Dynamics of National Identity and Transnational Identities in the Process of European Integration
Dynamics of National Identity and Transnational Identities in the Process of European Integration

Edited by

Elena Marushiakova

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# Contributors

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This book was inspired by the international conference "Dynamics of National Identity and Transnational Identities in the Process of European Integration". The conference was organized by the Balkan Ethnology Department of the Ethnographic Institute and Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and held in 2006. The conference was realized as project of the European Commission Jean Monnet Action Program for the support of Study and Research Centers.

During the last 19 years the political and social life of East European countries has developed in close connection with their integration into the European Union. The question of “the way towards Europe” has become a general internal and external public, political, economical and cultural topic in the region. Its salience has increased during the process of pre-accession negotiation and integration of each country into the European Union. The opening of borders, movement of peoples and capitals, intensive labor migrations and frequent contacts between border regions have both created a new reality, and new expectations of EU integration among people from the accession states of Eastern Europe.

The objective of this book is to open a debate on changing notions of identity in the region of Central and Eastern Europe on the base of analysis of social developments influenced by EU accession and EU integration process. The most important aspect is the analysis of processes of breaking up the borders of national identity and transition towards new forms of transnational identities and emerging of consciousness of All-European unity.

The discussion in the book falls within the theoretical frameworks of ethnology, history, political sciences and nationalism studies. This multidisciplinary approach is demanded by the logic of European integration processes. Traditionally the Eastern European ethnology has placed stress on broad historical and comparative studies of ethnic specifics and traditional cultures, while drawing attention to innovative elements. This approach contrasts with Western European ethnology and anthropology, which is oriented outside its own cultures. This book therefore contrasts the perspectives of “insiders” and “outsiders” towards a range of issues. The ambition of this book is to stimulate discussion through bringing together the perspectives of a range of disciplines, which
will help create a new approach to universally accepted definitions as “nations”, “identity” and “nationalism”.

The book is also concerned with another real result from EU integration - the development of “cultural nationalism” in East European countries. The general result of the research presented in this volume is to create a forum for discussion of the local processes in national self-identification as the region is integrated with Western Europe during a period of increasing globalization. EU integration is presented and analyzed in several different aspects: how Central and Eastern Europe will be integrated (and the consequences for cultural heritage); what the integration of East Europe gives to “the West”; how EU integration (and related to it free movement of population) will influence national identities, self-identification and self-consciousness; to what extent does EU integration result in negativism and nationalism revival; how far are we witnessing a creation of transborder and regional identities; and if the creation of all-European identity is already reality or only exists as a distant perspective.

The book defines the important factors, which influence the studied processes. The purpose of the book is to describe, analyze and discuss EU integration in the context of nation consolidating or disintegrating factors. An important part of the book is to discuss the response of society and people’s attitudes to the integration of their countries into the EU. It is important to place stress on how the factors identified affect the ordinary people, their life, culture and self-identification. Not less important is to place the connection between these three different levels within the context of EU integration, and the messages transmitted by the local governing political elites and societies in East Europe. However, the integration process and the different national and transnational identities are presented as a reality, development, dynamics and perspectives.

The book has a dual focus: on general topics related to the study of national and transnational identities and on the process of European integration. It brings together the work of researchers not only from different parts of Europe (from France to Russia) but from USA and Asia too. We firmly believe that this book will become a starting point for East-West discussion and will bring new knowledge that will be an invaluable contribution to the common European research area.
We want to express gratitude to all those institutions and persons, which support made it possible that our conference and this publication were realized. We are behold to the Jean Monnet Action - Support for Study and Research Centers 2006, Program of the European Commission; to Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe and to Rayna Gavrilova its Executive Director; to Roma Participation Program of the Open Society Institute and to Bernard Rorke its Director; to Minority Studies Society “Studii Romani” and to our colleagues from Ethnographic Institute and Museum at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.
Ironies of “Ethnolinguistic Purity”

In my article, I define Central and Eastern Europe as a region flanked by the Russian Federation in the East and Germany and Italy in the West. In the North it also includes Norway, Sweden and Finland, while Turkey, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in the South. The reader may enquire what inspired me to single out this area as a region for the purpose of an analysis. I argue that in this wide swath of land, beginning in 1918, the ideal of ethnolinguistic homogeneity became the widely accepted basic principle of statehood and nationhood legitimization.

Obviously, language remains a significant instrument of statehood and nationhood legitimization in the countries, which surround the region, but it is one of many such instruments. For instance, the states of Western Europe share their official/national languages with many other countries on the continent or elsewhere in the world (for instance, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, or the United Kingdom), or are officially multilingual (for instance, Belgium, Denmark, Malta, Luxembourg, or Switzerland). The sole exception to this pattern is Iceland, which shares its feature of ethnolinguistic homogeneity with Central and Eastern Europe. On the other hand, although Russian is the sole official (state) language of the Russian Federation, this country is dotted with a multitude of autonomous republics and regions with a plethora of local official (state)/national languages. In the South, Central and Eastern Europe, as defined here, is bordered on by the countries, which share Arabic as their official and national language (for instance, Syria and Iraq). The exceptions are Iran and Israel. Although modern Iran was founded in 1935 as an “Aryan nation-state” with Farsi (Persian) as its national language, the 1979 Islamic
Revolution led to a growing emphasis on the unity of Iran’s “Muslim nation” with the Ummah, or the ecumene of all the world’s Muslims, which, in its wake, brought in Arabic as a quasi-official language. In contrast, despite its religious roots Israel is a typical ethnolinguistic nation-state, where modern Hebrew (Ivrit) is the sole official and national language. The fact does not strike one as surprising when it is remembered that the state was established mostly by (Ashkenazi) Jewish settlers from Central and Eastern Europe, who had to leave the region due to the sheer impossibility of reconciling their Jewishness with the growing demands of the ethnolinguistic nationalisms, which developed there, to the point of wholesale exclusion of Jews from political bodies on a racial(ized) basis.

