HOW EUROPEAN IS BULGARIA?

The Case of Party System and Politics

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to depict the level of Europeanization of the Bulgarian party politics. It was done by analyzing five different variables: 1. the nature of the electoral system itself, 2. voter turnouts in national parliamentary elections, 3. party-based Euroscepticism, 4. the nature of ethnic politics, and 5. the existence of 'extreme trends' in party politics. The situation in Bulgaria with regards to each of those is compared to that of Western Europe on the one hand and CEE on the other. The basic research question of this thesis is if the Bulgarian party system and politics does fall into the 'Western', i.e. Europeanized camp or not. The answer is provided on a 'more-or-less' continuum due to the complexity of the issue. An examination of each of the variables chosen has revealed that overall the case of Bulgaria is very unique. It is neither fully 'Europeanized', nor is it typically 'Eastern'. Only in the case of the nature of the electoral systems, Bulgaria has displayed 'Westernization'. With regards to the other four variables, one could notice that the various aspects of each of them show different trends in terms of their level of Europeanization, with some demonstrating typically 'Western', while others truly 'Eastern' perspectives, yet others proved to have the mixture of the features of the two.

Keywords: Europeanization, Westernization, Bulgarian party politics, voter turnouts, electoral systems, party-based Euroscepticism, ethnic politics, right-wing extremism

Acknowledgements

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1. Introduction

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, the former Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) initiated a process of transition/transformation into consolidated Western-style democracies. At the same time, their aspiration to join the European Union (EU) led to changes in their domestic political, economic, and social structures. The process of initiation of these changes has been termed as the process of Europeanization. In this thesis I will concentrate on the process of Europeanization of party politics. This concept has immediately entered the realm of both academic and political debates after the initiation of the enlargement of EU-15. This thesis will assess the level of Europeanization of the Bulgarian party politics.

One cannot give a definite answer whether the Bulgarian case can be considered fully 'Europeanized' or not. Therefore, I will depict the degree of Europeanization on the 'more or less' continuum. The basic research question to be answered is if the Bulgarian case does fall into the 'Western', i.e. Europeanized camp or not. There are ongoing debates whether the concept of Europeanization is applicable at all as a term. At the same time, social scientists deliberate if and to what extent can the EU decision-making process affect and influence the party politics in the countries of CEE. For a successful analysis of the level of Europeanization of Bulgarian party politics, one must clearly define the broader concept of Europeanization. Consequently, the first section of this paper will deal extensively with the definition of the term.

However, in order to proceed with the analysis of the Bulgarian case, I shall firstly introduce the variables that will be used to assess the scope and the level of Europeanization of Bulgarian party politics. I have identified five relevant variables:

1. the nature of the electoral system itself,
2. voter turnout in national parliamentary elections,

3. party-based Euroscepticism,

4. the nature of ethnic politics,

5. the existence of 'extreme trends' in party politics.

The choice of these particular variables as a framework for my analysis is justified by the lack of any specific references to this topic in the academic literature. One can easily find a large number of factors that could have potentially influenced the course of the transformation and Europeanization, but can hardly see any references to what specific factors could be used to make a study of Europeanization patterns in general, and to assess the level of Europeanization in particular. Thus, a substantial review of existing academic literature on the topic has influenced my choice.[1]

To be more specific, the nature of the electoral system defines the arena for the rest of the political game, be that domestic or international, since the nature of the electoral system determines the mechanism of selecting the winners. Arguments are being made in the mainstream literature of electoral politics that the citizens do not go to the polls frequently anymore. This trend is prevalent, according to some authors, across Europe, but mainly in the Western part of it. Therefore, comparing Western Europe and CEE in terms of voter turnouts was just logical. Euroscepticism has emerged as a strong force both within the EU-15 and the new member-states. As a result, one cannot disregard its importance in shaping the domestic and international rhetoric of political parties both in power and in opposition. The presence of ethnic minorities gives rise to ethnic politics and the nature of it varies from case to case, but evidently, there are patterns across the two camps and within them. As for the 'extreme'

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[1] See for instance *Making Policy in Europe: The Europeification of National Policy-making*, edited by Svein Anderson and Kjell Eliassen, London: Sage, 1993; Andeweg, Rudy, "The Reshaping of National Party Systems", *West European Politics* 18, 1995, pages 58-78; *Political Parties and the European Union*, edited by John Gaffney, London: Routledge, 1996; *Europeanised Politics? European Integration and National Political Systems*, edited by Klaus H. Goetz and Simon Hix, London: Frank Cass, 2000; Hix, Simon and Christopher Lord, *Political Parties in the European Union*, London: Macmillan, 1997; and *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change*, edited by Maria Green Cowles, James Caporaso and Thomas Risse, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001

trends, it has been widely acknowledged that the rise of political parties with 'extremist' rhetoric has been pertinent across Europe. Political parties with extremist discourses are present across the continent. Their agenda and oratory forces the major players on the political arena to amend their platforms and policies. Overall, the five variables outlined above are of great importance when analyzing the process of Europeanization and its impact.

This thesis will follow a two-dimensional structure. On the one hand, I will analyze the predominant trends in the above mentioned five variables in the region of Western Europe. On the other hand, I will follow the same scheme of analysis and apply it to Central and Eastern Europe. I will further concentrate on the Bulgarian case. This will help to assess the degree of Europeanization of Bulgarian party politics.

As was mentioned earlier, the next section of this chapter will firstly define the primary concepts to be used in my analysis, which will be followed by a section on the methodology used in this thesis. Afterwards, in the background chapter, I will introduce the legal framework within which the party politics in Bulgaria functions. This will incorporate the analysis of the relevant articles from the country's constitution, the Political Parties Act, and the 2001 Elections of Members of Parliament Act. Furthermore, it will have a great relevance when the evolution of the current state of affairs in party politics is discussed. Definitely, the legal framework is particularly important in the Bulgarian case since there is a wide gap between the *de jure* and the *de facto* players on the political arena. The section to follow will briefly give a historical overview of the development of political parties and the challenges that were faced starting from the fall of Zhivkov's regime. The following chapters will be devoted to scrutinizing each variable presented above separately. Each of these chapters will incorporate a detailed analysis of trends in both Western and Eastern Europe, and only then concentrate of the Bulgarian case and depict its complexities and the level of Europeanization of each variable. The final concluding chapter of this paper will enumerate

the main research findings of the author and give predictions on the future changes in the system in general and in the party politics of Bulgaria in particular. The theoretical framework for this thesis overall will be derived from the vast pool of literature on the topic of Europeanization with particular focus and emphasis on the Europeanization of political parties. At the same time, each chapter will follow a different theoretical framework within the larger one.

Europeanization of party politics is just a piece of a larger puzzle about the factors influencing the domestic politics of the new member-states. After the accession, as is widely acknowledged, decision-making in Brussels starts having a great impact on the domestic level in the countries of CEE. However, this is too large of a topic to be covered in a single study, thus I will concentrate on the level of Europeanization of party politics in particular. This is not to suggest the changes that the party politics has or still is undergoing in the CEE region are isolated from the broader concept of transformation and Europeanization, but rather this thesis aims at contributing to a vast pool of literature on the subject. Furthermore, as Bulgaria, like Romania, is the latest entry into the 'European' community, there is little, if any, study exploring the transformation of their party politics from the comparative perspective. This thesis will later be used for a larger comparative study across the region of CEE with the aim of identifying transformation patterns in the new member-states.

1.1 Defining the concepts

In social sciences, there is a vast number of different definitions of the term Europeanization. Most of them either tackle the particular aspects or variables of it, or give a very wide-ranging explanation of the term. As is widely agreed in the academic literature, the process of Europeanization "refers to responses by actors – institutional and otherwise – to

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the impact of European integration"[2]. From this perspective, the process of Europeanization is a double-edged process where domestic actors and European decision-making processes influence each other. Neither this, nor the majority of the rest of the definitions of the process of Europeanization put enough emphasis on the role of the political parties as actors of the process that either influence the direction of the process, or become influenced themselves.

The literature on political parties and their involvement with the process of Europeanization can be divided into two categories. The first category deals with political parties as actors outside the national level, i.e. focuses "on party groups in the European Parliament (EP) and the development of transnational party federations"[3]. The second camp in this literature "focuses on the European policy orientation of individual political parties"[4] and their platforms. At the same time, it is of utmost importance to include political parties as a unit of analysis when exploring the nature and the direction of the process of Europeanization of the new member-states. As Robert Ladrech has argued in his "Social Democracy and the Challenge of European Integration", the rising role of the EU decision-making process and its influence on the domestic actors increases "the remoteness of key decision-making from domestic electorates"[5]. This not only affects the role of political parties and formation in the decision-making process, but also changes it to a large extent. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to analyze this level of transformation, or more precisely, Europeanization, of political parties in the region of CEE. This project will contribute to the task by exploring the scope and the level of Europeanization of Bulgarian party politics. Furthermore, I will ascertain whether the case of the Bulgarian party politics can be considered falling into the 'mainstream electoral trends' in Europe.

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[2] Ladrech, Robert, "Europeanization and Political Parties: Towards a Framework for Analysis", *Party Politics*, issue 8, November 2002, pg 389 - 403
[3] Ladrech, 2002
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ladrech, Robert, *Social Democracy and the Challenge of European Union*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000, page 34

I define *mainstream* electoral trends as those where the dominant key players on the political arena fall within the range of center-right to center-left. This definition is justified by the fact that the overwhelming majority of EU member-states can be identified as following the Left-Right ideology in electoral politics, with "a juxtaposition of state intervention on the one hand (the Left) and state abstention or restrictiveness on the other (the Right)"[6]. At the same time, the main political actors is these states 'play' on the center-left – center-right continuum. Therefore, according to this definition, the predominance of *mainstream* party politics trends is evident all throughout EU member-states. This is not to claim that all EU member-states have the same electoral trends, legal frameworks, etc. But "the established European countries are in many respects 'most similar': they share more characteristics regarding the political-institutional organization of their democracies than not"[7].

1.2 Methodology

This thesis is based primarily on a literature review on the topic. Each of the variables presented to measure/assess the level of Europeanization of Bulgarian party politics are analyzed using separate sets of academic literature and theoretical frameworks. Two methods of analysis are used here: quantitative and qualitative. For the former quantitative models were created using the in-built functions of the SPSS program and by running linear regressions. This helped in identifying trends in voter turnouts both across Europe and across time. The model was coded in a way that permitted for separate analysis of Western European and CEE states. Both were compared to Bulgaria in order to determine whether the trends in voter turnouts in Bulgaria are 'Europeanized' or are still typical of the CEE region.

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[6] Pennings, Paul, "Voters, Elections and Ideology in European Democracies", in *Comparative Democratic Politics: A Guide to Contemporary Theory and Research*, edited by Hans Keman, SAGE Publications, 2002, page 111.
[7] Ibid., page 107.

Quantitative analysis was used in the chapter on ethnic politics as well, where electoral results for ethnic parties were examined.

Qualitative analysis was done mainly relying of literature reviews. In some cases, especially in the chapter on Euroscepticism, discourse analysis of party platforms was used. Moreover, personal interviews were conducted in Sofia, Bulgaria. Those interviewed included:

1. Dr. Vassil Garnizov, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, New Bulgarian University

2. Dr. Agop Garabedyan, Director of the Institute of Balkan Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

3. Dr. Marin Lessenski, Director of Programs, Institute of Regional and International Studies

4. Dr. Kostadin Paskalev, Member of Parliamentary Group Coalition for Bulgaria; Deputy Chairperson of Local Self-Government, Regional Policy and Urban Development Committee; Member of Budget and Finance Committee

5. Dr. Ivan Atanasov Kolchakov, Member of Parliamentary Group of the United Democratic Forces, DP, National Alliance-BAPU, BAPU, St. George's Day Movement, Equal Social Model Movement; Member of Labor and Social Policy Committee; Member of Health Care Committee

6. Dr. Stanimir Ilchev, Spokesman NMSS

7. Dr. Anastasia Mozer, Vice Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of Bulgarian National Coalition; Member of Foreign Affairs Committee

8. Dr. Stanislav Stanilov, Member of Parliament from the Coalition Attack; Vice Chairman of the Permanent Parliamentary Commission for Culture; Member of Educaion and Science Committee

9. Dr. Tchetin Kazak, MP, Secretary of the Parliamentary Group of the MRF; Observer Member of the European Parliament

In the selection of the interviewees I aimed at creating a representative sample of the main political actors, and a number of scholars to present the analysis of the position of the former. Therefore, a representative from each of the major political parties was selected, and three scholars as well – from the Academy of Sciences, from the Institute of Regional and International Studies, and from the New Bulgarian University. The interviews were conducted in an informal manner due to personal requests from the interviewees. All of them were asked to elaborate on three main areas: extremism, ethnic politics, and Euroscepticism in Bulgaria. The MPs were asked to analyze these issues from the perspective of their respective political parties, whereas scholars interviewed voiced their independent opinions. The executive summaries of the main points of the interviews can be found in Appendix 1.

2. Background information

2.1 Legal Framework

In order to successfully analyze the Bulgarian case, one must clearly identify the relevant legal framework within which the party politics is to be taking place. In this context, it is essential to examine the relevant articles of the Bulgarian Constitution and the Political Parties Act, as well as the 2001 Election of Members of Parliament Act as panoply of rules governing everything related to party politics and elections from the frequency of elections to party nominations.

The Constitution, adopted in 1991 and subsequently amended in 2003, 2005, and 2006, in Article 1 declares Bulgaria a parliamentary republic, and Article 11 recognizes the dominance of a multiparty system[8]. Definitely, 'multiparty-ism' is a prerequisite of a functioning democracy in its minimalist sense, I will define a multiparty system as one, where two or more parties are fairly competing for votes, a definition similar to the one provided by Sartori in his *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis.* Nevertheless, a further point of clarification is needed. The definition I have proposed means that all the parties have equal chances, at least hypothetically, of winning the national elections. In the wake of the transition process in the beginning of the 1990s, Bulgaria was a de facto two-party system, where no other political party had any chances for electoral success. UDF and BSP were dominating the political arena, and since the definition of multiparty-ism includes fair theoretical chances for other political formations as well, it would be inappropriate to define Bulgaria in the wake of the transformation period as a fully functioning multiparty system. However, the dominance of two major parties and the rivalry between them during the early phases of democratization reduced "the likelihood of

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[8] National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria, < http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en >, accessed on December 1, 2006.

wanderings between them"[9]. In the other post-communist/socialist countries, with the notable exception of Slovenia, 'party tourism' was an important feature of the formation of current party politics. Nevertheless, there was a gradual transformation into a multiparty system. Most analysts agree that currently the Bulgarian party politics goes in accordance with the Constitution's Article 11, which identifies Bulgaria as a multiparty system.

The law on political parties, called the Political Parties Act, adopted by the National Assembly in 1990, was typical of the initial transition toward democracy. "It was a fast adopted law and very concise which had as a major task to legitimize the emergence of the new parties and allow for their free activity in the wake of the coming elections."[10] It was an outcome of the fact that more than 150 political parties were officially registered; however, the majority of those did not have a properly functioning structure. As a result, the law permitted for the formation of political parties with as little as 50 registered members in its Article 7 – all were required to be Bulgarian citizens[11]. This situation is typical of almost all post-communist/socialist states. For example, the 2002 Law on Political Parties in Armenia requires all political parties to have at least 200 members. Consequently, 120 political parties have registered with the appropriate authorities in Armenia immediately after the adoption of the law.[12] The Political Parties Act in Bulgaria was amended prior to the 2005 national elections. One of the modifications required 5,000 signatures instead of the previous 500 to form a political party. The Election Law was also modified prior to the last parliamentary elections. It introduced higher financial deposits for both political parties and coalitions. The

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[9] Millard, Frances, *Elections, Parties, and Representation in Post-Communist Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, page 133.
[10] Karasimeonov, Georgi, "The Law on Political Parties in Bulgaria", October 1999, <http://www.cecl.gr/RigasNetwork/databank/REPORTS/r7/Bu_7_Karasimeonov.html>, last accessed on December 2, 2006
[11] Political Parties Act: Bulgaria, *Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe*, University of Essex, <http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/legislationAll.asp?country=bulgaria&legislation=bg9098lpp>, last accessed on December 2, 2006
[12] Information taken from the official website of the National Assembly of Armenia, <http://www.parliament.am>, last accessed on December 2, 2006

required number of signatures for a party to compete in elections was also raised, which brought them "closer in line with requirements for independent candidates"[13]. As a result of these amendments to the existing legislation, the number of political parties competing in the national elections has drastically decreased.[14]

A unique feature of the Bulgarian Constitution is its ban on the formation of ethnic political parties (Article 11, paragraph 2). This was reiterated in the Political Parties Act (Article 3, paragraph 2, subparagraph 3). This constitutional ban also extends to any racial or religious political parties.[15] This is an important aspect of the formation of the current electoral politics in Bulgaria due to the existence of a party like the Movement of Rights and Freedoms, which is *de facto* an ethnic political formation. One could argue that the only issues that the main actors had agreed upon during the Roundtable Negotiations was the importance of limiting the ability of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms to become a fully functioning Turkish ethnic party despite its strength. Consequently, these legal limitation were imposed on its formation.

Furthermore, Article 14 states that any person belonging to the Armed Forces or to the Ministry of Interior cannot be affiliated with any political party[16]. This was done to assure the objectivity of the military and, at the same time, its non-intervention in the political battles – a crucial element of a democratic society and a pre-requisite of a progress towards the membership in the EU. As for candidates running for Parliament, the 2001 Elections of Members of Parliament Act in Article 52 stipulates that they have to interrupt their service

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[13] Voynova, Sevdalina, "Roma Participation in the 2005 Parliamentary Elections", report published by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, <http://www.accessdemocracy.org/library/1976_bg_roma_011806.pdf>, last accessed on May 19, 2007

[14] Ibid.

[15] Political Parties Act: Bulgaria, *Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe*, University of Essex, <http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/legislationAll.asp?country=bulgaria&legislation=bg9098lpp>, last accessed on December 2, 2006.

[16] Political Parties Act: Bulgaria, *Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe*, University of Essex, <http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/legislationAll.asp?country=bulgaria&legislation=bg9098lpp>, last accessed on December 2, 2006.

for the public administration and get unpaid leave immediately after registration as candidates. The same article states that if elected, the candidate is entitled to return to his/her position immediately after completing his/her term of office.[17]

The 2001 Elections of Members of Parliament Act contains the main principles that govern the technicalities of elections and balloting, identify legitimate voters and candidates, and define the procedures of appointment and the functions of the Election Committee, as well as the rules of termination of the service of the elected candidates. The Act specifies the obligations of the authorities and the citizens, as well as their rights on the day of the elections and before them. It is important to mention that Article 26 of the Act puts full responsibility for compiling election rolls on the municipal authorities, i.e. the voter registration process is state-initiated and is automatically drawn from the National Population Registrar.[18] As will be discussed later, this could potentially be one of the factors boosting higher voter turnout rates.

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[17] Article 52
(1) Candidates for parliament holding positions in the public administration shall interrupt their service upon their registration and get unpaid leave or annual paid leave at their choice for the period from the registration to the announcement of the results of the election inclusive.
(2) The leave shall be recognised for social security and health insurance purposes.
(3) Where the registration is cancelled, the leave under para 1 shall be discontinued as of the date of cancellation. Where the cancellation is repealed, the leave shall be deemed to be uninterrupted.
(4) Elected candidates, working in central government or municipal institutions, enterprises or companies with central government or municipal interest exceeding 50 per cent or organisations, shall be entitled to return to their previous positions upon termination of their powers or, where the position is closed, to occupy another equivalent position at the same central government or municipal institution, enterprise or company with central government or municipal interest exceeding 50 per cent or organisation or at another one with their consent.
(5) Where the previous position of the elected candidate is occupied by another person, the employment relationship with the other person shall be terminated without serving any notice.
(6) The provisions under para 1 shall not apply to Ministers and the Prime Minister. Their powers shall continue also after their registration as candidates for Parliament.
2001 Elections of Members of Parliament Act, Political Transformation and Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe, University of Essex, <
http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/legislationAll.asp?country=bulgaria&legislation=bg2001>, last accessed on May 9, 2007.
[18] Article 26:
(1) Election rolls shall be drawn up by the municipal administrations in the communities where the population registrar is kept and signed by the Mayor of the municipality or the Mayor of the mayoralty or the Proxy Mayor and the Secretary of the municipality. In cities divided into wards, election rolls shall be signed by the Mayor and the Secretary of the ward.
(2) Each voter shall be entered into one single election roll.
2001 Elections of Members of Parliament Act, Political Transformation and Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe, University of Essex, <

2.2 Historical Overview

In order to analyze the current state of affairs in the Bulgarian party politics, it is important to understand the historical evolution of the party politics starting from 1944. In September 1944 a Communist-inspired *coup* installed a new government in Bulgaria. For over 40 years, in addition to a full political and economic dependence, Bulgaria was sort of a mirror image of the Soviet Union. Growing discontent throughout the 1980s was deflected through nationalism, targeted specifically against the ethnically Turkish residents, which constituted 10 % of the total population. The Communist Party leadership, who after the 1944 *coup* used the opportunity to brutally repress any potential opposition to Communist rule through terror, used similar techniques against this sizeable minority. Using the resistance of the Turks to agricultural collectivization as a pretext, the government in power at the time engaged in "the first wave of repression against Bulgarian Turks in the early 1950s"[19].

Todor Christov Zhivkov, who became the Secretary-General of the Bulgarian Communist Party in 1954 and remained uncontested till 1989, continued the policies of his predecessors by introducing the second wave of suppression against all the minorities. The campaign reached its peak when he forced ethnic Turks to change their names and banned them from using their language and practicing their religion in the mid-1980s – the policies of ethnic assimilation, homogenization, and the process 'national revival'. Officially Zhivkov's policies were against all the minorities present on the Bulgarian territory. According to the 1893 census the following nationalities and religious groups were present on the Bulgarian territory: Eastern Rite Orthodox Bulgarians, Turks, Romanians, Greeks, Roma, Jews, Muslim Bulgarians (Pomaks), Tatars, Gaguzi, Armenians, Protestant Bulgarian,

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http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/legislationAll.asp?country=bulgaria&legislation=bg2001>, last accessed on May 9, 2007.

[19] Millard, Frances, *Elections, Parties, and Representation in Post-Communist Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, page 235

Vlachs, Russians, and Germans.[20] Certainly, as a consequence of two World Wars, the borders have changed, and the ethnic composition of Bulgaria has undergone enormous alterations as well. But due to the 'closeness' of the Communist regime and its systematic attempts to deny the existence of national and ethnic minorities, alongside with the assimilation and homogenization campaigns, it was practically impossible to get any statistical information on the national and ethnic minorities. Furthermore, the censuses conducted under the Communist regime did not include questions on ethnicity and religion. When Zhivkov's thesis of ethnic homogenization of the Bulgarian Socialist nation of 1967[21] was implemented, the repressions touched upon all the existing minorities. Using this thesis as a guideline for his 'national revival' process Zhivkov initiated the discriminatory measures against the ethnic minorities. For example, all schools of the Armenian minority were shut down. However, due to the high numerical representation of ethnic Turks and Muslims in Bulgaria, the discrimination and repression was most evident in their case.

