Macro-Political Means of Ethnic Conflict Management in Southeast Europe. A critical examination.

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Introduction

It is a common place that the end of Really Existing Socialism in the Eastern Europe was, at least partly, due to nationalist mobilization (cf. Bollerup and Christensen, 1997). In Raanan's view (1991), dissident and anti-socialist movements in the Soviet Union were largely concerned with human rights, but they at the same time had strong "*political* aspirations" (p. 114)[1]. Those aspirations were formulated frequently as requests for democratization and decentralization. After decentralization, however, came separation of newly formed national states.

A decade has passed since the three main multinational former socialist countries, Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and former Yugoslavia, collapsed, but ethnic and national conflicts in the region are still far from being settled. The belief that "secessions and the redrawing of territorial frontiers through conquest or partitions were phenomena of previous age has became obsolete", as McGarry and O'Leary (1993, p. 1) assert.

Although partitions or secessions of countries along ethnic borders have been rather popular and widely applied strategies of 'solving' problems of multinational states, such strategies might not always be feasible. For example, an ethnic group may be territorially dispersed, without clear inter-ethnic boundaries, an ethnic group may be too small to create a workable state, or an ethnic minority may be even satisfied with living in a common state with the majority. Whatever the reasons for ethnic and national heterogeneity of states, they present a challenge for both practitioners and political scientists of developing institutional frameworks that can make multi-ethnic states sustainable, and in addition, democratic.

The task of this paper is to review and evaluate some of the institutional and macro-political strategies of ethnic conflict management that are often recommended in scholarly literature and applied in a number of Eastern

European countries with substantial ethnic minorities. It will be examined to what extent institutional arrangements such as consociationalism, federalism, and proportional representation have been able to contribute to the peaceful coexistence of majorities and minorities or rather contributed to the development of more intense conflicts. An attempt will be made to outline what factors contributed to the choice of other, 'pre-institutional', means of conflict management if the institutional ones proved unsuccessful.

Methodologically, the paper focuses on brief qualitative case studies of several Eastern and Central European countries with substantial proportion of minorities, and which experienced different degrees and characters of ethnic conflicts. The included countries are Moldova, Croatia and present Yugoslavia.

While the emphasis will be on what states, or majorities in 'possession' of a state, have been doing, the attention will be paid also to the strategies adopted by minorities. This two-sided strategy seems to be necessary, especially taking into account the interrelatedness of actors involved in inter-ethnic conflicts. After the Brubaker's (1996) exposition of the 'nexus' of mutually influencing actors in the nationalist projects, involving external homelands, nationalizing states and mobilizing minorities, approaches focusing on single actors are clearly inappropriate.

Previous research and theoretical framework

Scholars seem to be divided in their beliefs about the viability of multi-national *and* democratic states. Some authors, like Rabushka and Shepsle, are highly skeptical in this regard: "the [ethnically] plural society … does not provide fertile soil for democratic values or stability" (1972, p. 92). On the other side, a more optimist views have also been expressed. Bose (1995), for example, believes that democracy is compatible with divided societies, but only if the state succeeds in establishing its legitimacy. The author suggests that, for example, federalism may help in achieving popular legitimacy in ethnically divided societies.

Notwithstanding these reservations, scholarly and other literature abounds with a variety of proposals about strategies for ethnic conflict management. Since the very beginning of the disintegration of socialist multinational states 'useful' recommendations have been offered. Necak (1991), for example, announced that "The complete sovereignty of all the peoples living in Yugoslavia is a *conditio sine qua non*, for the future existence of Yugoslavia as a modern multinational state" (p. 134). Thus, in order to integrate, the state must first disintegrate. Events over the last decade provide more support for reasoning, such as Connor's (e.g., 1994), that the larger the autonomy an ethnic group enjoys the weaker its motivation is for staying within boundaries of the larger state.

Problem of devising an institutional framework which will be able to contain ethnic diversity is still an open and researched issue (e.g., Ishiyama, 2000). Since "cultural pluralism is an enduring attribute of contemporary political societies" (Young, 1998, p. 3) there is a need for learning about the applied remedies for ethnic conflicts.

