Post-Socialist Transformations in the Danube Region:
25 Years After the Collapse of the Soviet Union

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Edited by: István Tarrósy and Susan Milford

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Preface

On Christmas Day 1991, the bipolar world scenario ended with the collapse of the once-mighty Soviet Union. 25 years ago the international system arrived at a junction and ever since some significant tectonic shifts have been moving its actors towards a new global order. Regionalization has been seen as one of the tools for all cooperating entities to get more competitive and perform better – also on the world stage. Technology has become one of the driving forces, and certainly, "as a result of advances in communication and information technologies, a new dimension to the evolving 'international society' has been increasingly in evidence."[1] The spread of this international information society is unimaginable without the rise of a 'knowledge society'. Knowledge is key to development, and as Amartya Sen explains: "since participation [in society] requires knowledge and basic educational skills, denying the opportunity of schooling to any group – say, female children – is immediately contrary to the basic conditions of participatory freedom."[2] Without education no development is achievable – in particular, in the more peripheral parts of our asymmetric world with significant inequalities permeating the system itself.

Since 2004 the major aim of the Danube Rectors' Conference (DRC) Summer School series has been to address ideas, issues, processes, together with policies in the making or under reform, all of which affect our Danubian Region. Not only the ongoing changes we need to deal with even on a daily basis, but also the heritage of the past that has been embedded in our behaviour and mentality have offered sufficient questions to investigate so far. We have always done this with the active participation of leading experts of the countries of the Danubian Region and young scientists and thinkers representing various academic disciplines. They are also true representatives of our rich multi- and intercultural community and heritage across the regions along the River Danube.

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[1] Smith, Martin A. (2012): *Power in the Changing Global Order. The US, Russia and China*. Polity Press, Malden, MA. p. 11.

[2] Sen, Amartya (1999): *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press, Oxford. pp. 32-33.

Our overarching topic in 2016 was to commemorate the fall of the Soviet Union and look into how this has shaped our different regions and the world itself. We had the privilege to enjoy another most exciting core city of Central Europe, the Czech capital, Prague. The Czech University of Life Sciences proved to be a fantastic host with all its facilities and embracing hospitality. Both the institution and the city provided yet another perfect location for fine discussions of "Post-Socialist Transformations in the Danube Region".

With the series of the Danube Rectors's Conference Summer School, as well as the Pécs Debate Academy of the University of Pécs (PDA – formerly known as ICWiP), since 2004 and 1996 respectively we have been taking determined steps towards the efficient networking of various institutions, associations and individuals, who want to contribute to the realization of regional co-operation in general, and international scientific collaboration in particular.

Our strategy covers structures, manifestations and methods of the exchange of views, ideas and hopes in the form of lively discussions in a non-formal, and certainly non-frontal teaching environment. Our series of the DRC Summer School has been made real in close cooperation with our long-lasting supporters, who have been with us for so many years. We clearly understand each other easily, which truly offers a firm and calm background for the organizational work. It is never enough to underscore that: our institutes and colleagues are grateful for all the positive attitudes, academic and financial contributions!

As mentioned many times, for the continuous encouragement within our network to let scholars engage in academic discussions and presentations of research results, we consider our series of edited volumes an important tool. Beyond its primary mission to be a stable outlet for sound academic thoughts and products, our publication intends to serve the very heart of scientific work: the debate over policies, outputs, methodology, theories, data and social achievements in general, which can further help interpret how people across the Danube Region view their place and role in our global world.

The 13th edited book contains seven papers, exposing a number of intriguing topics from our region that all are, one way or another, connected to post-Socialist transformations and recent social, political and economic

changes happening in our countries. Let us present the 13th DRC Summer School edited volume and wish all our readers to join our debate and series of events in the forthcoming years.

Vienna–Pécs, 2016 December

The Editors

Chapter 1

Title **The Post-Socialist Transformation over 25 Years After the Collapse of the Soviet Union in the Danube Region Reflected in Literature and Films**

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The Post-Socialist Transformation over 25 Years After the Collapse of the Soviet Union in the Danube Region Reflected in Literature and Films

Irena Markuszewska

The post-socialist transformation in the Eastern Bloc countries has been visible in everyday life but it is also the subject of books and films. These artistic forms of expression are one way of sharing a story and addressing the most difficult issues, ones that are unresolved and traumatic. Artists are able to open our eyes and shed new light on some events. They do not focus only on facts, numbers and statistics, they share feelings, experiences, personal stories, their doubts and reveal some mystery instead. It is interesting to broaden our perspective by looking through the prism of literature and cinematography as it is sometimes more telling than other discourses. In this paper I will refer to selected books and films reflecting these changes, and created before and throughout the post-socialist transformation in the Danube Region.

Authors are good observers of ongoing processes and changes in the world around them. They often contribute to our memories of the past as they observe and describe reality and all its significant transitions. They shed new light on it and give it a new perspective. They do not let us turn away from the past. People tend to forget or hide bad memories in their consciousness such as the traumatic memory of living in a communist state. This is probably why there is so much silence about this period. Going back to it would open up Pandora's box of horrors.

One of such visionaries is George Orwell with his dystopian classic, *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* written in 1948 about the catastrophic picture of the destructive future of the communist system. Orwell was able to foresee the future 30-40 years ahead of his time in countries with a totalitarian system, ruled by a communist regime. He claimed that such a destructive power may prevail in any land, even in Britain, providing it is ruled by that kind of dictatorship. The novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is about the decay of the soul. An eponymous country called Oceania, is constantly at war with Eastasia and sometimes with Euroasia. It is subjected to the cult of Big Brother, who controls everybody and has four governmental bodies: the Ministry of Truth, the Ministry of Peace, the Ministry of Love and the Ministry of Plenty. "*Their names, in Newspeak: Minitrue, Minipax, Miniluv and Miniplenty.*"[1] Shops are empty, food is tasteless, and everyone wears the same boring overalls. The country is continuously at war, bombs daily explode everywhere while the population lives in a life of fear. Individual thoughts and actions are monitored by the Thought Police while speech is reduced to the new language called 'Newspeak'. Another well-known fable of this writer, *Animal Farm* was written in 1945, and it is a metaphor about the contemporary situation in Soviet Russia. It is a story about animals living on a farm or a mini communist state. The story is about resistance and rebellion. It presents the mechanism of change in a society run by an overbearing desire for power. Both novels are relevant to modern society as they make one think more deeply about life, power and the condition of the mankind today.

Looking back to those times makes it clear that artists and writers in communist states were influenced by ideology and politics. Moreover, the governors imposed a new form of art later called socialist realism, which glorifies great national heroes, prosperity, the spirit of community,

[1] Orwell, G. *Nineteen-Eighty Four*, p. 6.

optimism and the work for the commonwealth. This art was meant to be didactic and its message was clear; 'do what you are told and you will be forever happy and rich'. In addition, artists were not allowed to dwell on the darker side of the communism: the loss of personal and collective freedom, as there was a total ban on such taboo themes. Consequently, non-conformists feared persecution, imprisonment or even death. Those who did not comply with the authorities' rules were 'blacklisted' – the word was coined in socialist times. In order to survive, artists had to either comply, negotiate or move abroad. Those who refused the party line risked their careers and lives, and those of their families.

Many had to move abroad. Taking advantage of being in another country they wrote about things they were not able to in their homeland. Among them was Milan Kundera, a Czech writer, who moved to France. I will refer to two novels addressing these times, i.e. *The Joke* and *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. The first one is a satire on the communist regime. The eponymous joke is a naive and ill-considered joke that the main protagonist makes. Ludvik Jahn writes a postcard to his girlfriend with one sentence; "*Optymizm to opium dla ludu! Zdrowy duch zalatuje głupotą! Niech żyje Trocki! Ludwik.*"[2] [„Optimism is the opium of mankind! A healthy spirit stinks of stupidity! Long live Trotsky! Ludwik" Trans.: I. Markuszewska]. As a consequence of this joke he, a student, is expelled from university as well as from the Party and has to serve in a military penal unit without any prospects for a good job or future. Another story entitled *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* describes love between two characters. The narration develops around the time of the Prague Spring revolution. One of the novel's themes is fate. In a totalitarian system fate interweaves with obligation, which makes it even stronger, such as the love between Teresa and Tom. After the Prague Spring revolution the couple move to

[2] Kundera, M. *Żart* p. 46.

Switzerland, then they go back to their country and lose their jobs as a punishment for participating in the revolution. Not only do both novels speak about those terrible times, but they also have a universal meaning.

In Poland among the many artists who at that time went into exile was Czesław Miłosz, a poet and writer, an author, among others, of *Russia* or *The Captive Mind.* The second story, written in Paris in 1951, is an essay trying to explain why European intellectuals believed in the communist rulers. In this novel Miłosz gives an account of totalitarian culture and illustrates life under communism. *The Captive Mind* analyses the power of tyrannical regimes enslaving people not only through terror but also through ideas. In his story the author describes four writers: Alfa, Beta, Gamma and Delta. Only one of them tries to confront and not to succumb to the doctrine. It portrays the internal conflict the writer and other East Europeans intellectuals were experiencing in adopting the 'method'[3] of the communist rulers and shows how it was reflected in their thought and writings. Miłosz tries to unveil the working of the individual mind haunted by a regime, tells us how artists were talked into conforming, and consequently into paralysing their creativity and mistrusting their own true beliefs. The whole plot is about the human soul, its longings, ambitions, lies and truths, cruelty of man, or the human comedy of errors. Other voices of four Polish writers present various attitudes and philosophies which guided them through communism. There were also Polish emigrant authors such as: Sławomir Mrożek, author of *The Tango*, Gustaw Herling Grudziński known for *Dziennik Pisany Nocą (Journal Written at Night).* Those who stayed in Poland and strived to write about the reality around them had to write for underground publishing houses. In this way they tried to avoid censorship and save their lives.

[3] Method – doctrine of socialism realism

After the breakthrough year, 1989, new trends were developing; the socialist realism ideology was rapidly replaced by the omnipresent consumerist culture. It was mainly influenced by the media, by big corporations and popular mass culture. Art became free and provocative, shocking and often critical of consumerism. In a sense old taboo themes have disappeared, but new taboos and limitations have appeared instead, such as the ban on criticising racial and religious feelings, in other words, political correctness. Pop culture or mass culture with all its needs created by the media and advertising began to flourish. Apart from that, new social and political dilemmas reappeared after the collapse of the communist system. Old bugging devices have been replaced by new ones in the name of security. After the long-lasting lack of products goods had become available for the individual, new needs and expectations were created by big corporations, which in turn led to new aesthetic stereotypes.

With the doors wide open to a new Europe, even more people moved to the West hoping to find a more prosperous new world. The dream of a better life is reflected in many stories. An example of such a novel is *Herrn Kukas Empfehlungen* (*Mr. Kukas's Advice)*, which tells the story of the journey of a young Pole to Vienna and his stay there. The author is an Austrian-Polish writer, Radek Knapp. The novel talks about the new-found freedom in the West. This 'invented foreign life' seems to resemble the American Dream. Waldemar, the main protagonist, heads for his first Western holiday. The story is full of contrasts and clashes between the dream of a better existence and the actual reality he is part of. In a nutshell, it presents the disillusionment of the immigrant who goes abroad in search of more freedom and the dream of a better life. It also tells one about the contrast between the West and the East, and all the resulting stereotypes and prejudices. The dream of a better life is in fact idealised and

seems to be generated by adverts, television and distorted stories spread by word of mouth.

Encountering people of various cultural backgrounds and confronting a multicultural environment, the protagonist learns and adapts to a new reality. After experiencing numerous setbacks while finding a job (because of his foreign origins and worn out trainers), he resists the first temptation to renounce his national identity. Finally, thanks to his fellow immigrants, he feels at home in Vienna while missing his country at the same time. Living with his unusual peers, Waldemar learns that all people are essentially the same despite different circumstances and opportunities. While working in a toy shop, a job found by recommendation, Waldemar finds himself engrossed in playing with LEGO bricks, which he dreamed of as a child. One of his new friends is fed up with the hypocrisy of the Western world and his rich parents. He rebels against the consumerist world by shoplifting in a supermarket. Apart from that, the story emphasises the importance of acquiring foreign languages and discusses the needs and lifestyles of urban culture conditioned by consumerism.

A similar theme is also evoked in films: the *Last Resort* directed by Paweł Pawlikowski and in *Strange Heaven* by Dariusz Gajewski. The first one presents the story of a young Russian woman and her son who arrive in London. The woman expects to be met by her fiancé. When he fails to arrive, they apply for the political asylum, and are confined to a small seaside resort while their claim is being considered. Then a relationship develops between the woman and the manager of a local amusement arcade.

The recent film *Strange Heaven* by Dariusz Gajewski is a story of a Polish family who emigrates to Sweden, where they encounter problems with the social system as a consequence of different laws and customs. Their daughter, Ursula is placed at a foster family by the social services on the basis

of allegations about the child's neglect and ill-treatment by her biological parents. One night, when the parents quarrel, Ursula, unconscious of the consequences, calls the blue emergency line. The number of the intervention line had been given to her by a social worker at school. The strict regulations of the Swedish social system leads the welfare officer to believe that the state is more apt to look after Ursula than her parents. In the fervour of applying the law she forgets that Ursula needs more than material comfort, which is parental love and care. What is more, the daughter's love for her mother is put to the test. As a result, it is impossible to reverse the unjust decision of the welfare officer once the whole adoption procedure is put into motion. In the end, after numerous futile attempts at pleading with the authorities, the couple kidnaps Ursula from her foster family and following a dramatic fight runs away to Poland.

It seems that after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and the entry of former Communist countries to the European Union on 1st January 2004, new dilemmas came to life. Many writers, who are often journalists too, create travel literature sharing their discoveries and observations of different cultures with readers. In the past, authors used to sit in a café and write there (e.g. Bohumil Hrabal), nowadays it seems that more of them work individually at home on their tablets or laptops. One well-known novel, *Loneliness,* of such a writer recounts the story of an old man's solitude because of his unwillingness to accept a new reality. Solitude, melancholy, addiction, crime are still current literary themes.

However, the current trend today seems to be travel literature and reportage describing 'other worlds'. Here I must mention a great Polish author, a giant of the genre, Ryszard Kapuściński, who wrote: *Self-Portrait*, *The Empire, The Emperor, The Other Day or Travels with Herodotus,* etc. There is also a younger representative of the genre, called Paulina Wilk, who became famous for her book *Znaki Szczególne*

(Significant Features). In it she recounts a time before and after the transformation, when Poland was being remodelled from the old system to the new country now called the Republic of Poland. This piece of non-fiction prose is a sort of essay, a diary and reportage, too; it is the first autobiography of the 80's generation.

At first glance, this is a story about the author's childhood with outdoor games around the carpet beating stand, team games, watching long-distance trains, Moscow-Berlin relations, discovering a new flavour of melon, fruit-flavoured starch-jelly, late bedtime TV cartoons such as *Miś Uszatek (Teddy Floppy Ear), Little Moll* or *Magic Pencil.* Incidentally, this unique pencil was capable of drawing everything you needed but did not have at the time. It was a magic antidote to the constant situation of lacking basic necessities, and waiting in long queues in an effort to buy them. The wind of change brought about a huge choice of goods that were once unobtainable on the market. New school syllabuses had to include Western European languages, with an emphasis on English, forgetting the once inevitable Russian language.

The author describes the process of reshaping her neighborhood (a military housing estate) and new developments such as the first computer, cable TV with new channels like MTV, new fashion icons, advertising and the new enthusiasm to enter the EU. Wilk also recollects her first visit to a McDonald's fast food restaurant and the first time she casts a vote in a democratic Poland. With the advent of a new digital era, mobile phones replaced real relations by virtual ones. People stopped sending postcards and letters. With the emergence of the free market economy new financial and social barriers were erected.

One of the author's recommendations to improve our vacuous lives is cooperation, caring, honesty and justice, and participation in local initiatives as well. Her book is about the transition from one system to another, without any focus

on the darker sides of communism. The world is definitely more colourful and exciting now, but also more insecure with violence, organized crime, manipulation, unemployment and homelessness. The more recent developments have led to the fear of refugees. The dream of a better life has crashed down with a vengeance.

Significant Features is written with nostalgia, for those values that are lost now: mutual respect, caring and sharing, and a sense of togetherness. Wilk believes that present day societies have lost the capacity for the genuine relationships ones that are close-knitted and disinterested. The author talks about the challenges we have to face such as: maintaining closer relationships, the traps of consumerism, burning out in the rat race, the lack of role models, loneliness, and the disillusionment with the government, the lack of time, and political and social stability. There is hardly such thing as a 'life-long job' – meaning job stability.

Many books relate to human migration and identity issues, a very interesting example of this is *Nieobcy (Not Alien)* which tackles social dilemmas and brings up the concept of multinational identity. It is a collection of twenty-one different stories exploring the issue of otherness written by various well-known contemporary Polish authors, e.g. Olga Tokarczuk, K. Bonda, P. Huelle, J. Mikołajewski, A. Stasiuk, H. Krall or P. I. Kalwas of Jewish origin. These stories try to dissolve the fear of the unknown, the alien, in an effort to reverse or shatter the phobia of refugees. The whole book tries to come to grips with the feeling of fear and hatred, which is universal to all mankind. The authors claim that everyone, no matter where they live, tends to be afraid of the otherness of the unknown. And it is the artists who try to recognize this fear and help us understand its sources. This fear not only concerns us, our families and relatives physically, but also leads to deep-seated psychological anxiety about losing our own national boundaries and cultural identity. To counter

this, the writers convey the idea of learning from each other and reassure the reader that one learns more about oneself from relationships with others. These stories are varied, ranging from tales about people who themselves emigrated abroad, or welcomed and helped newcomers settle down in their country. Some narratives are about the individuals, while some about the cultural differences between people. There are stories, among others, about people living on and around borders such as those astride the Polish-Ukrainian frontier. Another story tells us about the everyday life in Syria before the war through an account of a European woman who tried to become part of it.

The following example is a reportage by Jarosław Mikołajewski *Wielki Przypływ* (*Great Influx)* which describes the island of Lampedusa through stories about refugees. Lampedusa is an isle in Italy, where thousands of people come to shore in search of the promised land. Lampedusa became a harbour of peace and hope for asylum seekers from the Middle East (e.g. Syria) and Africa (e.g. Ethiopia, Libya). The author describes the island as a beautiful corner of the world with its magnificent natural beauty and old architecture, and contrasts it with recent changes, such as the freshly populated cemeteries of those who fled their war-torn countries but did not make it to its shores. He parallels this dramatic situation with scenes of hell from Dante's *The Divine Comedy*. The author discusses the dangerous pilgrimages made by these people from other continents and the island's inhabitants such as the mayor, the doctor in the hospital, a woman taking care of the island's turtles, the local priest and artists, and all those people who are concerned with the newcomers' fate.

