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Ethnic Relations and Democratization in Eastern Europe (Secession, Federalism and Minority Rights)

July 1-12, 2002

Course Director: **Mária M. Kovács**, Nationalism Studies Program, CEU, Budapest, Hungary

Resource Persons: **András Kovács**, Nationalism Studies Program, CEU, Budapest, Hungary
Will Kymlicka, Queen's University, Toronto, Canada
Erica Benner, London School of Economics, London, United Kingdom

Short biographies

Mária M. Kovács is a professor of history at the Central European University and Director of the Nationalism Studies Program at CEU. Before coming to teach at CEU she was on the faculty of the History Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her main research interests are in the history of self-determination and international minority protection throughout the twentieth century up to the latest developments in the 1990s. Her previous book entitled *Liberal Professions, Illiberal Politics*, focused on the collapse of liberal institutions in Central Europe and more specifically, Hungary after the first world war and on the institutional expressions of interwar xenophobia and anti-Semitism. She has also published in the problem area of the conjunction of gender and ethnicity, focusing on the problem of ethnic cleavages within feminism in the interwar era. Professor Kovács is also a member of the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

András Kovács studied philosophy and history and completed his Ph.D. in sociology at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. In the early seventies he worked as editor at a publishing company and as lecturer in social philosophy at the Eötvös Loránd University. Between 1977 and 1990 he was banned from professional activity in Hungary because of clandestine ("samizdat") publications. He has taught at various universities in Germany and participated in various research projects in Germany, France, the US, and the Netherlands. In 1990 he became senior research fellow at the Institute of Sociology at the Eötvös Loránd University. Since 1997 he has taught several courses on sociology of nationalism and prejudice in the CEU Nationalism Studies Program and he is the academic director of the Jewish Studies Project at the CEU. His research interests include minority identities, prejudice, antisemitism, and sociology of post-Holocaust Jewry. In the last years Professor Kovács has carried out empirical research on antisemitism in post-Communist Hungary, on Jewish identity in Hungary and on national identity and European integration. He has published over 60 scholarly works, most recently a book on antisemitism in post-Communist Hungary.

Will Kymlicka received his B.A. in philosophy and politics from Queen's University in 1984, and his D.Phil in philosophy from Oxford University in 1987. Since then, he has been a research fellow or visiting professor at various universities in the United States (Princeton), Canada (Queen's; Toronto; Ottawa; Carleton), and overseas (European University Institute; Central European University).

He is the author of four books published by Oxford University Press: *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* (1989), *Contemporary Political Philosophy* (1990), *Multicultural Citizenship* (1995), which was awarded the Macpherson Prize by the Canadian Political Science Association, and the Bunche Award by the American Political Science Association, and *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* (1998). He is also the editor of *Justice in Political Philosophy* (Elgar, 1992), *The*

Rights of Minority Cultures (Oxford 1995), Ethnicity and Group Rights (NYU 1997), and Citizenship in Diverse Societies (OUP, 2000).

He is currently a Queen's National Scholar at Queen's University, and a recurrent visiting professor in the Nationalism Studies program at the Central European University in Budapest.

Erica Benner is Lecturer in International relations at the London School of Economics.

Her work deals with the history of thought on nationalism and the ethics of nationality. Her book Really Existing Nationalism (1995) placed Marx and Engels' thought on national issues in historical perspective, and reappraised the view that they misunderstood nationalism in their own time. Several articles including 'Nationalism Within Reason' (1997), 'Nationality Without Nationalism' (1997), and 'National Myths and Political responsibility' (1998) critically assess recent attempts to reconcile liberal and national values, and argue that judgements about acceptable and unacceptable nationalism should be grounded in norms of political reason. She is currently completing a book, Nationalism, Insecurity and Political Judgement (Oxford University Press) that develops these arguments. Here and in a forthcoming article, 'Is there a Core National Doctrine?' (2001), concerns about geopolitical insecurity are seen as underlying many of the ethical problems of nationalism. Erica Benner received M.Phil and D.Phil degrees from Oxford. She taught at Warsaw University (1993-5), the Skola Nauk Społecznych in Warsaw (1994-5), and Oxford University (1995-7) before moving to the LSE in 1998.

