconciliation process between Hungary and Slovakia, which would also decrease tensions between the communities within Slovakia. In its program, it proclaims Slovakia as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and a multi-lingual state. In the first series of elections (regional elections in autumn 2009, local and national elections in 2010), Most-Híd could make massive gains and won 8.1% of the votes in the national elections. Most-Híd votes came from Hungarian areas, presumably from former SMK voters. SMK failed to cross the 5% threshold with solely 4.3% of the votes. The radicalized course of the SMK during the four year of opposition and its campaign to brand-mark Most-Híd as a betrayer of the Hungarian minority did not pay out.

After the elections, Most-Híd joined the centre-right government coalition under the lead of the SDKÚ-DS. Since from the 14 parliamentarian representatives of the Most-Híd are only half ethnic Hungarians and the other

[4] According to the last available census data, 2001, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (http://portal.statistics.sk/files/Sekcie/sek_600/Demografia/SODB/Tabulky/Tabulky_AJ_SODB/tab11.pdf [last accessed on 15 March 2010])

[5] The Beneš decrees were issued by the government of Czechoslovakia in exile during the German occupation in the Second World War. Germans and Hungarians were collectively punished for their alleged collaboration. Today these decrees hinder the restitution or reclaiming of properties and citizenship taken away from Germans and Hungarians between 1945 and 1948.

half are ethnic Slovaks, the SMK had rather an easy task to continue to question Most-Híd's capacity and will to defend the Hungarian interests in the new government. Most-Híd, however, managed a considerable large part of its demand to include in the government program related to minority issues, including regulations about double citizenship and about the use of minority language. It remains to be seen how effective Most-Híd's government participation will be and what kind of a strategy the SMK will endorse in opposition.

In opposite to the case of the political organisation of the Hungarian minority party in Romania, in Slovakia the new challenger party become more moderate than the old one. The reason for this is the relapse of the SMK in the opposition after 8 years of government participation and the replacement of the moderate leadership. In opposition the new leadership turned to controversial issues that were being in the government a taboo. This, however, lead to the break up of the party under the lead of the former more moderate party president.

The mufti as the new political head of the Bosniaks in Serbia

As our previously discussed cases, Serbia is a multi-ethnic country, too, but there are several minority groups of roughly similar size. While Roma (estimated 6% of the population[6]) do not have strong political organisations, the Bosniak minority (1.8%, according to the 2002 census) living in the Sandžak region in Southern Serbia, the Hungarian minority (3.9%) in parts of the Vojvodina province, and the Albanians (0.8%) in the Preševo Valley in South Serbia rely continuously on minority parties, which have been formed during the first transition of 1990.

In the 1990s, the certainly most important political manifestation of the Bosniak minority was a pro-autonomy plebiscite organised by the non-recognised Muslim National Council of Sandžak in 1991, resulted in a 99% support for autonomy, among the 70% of the voters who turned out. The plebiscite was backed by the political leaders of the Bosniak minority, Sulejman Ugljanin and Rasim Ljajić. Regional autonomy was the most important political claim of the political organisations of the Bosniak minority and the core of the program of the first Bosniak party, the Party for Democratic Action (SDA), founded by Ugljanin and Ljajić in 1990 as the Serbian branch of the SDA of neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina. While SDA was lead by Ugljanin, a rather right-wing leaning politician, the left-winger Ljajić, split off in 1995. He offered a slightly more conciliating political option for the Bosniaks, the Sandžak Democratic Party (SDP), which adopted a more pragmatic strategy, and was also the first to participate in a Serbian government after the country's turn towards democracy in 2000 (International Crisis Group 2005).

Further parties were mushrooming (Zuber 2011), but are essentially just satellites of the parties either of Ugljanin or Ljajić. In some cases, their creation was motivated by laws that give each parliamentary party a flat rate subsidy. While Serbian mainstream parties supposedly have few supporters among Bosniaks, the pro-European and anti-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), founded 2005, recruits its personnel and allegedly also its voters in the Sandžak region to a large part also among Bosniaks.