Pieces of art describing the past and its aftermath include for example reportages of Svetlana Aleksiejewicz, *Chernobyl Prayer* or *Secondhand Time.* This Belarus writer and journalist unravels the complicated and often forgotten Russian

history, e.g. Chernobyl's catastrophe, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, women's participation in the Second World War, the fate of children, and the everyday life of ordinary man after the collapse of the Communism. In *Chernobyl's Prayer (Voices from Chernobyl)* the author presents personal accounts of the tragedy in 1986. In her most recent book, *Secondhand Time*, the author recites experiences of Russian inhabitants: from ordinary people to the military, and financial elites. She writes about the aftermath of the Soviet Union's disintegration and the relicts of the past personified as 'Homo Sovieticus' which still persists in the collective memory. Aleksiejewicz recounts the lives of different individuals as well as people's clinging trust in the communist ideology as if the horrors of the past did not concern them or their families. The stories also refer to PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), a condition that many Soviet citizens suffered from due to imprisonment, forced labour in dedicated camps, political prisons, gulags (harsh prison camps) or "simply" due to combat fighting. Almost every family experienced the horror of being reported as the national or class enemy to the authorities by means of a denouncing letter or directly by the Secret Police.

Not surprisingly for us now, these stories representing the ongoing situation are strikingly similar to the prophecy of Orwell's world voiced in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or *Animal Farm*. The two worlds mirror one another. The voices of bygone times have echoed for decades into present-day Europe. In all Eastern Bloc ex-communist countries, the isolation imposed by the Iron Curtain has gone, but street names, milk bars, cars, monuments, museums or souvenir shops carry its stigma in the collective memory. What is more, these very memories, ones of persecution and fear, have often been transformed by a macabre twist of the human mind, into nostalgia for those hard times also called 'ostealgia' (Eastern German world for nostalgia). Fortunately, those artists

who were there in the thick of it, left their heritage in the form of writings about the truth in those days without much romanticizing about it.

Horror stories, a reminiscent of the socialist past, have been transformed into films such as *The Lives of Others,* written and directed by East German Florian Henckel, describing a drama in East Berlin in 1984. The year is 1984 and it is set in East Berlin. This date is not coincidental. The author portrays the lives of artists, who are invigilated by the Stasi police. The film turns around the moral dilemma of an officer who at some point finds it hard to listen to and interrogate his victims.

In Poland a worth-mentioning film scenario describing difficult and traumatic events of Polish history is Andrzej Wajda's *Katyń*. The film tries to uncover the mystery of the Katyń slaughter of thousands of Polish officers brutally killed by the Soviets in 1940 during the Second World War. Another Oscar-winning film, *Ida,* directed by Pawlikowski, is set in 1961, under the influence of the Stalinist dictatorship, where a young novitiate nun, living in the 1960s in Poland discovers her unknown past. The convent's mother superior orders Ida to visit her aunt, Wanda in Łódź. She was a minor state judge and Communist Party activist, who was responsible for sentencing to death many 'suspicious Polish citizens', accused of preposterous crimes against communism. They both go to the village, where Ida's parents and Wanda's sister were at first hidden and then betrayed by Polish Christians. The young novitiate nun Ida learns there that she is of Jewish origin and discovers the reasons of her parents' death. The plot and the personal stories of the characters are complex and complicated. Both women are faced with their individual and Polish fate at the same time. All the events and circumstances of their turbulent past are built into the film's atmosphere.

The war experience in former Yugoslavia is portrayed in a child's diary by Zlata Filipovic in a book, *A Child's Life in Sarajevo,* where a twelve-year-old teenager expresses the chaos and uncertainty at that time. Zlata starts her diary at the time of peace, then she is told threatening stories of bombs falling on Dubrovnik, but her life remains the same. Suddenly, the tone of the diary changes when the war breaks out in her home town. Terror, violence, hunger and darkness invade her life. She can no longer go to school, her life is disrupted, and her mates are injured or dead. The thought of committing suicide slips into her mind, but somehow she manages to carry on in spite of all odds, and the memories of a happy past help her along to do things she simply likes such as playing the piano.

Looking at the literature and cinematography of the Danube Region covering the stretch of time from the Communist states, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the war in former Yugoslavia and the transition from the tyrannical regime to building new democracies, which entered or are at the threshold of the European Union, it is easier to imagine how the region has been changing and developing. It seems that the socio-political transition was not insignificant to these changes and these facts have certainly provided a fertile background for artistic creativity.

A very popular form of writing about the past is non-fiction literature: reportage, essays, travel stories and diaries. Writers have frequently combined the different genres into a literary collage in which they speak using various discourses. Another common technique used by story-tellers is fiction, and the repertoire of subject matter ranges from love to war. Sometimes, they are influenced by true stories (for example, the novel *Hidden Rose* by Reyes Monforte). Undoubtedly, many artistic creations are probably more intercultural and spread beyond the boundaries of one country, as writers from one nation often write about another

country. Frequently, they tackle contemporary issues such as migration, intercultural issues, mixed origins or couples, war and crime, and borderline situations. This is where new cultural connectedness and intercultural themes are visible.

Moreover, the dismantlement of the old 'ideologised reality' in art and culture has broadened horizons and led to new expectations. This was definitely not insignificant, and one need not forget that it had an enormous influence on art and led to a dramatic curtailment of creativity and the appearance of mediocre art at the time.

In this paper, I have attempted to review different pieces of art on the basis of examples taken from literature and cinematography in the Danube Region over the 25-year-old period of the post-communist transition. Both genres seem to reflect a great deal about this period, be it fiction or fact.

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Chapter 2

Title **Historical Narratives of the Dual Monarchy – An Analysis of Current Literary and Political Examples**

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Historical Narratives of the Dual Monarchy – An Analysis of Current Literary and Political Examples

Zsófia Schmidt

Abstract The aim of this paper is to examine different current narratives of the Dual Monarchy (1867-1918), not only focusing on both scientific publications and literary examples, but also including at the same time the function of a recently established political instrument. Hereby the emphasis of the analysis will be drawn on the European Commission's Danube Region Strategy as an example. The chosen literary works include two of the most important contemporary authors from Vojvodina: László Végel and Aleksandar Tišma. Both being of mixed ancestry, growing up in multilingual households in and around the north Serbian Vojvodina's capital, Novi Sad, their literary works prove to be outstandingly important objects of research.

While it is generally complex to phrase a comprehensive thesis regarding the representation of any period of the past in the highly diverse Danube Region, the results of this work evolve along the geographical and cultural space between Budapest in Hungary and Novi Sad in Serbia.

The choice of analyzing this specific region has been based upon its characteristics, which include two crucial factors: its historical and political past, as part of the Dual Monarchy, and as well its domination of the communist doctrine for several decades during the 20th century. Yet another similarity consists through its fluid artery, the Danube. Undoubtedly, various other Eastern European cities can

provide these factors, but Budapest and Novi Sad also share a large amount of interconnections due to their Hungarian population. Therefore, the elaboration of these similarities and differences contribute to a qualitative field of research.

The research is reinforced not only by qualitative methods, through the evaluation of interviews conducted with experts in the field and the literary analysis of two relevant regional authors, but as well through Stephen Greenblatt's 'new historicism' approach, which is connected to the comparably new 'cultural studies' discipline. In combining these methods, the analysis is embedded into a scientifically innovative structure, which overlaps disciplinary borders – an unavoidable criterion considering the variety of research objects. The comparison of interdisciplinary and different textual accounts suits the aim of establishing an accurate and up to date overview of historical narratives and their changes within the past 25 years in a period of post-socialist and pro-patriotic climate.

> *"The Danube played a vital role in the settlement and political evolution of central and southeastern Europe"* (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2015)

While todays' common historiographic discourses are mainly dominated by researches about the recent, communist past, and its reception and remembrance throughout Eastern Europe, the following paper focuses on the region's common past during the 19th and 20th century. From 1867 after the Compromise, which established the juridical frame of the Dual Monarchy, until 1918, significant parts of Eastern Central Europe belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Hungary, as the Danube region's pivot and one of the Dual Monarchy's administrative centers, is hence a remarkable field of research. However, Vojvodina, today an autonomous province in Northern Serbia, provides an equally substan-

tial part of the analysis due to its connection through the Danube, the common past with Hungary and its historical multi-ethnical societal structure.

The aspect of the Danube, the biggest European river that is commonly defined as a bridge between the borders of the East and the West, and as a culturally enhancing element is taken into critical consideration.

The historic narratives regarding the era of the Dual Monarchy have been changing significantly during the course of history. The central question, which was addressed concerning these changes, evolves around the representation of the era in current historiographical sources and the general relevance of the era in spheres of public remembrance. Equally, the outlines of substantial modifications in today's narratives in contrast to previous accounts should be sketched out for contextualizing the material.

Although the democratic transition and its establishment are commonly still defined to be in progress (especially from Eurocentric point of views) in both societies, in Serbia as well as in Hungary, significant political shifts have been recognizable during the last 25 years. It is necessary to overview these changes and their effect in terms of changing historical narratives.

While post-socialist research has established diversified approaches to analyze narratives of the socialist past and its current remembrance, it remains interesting to observe a more distant but not less relevant past on these terms.

Traditionally, the widespread Hungarian commentaries about the Habsburg Empire have been relentlessly negative during its beginning years, when Hungary officially became part of it. However, this perception shifted to a more positive interpretation, especially after the so-called Compromise of 1867 and the creation of the Dual Monarchy.

Hungarian historiographic accounting has been established and institutionalized during the second half of the

19th century. The most crucial turning point is marked by 1867, the year of the Compromise, but also the founding of the Hungarian Historic Society and the first publishing of its organ, the *Század*.

While historical science during the 19th century still mainly focused on chronological accounts of state politics, including side branches such as military and constitutional politics, and diplomacy and biographies, the 20th century began examining political history, as well as economic and societal history. The influences of these developments can certainly be associated with the modernization of the era, its economic and political progress. By now, interdisciplinary approaches have gained worldwide and, including in Hungary, widespread popularity in order to create a better historical comprehension.

One of the most significant Hungarian historians of the time was Henrik Marczali (1856-1940), who comments on the importance of history accordingly: "*There is only one history: the history of the development of the human soul, and the purpose of historiography is the knowledge of the dominant concepts of the society.*" (Romsics, 2008: 178) Marczali understands history primarily as an embracive collection of influential factors, including social, political, economic and philosophical aspects, which effectively form the soul of a society.

At the beginning of the 20th century, not only various apologetically and almost even romantically affiliated interpretations of the 1867 Compromise but also glorifying accounts of the entire Dual Monarchy dominated the narratives.

Later, in 1918, after the First World War, the collapse of the Dual Monarchy, the vast territorial losses for Hungary and its independence, Hungarian historiography and historical narratives experienced a remarkable turning point. Gyula Szekfü, a well-known historian of the period is considered

its iconic figure as he generated a declaration that identifies the entire previous century as regressive, and stigmatized liberalism as the root of all recent fateful events for the Hungarian people.

As the Trianon Peace Treaty (1919), which foresaw an extreme minimization of Hungary's territory, was not considered as ultimate at its very outset, strong revisionist tendencies gained roots, openly and politically. However, it is necessary to mention that these revisionist tendencies did not include Austrian territories and predominantly focused on Romania and its enormous gains of territories, which formerly belonged to Hungary. This distinct revisionism and glorification of 'Greater Hungary' is still vividly present in some people's mindset.

Hungary signed the Trianon Peace Treaty in 1920, acknowledging two thirds of its territory being distributed to its surrounding neighbours. The newly drawn borders remain almost the same until today and signify the largest defeat and disgrace in Hungarian history, next to the 150-year-long Osman oppression.

While Hungary occupied all of its former territories, the historic 'Greater Hungary', during the Second World War and even created an alliance with Nazi Germany (1940) in order to fulfill its own revisionist tactics through Regent Miklós Horthy, ultimately it was forced to capitulate and faced occupation by German forces from March 1944. Hungary, as an ally of the Axis Powers, had to re-establish the pre-war borders of the country; therefore, effectively no territorial enlargements were successful.

The country was liberated by the Red Army in 1945 and gradually included into the Soviet sphere of influence as a so called 'satellite state'. With the 'Sovietization' and the establishment of the communist one-party system, an ideological, Marxist adaptation of historiography was institutionalized.

Nevertheless, the narrative of the eternal martyrdom of the Hungarian people was by no means erased. Aladár Mód, author of the most significant historical volume, *400 Years of Struggle for the Independent Hungary* (in Hungarian, "*400 év küzdelem az önalló Magyarországért*") concludes in 1948: "*The past 400 years of Hungarian history have been marked by the struggle against the German oppression and the colonial dependency towards Austria*." (Mód, 1948: 1) His strongly anti-Habsburg opus, which is neatly kept in communist jargon exposes the motif of suppression of the independent Hungarian people by the Habsburgs and establishes itself as model for Hungarian history politics during the '50s.

The new conception of the national history also included the manifestation of the negative narrative of the 1867 Compromise as the rule of the elite and the ultimate betrayal of national interests.

One of today's leading Hungarian historians, Ignác Romsics, focuses his scientific research on Hungary during the 20th century and outlines the coherences and changes of Hungarian historical narratives throughout the passage of time. The citations from his most recent publication, *The Faces of the Past* (in Hungarian, "*A múlt arcai*") remarkably demonstrate the course of historical narratives in Hungary:

> "*After 1956, especially from the middle of the 1960s the situation gradually improved. The ties of the so-called middle-class and not Marxist researchers have been loosened; Marxists at the same time have become more and more professional... Thanks to the change of atmosphere scientific debates, which have changed the typical '50s schematic Marxist approaches, have become frequent.*" (Romsics, 2008:192-193)

However, these changes were not by far ubiquitous, as the importance of certain dates remained unchanged:

"As part of the so-called Erik Molnár debate or state debate, which has been covered in the wrapper of Marxism, when new interpretations of the old Hungarian historic reflections on '48 and '67 were formulated, lasted more than a decade, until the middle of the 1970s." (Romsics, 2008: 190)

Even though the diverse narratives and interpretations unfolding during the '60s increased, a new tendency towards Revisionism can be witnessed within the last decades. Hereby the highest quest remains the reestablishment of the historical 'Greater Hungary' and therefore finally revising the Trianon disgrace, which is nowadays openly delivered in public by particularly radical rightist groups.

Summarizing the current sentiments and narratives in regards to the Dual Monarchy, a strong tendency towards nostalgia through defining the era 'as Hungary's greatest period' and the focus on the positive achievement of the Compromise, which equalized Hungary's status as part of the Dual Monarchy, is dominant.

Generally, the entire period of the existence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, when Hungary physically and politically reached its greatest magnitude, is strongly portrayed positively.

But the overall positive perception of the glorious period is equally dictated by strong negative sentiments, as Hungary undeniably compromised itself with the 1867's Compromise in its literal sense of the word; as while in 1848 the Hungarian Revolution was still fighting for the independence of the Hungarian people and the liberation from the Habsburg oppression, 1867 suddenly made all of these maxims forgotten.

According to present-day historian, Gábor Sonkoly, in 1998 with the establishment of the ministry of National Cultural Heritage the term 'cultural heritage' became as relevant in Hungary as in Western Europe.

With the fall of the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe (1989) and the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991), an era of radically

new historical perceptions all over the post-communist Eastern European states commenced. Primarily the emergence of newly awakened national identities played a key role in this process:

> "*The collapse of the communist ideology as the basis of valuation caused a vacuum, in which the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe necessarily reverted to the value system of national identities*." (Vogel et al., 1999: 218)

According to Francis Fukuyama, Hungary has chosen 'the right path' in 1992: "*Hungary is ripe for revanchism, given the ethnic Hungarians in Romania, Croatia, Slovakia and Ukraine. Yet Budapest has relied on diplomatic means alone to protect these interests*." (Fukuyama, 1992)

Since then the public debate about the 19th century and, in general, the past before Trianon seems to be far less included into current collective memory narratives than the burden of the communist cloud, which in consideration of its proximity and intensity seems evidently logical.

In conclusion, the most current discourses about the Dual Monarchy still predominantly vary between nostalgia and anger. Therefore, in essence, the substantial ambiguity regarding the Dual Monarchy has not changed significantly. Nevertheless, none of the two sentiments seems to overweigh nowadays, they coexist.

Nostalgia is dominant when the benefits of the Austro-Hungarian Empire are taken into account: the size of Hungary, the Empire, and its general political and cultural influence in Central Europe. The beginning of the 20th century also marks a period that is considered Hungary's 'Golden Age', the peak of its cultural and philosophical, social and political growth. The number of new journalistic publications rose to an absolute maximum, the newly established 'coffeehouse culture' celebrated its birth, and the pleasures

of a multicultural state were lived through multilingual conversations and studies at various universities.

György Dalos, a renowned present-day Hungarian historian, explains this nostalgia as follows: "*Hungarians tend to romanticize the Dual Monarchy. It had been the best of times because everything that came after was far worse*."(Dalos, 2016) According to Romsics, 1867 meant: „*The Compromise of 1867 turned the Hungarian century-long political aspirations into reality*. " (Romsics, 2008: 308)

Yet distinct anger sentiments and disillusion are equally well established throughout Hungarian narratives nowadays, the following key factors are prominent. Firstly, the disruption of the Hungarian Revolution in 1848, the compromising character of the 1867 Compromise, the overall repression of the Hungarian people all over the Empire (e.g. the right to vote was granted only to a very small population percentage), and the egoistic rule of the aristocracy.

Furthermore, Hungarian sociologist Lajos Arday explains an interesting post-socialist phenomenon: "*Since 1898 and 1990, we have witnessed a rebirth of unity, which has been expressed through history, culture, economics and mentality for hundreds of years. This relatedness and similarity is especially developed in the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, within the states of Czech, Polish, Hungarian, Slovak and Slovene peoples*." (Arday, 1995: 59)

The renaissance of the historical Visegrád alliance in 1991, which was originally a meeting place for political and economic debates for the Hungarian, Bohemian and Polish king in 1355, can be described as one example for the 'rebirth of unity'. The four Central Eastern European countries, Hungary, Poland, Czechia and Slovakia regularly meet to debate current shared political goals.

According to the 19th-century Czech historian, Frantisek Palacky: „ *(...) The vital artery of this necessary union of nations*

is the Danube. The focus of power of such a union must never be diverted far from this river, if the union is to be effective and remain so." (Bideleux et al., 1998:266) With regard to the course of history, Palacky's words appear prophetic, but it is important to establish a connection between the remains of this theory and the present. In this respect, the Danube Region Strategy, an instrument set up by the European Commission in 2009, deals with the macro-regional importance of the Danube region and its focused enhancement. As this type of merging is relatively new, its effectivity and achievements are still defined with ongoing work in progress. An official communication document of the DRS explains: "*The world's most international river basin is now largely a European Union (EU) space.*" (European Commission, 2010)

The official statement, which is to be found on the Danube Region Strategy's website, clearly indicates the potential, which can be drawn from the new geographical outset of the river, which already defines a major key factor itself through its 'internationality'.

