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'Moving politics beyond the state? The impact of European Integration on the Hungarian minority in Slovakia'[1]

In Eastern Central Europe identity has always been an integral part of any political changes – democratic or otherwise. Within one decade postcommunist democracies transformed themselves into enlargement states and finally, to new member states of the EU. The article traces the impact of this ongoing transition process on politics and societies and identifies three stages of identity politics in the Central European region.

The aim is to provide a systematic analysis of these varied stages whilst focusing on the new developments since the accession into the EU. The Slovak-Hungarian relations serve as an example. It is argued that the initial stage of postcommunist identity politics was dominated by an overwhelming assertion of ethnic conception of statehood. This was followed by the still ongoing 'Europeanisation' stage of national and ethnic groups – both internally within states and externally into the EU. The second stage is being complemented by a new 'transnational' stage. The question here is whether the latter is accompanied by the emergence of ethno-regions, meaning political/geographic entities beyond and 'across' state level.

The argument holds that the meaning of 'the nation', the state and territory is being transformed and that there is a discernible shift from politics at the state level to regions and with that a change in identity formation vis-à-vis new institutions and geographies. The implications for international/ interethnic relations appear to be largely positive, but untested. The main implication is that democracy, in view of the fact that its traditional home – the state - is being challenged for its repeated failing to produce a lasting reconciliation between national groups, needs a novel shape.

In seeking an answer as to the sustainability of this largely positive developments, I elaborate firstly on contradictions of the democracy-identity relationship within the state and propose, following Habermas, that democracy may need 'rescuing'[2] from beyond the state. This sets the remit for the categorisation of subtly varied stages through which this relationship has been played out over the last decade. A number of hypotheses about politics beyond the state are tested against empirical evidence gained from a recent survey conducted among the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. This evidence supports the main thesis here: the EU creates

unprecedented prospects to move politics beyond the state and in the process, removes some challenges to democracy within the state.

Identity and Democracy in post-Communism

I have argued elsewhere[3] that identity and democracy are very closely linked. In fact, the relationship is so intimate that it is difficult at times to separate which one of the two has an upper hand, for let us not for a moment imagine, that this intimacy should in any way suggest an equality of purpose or objective. There is a good reason why the most ruthless of conflicts in our time – the ethnic conflict – is in such prevalence at the same time when the globe is democratising. Whilst discussing democratisation of eastern Central Europe, (now in relative peace), it is important to stress the dark shadow democracy carries within[4] - nationalism.

Definitions

I will use nationalism and identity politics interchangeably. I take nationalism to mean a form of politics which focuses on the articulation and the promotion of political aims in the name of and on behalf of a nation, or a national group. It refers to aspirations to political sovereignty, or a degree of it within a given territory; hence nationalism is not limited to actions and policies of a nation whose name the state carries, but could be policies and actions of other national groups living within the territory of the state, or as is the case in Central Europe, across the state boundary[5].

The nation here stands for a large social group integrated by a combination of objective relationships, such as territory, language, politics, history, economy and culture, and their subjective reflection in collective consciousness[6]. The distinction between the nation and ethnic group lies in the fact, that ethnicity is strictly a cultural trait in which the binding issue is primarily the common ancestry and not loyalty to a legal structure of the state, at least not necessarily the state of residence or/and citizenship. National identity then, logically, derives from the membership in 'the nation', whilst ethnic identity is even more a cultural category than the nation, which too should be considered a cultural rather than a political category.

It is not a revelation that the controversy of nationalism lies in the fact that the nations-state is hardly ever a single nation state and that most states comprise of more than one national group, thus are actually non-nation-sates[7], but that in nearly all cases one national group has the pre-eminent authority to assume the dominant position in the distribution of rewards and cultural values. Minority is a national/ethnic group which defines itself, or is defined as a separate cultural entity from the official culture of the state.

No discussion about nationalism could be complete without the mention of two processes at the heart of the establishment of a political community. These are culturally dominated nation-building and institutionally underpinned state-building. The former stands for a deliberate effort to construct a collective identity which can bind the political nation in a more meaningful way. The focus of this effort is the construction or promotion of national narrative which is based on the language, history, literature, and other cultural traditions that together form what we call national identity. State-building should be understood as a complementary project,

aiming at the establishment of political community of citizens, forging of social solidarity and respect and loyalty to state institutions. This is fundamentally a different process; moreover, resources for the formation of this identity need not be culturally given – one does not need to be born into citizenship, one can acquire it and with it adopt a sense of belonging to the state. Obviously, the clash between the administrative and the political thrust of state-building and the culturally preoccupied nation-building is less relevant if there is congruence between the polity and cultural nation. It is equally obvious that in cotemporary world, ethnic homogeneity is less and less possible to achieve - if it ever was.

The recent history of postcommunism offers many examples of the difficult balancing of nation and state-building and the consequences for these nascent democratisation processes. The modern state has for a long time rested on social and cultural homogeneity, hence the perception that unity means homogeneity. In multinational (multiethnic or multicultural) states the process of homogenisation can be conflicting, mostly due to the assumption by the dominant nation and its nation-building elites that the state is their own nation-state which implies the exclusion of other cultures from ownership of the state. Too much emphasis on nation-building tends to inhibit internal integration of national groups within the state and aggravate the relationship between majority and minorities. By the same token, taken into a larger context of the EU, we can argue that too much insistence on national identity inhibits political integration of the new European polity.

Nationalism and democracy: ambiguous and perilous relationship

The basic premise here is that identity and democracy are very tightly linked. The explanation lies in a number of interrelated historical contingencies and ideological assumptions. Democracy, at its most basic level is a rule of the people. However, democracy also presupposes a political unit – in modern times this has been a modern state. We also have to concede that a) nationalism, more than any other ideology has, often by violent means, succeeded in furnishing such a community with legitimate political status, b) that no matter how much we may reject the idea that the nation-state should be the main framework for democracy, solidarity and sovereignty, it is still difficult to think about political community outside the frame of the nation-state[8]. The state has usually come to existence as a result of national self-determination of one dominant culturally predetermined 'nation'.

The idea that a group of people have in common a set of shared interests and should be allowed to express their wishes on how these interests are best promoted and that that group should be culturally homogeneous and therefore united under 'a government to themselves apart'[9], expresses what historically and ideologically became two dominating, at times compatible, but rather contradictory ideologies – democracy and nationalism. Some two hundred years later we are still preoccupied with the same set of challenges: legitimacy of the nation-state, democracy, political unity and nationalism, cultural diversity and self-determination and how they interact. From this perspective, the EU is, as it were, guilty of political blasphemy, challenging a holy trinity: nation, state, territory.

