

ECMI
SUMMER SCHOOL



Group 1: Ethnic Rhetoric in Political Elections

Student summaries submitted for the
Group Work

European centre for Minority Issues (ECMI)
19-29 August 2013

Ethnic Rhetoric in Political Elections

Various mechanisms are usually used by politicians to mobilize political support in elections. Ethnic rhetoric is just one of those, but it can have a significant positive or negative impact on a society revealing existing issues, problems, and sensitive agendas. The lack of such rhetoric in ethnically diverse societies is also to be taken into account. Please assess the available data on the last 2 major political campaigns (parliamentary and/or presidential) in your country and provide examples of such positive or negative (or missing) rhetorics. Please look at the platforms of the major political parties (represented in the Parliament or currently raising), their messages to the public and the electoral promises. Please assess the ethnic (minority) discourse – is it positive, negative or missing (neglecting existing hot issues)? Please provide comments on the observed developments comparing either the last two election campaigns or the last and the up-coming one – what trends can be identified?

I. ABE TSUZUKO:

The minorities under the economic crises and the political turn to the right in Japan

Today Japan is facing the toughest and the most difficult crisis after the World War II. The great earthquake in Tohoku and the nuclear disaster in Fukushima in March 2011 brought a fateful damage to Japan, which had already been suffering from the economic depression for the last 20 years.

The international situation around Japan has also changed. The power of the so called “Rising Tigers”, the new Asian economic leaders is rapidly increasing. On the other hand, the relative political influence of Japan in the international society is decreasing. There are several serious international issues surrounding Japan. For example, there is a severe territorial dispute about Senkaku-Islands with China, there is a discussion with South Korea about the so called “comfort women”, who were forced to work as prostitute for the Japanese military during the World War II, and the commercial whaling of Japan is criticized by many nations.

There are also numerous domestic problems in Japan. For example, the Japanese agriculture is forced to undergo an ordeal as Japan joined in the free trade agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), in 2013. The agricultural sector, which is traditionally a measure power base of the conservatives, fears that they are going to lose in the international competition. There is a serious problem with unemployment. The unemployment rate of Japan is under 5%, however it doesn't include the 1.370.000 temporary workers, who are often forced to work under disadvantageous conditions and are considered as hidden unemployed.

Considering these social unrest on the background, the extreme right groups are rapidly growing in Japan. The “Zautokukai”, which means Citizens against Special Privilege of Foreigner residing in Japan (it indicates mainly Koreans in Japan), is one of them. The “Zaitiokukai” uses the internet effectively for their propaganda and gathers supports and donations especially from young people.

Although the “Zaitokukai” is not a political party, they give great right-wing impact to young voters by making racial and rightist assertion on the internet and in the streets.

The latest tendency of Japan can be characterized by a political turn to the right and a certain reaction against this. The result of the latest national elections reflects this tendency.

In the elections for the Upper House of the National Diet on July 29th 2007 the DPJ (Democratic Party of Japan) gained 109 seats out of 242. Meanwhile the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party of Japan) got only 83 seats and lost its majority. Most of the voters saw this election as a battle between the DPJ and the LDP. Other opposition parties such as the Japanese Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party reduced their seats.

In the general election for the Lower House on the June 21st 2009 the opposition party DPJ gained 308 seats out of 480 and defeated the ruling LDP, which only managed to gain 119 seats. The DPJ gained large support especially from the young voters in urban areas, who wanted change from the LDP’s old-fashioned politics.

However, in the general election for the Lower House on the December 16th 2012, the LDP gained 294 seats out of 480 and returned to power. Meanwhile the DPJ managed to gain only 57 seats. The DPJ government couldn’t make an economic breakthrough during the 3 years in power and they also couldn’t exercise sufficient leadership after the great earthquake in Tohoku and the nuclear disaster in Fukushima on the March 11th 2011. Although the voting percentage of this election was only 59.32%, which was the lowest quote ever after the World War II, the LDP managed to win an overwhelming victory. “The Japan Restoration Party”, which is a right populist party, gained 57 seats and became the 3rd largest party.

In the elections for the Upper House on the July 21st 2013, the LDP won again an overwhelming victory by gaining 115 seats out of 242. Meanwhile the DPJ gained only 59 seats. This is also because the DPJ party has almost collapsed after the general election for the Lower House on the December 16th 2012. On the other hand, the Japanese Communist Party could manage to increase their seats from 6 to 11, because they sent a clear message to the voters that they are against the rebuild of the nuclear power stations. They gained also support from temporary workers and persons on welfare.

