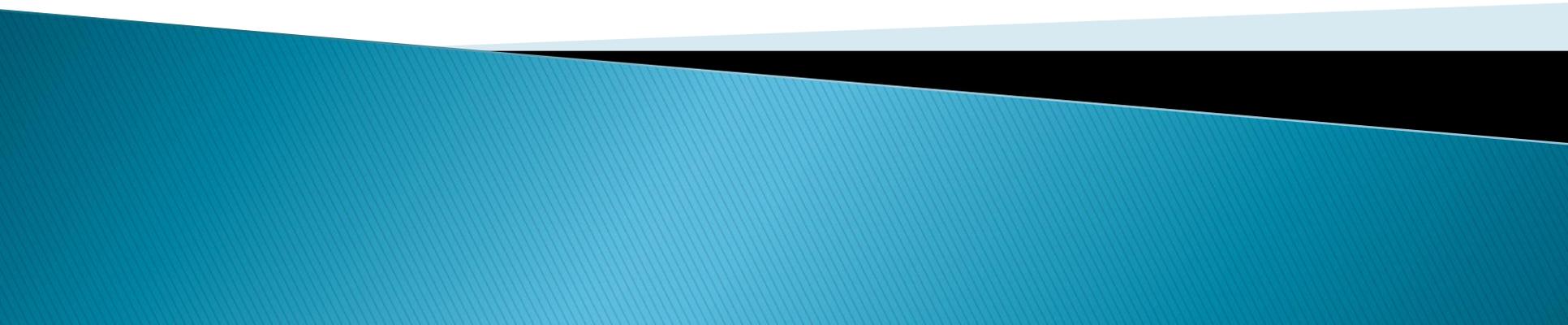


Ethnic Rhetoric in Political Elections

Presentation delivered during the ECMI Summer School 2013 by

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Integrated version, ECMI 2013



Overview

- ▶ Keeping in mind
Minority Representation in different countries: non-existent/ inclusive/ exclusive
 - ▶ Ethnic rhetoric:
What is it?/ How is it used?/ Why is it used?
 - ▶ Examples
 - ▶ Conclusion
- 

Categories used for the Analysis of Campaign Speeches (2008-2013)

- ▶ Absent/Inverted ethnic discourse
 - ▶ Territorial Integrity
 - ▶ Separatism/Autonomy
 - ▶ Nationalism (offensive / inclusive)
 - ▶ Exclusion
 - ▶ Social Exclusion (stereotyping)
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Absent/Inverted Ethnic Discourse

JAPAN

- The political agenda do not address ethnic/diversity issues at all

USA

- In his Inauguration speech in 2008, Barak Obama turned to a very divided nation behind him and he needed to find a way to appeal to a large number of voters with the goal of uniting them. His goal was to address socio-economically vulnerable groups and minority groups. Focusing on the social system and on the healthcare he managed to address all groups without referring to any of them directly. The topic of healthcare became an ethnic topic thereafter. This is an example of transmitting ethnic messages through an alternative discourse.

SYRIA

- **Non-orthodox case: minority (8% of the population) is oppressing the majority and the other groups.**
- Over the 42 years of the Dictatorship regime, Syria disregards the existence of different cultural groups (not mentioned at all). Minority rights are considered CIA invention.
- Minorities in Syria are sectarian (of Islam) but also religious (Christians, Jews, Kurds, non-Arabs). Currently, Assad regime is playing the sectarian card to preserve power and talks about minorities vs. majority because this is seen as an advantage that they can use
- Current political rhetoric presents the repressed majority (Sunni) as terrorist and the minority as the 'victims'. In September 2013, the PM said that the attacks on the rebel areas of Damascus were an attempt that **“government protects the minorities from the majority”**, addressing the **majority as “terrorist”**. Assad presents himself as a defender of the minorities and he is there to protect them (lobbying before the international community in order to be supported)
- Institutionalised discrimination: according to the Constitution the president must be **“an Arab, Muslim, and male”** – excluding non-Arabs (e.g. Kurds), other religions (Christianity), and excluding women.

Territorial Integrity

RUSSIA

- Sept 6th 2013 – mayoral elections in Moscow
- The two leading candidates – Sobyenin (supported by Putin) and Nivalny (opposition) have similar positions and rhetoric with regard to the ethnic diversity)
- “Russia starts with Moscow. I want that power is with people and not with some ethnic gangs. I will stop ethnification of the criminals of Russia”
- Negative attitudes of locals towards migrants from former Soviet areas (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine)
- Cultural and contextual anxiety over political unity
- LGBT in Russia have no possibility to express themselves in their localities – only in Moscow. But even there they are not welcome (government seeks support from Orthodox church and nationalists against them)

Separatism/Autonomy

SPAIN

- In the last election campaign (2012) all political parties have addressed this issues in their rhetoric.
 - Spanish parties advocating independence would discuss it, and those who were against also raised their arguments.
 - The most important claim of the pro-independence parties was the celebration of the referendum.
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Offensive/Inclusive Nationalism

SLOVAKIA/SPAIN

- Offensive nationalism
- Spanish Minister of Education (2012): "We have to "spaninize" (españolizar) the Catalan students"

USA

- Obama's attempts to 'unite' the nation can be viewed as a mechanism for national consolidation

Exclusion & Stereotyping

RUSSIA

- Political discourse does hardly address the topics of equality/inequality
- Historical legitimacy of exclusion

SLOVAKIA

- Slovakia, 2010 - ‘other problems’ as dominant discourse
- Slovakia’s national party (2012)
 - “We will eliminate the unfair prioritization of gypsy parasites over decent people”
 - “Hungarians are the cancer of the Slovak Nation”

Examples from other countries?

- ▶ Total absence of ethnic discourse
 - ▶ Territorial Integrity
 - ▶ Separatism/Autonomy
 - ▶ Nationalism (offensive)
 - ▶ Stereotyping (Social Exclusion)
 - ▶ ????
- 

Conclusions

(from the group's findings)

- A technique used in a variety of forms is the separation between 'us' and 'them' or between those in power (or wanting to be in power) and those on the other side
- This binary that is created rhetorically is a means to create fear in order to unite people to employ them in combatting the 'enemy' and claim victory. This applies to the various types of ethnic discourses we've analyzed at length in our written summaries and of which we can only show you the tip of the iceberg
- Given the increase in negative stereotyping and hate speech in a number of countries over the past years – especially with regard to Roma – we need to ask what this rhetoric will look like in five to ten years and where it will lead us? How can it be stopped? (Can it?)
- Many people in various countries have gone and are going through major crises since the changing of borders, ideologies, movements of peoples during the 20th and 21st centuries. Crises feed uncertainty, and uncertainty affects behavior, which feeds crises.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

“We have nothing to fear but fear itself.”

What could he have meant by this?

The message, perhaps:

- We should have no fear. . .
 - We need to fear our own fear. . .
 - We need to realize that fear is the only danger to fear. . .

 - Realizing that much of hate speech and other degrading rhetoric appeals to our fears in order to have us act on it is the first step in dismantling the binary ('us' vs. 'them') that has been so successfully employed throughout history-e.g. in the Third Reich, after 9/11, and during campaign speeches in many parts of the world between 2008 and today.

 - A second step, of course, needs to follow, and requires specific actions tied to specific cases → the work continues!
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Thank you. . .

. . . for listening and participating!

. . . for being here working on, with, and through some important issues

. . . for connecting!

Goodbye . . .

Oula, Andrea, Judit, Victori, Jan, Abe, Gesa