The interaction between democracy and nationalism is rather banal. Both are associated with popular sovereignty and participation from below meaning rights,

beliefs, expectations and interests, in short, both are rooted in the idea that all political authority stems from 'the people'. There is, however, a crucial difference: whilst democracy's legitimacy relies on explicitly defined political principles about inclusion, political equality and participation, nationalism bases its legitimacy in the rule of the people who constitute its nation. Here is the fundamental challenge. Democracy does not tell us who the people are whilst nationalism tends to predetermine who they are. Usually 'the people' have become such through historical and cultural progression and/or the struggle for the ownership of the state.

We are all too familiar with the challenges of citizenship and the plight of minorities seeking democratic rights. It is important to stress that the struggle is not necessarily about political equality or citizenship rights. Citizenship is not a guarantee of full inclusion and participation. When Slovakia under the strong nationalizing policies of Mečiar's government (1992-98) was criticised form its mistreatment of minorities, the problems faced by ethnic Hungarians and the Roma were not about citizenship. The former felt that they were denied an equal political status and a share of the government; these problems appear to have been mostly resolved. The Roma continue to face social exclusion, political under-representation, inferior socio-economic position and the lack of protection from discrimination.

From postcommunism to European integration

First stage: postcommunist nationalism

Enough has been said and written about the salience of nationalism in transition from communism to democracy. To sum up:

a) the mobilisation of ethno-territorial character as an integral part of democratisation dominated the transition to such an extent that some states, i.e. Czechoslovakia (Yugoslavia and of course, the Soviet Union) could not withstand its force and disintegrated;

b) the states that had a tradition of statehood to fall back on, i.e. Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, managed (for reasons too complex to discuss here) to sustain the democratisation process without being 'derailed' into postcommunist nationalism, as was the case with Slovakia;

c) in all cases, however, we observed 'state nationalism' of the dominant national groups and a threat to minorities, in some cases a subjugation of minorities (i.e. Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia and Serbia)[10].

The mobilisation of one group leads to the politicisation of another group's identity and that to the increase of populist discourse on both sides. The dominant group may appear increasingly more threatening and that may lead to the involvement of ethnic kin state across the borders. Depending on historical experience this dynamic sends a ripple of fear back and forth and whilst gathering momentum radicalises politics to a dangerous and at times explosive potential. Elites, for all their exploitation of identity in terms of political capital are not wholly responsible for this dynamic – they could not succeed without building on the foundations of historical resentment and new insecurities. Regions of historical and ethnic complexity (mutually dependent factors) are particularly prone to this dynamic which has been well formalised by Rogers Brubaker's theory of 'triadic nexus'[11].

In his attempt to explain the rise of 'new nationalism' in postcommunist Europe he identified an interlocking dynamic between 'nationalising' nationalism of newly independent states, autonomist nationalism of national minorities and the trans-border nationalism of the 'external homelands' to which they belong by shared ethnicity, but not their citizenship. The role of the 'external homeland' in any analysis of majority-minority relationship in Central Europe is crucial. Slovakia and Hungary (and Romania and Hungary) have been excellent examples of this dynamic, each government or opposition at various times in their political fortunes and misfortunes relied on historical events to mobilise their respective groups.

Notwithstanding the inventiveness and the applicability of the 'triadic' paradigm, it does belong to an era of early 1990's nationalism which I identified as the first stage of postcommunist identity politics in Central Europe. The model was, however, always incomplete on two levels. First, it portrays identities as essentialists and divorced from the institutional processes within the state. The unit of analysis here, as everywhere else, when it comes to interethnic relations within the state, should be the state and its policies. Majority-minority relationships are fluid and depend on many variables: the policies of the state, the existence and politics of the 'external' homeland, the political mobilisation of minorities, their numbers, the socio-economic position of the minority (for example, the Ukrainian minority in Slovakia has a totally different attitude to the state) and the international position of the external homeland. In the present context, it is particularly the second limitation of Brubaker's theory – the exclusion of the fourth actor, the EU - that makes this theory so incomplete and somewhat outdated.

The second stage: 'Europeanisation' and the deepening of democracy

If the early years of postcommunism could be characterised by the simultaneity of identity as an accompaniment of democratisation at best or the subordination of the democratisation process to 'national' issues at worse (as exemplified by Slovakia and more dramatically, Croatia), the next, second, stage of postcommunism became characterised by the intensification of the democratisation process through 'Europeanisation'. This is where we are at now and slowly moving towards yet another stage of which more below. The 'Europeanisation' stage signifies a considerable improvement in interethnic relations within and between the states in Central European region. It also signifies something of a democratic consolidation and a commitment to democracy, practiced and exercised at various levels – national, subnational and beyond the state at the EU level; moreover, exercised in tandem with many states within this large and de-territorialized political entity. As with all transitions, this stage too is prone to different levels of success, stagnation or even regression.

'Europeanisation', is taken to mean a process of transformation of the domestic structures of a state by European frameworks, norms and rules. This process necessitates a series of adaptations by national and sub-national actors to economic, social and political changes originating at the European level. Some mediated through the institutions of the European Union by the way of implementation of EU rules and policies in, and this must be stressed, an otherwise little changed domestic arena, others not. Domestic structures entail the formal institutions of the state and its national legal system and administration, but also the perception and public discourse

about national and ethnic identity and the meaning of citizenship, the role of the state and political traditions.

Evidence shows that in states with a significant ethnic division and the presence of ethnic parties, i.e. Slovakia[12], 'Europeanisation' affected the structure of political competition in a way which, in turn, bears directly on the relationship between national groups within the state and hence, less directly, on the perceptions about national identity and its changing function within the new European framework. 'Europeanisation' does not just add another dimension to the discussion about the politics of the state; it also changes the debate about the available solutions to political problems.

It is not the intention of here to engage in a near impossible task of discussing the concept of 'Europeanisation'[13]. Rather, my intention is to explore how and why European integration matters. I shall confine myself to highlighting a number of points about 'Europeanisation'.

a)   Democratisation and 'Europeanisation' are overlapping processes, in fact they have in the latter years of accession negotiations become mutually dependent.
b)   Laffan[14] argues that the EU is a social construction that is being grafted on to the nation-state. Significance of this can hardly be overestimated, in cases where 'Europeanisation' follows soon after the relatively recent establishment of independent statehood and where there are many still unresolved issues concerning nationhood and minorities[15], as I argue below. Laffan further identifies three pillars of the EU as an institutional field – regulative, normative and cognitive. The latter, a product of social subjectivity encompasses meanings, perceptions and symbols through which identity and social reality are constructed, This is the focus here.
c)   'Europeanisation' raises new questions about the purpose and meaning of national identity in the context of European integration. Questions concern mainly, the exclusivity of national identity which hitherto reinforced the project of the nation-state, and hence, the capacity of national identity to offer a contribution towards the reinforcement of the European political project in the area of identity which it so obviously lacks.

