

Development and Pluralization of the Media of Security Sensitive Ethnic Minority Groups: the Experience of South Eastern European States

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of Political Science
University of Toronto

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Abstract

This thesis is about the media of security sensitive ethnic minority groups in South Eastern Europe. Why some of them enjoy developed media spheres whereas others are media-deprived? Why operating in similarly structured liberal contexts, the media spheres of some minorities develop as pluralist and liberal, whereas those of others as non-pluralist and authoritarian? In search for answers to these questions, this dissertation compares the media of Turks in Bulgaria, Albanians in Macedonia and Hungarians in Romania. It proposes a model of development of pluralist media spheres of security sensitive ethnic minorities, incorporating variables from three levels of analysis (group, state and system), namely, political cohesion of ethnic minority groups, their level of education, status of interethnic relations, media funding mechanisms, external system pressure and grand polity design.

The central thesis of this study is that there is a strong correlation between the structuring of the political and media domains of security sensitive minorities. The outlook of their media spheres

depends on the structure and processes taking place within their political spheres. The chances of development of pluralist minority media strongly increase when the political sphere of given ethnic minority group is characterized by political party pluralism. Politically coherent minority groups (represented in the political domain by a single political party) are less capable of generating pluralist media systems than politically pluralist minorities. The mere situation of minority media institutions within the pluralist context of majority media does not result in automatic liberalization of the former. Pluralization of the political spheres of minority communities is the factor that contributes to the pluralization of their media domains. In short, ethnic minority political pluralism breeds ethnic minority media pluralism and development.

To my mother, father, wife and son

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'The most powerful force for liberalism and democracy is information...Power ultimately depends on assumptions, and assumptions are intimately tied to information.'

William Thorsell, editor, *Globe and Mail*

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. The Puzzle

The Balkan states have long been known as the 'powder keg' of Europe - a label earned for the chronic political instability they demonstrated over the past century. One of the main factors that contributed to this instability is the ethnic rivalry among different communities populating the area. The Balkans are made up of a motley mix of ethnic groups, coexisting within borders that have been redrawn many times by the great powers. A demographic snapshot of a typical Balkan state today will reveal a majority population living alongside a number of smaller ethnic communities, one of which is usually a large minority group, characterized by numerical and political strength as well as proximity to its motherland. Often, the long-term goals of such groups go beyond the mere preservation of their linguistic and cultural heritage, and include proportional representation in the economic and political domains of their adoptive countries, as well as achieving some sort of autonomy, much to the dislike of majority populations. Bearing in mind that such communities have the leverage to impact the stability of their host

polities, local researchers of ethnicity have labeled them “security sensitive minorities.”¹ This thesis is about the media of these communities. It has been driven by the following puzzle.

The 200,000-strong security sensitive Albanian minority in Macedonia enjoys more than 120 locally produced Albanian media outlets that contribute to the well-informed status of the group and integration of Albanians in the public life of this young Balkan democracy. At the same time, nearly 600,000 Turks, living next door in Bulgaria, almost entirely lack media of their own. This makes them one of the biggest information-deprived communities in Europe, reinforces their social capsulation and impedes their integration in Bulgarian society. This discovery made this author wonder: why some minorities develop full-fledged media spheres, resembling in their complexity and diversity mainstream majority media, whereas others largely fail in the same endeavor? In the process of researching on this question, another dimension has been added to the puzzle: although enjoying more than a century-long tradition of development and operating within the liberal media structures of Romania, the media of Transylvanian Hungarians have only recently started to liberalize and pluralize. In a similar vein, the diverse and pluralist Turkish minority media from the beginning of the 20th century reached a point in the late 1990s (ten years after the democratic opening in Bulgaria) when their pluralist stillness and lack of ideological diversity resembled those from the communist era of their development. In contrast, the media of Albanians in Macedonia

¹ Ivan Krastev. Personal communication. Sofia, 20 September 2006. Krastev is Director of the ‘Center for Liberal Strategies’. Ognyan Minchev. Personal communication. Sofia, 26 September, 2007. Minchev is Professor at the Department of Political Science at Sofia University and Director of the ‘Institute for Regional and International Studies’.

continue to amaze researchers with their solid pluralist base and diversity of opinions expressed in them, despite the fact that Albanians have had limited experience in making their own media. Why operating in similarly structured liberal contexts, the media of some minorities develop as pluralist and libertarian, whereas those of others as non-pluralist and authoritarian? These questions form the puzzle of this thesis, which aims to construct a model that explains the dynamics of development and pluralization of the media of security sensitive minority groups in the Balkans. It reveals the strong correlation between the structuring of their political and media domains, and demonstrates that the pluralization of minority media spheres is a function of the pluralization of minority political spheres. In other words, the emergence of free marketplace of ideas and plurality of opinions in minority media is correlated with the emergence of multiple centers of ethnic minority political power.

2. Why Researching Ethnic Minority Media is Important?

Many recent studies have focused on the examination of ethnicity and ethnic minority groups around the world. The rationale for this is that ethnic minorities are a phenomenon existing in almost every polity. There are thousands of different ethnic identities and at the same time less than two hundred states, only small percentage of which are ethnically homogeneous. With the advancement of globalization, ethnic minorities have become permanent features of post-modern societies. Finding ways to preserve and develop their ethnic identity, especially when situated in the competitive

environment of transitional states, has become a hot topic of research. Darbishire (1999) maintains that preservation of ethnic identity strongly depends on the ability of ethnic groups to express themselves in the language, form and medium of expression of their own choice. In a similar vein, Riggins (1994), Jeffres (2000) and Matsaganis (2011) see ethnic minority media as a crucial instrument for the construction and preservation of ethnicity. These media also perform integrative function, as they inform minority agents about the life in their host societies thus enabling them to partake in it. If utilizing the bilingual modality of organization, ethnic media also help acquaint majority populations with the problems and culture of their ethnic neighbours, creating inter-ethnic bridges and opening lines for inter-group communication (Riggins 1992). Brubaker (2006), Browne (1994) and Matsaganis (2011) stress the political mobilization and watchdog roles of ethnic minority media.

These media also play important role in the operation of minority public spheres and civil society structures (Browne 2005). According to contemporary students of public sphere phenomenon, today's national public spheres represent plurality of overlapping and competing publics (including sub-national minority public spheres), built upon pluralist mass media and notions of freedom of speech and freedom of communication (Gitlin 1998). For Habermas (1989), pluralist media institutions constitute the "lungs" of national public spheres as they provide citizens with topics for deliberation and serve as a medium for communication of competing views. Once exposed to diverse media accounts of reality, citizens come together to the imaginary realms of their national public spheres to discuss matters of public concern and form opinions about the functioning of

public institutions and performance of elites. Media help relay back the opinion of citizens to authorities, providing the latter with valuable feedback regarding their performance and informing their future policies, thus assisting in the process of democratic governance. This democratic function of liberal media institutions is even more pronounced with respect to capsulated ethnic minority groups, which often isolate themselves in an attempt to preserve their ethnic distinctiveness. Promotion of minority media enables minority agents to make informed choices and participate more adequately in the public life of their adoptive countries, which is yet another reason for investing into their research.

Despite the importance of ethnic media, however, they have received little attention in the scholarly literature. This research intends to contribute to ethnic media literature by providing insights into the development of the media of some of the largest ethnic minority groups in Europe, namely, Turks in Bulgaria, Albanians in Macedonia and Hungarians in Romania. Its ultimate goal is to advance a model that explains the organization and pluralization of these groups' media spheres. Why some ethnic minorities enjoy developed media whereas others are media-deprived? Why the media spheres of some minority groups are liberal and pluralist whereas those of others are monolithic and authoritarian? What causes the pluralization of the media of ethnic minority groups? What is the role of political elites in their development? These are all intriguing questions that have largely escaped the attention of scholars of ethnicity and media. The present research attempts to address this void.

3. Research Goals and Levels of Analysis

The major goal of this study is to identify the factors that affect the formation of pluralist media spheres of the selected security sensitive minorities in the Balkans.² It aims to identify the variables that influence the development and pluralization of their media institutions, so that the latter evolve into mature media spheres, approximating in their complexity and diversity those of majority populations. The print and electronic media of Bulgarians, Macedonians and Romanians are all characterized by genre diversity, sufficient number and circulation, quality of media content, and most importantly - diversity of opinions expressed in them (that is, media pluralism). What are the conditions, under which the media spheres of the Turkish, Albanian and Hungarian minorities, residing in the above young democratic regimes, can achieve similar development and pluralization? What factors affect the development of the media institutions of these groups so that they evolve into pluralist media spheres that can satisfy the information needs of these capsulated minorities?

The selected case studies provide excellent opportunity to observe temporal and spatial variations in the development stages of the media of the above security sensitive minority groups. Starting from Turks in Bulgaria, who have developed neither media institutions nor a pluralist media sphere; going through Transylvanian Hungarians, who enjoy an elaborate media scene, the pluralization of which, however, was delayed for more than a

² Full-fledged minority media spheres of large minority groups need to be distinguished from the media generated by usually smaller minority communities, which produce limited number of mostly culture-oriented gazettes, with insignificant circulation and amateur quality (i.e. the media of Armenians and Russians in Bulgaria). The latter type of media is not subject of analysis of this study.

decade by the authoritarian discourse maintained by Hungarian media; and, finishing with the developed and pluralist media sphere of Albanians in Macedonia. To provide for cross-country comparisons, the case study chapters of the present dissertation are similarly structured. First, they review and assess the development of the media spheres of the selected minority communities. Second, they study the factors that condition their progress and pluralization. For this purpose independent variables from three different levels of analysis – micro (group), macro (state) and system (supra-national) – have been taken into consideration. Let me elaborate on the necessity to look at all three levels for answers.

To develop any type of media, it is important to establish first favorable conditions for their progress at national level. Authorities in liberal societies have at their disposal few policy instruments that can set up the grounds on which ethnic media can develop. These are adoption of liberal media norms, provision of funding to minority media, and securing access of minority agents to media training programs (Riggins 1992). These instruments secure the normative, financial and expert grounds on which minority media emerge and flourish. Manipulation of these instruments by elites can either increase or decrease the access of minority communities to national media spheres. Once the external conditions for the promotion of ethnic media are set, the responsibility for their initialization and development falls in the hands of ethnic minority groups themselves. Hence, following the examination of national normative and institutional media contexts, there is a need to engage in group-level of analysis in order to explore minority-specific factors that may affect the development of ethnic media. Such factors can be the size of

minority groups, their level of education, previous experience in media production, degree of integration in the mainstream society, etc. This research has discovered that the political organization of minority groups also plays important role in the progress of their media institutions. Finally, this dissertation will examine the role of the European Union (system-level analysis) in the progress of ethnic media in the Balkans. In sum, in order to answer the research questions of this thesis, one has to examine the effect of explanatory variables from three different levels of analysis – group, state, and system. Introduction of these variables and hypotheses pertaining to them, as well as a more detailed presentation of this study's research questions will follow.

4. Research Questions, Variables, Hypotheses and Thesis

The original set of questions and preliminary hypotheses that I planned to examine evolved in the process of researching. The more I studied the topic of ethnic media in the Balkans, the more my assumptions were changing. My starting hypothesis was that the young democratic regimes in the region would offer little support to the development of the media of their security sensitive national minorities because of the ethnicization and mobilization potentials of these media, and the risk to alienate nationalistically oriented electorates. Instead, I hypothesized that majority elites would be more willing to invest in the development of the media of security non-sensitive groups, as those pose no risk to their adoptive countries and catering to their needs can improve the international image of these states. Upon completing the first leg of field

investigations, I was forced to overhaul this hypothesis. Contrary to my expectations, I discovered that the media of Albanians and Hungarians – two security sensitive minorities that voice strong demands for special group rights and territorial autonomy – are among the best-developed ones in the Balkans, enjoying sufficient government funding and institutional support. The developed media spheres of these communities have induced vibrant debates in the public spheres of these groups where the very ideas of special group status and autonomy are discussed. The provision of institutional, financial and expert support to their media by majority elites seemed puzzling and bizarre at the beginning. On the other hand, the media of Turks in Bulgaria – a minority community, which does not threaten the majority establishment and integrity of its host state – have been totally neglected by majority and minority elites alike, resulting in ‘silent’ media of one of the most numerous ethnic minorities in Europe.

This counter-intuitive discovery warranted an overhaul of my preliminary hypothesis and fine-tuning of the original research questions. The new set of questions has centered on the role of political elites in the development of the media of security sensitive minorities in South Eastern Europe. This dissertation will address the following research questions:

1) What factors determine the development of the media spheres of security sensitive minority groups in the Balkans? 2) What factors determine if their media are going to be liberal and pluralist or authoritarian and anti-pluralist? What triggers the pluralization of the media of security sensitive minority groups? The following derivative question will be addressed as well: what is the role of minority political elites in the development and pluralization of the media of their respective communities? Upon adjusting the research

questions, another two legs of field investigations followed. Asking the right questions this time helped me pinpoint the correct independent variables. They will be presented in the next section.

4.1. Independent Variables and Hypotheses

The present research constitutes a qualitative hypothesis-generating study. As such, it intends to demonstrate that the development and pluralization of the media of security sensitive minority groups (that is, establishment of full-fledged pluralist minority media spheres) is a complex process that depends on the effect of independent variables from three different levels of analysis. For simplicity, these variables are grouped into three categories, namely, 1) *minority-level* institutional and resource constraints, 2) *media-level* constraints and 3) *state-* and *supranational-level* constraints. Altogether seven independent variables are suggested to condition the progress of ethnic minority media in the Balkans. A few of them can be singled out as having stronger impact on the dependent variable than others. Hence, the latter assume secondary importance in my analysis.³ Herein, I am going to introduce these variables and related to them hypotheses.

4.1.1. *Minority-level institutional and resource constraints*

a) Upon concluding my research, I have established that the major factor that determines if the media sphere of given security sensitive minority group is going to be pluralist or monolithic is the *structure of political organization* of the group or the degree of its

³ See “Table 5: Main independent variables and their scores” in the Appendix section.

political cohesion. Are the group's grievances channeled in the political domain by a single political broker or by several competing among each other ethnic parties? Is the ethnic minority group's party system monolithic or pluralistic? Does the group have coherent political elite or multiple centers of political power? Is the group's political vote dispersed or coherent? Depending on the circumstances, the political spheres of security sensitive ethnic minorities can be *monolithic (coherent)* - minority party system comprised of just one ethnic party, or *pluralist* - minority party system comprised of at least two ethnic parties that compete between each other for access to political power and resources, and to exert influence upon the decisions taken by the state. I hypothesize that the greater the political coherence of given minority group, the less pluralist its media sphere is going to be. I assume that whenever an ethnic minority community is represented in the political domain by a single ethnic party, one is more likely to observe that the media of this group are non-pluralist, lacking diversity of opinions and critical discourse, and avoiding watchdog style of journalism. Instead, they are more likely to be non-pluralist and maintaining authoritarian discourse. The rationale for this is that politically coherent minorities in the Balkans are featured by capsulated political elites who try to preserve the political coherence of their communities for it is a source of political power. Thus, they use their power and resources to block attempts for minority media liberalization, as they believe that critical reporting and plurality of opinions, circulating in the media and public domains of their communities, may challenge the political unity of these groups and endanger the status quo of elites.

On the other hand, media of minority communities with pluralist party systems (that is, groups represented in the political domain by at least two rival ethnic parties) are likely to be ideologically diverse, critical, rich on opinions, and practicing watchdog journalism. In other words, they are likely to be pluralist. The rationale for this is that put in a situation of intragroup multi-party competition, minority politicians rely on the mobilization powers of minority media to spread their messages across and mobilize political support. Therefore, competing minority elites provide assistance to sympathetic to their parties media outlets, assisting in the diversification of minority media voices and overall pluralization of the media spheres of their respective communities. Independent media outlets appear to balance the politically charged minority media field and to cater to the information needs of non-partisan agents. This is how minority party pluralism caters to the development and pluralization of ethnic minority media.

b) The potency of the *political cohesion* variable for the pluralization and development of the media of security sensitive minorities is further exacerbated when the *inter-ethnic relations* between majority and minority groups have been marred by prolonged rivalry and rise of ethno-nationalist sentiments. In such situations, minority politicians claim that the ‘ethnic’ survival of their communities depends on the unified public voice and political vote of the latter. Thus, minority politicians use their powers to silence critical minority media in order to preserve the political coherence of their groups. This process is exemplified by the experience of Transylvanian Hungarians and Bulgarian Turks. Both communities sustained prolonged attacks from nationalist majority formations, which catalyzed their political homogenization and provided leverage to their elites to silence

critical minority media voices. In addition, ethnic intolerance on behalf of majority populations can directly impede the progress of minority media. For example, Bulgarian nationalist parties and their supporters have staged numerous campaigns over the past decade to restrict the access of Turks to Bulgarian public broadcasters.

c) The average *level of education* of minority communities is another minority-level constraint that has direct effect on the development of minority media institutions. Naturally, the higher the educational standing of given minority group, the more versatile and developed its media sphere is going to be. The rationale behind this is that well-educated communities not only pose greater demand for media products, but also generate cultural and professional elites to run ethnic media. This is exemplified by the experience of Transylvanian Hungarians. At the same time, minority communities that have produced little post-secondary graduates tend to experience difficulties training their own media professionals and cultural elites. Instead, they depend on specialists from the majority group to run their media outlets. The Bulgarian case serves as a good example for this. It shows how the availability of Turkish media cadres and intelligentsia propelled the development of this group's media in the past, and how the closure of Turkish educational institutions and forceful exodus of the Turkish intellectuals in the 1980s has led to complete stall of Turkish minority media.

4.1.2. Media-related constraints

a) Established *media traditions* or *media-related experience* is a media-level constraint, which influences the progress of ethnic media from a non-political angle. Naturally, minority groups with vibrant cultural and professional elites have greater traditions of developing their media institutions. The case of Transylvanian Hungarians shows that previous media experience can help minority communities preserve their media institutions during times of despotic authoritarian regimes like the one established by Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania. When investigating the impact of this variable, however, I stumbled upon an intriguing discovery: minority groups with little media experience (Albanians in Macedonia) can develop in a short period of time elaborate media landscapes that approximate in their complexity mainstream majority media. At the same time, communities with long media traditions (Turks in Bulgaria) cannot even dream of achieving similar media success. The comparative analysis of the three cases will demonstrate that the potency of this variable is overrated, for which reason it will be excluded from the advanced media model, bringing down the number of explanatory variables to six. Previous media experience certainly helps maintain the quality of media production at the necessary level, but it hardly accounts for the initialization of minority media spheres, let alone their diversification and pluralization. Other structural variables are at play here.

b) Availability of *funding* is a prerequisite for the success of any enterprise and minority media are no exception to this rule. Insufficient funding was mentioned by the producers

of minority media in the Balkans as one of the major problems that they encounter in their work. Four major sources of financing, open to minority media producers, have been identified. These are state subsidies, revenues from sales, revenues from advertisement and external funding provided by civil society (NGOs) or supranational organizations (EU). The better-developed minority media in the region (Albanian and Hungarian) sustain themselves through combining revenues from sales, advertisement and external funding. For example, Hungarian media rely mostly on sales and commercial ads. Some influential Hungarian outlets, however, depend on the support of Hungarian political elites who direct public funding to select media outlets in exchange for friendly media coverage. It is also not uncommon for Hungarian politicians (or close to them businesses) to purchase influential Hungarian media outlets and use them as mouthpieces of their parties. The over-saturated media market in Macedonia has rendered Albanian media less dependent on sales and more dependent on revenues from advertisement, where the most profitable ads are provided by the Albanian parties in the government. Finally, minority public broadcasters in all three cases depend exclusively on government appropriations for their operation.

This thesis demonstrates that minority elites recognize and value the informing and mobilizing potentials of minority media, and actively look for ways to establish control over them. The application of Herman and Chomsky's 'Propaganda' model in the analysis of the Albanian and Hungarian media has helped identify the financial instruments that minority elites utilize to achieve control over the media domains of their respective communities. To attract minority media institutions in the orbits of their

political parties, Hungarian and Albanian politicians distribute public funding and offer administrative protection to friendly ethnic media outlets, and use financial and administrative pressure to punish critical ones. In a number of cases, minority politicians purchase influential media that have found themselves in difficult financial situation. Political ownership, distribution of state funding and public tenders to select media are among the financial instruments used by minority elites to establish presence and control in the media spheres of their communities. This dissertation has established that there is a clientelist link between minority media institutions and political elites across the three cases. Political patronage of minority media has resulted in the political dependence of the latter. Despite that, the media spheres of Hungarians and Albanians have preserved their pluralist character. The main factor accounting for the pluralism in the Albanian and Hungarian media is the pluralist architecture of the political spheres of these communities where intragroup political rivalry has resulted in: 1) forming of 'friendly' media circles around competing centers of minority political power, and 2) transferring of the competition from the political to the media domains of these communities. This thesis demonstrates that political pluralism tolerates and breeds media pluralism, whereas political authoritarianism kills media diversity and pluralism. Placement of minority media institutions within liberal majority media structures does not entail liberalization of the former. Pluralization of the political life of minority communities is the key variable that kicks off pluralization of minority media domains. The central thesis of this dissertation is that minority political pluralism breeds minority media pluralism and development.

In the process of investigating on the funding mechanisms of ethnic media in the Balkans, I have discovered that majority elites in the region also offer support (financial and institutional) to the media of security sensitive minorities. For example, public funding is distributed by Romanian authorities to select Hungarian media outlets, whereas Albanian public channels have seen the timing of their programming increase five times over the past decade. It would be premature to assume that the benevolent 'media' treatment of these groups stems from the liberal predisposition of majority elites who strive to protect the media rights of minorities. Unfortunately, this is not the case. This dissertation has identified two structural variables that explain the willingness of majority elites to support the media of security sensitive minorities. These variables serve as an additional boost that indirectly aids the progress of local minority media institutions.

4.1.3. State- and supra-national level constraints

a) The first variable from this level of analysis is dubbed *external system pressure*. It pertains to the political pressure imposed on the Balkan polities by supranational actors to make their authorities improve the treatment of local minority groups (including their access to media) in exchange for financial support or/and granting membership in prestigious international organizations.⁴ The European Union (EU) plays central role in

⁴ This pressure is sometimes referred to as 'political conditionality'. Smith defines the latter as a mechanism that "entails the linking, by a state or international organization, of perceived benefits to another state (such as aid, trade concessions, cooperation agreements, or international organization membership) to the fulfilment of conditions relating to the protection of human rights and the advancement of democratic principles.' In K. Smith, 2001, 37.

this process. Joining the EU has been the ultimate foreign policy goal of the examined here countries. In order to receive membership in this exclusive club, Bulgaria, Romania and Macedonia had to improve rapidly the treatment of their national minorities, as Brussels incorporated protection of minority rights as an important requirement in the political criteria for EU accession.⁵ To meet these criteria, the authorities in Bucharest, Sofia and Skopje ratified in a short period of time a number of key international covenants protecting minority rights. This allowed Bulgaria and Romania to open negotiations for accession and eventually become EU members. For example, the ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by these states was largely seen as an attempt to meet the political criteria for EU accession. The same applies to Macedonia, which is currently in the queue for the next enlargement wave, where “minority policies have been high on the EU accession agenda... [and where] the EU has significantly engaged in the promotion of improved minority protection in the framework of its political criteria for accession.”⁶ The minority covenants ratified by these states were rapidly incorporated into their domestic legislations, ensuring preservation of ethnicity, culture and traditions of their national minorities. For the minority groups researched here, this has resulted in improved access to the media and educational spheres of their adoptive countries, which indirectly benefited the progress of their media institutions.

⁵ To join the EU, a new member state must meet three types of criteria: political, economic and *acquis* (legal and administrative). For the European Council to decide to open membership negotiations, the political criterion must be fulfilled beforehand.

⁶ Simonida Kacarska, “Minority Policies and EU Conditionality - The Case of the Republic of Macedonia,” *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 11, no. 2 (2012): 60-61.

The political elites in the Balkans have been also forced to address the poor economic standing of their national minorities whom the neo-liberal reforms have put in a disadvantaged position. EU funds have been allocated for various integrationist projects, including development of minority media. Dedicated minority councils have sprung throughout the region to propel the integration of minorities and help administer the external funding. My research has revealed, however, that minority elites have used these councils to advance their narrow political agendas, often at the expense of the best interests of their respective communities. The biased performance of national media regulators and politically motivated allocation of state funding to minority media projects have reinforced the clientelist link between minority elites and minority media institutions.

b) The examination of the Macedonian case has introduced another structural variable (pertaining only to this country), which has boosted the progress of Albanian media there. This is the model of democratic governance or *polity structure*. According to Brown's situationalist approach to ethnicity (1989), the model of polity organization informs the multicultural policies of majority elites. After examining the Macedonian case, it has become evident that the commitment of Macedonian elites to the development of Albanian media stems from the consociational arrangements that the EU, NATO and the USA helped brokerage to preserve the ethnic peace and integrity of the Macedonian state. I assume that under normal conditions, majority elites would be unwilling to invest resources into the development of the media of security sensitive minorities because of the ethnicizing and mobilizing powers of these media, and because of the negative

message this will send to the nationalistically oriented majority electorate. Therefore, I hypothesize that majority elites will provide ethnic minority groups with greater access to their national media spheres in order to fulfill their normative obligations under consociational or other international agreements. Although *polity structure* and *external system pressure* are two variables that have only indirect effect on the development of ethnic minority media, they nevertheless remain potent factors, which will find their proper place in my analysis.

In sum, seven independent variables have been identified to condition the development and pluralization of the media of security sensitive minorities in the Balkans. They pertain to all three levels of analysis (micro, state and system) and are grouped into three categories: 1) *Minority-level institutional and resource constraints*: degree of minority political cohesion, status of interethnic relations, and level of minority education; 2) *Media-level constraints*: media traditions and media funding mechanisms; and 3) *State-level constraints*: external system pressure and polity structure. This dissertation will probe the potency of each of these variables for the development of pluralist minority media spheres in the Balkans. My analysis will demonstrate that the political organization (political cohesion) of security sensitive minority groups is the variable with strongest impact on the development of pluralist media spheres of such communities and thus, will be addressed as the key explanatory variable throughout my analysis. As looking only at this variable is not sufficient to explain why in similar institutional contexts the media of some groups develop better than those of others, I will also pay attention to the remaining

independent variables, though they will assume secondary importance in my investigation.

The central thesis of this dissertation is that there is a strong correlation between the structuring of the political and media spheres of security sensitive ethnic minorities in the Balkans. I argue that the media spheres of such communities become pluralist only after their political spheres undergo a process of pluralization. Politically coherent minority groups (i.e. represented in the political domain by a single political party) are less capable of generating pluralist minority media spheres than politically pluralist minorities. The expectation that the mere situation of minority media institutions within the liberal media structures of their adoptive states will result in automatic liberalization of the former is false. The pluralization of the media spheres of security sensitive minorities is a function of the pluralization of their political spheres (that is, pluralization of minority party systems). Once this becomes a reality, circles of friendly media form around competing centers of minority political power. They assist their political friends/patrons in the mobilization of the ethnic electorate, offering competing interpretations of events and creating genuine marketplace of ideas in the media field. Independent minority media outlets emerge to balance the politically charged media field. This is how the media spheres of minority groups become divergent in opinions and interpretations of reality. They become pluralist. The liberal marketplace of ideas, generated by pluralist minority media institutions, stimulates critical deliberation within minority public spheres and aids the integration of minority agents in the public life of their adoptive states. Hence, the structuring of the political spheres of security sensitive minorities is the key explanatory

variable that accounts for the development of full-fledged and pluralist media spheres of such communities. The main thesis of this dissertation is that ethnic minority political pluralism breeds ethnic minority media pluralism and development. Depending on the context, the *political coherence* factor works together with other potent variables (*level of education, availability of funding, status of interethnic relations*) and less potent ones (*external system pressure*) to shape the media spheres of security sensitive minorities.

5. Method and Research Design

The current project constitutes a qualitative hypothesis-generating research, which aims to arrive at causal inferences about the conditions under which the media spheres of security sensitive minorities undergo development and pluralization. In order to address this study's research objectives, I have embarked on a comparative study of the media of three tangible security sensitive minority groups in the Balkans. In the data gathering process, I relied on the method of semi-structured individual interviews, using open-ended questions. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed using the technique of tape analysis – listening selectively for key topics of interest. Then using the method of content analysis, the collected data was categorized into larger themes and categories, allowing this researcher to conduct cross-country comparative analysis. The intensive and time-consuming data collection process associated with this methodology, accounts for the small number of cases.

The research design of the thesis is influenced by the writings of King, Keohane, and Verba (King 1994). Following their recommendations, I have selected explanatory variables that are exogenous and a dependent variable that is endogenous. To escape the trap of selecting observations on a particular value of the dependent variable (development of pluralist media spheres of security sensitive minority groups), I selected the cases in such a way as to make sure that all possible values of the dependent variable are observable. For example, I selected a minority group with a developed pluralist media sphere (Albanians in Macedonia), a minority group with an underdeveloped and non-pluralist media sphere (Turks in Bulgaria), and a minority group with a pluralizing and liberalizing media sphere (Hungarians in Romania). This was done to fulfill one of the main rules in research design, namely, “[case] selection should allow for the possibility of at least some variation of the dependent variable.”⁷

Further, in the assessment of the media spheres of the three groups, I look at the same set of independent variables, namely, *political cohesion* of minorities, their *educational standing*, *status of inter-ethnic relations*, *experience in minority media making*, *availability of funding for minority media production*, *external system pressure* and *grand polity design* (for the case of Macedonia). The cases themselves have been selected on the values of the independent variables, as according to King et al. such selection would cause no inference issues and help avoid the common in comparative research ‘selection bias’ problem.⁸ I will elaborate next on the case study selection process.

⁷ Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing social inquiry scientific inference in qualitative research* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 129.

⁸ Ibid, 137.

Each of the selected security sensitive minority groups has experienced prolonged rivalry with the majority population, solid political representation, sufficient educational credentials for consumption of media, experience in making media, access to divergent funding mechanisms for minority media production, and some support from supranational actors (EU). The values of these variables, however, are not constant - they vary within (temporarily) and across (spatially) the cases, allowing for making causal inferences. For example, the political organization of Transylvanian Hungarians has evolved from one party system (monolithic) to a pluralist party system (pluralist); Turks in Bulgaria have been a non-pluralist political community since the democratic opening in 1989, whereas Macedonian Albanians have enjoyed a pluralist Albanian party system since the beginning of the democratic transition. Hungarians and Turks share in common long media traditions, whereas Albanians have had very limited media experience. The relative level of education of the examined minorities has gone through periods of ups and downs in each of the cases, and it also varies across the cases. The inter-ethnic relations in the three Balkan states have gone through periods of intensified ethnic rivalry, followed by more amicable relations between the majority and minority populations. Finally, pressure from supranational actors (EU) has resulted in betterment of minority rights across the three cases (temporal variation). But if in the case of Macedonia this was achieved through the installment of consensus model of democracy, in the cases of Bulgaria and Romania, boosting of minority rights was accomplished within existing polity structures (spatial variation). Naturally, the dependent variable of this research also shows spatial and temporal variations depending on the changing values of the independent variables. How changes in the values of these variables affect

the progress and pluralization of the media spheres of examined here ethnic minority groups remains to be revealed in the subsequent chapters of this study.

To achieve more parsimonious design and minimize the number of independent variables,⁹ I opted for the Most Similar Systems design and focused my analysis on comparable cases. The cases were selected from a specific geographical-cultural area – the Balkans, which allowed me to control for the following variables across the three states. First, all of the examined here countries are multi-ethnic, post-communist and young democratic regimes that are at similar stages of their institutional development and have similar political cultures. Second, they all pursue the foreign policy goal of integration into the structures of the European Union, which has resulted in adoption of similar institutional mechanisms and norms for protection of minority rights, including in the media sphere. Third, the national media contexts of the three cases are liberal and pluralist. Fourth, the selected states host security sensitive minority groups that exhibit the following similarities: strong sense of ethnic identity, strong political power, minority party/ies capable of aggregating the ethnic vote, low level of integration in mainstream societies, social capsulation, sufficient educational credentials for the consumption of media, reliance on mother tongue for communication purposes. Fifth, the selected groups are all un-ranked minority communities, that is, there is no convergence between social class and ethnicity in the examined polities.¹⁰ Sixth, all three cases share a record of inter-

⁹ For recommendations how to solve the problem of ‘many variables’ and ‘small N’, see Arend Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” *American political science review* 65, no. 3 (1971): 682-693.

¹⁰ For proper selection of ethnic minority groups for comparative analysis, consult Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985).

ethnic rivalry between their majority and minority populations. Seventh, the researched states have adopted proportional type of electoral representation, which benefits large and dispersed ethnic minority groups. Finally, the geopolitical location of the examined states is such that the homelands of the security sensitive groups hosted by them are neighboring countries. Although such case selection has helped me achieve more parsimonious design and accuracy of the reached conclusions, it has also limited the generality of my findings, which apply to the Balkan states under investigation. Many of my discoveries, however, may well have broader applicability.

In sum, as “perfect designs are unattainable” (King 1994, 149), in the construction of the research design of the present study, the author has tried to minimize the bias as a result of the selection process. For this purpose, the choice of the case studies has been done on the values of the explanatory variables while the dependent variable has been let to vary. The variation of both dependent and independent variables in each case and across the cases has allowed for making causal inferences about the development of ethnic minority media in the Balkans.

6. Data and Data Collection Methods

In order to address this project’s objectives, I have analyzed a rich selection of primary and secondary data. The nature of the researched phenomenon and its novelty has required conducting a number of semi-structured individual interviews with people

involved in the making of minority media, their regulation, funding and research. These include scholars of ethnicity and media, minority politicians, majority and minority journalists, media policy-makers, state officials involved in the regulation of minority issues, ethnic minority intellectuals, as well as representatives from the NGO sector who offer support to ethnic media.

Throughout the course of researching, I conducted five rounds of interviews. In 2005, I started researching on the Turkish minority media in Bulgaria. My field research there was followed next year by another round of interviews in Sofia and a round of interviews in Skopje (Macedonia) where I examined the progress of Albanian minority media for a first time. In 2007, I went on a field trip to Romania where I conducted another set of semi-structured interviews with Hungarian and Romanian journalists, media researchers and politicians. First, I visited the Hungarian strongholds in Transylvania (Cluj-Napoka and Brasov) where the major Hungarian country press is produced. I continued my research in the Romanian capital where the political leadership of the Hungarian minority is based and where public Hungarian media are made. In 2008, I conducted a second round of interviews in Macedonia, visiting the burgeoning with ethnic tensions regions of Tetovo and Kumanovo – the two strongholds of the Albanian minority in the country. Finally, in 2009, I conducted my last tier of interviews in Bulgaria, which allowed me to draw conclusions about the progress of Turkish minority media over three consecutive time-periods. In addition to these interviews, my analysis also draws upon the following primary and secondary data, collected in the course of field investigations:

- Public opinion surveys of the voting preferences and integration of minorities in the examined countries. They offer quantitative data that are useful for making inferences about the political coherence of examined communities and their level of capsulation or integration.
- Quantitative and qualitative data on the status of print and electronic media of examined minorities. These are either primary data, describing the variety of minority media outlets in the researched states, or secondary research done on minority media institutions. Both provide useful information on the objectives of minority media, their genre diversity, formats, main topics, circulation, language as well as details about the ethnic and professional backgrounds of the journalists employed in them.
- Primary and secondary research on majority-minority relations in the examined states. These are either reports produced by human rights organizations or scholarly research done on the topic of inter-ethnic relations in the Balkans. These sources elaborate on the formation of minority communities, majority-minority relations, causes of contention and inter-ethnic rivalry. They have helped me determine the values of the *inter-ethnic relations* variable across the cases and study its impact on the progress of ethnic media.
- Normative documents pertaining to the regulation of minority issues in each of the examined states. These are international covenants for the protection of minority rights ratified by the authorities of the examined countries, national constitutions, minority-related norms, domestic media laws and provisions regulating the operation of media regulatory organs. These documents have helped me establish the legal framework within which the ethnic minorities in the Balkans are to preserve their identities and develop their media.

- Last but not least, secondary scholarly research on ethnic media and ethnicity. It has helped me construct the theoretical framework of my investigation and establish the functions and structuring of minority media institutions.

7. Dissertation Structure

This chapter has clarified the puzzle and goals of the present thesis, the research questions it is going to answer, the variables it is going to study and the related to them hypotheses. In the following chapters, I provide extensive analysis of the media of Turks, Albanians and Hungarians. I research and analyze the factors that condition their development and pluralization, paying special attention to the political organization of these communities. The next chapter reveals the theoretical framework of my study and reviews the major approaches that have informed it. Chapter *three* is dedicated to the media of Turks in Bulgaria, chapter *four* to the media of Albanians in Macedonia, and chapter *five* to the media of Hungarians in Romania. The concluding *sixth chapter* summarizes my findings and puts together a theoretical framework that purports to account for the development and pluralization of the media of security sensitive ethnic minorities in the Balkans. It is also there where I acknowledge the limitations of my research and the range of applicability of the advanced minority media model. ⁽¹⁴⁾

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to build a theoretical framework that is going to be used in the empirical analysis of the data of the three case studies. The chapter sets to accomplish three goals. First, to review the major theoretical approaches that inform this study and that are going to be used in the actual analysis of the empirical data. Second, to report broadly on the results of my empirical analysis and the relevance of selected theoretical approaches to it. Details about the input of individual theories into my research will be left to the case study chapters. Third, to identify gaps in minority media literature with respect to the researched phenomenon and to suggest how this dissertation purports to fill them and advance knowledge in related fields.

Two major bodies of literature have informed my research. These are literature on ethnicity and literature on media. Each of these broad fields has provided me with specific theoretical approaches, which I draw upon in my empirical investigation. These are the *instrumentalist approach* to ethnicity and the 'Propaganda' media model. I will start this chapter with a broad presentation of the literature on ethnicity, narrowing down to the central to my argumentation *instrumentalist* approach. Then, I will present relevant media literatures, organized in four sub-categories: ethnic minority media, media systems, 'Propaganda' model and media liberalization in Eastern Europe. The following logic has guided this selection and organization. Since the topic of my research is the media of security sensitive ethnic minorities in the Balkans, a review of the literature on ethnicity seems as a logical departing point. As political elites play central role in my

hypotheses, I pay special attention to the tenets of the *instrumentalist approach* to ethnicity from which I borrow the mechanisms for manipulation of ethnicity by political elites and apply them later to the analysis of ethnic minority media. Second, as ethnic minority media constitute the focus of my dissertation, I review major scholarly research in this field. Third, since my thesis focuses on the development of ethnic media in liberal states, I provide review of existing national media systems to clarify the institutional context within which minority media develop in Eastern Europe and to assess the effect of national media structures on minority media pluralism. Fourth, as political elites play central role in my argumentation, I present Herman and Chomsky's 'Propaganda' model, which provides useful analytical tools for revealing the input of elites in the operation of liberal mass media systems and the mechanisms they employ to establish control over them. Finally, since my case studies are all Eastern European states, and I am interested in the forces that drive the pluralization of local minority media, I review briefly the literature on media liberalization in Eastern Europe, which provides additional details about the media structures in the Balkans and shows that operation of media there depends on the agenda of local political actors.

In sum, the *instrumentalist* and 'Propaganda' approaches help me construct the analytical framework of my investigation, whereas the remaining bodies of literature help me identify the variables that affect the development of ethnic minority media in the Balkans.

1. Literature on Ethnicity

The purpose of this section will be to define *ethnicity*, offer suitable for my analysis classification of ethnic minority groups and review relevant theoretical approaches to ethnicity. Ethnic identification has proved to be a potent and resilient force that profoundly affects socio-political relations in multi ethnic societies. Distinguished scholars from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries shared the belief that race and ethnicity will gradually decline as social forces. Karl Marx, for example, foresaw that capitalism would diminish the importance of ethnic and tribal bonds, which will be substituted by social class bonds. Max Weber foresaw the decline of ethnicity under the pressure of modernity and rationalization of human action.¹ Cornell and Hartman (2007) maintain that on a large scale the decline of ethnic and racial attachments has failed to occur in the post-modern world: “Modernity... was supposed to bring an end to ethnicity and race... In recent decades, far from disappearing, ethnicity and race have been resurgent around the world, often with lethal consequences.”² Donald Horowitz advances a similar argument, claiming that “[e]thnicity is in the center of politics in country after country, a potent source of challenges to the cohesion of states and of international tension.”³ Contemporary research demonstrates that ethnicity has become a salient feature of modernity: “Significant as class conflict has been, no cleavage has more

¹ In Stephen E. Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, *Ethnicity and race: making identities in a changing world*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2007), 9.

² Ibid. pp. 9-10.

³ Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), xi.

sharply, and oftentimes violently, polarized nations in modern times than ethnicity.”⁴ The manifestation of ethnic belonging, however, is different in developed and developing countries. Whereas in liberal societies ethnic identification is a matter of personal choice and is supplemented by other forms of identity (gender, environmentalist, etc.), many developing countries are experiencing proliferation of ethnic identification. In many cases, the process of ethnicization is skilfully manipulated by local political elites and results in sparking of interethnic clashes that have brought about the most devastating humanitarian crises in the post-WWII world. Therefore, examination of ethnicity and interethnic relations has become central in comparative literature. Let us clarify first the term *ethnicity* before moving to the theoretical approaches that demonstrate the power of political elites to manipulate it.

1.1. What is Ethnicity?

The term ‘ethnicity’ originates from the Greek word *ethnicos*, used by the ancient Greeks to designate ‘outsiders’ and ‘cultural strangers’ not belonging to the dominant community. The noun ‘*ethnos*’, on the other hand, designates a unity of people with common blood or descent. When the term entered into the English vocabulary, it was also used to refer to those who are not ‘us’ (the non-Christians). In the mid-nineteen century, the concept of ‘ethnicity’ evolved to its contemporary usage do delineate a phenomenon

⁴ Howard Handelman, *The Challenge of Third World Development* (New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006), 77.

peculiar to a race or a nation.⁵ When it entered the field of sociology in the beginning of the 20th century, the *ethnicity* was used not only to define otherness, but also to denote subjective self-identification. Max Weber (1978) is the first modern scholar to offer an explicit definition of ethnicity. In '*Economy and Society*,' he writes:

We shall call 'ethnic groups' those human groups that entertain subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists. Ethnic membership (*Gemeinsamkeit*) differs from the kinship group precisely by being a *presumed identity*...⁶

What really matters for Weber is wheatear members of given group share a belief of common descent. Physical resemblance, shared cultural traditions or historical experience can all contribute to discovering common ethnic descent. Therefore, *ethnicity* is a matter of belief and subjectivity. Later on, Weber's emphasis on common descent was replaced by emphasis on 'common culture' – a more precise term that includes common language, religion, and other patterns of common behavior.

Most scholars of ethnicity have provided their own definitions of this phenomenon. When analyzing the ethnic minorities in the Balkans, this thesis will draw upon Schermerhorn's (1970) and Riggins (1992) definitions. Schermerhorn describes ethnic groups as:

⁵ Fitzgerald, 1992, 115. In Marie Gillespie, *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change* (London: Routledge, 1995), 9.

⁶ Max Weber, *Economy and society: an outline of interpretive sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 389. (Emphasis mine)

Collectivities within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of shared historical past and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood. Examples of such symbolic elements are: kinship patterns, physical contiguity, religious affiliation, language or dialect forms, tribal affiliation, nationality, phenotypical features, or any combination of these. A necessary accompaniment is some consciousness of kind among members of the group.⁷

Riggins (1992) offers a more parsimonious and operational definition. According to him, every group should be regarded as ethnic provided it is composed on the basis of “common culture, ancestry, language, history, religion or customs.”⁸ The commonality of at least two of these variables is sufficient for the self-identification of its members and for defining of given group as ‘ethnic’. What Weber’s, Schermerhorn’s and Riggins’ definitions have in common is that they suggest that ‘ethnicity’ is not a primordial feature acquired at birth, but a subjective phenomenon to be discovered and reclaimed by individuals themselves. Thus, one of the dominant theories of ethnicity today – the constructivist approach, depicts *ethnicity* as a social construction and a matter of negotiated self-identity. In other words, *ethnicity* is portrayed as a dynamic rather than static phenomenon: “Ethnic identity is a social construction – a way that certain groups have come to view themselves as distinct from others over time – rather than an inherent or primordial characteristic.”⁹

The conceptualization of ethnicity as a dynamic phenomenon is important for my research as it rests on the assumption that political elites use ethnic minority media to

⁷ Richard Schermerhorn, *Comparative ethnic relations: a framework for theory and research* (New York: Random House, 1970), 12.

⁸ Stephen Harold Riggins, ed. *Ethnic Minority Media. An International Prospective*, Communication and Human Values (London: Sage Publications, 1992), 1.

⁹ Handelman, 78.

manipulate the process of ethnicization for political and material gains. Discussing the dynamic nature of ethnicity, Lieberman (1985) argues that formation of ethnic identity involves active interaction between different communities, in the process of which common and distinct features are (re)discovered and the boundaries of the ethnic groups are delineated. In a similar vein, Gillespie (1995) maintains that multiethnic societies provide breeding grounds for the thriving of ethnicity and for the unfolding of ambivalent relations between majority and minority ethnic communities. The former prescribe the feature of ‘otherness’ to outsider groups, blaming them for the problems occurring within their polities, whereas the latter seek ways to withstand the majority pressure and preserve their group identity. Gillespie stresses that media play important role in these inter-ethnic interactions, as they provide the playground for the exchange of ethnic ideas, thus aiding the process of constructing and defining ethnic identity (Gillespie 1995, 11). This thesis will demonstrate that minority politicians have realized the important role that ethnic media play in the ethnicization and mobilization of ethnicity, and thus have used different mechanisms to establish control over them to use them in the political process.

In summary, ethnicity has remained an important feature of modernity in developed and developing countries. Despite the abundance of definitions, scholars of ethnicity seem to agree that given group can be identified as ‘ethnic’ provided its members share few key ethnic identifiers (common ancestry, language, race, religion, territory, values, history, culture, etc.) and identify themselves as belonging to the group. Scholars of ethnicity also agree that interethnic conflicts pose serious threat to the security of multi-ethnic polities. Where they seem to disagree is how ethnicity is formed and why it is so resilient. The

next section will examine the major theoretical approaches to ethnicity, where the stress is going to be put on those that draw upon the ‘ethnicizing’ powers of political elites.

1.2. Theoretical Approaches to Ethnicity

There are two major approaches to ethnicity, which provide competing conceptualizations of this phenomenon, its emergence and resilience.¹⁰ These are the *primordial* and *constructivist* approaches. They crystallized in the academic field in the mid-1960s and came to substitute the prevalent until then *assimilationist* approach. The latter appeared in the beginning of 20th century and drew *upon* the ideas of Marx and Weber. It claims that ethnic differences are going to disappear as the progress of rationality and science will nurture universal values and utilitarian interests that will replace the old-fashioned ethnic ties. The *assimilationist* approach had a short lifespan and soon lost its credibility as it became clear that the advancement of global capitalism results in strengthening of ethnic ties rather than their dissolution. Two opposite approaches emerged on its place to account for the resilience of ethnicity. The *primordial* approach stresses the objective and fixed nature of ethnic characteristics, whereas the *constructivist* approach attributes the longevity of ethnic ties to the subjective, fluid and ever evolving nature of ethnicity. I will briefly examine these approaches as their tenets provide the foundation of my analytical framework, designed to investigate ethnic relations in the Balkans.

¹⁰ In the selection of most useful approach to ethnicity for the purposes of my analysis, I found helpful Cornell and Hartman (2007) historical overview of different schools to ethnicity.

Chronologically, the *primordial* approach appeared first. It was introduced by Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz (1973) who maintain that ethnic consciousness is a preexisting objective phenomenon that develops naturally after birth in the process of socialization of individuals, and is based upon such objective characteristics as kinship relations, common history, shared religious beliefs, racial, language and cultural similarities. According to this approach, “ethnic and racial identities are fixed, fundamental, and rooted in the unchangeable circumstances of birth” and it is the ‘fixed’ and ‘forever-given’ nature of identity that accounts for the longevity of ethnic ties.¹¹ Harold Isaacs (1975) identifies eight external variables that determine the ethnic identification of individuals. These are physical characteristics (body shape, color, size, etc.), given name, group origins, nationality, language, religion, culture, geography (Isaacs 1975, 51).

Critiques argue, however, that there are many instances when the primordial approach falls short of explaining ethnic ascription. For example, second and third generation immigrants often experience difficulties identifying their ethnic belonging. It is also not uncommon for members of one ethnic community to swap their ethnic identity with a more ‘prestigious’ one for economic reasons (i.e. Roma in the Balkans). The primordial approach also experiences difficulties explaining situations when not all cultural groups develop strong group consciousness and when some groups develop it in a condition of internal disparities of language, religion or race (Brown 1989, 5). Smith (1991) and Stack (1981) elaborate on these theoretical predicaments and argue that primordial identity might be latent in some groups, but can also be triggered and intensified by political elites

¹¹ In Cornell, 51.

under certain circumstances. This means that ethnicity is not purely an objective phenomenon, but there is a great deal of subjectivity involved in its development. Cornell and Hartman conclude that “there is simply too much change and variation in ethnicity and race around the world to support the primordialist approach.” (Cornell 2007, 54)

The analytical weaknesses of the primordial theory have spurred the emergence of alternative theories of ethnicity, which center on the dynamic and subjective nature of this phenomenon. The most influential among them is the *constructivist* theory, which provides the basis for my analysis. It stems from the broader *circumstantialist* school, which defines ethnicity as a medium used by groups to pursue their collective interests in the process of competition for scarce resources (i.e. access to political power, employment, social benefits, etc.) The *circumstantialist* theory perceives ethnic groups as dynamic organizations that similar to interest groups change their ethnic affiliation depending on the context and circumstances (Gil-White 1999, 790). Although more flexible than the primordial approach, the *circumstantialist* school also suffers from serious predicaments, such as failure to explain the resilience of ethnicity in economically disadvantageous situations or instances when ethnicity becomes a strong incentive for human action. These shortcomings are addressed by the *constructivist* approach to ethnicity, which borrows elements from both *circumstantialist* and *primordialist* approaches, infusing into the mixture its own dynamic understanding of ethnic affiliation. The *constructivist* theory sees agency as playing central role in the process of shaping one’s identity and constructing the identities of other groups. I will turn next to

examination of this approach, as in my opinion it provides the most suitable analytical framework for the investigation of ethnic relations in the Balkans.

Many life examples demonstrate that ethnicity is a fluid phenomenon, which values can change over time. They suggest that the formation of ethnic identity depends on external factors and on the self-ascription potential of individuals. The ability to explain the dynamism of ethnic affiliation is where the *constructivist* theory has an edge over the previous approaches. Constructivists borrow from the *circumstantialist* school the notion of fluidity of ethnicity and combine it with the ability of group agents to shape and re-shape their identities in synch with the changing societal conditions. Constructivists see ethnic identity as varying across space and time. Compared to the *primordialist* and *circumstantialist* approaches, the *constructivist* theory stresses the central role of agency in the process of identity-formation. It claims that individuals actively respond to societal changes, guided by their own perceptions, dispositions and agendas.¹² According to the *constructivist* theory, collective identities become naturally constructed in the process of interaction between citizens, civil society and the state. Prominent scholars like Anderson (1983) and Brass (1991) perceive ethnicity as a matter of negotiated self-identity and ‘imagined community’ rather than a fact of life determined at birth. They believe that ethnicity is a dynamic construct for its symbols evolve over time, making ethnic communities expand and contract in response to changing external conditions. This is especially visible in the post-modern world where agents develop multiple identities by joining various social groups (Esman 1994). Staino (1980) maintains that formation of

¹² Ibid, 81.

ethnicity involves the interaction of at least two distinct communities and is influenced by the continual reinterpretation of their differences. Fluidity of ethnicity then allows ethnic groups to exhibit less ('thin') or more pronounced ('thick') ethnic features, and ability to move from one ethnic category to another.

Instrumentalist Approach to Ethnicity

Drawing upon the dynamic nature of ethnicity and the central role of agency in the process of its construction, Gelner (1983), Hobsbawm (1992), and Cornell (2007) examine the role of political elites in the formation of ethnicity. They describe ethnicity as a subjective phenomenon that can be ideologically constructed by politicians who play the 'ethnic card' to mobilize political support – a widely utilized practice in the Balkans: “When there is a need to mobilize persons on behalf of their interests, the invocation of ethnic or racial bonds can be a powerful call to unity. Race and ethnicity are commonly called into play in situations of competition over scarce resources: jobs, housing, school access, political power, and so on,” explains Cornell.¹³

Another group of scholars [Brass (1991), Gurr (1994), Handelman (2006), Martinussen (1997), and Horowitz (1985)] push the constructivist argument even further. They adopt the so called *instrumentalist approach* to ethnicity according to which ethnic communities are primarily political communities that are created by political elites who manipulate ethnicity to maximize their political power and material resources: “[Ethnic]

¹³ Ibid, 100.

identities and histories frequently are partly created, or at least embellished, by entrepreneurial politicians, intellectuals or *journalists* who gain some advantage of playing the ethnic card,” explains Handelman.¹⁴ In a similar vein, Brass argues that ethnicity, being a subjective phenomenon, is skillfully molded by political elites who “draw upon, distort, and sometimes fabricate materials from the cultures of the groups they wish to represent in order to protect their well-being or existence, or to gain political and economic advantage for their groups and for themselves.”¹⁵ Gurr echoes this argument and maintains that material and political gains seem to drive the elites of different groups who invoke cultural identity as a means to attain these gains: “Political entrepreneurs’ capitalize on these differences to establish ethnically based political movements aimed at increasing the economic and political well-being of their group or region.”¹⁶ However, Horowitz and Esman warn us that ethnic groups are not just trade unions and one should not exaggerate the elasticity of their boundaries.¹⁷ Even if some ethnic ties are fictional, they cannot be entirely created out of thin air. Therefore, any efforts to mobilize a population based upon empty cultural material would be futile.¹⁸ Finally, working within the constructivist paradigm, Brown (1989) advances the *situationalist* approach to ethnicity, which nicely complements the *instrumentalist* view. He suggests that the formation and politicization of ethnicity can be best examined

¹⁴ Handelman, 78. Emphasis mine.

¹⁵ Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991), 8.

¹⁶ Ted Robert Gurr and Barbara Harff, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 78.

¹⁷ Horowitz, 104.

¹⁸ Milton J. Esman, *Ethnic politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 10.

through the statist perspective, maintaining that the institutional context of given polity determines the outcomes of ethnic identification. The *situationalist* approach focuses on few variables to explain ethnic composition and politicization of ethnicity, namely, level of autonomy of the state from society, composition of state elites, dominant state ideology,¹⁹ and institutional framework for political participation, which can either encourage (Macedonia) or discourage (Bulgaria) formation of ethnic minority parties. According to Brown, consociational state doctrines and structures inform the ethnic policies of elites (Brown, 14).

The instrumentalist approach is especially popular in the field of developmental studies, which is rife with examples on politicization of ethnicity by competing political elites. The political overtones that it instills in the constructivist theory reflect well the conduct of ethno-politics in the Balkans where majority and minority elites alike play the ‘nationalist card’ to mobilize political support and multiply their material gains. This is exemplified by the experience of the Turkish, Albanian and Hungarian minority groups. My investigation of these communities draws upon the tenets of the *instrumentalist* theory to demonstrate how minority political elites in the Balkans politicize ethnicity to tighten the political unity of their respective communities, to squash the formation of alternative political factions and to clamp down on the development of liberal minority media.

¹⁹ Some states like Canada pursue ethnic multiculturalism, whereas others like Greece – mono-ethnic national identities.

1.3. Utility of the Instrumentalist Approach for the Study of Ethnic Minority Media in the Balkans

Once the tenets of the instrumentalist theory have been revealed, let us see now how it contributes to the study of ethnic relations and ethnic minority media in the Balkans. The analysis of the three case studies included in my dissertation shows that ascription of ethnic identifiers and mobilization of ethnicity are dynamic processes that are manipulated by majority and minority politicians for political and economic gains. Albanian, Hungarian and Turkish minority elites perceive their groups mostly as political communities, whose electoral support is key for the political and economic advancement of their leaders. Thus, elites play the ‘nationalist card’ to mobilize the support of their ethnic constituencies. Paramount role in their electoral campaigns is played by the media of these communities, which are used by minority elites as political platforms and mobilization vehicles. This is especially evident in the experience of the politically pluralist Albanian and Hungarian minorities, where intra-group political competition among rival ethnic parties calls for the mobilization potential of ethnic minority media. The leaders of Hungarian and Albanian parties provide material incentives and administrative protection to ‘friendly’ minority media outlets in exchange for positive media coverage, criticism of political opponents and assistance in the political mobilization process. It is from the pages of these politically charged minority media titles that political entrepreneurs play the ‘ethnic card’ to mobilize the support of their constituencies.

By evoking artificially created ethnic fears, Turkish and Hungarian politicians mold the structure and discourse of the media of their respective communities. For example, the Turkish political party in Bulgaria – Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) - has taken advantage of the surge of ethno-nationalist sentiments in Bulgaria. The MRF leaders have persuaded the Turkish clan leaders that in a situation of constant nationalist attacks against the group, its survival depends on the unified public voice and political vote of the community. Thus, any attempts to liberalize the political and media spheres of the Turkish group have been portrayed as betrayal to the best interests of Turks and efficiently blocked. Through evoking politically engineered ethnic tensions, the Turkish elites have managed to secure the political homogenization of the Turkish community and clamp down on the development of a liberal Turkish media sphere.

The Hungarian minority in Transylvania had similar experience in the 1990s when it was represented in Romanian politics by a single political broker – The Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR). The ‘90s were a decade of constant nationalist attacks against the Hungarian minority, whom the Romanian politicians blamed for the economic deprivation experienced by the majority population. The abundant with nationalistic slogans rhetoric of Romanian leaders from that period had become a ‘political fad’ and useful instrument for the mobilization of the nationalist vote.²⁰ Put in a defensive position, the Hungarian leadership managed to persuade the members of the community to enter into a self-preservation mode and rally behind the Hungarian party so that the group preserves some institutional presence and leverage. Romanian and Hungarian media were used by the elites of both communities as ethnic mobilization tools. It is from

²⁰ Avadani, Ioana. Interview with author. Digital recording. Bucharest, 4 October, 2007.

the pages of the Hungarian newspapers that the Hungarian politicians spread fear among the Hungarian population about the ‘evil’ and ‘selfish’ Romanians who want to kill the ethnic distinctiveness of Hungarians. This politicization of ethnicity helped UDMR achieve a record mobilization of the Hungarian electorate and secured permanent representation of the Hungarian party in the Romanian parliament. This is how the ‘ethnic card’ was skilfully played by the elites of the Turkish and Hungarian communities to rally support for their political structures and secure access to administrative power and material resources. Similar to the leaders of the Turkish party in Bulgaria, their Hungarian counterparts from UDMR used inter-ethnic tensions to clamp down on the liberalization of Hungarian media sphere. Any ideas appearing in Hungarian media that were in discord with the official stance of the Hungarian party were fiercely repudiated as attempts to break up the Hungarian unity and harm the community. Hungarian politicians successfully ‘sold’ ethnic homogenizing frames to the editors of Hungarian media, many of whom received financial assistance from UDMR. Application of the ‘Propaganda’ model in the analysis of the media of examined in this thesis communities will reveal the clientelist link between minority elites and media institutions.

Finally, I find useful for my analysis Brown’s *situationalist* approach to ethnicity because of its accent on the institutional settings of multiethnic polities and their impact on ethnic politics. For example, the Albanian case demonstrates how the consensual arrangements of Macedonian polity have informed the multiethnic policies of state elites, including in the media domain where the access of Albanians to Macedonian media sphere has greatly

improved and stable governmental funding for the development of Albanian media has been secured.

In sum, the agency-centered focus of analysis and conceptualization of ethnic minority groups as political communities – emblematic of the *instrumentalist* approach to ethnicity – will allow me to subject the development of Albanian, Hungarian and Turkish minority media institutions to the interests of minority political elites. Through politicizing ethnicity and evoking artificial ethnic tensions, the political leaders of these communities have gained political and economic advantages, as prescribed by the instrumentalist theory.

1.4. Classification of Ethnic Minority Groups

Literature on ethnicity is abundant on classifications of ethnic minority groups, formulated to study ethnicity in different institutional and cultural contexts. In my investigation of ethnic minorities in the Balkans, I will utilize a classification system geared to my specific research focus – media of ethnic minority groups. This system is featured by simplicity and universalism. It was suggested to the author by Professor Ivan Krastev during a series of private discussions on the dynamics of ethnic politics in the Balkans.²¹

²¹ Professor Krastev is among the leading researchers on ethnicity in the Balkans. He is Director of the 'Centre for Liberal Strategies' (Sofia, Bulgaria) and visiting Professor at the University of Toronto (CERES) and the Central European University (Department of Political Science).

Krastev distinguishes between two major categories of ethnic minorities in the Balkans - 'security sensitive' and 'security non-sensitive'. The term 'security sensitive' is used to depict those minority groups that have the potential to jeopardize the stability, security and even territorial integrity of their host states. Apart from common ethnic identifiers, these minorities share distinguishing characteristics such as numerical strength, strong sense of ethnic identity, ethnic coherence and capsulation, low levels of integration in domestic societies, strong political power, ethnic parties capable of aggregating the ethnic vote, history of prolonged and violent rivalry with majority populations, ties with motherland states, demands for special group status, real potential to achieve some sort of group autonomy (even territorial secession), and political representatives (elites) that play the role of power-balancers in national political arenas.

Compared to other ethnic minorities, security sensitive groups have the potential to request special status due to their sheer number and political strength. Their demands are usually centered on, but not limited to, securing institutional guarantees for the preservation of their ethnic identity, culture, language and traditions; gaining proportional to their numerical size political representation and access to economic resources. If their requirements fail to be addressed or channeled through the existing political structures, the elites of security sensitive communities have the potential to mobilize their groups, escalate ethnic confrontation to the level of open conflict, and advance demands for group autonomy or even secession. As the Macedonian case demonstrates, security sensitive minorities are capable of engaging in successful guerilla warfare with majority authorities in order to achieve their goals. Thus, support of these groups to domestic

political structures and processes, as well as willingness of their elites to cooperate with majority elites, are deemed essential for maintaining the stability and ethnic peace in multiethnic polities. Good examples of such security sensitive minorities are Kosovars in Serbia (who have already seceded from Serbia), Turks in Bulgaria, Albanians in Macedonia and Hungarians in Romania.

In contrast, *security non-sensitive* ethnic minorities lack the capacity to pose serious threats to the political and territorial order of their adoptive states. These are usually numerically smaller groups that lack strong political representation and powerful elites. Their parties fail to aggregate the ethnic vote. These are politically non-coherent communities, whose leaders are often co-opted by majority political parties. Clashes between members of *security non-sensitive* groups and majority populations usually bear individual character and lack the intensity of 'inter-group' rivalry that distinguishes the conflicts involving security sensitive minorities. Given political representation, security non-sensitive groups have little capacity to change existing policies and influence the drafting of new ones, let alone to amend existing institutional pillars – something that security sensitive minorities can achieve. In general, such groups lack resources to advance demands for group rights, special status and autonomy. Good example of security non-sensitive communities are Roma, Jews and Armenians in Bulgaria; Roma, Serbs and Turks in Macedonia; and Roma and Germans in Romania.

In summary, the instrumentalist approach to ethnicity provides useful analytical tools to study the dynamics of inter-ethnic relations and minority media development in the

Balkans where local political elites have pitted ethnic groups against each other in order to achieve political and economic gains. The simple categorization of Balkan minorities into two groups will provide the opportunity to conduct a cross-country analysis of the media of some of the largest ethnic minorities in Europe. Since one of the explanatory variables of this study is *status of inter-ethnic relations* in the young Balkan democracies, I consider important to narrow down my scope and review next the literature that deals with the effect of democratization on inter-ethnic relations, in general, and ethnic minority media, in particular, in young democratic regimes.

1.5. Ethnicity, Democratization and Ethnic Minority Media in Eastern Europe

The democratic restructuring and market liberalization in Eastern Europe have had mixed effect on the ethnic relations and ethnic tolerance in the region. There are different opinions in the democratization literature as to whether democracy as a form of governance serves as a remedy to ethnic tensions or further exacerbates them. Glickman (1998) and Huntington (1997) suggest that political and social liberalization may unleash ethnic rivalries as it results in a growth of the civil society sector, political emancipation of the masses and ethnic politics, inspired by selfish demagogues. These can pose excessive pressures on newly established democratic institutions and produce instability. In a similar vein, Chua (2003) and Horowitz (1993) demonstrate how politicization of ethnicity, following democratic restructuring, can jeopardize institutional stability. Horowitz finds a correlation between ethnic conflict and anti-democratic development. He uses Eastern European polities to show that those of them that enjoyed least ethnic

cleavages have progressed the most. Referring to the former Soviet Union, Chua advances similar 'anti-modernization' argument. She questions the modernization hypothesis and maintains that the simultaneous pursuit of marketization and democratization in post-totalitarian societies can exacerbate ethnic rivalry as well as produce unstable and combustible political conditions because economic liberalization results in concentration of wealth in market-dominant minorities, while political liberalization increases the political power of impoverished majorities. Political competition then brings to the fore nationalist demagogues who use the 'ethnic card' to mobilize political support. Mass media are widely used under such circumstances to ethnicize the masses.²² The forces of liberalization and democratization collide. The result is ethnic violence against minority groups, as exemplified by the experience of former Yugoslavia.

Bertrand (2004) disagrees with the so outlined instrumentalist argument about the resurgence of ethnonationalism as a result of transition to democracy. His study of the religious and ethnic conflict in democratizing Indonesia suggests that group identities can be politicized prior to the democratic opening provided there have been previous underlying tensions between the communities. He agrees that democratic transition is often associated with inter-group conflicts in weak state-nations. Rapid democratic opening in such polities triggers centrifugal tendencies that activate prior inter-group tensions, suppressed by power during the authoritarian phase of their development.

²² Chua provides examples how Latin America's poor have been ethnicized through radio, television, and most recently through the Internet (72). The use of radio by the Hutus to instigate ethnic hatred against the Tutsis in Rwanda is another good example for the ethnicizing power of mass media.

According to Bertrand, it is the weakening of the repressive power and authoritarian means of control that give impetus to ethnonationalist movements, rather than the engineering potential of political elites: “Democratic transition was seen as a moment of weakness in the state and, therefore, either a source of insecurity or an opportunity for mobilization.”²³ Thus, the *political order* school, advertised by scholars like Huntington, prescribes to such transitional societies to liberalize their markets first, achieve some degree of economic affluence and only then initiate political liberalization.

How did economic and political liberalization affect the inter-ethnic relations in the Balkans? The answer to this question is important to my research as status of inter-ethnic relations affects directly and indirectly the progress of ethnic minority media. While Chua’s anti-modernization argument might have hold true with respect to some provinces of former Yugoslavia, the experience of examined here Balkan states has deviated from her theory. The transition to democracy and market economy in Macedonia, Bulgaria and Romania did not result in the ethnic hatred and violence that torn apart former Yugoslavia.²⁴ The political elites of examined here states managed to engage into cooperation within the newly established democratic institutions and steer a clear course from the violent interethnic wars in Yugoslavia. The liberalization of their political systems, however, indeed propelled to power political demagogues who have been playing the ‘ethnic card’ ever since to garner political support.²⁵ This has resulted in

²³ Jacques Bertrand, “Democratization and religious and nationalist conflict in post-Suharto Indonesia,” in *Democratization and Identity*, ed. Susan J. Henders (Lexington Books: Toronto, 2004), 177-200, p. 178.

²⁴ Macedonia’s exit from the Yugoslav Federation was peaceful and elite-coordinated.

²⁵ Including questioning the right of minorities to have access to national media spheres.

cyclical surges of ethnonationalist politics and sentiments in these societies. The Macedonian state almost collapsed due to an interethnic clash in 2001. Bulgaria and Romania also weathered few waves of ethnonationalist revival, which tarnished their international image. The adherence of local political elites to the democratic ‘rules of the game’ and their willingness to cooperate within existing political structures, however, has prevailed and saved these polities from destructive ethnic wars. The ebbs and flows of ethno-nationalist politics in these societies receives greater attention in the case study chapters of this dissertation where I demonstrate how cyclical surges of ethnonationalist sentiments in Romania and Bulgaria have contributed to the political capsulation of Hungarian and Turkish minorities, in general, and to the block of liberalization of their media institutions, in particular. Once nationalist rhetoric and sentiments lessen, grip of minority politicians eases, opening room for media liberalization.

The driving forces behind the surges of ethno-nationalist politics in the Balkans have different interpretations in the scholarly literature. I consider necessary to comment here on the research of those scholars of ethnicity in the region who also touch upon the development of minority media in their analysis. There seems to be an agreement among them that one of the triggers of ethno-nationalist sentiments in the Balkans has been the economic deprivation, experienced by majority populations as a result of the liberalization of local economies. Peter Gross (2002) argues that the imposed on these states structural adjustment programs by supranational institutions are to be blamed for the exacerbation of “a political culture of fear, panic, anguish, and suspicion ... [which give] further impetus to ethnic particularism and the resulting nationalism, racism, and

anti-Semitism” in the region.²⁶ He agrees with Brzezinski (1989) that the springs of ethnic intolerance and nationalism in Eastern Europe can be traced back to the pre-communist political culture of these societies. Brzezinski notes that during the communist era, nationalism was further nurtured by political elites but in a covert manner, as authorities did not discriminate officially between ethnic groups. Similar to Bertrand, he argues that open inter-ethnic conflict was suppressed by authoritarian means of control. Eminov (1997) echoes Chua’s anti-modernization and instrumentalist arguments, maintaining that the political democratization in the Balkans has enabled nationalistic parties to come to the fore and win parliamentary seats by means of extensive use of nationalistic rhetoric. Tomova (1996) synthesizes Gross’ and Eminov’s viewpoints, and argues that the cyclical economic crises and socio-political changes in Eastern Europe account for the strengthening of ethnocentric attitudes in the region.