On the other hand, the striven-for ethnolinguistic homogeneity of Central and Eastern Europe’s nation-states is not without its exceptions, either. Due to historical reasons, Swedish is a co-official language in Finland, though native Swedish-speakers living in the state account for a mere 5.5 per cent of the population. In reality, Norwegian is two languages, Bokmål (“book language”) and Nynorsk (“new Norwegian”). Almost 90 per cent of the Norwegians speak the former, which is a slightly Norwegianized variety of Danish, and in practice mutually comprehensible with the language. Although after a bloody war, Bosnia was recognized as a nation-state, the Bosnian-speaking nation of the Bosniaks has to share the state with Croatians and Serbs, all that under an international control. As a result, alongside Bosnian, also Croatian, English, and Serbian are official in Bosnia. After the 2006 declaration of Monteneegrin independence, despite the intermittent use of Montenegrin even on governmental websites since 1999, Podgorica still has not decided whether to declare Montenegrin as the sole official and national language of this new post-Yugoslav nation-state. Due to the vicissitudes of history, English, Greek, and Turkish are Cyprus’s official languages, although after the 1974 division of this country, Greek and English are employed in the internationally recognized Southern Cyprus, while Turkish in Northern Cyprus, recognized only by Ankara. Furthermore, not unlike the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Moldavia, Georgia and Azerbaijan recognize on their territories the existence of autonomous republics with other official languages than the countries’ official and national languages. In the wake of Armenian-Azeri war (1988-1994), Nagorno-Karabakh was de facto detached from Azerbaijan and merged with Armenia. The international community does not recognize this fait accompli, but not to incur international wrath, instead of simply annexing Nagorno-Karabakh, Yerevan agreed to the organization of this territory as a second Armenian nation-state. Finally, after the 1995 re-introduction of Russian as a second
official language in Belarus, the fate of ethnolinguistic Belarusian nationalism took a serious downturn. The dictatorial authorities and population at large seem to support a project of a civic, Soviet-like (less communism) nationalism with Russian as the chief and prestigious medium of communication, which does not define one’s identity as elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe languages do. Should the hypothesis hold, Belarus would be the sole non-ethnolinguistic nation-state in the region of Central Europe, as defined for the needs of this article.

I propose to define this political and intellectual fixation on language in the function of the legitimizing basis of statehood and nationhood, as the normative isomorphism (tight spatial and ideological overlapping) of language, nation, and state. As required by the ideological constraints of ethnolinguistic nationalism, ideally, all the speakers of a national language, construed as a nation, should live in their own nation-state. Second, no languages other than the national should be allowed any official capacity at the state level. Third, the national language of a nation-state cannot be shared in its official or national capacity with any other nation-state or stateless nation. Fourth, autonomous regions must not be permitted on the territory of an ethnolinguistic nation-state. Obviously, only a handful of ethnolinguistic nation-states fulfill all the requirements of such a normative isomorphism, namely, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. These 11 countries constitute almost 40 per cent of all the 28 states in Central and Eastern Europe (as defined here). It is quite a high percentage, should one remember that, perhaps, not more than 12 further countries fulfilling this isomorphism exist elsewhere in the world. Furthermore, these 12 ethnolinguistic nation-states are spread all over, unlike the 11 in Central and Eastern Europe, which are clustered together. One ethnolinguistic nation-state exists in Western Europe (Iceland), two in Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia), one in the Middle East (Israel), one in Central Asia (Turkmenistan), one in South Asia (Bhutan), one in the Far East (Japan), and five in South-East Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam), 12 in total outside Central Europe (Kamusella 2006: 85-89).

A further analysis of the normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state allows discerning, that the fulfilling of the ideological requirements of this isomorphism is not always identical with the actual attainment of the national ideal of ethnolinguistic homogeneity. Ethnic Latvians account for 59 per cent of Latvia’s inhabitants (2006), ethnic Macedonians for 64 per cent of Macedonia’s populace (2002), ethnic Estonians for 69 per cent of Estonia’s population (2006). The
corresponding percentages are 83 per cent for Slovenia (2002), 84 per cent for Lithuania (2006), 84 per cent for Bulgaria (2001), 86 per cent for Slovakia (2001), 89.5 per cent for Romania (2002), 94 per cent for Hungary (2001), 95 per cent for the Czech Republic (2001), and the astounding 98 per cent for Poland (2002). Furthermore, no mutual incomprehensibility but the ideological constraints of the normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state precipitated the breakup of the Serbo-Croatian language into Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, and, now perhaps, Montenegrin vis-à-vis the breakup of multilingual federal Yugoslavia into (so far) six ethnolinguistic nation-states. Similarly, this isomorphism, and not mutual incomprehensibility, necessitated the closely related pairs of Bulgarian and Macedonian, Czech and Slovak, and Moldovan and Romanian to be established and politically reaffirmed as separate standard national languages.