The relation between the two party alliances lead by Ugljanin and Ljajić can be characterised as hateful, extremely rivalling, and occasionally violent. Cooperation was never possible, and in local politics, the two leaders found it easier to form coalitions with ultra-nationalist Serbian parties, rather than cooperating (International Crisis Group 2005).

Since the beginning of the new century, the two Bosniak parties were not only included into the Serbian institutions, but have also increasingly calmed abandoned their (controversial) core demands of the 1990s, (asymmetric) regional autonomy. At the national level, Ljajić was closely cooperating with the moderate Democratic Party (DS), and became minister in the government of Zoran Đinđić (2000-2003), whereas Ugljanin was temporarily supporting the government lead by the nationalist-conservative Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) of Vojislav Koštunica (2005-7) (Bochsler 2010). In 2008, when in view of a very narrow majority, president Tadić included both Bosniak minority leaders into his governing coalition supported by pressure on the side of the EU and of Turkey. Today, both parties highlight opportunities for regional development in the upcoming decentralisation process, but insist that all Sandžak municipalities should be attributed to the same region, which is currently not the case. Not only the demands of the parties have moderated but this has also calmed partisan struggles in the Sandžak.

The entering of the religious head of the Sandžak Bosniaks, mufti Muamer Zukorlić, on the political scene has turned the political situation of the Sandžak since 2010 upside down. The economic hardships of the Serbian periphery and the widespread feeling that the two minority leaders were reaching little regional benefits (if at all, then personal interests, rather than common benefits), created the potential for the mobilisation of a despairing Bosniak electorate. Being in government and deeply entangled with the parties of the Serbian majority none of the Bosniak parties could play the card of the anti-Belgrade opposition and of the defender of the Bosniak interests any more.

[6] Source: UNHCR (http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,MRGI,,SRB,,49749cb137,0.html [last accessed on 6 June 2011])

In the elections of the newly established National Minority Councils in 2010, Zukorlić ran with an own electoral list, which unexpectedly won a plurality of all votes and seats for the Bosniak Council (48%; turnout of 56% was low). Jointly with two members who switched from their own list, Zukorlić's followers could form a majority in the Council. Although no electoral lists in those elections were declaredly partisan ones, all were closely linked to political parties, and Zukorlić's list showed a new political force. In January 2011, his movement Zukorlić was registered as a political party, the Bosniak Democratic Community (Bošnjačka Demokratska Zajednica, BDZ). The national government, however, did not recognise and dissolve the Bosniak National Council, which contributed to even stronger tensions in the region.

There are peculiar developments that split the Bosniak community, and contribute to tensions with the central governments. Particularly noteworthy are tensions regarding the organisation of the religious community. Sandžak Bosniaks (Muslims) are mainly organised in the Islamic community in Serbia lead by the Sandžak-based mufti Zukorlić. Several Serbian governments have contributed to the conflict within the Islamic community, arguably trying to weaken the role of Zukorlić. The governments of Vojislav Koštunica (2004-8) recognised the rivalling Islamic community of Serbia by the Belgrade-based mufti Adem Zilkić, who had close contacts to several former Belgrade governments, including the one of Slobodan Milošević, as the official Islamic community (Stanić 2009; Džihić 2011). The government Tadić-Cvetković (2008-) confirmed the recognition of Ziklić's Islamic community of Serbia as second Islamic group in the country. This provoked turmoil within the Bosniak community. Subject to the conflict is not only the recognition of the second community, but also property rights of the religious communities, the non-equal treatment with the Serbian Orthodox Church, and issues linked to religious education in school, and the registration of Zukorlić's private university in Sandžak.

