

## ***Divide et impera principle. Minority oriented state policy in the Balkans***



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### **Abstract<sup>1</sup>**

This article focus' on institutions of the cultural autonomy adopted in some of the Balkan states. After the failure of the Dayton project in Bosnia and Herzegovina most of the Western Balkan countries adopts some forms of cultural autonomy. The main hypothesis of this article is that this solution enables the states' governments to hold a firmer control over the minorities political demands and therefore facilitate control of the minority itself and lower the risk of an ethnic conflict outbreak. This article contributes to the debate on the ethnic minorities' political accommodation by highlighting some issues related to cultural autonomy models adopted in the Balkans. It looks into these of it features, which enable central-state authorities to strengthen their bargaining position vis-à-vis ethnic minorities groups and their representatives.

**Key words:** cultural autonomy, ethnic minorities, Balkans, intra-ethnic competition

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## **Development of cultural autonomy in the Balkans**

The tensions, conflicts and wars have, especially in the Balkans, ethnic character, i.e. political support in such a cases is gained on the basis of ethnic cleavages and conflicts and, ultimately “politicization” of ethnicity. This process can have various forms. As summarized by Erin Jenne, ‘primordialist or essentialist arguments posit that groups with distinctive national identity will ultimately seek independence on the basis of a perceived right to national self-determination. A second set of structural arguments hold that group traits, including size and territorial compactness, may galvanize support for secessionist agendas. (...) A third set of structural arguments holds that economic disparities between the minority and center give rise to group demands for secessionism or irredentism. Finally, a fourth set posits that institutions of autonomy serve to “construct” nations, creating focal points around which independence movements gather momentum when the centre weakens. (...) Among dynamic or processual theories, instrumentalism posits that elites generate popular support for extremist demands when they stand to gain personally from doing so, thus identifying a causal mechanism for claim-making. (...) Ethnic fears or grievance theories of ethnic conflict stand as most plausible accounts of claim in the existing literature. One variant holds that ethnic groups mobilize in response to the internal security dilemma brought about by state collapse. (...) Grievance theories, in turn, argue that minorities suffering serious discrimination will mobilize around collective demands such as secessionism or irredentism once they obtain the resource to do so’ (Jenne, 2004: 731-734). Cultural autonomy has been adopted, among the others in Albania, Croatia and Serbia with goal to prevent emergence new or diminishing of the existing ones. This aim has to be perceived also in the light of the ongoing process of the EU integration.

Idea of cultural autonomy it is an old concept in the Southeastern Europe. The Balkan societies have been divided for much longer and much deeper along the cultural/ethnic lines than their counterparts from other parts of Europe. There, the mercantilism, bourgeois- and industrial revolutions shifted the political strengths from religious and cultural divisions into the availability to collect, protect and reinvest financial and economic assets. Subsequently the states underwent the processes centralization and national homogenization. The Ottoman system of governance

which covered until the end of XIX century majority of Balkan lands preserved the old system of social divisions. The national assimilation or unification did not begin later than in Germany or Poland, but it was exercised from various centers. The plurality of the centers led to multiplication of claims. Therefore the newly established Balkan states had to face many problems of ethno-political character.

First attempts to address the 'ethnic issues' were characterized by centralization of power and assimilation policy imposed by the state authorities. Building a nation state was almost an universal process in the XIX and XX century Europe. Social and political changes that occurred at this time forced changes in relations between the state authorities and their subjects. The divine character of a monarch was put in serious doubt and a new organization of society emerged. France adopted solution that ignored ethnic differences between various segments of the society. The subject becomes linked to the state not through his or her unique ethnic characteristic but through citizenship. In other words, the state treated all the society members equally (at least formally), regardless of their ethnic roots, religion, culture, race, etc. Swiss confederation on the other hand accepted multi-ethnic, multi-confessional and multi-linguistic character of its society.

Balkan states however adopted the German model, which was based on the ethnic tie between the society members and the state. The German solution provides the purest version of nation state - the one, that actually recognizes existence of minorities. French model rejects the idea of ethnic minorities in political sense, since the ethnic factor is irrelevant to the citizenship concept. Swiss state also ignored minorities by incorporating idea of multi-ethnic society. Building the state based on the idea of national homogeneity in region subject to fierce ethnic and territorial claims and inhabited by multi-confessional and multi-ethnic society was an uneasy task. It has resulted in rise of tensions between majority representing government and politically ignored minorities. Loyalty towards host states of Greeks in Albania, Slavs and Albanians in Greece, Non-Bulgarians in Bulgaria and Non-Serbs in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia faced many obstacles and challenges.