How has this affected the development of local ethnic minority media? Few scholars of ethnicity and media address this question. Splichal (1994) argues that although the rise of nationalism in Eastern Europe has given impetus to the democratization process, the caused by it exacerbation of ethnic tensions have seriously endangered the territorial integrity of these states. To stop the outbreak of ethnic conflicts and dismantling of polities, local majority elites have embarked on internal centralization and national homogenization. This resulted in suppression of multiculturalism, in general, and ethnic minority media development, in particular: “In contrast to the global production of “placeless culture” ... the media in post-socialist countries are still (or again) aimed at

²⁶ Peter Gross, *Entangled evolutions: media and democratization in Eastern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 19.

political and cultural, national homogenization,” concludes Splichal.²⁷ By focusing exclusively on the role of majority politicians in the process of national homogenization and suppression of minority media, Splichal fails to examine the role of minority elites in the development of minority media spheres – an angle of analysis that this dissertation provides. Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine (1996) offer a different interpretation of the revival of nationalism in Eastern Europe. They maintain that the democratization in the region has unleashed unrestricted freedom of public debate in the public spheres of the former communist states. The latter has been accompanied by an outburst of nationalism and “nationalist mythmaking” directed against the promotion of multiculturalism and amicable relations among different ethnic minorities.²⁸ This is another factor that impedes the access of minority groups to the media and public spheres of their adoptive states.

What scholars of ethnicity and ethnic media in the Balkans have largely overlooked in their analysis is the role of minority elites in the development of the media of their respective communities. The present dissertation aims to fill this gap and demonstrate that the media spheres of ethnic minority groups are affected not so much by the processes occurring within national media and political spheres, but by the structure and processes occurring within minority political spheres. This study will demonstrate that the artificially engineered by nationalist demagogues ethnic tensions are skillfully exploited by minority politicians to prevent the liberalization of their respective

²⁷ Slavko Splichal, *Media beyond Socialism: Theory and Practice in East Central Europe* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1994), 119.

²⁸ ‘Nationalist mythmaking’ is defined as an “attempt to use dubious arguments to mobilize support for nationalist doctrines or to discredit opponents”. Usually these myths proclaim the cultural and historic superiority of the dominant identity, and exaggerate the threat that ethnic minority groups pose on the host state. In Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine, “Nationalism and Marketplace of Ideas,” *International Security* 21, no. 2 (1996): 5-40, 10.

communities (including their media spheres) so that elites retain full control over their groups.

In summary, the analysis of the media-politics nexus of the three Balkan minority communities will be guided by the *instrumentalist* approach to ethnicity. The stress that this approach puts on the engineering powers of political elites in the mobilization of ethnicity seems to correspond to the conduct of ethnic politics in the region. In my analysis, I will utilize a simple classification of ethnic minority groups, which distinguishes between security sensitive and security non-sensitive minorities. The review of the literature on democratization and ethnicity in Eastern Europe has shown that the strengthening of ethnonationalist sentiments and politics in the region has slowed down the progress of ethnic minority media. Scholars of media and ethnicity, however, have failed to examine the role of minority political elites in the structuring of the media domains of their respective communities, which is the central theme of this dissertation. This study will demonstrate that minority political elites play central role in the development and pluralization of the media of their respective communities. To identify the peculiarities of these media, the next section will provide a review of the literature on ethnic minority media.

2. Literature on Ethnic Minority Media

A number of scientific studies have emerged over the past two decades that examine the establishment, purpose and operation of ethnic minority media. They are primarily focused on developed Western societies (Western Europe, North America and Australia). Little attention, however, has been devoted to the Eastern European states, in general, and the Balkans, in particular, where the combusive nature of inter-ethnic relations has made researcher label the region the ‘powder keg’ of Europe. Studying the democratization of mass media in Eastern Europe, media scholars [Splichal (1994), Gross (2002)] tangentially touch upon ethnic media. They report on the under-representation of minority groups in national media spheres, but fail to delve further and examine the political reasons for it, which is the goal of this study. In this section, I will explore the literature on ethnic minority media to identify their essence, functions and factors influencing their progress.²⁹ This will help me in the process of selection of independent variables.

Ethnic minority media have been addressed in the scholarly literature primarily as a form of media that complement the multicultural policies of liberal states. They are usually discussed within the context of media liberalization and protection of minority rights in democratic regimes in the West. Matsaganis et al. attempt to break off from the Western-centric perspective of their analysis by providing an all-inclusive definition of ethnic

²⁹ In my presentation of ethnic media literature, I will draw upon the theoretical framework I constructed to study Turkish minority media back in 2000 (Igor Valentovitch, “Turkish Ethnic Minority Media in Bulgaria: an Underdeveloped Resource” (MA Thesis, Central European University, 2000) [unpublished], updating and enriching the latter with recent publications in the minority media field that bear relevance to my analysis.

media, which attempts to encompass their various manifestations in different parts of the world. It states that ethnic media are the media “produced by and for (a) immigrants, (b) racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities, as well as (c) indigenous populations living across different countries.”³⁰ They advise researchers to adapt this definition to minority groups and their media institutions situated in a particular polity or geographical area. Therefore, drawing upon Matsaganis et al. classification, I have constructed a more parsimonious definition of ethnic media, focusing on the media of ethnic minority groups in the Balkans. Guided by the objectives of my research, I define ethnic minority media as the media produced by and for ethnic minority groups in South Eastern Europe. I narrow down further my focus and look at the media produced by and for the security sensitive minorities populating this region. This more parsimonious and curate definition of ethnic media will provide me with opportunity to compare the media of these communities across the three cases.

Existing research on ethnic media focuses primarily on their history, structures, operation and functions. It discusses the role of national institutional contexts in their development, but neglects the input of minority political elites in their progress. My dissertation attempts to address this void. As one of the leading researchers of minority media admits, the social influence of ethnic media has not been properly studied and understood “because the topic has been relatively neglected.”³¹ The reasons for the scholarly neglect of ethnic media phenomena are methodological difficulties associated with media impact

³⁰ Matthew D. Matsaganis, Vikki S. Katz, and Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach., eds. *Understanding ethnic media: producers, consumers, and societies* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2011). Chapter 1 [electronic resource].

³¹ Riggins, 3.

studies,³² untrustworthiness of journalist sources and the requirement of researchers to speak minority languages (Riggins 2004). My dissertation attempts to contribute to the study of this phenomenon by examining the media of some of the biggest ethnic minority communities in Europe. Another contribution of my study to minority media literature is that it examines the variables that affect the pluralization of minority media spheres - a new angle of analysis that has not been pursued before. The writings of Stephen Riggins (1992), Charles Husband (1994), Donald Browne (1994, 1996, 2005), Jack Snyder (1996) and Matsaganis et al. (2011) have all informed the selection of this study's independent variables. I will start with identifying the functions and role of ethnic minority media.

2.1. Functions and Role of Ethnic Minority Media

According to Matsaganis et al. "ethnic media develop as expressions of different types of ethnic identities, but also... ethnic identities are developed, negotiated, and reinforced by media that serve these ethnic groups."³³ They build upon Martin and Nakayama's (2007) conceptualization of ethnic identity, and maintain that ethnic media assist in every of the three dimensions of ethnic identity formation. First, this is the *cognitive* dimension, which is associated with the possession of certain cultural knowledge associated with given identity (ethnic traditions, customs, values, history, language, etc.). Ethnic media are indispensable as a medium for transmission of such cultural knowledge to ethnic audiences. Second, this is the *behavioral* dimension of ethnic identity formation, which

³² The methodology of *content* and *discourse* analysis are much better developed than the tools needed to measure audience reception. Therefore most of the media impact studies rely on impressions and indirect evidence.

³³ Matsaganis et al., Chapter 1 [electronic resource].

assumes that one has to behave in accordance with given group's cultural norms in order to be considered part of the latter. Ethnic media may also serve as a potent medium of identity expression, especially the Internet-based media technologies because of their ability to involve agents in multi-directional forms of communication. Finally, there is the *affective* dimension of identity formation. It pertains to the ability of agents to develop sense of belonging to given ethnic community. Ethnic media again play important role here, by creating imagined ethnic communities across vast territories.³⁴

Riggins (1992) looks at the structure of minority media messages to arrive at similar conclusions. Examining ethnic minority media in Canada, he maintains that ethnic minority media play a key role in the process of ethnic identity formation. He argues that ethnic media have a dual role. On the one hand, these media help nurture and preserve the ethnic distinctiveness and cohesion of minority communities, which is their pluralist role. On the other, they may contribute to the assimilation of minority values to majority ones in the cases when these media are part of majority media institutions. The Turkish news program on the National Bulgarian Television is a good example for the assimilationist role of ethnic media. 'News in Turkish' offers ten-minute daily news broadcasts, which are a verbatim translation of official Bulgarian news. The editors of the program have no authority to alter the content of the news and rely entirely on Bulgarian media experts to perform their duties, which strengthens the assimilationist role of this ethnic medium.

Assessing the overall role of ethnic minority media, Riggins (1992) argues that it falls between the *pluralist* and *assimilationist* extremes so that the net result of their operation

³⁴ Ibid.

is a moderate preservation of ethnic minority culture together with temperate assimilation of minority groups to the values of the host society. This is visible in the structure of minority media messages, which have two layers: the upper layer contains ideological messages that offer counter-ideological arguments to the ones presented in the mainstream media, whereas the second ‘hidden’ layer contains assimilationist features, generated by the structures of mainstream media, which host minority media institutions. The resulting assimilation of minority groups is an unavoidable structural side effect, stemming from the fact that ethnic minority media can develop only within mainstream (majority) media spheres.³⁵ Hence, the necessity to examine the structuring of national media spheres and their impact on the operation of minority media spheres, offered later in this chapter. Riggins concludes that despite their dual role, ethnic minority media continue to act as a guard against the assimilation of minorities to majority cultures. For him, the ultimate role of these media remains the pluralist one, that is, the “peaceful preservation of the linguistic and cultural identity of a population that political and economic factors have put in a threatened position.”³⁶

Browne’s research on ethnic media in Western Europe reveals that they serve a number of purposes contributing to identity formation and preservation, namely, they help restore the self-esteem of minority groups, to revive and preserve minority languages, to combat negative stereotypes held of minorities by majority populations and expressed in majority

³⁵ Marianne Stenbaek. 1992. Mass Media in Greenland: The Politics of Survival. In *Ethnic Minority Media. An International Perspective*, ed. Stephen Harold Riggins: 44-63. London: Sage Publications

³⁶ Riggins, 287. . In Valentovitch 2000.

media, and most importantly, ethnic media serve as a source of information and education to minority communities (Browne 1994, 2005). In his most recent study, Browne (2005), Brubaker et al. (2007) and Matsaganis (2011) recognize also the political function of ethnic media. For example, Brown maintains that they act as a break to the ‘divide and conquer’ strategies of majority elites: “minority media work for a greater degree of *cohesiveness* among people, often so as to develop greater political influence in local, regional, and national life.”³⁷ In a similar vein, Matsaganis et al. (2011) maintain that ethnic media may serve as ‘mobilizing forces’ with regards to ethnic communities. They provide an example with the Hispanic radio stations in the U.S., which were quicker than mainstream media to discuss controversial changes of US immigration laws and mobilize massive ethnic minority protests across the country against the amendments.³⁸ Jeffres (2000) echoes Browne’s observations and argues that ethnic minorities connected by dense communication networks (ethnic media being integral part of them) exhibit stronger ethnic cohesion, which is a predisposition for unified action.

To sum up, ethnic minority media not only contributes to the promotion of ethnic identities, but also increase the cohesiveness of minority communities and provide for their political mobilization and action. These features of ethnic media make them an important tool for political mobilization in the hands of political elites – an argument that plays central role in my argumentation. In particular, I draw upon the mobilization role of ethnic media to explain why the elites of Hungarian and Albanian minorities are so interested in establishing control over the media produced by their respective

³⁷ Browne, *Electronic media*, 96. Emphasis mine.

³⁸ Matsaganis et al., Chapter 1 [electronic resource].

communities, and why they use a wide range of incentives (institutional, financial, administrative) to win their support. For example, Albanian parties participating in Macedonian coalition cabinets have directed public funding to sympathetic to Albanian media outlets in exchange for positive media coverage. Similarly, politicians from the Hungarian party UDMR in Romania have provided financial and administrative support to UDMR-friendly Hungarian media, in addition to purchasing influential Hungarian titles, to use them as platforms for political mobilization and action. The political significance of Hungarian media has been registered by Brubaker et al. who examined the pillars of the distinctive Hungarian world in Transylvania and identified locally produced Hungarian media as one of the major among them.³⁹

My research builds upon Browne, Riggins and Matsaganis ideas about the importance of national institutional contexts for the progress of minority media. It goes a step further by studying the effect of political organization of ethnic minorities on the structuring of their media spheres. For example, when examining the Albanian minority media in Macedonia, I demonstrate that politically pluralist minorities provide breeding grounds for the development of pluralist minority media institutions. Put in a situation of intragroup political competition, minority elites invest in the development of sympathetic to their parties media outlets, triggering pluralization of the media spheres of their communities. This idea has been supported by the trajectory of development of Hungarian minority media in Transylvania. The latter have become pluralist following pluralization of the political life of the group. Finally, in synch with the arguments of

³⁹ Rogers Brubaker, M. Feischmidt, J. Fox, L. Grancea, *Nationalist politics and everyday ethnicity in a Transylvanian town* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

public sphere theorists (Habermas 1989, Browne 2005, Brubaker et al. 2007), my research shows that pluralist minority media are indispensable for the genesis and operation of minority public spheres, as these media provide minority agents with diverse and rich on opinions information that boosts public deliberations and help minority agents partake in the process of public opinion formation.⁴⁰ The examination of the dynamic link between the operation of ethnic minority media and public spheres in an intriguing avenue of research that this author plans to pursue in the future.⁴¹

2.2. Variables Affecting the Development of Ethnic Minority Media

According to the literature on ethnic minority media, few key variables determine their genesis and progress. Ethnic media students (Riggins 1992, Matsaganis 2011) and media professionals involved in their making [(Belchev (2006), Ali (2006), Tadarakova (2005), Kiss (2007), Azemi (2008)] seem to agree on the set of major factors that condition the establishment and success of these media. It all starts with the *political culture* of the adoptive society and whether it supports assimilation of ethnic minorities or stands for

⁴⁰ Minority agents of capsulated communities also follow mainstream media but mostly for entertainment purposes. Majority media rarely cover issues pertaining to the life of minority communities. And even if they do so, their reportages are *episodic* (as opposed to *thematic*). Quite often, minorities are misrepresented in majority media either for political reasons or because of the incapacity of majority journalists to report on the life of minorities. This and the language barrier are among the factors that prevent mainstream media from reporting adequately on the life of capsulated ethnic minority groups like the ones examined in this dissertation. Hence, the availability of ethnic minority media is indispensable for filling this information gap. On a side note, the selection of *episodic* framing of events by mainstream journalists produces news that is taken out of the context. Serious journalism relies on the use of *thematic* frames for these frames investigate the context of events being reported and provide a thorough analysis. Unfortunately, *thematic* reportages are a rare commodity nowadays for they require longer airtime, which does not square with the *infotainment* design of the programming of contemporary broadcasters.

⁴¹ It will build upon the ideas of contemporary students of *public sphere* phenomenon [Keane (1996), Gitlin (1998), Hartley and McKee (2000), Browne (2005), Heller and Renyi (2007)] and study the dialogue in the public domains of capsulated security sensitive minorities, stimulated by ethnic minority media.

promotion of cultural diversity and ethnic tolerance. Societies characterized by ethnic intolerance provide poor climate for the development of ethnic media, whereas polities respecting minority rights offer breeding grounds for their development. *Size, level of education, degree of assimilation, media experience, liberal normative regulation, training of minority media professionals* - are all variables identified in the media literature that seem to affect the progress of minority media institutions. Hence, they will find proper place in the analysis of the three case studies. This thesis' case study selection provides for controlling for many of these variables. For example, all of the examined here minorities are large and capsulated communities, which live in multiethnic polities that strive for inter-ethnic dialogue and provide normative guarantees for the cultural reproduction of their national minorities, including their access to national media spheres. Their level of education, media experience and availability of minority media professionals, however, vary across the cases, which necessitated the selection of these factors as independent variables.

Riggins (1992) suggests that as ethnic minority media develop within the structures of mainstream media, their evolution depends on the regulation of the latter:

Media organizations are not socially autonomous entities but are integrated in larger socioeconomic systems. They are affected most obviously by the state through policies of *subsidization, regulation, and legislation*. The state makes possible the technological and economic transfers that permit minorities to assume the means of media production, even though success may ultimately depend on actions undertaken by minority communities themselves.⁴²

⁴² Riggins, 11. In Valentovitch 2000, 8. Emphasis mine.

Riggins maintains that the authorities in liberal multiethnic polities have at their disposal three instruments to assist in the genesis of the media spheres of ethnic minority groups, namely, *legislative* and *regulatory* mechanisms, and *media subsidization* (financing). It is also necessary to add to this list setting up of *training programs for minority media professionals* - another policy tool, which importance was stressed by the interviewed by this author producers of ethnic media in the Balkans. The above instruments will be discussed next in detail, as the intensity of their application will be used in the case study chapters to assess the efforts of elites to develop the media landscapes of minority communities in the Balkans. This is an area where the tenets of the instrumentalist approach have influenced and guided my investigation. I hypothesize that political elites would use the vested in them institutional powers to shape minority media spheres in such a way, as to benefit from their ethnicization and mobilization potentials, and ability to influence debates in minority public spheres.⁴³ The following review of state media policies draws upon the assumption that they are pursued by elites of liberal democratic regimes that respect minority rights and strive for inter-ethnic dialogue. All three Balkan countries examined in this thesis fall into this category of states, providing for control for the *political culture* variable.

⁴³ Brubaker et al. claim that ethnic minority media serve as the backbone of minority public spheres (2006)

2.2.1. Normative tool

The *normative* regulation of media institutions affects primarily electronic media where the intervention of the state is required for political and technical reasons. The political reason is to promote liberal marketplace of ideas through development of independent and pluralist media institutions. The technical reason pertains to the limits of the frequency spectrum. To address these issues, liberal media norms and regulatory organs must be set up. Different approaches have been followed in this regard by the Western societies. In the U.S. for example, ethnic media are regulated through preferential licensing policies or/and granting managerial quotas to minority representatives in mainstream media companies.⁴⁴ Researchers of minority media in the US argue, however, that ethnic minorities still experience significant difficulties to reach managerial media positions because of their low professional qualifications.⁴⁵ This underlines the necessity authorities of multiethnic polities to develop training programs for minority journalists, which is examined here as a separate policy tool.

The European practice of minority media regulation is not that specific as the American one.⁴⁶ Special normative guarantees for minorities' access to media are adopted only with respect to public service broadcasters, which is a consequence of the general trend of electronic media deregulation followed by the EU member states. The media legislations

⁴⁴ Donald R. Browne, Charles M. Firestone, *Television/Radio/News and Minorities* (The Aspen Institute, 1994), 115.

⁴⁵ Lou Prato, "Bumping Up Against the Glass Ceiling," *American Journalism Review* November 1999, 74.

⁴⁶ It will be reviewed in greater detail in the concluding section of this chapter where the Eastern European media landscapes are discussed.

of European states include only general provisions that recognize the necessity of diversity and plurality in national media domains. As far as the states from Central and Eastern Europe are concerned, Browne argues that in the 1990s the authorities of these countries have imposed legal barriers on ethnic minority media, which aimed to prevent minorities from owning their media institutions.⁴⁷ Possibly correct for the first decade of post-communist development of these countries, this argument is no longer valid. The common foreign policy goal of the Eastern European states to become members of the EU has necessitated the adaptation of their domestic legislations to the minority-friendly standards of the Western European democracies.⁴⁸ Hence, the media norms of the former communist states had underwent series of revisions to match the prescriptions of the liberal media models that guide the operation of media institutions in Western Europe. The flawed implementation of these norms, however, is what has impeded the development of minority media in Eastern Europe. Contrary to Browne's assumption, my investigation of ethnic media in the Balkans has revealed that it is not majority elites that prevent the access of ethnic minorities to national media spheres,⁴⁹ but minority politicians who strive to impose control over minority media spheres for political reasons. The interviewed by this author media experts and minority journalists from Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania have unanimously stressed the fact that the adopted media

⁴⁷ Donald, *Television/Radio/News and Minorities*, 88. In Valentovitch 2000, 10.

⁴⁸ For example, the countries in the region were 'inspired' to ratify key international covenants (i.e. Framework Convention for the Protection of Minority Rights) and implement their clauses in their domestic legislations in order to meet the political conditionality for EU accession.

⁴⁹ Donald R. Browne, *Ethnic minorities, electronic media, and the public sphere: a comparative approach* (N.J.: Hampton Press, 2005), 181.

norms in their countries are liberal and non-discriminatory.⁵⁰ The unequal access of minorities to the media sphere, instead, stems from the manipulation of local media institutions and regulators by minority political elites who use administrative and financial levers to silence oppositional minority media and prevent the emergence of liberal marketplace of ideas in their communities.

2.2.2. *Financing tool*

Financing of minority media plays important role for their progress as these media rarely generate economies of scale and often rely on external financing to stay afloat. The sources of funding are diverse and context-specific. Browne describes them as a “patchwork quilt where the patches themselves are of different sizes and durability, so that the quilt is under almost perpetual alteration.”⁵¹ For simplicity, I have grouped them into two broad categories – public and private.

Public sources of financing

The most tangible source of public financing is *government appropriations (subsidies)*. They may take the form of direct subsidies to minority media projects, commissioning

⁵⁰ In fact, the liberal media norms of some Eastern European polities have enabled the uncontrolled growth of ethnic media institutions. For example, the Albanian community in Macedonia (509,000 people) has more than 120 electronic and print media outlets – way more than the local media market provides for. The producers of Albanian media see this as a deterrent to the development of ethnic media, as the over-saturation of the minority media market leads to ‘dog-eat-dog’ competition and dependence on external sources of funding (political in this case).

⁵¹ Ibid, 96.

public advertisement (tenders) in minority media outlets, and financial backing of Public Broadcasting Services (PBS) that host minority channels. In Western and Central Europe, minority stations that are part of the local PBS are also subsidized through revenues from collecting a dedicated media tax that is imposed on households owning TV and radio sets. This media tax is seen by Browne as the most stable form of public funding of minority media.⁵² Unfortunately, the mechanisms for its collection are not developed yet in the researched here states. Thus, their public broadcasters continue to depend on government appropriations, which make them politically dependent.

Discussing minority media funding mechanisms, Browne maintains that sizable ethnic communities with strong political organization and representation have better funded media than smaller groups with little political influence.⁵³ The experience of Turks in Bulgaria largely disproves this assumption. Despite the fact that Bulgarian Turks are among the most numerous minority groups in Europe and enjoy the brokerage of the most successful political party in Bulgarian politics (Turkish party Movement for Rights and Freedoms), they receive negligible state support for the development of their media. The Turkish case is intriguing for it demonstrates that when the political elite of given minority has total control over the group (as this is the case with Bulgarian Turks), it may intentionally block the progress of this group's media for political reasons such as maintaining the group's political coherence and preventing the emergence of pluralist media voices, which can threaten the political status quo. My research demonstrates, however, that suppression of liberal minority media institutions by minority elites can

⁵² Ibid, 179.

⁵³ Ibid, 94.

only happen in special circumstances such as 1) availability of alternative channels for mobilization of the minority electorate (i.e. clientelist links with the leaders of hierarchically organized minorities), and 2) when the political sphere of the group is represented in the political domain by a single political party. In the cases when the political sphere of given minority community is characterized by internal political pluralism, minority politicians invest in the development of minority media outlets that support minority parties, thus assisting in the pluralization of minority media domains. The media of Albanians and Hungarians serve as a good example for this practice. Attempting to mobilize the support of horizontally structured minority communities (Transylvanian Hungarians) also requires the assisting role of minority media, which explains the willingness of Hungarian elites to support their development. Hence, I conclude that students of ethnic media need to take into consideration the structuring of the political and social spheres of minority groups before assessing the impact of their numerical size and political strength on the development of these groups' media institutions. Examination of the effect of the political organization of ethnic minorities on the development of their media is one of the contributions of this study to minority media literature.

Private sources of financing

Advertising is considered the major source of revenue for both majority and minority media. Scholars of ethnic media tend to believe that advertising has limited applicability to minority media as they have small audiences and hardly attract any advertisers.

Albanian and Hungarian media, however, demonstrate that large minority communities with developed media markets can successfully attract advertisers from minority and majority businesses, as well as from government agencies. In fact, government-commissioned ads constitute the major source of revenue of Albanian media in Macedonia. Second, Hungarian and Albanian media also demonstrate that minority media can successfully sustain themselves through revenues from *sales*. Third, funding for minority media projects can also be provided by non-governmental organizations (i.e. Open Society Foundations) and supranational organizations (the E.U.) that seek to achieve integration of minorities and preservation of their identity. Such grants, however, are temporal and conditional. Finally, another source of financial assistance to minority media institutions can be provided by minority politicians who, as the Hungarian and Albanian cases demonstrate, often become owners of influential minority titles and channels. The Turkish case shows another scenario where the Turkish political establishment has deliberately chosen not to support the media of its group because of a fear to assist in the genesis of its own nemesis – pluralist Turkish media and watchdog minority journalism that can challenge the Turkish political status quo.⁵⁴

Naturally, the origins of funding affect the freedom of media and influence their ability to perform their watchdog role. Therefore, achieving genuine freedom of expression requires finding proper balance between the mentioned above public and private sources

⁵⁴ Over the past ten years, the leaders of the Turkish political party in Bulgaria have largely neglected requests from Turkish media entrepreneurs to assist them in the development of Turkish electronic and print media outlets. Some of these requests were for financial assistance. Others were policy oriented such as asking MRF leaders to lobby for expansion of the Turkish programs on Bulgarian PBS. Regardless of their orientation, all media requests of the Turkish community fell on the deaf ears of its political leadership.

of financing. In the case study chapters, I pay special attention to the use of public funding for minority media projects by majority and minority politicians to assess their involvement in the promotion and development of these media. Riggins (1992) points out that in many cases majority elites are concerned with supporting minority media to exploit their assimilationist role rather than to promote genuine ethnic pluralism. This observation has been confirmed by the case of Turkish minority media in Bulgaria. However, my research goes further and investigates the incentives of minority politicians to block or encourage the development of the media institutions of their respective communities. Thus, media–politics nexus plays central role in my analysis. Another contribution of this thesis to minority media literature is that explains the change in the structuring of minority media spheres by examining the role of minority political elites in their development.

2.2.3. *Training tool*

Training of minority media professionals is the final tool that authorities in multiethnic polities have at their disposal to aid the development of ethnic minority media. Browne (2005) reports that one of the most common problems experienced by minority media producers today is the lack of journalistic and managerial skills among their staff. Riggins (1992) argues that ethnic media are often run by enthusiast amateurs and volunteers.⁵⁵ It is obvious that to diminish the assimilationist role of ethnic media, the latter have to rely

⁵⁵ This observation is not entirely accurate. It might be valid for the ‘cultural’ type of ethnic minority media produced by small communities, but is certainly less applicable to full-fledged ethnic media produced by professional minority journalists. For example, the major electronic and print media outlets of the Albanian minority in Macedonia are run exclusively by media professionals, educated in Albanian universities.

on their own media experts. Usually, the training of minority media specialists is done through positive discrimination measures such as providing reserved seats (quotas) to minority students in public educational institutions. This is the approach followed by the Macedonian authorities. In addition, non-governmental organizations may also contribute to the cause by setting up training courses for minority journalists – a strategy that has been successfully utilized in Bulgaria and Macedonia. The utility of the NGO assistance, however, is somewhat limited as it lasts until the funding is exhausted. Thus, my research shows that positive discrimination measures in the educational sphere have more lasting benefits for ethnic media development. These measures reflect the general minority policies of majority elites. The selected here cases provide a good opportunity to study the development of ethnic media in institutional contexts that show no coherent minority policies (Bulgaria) and well-structured minority policies (Macedonia).

2.3. Models of Minority Media Development

As mentioned above, literature on ethnic media recognizes the role of majority elites in the setting of conditions for the emergence and development of ethnic media. For example, Husband recognizes that “state policies in relation to immigration, national identity and ethnic diversity shape the framework within which [minority] communication policy is formulated and implemented.”⁵⁶ In a similar vein, Riggins (1992) argues that authorities often have decisive role in the formation of the media spheres of minority communities for in many occasions ethnic minority groups have little

⁵⁶ Charles Husband, ed. *A Richer Vision: The Development of Ethnic Minority Media in Western Democracies*, Communication and Development (Kent: UNESCO Publishing, 1994), 2.

leverage to articulate and defend their communication needs and rights. He claims that allocation of state resources to minority media are not “spontaneous gestures of goodwill,” but are calculated decisions made in accordance with elites’ objectives. The latter often do not coincide with the best interests of minority communities, as elites perceive minority journalism and media as a threat to national unity and integration. Hence, it is not surprising that multiethnic states “might have inconsistent policies, promoting minority media while simultaneously following policies of containment and repression.”⁵⁷

Riggins conceptualizes the multicultural strategies of elites in the media field in the form of five models. The *integrationist model* is adopted by states that pursue multicultural policies. They invest into the development of minority media institutions, as they believe that minority media may contribute to the integration of minority communities into national life, giving authorities at the same time the opportunity to monitor minorities through following the debates in their media.⁵⁸ The *economic model* is pursued by states that wish to increase the literacy of their minority communities through opening minority media outlets in order to boost their national economies and achieve better integration of minorities in the economic processes.⁵⁹ The *economic* and *integrationists* models are compatible. They are usually pursued by states that adhere only superficially to the policies of multiculturalism. States may also subscribe to the *divisive model* of ethnic

⁵⁷ Riggins 1992, 8

⁵⁸ For a more detailed discussion of these models, see Riggins (1992), pp.8-11.

⁵⁹ This is the case of Canada, where the assimilationist policies of the state are often disguised as multiculturalism. Riggins provides as an example the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation in Canada, which operation depends on the goodwill of national elites and bureaucrats.

media, where the latter are used to trigger ethnic rivalry and disunity in fragmented societies, following the interests of ruling elites. The *preemptive model* of ethnic media organization is pursued by majority elites who willingly invest in the establishment of public minority media institutions in order to prevent minority groups from establishing their own independent media outlets. This provides authorities with the ability to control the discourse in minority media spheres and influence minority public opinion. Finally, there are instances when states or transnational organizations seek to promote values through mass media and thus devise ethnic media to reach minority audiences in their own language. This is the *proselytism model* of ethnic media organization. All these models exemplify the important role that political elites play in the organization of the media spheres of ethnic minority groups. Scholars of ethnic media, however, omit to examine cases of politically strong minority communities whose elites may play a key role in the articulation of the media needs of their communities. This thesis attempts to address this void. My field research in the Balkans has revealed that majority political elites can adopt different models of minority media organization with respect to different communities. For example the *economic* model is applied with respect to the development of Roma media in Bulgaria, whereas the *preemptive* and *proselytism* models have been utilized with regards to the Turkish media in the same polity. Naturally, the security sensitive character of the Turks and the social and political marginalization of Roma have informed the elites' selection of approaches to the development of the media spheres of these groups.

In sum, the review of literature on ethnic minority media has revealed that an important area of research has escaped the attention of the students of this phenomenon. This is the impact of minority political structures and agents on the development of the media spheres of ethnic minority groups. This dissertation will turn this void into its central focus. To account for the progress of the media of security sensitive groups in the Balkans, I propose an analytical framework that encompasses seven independent variables from three different levels of analysis. The literature on ethnic minority media has helped me identify some of them, whereas the selection of the rest has been a consequence of a four-year long field research in the Balkans.

3. Media Systems and ‘Propaganda’ Model

As stated earlier, the media of ethnic minority groups cannot exist in a vacuum and can develop only within majority (mainstream) media structures.⁶⁰ Hence, in order to subject the media of security sensitive minorities on the Balkans to critical evaluation, one needs to clarify the broader media context within which they operate. In other words, the structuring of majority media spheres may affect the structuring and operation of minority media spheres. In the media literature, the former are theorized as national media systems. In this section, I am going to introduce an operational classification of national media systems, which conceptualizes the relationship between media and politics – the focal point of my investigation. This classification will prove useful for the

⁶⁰ Marianne Stenbaek. 1992. Mass Media in Greenland: The Politics of Survival. In *Ethnic Minority Media. An International Perspective*, ed. Stephen Harold Riggins: 44-63. London: Sage Publications.

analysis of national media systems in the Balkans. Later, I will introduce Herman and Chomsky's 'Propaganda' media model, which conceptualizes the relationship between elites and media institutions, and demonstrates how the former manipulate the operation of the latter. Certain elements of the 'Propaganda' model seem relevant to the operation of ethnic minority media systems in the Balkans. The model provides useful analytical tools for identifying the clientelist relations between political and media elites, which is central to my argumentation.

To adapt the 'Propaganda' model to the task of examining the input of political elites in the operation of ethnic minority media, it will be supplemented by elements of the instrumentalist theory to ethnicity. Intertwining of the instrumentalist and Propaganda approaches will provide the basis of my analytical framework.⁶¹ Both frameworks focus on the engineering powers of elites and nicely complement each other. If the instrumentalist approach studies the role of elites in manipulation of ethnicity for political/economic gains, the 'Propaganda' model studies manipulation of media by elites for political/corporate gains. If the Instrumentalist approach accounts for the incentives of elites to manipulate media structures and content, the 'Propaganda' model explains their ability to do so. Thus, combination of both approaches into a single analytical framework will provide me with the opportunity to examine the role of political elites in influencing both the *structure* and *content* of ethnic minority media. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a review of the literature on media democratization in Eastern Europe, which does not add any new elements to the constructed here analytical framework, but

⁶¹ The lack of developed analytical frameworks for the study of ethnic media phenomenon, necessitate adaptation of national-level media models to the study sub-national media systems.

brings in practical knowledge about the peculiarities of the media systems in this part of the world, which my analysis will later draw upon.

3.1. Mass Media Systems and Media Pluralism

Media of ethnic minority groups should be studied in the context of national media systems. There are a number of competing categorizations of media systems in the world, which all draw upon the same ‘libertarian-authoritarian’ dichotomy. For the purposes of my research, I will use the classification proposed by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1978) for it recognizes the communist media heritage of Eastern European states and offers broad understanding of the parameters of national media systems that is elastic enough to accommodate analysis of various media contexts.⁶²

In their seminal study ‘*Four theories of the press*,’ Siebert et al. distinguish among *libertarian*, *social responsibility*, *communist* and *authoritarian* media systems, where the dichotomy ‘media freedom - media control’ serves as a basis of their classification.⁶³ The authors argue that the design of given state’s media system is pre-determined by this state’s social and political structures. In other words, political structures determine media structures – an important argument that my thesis rests upon. Since the beginning of mass communication in Renaissance Europe, for Siebert et al. there have been only two media systems (or theories) – *libertarian* and *authoritarian*, each branching out into its own

⁶² Oates, 5.

⁶³ Although the authors refer to these systems as ‘theories of the press’, they make it clear that these theories are applicable to all forms of mass media.

modifications - *social responsibility* and *soviet communist* systems - which can be treated as separate media systems. The *authoritarian theory* is the oldest among them. It dates back to the late Renaissance era when print media were invented. In medieval Europe, the discovery of the truth was a prerequisite of kings and nobility who used the press to inform their subjects what they believe the latter should know. The media was obliged to support king's policies and only kings could grant media licenses ('patents') to private publishers in exchange for their loyalty and support. Any form of political criticism was forbidden. The media's goal was to inform the citizenry and to advance the policies of the government. The ruler retained the right to censor media and to withdraw the patent at any time. Check on the government by the press was not possible. Instead, control of the authorities over the media was the norm.

The authoritarian media system has served as a blueprint for the national media systems of most states in the world and is still common in its original form in some countries (Iran and Burma, to name a few). In these states, media serve the state and are subject to direct government control. They are not allowed to print/publish anything that would undermine the established political status quo or challenge the existing political values and culture. Censorship and punishment of liberal journalists is used to maintain state control over the media. This categorization of national media systems can be successfully applied to the study of minority media systems. For example, a modern version of the authoritarian media system can be observed nowadays in Bulgaria with regards to the operation of the Turkish minority media there. The attempt of these media to establish critical discourse and develop watchdog journalist practices has resulted in triggering of institutional

mechanisms of control by the Turkish political elite and silencing of liberal media outlets. Their ‘patents’ were withdrawn by the Turkish elite who controls all aspects of public life of this capsulated community. The attempt of authorities to subject media to political controls is typical for Eastern European states in general, the media of which still subscribe to practices typical for the Marxist-Soviet media model that these states followed before the democratic opening. The *Marxist-Soviet* media system is an offshoot of the authoritarian theory. Although the Soviet system collapsed, the *Marxist-Soviet* model is “still useful in understanding the poor performance of the media as pillar of civil society in many post-soviet states.”⁶⁴ According to this offshoot of the authoritarian media model, during the communist era, mass media in Eastern Europe served the interests of the working class while journalists practiced self-censorship to protect the socialist pillars of society. In reality, communist media were subjected to total government control, similar to the one from the authoritarian model.⁶⁵

The role of media as a servant of the state and major supporter of its policies remained a norm in Western Europe until the emergence of the *libertarian* media model in the 18th century. The forces that brought about the genesis of the bourgeoisie public sphere in Europe (i.e. expansion of political and religious freedoms, development of less-a-fair economic relations, emergence of the bourgeoisie class, etc.) also contributed to the undermining of the *authoritarian* model and the springing of libertarian media systems in

⁶⁴ Oates, 6.

⁶⁵ Ibid. Although the *authoritarian* and *Marxist-Soviet* models are close to each other, they have some key differences. First, the communist regimes had a complete monopoly over all communication channels – all media outlets were state-run. Second, since these regimes were not threatened by independent private media, they placed the emphasis on the positive use of mass media for agitation purposes as opposed to restricting the freedom of the press, typical for the authoritarian media systems.

Western Europe. Siebert et al. notice that although the postulates of the authoritarian theory have been rejected by contemporary liberal societies, their current media systems still bear the mark of the authoritarian model, which continues “to influence the practices of a number of governments that theoretically adhere to libertarian principles” (Siebert 1978, 9). Herman and Chomsky arrive at a similar conclusion. Although the liberal democratic regimes officially claim that their citizens enjoy freedom of expression and freedom of the media, in many cases the libertarian doctrines are “merely window dressing behind which governments follow authoritarian practices.”⁶⁶ This is especially true with respect to the newly established democratic regimes in Eastern Europe where previous authoritarian political culture and practices interfere with the operation of the newly established liberal norms and institutions. This accounts for the political control over the media institutions in the region, stressed in the case study chapters of this dissertation. Moreover, the development of the Turkish and Hungarian minority media spheres shows that the situation of minority media institutions within liberal national media systems does not entail liberalization and pluralization of the former. On the contrary, the media of Turks and Hungarians operated as *authoritarian* media sub-systems within the national *libertarian* media systems of Bulgaria and Romania. This dissertation has revealed that the structures of national media systems have little effect on the structuring and operation of the media systems of ethnic minority groups. It claims that the latter are shaped by the structures of minority political systems: pluralist minority political systems produce pluralist minority media systems, whereas non-pluralist (authoritarian) minority political systems produce authoritarian minority media systems.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 30.

Researching on the topic made me ask the question: will the structures and practices of the liberal media systems of the examined here Balkan states ‘trickle down’ to the media spheres of their national minority groups and breed similar liberal and pluralist media environments? The answer turned out to be negative. It is the purpose of this dissertation to demonstrate that the pluralization of the media spheres of minority groups is a function of their political spheres becoming liberal and pluralist first.

Media Pluralism

Since this dissertation examines pluralism in the media and since pluralist media institutions form the substance of libertarian media systems, it is necessary to provide a working definition of media pluralism. Ever since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) has recognized freedom of information and freedom of expression as fundamental human rights in 1948, international standards have acknowledged that these freedoms must be accompanied by media pluralism. On the one hand, media pluralism is seen as an effect of freedom of speech. On the other, it is an institutional precondition for the fulfillment of freedoms of information and speech, which are viable only when agents have access to multitudes of media outlets, expressing divergent opinions. Thus, media pluralism has been also recognized as an indispensable human right by the UDHR. It is defined as diversity of political, cultural and other outlooks expressed in the media sphere. The Commissioner for Human Rights provides one of the most comprehensive definitions of media pluralism, which this dissertation draws upon. This institution within the Council of Europe qualifies media as pluralistic provided they are “multi-centered

and diverse enough to host an informed, uninhibited and inclusive discussion of matters of public interest at all times.”⁶⁷ Pluralist media are defined as structures that are comprised of competing media outlets that establish genuine marketplace of ideas in liberal societies. Pluralist media are diverse in terms of ownership, political views, cultural outlooks and regional interests. They communicate to all corners of society and are capable of conveying a great variety of information and opinions. They draw information from a wealth of different sources.⁶⁸ The so defined pluralist media system is of course an ideal category that media institutions in liberal societies are trying to approximate with varying degrees of success. Further theoretical discussion of libertarian media systems will reveal additional facets of this phenomenon, whereas overview of media liberalization in Eastern Europe, offered in the concluding section of this chapter, will shed more light on the actual manifestation of media pluralism in this corner of the world.

To continue with the presentation of the *libertarian* media model, it is important to mention that liberal media systems drop the regulatory role of the state in media affairs and put the stress on the enforcement of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. These human rights rest upon the assumption that men are rational actors who desire to know the truth and the only method for them to discover it is pluralism and free competition of opinions in the media and public domains. In the libertarian model, citizens can discover the truth themselves, provided they are offered diverse

⁶⁷ Commissioner for Human Rights, *Media pluralism and human rights* (Council of Europe, 2011, accessed 10 June, 2012); available from <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1881589>.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

interpretations of reality by liberal and pluralist media institutions, whose critical reporting promotes free marketplace of ideas. Yet another important role of liberal media is to serve as watchdogs of elected officials. To make this possible, it is imperative for liberal media to remain free from government control. These media should be used as a “device for presenting evidence and arguments on the basis of which people check on government and make up their minds as to policy. *Minorities* as well as majorities, the weak as well as the strong, must have access to the press ... [tasked] to keep officers of the state from abusing or exceeding their authority... to be the watchdog over the workings of democracy, ever vigilant to spot any arbitrary or authoritarian practice,” explains Siebert.⁶⁹ Libertarians believe that everybody should have access to the media sphere regardless of the fact if one distributes true or false messages. It is up to the public to decide what opinion will survive the day. For this reason, the proponents of this theory oppose all forms of state monopoly over the avenues of communication and believe that everyone with inclination and economic means should have the opportunity to own and run media. Media should be privately owned and compete in the open capitalist market. They should be profit-driven and the purchasing power of the public shall determine their success.

Contemporary communication theorists, however, argue that subjecting the operation of media institutions to the logic of the free market negatively affects the plurality of opinions expressed in them. Herman and Chomsky, for example, demonstrate that the British authorities deliberately sought to deregulate the national media market in order to

⁶⁹ Siebert, p.4 and p.56. Emphasis mine to exemplify the importance of granting minority groups with access to liberal media.

kill the working-class and radical press, and prevent the spread of leftist ideas.⁷⁰ The authors show that in a deregulated media market, media outlets depend exclusively on the will of the advertisement donors (corporate and political entities) to stay afloat. Thus, the editorial stances of contemporary ‘liberal’ media are synched with the views of corporate and political elites who provide the advertisement dollar. In most cases, the views of elites are culturally and politically conservative, which kills the pluralism of the voices in the media domain.⁷¹ Curran concurs with this assessment: “Corporate advertisers will rarely sponsor programs that engage in serious criticism of corporate activities. This explains the death of the social-democratic and radical papers in Britain in the post WWII period, which provided “an alternative framework of analysis and understanding that contested the dominant systems of representation in both broadcasting and the mainstream press.”⁷² Hence, one can conclude that the size, market liberalism and degree of economic development of contemporary media markets, do not translate automatically into media pluralism, but install a media voting systems weighted by income: “With advertising, the free market does not yield a neutral system in which final buyer choice decides... The idea that the drive for large audiences makes the mass media “democratic” thus suffers from the initial weakness that its political analogue is a voting system weighted by income!”⁷³

⁷⁰ Herman, *Manufacturing Consent*, 14.

⁷¹ Businesses advertise in media outlets that are geared to the middle and upper classes because of their purchasing power. The lack of advertisement in the labour press eventually killed the latter. As a result, there is not a single leftist newspaper on the UK market today. The leftist discourse is also largely missing from the American mass media. Ibid.

⁷² James Curran, “The British press: a manifesto,” in *Advertising and the press* (London: Macmillan, 1978), p.254

⁷³ Herman, pp.14-17

Assessing the problem of media pluralism in libertarian media systems from a different angle, Habermas argues that the plurality of media voices does not depend on the size or strength of the media market, but is a function of the plurality of interests ('publics') in given polity and the ability of different 'publics' to access the media sphere.⁷⁴ The vibrancy of the social interests in the 18th and early 19th centuries provided for the vibrancy of the media back then, which were not exclusively profit driven. In fact, it was considered a norm for the pluralist media to generate degree of negative profit (Habermas, 182). Hence the gripe of Habermas with the 'consumerist' spirit of today's mass media, which kills the pluralism in them. He claims in this regard that the pluralist and liberal media from the past have been swept away by a new breed of capitalist mass media and mass culture, which do not lend themselves to critical reasoning. It is the logic of the market, not the interests of the 'publics', that dictates to modern mass media what to do. For Johnson the major task of contemporary media is not to inform, but to 'pack' and 'sell' corporate interests.⁷⁵ Herman and Chomsky agree with Habermas that the creation of vast class divisions by the capitalist market has put the bourgeoisie strata on top of the social ladder and made them the only participants and determinants of the public and media discourses. Their 'Propaganda' model seeks to conceptualize the power of elites to shape the discourse of contemporary mass media. My own research also indicates that the size and market success of the media of Transylvanian Hungarians have affected little their pluralist diversity. Instead, the administrative and financial

⁷⁴ This thought is very useful in the analysis of the origins of pluralism in the Hungarian minority media sphere, as it suggests that developed market for Hungarian titles does not necessarily imply pluralist Hungarian media sphere. My research has shown that the latter is a function of the plurality of political interests (or publics) in the Hungarian community.

⁷⁵ Pauline Johnson, *Habermas, Rescuing the public sphere*, New York: Routledge, 2006, p.29

dependence of Hungarian titles on the single Hungarian party (UDMR) in the 1990s, made them follow the discourse charted by the UDMR leaders and suffocated the pluralism of opinions in the Hungarian media. It was the pluralization of the political life of Hungarians, not liberalization of the media market in Romania that unlocked the pluralization of the Hungarian media sphere. The progress of Albanian and Turkish minority media seems to support this argument.

To sum up, the consumer-driven approach of contemporary mass media has resulted in establishing of 'commercial' type of media that substitutes serious reporting with infotainment.⁷⁶ With the emergence of electronic media in the 1950s, the libertarian media theory faced serious predicaments. First, the limited number of frequencies (electro-magnetic waves) that these media use to operate required bringing back the regulatory power of the state in the media domain.⁷⁷ Second, the establishment, production and maintenance of electronic media has turned out to be an expensive enterprise that can be afforded by a select few, violating the core libertarian principle that all citizens should have access to the media sphere.⁷⁸ Hence, the market-driven development of contemporary mass media necessitated re-formulation of the original

⁷⁶ Oates, 7-8.

⁷⁷ State structures arbitrate in the process of allocation of media frequencies to private entrepreneurs and grant them media licenses, guided by the 'public interest' in the process of arbitration. The fuzziness of this concept, however, provides for political and corporate interference.

⁷⁸ Different solutions have been implemented to solve this problem. Some states opted for provision of financial assistance to the media of disadvantaged groups (including ethnic minorities), which puts the latter in a position of dependency and limits their watchdog abilities. Others have set up public media funds and through taxation of households have directed public money to public broadcasters and media of minority communities.

libertarian media model. As a result, its offshoot - the *social responsibility* model - was born.

The *social responsibility* model has developed first in the U.S. where the neo-classical paradigm of development and saturation of the media market have led to concentration of media outlets in the hands of few media moguls. The monopolization of the media market has diminished media pluralism and endangered the liberal marketplace of ideas. Handful of media owners have become the new ‘information gatekeepers’ that were allowed to continue operating as long as they follow some basic rules. First, they need to be ‘socially responsible’ and make sure that their media empires strive for fair representation and cover all sides of events. Second, being in command of numerous media outlets, they need to filter out information that might jeopardize the fabric of society and refrain from broadcasting ‘damaging’ or ‘undesirable’ viewpoints. Third, they have to work towards building social consensus, sense of common good and sense of nationhood. All these obligations, however, deprive agents from acting on full information. If the libertarian media are mere ‘information providers’ that make possible for agents to discover the truth themselves, socially responsible media act as ‘information gatekeepers’, which opens the door to elites’ manipulation of media.⁷⁹ Thus, political communication scholars remain skeptical about the ability of mass media in liberal societies to fulfill their watchdog and social responsibility functions. Instead, they stress the dependency of these media on the interests of political and corporate elites:

⁷⁹ Ibid, 5-8.

Ideally, a free press balances official views with a more impartial perspective that allows the public to deliberate independently on the government's decisions. But in practice, the relationship between governing elites and news organizations is less distant and more cooperative than the ideal envisions.⁸⁰

Media researchers also discovered that the content, generated by liberal media systems today, tends to show broad similarity, which makes some scholars treat them as homogeneous entities.⁸¹ Hence, political communication students have developed two approaches to examine the 'government - media' nexus in libertarian and social-responsibility media systems, namely, the *hegemony* and *indexing* models. Hegemony theorists argue that political elites agree on the major policy principles and keep the available to the public information within narrow ideological boundaries in order to control the masses and manufacture consent. In their models, media function as propaganda machines. The *indexing* model shares with the *hegemony* theories the notion that elites control media, but believes that whenever there is a disagreement among elites, media split and reflect (or index) closely elite debates, which accounts for the appearance of critical views in the news.⁸² Media, however, continue to be subservient to the political domain and act as a tool in the hands of elites.

The 'media' segment of my theoretical framework will borrow components from the *hegemony* approach to study the 'politics-media' nexus of ethnic minority groups in the

⁸⁰ Robert Entman, *Projections of power. Framing news, public opinion, and U.S. foreign policy*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 2.

⁸¹ Ibid, 11.

⁸² For more detail account of the *indexing* approach see the studies of Entman (2004), Merming (1999) and Robinson (2002).

Balkans.⁸³ The ‘Propaganda’ model, advanced by the hegemony theorists Herman and Chomsky, provides the analytical tools that I will use to flesh out the dependence of ethnic minority media in this region on minority political elites. Their hegemonic model is also useful for my analysis because it examines the role of elites in *structuring* media institutions together with shaping the *content* of the messages produced by them. In comparison, *indexing* models put the stress exclusively on content-production and neglect important factors such as media ownership, concentration and financing of media – variables that play central role in Chomsky’s model and that have strong impact on the operation of ethnic minority media in the Balkans. I will briefly examine next Herman and Chomsky’s framework and elaborate on the elements I will borrow from it to study the media of ethnic minority groups in South Eastern Europe.

4.2. ‘Propaganda’ Model

In their seminal study, “*Manufacturing consent. The political economy of the mass media,*” Herman and Chomsky elaborate on the merging of liberal media with business and political interests to an extent where the former no longer stimulate the liberal marketplace of ideas, but protect the capitalist status quo and ‘manufacture consent’ through propagating the views of the elites. Although the ‘Propaganda’ model focuses on

⁸³ I consider the *hegemonic* framework better suited for my analysis than the *indexing* models for minority elites in the Balkans show broad consensus on what minority policies of their host states should be (i.e. protection of minority rights, proportional access to material and political resources, participation in the governance, autonomy issues, etc.). The disagreements among them are usually related to the means of achieving these goals (i.e. the Hungarian parties in Romania) or personal rivalry between ethnic politicians (i.e. the Albanian parties in Macedonia). The case of Turks in Bulgaria is also a good fit with the hegemonic approach as the Turkish political elite is coherent and exercises hegemonic control over every single aspect of the public life of the Turkish community.

the operation of the U.S. media, its provisions are useful for the study of any other 'libertarian - social responsibility' media system.⁸⁴ I will elaborate next on the relevant elements of this model and their usefulness for my analysis.

The 'Propaganda' model focuses on the effect of power and economic inequalities, vested in capitalist systems, on the operation of media institutions. It attempts to explain the performance of the U.S. mass media in terms of the institutional structures and relationships within which they operate, looking at factors of ownership, dependence on advertisers, and mutual interests and relationships between media and elites.⁸⁵ The model reveals the structural mechanisms of influence that the American political and corporate elites use to influence the messages and shape the discourse of the U.S. media. Elites deem this necessary as their dominant position in the media field can "influence the public opinion in the desired [by them] direction."⁸⁶ In particular, the 'Propaganda' model "traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public."⁸⁷ It depicts American media as large businesses, controlled by a handful of powerful individuals and corporations, often with links to the government. The inherited bias in their operation comes from the adaptation of journalists to the interests of media owners, the market and politicians: "the powerful are

⁸⁴ Both media systems represent ideal rather than actual models. The media systems of contemporary liberal societies borrow elements from both *libertarian* and *social responsibility* models (Oates 2008).

⁸⁵ Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing consent. The political economy of the mass media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002), xi.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, xii.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 2.

able to fix the premises of discourse, to decide what the general populace is allowed to see, hear, and think about, and to “manage” public opinion by regular propaganda campaigns.”⁸⁸ Although there is no overt censorship, American media are plagued by self-censorship, which guides the work of journalists who choose to implement “the constraints imposed by proprietary and other market and *governmental* centers of power.”⁸⁹ The model portrays elites as ‘information gatekeepers’ who decide what information will reach the media and become focus of public attention. To perform this gatekeeping role, elites rely on five news “filters,” which are internalized in the operation of American mass media. These are: (a) size, concentrated ownership and profit orientation of dominant mass-media firms; (b) advertising as dominant income source of mass media; (c) reliance of media outlets on information provided by government agencies and paid ‘experts’ close to the establishment; (d) elite organized negative responses to media statements; and (e) ‘anticommunism’ filter.⁹⁰ The filters interact and reinforce one another. Raw news content has to pass through all of them to be fit to print. The filters “fix the premises of discourse and interpretation, and the definition of what is newsworthy.”⁹¹ My investigation shows that elements of the first two filters have been extensively used also by minority elites in multiethnic polities to make their views dominant in the public domain, to shape the discourse of discussions within minority public spheres and to marginalize the views of dissidents. It is my view that elements of

⁸⁸ Edwards Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing consent. The political economy of the mass media*. (New York: Panteon Books, 1988).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, xii. Emphasis added to stress the role of political elites in the operation of media institutions, resting upon libertarian pillars.

⁹⁰ Herman, 2002, 2.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

the ‘Propaganda’ model can be successfully used to study mainstream mass media as well as minority media. In particular, the application of the *ownership* and *advertisement* filters to the study of minority media in the Balkans has helped me prove the dependence of these media on the interests of minority political elites. Thus, these two filters will be introduced next together with examples of their applicability.

The ‘*size, concentrated ownership and profit orientation*’ filter reveals the structural dependence of private media companies on the interests of their corporate owners, which also have vast stake in political decisions (GE, ITT, etc.).⁹² Herman and Chomsky elaborate extensively on the concentration of the media market in the U.S. in the hands of few media companies, whose stock is owned by corporate executives, bankers and investors. The authors elaborate on the close ties of the American media giants with the U.S. government, which they see as a key structural factor for the subjugation of private media companies to the interests of political elites. This affects most seriously electronic media as they require government licenses and franchises to operate “and are thus potentially subject to government control or harassment. This ‘technical’ dependency has been used as a club to discipline the media, and media policies that stray too often from an establishment orientation. The media protect themselves from this contingency by lobbying and other political expenditures, the *cultivation of political relationships*, and care in policy.”⁹³ This citation explains the ‘countermeasures’ that American media should deploy to avoid being hit by the regulatory club of the authorities. Among them is

⁹² Ibid, 12.

⁹³ Ibid, 13. Emphasis added.

cultivation of friendly relations with the administration, which is achieved by providing positive coverage of the latter. Herman and Chomsky reveal the impressive political ties of the media in the U.S. Many of the outside directors of these media are former government officials. “In television, the revolving-door flow of personnel between regulators and regulated firms was massive during the years when the oligopolistic structure of the media and networks was being established.”⁹⁴ The authors add that media have also become dependent on the government for more general policy support in areas such as business taxation, interest rates, labor policies, etc.⁹⁵

Alike the development of mass media in the U.S., stewardship and even direct ownership of media by active government officials has become the new fad of media organization in Europe. Take for example the media empire of the former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi or the close ties of the former French President (Sarkozy) to public French media. It is my view that the tendency of ‘Berluskonization’ of mass media in Europe has made the application of the ‘Propaganda’ model even more relevant for their analysis. This is true also with respect to ethnic minority media in the Balkans where ownership of influential minority media outlets by political entrepreneurs has become a norm. Indeed, the owners of the biggest Albanian and Hungarian media outlets in Macedonia and Romania are either minority politicians or business groups with political ambitions that forge close ties with ethnic minority parties and set up media enterprises to advance their political projects. As a rule, they own the media outlets with greatest influence and

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

potential to shape local public opinion. Preoteasa discusses the process of ‘Berlusconization’ of Romanian media where an increasing number of politicians are becoming owners of print and electronic media, and where there is a concentration of media ownership in the hands of few powerful representatives of the political and corporate elite.⁹⁶ For Avadani, political ownership of mass media in Eastern Europe is something natural as running large media enterprises is a resource-intensive business and the only actors who can handle it are politicians as they have the necessary assets.⁹⁷ The political and corporate ownership of influential mass media in the Balkans is the mechanism that turns Balkan elites into ‘information gatekeepers’ of their respective societies and gives them the power to shape the content of the messages produced by local media institutions. This calls for the application of “media concentration and ownership” filter of the ‘Propaganda’ model for their analysis.

Moreover, establishing control over mass media through using media regulatory bodies as a ‘punishing club’ has been a reality not only for the US media scene but for the Eastern European as well.⁹⁸ My research shows that national media regulators have been used also by minority political elites to control minority media outlets. For example, representatives of the Hungarian party (UDMR) on the Romanian media council have used this regulatory organ to silence critical Hungarian channels that dared to criticize

⁹⁶ Manuela Preoteasa, “Television across Europe: regulation, policy, and independence - Romania,” in *Television across Europe: regulation, policy, and independence* (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2005), 1231-1314.

⁹⁷ Avadani, 2007.

⁹⁸ For detailed analysis of the exploitation of media regulatory bodies by political elites in Eastern Europe see “Television across Europe: regulation, policy and independence. Summary. Monitoring reports,” (Budapest: Open Society Institute - Network Media Program, 2005).

UDMR. In a similar vein, the largest Albanian TV station in Macedonia (ALSAT-M) became a victim of administrative harassment, executed by the Macedonian Council for Radio Diffusion (MCRD). MCRD ordered few consecutive financial inspections of ALSAT-M with the sole purpose to intimidate its editors and punish them for maintaining a critical stance towards the Albanian party in the government. The OSI media monitoring report states that it has been a usual practice of Macedonian authorities to try to influence or silence liberal media outlets through threats, unannounced company audits and prosecution of independent journalists.⁹⁹ Similar control over the performance of mass media is exercised in Romania where broadcasters are reluctant to engage in critical reporting out of fear that the government will retaliate by seeking back unpaid taxes or ordering financial audits. According to the OSI report, this is a “very well coordinated [effort] at government level.”¹⁰⁰

Herman and Chomsky argue that political elites use institutional mechanisms together with personal relationships, threats and rewards to impact and coerce media.¹⁰¹ This contention perfectly squares with the experience of Albanian minority media and brings us to the *advertisement* mechanism of media control. The *advertisement* filter of the ‘Propaganda’ model suggests that the elites in the U.S. draw upon selective advertising to manipulate mass media institutions. When constructing this filter, Herman and Chomsky drew upon the research by Curran and Seaton who demonstrate the importance of

⁹⁹ Vesna Sopar and Veton Latifi, “Television across Europe: regulation, policy and independence. Monitoring reports. Republic of Macedonia,” (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2005), 284.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Herman, 22.

advertising for the operation of media.¹⁰² For Curran et al. advertising is a market-related factor that allows elites to accomplish what taxes and administrative harassment of dissident media may fail to do: “advertisers thus acquired a de facto licensing authority since, without their support, newspapers ceased to be economically viable.”¹⁰³ In a similar vein, Tarrow claims that advertisers’ choices influence profoundly the media market that no longer is a neutral market system where the ultimate arbiters are the readers. Instead, advertisers possess now this power and decide which media will remain on the market and which will disappear.¹⁰⁴ This provides for the subservient position of media to advertisers and the power of the latter to shape the content of the messages produced by the former. As the head of the NBC-TV Garnt Tinker observed, mass media today are an advertising-supported business “and to the extent that support falls out, programing will change.”¹⁰⁵ The power of advertisers “stems from the simple fact that they buy and pay for the programs - they are the [media] patrons... As such, the media compete for their patronage” and gear the produced messages to the interests of their donors.¹⁰⁶ Newspapers and stations that attract ads can afford a copy/program price well below the production costs. Media that fail to attract advertisers find themselves in a disadvantaged market position with higher production costs and less surplus to re-invest in their improvement. Hence, Herman and Chomsky conclude that the “advertising-based

¹⁰² See James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power without responsibility: the press, broadcasting, and new media in Britain*, 6th. ed. (London: Routledge, 2003).

¹⁰³ Curran, in Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 14.

¹⁰⁴ See Joseph Turow, *Media industries: the production of news and entertainment* (New York: Longman, 1984).

¹⁰⁵ In Herman, 16.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 16.

system will tend to drive out of existence or into marginality the media companies and types that depend on revenue from sales alone.”¹⁰⁷ This makes their filter applicable to the analysis of the performance of ethnic minority media, for which narrow profits from sales is a norm and availability of advertisers is paramount for their survival. This is clearly visible in the operation of Albanian minority media in Macedonia. As the neoliberal reforms in the country have hit disproportionately stronger the Albanian minority there, regular Albanians cannot afford to spend much on newspapers and cable television. Despite that, their media are among the most developed and extensive ones in Eastern Europe. There are more than 120 print and electronic Albanian media outlets in Macedonia, which are competing for the attention of the 500,000-strong Albanian population there. Obviously, it is not revenues from sales that account for the success of Albanian media. Experts claim that the local media market simply cannot sustain so many Albanian outlets. My research has shown that to stay afloat, Albanian media depend extensively on revenues from advertisement. It is even more peculiar that the biggest advertiser, offering the most generous and lucrative advertisement deals, is the Macedonian state. Different state departments commission on a weekly basis tenders (i.e. announcements for administrative positions, new government policies, etc.) to select Macedonian media outlets. Macedonian politicians allocate tenders to Macedonian media. Albanian politicians allocate tenders to Albanian media. The rationale behind their allocation practices is that the media that receive government tenders should provide friendly and uncritical coverage of the activities of the administration – just as the ‘Propaganda’ model envisages. The leaders of the Albanian party in the government

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 14.

decide which Albanian media are going to be the lucky recipients of these advertisement contracts. They use the ‘advertisement’ mechanism to support friendly media outlets and punish critical ones, thus shaping the discourse of Albanian media and public opinion formation in the Albanian community. Indeed, as the ‘Propaganda’ model dictates, “in addition to discrimination against unfriendly media institutions, advertisers also choose selectively among programs on the basis of their own principles”¹⁰⁸ and media have to accommodate the requirements and demands of their advertisers if they are to succeed.¹⁰⁹ This results in “continuous interaction of the media organization with patrons who supply the revenue dollars.”¹¹⁰ My research shows that in the case of ethnic minority media in the Balkans, their patrons are minority political elites or close to them businesses, which renders the “advertisement” filter useful for the analysis of these media.

In sum, elements of Herman and Chomsky’s ‘Propaganda’ model will be used in the analysis of the ethnic minority media in the Balkans to exemplify the role that minority elites play in the process of their development and performance. If the *instrumentalist* approach to ethnicity provides analytical leverage to explain the role of elites in shaping the *structures* of minority media institutions, the ‘Propaganda’ model complements it by accounting for the role of minority elites in shaping the *content* of the messages produced by these media. The examined in this thesis cases demonstrate the ability of minority elites to determine which minority media outlets will flourish and to shape their

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 17.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 16.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

discourse. Minority elites possess the necessary instrumentarium to reward friendly media and to marginalize those that dare to threaten their hegemonic position. Although inspired by the performance of the U.S media institutions, the following thought by Herman and Chomsky closely traces the dynamics of media-politics relations in the Balkans: “The elite domination of the media and marginalization of dissidents occurs so naturally... The [five filters] constraints are so powerful that alternative bases of news choices are hardly imaginable.”¹¹¹ Although the ‘Propaganda’ model studies the power of national elites “to fix frames of reference and agendas, and to exclude inconvenient facts from public inspection,”¹¹² I believe that some of its elements can be successfully used to study the *modus operandi* of ethnic minority media as well. Bearing in mind the novelty of these media and the fact that little analytical tools have been developed for their analysis, adjusting existing analytical frameworks, designed to study national media systems, to study sub-national media systems - seems like a logical thing to do. Thus, a combination of elements of the ‘Propaganda’ and *instrumentalist* approaches will be utilized in the forthcoming analysis of ethnic minority media in the Balkans. These frameworks are similar in the sense that they both examine the engineering power of elites. They are also different in the sense that the instrumentalist theory studies the manipulation of ethnicity by political elites for political gains, whereas the ‘Propaganda’ model studies the role of elites in shaping the messages produced by mass media. It is my view that manipulation of ethnic minority media by political elites, done for ethnicization and mobilization purposes, can be successfully studied through combination of elements from both approaches.

¹¹¹ Ibid. 2.

¹¹² Ibid, xiv.

4. Media in Eastern Europe: Democratization and Media Liberalization

This concluding section of the theory chapter will offer a brief review of the literature on media liberalization in Eastern Europe. Although this body of literature does not bring any new elements to my analytical framework, it is nevertheless important for my research, as it reveals the structural peculiarities of the media landscapes in the region, within which the media of ethnic minority groups are to emerge and develop.

The democratic restructuring that engulfed the communist states from Eastern Europe in the late 1980s swept away the *Marxist-Soviet* model regulating their media landscapes. On its place, an institutional amalgamation of elements from the *libertarian* and *social responsibility* media systems has been established. On paper media in Eastern Europe are pluralist, politically independent and able to promote genuine marketplace of ideas. My investigation has discovered, however, that the media of the examined here Balkan states deviate from the tenets of the libertarian model for they are still subjected to political control and manipulation. This is most noticeable in the operation of public broadcasters, which continue to depend heavily on state appropriations. Indeed, the process of democratization in the Balkans has enabled the genesis of a free marketplace of ideas, but it has not uprooted the authoritarian legacies, which continue to impair the development of mass media in the region. Literature on media liberalization in Eastern Europe provides insights into the role of majority elites in the development of ethnic minority media. It also advances propositions that help adapt the reviewed earlier national media systems to the dynamically changing media landscapes in Eastern Europe. I will depict

next the media spheres of these states, identify the obstacles hindering their liberalization, and draw conclusions about the effect that the liberalization of Eastern European media has on the development of ethnic minority media.

During the communist era, print and electronic media in Eastern Europe were used as a mouthpiece of communist elites. These media largely served to propagate the communist ideology and to glorify the authoritarian leaders. Following the collapse of the communist systems in the late 1980s, a process of rapid democratization and liberalization of all public domains, including mass media, ensued. The restructuring of Eastern European media systems traced the organization of their Western European counterparts. It was portrayed as a part of the 'Europeanization' of the former communist states. As a result, print media have been completely liberalized (*libertarian* approach), whereas electronic media have been subjected to certain government regulation (due to the scarcity of airwave frequencies), which called for the arbitration of specially created for this purpose media regulatory organs (*social responsibility* approach). The restructuring of the broadcasting sector in the region resulted in borrowing elements from the British, French and German broadcasting models, based on the competitive coexistence of private media sector and independent public service broadcasters. Print and electronic media comply with national norms and codes of ethics, whereas broadcasters also comply with the directives of national media regulatory organs. The new democratic governments in Eastern Europe opened their media to private investors while at the same time attempted to transform the former state-owned media enterprises. The liberalization of the broadcasting sector was often executed chaotically, without any clear vision or policy in

place. In the early 1990s, many post-communist countries were ravaged by “media wars” between political elites and journalistic communities over who controls the media. It is indicative that these wars still continue today in liberal states like Hungary, where politicians and journalists fight over the proper place and functions of media in pluralist societies.¹¹³

Although the liberalization of the media in Eastern Europe has largely improved the access of the public to it, scholarly research on the topic indicates that this is still a process in flux. Critical commentators maintain that the functioning of post-communist media institutions has been compromised by authoritarian style of policy-making and susceptibility of media to political control, which has negatively affected the development of local ethnic minority media. Sparks (1998), Splichal (1994), Agh (1998), Ognianova (2002) and Gross (2002) research the link between ‘political democratization’ and ‘media liberalization’ in Eastern Europe and express reservations about the success of nurturing liberal and free of government control media systems in the region. Instead, they arrive at the conclusion that media landscapes in Eastern Europe have largely remained under political influence. This contention is supported by two successive media monitoring reports produced by the Open Society Institute. In sum, media researchers seem to agree on the fact that mass media in Eastern Europe are featured by partisanship, state control, convergence of media and political elites, and lack of Western-type journalistic ethics and professionalism.

