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Nationalism and Democratic Transition in Eastern Europe

How does nationalism and right-wing populism affect the democratic transition in the post-communist European countries?

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Abstract

This Thesis answers the question: how does nationalism affect democratization in Eastern Europe? The contemporary European tendencies are showing interesting changes from this aspect. Twenty-five years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the post-communist Eastern European countries went through a period of contradictory democratization transition. There have been several changes within institutional systems as well as on the level of political culture. However, the Eastern European region still holds certain democratic shortages. The tendency of rising nationalism and anti-democratic populism in the post-communist countries is not a unique phenomenon. The expansion of right wing governments shows correlation with the increasing EU skepticism and anti-democratic populism. At the same time the fast growing far-right parties and extremist movements are enjoying concerning levels of popularity for their anti-elitist, ethnic-based discriminative views and anti-Semitism. The shaken confidence in democratic institutions and the neo-liberal economic system drives many voters to extreme directions. This tendency of raising nationalism questions the effectiveness of the democratic consolidation in the post-socialist countries. According to the case studies it cannot be stated that the raising nationalism harms the democratic transition. Many of the cases pointed out that nationalism and democracy mutually affect and form each other. Since their multiple interconnections the two phenomena cannot be analyzed individually. Both tendencies are dependent variables of complex social, economical and political processes. In many cases nationalism and right-wing populism is also a consequence of the post-communist liberalization process. The young democratic systems are still lacking the experience of reacting far-right expansion. This lack of experience concerns the political party level as well as the public electoral behavior. The post-communist Eastern European countries did not earn the liberal democracy in the way how for instance the French democratic roots were founded. The active political participation still carries negative perceptions since the communist era. The conscious acquisition of the representative democracy and the understanding of democratic values and rights cannot be triggered by introducing institutions or checks and balances. The social and cultural adoption seems to occur at a much slower rate than political adoption. In this aspect the contemporary right-wing populism seems a reasonable reaction. The transition period proved the necessity of reinterpreting the last twenty-five years.

1. Introduction

This thesis aims to understand and analyze the interrelated relationship of nationalism and democracy. *"Nationalism sometimes appears to be fully congruent with democracy as it speaks of freedom, equality and progress, (…). At other times, nationalism and democracy seem almost antithetical, with the former producing mechanisms of exclusion and sentiments of intolerance, and the latter constraining its definition to instrumental mechanisms of a majoritarian representation."* (Lecour & Moreno 2010, 3) The contemporary European tendencies are showing interesting changes from this aspect. Twenty-five years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the post-communist Eastern European countries went through a period of contradictory democratization transition. There have been several changes within institutional systems as well as on the level of political culture. However, the Eastern European region still holds certain democratic shortages, for example in the field of democratic checks and balances, corruption, electoral systems, minority rights or access to education. The recent tendency of rising nationalism and intensifying right-wing powers in the region is commonly discernible. (Korkut 2012, 1-2) This thesis assumes that there are certain democratic shortages in most of these countries that are related to their common post-totalitarian heritage and their troubled liberalization process during the last twenty-five years. At the time of regime change, most of the post-communist countries adopted democracy as a prescription. *"In the 1990s, the democratization of the formerly communist societies was widely understood as part of a 'wave' that diffused a liberal-democratic model to the East. By now there are increasing doubts over the scope of this diffusion (…)."* (Blokker, 2010, 1) The last twenty-five years of political liberalization resulted in a skeptical attitude towards politics and the occurred democratic transition. The thesis assumes that the rising nationalist waves could be understood as reaction to this transition period.

The tendency of rising nationalism and anti-democratic populism in the post-communist countries is not a unique phenomenon. It is a general tendency in Europe. The expansion of right wing governments shows increasing EU skepticism.

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At the same time the fast growing far-right parties and extremist movements are enjoying concerning levels of popularity for their anti-elitist, ethnic-based discrimation, anti-Semitism and in some cases national revisionist agendas. (Wodak & KhosraviNik 2013, XXVII-XIX) Does the tendency of nationalistic populism correlate with the troubled democratic transition in the Eastern European region? There are examples of countries which are committed to democratic values whilst being nationalistic at the same time, such as Israel or the Scandinavian states. Is Eastern European nationalism different? Why does nationalism undermine the democratic development and transition in the case of Eastern European Countries? How can nationalism be an incentive and inhibitor as well?

The answer to these questions shows a high level of complexity. This thesis analyzes different case studies in order to understand the relationship between the Eastern European type of nationalism and the cumbersome democratic transition in the region. As it is argued in the theory section, the concept of nationalism is quite broad. This project faces the challenge of understanding the Eastern-European phenomena of rising nationalistic tendencies. Therefore the concept of nationalism is understood specifically as right wing populism and as a tendency of using nationalistic rhetoric and ethnic based discriminative propaganda. Eastern European nationalism is also analyzed from the perspective of EU-skepticism and anti-integration public opinion tendencies. In this regard nationalism is understood as a dependent variable on the denationalization process of the European Union. This specific aspect of nationalism defines a limitation to this thesis.

The research question addresses the subject of nationalism in relation to democracy by asking: How does nationalism affect democratization in Eastern Europe? By the sub-questions it provides an understanding of how Eastern European nationalism undermines the democratic transition in the region. Through the understanding of nationalism the thesis aims to dissipate the stereotypical understanding of nationalism in Europe. According to George Schöpflin nationalism often has a public understanding of a 'good western type of nationalism' that projects the illusion of a peaceful and democratic patriotism. On the other hand there is a stereotype of 'bad eastern type of nationalism' with radical, brutal and dangerous specifics. (Schöpflin 2000, 4-5) I also believe that the contemporary

tendencies are much more nuanced than 'good' and 'bad' types. The case studies demonstrate the correlation between democratic shortages and nationalistic populism. This paper provides an analytical tool to identify and discuss the problem of right-wing populism and extremism.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

2.1.1. Research Question

The core research question of the thesis is 'how does nationalism affect the democratic transition in Eastern Europe?' In order to answer this question the correlation between nationalism and democratic transition has to be justified. The theories of Andre Lecour and Elena Melshkina were applied to support this connection. Their concepts provide an explanation particularly in the case of post-socialist Eastern European countries. According to their theories the identity building process after regime change has been wounded by an elitist method of adapting democracy without wide public discussion. The established political community was lacking the integration of various social groups, especially the national and ethnical minorities. This type of transition created and exclusivist and discriminative environment in addition to a nationalistic understanding of democracy. (Blokker 2010, 172-178) (Melshkina 2010, 164-165) This conclusion raises the following sub-questions. Is East-Central European nationalism different? If there is a particular form of nationalism in the case of Eastern Europe then how does nationalism undermine the democratic development and transition? How can nationalism be an incentive and an inhibitor as well?

 2.1.2. Theory Selection

This thesis applies a number of theories since the concept of nationalism is very diverse. Their application follows a deductive method. Based on the different focus of these theories three different aspects were created in order to provide a structural framework for understanding the case studies. In order to understand the basic nature of nationalism the first chapter of the theories provides a framework to the thesis and it is applied during the analysis holistically. This aspect is based on the

classical scholars of nationalism: Gellner, Smith and Andersen. This group of theories is considering the genesis of nationalism by the historical, lingual, cultural and territorial roots of nationalism. In the application it serves as an explanation for the common post-soviet heritage of the Eastern European region. Post-communism as overall phenomena justifies the process of analyzing the Eastern European region as a unit. To understand the rising nationalism in the region assumes the understanding of post-authoritarian democratic transition. Therefore the aspect of classical theories helps to develop an understanding of how nationalism can be an instrument of right-wing populism. (1.) The first aspect of analyzing the examples of Eastern Europe focuses on the key role of minorities in the region. The question of nationalism has always been connected to the concept of exclusion in the region. George Schöpflin (Schöpflin 2000) and R.J.B Bosworth (Bosworth 2007) provide the theoretical framework to understand the nature of discrimination. The two theories are applied on various cases in the region considering national minorities and Roma minorities. The rising xenophobia and discrimination caused several ethnic based conflicts and crimes in the region. At the same time there is a common tendency of segregation on the policy level as well. (2.) Since this thesis aims to understand the relationship between democratic shortages and nationalism, the second aspect contains the theoretical framework of democratic shortages. By focusing on the shortages of democratic checks and balances the application of these concepts aims to point out the regime change's responsibility from 1990. The concept of Andre Lecour (Lecour & Moreno 2010) was selected because it analyses the paradox relationship of nationalism and democracy within the period of democratic transition in Eastern Europe. (3.) The last aspect is the populism and the role of the extreme right in Eastern Europe. Anton Pelinka's (Pelinka 2013) concept explains the contemporary rise of right-wing populism in Europe. This theory provides an understanding for the rising right and far-right populism in Europe. The analysis of radical parties and their position in the Eastern European region is important in order to highlight their negative effect on democratic transition. The chapter also provides an analysis on the responsibility of mainstreams political parties.

