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Politics of Balance

The Conjuncture of Ethnic Party Formation and Development in Romania and Bulgaria

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1. Introduction

The collapse of the Communist regimes in South Eastern Europe—as part of the former Communist block—has launched processes of transformation in the countries of the region, aimed at the establishment of political systems of multi-party democracy paralleled by a passage from centrally planned to market based economies. One of the basic challenges these countries have had to face throughout their transition process has been the ethnic diversity that characterizes their societies. The emergence of the ethnic party phenomenon can be regarded as the result of the impact that the realities of ethnic diversity have had on the development of the political systems in the transformation countries of South Eastern Europe.

Taking a look at the various ethnic parties that came into being in the post-communist period through the self-organization of ethnic minorities in the countries of the region, there are two that seem to stand out and have internationally been hailed as factors of ethnic stability in their respective countries. One is *the Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség* (*Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania*, further referred to as *DAHR*), while the other is the political formation representing the ethnic Turks and Muslims in Bulgaria, the *Hak ve Özgürlükler Hareketi* (*Movement for Rights and Freedoms*, further referred to as *MRF*).[1] Considering the continuous presence and decisive importance of the two organizations in the political life of the two countries since the onset of the transition period, at first look we are the witnesses of two models of post-communist ethnic accommodation bearing the traces of democratic consociation worth a comparative analysis.

Possibilities for a more complex comparison gain contours with the positioning and examination of the two examples of ethnic party formation in the

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[1] Ethnic parties in general, as well as the legal particularities of the two formations will be addressed below.

context of the "quadratic relational nexus"[2] that brings about the emergence of and determines the two political parties in the first place. The "quadratic nexus" pattern draws upon the original model of the "triadic nexus" proposed by Rogers Brubaker as a basic defining principle of the "territorial nationality" phenomenon.[3] "Generated by the movement of borders across people, rather than that of people across borders," the phenomenon describes a territorially concentrated minority that is linked to its native country only by citizenship but which identifies itself culturally and nationally with a neighboring state.[4] The basic feature of this specific diaspora pattern is, according to Brubaker, its definition along the lines of a "triadic nexus." The "triadic nexus" coordinates the dynamic relationship between the three "relational fields" formed by the minority group itself, their homeland, to which they are linked by citizenship and their external "kin-state" by links of ethno-cultural affinity. This configuration of relations embodies the fundamental specific character of the diaspora determined by the tight and dynamic interrelationship between the three constituent "relational fields."[5] Revisiting the model proposed by Brubaker, the "quadratic nexus" model of David. J. Smith includes the additional field of "Europeanisation/Westernization" that implies the fundamental role of international organizations in the dynamics of the nationality question and post-communist politics in Central and Eastern Europe.[6]

Following the dynamic development of the above-discussed "quadratic nexus," for the purpose of developing the analysis of the two ethnic political parties, the paper will focus on the field of the national minorities themselves. To this end, the paper will employ the analytical framework of "nationalizing minorities" developed by Zoltán Kántor on the basis of Brubaker's idea of "'nation' as a practical

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[2] David J. Smith, "Framing the National Question in Central and Eastern Europe: a Quadratic Nexus?" *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics,* Vol. 2, No. 1, September 2002, pp. 3-16, available at http://www.ethnopolitics.org/ethnopolitics/archive/volume_II/issue_1/smith.pdf.
[3] Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity, migration, and statehood in Europe, West and East," pp. 357-374, in *The Fate of the Nation-State*, ed. Michel Seymour, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004, pp. 357-360.
[4] Ibid. p. 360.
[5] Rogers Brubaker, "National Minorities, Nationalizing States and External National Homelands in the New Europe," pp. 55-76, in *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe,* ed. Brubaker, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 55-60.

category, institutionalized form and contingent event" as opposed to being a substantial entity.[7] Along these lines, the paper will examine the two political formations as the products of minority self-organization aimed at the institutionalization of the ethno-cultural differences that differentiate them from the nationalizing majority.[8]

If one applies the above-outlined analytical framework to the specific cases of the two ethnic parties in Romania and Bulgaria, one can discern a series of similarities. First, a comparison offers itself due to the existence of the quadratic relational nexus, in which all factors actively or inactively exert an influence on the self-organization of the two minorities. Hungarians in Romania and Turks in Bulgaria are two national minority communities of considerable demographic importance linked to their home countries by citizenship and linked to their respective *kin-states* by ethno-cultural attachment. Further, in the face of the post-communist nationalizing process launched by the Romanian and Bulgarian majorities following a similar course of regime change in 1989, both minority communities have launched an active process of self-organization, the central result of which has been the creation of the two ethnic political parties. Finally, in both cases, the degree of involvement of the *kin-states* has exerted a fundamental influence on the process and character of the self-organization of the two minorities.

In addition to the similarities between the setup of the "quadratic relational nexus" affecting political developments in the two countries, parallel developments can also be observed in the dynamic of the relational nexus. Important phenomena in this regard are the development of relatively good neighborhood relations between the respective homelands and *kin-states* of the two minorities, a gradual

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[6] In developing his own pattern of "quadratic nexus," Smith extensively draws upon other critiques on Brubaker's "triadic nexus" model, such as that of Judy Batt or Kataryna Wolczuk, see Smith, p. 9.

[7] Zoltán Kántor, "Nationalizing Minorities and Homeland Politics," pp. 249-274, in Iordachi, Constantin, Zoltán Kántor, Cristina Petrescu, Dragos Petrescu and Trencsényi Balázs (eds.), *Nation building and Contested Identities: Romanian and Hungarian Case Studies,* Budapest/Iasi: Regio Books/Polirom: 2001, p. 250.

[8] The character, strategies, aims and outcomes of this phenomenon of minority self-organization will be discussed in details below.

disengagement on part of the *kin-states* with regard to the minorities[9] or Romania and Bulgaria's parallel advancement towards accession to the European Union. It is the series of these similarities that enable a comparative analysis of the two ethnic political parties, as well as an assessment of ethnic party politics in the two countries.

Within this context, focusing on the specificities that make them comparable, the paper will examine the two political formations as natural products of the post-1989 self-organization of the two minorities. This process of self-organization will in its turn be examined as conditioned by the specific interplay between the four factors that determined the post-1989 self-organization of the two minorities. As the outcome of the minority self-organization processes subject to the dynamic interplay of the various factors, the specific duality of balancing politics will be then positioned into the framework of ethnic party politics development itself subject to a constant dynamic shift. Examining the new relational setup brought about by this change and the degree of politics adjustment effectuated by the two ethnically based political organization, the paper argues that the two parties have only marginally responded to the challenges posed by the ever-changing dynamic of the particular relational nexus, which continuously determines their character and strategies. Accordingly, there is a necessity for a more fundamental, pro-active and longer term balance politics to be pursued by both parties in order to avoid a potential future challenge to their very existence.

For this end, the first chapter of the paper begins by presenting the creation of the two ethnic political parties against the background of a brief account sketching the pre-1989 minority existence in Romania and Bulgaria—a period, which is of considerable importance regarding later developments in minority self-organization. More importantly, the phenomenon will be examined within the context of the 1989 changes of regime in the two countries with special focus on the factors and events

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[9] This phenomenon of disengagement started earlier and has had a more accentuated character in the case of the Bulgarian Turks/Muslims and Turkey, see below.

that launched the transition process to multi-party democracy. Accordingly, the chapter will take a closer look at the main features of the immediate post-1989 constitutionalization and political system formation in Romania and Bulgaria, with special reference to the formation of the two political parties themselves.

The second chapter, in its turn, takes a closer look at the comparable specificities of the two political formations by presenting their setup, organization, programs and initial strategies as the manifestation of the politics of balance formula pursued by both. Since the creation of the two parties is studied as the result of the complex interplay between the quadratic relational nexus, the chapter will present in detail the character, instruments and strategies of the four factors that determined the very character of the two political formations. All these aspects will be positioned and discussed within the framework of a larger theoretical setting.

The third chapter of the paper will go through the various stages of ethnic party politics in the two countries following the fall of the communist regime. Presenting the developments in the factors making up the quadratic nexus and in its dynamic, the chapter will focus on to what degree and how these developments have affected and shaped the two parties and their strategies throughout the successive government formations in the two countries up until the present. The main question this chapter will seek to answer is, whether in the elaboration of their strategies the two parties have succeeded in adequately responding to the challenges raised by the above-described dynamic. Finally, the paper will conclude with the presentation of a few possible scenarios regarding the future of the examined ethnic parties, as well as an estimation of the future possibilities of ethnic party politics in Romania and Bulgaria.

2. The Emergence of the Two Ethnic Parties

2.1. The Birth of New Nation States

In order to be able to develop a comparative scrutiny of the creation, specificities and strategies of the *DAHR* in Romania and that of the *MRF* in Bulgaria, one has to examine the circumstances of political system development and regime changes of 1989 in the two countries. For an optimal understanding, this phenomenon has to be placed into the larger framework of interaction between the factors of the "quadratic relational nexus" introduced above. Accordingly, since the main aspects of this quadratic configuration have its origins in the minority phenomenon, one has to briefly address the emergence of the phenomenon itself.

From Alba Iulia to Trianon: the Birth of the Modern Romanian State

The emergence of the Hungarian minority issue in the Romania of today dates back to the fall and dismemberment of the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire as pinned down by the peace treaties that followed the First World War. The Trianon Peace Treaty of June 4, 1920, which forced Hungary to cede around two thirds of its territory to newly created neighboring countries—marked the transfer of Transylvania and other western provinces from the Hungarian Kingdom to the Old Kingdom of Romania. The annexation of Transylvania to the Kingdom created in 1859 through the unification of the provinces of Moldova and Wallachia still under a very loose Ottoman sovereignty, was the fulfillment of the December 1, 1918 *Alba Iulia Proclamation* anticipating the union. Although the Trianon Treaty was briefly revised by the Second Vienna Arbitration of 1940, the Paris Pace Treaties after 1945 finalized the annexation of the territory to Romania. Since the 19th century, the multi-ethnic province of Transylvania has been the subject of competing Romanian and Hungarian claims of dominance and since Trianon it has been a contentious issue debated by historiographers and came to be highly politicized.

Following the annexation of the ethnically diverse territory, the newly created Romanian state faced the venture of embarking on the path of nation-building while having to address the challenge of 28.1 percent of the population belonging to national minorities, out of which 1,664,000 Hungarians.[10] Half of this community was a compact group concentrated in the middle of the newly created state, the other half being dispersed mainly in the Western part. The newly integrated territories with a distinct administrative legacy were to be subject to the strategy of *internal colonization* aimed mainly at cultural homogenization with the nationalization of educational and cultural policies. [11]

In the first decades following the communist takeover in 1947-48 in Romania, the Hungarian minority enjoyed a singularly lax treatment. In this period, a complete educational system in their mother tongue, including university education was granted to Hungarians and the region with Hungarian majority population enjoyed— albeit a rather formal—territorial autonomy. The Hungarian minority had its own political organization called the *Hungarian Popular Union*. On a more general level, the *Nationality Statute* law of 1945 regulated the statute of national minorities in Romania stipulating the rights of minority communities to education in mother tongue, to the use of mother tongue in the administration, as well as the punishment of national instigation and ethnic discrimination.[12]

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[10] Ferenc Glatz (ed.), *Magyarok a Kárpát-Medencében [Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin]*, Budapest: Pallas Kiadó, 1989, p. 236. According to the 1910 Hungarian census, the territories that were later annexed to the Romanian state of 1920 had a Hungarian population of 1,661,805 persons. The first census of Romania in its post-1920 territorial configuration took place in 1930 and took into register minority communities such as Hungarians, Germans, Jewish, Roma, Ukrainians, Lipovans, Serbs, Croats, Tatars, Slovaks, Turks, Bulgarians, Czechs, Greeks, Polish and Armenians making up roughly 20 percent of the total population. In the 1930 census there were 1,423,500 persons who professed to be Hungarians. For the further development of these figures and trends as recorded in subsequent census data, as well as the territorial concentration of the Hungarian minority in Romania see Annex 1 and 2.

[11] István Horváth, "Facilitating Conflict Transformation: Implementation of the Recommendations of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities to Romania, 1993-2001," pp. 19-20, in *Comparative Case Studies on the Effectiveness of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities,* eds. Wolfgang Zellner, Randolf Oberschmidt and Claus Neukirch, Hamburg: Center for OSCE Research, 2002, available at http://www.core-hamburg.de/documents/34_CORE_Working_Paper_8.pdf.

[12] However, the stipulations of the *Nationality Statute Law*—which has not been formally annulled until today—remained mainly theoretical and most obvious in the cruel treatment of the German

Beginning with the sixties and seventies, however, aggressive nationalism became a tool in the quest for legitimacy of the Romanian communist regime. A gradual phasing out of education in Hungarian—and in other minority languages—was initiated, paralleled by the consequential promotion of the status of Romanians to the detriment of Hungarians within the economic, social and political spheres. [13] Despite the stipulations of the *Nationality Statute* Law or the Constitution of 1965 itself guaranteeing the use of minority mother tongue, the public use of the Hungarian language was gradually restricted. Further, as a result of the general property nationalization effected by the communist regime, the Hungarian community was completely deprived of its property bases, institutions, and educational system, while the activity of the Hungarian churches was also restricted to the minimum.[14] On the international level, the unfortunate situation of the Hungarian and other minority communities in Romania was denounced by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe itself, in its *Resolution No. 830* of 1984, as well as in its *Recommendation No. 1114* of 1989.[15]

From San Stefano to Neuilly: the Birth of Bulgaria

Similarly to the origins of the Hungarian minority phenomenon in Romania with the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the emergence of the Turkish and Muslim minority phenomenon in Bulgaria occurred with the finalization of the borders of today's Bulgaria on the ruins of the multi-national Ottoman Empire.

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minority community in the immediate post-1945 period. See the "Report on the Situation of Hungarians in Romania in 2005," in *Reports on the Situation of Hungarians* prepared by the Hungarian Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad, available at http://www.htmh.hu/en/?menuid=0404.

[13] Horváth, p. 20.

[14] "Report on the Situation of Hungarians in Romania in 2005."

[15] "Aware that, while these human rights violations affect the 'unhappy Romanian people' as a whole," the Recommendation draws attention to the fact that "they are more specifically directed against the Hungarian and the Tzigane minorities, whereas the German and Jewish minorities are gradually leaving the country on a fee-paying basis." See *Recommendation 1114 on the Situation of Minorities in Romania*, 26 September 1989, and the *Resolution 830 on the Situation of Minorities in Romania,* 29 September 1984, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, available at http://assembly.coe.int.

Turkish and Muslim communities having privileged positions under the Ottoman rule in Bulgaria found themselves in minority position when the San Stefano Treaty of 1878 established the borders of the modern state of Bulgaria following the Russo-Turkish war and ending a nearly five-century Ottoman rule. The borders of the "Greater Bulgaria" created at San Stefano were soon revised by the revocation of the treaty and the new borders of Bulgaria were defined by the 1913 Treaty of Constantinople ending the Second Balkan War. The borders of the present-day Bulgarian state were, however, finalized following the post-World War I. Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine of November 27, 1919, which compelled Bulgaria to cede sizeable territories to its neighbors.[16] Within this framework, the building of the Bulgarian nation-state was launched against the background of the *Ottoman Yoke* period, the nostalgia of the San Stefano borders of the *Greater Bulgaria,* as well as the presence of a considerable Turkish and Muslim minority community in the country concentrated in the Southern and North-Eastern regions of the country.[17]

Like in the case of Romania, the initial treatment of Turks and Muslims remaining within the borders of the new Bulgarian State was considerably relaxed. Although naming Orthodoxy as the prevailing religion of the country, the Tarnovo Constitution of 1879 backed by a series of treaties with Turkey, guaranteed the freedom of worship, institutional autonomy and state support of the Muslim faith. Thus, the Muslim community enjoyed a high degree of autonomy with a system of religious, Turkish-language schools and it was also politically active by exercising its

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[16] The demarcation line between Bulgaria and Turkey established by the treaty was confirmed with the July 24, 1923 Treaty of Lausanne fixing the boundaries of the newly created Turkey.

[17] The Turkish presence can be traced back to immigration of Ottoman Muslims into the territories conquered through expansion of the Ottoman Empire. Despite the tolerant religious-administrative *millet* system introduced by the Ottomans, their presence has led to numerous conversions to Islam within the local population. This was the case with Bulgaria, where the emergence of *Pomaks*—ethnic Bulgarians who adopted Islam—as well as Muslim Roma has been contributed by Bulgarian hitoriogaphers to forcible conversion by the Ottoman. It has to be born in mind that there are frequent cases of cross-identification, Muslim Roma and *Pomaks* frequently assuming Turkish identity. It is with this consideration that Turkish and Muslim minority concept will be used in this paper. See Talip Kucukcan, "Ethnicity, Religion and Politics among Turkish-Muslims in Bulgaria and Greece," pp. 49-68 in *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 19, Iss. 1, April 1999. For an overview of figures related to national and religious minorities, as well as their territorial concentration in Bulgaria see Annex 2 and 3.

voting rights in the Bulgarian elections.[18] In the immediate aftermath of the establishment of communist rule in Bulgaria in 1944, national minorities were constitutionally recognized and their rights were continuously guaranteed and protected. Throughout the 1950's, the Turks were given *de facto* autonomy and minority cultural institutions enjoyed a high degree of state support. The policy of "benign neglect" exercised by the Bulgarian government in this period deprived the Turks and *Pomaks* of the benefits of modernization that took place in the country in this period, while the emigration of the Turks and Muslims to Turkey continued at a steady rate.[19]

Radical change in Bulgarian state policy towards minorities came about with the birth of the idea of creating a unitary and homogeneous Bulgarian socialist nation—in accordance with the stipulations of the 1971 Constitution—and the subsequent launching of the *Revival Process* initiated by communist leader Todor Zhivkov. For this end, all further reference to national minorities was purged from constitutional and political discourse, while minorities were stripped of all privileges they had previously enjoyed and they were subject to policies of economic, social and political discrimination.[20] An agreement with Turkey regarding the 'repatriation' of Turks wishing to emigrate to Turkey was also signed and resulted in about 100,000 Turks leaving the country.[21]

The successful creation of the homogeneous Bulgarian nation-state was to be officially announced in 1985 following a 25-year long government campaign of *National Revival* directed at the forcible replacement of all Turkish-Arabic names by Bulgarian ones and assimilation of the country's Macedonian, Pomak, Gypsy and Turkish minorities.[22] The ideological underpinning of the assimilation campaign

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[18] John D. Bell, "The 'Revival Process': The Turkish and Pomak Minorities in Bulgarian Politics," pp. 237-268, in *Ethnicity and Nationalism in East Central Europe and the Balkans,* eds. Thanasis D. Sfikas and Christopher Williams, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999, pp. 238-241.

[19] The proportion of 20 percent of the Turkish population in the Bulgaria of 1887 fell to 10 percent by the turn of the century. See Bell, p. 239.

[20] See Bell, p. 241.

[21] See Bell, p. 240.

[22] Ali, Eminov, *The Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities of Bulgaria*, London: Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs, Hurst & Co, 1997, p. 8.

rested on the idea of "Bulgarian ancestral roots" preceding the forcible Ottoman conversion to Islam and to a Turkish identity of all those who were considering themselves Turks.[23] Internationally, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe condemned the Bulgarian name-changing and assimilation campaign of minorities in its *Resolutions No. 846* of 1985 and *No. 927* of 1989 and called for the respect of minority rights.[24]

The re-configuration of political boundaries over the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman multi-national empires following the First World War as discussed above, led to the emergence of a sizable and relatively compact Hungarian and Turkish/Muslim minority incorporated into a newly shaped political space incompatible with their ethno-cultural affinities. The initial self-organizing strategy of both Hungarians in Romania and Turks and Muslims in Bulgaria was tolerated and even assisted by their respective homelands of citizenship, as well as by their *kin states,* to which they were linked through ethno-cultural bonds. It was with the onset of an intensive nation-building process launched by the communist governments in Romania and Bulgaria that the ethno-cultural incompatibilities between majority and minority communities came to be accentuated and were to be done away with. The condemnation of these strategies on part of international organizations such as the Council of Europe—complementing the preoccupation of the *kin states,* Hungary and Turkey themselves—indicate the presence of a fourth element in the specific interplay of factors that determined the new minority existence of the two communities. The dynamic of this specific interplay of four factors was to be given a fundamentally new spin following the fall of the communist regimes.