Formally, Zukorlić's young brother-in-law Emir Elfić acts as party president, while Zukorlić himself aims to become the future religious leader in Sarajevo for all Bosniak Muslims (not only those in Sandžak).[8] In the meanwhile, he plays a crucial political role in the Sandžak, by positioning his party as political opposition to the other Bosniak parties, which are included in government, and by using a radicalising strategy. On the one hand, Zukorlić and Elfić both criticise Ugljanin and Ljajić of pursuing "only personnel interests" in the current government. On the other hand, they outbid the current position of the other Bosniak parties. Their core program is a copy of parts of Ugljanin's and Ljajić's program of the 1990s, demanding the "stepwise territorial autonomy for the Sandžak region, as a constitutional region of Serbia".[9] Yet, the history of the party is short, so that there is not a consolidated program and direction. Adding to this, the claims of the informal party leader Zukorlić vary considerably, depending on the public and the venue, and undoubtedly, parts of his communication are strategic, aimed at rising tensions, and worrying the international community and national politics.[10] Therefore, it is hard to evaluate how radical the BDZ is. In some occasions (such as in the interview with us),[11] Zukorlić highlights issues that are in line with other analyses and of the SDA and SDP of the situation of the region, e.g. speaking of the economic neglect of the region by the national government, non-realised rights of Bosniaks in education, religious rights. Elsewhere (e.g. only a few days after our interview), he addresses much more sensitive issues that can only contribute to a deteriorating of Bosniak-Serb relations speaking for instance of several genocides perpetrated by Belgrade against the Bosniak minority in Serbia (Biševac 2011). In many aspects, BDZ is a split-off from the two established parties in the Sandžak. Party president Elfić was a former SDP in Novi Pazar, the informal capital of the Sandžak, while Zukorlić has used his religious and economic authority to mobilise voters in the Sandžak. In the 1990s, he stood close to Ugljanin, in the 2000s close to Ljajić's SDP.[13] This also gave him also political recognition, especially prime minister Zoran Đinđić (2000-3), who regularly met Zukorlić, when visiting the Sandžak.

The case of the BDZ is particularly helpful to illustrate our two arguments on the logic of political representation put forward in this paper separately. Our first argument was on the need for a representation of the plurality of political preference of a minority group. In the case of the Bosniak minority, political plurality among the Bosniaks, with two clearly distinguishable, even hostile political options and handfuls of satellite parties, pre-existed, long before the entry of the BDZ. However, the rare occurrence of all relevant minority parties being included simultaneously in the governing coalition gives us the exceptional situation where the arguments of internal plurality and governmental inclusion can be empirically separated. In the cases of the SMK-MKP and UDMR/RMDSZ the internal plurality of the Hungarian minority was mapped within the party

[8] Speculations were further promoted by his statement of april 2011. (B92 2011)

[9] Interview with Muamer Zukorlić, 19 January 2011, Novi Pazar.

[10] The BDZ aims at more international attention, as this might put also pressure the Serbian government to change its priorities in the relations to the Sandžak. BDZ opens issues which foreign analysts read as a threat of radicalisation and a treat to the stability of the Bosniak community in Serbia (Džihić 2011) a threat which Zukorlić himself frequently expresses explicitly. Zukorlić implicitly threats of destabilising the region if his local power should not be recognised. On the other hand, BDZ presents radical claims (compared to the incumbent Bosniak parties), which are adequate though, in view of the analysis of independent analysts (e.g. International Crisis Group 2005).

[11] Similar: interview with Emir Elfić, Belgrade, 21 January 2011.

[13] Interview with Zukorlić, several other interlocutors made similar statements.

so that government participation had an impact on the internal tensions within these parties. Our second argument on the effect of government participation is illustrated by the process of the emergence of a political vacuum for an oppositional Bosniak party that was created through the governmental inclusion of both main Bosniak parties. The moderation of the SDA and SDP, the on-going unequal employment opportunities in state institutions, economic problems, and conflicts about education of the Bosniak minority and of the recognition of religious institutions have created the basis of Zukorlić's picture of Belgrade's policy being discriminatory against the Bosniak minority.