The 1971 Constitution, unlike the Constitution of 1947, did not mention ethnic or national minorities at all; instead it referred to them as citizens of non-Bulgarian origin, representing the Bulgarian nation. At the same time, they were granted the right to learn their language in schools. The regulations for language training were to be stipulated by the appropriate legislations. The Constitution protected all the citizens against discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, ethnicity, race, social standing, etc. It also stipulated freedom of religion and religious practices. At the same time, there was a constitutional ban on the formation of political parties based on religion.

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[20] Country Report: Bulgaria, Country Studies US, <http://countrystudies.us/bulgaria/25.htm>, last accessed on May 10, 2007

[21] Report submitted by Bulgaria pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 1 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, "Repressions against Ethnic Minorities: 1944-1989", accessed through <http://www.government.bg>, last accessed on May 10, 2007, original document in Bulgarian, доклад на Република България съгласно чл.25, ал.1 от Рамковата конвенция за защита на националните малцинства, 2003 г.

The discontent with Zhivkov's rule was steadily growing both inside the country and on an international level. With Gorbachev coming to power, Zhivkov received a number of critical assessments of his governing style from Moscow as well. General opposition at home and abroad resulted in mass demonstrations and the removal of Zhivkov from his position of an absolute dictator in November 1989. However, the change of regime in 1989 was very different in Bulgaria than elsewhere in the region. The 'revolution' in Bulgaria more resembled the features of a 'palace-led coup' rather than an *en masse* venture.[22] Zhivkov left the post of the Secretary General of the Party as he was forced to do so by the Party leadership. Definitely, the removal of Zhivkov would not have been possible unless control from the center, i.e. Moscow, was loosened. When Gorbachev abolished the Brezhnev Doctrine, it became much easier to consolidate opposition on the periphery. At the same time, Gorbachev himself did not attempt to exercise control over the Eastern bloc as much as before. He even encouraged reforms on the local level both politically and economically.

During the early phases of Zhivkov's rule, he was merciless towards any sort of opposition to him not only outside but within the party as well. However, in order to earn the support of the peasantry, in 1964 Zhivkov nominated Georgi Traikov, "chief of the nominally independent Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BANU), head of state"[23]. After the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Bulgarian party firmly decided to avoid the repetition of these disastrous events on their soil that would potentially weaken the firm grip of the party. Consequently, at the Tenth Party Congress in 1971 the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) designed a new constitution, which "specified the role of the BCP as 'the leading force in society and the state', and the role of BANU as its collaborator within the Fatherland

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[22] "Bulgaria: Human Rights Developments", Human Rights Watch Publications, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1990/WR90/HELSINKI.BOU-01.htm>, last accessed on April 10, 2007
[23] Vatahov, Ivan, "Todor Zhivkov – The Longest Serving Authoritarian", April 2003, The Sofia Echo, issue 47: November 24-30 2006, <http://www.sofiaecho.com/article/todor-zhivkov---the-longest-serving-authoritarian/id_6972/catid_30>, accessed in December 2, 2006.

Front"[24]. Despite the fact that officially there were two formally recognized parties, and "National Assembly elections were held in single-member districts, both parties were enlisted in the Fatherland Front and, since there was only one candidate allowed per district, the candidate favored by the Front always won"[25]. It is noteworthy that although BANU was only independent *de jure*, Bulgaria was among the very few Soviet satellite states where more than one political party was functioning – both the parties are still players on the Bulgarian political arena, even though BANU got divided into a number of political parties and formations, one of which is in the current governing coalition with the Bulgarian Socialist Party, i.e. the reformed BCP. The agrarians are very fragmented and each parliamentary coalition has an agrarian party in it. As Moser, one of the founding members of then united agrarian party, mentioned, the agrarians do not act in a uniform manner anymore, which prevents them from passing constituency-specific legislations more frequently.[26]

2.3 Formation of the Current Party Politics

The Communist monopoly was over by 1990 and the party successfully changed its name into the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and, surprisingly, won the subsequent national elections. This is a unique case in the region at large, in addition to Romania. "In an attempt to spread the responsibility for the reforms ahead, the BSP elected as President the leader of the oppositional Union of Democratic Forces (UDF)"[27]. As a result of the elections a hung parliament came into existence and political instability dominated the country. The UDF coalition consisted of fifteen parties, which were in a disagreement amongst themselves.

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[24] Vatahov

[25] Rose, Richard and Neil Munro, *Elections and Parties in New European Democracies*, CQ Press, Washington, 2003, page 103.

[26] Personal interview with Dr. Anastasia Moser, Vice Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of Bulgarian National Coalition, Member of Foreign Affairs Committee, interview conducted in Sofia, on April 11, 2007

[27] Palmowski, Jan, *Oxford Dictionary of Twentieth Century World History*, Oxford University Press, 1997, page 87.

Therefore, the December 1994 elections gave the BSP an absolute majority - a BSP-led coalition is in power in Bulgaria today as well.[28]

Most of the modern political science literature recognizes the emergence of multiparty systems in post-communist/socialist states as a first step towards democratization. Moreover, it facilitates the surfacing of a well functioning civil society, which is a pre-condition for a full-fledged democracy. Georgi Karasimeonov, a Professor of Political Science at Sofia University in Bulgaria and a leading expert on Bulgarian party politics, argues that the transitory phase from a one-party monopoly in Bulgaria was determined and

> dominated by one major division and conflict, or transitory cleavage revealed in the struggle between two major political blocks. On one side were the supporters and the driving political forces of the reform movement united in the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) and on the other the representatives of the old system grouped around the Communist party[29].

Their ideological confrontation was fueled by disagreements over redistribution of power and resources. However, both blocks were not homogenous in themselves and, consequently, this heterogeneity caused divisions within each block.

According to Karasimeonov, "the proponents of former radical reforms were assembled in the new parties that sprung up in the months after the downfall of the old regime which had formed the UDF. They included three major political groups"[30]: the 'historical parties' [those that existed in the pre-communist times]; former dissidents, "which had taken part in various protest actions preceding the downfall of the communist regime"[31], whose leaders and members were "in their majority former members of the Communist party"[32]; and the third group consisted of a number of newly created political parties and

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[28] Palmowski, pages 86-87.
[29] Karasimeonov, Georgi, "The Law on Political Parties in Bulgaria", October 1999, <http://www.cecl.gr/RigasNetwork/databank/REPORTS/r7/Bu_7_Karasimeonov.html>, accessed on December 2, 2006
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.

organizations. Along the divisions within the UDF-led coalition, Karasimeonov identifies two distinct groups of UDF supporters: the class that was marginalized and oppressed under the communists and the representatives of the new generation that opted for an immediate westernization of the society and the system.[33] Moreover, the political tactics of UDF were not homogenous either: some supported revolutionary de-communization and some "accepted the rules of parliamentary democracy and evolutionary change"[34]. From the beginning, all these groups were united to defy the renamed communist party, the BSP, which was very strong at that time due to existing embedded structures on local/municipal level and a relatively stable electorate. However, when this task was partially accomplished, the coalition started cracking with different factions fighting over their narrow interests – bringing the party closer to being a particularistic one.

On the other side of the continuum was the so-called communist camp, which was also far from presenting a homogenous political force. They were divided into two major groups – those that advocated reforms and the neo-communists, according to Karasimeonov. The former was divided within itself into radical and moderate wings, and the latter consisted of "the representatives of the 'old guard' fighting to survive and keep their privileges and the 'hard-liners', the Marxist ideologues"[35]. Unlike most of CEE communist parties, the Bulgarian one was able to remain cohesive at least until the elections of 1990. Afterwards it succeeded in its transition into a parliamentary party successfully balancing between a range of factions within the party.

In terms of electoral reforms, the two blocks could not come to terms either. BSP favored first-past-the-post system[36], "assuming that as the best organized party it would

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[33] Karasimeonov
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] FPTP or a 'simple plurality' system – divides the country into single-member constituencies and the voters select one candidate who must receive a plurality of votes.

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benefit most"[37]. UDF, on the other hand, argued for a proportional representation system[38]. Consequently, "a mixed system was agreed, electing 200 deputies by proportional representation with the d'Hondt[39] formula, and 200 in single-member districts"[40]. During these round-table talks UDF and BSP concurred to have a "4 % threshold to qualify for seats"[41] in the PR ballot. The mixed system was used only during the elections in 1990. Now the members of the National Assembly in Bulgaria are elected through a party-list proportional representation system[42].

At the beginning of the round-table negotiations both blocks agreed to prevent the Turkish minority from organizing a political party of their own by putting into effect a provision that bans the formation of political parties and organizations based on ethnicity. Interestingly, "after the initial refusal by the electoral registration office, ethnic Turks succeeded in getting the Movement for Rights and Freedoms recognized as a civil rights organization; it won both PR and single-member seats"[43]. Nevertheless, despite the constitutional ban on the formation of ethnic political parties, "the Movement for Rights and Freedom is effectively a party representing Turks, and has been a minor partner in a coalition government"[44]. Currently, the existence of the MRF is crucial to the analysis of the Bulgarian party system. The nature of ethnic politics in Bulgaria will be addressed in the later chapters.

In the wake of the formation of party system and party politics in Bulgaria, the UDF and BSP blocks were in an open confrontation, which resulted in the radicalization of the

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[37] Rose and Munro, page 103.
[38] Each party presents a list of candidates in order of preference; usually the country is divided into several large multimember constituencies.
[39] Highest averages method for allocating seats in party-list proportional representation. The method slightly favors large parties and coalitions over scattered small parties.
[40] Rose and Munro, page 103.
[41] Ibid.
[42] International Foundation for Electoral Systems Election Guide, < http://www.electionguide.org/country.php?ID=34>, accessed on December 5, 2006.
[43] Rose and Munro, page 104.
[44] Rose, Richard, "Are Bulgaria and Romania up to EU Standards? A New Europe Barometer Evaluation", *Studies in Public Policy*, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, 2005, page 22

UDF, especially after they won the parliamentary elections in November 1991 and formed a governing coalition with the MRF.[45] In order to avoid any drastic de-communization processes, the BSP compromised as much as it could. It was first apparent in its support for the UDF candidate for presidency in the 1990 elections. One could argue that the altercations between the two major blocks shaped the political atmosphere in the years to come. BSP was rather flexible in its concessions and UDF was rather unstable within, which helped to keep the confrontation tuned down. However, this tension did not allow a smooth process of reforms since the two factions could not agree on the major developments.

"The unresolved struggle for 'power' between the UDF and the BSP until the parliamentary elections [of] 1994 blocked not only the reform process, but kept other issues and conflicts in the 'shadow' preventing their becoming a motivating factor for electoral behavior and party identification."[46] As a result the subsequent governments that were formed were unstable, and the system resembled a two-party confrontational system with no other party having even a slightest chance for getting into the government, rather than a multiparty representative democracy. In the 1994 parliamentary elections – third since independence – BSP was victorious. At the same time, new political parties and movements started emerging. Interestingly, the BSP-led government was forced to resign and agree to early elections in 1997 since the electorate's dissatisfaction with their policies led to mass protests. The next elections brought UDF back to power, but the political arena was also restructured.[47]

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[45] Karasimeonov
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

3. The electoral system

The electoral system of a country establishes the winners and the losers of the election process, as well as the participants of these very elections. Furthermore, it determines the nature of "any policy decision in which those elected are involved"[48]. Reeve and Ware further argue that the particular electoral system the country opts for is the key factor that determines specific outcomes. Social scientists deliberate about the nature and level of the impact the electoral system has on internal politics in general and on party politics in particular, but none disregard its influence overall. The academic literature on the issue can be divided into three main categories. Maurice Duverger has famously averred that the impact of the electoral system on party politics as a whole can be easily expressed in one formula: "the simple-majority single-ballot system favours the two-party system"[49]. Lipset and Rokkan, on the other hand, claim that the nature of the electoral system does not essentially transform the entire party system, which is socially determined, but rather modifies it.[50] Reeve and Ware assert that in recent years it became apparent that although "Duverger claimed too much influence for the role of electoral systems", the sociological approach of Lipset and Rokkan underestimated it.[51] Parties, according to them, are "not merely the product of social forces but of institutional structures as well"[52]. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to analyze the existing electoral systems in both Western and Eastern Europe, and compare and contrast them since the nature of the electoral system defines "how the political system will function"[53]. At the same time, one should focus on the nature of changes that these systems have undergone. Since this thesis primarily concentrates on the post-1989 period, the reforms prior to it will be consciously disregarded.

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[48] Reeve, Andrew and Alan Ware, *Electoral Systems: A Comparative and Theoretical Introduction*, Routledge, 1992, page 7

[49] Duverger, Maurice, *Political Parties*, London: Methuen, 1954, page 217

[50] *Party Systems and Voter Alignments,* edited by Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan, New York: Collier Macmillan, 1967

[51] Reeve and Ware, page 9

[52] Ibid.

[53] Farrel, David M., *Comparing Electoral Systems*, Prentice Hall: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997, page 2

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Before describing the electoral system of a country it is necessary to define the concept itself, since depending on the definition one adopts the needed components for a successful analysis can vary. I will follow the definition presented by Pennings, who states that an electoral system is a set of rules that describes "how votes are cast and seats are allocated. The electoral system is part of the electoral law which encompasses a broader family of rules governing the process of elections"[54]. In other words, it is a mechanism of determining the winners and the losers.[55] Electoral systems differ from each other by electoral formulae, constituency and ballot structures, and the degree of disproportionality. The two most commonly observed electoral (voting) systems are plurality-majority voting systems and proportional representation voting systems, with each of those having subtypes of their own.[56]

After the collapse of the old regime, the new rules for upcoming elections were agreed upon in round-table discussions. None of the participants of these deliberations "could be confident of how many votes they and their allies would gain at the first free election"[57]. Since the elites participating in the decision-making process were not confident about the behavior of the electorate, "they made decisions without knowing which rules would turn out to be in their interest and which would not"[58]. This was true all throughout the region and Bulgaria was not an exception.

A preliminary literature review has suggested that proportional representation is an electoral system that is used most frequently by European democracies[59].[60] Furthermore,

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[54] Pennings, page 107.
[55] Farrel
[56] See for instance Amy, Douglas J., *Behind the Ballot Box: A Citizen's Guide to Voting Systems*, Praeger Publishers, 2000
[57] Rose and Munro, page 12.
[58] Ibid., pages 12-13.
[59] Weiner put forward the following criteria for states to be considered democratic: "(1) Government leaders are chosen in competitive elections in which there are opposition political parties; (2) political parties, including opponents of te existing government, have the right to seek public support openly: they have access to the press, the right of assembly, and freedom of speech, and they are protected against unwarranted arrest; (3) governments defeated in an election step down, losers are not punished by the winners, nor are defeated leaders

countries of CEE are considered to mainly follow proportional representation systems as well.[61] In this paper I have analyzed the electoral systems employed in twenty-four Western and fifteen Central and Eastern European countries. This analysis has confirmed the previous findings. It can be thus concluded that the majority of countries in both blocs follow the PR system (Bulgaria included).

As was mentioned earlier, initially Bulgaria adopted a mixed system. It was a mixture of majority and proportional representation systems. Half of the 400 deputies of the National Assembly were to be chosen based on the majority principle (50 % + 1) in single-member election regions, and the other half through proportional representation in multi-mandated territorial units according to multi-mandated territorial units.[62] But prior to the second elections this has changed, and Bulgaria adopted the PR system. The reasons behind this switch are debatable, and political scientists have not come to a unified conclusion so far. Due to the limitations of this paper, it is impossible to assess the reasons behind it and its implications. One thing is clear though – the change of the nature of the electoral system in Bulgaria brought it closer to the established Western European democracies and to their mainstream electoral trends.[63]

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punished unless in the act of governance they have broken the law, and their punishment is based on due process; (4) elected governments are not figure-heads; they exercise power and make policies, and they are accountable to the electors, not to the military, the monarchy, the bureaucracy, or an oligarchy" (Weiner, Myron, "Empirical Democratic Theory", in *Competitive Elections in Developing Countries*, edited by Myron Weiner and Ergun Özbudun, Duke University Press, 1987, pages 4-5). Although the author of the present paper is aware of the different definitions of democracy varying from electoral to liberal democracies, literature review on the topic shaped the choice of this particular definition. The term 'European democracies' refers to the countries of Western Europe (following the Cold War logic) due to their historical democratic traditions. On the other hand, most, if not all, countries in Central and Eastern Europe fell short of the criteria outlined above at least during the first elections after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union.

[60] See for instance Amy, Douglas J., *Behind the Ballot Box: A Citizen's Guide to Voting Systems*, Praeger Publishers, 2000

[61] See for instance *Democratization in South East Europe: An Introduction to Election Issues*, edited by Dusan Pavlovic, Goran Petrov, Despina Syrri, and David A. Stone, South-East European Research Centre, June 2005

[62] *Elections in Central and Eastern Europe: A Compendium of Reports on the Elections Held from March through June 1990*, compiled by the staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Washington DC, July 1990

[63] For the types of electoral systems in Europe refer to Table 1 (Western Europe) and Table 2 (Central and Eastern Europe) in Appendix 2

4. Voter turnouts in national elections

The notion of representation is central to the definition of democracy even in its minimalist sense. Although scholars argue about the precise meaning of the term[64], it is clear that the ability and the willingness on behalf of the voters to cast a vote constitute an integral aspect of representation. Without this very participation, democracy will cease to exist. However, the question on how to measure this participation and how much is 'enough' remains open. One thing is agreed upon by all scholars though - voter turnout is the most important indicator of participation. Frances Millard argues that

> …declining turnout appears to be a feature of many liberal democracies, creating anxieties about popular alienation from politics. In the new democracies, turnout also became a cause of concern, both for politicians fearing a loss of legitimacy and for scholars who stressed an engaged population and democratic political culture as necessary features of democratic development.[65]

The importance of public participation in elections lies in the idea that the "parliament should be a 'representative sample' of the population"[66]. It would be absurd to argue that a perfect 'representative sample' is an achievable outcome of any nation-wide elections but, at the same time, "the aim should be to get as close as possible"[67]. Basically, the higher the voter turnout for the national elections, the more representative the sample gets. In the vast pool of academic literature on electoral systems and electoral politics, voter turnout trends take up an important position. In this chapter of the paper I have consciously chosen to concentrate on the national parliamentary elections rather than presidential ones, since the overwhelming majority of the European states have parliamentary systems of governance.

However, prior to engaging in a discussion about the general trends in voter turnouts in the two European blocs and positioning Bulgaria in either of those or generalizing about the two, it is necessary to define the concept itself and explain the mechanism of calculating

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[64] See for instance Farrel, David M., *Comparing Electoral Systems*, Prentice Hall: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997
[65] Millard, page 73
[66] Farrel, page 6
[67] Ibid.

it, since it can affect the outcome. I will be following the definition provided in "Elections, Parties, and Representation in Post-Communist Europe" by Millard. He states that "turnout is measured as the percentage of voters casting valid and invalid ballots divided by the number of registered voters"[68].

The first national elections held in the CEE countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union were expected to have very high turnouts because those were the first free, democratic and decisive elections since their respective countries became Soviet satellite states. Indeed the first competitive elections demonstrated the willingness of the population to be actively engaged in the decision-making process. However, as the data aggregated by Millard shows, differences within the region remained high. From twelve countries presented in his analysis, only Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovenia had a voter turnout above 85 % (Bulgaria in its first national elections in 1990 showed 90.8 %); Latvia, Estonia and Ukraine averaged above 75 %, but below 85 %; Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, and Russia all scored below 75 %, with Russia having only 54.3 %.[69]

In this chapter of the thesis a comparative model was devised using the SPSS program to analyze voter turnouts across Europe from 1989 till March 2007, using in-built SPSS functions and linear regression analysis. For this purpose the numerical value of voter turnouts in percentages was chosen as the dependent variable. Furthermore, in order to assess the reasons behind variations in voter turnout both across countries and across time, a number of independent variables were evaluated. Following a literature review on the topic,[70] nine variables were identified as relevant: the location of the country (Western Europe or CEE, in order to be able to identify trends both within each 'camp' separately, and in Europe at large); the year the elections took place (in order to control variations for time); was this the

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[68] Millard,page 294.
[69]Ibid., page 75.
[70] See for instance Massicotte, Louis, André Blais, and Antoine Yoshinaka, *Establishing the Rules of the Game: Election Laws in Democracies*, University of Toronto Press, 2004, or *International Encyclopedia of Elections*, edited by Richard Rose, CQ Press, 2000

country's first election since independence (primarily relevant for CEE, in order to see whether high turnouts in the first elections were mainly related to post-independence enthusiasm of the voters, or similarly high turnouts have continued to prevail in the region); the election day (weekend or weekday); if it is on weekdays, is there time off for employees without loss of pay; existence of a law on compulsory voting; if such a law exists, are there penalties for non-voters or it is considered a social duty; the easiness of voter registration (is voter registration state- or citizen-initiated); and the existence of special voting procedures (proxy, advanced, and postal voting, and/or mobile voting stations). My working hypothesis is that these variables strongly affect the voter turnout rates, and therefore, are to be taken into consideration when analyzing electoral trends.[71] It is worth mentioning that the definition which is being followed in this paper excludes non-registered non-voters, since it takes into account the votes cast, both valid and invalid, divided by the number of registered voters. Therefore, automatic registration was introduced into the quantitative model constructed for this chaper to rectify the problem.

After running the model, it became evident that slightly less than forty percent of the variations in voter turnouts across the European continent can be attributed to the above-mentioned nine independent variables. Furthermore, the high significance of the F-test (significance score of 0.000) demonstrates that there are virtually no possibilities for the correlation results to be by chance, and that there is a very high correlation between the independent variables that I have chosen and voter turnout. Other factors that could possibly influence the voter turnouts (since the nine independent variables account for almost forty percent of the variation) can be as far-reaching as the weather, the logistical aspects of voting,

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[71] The countries that were analyzed in the project are Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Western Europe); Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia (Central and Eastern Europe). The newly independent republics of former Soviet Union were consciously omitted since they do not meet the criteria for democracy outlined in the previous chapter with rare exceptions

general political apathy, and others. Consequently, it can be averred that the independent variables that were chosen for this model are of great importance and relevance for the analysis of voter turnout trends.

In terms of turnout averages, there is hardly any difference between Western and Eastern Europe (see Figure 1). Differences can be observed only in terms of trends and individual countries. For instance, contrary to what most researchers claim, voter turnout in Western Europe is experiencing a non-significant decline of 0.153 %; CEE countries have undergone a bigger decline, but it still cannot be considered highly influential (1.376 %). This proposition holds true, however, only when one analyzes regional patterns overall. There is a great degree of variations within each of them. For instance, Bulgaria has started off with a very high voter turnout (90.8 %) in the first national elections after independence, as many other countries in the CEE region, and has experienced a sharp decline (last parliamentary elections witnessed only 55.8 % turnout) if compared to the first elections. At the same time, it is important to mention that the decline was gradual. Other countries in the region have undergone very similar experiences.[72] In the countries of Western Europe there were no drastic differences in the numerical values of voter turnouts between the first elections after 1989 and the very recent ones. This can certainly be attributed to the fact that the first elections after 1989 for Western Europeans were as ordinary as they were before, while in the CEE region they had signified change and a break with the past contested by so many. Overall, the Bulgarian case is more or less following the Western European trend when it comes to the decline on average in percentages. However, in terms of actual values, Bulgaria is still a true representative of its geographical location.

