HUNGARIAN MINORITIES AND MAJORITY NATIONS IN POST-COMMUNIST TRANSITION

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Abstract

This paper examines the effects of post-communist transition on the Hungarian minority and majority nation relations in Slovakia from the collapse of Communism until 2006. The frame of the analysis are the triadic nexus and the dual model of ethnopolitics. The minority – titular relations analysed through the focus on how the resource distribution and its changes effects the power struggle between the two actors. It is assumed that the power struggle is fought for the cultural survival on one side and for the strengthening cultural dominance on the other side, as well as gaining as much from the distributable resources as possible. Minor changes in the power structure can be seen on the gains or losses of the minority, while major changes means the change of the ethnopolitical regimes. The main founding of the research is that we can differentiate two periods, in the first the minorities suffer losses, in the second the minorities achieve major gain, however the basic characters did not change between the two periods. The minority’s resources are insufficient for achieving its demands which are opposed by the titular nation. This regime which sentence the minority for eternal minority can be conceptualized as an ethnic democracy.
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Introduction

The fall of Communist regimes in Central Europe and in the Soviet Union was almost everywhere accompanied with emerging nationalisms. The words of Adam Michnik, that “Nationalism is the continuation of communism” (through Andreescu, 2001, p. 272) might be an exaggeration, nevertheless nationalism was a clear phenomenon of Post-communist transition, which caused huge changes in the region. Federalist states disintegrated as nations became independent, nationalist wars broke out, hundreds of thousands fled or emigrated and in several cases the situation of minorities changed. The situation of Hungarian minorities were not an exception to this phenomenon.

The whole phenomenon poses interesting questions. What could have been the reason for such a massive spread of nationalism when it was not anticipated before and came as a surprise for observers? To what extent were the conflict the results of the manipulation of the elites? Or were they originated in the sentiments of the masses? How much was nationalism due to the painful social, economic transition? Beside the reasons for the upheaval of nationalism it is also interesting to examine how national or ethnic minorities and majorities interacted in this time of intensified nationalism during a transition to a democratic system. I believe that if we found answers to these questions, then we can have a deeper understanding on how nationalism works and on the logic of the ethnopolitics of national, ethnic minorities and titular nations.

I chose to examine this topic on the case of post-communist Slovakia from the Velvet Revolution (1989) until the MKP’s (Hungarian Coalition Party) fall out of government (2006). I done this for practical and normative reasons. As I am a Hungarian student, studying in Budapest it’s the easiest for me to found sources on Hungarian minorities in the Carpathian Basin. I chose Slovakia among the following arguments; it was the most democratic from the countries with major Hungarian minorities, has by portion the largest Hungarian minority, which minority was often in the centre of post-communist politics. Romania could have been a good a choice as well, however I think that the issue of the Hungarian minority had a lesser importance for the country, especially after the defeat of the rather authoritarian Ion Iliescu’s regime in 1996.

My normative aim is that I would like to contribute to the deeper understanding of the conflicts between Hungarian minorities and titular nations. I believe that on the long term this
could lead to better relations, with better conditions for the Hungarian minorities. Personally I am a Hungarian nationalist, who have deep sympathy for the struggle of Hungarian minorities. In this sense I ought to be biased, so the reader should read the paper with a critical approach. However as apart the normative reason for choosing this topic and case of the research, the research itself is aimed to be as positive as it can be, putting normative aspects with personal opinion aside for the sake of deeper understanding of the problems. As so this paper will not go into the evolution of either side’s policies and will not form any policy suggestions for any kind of aim.

The narrowed research questions are the following: What were the effects of Post-communist transition on Hungarian minority and majority nation relations in Slovakia? What were the effects of the transition on the resources of the Hungarian minority? What were the types of the ethnopolitical regimes and did they change significantly overtime?

The paper use the triadic nexus model of Rodger Brubaker as the wider frame of analysis and the dual model of ethnopolitics by Eva-Clarita and Vello Pettai for the closer examination of Hungarian – Slovakian relations. Beside these model it also built on the works of other scholars who studies the general logic of inter-ethnic, inter-national relations and on those who research Hungarian minorities in the Carpathian Basin. In other to enhance the balance of the paper it consciously aims to involve works of Slovak and international authors on the Slovakian case.

The main findings of the paper are that the post-communist transition brought important resources to the Hungarian minority and through them it was able to make minor gains in the second period of the transition, nevertheless it was unable to change the basic character of the Slovak ethnopolitical regime, which is an ethnic democracy in type. However compared to communist times the titular nation in post-communist time a more legitimate leadership with more power to engage in nationalizing efforts, supported by large parts of Slovakia’s electorate, while the anti-Hungarian feeling of the titular nation made largely impossible for its moderates in the fear of nationalistic outflanking to give concessions to the minority.

The first chapter of the paper presents the mentioned theoretical models of ethnic relations and form the structure of the case study analysis. The second chapter starts with an overview on the ethnopolitical situation of the examined case and the discussion of the basic resource distribution and its evolution over time. It followed by the main part of the case study, where
first the situation in communist, then in post-communist time examined through a special focus on the minority’s resources and the evolution of the ethnopolitical regime.
Relevant theories of ethnic relations

In order to gain a better understanding of how the Hungarian minorities of Romania and Slovakia were affected by the post-communist transition I will apply theories. As the reality of these minorities is incredibly complex and the research question is rather broad, a filter is needed to find the most important phenomena. The filter will be based on Brubaker’s Triadic Nexus and Pettai’s model of ethnopolitics. Brubaker’s Triadic Nexus model will give the wider frame of the ethnopolitics involving the Hungarian minorities, while the model of ethnopolitics will be used to examine closely the minorities’ struggle. This chapter will present these theories and discuss the most important terms. First the Triadic Nexus, with the terms of national minority, kin state and majority nation, then the model of ethnopolitics with the terms of resource distribution, ethnopolitical regime and ethnopolitical situation. After presenting the two theories I will frame the structure which the case study analysis will follow.

A Triadic Nexus

Roger Brubaker’s triadic relational nexus is a model for understanding a special type of ethnopolitics, the one which involves a national minority, its kin state (external national homeland) and its nationalizing host state. This model defines the actors and offer a way of how these actors can interact. The actors are not homogenous units, but political fields where different sub actors (e. g. parties, civil organisations, individual politicians, etc.) with different ideas, approaches and policy demands’ compete with each other. The triadic nexus is “a relation between relational fields” (Brubaker, 1996, p. 67), where the nationalizing efforts of the host and kin state clash over the national minority through representational struggle. (Brubaker, 1996) The following paragraphs will define the three actors (political fields) and discuss the nature of their struggle.