'Europeanisation' stage in the evolution of identity politics in Central Europe is marked by a degree of ambivalence toward the EU. This is understandable given the speed and a certain inevitability of the accession. Depending on one's point of view, it is also somewhat risky for further developments within the EU. The third stage – 'transnational identity' – which is expected to follow will depend on the progress of the EU over the next few years. To avoid the teleology, progress signifies, deepening of democracy within states and beyond them at every level as my conclusion will argue.

The Slovak-Hungarian relationship

The relatively high level of ethnic heterogeneity makes the position of minorities one of the most important socio-political issues in Slovakia[16]. It must be stressed immediately, that it is also the only state with ethnic party, the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (henceforth, the SMK or the Hungarian Coalition) in the government since

1998 and that it is largely the Hungarian minority that exemplifies the national question in Slovakia.

The exaggerated importance of the Slovak – Hungarian relationship (for both sides, incidentally) reflects a number of historical facts and their mutually incompatible interpretations, as well as very contemporary problems. Two of the most significant historical markers round which Slovak national identity has been historically constructed are the Hungarian and Czech nations. Since Slovakia's independence, the perceptions about the role of the nation and the state and democracy are all focused on the Hungarian minority which, as it were, represents Hungary in the Slovak national consciousness. Regretfully, the Hungarian minority, (whether in Slovakia or in Romania), seems to be viewed also as an extension of Hungary by the Hungarian state and thus, a subject of the Hungarian national consciousness, particularly its pre-occupation with the post-World War I. arrangements by which these minorities were 'lost' to Hungary. The Slovak-Hungarian relationship symbolises, simultaneously, a maturing or a regressing democracy, it is a sign of rising or waning nationalism, but also, an important criterion by which Slovakia's admission into the EU was assessed.

The nationalistic slant of the Mečiar administration was one of the reasons for the initial rejection of Slovakia from the first wave of entrants into the EU. This was the period of the implementation of a discriminatory State Language Law (1995), the negative reforms in the provision of cultural subsidies and unsuccessful efforts to enforce Slovak education into Hungarian schools.

The post-1998 administrations succeeded in creating a better framework for the resolution of minority issues[17], despite many political crises, permanent frictions and mutual misgivings about broken promises – from all sides, including the Hungarian Coalition. The position of the SMK in the 2002 government is very strong with 20 seats in the Parliament and three ministries (agriculture, environment and development) as well as the Deputy Prime-Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and the European Integration, and the First Deputy Speaker of the Parliament.

Admittedly, the abundance of anti-minority rhetoric which accompanied the pre-2002 election campaign did not appear to have impressed the voters; it is to be hoped that the current wave of inter-party ethnic haggling which is already appearing at the onset of the new pre-election year in Slovakia (2006) will be equally ineffective in their aim to destabilise the Slovak-Hungarian relationship[18]. The continuing reappearance of ethnic mobilisation must not be underestimated for it illustrates the assumption on the part of some political elites that the exploitation of ethnic divisions in society remains a relevant strategy for political mobilization.

Despite the positive shifts in minority policies, one cannot claim an entirely new system. The absence of constitutional changes which would guarantee the continuation of the new trend questions Slovakia's ability to deal with minority issues adequately and positively. No actual laws that would address some outstanding minority problems have been passed in the Parliament, with the exception of the Minority Language Law (1999) which brought changes to the much-criticised Language Law (1995)[19], and enabled the ratification of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*[20]. The Hungarian SMK rejected the new parliamentary law on the use of minority languages because it did not deem it

adequate, whilst the opposition also abstained from voting for the opposite reason, but the law was passed anyway.

Many other issues remain open, i.e. the change to the preamble of the Constitution (1992) which refers to 'the Slovak nation', thus implicitly excluding minorities from the 'ownership' of the state[21], as well as other demands concerning the constitutional guarantees, the boundaries of administrative districts and legally and emotionally complex issue of the revocation of *Beneš Decrees*[22]. All in all, the Hungarian representatives, during their 7 years in government achieved only minor compromises on some issues, but no significant victories. However, despite the regular disagreements the assessment of the SMK's influence on the democratic process and European integration is overall very positive[23].

A multiethnic democracy requires more than a mere acceptance of the multiethnic reality. It requires full institutional inclusion of minorities in the governance of the state. Where the representatives of minorities are incorporated in power structures, institutions in a multiethnic democracy need to be backed up by a normative change in perceptions about who can and cannot participates in decisions about 'national' destiny. It also requires an adequate management of ethnic diversity, in order to restrain the attempts to politicise ethnicity for the purpose of political competition. Ethnic diversity is not an intrinsic feature of ethnically divided societies; it is, however a feature of societies where ethnicity is allowed to challenge democratic norms and principles. Neither institutional nor normative context of the Slovak democracy is mature enough, yet, to eliminate ethnic mobilisation (often from both sides Slovak and Hungarian) from political life lastingly.

The adoption of *minority legislation* in line with *European norms*[24] is a part and parcel of 'Europeanisation' of post-communist states, where nearly without exception the national question claimed a prominent position in political life due to either historical or recent developments. In the majority of cases the national elites have, at least formally, adopted them. It would be however naïve to assume that the formal adoption and even implementation would guarantee an instant change in the majority-minority relationships. These relationships are a result of long-standing prejudices derived from historically and culturally predetermined threats (real or perceived is irrelevant) to national groups. Equally, the motivations behind the adoption of European minority norms have often been less generous in spirit than it may appear. Firstly, there was no choice: 'Europenisation' meant the adoption of minority legislation, possibly more speedily than domestic politics would indicate. Secondly some states, i.e. Hungary and Germany, who have a significant number of 'kin' abroad supported extensive minority protection, whilst states such as Slovakia and Romania (in Western Europe, France and Greece who still have not signed the European Charter on Minority Languages) were, at this point in national development, more inclined towards less rigorous interpretation of minority rights, but given the internationalisation of the problematic, were left with little choice.

A number of conclusions follow from the above discussion. First, neither Hungary nor Slovakia has moved away sufficiently from their past-inspired national identities to new European and future-orientated ones. Hungary is not prepared to accept fully that its kin-minority is a citizen of another state. The extension of constitutionally underpinned 'partial' citizenship rights (*Status law)* to their minority, whilst both

states were in the process of EU membership negotiations which renders this law *de facto* redundant, exacerbated a historically delicate relationship between the two nations. Slovaks perceived it as another attempt to reassert 'the Hungarian nation' and thus undermine the creation of a new political nation in a new Slovakia (the same reaction occurred in Romania which is a residence state of the largest Hungarian minority in Europe).