Ergo, should one add the further requirements of actual ethnolinguistic homogeneity and the unique distinctiveness (no mutual comprehensibility with other languages) of the national language to the already enumerated constraints of this isomorphism, only Hungary and Poland remain as the sole “true” ethnolinguistic nation-states in Central Europe. And even these two could be disqualified on the ground that outside the countries’ borders substantial groups of ethnolinguistic co-ethnics remain. For instance, 2.1 million ethnic Hungarians reside in Hungary’s neighboring states, and Budapest claims 1.4 Americans of Hungarian origin as ethnic Hungarians. This Hungarian diaspora of 3.5 million and 9.6 million ethnic Hungarians living in Hungary amount to 13.1 million, meaning that 27 per cent of the members of the ethnolinguistic Hungarian nation live outside their nation-state. Similarly, it is estimated that 2.3 million ethnic Poles reside in Poland’s neighboring states, and Warsaw claims 10 million Americans and 1 million Canadians of Polish origin as ethnic Poles. All in all, it is vaguely estimated by various sources that the Polish diaspora and 37 million ethnic Poles in Poland add up to 55 million; hence, 33 per cent of ethnic Poles live outside their nation-state. Obviously, claiming Hungarian-Americans and Polish-Americans for the Hungarian and Polish nation, respectively, is a special practice, which has more to do with wishful thinking than any ethnolinguistic reality on the ground. For example, in 2000 in the United States a mere 715,000 people actually spoke Polish at home and 127,000 Hungarian.
From the National Principle to National Communism

In the wake of the Great War, the Allies under the guidance of the academic-turned-United States President, Woodrow Wilson, decided to secure peace and prosperity for Central and Eastern Europe by replacing the multiethnic empires of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia and the Ottomans with nation-states. At that time, the popular “scientific” belief was that people spoke different languages, which would allow for deciding in an unambiguous way where the speakers of a given language live. In turn, the territorial extent of their settlement would yield the territory of a prospective nation-state, in which all the language-speakers would be contained thus redefined as a nation. The cautionary tale of the Balkans, where in the early 1830s nation-states commenced to emerge rather on the ideological basis of religious and historical difference than language, did not record with the post-World War I decision-makers. In addition, the division of the Ottomans’ European territories among these new Balkan nation-states did not bring peace but an increasing instability and insecurity, wholesale falsification of statistics employed as an ideological weapon (Jezernik 2004: 174), proliferation and escalation of wars, vast border changes and forced “population exchanges”.

The political shapers of interwar Central and Eastern Europe failed to take into their calculations, for example, the phenomena of multilingualism and bilingualism, and disregarded the possibility that numerous groups may identify more with religions, specific ways of life, dioceses or historical states rather than with some standard languages, which they might even happen to speak and write. Until the instituting of compulsory elementary education for all by communists after 1945, illiteracy was widespread in Central Europe, except the Czech lands, Prussia, and Russia’s Baltic provinces (Kr 2006: 627-631). Basically, the belief in “objective social laws” (presumably identical in character with those in exact sciences, as originally proposed by August Comte and Karl Marx), to which Wilson lent his overwhelming political and academic authority, made the decision-makers blind to anything, which clashed with their pet analysis of the social reality. They proposed that the nation-states, which they created or whose creation they blessed, were the logical political confirmation or emanation of the ethnolinguistic differentiation on the ground, as described by researchers. Josef Stalin, being the main Bolshevik theoretician on nationalism, shared Wilson’s “objective view” on nations as discrete ethnolinguistic entities, and, in his capacity of the Commissar of Nationalities (1917-1924), made ethno-linguistic territorial
units the basis of the administrative division of the Soviet Union (Martin 2001: 3).

The difference between the Allies and the Bolsheviks was that at the Peace Conference in Paris the former declined to hear the demands of various aspiring nations (for instance, the Rusyns or the Silesians) of which the great powers had not been aware of prior to the conference. At that moment, the message dawned on the Allies that their presumably “objective approach” to the national question might not work, and sticking to it would cause a rapid proliferation of national states, which was perceived as an unworkable possibility that had to be avoided. Stalin was not afraid of such a consequence, as in the case of the Soviet Union this proliferation unfolded within a single state, and he could direct or roll it back at a whim thanks to his unchecked totalitarian powers. For instance, in 1932, around 17 500 ethnolinguistic national territorial entities existed in the Soviet Union, but its number was reduced to a mere 46 by 1938 (Martin 2001: 413). Stalin aspired to use nationalism as an instrument on the way to communism. In line with Marxist historical determinism, he saw nationalism (like its economic counterpart of capitalism) as a necessary stage, which each society has to pass. Thus, after the years 1923-1933, when ethnolinguistic difference was encouraged and cherished in the Soviet Union to the point of building nations out of the not at all nationally-inclined or even linguistically undifferentiated (in the case of Turkic-speakers) population of Central Asia, the Kremlin stepped in to do away with the excesses of the “national-bourgeois deviation”. The stage of nationalism was officially put behind, and the construction of the postulated worldwide classless communist nation began (though, for a while, in a single country – the Soviet Union – as originally proposed by Stalin).

Meanwhile, the Allies could not help but notice that the new nation-states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes until 1929) were as multiethnic as the non-national empires, which the states had replaced. The ideal of ethnolinguistically homogenous nation-states remained as elusive during the interwar decades as before the Great War. But the decision was taken, and the national principle in the form of the normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state remained the backbone of statehood legitimization in Central Europe. Hence, in order to keep up the appearances, multiethnic Czechoslovakia announced Czechoslovak as its national and official language, and Yugoslavia – the Serbocroatoslovenian language. Both languages were creatures of the ideological necessity, but, unlike in the Soviet Union, where languages were made, unmade, and remade in line
with the political and ideological expediency (King 2000: 65-67, 81-83, 206-208), neither Prague nor Belgrade enjoyed totalitarian power, which would enable them to transform the constitutional constructs of Czechoslovak and Serbocroatoslovenian into bona fide languages.