The National Minority

Being in the focus of the analysis, it’s important to well define the concept of national minority and argue why the Hungarian minorities in the Carpathian Basin fits to its criteria. Brubaker defines the national minority as a political field, characterized by three elements. First the “public claim to membership of an ethnocultural nation different from the numerically or politically dominant ethnocultural nation”, second the “demand for state
It is important to notice that the national minority is not a “fixed entity or a unitary group but rather (...) the field of differentiated and competitive positions or stances”. In practice this means that different actors from the national minority group may have different demands and may seek to reach these demands through different strategic behaviours (e. g. cooperative – non-cooperative). These different actors are “seeking to monopolize the legitimate representation” of the national minority. (Brubaker 1996, p. 61) As Brubaker defines the national minority in the Triadic nexus, the element of existing kin state logically must be included in his definition. (Brubaker 1996)

Some of Brubaker’s element is also emphasized in other scholars’ definition. Gurr and Harff similarly stress the demands of these groups for collective rights, stating that these minorities’ “modern political movements are directed toward achieving greater autonomy or independent statehood” (1994, p. 18). Several scholars’ definition narrow the concept of national minority with excluding stateless nations and only including minorities which identify themselves as part of an ethnocultural nation which somewhere else has its own state. These type of definitions include Gurr’s: “segments of a trans-state people with an organized political autonomy, whose kindred control an adjacent state but who now constitute a minority in the state in which they reside” (2000 through Székely 2014, p. 23) and Markusse’s: “presence of common national identification with the titular majority in another state” (2007 through Székely, p. 22). Lastly Keating, alike Brubaker, include in his definition the identification element, when he writes that national minorities are “groups located territorially within a wider nationality but who do not identify with it” (2001 through Székely 2014, p. 25).

However Keating’s and other scholars’ definition brings up points not mentioned in Brubaker definition. New elements are the institutional network and the historical homeland of the national minority. I think Keating is right in pointing out that these minorities are “not mere cultural communities but also socio-political entities with a wide range of social institutions” (2001 through Székely 2014, p. 25). Kymlicka and Esman stress that these national minorities have a strong connection to the land they inhabit. According to Kymlicka these minorities “formed complete and functioning societies on their historic homeland prior to being incorporated into a larger state” (Kymlicka 2002, p. 23), while Esman writes that their main characteristic is the historical inhabitance of their territory (1994 through Székely 2014, p. 21).
On the base of the presented literature for me the national minority is a group of people who:

1. possess an ethnic culture which is to a varying degree different from their country’s majority
2. historically inhabit their marked territory
3. possess social institutions separate from the majority’s
4. act to preserve their cultural difference and separate institutions
5. act to organise itself as a separate political community

Each point of my definition aims to exclude different type of social groups to the point until its narrowed down to the social groups which to my mind are national minorities. First of all these minorities differ from other type of minorities in their ethnic type. For me this means that these groups differ from others in at least some of the characteristics of Smith’s ethnie, which are the ethno name, language, shared historical memories, common myth of origin, homeland claims, customs and religion (Smith, 1989, p. 185). Second these minorities differ from other ethnic minorities in the way they became a minority. They are not recent migrants, but communities deeply rooted on their territories. They have a shared history (often including memories of independence) binding them together and connecting them to their lands (practically possession of land). Not necessarily but usually there rootedness has important implications, as the possession of separate institutions (e.g. church, schools). Third these minorities are national, they engage themselves in nation-building. They aim to ensure their social reproduction and strive for self-determination (autonomy or secession). They refuse to be a part of the majority nation and they aim to organise a parallel social and political unit on the base of their ethnic culture. All in all a national minority is an ethnic minority, which is long settled on its territory, possess its own separate institutions and engage itself in its own nation-building.

It can be seen that my national minority definition include the intersecting sects of trans-state nations with and without kin state and stateless nations. I do not see any logical reason why to exclude any of these cases as long as they form a minority in a state, which is national in its quality. However this does not mean that there would be only irrelevant differences between the ethnopolitics of the national minorities with kin state (e.g. Hungarians), without kin state, trans-state (e.g. Kurds) and without kin state, non-trans-state (e.g. Catalans). The three cases ethnopolitics are different from one another. As the paper focus on the Hungarian minorities, the frame of it will be the ethnopolitics of national minorities with kin state.
The Hungarian minorities are national minorities in the Carpathian-Basin\(^1\), most importantly in the countries of Romania (Transylvania, Partium and Banat), Slovakia, Serbia (Vojvodina) and Ukraine (Transcarpathia). They possess an ethnic culture which is different from the titular nations’ cultures. In all cases this means the Hungarian language and on its base the Hungarian high culture, to a lesser importance the historical memories and common group symbols (e. g. national colors). In each country’s or region’s case there are additional differences, for example often in religion. They historically inhabit their marked territory. Hungarians live in the Carpathian Basin, at least since the end of the 9\(^{th}\) century (‘Honfoglalás’ – conquest of the homeland) and managed to maintain the not always independent but at least autonomous Hungarian Kingdom into the modern times. Although the borders of the Kingdom went through serious changes during the centuries, Hungarians uphold the common view of the one thousand years old borders (‘ezeréves határok’). Ever since these minorities were created (Treaty of Trianon 1920) they managed to upkeep their separate social institutions, most importantly the Hungarian language based schools. The leaders of the Hungarian minorities aimed and aim to ensure the cultural reproduction of the groups, formed their own political organisations and at several cases articulated demands for political autonomy. Although to strongly differing degrees, large percentages of the Hungarian voters of their countries supported their causes against the nationalizing efforts of their home states. (Macartney, 1937) (Bárdi et. al, 2011)

Some scholars discussed the Hungarian minorities as diaspora groups, arguing that these minorities are in many ways similarly connected to the Hungarian state as classical diaspora groups. This similarity had been strongly increased as the masses of ethnic minority Hungarians gained Hungarian citizenship in the last years, due to the eased conditions. By looking at these minorities as the diaspora of Hungary, they argue, we can gain better insights to the relations of the minorities and its kin-state. (Székely, 2014) Even if I agree that similarities can offer good insights, as they are not migrant groups I think it would be indefensible to classify these minorities as diaspora. The applicable parts of the theories on diaspora and homeland relations should be inserted into the Triadic Nexus, which could clearly improve by that. However as that would overextend the possibilities of this paper, the

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\(^1\) When I write Hungarian minorities in this paper, I am referring only to the national minorities living in the Carpathian-Basin outside of Hungary. Due to emigration from the 19\(^{th}\) century there is a Hungarian diaspora in Western Europe, North and South America. Beside this in Romania, Moldova there is a small Hungarian speaking ethnic minority (Csángós). None of these are national minorities.
Hungarian minorities will be discussed only as national minorities and discussed in the broader concept of the Triadic Nexus.

The Nationalizing State or the Titular Nation?

The second ‘actor’ of Brubaker’s Triadic Nexus model is the nationalizing host state of the national minority. The nationalizing state similarly to the national minority is a “family of related yet competing stances”, a “dynamic (...) rather than static condition” (Brubaker, 1996, p. 63). The nationalizing states are “ethnically heterogeneous yet conceived as nation-states, whose dominant elite promote (to varying degrees) the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing, or political hegemony of the nominally state-bearing nation” (Brubaker, 1996, p. 57). The elites leading these nationalizing efforts perceive the state as an “organizational shell that has to be filled with national content, bringing population, territory, culture and polity into the close congruence that defines a fully realized nation-state” (Brubaker, 2011, p. 1786). A state is a nationalizing one if it’s “perceived as such in the field of the national minority or the external national homeland” and if this perception is “validated or socially sustained” (Brubaker, 1996, p. 63-64.).