An uneasy question here is whether a politically integrated Europe is not, unwittingly, giving an opportunity to assert and reinvigorate ethnicity through eroding the importance of civic affiliation to the nation-state. 'Europeanisation' could lead to the strengthening of ethnic ties, as expressed by Victor Orbán: 'from the Hungarian point of view, the EU is a possibility to unify the Hungarian nation without the modification of borders' (RFE/RL, 17.10.2003). On the other hand, reaction in Slovakia is also based on historical experience, full of suspicion and devoid of good will and confidence of a European neighbouring state.

Second, 'Europeanisation' of minority rights is a double edged sword: it has positive effects, as it is argued here in the Slovak-Hungarian case (similarly in Estonia and Latvia in respect of their Russian minority), but at the same time, the instrumental attitude to minority rights in order to fulfil the EU conditionality criteria without enough social support, may impede the effectiveness of the legislation. This too can be seen in Slovakia and Hungary. National groups in Central Europe are facing a choice between the often-difficult national histories and Europe in which future cooperation could put this past to rest.

Finally, it is obvious that in a Central European context nationalism operates on two levels: rejected on a pragmatic level, but invoked easily on the emotive one. In the case of the Hungarian Status Law, the EU's cautious, but negative Report by the Venice Commission lead to a careful re-examination of the Status Law and to a legal and political compromise. It must be argued that shifting a historically inspired conflict to another level, independent of political manoeuvring makes its resolution easier. The EU appears to provide that level and therefore the role of the EU as a mediating factor in interstate and interethnic conflicts is crucial. Hence, Brubaker's triadic relationship between 'nationalising' nationalism of newly independent states, autonomist nationalism of minorities and the trans-border nationalism of the 'external homelands', should be extended by a fourth party - the EU – who has become, if not an active participant, then certainly a mediator in the evolving relationship between national groups within the Central European region[25].

Third stage: 'Transnationalism' and the changing context of identity politics

The nation-state and identity in the EU

The membership of the EU increasingly defines state's identity; it has become a constitutive feature of statehood[26] and defines social and institutional space within which states act. This is where we left the second 'Europeanisation' stage of identity politics – the internal integration of national groups within the state, thus, the intensification of liberal, democratic and civic values from within and partially from beyond the state. At this stage, it is not clear how this affects personal identity of European citizen and how strongly this bonds people to the EU and its institutions – possibly more than the strictly intergovernmental approach to the EU suggests and

less than pro-integration elites would like to suggest as was so manifestly demonstrated by the EU Constitution fiasco following the French and Dutch referenda (Spring 2005). No matter how small the impact is, and this is not the subject here, it is nevertheless clear that the EU must be considered an integral part of domestic politics. Even the French and Dutch rejection of the current form of integration confirms that: identity, institutions and geography are mutually interdependent and whilst identity is slow in changing it is, at all times, reflective of the experience of institutions and socialisation within them.

If we for the moment stay with this claim, it seems reasonable to argue that the nation-state is finding itself in a precarious position: under pressure from beyond and within the state with a substantially reduced ability to influence either. The greatest success of the nation-state has been its ability to harness identity into a valuable political tool in the form of nationality. The true value of democracy is to elevate nationality into a democratic citizenship which entails rights, dignity and respect, but also obligations and expectations of those. That amounts to our perception of the world and our place in it and, not in the least, constitutes the point of departure from which we construct our identity. This identity, for there are many others that are possibly more immediate, such as our gender, profession, social status, age and family hierarchy, is a historical product related closely to the nation-state. The same nation-state that is either losing the ability to control, construct and guard it in the traditional way, or has willingly partially relinquished this capacity in order to provide more goods, such as greater prosperity, more freedom and peace, more equality and solidarity among more people through European integration. Why are we assuming that the 'new nation-state' should be the object of the same identity as the classical nation-state?

It is time to state the obvious: there is a tension between national identity and European identity. It is because there is a tension between the nation-state in its current shape and perceptions about national identity. Interestingly, these perceptions reflect rather the 'pathology of identity' than identity as such[27]. The stress on a difference, whether cultural or ideological and the inability to accommodate it is not an intrinsic feature of identity. If that were the case, we would not place our hopes for a better world in democracy and we would not have EU of 25 states seeking a deeper integration. Paradoxically, it is the proponents of the unchanging identities that claim the loss of national identity as one of the major discontents with the EU, probably aware of how fluid identities are and how easily influenced by a changing political environment. Whilst national identity carries an honourable status associated with a cultural continuity of 'the nation', the obstinacy of non-adaptation is associated with rather less honourable historical events. We must therefore concede that national identities have been constructed and engraved in our political consciousness and rhetoric within the contours of the classical nation-state and that it is time to acknowledge its passing.

Nevertheless, nation-state is not entirely obsolete when it comes to the construction of new forms of identity or democracy for that matter. The intrinsic value of democracy is not just in its procedures, implying the compromise of differing interests acceptable to the largest majority of citizens, but in the accommodation of differences in order to produce a stable political community. Stability implies tolerance, acceptance of differences, unity of purpose and mutual constraint between individuals and groups,

thus ensuring the greatest possible liberty within constitutional limitations. The achievement of the latter, where achieved, has been a long historical process[28]. There is no denying that the resolution of the alleged tension between national identity and the European one may be equally long.

The literature on national identities and their character in respect of democratic practice is vast and rich in terminology and arguments about the fundamental question as to what kind of identity sustains a democratic state. In the first place there is by now an exhausted and rightly almost discarded 'civic/ethnic nationalism' dichotomy[29]. Then there is a huge body of work by 'liberal nationalists' – often stretching the concept of liberalism to its very limits[30]. Both camps seek to accommodate the nation-state's propensity towards nationalism and curb it by strong liberal principles. Finally, building on the Kantian version of republicanism, there is the sophisticated and normatively very appealing notion of Habermas' 'constitutional patriotism' and its various critical adaptations, such as 'civic patriotism'; some giving more credence to cultural identity than others[31]. This is not the place to argue the virtues and pitfalls of either of these theories. All concur on one point though: collective identity in a democratic state should draw its inspiration from institutions rather than culture – it should be a political identity. Democratic national identity must be underpinned by universal principles of civil liberties, equal rights, democratic self-government and all the other norms attached to the realisation of these. Hence, the binding issue of a thus conceived political community is in civic virtues and respect for and commitment to institutions that safeguard the continuation of a 'common existence'[32]. So, the 'narrowness' of ethnic solidarity is juxtaposed by the 'broadness' of the unifying universal principles. I am imagining with Richard Bellamy and Alex Warleigh, a *Cosmopolitan–Communitarianism[33]*, in which Communitarian (national) identities at the level of the state are developed and held in such a way that leaves national democracies open to taking obligations beyond the state.