The most remarkable thing of this election in 2013 was, that the Ainu, the indigenous people in north Japan, formed a political party and planned to run for this election. The “Ainu Party” was formed on the January 21st 2012. A delegation of the Maory Party in New Zealand attended and celebrated the launch of the Ainu Party. Also several organizations of other indigenous people, such as Siraya in Taiwan and the AIO (Americans for Indian Opportunity) sent greeting message on this occasion. However the Ainu Party gave up the candidacy for lack of funds. The Korean Minority in Japan, app. 530.000 people, are not considered as a national minority group, but as foreigner, because their citizenships are either South or North Korean. Therefore they don’t have any voting right as long as they don’t claim the Japanese citizenship, although they have been living for almost 4 generations in Japan.

As we have seen above, there is a grave political turn to the right in Japan, which based on economic crises and a social unrest, and there are certain reactions against it. Japanese voters seem to be confused, however as a whole they tend to move toward the right.

The voices of the minorities are buried under the battle between the right and the left.

II. ANDREA CEREVKOVA: Slovakian Case

National Minorities and Ethnic Groups

There are 13 officially recognized national minorities in Slovakia. According to the 2011 census, 12.3% of the population declared themselves as belonging to a minority. The largest minorities are Hungarians with 8.5% and Roma with 2.0%, though the actual number of Roma may be much higher. Other minorities include: Czech (0.6%), Ruthenian / Rusyn (0.6%), Ukrainian (0.1%), German (0.1%), Polish (0.1%), Moravian (0.1%), Croatian, Serbian, Russian, Jewish and Bulgarian. 0.2% of the population stated they belonged to 'other' minority and 7.0% did not specify their nationality/minority.

Political Parties and Minority Representation

Ethnic Hungarians have been traditionally very politically mobilized. The Hungarian minority has been effectively represented in legislative and executive organs, mainly through SMK - Strana maďarskej koalície (Party of the Hungarian Coalition). The SMK enjoys a solid position in some regional and local self-governance bodies, especially in regions and localities with a higher concentration of ethnic Hungarians. In 2009, several former members of the party, led by its former leader Béla Bugár, founded the Most-Híd (Bridge) party, which made appeals not only to ethnic Hungarians living in Slovakia but also to Slovak voters.

The situation is different for the country's second largest ethnic minority, the Roma, who until recently have been inadequately represented in political processes due to social marginalization, low average education level and consequent shortage of political leaders, and the inability of ethnic majority, mainstream political parties to cooperate with Roma organizations. In order to participate in political processes, members of Slovakia's smaller ethnic minorities and groups use opportunities provided by non-ethnically-based political formations.

Ethnic Rhetoric in Political Elections

The two most recent parliamentary elections took place in June 2010 and in March 2012.

The 2010 electoral campaign mostly focused on social and economic issues such as unemployment, the fight against corruption, and the need for reform of the health and social security system. At the same time, the so-called ethnic card was used in the campaign by some political contestants. The adoption of a citizenship act in Hungary featured prominently during the campaign. The election campaign by some parties contained intolerant rhetoric, exploiting negative stereotypes about minorities and fears present in the society at large. For example, the program of ĽSNS - Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko (People's Party Our Slovakia), a radically xenophobic political party, stated that "We will eliminate the unfair prioritizing of gypsy parasites over decent people." SNS – Slovenská Národná Strana (Slovak National Party) used billboards featuring a photo of bare-chested Roma man, which had been digitally altered by adding tattoos and a golden chain displaying the slogan: "So that we do not feed those who do not want to work".

In the weeks prior to the 2012 elections, the political discourse was dominated by the so-called Gorilla case, a scandal involving alleged high-level state corruption; hence corruption and the economic crisis were the main campaign issues. Whilst the anti-Roma rhetoric continued to be present in the 2012 campaign of the nationalist SNS party, ethnic rhetoric was absent from election campaigns of some of the major political parties such as Smer (Direction) and KDH – Kresťansko-Demokraticke Hnutie (Christian Democratic Movement). Positive minority discourse was evident on OĽaNO's campaign billboards, which contained slogan "Decent Roma Deserve Respect," targeting primarily the Roma

but also non-Roma. Naturally, Most-Híd Party's 2012 election program considered the protection of minorities to be a priority, supporting the development of minority identity, i.e., legislative and financial support for their culture, use of language and education.