2.1.3. Illustrative examples

The illustrative examples of this thesis have been selected in order to analyze the three aspects of rising nationalism in Europe. The chapter of nationalism and discrimination contains a case study of a racist attack against a Hungarian speaking Slovakian citizen that caused a diplomatic conflict between the two countries. The analysis was written by Anna Porter (Porter 2009) who specializes in national solidarity affairs. The case was chosen because it caused intense debate on a European level and a short-term diplomatic conflict between Hungary and Slovakia. The second illustrative example of the chapter is the case of Roma discrimination and aggressive conflict in Hungary. André Lendvai (Lendvai 2012) used this example to explain the deep gap within Hungarian society between Roma and non-Roma communities. Since the organized attacks against Romas were directly connected to the para-military organization of the extreme right, the case illustrates how nationalism can lead to aggressive hatred. The chapter also contains a report of Amnesty international that points out the institutional segregation of Roma minority in Slovakian educational practice. The two cases can prove the social and institutional form of discrimination that provides an overview of Roma segregation and lack of integration.

The chapter of democratic concerns in the Eastern European region follows the structural framework of Blokker's (Blokker 2010) analysis on constitutionalism in Poland, Hungary and Romania. This chapter serves as a comparative example of the three EU member states and aims to point out their similar challenges of democratic transition in the last twenty-five years. The study has been chosen because it provides overall conclusions regarding the Eastern European region such as the elitist method of regime change, the lack of institutional definition of citizenship, the lack of civil society integration into political decisions and the ethnical definition of nationhood.

The chapter of populism and extreme right provides a structural overview on Slovakian, Hungarian, and Latvian far-right parties. The examples were used as case studies in the report on Right-Wing Populism in Europe. It has been chosen because it also focuses on the political environment of far-right parties and aims to point out all the contribution factors of their recent success. This method of analyzing the

tendency of expanding extreme right gives the opportunity to point out the responsibility of mainstream political parties as well. The conclusion of the chapter stresses the importance of mainstream party reaction and their political strategy against far-right populism.

2.2. Core Definitions

2.2.1 Concept of democratic shortages

There is evidently no universal consensus on the basic characteristics of a democratic system, even on the level institutional framework. The explanation of Paul Blokker provides the basis for a critical aspect toward the Eastern European democratic systems. He understands the new European democracies in a plural way as 'multiple democracies'. In addition to the political dimension Blokker analyses the cultural aspect of democracy. On one hand democratic shortages are understood as the lack of institutional transparency, corruption and violation of human rights. On the other hand it is also understood as a tension between the political and the cultural aspect of democracy.

2.2.2 Concept of nationalism

This thesis does not distinguish between nationalism and patriotism. It aims to use the concept of nationalism as reference to the contemporary tendency of right wing expansion and strengthening of the extreme right. As André Lecour concludes (Lecour & Moreno 2010, 262-4), nationalism as a concept is understood as a contributor to the democratic transition process. This thesis does not aim to judge if it is a positive or a negative facilitator. It aims to understand the effect and the roots of nationalism in the context of post-communist countries.

2.2.3 Post-communism

This thesis follows Blokker's understanding of post-communism. The process of political, social and cultural democratic transitions were grounded in the constitutions created immediately after the fall of the communist regime. The former eastern bloc countries of Europe adopted a democratic model based on western role models. The political elite of the regime changes in the region created a foundational framework of democracy by adopting the checks and balances of a democratic system. The concept of post-communism refers to all the short and long term consequences of the change of system. (Blokker 2010, 69-73) This thesis assumes correlation between post-communism and the contemporary challenges of the democratic system in the Eastern European region.

2.2.4 Eastern European Region

According to the United Nations' geographical definition the Eastern European countries are Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, the western part of the Russian Federation, Slovakia and Ukraine. (United Nations 2013) However, this thesis understands Eastern Europe as a political classification. As a main criterion it only considers EU member states, as the process of European integration is a very strong similarity among them. According to the UN the Baltic States are not listed as Eastern European countries. However based on their similar post-communist heritage they are part of the political classification of Eastern Europe therefore they are also involved during the analysis. The case studies used in the analysis are from Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania.

2.3.Method

This thesis uses a theoretical framework to analyze the illustrative examples from the Eastern European countries. According to the definition of basic case studies this method requires deep and intensive analyses of the cases that involves quantitative and qualitative techniques. In case studies the researcher typically

explains the special importance of the case, which is known as an idiographic approach. (Bryman 2012, 66-69) Instead of focusing on a particular case or country the method was chosen of analyzing various examples of the Eastern European countries. Based on the theory part of the thesis three structural aspects of Eastern European nationalism have been created: (1) Nationalism and Discrimination, (2) Democratic Concerns, (3) Right-wing Populism & Far-right.

The Theories of Ernes Gellner, Anthony Smith and Bendedict Anderson are providing an overall conceptual framework, therefore their concepts are applied in all three aspects of Eastern European Nationalism. The concept of Boothworth, Schöpflin, Melshkina and Korkut are contributing to the (1) first aspect. The concepts of , Korkut and Schöpflin are explaining the cases of the (2) second structural aspect. Whilst the concept of Wodak and Pelinka is contributing to the third (3) aspect. The three aspects are closely related to each other, for example the issue of minority discrimination can not be divided is hardly dividable from the far right propaganda. Because of their mutual interconnection there are several overlapping cases that do not belong to only one of the aspects. However due to the structural consistency of the thesis the cases have been divided between the three aspects based on my own understanding.

2.4.Limitations

2.4.1 Eastern Europe

The analysis is limited geographically. It focuses on nationalism within the Eastern European Region. As mentioned earlier the similar heritage of this region allows united analyses of contemporary tendencies. However this does not allow to take any further conclusions in case of other examples outside of this region. This paper narrows down the broad concepts of nationalism to a particular area therefore it is able to provide a deeper understanding of regional conditions. This focus area was primarily chosen because of my own interest and my abilities to use native sources as well. Furthermore, this region is relatively homogeneous by

religion, it is not the main target of European immigration flood and it is going through a democratic transition and a gradual European integration process.

2.4.2 Historical overview

As another limitation this thesis lacks a deep overview on the history of the Eastern European nationalism. As the research question assumes these countries are similar based on their post-soviet heritage and by their reaction to European integration processes. However these similarities should not overlap the many differences between them. Due to the page limitations, this thesis does not investigate other aspects of similarities such as pre-socialist historical connections. Nevertheless, this research clearly admits that the comprehensive history of a country contributes and influences the contemporary processes of politics. However, the recent historical events such as the regime changes of 1989-90 are providing more direct explanations to the tendency of rising nationalism and right wing populism.

2.4.3 Lack of comparison

As it is pointed out in the discussion, the thesis is lacking comparison to other regions of Europe or parts of the world. The relationship of nationalism and democracy is observed in the post-communist countries of the European Union although some of its conclusions are applicable to other cases as well. This thesis aims to carry out profound research in the Eastern European case therefore a comparative analysis is not feasible. A further comparative analysis with the Scandinavian type of nationalism or with the Israeli nationalism could make this research more complex.

3. Theories

The Following theories have been selected based on their different approaches to explain nationalism. This project aims to provide an analytical framework for understanding the rise of nationalism in Europe. Therefore nationalism theories are necessary to explain the various aspects of right wing populism and rising nationalistic tendencies in Europe. The selected theories are related to the rising nationalistic tendencies of Eastern Europe. A significant group of nationalism theories are focused on the genesis of nationalism. According to the theory of Smith, Gellner and Anderson the creation of nation states and the appearance of nationalism are closely related. The aspect of classical theories helps to understand how nationalism can be an instrument of right-wing populism in the region. The rising nationalism in Europe is also connected to the issue of minorities, ethnicity and xenophobia. This aspect of nationalism can be understood and explained by the theory of George Scöpflin who focuses on European nationalism, identity and power. He reflects on the particular example of Eastern Europe, which makes his work even more relevant to this project. The denationalization process of European integration also plays a major role rising right wing populism. Bosworth's theory was chosen because he represents a critical view on the stereotypical effects of nationalism. This theory mainly focuses on the strengths, contradictions, lies and truths about nationalism. Since this project assumes that nationalism in Eastern Europe harms the democratic transition. Andre Lecour's theory on the paradox relationship of democracy and nationalism is also relevant. According to his theory the case of rising nationalism can be understood by the interrelated perspective of nationalism and democracy. Finally Anton Pelinka's concept provides the tools to understand the nature of right wing populism. The particular left-wing, right-wing relations are essentially representing the Eastern-European political culture therefore this aspect is also necessary to answer the research question.

Based on the different theories three aspects have been created to analyze the nature of nationalism in the case of Eastern Europe. The following three aspects are providing a structural framework for analyzing the illustrative examples.