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[72] For example the first elections in Romania had witnessed 76.3 % turnout, while the last ones only 58.5 %

Figure 1: Voter turnout trends on average in Western Europe and in CEE
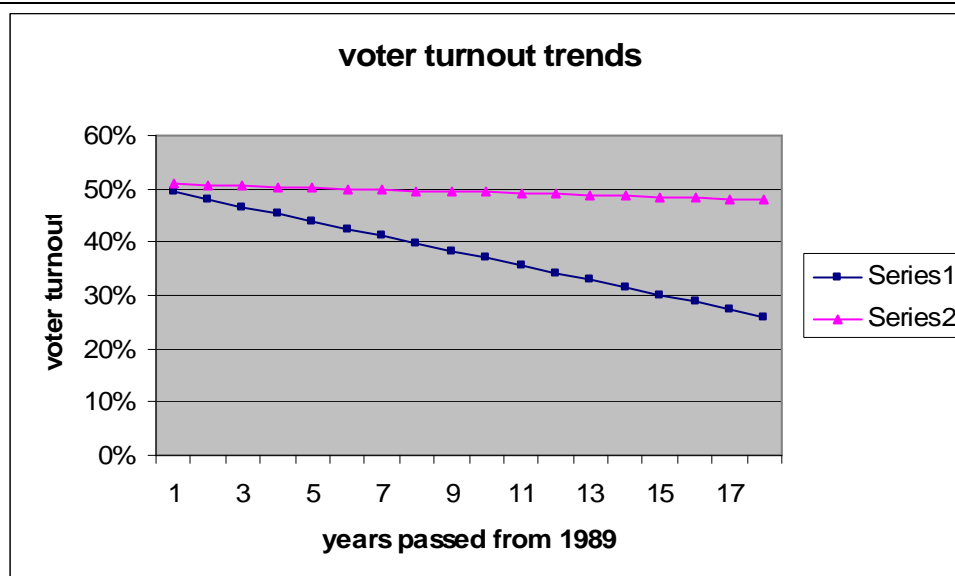
Series 1 – CEE states
Series 2 – Western European states

The graph presented above demonstrates relatively low averages for both 'camps' in

Europe. This diagram of averages was constructed with a numerical value of zero for all the

independent variables. However, if one looks at the impact of these independent variables on

voter turnouts in Europe, it can be averred that they all increase the numerical value of voter

turnout. Furthermore, the model has revealed that in countries that do have special voting

procedures the voter turnouts tend to increase by 5.365 %. Unfortunately, at the time when

this research was conducted, there were no such procedures employed in Bulgaria, which is

very atypical for the CEE region, as well as for the Western European democracies.[73] State-

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[73] The 2001 Elections of Members of Parliament Act specifies the regulations for those who cannot vote due to physical reasons: Article 88
(1) Votes shall be cast personally.
(2) Where the voter is a physically handicapped person and is unable to perform the required voting actions on his or her own, the Chairperson of the Committee may allow an accompanying person designated by the voter to help the latter. Where the decision of the Chairperson is challenged by a member of the Committee, the dispute shall be finally resolved by the District Election Committee. In such cases, the Committee shall specify the name and personal identification number of the accompanying person in the Notes column of the election roll. Where the physical handicap prevents the voter from signing personally, a committee member shall write a cross in the signature column and specify the case in the records.
(3) No person shall be allowed to accompany more than two voters.
(4) No committee member may accompany a voter.

initiated automatic voter registration also increases voter turnouts significantly (by 18.866 %). From all the countries included in this study only France and Portugal have citizen-initiated registration. In terms of voter registration, procedures in Bulgaria follow the overwhelming majority of both Western European and CEE states. Although the existence of a law on compulsory voting proved to be non-significant, its presence in some of the Western European legislatures leads to an increase in voter turnouts by 4.95 %.[74] Furthermore, interesting results were revealed from the analysis of the Election Day across Europe. In countries where the national elections are conducted on weekends, the turnouts increase by 5.702 %. Surprisingly, this is not a significant factor, since the scores of significance were only 0.69. Across Europe elections are conducted on weekdays only in Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, UK and Macedonia, with only the Netherlands and Norway having time off for the employees without loss of pay. Here as well, the Bulgarian case falls into the 'Europeanized' category. It was demonstrated that the presence of a legislation stipulating time off for the employees without loss of pay is highly significant and leads to an increase of 7.271 % on average. Since elections in Bulgaria, according to the 2001 Elections of Members of Parliament Act are conducted on non-working days[75], this variable was not

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(5) No persons other than voters casting their vote shall be allowed to stay at a distance of less than three metres from the voting booths when a voter is inside.

(6) No voting outside the voting premises shall be allowed.

(7) Voters shall be prohibited to take envelopes and ballots outside.

(8) The taking of ballot boxes outside the voting premises during the voting process and the counting of votes shall be prohibited.

2001 Elections of Members of Parliament Act, Political Transformation and Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe, University of Essex, < http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/legislationAll.asp?country=bulgaria&legislation=bg2001>, last accessed on May 9, 2007.

[74] None of the countries in CEE have a law on compulsory voting. Furthermore, as studies reveal there is a trend among Western European states to loosen the enforcement of this law.

[75] Article 5:

(1) Elections shall be held on a non-working day for the whole country.

(2) Elections shall be scheduled by the President of the Republic not later than 60 days prior to the election day.

(3) The President of the Republic shall endorse the specimens of the ballot papers and promulgate them in The State Gazette not later than 55 days prior to the election day.

2001 Elections of Members of Parliament Act, Political Transformation and Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe, University of Essex, < http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/legislationAll.asp?country=bulgaria&legislation=bg2001>, last accessed on May 9, 2007.

valid. Generally, if one looks at each of the independent variables separately and compares the data for Bulgaria with Western Europe, the following can be averred: in terms of Election Day, Bulgaria is very much 'Europeanized', since the overwhelming majority of countries in both Western European and CEE states have national elections scheduled for non-working days; in terms of voter registration procedures (state- vs. citizen-initiated), Bulgaria is extremely 'Westernized' as well – only three countries in the entire dataset were not following state-initiated voting registration (France and Portugal hold citizens responsible for voter registration, while information on Slovenia with regards to the registration process was missing at the time of the compilation of the dataset); as was mentioned earlier, Bulgaria falls short of mainstream European standards when it comes to special voting procedures – from thirty-nine countries analyzed in this study twelve do not have special voting procedures (Andorra, Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Poland). Overall, given the above stated results from the linear regression run with SPSS in-built functions, one can conclude that electoral trends pertaining to the technicalities and factors affecting voter turnouts are more falling into the category of Europeanized states than not.[76]

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[76] For detailed results of the quantitative model refer to Table 3 in the Appendix 3

5. Euroscepticism

5.1 Academic deliberations

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact most of the former members expressed their willingness to join the EU. Since no other options were considered by these states after the collapse of the bipolar world but to aspire for the 'return to Europe', no political parties and/or elites were present on the political spectrum to oppose European integration and membership in the EU as an ultimate goal and, consequently, no political forces were found to question the viability of these pre-requisites. The EU pre-accession requirements and subsequent full membership were generally acknowledged to enhance democratic institutions and, more importantly for the applicants, bring "substantial returns to the national budget over the long run"[77].

With the political and economic benefits, however, the applicant states had to bear the costs of their membership, which at times could be severe. Moravcsik and Vachudova argue that the standards and goals set in the *acquis communautaire,* a full implementation of which was one of the prerequisites for the applicants to join the Union, were considerably higher than those for the 'core' states themselves – double standards were applied.[78] To achieve similar goals the 'core' states had around 50 years, and yet some of these goals, namely, the protection of minorities, were never even set for the EU-15.[79] Furthermore, "some EU rules even appear ill considered, unsuited to transitional economies, or ill suited for particular countries"[80]. The economic reforms set by the EU that the applicant states must complete in their transition to market capitalism, "impose a large adjustment cost on economically and politically vulnerable countries"[81]. Above all, however, "the intrusive verification procedures

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[77] Moravcsik, Andrew, and Milada Anna Vachudova, "National Interests, State Power, and EU Enlargement", *East European Politics and Societies* 17, 2003, page 47.
[78] The entire body of the European laws – Euro Glossary, BBC News World Edition, < http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/europe/euro-glossary/1216329.stm>, last accessed on December 28, 2006
[79] Moravcsik and Vachudova, page 46.
[80] Ibid., page 46-47.
[81] Ibid., page 47.

that follow these standards are a tough blow for national pride"[82]. Despite these, in the eyes of the political elites of the region and, to some extent the general masses, the benefits outweighed the costs of accession. However, somewhere after a decade from the beginning of the transition period, as the costs became more apparent but the benefits still not tangible, an increasing number of political parties and organizations started having reservations about the membership pre-requisites and their country's future membership in it. Those critics have been labeled as *Eurosceptics.*

With the start of the enlargement policies of the EU, and especially with the first wave of accession of ten CEE states in 2004, Eurosceptic attitudes on both popular and political level started rising. It would sound like the argument of the chicken and the egg if one attempts to depict whether the popular attitudes were the result of the Eurosceptic outlook of certain political elites, or it was the other way round. At the same time, Euroscepticism was an issue of pressing concern in Western Europe from the early 1990s. Initially it was framed in the context of the opposition to the Maastricht Treaty, since it was regarded by the critics as an "over-extension of the idea of European integration"[83]. For the countries that were not EU member-states in 1992, namely Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Austria, the context of Euroscepticism was shaped by public debate and referendums "in which parties took clear positions on the EU"[84]. Taggart provides a list of political parties that had Eurosceptic discourse in the Western European countries. Those include, but are not limited to the Austrian Freedom Party, the Flemish Bloc in Belgium, People's Movement Against EC-Union in Denmark, The Leftist Alliance in Finland, the National Front in France, the Centre Democrats of Norway, and others.[85] Furthermore, according to the surveys of the

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[82] Moravcsik and Vachudova, page 47.
[83] Taggart, Paul, "A Touchstone of Dissent: Euroscepticism in Contemporary Western European Party Systems", *European Journal of Political Research* 33, May 1998, pages 363 – 388, page 366
[84] Ibid., page 367
[85] For the full list of Eurosceptic political parties in Western Europe as for 1998, refer to Taggart, 1998, pages 370-371

Commission of the European Communities as of 1995, thirty-three percent of Swedes viewed their country's membership in the EU as a 'bad thing'.[86] Similarly high percentages were depicted in the UK, Spain, Denmark, Austria, and Finland. Since the relevance of Eurosceptic attitudes on the political arena is apparent in both Western European and CEE states, it is of utmost importance to analyze these attitudes thoroughly and depict the similarities and the differences in Eurosceptic patterns in the two 'camps', as well as position Bulgaria in either of those, or demonstrate its uniqueness.

The term *Euroscepticism* first appeared in *The Times of London* as early as 1986 to refer to Margaret Thatcher viewing her concerns over closer ties with continental Europe.[87] Consequently, one can assert that the term first came forward as a journalistic jargon rather than an academic concept. Nowadays, "Euroscepticism tends to be used as a generic, catch-all term encapsulating a disparate bundle of attitudes opposed to European integration in general and opposition to the EU in particular"[88], and hence, difficulties with the precise definition are apparent.

In the academic literature Paul Taggart[89] was the first one to attempt to define party-based Euroscepticism. He argues that Euroscepticism integrates three different positions towards the EU: anti-integration, and therefore, anti-EU; not in principal anti-integration, but skeptical of the EU since it is too inclusive; not in principle anti-integration, but skeptical of the EU since it is too exclusive. Taggart further suggests that the term Euroscepticism "expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration"[90]. Until Taggart's first

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[86] Taggart, 1998, page 375
[87] Flood, C., "Euroscepticism: A Problematic Concept", Paper presented to the UACES 32nd Annual Conference and 7th Research Conference, Queen's University Belfast, September 2002
[88] Szczerbiak, Aleks, and Paul Taggart, "Theorising Party-Based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definition, Measurement and Causality", Sussex European Institute Working Paper No 69, European Parties Elections and Referendums Network Working Paper No 12, August 2003
[89] Taggart, 1998, page 366
[90] Ibid.

publication the term specifically referred to the British opposition to further integration with the continental Europe. Afterwards, Taggart and many other political scientists worked on developing his original concept.

However, only "in the second half of the last decade, the notion of Euro-skepticism entered the debate in a new meaning. Before, the term had been used to identify adversaries to European integration within the Union"[91]. A further elaboration of this definition was proposed by Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak[92] who adjusted it to refer to the CEE region specifically. Such an amendment to the original definition came as a result of rising levels of criticism within the CEE region concerning the EU in general and the process of European integration in particular. Interestingly, the original definition by Taggart implies that there could potentially be different levels and/or degrees of Euroscepticism. This was conceptualized later by Taggart and Szczerbiak when they broke the concept of Euroscepticism into two – 'hard' and 'soft'. A number of academic works sprung from the Taggart's and Szczerbiak's conceptualization. Kopecky and Mudde derived their model of party-based Euroscepticism predominantly from the criticism of Taggart's and Szczerbiak's. Karen Henderson, Jack Bielasiak, Timm Beichelt, Gary Marks et al and others have analyzed the concept extensively; most of them have derived their analysis from that of Taggart and Szczerbiak and/or Kopecky and Mudde.

None of the models present in the academic literature so far can be generalized to incorporate political parties in the CEE states or in Western Europe separately, let alone in Europe as a whole. The two main models to classify Eurosceptic parties in Europe are those

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[91] Beichelt, Timm, "Nationalism and anti-EU Mobilization in Postsocialist Europe", Paper for the Eight Biennial International Conference of the European Union Studies Association, March 27-29, 2003 in Nashville, Tennessee, page 1.
[92] Szczerbiak, Aleks and Paul Taggart, "Parties, Positions and Europe: Euroscepticism in the Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe", Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of Political Studies Association, 10-12 April, 2001, Manchester.

of Taggart and Szczerbiak[93] on the one hand, and Kopecky and Mudde[94] on the other. Criticisms can be drawn with regards to both models, and none are applicable to the region as a whole. Kopecky and Mudde summarized the main criticisms of the model proposed by Taggart and Szczerbiak:

1. the definition of 'soft Euroscepticism' is so broad that almost anyone who has any reservations or disagreements with anything related to the EU can be classified as Eurosceptic[95];

2. "the relatively clear distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism is later blurred when the authors argue that 'in practice hard Euroscepticism can be identified by the principled objections to *the current form* of European integration in the EU'"[96];

3. the criteria for the two types of Euroscepticism are vague and unclear[97];

4. the two types of Euroscepticism "do not do enough justice" to the distinction between the ideas of European integration and European Union as its embodiment[98].

At the same time, when looking at the model presented by Kopecky and Mudde, one is inclined to think that the political parties of the region can be plotted into it successfully. However, a closer examination has showed that this model is not fully applicable either. Many scholars have voiced their criticisms about the classification suggested by Kopecky and Mudde. I have identified three of those as the most relevant ones. Firstly, the category of Europragmatists seems illogical. A party cannot be against European integration, but at the same time fully support the EU as an institution. Two political parties have been identified as Europragmatic by Kopecky and Mudde – the *Movement for a Democratic Slovakia* and the Hungarian *Independent Smallholders Party*. Nevertheless, as Taggart and Szczerbiak have

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[93] For a detailed description of the model refer to Appendix 4
[94] For a detailed description of the model refer to Appendix 5
[95] Kopecky, Petr and Cas Mudde, "The Two Sides of Euroscepticism: Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe", *European Union Politics*, volume 3 (3), 2002, pages 297-326, page 300.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.

argued in their subsequent work, those are not Europragmatic in essence, but rather "have positions on Europe that make them extremely difficult to categorise"[99]. Secondly, the definition Kopecky and Mudde have provided for the Euroenthusiasts is too inclusive. It "does not really capture the full range of different approaches to the EU that are encompassed within it"[100]. Thirdly, although Kopecky and Mudde break down the broad category of the critiques of the process of European integration and the EU into Eurosceptics and Eurorejects, further specifications are required. While the concept of Eurorejects is fairly clear – a party is either a Euroreject, i.e. against the core principles underlying both the EU as an institution and the process of European integration, or it is not; the quadrant that has the Eurosceptics in it promotes confusion. As was mentioned earlier, degrees of Euroscepticism are implied from the original definition of the term. Therefore, the category of Eurosceptics proposed by Kopecky and Mudde is too inclusive as well, since it does not take into account the varying degrees of this very opposition. As was shown above, there can be no one framework for comparing and contrasting varying degrees of Euroscepticism in party politics across Europe. Consequently, in this paper I will employ a qualitative method of assessing party-based Euroscepticism, in which parties will be classified on a 'more or less' continuum.

5.2 The case of Bulgaria

The case of Bulgaria is truly unique. It does not resemble any other CEE country, let alone Western Europe. It has been widely acknowledged that Bulgaria[101] was the least Eurosceptic candidate for joining the EU, at least in terms of party-based Euroscpeticism.[102]

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[99] Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2003, page 9
[100] Ibid.
[101] Bulgaria officially submitted its application for EU membership in 1995 and was recognized as a candidate country in 1997. Accession negotiations were opened in 2000 and concluded in 2004. The Accession Treaty was signed in 2005. Bulgaria officially joined the EU on January 1, 2007
[102] See for example Taggart, Paul and Aleks Szczerbiak, "Europeanisation, Euroscepticism and Party Systems: Party-Based Euroscepticism in the Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe" in *Pan-European*

Dr. Agop Garabedyan, the Director of the Institute of Balkan Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, stated that one of the reasons for this can be found in Bulgarian geopolitics. Due to its strategic location bordering Turkey, political parties feel more secure being in the EU, thus the overwhelming majority of them are Eurooptimists.[103] He claimed that party-based Euroscepticism is in the process of formation in Bulgaria, but not "substantially present yet"[104]. This could probably be attributed, according to him, to the fact that Bulgarians hope the EU will "fix Bulgaria up", and they generally regard the EU as a panacea to all the ills of the society and the country as a whole.[105] Furthermore, taking into account the current state of affairs on the Bulgarian political arena, any political party declaring a profoundly Eurosceptic outlook is confined to a 'political suicide'. "The idea of completely rejecting European integration is not present in political life"[106]. During the last parliamentary elections in 2005, issues pertaining to the country's at that time future membership were not very visible and not salient at all,[107] although when analyzing party platforms specifically one can encounter some degree of party-based Euroscepticism. This is especially apparent if one looks at the political parties separately and not at coalitions that were either campaigning from the start together or formed a coalition once in parliament.

In the last national elections in 2005, twenty-two political parties and coalitions competed for seats in the Bulgarian National Assembly, seven of which actually made it in.[108] Interestingly, while some parties may have platforms with a Eurosceptic outlook, their coalition is a highly Euroenthusiastic one in essence, which would support my claim that in

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Perspectives on Party Politics, edited by Paul Lewis and Paul Webb, Perspectives on European Politics and Society, Brill, the Netherlands, 2003.

[103] Personal interview with Dr. Agop Garabedyan, the Director of the Institute of Balkan Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The interview was conducted in Sofia, on April 12, 2007

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Beichelt, page 4.

[107] Savkova, Lyubka, "Election Briefing No. 21: Europe and the Parliamentary Election in Bulgaria, 25th June 2005", EPERN, University of Sussex, Sussex European Institute

[108] Ibid., page 7.

Bulgaria party position on Europe are predominantly strategically driven.[109] When talking about Euroscepticism in Bulgaria, it is important to refer to varying degrees of it. As was mentioned earlier, from the beginning of 1990s the Bulgarian politics was oriented towards the EU membership, which in turn has shaped the current form of party politics. Regardless of the political orientation of the governing coalition (center-left or center-right), the main foreign policy objective did not change.[110] At the same time, once a particular political party would go into opposition, its rhetoric towards the benefits of further integration and membership would change. Moreover, some political parties change their platforms depending on their position (government or opposition) – another evidence of the strategically driven considerations shaping the political arena. It would go beyond the scope of this paper if one tried to analyze the platforms of individual political parties and coalitions. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that none had a profound Eurosceptic outlook.

The only political party that could be called Eurosceptic to some extent is the newly emerged Attack because of its rejection of the single European market, its promotion of nationalization of property and its denial of the right of foreigners to purchase agricultural land. In the *Twenty Principles of the Party Attack* it is stated that national interests should take a priority over any membership in any international organization; that Bulgarian investors, producers and businessmen must have advantages over any foreign investor, producer and businessman until the level of social security of Bulgarians equals that of

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[109] The ideology vs. strategy debate is of great importance in analyzing party-based Euroscepticism. Ideologically driven parties are committed to their constituencies that are committed to these ideological values themselves. At the same time, these parties are ready to lose voters to pursue their ideological goals. Whereas political parties that are strategically driven want to attract voters at any cost. Surprisingly, the use of ideology plays an important role in their party platforms.

[110] As Bulgaria joined the EU in January 2007, there is no clear foreign policy objective formulated yet. All the talks about it revolve around the goals within the European community and future challenges ahead. This was also confirmed by all the MPs interviewed. None of them mentioned an unambiguous foreign policy objective that the Bulgarian foreign service follows or will be following in the coming years.

average Western Europeans; that Bulgarian agricultural land cannot be sold to foreigners.[111]

However, at the same time, the party did advocate Bulgarian membership as a whole, provided that national interests must take a priority and certain provisions of the *acquis communautaire* should be re-negotiated, including the closure of Kozlodouy nuclear power plant. It also is in favor of further European integration while defending the national interests and against Bulgaria's exclusion from the broader European politics. As was mentioned earlier, the definition of 'hard' Euroscepticism provided by Taggart and Szczerbiak includes "a principled opposition to the EU and European integration"[112]. Therefore, I argue that Attack is not a hard Eurosceptic political party as defined by Taggart and Szczerbiak, but rather falling somewhere between 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism with a tendency to be closer to the former[113]. It is a party whose political ideology is in the process of formation[114]. Despite this, the party has a highly Eurosceptic discourse and, arguably, it will not become more moderate but more radical towards the next national elections.[115]

Dr. Stanislav Stanilov, who is a Member of Parliament from the Coalition Attack, stated that as a result of privatization of industry under Kostov's leadership during the first UDF government, the country got destroyed, which led to the emergence of Euroscepticism on the political arena. Another factor that contributed to its emergence, according to Stanilov, was the fact that ordinary Bulgarians were never asked if they wanted to join the EU.[116] Interestingly, representatives of other political parties claimed that there is no apparent degree of Euroscepticism present on the political arena. For instance, Mr. Tchetin Kazak, who is a

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[111] The *Twenty Principles* can be accessed in Russian on the official website of the party, <http://www.ataka.bg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=44&Itemid=43>, last accessed on December 25, 2006.