Thereafter the idea of federalism and territorial autonomy prevailed and became dominant factor of political life of the communist Yugoslavia after the second world war. The Yugoslav experience as well as the Dayton constitutional system of Bosnia and Herzegovina efficiently deter from applying solutions linking strong territorial autonomy and ethnicity at the same time.

In such a cases political elites aim at political mobilization, that is based on ethnic differences and conflicts. The deeper cleavages and conflicts the more efficiently the mobilization proceeds.

While the issue territorial autonomy and federalization became a synonym of failed and dismembered state, the ethnic minorities issues could not be ignored due to two reasons. First of them was a necessity to accommodate and canalize the ethnic based political claims. The second one was international pressure, conditioning various economically and politically lucrative projects and solving minorities problems and preventing the new one according to the international and western European standards. Therefore, instead of territorial autonomy, some countries adopted cultural self-rule standards. This article highlights models adopted in Albania, Croatia and in Serbia.

### **Minorities as subject of autonomy**

Ethnic mosaic of the Western Balkan countries have special methodological value for various reasons. First of all, ethnic minorities, with some minor exceptions, have indigenous character, and have settled in the region at least several centuries ago. Actually, there is a constant debate on the question of “who was there first”, i.e. Macedonian Slavs or Macedonian Albanians in today’s Republic of Macedonia? Who settled down in Bosnia – Serbs, Croats or another, distinct group? How much rights to Croatia have Croatian Serbs? How Serbian is Vjvodina and Sandžak Novi Pazar? Is Epir Albanian or Greek region?

Secondly, most of the major minority groups have a kin-state in the region. ‘Kin state involvement in ethnic conflicts is based on an assertion of strong ethnonational ties that cross borders and entails “the right, and even obligation to defend” co-ethnics in another state’ (Caspersen, 2008a: 357). On the other hand the kin state can influence to some degree the policy of the minority's host state. In other words, relationship between the minority and the kin state involves both rights and obligations for both sides. The most clear examples here would be: Albanians who inhabit, except of Albania and Kosovo, which are essentially ‘Albanian’ entities, also Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia and Greece. Bosniacs constitute significant minorities in Serbia and Montenegro, as well as recognized separate ethnic groups in Croatia and Kosovo.

Serbs as ethnic minorities live in each of the countries except of Albania. Croats are settled in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. There are also some Croat villages in Kosovo. There are Montenegrins living mostly in Serbia, but also in Albania and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The net of interdependence is relatively dense and can have a significant impact on the political situation and stability in the region. Minority group and its relations with the state authorities can constitute a significant base of influence of the relevant kin state.

The other important factor, which makes comparison of the Balkan countries especially valuable is fact of the international pressure mostly from the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe to respect minority rights. Following Jeffrey T. Checkel, two types of behaviour explain adoption of international norms into the domestic systems. First one of them, provides that the domestic players accommodate to the international rules, norms, procedures etc., having calculated costs and benefits of such a decision. We shall call it the 'rational model'. Second type of behaviour is based on ideological agreement between the norm provider (i.e. international community) and norm taker (domestic player), therefore this type of appropriate action will be called the 'compliance model'. (Checkel 2005: 804-805) First of the models is relevant in the case of the Western Balkan countries, although with various degree of rationality and compliance.

Finally, Albania, Croatia and Serbia have comparable share of minority population. 'Traditionally, Albania has recognized those national minorities which have a motherland and characteristics like national identity, language, customs and tradition, religion etc. Thus, Albania has recognized Greek, Macedonian and Montenegrin minority. Roma and Aromenian on the other hand are recognized as ethnic-linguistic minorities. (...) In the first half of 1991, minorities in Albania began to form organizations and associations: the Organization of Macedonians "Prespa", the Association of Montenegrins "Common Life and Harmony", the Association of Greeks "Omonia" (Sinani 2008: 202).