I think this definition is problematic for several reasons. First it narrows down the possibly analysable cases of the Triadic Nexus model to the ones where we can find a nationalizing state. Take the case when the host state is not perceived as nationalizing anymore. Would the triangular relation between national minority, kin state and host state ceased to exist? I think not, but as the Triadic Nexus model is focused on the struggle to represent the host state as nationalizing it would be certainly less effective in explaining the relations, when such a representation would not be socially accepted. Second, if power sharing between the minority and majority takes place in the government, it would be hard to perceive the whole state as nationalizing, even if some of its institution are still perceived as strongly nationalizing. Third, I think that the field of the competing stances here are more the national political community of the majority, then the institutional network of the host state. The majority on an ethnic base forms a political community, the titular nation, from where the national minority is excluded and can be only included if its renounce its national quality with its special political demands.

I think that the host country’s state can be best conceptualized as a tool, which can be used by both the national minority and the titular nation. Although each institution of the state has some kind of autonomy, the state as whole is not an independent actor, but the subordinate of
the political leadership of the country. The structure, rules and policies of the state will largely depend on who is controlling it. If the chauvinist radicals of the titular nation, then probably it will be nationalizing, if the moderates of the titular nation and the minority nation, then most likely it will be less nationalizing. How nationalizing is the state will depend on which fields’ which stance is dominating it.

Due to the arguments discussed above, I differentiate the host state and the titular nation. The titular nation is the political field of the ethnocultural majority, where different stances compete with each other. These stances to a varying degree share the characteristic that they aim to use the state’s power to ensure the reproduction and progress of their ethnocultural nation. It’s important to note that this field do not necessarily has to be closed among this characteristic. Some stances can aim to unite the minority and majority among the idea of some kind of ‘civic’ nation, a state which equally belongs to the two or more ethnocultural community inhabiting the state. This would threaten the coherence of the concept, however as far as I know these stances are marginal in the countries of Central-Eastern Europe.

The Kin State

The kin state, or as Brubaker originally termed the external national homeland of the national minority is also a political field of competing stances. The shared base of these stances are the "axiom of shared nationhood across the boundaries of state and citizenship" with the practical implication that the kin state is responsible for its co-ethnics even if they are not its own citizens (Brubaker, 1996, p. 67). The kin state’s "elites (...) closely monitor the situation of their co-ethnics in the new states, vigorously protest alleged violations of their rights, and assert the right, even the obligation, to defend their interest" (Brubaker, 1996, p. 57). In the field of the kin state different stances, with different "understanding of just what the asserted responsibility (...) entails" compete with each other and "with stances that rejects the basic premise of homeland politics" (Brubaker, 1996, p. 67).

The dynamics of the Triadic Nexus

The triadic relation is a "relation between relational fields", where every field is "an arena of struggle among competing stances" and the "relations between the three field are closely intertwined with relations (...) constitutive of the fields" (Brubaker, 1996, p. 67). The developments in one field can have a great impact on the stances of the other two fields, depending on the dominant representation of these developments in the fields. The core elements of the nature of the Triadic Nexus are the representational struggles. Each 'actor' of
the Triadic Nexus constantly monitor the actions taken in the other two fields. As the nationalizing efforts of the titular nation clash with the one of the kin state, the main division in the Triadic Nexus usually lies between the titular nation on oneside and the national majority with its kin state on the other. Due to the selective attention and the interpretation the same events can be perceived to have very different importance in different fields. (Brubaker, 1996)

Often the ‘reality’ of the Triadic Nexus looks very different depending on from which field are we looking on it. The reason for this difference among others can be the conscious or unconscious misrepresentation of the other field(s). As the “perceptions and representations of developments in an external field may strengthen or undermine existing stances” (Brubaker, 1996, p. 68) actors in the fields have strong interest to upkeep a certain representation of the external fields. This can lead either to “deliberately selective interpretation” and “outright misrepresentation” or to an “entirely sincere (…) mechanism of selective (mis-)perception and (mis-)representation to accept (…) a representation congruent with one’s own stance” (Brubaker, 1996, p. 68).

In the representational struggle from both side actors often aim to represent the other side as a threat to their field’s security. If the host state perceived as nationalizing that means a threat to the survival of the minority (cultural or physical) and through that it’s threatening the whole ethnocultural nation, including the kin state. On the other side, if the national minority is perceived as disloyal and the kin state as irredentist in the field of titular nation, that means a threat to the territorial integrity of the host state. (Lake and Rothchild 1998 through Salat, 2001) (Brubaker, 1996)

I think what it is important to understand from the dynamic of the Triadic Nexus is that internal actors in the fields can gain or lose a lot depending on the developments in other fields. First depending whether another field’s dominant representation supports its cause or not. For example in the cases where the actions of the other side are perceived as real existential threat the moderates lose ground to the radicals. Second the internal position of actors can be strengthened by the stance what they hold in connection to the other fields. For example a party in the kin state can strengthen the credibility of its commitment to national cause by supporting the cause of the national minority. Third there is a struggle over resources. The population of the national minority can be a valuable source of labour for the kin state. For this it’s in its interest to upkeep the reproduction of the minority at least on the short run. For the national minority the kin state is often an important source of material
resources. Finally the national minority and titular nation struggle over the power and resources of their state, which struggle will be discussed in the next part of the chapter. (Székely, 2014)

**The Dual Model of Ethnopolitics**

The Triadic Nexus model gave an idea of how the broader system of national minorities with kin states works, now this part of chapter will present a model which aims to explain the dual relation of the national minority and the titular nation. I think that by looking at the ethnopolitics of national minorities through the ‘dual model’ we can gain a deeper understanding. The dual model is focusing on the resource distribution between the two ‘actors’ (the national minority and the titular nation) in one country and the impact of the resource distribution on the power relations of minority and majority. The model was developed by two scholar, Eva-Clarita Pettai and Vello Pettai, however they haven’t published it. On the base of their ideas I further developed the model in this chapter. The model defines the two actors, the unit of struggle, the dynamic of the struggle and categorize the different relations between minority and majority. It describes the signs which show change in the power relation between the actors and offers an explanation to the changes. In order to be able to do that it is necessarily have to simplify the incredibly complex relations of ethnic groups.

**An Overview of the Dual Model**

The field of struggle is a multinational state, the actors are two national groups with different cultural characteristics. One group is numerically and politically dominant over the other. The dominant one is the titular nation (national majority), while the other is the national minority. The titular nation might aim to terminate the existence of the national minority group through assimilation or other means in order to create a nation-state. If the majority starts acting with these aims the national minority will strive to defend itself and its cultural distinctiveness. To ensure their aims and to gain resources the groups struggle against each other for the modern state power of their country. The structure of power which evolves through this struggle can be termed an ethnopolitical regime. The signs of the changes in the power relation between the actors are the minority’s gains (an achieved aim) and losses (a measure against they protest). The struggle is influenced by the resource distribution between the two groups. The resource distribution originates from the ethnopolitical situation, but it is also shaped by the

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2 Due to this rather unfortunate case I rely on the course materials of my Nationalism and Ethnopolitics course taught by Eva-Clarita Pettai at University of Tartu.
acts of both actors and their external supporters. The resource distribution is also affected by processes and events largely outside of the influence of short-term political decision making. When resource shifts occur they can lead to the change of ethnopolitical regimes. (Pettai, 2015, l. 5)

**Struggle between Majority and Minority**

As the two actors of the model, the titular nation and the national minority have been discussed in the first part of the chapter, there is no need here for a detailed description. As I wrote earlier, the groups are different in at least some of the following characteristics of Smith’s ethnie, as ethno names, language, shared historical memories, common myth of origin, homeland claims, customs and religion (Smith, 1989, p. 185). Moreover both groups are national in nature as they aim to ensure the reproduction of their culture and to form their cultural group into a social-political community.