[112] Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2001, page 7

[113] Degrees of Euroscepticism are implied in the original definition of the term; therefore, further empirical research is required to rightly classify the party.

[114] One of the reasons for this is that it sends conflicting political messages.

[115] A more elaborate discussion on the discourse of the Coalition Attack will appear in the following sections

[116] Personal interview with Dr. Stanislav Stanilov, Member of Parliament from the Coalition Attack, Vice Chairman of the Permanent Parliamentary Commission for Culture, and a Member of Education and Science Committee of the Bulgarian National Assembly. The interview was conducted in Sofia, on April 12, 2007

Member of Parliament and the Secretary of the Parliamentary Group of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms, as well as an Observer Member of the European Parliament, claimed that "Bulgarians are not yet Eurosceptic"[117], and thus no political party provides its supporters with a truly Eurosceptic outlook. He further attested that party-based Euroscepticism is a growing trend in CEE states with the notable exception of Bulgaria. At the same time, Mr. Kazak, stating the position of his party, averred that unless the governing coalition takes up its full responsibility and informs the people about the benefits of joining the EU, party-based Euroscepticism will emerge in Bulgaria as well.[118] Garabedyan also stated that Bulgaria has the foundation for developing a very strong party-based Euroscepticism.[119] Till now Euroscepticism was not a salient issue in the electoral campaigns since the consensus among the main political actors revolved around the goal of entering the EU at any cost. It would be interesting to observe how, and if at all, Euroscepticism will emerge as a salient issue in the upcoming municipal elections in September 2007.

In terms of popular attitudes toward the EU, the Bulgarian population has been demonstrating relatively high support. Although some researchers have claimed that Bulgaria has the highest rates of Euroenthusiasm on both political and popular levels, the Eurobarometer surveys have revealed that starting from 2001 Bulgaria has had the second highest rate of Euroenthusiasm in Europe after Romania.[120] Looking at the average support that membership in the EU receives from the population (Figure 2 below) one can easily attest that Bulgaria is well above the averages in the EU-15 and in the CEE countries as well. However, if one looks at the averages of percentages in the CEE region of people who

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[117] Personal interview with Dr. Tchetin Kazak, Member of Parliament, Secretary of the Parliamentary Group of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms, and an Observer Member of European Parliament. The interview was conducted in Sofia, on April 11, 2007
[118] Ibid.
[119] Personal interview with Dr. Agop Garabedyan
[120] The results from Turkey are not taken into account due to lack of information on some questions and missing data on others

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claimed that their country would benefit from the accession into the Union, Bulgaria demonstrates very similar tendencies with the other CEE states (Figure 3 below).

Figure 2: Support for EU membership (percentage of respondents saying that membership in the EU is a 'good thing' for their country)
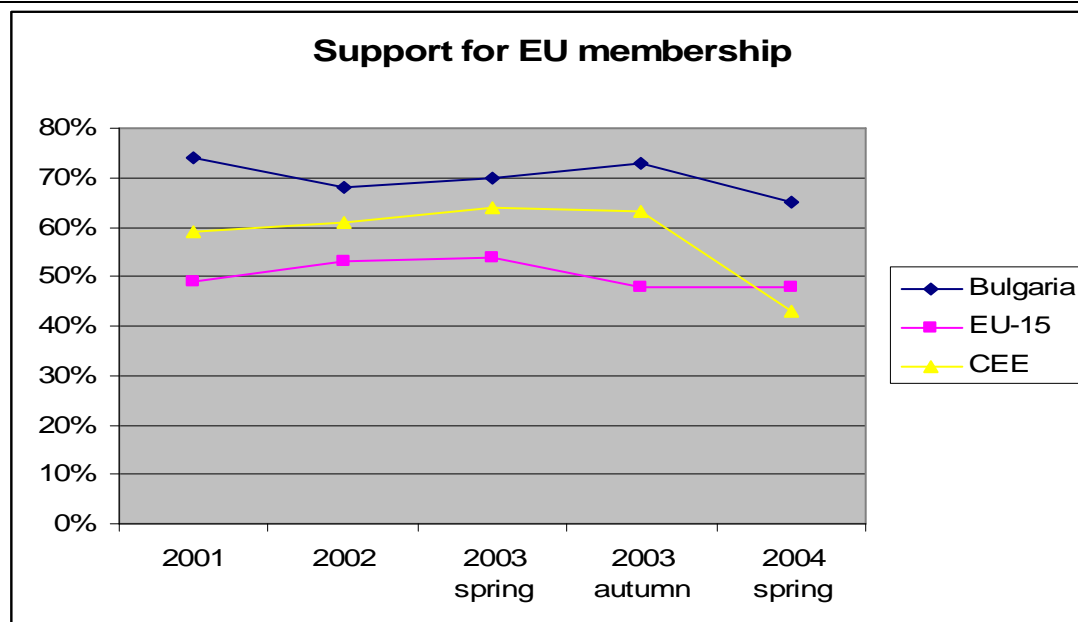
Source: European Commission: Public Opinion Analysis (Eurobarometer)

Figure 3: Assessing the attitudes of the people regarding the potential benefits from membership in the EU
(Question: Taking everything into consideration, would you say that Bulgaria could get advantages or not from being a member of the European Union?)
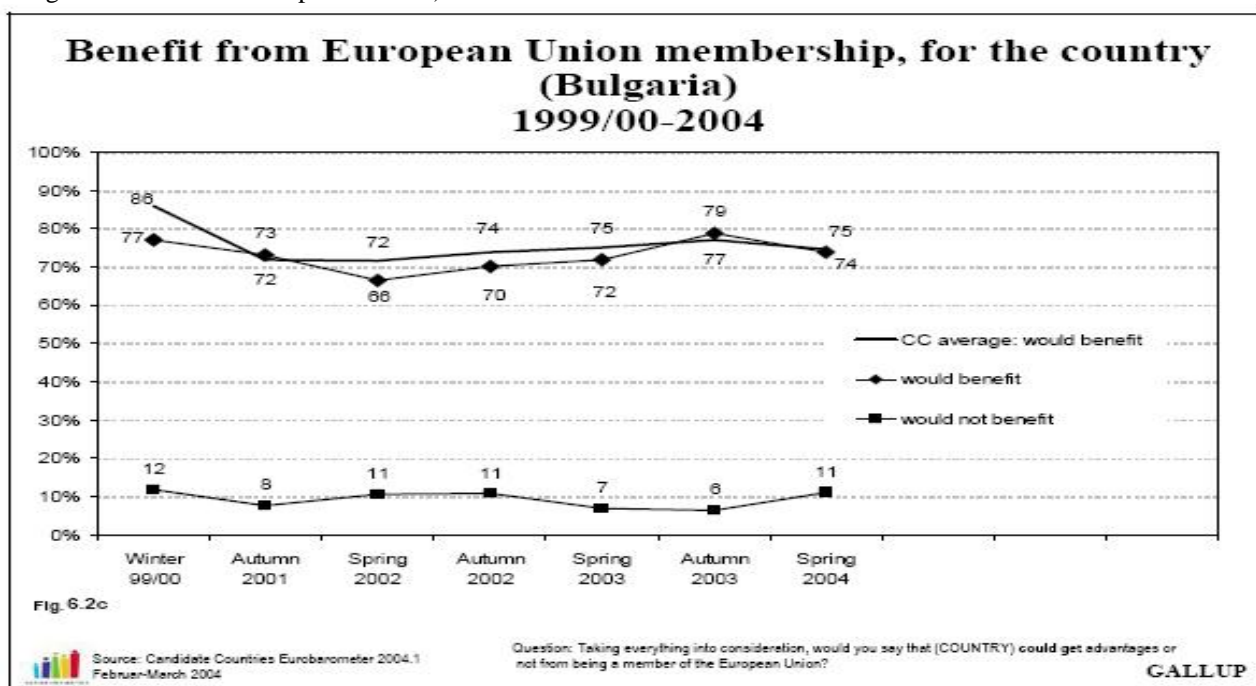
Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer 2004.1

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As was mentioned earlier, no political parties on the Bulgarian political arena have a profound Eurosceptic outlook, with the exception of Attack, which advocates re-negotiation of certain chapters only and not the entire project of EU, which makes it a less Eurosceptic in its discourse than, for example, the New Era of Latvia.[121] It is worth mentioning that in other CEE countries the presence of Eurosceptic political parties is strongly felt. In virtually all CEE states at least one party is considered to be profoundly Eurosceptic – Greater Romanian Party; Smallholders Party and Hungarian Justice and Life Party; Slovak National Party and Movement for a Democratic Slovakia; League of Polish Families and Self-Defense, to name but a few. At the same time, party-based Euroscepticism is evident in Western Europe, with its culmination during the vote of rejection for the European Constitution in France and The Netherlands. Consequently, one can aver that in terms of party-based Euroscepticism Bulgaria does not follow the mainstream European trends. Interestingly, both Western European and CEE states, with the exception of Bulgaria, demonstrate similar inclinations in terms of party-based Euroscepticism.

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[121] The only political formation that at least comes close to rejecting the notions of Euro-integration in its entirety is the Bulgarian Business Bloc or BBB. It had approximately 5 % of the national vote in 1994 - a year before Bulgaria submitted its application for EU membership, and 1997 - a year when the EU recognized Bulgaria as a candidate country (Beichelt, 2003). However, after 1997 BBB stopped being a relevant political actor and the party split along the lines of support for its leader George Ganchev. Ganchev himself contested in local elections afterwards, but was not able to pass the required threshold. Therefore, BBB will not be taken into account in this paper, since I refer only to those parties that are currently in Parliament or have fair chances of getting into it.

6. Ethnic politics

In this chapter I will first provide the reader with an overview of general statistics on national minorities in Bulgaria and give reasons behind my specific concentration on the case of the Turkish minority as opposed to the Roma, for instance. Since this thesis is based on a comparative framework I will compare the nature of the Bulgarian ethnic politics with that of Western Europe on the one hand, and CEE states on the other, which will help me assess the position of Bulgaria in comparison to both. This would also enable me to analyze the level of Europeanization, or Westernization, of Bulgaria in terms of ethnic politics. The assessment will mainly generate from a comparative analysis of the activities of ethnic political parties in Slovakia and Romania, as representing the region of CEE, and Spain, as representing Western Europe. Some examples will be drawn from the case of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia. This comparison will evolve around two main areas. Firstly, I will compare and contrast the electoral results of the ethnic political parties in the respective countries in the last national elections. Secondly, I will analyze the demands of the ethnic parties and formations in the respective countries. It will be argued that the case of Bulgaria, despite the many commonalities with both Western European and CEE states, differs drastically from both; and the model of ethnic relations of Bulgaria is unique not only in the CEE region, but in Europe in general.

For a successful analysis of ethnic minority politics, one must look into the definition of the concept of 'minorities'. This would help in identifying the minorities and concentrating on their party politics. While aware of the many definitions of the term in the academic literature, I will follow the definition proposed by Fracesco Capotorti.

> A minority is a group which is numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State and in a non-dominant position, whose members possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics which differ from the those of the rest of the population and who, if only implicitly, maintain

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> a sense of solidarity directed towards preserving their
> culture, traditions, religion or language.[122]

Based on this definition one can explain the choice of the Turks in Bulgaria, Basques in Spain, Hungarians in Romania and Slovakia, and Albanians in Macedonia as case studies for this chapter.[123]

It is important to mention that the selection of these particular case studies is justified by the fact that there are existing ethnic cleavages in the respective societies, which led to the formation of political parties based on ethnicity. The case of Spain was preferred to that of Belgium and the UK due to the fact that the ethnic cleavage in Spain follows the center-periphery dimension, similar to that of Slovakia and Romania. The concentration on the Basques in Spain rather than Catalans, for example, is due to the fact that the intensity of the cleavage in the Basque case is much stronger. Also, the activities of the Basque political parties incite much more negative sentiments on a national level than any other ethnic party or formation in Spain. In the meantime, the ethnic politics of Belgium has a relatively balanced nature; while in the case of Northern Ireland, ethnic politics is not only an outcome of an ethnic cleavage, but rather a combination of ethnic and religious ones. Furthermore, in order to assess the nature of ethnic politics in the UK, one must go back to the Irish independence movement, which is beyond the scope of this thesis. The case of France was consciously disregarded. Although it has sizeable ethnic minorities, France does not formally and legally acknowledge their presence on the French territory. But this is more of an exception rather than a rule in Western Europe. Overall, the case of Spain was preferred to any other Western European democracy due to the fact that it is the most extreme and illustrative case of them all – only in Spain a fraction of ethnic formations resorts to violence to achieve its goals. In the CEE region, the case of former Yugoslavia is consciously removed

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[122] Apud Lapidoth, Ruth, *Autonomy: Flexible Solutions to Ethnic Conflicts*, Washington, DC: United Nations Institute of Peace Press, 1996, pages 10-11

[123] Due to the limitations of this paper, other ethnic minorities and their politics is not taken into account

from my comparative framework due to the eruption of a violent conflict and a full-scale war that exacerbated an already complex ethnic puzzle.

This paper solely concentrates on the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. While aware of the existence of other sizeable minorities in Bulgaria, especially the Roma, I have consciously chosen the Turkish case. Firstly, ethnic Turks numerically represent the biggest minority on the territory of modern-day Bulgaria. Secondly, they are politically mobilized, active, and influential. Finally, the history of the Turkish party in Bulgaria dates back to the Zhivkov era. Although at that time non-formal, MRF has administrative structures that are deeply-rooted and well-organized. Unlike the Roma political parties, MRF is able to consolidate support within the ethnic minority and get support from the Bulgarian Muslims, Pomaks, as well, and was successful in preventing the mushrooming of other Turkish political parties in Bulgaria.

6.1 Comparative elements

Unlike the case of Bulgaria, in all other cases selected here, formation of ethnic political parties is not legally banned. Consequently, one of my major tasks in this chapter is to empirically prove that MRF is a political party of the ethnic minority. Although academic literature on the topic departs from the assumption that MRF is an ethnic formation, none of the existing works show empirical evidence for it.[124] Furthermore, there is a definitional vacuum in the mainstream literature concerning the criteria of an ethnic party. After a substantive literature review,[125] I have adopted the following criteria: the electoral support of the party is derived mainly from the ethnic minority; and/or the party effectively represents ethnic interests. However, in the Bulgarian case, the second criterion will be virtually

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[124] See for instance, Rose, 2005
[125] See for instance, Birner, Jóhanna Kristín, *Ethnicity and Electoral Politics*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006; or Bugajski, Janusz, *Ethnic Politics in Eastern Europe: A Guide to Nationality Policies, Organizations, and Parties*, Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1994

impossible to prove due to the existing constitutional ban. Therefore, it will be abolished for the purposes of this paper. Since in all the cases, except for Bulgaria, the parties officially declare themselves as political parties representing the interests of the respective minorities and deriving their electoral support from them, it will not be necessary to provide empirical evidence for it.

Ethnic Turks constitute 9.4 % of the total population of Bulgaria.[126] They mainly inhabit the agricultural areas "in two pockets of the north and the south, each with four 'subprovinces' with a Turkish majority"[127]. 6.6 % of the total Romanian population is ethnically Hungarian[128], while 9.7 % of Slovak citizens constitute the Hungarian minority[129]. In Spain, the population of the Basque Country is 4.9 % of the total population,[130] which I will regard as the official number of the Basques. In all the cases presented above, the ethnic minorities are geographically concentrated. This gives them leverage in elections, when they can collectively vote for representation.

In all the cases, except of Spain, the ethnic minority is represented by one political party. In Romania another Hungarian political formation - the Hungarian Civic Union - is awaiting official state registration as a political party. Currently, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania is the only political party effectively representing this sizeable minority. The Party of the Hungarian Coalition in Slovakia and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms in Bulgaria are the uncontested envoys of the minorities. The case of Spain is completely different. The Basque interests are represented by seven political parties and formations, which leads to a high degree of fragmentation. This is a result of the split within

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[126] CIA – The World Factbook – Bulgaria, < https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bu.html>, last accessed on May 18, 2007
[127] Millard, 2004, page 227.
[128] CIA – The World Factbook – Romania, <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ro.html>, last accessed on April 23, 2007
[129] CIA – The World Factbook – Slovakia, < https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/lo.html>, last accessed on May 18, 2007
[130] Conversi, Daniele, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilization*, London: Hurst & Co., 1997

the Basque country along four different cleavages: violence vs. non-violence, nationalism vs. non-nationalism, provincialism vs. non-provincialism, and left wing vs. right wing.[131] Also, it is important to note that there is a degree of regional autonomy in the case of the Basque Country, which implies some sort of electoral competition on the regional level. Consequently, all these parties that compete for power on a regional level try to attract their constituencies on the national level as well. But due to a high number of these parties, the cumulative vote share gets divided.

Similarities between all the cases are evident. The most important of those are the historical discrimination and repressions that the members of the ethnic minorities had suffered under the previous regimes. In Francoist Spain all signs of Basque identity were suppressed and decrees were issued to institutionalize the discrimination.[132] At that period the nationalistic claims of the Basque parties gained support. Demands for cultural and territorial autonomy sprang up and were continuous since then.[133] In both Bulgaria and Romania the ethnic minorities were subjected to increased discrimination under the communist regimes. Zhivkov and Ceausescu were forcibly changing the names of ethnic minority representatives and pursuing cultural assimilation policies – Bulgariazation and Romanianization respectively. At the time leading to the break up of Czechoslovakia the situation of ethnic Hungarians worsened. In order to be able to trace similarities and differences in ethnic politics in the selected cases, one must carefully examine the historical developments, which led to the current claims of the minorities.

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[131] Castells, José Manuel and Gurutz Jauregui, *Political Autonomy and Conflict Resolution: The Basque Case*, < http://www.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu12ee/uu12ee0m.htm#12.%20political%20autonomy%20and%20conflict%20resolution:%20the%20basque%20case>, last accessed on May 18, 2007

[132] Apud Beck, Jan Mansvelt, *Territory and Terror: Conflicting Nationalisms in the Basque Country*, London, New York: Routledge, 2005

[133] Castells and Gurutz

6.2 The case of Slovakia

For the 1994 Slovak national elections the Hungarian parties ran in a coalition to pass the threshold to enter into the parliament. They campaigned with the claims of regional or territorial autonomy. Earlier, in the wake of the Czechoslovak break up, relations soured between Hungary and Slovakia, since Meciar's government started showing signs of forthcoming repressions. The minority radicalization gained momentum. Not surprisingly, the Hungarians backed ousting Meciar out of power and installing a government with a liberal and a pro-minority agenda. At the same time, their claims for autonomy did not stop, but even escalated. Promises of inclusion into a coalition government did not help. When Meciar resumed power in 1995, policies of repression and intimidation against ethnic Hungarians started again. Afterwards, with Dzurinda's new pro-minority agenda, Hungarians received three ministerial positions. In the meantime, however, nationalistic Fidesz came to power in Hungary and Hungary withdrew its initial support for its compatriots in the near abroad. Nevertheless, the signs of goodwill from the Slovak majority led to fewer radical claims, and now the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK) modestly voices demands for a cultural autonomy.[134]

6.3 The case of Romania

By 1993 the DAHR had replaced its demands for territorial autonomy with claims for communal autonomy. Later that year, the leadership of DAHR escalated their demands "to territorial autonomy where 'compact Hungarian populations live'."[135] As the negotiations between Romania and Hungary proceeded, the DAHR, realizing their leverage in the context of these negotiations, radicalized their demands. With EU and NATO using the policies of conditionality, both Romania and Hungary were forced to settle the issue of Hungarians in

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[134] Jenne, Erin K., *Ethnic Bargaining: The Paradox of Minority Empowermen*t, Cornell University Press, 2007
[135] Ibid., page 115

Romania. However, Iliescu's government when finalizing the terms of the agreement between the two states, clearly declared that no collective rights would be allowed. The Hungarian government, since pursuing non-interventionist policies, had reluctantly agreed. When the opposition forces came to power in 1996, DAHR was invited into the coalition government. The government also made amendments to the education and language laws. In return, DAHR abandoned its claims for territorial autonomy.[136]

6.4 MRF as an ethnic formation in Bulgaria

Prior to engaging in a discussion about the nature of ethnic politics in Bulgaria and presenting the history of MRF and their claims, it is important to empirically prove that MRF is an ethnic political party. As was mentioned earlier, the criterion that I will be using here is that the party derives its electoral support mainly from the ethnic minority. In order to do that, I will look at the results of the last national elections in Bulgaria by electoral districts. Bulgaria consists of thirty-one electoral districts. The vote share of MRF by districts is presented in the table below.

Table 3: Vote share of MRF by electoral districts in percentages and the percentage of mandates taken per district

'-' sign indicates that the party did not pass the 4 % threshold to get a mandate

Districts that are bolded are located in one of the four 'subprovinces' where ethnic Turks are concentrated

Electoral District	Actual vote share of MRF (%)	Mandates taken by MRF (%)
Blagoevgrad	18.51	21.50
Burgas	15.06	16.86
Varna	8.66	9.79
Veliko Tirnovo	4.56	-
Vidin	13.39	-
Vratca	1.29	-
Gabrovo	6.61	-
Dobreech	14.05	17.85
Kirdjali	67.32	100
Kyustendil	1.50	-
Lovetch	7.37	-

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[136] Jenne, Erin K.

Montana	4.12	-
Pazardjik	11.91	14.86
Pernik	0.42	-
Pleven	7.25	8.24
Plovdiv city	7.18	7.70
Plovdiv district	9.81	11.09
Razgrad	45.97	69.52
Rousse	11.76	13.55
Silistra	36.12	54.19
Sleeven	9.99	14.20
Smolyan	15.25	24.37
Sofia 23 MIR	0.44	-
Sofia 24 MIR	2.35	-
Sofia 25 MIR	0.56	-
Sofia province	4.25	-
Stara Zagora	5.58	-
Tirgovishte	37.84	55.95
Khaskovo	16.55	19.94
Shoumen	27.48	33.96
Yambol	2.88	-
Votes from abroad	53.99	59.09
National results	12.81	14.07

Source: Central Elections Committee, <http://www.2005izbori.org/results/index.html>, last accessed on May 19, 2007

The ethnic support-base of MRF can be proven on two different levels - firstly, the national breakdown of the votes, and secondly, the votes cast by Bulgarian citizens from abroad. As can be seen from the table above, MRF gained the highest share of votes, and thus the highest number of parliamentary mandates, in the electoral districts with either numerical Turkish majority[137] or with a substantive Turkish population[138]. Furthermore, there were no mandates for MRF from the capital and its province. This can be explained by the fact that the Bulgarian society perceives MRF as a purely ethnic force representing purely Turkish interests. And since the ethnic Turks and the Bulgarian Muslims – Pomaks - are not geographically concentrated in the capital, they could not pass the required threshold. Consequently, one could aver that the support of MRF is derived primarily from the 'mixed' regions or regions where the majority of the inhabitants are ethnically Turkish. This would

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[137] Kirdjali and Shoumen
[138] Dobreech, Pazardjik, Razgrad, Silistra, Smolyan, Tirgovishte, and Khaskovo

prove that the support base of the MRF is ethnically Turkish and, thus, the MRF is an ethnic political party.