The Greek minority, Albania's largest, has deep roots in the country's two south easternmost districts, Sarandë and Gjirokastër, in an area many Greeks call Northern Epirus. Estimates of the size of the Greek population was, according to the popular census from 2011, 24,243 or 0,82 percent of population, yet only 0,5 percent spoke Greek as first language. Smaller minorities make less than one percent. *'Persons of Macedonian and Bulgarian origin lived*

*mostly in the border area near Lake Prespa. The Vlachs, akin to modern Romanians, were most numerous in the Pindus Mountains and in the districts of Fier, Korçë, and Vlorë. A few persons of Serbian and Montenegrin derivation resided around the city of Shkodër. There were small Jewish communities in Tiranë, Vlorë, and Korçë; and Gypsies were scattered throughout the country'* (Iwaskiw and Zickel 1994). The Albanians themselves constitute 82,6 percent of population, while the considerable part of society decided not to provide any information on their ethnicity.

Croatia has been inhabited, next to Croats (3,874.321 or 90,42 percent of the overall population), by members of 22 minorities, of which only Serbs constitute 4.36 per cent strong group or 186,633 people. Other significant minorities are Bosniacs (0,7 per cent), Italians (0,42), Albanians (0,41) and Hungarians (0,33). There are also Muslims by Nationality, Yugoslavs (do not recognized as ethnic minority), Slovenes, Czechs, Roma, Montenegrins, Jews, Poles, Macedonians.

According to the census in 2002 there was almost 7,187 million Serbian citizens of which ethnic Serbs amounted to 5.98 millions or 83,3 percent. In Vojvodina however Serbs constituted only a 65 percent strong majority. Another significant minorities in Serbia are: Hungarians with over 290 thousands and 3.9 per cent or over 14 per cent in Vojvodina where almost all Serbian Hungarians live; Roma 2.4 per cent (147 thousands); 145 thousands of Bosniacs constituting 2.2 per cent; around 60 thousands of Albanians (Albanians boycotted the popular census in 2011) 0.81 % Croats, 0.74 percent of Slovenes. Except that there are smaller minorities of Montenegrins, Vlachs, Romanians, Muslims by Nationality, Macedonians, Bulgarians, Russians, Bunjevans, Gorans, Albanians, Ukrainians, Germans, Slovenians, Greeks, Czechs, Ashkali and others.

In Serbia most of minorities is traditionally concentrated in Vojvodina, the northern province of Serbia. Additionally, Muslims by nationality and Bosniacs inhabit Snadzak Novi Pazar region on the border with Montenegro, Albanians dominate on the eastern border of Kosovo, while Bulgarians settled near the town Pirot, on the southeastern Serbia. Vlachs constitute significant minority in north-easter part of the republic between Majdanpek and Knjazevac.

The minorities in Albania, Croatia and Serbia constitute visible, yet not influential in terms of numbers, groups. Nevertheless their indigenous character, international attention and existence of the kin states sharply increase their political significance.

### **Cultural autonomy as the solution**

It is well acknowledged that cultural autonomy separates ethnically defined policy areas concerning “the cultural, linguistic, ethnic, or religious matters” from policy areas affecting all citizens alike. The modern *'idea of granting national-cultural autonomy on a personal rather than territorial basis can be traced back to debates in Imperial Austria and was originally developed in the writings of the Austro-Marxists Karl Renner and Otto Bauer (Nimni 1999). In both the historical and the contemporary debate, cultural self-government has been praised for providing ethnic groups with a means to self-determination in policy areas that are particularly relevant for preserving their ethno-cultural identity, while avoiding the incentives for separatism that are commonly associated with territorial solutions (Bieber 1999: 91; Stroschein 2003: 10; Nimni 2007). On normative grounds, however, scholars have warned that granting cultural group rights through minority councils may threaten norms of equality and individual rights at the within-group level (Deets and Stroschein 2005)' (Zuber and Muš 2013: 1).*

Albania, Croatia and Serbia adopted cultural autonomy model. They guarantee a significant number of rights and freedoms to national minorities and their members. *'In 1993, a charter of rights passed by the Albanian legislature assures 'individuals belonging to minorities' full protection and equality before the law and makes provision for education in the mother tongue. In addition, the Albanian Constitution guarantees the rights of recognized national minorities, including the right to study and be taught in their mother tongue. Correspondingly, there is some provision of schools and classes for the Greek and Macedonian national minorities, where education in minority language is available, to varying degrees. However, other minorities do not fare so well. There is a lack of education in and of minority languages for the Aromanian/Vlach and the Roma minorities' (MRGI, 2007).*

In December 2002 Croatia adopted the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities (*Ustavni zakon o pravima nacionalnih manjina*). According to the Article 7 of the Constitutional Law, the Republic of Croatia guarantees national minorities and their members, among the others: self-organization and association rights; representation in the representative bodies at the state and local level and in administration and judicial bodies; participation of members of national minorities in the public life and in management of local affairs through the councils and through representatives of national minorities. Article 23 of the Law indicates aims of the National Minority Councils (NMCs): preservation, improvement and protection of national minorities in the Croatian society. Therefore means of participation of NMCs in public life and in the local self-government institutions should be established.