The two groups have conflicting aims. The national majority not necessarily but usually aims to build a nation-state, a unational state. This is a widespread phenomenon, “all Western states continue to adopt the sorts of nation-building policies” (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 49) and also “the successor states to the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia [...] have been concerned to ‘nationalize’ their heterogeneous populations and territories” (Brubaker, 2011, p. 1786). However the national minorities “resist actual or perceived policies or processes of assimilation or discrimination” (Brubaker, 1996, p. 57) and “their modern political movements are directed toward achieving greater autonomy or independent statehood” (Gurr and Harff, 1994, p. 19).

The conflicting aims of the two actors lead to the emergence of ethnopolitics, “the struggle between groups - defined by ethnicity, language and/or religion - in a single state to modify or alter the use of modern state power in relation to the maintenance of their ethnic identities” (Pettai, 2015a, l. 5, s. 4). The struggle between the two groups have two intertwined dimensions, first the struggle for the strengthening of one group’s national culture, second the fight over available resources. The national groups aim in reality not only the reproduction of their culture, but the general strengthening of it. To ensure the strengthening of their culture they need authority over state education, cultural and language policy (Gellner, 1983). Beside this from the point when two or more ethnic group forms a separated political community on its own, in one state, the competition for resources between the groups will necessarily take place. I think both of dimension play an important role and one can not simply divide them, as
the acquisition of resources helps the reproduction and spread of cultures, why a strong cultural community which capable of assimilating others have an advantage in gaining resources.

Resource distribution

The ethnopolitical struggle between the two actors is influenced by the resources they possess. By resources I mean a wide range of social phenomena and geographic properties. The main characteristic of these resources is that they can be changed by the actors, although the actual short-term influence over the quantity and quality of different type of resources can vary greatly. The different type of resources are grouped into the followings: demographical, economic, political, social and discursive (based on Pettai, 2015a, l. 5, s. 7). It is not easy to give a clear cut definition for each type of resources, but as they will have central importance in the analysis, I will discuss them here one by one.

Demographic resources includes first of all the relative and absolute size of the group and the change of its size (Coakley, 1992). The population size of the groups is affected by “variables such as fertility, mortality and migration” and its dependent on the “subjective practices of self-identification that are context-dependent and endogenous to political processes” (Chandra and Boulet 2003, through Brubaker, 2011, p. 1795). To give an example one group may have high fertility and low mortality rates, suggesting the growth of the group, while actually the population of the group is decreasing due to assimilation. What is more as the “choices about counting and categorizing choices about what to count and how to count it are always political” the censuses “do not provide a neutral and transparent record of social reality, but help constitute that reality” (Brubaker, 2011, p. 1793). (Gyurgyik et. al, 2010) At last “the pattern of geographical dispersal of the minority is important” (Coakley, 1992, p. 353), with other patterns as territorial concentration and urbanization of the examined groups.

The economic resources are money and natural resources as land, oil, metals and others (Pettai, 2015. l. 5, s. 7.). Economic resources are strongly interconnected with the other type of resources. For example an economically developed region can be an important resource for that group who forms the majority on that territory (demographic), especially if the cultural division of labour (social) (Coakley, 1992) favours that group and if it can control the state revenues (political) from that region. Not all economic resources of a multi-ethnic, multinational state are involved in the struggle between the groups and it’s hard to draw a clear line between those involved or not involved. However the money what is spent on the
education and culture in the way that ensures the strengthening of the groups’ culture’s position is clearly involved in the struggle.

Political resources are the political organisations of the groups (e. g. parties), their mobilization capacity and the political offices (in government, parliament, regional and local governments) what they hold others (Pettai, 2015. l. 5, s. 7.). These resources highly interdependent with one another and with other resources. The distribution of political resources, especially the offices, are strongly determined by the rules of the political system. Dominant groups have the vested interest and often the possibility to form the political system in a way which favours their positions. For example in democracies this can often lead to gerrymandering, centralization, denial of citizenship or to the ban of ‘ethnic’ parties.

On social resources I mainly understand the separate institutional networks of the groups, however the cultural distribution of labour can be also included (Pettai, 2015. l. 5, s. 7.). The institutional networks usually consists of schools, churches, cultural organisations (from theatres, through libraries to folk dance and reading groups) and other type of civic organisations. Business companies which are through their main activity, their CSR activities or hiring policies clearly connected to one group can be included in the institutional network. Just as organisation which are mainly political organisation but also have non-political activities. As wrote it earlier it is not easy to make clear cut categorize of resources as they are interdependent on another and the borders of the dimensions are blurred. Wherever included the cultural distribution of labour can have a very important impact on the resource distribution. If a group is overrepresented in a higher social strata that is usually process more resources, than groups overrepresented in lower social strata (Coakley, 1992).

Discursive resources are “norms, frames and situational definitions” (Pettai, 2015. l. 5, s. 7.). In my understanding discursive resources are the ones which on the hand constrains the discourse, while on the other hand offers reference points. A constrain can be for example an official law on the use of minority languages in the spheres of the state or unofficial norm on the usage of minority language in public. Examples for reference points can be the ‘inviolable norm of territorial integrity’, universal human rights, the idea of nativeness or ‘civic nation’, just as historical memories.

Ethnopolitical situation

The distribution of resources can be determined to a great deal by “historical mode via which ethnic groups have come to find themselves together in one state or territory” (Pettai, 2015a,
Ethnopolitical regimes

The dynamic ethnopolitical struggle between the groups becomes embodied in the ethnopolitical regimes, which is the “structure of modern state power among ethnic groups in a single state in relation to the maintenance of ethnic identities” (Pettai, 2015b, l. 6, s. 4). In other words, the ethnopolitical regime sets the rules of the game for the competing groups. Rules like what I discussed above at political resources. Every competing group will be able to influence the ‘rules’, but their influence can vary greatly, depending on their power (which is based on their resources). If a resource shift takes place, changing the distribution of resources between the groups, it may lead to the change of ethnopolitical regime (Pettai, 2015. l. 5). Apart the power of the competing groups, other factors as widely accepted norms or external pressure can influence the form of ethnopolitical regime as well.