Transnationalism and ethno-regions

'Europeanisation' changes institutions and actors and alters the relationship between majorities and minorities. This leads to politics of '*transnationalism*' - that is a form of affiliation that is less defined by the relationship of the individual to the state citizenship and more by the solidarity based on other factors, i.e. region, or ethnic kin, but not seeking the exclusive control of this territory of residence. 'Transnationalism' defies the conventional meaning of the state and does not fit easily into the existing state dependent theories of integration, nationalism or democratisation. It is often referred to as '*new regionalism*', that is 'self-rule based on territory but without the exclusive territorial control over territory as implied by the classical nationalist doctrine'[34].

In the context of this paper one ought to be aware of a delicate difference between sub-state regionalism, i.e. Scotland, Wales and regionalism in Central Europe, which usually denotes an *ethno-region*, that is a territory on two sides of the state border based on ethnic kinship. This is the reason why in this paper term 'transnationalism' appears to be more suitable. That too with some reservations; we could be actually looking at a border region, thus at trans-state, or trans-border identity, but that leaves out the overwhelmingly ethnic content of the affiliation. Ethno-regionalism comes

nearer the mark, but gives a false impression of ethnic homogeneity in these territories which is not always the case.

The impact of these developments can, at this stage, provide only some tentative suggestions. I shall continue with a series of interrelated hypotheses which, I argue, will characterise the third –' transnational' stage of identity politics in Central Europe.

1. *The main challenge of the accession is the reformulation of the meaning of the nation, the state and territory both perceptually and in reality.* The state's sharing of competencies with Brussels diminishes the role of the nation as the dominant owner of the state with intended consequences for minorities whose position should become less threatened and more secure in political and practical terms.

2. *European integration, if it is to continue on its intended path of civilising and democratising the European continent, changes the traditional meaning of borders.* Borders, far from the assumed clarity of purpose signify something of a paradox. Ideologically, they are deemed to offer inclusion and cohesion; politically, security and a completion of the project of the nation-state. Yet, historically, borders, particularly in Central Europe, have been subject to a constant renegotiation, always producing overlapping and contradictory ethnic zones[35], leading, more often than not, to increased insecurity, ethnic and social divisions, exclusion and political conflict. The question of civilisational borders within European democracies between citizens of 'in' and 'out' states and between more accepted and less accepted peoples of Europe is another issue all together which needs to be analysed within politics of tolerance, recognition, multiculturalism and democracy generally. The new 'lack of borders', particularly in the region where borders were associated with historical animosity or/and communist army check points, this constitutes one of the most profound changes in the history of the Central European region with tremendous consequences for majorities-minorities relationships, interstate relations and identity formation as we understand them in a more traditional nation-state-dependent context.

3. *New arrangements increase the trans-border cooperation which reinvigorates the kinship identity and produces the rise of ethno-regions.* Here the story becomes rather complex and adds to the surplus of speculations in the absence of sufficient empirical evidence. One story is becoming clear: the blurring of boundaries between national, international and regional. There is a fluidity of spaces within which politics are conducted and that logically, leads to the fluidity of affiliations and varied consequences.

Slovak –Hungarian relationship: an empirical investigation [36]

Given the strong cultural, historical and political ties between the Hungarian minority and Hungary and the strong political position of the Hungarian minority in Slovak politics, the border regions of Southern and Eastern Slovakia offer a perfect opportunity to investigate the above questions which form the organising framework of the following survey.

The survey tried to capture perceptions about politics and identity among the members of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, a year after the EU accession. The sample of 110 people is of course too small to represent a 500 000 member community. On the other hand, the respondents have been chosen in a way that can be viewed as representative of the Hungarian minority. These were: 47 students at two Gymnasia taught in Hungarian in the predominantly Hungarian border city of Štúrovo in the South of the country and in Bratislava. The further 63 respondents were: teachers and council workers in Štúrovo, employees, librarians and others visiting or working at the Forum Institute (Institute for minorities) in Šamorín which is a mixed town near Bratislava, a number of MP's (the Hungarian Coalition) and a few representatives of the Hungarian minority in the city of Košice in the East of the country (also attached to the Forum Institute).
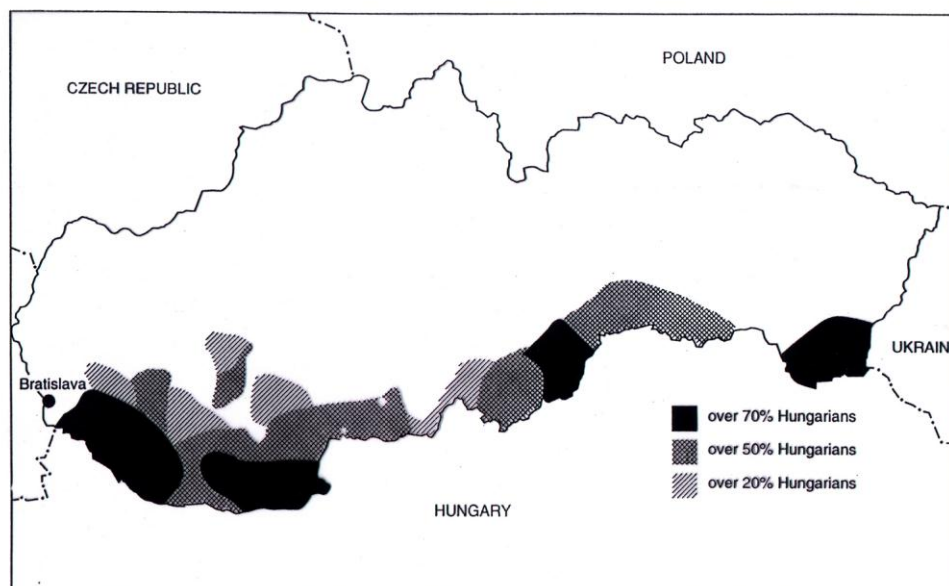
Geographically, Štúrovo is the nearest to the Hungarian border, in fact shares the Danube river with the Hungarian city of Esztergom (one place prior to the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918 following the Trianon agreements); in recent times, both cities are joined by a restored bridge, open to crossing with a minimal border control. Šamorín is also near the border, but nearer to Bratislava with a more mixed population. Both towns belong to what is called *Žitný Ostrov* (Wheat Island, after the predominantly agrarian nature of the Southern region also called the Hungarian belt). Košice, in the East, has a strong Hungarian presence that goes back to the Austro-Hungarian empire and to the Hungarian annexation of Eastern Slovakia during the WWII. Since 1945 the Hungarian presence in Košice has been decreasing. The capitol Bratislava is historically a multiethnic city near the Austrian and Hungarian borders. As will become apparent, the geographical position is important for reasons associated with the economy and the influence of the 'motherland' Hungary.