¹¹³ “Television across Europe: regulation, policy and independence. Summary. Monitoring reports,” (Budapest: Open Society Institute - Network Media Program, 2005), 35.

When researching on mass media in the former communist bloc, Gross (2002) groups the countries in the region into two camps depending on their pre-communist liberal traditions. The first camp is formed by Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, which enjoyed underground anti-Communist media and civil society structures long before the end of the communist regimes. The second camp incorporates all the remaining Eastern European states (Bulgaria, Romania, and Macedonia among them), which did not have independent media and public spheres prior to the democratic opening. Despite this difference, Gross argues that immediately after the democratic change, every state in the region has developed a politically dependent mass media system. Nowadays, the difference between the two camps is in the degree of affiliation of media outlets with political elites – weaker in the first and stronger in the second group: “The political parties that took over the reins of government and state sought to control the existing radio and television outlets and to influence the print media by whatever means they had at their disposal.”¹¹⁴ In a similar vein, Splichal argues that post-communist media have been largely used by politicians to achieve narrow political goals rather than to serve their civil societies.¹¹⁵ Agh echoes this argument and adds that the Eastern European “political parties have monopolized the public scene by securing privileged access to the media for themselves.”¹¹⁶ Ognianova subscribes to the above propositions and affirms that media in

¹¹⁴ Peter Gross, *Entangled evolutions: media and democratization in Eastern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 36.

¹¹⁵ See Slavko Splichal, “The Civil Service Paradox and the media in Central and Eastern Europe,” *Research on Democracy and Society*, no. 1 (1993): 85-109.

¹¹⁶ Atilla Agh, “The emergence of the Hungarian party system: an East Central European comparative review,” in *Central and Eastern Europe in Transition*, ed. Frank Columbus (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 1998), 29-66, 40.

Eastern Europe have evolved from “tribunes of the Communist party to tribunes of a diversity of political parties.”¹¹⁷

The conjoined evolution of party politics and media was valid for all Eastern European states during the first half of the 1990s. Although by the end of this decade the development of more independent media was registered, “the two sides [media and politics] continued living together or, at the very least, dating even after the divorce.”¹¹⁸

Media politicization and partisanship have not disappeared. Instead, political parties and media institutions entered into a new form of relationship, featured by shared beliefs and interests, actions and discourses. Hence, Gross concludes that Eastern European media continue to serve as platforms of their political patrons and depend on the developments in the political sphere. For Splichal (1994), the prolonged dependence of media on politics in the region is a result of the merely ‘cosmetic’ change of former communist elites with new ‘democrats’ who still rely on the authoritarian tradition of policymaking. According to Gross (2002) the antidemocratic political culture from the communist era is still pervasive in Eastern Europe, which makes him conclude that it is “highly questionable whether the post-1989 institutions of Eastern Europe, including the media, are liberal.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Ognianova, *Transitional Media*, 18. In Gross, 36.

¹¹⁸ Gross, 42.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

The mushrooming of independent media outlets in the 2000s does not signify that the Eastern European media systems have become genuinely libertarian. To become so, they need to get rid of government control and develop resistance to political partisanship. To avoid confusion, it must be said that the influence of political institutions on broadcasting is legitimate as elected legislators and governments are the legitimate representatives of the public interest in the media domain. The problem with Eastern European media is that they are “subject to political pressures and interference by party politicians, and industrial and other lobbies, which encroach upon their independence by attempting to compel them to serve specific economic and political interests,” explains the OSI media report.¹²⁰ Sparks and Reading (1998) argue that the privatization of Eastern European media aimed to achieve their independence, but resulted instead in granting control over them to local business and political elites, which has negatively affected the promotion of liberal marketplace of ideas and empowered political elites at the expense of civil society actors.¹²¹ This observation is also true with regards to the development of ethnic minority media in the region. The cyclical revival of ethno-nationalist sentiments in Eastern Europe has been portrayed by media scholars as an additional impediment to the liberalization of the media, in general, and to the development of ethnic minority media, in particular. For example, Splichal (1994) maintains that local majority elites have become afraid of the speed of economic and political globalization and the associated with it loss of national sovereignty. To compensate, they have undertaken a course of restricting media pluralism and enhancing state penetration in the media sphere, which

¹²⁰ *Television across Europe*, 2005, 43.

¹²¹ See Colin Sparks and Anna Reading, *Communism, capitalism, and the mass media* (London; Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1998).

resulted in the establishment of paternalistic media systems, leaving little room for minority media development.

During my field researches in Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania, I had the chance to interview a number of media scholars and journalists from the Balkans, many of whom share the belief that the lingering political control over the mass media in the region is not solely a post-communist artifact, but a larger trend that all Western media share.¹²² Berlusconi's media empire in Italy,¹²³ 'Fox'-style media coverage in the US, Sarkozy controlled public broadcasters in France, were among the usual examples given to this author by media researchers in the Balkan to demonstrate that Western media systems are far from immune from political controls. The OSI media report concurs with these contentions and provides well-documented examples of the political pressure exerted over the public broadcasters and media regulatory bodies in France, Italy, UK and Germany.¹²⁴ The difference between political and corporate controls of mass media in Western and Eastern Europe lies in the visibility of the process: more subtle in the West and more visible in the East.

¹²² Zhaneta Trajkoska (Macedonia), Iona Avandi (Romania), Marian Chiriac (Romania), Professor Snejana Popova (Bulgaria), Assya Kavrakova (Bulgaria). Media *hegemony* scholars like Herman and Chomsky would agree with these qualifications.

¹²³ "...Silvio Berlusconi, as Italy's Prime Minister, enjoyed a degree of power over both commercial and public service television in recent years that has no precedent in any developed European democracy." This prompted the Representative for the Freedom of the Media of the Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) to voice his concerns. "Usually, such reprimands are addressed to countries with unconsolidated democratic political systems." *Television across Europe*, 2005, 34, 38, 44. The same source fleshes out that Italian politicians still exercise a great deal of control over the regulation of electronic media in the country, due to a "confusing and complicated" regulatory system.

¹²⁴ For the porous to political influence organization of the French High Council for Broadcasting see *Television across Europe*, 2005, p. 44 and p. 51. The same source provides information on the susceptibility to political control of the media regulatory bodies of Germany, UK and Italy. See pp. 50-51.

The Open Society Institute published two media monitoring reports that assess the performance of media regulatory bodies and broadcasters in 40 European states, with a special focus on the new democracies from Eastern Europe.¹²⁵ They provide useful information on the development of national public broadcasters, which are important for the development of ethnic minority media as they host public minority channels. The first report (2005) assesses as “incomplete” the process of transformation of state broadcasters into public ones. It affirms that “...political and commercial pressures on the national regulatory authorities in charge of licensing broadcasters, remain a fact of life.”¹²⁶ As major reason for this is seen the “culture of collusion” between the regulatory bodies and state institutions, which stems from the flawed implementation of media laws.¹²⁷ The report claims that although broadcasting regulations in the region have been brought broadly into line with the Western European standards, “the implementation of legislation is often deficient and the operational and financial independence of broadcasting regulators is in many cases flawed.”¹²⁸ The dependence of public broadcasters on state funding opens the door for “political interference and pressures,” kills investigative journalism and hampers minority programming which are both “scarce commodities in both public and commercial television.”¹²⁹ The report concludes on a pessimist note,

¹²⁵ The scope of comparison and the depth of research of this project is unparalleled. It focuses on television broadcasters for “television is the primary source of information for most people today and most influential medium for forming public opinion.” *Television across Europe*, 2005, 21. The report also assesses the performance of electronic media regulatory organs in the Balkans countries, which proved useful for my analysis.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 21.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 49. The report states in this regard that “the appointment procedures leave room for political interference... harming the operational independence of the regulators.” (p. 50).

¹²⁸ Ibid, 21.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 22.

suggesting that local political elites have shown “little inclination to respect the autonomy of the public service broadcasters.”¹³⁰ In line with the ‘Propaganda’ model, the OSI reports stress the negative trend of concentration of the broadcasting market in Eastern Europe in terms of ownership and viewership. Although the concentration of ownership in Western Europe still remains higher, the former Eastern bloc quickly catches up: “in the past decade the transition countries have seen massive mergers and acquisitions, and the establishment of large media groups controlling much of the broadcasting market. When financially backed by politicians, or part of larger enterprises operating in other sectors than the media, *commercial television can, and often has, become an instrument for pursuing political or business interests.*”¹³¹ This demonstrates the relevance of the ‘Propaganda’ model for their analysis.

In sum, democratic culture and liberal media are still in the process of formation in the former communist states from Eastern Europe. Although the adoption of liberal media laws have ensured the independence of local media institutions on paper, the flawed implementation of media legislations, combined with lingering authoritarian practices from the communist era, have resulted in subjugation of local mass media institutions to political and corporate controls. The concentration of media ownership, together with susceptibility of media to elites’ control, make the selection of Herman and Chomsky’s ‘Propaganda’ model a suitable framework for the analysis of the media landscapes in the examined here Balkan states. The combination of elements from this model and the

¹³⁰ Ibid, 24.

¹³¹ Ibid. Emphasis added by the author to demonstrate the relevance of the ‘Propaganda’ model for the analysis of Eastern European media landscapes.

instrumentalist approach to ethnicity completes the building of my analytical framework, which will be used to study the role of political elites in the progress of ethnic minority media in the Balkans.

5. Chapter Conclusion

This theoretical chapter has reviewed few bodies of literature. Some of them have provided the building blocks of this dissertation's theoretical framework (the literature on ethnicity and the 'Propaganda' media model), whereas others have informed the selection of its independent variables (literature on ethnic minority media) or established the background for analysis of the researched phenomenon (literature on media liberalization in Eastern Europe). The review of literature on ethnicity has ended with the contention that the analysis of ethnicity and ethnic minority media in the Balkans will be guided by the *instrumentalist* approach, as I perceive ethnicization of minorities in the region, in general, and development of their media, in particular, as dynamic processes manipulated by local political elites. As the investigation of the three case studies will demonstrate, the political elites in the Balkans (minority elites in particular) not only manipulate ethnicity, but also often play the 'ethnic card' to shape the structures and messages produced by ethnic minority media. Majority elites can control the development of media through instruments such as subsidization, regulation, and training of minority journalists. Once a favorable normative and institutional context is established, it is minority elites who play the central role in the development of the media of their

respective communities. They try to establish control over these media for the important role they play in the process of ethnicization, mobilization and public opinion formation. The political organization of minority groups is identified in this thesis as one of the independent variables that affects strongly the progress of ethnic minority media. The review of literature on ethnicity has revealed that the status of inter-ethnic relations in Eastern Europe also influences the development of ethnic minority media. Thus, it has been selected as another independent variable that the present dissertation will look at.

The literature on ethnic minority media has stressed that the media spheres of ethnic minorities represent an integral part of national media systems. Thus, I have engaged into classification of national media systems, first, to clarify the broader framework within which ethnic minority media develop in Eastern Europe, and second, to introduce some key concepts that the analysis of minority media spheres draws upon, namely, liberal and authoritarian media spheres, characteristics of pluralist media, etc. The analysis of literature on media democratization in the region has indicated that the media landscapes of the Eastern Europe states are still in flux, exhibiting blending of elements from the *libertarian* and *authoritarian* media systems. This body of literature has confirmed that liberal media mechanisms are still in process of formation in the region. Although the adoption of liberal media laws and regulatory structures have ensured the independence of Eastern European media on paper, the lack of proper implementation of these norms accounts for the susceptibility of local mass media to political and corporate controls.

In addition to the *instrumentalist* approach to ethnicity, elements of Herman and Chomsky's 'Propaganda' model have helped me construct the second pillar of my theoretical framework. The application of two of their media filters - *ownership* and *advertising* - will help me reveal the dependence of ethnic minority media in the Balkans on minority political elites. These filters will be combined with elements of the instrumentalist approach to demonstrate the role of political agency in the pluralization of ethnic minority media in the Balkans. Both frameworks nicely complement each other: if the Instrumentalist approach accounts for the incentives of elites to manipulate media structures and content, the 'Propaganda' model explains their ability to do so. Thus, combination of both approaches into a single analytical framework will provide me with opportunity to examine the role of political elites in influencing both the structure and content of ethnic minority media.

The review of literature on ethnic minority media has identified the variables that influence the progress of these media. Domestic political elites have at their disposal the following institutional tools to promote ethnic media: *normative regulation*, *financing*, and *training of minority media professionals*. The intensity of their application will be examined in the three case studies to account for the input of elites in the development of ethnic minority media in the Balkans. The identified by Riggins (1992) five multicultural media models (*integrationist*, *economic*, *divisive*, *preemptive*, *proselytism*) will be taken into account in the analysis of the structuring of minority media spheres in the Balkans. The *preemptive* and *proselytism* models, in particular, bear strong relevance to the development of ethnic media in some of the states in the region, and fit nicely into the

adopted instrumentalist framework for their analysis. The so constructed theoretical framework will now be applied to the analysis of the media of the largest security sensitive ethnic minority groups in the Balkans – Turks in Bulgaria, Albanians in Macedonia, and Hungarians in Romania. ^(fd)

Chapter 3

Media of the Turkish Minority in Bulgaria

The first case study chapter of my dissertation will examine the development of the Turkish minority media in Bulgaria. The collected primary and secondary data on the topic will be analyzed through the lenses of the discussed in the previous chapter theoretical approaches to provide answers to the central questions of my research, namely, *what factors account for the development of the media of security sensitive minority groups? What accounts for the pluralization of these media? What role do minority political elites play in the development of the media of their respective communities?* To find answers to these questions, the present chapter will examine the following clusters of independent variables: 1) Minority-level institutional and resource constraints, namely, the *political cohesion* and *level of education of the Turkish minority group* as well as the *status of interethnic relations* in Bulgaria; 2) Media-level constraints, namely, *previous experience in making Turkish minority media* and *availability of funding for their production*; 3) Supranational-level constraints, namely, *external system pressure* on Bulgaria to improve the status of its national minorities.

The Bulgarian case will set the stage for revealing the strong causal link between the organization of the political and media spheres of security sensitive minority groups. This chapter will demonstrate that the status of Turkish minority media is strongly affected by the political organization of the Turkish community and more specifically by its political coherence. It will show that when a single ethnic party represents the interests of a tangible minority group in the political domain, the media of this group will be anti-

pluralist and will maintain uncritical and monolithic discourse. The Turkish case will demonstrate that elites of politically coherent minority groups try to stop any liberalization of these group's media in order to prevent political fragmentation and to strengthen the political cohesion of the ethnic electorate. The greater the political homogeneity of given minority group, the less pluralist and liberal its media are. The expectation that 'pasting' the media structures of politically homogeneous minority communities in liberal national media systems will result in liberalization and pluralization of the former is false. The major contention of this dissertation is that the pluralization of the media spheres of security sensitive minority groups is a function of the pluralization of their political spheres. Competition among minority political parties transcends political spheres and transfers into minorities' media domains, creating opportunities for the development of pluralist minority media spheres. Diverse media voices within minority communities then stimulate deliberations within minority public spheres, thus aiding the overall integration of minorities in the fabric of their host societies. *Level of education of minority groups, traditions of media making and availability of funding* for minority media projects are all factors that are also important for the progress of ethnic media. The examination of the three case studies, however, will demonstrate that these variables are less potent when it comes to the development of full-fledged pluralist minority media spheres, when compared to the key explanatory factor of this study – the political cohesion of ethnic minority groups.

This chapter begins with a presentation of the major characteristics of the Turkish minority, which are believed to affect the development of its media institutions. It will be

followed by analysis of the media legislation in Bulgaria to demonstrate that there are no normative impediments to the development of minority media in the country. Review of Turkish minority media will follow to demonstrate their rich traditions and current impoverished status. Building upon this information, the analytical section of this chapter will examine the validity of the advanced here hypotheses and explanatory variables.

1. Characteristics of the Turkish Minority in Bulgaria

I will begin with a snapshot of the ethnic diversity in Bulgaria, followed by a discussion of the inter-ethnic relations in the country, presentation of the political and social characteristics of the Turkish community, and identification of the media preferences of the Turks.

1.1. Ethnic Diversity in Bulgaria

According to the last national census, the total population of Bulgaria numbers 7,364,570 people. Bulgarians account for 84.5% (5,664,624) of the population, followed by 588,318 (8.8%) Turks and 325,343 (4.9%) Roma. The remaining smaller minorities amount to only 0.7%.¹ Although the Bulgarian population has decreased by half a million (564,331) since the previous census, the ratio between the biggest ethnic communities has remained

¹ National Statistical Institute, *Results of the 2011 Population Census. Population by region, municipalities and settlements.* (National Statistical Institute, 2011, accessed 10 May 2012); available from <http://censusresults.nsi.bg/Census/Reports/1/2/R7.aspx>.

the same.² According to the National Statistical Institute, 85% (5,631,759) of Bulgarians name Bulgarian as their mother language, 9.1% (604,246) specify Turkish as their mother tongue, and 4.2% (280 979) indicate Roma.³ According to a public opinion survey conducted by the National Centre for Public Opinion Surveys (NCPOS), 82% of Turks speak Turkish at home and only 2.6% of them speak both Turkish and Bulgarian languages.⁴ The 2011 national census indicates a similar trend, namely, 96.6% of Turks recognize Turkish as their first language and only 3.2% identify Bulgarian as their mother tongue.⁵ This statistical data demonstrates that Turks in Bulgaria are a tangible minority group that relies exclusively on the Turkish language for communication purposes. This suggests that media in Turkish would be the preferred information source of the community.

1.2. Media and Information Preferences of the Turkish Minority

Indeed, the Open Society Institute (OSI) survey of the media preferences of ethnic minorities in Bulgaria clearly demonstrates that Bulgarian Turks prefer to watch and

² This is beneficial to this comparative study as some of the provided here statistical information comes from surveys conducted in the late 1990s and mid-2000s. According to the 2001 census, the total population of Bulgaria was 7.9 million: 83.6% of them (6,655,210) identified themselves as ethnic Bulgarians, 9.5% (746,664) as ethnic Turks, and 4.6% (370,908) as Roma.

³ The number of people speaking Turkish appears larger than the actual size of the Turkish group because 21,440 Roma and 15,959 Bulgarians have also specified Turkish to be their first language. Many Roma accept Turkish identity to achieve higher social status and get access to better jobs. Bulgarians who speak Turkish belong to the Pomak Muslim community. Pomaks are ethnic Bulgarians who accepted Islam during the occupation of Bulgaria by the Ottoman Empire.

⁴ National Centre for Public Opinion Surveys, "Ethnicities and power," (Sofia: 1998), 9.

⁵ National Statistical Institute, *Results of the 2011 Population Census. Population by region, municipalities and settlements*. (National Statistical Institute, 2011, accessed 7 July, 2012); available from <http://censusresults.nsi.bg/Census/Reports/1/2/R7.aspx>.

listen to programs in Turkish language. As such programs are a rare commodity in the country, the media attention of the group is directed to TV shows made in the neighbouring state of Turkey, which Turks receive via satellite or cable. The OSI report indicates that 67 % of Bulgarian Turks prefer to watch satellite TV programs from Turkey, which are equally popular among viewers from different educational backgrounds.⁶ Unfortunately, the programs originating from Turkey provide mostly entertaining content and do not report on the life in Bulgaria. To inform themselves about the socio-political developments in their host country, Bulgarian Turks rely on two Turkish media outlets produced in Bulgaria. These are the ten-minute ‘*News in Turkish*’ program on the First Channel of the Bulgarian National Television (BNT), followed by 46% of the Turks, and the ‘*Radio program for the Turks in Bulgaria*’ on the Bulgarian National Radio (BNR), followed by 27% of Turks. The OSI report indicates that almost every second Turk in Bulgaria watches the First Channel of BNT because of the ‘*News in Turkish*’ program. Unfortunately, the unpopular time-slot of the latter (4.00-4.10 pm) prevents many employed Turks from viewing it. The report also indicates that Turks in Bulgaria follow Bulgarian channels only when the latter air “high budget entertainment shows.”⁷ Turks show similar negative disposition to Bulgarian radio channels. Most of the time they listen Bulgarian radio stations for the turbo-folk music they air. Turks rarely follow the news broadcasts of serious Bulgarian channels.⁸ The OSI report establishes that the Turkish population has “underdeveloped radio culture” because of the geographic

⁶ Ilko Yordanov and Aglika Krushoveska, “Assessment of print and electronic media supported by the Open Society Institute - Sofia,” (Sofia: Open Society Institute - Sofia, 2006), 15.

⁷ Ibid, 14.

⁸ Ibid, 15.

areas it populates.⁹ Turks live in small communities, situated in rugged terrain areas with limited radio reception. As far as the mainstream Bulgarian print media are concerned, the OSI paper indicates that as a general trend ethnic minorities in Bulgaria have low interest in them due to the ‘undeveloped readership culture’ of these groups. This is especially pronounced with regards to Roma, 37% of whom are virtually illiterate. The rejection of Bulgarian titles applies with much lesser extent to the Turkish community. The OSI report indicates that around 40% of the Turks, who are literate in the majority language, follow the biggest Bulgarian dailies. The mainstream Bulgarian media, however, pays little attention to the problems of ethnic minorities and provide limited insights into their social, cultural, economic and political life, which accounts for the limited interest in them among minority groups.

In sum, the presented primary and secondary data indicate that Turks in Bulgaria rely exclusively on the Turkish language for communication and information purposes. They prefer to follow media from Turkey and have little chance to inform themselves from the limited number of Turkish minority media outlets in Bulgaria.

1.3. Interethnic Relations in Bulgaria

Turks have become a minority after the liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman rule in 1878 when many of them decided to stay in the re-established Bulgarian Kingdom. Until 1934 (the year that marks the end of the short-lived democratic period in Bulgarian history),

⁹ Ibid, 17.

the Turkish minority enjoyed religious, educational and cultural autonomy. Some 80 Turkish newspapers and magazines were published and some 1,300 Turkish schools offered education in Turkish language.¹⁰ Note, that at that time Turks constituted almost the same percentage of the population as they are today.¹¹ Stoyanov argues that in the early 1920s “ethnic tolerance was so widespread in Bulgaria as nowhere else in the East European countries.”¹² The Turkish minority showed little desire to integrate into Bulgarian society. The peaceful coexistence between Bulgarians and Turks continued uninterrupted during the Inter-war period until the fascist government of Circle ‘Zveno’ took over in 1934.¹³ Zveno launched an ethnic homogenization campaign that curtailed the freedoms of ethnic minority groups. As a result, the majority of Turkish schools were closed.

The coming to power of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) in 1944 was perceived by the Turkish minority as a deliverance from the fascist policies of the previous regime.¹⁴ The adopted by BCP course of ‘socialist nation building’ recognized many minority rights and had positive effect on the development of minority groups in the country. For

¹⁰ Vera Mutafchieva, “The Turk, the Jew and the Gypsy,” in *Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria* (Sofia: International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, 1994), 5-63.

¹¹ According to the 1934 census, Turks in Bulgaria were 591,193 (9.7%) of the general population. Today, they are 588,318 (8.8%). The percentage of the Turkish population has been fluctuating between these margins throughout the rest of the century. In National Statistical Institute. 2011.

¹² Vallery Stoyanov, “The Turks in Bulgaria,” in *Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria* (Sofia: International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, 1994), 268-271.

¹³ Milena Mahon, “The Turkish Minority under Communist Bulgaria-politics of ethnicity and power,” *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 1, no. 2 (1999).

¹⁴ Tatarli, Ibrahim. Interview with author. Notes taking. Sofia, 12 October, 2007.

three decades, Bulgarian Turks were granted cultural autonomy that allowed them to set up cultural organizations, schools and open their media outlets.¹⁵ Unfortunately, this progressive course was gradually substituted by a far-reaching ethnic assimilation campaign which started in the mid-1970s. This affected negatively the normative protection of minority rights in the country. While the first communist constitution of 1947 recognized the existence of national minorities and allowed them to study in their mother tongue,¹⁶ constitutional revisions from 1973 eliminated the recognition of minority group rights and introduced a broader division of “Bulgarian” and “non-Bulgarian” citizens. This change stripped minority groups in the country from protection of their rights and paved the way for their ethnic harassment. The latter begun in 1975 with an attempt to ‘bulgarize’ the Turkish and Roma populations. The ethnic homogenization lasted for more than a decade to reach its climax in 1986. Although all ethnic groups in the country were negatively affected by it, the Turkish community suffered the most. The names of Bulgarian Turks were forcefully changed to Bulgarian equivalents, the use of Turkish language and practice of Islam in public places were forbidden, all Turkish print and electronic media were closed. Ironically, this inhumane campaign was dubbed ‘revival campaign’ as it aimed to ‘revive’ the allegedly dormant Bulgarian self-consciousness of Turks and Roma. Its net result was that 350,000 Turks

¹⁵ Andrey Ivanov, *The Balkans divided: nationalism, minorities, and security*, Euro-Atlantic security studies (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 111.

¹⁶ Article 79 of the Bulgarian Constitution from 1947 states: “National minorities have a right to education in their vernacular and to develop their national cultures, while the study of Bulgarian is compulsory”. In Ali Eminov, “Turks and Tatars in Bulgaria and the Balkans,” *Nationalities Papers* 28, no. 1 (March, 2000): 129-165, p. 139.

were forced to live their homes in Bulgaria and to migrate to Turkey.¹⁷ The sustained for centuries ethnic peace between Bulgarians and Turks was destroyed and substituted by ethnic intolerance, which is still visible today. Ragaru maintains that the biggest damage of the revival campaign has been the forced exodus of the Turkish elite from Bulgaria, including Turkish media professionals.¹⁸ The renowned researcher of minorities in the Balkans Antonina Zheliazkova echoes this observation and depicts the outcome of the revival campaign in the following way:

The Turkish community has painfully suffered over the past 20 years the consequences of the lack of cultural leaders. The cream of their society left the country during the revival campaign and the community has been struggling ever since to generate a new elite by drawing upon the few Turkish intellectuals who remained in Bulgaria.¹⁹

My research has revealed that the loss of prominent Turkish intellectuals and educated media cadres is among the factors that account for the present inability of the Turkish community to restore the rich traditions of its media. Sabri Alagioz - publisher of the single Turkish magazine in Bulgaria - referred to the loss of Turkish intellectuals as the major contributor to the present 'generation gap' between the Turks from his generation, who can produce Turkish media, and the following generations, who lack media skills

¹⁷ Kiel Engelbrekt, "Movement of Rights and Freedom to Compete in Elections," *Report on Eastern Europe* 1991, 1-5, p. 5.

¹⁸ Nadezh Ragaru and Antonella Capelle, "Minority parties, parties 'just as others'? The experience of MRF in Bulgaria and DUR in Romania," in *Dynamics of national identity and trans-national identities occurring in the process of European integrations* (Sofia: Paradigma, 2008), 71.

¹⁹ Zheliazkova, Antonina. Interview with author. Digital recording. Sofia, 14 September, 2009.

and proficiency in standard Turkish language.²⁰ The producer of “*News in Turkish*” succinctly summarizes the consequences of the revival campaign in the following way:

The revival campaign has resulted in a gap of media professionals that opened in the Turkish community. Between 1985 and 1990, all Turkish media outlets were closed. The majority of the Turkish journalists fled to Turkey and no new Turkish media cadres were trained... The few remaining Turkish media professionals, who are presently engaged in the making of Turkish print media, are pensioners. Although they continue their work, they are alone in this difficult enterprise. Unfortunately, when some of the remaining [Turkish] media Mohicans passes away, his media legacy dies with him - there are no young Turkish professionals who have the skills and willingness to continue their work.²¹

The crumbling of the totalitarian regime in 1989 put an end to the revival campaign and opened the way to the democratization of Bulgaria. Two years later, a new democratic constitution was passed. It laid out the foundations of a multi-ethnic society in the country and provided normative basis for the liberalization of ethnic relations in Bulgaria.²² Opposite to other neighboring states, the last Bulgarian constitution deals with ethnic minority rights as individual rights. Group rights are not recognized. Regardless of that, over the past twenty years, Bulgarian authorities have adopted a number of legal provisions that aim to preserve the identity of local minority groups and stimulate their integration into the fabric of Bulgarian society. As a result, the restrictions on the use of minority languages in public have been lifted and the right of minorities to disseminate

²⁰ Alagioz, Sabri. Interview with author. Digital recording. Sofia, 18 September, 2009. ‘Standard Turkish language’ here refers to the proper Turkish language that is used in the Turkish literature. It is to be distinguished from ‘dialects of Turkish’.

²¹ Ismailov, Izzet. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, 10 September, 2009. Ismailov is editor-in-chief of ‘News in Turkish’ – the single 10 minute Turkish TV program that is aired on the Bulgarian National Television.

²² Nikola Genov, *Ethnic relations in south Eastern Europe: problems of social inclusion and exclusion* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 16.

information in their mother tongue restored. Bulgarian authorities also lifted the ban on the public practice of Islam and the public use of Turkish language. As a result, close to 180,000 Turks returned to Bulgaria. The next section will offer a socio-economic snapshot of the Turkish community, the findings of which will be used to assess the ability of the group to run and consume its own media.

1.4. Socio-economic Profile of Bulgarian Turks

Census data indicates that more than half of Bulgarian Turks (63%) are rural dwellers and that the majority of them are engaged in labour-intensive businesses such as agriculture (32%) and heavy industry (25%). Unemployment rate among them is significantly higher than unemployment among Bulgarians. Figures of various public opinion surveys over the past twenty years indicate that Bulgarian Turks have not been successfully integrated in the mainstream society, though they are somewhat better accepted than Roma. The fact that 64% of Bulgarians believe that part of Bulgarian nation are only those who share the ethnic Bulgarian traditions and customs, clearly indicates the rejection of ‘others’ by the majority population. A survey conducted by the National Centre for Public Opinion Surveys (NCPOS) in 1998, renders ethnic tolerance of Bulgarians as ‘problematic.’²³ According to it, 55% of Bulgarians are against the right of minorities to partake in state institutions. “The apprehensions of majority Bulgarians that the inclusion of minorities in the governing institutions of the country could be dangerous are so strong that they spill over to other minority rights, thus increasing the rift between ethnic communities in the

²³ Ibid.

country and prevents their integration,” concludes the report.²⁴ The following figures illustrate the social distances and level of intolerance that feature Bulgarian society today.

In 1998, 83% of Bulgarians could not accept a Turk to become the local sheriff. 75% were against a Turk becoming a mayor of the settlement they live in. In 2007, the levels of rejection of other ethnicities showed further increase: 87% of Bulgarians were against a Turk becoming a mayor of their town or village.²⁵ The degree of rejection of Roma is even greater. In 1998, 98% of Bulgarians were against Roma becoming the local marshal and 83% were against Roma becoming their mayor.²⁶ The last figure marked a rise by 13% in 2007, indicating further increase of the ethnic intolerance in Bulgarian society. The negative perception of minorities by Bulgarians is also visible in the private domain. In 2007, 80.1% of Bulgarians indicated that they will not accept an ethnic Turk to become a member of their family (91.4% against Roma candidates), 42.5% could not even accept a Turk to become a close friend of theirs (72.4% in case of Roma).²⁷ NCPOS data also shows the residential capsulation of ethnic minorities in the country. 51.7% of the respondents (including minorities) believe that Turks should live in their separate neighbourhoods and refrain from mixing with other ethnicities. This percentage is even higher with respect to Roma – 71%. The ethnic rift remains visible also in the issue of

²⁴ Ibid, 30.

²⁵ “Ethnic minorities and power,” (Sofia: National Centre for Public Opinion Surveys at the Bulgarian Academy of Science, 2007), 3.

²⁶ “Ethnicities and power,” (Sofia: National Centre for Public Opinion Surveys at the Bulgarian Academy of Science, 1998), 18-19.

²⁷ “Ethnic minorities and power”, 21-23.

setting up mixed ethnic schools where over 50% of respondents were against the mixing of Bulgarian with Turkish and Roma pupils.

It is interesting to observe that in a number of other important spheres, the social distances between the majority and minority groups have grown larger over the past few years. For example, the percentage of people who believe that minorities *should not have the right* to publish books and have *media* in their own language has increased by 3.3% between 1998 (41% against) and 2007 (44.3% against). In 2007, *half of Bulgarians believed that minorities should not have their own media.*²⁸ The figure of those who believe that minorities should not have the right to study their mother tongue at public schools has also increased by 6.8% for the same time-period (67% ‘against’ in 1998 vs. 73.8% ‘against’ in 2007).²⁹ At the same time, over 90% of the interviewed Turks believe that ethnic minorities should have the right to create organizations for the preservation of their culture and traditions, to have their own media, to study their mother tongue at public schools, to be allowed to form ethnic parties and to have proportional representation in the decision-making bodies of the country. The lack of consensus among minority and majority groups over these key freedoms has resulted in the development of “ethnocentric tendencies among the minority communities themselves and increasing the social distances between them and the majority population. This is clearly visible in the high degree of approval among the Turks (43%) of the belief that one should participate only in the development of the customs and traditions of one’s

²⁸ Emphasis mine.

²⁹ “Ethnic minorities and power”, 3. The percentage of Bulgarians who are against the study of minority languages at public schools is actually higher - 82.5%. Emphasis mine.

own ethnic group.”³⁰ 40% of the Turks are not even interested in the culture and traditions of their ethnic neighbours. The same source also suggests that the level of *self-capsulation* among the Turks is much higher than it is among Roma, and that the affiliation of Turks with their own community is much stronger than their affiliation with the Bulgarian nation.

When combined with the high degree of rejection of minority rights on part of the majority population, the above figures clearly demonstrate that Turks in Bulgaria are featured by a very low degree of integration in Bulgarian society and by *strong ethnic capsulation*. According to the NCPOS report, mainstream media partially bear the blame for this due to their failure to provide adequate portrayal of the life of minority communities in the country. 45% of Turks and 60% of Roma consider their coverage in mainstream Bulgarian media as completely lacking objectivity. Only 23% of Turks believe that the problems of their community are objectively presented in Bulgarian media, which accounts for their low interest in them.³¹

1.5. Political Profile of Bulgarian Turks

Once the social profile of the Turkish community has been established, it is time to sketch its political profile, especially after the present dissertation purports to establish that the structure of Turkish political sphere is one of the main variables that accounts for

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid, 54.

the rudimentary status of the Turkish minority media in Bulgaria. Opposite to Albanians in Macedonia and Hungarians in Romania, the political sphere of Bulgarian Turks is homogeneous, non-pluralist and monolithic. It is a domain of the single Turkish political party – *Movement for Rights and Freedoms* (MRF). MRF is a unique and unprecedented phenomenon in the history of Bulgarian politics. Created in 1985 as a form of civic protest of Turks against the revival campaign, MRF has gradually transformed into a full-fledged political party, which has been acting as a balancer and integrating factor in Bulgarian politics ever since. Being a political representative of the biggest ethnic minority group in the country, MRF is praised as a source of stability and ethnic peace, and is believed to have significant contribution for the consolidation of the Bulgarian political system³² and stabilization of the political atmosphere after the beginning of the democratization process.³³ MRF's entry into politics was far from smooth. Representatives of the majority political elite attempted to preclude this party's institutionalization. Few months before the first parliamentary elections in 1991, the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) referred MRF to the Constitutional Court to establish its constitutional character as according to Article 11 of Bulgarian constitution "there shall be no political parties on ethnic, racial or religious lines..."³⁴ The constitutional judges declared MRF a 'constitutional organization' and allowed it to compete in the forthcoming elections officially legitimizing its place in Bulgarian politics. Upon this first victory, MRF demonstrated rapid political emancipation. For the past twenty years, it has

³² Георги Карасимеонов, *Партийната Система в България* (София: ГорексПрес, 2006), 221.

³³ Genov, 17.

³⁴ Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, Article 11, paragraph 4. Available at: <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

managed to accomplish solid parliamentary representation thanks to the skilful mobilization of the Turkish electorate exercised by its authoritarian leadership.

Throughout the 1990s, the major Bulgarian parties extensively used the ‘Turkish’ theme to mobilize the support of the nationalistically oriented Bulgarian electorate.³⁵ Similar mobilization techniques continue to be employed today by few right-wing parties. The continued portrayal of Turks as a ‘security threat’ by political demagogues, allows the leaders of MRF to achieve remarkable mobilization of the ethnic base of the party – close to 90% of Turks vote today for MRF. The patriarchal structure of the Turkish community, combined with the authoritarian and clientelist character of its political leadership, account for the continuous electoral successes of MRF.³⁶ As my research will demonstrate, the political organization of the Turkish community plays central role in the development of this group’s media sphere. Further analysis of the structuring of the Turkish political sphere will be offered in the analytical section of this chapter where I will study the impact of minority political structures on the development of minority media institutions.

In sum, Turks in Bulgaria are a capsulated minority group with hierarchical social organization, strong political cohesion and low level of integration in Bulgarian society. They rely on their mother tongue for communication and information purposes. The

³⁵ Ivanov, *The Balkans divided*, 110.

³⁶ Yanovski, Rumen. Interview with author. Notes taking. Sofia, 26 September, 2007. Yanovski is researcher of minority groups in Bulgaria and Project Coordinator at ‘Access Sofia Foundation’.

interests of the group are represented in the political domain by a coherent political elite, which operates as a ‘gatekeeper’ in all spheres of public life of the community.³⁷

2. Bulgarian Legislation and Access to Media

Before turning to examination of Turkish minority media, this section will offer a brief overview of the minority-related legislation in Bulgaria to demonstrate that there are no normative impediments to the progress of ethnic media in the country. Normative provisions that regulate the access of ethnic minority groups to the media field in Bulgaria will be examined. Short analysis of the Bulgarian Constitution will clarify the normative framework that guarantees to ethnic minorities the preservation of their ethnic distinctiveness. It will be followed by evaluation of Bulgarian media law to demonstrate the specific provisions through which the access of minorities to the media sphere is guaranteed.³⁸

³⁷ Metodieva, Maria. Interview with author. Sofia, September 19, 2007. Metodieva is Director of ‘Roma’ Program at the Open Society Institute-Sofia.

³⁸ In the analysis of minority and media regulations in Bulgaria, I will draw upon my earlier findings on the topic and interviews I conducted to study Turkish minority media back in 2000 (In Igor Valentovitch, “Turkish Ethnic Minority Media in Bulgaria: an Underdeveloped Resource” (Central European University, 2000) [unpublished]. They will be updated and enriched with new primary and secondary sources, tracing the improvement of protection of minority rights in the country following its acceptance to the European Union.

2.1. International Law and Minorities Access to Media

Darbishire (1999) maintains that ethnic identities depend in significant part on the ability of humans to express their ideas and opinions in a language and medium of their choice. Therefore, freedom of expression and access to information are fundamental human rights that are protected by a number of international covenants. Although the implementation of international norms is not binding, their ratification by democratic states usually results in the adoption of their provisions in national legislations. Hence, I will mention here the most important international covenants - with minority rights focus - that have been ratified by Bulgaria. First, these are the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the European Convention on Human Rights (1950), which protect freedom of expression on individual level. Second, these are the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Law for Protection against Discrimination, which protect human rights on a group level. The media provisions of the second group of conventions stipulate that minority groups should be the producers of their own media rather than objects of mainstream media where "... somebody else's view of them is reproduced and thrown back at them."³⁹ These conventions stress that national governments need to be proactive and provide conditions for the development of the media institutions of minority groups. When evaluating the level of implementation of these minority

³⁹ Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones, in *Conference on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*, Council of Europe Publishing 1998, p. 35. In Helen Darbishire, "Minorities and media freedom under international law," *Roma Rights* 4 (1999): 60-70, p. 63. In Valentovitch 2000, 18.

provisions, Darbishire argues that minorities' access to media "is still in its infancy both in law and in practice."⁴⁰

2.2. Bulgarian Constitution and Minority Rights

One of the objectives of the most recent Bulgarian constitution (1991) is to appease the problematic inter-ethnic relations in the country, caused by the revival campaign. Thus, the supreme law incorporates a number of provisions that aim to protect minority rights despite the fact that the term 'minority' is not explicitly used in them. It recognizes that Bulgaria is a nation of diverse ethnic, religious and language groups, but protects their rights on individual basis (as opposed to the constitutions of Romania and Macedonia, which recognize their minority groups as 'national minorities'). Despite that, the Bulgarian constitution also does a good job protecting minority rights on a normative level. For example, Article 6 of this document establishes that "there shall be no privileges or restrictions of rights on the grounds of ethnicity."⁴¹ Article 36 stipulates that "citizens whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian shall have the right to study and use their own language alongside the compulsory study of the Bulgarian language." As far as the ethnic culture is concerned, Article 54 proclaims that "everyone shall have the right ... to develop his own culture with accordance with his self-identification." Articles 39 to 41 proclaim freedom of expression and information, and freedom of any medium. Unlike the constitutions of Macedonia and Romania, the Bulgarian supreme law explicitly restricts

⁴⁰ Ibid, 68.

⁴¹ Art.6. *Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria*. 1991. Accessed 1 May, 2010. Available from <http://www.parliament.bg/en/const>.

the formation of political parties on ethnic grounds: “There shall be no political parties on ethnic, racial, or religious lines” (Article 11). This demonstrates the desire of Bulgarian authorities to promote ethnic equality on the ground of individual rather than group rights. Therefore, closer attention should be paid to the ratified by Bulgaria Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities for it creates positive obligations for the protection of minority rights on a group level.

The Framework Convention creates favorable environment for the development of minority culture, education and media. For example, Article 9 establishes the following positive obligations:

3. The Parties shall not hinder the creation and the use of printed *media* by persons belonging to national minorities. In the legal framework of sound radio and television broadcasting, they shall ensure... that persons belonging to national minorities are granted the possibility of creating and using their own media.

4. In the framework of their legal systems, the Parties shall adopt adequate measures in order to facilitate access to media for persons belonging to national minorities and in order to promote tolerance and cultural pluralism.⁴²

The ratification of the Framework Convention by Bulgaria in 1998 resulted in redrafting of Bulgarian Media Law to incorporate the above media freedoms.

In sum, one can conclude that in the past two decades Bulgaria has embarked on a steady course of restoration of minority rights – a process expedited by the foreign policy goal of the country to become member of the European Union and the necessity to meet the

⁴² Art.9. *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (accessed 3 May 2010); available from <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/html/157.htm>.

EU's 'minority condition', enshrined in the political conditionality of the union (*external system pressure variable*).⁴³ Through implementation of the discussed above international covenants into the Bulgarian legislation, the ethnic minorities in the country have been granted the right to receive and disseminate information in their mother tongue and to establish their own media institutions. Let us now turn to the Bulgarian Media Law and see how it regulates the access of minorities to the media sphere.

2.3. Bulgarian Media Law

Although the Bulgarian Media Law suffers from some imperfections, its analysis has identified that it does not hinder the development of minority media spheres. The 'Radio and Television Law' (hereafter 'Media Law') was passed in 1998. In accord with the libertarian media model guiding the media in Western Europe, the Bulgarian media law distinguishes between print and electronic media where the former are completely liberalized, whereas the latter are subjected to state licensing due to the limits of the frequency spectrum. "The Media Law provides ethnic minorities with all the necessary normative provisions to guarantee their right to establish their own media," comments Bozhilova.⁴⁴ For example, Article 49 obliges national public broadcasters to make programs for "Bulgarian citizens for whom the Bulgarian language is not native,

⁴³ For the effect of EU on the improvement of minority rights in Eastern Europe see Gwendolyn Sasse, "The politics of EU conditionality: the norm of minority protection during and beyond EU accession," *Journal of European Public Policy* 6, no. 15 (2008): 842-860.

⁴⁴ Bozhilova, Svetlana. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, 22 April, 2000. Bozhilova is media expert and former member of the Council of Electronic Media. In Valentovitch 2000.

including programs in their mother tongue.”⁴⁵ Article 12 stipulates that the “programs of the Bulgarian radio and television operators are transmitted in the official language [i.e. Bulgarian]”, but adds that they can be also broadcasted in another language in those cases when the programming is “designed for Bulgarian citizens whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian.”⁴⁶ Although some may argue that this norm promotes the supremacy of the Bulgarian language over the languages of ethnic minority groups, Kashamov maintains that it is “just a formal and declarative text from which do not originate any legal consequences in terms of restricting the right of ethnic minority groups to use their mother tongue in the media.”⁴⁷

Some critical commentators have expressed concerns that the Bulgarian Media Law provides opportunity for the executive to interfere in the media sphere by granting the government with extensive control over the operation of the Bulgarian media regulator – the Council of Electronic Media (hereafter Media Council). Bozilova points out that the Bulgarian media law has preserved the control of the executive over the public broadcasters, thus violating the principle of separation of powers and diminishing the freedom of expression. “This is because the Media Law enables the executive to exert control over the licensing of broadcasters, which unequivocally shows the desire of authorities to control the work of the radio and television operators, thus limiting the freedom of information. Secondly, the elaborate procedure for the selection of members

⁴⁵ Art. 49. *Radio and Television Law* (1998, accessed 4 May, 2010); available from <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UNTC/UNPAN016248.pdf>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Kashamov, Aleksander. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, 17 April, 2000. Kashamov is lawyer and media expert working for ‘Access to Information Program’. In Valentovitch 2000.

of the Media Council subordinates once again this body to the interests of the executive,” explains Bozhilova.⁴⁸ Although susceptible to political manipulation media regulators are a potential danger to minorities’ access to media, my research has not identified any violations in terms of stopping minority groups from opening their own television or radio stations.⁴⁹

In sum, the Bulgarian media legislation contains provisions that enable the executive to exert control over independent media operators, which is emblematic for the regulation of media in South Eastern Europe. As far as the access of ethnic minority groups to the media sphere is concerned, the media law sets all the necessary normative preconditions for the promotion of the electronic media of minority groups. The review of Bulgarian legislation has revealed that Bulgarian authorities have provided the ethnic minorities in the country with an adequate normative framework that guarantees the preservation of their identities and opens their access to the media sphere. The Bulgarian media experts, whom this author interviewed, all agree with this assessment. The renowned researcher of ethnicity in the Balkans - Antonina Zheliazkova – even argues that: “the normative framework, designed to protect minority rights in Bulgaria, is one of the best in Europe. It is perfect! There are no flaws there. Its implementation and social disposition towards this framework is where the problem lies.”⁵⁰ In a similar vein, Kashamov maintains that “Bulgaria has successfully adopted all the necessary normative regulations that protect

⁴⁸ Bozhilova, 2000. In Valentovitch 2000.

⁴⁹ In fact, the Media Council has not received a single application for licensing a Turkish electronic medium. Belchev (2009)

⁵⁰ Zheliazkova, Antonina. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, 19 September, 2005. Zheliazkova is Director of the ‘International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations’.

minorities from negative discrimination but not from positive discrimination.”⁵¹ Petkova sees the culprit for the inaccurate implementation of these norms in the heightened ethnic intolerance in Bulgarian society, which is reflected in the (in)action of Bulgarian politicians: “there is not a single Bulgarian party today that wants to tackle minority problems in this country, as Bulgarian politicians know that if they engage actively in the resolution of minority issues, they will lose the votes of the nationalistically oriented electorate.”⁵² Finally, Alagöz explains that having liberal media legislation does not guarantee the proliferation of ethnic minority media: “on paper everything seems to be fine, but in practice this ‘normative’ media freedom has not been of much help to the Turkish intellectuals who struggle to promote Turkish media.”⁵³ Hence, one may conclude that planting the media institutions of given ethnic minority group in the libertarian media system of this group’s adoptive society does not guarantee the development and liberalization of the former. After establishing that the Bulgarian legislation does not impede ethnic minority groups from starting their own media, the following section will embark on a review of Turkish minority media in Bulgaria. Its ultimate goal will be to demonstrate that Turkish minority media had enjoyed extensive periods of proliferation in the past, but are currently facing the predicament of total collapse, the major reason for which is rooted in the political organization of the group.

⁵¹ Kashamov, Aleksander. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, 14 September, 2005.

⁵² Petkova, Cveta. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, 10 September, 2005. Petkova is expert on ethnic minorities and former director of the ‘Roma’ Program at the Open Society Institute-Sofia.

⁵³ Alagöz, Sabri. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, 17 September, 2005. Alagöz is former Chair of the ‘Public Council of Ethnic Minorities in Bulgaria’, present Chair of the Turkish Cultural Centre ‘XXI Century’, editor-in-chief of the Turkish cultural magazine ‘Kainak’ and former Director of the now closed Turkish magazine ‘Ethnodialog’.

3. Turkish Ethnic Minority Media in Bulgaria

For more than a century, Turkish minority media in Bulgaria have helped preserve the ethnic identity of the group and served as a consolidating factor for its self-organization and equal participation in the social and political life of Bulgarian society.⁵⁴

This section will trace their development.

3.1. Print Media of the Turkish Minority in Bulgaria

The Turkish print media in Bulgaria have had a century-long tradition of development. Their examination will be organized into three time-frames, starting with the liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman rule to the beginning of the communist era (1878-1944), the communist period (1944 - 1989), and will conclude with the present post-totalitarian era (1989 - onwards). Although the focus of this research is on the contemporary status of the Turkish media, a brief review of the first two periods of their development will illustrate their developed nature in the past. The gradual extinction of Turkish minority media today constitutes one of the puzzles of this dissertation.

3.1.1. Turkish print minority media during the pre-communist period (1878-1944)

The Turkish press in Bulgaria was born in the late 19th century when the first printing houses opened on the territory of the country, which at that time was part of the Ottoman

⁵⁴ Mihail Ivanov, "The minority press in Bulgaria has its achievements," in *Minority press in Bulgaria*, ed. Rositza Stoikova (Sofia: Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, 2000), 5. [in Bulgarian].

Empire. After the liberation of Bulgaria in 1978, the Turkish cultural elite undertook active steps to preserve the identity of the group, which the historic circumstances put in a minority position. The Turkish minority press was born and soon after that demonstrated rapid emancipation and development.⁵⁵ For a period of 70 years, the number of published Turkish newspapers and magazines reached 112.⁵⁶ Turkish print media served as the main information source of the 600,000-strong Turkish community in Bulgaria.⁵⁷ Note, that the number of Turks living in Bulgaria a century ago is almost the same today - 588,318. The Turkish press not only aimed to preserve the language and identity of the Turkish community, but also to facilitate the integration of the group in the Bulgarian society. This can be seen in motto of the popular at the time daily '*Bulgaristan*', which reads "Independent newspaper that works for the unification of Bulgarians and Turks." The integrationist purpose of the Turkish press from the turn of the century is also discernable in their format. Most of the newspapers from that era were published in both Bulgarian and Turkish languages to accommodate the language preferences of their audience and to provide the majority population with opportunity to get acquainted with the life of their ethnic neighbors. Turks did not experience problems reading in their mother tongue, as more than a thousand Turkish schools operated on the

⁵⁵ Ibrahim Yalamov, "Turkish Periodic Press in Bulgaria (1878-1996)," in *Periodic press of minorities in Bulgaria (1878-1997)*, ed. Mihail Ivanov (Sofia: Interethnic initiative for human rights, 1998), 6. [in Bulgarian].

⁵⁶ Their number reached the record **173** for the period between 1865-1985. Karagöz, Adem Ruhi. 1945. *Bulgaristan Türk Basını, 1879-1945*. Istanbul: Üniversite Matbaası. In Yalamov, 6.

⁵⁷ Accounting for 9.6% of the population according to the 1926 and 1934 national censuses. In National Statistical Institute, *Results of the 2011 Population Census. Population by region, municipalities and settlements*. (National Statistical Institute, 2011, accessed 8 July, 2012); available from <http://censusresults.nsi.bg/Census/Reports/1/2/R7.aspx>.

territory of Bulgaria at the time. This 'bilingual' tradition of the Turkish press continued undisrupted until the 1980s.

At the beginning, most of the Turkish titles offered exclusively cultural and some information content. At the turn of the 19th century, however, a full-fledged Turkish minority press emerged, which resembled in its diversity and organization mainstream Bulgarian titles. The Turkish newspapers subscribed to different ideological and political views. They adopted the political perspectives of the main Bulgarian parties, using different ideological lenses to interpret the socio-political events from that time. The modern Turkish press often engaged into watchdog journalism, voicing criticism against the authorities when the latter infringed upon the rights of the Turkish community. What is intriguing about this time-period is that the Turkish newspapers were even more ideologically polarized than their Bulgarian counterparts. Besides being divided along the lines of Bulgarian politics, the Turkish press also featured a second cleavage, caused by the events in neighboring Turkey.⁵⁸ The Turkish minority press was splintered into 'supporters' and 'opponents' of the modernization processes taking place in their homeland.⁵⁹ The pluralist Turkish minority press from the beginning of the twentieth century had contributed not only to the preservation of the ethnic identity of the group, but also to the development of the Turkish minority public sphere. The Turkish community back then was far from its present ideological homogeneity. It was sharply

⁵⁸ Similar ideological polarization is developing in the Hungarian minority press in Romania today. It is generated by the political events in Hungary.

⁵⁹ Out of the 44 Turkish newspapers and magazines that were published between 1978 to 1908, 25 served as a tribune of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's modernization movement in Turkey. In, Yalamov, 8.

divided into pro-Kemalist and anti-Kemalist camps, which clashed their opinions about the reforms in Turkey on the pages of the Turkish minority titles.

After the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), the Turkish press showed rapid improvement in terms of quality, diversity and circulation. Between 1913 and 1944, the Turkish minority enjoyed 68 different newspapers and magazines, divided into ‘pro-Kemalists’ and anti-Kemalists’ camps. The development of the Turkish *party press* was also underway. To mobilize political support among the Turkish minority, many Bulgarian parties set up Turkish editions of their media organs, which were run by Turkish intellectuals. Newspapers such as ‘*Farmer’s Awareness*’ (9,000 circulation, affiliated with the *Farmer’s Union*), ‘*Light*’ (2,000 circulation, affiliated with the *Bulgarian Communist Party*), ‘*Tundza*’ and ‘*Friendship*’ (affiliated with the *Democratic Party*) managed to provide diverse coverage of the socio-political life in Bulgaria, adhering to the ideological perspectives of Bulgarian political parties. Apart from politics, the vibrant Turkish press also reported on minority-specific issues, covering religious, education and economic topics.

In sum, the liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman rule at the turn of the nineteenth century marked the genesis of the Turkish minority press in the country. The latter showed rapid development in the following seventy years. The total number of Turkish titles during this period reached 112. Their longevity and circulation varied over the years. The volume and quality of the Turkish titles helped to fulfill the ultimate goals standing in front of any minority media, namely, to preserve the identity of the ethnic group and to

serve as its main source of information. The Turkish press went beyond these requirements. Through adopting different ideological lenses, it provided its audience with divergent coverage of the socio-political and economic processes in Bulgaria and Turkey, thus encouraging critical deliberations within the Turkish public sphere and involving the Turkish minority in the public life of Bulgaria. The high media-to-audience ratio (112 titles per 600,000 Turks), genre and editorial diversity makes one conclude that the Turkish minority from this first time-period enjoyed developed and pluralist media sphere. Unfortunately, the military coup in 1934 propelled to power a right-wing government that banned all Turkish titles with the exception of 'Medeniet' (2,000 circulation) - spared to be used as a propaganda tool by the new fascist authorities. The massive closure of Turkish newspapers, caused by this political shift, offers the first example of how tightly media and political spheres are connected. The dependence of Turkish minority media on the political sphere will continue to be observable throughout the next two time-periods of their development.

3.1.2. Turkish print minority media during the communist period (1944-1989)

During the communist period, the Bulgarian media landscape underwent major reconstruction along the lines of the Marxist-Soviet media system. All media outlets in the country became state-controlled and subsidized. They operated mostly as propaganda machines in the hands of the ruling communist elite.⁶⁰ During this era, the Turkish press went through series of ups and downs, which influenced their present status. Starting

⁶⁰ Yalamov, 24.

from 1950s, Turkish print media experienced proliferation for two decades. The Bulgarian authorities sought to develop Turkish titles by offering them generous financial support. This was done for two reasons. First, Politburo looked at the Turkish media as a useful propaganda tool that can help authorities reach down to the Turkish grassroots.⁶¹ Second, the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) aimed to win the allegiance of the Turks through granting them various cultural, religious, educational and media freedoms, and through making sure that the culture and identity of the Turkish minority are respected and preserved.⁶²

The idea to invest in the development of the Turkish community, in general, and its media, in particular, came gradually to Bulgarian Politburo. It all started with looking for ways to strengthen the support of the communist party among the Turkish population.⁶³

⁶¹ It should be noted that until the beginning of 1970s, the majority of Turks did not understand the official Bulgarian language and relied exclusively on the Turkish minority press for information.

⁶² Tatarli, Ibrahim. Interview with author. Notes taking, Sofia, 12 October, 2007. Ibrahim Tatarli is one of the founders of the Turkish political party *Movement for Rights and Freedoms* (MRF), its former deputy-chairman, former MP from MRF, and former deputy-chairman of the Bulgarian National Assembly.

⁶³ The communist authorities in Bulgaria experienced major shifts in their position towards the Turkish group. The first communist constitution of 1947 included provisions that guaranteed the linguistic, educational and cultural rights of Bulgarian Turks. Professor Tatarli describes these policies as a double-edged sword as on the one hand, the communist regime officially recognized the essential rights of the Turkish minority, but on the other, secretly engaged in pushing many Bulgarian Turks to leave the country. This policy was 'suggested' to Politburo in Sofia by Stalin who distrusted ethnic minorities in general. In 1951, Stalin reversed his position. Being under the influence of two Azerbaijani members of Politburo, he encouraged Bulgarian authorities to stop the forced migration of Turks. Stalin was persuaded by his Azeri advisors that when the global socialist revolution reaches Turkey, Kremlin will need indoctrinated Turkish cadres to carry out the socialist reconstruction of this Muslim state. The idea was simple: trusted Turkish comrades were going to be recruited from the ranks of Bulgarian Turks and trained in Bulgarian universities. New slogan - 'Bulgaria - motherland of Bulgarian Turks' was embraced, the unofficial forced migration of Turks was stopped, and a new era of warm relationship with the Turkish minority was launched. Kremlin sent advisors to the Bulgarian Ministry of Education. Under their instruction, a number of schools for training of Turkish teachers were opened; departments for Turkish language and literature were established at all major Bulgarian universities; many new Turkish schools opened doors and a number of new Turkish print media were launched. In a span of ten years, close to 10,000 Turkish cadres from different fields (geographers, philosophers, mathematicians, journalists, engineers, etc) were trained. They formed the nucleus of the Turkish intelligentsia in Bulgaria. Personal conversation with Professor Tatarli.

Driven by the slogan ‘Bulgaria – motherland of Bulgarian Turks,’ the communist authorities opened a number of Turkish print media outlets and set up training programs for Turkish journalists at the state universities. Turkish media experienced rapid growth. At the peak of this period, 67 Turkish newspapers and magazines were published and distributed throughout the country. Only in the capital alone, there were 20 Turkish newspapers and 3 magazines. Some of them had an impressive circulation of 25,000 copies (*‘Dostluk’*). The national *‘New Light’* was one of the major Turkish dailies. Established in 1945, it operated for half-a-century. All of its editors were ethnic Turks. Although the major goal of the newspaper was to rally support to BCP, *‘New Light’* also devoted attention to the social and cultural life of the Turkish community, as well as to the Turkish language training.⁶⁴ *‘New Life’* was another popular Turkish magazine, which focused on the social, cultural and artistic life of the Turkish community. It also enjoyed a long lifespan thanks to the editors’ policy of adaptation to the shifts in the BCP line. *‘People’s Youth’* was a popular newspaper among the Turkish youth. It remained on the market for 21 years and was the first successful attempt to establish Turkish youth press. The youngest readers of the Turkish community enjoyed a variety of kids’ newspapers and magazines, encouraging the preservation of the Turkish culture and language. By supporting the Turkish youth press, the communist authorities tried to win the hearts and minds of the young Turks. Despite the fact that the content of many of these publications was shaped by the communist discourse, the communist period of development of the Turkish press had a number of positive effects on it. First, the Turkish culture and

⁶⁴ At that time, the communist authorities subsidized not only the public Turkish schools, but also the Turkish educational institutions.

education in mother tongue were preserved. The Turkish press also contributed a great deal to the development of the Turkish literature in Bulgaria.⁶⁵ Second, few generations of devoted readers of Turkish titles were trained. They formed the intellectual core of the community. Third, Turkish media professionals were trained. Fourth, the Turkish press aided the integration of the Turkish community in the Bulgarian society and boosted the emancipation of the Turkish women.

In the mid-1970s, the minority policies of Bulgarian authorities sharply shifted from toleration of ethnic diversity to ethnic homogenization.⁶⁶ The communist propaganda machine fan up the fabricated ‘Turkish problem’ and set up a ‘logical’ course for its resolution through forceful assimilation of the Turkish community. The so called “revival” campaign was launched and given full throttle. As a result of it, the Turkish titles experienced dramatic cuts in numbers, genre diversity and circulation. Articles written in Bulgarian language soon became dominant on the pages of the Turkish newspapers. The Turkish language was intentionally polluted with Bulgarian words. The voices of the Turkish intellectuals were silenced through killing the cultural press of the community. As a result, by the end of 1970s, just two Turkish titles remained on the market - ‘*New Light*’ and ‘*New Life*’. During the final leg of the revival campaign (1984-1989), the Turkish minority press in Bulgaria was completely annihilated. ‘*New Light*’ continued to be published but only in Bulgarian language. It was used largely as a

⁶⁵ Yalamov, 32.

⁶⁶ This shift was allegedly caused by two factors. First, changes in the leadership of the Bulgarian Communist Party. Second, some developments in the international arena, namely, the seizure of parts of Cyprus by Turkey in 1975. This scared Politburo in Sofia, which feared that Bulgarian Turks might attempt to achieve territorial autonomy following the example of their kin from Cyprus.

propaganda tool in the hands of the communist authorities, aiming to justify the wrongs of the revival campaign amidst the Turkish population. 'New Light' engaged in open criticism of the life in Turkey and sought to establish ideological justification for the ethnic homogenization campaign.⁶⁷ Soon the newspaper lost more than half of its subscribers. The editors stopped receiving letters from their readers. The vibrant Turkish press in Bulgaria, with a century-long tradition, was dead.

3.1.3. Turkish print minority media today

The following review of contemporary Turkish print media aims to demonstrate their gradual regress and decay. The foundations of my research have been established back in 2000, when I first started researching on the topic.⁶⁸ Back then, the scope of my research was limited only to the investigation of the Turkish minority media in Bulgaria and did not involve any regional comparisons. Nevertheless, it helped me understand the dynamics of their development, as well as establish contacts with people involved in their making and regulation, which proved useful for my recent field research in Bulgaria. In the present review, I will draw upon some of my earlier findings and misconceptions, and offer new observations backed by up-to-date data.

⁶⁷ It was found in the false thesis that Turks in Bulgaria had Bulgarian origins, which they lost during the forceful Islamization campaigns, conducted by the Ottoman authorities.

⁶⁸ Evaluating the development of Turkish minority media in Bulgaria was the focus of my master's thesis for the Department of Political Science at the Central European University.

The democratic changes in 1989 marked the beginning of the re-habilitation of the Turkish minority media in Bulgaria. The new democratic authorities lifted the political and institutional barriers in front of their development. The adopted liberal legislation, however, was insufficient to restore the Turkish press to its previous level of development. The restoration of the Turkish titles from the communist era was driven by the few remaining Turkish intellectuals, who chose to stay in Bulgaria upon the end of the revival campaign. Only seven Turkish newspapers and magazines were published between 1989 and 2000 (three of which were youth titles). Their circulation and genre diversity were limited and badly compared to the level of development of the Turkish titles from the previous two time-periods. Twelve years after the democratic opening, Turkish minority media were falling from the grid of the Bulgarian media scene, threatening to disappear completely. They were crippled by financial constraints, lack of professionals and lack of support from the Turkish elites. This made Yalamov describe the tendency of revitalization and liberalization of Turkish media in Bulgaria as “unstable” and “short-lived.”⁶⁹

‘Table 1.a.’ in the Appendix section - ‘*Turkish print minority media in Bulgaria 1990-2000*’ - shows the diversity, circulation and main topics of the Turkish press during the first post-communist decade of their development.⁷⁰ The collected data suggests that the bilingual format was the preferred form of content presentation among the Turkish

⁶⁹ Yalamov, 40.

⁷⁰ The author constructed ‘Table 1.a.’ table back in 2000, organizing in a comparative format the primary data he collected on the subject. In Valentovitch 2000 [unpublished]. ‘Table 1.b.’ is constructed on the same basis but with up-to-date information regarding the progress of Turkish print media from the past decade.

editors for this format addressed the language preferences of Turks and helped promote intercultural dialogue. Due to closure of all Turkish educational institutions in the 1980s, few generations of Turks were trained exclusively in Bulgarian language and could not read Turkish language. The articles appearing in the Turkish press called for cultural tolerance and rebuilding of the inter-ethnic bridges from the past. The motto of the Turkish newspaper '*Guven*' ('*Trust*') nicely summarizes the goals of the post-totalitarian Turkish press: "Let us go to each other instead of against each other." The popular in the past newspaper '*New Light*' was restored as an independent weekly under the name '*Light*'. Along with some cultural content, it offered coverage and analysis of the main socio-political events in Bulgaria. From its pages, Turkish intellectuals engaged in occasional criticism of the Turkish political party - MRF. The newspaper tried to objectively inform its audience about the political processes that took place in those turbulent transitional years.⁷¹ A second Turkish weekly - '*Rights and Freedoms*' - was launched. It became an organ of MRF. Naturally, this title was biased towards its patron and performed as a mouthpiece of the Turkish party. Two newspapers and one magazine for kids were started. They aided the linguistic education and ethnic emancipation of the younger Turkish generations. Finally, the Turkish religious press was re-established with the launching of the newspaper '*Muslimanlar*' ('*Muslim*'), which is among the few Turkish titles that are still published. '*Muslimanlar*' focuses exclusively on the popularization of the Muslim religion in Bulgaria and pays no attention to the public life in the country. A split in the Turkish religious leadership in 1992, resulted in launching of two separate versions of the newspaper. One of them provided support to the leader of the

⁷¹ Yalamov, 43.

alternative Muslim faction of Nedim Gendzev and his newly formed political party - '*The Democratic Party of Justice*'. Although this party and its organ had a very short lifespan, their emergence demonstrates that media diversity is born in politically homogeneous communities following a split in their ruling elites. Nedim Gendzev's party and newspaper were the first alternatives to the almighty Movement for Rights and Freedoms and its organ '*Rights and Freedoms*'.

Back in 2000, I concluded that the prospects for full restoration of the Turkish press in Bulgaria are slim.⁷² My investigation showed that from the restored seven Turkish newspapers and journals, one third were soon forced to stop due to lack of financial resources. Many of the media experts, whom I interviewed for my master's dissertation, considered insufficient funding to be the major reason for the decline of the Turkish press in Bulgaria. Indeed, scarcity of funds has a direct effect on the quality of the produced media products. Low quality entails low demand and small circulation. Bearing in mind the poor economic and social climate that minority groups had to weather in the beginning of the transition period, the fluctuating numbers of the Turkish titles from that time comes as no surprise. In this regard, Ivanov maintains that it is unrealistic to expect that minority media can be self-sustainable at times of economic hardship and market liberalization, because their readership and circulation are limited, and because revenues from sales and subscription are minimal. Moreover, "for the past eleven years, the budget of the Bulgarian state has not allocated any funding for aiding the culture of ethnic

⁷² In Valentovitch 2000, pp.23-24.

minorities, in general, and their newspapers and magazines, in particular.”⁷³ The Turkish titles in Bulgaria were funded mostly by Bulgarian NGOs. “Non-governmental organizations like ours are the only source of financing of the Turkish media in Bulgaria... We play the role of a ‘financial’ rocket-carrier that helps the Turkish press survive the hardships of the transition period,” explains Morozova.⁷⁴ Only two Turkish titles enjoyed financial stability during the 1990s as they were supported by their foreign owners. These are ‘*Zaman*’ (Bulgarian edition of a popular newspaper from Turkey) and ‘*Umit*’ (cultural magazine with a religious twist, sponsored by a wealthy businessman from Turkey).⁷⁵ The last two titles are thought to be an unofficial tribune of the religious and socio-political views of a popular Muslim school from Turkey⁷⁶ for which reason they are not considered a genuine minority press and are excluded from the analysis.

To sum up, following the complete annihilation of the Turkish press in the late 1980s, a handful of Turkish titles showed modest signs of recovery throughout the 1990s. The rich selection of titles from the previous two time-periods, however, was significantly reduced to just two weeklies (‘*Light*’ and ‘*Rights and Freedoms*’), which were supposed to serve as main sources of information to the 600,000-strong Turkish population in Bulgaria.

None of these titles, however, could serve as an example of liberal minority press, able to

⁷³ Ivanov, *The minority press in Bulgaria*, 7.

⁷⁴ Morozova, Svetlana, interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, 18 April 2000. Morozova was executive director of the ‘International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations’. Her organization provided funding to half of the published Turkish titles in Bulgaria. In Valentovitch 2000, 23.