Elimination vs. Management of Ethnic Differences

On the more general level, it is possible to distinguish different strategies that states may adopt to manage or eliminate ethnically based conflicts. McGarry and O'Leary (1993) present a systematic overview of macro-political ways of regulating ethnic conflicts. They first distinguish (1) methods for *eliminating* differences, and (2) methods for *managing* differences. Four specific methods belong to the first group. They are (a) genocide, (b) forced mass-population transfers, (c) partition and/or secession, and (d) integration and/or assimilation. The second group consists of (a) hegemonic control, (b) arbitration (third party intervention), (c) cantonization and/or federalism, and (d) consociationalism or power sharing. All these methods, according to the authors, were or still are applied in various places worldwide. According to Schopflin (1993, Table 8.2, p. 182), for example, all aforementioned methods were used in various periods of the Yugoslav history: genocide was applied by the Ustasha regime during the W.W.II; forced population transfer of Germans after the W.W.II; (pseudo)consociationalism of republican elites in the 1980's, etc.

Methods of eliminating differences, often named 'pre-' or 'extra-institutional', do not belong to the recommended strategies, the first two primarily for ethical reasons, the third one since it easily lead to violence, while the method of assimilation generally requires considerable time and often cannot be accomplished purposefully. In addition, they violate the contemporary ideal of multiculturalism.

Methods for 'managing differences', on the other hand, aim at preserving multiethnic societies. Hegemonic control violates the norm of democracy what makes it an unacceptable solution. Arbitration is a method used when more desirable solutions fail, hence it is out of the present interest. Thus, we are left with cantonisation/federalism, and power sharing, which refers to various modes of giving "voice" to minorities, such as consociationalism or proportional representation (PR) electoral systems. Federalism, consociationalism, and proportional electoral systems are not only advocated but also often applied institutional arrangements with the aim of ameliorating inter-ethnic cleavages (cf., Ishiyama, 2000).

Decentralization and Federalism

It has been frequently suggested that decentralization of political power, its transfer to lower levels of institutional hierarchy, can prevent or reduce the

power of centrifugal tendencies of national minorities. By increasing their power, degree of autonomy and self-control, they may become more satisfied within the larger state, and therefore less motivated to pursue radical separatist political program. In case when a group requesting greater autonomy inhabits particular territory, the request for decentralization usually acquires the form of federal or confederal institutional arrangement. For example, Ghai (1998) distinguishes spatial (federalism) and corporate decentralization (when segments are not territorially defined).

Many authors believe that federalism may be a good solution for ethnically divided societies (cf., Ghai, 1998, Bose, 1995, Young, 1998, Cohen, 1997). For an illustration of such beliefs it is sufficient to cite Bose, who says that "a healthy dose of *both* a thriving multiparty democracy *and* a robust, substantive federalism represents the optimum solution and the most democratic arrangement in multiethnic countries" (1995, p. 110).[2]

Belief in federalism requires the explanation why former communist *federal* states (up to recently the most notable examples of both federalism and genuinely multi-national states) did not succeed in preventing ethnic conflicts.[3] Bose (1995) acknowledges that former-Yugoslavian constitution-makers were practically obsessed with federalist issues, in making all of the four post World War II constitutions. The last one, from 1974, was practically confederal (*Ibid.*). Ghai (1998) argues that federalism of the USSR and former Yugoslavia was not such that it could have accommodated interethnic relations. In this view, important is the origin of decentralization. In case of 'liberal' federalism, it is achieved by 'aggregation' of preexisting sovereignty, it is forward-looking, towards common goals in the future. Such federalism has good chances for success. If federalism originates from 'dis-aggregation', like usually in countries of the Third World, or former socialist block, chances for success are weaker. It is due to the fact that such federalisms are created not on the basis of common goals in future, but on the pressure to get rid of the former center. The outcome was decentralized centralism: power of the federal center diminished, while federal units became more powerful. Lack of democracy on the one side, and structuring of political power according to ethno-national lines provided almost perfect framework for national mobilization and separation (cf., Olson, 1993).