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[23] See Bell, p. 241.

[24] See *Resolution 846 on the Situation of Ethnic and Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria*, 26 September 1985, and the *Resolution 924 on the Situation of Ethnic and Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria,* 26 September 1989, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, available at http://assembly.coe.int.

2.2. Romania: Revolution and the "Morning After"[25]

2.2.1. Timisoara and the Fall of Ceausescu

The fall of the communist regimes in Romania and Bulgaria—within the wider wave of breakup of the whole Soviet block—marked the beginning of a transition period to multi-party democracy and market economy. Due to the specific character of regime change in the two countries making them singular among the regime-changing countries of South Eastern and Central Europe, the legacy of communist rule left a considerable imprint on the process of transition to multi-party democracy. Accordingly, the strategies of nation-state consolidation pursued in the last decades of communist rule came to exert a defining influence on the formation of the new political system in Romania and Bulgaria. Nevertheless, the changes in the internal and international political climate also presented the two minority communities the possibility for a renewed effort towards self-organization.

The reconfiguration process of the political system in Romania had its roots in the turbulent ousting of the communist leader Nicolae Ceausescu in December 1989—an event of an indeterminate quasi-revolutionary character that still challenges and confuses its would-be analysts. What is certain, though, is that its violent character—manifest in the roughly 800-1,000 dead killed under still unexplained circumstances[26] and the hasty execution of the Ceausescu couple following a brief televised trial—was to exert heavy influence on the immediate post-1989

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[25] "(W)e are witnessing the enthusiastic moment of universal Solidarity. However, in such a situation, it is now more important than ever not to succumb to the fascination of this magic moment. One should rather focus on the "morning after," on the sobering headache after the drunkenness of full solidarity, when the enthusiastic unity has to be translated into a positive political program or, at least, into a set of determinate administrative measures." Though Slovenian writer Slavoj Žižek made this point concerning the ousting of Slobodan Miloševic in Serbia, the idea best describes the spirit of the 1989 events in Romania and Bulgaria, as well as the immediate post-1989 challenge they had to face. See Slavoj Žižek, "The Morning After," March 27, 2001, in *Eurozine,* available at http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2001-03-27-zizek-en.html.

[26] The numbers of casualties being one of the never deared aspects of the December 1989 events, these figures indicate indeed a very rough estimate. See Anneli Ute Gabanyi, "Rumäniens unvollendete Revolution" [Romania's Unfinished Revolution], pp. 165-203, in *Südosteuropa,* Vol. 39, No. 3-4/1990, p. 167.

developments in the country. [27] A further factor that fundamentally determined the direction of these developments was the dual character of the December 1989 events combining the revolutionary enthusiasm and wish for rapid reforms of the students and intellectuals and the anti-reform spirit of the army, the bureaucracy and the bulk of the population.[28] It was into the latter direction that the revolutionary events spreading from the city of Timisoara were to be channeled by a specific restructuring of the political elite during and after December 1989.

An idea of the newly restructured political elite can be best formulated through an overview of the initial setup of *National Salvation Front/NSF* created in December 1989, which—unlike the new political formations in Hungary, Poland or Czechoslovakia—did not clearly identify itself with any distinct dissident or opposition movement.[29] Controlling the government created by decree, the self-installed *NSF* was dominated by members of the opposition of the just then ousted communist regime, educated in the Stalinist-Soviet communist spirit and marginalized during the last decades of the Ceausescu-regime bent on a particular course of Romanian national communism. Further, the younger members of the opposition inclined towards the establishment of a reformed version of the Romanian national communism were also present in the *NSF*. It was due to the designs of these two elements of the *NSF* that, in the first phase of the transition, a possible drift to the "mexicanization" of the Romanian political system appeared imminent.[30] Taking the place of the invalidated Romanian Communist Party and its control over the intact communist bureaucratic apparatus, the old-new elite within the *NSF* initially strived

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[27] Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, *Politica dupa comunism [Politics after Communism],* Bucuresti: Humanitas, 2002, p. 26.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Vladimir Tismaneanu, Reinventarea politicului: Europa Rasariteana de la Stalin la Havel [Reinventing Politics: Eastern Europe from Stalin to Havel]. Bucuresti: Polirom, 1999, p. 206.

[30] By an analogy with Latin-American transition processes from authoritarian rule, the idea of "Mexicanization" or "Latin-Americanization" of Communist parties in South Eastern Europe refers to their change into hegemonic revolutionary parties that respect freedom of opinion and rules of capitalism yet keep complete monopoly of political power and privileges. See Anneli Ute Gabanyi, *Systemwechsel in Rumänien: von der Revolution zur Transformation [System Change in Romania: from Revolution to Transformation],* München: Südost-Institut, 1998, p. 248, and Maximilian Strmiska, "Parties, Poles, Alliances and Romanian Pluralism, 1990-2000," *Central European Political Studies Review,* Part II. Vol. 3, Spring 2001, available at http://www.cepsr.cz/tisk.php?ID=84.

to turn the organization into a hegemonic party to encompass the various political formations in order to establish a specific Romanian-style "democracy."

At the same time, for the sake of the maintenance of revolutionary legitimacy, the *NSF* initially also included members of the cultural elite that had emerged under the Communist regime and that had a closer link to the mass movements of December 1989.[31] It was to be this stratum of the new political elite urging a democratic stabilization of Romania that came to engage into an active and organized critique of "neo-communist" *NSF* to curb the threat of a "Mexican-model" development in Romania. Even though initially subject to measures of violent intimidation on part of the *NSF* aimed at their discouragement and neutralization, the new extra- and intra-parliamentary opposition forces—assisted by external pressure coming from international organizations and neighboring countries—had a major role in steering the country into the direction of democratic transition.[32]

With the new *Decree on Political Parties* of December 31, 1989—valid for the next five years—guaranteeing a new multi-party system and enabling party formation under extremely easygoing conditions leading to the ensuing rush to political party formation, the political landscape of Romania soon came to be impenetrable.[33] In accordance with a more general post-communist trend, in their formative period, political arrangements in Romania were initially structured along an old versus new regime cleavage and they had an extremely adversarial character.[34] As a Romanian specificity, this conflictual behavior continued to play a determinant role in the configuration of the new party system, preventing the appearance of a "more sophisticated political differentiation" and perpetuating thus the "primitive and inchoate" character of the party system that evolved in the immediate post-1989

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[31] Gabanyi, *Systemwechsel in Rumänien: von der Revolution zur Transformation [System Change in Romania: from Revolution to Transformation]*, p. 95.

[32] Tismaneanu, p. 207.

[33] In the three months following the December 1989 events 61 parties were registered in the City Council of Bucharest and the growing tendency in their numbers was to be further maintained. See Anneli Ute Gabanyi, "Rumänien: Einmal Demokratie—und zurück?" [Romania: Once Democracy and Back ?] pp. 276-300, in *Südosteuropa,* Vol. 39, No. 5/1990, p. 276.

[34] Strmiska.

period.[35] This development can be traced back to the formative effect exercised by the initial dominance of the *NSF*—formation that soon split and had to undergo a renewal process in order to adjust to the new dynamic of democratization, which had by then spun out of its control. The parties that emerged were of a considerable heterogeneous, ambiguous and volatile character due to contradictory conceptions within the same camps, as well as the existence of dividing lines crossing through representations and constituencies.[36]

The rudimentary and volatile character of the post-1989 party system dominated by a predilection to adversarial and even violent behavior in the management of political conflicts gave its imprint to the first elections, to the character of the first experimental governments and determined the direction of constitutionalization. Similarly to other South Eastern and Central European countries, in the negotiating phase of the future political system and of the Constitution, Romania had its own specific Round Table called the *Provisional Council of National Unity* and dominated by the *NSF* itself. Although the duty of the Council was only to establish the legal prerequisites for the election of a Constitutional Assembly, the March 1990 *Law on the Election of the Parliament and the President of Romania* drafted by the Council already contained detailed guidelines for the political system.[37] Rejecting the quest of the opposition for an all-inclusive exclusion of all leading representatives of the pre-1989 communist nomenclature, concerned with the future political activity of many of its own members—including the next Romanian president Ion Iliescu himself—the *NSF* agreed only to a restricted exclusion of communist leaders.[38] This development exemplifies the merely symbolic presence of a fragmented and weak opposition in the Provisional Council and the upcoming elections of May 1990 ending with the

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] *Law on the Election of the Parliament and the President of Romania 1990,* available on the website of the *Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe Database of the University of Essex,* http://www.essex.ac.uk/elections/.

[38] Gabanyi, Systemwechsel in Rumänien: von der Revolution zur Transformation [System Change in Romania: from Revolution to Transformation], p. 249.

sweeping victory of the *NSF*. Opposition forces, with special emphasis on the historical political parties between the two World Wars—the *National Liberal Party/NLP* and the *National Peasant Party/NPP*—soon came under heavy assault on part of the *NSF* culminating in the infamous miner incidents of February 1990 and clashes between the *NSF* imported miners and opposition forces in Bucharest.[39]

2.2.2. The "Morning After" and Formation of the *DAHR*

A novel aspect of the post-communist political system formation can be discerned from another type of bloody clashes that occurred in the Transylvanian city of Târgu-Mures in March 1990 ending with several people dead and hundreds wounded—this time between members of the Romanian and Hungarian communities. While the exact circumstances of the supposedly orchestrated events have never been cleared—with the NSF and opposition pointing fingers at each other for guilt[40]—the events draw attention to the accrued importance that nationalism and ethnicity came to have in post-communist Romania. As a strategy instrumentalising and exacerbating inter-ethnic tensions, according to analysts, ethnic nationalism was to be applied as a legitimising tool by the new political forces to fill the post-communist ideological vacuum after the myth of revolution died out and could no longer serve as legitimacy.[41] Under these conditions, the initial revolutionary patriotic euphoria uniting minority communities and the majority gave way to heightened inter-ethnic

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[39] As a response to mass demonstrations of dissatisfaction against the politics of the *NSF* organised by the historical parties, in the spirit of the violence that had characterised the regime shift itself, the *NSF* responded by the mobilisation of the Jiu Valley miner community. A strategy of dealing with political opposition in a particularly violent manner to occur several times later, the miners brought to Bucharest violently clashed with the demonstrating masses and restored the *NSF* control over the street that had so expensively been acquired by the Front during the December 1989 events. See Gabanyi, "Rumänien: Einmal Demokratie—und zurück?" [Romania: Once Democracy and Back ?], pp. 284-286.

[40] Ibid*.,* p. 285.

[41] See Tismaneanu, p. 235 and Anneli Ute Gabanyi, "Nationalismus in Rumänien—Vom Revolutionspatriotismus zur chauvinistischen Restauration" [Nationalism in Romania—From Revolutionary Patriotism to Chauvinistic Restoration], pp. 275- 292, in *Südosteuropa.* Vol. 41, No. 5/1991.

mistrust.[42] In the specific context of the post-1989 period, the active process of the Romanian nation-formation under the Ceausescu-regime was to be resumed, while the Hungarian minority itself launched its own process of self-organisation. The March 1990 events—complementing the treatment of the opposition by the Iliescu regime—resulted in the international condemnation and isolation of the country.[43]

The instrumentalisation of ethnic nationalism for democratic legitimacy, as well as the development of an inefficient political system for the sake of maintaining the *NSF* power monopoly leaning on the still intact communist-period institutions was sanctified with the new Constitution. Blending into the line of the Romanian constitutional tradition yet completely new Constitution drafted by the Constitutional Assembly in November 1991 and affirmed by referendum bore the traces of the circumstances of its drafting. Following the French model, the Constitution of 1991 stipulated the "sovereign, independent, unitary and indivisible" character of the Romanian Nation-State.[44] The basic law guaranteed the "right of persons belonging to national minorities, to the preservation, development and expression of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity," in accordance with the principle of "equality and non-discrimination in relation to the other Romanian citizens."[45] This formulation was seen as falling short of encompassing the group rights formulated by the minorities themselves and was to be the subject of numerous subsequent political debates.

Further, serving the legitimisation of the authority of the *NSF*, as well as the perpetuation of its command over the direction of transition, the Constitution of 1991 created a dysfunctional semi-presidential political system with the imperfect

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[42] Political leaders were in fact acting upon the mutually reinforcing feelings of Hungarian threat and contestation of the Romanian nation felt by Romanians and reinforced by a professed "anti-Romanian chauvinism of the Hungarians stemming from a complex of cultural superiority toward the Romanian majority." See Dragos Petrescu, "Can Democracy Work in South Eastern Europe?" pp. 275-301, in *Nation building and Contested Identities: Romanian and Hungarian Case Studies,* eds. Iordachi, Constantin, Zoltán Kántor, Cristina Petrescu, Dragos Petrescu and Trencsényi Balázs, Budapest/Iasi: Regio Books/Polirom: 2001, p. 284.

[43] Ibid.

[44] § 1 (1), *Constitution of Romania,* 1991, available on the website of the *Romanian Chamber of Deputies*, http://www.cdep.ro.

[45] § 6 (1) and (2), *Constitution of Romania,* 1991.

separation of powers. Public responsibility of both the Parliament and the Government was to be low due to the immunity granted to its members by Constitution, as well as the possibility of inter-party migration. Dominated by communist-time judges due to the requirement of experience as the main selection criterion, the judiciary, in its turn, was to manifest the greatest possible resistance to the slightest reform attempt.[46]

The various minority communities in Romania reacted in different ways to the immediate post-communist inter-ethnic mistrust that gave way to the initial relief and came to underlie the newly created political system of questionable origins, stability and efficiency. In the moments of revolutionary solidarity, representatives of national minority communities were included—albeit nominally like in the case of the other members opposing the *NSF*—into the *Provisional Council of National Unity* itself. Further, in the 1990 *Law on the Election of the Parliament and the President of Romania* they were granted the right for political self-organization and the right to be represented by one deputy in the National Assembly organization in the case of failure to collect the necessary number of votes.[47] Yet, numerous members of minority communities—within a general trend among all of the Romanian citizens— chose the solution of emigration. The most spectacular case was that of the German and Jewish communities.[48]

The Hungarian community, in its turn, actively represented itself all through the December 1989 revolutionary events and regime change. The unleashing episode of the revolution itself was linked to Hungarian protests against the forced eviction of Hungarian Reformed priest László Tokés—an action soon joined by many of the ethnically diverse Timisoara's Serb and Romanian population. Initially, Hungarians were included in the top leadership of the *NSF* itself and their dissident and previously marginalised representatives were also given top executive offices in the first transition government. As a political agency of the Hungarian minority

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[46] Mungiu-Pippidi, p. 61.
[47] § 4 (1), *Law on the Election of the Parliament and the President of Romania, 1990.*
[48] See Gabanyi, "Rumänien: Einmal Demokratie—und zurück?" [Romania: Once Democracy and Back ?], p. 296.

community, the *Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania/DAHR* was founded on 25 December 1989 under the leadership of Géza Domokos.

Yet, the times of optimistic cooperation were to come to an end after two months, when, as a reaction to a wave of Hungarian-Romanian school separations, public dissatisfaction against Hungarians was taken to the streets of Târgu-Mures and Cluj.[49] Soon, the threat of Hungarian separatism was to be introduced into the public discourse by Ion Iliescu himself, while growing popular support for ethno-nationalism was directed into new national-populist political organizations such as the *Vatra Româneasca/Romanian Hearth* or the *Partidul România Mare/Greater Romania Party.* The extremely tense relations between the Romanian majority and the Hungarian minority in this period culminated in the above-mentioned ethnic clashes of March 1990 in Târgu-Mures—an event that was condemned by the international community and the Republic of Hungary, as well.[50]

2.3. Bulgaria: Revolution and the "Morning After"

2.3.1. The Fall of Zhivkov

It is not by chance that Bulgaria and Romania are as a rule grouped together by analysts examining regime changes and transitions in South Eastern and Central Europe. Although lacking the dramatic incident of a Romanian-style dictator-execution, the circumstances of the Bulgarian coup against the communist Zhivkov rule had numerous similarities to that of the Romanian one. Further, due to shared communist-time legacies, it is not surprising that the path to transition chosen by Bulgaria seems to have been leading into the same direction.

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[49] See Horváth, p. 23.
[50] In his letter to Romanian Prime Minister Petre Roman, Hungarian Prime Minister Miklós Németh reproached to the Romanian Government the "subordination of the Hungarian issue to the internal power struggle, making unacceptable concessions to forces practicing explicit racial discrimination." Quoted in Horváth, p. 25.

Similarly to the Romanian regime change, due to the lack of an organized opposition "from below" during the repressive and therefore stable Zhivkov rule, the unavoidable regime shift in Bulgaria was orchestrated "from above." Possible group-specific mass dissatisfaction stemming from the economic inefficiency of the socialist system had been addressed by partial reforms, while the intelligentsia itself was strongly linked to the power structures and thus rendered loyal to the system.[51] Yet, towards the end of the 1980s, in a spreading spirit of *perestrojka* and *glasnost* serving as background for a general wave of social and economic crisis, this strategy could no longer serve its purposes. Against the backdrop of growing dissatisfaction of the population and the gradual appearance of informal yet critical civil rights groups of the intelligentsia, the regime change was prepared and coordinated by a younger "second row" stratum of the Communist Party nomenclature. Closely following the escalation of the economic and social crisis and disposing of adequate political and economic bases, the reform-wing of the Bulgarian Communist Party was best situated to conduct the *palace revolution* of November 1989 and promptly react as communist leader Todor Zhivkov stepped back from his office. While in Romania, it was the bloody revolution spirit that served as legitimizing capital for the old-new elite, in Bulgaria the same role was to be played by the bloodless elimination of the communist regime.[52]

In December 1989, mass demonstrations also occurred in Bulgaria and the political opposition of the Communist Party reform-wing—that had in the meantime renamed itself the *Bulgarian Socialist Party/BSP*—organized itself into the loose and heterogeneous *Union of Democratic Forces/UDF*. Lacking the necessary financial means and a unified concept with regard to a possible direction of post-communist governing, the *UDF* could not possibly stand as an alternative to the *BSP* in the first free post-communist elections of June 1990. The same weightlessness characterized also the presence of the ideologically fragmented opposition in the Bulgarian Round Table talks—like in the Romanian case—dominated and steered by the old-new neo-

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[51] Ana Karlsreiter, "Systemwechsel und Elitenkontinuität in Bulgarien" [System Change and Elite Continuity in Bulgaria], pp. 546-653 in *Südosteuropa,* Vol. 47, No. 10-11/1998, p. 547.

communist elite that had thus the upper hand in establishing the rules of the game regarding the future Bulgarian political system.[53]

The rapid introduction of market economy relations and a rash privatization wave without the necessary economic reform measures resulted in a rapid deterioration of the country's economy and popular economic and political dissatisfaction was given voice in *UDF*-orchestrated mass demonstrations. As a result, the socialist government headed by Andrej Lukanov stepped back and gave place to a transitional technocratic government led by Dimitar Popov. The greatest achievement of Popov's one-year government was the drafting of the country's new Constitution of July 1991. As a result of the heated drafting debates, a radical faction of the *UDF* group formulated harsh critiques referring to the new Constitution by splitting of the organization and staying away from the voting procedure. Similarly to the new Romanian Constitution, the Bulgarian Constitution stipulated a deficient separation of the powers of the President and the Parliament. As an achievement of the *BSP* representatives, the presence of empty formulas and unclear formulations enabled communist structures and institutions to survive and holders of high offices in the communist nomenclature to continue their political activities unheeded.[54] At the same time, credit has to be given to the democratic achievements of the new Constitution. Introducing a presidential system in Bulgaria, the Basic Law establishes the rule of law as basic guiding principle of the state and also includes an exhaustive and up-to-date chapter on the protection of human rights.