Table 1.

1. **On the scale 0→5, do you feel that Slovakia's membership in the EU has altered the relationship between Slovak majority and the Hungarian minority?** *(0- not at all, 5-significantly)*

A) politically

	0-3 (not)	**4-5 (significantly)**	Comments
All regions and ages	100	10	most used category: 3

B) economically

	0-3	**4-5**	Comments
All regions and ages	90	20	most used category: 3

C) culturally (protection of language, maintenance of identity, history etc.)

	0-3	**4-5**	Comments
Šamorín/Bratislava/Košice Štúrovo: category unavailable	49	9	most used category:3

Table 2.

2. **In terms of your identity, which of the following categories do you feel most comfortable with?**
    In order of relevance: 1-most relevant, 2- relevant, 3 rather relevant, 4- less relevant, 5- not relevant. N.B.You can tick more than one category.

Category	0-3 (relevant)	4-5 (not relevant)	Comments
Hungarian living in Slovakia	93		Most 'rather relevant'
Slovak of Hungarian background	1		
Hungarian (no state affiliation)	83	2	This probably in reference to a 'no' dual nationality referendum about the extension of citizenship to ethnic Hungarians from abroad
Slovak (state affiliation)			
European (ethnically Hungarian)	87		
European	5		
Other			

Table 3.

3. **In terms of political activity (i.e. local politics and national politics), are you most interested in:** *In order of importance 1-most important, 2- important, 3- less important, 4- not important.*

Place of interest	1-2 Important		3-4 Less important		Comment
	Residence Štúrovo	Residence Bratislava/ Šamorín Košice	ResidenceŠtúrovo	Residence Bratislava/ Šamorín Košice	
Locality/region	45	51			
Bratislava	23	46			
Budapest	31	19		16	Further from the Hungarian border Budapest appears less important
Brussels	21	31		9	

Table 4.

4. **On scale 0→5 has EU membership affected your sense of security in terms:** (0-not at all, 5-significantly)

All regions and ages	**0-2 (no)**	**3**	**4-5 (yes)**	**Comment**
Politically	66	22	22	
economically	83	14	13	
Culturally	70	25	15	Sense of security improved

Table 5.

5. **Do you think that developments in your region have a long-term influence on the relationship between Slovakia and Hungary?**

	Yes/possibly	**Don't know**	**Not really**	**Comment**
All regions and Ages	98	12		Self-explanatory

Analysis

The above survey is not a sociological study, but seeks to give an impression of issues that could be considered relevant to identity politics of a politically and geographically concentrated minority in a state where national issues remain high on the political agenda. A number of classifications are in order.

First, a minority in the Central European context denotes usually an historical minority (autochthonous), who have resided in the same territory for generations, but their state affiliations have changed due to historical processes, i.e. the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires and the consequent establishment of new states. This is very different to Western Europe, where minority usually refers to immigration ('new minorities', as they are called in Slovakia). Both types of minorities face specific problems and require specific legislative arrangements for their resolution.

Second, the Hungarian minority is concentrated in certain areas of the country which they feel should form a coherent administrative district. This is particularly the case with the Southern border region (*Žitný Ostrov*). This region is, however, divided between two administrative districts (*Trnava and Nitra*) with two major consequences for political competition.

a) the dissatisfaction of the Hungarian minority who feel that administrative regions (*VÚC, Všeobecné účelové celky)* have been drawn according to a principle of 'diminishing Hungarian influence' (MEP [SMK] Edith Bauer) in the areas with an overwhelmingly Hungarian population[37]. In this respect, they lack ethnic and geographic coherence that ethno-regions would suggest.

b) political competition between parties at the state level tends to 'migrate' into the regions. The best example is indeed the declaration of an 'anti-SMK' coalition between a number of Slovak parties for the regional elections (see note 18). There is only one Hungarian party, but a number of Slovak political parties who are always willing to mobilize on the purportedly excessive Hungarian influence in the mixed regions. This is even more so now, when the Hungarian Coalition is fighting many battles. First, as a governmental party within a fractious coalition (to which fractiousness it often contributes), against a strong opposition; second, an ethnic party in the first post-accession election when its presence in the government is no longer considered a foreign policy issue connected to successful European integration; and finally, it is struggling to reconcile the growing ideological and socio-economic chasms within its own electorate.

What do the results of the above survey tell us about 'transnationalism'?

The identity of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia is overwhelmingly ethnic: some 84% of respondents view themselves primarily as a 'Hungarian living in Slovakia'. This is further confirmed by the 80 % response to 'European, but ethnically Hungarian' (table 2). Interesting about this is that political affiliation appears to be rather European (80%) than Slovak and that the Slovak state is viewed strictly as a place of residence (75%). When, however, compared to results of political interest, Europe is in third place after locality (the majority of respondents) and the national

level (Bratislava) (table 3.) The external homeland, that is Budapest, takes precedence over the national level only in Štúrovo which is geographically nearest to the Hungarian border. The further away from the border, or nearer Bratislava (where the locality is actually the capital), Budapest ceases to be important. This says probably more about the influence of the media than about where political interest lie. The most important finding here is that locality/region carries the weight of political interest and engagement.

In this respect we are looking clearly at regionalisation of the Hungarian minority within the EU context. In order to make a more meaningful statement about the relation of 'Europeanisation' and regionalisation among other national groups, whether in Slovakia (or elsewhere), one would have to conduct a similar survey among the Slovak population in mixed and mostly Slovak regions.

In the absence of such a comparative survey, a degree of cautiousness is required when claiming the emergence of an ethno-region in the Southern 'Hungarian belt' between Slovakia and Hungary. On the other hand, there is no denying that the Hungarian minority's cultural and political life takes place in their region and that European identity takes precedence over Slovak territorial one. This can be interpreted in a number of ways. State affiliation is marginalised in favour of ethnic affiliation, either for historical reasons, or as a reflection of actual daily existence. Whilst the Slovak state is accepted, it is being supplemented by the EU which appears to offer an acceptable political identity – this is consistent with beliefs that historical minorities in Eastern/Central Europe prefer larger less 'national' political units[38] and that 'Europeanisation' opens different political spaces and opportunities within which national groups operate. Here again, it would be beneficial to conduct a survey on the 'other side of the border' to gain a deeper understanding of how Hungarian citizens feel about their border region and where their affiliations lie – I contend that 'Europeanisation' means different things to minorities than it does to dominant national groups within 'their' national states.