Issues/Trends

- The use of inflammatory and offensive language using ethnic stereotypes in the 2010 election was contrary to the OSCE commitments and is in clear violation of principles enshrined in the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document and other international instruments on minority protection that aim at encouraging tolerance and intercultural dialogue and combating prejudices leading to racial discrimination.
- Disapproval of offensive campaign billboards - such billboards were condemned by a number of Roma civic groups and other NGOs, as well as by political opponents, and some companies refused to display them.
- Roma are an easy target for electoral manipulations - due to poor socio-economic conditions, often low level of education and widely experienced social exclusion, considerable number of Roma voters are particularly vulnerable. The need for investment in better education and awareness of the Roma minority, and their integration to the society is clearly evident.
- First Roma elected to parliament – the fact that the Roma are represented in parliament today is good not only for the Roma themselves but for entire Slovakia.
- The use of ethnic card - the deployment of the Hungarian card, in particular in the 2009 presidential elections, was the paramount example of the persistent significance and power of the ethno-politics in Slovakia. As it proved to be a good mobilisation strategy and a marketing step in the previous presidential elections, it is most likely that it will be deployed again in the next elections.
- Though ethnic rhetoric was not as prominent in the 2012 election campaigns as it had been in the past, references to the Hungarian minority in particular continue to strongly feature on the agenda of many political candidates. This is not only related to the fact that the Hungarian national minority represents the largest ethnic minority in Slovakia, but it is also linked to the problematic aspects of the common history of Hungarians and Slovaks, which include the views that Hungary and ethnic Hungarians pose a threat to the territorial integrity of Slovakia.

III. FERDINAND KUNZ: German Case

After the experience of the fascist Nazi-regime that was based on racist and nationalist ideologies the political parties in Germany are very careful in the use of ethnic rhetoric. In the mind of the people, but as well in the polity of the nowadays Germany the incredible violence and the genocide left their mark. Still ethnic issues are not absent in campaigns. Especially in the issue of migration and integration there are harsh words used by the bigger parties to raise public support. On the other hand political parties compete over German citizens with migration backgrounds in their campaigns. The integration, the demands and the rights and duties of different migrant groups are a permanent point on the political agenda.

The official recognized minorities like the Sorbs, the Danes and Roma and Sinti not as often mentioned and are less often part of political campaigns. They may play an issue in regional and local elections, but will not be concerned here.

An older example, but a good starting point is the “Leitkulturdebatte” (leading culture debate) started by that time MP Friedrich Merz from the CDU in 2000 (conservative party). In his speech in the Bundestag he came back to the theory of the German-Syrian political scientist Bassam Tibi that migrants need to accept and integrate in the culture of the country they live in and have to find ways to identify themselves with the existing culture. There is a certain obligation to assimilate as migrants.

Integration is not only reached by a valid passport but also includes a cultural change (Tibi 1998, 151). Merz said that there is a lack of definition what German culture actually is and was concerned that Germany as a nation could lose its stand as “Kulturnation”. His argumentation was directed against the multicultural rhetoric of the Labor (SPD) and the green party (Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen). He and other politician on the conservative side saw a lack of will to integrate by migrants and argued in favor of a “healthy patriotism”. The term Leitkultur since then kept on occurring in election campaigns and speeches, not only by the conservative party. Other parties shifted to more negative and stricter rhetoric on integration issues. Especially the two big parties face the fact that most of their base is concerned and afraid with the issue of migrants (Arte 2012).

In 2010 this debate continued and become wide public interest after Thilo Sarrazin published his book “Deutschland, ein Land schafft sich ab” with a clear racist tendency against migrants. In a pseudo-scientific research he rewarmed the debate and argued on the basis of genetic and economic theories that especially the Turkish migrants carry inferior gens and culture. Empirically he uses old army data sets and other highly questionable sources to underpin his approach. He comes to the conclusion that migrants have and will harm Germany. Sarrazin was member of the SPD, but left after the publication of his bestseller. While all democratic parties criticized the argumentation they also could not ignore the success of the book. Leading politicians from CDU and SPD also used more critical rhetoric and criticized multiculturalism and demanded more integration (Geyer 2010).

On the other hand migrants play also a positive role as political parties try to compete over their votes. Around 9% of the 62 Million potential voters in Germany have a migration background which often biases there voting decision. Political parties concern these issues. Migrants from Eastern Europe, the so called “(Spät-) Aussiedler” traditionally voted for the conservative CDU because of the religious similarities but also because the CDU concerned this group in their policies. Turkish migrants and other migrants from southern states tend to vote for more leftist parties like the SPD because the social profile seems more capable of representing their and concerning their minority aspects. Still these patterns are losing importance and especially younger generations not necessarily follow this pattern (Schröder 2009).