2.3.2. The "Morning After" and Formation of the *MRF*

Yet, in the field of protection national minority rights, the Bulgarian Constitution of 1991 contains stipulations that are of a highly controversial character. First, Article 6 of the Constitution determines freedom and equality in dignity and rights with "no privileges or restriction of rights on the grounds of race, nationality,

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[52] Ibid. pp. 548-549.
[53] Ibid. p. 550.

ethnic self-identity, sex, origin, religion, education, opinion, political affiliation, personal or social status or property status."[55] At the same time, in accordance with the *Political Parties Act* of 1990 prohibiting the establishment of a political party "based on a confessional or an ethnic principle,"[56] the Constitution bans the formation of political parties on exclusively ethnic, racial or religious base.[57] The inclusion of this specific provision regarding ethnic political parties and its subsequent use by actors within and outside the Bulgarian government to disenfranchise minority groups undertaking a course of political self-organization, indicates the heightened importance of ethnic issues in this period.[58]

In this period, fear of a possible Turkish/Muslim revenge for the forced assimilation campaign during the *National Revival* through separatist designs blended into a larger "Cyprus-syndrome" apprehension of the possible emergence of a powerful Turkey that would re-instate the times under the *Ottoman Yoke* in Bulgaria.[59] Touching upon this painful point of reference in the creation of the Bulgarian nation state, the general fear of the Bulgarian population of Turkish and Muslim minority demands for cultural, let alone administrative-political autonomy, received an impetus by the revocation of the assimilative measures introduced in the Zhivkov-era. As early as in December 1989, the rights of Turkish and Muslim minorities for the free practice of their faith and for the free use of and education in their mother tongue were thus reinstalled. Moreover, the introduction of a multi-party political system provided the numerically significant minority community an optimal tool for political self-organization. Complemented by a fear of the militarily superior NATO-member neighboring Turkey, the prospect of a possible Turkish/Muslim

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[54] Ibid. p. 551.
[55] § 6 (1) and (2), *Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria,* 1991, available on the website of the *Bulgarian National Assembly,* http://www.parliament.bg.
[56] § 3 (2), *Political Parties Act* 1990, available on the *Portal of Ethnic Minorities in Bulgaria,* http://www.ethnos.bg.
[57] § 11 (4), *Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria,* 1991.
[58] See Eminov, p. 167 and Sabine Riedel, "Die türkische Minderheit im parlamentarischen System Bulgariens" [The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria's Parliamentary System], pp. 100-124 in *Südosteuropa,* Vol. 42, No. 2/1993, pp. 103-104.
[59] Riedel, "Die türkische Minderheit im parlamentarischen System Bulgariens" [The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria's Parliamentary System], p. 104.

separatism exacerbated the alarm of the population for the cohesiveness of the Bulgarian State itself. The latter aspect also re-launched the controversial *Macedonian Question* into the public debate, involving the continuously questioned identity of the Slavic Macedonians living in a potential irredentist neighboring Republic of Macedonia with respect to the Bulgarian Macedonian community.[60]

It was this general fear that became a tool for legitimization in the hands of the post-1989 government of Bulgaria struggling with a legitimacy problem when the euphoria over the ousting of the Zhivkov-regime gave way to a general wave of discontent amid growing economic, social and political crisis. By successful manipulation of the Bulgarian population, the issue of general crisis was channeled into a single hypothetical problem—that of the Bulgarian national question. Playing on the above-discussed *Ottoman Yoke*-phobia and the *Greater Bulgaria*-nostalgia as two basic defining tenets of the Bulgarian nation-state creation, the populist rhetoric of the immediate post-1989 government managed to re-vitalize feelings of ethnic nationalism in both majority and minority communities.[61] Thus, the presence of a numerically significant and territorially concentrated ethno-culturally foreign community in Bulgaria linked nevertheless to the neighboring Turkey, as well as the territories lost especially to the Republic of Macedonia became issues of central importance in this period.

Initial cooperation with and far-reaching concessions were also characteristic of the immediate post-1989 relations between the new government and the Turkish and Muslim minority communities in Bulgaria. The violent protests of the minority communities against the forced assimilation campaign under the Zhivkov-regime started as early as spring 1989 and led to the arrest, imprisonment or expulsion of many of their representatives. As a response to the bloody demonstration mainly in the Haskovo and the Kardzhali regions with a majority Muslim population, Zhivkov agreed to grant passports to all Muslims willing to immigrate to the neighboring Turkey. The ensuing mass exodus of roughly 300,000 Turks only by August 1989 did

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[60] Stefan Troebst, "Nationalismus als Demokratisierungshemmnis in Bulgarien" [Nationalism as Obstacle to Democratization in Bulgaria], pp. 188-227in *Südosteuropa,* Vol. 41, No. 3-4/1992, p. 196.

not lead to the expected easing of inter-ethnic tensions and greatly contributed to the further discrediting of the Zhivkov Government both within and outside Bulgaria.[62] This situation rendered it easier for the anti-Zhivkov reform-communist wing of the Bulgarian Communist Party to induce its *palace revolution*. Based on the idea that the forcible assimilation campaign had failed to meet the initial objective of realizing and protecting the unity of the Bulgarian nation, the leader of the interim government replacing the Zhivkov-regime, Petar Mladenov decreed the suspension of the assimilationist measures. Yet, the idea of an ethnically homogeneous Bulgarian nation as imagined and promoted by Zhivkov was to persist in the public mind and discourse. As a result, the termination of the assimilation campaign led to numerous mass demonstrations on part of ethnic Bulgarians not only in predominantly Turkish/Muslim regions such as Haskovo or Kardzhali but also in Sofia, Plovdiv, Ruse and Shumen.[63]

It was under these circumstances that the *Movement for Rights and Freedoms/MRF* was founded on 4 January 1990 in the city of Varna. Successor to the *National Turkish Liberation Movement* established under the period of the assimilation campaign, the organization had its first National Conference in March 1990 in Sofia with Ahmed Dogan elected as its President. Nevertheless, the organization—such as any other minority representative—was not present at the Round Table talks between representatives of the *BCP* and its opponents amalgamated into the *UDF*. Further, the idea of the protection of Bulgarian national unity also resurfaced in the public discourse of the *BSP*—successor to the reform-wing of the old Communist Party—and discriminatory provisions were introduced into the *Political Parties Act of 1990* only to appear later in the new Constitution itself. Rising public apprehension with regard to a potential Turkish/Muslim problem was only intensified by the successful participation of the *MRF* in the country's first free multi-party elections of 1990 for the Grand Assembly. Besides drawing greater

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[61] Ibid. p. 195.
[62] See Riedel, "Die türkische Minderheit im parlamentarischen System Bulgariens" [The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria's Parliamentary System], p. 101.
[63] Ibid. p. 103.

attention the organization, the *MRF* presence in the first year of post-communist politics dominated by the *BSP* turned out to be inefficient. The lack of the organization's sufficient influence on legislation in this period is best exemplified by its inability to sway the debates on the future Constitution or the 1991 *Electoral Law,* both of which repeatedly banned ethnically based political parties. The implications of these provisions were an interdiction and the near-exclusion of the organization from the elections that were to take place in October 1991.

The political, social and economic changes re-awakening of the Romanian and Bulgarian societies launched by the ousting of the communist regimes also had their rekindling impact on the minority communities themselves. With the memories of a various cultural and educational rights, as well as those of political liveliness, against the backdrop of the new possibilities presented by the new political system and that of the re-awakening of majority nationalism, the emerging minority elite launching the course of minority self-organization. The novel international setup—enhancing external influence exerted by international organizations and by the respective *kin states* of the two minority communities on developments in the two countries—constituted an optimal framework for launching these endeavors. It was the imprint of this specific relational configuration that the emergence of the two ethnically based parties was to bear in the post-communist transformation process of the Romanian and Bulgarian party systems.

3. The Two Parties at a Closer Look

3.1. The *DAHR* and the *MRF*: Two Ethnic Parties and their Context
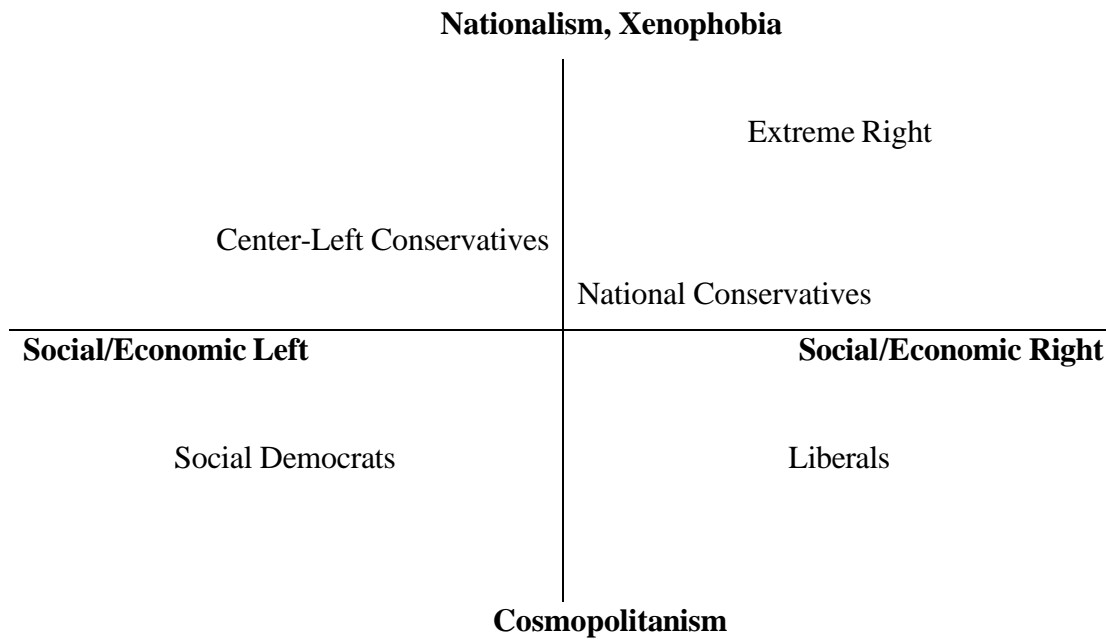
3.1.1. Ethnic Parties

In the specific context of the Romanian and Bulgarian political party formation process in the immediate post-1989 period, dominated by ethno-national discourse as a frame of reference, two significant political formations emerged as the result of the self-organization of two minority communities. The emergence of the ethnic party phenomenon in the post-communist countries can be best conceptualized in the wider framework of party formation that can be optimally described as a specific re-configuration of political parties domesticating the classical model of cleavages as proposed by Stein Rokkan. According to the initial model designed to capture party formation in the Western countries, two historical revolutions generated two major cleavages that have come to dominate the structure of society: the Reformation; i.e. the "national revolution" has led to a cleavage between Church and the State, as well as between the Center and the Periphery—the latter setting into opposition the dominant national culture against ethnic, linguistic or religious peripheral communities. The second cleavage between urban and rural society, as well as between the employers and the employees has been, according to Rokkan, the result of the second revolutionary dynamic set into motion by the industrial revolution. In this framework, political parties play the role of institutionalizing the societal antagonisms embodied by the two major cleavages.[64]

When applied to non-Western countries with special reference to Central and Eastern Europe in the immediate post-communist period, critics have argued that the model of political party formation originating in the major societal cleavages is

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[64] See Stein Rokkan's theory presented in Antoine, Roger, "Economic Development and Positioning of Ethnic Political Parties: Comparing Post-Communist Bulgaria and Romania," pp. 20-42, in *Southeast European Politics,* Vol. 3, No. 1, June 2002, available at http://www.seep.ceu.hu/archives/issue31/roger.pdf, pp. 22-23.

dominated by the Center/Periphery cleavage, while the employer/employee axis has a merely a marginal role. This trend can be traced back to the communist rule when "the nationalization of the means of production and the subsequent elimination of the capitalist bourgeoisie" overturned the cleavage that has originated in the industrial revolution.[65] Consequently, in the particular case of party system formation in both post-communist Romania and Bulgaria, it was the Center/Periphery cleavage that came to be of a formative influence. It is on the basis of this observation that—adapting the original model of Rokkan—Alan Siaroff has proposed a new model to fit the realities of post-communist East Central Europe—including those of Romania and Bulgaria:

Nationalism, Xenophobia

Extreme Right

Center-Left Conservatives

National Conservatives

Social/Economic Left   **Social/Economic Right**

Social Democrats   Liberals

Cosmopolitanism

Source: Enyedi, Zsolt and András Körösényi, *Pártok és pártrendszerek [Parties and Party Systems]*

It is within this framework that the multi-party system formation in Romania and Bulgaria resulted in the formation of the two ethnic parties undertaking to represent the interests of the two minority communities. In Romania, the *DAHR* came into being as a political agency to represent the interests of the Hungarian minority,

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[65] Daniel-Louis Seiler, quoted in Roger, p. 22.

while in Bulgaria the *MRF* was created with the declared purpose of struggling for the reinstating of the rights and freedoms of the Turkish minority on the parliamentary level.[66] Deriving their electoral potential and legitimacy from the "identary mobilization of an ethno-territorial community of sub-national nature"[67]— the Hungarians in Romania, respectively the Turks and Muslims in Bulgaria—the two formations will be examined as falling into the category of ethnic parties.

Both the *DAHR* and the *MRF* bear the characteristics of the classical ethnic party definition suggested by Daniel. L. Horowitz: the two formations "derive their support overwhelmingly from an identifiable ethnic group (…) and serve the interests of that group."[68] As Horowitz sees it, the organizations derive from two sources: first, the internal imperatives of the communitarian aspect of the respective ethnic group driving its adherents towards "concentrated party loyalties." Further, due to the "mutual incompatibility of ethnic claims to power," ethnic parties also develop due to the external imperatives of the ethnic group.[69] Further, due to the ascriptive character of ethnic identity, ethnically based parties can also be considered as having a secure basis of support and offer thus an incentive for politicians to perpetuate the existence of such parties. Since the *raison d'être* of ethnic parties is the cause of the ethnic group they represent, ethnic parties bear resemblance to interest groups and, as a result of the "coincidence of party and group boundaries" excluding the voters' exercise of choice, they have a certain character of "fixity." Yet, this ascriptive predictability of ethnic parties does not exclude a character of "fluidity," as well, referring to the capability of the party to enter coalition arrangements across ethnic and party lines and to develop mechanisms of ethnic conciliation.[70]

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[66] See Riedel, "Die türkische Minderheit im parlamentarischen System Bulgariens" [The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria's Parliamentary System], p. 103.

[67] Maximilian, Strmiska, "A Study on the Conceptualisation of (Ethno)Regional Parties," *Central European Political Studies Review,* Part II-III. Vol. 4, Spring & Summer 2002, available at http://www.cepsr.cz/clanek.php?ID=40.

[68] Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict,* Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985, p. 291.

[69] Ibid., p. 295.

[70] Ibid., p. 297.

Even though they are primarily characterized by the "identary mobilization of an ethno-territorial community," for a typological classification of ethnic parties, it is important to note that these political formations are not clearly monothematic.[71] Ethnic political parties are also determined by the general fundamental logic underlying the character of political parties aimed at the reproduction and expansion of legitimizing and mobilization potential—a logic that has resulted in the inclusion of different ideological platforms into the party spectrum. Yet, these different ideological orientations are merely secondary being indirectly linked with and predominantly subordinated to the main "profile-forming" primary characteristics of the political formations.[72]

The primary characteristics that enable a more refined classification of ethnic political parties involve the degree of radicalism they profess in their claims for political and territorial change.[73] Accordingly, the classification ranges from the most moderate protectionist parties struggling for the official recognition and institutionalized protection of the "unique character" of the respective ethnic group. Autonomist parties strive for autonomy for their regions, as well as a consociational power sharing arrangement with the elite of the majority group. National-federalist parties, in their turn, claim a fundamental rearrangement of the unitary state-model into a federal one, while openly separatist movements strive for total independence of their regions with a potential irredentist claim for their annexation to another nation-state, to which they are linked by ethno-cultural affinity.[74] A possible classification of the two parties would place the *DAHR* into the autonomist and the *MRF* into the protectionist category. Yet, for a classification of the parties it has to be born in mind that the standpoints taken by the two organizations are in all stages influenced by their specific character. This particularity lies in the fact that the two organizations represent minority communities linked by ethno-cultural affinity to a state other than

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[71] See Strmiska, "A Study on the Conceptualisation of (Ethno)Regional Parties."
[72] Ibid.
[73] A classification suggested by Lieven de Winter, presented by Strmiska.
[74] Ibid.

the one they belong to in political/civic terms. It is in this context that the two ethnic formations will be in more details presented and assessed below.

3.1.2. The Context of Minority Ethnic Parties

Nationalizing Minorities

Based on the idea of drawing a parallel between present-day minority nationalism and the nation-formation process launched in the 19th century, the idea of the *nationalizing minority* has been suggested by Zoltán Kántor. In the face of the nationalizing process of the majority defined in ethno-cultural terms and asserting the claim to be the "legitimate owner" of the state,[75] Kántor observes minority communities—equally delineated on ethno-cultural terms and linked thus to an external *kin state*—striving towards a parallel process of self-organization and institutionalization of a system of political representation. In this sense, national minorities are perceived as a "dynamic political stance" as opposed to a "static ethno-demographic condition" and are characterized by the assertion of the public claim of belonging to an ethno-culturally different community than the numerically or politically dominant majority, the demand for official state recognition of this ethno-cultural difference, on the basis of which they also claim certain collective cultural or political rights.[76] In this framework, the dynamic nationalizing process of minority communities has its distinctive features. First, the nationalizing minority is sufficiently numerous to enable it to achieve a number of its goals, which are not only cultural but also political ones aiming at the ultimate establishment of a "minority life-world." Finally, nationalizing minorities aim at the transformation of the political structure of the state and also at representation on the state level.[77] Within this framework, the main issues at stake for the minority communities involve questions

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[75] The idea of *nationalizing* majority proposed by Rogers Brubaker and described in Zoltán Kántor, "Nationalizing Minorities and Homeland Politics," pp. 252-253.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., p. 251.

such as that of the status of the ethnic minority vis-á-vis the nation-state, the question of the institutionalization of minority educational and cultural rights and the decentralization of the central power of the state.

Nationalizing Home States

Since the nationalizing process of minority communities is launched as a reaction to and in parallel with the nationalization process of the majority community itself, the conceptualization of the ethnic party phenomenon as a result of minority self-organization has to include the main aspects of the latter phenomenon, as well. Since the nationalism of the ethnically defined "core nation" is determined by the basic assumption that the nation-state is the "state *of* and the state *for* the core nation,"[78] the space for maneuver of the ethno-culturally distinct nationalizing minority is confined by the specific parameters of the nationalizing majority itself. In the specific context of post-communist Romanian and Bulgarian transition to democracy and market economy complicated by tense inter-ethnic relations, the basic parameters of majority nation-building include the existence of weak state structures with opportunistic elite-orchestrated politics in a political, social and economic crisis period. Since the removal of the communist-time repressive apparatus was effected in an institutional vacuum with no democratic rules to regulate the unleashed power struggles, it is not surprising that the newly forming political system came to be permeated by exclusionary ethnic nationalism, "ethnic scapegoating"[79] and the "securitization of ethnic relations." In this sense, normal democratic political procedures presupposing the negotiation and debate regarding inter-ethnic relations are limited by and subject to matters of state security.[80]

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[78] Ibid. p. 252.

[79] Ivanka Nedeva, Atanassova, "The Impact of Ethnic Issues on the Security of South Eastern Europe;" *Report Commissioned by the NATO Office of Information and Press.* June 1999, Available at http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/97-99/atanassova.pdf.

[80] Will, Kymlicka, "Multiculturalism and Minority Rights: West and East," *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe,* 4/2002.

Nationalizing *Kin States*

Inter-ethnic tensions stemming from the sense of insecurity, threat and mistrust that the nationalizing majority nurtures in face of the minority group regarded as a "fifth column," assumed to be working for a neighboring enemy[81] become all the more accentuated with the actual presence and strategies of the neighboring *kin states,* to which the minority communities are linked by ethno-cultural ties. Mutual suspicions between all three of the actors have their roots in the tension-laden history involving territorial disputes, wars, military occupation or imperialist domination. Within the actual international context, *kin states*—engaged in their own nation-building process and having to face their own national minority issues—generally do not wish or cannot choose to pursue their irredentist designs to accomplish a forcible modification of borders to their advantage. Instead, *kin states* wishing to monitor the fate and support the interests of their trans-border co-ethnics opt for various support measures. These assistance mechanisms include as a rule direct material, cultural support or repatriation involving social assistance or facilitated citizenship. Further, *kin states* can also undertake international initiatives and lobbying by influential actors and international organizations or enter bilateral or regional agreements with the host countries of the respective minority communities.

External Factors: Norms and Conditionality

While the processes of state- and nation-building in post-communist East Central Europe was determined by a general aspiration towards national self-assertion both on the nation-state, as well as the national minority levels, there was another fundamental theme that influenced these processes: that of *Europeanization*. Since a "return to membership in the 'family of democratic nations'"[82] and into the Euro-Atlantic space in broader terms was considered as self-evident, the benchmarking

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[81] Ibid.