Just as important is the finding of the fifth question concerning the relationship between regional developments and a long-term influence on the relationship between Slovakia and Hungary whereby 90% of respondents believe it to be positive. If democratisation is also about peaceful coexistence among national groups, then there could not be a more convincing argument, if more were needed, that 'transnationalism', open borders, and politics decentralised beyond the dominance of the nation-state are a way forward. This must be even more so is the conflict ridden areas which when all said and done, the Slovak-Hungarian relationship, for all its tensions, is not.

Between Bratislava, Brussels and Budapest (Interviews with the representatives of the Hungarian Community in Slovakia)[39].

'No borders as such! It is an historic moment of unforeseen consequences' (Edit Bauer, the MEP).

Pál Csáky:	Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and European Integration (SMK)
Kornélia Csala:	The Director of 'Hungarian Cultural Home', a civil society cultural organisation in Košice,
Edit Bauer:	MEP (SMK)
Mária Kulcsár:	Head of the office of the Hungarian Information Center, the Forum Institute, Košice,
László Nagy:	Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, National Minorities and the Position of Women (SMK)
Fridrich Nagy:	Deputy Mayor, Dunajská Streda and Member of the regional parliament(Trnavska Župa)
László Őllős:	President of the Forum Institute,Šamorín.
Ján Oravec:	Mayor of Štúrovo
Károly Tóth:	The Director of the Forum Minority Research Institute, Šamorín

Comments of interviewees that capture significant issues at hand:

1. Majority-minority relations. State subsidies and Structural Funds for minority cultures have been much improved, 60% goes to the Hungarian minority (for that reason, Roma often claim to be Hungarian). Social and cultural life is played out in ethnic regions, regardless of the boundaries of artificially drawn administrative regions. The Hungarian minority in Slovakia is not a minority, but an ethnic group with their own identity: not Slovak and not Hungarian, but with the Hungarian orientation (60 % of ethnic Hungarians watch exclusively the Hungarian TV, Forum Institute). Politicians, on both sides of the border, simplify the issue, the identity is regional, not state-affiliated. National government has become a mediator between Brussels and the regions and increasingly less important. The minority will in future coordinate its political life between Bratislava, Brussels and Budapest (Forum Institute, but the politicians, predictably, disagree). Currently, the weight of cultural subsidies into the regions in the order of importance is: the Slovak state, Hungary, the EU.

2. Economy. Everyday life changes identity. The region round Bratislava (*Dunajská Streda, Šamorín)* is becoming less and less ethnically divided, due to higher employment possibilities and greater movement of Slovaks into the region (Fridrich Nagy). The positive development is that socio-economic issues are becoming more important than ethnic (Csáky). In future we will be able to exchange labour resources between Hungary and Slovakia; there is high unemployment in the Komárno area, whilst Hungary is lacking an adequate labour force (Bauer). It is important to overcome communist dependence on the state – social life of ethnic communities will have become less dependent on the state and more on its own resources (Csáky).

3. EU. The situation has changed since the accession. It is too early to say, empirically, how exactly, but there is an intuitive sense of trust that relations are improving and they have been for the last 7 years. After all, nobody thinks of living elsewhere. Trust is important, it is in the atmosphere of insecurity that dogmatic discourse (whether Hungarian or Slovak) takes root (Fridrich Nagy). The EU gives us the sense of stability, the old region is a new form (Őllős). Yet, the turnout in the European elections among both Slovaks and Hungarians was very low. 2004 was a turning point for the EU: it must reform into a strong political union, otherwise it will fall apart and the consequence of this is too frightful to contemplate, for the Slovaks

and Hungarians (Bauer, Csáky). The purpose of regional regeneration by the EU is to equalise economic life throughout Slovakia and redress the neglect of the Hungarian belt inherited from Communism and Mečiar era (László Nagy). It is of paramount importance that the Hungarian Coalition shifts its agenda from ethnic concerns to economic ones and translates its powerful position in the government to 'real' issues of economy (László Nagy) - nationalism and borders should not be its concern.

4. Identity. No identity is being consolidated as such, all is changing, we do not know how precisely. Economic life is regional, cultural identity is Hungarian (Őllős). However, all interviewed whilst admitting to a symbolic value of the *Status Law* with some practical benefits (concessions in Hungary for students and pensioners), considered it a political manipulation, orchestrated by the Hungarian Right (ex- Prime Minister Orbán) for the purpose of his waning pre-election campaign and aided by the most nationalistic wing of the Hungarian Coalition and regretted that the Coalition let itself be drawn into it, thus temporarily disturbing Slovak-Hungarian relations.

SMK(the Party of the Hungarian Coalition). Interestingly, there is an observable and rising dissatisfaction with the political representation of the Hungarian minority in the form of the Hungarian Coalition. The reasons are many: the lack of choice and short-sighted policies that derive from it, the maintenance of ethnic tension rather than the resolution of economic problems. The unemployment of 13-20% in the Southern region has been mentioned by all interviewed. More to the point: 'the Hungarian Coalition is a conservative party and that is not what this region needs – identity rhetoric is a replacement of the real issue'(Oravec). On the other hand, the Hungarian minority feels that 'there is no alternative to the SMK in the current climate' (Tóth).

The old region in the new form: a conclusion

The third stage of identity politics in Central Europe can be summed up as follows:
History of Central Europe produced divergent accounts of identity politics within the post-communist and 'Europeanisation' stages of the democratisation processes. These are now nearing the end and the context of identity politics has dramatically changed. Interests and identities are shaped and affected by a rights granting and economy regulating entity,that is the state and the EU. Even though we are dealing with identity formation, the unit of analysis is not the cultural nation/ethnic group, but the policies and institutions that affect these identities. The subjective here is a reflection of the objective.

Transnationalism affects the meanings associated with the nation, the state, the borders and citizenship and produces a plethora of contradictions, challenges and difficulties. It also creates unprecedented prospects to move politics beyond the state and 'rescue' democracy and the relationship between national groups from its confines.

Minorities are about memory, identity and solidarity; border regions in Central Europe are all those, but they are also spaces where memories can be transcended , identities multiplied and transformed and where democracy, governance and European integration are played out. The assertion of those regions may be the first instance of a postnational polity where the EU project can be truly tested.

Democracy, in view of the fact that its traditional home – the state – is being challenged for its repeated failing to produce a lasting reconciliation between identity

groups, needs a novel shape. The intention here has been twofold: to highlight the potential for further research into the relationship between 'Europeanisation' and minorities and defend politics beyond the state. The third stage of identity politics in Central Europe, 'transnationalism', may tell us a little more about identity formation and the construction of stable political communities.