Ethnopolitical regimes can be grouped into four category, whether they are preserving or eliminating diversity and democratic or non-democratic. I differentiate ethnopolitical regimes and ethnopolitical conflict regulation methods, as these methods are often nothing more than policies aimed on specific groups. Even though the policies what an ethnopolitical regime can implement are important signals on the type of the ethnopolitical regime, they are not defining the whole power structure between the ethnic groups. The ethnopolitical regime range on the scale between hegemonic control and power-sharing, while assimilationist, accommodative, integrationist policies are not ethnopolitical regimes. They can show whether the ethnopolitical regime in place is preserving or eliminating, but do not describe the power structure. (Pettai, 2015b, l. 6) (Coakley, 1992) (McGarry and O’Leary, 1993)

Issues at Stake

The change of ethnopolitical regimes sometimes can be unclear and also significant changes can occur in minority-majority relations, though still unable to change the basic characteristic of the regime. In these cases the examination of ethnopolitical regime type is not useful enough to grasp the changes in minority-majority relation changes. To also see these minor changes, I will examine the issues at stake (implemented or debated measures and policies). The reached gains (an achieved aim) or the suffered losses (implemented measure against
they protested) of the minority will be the indicators of the trends in minority-majority power relations.
The Analytical Framework

The analytical framework is based upon the two discussed model, however it only focus on the national minorities, in this case on the Hungarian minorities in Romania and Slovakia (Czechoslovakia). This is a necessary simplification, otherwise this paper would not be able to handle the extent of the analysis. Due to this limitation the triadic nexus plays a lesser role to the dual model. The kin state will only appear as a source of resources for the minority. The analysis will focus on the resources of the minorities and examine how their resources changed. It won’t examine the resources of the titular nations’ as that would be again overextend the possibilities of the paper. I believe that the examination of how the resources of the minority change and what could they gain with it may offer a good insight to the change of the overall resource distribution in the post-communist transition.

The examination of the cases starts with defining the ethnopolitical situation and mapping the basis of the resource distribution with the long-term processes effecting it. It is followed by a brief discussion of the minorities’ resources and the type of ethnopolitical regimes in communist times. The analysis of the post-communist situation starts, first with the research of the change of resources of the minority one by one. After acquiring a clear view on the changes, I will look at the issues at stake to see which side can make gains, to what extent, in which time periods. At the end of the case studies I will attempt to classify the ethnopolitical regime which were in place and its changes, if changes occurred.
Minority Hungarians in Post-communist Slovakia

The ethnopolitical situation and the basis of the resource distribution

As the two cases’ ethnopolitical situation share their basic characteristics, this chapter describe them here together. It classify the ethnopolitical situation of the cases and then discuss the basic resource distribution and its long-term changes. Each resource’s dimension is discussed, starting with the demographic resources, followed by the economic, political, social and discursive resource dimensions.

The Ethnopolitical Situation of the Cases

The Hungarian minorities’ ethnopolitical situation can be best described as native groups on historical territory. Although the exact location and size of them is debated, it is clear that Hungarians lived in the Carpathian-Basin from the 10th century. They established their own state in the beginning of the 11th century, ruled the Carpathian-Basin through the whole middle ages. The state collapsed in the beginning of the 16th century but the Hungarian aristocracy and nobility could maintain the autonomy of the state in the Turkish (Transylvanian Principality) and Habsburg empires (Kingdom of Hungary). The ancestors of now day Hungarian national minorities participated in the Hungarian nation-building from the beginning of the 19th century. Their inclusion to Romania and Slovakia (and to the other states in the Carpathian-Basin) in the Treaty of Trianon (1920) was involuntary and they still describe themselves as part of the Hungarian nation (Bárdi, 2013). (Macartney, 1937) Right before and during the Second World War Hungary could gain back some of its lost territories, however she lost them again with the Paris Peace Treaty (1947). (Bárdi et. al, 2011)

Demographic resources of the Hungarian minorities

The population of the Hungarian minorities decreased since the creation of these minorities and their demographic characteristics are worse than the titular nation’s. The main reasons of the decrease in both cases are the emigration waves, the re-identification or assimilation processes, natural decrease and the minorities’ worse ageing than the titulars’. These processes have an impact on each other. The emigration, involving unevenly the younger generations, worsens the ageing. As the number and to a lesser importance the proportion of the minority population decrease in a mixed settlement or region, the assimilation process speed up, due to the disappearance of the minorities separate communities (which force back one’s culture into the private sphere) and the rising number of mixed marriages. If we take a look at the demographic resources territorial dimension, then the most important process what
we can recognize is the decreasing urbanization of Hungarians. As re-identification and migration affected unevenly the urbanized Hungarians, the Hungarian majority in the regional centre cities all vanished away and the Hungarians became less urbanized then the titular nation’s population. (Gyurgyik et. al, 2010) As the demographic resources of the Hungarian minority in Romania and Slovakia differ in several aspects the text will discuss them separately.

The number of Hungarians on the territories of nowadays Slovakia decreased from 884 309 (1910) to 458 467 (2011). In 1910 they made up 30.3% of the local population, while in 2011 their percentage was only 8.5%. The decrease right after Trianon was due partly to the differing counting methods. Large portion of Hungarian ‘mother tongue’ people were by origins Slovaks, Germans, Jews or Rusyns, who mainly lived in the cities and preferred the use Hungarian to other languages. Some of them probably would have identify themselves as Hungarians, while others not, nevertheless I think we won’t be wrong if we assume that these groups had rather fluid and often mixed identities. As they were still connected to their ethnic origins, after Trianon they were separated from Hungarians first in census results, then in reality by the spread of Slovak (or Czech) language and identity instead of Hungarian. What is more from the relatively high percentage of mixed marriages it seems that the cultural distance between Hungarians and Slovakians is rather small, leading to their easier assimilation. The census of 1980 found that 15.5% of Hungarians lived in mixed marriages, which in 11 years grew to 17.8%. Only one fifth of the children from interethnic marriage became Hungarian. (Gyurgyik et. al, 2010)

Apart the different counting methods, the re-identification – assimilation, other factors as migration and natural decrease also played a role. Similarly to the other lost territories of Hungary, large number of Hungarians migrated between 1918 and 1921 from Czechoslovakia to Hungary. After the Second World War, as a revenge for the cooperation of Slovakian Hungarians with Hungary, large numbers of Hungarians had to leave the country or renounce its Hungarian identity. Beside the reslovakization of hundreds of thousands of Hungarians, some Hungarians were expelled to Hungary and others resettled in Czech. Most importantly in the frame of Czechoslovak-Hungarian population exchange 73 000 were forced to leave. Since that time migration played an almost negligible role. Natural increase of the Hungarian population stopped and turned into decrease around 1994. (Gyurgyik et. al, 2010)

Before Trianon Hungarians in South Slovakia, along the present Slovak-Hungarian border had an almost contiguous majority area, with majorities in cities like Kosice, Nitra, Levice or
Michalovce and large local minorities in Bratislava and Trnava. To the north the Slovak formed an overwhelming majority of the rural population, while in the cities there were local Hungarian minorities (like in Trenčín or Bardejov) or majorities (e.g., Banská Bystrica and Prešov). In the last hundred year the Hungarian majority area became smaller and divided into minor areas (see map!). The Hungarian population of the cities weakened, they could only maintain their majority in smaller towns as Komárno, Dunajská Streda and Veľké Kapušany, while in Bratislava and Kosice decreased below 5% (in several towns completely disappeared). The main reason for this change is that the above discussed processes of re-identification – assimilation and migration – expulsion all impacted mostly the cities’ population. (Gyurgyik et. al, 2010)