[82] See David J. Smith, p. 9.

leverage and consequent influence of external actors on the strategies of nation-states and minorities—and thus of the ethnic minority parties themselves—is of utmost importance. As with the fall of communism the region of South Eastern Europe became a potential powder keg, the beginning of the 1990's saw the internationalization of minority rights protection, which thus became an issue of legitimate international concern allowing for external monitoring, pressuring and potential intervention. The most relevant international actors that exerted influence on the post-1989 developments in Romania and Bulgaria have been—outside singular state actors such as the United States or NGOs such as Amnesty International—the *United Nations/UN*, the *North Atlantic Treaty Organization/NATO*, the *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe/OSCE*, the *Council of Europe* and the *European Union/EU*.

The collapse of the communist Soviet block brought into motion the previously frozen system of inter-state relations and normative human rights protection agenda as pinpointed by the 1975 Helsinki Final Accords marking the creation of the *Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe/CSCE*. The collapse of the communist regimes launched the *CSCE/OSCE* process as a "powerful monitoring mechanism in the regulation of stat conformity with declared core European norms of democracy, human rights and minority protection."[83] Yet, with its vagueness, the definition of 'national minority,' blended into the existing series of ambiguous, contradictory and hazy tentative definitions provided by diverse international instruments striving to bypass the inherent tension between individual human rights and collective rights. Such attempts at the international codification of minority rights included the 1992 *UN* Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities or the 1992 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Further contentions surrounded the concept of national sovereignty and an exploratory reformulation including the

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[83] James Hughes and Gwendolyn Sasse, "Monitoring the Monitors: EU Enlargement Conditionality and Minority Protection in the CEECs," *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe,* 1/2003.

obligation of minority rights protection surfaced for the first time at the *CSCE* Copenhagen meeting of 1990.[84]

Prevailing confusion was furthered by additional internationally binding agreements conceived in the post-communist period, such as the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities/FCNM of 1995. The FC was the first legally binding international document dealing with minority rights protection with regard to issues such as non-discrimination, linguistic and educational rights, effective participation and representation, as well as trans-border cooperation.[85] Strengthening the line of pan-European instruments addressing the protection of national minority rights, the General Recommendations issued by the *OSCE* with the aim to give contours to the fundamental international protective standards. In addition, the compliance ensuring mechanism of the *OSCE* was in 1992 strengthened with the creation of the office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities/HCNM as an 'early warning' and 'early action' instrument of minority issue management relying on the strategy of "quiet diplomacy" for conflict prevention.[86]

The second major development in international minority rights protection was the redefinition of the European Community/EC along political lines. The reinvigorated pan-European normative agenda as formulated by both the *OSCE* and the Council of Europe, was adopted and entrenched into the European Union/EU roadmap for the eastward enlargement under the name of the 'Copenhagen criteria' in 1993. Conditioning future membership of candidate countries from "the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, human rights, the rule of law and respect for and protection of minorities," the first Copenhagen criterion marked a considerable shift from the formula of individual rights to that of group-rights.[87] In turn, due to the

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[84] The statist position taken by France and Greece were supported by Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia. See Hughes and Sasse.

[85] Kinga Gál, "The Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and its Impact on Central and Eastern Europe," *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, Germany: European Centre for Minority Issues, 4/2000.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

pioneer character of the new formula, as well as the absence of a collective minority rights protection standard within the EU itself, has considerably discredited the conditionality principle making it the target of double standards accusations and strengthening the image of Europe as a "moving target" for applicant countries.[88]

Conditionality within the context of the *OSCE* normative agenda also appeared in relation with the idea of a potential expansion of the *NATO*. In this case, the second chapter of the 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement* formulated the necessity of the peaceful resolution of ethnic or territorial disputes in the region as a prerequisite to a possible invitation of countries to join the organization.[89] Stability in the region of Central and South Eastern Europe was also the main objective of another *EU*-proposed instrument: the 1995 Pact on Stability in Europe intended to achieve its aim through bilateral treaties and regional cooperation facilitating the promotion of good neighborly relations, including question related to frontiers and minorities"[90]

In the specific context of the host-state—ethnic minority—*kin state* configuration, the safeguarding of stability targeted by the international actors has depended on the realization and maintenance of a fragile balance between the often competing claims of the various actors involved. Accordingly, international organizations have sought to ensure the granting and protection of minority rights by the host states—albeit within the existing international legal framework—with he parallel securing of principles such as territorial sovereignty, the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*, friendly inter-state relations or, more generally, the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. At the same time, it is these basic principles that limit the possibilities of *kin state* protection of trans-border co-ethnics.[91]

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[88] Judy Batt and Kataryna Wolczuk quoted in Smith.

[89] See *Study on NATO Enlargement,* September 1995, available at the website of the *NATO*, http://www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/enl-9501.htm.

[90] See the website of the *Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe*, available at http://www.stabilitypact.org/.

3.2. The *DAHR* and its Context

3.2.1. The *DAHR*—Ethnic Organization in National Politics

As asserted above, the formation of the *DAHR* was linked to the circumstances of the post-1989 multi-party system development in Romania and the parallel self-organization of its sizeable Hungarian minority community. Having the above-outlined specific Romanian model of party formation in mind, due to its specific ambiguous and constantly shifting character, analysts of the post-communist party system configuration in Romania have seen it as a considerable challenge.[92] According to the doctrines and self-identification, the placing of the newly formed Romanian political parties in the political space as defined by the traditional "left," "right" and "center" is risky since the specific Romanian context gives a distorting spin to these categories. Having this risk in mind, a tentative description of the post-communist Romanian political spectrum positions the traditional communists, the national populists (the *Party of Romanian National Union/PUNR*, the *Greater Romania Party/PRM*, the nationalist wing of the *DAHR*) and the socialist populists (the heir of the *NSF*, the *Romanian Party of Social Democracy/PDSR*) on the "left."[93] The *Democratic Party/PD* has represented the Romanian center-left, while the center-right has been represented by the liberal wing of the *DAHR* or the *National Liberal Party/PNL.* The Romanian right included the *Christian Democrats* (*PNTCD*), while the extreme right encompassed various radical nationalist, chauvinist and religious fundamentalist formations.[94]

As this classification suggests, already at its formation, the *DAHR* was designed to include factions with diverse ideological orientations and radicalism with

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[91] In accordance with the Council of Europe's Venice Commission *Report on the Preferential Treatment of National Minorities by their Kin State*, October 2001, available on the website of the Venice Commission, http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2001/CDL-INF(2001)019-e.asp.

[92] See Gabanyi, Strmiska, Tismaneanu, Mungiu-Pippidi.

[93] For the development of political parties and successive electoral results in Romania see Annex 5 and 6.

regard to the desired political, territorial rearrangements in Romania. In the context of the immediate post-1989 changes bearing the heightened importance of ethno-national discourse with nationalist parties emerging as important players in the post-communist political system coordinated by the *NSF* as addressed above, the initial claims of the newly formed interest representing organization were correspondingly radical. The *DAHR* demanded the re-establishment of the wide range of autonomy and cultural rights the Hungarian community had been granted before the aggressive nationalistic course of the Ceausescu-regime. In the initial period of revolutionary cooperation, the organization was successful in exerting pressure and managed to attain the controversially hasty division of bi-lingual schools and ensuing Hungarian-Romanian tensions. Yet, the strategy of radicalism promoted by a radical faction under the leadership of the *DAHR* Honorary President László Tokés had soon to confront a more moderate and gradualist view represented by *DAHR* President Géza Domokos followed by Béla Markó. In the course of the ever-changing context of minority self-organization, the moderate—radical axis was to be continuously present in defining the *DAHR* profile to ever-varying degrees.

When examined against the above mentioned model proposed by Horowitz, this specific moderate—radical character positions the party into the autonomist category. The rhetoric of demand for different degrees and forms of autonomy has figured as constant yet of varying importance in *DAHR* discourse. Further, the political strategies of the party corroborate the intention of developing a consociational model of power sharing with the majority political elite.

In the spirit of ideological pluralism and democracy intended to constitute the basic organizational and functional principles of the *DAHR* as an the umbrella organization—organized in relatively autonomous regional organizations—has included various ideological platforms represented by smaller parties such as the Hungarian Christian Democrats, the Part of Small Landowners, the Hungarian Liberals or Social Democrats. In addition the organization also incorporated by

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[94] A classification proposed by Romanian political scientist Vladimir Tismaneanu and presented in Strmiska, "Parties, Poles, Alliances and Romanian Pluralism, 1990-2000."

associate membership autonomous professional, cultural and scientific civic organizations. Democratic considerations also determined the organizational model of the *DAHR* taking care to be based on the separation and mutual check-and-balance rapport between the various power branches of decision-making bodies, executive bodies, bodies of inspection and consultative bodies.[95]

In order to conceptualize the specific phenomenon of the *DAHR* as a political organization representing the interests of an ethnic minority, it is important to address in more details its dual character having its roots in the multiple objectives and roles the organization has come to assume. Being the organization of an ethnic minority community and thus legally never bearing the denomination of political party in accordance with the Romanian legislation on elections and political parties securing preferential treatment to such organizations having the status of non-governmental organizations,[96] ever since its formation the *DAHR* has undertaken an important political activity. Having an important and active political role, the organization has thus been the participant of the Romanian political process of transformation and transition to democratic multi-party pluralism, as well as market economy.

At the same time, in its position of an ethnic minority organization, the *DAHR* has also been charged with the representation and furthering of the interests and rights of the respective community in the sphere of nation-state politics.[97] With this regard, as the *DAHR* experience attests, even though ethnic minority politics is generally exclusivist and tends to subordinate the general interests of the entire population are subordinated to the program of the national minority itself, the same goals can be beneficial for both minority and majority communities.[98] Being an ethno-political party charged with the dual activity of interest representation and political involvement on the state level, as the sole manifestation of the nationalizing process of the Hungarian minority in Romania, the organization had to undertake the task of

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[95] Website of the *DAHR*, available at www.rmdsz.ro.

[96] See § 4 of the 1992 *Law on the Election of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate*, available on the website of the *Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe Database of the University of Essex,* http://www.essex.ac.uk/elections/.

[97] See Atanassova.

[98] See Kántor, p. 257.

orchestrating the minority self-organization process itself. As the inclusion of various professional, cultural and scientific civic organizations into the *DAHR* membership suggests, the fundamental task of the organization has been linked to the sphere of ethnic political subculture and has targeted to "strengthen the internal boundaries of the community, organizing them into an *ethno-civil* society."[99]

In the immediate post-communist socio-political and economic environment in Romania, the specific configuration of these various objectives and roles had a formative and cementing effect on the organization. Due to the fact that the *DAHR* emerged and gained its basic features as the result of the complex interplay of the above described relational fields, the various roles of the ethno-political formation can also be traced back to the dynamic of the "quadratic relational nexus." For the sake of a better conceptualization of the character, role and strategies of the *DAHR*, it is this specific context that will be more closely examined.

3.2.2. The *DAHR* in Context

As has been suggested above, the basic parameters of Hungarian minority nationalism in Romania were brought forth with the annexation of Transylvania to Romania. Facing the challenge of a fundamentally new minority existence in the first years following 1920, the political and cultural self-organization of Hungarians in Romania was backed by the revisionist designs of the truncated Hungary and it was concentrated around a defensive stance against the process of Romanian nationalization. The Treaty of Trianon was to linger on as an internationally imposed dictate in the collective memory of both Hungarians in Hungary and in Romania and this idea has considerably influenced mutual self-perceptions and nationalizing strategies of communities on both sides of the border. After the initial shock of territorial reorganization, the Hungarian minority in Romania launched a process of

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[99] Ibid., p. 256.

self-organization under the banner of a sentiment of a particular *Transylvanism* that gradually came to provide a novel framework for the new minority existence.[100]

Having enjoyed a wide range of political and cultural rights at the beginning of the communist period in Romania, of the various minority communities in the country, it was the numerically considerable Hungarian minority that resumed its self-organization process with the advent of multi-party democracy formation following the 1989 regime change. The most important aspect of the process was the creation of an ethnic party to represent the interests of the community on the national level. As indicated above, initially it was this ethnic formation with both political, as well as ethno-civic organizational purpose that channeled and gave voice to the goals of the Hungarian minority aimed at the "decentralization of power and the establishment of institutions that reproduce the Hungarian elite."[101] These goals formulated during and following the hectic times of regime transformation were in fact the resumed claims formulated in the post-1920 period urging the establishment of various forms and degrees of autonomy and self-government underpinned by separate Hungarian institutions.

Ever since the reality of Hungarian minority existence in Romania, the main point of contention has been the question of the status of the minority community and its relation to the Romanian State. The issue frozen during the times of Romanian nationalistic communism vehemently resurfaced in political discourse following the 1989 changes. The main manifestation of the renewed hot debates—and the *DAHR* role in it—was the disputes that surrounded Article 1 of the new Romanian Constitution defining Romania as a "national, sovereign and independent, unitary and indivisible state,"[102] with special reference to the term "unitary" retaken from previous Constitutions of 1923 and 1965 and stressing the idea of Romania as a centralized single-nation state with ethnic minorities having a secondary role. It was

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[100] László Szarka, "Kényszerközösségek és védtelen védhatalom," [Constrain Communities and Defenseless Defense], in *New Diasporas in Hungary, Russia and Ukraine: Legal Regulations and Current Politics*, (eds.), Ilona Kiss and Catherine McGovern, Budapest: Open Society Institute/Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute, 2000), 24-26.
[101] See Kántor, p. 250.
[102] § 1 (1), *Constitution of Romania,* 1991.

this reason that representatives of the *DAHR* in the National Assembly refused to vote for the new basic law seen as failing to secure minority rights as stipulated by international covenants.[103]

Another similarly debated subject that was to shoot back into public discourse was the question of minority education. Having had an extremely well-developed system of education, the 1920 annexation of Transylvania to Romania brought a gradual deterioration, the most blatant manifestation of which was the loss of the historical Hungarian Bolyai University in Cluj. As crucial to minority self-organization through the furthering of cultural reproduction, a reinstallation of the traditionally advanced educational system was expected by the changes of 1989—a wish to clash against the interests of the nationalizing Romanian minority itself. The same was to be the fate of Hungarian aspirations towards a high degree of administrative decentralization of the country against the traditional French-inspired centralizing strategies of the majority.

It is not surprising that the strategies of the nationalizing Romanian majority itself aimed at the rethinking and recreation of the post-communist socio-political and economic realities of the Romanian nation-state. In the general spirit of instability and crisis that came to replace the initial revolutionary euphoria with sentiments channeled into the direction of exclusionary ethnic nationalism and re-launching fears of Hungarian irredentism, the main objective of the majority elite was to constrain the room for the Hungarian minority self-organization. Generally classified as a "belated" or "unrealized" nation,[104] following 1989, the Romanian majority re-launched its efforts "to remedy the perceived defect [of being an 'unrealized nation-state'] to make the state what it is properly and legitimately destined to be, by promoting the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing or

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[103] See Atanassova.

[104] A term generally used for countries of South Eastern Europe that were given their distinct administrative-territorial independence and launched their nation- and nation-state building course relatively late following the domination of multi-ethnic empires as opposed to "historical nations" that had once been incorporated into their own independent territory such as Poland or Hungary. See in Petrescu, p. 279 and Stéphane Pierré-Caps, *La Multination—L'avenir des minorités en Europe*

political hegemony of the nominally state-bearing nation."[105] Since in a moment of transition to multi-party democracy, this objective could not possibly be realized by repressive means, the upcoming attempts at democratic dialogue—involving mainly the *DAHR* as the representative of the Hungarian minority community—came to bear the traces of these perceptions.

The complex situation between majority and minority in Romania was given a further twist by the considerably reinvigorated activity of the neighboring Hungary with reference to their trans-border co-ethnics. Following the shock of territorial and population loss at Trianon and the ensuing irredentist-revisionist designs of Hungary given voice and nearly materializing during the Second World War through the Second Vienna Arbitration, the relationship between the two countries was characterized by deep mutual mistrust and hatred. With regard to the Hungarian minority in Romania, all through the communist period, Hungary took attention to follow the fate of the community with a varying degree of intensity. This attention entered a whole new dimension and was intensified following the regime change in Hungary. The new Hungarian Government openly supported the self-organization process of the Hungarian communities in all neighboring countries and the institutions that came out of these processes. At the same time, they did not hesitate to give voice to their dissatisfaction in the case of instances of mistreatment of the Hungarian minorities—one example was the official condemnation of the Romanian Government's attitude with regard to the bloody interethnic clashes in Târgu Mures. The reinvigorated attention of Hungary in the fate of its trans-border co-ethnics culminated in the infamous statement made by its Prime Minister József Antall declaring to feel the "Prime Minister of fifteen million Hungarians in spirit."

Concern for Hungarian minorities abroad gave its imprint to Hungarian legislation and government politics, itself.[106] Considered to be a political and moral duty to assist the Hungarian ethnic communities beyond the borders of Hungary, the

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Centrale et Orientale [Multi-Nation—The Future of Minorities in Central and Eastern Europe], Paris: Édition Odile Jacob, 1995, pp. 10-35.

[105] Rogers Brubaker, quoted in Petrescu, p. 279.

[106] See Kántor, p. 261.

ethno-cultural responsibility was codified by the 1989 amendment of the 1949 Hungarian Constitution.[107] On more practical terms, this constitutional and moral responsibility was manifest in the creation of a series of government institutions such as the Hungarian Government Office for Hungarians Abroad established in 1992 by the Government Decree 90/1992 subordinated to the Office of the Prime Minister,[108] or the Administration of Hungarians Abroad under the Ministry of Education and Culture.[109] Designed to give place to a constant dialogue between the Hungarian Government and the representatives of the Hungarian minority communities beyond its borders, a forum called Hungarian Standing Conference also came into being. A certain part of the Hungarian budget was to be directed at the financial support of various Hungarian minority political, educational and cultural institutions. Hungarian state support has been intended to advance the cause of maintenance of Hungarian identity through the preservation and development of the native language and through the furtherance of education, research and continuous cultural exchange between Hungary and Hungarian communities beyond its borders. Accordingly, extensive relations have also been developed between the Hungarian Government and the *DAHR*, as the representative of the Hungarian minority.

At the same time, it is important to note that the policies and rhetoric of the Hungarian Government have shown a tendency of changing with the shifting of the power structure within the Hungarian Government itself. In this context, the right-wing governments (more specifically the first government of József Antall and the second government of Viktor Orbán) tended to put more emphasis on the ethno-cultural links between Hungary and its trans-border co-ethnics. In their turn, left-wing governments (i.e. the second government of Gyula Horn, as well as the fourth and fifth governments under Péter Medgyessy and most recently Ferenc Gyurcsány) have had the predisposition of stressing the importance of civic nation-ness professing to

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[107] § 6 (3), *Constitution of the Republic of Hungary,* 1949, amended it 1989, available on the website of the *Hungarian National Assembly,* http://www.mkogy.hu/alkotmany/alkotm.htm.

[108] See the website of the *Hungarian Government Office for Hungarians Abroad,* available at http://htmh.hu.

[109] See the website of the *Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture*, available at http://www.om.hu/.

govern in the name of the roughly ten million Hungarian living in Hungary.[110] This tendency has been translated into varying attitudes and strategies on part of the Hungarian Government with regard to Hungarians in Romania and Romania itself and has had as such a formative impact on the strategies of the minority Hungarians and their relations with both their host state and their *kin state*, as well.

The complex relational configuration between the three actors has been also affected by the influence of external actors. Since both Romania and Hungary embarked on the path of the Euro-Atlantic integration process following 1989, their strategies were fundamentally shaped by the instruments described above. Gradually entering international covenants and aspiring to NATO- and EU-membership, the two countries have been influenced by the blueprint of the international normative agenda, as well as the membership conditionality—a fact that has resulted in the development of a certain concern for minority protection. At the same time, *kin state* protectionist aspirations on part of both countries (Romania manifesting its own wish to monitor the fate of its own trans-border co-ethnics) was curbed to fit the internationally pinpointed principles ensuring stability in the region. It has been this complex situation that gave the framework for Hungarian minority self-organization with special reference to the tactics of the *DAHR* itself.

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[110] See Kántor, p. 261.