This very brief overview shows that scholarly authorities believe that, under favorable conditions, federal arrangement can be a solution for ethnically divided societies. The required favorable conditions, however, seem to be rarely available. On the basis of quantitative analysis of 21 'minorities at risk' in post-communist Eastern Europe, Ishiyama (2000) found that federalism has been actually favorable for maximization of ethnic minorities' demands. This confirms Connor's (1994) view that even in democratic federal arrangements, stronger independence of a group from the center diminishes any incentives for staying within the 'overarching' state.

Consociationalism

A prime example of political institutional arrangement designed for accommodating ethnic differences is offered by consociational arrangement with ethnic groups as the principal actors (cf. Lijphart, 1977). In contrast to the federal arrangement, this model is not based on territorial principle. Essential features of consociationalism are primarily minority veto (i.e., ability of any minority to veto policies it strongly disagrees with), and rule by 'grand coalition' (i.e., representation of all relevant segments). [4]

In Lijphart's (1977) view, this arrangement is applicable for relatively small societies, with relatively small number of communities in cleavage (3-5), and with political elites whose political culture is accommodative rather than adversarial. Under such conditions, consociationalism can be a viable institutional framework for handling ethnically (or otherwise) divided, segmented societies.

There are not many examples of applied strictly consociational arrangements in the 'new democracies'. Among the old non-democracies, former Yugoslavia after the 1974 constitution approached this solution. The result, however, was again enhancement of the centri*fugal* tendencies.

Obviously, applicability of this model is rather limited. In addition to difficult conditions that Lijphart lists as necessary for the successful consociational system, there are other potential problems. For example, intra-segmental conditions are relevant - adversarial political culture may prevent inter-elite negotiations, or right of a particular elite to represent the constituency may be contested. If segments themselves are also sub-segmented into more or less radical streams, it could lead to intra-segmental competition and rise of the more radical groups.[5] However, the crucial difficulty with consociational proposals is that in order to be applicable, already a relatively high degree of agreement has to exist between the conflicted sides. In a sense, it becomes applicable only when conflicts are already sufficiently settled, or when there does not seem to exist any other option.[6]

Proportional Representation

Considerably less demanding institutional arrangement is proportional representation. It does not involve territorial autonomy, nor minority protection in the form of veto and 'grand coalition' rule. The basic rationale of this policy is that minorities should influence politics proportionally to their size. Though their influence may remain small, they would not be entirely overwhelmed by the majority. Crawford and Lijphart, 1995, for example, believe that PR system could help in giving a 'sense of belonging' to a minority, and help them feel integrated in a society. Similar is also Young's general recommendation of a "balanced representation in the national institutions" (1998, p. 13). For such

reasons, electoral systems have come to the forefront of policy proposals in connection with managing ethnic diversity.

According to (Benoit-Rohmer and Hardeman, 1994), popularity of the PR systems in the Eastern and Central Europe is at least partly due to the desire to accommodate ethnic diversity. PR system owes its popularity also to the simplicity of its application, comparing to more demanding and complex methods of consociationalism and federalism.

However, scholars report inconsistent findings about the effectiveness of the proportional representation for minorities. On the basis of quantitative analysis including 100 countries and 233 ethnic groups, in the period between 1945 and 1989, Cohen (1997) found that proportional institutions (e.g., federalism, electoral proportional representation, and multipartism) contribute to low-intensity (though more frequent) ethnic conflicts, while the contribution of majoritarian institutions is the opposite.[7]

A more skeptical view about the efficiency of PR systems comes from deSilva (1998). After reviewing the evidence about the role of electoral systems in taming ethnic conflicts, he concluded that "electoral systems on their own are inadequate for this purpose unless they are linked to a democratic ethos and a political system based on regularly conducted, peaceful competitive politics. [...] In any event there are as many examples of PR systems helping to mitigate the effects of ethnic dissonance as there are of PR systems which have conspicuously failed to do so." (deSilva, 1998, p. 102). Ishiyama (2000) reports basically similar findings: "although the promotion of proportionality for individual ethnic groups dampens ethnic political protest, general proportionality of the party system does not" (p. 62), and "electoral systems which emphasize 'groupness' (as is the case in PR-list systems) tend to be associated with increased political demands for independence, whereas systems in which voters vote for individuals as opposed to party lists tend to be associated with less extreme political demands" (p. 63).