Course Objectives

The purpose of the course is to explore how western models of dealing with ethnocultural diversity can be adopted in Eastern Europe. From the point of view of Eastern European countries interested in European integration, Western European countries are not simply offering such models for possible consideration, but rather are pressuring Eastern Europe to respect pan-European standards. The decision of Western European organizations to insist on respect for pan-European standards is a serious test-case for the feasibility and desirability of "exporting" western standards to the rest of Europe. Given this background, the course will focus on three important topics. First, it will attempt to clarify the theoretical basis of Western models of dealing with ethnocultural diversity so as to distinguish the underlying principles from the myriad of local variations in the way that these principles are institutionalized. The course will distinguish the fundamental principles from the contingent practices and ask questions about the extent to which those principles are applicable elsewhere. Second, the course will attempt to involve participants, scholars, advanced students and practitioners, in a transnational and intercultural dialogue on problems of self-determination, federalism and minority rights and on how these problems are linked to democratization. Third, the course will offer an overview of methodological approaches to research on ethnicity, ethnic conflict and identity politics.

The specific topics addressed in the course are:

1. Can new Western models of liberal pluralism assist in the democratization and stabilization of post-Communist Europe?
2. Democratic transitions and ethnicity.
3. The theoretical basis of Western models of minority rights. Fundamental principles and contingent practices.
4. Relationship between the problems of self-determination and minority protection.
5. Methodological approaches to empirical research on ethnicity.

Course level

The course is offered to students and junior faculty (mainly in the social sciences and international relations) interested in nationalism studies. Participants are requested to read papers prior to the course.

Course format

The course offers a combination of lectures and seminars, including participant (student) presentations, some prepared in advance.

Course content

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The aim of the courses in the first week is to explore whether recent work by Western liberal theorists on issues of pluralism and minority rights is useful to understanding and evaluating ethnic conflicts in the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. There has been a great deal of important work done recently by Western political theorists on the importance of accommodating ethnocultural, linguistic and religious pluralism in democratic societies - eg., works by Charles Taylor, Will Kymlicka, Yael Tamir, David Miller, Jeff Spinner, Allen Buchanan, Rainer Baubock, James Tully, Michael Walzer, and Iris Marion Young. These and other theorists have helped to define a new approach to ethnocultural diversity that argues that justice requires the public recognition and accommodation of diversity. This new position (we will call it the "liberal pluralist" approach) differs significantly from the standard post-war liberal view (we will call it the "orthodox liberal" view) that ethnocultural diversity should be relegated to the private sphere and not publicly supported in the form of minority rights or multiculturalism.

According to liberal pluralists, learning to live with the public expression and institutionalization of ethnocultural diversity is a key precondition for a stable and just democracy. This raises the obvious question: can the new Western models of liberal pluralism assist in the democratization and stabilization of post-Communist Europe?

Many people in Eastern Europe are searching for (non-ideological) ways of conceptualizing their situation. There is no shortage of detailed descriptions and diagnoses of particular ethnic conflicts in particular countries, but very little in the way of general theorizing about the nature of minority rights or their relation to justice and democracy. As a result, proposals for resolving ethnic conflicts almost always appear as special pleading on behalf of this or that minority, rather than as the appropriate application of defensible moral principles. To avoid this perception that ethnic relations are nothing more than ad hoc compromises, there is interest amongst Eastern Europeans in determining whether Western theory provides useful ways to conceptualize minority rights in their region.

The importance of this topic is obvious. The ability or inability of countries in Eastern Europe to resolve their ethnic conflicts has profoundly affected the process of democratization. While most countries without significant ethnic tensions have democratized successfully (eg., Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia), those countries with major ethnic and linguistic cleavages are having a more difficult time consolidating democracy and civil society (eg., Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Macedonia). At worst, these ethnic conflicts have led to civil wars that have shocked the world with their levels of brutality (Serbia, Croatia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Chechnya). It is important to try to identify the relevant lessons and principles (if any) that the experience of Western democracies might offer to newly-democratizing countries struggling with these conflicts.