The issue of preservation of culture is not only used by parties against permanent migrants. Recently there were demonstrations by asylum seekers against their inhuman treatment in German asylum homes. As a reaction parties were forced to give statements to the demonstrations. Again the parties have been mainly concerned with their voters and had to be careful not to lose their base. Even the amount of applications for asylum in Germany got smaller and smaller since the Dublin II agreement this issue shows how important and fragile the issue of ethnic belonging is (Tagesschau 2013).

A last point of ethnical rhetoric in political campaign that should be mentioned in this brief summary is the extreme right parties that have clear racist issues. Parties like the NPD have little elective support. The NPD is the most successful radical nationalist party in Germany and was able to gain seats in two regional parliaments. In both cases there are ignored by the democratic parties and have no chance of taking part in the policy-making process (Lau 2012). The NPD has a clear racist profile and is present on different anti-migration demonstrations. It clearly disregards minority rights. Even having no chance of gaining official power they are present on the “streets” and are use their democratic guaranteed freedoms to issue their opinion (NPD 2013).

IV. GESA ZINN:

American Presidential and Vice-Presidential Rhetoric: Lacking in Substance and Evaluative Processes

The past century has charted the intensified de-intellectualization of American presidential rhetoric, which in its modern mode has exhibited an increased tendency to avoid references to cognitive and evaluative processes as well as to substitute formal word choices for more colloquial turns of phrases

according to Elvin T. Lim, who wrote about commonalities in Presidential Rhetoric from George Washington to Bill Clinton.” Unfortunately, this trend has continued as has become especially noticeable in the U.S. American presidential and vice-presidential candidates’ discourses during the past two election campaigns in 2008 and 2012, especially when one takes sensitive agendas or problems addressing and/or describing ethnic minorities into account. In my brief summary of the overall gist of “minority discourse” I will highlight some of the main rhetorical devices and lack thereof vice-presidential candidates Sarah Palin and Paul Ryan as well as presidential candidates Mitt Romney, John McCain and Barack Obama employed to gain the voter’s approval.

During her vice-presidential campaign in 2008, the Republican presidential candidate’s running mate, Sarah Palin, was asked by an African American what she should do to improve upon the minority mix at her rallies. Palin replied that she knows what racism is like, because Todd, her husband, is a native Alaskan and “We live it.” Palin’s answer, off the mark, did not only not answer the question posed to her, but showed an uncanny insensitivity in comparing the African American’s, among others’, underrepresentation to her husband’s. Her husband may be underrepresented in the state of Alaska, but not to the extent minorities are underrepresented at her rallies, especially not those of color. Furthermore, her “we live it” was a sweeping assumption that she (as an extension of her husband) knows what racism feels like on daily basis. Palin’s disregards the African American who confronted her on two levels: one, in her ignorant, polemic, and racist reply; and two, in her avoidance of answering his question, a racist gesture as well. All in all, she simply refused to be engaged and to engage.

Paul Ryan, the vice presidential candidate of Republican Mitt Romney, who ran for president in 2012, avoided references to cognitive and evaluative processes as well and thus also contributed to the de-intellectualization of American presidential rhetoric that, according to Lim, began in the previous century. For example, asked why the U.S.’ inner cities’ murder rates are higher than Kabul’s and Mexico City’s, Ryan’s response did not consider the effect of poverty and unemployment as a cause of a capitalist system bend on exporting jobs overseas, for example. It also did not take into consideration the lack of gun control that allows firearms to find their way into the hands of young children. Neither did it consider a public school systems bursting under the weight of austerity cuts. Ryan simply concluded that the immoral and inferior culture of the inner city with high minority neighborhoods creates crime downtown: “The best thing to help bring opportunity in the inner cities is to help teach people good discipline, good character.” It seems, then, as if crime does have nothing to do with poverty, or, as Tommy Christopher writes, with “systematic failures fueled by generations of institutionalized racism.” What it has to do with is the character of the people. Again, we have here a racist remark in the Republican’s discourse that refuses to evaluate: why and how have the murder rates risen to such large numbers? An analysis is avoided with a short, arrogant, and definite conclusion: the improvement of the character of those living in the inner cities, because they need it.