1. Nationalism and Discrimination

2. Democratic concerns

3. Right wing Populism & Far-Right

3.1.Classical Theories and the Genesis of Nationalism

The classical nationalism theories are closely related to the study of nation states. Before the nature of nation was not questioned based on its positive or negative effects. The conventional understanding of nationalism until the 1960s can be divided in two major approaches: The first aspect connects nationalism with national history where nationalism is a tool for analyzing individual nations. The second approach focuses on the ideas and the individuals as the creatures of nationalism. Gellner's theory on nationalism breaks down these conventional views. He argues that modernity and nationalism cannot be understood through history. (Breuilly 2006, XIV-XXIV) Smith's fundamental belief is that nationalism creates national identity. This causal relationship drives Gellner's theory on nationalism as well. Smith agrees that nationalism helps to create nations however he declares that nationalism is dependent on many historical factors as well such as cultural heritage, ideas, territorial history or earlier motifs. Therefore this social and cultural matrix is just as important as the awaking nationalism. (Smith 1991, 73-98) According to Anderson the concept of nation and nationhood is an ideological concept. Therefore he uses the term: 'imagined communities' which refers to the fact that the members of a political community do not know each other. According to Anderson the rise of nationalism is the result of the declining role of religious communities and dynastic realm and the change in the conceptions of time. Similar to Durkheim he notes certain similarities between the role of religion and contemporary nationalism. (Özkirimli 2010, 105-112) These arguments are predominately focused on explaining the rise of nations and the nature of the nation. Similar to religion, nationalism provides an ideological background to everyday life. In my opinion nationalism is much more complex than a political view especially in the case of Eastern Europe.

Being nationalistic in some cases shows unconditional belief in selected traditions. Nationalism is comparable to a religious belief, as the case studies will illustrate. Gellner states that nationalism produces nations however he believes that nationalism does not produce modernity - then where does nationalism root? He recognizes that both society and ideas have changed radically which can explain the modernization transition however he focuses on one concrete event in history: The industrial revolution. According to him after this stage of human history certain intellectual tools were provided to help the modern transition. The post-industrial society creates nationalism, this appearance is natural and the power of nationalism lies in this naturalism. (Breuilly 2006, XIV-XXIV) This understanding overlaps the rise of nation-states in the case of Eastern Europe as well. However the power of nationalism has a strong contemporary relevance in the case of Eastern Europe. In my opinion being nationalistic today in Europe is just as axiomatic as it was after the industrial revolution. Patriotism can be understood for instance as a protective reaction to the process of European integration.

According to Gellner *"The sense that national identity is natural is one expression of this irresistible convergence of state, population and culture within industrial society."* (Gellner in: Breuilly 2006, XXIV) Gellner explains the conflicting nature of nationalism by the fact that industrialization spreads unevenly. However the uneven distribution of modernization does not lead to nationalism without the lack of cultural homogeneity. By cultural differences Gellner refers to skin color, language or religion. (Gellner in: Breuilly 2006, XXV) According to the history of the twentieth century the conflicting nature of nationalism seems valid and still is today. In the case of Eastern Europe, nationalism and EU skepticism often goes hand in hand, therefore being a patriot is often stigmatized which leads to several conflicts and also to the crisis of patriotism.

Gellner distinguishes between high-culture and folk-culture regarding nationalistic tendencies. Nationalism is an imposition of the high culture towards the rest of the society. This means that national identity is a creature of a few however it is sustained by the folk culture and the micro-groups themselves. This is quite contradictory with the basic phenomena of nationalism that claims, *"(...) nationalism usually conquers in the name of a putative folk culture".* (Gellner 2006, 56) Likely to

Gellner, Smith also claims that nationalism was a tool created by the elites in order to boost economic progress and create some sort of homogeneity among the society. (Smith 1991, 73-98) If nationalism is also a tool to influence and coordinate the society than there is a clear similarity with contemporary populist method of the right wing in Eastern Europe. Folk culture symbols, nativism and nationalistic rhetoric are emblematic features of Eastern European right wing. The excessive patriotism is a very characteristic tool of far-right political communication. According to Ruth Wodak this type of political rhetoric combined with anti-minority propaganda is one of the strongest attractions of Eastern European far-right parties. (Wodak & KhosraviNik, 2013, XXV)

3.2. Nationalism and Discrimination

R. J. B. Bosworth the Australian historian explains the strengths, contradictions, lies and truths about nationalism. He illustrates today's nationalism with sport supporters of national teams or the propaganda of buying homeland products in favor of supporting the national economy. According to Bosworth the lie of the nation is the fake promise of its 'sweet and glorious victory' over everyone who 'doesn't belong to the us'. This old lie drives people to pointless fights. The Nation seems natural and permanent but at the same time it brings exclusion, hierarchy, genocide and war. The geographical determination of the nation is also based on a fake assumption *"that the fate of humankind was decided by blood and soil".* (Bosworth 2007, 16) This leads to the perception that the territory was sacred to the nation therefore this property is inalienable. The Nation is equal to the land as the example shows when the Catholic Pope kisses the soil, or countries are nationalizing nature – such as Kangaroos for Australia or Eagles for the United States. (Bosworth 2007, 10-15) This geographic determination becomes conflicting from the very moment when at least two nations are claiming one small piece of land at the same time. The eastern European example shows various changes in territorial affiliation.

The concept of 'Great Hungary' [1] explains the complexity of territorial interconnection in the region. Claiming the national soil brings up the oldest argument why a territory should belong to a nation: The language. This results in discrimination of national minorities and ethnic communities. Languages are constantly changing and are as variant as cultures. Most importantly they are affected by several factors and national difference is just one of these. (Bosworth 2007, 10-25) Geographic borders are not equal to cultural or linguistic borders. A celebrated, iconic dish or dance or music of a nation does not mean that the surrounding countries have fundamentally different symbols. In the case of Eastern Europe these symbols have mutually shaped each other across borders. The national history of neighboring countries often contradicts each other. According to Bosworth the memory of old-time glory is just as conflicting as territorial claims. Human history is simply too long to seek the glory of bygone eras. The complex interconnection of national histories creates conflict and contradicts national identity. (Bosworth 2007, 168-9)

According to Schöpflin *"Among the great debates in Europe since the eighteenth century has been whether to organize power on the basis of reason or of identity"* (Schöpflin 2000, 9) His approach concerns ethnic minorities and focuses exclusively on the central and Eastern European countries. Schöpflin's view on post-communist heritage is connected to the contemporary minority conflicts. According to his understanding minority issues have replaced the role of communism as a threat to national identity and nationhood. (Schöpflin 2000, 277-279)

The relationship between post-communism and nationalism in the region raises the problem of nationhood and power. According to Scöplfin, cultural reproduction is ethnically motivated. The natural strength of nationalism is also a key element of Gellner's theory. According to Schöpflin the origin of nationhood stands on two pillars: *"(…) both ethnic origins and state construction played a role in the rise of the modern nation-state.* (Schöpflin 2000, 6) As a Polish example shows, xenophobia

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[1] Reataching pursuit of lost theritories after the peace negotiations of the First World War. The Hungarian far-right often claims that the pre-First World War stage of Hungarian borders suppose to be reatached to the country. It concerns the present borders of Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Slovania.

exists even without a significant presence of national minorities in the country. With 98% of the population considers itself polish there are still very strong discriminative feelings towards minorities. Based on this example xenophobia is not even dependent on ethnical homogeneity. Does it come from a fundamental instinct of protecting natural identity? (Taras 2010, 146)

The operation of the civic and ethnic divisions is the key to understanding the operation of modern nation states. The modern nation states can be described by the continuous interaction of ethnicity, citizenship and the state. The power relations and the national identity can only be understood through the interconnected relationship of these three. (Schöpflin 2000, 6) This ascertainment of Scöpflin highlights how close the relationship is between national identity and ethnic affiliation. A major source of conflict in the Eastern European region is the integration of Roma minority. Nationalistic xenophobia is mainly directed towards Roma people or national minorities of neighbor countries. However, this is not a fundamentally different phenomenon from the Western European anti-immigration tendencies. Nevertheless as a common tendency in the Eastern European region it needs a particular explanation.