Furthermore, the Bulgarian citizens living abroad were able to cast their votes since a considerably big number of polling stations were established abroad. More than seventy of those were in Turkey.[139] This is not surprising, given the fact that 100,000 Bulgarian citizens live there – the highest number of Bulgarian citizens abroad.[140] From all the mandates that were allocated based on numerical proportions of citizens living abroad, Bulgarian citizens in Turkey had the highest share. From all the votes cast abroad, MRF got 59.09 % of the mandates.[141] This is another indirect proof of the ethnic support-base that MRF enjoys. Yet another evidence can be derived from the ethnicity of the MPs currently representing MRF in the Parliament. Out of thirty-four MPs, twenty-eight are ethnically Turkish,[142] thus making up 82.35 % of the party's MPs. In fact, MRF has enjoyed relative electoral success since its establishment. Moreover, it has participated in coalition governments, thus securing its centrist position in the power politics within the Bulgarian state.

6.5 MRF as a political party

Considering the task of establishing MRF as an ethnic formation accomplished, I shall now turn to the evolution of MRF as a political party and its current activities. The appearance of the ethnic cleavage in Bulgarian politics dates back to the repressions initiated by Zhivkov. In fact, MRF emerged as a consequence of mass demonstrations in 1989 against Zhivkov's anti-Turkish policies and sentiments in general, and for the reinstatement of their

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[139] Deputy Minister Sylvia Neycheva comments on the elections to be held abroad, Bulgarian National Radio, Horizont, "Before All" Programme, 22 June, 2005, < http://www.mfa.government.bg/index.php?item_id=11325>, last accessed on May 19, 2007

[140] "Turkish Voting Rights Come Under Attack in Bulgaria", *South East Europe Online*, February 8, 2007, < http://www.southeasteurope.org/subpage.php?sub_site=2&id=17500&head=hl&site=3>, last accessed on May 19, 2007

[141] For the actual share of votes nationwide, refer to Table 3

[142] For the list of the MPs refer to the official website of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria, < http://www.parliament.bg/?page=ns&lng=en&nsid=5&action=show&gid=141>, last accessed on May 19, 2007

names in particular. MRF's sole goal was to redress those. In that regard the MRF is similar to other ethnic parties in the region that surfaced due to the injustice toward ethnic minorities under the communist/socialist regimes. However, unlike other countries in the region, namely those in the Balkans, MRF and the Turkish minority in general were able to avoid ethnic tensions within the country, despite the large numbers of Turks in Bulgaria.

MRF's initial goals included "the restoration of full rights for minorities, including religious freedom for Islam, Turkish language demands, and rights to form cultural associations, as well as redress for injury suffered under the communist rule"[143]. However, in order to avoid being rebuked on constitutional grounds, MRF has declared itself an all-national party that represents all Bulgarian citizens. Furthermore, it claims that its platform embraces "all issues of civil rights in Bulgaria, aiming 'to contribute to the unity of the Bulgarian people and to the full and unequivocal compliance with the rights and freedoms of mankind and of all religious and cultural communities in Bulgaria'"[144]. As the economic hardships faced by the Turks in Bulgaria are persisting, MRF announced the alleviation of the economic problems facing minority populations in Bulgaria as one of its priorities.[145] Unlike the other ethnic parties analyzed in this chapter, MRF has never claimed territorial, cultural, or communal autonomy.

It is frequently argued that MRF in itself is one of the last creations of the Communist secret services in Bulgaria that wanted to contain the Turkish discontent on a rural level. Consequently, a secret organization was created to control the ethnic Turks locally. After the collapse of Communism in Bulgaria, however, this organization was believed to have gotten out of control. In the initial phases of transition, "the existence of MRF was beneficial for

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[143] Millard, page 235.
[144] The official website of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms, < http://www.dps.bg/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis/vis.pl?s=001&p=0368&n=&vis=>, last accessed on December 4, 2006.
[145] Ibid.

Bulgaria"[146]. It helped in mobilizing the ethnic Turks and, at the same time, keeping them under control. Furthermore, since MRF was always against any sort of religious radicalism and fundamentalism, the main players during the Roundtable Negotiations believed that MRF could prevent the fueling of these ideas in the areas populated by ethnic Turks and Bulgarian Muslims. This was useful for MRF, since Ahmed Dogan, the leader of MRF, negotiated a status of a third party for itself during the Roundtable Talks. In the initial phases of the Negotiations Dogan was independent, and only later he started "playing with different coalitions to maximize the benefits for himself and for the party"[147] In fact, this is typical for the CEE region at large, where ethnic parties in Slovakia, Romania, and Macedonia have participated in governing coalitions. Interestingly, in all cases the ethnic parties were not hesitant to ally with both the political left and right.

6.6 Ethnic political parties in a comparative perspective

As was mentioned earlier, ethnic political parties in this chapter will be compared on two grounds: electoral results of the last national elections and their demands and claims. This section will address those. It is the main task of this chapter to depict whether the case of Bulgaria can be considered Europeanized or not. However, one must keep in mind that the concept of Europeanization will be assessed on a 'more-or-less' continuum rather than on an 'either-or' one.

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[146] Personal interview with Dr. Marin Lessenski, Director of Programs of the Institute for Regional and International Studies, conducted in Sofia, on April 13, 2007
[147] Personal interview with Dr. Vassil Garnizov, Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology of the New Bulgarian University, conducted in Sofia, on April 12, 2007

Table 4: Ethnic political parties in a comparative perspective

Areas of comparison	MRF	DAHR	SMK	PDP/DPA	Basques
Previous repressions of the ethnic minority	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Official recognition as an ethnic party	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Party demands	Cooperative/ Modest	Limited regional autonomy	Cultural autonomy	Cooperative / modest	Territorial autonomy
Did they change over time?	no	yes	yes	yes	no
How are the demands pursued?	Peaceful negotiations/ cooperation	Peaceful negotiations / cooperation	Peaceful negotiations / cooperation	cooperation	Occasional violence
Results of last national elections for the ethnic party	12.81 %	6.20 %	11.68 %	7.50 %	Ranging from 0.2 % to 1.6 %
Ever participated in coalition governments?	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
Minority - majority tensions (instances of violence)	Not since Zhivkov	In the 1990s	yes	In the 1990s	yes

A lot of similarities, along with drastic differences, can be drawn from the nature of ethnic relations and politics in the five cases presented in the table above. All the ethnic minorities analyzed in this chapter have witnessed repressions in the past. Some would claim that in the case of the Basques, discrimination still persists. However, dwelling upon this claim is beyond the scope of this thesis. There are minority-majority visible tensions in none of the states analyzed here, but arguably in Spain and Slovakia. However, it seems that majority-minority tensions on daily basis, especially involving violence are no longer the

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order of the day in the region. Only MRF in Bulgaria is not officially recognized as an ethnic political party due to the existing constitutional ban. In no other country in the CEE such a ban is in effect. This makes Bulgaria a unique case study on the region.

Only in Spain and Bulgaria the demands of the ethnic parties did not change over time. Some of the Basque political parties have been demanding territorial autonomy since the Francoist repressions. MRF, on the other hand, has never had radical claims. On the contrary, the rhetoric of the party was always cooperative and accommodating. Throughout the 90s MRF "maintained one political goal, to 'decapsulate' the ethnos and integrate it into the civil society"[148]. This is true for the current claims of MRF as well.

The claims of MRF are relatively unique as well. The closest to it is the demand of the Democratic Party of the Albanians in Macedonia (DPA) since 1998, but the demands of DPA differ from those of MRF in that DPA "demanded that Albanians become a 'constituent' element ('nation'/'nationality') of the Macedonian state"[149]. Nevertheless, the demands of the Albanian political party have not been constant. The predecessor of DPA, the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) boycotted the 1991 independence referendum, the voting of the Constitution, and the 1991 census. The radical wings of the party even went as far as proclaiming the 'Republic of Ilirida'. Initially, when PDP dissolved and DPA was formed on the grounds of the former, DPA "advocated an 'armed revolt'"[150]. This rhetoric was subsequently softened once DPA entered the coalition government after the 1998 general elections. Since then the party started demonstrating an increasingly cooperative rhetoric.[151] In the initial phases of transition, demands for autonomy were dominant in the party's

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[148] Koinova, Maria, "Three Outcomes of Ethnic Conflict: The Cases of Bulgaria, Macedonia and Yugoslavia: 1989-1990", European University Institute, Florence, Italy, Paper for delivery at Third Annual Students Workshop of the Socrates Kokkalis, Program on Southeastern and East-Central Europe, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 8-11 February, 2001, < http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/kokkalis/GSW3/Maria_Koinova.pdf>, last accessed on May 20, 2007.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.

platform; these demands became even further radicalized for a period of time (proclamation of the Republic of Ilirida), and then a gradual softening could be witnessed.

In fact, similar softening of rhetoric can be observed in the cases of DAHR and SMK. After the collapse of Ceausescu's regime, DAHR voiced demands for territorial autonomy. However, in 1993 these demands softened and only claims for communal autonomy could be heard. In the meantime, the hard-line rhetoric of Iliescu prompted DAHR to radicalize the claims. As long as Iliescu was against granting Hungarians collective rights, DAHR pushed for territorial autonomy in the areas where Hungarians constitute a majority. As was mentioned earlier, in 1996 moderates came to power, and amendments to the education and language laws were made. In return, DAHR abandoned claims for territorial autonomy and voiced its preference for an increased limited regional autonomy. Since then the official rhetoric of DAHR is very much inclined towards cooperation with the government.[152] The case of DAHR is rather unique for the region, since it is the only ethnic political party in CEE whose rhetoric was marked by several shifts rather than a gradual change. In case of Slovakia, SMK was demanding territorial autonomy in the period from Meciar to Dzurinda. Once SMK got assurances from the government and was able to participate in coalition governments, the rhetoric gradually softened and claims for cultural autonomy could be heard.[153]

In all the cases, but in Spain, the ethnic political parties were and still are pursuing their demands through peaceful negotiations and cooperation. Consequently, DAHR, SMK, DPA, and MRF participated in coalition governments, while the Basque parties were never part of the main actors' game. This could be also attributed to the fact that the Basque parties are very fragmented, and the central government does not have one force to negotiate with.

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[152] Andreescu, Gabriel, *Ruleta: Romani si Maghiari: 1990-2000*, Ed. Polirom, Iasi, 2001; the online version of the book in Romanian can be found on < http://www.edrc.ro/docs/docs/ruleta.pdf>, last accessed on May 20, 2007
[153] Jenne, 2007

Moreover, all these parties have very different demands, ranging from modest claims for cooperation and increased cultural rights to very radical calls for territorial autonomy and armed revolts. Therefore, the results of the last national elections do not come as a surprise – the different Basque political parties got from 0.2 to 1.6 % of the national vote. At the same time, the Basque region in Spain is the only one from the cases presented here that is granted regional autonomy. Consequently, these political parties in the Basque Country battle for regional and local elections, thus creating a fragmented political scene, which weakens them on the national level.

The situation with the other ethnic parties is completely different. The electoral results for the ethnic parties roughly constitute the same percentage as the ethnic group in Bulgaria (the difference for 3 % is attributed to the fact that Bulgarian Muslims are a loyal electorate for MRF), Romania, and Slovakia. In Macedonia, Albanians constitute 25 % of the total population[154], but the DPA received only 7.5 % in the last national elections. One of the reasons for it could be that the turnout during the elections was almost 56 %, and for the moment of this research no data was available on the ethnicity of non-voters. Furthermore, it is important to mention that there is not data provided on the non-registered non-voters, which is to be considered as another reason for the gap between the actual size of the community and turnout and support for the particular ethnic party. Overall, the case of Bulgaria is more unique than not when it comes to ethnic politics, presenting a complex research puzzle. It is neither fully Europeanized, nor is it 'Eastern'.

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[154] CIA – The World Factbook – Macedonia, < https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mk.html>, last accessed on May 20, 2007

7. Extremism

7.1 The terms and the grounds for comparison

For a successful evaluation of the level of Europeanization of Bulgarian party politics, it is of utmost importance to analyze the existence, the rhetoric and the strength of extremist political parties and formations. One must clearly define the term before engaging in a debate about it. In this chapter I have adopted the definition proposed by Millard, who argues that "the term 'extremism' itself implies a kind of deviance, an existence beyond the norm"[155]. The norm here refers to the 'mainstream' trends in party politics in Europe as a whole. Consequently, extreme deviations can be observed from both sides of the center-left – center-right continuum. Since this thesis deals with the concept of Europeanization, i.e. Westernization, I will be analyzing the emergence, the rhetoric and the strength of extreme-right political parties. This is done due to the fact that "Western Europe has experienced an unprecedented rise of new extreme 'rightist' parties some of which took off in the 1970s but most of which came into their own in the 1980s and early 1990s"[156].

At the same time, I do acknowledge that in the CEE region most of the political parties that can be described as extreme-rightist do have extreme-leftist or center-leftist economic platforms Examples can be drawn from the platforms of Coalition Attack in Bulgaria, Greater Romania Party, or the League of Polish Families. These parties combine radical right-wing political ideologies with left-wing economic strategies. Arguments can be made whether this is due to the fact that these parties are generally new and unstable, or we are witnessing a new form of extremism, one that draws its dogmas from the ideologies of both sides of the political continuum. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this paper, the economic platforms of parties will not be assessed here. In this chapter the Bulgarian case will be compared to other 'extremist' parties in Europe.

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[155] Millard, page 120
[156] Kitschelt, Herbert, *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis,* The University of Michigan Press, 1995, page 1

Due to the complexity of the issue, there is no one single definition of criteria for right-wing extremism. As Von Beyme has observed,

> though formal definitions or derivations based on the history of ideas largely failed to provide a convincing concept for 'right-wing extremism', research work on political parties of the right has not had serious problems in selecting appropriate cases.[157]

The list of definitions suggested to describe right-wing extremism is enormous. Hartmann et al., for example, use the term to describe all "progress-hostile forces"[158]. A more specific and widely accepted definition comes from Macridis, who describes right-wing extremism as an "ideology [that] revolves around the same old staples: racism, xenophobia, and nationalism"[159]. I will follow this definition throughout the chapter. Moreover, in this chapter the terms 'extremism' and 'radicalism' will be used interchangeably. Although aware of the different connotations of the two, it goes beyond the scope of this chapter to refer to them specifically.[160]

In this chapter the radical right-wing political parties and formations will be compared on the grounds of their strength. Two main indicators will be used: the electoral results in the last three national elections, and whether the party has entered coalition governments. The latter indicator will be just given a 'yes or no' answer in a comparative table. The results of the national elections will be inserted into a comparative table as well. It is important to keep in mind that in the case of Bulgaria, only the last parliamentary elections will be analyzed, since the radical Coalition Attack has emerged only two months prior to them.[161] I do

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[157] Von Beyme, K., "Right-wing Extremism in Post-war Europe", *West European Politics*, 11:2, 1988, pages 1-18, page 3

[158] Hartmann, U., H. P. Steffen and S. Steffen, *Rechtsextremismus bei Jugendlichen. Anregungen, der wachsender Gefahr entgegenzuwirken,* Munich, Kösel, 1985, page 9

[159] Macridis, R. C., *Contemporary Political Ideologies: Movements and Regimes*, Glennview, Scott, Foresman and Company, 4th edition, 1989, page 231

[160] For a specific explanation of the differences refer to Mudde, Cas, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*, Manchester University Press, 2000

[161] The League of Polish Families appeared only in 2001, therefore, only the last two national elections will be analyzed in the case of Poland

acknowledge though that there is a number of other extremist political parties and formations in Bulgaria;[162] however none of those are 'electorally' relevant.

7.2 Extremism in Bulgaria: The Coalition Attack

Before giving any comparative overview of the strength of the right-wing extremist political parties across Europe, it is necessary to discuss the right-wing radicalism in Bulgaria. The recent history of extremist ideology in Bulgaria dates back to the Communist period, when Zhivkov initiated the 'national revival' process, under which the ethnic minorities have suffered discrimination and repressions. Certainly, the discriminatory measures were aimed first and foremost against the Turkish ethnic minority – the largest ethnic minority in Bulgaria. After the collapse of Zhivkov's regime, no extremist political party was present on the political arena, and the mainstream actors had agreed on a model of ethnic tolerance to be built in the society. As a consequence of this consensus, MRF was given the status of a third party during the Roundtable Negotiations. Nevertheless, the extremism-free and tolerant political arena was ruptured in 2005.

The last parliamentary elections came as a shock to most of the analysts and officials both in Bulgaria and on a European level. "One surprise from the election was the breakthrough of an anti-establishment formation in the face of Coalition Attack which gained a high level of support and effectively positioned itself as the fourth largest parliamentary group in the 40th National Assembly"[163]. None of the existing political formations were ready to enter into a coalition with it. Coalition Attack appeared two months prior to the general elections and immediately started a fierce campaign for votes. The program presented by the party "was in opposition to every political consensus that has been agreed over the years:

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162 See for instance Ivanov, Christo and Margarita Ilieva, "Bulgaria", in *Racist Extremism in Central and Eastern Europe*, edited by Cas Mudde, Routledge, 2005
163 Savkova, page 1.

participation in the Iraq war, EU accession agreements, the sale of land to foreigners to name but a few"[164]. Interestingly, it did not have a well-organized, structured and financed campaign, unlike the other political parties and formations. Initially, none of the major political actors perceived the threat of the electoral success of Attack as viable. Therefore, the electoral campaigns of the mainstream parties were not ready to respond to the emergence of Attack. The only reactions that Attack had received from the major players were the labels of xenophobia, racism, and anti-integrationist formation. However, after the last parliamentary elections, Attack "started organizing itself as a party with a strong apparatus"[165].

Since Attack got 8.14 % of the popular vote,[166] the main players started modifying their rhetoric to calm their voters down. Despite the efforts of the main actors to lower the popularity of the newly emerged extremist party, the leader of Attack, Sidorov, made it to the run off of the presidential elections in 2006, creating a public outcry and an outrage among the ethnic minorities, especially the Turks and the Roma. Furthermore, in the first European Parliamentary elections in May 2007, Coalition Attack got 14.22 % of the national vote.[167] As was mentioned earlier, the main task of this chapter is to compare the strength of Coalition Attack to that of radical right-wing parties in both Western Europe and the CEE region. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to analyze the possible reasons for the emergence of right-wing radicalism in a seemingly non-radical society.

In Bulgaria, as in the other CEE countries, right-wing extremism is a post-Communist phenomenon. Although emerging at a much later stage, extremism in Bulgaria has very similar reasons for its appearance with other CEE states. First and foremost, the hardships of economic reality faced by the majority of the population set a fertile soil for radicalism.

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[164] Savkova, page 6.
[165] Personal interview with Dr. Vassil Garnizov
[166] Central Elections Committee, <http://www.2005izbori.org/results/index.html>, last accessed on May 19, 2007
[167] "Bulgaria's Central Electoral Commission Announces Final MEP Vote Results", Novinite.com Sofia News Agency, May 23, 2007, <http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=81022>, last accessed on May 23, 2007

People who become desperate due to their poverty and hardships tend to go for radical solutions. As Paskalev pointed out, "the unsolved socio-economic problems in Bulgaria" breed extremism.[168] Furthermore, the not so obvious from a first glance tension between the Bulgarian majority and the Turkish ethnic minority also provides the radical groups with a leverage. Taking into account that in some areas heavily populated by the ethnic Turkish minority the knowledge of Turkish language is a must to get by, some Bulgarians get frustrated. Moreover, a number of Bulgarians have suffered from crimes performed by representatives of the Roma minority, thus reinforcing the long-existing stereotypes.[169] This leads to a general frustration, which results in the electoral success of a political party like Coalition Attack.[170] Another possible reason for the success of radicalism in Bulgaria, as outlined by Garabedyan, is the lack of state ideology. "When there was communism, there was a communist ideology. Now there is an ideological vacuum, and thus extremism emerges"[171]. Also, one must take into account that the majority of the Bulgarian citizens have lived under the Communist regime,[172] where they were socialized into having a state ideology that would provide the daily guidelines. Once the new Bulgarian government no longer was able to provide one unified ideology for the people, this vacuum emerged.

Consequently, one is left puzzled with the question: who votes for Coalition Attack in Bulgaria? The frequently heard answer is 'the losers of transition'. All the MPs interviewed in the research process, except for the representative of the Coalition Attack, have agreed with it. Other categories of people were added as well. However, the definition of 'transition losers' is so vague that virtually everyone who is not in power or who does not belong to the

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[168] Personal interview with Dr. Kostadin Paskalev, member of Parliamentary Group Coalition for Bulgaria, Deputy Chairperson of Local Self-Government, Regional Policy and Urban Development Committee, Member of Budget and Finance Committee, conducted in Sofia, on April 13, 2007
[169] Personal interview with Dr. Stanimir Ilchev, spokesman NMSS, conducted in Sofia, on April 14, 2007
[170] Personal interview with Dr. Stanimir Ilchev and Dr. Anastasia Moser
[171] Personal interview with Dr. Agop Garabedyan
[172] To check the age structure of the Bulgarian population, refer to CIA – The World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bu.html#People>, last accessed on May 23, 2007

wealthy few can fall into this category. Also, if one categorizes the 'losers of transition' based on self-perceptions, then approximately 50 % of the Bulgarian population claimed to have lost something during the transition years.[173] However, Garnizov claimed that labeling all the voters of Attack as losers of transition is deeply misleading. Results of a large population study have revealed that there is a high correlation between the feelings of 'losers' and voting for radical political formations, but these results are not as high as it was expected.[174] So who votes radical? The results of a social survey have outlined that these voters are usually of the median age; they declare themselves as angry and radical, but cannot and do not do anything to change the current status quo; their radicalism is expressed only during the elections. This is not the most frustrated strata in the society that is ready to take up the streets, because the most frustrated citizens do not vote at all.[175]

In addition to those who have 'lost something during the transition period', Attack attracts those who fear Bulgaria's loss of sovereignty in the EU.[176] As was mentioned in the previous chapters the general public in Bulgaria is not aware of the costs and benefits of the membership in the Union, and the government does not provide answers to the legitimate fears of the unknown. Kazak points out that Attack derives its support also from the formerly privileged strata of the society that is disappointed in the performance of the current mainstream political parties and was voting for the Socialists before. He further avers that the youngsters, due to their psychological vulnerability to radical ideas, are easily influenced by the Attack's discourse. These are the unemployed youngsters in the urban areas, whereas in

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[173] Personal interview with Dr. Vassil Garnizov
[174] Garnizov, Vassil, "The Minority of Intolerance and the Radical Change", *Politiki.bg*, Issue 12/06, Open Society Institute, Sofia, < http://politiki.bg/?cy=60&lang=2&a0i=222832&a0m=readInternal&a0p_id=167>, last accessed on May 20, 2007
[175] Ibid.
[176] Personal interview with Dr. Ivan Kolchakov, Member of Parliamentary Group of the United Democratic Forces, DP, National Alliance-BAPU, BAPU, St. George's Day Movement, Equal Social Model Movement, Member of Labor and Social Policy Committee, Member of Health Care Committee, conducted in Sofia, on April 14, 2007

the rural areas, where the level of frustration is much higher both among the youngsters and the older generations, Attack gets a higher share of the vote.[177]

When Coalition Attack appeared on the political arena, it broke all the societal taboos. There was a consensus among the main players since the Roundtable Negotiations not to touch upon the questions of minorities, change of identity in the 1985-89 period; not to attack the ideas of constitutional order and the constitution; not to question the viability of the path towards the EU and NATO, market economy, party pluralism, and privatization. In 2005 Coalition Attack broke this consensus. And a large number of people felt that these sensitive issues are to be addressed. Consequently, they voted for what they saw as an alternative solution.[178] Since no one touched upon these sensitive issues, once Coalition Attack put them all together in a platform and offered it to people, their popularity increased drastically. This package was very market-oriented – it included issues that concern the average Bulgarian but are not addressed by the mainstream political parties. Taking all this into account, it is surprising that Coalition Attack did not get a higher share of votes in the last national elections in 2005.