This is underlined also in an explanatory footnote in the Action Plan: "*From Kelheim in Germany to Sulina in the river's Romanian delta, the navigable length of the Danube totals 2414 km serving more than 40 ports of importance. (...) With 10 riverine countries and 1025 km of shared borders, the Danube is also the most international river in the world.*" (European Commission, 2010: 9)

Furthermore, the relevance of the Danube River, not only as a regional and strategic advantage but also as an identity-establishing element, is of grave relevance. A term 'Danube identity' has coined in recent historiographic discourses in order to describe the region's cultural and historical specifics.

The comparison of contemporary authors' views concerning the topics of identity and memory draws clear connections between the Danube and its culture. Indisputably important are in this sense Claudio Magris' *Danube: A Senti-*

mental Journey from the Source to the Black Sea, but also Nick Thorpe's book, *The Danube – A Journey Upriver from the Black Sea to the Black Forest*, as well as Laszló Végel's *Neoplanta or the Promised Land* (in Hungarian, "*Neoplanta, avagy az Ígéret Földje"*).

While examining Laszló Végel's work, his multi-ethnicity, as a frequent quality of authors in the region, becomes highly evident. His home, the north Serbian Vojvodina, its capital Novi Sad and the nearby Szenttamás are at the same time proof and witnesses for the region's diverse culture and mixed ethnical structure. During the last centuries, Vojvodina was haunted by tragic misfortunes and torn up between empires: from the Dual Monarchy to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Since 1991 it belongs to Serbia as an autonomous province. As a large Hungarian minority has historically populated Novi Sad and the entire Vojvodina, during several decades the city has been at least trilingual (German, Serbian and Hungarian). The capital was considered a vibrant metropolis at the banks of the blue Danube, bordering the Balkans and Central Europe, and unifying all the different ethnicities of the Monarchy.

In his works, Végel achieves to give an impressively authentic recount of his home, its turbulent past and its present situation. His work can be considered unique, written by a local, who not only has the capability to schematize history but also to add a trustful intimate note through his personal experiences to it. While Végel chooses to establish his historical reproduction of Novi Sad through a local's, Lazo Pavletic's anecdotes, he occasionally adds his personal stories, which focuses very intensively on the city's multicultural past and its remains.

A passage, from the beginning of the account, gives a brief historical sketch: "*We have always been liberated by someone. The Gepids started. They built up their tents on this slippery*

soil; they tied their studs to the banks of the Danube, fed and watered their cattle here. They thoroughly trawled the area. It is not at all certain whether they were the first liberators, but they acted as if they were certain that they were the only ones. Thereafter the Avars came. Then the others: the Bulgarians, meaning the Slavic tribes, and the Hungarians. Then the Turks who liberated us yet again. Then once more the Hungarians. Jenő Savoyai, the Austrian emperor's general, had ridden on his white horse until he arrived here, in order to free the locals from the Turkish slavery. Yet again, the Hungarians arrived. Then the French and the Serbs broke in. They also marched in as saviors. The inhabitants chanted happily: 'Finally our Serb brothers have arrived!' The Hungarians marched in again, the inhabitants shouted with one mouth: 'Finally our Hungarian brothers have returned!' They stayed only for a short time, because the Serbs and the Russians conquered the city once again. Each time the city celebrated the arrivals obliviously." (Végel, 2013: 38)

The evidence which can be drawn from the essence of the previously mentioned documents is that the Dual Monarchy and moreover the Danube Region as a cultural Region is still remaining in the historical and collective memory of its societies; but what remains highly questionable is its representation and overall relevance nowadays. The literary examples give a clear idea about the region's specific past, but also underline its current unsettling changes. Examining the EUDRS as an instrument to enhance the cultural and shared heritage of the regions seems to be inadequate at the current stage of the program, as its Priority Area 3 does not cover sufficiently this aim, not yet.

"*The study of the representations of the past (the past as it was once imagined) promises to reconstruct patterns in the use of rhetoric in the past that parallel those devised earlier to place its events (the past as it is actually transpired). It has added a new dimension to historiography by revealing myriad ways in which*

memory inspires and directs the course of historical inquiry." (Olick et al., 2011: 415)

Therefore, what modern historiography needs, as much as in the context of any historical period, is a comprehensive approach that does not only simply accept the past, but reflects and detects it. Undeniably, the literary works of Végel and Tišma fulfill this ambition to a broad extent and can be considered precious eyewitness accounts.

In this sense, Greenblatt's new historicism seems promisingly helpful to establish new interconnections and contexts; it offers an interdisciplinary perspective to a complex topic as such.

New historicism does include the ideal to collect and interact different sources, literary, juridical and political texts in order to establish an accurate glimpse of the past: *"If the modern historicists saw their task as using the recollective techniques of history to recover the repetitive truths of tradition, their post-modern counterparts focus almost exclusively on the material leavings once designed to inspire recollection*." (Olick et al., 2011: 414)

Therefore, the idea to measure and create an analysis of the past, memory and presentations of it, through using every available material source, offers a complete perspective. The abovementioned example gives an approach to uncover every layer of history and its political changes.

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Chapter 3

Title

From Elections to Protest?
The Transformation of Political Participation
in Post-Socialist Europe

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From Elections to Protest?

The Transformation of Political Participation in Post-Socialist Europe

Tobias Spöri

Weak Political Participation in Post-Socialist Europe

Ever since the beginning of democratic theories, scholars have highlighted the importance of citizens' participation in politics. Diverse participatory channels such as voting, membership in political organisations or joining demonstrations are available to citizens to make their voices heard in political terms. When it comes to the region of Central and Eastern Europe, citizens are supposed to make less use of their right to participate in comparison to their Western counterpart. Post-socialist civil society is considered to be "weak" (Howard, 2002), civic traditions to be "less salient" (Janmaat, 2006) and citizens less active in politics (Letki, 2004). In the literature, the so-called 'post-communist heritage' is presented as the most important explanation for the supposed lack of political participation in Central and Eastern Europe. Regarding the 1990s, Barnes states that citizens share "*a lack of participation due to the long authoritarian experience*" (2006: 79). Pop-Elches and Tucker complement Barnes' finding by claiming that the "*pervasive distrust of the public sphere under Communism*" caused an attitudinal legacy that is responsible for citizens' abstention from civic participation (2013: 46). In essence, such articles argue that a cultural heritage – caused by citizens' negative experiences with politics before 1989 – is still influencing political participation negatively, even today.

However, having in mind the contemporary history of Central and Eastern Europe, several social movements, demonstrations or other forms of citizens' participation had great influence on crucial political and societal developments. The most seminal examples from the 20th century are the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the Prague Spring, Solidarność, the Baltic independent movement, and the Monday demonstrations in East Germany. With regard to these movements, one could raise the question whether the picture of political participation in the region before 1989 is as bleak as partially portrayed. This paper argues that the effects of the comprehensive transformation on people's political attitudes and behaviour after 1989 are still underplayed in the literature.

First, I will briefly outline the main findings of political participation research. The second part stresses regional specifics of post-socialist Europe in terms of citizens' engagement in politics. Diverse participatory channels such as voting or demonstrating will be traced over time. Third, the increase of protest movements after the outbreak of the economic and financial crisis in 2008 is discussed in regard to its impact on democracy in the region. I argue that the increase in political participation outside of the realm of formal politics hints at the great level of frustration with politics stemming from citizens' experiences with democracy after 1989.

Lessons Learned From Previous Research on Political Participation

The challenge any definition of political participation faces is to capture its dynamic character. A too static and predetermining approach would not sufficiently take into account the vibrant and diverse features of political participation. In this vein, Lamprianou (2013) proposes to focus on the aims citizens pursue by their actions to influence political decisions or policy-makers. Norris specified the telos-orientated understanding of political participation by adding to this

definition that "*any dimensions of activity*" should count as political participation that "*are either designed directly to influence government agencies and the policy process, or indirectly to impact civil society, or which attempt to alter systematic patterns of social behaviour*" (Norris, 2001: 6). She clarifies that citizens equally intend to address representatives, civil society's stakeholders or like-minded people. Therefore, the definition of political participation of this paper is:

> *Any action of private citizens by which they seek to directly or indirectly influence any political outcome, representatives, civil society's stakeholders or like-minded people.*

New participatory venues are constantly emerging and therefore research on political participation has to grasp and contextualize them as they appear. As a reaction to the branching out of political participation in the 1970s, Hirschman (1970) proposes the well-known differentiation between exit-based and voice-based political participation. He emphasises that political participation can be either channelled directly though voting for opposition parties ("kicking the rascals out") or indirectly through party membership. Teorell et al. develop Hirschman's dimension further by adding a second aspect – "representational" and "extra-representational" participation (2007: 340-344). It is not only essential whether citizens intend to influence any political outcome directly through casting their votes or indirectly through raising their voice. It is equally crucial whether citizens choose representational or extra-representational channels. In the case of casting their electoral ballots, citizens vote for politicians, who are supposed to represent their interests. By applying extra-representational forms of political participation, citizens voice their interests themselves directly without necessarily being represented by

any politicians. The underlying assumption is that any form of political participation beyond the scope of classic representation such as protest results in an additive expression of opinion in public. However, it does not mean that citizens have to choose between different channels. Fung highlights that extra-representational channels or direct participation are not a "*strict alternative to political representation*". They rather serve as a complement to classic representation (2006: 66). In this context, Schäfer shows that citizens who participate through representational forms are more likely to choose extra-representational ones as well (Schäfer, 2012). His explanation for the disproportionately high usage of any participatory mean refers to one of the most important variable when it comes to preconditions of political participation – individual availability of socio-economic resources.

Many scholars state that political participation mainly depends on citizens' availability of time and resources (Brady et al., 1995). The more resources citizens possess, the more likely they are to participate. Time is limited by definition but resources are not, which makes them even more crucial for political participation. Correspondingly, availability of socio-economic resources has also the potential to exclude people from politics (Anderson and Beramendi, 2008). However, even an indirect exclusion through great social inequality contradicts the fundamental principles of democracy. All citizens "*who are subject to laws and policies should participate in making them*" (Fung, 2006: 66). Barber argues that the main precondition for citizens participating in politics is people's ability to act freely, economically independent and autonomous in public decision making (Barber, 1984). Dahl puts it similarly: if people do not have enough resources to participate or loose trust in political activity that could improve their individual situation, then democratic governance faces a challenging threat (Dahl, 1998: 177-178).

With respect to Central and Eastern Europe, it is surprising that weak political participation in Central and Eastern Europe is not linked to the transformation and its effects. The transformation along with its economic reforms affected many citizens negatively. Social and economic inequalities have increased since the beginning of the transformation. In order to emphasise regional specifics of post-socialist Europe, the following part outlines both alleged heritages – the state socialist past and the transformation after 1989.

A Twofold Heritage in Post-Socialist Europe

The state socialist heritage

The commonly agreed diagnosis is that Central and Eastern European societies experience a lack of political participation. In the mainstream, scholars predominantly refer to the state socialist past by discussing the monopoly of the communist party, stifled autonomous counter-elites or suppressed pluralism and fundamental freedoms (Ceka, 2013, Crawford and Lijphart, 1997). The long authoritarian experience before 1989 is used to explain low support for democracy, low levels of trust and weak political participation in the region; in particular in terms of electoral and associational forms (Pacek et al., 2009).

However, according to Verba et al., "*participation is a complex field where various variables have impact on. No magic bullet would do the trick*" (2004: 658). Past research on political participation has identified a myriad of preconditions for political participation such as the institutional setting, the level of mobilisation of citizens, political culture, income, and education. In the light of those findings, it is puzzling that weak political participation in Central and Eastern Europe is predominantly linked to the cultural legacy: despite political culture being just one out of many key factors influencing political participation in general. There is no doubt that most citizens tried to keep a low profile under state socialism in order to avoid sanctions. It is not the aim of the paper to fully deny the impact of the state socialist past. However, the

'heritage theory' incorporates the danger of selecting only "*aspects of a previous political culture which support one's hypothesis about the present*" (White, 1984: 65). It is true that all Central and Eastern European countries share a common state socialist past and show weak political participation rates. The legacy from the past appears to be a simplistic explanation for such a complex phenomenon like political participation.

The transformation heritage

Kornai describes the transformation as a "*complete transformation, parallel in all spheres*" (2006: 217-218), also known as the "*dilemma of simultaneousness*" (Offe, 1991). The transformation to democracy – the establishment of constitutions, free elections, independent courts of justice, pluralistic party systems, and free media – did not proceed easily (Kitschelt, 1995). Due to the persistence of former high-level members of the communist party after 1989, the transformation of the political elite was partially delayed and therefore sometimes less visible to citizens. However, at one point a new elite replaced the old one, but the reputation of the political elite remained still low. Thus, scholarly attention should be drawn to the performance of the current political elite, especially to clientelism and corruption.

The transformation of economic systems brought negative consequences for large parts of society (Allardt, 2002). Neoliberal reforms and unequal points of departure of different societal groups caused an unequal distribution of former state property, a high level of unemployment, and subsequently distrust in political and economic elites as well as in institutions in particular (Lovell, 2001). Furthermore, at the beginning of the transformation great expectations sprouted both in political and economic terms; expectations that have been mostly disappointed over time (Krastev, 2010). After the great enthusiasm or the 'democratic honeymoon' at the early stage of the transformation, the beliefs in democ-

racy and its capability of solving the most salient problems diminishes constantly in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 (Ulram and Plasser, 2003). Unfulfilled expectations are the source of great potential for frustration, disappointment and apathy (Varga and Freyberg-Inan, 2012). Mishler and Rose argue that the effects of the latest economic and political performance are at least equally crucial for citizen participation than the socialist past (1997: 434). In this vein, Tanasoiu proposes the so-called 'Homo Post-socialistus' in order to highlight the post-transformation frustration of most citizens, their disappointment with the political elite, flourishing corruption, or simply unfulfilled but with too high expectations (2013: 601-604). Therefore, I argue that the region of Central and Eastern Europe has to deal with a twofold heritage – a state socialist and a transformation heritage. Despite the well-described transformation effects on the region, the effects on political participation are still underplayed.

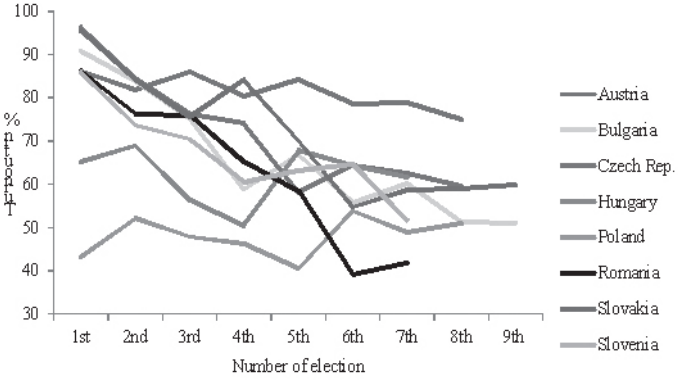
The Transformation of Political Participation in Post-Socialist Europe

In order to grasp the development of political participation in Central and Eastern Europe, seven countries are selected – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Those countries cover the diversity of the region in terms of the socialist heritage and the entire spectrum of the transformation. As Mungiu-Pippidi (2010, 122) illustrates, Romania is considered to be the most oppressive Central and Eastern European state with the lowest level of societal autonomy in 1989. In contrast, Yugoslavia (Slovenia) is considered to be the least oppressive Central and Eastern European state with the highest level of societal autonomy. When it comes to the time after 1989, all countries faced similar challenges as previously outlined. The division between winners and losers of the transformation exists in all countries. However, the countries differ for instance in terms of social inequality after 1989. Since all selected cases

are members of the EU since 2004, Romania and Bulgaria with a certain delay in 2007, the influence of the European Union and the European integration process is relatively constant. Austria complements the case selection in order to include a Western European EU member state, which helps to distinguish between general and regional specific trends.

Electoral participation To begin with electoral participation, Graph 1 illustrates voter turnout in national elections since 1990 in the region. Data is taken from the webpage "Parties and Elections in Europe" (http://www.parties-and-elections.eu/; accessed on September 28, 2016).

Graph 1: Turnout in national elections since 1990



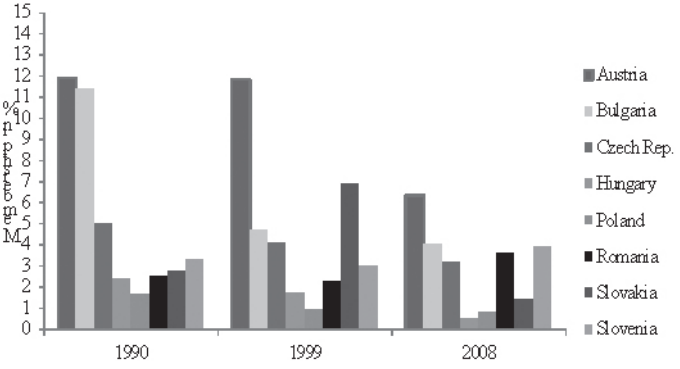
Apart from Poland and Hungary, turnout decreases tremendously over time in all post-socialist countries. In Bulgaria, turnout dropped from 90.8 % (1990) to 51.1 % (2014); it decreased from 96.3 % (1990) to 59.5 % (2013) in the Czech Republic; Romania experienced a decline from 86.2 % (1990) to 41.8 % (2012); in Slovakia 95.4 % of eligible voters casted their ballot in 1990 compared to 59.8 % in 2016; and Slovenia shows a sharp fall from 85.9 % (1992) to 51.7 % (2014), too. In the just mentioned cases, between one third and almost half of eligible voters refused to participate in elections over the transformation. Turnout in Hungary and Poland is different

as it started at a lower level (Poland 43.2 % in 1991; Hungary 65.1 % in 1990) and is comparatively stable over time (Poland 50.9 % in 2015; Hungary 61.7 % in 2014). The graph also shows Austrian turnout since 1990, which also decreases almost steadily with each election. However, it is generally higher and does not show the sharp drop over time.

Membership in political organisations

The subsequent graphs showing two participatory channels, membership in political organizations and joining lawful demonstrations, are based on the European Value Study (EVS). It is a large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal survey on beliefs, attitudes and values of citizens all over Europe. As in all other surveys, the EVS responses are subjective as they consist of reported political activities and opinions by a sample of citizens. The level of reported activities is generally higher as in reality due to social desirability, which means that societal expectations trigger higher values in a face-to-face interview situation. Still, the EVS is one of the few surveys, which covers a whole range of political activities over time in the post-socialist world from the early 1990s onwards.

Graph 2: Membership in political organisations since 1990



Membership in political organisations, in particular in parties is a classic example for voice-based political partici-

pation of representative democracy. Graph 2 shows the respective development in the selected post-socialist countries and Austria.