Other resources of the Hungarian minorities

The economic resources of the Hungarian communities’ also weakened in the 20th century, through the change of political leadership and the cultural division of labour. The titular nations after Trianon took over the states institutions and the resources granted by them, which could not been balanced with the Hungarian state’s support (which only came in the interwar period and stopped after the Second World War). In the pre-Trianon Carpathian-Basin Hungarians were overrepresented in the higher social strata (aristocracy, bourgeoisie and intelligentsia) and so the cultural division of labour benefited them in the resource distribution. However the overrepresentation gradually disappeared, the lands of the aristocracy were distributed and Hungarians were replaced with the titular nations in the state administration. (Macartney, 1937) In accordance with a conscious policy of elite change the states strived to limit the Hungarians possibility to participate in higher education, which with the mass emigration of the educated Hungarians, lead to the underrepresentation of Hungarians among the university graduates. The decline in the social status of the Hungarian minority is also shown in the previously discussed decrease of urbanization of the group, below the level of the titular nations’. (Gyurgyik et. al, 2010)

The political resources of Hungarian minorities’ until collapse of Communism were not weak, however insufficient to make serious impact. In the interwar period in both cases Hungarian minority parties had been organized, which had continuous parliamentary representation. They could not reach their political aims (some kind of autonomy) and they were unable to halt the nationalizing efforts of the Romanian and Czechoslovakian states. After the war in Czechoslovakia the Hungarian minority’s political participation was strongly limited by the Benes decrees, while later the Communist regimes totalitarian systems let know space for the
open articulation of minority interest and they were growingly dominated by the national majority. Although Romania’s communist leadership first involved many Hungarians and the Székely Land became autonomous, later the regime became step by step more oppressive, the autonomy was abolished, the Hungarian elites were marginalized and the minority’s institutional network weakened.

When the new territories became part of Romania and Czechoslovakia their societies were dominated by Hungarians, even though they lost this domination in the time since, however they managed to keep a strong institutional network. To give an example what this domination meant, the Czechoslovak authorities postponed the elections in the beginning of 1920s in Carpathian Ruthenia, arguing that the local Hungarian elite still controlled the Rusyns (Macartney, 1937). This domination disappeared, the titular nations took over most of the societies’ institutions, some faster (e. g. universities) and some slower (e. g. Catholic Church of Slovaks). However the Hungarian minorities could keep important institutions as mother tongue education (more the elementary level, as the secondary was rather restricted), cultural organisations and could still rely on the support of their own Churches.

The discursive resources of the minorities haven’t changed a lot, they were and are based around the nativeness of Hungarians in the Carpathian-Basin, with other additional sources as international human rights. The Hungarian narrative claims that these contemporary minorities live inside the Kingdom of Hungary’s more than 1000 years old border, in the Carpathian-Basin, on the homeland of Hungarians (which usually accepted as also the homeland of other national groups). They are seen as parts of the Hungarian nation, involuntary separated from the Hungarian state by the “unjust” Treaty of Trianon. To have autonomy, which would ensure their survival as distinct national group, is their “right” due to their nativeness.

There is great clash between this and the narrative of the majorities. They often emphasize that they arrived earlier, claiming that the Hungarians were migrant conquerors, whose aristocracy and nobility oppressed their ancestors. They tend to see their Hungarian minorities as the remainings of previous unjust Magyarization policies. The titular nation’s politicians often refer to the principle of domestic non-interference and territorial integrity. Based on the experiences of the Second World War (when parts of the formerly lost Hungarian territories were given back by the Axis to Hungary and the local Hungarian population enthusiastically greeted the arriving Hungarian troops), the loyalty of the minority is sometimes questioned. With disloyal minorities and possibly irredentist neighbour, the question of minority is often
seen as a security issue, where the gains of minorities are seen as the re-strengthening of Hungarian domination.

**Hungarians in Communist Czechoslovakia**

The communist period from a minority perspective can be divided into two periods, the first from the Communist takeover (1948) until the end of the Prague Spring (1968) and the second from the Soviet intervention until the collapse of the communist regime in the Velvet Revolution (1989). After the troublesome times of the Benes decrees, in the first period the status of Hungarians in Czechoslovakia gradually improved, with the final upheaval of Hungarian activity in the Prague Spring. The second period was rather marked by the sporadic efforts of the Slovak Republic’s state to weaken the Hungarians position in the society. As the first period took place long before the post-communist transition, the focus is given to the second period. (Marusiak, 2015) (Popély, 2008)

Even though the Hungarian minority hold rather limited resources in the communist Czechoslovakia, it was able to mobilize those resources in very effectively and thus it was being able to defend its positions against the Slovak Republic efforts to upset the existing balance. As it was already discussed the Hungarian minority was continuously increasing in numbers during this time. They had Hungarian speaking media (newspaper, radio channel and news programme on TV) and education system in their mother tongue. Hungarians were employed in state administration, most importantly in the parts responsible for their education. The main social resource was the Hungarian cultural, social countrywide organisation, called CSEMADOK. However the leadership being loyal to the ruling regime did not pursue any activism and the organisation was excluded from the Slovak National Front, hence unable to nominate candidates on the single election list. The state overwhelmingly communicated in Slovak with their citizens and the language of the regional and district Committees (with the exception of the Dunajská Streda district) was exclusively Slovak. In the Constitutional Act (1968) transforming the Czechoslovak state into a federation, "the newly established Slovak Socialist Republic (SSR) was declared to be a national state" (Marusiak, 2015, p. 89). (Popély, 2008)

In the federation the SSR received the authority over minority policy. In the following two decades the SSR authorities tried to suppress and weaken the Hungarian minority in several ways. The state tried to suppress the usage of the Hungarian language in the press, official signs and documents. The financial support for minority cultural life was reduced and South
of Slovakia generally underdeveloped. The state tried to weaken the Hungarian educational system in many ways. Plans were made for the Slovakization of the Hungarian schools (plan to compulsory teach subjects in Slovak) and the “attempts to create the new schools or kindergartens with the Hungarian language of instructions were hampered” (Marusiak, 2015, p. 92). (Popély, 2008)

At the first Slovakization effort, in 1978 a Hungarian organisation was established (Hungarians Committee for the Protection of the Hungarian Minority Rights in Czechoslovakia), which effectively organized the protest and prevent the reforms, although with the cost that its leader, Miklós Duray was twice imprisoned. The success of the organization was “due to the high level of the solidarity within the Hungarian minority”, which meant the cooperation of activists, dissidents, state employees and CSEMADOK leaders (Marusiak, 2015, p. 96). The Hungarian activists maintained ties with the Czech and Slovak opposition, however even before the collapse of the communist regime the signs of the schism between the Hungarian and Slovak opposition were clear. (Marusiak, 2015)

Finally I would argue that the ethnopolitical regime of the period as an ethnic domination. The question can be raised whether it is grounded to categorize a communist regime which at least in doctrine disapprove nationalism and which in general oppressed its population from an ethnopolitical perspective. I think it can be be when it’s differentiate between its citizens on the base of nationality or ethnicity and acts upon that excluding members of the minority from power and discriminating their population. The Czechoslovak communist in examined period clearly fits these conditions. What is more this dominative regime aimed to eliminate the existing differences in its society.