World War II ushered the period of totalitarianisms in Central Europe, when legal niceties were customarily overlooked on the way to achieving the ideal of ethnolinguistic homogeneity in the Central European nation-states. By 1945, the Third Reich had exterminated 5 million Jews and half a million Roma in the Holocaust. Between 1939 and 1948, population transfers involved the staggering 47 million people (Magocsi 2002: 190-193). Paradoxically, however the postwar Soviet seizure of Central Europe might be unwelcome; Stalin’s imposition of actual ethnolinguistic homogeneity amply legitimized the Kremlin’s dominance in the region. For instance, although Polish communists and anti-communists waged a brutal civil war, followed by its cold (ideological) counterpart until 1989, both factions agreed that it was right to incorporate the Eastern German territories into post-1945 Poland, and that the Oder-Neisse line should remain Poland’s Western border (Prażmowska 2004). The trick was that until Germany recognized this incorporation and the new border. The German-Polish Border Treaty (1990) and the Polish-German Treaty on Good Neighborliness and Cooperation (1991) were ratified in 1992, only the Soviet Union could guarantee the existence of the Polish nation-state in its brand-new territorial shape without any clear precedence in the past.

The Polish anti-communist and communist elites readily (though in most cases, tacitly) recognized the fact. The former had no choice but grudgingly accept the Soviet dominance and even cooperate with the communist government to a limited degree, while the communists had no choice but to pay at least lip service to Polish national ideals at the expense of the presumably universal (“internationalist” in the Soviet parlance) ideology of communism. As earlier in the case of the Soviet Union, Stalin saw this official espousal of nationalism in the Soviet bloc as a tactical move to pacify opposition prior to the imposition of the uniform Soviet model on Central Europe’s nation-states. The purge of the proponents of the “bourgeois-national deviation” or the “rightist-national deviation” began in 1948, but was never completed due to Stalin’s death in 1953. Paradoxically, almost at the same time (1946-1953), Stalin commenced the “struggle against cosmopolitism” in the Soviet Union, having recognized the unusual efficiency and political expediency of ethnic Russian nationalism, which had been successfully mobilized during the war for the needs of war effort. The thrust of this “anti-cosmopolitism fight” was aimed mainly at Jews, and later found its reflection in the
persecution of communist party functionaries of Jewish origin and Jews at large across the entire Soviet bloc, including the 1968 expulsion of the majority of Poland’s remaining Jews from that country (Tyszka 2003: 115-119; Zaremba 2001: 232).

Three years later (1956), a major change in the Soviet ideology followed, which allowed the satellite states to take their own “separate national paths” to communism. In this manner, national communism, as initially practiced in Yugoslavia after Belgrade’s breakup with Moscow in 1947, became the actual ideology of the Soviet bloc. The Kremlin decided that it would be impractical to impose an exact copy of the Soviet system and ideology on Central Europe, which made nationalism a permanent ideological fixture of all the communist regimes in the region. The theory held that the regimes should be “communist in form and national in content”, but in reality just their communism was limited to rhetorical lip service (Tyszka 2004; Zaremba 2001).

Meanwhile, Russian nationalism (less Orthodox Christianity) became the leading ideological force in the Soviet Union. In the latter half of the 1950s, Nikita Khrushchev encouraged the “coming together” (sblizhenie) of the nations in the Soviet Union and criticized “national narrow-mindedness” (mestnichestvo). The strong negative reaction to the renewed wave of Russification entailed by this policy made him declare that the “flourishing of separate national cultures” would continue until the “merger” (sliyanie) of all the Soviet nations into a Soviet nation (Sovetski narod) in a distant future. In 1971, Leonid Brezhnev opined that this classless and potentially worldwide nation of “developed communism” would speak a single language, none other but Russian. Ten years later, he claimed that the realization of the Soviet nation was close-by. Predictably, Russification intensified, despite the official rhetoric of a “multiethnic society of culturally distinct yet integrated nationalities” (mnogonatsionalnoe sovetskoe obshchestvo, or sotsialno-kulturnaya obshchnost sovetskikh natsii). Beginning in the mid-1980s, however, the centrifugal forces of old nationalisms and relatively new ones (created by the Bolsheviks in the interwar period) could not be contained any more, and they hastened the breakup of the Soviet Union in the wake of the country’s economic and ideological bankruptcy (Artyunyan 1985; Smith 1990: 7-14).

**Building an Homogenous Communist Poland**

“Communist Poland” is convenient shorthand for Poland between 1945 and 1989. However, the communist party seized entire power in postwar
Poland only in 1947, and Poland was not announced a “people’s republic” (Republika Ludowa) until 1952.