Problem

The problem this paper addresses is the use and consequences of various macro-political methods of ethnic conflict regulation. The question is whether federalism, consociationalism, and proportional representation succeeded in preventing more 'crude' methods of 'eliminating ethnic differences', such as mass transfer of population or secession.

Cases

The analysis concentrates on a specific selection of the former socialist countries with substantial ethnic minorities. Relationships between minorities and

majorities in the following states will be analyzed: Yugoslavia ('small', 'third'), Croatia, and Moldova.

Contemporary Yugoslavia is interesting because it shows how it is possible that within basically the same institutional framework, different minorities, i.e., Albanians in Kosovo, Muslims in Sandžak, and Magyars in Vojvodina, opted for strikingly different strategies of ethnic politics. In that way, the formal-institutional arrangement is held constant, while the outcome (degree of ethnic conflict) varies drastically. Croatia is a challenging case because of the successful transfer of its Serb population, but also due to a variety of applied changes in electoral system. Moldova deserves attention because of, on the one hand, a half-way solved problems with ethnic minorities, but on the other, it represents a rare example where majority made significant concessions to minorities (at least to some of them).

Moldova vs. Gagauz and Slavs

The disappearance of the Soviet Union was accompanied by three 'national revivals' in Moldova - among Rumanian speaking Moldovans, among Ukrainians and Russians (14% and 13% of the total population respectively, often named as 'Slavs'), and among the Gagauz (3.5% of the total population) (Bollerup and Christensen, 1997). As the majority (Moldovans) had started applying nationalist policies (e.g., language policy), ethnic mobilization among the minorities immediately followed. Soon after the Moldovan declaration of independence in 1990, Slavs in the Dnestr region, and Gagauz in their region also declared secession from Moldova (actually, they opted more for reunification with what remained of the USSR than for creation of fully independent states, see Bollerup and Christensen, 1997).

Concerning the institutional attempts to handle the ethnic divisions, Moldovans adopted PR system.[8] However, such system had a particular goal. Since the whole country is defined as a single district, the end result is actually *under-representation* of minorities. Nevertheless, since the Slavs and the Gagauz declared their separation, there was no time even to test the usefulness of such system.

Moldovan government then had to try other means. Military intervention in the trans-Dniestrian region was, however, not successful. Relative balance of power was more favorable for the Slavs, and no significant help in concrete terms came from Rumania (Bollerup and Christensen, 1997). Concerning the international framework, besides the lack of support from Rumania, Moldovan government was not particularly helped neither by the Western powers. On the other side, Slavs were more supported by the Russia. In the case of the Gagauz, balance of military power was more favorable to the Moldovan government, but nevertheless, in this case it was decided to restrain from the more active military intervention. According to Bollerup and Christensen, "the Moldovan leaders

with a conciliatory attitude prevailed only after the escalation of the conflict when the non-conciliatory strategy had proven futile to the Moldovan aims" (p. 190), i.e., after the failure of the military campaign.

Concerning the present status of the two separatist regions, the situation has largely stabilized. "The Transdniestrian region declared its independence in December 1995, but is not recognized as an independent state by other countries. So far, it has run its own affairs." (Freedom House Country Report, 1998). Since the new Moldovan constitution allows "special status" for ethnic minority areas, an agreement for special autonomous status for the Gagauz Yeri region was adopted in January 1995 (Freedom House Country Report, 1998), and it seems that it may be a lasting solution.

The Moldovan example seems to be instructive in two regards. In the case of a small and relatively weak minority, certain institutional accommodation can help in settling the problems of the minority's dissatisfaction. This is what has happened in case of the Gagauz minority. However, in case of a more powerful minority, which is supported from outside, and central authorities lack such external support and means for coercive imposition of its policies, the minority succeeded in its maximalist, or radical demands.