**The Ethnic democracy of the Post-communist Slovakia**

With the collapse of the communist regime in 1989 both republic of Czechoslovakia started its transition from the socialist-communist political, social, economic system towards democracy and market economy. Although this transition brought many changes to Czechoslovakia the minority policy of Slovakia had not became less nationalizing. After the dissolution of Czechoslovakia (Slovakia independent from 1993 January 1) the nationalizing efforts heightened between 1994 and 1998 under Vladimír Mečiar’s government. A change came after the opposition of Mečiar won the election in 1998 and the Hungarian party was included in the government and stayed there until 2006.
Here I will examine how the post-communist transition affected the minority, how their resources changed, how much power they possessed and what could they gain with it. Attention will be also given to the core attributes of the ethnopolitical regime in which the groups struggled with each other and whether the regime changed in the examined period or not. Finally I will try assess to what degree the changes were due to the power of the minority.

The fall of communism opened up the public space for the articulation of minority interests and struggle for rights. Hungarian minority parties were organized and started working to represent the minority’s interest (most important were the EPM, MKDM and the MPP). The parties cooperated at the first three free national election, while in 1998 they merged establishing the Party of Hungarian Coalition (MKP). In the whole period the Hungarians were successful in gaining representation in the Slovak National Council, their share of the total vote was usually around 10-11%. The representation was important as the concerns and demands of the minority could had been voiced, nevertheless they had no influence on the legislation until their involvement in government and even then only a strongly constrained one. The Hungarian parties were successful in the local elections of municipalities, they could take over the governance where they were in majority. (Székely, 2015) However as the resources of the municipalities were insufficient it guaranteed only very limited local self-governance (van Duin and Polácková, 2000). (Hamberger, 2008)

The post-communist transition brought important social-economic resources to the Hungarian minority. One new source of resource was the Hungarian state, which from 1990 growingly supported financially the minority. This was vital to the minority before 1998 “as Hungarian cultural organisation (including CSEMADOK) did not receive founding from the Slovak state and according to an estimation even after “the subsidies from Hungary were roughly twice as high as the resources allocated by Slovakia” (Székely, 2014, p. 162). Apart simple founding the Hungarian Status Law (2001) for the execution created a network of offices with paid employees which were controlled by the Hungarians in Slovakia (Bárdi and Misovicz, 2010). Apart the support of the kin state, the civic institutional network (overwhelmingly consisting cultural organisations) strengthened as the organisations financing stabilized and they became more independent from the political sphere (Tóth, 2004).

The total assessment of the discursive resources is not possible here as it as an incredibly broad and deep topic, however the views on the nature of the Slovak state and nation is too important to be avoided. Slovakia, the Slovak state in the examined period was mainly
understood by both Slovaks and Hungarians as the state of Slovaks. The preamble of Slovakia’s Constitution is the following:

“We, the Slovak nation, mindful of the political and cultural heritage of our forebears, and of the centuries of experience from the struggle for national existence and our own statehood, in the sense of the spiritual heritage of Cyril and Methodius and the historical legacy of the Great Moravian Empire, proceeding from the natural right of nations to self-determination, together with members of national minorities and ethnic groups living on the territory of the Slovak Republic, in the interest of lasting peaceful cooperation with other democratic states, seeking the application of the democratic form of government and the guarantees of a free life and the development of spiritual culture and economic prosperity, that is, we, citizens of the Slovak Republic, adopt through our representatives the following Constitution”

The preamble connects the Slovak nation to the Slovak ethnic mythology and history, while differentiating the Slovak nation and the “members of national minorities and ethnic groups”. In the following articles it states that the state language is Slovak (Article 6/1) and establish the Slovaks ethnic symbols as the symbols of the state (Article 9/1, 3, 4) Kusy evaluating these writes that “the Slovaks have arrogated the whole state for themselves. They have declared it their own nation state and declared themselves as its state-forming nation”. According to him due to this the Slovaks and the minorities in Slovakia do not enjoy the same rights. (Kusy, 1996, p. 63) Other scholars, as van Duin and Polácková seem to share this view, writing that “The preamble (...) emphasizes the Slovak nationalist historical perspective and the fact that the ethnic Slovak nation is the actual state-forming subject, with the other national and ethnic groups at best in a secondary role” (2000, p. 345). Hungarian deputies protested with absence at the vote (Lucas, 1996, p. 57-8 through van Duin and Polácková, 2000) and later one of their demands was the change of the preamble (Harris, 2003).

Another preamble, the one of State Language Law (1995) similarly connects the state with the Slovak ethnocultural nation by stating that “the Slovak language is the most important distinctive feature of the uniqueness of the Slovak nation, the most precious asset of its cultural heritage, the expression of the sovereignty of the Slovak Republic” (through van Duin and Polácková, 2000, p. 347). The law banned the use of Hungarian in official situations. By the advocators it was argued that the law “was a remedy for historical grievances regarding the treatment of the Slovak language under Hungarian rule and it was described as the ´finale of a battle of many years´” (van Duin and Polácková, 2000, p. 347). This shows that in the
‘state owner’ Slovak ethnocultural nation’s self-understanding the ‘historic’ hostility against Hungarians is common phenomenon and that “the Hungarian minority in Slovakia has always been viewed as an extension of Hungary” (Harris, 2003, p. 27).

Issues at stake - Vladimír Mečiar

By looking at the issues at stake the examined years in Slovakian politics can be divided into two period, first the nationalizing one under Vladimír Mečiar governments until 1998 and after 1998 the period of minimal accommodation. In the first period the government’s policies insisting “on the concept of a dominant, state forming and ruling Slovak nation in all areas of social life” (Kusy, 1996, p. 68) “attacked the rights of the ethnic Hungarians” (van Duin and Polácková, 2000, 339-340) in “an attempt at gradual assimilation” (van Duin and Polácková, 2000, 347). The previously mentioned Slovak State Language Law curtailed the established rights of the use of Hungarian, striving “to exclude minority languages from the spheres considered most important for the reproduction of national cultures: local government, territory markings, the media and the educational system” (Csengő, 2011, p. 138). Several measure intended to weaken the political power of Hungarian parties. A numeros clausus constrained the number of Hungarian representatives in the municipal self-governments in proportion to their share in the population (previously minority parties could achieve higher shares of votes than the portion of Hungarians at several settlements). The internal borders of regions and districts were redrawn in a fashion that Hungarians became minorities in all regions and with the exception of two in all districts (see maps!). Other measures “were aimed at establishing Slovak majority control over all institutions cultural reproduction” (Csengő, 2011, p. 138), as the renewed plans for the Slovakization of schools (was halted by Hungarians), the suspension of the finance of Hungarian cultural activity and the Hungarian teacher training was stopped. (Hamberger, 2008)

Issues at stake - Mikuláš Dzurinda

In 1998 the opposition of Mečiar won the elections and the Hungarian party (MKP) was included in the government of Mikuláš Dzurinda. The coalition proved stable and lasted for eight years (two terms). Although the Hungarian minority could halt further Slovak nationalizing efforts and realize some of its demands, it was unable to archive most of its main goals. The gains of the minority were the easement of language restrictions to the level before the State Language Law, the financing of culture became more equal and the Hungarian education system was strengthened, among other measures with a state funded
Hungarian university. (Hamberger, 2008) As the Hungarian party’s (MKP) proposals were excluded from the Minority Language Law (1999), the party voted against (van Duin and Polácková, 2000). Even though the regions were turned into self-governing bodies (2001), their borders haven’t changed, leaving Hungarians with no region where they would form the majority. The controversial Benes decrees have not been withdrawn and the preamble of the Constitution is still the same. No law passed which would have settled the minorities’ role in the Slovak society. Harsh debates aroused around Hungary’s Status Law (Law on Legal Status of Hungarians Living in Neighbouring Countries – 2001) (Harris, 2004). Finally no highway was built in South Slovakia, which was one of the main demands of the MKP. (Székely, 2014) (Harris, 2004)