3.3. Democratic Concerns

This project aims to understand the tense and the paradoxical relationship of democracy and nationalism. According to André Lecour these are the two most important processes in contemporary politics influencing institutional decisions. He explains how fundamentally similar and at the same time different the two ideologies are. *Nationalism sometimes appears to be fully congruent with democracy as it speaks of freedom, equality and progress, (...) At other times, nationalism and democracy seem almost antithetical, with the formal producing mechanism of exclusion and sentiments of intolerance, and the latter constraining its definition to instrumental mechanisms of a majoritarian representattion."* (Lecour & Moreno 2010, 3) Nationalism and democracy are mutually reinforcing each other and both

of them are strongly relying on social suport due to the lack of other source of legitimacy. According to Lecour the adoption of nationalism by democracy is highly controversial since nationalism is often associated with massacres, the holocaust, and several genosides. However nationalism can be a crucial element of social mobilization which doesn't necessraly leads to intolarance or conflict. (Lecour & Moreno 2010, 4,5)

To understand this relationship in the case of Eastern Europe Mileshkina's concept explains the post-soviet country nationalism and democratic transition. According to her the exclusion of minorities from the identy building process has crucial importance.The homogenization process in the region has shown very similar tendencies. Seeking the lost or wounded national identity is a typical reaction after the fall of the Soviet Union. This type of nation-building process excludes and discriminates the identities of national minorities and sees them as a threat to consensus building. This situation creates an enviroment in wich extremists are provoking conflicts against minorities and creating a picture of an enemy based on populist beliefs. This inhibits the achievement of the basic consensus on the nature of state. The establisment of a more integrative political community is a necessary condition of democratic transition in the Eastern European region. (Melshkina 2010, 164-165)

According to Paul Blokker, „(...) democratization has made available a fairly ample range of democratic discourses and political cultures in the region, which cannot necessarily be reduced to a liberal view of democracy." (Blokker 2010, 170) Blokker states that after 1990 the establishment of democractic checks and balances in the Eastern European region weren't necessarily based on a wide political consensus or shared political culture. However it is widely accepted that there is no single model or combination of institutions which refers to a best practice. The recent constitutional crisis in the region shows that the leading populist parties seek a reconceptualization of the regime change. According to Blokker the ethic of deliberation in post-communist societies often means the return to pre-communist stages. In a number of cases it results an exclusivist, nationalist understanding of democracy. This concept is applicable for example in the case of Hungarian, Polish or Romanian contempary politics. This picture becames even more complex by taking

into account the European Integration process as another dimenson of democracy. (Blokker 2010, 172-178)

According to Korkut there has been a liberalization challenge in central and eastern Europe since the fall of socialism.The transition period of Eastern Europe proved that some countries weren't ready for the democratic transition and economic liberalization. His concept states that *"elitist and disaggregate course of liberalization generates the troubles."* (Korkut 2012, 195) The Eastern European transition has followed a Europeanization process which is based on elitist patterns which undermine social welfare values. In adition to the liberalization of human rights and freedoms the economic transition demanded a fast catch up with the western European economies. This enviroment didn't open up the platform of public discussion and the emergence of civil society. Instead it *„(...) gave birth to an elite driven modernization and the commitment to ameliorate the troubles of the state, economy and society and, (..) removing [fundamental decisions] from political control, and making them the exclusive responsibility of expert politicians."* This method of liberalization exposed itself to populist voices. The conservative reaction tends to criticize the economic liberalization and the europeanization processes in the region. At the same time it promotes nationalism and tends to restart the transiton on different bases. (Korkut 2012, 195-200)

3.4. Right-Wing populism & Far right

The phenomenon of right wing populism is highly relevant to understanding the Eastern European nationalism. According to Anton Pelinka's concept: populism is rooted in the understanding of people and their represnentation. *"The reality of representative democracy creates frustration among those segments of the society that do not feel represented by that which has always been a rather elitist establishment."* (Pelinka 2013, 4) However, frustration by itself cannot provide a complex explanation of the growing right wing extremism in Europe. Pelinka states

that contemporary populism and especially extreme-right populsim is based on anti-elitism. (Pelinka 2013, 8-9) The example of fast growing eastern European far-right parties supports this assumption. The case of the Jobbik party In Hungary and the Slovakian nationalist party supports this assumption.

"Contemporary populism is very much a phenomenon of the far right. Mainstream parties tend to simplify their political message and claiming that they are speaking on behalf of 'the people'. (…) The far right is the one using the mobilizing key words and topics which are domination some of the political discourses: migration, multiculturalism and the end of the nation state." (Pelinka 2013, 8-9) The overall European tendency shows that EU skepticism is also among these mobilizing key words, which refers to the dogma of anti-integration and the conservation of national values and homogeneity. In the case of Eastern Europe the promotion of economic independence is also part of the populist rhetoric that often promotes eastern opening instead of EU integration. If we look at the typology of right wing populist parties than according to Pelinka the typical profile of Eastern Europe extreme-right: is a post-communist type of anti-Semitic, anti-EU, ethno-nationalistic profile directed against minorities which often includes some type of revisionist agenda. (Pelinka 2013, 12-16)

This concept provides different approaches to deal with extreme political parties, which gives an analytical tool to understand the power and the influence of these parties in the different case studies. According to the latest events the reaction of the leading political power towards the far right has crucial importance.[2] According to Pelinka there are three ways of policy reactions towards regarding the rise of extreme right. (1) Delegitimizing. (2) Isolating. (3) Embracing. The different case studies will show the effectiveness of these approaches. (Pelinka 2013, 17) The case studies of this project provide examples of different ways to react to far right expansion.

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[2] As an example: Case of Jobbik crucial Winning (BBC)
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32281713
The far-right Jobbik party in Hungary has won its first ever individual constituency seat in parliament.

4. Application: Nationalism and Democratic Transition in Eastern Europe

The following illustrative examples aim to show how unique and interesting the Eastern European case of right-wing populism is. These cases explain the disruptive nature of nationalism and highlight the democratic shortages of the region. Through these examples the various theories of Eastern European nationalism point out several causes of rising nationalism in the region. The discrimination against national and ethnic minorities has been closely related to the far-right political forces, therefore it takes the first chapter to analyze the issue of minorities. The second chapter focuses on the democratic concerns of the twenty-five year long democratization process in the region. It aims to point out elitist way of regime change and current political culture, the lack of transparency and the weak activity of civil society. The third chapter focuses on right wing populism and the far-right political parties. It debates the emergence of extreme political parties and their influence and power on the political culture. The chapter also provides an analysis on the responsibility and the strategy of mainstream left and right wing parties.

4.1. Nationalism and Discrimination – Minorities in the Eastern European Region

4.1.1 Territorial and linguistic conflicts of Eastern Europe

According to Bosworth nationalism naturally generates conflict. The exclusive determination of nationhood brings discrimination and territorial demand. (Bosworth 2007) The region of Eastern Europe went through several geopolitical changes therefore this source of conflict is very relevant to the explanation of nationalism. The first example illustrates the still existing frustration of Hungarian nationalism through losing a significant part of the country's territory after the First World War.

This dilemma compares well with the Slovakian example in Laszló Szarka's analysis. The unresolved historical conflict between Hungary and Slovakia has been a major concern of the European Union since the accession of the two countries. The Hungarian extreme revisionists demand a significant part of south-Slovakian territory based on the pre First World War territorial status of the country. However according to the Treaty of Trianon these parts of the country have not belonged to Hungary since 1920. Instead of considering the historical facts, these demands are relying on myths and symbolic elements created by the media. The nostalgic glorification of the 'pre-Trianon era' is a common populist tool of Hungarian politicians. It appears mainly in the far-right rhetoric however when it comes to mainstream right wing populism it is still a risk not to regret the loss of Hungarian territories. It is referred as an unfair and humiliating decision, which has nothing to do with the responsibility of the Hungarian nation. However, it is often forgotten to examine at the historical context of this decision. The Hungarian-Austrian empire lost the First World War and the Treaty of Trianon was a concluding peace treaty. (Szarka 2012, 469-470; 484) The nationalist understanding of the treaty is based on the revisionist concept of the Hungarian nationalist ideology. This unconditional belief in the concept of 'Great Hungary' is very similar to the role of religion. It can be explained by Anderson's concept of how nationalism replaces the pre-nation state role of the church. (Özkirimli 2010, 105-112)

 One of the practical confrontations between the two countries is using nationalistic symbols, for instance maps with extended boarders of Hungary. According to Median, 5 percent of Hungarian cars drive with a sticker symbolizing the map of Hungary before the Treaty of Trianon. This is more than cars with the symbol of being a learner driver. In 2005 even the present prime minister of the country was driving a car with this symbol. (Origo 2007) The conflict of the two countries will be explained through the example of national minorities. This example only illustrates the unfinished discussion of territorial conflicts. Morover it provides an example how neighbouring countries' history often condradicts each other as Bosworth says. (Bosworth 2007, 10-15)

4. 1.2 Ethnicity

National minorities

According to George Schöpflin the modern nation states can be described by the continuous interaction of ethnicity, citizenship and the state. The power relations and the national identity can only be understood through the interconnected relationship of these three. In the interconnected history of Eastern Europe there are several national minorities in most of the countries. The case of Hungarian minority in Slovakia shows increasing aggression on both sides. The case of Malina Hedvig and the reaction of the Slovakian authorities well-illustrates this tension. And also shows the escalation of the conflict since 2006.

"On Aug. 25, 2006, an ethnic Hungarian student named Hedvig Malina was severely beaten and robbed in the city of Nitra, Slovakia, after she spoke Hungarian on her cellphone. "Slovakia without parasites" was written on her clothes when she first reported her injuries to authorities. A two-week-long police investigation ended without charges, while at the same time the minister of the interior stepped in front of TV cameras to announce that Malina's claims were baseless and accused her of making up the whole incident. In May 2007, Malina was indicted for perjury. Amid cries of outrage and charges of political interference, Malina appealed her case at the Constitutional Court. And in 2008, she took her case to the European Court of Human Rights." (Porter 2009) As Gellner's theory explains nationalism often refers to conflicts such as independence separations. One is often the cultural homogeneity as one of the classical factors to create conflict. (Gellner 2006, 55-56) As the Slovakian-Hungarian example illustrates the lingual homogeneity is a crucial element of national identity building especially in the case of Slovakia where part of the country is overwhelmingly Hungarian speaking.