The process of the expulsion of Germans from postwar Poland, as agreed upon and approved by the Allies, officially lasted from 1945 to 1948, but in reality, due to the tremendous scale of the operation, it was not complete until 1950. The same was true of the expulsion of Poles (and Jews who had lived in Poland before 1939) from within the new borders of the Soviet Union to Poland, between 1944 and 1948. Simultaneously, Jews remaining in postwar Poland began to emigrate to Palestine/Israel and the West already in 1946, and the process continued until the early 1960s. Although in the 1952 Constitution Warsaw did not mention minorities, Jews were allowed to establish their “socio-cultural society” already in 1950, because their drive to emigrate agreed with Warsaw’s aim of building an ethnolinguistically homogenous Polish nation-state. Similar societies for other minorities followed later: in 1956 for Belorussians, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians, and, finally, in the following year for Germans. The 1948-1953 “struggle against the rightist-nationalist deviation” left hardly any dent on the process of continued ethnic cleansing in post-1945 Poland. The restriction painfully felt by the population at large was the wrapping-up of the expulsion of ethnic Poles and Polish Jews from the Soviet Union in line with Soviet policy of “fighting against cosmopolitism”, which, paradoxically, also entailed the retaining of ethnically non-Russian populations in order to “prove” the “irresistible attraction” of Soviet-style communism. Eventually, another wave of pre-1939 Polish citizens of Polish and Jewish ethnicity desperate to leave the Soviet Union for Poland was allowed to do so from 1955 to 1959. A similar predicament was faced by Germans in Poland, whom Warsaw was reluctant to let leave for East or West Germany after 1951. Their emigration resumed, however, in 1955 and continued throughout the period of communist Poland before it petered out to a trickle in the mid-1990s (Berdychowska 1998: 18, 30, 254; Kacka 1994; Kamusella 1999: 58; Ociepka 1994: 39-47; Walaszek 2001: 307).

In the early 1950s, the communist party glossed over the actual project of “Poland for Poles only” in the rhetoric of “all-people’s socialist nation” (ogólnonarodowy naród socjalistyczny), reminiscent of “Soviet classless communist nation” (Zaremba 2001: 203). After the thaw of 1956, when national communism became the accepted norm in the Soviet bloc, there was no need for euphemisms anymore. Poland was to become a state for one nation only (Polska państwem jednego narodu), and the nation united in its own national and standardized language (język ogólnonarodowy) was to attain at last the ideal of social-economic homogeneity (homogeniczność
Poland: The Reluctant Shift from a Closed Ethnolinguistically Homogenous National Community to a Multicultural Open Society

społeczno-gospodarcza). Obviously, “social” means “ethnic” here, and the throwing-in of the adjective “economic” into the phrase “social-economic homogeneity” was nothing more but lip service to the communist economic orthodoxy, which underlay the elusive unity of the Soviet bloc on its way to communism. Similarly, sometimes Polish communist ideologues qualified the noun “nation” with the adjective “socialist” (naród socjalistyczny) but any references to the Polish “socialist nation” became rare after the mid-1970s (Grzybowski 1970: 214-216). That time was the acme of national communism encapsulated in the ubiquitous, koan-like slogan “The party with the nation, and the nation with the party” (Partia z narodem – naród z partią) (Zaremba 2001: 362).

People who were not ethnic Poles disappeared from official statistics after 1946, when the question about one’s nationality was asked for the last time in a census in communist Poland in order to assess the number of remaining Germans to be expelled. In the 1970s, Polish scholars assessed the size of the ethnically non-Polish population at 0.4 million to 0.6 million. Obviously, these estimates did not include the so-called “autochthons” (autochtoni). This category was invented immediately after the war in order to legitimize the retaining of around 2 million German citizens (including those who [re-]acquired German citizenship during the war). Warsaw officially maintained that they were of Polish/Slavic origin, and often referred to them as “ethnographic Poles unaware of their Polishness” (etnograficzni Polacy, nieświadomujący sobie swej polskości). This sobriquet harked back to the term “half-Poles” (pół-Polacy), which Polish nationalists devised at the beginning of the 20th century and used widely in the interwar period for referring to those, who did not actively express their Polishness or even failed to identify as Poles. The nationalists perceived them as mere “ethnographic Poles” because of the latter’s language, Catholicism, history, or Slavic origin. They also estimated that only one-third of the Poles in interwar Poland were “real Poles”, that is, not more than one-fifth of the state’s population, which was composed in two-thirds from ethnic Poles and in one-third from ethnic non-Poles (Walicki 2000: 323-324, 395). The “autochthons” mostly belonged to the ethnic groups of Kashubs, Mazurs, and Silesians. They perceived the policy of “re-Polonization”, which was to make “real Poles” (prawdziwi Polacy) out of them as humiliating, and increasingly likened it to the treatment, which “natives” in colonies received at the hands of Western imperial administrations. The status of second-class citizens, which the “autochthons” suffered in communist Poland, caused them to identify as Germans in defiance of forced Polonization. Beginning in 1975, Warsaw, without changing its rhetoric toward the autochthons, allowed them to
leave for West Germany in return for huge loans granted by Bonn. As a result all the Mazurs left and a third of the Silesians along with fewer Kashubs. This contradicted the cherished myth that at the beginning of the 1970s only 3,500 odd Germans were left in Poland, and supported the official West German thesis of 1 million to 1.5 million Germans remaining in postwar Poland (Berdychowska 1998: 19-20; Misztal 1990; Reichling 1986; Šatava 1994: 227; Strauchold 1995).

But during the 1980s, the communist party resigned from keeping up ideological appearances. It was busy with the suppression of the growing anti-communist opposition in the context of the badly faltering Polish economy under the strictures of the Western economic embargo (imposed after the introduction of martial law in Poland in 1981), and with no hope for any economic support from the Soviet Union, itself badly strained by the war in Afghanistan and the accelerating armament race. Poland began to appear even to the population at large not so much ethnolinguistically homogenous as it should after the four decades of permanent ethnic cleansing.