As in the case of electoral participation, the sample displays a great heterogeneity: Poland (1.1 %) and Hungary (1.5 %) show the lowest values on average over time. Romania (2.8 %), Slovenia (3.39 %), Slovakia (3.6 %), and the Czech Republic (4.0 %) have moderately higher values. Due to the high value in 1990, Bulgaria comes first out of all post-socialist countries with an average of 6.71 %. In Austria, 10.0 % of the population is a member of political organisations on average from 1990 to 2008, making it the highest value of the sample. The Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary experience a clear negative trend as the values decrease from wave to wave steadily over time. In Romania and Slovenia, the respective values hardly change over the 1990s but increase slightly in 2008. In the Slovak case, the values increase to a great extent from 1990 to 1999 but equally drop from 1999 to 2008. In turn, Bulgaria displays a massive drop from the first to the second wave and hardly change from the second to the third wave. In the Austrian case, the values are almost constant over the 1990s but then drop in 2008, too.

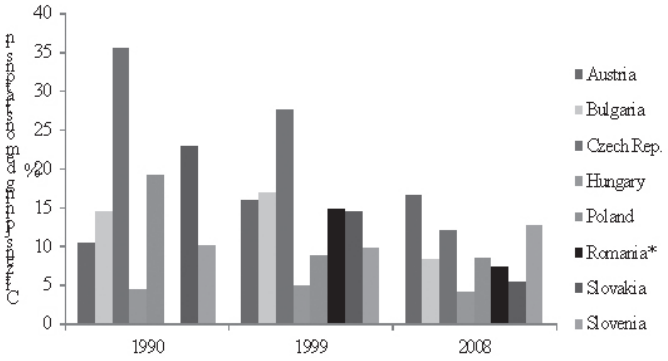
Demonstrations

The last form of political participation under scrutiny is joining lawful demonstrations. As already mentioned, the development of state socialist Europe was heavily influenced by mass demonstrations, in particular by the Prague Spring in the late 1960s.

Graph 3 presents the development of protest participation in 1990, 1999, and 2008. Hungary shows again the lowest values with an average of 4.4 % of the Hungarian population having joint at least one demonstration over the course of their life. The average values in Austria (14.3 %), Bulgaria (13.3 %), Poland (12.1 %), Romania (11.0 %, *the question on taking part in demonstrations was not included in the Ro-

manian survey in 1990), Slovakia (14.2 %), and Slovenia (10.8 %) are fairly close to each other. The Czech Republic has the highest share of citizens with protest experience (25.0 %). Apart from Austria and Slovenia, all other countries show a negative trend over time. Moreover, Austria does not have a significantly higher value in protest participation in comparison to the other countries. This finding does not support the thesis that political participation in post-socialist Europe is always weaker than in Western Europe. It might be rather limited to representational forms of political participation such as voting or membership in political organisations.

Graph 3: Joining lawful demonstrations since 1990



From Elections to Protest?

In all selected countries, the likelihood of citizens participating through diverse channels tends to decrease from 1990 to 2008. In particular, taking part in elections faces a sharp decline, which is one of the biggest challenges for representative democracies. The Austrian case illustrates that this trend does not only exist in post-socialist Europe. It is rather a global phenomenon that citizens' frustration with politics causes political apathy and abstention from formal politics (Franklin and Eijk, 2004). However, the level of decline in the region of post-socialist Europe is tremendous and significantly stronger in comparison to Western Europe (Hooghe and Quintelier, 2014: 221).

Furthermore, Central and Eastern Europe has experienced an increase of large-scale protest movements since 2008, which also marks the outbreak of the financial and economic crisis. They range from rather single-issue protest movements, such as environmental protest in Romania (2013) to broader protest against the political elite such as in Bulgaria (2013), Poland (2016), Romania (2015), and Slovenia (2012-2013). According to the literature, protest movements are most likely to emerge when citizens seek changing policies, when they do not have sufficient trust in the government or when certain interests are not sufficiently represented by the political elite (Chesters and Welsh, 2011).

I argue the increase of protest is fostered by the economic crisis. Since 2008, Central and Eastern Europe has been affected by the crisis through intensified austerity measures, economic decline and higher unemployment rates. The crisis hit the vulnerable post-socialist economies after some years of almost steady economic growth since 2000, and mean a great threat to the socio-economic basis of many citizens. On top of the already increasing gap between the representative democracy and citizens, the crisis triggered a new wave of deterioration of social standards (Myant and Drahokoupil, 2013), which gives room for new protest movements. Krastev, for example, stresses that "*elections not only are losing their capacity to capture the popular imagination, they are failing to effectively overcome crises*" (2014: 10). Therefore, citizens increasingly might consider elections to be a less effective channel to influence policies. Citizens might not necessarily participate less but they choose new channels beyond representative democracy. Although the linkage between the increase of protest and the effects of the financial and economic crisis is still scholarly debated, the visibility of protest movements has risen since 2008. At least a certain share of society started to raise their voices more often publicly. If the 'from elections to protest' thesis is true, democracies in

post-socialist Europe as well as in other regions face a severe threat. One out of many crucial questions is how to bridge the increasing gap between the political elite and that actually intended key player of democracy – the people.

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Chapter 4

Title **Lessons from the Western European Autonomy and Independence Aspirations for Hungarian Minorities Living in the Danube Region**

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Lessons from the Western European Autonomy and Independence Aspirations for Hungarian Minorities Living in the Danube Region

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In the 20th century, numerous ethnic minorities of Western Europe managed to obtain autonomy (e.g. the autonomy of South Tyrol had been guaranteed in 1946, the autonomous communities of Spain had been established in Spain in 1979, etc.). Although, ethnic and national minorities of the Central and Eastern Countries (CEECs) were not so lucky: in many countries of the Soviet bloc persons belonging to national minorities could not use their language in the public sphere, in the institutions, in the media, and in the education system. The Communist-led regimes, based on the ideology of the proletarian internationalism (international socialism), adopted the Soviet model of treating national minorities as possessing only folkloric significance. Moreover, in the CEE countries during the Communism every germ of the autonomy aspirations has been stifled.

The end of the Cold War reopened the question of self-determination and minority rights issues. After 1989, with the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the autonomy aspirations of the ethnic and national minorities living in the Danube Region have (re-)appeared.

Simultaneously, in response to political and economic challenges, from the end of the 1990s autonomy aspirations have re-emerged and/or intensified in the Western part of Europe (ex. Corsica, Scotland and Catalonia). In several cases autonomy aspirations resulted referendums on independ-

ence (e.g. Scotland and Catalonia) or on "more autonomy" (e.g. Corsica).

Two recent examples of independence claims were the referendums on independence in Scotland (18 September 2014) and in Catalonia[1] (9 November 2014).

In the context of these referendums several scholars in the field of the political science emphasized that an eventual independence of Scotland or Catalonia would create a domino effect throughout Europe. Eve Hepburn, Senior Lecturer of the University of Edinburgh (Scotland) anticipated only the domino effect on the independence movement of some Italian regions (Hepburn, 2014); while Ivan Botoucharov, Specialist of the European Civil Society, and co-founder and co-president of the political journal *One Europe*, in his political analysis emphasized that *"a potential « yes » vote would have large geopolitical ramifications across Europe as other pro-independence regions and autonomous areas may follow the Scottish example"* (e.g. the Catalan region, Basque Country, etc.). He also added that in addition to the abovementioned semi-autonomous regions, there are many minority groups across Europe, e.g. Russians in Latvia and Estonia, and Hungarians in Romania that are *"keenly aware of the Scottish referendum and its outcome will influence their plans and struggles in the future"* (Botoucharov, 2014).

Moreover, several politicians, especially from the far right politics, went over in the political foretelling and predicted that an eventual independence of Scotland and/or Catalonia would create a domino effect throughout Europe. This position was particularly popular between (nationalist) politicians of Romania who feared that the Hungarian

[1] The referendum in Catalonia was a non-binding vote on the political future of Catalonia. The Spanish government appealed the Constitutional Court of Spain, which provisionally suspended the vote. Therefore, the Catalan President Artur Mas re-branded the referendum as a "process of citizen participation", in other words, a consultation (non-binding self-determination referendum).

minority from Transylvania would ask for secession. The then social democrat MP, Bogdan Diaconu[2] was anxious that the independence of Scotland and Catalonia could reinforce the independence claim of the Hungarian minority[3].

On 17 September 2014, one day before the referendum on Scottish independence, the online newspaper of ethnic Hungarians living in Romania, Maszol claimed in its article entitled *Can Szeklerland follow the example of Scotland?,* that, without quoting any names of politicians, according to some representatives of the Romanian political elite and the Romanian media, the Scottish independence could create a European political tsunami: Catalans, Basques, Flemings and *Szeklers*[4] would enhance their autonomy or would claim independence. (Maszol.ro, 2014)

Although, firstly, at the referendum, Scottish people voted to stay in the United Kingdom, while the referendum on the independence of Catalonia was merely a consultation without any legal effect, and secondly, there are no influential Romanian politicians who think that Szeklers, under the influence of the Scottish and/or Catalan referendums on independence would threaten the territorial integrity of Romania. It would be important to analyse, firstly, if there is any (geo)political and economical reality behind the accusa-

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[2] Bogdan Diaconu left the Social Democratic Party and founded a new Romanian nationalist party called United Romania Party.

[3] Bogdan Diaconu filed a criminal complaint against the organizers of the Great Szekler March (march for the autonomy of Szeklerland) even before the Scottish and Catalan referendums saying that the demonstration incites Romania's Hungarian population to deny the unity of the country as a one-nation state. (dailynewshungary.com, 2013)

[4] The Székelys or sometimes also referred as Szeklers are a subgroup of the Hungarian minority living mostly in Szeklerland in Romania. In the Middle Ages, Szeklers played an important role in the defense of the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary against the Ottomans. With the Treaty of Trianon (1920), Transylvania become part of Romania, and the Szeklers were target of the strong Romanization effort of the Ceausescu regime.

tions of some (nationalist) Romanian politicians. Secondly, it is also necessary to analyse how the Western European autonomy aspirations can influence the autonomy movement in the Danube Region, with particular regard to the autonomy aspirations of the Hungarian national minorities living in Romania.

Therefore, it is necessary to compare apples and oranges, in other words, the two different cases: Scotland and Catalonia fighting for independence, and the Hungarian minority living in Transylvania struggling for autonomy (especially the special position of Szeklerland claiming territorial autonomy).

The first chapter of my paper aims to give the most important definition concerning the classification of the different types of self-determination of minorities, while the second would present the question of the self-determination of minorities in EU context. The third chapter gives a short panorama about the most important autonomy aspirations in Western Europe (Scotland, Catalonia, etc.) and their outcome. The fourth chapter of my study would present the autonomy aspirations of the Hungarian minorities living in Transylvania, with particular regards to Szeklerland. In the last chapter (conclusion), I try to respond to my initial question: what lessons to take from the Western European autonomy and independence aspirations to the (territorial) autonomy claims of the Hungarian minority living in the neighbouring country?

Theoretical framework: basic concepts of the self-determination of minorities

The ideal propagated by Europe's nation-state builders in the 19th century was "One nation, one state". Nonetheless, all European states, excluding the microstates (Andorra, Lichtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, etc.) host national minorities. Generally, most national and ethnic minorities live in their traditional homeland; however, because of the evolution of state boundaries through history, they have

found themselves included in the territory of a country with a major 'titular nation', a national majority which exerts cultural, political and economic domination on the minorities living in their territory. (Benedikter, 2006) These minority groups are often socially and economically discriminated and excluded from the political power.

In the post-war period the UN system of human rights established the universal standards of the protection of human rights. In spite of this UN system, in many European states persons belonging to national minorities cannot use their language in the public sphere, in the institutions, in the media, and in the education system. (Benedikter, 2006) This allegation was (and in several cases is still) particularly true for the Communist (Socialist) period of the Central and Eastern European region.

Ted Gurr, a US scholar on political conflict and instability, differentiates the claims of minorities based on the integration of a national or ethnic minority in the society: the members of a socially (fully) integrated minority group claim the improvement of their political and cultural rights, while the socially non-integrated minority groups struggle for political and territorial autonomy or independence. (Gurr, 2000: 16.)

Based on the origin of the territorial claims of minorities in a state with a major 'titular nation', two categories of territorial conflicts can be distinguished: the claim of autonomy and the claim of independence. (Pellon, 2009: 52.) Autonomist claims are challenging domestic state sovereignty but not external sovereignty, to the extent there is a degree of allegiance to the central authority. In contrast, secession is much more radical since this word is the synonym of breaking and questioning territorial integrity. The ultimate goal of secessionist claims is obtaining international legal sovereignty. (Krasner, 1999)

Autonomy is the capacity of a rational individual to make an informed, un-coerced decision. More specifically, in the

field of minority rights autonomy refers to a 'limited self-rule', which can range from self-government in limited areas to complete self-rule just short of independence. Autonomy is a broad concept. Taking into consideration the subject of autonomy, distinction should be made between personal and/or cultural autonomy and territorial autonomy.

Personal or cultural autonomy is granted to the members of a specific ethnic, linguistic and religious community. This model of autonomy permits the members of a specific community to be governed through institutions and/or their own institutions. Therefore, it allows minority groups a significant degree of autonomy even when they are dispersed throughout the territory. In case of personal autonomy the autonomous status is granted not to a unit of area, but rather to a group of persons which form together a specific ethnic, linguistic or religious community. This form of autonomy is appropriate when national or ethnic minorities do not constitute the majority of the population in areas in which they reside, or when national or ethnic minorities, for whatever reasons, have no territorial autonomy claims. (Benedikter, 2006)

In contrast, territorial autonomy is to some extent a more developed form of self-government. This second type of autonomy can be applied to national or ethnic groups – in this case the expression 'minority' is not a proper term – that differs from the majority of the population in a state, but constituting the majority of a specific area. The powers transferred are exercised by locally elected representatives. The territorial autonomy makes possible to the inhabitants of the area to regulate their own affairs through autonomous institutions. The territorial autonomy includes some specific areas which are fundamental for a national or ethnic minority to maintain its cultural identity (e.g. education, culture, media, etc.) or which are needed to ensure the functioning of the autonomous territory (e.g. social and economic regu-

lation). (Benedikter, 2006) As for the (international) legal status, these autonomous areas do not possess any international personality. The claim of sovereignty is not linked to territorial autonomy.

Secession, in the context of minority studies, is the withdrawal of a (minority) group from a larger (political) entity. Threats of secession can also be used as a strategic bargaining tool. International law prohibits secession directly or indirectly. (Stanford, 2013) Therefore, most of the minority protection and/or minority rights related legal documents include a clause emphasizing the importance of the territorial integrity and the national unity of a state. (Pellon, 2009: 69-70.)

The EU framework of the self-determination of minorities

The European Union is the home of almost 500 million people. About 45 millions of them (9%) belong to one of the many national minorities. The rights granted to these minorities differ from one state to another. The Member States have not even found a common position with regard to the recognition of the existence of national minorities either.

In fact, it is not possible to speak about a special EU minority protection system. The main reason of this fact is that minority-related questions are considered by the Member States as internal affairs and for that reason they would not accept the interference of the European Union in such questions. Although the 'old' Member States had to face minority-related issues (ex. Corsican, Basque, Alsatian, Breton ethnic minorities in France, the Catalan question in Spain, the autonomy of Scotland in the United Kingdom, etc.), until the beginning of the enlargement process in the Central and Eastern European region, the European Community – on the basis of the subsidiarity principle – avoided the treatment of minority questions (Csáky, 2009: 277-278). It was only gradually developed as the European Union has become active in this field. Hence, the 'minority policy' of the European

Community (from 1 November 1993: European Union) can be divided in two distinct periods: the first period until 1989 and the second period from 1989, the regime change in the Central and Eastern European Countries and the perspective of the accession of the CEECs to the European Community.

The European Union's attitude to autonomies is also ambiguous. On the one hand, the European Union does not make difference between unitary and federal states. Therefore, the (autonomous) regions may not be represented in the EU decision-making mechanism (except for German and Austrian lands). It means that the European Union does not recognize the political autonomy of regions. On the other hand, the Maastricht Treaty created the Committee of Regions (CoR), an advisory body which represents the interests of regional and local authorities. However, neither the Maastricht Treaty, nor other EU treaties have given special status to autonomous regions. The reason of the setting-up of this institution was not to institutionalize the representation of regional political power. The Maastricht Treaty introduced also the principle of subsidiarity into the EC Treaty. (Miklósné, 2010: 80-81.)

Furthermore, the attitude of the EU towards (territorial) autonomy is in line with its minority policy. Taking into consideration the delicate nature of the territorial autonomy, this question was and is still considered by the EU as internal affairs of the Member States. In contrast, the European Union, like other European and international organizations (European Council, United Nations, OSCE, etc.) advocates the principle of the inviolability of the territorial integrity of the Member States. (Pellon: 69-70.) In this regard, it is important to take into consideration the attitude of the EU Member States toward secession. One of the most famous and recent example was the case of the secession of Kosovo (enacted on 17 February 2008). On 18 February 2008, the European Union took note of the independence of Kosovo

without recognizing it as an independent state. EU Member States individually decided whether to recognize Kosovo, and the majority of the Member States (24 out of 28) have recognized it. The recognition was especially refused by states (Cyprus, Greece, Romania and Spain) which fear that the recognition of the independence of Kosovo would lead their minorities to introduce secession claims. Although the European Parliament is not formally vested with the authority to shape the EU's foreign policy, it was seen to be expressing its acceptance of Kosovo's independence when it hosted the Kosovan Assembly in the interparliamentary meeting on 30 May 2008. On 5 February 2009, the European Parliament adopted a resolution that encouraged all EU Member States to recognize Kosovo. (EP News, 2012)

This attitude of the EU institutions and Member States towards independence (secession) is particularly true in case of the secessionist attempt (referendum on independence) of an autonomous region of a Member State.

However, it is important to know that EU treaties are silent on what happens when a part of a Member State becomes independent. The possibility of internal enlargement, in other word the EU membership of new states resulting from self-determination process within current EU Member States, is neither explicitly rejected nor explicitly foreseen by treaties.[5] (Euobserver.com, 2013)

However, before the Scottish referendum on independence, José Manuel Barroso, the then President of the European Commission, speaking to the BBC emphasized that it would be "*extremely difficult, if not impossible for an independent Scotland*"[6] to join the European Union. He also added that "*of course it will be extremely difficult to get the approval of all the*

[5] In the past, in unforeseen situations (when East Germany merged with West Germany and when Greenland chose to leave the EU despite being part of Denmark) the European Union has adopted solutions based on negotiation and agreement.

[6] Scotland is the more pro-European country of the UK.

other member states to have a new member state coming from a member state" (BBC, 2014).

Concerning the Catalan independence claim, the spokesman of the European Commission stated on 29 September 2013 that if Catalonia became independent, it would automatically leave the European Union. "*An independent state, because its independence, would become a third country vis-à-vis the EU and as of the day of independence the EU treaties will not longer apply*." (euractiv.com, 2013)

Western European autonomies and independence aspirations

In response to political and economic challenges, from the end of the 1990s autonomy aspirations have re-emerged and/or intensified in the western part of Europe. However, there are only two areas in the European Union, Scotland and Catalonia, that claimed independence and organized referendums on this question.

Scottish autonomy

Scotland is an autonomous country inside the United Kingdom with a wide-ranging autonomous status.