The right-wing Prime minister at the time, Robert Fico in coalition with Ján Slota's extreme nationalists introduced a new Slovakian Language Regulation[3] that prohibits

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[3] "The law stated that personal contacts and documents used in local government and hospitals, and during public, cultural and educational events, were to be conducted and written only in the state language (Slovak). Information materials and notices, leaflets, event programmes, plaques, signs and advertisements needed to be in Slovak or to provide a

the use of Hungarian language by the minorities in official manners and work places. *"For example, a Hungarian doctor treating a Hungarian patient must speak Slovak unless they live in an overwhelmingly Hungarian area of the country."* (Porter 2009) In 2008 The Hungarian president was stopped at the border on his way to a joined memorial of the first Hungarian king recognized by both countries. It deepened the ongoing conflict and at the same time raised the issue of the freedom of movement on EU level. The diplomatic conflict was resolved later by a meeting of the Hungarian and Slovakian Prime Ministers a month after the incident. The anti-Hungarian sentiments by right-wing politicians are still on the agenda. The discrimination in education and the free use of language are the basic values of the European Union, however, the national identity and ethnical affiliations are closely related. The discrimination against minorities is part of the national identity and rooted in long historical conflicts. Just like in most of the cases the Slovakian-Hungarians are also carrying their identities by their surnames or accents that still makes them face everyday discrimination. (Porter 2009)

Roma minority

In adition to national minorities the segregation of Roma minorities also shows high level of discrmimination in most of the Eastern European region. The example of actual territorial segregation in Romania illustrates the radical level of the situation. According to the Economist a wall was built by the Romanian authorities in order to hide the Roma district from the public in a smaller town. It became the symbol of hiding poverty and discriminating minorities. The wall surrounded a district mainly occupied by Roma people because of their deep level of living condition and extreme poverty in the heart of the town. However Romania's anti-discrimination organization called the town leadership to demolish the wall, which they refused to do. According to the local authorities the wall serves safety purposes in order to

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simultaneous Slovak translation. All bilingual monument plaques and texts had to be first submitted to the ministry of culture for approval. The law also introduced fines of up to t5,000 for ignoring the legal provisions." (Pytlas 2013, 172)

prevent car accidents. This example shows not only a high level of ignorance but raises concerns about the capability of town leadership (The Economist 2015) The following examples will illustrate that in addition to territorial segregation the Roma communities are excluded in many levels in Eastern European countries. Discrimination does not only result in conflicts but also deepens the socio-economic gap between minority and majority. Being Roma is stigmatized by low-income or unemployed economic status. Roma children have significantly worse chances to access higher education or integration to the job market later on. Due to the local conflicts and the overall frustration of the society the Roma minority represents the main target of right-wing extremists in Eastern Europe.

According to the official statistic the the largest minority of Hungary are the Romas by 3,2 percent of the population. (KSH 2013) Paul Lendvai a Hungarian born journalist concludes the resent envents of Roma discrimination and also relates it to the rise of extreme right. Despite the above mentioned official statistics the Roma population in Hungary is estimated around 600-700,000 which is around 7 percent of the population. These people are facing discrimination on political, cultural and social level. The actual unemployment rate among Romas is around 80 percent. The low education level, dicrimination, bad health conditions and deprived living conditions create a high level of inequality between Roma and non-Roma Hungarians. The situation is critical in the already poor regions of the country where the lack of job opportunities often results in ethnic conflicts. (Lendvai 2012, 179-181) According to Melskhina in post socialist countries the exclusion of minorities from the identy building process is a common phenomenon. After the fall of the communist regime the picture of enemy shiftied to minorities instead of communism. This type of nation-building process excludes and discriminates identities of national minorities and sees them as a threat to consensus building instead of the appreciation of the cultural variety. This situation creates an enviroment where extremists are provoking conflicts against minorities and creating a picture of an enemy based on populist beliefs. This inhibits the achievement of the basic consensus on the nature of state. The establishment of a more integrative

political community and the promotion of multiculturism is a necessary condition of democratic transition in the Eastern European region. (Melshkina 2010, 164-165)

The exclusion of the Roma minority from consensus building and the faiulire of introducing effictive integration programs is the overall responsibility of leading hungarian political parties since 1990."*There is no question that the Roma have been the biggest losers of the change of system in 1989 and the collapse of the old heavy industries."* (Lendvai 2012, 180) Melesknina's concept of the extremists provocation against Romas can be exemplyfied by the sequence of events starting in 2006. The following events show extreme segregation, unemployment and everyday discrimination that leads to social frustration. The incite of the far-right party and the ignorance of the right-wing government leads to deadly conflicts between Roma and non-Roma Hungarians.

„While driving through the Roma quarter a School teacher (..) had an accident with a small Roma girl, slightly injuring her. When he got out of his car, he was attacked by incensed Roma who believed the girl was dead. [He] was killed on the spot." (Lendvai 2012, 181) The brutal murder induced huge media attention which was directed against the overall Roma population mainly by far-right publications and media coverage. After the murder of a popular handball player[4] the fact that the attackers were Roma facilitated the strengthening of right-wing extremist and extremist organizations such as the Hungarian National Guard[5]. The relevance of this organization will be discussed in the later chapters. The everyday provocation and harastment of the Roma population esclated into tragic events in. After the everyday

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[4] „Late at night on 8 February 2009 three popular handball players of a local team in the town of Veszprém in western Hungary were involved in a nightclub fight. The Romanian Marian Cozma was stabbed; the other tow players sufferd critical injuries. The fact that the attacers were roma fuelled the debate on 'gypsy criminality'." (Lendvai 2012, 182)

[5] Para-military organization that is related to the Hungarian far right party, the JOBBIK. The organization stands for the protection of Hungarian identity and national values. It organizes voluntarily based public protection mainly in settlements with high Roma population. Their presence provokes and intimidates the local Roma community. The organization was dispended by Hungarian supreme court in 2008 however the it reorganized it self and still operates.

intimidation of Roma people "(..) *9 people including two children were killed in 49 attack of Roma communities between January 2008 and April 2011.*" (The Guardian 2012) The murder of a father and his five year old son in 2009 shows exceptional brutality. Both of them were shot dead while escaping from their burning house that was set on fire by their murderers. The attackers were motivated by ethnic hatred. (Open Democracy 2014) Most of the attacks were associated with the above mentioned paramillitary organization that is connected to and supported by the Hunagarian far-right Jobbik party. *„Although both the Fidesz[6] leadership (...) and the right-leaning media, not to speak of the chuches, have all remained silent on the Hungarian guard."* (Lendvai 2012, 186)

In addition to the brutal events the lack of integration can be illustraded by the segregation on an educational level. A recent report by Amnesty International points out concerning level of elementary school discrimination against Roma pupils across Slovakia. In the regions with high number of Roma population eighty-five percent of special classes are Roma pupils that is considered as an undercover way of creating Roma classes for children who are studying slower than the averege. This segregation is also facilitated by the anti-roma sentiments of parents who fear their children to be taught together with roma kids. Roma pupils remain trapped in this system that does not provide equal opportunitites in further education and their job market positions later on. (Amnesty International 2010) Education as a key factor of integration seems to lack basic measurements in order to provide equal opportunities.

4.1.3 Concluding remarks

To conclude the aspect of discrimination and exclusion of minority groups the above listed examples show significant characteristics. According to Schöpflin the concept of citizenship shows fundamental differences between Western and Eastern Europe.

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[6] Largest opposition party until 2010, government party since 2010.

The post-socialist Eastern Europe is still lacking the institutional definition of citizenship. The public identities are often defined on ethno-nationalistic bases. This ethno-nationalistic view allows determinate poverty or social deprivation based on ethinc-criterias. (Schöpflin 2000, 277-278) The case of Hungarian minority in Slovakia, Roma minority in Hungary or Russian speaking minority in Latvia[7] can be explained by this argument. Based on the examples the socio-economic status of minorities in the region has a very negative reputation especially among the far-right supporters. According to Schöpflin communism had a very destructive effect on civil society solidarity that is especially underdeveloped towards the minority groups. The strong ethnic character of nationhood is directed against national and Roma minorities. According to Schöpflin the disapearence of communism as threat was replaced by these minorities. They symbolise the factor of danger on national identity. (Schöpflin 2000, 278-279) This way of connecting post-communism with contemporary ethnic conflicts provides a possible explanation to this overall Eastern European tendency. According to Korkut "*(...) while the provision of rights and freedoms made sexual and ethnic minorities visible and their demands increasingly ubiquitous, the same process of liberalization did not enhance their capabilities. „* (Korkut 2012, 196-197) This observation provides an explanation to the discriminative legislations which were made for instance against the Hungarian minorities in Slovakia.