7.3 Pan-European comparative perspective

Right-wing extremism is described to be equally strong in both Western Europe and CEE. Merkl stated that the extreme right in Europe is "stronger than ever"[179]. Due to the process of erosion of traditional political forces, radicalism finds itself hastily entering the mainstream political life. Betz argues that

> it is hardly a coincidence that the recent upsurge of right-wing radicalism in advanced capitalist democracies has occurred at a time of enormous turmoil and profound

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[177] Personal interview with Dr. Tchetin Kazak
[178] Personal interview with Dr. Vassil Garnizov
[179] Merkl, Peter H., "Stronger than Ever", in *Right-Wing Extremism in the Twenty-first Century*, edited by Peter H. Merkl and Leonard Weinberg, Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, page 24

> change affecting virtually all aspects of individuals' lives.
> In this situation, radical right-wing parties and movements
> propose themselves as alternatives to the traditional forces,
> filling a void created by the erosion and collapse of the
> established structures. In recent years, these developments
> have been primarily associated with globalization and
> 'postmodernization'.[180]

The same is true for the CEE region, where not only there is an ideological vacuum, but the traditional political parties have disappointed their electorates to a large extent.[181] As a consequence, parties that offer radical solutions and voice their opposition to the existing structures become very successful.

7.3.1 Romania

"The most consistent, effective and threatening form of extremism in Romania was and remains *ultranationalism*".[182] The Greater Romania Party (PRM) is a clear example of it. The strength of PRM and its leader, Vadim Tudor, resulted in him participating in the run off of the presidential elections in 2000 with a convincing 33 % of the general vote, and scoring third in the last presidential elections in 2004. PRM received 23 % of the popular vote in the parliamentary elections in 2000. Their success somehow dropped when in the last national elections PRM received 13.2 % of the general vote. This, of course, is a very high share for a party that promotes intolerance and uses hate-speech. It is important to note that Vadim Tudor, as the majority of the leaders of radical parties, has a very charismatic personality. This helps a great deal in consolidating support for their rhetoric and promoting their values. The personality of the leader plays a big role in the politics of radical groups. This holds true throughout the CEE region and Europe at large.

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[180] Betz, Hans-Georg, "The Growing Threat of the Radical Right", in *Right-Wing Extremism in the Twenty-first Century*, edited by Peter H. Merkl and Leonard Weinberg, Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, page 85
[181] Personal interview with Dr. Agop Garabedyan
[182] Andreescu, Gabriel, *Right-Wing Extremism in Romania*, Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, page 29

7.3.2 Poland

In Poland radical political parties and formations have been strong historically. The extremist right-wing League of Polish Families (LPR) is currently in the coalition government with the Law and Justice Party, alongside with the extreme left-wing and populist Self-Defense (SO). Both parties were relatively successful in the last parliamentary elections receiving 8 % and 11.4 % respectively. The LPR is "nationalist, Catholic fundamentalist, anti-Semitic, and anti-Western"[183]. An important similarity can be drawn with the Coalition Attack – LPR appeared only eight months before the 2001 parliamentary elections, and received 8.3 % of the popular vote.[184] While in the last three presidential elections, no extreme-right wing candidate had electoral success, Lepper, the leader of SO came as victorious third in the 2005 presidential elections with 15.1 % of the popular vote. At the same time, the leaders of both LPR and SO currently hold ministerial positions, while not denouncing hate-speech and intolerance.

7.3.3 Slovakia

In Slovakia, the Slovak National Party (SNS) is "based on hatred of Hungarians, Jews, and other groups"[185]. Nevertheless, SNS is in a coalition government with a center-left party Smer. As a result of this coalition, Smer got suspended from its membership in the Party of European Socialists in 2006. In the last parliamentary elections in 2006, SNS won 11.6 % of the popular vote. The success of SNS, as is the case with many other right-wing radical parties, is largely attributed to its leader, Jan Slota. Slota openly incites anti-Hungarian sentiments, and claims that the Hungarian minority is oppressing the Slovak

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[183] "Political Extremism and Interethnic Relations in the New Millennium", Princeton Project on Ethnic Relations, Budapest, Hungary, February 15-16, 2002, page 9
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid., page 8

majority on their own land.[186] At the same time, a recent social poll reported that Slota is the second most trusted politician in Slovakia.[187]

7.3.4 France

The most successful far-right nationalist party in France is National Front (FN) with its leader Jean-Marie Le Pen who has been in power within the party hierarchy since its establishment. Le Pen's personality is a major factor in FN's success. In 2002 presidential elections Le Pen made it to the run off and got 17.8 % of the general vote, which "produced the greatest surprise in the nearly fifty-year history of the French Fifth Republic"[188]. In the last presidential elections his support has slightly declined to 10.44 %. It is noteworthy that in the last three parliamentary elections FN got 12.4 %, 14.9 %, and 11.3 % of the general vote respectively. FN has a xenophobic, anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic, and sometimes even anti-establishment rhetoric. Several members of FN have been condemned for racist acts and imprisoned. FN has never been in a coalition government.

7.3.5 Austria

Prior to seceding from the party in 2005, Jorg Haider's Freedom Party (FPO) was one of the most controversial political formations in Europe. The party's success was largely being attributed to the charismatic personality of Haider. Both the party's platforms and Haider's speeches were termed xenophobic and anti-immigrant. However, the general frustrations of the population with unchanging governing coalition led to FPO's success in 1999 (26.9 %). It entered the governing coalition in 2000, which resulted in diplomatic

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[186] From an interview of Jan Slota to Lidové Noviny, on July 22, 2006; excerpt taken from "Ethnically-Motivated Attacks Increase Against Minorities in the Wake of New Slovak Government Formed with Extremist Party", Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, September 5, 2006, <http://www.hhrf.org/sdoc/euw.slovakia.no1.pdf>, last accessed on May 24, 2007

[187] Ibid.

[188] Kesselman, Mark, "France", in *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, edited by Mark Kesselman, Joel Krieger, and William A. Joseph, third edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004, page 90.

sanctions being imposed on Austria by fourteen EU member-states. In the subsequent parliamentary elections FPO got 10 % and 11 % respectively. FPO was weakened in 2005 due to internal strife and Haider's creation of the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZO).

7.3.6 Other cases

Due to the limitations of this paper, I will not analyze other extreme right-wing parties in the region. Nevertheless, some examples would be useful. The unprecedented success of extremists in Norway came as a surprise. "Carl Hagen's Norwegian Progress Party (FrP) topped the opinion poll ratings in 2002 with over 30 per cent of popular support"[189]. Its popularity increased after the 2005 elections, which led to FrP becoming the second largest party in Norway. Furthermore, traditionally 'peaceful' Britain witnessed the highest votes cast for the far-right racist British National Party (BNP) in 2001 on the local level. In Oldham West and Roytom BNP's candidates won 11 per cent of the vote.[190] However, on a national level BNP is not as successful as its continental counterparts. In Italy Alleanza Nazionale (AN) entered a coalition government twice - in 1994 and in 2001. Arguably, the only country in Europe that has been immune to right-wing radicalism so far is Portugal.[191] Nevertheless, taking into account the recent upsurge of radical right-wing political parties, none of the analysts are ready to claim that this will last for long.

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[189] Eatwell, Roger, "Introduction: the new extreme right challenge", in *Western Democracies and the New Extreme Right Challenge*, edited by Roger Eatwell and Cas Mudde, Routledge, 2004, page 1.

[190] Krieger, Joel, "Britain", in *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, edited by Mark Kesselman, Joel Krieger, and William A. Joseph, third edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004, page 64.

[191] "Political Extremism and Interethnic Relations in the New Millennium", Princeton Project on Ethnic Relations, Budapest, Hungary, February 15-16, 2002

7.3.7 Comparative assessment of right-wing radical parties in Europe

Although some analysts claim that the extreme right in Europe is in demise. Eatwell, while not diminishing the importance and the repercussions of extreme right-wing politics, stresses that support for the far-right

> has often been volatile: the populist List Pim Fortuyn's support slumped from 17 per cent of the vote in 2002 to a third of this in the 2003 Dutch elections, while support for Jörg Haider's Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) fell in 2002 to just over half its record 27 per cent achieved in the 1999 elections[192].

According to Gyarmati, on the other hand, "there is a general trend in Europe which is the re-emergence of the extreme right, as various radical elements look for solution outside the system"[193]. In any case, dismissing the importance of the rise of the extreme right as a wave of protest would be inapt, since traditional partisanship is generally in decline all over Western Europe and has never been stable in the CEE region. These 'lost' voters find their interests better represented by the extreme right and their often very charismatic leaders.

In terms of the participation of the far-right in coalition governments, Bulgaria stands unique with FN of France and FrP of Norway. In all other cases analyzed in this chapter the extreme right-wing political parties have entered into coalition governments at one point during their history of existence. France, Italy, and Poland demonstrate relative stability in the vote share of the far-right. While increase can be observed in Norway and Slovakia; decrease in electoral support is noticeable in Austria and Romania.[194] Therefore, one cannot generalize about different trends in electoral support for the far-right in Western European and CEE states.

Various arguments can be made about the nature of the differences between right-wing extremism in Western Europe and in CEE. However, its essence is the same. All the

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[192] Eatwell, page 1
[193] "The World; Hungary's Odd Affairs with the Right", interview with Istvan Gyarmati, senior vice-president of the East-West Institute, former Hungarian Deputy Defense Minister, *New York Times*, May 12, 2002
[194] The electoral results of the last three national elections are presented in Table 5

far-right parties analyzed in this chapter display xenophobic and racist rhetoric. None of them show desire for accommodation or assimilation. And even when entering coalition governments, none soften their hatred-full language. Another noteworthy similarity is the importance of personalities, namely the party leaders, in these parties. In essence all extreme right-wing parties in Europe are similar with distinct country-specific features.

At the same time, their differences should not be disregarded. The most important of those is the fact that in Western Europe the xenophobic rhetoric is directed against the immigrants, who are regarded as "universal irritants"[195] that use the merits of social welfare systems in the established democracies of Western Europe. This is typical "welfare chauvinism"[196]. The multicultural models of the protection of historical minorities are never questioned by the far-right in Western Europe, with a debatable exception of Haider in Austria.[197] Examples can be drawn from South Tirol in Italy, the Danish minority in Germany, and the Swedish minority in Finland. One could argue that these models do not hold in France, but there the government does not even recognize the existence of national and ethnic minorities. Otherwise, no mainstream or extreme political formations advocate cutting those rights for historical minorities. On the other hand, in the CEE region the far-right directs its xenophobic rhetoric against the historical minorities as the cause of all ills of the society. Bulgaria, in this sense, is a true representative of its region, since the Turkish and the Roma minorities are considered to be historical. In this regards Bulgaria is not yet 'Europeanized'.

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[195] Merkl, page 27
[196] Ibid.
[197] "Political Extremism and Interethnic Relations in the New Millennium", Princeton Project on Ethnic Relations, Budapest, Hungary, February 15-16, 2002

Table 5: Electoral results of right					wing extreme parties across Europe in the last three national elections, and their participation in coalition governments at any point in the history of their existence			
	FN	FPO	AN	FrP	LPR	PRM	SNS	Attack
Electoral results	13.8	26.9	15.7	15.3	-	4.46	9.07	-
	14.95	10.0	12.0	14.6	8.3	19.48	3.3	-
	11.3	11.0	12.3	22.1	8.0	13.0	11.73	8.14
Coalition governments	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no

8. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis is to depict the level of Europeanization of the Bulgarian party politics. It was done by analyzing separately five different variables, using both qualitative and quantitative data, which would draw a broader picture of the level of Europeanization of party politics in Bulgaria. These variables are:

1. the nature of the electoral system itself,

2. voter turnouts in national parliamentary elections,

3. party-based Euroscepticism,

4. the nature of ethnic politics,

5. the existence of 'extreme trends' in party politics.

The situation in Bulgaria with regards to each of the above-mentioned variables was compared to that of Western Europe on the one hand and CEE on the other. The basic research question of this thesis is if the Bulgarian party system and politics does fall into the 'Western', i.e. Europeanized camp or not. Since there is no definite answer to whether the Bulgarian case can be considered fully 'Europeanized' or not, I have rather chosen to depict the answer to the research question on a 'more-or-less' continuum. In-built functions of the SPSS program, as well as discourse analysis of party platforms, and personal interviews, in addition to literature reviews on each of the variables, were used to proceed with the analysis.

Prior to analyzing each of the above-mentioned variables, the legal framework, in which the party politics is conducted, was examined. This analysis has revealed that the recent amendments to the legal provisions pertaining to the political parties and elections brought Bulgaria closer to the established democracies of the West and distanced it from the region of CEE. A further research into the topic could possibly concentrate on the reasons behind these amendments. Arguments can be made that they were passed out of necessity to alter the eroding structures, which were considered to be the legacy of the Communist past of the country, and following the 'role model' of the established Western democracies. The

process of amendments came in stages, each of which brought the legal system of Bulgaria a step closer to the 'role models' of Western Europe.

An examination of each of the variables chosen to analyze the level of Europeanization of Bulgarian party system and politics has revealed that overall the case of Bulgaria is very unique. It is neither fully 'Europeanized', nor is it typically 'Eastern'. Only in the case of the nature of the electoral systems, it was argued that Bulgaria became a member of the Western 'family' since the adoption of the PR system after the first national elections. With regards to the other four variables, namely, voter turnouts in the national parliamentary elections, party-based Euroscepticism, the nature of the ethnic politics, and the existence of 'extreme' trends in party politics, Bulgaria was assessed on a 'more-or-less' continuum. Furthermore, in all of these four variables, one could notice that the various aspects of each of them show different trends in terms of their level of Europeanization, with some demonstrating typically 'Western', while others truly 'Eastern' perspectives, yet others demonstrating a mixture of the two.

Voter turnout in Bulgaria on average in percentages is in decline, similar to the majority of the CEE states. This could be observed in Western European countries as well. However, contrary to what most researchers claim, the decline in Western Europe was shown not to be significant. At the same time, the countries of the CEE region (Bulgaria included) have demonstrated a much sharper decline starting from 1989, but the course of the decline was gradual. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the extremely high turnouts in the first elections after 1989 were at least partly due to the fact that these were the first free and fair elections in countries that have experienced one-party rule and pseudo-elections for decades. Overall, if one is to assess the level of Europeanization of voter turnout patterns in Bulgaria, one would argue that they are more 'Eastern' than not.

In terms of voter registration procedures (state- vs. citizen-initiated) and Election Day (weekend vs. weekday) Bulgaria is completely Europeanized. At the same time, there are no special voting procedures (proxy, advanced, and postal voting, and/or mobile voting stations) in the country, which is very atypical for Europe as a whole. Overall, in terms of technicalities and factors affecting voter turnouts, namely voter registration and special voting procedures, the Election Day, and the existence of a law for time off for employees without loss of pay to vote, Bulgaria can be classified as a more Europeanized state than its geographical neighbors.

Bulgaria is a unique case study in terms of party-based Euroscepticism. No Western European trends were identified while analyzing it. Moreover, there are no political parties on the arena that have a profound Eurosceptic outlook, since this would entail a 'political suicide'. Unlike most of the other CEE states, where the presence of Eurosceptic political parties is strongly felt, only Coalition Attack could be considered somehow Eurosceptic. It wanted to renegotiate only some of the chapters of the *acquis communautaire*, but it was never against the membership in the Union or against integration and closer cooperation as a whole. Moreover, the Bulgarian public was always considered one of the most Euroenthusiastic nations across the continent.

In terms of ethnic politics Bulgaria displays very unique features despite many similarities with Western Europe and CEE. In the chapter on ethnic politics I have empirically demonstrated that the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) is an ethnic formation despite the existing constitutional ban on the formation of political parties based on religion, ethnicity, race, or other similar factors. In fact, one of the features that make Bulgaria unique is the existence of this very prohibition. Another unique feature of the Bulgarian ethnic model is the fact that the MRF has never claimed territorial, cultural, or communal autonomy, unlike the other ethnic parties examined in the chapter. Just like the

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other cases analyzed, except for Spain, the ethnic minority is represented by one political party. All of those had initially surfaced to combat the injustices faced by their respective ethnic groups under the previous regimes. Only in Spain and Bulgaria the initial demands of the parties have remained the same. And all of them, with the notable exception of Spain, pursue those in a peaceful manner. The vote share from the national elections of these parties roughly resembles the percentages the ethnic group represents of the total population. The exception is the case of Spain, where due to the high fragmentation of the Basque party system, the votes on the national level get divided. Interestingly, in all cases the ethnic parties do make coalition governments with both center-left and center-right (except for Spain, where the Basque parties were never included in the coalition governments).

In conclusion, the ethnic politics in Bulgaria has a very unique nature, despite the many similarities that were identified. Those include but are not limited to the previous repressions of the ethnic minorities analyzed, which gave leverage for the formation of these ethnic parties during the initial phases of transition; to the techniques used in pursuing the demands of the parties (with a notable exception of Spain); the participation of these parties in coalition governments (with the exception of Spain); and their relative electoral success. At the same time, it is noteworthy that the Bulgarian case is more symptomatic of CEE in general than of Western Europe, thus one could attest that it is less 'Europeanized' than it would be expected to be.

The last variable that was introduced in this thesis was the extremist right-wing rhetoric in party politics. In terms of display of radical attitudes on the political scene Bulgaria does not 'fall behind' any established democracy. However, like in any other CEE country where there is a right-wing radical party, i.e. in all of them, Coalition Attack voices

its xenophobic attitudes against the historical minorities of the country.[198] At the same time, none of the far-right parties in Western Europe, challenge the multicultural models of coexistence with the historical minorities. In these countries, the xenophobic rhetoric is usually directed against the immigrants – a typical display of "welfare chauvinism"[199]. Two exceptions to this rule can be identified. First, Haider's Freedom Party in Austria, which, as some would argue, voiced its extreme rhetoric against the historical Slovene minority. Second, Le Pen's National Front in France, where due to the non-recognition policies of the French state, multicultural models simply do not exist, since no historical minority is recognized as such. Consequently, one can aver that the extremist rhetoric in Bulgaria is typically 'Eastern'.

Due to the limitations on the time frame of this research, I could not address the emergence of a new force on the Bulgarian political arena, namely, the political party of the current major of Sofia, called GERB[200]. However, it would be an interesting area for further research on the topic. The appearance of GERB shook the political reality, and displayed the interesting peculiarities of the Bulgarian case in a new realm. The influence of GERB is increasing. No political analyst can surely claim its orientation – right or left, centrist or extremist. One thing is clear though, GERB attracts not only the voters of the other mainstream actors, but their members as well. This was particularly evident during the elections into the European Parliament, where GERB was victorious. Its vote share placed it even above the ruling Socialist party. It is noteworthy that GERB is not in power now, and never was, which gave a big leverage to the competing parties in terms of the electoral campaigns. Its members are not even represented in the Parliament, since in the last national

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[198] It was previously mentioned that the author acknowledges the co-existence of leftist economic dogmas and far-rightist political ideologies within the same party, especially in CEE. However, for the purposes of this thesis only the political platforms were taken into account.
[199] Merkl, page 27
[200] The abbreviation stands for Grajdane Za Evropeysko Razvitiye na Blgariya (Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria)

elections in 2005 GERB was not formally recognized as a political party. Furthermore, the crushing defeat of all center-right formations during the European elections led to the resignations of prominent members of the right, and their desperate attempts for realignment. Calls can be heard now for a coalition with GERB although prior to the European elections, virtually all the mainstream political parties, with minor exceptions, denounced any possibility of cooperation. They claimed GERB is a populist formation. However, now the politicians are more cautious with their descriptions of GERB's platform, since it is obvious that GERB is there to stay, and that the average people seem to have more trust in GERB than in other established parties on the political arena. A prediction could be made that in the coming national elections in 2009 GERB will get the mandate to form a government, let alone the easily predictable victory in the municipal elections in September 2007.

Furthermore, the coming municipal elections will most probably demonstrate the peak of party-based Euroscepticism in Bulgaria. Perhaps this is too fast for a CEE country, but the average Bulgarian, whose economic standards of living do not rise, can easily observe the situation in the neighboring states. This forces the political parties to alter their already very market-oriented and populist platforms to accommodate the needs of the electorate. Moreover, it can be predicted that the voter turnouts in Bulgaria will either stay on the same low level or plummet down even more. Taking into account that the last national elections witnessed an almost fifty-six percent turnout and the first European elections less than thirty, one could aver that the level of apathy among Bulgarians is on the rise. However, it could be argued that in the rural areas the voter turnout will be on the rise, as well as in the 'mixed' regions, where the MRF has an absolute leverage. At the same time, due to very low turnouts in the cities and towns, the overall result on the national level tends to be lower.

As for the MRF, its existence is not only beneficial for the Bulgarian state, but is also of utmost necessity. MRF plays the role of the 'balancer' between the claims of the Turkish

minority and the Bulgarian majority. It is sort of a mediator that tunes down the minority claims and assures the majority that no further territorial autonomy demands will be voiced. It is a guarantor of ethnic peace and stability and a 'preventor' of the rise of Islamic radicalism. At the same time, due to very negative perceptions in the country about the ethnic minorities, MRF is viewed in a highly skeptical manner. This is certainly exacerbated by the fact that MRF arguably evolved into an oligarchic and corrupt formation.

As was mentioned earlier in the thesis, MRF is the only Turkish party in the country. At the same time, another ethnic formation is awaiting official recognition. But the political landscape reveals that it will not get one in the years to come. Not only MRF, due to its strong position as a coalition partner, does everything possible within its reach to prevent it, but this new formation expresses radical claims, which will not be tolerated by the Bulgarian society.