⁷⁵ ‘*Umit*’ became later magazine for kids.

⁷⁶ Being a translation of a newspaper from Turkey, ‘*Zaman*’ focuses mainly on the political and economic developments in Turkey. Its major goal is to facilitate trade relations between Turkey and Bulgaria. The editors of the newspaper maintain neutrality and shay away from the political and social processes taking place in Bulgaria.

provide its audience with adequate information about the socio-political developments in the country. Most of the Turkish press from that period focused on cultural, religious or educational topics. The few among them, which discussed serious social and political themes, operated in a condition of tight political control, exercised by the Turkish political party. The adoption of liberal media provisions by the Bulgarian authorities proved insufficient for the restoration of the previous glory of the Turkish press. The 'planting' of the Turkish press into the liberal 'soil' of the Bulgarian media system, did not spur the development and liberalization of the former.

At the beginning of my investigation on this topic, I assumed that the Turkish minority press could have been restored had the Bulgarian authorities provided them with sufficient financial backing.⁷⁷ Only after conducting a comparative study on the development of ethnic minority media in the Balkans, did I realize that my assumption was premature. Focusing exclusively on the financial constraints that Turkish media experienced in the 1990s is not sufficient to explain their present predicament. After comparing the Turkish minority press to their Albanian and Hungarian counterparts, I have arrived at the conclusion that the financial difficulties are just one of the impediments that may deter (but do not prevent) the development of minority media. Similar to other minority media scholars, I failed to pay attention to the important role that minority political elites play in the development of these media. My doctoral research has revealed that the major obstacle to the development of the Turkish minority media in Bulgaria is the indifferent and at times obstructing position of the Turkish political elite towards these media. MRF has enjoyed solid representation in Bulgarian

⁷⁷ Valentovitch 2000, 23.

institutions that allocate funding to minority projects, including media. The Turkish political elites, however, have deliberately chosen not to aid the development of independent Turkish titles out of fear to assist in the genesis of liberal Turkish press that can reshuffle the Turkish elite.

During the second (2007) and third legs (2009) of my field investigations in Bulgaria, the identified earlier tendency of decline of Turkish print media was confirmed. Most of the Turkish titles from the 1990s were stopped due to lack of funding.⁷⁸ The story of the closure of the kids' magazine '*Balloon*' is insightful in this regard. '*Balloon*' disappeared forever from the shelves of the newspaper kiosks because of the death of its editor-in-chief and the inability of his younger aids to continue his legacy. This demonstrates that the few remaining Turkish titles in Bulgaria are run by elderly professionals, whose legacy cannot be continued due to the shortage of young Turkish media professionals. Only three original Turkish print media continue to be published today, two of which infrequently and with half of the circulation they used to have in the 1990s. These are the religious '*Muslim*', the cultural almanac '*Kainak*' (only two out of the planned six issues were published in 2007) and the children's newspaper '*Filiz*' (circulation dropped from 6,000 to 3,000). MRF decided to stop even their own party organ '*Rights and Freedoms*' for it started developing some critical stance with regards to the Turkish party and for the Turkish leaders realized that in a situation of lack of another Turkish political competitor, they do not need their own party organ to mobilize the support of the Turkish constituency. The mobilization of the Turkish votes becomes automatic in a situation of

⁷⁸ See Table 1.b. '*Turkish Print Minority Media in Bulgaria (2001 – 2009)*' in the Appendix section.

heightened ethnic intolerance and nationalistic attacks on behalf of the majority population.

MRF also halted the progress of few independent Turkish newspapers, which attempted to set the beginning of a critical discourse in the Turkish minority press. The children's '*Filiz*' and the intellectual's '*Kainak*', however, cannot satisfy the information needs of this large community. Hence, one can conclude that the Turkish press in Bulgaria has degraded to a stage of almost total collapse after a failed attempt to be jump-started during the first transitional decade. This gruesome finale has been summarized by Professor Alagöz in the following way:

Looking back to 1989, when the democratization process started, I must say that the ethnic Turkish media are progressively diminishing and face the threat of total extinction. There were a number of Turkish newspapers and magazines [established after 1989] that simply vanished ... If I have to sum it up, I have to say with deep regret that presently nothing serious is done in the field of Turkish minority media in Bulgaria.⁷⁹

But why the efforts to revive the Turkish press, with a century-long tradition of development, have failed once the communist deterrent to their progress was eliminated? Why would the print media of one of the largest minority groups in Europe disappear at a time when Bulgaria has firmly set upon the path of liberal and democratic development, and restoration of minority rights? The answer to these questions will await until the downfall of the Turkish electronic media is documented. Then a thorough analysis of the factors for the demise of the Turkish minority media will be offered.

⁷⁹ Alagöz, Sabri. Interview with author. Digital recording. Sofia, 28 September, 2009.

3.2. Electronic Media of the Turkish Minority in Bulgaria

The family of the Turkish electronic minority media in Bulgaria is made up of a single Turkish radio program on the Bulgarian National Radio (BNR) and a ten-minute 'News in Turkish' program on the Bulgarian National Television (BNT). In the liberal Bulgarian media landscape, there is not a single private Turkish broadcaster! This section will examine the electronic Turkish outlets and demonstrate that similar to Turkish print media, they are underdeveloped and fail to meet the information needs of this large community. In particular, I will demonstrate that despite some previous experience of making of public Turkish media, they are facing today serious structural, financial and technical predicaments that hinder their operation. These predicaments could have been easily resolved if the Turkish political elite had intervened and utilized the available to it institutional and policy resources. Unfortunately, the *Movement for Rights and Freedoms* has been deliberately avoiding to do this out of fear to assist in the genesis of critical Turkish minority media.

3.2.1. Turkish minority radio in Bulgaria

The Bulgarian National Radio remains the single institution that broadcasts a radio program designed for Bulgarian Turks. The '*Radio Program for the Turks in Bulgaria*' (or the *Turkish radio program* for short) reaches only pockets of the Turkish population, as its terrestrial coverage is limited by technical limitations. Until present day, neither the

Commission for Allocation of Radio Frequencies, nor the Council for Electronic Media, have received a single application for licensing a private Turkish channel.⁸⁰

Since its launch in 1945, the *Turkish radio program* has changed its format and philosophy several times, following the shifts in the political climate in Bulgaria. Until 1970s, the program sought to become the intellectual and cultural forum of the Turkish community. At the beginning, there were just two 30-minute daily shows for Eastern Bulgaria and Northern Turkey. Gradually, the airtime was extended to an hour and a half and the territorial coverage expanded. In 1959, the editorial offices of the program were consolidated into one central department within the Bulgarian National Radio in Sofia, called 'Programs in Turkish language'. The airtime was extended to the record 4.5 hours a day. The content was original and was prepared by a team of professional Turkish and Bulgarian journalists, working under the management of Turkish editors. All broadcasts were aired in standard Turkish language. Their content was determined by the interests of the Turkish audience, which communicated actively with the program's editors by phone and mail. This was the golden era of the development of the Turkish radio in Bulgaria. A variety of publicist shows were aired. In the studio of the program, round tables for important historical and political events were set up. Frequent guests to the program were prominent Turkish intellectuals. Soon, the Turkish radio "became not only an attractive information center, but also an important educational institution, which played important role in the development of the Turkish community."⁸¹ In the 1970s, the director of the

⁸⁰ The Commission allocates radio frequencies to private channels, whereas the Council approves their programming schemes.

⁸¹ Yalamov, 39.

Bulgarian National Radio undertook gradual restructuring of the program and eventually transformed it into a propaganda machine to aid the unfolding in the country ethnic assimilation campaign. The quality of the program deteriorated and eventually it was terminated altogether in 1985 when the revival campaign reached its peak.

The *Turkish radio program* was restored only in 1994. Today, it is prepared by the editorial office of the “Radio programs in Turkish language,” which is part of Radio Bulgaria.⁸² The Turkish unit within Radio Bulgaria has a mixed team of Turkish and Bulgarian media professionals who prepare five-hour daily programming for the Bulgarian Turks in Turkey. On a completely voluntary basis, the staff of this unit prepares a special daily program for the Turks in Bulgaria. Unfortunately, only some Turkish settlements can tune into the program’s frequency due to the limited coverage of the airing technical equipment. Since 2004, the Turkish radio program has three daily shows, which total 3 hours per day, that is, 1.5 hours less than the program had during the 1960s. The focus of the shows is primarily on the culture and economic life of the Turkish community. Each broadcast starts with ten-minute news, followed by rubrics unique for each day of the week.⁸³ Although most of the content is produced by the

⁸² Radio Bulgaria is one of the three public radio stations, operating under the hat of the Bulgarian National Radio. It consists of ten sub-divisions making radio programs for the Bulgarian citizens abroad in ten languages.

⁸³ On Mondays, there is ‘Beginning of the Week’ program that discusses events scheduled to happen during the week. The Tuesday’s program focuses on the agricultural sector, in which the majority of Bulgarian Turks are involved. The Wednesday’s show has a gender focus. The ‘Thursday Express’ is an entertaining music program. The ‘Friday Afternoon’ show has a religious accent. There are daily evening ‘End of The Day’ blocks, which start with ten-minute news broadcasts, followed by discussion of important socio-economic events that happened during the week and have relevance to the Turkish community. A variety of programs dedicated to the youngest listeners are also present in the programming scheme.

Turkish journalists themselves, the information materials used in the news broadcasts are taken from the central information bulletin of the Bulgarian National Radio, which are then translated into Turkish language. In other words, the Turkish program is not fully in charge of the news reporting, which is also the case with the ‘News in Turkish’ on the national television.⁸⁴

The selection of topics is dictated by the feedback received from the audience of the program and is facilitated by local reporters (stringers) who set up talk shows with the authorities of the ethnically mixed Turkish-Bulgarian regions. This helps establish communication between the capital and the remote Turkish settlements. A topic that is deliberately avoided in the news broadcasts and from discussion in the different rubrics throughout the week is the internal political life of the community, as the program puts the stress on the integration of the group: “Our major goal here is the social integration of Bulgarian Turks. Through our program, we aim to pay respect to their unique culture and preserve their identity. We also try to help those members of the Turkish community, who do not speak well the official [Bulgarian] language, to feel part of the social and cultural life of our common home – Bulgaria,” explains the Director of Radio Bulgaria Konstantinova.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Both programs are similar in terms of the gathering, preparation and reporting of the news. The content of the news broadcasts is prepared for them by the newsrooms of the Bulgarian public broadcasters and then translated into standard Turkish language. The editors of the Turkish radio program, however, can instill original news reportages into the content of the news broadcasts.

⁸⁵ Konstantinova, Rayna. Interview with author. Tape recording, Sofia, 15 April 2000. Emphasis mine. In Valentovitch 2000, 25.

Interviews with the editors of the Turkish radio program helped me identify the major problems that they encounter in their work. For Ahmed Ali, editor-in-chief, this is the lack of funding.⁸⁶ Making a radio program can be an expensive enterprise, especially if it has a national coverage, explains Ali. Due to the lack of funding, the Turkish program can afford to keep only five regional reporters, which is far from the necessary minimum for covering of the events from the major Turkish settlements. “As the content of our shows is determined by the problems and questions of the Turkish audience, we experience serious difficulties in terms of receiving its feedback,” explains Ali. Availability of adequate funding would have solved problems such as hiring reporters, purchasing technical equipment and expanding the range of the radio signal to cover all areas populated by Turks. Bulgarian public broadcasters, however, are in dire financial straits. Although the media law has introduced a public media fund, designed to raise money for the public broadcasters through taxation of households, this fund has never took off because of the faulty mechanism for collecting the media tax. Instead, the Bulgarian National Radio and Television depend exclusively on annual appropriations from the state budget, determined at the Parliament. This makes the editor-in-chief of ‘Radio Bulgaria’ Milen Belchev conclude that “there is no genuine public media in Bulgaria” and that “Bulgarian National Radio and Television are largely susceptible to political influence.”⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Ali, Ahmed. Interview with author. Tape recording, Sofia, 15 April, 2006.

⁸⁷ Belchev, Milen. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, 20 September, 2006. Belchev is editor-in-chief of ‘Radio Bulgaria,’ which is part of the Bulgarian National Radio. He explains that until recently, Bulgarian politicians have enjoyed the power to tailor the structure and content of the newscasts of public broadcasters by using their cell phones – a practice dubbed by Bulgarian journalists as ‘cell phone authority.’ For example, the former chair of the Media Commission in the Parliament - Klara Marinova - used to call on her cell the editor-in-chief of the Newsroom in the Bulgarian National Television and dictate on the phone the structure of the evening news.

I am not convinced that there is a functioning public sphere in Bulgaria either as there is no functioning public media in this country. Since the so-called ‘Bulgarian public media’ are still exclusively funded through the state budget, it is safe to say that these media can and are manipulated by the political elites who determine the budget. The old saying that ‘the selection of the music is done by the one who pays for it’ is well applicable to the Bulgarian public broadcasters. They are hardly independent, as media independence is a function of financial independence.⁸⁸

The second problem, faced by the Turkish radio program, is the lack of Turkish media professionals who can write and speak standard Turkish language – a necessary precondition for airing content on the national radio: “There is a shortage of Turkish media professionals in terms of both linguistic and journalistic skills,” complains Ali.⁸⁹ Nozhgyan, one of the leading journalists of the program, explains that there is a “generation gap, or even abyss, between the older generations, who were well trained in standard Turkish, and the youngsters, who cannot properly speak it, let alone understand it.”⁹⁰ The closure of the Turkish schools in the 1980s and the unresolved issue with the education in Turkish in Bulgarian public schools have resulted in deterioration of the knowledge of standard Turkish among the young generations, who speak dialects of it and experience difficulties understanding the anchors of the Turkish shows on the public broadcasters. If the recent resolution of the problem with the education in Turkish may solve the language problem in the near future, the training of minority journalists requires a proactive response on behalf of the authorities, which has not materialized yet. Bearing

⁸⁸ Belchev, 2006.

⁸⁹ Ali, 2000. Surveys have revealed that the dominant part of the Turkish population does not speak standard Turkish, but different dialects of it, which are not suitable for broadcasting. In Valentovitch 2000, 26.

⁹⁰ Nozhgyan. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, 14 September, 2005.

in mind that Bulgarian politicians have been lacking a coherent ethnic minority policy, such response is unlikely to materialize in the near future either. Moreover, the formation of clear minority policy has been further obstructed by the rise of ethnonationalist sentiments in Bulgarian society. This makes Belchev conclude that the nationalist attitudes, expressed by a fracture of the Bulgarian population, hinder the development of the Turkish minority media, in general, and the Turkish public radio, in particular.⁹¹

In line with the tenets of the instrumentalist approach to ethnicity, the leaders of some Bulgarian nationalist parties (i.e. ATAKA [Attack]) have mobilized political support by attacking ethnic minority groups and blaming them for the economic and social misfortunes, experienced by the majority population. Along with curtailment of minority's rights, these nationalist demagogues have also demanded closure of the public Turkish media in Bulgaria.⁹² The growing popularity of their slogans has affected the stance of the rest of Bulgarian parties on the issue of minority media development. To stop bleeding electoral support to nationalist formations, Bulgarian parties have maintained silence about the plight of ethnic minorities in the country, including access to media of the latter. This is largely seen by critical commentators as a consequence of the lack of consistent minority policy among majority elites. Cveta Petkova - former director of the Program 'Roma' at the Open Society Institute – Sofia - comments that Bulgarian

⁹¹ Belchev, 2006.

⁹² For the past seven years, this author has monitored an ongoing campaign for the closure of the Turkish TV program on the Bulgarian National Television. Right-wing activists have collected signatures for a national petition to stop the Turkish TV program. Screaming slogans like “Bulgarian National Television is for Bulgarians only!” they have managed to gain popularity and draw supporters to their cause. The absurdity of the situation is that the Turkish news program is only ten-minute long and is aired at a very unpopular time-slot – 4pm.

political elites refrain from following any structured minority policy because they fear losing the support of the nationalistically oriented segment of the electorate. Thus, the engineered by the EU minority programs are executed in a secretive fashion to avoid teasing the nationalist voters.⁹³

In addition to the lack of funding and media cadres, and the rise of nationalist sentiments in Bulgarian society, another hurdle in front of the development of the Turkish radio program is the technical issue of transmitting its frequency to the remotely situated Turkish settlements.⁹⁴ Today, this is done by means of small re-transmitters, which relay the program's signal to some Turkish communities, leaving many others without coverage. Turks living outside of the densely populated Turkish areas cannot tune into the frequency of the program either. Although the Bulgarian National Radio initiated a campaign to build more powerful re-transmitters, the National Telecommunications Company, in charge of the installation of such equipment, asked for the service a price that BNR could not afford to pay. Ali finds this situation absurd as the Turkish political party (MRF) enjoyed at the same time when these events were taking place strong representation in the government and could have easily mediated to find solution to this technical problem. In fact, after being approached by a delegation from the Turkish radio program, the MRF leaders promised to assist in the matter and provide the necessary support and funds for its resolution. At the end, they failed to live up to their promises.⁹⁵

⁹³ Petkova, Cveta, Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia 18 October, 2006.

⁹⁴ Note, that there were no such technical problems during the communist period of development of the Turkish radio program.

⁹⁵ The requested 100,000 BGL (\$64,000 CAD) were to cover the expenses for the building of a more powerful network of radio re-transmitters, and to upgrade the computers of the Turkish radio program.

Hence, the inactiveness of the Turkish political elite with respect to enforcing the constitutional right of Bulgarian Turks for access to media and information in Turkish language appears as another factor, deterring the progress of the public Turkish broadcasters in Bulgaria:

The Turkish political elite has shown a complete lack of interest in the development of our radio program. We have contacted them on a number of occasions with requests to help us get additional state subsidies to expand the territorial coverage of the program, as presently we cover only some Turkish towns and villages. All our requests were ignored.⁹⁶

Naturally, the Turkish community desires to have their own media in their own language, explains Ali.⁹⁷ At the same time, “the decision of the Turkish party to close their own party organ [the weekly newspaper ‘Rights and Freedoms’] clearly indicates the position of the Turkish political elite towards the development of Turkish minority media in Bulgaria. It is not natural for a party that represents the biggest minority group in the country, a party that has strong social and political influence and is well-represented in the government, to be ok with a situation where the ethnic group it is supposed to act for has no media... It is the [Turkish] political elite that has to initiate policies that would

When asked for assistance, the leader of MRF Ahmed Dogan made a comment that he should not be even bothered with requests for such petit sums of money and promised to help, which he never did. When representatives of the Turkish radio program contacted Emel Etem – another prominent politician from MRF - with the same request, the outcome was identical - initial promises, followed by silence and inaction. It is noteworthy that at the time these requests were extended, Emel Etem chaired the Media Commission at the Parliament and had the capacity to aid in the resolution of this technical issue. This high-rank Turkish politician, however, did not even include the discussion of this problem in the schedule of the presided by her commission. Note, that the Media Commission also drafts the annual proposals for the budget of the national broadcasters. In the capacity of chair of this commission, Etem could have easily assisted in the improvement of the funding of the public Turkish media programs.

⁹⁶ Belchev, 2006.

⁹⁷ Ali, 2006.

make possible the establishment of Turkish minority media in Bulgaria,” concludes the editor-in-chief of the ‘Radio Program for the Turks in Bulgaria’ Ahmed Ali.⁹⁸

In sum, the development of public Turkish radio program in Bulgaria has been hindered by lack of financial resources, media cadres, language issues, technical problems and lack of support from the Turkish elite. All these hurdles stem from flows in the policy-making process in the field of minority media, which require pro-active steps on behalf of authorities. The scholars of ethnic media have determined that the latter have at their disposal *regulatory*, *funding* and *educational* mechanisms to create favourable conditions for the development of ethnic minority media. The Bulgarian authorities have utilized so far only the regulatory instrument. What is puzzling in this case is that the powerful political elite of the Turkish community has failed to mediate in the resolution of these media-related problems despite having the strong administrative capacity to do so. The reason(s) for the inactiveness of the Turkish politicians with regards to the development of Turkish minority media will be addressed in the analytical section of this chapter. My objective for now is to mark the problems experienced by these media. I will turn next to the examination of the Turkish minority television in Bulgaria.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

3.2.2. Turkish minority television in Bulgaria

The development of Turkish minority television in Bulgaria is still in its infancy. Presently, there is just one Turkish program called *'News in Turkish'*, which airs a ten-minute daily news broadcasts on the First Channel of the Bulgarian National Television (BNT). The content of the news is a verbatim translation of the official Bulgarian newscast, prepared by the Newsroom of BNT.

'News in Turkish' was launched in 2005. Despite the fact that it is aired in a very unpopular time-slot (4 - 4.10pm), the program has steered a lot of controversy. Many nationalistically-oriented Bulgarians feel unhappy by the fact that Turkish language is spoken on the national television. The right wing party *'Ataka'* has even launched a campaign, involving street marches and petitions, to stop the program. In order to calm the social frustration, the editors of *'News in Turkish'* added Bulgarian subtitles to the broadcasts. The program is prepared by a team of only four employees, just two of whom are professional journalist. The crew of the program is in charge of the translation and narrating of the newscasts. It has no input in their drafting and does not have the authority to amend their structure or content. This gives reason to Svetoslava Tadarakova - respected Bulgarian journalist and maker of programs for ethnic minorities – to describe *'News in Turkish'* as a “useless program” for it merely translates Bulgarian news into Turkish language and rarely includes specific to the Turkish community information: “This program does not cover the life and problems of Turks in Bulgaria... It is a formal political act to demonstrate that the minorities in our country have access to media -

nothing more than that,” argues Tadarakova.⁹⁹ Izzet Ismailov - editor-in-chief of the program - confirms Tadarakova’s assessment, adding that all Turkish minority media in Bulgaria suffer from the same problem, namely, inability to properly inform the Turkish population about the developments in their community and Bulgarian society at large. He admits that the Turkish media in Bulgaria are also incapable of maintaining the “necessary reality check on the public events, which every media should perform. To serve as a truly informative and critical medium, our program needs to expand. Unfortunately, I do not see this happening anytime soon as the present political climate is against it. The nationalist and chauvinist political formations are on a rise and they are very active to have our program stopped,” complains Ismailov.¹⁰⁰

Contemplating on the utility of the program, Ismailov agrees with Tadarakova’s assessment that ‘News in Turkish’ is an example of a political compromise rather than a genuine Turkish medium. “The nationalists in Bulgaria might see our program as problematic, but if ‘*News in Turkish*’ is taken off the air, this will become an even bigger problem for Bulgarian authorities,” explains Ismailov, referring to the EU political conditionality, which requires from Bulgarian authorities to respect the rights of minorities, including their access to media. The role of the EU (*external system pressure* variable in this analysis) in boosting minority rights in Bulgaria is visible in the fact that ‘*News in Turkish*’ was launched after the Framework Convention for the Protection of Minority Rights was passed in the Bulgarian Parliament and two years prior of Bulgaria’s

⁹⁹ Tadarakova, Svetoslava. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, 20 September, 2005. Emphasis mine. Tadarakova is Bulgarian journalist and producer of the ‘*White Dove*’ show for the Turks in Bulgaria.

¹⁰⁰ Ismailov, Izzet. Interview with author. Digital recording. Sofia, 10 September, 2009.

accession to the EU. This makes Ismailov conclude that the only reason ‘*News in Turkish*’ was established on a first place was to pay lip service to Brussels and demonstrate that the rights of minorities in Bulgaria are respected. Apart from satisfying this political objective, Ismailov believes that ‘*News in Turkish*’ is useless as an information medium as “it is only ten-minute long and is aired at a time slot [4pm] when no working Turk can watch it.”¹⁰¹

Experts at BNT have worked for years on a concept of a thirty-minute weekly program in Turkish language to follow ‘*News in Turkish*’. The original idea was to wait for the staff of the Turkish news program to gain the necessary media experience and then to launch a problem-oriented publicist show, geared to the information needs of the Turkish population. “As you would expect, this otherwise good idea has completely failed to materialize and I don’t see any chances for it coming to fruition anytime soon. Although the Bulgarian public television is supposed to be independent, authorization for launching such a show rests with the ruling political elites,” explains Ismailov. He adds that despite the fact that the Turkish political party has been influential player in Bulgarian politics, the Turkish politicians have never taken any serious steps to propel the launching of this useful media project:

Unfortunately, the Bulgarian authorities do not offer us any support to develop our media. The Turkish political elite, which is represented in the executive and legislative, has also demonstrated lack of will to support the development of the media of its own group. Instead, they [MRF] have adopted a rather passive and

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Originally the program was allotted the 5pm slot, but later on was pushed back to 4pm.

neutral stance towards Turkish minority media, in general, and the Turkish programs on Bulgarian public broadcasters, in particular.¹⁰²

To back this statement, Ismailov provides an example with the work of the parliamentary Commission on Ethnic and Demographic Issues, chaired at the time of our interview by an MP from MRF who had the necessary political and financial cloth to spur the development of Turkish public media but deliberately chose not to. The previous editor-in-chief of *'News in Turkish'* shares similar observations about the passivity of the Turkish political elite with respect to the development of Turkish media: "The Bulgarian authorities have forgotten about our media. We feel totally neglected. What is truly shocking and perplexing is that our own Turkish political party [MRF] pretends that our media do not exist!" exclaims Dimitrova.¹⁰³ She discards the popular among Bulgarian nationalists argument that there is no need of Turkish minority media as Bulgarian Turks can watch Turkish television from Turkey via satellite connection or cable. "This argument is profoundly wrong as Turks in Bulgaria are citizens of this country and they need to be informed about the events happening here, not about the events happening in Turkey. This is especially valid for those Turks who do not understand well the Bulgarian language and do not follow mainstream Bulgarian media. Providing information to Bulgarian Turks is after all the primary reason *'News in Turkish'* was established at first place," explains Dimitrova.¹⁰⁴ Contemplating on the same topic, Tadarakova adds that the economic and 'information' deprivation, experienced by all ethnic minorities in the country, contribute to their further encapsulation and severing of communication links

¹⁰² Ismailov, 2009.

¹⁰³ Dimitrova, Silvia. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, 20 September, 2005.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

between them and the ‘outside’ world. This ghettoization of minority communities makes them unreachable to Bulgarian authorities:

Being a professional journalist and maker of programs for ethnic minorities, my observation is that ethnic communities in Bulgaria are not following the mainstream electronic media. Instead, Turks predominantly watch the free satellite channels from Turkey and other Arab states, which are bad substitutes to locally produced Turkish media. Turkish media from Turkey cannot help inform and integrate Bulgarian Turks. Only Turkish media from Bulgaria can do that.¹⁰⁵

This observation has been confirmed by the OSI minority media report, discussed earlier in this chapter.¹⁰⁶ The major problems that the makers of ‘*News in Turkish*’ face in their work are identical to the ones experienced by the journalist from the ‘*Radio Program for the Turks in Bulgaria*.’ First, this is the lack of media professionals, in general, and journalists with good knowledge of standard Turkish language, in particular. Ismailov states that there was no shortage of educated media cadres before 1984 when there were numerous Turkish media in Bulgaria, made by Turkish professionals. The ethnic homogenization campaign, however, drove into exile most of the Turkish intellectuals and media specialists. “This resulted in shortage of Turkish professionals. No fresh Turkish media cadres are trained today. Moreover, educated Turks have little incentive to pursue a career in Turkish media institutions due to the low wages offered in them,” explains Ismailov.¹⁰⁷ Dimitrova identifies the rising ethnic intolerance in Bulgaria as the second major hurdle in front of the development of Turkish minority media: “I do not

¹⁰⁵ Tadarakova, 2005.

¹⁰⁶ See Ilko Yordanov and Aglika Krushoveska, “Assessment of print and electronic media supported by the Open Society Institute - Sofia” (Sofia: Open Society Institute - Sofia, 2006).

¹⁰⁷ Ismailov, 2009.

think the Bulgarian National Television would ever allow us to expand and make a publicist Turkish show on the First Bulgarian channel, or on any other channel, until the ethnic intolerance remains at its present levels. The Bulgarian politicians will never fully allow Turkish minority media to flourish, as they fear to lose the support of the nationalist-minded electorate. I believe that the notion that Bulgarians are ethnically tolerant people is a pure myth,” concludes Dimitrova.¹⁰⁸

Ismailov and Dimitrova’s conclusions are echoed by Tadarakova - author of the first publicist show dedicated to the culture and problems of Turks in Bulgaria. The story of her program, called *‘The White Dove’*, is indicative of the negative effect of ethnic intolerance in Bulgarian society on the development of Turkish minority media. *‘The White Dove’* was launched in 2000 and was aired for four consecutive years on the private channel *7 Days*. This weekly thirty-minute show was prepared by a mixed team of Bulgarian and Turkish journalists. Their goal was to aid the integration of the Turkish minority into the fabric of Bulgarian society through demonstrating that Turks and Bulgarians have similar problems. To achieve this goal, the makers of the program opted for the bilingual format - *‘The White Dove’* was aired in Turkish language with Bulgarian subtitles. Every episode would start with short news, covering the major events from the life of the Turkish community, followed by a discussion of a wide range of social topics, specific to Turks. The program would also pay attention to the ethnic politics in Bulgaria, which no Turkish electronic medium had done before. For these reasons, the *‘The White Dove’* can be classified as the only electronic program with truly informative character.

¹⁰⁸ Dimitrova, 2005.

Unfortunately, it was taken off the air for familiar reasons - lack of funding and professional Turkish journalists:

The making of the *'The White Dove'* is [was] possible thanks to the support of Bulgarian NGOs. It would have been more natural if affluent Turks provided some of the funding... When we announced that we are looking for a Turkish crew, it turned out that there are no Bulgarian Turks who can handle TV journalism. This is a big problem as we try to make a media product that is competitive to the Turkish shows [from Turkey], which the majority of the Turks in Bulgaria prefer to watch.¹⁰⁹

Five years after our first meeting, Tadarakova adds that the ethnic intolerance on behalf of the majority population had also played a central role in the demise of her show.¹¹⁰ The biggest cable television in Bulgaria at the time [*'EuroCom'*] refused to air the *'The White Dove'* out of fear that this might alienate the nationalistically oriented segment of their audience. "Our program was rejected also by many other regional cable operators due to the ethnic intolerance on behalf of their subscribers. The editors were unwilling to air my program as they were afraid to lose their viewers," explains Tadarakova.¹¹¹ The Director General of the Bulgarian National Television also refused to host the *'The White Dove'* as at the time his relations with the leaders of the Turkish party were strained. Tadarakova stresses that the Turkish politicians have the ability and opportunity to boost the development of Turkish media because MRF enjoys solid political representation and presence in key institutions, including the Media Council: "The present Chair of the

¹⁰⁹ Tadarakova, 2000. The interview was taken when the *'The white dove'* was just launched. In Valentovitch 2000, 27.

¹¹⁰ Tadarakova, 2005. Note that the second interview with Tadarakova was taken four years before the interview with Ismailov (editor-in-chief of *'News in Turkish'*). This demonstrates that the resilient ethnic intolerance of Bulgarians has acted as a break on the development of the Turkish minority media throughout the 2000s. See "Table 5: Main independent variables and their scores" in the Appendix section.

¹¹¹ Tadarakova, 2005.

Media Council [Raicho Raikov] is serving a second mandate from the Turkish party quota. He would do occasionally favours to MRF that bear political character.”¹¹² According to Tadarakova, the leaders of the Turkish party are not concerned about the development of the media of their community for such media will not help them win elections. As my research demonstrates, the patriarchal organization of the Turkish community and the lack of political competition within the Turkish group give the MRF leaders opportunity to mobilize the Turkish electorate through maintaining personal communication channels with the Turkish clan leaders, discarding the need of Turkish media for this purpose.

To sum up, the conducted research on the contemporary print and electronic Turkish minority media in Bulgaria has shown that they experience gradual decay when compared to the previous two time-periods of their development. The specifics of Turkish media outlets from the past two decades are systematized in two comparative tables in the Appendix section. Table 1 provides information on the post-totalitarian era Turkish print media. It indicates that presently there are just three Turkish titles: the religious magazine *'Muslim'*, the kids' newspaper *'Filiz'* and the cultural magazine *'Kainak'*. Four other newspapers were forced to go out of business due to financial constraints and/or lack of trained media cadres. This gruesome picture of the slowly disappearing Turkish print media differs starkly from their developed nature during the pre-totalitarian and totalitarian time-periods when the Turkish press offered to its

¹¹² Tadarakova, 2000. One of the functions of the Media Council is to license private radio and TV channels. Hence, one may assume that once the Council's chair is a person appointed by MRF this would increase the chances of Turkish applicants who want to open television or radio channels. Unfortunately, this has not been the case, as such applications have not been submitted until this day.

audience a rich variety of titles, genres and impressive circulation. Neither of the currently operating Turkish print media outlets addresses adequately the socio-economic and political life of the Turkish community in Bulgaria. Instead, the three remaining Turkish titles focus on religious, cultural and educational topics. In contrast, the pre-totalitarian and totalitarian Turkish press focused extensively on the social, economic and political life of the Turkish community. The pre-totalitarian Turkish press even did so from different ideological and political perspectives, which contributed to the development of the Turkish minority public sphere in Bulgaria.

As far as the electronic Turkish media are concerned, presently there are just one television news show and one radio program in Turkish language. *'News in Turkish'* is similar to the Turkish press in the sense that they both fail to report adequately on the social and political life of the Turkish community. The *'Radio Program for the Turks in Bulgaria'* is the only Turkish medium that pays attention to the social and economic problems of the group, but shies away from topics related to the internal political life of the community and ethnic politics in Bulgaria. The program has strong traditions, but similar to the remaining Turkish media in Bulgaria, experiences financial difficulties and lack of media professionals. The informative role of the Turkish radio is further diminished by technical constraints, which enable only fraction of the Turkish population to tune into its frequency. In effect, there are no developed Turkish minority media in Bulgaria that could come close to the ones serving the information needs of the Albanian and Hungarian minorities in Macedonia and Romania.

3.3. Implications of the Level of Development of Turkish Minority Media For the Turkish Community

As established in the theory chapter, ethnic minority media play important social and political roles. They serve as main information sources (especially for capsulated minority groups like the ones examined in this dissertation), contribute to minorities' integration in the socio-economic and political life of their host societies, and serve as locus of minority public spheres. The level of development of Turkish minority media suggests that this socially isolated community is left in an information vacuum. "Turks in Bulgaria need their own media to establish a communication flow in their community and to keep them informed about the developments in the country. As Turks lack media of their own, they watch exclusively Turkish satellite programs. This is not acceptable as it results in leaving large segment of the population of the country uninformed about the life in Bulgaria," comments the renowned researcher of ethnic minorities in the Balkans Zhelyazkova.¹¹³ How does this affect the civic activity, integration and public debates within the Turkish community?

According Habermas (1989), Hartley (2000), Sampson (1996) and McNair (2000), media represent the tonic of public debates and locus of national public spheres. In order for a public sphere to form and function, there should be freedom of communication and universal access to pluralist media where information about public issues is disseminated, discussed and analyzed (Habermas 1989). Only well-informed citizens can participate in the public debates, discover the truth about public issues and contribute to the formation

¹¹³ Zhelyazkova, 2009.

of the public opinion. Thus, pluralist mass media are paramount for the integration of citizens in the public life of national states. Keane (1996), Gitlin (1998), Hartley (2000), Browne (2005) and Heller (2007) argue that minority communities may also form their own public sub-spheres, operating within national public spheres, provided the minority agents have access to pluralist media.

As my analysis has demonstrated, over the past twenty years, the Turkish minority has had very limited presence in the media sphere. Turkish minority media are almost extinct, whereas mainstream Bulgarian media are not followed by the majority of the Turks either because of their insufficient proficiency in the majority language, or because Bulgarian media fail to reflect on the issues that concern the minority populations in the country. To illustrate this point, Zheliyazkova describes how Emel Etem – high-rank politician from MRF, former chair of the media commission in the parliament and former Minister of Education – complained that when she goes to campaign in the Turkish settlements, the ordinary Turks do not recognize her despite the fact that Etem is constantly present in the Bulgarian news. This shows that although the activities of the Turkish political party are followed by the mainstream media, significant segment of the Turkish population remains unaware of the public life in the country, as it does not follow the Bulgarian media. “Instead, Turks follow Turkish news from Turkey, which do not provide information about the life in Bulgaria,” explains Zhelyazkova.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Since there is no media-stimulation of public discussions within the Turkish community and no genuine Turkish civil society structures, one may infer that the Turkish minority does not have its own public sphere. According to many of the interviewed by this author Turkish intellectuals and media professionals, this conclusion well reflects the reality. “There are neither civil society structures [important for the hosting of public debates], nor Turkish public sphere in Bulgaria. Instead, there is total control over the community, exercised by MRF!” exclaims Chaushev.¹¹⁵ Another Turkish intellectual and media professional captures succinctly the status of the Turkish public sphere in the following way:

One can hardly speak of a Turkish public sphere in Bulgaria as there is practically no media that could provide relevant information to the group and enable it to critically assess the public life in the country, in general, and in the Turkish community, in particular. To launch such [public] sphere there should be at least few Turkish daily newspapers that would monitor the social and political processes, preferably from different ideological perspectives. Instead, the majority of Bulgarian Turks listen and watch satellite programs from Turkey, which offer no information on the life in Bulgaria. As a result, Bulgarian Turks have at very best distorted or blurred information, if any, about the life in this country. This information blackout is not accidental. It is deliberately sought by our [Turkish] politicians as they believe that the less people know about the political developments in Bulgaria, the easier they can be manipulated and ruled.¹¹⁶

Alagöz’ observations are echoed by the editor-in-chief of ‘*News in Turkish*’:

There is no such phenomenon as ‘public sphere’ of Bulgarian Turks. The existing Turkish media have adopted a non-critical and cultural focus, which simply cannot stimulate public discussions within the Turkish community. They

¹¹⁵ Chaushev, 2008. Chaushev is the last editor-in-chief of the MRF organ ‘*Rights and Freedoms*’.

¹¹⁶ Alagöz, 2009. Emphasis added to demonstrate the input of minority political elites in the structuring of the media spheres of minority communities and the applicability of the instrumentalist framework for their analysis.

do not subject the reality to any critical analysis and for that reason Turkish [minority] media cannot provide useful information for public deliberation. There are no Turkish civil society structures either. Together with Turkish minority media, Turkish civic organizations need to be present for such public debates to materialize... Turks lack civil society organizations because they have delegated to MRF the authority to decide on their behalf about all public matters and expect the Turkish party to present solutions to all of their problems.¹¹⁷

Kept deliberately in an information vacuum, Bulgarian Turks are poorly informed about the public events in Bulgaria, can hardly engage into critical discussions in the public domain and are excluded from the formation of the public opinion, which is imperative for improving of the process of democratic governance. Hence, one can conclude that the lack of serious Turkish minority media has affected negatively the integration of the Turkish community in the socio-political processes of Bulgarian society.

The phasing out of the Turkish minority media in Bulgaria was a surprising discovery when looking at their century-long tradition of development and the strong political representation of the Turkish community. The Turkish political elite could have easily solved the administrative and technical hurdles, impeding the progress of the Turkish electronic media, but deliberately chose not to. In comparison, Roma minority, which comprise only 4% of the population, lacks media experience and faces serious literacy problems, enjoys far more developed media than Turks do. Zheliazkova offers the following explanation to this puzzle:

¹¹⁷ Ismailov, 2009.

Presently, Roma media are far better developed than Turkish ones thanks to the generous financial support that the former receive from external donors and Bulgarian NGOs like our organization. If it was not for our efforts, probably no Turkish titles would have been published either. The blame and the responsibility for the total underdevelopment of the Turkish minority media should be taken by the Turkish political party [MRF]. I am astonished from the fact that the strong and powerful MRF has not addressed this problem yet. I was amazed when I was told that MRF stopped their own party organ due to 'financial constraints' – an explanation that nobody familiar with the strength of this party would believe. The impoverished status of the Turkish minority media today is striking and shocking even to Bulgarians and especially to those who research ethnic minorities like us.¹¹⁸

How is it possible for one of the largest minorities in Europe to remain in a media and information shadow in the era of proliferation of media and communication technologies? Why the political elite of the Turkish community remains inactive and fails to utilize the policy instruments at its disposal to provide its group with access to information and media? Identifying and analyzing the variables that affect the development of the Turkish minority media will constitute the focus of the remaining of this chapter.

¹¹⁸ Zheliazkova, 2005.

4. Turkish Minority Media: Analysis of the Factors for their Underdevelopment

What variables account for the development of the media of security sensitive minority groups? What makes the media spheres of such groups become developed and pluralist? Why would minority political elites obstruct the development of the media of their own communities? These are the key questions that my dissertation seeks to answer. I claim that the development of full-fledged and pluralist media spheres of security sensitive ethnic minority groups is a complex process that depends on the interplay of the following variables: *political cohesion of ethnic minority groups, their level of education, status of inter-ethnic relations, media experience, availability of funding and external system pressure.* My research has shown that the *political cohesion* of security sensitive minority groups is the variable that has the strongest impact on the development and pluralization of the media of such communities. I argue that there is a strong causal link between the political organization of security sensitive minorities and the character of their media spheres. Media spheres of minority groups liberalize after their political spheres become pluralist. Once this happens, circles of friendly media form around rival centres of minority political power, leading to pluralization of the media domains of previously coherent minority communities. The benefit of pluralist minority media is that they offer competing interpretations of reality, which stimulates the operation of minority public spheres, aiding the integration of minority communities in the public life of their adoptive states. Politically coherent minorities are unable to generate pluralist minority media even if their media spheres are integrated in the pluralist media systems of their

host societies. What follows is examination of the effect of each of the suggested above independent variables on the development of Turkish minority media in Bulgaria.¹¹⁹

4.1. Political Cohesion of the Turkish Community

As established in the introduction to this chapter, Turks in Bulgaria are represented in the political domain exclusively by the Turkish party *Movement for Rights and Freedoms* (MRF), which serves as a balancing and integrating factor in Bulgarian politics. Although the Turkish politicians claim that MRF is a liberal party open to all Bulgarians, primary data reveals that MRF is an ethnic party that aggregate the vote of the Turkish community. Turks in Bulgaria are a politically coherent group, whose members share patriarchal devotion to the MRF political leadership.

The ethnic character of MRF is exemplified by the following data. According to *Alpha Research*, in the 2005 parliamentary elections, 82.5% of the MRF supporters were ethnic Turks, 6% Pomaks (Bulgarian Muslims) and 4.4% Bulgarians.¹²⁰ A separate survey by GALUP confirms these numbers and offers further proof to the ethnic voting and strong internal political cohesion of the Turkish community: 82% of the Turks who backed MRF in the 2001 parliamentary elections, reconfirmed their support to the party in the 2005 elections. Exit polls of the 2007 elections for European Parliament show even greater political homogenization of the Turkish electorate: 93% of the voters who

¹¹⁹ See “Table 5: Main independent variables and their scores” in the Appendix section.

¹²⁰ This data was provided to the author by the director of GALUP-Bulgaria - Zhivko Georgiev.

supported MRF were Turks, 1.5% - Roma and 2.2% - Bulgarians. The same poll suggests that 96.61% of the people who voted for MRF in the 2005 parliamentary elections cast their vote for the same party in 2007. Another set of data shows that 94% of those who voted for MRF in 2007 would vote for the same party again provided there were parliamentary elections that year. Finally, 98.26% of those who voted for MRF in the 2005 parliamentary elections said they would support MRF again if elections were called today (2009). On the basis of this information, Georgiev concludes that “Turks in Bulgaria are a politically homogeneous community that votes exclusively for MRF.”¹²¹ Table 3 in the ‘Appendix’ section provides further numerical evidence to this contention.

Thanks to the consolidation of the Turkish vote, MRF has enjoyed permanent representation in the Bulgarian parliament since the party’s entry into politics in 1989. The gaining momentum nationalist sentiments over the past seven years, have resulted in further political capsulation of the Turkish electorate (see ‘Table 4’ in the Appendix section). MRF has been constantly ranked among the top three most popular political formations in Bulgaria, which makes it the most valuable coalition partner: “MRF is privileged to enjoy a consolidated and highly disciplined electorate, which has guaranteed the parliament representation of the party since 1989,” confirms Karasimeonov.¹²² Now that the political homogeneity of the Turkish community has been established, I will spill some ink on the structure of power relations within the party. Although not identified as

¹²¹ Georgiev, Zhivko. Personal communication. Sofia. September 15, 2009.

¹²² Карасимеонов, 217.

independent variable, my research shows that the authoritarian nature of MRF has served as an additional deterrent to the pluralization of the Turkish media in Bulgaria.¹²³

4.2. Power Relations within the Turkish Political Party

The *Movement for Rights and Freedoms* achieved its first major victory in 2001 when it sent two ministers to the coalition cabinet. In 2005, MRF reconfirmed its position as a leading actor in Bulgarian politics, sending another four ministers to the government. The party is also a key partner in the present Bulgarian cabinet, which is a coalition between MRF and the Bulgarian Socialist Party. The political success of MRF is rooted in its internal organization. As the following evidence demonstrates, the Turkish party has a highly hierarchical structure. Its cohesion is maintained by the party's authoritarian leadership where all the power is concentrated in the hands of the party leader and its immediate aids. Karasimeonov and Ragaru describe MRF as a leader-type party with neat vertical architecture and highly centralized organization.¹²⁴ The party has been dominated by its founder and leader Ahmed Dogan since its establishment in 1989.¹²⁵ Dogan has managed to prevent all attempts for political splintering and remained on the helm of

¹²³ *Structure of power relations within ethnic parties* has not been identified here as a separate independent variable, as authoritarian parties can still provide room for pluralization of ethnic minority media. As the Albanian case will demonstrate, if the political sphere of given ethnic minority group is made up of competing political parties, the pluralization of the media sphere of the group is highly possible despite the fact that some of these minority parties might be of authoritarian character. When the political sphere of given minority group is made up of a single political formation, then the authoritarian character of the latter serves as an additional deterrent to the liberalization of the media sphere of the community.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 216.

¹²⁵ Ragaru, 81.

MRF for 23 consecutive years until he recently handed the reins to his closest aid, although he still remains the actual party leader.¹²⁶

MRF's hierarchical structure is enshrined in the charter of the party, which concentrates the power in the hands of the party leader who serves as a Chairman of the party's Central Committee, Central Operative Bureau and parliamentary group. The Chairman is consulted by a council of five of his closest aids. The decisions taken by the party's 'Central Operative Bureau' are then passed down to the regional sub-structures of the party where direct lines of communication with local Turkish clan-leaders are utilized to secure the implementation of the party directives. Popov claims that being a clientelist and authoritarian party, MRF utilizes personal communication channels with its ethnic base to achieve political mobilization of the latter, thus bypassing the need of media for this purpose.¹²⁷ Zheliazkova confirms this observation, stressing the detachment of MRF's core from the party's electorate:

The communication between the Turkish politicians and their ethnic electorate is flowing one-way only - top-down. The bottom-up communication is not working. Although ordinary Turks attempt to send signals to their leaders, the Turkish political elite demonstrates complete deafness to their voices. Turks do not share their problems with their Turkish MPs, who occasionally come to visit driving around in luxurious cars, smoking cigars and wearing posh clothing. There is a clear rift between the Turkish electorate and the leadership of MRF. The communication between MRF and its constituency resumes only during

¹²⁶ In January 2013, Dogan resigned from the post of Chairman of MRF. He appointed Lutvi Mestan as the new leader of the party, assuming the position of honorary Chairman of MRF for life. Critical commentators, maintain that Dogan unofficially still remains the true leader of MRF and the change at the top was done to restore the confidence of the public in the party.

¹²⁷ Popov, Evgeni. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, 17 September, 2005. Popov is Political Analyst at the Bulgarian Socialist Party.

elections and is based upon an irrational and imaginary fear from the [nationalistically-oriented] majority population.¹²⁸

Because Dogan's circle of aids is closed and detached from the ordinary Turks, Zhelyazkova believes that having Turkish minority media would have helped enormously the integration of the group in the political process:

No genuine feedback from the group is reaching the MRF leadership. Turkish minority media could have helped a lot in this department had they existed. Instead, it is the mainstream Bulgarian media that perform the watchdog function with regards to MRF, which is hardly productive due to the capsulated nature of the party and the inability of Bulgarian journalists to penetrate the MRF decision-making core.¹²⁹

Similar to Popov and Karasimeonov, Zhelyazkova describes MRF as a clientelist and authoritarian party, with devoted patriarchal base, which perceives its leader as 'batjushka'¹³⁰ and follows him unconditionally: "This is a Stalinist type of party where the authoritarian character of its leadership is so pronounced that regular Turkish politicians are not allowed even to speak out their minds unless they receive a permission to do so."¹³¹ Moreover, the MRF charter empowers the party leader to be the only representative who interacts with the Bulgarian officials. He also appoints the Turkish MPs and mayors. MRF's centralization is further visible in the power delegated to its leader to expel party members for reasons such as disclosing party secrets, discrediting

¹²⁸ Zhelyazkova, 2009.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ 'Batjushka' means 'father' in Russian. This was the nickname of the Russian Tsar – an authoritarian figure, blindly followed by the masses who believed that their *Batjushka* is always right and will take care of them.

¹³¹ Ibid.

the party image in the media, factionalism attempts, etc. The sporadically occurring internal conflicts are usually resolved through sacking of those members who dare to challenge the leader's authority.¹³²

Similar to MRF, Turks are a hierarchically organized patriarchal community where the relations of accountability flow vertically from family clan leaders to the rest of the group. The clan leaders decide how the members of their extensive families will act in the public domain and therefore constitute primary object of MRF's attention during election campaigns. Professor Minchev succinctly summarizes the patriarchal architecture of MRF and the Turkish community in the following way:

The MRF leadership is not interested in springing of alternative and oppositional camps within the group. The Turkish party parasitizes on the preserved within the Turkish community patriarchal model of dependency, which is hostile to the idea of pluralism and competition of organized interests. Turks are a patrimonial community where everything follows the logic of the family hierarchy. This structure has been skillfully exploited by the party leader Ahmed Dogan. During elections, MRF monitors the process of voting of their electorate through direct control. The Turkish dissidents are efficiently excluded and kicked out of the community through economic isolation or even physical punishment. This is how tightly MRF controls the Turkish group.¹³³

Over the past two decades, there have been few attempts to establish an alternative Turkish party. All but one failed thanks to the counter-splintering mechanisms, employed

¹³² This happened to Dogan's former right-hand Kasim Dal, who served as deputy Chairman of MRF. After Dal publicly criticized the dictatorial methods of MRF's leadership and the party's detachment from its base, he was expelled from MRF in 2011. Two years later, Dal formed the newest Turkish party - People's Party of 'Freedom and Dignity' (PPFD). PPFD has just started its political life and it remains to be seen if it will survive the day or disappear soon after its establishment, following the course of four previous unsuccessful attempts to set up a Turkish political alternative.

¹³³ Minchev, Ognyan. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, 26 September, 2005. Minchev is Professor in Political Science at the University of Sofia and Director of the '*Institute for Regional and International Studies*'.

by MRF. In some of the cases, the leaders of the newly established Turkish parties were publicly discredited, in others, the Bulgarian authorities refused to register their formations for being “unconstitutional,” “subversive” and “dangerous” for the ethnic peace in the country.¹³⁴ At the end of 2012, the expelled from MRF former deputy Chairman of the party - Kasim Dal - established the newest Turkish political formation - People’s Party “Freedom and Dignity” (PPFD). This has been the most recent and serious attempt to splinter the Turkish electorate, which this time has received the official backing of Ankara.¹³⁵ The results of the last parliamentary elections, however, have proven this attempt to be a failure as well. One of the biggest Turkish dailies (Hurriyet) comments that the ‘efforts of the Justice and Development Party to splinter the Turkish vote [in Bulgaria] met very strong resistance among Bulgarian Turks who consolidated around MRF on the Sunday’s elections... The election results show that JDP’s attempt to split Bulgarian Turks was unsuccessful and that they chose to be represented by MRF

¹³⁴ The first attempt to split MRF occurred in 1997 when Güner Tahir (former MP and member of MRF) formed the ‘National Movement for Rights and freedoms’. Few years later, Tahir was discredited in the media as an informer of the secret services from the totalitarian era and had to leave the political stage. In 2005, Adem Kenan was expelled from MRF for contradicting the party line. He formed the alternative ‘Turkish Democratic Party,’ which also was refused registration. Its leader was inspected by the Bulgarian Court of Cassation for instigating racial enmity and creating an organization that instigates racial hatred. Similar fate befell the ‘National Turkish Alliance’, established in 2006, which also was refused registration for being a ‘separatist’ formation. The fourth attempt to establish an alternative Turkish party was the institution of the ‘Muslim Democratic Union’, which the Bulgarian president described as a ‘provocation against the ethnic peace in the country’ and urged authorities to ‘act uncompromisingly’ against similar attempts of radical Islamization. In Nikola Lalov, *Threat of radical islamization* (Mediapool, 1 October, 2009, accessed 1 May 2011); available from <http://www.mediapool.bg/show/?storyid=156952>.

¹³⁵ The Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdoğan and officials from his Justice and Development Party (JDP) have urged the Bulgarian emigrants in Turkey to vote for PPFD during the parliamentary elections in May, 2013. “Emigrants in Turkey are divided before the vote on Sunday,” *Dnevnik*, 9 May 2013. Available from http://www.dnevnik.bg/izbori2013/2013/05/09/2057139_izselnicite_v_turciia_sa_razedineni_predi_vota_v/

again, demonstrating their willingness to continue being united in the public and political domains,' writes Hurriyet.¹³⁶

The newly born PPFD participated in this year's elections as a coalition partner to the popular in the past party of the former Bulgarian Tsar Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha – the National Movement Simeon the Second (NMSS).¹³⁷ For this reason, it is impossible to calculate how many of the MRF's votes were bled to PPFD. PPFD-NMSS scored poorly in the 2013 elections, receiving just 1,6% of the popular vote and failing to pass the 4% threshold and secure seats in the parliament. In comparison, MRF aggregated 11,3% of the votes, ranking again among the top three political powers in the country and entering for a fourth time as a partner in the coalition government.¹³⁸ Hence, one may conclude that although the first serious challenger to MRF's position of exclusive representative of the Turkish community has arrived on the political stage, the Turkish electorate still remains politically coherent. Despite that, the political life of the Turkish minority demonstrates an interesting phenomenon, which will become a focus of my next academic research, namely, identifying the variables that affect the pluralization of the political spheres of security sensitive minority groups in Eastern Europe. My hypothesis is that the extension of political bridges between diaspora and homeland political communities can trigger fission within politically coherent diaspora groups. We see this

¹³⁶ In Hurriyet, "Officials in Turkey lost the elections in Bulgaria," *Vesti*, 14 May 2013. Available from: <http://www.vesti.bg/?tid=40&oid=577031>

¹³⁷ The National Movement Simeon II won the 2001 elections and formed a government, led by Simeon II himself. NMSII participated as a coalition partner in the next 2005-2009 government.

¹³⁸ *Results of the elections for members of parliament on 12 May, 2013* (Central Electoral Committee, 2013, accessed 16 May 2013); available from <http://results.cik.bg/pi2013/rezultati/index.html>.

process replicated in the political experience of Transylvanian Hungarians, who similar to Bulgarian Turks used to be a politically coherent community until partnership between politicians from Hungary and Transylvania led to the splintering of the almighty Hungarian minority party in Romania - UDMR. How pluralization of the political life of security sensitive minorities affects the quality of their media will be discussed in the next two chapters. Since the political representation of Bulgarian Turks still remains coherent, I will discuss here how political homogeneity has affected the media experience of the Turkish group over the past two decades.

4.2.1. Establishing the link between the political and media spheres of the Turkish community

The Turkish political party [MRF] intentionally blocks the development of our [Turkish] media outlets to make sure that ordinary people and Turkish intellectuals have little access to information about the processes in our society. This is done on purpose so that the Turkish political leaders can keep their grip over the community.¹³⁹

There is no better proof than this statement, provided by one of the remaining makers of Turkish minority media in Bulgaria, for the potency of political factors for the development of minority media and for the adequacy of the instrumentalist approach for their analysis. My research has shown that the monolithic political representation of the Turkish community offers little incentives for the development of pluralist Turkish media institutions. Since the democratic opening in 1989, there have been few attempts to establish liberal Turkish media outlets in Bulgaria, for which little is known. The alternative Turkish media voices originated from the intellectual core of the Turkish

¹³⁹ Alagöz, 2009.

community - university professors, intellectuals and students¹⁴⁰ - who made few attempts to start critical Turkish press. In 2003, two liberal Turkish dailies were launched. They were written in Turkish and distributed only in the Turkish regions. The editors used their papers as a platform to criticize the anti-liberal foundations of MRF, the party's detachment from its base and to introduce their political alternatives. In particular, they criticized the Turkish party for the impoverished and disadvantaged position, in which it keeps the Turkish community. Both newspapers received financial support from private foundations from Turkey, some of which with religious orientation. The obscure funding sources helped MRF win the support of the majority population when clamping down on both titles. If MRF was unhappy with the flourishing of alternative political voices within the Turkish community calling for change, the Bulgarian public feared the spread of Islamic fundamentalism following the 9/11 attacks. At the end, both parties agreed that it is better for the critical Turkish press to be stopped. The editors of the oppositional newspapers were soon put in a situation, which quickly evaporated their dissident zeal. On the one hand, they were confronted by MRF and their local activists, who made everything possible to hinder the production and distribution of the oppositional newspapers. Activation of patriarchal mechanisms resulted in isolation of the MRF foes.¹⁴¹ On the other hand, they had to confront the rising suspicion of Bulgarians, who largely distrusted any form of support to Bulgarian Turks coming from Turkey. This left

¹⁴⁰ The editors of one of the Turkish newspapers ('*Balkan*') who introduced the critical discourse in the Turkish minority press in the 2000s were professors from the University of Shumen (Bulgaria).

¹⁴¹ Following instructions from local clan leaders, anti-MRF dissidents are easily isolated from the life of the community. They are refused service at local Turkish shops and restaurants, and sometimes even beaten by MRF supporters. Similar methods of isolation of members of politically coherent minority groups who support oppositional parties have taken part in other parts of the world like for example in the Sikh community in India. See Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985).

them with no choice but stop their papers. Yordanov, one of the few minority media researchers in Bulgaria, summarizes the prospects of pluralization of the Turkish media sphere in Bulgaria in the following way:

Speaking about the Turkish community, it is almost impossible to find people with alternative thinking to that of MRF as the Turkish party has managed very successfully to stop the dissident voices from reaching the public domain and to establish firm control over the Turkish group. For this reason, the emergence of MRF alternatives, in both the political and media domains is highly improbable, if not impossible.¹⁴²

Several mechanisms have been utilized by MRF leaders to stop the spread of dissident voices within the community. First, through activating the clientelist and patriarchal mechanisms that drive the Turkish community, that is, through asking Turkish clan leaders to isolate potential dissidents. Second, through blocking the emergence of independent Turkish media that can be used by the dissidents to reach the Turkish grassroots. Third, through blocking the development of Turkish civil society structures. Fourth, through using the solid representation of MRF in the administration to block potential dissidents from access to political channels of mediation. Hence, for Yordanov, the subordination of the Turkish media sphere on the political domain is the major culprit for the failure of the Turkish community to launch alternative media: “The ability of MRF to control their hierarchically structured electorate simply allows the Turkish politicians to control Turkish [minority] media.”¹⁴³

¹⁴² Yordanov, Ilko. Interview with author. Digital recording. Sofia, September 14, 2009. Yordanov is expert on media and ethnic issues at the Open Society Institute-Sofia.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

The MRF control over the Turkish media domain also has an administrative dimension. Being represented in the state administration for two decades, MRF has exercised tight control over the distribution of state funding to minority media projects, which is one of the independent variables of this study. For example, in 1997, the National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Issues (NCEDI) was set up to serve as a coordinating and consultative organ to the government on minority related issues. Ever since, NCEDI has been in charge of the distribution of government appropriations and EU funding to various minority projects, including minority media. In fact, NCEDI is the sole government body that can be addressed with requests for funding minority media projects. On paper, NCEDI provides a forum where civil society organizations discuss various minority policies with the officials. The political bias of this allegedly ‘impartial’ structure has been confirmed by many critical commentators who stress the key role minority politicians play in its operation. “NCEDI was designed to be the institution that takes care of the integration of minority groups, but ever since its establishment, it has been doomed to be an impotent organ because of its limited budget and political dependence on MRF,” comments Zheliazkova.¹⁴⁴ For many years, as chairs of NCEDI have been appointed either MPs from MRF or people close to the Turkish party, which explains the susceptibility of this structure to political manipulation. “MRF has had a significant and determining influence on the operation of NCEDI as ever since the Council’s establishment its chair has always been a Turk,” comments a prominent Roma intellectual.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Zheliazkova, 2005.

¹⁴⁵ Chaprazov, Vasil. Interview with author. Digital recording. Sofia, September 25, 2007. Chaprazov is a producer of Roma print media in Bulgaria.

The involvement of MRF in the Council's operation is visible in the biased process of allocation of state funding to minority projects. "As far as the distribution of grants by NCEDI is concerned, one cannot help but notice that they are directed to projects whose administrators are close, or at least not opposed, to the Turkish party. If one is known to be critical of MRF and applies for a grant, his application will be rejected," explains Petkova.¹⁴⁶ The final decision for allocation of grants has to be made by the Council's Chair who usually is a MRF man. This explains why applications for funding Turkish titles, submitted by Turkish dissidents, are usually turned down by the Chair of NCEDI:

The way NCEDI is structured and operates accounts for the failure of our media initiatives to receive state funding. MRF people are represented on the Council and they are not interested in providing support to [media] projects that might turn critical to the leadership of the Turkish party... The representatives of MRF on the Council stopped the Turkish Cultural Centre from opening office and from receiving government funding for cultural and media projects... In order to receive support [from NCEDI], one has to be close to the Turkish party where interpersonal relations, based on kinship connections, are put on political wheels... The Turkish Cultural Centre is officially represented on NCEDI. However, the sole purpose our organization was invited to sit on the Council's meetings is to demonstrate fake minority representation to foreign [EU] observers who come to monitor Bulgaria's performance in the field of minority rights.¹⁴⁷

Asked for the reason why the MRF representatives on NCEDI refuse to aid the printing of serious Turkish titles, Professor Alagöz explains that MRF fears the watchdog position these media may adopt with respect to the Turkish political elite. "MRF has even stopped

¹⁴⁶ Petkova, 2006. Petkova is Director of 'Program Roma' at the Open Society Institute-Sofia.

¹⁴⁷ Alagöz, 2005. Professor Alagöz was informed informally by representative from NCEDI that although the media project he applied with to NCEDI was approved by the Minister of Culture, his application for financial support was turned down by the MRF representatives on the Council because Alagöz 'is not one of the MRF's people' and his publications intend to tarnish the image of the Turkish party by disclosing sensitive information about its leadership.

their own party organ because of the same fear... The Turkish party is willing to support mostly happenings and Turkish cultural events that are of little importance to the process of public opinion formation... I believe that they [MRF] blocked the opening of the office of the Turkish Culture Centre [in Sofia] because they fear that if the Turkish intellectuals have their own space to meet and discuss public matters, they eventually would focus the attention of the community on the problems within the Turkish party. And sooner or later some of the MRF leaders would have to go.”¹⁴⁸ Two years following our initial conversation, Alagöz confirms his original position and argues that the “Turkish political leadership does not care about Turkish media. This is not a coincidence but a purposeful and well thought course of the MRF leaders who want to protect their position at the top by blocking the development of liberal Turkish media.”¹⁴⁹

The dynamics of power relations within the Turkish community have made Yordanov and Alagöz arrive at the same conclusion that Turks in Bulgaria are put in a situation of a ‘double-locked’ prisoner. On the one hand, Bulgarian elites lack a consistent policy towards ethnic minority groups in the country, which prevents the latter from seeking institutional support when their official representatives fail in the representation process. On the other, MRF’s monopole on political power has enabled the party’s leadership to prevent the emergence of alternative Turkish political formations and close to them media.¹⁵⁰ That is, the lack of consistent minority policy and the coherent political

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Sabri Alagöz. Interview with author. Digital recording. Sofia, September 28, 2007.

¹⁵⁰ Yordanov, 2009.

representation of the Turkish community are the two brakes that deter the development of a pluralist Turkish media sphere. In a similar vein, Zheliazkova maintains that Bulgarian elites do not pay any attention to the development of Turkish minority media because they do not follow any particular course with regards to minorities in the country.¹⁵¹ Professor Minchev concurs with this viewpoint, stating that “minority policies is one of the few important fields that have been left totally neglected and unaddressed by the Bulgarian state. In fact, there is no such thing as a ‘general minority policy’ in this country. The Bulgarian state lacks any coherent position with respect to the development of local minority groups, in general, and their media, in particular.”¹⁵² Zheliazkova explains that since the beginning of the democratic period, all Bulgarian cabinets have been reluctant to engage into resolution of minority problems out of fear to loose the support of the nationalistically oriented electorate. Consistent integrationist policies have not been adopted also because Bulgaria is a poor state, which cannot afford to run integrationist programs at the time when the majority population suffers from economic deprivation. “Only due to external pressure from the EU, our policy-makers have recently started to address some of the problems that befall local minority communities, but even this is done with great reluctance and resistance,” states Zheliazkova.¹⁵³ This comment offers a bridge to the other two variables that affect the progress of ethnic minority media in Bulgaria, namely, *status of interethnic relations* and *external system pressure*. Before I address them, let me summarize my findings until this moment.

¹⁵¹ Zheliazkova, 2005.

¹⁵² Minchev, 2005

¹⁵³ Zheliazkova, 2005.

This section has demonstrated that the political homogeneity of the Turkish community and authoritarian character of its political leadership have negatively affected the development of pluralist Turkish minority media in Bulgaria. Being the exclusive political representative of the Turkish community, MRF has used institutional levers to prevent the emergence of independent Turkish media that can spur critical deliberation within the community, jeopardize the unity of the party and trigger re-shelving of its political elite. The patrimonial social organization of the Turkish group has enabled MRF leaders to use personal channels of communication with the Turkish clan leaders to mobilize political support, thus bypassing the need of Turkish minority media as a mediator in the mobilization process. Moreover, MRF has successfully intervened on few occasions to prevent the formation of alternative Turkish political parties and independent media outlets. MRF's influence in key institutions has prevented a number of Turkish dissidents from launching their liberal media projects. Finally, the lack of coherent minority policy on behalf of Bulgarian elites has additionally impaired the germination of pluralist Turkish media. The political elites in Bulgaria – majority and minority alike – have refrained from utilizing the policy instruments available at their disposal - *subsidization* and *training of media professionals* - to spur the development of Turkish minority media in the country. The outcome of the interplay of all these politically centred factors is underdeveloped and non-pluralist Turkish media. The intentional blocking of the development of Turkish media and civil society structures by MRF has resulted in a situation where one of the most numerous ethnic minorities in Europe has been left in an information vacuum. This has catalysed the social capsulation of the Turks and prevented their integration in the public life of Bulgarian society.

4.3. Status of Interethnic Relations and Turkish Minority Media

The potency of the '*political cohesion*' of ethnic minority groups variable on the proliferation of their media is further amplified when the *interethnic relations* between minority and majority communities have been marred by rivalry and when the minority population feels threatened by nationalist demagogues and rising nationalist sentiments among the majority population. As the Bulgarian and Romanian cases demonstrate, during periods of heightened ethno-nationalist politics, minority politicians tend to argue that the survival of the communities they represent depends on the unified political, public and media voice of the latter. Thus, they feel compelled to silence liberal minority voices (including media), which can splinter their groups and weaken their political power. I will demonstrate next how the escalation of ethno-nationalist sentiments in Bulgaria has been used by the Turkish political elite to clamp down on critical Turkish media. This is an example of the indirect effect of the '*status of interethnic relations*' variable on the development of ethnic media. The direct effect of this variable has been documented when examining the progress of Turkish electronic media in Bulgaria.¹⁵⁴ To set the stage, I will start with examination of the factors that brought about the rise of nationalist sentiments in Bulgarian society.

4.3.1. Rise of nationalist sentiments in Bulgarian society

During the last decade, Bulgarian Turks have experienced further social capsulation and political homogenization due to the proliferation of right-wing nationalist parties in

¹⁵⁴ I refer here to the organized by Bulgarian nationalist formations protests to stop the '*Turkish News*' program and prevent the access of minority groups to Bulgarian public broadcasters.

Bulgarian politics. To garner political support, these parties target ethnic minority groups, blaming them for the social misfortunes experienced by the majority population. In the past two decades, similar waves of revival of nationalist sentiments have engulfed many South East European states – a process described by Genov as “ethnicization of politics and politization of ethnicity.”¹⁵⁵ According to him, the major factor behind the rise of nationalism in the region is the spread of poverty and rising unemployment. Given the ethnic diversity in the Balkans, “...there are and there will be groups ready to interpret the difficult economic situation and the general underdevelopment in ethnic terms and to draw political conclusions and orientations for action accordingly.”¹⁵⁶ Minority politics in the Balkans seem to follow closely the tenets of the instrumentalist approach, which claims that ethnic identities are embellished by political entrepreneurs who gain advantage from playing the ‘nationalist card’ (Handelman 2006, 78). The nationalist demagogues in the region have indeed drawn upon ethnic cleavages to gain political and economic benefits, as Brass would put it (Brass 1991, 8). Ethnicity has been called into play in the Balkans whenever there is competition over scarce resources. Cornell’s contention has proven correct with respect to the states in the region: “when there is a need to mobilize persons on behalf of their interests, the invocation of ethnic or racial bonds can be a powerful call to unity.” (Cornell 2007, 100). Let us see how ethno-politics has worked in Bulgaria and how it has affected the political and media standing of the Turkish minority there.