There also policy issues might explain the BDZ' entry, but these alternative explanations are not very plausible. The economic problems experienced in the Sandžak figure already in reports of the 2000s (International Crisis Group 2005) so that the timing of the BDZ' entry in 2011 can best be explained by the simultaneous inclusion into the coalition government of the SDA and SDP that created a political vacuum to mobilise the Bosniaks based on their longstanding feeling of being neglected and discriminated. Apart from this Zukorlić personal motivation to regain influence in politics can also be explained by the fact that Belgrade governments after 2003 have cut their ties to Zukorlić and rely instead on Ugljanin and Ljajić. Zukorlić himself does not deny that the conflict around the Islamic community was a trigger for the creation of the new party, but does not fully motivate it. The government-opposition logic is also underlined by Zukorlić's links to the pro-European liberal opposition in Serbia, the Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP) of Čedomir Jovanović (who politicises in the footsteps of Đinđić).

Both established party blocs need to react to the new challenge, as many of their voters might leave for the new political option. Ugljanin and Ljajić intensified negotitations about local coalitions in several Sandžak municpalities, which were unthinkable before the entry of BDZ.[14] Already years before Zukorlić's entry, started to transform his party in a non-ethnic Social Democratic Party, addressing both Roma and economically disadvantaged Serbian voters (Politika 2007). It remains to see, yet, whether this new electorate might replace those voters who break away to BDZ in future parliamentary elections.

How Hungarian minority parties in Serbia failed to find unity

The largest national minority in Serbia are the Hungarians with 3.9% who live predominantly in Vojvodina and present there 14.3% of the population. They are the majority in a couple of municipalities in Northern Vojvodina, and the largest group in the town of Subotica. In 1990, the Democratic Fellowship of Vojvodina Hungarians (DZVM) established as the first and unique party of Hungarian in Serbia. Over the time two further parties split off from the DZVM, in 1994, the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (SVM), and in 1997 the Democratic Party of Vojvodina Hungarians (DSVM). Apart from these three parties there are two minor Hungarian parties: the Hungarian Civic Alliance (GSM) (since 2006) and the radical right Hungarian Hope Movement (PMN) (since 2009).

After the democratic revolution of 2000, SVM was the most important party of ethnic Hungarians in Serbia. Among the three parties it was the most pragmatic and the most open towards cooperation with democratic forces of the Serbian majority. It joined the broad pro-Democratic DOS coalition in 2000, and the SVM leader József Kasza was vice prime minister in the Đinđić government, in charge of minority affairs and local governments (Jenne 2004, 744). However, in the 2003 elections, it ran in a coalition mainly with other minority parties (Together for Tolerance), which failed to cross the 5% threshold and to enter parliament. The other two Hungarian minority parties did not participate in these elections. In the elections to the provincial parliament of Vojvodina in 2004 the SVM took part independently and obtained 8.8% of the votes, whereas DSVM run in a coalition, and won a seat in one of the single-seat districts. The DZVM did not participate in the provincial elections. In the 2007 national elections, SVM won 1.3% of the votes and three seats, and joined the opposition in parliament, while the two other two Hungarian parties ran in a coalition, but did manage to enter the parliament.

In 2007 in the front of the presidential elections the SVM initiated the nomination of a joint Hungarian presidential candidate. The DSVM and DZVM followed the call of the SVM and agreed to support the new president of the SVM as a presidential candidate. István Pásztor, the new president of the SVM was appointed following the disappointing results of the SVM in the national elections in 2007. Pásztor's program was not the change of the pragmatic course of the party but the emphasis of a need for dialogue and cooperation with other Hungarian political organizations in Vojvodina what was welcomed both by DSVM and DZVM (Sebestyén 2007). In 2008, in the national, provincial and municipal elections this cooperation was pursued under the name "Hungarian Coalition".