Not surprisingly, the success of the Coalition Attack, as a radical counterbalancing force to the ethnic voices, is on the rise. Although a direct cause-effect relationship is hard to establish between the two, it seems that the higher the share of MRF during the national elections in a particular electoral district, the more triumphant Attack is.[201] This is for all the districts but those with a numerical ethnic Turkish majority. Furthermore, most analysts have predicted that in the coming municipal elections Attack will be not less successful than in the last national elections or in the first European elections, where it got more than fourteen percent of the total vote. This was certainly exacerbated by the poor performance of the ruling Socialist party, and the inability of the centrist actors to convince the electorate. Another contributing factor to this are the findings of November 2006 social surveys, which

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[201] A comparative table is presented in Appendix 6

attested that fifty percent of Bulgarians find the situation in the country unacceptable and unbearable.[202]

Overall, one cannot claim that Bulgaria is either Europeanized or not. It is a unique case that stands aside in the region of CEE and in Europe as a whole. The dissimilar historical circumstances that led to the formation of the current state of affairs in the party system and politics facilitated the creation of the distinct features of the Bulgarian system. Although the economic conditions were not part of my analysis, it is important to mention, that the economically low standards of living, even in comparison to the rest of the CEE states, exacerbated the complexities of the Bulgarian case. At the same time, the development trends of the current state of affairs in party politics certainly show more 'Europeanized' features than not. To conclude, this work has been done as a part of a bigger comparative project that will aim at identifying transformation patterns in the new member-states. It was also intending to fill in the gap currently present in the academic literature concerning the specific features of the Europeanization of party politics.

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[202] Garnizov, Vassil, "The Minority of Intolerance and the Radical Change", *Politiki.bg*, Issue 12/06, Open Society Institute, Sofia, < http://politiki.bg/?cy=60&lang=2&a0i=222832&a0m=readInternal&a0p_id=167>, last accessed on May 20, 2007

Appendix 1

Interview Summaries

Agop Garabedyan

Director
Institute of Balkan Studies
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Main Points

- All parties had **extreme** people at one point during the transition, but for the first time an extreme party emerged that has combined all these extreme/radical ideas

- Reasons for their emergence → socio-economic factors, nostalgia for the economically stable past, historical memories of stained history (MRF)

- **MRF** as a party has access to power. All positions on the local level in provinces are occupied by ethnic Turks. Bulgarians are only in the cities

- The public opinion is negative

- Same can be said about the Roma (they are economically vulnerable, therefore, there is increase in crime rates, thus, public intolerance)

- **Coalition Attack** is not against the system as a whole. This is not political extremism, but ethnic, and also there is an element of protest

- Coalition Attack makes its programs on this basis

- Since all the niches are occupied they have to use this one (ethnic)

- There was communism, and there was communist ideology. Now there is a vacuum, and therefore, nationalism emerges

- In all of Eastern Europe there are similar processes

- If a state has a minority, and this minority wants emancipation, the majority perceives it as a threat

- All Eastern European states have minorities and none of the legislations stipulate the rights of minorities (borders between human rights and desire for autonomy)

- On the contrary, in Western Europe laws resulted from mechanisms, which were intact in specific countries.

- In CEE, the laws are not the outcome of local developments, but are imported

- The existence of ethnic political parties is a result of a political compromise

- Bulgaria always had a tolerant society, and never xenophobic (sort of unique for the region)

- Amended model of ethnic tolerance

- Now it is not xenophobia, but a product of ethnic political and socio-political circumstances

- In the coming European elections, Coalition Attack is predicted to participate weakly

- Support for Attack plummeted because the Coalition split (this is what creates complications for them). People are not disappointed with their ideology, but with the people that present this ideology on the political arena

- If **Gerb** manages to get new people to present these ideas, the voters that are dissatisfied with the people presenting the ideas of Attack will swing to vote for Gerb

- Every party has its hard loyal electorate, but the majority of the voters are undecided. This is the reason for the sweeping victory of NMSS previously

- Since Gerb does not have open nationalistic tendencies and discourse, EU is more receptive toward it

- The existence and activities of MRF, Attack, ad Gerb are closely interconnected

- **Euroscepticism** is not in Bulgaria yet. It is still in the process of development

- Bulgarians hope EU will fix Bulgaria, and look at it as at some sort of panacea. No one says no to the EU as a whole

- However, Euroscepticism in Bulgaria could potentially become a strong force

- **Geopolitics** is very important here. Greece and Turkey are on the borders. And since Turkey is right on the border, the political parties feel more secure being in the EU, thus Eurooptimists. Romania does not have the same geostrategic problem

- Euroscepticism in Montenegro → those who voted against the referendum are Eurosceptic because they think separation is made artificially by outside actors for Montenegro to enter the EU against Serbia

- Euroscepticism in Albania → Eurosceptic because the EU will not give a leeway to the mafia (check if there is Euroscepticism in these countries, because he mentioned the potential reasons)

- In the beginning of the transformation period in the region, the right was strong. But now this is not the case anymore

- All over the region, we can witness the re-emergence of the socialists and the centrists, except in Czech Republic

- The reasons for this are purely economic and to some extent nostalgic (hardly anyone remembers the lack of basic freedoms, but everyone remembers the economic security and stability)

- Support for the socialists in the last elections in Bulgaria → pensioners (mainly), those of 40-50 years of age who still remember the past, and those that did not find themselves in the post-communist society. These people constitute an important minority. At the same time, a lot of votes were derived from those that were dissatisfied with the previous two governments (the UDF and the NMSS) → protest votes

- Same happened with the protest votes during the previous general elections (people dissatisfied with the UDF government and still remembering the failure of the BSP government before that voted for NMSS). The element of protest votes is quite visible in Bulgaria. *Can we say they constituted a majority in the last general elections when BSP won?*

- All of this is a result of the economic situation

- In terms of legislature, Europeanization is over, but … there is still the problem of monitoring

Anastasia Moser

Vice Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of Bulgarian National Coalition
Member of Foreign Affairs Committee

Main Points

- Bulgaria is an island of political and, so far, economic stability

- **Coalition Attack** → populist demagogues; claim to be nationalistic (this is not patriotism, because patriots accept the others); sounds like old-fashioned nationalism under the Communists; they are isolationists who do not want anyone to step onto Bulgarian soil

- Attack reminds us of bad times. They constantly set one part of the society against another

- Now their rhetoric has calmed down a bit

- Their attitudes bring conflicts rather than solutions

- This type of political formations are present in the Netherlands, France, Romania, Russia, and others

- Now no one talks about Zhirinovsky, for example

- But they are not strong enough to threaten democracy

- Attack is extreme-left

- They try to be more Bulgarian than Bulgarians

- The Turkish minority was given more power that they deserve numerically and they take full advantage of it

- There is hardly any ministry in Bulgaria that does not have at least a deputy minister who is an ethnic Turk

- The government needed their party to have a majority

- This resulted in the discontent of the ethnic Bulgarians. Consequently, Attack has appeared

- **Gerb** is not an extremist party. It has a personal appeal, looks like Borisov is able to do things → this appeals to people

- We will see him as a major and then judge. However, the government wants to discredit him and does everything not to let him be a successful major

- Currently, the **center-right** is in a disarray

- Borisov is trying to consolidate it

- His rhetoric is different from that of Attack → he has never talked against the minorities, he has support in all segments of the society

- Bulgaria is a peaceful ethnic ethnically tolerant society

- Bulgaria is an island of ethnic stability and peace in the Balkans

- **MRF** tried to get non-Turks into its lists because of Article 11

- A lot of ethnic Bulgarians sympathized with them after Zhivkov's policies and, consequently, they got the third party status during the Roundtable talks. But things have changed

- Berov's regime paved way for the socialists, which did not last long

- MRF works for Dogan and his entourage rather than his people

- Now they are trying to be for the people, but high illiteracy rates still persist among ethnic Turks, they speak no Bulgarian (and if one wants to make it in Bulgaria, s/he should learn the language of the country)

- MRF has a stable electorate

- A lot of people do not understand what EU is. They believe Bulgaria will have to give up its sovereignty, which is not the case (because EU is a positive thing, there is a lot of money. And it promotes democracy since all its member-states are to be democratic). Furthermore, neither this, nor the previous government succeeded in explaining it to people.

- Attack played on it and got votes, but it is not as popular now as it used to be

- **Center-right** is very fragmented. There are no signs of consolidation. But **Gerb** is a hopeful sign

- **Agrarians** are in a partnership with Gerb

- Agrarians will always play a role: deep roots (and thus every party tried to destroy the Agrarian party), Bulgaria traditionally is an agrarian country

- Agrarians → centrist party with strong social agenda, and Europe is talking about social market economy

- Agrarians are split. There was another split recently. Some of them are not even registered. Some exist only on paper

- Cannot be together → every other political coalition wants an agrarian party with them (Stoyanov wants one because Agrarians have structures all over the country; Kostov, BSP and others as well)

- Dogan is a faithful and loyal ally

- The tripartite coalition functions by blackmailing each other

- **Small political parties** are insignificant poppet parties. They switch agendas. Principles are no longer important, what matters is the interests

- **BSP** has a solid support. No matter how disappointed people are, they sill vote for them

- **Agrarians** in the EU want financial help for the people

- It was forbidden to subsidize agriculture (financial board), unlike other European countries. Bulgaria falls behind all countries in Europe. Ecological agriculture is a possibility

- We will modernize the agricultural sector and farmers will understand what modern agriculture is

- Learning how to get a hold of the EU money to modernize Bulgaria → main challenge

- Other challenges for Bulgaria include but are not limited to judicial reforms (to handle organized crime) and corruption

- Bulgaria's role in the Balkans is important because it is an island of stability

- Bulgaria's official position on Turkey's accession → if Turkey satisfies all the provisions of the *acquis*, it should join the EU

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Ivan Atanasov Kolchakov

Member of Parliamentary Group of the United Democratic Forces, DP, National Alliance-BAPU, BAPU, St. George's Day Movement, Equal Social Model Movement
Member of Labor and Social Policy Committee
Member of Health Care Committee

Main Points

- The phenomenon of extremism has historical roots

- Eastern Europe was historically more dynamic and thus people are more tolerant. There is a ground for tolerance. But at the same time, there is economic emigration, and thus extremism

- In Bulgaria in the new democratic times, extremism is not that big of a problem, but we should not hide from it like ostriches

- We need to develop special receptors to handle that problem

- It is normal that a party like Attack exists

- But some of its declarations are not acceptable for us

- Bulgaria is a bouquet of ethnicities. Having this amazing tradition, it is particularly painful to witness this disease

- Attack does not have that big of a support in terms of percentages

- The electorate of Attack is composed of angry people who are disappointed in the period of transition, who thought that Bulgaria in general and them in particular have lost a lot during these 17 years, they are the most unsatisfied

- They do not choose rationally but based on negative emotions

- However, there are the ones who choose rationally. They base their choice on the fact that Bulgaria was entering the EU at the time, and they thought Bulgaria would loose its sovereignty and that Bulgarians should preserve themselves

- The average educational level of Attack electorate is higher than that of BSP.

- The electorate of Attack is not only the losers of transition, as many believe. Their electorate is a mix

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- Bulgaria is still in transition. We are still accommodating our values, creating moral values and legal frameworks

- Existence of a party that relies primarily on an ethnic vote is not normal, but MRF itself did not come into existence normally

- During Communism the secret services created the MRF

- Dogan himself was a secret service officer and the old regime had pragmatically trained him. The same can be witnessed in Russia, except Russia is too big of a country, while in Bulgaria this leads to problems

- The influence of former secret service can still be strongly felt. They have created the MRF, the BSP. They have helped the king (NMSS) and wanted to interfere with UDF

- For a country to pass through the period of transition into a full liberal democracy it goes through circles or stages → similar to the Biblical notion of the move from hell to heaven

- BCP changed its essence overnight

- The right is a mix because BCP wanted to create a convenient opposition, and because the people in the right political arena are free thinkers

- The right has the following principles: subsidiarity, liberalism, democracy

- This is a hard period for the right

- In 1997 out of 240 MPs 125 were from the right political forces. The right has initiated the negotiations with the EU and NATO

- But it is known that after governance, the governing political force looses the trust of the people. This is a normal sequence of events

- Now we are accumulating trust again. When in opposition, we need to give people options and choices

- There were waves of expectation after the UDF government: NMSS (did not justify hopes), Attack (not successful), Gerb (optimistic expectations; still do not know what will happen)

- Gerb and Attack are similar in relation to MRF and the Turkish minority. Both say Bulgaria is enslaved by the Turks. Both are very aggressive towards the MRF

- UDF does not welcome the existence of MRF, but is not aggressive to it. The politics and policies of MRF on the one hand, and the Turkish minority on the other, are two different things. And we must acknowledge it

Kostadin Paskalev

Member of Parliamentary Group Coalition for Bulgaria
Deputy Chairperson of Local Self-Government, Regional Policy and Urban Development
Committee
Member of Budget and Finance Committee

Main Points

- Europeanization in Bulgaria is slow because we have entered the EU relatively late

- People did not understand what the EU was all about, while the politicians did. They did not explain to the people, however, what the economic benefits of membership are. People thought their lives will get transformed overnight. But none of their expectations have happened yet

- This is a good environment for extremism. There are different reasons for it and different direction of it: nationalistic, unsolved social issues have also created an environment for people to play on extreme feelings, MRF's participation in government (not because Turks are in the government but because of MRF, their strength, methods as an ethnic rather than political force), wrong politics on the Roma issue which led to negative impressions and perceptions. All these created an environment for people to play on extreme feelings. These points are also the philosophy of Attack

- In 1990 when MRF wanted to register as a party, it was denied that right based on Article 11 of the Constitution of Bulgaria. Later it succeeded. But the registration of MRF as a political party is a purely political decision. It is bad for Bulgaria and dangerous for Europe

- There is no connection between Attack and MRF. It is the unsolved social problems, as well as the national ones. Pure governmental and governance problems that have been postponed for years are a reason as well.

- All formations in Bulgarian politics are the same. In this sense, Borissov can be the united right, or the left with equal success

- Gerb is very different from Attack

- Gerb flirts with the US, forms a European image

- Borissov himself is just an image. There are no deep ideas underlying him

- He does not give solutions, just talks about particular issues and has no broader vision

- If he is the alternative for the rightist government than we can make a funeral for the right political force on the Bulgarian political arena

- Only Kostov's party is a serious rightist party. The rest are separate parties. The political right in Bulgaria was never so weak

- Generally, Bulgarians are more left-oriented than centrist as people

- This is typical of all Balkan people. They all talk based on nationalistic sentiments and social benefits

- All political parties are BSP outcomes. BSP itself is a BCP outcome

- If one analyzes the MRF MPs from 1990, 99% of them were linked to the secret services

- It was thought that MRF would help the Communist government to control and contain the Turks

- As a consequence of the Roundtable negotiations, the Turkish ethnos was given to the MRF with 200,000 votes

- Dogan is a good politician and was prepared well by the secret service

- He has extended his influence over the Roma minority as well

- He includes ethnic Bulgarians in his party lists in an emphatic manner regardless of who they are

- Predictions can be made that ¼ of all European MPs from Bulgaria will go to his party. I'd wish ½ to him, so that politicians from Bulgaria can be visible

- Challenges in the EU → the national and local administration, the economic subjects and the NGOs in Bulgaria must have a united vision and must work together

- In terms of foreign policy, Bulgaria has two main issues: the EU and working out trade relationships with other countries

Marin Lessenski

Director of Programs
Institute for Regional and International Studies

Main Points

- **Extremist trends** in Bulgarian politics emerged before the last general elections

- However, extreme nationalism dates back to early 90s → backlash to liberalization → committees to defend national interests → left-wing extremism (BSP was nationalistic in the beginning of the transformation period)

- Afterwards, until 2004 there was no extreme nationalism, when **Coalition Attack** emerged

- Its electorate is from both left and right

- It presented itself as an anti-establishment party → alternative; hence, such support

- The main support is derived from the 'losers of transition', those who perceive European integration as a threat, the profile of the electorate → smaller towns, economically disadvantaged

- Similarities can be found in Poland

- Interestingly, in the European Parliament Coalition Attack is on their own (very close to the Austrian, Flemish, and French nationalists, but the rhetoric of Coalition Attack is much closer and similar to Russian ultra-nationalists)

- Their rhetoric is anti-Turkish, anti-Jewish, and against Turkey

- The anti-Jewish rhetoric is very uncommon for Bulgaria; it is mainly derived from Russia anti-Semitic websites

- Recently, Coalition Attack lost a lot of its support → those that voted for them because of their anti-corruption discourse were disappointed

- Coalition Attack is just noise

- Currently, **Gerb** is the second political force

- Mainly, has the support of center-right voters because the center-right of the Bulgarian political arena has practically disappeared

- Borisov is a moderate/mild nationalist → against MRF, but pro-EU and pro-NATO, at the same time, believes Bulgaria should not play back (is against the closure of Kozlodouy) → this is what people like

- His rhetoric is not against ethnic Turks *per se*, but against the existence of MRF as a party, which is not only unconstitutional, but also extremely corrupt

- People like the fact that he is a moderate/mild nationalist

- **MRF** is in Liberal International

- MRF has a lot of members on their lists that are not ethnically Turkish, which helps them in presenting themselves as constitutionally legal

- MRF takes all the Turkish votes

- It has excellent connections with the Turkish government, which helps them mobilize the votes

- They play with identity and religious issues

- The existence of MRF was initially beneficial for Bulgaria

- Comparing it to other European countries: completely different from former Yugoslavia (because there different nationalisms were battling each other, while in Bulgaria it was the other way round → transformed the conflict into political); the Bulgarian case is not unique; similarities can be drawn with Macedonia (after 2001 the Albanian Freedom Fighters became part of the status quo → armed conflict transformed into a political one); same can be said about Bosnia; Northern Ireland can be characterized along the same lines (inclusion of a terrorist organization IRA into the political process) → better to have them turned into status quo

- Bulgaria has no radicalism like that → once Coalition Attack was included into the political process it became less harmless

- **Coalition Attack** is not that strong. They have a good organization, but lost a lot of support very easily → they will continue having representation but not that strong anymore

- Coalition Attack is no longer extremist → currently no extremism (right or left) on the political arena

- **Gerb** might play with Euroscepticism, because it became politically fashionable

- Gerb's support will increase, while Attack's support will decrease

- Bulgaria has a different (from the rest of Eastern Europe) type of political culture, not lack of such; therefore, no public disorders could take place

- **BSP** is a phenomenon that combines the big business and the poor

- **Gerb**'s support is derived from the urban and middle classes

- According to opinion polls across the country prior to the European elections, 1.BSP, 2. Gerb, 3. MRF (will have the Turkish votes, but will lose some because of the new electoral law), 4. Coalition Attack, 5. NMSS (takes center-right voters, urban and middle classes, but the support is very much declining), 6. UDF, 7. DSB (similar to Christian Democrats, most probably will not even get any seats)

- **Small parties** → a lot of them were established by the bigger parties to dwell votes from different segments of the population, they sell political power, it is part of the political bargaining process

- The example of **Euroroma** → were created by BSP to get the center-right votes, but in the last moment they gave their support/votes to MRF → Bony and Azis had a concert mainly for the Roma, but it got cancelled in the last moment, suddenly, Dogan appeared in the stadium with a helicopter and delivered a speech

- **UFD** → involved in floating coalitions

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- **Gerb** → will be socialized and Europeanized in the EU. The West looks at it as a promising alternative to center-right; Gerb has a good cooperation with the European Peoples' Party; BOrisov got some members from other parties who would potentially be good European administrators; European Peoples' Party likes that and promised to support Gerb; Gerb started from a charismatic leader, then entered the pan-European political scene and thus gained legitimacy

Stanimir Ilchev

Spokesman NMSS

Main Points

- Unlike the situation in Russia in the beginning of the transition period, Bulgaria had witnessed a mixture of traditional and new approaches and ideas. Bulgaria restored the old traditional political parties (Social Democratic Party, Radical Party, Conservative Party and others) → classical components of transition

- A new force was formed → UDF → a cocktail of a lot of ideas and approaches united by the idea of anticommunism

- Having this new, but in fact old, restored political parties under the umbrella of UDF, created a bipolar political environment (BSP vs. UDF)

- Now it is hard to say if that was the best option for Bulgaria, but it was unavoidable

- There was a struggle all throughout the transition period between the red and the blue camps until 2001

- The two camps witnessed a lot of turmoil within them; a lot of events diminished the two as well. This led to the appearance of NMSS

- Simeon came back from Spain, delivered a declaration, which was to serve as the party platform as well. The declaration appealed to the society with the new manner to solve the problems of the society. Simeon declared his intention to replace the battle persisting on the political arena with a dialogue and a consensual model

- This impressed Bulgarians, which led to the victory of NMSS in the national elections

- The change was accepted positively by a very large segment of the society

- NMSS destroyed the status quo of the bipolar political model

- NMSS came to play the role of the center, the translator between the two camps, the sort of moderator. And it achieved success

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- For the first time in the Bulgarian history after the collapse of Zhivkov's regime, the Bulgarian people were given a chance to identify themselves not as left or right, but as centrists. And a lot of people were happy to say that they are centrists, liberal democrats

- NMSS is a party of reformers, which is not focused on a battle

- When NMSS came to power, it had two main priorities on its agenda in terms of foreign policy: full membership in NATO and complying with the chapter of the acquis for the future EU membership

- MRF is a moderate ethnic and liberal political party. 'Ethnic' implies that its electorate primarily comes from the ethnic Turkish minority, which roughly constitutes 10% of the Bulgarian citizens, and the Bulgarian Muslims, which amount to roughly 2%, as well as the members of the Roma community who have adopted Islam as their religion

- In 2001 the union between NMSS and MRF was nothing but natural

- MRF was registered as a political party with the permission of and interpretation by the Constitutional Court of Bulgaria

- MRF itself does not want to be accepted and perceived as an ethnic political party, but as a national party, that plays the role of the balancer in the society. And they are right in that regard

- MRF's contribution to ethnic peace in Bulgaria is very big. During the bipolar period, it used to balance the political scene relatively well

- The problem is not whether MRF is an ethnic party or not. The real question is whether Bulgaria profited from the existence of a party like MRF. And the answer is very clear: Bulgaria did not only profit from the creation of MRF, but it was lucky as well. The existence and the activities of the MRF prevented the radicalization among the Bulgarian Muslims and prevented the creation of other ethnic and religious political parties. This could have led to a

competition among them, which in turn would have led to a situation that is present in modern day Macedonia, for instance

- MRF as a party is getting more and more Bulgarians into its ranks, which is not typical for such parties in the region, e.g. Kosovo and Macedonia. This facilitates the dialogue

- Coalition Attack is an artificial creation, and not a natural outcome

- There is a lack of confidence between Bulgarian and Turks in some regions. Some Turkish ministers are being criticized for not serving national interests. Turks are thought to want to extend their sphere of influence beyond the Turkish regions. It was true on a small scale → this was the fuel for Coalition Attack to emerge

- There was a nationalistic niche on the political arena

- Attack was born from a private TV channel (SKAT)

- It does not have a well shaped ideology → a cocktail of everything one can ever imagine