¹⁵⁵ Nikola Genov, *Ethnic relations in south Eastern Europe: problems of social inclusion and exclusion* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 9.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 22.

The first right-wing nationalist formations appeared in Bulgaria in 2005. In the 2009 parliamentary elections, they managed to acquire jointly 14% of the popular vote.¹⁵⁷ In 2013, they aggregated 12.7% of the votes.¹⁵⁸ The most popular and aggressive nationalist party among them is ATAKA [*Attack*]. Much to the disgust of Bulgaria's European partners, *Attack* has kept its level of popularity steady and has risen to the position of fourth political power in Bulgaria, serving as a balancer in the last two Bulgarian parliaments. Karasimeonov sees the rise of nationalist parties as the most serious challenge to democracy and ethnic peace in the country. The danger to social peace is visible in these parties' manifestos as well as in the public speeches of their leaders, which contain open racist and xenophobic slogans and aim to inspire ethnic hatred towards the Roma and Turkish minorities.¹⁵⁹

The conduct of Bulgarian nationalist parties in the public domain has left many to believe that the level of ethnic intolerance in the country is on the rise. Research conducted by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC) on the topic has revealed that the ethnic intolerance among the majority population against Turks, and especially against Roma, is widespread. "The intolerance levels are high and stable, and they show no signs of abiding," comments the Chair of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee Krasimir Kanev.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ *Attack* (9.36% and 21 seats in the parliament), *Order, Low and Justice* (4.13% and 10 seats in the Parliament). Examples of other recently formed nationalist parties are: *For the Homeland, Union of the Bulgarian Patriots, National Movement for the Salvation of the Fatherland*.

¹⁵⁸ *Attack* (7.3% and 23 seats in the parliament), *National Front for the Liberation of Bulgaria* (3.7%), *Order, Low and Justice* (1.7%)

¹⁵⁹ Karasimeonov, 126.

¹⁶⁰ Kanev, Krassimir. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia, September 15, 2005.

The BHC report from 2009 confirms this observation and concludes that the “negative prejudices and social distances towards ethnic minorities in Bulgaria are high and there have not been any positive developments [in that direction] in the past 15 years.”¹⁶¹ “We live in an epoch of renaissance of Bulgarian nationalism. Ethnic divisions are skilfully orchestrated by political elites who reap the benefits of the artificially created ethnic hatred in society,” concurs one of the leading intellectual figures of the Roma community in Bulgaria.¹⁶² His assessment is echoed by researchers from the Open Society Institute in Sofia. Metodieva claims that the “ethnic tolerance has become a rare commodity in Bulgaria. Political elites and mainstream media are to be blamed for this as they deliberately work towards the ethnicization of the vote for political gains.”¹⁶³ This is another good example of the applicability of the instrumentalist approach to the analysis of the ethnic politics in Bulgaria.

The capsulation and authoritarian management of the Turkish political party have additionally exacerbated the anti-Turkish sentiments in Bulgarian society (Zheliakova 2009). The lack of transparency and the authoritarian style of leadership of MRF have made the Bulgarian public apprehensive about the activities of the Turkish political actor. Recent revelations of corruption and illegal activities conducted by MRF leaders have aggravated the majority population to an extent where the anti-MRF sentiments have

¹⁶¹ *Human rights in Bulgaria in 2008. Annual report of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee* (Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, 2009, accessed 15 October 2010); available from http://old.bghelsinki.org/upload/resources/Humanrights2008_en.pdf.

¹⁶² Savchev, Savcho, Interview with author. Digital recording. Sofia, September 28, 2007. Savchev is editor-in-chief of ‘*Andral*’ journal for Roma history, culture and literature.

¹⁶³ Metodieva, Maria. Interview with author. Sofia, September 19, 2007. Metodieva is Director of ‘Roma’ Program at the Open Society Institute-Sofia.

threatened to spill over to the Turkish community itself. In few Bulgarian municipalities, the anti-MRF rhetoric indeed evolved into anti-Turkish slogans.¹⁶⁴ The charismatic leader of *Attack* has even persuaded his supporters to engage in physical confrontation with the Turks.

The intensification of the anti-Turkish sentiments in Bulgaria has been skilfully exploited by the Turkish political elite, as the instrumentalist approach would expect. Zheliazkova claims that MRF has managed to achieve remarkable consolidation of its electorate thanks to the rise of Bulgarian nationalist parties and orchestrated xenophobic incidents, mediated sometimes by the Turkish politicians themselves: “as a result, Turks line up in front of the voting booths and cast their votes for MRF because they recognize it as their last line of defence against the aggressive Bulgarian nationalists ... Fear from repetition of the horrors of the revival campaign still holds the Turkish electorate together. For this reason, the formation of alternative opinion and centres of political power within the Turkish community is not plausible at the moment. Every such attempt would be seen by the group as betrayal to its unity,” explains Zheliazkova.¹⁶⁵ Despite the fact that many Turks are not happy with the leadership of the Turkish party, when elections approach, they almost anonymously unite behind MRF as they feel threatened by Bulgarian nationalists:

¹⁶⁴ Antonina Zheliazkova, “Psychology of voter turnout,” *Kylytra*, no. 27 (2009). Available from <http://www.kultura.bg/bg/article/view/15908>.

¹⁶⁵ Zheliazkova, 2009. Hungarians from Transylvania were put by the Romanian elites in a similar position in the 1990s.

None of the Bulgarian parties can offer us a valuable alternative... For good or bad, we do not need any [political] partitioning at the moment as there is nobody else who could extend us a friendly hand. In such a situation, no alternative Turkish party will ever succeed. Our people believe that this is our fait. They keep their heads down and vote for MRF.¹⁶⁶

The most recent parliamentary elections (May 2013) have confirmed this assessment. Following the ethnicizing techniques described by the instrumentalist theorists, majority and minority politicians in Bulgaria have exploited equally well the ‘ethnic card’ in the election period to garner support to their political formations: “At times of ethnic friction, majority politicians appear with the slogan ‘We are going to save you from the Turks!’ Then the Turkish politicians embrace the slogan ‘We are going to save you from the Bulgarians!’ This is how the political mobilization is done here - majority and minority politicians pit ethnic groups against each other to remain in power and to establish an image of themselves as protectors of minorities and solvers of ethnic problems,” explains Alagöz.¹⁶⁷ Let us see now how the rise of nationalist and anti-Turkish sentiments in Bulgarian society has affected the development of Turkish minority media.

4.3.2. Bulgarian nationalism and Turkish minority media

The rise of nationalist sentiments and right-wing political formation in multiethnic societies has negative effect on the development of ethnic minority media. Splichal (1994) argues that the majority elites in Eastern Europe have become apprehensive of the loss of national sovereignty in the era of globalization and to compensate have set up

¹⁶⁶ Alagöz, 2009

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

politically controlled media systems with little room for minority media to flourish. My research sheds new light on this topic. The Bulgarian and Romanian case studies suggest that the surge of nationalism and ethnic hatred in the Balkans has triggered capsulation of local minority groups and further empowerment of their political elites. Minority politicians have used this power to strengthen the political coherence of their communities and to silence alternative political and media voices within them - a necessary measure to “save” the minority groups, as they argue. The Turkish minority provides an excellent example for this instrumentalist strategy of using ethnicity for achieving political dividends. The escalation of nationalist attacks against the Turks in Bulgaria has been used by their political leaders not only to mobilize politically the Turkish electorate, but also to clamp down on the freedom of expression within the community. This is evident in the opinion of Professor Tatarli - one of the founders and leaders of MRF.

Tatarli claims that during times of heightened ethno-nationalism and escalating attacks against the Turkish minority, “freedom of speech and deliberation within both the community and its party [MRF] must be sacrificed on the altar of MRF’s unity. Only united, can Bulgarian Turks defend themselves!” exclaims Tatarli.¹⁶⁸ Asked if he believes that Turks need to develop their own pluralist media institutions, Tatarli stressed on few occasions his firm belief that until Bulgarian society remains ethnically polarized, there is

¹⁶⁸ Tatarli, Ibrahim. Interview with author. Note taking. Sofia, October 12, 2007. Professor Tatarli is one of co-founders of MRF, advisor to Ahmed Dogan, former Deputy Chairman of the MRF parliamentary group, former Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary commission on culture, member of the Legislative commission in the Parliament and adviser to the Turkish parliamentary group.

no room for pluralist and liberal media in the Turkish community, as such media would weaken the overall bargaining power of the group:

At the moment, MRF can neither afford nor allow the appearance of multiple [Turkish] ideological centers and factions, as political pluralism would lead to disunity and factionalism, which is not beneficial to our community. Therefore, those who want to express alternative viewpoints [to the MRF line] should not do so from the pages of the Turkish [minority] press, but from the podium in the Parliament! Otherwise, we are going to become a politically partitioned community just as the Roma are... One can only speak up his mind and alternative political visions in the Parliament, but there is no room for democracy and alternative thinking when it comes to determining the MRF course!¹⁶⁹

Such political logic is emblematic for ethnic parties that want to keep their grip on the group and avoid political changeover. By invoking the danger of external nationalist threats in their argumentation, the leaders of MRF (similar to their counterparts from UDMR - the political broker of Hungarians in Romania) have managed to achieve remarkable political consolidation of their group and block the development of critical Turkish media. Although such aggressive political course might sound logical at times of ethnonationalist upheaval, it is also dangerous, as it might turn into a permanent trait of the political culture of the group. MRF has maintained this anti-liberal stance not only with respect to the Turkish minority media, but also with respect to the modernization of the Turkish community in general:

The MRF leadership does not allow the Turkish community to modernize. During our field research in Ardino [Turkish settlement in North Eastern Bulgaria], well educated representatives of the Turkish group told us that ‘you [Bulgarians] might be living in a democracy now, but we [Turks] are still living in a feudal system. You can change your leaders if you are not happy with them,

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

but we cannot do that. We have moved from a communist one-party era to another ‘MRF-one-party’ era and there is no escape from this predicament.¹⁷⁰

The MRF’s anti-liberal course with respect to the development of the Turkish community is visible in the political block imposed on the development of Turkish civil society structures, pluralist media being integral being part of them. Yordanov (2009) maintains in this regard that the proliferation of horizontal social relations and civic capital are indispensable for the growth of pluralist minority media. These preconditions, however, are not met in the case of the Turkish community where MRF has worked hard to prevent any attempts for liberalization of the group:

MRF has always been blocking the alternative paths of development that would lead to the liberalization of the community and the Turkish party. This probably relates to the development of pluralist Turkish media as well, but it is definitely valid for the Turkish NGO sector. MRF has deliberately blocked the attempts to establish Turkish NGOs. Turkish NGO pioneers were told that “you do not need to form non-governmental organizations as you already have MRF to represent you.”¹⁷¹

This demonstrates the deliberate course followed by the Turkish political elite to suffocate the Turkish civil society and pluralist media structures – the two pillars, on which Turkish public sphere could have rested. The last editor-in-chief of the MRF organ ‘*Rights and Freedoms*’ succinctly summarizes this predicament in the following way:

¹⁷⁰ Zheliazkova, 2009

¹⁷¹ Ibid. Recently, MRF was forced to allow the formation of few Turkish NGOs to utilize the EU funding for development of the civil society sector in Bulgaria. The few Turkish NGOs that were hastily set up are dummy structures, which have no connection to the Turkish grassroots, as they have been artificially engineered by MRF and remain under this party’s control.

Bulgarian Turks need their own media. The problem is that such media are impossible to establish at the moment as everything continues to be controlled by the almighty Turkish party... People who want to create Turkish media get together and initiate the process of their setting. Soon after that, they are infiltrated by [MRF] agents and the launched liberal medium is stopped. Under these conditions of tight party control over the community, it is impossible to create neither a Turkish civil society sector nor Turkish minority media and public sphere.¹⁷²

In sum, drawing upon the experience of Bulgarian Turks, this section has established the link between the rise of ethnonationalist sentiments in multi-ethnic societies and the restriction of debates within the media spheres of politically coherent minority groups. The Turkish case has demonstrated that when nationalist formations threaten politically homogeneous ethnic minority groups, the political leaders of the latter tighten their control over their communities. This results in silencing of critical minority media out of fear that their watchdog style of reporting may result in loss of political coherence and power. To block liberal Turkish media, MRF has used its power in key institutions, namely, the Media Council, the Media Commission in the Parliamentary and the council for ethnic minorities. The Turkish party has also taken advantage of its clientelist relations with the Turkish clan leaders. Minority elites may play the “nationalist card” themselves or exaggerate the nationalist threat in order to preserve the political coherence of their groups and their leadership position within them. Yet another instrumentalist notion, fully supported by the experience of Bulgarian Turks. Thus, the heightening of nationalist rhetoric leads to silencing of liberal media voices in politically coherent minority communities. Leaders of politically pluralist minority groups (that is groups whose political vote is split among rival ethnic parties) are not capable of silencing

¹⁷² Chaushev, 2008

alternative media for many of these media gravitate in the orbit of competing minority parties, as shown by the experience of Albanian media in Macedonia. Let me move next to the analysis of another important ‘media’ variable that affects the standing of minority media, namely, availability of *funding* for minority media projects.

4.4. Funding of Turkish Minority Media

The producers of Turkish minority media in Bulgaria have unanimously identified the lack of financial resources as one of the major difficulties in their work. Tables 1 and 2 in the ‘Appendix’ section demonstrate that most of the Turkish titles were forced to stop due to lack of funding. The availability of funding is a prerequisite for the success of any enterprise and minority media are no exception to this rule. Because these media have smaller and usually more impoverished audiences (when compared to the majority population), the revenues from sales and advertisement in them are less compared to the revenues generated by mainstream outlets. For this reason, minority media often depend on external financing, which complements the revenues from sales and advertisement. Potential sources of financial aid can be non-profit organizations, businessmen and state appropriations. My research on Albanian and Hungarian minority media has shown that minority political elites represent another potent source of financial assistance.¹⁷³ I will examine next the financing opportunities available to the Turkish media in Bulgaria.

¹⁷³ When represented in the government, Albanian minority elites use their power to direct lucrative state advertisement contracts to friendly minority media outlets. Direct funding of minority titles from politicians occurs when the latter own the funded media.

4.4.1. Turkish businesses and Turkish minority media

As the Turkish minority media are not capable of sustaining themselves exclusively through sales, they rely on external funding. A potential source are investments from Turkish businessmen. The interviewed by this author producers of Turkish minority media, however, have explained that the Turkish businessmen show little interest in investing into Turkish minority media because first, there are almost no serious Turkish titles left on the market, and second, because successful Turkish entrepreneurs are connected to MRF and loyal to its leadership. Why Turkish businesses are not interested in investing in Turkish media projects? The answer is simple – because of the clientelist link between the Turkish politicians and businessmen: “The Turkish businesses in Bulgaria are tightly linked to MRF and would offer support to Turkish media only if the leader of the party approves such investment,” explains Alagöz.¹⁷⁴ In a similar vein, Yordanov argues:

Bulgarian businessmen are not interested in investing into Turkish minority media due to the lack of return. The Turkish businessmen cannot invest into their development either as they are controlled by the Turkish politicians. The few entrepreneurs who launched critical Turkish media relied on funding from Turkey, which raised suspicions among Bulgarians regarding the origins of the funding and the ultimate purpose of the funded media.¹⁷⁵

In a famous television interview for Channel One of the Bulgarian National Television, the Chairman of the Turkish party - Ahmed Dogan - revealed that MRF and the Turkish businesses in Bulgaria are involved in a symbiotic clientelist relation. He explained that

¹⁷⁴ Alagöz, 2007.

¹⁷⁵ Yordanov, 2009.

every serious political formation in the country, including MRF, does not exist in a financial ‘vacuum’, but instead is ‘encircled’ by loyal to it business groups. These so called ‘financial rings’, as Dogan dubbed them, provide monetary assistance to their political patrons during elections to benefit later from the offered in return political protection and opened channels for lobbying.¹⁷⁶ This is how the clientelist link between the political and business elites of the Turkish community is perpetuated. The reluctance of the Turkish political elite to allow the flourishing of pluralist Turkish media has passed to the business community of the group, which now shays away from requests to sponsor independent Turkish titles, extended by Turkish media entrepreneurs or dissidents. This demonstrates once again the importance of political agency in the operation of ethnic minority media.

4.4.2. State support to Turkish minority media

Another source of financial assistance to ethnic minority media is state appropriations. The only institution authorized to distribute state funding to Turkish minority media is the National Council for Ethnic and Demographic Issues (NCEDI). “NCEDI serves as a bridge between the EU structural grants and the local minority projects,” explains Belchev.¹⁷⁷ However, the political dependence of NCEDI on MRF accounts for the reluctance of NCEDI’s officials to offer support to independent Turkish media. “In a

¹⁷⁶ During its participation in few coalitional governments, MRF was accused of blatantly misusing EU grants provided for the development of the agricultural sector, directing them to local Turkish businesses in return for their financial support to the party.

¹⁷⁷ Belchev, 2005

situation like this, Turkish minority media may develop only if supported by Bulgarian NGOs (as there are no Turkish NGOs) or the state directly, which is not a viable alternative, bearing in mind the negative attitude of Bulgarians towards the Turkish media. This explains why the state funding provided to these media is so limited,” clarifies Yordanov.¹⁷⁸

The Bulgarian media law grants access to the national media sphere to all ethnic minority communities. The Bulgarian constitution even obliges public broadcasters to make programs for the “Bulgarian citizens for whom the Bulgarian language is not native, including programs in their mother tongue.”¹⁷⁹ The media law also obliges national public broadcasters to allocate funding to ethnic minority programming. As long as Bulgarian officials lack a consistent minority policy, in general, and strategy for development of the media of ethnic minorities, in particular, they can hardly be held accountable for failing to provide the necessary assistance to these media, as directed in the legislation:

There are many mechanisms that the state can use to assist the progress of minority media in Bulgaria. The problem is that the authorities lack a structured policy with respect to the ethnic minorities in the country. This means that we have no firm base to step on and demand reaction from the officials to make things right in the minority media field. Therefore, to expect from the Bulgarian government any form of assistance to Turkish minority media is simply not realistic. We hope this will change in the future because if we stop to exist as a program then our listeners will switch for good to programs produced in Turkey, which is not in the best interests of the Bulgarian state.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Yordanov, 2009

¹⁷⁹ *Radio and Television Law* (1998, accessed 4 May, 2010); available from <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UNTC/UNPAN016248.pdf>.

¹⁸⁰ Ali, 2006. Editor-in-chief of ‘*Radio program for Turks in Bulgaria*’.

Another potential source of financial assistance to Turkish public media is appropriations from the media fund 'Public Radio and Television'. This fund was designed to serve as a financial backbone of the emerging public broadcasters in Bulgaria. However, the mechanisms for collecting money into it has not been perfected, which renders the fund virtually non-operational. This makes Bulgarian public broadcasters depend exclusively on appropriations from the state budget. The editor-in-chief of the public channel 'Radio Bulgaria' sees the ongoing practice of funding public media in the country from the state budget as highly problematic for it jeopardizes the independence of these media.¹⁸¹ Since 'Radio Bulgaria' is the home of the only Turkish radio program in the country, one may assume that the political dependence of this medium impacts negatively the operation of the Turkish radio program as well. Finally, Popova reveals that there are no training programs designed for minority journalists in Bulgarian universities.¹⁸² The positive discrimination practice of reserved quotas for ethnic minority students is not practiced in Bulgaria either. Instead, minority students, who aspire to pursue higher education, have to pass rigorous entry exams in Bulgarian language, which discourages many of the potential Turkish applicants.

In sum, the Bulgarian authorities have failed to utilize the suggested in the media literature policy tools for aiding the development of ethnic minority media, namely, *subsidization* of minority media and organization of *training programs* for minority

¹⁸¹ Belchev, Milen. Interview with author. Tape recording. Sofia. 21 September, 2006. Belchev is editor-in-chief of 'Radio Bulgaria', part of the Bulgarian National Radio, which hosts the 'Radio program for the Turks in Bulgaria'.

¹⁸² Popova, Snezhana. Personal communication. Sofia, 2 October, 2008. Popova is Professor in the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Sofia

media professionals. Since the mechanisms for funding of public media in the country are still not developed, the Turkish radio and television programs will continue to depend on appropriations from the state budget, that is, on the whim of the politicians in the Parliament. This accounts for the susceptibility of the Turkish electronic media to political control and manipulation.

4.5. Educational Standing of the Turkish Minority

Another minority-level resource constraint, affecting the development of the media of minority groups, is their *level of education*. The higher the average level of education of the group, the more versatile and developed its media should be for well-educated communities pose greater demand for print media, as well as generate cultural and professional elites to produce them. Results of the 2011 Population Census reveal that Turks in Bulgaria are a sufficiently educated community to generate demand for Turkish minority media: 4% of them have university diplomas, 25% have completed secondary education, 58% - primary education, and only 3.5% have never attended school.¹⁸³ Comparison between 2001¹⁸⁴ and 2011 census data reveals that for a decade, the number of Turkish university graduates has increased from 1% to 4%. Turks who completed higher and secondary education are mostly from the young (20-29) and middle age (30-49) cohorts, whereas the uneducated persons are predominantly from the older (60+)

¹⁸³ National Statistical Institute, "Results of the 2011 Population Census. Population 7-years-old and older by degree of completed education, ethnic group, residence, sex and age," volume 1, book 2 (National Statistical Institute, 2011), 194-204.

¹⁸⁴ National Statistical Institute, "Results of the 2001 Population Census. Population 7-years-old and older by degree of completed education, ethnic group, residence, sex and age," volume 1, book 2 (Sofia: National Statistical Institute, 2001).

generation. Although the overall level of education of the Turkish community is lower than that of the majority population, this data suggests that Turks in Bulgaria are an educated community whose stock of university graduates is rising. The census data, however, does not provide information about the proficiency of Turks in their mother tongue. Brief review of the status of education in mother tongue in Bulgaria will reveal the language proficiency and preferences of the group.

Following the revival campaign, the study of Turkish language was re-introduced as an optional subject in the curriculum of Bulgarian schools in 1992. Immediately after the democratic change, the study of Turkish became very popular among Bulgarian Turks due to the banning of the subject from the curricula in the 1980s.¹⁸⁵ In the beginning of 1990s, Turkish language was studied in all of the 260 schools of the region of Kurdzhali - the Turkish stronghold in southern Bulgaria.¹⁸⁶ This produced few generations of Turks who have knowledge of their mother tongue. The popularity of studying in Turkish, however, has significantly subsided over the past decade especially in the big cities. Some attribute this change to the preference of the parents of Turkish pupils to send their kids to Bulgarian schools so that they learn the majority language plus another Western language, and have greater chances to integrate in Bulgarian society, find jobs or continue their studies at Bulgarian universities.¹⁸⁷ Others see the major reason for the dwindling numbers of students in Turkish language classes in the deteriorating quality of

¹⁸⁵ During the 1992/93 academic year, 114,000 pupils (20% of the Turkish population) opted to study Turkish as a 'mother tongue' subject at Bulgarian schools.

¹⁸⁶ Krasimir Angelov, "Education in Turkish mother tongue can trick MRF," *Ипеца Daily*, 5 July, 2012, 2012.

¹⁸⁷ Angelov.

instruction in Turkish at public schools.¹⁸⁸ Turkish language classes continue to be popular in the Turkish villages where the curriculum devotes much more attention to the Turkish language than to the Bulgarian.¹⁸⁹ Following the pressure from the Turkish constituency, MPs from MRF have made an amendment to the ‘School and Preschool Education’ bill, which from the 2013 academic year makes mandatory the study of Turkish language in the Turkish regions of the country - at least 4 hours of Turkish per week. This normative change will definitely improve the knowledge of Turkish among the young generations in the near future. The pursuit of higher education in Turkish language, however, remains problematic due to the lack of accredited Turkish universities in Bulgaria. In May 2012, the Federation of Turkish exiles (‘Federation Fairness – Bulgaria’) has demanded the opening of a public Turkish University in Bulgaria where the education will be conducted exclusively in Turkish.¹⁹⁰ However, there is no legal provision in the Bulgarian legislation that obliges Bulgarian authorities to fund the operation of public Turkish universities. The latter is a matter of political will and availability of coherent policy towards minority groups, which are both of short supply at times of ethno-nationalist upheaval.

In sum, the knowledge of standard Turkish language among the Turks is gradually improving. Their commandment of Bulgarian and overall educational credentials are

¹⁸⁸ Bulgarian Telegraph Agency, “MRF demanded at least four hours education in Turkish language in schools,” *Novini*, 7 June, 2012.

¹⁸⁹ Turkish is studied seven hours per week, Bulgarian only four. In Angelov.

¹⁹⁰ The Federation referred to Article 13 of the ‘Framework convention for the protection of minority rights’, which stipulates that national minorities have the right to establish their private universities and educational institutions.

sufficient for the group to generate demand for Turkish minority media, which can utilize bilingual format of organization to accommodate the language preferences of the group.¹⁹¹ To remind the reader, the bilingual format of organization of the Turkish press was successfully exploited throughout the whole history of its existence. Since the beginning of the 20th century until 1990s, the majority of the Turkish titles were written in both Bulgarian and Turkish languages.¹⁹² Hence, the Turkish minority media in Bulgaria do not suffer from lack of a potential audience. From ‘educational’ perspective, they suffer from the lack of trained Turkish media professionals. Looking at the rise of the number of Turkish university students in the past decade, there is hope that this problem will be solved in the near future. The access to higher education for minority students is also an administrative issue that can benefit from a political solution. In the case of Bulgaria, such a solution could have been found during the MRF’s partnership in a number of coalition governments (including the current one), especially when Emel Etem (MP from MRF) served a full mandate as Minister of Education. Some may argue that the lack of political will on behalf of the Turkish party to push for quotas for ethnic minority students at Bulgarian universities is a result of the general course undertaken by the Turkish elite to slow down the modernization and emancipation of the group. The take of the Turkish politicians on the subject is that positive discrimination measures are not the way to achieve integration of minority communities.

¹⁹¹ Indeed, the OSI report suggests that close to 40% of Bulgarian Turks follow the major Bulgarian dailies - ‘Trud’ and ‘24 Chasa’. In Yordanov and Aglika Krushoveska, “Assessment of print and electronic media supported by the Open Society Institute - Sofia,” (Sofia: Open Society Institute - Sofia, 2006), 17.

¹⁹² See ‘Table 1. Print Turkish Media’ in the Appendix.

The political block imposed on the liberal Turkish media in Bulgaria is deliberately sought by the Turkish political elite. The lack of coherent ethnic minority policy has aided MRF elites to establish full control over the Turkish community. As a result, we witness today an underdeveloped and non-pluralist Turkish media sphere – an outcome, which benefits majority and minority elites alike: the Bulgarian politicians can show Brussels that the media freedoms of minorities in the country are formerly respected, whereas their Turkish counterparts can keep Turkish media a prisoner to their political goals and continue enjoying their lack of critical edge. The MRF's monopoly on political power translates into monopoly over the media domain of the group. It is accompanied by 'monopoly of silence' about the life of Turks in mainstream Bulgarian media from which the Turks are virtually excluded:

As a whole, we have silent mainstream media that pay little attention to the problems of the Turkish community. Bulgarian media do not send any messages to those people. The existing communication channels with the Turks - '*News in Turkish*' and the '*Radio Program for the Turks in Bulgaria*' - are an illusion of Turkish minority media, illusion of access of Turks to media and illusion of Turks exercising their freedom of communication and information. The illusion of having 'Turkish media freedom', however, is rather convenient for the MRF leadership. It helps them maintain the political status quo and prevent the emergence of pluralist Turkish civic institutions. The existing Turkish minority media today are largely 'silent' media, which have little utility as information sources.¹⁹³

The Turkish case suggests that the only way pluralist media of ethnic minority groups can develop is independently from the control of their political elites. Such control is inevitable in politically coherent communities that are represented in the political domain by a single party with authoritarian leadership. Such communities will develop pluralist media only after their political spheres pluralize and liberalize.

¹⁹³ Yordanov, 2009.

5. Chapter Conclusion

Turkish minority media have had long tradition of development in Bulgaria. During the pre-totalitarian period, minority Turkish press enjoyed decades of rapid growth in quality, genre diversity, and circulation. 112 Turkish titles were published and served as main information sources to this tangible community in the Balkans. Turkish minority media from that period managed to fulfil the major goals, standing in front of any minority media, namely, to preserve the ethnic identity of the group, to serve as its information source and to contribute to the group's integration in the adoptive society. The communist period of development of Turkish media had its ups and downs. During the first half of the communist era, the Turkish press demonstrated further emancipation. Their diversity and circulation remained high. A dedicated program for the Turks in Bulgaria was launched on the national Bulgarian radio, marking the beginning of the Turkish electronic media in the country. Although Turkish minority media were used by the communist regime mainly as propaganda tools and were stripped from any ideological diversity, these media still managed to achieve their major goals – informing the Turkish community and preserving the Turkish identity, culture and language. In addition, the numerous Turkish media outlets trained generations of devoted readers and media specialists, which proved vital for the continuity of these media. The ethnic homogenization campaign that started in the 1970s resulted in expelling of the Turkish intelligentsia from the country and closure of all Turkish media outlets. The fruits of decades of achievements in the minority media field were squandered in a few years of brute totalitarian arbitrariness.

The post-totalitarian period of development of Turkish minority media had featured modest attempts to reinstate them in the beginning of the 1990s, followed by almost complete annihilation of the Turkish press in the 2000s. Presently, Turkish minority media in Bulgaria is reduced to just a single religious and kid's magazines as well as a single radio and television programs on the national public broadcasters. These media maintain mostly cultural and educational focus. They are unable to provide the Turkish community with sufficient information about the socio-political developments in Bulgarian society, let alone to stimulate deliberation in the public sphere of the community.

The immersion of Turkish media in the pluralist Bulgarian media sphere has not resulted in the development and pluralization of the former. The Turkish case has shown that the mere adoption of liberal normative provisions is not enough for the development of the media of security sensitive minority groups, featured by political homogenization and authoritarian leadership. Comparison of the Turkish minority media with their Albanian and Hungarian counterparts will reveal that the financial difficulties, experienced by the media of all these groups, are not the major impediment to their development, but just a variable that obscures the more important political factors behind their progress. My major conclusion is that the development of pluralist Turkish media in Bulgaria is obstructed by the coherent political sphere of the Turkish community. This case study has demonstrated how the political homogenization of the Turkish community, combined with the authoritarian character of its leadership, have prevented the emancipation of a pluralist Turkish media sphere, in particular, and modernization of the Turkish group, in

general. The exclusive political representative of the group – Movement for Rights and Freedoms - has skilfully exploited the surge of nationalist sentiments in Bulgarian society to retain its grip over the Turkish community and to prevent the emergence of independent media voices that can spur critical deliberation, jeopardize the political homogeneity of the group and trigger re-shelving of its political leadership. The patriarchal organization of the Turkish community makes possible for its coherent political leadership to utilize personal channels of communication with the group's clan leaders in order to mobilize the support of the Turkish constituency, thus bypassing the need of media brokers in the political mobilization process. The representation of MRF in key government, educational and media institutions has prevented Turkish dissidents from launching their liberal media projects. Due to the lack of coherent policy towards minority groups in the country, Bulgarian Turks cannot seek protection of their freedom of expression and communication through alternative institutional channels. They depend solely on MRF for the articulation of their group demands in the public domain. The outcome is gruesome - gradual disappearing of the media of one of the most numerous minority groups in Europe. Turks in Bulgaria are left largely uninformed about the economic and socio-political developments in the country, which hinders their integration in the fabric of Bulgarian society.

Hence, one may infer that the development of pluralist media spheres of security sensitive minority groups is strongly affected by the political organization of these communities. Minority groups that are featured by strong political cohesion are most likely to lack pluralist media spheres. Those with pluralist political spheres are likely to

enjoy their own pluralist media institutions. It remains to be seen if the genesis of a second centre of political power within the Turkish community will survive the day and shatter the chains put on the liberal Turkish media. This is highly probable, as political competition between two rival Turkish parties would require informing the Turkish community about the available political alternatives and competition for Turkish votes. What better assistant in the political mobilization process than pluralist Turkish minority media? ^(rd)

Chapter 4

Media of the Albanian Minority in Macedonia

This chapter will examine the progress of Albanian minority media¹ in Macedonia and demonstrate that the Albanian community there enjoys developed and pluralist media sphere, comparable in structural and quality terms to mainstream Macedonian media. My objective will be to contrast the flourishing Albanian media with the extinguishing Turkish media in Bulgaria and then to identify the factors that account for the different paths of their development. The questions this chapter will answer are identical to the ones addressed in the previous one, namely: *what factors account for the proliferation of the Albanian media in Macedonia? What causes anti-pluralist media spheres of minority groups to liberalize and pluralize? Why Albanians in Macedonia enjoy developed media, whereas Turks in Bulgaria are a media-impooverished community? Why would Macedonian elites support the media of a security sensitive minority group?* The chapter looks at the same set of independent variables, namely, 1) minority-level resource constraints (*degree of political cohesion of the Albanian community, status of inter-ethnic relations in Macedonian polity, level of education of Albanians*); 2) media-level constraints (*traditions in making Albanian media, availability of funding*); and 3) State- and supranational-level constraints. A new independent variable, specific to the Macedonian context, will be introduced, namely, the (consociational) design of Macedonian polity, and its effect on the development of Albanian media will be examined.

¹ Hereafter 'Albanian media' to relieve stylistic monotony.

The analysis of the collected primary and secondary data intends to provide support to the major thesis of this study that there is a strong causal link between the structuring of the political and media spheres of security sensitive minority groups. The Albanian case demonstrates that pluralization of the media sphere of given minority group is possible only in a politically pluralist environment, that is, when there are multiple centers of minority political power. Then, the competition among minority political actors stimulates the development of minority media outlets, which gravitate in the orbit of minority parties, linked to them by clientelist and/or ideological ties. By offering to friendly media outlets political protection and financial stability, rival Albanian parties seek in return their assistance in the process of political mobilization of the Albanian electorate.² The Albanian media cannot be subjected to the controls of a single Albanian party thanks to the pluralist nature of the Albanian political sphere. Media that are in opposition to the Albanian incumbent in the administration engage in watchdog journalism and help generate a genuine marketplace of ideas in the Albanian society. Diverse and pluralist Albanian media stimulate Albanians to participate in the socio-political life of the Macedonian polity, thus aiding their integration into the latter. In short, competitive political relations give birth to competitive and diverse media relations. This is where the landscape of the Albanian media sphere sharply differs from the Turkish media in Bulgaria, providing fertile grounds for comparison.

Besides examining the effect of the political organization of Albanians on the development of their media institutions, this chapter will demonstrate that the *structure of Macedonian polity* also affects the values of the dependent variable. In particular, the Macedonian model of consensual

² The mobilization potential of ethnic media is especially useful in countries like Macedonia where the Albanian population is territorially dispersed and difficult to reach through personal visits of political leaders.

democracy accounts for the support that Macedonian political elites offer to Albanian media. Bind by consensual agreements with Albanian elites, Macedonian authorities work towards improving the access of Albanians to all public spheres of life, including mass media. The lack of similar consensual arrangements in Bulgaria prevents the Turkish minority there from achieving even remotely similar degree of access to the Bulgarian media sphere. Improved *education* in Albanian language is the next key factor that accounts for the proliferation of Albanian media in Macedonia. It fixes two of the problems that minority media are usually plagued with, namely, lack of media professionals and lack of a reading audience. The two Albanian universities in Macedonia, together with the higher educational institutions in the neighboring Albania and Kosovo, have made possible for few generations of Albanians to be trained in the craft of media making. They have also raised the education level of the Albanian community, helping establish a burgeoning market for the Albanian press in the country. The comparison between the Albanian and the Turkish cases will show that pre-existing *traditions* in developing minority media might be a potent variable accounting for the quality of the media product, but have little effect on the establishment of full-fledged minority media spheres. Presently, Turks in Bulgaria experience severe shortage of Turkish media outlets, whereas Albanians in Macedonia face the opposite problem of having too many media institutions, which are forced to operate in severe market competition. The previous media experience accumulated by the Turkish community has aided little the group to re-establish its media after the democratic opening in Bulgaria. At the same time, Macedonian Albanians have had very little media experience, which has not prevented their media from experiencing a true renaissance throughout the past decade.

In short, the pluralist nature of the Albanian political sphere has aided the pluralization and development of the Albanian minority media in Macedonia. They follow the pluralist path of

development, which assures not only the ethnic and cultural survival of the group, but also provides for exposing the Albanian community to competing interpretations of reality, generates debates in the Albanian public sphere and helps integrate Albanians into the fabric of Macedonian society. This chapter will start with an ‘ethnic’ picture of the Albanian community, followed by a detailed examination of the key explanatory variable of this dissertation – the structure of Albanian political sphere. A snapshot of the present status of Albanian media will follow. After establishing the background, this chapter will offer detailed analysis of the major variables conditioning the progress of Albanian media in Macedonia.

1. Ethnic Diversity and Interethnic Relations in Macedonia

Macedonia is the most ethnically diverse territory in the Balkans. National minorities make up a third of its population. According to the latest estimates of the State Statistical Office (2009), the population of the country numbers 2,048,619 people. Macedonians account for 64.2% (1,297,981). They play decisive role in the state’s political and economic life. The country is also a home to six minority groups: Albanians (25.2% or 509,083)³, Turks (3.9%), Roma (2.7%), Serbs (1.8%) and Vlachs (0.5%). Over the past decade, the Albanian population has doubled in size due to migration from Kosovo and the faster reproduction rate of the community.⁴

³ Note that Turks in Bulgaria have about the same numerical strength - 588,318. It is difficult to establish the exact number of the Albanian diaspora in Macedonia. Numbers provided by Albanian sources deviate significantly from the official data and report that Albanians constitute 35% of the general population, which is contested by the Macedonian sources.

⁴ The birth rate of Albanians in Macedonia is the highest in Europe. Albanians constituted only 12% of the Macedonian population in 1953, 17% in 1971, 20% in 1981, and 23% in 1994. In Jovevska, Aneta and Natasha

Macedonians are Orthodox Christians who speak Macedonian language. Orthodox and Macedonian-speaking are also Serbs and Vlachs. Albanians, Turks and Roma are mostly Muslim and speak their mother tongue languages. The most integrated minority groups are the Vlachs and the Serbs. There is a huge gap between their level of integration and that of the remaining minorities who live isolated in a ‘homogeneous world of their own.’⁵ Roma are considered the least integrated community, followed by Turks and Albanians who are also capsulated groups. Despite decades of living next to each other, the relationship between Albanians and Macedonians has been marred by a history of ethnic rivalry and ‘mutual suspicion’ for the whole period of the country’s life.⁶ This is in contrasts with the amicable relations between Macedonians and the remaining five minority groups.⁷

... [A] deep psychological rift exists between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians... ethnic Albanians simply do not feel comfortable in Macedonia; given their sense of exclusion, they believe that Macedonian society treats them as ‘second class citizens’ and that the corrective to this type of discrimination lies in a much greater autonomy... Ethnic Macedonians, in turn, do not trust their Albanian compatriots. They believe that satisfying even some Albanian demands would trigger chain reaction of new demands, threatening the country’s territorial integrity and demographic unity.⁸

Graber. 2003. Minorities in political life in the Republic of Macedonia. In *A new balance: democracy and minorities in post-communist Europe*, ed. Monica Robotin and Levente Salat. Budapest: Open Society Institute, p.44.

⁵ Henryk J. Sokalski, *An ounce of prevention: Macedonia and the UN experience in preventive diplomacy* (Washington, DC: Institute of Peace Press, 2003), 71.

⁶ Graham Holliday, “From Ethnic Privileging to Power-Sharing: Ethnic Dominance and Democracy in Macedonia,” in *The Fate of Ethnic Democracy in post-communist Europe*, ed. Sammy Smooha and Priit Jarve (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2005), 139-167, 141.

⁷ For example, the relationship between Macedonians and Turks are featured by a tradition of mutual tolerance despite the fact that Turks were the oppressing group during the occupation of Macedonia by the Ottoman Empire.

⁸ Sokalski, 72.

Review of literature on inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia reveals that the Albanian group demonstrates great attachment to the territories it populates and little affiliation with Macedonian nationhood. The majority population perceives them as a threat to the territorial integrity of the country: “[Albanians] tend to question their loyalty and to see separatism and threats to national survival in all Albanian demands, whether major, as in federalization, cantonization, or less sweeping,” notes Rossos.⁹ The separatist potential of the group is stressed by Jovevska who asserts that Albanian political parties “directly or indirectly express a lack of support for the territorial integrity of the state, which could be a destabilizing influence... The Albanian parties often question the basic tenets of the [Macedonian] political system and could be seen to encourage its disintegration.”¹⁰ Sokalski echoes these observations and claims that the reactions of Albanians “persistently evoke a strong sense of fear of secession and territorial losses, which would jeopardize Macedonia’s very existence as a state” up to a point where the political stability in the country is contingent upon satisfaction of Albanian grievances.¹¹ In a similar vein, for Holliday the most potent source of instability in Macedonia is the threat of separatism emanating from the Albanian community, which creates an atmosphere of insecurity and endangers the interethnic balance in the country.¹² These characteristics of the Albanian group warrant its examination as a security sensitive minority that has the numerical and political strength to

⁹ Andrew Rossos, *Macedonia and Macedonians* (California: Hoover Institution Press, 2008), 279.

¹⁰ Aneta Jovevska and Natasha Graber, “Minorities in political life in the Republic of Macedonia,” in *A new balance : democracy and minorities in post-communist Europe*, ed. Monica Robotin and Levente Salat (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2003), 47.

¹¹ Sokalski, 73.

¹² Graham Holliday, “From Ethnic Privileging to Power-Sharing: Ethnic Dominance and Democracy in Macedonia,” in *The Fate of Ethnic Democracy in post-communist Europe*, ed. Sammy Smooha and Priit Jarve (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2005), 139-167, 149.

destabilize its host state and splinter it along ethnic lines. The other minorities in Macedonia can be qualified as security non-sensitive.

2. Minority Politics in Macedonia

The Bulgarian case has demonstrated that the lack of consistent policy towards minority groups negatively affects development of their media. Hence, similar analysis of minority policies in Macedonia is warranted to check if it has any effect on the development of Albanian media there. As these policies have sustained significant changes over the years, their examination will be organized in three time-periods, namely, *socialist period* (1945-1991), *first transitional decade* (1991-2001) and *contemporary period* (2001-onwards). Review of these periods will provide useful information about the status of inter-ethnic relations in the country. It will also help explain the heterogeneous nature of Albanian political sphere and the consociational pillars of Macedonian polity - potent variables accounting for the advanced stage of development of Albanian minority media there.

2.1 Minority Politics in Macedonia during the Socialist Period (1945-1991)

The communist regime in Macedonia lasted for forty six years. During this period, Macedonia constituted one of the six republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).¹³

¹³ This was the period when Macedonia for a first time in its history was not just a territorial part of another state but a separate administrative entity.

Josip Broz Tito¹⁴ - leader and builder of the Yugoslavian multi-ethnic society - designed the federation in such a way as no ethnic community could dominate the rest and enjoy preferential access to power and resources. Instead, strong redistributive mechanisms were put in place to ensure that even the poorest southern republics of the federation (Macedonia) receive support from the more affluent north. Tito's multiethnic model was based on elaborate mechanisms for preservation of the culture and ethnicity of all ethnic communities populating the country. The ethnic piece in SFRY was sustained through promotion of balanced set of identities, which counterbalanced the numerical strength of the Serbian group. Tito's strategy for managing the nationalistic demands of different ethnicities was one of increased federalization and nominal state centralization.¹⁵

Since the establishment of SFRY, Albanians have been the biggest and most influential ethnic minority in Macedonia. Together with their kin from the neighbouring Serbian province of Kosovo, Macedonian Albanians enjoyed constitutionally protected group rights such as recognition of Albanian as one of the official languages in the federation, instruction in Albanian throughout all educational levels, right to fly the Albanian flag during national holidays and others.¹⁶ The group identity of Albanians became more and more pronounced as the community reproduced faster over the years.¹⁷ Nationalist and irredentist Albanian sentiments started surfacing as early as 1969 when Albanians publicly demanded recognition of the populated by

¹⁴ Tito ruled SFRY for thirty five years until 1980. He was from the Croatian republic.

¹⁵ Holliday, 142.

¹⁶ These rights were enshrined in the most minority-friendly for its time Constitution (1974) in Eastern Europe.

¹⁷ Tom Gallagher, *The Balkans in the New Millennium: in the shadow of war and peace* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 80.

them areas in Macedonia as the seventh republic of Yugoslavia. Shortly after Tito's death in 1980, similar nationalist and irredentist sentiments developed in the rest of the Yugoslav federation. Led by the fear that the numerical strength of Albanians will jeopardise the territorial integrity of Macedonia, Macedonian authorities opted for the Serbian nationalistic approach of 'solving' the Albanian problem.¹⁸ Nation and state-building policies were combined with ethnic repression and assimilation, which at times resembled 'internal colonialism'.¹⁹ Macedonian leaders implemented policies that aimed to circumscribe the cultural and educational rights of Albanians, exclude them from representation in the state institutions and companies, lower the reproduction rate of the group, ban registration of Albanian names, limit their property ownership rights and religious teaching, and close Albanian educational institutions.²⁰ These policies of ethnic homogenization strongly resembled the ones implemented by Bulgarian authorities in the 1980s. The end of the communist period was marked by endorsement of the last Yugoslav Constitution of 1989, which officially stripped Albanians from their group rights throughout the federation.²¹ The mutual distrust between Macedonians and Albanians was mounting during the entire communist period despite the efforts of the Yugoslav authorities to conceal it.²² The communist regime, however, was not the sole culprit for the growing interethnic hatred between the two groups. The mutual distrust between them has a long history going back to the five-century-long ruling of Macedonia by the Ottomans when Macedonians were subjugated to Albanian lords.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Holliday, 143.

²⁰ Jenny Engstrom, *Democratization and the prevention of violent conflict: lessons learned from Bulgaria and Macedonia* (Farham: Ashgate, 2009), 107. The targeting of Muslim Albanians also negatively affected the Turkish community in Macedonia whose schools were also closed down.

²¹ The 1989 constitution substituted the notion that Macedonia is a 'state of the Macedonian people and the Albanian and Turkish minorities' with 'Macedonia is a nation-state of the Macedonia people'.

²² Rossos, 279.

2.2. Minority Politics in Macedonia during the First Transitional Decade (1991-2001)

The first transitional decade witnessed a major shift in the Macedonian ethnic model towards further reduction of Albanian group rights. The referendum from 1991, when 95% of Macedonians voted for independence from Yugoslavia, was boycotted by the Albanian population, which feared that if Macedonia becomes an independent state, the status of Albanians will be downgraded to that of a mere minority group and they will have to forfeit their group rights. These fears largely became a reality when the new Constitution of independent Macedonia came into effect in 1991. It solidified the institutional predominance of Macedonians in the polity by stating that Macedonia is “Macedonia is established as the national state of the Macedonian people, in which full equity as citizens and permanent co-existence with the Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Roma and other nationalities who live in the Republic of Macedonia.” In addition, the new Citizenship Law prevented Albanian immigrants from Kosovo from participating in Macedonian political life. This ‘constitutional nationalism’ further alienated Albanian political elites.²³ On a number of occasions, they voiced the cultural, language and territorial grievances of the group. A national referendum, conducted in 1992 by the popular among Albanians ‘Party for Democratic Prosperity’ (PDP), revealed that 74% of Albanians were in favour of cantonisation of Macedonia and territorial autonomy.²⁴ Further radicalization of the Albanian community led to splintering of PDP and formation of the radical ‘Democratic Party of Albanians’ (DPA). DPA voiced demands for recognition of Albanians as a

²³ Holliday, 144

²⁴ It remains obscure though how such territorial autonomy can be achieved since the Albanian group is territorially scattered. It resides in a crescent-shape region, stretching from Kumanovo in the North East, passing thorough the capital Skopje and Tetovo in the North West, and reaching to the border with Albania in the South. In Skopje alone 20% of the population are Albanians.

co-nation of Macedonia, equation of Albanian and Macedonian languages and re-opening of Albanian universities in the country.²⁵ A process of radicalization and factionalization of Albanian political elites was underway. It became clear that the Albanian leadership was favouring a restructuring of the established in Macedonia majoritarian regime and building of a new democratic system, which will rest on the principles of power sharing and consensus decision-making.²⁶ If the actions of Macedonian politicians at that time were animated by assimilationist and hegemonic impulses, their Albanian counterparts were either in favour of integration or in favour of partitioning of the country.²⁷

The ethnic tension between Macedonians and Albanians was mounting, fomented by few factors.²⁸ First, the widespread believe among Macedonians that in the near future they will be overtaken numerically by the faster reproducing Albanian ethos, which will put an end to the Macedonian dream of establishing a nation state.²⁹ The divergent patterns of economic and social development between the two camps, was the second factor. As the Albanians were largely excluded from the process of privatization of Macedonian enterprises, they found economic niche in the grey sector of the economy. Many Macedonians believed (and still believe) that Albanians have become prosperous thanks to smuggling people, weapons and other illicit activities across

²⁵ Higher education in Albanian became a pressing concern after Milosevic closed the single Albanian university in the area – the University of Pristina in Kosovo.

²⁶ Engstrom, 130.

²⁷ Holliday, 158.

²⁸ Rossos, 279.

²⁹ These fears became especially pronounced in 1999 when over 114,000 ethnic Albanians sought refuge in Macedonia after being driven away from their homes by Milosevic's homogenization campaign in Kosovo. This resulted in more than 10% increase of the Albanian population in Macedonia for a period of only few weeks. Most of Kosovo Albanians returned to their homes, following NATO bombardment of Serbia and Milosevic's resignation.

the border.³⁰ They perceive Albanians as disloyal citizens who seek the partitioning of the state and avoid paying taxes. Third factor for the languishing tension between the two groups has been the operation of an underground trans-Albanian network on the Balkans, which works for the consolidation of all territories populated by Albanians into Greater Albania.³¹ The prolonged exclusion of the Albanian group from the state-sponsored development has resulted in acute crisis of legitimacy of Macedonian political institutions in the eyes of Albanians and the widespread believe that the Macedonian state has little to offer them in return for their loyalty.³² Following the declaration of independence from Yugoslavia and the formation of nationalist parties from both sides, the above divisions came into the open. Two factors have kept Albanians and Macedonians from engaging into a large-scale ethnic clash, similar to the ones that occurred in the rest of the Yugoslav republics. First, the ethnic peace in Macedonia has been assisted by the presence of few other minority groups who act as a buffer between the Macedonian and Albanian populations.³³ Second, the external threat from Milosevic's Serbia kept Albanian and Macedonian elites working together, engaging them into a 'loveless marriage'.³⁴

In 1999, NATO forced Milosevic to exit Kosovo and step down from power. The removal of the 'Milosevic' threat and increasing prospects for independent Kosovo put new spin on Macedonian - Albanian relations. Local Albanians kept comparing their plight to the progress of their brothers

³⁰ *The other Macedonian conflict* (Berlin: European Stability Initiative [2002]), 9.

³¹ Greater Albanian is to unite the territories populated by Albanians, namely Albania proper, Kosovo, areas of Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Gallagher, 84.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

in Kosovo. The soaring unemployment among Macedonian Albanians (48%) and gradual erosion of their group rights compared badly to the life of their kin in autonomous Kosovo, where guerrilla warfare helped Kosovars evolve from an oppressed minority group to masters of the region. A sense of relative deprivation was mounting among Macedonian Albanians. To make matters worse, the porous border between Macedonia and Kosovo allowed the movement of paramilitary Albanian groups between the two territories and the smuggling of Kosovo Liberation Army's weaponry (KLA) into Macedonia. Many Macedonian Albanians, who fought for KLA, returned home and searched for ways to improve the live of their kin in Macedonia. Leading role among them was played by Ali Ahmeti – founder of KLA and its Macedonian chapter '*National Liberation Army*' (NLA), and major player in Macedonian politics. Ahmeti's NLA opted for a military solution to the pressing concerns of Macedonian Albanians. The liberal minority policies adopted by Macedonian authorities in the early 1990s proved insufficient for the gaining impetus Albanian resistance.³⁵ The vaguely defined Macedonian ethnic model was not working. Macedonian Albanians got inspired by the events in neighboring Kosovo and demanded immediate improvement of their situation.³⁶ Nationalist Macedonian elites, however, failed to respond to these demands. The interethnic clash seemed inevitable.

³⁵ Following the transition from communist rule to democracy, a number of liberal policies were adopted in Macedonia. The most important among them was the institution of affirmative action in higher education - 20% of the seats in Macedonian universities are reserved for ethnic minority students (no such policy exists in Bulgaria), permission for setting up ethnic minority parties which propelled the formation of the first Albanian, Turkish and Roma parties in the country (formation of ethnic parties is forbidden under the Bulgarian constitution), establishment of a state committee on inter-ethnic relations to coordinate minority integrationist programs, which has been guided in its work by the unwritten rule that every Macedonian cabinet should be a coalition cabinet that includes at least one Albanian party.

³⁶ In particular, NLA demanded that Albanian language becomes the second official language in Macedonia, that Albanians and Macedonians receive equal status under the constitution together with proportional representation of ethnic groups in the public administration and security forces of the country. NLA made it clear to the West that it was fighting for civil rights, not dismemberment of Macedonia or greater Albania. In Gallagher, p.102

2.3. Minority Politics in Macedonia Today: Ohrid Framework Agreement

The warfare between the Macedonian army and NLA erupted in the spring of 2001. It ended few months later with the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. This six-month ethnic war forced Macedonian elites to adopt a package of liberal minority policies in order to preserve the ethnic peace in the country and territorial integrity of the state. As a result, “Macedonia has developed probably the most consistent minority policies in the world today. They are enshrined in the principles of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which represents the major pillar of the new Macedonian multi-ethnic society,” claims Georgiev.³⁷

Brokered by the U.S., NATO and the EU³⁸, the Ohrid Agreement was designed to usher in an era of genuine power sharing between Albanians and Macedonians.³⁹ It provides a broad framework for protection of minority rights that has been gradually implemented in the Macedonian Constitution. Although the latter specifies ‘parliamentary democracy’ as a form of governance, the consensual provisions of the Ohrid Agreement *de facto* make Macedonia the only consensual regime in the Balkans, which has been unanimously depicted by scholars of Macedonian politics as a success story.⁴⁰ For example, Georgiev (2008) maintains that before signing the agreement,

³⁷ Georgiev, Gordan, Interview with author. Digital recording. Skopje, 28 September, 2006. Georgiev is executive director of the influential Macedonian think-tank ‘FORUM – Centre for Strategic Research and Documentation’.

³⁸ The Ohrid Agreement was signed by the leaders of the two major Macedonian and Albanian parties, the President of the Republic, and international representatives.

³⁹ Gallagher, 107.

⁴⁰ Georgiev (2008), Daskalovski (2006), Stojkovski (2008).

Macedonia exhibited all signs of a failed state such as economic impoverishment,⁴¹ high unemployment, constant ethnic tensions, government instability, lack of foreign financial assistance and international recognition. “Yet the state did not split up thanks to the established consensus model.”⁴² My research has shown that the consensual underpinnings of Macedonian polity have also spurred the development of Albanian minority media, which calls for brief examination of some of them.⁴³

To begin with, the Preamble of the 2011 Macedonian Constitution (revised in the spirit of the Ohrid agreements) no longer mentions ‘national minorities’ but employs neutral terminology and speaks of ‘communities’ to avoid the majority-minority dichotomy contested by Albanian elites. The new constitution protects the rights of national minorities on a group bases. Article 48 protects ethnic, cultural, and religious identities, as well as guarantees the right of minorities to establish associations and educational institutions where their mother tongues can be used. Moreover, the revised constitution empowers minority groups politically through granting them the right to establish their own political parties.⁴⁴ The normative revisions of the Macedonian supreme law have also significantly improved the access of Albanians to education, which is important for the development of Albanian media. For example, the new constitution directs that state funding must be provided to university-level educational institutions where training is

⁴¹ The Macedonian GDP fell by 9.9 per cent in 1990, 12.1 per cent in 1991, 14 per cent in 1992, 21.1 per cent in 1993, 8.4 per cent in 1994 and 0.4 per cent in 1995. In Gallagher, p. 87.

⁴² Georgiev, Gordan, Interview with author. Digital recording. Skopje, 24 September, 2008.

⁴³ For complete list of the consensual elements of the Ohrid Agreement, see ‘Consensual Elements of the Ohrid Agreement’ in the ‘Annex’ section.

⁴⁴ Zidas Daskalovski, *Walking on the edge: consolidating multiethnic Macedonia 1989-2004* (Skopje: ZD, 2005), 157. The establishment of such parties is forbidden under the Bulgarian Constitutions, which recognizes only the individual rights of Bulgarian citizens.

conducted in Macedonian or Albanian languages. It also dictates that positive discrimination should be followed in the university enrolment process until ‘enrolment equality’, reflecting the ethnic composition of society, is achieved.

Critical commentators agree that the normative amendments of Macedonian constitution, inspired by the Ohrid accord, have significantly improved the protection of minority rights in the country: “Thanks to the Ohrid Agreement, all minorities in Macedonia have well established group rights in the key areas of education, social protection, cultural development and access to media,” confirms Jusufi.⁴⁵ Another positive consequence from the signing of the Ohrid Agreement has been eradication of the nationalistic rhetoric in Macedonian politics and starting the process of cooperation between Macedonian and Albanian elites. The normative protection of minority group rights in Macedonia has been further ensured by ratification of key international covenants such as the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, the *European Convention on Human Rights* and the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*. In effect, the Ohrid Agreement has established a modification of Lijphard’s consensus model of government, which is on its way to become a permanent foundation of Macedonian polity. Its success is attributed to the improved communication between Macedonian and Albanian political elites,⁴⁶ rising support to the consensus model among the grassroots,⁴⁷ and the strong financial backing it receives from its foreign guarantors - the EU, the U.S. and NATO.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Jusufi, Islam. Interview with author. Tape recording. Skopje, 27 September, 2006. Jusufi is Task Manager with the European Agency for Reconstruction.

⁴⁶ Georgiev, 2008

⁴⁷ Georgiev, 2006

⁴⁸ For the period 2001-2006, the EU alone had invested more than 500 million Euros in the strengthening of the pillars of the model and overall development of Macedonia (Jusufi 2006). The heavy reliance of Macedonia on

The Macedonian multiethnic model, however, is not without its flaws. Rossos warns that “a permanent and perfect relationship between a national majority and a substantial minority is virtually unobtainable as such minorities tend to be overprotective of their rights, and majorities over-sensitive about the stability of the state.”⁴⁹ The improved communication between the political elites of both groups has not changed the general feeling of mistrust between the ordinary people. The political parties in Macedonia remain ethnically exclusive and if a general characteristic of the Macedonian polity should be given, it will be that of a growing ethnic segregation. The political and cultural dialogue at grassroots level continues to be conducted largely within the ethnic boundaries of different communities, which rarely interact with each other. This can be seen in their media, which choose to address exclusively the concerns of their own people rather than the Macedonian public as a whole.⁵⁰ In essence, Albanian, Roma and Turkish minorities live encapsulated within Macedonian polity.

Another deficiency of the Macedonian consensus model is its failure to redress the power asymmetry among the ethnic communities, which leads to over-representation of the Albanian group and under-representation of smaller minorities.⁵¹ Some critical commentators describe this skewed representation as an “institutional bias in favor of the Albanian camp”⁵² and claim that the Ohrid Agreement has resulted in building of a bi-national ethnic model rather than the

external support is not surprising. Engstrom maintains that the very democratic transition in Macedonia was a result of changes in the external political environment and *external pressures* rather than internal dissident movement. In Engstrom, 110. Emphasis mine to demonstrate the importance of ‘external pressure’ variable.

⁴⁹ Rossos, 281.

⁵⁰ Holliday, 154.

⁵¹ Ibid, 156.

⁵² Georgiev, Gordan. Interview with author. Digital recording. Skopje, 24 September, 2008.

originally sought multi-ethnic one.⁵³ Naturally, this outcome has aggravated the smaller ethnic communities. For example, the leaders of the Turkish minority group expressed publicly their disappointment over the fact that the Albanians are the only minority that benefits from the Ohrid Agreement.⁵⁴

In sum, the constitutional amendments that followed the signing of the Ohrid Agreement have improved the standing of minority groups in the country. At the same time, they instituted two categories of ethnic minorities – ‘Albanians’ and ‘all the rest’ – granting greater possibilities to the security sensitive Albanian group. This has skewed the access of ethnic minorities to the Macedonian media sphere, where the Albanian minority media have been disproportionately better supported and represented than the media of other smaller minorities. Hence, one may conclude that the adoption of consensual arrangements can aid the development of the media of security sensitive minority groups on institutional level. In comparison, there are no similar consensual mechanisms in Bulgaria where the rivalry between Turks and Bulgarians has never escalated to the level of civil war, as it did in Macedonia. Instead, the Turkish political party (MRF) has managed to channel the grievances of the Turkish community through the existing institutional channels and establish successful partnership with Bulgarian elites. This prevented the need of external intervention and forging of consensual mechanisms for conflict resolution.⁵⁵ Moreover, the skillful exploitation of the Bulgarian political system by MRF has significantly

⁵³Biljana Vankovska, *The role of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the peace process in Macedonia* (Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, 2006, accessed 26 April, 2011); available from <http://www.transnational.org/SAJT/forum/meet/2006>.

⁵⁴ Engstrom, 133.

⁵⁵ Besides, Turks in Bulgaria have never pursued secession and territorial autonomy as Albanians in Macedonia.

enhanced the Turkish political power, which without consensual “crutches” rivals and even exceeds the political power of Albanians in Macedonia.⁵⁶ The political strength of Albanians has been mostly a result of external political engineering (EU, USA, NATO), the numerical strength of the community (25% according to officials or 35% according to Albanians) and the backing of Albanian politicians by powerful actors from autonomous Kosovo based on economic partnership in the grey sectors of the economy. Before elaborating further on the political organization of Albanians in Macedonia, I will offer a socio-economic profile of the group to probe for non-institutional (non-consensual) factors that might influence the development of its media.

3. Social and Educational Standing of Albanians in Macedonian

The following review intends to reveal the educational status of the Albanian minority and its level of integration in Macedonian society - factors that may influence the demand for Albanian media. Naturally, well-integrated communities exhibit less demand for their own media and rely on mainstream media for information. This is not the case with capsulated minority groups, which live in parallel social realities. All three ethnic communities examined in this dissertation are capsulated minorities, whose problems and concerns are rarely addressed in the mainstream media, calling for establishment of their separate media institutions.

⁵⁶ MRF has been a constant coalition partner in almost all Bulgarian cabinets since the democratic opening in 1989.

The most recent census data indicates that large percentage of Albanians (60%) are rural dwellers, similar to Turks in Bulgaria. Before the Ohrid Agreement, Albanians were largely underrepresented in the state administration and all political and social spheres. For example, by the end of 1990s, Albanians held only 10.2% of the state jobs despite comprising 25% of the population. In the Albanian cities of Tetovo and Gostivar, they constituted under 15% of the police force. Similar underrepresentation was visible in the Macedonian armed forces where only 2.9% of the officers were Albanians, Ministry of Interior (8.7% Albanians) and most state and privatized enterprises. In 1995, the ministries of labor, urban affairs and finance had only two Albanians out of 400 employees.⁵⁷ There was not a single Albanian in the foreign ministry. Opinion polls suggest that 86% of Albanians felt as second-class citizens and 87% of them felt discriminated legally and politically.⁵⁸ Being deprived from fair access to state resources, many Albanians believed that it is of no use to learn Macedonian language.⁵⁹ Animosity towards inter-marriages was equally popular among Albanians and Macedonians. Strengthening of kinship ties and group solidarity has been considered paramount among Albanians for the survival of their group.

Upon signing of the Ohrid Agreement, the under-representation of Albanians in Macedonian institutions has gradually diminished. For example, the percentage of Albanians working in the Ministry of Interior rose from 0% in the 1990s to 10.5% in 2003 and 14.5% in 2005. The percentage of Albanian officers serving in the Macedonian military marked a 6% increase in

⁵⁷ Data taken from Daskalovski, p. 171.

⁵⁸ Gaber, 1997, p.111. In Gallagher, 87.

⁵⁹ A survey from 1994 reveals that only 4.5% of Albanians believe in the usefulness of knowing the languages of their ethnic neighbors, including Macedonian language. Ibid.

2005 (12%) compared to 1994. Gradual improvement has been also recorded in the representation of Albanians in state companies. The implementation of the Ohrid Agreement has most noticeably improved the political integration of Albanian community, whereas the social one remained at its previous low levels. Georgiev (2008), Missev (2008), Daskalovski (2006), Mehmeti (2008) and Stojkovski (2008) maintain that at grassroots level the Albanian community remains highly capsulated. Macedonian and Albanian researchers, media experts and intellectuals, whom the author had the chance to interview, were unanimous that the daily communication between Albanians and Macedonians remains at minimum. “The primary trend between the two main ethnic communities in Macedonia is one of divergence and separation rather than integration,” comments Holliday.⁶⁰ Stojkovski sees this as a ‘path dependence’ problem as Macedonia has been an ethnically divided society for most of its history. For Missev, this unfortunate outcome is a result of the elite-engineered ethnic clash between the two groups: “The ordinary people from both communities communicated well before the conflict, which was not the case with their political elites. The inability of the latter to maintain a dialogue led to the elites’ orchestrated ethnic war of 2001, in the aftermath of which inter-elite communication has improved but ethnic segregation at grassroots level has deepened.”⁶¹ Jusufi succinctly summarizes the above arguments in the following way:

The goal [of the Ohrid agreement] is to build a multi-ethnic state in Macedonia. What we have in practice are capsulated ethnic groups, living their separate lives. Our consensus model relies on representation and cooperation of ethnic elites while at the same time the minority grassroots remain capsulated... This accounts for the absent feeling of national belonging, expressed by the minority communities in the country. The primary allegiance for most of them rests with their ethnic community rather than the Macedonian state.

⁶⁰ Holliday, 162.

⁶¹ Missev, Vladimir. Interview with author. Digital recording. Skopje, 23 September, 2008. Missev is Director of the Macedonian think-tank ‘*Institute for Democracy*’.

Ethnic minorities do not perceive themselves as an integral part of the Macedonian nation. Instead, they share the feeling of belonging to different ethnicities. Therefore, being 'Macedonian' is a somewhat 'hollow' concept as it implies being multi-ethnic.⁶²

Researchers of the Albanian diaspora in the Balkans have determined that Albanians have never been successful in integrating into their new homelands – a tendency, which is traced back to the Ottoman Empire.⁶³ The capsulation of Albanians in Macedonia, however, works well with the tenets of the consensus model of democracy. According to Lijphard (1977), the ultimate success of consensus regimes depends on three factors: desire of the consensus model by political elites, ability of the latter to cooperate with each other, and pillarization of ethnic grassroots to ensure minimal communication between them, thus minimizing the chances of ethnic clashes.

As far as the *educational standing* of the Albanian community is concerned, it should be noted that there was some effort to improve the access of Albanians to higher education even before the Ohrid Agreement. After Milosevic's regime closed the single Albanian university in the region (University of Pristina in Kosovo), the Albanian students from Macedonia were left with no choice but to study in Macedonian language at Macedonian universities. This accounted for the low enrollment numbers of Albanians in the latter. From 22,994 students in 1993 only 1.7% (386) were Albanians. The Macedonian state recognized this as a structural problem and established a student quota for minority groups: 10% of the seats at public universities were reserved for minority students where the distribution of seats was done proportionally to the size of the

⁶² Jusufi, 2006

⁶³ Zheliazkova studied the Ottoman archives and discovered that when an Albanian settlement arrived to a new village, it remained capsulated and rarely blended with the local population. Inter-marriages were extremely rare. In many cases, Albanians soon outnumber the locals and forced them to migrate, thus becoming the new majority in the village. According to Zheliazkova, the same pattern of Albanian settlement is exhibited in Macedonia today. Zheliazkova (2009)

community. As a result, the number of minority graduates rose from 6.4% in 1992 to 15.7% in 1998.⁶⁴ The minority quota for higher education was further increased upon the ratification of the Ohrid Agreement. Presently, it is proportional to the ethnic make-up of the population. The quota for Albanian students, for example, rose from 10% in 1997 to 23% in 2005. Thanks to these positive discrimination measures, the opening of two Albanian universities in Macedonia and re-opening of the University in Pristina, the number of Albanian university graduates has demonstrated continuous increase. Similar improvement has been achieved in the field of secondary education where the number of students, studying in Albanian language, rose from 2,535 in 1990/91 to 8,687 in 1994/95, 12,114 in 1997/98 and shows further increase after the signing of the Ohrid Agreement.⁶⁵ Hence, one can conclude that the education in Albanian language has been constantly improving in Macedonia. For the past twenty years of democratic restructuring, thousands of young Albanians have received high school and university diplomas. Their education and proficiency in Albanian language has aided the expanding market for Albanian print media in Macedonia.