Unlike Palin and Ryan, the Republican presidential candidate John McCain, used a different rhetoric in his 2008 campaign, yet nevertheless, one void of intellectual substance. In his advertisements, for instance, he reverted to character defamation to gain the support of his voters. Not only did he portray his rival, Barack Obama, as a shadowy figure who never revealed himself to show his true identity, he also linked him continuously to William Ayers, a founder of the Weather Underground, and someone who served on the boards of two committees with Barack Obama. McCain’s campaign sent out flyers with a picture of Ayers and the words “Terrorist. Radical. Friend of Obama.” Running mate Sarah Palin charged Obama with “palling around with terrorists.” Other hate messages from the Republicans claimed that Obama had “friends that bombed the Pentagon”, and was a “guy of the street who used cocaine.” He was also “anti-American.” These are just a few of the many base examples of rhetoric used to defame Obama, a minority candidate.

Mitt Romney’s campaign was characterized by a pro-America campaign and thus, by the simple formula “if you are not for, then you are against”, which he used in an anti-minority/immigrant/ alien rhetoric in that he not only opposed temporary legalization for illegal aliens and guest workers, but also denied them the use of driver’s licenses, which are a common means of identification in the

United States. Needless to say, amnesty or permanent legalization for illegal aliens was something not on his list. Thus, it was contrary to Barack Obama's program set up to start the slow process to integrate thousands of illegal aliens who had and have been part of an underground social and economic substructure supporting the U.S. economy.

Pro-America also meant pro-tradition for the Republican presidential candidate. On the hot issue of same sex marriage, Mitt Romney adhered to the status quo as well, neither supporting same sex marriage nor civil unions. Moreover, he adamantly spoke up for the Federal Same Sex Marriage Amendment, which would modify the constitution, prohibiting same sex marriage. Unlike Barack Obama, who already announced need for change in his first campaign speech in 2008, Romney came across as someone not only wedded to traditional and conservative views, but also as someone denying the rights of the increasing minorities in the country, ethnic and not as he strongly felt that same sex marriage, for example, would destroy the culture of America as well as damage children and the educational system.

Given the opposing views of the presidential candidates, the rhetoric on the campaign trails and beyond have separated the Republican and Democrats further and deeply divided a nation along economic, ethnic and gender lines. With the goal of bringing opposing and clashing factions together, Obama's first campaign speech thus focused primarily on having those partake in the rebuilding of the country that had been left out for too long. He specifically addressed the poor and the veterans, education and health care benefits for all. In 2012, his campaign issues, again, included the former and among others, immigration. With the Dream Act he sought to create a legal immigration system. What can be said in regards to the ethnic rhetoric in his first political campaign is that it had been less overt than in his second run for office. The first time around the lack of specifically mentioning particular minorities, yet nevertheless indirectly addressing them as a large part of the poor, the veterans, the educationally deprived and neglected within a dysfunctional health care system, speaks for including them in the rebuilding of a nation without mentioning their status on the fringes of society. I view the lack of overt ethnic discourse as a deliberate choice on his part to include various ethnic groups.

Contrary to his first campaign, his second is marked by overt ethnic rhetoric, in that he specifically mentions Hispanics and other immigrant groups (along with gays and religious minorities). I interpret this shift to come out and speak out as a) a need to be explicit to force a dialogue that hasn't been had yet and b) to openly challenge his rival Mitt Romney along with the conservative Right, and especially the Tea Party. For dialogue the U.S. needs again, if only to turn around the continuing de-intellectualization of presidential campaigns marked by a lack of substance and evaluative processes.

V. JAN OLIETTE: Spanish Case

Due to its huge regional diversity, there are lots of arguments to justify a presence of ethnic rhetoric in the Spanish elections. Not only the traditional nationalities have a majority presence in regions like the Basque Country or Catalonia, but there are almost a million Roma, who represent 2% of the total population and in some provinces could represent more than 10%, and whose votes could be decisive to win an election. In this presentation the 2011 parliamentary election and the 2012 Catalan regional elections are going to be analyzed and compared. These have been chosen due to their differences in their presence of ethnic rhetoric.

Spanish parliamentary election 2011:

This election has been mostly marked by the context of economic crisis and austerity.

The sentence against the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia started an institutional conflict between national and Catalan governments, which in this election has been totally ignored by the Spanish majority parties.

Partido Popular: Winner of the election with absolute majority. This political party started the electoral campaign in Catalonia, which the main candidate Mariano Rajoy described as “decisive for the economical recover of Spain”. Their election program is presented in six different languages: Spanish, Catalan, Valencian, Basque, Galician and English. In the whole program there is no mention to the protection of minorities of any kind.