3.2. The *MRF* and its Context

3.2.1. The *MRF* in Context

Internationally, it has been the same confines that have delineated the room for maneuver of the self-organization of the Turkish and Muslim minority in Bulgaria and that of their interest representing organization, the *MRF*, as well. Since Bulgaria entered the same process of *Europeanization* and accession to the Euro-Atlantic space as Romania, it was the same international, regional and bilateral agreements and arrangements that determined the line of policies and strategies of the nationalizing Bulgarians, the nationalizing Turkish minority and that of Turkey, too. Accordingly, the normative prescriptions and membership conditionality stipulations regarding minority rights protection of the various international *UN, OSCE,* Council of Europe and *EU* agreements have also found their way into Bulgarian and, to a lesser degree, Turkish legislation and politics. The relationship between the three main actors has been thus shaped by the dynamic of their various strategies and actions shaped to fit the general international context.

The dynamic of the relational nexus between Bulgaria, its Turkish and Muslim minorities and Turkey differs from that between Romania, its Hungarian minorities and Hungary in the relatively restricted role of Turkey as a *kin state* following the fate of its trans-border co-ethnics. This phenomenon can be traced back to the specific external and internal conditions of the creation and consolidation of the Turkish nation-state itself. Created by revolution on the ruins of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire yet emphatically denying continuity with the Empire itself, irredentist claims have not featured on the Turkish agenda. Yet, the presence of the sizable Turkish and Muslim minority in Bulgaria and the moral duty to monitor their treatment was also present in defining relation between Turkey, Bulgaria and the minority community itself. The main issue that has linked Bulgaria and Turkey with regard to the Turkish minority has been the phenomenon of permanent emigration of

Bulgarian Turks and various bilateral attempts to regulate it. The first agreement of friendship between the two countries was signed in 1925 following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey and it was intended to settle "legal problems ensuing from emigration," the status of the immigrants, their citizenship and property situation.[111]

During the communist period in Bulgaria, the status of Turks shifted from official recognition of minorities and the granting of a wide variety of cultural and educational minority rights to a gradual revocation of rights culminating in the mass renaming campaign under the Zhivkov regime. Turkish protests to the forcible name changing went as far as sporadic terrorist attacks. This was the time when the secret resistance organization called *Turkish National Liberation Movement in Bulgaria/TNLM* was created. The aims of the illegal organization headed by Ahmed Dogan and dissolved in 1986 was the reversal of the *Revival Process* policies through peaceful means.[112] Outraged by the treatment of its trans-border co-ethnics, Turkey completely severed relations with Bulgaria—reaction that led to the termination of political contacts and the closing of the common border.[113] The conflict was also given an international dimension, as international bodies such as the *UN, OSCE* or the Council of Europe issued official condemnations of the Zhivkovian *National Revival* campaign and made efforts to pressure the regime into retracting its assimilatory policies.

The 1989 November withdrawal of the assimilatory strategy initiated by the communist-heir political elite for the purpose of doing away with its explosive consequences was in turn met with satisfaction in the international sphere and strongly appreciated and encouraged by the United States and Western Europe, as well.[114] The reinstallation of the rights of Bulgarian Turks and Muslims to freely choose their names, practice their faith and speak and be educated in their mother tongue also led to a gradual improvement of relations with Turkey. This trend was to

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[111] Ivan Palchev, *Ahmed Dogan and the Bulgarian Ethnic Model*, Sofia: Bulgarian Diplomatic Review, 2002, p. 20.
[112] Ibid.
[113] See Atanassova.
[114] Ibid.

be given an additional boost with the political recognition, successes and active involvement of the *MRF* itself vowing to represent the interests of the Turkish and Muslim minorities on the level of Bulgarian national politics.

The main parameters of Turkish support for its trans-border co-ethnics was thus never intended to involve even the slightest transgression of the line of mere cultural support either on the level of rhetoric or that of national politics. Beside the accentuated break with the past and the times of Ottoman imperialism, the consistent maintenance of this solid line of cultural support can be traced back to the issues of the ethno-cultural minorities living on the territory of modern Turkey itself. While the insignificant number and concentration of minorities in Hungary has enabled the country to devise an elaborate system of minority self-governance intended to serve as a blueprint for minority protection in the neighboring countries,[115] the obstacle presented by the ethno-cultural minorities in the Turkish nationalization process confined the protection of its trans-border minorities to an exclusively cultural level. Besides lobbying actions at international organizations for the protection of the rights of Turkish minorities in Bulgaria, this support also included financial assistance to their interest representing organization, the *MRF*. While in the case of Hungarian aspiration to *NATO* and *EU* accession resulted in a careful foreign policy balancing these goals with that of the trans-border minority protection, Turkey's *EU* membership bid and the contentious issues surrounding its roadmap led to the decreased international lobbying leverage of the country. All these aspects molding the Turkish strategy has had a formative influence on the goals formulated by the Turkish and Muslim minority in Bulgaria in its nationalization process with special regard to the character and strategies of their ethnic party, the *MRF*.

In addition, the basic parameters of the post-1989 nationalizing process of Bulgarians were also to have a fundamental formative consequence with regard to the self-organization of the Turkish and Muslim minorities of Bulgaria. The Bulgarian regime change of 1989 marked the re-launching of the course of the Bulgarian

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[115] For a discussion of minority self-governance in Hungary see Kinga Gál, (ed.). *Minority Governance in Europe,* Budapest: Open Society Institute, LGI Books, 2002.

nation-state building with the background of the "belated-nation" self-perception similar to that of Romania, paralleled by the same specific idea of the necessity of core nation and nation-state territory congruence.[116] Accordingly, as initial policies of reconstruction and institutionalization of the new socio-political and economic realities of the Bulgarian nation-state bore the imprint of the same exclusivist nationalism as in the case of Romania. Even though the Zhivkov-inspired assimilatory policies were redrawn due to internal pressure of violent protests of Turkish and Muslim minorities paralleled by external pressure from Turkey and international organizations, the earliest pieces of legislation related to party formation and elections contained restrictive measures with regard to the formation of ethnically based parties.[117] This stipulation—that came to be codified in the new Bulgarian Constitution itself—had its roots in the "ethnic scapegoating" phenomenon and the idea of the historically feared "Turkish threat" reintroduced and accentuated by the old-new Bulgarian elite with the intention to secure their legitimacy.[118]

It is against this background of complex developments that the self-organization process of the Turkish and Muslim minorities in Bulgaria was launched following the regime change of 1989. Similarly to the case of Hungarians in Romania, the main objectives of the Turkish minority targeted first of all the withdrawal of the *Bulgarian National Revival* objectives and policies, as well the restoration of the extensive rights they had enjoyed before the intense nationalistic direction taken by the Zhivkov-regime. Through extended actions of violent protests with external assistance of pressure on part of Turkey and international organizations, the Turks and Muslims of Bulgaria achieved the first line of objectives immediately after the fall of Zhivkov.

Constrained by the nationalizing course of the Bulgarian majority and a less active support from the part of Turkey, the demands formulated by the Turkish

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[116] Stefan Troebst, "Nationalismus als Demokratisierungshemmnis in Bulgarien" [Nationalism as Obstacle to Democratization in Bulgaria], *Südosteuropa.* Vol. 41, nr. 3-4/1992, pp. 188-227.

[117] See § 3 (2), *Political Parties Act* 1990 and the § 11 (4), *Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria,* 1991, available on the website of the *Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe Database of the University of Essex,* http://www.essex.ac.uk/elections/.

[118] See Atanassova.

minority in Bulgaria have been more modest than those of the Hungarian minority in Romania—a phenomenon that left its imprint on the organization and political agenda of their ethnic organization, as well. When positioned into the analytical framework of nationalizing minorities as proposed by Kántor, the aspirations of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria turn out to be more hesitant that those of the Hungarians in Romania. Being numerically and ethno-geographically significant, the Turks launched their public claim for the recognition of their ethno-cultural distinctiveness, yet, constrained by the above mentioned conditions, their "minority life-world" to be created has been more limited. In this context, aiming at the transformation of the Bulgarian political structure only to the degree of guaranteed political representation, the Turks have not demanded any form of territorial autonomy or the status of a constituent nation, while Bulgaria—just like Romania—was defined as a unitary nation state in its new Constitution. Moreover, at certain variance with the case of Romania, the political practices and national legislation in Bulgaria have completely avoided the official recognition or use of the term 'national minority,' for fear of potential inter-state implications.[119]

The same moderation has been characteristic of the Turks' demands regarding the issue of administrative decentralization. With the lack of claims for territorial/administrative autonomy like in the case of the Hungarians in Romania, the Bulgarian—Turkish debates around the subject of local government have been predominantly concentrated around practical yet permeated by political issues. Questions such as the necessity of restructuring the local economy or of support to private businesses lacking serious government commitment to find solutions to the economic and social problems of the mixed regions have occasionally been translated into ethnic tensions constituting the subject of debates between the *MRF* and the Bulgarian central authorities.[120] Finally, similarly to the situation of the Hungarians in Romania, in the case of the Turks and Muslims in Bulgaria, the most sensitive issue

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[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.

has been the question of minority education and it has consequently figured high on the political agenda of the *MRF*.

3.2.2. The *MRF*—Ethnic Party of a National Type

Since the *MRF* emerged as the result of the self-organization of the Turkish and Muslim minority in Bulgaria, a presentation of the character and strategies of the organization has to be positioned into the complex framework of relations by the various actors discussed above. The transition process to multi-party democracy launched by the regime change of 1989 in Bulgaria presented the numerically important and demographically concentrated Turkish minority with the opportunity to form its own political organization following a period of severe assimilatory state policy. Due to the size and concentration of the minority, the *MRF* could come into being despite legislative constraints aimed at the restriction of ethnically or religiously based political parties. Yet, the formation and political involvement of the organization was to be immediately contested based on the consideration that the presence of a political party with a pro-Turkish and Islamic agenda in Bulgarian political life endangers the unity of the Bulgarian nation.[121]

In this context, excluded even from the debate of the new Bulgarian Constitution, the political agenda of the *MRF* came to be more moderate that that of the *DAHR* in the case of the Hungarian minority in Romania. Retaking the initial objectives of its ancestor organization, the *TNLM,* and giving voice to the demands of the Turkish minority, the *MRF* political platform expressed demands for the recognition and protection of minorities in conformity with international law, for political rights and representation on all levels of local and government structures, for the official guarantee for the preservation and furthering of the cultural, religious and linguistic minority identity and amnesty for all political prisoners.[122] Of all these

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[121] Riedel, "Die türkische Minderheit im parlamentarischen System Bulgariens" [The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria's Parliamentary System], p. 105 and the website of the *Movement for Rights and Freedoms*, available at http://www.dps.bg.

[122] See Palchev, p. 30.

demands, it was the minority education issue to vehemently surface in future political debates.

At the same time—unlike the *DAHR* and the Hungarians in Romania—already the 1990 electoral program of the *MRF* included a clarification of their stance in relation to the idea of a potential Turkish political autonomy claim. Stressing the difference between the idea of civic nationalism of all Bulgarian citizens, compatible with the acknowledgement and protection of ethnic, religious and cultural minorities desirable for a passage to democratic pluralism, the *MRF* took stance against autonomy and all forms of separatism.[123] This idea of dualism and mutual compatibility between civic and ethnic nationalism was clearly incompatible with the designs of the Bulgarian 'core nation' to achieve the correspondence between the Bulgarian nation defined in ethno-cultural terms and the territory of the Bulgarian state. Retaking the latter idea in its definition of the Bulgarian State, the new Constitution of Bulgaria was not signed by representatives of the *MRF*.[124] Due to the constraints posed by the Bulgarian political realities that gave rise to the *MRF*, in Horowitz' model of ethnic party classification, the party figures as a moderate protectionist party striving for official recognition and institutionalized protection of the ethno-cultural differences that define the Turkish and Muslim minority with regard to the majority Bulgarians.

For a better conceptualization of the character and agenda of the *MRF* as a minority ethnic party, it is important to address the basic defining features of its immediate context: that of the Bulgarian multi-party system formed after the fall of communism. Integrating the specific cleavages that surfaced in post-communist Bulgaria—similarly to the Romanian case—the newly formed party system has been characterized by a process of bipolarization.[125] With a certain simplification, it can be stated that the two main political poles have been represented by the anti-communist *Union of Democratic Forces/UDF* and the post-communist *Bulgarian Socialist*

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[123] See Riedel, p. 105.

[124] See Palchev, p. 32.

[125] Maximilian Strmiska, "Major Poles, 'Third Parties' and Bulgarian Multipartism," *Central European Political Studies Review,* Part I. Vol. 3, Winter 2001, available at http://www.cepsr.cz/.

Party/BSP. This "primitive" and "confrontational" bipolar model paralleled by a belated party and political differentiation with both the *UDF* and the *BSP* endured as "ideologically and programmatically underdeveloped and incoherent formations," with the lack of development of a moderate centrist pole.[126]

In this context, playing on the ethnic cleavage as opposed to the more competitive "de-communisation cleavage," it is not surprising that the *MRF* has been successful in occupying a strategic position in the Bulgarian party system. The two main political formations, in their turn, have manifested two different approaches with regard to the *MRF*. The *UDF* has been in favor of stable relations with Turkey and on several occasions has entered or envisaged political agreements with the ethnic party. On the other hand, the *BSP* has displayed an attitude of nationalistic hostility against Bulgarian Turks considered as a "fifth column" on the territory of Bulgaria conspiring with Turkey through its agent, the *MRF*.[127]

Acting within this context of complex inter-connected relations and professing the representation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, the agenda of the *MRF* attests for the same dual character that describes the *DAHR*. Drawing its electoral legitimacy from the Turkish and Muslim minority in Bulgaria and organized into local councils with high autonomy, one main task of the organization has been the orchestration of the ethno-civil self-organization of the ethnic group it represents, as well as the representation and promotion of their interests on the state level. At the same time, the intention of the *MRF* leader Ahmed Dogan to render his organization to become a significant political actor in Bulgarian national politics has been openly professed on several occasions.[128] The integration process of the *MRF* into Bulgarian politics as an "ethnic party of national character" has been pursued against the background of a lack of clear ideological commitment manifest in the *MRF* support for opposing political forces or policies—an attitude that recalls the same lack of one ideological line in the case of the *DAHR* representing Hungarians in Romania.

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[126] Ibid. For the development of the Bulgarian political parties and their successive electoral results see Annex 7.
[127] See Atanassova.
[128] See Palchev, p. 62.

3.4. Ethnic Party Politics: a Politics of Balance

As it has been argued above, the formation of the two ethnic parties in Romania and Bulgaria had its origins in the specific ethno-territorial makeup of the two countries and the particular context of regime shifts from communist one-party system towards the realization of multi-party democracy. Institutionalizing the dominant societal cleavages in post-communist Romania and Bulgaria, the newly forming political parties came to be organized along the dual axis of post-communism—anti-communism as a specific manifestation of social and economic left and right, as well as that of nationalism, xenophobia—cosmopolitanism. Accordingly, the new political party spectrum—of a considerably rudimentary character, lacking a more sophisticated political differentiation in both cases—came to reflect opposing political party positions with regards to the concept of de-communization and ethnic nationalism as two dominant frames of reference. With the creation of numerous extreme nationalist parties on part of the core nation in both Romania and Bulgaria legitimizing themselves by perpetuating popular fear of potential separatist and irredentist claims on part of the minority communities and their kin states as a threat to the integrity of the nation state, the defensive stance of the minorities and the creation of ethnically based minority parties was a natural consequence.

In a climate of ethnic nationalism dominating the creation of political systems in Romania and Bulgaria, the very presence of the two sizable and territorially concentrated Hungarian and Turkish/Muslim minorities enabled the national minority elite to democratically form the minority interest representing political organizations through the "identary mobilization of the ethno-territorial communities of sub-national nature." As such, both the *DAHR* and the *MRF* faced a dual task. One the one hand, they had to fulfill their mission as interest representing ethnically based organizations by taking up the task of orchestrating the process of self-organization of the two national minority communities and that of formulating and representing their

interests on the level of national politics. On the other hand, as active participants in the post-communist democratic political and economic processes in Romania and Bulgaria, and in order to be able to fulfil their interest representing vocation in the first place, the two organizations of political character also had to live up to expectations of acting as viable political actors on the national scene. Being constantly subject to the challenges of this duality, presenting them with the necessity to choose between occasionally incompatible requirements coming from the two domains, the success and efficiency of minority ethnic party politics has been the successful balancing of the ethnic-minority and national levels. The ethnic character, organization and political agenda of the organizations came to reflect the specific formula they devised to balance this dual challenge of their role.

For a more complex view of this specific balance formula applied by both the *DAHR* and the *MRF* in their politics, it is also important to address the formative influence of the particular host state—minority—kin state—external actors relational configuration, which determines the very dynamic of minority self-organization. Accordingly, as the outcome of the self-organization designs of the Hungarian, respectively the Turkish/Muslim minority communities in Romania and Bulgaria, the character and political agenda of two parties came to be fundamentally determined by the interplay of the same quadratic relational nexus. At the same time, even though subject to the same dynamic relational setup, due to various differences in the factors and their interplay itself, the two examples of minority political organizations developed their specific and somewhat differing formula of politics of balance.

Thus, the political agenda of the *DAHR* was designed to reflect the demands of the Hungarian minority for the restoration of the various rights they had enjoyed before the aggressive nationalistic course during the last years of communism. Conscious of their political potential, the process of self-organization of the Hungarians in Romania was reinforced by external support coming from their kin state eager to utilize the international legal framework enabling the monitoring of trans-border co-ethnics by the state they are linked to by ethno-cultural affinity. At the same time, the room for maneuver of the Hungarian community was delineated

by the nationalizing designs of the Romanian majority making extensive use of exclusive nationalistic discourse, which also presented a potential of pitting host state and kin state against each other. Further, relations between the three were determined by the blueprint of international norms for human rights and minority rights protection and conditionality requirements on part of the *NATO* and *EU* once both Romania and Hungary embarked on the path of Westernization. It is against this background that the *DAHR* presented itself as an organization representing the interests of the Hungarian minority in Romania and demanding, in accordance with its role, a state-forming status and various forms of autonomy for the Hungarian community striving at the same time for the development of a consociational power sharing arrangement with the majority. Thus, in this particular balance formula greater emphasis was to be put on the ethnic character of the organization generally dominating over the national politics level.

Subject to the same general international framework of norms and conditionality, the relations between the Turkish/Muslim community in Bulgaria, Bulgaria and Turkey had a similarly formative effect on the formation, organization and political agenda of the *MRF*. As an ethnic party deriving its source of legitimacy from the mobilization of the Turkish community in Bulgaria and undertaking the formulation and representation of its interests, the *MRF* was to enjoy a more restrained support on part of Turkey—the latter also having to face major challenges on its own Westernization path. Developed in a climate of strong nationalistic sentiments on part of the core nation itself, paralleled by a restricted pace of minority demands formulation of part of the Turkish minority, which has also undergone a considerable shrinking due to emigration waves, the *MRF* came to fall into the category of the more moderate protectionist ethnic parties struggling for official recognition and the institutionalized protection of the ethno-cultural values of the minority community that differentiate them from the majority core nation. At variance with the case of the *DAHR*, in the case of the *MRF*'s balance politics, the relation between the two sides of its role were to be more balanced with both the

ethnic and the political character having dominant roles in *MRF* politics depending on the specific context.

At the same time, since the balance formulas devised by the two ethnic political parties were the outcome of the immediate post-communist political system formation in Romania and Bulgaria, they were to be subject to the pressure of change due to the ever-shifting dynamic of the relational nexus that has determined them. Accordingly, a full conceptualization of the politics of balance pursued by the *DAHR* and the *MRF* needs to address the various developments in the relational fields making up the quadratic configuration and the shifts in its dynamic itself. The political developments in Romania and Bulgaria during the successive government formations reflected and induced a series of developments that presented the two ethnic parties with the challenge of adapting themselves to the changing context. It is thus these developments in the relational nexus dynamic changing the conjuncture of ethnic party politics and their effect on the politics of balance formula of the two parties that will be addressed below.