**Post-communism: Choosing Between Ethnic and Civic Nation**

After the unexpected demise of communism in 1989, the lid fell off the pot of Polish politics, previously enviously monopolized by the communist party. Anti-communist nationalists emerged from the spilt political broth along with democrats, liberals, social-democrats (or reformed communists), and other political forces. Apart from the burning question of economic and political transformation, the discourse on the future of the Polish nation within its nation-state also gained pace. The discussion unfolded in a potentially extremely dangerous international context. At that time, the national already radically dominated over the communist, which was limited to empty rhetoric believed by almost no one. The Kremlin washed its hands from guaranteeing the keeping of the communist form in the Soviet satellites, after it even could not contain the intensifying Azeri-Armenian military conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh in the Soviet Union itself. Wishing to retain power in the novel times, communist nomenklatura attempted to find an appropriately elevated place in post-communist economy or politics by reinventing themselves from national communists into through and through ethnolinguistic nationalists. On this plane, compromised communist apparatchiks could successfully compete with erstwhile anti-communist refusniks. As early as 1989, the Bulgarian communist leader, Todor Zhivkov, ordered the wholesale...
expulsion of Bulgaria’s Turks to Turkey. Luckily, this move (which involved 0.34 million expellees) did not precipitate a civil war or military conflict, but despite this effort Zhivkov was ousted from power later that year (Crampton 2005: 210-212).

The Serbian career apparatchik, Slobodan Milošević, had more luck in this respect than Zhivkov. In 1987, Milošević became the leader of the communist party of Serbia. In the following two years, he gradually adopted (Great) Serbian nationalism as his program in the place of communism, which earned him the post of President of the Socialist Republic of Serbia in 1989. In the following year, he contributed to the demise of the communist party of Yugoslavia by insisting that the party should be “democratized” in line with the principle “one man – one vote”. This would have sanctioned Serbian dominance over the party, and, by default, over Yugoslavia, meaning the de facto de-federalization of this state. Milošević’s stance enabled him to win the first free Serbian elections in 1990. In the same year, he did away with the autonomous status of Kosovo and Vojvodina in preparation for the transformation of the socialist republic into a unitary Serbian nation-state in 1991, when Yugoslavia began to split up. The transformation of this state into a Greater Serbia proved unworkable, in the wake of internal opposition of other national republics to this project and the West’s 1991-1992 decision to recognize the independence of Slovenia and Croatia.

After 1945, Yugoslavia was recreated as a multinational federation, thus Milošević’s success accelerated, or even precipitated, the breakup of Yugoslavia, which began in 1991. That same year the Soviet Union split along the borders of its union (national) republics into 15 independent nation-states. As in the case of Milošević, most communist leaders of their national republics attempted to, and many managed to reinvent themselves as presidents of the successor independent nation-states. In numerous cases their hold on power was short-lived with the notable exceptions of Azerbaijan (Heydar Aliyev), Kazakhstan (Nursultan Nazarbaev), Russia (Boris Yeltsin), Turkmenistan (Saparmurat Niyazov), and Uzbekistan (Islam Karimov). The case with Heydar Aliyev is quite indicative. Aliyev was the First Secretary of the communist party of Azerbaijan from 1969 to 1982, when he became full member of the Soviet Politburo. Mikhail Gorbachev removed him from office in 1987, but Aliyev reinvented himself as an Azeri nationalist and became the Deputy President of independent Azerbaijan in 1992, before, in the following year, attaining the top office of President, which he kept until his demise in 2003 (Świętochowski 2006: 289).
Strangely, military conflicts similar to post-Yugoslav and post-Soviet wars were avoided in the case of Poland, despite the extremely volatile political environment in which the state found itself. First, its Western border was not fully recognized in light of international law until 1992. Second, between 1990 and 1993, all Poland’s neighbors (East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union) disappeared and were replaced by seven brand-new ones (Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, and Russia). Thirdly, between 1988 and 1991, 0.56 million autochthons (Kashubs and Silesians, or ethnic Germans from the West German point of view) left Poland for West Germany, and they were followed by about 150,000 ethnic Poles (Rogall 2000: 7; Schmalz-Jacobsen and Hansen 1997: 125; Walaszek 2001: 248-249).

In the past, such tremendous border changes, prolonged non-acceptance of existing borders, and rapid movements of disgruntled population would have invariably led to war, as amply exemplified by the incipient Polish nation-state, which had fought border wars with almost all its neighbors between 1918 and 1922. The question arises why the fate of post-communist Poland was so peaceful, unlike what lay in store for the post-Yugoslav states and many post-Soviet states. Some say it was an accident, others opine that no blood was spilt thanks to the mature behavior of politicians. I believe, however, that the initial “restrainer” was the lack of full sovereignty, which, in the case of both Germanys and Poland, was held at the time of the fall of communism by the wartime Allies, and in the case of Czechoslovakia – by the Soviet Union. Hence, the situation was “frozen” and shielded from any decisive influence by local political actors (including nationalists) by the vast number of Soviet troops stationed in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Poland, and also of their American, British, and French counterparts in West Germany. The Two Plus Four Agreement (1990) signed by both Germanys and the Allies returned full sovereignty to reunited Germany and indirectly recognized the territorial shape of postwar Poland by obliging Bonn to sign a border treaty with Poland (1990). The Red Army left Czechoslovakia in 1991, Poland in 1993 (that is, a year after the ratification of the German-Polish border treaty), and the territory of erstwhile East Germany in 1994.

The great powers paid no similar attention to the cracking-up of Yugoslavia until 1995, when the Dayton Agreement rounded up the war in Bosnia, and until the 1999 US-led NATO intervention in Serbia, which prevented an impending humanitarian disaster in Kosovo. On the other hand, the Kremlin announced the territory of the former Soviet Union (less the three Baltic republics) its exclusive zone of influence under the sobriquet of “near abroad”. As a result, Moscow actually used and
fomented wars in the vast area in order to re-exert its control over 11 former Soviet republics in a neo-imperial manner. Other great powers stayed away and watched.