Partido Socialista Obrero Español: The second party represented in the parliament. In their program there is also a complete absence of ethnic rhetoric. During the electoral campaign the main candidate Alfredo P. Rubalcaba reminds the Catalan people not to forget what the Partido Popular has made against the Catalan people. In the Basque Country Rubalcaba makes comments about peace and the final dissolution of the terrorist organization for independence ETA, but no promises about the will of better recognition of the Basque people. There are no references about the Roma people in the whole campaign.

It can be affirmed that the ethnic rhetoric in the Spanish election of 2011 has been very low.

Catalan regional election 2012:

This election has been mostly marked by the national claim for independence in the huge demonstration on 11th September, with more than one million participants. The negative of the Spanish government to discuss any of the terms purposed by the Catalan government forced the president of Catalonia Artur Mas to call for an anticipate election after two years of government.

The main electoral promise in these elections was the celebration of a referendum on self-determination, a claim of the citizen platform Assemblée Nacional Catalana, supported by the nationalist coalition Convergència i Unió, the catalan republican left-party Esquerra Republicana and the green and left coalition ICV-EUiA, between other smaller parties.

In the case of these parties it can be affirmed that their ethnic rhetoric was positive in support of a better recognition of the Catalan nation, as well as the promise of deployment of the law that recognizes the Occitan minority in Catalonia. In this group of parties could be also included the Catalan version of the Spanish socialist party PSC, which has the same ethnic rhetoric but rejects the celebration of a referendum on self-determination.

On the other side, the Spanish Partido Popular and the Citizen's Party have a negative ethnic rhetoric, since they are against the possibility of Catalonia being recognized as a nation, as well as they reject the promotion of the Catalan language, which is the language of preference in the public school and in the public administrations.

In conclusion, the ethnic rhetoric has been one of the main subjects in the 2012 Catalan election and has had a very testimonial presence in the 2011 Spanish parliamentary election. This difference manifestates also a variation of rhetoric made by the two biggest parties in Spain among this subject, depending on the kind of election.

VI. JUDIT KLEIN: Hungarian Case

In Hungary the rhetoric about ethnic minorities is almost reduced to the Roma issue. Making out 6-8% of the population, they are every time in crossfire used by the left and right side.

Roma MP's are in the parliament almost since the beginning. Only they influence is very limited, being first of all part of the fraction of the parliament and secondly Roma. They have no independent

voice and even, when a Roma state of secretary was in power, his opportunities were very limited, he was more thought as a window person.

It is clearly to see, that the rhetoric on the left side (socialist, liberal) try to get Roma as they ally even in their speeches. Only in real politics the result shows no improvement. The conservative parties, now in power, patronize the Roma and keep them as a group, which needs help and which has to be regulated from above, from the outside. Even though they have their Roma MP's in the parliament, they play a very little role in decisions and in the campaigns.

The far right party, which is sitting in the Hungarian Parliament since 2010, moved the rhetoric more to right, establishing a very dangerous speech officially. They tore down a wall and give this speech credential.

For the next election 2014 the situation is expected to be more serious. The far right party (Jobbik) will use the economic crisis for speeches against Roma and will push other parties to catch up with this, as Fidesz/KDNP (the party on government it already did).

As for other minorities, they don't really count in Hungary. Because they are invisible (not like the Roma), they are very much assimilated and they are not an issue in Hungary's media at all.

They are sometimes asked only if the government has some quarrels with their neighbors, like Rumania or Slovakia.

In Hungary there is also a minority self-government system which is to be meant to support the minorities in Hungary. In the past more, than 20 years it was proven, that this system doesn't fulfill the objectives and holds back a healthy improvement of all minorities.

For the future: Hungary has a huge issue to solve, the growing population of Roma, how they can be helped to come out of poverty and social exclusion. If the trend continues, it won't happen in the next election campaign.

VII. OULA ALNASHAR ALRIFAI: Case of Syria

Being under a dictatorship regime for forty-two years in Syria; political participation and representation are major challenges. Living under one party system (Single Party State) according to 1973 constitution, Syrians do not have the luxury to form political parties. All political parties are under the umbrella of the Arab Socialist Baath party (the Government Ruling party) and they have to accept the leadership of the dominant party. Syria is a diverse country on the other hand, but this diversity is not given the chance to be appreciated and celebrated under a dictatorship regime. Syria is a diverse country, and multiculturalism policies do not exist there unlike the rest of the world. Located in the Middle East on the Mediterranean Sea, it was always open to the world. The make-up of the Syrian population today is sophisticated and rich. One cannot ignore the diversity and the colorful culture in that land, whether I mean by that the multi-religion or the multi-ethnicity backgrounds starting from Muslims, Christians, Jews, to Kurds, Assyrians, Armenians and others.