Croatia vs. Serbs

Considerably more violence characterized relationship between the Croat majority and Serbian minority in Croatia. Particularly since the late 1980's, strong nationalist mobilizations in both groups reinforced each other (cf., Bollerup and Christensen, 1997). At early stages, the Serbian minority reacted to the secession of Croatia by declaring independence of regions under its own control. The conflicts finished by expulsion of most of the Serbs from the Croat territory in the summer of 1995.[9]

While the majority leaders in Croatia had available late Yugoslav example of consociational and federal manners of ethnic relations management, their policies were directed in the opposite direction. According to Schopflin, Croatia "adopted policies virtually calculated to mobilize Serbian opinion against Zagreb" (1993, p. 201). Even by the constitution non-Croats received unequal treatment (cf., Crawford and Lijphart, 1995).[10]

The example of Croatian handling of the minority issue is particularly interesting in relation to effects and possibilities of institutional manipulation. According to Crawford and Lijphart, the electoral laws were designed purposefully: "electoral laws favored the dominance of the Croatian majority in the political process" (1995, p. 189). In a country as a whole, more than half seats were awarded by majority principle, while on the other hand, PR is established in areas where Serbs were in majority. Although it has been thought that PR systems should be favorable for minorities, the authors argue that in

general "majority rule would have provided Serbs with more representation" (Ibid., p. 189). However, these conclusions apply only to a fraction of the Croatian electoral policies. According to Kasapović "all possible electoral models were employed in the Croatian parliamentary elections… during these electoral procedures all types of decision-making, all types of districts, various types of campaigns, various types of voting, natural and legal thresholds, and other procedures were tried" (1997, p. 77). For example, electoral districts have been organized in that way that no single one had Serbian majority (*Ibid.,* p. 63), but also with the aim of favoring the victory of the ruling party. "There was not the slightest chance that the political representatives of the Serbs would get into Parliament even through the proportional representation system" (*Ibid.,* p. 69). Moreover, due to particular citizenship law, in the elections participated over 300.000 Bosnian Croats (Karatnycky et al., 1997), and recent changes in the electoral law "increased the number of seats for the Croatian Diaspora, and gave fewer seats to the Serb minority" (*Ibid.,* p. 209).

Obviously electoral system manipulation was not designed with the aim of providing minority representation. Federalism was even less regarded as acceptable. Territorial autonomy, for example in Slavonia, was opposed also by international representatives (e.g., Karatnycky at al., 1997). The most generous offer was the so-called 'cultural autonomy' for the Serbs.[11] Serbian minority accepted confrontation from the very beginning, relying on substantial support (including military support) from Serbia. On the other side, Croat authorities secured the role of 'good guys' in the eyes of the relevant international factors. In that way both sides in the conflict persisted in their positions, while conflicts escalated involving increasingly violent means. The stalemate was solved by military force. In the August of 1995 Croatia launched an offensive into territories held by Serbs. In a couple of days Croatia became ethnically homogenous country.

The story of the Croat handling of the issue of the Serbian ethnic minority provides two important points. First, it is obvious that the ease with which electoral system can be manipulated makes such manipulation also highly vulnerable for mistreatment of minorities. The required condition for the opposite is disposition of majority leaders for more conciliatory politics. The second point is that in favorable international framework problematic ethnic minority issue *can* be 'solved' by pre-institutional means, which basically amounts to mass expulsion.

Yugoslavia vs. Albanians, Muslims and Magyars

It is a common place to start the story of the breakup of the former Yugoslavia by pointing towards the reduction of political autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina within Serbia in the late 1980's. However, more open conflicts between Serbia and Albanians of Kosovo started already in late 1970's and early

80'. Albanians required that Kosovo be granted the status of republic because it implied the right for secession. So, the principal motive was not the lack of autonomy, since according to the 1974 constitution, autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo had virtually equal power as republics. According to Schopflin, the main consequence of the 1974 constitution was "republicanization, a process whereby the republics increasingly became the true centers of power at the expense of the centre" (1993, p. 190). So, the 'old' system contained elements of both federalism and consociationalism, though within non-democratic, one-party political system.

The development of the Serb - Kosovo Albanian relationship during the 1990's was mainly characterized by the persistent maximalist demands by the Albanian side, and somewhat more ambiguous and changing politics of the Serbian side. The former initially opted for non-violent means of pursuing their goals. Parallel system was organized in most of the spheres of life (e.g., Lutovac, 1998), while all official political institutions and processes (including all elections) were simply boycotted.[12] However, over time more radical streams came to the surface and resistance acquired more violent form, especially during the 1998 and later.