But the topic is urgent in another way. Several Western organizations have recently decided that respect for minority rights is one of the preconditions for post-communist countries to "rejoin Europe". Countries which fail the test of respect for minority rights will not be allowed to join NATO and the European Union, and may lose their standing in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) or the Council of Europe.

This growing movement for the international codification and monitoring of minority rights presupposes that at least some minority provisions are not simply a matter of discretionary policies or pragmatic compromises but rather are a matter of fundamental justice. It implies that minority rights are indeed basic rights. This movement has primarily been advanced by Western organizations, NGOs and scholars, together with their local allies in the rest of the world. And not surprisingly, their proposals typically involve codifying Western models as universal standards. There has been little input, and even less enthusiasm, from governments in Eastern Europe, Asia or Africa, most of which tend to be very sceptical about the whole idea of internationalizing minority rights issues.

What is happening today in Eastern Europe, therefore, may be a harbinger of things to come elsewhere in the world. The decision of Western organizations to insist on respect for minority rights in Eastern European countries will be the first serious test case for the feasibility and desirability of “exporting” Western minority rights standards to the rest of the world. For this reason, it is worthy of careful consideration by anyone interested in the issue of minority rights.

Given this background, there are two increasingly important tasks. First, we need to clarify the theoretical basis of Western models of minority rights, so as to distinguish the underlying principles from the myriad local variations in the way that these principles are institutionalized. While Western organizations have decided to demand respect for minority rights standards, there remains considerable confusion about what these standards actually are, and it is far from clear that there is any consensus yet within the West on the precise nature of these principles. We need to distinguish the fundamental principles from the contingent practices, and to think carefully about the presuppositions and preconditions of these principles, and hence about the extent to which they are applicable elsewhere.

Second, we need to promote a dialogue with intellectuals and leaders from other parts of the world about issues of minority rights. Our aim in this course is neither to support nor criticize recent moves to internationalize minority rights standards. But we do believe that any attempt to develop such international standards must be done in an inclusive way, with the active participation of non-Western countries, including representatives of both majority and minority groups. We need, in short, to start a transnational and inter-cultural dialogue on minority rights. Many intellectuals and policy-makers in Eastern Europe have no clear idea of the principles underlying these Western standards. They are told that respect for minorities is an essential part of democratization, but are not told why minority rights are linked to democracy, or how these rights relate to principles of justice or freedom. Under these circumstances, it is essential to establish a genuine dialogue on this issue.

As a second area of focus, the course will investigate the relationship between the problems of self-determination and minority protection. We will examine various theories of self-determination, the extent and actual content of self-determination rights, the extent to which self-determination is regarded as a legal right, and current initiatives to extend and redefine self-determination rights as benefiting minorities, too.

This part of the course will examine issues that remain hotly debated to our day, such as 'The gap between norms and practice', 'Minority right norms and self-determination norms: parallel commitments?', 'Normative commitments and policy decisions', etc. The course will not attempt to provide "answers" to the debated issues, but will look at the polemical arguments advanced on opposite sides. Where possible, readings are selected to introduce students to the debates. The readings are selected to provide a historical account of experiments with self-determination and international minority protection as well as a cross section of the relevant literature on contemporary debates within various disciplines.

The third part of the course will concentrate on the most influential economic, sociological and social-psychological theories of nationalism, national identity, national feeling and national conflict. After a general introduction in the sociology and social-psychology of attitudes stereotyping, prejudice and identity, lectures and discussions will deal with the theories of ethnic and national stereotypes, identities and conflicts as group conflicts. The seminars will introduce the students into the methods of empirical investigation of the subject.