However, the important question here is whether these different groups enjoy their basic human rights and minority rights or not. The Syrian Uprising that began on March 15th 2011 is obviously the answer. For more than forty years Syria has been suffering from a brutal dictatorship rule. The son Basher Al-Assad inherited the presidency from his father who ruled for nearly thirty years by militarily taking over the government in 1971. Since then, Syria is a one-party system ruled by one family and called the Syrian Arab Republic; denying by that the rights of the non-Arab Syrians such as the Kurds. The Assad regime is planting fear in the minds and hearts of the minorities to stay in

power and to drive the country into a sectarian war. Divide and conquer is Assad family's strategy to stay in power and to control the masses.

Free and transparent elections do not exist in Syria. Since the Assad family took power, presidential elections take the form of referendums. Every seven years Assad basically re-elects himself with a percentage that could go up to "99% of approval". There are no equal voices nor equal votes. During the last referendum, when few Syrians tried to run for presidential elections security forces threatened them to be killed. No one dares to run for presidential elections in Syria. One of the pre-conditions for running for presidency is being an Arab Muslim excluding by that other religious groups in the country and the non-Arab Syrians such as the Kurds who form the biggest minority in the country. 20% of Kurds were stripped of their citizenship in 1962 and they continue to suffer from discrimination and human/minority rights violations. Syria elects on the national level the head of the state and the legislature. The People's council has 250 members elected for a four-year term. The presidential candidate is appointed by the parliament after receiving the approval from the Baath Party and needs to be confirmed for a term of seven years in a single-candidate referendum. A new Article 88 introduced in 2012 limited the term of office for the president to a maximum of one reelection.

Ethnic rhetoric along with allocation of resources are not only used during political elections in order to spread fear among the masses of the minority, Alawites, which is in control of the majority and other minorities in Syria, but also they are used as tools to divide and conquer in our daily lives as Syrian citizens. Political Patronage is the essence of both of Syria's politics and culture. The Assad family gives incentives and benefits to minorities in general in order to win their loyalty and support. When it comes to the Alawite minority in specific, Hafez Assad's strategy was to appoint from his minority the top leaders in the Baath Party. It seems that minorities somewhat have the right to participate in elections which is true but they are only participating in re-electing the president and the parliament members who are very much loyal to the ruling party; at the end it is a dictatorship regime. Thus, there are no free elections in Syria, but you only see fake political elections under Assad regime. Corruption of favoritism is another tool the government uses to manipulate elections where groups are rewarded illegally for their political support.

Now Syria is going into a dreadful civil war, the Opposition is trying to form an interim government that should represent the Syrian people. However, the opposition is not successful at creating a body that is truly representative of all Syrians. The current members tend to be predominantly from one party that is the Muslim Brotherhood that has a long history with fighting with Assads over power in Syria. Most Muslim Brotherhood party members live in exile and they are detached from the reality on the ground and disliked by many Syrians. Neither Assad nor the Muslim Brotherhood is representative of the Syrian people. The road to freedom, dignity and quality is very long but Syrians believe that there will be light at the end of the tunnel.

VIII. VICTORIA MARTOVSKAYA: Case of Russia

The consideration of ethnic rhetoric in the political campaigns in Russia cannot be possible without knowledge of the main centres of separatist processes in the country.

The first remarkable case of separatism took place in the end of 80s, when 14 units (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kirgizia) officially claimed for the sovereignty and later in 1990-1991 separated from the Soviet Union. This occasion was called 'the parade of sovereignties'.

In 1990 the Head of the Supreme Council of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, Boris Yeltsin claimed: 'take as much sovereignty as you can swallow'. Thus, the number of autonomous republics received their sovereignty by August 1990: Komi Republic (11.10.1990), Republic of

Tatarstan (31.08.1990), Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) (27.09.1990), Chukotka Autonomous Area, Republic of Adygeya (05.10.1990), Republic of Buryatia (07.10.1990), Republic of Bashkortostan (11.10.1990), Republic of Kalmykia (19.10.1990), Republic of Mari El (22.10.1990), Chuvash Republic (24.10.1990), Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area (17.10.1990), Republic of Altai (25.10.1990), Irkutsk Region (26.10.1990) and others. However, the government didn't consider the possibility of separation of these territories from the territory of RSFSR and by 1992 established the rights of new republics to operate in frames of the Republic of Russian Federation. Chechnya didn't sign the document. Moreover, the reckless statement of President of Boris Yeltsin awakened a desire of the Chechen people to acquire independence which in turn led to the armed clashes in the region and ethnic cleansing from 1991 to 1999.