The formation of an electoral alliance became possible because the SVM as the strongest party among the three agreed to campaign with the most radical claim: the parties elaborated a joint autonomy plan that included the most radical claim namely the territorial autonomy for the Northern part of Vojvodina where the Hungarian

[14] Interview with Safeta Biševac, Belgrade, 11 January 2011

provide the majority of the population (VMSZ et al. 2008). SVM was rather supportive of personal autonomy and the autonomy of the multi-ethnic Province Vojvodina then of territorial autonomy. However, the alliance was mainly motivated by decreasing vote shares of Hungarian parties, as less and less ethnic Hungarian voters keep voting for ethnic parties, and this was blamed by many on the fragmentation of the Hungarian political landscape. The Hungarian Coalition was also supported by the Fidesz and its leader Viktor Orbán, who personally campaigned at the side of the Hungarian Coalition in Vojvodina (Népszabadság online 2008). Fidesz, at this time the main national conservative party in the opposition in Hungary, was looking for alliances with strong Hungarian minority parties abroad.

The Hungarian Coalition won in 2008 only 1.8% of the national votes, and four seats, so that only SVM entered parliament. Again many ethnic Hungarians have most likely voted for Serbian mainstream parties, especially the Democratic Party (DS), or for regional parties. The strategy to mobilize the Hungarians with the radical campaign promise of territorial autonomy did not pay out (Tanács 2008). The agreement between the parties in the Hungarian Coalition was that the first four seats will go to the SVM as the largest party and that the remaining seats would be allocated between the DSVM and the DZVM (Fazekas 2008).

The Hungarian Coalition supports the DS-lead governing coalition, but without being part of the government. The (secret) cooperation agreement between the Hungarian Coalition of the SVM and the DS was negotiated and signed only by the SVM. According to Pásztor out of the twelve claims of the Hungarian Coalition towards the Democratic Party only one, namely the claim for territorial autonomy of Northern Vojvodina, was rejected by the DS (Ternovácz 2008a).

Also in the provincial elections in Vojvodina, the Hungarian Coalition received 7.4% of the votes, but the SVM dominates over the other Hungarian minority parties and closely cooperates with the DS.

The coalition between the three Hungarian parties basically broke apart after the elections, as only the SVM managed to enter the national parliament, and was the only party to gain political power and access to offices. The programmatic concession not to claim territorial autonomy was easily handled by the SVM. Nevertheless, to stress its independent role as a protector of Hungarian and regional interests, outside government, SVM was fighting with the government over the budget, and demanding more financial resources for the Province Vojvodina (Sebestyén 2009; Vajdaság MA - Délvidéki Hírportál 2010). In the field of minority rights, SVM stressed the adaptation of the law on National Minority Councils in 2009, and the Statute of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, a pronouncedly multi-ethnic region of Serbia (Ternovácz 2009).

Both DSVM and DZVM questioned these two main achievements. In their views both were not far reaching enough. Their main critique regarded the handling of the voter lists for the elections of the national minority councils16 and the not sufficiently generous autonomy status for Vojvodina (Magyar Szó 2009; Diósi 2010). They saw the SVM leaning rather towards the governing DS party than towards themselves (Ternovácz 2008b; Ágoston 2009), and therefore, adopted a strategy of outbidding the claims of the SVM.

Conclusions

For the national minorities, the aftermath of the political transition in Central and Eastern Europe, was accompanied by important political challenges. Changing borders, the creation of new nation states, the re-establishment or alternation of national ideas all around the region have contributed to ethnicity as a (re-)emerging political category. On the top of the national minorities' political agenda was the struggle for the adaptation of minority rights, for political autonomy and for the economic development of regions with a dominant minority population. This has also been reflected in different forms of political participation of minorities. While external ethnic kin states and the European institutions were important actors in the debates over minority rights, on the domestic political scene, minority parties were formed in many of the Central and Eastern European countries, and after a first period of political isolation, they gained access to governments.