Ethnopolitical regime

The historical roots of the Slovak – Hungarian conflict is emphasized by several scholars. Harris stress that “the mutually incompatible interpretation of the past among the Slovaks and Hungarians stem from their diametrically opposed national (mis)fortunes whereby victory of one meant the loss for the other and vice” (2003, p. 14). It goes back on a long way as Mihalikova presented, “Slovaks refer to a history of 1000 years of repression by Hungarians, while last year Hungarians in Slovakia celebrated the 1100th anniversary of their settlement in the Carpathian valley” (1998, p. 160). The Slovaks are sensitive to the ‘Hungarian threat’ due to “the period before 1918, when Slovakia was a nationally oppressed part of Hungary, (...) the post-World War I Hungarian revisionist propaganda, and (...) the years 1939-45 when parts of Slovakia were reincorporated into Hungary” (van Duin and Polácková, 2000, p. 344).3 These historical roots were strengthened by contemporary challenges, as the painful economic transition and political uncertainty of the post-communist transition, leading to the anti-Hungarian nationalism of parts of the Slovak electorate. The anti-Hungarian sentiments were not constrained to the voters of the Mečiar’s coalition parties, as “in January 1997, an opinion poll indicated that no less than 54 per cent of ethnic Slovaks approved of the Mečiar’s government’s rather unfriendly policy towards the Hungarian minority”, which was

3 On the other side Hungarians saw their inclusion into Czechoslovakia as something forced upon them, celebrated the return of these territories to Hungary in 1938 and suffered from the oppressive measures of the Benes decrees.
“a decidedly higher percentage than the proportion of Slovaks who would have supported the Mečiar’s government parties at the time” (van Duin and Polácková, 2000, p. 344).

Due to these sentiments of the Slovakian electorate, the nationalist parties (e.g. SNS, HDZS) often used the ‘Hungarian card’, while the moderate parties were cautious not to take an gesture which could had been interpret as traitorous cooperation with Hungarians. The use of the ‘Hungarian card’ refers to the political act of “frightening the ethnic Slovak voters with the bogey of the Hungarian threat” (van Duin and Polácková, 2000, p. 348). Beside the simple usage of this technic it seems that they themselves have anti-Hungarian sentiments.

After the Law on the Usage of Minority Languages had been accepted by the National Council against the will of the MKP the “somewhat intoxicated representatives of the Mečiarist and nationalist opposition parties were joined in their provocative singing of a Slovak nationalist song by deputies of the SDL” (van Duin and Polácková, 2000, p. 353).

When in accordance with parliamentary tradition (the second strongest party of the coalition gives the speaker) Béla Bugár was to become the Speaker of the National Council “Fico declared that it would be most ‘unusual’ for a member of the minority to be chairing the Slovakian Parliament” (Harris, 2003, p. 8) Those Slovakian politicians who may perhaps personally give concessions to Hungarians probably deterred by the possibility of outflanking by the more radical parties. This can be the reason why the MKP had so little support from its coalition partners in achieving its aims. (van Duin and Polácková, 2000) (Mihalikova, 1996)

According to Smooha an ethnic democracy has the following basic characteristics; an ethnic nation claim ownership of the state, the ethnic nation shapes the symbols of the state, citizenship is separate from membership in the ethnic nation, a minority perceived as a potential threat, a democratic political system, lack of equality of rights (Smooha, 2002, p. 477-478). He developed the concept based on the Israeli regime, which is unfortunate for several the reasons First that Israel is strongly controversial country due to its occupation of the Palestine territories. If someone see the territories of the Occupation Zone as one united system with the Israel state for which there are strong arguments, then Israel is very far from meeting the basic criteria of ethnic democracy (e. g. citizenship is not granted for everyone). Second the inter-ethnic distance is unusually big between Jews and Arabs, which, if we accept that ethnic democracy is like the state of Israel in its official borders, strongly constrains the applicable cases. I would argue that for the usage of the concept this and the emphasis on the perceived threat should be put aside and ethnic democracy should be defined as a democracy where “the state privileges the majority and strives to advance its interest rather than to serve
all its citizens equally” while “the minority cannot fully identify itself with the state, cannot be completely equal to the majority and cannot confer full legitimacy on the state” (Smooha, 2002, p. 478).

I think that’s the most punctual and applicable definition of the concept and it’s much better fit the reality of Slovakia, then of Israel. Slovakia from 1998 on at least is clearly a democratic country, which grants citizenship and equal individual political rights to all of its citizens. The ethnocultural Slovak nation claims ownership to the state and shaped it symbols. The Slovak state discriminates in favour of the ethnic nation in majority and due to this reason creates secondary class of its Hungarian (and Rusyn) citizens with lesser rights, who cannot fully identify themselves with the Slovak state. To my mind after the analysis it is clear that these characteristics fits Slovakia very well.
Conclusion

What we can clearly see after the case study are the followings, the nationalizing efforts of the Slovak state continued from communist times into post-communist time, it even strengthened in the first period of the examined years. In the second period the Hungarian minority which gained new resources could halt further nationalizing efforts in cooperation with Slovak moderates, however it was unable to change the basic characteristics of the regime which is ethnic democracy.

The possible reasons for the strengthened nationalizing efforts of the Slovak state can be summarized as the following; historical memories, social and economic difficulties and fight for resources. The causal relation can be assumed that the radicalization of Slovak voters on the base of collective historical memories due to the social difficulties of the transition and the uncertainty in the new political system lead to the election of radical parties, who being more legitimate, then their communist predecessors could implement stronger nationalizing policies. The attitudes of the electorate and the position of the radical parties did not let much space for the moderate parties to accommodate the minority demands leading to the freeze of Slovakia’s ethnic democracy.

The Hungarian minority although strengthened by the transition in its resources and made some modest gains, in general it was unable to change the dominant ethnopolitical regime. The new resources coming with democratization, marketization and European integration included the possibility for the open struggle for minority interest and its public articulation, the organization of minority parties which were successful in gaining parliamentary representation, local self-governance, the strengthening of Hungarian civil society and importantly the inflow of Hungarian state support. With the participation in the government the Hungarian party and to some degree the whole minority gained new resources. With these resources they could achieve among minor gains the establishment of the first non-Hungary financed Hungarian university. They halted the nationalizing efforts (at least until 2006), but change the basic structure of the ethnopolitical regime is proved to be a by far too big task compared to their resources.

As this paper had a broad research question and therefore could only scratch the surface, there are many ways to further develop this research. One is to go deeper in the case and examine certain aspects in a more solid manner, for example into the development of the Hungarian civil society or into the sentiments of Slovak’s. Another is to do the same research in similar
depth with other country cases inside and outside the Carpathian Basis, to see the general patterns and specialities of the post-communist transition’s ethnopolitics and nationalism.
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