Historically, the source of conflict between Russian and Chechens was related to the struggle for the land, which, according to the Chechens belonged to them for centuries. The question of affiliation of the land along with faith and believes in jihad (war for the faith) triggering one armed conflict after another establishing a permanent source of instability in the country.

Another alarming region is Dagestan. The tensions over the affiliation of the land create the source of instability for Russia up to date. Multiple armed conflicts with the neighboring region of Chechnya and constant appearance of the terrorist groups are disturbing factors for the local authorities and for the president of the country. Thus, in 2007, the terrorist organization 'Imarat Caucasus' included Dagestan in its sphere of influence by organizing terrorist acts on the territory of the republic. One of the most notable acts of terrorism committed by local Islamists (Jamaat Shariat) were explosions in Kizlyar (2010).

Thus, currently the key regions of separatism in Russia are Chechnya(Chechen Republic) and Dagestan (Republic of Daghestan). Apart from these territories, the researchers emphasize the following constituent entities of the Russian Federation as potentially dangerous from the prospective of unity of the whole country: Republic of Tuva, Republic of Bashkortostan, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Republic of Buryatia, and Primorye Territory and Kaliningrad Region.

Lots of discussions appeared when the Republic of North Ossetia - Alania allotted to the territory of Russian Federation. This region of the disputed territory has the strategic meaning due to its border with Chechnya and allocation of the Russian command body, airfields and rear bases involved in the fighting in Chechnya.

Starting from 1992 the Republic of North Ossetia was attacked multiple times by Chechen rebellions. Particularly heinous case of terrorist attacks was conducted on 1st September 2004 when terrorists captured 1,100 hostages in a school number 1 in Beslan - 334 people were killed (186 of them were children) and more than 800 people were injured.

Ethnic rhetoric in political campaigns

The willingness of separation is usually supported and promoted by the ethnical elites that have the most power in the regions. The local leaders speak in terms of national revival, ethnic equality etc., which motivate the people to participate in the ideological wars.

In 2011, before the elections of a new president of Russia the elites had a discussion with the Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin over the willingness to eliminate Russian language in Republic of Bashkortostan and Tatarstan which led to the inclusion of the idea of revival of the national consciousness into the presidential campaign. It should be also mentioned that the elites representing the ethnical minorities are the members of the major party 'United Russia', which provides them a possibility to reach the president or prime minister easily and to discuss the issues related to the politics of ethnical minorities.

The main ethnical questions of the utmost importance

3 directions of politics:

- North Ossetia

- Chechnya
- Dagestan

Nonetheless, it can be stated that Vladimir Putin is against the possibility of independent development of the regions but advocates the measures of centralization of power using the notions of integrity, common history and past, national spirit and heritage. He doesn't ignore the problems and open to discuss them but his position remains unchangeable and doesn't include any consideration of possible loss of state territory.

The main mechanisms of coordination of the politics of the problematic regions are the allocation of the pro-Russian leaders from the local elites (further example of the appointment of Ramzan Kadirov).

Current politics

In 2012 V.Putin promoted the following innovations: 'to provide Russian citizenship to compatriots who want to move to Russia under a simplified scheme but only in case of the renunciation of citizenship of their country. Moreover, he called for tougher penalties for illegal immigration. Entry of nationals of the CIS in Russia in 2015 should be carried out only by foreign passports'.

Chechnya:

The problem of terrorism was partly solved by the assignment of the position of the head of the Chechen Republic to Ramzan Kadirov. Ramzan Kadirov is a member of the Bureau of the Supreme Council of the party "United Russia", the Hero of the Russian Federation (2004) and is the son of the first president of the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation, Akhmad Kadyrov. Key influence on the career of Ramzan Kadyrov was made by the support from Vladimir Putin. In public statements, Kadyrov has repeatedly expressed his personal loyalty to Putin, admired his work and called him the "savior of the Chechen people". Ramzan Kadyrov continued the policy, which in agreement with Putin was led by his father and the central point of which was the transfer of the power in the Chechen republic to the leaders loyal to Russia.

Nowadays, the results can be described as successful because:

'No acts of terrorism were committed during the past year in the country. In addition, the law enforcement agencies of Chechnya undertook a number of special operations to eliminate the leaders of the underground bands.'

Dagestan:

The situation in Dagestan remains uncertain and can be described as a situation of slow-developing civil war. Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation estimates the situation as steadily worsening.

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