In 1991, the leading German political scientist, Claus Offe, remarked that post-communist states needed to undergo not a dual (as proposed earlier by Anglo-Saxon researchers) but triple transition before they could join the “system of European states”. In this model, the dual political-cum-economic transition from totalitarianism/autocracy to democracy and from planned to free-market economy, was appended by an ethno-national one leading from multiethnic state or somehow faulty nation-state to model ethnolinguistic nation-state. The multiethnic states to which Offe alluded were the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, while the faulty nation-states included the national republics in the three federations. Despite their ethno-national distinctiveness these republics did not enjoy independence and the constraints of a more or less imposed federal system required them to accept other languages than the national one on their territories, meaning the lingua franca of the federation and other languages of autonomous republics and regions embedded within the territories of some national republics (for instance, Kosovo in Serbia or Chechnya in Russia).

In his analysis, Offe explicitly defines the members of the “European system of states” as nation-states. In this he does not fall far from the mark, because nowadays, in the wake of the breakups of the per definitionem non-national Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, all the world’s extant states (perhaps with the insignificant exception of the Holy See) declare themselves as nation-states (including Gibraltar or Monaco, which aggressively aspire to this status). Nationalism became the sole ideology accepted all over the globe as the ultimate instrument of statehood legitimation (Kamusella 2003; Kamusella 2003a). What Offe seems to be suggesting implicitly is that a “true nation-state” must be of an ethnolinguistic character, or, in other words, such a state should fulfill the requirements of the normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state. But in Western Europe (a short hand for Offe’s “European system of states”), apart from Germany and Italy, such main states as France, Spain, or the United Kingdom are multiethnic and define themselves as nation-states on the civic basis of citizenship, the common tradition of statehood, legal institutions, and the like.

As remarked above, the ethnolinguistic sort of nation-state is typical of Central Europe and relatively unknown elsewhere in the world. This is so because the ideal of ethnolinguistic homogeneity is extremely difficult to achieve and maintain (probably, it is possible exclusively in dictatorships
and totalitarian states, unless such homogeneity unfolds itself by chance, as in Iceland), while the way to such a homogeneity is marked by long-lasting (or intermittent) inherent internal and external instability, and vast social and political engineering with no respect for the life and needs of the individual, let alone ethnic or national minorities. Invariably, lives of thousands or even millions are destroyed by a single sweep of a fountain pen in a politician’s hand, who strives for ethnic homogeneity, but this homogeneity unravels as soon as a state is transformed into a democracy. The democratic system entails granting the citizenry wide-ranging political rights and freedoms, and the state’s full and (largely) unconditional participation in international relations and the global system of free commerce. With time this leads to the outflow of citizens abroad and the parallel inflow of foreigners, who, in line with the democratic principles, eventually must be allowed naturalization. Ergo, ethnolinguistic homogeneity becomes legally and practically unattainable without the resort to extralegal or openly illegal means. The only two democratic countries, which wholly espoused the legal precept of jus sanguinis in order to prevent the granting of citizenship to legally residing non-co-ethnics, were (West) Germany and Japan. In the 1990s, both recognized incompatibility of this practice with the principles of democracy, but various obstacles remain there on the way of non-co-ethnics to naturalization, especially so in Japan.

**Poland: Toward a Civic Nation?**

In Offé’s model, post-communist Poland could immediately focus on the dual political and economic transition only, because the national transition had been effected there in the latter half of the 1940s, when the national communists had made postwar Poland ethnolinguistically homogenous. This model does not account for the role of the Polish ethnic minorities in Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, or Germany. Furthermore, it does not explain why the dual, economic-cum-political, transition took precedence over the national transition in the case of Poland’s new seven neighbors, which defined themselves as nation-states, and thus, had to reinvent themselves as such by becoming removed from the non-national traditions of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union. Upon its creation in 1949, East Germany posed itself as a new quality, while the thankless role of successor to the Third Reich was conveniently left with West Germany. In 1968, the new Constitution declared East Germany the “socialist state of the German nation”. In 1974, this phrase was dropped from the Constitution, thus opening the period of
building the socialist nation of East Germany as opposed to the “capitalist nation” of West Germany. But the decreed ideological construct of socialist nation never took off the launching pad, like the languages of Serbocroatoslovenian and Czechoslovak between the two World Wars (Asmus 1984; Müller 1996: 383-384).

Offe believes that the national transition is more important to those concerned than any reform of the political system or economy, which seems to explain why democratization or economic reforms were so swiftly written off their programs by governments in many post-Soviet and post-Yugoslav states. I think, however, that his model unduly marginalizes the forces of the international relations (for instance, great powers, NATO, the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States], or the EU [European Union]) as a decisive restraining factor on the internal or external expression of national transition (as defined by Offe) in the case of a given state.