4.2. Democratic concerns since the regime change of Eastern Europe

By investigating the correlation between nationalistic populism and democratic shortages the following examples will focus on the twenty-five year long period of democratic transition in Eastern Europe. According to Blokker after 1990 the establishment of democratic checks and balances in the Eastern European region was not necessarily based on a wide political consensus or shared political culture.

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[7] The Latvian case of Russian speaking minorities will be discussed the following chapter.

The recent constitutional crisis in some of the Eastern European countries shows that the leading populist parties are seeking to reconceptualize the regime change. (Blokker 2010, 172-178) The case study of Poland, Hungary and Romania aims to demonstrate the challenges of the regime change and the liberal democratic transition. The analysis is focusing on the three countries constitution making processes in 1989-90 in contrast of their contemporary democratic shortages. Blokker's study on the three countries provides examples of shortages along the democratic transition period.

4.2.1. Poland

After the elections of 1989 the Polish parliament made several radical changes on the constitution, however the constitution making process lasted until 1997. This version of the constitution was still criticized by some right-wing politicians, however it can be seen as a compromise between right-based and identity-based views of the political community. (Blokker 2010, 90-95) The Polish Law and Justice Party urged a new social contract for the Polish people against the liberal transition. The Kachinsky led right-wing movement promoted the idea of a 'Fourth Republic' that reinterprets the Polish regime change. The party supported a solidarity based Christian nation building process. (Blokker 2010, 136) This duality of identity and rights is still present in the polish political culture. Among the main political parties there was a consensus about the EU integration. European integration meant the way forward and the protection of democracy for those who represented the ethics of rights in Poland. The EU accession clearly opened the door for discussion on national sovereignty, independence and identity. Christianity plays a significantly more important role in national identity building than in other countries in the region. The Christian grounded identity in Poland could be coordinated with European values based on the Christian homogeneity of the European member states. (Blokker 2010, 168) The radical representatives of national sovereignty can be closely related to the supporters of the former Polish president Kachinsky who died in a plane crash in 2010. The challenge of the democratic system is how to handle the right wing in

Poland. The movement of counterdemonstrations started to get stronger recently. Which can be an effective way respond to anti-democratic voices. (New York Times 2013) According to Pelinka there are three ways reacting to far-right movements. The method of (1) delegitimization follows an exclusive process from electoral participation. The method of (2) isolating the far-right aims to block it from its alliances. Meanwhile the strategy of (3) embracing trusts that the populist right wing will prove its inability to govern among the democratic checks and balances. However the Polish way seems to follow the way of social demonstration, which shows the strength of democratic public support. (Pelinka 2013, 17) The counterdemonstrations create a picture of Poland, which is not solely dominated by the voices of nationalistic extremist, but shows strong support of democracy as well.

4.2.2 Hungary

The Hungarian constitution at the time of the regime change of 1989-90 went through fundamental amendments that created strong liberal constitutional environments compared to other post-communist countries. However in order to ensure legal continuity an entirely new constitution was not introduced. This period of constitutional politics *"(…) was dominated by the more liberal and radical oppositional forces as well as part of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)."* (Blokker 2010, 89) However the establishment of democratic checks and balances did not result in a singular political culture. The regime change concluded the emergence of different political cultures at the same time. As the Polish example already showed this plurality had an overall effect on the last twenty-five years of democratic transition. *"A right based political grammar has, however, been paralleled and contested by an alternative democratic discourse based on an ethic of identity (…)"* (Blokker 2010, 144) The Hungarian post-territorial nationalism concerns all the Hungarian speaking population beyond the border. The rights of these minorities beyond the borders have always had crucial importance. The concept of 'Great Hungary' is part of the traditional national sovereignty. (Blokker 2010, 168) The ethic based political identity, which is mostly represented by the right-wing

conservative party wrote a new episode of constitutional politics in the country. After the landslide victory of Hungarian conservatives in 2010 the new parliament approved a widely criticized new constitution. According to the Hungarian president Viktor Orbán the introduction of a new basic law is *"(…) necessary in order to complete the work of eradicating the legacy of Communism from Hungary. The constitution, enacted in January 2012, replaced one drafted in 1989, at a time when the country was emerging from 40 years of Communist rule."* (BBC 2013) The measurement became targeted by the international media mainly because it limits the power of the constitutional court, gives preference to traditional (heterosexual) family models, controls civil liberties of higher-education students and lowers the age limit in the judicial system. (BBC 2013) Independently from these critics the intention of introducing a new constitution meets with Korkut's concept. The populist conservative party promotes nationalism and aims to restart and reinterpret the transition period. According to Korkut the contemporary critical view on liberal democracy and Europeanization processes is the direct consequence of the lack of public discussion and emerge of civil society. The elitist political culture since the regime changes created the nationalistic response and the urge to reinterpret the democratization in the region. (Korkut 2012, 195-200) According to Lendvai the *'half-hearted change'* of 1989 gave the opportunity to the current government to restart the regime change. However most of the newly introduced laws and regulations since 2010 faced serious critics in Brussels. (Lendvai 2012, 216-220)

4.2.3 Romania

In contrast with the Hungarian and Polish example the Romanian case was not a negotiated regime change. During the communist regime the opposition forces struggled to organize themselves, therefore by 1989 there wasn't such a concept of political transition like in the case of Poland or Hungary. After the execution of Ceausescu, the former Romanian dictator, a self-declared political council: The National Salvation Front (NSF) started the transition that included the former elite of

the communist era as well. The adopted constitution in 1991 was based on the ethic of identity according to Blokker's terminology that formed a so-called constitutional nationalism. Nevertheless the human rights and internationally approved checks and balances of the democratic operation were included in the newly adopted constitution. However it predominantly served the maintenance of post-communist regime. The revision of the Romanian constitution happened in 2003 that shifted away from the right-based nationalistic outlook partially because of the beginning of the European Union accession process. (Blokker 2010, 95-98)

"In the Romanian case, the constitutional analysis showed an extensive dominance of a democratic discourse based on an ethic of identity." (Blokker 2010, 144) However the civic participation in decision-making was very low from the beginning of the transition period. As the concept of Blokker and Schöpflin states that the establishment of democratic checks and balances in the Eastern European region were not necessarily based on wide political consensus or shared political culture. Communism had a very destructive effect on civil society and the culture of political participation. The strong ethnic character of nationhood after the regime change is strongly reflected in the first version of Romanian constitution. (Blokker 2010, 170) as (Schöpflin 2000, 278-279)

4.2.4 Concluding remarks

The three examples have demonstrated the crucial importance of the regime change that was the first step on the road of democratic transition. The concept of post-communist democratic transition by Blokker highlights the correlation between democratic checks and balances, the political culture and the constitution. The process of constitution making differs among the three examples especially in the case of Romania. However the current constitutional crisis in the three countries points out the plurality in each post-communist state. *"The project of a Fourth Republic in Poland, a stand-off between liberal and nationalist forces in Hungary, and a presidential crisis with constitutional overtones in Romania"* (Blokker 2010, 171) are showing the urge to reinterpret or restart the democratic transition. Nationalism

has played a key role in this transition that raises the question of its either positive or negative effect. According to Lecour's the effect of state nationalism during transition periods is variable. Nationalism can facilitate the process. If nationalism contributes to define the nation (in this case a post-communist nation) *"above and beyond the countries preexisting ethnic and national cleavages it can provide a basic political framework from where democracy can operate"* (Lecour & Moreno 2010, 264) This can be interpreted partly on the Polish case where state nationalism has been defined on the basis of Christian values and religious solidarity. On the other hand Korkut's concept states that the elitist nature of democratization harms the formation of civil society political culture and later opens room for nationalistic populism. As the Hungarian example of EU skepticism shows, the relationship between elitism, liberalization, and alienation makes the Europeanization abstract and impersonal. So far the largest failure of elitist liberalization has been the lack of overall welfare delivery. The growing social gap between rich and poor in the region creates serious ethnic, social and political conflict that is resulting in the strengthening of radical political forces. (Korkut 2012, 195-201) The above-mentioned examples are concluding the core dilemma of lack of trust in public institutions. The liberalization process of these countries failed to deliver increasing level of trust towards public institution. The lack of transparency and the corruption scandals are undermining the positive effects of democratization. (Horne 2009, 344-5, 365)

4.2 Right wing populism – extreme right

This chapter will apply Pelinka's concept of Eastern European extreme-right on the example of the Hungarian Jobbik party, the Slovakian National Party, the Latvian 'All for Latvia' party and the Estonian Independence party. By analyzing the role and influence of these radical parties the chapter is also focusing on their relation towards the conservative right wing parties. According to Pelinka Right-wing as a concept involves the mainstream as well as the radical forces of the political elite therefore their relation has crucial importance. The representative-

democracy creates frustration because there are segments of the society who feel underrepresented or excluded from the political decision-making. Pelinka says that this frustration combined with anti-elitism plays a key role in contemporary far-right expansion. (Pelinka 2013, 8-9) According to Pelinka *"populism's anti-elitist character makes it easier for parties outside the mainstream to make use of populist elements."* (Pelinka 2013, 9) The anti-elitism is generally a post-communist type of anti-Semitic, anti-European, anti-globalization ethno-nationalistic profile directed against minorities that often includes some type of revisionist agenda. (Pelinka 2013, 12-16) If we look at the expansion of the four radical parties in the Eastern European region Pelinka's characterization appears to be valid.