The interaction between nationalizing states and ethnic minority groups have been many times studied mainly from the perspective of radicalization and conflict. This paper, however, looks particularly at the importance of governmental participation on the political organisation of ethnic minorities. The literature on ethno-political conflicts has often overseen that ethnic minorities are not homogeneous actors. We look at the dynamics within the minority groups and focus on the internal conflicts between different players within minorities, distinguished by moderate versus radical positions on ethnic-nationalist issues, and distinguished by their policy- versus office-seeking orientation. The aim of this paper is to discuss the role of government participation on the political plurality respectively unity of national minorities.

Very recently, in three cases in Central and Eastern Europe – the Hungarian minority in Romania and Slovakia and the Bosniak minority in Serbia – government participation lead to the break apart of stable parties

[16]Voter lists were elaborated upon voluntary registration of citizens who needed to document that they belong to a national minority. The parties favoured an automatic inclusion of voters.

of national minorities. They were divided between more pragmatic and office-seekers who have favoured government participation and those who evaluated government participation as a largely unsuccessful strategy to seek policy influence or who based dissatisfaction with the parties in government managed to mobilize voters with a more assertive position. In the fourth case, the long standing rival parties of the Hungarian minority in Serbia made an attempt to unite forces. Their cooperation failed since only one party of the coalition managed to enter the parliament and even decided to support the government while the other two parties remaining outside of the parliament have endorsed a confrontational course outbidding their former coalition partner. The internal dynamics and the inclusion of minority parties into national governments are closely connected: Participation in government is a chance for policy influence of ethnic minority parties, but it might also intensify intra-ethnic conflicts between different goals and different strategies to establish minority rights. At times, this accelerates the divides between radicals and moderates, and between office- and policy-seekers, and finally leads to the fissions of dominant parties.

List of the parties

English	Romanian / Slovak / Serbo-Croatian	Hungarian

Hungarian minority parties / political organisations in Romania

Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania	Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România (UDMR)	Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség (RMDSZ)
Hungarian Civic Party	Partidul Civic Maghiar (PCM)	Magyar Polgári Párt (MPP)
Szekler National Council	Consiliul Național Secuiesc (CNS)	Székely Nemzeti Tanács (SZNT)
Hungarian National Council of Transylvania	Consiliul Național Maghiar din Transilvania (CNMT)	Erdélyi Magyar Nemzeti Tanács (EMNT)

Hungarian minority parties in Slovakia

Hungarian Civic Party	Mad'arská obcanská strana (MOS)	Magyar Polgári Párt (MPP)
Coexistence	Spolužitie	Együttélés
Party of the Hungarian Coalition	Strana maďarskej koalície (SMK)	Magyar Koalíció Pártja (MKP)
“Bridge” party	Most-Híd	Most-Híd

Bosniak minority parties in Serbia

Party for Democratic Action	Stranka demokratske akcije Sandžaka (SDA)
Sandžak Democratic Party	Sandžačka demokratska partija (SDP)
Bosniak Democratic Community	Bošnjačka demokratska zajednica (BDZ)

Hungarian minority parties in Serbia

Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	Savez vojvođanskih Mađara (SVM)	Vajdasági Magyar Szövetség (VMSZ)

Democratic Party of Vojvodina Hungarians	Demokratska stranka vojvođanskih Mađara (DSVM)	Vajdasági Magyar Demokrata Párt (VMDP)
Democratic Fellowship of Vojvodina Hungarians	Demokratska zajednica vojvođanskih Mađara (DZVM)	Vajdasági Magyarok Demokratikus Közössége (VMDK)
Hungarian Hope Movement	Pokret mađarske nade (PMN)	Magyar Remény Mozgalom (MRM)
Hungarian Civic Alliance	Građanski savez Mađara (GSM)	Magyar Polgári Szövetség (MPSZ)

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