4. The Dynamic of Ethnic Party Politics in Romania and Bulgaria

4.1. The *DAHR* and Political Developments in Romania

4.1.1. Radicalism and Isolation: 1992-1996

Following the 1989 revolutionary regime change in Romania orchestrated by a communist-heir organization making use of ethno-nationalistic discourse to legitimize its own political purposes, the first years of transition to multi-party democracy was marked by the consolidation of the power of the *NSF*—turned into a party under the name of *Romanian Democratic Socialist Party/PDSR*. The climate of official promotion of exclusivist nationalism—a line picked up and furthered by the series of newly born extremist political parties—as well as the legitimizing use of violence within and outside the ethno-national sphere pushed also the organization of Hungarians in Romania into a defensive radical nationalistic stance. Assumed to be cooperating with the opposition parties advocating the establishment of genuine democratic political processes, the *DAHR* took its place in the partnership association that became the electoral alliance called the *Democratic Convention of Romania/CDR*.[129] The leaders of the opposition parties disassociated themselves from the ethno-nationalistic course followed by the *PDSR*, yet were not willing to enter a debate regarding the establishment of a viable framework for the relationship between minorities and the Romanian State.[130] With the codification and institutionalization of the reinvigorated protective attention of Hungary relating its co-ethnics in Romania, the thorny issue of the Hungarian minorities became all the more pungent and it re-entered the sphere of bilateral relations between the two countries, as well.

Signs of hope surfaced with the expression of aspirations towards *Europeanization* on part of the Romanian Government. Having been internationally

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[129] See Horváth, p. 28.
[130] Ibid., p. 29.

criticized for signing a bilateral treaty with the Soviet Union in 1991, as well as for the inter-ethnic clashes in Târgu Mures and the infamous miner incidents, 1993 seemed to mark the possible turning point. This was the year when the Europe Agreement was signed and when the Parliamentary Assembly of the *CoE* was proposed to give green light for the Romanian candidature. The will on part of the government for the necessary dialogue with minority community representatives materialized in the creation of the consultative body of the Council for National Minorities and in a series of informal bilateral talks with the *DAHR*.[131] Yet hopes for making up were soon to be shattered when –backed by Hungary—the *DAHR* withdrew its representatives from the Minority Council and issued a condemning memorandum to the *CoE* with regard to Romania's application. Upon the failure of dialogue, the *PDSR*-led minority government revived its reliance on the support of nationalistic parties, while the *DAHR* resumed the elaboration of its autonomy design in further political isolation—an uneasy situation in the period of accession-negotiations with *NATO* and bilateral agreement negotiations with Hungary.

Inspired by Article 11 of the much-debated *Recommendation 1202* of the *CoE*, pinpointing the right of persons belonging to national minorities "to have at their disposal appropriate local or autonomous authorities or to have a special status," in 1993 the *DAHR* submitted a draft *Law on National Minorities and Autonomous Communities*.[132] Demanding the establishment of personal autonomy, local self-government and regional autonomy, due to its vagueness, the law was never considered as a genuine political initiative and resulted in a break between the *DAHR* and the opposition force *CDR*, as well.[133] It was within this climate of mutually reinforcing nationalist radicalization on both sides that the 1995 *Law on Education* lacking adequate measures for the protection of minority education was adopted.

On the international level, it was this period that marked the negotiation and signing of the bilateral treaty between Romania and Hungary—recognized by both sides as a necessary step towards Euro-Atlantic integration. Even

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[131] Ibid., p. 37.
[132] Ibid., p. 40.

though Hungarian position was formulated by the more moderate Horn Government conducting consultations with representatives of the Hungarian minorities yet subordinating the issue to Hungary's Westernization designs, the road of negotiations set out to be considerably bumpy. With the disarmament of the controversial collective minority rights stipulation of the *CoE Recommendation 1201* and a large degree of international pressure, the Hungarian—Romanian Treaty was eventually signed in 1996. Adopted without the participation of the *DAHR* and considered as toothless, the treaty marked a distancing of relations between the Hungarian Government and the Hungarian minority representatives.[134]

4.1.2. "Electoral Revolution"[135] and Participation: 1996-2000

The road towards Romania's democratic engagement was secured by the victory of the democratic opposition forces in the 1996 presidential and parliamentary elections. With the emergence of a coalition government formed by the *CDR,* the *Democratic Party/PD,* the *Romanian Social Democratic Party/PSDR* and the *DAHR* itself. The new coalition was, however, of a considerable heterogeneity and the ensuing governing of the cabinet set up after considerable difficulties was to be irresolute and crisis-laden.[136] The inclusion of the *DAHR*—yet with continuing isolationist and exclusivist attitudes on part of various factions—was the result of electoral support calculations and it was intended to boost international acclaim for the ruling coalition. The intentions of the *DAHR*, taking up a series of government positions were targeting a revision of the *Law on Education* and that of the *Law on Public Administration* for the right to use of mother tongue, the ratification of a law on national minorities, as well as the ratification of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Rights*.[137] Although the two laws were modified through

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[133] Ibid., p. 42.
[134] Ibid. pp. 44-45.
[135] Expression proposed by Vladimir Tismãneanu with regard to the revolutionary political turn initiated by the 1996 elections, quoted by Petrescu, p. 287.
[136] See Horváth, p. 46.
[137] Ibid., p. 47.

emergency ordinance by the government, difficulties surfaced when they had to be debated and voted in Parliament. Divergent opinions regarding the treatment of Hungarians were given voice within the coalition itself and the rhetoric of nationalism also reappeared for the purpose of boosting political prestige.[138]

The phenomenon of nationalistic divergences splitting the coalition was exacerbated and blended into a general process of erosion and crisis of the government becoming visible after Romania's failure to be grated *NATO* membership in 1997.[139] This crisis had its roots in the lack of experience in the formula of democratic coalition-governing, fundamental divergence in the various programs of the governing parties, the lack of coordination and competence and a continuous struggle for power in government.[140]

On the ethno-political level, the crisis of the coalition government was only aggravated by the specific demands of the *DAHR,* the central objective of which became the establishment of a separate Hungarian language university. In the face of an ultimatum set by the *DAHR* threatening to leave the coalition, the compromise idea of a multi-cultural German-Hungarian university came into being to calm down the spirits—an idea, which was never to materialize. Following heavy pressures from the *DAHR*, the amended *Law on Education* was passed in 1999, yet the unrealized idea of a separate Hungarian state university was to continue featuring high on the *DAHR* political agenda.[141] At the same time, the autonomy project became a secondary issue in this period—a fact that led to an intensification of opposition between the moderate and more radical internal factions of the organization. Moreover, the debates that came to flare up were soon to leave to traditional internal debate and decision-making forum of the *DAHR*, with the opposition organizing separate popular assemblies and issuing declarations condemning the lenient position of the dominant moderate wing of the organization.

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[138] See Atanassova.
[139] Anneli Ute Gabanyi, "Rumänien Regierungspolitik in Zeiten der Krise" [Romania's Government Politics in Times of Crisis], pp.393-420 in *Südosteuropa.* Vol. 47, nr. 9/1998, pp.394-395.
[140] Ibid., pp.395-398.
[141] See Horváth, pp. 47-48.

Fanning the flames of the internal *DAHR* crisis, the new Hungarian Government of Viktor Orbán expressed support for the radical reform bloc by supporting the autonomy claims of the Hungarian minority—a position that became more and more accentuated with time. This attitude also had a detrimental effect on Hungarian—Romanian bilateral relations already burdened by envy on part of Romania in the face of the Hungarian membership in *NATO*. Still disassociating the issue of Hungarian minorities from the development of bilateral relations, the main issue of concern of the Orbán-Government became the question of maintaining relations with their trans-border co-ethnics following Hungary's imminent accession to the *EU*.[142]

4.1.3. Cooperation and Protocol Agreement: 2000-2004

The elections of 2000 brought the surprising victory of the *PSDR* paralleled by and unprecedented rise of the extreme nationalist forces that came to have the second largest parliamentary faction. Having had virtually broken up before the elections, the former coalition partners of the *CDR* scored surprisingly low and its core organization, the *National Peasant Christian Democratic Party/PNTCD* failed to reach the threshold of 5 % to enter Parliament. With the *PD* and the *PNL* themselves gaining a mere symbolic presence in the Parliament, the political right wing virtually disappearing from the Romanian political party spectrum.[143]

The clear partition between democratic and non-democratic forces that characterized the formation of the party system in the immediate post-1989 period in Romania disappeared by 2000[144] and the *NSF*-heir *PDSR*—later renamed the *Social Democratic Party/PSD*—had undergone a fundamental change in the period of its opposition activity. The main shift in the *PDSR* stance was its turn to an emphasis of the necessity of a pro-Western orientation in Romanian foreign policy with a clear commitment to the country's *EU*-accession. Under these circumstances, it came as no

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[142] Ibid., pp. 50-52.
[143] Ibid., p. 50.

surprise that—lacking the necessary parliamentary majority to govern—the *PDSR* set up an agreement with the *DAHR* itself. The agreement between the two political formations was embodied in a series of yearly assessed and renegotiated cooperation protocols. Main aims of the *DAHR* formulated in these documents ranged from the finalization and passing of the modified *Law on Local Administration*, the enlargement of the educational network in Hungarian language or the finalization of the legal framework and launching of concrete steps regarding the restoration of properties nationalized under the communist period.

The cooptation of the *DAHR* into the new Romanian Government meant the finalization of the moderate stance of the organization favoring the politics of smaller successes and political cooperation for the achievement of the final goal of autonomy establishment. While the cooperation process with the *PDSR* was also marked by divergences due to still present nationalistic forces within both formations, many of the objectives set by the *DAHR* came to materialize.[145] After the necessary legal framework had been created, the restitution of unlawfully confiscated church and private properties kicked off—albeit hesitantly—in 2002-2003. The achievement deemed the greatest by representatives of the *DAHR* was in this period the participation of the organization in the amendment debates with regard to the 1991 Romania Constitution. By 2000 the necessity of the amendment of the Constitution surfaced based on the internal need to correct the dysfunctionality, slowness and inefficiency of the political system it codified, as well as the external pressure of the *EU* integration process. With regard to the interests of the Hungarian community, the amended Constitution ratified in 2003 contained stipulations granting the right to the use of mother tongue in education, in public administration and in the administration of justice. A further development was the acknowledgement of denominational schools.

On the level of relations of both Romania and Hungarians in Romania with Hungary a new contentious issue emerged under the form of the 2001 *Act on*

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[144] Miklós Bakk, quoted in Horváth, p. 50.
[145] Ibid., p. 51.

Hungarians Living in Neighboring Countries adopted with majority by the Hungarian Parliament. In the course of the years following the 1989, the idea of legally regulating relations between Hungary and its trans-border co-ethnics was ever present in Hungarian public discourse and debates with various solutions proposed, the most controversial of which has been the idea of double citizenship of Hungarians beyond the borders of Hungary. The so-called *Status Law* of 2001 was another attempt to give legal form to this relationship by formalizing the criteria of Hungarian ethnicity. The rights stipulated by the law include educational and cultural facilities and freedom of movement in Hungary, facilitated possibility for ethnic Hungarians to work in Hungary and financial assistance in their home state. The *DAHR* supported the law popular among Hungarians in Romania, while the Romanian Government saw it as an infringement on Romanian State sovereignty and applied for international arbitration by the *CoE Venice Commission* to determine the compatibility of the law with European and international standards and practices. In accordance with the provisions of the report—recognizing the right of protection exercised by kin states yet confining it to the field of education and culture—the hesitant implementation of the law kicked off following a bilateral agreement between the two countries.[146]

4.1.4. The "Third Turn"[147]: 2004-?

The surprising outcome of the 2004 presidential and parliamentary elections in Romania, gave another twist to the quadratic relational configuration defining the line of *DAHR* politics. The governing *PSD* (former *PDSR*) lost power to the *Right and Truth* alliance made up of the formerly opposition parties of *PD* and *PNL*. The result was all the more surprising since the fragile balance of coalition negotiations already pursued by the *PSD* was tipped by newly elected President Traian Basescu (*PD*) pushed the *PSD* candidate into the second place by assigning the *PNL* candidate to form the new Romanian Government. The new coalition—frightfully evoking the

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[146] Ibid., pp. 53-54.

fragile and divided coalition of 1996-2000—came to include the *PNL, PD,* the *Romanian Humanist Party/PUR,* the representatives of the national minorities and the *DAHR* itself. The configuration of electoral and post-electoral arrangements and clashes—with in fact two leftist parties, the *PD* and the *PSD* opposing each other—continuously underpins the ideological confusion that has characterized the political party spectrum in Romania ever since the 1989 changes.[148]

After the successful conclusion of Romanian *NATO* accession under the *PSD* Government, the greatest objective of the present government has been to carry through Romania's accession to the *EU* by 2008 at the latest. This promotion of this aim—as beneficial for all citizens of Romania, including the Hungarian community—has been taken up by the *DAHR*, as well. Due to threats of losing a part of its electorate manifesting a tendency of supporting the radical autonomy-promoting faction that has split off the organization and has entered a process of political self-organization, the idea of autonomy resurfaced on the political agenda of the organization.[149]

Yet, opposing the idea of radical realization of autonomy arrangements, the *DAHR* representatives have envisaged it as part of the general small-steps and political dialogue strategy incorporated into the larger framework of necessity for decentralization processes in Romania as an *EU* acceding country. In addition, the idea of renegotiating the political status of minorities with regard to their relationship to the Romanian State has also resurfaced on the political agenda of the organization. It was with this aim that the *Law on the Status of National Minorities in Romania* was drafted by *DAHR* experts in cooperation with representatives of other minority communities. Clearly defining the concept of national communities and aiming at the regulation of the status of national minorities as constituent communities of the Romanian nation, the law also introduces the legal framework for the practice cultural autonomy. Thus, it does not only stipulate the right to independent cultural

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[147] Jürgen Henkel, "Die 'Dritte Wende'—Rumänien nach den Wahlen von 2004" [The 'Third Turn'—Romania after the 2004 Elections], pp. 25-42 in *Südosteuropa Mitteilungen,* Nr. 4-5/2005, p. 25.
[148] Ibid., p. 37.
[149] See the *2004 Electoral Program of the DAHR,* available at www.rmdsz.ro.

and educational institutions but specifies the ways how the minority community should organize and supervise the functioning of these institutions.[150] Propagated as an instrument that makes way for other forms of minority autonomy, the draft law has become the subject of heated debates and spectacular statements on all sides within the ruling coalition further eroding the shaky coalition arrangement.

Another contentious issue to influence mainly relations between the Hungarians in Hungary and the Hungarian minority in Romania was the referendum on the double citizenship of Hungarian minorities abroad held on 4 December, 2004. Seeking answer to the question whether Hungarians beyond the borders of Hungary could be granted Hungarian citizenship by preferential naturalization, the issue of the referendum unleashed the simmering conflict between left and right of the Hungarian political party spectrum. Without detailed description of the practical and legal implications of such a project, the double citizenship concept—just like the issue of the Hungarian minorities abroad in general—rashly became an instrument of vote-hunting. The campaign preceding the referendum presented the civic Hungarian nation concept against the all-inclusive trans-border ethnic Hungarian idea and managed to pit the two sides of the population against each other with the Hungarian minority communities as baffled spectators. Supporting the idea of double citizenship—extremely popular among Hungarians in Romania—the *DAHR* nevertheless tried to distance itself from the rhetorical battle in Hungary.[151] Relations between Hungarians and Hungarian minorities abroad deteriorated due to the brandished threat of a consequent excessive Hungarian immigration and its unsettling effect on the Hungarian labor market—an phenomenon that gained corroboration through the failure of the referendum due to the extremely low turnout of 37.49 %.[152]

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[150] See www.rmdsz.ro.

[151] See www.rmdsz.ro. The implications of double citizenship were deemed much higher by Hungarian communities living in countries still at a distance from EU accession, such as Serbia and Montenegro and Ukraine.

[152] For more detaled information regarding the results, organization and analyses on the 5 December, 2004 referendum in Hungary see the website of the László Teleki Foundation dedicated to the issue of the double citizenship, available at http://allampolgarsag.hu.

Following the failure of the referendum, relations between Hungary and Hungarians in Romania have been channeled into the sphere of civic nation conception propagated by the leftist Hungarian government that came to win its second mandate in the April 2005 elections in Hungary with the repeatedly entrusted Prime Minister Gyurcsány professing to do politics "in the name of ten million and in the interest of fifteen million Hungarians." Accordingly, the double citizenship idea was replaced by the new instrument called *Homeland Fund* guaranteeing financial assistance for educational and cultural purposes and promoting the return to and stay of Hungarian minority members in their home country. As for the more radical side continuously stressing ethno-national links and manifesting continuous support for the politically self-organizing radical opposition forces of the *DAHR*, have turned to the instrument of pressure exercised on the *DAHR* and on Romania through various EU bodies. Accordingly, due to the double lobbying effected by the Hungarian right and the *DAHR* itself mainly through its associate membership in the *European Peoples Party/*EPP, the unsatisfactory situation of the Hungarian minority still appears in EU reports and statements. Yet, the granting of autonomy has not become a prerequisite for Romania's EU accession as wished for by the more radical Hungarian minority representatives backed by their counterparts in Hungary.

4.2. The *MRF* and Political Developments in Bulgaria

4.2.1. From Near-Illegality to Kingmaker: 1990/1991/1992-1994

Heir to an illegal organization formed to struggle for the restoration of the rights the Turkish/Muslim minority in Bulgaria had been stripped off during Zhivkov's *Revival Process*, the newly formed political party, the *MRF* shot into public attention with its presence in the Bulgarian *BSP*-dominated Grand National Assembly following the first free elections after the 1989 change. Even though this period saw the passing of two important laws regarding the restoration of Turkish names and amnesty for persons sued in relation to the assimilation campaign, this was mainly due to the double pressure of the internal violent manifestations pursued by the Turkish minority complemented by international condemnation and continuous demand for the reversal of the assimilation process.[153] The negligible position of the *MRF* became all the more obvious when it was excluded from the new coalition government formed by the *BSP,* the *UDF* and the *Bulgarian Agrarian National Union/BZNS* following the legitimacy crisis of the *BSP* Government and a slight shift in power relations to the advantage of the *UDF.* Yet, the *BSP* still managed to dominate the discussions related to the new Constitution, which eventually divided the *UDF* and was not signed by representatives of the *MRF* excluded from the debates themselves. The most outstanding manifestation of the anti-minority provisions of the 1991 Constitution of Bulgaria has been—as noted above—the banning of ethnically or religiously based political party formation—a provision only reinforced by the 1990 *Law on Political Parties*.[154]

The practical consequence of these legal stipulations were that the acknowledgement *MRF* as a political party representing the Turkish minority in Bulgaria could be legally challenged—a possibility that was to exclude its

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[153] See Riedel, "Die türkische Minderheit im parlamentarischen System Bulgariens" [The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria's Parliamentary System], p. 106 and Atanassova.

participation in the 1991 elections based on the 1991 *Electoral Law* prohibiting the electoral participation of movements not registered as political parties.[155] Accordingly, the registration request of the *MRF* as political party was rejected by the Sofia City Court as unconstitutional yet the Central Electoral Commission gave the right to the organization to participate in the elections even without political party status. The legal challenge of this decision brought to the Constitutional Court by *BSP* representatives was also unsuccessful. The favorable final decision allowing the participation of the *MRF* in the upcoming elections can be traced back to a dual consideration: on the internal level, the *BSP* representatives' calculations that the votes cast for the *MRF* will take from the votes cast for its opposition, the *UDF*.[156]

Further, a great role was played by the external pressure exercised through the lobbying of the Turkish minority on the Conference on the Human Dimension of the *OSCE* assembled during the same time in Moscow. The protests brought forth by the representatives of the minority claiming protection of their right for the establishment of representative organizations based on the 1990 *Copenhagen Document* was further strengthened by the support voiced by Turkey and Great Britain.[157] It was the external consideration that has become instrumental in the existence and activity of the *MRF* rendering the Bulgarian position on the organization flexible enough to let it exist on the margin of illegality ever since.[158] Accordingly, the Constitutional Court granted the right of the *MRF* to be registered as a political party based on the consideration that in its quality of an interest representing organization it blends into the international normative framework of human rights protection and is as such in no contradiction with the Bulgarian Constitution. Along the same line, the accusations of

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[154] Ibid., pp. 107-108.

[155] See § 41 (4) of the 1991 *Law on the Election of the National Assembly*, available on the website of the *Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe Database of the University of Essex,* http://www.essex.ac.uk/elections/.

[156] See Riedel, p. 120.

[157] Ibid., p. 109.