4.3.1 Slovakia & Hungary

The expansion of the Slovakian National Party shows a relatively long history with its establishment in 1989. Since 1990 it is represented in the Slovakian Parliament. The Party's profile is certainly directed against the Roma minority and the Hungarian minority concentrated in the southern part of Slovakia. After winning the 11,6 percent of the votes in 2006 the party became an influential actor of parliamentary decision-making. However it lost 50 percent of its support by the time the elections in 2010. Most of its the supporters turned to Robert Fico's right-wing populist party: the SMER. After winning the elections in 2006 the radical right wing elements became more frequent in SMER's rhetoric. The government coalition was formed with the Slovakian National Party. (Pytlas 2013, 168-169) This era was marked by continuous confrontation with the Hungarian minority. The earlier mentioned Slovakian Language Regulation was introduced in 2009 that also resulted in an ongoing conflict between Slovakian and Hungarian nationalists. The earlier mentioned Jobbik party of Hungary reacted radically. The anti-Slovakian speeches of the party leader, Gábor Vona included insulting statements. He described Slovakia, as a country that belongs to Hungary and never existed on its own moreover it does not have its own national history. (Pytlas 2013, 175)

Hungary's Jobbik Party was formed into a political party in 2003 and gained a significant amount of supporters by the time of the European elections in 2009. The Party won almost 15 percent of the votes, which can be explained by political failure of the Hungarian left wing governments during the period. (Pytlas 2013, 169) However the expansion of the party is a result of complex circumstances of the Hungarian political culture.

Looking at the core electorate of the party the voters are dominantly the losers of the post-socialist era and those who lost were negatively affected by the economic crisis in 2008-2009. Pelinka's aspect of Anti elitism can be applied to this group of supporters. The party attracts many supporters based on their Roma hostility independently from their social status. This profile would fit into a typical far-right party in the region however the Jobbik party has many students and highly educated supporters as well who share anti-Semitic, nationalistic and xenophobic beliefs. It is not surprising that the party enjoys much higher support in rural areas especially in regions with high number of Roma population. (Kovács 2013, 228-230)

According to Lendvai, Jobbik's anti-Semitism also influenced the party's increasing support. Jobbik's propaganda targets Israeli investors and 'secret agents' who are slowly buying up the country as another typical populist method of the party. In addition to the growing anti-Semitism, anti-Elitism is also a significant and increasing feature of the far-right party. (Lendvai 2012, 192). The recent results of the local elections held in a western Hungarian town raises further concerns. The far-right party won local elections for the first time on April 12 of 2015. The result addresses also the responsibility of the right-wing FIDESZ government. Jobbik seems to be gaining advantage of the declining popularity of the governing FIDESZ party. This means that the far-right party can be the next challenger of FIDESZ in the upcoming elections in 2018. (BBC 2015) The rise of Jobbik clearly demonstrates some crucial structural causes of far-right expansion. In the era of socialist-liberal coalition between 2002 and 2010 corruption became a systematic factor. The government focused on securing short-term political support instead of promoting the necessity of European Integration. The consecutive corruption scandals undermined the trust in institutions and political actors. The continuous failure of introducing an effective Roma integration policy deepened the social and economic gap in the society. This

political environment combined with the economic crisis and the counterproductive strategy against extreme political movements resulted in a surprisingly big success of Jobbik in 2009. Both mainstream political actors tried and failed to gain advantage of the rise of Jobbik. Therefore they also have indisputable responsibility in the case. The social-liberal former government failed to break Jobbik's popularity by using strong anti-fascist rhetoric. Meanwhile the right-wing conservatives (FIDESZ) failed to separate their views consistently from the populist propaganda of Jobbik. By appropriating some of the aspects of the extremists – such as radical anti-communism or the strong political support of Hungarian minorities abroad – Fidesz induced the long term expansion of the Jobbik party. (Kovács 2013, 224-225) As Anthony Smith states, nationalistic rhetoric is a tool to coordinate and influence society. This populist approach seems more beneficial for the Hungarian mainstream right than a strict separation from far-right propaganda. (Smith 1991, 73-98) Folk culture symbols and nationalistic rhetoric is an emblematic feature of Eastern European right wing. The excessive patriotism is a very characteristic tool of far-right political communication. It functions as a 'religious' belief in the country's national heritage and values. According to Ruth Wodak this type of political rhetoric combined with anti-minority propaganda is one of strongest attractions of far-right parties. (Wodak 2013, 27-29)

3.2 Latvia & Estonia

This chapter aims to highlight the characteristics of far-right parties, it also concerns the minorities. In the case of Latvia and Estonia the extreme right populism is mainly directed against the Russian speaking minorities. In Latvia the Russian speakers are also targeted by the mainstream right parties. The country also has much more radical organizations and extreme right movements, however the russian minority is also larger in Latvia than Estonia. Morover these organizations are also directed against homosexuals and often using anti-Semitic rhetorics. However since their platform was primarily concentrated on websites their support was not significant. Since 2010 the National Alliance of Latvia far-right party is showing increasing

popularity. (Auers & Kasekamp 2013, 237-242) The party fullfils the typical modern far-right profile decribed by Pelinka. It is ethno-nationalistic, anti-globalistic, anti-Semitic and it is led by a charismatic leader named Raivis Dzintar who is well-known as the 'master' of right-wing populism. (Pelinka 2013, 17) However "*There is a strong strain of support for authoritarianism in the Baltic States that stretches back to the popular authoritarian regimes of the 1930s (..)"* (Auers & Kasekamp 2013, 243) This nostalgia remains central to the Latvian National Alliance propaganda. The attraction of a strong leader who decides instead of the parliament or any elected body is surprisingly popular among the National Alliance voters. The militaristic profile of the party advertises quick and efficient decision making especially in the case of increasing Russian threat instead of democratic solutions. This type of populist rhetoric primarily blames the estublished political élite for being corrupt and unable to protect the national identity. By blaming the government for corruption and lack of transparency the National Alliance is still able to keep their democratic profile. (Auers & Kasekamp 2013, 243-244) This anti-elitist populism is also highlighted by Pelinka who combines it with the frustration of underepresented groups of the society. (Pelinka 2013, 4)

The example of Latvian and Estonian emergence of radical-right populism is most likely related to the economic crisis of 2008-09 however there are differences between the countries in this regard. Their reaction to the economic crisis was very similar. Both countries' GDP dropped by approximately fifteen percent by 2010 however the institutional checks and balances remained strong moreover both governments were re-elected after the crisis. The fundamental difference is in their the party funding systems. Estonia shows far lower levels of corruption and the population is more satisfied with the political accountability. (Auers & Kasekamp 2013, 245-246) According to Pelinka's explanation "*populist anti-elitism today is directed against those who seem to be responsible for Europeanization and globalization, and especially for mass migration (...)"* (Pelinka 2013, 8) The example of Estonia shows an interesting difference. Political transparency can decrease the popularity of right-wing populism. According to Bustikova nationalism, cultural conservatism and anti-communism are the most common charateristics of far right

in Europe. The success of the extreme right can be understood as a reaction to corruption and to the lack of accountibility of the political elite. The weakness of the rule of law establishes more competitive postitions for the extreme right. Since the EU accession of the region homogenised some of the main policies of the new memberstates the far right has gained a lot of support by fundamentaly criticizing the democratic system. (Bustikova 2009, 224, 237) Estonia's case shows how big the responsibility of the mainstream political forces is in the expansion of radical movements.

5. Discussion

This thesis is focusing on nationalism in the context of Eastern Europe and investigates how it affects the democratic transition. The analysis does not focus on the effect of EU accession and the European Integration Process. As it is pointed out in the analysis the nationalism, populism and extreme right expansion are closely related contemporary issues. This thesis concludes and explains the far right expansion by highlighting the responsibility of mainstream parties, corruption of the political elite and the minority issues. However the European denationalization process is also one of the contributors to the rising nationalism in Eastern Europe. According to Bustikova the EU accession facilitates the effect of homogenization of policy positions among the mainstream political parties. By adopting the European policy regulation left- and right-wing parties became more consentient on Europeanization policies. This vacuum effect of EU accession created a conducive environment for the far right. Due to the limited economic policy margin of newly joined member states the conservative populist reaction took advantage of these limitations. These parties interpreted the European accession as an external regulation of national freedom. This populist interpretation could address right wing and far right voters. (Bustikova 2009, 226,237) *"The extreme-right parties focused on the alternative dimension of party competition based on ethnicity, cultural conservatism, moralistic and puritan anti-communist rhetoric bundled up with anti-corruption invective. The technocratic and bureaucratic process of EU accession, which has been accompanied by declining improvements in the quality of governance, contributed to a 'vacuum' effect in the policy space and led to party competition based on identity-based appeals such as ethnic hatred."* (Bustikova 2009, 236) Bustikova emphasizes that the European enlargement has contributed to the electoral success of far right parties in Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia or Romania however she acknowledges, it also improved other contributing factors such as the minority protection.