Notes:

[1]   The paper is based on a British Academy founded research project (SG – 37978) *'The changing context of minority politics: The impact of European integration on the Hungarian minority in Slovakia'* which I conducted in the period June 2004-June 2005 in Slovakia.

[2]   J.Habermas *The Postnational Constellation*: *Political Essays,* Cambridge, MIT Press, 2001.

[3]   E.Harris *Nationalism and Democratisation Politics of Slovakia and Slovenia,* Ashgate, 2002.

[4]   See M. Mann *The Dark Side of Democracy Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*, Cambridge: CUP, 2005 for a particularly disturbing account of this argument.

[5]   E.Harris, 2002.

[6]   M.Hroch 'From National movements to Fully-Formed Nation', *New Left Review* 198, 1993, pp. 3-20.

[7]   J. Migdal 'State-building and the non-nation-state' *The Journal of International Affairs* 58:1, 2004, pp. 17-46.

[8]   A.Debeljak 'European Forms of Belonging', *East European Politic and Societies* 17:2, 2003, pp.151-166, p. 156.

[9]   J.S.Mill 'Representative government', *On Liberty and other essays,* Oxford, Oxford University Press 1991. p.427-8.

[10]   I would, however, argue that in the case of Serbia, the intensity of postcommunist nationalism was exacerbated by a particularly vicious form of resistance to democracy by the old leadership; if Slovak national(istic) elites sought a national alternative to democracy within some form of 'procedural' democracy, Serbian nationalists sought the return to authoritarianism.

[11]   R.Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed,* CUP, 1996.

[12]   E.Harris 'Europeanisation of Slovakia' *Comparative European Poltics* 2:2, 2004, pp. 185-211.

[13]   SEE: Börzel, T. 'Shaping an Taking EU Policies: Member State Responses to Europeanisation' *Queen's Papers on Europeanisation* No 2/2003; E.Harris 'Europeanisation of Slovakia' *Comparative European Poltics* 2:2, 2004, pp. 185-211; Olsen, J.' The Many Faces of Europeanization' *Arena Working Papers* WP ½, 2002; Radaelli, C. 'Whither Europeanization? Concept Stretching and Substantive Change' *European Online Papers* 4(8), 2000.

[14]   B.Laffan, 'The European Union Polity: a Union of Regulative, Normative and Cognitive Pillars' *Journal of European Public Policy* 8:5: 709-727, 2001.

[15]   For the impact of the EU's enlargement on national policies in Central Europe see P. Vermeersch, 'Minority Policy in Central Europe: Exploring the Impact of the EU's Enlargement Strategy', *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 3(2): 3-19.

[16]   14-18% of the population declares itself to be other than Slovak. Slovakia thus counts as one of the most ethnically heterogeneous countries in Europe. With the exception of the ex-Soviet Republics, Slovakia is in the 4.place after: Macedonia, Spain and Croatia. (Dostál in M. Kollár,. and G. Mesežnikov(ed). *Slovensko 2000,* Bratislava: IVO, 2000).

[17]   E.Harris ,2004.

[18]   An anti-SMK coalition has been declared by some Slovak parties for the purpose of regional elections in *Nitra* regional parliament where the Hungarian Coalition currently has the majority (*SME,* 11.6. 2005). Similarly, the SMK is apparently exerting some pressure on their own voters to vote for their candidates in preference to Slovak candidates in local councils in mixed regions. For the role of ethnic parties see also K.Chandra 'Ethnic Parties and Democratic Stability' *Perspectives on Politics* 3:2, 2005, p.235-251.

[19]   For details see E.Harris, 2002 and E. Harris, 2004.

[20]   Main post-Cold War agreements on minority rights are: the 1990 Copenhagen Documents and the 1995 Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. .

[21]   For details E.Harris, 2002, p.115-119.

[22] This refers to the post WWII. Czecholsovak President Beneš's degrees on the basis of which the confiscation of Hungarian properties in Slovakia and the expulsions of the 3 million Sudeten German minority from the Czech lands was legally justified. The Hungarian and the Czech minorities were accused of being 'collectively guilty' of the collaboration with the enemy. None of these degrees have been actually revoked and there are no restitutions for the confiscated Hungarian properties available under the current Slovak legislation.

[23] E.Harris, 2004 and K. Krause, 'Slovakia's Second Transition', *Journal of Democracy* 14:2,2003,pp.65-79.

[24] L.Tesser, ' Geopolitics of Tolerance: Minority Rights Under EU Expansion in East/Central Europe' *East European Politics and Societies* 17:3, 2003, pp.483-532.

[25] C.Lord and E. Harris, *Democracy in the New Europe* (chpt.5), Palgrave, forthcoming 2006.

[26] T.Risse.*Transnational Identities,* p.263.

[27] Cerutti, F.and Rudolph, E. 2001. *A Soul for Europe Vol. 1.* Leeuwen: Peeters, p.6. See also C.Lord and E. Harris, forthcoming (2006).

[28] Habermas, J. 'Constitutional Democracy' *Political Theory* 29:6, 2001, pp.766-781.

[29] B.Yack in R. Beiner, Ronald. (ed.) *Theorizing Nationalism,* 1999, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

[30] W.Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995; D.Miller *On Nationality,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995; Y.Tamir *Liberal Nationalism,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

[31] For review see C.Laborde 'From Constitutional to Civic Patriotism' , *British Journal of Political Science* 32, 2002, p. 591-612.

[32] B.Parekh *Rethinking Multiculturalism,* 2000, London, Macmillan.

[33] Bellamy, R. and Warleigh, A. ' From an Ethics of Integration to an Ethics of Participation: Citizenship and the Future of European Union' *Millenium* 27:3, 1998, pp.447-470.

[34] M.Keating 'European Integration and nationalities Question' *Politics and Society* 32:3, 2004, pp.367-388, p. 373 and *The New Regionalism in Western Europe: Territorial Restructuring and Political Change, E*dward Elgar, 1998, by the same author.

[35] E.Balibar, *We, the People of Europe? ,*Princeton University Press, 2004.

[36] The empirical research has been conducted in Slovakia in the period June 2004-June 2005. The survey took place in June 2006.

[37] The creation of all Hungarian district remains one of the unfulfilled demand of the Hungarian Coalition. For details see E.Harris, 2004 and comments of the above interviewees.

[38] The Hungarian minority was always opposed to Slovak independence which was one of the reasons for tensions in post-independent Slovakia. See E.Harris, 2002.

[39] Interviews conducted in June 2004 and June 2005.