In sum, the social snapshot of the Albanian minority in Macedonia has revealed that it exhibits low level of integration in the mainstream society. The ethnic capsulation of Albanians at grassroots level and their successful inclusion in the political process makes them somewhat similar to Turks in Bulgaria. The two groups, however, are distinct with respect to their access to education in their mother tongue. If the education in Turkish language in Bulgaria has been featured by ups and downs over the past two decades, the access to education in Albanian in

⁶⁴ Data taken from 'Report on Minority Rights' 1999. In Daskalovski, 176.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Macedonia has been constantly improving – especially in the field of higher education. As a result, generations of young Albanians have received the opportunity to complete their higher education in Albanian language - something their Turkish peers in Bulgaria have been deprived of. The improved education in Albanian language accounts for the increased demand for Albanian print media and availability of trained Albanian media professionals. In this respect, the Albanian community comes close to Transylvanian Hungarians, whose educational standing and high proficiency in Hungarian language have created favorable conditions for the thriving of the Hungarian press in Transylvania.

4. Political Organization of Albanians in Macedonia

As this dissertation aims to establish a causal link between the political and media spheres of security sensitive minority groups, my attention will turn now to the examination of the major explanatory variable of this study – the political organization of Albanians in Macedonia. This section will demonstrate that Albanians as a group are featured by high degree of internal political fragmentation and pluralist political life. The political heterogeneity of the Albanian community provides for the formation of circles of friendly Albanian media outlets around rival Albanian parties and accounts for the dynamic development of Albanian media and their pluralist character.

The political organization of minorities in Macedonia is quite different from that in Bulgaria. There is a genuine political pluralism in the former case and lack of it in the latter.⁶⁶ Over the past two decades, a multi-party system has developed in Macedonia with all ethnic groups participating in the process.⁶⁷ Engstrom states that the Macedonian political sphere is divided along ethnic, rather than ideological, lines.⁶⁸ Each ethnic minority is represented in it by at least two ethnic parties. For example, Turks constitute only 4% of the population but have three political parties, Roma are a mere 2% of the population but have four parties, Vlachs are less than 1% and have two parties, Albanians are 25% and have seven parties, at least two of which constantly alternating as coalition partners in the government.⁶⁹

Governing through coalition cabinets has been a peculiarity of Macedonian polity since the beginning of the democratization process in 1991. Despite the separatist grievances of the Albanian community, the Albanian political elite is willing to work within the existing political institutions and to cooperate with Macedonian political parties.⁷⁰ There is a tendency to form large coalition blocks around the major Macedonian parties. These coalitions usually consist of more than ten parties and are featured by strong minority representation.⁷¹ The majority partner in the coalition decides on the structure of the government and invites ethnic partners, often selected

⁶⁶ Politically pluralist are those ethnic minority communities whose party systems are composed by two or more ethnic minority parties, competing with each other on the political arena of their adoptive countries.

⁶⁷ Jovevska, 62.

⁶⁸ Engstrom, pp. 118-119.

⁶⁹ Data taken from Svetomir Skaric, *Democratic elections in Macedonia, 1990-2002: analyses, documents and data* (Berlin: Sigma, 2005). pp. 9-12.

⁷⁰ Holliday, 154.

⁷¹ Jakub Sedo, "The party system of Macedonia," in *Party politics in the western Balkans*, ed. Vera Stojarova (London: Routledge, 2010), 171.

on ideological grounds. “We have majority social democrats entering into alliance with Turkish and Roma social democrats, or conservatives entering into alliance with conservative minority parties,” explains Jusufi.⁷² The more numerous ethnic minorities manage to appoint at least one minister in the coalition cabinet. Due to its numerical strength, the Albanian community enjoys proportionally superior representation in the government compared to other smaller minority groups. In essence, there are two major Macedonian parties around which all coalition blocks are formed. In a similar vein, there are also two popular Albanian parties, which compete intensively for entry into government coalitions. Upon the ratification of the Ohrid Agreement, Macedonia adopted a proportional system of representation that has further improved the political representation of minorities, in general, and Albanians, in particular.⁷³ As the present chapter focuses on the Albanian community, a brief overview of the genesis of Albanian political parties is necessary to help identify the differences between the Albanian and Turkish (in Bulgaria) political spheres. The comparative study of their structuring will provide evidence to the major argument of this dissertation, namely, that political organization of security sensitive minority groups determine the organization and progress of their media. The following presentation will demonstrate the stark difference between the burgeoning political pluralism in the Albanian camp and the lack of something even remotely similar to it in the Turkish group. The review of the political organization of Albanians will be followed by analysis of the factors that account for its pluralist nature. This will help the reader understand the pluralist dynamics of the Albanian media sphere.

⁷² Jusufi, 2006.

⁷³ Sedo, 178.

4.1. Genesis of the Albanian Political Pluralism

Over the course of the past twenty years, the political sphere of Albanians in Macedonia has become very diverse and highly competitive. The following brief review of the genesis of Albanian parties will illustrate their high degree of integration in the Macedonian political life. The first Albanian parties formed in the early 1990s. These were the *Party for Democratic Prosperity* (PDP) and *People's Democratic Party* (NDP). They entered into coalition and won 22 seats (18% of the popular vote) in the first parliamentary elections in 1991.⁷⁴ Together, they sent four ministers to the first democratic Macedonian cabinet. In 1994, PDP managed to secure a place in the second coalition government. NDP remained in opposition and engaged in active criticism of PDP for its moderate stance and impotency to push for resolution of pressing Albanian problems.⁷⁵ Soon after the formation of PDP and NDP, the first liberal Albanian newspapers appeared on the market. They were quick to voice their allegiance with one of the political rivals (NDP or PDP) and were used by their leaders as political tribunes and vehicles for mobilization of the Albanian electorate. In 1994, PDP split up over internal differences and a new political player was born – *The Democratic Party for Prosperity of Albanians* (DPPA).⁷⁶ In 1996, DPPA and the *People's Democratic Party* (NDP) joined forces to form one of the two major Albanian parties in Macedonian politics today – *The Democratic Party of Albanians* (DPA). In 1998, DPA won 11 seats in the parliament and was invited as a coalition partner in the

⁷⁴ Rossos, 263.

⁷⁵ Sedo, 176.

⁷⁶ According to a statement made by the Minister of Internal Affairs of Macedonia at the time, the split of DPP was a project of the Macedonian secret services, which aimed to weaken the power and influence of the Albanian political parties. Dauti, Daut. Interview with author. Digital recording. Skopje, 22 September. 2008.

government led by the nationalistic Macedonian party VMRO-DPMNE.⁷⁷ DPA remained in power for a full term until 2002. In June 2002, from the rubbles of the civil war emerged the *Democratic Union for Integration* (DUI). DUI is the most popular Albanian party today and the third biggest party in Macedonia. It was established by the founder of the National Liberation Army (NLA) and former guerilla fighter Ali Ahmeti. In essence, DUI is a transformation of the paramilitary body of NLA into a political structure. If DPA is known to be the moderate Albanian party, favoring political dialogue, DUI is its radical antipode. DUI's guerrilla leadership has demonstrated that when the political means are exhausted, there is always the option of violent confrontation with the authorities. In the 2002 parliamentary elections, DUI won the majority of Albanian votes (70% and 16 seats in the parliament versus DPA's 5.2% and 7 seats) and was invited as a coalition partner in the government, led by the *Social Democratic Union of Macedonia*. In 2008, thirty fellow partisans split up from DPA and formed the newest Albanian party - *New Democracy*. As in the previous cases of party splintering, the reason for the most recent split was "disagreements of some party members with the authoritarian leadership of DPA."⁷⁸

As far as the voting behavior of Macedonians is concerned, it is determined primarily by identity-based cleavages. This is well demonstrated by the exit polls of the 2002 parliamentary elections.⁷⁹ Macedonians vote for Macedonian parties, Albanians vote for Albanian parties.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ VMRO-DPMNE stands for Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity.

⁷⁸ Zimberi, Abedin. Interview with author. Skopje, 29 September, 2008. Zimberi is MP from *New Democracy*.

⁷⁹ Skaric, p. 119 and p. 129.

⁸⁰ Rossos, 279.

This makes Engtrom conclude that Albanians are a politically homogeneous minority group.⁸¹ Their vote, however, is internally split among a motley palette of Albanian parties, which is in stark contrast with the political organization of Turks in Bulgaria who are both an externally and internally homogeneous political community.

As far as the ideological orientation of the Albanian parties is concerned, Skaric places them to the right of the political centre.⁸² It is interesting to note, however, that there is little difference between the ideological programs of the Albanian parties.⁸³ They are formed not upon clear ideological platforms, but around the charismatic figures of their leaders. The latter single-handedly determine the party course and enjoy control over the entire party machine, which is similar to the internal authoritarian structuring of the Turkish *Movement for Rights and Freedoms* in Bulgaria:

The platforms of all Albanian political parties are more or less alike. All of them focus on the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement, the recognition of Albanian as a second official language in Macedonia, the economic development of Albanian territories, the fair distribution of social benefits, etc. When picking between different parties, the choice of Albanians is determined by their preferences for one or another party leader.⁸⁴

Presently, the most popular political figure among Albanians is Ali Mehmeti – the leader of the *Democratic Union for Integration* and co-founder of KLA and NLA guerilla fronts. Mehmeti initiated the armed Albanian resistance and was the first to fire a weapon against the Macedonian Special Forces in 2001. “This is a man who proved himself in battle. Ahmeti will never betray us!

⁸¹ Engtrom, 119.

⁸² Skaric, 45.

⁸³ Zimberi, 2008

⁸⁴ Abdiu, Nevaip. Interview with author. Digital recording. Tetovo, Macedonia, 25 September, 2008.

He might be a terrorist for the Macedonians, but he is a hero for us and that explains the popularity of his party among Albanians,” explains Abdiu.⁸⁵

4.2. Structure of Albanian Political Parties

The internal structure of Macedonian and Albanian political parties is similar to the organization of most post-communist parties in Eastern Europe. These are leader-type organizations, which identity is defined by the strong figure of their leaders.⁸⁶ Scaric nicely summarizes the internal character of Macedonian political formations in the following way: “There is no internal democracy within any of the political parties in Macedonia... The key role is played by the party leadership and not by their memberships. All party leaders are elected at party congresses without opposing candidates... As a result, one finds no dialogue and no struggle of opinions on issues concerning the parties’ policies.”⁸⁷ In a similar vein, Missev argues that “Albanian parties represent hierarchical structures with authoritarian leadership. The communication within them flows from top to bottom and leaves no room for democratic inter-party discussions.”⁸⁸ Albanian parties are no different in this respect from the mainstream Macedonian parties, which according to Pearson have “degenerated into undemocratic pyramid structures with no clear line of strategy.”⁸⁹ These observations are echoed by the Albanian MP from *New Democracy* - Abedim

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Stojkovski, Goran. Interview with author. Digital recording. Kumanovo, 30 September 2008.

⁸⁷ Scaric, 49.

⁸⁸ Missev, 2008

⁸⁹ B. Pearson, “Putting peace into practice: can Macedonia's new government meet the challenge,” (United States Institute of Peace, 2002). In Engstrom, 120.

Zimberi, who during our meeting depicted Albanian parties as “authoritarian formations with pronounced hierarchical structures, providing for extensive power of the leader and his closest aids.”⁹⁰ The Albanian parties, however, exhibit varying degrees of authoritarianism - some of them are more autocratic than others. Next to the charismatic figure of the party leader, the level of internal party autocracy is the second trait that distinguishes them.⁹¹ For example, the lack of internal dialogue within DPA made some members leave its ranks and form *New Democracy*. “There is very little room for internal party democracy in DPA and that is why we left,” explains Zimberi.⁹² In the case of DUI, the figure of the leader is also prominent, but DUI’s party structure is less autocratic when compared to that of DPA.⁹³

Besides the figure of the party leader, the second determinant of the political preferences of Albanians is the potential of the political candidates to provide jobs and social services to their supporters. In this regard, Albanian political parties “bear strong resemblance to private enterprises that serve as job-banks to their supporters,” explains Mehmeti.⁹⁴ After the Albanian coalition partner in the government switches places with another Albanian party, the incumbent administration is fully replaced by staff from the incoming party – a phenomenon known in Balkan politics as ‘party groom’. Once established, the new party works primarily towards advancement of the interests of its supporters (including friendly media outlets), often placing the

⁹⁰ Zimberi, 2008.

⁹¹ Dauti, 2008.

⁹² Zimberi, 2008.

⁹³ For example, DUI’s leader allows the regional party chapters to select their MP candidates instead of appointing them single-handedly, as does the leader of DPA.

⁹⁴ Mehmeti, Kim. Interview with author. Digital recording. Skopje, 29 September, 2008.

goals of the community on a second place. There is a genuine rivalry among Albanian political formations for access to state resources. As these resources are limited, the Albanian parties never engage in cooperation with each other. Vested economic interests are the major factor that prevents the consolidation of the fragmented Albanian party system:

In fact, they [Albanian parties] find common grounds easier with Macedonian parties rather than with their Albanian opponents as Albanian leaders do not like to share the economic benefits that come along with representation in the government. Naturally, the greatest chunk of these benefits flows to the majority political elite and the rest is channeled to the Albanian coalition partner. The scarcity of economic opportunities explains why the Albanian party in power refuses to share them with their political rivals, who happen to be their kin.⁹⁵

Interestingly, there is no constitutional provision that obliges the winner in Macedonian elections to enter into coalition with the Albanian formation that won most of the Albanian votes. However, due to the fragmented nature of the political spectrum in Macedonia, the winning Macedonian party always makes a coalition with one of the competing Albanian parties. Inter-ethnic political cooperation is then engaged to ensure the stability of the coalition cabinet.⁹⁶ The participation of Albanians in every Macedonian government is one of the factors that accounts for the political stability of the Macedonian polity when compared to the rest of the former Yugoslav republics.⁹⁷ The practice of inter-ethnic political accommodation has become even more pronounced after the signing of the Ohrid Agreement. The very implementation of its clauses requires the cooperation between Albanian and Macedonian elites, and formation of coalition governments. This is how the collaboration between the elites of the biggest ethnic

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Florian Beiber, "National minorities in the party systems," in *Party politics in the western Balkans*, ed. Vera Stojarova (London: Routledge, 2010), 70.

⁹⁷ Skaric, 50.

communities in Macedonia is put on strong institutional wheels. It is founded on clientelist relations, which is the same magic glue that makes Bulgarian and Turkish elites cooperate so well.

As odd as it may sound, the winner in Macedonian elections is not compelled to seek partnership with the Albanian party that aggregated most of the Albanian votes. Instead, the Macedonian victor seeks cooperation with the most 'obedient' Albanian party, that is, the party that will be most receptive to the political course of the leader of the future coalition. There are presently seven active Albanian parties in Macedonia and their voice is not unified.⁹⁸ "This situation suits well the majority political elites as they can play Albanian parties against each other to seek their obedience. Once in the coalition, the voice of the Albanian party becomes synched with that of the ruling majority. If the synch for some reason fails to materialize, then the Albanian partner is kicked out of the government and the next available Albanian party is invited in," explains Memedaliu.⁹⁹ By doing so, Macedonian politicians demonstrate who is the 'master' in Macedonian politics and achieve tacit obedience on behalf of their Albanian partners. Once they become coalition associates, common economic interests amalgamate the relationship between Macedonian and Albanian politicians. "The process goes like this: first, the major businesses in the country are divided into zones of influence. Then, the partners decide which political party is going to control which business to avoid interference and clearly distinguish the roles from the onset. The relationship between Macedonian and Albanian partners remains amicable as long as their economic partnership remains productive. Macedonian politics is largely a game of

⁹⁸ Memedaliu, Vedat. Interview with author. Digital recording. Skopje, 25 September, 2008.

⁹⁹ Ibid. For example, in 1998, VMRO invited in the government the *Democratic Party of Albanians* (DPA), which won eleven seats in the Parliament, but not the *Democratic Party of Prosperity* (NDP), which won fourteen seats. The same scenario was repeated in the 2006 elections when VMRO invited as coalition partner DPA instead of DUI despite the fact that DUI sent sixteen representatives to the Parliament, whereas DPA only eleven. The Macedonia Parliament has 120 MPs.

economic interests,” explains Zimberi.¹⁰⁰ Pearson confirms the so described clientelist nature of Macedonian politics, claiming that “politics has become little more than a pretext for the involvement of all major political parties in lucrative businesses.”¹⁰¹

4.3. Explaining the Pluralism in Albanian Political Sphere

Ethnic minority parties have become widespread in the Western Balkans due to the inability of mainstream majority parties to attract the minority vote. This is a result of the unwillingness of majority elites to incorporate the concerns of minority communities into the platforms of their formations out of fear to lose the support of the nationalistically oriented majority electorate.¹⁰² Macedonia was the first country in the region to include minority politicians in the government – a practice, which started back in the 1990s and has remained unchanged ever since. The power of minority parties in the Balkans comes from the proportional type of electoral representation, adopted by many of the countries in the region, which benefits large and dispersed minority communities. Moreover, in Macedonia the electoral threshold for minority parties has been abandoned in order to increase the chances of minority formations.

The ethnic parties in Macedonia are unique in terms of their diversity. This is not the case with the rest of the Balkan states where “minority parties are brought together not only by the common interest of representing a minority group, but also by the need for cohesion to secure

¹⁰⁰ Zimberi, 2008.

¹⁰¹ B. Pearson, “Putting peace into practice: can Macedonia's new government meet the challenge,” (United States Institute of Peace, 2002), 120.

¹⁰² Bieber, 60.

parliamentary representation. Many strong and competing minority parties, as in Macedonia, are exceptional and only possible among a numerically strong minority,” explains Bieber.¹⁰³ Few possible reasons for the burgeoning minority party life in Macedonia have been advanced, which set Macedonia apart from Bulgaria. According to the MP from *New Democracy* Abedin Zimberi, the large size of the Albanian community provides for greater internal ideological diversity and larger *N* of Albanian parties. Size of ethnic constituencies indeed matters for electoral success, but its correlation with ideological diversity is somewhat obscure. There are nearly as many Turks in Bulgaria as there are Albanians in Macedonia, but despite their numerical strength, Bulgarian Turks demonstrate no ideological deviation and strong political homogenization.

In my opinion, the diverse origins of the multiple Albanian clans in Macedonia provide a better explanation to the political pluralism of Albanians in Macedonia. As opposed to the ethnically homogeneous Turkish group in Bulgaria, Albanians in Macedonia are a mixed bag. Some of them are ‘local’ from Macedonia, others have migrated to Macedonia from Kosovo and Albania. Hence, the vertically organized Albanian group maintains allegiance to different clan leaders. Moreover, some Albanian leaders maintain connections with the leaders of other Albanian diasporas in nearby countries, which stimulates the transfer of political cleavages across the borders. For example, DUIs leader Ali Ahmeti is connected to the leaders of the Albanian political parties in Kosovo with whom he organized in the 1990s the Kosovo Liberation Army - paramilitary organization, which sought radical solution of the Albanian problems in this former Serbian province. The former leader of the second largest Albanian party (DPA) is also connected to the Albanian elites in Kosovo where he served in the Cabinet of the Kosovo Prime

¹⁰³ Ibid, 62.

Minister before the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The present leadership of DPA stands for dialogue and partnership with Macedonian elites for resolution of minority issues, as opposed to the more radical approach pursued by Ali Ahmeti and his followers. The diverse origins of Albanians in Macedonia and the external connections of their leaders to other Albanian diasporas, prevent the political homogenization of Albanians in Macedonia and provide for their political diversity. This shows how the extension of political and economic bridges between leaders of diaspora communities in nearby states may result in transferring of political cleavages across borders – a process well exemplified by the experience of Transylvanian Hungarians. However, the political plurality within the Albanian camp in Macedonia has been a reality even before the extension of these bridges. Hence, its origins must be local.

Another explanation for the pluralist nature of the Albanian political sphere rests in the better climate for minority party politics in Macedonia, which is a legacy from the relatively more liberal party life in Yugoslavia compared to the rest of the Eastern bloc. Starting from 1940s, Tito engineered an ‘egalitarian socialism’ in Yugoslavia, dissociated from the Soviet communist system. The Yugoslav citizens were allowed to travel abroad, to keep foreign currency and establish private businesses. In the political sphere, Tito’s model provided for significantly greater party liberalism compared to the rest of the Eastern European states. His homegrown socialist project incorporated a number of liberal elements, which provided for more relaxed political discussions and greater pluralism in the political sphere. “The *Macedonian Communist Party* was far from being homogeneous ... dissidents were indeed to be found within the Party, where there were divisions between liberal and dogmatic factions,” explains Engstrom.¹⁰⁴ In fact,

¹⁰⁴ Engstrom, 109.

the first ethnic parties in Yugoslavia were formed during the Inter-War period when the federation was established.

The liberalization of the communist regime and the formation of multi-party system in the 1990s marked the genesis of the modern ethnic parties in Yugoslavia. They appeared as a reaction against the nationalist climate in the country, which emphasized ethnic cleavages over all other differences in society.¹⁰⁵ From the very introduction of the political pluralism in Macedonia, the perceptions of Macedonian and Albanian elites about the structuring of the polity diverged. Macedonians have been in favor of the majoritarian model of democracy and individual rights, whereas Albanians have been leaning towards group rights and consensus model of democracy, led by the fear that the numerically stronger Macedonian population will exclude them from the political process.¹⁰⁶ It is not surprising that in such a pluralist atmosphere the first Albanian parties emerged immediately after the political opening in 1991 (*Party for Democratic Prosperity* and *People's Democratic Party*), advertising different approaches to solving the problems of Albanian minority in Macedonia.

Yet another factor that accounts for the political pluralism within the Albanian camp is the strong voice of the Albanian intellectuals within the community, which sets this group apart from the Turks in Bulgaria who have been stripped from their intellectual core.¹⁰⁷ The diverse ideological orientations of the Albanian intellectuals, conveyed to the group with the help of Albanian media, has spurred the opening of ideological cleavages with the group, which translated into political

¹⁰⁵ Beiber, 60.

¹⁰⁶ Engstrom, 110.

¹⁰⁷ Dauti, 2008.

cleavages. Finally, yet importantly, there are normative and electoral incentives for the thriving of Albanian multi-party system in Macedonia. All Macedonian constitutions, starting from 1970s onwards, have recognized the group rights of minorities. The 1991 and 2001 constitutions institutionalize the formation of ethnic parties, giving them the task to represent and defend the group rights of national ethnic minorities.¹⁰⁸ In contrast, group rights of minorities have never been recognized under the Bulgarian supreme law, which prohibits the establishment of ethnic parties. The proportional electoral system and the lack of electoral threshold for ethnic minority parties have also contributed to the pluralism in the Albanian political life.¹⁰⁹

As far as the political organization of the other minority groups in Macedonia is concerned, Bieber demonstrates that there is considerable variation among them in terms of aggregation of their political interests. While the interests of big ethnic communities (Macedonians and Albanians) are well aggregated through their party vehicles, this is not the case with smaller minorities such as Roma and Turks. Their weaker numerical strength prevents them from achieving adequate political representation, which is further exacerbated by the proportional electoral system that benefits numerically strong and territorially dispersed minorities. Therefore, Roma often articulate their interests in the public domain via grassroots organizations, some of which with strong Western backing (i.e. ‘Roma Program’ of the Open Society Institute-Skopje).

¹⁰⁸ Only in three cases the *Law on Political Parties* in Macedonia provides for banning of political parties: if the party promotes violent overthrow of the constitutional order; if the party calls for military aggression; and if it incites ethnic, confessional, or religious hatred and intolerance. In Skaric, 51.

¹⁰⁹ There is also this conspiracy theory, according to which Albanian parties are created with the assistance of the Macedonian Secret Services with the sole purpose to splinter the Albanian electorate and reduce its power. Pavle Treyano, former Minister of Interior, disclosed in a public talk that the *Democratic Party of Albanians* was created with the assistance of the Macedonian Secret Services in order to splinter the Albanian political block and weaken its bargaining power. In Mehmeti, 2008. In a similar vein, critical commentators believe that the *Movement of Rights and Freedoms* in Bulgaria has been established with the assistance of the Bulgarian Secret Services (BSS) to control the Turkish electorate through dummy minority politicians. This theory has been supported by the recent revelation that all of the current leaders of MRF had worked as informants of the BSS during the communist era.

Being the most marginalized minority in the region, Roma “have been least able to benefit from efforts to promote minority parties... While many Roma vote also for majority parties, this voting pattern is hardly a reflection of the integration of Roma in the mainstream politics, but rather of the political and social marginalization of the community.”¹¹⁰ The proportional system of representation prevents them from electing MPs unless their parties enter into coalition blocks with Macedonian and Albanian formations. Often Turks and Roma vote for Macedonian parties, which is especially pronounced among the urban dwellers. In this sense, Roma and Turks are politically dispersed communities as opposed to Albanians who vote exclusively for Albanian parties. This affects negatively the development of Roma and Turkish minority media, which lack the political support enjoyed by Albanian minority media.

In sum, the examination of the political organization of Albanian community in Macedonia has revealed that externally Albanians are a politically coherent minority group similar to Turks in Bulgaria, that is, they vote as a block for Albanian political parties.¹¹¹ Internally, however, the Albanian political vote is split among a number of competing Albanian parties. There is a genuine pluralism within the Albanian political sphere, which is not the case with the Turks in Bulgaria who are both an externally and internally politically coherent community. The pluralist nature of Albanian political sphere is a result of unique social, electoral and path-dependency factors that cannot be replicated in other contexts. Consolidation of the fragmented Albanian party system cannot be expected due to the narrow economic interests of the competing Albanian

¹¹⁰ Bieber, 70.

¹¹¹ Daskalovski, 2006; Georgiev, 2006.

elites, their external links with leaders of other Albanian diasporas and the divergent origins of the Albanian electorate.

The pluralist political organization of the Albanian community has its pros and cons. On the one hand, it weakens the collective bargaining power of the group. For example, Dauti (2008) demonstrates that the Albanian political pluralism becomes a liability at times when the Albanian leaders have to overcome their narrow economic and political interests and push united for resolution of the pressing concerns of the group. The Albanian politicians often fail to live up to the expectations of the Albanian electorate to be united at decisive political junctures. On the other hand, the political pluralism within the Albanian community stimulates internal democracy and diversity of approaches to resolution of minority issues – ranging from moderate to radical. It also has positive impact on the development of pluralist Albanian media, namely, the heterogeneity of the Albanian political sphere enables the genesis of media circles around competing Albanian parties, thus stimulating a liberal media environment and genuine marketplace of ideas within the Albanian community. I will focus next on the benevolent effect of political pluralism of minority groups on the development of their media, which happens to be the focus of my dissertation. The second half of this chapter will offer analysis of the Albanian media in Macedonia and flesh out their clientelist relations with Albanian political parties. My goal will be to flesh out the causal link between the development of pluralist political and media spheres in the Albanian community.

5. Media Landscape in Macedonia

Before delving into the primary objective of this section – presentation and analysis of Albanian minority media – it is necessary to establish the broader context within which they are situated, namely the Macedonian media landscape. Trajkoska argues that Macedonia is featured by numerous and developed media institutions, which play central role in the public opinion formation, especially with respect to politics, as these media devote most of their attention to high politics.¹¹² The population of Macedonia numbers only 2 million people, but at the same time there are 268 electronic media outlets in the country. The terrestrial public service broadcasting is composed of 47 radio and television stations; there are 148 commercial broadcasting stations, including five private national television channels, six national radio stations and 66 cable radio and television networks.¹¹³ There are also seven Macedonian satellite channels. The Macedonian National Television maintains three 24/7 national channels. The Macedonian National Radio has four radio channels. As far as print media are concerned, there are approximately 200 titles in circulation. Trajkoska comments in this regard that “having eleven national dailies and six weeklies for a population of only two million is a media overkill! When there are so many media outlets it is easy to manipulate them as their existence is obviously not based on sound economic logic.”¹¹⁴ The small Macedonian market simply does not provide for so many media outlets. Thus, many of them are dependent for resources on political parties and businesses.

¹¹² Trajkoska, Zhaneta. Interview with author. Skopje, 26 September, 2008. Trajkoska is Director of the ‘*Higher Institute for Journalism and Public Relations*’ in Skopje.

¹¹³ Vesna Sopar and Veton Latifi, “Television across Europe: regulation, policy and independence. Monitoring reports. Republic of Macedonia,” (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2005), 281-289, p. 281.

¹¹⁴ Trajkoska, 2008.

In the mid-1990s, a large number of private media were launched, breaking up the state monopoly over the dissemination of information and replacing it with a new breed of political control, based on political ownership of media. This calls for application of two of the filters suggested by Herman and Chomsky's 'Propaganda' model - *ownership* and *advertising* - in the analysis of the Macedonian media landscape, which will reveal the mechanisms behind their dependence on the political sphere, in general, and the dependence of Albanian media on Albanian parties, in particular. The Macedonian case demonstrates that the media pluralism in the country (including Albanian media) is not a consequence of the size of the local media market, but of the clientelist links between media institutions and political elites. These links make possible the launching of media outlets that revolve in the orbit of competing political actors, offering them friendly coverage in exchange for financial backing and administrative protection. Left alone on the logic of the liberal media market, many media outlets – Albanian and Macedonian alike - would disappear. Let me elaborate on the clientelist link between the media and political spheres in this country.

Although there is no direct state intervention in the operation of Macedonian media, these media pay allegiance to one or another political party in pursuit of economic benefits such as public advertisement contracts (tenders), other financial benefits and administrative protection (political umbrella) in exchange for positive coverage of this party's political patrons and critical portrayal of political rivals. The financial and administrative backing of private media by political actors is described in the 'Propaganda' model as one of the forms of elites' control over mass media: "It would be hard to label Macedonian media as liberal and independent as most of them are closely connected to the political sphere and the state," comments the editor of a popular TV station in

Macedonia.¹¹⁵ Moreover, “many influential media in the country operate as adjuncts of political parties. They are not part of the civil society as they should be,” argues the researcher of Macedonian media Stojkovski.¹¹⁶ The OSI monitoring report reaches similar conclusions:

The influence of political parties on major actors in the broadcasting sector is evident. This applies equally to the Broadcasting Council, the MRT Board [Macedonian Radio and Television] and the directors of public broadcasters. Divided along political, ethnic and economic lines, media outlets are under constant pressure from Government and State institutions.¹¹⁷

The OSI report reveals that there is a close relationship between the government and the twelve leading media companies in the country, three of which are Albanian.¹¹⁸ The media moguls in Macedonia are deeply involved in the fabric of Macedonian politics. They often act as leaders of political parties or business groups with political ambitions, which set up media enterprises to advance their political objectives.¹¹⁹ The clientelist links connecting political and media actors in Macedonia are similar to the mechanisms of political and corporate control over the media exercised in the US. By studying the corporate and political ownership of these media, Herman and Chomsky demonstrate that the concentration of the major media outlets in the U.S. in the hands of few private media companies with overt political preferences results in distortion of the liberal marketplace of ideas and swinging the public discourse in favor of one or another

¹¹⁵ Tahiri, Safer. Interview with author. Digital recording. Skopje, 23 September, 2008. Tahiri is a deputy editor-in-chief of the Albanian channel ‘ALSAT-M’

¹¹⁶ Stojkovski, 2008.

¹¹⁷ Sopar, 284.

¹¹⁸ They are rendered as ‘leading’ because they have the strongest impact on the public opinion formation in Macedonia.

¹¹⁹ For example, the owner of ‘AI’ TV station and newspapers ‘Vreme’ and ‘Spic’ - the most popular print and electronic media outlets in Macedonia, is a wealthy Macedonian businessman who served as a chairman of one of the ruling political parties. In a similar vein, the owners of the popular television stations ‘Channel 5’ and ‘TV Citel’ are leaders of political parties from the current coalition government.

political/corporate actor. The Macedonian and Albanian media spheres are developing along similar lines, where the political and corporate involvement in their operation is poorly masked and even further exaggerated than in the U.S. In fact, it is through receiving support from political and corporate elites that most contemporary media outlets in Macedonia have emerged. All major television stations and some of the main newspapers in the country are either owned or backed by local political partisans who often participate as coalition partners in the Macedonian governments.¹²⁰ Their media outlets are the ones with most influence and greatest potential to shape the public opinion in the country. This is how the political and corporate elites in Macedonia have become the local ‘information gatekeepers’, as Herman and Chomsky would have described them.

Ironically, the public broadcasters in the country – the National Macedonian Radio and Television (MRT) - also remain subjected to excessive political control. Coping with the challenges of the liberalization of the media market, the MRT’s budget is formed exclusively through state appropriations, which makes this body operate as state enterprise rather than a public broadcaster. “The result is dependent media, which forgo their high journalistic standards in order to please the political ambitions of their owners... There are little politically independent media in Macedonia,” comments Delchev.¹²¹ “The dependence of local media on political and economic centers of power challenges their ability to objectively cover public events,” adds Trajkoska.¹²² “I would describe the present Macedonian media spectrum as a vicious circle and as

¹²⁰ Sopar, 282.

¹²¹ Delchev. Interview with author. Digital recording. Skopje, 28 September, 2006. Delchev is editor-in-chief of two of the biggest newspapers in Macedonia (100,000 circulation) – ‘Spic’ and ‘Vreme’.

¹²² Trajkoska, 2008.

a form of ‘Berluskonization’,” concludes Stoikovski.¹²³ Can mainstream Macedonian media provide critical portrayal of reality if their owners are part of the political establishment? Highly doubtful. One would rather expect them to manipulate the public opinion in a way that suits the interest of local political elites,¹²⁴ as the ‘Propaganda’ model would have predicted. Fortunately, two of the most popular Macedonian dailies (*‘Dnevnik’* and *‘Utrinski Vestnik’*) are owned by private German investors, which gives them financial independence from the local political agents and allows them to subject reality to critical evaluation.

Apart from the proximity of many media owners to the executive branch, Macedonian politicians themselves have established special relations with Macedonian media. The Macedonian government has become the biggest and most generous advertiser in them, which perfectly corresponds to the ‘Propaganda’ model where corporate/political advertising is described as one of the tools (together with political ownership) by which political and corporate control over mass media is exercised. Trajkoska considers the fact that the state has become the major advertiser in Macedonian media the biggest problem in front of their development.¹²⁵ Although the political pressure on these media is of more ‘rural’ character, at the end of the day, it is not that different from the ‘sophisticated’ political pressure that Western mass media are subjected to:

The observation of Peter Gross that mass media in Eastern Europe are subjected to political control is not limited only to the countries from the region, but can be also applied to half of the Western European mass media as well. Look at the Berlusconi’s

¹²³ Stoikovski, 2008.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

media empire in Italy. Or turn to French [public] media, which have recently experienced strong political pressure from the cabinet of President Sarkozy.¹²⁶

In sum, the review of Macedonian media landscape has discovered serious overlapping of Macedonian media and political spheres, stemming from the financial dependence of the former on the latter. Political ownership and state subsidization of media are some of the instruments utilized by Macedonian and Albanian political elites to reassert their authority in the media domain, which makes them the 'information gatekeepers' in Macedonian society. However, direct political ownership of media is less evident in the case of Albanian media, which are mostly run by business-oriented media entrepreneurs. This allows the latter to alter the affiliation of their outlets with different Albanian political parties, thus providing for greater diversity of opinions expressed in the Albanian media compared to Macedonian media. Despite the fact that clientelist links connect both Albanian and Macedonian media to political entrepreneurs, the higher degree of political pluralism in the Albanian political sphere is associated with greater diversity of opinions in the Albanian media domain. The Albanian media sphere is truly rich on opinions - an observation unanimously confirmed by the editors of Albanian media whom this author had the chance to interview during his two consecutive trips to the region. The next section is dedicated to the study of Albanian minority media in Macedonia.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

6. Albanian Minority Media in Macedonia

Kim Mehmeti – one of the leading Albanian intellectuals in Macedonia — explains that Albanian minority media have little tradition of development.¹²⁷ During the communist period, there was just a single Albanian newspaper and a thirty-minute Albanian program on the National Television. “They both largely served as propaganda machines of the communist authorities and did little to train Albanian journalists and media cadres,” explains Mehmeti. After the regime change in 1991, Albanian media did not experience the same growth as their Macedonian counterparts mainly due to the lack of trained Albanian media professionals. Over the past decade, however, they have picked up the pace and shown rapid expansion. Today, there are 30 daily Albanian newspapers, 3 national Albanian television stations and every Albanian city has at least two local Albanian television and radio stations, together with a number of country newspapers. This comes to show the stark difference between the level of development of Albanian minority media and Turkish minority media in Bulgaria, which this chapter aims to account for. The next section will provide a brief review of the Albanian print and electronic media to demonstrate their advanced stage of development. It will be followed by an analytical section, detailing on the variables that account for the proliferation of Albanian minority media in Macedonia.

6.1. Regulation of Albanian Minority Media

As per the tenets of the libertarian media system, Macedonian print media are left unregulated, whereas electronic ones are subject to state licensing due to the limits of the frequency spectrum.

¹²⁷ Mehmeti, 2008. Mehmeti is well-known prose writer, university instructor, and regular guest in Albanian and Macedonian media.

The producers of ethnic media in Macedonia, whom the author interviewed for this study, have unanimously reported their satisfaction with the existing media legislation in the country, particularly with regards to the provisions dealing with access to media: “There are no double standards and handicaps there,” comments the editor-in-chief of the popular Albanian daily ‘*Lajm*’.¹²⁸ “There are no normative impediments to the establishment of Albanian media in Macedonia. There is complete freedom of information and access to it,” confirms the editor-in-chief of another popular Albanian daily ‘*Fakti*’.¹²⁹ However, some Albanian editors have expressed concerns about the inability of the existing legislation to guarantee the independence of the media sphere from the political sphere, which constitutes a problem for majority and minority media alike. Azemi maintains that the Macedonian media law does not prevent the ability of the executive to exercise control over the Albanian media via subjecting them to various forms of financial dependence. Trajkoska and Abdiu see the problem elsewhere. For them the major obstacle in front of the Albanian media is the lack of proper media monitoring and regulation, which accounts for the state of ‘lawlessness’ they are forced to operate in. Macedonian officials have allowed the launching of over 120 Albanian media outlets, “which is way too many compared to the size of the Albanian community in Macedonia [509,000 people]... The over-saturation of the Albanian media spectrum entails ‘dog-eat-dog’ competition among Albanian media for audience share,” complains the director of ‘*Koha TV*’ Abdiu.¹³⁰ Obviously, the media market in the country is not able to sustain alone the existence of such large volume of Albanian

¹²⁸ Salim, Isen. Interview with author. Digital recording. Skopje, 23 September, 2008.

¹²⁹ Azemi, Emin. Interview with author. Digital recording. Skopje, 26 September, 2008.

¹³⁰ Abdiu, 2008. The lack of proper monitoring of Albanian electronic media has resulted in regular instances of violation of intellectual property rights. If some Albanian channels abide by the law and pay license fees for airing copyrighted content (usually older Hollywood movies), other stations air pirated copies of the most recent American blockbusters, thus stealing from the audiences of their law-abiding colleagues. This results in disloyal competition between pirate and non-pirate Albanian stations.

media outlets, which makes them dependable on financial appropriations from political and corporate actors. According to Trajkoska, the disloyal competition, experienced by Albanian media, is a result of the general 'lawlessness' in the Albanian regions of the country, where state authorities refrain from intervening out of fear to be blamed for violation of human rights or engineering of ethnic tensions.

As far as the media regulatory mechanisms in the country are concerned, the Macedonian Council for Radio Diffusion (MCRD) is the media regulator in charge of granting licenses to electronic media outlets. Its make-up assures that the Albanian voice is heard in the media domain. The Parliament elects all nine members of the Council, whose composition reflects the political make-up of the National Assembly and the Government.¹³¹ Three of the Council's members are MPs. The remaining six appointees are representatives of various public organizations. There are two Albanian representatives, one of whom is always from the ruling Albanian party. The deputy chair of the Council is also an Albanian. Besides regulatory functions, MCRD is in charge of the distribution of certain percentage (usually 10%) of the money from the Macedonian public radio-television fund to ethnic media projects.

Many of the interviewed by the author producers of Albanian electronic media complained about the dependence of MCRD on the executive and legislative branches of power. Sopar claims that although this regulatory organ officially offers only opinions and proposals, the actual decision on granting media licenses and sanctioning broadcasters is taken by the government.¹³² Other

¹³¹ Sopar, 281.

¹³² Ibid.

critical commentators stress the lack of transparency in the operation of the media council, which makes the playing field uneven when it comes to applying for state grants for minority media projects. “Unfortunately, the mechanisms for grant allocation are obscure and often these grants end up in the hands of television stations that are close to the Albanian party in the government,” explains the director of ‘TV Hana’ Selver Ajdini.¹³³ The deputy-editor of the largest private Albanian TV station ‘ALSAT-M’ described instances of politically-motivated arbitration by the Council against disobedient Albanian broadcasters that dared to voice criticism against the Albanian party in the government: “MCRD is susceptible to political influence, which explains why some oppositional electronic media might experience constant financial audits sent by the Council, whereas other more obedient channels – none.”¹³⁴ The use of the media regulator by Macedonian political elites to silence oppositional media corresponds to the first filter of Chomsky’s ‘Propaganda’ model, which discusses the technical dependence of electronic media on media regulators, acting as a ‘club’ in the hands of elites who use them “to discipline the media that stray too often from an establishment orientation.”¹³⁵ The ‘Propaganda’ model argues that political elites can use institutional mechanisms together with personal relationships, threats and rewards to influence and coerce media. This corresponds to the experience of Albanian media in Macedonia where the disobedient among them are hit by the MCRD ‘club’, whereas the obedient ones are rewarded with state advertisement contracts and licenses to continue their operation.

¹³³ Ajdini, Selver. Interview with author. Digital recording. Kumanovo, 1 October, 2008.

¹³⁴ Tahiri, 2008. Emphasis mine to demonstrate the systemic nature of the administrative harassment of ‘inconvenient’ to authorities media outlets.

¹³⁵ Harman and Chomsky, 13.

In sum, the normative regulation of the media in Macedonia does not prevent minority groups from accessing the media field. The existing media norms and regulatory institutions, however, suffer from one major deficiency – they provide for political interference in the media domain, which explains the ability of political elites to manipulate local media. Macedonian political elites have become the ‘information gatekeepers’ of Macedonian society. They have the institutional ability to reward obedient media and punish disobedient ones.

6.2. Financing of Albanian Minority Media

Sufficient funding is a prerequisite for the success of any enterprise and Albanian media are no exception to this rule. The over-saturation of the Albanian media market, however, prevents Albanian media from the opportunity to sustain themselves solely through revenues from sales and advertisement. Instead, they depend on three sources of external financial support, some of which unique to Macedonian reality. First, these are *appropriations from the state budget* directed to public Albanian radio and television programs, operating under the hat of the two public Macedonian broadcasters. The inability of Macedonian authorities to launch a public media fund (designed to collect money for the budget of the public broadcasters in the country through taxation of Macedonian households) has doomed Macedonian public media to chronic financial instability, the only solution to which is relegation of their financial support back to the Parliament. Presently the Macedonian National Radio and Television are funded exclusively through appropriations from the state budget, which accounts for their political dependence. For Zimberi, the financial backing of Albanian public media by the state has also a normative connotation. According to the Ohrid Agreement, every ethnic community that represents at least 20% of the population is entitled to have its programming on the public radio and television.

“This legal provision has improved the access of Albanians to the media sphere, as well as guaranteed to public Albanian media state funding, thus securing their further development,” explains Zimberi.¹³⁶ This provides support to the argument that the model of polity organization (in this case consensus democracy) can be an important structural variable that can spur the development of the media of security sensitive minority groups.

The other source of funding utilized by Albanian media is unique to Macedonian reality. The budget of many private Albanian print and electronic outlets is dependent on revenues from lucrative *public advertisement contracts*, commissioned by different ministries, state departments and agencies.¹³⁷ Albanian media are abundant on state tenders and political ads, which are the most profitable type of advertisement that a media outlet can attract in Macedonia. However, the market for these government-commissioned ads is politically regulated. The Albanian recipients of state advertisement contracts are selected by the Albanian party in the coalition government that naturally offers this financial reward only to friendly Albanian media.¹³⁸ Once in the government, Albanian politicians use state resources to sponsor friendly media and refrain from supporting oppositional ones in attempt to silence their critical voices.¹³⁹ This financing

¹³⁶ Zimberi, 2008

¹³⁷ The cost of a single ad in a leading Albanian newspaper is around 6,000 Euros. Zimberi, 2008.

¹³⁸ To exemplify this point, Salim (2008) provides example with the Albanian daily ‘Koha’, which became the main recipient of government ads, directed to the newspaper by its political patron - the *Democratic Party of Albanians*.

¹³⁹ To remain in the cabinet, the Albanian coalition partner has to endorse policies that sometimes contradict the best interests of the Albanian community. Oppositional Albanian media would expose such anti-Albanian behavior, which would negatively affect the rating of the Albanian incumbent within the community. Thus, the governing Albanian party directs state advertisement contracts only to friendly Albanian media in an attempt to suffocate oppositional Albanian titles through financial ‘starvation’.

mechanism seems to have no official oversight.¹⁴⁰ What a better example of the usefulness of the ‘Propaganda’ model for the analysis of the operation of the media in Macedonia. As the ‘advertising’ filter of this model suggests, elites use selective advertising to manipulate mass media: “The power of advertisers... stems from the simple fact that they buy and pay for the programs [or titles] - they are the [media] patrons... As such, the media compete for their patronage” and gear the produced messages to the interests of their donors.¹⁴¹ Indeed, as many critical commentators have reported, state ads represent the major source of revenue for private Albanian media, thus making the latter dependent on their political benefactors:

Most Albanian media are dependent on the Albanian political parties for their existence. The majority of Macedonian newspapers are established and supported by Macedonian businessmen. In contrast, many Albanian newspapers are not owned by businessmen. Hence, to stay afloat they are forced to seek close ties with the Albanian party in the government to secure those lucrative advertisement contracts.¹⁴²

This raises the question “how does this financing mechanism affect the plurality of Albanian media?” The Albanian MP from *New Democracy* explains that “ideally, this funding practice should be avoided as it creates dependence of media on politics and as Albanian newspapers that benefit from it forfeit their watchdog role.”¹⁴³ “If most of the revenues of a given newspaper come from ads commissioned by the administration, then naturally this newspaper is going to be sympathetic to the policies of the latter and the Albanian party in it,” adds the editor-in-chief of

¹⁴⁰ Owners of Albanian media find this funding mechanism improper but necessary for the survival of their outlets. They see it as an internally balanced mechanism to receive funding, which explains their reluctance to change it. The Macedonian Media Council cannot exercise efficient control over this funding mechanism either as this regulatory body is susceptible to political control.

¹⁴¹ Herman and Chomsky, 16.

¹⁴² Memedaliu, 2008.

¹⁴³ Zimberi, 2008.

'Fakti'.¹⁴⁴ Trajkoska (2008) and Mehmeti (2008) claim that the political pressure on Albanian media is much stronger compared to the one imposed on mainstream Macedonian media due to fact that the revenues from sales of the former are smaller and many Albanian media outlets depend exclusively on state advertisement contracts to survive:

The public media in Macedonia are controlled by the state. The private media are also dependent on the political sphere because there is no strong business climate in the country that can sustain independent media. Instead, many media outlets depend on the political sphere for financial support. This is especially evident and pronounced with respect to Albanian minority media.¹⁴⁵

However, a certain peculiarity of the Macedonian political life serves as a natural balancing mechanism that makes sure that state advertisement contracts circulate through all Albanian media outlets, thus preserving their pluralist spirit. Here is how this mechanism works. As the Macedonian political sphere is rather fragmented and features unstable coalition governments, there is a frequent rotation of Albanian parties in the executive. Hence, the Albanian media that stay behind one or another Albanian party (forming the so called friendly 'media circle' around it) also alternate as recipients of state advertisement contracts, which in a long run levels the playing field among them. This means that at any given time, there are Albanian media outlets that support the government and the Albanian party in it, and there are oppositional Albanian media that engage in criticism of the Albanian incumbent. In effect, the pluralist and competitive nature of the Albanian political sphere helps maintain the pluralist and competitive character of the Albanian media sphere. Had the Albanian political sphere been non-pluralist and monolithic, that is, had there been only a single Albanian party in Macedonia, the rival Albanian media circles

¹⁴⁴ Azemi, 2008.

¹⁴⁵ Mehmeti, 2008.

would not have existed, as most of the Albanian media would have received funding from the same political patron, which would have killed the political polarization and diversity in the Albanian media field. More importantly, because of the greater party pluralism in the Albanian political domain, there is a greater diversity of Albanian media circles, that is, there is greater pluralism of media voices in the Albanian media domain.

The OSI media monitoring report establishes that political bias characterizes also the performance of media in established liberal democracies.¹⁴⁶ Rupert Murdoch's and Silvio Berlusconi's media empires demonstrate well how the political perceptions of media owners shape the perspective and angle of reporting of their media. This does not constitute a problem, however, as long as there is a genuine media pluralism and diversity of opinions expressed in national media domains. For example, Canadians perceive as natural the liberal leaning of *'Toronto Star'* and the more conservative standpoint of *'Globe and Mail'*. The political bias of Albanian media, however, is somewhat different in the sense that they are financially linked to their political patrons as opposed to being only ideologically related to them. This does not mean, however, that all Albanian titles support the incumbent Albanian party. Quite the opposite, the media gravitating around Albanian oppositional parties, openly engage in criticism of the government (and the Albanian party in it) and serve as a watchdog of the political establishment. At the end of the day, there is a genuine plurality of opinions expressed in the Albanian media sphere, which fuels the public debates in the community.

¹⁴⁶ For a detailed discussion on this matter, see *'Media in Eastern Europe – democratization and media liberalization'* sub-chapter from the Literature Review Chapter of the present dissertation.

The origins of the pluralism in the Albanian media domain deserve greater attention and will be addressed in detail after providing an overview of the major Albanian print and electronic media in Macedonia. The purpose of the next section is to present the major Albanian media outlets, to reveal their structure, purpose and role and demonstrate their developed nature. At the time of this writing, the Albanian media sphere remains an unmapped phenomenon. Thus, the author hopes that the presented here primary data will serve as the first step in the mapping of the motley character of the ethnic minority media in the region.

6.3. Albanian Print Minority Media

My review of Albanian print media will focus on the biggest national Albanian dailies. '*Koha*' is the most influential among them and is a good example of a minority title that stands equal to mainstream Macedonian newspapers in terms of production, coverage and professionalism. Launched in 2005, the newspaper has a record circulation of 35,000 copies per day. It is printed in the *Koha*'s own printing house and distributed free of charge by its own distribution company. According to a survey conducted by the newspaper, *Koha*'s readership approaches 120,000, that is 24% of Albanians are reading it. The paper's editor-in-chief explains that Albanians tend to share newspapers at work and at home, which accounts for the greater readership figure compared to the circulation number. '*Koha*' is printed only in Albanian language. It puts the stress on the coverage and analysis of domestic political affairs, but also pays attention to cultural, economic and social issues that are of interest to the Albanian community. The newspaper's team consists of 45 media professionals, all of whom are ethnic Albanians. Memedaliu maintains that his newspaper does not experience any lack of qualified cadres. The majority of his coworkers have completed their post-secondary education in various media programs at the Macedonian

University in Skopje (thanks to the quota system for minority students) or at the two recently established Albanian universities in the country. The newspaper also provides internships to graduates from the journalism department at the University of Tetovo. *Koha*'s revenues come mostly from sales and advertisement of Albanian and Macedonian businesses as well as from government-commissioned tenders. Although, its editor insists that the newspaper tries to steer a politically neutral and independent course, Memedaliu admits that the major problem he experiences in his work is the political pressure, coming from the Albanian party in the government:

We do not experience financial difficulties or problems related to recruiting media professionals. Our major problem is the relationship of dependency with the [Albanian] political parties. Two years ago, DUI [Ali Ahmeti's *Democratic Union for Integration*] wanted to have our paper stopped because of a single critical article we published in his address. DUI threatened to bring us to court for libel. There were even telephone threats to our editors, coming from the deputy-minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Unfortunately, this kind of political pressure has become routine in our work... Although we are not among the favorites of the present administration, we do not experience financial problems, as we have a very large readership and the local business climate is good - many Macedonian and Albanian businesses want to advertise in our newspaper.¹⁴⁷

As '*Koha*' is also distributed in Kosovo¹⁴⁸, the party of the former Macedonian Prime Minister Gruevski (VMRO) was supporting the newspaper in the beginning of its term when Gruevski sought to establish positive image of himself among the Albanians in Macedonia and abroad. Later, '*Koha*' became financially dependent on the *Democratic Party of Albanians* (DPA). This dependence resulted in direction of lucrative state advertisement contracts to '*Koha*' while DPA was a coalition partner in the government. The partnership between '*Koha*' and DPA lasted for

¹⁴⁷ Memedaliu, 2008. *Koha* dedicates six pages to advertisement. A single ad in the newspaper can cost as much as 1,000 Euro per day.

¹⁴⁸ 30% of *Koha*'s shares belong to an Albanian politician from Kosovo who is considered the local Berlusconi – yet another example of Chomsky's 'ownership' filter in the functioning of ethnic media in the Balkans.

few years until the newspaper became an established medium with large readership, which allowed it to dissociate from DPA and pursue an independent editorial course.

What is intriguing here is that the dependence of Albanian media outlets on Albanian political parties is considered a “normal” aberration. All of the interviewed by the author editors of Albanian media openly admitted the existence of such dependence. Memedaliu believes that in order to break away from it, a new media law has to be drafted, which should make sure that the state authorities distribute financial assistance (tenders and financial support) equally among all media outlets. Moreover, the Macedonian authorities need to improve the monitoring and regulation of the Albanian media sphere, as presently there are too many Albanian media outlets left to operate without any supervision: “There are three major Albanian daily newspapers in Macedonia, which is enough to serve the media needs of the whole community - there is simply no market for more newspapers,” explains Memedaliu.

The second largest Albanian newspapers are ‘*Fakti*’ and ‘*Laim*’. They are both national dailies, published in Albanian language. ‘*Fakti*’ has a circulation of 10,000 copies and ‘*Laim*’ has 4,000. ‘*Fakti*’ is also distributed among the Albanian diaspora abroad in Kosovo, Albania and few other European states.¹⁴⁹ The staff of both newspapers consists exclusively from ethnic Albanians, the majority of whom are professional journalists. The newspaper focuses on the life of Albanians in Macedonia where events in the political sphere are given a priority. Similar to ‘*Koha*’, the editor-in-chief of ‘*Fakti*’ has identified the interference of Albanian political parties as the major

¹⁴⁹ The newspaper has a circulation of 8,000 copies in Europe alone!

obstacle in his work. The only difference is that the Albanian party giving troubles to 'Fakti' this time is DPA, which is the same party that offers support to *Fakti's* major competitor – 'Koha':

We have had a bad experience with the *Democratic Party of Albanians* when it was in power two years ago. DPA is very sensitive to critical journalism and very anti-liberal in this respect. The leader of the party distributed a memo to all Macedonian ministries to refrain from posting ads in our newspaper, as we were brave enough to criticize the performance of the government at the time.¹⁵⁰

In sum, the Albanian print media in Macedonia are numerous and developed. There are three national dailies and a rich palette of regional newspapers.¹⁵¹ The biggest among them are run by Albanian media professionals who completed their education in Macedonian and Albanian universities. The review of Albanian print media has demonstrated that improved access to education in mother tongue can solve two of the problems that print minority media are often plagued with, namely, lack of minority media professionals and limited readership. Another peculiarity of the Albanian print media is their dependence on the political domain. Lucrative advertisement contracts, offered by the Albanian party in the government, tend to soften the critical edge of the titles that accept state commissioned tenders. This comes to demonstrate that the progress of minority media in Macedonia depends on the financial support coming from the Albanian political sphere. The frequent rotation of Albanian parties in the government, however, ensures that those media that benefit from state ads today will switch places tomorrow with other Albanian titles that side with oppositional Albanian formations. Hence, there is a balance of pro- and anti-government publications in the Albanian press. This demonstrates how the pluralism in

¹⁵⁰ Azemi, Emin, Interview with author. Digital recording. Skopje, 26 September, 2008. Azemi is editor-in-chief of 'Fakti'.

¹⁵¹ Unfortunately, there is no official data on their exact number.

the Albanian political domain generates and tolerates pluralism in the Albanian media domain. I will examine next the electronic media of Albanian community to check for similar dynamics in the 'media-politics' nexus before drawing my overall conclusions.

6.4. Albanian Electronic Minority Media

To provide a comprehensive picture of the status of Albanian electronic media in Macedonia, I will look at a variety of Albanian channels. My presentation will include a review of the public Albanian television, the most successful private Albanian television station with national coverage and the most popular private regional TV channels. My aim will be to demonstrate the developed nature of the Albanian electronic media, to identify their features and problems. This will help compare these media to their Turkish counterparts in Bulgaria and discover the factors that have spurred the development of the former.

6.4.1. Public Albanian electronic media - 'Albanian Program' on MTV

The '*Albanian Program*' is part of the Second Channel of the Macedonian National Television (MTV). MTV is made of five different programs (departments) representing all ethnic groups in the country. The Albanian program is aired daily and has the longest airtime - fifteen hours per day.¹⁵² It starts at 7am and runs until 1.30am the next day. From 2.30pm to 6pm, there is a break

¹⁵² Before the signing of the Ohrid Agreement, the duration of the Albanian program was five times shorter - three hours a day.

during which the programs of smaller ethnic communities are aired on a rotational basis.¹⁵³ The structure of the program reflects its major goals - to inform, educate and entertain the Albanian population. The '*Albanian Program*' offers shows that cover all aspects of the life of Albanians in Macedonia. Most attention is devoted to political shows such as news, debates between Albanian political parties, interviews with Albanian MPs, etc.¹⁵⁴ The program is prepared by a team of ethnic Albanians. In contrast to '*News in Turkish*' on Bulgarian National Television, the editors of the Albanian program do not experience lack of Albanian media professionals, although the chronic financial difficulties at MTV have forced many journalists to migrate to private Albanian stations, which offer better payment.¹⁵⁵ When preparing the program, the Albanian journalists follow the broad guidelines provided by the Macedonian Radio Diffusion Council, which apply to all television stations in the country. Apart from that, the editorial body of the program enjoys complete freedom in determining the topics and content of the shows. Hence, the content of the program is original, which is yet another feature that distinguishes the Albanian public channel from its Turkish counterpart in Bulgaria. The predicaments experienced by the '*Albanian Program*' are related to obsolete technical equipment and migration of journalists to private Albanian media. These problems are not caused by the minority status of the channel (as it is the case with the '*Turkish Program*' in Bulgaria), but by the financial crises

¹⁵³ For example, the Turkish program has a fixed daily slot of 1.30 hours, whereas the programs of other smaller minorities (Roma, Serbs, Vlachs) are aired every third day.

¹⁵⁴ The Albanian Program provides coverage of debates between Albanian politicians, which rarely include Macedonian guests due to technical difficulties to host such debates: the poor financial status of the Macedonian National Television prevents the Albanian program from offering subtitles to their Macedonian viewers when there are Albanian speakers in the studio.

¹⁵⁵ Gorenca, Migena. Interview with author. Skopje, 24 September, 2008. Gorenca is Director of the '*Albanian Program*'.

experienced by the public broadcasters in Macedonia. Their financial dependence on the state budget makes Delchev conclude that *de facto* there are no public media in Macedonia:

The national Macedonian television and radio undergo a painful transformation from state controlled organizations to public ones. This process is not successful as the political elites constantly attempt to establish control over the national radio and television. MTV's board of directors is appointed by the majority in the parliament and therefore is effectively controlled by them. The electronic media regulatory organ is not politically independent either. Contrary to the high professional standards, maintained by public service broadcaster such as BBC, the political elites in Macedonia exercise flagrant manipulation and control over the operation of public media in the country.¹⁵⁶

The OSI media monitoring report on Macedonia confirms Delchev's observations and adds that the attempts to restructure the Macedonian Radio and Television (MRT) have been unsuccessful due to the "government's unwillingness to give up its control over them. The MRT's management is appointed from the ruling political structures, which, in turn influences how the company is run and also its program profiling," concludes the report.¹⁵⁷ The Macedonian programs on MTV are controlled by the Macedonian party in the government, whereas the 'Albanian Program' by the Albanian party in the coalition: "Our program is largely dependent on the Albanian political party in the government," admits the Director of the Albanian program Gorenca.¹⁵⁸ She explains that Albanian media in Macedonia are divided politically and adopt either pro-DPA or pro-DUI stands: "Every single Albanian medium in Macedonia takes the side of one of those two political powers. This is the way it is and going to be for a foreseeable future. We are supposed to be a public medium, but in reality we are still a state television, which

¹⁵⁶ Delchev, 2006.

¹⁵⁷ Sopar, 282.

¹⁵⁸ Gorenca, 2008.

automatically makes us adopt a pro-government stand.”¹⁵⁹ Gorenca explains that Albanian politicians use their power and connections to impose demands on Albanian public media and make them portray a positive image of select political elites and their parties:

They try to tell us which road to take and what to include or exclude from our reportages. In other words, they try to substitute our viewpoint with theirs... Being a state television, MTV offers a coverage of events that in most of the cases is flattering to the government... To be Albanian journalist in Macedonia often means to be dependent on the [Albanian] political party in the executive... We [*Albanian Program*] are always in favor of the government as we receive our salaries from them.¹⁶⁰

The review of the *Albanian Program* on MTV has revealed that whenever the incumbent Albanian party in the ruling coalition is replaced by another Albanian party, the director and editors of the program are also replaced by people close to the new Albanian administration.¹⁶¹

This is how the political dependence of public Albanian media becomes perpetual.

6.4.2. Private Albanian electronic media - *ALSAT-M*

Fortunately, there are private Albanian channels whose market success allows them to preserve their political independence and provide coverage that is more balanced. *ALSAT-M* is one of these channels. It is an example of a private Albanian television ‘success story’. Its level of professionalism sets the benchmark for electronic minority media at a new height that is unattainable by most ethnic minority media in the Balkans. *ALSAT-M* is the most influential Albanian station in Macedonia, “as it is probably the only one that has the potential to seriously

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Gorenca, 2008.

¹⁶¹ Tahiri, 2008.

influence the public opinion in the country and to make authorities listen,” comments the researcher of Albanian media and former Albanian journalist Daut Dauti.¹⁶² The 2008 viewership ratings of the channel indicate that ‘*ALSAT-M*’ was the third most popular television station in the country, preceded by two private Macedonian channels. There are two main reasons for its success - the bilingual format of its programming and the high quality of the shows. The program is prepared by an ethnically mixed team of 130 professionals. ‘*ALSAT-M*’ offers 24/7 programming and is the only Albanian television station with national coverage. The program has a pronounced infotainment focus. Its major goals are to inform the Albanian and Macedonian publics about the socio-political events in the country and to facilitate the integration of Albanians in Macedonian society. Hence, the bilingual format of the programming – many of the shows are in Albanian language with subtitles in Macedonian or vice versa. ‘*ALSAT-M*’ offers various economic, political and publicist shows. Especially popular are the round table discussions where regular guests are politicians from all major Macedonian and Albanian parties. Their debates are aired in the prime-time evening slots. Depending on the ethnic origins of the participants, subtitles in Albanian or Macedonian languages are provided to enable both audiences to follow the discussions. The news emissions are also offered in a bilingual format. The entertainment shows air both Albanian and Macedonian pop music. The structuring of the programs makes ‘*ALSAT-M*’ a truly multi-ethnic medium, presenting the Albanian perspective on the life in Macedonia.

The channel’s major source of revenue is advertising. The high ratings of the station, and the fact that it attracts viewers from all ethnic groups, make ‘*ALSAT-M*’ very popular among the big

¹⁶² Dauti, 2008.

businesses in the country. The popularity of the channel and the serious financial backing it receives from its owner – a businessman from Albania - provide for its financial independence from the Albanian and Macedonian political parties. As opposed to many other Albanian media, 'ALSAT-M' does not depend on state advertisement contracts to stay afloat. Moreover, thanks to the good financial status of the channel, it attracts the best Albanian and Macedonian media professionals: "We don't experience any lack of professionals. Our channel pays well and many experienced journalists from other Albanian media have migrated to us for that reason," explains the deputy editor-in-chief of the station Safer Tahiri.¹⁶³

The financial independence of the channel also results in a more objective and critical coverage of the daily life in Macedonia. On few occasions, its balanced and critical stance has irritated the members of the Macedonian Council for Radio Diffusion (MCRD) who ordered a string of financial inspections of the station with the sole purpose to intimidate its editors:

It is a well-known fact that MCRD is susceptible to political influence. Some oppositional electronic media might experience constant financial audits, sent by the Council, whereas other more obedient channels – none. Our station maintained a rather critical line with respect to the previous government and the Albanian party in it [DPA]. As a result, we were subjected to few financial audits. Moreover, our re-translator station in the region of Tetovo was temporary shut down by the authorities for undisclosed reason.¹⁶⁴

The OSI monitoring report confirms the fact that it has been a usual practice for the Macedonian authorities to try to influence and silence critical media outlets (especially during elections) by means of "anonymous threats, mysterious power failures, *unannounced company audits*, court

¹⁶³ Tahiri, Safer. Interview with author. Digital recording. Skopje, 23 September, 2008. Tahiri is deputy editor-in-chief of 'ALSAT-M'.

¹⁶⁴ Tahiri, 2008. Tetovo is one of the Albanian strongholds in Macedonia.

decisions against journalists, and other forms of intimidation.”¹⁶⁵ The manipulation of the Macedonian media regulator by local political elites, exemplified by the experience of ‘*ALSAT-M*’, supports the prescriptions of the ‘Propaganda’ model, which states that political elites will use institutional mechanisms to impact and coerce uncomfortable to them media (Herman 1988, 22). This is another example where the technical dependency of media stations on the licensing bodies has been used as a ‘club’ to discipline those media that stray away from the charted by the Albanian incumbent in the government course of action.

In sum, ‘*ALSAT-M*’ is an example of a successful ethnic minority television station that offers critical coverage of the life in Macedonia and keeps the Albanian group well informed about it. The bilingual format of the program contributes to the integration of the Albanian community in the Macedonian society. The financial independence of the channel accounts for its political autonomy, program quality and ultimate success across all ethnic groups in the country. For these reasons, ‘*ALSAT-M*’ may serve as an example of properly organized and operating minority medium that achieves all of the goals standing in front of minority media, namely, to serve as an information source, to help preserve the ethnic identity of its target audience, to serve as a bridge to inter-ethnic communication, and last but not least, to keep in check the political elites of the group. After presenting the two largest Albanian stations with national coverage, I will turn next to a brief presentation of two regional Albanian channels.

¹⁶⁵ Sopar, p.284. Emphasis mine.

6.4.3. Regional Albanian Electronic Media

There are more than 25 regional Albanian television and radio stations across Macedonia. Only in Western Macedonia (in the regions of Tetovo and Gostivar), there are eight regional TV channels and ten radio stations. My review of regional Albanian electronic media will focus on two of the most popular television stations in Western ('*TV Koha*') and Eastern ('*TV Hana*') Macedonia. The purpose of their presentation is to demonstrate the developed nature of the electronic Albanian media in the country and to identify the factors for their progress.

Since its establishment in 1993, '*TV Koha*' has been the biggest Albanian station in Western Macedonia. It is based in the ethnically mixed city of Tetovo. According to '*Strategic Marketing*' and '*Brima Gallup*' survey agencies, '*TV Koha*' has between 180,000 and 200,000 viewers. It offers 24/7 programming in Albanian language. Although entertainment shows dominate the programming scheme, keeping Albanians informed remains one of the priorities of the station. There are four daily news broadcasts, which cover the major socio-political events from the region and the rest of the country. Interviews with Albanian and Macedonian politicians are often included in the program's scheme. For example, the Thursday's publicist show '*Horizon*' discusses the economic and political events from the week that bear relevance to the Albanian population. There are also shows dedicated to Albanian language, health issues and sports. The program is prepared by a team of twenty Albanians, twelve of whom are professional journalists. Similar to other private Albanian media, *TV Koha's* major source of revenue is advertisement, where state commissioned ads account for the major bulk of the revenues. Lack of media professionals is getting less of a problem nowadays thanks to the two Albanian universities in

Macedonia, which offer media training programs.¹⁶⁶ The biggest predicament that the station faces is lack of proper state regulation and monitoring of the Albanian media in Macedonia. This entails disloyal competition from rival Albanian channels, which air pirated content and steal from the audience of their law-abiding colleagues:

It is simply too much to have within an area of twenty square kilometers 8 regional Albanian TV stations and 10 radio programs. If one adds to these the three Albanian televisions and fifteen cable TVs with national coverage, one ends up with around thirty Albanian channels that are to serve the needs of 330,000 Albanians living in the region... The Macedonian Committee on Radio Diffusion [MCRD] is responsible for this uncontrolled liberalization of the Albanian media market. The mushrooming of Albanian media outlets entails problems such as extreme levels of competition for audiences as well as reduced ability of the MCRD to monitor these programs and effectively regulate them.¹⁶⁷

Abdiu concludes his analysis on a positive note, stating that the numerous Albanian media in Macedonia help keep the Albanian community well informed, which in turn helps stimulate the debates in Albanian public sphere. The large number of Albanian media also hinders the ability of the Albanian incumbent in the administration to control them and shape the public opinion of the group. Despite that, Abdiu and Trajkoska maintain that there are way too many Albanian media outlets in Macedonia and that it would be better to have fewer but professionally run ones and subject to quality control. This will propel the development of Albanian minority media even further.

One of the largest Albanian television stations in Eastern Macedonia is ‘*TV Hana*’. It serves the infotainment needs of 140,000 ethnic Albanians living in the vicinity of the city of Kumanovo.