The Serbian law makers adopted solutions, that, at the first glance, seem to be narrower, as far as responsibilities and rights of the NMCs are concerned. The adopted in 2009 Law on National Councils of National Minorities (*Zakon o Nacionalnim Savetima Nacionalnih Manjina*) indicates that NMCs represent respective national minorities in the area of education, culture, informing in the national minority's language and as well as official use of language and script. NMCs participate also in the decision making process in the mentioned above areas. Additionally, with the regard to these tasks, they are able to found organisations, associations and other institutions.

Ethnic minorities have enjoy a similar degree of cultural, non-territorial autonomy, covering areas of education, culture, language and religion. Nevertheless, the following three features of cultural autonomy weaken minorities' political independence in relation to central authorities.

### **Rising intra-group competition**

Cultural autonomy, reflected in a form of self-government in the areas of education, use of language and media control, establishment of specific associations, foundations, etc. transform into a relevant flow of financial means. In effect, leading a minority council stands for disposal of finances, governing various institutions and controlling minority's media. Therefore



the leaders within one minority group are likely to turn against each other, rather than cooperate. These internal struggles can be reinforced in various ways. By provision of democratic and free elections to the minority councils, candidates representing minorities have to compete with each other for votes. Thus the internal division within a group or within a party representing the group are likely to happen. This is the case of Serbia, where only 'the Czech minority only had one choice, the list "Czechs together" that consequently received 100% of Czech minority votes. Two lists stood for elections to the Albanian, Greek, Egyptian and German NMCs, three for the Bosniak and the Ashkali, five for the Hungarian and Slovak, six for the Rusyn and Romanian, seven for the Ukrainian, Bulgarian and Bunjevac, and nine for the Vlach. The campaign for the Roma NMC witnessed the maximum of 10 lists (Ministry of Human and Minority Rights 2010)' (Zuber and Muš 2013: 5).

Croatia the organisations representing relevant minorities are strongly divided internally. For example Italian Union is composed of 52 Italian communities in Croatia (Le Istituzioni della CNI). Similar organisations have been established by Czechs, Bosniacs, Slovaks and other minorities inhabiting Croatia. Interestingly, Ruthenians and Ukrainians as well as Germans and Austrians decided to establish joint organisations.

The same holds for access to financial means for activities of associations, organizations and political parties representing minorities. The financial and economic benefits may constitute a strong argument for a leadership and influential tools in an impoverished society. Competition there is also very likely to happen, with all of its consequences. It is a matter of time when the group will be internally divided. Although pluralistic – structure of minority representation is much weaker if divided. This holds especially true for Croatia, where NMCs represent cultural association rather than political parties.

Divided group is easier to control. Leaders of various subgroups who compete with each other have to struggle for votes of the same electorate. Smaller and internally conflicted groups are obviously less influential politically and internationally and more prone to be influenced by other actors, including relevant state authorities.

### **Multiplication of minorities**

By establishment of numerous officially recognized ethnic minorities group, central authorities dilute the biggest, often perceived as the most “problematic” one. These “large” minorities are Serbs in Croatia, Greeks in Albania, Bosniacs, Hungarians and Albanians in Serbia. Claims and complaints of such a group can be balanced by counter-claims or denials of other, smaller and less influential groups. In other words, the state authorities are able to neutralize complaints of the main group, by referring to (positive) counter claims of other groups. Other minorities are more likely to respond in a desired by the state authorities way due to various reason.

First of all, the smaller group are easier to be influenced. State authorities can impose they will much more efficient without a risk of being resisted by a small minority than a large one. Multiplication of small groups is thus beneficial to state authorities. It improves international image of the country and reduces relative position of the main minority group.

Secondly, position of other minorities, which very often do not have kin-state, and even if such a exist, it is either geographically distanced or politically indifferent (Roma, Ashkali, Egiptians, Gorani, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Poles, etc) is much weaker than those of main minorities. Greeks in Albania or Albanians in Serbia can expect active involvement of the mother-state in their affairs. Despite the obvious limitations ensuing from the sovereign character of the hosting states, close geographical existence of a kin state force the host state authorities to a certain level of political forbearance, an advantage lacked by 'homeless' minorities.