Demography

The 5.3 million Scots are representing 8.3 percent of Britain's overall population. In the 2011 census, 62% of Scotland's population stated their national identity as 'Scottish only', 18% as 'Scottish and British', and 8% as 'British only', while 4% indicated other national identity. 80% of the population is Scottish Presbyterian and only 10% is belonging to the Anglican Church. (Scotland Census, 2011)

History

Scotland emerged as an independent entity during the Early Middle Ages. From 1603, Scotland and England shared the same king in a personal union when James VI of Scotland was declared monarch of England and Ireland.[7] In 1707 the Treaty of Union and the subsequent Acts of Union ratified by

[7] From 1603, the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland were separate states and separate legislatures, but with the same monarch.

the Scottish Parliament, created the United Kingdom of Scotland and England. Therefore, Scotland was never military conquered by England. The union of the two kingdoms was accepted by Scotland mainly for economic reasons (access to resources of England, suppression of trade barriers, etc.). In 1707, the Scottish Parliament and the English Parliament united to form the Parliament of Great Britain. However, the merger was not assimilation since Scotland could administrate the territory through its own self-government system. (Győri Szabó, 2006: 154-155.)

Economy Scotland, due to the merger with the Kingdom of England, got free access to the colonial market and received also access to the resources of an industrially more developed country. These facts and also the industrial revolution made Scotland into a cultural, commercial and industrial power. After 1945, Scotland's economic situation became progressively worse due to overseas competition and its inefficient industry. However, the discovery of North Sea oil in 1970 created the conditions for Scottish economic independence. On per capita basis, Scotland has higher GDP than national averages (Scotland: USD 45 904, United Kingdom: USD 41 158 in 2015). (IMF, 2016)

Scotland

Source: Google Maps

The autonomy of Scotland and independence aspirations

Since in Scotland the merger had no assimilation character, for decades the Scottish nationalism did not go beyond the activity of cultural and folkloric movements. However, in the 20th century, due to the deterioration of the economic situation, and the introduction of the Community Charge[8] one year before the rest of the United Kingdom by the government of Margaret Thatcher, contributed to a growing internal movement in Scotland for a return to a direct control over Scottish domestic affairs. Following the referendum on devolution, the Scottish Act was adopted by the United Kingdom's Parliament to create a Scottish Parliament and a Scottish Government. Due to the law on Scottish devolution, the Parliament of Edinburgh can pass laws on devolved matters, in general those affecting most aspects of the day-to-day life in Scotland (e.g. agriculture, education, health, environment, local government, sport, tourism, local taxes, etc.). The Parliament at Westminster can pass laws on matters having UK-wide or international impact (e.g. foreign policy, immigration, defence, energy, etc.). (Parliament.scot, 2016)

The left-leaning Scottish Nationalist Party is the biggest pro-independence party, having 69 seats of the 129 in the Scottish Parliament. This fact illustrates the importance of the independence for the population of Scotland.

A national referendum was held in Scotland on 18 September 2014 about the independence of the country that is part of the United Kingdom. The referendum question was *"Should Scotland be an independent country?"* The 'no' side won with 55.3% voting against independence. Although, Scotland voted to remain part of the United Kingdom, the country continues to remain one of the autonomous areas of the United Kingdom.

[8] The Community Charge was a system of taxation introduced in replacement of domestic rates in Scotland.

Although, the UK government, emphasizing the territorial integrity of the United Kingdom, opposed to the independence of Scotland, it made possible to Scotland to organize a referendum on the independence.

Catalan autonomy Catalonia is an autonomous community of the Kingdom of Spain. It is designated as a nationality by the Statute of Autonomy.

Demography Catalonians make up around 16% of Spain's population. According to the linguistic census held by the Government of Catalonia, Spanish is the most spoken language in the autonomous region (46.53%), followed by the Catalan (37.26%) in everyday communication. The census reveals also that 73% of the Catalan population aged 2 or more can speak Catalan, and 95% understands it. (INE, 2015)

History As the territory of the Crown of Aragon Catalonia has been part of Spain since the country was born from the union of Aragon and the Kingdom of Castile in late 15th century. The Crowns of Castile and Aragon maintained distinct territories, institutions, parliaments and laws. The first serious struggle for Catalan independence was in 1640 when King Philip IV introduced huge taxes in Catalonia. Catalans revolted against the large presence of the royal army in the territory of Catalonia. The Crown of Aragon lost distinctive rules, institutions and laws at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession when Philip V centralized Spanish rules. The king banned also the use of the Catalan language in Catalonia.

The beginning of separatism can certainly be traced back to the mid-19th century when some intellectuals and politicians started to claim full independence to Catalonia.

In 1932, the Generalitat of Catalonia (Government of Catalonia) was restored as an autonomous government. After the Spanish Civil War, Franco abolished Catalan institutions and

banned the use of the Catalan language both in official and in private life communication. Since the democratic change in Spain, Catalonia is again an autonomous region of the Kingdom of Spain and has gained some important political and cultural autonomy. (Győri Szabó, 2006: 187-188.)

Economy

Catalonia, a highly industrialised area and one of the principal tourist destinations, is economically the richest part of Spain. The GDP in Catalonia in 2014 was EUR 199 797 million, which was the highest in Spain. (Datosmarco.com, 2016)

The autonomy of Catalonia and independence aspirations

Catalonia is an autonomous region of Spain. The region has its democratically elected parliament. In September 2005, the Catalan parliament approved the definition of Catalonia as a nation in the new Statute of Autonomy.

The Generalitat de Catalunya is the self-government institution of Catalonia. The Generalitat holds jurisdiction in the field of culture, education, health, justice, environment, transportation, commerce and public order. Catalonia has its own police force. However Catalonia, unlike Scotland, cannot make its own rate of income tax.

Catalonia

Source: img.theepochtimes.com

The legal system is uniform in every region of Spain with the exception of civil law, which is administered separately in Spain.

The Catalan independence movement is dominated by the centre-right Democratic Convergence of Catalonia and the left-wing Republican Left of Catalonia. (Győri Szabó, 2006: 188.) The 2012 elections were the first in the history of Catalonia resulting in a clear majority for the pro-independence movement. The coalition of these two parties holds 72 from the 135 seats in the Catalan Parliament.

The non-binding referendum on Catalan independence was held on 9 November 2014. The ballot paper carried out two questions: "*Do you want Catalonia to become a State?*" and "*Do you want this State to be independent?*". 80.8% of the votes supported the 'yes-yes' option, 10.1 the 'yes-no', and 4.5% the 'no-no' option.

The Spanish central government rejects the independence claim of the autonomous regions but the territorial autonomy of the autonomous regions is fixed in the Spanish Constitution of 1978.

The autonomy aspiration of the Hungarian minority living in the neighbouring countries: the example of Transylvania

In the Central and Eastern European region one of the most affected states by minority issues is Hungary. The existence of more than three million Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin is the consequence of history. These Hungarian minorities are not immigrants; their ancestors lived in the Kingdom of Hungary for over a thousand years. They were detached from Hungary by the Peace Treaty of Trianon, signed in 1920.

The Treaty of Trianon closing World War I regulated the status of the independent Hungarian state and defined its borders. The victorious allies of World War I imposed to punish Hungary and the Axis powers for their participation in the war. As a result of this treaty, the post-war Hungary lost 72% of its former territory (325 411 to 92 916 km^2) and half of its population (20 880 487 to 8 522 230 people). The former

Hungarian land was redistributed to Romania, Czechoslovakia, the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom and Austria. Nearly 33% of the ethnic Hungarian population was also attached to neighbouring countries.

During World War II Hungary regained some of its lost territories. These new borders reflected the geographical distribution of various ethnic groups in the region more accurately.

Nevertheless, after the end of World War II, the Treaty of Paris re-imposed the territorial provisions of the Treaty of Trianon upon Hungary. Hungary lost the territories it had regained during World War II.

As a result of the peace system in 1920 and 1947, a significant part of the Hungarian population was attached to Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union and Austria.

At present, because of the dissolution of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, Hungarian minorities live in the territory of Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Austria (Győri Szabó, 2006: 83-88).

The Hungarians living in the territories detached from Hungary have been and are still subjected to discrimination due to the anti-discrimination policy applied especially by Slovakia, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine, where the right of national minorities to preserve their national identities, such as the education of minority languages and their use in the public sphere, is not or is only partially respected. (Brucker, 2016: 101.)

The Hungarian minority in Romania

The Hungarian minority is the largest national minority in Romania. Based on the census of 2011, this minority is consisting of 1 227 623 people, making up the 6.5% of the total population.

The majority of ethnic Hungarians lives in the western and central part of Romania, in the areas called Transylva-

nia that were, before the treaty of Trianon (1920), parts of Hungary. Actually, Hungarians, dispersed in Transylvania constitute 18.9% of the population of this area. Hungarians form the large majority of the population only in two counties of the area – not officially called Szeklerland[9].

Demography in Szeklerland

According to the 2011 census, 609 033 Hungarians (56.8%) live in the counties of Szeklerland (Covasna, Harghita and Mures) out of a total population of 1 071 890 inhabitants. While in Covasna and Harghita Hungarians make up the majority of the population, in Mures Romanians are barely most numerous. (INS, 2011)

92% of the Hungarian inhabitants of Szeklerland are Reformed, Roman Catholics or Unitarian, while the majority of Romanian population is Romanian Orthodox.

History of Szeklerland

Originally, the name of Szeklerland referred to territories of a number of autonomous Szekler seats within Transylvania from the Middle Ages. The self-governing Szekler seats had their own administrative system and formed legal entities from medieval times until 1876. From the 12th and the 13th centuries until 1876 Szeklerland enjoyed a considerable autonomy, first as part of the Kingdom of Hungary, then inside the Principality of Transylvania[10]. In 1867 the Principality was reunited with Hungary.

In 1920, the Treaty of Trianon closing World War I left the whole Transylvania within the Romanian state. In August 1940, during the World War II, the northern part of Transylvania was annexed by Hungary. After the end of the war the territory was returned to Romania.

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[9] Szeklerland is not an official administrative unit of Romania. This term refers to the area of Romania where ethnic Hungarians make up the majority of the population.

[10] The Principality of Transylvania (from 1570 until 1700) was a semi-independent state, ruled by Hungarian princes; and from 1711 until 1876 was the realm of the Hungarian crown.

In 1952, during the Communist era, a Magyar Autonomous Region was created in Romania. In practice, the region had the same status as other 'normal' regions and did not enjoy an autonomy of any kind. The only positive sign of this 'Potemkin autonomy' was that most of the officials working in the region were Hungarians, the Hungarian language could be used in administration and at the courts, and bilingual signs were put on public buildings. In 1968, the Romanian National Assembly put an end to the regional division of the country and re-introduced the historical county system.

Economy of Szeklerland

In 2013, the GDP per capita of the three counties constituting unofficially Szeklerland was below the national average. (Hirsarok.blogrepublik.eu, 2013)

However, the whole Transylvanian area accounts for 35% of the Romanian GDP, and has a 10 percent higher GDP per capita than the Romanian average.

GDP per capita (2013) in the area called Szeklerland

Source: hirsarok.hu

County of Szeklerland	GDP per capita in EUR (2013)
Covasna	4675
Harghita	4895
Mures	5535
National average	*5664*

Autonomy aspirations in Transylvania

Although Romania signed the European laws protecting minority rights, their implementation was not considered satisfactory by the members of the Hungarian community living in Romania. The public administration law stipulates that a minority language can be used in public administration in settlements where minorities exceed 20% of the population. However, in practice, these provisions were not applied in every settlement.

The Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) is the major party representing the interests of ethnic Hungarian minorities. Since 1996, RMDSZ has been

a member or a supporter of every coalition, and therefore several ministers of the Romanian government have been ethnic Hungarians.

Since 1990 there is a movement by ethnic Hungarians for the introduction of an autonomous status in Transylvania, with a special autonomous model in Szeklerland. Several autonomy models had been developed by ethnic Hungarian intellectuals on their own initiative or at the request of an ethnic Hungarian party but neither of them expressed independence claims.

Most of the abovementioned models advocate the idea of a combined autonomy. This model requests territorial autonomy in counties where ethnic Hungarians make up the majority of the population (e.g. counties of Szeklerland) and personal/cultural autonomy, with particular regard to matters related to education, culture, communication, and media and social affairs in settlements where an important number of ethnic Hungarian minorities resides without making up the majority of the population. This second model can be applied in counties where ethnic Hungarians are dispersed and therefore do not live in bloc. (Győri Szabó, 2006: 374.)

Szeklerland

Source: Google Maps

Although 98% of ethnic Hungarians living in Szeklerland consider autonomy as the main condition of the survival of the ethnic Hungarian community in Romania, the Hungarian political elite living in Romania does not have a common position in this question. (Győri Szabó, 2006: 384.) The prevailing view is that autonomy is not necessary in the short run and it is better to cooperate with the Romanian government and political parties to improve the situation of ethnic Hungarians. In the context of the joining the EU, several ethnic Hungarian persons proposed to create a "Szekler region" in the framework of the regionalization of Romania. This proposal, however, was rejected by Bucharest.

Although, (territorial) autonomy would be particularly important for the ethnic Hungarian population living in Transylvania, especially in Szeklerland. The importance of the territorial autonomy is reflected by the fact that in March 2013 thousand ethnic Hungarians demonstrated for Szekler autonomy. In autumn 2013, the 'Great Szekler March' for autonomy was held with thousands of people.

The situation is also complicated by the fact that the article 1 of the Constitution of Romania rejects all referendum on independence or autonomy[11]. (The Constitution of Romania, 2003)

[11] Romania is a sovereign, independent, unitary and indivisible nation-state.

Conclusion: what lessons to take from the Western European autonomy and independence aspirations to the (territorial) autonomy claims of the Hungarian minority living in the neighbouring country?

In my study, I compared apples to oranges: the Western European *independence* aspirations to the *autonomy* claims of one of the biggest national minority groups of the Danube Region, the ethnic Hungarians living in Romania.

Although, at the Scottish independence referendum the 'no' side won, and the Catalan independence referendum was non-binding, these two examples permit to draw conclusions for the autonomy aspirations of minorities living in the Danube Region. Based on the examples of Scotland and Catalonia, we can conclude that there are some elements that are important for (territorial) autonomy and essential for independence.

These key elements are the following:

1. the number of the ethnic minority population inside a given area (does the ethnic minority constitute the majority of the given area?);
2. the constitutional framework (does the constitution make possible to organize a referendum on territorial autonomy or independence?);
3. the attitude of the central government towards autonomy or independence (does the government favor autonomy claims?);
4. the attitude of the political elite of the minority group towards autonomy or independence (is the political elite of the minority interested in autonomy claims?);
5. the attitude of the EU towards autonomy or independence;
6. *especially for independence*: the economic situation of the area (GDP of the area, beyond or below the national average);
7. *only for independence*: location of the area within the country (is the area able to communicate freely with the world?).

As we could see, neither in Transylvania, nor in its special area, Szeklerland, where ethnic Hungarians are in majority, is independence (secession) a real political claim. The ethnic Hungarian political elite emphasizes in every possible forum that the future of the Hungarian minority of Transylvania is in Romania. By the way, secession would not be possible since the area called Szeklerland is located in the middle of Romania, and therefore, it is surrounded by territories inhabited by a Romanian majority population.

Ethnic Hungarians claim only personal or cultural autonomy in Transylvania and a special territorial autonomy in Szeklerland where they make up the majority of the population in the given area (condition a)). However, it is difficult to achieve, especially in case of territorial autonomy, since the first article of the Romanian Constitution (condition b)), such as the Romanian political elite (condition c)), rejects all referendum on autonomy or independence. Moreover, the opinions of the representatives of the ethnic Hungarians are also divided on the question of the autonomy, since most of the politicians of RMDSZ would avoid conflicts with the Romanian political elite and prefer the policy of 'small steps' (condition d)). The attitude of the EU in this case (autonomy claim) is not interesting since Brussels considers autonomy claims as internal affairs of the Member States.

We can conclude that, because of the composition of the population, territorial autonomy is only possible in the area called Szeklerland. However, territorial autonomy can only be achieved if the ethnic Hungarian political elite of Romania would be able to establish a common position and convince the Romanian majority population, and especially the Romanian political elite, that territorial autonomy is only a form of self-governance which does not threaten the territorial integrity of Romania.

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Chapter 5

Title **Between Consistency and Change: Exploring the Territorial and Planning Context of Post-Socialist Bulgaria**

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Between Consistency and Change:

Exploring the Territorial and Planning Context of Post-Socialist Bulgaria

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Introduction The fall of the communist system in Bulgaria opened up the way for profound political transformation and economic restructuring. Since the beginning of the 1990s the country has followed a path of transition to democracy, market economy and later on European integration, and has gone through complex processes of political, administrative and fiscal decentralisation and series of economic reforms. The process of transition has given rise to manifold changes in the functioning of cities and regions and has evoked far-reaching consequences for the development of the national territory. This has seen the emergence of trends of spatial inequalities, concentration of growth in few main cities (Monastiriotis, 2013; Bachtler et al., 2000) and changes in the spatial structures and functions of urban areas (Hirt and Kovachev, 2006). The nature and extent of the new trends have been unknown in the years of state socialism, which have been marked by aspirations for balanced territorial development, minimal disparities and equal distribution of social transfers (Horváth, 2015).

The change of the regime and the advance of the processes of privatisation and liberalisation have prompted adjustment of the role and functioning of traditional institutions and actors involved in territorial development and spatial planning, and have necessitated changes in the scope and nature of the policies meant to guide development and

planning actions (Nedović-Budić et al., 2006). In response to the new conditions, policies have shifted towards a model of decentralisation, regionalisation and re-centralisation. This led to modification of the hitherto allocation of power and responsibilities of the actors at the municipal, regional and state level. The processes and challenges of the transition years have thus significantly shaped the present territorial and planning context in the country and have been a subject of first theoretical and empirical investigations. While hitherto research has provided important evidence on the processes of decentralisation, the emergence of regional policy, the impacts of European integration on regional development (see e.g. Matiuta, 2013; Monastiriotis, 2013, 2008) and on the spatial restructuring of urban areas (see e.g. Slaev and Kovachev, 2014; Stanilov and Hirt, 2014; Stanilov, 2007; Hirt and Kovachev, 2006), it has paid less attention on the planning reforms and context in the country.

Taking this into consideration, the current paper aims to provide a better understanding of the territorial and planning context in Bulgaria by shedding some light on the main spatial implications of the transition process and the reactions to the new circumstances in both the development and planning fields. In so doing, the paper will contribute to the general discussion on the continuities and discontinuities of the transition process, and the restrictions and potentials these represent for the future territorial and planning context of the country.

The paper is based on a desk analysis of academic literature and policy documents, and is structured in five main parts. After this introduction, part two gives a short overview of the economic, political and social dimensions of the transition process in Bulgaria. The paper proceeds with the analysis of the spatial implications and trends that emerged with the progress of transition. The gained insights set the basis for part four that traces the course and nature of the

legislative, administrative and policy reforms undertaken in the country with regard to territorial development and planning. The paper ends with a concluding discussion on the main features of the post-socialist territorial and planning context in Bulgaria and the challenges expected to face in the future.