The official Serbian politics rejected all requests for separation, and introduced 'emergency measures' (Goati, 1998, p. 30). In 1989, a plan to settle some 100.000 Serbs in Kosovo was developed, but it failed due to the lack of sufficient resources, and perhaps of Serbs willing to settle there (*Ibid.* p. 31). On various occasions the regime also tried to offer certain compromises, for example in the form of the "establishment of full autonomy for Kosovo" in 1995-6, but the Albanian side rejected such proposals (*Ibid.* p.31.). The result of such policies on the two sides is well known. Thus far, it does not seem that the change of the regime in Belgrade makes much difference concerning the *de facto* separation of Kosovo.

The example of Kosovo shows precisely the opposite of what could be expected according to the promoters of the institutional means of ethnic diversity management. For example, even after the reduction of autonomy of the provinces according to the 1990 constitution, the country still remained federal, and provinces still were granted substantial autonomy. Even attempts to restore the previous autonomy were boycotted by the Albanian side. It seems obvious than no degree of autonomy, save the ultimate secession, could have satisfied their requirements. So, the medicine of federalism did not work in this case.

Concerning the electoral system, and potential contribution of the PR system, the prospects have been even less optimistic. The reason is simple: all elections were boycotted by the majority of Albanians of Kosovo (e.g., Lutovac, 1998). It is crucial to note that other sizable minorities opted for different strategies. Magyars of Vojvodina took part in all elections and have had their

representatives at all levels. Municipalities in which they constitute majority (or even relative majority) have been generally under the rule of Magyar parties (e.g., Subotica, Kanjiža, Senta). Muslims of Sandžak initially tried to follow the Albanian route, but soon more moderate leaders appeared, and became more involved in the regular political life (e.g., Lutovac, 1998).[13]

While it cannot be disputed that proportional electoral system in Yugoslavia was not designed so to maximize the representation of minorities but rather to secure electoral victory for the ruling party, the minorities, which were interested, were able to achieve their political representation. So, the applied electoral systems allowed for minority representation, and as such it obviously helped preventing development of more conflictual relationship with the Magyar and Muslim minorities.

Since institutional and legal obstacles for minority representation cannot fully explain the extreme escalation of the conflict in Kosovo, the answer has to be searched elsewhere. Two factors seem to be the most important: persistently maximalist requirements of the Albanian side, and increasing support for such strategy by international powers (cf., Lutovac, 1998). It may be interesting to mention that the last proposal offered by the Yugoslav government after the Rambouillet negotiations but before the NATO bombing, specifically included consociational arrangement for the province of Kosovo. Of course, its inclusion of minority veto and similar provisions was intended to secure the position of the Serbian and other ethnic groups in Kosovo. However, the 'international community' decided to support the pure majoritarian system without any protection for the non-Albanian population, plus it included the option of future secession.

The Yugoslav case shows that various legal and institutional provisions, which proved at least temporarily acceptable to some minorities, did not prevent destructive conflicts with other minorities. The conditions favorable for such development seem to be oppressive politics of majority regime, extremist minority leaders with maximalist demands, and strong support of relevant international actors for at least one side in the conflict.

Discussion and Conclusion

The examined cases included countries with relatively high proportion of ethnic minorities, with various degrees of conflictual relationship between majorities and minorities, and with a considerable variety of applied macro-political strategies and policies aimed at solving the problem of ethnic heterogeneity. Complex interactions between minorities and majorities resulted in: one mass transfer of population (Croatia), two virtually accomplished secessions (Transdniestrian republic and Kosovo), one case of semi-federal solution (Gagauz region), and one case of incorporation of minorities through plurality system (Magyars of Vojvodina and Muslims of Sandžak).

Certain institutional arrangement proved helpful in several cases. In the case of Moldova, the Gagauz problem approached settlement though a semi-federal solution, while the issue of the Slav minority still waits for its ultimate solution. In Yugoslavia, Muslim and Magyar minorities became actively engaged in the political system, and their position will probably further improve via various institutional mechanisms including aspects of federalism and cultural autonomy.