Thirdly, other groups can have much lower political ambitions (Roma, Jews, Poles in Croatia, Macedonians and Montenegrins in Albania), then the main ones, and/or, quite simply, better relations with state authorities (Germans and Bosniacs in Croatia, Slovaks in Serbia, Turks in Kosovo). Fourthly, the internal division of a large minority group can be achieved by imposition or support for new identities. Very good examples would be here: Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians and Albanians in Kosovo; Bunjevci, Sokci and Croats or Romanians and Vlachs in Serbia. In fact the 'large' groups are conflicted with the smaller ones. This clash over ethnic and

political identity is well reflected in relations between Romanians and Vlachs as well as between Croats and Bunjevac, both cases in Serbia.

Political position of the groups that are more likely to claim, complain, demand or provoke other, undesired by the government situation, can be therefore diminished by multiplication of minority society in the country. Subsequently such a 'large' group becomes one of many others, which not necessarily have to share negative attitude towards government adopted approach.

### **Intermediary institutions**

In Albania and Croatia a form of intermediary institution exists. Establishment of highly placed institution, which on one hand represent minorities in the state level, but on the other hand is closer to the central authorities than to the minorities' villages weaken position of the NMC, as primary representatives of ethnic groups.

The good example constitutes here solution adopted by Zagreb. The NMCs in Croatia are weakened by existence of the **National Minorities Committee** (*Savjet za Nacionalne Manjine*) – a state level institution, that holds a considerable part of “national minorities' powers”. The National Minorities Committee has been established, *for participation of national minorities in the public life of the Republic of Croatia, and mostly for consideration and suggestion of regulation and solution of issues connected to exercising and protection of rights and freedoms of national minorities. With this aim the Committee cooperates with the competent government bodies and bodies of self-government units, National minority councils, or representatives of national minorities, associations of national minorities and legal entities performing activities by means of which minority rights and freedoms are being exercised.* (Article 35(1) Croatian Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities)

The Committee has very wide competences, including right to propose to bodies of the state authority to consider some issues of importance for the national minority; draft measures for promotion of situation of national minority in the state to the bodies of state power; give opinions and proposals on programmes of public radio and television aimed for or treating national

minorities; propose the implementation of economic, social and other measures in the regions of traditionally or predominantly inhabited by national minorities in order to preserve their existence in that regions, request and obtain from the authorities data and reports necessary for considering issues from the Committee's scope of interest; call and request the presence of representative of authorities competent for the issues in scope of the Committee (Article 35 (2)).

Moreover *the National Minorities Committee cooperates in issues of interest for national minorities in the Republic of Croatia with the competent bodies of international organisations and institutions dealing with issues of national minorities, and competent bodies of parent countries of the members of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia* (Article 35(3)).

The Committee thus can play a significant role of an agent of the Councils on the state and international level. It is important however to emphasize that the efficiency of the Committee and its real impact on the affairs in the state depends on the skills of its members – the legislator has not equipped the Committee with any significant tools guarantying implementation of its decisions. The advisory character of this body means that the result of its work will depend on the quality of the proposed solutions, ability to find compromise and convince the legislator and the respective members of administration, etc.

Moreover, while the members of the NMCs in Croatia and Serbia are being elected by members of respective community in popular elections, members of the National Minority Committee are appointed by the Croatian Government - Seven members of national minorities nominated by the National Minority Councils and additional five members from the group of persons prominent in culture, science, religion and other professions, nominated by minority associations and other organisations of minorities, religious communities, legal entities and citizens-members of national minorities. The President and two Vice Presidents of the Committee are also appointed by the Government (Article 36). This means that, while the NMCs are 'closer to the people', the Committee might suffer a legitimacy problem similar to the these of some European Union institutions.

An important institution which is situated very high in the administrative hierarchy in Albania is the State Committee for Minorities. It was established in March 2004 as a part of Albania's Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU. Linked to the Omonia organization Kostandina Bezhani, former deputy minister for labor and social affairs and a

representative of the Union for Human Rights Party (UHR) has been appointed as a head of the committee. The main goal of the institution, answering directly to Prime Minister, is to address the problems of the country's minorities, helping them integrate into society, and working for the protection of human rights (Pulaj 2004).