Complexities and dimensions of the transition process

The transition towards market economy and democratic government in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries bears similarities with the structural changes that took place in more developed economies a couple of decades ago. With the change of the political ideology and the end of the monopoly of the communist party, the countries entered a multi-facetted process of transformation. This has taken various paths of development due to the different national political and economic conditions in the countries, the differences in the starting point of their restructuring efforts, the speed and depth of their reform process and the rate of growth after their initial recession phase (Bachtler et al., 2000). With view to the many policy reversals and unsuccessful attempts for policy reforms in the first years following the change of the regime, Bulgaria has been argued to represent "*the least successful of the CEE transitions*" (Monastiriotis, 2013: 214).

The transition process in Bulgaria has evolved in a series of economic reforms and political, structural and social changes. The hallmarks of the economic restructuring have been the move to market liberalisation and de-regulation with the aim to foster macro-economic stabilisation and help national markets become more competitive in the globalised world. The macroeconomic change has been expressed in rapid development of the service sector and increase in the level of foreign direct investments concentrated mainly in bigger urban areas. In the meanwhile, it has given rise to major challenges such as the increase in the rates of unem-

ployment (due to the collapse of big public enterprises and closure of heavy industries, for instance) and the emerging trends of social polarisation (see Tsenkova, 2006, on transition from centrally-planned to market-based economies).

One of the first steps in the process of transition to democratic and market system has been the privatisation of property and the restitution of private land (Nedović-Budić et al., 2006). In the beginning of the 1990s, Bulgaria has witnessed intensified processes of privatisation of state assets, including agricultural land, production entities and industrial facilities, which "*introduced private ownership and profit motivation in the production of goods and services*" (Nedović-Budić et al., 2006: 13). The marketisation in the provision of public services went in line with processes of restitution of property, which have turned land into "*a precious commodity*" (Hirt and Kovachev, 2006: 117). This, together with the rather relaxed control over spatial development as a result of the institutional change, has provided many investors with easier access to urban property markets (Nedović-Budić et al., 2006), and has given them an important role in the housing production, the housing distribution and the maintenance of urban amenities.

The opening up of the public sphere to private actors went in parallel with a process of administrative, political and fiscal decentralisation. The process has been a reaction against the extreme centralisation of power during the communist regime and is considered to be one of the most important factors of democratisation (Matiuta, 2013). Decentralisation aimed to support local economic development and the creation of competitive market economy, as well as to bring local governments closer to the local population in order to better meet its needs (Bartlett et al., 2013). In Bulgaria, with the amendment of the Local Self-Government and Local Administration Law in 2002, municipalities were allowed "*to design and to implement development strategies, projects*

and programmes, to adopt the municipal budget and to control its implementation, to set the size of local taxes and charges within the statutory limits and to create districts and mayoralties" (Matiuta, 2013: 141). Despite the achieved progress in decentralising power and resources to local governments, municipalities in Bulgaria are not yet fully independent from the central government resources (Matiuta, 2013). Currently, they face difficulties in the provision of high quality public services and prove still weak administrative capacities.

The differences in the administrative capacity, the level of information and know-how, and the tax base of the individual units of local self-government have resulted in differences in the spatial distribution of income and growth in the country. The prevention of spatial inequalities and the more general discussion on how to transform the former unitary state into a decentralised one became central in the context of accession in the European Union (EU). The pressure of the EU on Bulgaria to implement the *acquis communautaire* and to establish working institutions led to reforms in the legal framework related to decentralisation, and local and regional development (Matiuta, 2013). It is exactly in the context of EU accession that the efforts for regionalisation in the country have started. The process of regionalisation, along with the efforts for decentralisation, the exposure of Bulgaria to the new competitive European and global environment and "*the pursuit of private-sector-driven growth*" (Tsenkova, 2006: 21) have had direct spatial implications with importance for the territorial development of the country and its cities and regions.

Spatial implications of the transition process in Bulgaria

The structural changes in the transition years have provoked the emergence of significant regional disparities in incomes and rates of growth in all Central and Eastern European countries. Since the early 1990s these have witnessed development processes that share many common trends

such as increase in the dominance of capital cities and slowdown in the progress of peripheral areas. Despite the many similarities, development processes have also been a result of the ability of individual regions to adapt to the changing conditions. As argued by Bachtler et al. (2000), each region is acting under the specific influence and according to the characteristics of the central planning of its own country, and its actions are dependent on various context specific factors such as historical development, culture and ethnicity. This explains the specificities of the emerging spatial patterns in each country, and the nature of economic and social inequalities observed on its territory.

In Bulgaria, regional disparities have been on the rise since the late 1990s, but increased significantly with the turn of the century. Regional disparities reached particularly high levels in terms of GDP, labour productivity and wages at the onset of the financial crisis in 2008 (for detailed information on the development of regional disparities at the district and municipal level in the period 1995-2010 see Monastiriotis, 2013). Differences in income and productivity are particularly evident at the district and local levels, which speaks for a high degree of disparity within the individual planning regions. Presently, planning regions witness the coexistence of over- and under-performing localities and of core-periphery patterns (Monastiriotis, 2013). The emergence of these patterns could be explained by the fact that the faster development of districts and municipalities with large urban centres attracting enterprises and foreign investments went in parallel with a decline of old industrial areas that suffered from the closure or optimisation of outdated enterprises and infrastructure (Bachtler et al., 2000). The changes in the planned economy significantly affected agricultural areas and border regions, too, that due to their peripheral location away from main markets face serious development challenges.

The internationalisation and opening up of competitive markets have particularly favoured the development of metropolitan areas (Petrakos, 2001). Metropolisation processes characterised by the concentration of population and activities in few main cities and their hinterlands have largely shaped the regional structure of the country. These processes affected in particular the capital city-region of Sofia[1] that became the main driver of development in Bulgaria and stood for 18.4 % of the national population in 2015 (NSI, 2016a) and for ca. 40 % of the country's GDP in 2014 (NSI, 2016b). The rising dominance and centrality of Sofia was mainly due to the growth in the core city that was much faster than the one in the city's hinterlands (Gorzelak and Smętkowski, 2010).

The concentration of population in large urban agglomerations together with the increase in the economic prosperity of their core cities and of the social well-being of their residents has triggered trends of suburbanisation and settlement expansion. Big cities have expanded into law density areas with new housing developments and their peripheral areas have attracted increasing number of commercial activities. The latter has been a result of the quick rise of the tertiary sector, the growth of new private businesses and the entry of large-scale Western chains that needed space to operate. The functional restructuring of cities has been complemented by processes of spatial fragmentation of the urban environment. These became particularly evident in open green spaces which have been significantly reconfigured and partly lost in the course of privatisation and restitution of land (see Hirt and Kovachev, 2006, on growth of suburbia and changes in the spatial structure of Sofia). The loss of green space in the cities, the concentration of people and the growth of motorisation there have resulted in en-

[1] In this paper the capital city-region of Sofia coincides with the delineation of Sofia municipality.

vironmental degradation, which together with the issues of social polarisation represent one of the major challenges for the city's future development.

The spatial consequences of the transition process, the challenges these posed to the development of the national territory in general and the functioning of urban areas in particular necessitated the rethinking of regional development and spatial planning policies in the country, and resulted in a series of legislative, institutional and administrative reforms.

Tracing the course of territorial development and planning reforms

The political and financial instability of the early transition period in Bulgaria gave priority to the processes of economic restructuring and establishment of functional democracy, and delayed significantly the development of suitable regional policies (Monastiriotis, 2008) and the rearrangement of the spatial planning system (Nedović-Budić et al., 2006). It was mainly as a result of the increasing pressure for conformity with the European Union and the widening up of spatial problems that the discussions for territorial development and planning reforms have started. These have resulted in a new system of institutions, policy documents and objectives that frame the current context for regional development and spatial planning in the country.

In the advent of the 1990s there was no comprehensive framework for regional policy in Bulgaria. Although some attempts for allocation of subsidies for local interventions have been on the run, these followed a model of municipal self-governance and failed to counteract the spatial imbalances emerging in the country. The attention to issues of regional development has noticeably increased in the context of Bulgaria's negotiations for EU membership, when the country started shaping up a new regional policy (Monastiriotis, 2008). The space for regional development and the nature of the emerging regional policy have been largely de-

termined by the accession requirements, the organisational, functional and financial reforms of the European Union, and the process of decentralisation in Bulgaria (Horváth, 2015).

The need for a new regional policy was widely driven by the weaknesses of the existing legislative base of the country and the lack of appropriate structures for policy-making and implementation (see Bachtler et al., 2000 on the process of EU accession of the CEE countries). The attempts for establishment of a new legislative and administrative framework for regional policy were manifested in the adoption of the first Regional Development Act in 1999. The new Act introduced important changes in the regional administrative structure and the planning of regional interventions (Monastiriotis, 2008). Among the major novelties was the introduction in the country of the European classification of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) and the establishment of six new planning regions at the NUTS-2 level. The implementation of regional policy at the new level is managed centrally through Regional Development Plans for each planning region and is responsibility of the newly established Regional Councils for Development. These do not have an own administration, but include representatives of certain ministries, district governments and municipalities (Matiuta, 2013).

Considering the allocation of responsibilities for regional development in the country, it could be argued that the regional policy in Bulgaria is mainly managed by the central authority and leaves little room for representation of regional and local interests. As Monastiriotis puts it the new policy "*shows little sensitivity to, and appreciation of, the main regional and spatial problems that policy in the country should be addressing*" (2008: abstract). Even after the amendment of the Regional Development Act in 2004 and the improvements this has led to (in terms of plans' coordination for instance), the development tradition marked by hierarchy and central steering of funds was prolonged as evident by the still

central management of the operational programmes in the country. The reasons for this might be sought in the fact that after the end of the central-planning period Bulgaria had very little experience with regional policy, very weak sub-national administrative capacities and limited resources for regional and development policies (Monastiriotis, 2008). In this context, all reforms conducted in the country around the turn of the century were marked by the complete dominance of the European orientation of regional policy. The reforms represented a rather mechanical adoption of the EU regional policy framework and served mainly purposes of Structural Funds allocation. Thus, they support the formation of a culture of aid-dependency of the local economies and administration (Monastiriotis, 2008) and project-driven development. At the same time, the competition policy of the EU, while aiming at convergence and cooperation, seems to foster the competitive abilities of localities and thus to strengthen centralisation processes (see Horváth, 2015 on regional policy in Europe). In this sense, the current regional context of the country is shaped by the ongoing interregional differences, the lack of strong regional institutions, the growing competitiveness among cities and their dependency on internal and external investments, and on the decisions of the nation state.

While the practice of regional planning was continuously gaining momentum throughout the last two decades, spatial planning was almost completely abandoned in the first years of the transition, and started playing an own role in the new market economy only around the turn of the century. Similar to in other CEE countries, the post-socialist context in Bulgaria was marked by aspirations of less government control and more freedom for private economic activities. In this context, planning was considered as a constraint that limits the entrepreneurship and economic freedom, and land-use plans were seen as restrictive documents that slow

down the land development (Yanchev, 2012). The relaxation of control over spatial development (see also Nedović-Budić et al., 2006), the liberal free market environment, and the processes of privatisation and restitution of property have unleashed massive real estate development. The existing out-dated plans could not manage to regulate the rapid development of settlements, coastal and mountainous areas, and to provide the necessary infrastructure for their functioning (Yanchev, 2012). In this state of liberalised market, where investments originate mainly from the private sector, the need for planning and for regulations that structure the rules and obligation of the different actors was gradually recognised.

The need for a reform in the sector of spatial planning has resulted in the cancellation of the Territorial and Settlement Planning Act from 1973 and the adoption of a new Spatial Planning Act in 2001. The new Act together with its subordinate ordinances determined the relationships between the different types and levels of spatial plans, and the procedures and responsibilities for their elaboration and approval (Sofia Municipality, 2006). While increasing the importance of planning documents, the Act did not actually reform their nature and hierarchy preserving the communist structure of vertically subordinated spatial schemes (for the national, regional and district level) and spatial plans (for the municipal, settlement and neighbourhood level). Yet, the lack of concrete timeframes for the elaboration or revision of schemes and plans, and the delayed guidance from the upper levels led to the current situation of still missing planning documents for many parts of the territory (Yanchev, 2012).

Besides the increased importance of planning documents, post-socialist Bulgaria has also experienced changes in the nature and functions of the institutions involved in spatial development and policy (see Nedović-Budić et al., 2006). The shifting of power and responsibilities to the local

level, and the dominating role of the market economy has placed municipal governments as one among many other actors in the elaboration and implementation of spatial plans and policies. This has called the need for innovative forms of cooperation between private and public actors, new mechanisms for coordination of actions and a move to more participatory approaches in planning. As a result, recent years have seen the emergence of new aspirations for integrated planning and sustainable development. These, together with the need for planning documents to provide a stable basis for negotiations on future development perspectives and investment opportunities, largely determine the current context of spatial planning in the country.

Conclusion The structural changes in post-socialist Bulgaria combined with the pursuit of private-sector driven growth and project-based development have diminished the legitimacy of traditional planning and have delivered mixed outcomes with regard to economic performance and provision of basic services. These developments have been manifested in a combination of regional and spatial problems such as the increasing primacy of few urban areas and the emergence of trends of interregional inequalities. It was not before the turn of the century that the issues of regional development gained momentum in political discussions and became subject of a series of legislative, institutional and administrative reforms. The latter were largely motivated by the requirements for EU accession and represented mechanical adoption of the regional policy framework of the Union. An illustrative example in this line was the introduction of the new regional level in the country without allocation of implementation power to this. Thus, while introducing new modes of territorial governance regulated by time-framed strategic documents and supporting private sector participation, the changes in the regional planning and development practices

in post-socialist Bulgaria have kept the old tradition of hierarchical decision-making and central steering of funds, and have increased the dependence of cities and regions on national and external investments.

The significant efforts made in the domain of regional development went in parallel with an anti-planning discourse. This was expressed in the little attention paid to the restructuring of the traditional modes of spatial planning. For years, spatial planning in Bulgaria was mainly represented by out-dated land-use plans that were not able to manage settlement development in the context of market-led economy. The need for adaptation to the new economic and political mechanisms prompted changes both in the legislative framework regulating spatial development, and in the traditional institutions and actors involved in planning. The conducted reforms enforced in parts the continuity of existing planning traditions and documents, and called the need for integration of old and new planning practices and models. This, together with the need for synchronisation of the spatial planning and regional planning approaches and for orientation towards long-term sustainable opportunities, determine the future political and academic agenda in the territorial development and planning field.

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Chapter 6

Title **Increased International Research Co-operation – Opportunities and Challenges for Eastern European Countries**

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Increased International Research Co-operation – Opportunities and Challenges for Eastern European Countries

Martina Hartl

Introduction

The phenomenon of globalization has made a profound impact on the way international science, technology and innovation (STI) co-operation has developed over the last decades. Although policies and programmes supporting international collaboration in STI already have a long tradition (especially in the context of 'science diplomacy'), a new era of increased strategic planning by governments, funding agencies, universities and research organisations may be observed. Which are the roles that Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs = Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and the three Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and their research communities play in international STI networks, which opportunities and challenges do they currently face, and what does the near future hold in store for them with a view to their international competitiveness in research and innovation in the coming years?

Incentives for international research co-operation

The reasons and incentives for engaging in international STI co-operation are quite diverse and may vary depending on whether one takes an individual, organisational or governmental perspective. A non-exhaustive list of main motifs includes:

- Research has become an international collaborative endeavour, and many scientific as well as societal challenges

need to be addressed by means of an interdisciplinary and international approach (e.g. from the recent Ebola crisis to long-term issues like climate change).

- To increase scientific excellence access to knowledge and data, to international networks as well as high quality research-infrastructures are needed.
- International collaboration can help in harmonizing data, agreeing on common research procedures and methodologies thereby increasing the comparability of research results.
- Mobility and integration in international networks are important factors in the career development of researchers (academic staff in general).
- Internationalisation of research efforts may have a positive effect on attracting investment for specific projects.
- International research co-operation can be used as a tool for science diplomacy.

The authors of the report *Drivers of International collaboration in research* (EC, 2009) have linked drivers, policy domains (e.g. research, development aid, diplomacy) and specific goals (e.g. institutional capacity building, attracting foreign R&D investment):

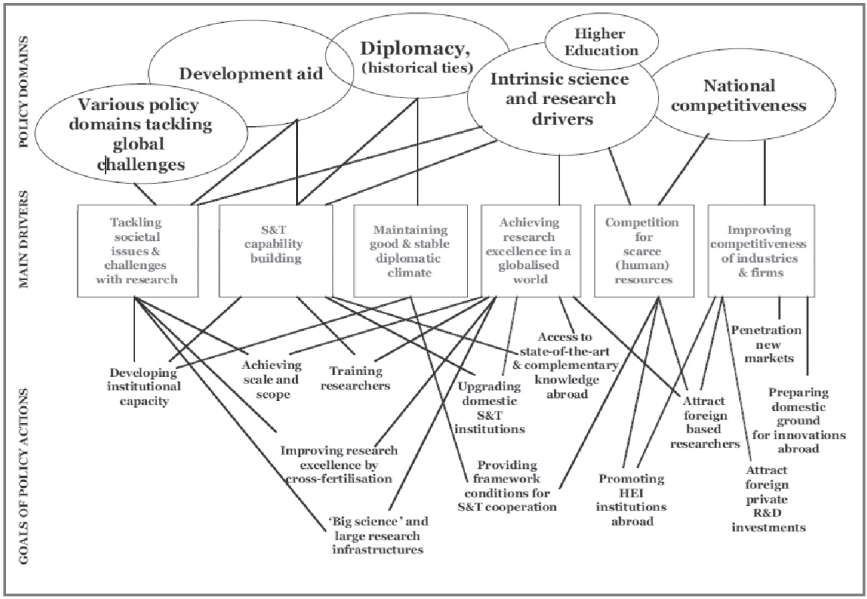


Figure 1: Policy domains, drivers and goals for international co-operation in STI

Source: Drivers of International collaboration in research (EC 2009: 9)

Taking the European Commission as a specific example, their strategic approach to international research co-operation states the following objectives: "a) Strengthening the Union's excellence and attractiveness in research and innovation as well as its economic and industrial competitiveness b) Tackling global societal challenges c) Supporting the Union's external policies. Moreover science diplomacy will use international cooperation in research and innovation as an instrument of soft power and a mechanism for improving relations with key countries and regions". (European Commission, COM(2012) 497 final)

Tools and methods in international research cooperation

As manifold as the reasons for international STI co-operation may be they are indeed matched by at least as many tools that have been developed to support cross-border collaboration and mobility. These tools range from governmental agreements and joint programmes to individual collaborative projects and networks, and often include a thematic or geographical focus:

Figure 2: Set of policy instruments for international STI co-operation

Joint Strategic Fora and agenda setting committees (on global as well as multi- and bilateral level)
Multilateral co-operation on EU-level (e.g. via ERA-NET or Joint Programming schemes)
Bilateral and multilateral agreements as umbrella for various collaboration modes (whilst signed at the national level these agreements often facilitate collaboration at the institutional level)
Joint research programmes (often thematic)
Joint funding of research infrastructures (e.g. on European level via the ESFRI Roadmap; cf. the ESFRI Roadmap 2016 http://www.esfri.eu/roadmap-2016)
Joint funding of research centres in a particular location
Opening up of national research programmes
Opening up of national programmes to the world in order to attract STI investments, inter alia to foster collaboration between national and foreign public or private research organisations.
Specific collaboration programmes aimed at creating market opportunities for innovation and/or commercialisation of domestic technologies in a particular country, mostly with emerging economies (e.g. India, China)
Use of specific mobility and educational programmes (ERASMUS+; CEEPUS)
Information and brokerage services abroad (e.g. Science and Technology Attachés, collaboration with Trade Agencies)

Source: based on Drivers of International collaboration in research (EC 2009:17) with adaptations made by the author

Taking Austria as an example here (for data sources see bibliography)

- The country presently engages in around 20 bilateral STI agreements with other countries
- There are currently ~ 4960 international university co-operations and agreements, around 3160 of which within the EU and 1800 with non-EU countries

- (university partnerships, joint degrees, ERASMUS partnerships, etc.)
- The academic year 2014/2015 witnessed 7484 outgoing and 8279 incoming students within exchange programmes at public universities
- There are specific funding programmes for international cooperation in the area of innovation and science-industry co-operation
- The funding agencies FWF and FFG run bilateral/multilateral calls as well as calls requiring participation of international partners
- Austrian researchers take part in Horizon 2020 with currently 1102 participations in 780 projects and have received some 452 million euros approved funding so far
- Austria is involved in numerous multilateral activities (ERA-Net activities, Joint Programming, etc.)