Course syllabus

TOPICS	RESOURCE PERSON	NO. OF HOURS	TEACHING MODE	DISCUSSION POINTS
Self-determination: the current debate	Mária M. Kovács	4	Lecture and Participant presentations and discussion of case studies	Is there a right to self-determination in international law? Does the „right to self-determination” imply a right to secession?
Self-determination in post-Soviet Eastern Europe	Mária M. Kovács	4	In-class discussion of the decisions of the Badinter Commission based on Franck, Ratner and Shaw	What does international law currently regard as the proper unit of self-determination, and ultimately, of secession? The <i>uti possidetis</i> debate. What legacy of decolonialization do we see survive into the post-Soviet period?
External minority protection: the current debate	Mária M. Kovács	4	In-class analysis of the minority provisions of the Dayton Peace Accords	Can we say that current EU minority rights norms and norms formulated by the Council of Europe and the OSCE are generally accepted within the EU countries? Is the EU insisting on stronger norms for Eastern Europe than for EU members? How do minority rights norms and secession norms correlate?
Accommodating conflicting rights: the limited self-determination of minorities	Mária M. Kovács	4	Text-based analysis of autonomy models: Aaland Islands, Faroe Islands, etc.	What kind of flexible solutions have been developed by European countries to overcome the tension between territorial integrity and self-determination?
Territorial autonomy in post-Soviet Eastern Europe	Mária M. Kovács	4	Discussion of case studies by participants	What are the lessons of currently existing TA's and so-called „special status areas” for the region?
Western political theory and ethnic relations in Eastern Europe	Will Kymlicka & Erica Benner	8	Introductory lectures and participant presentations and discussion of proposed theses	Is ethnocultural neutrality a myth? What does ethnocultural justice mean?
The relevance of western models of nation building and minority rights in East Central Europe	Will Kymlicka & Erica Benner	8	Developing an in-class typology of minority-rights claims	What kinds of minority rights claims do we encounter in East-Central Europe? What explains the overwhelming resistance of East European states to the general principle of recognizing minority nationalism?
Specific features of East-Central Europe: historical legacies, the kin-state phenomenon, and emerging models of cultural autonomy	Will Kymlicka & Erica Benner	8	In-class analysis of constitutional transformation in East Central European countries, and analysis of models of ethnocultural autonomy	What are the prospects of multinational states, federalism and territorial autonomy in East Central Europe?

TOPICS	RESOURCE PERSON	NO. OF HOURS	TEACHING MODE	DISCUSSION POINTS
Hard cases: the Roma, the Russians in the Baltics, the Crimean Tatars and the Cossacks	Will Kymlicka & Erica Benner	8	Analysis of OSCE standards on the protection of minorities, and discussion of its applicability in individual Central-East European countries	In what sense do „hard cases” lack obvious analogues in Western experience?
Ethnocultural justice and democratization	Will Kymlicka & Erica Benner	4	Discussion of case studies by participants	Can we expect that ethnocultural conflicts will disappear with democratization? Is there grounds to hope that such „sequencing” will lead to ethnocultural peace? What are the risks of denying the seriousness and persistence of ethnocultural identities?
Sociology and social psychology of nationalism and national & ethnic minorities	András Kovács	4	Lecture	Specificity of sociological and social psychological approach to the question of nationalism & minorities
Investigation of national, ethnic and minority identities	András Kovács	4	Lecture and Participant presentations	Analysis of most influential theories and their applications in empirical research
National and ethnic stereotypes and prejudices as sources of conflict	András Kovács	4	In-class analysis of relevant survey data	Theories on stereotyping and prejudice; methods and problems of measurement of national and ethnic stereotypes and prejudices; prejudice and political conflict
Empirical research on nationalism and ethnicity in Europe in the 1990's	András Kovács	4	Same as above	Analysis of results of empirical investigations in different European countries (France, the Netherlands, Germany, Serbia, Hungary, Russia, Romania)
Empirical research and prediction	András Kovács	2	Discussion of case studies by participants	What is the use of empirical research?

For more detailed biographies, updated course description, syllabus, reading lists please check <http://www.ceu.hu/sun/sunindx.html>

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