*‘The State Committee for Minorities cooperates with central and local government structures, with organizations and associations dealing with minority issues, to improve standards in respecting the rights of minorities in Albania. It proposes concrete measures for the economic, social and educational development of minorities, thus contributing to the improvement of the situation of persons belonging to minority groups, wherever they live. The Committee cooperates on different issues with international organizations, as well.*

*To ensure a constructive and active dialogue with representatives of the minorities, the Committee has in its structure, besides a technical staff, five members belonging to minorities, as well. (...) In 2005 its staff was increased by adding one deputy chairwoman and experts and specialists at the technical level (13 members). (...)*

Budget of the Committee covers the following tasks:

- 1. to finance projects for the preservation and development of culture and for the preservation of the national identity of minorities;*
- 2. to finance the means of information in the native language of minorities, to take the appropriate measures for the improvement of minorities climate representation in the media;*
- 3. to financially support the organization, at the national level, for the “Day of minorities” (Second Albania Report 2007:13-14)’*

Taking into account relatively small size of the ethnic minorities in Albania, the committee can play an important role as a highly situated and well observed by the international community public institution designed to solve substantial problems faced by minorities. However, this double hat of the committee, serving as a minority representation on the state level on the one hand, and on the other being a governmental institution on the other, ‘created confusion which has been detrimental to the dialogue between the authorities and minorities. (Second Opinion on Albania 2008: 8)’

Moreover, report of the advisory committee to the Council of Europe from 2011 states clearly that due to its dependence from the authorities and arbitrary nomination of its members, the Committee lacks both independence and a direct link with minorities (Third Opinion on Albania 2011: 1). The Albanian government explained that such complaints result from an intra-group competition (Comments of Albania 2011: 5). Whereas each of the recognized minorities is represented by only one person, the internal struggle for power within some groups, leaving in effect on the parties dissatisfied.

So far achievements of the committee in the field of its interest remain rather limited, either due to limited resources or to the fact increasing alienation of elites from their electorate.

Albanian model of inclusion of minorities in state governance is rather unclear and highly informal, based rather on personal connections and ties and on level of representativeness. Nevertheless, ignoring the fact of rather poor condition of Albanian political institutions and development of liberal parliamentary culture, the minorities in Albania are relatively well represented and included in state governance.

Intermediary institutions established in Croatia and Albania provide an opportunity to bring ethnic minorities' leaders closer to the government, both in terms of distance and ideology. Therefore it is matter of time when such a leaders will start identify themselves with colleagues from the capital and public, state-oriented institutions.

## **Conclusions**

Albania, Croatia and Serbia decided to adopt model of cultural autonomy in order to address arising ethno-political issue and satisfy international community. This solution tend to separate ethnic-vulnerable issues, like culture, religion, preservation of language etc. from areas that concerns all citizens alike, regardless of their ethnic origin. In other words we could claim that cultural autonomy is beneficial for the minorities since it provides tools (self-government) enabling the group to preserve their distinct identity, while it is welcomed by state authorities as it sets up limits of overwhelming ethnicisation just as in case of the former Yugoslavia and contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina. However cultural autonomy constitutes a model of

minorities' claims accommodation that, from perspective of central authorities have more advantages.

First, it tends to divide group internally. Divided group is easier to control. Leaders of various subgroups who compete with each other have to struggle for votes of the same electorate. Smaller and internally conflicted groups are obviously less influential politically and internationally and more prone to be influenced by other actors, including relevant state authorities. Secondly, political position of the groups that are more likely to claim, complain, demand or provoke other, undesired by the government situation, can be diminished by multiplication of minority society in the country. Subsequently such a 'large' group becomes one of many others, which not necessarily have to share negative attitude towards government adopted approach. Thirdly, establishment of intermediary institutions provide an opportunity to bring ethnic minorities' leaders closer to the government, both in terms of distance and ideology. Therefore it is matter of time when such a leaders will start identify themselves with colleagues from the capital and public, state-oriented institutions.

In effect we can observe two process taking place in the examined states and societies. Polarisation of ethnicity within the society, that previously, in real terms, consisted of a majority group and one, to three minorities. Subsequently the particular minority groups are weaker vis-a-vis state authorities. Second process is a separation of ethnic groups from their leaders. It is important to emphasize however, that although both of this processes means significant diminishing of the minorities' political position, it does not necessarily mean diminishing of an actual situation of ethnic minorities members, since these two questions are not always linked to each other.

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