During the first half of the 1990s, the wartime Allies’ armies prevented such expression of the national transition, and also guaranteed external and internal stability in East Germany absorbed by West Germany, Poland, and (less so) in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which emerged from Czechoslovakia. In the mid-1990s (especially after 1997 when the financial crisis hit Russia), the political and economic clout of the West convinced the Kremlin to accept, though grudgingly, the exclusion of the Baltic republics from Russia’s near abroad. Unlike other Soviet national republics, the three Baltic ones had been independent during the interwar years. The sheer timeliness of these three states and the carrot of EU and NATO membership prevented them from seeking a reversal of the Soviet-time border changes. But in all of them the national transition went swiftly when it came to the ousting of Russian as a co-official language, while in Latvia and Estonia, the low level of ethnolinguistic homogeneity entailed the withholding of citizenship from Russian-speaking residents who failed to master the prescribed basics of the official national languages. Beginning in 1999, under Vladimir Putin, Russia re-embarked on the neo-imperial course, which by default moderated the expression of Russian nationalism, because the project of (re-)building an empire is, by definition, multiethnic in character. Suitably, the 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation defines the state’s population as the “multinational people” or “multietnic nation” (mnogonatsionalnyi narod), which is clearly reminiscent of its Soviet counterpart of mnogonatsionalnoe sovetskoe obshchestvo. The Russia-led CIS effectively contained the external expression of the national transition in the former Soviet republics belonging to this organization, with the exception of the Armenian-Azeri...
conflict, which had begun three years before the breakup of the Soviet Union. In Belarus this containment also meant the wholesale reversal of the national transition after 1995, while Ukraine’s success in this field (sealed by the 1996 constitutional guarantee for Ukrainian as the state’s sole state and national language) was marred by the Kremlin’s blatant support for the official and political use of Russian in the Russian-speaking Eastern half of the country.

To reiterate, it may be quite misleading not to take into consideration the role of external forces as guarantors of the peacefulness of post-communist transition. The first non-communist Polish Prime Minister after the fall of communism, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, and his roving Minister of Foreign Affairs, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, clearly intuited this, and thus, lobbied with the wartime Allies for such solutions, which would not neglect Poland’s needs, and especially its fears of possible “German revanchism” with regard to Poland’s Western border.

What is more, the internal discussion on the suitable shape of democracy for Poland had to address the issue of which kind of nationalism should be employed for statehood legitimization in this state. The already established tradition of ethnolinguistic nationalism made the Polish nation-state what it became between 1918 and 1989. On the other hand, it bred such immense instability, so many military conflicts, and required the expulsion of so many millions of people, that none of these was to be repeated if Poland was to succeed on its “way to Europe”, meaning joining NATO and the EU. The sad lot of Yugoslavia, which seemed fated to become a member of the European Community (the EU’s forerunner) at the close of the 1980s, was a clear warning about what might wait in store for a Poland ready to succumb to an ethno-national program of “Poland for Poles”. The West’s pressure in the form of the Balladur Plan (named after the French Prime Minister, Édouard Balladur, in office between 1993 and 1995) required all the former members of the Soviet bloc, along with their Western and post-Soviet neighbors to sign with one another treaties on cooperation with appropriate clauses on minority rights protection. The first treaty of this kind, which would become the model for later ones, was the German-Polish Treaty on Good Neighborliness and Cooperation (1991). In 1993, the Copenhagen Criteria for the candidate states wishing to join the EU, among others, required internalization of respect for and protection of minorities in their legal systems (Łodziński 2000: 134). Ironically, it was never demanded of the old 12 of the European Community that they fulfill the same high standards of minority rights protection as entailed by the Balladur Plan and
the Copenhagen criteria. The main Western European state, which falls short of these standards, is none other but France.

In its first postcommunist Constitution of 1997, Poland finally faced up to the challenge. Besides providing for a wide-ranging system of rights and protection for ethnic and national minorities, in the Preamble the novel, civic definition of the Polish nation was given: “all the citizens of the Republic of Poland”. On the legal plane, it was a clear breach with the tradition of ethnolinguistic nationalism. In reality, however, the ethnolinguistic practice of day-to-day politics prevailed. A modicum of minority rights protection was granted to these minorities with whose “home nation-states” Poland signed bilateral treaties, which include minority rights protection clauses. These minorities include: Belorussians, Czechs, Germans, Lithuanians, Russians (mainly Old Believers), and Slovaks. The same level of minority rights protection was also extended to ethnoreligious groups, which had achieved institutional autonomy already in Poland-Lithuania (that is, before the 18th century), namely: Armenians, Jews, Karaims, and Tatars. Warsaw also styled as “national minorities” these ethnic groups, which Polish ethnonationalists traditionally sought to exclude from the commonality of the Polish nation (Jews and Roma). Lemkos (Rusyns) were also accorded the status of a national minority, because already during the interwar years the Polish authorities had begun to treat them as such a minority in order to weaken Poland’s then huge Ukrainian minority of 5 million (Berdychowska 1998; Michna 1995: 41-44, 57; Tomaszewski 1985: 50). The Polish Constitution distinguishes between national and ethnic minorities, but until the passing of the Act on National and Ethnic Minorities, and the Regional Language in 2005, there had been no legal distinction between these two, so any recognized minority was treated as “national”. Today, this act defines national minorities as those living outside “their” home nation-states, and the ethnic ones as stateless (that is, with no home nation-states). Minority rights protection is extended only to these minorities, which are listed in the act. The national ones include: Armenians, Belorussians, Czechs, Germans, Jews, Lithuanians, Russians, Slovaks, Ukrainians; whereas the ethnic minorities include: Karaims, Lemkos, Roma, and Tatars. The “regional language” from the act’s title is Kashubian, but it is explicitly emphasized that the Kashubs are just a regional group of the Polish nation. Obviously, officially “non-existing” Silesians are not mentioned (Ustawa 2005).

In 2000, the ethnolinguistic practice of Polish politics was clearly shown by the Act on Repatriation, adopted by the Polish Parliament. This act allows ethnic Poles (even if they do not speak Polish) from the post-