Federalism proved to be not particularly popular strategy among majorities, nor among some minorities (e.g., Kosovo Albanians). However, there are more successful applications. Moldovan government made a good move by granting a certain degree of territorial autonomy to the Gagauz. But, in general if federal solutions were proposed, or formally were in effect, they were 'dis-aggregative' federal arrangements in Ghai's terms (1998), i.e. not motivated by common interests of potential constituents and therefore unlikely to succeed.

Concerning the consociational option, there were no serious attempts at applying it. Even if consociational proposal of the Serbian government for solving the problem of Kosovo submitted at the Rambouillet negotiations was not too serious, it was straightforwardly rejected. It seems that in the analyzed cases the elites were obviously far less accommodative than is required even for discussing consociational solution.

As far as PR system is concerned, it is in operation in all the examined countries. However, its usefulness for settling ethnic conflicts is not particularly supported. Positive evidence comes primarily from Yugoslavia where Muslim and Magyar minorities opted for participating in the political process. In other cases relevant minorities preferred 'exit' instead of 'voice' (Slavs in the Trans-Dniestrian region, and Kosovo Albanian). Not only that the discussed proportionality based institutional means of conflict management proved to be not always successful, but we saw that they can be, and have been, intentionally manipulated in order to strengthen ethnic cleavages. As a rule, the principle of proportionality was often manipulated so that in the actual results minorities missed representation even if they would have achieved it according to the majoritarian system (Croatia, Yugoslavia, Moldova). Thus, if political sphere is already strongly defined in ethnic terms proportionality seems to be insufficient to improve interethnic relations.[14]

If institutional means of ethnic conflict management proved ineffectual and insincerely applied, than the question that inevitably arises is What methods seem to provide more enduring solutions and are preferred by conflicting sides? The answer resulting from the present analysis is somewhat discouraging. Ethnic diversity problems are most easily 'solved' by *erasing* the diversity. In other words, minorities should be erased, either literally (Croatia), or by transforming

a minority into majority (Kosovo Albanians). In these cases, the solutions seem to be durable.

What factors favor choice of these destructive strategies? Clearly, a conditio sine qua non is contending elite strategy. Fortunately, the region does not lack such elites (cf., Bollerup and Christensen, 1997), whether among majorities or minorities. The examined elites obviously preferred contending strategies, but it seems that Milošević and Tuđman regimes particularly excelled in this. Not surprisingly, the most violent conflicts bear their imprint. Among minority leaders, such contending strategy was pursued by the Serb leaders in Croatia, Albanians in Kosovo, and by the Slav leaders in Moldova. Cases of non-contending strategy are exemplified by the interaction between Moldovan majority and Gagauz leaders, but also by Magyar and Muslim minority leaders in Serbia.

It seems that the overall strategy conflicting sides adopt determines how particular institutional means will be used, whether towards settling the conflict or towards the further escalation. Both majority and minority elites reveal themselves as interested in escalating conflicts if they believe that such strategy will maximize their gain. Unless at least one side realized that further escalation of conflicts might be particularly harmful no options of institutional accommodation were considered as desirable. However, in some cases limits of the available maneuver space were miscalculated. For example, the Serb minority in Croatia showed interest in finding a compromise when it was all too late. "Croatian forces launched operation 'Storm' on the same night that Krajina Serbs accepted the Z-4 Plan" (Grubisa, 1998, p. 98). Kosovo events fit this pattern, except that in this case the majority leaders miscalculated the probability of the third party 'intervention'.

The range of possible strategies the contending elites can adopt, however, is limited by certain factors. One is the perceived power balance between majority and minority. This obviously includes military power balance, but also factors such as numeric size of groups and geographic concentration (cf. Ishiyama, 2000). It could be argued that the unfavorable power balance was the factor that primarily prevented some elites from pursuing maximalist demands. Institutional accommodation was attempted in Moldova only after it was obvious that military campaign cannot bring much success. Similarly, power of minorities determines their demands. For example, if the Gagauz were more numerous and better equipped, they might have opted to further follow the path of the Trans-Dniestrian republic.