The EU Framework Programmes

Very specific cases of collaborative STI support and funding in Europe are the EU's Framework Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities. Whilst Framework Programme 1 (1983-1987) came with a budget of ~ 3.3 billion € and focused mainly on cooperation in basic research, the Programmes have been expanded over time in terms of budget and scope. The current programme *Horizon 2020* (= Framework Programme 8, 2014-2020) was fitted with an estimated budget of nearly 80 billion €. Amongst other activities, *Horizon 2020* supports research co-operation directly as well as via the European Research Council, provides support to the development and deployment of key enabling technologies, and covers specific measures targeting small and medium enterprises.

With a view to integrating Eastern European and Central Asian countries into these funding schemes, cooperation began soon after the demise of the Communist regimes in the early 1990s. According to Schuch, K., Bonas, G. & Sonnenburg, J. J. the EU dedicated 241 million ECU in FP4 (1994-1998) under

the PECO (Pays de l´Europe Centrale et Orientale) and COPERNICUS (Community of Pan European Research Networks of Interdisciplinary Centres and Universities in Sciences) schemes for stimulating S&T cooperation between researchers from the EU and researchers from the Central European candidate countries as well as from the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union (NIS). Around 500 projects involving almost 3300 participants were funded. Additional funding was provided through INTAS, the International Association for Cooperation with Scientists from the former Soviet Union, which was established by the European Commission, the EU Member States and countries associated with the EU RTD Framework Programme in 1993. "*Until the turn of the millennium, more than 20,000 individual scientists from the NIS had been involved in approximately 2,000 INTAS projects. From 1993 to 1998, the association's budget totalled €121 million to which another overall budget of €75 million has been added from 1998 until the end of 2002.*" (Schuch, K., Bonas, G. & Sonnenburg, J. J Innov Entrep (2012) 1: 3.).

Over time, the role of international STI cooperation within the Framework Programmes has evolved into increased mainstreaming in the different sub-programmes as well as to a general opening towards international partner countries including a more strategic approach towards countries and regions of relevance (e.g. BRICs). In this context, having in view the political, economic and structural changes in the CEECs and the neighbouring region, their situation for participating in the European Research Area and in the Framework Programmes has significantly changed as well:

- 11 countries have become EU Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia
- Through association with *Horizon 2020* the following countries have full participation rights in the Programme: Albania, Armenia (in the process), Bosnia and

Herzegovina, Georgia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine
- Third countries in the region eligible for funding under *Horizon 2020* are Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan
- The only country funding the participation of its researchers in *Horizon 2020* in the region is Russia, which has recently established a co-funding mechanism for successful Russian project partners (dedicated calls via the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation).

On the political and strategic level, a joint initiative of the EU and 6 Eastern European partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) was launched in 2009. This Eastern Partnership (EaP – http://ec.europa.eu/rsearch/iscp/index.cfm?pg=eep) aims at bringing the participating countries closer to the EU. The main topics – dealt with via multilateral policy platforms – are democracy, good governance and political stability; economic integration and convergence with EU policies; and energy security and contacts between people. STI cooperation is addressed via a dedicated panel on research and innovation, launched in 2013, which gathers senior officials and experts from Member States and Eastern European partner countries, as well as from the Committee of the Regions and the EaP Civil Society Forum. The European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENI) is the EU's main financial instrument supporting cooperation with the EaP countries.

In the field of STI co-operation a dedicated coordination and support action 'STI International Cooperation Network for Eastern Partnership Countries' (http://www.inco-eap.net/) was funded under FP7, then facilitating the advancement of

the bi-regional policy dialogue with an explicit focus on the Societal Challenges, Climate Change, and Energy and Health.

STI performance for the CEECs

Although there seem to be plenty of opportunities for the CEECs for engaging in European-wide STI co-operation, the actual level of the CEEC's participation within projects and international scientific networks is – at general level – still limited. There are a number of facts and figures suggesting that the process of catching-up with the EU 15 may be longer and more difficult than anticipated. Three examples related to the performance of CEECs may illustrate this point:

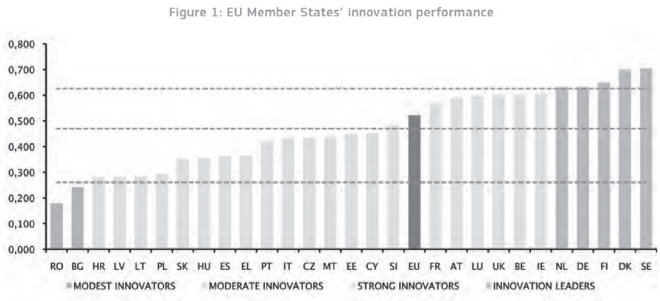
1. Innovation Union Scoreboard

"*The annual European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) provides a comparative assessment of the research and innovation performance of the EU Member States and the relative strengths and weaknesses of their research and innovation systems*" (EC, EIS 2016:8). The composite indicator estimated for each country covers 25 different indicators ranging from the number of doctoral graduates to R&I investments in the different sectors, to PCT patent applications, and medium and high-tech product exports (see Annex E: Definitions of indicators of the European Innovation Scoreboard 2016).

According to the EIS 2016, all CEECs, with the exception of Slovenia, belong to the two groups of either moderate or modest innovators. In many of the countries a catching-up process has started and positive developments may be observed, for example Latvia, a moderate innovator, has shown an annual growth rate in innovation performance of 4% from 2008 to 2015. Annual growth rates of other moderate innovators range from 0.7% (the Czech Republic), 1.1% (Estonia), 1.4% (Slovakia) and at around 2.4% (Lithuania). The only two EU Member States categorized as modest innovators are Bulgaria and Romania for both of which the relative position within the EU has even dropped between 2012 and

2015. These two countries are thus at the very low end of the EIS ranking:

Figure 3: Set of policy measures for international STI co-operation



Source: European Innovation Scoreboard 2016 (EC 2016: 6)

2. International co-publications

A common indicator for measuring the internationalisation of research is the share of international co-publications, defined as publications of authors from at least two countries. International co-publications are seen as an outcome of international STI cooperation. They are used as a proxy for the quality of scientific research, as it is often argued that international collaboration tends to lead to higher quality research as measured in terms of citations.

There are different versions of this indicator: as a share of total scientific publications, as a share of population, etc. The *European Innovation Scoreboard 2016* displays the international scientific co-publications per million population, whereby the following definition applies: Number of scientific publications with at least one co-author based abroad – whereby *abroad* applies to countries not part of the EU 28.

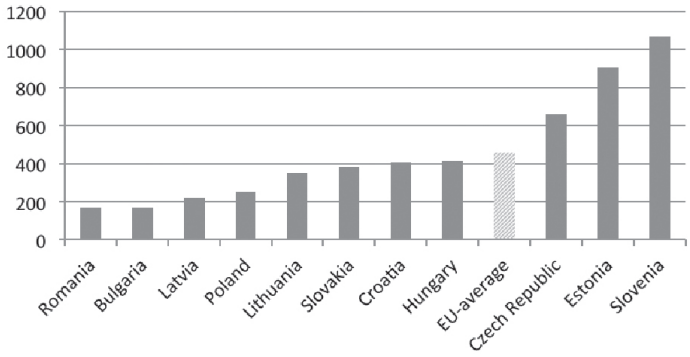


Figure 4: CEEC – International scientific co-publications per million population

Source: based on EC, EIS 2016, Annex B Performance per indicator: 6; CEECs only

Only three out of the 11 analysed CEECs show a co-publication rate above the EU average (459.2). The weakest performing CEECs only produce around 173 international scientific co-publications per million population, which is only a fraction of the Nordic countries that are on top of the EU list (Denmark 2067, Sweden 1774).

The report also contains calculations showing the staggering annual increase of international scientific co-publications. In the EU this increase has been around 6% on average. With the exception of Bulgaria all CEECs have even shown an above-average increase with Estonia (almost 12%) in the lead, followed by Croatia and Lithuania (both above 10%).

3. Participation in Horizon 2020

This finally brings us to the performance of the CEECs within the EU Framework Programmes themselves. A number of articles (Schuch K., 2014); EC, 2010: 46; Net4Society project, 2011), projects (http://www.mirris.eu/) and even political position papers (Common Position Paper of the EU-12 Member States for the next Framework Programme) have already broached the issue of the weak participation and low success rates of especially the new EU Member States. Nevertheless, this unfavourable trend seems to persist within *Horizon 2020*:

Figure 5: Horizon 2020 Performance – CEEC focus compared to other EU Member States

Horizon 2020 Performance	Number of evaluated participations	Number of retained participations	Success rate participations
United Kingdom	34.985	4.992	14,3%
Germany	32.848	4.887	14,9%
Italy	32.536	3.547	10,9%
Spain	30.309	3.829	12,6%
France	21.428	3.349	15,6%
Netherlands	16.111	2.457	15,3%
Belgium	10.548	1.688	16,0%
Greece	9.297	1.072	11,5%
Schweden	8.206	1.125	13,7%
Austria	7.174	1.102	15,4%
Portugal	7.110	837	11,8%
Denmark	6.381	901	14,1%
Finland	6.221	741	11,9%
Poland	**5.951**	**619**	**10,4%**
Ireland	4.558	648	14,2%
Hungary	**3.786**	**353**	**9,3%**
Slovenia	**3.392**	**322**	**9,5%**
Czech Republic	**3.272**	**378**	**11,6%**
Romania	**3.196**	**345**	**10,8%**
Bulgaria	**2.065**	**179**	**8,7%**
Cyprus	1.586	174	11,0%
Croatia	**1.579**	**154**	**9,8%**
Estonia	**1.503**	**197**	**13,1%**
Slovakia	**1.447**	**167**	**11,5%**
Lithuania	**1.217**	**124**	**10,2%**
Latvia	**1.034**	**113**	**10,9%**
Luxemburg	811	127	15,7%
Malta	511	67	13,1%
Albania	**162**	**8**	**4,9%**

Source: Austrian Research Promotion Agency online data base for analysis regarding EU Framework Programme participation – EU-Performance Monitor Horizon 2020 https://eupm.ffg.at/ui/login/ (data status 31 May 2016)

Challenges in the CEEC STI systems

Within *Horizon 2020* the Work Programme titled 'Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation' has been introduced including specific teaming and twinning activities as well as university capacity building measures (ERA-Chairs). However, the activities are – compared to the overall budget of *Horizon 2020* - rather limited and narrow in scope and budget. But to be fair and realistic, many of the problems the CEECs are encountering cannot be solved by a funding programme at the EU level. These problems are inherent to the national STI systems and/or are a result of the economic situation of the CEECs. The partially slow economic development (aggravated by the financial crisis from 2009 onwards) has resulted in or sustained the insufficient level of STI invest-

ments, of the necessary reforms of the national STI systems towards performance-based funding systems. In addition, the uptake of competitive funding, through calls for proposals and institutional assessments, etc., are often delayed; priority for STI and STI-related investments is moderate; necessary changes in national STI cultures are very slow; and a high level of brain drain – especially of high-qualified people due to a lack of perspective in the CEECs – persists. Finally, political instability in some CEECs as well as lengthy legal and administrative reforms have made it difficult to generate an investment-friendly environment; in addition, the lack of interaction between academia and industry is a clear obstacle with view to innovation performance.

Conclusions It seems obvious that the different issues identified above as challenging for successful international research collaboration point towards the necessity of introducing diversified measures going far beyond the area of STI policy. Current forecasts assert that the overall economic situation will remain difficult in all of Europe – meaning there will be little room for financial manoeuvring, e.g. for increasing wages or creating scores of new STI programmes.

Thus, it is imperative that the CEECs national STI policies focus on the funding sources that are already available, e.g. the European Structural Funds, and strategically align with EU activities (ERA-Net Cofund, Joint Programming, and multilateral activities with third countries/partner regions). The five key priorities of the European Research Area provide a reasonable framework for the modernisation, adaptation and focusing of activities in the CEECs.

Finally, having in mind that the negotiations for a new EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme (FP 9) are about to commence, it is high time for the CEECs to start to develop a strategic common position on what could be helpful and necessary for improving their performance in the

upcoming Research and Innovation Framework Programme due to become operational in 2021 .

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Chapter 7

Title **Natura 2000 – the Role of Reflective Learning for Successful Pan-European Conservation Governance**

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Natura 2000 – the Role of Reflective Learning for Successful Pan-European Conservation Governance

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Abstract The discussion engages in an analysis of a novel mode of European conservation governance – the pan-European Natura 2000 (N2000) network of protected areas – from the perspective of reflexive governance. Empirically substantiated by an analysis of the N2000 annual awards, the inquiry expands the explanatory power of the reflective governance concept by arguing that reflective learning is pivotal for the successful implementation of pan-European policies. Comparative analysis of the awarded projects reveals the N2000 community as a particularly important emerging conservation actor, and the project-based public–private inter-sectoral partnerships, as an especially successful governance strategy for achieving the conservation objectives. The introduction of new governance strategies and the attendant appearance of new governance actors also indicate that new socio-political spaces for biodiversity conservation are beginning to be opened.

Theoretical framework and analytical objective

Globally and in Europe, formidable biodiversity conservation challenges have spurred a change of the environmental governance style. The formerly prevalent enforcement and penalty-focused, command-and-control governance approaches have now been transformed into open and citizen-participatory governance styles. Thus, from a conception of governance as a 'linear' process, following a path, laid out

by an actor or a group of actors, it is now understood as the result of the interaction of many actors, who have their own specific goals and strategies (Voß and Kemp, 2006: 9). In this new flexible regulatory system, the reflexive governance paradigm has increasingly been considered as the key to achieving the conservation goals (Brousseau, Dedeurwaerdere, and Siebenhüner, 2012).

Theoretical framework: reflexive governance and reflexive learning

The concepts of reflexivity traces its intellectual origin to the theory of reflexive modernity, which emphasizes social reform, restructuring and reflexivity, as the defining characteristics of post-modernity (Beck, Giddens, and Lash, 1994; Beck, Bonss, and Lau, 2003). The reflexivity concept simultaneously encompasses and constitutes both the subject and the object in a recursive mutual contingency of subjective representations and interventions (Stirling, 2006: 229). According to Voß and Kemp (2006: 4) reflexive governance refers to the process of shaping social development in light of the reflectivity of the steering strategies – i.e. by recognizing that cognitive and normative beliefs also partake and (re)shape in open-ended formerly foundational concepts, practices and institutions by which social development is governed.

The reflexive governance paradigm considers that the governance structures are not "*an external supervisor and navigator of social change*", but also part of the problem's configuration (Voß and Bornemann, 2011). With the acknowledgement of the multi-dimensionality of the governance issues has come the realization that no single adequate problem framing and solution could be identified in an objective manner from a "*neutral, supervisory outlook on the (social-ecological) system as a whole*" (Voß and Bornemann, 2011). Thus, the understanding that social change results from a multiplicity of distributed efforts is embraced.

The theoretical focus on reflective governance has been subject to considerable scholarly attention, but the practical and explanatory relevance of this new government paradigm has also been gaining increasing recognition (Voß, Bauknecht and Kemp, 2006; Voß and Bornemann, 2011; Brousseau, Dedeurwaerdere, and Siebenhüner, 2012; Lawrence and Molteno, 2012: 284). In this regard, the supra-national nature of the European Union (EU) and especially its "*open-ended and competitive governance structure*" (Schreurs and Tiberghien 2007) hold the promise of 'naturally' endorsing the tenets of reflexive governance.

A learning-based approach to governance has been considered an indelible component of the reflexive governance paradigm (Schutter and Lenoble, 2010). Reflective learning, when first theorized by Dewey (1933) captured the notion of rationality and purposefulness so that "*active, persistent and careful consideration*" is given to "*any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and further conclusions to which it leads*". However, while Dewey highlighted reflective learning vis-a-vis an individual learner, subsequent research has engaged with the institutional (Biggs, 2001) and community learning dimensions (Ayas and Zeniuk, 2001), under the general aegis of social learning (McCarthy et al., 2011). Social learning, especially in the context of environmental planning and governance has been defined as "*an on-going, adaptive process of knowledge creation that is scaled-up from individuals though social interactions fostered by critical reflection and the synthesis of a variety of knowledge types that result in changes to social structures (e.g., organizational mandates, policies, social norms)*" (McCarthy et al., 2011).

Analytical objective

Bounded by the analytical-empirical outline sketched above, the inquiry will now focus on the role of reflective learning in the constitution of European biodiversity conservation

governance from a reflexivity perspective. To this end the discussion will focus on the most recent (2016) European Natura 2000 awards, which are part of the major contemporary European conservation initiative: Natura 2000. The awards aim to recognize the most successful and innovative European biodiversity conservation efforts. Consequently, it is expected that reflective learning will be employed in these leading European conservation endeavours.

The following hypothesis will guide the analysis: pan-European governance has been enhanced through the use of the European Natura 2000 annual award as a flexible and open-ended pan-European device of reflective transformative learning. The inquiry will be empiricized by comparative project analysis, guided by a reflectivity perspective.