[158] This did not, however, happen in the case of the *OMO-Ilinden-Pirin* organization representing the Macedonians of Bulgaria, which was denied recognition and was suspended by the Bulgarian Constitutional Court. See Klaus Schrameyer, "Ahmed Dogan—hat der Königsmacher überreizt? Die Partei der türkischen Minderheit in Bulgarien (DPS) unde die Parlamentswahlen vom 25. Juni 2005," pp. 356-375 in *Südosteuropa,* Vol. 53, nr. 3/2005, p. 360.

the *BSP* that the organization should endanger the territorial integrity of Bulgaria were also rejected.[159]

The *MRF* came out strengthened from the October 1991 elections as in addition to the Turkish minority itself, many Pomaks and Muslim Roma cast their vote in favor of the organization. Further, since none of the two great parties were strong enough to form a government, the *MRF* came to be the deciding third power and it was with their support that the *UDF* Government could be formed under Filip Dimitrov. The new *UDF* Government supported by the *MRF* changed the orientation of politics. Two important fields that had repercussions on the fate of the Turkish minority itself were the novel relations with Turkey and the launching of the land reform process. The first steps towards the normalization of relations with Turkey—completely deteriorated during the assimilation campaign of the Zhivkov-era—were the signing of the *Sofia Documents* regarding the military cooperation between Turkey and Bulgaria paving the way for future designs of cooperation in the Balkans and the 1992 *Treaty on Friendship, Good Neighborly Relations, Security and Cooperation* between the two countries. Since minorities and their rights were continuously not recognized in Bulgaria, the normalization of bilateral relations could serve as a balance and compensation.[160]

Yet, cooperation between the *UDF* and the *MRF* was to suffer a severe blow with the launching of the land reform program aiming the restitution of property nationalized under the communist regime. Since privatization was also to include properties of the tobacco and mining industry, as well as the dissolution of cooperatives—domains employing most of the Turkish minority—and since the acquiring of land by person without property was to be considerably restricted, it was unavoidable that the reform process should lead to social, political and even inter-ethnic conflicts.[161] Growing unemployment and great losses of revenue due to the fall in the price of tobacco resulted in mass dissatisfaction among the Turks of Bulgaria and a renewed wave of emigration to Turkey. Inter-ethnic tensions were also to be

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[159] See Riedel, p. 112.
[160] Ibid., p. 113-114.

fanned by the differentiated treatment through social measures of ethnic Bulgarians re-settling from Moldova as opposed to the lack of protection of Turks re-settling from Turkey.[162]

It was within the context of growing economic and social crisis—with 60 % of all Bulgarian living under the minimum standard of living by 1992—that Bulgarian President Zhelev gave voice to his critique of the *UDF* Government warning from its current politics of governing on the basis of administrative repression as opposed to political consensus conducting "war against all."[163] In its turn, the *MRF* opposing the privatization and land reform designs of the *UDF* expressed its discontent more and more openly and asked for the drafting of a cooperation agreement to codify the basic tenets of the so far tacit *MRF* support of the Dimitrov Government without direct involvement. The *UDF* rejected the *MRF* demands for cabinet restructuring and as the last mistaken step Dimitrov called for a vote of non-confidence in the National Assembly. To the *UDF*'s own surprise, the *MRF* and the part of the *UDF* itself voted against the government, which collapsed.

The fall of the Dimitrov Government introduced a period of parliamentary crisis eventually ended by the formation of a technocratic government under the unaffiliated Ljuben Berov as Prime Minister. The formation of the government was effectuated under the mandate of the *MRF* itself—a fact that attests for the growing role of the organization in Bulgarian politics. The new government was actively supported by the critical faction of the *UDF* that built its own *Union for New Democracy/UND*, and the *MRF* with the tacit backing of the *BSP*. The reconfiguration of power relations resulted in the *UDF* losing its governing power and coalition forming capacity, as well.[164] Since under the new setup of power relations the initiation of new elections by the *UDF* became impossible, the new government accused for being too apolitical and inefficient and labeled as the

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[161] Ibid., p. 115.
[162] Ibid., p. 117.
[163] Rumen Dimitrov, "Bulgarien 1993/94: Was ändert sich, wenn 'nichts passiert'?" [Bulgaria 1993/1994: What Changes when 'Nothing Happens'?], pp. 513-533 in *Südosteuropa,* Vol. 43, nr. 6-7/1994, p. 318.
[164] Ibid., p.319.

example of the "power of the weak" was to survive through the longest period of all post-communist governments before.[165] The government having to deal with the growing financial and currency crisis, the nationality question was pushed into the background and in September 1994 that the weakened Berov Government submitted its resignation.

4.2.2. In the Background: 1994—1997 and 1997—2001

The 1994 parliamentary elections brought the overwhelming victory of the *BSP* with absolute majority in the Parliament. Nationalistic tones were continuously in the background during the elections since the split in the *UDF* and its inefficiency in managing the financial crisis in the country assured a safe victory for the opposition. Yet, with the inclusion of representatives of the nationalistic faction of the *BSP* in the government was going inevitably to result in renewed tensions wit representatives of the Turkish minority.[166] These tensions were to resurface on the occasion of the 1994 local elections when the *BSP* representatives challenged the results in the town of Kardzhali—inhabited mainly by Turks. In addition to being contested in their attempt for representation of the local level, by naming a nationalist ex-communist functionary as head of the Directorate of the Religious Communities, the Government of Zhan Videnov also managed to bring the constantly simmering religious conflict between the Bulgarian Church and the legal representation of the Muslim community to a new peak The reinvigorated conflict between Turks and ethnic Bulgarians, complemented by the deterioration of the general economic situation resulted in a renewed wave of emigration of Turks.[167]

The mass dissatisfaction with the Videnov Government was manifest in massive protests and blockades of the Bulgarians, paralleled by a galloping inflation

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[165] Ibid.
[166] Ulrich Büchsenschütz and Ivo Georgiev, "Nationalismus, nationalistische Parteien und Demokratie in Bulgarien seit 1989" [Nationalism, Nationalistic Parties and Democracy in Bulgaria since 1989], pp. 234-262 in *Südosteuropa,* Vol. 50, No. 3-4/2001, p. 247.
[167] Between 1994 and 1997 around 200,000 Turks immigrated to Turkey. See Ulrich Büchsenschütz and Ivo Georgiev; p. 248.

rate bringing the country to the verge of civil war. The internal situation of Bulgaria complemented by a continuously Moscow-oriented foreign policy was frowningly followed by Western observers.[168] Under these circumstances, the opposition forces achieved early elections to be organized in April 1997 that were won by the opposition association called the *Alliance of Democratic Forces/ODS*. The main issues of the electoral campaign were the economic problems and the inefficiency of the previous government.

While during the 1996 presidential elections the *MRF* still counted as member of the winning anti-communist opposition, the renewed struggles for the future distribution of the parliamentary seats exacerbated the rift between the two ex-partners, the *UDF* and the *MRF*. As an attempt to solve the continuous conflict between majority and minority related to the political representation of the minorities, the new government headed by Ivan Kostov created the Council for Minority Issues received with skepticism by representatives of the minority communities.[169] Relations between the *ODS* and the *MRF* suffered a further blow with the surfacing of rumors about Ahmed Dogan's and other Turkish representatives' alleged cooperation with the secret services of the communist regime—a rumor that was extensively made use of by the *ODS* in their campaign aiming at the discrediting of Dogan and his organization.[170] Finally, as a gesture equaling a war declaration on the *MRF*, under the pretext of launching a "Europeanized" model of inter-ethnic relations in Bulgaria, the *ODS* turned to a policy of openly promoting anti-*MRF* Bulgarian Turks into high offices of the ministerial bureaucracy.[171]

In the field of foreign policy, the *ODS* Government initiated a full turn to the Westernization of the country. Relations with Russia—considered as primary under the previous *BSP* Government—were put on a novel basis stressing the necessity of mutual benefits and righteousness and they came to be subordinated to Bulgaria's

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[168] Markus Wien, "'Ab heute ist Bulgarien nicht dasselbe Land' Die Parlamentswahlen vom 17. Juni 2001" ['Bulgaria is not the Same Country after Today' The Parliamentary Elections of 17 June 2001], pp. 213-231 in *Südosteuropa,* Vol. 50, nr. 4-6/2001, p. 215.
[169] Ibid., p. 249.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid., p. 250.

aspiration towards *NATO*-membership. Official negotiations for EU-accession also kicked off in 1999 and as a great foreign policy success, the government managed to achieve the lifting of Bulgarian visa requirement on the territories of the Schengen states. [172] With regard to international norms of minority rights protection, the 1995 signing of the *Framework Convention on National Minorities* was to be a considerable achievement of the government. With the reappearance of the threat of Turkish secession in the public discourse, the *Convention* was eventually ratified in 1999 yet had to be complemented by an additional memorandum assuring the maintenance of Bulgarian territorial integrity.[173]

Despite the considerable internal and international political and economic successes, the *ODS* Government did not manage to raise Bulgarian living standards—an expectation that had made it the winning party in the 1997 elections. In addition, certain foreign policy moves led to a considerable loss of popularity of the government, such as the opening of Bulgarian air space to *NATO* forces on the event of the Kosovo crisis and *NATO* air operations against Serbia.[174] The growing unpopularity of the *ODS* was exacerbated by accuses of a high level of corruption and the potential of upcoming protest-voting against the government was highlighted by the *ODS*' loss of foothold in the 1999 local elections.

4.2.3. Return of the King: 2001—2005

The firs government of the post-communist period to last through its whole mandate, despite its growing unpopularity, the *ODS* was expected to win in the June 2001 parliamentary elections.[175] Burdened by continuous internal corrosion, the main threat to the absolute majority of the alliance was the *MRF* itself, while the *BSP* had been keeping a low political profile and presented no serious challenge to the *ODS*. Yet, the political configuration of power relations was to be fundamentally unsettled

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[172] See Wien, p. 216.
[173] See Büchsenschütz and Georgiev, p. 251.
[174] See Wien, p. 218.
[175] Ibid., p. 220.

by the sudden appearance of the Bulgarian ex-King, Simeon Sakskoburggotski in the lead of his newly formed party, the *National Movement Simeon II/NDSV*. Proposing a "new economic vision," the ex-King's party leaning on young technocrats promised to turn Bulgaria into a European country with high living standards.[176] The new development turned the electoral campaign into a struggle between the *ODS* and the *NDSV* with the *BSP* and the *MRF*—counting on their core electorate—in the background. Under these circumstances, the issue of national minorities was left out of the electoral battle, while the continuous fragility of the Bulgarian party system was to be repeatedly demonstrated by the surprising victory of Simeon's movement.

The victory of the *NDSV* completely disrupted the bipolar party spectrum, as well. The *MRF* secured its coalition partner position as the new government was formed by coalition agreement with the Turkish party and additionally included representatives of the *BSP*. The main merit of the new government was the raising of Bulgaria's international prestige by the introduction and maintenance of macroeconomic stability, the country's accession to *NATO* membership and its successful steering towards EU-accession. Yet, the high electoral promises of 2001 turned out to be impossible to live up to and the popular punishment—similarly to the fate of the previous government—was to be commensurate.[177]

4.2.4. Nobody's Government: 2005-?

The June 2005 elections in Bulgaria were yet a further sign of the deep division and hopelessness of the Bulgarian society, the lack of a complete elite renewal and the burden of the past.[178] Accordingly, the results of the elections came as a further surprise: first, the *BSP* failed to achieve the prophesied absolute majority. Second, the *MRF* targeting to obtain as many mandates as possible in order to maintain its role as a kingmaker despite growing dissatisfaction within its

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[176] Ibid., p. 222.
[177] Klaus Schrameyer, "Bulgarien nach den Parlamentswahlen vom 25. Juni 2005" [Bulgaria after the Parliamentary Elections of 25 June 2005] pp. 17-33 in *Südosteuropa Mitteilungen,* Nr. 6/2005, p. 23.
[178] Ibid., p. 18.

constituency, succeeded in accomplishing the best results of its existence. This outstanding result of the Turkish party has been contributed to electoral manipulation (i.e. the mobilization and concentration of ethnic Turkish emigrant voters holding double Bulgarian and Turkish citizenship) and the surprising ascent of the extreme rightist, xenophobic and emphatically anti-Western *Ataka/Attack* party.[179]

The results of the elections favored neither one bigger party nor the possibility for smaller parties to take a position of tipping the scales. The coalition government between the *BSP,* the *NDSV* and the *MRF* came into being after a series of hot debates and negotiations under the looming threat of EU accession postponement in case of political instability staggering the badly needed reform process. Termed as "nobody's government" without a political profile or identity and not fulfilling the expectations of the voters, the new, considerably fragile government has born the traces of its uneasy formation under external pressure and it has been predicted to last until EU decision regarding Bulgaria's accession.[180]

Even though part of the ruling coalition following a sweeping electoral success, the *MRF* has lost its kingmaker position in Bulgarian politics. This phenomenon has occurred firstly amid growing opposition on part of the Bulgarian public and politicians against Dogan's politicking and attempts to curb the political power of the organization he heads. A proof for this antagonism was the rejection by Simeon Sakskoburggotski to enter an electoral alliance with the *MRF*, while the rise of the *Ataka* can also be partially traced back to the fear of the participation of the Turkish minority in Bulgarian politics and potential accession of Turkey to the EU.[181] It is under these circumstances that the *MRF* has been included into the ruling coalition merely as a convenience to continuously serve as a bonus point for inter-ethnic harmony in Bulgaria on the external level and to secure votes for the next presidential elections and it can as such be excluded from the coalition at any point. At the same time, deemed as an uneasy coalition partner, the power of the *MRF* has

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[179] Ibid.

[180] Ibid., p. 32.

[181] Klaus Schrameyer, "Ahmed Dogan—hat der Königsmacher überreizt? Die Partei der türkischen Minderheit in Bulgarien (DPS) unde die Parlamentswahlen vom 25. Juni 2005," p. 357.

also been considerably curbed through mutual checks and balances among the coalition partners by the instrument of the Coalition Council.[182] The unpopularity of the *MRF* as a political party has also been manifest in the series of demonstrations on part of ethnic Bulgarians against the *MRF* candidates in local elections.[183]

More and more unpopular as a political party, accused of corrupt and dictatorial politicking, Dogan's organization has also lost foothold with regard to its own electorate. Leaning on the Turkish community in Bulgaria and the exile community of Turks in Turkey, as well as Pomaks and Muslim Roma, the party has witnessed growing dissatisfaction and distancing on part of a segment of its constituency. With the ever shrinking number of Turks in Bulgaria choosing the way to immigration to Turkey, the immigrants and re-settled immigrants have been instrumental in securing the *MRF* strength in Bulgarian politics. Initial unconditional support on part of these communities has by now turned into active criticism and has launched a political self-organization process, as well. Moreover, these segments have come to the attention of ethnic Bulgarian parties who have begun to manifest interest in the dissatisfied Turkish re-settlers.[184] Moreover, growing opposition against the *MRF*, the rise of *Ataka* as a would-be impetus to the extreme resurfacing of nationalist discourse, as well as continuous concerns of a potential threat to the country's EU accession have led to an open distancing from Dogan's organization on the part of Turkey itself.[185]

4.3. Politics of Balance in a New Context

As it has been argued, the *DAHR* and the *MRF* came into being as ethnically based political organizations in the process of multi-party system formation in post-communist Romania and Bulgaria. Accordingly, both organizations have developed their own carefully balanced political and minority interest representing strategies

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[182] Ibid., p. 372.
[183] Ibid., p. 375.
[184] Ibid., p. 365.
[185] Ibid., p. 375.

trying to fit both the demands arising from their ethnic base as well as those from their role as actors in the national politics of their respective countries. Yet, as these strategies of political balance have been determined by the context of the dynamic interplay between the mutually influential factors of the minority communities, the home states, the kin states and external actors, they have been subject to the challenges of an ever-changing context during the successive government formations in Romania and Bulgaria. The changing context of ethnic party politics has led to an attempt to adapt the balance formula between ethnic representational and national political demands to the new realities of Romanian and Bulgarian politics. Yet, considering the present position of both the *DAHR* and the *MRF*, the degree of policy adaptation seems to have had only a marginal, short-term and reactive character.

In the immediate aftermath of the regime shift of 1989 in Romania and Bulgaria the rising of majority nationalism as a frame of reference and legitimization in the formation of the political system facilitated the emergence of the two ethnic organizations through the identary mobilization of the two sizable minorities in their respective countries. Even though subject to attempts of isolation—in the case of the *DAHR*—and of legal ban—in the case of the *MRF*—the organizations were assisted externally to varying degrees by their respective kin states. Further, the supportive effect of international norms and conditionality requirements gaining considerable leverage with the home states' and kin states' turn towards Westernization also assisted the two ethnic parties in launching their political activity on the national political scene. It was against this background that the two ethnic parties devised their respective formulas of balancing the ethnic and political aspects of their role and came to formulate their political agenda accordingly. Tending towards a more autonomist position, the *DAHR* proposed to negotiate through consociational power sharing arrangement an equal status of Hungarians in Romania with that of the core nation and the achievement of personal, cultural and administrative autonomy. More of a protectionist character, the *MRF* put emphasis on the protection of the cultural and educational rights of the Turkish/Muslim minority, strengthened local

government paralleled by the necessity of political representation and the consequent emphasis on the national character of the organization.

This balance of politics formula was to be challenged from more sides due to changes in the factors had given its line of direction in the first place. The first change can be contributed to the effects of international norms and conditionality presented by international actors and organizations and their effect on minority policy in both Romania and Bulgaria. Following the initial period pf heavy external pressure on the two countries, through the signing and ratification of a series of international conventions, as well as in their efforts to meet the *NATO* and EU conditionality requirements, the two countries have developed legal and institutional instruments for the protection of their minority communities deemed fairly adequate by international observers. In addition, the presence of ethnic minority representatives in the parliament or the government has brought further bonus points in the international scrutiny of both countries. If the Bulgarian and Romanian models of minority accommodation are criticized, it is mainly in relation with the contentious situation of the Roma community.[186] Finally, with the imminent accession of both countries to the EU, the ethnic minority issue—marginally addressed within the EU itself—is bound to lose much of its significance. This consideration also appeared in the *DAHR* electoral rhetoric as a mobilizing tool drawing attention to the necessity to achieve political representation and further political goals before the country's accession to the EU.[187]

Change in external support has also come about in the two parties' relations with the kin states of the respective minorities they represent. Due to the greater influence of Hungarian Governments on the self-organization of the Hungarian minority in Romania, this change has been more dramatic in their case yet the trend of gradual disengagement has been a point of convergence in the two cases. After having played around with various legal instruments to regulate the relationship with

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[186] This trend can be optimally observed by an examination of the sections dealing with minority rights protection in the successive accession monitoring reports of the European Commission, see http://www.europa.eu.int.

[187] See http://www.rmdsz.ro.

their trans-border co-ethnics depending on the actual dominant force, the last two Hungarian Governments of leftist orientation have channeled relations into the direction of a civic nation perception providing cultural and educational assistance yet leaving the minority communities to their self-organizing process within their own milieu. At the same time, the rightist forces of Hungarian politics have also left their imprint on the *DAHR* strategies by supporting the split and political organization of its more radical opposition—a considerable threat to the political representation of the Hungarian community. In the case of the *MRF*, the growing disengagement on part of Turkey has led to the moderation of its political agenda with regard to potential demands for autonomy arrangements or a more consolidated status for the Turkish minority community in Bulgaria.

The position of the two ethnic parties has considerably been determined by changes in the Romanian and Bulgarian national politics. As the continuous presence and high results of extreme nationalist political forces—such as the *PRM* in Romania and the *Ataka* in Bulgaria—shows, nationalism is still an important frame of reference in the politics of the two countries. This phenomenon, in turn ensures the continuous possibility for ethnic mobilization in the case of both ethnic parties. Yet, as the political developments described above show, their position as central political actors is of a rather precarious nature.

Far from the model of consociational power sharing, the coalition arrangements including the two ethnic parties materialized in the framework of political calculations—the strategic benefits of which should naturally not be underestimated. However, these political calculations involved the ever-repeating necessity to negotiate the issue of minority representation itself, as opposed to the negotiation of the terms of national minority representation in national politics as proposed by the consociational model of power sharing.[188] The circumstances of the near-banning and eventual acknowledgement as political party of the *MRF*— expected to help the *BSP* to win the elections by drawing votes from its opposition,

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[188] Gabriel Andreescu, Natiuni si minoritati [Nations and Minorities], Bucuresti: Polirom, 2004, pp. 65-75.

the *UDF*—is an optimal example of this idea. The same idea of coalition of necessity is implied by the problematic cooperation of both the *DAHR* and the *MRF* with their various partners in ruling coalitions—with special reference to the present fragile and inchoate coalitions both in Romania and Bulgaria. The loss in political foothold is all the more accentuated in the case of the *MRF*: with the end of the bipolar political party system with the return of the ex-King Simeon Sakskoburggotski to the Bulgarian political scene, the previous secure position of the ethnic party balancing power relations between the *BSP* and the *UDF* has also come to a sorry end.