As it was already argued in the earlier chapters the mainstream political parties have crucial responsibility in the far right expansion. According to a study on party

responsiveness on European Integration the mainstream parties of Eastern Europe consistently show more and more support on Europeanization during the integration process. However, the study shows no evidence that these parties actually track their voters. *"In the case of EU integration, parties may have additional incentives to disregard the interests of the public in the hope of securing benefits associated with their country's membership of the EU."* (Spanihelova & Zicha 2012, 764) This gap between public opinion and the political sphere was already discussed by the example elitist regime changes in Eastern Europe. According to this example the political interest urges the adaption of European Integration that show similar tendencies with the elitist method of regime changes in the region.

As the introduction states the rising nationalism and growing EU skepticism are not unique Eastern European phenomena. It is an overall tendency since the accelerated enlargement process and the economic crisis. Recently it is also interpreted as an overall policy response to the economic crisis. As the Eastern European example shows, nationalism contributes to some of the democratic shortages in the region. However this result contradicts some of the European examples where far right expansion and right wing populism does not harm the democratic operation of the system. As part of the discussion the relationship of nationalism and democracy is being analyzed in the context of Scandinavian countries. According to Marsdal the social democratic Scandinavian welfare states are representing a non-traditional practice of right-wing populism. The far right voters share clearly conservative and nationalist views in the case of immigration and minority policies, foreign aid to development countries, anti-globalism, homosexual rights or feminism. However the voters also share traditionally leftist attitudes such as reduction of economic inequality, extensive welfare services, increased worker rights and influence in the workplaces. 9 (Marsdal 2013, 44-45) This duality differs from the Eastern European way however the electoral base of the Scandinavian far right shows close similarities. The Norwegian Progress Party (FRP) primarily targets relatively low-income working class people. Compared to a typical Eastern European far-right party the FRP is more popular among the older generation. According to Marsdal the popularity of FRP is rooted in recent public policy measures such as the *"reduced taxation on capital (…),*

increasing economic inequalities, privatization of public companies (Stanoil, Telenor), deregulation of electricity market (…), abolition of social-housing policies, free trade policy restrictions dictated by the European Union, pension cuts, (…)" (Marsdal 2013, 48) The Norwegian far-right is directed against neo-liberal economic policies and supranational organizations such as the EU or the WTO. The potential voters of FRP among the working class are obviously rejecting the ongoing economic integration policies. Instead, they support economic and political independency with active participation and representation of the voters. It shows a very similar type of criticism against Europeanization and neo-liberalism like the Eastern European skepticism. The aspect of economic and political independence is not a unique nationalistic post-communist phenomenon. The Danish election results of 2011 points out the responsibility of mainstream political parties. It highlights another similarity with the Eastern European Case. Since the social-democrat victory in 2011 the government failed to introduce an effective strategy to win back the voters from the Danish People Party. The right-wing character of the party on economic issues was proven by their reaction to the economic crisis therefore they became less popular by the 2011 elections. However since their popularity is constantly growing. After the economic crisis the neo-liberal right wing introduced austerity policies all across Europe. The center-left coalition was supposed to offer political alternative to the right-wing crisis management however Thorning-Schmidt's government represented a particularly depoliticized and neutral role during the Danish presidency of the European Union. (Marsdal 2013, 53-54) Nevertheless the Danish People Party failed to deliver their promises during the previous parliamentary cycle. As it is stated by Pelinka *"populism in power will demonstrate its professional inability and the impossibility to fulfill the expectations of its voters as a governing party"* (Pelinka 2013, 17) According to this concept the anti-democratic parties are embracing themselves when it comes to real political participation. In the case of the Danish People Party this concept is not entirely valid. However by indirectly supporting the welfare cuts of the government the party lost many of their supporters. This action already proved a certain level of inability to take responsibility for campaign promises.   However it raises some concerns in the Eastern European case. Is the post-communist democratic system able to react in a

similar way towards right-wing extremism? In my opinion such young democratic systems are still lacking the experience of reacting far-right expansion. This lack of experience concerns the political party level as well as the public electoral behavior. The post-communist Eastern European countries did not earn the liberal democracy in the way how for instance the French democratic roots were founded. The active political participation still carries negative perceptions since the communist era. The conscious acquisition of the representative democracy and the understanding of democratic values and rights cannot be triggered by introducing institutions or checks and balances. The social and cultural adoption seems to occur at a much slower rate than political adoption. I find the contemporary right-wing populism a very natural reaction. The transition period proved the necessity of reinterpreting the last twenty-five years. The effect of the economic crisis of 2008 internationally shook the confidence in the neo-liberal democratic model. It likely affects the contemporary democratic and constitutional doubts of post-socialist countries and the expansion of radical political parties. The expansion of right-wing populism is not surprising in such an environment.

6. Conclusion

The illustrative examples of Eastern European right-wing populism and extreme nationalism have contributed to an understanding of how nationalism affects the democratic transition. The effect of contemporary nationalistic tendencies is both hindering and furthering the transitional process of the region. The examples demonstrated that nationalism and right wing populism can be understood as a result of the democratic transition therefore the positivity or negativity of its effect can be hardly decided. The aspect of discrimination against national minorities and Roma minorities in the region pointed out the ethno-nationalistic character of public identities. The post-socialist European countries are still lacking the institutional definition of citizenship. The public representation of minorities is inefficient and excludes them from the political sphere. Poverty and the low social status of Roma minorities are combined with ethnic hatred and marginalized positions within the societies. The strong ethnic character of nationhood is directed against minorities by far right populism. According to Schöpflin's concept the disappearance of communism as a threat to national identity was replaced by the discrimination towards national and ethnical minority groups. (Schöpflin 2000, 277-9) The multiple discrimination of minorities conserves their disadvantaged situation. The lack of effective integration deepens the social and economical gap within the society and results in a rapid rise of poverty. The far-right hatred speech and populist provocation towards minority groups results in frustration and racism.

The examples of constitution making process in Poland, Hungary and Romania highlighted several consequences of the regime change in these countries. The communist era eliminated the civil society practice of political participation therefore the institutional transition of the democratic system was not followed by the emergence of the civil society culture. The adoption of democracy as a prescription urged the creation of a neo-liberal, Western-European type of democratic model. The regime change resulted in an elitist political culture. It harmed the formation of a democratic civil society and as the contemporary tendency shows it opened room for anti-democratic nationalistic populism. The elitist political sphere failed to deliver effective welfare systems. Therefore the

growing social gap between rich and poor in the post-socialist countries creates serious ethnic, social and political conflicts that are resulting in the strengthening of radical political forces and anti-democratic movements. (Korkut 2012, 195-201) The adoption and introduction of democratic institutions was not closely followed by the social adoption of democratic values and the emergence of a democratic civil society.

The analysis of far-right political parties and organizations in Slovakia, Hungary, Latvia and Estonia pointed out the anti-democratic character of extreme political forces. The growing popularity of far-right parties shows a concerning tendency in the Eastern European region. Based on the examples the thesis concluded a number of significant characteristics of these parties that explains their popularity and attraction among many voters. The far right populism primarily addresses the low-income, undereducated layers of society who are predominantly the losers of the post-socialist democratic transition. Due to the vulnerable financial situation of this social group the recent economic crisis increased the unemployment rates within this social layer. The austerity policies introduced by mainstream political parties continued to increase their unpopularity among the already skeptical voters. (Kovács 2013, 228-230) As the Hungarian example shows the mainstream political forces are sharing responsibility for the expansion of far right. The Latvian case illustrated how corruption and lack of transparency can result in increasing far-right popularity. The populist propaganda of these parties is typically directed against minority groups. The nationalist rhetoric is often built on anti-elitist critique against the mainstream political parties and promotes the protection of national identity and independence. Their populism calls for the reinterpretation of the democratic transition and facilitates anti-European rhetoric. Anti-democratic rhetoric seems to be increasingly popular, however it addresses the question of what happens if an Eastern-European far right party gains real political power. Are they able to deliver all the populist promises what they use by their propaganda?

The shaken confidence in democratic institutions and neo-liberal political system drives many voters to extreme directions. This tendency of raising nationalism questions the effectiveness of the democratic consolidation in the post-socialist countries. According to the examples it cannot be stated that the raising

nationalism harms the democratic transition. Many of the cases pointed out that nationalism and democracy mutually affect and form each other. Since their multiple interconnections the two phenomena cannot be analyzed individually. Both tendencies are dependent variables of complex social, economical and political processes. This thesis provides a brief explanation of how nationalism and democratic transition affect each other in post socialist countries however it points out the necessity of further research. As the thesis concludes in many cases nationalism and right-wing populism is also a consequence of the post-communist liberalization process therefore a research on post-communist national identity development could bring interesting results. Such a research could analyze the complexity of the unorganized, contradictory and insecure nature of national identity in the new democracies of Europe.

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