The analysis is structured along three sections. The first section introduces the novel governance architecture of N2000 as a new mode of European environmental governance. The analysis then elaborates on the two major directives, constituent of N2000 – the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive. The second section discusses the projects recognized by the N2000 award in order to evaluate to what extent productive pan-European reflexive governance has been enhanced through the use of the European N2000 annual award as a flexible and open-ended pan-European device of reflective transformative learning. Finally, the third section draws conclusions about the processes of reflexive governance, the processes of institutional and social learning, as well as about knowledge-creation in complex governance regimes.

The Natura 2000 network of protected areas

N2000, "*the center-piece of EU nature and biodiversity policy*" (IUCN 2014), is an environmental protection regime articulated by the EU as a network of protected areas (EC, 2016a). Stretching over 18% of the EU's land area, N2000 is the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world,

which offers a haven to Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. However, N2000 is not a system of strict nature reserves from which all human activities would be excluded. While it includes strictly protected nature reserves, most of the land remains privately owned.

The IUCN reports that the economic benefits of the N2000 network have been estimated at between 200 and 300 billion € per year, or 2-3% of the EU's Gross Domestic Product (IUCN, 2016). Economic activities undertaken in N2000 sites are estimated to have supported about 12 million jobs each year during the period 2006-2008 (i.e. about 6% of total employment in the EU). At the same time the programme has been instrumental in protecting natural environments from short-term economic and political decisions. The IUCN considers it to be "*a cause for celebration in Europe and one of the success stories*" (IUCN, 2014).

The aim of the network is to ensure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats, listed under both the union's Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive. The EU refers to these directives as the 'two pillars of EU nature legislation' (EC, 2016b).

N2000: The Birds Directive

Europe is home to more than 500 wild bird species, yet the conservation status of at least 32% of the EU's bird species is currently unsatisfactory. The Birds Directive aims to protect all of the 500 wild bird species naturally occurring in the EU (Bird Directive, 2009). Often migratory, wild bird species can only be protected by cooperating across borders. Urban sprawl and transport networks have fragmented and reduced bird habitats; intensive agriculture, forestry, fisheries and the use of pesticides have diminished food supplies, and hunting also needed to be regulated in order not to damage birds' populations. Concerned with the decline of bird populations, Member States unanimously adopted the Directive 79/409/EEC in April 1979. It is the oldest piece of EU

legislation on the environment and one of its cornerstones. Amended in 2009, it became the Directive 2009/147/EC, designating Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under Article 4 of the birds directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds).

N2000: The Habitats Directive

The Habitats Directive ensures the conservation of a wide range of rare, threatened or endemic animal and plant species. Adopted in 1992, the Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora aims to promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements (Habitats Directive, 1992). The directive aims to protect 200 rare and characteristic habitat types. Since habitat loss and degradation are the most serious threats to the conservation of wild birds, the Habitats Directive also places great emphasis on the protection of habitats for endangered and migratory species. In order to counter the loss of habitat, the Directive establishes a network of Special Area of Conservation (SAC) sites. SAC refers to a site of Community importance designated by the Member States through a statutory, administrative and/or contractual act where the necessary conservation measures are applied for the maintenance or restoration, at a favourable conservation status, of the natural habitats and/or the populations of the species for which the site is designated. Since 1994, all SPAs are included in the N2000 ecological network, set up under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

The N2000 awards: reflexive governance via reflective learning

The European N2000 annual awards are a pan-European recognition of excellence in the management of N2000 sites and conservation achievements (EC, 2016c). The awards trace their beginning to 2012, and the winning entries have been publicly shared since 2014. With the awards the Commission showcases the added value of N2000 for the local economies

and at the same time it increases the public awareness about Europe's valuable natural heritage (EC, 2016*c*).

Communication with the European public about the goals of N2000 is explicitly stated as the primary purpose of the awards – thereby strengthening the Commission's public outreach and educating the public about N2000. The awards recognize good practices at Natura 2000 sites in five different categories: Communication, Socio-Economic Benefits, Conservation, Reconciling Interests/Perceptions, and Cross-border Cooperation and Networking. Since 2015 the host of awards also includes a European Citizens' Award, which gives the public a chance to vote for their favourite finalist. The Commission aims to attract the widest possible range of stakeholders as applicants to the award: "*anyone directly involved in Natura 2000 – businesses, authorities, NGOs, volunteers, land owners, educational institutions or individuals*". Thus, the award represents a novel attempt to strengthen the capacity of the local stakeholders to develop and implement effective environmental and natural resource management strategies and practices. One of the most prominent goals of the N2000 awards is promoting training activities and exchange experiences of the concepts, methodologies, mechanisms, and tools for effective environmental management, as well as the development of strategies to promote good environmental governance. The impact of the award is magnified by the additional support provided by the Commission to the award winners in organizing local events and giving them an added opportunity to showcase their achievements.

Now that the N2000 awards have been introduced, the discussion will engage in a comparative analytical summary of the most recent (2016) award winning projects. Table 1 presents the summary of the projects, recognized by the 2016 N2000 awards. The abbreviation PES stands for 'Payment for Ecosystem Services' (PES).

Table 1. Comparative summary of the projects, recognized by the N2000 awards, 2016.

Scale / N2000 Award	Project and Country	Participants
Conservation	"Demonstrating success in blanket bog restoration at the RSPB / United Utilities partnership", United Kingdom	Water company, NGO, local volunteers, local community, a network of stakeholders and volunteers
Communication	"Nature Concerthall", Latvia; created an innovative approach for raising public awareness of the importance of nature conservation	Artists and scientists, municipalities
Reconciling Interests/ Perceptions	"Creating green corridors for biodiversity under high-tension lines project in Belgium and France"	Two system operators (ELIA and RTE), government authorities, environmental consultancies and NGOs, stakeholders involved in forest management: public and private landowners, hunters, farmers, tourists
Socio-Economic Benefits	Nature Protection and Sustainable Rural Development, Bulgaria; PES* schemes to farmers, micro and small enterprises, relying heavily on the natural resources of six Natura 2000 sites	Coalition – WWF DCP Bulgaria, FOA Bioselena, Association of Parks in Bulgaria (APB), Bulgarian Society for Protection of Birds (BSPB), Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation (BBF)
Cross-Border Cooperation and Networking	Conservation of the lesser white-fronted goose, Europe's rarest waterbird; implementation of a successful 'flyway approach' covering 15 countries and spanning the entire Eurasian migration path	A wide range of actors – two national public authorities (Ministry of Environment and Energy/Greece and Metsähallitus/ Finland), three NGOs (HOS/ Greece, BSPB/Bulgaria and WWF/ Finland), the Forest Research Institute/Greece, Hortobágy National Park Directorate/ Hungary and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. The project involved 15 countries and experts along the species' flyway.
European Citizens' Award	Project aimed at saving the Iberian lynx from extinction, Spain	Collaboration between public and private bodies – 132 private owners, managers and hunting clubs in six Natura 2000 sites

Table 1 reveals that the N2000 awards have been granted to a variety of conservation projects from across Europe. Still, in spite of the great diversity of issues and approaches recognized by the award, some important common trends could be discerned.

First of all, taking into consideration the multi-level nature of European governance, the discussion assesses the awarded N2000 projects against a multi-level governance scale, along the following progressively expanding in scope dimension: community, national, pan-European, Eurasian/international. Evaluated against such scale, it is found that four of the six awards focus on national-level, single-country projects, while two of the awarded projects – 'Cross-Border Cooperation' and 'Networking and Reconciling Interests/Perceptions' are explicitly multi-national in scope (Table 1). The award winner in the category 'Cross-Border Cooperation and Networking' is also notable for the fact that it is the only project, which recognizes the pan-European and Eurasian scale and engages with it. However, a more detailed analysis of the relevant project documentation revealed that most of the awarded projects, even when engaging only with an issue directly pertinent to a specific country, show explicit awareness of the potential pan-European applications of their conservation innovations.

In the second place, all projects have been implemented by the participation of variety of participants, and have strived to involve all concerned stakeholders (Table 1). In this regard, the comparative summary of the 2016 N2000 award-winning projects also entails two important recognitions: that first of all – the community-level scale has risen in importance. Of equal importance, however, is the recognized prevalence of the so-called transactional (short-term) project-based public–private intersectoral partnerships (PPIPs) (Visseren-Hamakers and Glasbergen, 2007) as the preferred strategy for conservation governance and management. PPIPs are

distinguished by the award as very successful and worthy of recognition (and emulation). Now each of these patterns will be discussed, in turn.

The community-level scale has captured most prominently the focus of the N2000 award. Community-oriented projects have been prominently recognized and acknowledged by the award in terms of their governance focus and action-orientation. Even though the governance scale of the nation-state is referred to by four of the six projects, the focus of the conservation practice is not national, but as mentioned above: the communities, with one exception – the Latvian project (winner of the N2000 Communication award) focuses on municipalities.

Moreover, the analysis indicates the emergence of a new type of community: one which can be termed the 'N2000 community' – a social unit inextricably linked to the N2000 sites, and environmentally and biodiversity conscious. Openness to learning and sharing of practices and know-how is the definitive characteristic of this new type of community. The N2000 embraces transformative learning, which is also nurtured by the active role of the EC in promoting the N2000 awards as a vehicle for learning and exchange of best practices. Thus, the N2000 awards' process actively fosters an emerging pan-European conservation community, and consequently possibly pan-European conservation identity.

The emerging N2000 community is not an inward-looking social entity, but an active, outward-looking, networked, and aware social association. The outward-oriented and partnership-seeking outlook is underscored by the explicit recognition that many of the conservation challenges require coordinated efforts across the borders, beyond the narrow confines of the nation-state. An ethics of sharing is particularly evident in the goal, stated by the Belgium and French award-winning project in the 'Reconciling Interests/ Perceptions' award category, which explicitly aims at help-

ing similar European projects on the basis of the acquired know-how.

In the second place, the present analysis brings attention to the prevalence of another socio-political phenomenon – the PPIPs, as a particularly successful governance approach. Characteristic of the PPIPs is the engagement of private actors in governance, a realm, which was previously the prerogative of the states. Visseren-Hamakers and Glasbergen (2007) explain that this phenomenon has taken four institutional forms: Business Initiatives, Civil Society Initiatives, Private Intersectoral Partnerships (PIP) (strategic alliances between civil society and business), and the already-mentioned PPIPs (strategic alliances between governments and business and/or civil society). Five of the six awarded projects are project-based PPIPs and only one of the projects could be classified as a PIP – the UK Conservation project. Thus, the awards highlight an emerging governance trend - the PPIPs as the preferred governance tool for achieving concrete biodiversity conservation objectives. Achieving conservation goals via PPIPs poses both new challenges and opportunities for the government structures as well as for the other conservation governance actors. This emerging trend signifies that reflective learning is an imperative not only within the relatively narrower conservation governance domain, but now also within wider social setting, as new forms of social learning are necessary, in order to achieve the conservation goals.

The comparative analysis of the N2000 award-winning projects points at the active proliferation of community-centric network-governance models. The analytical inquiry of the awards also indicates that a fundamental governance change is taking place – one consistent with the tendency to shape the contemporary governance systems through the interactions of public and private actors (Glasbergen and Driessen, 2002; Kooiman, 2003). However, Visseren-Hamak-

ers and Glasbergen (2007) caution that while setting numerous positive examples, novel forms of governance, such as the PPIPs cannot substitute for the 'classical'[1] competences of government, but rather complement them.

The analysis set out to explore pan-European conservation governance from a reflexive governance perspective, inquiring if the European N2000 annual award has been utilized as a flexible and open-ended pan-European device of reflective learning. Every project, which was a recipient of a N2000 2016 award, implemented reflective learning as a seminal strategy in achieving its conservation goals. The learning has taken place in a transformed governance context – one, which is community-centric, and one, in which PPIPs play an active leadership role. The challenge remains though, to align the short-term goals (in line with the award requirements) with the long-term governance objective. In this regard the apparent efforts of the EC to foster capacity-building at the community-level hold great promise both for the success of biodiversity conservation and for the future of democratic governance.

The current inquiry strongly highlights the highly participatory and inclusive governance dimension of the awarded projects. Diverse groups of stakeholders, drawn from the government, business, NGOs, communities, science, farmers and volunteers are active and keen to contribute as project participants. Thus, the analysis submits that the temporary and diverse (cross-sectoral and transnational) multi-stakeholder interest coalitions, initially coming together to address single issues, emerge as an important biodiversity conservation governance actor, and some of these networks even show tendency towards becoming more permanent structures. Consequently, the awarded projects indicate

[1] With 'classical' government policy, governments contribute themselves to sustainable development and create the conditions in society needed for partnerships and other private initiatives to be successful (Visseren-Hamakers and Glasbergen, 2007).

that new political spaces for biodiversity governance have emerged.

Conclusion The EU is a complex governance system that offers both challenges and opportunities for biodiversity conservation on a continental scale. The reflexivity governance perspective embraces, rather than rejects, the internal tensions accompanying the EU's governance actions in the sphere of environmental conservation. The comparative analysis of the projects, recipients of the N2000 award, highlights some very important governance trends. The awards (and thus the EC) strive to encourage community participation and community-level governance capacity. The emergence of the PPIPs challenges the formerly clearly defined notions of stringent governance regimes, even though transactional project-based PPIPs cannot substitute for the traditional forms governance. Nevertheless, in the dynamically transforming European biodiversity governance regime, reflective learning has now become a governance imperative, so that the multiple co-existing governance strategies can complement rather than contradict each other.

The EU's role as a leader in environmental conservation and sustainable development does not depend on dismissing the tensions attendant to the policies' development and implementation, but on the recognition of their potential. The EU's current complex and dynamic governance system entails a constant imperative to be reflexive, learn and transform. Only by adopting such stance will the EU be able to face the challenge of inspiring people around the world and across generations to reconnect with nature, "*by demonstrating that genuine sustainable development is possible*" (IUCN, 2014).

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Chapter 8

Organizers – Content of Previous Volumes

Organizers

Institut für den Donauraum und Mitteleuropa (IDM)

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More than 60 Years of Research for the Danube Region

The IDM was founded in 1953 as the "Research Institute for Issues of the Danube Region". As an Austrian scientific institution, it was dedicated specifically to research on the Danube region.

In 1993 the Institute was renamed as the "Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe" (IDM).

Today the IDM is an extramural research institution based on an association – constituted by individual and corporate members – with its head office in Vienna.

As of April 1, 2011, IDM started a strategic cooperation with the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Vienna.

The Institute is funded by the Austrian Federal Chancellery and the Federal Ministries of Science, Research and Economy, of Education and Women's Affairs, of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs as well as by individual provinces, cities, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, the Austrian Central Bank and private sponsors.

Facilitator and clearinghouse As a gateway and a facilitator institution the IDM makes an important contribution to co-operation in the fields of research, culture, politics, economics and administration. At the same time the IDM sees itself as a clearinghouse for concerns of the Danube Region, Central and Southeast Europe, supporting the work of embassies, trade missions, cultural institutes and national tourist offices of the countries of the Danube Region, Central and Southeast Europe in Austria, as well as the work of Austrian missions to these countries.

Since 1995 the chairman of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) is the former Austrian vice-chancellor Dr. Erhard Busek.

Groundwork As a think tank the IDM performs basic groundwork for government agencies and institutions in the fields of politics, education, research, culture and business and supports efforts in the Danube Region, Central and Southeast Europe.

PR work The IDM performs PR work and serves as a lobbyist for the region.

Research The IDM carries out research projects dealing with current political, sociological, social, economic, cultural and ethnic issues of the countries of the Danube Region, Central and Southeast Europe. The results are publicised by means of events and publications.

Next generation support The IDM supports recent graduates and young professionals in research and practice.

Educational activities and events In seminars, symposiums, summer schools and the post-graduate course "Interdisciplinary Balkan Studies" in co-operation with the University of Vienna, all with international participation, the IDM also serves as an institute of learning

and training. In addition, the IDM organises expert meetings, conferences, workshops and lectures. In this context, cooperation with institutions that share the IDM's goals is of particular significance.

Corporate services On request the IDM will organise custom-tailored introductory and advanced seminars for companies (executive briefings).

Publications

- "Der Donauraum" ("The Danube Region") – scientific journal of the Institute (quarterly/price per copy: € 9.60/ subscription: € 34.50) – Böhlau publishing house, Sachsenplatz 4-6, A-1201 Vienna)
- "Buchreihe des Instituts für den Donauraum und Mitteleuropa" ("Book Series of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe") – Böhlau publishing house
- "Das Magazin für den Donauraum und Mitteleuropa" ("The Magazine for the Danube Region and Central Europe") – issues on individual countries
- "IDM-Studien" ("IDM Studies") – on topical issues
- "Info Europa" – journal on the enlarged EU (5 issues per year, subscription: € 40, reduced price € 15)
- "IDM-Info" – newsletter of the Institute including the programme of events (5 issues per year/subscription: € 15/free of charge for members of the Institute)

Documentation The IDM maintains a documentation centre and a magazine reading room with specialised publications on current developments in the countries of the Danube Region, Central and Southeast Europe. Documentation is supplemented by regular reports provided by country correspondents working for the Institute on a voluntary basis.

IDResearch Ltd.

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ID in the name of our enterprise indicates first the significance of possible research and co-operation between different disciplines (InterDisciplinary) in today's globalising world; second, refers to the ability of developing creative ideas (Idea+Development) and third, covers Innovative power and Dedicated aspect of the enterprise.

Since 1997, a team of young researchers, students and Ph.D. aspirants from the University of Pécs have been organising various national and international symposia, conferences, seminars and summer schools about different aspects of social and political changes in Central and Eastern Europe (ranging from regional co-operation, the place and role of the V4 countries to security dilemmas of our global world). IDResearch is a young company based on the experiences and achievements of the past years, with a special intention of generating and shaping collaborations among young researchers in Central Europe. The aim of the company is to become a well-known generator of co-operations between national and international actors in the field of human sciences and research, project development and training. IDResearch Ltd. is interested in strengthening a new generation of social scientists who can search for and interpret affects of global processes appearing on the local level, and contribute to expressing social demand by estab-

lishing a new co-operation culture. For this aim the company plans to develop accredited trainings for young scientists to help them obtain complementary and pragmatic skills useful for their future work.

Current projects include

- the DRC (Danube Rectors' Conference) Summer School series on Regional Co-operation (www.d-r-c.org; www.drcsummerschool.eu);
- the Publikon project (portal for social science research and publishing house (www.publikon.hu);
- think tank and project leader on migration-related issues in the form of the European Integration Fund-supported scheme 'Black and white - Here we are!' and 'Immigropoly' (www.ittvagyunk.eu);
- publisher of the Hungarian African Studies (Afrika Tanulmányok) periodical and initiator of several researches, conferences and workshops on African issues (www.afrikatanulmanyok.hu);
- publisher of the journals of Modern Geográfia (Modern Geography; www.moderngeografia.eu) and the Central European African Studies Review (CEASR);
- collaborator in the International Cultural Week in Pécs international studies summer school series (www.icwip.hu);

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