The loss of political power on the level of national politics in the case of both the *DAHR* and the *MRF* has been paralleled by a process of deterioration in their relation with their own constituencies. In the nationalistic climate of the post-1989 period, unity and mobilization of the minority communities was a relatively easy objective to achieve. It was for this end that various factions and ideological orientations were included in both parties yet the surfacing of differences in view was unavoidable. Initially both parties succeeded in moderating their internal opposition forces, but continuous disagreements eventually gave way to a split and the eventual launching of a political self-organization course on part of the oppositional factions. In the case of the *MRF*, this split implied the loss of most of the emigrant and re-settled Turkish voters yet has not threatened the reaching of the required 4 % threshold for parliamentary representation. On the other hand, the potential rise of an anti-*DAHR* political organization could split the Hungarian constituency and lead to a failure of achieving the necessary 5 % threshold on either part.

Critiques that gave rise to dissatisfaction within the minority communities have involved the lack of success of both organizations to secure their output legitimacy by an interest representation deemed as inadequate by many. Seen as unsuccessful in the regulation of the status of minorities—attempted currently by a draft law considered toothless by many representatives of the Hungarian minority—or the development of a coherent and detailed autonomy strategy to be pursued, the *DAHR* has been widely criticized as an overly centralized organization trying to dominate all domains of minority self-organization for its own purposes while selling

out the minority cause for the sake of political power potential.[189] Failure to deliver the results of its interest representing activity has also been the cause of dissatisfaction with Dogan's politics as it has fallen short of the expectations of improving the extremely low living standards of the Turkish/Muslim community.

These changes in the context of ethnic party politics in Romania and Bulgaria have determined both the *DAHR* and the *MRF* to adjust their politics of balance accordingly. Pressured by the necessity of mobilizing and securing its corroding power base, the idea of autonomy resurfaced in the *DAHR* rhetoric in the last years and it has been complemented by the idea of the *Draft Law on the Status of National Minorities in Romania*. Considered as weak and undeveloped instruments by the Hungarian community, these initiatives on part of the *DAHR* have managed to pit the partners of the present fragile coalition government against itself. This result has in turn obstructed the *DAHR* designs to patch relations up with Romanian national political forces by emphasizing the common course and compatibility of minority and majority EU accession and integration designs.[190] Similarly, concerned about the mobilization of its own constituency, *MRF* leader Ahmed Dogan made waves in Bulgarian national politics by opposing the privatization of the *Bulgartabak* Factory considered as disadvantageous with regard to the economic interests of the Turkish community employed in mass in the Bulgarian tobacco industry. On a more practical level, the literal mobilization and concentration of emigrant Turkish voters also assisted the *MRF* in scoring its last spectacular electoral success—a solution that exacerbated suspicions among Bulgarian political forces against its politics.[191] In these conditions, the *MRF* attempt to secure its coalition position through forming a pre-electoral alliance with the *NDSV* was met with a categorical refusal and its eventual inclusion into the coalition government has also been done with the extra care of curbing its power.

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[189] See the website of the *DAHR*'s main opponent organization, the *Erdélyi Magyar Nemzeti Tanács/Hungarian National Council of Transylvania,* available at http://www.emnt.ro.

[190] See http://www.rmdsz.ro.

[191] See Klaus Schrameyer, "Ahmed Dogan—hat der Königsmacher überreizt? Die Partei der türkischen Minderheit in Bulgarien (DPS) unde die Parlamentswahlen vom 25. Juni 2005," p. 360.

The signs of failure of both the *DAHR* and the *MRF* in further integrating, organizing and mobilizing their constituency—more accentuated in the case of the Hungarian minority organization—complemented by the loss of political foothold on the level of national politics by both organizations implies a malfunction in the politics of balance they have pursued. Optimally working in the first years after the 1989 regime change in both countries, the politics of the *DAHR* and of the *MRF* was instrumental in the appeasement of inter-ethnic tensions, as well as the building of a legal and institutional framework for the protection of minorities in Romania and Bulgaria. Yet, the necessity of an adaptation of balance politics has arisen with the changing context of ethnic party politics—a challenge that has been addressed by both political formations. With the *DAHR* in a position of struggling to maintain its constituent basis, as well as its political position in a considerably labile coalition government and the *MRF* in a similar position of crumbling political power exacerbated by losses of ethnic votes, it becomes clear that the adjustment strategies pursued by the two ethnic parties have not been successful.

Attempting to steer their agenda and politics into the direction determined by the dynamic of the quadratic relational nexus that shapes them, the new politics of balance of both parties have suffered a shift of emphasis to the role they play in the field of coalition politics on the national level to the detriment of their role as interest representing organizations. Lacking the bargaining potential to score successes to the benefit of their respective communities on the national politics level due to their considerably weakened position on all levels, the new balance formula has turned out to only marginally address the test of the new environment of ethnic party politics. The two political organizations are thus failing to present viable pro-active and longer term solutions with regard to the efficient political representation of the interests of the minority communities represented by them in their ever-changing context. They are thus facing the need of a fundamental refurbishing of their character and political strategies to achieve a new and workable balance between their role as politically active and viable organizations representing the interests of their respective minority communities.

5. Conclusion

This paper has argued that the political organizations representing the Hungarian minority community in Romania and the Turkish/Muslim community in Bulgaria have only incrementally succeeded in adapting their careful balance politics between the ethnic and political parameters of their position to the ever-changing context of the national politics in their respective home countries. Emerging in the context of the specific ethno-demographic and territorial setup of Romania and Bulgaria in a time of revolutionary regime shift to multi-party democracy in both countries, the politics of balance pursued by the two organizations—undertaking the representation of ethnic minority communities on the national political level—has been determined by the dynamic interplay between the main factors providing the basic parameters of minority ethnic party politics in both cases.

The transformation of the character and strategies of the minority communities themselves, of their kin state, of their home state and those of the external actors, as well as the fundamental change in their dynamic interplay have resulted in an attempt on part of both the *DAHR* and the *MRF* at adapting ethnic party politics to the modified context. Yet, as attested by the considerable loss of power potential by the two organizations failing to deliver the expected results in both domains of their dual role, this adaptation of balance politics has proved to be inadequate and has opened the way for the necessity of a series of changes in the nature and agenda of ethnic party politics in both cases. Due to differences in their respective context of politics, the solutions that present themselves are similar yet offer a particular combination of balance politics in the case of the *DAHR* and Hungarians in Romania and the *MRF* and Turks/Muslims in Bulgaria.

As a political organization that has presented itself as an ethnic party of a more autonomist character, the *DAHR* needs first of all to address its own failures in its role as interest representing organization. This idea implies the revision of *DAHR* strategies in relation with the self-organization processes of the Hungarian minority

in Romania. With the lack of constructive dialogue between representatives of the *DAHR* and its former members with more radical designs who have been organizing themselves into political formations, the democratic character and mobilizing potential of the ethnic party has come under scrutiny. This critique has gained another dimension with the *DAHR* activities orchestrating and financially influencing—through various cultural and civic foundations within the organization determining the direction of funds coming mainly from Hungary—the working of the ethno-civic society as one aspect of the self-organization of the Hungarian minority. Democratic deficit has also been attributed to the *DAHR* on a more practical, organizational level drawing attention to the overly centralized power\structure and the lack of a badly needed elite reshuffling. Accordingly, the solution of problems of the organization with the mobilization and organization of its constituency would imply the launching of constructive dialogue with its opposition aiming the devising of common future strategies as opposed to attempts at a disarmament or inclusion of the more radical factions. Further, the clear division between the ethno-civic and political activities of the *DAHR* would also be necessary paralleled by a devolution of the party's organizational and power structure to the regional levels.

In addition, the necessary maintenance of the core constituency of the *DAHR* also requires an adjustment of its political agenda to the new political realities in the country. This would involve most of all the revisiting of the autonomy designs promoted by the organization bearing the traces of its excessive subordination to concern of internal and external party politics on part of the *DAHR*. Featuring mainly on the level of political rhetoric, the idea of autonomy as an objective of the Hungarian community in Romania has never been developed in adequate details.[192] Yet, due to the fact that the idea of autonomy arrangements feature high of the agenda of the Hungarian community itself, the *DAHR* representatives now face the necessity of reinvigorating and refurbishing the concept to fit into the new political realities in Romania. Such a strategy would involve the turning of the party into an emphatically

regionalized organization deriving its political capital mainly from the regional sphere of local government and regional development—a line that would seamlessly blend into the larger trend of Romania's EU accession and requirements for decentralization.[193]

A fundamental reorganization of the ethnic party to secure the democratic and adequate representation of its minority constituency paralleled by a reframed and more developed political agenda and strategy would be instrumental in securing the votes of the Hungarian community as the core electorate of the *DAHR*. This would in turn provide the organization with an adequate background and basis for carrying on its activity on the national politics level. On the other hand, if the loss of foothold in national politics was to be addressed instead of the ethnic parameter of the *DAHR* role, a strategy of another line of organizational restructuring could also involve the breakup of the ethnic organization into its various ideological platforms with the eventual merge of the factions into their respective political-ideological families on the level of Romanian national politics—an idea with questionable implications regarding the future of ethnic minority interest representation still far from being an automatism in Romania.

Similar strategies of remodeling are available to the *MRF*, as well. Yet, stemming from its character of a more moderate protectionist ethnic party, the new formula of political balance is slightly different from that of the *DAHR*. Criticized for excessive power concentration, a reconfiguration of its leading elite, as well as the decentralization of the organizational and power structure of the organization— similarly to the case of the *DAHR*—has become a necessity in the case of the *MRF*, as well. Within the wider contest of Bulgaria's accession process to the EU, this would provide an optimal framework to strategies of regional development and local government that would be of a considerable benefit for the Turkish and Muslim minority community in Bulgaria. Such strategies of organizational restructuring and a

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[192] See Miklós Bakk, Andor Horváth and Levente Salat, „Az RMDSZ 2003-ban—útkeresés integrációs határpontokon," [The *DAHR* in 2003—Looking for a Way along Integrationist Border Points], pp. 148-165 in *Kronika,* 25 January, 2003.
[193] Ibid.

more emphatic shift in the political agenda of the *MRF* towards the regional level could curb the growing dissatisfaction of its core constituency with its current politics. The necessity of constructive dialogue with its politically organized opposition is also present in the set of strategies the *MRF* could turn to. This would in turn render the organization into a viable interest representing formation capable of pursuing a coherent political activity on the national level and it would put an end to further losses of ethnic votes.

At the same time, since the major challenge that the *MRF* has to face is its loss of power position and marginalization in Bulgarian national politics and continuous attempts at restraining its room for maneuver on part of Bulgarian political actors, a revision of the organization's stance on the national political scene is pending. The *MRF* as a merely protectionist ethnic party continuously presenting itself as having an emphatically national character has drawn extensively on the national dimension by working hard to open up to all Bulgarian citizens with many ethnic Bulgarians holding high offices within the *MRF* mandate. An emphasis on the party's liberal and national character while carefully balancing and avoiding to overtly flaunt its ethnic interest representation designs in its dealings with the various actors within the sphere of national politics, could reverse the wave of dissatisfaction of Bulgarian political actors with regard to its politicking. Being an "ethnic party of a national character," the transformation of the organization into a more emphatically national political organization that would still be able to preserve its ethnic minority constituency through a series of political and economic successes to benefit the Turkish community, would be a viable solution. This objective could be achieved either by the party on its own or by a merger with the Bulgarian liberal political forces yet also implies the necessity of the reshuffling of the long enduring political elite—similarly to the case of the *DAHR*.

As the series of potential solutions of renewed ethnic party politics suggests, the efficiency and viability of the two organizations as ethnically based interest representing political parties continuously depends on the finding of a specific balance between the ethnic and political dimensions of their character. Yet, due to

considerable changes in the context of ethnic party politics in both Romania and Bulgaria, this balance has to be found on the basis of strategies of fundamental organizational restructuring paralleled by the development of more coherent political agendas in order to adequately reframe the two political organizations to fit the requirement of becoming a viable and legitimate actor to represent the interests of its constituency on the national political level. For the sake of rendering them viable and efficient political actors channeling and securing the protection of the various rights of their respective minority communities, it is these considerations that the new balance formulas destined to move both the *DAHR* and the *MRF* from their present dual ethnic and political impasse have to be based on.

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7. Annexes

Annex 1. National Minorities in Romania as Recorded by Censuses

Census Year	1930		1977		1992		2002	
Romanian	11,118,170 (77.85 %)		18,999,565 (88.12 %)		20,408,542 (89.47 %)		19,399,974 (89.47 %)	
Hungarian	1,423,459 (9.97 %)		1,713,928 (7.95 %)		1,624,959 (7.12 %)		1,431,807 (6.60 %)	
German	633,488 (4.44%)		359,109 (1.67 %)		119,462 (0.52 %)		59,764 (0.27 %)	
Jewish	451,892 (3.16 %)		24,667 (0.11 %)		8,955 (0.04 %)		5,785 (0.02 %)	
Roma	242,656 (1.70 %)		227,398 (1.05 %)		401,087 (1.76 %)		535,140 (2.46 %)	
Other[*]	406,012 (2.84 %)		232,736 (1.09 %)		236,332 (1.05 %)		246,940 (1.13 %)	
Undeclared	5,052	0.04 %	4,641	0.02 %	3,940	0.02 %	1,941	0.05 %
TOTAL	14,280,729		21,559,910		22,810,035		21,680,974	

Source: *Institutul National de Statistica* [Romanian National Institute of Statistics], http://www.insse.ro/.

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[*] The "Other" category marks the Ukrainian, Lipovan, Serb, Croat, Tatar, Slovak, Turk, Bulgarian, Czech, Greek, Polish, Armenian, Chango and most recently the Italian and Chinese minority communities.

Annex 2. The Geographical Distribution of the Hungarian Minority in Romania
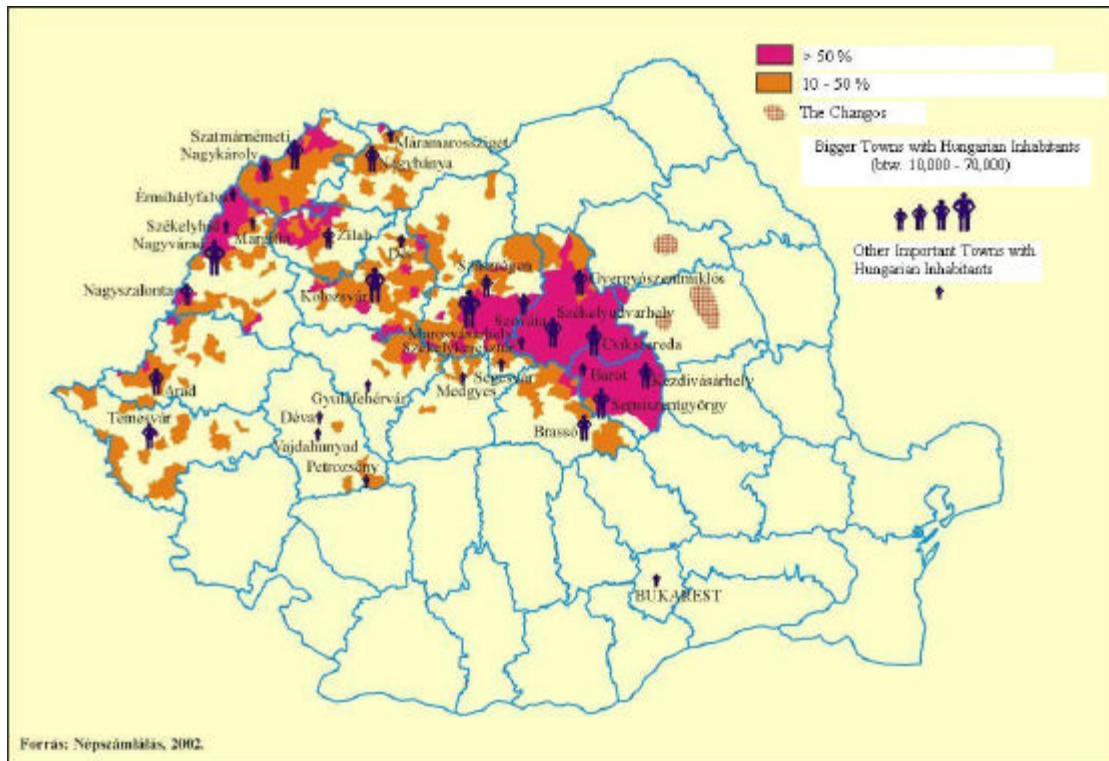
Source: Website of the *Hungarian Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad,* available at http://www.htmh.hu/en/.

Annex 3. The Turkish and Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria as Recorded by Census

| Census Year Ethnic Affiliation	1990	1956	1992	2001
Bulgarian	2,887,860 (77.1 %)	6,506,541 (85.4 %)	7,206,062 (85.1 %)	6,655,210 (83.9 %)
Turk	531,240 (14.2 %)	656,025 (8.6 %)	822,253 (9.7 %)	746,664 (9.4 %)
Roma	89,549 (2.4 %)	197,865 (2.6 %)	313,396 (3.7 %)	370,908 (4.6 %)
Other⊗	227,218 (6.28 %)	253,278 (3.4 %)	145,606 (1.5 %)	156,119 (1.96 %)

⊗ The "Other" category marks the Romanian, Greek, Armenian, Russian, Jewish, Tatar, Circassian, etc. minority groups.

° The "Other" category refers to Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Gregorian-Armenian, etc. faiths.

Religion				
Orthodox Christian	3,019,296 (80.6 %)	N/A	7,299,092 (86.2 %)	6,638,870 (83.7 %)
Muslim	643,300 (17.2 %)	N/A	1,112,331 (13.1 %)	966,978 (12.2 %)
Other°	81,687 (2.2. %)	N/A	75,894 (0.7 %)	323,053 (4.07 %)
TOTAL	**3,744,283**	**7,613,709**	**8,487,317**	**7,928,901**

Source: *Natsionalen Statiskitcheski Institut [Bulgarian National Statistical Institute],* http://www.nsi.bg/, and Ali Eminov, *The Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria.*

Annex 4. The Geographical Distribution of Muslims in Bulgaria
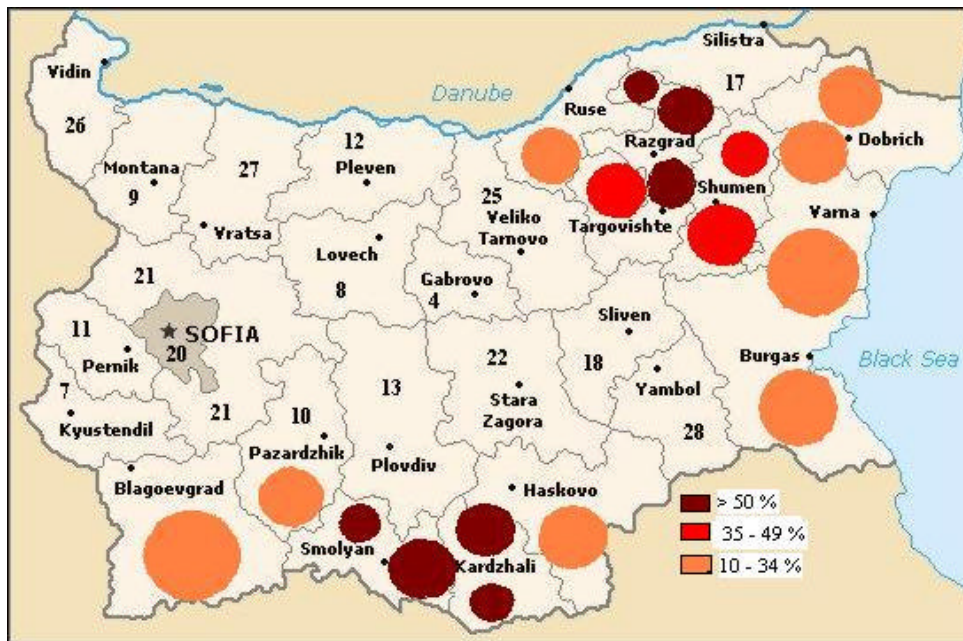
Source: Ali Eminov, *The Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria.*