'Third party intervention', however, can suddenly change the power balance of conflicting sides. Hence, another factor that limits the range of possible moves of actors in a conflict is the international framework. Although this appears to be one of the most decisive factors determining the development of ethnic conflicts in the post-communist world, its role has been largely

neglected in literature. Among the exceptional cases is study by Emizet and Hesli, whose research revealed that "the more the group has connection with the outside world, the earlier it will secede" (1995, p. 500; see also Crawford and Lijphart, 1995). Although the present analysis was not focused on this aspect, the analyzed cases show that the role of this factor cannot be overemphasized. It seems obvious that the examined conflicting minorities and majorities had permanently in mind potential reactions of the relevant international actors. The side which secures support from sufficiently powerful external actors can (and usually does) pursue maximalist, uncompromising demands. Croatia could be taken as an example of the supported majority, and Kosovo Albanians as extensively supported minority.

To conclude, no institutional variations without constructive cooperation of both sides can improve ethnic relations. Proportional/majoritarian institutional character is only of secondary importance concerning the contribution to the ethnic conflict management. It comes into play only after some of the macro-political methods, such as population transfer, military solution, or secession, are either ruled out or applied. Power balance of the rent seeking conflicting elites, and their relationships with potential 'third parties' in the conflict, is essential for the choice of pursued strategies.

Obviously, this analysis cannot be considered as a decisive test of the proposed institutional models for ethnic accommodation. The main point was rather to show how far reality is sometimes from the proposals that acquired wide circulation within academic circles. While it may be not particularly popular view, it seems that most of the real-life politics concerning ethnic minorities is performed according to practices officially more respected in previous centuries. Young's instruction that "basic principles for accommodation are simple to state: guarantees of cultural autonomy and security, regional self-rule, adequate representation in the central institutions, assurance of language preservation" (1998, p. 19) appears not only difficult to realize but also oversimplified. At least it may be worth to prevent self-delusion that ethnic accommodation is easily achievable through manipulation of the institutional political framework, and that understanding of the actual policies can be achieved without taking into account power relations and international factors.

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[1] Emphasis in original.

[2] However, analysis the author himself performed does not give particular empirical support for such statement.

[3] Crawford and Lijphart (1995) suggest that these failures contributed to the decreasing popularity of federalism.

[4] Of course, this does not apply just to 'any' minority, but only to politically recognized minorities.

[5] For example, history of the Albanian nationalist mobilization in Kosovo reveals occasionally strong intra-group competition with increasingly hostile factions as winning (cf., Lutovac, 1998).

[6] Ware and Kisriev (1998) suggest that the on-going Dagestan's experiment with consociationalism may be successful if not for other reasons but because other options do not seem possible.

[7] His results indicate also the importance of the non-institutional factors, like geographic concentration, or group size.

[8] Proportional representation with party lists; 5% threshold; 101-member chamber.

[9] It is not clear how many Serbs remained in Croatia. It seems that there are hardly more than 2 percents that remained of the more than 12% of the total population in Croatia in 1991. Interestingly, neither Karatnycky et al. (1997), nor Bollerup and Christensen (1997) do report exact numbers of the expelled and remained Serbs.

[10] Croat post-communist constitution defines only 'Croats' as citizens of Croatia, regardless of whether they live or not in the country (following the German recipe of *jus sanguinis*), while "non-Croats do not have full rights of citizenship" (Crawford and Lijphart, 1995, p. 189).

[11] However, "the government did not take decisive actions even towards *cultural* autonomy" (Bollerup and Christensen, 1997, p. 102, italics in original).

[12] Even the *census* in 1991 was boycotted, so the number of Albanians had to be estimated (Varady, 1992).

[13] Of course, it is not implied that Magyars or Sandžak Muslims have been particularly satisfied with the political system in Yugoslavia. Rather the opposite is correct. For example, among various goals, Magyar minority also has substantial political demands, including territorial autonomy and self-rule (see *Proposal...,* 1996*;* also Lutovac, 1998,). However, the most important difference is in the means that are considered as politically legitimate.

[14] Even if proportionality strategies are applied in a good faith, they still may exhibit various unintended undesirable consequences. For example, consociationalism may prevent development of cross-segmental allegiances and petrify boundaries between segments (see Brass, 1991).