- In fact, Attack is against everybody but their actual voters, who are not satisfied with anything

- Attack exploits the feelings of these people

- Their feelings are to some extent understandable. They have heard the Turkish language somewhere in Bulgaria, where it was supposed to be talked in Bulgarian; them or their relatives have suffered from a theft performed by a representative of the Roma minority; they may have lost their advantageous position during the communists. These people vote for Attack

- Attack is dangerous because Turks and Roma are not foreigners in Bulgaria. They have been participating in building a new Bulgaria

- Attack is giving simple solutions (Bulgaria for Bulgarians) to complicated and delicate problems (inter-ethnic relations)

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- Attack reached the peak of its success during the last presidential elections. It has no more solid position. An erosion of Attack has started

- There are some small similarities between Attack and Gerb, especially when it comes to their leaders: both prefer to play the role of the strong man, the macho, the person who suffers the most because of the poor; both employ the tactic of self-victimization to appeal to the people; both use the us vs. they rhetoric ('them' includes the government, the parliament, and for Attack the foreign enemies as well)

- Similarities can be observed in their behavior as well

- At the same time, there are a lot of differences: Attack is very critical of the EU, Gerb believes that EU is a good prospect for the future of Bulgaria; Gerb wants to join the European Peoples' Party, while Attack is a member of Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty, which is a political group in the European Parliament that is described as extremely nationalistic and far-right. The members of ITS include Le Pen's National Front, Haider's Freedom Party, and others. This is a very serious difference between Gerb and Attack, because a lot of parties would make an alliance with Gerb but not with Attack

- Attack will remain isolated, but interesting and extremely nationalistic in the next parliament

- It has a very vague and confused platform

- The political problems in the right first appeared when the first battles appeared between the strong and bright people → Stoyanov, Kostov, Sokolov, Mikhaylova, and others

- Instead of creating a new quality government, these bright people split

- They did not find strength in themselves to overcome the differences, and the UDF did not have a control over the resources in the country → these are the reasons for their split

- They had no economic base

- It is hard to predict how long will the right stay fragmented: maybe a year or two, maybe for much longer, or maybe Gerb will unite them under one umbrella

- Some regrouping can already be witnessed under the umbrella of Gerb: Moser, Abadjiyev, Mladenov

- The results of the first European elections will be the first solid illustration of who is who in the rights

- It could turn out being a drama

- Small parties → some are artificial created from outside to sustain the feeling of pluralism, while in fact they supported the big parties. The Greens, the Agrarian Unionists (there are a lot of them), and others try to be in the center of events. They are very flexible especially before the elections. They try to get a share of power. Sometimes they have experts and it is a pity that these people are off the board of governance. A lot of these professionals will leave these parties. This process has already started

Stanislav Stanilov

Member of Parliament from the Coalition Attack
Vice Chairman of the Permanent Parliamentary Commission for Culture
Member of Education and Science Committee

Main Points

- The political processes in Bulgaria develop differently from other European countries

- After Videnov → disastrous

- Under Kostov the government started negotiating with WB and IMF and agreeing on all the deals they offered, also his government agreed on all the terms proposed by the EU, his privatization has ruined the local industry, thus Euroscepticism emerged in the country, which was wrong, because problems started. This led to the victory of NMSS

- No one ever asked Bulgarians if they want to be in the EU or NATO

- The resentment was so strong that Coalition Attack has emerged (a coalition of five parties)

- The **Coalition Attack** derives its support from the intelligentsia that is left with no future, no perspectives for development

- Reasons for its popularity: destruction of industry and agriculture, confrontation with the Turks and the Roma, the military is almost non-existent

- Coalition Attack is neither left nor right

- Some think we are anti-Semites, but this is not the case. During his youth Sidorov wrote an anti-Semitic book. That was it.

- Coalition Attack is not very close to the European nationalists. Parallels can be drawn with Le Pen, Haider

- In the EU we must protect our interests that were never protected during the accession negotiations. We are not against the EU

- In Bulgaria there is no left or right: all the political parties are to be considered liberal-consumptionists

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- **MRF** is built on the ideas of Bulgarian secret services. At the time they thought that creating an ethnic Turkish party will help concentrating Turkish discontent, which would help the secret services in controlling them

- But they got out of control

- They behave as if they are representing the Turkish national interests in Bulgaria

- In a while we might as well have them wanting autonomy. Then we might as well use the Bosnian model

- Very high birth rates among the Turks. Now they constitute almost 10 % of the entire population

- What Zhivkov was doing (vozroditel'niy process) is a late attempt to solve the national question

- The predecessor of MRF was a secret organization, and Dogan was the head of it

- We will have an ethnic problem in Bulgaria as long as MRF exists. We should have Turkish representation but not an ethnic party. Moreover, they have become an oligarchic political formation

- **Gerb** → trumped-up story/fabrication. The biography of Borisov is mysterious and shadowy. The king found him and made him a career Gerb's support is derived from those who want power (former NMSS and the right)

- Gerb will survive for a short while

- European elections will be a test for them → only the true supporters will vote for them, because generally the turnout is very low and only the very loyal ones go to vote

- The only point where the voters might overlap with Attack is the anti-corruption stance of both parties

- In the European Parliament Attack will form a coalition with Le Pen, etc.

- Production quota in agriculture in the EU for Bulgaria is very low + Kozloduy → **challenges**

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- **Role** in the EU → normal Bulgarians (those that are not in power) understand nothing

- Bulgaria is not rich and starting from Videnov there were no innovations

- All parties have the same program → Kostov's creation (neither left, nor right, but liberal)

- Two new political parties will emerge in the coming elections: right and left + Attack + the party of the poor

- The main problem → illegal privatization (sold everything out with prices much lower than the real ones)

- Consolidation on another level will take place

- Russia is not interested in Bulgaria now

Tchetin Kazak

MP, Secretary of the Parliametary Group of the MRF
Observer member of the European Parliament

Main Points

- Unfortunately, after 2005 ultra-nationalist **Attack** came into the political scene in Bulgaria

- Attack is a xenophobic, nationalistic, and populist party

- It plays with the lowest feelings of people because there are problems in the society, and because they try to destroy what we built in seventeen years – a tolerant society, which is to set an example for all of Balkans

- Attack got a rather important percentage of votes in the elections leading to them having 20 MPs in the National Assembly

- After a while, there was a split within the coalition and inside the parties as well

- Coalition Attack reminds of Le Pen's party in France (one more similarity lies in the fact that both Siderov and Le Pen have their relatives as their close entourages – the first person on the party list for European elections is Siderov's son-in-law)

- Attack derives its support from those people in the society that are disappointed in the seventeen years of reforms, the losers, the formerly privileged (for example, former military personnel), those disappointed by the performance of mainstream political parties, those that were voting for the Socialists before, a lot of youngsters because they are easily influenced and they are natural protesters, they have much more support in the provinces, in cities their support is mainly derived from the unemployed youngsters with no ambitions

- We will see in the upcoming European elections what will happen to Attack

- The newly created **Gerb** plays with some type of populist ideas

- It is more flexible and tolerant than Attack, but with some nationalistic ideas

- The expectation is that more intelligent and pragmatic supporters of Attack will switch to Gerb

- Attack will remain with the uneducated

- The first test for Gerb will come in the first upcoming European elections

- Since Gerb's success is largely based on Boyko Borisov's personality, during the European elections we will see if this success will get transformed into the party list

- No one expects Gerb to make a boom in the European elections

- Since Borisov is the major of Sofia, he cumulated some shortcomings and therefore lost a part of his popularity in Sofia, but he is less known in provinces, and thus is more popular

- Bulgarians are not yet **Eurosceptic.** But this trend will grow in the society within several months. And it is the responsibility of the governing coalition to make people feel the benefits of membership

- We have to explain to the people that change is not going to be fast, but the Bulgarian society will benefit on the long run. First years will be difficult. Tangible benefits will not be felt in the first years

- Euroscepticism is a trend in Central and Eastern Europe

- Bulgaria and Romania are still beginners. The starting economic position of Bulgaria was very low. Unlike the other ten Eastern European countries Euroscepticism here is different

- The **model of ethnic tolerance** is being threatened now, but it is sufficiently strong to survive because of the sense of responsibility of the mainstream political actors

- MRF, particularly, will do everything for its survival

- We, the mainstream political actors, must limit the areas of maneuver of parties with ultra-nationalistic discourse and confine them

- Concrete steps to be taken → we must demonstrate for the people that radical solutions are not viable

Vasil Garnizov

Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology
New Bulgarian University

Main Points

- The supporters of **radicalism** in Bulgaria are the 'losers of transition'. However, this is too large of a statement. Not all 'losers of transition' had voted for radical political formations, but a lot of them did

- According to public opinion poll approximately 50 % of citizens of Bulgaria said they have lost something in transition

- The results of poll demonstrate that the level of self-depreciation is very high. At the same time, there is a very low level of trust in political parties. These parties are perceived as non-responsible, corrupt and selfish

- It would be easy to conclude that the 'losers of transition' and those with low trust in political parties would vote for radical political formations. However, this would be too big of a generalization, because firstly, most losers do not vote at all, and secondly, those that vote, vote for traditional mainstream political parties (left or right)

- Although there is a high correlation between the feelings of 'losers' and voting for radical political formations, it is not as high as was expected (results of a large population study)

- Who votes radical? → older than the median age; they declare to be angry and radical, but cannot and do not do anything; their radicalism is expressed only during elections

- There are two generations who lost too much during the transition process → they thought changing the nomenklatura would be enough, but they hoped to get a privileged position in terms of, for instance, consumption; they were socialized through the state, placed in workplace by the state

- When the transition process started, the former right wing reformers did not have enough support to initiate reforms as early as the 80s

- Bulgarian politics is very personal and the perception of politics is very personalizing

- Populist elements were present in Bulgarian politics during the whole process of transition

- The most frustrated citizens do not vote at all

- During the process of transition, a large consensus was built among mainstream political parties → do not touch upon the question of minorities, the question of change of identity in 1985-89, the question of Roma; do not attack the idea of constitutional order and the constitution; do not question the pro-EU and pro-NATO orientation (even for BSP) of te country, market economy, party pluralism, economic restructuring, and privatization

- At the end of 2005, one political party broke the consensus

- **Coalition Attack** became the speaker of all taboos

- If Attack had a bit more time before the elections, they would have had a majority in general elections

- They were unknown, consequently, could not get the message through because the public space has previously supported the consensus

- The results of a population study reveal that had Attack been known to the people in advance, the majority of the eligible voters would have voted to them

- This sounds logical, since no political party touched upon sensitive issues in the society. Suddenly, all these issues were put together in a package and offered for the people. This package is very market-oriented – included only those messages that were widely supported by the people and not offered by the mainstream parties

- It is surprising they did not have better results

- After 2005, Attack started organizing itself as a party with a strong apparatus

- The **political right** is very fragmented. Therefore, many right-oriented voters have supported Attack. They are angry at the right-wing

- It was a protest against transition, an expression of loss, and a vote against the right-wing political parties

- The potential voters of **Gerb** and the real voters of Attack are overlapping

- Borisov is a different type of populist. He is angry and is perceived as such. He is also regarded as being sincere and truthful

- Some think Sidorov is mad, because he speaks the unspeakable. So, people think he should be in parliament but not in power. They cannot imagine him as a ruler

- Borisov is different. He tried to attract experts and people that are not radical

- His function as a major of Sofia let people believe that he has the capacity to rule. He says the truth but never all of it. He is likeable and capable. People believe in his administrative capacity and experience. The same people believe that Sidorov is truthful as well

- Borisov with his biography demonstrated to people that he is like one of them

- Support for Borisov is very personal and now he tries to give it to his party

- Gerb is still not experienced, while Attack has already played in some elections

- Borisov's political apparatus is not well experienced

- Support for Sidorov in the beginning was very heterogeneous; people liked what he said and he is charismatic. If he is not in Attack, Attack as a party will fail completely

- Attack was counterattacked by the government, media, police, etc, but with no results because of Sidorov (he is a showman and the general message was 'attack'. He had a TV show called 'Attack'. All his key messages are anti-allied messages. Started from Jews, then turned anti-American, then broadened his scope and became anti-Turkish, anti-Roma, and all decisions taken with consensus during transition)

- Attack is his: the TV show, the party and the message

- There is a stable combination between the leader and the party

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- BSP, MRF, Kostov, and Attack have good party apparatuses on a local level. NMSS is based on king's personal charisma and has no strong political apparatus. A lot of people voted for him because of sentimental reasons (they remember him as a deprived child in exile during the socialists/communists). Only during the elections he created some organization that has worked as an apparatus

- **MRF** was challenged constitutionally (votes in the constitutional court were even and a decision requires a majority, 5 votes for, 5 against, 1 abstention, and 1 judge was absent). Consequently, one can say the appeal was neither rejected nor approved. The status quo was preserved. It remains an open issue, which was addressed during the last presidential elections

- In the beginning of transition Dogan was perceived as part of the right-wing space. But during the Roundtable negotiations he was not sitting with either the right or the left

- MRF succeeded to negotiate a status of a third party during the Roundtable talks (through BSP)

- Dogan's initial problem was lack of professional human resources. Therefore, in the beginning all his projects failed. He realized the need to invest in human capital, so he asked for support from Turkey, the EU, the US to get the ethnically Turkish youngsters to study abroad (so they can come back later and work for MRF). Unlike ethnic Bulgarians, ethnic Turks that were sent abroad by Dogan returned.

- The region of Kidgjeli is in a demographic disbalance

- Initially, during the Roundtable talks Dogan was independent. Then he started playing with coalitions, then had his own government (1993-1995) with no ethnically Turkish minister → third mandate was given to Dogan who created an expert government with no ethnic Turks in it because he had no experienced staff, and he did not want to disturb public opinion

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- The **king** arrived on April 6, gave a speech and started receiving CVs and lists of people who wanted to work with him. But he did not know Bulgaria. He refused to use other monarchical organizations as a political power base. Simeon did not know his supporters. He knew they did not have political experience, but MRF did, which served as a teacher for NMSS during the first year

- Later, the relationship between Simeon and Dogan has deteriorated

- The current government is created with the mandate from MRF

Appendix 2

Electoral Systems

Table 1: The nature of electoral systems – Western Europe

Andorra	Mixed
Austria	PR
Belgium	PR
Cyprus	PR
Denmark	PR
Finland	PR
France	Single-member absolute majority
Germany	mixed
Greece	PR
Iceland	PR
Ireland	PR
Italy	PR
Liechtenstein	PR
Luxembourg	PR
Malta	PR
Monaco	mixed
Netherlands	PR
Norway	PR
Portugal	PR
San Marino	PR
Spain	PR
Sweden	PR
Switzerland	PR
UK	Single-member plurality

Table 2: The nature of electoral systems – Central and Eastern Europe

Albania	Mixed
Bosnia and Herzegovina	PR
Bulgaria	PR
Croatia	PR
Czech Republic	PR
Estonia	PR
Hungary	Mixed
Latvia	PR
Lithuania	Mixed
Macedonia	Mixed
Poland	PR
Romania	PR
Serbia	PR
Slovakia	PR
Slovenia	PR

Appendix 3

Voter Turnouts

Table 4: Results of the quantitative model constructed for the chapter on Voter Turnouts in National Elections

Independent Variables	B scores	Significance scores
Election Day (weekend or weekday)	5.702	0.069
If it is a weekday, is there time off without loss of pay	7.271	0.009
Is there a law on compulsory voting	4.950	0.209
If so, are there penalties for non-voters	-0.034	0.993
Is voter registration easy	18.866	0.000
Are there special voting procedures	5.365	0.010
How many years have passed from 1989 (a)	-1.376	0.000
How many years have passed from 1989 (b)	-0.153	0.460
Was this the country's first election since independence	2.469	0.552

Appendix 4

Party-based Euroscepticism model by Taggart and Szczerbiak

Taggart and Szczerbiak identified relatively high levels of Euroscepticism among the political elites and political party systems within the CEE region. Consequently, the authors "find it useful … to break down the Euroscepticism manifest in Eastern and Central Europe into 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism" (Taggart, Paul, and Aleks Szczerbiak. "Parties, Positions and Europe: Euroscepticism in the Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Political Studies Association, 10-12 April, 2001, Manchester: 9). They define the two types of Euroscepticism as follows: "Hard Euroscepticism is where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived… Soft Euroscepticism is where there is not a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that 'national interest' is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory" (Taggart, Paul and Aleks Szczerbiak, "The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU Member and Candidate States", SEI Working Paper No 51, Opposing Europe Research Network Working Paper No 6, 2002, page 7). Taggart and Szczerbiak further map out the methods for determining the party's position in either of the two categories. Two methods are proposed for assessing if a party is 'hard' Eurosceptic. "The first is if it is a single issue anti-EU party… The second method is to ask whether the opposition to the EU is framed in language that stresses that it is too capitalist/socialist/neo-liberal/bureaucratic, depending on the ideological position (communist/conservative/socialist/populist), and calls for a fundamental re-casting of the terms on which their country is an EU member that is

incompatible with the present trajectory of the European project" (Ibid.). As for 'soft'
Euroscepticism, the authors propose that it exists in cases "where a party uses the rhetoric of
contestation over the European issue as part of their political repertoire" (Ibid.). It is mainly
related to scepticism about the process of European integration in its current way of
development.

Appendix 5

Party-based Euroscepticism model by Kopecky and Mudde

Kopecky and Mudde have proposed an alternative definition (to that of Taggart and Szczerbiak), which defines Euroscepticism "in relation to other (party) positions on 'Europe'" (Kopecky, Petr and Cas Mudde, "Two Sides of Euroscepticism: Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe", *European Union Politics*, volume 3 (3), 2002, page 297-326, page 300). Kopecky and Mudde stated that they drew "on David Easton's seminal distinction between different forms of support for political regimes" (Easton, David, "A Framework for Political Analysis", Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 124, from Kopecky and Mudde, 300) to differentiate between 'diffuse' and 'specific' support for further European integration. They define 'diffuse' support as the "support for the general *ideas* of European integration that underlie the EU" (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002, page 300) and 'specific' support is the "support for the general practice of European integration; that is, the EU as it is and as it is developing" (Ibid.). Kopecky and Mudde propose that "these are the two dimensions through which support for European integration in general, and skepticism about European integration in particular, can be studied" (Ibid.). The two dimensions are: 1. 'support for the ideas of European integration', 2. 'support for the European Union' (Ibid.). The first dimension gives a distinction between Europhobes and Europhiles, while the second one distinguishes between EU-optimists and EU-pessimists. They state that Europhiles "believe in the key ideas of European integration underlying the EU: institutionalized cooperation on the basis of pooled sovereignty (the political element) and an integrated liberal market economy (the economic element). However, they believe in such ideas regardless of how European integration is defined and realized in detail. The Europhiles can thus include those who see European integration as a project of creating a new supranational state (e.g. federalists), but also those who see European integration exclusively in economic

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terms (e.g. the creation of a free trade zone)" (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002, page 301). The opponents of this view, according to the authors, can be classified as Europhobes. They "do not support (and often even oppose) the general ideas of European integration underlying the EU. They take this position because they may be nationalists, socialists, or isolationists, or simply because they believe the idea of European integration is a folly in the face of the diversity (and 'thus' incompatibility) existing among European states. On the face of it, this may appear only a minority position, certainly in contemporary Europe. For even nationalists will often express some support for the idea of cooperation among European states. However, what matters here is that they fail to support one or more of the ideas underlying European integration" (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002, page 301). The authors subsequently move on to defining the second set of concepts – EU-optimists vs. EU-pessimists. The definition of EU-optimists is taken from Agnes Batory's "Hungarian Party Identities and the Question of European Integration". She states that "EU-optimists believe in the EU as it is and as it is developing, either because they are satisfied with the way it has been set up and is running, or because they are optimistic about the direction of development of the EU" (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002, page 302). However, it is worth mentioning that a disapproving outlook on a particular EU policy does not exclude a specific political party or a movement from the category of EU-optimists. Consequently, those who contest the view of EU-optimists are considered EU-pessimists. Here also, it is important to delineate that not all EU-pessimists object to their country's membership in the EU. The analysis of the two sets of concepts led Kopecky and Mudde into proposing "four ideal-type categories of party positions on Europe" (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002, page 302). To illustrate the typology I will present the figure Kopecky and Mudde used in their article:

		Europhile	Europhobe
Support for EU	EU-optimist	Euroenthusiasts	Europragmatists
	EU-pessimist	Eurosceptics	Eurorejects[1]

Figure: Typology of party positions on Europe (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002, page 303).

They have looked at political parties in Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic as of 2002 and plotted them in the proposed model. The conclusions they came forward with were as follows,

- many parties can be labeled as *Euroenthusiasts,*

- political parties that are classified as *Eurorejects* are politically irrelevant,

- very few political parties are *Europragmatic*,

public support of *Eurosceptic* parties ranges from 28 % to 3% (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002, pages 315-318).

Appendix 6

Vote share of MRF and Ataka by electoral districts in percentages
'-' sign indicates that the party did not pass the 4 % threshold to get a mandate
Districts that are bolded are located in one of the four 'subprovinces' where ethnic Turks are concentrated

Electoral District	Actual vote share of MRF (%)	Mandates taken by MRF (%)	Actual vote share of Ataka (%)	Mandates taken by Ataka (%)
Blagoevgrad	18.51	21.50	4.46	-
Burgas	15.06	16.86	10.90	12.21
Varna	8.66	9.79	8.20	9.27
Veliko Tirnovo	4.56	-	11.37	13.54
Vidin	13.39	-	4.35	-
Vratca	1.29	-	7.25	-
Gabrovo	6.61	-	9.61	-
Dobreech	14.05	17.85	7.75	9.84
Kirdjali	67.32	100	2.36	-
Kyustendil	1.50	-	4.69	-
Lovetch	7.37	-	8.44	-
Montana	4.12	-	5.97	-
Pazardjik	11.91	14.86	7.36	9.18
Pernik	0.42	-	6.43	-
Pleven	7.25	8.24	10.03	11.40
Plovdiv city	7.18	7.70	7.88	8.45
Plovdiv district	9.81	11.09	7.88	8.91
Razgrad	45.97	69.52	6.48	-
Rousse	11.76	13.55	12.28	14.15
Silistra	36.12	54.19	5.58	-
Sleeven	9.99	14.20	9.43	13.41
Smolyan	15.25	24.37	4.14	-
Sofia 23 MIR	0.44	-	8.31	8.93
Sofia 24 MIR	2.35	-	8.87	9.83
Sofia 25 MIR	0.56	-	10.23	11.27
Sofia province	4.25	-	10.46	15.95
Stara Zagora	5.58	-	9.58	11.57
Tirgovishte	37.84	55.95	7.80	-
Khaskovo	16.55	19.94	7.85	9.46
Shoumen	27.48	33.96	10.42	12.88
Yambol	2.88	-	7.17	-
Votes from abroad	53.99	59.09	2.08	-
National results	12.81	14.07	8.14	8.93

Source: Central Elections Committee, <http://www.2005izbori.org/results/index.html>, last accessed on May 19, 2007

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