¹⁶⁶ Abdiu, 2008. Abdiu is director of ‘*TV Koha*’.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

The station was launched in 1992 by a local businessman from Kumanovo and is among the first private television stations in the country. 'TV Hana' offers 24/7 programming, tailored to the tastes of all generations. Similar to the rest of Albanian broadcasters, 'TV Hana' puts the stress on the entertainment and information shows. It offers two thirty-minute daily news that cover mostly local events. This accounts for the popularity of the program among the locals. In order to serve better the Albanian community, 'TV Hana' has set up an electronic network for news exchange with other regional Albanian stations from Western Macedonia. Once a week, there is a political talk show (called 'Theme and Conversation') where representatives of all major political parties are invited to discuss issues of regional importance. The program is prepared by a team of 15 employees, half of whom are graduates from the media programs of the Albanian universities in Macedonia and Pristina. The channel's major source of revenue is advertisement. Similar to other Albanian broadcasters, the biggest problem for 'TV Hana' is disloyal competition from other channels: "There are four local television stations in the region of Kumanovo [two Albanian and two Macedonian], which is way too many for the size of the population here. The state does a bad job monitoring the process of granting media licenses, which results in severe and unfair competition among the local television stations," explains the editor-in-chief of the station Selver Ajdini.¹⁶⁸

To sum up, the study of Albanian print and electronic media in Macedonia has identified few important similarities. First, they are both well established and developed. Thanks to the improved access to education in Albanian language, there are enough qualified Albanian media professionals to produce and manage these media. The improved access to primary and

¹⁶⁸ Ajdini, Selver. Interview with author. Digital recording. Kumanovo, Macedonia. 1 October, 2008.

secondary education in Albanian language has also boosted the market for Albanian print media. Second, apart from few well established Albanian media outlets, the rest experience varying degrees of financial dependence on Albanian political parties. When represented in the government, Albanian politicians use their power to direct lucrative advertisement contracts to those Albanian media that have pledged their allegiance to them. This leads to formation of circles of supporting media around the major Albanian centers of political power. Those media help to mobilize the ethnic vote and serve as tribunes of their political patrons. Although the financial dependence on the political sphere makes Albanian media biased, the Albanian media sphere has preserved its pluralist nature. The frequent rotation of Albanian elites in the government guarantees that at any time there are Albanian media that are favorable to the government (and the Albanian party in it) and those that remain in opposition. There are also few financially independent Albanian outlets, which strive for more balanced coverage of events - they are among the most professional and influential once in the Albanian media sphere. As different Albanian media outlets put different spin on events, there is genuine plurality of opinions in the Albanian media sphere. The OSI media report arrives at a similar conclusion:

However paradoxical it may sound, the unsustainable number of media outlets does enable the spread and competition of different ideas and prospects... Media of different ethnic communities tend to report ongoing developments in different, often contradictory terms. Often it is said that viewers and listeners in the Republic of Macedonia receive different image of reality, depending on the ethnicity of the newspapers and broadcasters they prefer, especially with respect to reporting on news and current affairs. Essentially, there are two parallel public spheres – one created by Macedonian-language media and another by the Albanian language-media.¹⁶⁹

Thus, one can safely conclude that Albanian minority media in Macedonia manage to fulfill the major tasks standing in front of any minority media. Through making sure that divergent

¹⁶⁹ Sopar, pp. 282 – 284. Emphasis mine.

viewpoints are delivered to the Albanian public on a daily basis, Albanian minority media help stimulate the debates occurring in the public domain of the community. The fragmented nature of the Albanian political sphere and the improved access to education in Albanian language are the two major factors that have propelled the development of the Albanian media in Macedonia. The next concluding section will analyze and summarize the factors that account for the proliferation of Albanian minority media in Macedonia.

7. Explaining the Proliferation of Albanian Minority Media

The review of Albanian minority media has identified their advanced stage of development, which distinguishes them sharply from the Turkish minority media in Bulgaria. Both countries are post-totalitarian polities with young democratic regimes that share the goal of European integration. Albanians and Turks are tangible security sensitive minority groups that share similar hierarchical organization, strong political representation and ethnic capsulation. Why then the Albanian community enjoys a well-developed and pluralist media sphere whereas Turks in Bulgaria are facing the predicament of completely losing their media? The fact that Bulgarian Turks have had longer tradition in developing their media would make one expect that their media would be flourishing today, immersed in the liberal media climate in Bulgaria, which provides unrestricted access to the media sphere to all ethnic communities in the country. The reality, however, is the exact opposite: the media of Bulgarian Turks are in decay, whereas those of Macedonian Albanians, who have little media experience, are proliferating. What factors account for this puzzle? My research has identified three major variables that explain this

variation, namely, the *pluralist nature of the Albanian political sphere*, the improved access to *education in Albanian language* and the *consociational pillars* of Macedonian polity. The effect of these and other less potent variables will be examined below.

7.1. Political and Media Pluralism within the Albanian Community

The present dissertation purports to establish a causal link between the political and media spheres of security sensitive ethnic minority groups. The case of Macedonia is very useful in this regard as it provides the opportunity to observe how the pluralist nature of the Albanian political sphere affects the development of this group's media sphere. The case of Turks in Bulgaria has demonstrated that when a minority group is represented in the political domain by a single political party, the non-pluralist nature of its political sphere is replicated in the media domain of the community, which is also featured by lack of media pluralism and critical discourse. The potential of pluralist media to nurture informed and critical publics explains the efforts of the Turkish political establishment to suffocate the development of the liberal Turkish media. The power of opinionated publics to question their political representatives is key in libertarian media systems. Eriksen claims in this regard that “publics are the vehicles of democratization” and “the more publics the more debate and critique... more questions asked... [and] more possibilities for testing the legitimacy of power.”¹⁷⁰

The case of Macedonia, however, presents us with a different story. The competition among Albanian political parties for mobilization of the ethnic vote has stimulated the opening of

¹⁷⁰ Eriksen, 42.

numerous Albanian media outlets. They enter into clientelist relations with Albanian politicians, forming ‘media circles’ around major centers of Albanian political power. As many Albanian media depend on public advertisement contracts to sustain themselves, they pay allegiance to the Albanian parties in the government, assisting them in the process of mobilization of the Albanian voters in exchange for government commissioned advertisement contracts. Since the Albanian political spectrum is fragmented and only one of the many Albanian parties can be represented in the government, the media circles of individual parties follow their political patrons and oscillate from periods of being in ‘opposition’ to periods of being ‘in power’. This perpetual pendulum mechanism, typical for the Macedonian political process, ensures that at any time there are three categories of Albanian media: pro-government, oppositional and neutral. This is how the pluralist Albanian political sphere nurtures a pluralist Albanian media sphere. The latter stimulates debates in the Albanian public sphere, aiding the integration of Albanians in the fabric of Macedonian society. Nevaip Abdiu, Director of ‘TV Koha’, summarizes this peculiar interaction between the media and political spheres of Albanians in the following way:

Albanian media in Macedonia are politically dependent. Many of them are related to different Albanian parties, which prevents them from voicing criticism against their political friends. When in power, their political partners offer in return financial assistance. This does not stop, however, the rest of Albanian media to engage in criticism of the ruling Albanian party. Since there is a constant rotation of Albanian parties in the government, there are always Albanian media that criticize the political establishment and those that hail it at the same time. This ensures the pluralism in Albanian media and stimulates the discussions in Albanian community.¹⁷¹

The editor-in-chief of ‘Koha’ acknowledges the diversity of opinions in the Albanian media, but also stresses that these media may unite at decisive junctures: “Revolving around different

¹⁷¹ Abdiu, 2008. According to Abidiu, the Macedonian officials spend annually 300 million Euros for advertisement in different media. Portion of this money is directed to the Albanian media circle that favors the Albanian party in the government.

political centers, the Albanian newspapers offer competing interpretations of political events. However, they become united when it comes to the coverage of key themes that are equally important to all Albanians, for example, group rights, representation of Albanians in the administration, education in Albanian language, etc.”¹⁷²

The objective of my dissertation is to determine when the media of security sensitive minority groups stand chances of becoming pluralist. The Macedonian case has demonstrated that a pluralist minority political sphere gives birth to burgeoning and pluralist ethnic media. Albanian politicians use these politically charged media as vehicles for political mobilization. They regard the audiences of the Albanian media mostly as political communities and try to manipulate them from the pages of the numerous Albanian newspapers. This accounts for the utility of the instrumentalist approach in the analysis of the ‘media-politics’ nexus of the Albanian community. Indeed, the prescriptions of instrumentalist scholars like Hendelman, Gurr and Brass well reflect the reality of Albanian public life where group identity is frequently embellished by entrepreneurial politicians and their lapdog media who gain dividends from playing the ‘ethnic card.’¹⁷³ Albanian politicians capitalize on the ethnic differences to advance the goals of their political movements, using Albanian media as a tool in the mobilization process. In return, the ‘obedient’ media receive financial rewards (in the form of profitable advertisement contracts) from their political patrons. The student of Macedonian media Daut Dauti provides a succinct summary of the dynamics of Albanian minority media in Macedonia:

¹⁷² Memedaliu, 2008. Memedaliu is Deputy Editor-in-chief of ‘Koha’.

¹⁷³ Handelman (2006, 78).

Since the beginning of the transition period, *there has always been a political pluralism in the Albanian community*. The [Albanian] party in the government has been attacked, questioned, criticized by other rival Albanian parties... *This pluralism in the Albanian political life has induced reciprocal pluralism in the Albanian media*. In the beginning, there was just a single Albanian newspaper called '*Flaka*'.¹⁷⁴ But over the past decade many other Albanian media have emerged. The major Albanian newspapers are divided along political lines. Soon after being established, they demonstrate friendship to one or another Albanian [political] party... Being a 'friend' with one of the strongest Albanian parties of the day [DUI or DPA] guarantees access to lucrative advertisement contracts, which are important for the survival of these media.¹⁷⁵ The Albanian media, however, may forget about their political preferences and unite in their criticism of the government when the latter implements policies that are detrimental to the interests of the Albanian community.¹⁷⁶

The OSI monitoring report on Macedonian media has revealed that two parallel public spheres operate in the country – “one created by the Macedonian-language media and another by the Albanian language-media.”¹⁷⁷ My own research confirms this observation and shows that there is a functioning Albanian public sphere in Macedonia. Many of the interviewed Albanian commentators have stressed the vibrancy of the debates taking place in this sphere and argued that discussion of political and economic affairs is part of the everyday routine of Albanians. Memedaliu (2008), for example, maintains that all adult Albanians talk politics, as the community is befallen by pressing social problems, which require political solution. It is natural for the Albanians to get together in the Albanian coffee houses after work and engage in discussions of public affairs. The vibrant and rich on opinions Albanian media serve as a major

¹⁷⁴ '*Flaka*' was established back in 1945 and was the only Albanian newspaper during the communist regime. It was largely used as a mouthpiece of the communist authorities.

¹⁷⁵ For example, Dauti explains that when newspaper '*Fakti*' was launched, it originally maintained a critical and oppositional course against the incumbent Albanian party in the administration - DUI. Later on, when DPA was invited in the coalition government, '*Fakti*' softened its criticism against the Macedonian cabinet and the newspaper started receiving lucrative advertisement contracts from their political friend in the administration - DPA. Dauti, 2008.

¹⁷⁶ For example, all Albanian newspapers published critical articles against the bill that regulates the public use of Albanian language. They also unanimously criticized the government (and the Albanian party in it) for its hesitation to recognize the independence of Kosovo. Dauti, 2008. Emphasis mine.

¹⁷⁷ Sopar, 282.

stimulus of these debates. They nurture them. This state of affairs corresponds to Browne's observation that "ethnic minority media services possess the capacity to promote ethnic minority participation in the public sphere."¹⁷⁸ Zimberi echoes Memedaliu's contention and nicely summarizes the origins of pluralism in the Albanian media sphere:

Regardless of one's social status and occupation, the main topic of discussion in bars, cafes and on the streets is politics. As a minority community, we have serious unresolved problems, so it is natural for politics to occupy central place in our conversations with friends after work... Although some Albanian media lose part of their objectivity by siding with one or another Albanian political party, they do *provide a diverse and multi-angled depiction of the public life in Macedonia*... When the political patron of given newspaper is not in the executive, this medium engages in criticism of the Albanian party in the government. This provides a natural balance in the system and ensures that at any given moment positive, negative and neutral coverage of the same event can be found on the pages of the Albanian newspapers... If you are an ordinary Albanian and make an effort to browse the major Albanian newspapers, at the end of the day, you will get an objective picture of what happens in Macedonia, in general, and in the Albanian community, in particular.¹⁷⁹

The thesis of communication scholars¹⁸⁰ that mass media play central role in the process of informing the populace about important public events and spurring deliberations in the public domain, has proven correct with respect to the Albanian minority and its media in Macedonia. The interviewed by this author editors of print and electronic Albanian media have unanimously confirmed it. "The Albanian media play key role in the generation of public debates within the community as they inform the latter about the political developments in the country and have great influence on people's minds."¹⁸¹ "It is typical for Albanians to form their opinions about

¹⁷⁸ Browne, 2005, p. 188.

¹⁷⁹ Zimberi, 2008. Emphasis mine.

¹⁸⁰ Habermas (1989), Hartley and McKee (2000), Sampson (1996) and McNair (2000) among others.

¹⁸¹ Memedaliu, 2008.

things based on their coverage in the media,” confirms Gorenca.¹⁸² The vibrant Albanian minority media have mediated public discussions, thus aiding the integration of Albanian community in the public life in Macedonia, as only well-informed citizens can partake in it. Emin Azemi - professor in media studies from the Albanian *Shtulovo University* - summarizes this point in the following way:

There is a functioning Albanian public sphere in Macedonia, which formation has been greatly aided by the numerous Albanian media in the country. The Albanian newspapers offer comprehensive and diverse coverage of social and political events, which is sufficient to help the ordinary Albanians form opinion about the socio-political processes in Macedonia. Fifteen years ago, this was not the case as the authorities exercised total control over the mass media. Back then, there were just a single Albanian newspaper and a single Albanian TV program. Monopoly over information brings about monopoly over public opinion formation. For the past ten years, however, the tables have turned and we have experienced a burgeoning Albanian media that are diverse and motley in terms of the opinions expressed in them. Some of these media are close to the government, others are critical of it. There is *genuine media pluralism* in the Albanian community.¹⁸³

In sum, the media experience of Albanians in Macedonia has proven to be quite different from that of Turks in Bulgaria. The pluralist nature of the Albanian political sphere has aided the proliferation of diverse Albanian media. Many of them are politically charged, which reveals another difference between the Albanian and Turkish cases – Albanian politicians in Macedonia rely on locally produced Albanian media in the political mobilization process, whereas their Turkish counterparts in Bulgaria utilize personal communication channels for the same purpose. The latter approach could still be part of the instrumentarium of some Albanian politicians, but definitely not the sole one, as it is the case with the Movement for Rights and Freedoms in Bulgaria. Relying on personal persuasion techniques simply does not work for the Albanian

¹⁸² Gorenca, 2008.

¹⁸³ Azemi, Emin. Interview with author. Digital recording. Skopje, 26 September, 2008. Azemi is editor-in-chief of the newspaper ‘Fakti’ and professor in Media and Communications at the University of Shtulovo (Macedonia). Emphasis mine.

politicians as their constituencies are geographically dispersed, which makes the task of reaching them through personal visits rather difficult, if not impossible. In comparison, Turks in Bulgaria are more territorially concentrated, which enables their political leaders to contact in person the Turkish clan leaders and through them to mobilize the political support of this patrimonial community. Moreover, the fact that there are seven competing Albanian political parties makes the reliance on personal visits to Albanian villages less productive when compared to the everyday ‘bombardment’ of the Albanian electorate with messages from the numerous Albanian print and electronic media. The competition among political actors in the Albanian political sphere generates genuine marketplace of ideas in the Albanian media sphere, which in turn stimulates the integration of the Albanian public in the political process and provides for the stability of the Macedonian polity.

7.2. Training of Minority Journalists

Apart from the pluralist nature of the Albanian political sphere, another key factor for the proliferation of the Albanian media in Macedonia is the availability of Albanian media professionals. Some of them have received their training in the Albanian universities in Macedonia and abroad (Kosovo and Albania), whereas others in Macedonian educational institutions.¹⁸⁴ Important institutional incentives stay behind the increased access to training opportunities. First, the Ohrid Agreement mandates that minorities representing more than 20% of the population can receive their education in their mother tongue. Second, all minorities in

¹⁸⁴ In comparison, Turks in Bulgaria do not have the opportunity to pursue higher education in media-related fields in their mother tongue anywhere in the country. There is no quota for ethnic minority students at public universities either.

Macedonia have reserved quotas in the country's state universities where the education is conducted in Macedonian language. Since the access to Albanian and Macedonian universities is institutionally guaranteed and most of these educational establishments offer degrees in journalism and media studies, the availability of trained Albanian media cadres is guaranteed. Mehmeti (2008), Trajkoska (2008) and Memadaliu (2008) confirm that Albanian media professionals are widely available today.

The improved access to primary and secondary education in Albanian language, the foundations of which date back to Tito's Yugoslavia, has resulted in training of devoted readers of Albanian press and expansion of the market for Albanian titles in Macedonia. In the past, the readership of Albanian newspapers was lower due to literacy problems and the economic impoverishment of the Albanian population, members of which could not afford to spend money on newspapers. "Although the financial constraint might still be there, the educational one has been overcome thanks to the re-opening of Albanian educational institutions in Macedonia. The latter have trained few generations of dedicated readers who simply demand newspapers in Albanian language," asserts Dauti.¹⁸⁵ Apart from the Albanian and Macedonian universities, many local non-governmental organizations also provide training courses to aspiring ethnic journalists. For example, the *Macedonian Institute for Media* (MIM), in partnership with the *Danish School of Journalism*, runs a yearlong program for training of minority journalists from all ethnic backgrounds. In 2006, MIM instructed 24 media professionals, 4 of whom were ethnic Albanians. "The purpose of these courses is to train minority journalist and help them find jobs in the mainstream Macedonian media so that these media provide more balanced representation of

¹⁸⁵ Dauti, 2008.

minorities,” explains Delchev.¹⁸⁶ In addition, the Macedonian National Television has arranged half-year training courses for Albanian journalists to improve their professional skills.¹⁸⁷

In sum, the rising number of Albanian media professionals aids the making Albanian media in Macedonia. The rising educational standing of the Albanian community increases the market for Albanian media products. The clientelist link between Albanian media and Albanian political parties secures the financial backbone of Albanian media and accounts for the pluralism in the Albanian media sphere.

8. Chapter Conclusion

When I first examined the Albanian minority media in Macedonia, I made an intriguing discovery that contradicted my original hypothesis and expectations. Despite the security sensitive nature of the Albanian community and its lack of media experience, Albanians turned out to have one of the most developed and pluralist minority media spheres in the region. There was a modest attempt to launch Albanian minority press after the WWII (a single Albanian newspaper was published) but it cannot compare to today’s developed Albanian media that rival in their complexity and surpass in their diversity mainstream Macedonian ones: “I wouldn’t say that the Albanian media in Macedonia have had long traditions. The single Albanian medium we

¹⁸⁶ Delchev, 2006.

¹⁸⁷ Lecturers from BBC and Missouri University were invited for this purpose. The funding was provided by the U.S. government and the EU, which yet again demonstrates the importance of external actors for the development of minority media institutions.

had during the communist period was far from a true medium... The actual development of Albanian media started after the democratic opening in 1991,” asserts Tahiri.¹⁸⁸ In contrast, Turks in Bulgaria have had a century-long tradition of development of their media. Despite this vast heritage, the standing of Turkish minority media today is nowhere close to that of their Albanian counterparts. Hence, I conclude that *media tradition (media experience)* is a factor that may influence the quality of the media product, but has little impact on the initialization of minority media spheres.¹⁸⁹ The formation of full-fledged and pluralist minority media is a complex and dynamic process that involves the interplay of political and structural variables such as favorable normative regulation, availability of funding, access to education and political pluralism. Since the media laws of Bulgaria and Macedonia guarantee equally well the access of minority groups to the media sphere, the rationale for the different stages of development of Albanian and Turkish minority media should be searched elsewhere. The comparative study of these two cases has revealed that the development of pluralist minority media in newly established democratic regimes depends strongly on the political organization of minority communities, that is, on the degree of their political pluralism. The Albanian case has illustrated that competition among rival ethnic parties in the Albanian political domain has created strong incentives for both the development and pluralization of Albanian media. The financial dependence of many Albanian outlets on Albanian political parties has secured the financial backbone of the Albanian media sphere, whereas the Albanian multi-party system has provided for its pluralization.¹⁹⁰ These

¹⁸⁸ Tahiri, 2008.

¹⁸⁹ See “Table 5: Main independent variables and their scores” in the Appendix section.

¹⁹⁰ Herman and Chomsky’s *ownership* and *advertising* filters have been instrumental here for the revealing of the prominent role played by the Albanian political elites in the operation of Albanian media and in identifying the clientelist relationship between them.

media are instrumental for the Albanian politicians who use them to mobilize the support of the Albanian electorate. This is how the competitive and pluralist Albanian political sphere brings about equally competitive and diverse Albanian media sphere. As the organization of Turkish and Albanian groups and their political parties is identical – these are both clan-based, patrimonial communities who generate authoritarian leader-type parties - one may infer that the social and party architecture of minority communities has little effect on the development and pluralization of their media. Since the degree of political cohesion of the Turkish and Albanian groups is one of the major differences between them, it can be identified as one of the key variables explaining the proliferation of a pluralist Albanian media sphere in Macedonia.

The importance of few other institutional variables needs to be weighted in the equation as well. The adoption of *consensus model of governance* in Macedonia, done under *external pressure* from powerful international actors (EU, USA, NATO), has indeed established favorable conditions for the growth of the Albanian media in the country. After the Ohrid Agreement, the access of Albanians to media and educational institutions has significantly improved, which has resulted in supply of fresh Albanian media professionals and further expansion of the market for Albanian titles in the country.¹⁹¹ These institutional constraints, however, have only propelled further the development and pluralization of Albanian media – a process, which has started much earlier with the political emancipation of the Albanian community in the early 1990s.

¹⁹¹ This is how Brown's (1989) *situationalist* approach to ethnicity, with its accent on institutional settings and their effect on ethnic politics has helped me identify the institutional variable that affects the proliferation of the Albanian media in Macedonia.

In summation, my research has shown that competitive minority political spheres translate into competitive and pluralist minority media spheres, which in turn stimulate critical debates in minority public spheres and aid the overall integration of minority communities. Non-pluralist political spheres bring about equally non-pluralist minority media and public spheres, further enhancing the capsulation of minority groups. The next chapter will offer examination of the Hungarian minority media in Romania, which will reveal the forces behind the transition from non-pluralist to pluralist ethnic minority media. ^(fd)

Chapter 5

Media of the Hungarian Minority in Romania

The purpose of this chapter is to study the evolution of Hungarian minority media from their anti-pluralist¹ stage of development in the 1990s to their present liberal and pluralist modality. My research on the topic is based on an extensive set of interviews with Hungarian and Romanian media scholars, journalists, politicians, media and policy-makers. It will demonstrate that the transition of Hungarian media from authoritarian to liberal modality has been a consequence of the pluralization of the Hungarian political life in Transylvania.² The political splintering of Hungarian minority party into moderate and conservative camps has resulted in ideological fission within the media sphere of the community, where identical ideological camps formed around the competing centers of Hungarian political power. This chapter will demonstrate that the dynamics of pluralization, occurring within given minority group's political sphere, eventually find their way into the media domain of the community, starting similar liberalization in the latter. The case studies of this thesis have been carefully selected to exemplify this evolutionary process. First, the Turkish case has demonstrated the authoritarian structuring of the media spheres of minority groups that exhibit strong political cohesion. Second, the Albanian case has demonstrated the pluralist nature of the media of politically pluralist communities. Finally, the analysis of the media of Transylvanian Hungarians will demonstrate the transition

¹ Referred herein as 'authoritarian' mode.

² To remind the reader, 'pluralization of minority political life' is used here to denote the process of transition from monolithic minority party system (that is, comprised of just one minority party) to pluralist minority party system (that is, comprised of at least two ethnic parties that compete between each other for access to political power and resources, and for exerting influence upon the decisions taken by the state). See p.11 of the introductory chapter. The process of pluralization of the political sphere of Hungarians is thus associated with the emergence of multiple centers of Hungarian political power.

from monolithic to pluralist minority media, and attempt to explain the change in the structuring of minority media spheres.

All three cases of this study aim to provide support to the main thesis of this dissertation, namely, that the outlook of the media spheres of security sensitive minorities depends on the structuring and processes occurring within their political spheres. The cases demonstrate that a mere situation of the media institutions of given minority group within the liberal media structures of its host society does not guarantee that the former will undergo liberalization. Instead, liberalization of minority media occurs following liberalization of minority political life. Hence, one may conclude that the media spheres of majority and minority groups exist and progress in parallel realities. They have little impact on each other, which is especially true if the minority group is insufficiently integrated in the host society. The shape and characteristics of the media spheres of ethnic minority communities are determined by the processes occurring within their political spheres.

The structure of this chapter is identical to the previous two. It will start with a brief introduction of the Hungarian minority in Romania and the nature of interethnic relations in the country. Then, it will examine Romania's normative and structural mechanisms for protection of minority rights to demonstrate that despite being a young democratic regime, Romania already has in place all the necessary institutional and legal mechanisms to guarantee the rights of its national minorities. An examination of the political sphere of Transylvanian Hungarians will follow to determine the political coherence of the group, which is the key explanatory variable of this study. Then, examination of the media of the group will demonstrate their developed nature and identify the variables accounting for their pluralization. Finally, the chapter will conclude with an analytical

section that establishes the causal link between the political and media spheres of Transylvanian Hungarians.

1. Hungarian Minority in Romania

The Hungarian minority is settled mostly in Transylvania - one of the largest regions in central Romania. For centuries, Transylvania constituted part of the Hungarian Kingdom where the dominant politically and economically Hungarians were living alongside Romanian and German populations. After the Middle Ages, Hungarians lost their leading demographic and economic position in society but continued to keep their political control over the territory. Following the WWI, Transylvania was taken away from Hungary and given to Romania. At that time, Hungarians were already in a minority, accounting for 30% of the population. During the WWII, Hungary gained back the northern and central parts of Transylvania only to lose them again to Romania at the end of the war. With the second Paris Treaty, Hungary officially acknowledged the Romanian rule over Transylvania. The fall of Central and Eastern Europe under Soviet influence resulted in freezing of the territorial disputes between the two states. Hungary and Romania became allies within the Eastern socialist bloc and the 'Transylvania-problem' became a taboo due to Kremlin's intolerance to territorial disputes on ethnic grounds. During the early decades of the communist regime, the Romanian authorities, led by the spirit of 'communist brotherhood', favored the Hungarian minority and tried to integrate it into the socio-political life of the country.³ This benevolent attitude, however, changed after the Hungarian

³ Tivadar Magyari, "Hungarian Minority Media in Romania: Toward a Policy of Professional Improvement," in *Reinventing Media. Media Policy Reform in East-Central Europe*, ed. Milkos Sukosd and Peter Bajomi-Lazar (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003), 185.

uprising in 1956 when the Romanian leadership became increasingly suspicious of the loyalty of Transylvanian Hungarians. As a result, in 1975 an unofficial policy of assimilation of Transylvanian Hungarians was launched by the leader of the Romanian state - Nicolae Ceausescu.⁴ After the democratic revolution of 1989, the new authorities in Budapest signed a bilateral treaty with Romania, declaring that Hungary has no aspirations to change the Romanian-Hungarian frontier. The territorial dispute between the two states was replaced by more mundane issues such as enhancing the rights of Hungarian diaspora abroad and extending the right of self-determination to Transylvanian Hungarians.

2. Ethnic Diversity in Romania

Romania is a home of several nationalities: Romanians (88.9%); Hungarians (6.5%); Roma (3.3%); Germans (0.2%) and a dozen of smaller ethnic communities.⁵ According to the former Romanian Prime Minister Isarescu, all national minorities in Romania “live in good understanding.”⁶ Transylvanian Hungarians constitute the largest minority in the country, the largest Hungarian ethnic group outside Hungary, and the largest national minority in Europe.⁷

⁴ Ibid, 186.

⁵ National Institute for Statistics. *Census of population and dwellings*. National Institute for Statistics, 2011. Available at <http://www.insse.ro/cms/rw/pages/index.en.do> (accessed 18 March, 2014).

⁶ Mugur Isarescu, “The Romanian model of interethnic relations,” in *Interethnic relations in post-communist Romania*, ed. Lucian Nastasa and Levente Salat (Cluj-Napoca: Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, 2000), 23-27, p. 23.

⁷ Dan Chiribuca and Tivadar Magyari, “Impact of minority participation in Romanian government,” in *A new balance: democracy and minorities in post-communist Europe*, ed. Monica Robotin and Levente Salat (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2003), 73-99.

According to the last census data, there are 1,227,623 Hungarians living in Romania. In 1992, they accounted for 7.1% of the population, in 2002 – 6.6%. The number of Hungarians shrunk in two decades with 0.6% due to continued immigration to Hungary, ethnic assimilation and lowered birth rates in the community. Romanian Hungarians are usually referred to as ‘Transylvanian Hungarians’ as the vast majority of them reside in Transylvania. Being the endogenous population of the region, they have not assimilated into the Romanian society, unlike Hungarian diaspora in other neighboring states. Instead, Transylvanian Hungarians maintain a strong sense of national identity and rely predominantly on the Hungarian language in their everyday activities, including the selection of media sources.

3. Romanian Legislation and Status of National Minorities

Similar to Bulgaria and Macedonia, Romania has ratified the most important international covenants that protect minority rights. The desire of Romania to improve the plight of its national minorities has been driven by the main foreign policy goal of the country to join the European Union, which it successfully accomplished in 2007. In order to start the accession procedures, Romania had to fulfil first the rigid EU political conditionality, important part of which is the protection of rights of ethnic minority groups. A number of *legal* and *institutional* mechanisms were put in place for this purpose.⁸ They will be briefly reviewed next to

⁸ Brubaker et al. point out that the prospect of European Union membership has provided leverage for institutionalization of minority rights throughout East Central Europe in general. “The position of national minorities and state-spanning Ethnocultural nations... would seem to have been strengthened by European integration.” This demonstrates the potency of the ‘*external system pressure*’ variable in the betterment of minority rights, in general, and minorities access to media, in particular. In Rogers Brubaker, M. Feischmidt, J. Fox and L. Grancea, *Nationalist politics and everyday ethnicity in a Transylvanian town* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 368.

demonstrate that Romania has in place all the necessary institutional mechanisms to guarantee the protection of the rights of its national minorities, including their access to media.

As far as the *legal mechanisms* for minority rights protection are concerned, Romania has recognized and granted ‘national minority’ status to eighteen ethnic communities, Transylvanian Hungarians being the largest among them. Following the democratic opening in 1989, a new Romanian Constitution was adopted in 1991. Article 6 of the Romanian supreme law stipulates that the “state acknowledges and guarantees the persons’ belonging to national minorities, the right to preserve, develop and express their ethnic, cultural linguistic and religious identity.”⁹ Romanian constitution guarantees the right of minorities to public education in their mother tongue, the expenses of which are covered by the Romanian state. The constitution also allows the formation of ethnic parties. In 1991, the *Law on National Minorities* was passed, which gives equal rights to all minority groups in the country, irrespective to their size. For years later, Romania ratified the *Framework convention for the Protection of National Minorities* of the Council of Europe, considered by Brussels as a breakthrough in minority protection standards.¹⁰ Romania also signed bilateral treaties with Hungary, Ukraine, and Germany, which guarantee protection of national minorities on a bilateral basis. Specific laws that safeguard minorities and encourage the preservation of their culture have become part of the Romanian constitution. For

⁹ Constantin Botoran and Alesandru Dutu, *Transylvania and the Romanian-Hungarian relations* (Bucharest: The Institute of Military History and Theory, 1993), 126.

¹⁰ Due to the lack of its own minority-specific legislation, in the enlargement process the EU has been relying on minority protection standards developed by the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe. In its yearly progress reports, the European Commission of the EU draws on the reports of the above organizations to assess the progress of applicant states in the field of minority rights protection. In G. Sasse, “The politics of EU conditionality: the norm of minority protection during and beyond EU accession” and S. Kacarska, “Minority Policies and EU Conditionality - The Case of the Republic of Macedonia.”

example, the *Romanian Electoral Law* provides for reserved parliamentary seats in the House of Representatives for those national minorities that cannot pass the 5% electoral threshold. All 17 national minorities, excluding Hungarians, have each one representative in the House by default.¹¹ Romanian *Education Law* allows all levels of schooling to be conducted in a minority language, provides for opening of minority departments at the state-run universalities and establishment of multicultural universities with minority educational tracks. This law is important for the development of Hungarian minority media, as it provides institutional guarantees for the access of Hungarians to education in their mother tongue and training of media professionals in Hungarian educational institutions. If the former contributes to maintaining the language proficiency of Hungarians, thus enabling them to consume Hungarian media, the latter allows for training of Hungarian media cadres considered important precondition for avoiding the assimilation of minority media structures by mainstream media institutions.

As far as the *structural mechanisms* for protection of minority rights are concerned, two important institutions were set up to coordinate the drafting and implementation of minority policies in the country, namely, the Council for National Minorities and the Department for Protection of National Minorities.¹² The Department for Protection of National Minorities allocates state funding for various minority initiatives, including minority media, which have been nominated for grants by the Council for National Minorities. “Based on the provisions of

¹¹ In addition to this positive discrimination measure, Transylvanian Hungarians are able to secure substantial representation in the Parliament thanks to their numerical strength.

¹² The Council for National Minorities (established in 1993) consists of 17 organizations, representing the grassroots structures of each national minority in Romania. It operates as a mini-parliament of minority groups, which has a consulting role to the Department for the Protection of National Minorities (Department for Minorities for short). The function of this department is to aid the drafting of minority bills and monitor their application. It is led by a minister from the Hungarian party UDMR.

the Budget Law, every year... [state] funding is provided for the operation of [minority] organizations and for publication of books and journals, representative of the culture of each community.”¹³ According to Salat, these two minority institutions, together with the guaranteed representations of minorities in the legislative and the participation of Hungarians in all coalition governments since 1996, are the key elements of the Romanian ethnic model that prevent eruption of ethnic clashes.¹⁴ Salat maintains that it is hard to speak of a coherent ethnic model in Romania. “Instead, one can find elements of *consociationalism* (but not real consensual democracy as minority groups lack veto power), *segregationalism* (especially in the educational system), and even *assimilationism*...”¹⁵ Despite that, Romania seems to have in place all the necessary normative and structural mechanisms for the protection of minority rights. Therefore, it will be reviewed here as a young liberal democratic regime that works to accommodate the interests of its minority groups in order to maintain positive image in the international community and benefit from the membership in the European Union. The liberal character of the Romanian media sphere will be addressed later when reviewing the Romanian media legislation.

¹³ Peter Eckstein-Kovacs, “The protection and Participation of National Minorities,” in *Interethnic relations in post-communist Romania*, ed. Lucian Nastasa and Levente Salat (Cluj-Napoca: Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, 2000), 27-31, p. 29.

¹⁴ Levente Salat, “Foreword,” in *Interethnic relations in post-communist Romania*, ed. Lucian Nastasa and Levente Salat (Cluj-Napoca: Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, 2000), 7-15, p. 13.

¹⁵ Salat maintains that the Romanian multicultural model is in fact a disguise for assimilation. Salat, Levente. Interview with author. Digital recording. Cluj-Napoca, 8 October, 2007. Salat is Associate Professor in the Political Science Department at the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj.

4. Interethnic Relations in Romania

The relations between Transylvanian Hungarians and Romanians have been characterized by prolonged inter-ethnic rivalry, which has exhibited varying degrees of hostility over the centuries. As the present dissertation maintains a contemporary focus, the author will skip the complicated ‘Transylvania problem’ and focus on the present status of the inter-ethnic relations in the country.

The first decade following the democratic opening was characterized by intense hostility between the Hungarian and Romanian populations. Apart from the century-old rivalry between the two groups over the status of Transylvania, another major reason for the inter-ethnic contention has been the push of Hungarians for group rights (‘self-government’) and territorial autonomy, interpreted by the majority population as a prelude to secession. If Hungarians in the 1990s perceived Romanians as a threat to their group identity, Romanians were afraid of Hungarians for they threatened the integrity of the Romanian state. Hence, Transylvanian Hungarians are examined here as a security sensitive minority group. The fears of Romanians and Hungarians were skillfully orchestrated and exploited by nationalist political demagogues. “In the early 1990s, the [Romanian] society needed a scapegoat and the nationalistic rhetoric about the ‘bad Hungarians who want to tear our state apart’ was everywhere,” comments the Director of the ‘Center for Independent Journalism’ Ioana Avadani.¹⁶ The interethnic tensions ameliorated somewhat in 1996 when the Hungarian party (*Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania, UDMR*) entered the Romanian government as a coalition partner. The cooperation between the

¹⁶ Avadani, Ioana. Interview with author. Digital recording. Bucharest, 4 October, 2007.

political elites of both groups was mediated by foreign brokers: the European Union made it clear that if Romania is ever to join the EU, the majority and minority politicians should play according to the rules of the 'democratic game' and learn to cooperate within the existing democratic institutions. "The desire for cooperation came naturally to the elites of both groups once they realized the benefits of building majority cabinets," explains Toma.¹⁷ Under pressure from Brussels, Romanian and Hungarian parties signed a memo to avoid the ethnic theme in their political campaigns. "The shift in mainstream Romanian media was instantaneous - from nationalistic towards moderate. This change affected also the most nationalistic Romanian parties, which shifted their attention towards topics like corruption and kept their ethnic hostility directed primarily towards Roma."¹⁸

In addition, various normative and institutional mechanisms were set up to guarantee the rights of Romania's national minorities. All these measure calmed down the Hungarian community. Romanians gradually altered their negative perception of Hungarians as a threat to their state and started looking at them as viable political partners. In the early 2000s, the role of the scapegoat was assumed by the Roma minority, whom Romanians viewed as the main obstacle on the road to joining the EU. Recent opinion polls suggest, however, that many Romanians still fear that Transylvanian Hungarians will secede at some point in the future. These fears continue to be exploited by nationalist Romanian parties. "The interethnic situation in Romania, however, is not

¹⁷ Toma, Mircea. Interview with author. Digital recording. Bucharest, 4 October, 2007. Toma is senior researcher and Director of the 'Media Monitoring Agency' in Romania.

¹⁸ Ibid.

similar to the ethnic tensions experienced by Macedonia in 2001. The interethnic disputes here are reduced mainly to verbal exchanges and non-physical actions,” explains Chiriac.¹⁹

Brubaker’s et al. study of the workings of ethnicity in the Transylvanian city of Cluj-Napoca, affected by a highly charged ethno-political conflict in the 1990s, offers valuable insights into the interethnic relations between the two communities at grassroots level. Once considered to be the stronghold of Hungarians in Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca is gradually losing its Hungarian population due to steady migration of Hungarians to Hungary, ethnic assimilation and lower birth rates within the community. The city continues to host a “separate Hungarian world, nested within and more or less insulated from the wider Romanian world.”²⁰ The following paragraph is emblematic for the capsulated life of Hungarians in Romania:

Having grown up in a Hungarian milieu, attended Hungarian schools, and worked in Hungarian enterprises, they [Hungarians] socialize with Hungarian friends, read Hungarian newspapers, even shop at local Hungarian-owned store[s]... [F]or almost all Hungarians, the existence of this world is a fact of central importance for the social organization and personal experience of ethnicity.²¹

Brubaker et al. demonstrate that the distinctive ‘Hungarian world’ is built upon informal networks and formal institutional pillars such as the Hungarian political party (UDMR), the separate Hungarian schooling system and the minority Hungarian media. In essence, these institutions of Hungariandom establish a system of parallel Hungarian institutional ‘tracks’,

¹⁹ Chiriac, Marian. Interview with author. Bucharest, 3 October, 2007. Chiriac is Country Director of the ‘Balkan Institute Reporting Network’.

²⁰ Rogers Brubaker et al., *Nationalist politics and everyday ethnicity in a Transylvanian town* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 265.

²¹ Ibid.

which explains the parallel Hungarian and Romanian worlds²² and the ethnic ‘pillarization’ at grassroots level in the mixed regions of the country.²³ Avadani confirms the capsulated lifestyle of Transylvanian Hungarians and sees manifestation of it in the interaction (or lack of it) between Romanian and Hungarian journalists:

The ‘Romanian Union of Journalists’ and the ‘Hungarian Journalist Association’ in Romania live separate lives. On a management [elite] level, the two structures maintain good communication. On a grassroots level, however, Hungarian journalists do not mingle and communicate with their Romanian colleagues even in situations where they face the same problems, share the same limitations and can benefit from common solutions.²⁴

The ethnic pillarization at grassroots level and the inter-ethnic cooperation at elite level in Romania resemble somewhat the consociational model of democracy conceptualized by Lijphard (1977). Romania is not a typical example of this model for minority groups there lack veto power and for there is no legal requirement for forming grand coalition governments. However, the participation of UDMR in most Romanian governments (since 1996) and the ethnic pillarization at grassroots level, talk about the existence of certain consociational spirit in the foundations of the Romanian polity, reminiscent of the consociational arrangements in Macedonia. Two of the institutions underpinning the Hungariandom in Transylvania – the Hungarian political party and the segregated Hungarian educational system - could well affect the development of the third pillar – Hungarian minority media. For this reason, they will be examined in the following sections of this chapter where the stress will be put on the political organization of Hungarians. Let me tackle first the less complicated variable, namely, the educational standing of Hungarians.

²² Brubaker et al., 266.

²³ In the words of Lijphard. See *The Politics of Accommodation*.

²⁴ Avadani, 2007

5. Educational Standing of Hungarian Minority

According to Brubaker et al., one of the key institutions that helps maintain the Hungarian social parallelism in Romania is the separate, state-run Hungarian school system. Hungarian schools have been present in Transylvania since the 16th century when Hungarians constituted the majority population in the region. The Hungarian school system continued to operate during the reign of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Inter-war period. The ethnic segmentation of the education in Transylvania was preserved even during the communist period (although in a somewhat diminished form) and was restored to its Inter-war modality after the democratic opening in 1989. Nowadays, Transylvanian Hungarians can enroll in Hungarian schools that cover all educational levels. The expenses of public Hungarian educational institutions are paid by the Romanian state. In 1994, Hungarian language was taught in 2,428 educational institutions, which accounted for 8.5% of the total number of educational establishments in Romania.²⁵ As Hungarians tend to live in an encapsulated Hungarian world, most of them choose to send their kids to Hungarian schools. Data suggests that between 80% and 85% of the Hungarian elementary and middle school students choose to attend Hungarian schools. 75% of them continue their higher education in Hungarian universities.²⁶ Another survey data indicates that it is the Hungarian families with lower social and educational status that prefer to send their kids to Romanian schools.²⁷

²⁵ Botoran, 128.

²⁶ Arpad Varga, *Fejezetek a jelenkori erdely nepesedestortenetebol* (Budapest: Puski, 1998), pp. 291-92. In Brubaker et al.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 275-76.

The segmentation of the Hungarian educational institutions, together with the high enrollment rates in the latter, guarantee mass literacy in Hungarian language among the Hungarian group, where ‘mass literacy in Hungarian’ stands for achieving school-transmitted high Hungarian culture, not only minimal skills for reading and writing in Hungarian language. Brubaker et al. maintain that through upholding the knowledge of Hungarian language and culture at proper levels, the Hungarian educational system enables to sustain Hungarian media, literature, associations and public sphere. They argue that thanks to the availability of higher education in Hungarian language, the Hungarian schools manage to transmit the specialized vocabulary that is needed for professional work in Hungarian, including making of Hungarian media.²⁸ I will examine next the second institutional pillar of the Hungariandom in Transylvania – the Hungarian political sphere, which informs the values of the key explanatory variable of this chapter - the political coherence of Hungarian minority.

6. Political Organization of Hungarian Minority

The purpose of this section is to introduce the actors that make up the Hungarian political sphere in order to demonstrate at a later stage how its splintering into moderate and conservative camps has produced similar division within the Hungarian media sphere. It will introduce first the moderate political actor and main Hungarian party – the *Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania* (*Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România*, UDMR), followed by presentation of the conservative (also called “radical”) political challengers. The insights learned from the analysis

²⁸ Ibid., 271.

of the Hungarian political sphere will be then used to support the main argument of this thesis, namely, that there is a strong correlation between the structuring of the political and media spheres of security sensitive minority groups. I argue that the media spheres of such communities sustain liberal opening and become pluralist following pluralization of minority political life and party systems.

6.1. Moderate Political Camp

The moderate camp of the Hungarian political sphere is an exclusive domain of the *Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania*. The party was formed shortly after the fall of the authoritarian regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu in 1989. Ever since its inception, it has acted as the unified voice and collective actor of the Hungarian minority in Romania. Its founding started a new chapter in Romanian politics where the stability of Romanian cabinets became dependent on the strength of alliances between UDMR and Romanian parties. In the words of one critical commentator, “UDMR plays the role of a jolly joker in Romanian politics who ultimately decides who will build a majority government.”²⁹ Ever since its first entry into a Romanian coalition cabinet (in 1996), the party has been a participant in almost all of the subsequent governments, serving as a guarantor of the Romanian ethnic model. From a structural point of view, UDMR is a unique organization, resembling a parallel Hungarian political society within the Romanian polity.³⁰ Despite the fact that UDMR operates as a single political entity, in reality, it is an organization that consists of smaller political, social, cultural, and religious groups, which stick together to

²⁹ Toma, 2007.

³⁰ Michael Shafir, “The political party as national holding company: The Hungarian Democratic Federation of Romania,” in *The politics of national minority participation in post-communist Europe: state-building, democracy, and ethnic mobilization*, ed. Jonathan P. Stein (New York: Armonk, 2000), 101-128.

pass the 5% electoral threshold so that Hungarian political elites have a chance to impact policy-making in Bucharest. UDMR consists of 16 associations and 21 territorial branches.³¹ This accounts for the “umbrella” structure of the party, which advertises itself as an “organization, devoted to promoting the interests of all Hungarians in all spheres of life.”³² The organizations that make up the party advertise different ideologies (“platforms”) and approaches to minority political strategy. Before the split of UDMR in 2003, one could distinguish between ‘moderate’ and ‘radical’ camps within the party. The former (predominant camp) stands for expanding the rights for cultural reproduction of the community in incremental steps and in cooperation with Romanian elites, whereas the latter subscribes to more radical advancement of Hungarian demands in opposition to Romanian parties and in cooperation with international actors (the government in Hungary and international regimes). The leadership of UDMR “strove to preserve the umbrella organization of the party, allowing organized channels for the articulation of a spectrum of political views while maintaining the unity of the party,” explains Csergo.³³ Central to the UDMR’s program has been the concept of ‘internal self-determination’ of the Hungarian community, which involves autonomous organization of Hungarians and autonomous management of their cultural, educational and religious affairs. Self-government implies achieving “a means of maintaining a separate language, culture, and national identity.”³⁴ After in the mid-1990s the Romanian authorities adopted a nationalistic stand and allied forces with ultra-

³¹ To name a few: *The Federation of the Hungarian Youth Organizations in Romania*, *National Council of Magyars*, *Civic Hungarian Union*, professional federations of physicians, engineers, journalists, Roman and reformist church organizations, etc.

³² Brubaker et al., 345.

³³ Zsuzsa Csergo, “Beyond ethnic division: majority-minority debate about the postcommunist state in Romania and Slovakia,” *East European Politics and Societies* 16, no. 1 (2002): 1-29, 1.

³⁴ Bela Marko. *Ibid.*, 10

nationalist formations, UDMR introduced a territorial autonomy claim to its program. The efforts of Bucharest to consolidate a centralized unitary nation-state and refusal to listen to the Hungarian proposals for state building, served as a powerful glue that hold the Hungarian alliance together.³⁵ The Hungarian party benefited from the proportional electoral system in Romania and achieved admirable electoral successes, corresponding to the numerical strength of the group. For fourteen consecutive years, UDMR served as the unified political broker of Transylvanian Hungarians. The following statistical data exemplifies the strong political unity of the Hungarian community during the 1990s and early 2000s, which is similar to the coherent ethnic voting demonstrated by Bulgarian Turks for the same time-period.

During the first democratic elections in 1990, UDMR won 7.2% of the popular vote for each of the two chambers of the Romanian Parliament. At that time, Hungarians accounted for 7.1% of the population. This put the party in second position after the favored by Romanians ‘*National Salvation Front*’. This electoral success was repeated in the parliamentary elections two years later when UDMR aggregated 7.5% of the popular vote. Looking at the electoral performance of the main Romanian parties for the period from 1990 until 2003, UDMR stands out as the only formation that managed to achieve consistent electoral results, corresponding to the numerical strength of the Hungarians.³⁶ Thus, Shafir describes UDMR as a unified political and electoral front, exhibiting a “high degree of parliamentary voting discipline.”³⁷ Comparing the census and

³⁵ Csargo, 2002, 12.

³⁶ Seat shares obtained by UDMR for the examined period are as follows: 7.82% (1990), 8.23% (1992), 7.62% (1996), 8.26% (2000). In Zoltan Szasz, “Recent developments in Romanian political life,” in *A new balance: democracy and minorities in post-communist Europe*, ed. Monica Robotin (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2003), 99-111, p. 102.

³⁷ Shafir, 105.

electoral results for the past two decades, one can infer that Transylvanian Hungarians had been a politically unified community until 2003 when the radical factions splintered from UDMR and organized into independent parties, putting an end to the unified political front of Hungarians.

The UDMR's electoral success has been molded by the national question rather than by any notion of uniform social or ideological stance. As speeches of Romanian politicians reveal, 1990s were a decade of heightened ethnonationalist rivalry between the Romanian and Hungarian groups.³⁸ This was a period when the ruling government of Ilescu singled out the Hungarian party but annexed all other influential minority organizations to the government policy, as well as allied forces with ultra-nationalist Romanian parties. The UDMR was deliberately excluded from the political process and became target of nationalistic attacks. The party was blamed for anti-Romanian intentions, attitudes and actions.³⁹ In such a volatile interethnic atmosphere, the survival of the Hungarian group depended more than ever on its unified political strength - a situation that strongly resembled the political experience of Bulgarian Turks from the 1990s and 2000s. No Hungarian dared to question the necessity to maintain the political unity of the group "assumed to be necessary for effective minority advocacy" and understood by Hungarians as a national policy interest.⁴⁰ "As nationalist policies in Romania intensified, the ideological

³⁸ For example, Cluj's nationalist mayor Funar suggested that the Hungarian government should establish a 'Ministry of Absorption' to accommodate the flow of Hungarian refugees from Romania who have been a 'hotbed of instability and hate during their several-centuries long diaspora' (Shafir, 114). Another Romanian politician described Hungarians as 'genetically constructed' to cause trouble (Ibid.). The leader of the most extreme and nationalist Romanian party (represented in the parliament) Vadim Tudor called UDMR a "suicidal sect that defies the entire people and tramples under foot the laws of the state, engaging in physical and psychical terrorism", adding that "only those who are stupid, ill-willed or traitors of their nation will defend this Trojan horse ... which should have been outlawed long ago." (Ibid.) In 1995, the Justice Minister of Romania even threatened to disband UDMR.

³⁹ Dan Oprescu, "The protection and Participation of National Minorities," in *Interethnic relations in post-communist Romania*, ed. Lucian Nastasa and Levente Salat (Cluj-Napoca: Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, 2000), 73-81, p. 73.

⁴⁰ Chiribuca, 79.

differences among Hungarian political elites became subordinate to a shared rejection of the building of centralized Romanian nation-state and objection to downplaying the goals of the community and its calls for self-government by the authorities in Bucharest.⁴¹ Voting for UDMR became an ethnic obligation for Hungarians and each parliamentary election became a kind of a census for them.⁴² All opposition to the course of the party's leadership was repudiated as an attempt to break up the political union, weaken the Hungarian community and betray its dream for self-government.⁴³ The heightening of nationalist politics in Romania resulted in downplaying of the ideological differences within the party and introduction of a "monolithic and anti-pluralistic pattern of politics and policy, effectively a *one-party system* for ethnic Hungarians in Romania."⁴⁴ Membership in and voting for UDMR expressed strong ethno-national identity rather than any special class interests or political ideology.

Despite the strategic political unification within the Hungarian camp, the differences between the moderate and radical groups kept glowing under the surface. They reached their boiling point in 2003 when the Hungarian minority politics entered a period of intensified internal diversification⁴⁵ - the radicals could not tolerate anymore the approach to minority politics

⁴¹ "Throughout this process, a consensus emerged within the Hungarian elite that, at a minimum, an institutional autonomy was desirable that entailed a separate Hungarian system of institutions, especially in education and culture, accompanied by devolution of substantial state authority to local governments, including authority over language use." In Csergo, 2002, 28

⁴² Brubaker et al., 343.

⁴³ In his study, Shafir describes the reaction of UDMR parliamentary councilors who expressed a surprise that "one could conceivably envisage a situation in which UDMR MPs would split along party's internal ideological dividing lines." In Shafir, 105.

⁴⁴ Chiribuca, 79. Emphasis mine to stress the lack of political pluralism within the group.

⁴⁵ Magyari, 187.

followed by the moderates. “Internal debates within the RMDSZ [UDMR] focused on the question of whether autonomy demands could be negotiated internally, in cooperation with the majority government, or externally, in confrontation with the Romanian majority elite, with the latter approach depending on support from the Hungarian state and international institutions.”⁴⁶ Moreover, the support of the party among the Hungarian constituency was slowly eroding for UDMR failed to achieve the main goals of the community despite its representation in few successive Romanian cabinets.⁴⁷ Many Hungarians expressed disappointment with the performance of their MPs. A survey of the Hungarian electorate from that period reveals that every two Hungarians in five believed that UDMR leaders pursued narrow political agendas rather than defended the actual interests of the community.⁴⁸ As a result, the radical wing distanced itself further from the party core.⁴⁹

The initial cracks in the UDMR unity appeared back in 1996 when the party’s leadership decided to enter for a first time into a Romanian coalition government, disregarding the objections of the radicals that the goals of minority politics are best achieved when in opposition.⁵⁰ This division received a new boost at the end of the UDMR’s first mandate, when it became clear that the Hungarian party failed to achieve its main objectives, namely, to restitute Hungarian community

⁴⁶ Zsuzsa Csergo, *Talk of the nation: language conflict in Romania and Slovakia*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 2007). pp. 93-94

⁴⁷ Salat, 2007.

⁴⁸ Shafir, 101ff.

⁴⁹ The UDMR ‘radicals’ included organizations such as ‘Organization for Reform’, ‘The Transylvanian Initiative’, ‘Federation of Youth Organizations’, ‘Christian Democratic Party of Hungarians in Romania’ and others.

⁵⁰ Regime change in Romania, characterized by a shift from politics seeking building a unitary nation-state to politics seeking minority inclusion, consensual governance and building of a pluralist state, enabled the participation of UDMR in the first coalition government. For the radicals, UDMR’s participation in a Romanian cabinet meant abandonment of the goal of minority-self-government.

and church goods, to establish an autonomous Hungarian university, to allow the study of subjects in Hungarian language at Romanian schools, to complete the administrative legislation, and to pursue internal Hungarian self-determination. UDMR's departing from the concept of self-determination was especially aggravating to the radical wing. The radicals criticized the diminishing efficiency of UDMR's participation in Romanian coalition governments.⁵¹ In addition, UDMR embarked on a course of freezing internal democratization and pluralism, which additionally aggravated the radicals.⁵² The Hungarian party set on an authoritarian course of internal restructuring. In their defense, the leaders of the moderate wing claimed that their participation in few consecutive Romanian cabinets contributed to the betterment of minority policies in Romania, improvement of interethnic relations in the country, increase of sense of security among Hungarians and redefinition of the negative image of Hungarians as "enemies" and "foreign spies".⁵³ This was insufficient, however, to stop the centrifugal tendencies within the party and restore the political allegiance of the radical faction. When the Romanian nationalist attacks gradually subsided in the beginning of 2000s, "Hungarians found little incentive to stick together as much as in the 1990s."⁵⁴ The outcome was the appearance of four new conservative Hungarian parties, led by the leaders of the UDMR radical camp. Prominent role in the political

⁵¹ Szasz demonstrates that UDMR's specific demands, geared to the needs of the Hungarian community, dropped by 26.5% for a period of only two years. If they constituted 54.7% of the UDMR's statements in 2000, they fell to only 28.2% in 2002. In Szasz, pp. 106-109.

⁵² UDMR was criticized for succumbing to oligarchic tendencies after closing in 2002 its top decision-making body - the internal 'Council of Representatives' - in favor of a smaller non-representative body, which includes only the party's leading members - the so called 'Operative Council' - an oligarchic organizational arrangement, similar to the operative council of the Turkish party in Bulgaria.

⁵³ Chiribuca, 88.

⁵⁴ Kiss, Olivér. Interview with author. Digital recording. Cluj-Napoca, 8 October, 2007. Kiss is editor-in-chief of the popular in Cluj daily 'Szabadság'.

split played the former Honorable President of UDMR - László Tőkés.⁵⁵ The leader of UDMR Béla Markó qualified the split as a "historic irresponsibility."⁵⁶

In sum, until the splintering of the UDMR in 2003, the political organization of Transylvanian Hungarians was characterized by political unity. The rise of Romanian nationalism in the 1990s, specifics of Romanian electoral process and reluctance of authorities in Bucharest to listen to the demands of the Hungarian representatives, contributed to furthering of the political coherence of the group. Although serving as a collective political actor of diverse Hungarian interests, UDMR gradually became a political subject, pursuing monolithic and anti-pluralistic pattern of politics and policy. The leadership of the party gradually succumbed to authoritarian style of internal governance. This, together with personal and ideological differences among the leaders of the different factions within the party, precipitated its split signaling the beginning of Hungarian minority party pluralism.

6.2. Conservative Political Camp

It took six years for the ideological crack within UDMR to widen into an unbridgeable divide, which precipitated the splintering of the radicals from the party. "After 2003, the RMDSZ [UDMR] was no longer able to accommodate challengers who claimed that RMDSZ politicians

⁵⁵ László Tőkés is a well-known dissident and political figure in Romania. The efforts of the communist authorities to transfer him from his post of a pastor in Timisoara served as a formal trigger of the democratic revolution in the country in 1989. After the democratic opening, Tőkés became Honorable President of UDMR. He was among the prominent leaders of the radical camp within the party and started most of the conservative Hungarian parties after the split, namely, The Hungarian National Council of Transylvania (HNCT), the Szekler National Council and the Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania (PPMT).

⁵⁶ *UDMR to Join with Tokes Lazslo at EP Elections*. Divers. Available at: http://www.divers.ro/actualitate_en?wid=37647&func=viewSubmission&sid=7598

had ‘gone native’ in the bargaining culture of Bucharest and lost sight of larger goal of Hungarian minority autonomy in Romania. New Hungarian organizations emerged that challenged RMDSZ’s strategy of piecemeal bargaining and aimed to replace it with a more forceful pursuit of territorial autonomy in the Székler region.”⁵⁷ Csergo draws upon Horowitz’ ‘ethnic outbidding’ model to explain the radicalization of Hungarian political elites. The latter is seen as a consequence of the limitations of the process of political competition within ethnic parties, where the consolidation of the ethnic vote leaves no choice to the political challengers but to radicalize minority demands (engage in ethnic outbidding) to attract the conservative vote. As a formal reason for the split within UDMR served the expelling of László Tőkés and other fellow radicals from the party’s organizational core in 2002. A year later, the ‘*Hungarian Civic Party*’ (MPP) was formed. The MPP leaders engaged in ethnic outbidding, marketing themselves as ‘untainted by the bargaining culture in Bucharest and therefore more credible representative of Hungarian minority rights.’⁵⁸ MPP clearly positioned itself as an alternative to UDMR and declared its primary goal the achievement of territorial autonomy for Széklerland.⁵⁹ Since its inception, the party has had moderate success in local elections.⁶⁰

In the same year (2003), László Tőkés established another two conservative Hungarian parties – the ‘*Hungarian National Council of Transylvania*’ (HNCT) and the ‘*Szekler National Council*’

⁵⁷ Zsuzsa Csergo, “Kosovo and the framing of non-secessionist self-government claims in Romania,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 5 (2013): 889-911, 903

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ The Székler region (Széklerland) refers to the territories inhabited by the Székely - a Hungarian-speaking ethnic group from Eastern Transylvania. This is the only part of Romania where the Hungarians are a majority. Széklerland was an autonomous region within Romania between 1952 and 1968.

⁶⁰ In 2004, the MPP candidates were elected to the council of Harghita County – one of the 2.5 counties that make up the Székler region. In 2008, MPP aggregated 37% of the Székely votes.

(SNC).⁶¹ HNCT is described as a parliamentary-type organization, whose members are “commitment to the cause of autonomy.”⁶² In 2009, HNCT transformed into a “wide socially-supported civilian-political movement,” which a year later received the status of an official representative of Hungarian minority in Romania. As such, HNCT has strong ‘collective autonomy type’ objectives, namely, achieving territorial-economic autonomy of the Székler region, cultural autonomy of the Hungarians of Transylvania, regional harmonization of the autonomy efforts of the Hungarian diaspora from the Carpathian basin, recognition of the necessity of national unification by the authorities in Hungary, establishment of an autonomous educational Hungarian network. As opposed to UDMR, HNCT believes that the achievement of all these goals can be done through decisive cooperation with Budapest and, thus has declared itself a strategic partner of Victor Orban’s conservative “FIDESZ” party in Hungary.⁶³ Few years ago, Laszlo Tokes launched its most recent conservative project – the ‘*Hungarian People’s Party of Transylvania*’ (PPMT). It advertises transformation of Romania into a federal state, granting territorial self-governance to Transylvanian Hungarians, establishment of a Hungarian parliament and government in the city of Cluj. During the 2012 parliamentary elections, PPMT failed to challenge the leadership position of UDMR and enter the parliament. It aggregated 0.79% of the popular vote, whereas UDMR - 5.52%. Despite this electoral defeat, the appearance of PPMT on the political scene confirms the irrevocable political fragmentation in the Hungarian community and the bleeding of Hungarian votes to the newly formed radical formations.

⁶¹ SNC was formed by HNCT members to represent exclusively the interests of the Székely people and to pursue through a radical (but democratic) course their demands for self-government and territorial autonomy. Later on, claiming leadership over the autonomist movement gaining speed in Transylvania, Tökés founded a third conservative project – the ‘*Transylvanian Hungarian People’s Party*’.

⁶² HNCT, *Hungarian National Council of Transylvania* [Official HNCT website] (2011, accessed 30 January, 2012); available from http://www.emnt.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=65&Itemid=12&lang=hu.

⁶³ HNCT, *Hungarian National Council of Transylvania*

As far as the ideological differences between the conservative Hungarian parties and UDMR are concerned, Salamon maintains that the classic 'left-right' division is somewhat artificial when it comes to describing the Hungarian political spectrum, as "being a minority automatically puts you in the right-wing 'nationalist' camp."⁶⁴ Although the main goals of both camps remain similar - achieving self-government, territorial autonomy for the Széker region, and collective rights for Hungarians - their tactics largely differ. If UDMR stands for a dialogue and partnership with Romanian parties, radicals prefer to do politics from opposition, seeking radical solutions in the process; if UDMR steers a neutral course from the political life in Hungary, the radicals maintain close links with the Hungarian right. Contrary to the maintained by UDMR monolithic perception of how the Hungarian political sphere (party system) should be organized, the radicals recognize the necessity of political pluralism within the Hungarian group. Summarizing the performance of Hungarian parties, Salamon concludes that although the radical formations are still young, they are gaining momentum and can pose a threat to the UDMR leadership in the future.⁶⁵

In sum, during the first post-totalitarian decade, the Hungarian political sphere exhibited similar characteristics to that of Turks in Bulgaria. A common element of both spheres was their political coherence. Similar to Bulgarian Turks, Transylvanian Hungarians realized that to preserve the power of their community and influence the decision-making in Bucharest, they need to stick

⁶⁴ Salamon, Marton. Interview with author. Digital recording. Bucharest, 9 October, 2007. Salamon is editor-in-chief of the UDMR's organ 'Uj Magyar Szo' – one of the two Hungarian national dailies in Romania.

⁶⁵ In 2007, UDMR and Tőkés run as competitors in the elections for the European Parliament. Surprisingly, they both made it with Tőkés winning a seat after receiving the backing of many Transylvanian Hungarians and the support of the Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orbán. The UDMR leaders accused Tőkés of splitting the Hungarian vote and aiding the efforts of the nationalist Romanian President Băseșcu to assimilate Hungarians through dividing their political power.

together in the political process. Electoral norms (5% electoral threshold) together with nationalist attacks from radical Romanian parties, further propelled the political unity of the group, suppressing the ideological diversity within it. The political spheres of Turks and Hungarians, however, set on different paths of development in the early 2000s when the monolithic Hungarian political front split up into moderate and radical fractions, signaling the emergence of a pluralist Hungarian party system. A number of conservative Hungarian political parties were set up, challenging the leadership position of UDMR within the group and calling for a radical course in achieving the Hungarian grievances for self-government. In contrast, the political sphere of Bulgarian Turks has remained largely monolithic, that is lacking any ideological or party diversity. The pluralization of the Hungarian political sphere will help us understand the pluralization of Hungarian media sphere, which reorganized structurally and ideologically following the political fragmentation within the Hungarian group. Upon clarifying the social and political characteristics of the Hungarian minority, the remaining of this chapter will focus on the characteristic of Hungarian minority media, their level of development, functions and organizational structure. Before turning to their analysis, I will examine first the context within which Hungarian media are situated, namely, the Romanian media landscape.

7. Romanian Media Landscape

In line with the EU directives, the print media industry in Romania is left unregulated, whereas broadcasters operate under the regulations of the Romanian Media Law and the National Audiovisual Council. According to a media monitoring report by the Open Society Institute, the

media landscape in Romania appears at a first glance to be “dominated by a high number of media outlets... strong legislation in line with EU provisions, and independence warranted by law.”⁶⁶ The large number of outlets seems to ensure media pluralism, whereas legal norms guarantee the rights of expression and information. However, a closer look reveals dependence of Romanian electronic media on the political domain. The agenda of Romanian media is shaped mostly by the interests of political and corporate elites rather than those of the audience. The report qualifies the political pressure on Romanian broadcasters as “substantial.”⁶⁷ “Editors enjoy enough freedom as long as they safeguard the interest of their owners and their owners’ partners who in many cases are politicians,” is explained in the OSI document.⁶⁸ In addition, the report establishes that the financial weakness of many media outlets makes them “vulnerable and easily controllable by interest groups.”⁶⁹ State financing of media through public advertisement contracts is another approach that stifles media independence – a process “very well coordinated at government level.”⁷⁰ The reluctance of broadcasters to criticize politicians stems from the fear that the government would retaliate against them by seeking back unpaid taxes or ordering audits of stations’ finances. These characteristics of Romanian media show strong relevance to Herman and Chomsky’s ‘Propaganda’ model where the political/corporate ownership of media outlets, political/corporate advertisement in them and pressure from media regulatory bodies are specified as instruments used by elites to control media and manufacture social consent.⁷¹ Hence, the

⁶⁶ Manuela Preoteasa, “Television across Europe: regulation, policy, and independence - Romania,” in *Television across Europe: regulation, policy, and independence* (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2005), 1231-1314, p. 1235.

⁶⁷ Television across Europe, 2005, p.1254.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 1235.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 1255.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Edwards Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing consent*.

political and corporate elites in Romania can be described as the ‘information gatekeepers’ who decide on the selection of messages that will circulate in the media and public domains of the Romanian society.

Commenting on Gross’ (2002) argument that mass media in Eastern Europe are subjected to political controls and are by-product of authoritarian culture, the Romanian media expert Avadani admits the former but rejects the latter. She agrees that Romanian media are influenced by the local political culture, but claims that they are not a by-product of it. According to Avadani, the main source of political interference in local media is the overlap of Romanian media and political spheres. Preoteasa echoes this observation and maintains that a process of ‘Berlusconization’ of Romanian media is underway - an increasing number of politicians and businessmen are becoming owners of influential media outlets, which results in concentration of media ownership in the hands of few powerful representatives of the Romanian elite. Avadani explains that as running media is a resource-intensive business, the only actors who can afford to handle it in a climate of ongoing neo-liberal reforms are the local politicians who have the necessary assets.⁷² This calls for application of the ‘concentrated ownership’ filter of the ‘Propaganda’ model, which can help conceptualize the dependence of Romanian media on the objectives of political actors and account for the distorted marketplace of ideas in them.

Another serious danger to the media freedom in Romania comes from the political bias in the operation of the local media regulators. To open a TV or radio station in Romania, two licenses need to be obtained: the *National Audiovisual Council* (CNA) is the authority in charge of

⁷² Avadani, 2007.

granting licenses to broadcasters, whereas the *Inspectorate General for Communications and Information Technology* (IGCTI) issues technical licenses that permit the use of specific broadcast frequencies. The regulation of public and private electronic media in Romania is conducted by the CNA, which plays the role of an autonomous public authority, responsible for the protection of the public interest in the audiovisual field. Besides issuing media licenses, CNA also works to protect the culture and language of national minorities through granting them access to the media sphere.⁷³ CNA consists of 11 members who are appointed by different branches of power – president, parliament, government and civil society. The domination of state-appointees on the Council makes this organ susceptible to political influence. The second media regulatory institution – IGCTI – although dealing exclusively with technical issues, is also an important factor in the media field as potential broadcasters can apply for frequency only after IGCTI opens new frequencies. The president and vice-president of IGCTI are appointed by the Prime Minister, which makes this structure susceptible to government control even to a greater extent than CNA.

The fact that the two institutions in charge of granting broadcast licenses in Romania have direct links to the executive and legislative branches of power makes them open for political manipulation. Hence, it is important for minority broadcasters to have a political broker who will represent their interests in both media regulators, and more importantly in the CNA. In the case of Transylvanian Hungarians, this broker is UDMR, which has the power to nominate the vice-president of this institution. The representation of UDMR on CNA, however, might be viewed as a double-edged sword as it allows the Hungarian party to exercise control over the process of

⁷³ The CNA activities are regulated by the Romanian Audiovisual Law.

granting licenses to Hungarian radio and TV stations. One can assume that in a scenario when pro-UDMR and anti-UDMR channels compete for license, the former candidate will have greater probability of winning. The investigation of Hungarian media indeed revealed cases of political arbitration by CNA (and the UDMR representative), which supports the ‘Propaganda’ model’s prediction that ‘technical’ dependency of broadcasters on politically controlled media regulators (CNA in this case) can be used by political elites as a “club to discipline the media that stray too often from an establishment orientation. As all electronic media require government licenses to operate, they are “potentially subject to government control or harassment.”⁷⁴ For example, there was a case in the late 1990s, when the frequency of a critical to UDMR Hungarian TV station from Transylvania was changed by CNA to a new frequency, which was at the margins of the frequency spectrum, thus impossible to be captured by the tuners of modern TV sets. Only older tuners from the Soviet era could tune into the new frequency.⁷⁵

In sum, the examination of the Romanian media landscape has revealed that, on the one hand, it is pluralist, and on the other, that electronic media are regulated by mechanisms and institutions that are susceptible to political manipulation. Although print media are left unregulated, political and corporate ownership, combined with targeted advertisement, are some of the tools utilized by Romanian elites to control these media. However, Avadani warns us that one cannot speak of total political control of Romanian media:

There might be subtle political interferences in the operation of local media outlets, but not brutal ones, as it is the market forces that drive media today, not the political culture... And there is a very solid media market in Romania, which is based on liberal

⁷⁴ Herman, *Manufacturing Consent*, 13.

⁷⁵ Chirac, 2007

rules and ideas... In addition, the international media companies, which hold significant share of the South Eastern European media market, are playing by the book and counteracting the attempts for political intrusion in the media sphere.⁷⁶

As far as the access of ethnic minority groups to the media field is concerned, the editors-in-chief of the biggest Hungarian titles, together with the interviewed by this author researchers of Romanian media, have unanimously confirmed that the Romanian legislation provides favorable conditions for the establishment of print and electronic media of national minority groups. Professor Magyari clarifies that although obtaining licenses for audio-visual activity might be a challenging process, “the audio-visual legislation in Romania poses no legal barriers to the establishment of radio and television stations in Hungarian language.”⁷⁷ The opening of print minority titles is not obstructed either. Hence, Hungarian minority media are operating in a liberal and pluralist media environment, though susceptible to political control and manipulation. Will the pluralist and liberal spirit of the Romanian media sphere trickle down to the Hungarian media domain and breed similar diversity and plurality of opinions? My research has shown that the answer to this question is negative. The examination of Hungarian minority media in the next section will confirm the main thesis of this study, namely, that the pluralization of the media spheres of security sensitive ethnic minority groups is a function of their political spheres becoming pluralist first.

⁷⁶ Avadani, 2007.

⁷⁷ Magyari, 189.

8. Hungarian Minority Media in Romania

The examination of Hungarian minority media will begin with presentation of their role and structure. It will be followed by a review of Hungarian electronic, print and Internet media. The purpose of this section is to identify the features of Hungarian media, assess their stage of development and identify the factors that condition their progress. I will begin with presentation of these media, followed by analysis of their progress.

8.1. Hungarian Minority Media: Role and Structure

Often the electronic media of minority groups represent appendixes to mainstream media, whereas their print media exist only in the form of cultural brochures, published by minority NGOs. This is not the case with Hungarian media in Romania.⁷⁸ According to Magyari, they stand out as a full-fledged media system that is made-up of television and radio stations as well as developed press, resembling in their complexity and market position mainstream Romanian media.⁷⁹ Similar to Romanian newspapers, Hungarian titles cover the full spectrum of socio-economic, political and cultural developments in Romania, putting the stress on the events from Transylvania. Estimating the scale of development of Hungarian minority media, Brubaker et al. argue that there are two parallel media spheres in Romania: the mainstream Romanian sphere and the smaller Hungarian sphere. Although other information sources are open to Transylvanian Hungarians, Toma and Brubaker et al. argue that the information needs of the group are

⁷⁸ I refer to 'Hungarian minority media' as 'Hungarian media' to relieve stylistic monotony. 'Hungarian media' though should not be confused with media originating from Hungary.

⁷⁹ Magyari, 186.

addressed exclusively by the locally produced in Transylvania Hungarian media. Toma explains that although many Hungarians follow Romanian and Hungarian media from Hungary, the latter are “are largely missing the topics, pertaining to the everyday life of Hungarians in Romania. These topics are covered only in the Hungarian media from Transylvania.”⁸⁰ Drawing upon Benedict Anderson’s idea of imagined communities, Brubaker et al. demonstrate how the Hungarian minority media reproduce and structure the Hungarian world in Romania, serving as a vehicle for shaping national subjectivities and sustaining imagined communities:

The Hungarian media provide material that is not only *in* Hungarian, but *about, for* and *by* Hungarians. The news reported in the Transylvanian Hungarian press, for example, is skewed toward news about Hungarians; this holds not only for political news, but for reporting about culture, sports, social trends, and human interest stories. The papers announce meetings of Hungarian associations, performances of Hungarian theatres, activities of Hungarian schools... They simultaneously describe and delineate a Hungarian world.⁸¹

At the same time, Brubaker et al. argue that Hungarians are not locked only in their ‘Hungarian media world’, but also browse Romanian channels and newspapers, “participating in overlapping and shifting Hungarian, Romanian and international media words.”⁸²

Hungarian minority media have proved to be a useful source of information to Romanian authorities, who use them to inform themselves about the processes taking place in the group. “Simply put, Hungarian media provides the best way to learn about the community,” affirms

⁸⁰ Toma, 2007.

⁸¹ Brubaker et al., 292.

⁸² Ibid, 293.

Kiss.⁸³ This explains why despite the surge of Romanian nationalism in the 1990s, the Romanian authorities continued to support the locally produced Hungarian press. “The [Romanian] administration needs to know what different ethnic communities are thinking and what values they cherish. Monitoring ethnic minority media is the best way to get this information out,” confirms Ambrush.⁸⁴ Romanian authorities also rely on Hungarian media to get their messages across to this capsulated community. Thus, Ambrush argues that the Hungarian titles help promote inter-culturalism and bridge the ethnic divide in Romania.

Upon establishing the important role that Hungarian minority media play for the Hungarian diaspora in Romania, the next section will offer a review of their print and electronic editions. It will help identify the factors driving their development and provide additional evidence for the central thesis of this dissertation, namely, that the character of the media spheres of security sensitive minority groups depends on the structures and processes occurring within their political spheres. The concluding analytical section of this chapter will then discuss the dynamics of interaction between the media and political domains of the Hungarian community.

8.2. Hungarian Electronic Minority Media

When reviewing Hungarian electronic media, the stress will be put on the Hungarian public channels to search for insights into the relationship between majority and minority media

⁸³ Kiss explains that after UDMR became a coalitional partner in the 1996 Romanian government, local Romanian officials learned how influential is among Hungarians Kiss’ newspaper ‘Szabadság’. Since then, they have been regularly inviting him to all municipal press conferences. “Many public officials receive a translated copy of our newspaper, so the administration pays close attention to what ‘Szabadság’ has to say.” Kiss, 2007.

⁸⁴ Ambrush, Atilla. Interview with author. Digital recording. Brasov, 9 October, 2007. Ambrush is a Chair of the Hungarian Journalists Association of Romania and Editor-in-Chief of ‘Brasoi Lapok’ Hungarian weekly.

institutions, as well as to identify the state policies towards the development of public minority programming. Private Hungarian radio and television stations offer little insights in this regard as they are predominantly commercial and have insignificant political effect on the community.

The '*Hungarian Program*' on the Romanian National Television (TVR) has been on the air for forty two years. The Hungarian department at TVR was established back in 1969 when ethnic the minorities in Romania enjoyed a brief period of extended cultural rights. The '*Hungarian Program*' started with three hour weekly broadcasts (Mondays 4 to 7pm), considered a luxury back then when the Romanian program on TVR offered only three hour-long daily broadcasts.⁸⁵ In 1985, the Hungarian program was stopped and its department at TVR closed, following a surge in the ongoing ethnic assimilation campaign in the country. The program was reinstated only after the democratic opening in 1989. It started with three-hour Monday broadcasts that later on transformed into 2.5 hours of programming on TVR1 and a one-hour program on TVR2 – both with national coverage. In addition, the Hungarian department at TVR offers thirty-minute replays of the most interesting content of their shows on the public Romanian '*Culture TV*' channel, as well as an hour bi-weekly program on the '*TV International*' satellite channel - both part of the expanding TVR family.

The Hungarian program is prepared by a team of 34 media professionals all of whom are ethnic Hungarians.⁸⁶ Along with various cultural, entertainment and educational shows, the program offers daily news, covering events form Transylvania and the rest of Romania. It has a team of

⁸⁵ The usual scheme of the Romanian program was a news broadcast followed by a movie from a socialist country. Hence, the antennas of many Romanians living close to the border with Bulgaria were pointed towards the Bulgarian TV signal as the Bulgarian television offered 20 hours of diverse daily programming.

⁸⁶ This is an impressive number when compared to the four employees working for the '*News in Turkish*.'

local reporters (stringers) who prepare reportages from different parts of Transylvania. Sándor Kacsó maintains that for the normal operation of any minority television, it is imperative the technical personnel to be fluent in the minority language.⁸⁷ The Hungarian television program is a good example for this. For its daily shows, the program relies on Hungarian camera operators and editors. For comparison, *'News in Turkish'* in Bulgaria does not have a single Turkish technical specialist. This makes the Turkish staff rely on Bulgarian experts, which limits their independence and productivity. Second major difference between the Turkish and Hungarian programs is that the content of the latter is an original product of the Hungarian journalists, whereas the content of the former is a mere translation of official Bulgarian news into Turkish language. Hence, in terms of originality and production management, the *'Hungarian Program'* is similar to the *'Albanian Program'* on the Macedonian National Television. To ensure intercultural dialogue, the Hungarian content is accompanied by Romanian subtitles and vice-a-versa. "It is very important to have the program translated in the majority language so that the majority population gets the opportunity to learn about the pressing issues and problems bothering their Hungarian neighbors," explains Kacsó.⁸⁸

The Romanian Radio Broadcasting Company (SRR or Radio Romania) is the public radio broadcaster in the country. It airs a one-hour daily program in Hungarian language from Bucharest. All major Transylvanian cities have their regional Hungarian programs, which broadcast up to seven hour-long daily programs. The structure and operation of the Hungarian radio program is similar to that of the Hungarian program on TVR. They both share two key

⁸⁷ Kacsó, Sándor. Interview with author. Digital recording. Bucharest, 10 October, 2007. Kacsó is Director of the 'Hungarian Department' at TVR.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

features that need to be stressed: long tradition of development and original content produced by Hungarian media professionals. UDMR has drafted a project for introducing separate channels for the Hungarian and Romanian public media stations, but it has not materialized yet due to technical and financial constraints.⁸⁹

As far as the independence of public Hungarian channels is concerned, Magyari maintains that public media in Romania is “nothing like the British Broadcasting Corporation in the UK. Here the politicians establish the media field as the government has many avenues to interfere in the media sphere.”⁹⁰ Magyari and Vincze are unanimous in their assessment that the public Hungarian channels are subjected to political manipulation as UDMR is involved in the selection of their managerial and editorial bodies. Moreover, the Hungarian party also picks the Hungarian representative on the Romanian Audio Visual Council.⁹¹ This explains why “the tone of the public Hungarian channels is mostly pro-UDMR and why the internal party issues are kept under the carpet as the leadership of the Hungarian party desires.”⁹²

In addition to Hungarian public channels, there is a diverse private Hungarian broadcasting scene in Romania. According to data collected by the Association of Hungarian Journalists in Romania (HJAR), in 2007 there were 18 Hungarian commercial radio and 13 local television/cable

⁸⁹ Vincze believes that Romanians would not object the introduction of separate channels for Hungarians, as presently they have to share the same air frequencies in the bilingual regions.

⁹⁰ Magyari, Tivadar. Interview with author. Digital recording. Cluj-Napoca, 5 October, 2007. Magyari is a Vice Rector of the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj, Head of the ‘Hungarian Studies’ Department in the same university and vice secretary of UDMR.

⁹¹ ‘One of the members sitting on the Council is ethnic Hungarian, who has strong connections with UDMR and has a great influence over the structuring and operation of the Hungarian public radio and television’, explains Magyari, 2007.

⁹² Vincze, 2007.

Hungarian channels, which sustain themselves mostly through advertising. Hungarian media in Romania receive the least amount of financial support from Hungary (compared to the media of Hungarian diaspora in other neighboring states), which is another indicator for the profitable nature of the local media market. The vast majority of private Hungarian channels are commercial. Some of them receive government funding through the controlled by UDMR 'Communitas' Foundation.⁹³ The amount of financial support provided to Hungarian broadcasters is a function of the economic situation in the country, explains Magyari.⁹⁴

In sum, Hungarian electronic media in Romania are developed and continue to expand. The public Hungarian channels have been on the air for more than half-a-century. Their content is susceptible to political manipulation on behalf of UDMR, since the Hungarian party elects the editorial bodies of these channels and enjoys strong representation in the Romanian media regulators. The private Hungarian broadcasters are thriving on the profitable market for Hungarian media. They do not suffer from political interference as the content of their programming is commercial and has little effect on the formation of the public opinion of Hungarians, hence the little interest in them on behalf of Hungarian politicians.

8.3. Hungarian Print Minority Media

Print newspapers and journals account for the bulk of Hungarian media in Romania. Most of them are printed and distributed in Transylvania. Some titles were established during the Inter-

⁹³ 'Communitas' Foundation represents the Hungarian minority on the Council of Ethnic Minorities. It redistributes government funding to Hungarian cultural projects. This foundation is a dummy UDMR-engineered NGO.

⁹⁴ Magyari, p. 190.

War period, but the majority of them were launched in the early 1950s. In 1999, the Hungarian Journalists Association in Romania (HJAR) reported that there are 66 publications in Hungarian language. In 2007, their number rose to 86. These titles are all in Hungarian language and geared to the Hungarian public. Most popular among them are the two national dailies - '*Krónika*' and '*Új Magyar Szó*', four weekly national newspapers, twelve local daily newspapers, and a dozen of weekly editions and 'Literature, Art & Science' publications.⁹⁵

According to HJAR's data, the Transylvanian dailies (or "country press" as they call them) constitute the backbone of the Hungarian press. They enjoy the biggest circulation, market share and profit, which ensure "smooth, continuous publication with modest development through reinvestment."⁹⁶ Ambrush depicts Hungarian media as a "giant, standing on one foot" where the 'foot' is the Hungarian country press. Each day about 150,000 copies of locally produced Hungarian titles circulate throughout Transylvania, which exceeds by far the modest 20,000 circulation of the two national Hungarian dailies '*Krónika*' and '*Új Magyar Szó*'. The Hungarian country press exercises the greatest influence over the formation of the Hungarian public opinion.⁹⁷ Local news is generally more appealing to Hungarians as it relates to their daily life. Despite the local focus of the Hungarian titles, they also follow the events from the other regions of the country. Good litmus for the power of the Hungarian country press is the behavior of local

⁹⁵ The list of Hungarian titles in circulation was prepared and provided to the author by the President of the Hungarian Journalists Association - Atilla Ambrush. It is not officially published.

⁹⁶ Magyari, p. 190.

⁹⁷ Ambrush, 2007.

advertising agencies, which “target mostly the local [Hungarian] media because of their influence,” explains Ambrush.⁹⁸

The following section offers a brief review of three popular Hungarian dailies to illustrate the dynamics in the Hungarian press and to flesh out the links between the Hungarian political sphere and Hungarian minority media. Besides ‘popularity’, my selection is guided by two other factors, namely, *ownership* and *political affiliation*.⁹⁹ ‘Új Magyar Szó’ is owned by the leader of UDMR; ‘Kronika’ is property of a media group from Hungary close to the right-wing Fidesz party and sides with the oppositional MPP and HCNT; ‘Szabadság’ underwent public privatization and tries to maintain a neutral editorial course.

‘Kronika’

With a circulation of 11,000 copies, ‘Kronika’ is one of the two Hungarian dailies with nationwide distribution. Revenues from sales and advertisement comprise only part of the funding that the newspaper needs to stay on the market. The rest is provided by *Kronika’s* owner - ‘Inform Media’ – a media company from Hungary, connected to the ruling conservative party Fidesz.¹⁰⁰ It comes as no surprise that ‘Inform Media’ has chosen to invest into a newspaper that subscribes to a conservative ideology and leans towards the conservative Hungarian minority parties – the *Hungarian National Council of Transylvania* (HNCT) and the Hungarian Civic

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Chomsky’s ‘Propaganda’ model teaches us that the ‘ownership’ filter produces strong political bias.

¹⁰⁰ At the 2010 parliamentary elections, Fidesz won two-thirds majority seats in the Hungarian Parliament after gaining 52% of the popular vote.

Party (MPP). Although the editor-in-chief¹⁰¹ of *'Krónika'* maintains that his paper is independent and balanced, other critical commentators argue that the conservative-slant of *'Krónika'* is evident.

The design and structure of *'Krónika'* resemble mainstream Romanian titles. It covers all aspects of the socio-political and cultural life of Transylvanian Hungarians as well as follows the state of national and global affairs. According to Csinta, the main value of the newspaper is that it tries to “flesh out all viewpoints and opinions floating in the [Hungarian] community, which is of paramount importance for the functioning of Hungarian public sphere in Romania.”¹⁰² He believes that people buy his paper for its critical position towards the ruling Hungarian party - UDMR. As the majority of Hungarian press gravitates closer to the moderate position of UDMR, *'Krónika'* strives to provide the ‘other’ side of the story and offers alternative portrayal of political events. The newspaper is published only in Hungarian language. It is prepared by professional Hungarian journalists, most of whom have received their education at the Hungarian universities in Romania. Csinta is optimistic about the future of *'Krónika'* because the vast majority of his employees are young professionals who believe in the idea of liberal media and the necessity of maintaining true divergence of opinions in the Hungarian public sphere.¹⁰³ *'Kronika's'* progress provides support to this dissertation's main thesis, namely, that pluralization of the media of security sensitive minority groups occurs upon pluralization of their political life.

The emergence of oppositional Hungarian political actors has not only splintered the Hungarian

¹⁰¹ The editor-in-chief of the paper Samu Csinta pursues a political career in MPP. This is yet another example of the overlap between the Hungarian media and political domains.

¹⁰² Csinta, Samu. Interview with author. Digital recording. Cluj-Napoca, 8 October, 2007. Csinta is editor-in-chief of *'Krónika'*

¹⁰³ Ibid.

vote, but also created liberal opening in the monolithic Hungarian media sphere, enabling titles like *'Kronika'* to adopt watchdog-style of reporting with regards to the Hungarian incumbent in the administration - UDMR.

'Új Magyar Szó'

'Új Magyar Szó' is the second Hungarian national daily with a circulation of 3,000 copies per day. As an organ of UDMR, *'Új Magyar Szó'* offers yet another opportunity to examine the link between the media and political spheres in the Hungarian community. The newspaper is a successor of the popular during the communist times *'Romániai Magyar Szó'*. Established more than sixty years ago, *'Romániai Magyar Szó'* was used by the communist authorities to communicate the line of the Romanian Communist Party to the Hungarian population. In accordance with the postulates of the Marxist Soviet media system, it was completely dependent on state appropriations. The liberalization of the Romanian media market in the 1990s proved problematic to *'Romániai Magyar Szó'*. Its sales plummeted and just before filing for bankruptcy, it was purchased by the leader of UDMR Béla Markó who made it the official organ of his party and changed its name to *'Új Magyar Szó'*. The paper's director admits that similar to the oppositional *'Kronika'*, which is subsidized by the Hungarian right, *'Új Magyar Szó'* is subsidized by UDMR: "Without their support we will disappear."¹⁰⁴ There are other Hungarian newspapers, which also receive financial assistance from UDMR coming in the form of grants distributed by the UDMR-controlled 'Communitas' Foundation. Political financing leads to political dependence. It comes as no surprise then that Hungarian media are divided into 'pro-

¹⁰⁴ Vincze, 2007.

moderate/UDMR’, ‘pro-conservative/Tőkés’ and ‘independent’ camps. What is intriguing here, though, is that the relative strength of the rival ideological camps mirrors the political strength of their political protégés: “UDMR is the bigger and stronger player than the Tőkés conservative political projects. Respectively, the Hungarian media, standing behind UDMR, is also significantly more numerous than the media supporting the Tőkés conservatives,” explains the director of ‘Új Magyar Szó’.¹⁰⁵ Naturally, being financially dependent on the ruling Hungarian party, ‘Uj Magar Szó’ exhibits a pronounced bias towards its line. According to Vincze, this is not a reason for concern as Hungarian minority media are diverse on opinions and there are other titles, which will provide an alternative analysis and interpretation of events: “Our newspaper supports UDMR in the forthcoming elections and I don’t have a problem with that. ‘Kronika’ is there to criticize UDMR,” concludes Vincze.¹⁰⁶

The review of the two Hungarian national dailies (‘Új Magyar Szó’ and ‘Kronika’) has revealed one important fact: following the cleavage in the Hungarian political sphere, the Hungarian media has also split along political lines where the relative strength of the oppositional media camps resembles that of their respective political protégés. To harness the mobilization potential of Hungarian minority media and to win their allegiance, Hungarian politicians utilize the tools of ‘subsidization’ and ‘ownership’. This is a good example of the cross-applicability of the *instrumentalist* and ‘Propaganda’ analytical frameworks for the analysis of the media of security sensitive minority groups. The *instrumentalist* approach identifies the motives of political elites to establish control over Hungarian media (to mobilize the political support of the community),

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

whereas the ‘Propaganda’ model reveals the tools used by elites to do so. Through controlling the media sphere of the group, Hungarian elites exercise control over its political coherence, voting patterns, and the process of public opinion formation, thus manipulating the debates occurring within the Hungarian public sphere. Hence, Hungarian politicians can be described as the ‘information gatekeepers’ of their community.

‘Szabadság’

‘Szabadság’ is the best selling daily newspaper in the region of Cluj-Napoca. It is distributed in all of the five Hungarian counties and allegedly has a strong impact on the opinion of moderate Hungarians. According to some critical commentators, ‘Szabadság’ maintains a somewhat nationalist editorial stance. The newspaper is concerned primarily with the life of Hungarians in Transylvania. This comes as no surprise bearing in mind the conflicting relationship between the two groups in the region in the past. According to Brubaker et al., the media of Transylvanian Hungarians have a pronounced ‘nationalist’ overcast in general.¹⁰⁷ Commenting on the editorial stance of ‘Szabadság,’ they maintain that even those who do not subscribe to its nationalist line still buy and read the newspaper to participate and help sustain the distinctive Hungariandom in Transylvania.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Brubaker et al., 291.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 291, 294.

'*Szabadság*' has a circulation of 8,000 copies but according to the paper's editor, the actual readership figure hovers around 25,000.¹⁰⁹ Similar to other Hungarian dailies, '*Szabadság*' has the organization and provides the depth of analysis offered by serious Romanian press. The newspaper has political, economic, religious and cultural sections, as well as pages dedicated to women, students and kids. It was established after the WWII by the communist authorities. Upon the collapse of the totalitarian regime, '*Szabadság*' underwent public privatization and presently sustains itself exclusively through sales and advertisement. Being free from financial dependence on political sponsors, *Szabadság's* team of thirty professional Hungarian journalists enjoys the freedom to decide on the ideological orientation and content of the newspaper. Kiss describes '*Szabadság*' as a "traditional title with a pronounced nationalist punch."¹¹⁰ The nationalist rhetoric comes naturally to the paper's staff who went through twelve years of governance of an extremely nationalist Romanian mayor. "Our former mayor was using his public post to threaten the Hungarian minority and literally had plans to get us all into the city stadium¹¹¹... In a situation like this, a Hungarian daily can only adopt a nationalist stand to defend the group," explains Kiss. He admits that serving as an editor of the newspaper for more than a decade, he has received political 'punches' from 'left' and 'right', which makes him believe that the voice of his newspaper is balanced.

¹⁰⁹ Similar to Albanians in Macedonia, the impoverished economic standing of many Hungarians forces them to band together and share the cost of newspapers. According to Olivér Kiss, one copy is read by four Hungarians. Kiss also maintains that another 20,000 read the online version of his newspaper, also available in Romanian language.

¹¹⁰ Kiss, 2007.

¹¹¹ Kiss refers here to the methods used by the Chilean dictator Pinochet in attempt to silence the oppositional voices in Chile following the military coupe in 1973.

8.4. Hungarian Internet Minority Media

Apart from conventional media, the Hungarian community in Transylvania also enjoys developed Internet media, which are popular mostly among the Hungarian youth. Naturally, most of the Hungarian online resources originate from Hungary, but there is also an elaborate Hungarian Internet media scene produced in Transylvania.¹¹² Among the most popular Transylvanian online resources is ‘*Transindex*’. According to Brubaker et al. this portal “brings the nation-oriented nature of the print and electronic Transylvanian Hungarian media in the digital domain.”¹¹³ ‘*Transindex*’ puts the stress on the Hungarian lifestyle, art, theatre, pop-culture and movies, though it also has dedicated pages to politics and economics. The portal helps local Hungarians find Hungarian partners, jobs, get in touch with Hungarian associations, find Hungarian educational programs, scholarships, etc. As such, it provides “a virtual reality of the Transylvanian Hungarian world.”¹¹⁴ It has an average of 10,000 readers per day, which makes it an influential media outlet, surpassing the readership of most Hungarian dailies. The popularity of ‘*Transindex*’ among Hungarians has made Romanian authorities follow the portal in order to monitor the attitudes and problems of the Hungarian youth.¹¹⁵

To catch up with the rapidly growing popularity of online media among the Hungarian diaspora and to reach the young generations, many Hungarian newspapers have invested in the

¹¹² Brubaker et al., 291. Some of the popular Transylvanian online resources are: Pénzcsinálók.ro, Pályázatok.ro, Sportoldal.ro, Fejvadász.ro, Cégek.ro, Egologo.ro, Disputa.ro, Szótár.ro.

¹¹³ Ibid, 292.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Szabó, Ágnes. Interview with author. Notes taking. Cluj-Napoca, 8 October, 2007. Szabó is Project Manager at *Transindex*.

development of their own websites. “Now we are concentrating our efforts on the development of an online version of our newspaper as printed media are getting obsolete and it is clear that the young generation prefers the Internet as a medium of information,” explains the editor of *Szabadság*.¹¹⁶ For similar reasons, the editor of the ‘*Hungarian Program*’ on TVR has accelerated the development of the program’s website: “We are not able to broadcast for the active segment of the population as our time-slot ends in 5pm. Naturally, we desire to have access to prime-time slots and we are trying to solve this problem by developing a website where people will be able to view our program whenever they like. Going online is the future of television programs and especially minority ones,” explains the director of the program Casco.¹¹⁷

It is noteworthy that many online Hungarian minority media have similar sources of funding as conventional media. For example, ‘*Transindex*’ has three sources of revenue: advertising, funding provided by Hungarian NGOs and funding from the Romanian government. The latter is provided through the UDMR’s dummy civil structure ‘*Communitas*’ Foundation. Similar to other Transylvanian media, ‘*Transindex*’ is owned by a Hungarian politician who happens to be the former Executive President of UDMR - Béla Markó.¹¹⁸ This explains the ease with which ‘*Transindex*’ receives state grants from ‘*Communitas*.’ The funding and ownership of ‘*Transindex*’ is another good example of the concentrated political ownership of influential Hungarian media in Transylvania (*ownership* filter of the ‘*Propaganda*’ model).

¹¹⁶ Kiss, 2007. The editor-in-chief of *Szabadság* maintains that his newspaper was the first in Romania to launch an online version, which happened back in 1995 when the Internet had just started to spread in Romania.

¹¹⁷ Casco, 2007.

¹¹⁸ Béla Markó also owns ‘*Uj Magyar Szo*’ and few other influential Hungarian newspapers.

In sum, the Internet media of Transylvanian Hungarians are showing upward trend of development. Their growing popularity among the Hungarian youth as well as accessibility and low cost of production have made them an attractive alternative to conventional media. This is especially true with regards to ethnic minorities who usually have less financial and technical capabilities to maintain resource-intensive electronic media. Once the developed nature of the Hungarian print and electronic media has been established, it is time to turn to the examination of the variables that account for their progress and pluralization.

9. Explaining the Proliferation of Hungarian Minority Media

Hungarians constitute 6.6% of the population of Romania, but their media enjoys 10% share of the local media market.¹¹⁹ Turks constitute 8.8% of the population of Bulgaria, but their media are almost extinct. What variable(s) account for this variation? What factors determine if given minority group will have a developed media sphere or an under-developed one? What accounts for the pluralization of the media spheres of security sensitive minority groups? In the process of researching on the media of Hungarians in Romania, the following independent variables have been identified as the major propellants of their progress: *diverse sources of funding, media experience, availability of trained media cadres, educated audience and pluralist nature of the Hungarian political sphere*. These variables will be addressed in the following pages to identify their relative strength and importance.

¹¹⁹ Avadani, 2007.

9.1. Funding of Hungarian Minority Media

Some producers and researchers of Hungarian media in Romania have identified the diverse sources of funding and developed market for Hungarian titles as the most potent variables that explain their proliferation. Public and private Hungarian media have different as well as overlapping sources of funding. Being part of the Romanian public broadcasters, the Hungarian public radio and television channels are funded through the budget of these institutions, which is formed by revenues from commercials, taxation (media tax) and state appropriations.¹²⁰ Private Hungarian media rely on different funding sources. Some of them are funded by corporate or political owners, others receive grants from the Hungarian government or from private Hungarian foundations. Finally, some Hungarian media receive subsidies from the Romanian government through the 'Communitas' Foundation. I will elaborate next on these diverse funding mechanisms.

The Romanian legislation establishes that authorities have to work towards the preservation of ethnicity and culture of national minorities. Therefore, a special agency - Council of Ethnic Minorities in Romania - was set up to monitor the distribution of government funding to the 28 national minority groups in the country.¹²¹ Alongside the government delegates, on the Council's meetings sit representatives of all ethnic minorities who participate in the process of redistribution of the state grants for minority projects. The money is divided on proportional

¹²⁰ Funds collected through public the media tax account for 70% of the total budget of the Romanian public broadcasters; revenues from advertisement and state subsidies each account for 15% of their budgets. The state subsidy covers only the transmission expenses, as the state owns the national transmission network.

¹²¹ The Council's budget is approximately 2-3 million Euros per annum, which is split proportionally among the national minority groups.

principle, depending on the size of each community. The Hungarian representative on the Council is the 'Communitas' Foundation. It redirects portion of the government subsidies to more than a dozen Hungarian media. The allocation of state funding to Hungarian newspapers by 'Communitas' started after UDMR became a coalition partner in the Romanian government in 1996. As 'Communitas' is made up only of UDMR-member organizations, some critical commentators accuse the foundation of channeling government grants exclusively to UDMR-friendly media.¹²² Others argue that the money provided by the foundation to Hungarian media is of symbolic character.¹²³ What remains undisputed, however, is that most of Hungarian media are self-sustainable and support themselves through revenues from *sales* and *advertisement*. After the democratic opening in 1989, all media in Romanian underwent a difficult transition from state-funded to market-dependent, during which UDMR provided funding to many Hungarian titles to help them weather the economic turbulence. Hungarian media gradually commercialized and today most of them are run as successful businesses, profiting from the expanding market for Hungarian titles in the country.¹²⁴ "The key to the success of the Hungarian press is the existence of local market for Hungarian media, which is large enough to generate economies of scale," argues Vincze.¹²⁵ "There are more than a million Hungarians living in Transylvania, which is a sufficiently big market for the Hungarian titles to sustain themselves through revenues from sales and advertisement," adds his colleague Amrush.¹²⁶ After joining NATO and opening accession talks with the EU in the 1990s, foreign investors poured into Romania, causing further expansion

¹²² Magyari (2007), Csinta (2007), Csanad (2007).

¹²³ Amrush, 2007.

¹²⁴ Magyari (2007), Csanad (2007), Avadani (2007).

¹²⁵ Vincze, 2007.

¹²⁶ Amrush, 2007.

of the advertisement market. As Hungarians represent the biggest ethnic minority in Europe, they quickly became a target of the advertisement campaigns of Hungarian and Romanian businesses, which bombarded the Hungarian community with ads from the pages of the Hungarian titles and from the waves of the Hungarian channels.

The availability of stable and large market for Hungarian media is what distinguishes them from the media of smaller ethnic minorities, which continue to depend on appropriations from the Romanian government. “The people simply bought into Hungarian newspapers,” explains Avadani.¹²⁷ The self-sustainability of the Hungarian media explains why they receive the smallest financial support from the Romanian and Hungarian governments combined when compared to the financial assistance provided by Budapest to the media of the Hungarian diaspora in other neighboring countries.¹²⁸ The two national dailies - ‘*Kronika*’ and ‘*Uj Magyar Szó*’ - continue to depend on the support of their political and corporate owners, whereas the Hungarian country press thrives mostly on revenues from sales.¹²⁹ The local Hungarian titles enjoy the biggest circulations, sales and advertisement deals, which makes them more influential than the national Hungarian dailies: “The local Hungarian newspapers have greater influence on the community than the national dailies. They are well established as there is a market for Hungarian media in Romania and these newspapers generate enough revenues from sales and advertisement to stay on the market,” confirms Vincze.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Avandi, 2007.

¹²⁸ Magyari, 2007.

¹²⁹ Kiss, 2007; Csanad, 2007.

¹³⁰ Vincze, 2007.

The producers of Albanian newspapers in Macedonia have unanimously identified media funding provided by politicians as a source of political influence and pressure. Thanks to the sizable market for Hungarian media in Romania, the majority of Hungarian newspapers are not affected by this problem. “UDMR has had mostly moral importance for the development of Hungarian media rather than any substantial financial role,” explains Salamon.¹³¹ The representation of UDMR in the legislative, executive and media regulators has indeed assured the adoption of favorable media legislation and hassle-free granting of licenses to Hungarian broadcasters. Vincze observes that contrary to the Turkish party in Bulgaria (MRF), UDMR has been looking for opportunities to aid the development of Hungarian media in Romania as the party wants to be constantly present in them and maintain close connection with the Hungarian electorate: “The UDMR leaders are interested in the development of Hungarian media and especially of those of them that support the Hungarian party,” adds Vincze.¹³² Opposite to the patrimonial and clan-organized Turkish community in Bulgaria, the life of Transylvanian Hungarians is organized in horizontally overlapping communities. This explains the inapplicability of the political mobilization approach followed by the Turkish politicians (direct communication with Turkish clan leaders) to the Hungarian context and the necessity to rely on Hungarian media to convey the messages of Hungarian elites to the territorially dispersed and horizontally organized Hungarian community.

Some argue that the fact that many independent Hungarian titles choose to side with UDMR is a consequence of the ideological orientation of their editors rather than a result of some sort of

¹³¹ Salamon, 2007.

¹³² Vincze, 2007.

financial dependence. Others disagree, claiming that the pro-UDMR leaning of many Hungarian titles is a consequence of their financial dependence on the Hungarian party, which manifests itself in advertisement deals or financial grants distributed to these media by the UDMR controlled 'Communitas' Foundation. For example, a publication in the oppositional Hungarian daily '*Kronika*' (from 3 October, 2007) reveals the clientelist link between UDMR and Hungarian media. According to the newspaper, in the period between 2000 and 2004, Romanian public companies and ministries offered lucrative advertising contracts to sympathetic media, including Hungarian ones. "This was a very popular funding mechanism in Romania, which boiled down to siphoning public money to select media outlets in exchange for friendly coverage," explains Avadani.¹³³ '*Kronika*' reveals that the bulk of the advertisement contracts, commissioned by the public company Romania Post, went to select Hungarian newspapers. Romania Post is a state-run company, which operates under the authority of the Ministry of Communications and was the biggest public advertiser at the time. Back then, the Minister of Communications was a nominee from UDMR who allegedly procured public advertisement contracts to Hungarian media outlets belonging to the UDMR leader Béla Markó as a 'thank you' for the political nomination. Manipulating the discourse of media through 'advertisement' and 'political ownership' tools is well accounted for by Herman and Chomsky's 'Propaganda' model. This is similar to the experience of many Albanian media in Macedonia that are drawn into the orbit of Albanian political parties by means of analogous 'public advertisement' techniques. This is another example of the cross-applicability of the instrumentalist theory and the 'Propaganda' media model for the study of the clientelist relations between minority political elites and minority media institutions. As the instrumentalist approach suggests, minority politicians see

¹³³ Avadani, 2007.

their constituencies mostly as political communities. In order to mobilize their support, they draw upon ethnic minority media. To get these media in the orbit of their influence, political actors use financial incentives in the form of advertisement contracts (advertisement filter of the 'Propaganda' model) or political ownership (ownership filter).

Another explanation of the pro-UDMR leaning of the Hungarian press is offered by Papp. He maintains that the Hungarian journalists often perceive their duties as going beyond the task of mere informing the community and see themselves instead as performing social duties, which link them to political parties. Kiss echoes this observation. He admits that "being a Hungarian journalist in Romania is actually a form of community service."¹³⁴ The close partnership between journalists and politicians, however, affects the process of news gathering and reporting.¹³⁵ The 'Propaganda' model argues that the societal purpose of dependent on political elites media is not to "enable the public to assert meaningful control over the political process... but to inculcate and defend the economic, social and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state."¹³⁶ In a similar vein, Papp maintains that Hungarian politicians attempt to influence the Hungarian press to the greatest degree to further their agendas.¹³⁷

To sum up, the Hungarian media in Romania enjoy diverse sources of funding. Most of them are self-sustainable and rely on revenues from sales and advertisement thanks to the thriving market for these media. The Hungarian politicians, however, are not standing on the sidelines. They

¹³⁴ Kiss, 2007.

¹³⁵ Papp, 149.

¹³⁶ Herman and Chomsky, 298.

¹³⁷ Papp, 149.

utilize *subsidization* and *ownership* instruments to keep key Hungarian media outlets in the orbit of their influence as these media assist them in the political mobilization process.

9.2. Media Traditions of Transylvanian Hungarians

Other scholars and producers of Hungarian media argue that “the key to the success of Hungarian media in Romania is the long tradition of their development.”¹³⁸ Hungarian media in Transylvania have a 160 year-long tradition. The first Hungarian titles appeared in the late 19th century when Transylvania was under Austrian occupation and Romania was not even yet on the political map.¹³⁹ Similar to Vincze, Magyari considers the vast experience in making Hungarian media to be at the foundation of their progress today. This argument is echoed by Magyry’s colleagues Chirac (2007) and Toma (2007), and by many editors of Hungarian titles whom this author had the chance to interview.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, I will briefly address the different stages of development of Hungarian media to demonstrate the solid platform on which they rest today. This review will be divided into three time-periods.

9.2.1. Austro-Hungarian and Inter-War period

1848 is the year when the first Hungarian newspaper in the world - ‘*Brassoï Lapok*’ - was published. This happened in the Transylvanian city of Brasov. During that time, Hungary was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Hungarians constituted the majority in the region. The

¹³⁸ Vincze, 2007.

¹³⁹ Ambrush, 2007.

¹⁴⁰ Ambrush (2007), Vincze (2007), Kiss (2007), and Kasco (2007).

development of the Hungarian press in Transylvania was initially driven by the struggle of Hungarians for liberation from the Austrian oppressors. The burgeoning Hungarian civil society had numerous organizations, many of which maintained their own newspapers. Drawing upon the ideas of Habermas (1989), one can argue that this period of proliferation of Hungarian press had also marked the beginning of the Hungarian public sphere. By the end of the 19th century, there were already developed Hungarian media in Transylvania.¹⁴¹ Their upward progress continued during the Inter-war period when Transylvania was annexed to Romania. The driving force behind their development this time was the preservation of the Hungarian identity. The recently formed state of Romania automatically annexed the developed Hungarian press, which was “simply part of the package that came together with the annexation of Transylvania.”¹⁴²

9.2.2. Communist period

Toma (2007), Ambrush (2007), and Vincze (2007) maintain that the Hungarian media were also well established during the communist period. Officially, the communist authorities did not discriminate between ethnic communities. During this period, all bigger cities with sizable Hungarian population had local Hungarian newspapers. Starting from 1960s, Transylvanian Hungarians were also granted access to media, literature and movies coming from their homeland - Hungary. Despite the fact that the communist authorities covertly pursued a policy of assimilation of Hungarians, Romanian Politburo decided to preserve two institutions of the Hungariandom in Transylvania – the Hungarian press and theater. The rationale behind this was

¹⁴¹ Magyari, 2007.

¹⁴² Kasco, 2007.

that these institutions were susceptible to government control and thus instrumental in the assimilation and propaganda campaigns of the authorities.¹⁴³ At the same time, Hungarian universities, schools and cultural centers were closed as Romanian authorities feared that they can turn into breathing grounds of oppositional movements, which already happened during the Austrian occupation. Similar in timing and scope closure of minority educational institutions and cultural centers occurred in Bulgaria and Macedonia, but with respect to the Turkish and Albanian minorities. Note that although the educational centers of the examined here minority groups suffered the same fate during the communist period, the media of these communities followed different paths of development after the democratic openings in the three states.

During the communist era, Romanian media were subject to state control but also to generous government funding. Hungarian media were no exception. They received subsidies simultaneously from Romania and Hungary. Hungary took advantage of its membership in the socialist bloc to advance the interests of its diaspora in the neighboring states of Romania, Ukraine and Czechoslovakia. Toma maintains that the “developed status of Hungarian media in Romania today is to a certain extent result of the [media] policies from the Soviet era.”¹⁴⁴ It would be naïve to believe, however, that the Hungarian media from that period had free will and agenda. Ambrush explains that the Hungarian titles were functioning during the communist era as a mouthpiece of the Communist party. The Hungarian press offered little originality and were abundant with translations of Romanian articles. Operating under conditions of state censorship, many Hungarian journalists managed to internalize the use of metaphorical and ambivalent

¹⁴³ Kiss, 2007, Chiriac, 2007.

¹⁴⁴ Toma, 2007.

language to escape from the imposed totalitarian discourse, demarcating the boundaries of a Hungarian public sphere.¹⁴⁵

9.2.3. *Post-totalitarian period*

After the democratic revolution, many of the established during the communist period Hungarian titles remained on the market. “It was easier to continue publishing Hungarian newspapers that were established in the past than to start new ones. Had the Hungarian media been closed during the communist era, the Hungarian community would have had hard times to have these titles resurrected,” maintains Kiss.¹⁴⁶ During the first decade of the transition period, the Hungarian media received financial assistance from UDMR and the Hungarian government in Budapest. This funding proved to be insufficient to save many of them, which fell prey to the harsh logic of the liberalizing media market in Romania. It was during these difficult times when the editors of many Hungarian titles realized the need to restructure their newspapers and make commercially oriented.¹⁴⁷ Most of the Hungarian titles either underwent public privatization or were purchased by local businessmen and political entrepreneurs. The re-opening of the Hungarian universities in Romania provided for training of Hungarian media specialists who drew upon the rich traditions of Hungarian media to continue the upward trajectory of their development.

¹⁴⁵ Attila Papp, “The Hungarian Press System in Romania during the Nineties – the World of the Operators,” *Regio - Minorities, Politics, Society*, no. 1 (2005): 141-153, p. 142.

¹⁴⁶ Kiss, 2007.

¹⁴⁷ As opposed to culturally oriented.

In sum, the Hungarian media in Transylvania have had a long tradition of development. Established during the Austrian occupation of Hungary, these media managed to survive two major wars and a 40-year-long oppressive communist regime. They came out crippled but with potential to recover and develop further. These media aided the operation of a distinctive Hungarian public sphere in Romania. Thanks to the efforts of the Hungarian intellectuals and the skills of the Hungarian journalists, this sphere remained alive during the communist period and is a distinctive feature of the Hungariandom in Transylvania today.

9.3. Educational Standing of Hungarian Minority and Training of Hungarian Media Professionals

The size of given minority group matters for the establishment of a profitable market for minority media products, but only when correlated with sufficient level of education of the group, preferably in the minority language. “The level of education and knowledge of minority language is a precondition for the development of any minority media and Hungarian ones are no exception,” comments Vincze.¹⁴⁸ If the numerical strength of Hungarians provides for the marketing of Hungarian media products in Transylvania, the educational standing of the group provides for a sizable readership community, which poses demand for them, explains Magyari.¹⁴⁹ “Minority media is a business like any other and the state cannot do much to artificially promote it. Therefore, there must be a market for such media if you want them to flourish. Without devoted readers, minority titles will die,” adds Salamon.¹⁵⁰ Fortunately, there is a large

¹⁴⁸ Vincze, 2007.

¹⁴⁹ Magyari, 2007 and Magyari, *Hungarian minority media in Romania*, 185ff.

¹⁵⁰ Salamon, 2007.

community of educated Hungarian readers in Romania who demand Hungarian newspapers and electronic media.¹⁵¹

Apart from the pluralist nature of the Hungarian political sphere, the good educational standing of the community is another key variable that distinguishes it from Turks in Bulgaria. Ambrush stresses that acquiring proper education has been key to the survival of Transylvanian Hungarians over the past two centuries. Brubaker et al. confirm that having a comprehensive Hungarian-language school system has been crucial to the maintenance of the 'Hungarian world' in Transylvania.¹⁵² Ambrush explains that many Hungarians choose to pursue university degrees today either in Hungary or in the three Hungarian universities that recently re-opened doors in Romania. These educational institutions maintain the reproduction of the Hungarian cultural and professional elites. When analyzing the progress of Hungarian media, Vincze (2007), Magyari (2003, 2007) and Avadani (2007) stress the importance of Hungarian intelligentsia as a source of professionals in the education and media spheres. "Hungarians in Romania have always enjoyed their own cultural elite, which is very important for having our own media, literature and educational system in Hungarian language," explains Vincze.¹⁵³ Papp adds that Hungarian journalists, similar to their colleagues in the West, are often recruited from the dominant cultural strata of the society and may hold university degrees from fields unrelated to journalism.¹⁵⁴ The Hungarian universities in Romania offer a wide variety of programs, including media studies,

¹⁵¹ Avadani, 2007.

¹⁵² Brubaker et al., 299.

¹⁵³ Vincze, 2007.

¹⁵⁴ Papp, 145.

which help prepare Hungarian media professionals. Statistical data shows that 75% of Hungarians continue their education at universities, offering Hungarian educational tracks.¹⁵⁵

When analyzing the impact of education on the development of ethnic minority media, the comparative study of the Turkish and Hungarian media reveals some differences that help explain the divergent stages of their development. On the one hand, the shortage of Turkish intellectuals and minority media professionals has crippled the Turkish media in Bulgaria. On the other, their abundance in Romania has propelled the Hungarian media in Transylvania. The availability of developed educational system in Hungarian language, especially at the level of higher education, has ensured the continuity of the Hungarian cultural elite, which also serves as a source of Hungarian media professionals. The unresolved status of higher education in Turkish language in Bulgaria has prevented the Turkish community from the ability to reproduce its intellectual core and train media cadres at Turkish universities.¹⁵⁶ Last but not least, the greater tolerance towards minority media in Romania is also in contrasts with the glowing ethnonationalist sentiments in Bulgaria, which have resulted in organized protests against Turkish public channels. As opposed to Bulgarians, the Romanian majority has never questioned the right of Hungarians to have their own media.¹⁵⁷

Concluding the review of non-political variables that affect the development of Hungarian media in Transylvania, one cannot help but notice that the same set of factors pertaining to the Hungarian case has conditioned the development of the media of Albanian and Turkish

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ It has not prevented, however, Turks from receiving proper education in Bulgarian universities or educational institutions in Turkey.

¹⁵⁷ Vincze, 2007.

minorities. The large size of these groups has made possible for the development of markets for minority media products in the cases of Albanian and Hungarian communities. The numerical strength of minority groups, however, matters only when coupled with sufficient level of *education* of their members as only educated publics can pose demand for print media and generate professionals to run them. Having established *media traditions* is an important factor for the quality of the produced media products, but not a decisive one for generating full-fledged ethnic minority media systems. Transylvanian Hungarians have enjoyed their own media for century-and-a-half. This certainly helped them preserve these media during the obscurantist years of the Ceaușescu regime. Albanians in Macedonia, however, have had very little tradition and experience in making their media, which has not prevented the group from generating one of the most developed minority media spheres in the region. Moreover, despite the century-long tradition of development of the Turkish media in Bulgaria, their present status gravitates around the ‘ground zero’ mark. This comes to demonstrate that having long traditions in the field of media production by itself is not a guarantee that the media of given minority group will develop and pluralize. Hence, the key variable for the development of pluralist media spheres of security sensitive minority groups has to be searched elsewhere. The comparative study of the three cases has revealed that this variable is structural and pertains to the political organization of minority communities, namely, their political pluralism and political cohesiveness. The Albanian and Hungarian cases have demonstrated that pluralist political environments create opportunities for the development of pluralist minority media spheres.

The examination of the three case studies has also suggested that the *liberalization of mainstream majority media* is also beneficial to minority media development as it is accompanied by adoption of liberal media norms, which improve the access of minority groups to the media field.

Liberalization of majority media spheres, however, does not trigger by itself liberalization of minority media spheres. The actual ‘trigger’ for the latter is the pluralization of the political life of minority communities. Despite the fact that the media legislations of all three cases examined here share similar liberal spirit and regulatory mechanisms, the media experience of Bulgarian Turks is quite different from that of Macedonian Albanians and Transylvanian Hungarians. What distinguishes the Bulgarian case from the other two is the homogeneous nature of the Turkish political sphere, which is a mirror object of the pluralist political spheres of Albanians and Hungarians. To illustrate once again the link between the development of the political and media domains of minority communities, the next section will focus on the main explanatory variable of this study – the political coherence of security sensitive minorities - and examine its effect on the progress and organization of Hungarian minority media. I will demonstrate how the pluralization of the political sphere of Transylvanian Hungarians has boosted the pluralization and development of their media institutions along the libertarian path of progression.

9.4. Hungarian Political Pluralism and Media Development

Looking at the post-totalitarian period of development of Hungarian minority media, one can observe gradual transformation of their discourse from monolithic and anti-pluralist towards liberal and pluralist. The present section attempts to account for this change. The examination of the process of pluralization of Hungarian media will be divided into two time-periods. The first period stretches from 1989 until the end of the 1990s. It is characterized by the ‘approving discourse’ of Hungarian media towards the single at that time Hungarian party - UDMR. The second period has started in 2003 and is still ongoing. It is featured by swapping of the approving discourse of Hungarian media with critical and liberal ones, and traces the pluralization of the

Hungarian political sphere. The comparative analysis of the two time-periods will demonstrate that the development of a pluralist Hungarian media sphere is a result of the pluralization of the Hungarian political sphere from the early 2000s.

9.4.1. Monolithic and anti-pluralist period of development of Hungarian media

In his article, published in 2003, Tivadar Magyari¹⁵⁸ elaborates on the uncritical stance of the post-totalitarian Hungarian media towards the single at that time Hungarian party and its leadership. Magyari depicts Hungarian media as maintaining *affirmative* and *approving* discourse with regards to UDMR. In his words, “[Hungarian media] tends to assume an uncritical view towards the minority community’s political actors and public sphere while engaging in uniform patterns of speech and ‘uni-colored’ reporting practice.”¹⁵⁹ The attempt of these media to maintain a unified voice had resulted in a situation where “it is virtually impossible to find in Hungarian media critical attitudes toward respected Hungarian leaders and organizations.”¹⁶⁰ Papp echoes these observations and adds that the Hungarian journalists from this period had adopted a formal and uncritical frame of reporting, as an attempt to save the group from splintering along political lines: “The minority journalist feels compelled to protect the imagined community (the minority itself), and in doing so allows that the operation of the frame may clash with professional logic.”¹⁶¹ Drawing upon results of a sociological survey of Hungarian media,

¹⁵⁸ Tivadar Magyari is Professor, Vice-rector and Head of the Hungarian track of studies at the Hungarian Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca.

¹⁵⁹ Magyari, *Hungarian minority media in Romania*, 186.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 194.

¹⁶¹ Papp, 142-143.

Papp reveals that during the 1990s two-thirds of Hungarian journalists considered reporting on the UDMR's internal problems a 'taboo' topic. Driven by desires to maintain the ethos of the group, they chose to mask certain problems within the party in order to sustain the positive image of UDMR and the group itself. This is how UDMR has achieved a status of 'sacred cow' in the media of Transylvanian Hungarians. Papp sees this taboo-creation as means of continuous ethnic-boundary building by Hungarian elites through media, which is another good example of the applicability of the instrumentalist approach to their analysis.¹⁶²

The producers of Hungarian media, whom I interviewed for this study [Ambrush (2007), Kiss (2007), Salamon (2007), Csanat (2007) and Szász (2007)], have confirmed Magyari's observations. According to the editors of popular Hungarian titles, there is one major factor that explains the uncritical stance of Hungarian media during this initial stage of their post-totalitarian development, namely, the shared by all Hungarians ethos of 'staying united' as a way to achieve effective political representation and advocacy within Romanian institutions. Thanks to the UDMR-engineered belief in the sanctity of Hungarian political unity, the Hungarian party managed to aggregate the support of more than 95% of Hungarians during the first transitional decade.¹⁶³ This 'electoral' bliss remained unchanged until the emergence of alternative Hungarian parties in 2003. Parallels can be drawn here with the almost unanimous support that Bulgarian Turks offered during the same time-period to their only political representative – the Movement for Rights and Freedoms. During this period, both minority groups were subject to nationalist attacks and were portrayed by mainstream majority media as 'threats' to their host

¹⁶² Ibid, 149-151.

¹⁶³ Magyari, 195.

states. Avadani describes the nationalistic slogans of Romanian leaders from that period as a form of political fad and useful instrument for mobilization of the nationalist vote - mobilization technique conceptualized by the instrumentalist scholars of ethnicity:

In the 1990s, the [Romanian] society needed a scapegoat and the nationalistic rhetoric about the 'bad Hungarians who want to tear our state apart' was everywhere in the media. In the early 2000s, the Roma community that assumed the role of the scapegoat and was blamed for the economic and political misfortunes that befell the country. Today, Romanians do not perceive the Hungarian minority as a threat to the state anymore.¹⁶⁴

Placed in a defensive position, the leaders of the Hungarian community managed to persuade the members of the group to adopt an uncritical 'self-preservation mode' and rally behind UDMR to preserve the institutional representation of Hungarians in Romanian politics. The role of Hungarian media as a political mobilization tool in the hands of UDMR was paramount, which calls for application of the instrumentalist approach to their analysis.

Any ideas on the pages of Hungarian newspapers, which were in discord with the position of UDMR, were fiercely repudiated as attempts to break up the Hungarian unity and harm the community. The UDMR's leaders successfully 'sold' ethnic homogenizing frames of reporting to the editors of Hungarian titles, many of whom received at the time financial assistance from the Hungarian party to weather the market reforms in the media sector. Indeed, "[i]n the media, as in other major institutions, those who do not display the requisite values and perspectives will be regarded as "irresponsible," "ideological," or otherwise aberrant, and will tend to fall by the

¹⁶⁴ Avadani, 2007. The Turkish community in Bulgaria continues to be subject to nationalist attacks until present day. Its political sphere remains coherent.

wayside.”¹⁶⁵ This thought by Herman and Chomsky, which describes the elite-influenced mass media in the U.S., can be applied with some approximation to the situation that Hungarian minority media found themselves in the 1990s when they lacked critical discourse of reporting and followed the unification frames provided to them by the Hungarian political leaders.¹⁶⁶ Atilla Szász - former journalist from ‘*Kronika*’ and present politician from UDMR - succinctly summarizes the spirit of Hungarian media from that period. He maintains that the flammable status of Romanian-Hungarian relations from the 1990s largely determined the relationship between Hungarian politicians and journalists:

Indeed, there was a lack of criticism of UDMR at the time, as we were forced to stay united due to the growing Romanian nationalism and mounting pressure on us. The slogan ‘We must stay together!’ was like an axiom for all Hungarians and especially the Hungarian journalists. Staying united was a question of surviving as a community at the time.¹⁶⁷

Szász’ observations are echoed by the editor of ‘*Szabadság*’ - Oliver Kiss:

Hungarian media in the 1990s adopted a clear pro-UDMR slant out of concerns for keeping the [political] unity of the community... If you are a in a minority position, you try to stick together as a group... especially if there is an external threat, coming from a nationalistically oriented majority. In a situation like this, it is normal [for minority media] to support the political force that represents the group, provided there is no [political] split within the community.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing consent*, 394. The status of Hungarian minority media from the 1990s provides another example for the utility of combining elements of the instrumentalist approach to ethnicity and ‘Propaganda’ media model for their analysis.

¹⁶⁶ Magyari, p. 195.

¹⁶⁷ Szász, Atilla. Interview with author. Digital recording. Bucharest, 10 October, 2007. Szász is State Councilor from UDMR and Coordinator of the activities in the fields of culture, education and European integration with the Cabinet of the Prime Minister of Romania.

¹⁶⁸ Kiss, 2007.

In a similar vein, the editor of '*Kronika*' maintains that after the democratic opening in 1989, the Hungarian minority was looking to become a single social, cultural and political entity. "In the early 1990s, Hungarians believed that if they are to survive as a distinct ethnic community, they need to stay united. This position was also maintained by the Hungarian media, which basically meant no critical remarks towards the political representative of the group - UDMR."¹⁶⁹ The renowned researcher of Romanian media Avadani arrives at a similar conclusion. Her opinion is insightful for it represents the viewpoint of Romanian experts on the subject:

Romanians tend to see minorities as blocks... Staying united was a political objective for the Hungarian community. UDMR has to stay united in order to remain legitimate in the eyes of Hungarians. In fact, keeping Hungarians united is the *raison d'être* of this political party. Therefore, immersed in the 'us versus them' atmosphere of ethnic hostility, it was rather natural for Hungarian media to work towards maintaining the social and political cohesion of the group.¹⁷⁰

Thus, one can infer that the heightened Romanian ethno-nationalism from the 1990s had indirectly prevented the pluralization of Hungarian media sphere.¹⁷¹

Looking back at the case study of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, one cannot help but notice the similarity of development of Hungarian and Turkish minority media from this time-period. Turkish politicians, similar to their UDMR counterparts, strived to maintain the political cohesion of the Turkish community by means of evoking elite-engineered ethnic tensions and by silencing liberal Turkish media. Through controlling the media of their respective communities, the leaders

¹⁶⁹ Csinta, 2007.

¹⁷⁰ Avadani, 2007. Avadani is director of a respected media-monitoring think-tank in Romania called '*Center for Independent Journalism*'.

¹⁷¹ Hence, the value of this variable in Table 5 ('*Main independent variables and their scores*'), in the Appendix section, is set to '3' which is identical to the media experience of Bulgarian Turks for the same time-period.

of Hungarian and Turkish groups had (and still have in the case of Bulgarian Turks) effectively controlled these groups' ethnic and political coherence as well as debates occurring within their public spheres. This is how the agency-centered focus of analysis and dynamic notion of ethnicity, characteristic for the *instrumentalist* approach, allow us to subject the development of the media of Hungarians and Turks to the interests of their political elites. Indeed, note the similarity in the positions of Ibrahim Tatarli (high-rank politician from the Turkish party MRF) and Oliver Kiss (editor-in-chief of the popular Hungarian daily 'Szabadság'.) During our conversation, Tatarli expressed the firm belief that the Turkish party in Bulgaria should stay united in order to secure the political representation of the Turkish community. Therefore, Turkish minority media should refrain from criticizing MRF and expressing alternative political views, as this might cause political splintering and loss of political power – all detrimental to the group.¹⁷² In a similar vein, Oliver Kiss believes that being in a minority position and under attack from nationalists, it is difficult to nurture political and media pluralism. “We are a minority and we've got to have united political representation. We are so few that if we split up, we will disappear as a group in a decade... [Therefore] Hungarian media should advocate for political unity and engage in criticism of Hungarian leadership only when absolutely necessary.”¹⁷³

Though many editors-in-chief of Hungarian media shared in the past (and probably still share) Kiss' opinion, there is a growing camp of Hungarian media-makers who disagree with the need to continue maintaining the approving and anti-pluralist discourse of Hungarian media from the

¹⁷² Tatarli, Ibrahim. Interview with author. Note taking. Sofia, October 12, 2007. Professor Tatrli is one of co-founders of MRF, advisor to the MRF leader Ahmed Dogan, former Deputy Chairman of the MRF parliamentary group, former Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary commission on culture, member of the Legislative commission in the Parliament and present adviser to the Turkish parliamentary group.

¹⁷³ Kiss, 2007. Emphasis mine.

1990s. Csinta Samu, editor-in-chief of the oppositional '*Krónika*'¹⁷⁴, is representative of this new breed of Hungarian journalists who downplay the importance of political and media homogeneity, and elevate instead the necessity of nurturing political and media pluralism within the Hungarian camp:

As a minority, we need to be united, but we do not need some sort of mechanical or artificial unity of minds because our community is composed of individuals who are persons and have different opinions and viewpoints about things. Back in the 1990s, we had to have a strong political representative and UDMR fit the bill perfectly. But today - times have changed.¹⁷⁵

This brings us to the turning point in the development of Hungarian minority media – the time when their 'approving' and 'anti-pluralist' discourse transformed into increasing openness and pluralism in the 2000s. As a proof for this transformation serves the appearance of oppositional Hungarian titles, which follow critical editorial stances with regards to the Hungarian political leaders and UDMR in particular. These are '*Krónika*', '*Erdélyi Napló*', and '*Héromszék*' - all of which are Hungarian daily newspapers from Transylvania.¹⁷⁶ This transformation makes Attila Szász (councilor from UDMR) conclude that Madyary's argument about the approving and uncritical voice of Hungarian media is not accurate anymore. "Being myself a former journalist from '*Krónika*', I can attest that the Hungarian media today maintain a rather pluralist discourse."¹⁷⁷ What is important to take away from this discussion is that the pluralization of Hungarian media did not start by itself. Instead, it was triggered by the appearance of

¹⁷⁴ Csinta also pursues political career in the Hungarian Civic Union party (MPP)

¹⁷⁵ Csinta, 2007.

¹⁷⁶ Toma, 2007.

¹⁷⁷ Szász, 2007.

oppositional political parties within the Hungarian community, advertising radical approaches to minority policy making. The next section will establish and conceptualize the link between these two processes.

9.4.2. Dynamics of pluralization of Hungarian political and media spheres

From its inception in 1989 until 2003, the *Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania* had enjoyed a position of exclusive political representative of Transylvanian Hungarians. Similar to the Turkish party in Bulgaria (MRF), UDMR enjoyed almost absolute support from the Hungarian diaspora, sufficient to guarantee the party stable parliamentary representation throughout the years. This unchallenged political status, however, was altered in 2003 when the UDMR radicals formed oppositional political parties that chose to steer conservative course in an attempt to accommodate the more conservative segment of the Hungarian political constituency. The interviewed by this author Hungarian journalists and media researchers stressed that the splintering of Hungarian political space into liberal and conservative camps had direct effect on the affirmative discourse of Hungarian media, which gradually overcame their uniform patterns of speech and ‘uni-colored’ mode of reporting, and split up into pro-moderate (pro-UDMR) and pro-radical camps. Although the majority of Hungarian media still side with the UDMR, there are a number of titles, which lean towards the oppositional Hungarian parties, which gain popularity among the Hungarian groups. Papp summarizes the dynamics of this politically induced fission within the Hungarian media sphere in the following way:

In the second half of the decade [1990s], partly in response to the transformation in the internal situation in Romania (the entrance of UDMR into government), and partly in response to the Hungarian model, cleavages appeared in the previously unified and

defensive minority attitude. It became clear that the minority is not unified community, but one divided along lines of differing interests. These divisions also appeared and became accepted in the minority press. Currently, as occurred previously in Hungary, the press exhibits a dualistic character with the 'left-wing (i.e. Markó-[UDMR]-supporters, prepared for compromise with majority parties) on the one hand, and the 'right-wing' equivalent (i.e. Tóké-s supporters, Fidesz-friendly and following a more radical strategy), on the other.¹⁷⁸

As a result of mimicking the processes within the Hungarian minority political sphere, Hungarian minority media have been diversifying in terms of titles, ideological orientations and political allegiances. "The fact that the two national dailies of the Hungarian community side with the two Hungarian political formations, provides for genuine pluralism in the Hungarian media sphere, that is, divergent opinions are expressed in them today. As a result, the Hungarian readers can find different interpretations and analysis of events in our newspapers," explains the editor of *'Brassoi Lapok'* Attila Ambrush.¹⁷⁹ Hence, the present status of Hungarian media should be upgraded from 'static' to 'dynamic', and from 'monolithic' to 'pluralistic', as these media have moved away from their initial 'anti-pluralist' mode towards their current 'pluralist' modality. Four years after writing his critical article on the monolithic discourse of Hungarian media, Professor Magyari is pleased to confirm their diversification:

Today, one can observe some positive changes to the approving discourse of Hungarian media - a genuine debate has appeared in them. The cause of the change is the splintering of UDMR and the emergence of oppositional political camps... In essence, the split within the Hungarian political elite has triggered a similar split within the Hungarian press. Some titles now support the oppositional movements of Laszlo Tokes, whereas others continue to be loyal to UDMR.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Papp, 2005, 142. Emphasis mine.

¹⁷⁹ Ambrish, 2007.

¹⁸⁰ Magyari, 2007.

Discussing the dynamic changes that took place in the political sphere of Transylvanian Hungarians, some critical commentators arrive at the conclusion that the polarization of the political life in Hungary has affected the political spheres of Hungarian diasporas abroad, causing in particular the political split within the Hungarian community in Romania.¹⁸¹ Salamon recalls that when UDMR was the ‘one and only’ political representative of Transylvanian Hungarians, the Hungarian press was united and supportive of the party. “We felt threatened as a minority and we realized that we must stand united to defend ourselves. This is not the case anymore.”¹⁸² As a former journalist and present politician from UDMR, Szász echoes the conclusions of Magyari and Salamon, and confirms that the “key factor for the appearance of a critical discourse in the Hungarian media today is the splitting of the Hungarian community into two political camps with different ideological orientations.”¹⁸³ At the same time, Szász sees as unfortunate the fact that politicians from Hungary have managed to export their political cleavages to Transylvania. “This serves well the current Romanian president who tries to split the Hungarian community in order to weaken it.”¹⁸⁴

Although identifying the reasons for the political fission of diaspora communities is in the future research projects of this author, and beyond the immediate scope of this dissertation, I cannot help but notice that there is a similarity between the Albanian and Hungarian cases in this regard. They both flesh out the links existing between homeland and diaspora political spheres (the case

¹⁸¹ Chirac (2007), Solomon (2007), Csanad (2007).

¹⁸² Salomon, 2007.

¹⁸³ Szász, 2007.

¹⁸⁴ Szász, 2007. When Victor Orban (the current Hungarian prime minister from the ruling party Fidesz) visited Transylvania in 2007, he publicly encouraged Hungarians to vote for the president of HNCT Laslo Tokes in the upcoming elections for European Parliament.

of Transylvanian Hungarians) or adjacent diaspora political communities (Albanians in Macedonia and Kosovo), where the cleavages from one sphere can be transferred to the other.¹⁸⁵ This is especially evident when diaspora's homeland is a neighboring state and politicians from both sides of the border engage in close cooperation with one another, often propelled by mutual business interests. Similar to the connection of some Albanian politicians from Macedonia to leaders of political parties from Kosovo, the leader of the *Hungarian National Council of Transylvania* has established close links with the right-wing *Fidesz* party in Hungary. For the sake of the argument, one can hypothesize that the political sphere of Bulgarian Turks would never experience the pluralization, exhibited by the political spheres of Hungarian and Albanian diasporas, as long as the leaders of the Turkish party in Bulgaria continue to steer a clear course from the political processes in Turkey. In fact, the prospects for the emergence of an alternative Turkish minority party may have increased significantly today when the former deputy-chair of MRF Kasim Dal, sacked by the leader of MRF Ahmed Dogan, has established contacts with the administration in Ankara, which favors Dal over Dogan. If the political sphere of Bulgarian Turks also diversifies because of external influence from Turkey, one may expect that the Turkish minority media will also experience boost and pluralization.¹⁸⁶ Although a second

¹⁸⁵ Turks in Bulgaria had similar experience during the Inter-War period, when the Turkish diaspora split into pro-Atatürk and anti-Western camps, following similar division in Turkey.

¹⁸⁶ I advanced this hypothesis back in 2012, when working on the first draft of this dissertation. My hypothesis has proven correct at the time of this writing (May 2013). Kasim Dal had enjoyed the support of the MRF leader Ahmed Dogan until Dal voiced criticism against the authoritarian style of his leadership. The administration in Ankara has never supported Dogan and his immediate aids, for it believes that they are a construct of the Bulgarian Secret Services that try to control the Turkish group through them. Kasim Dal, however, has been recognized as a legitimate figure by the authorities in Turkey for he publicly exposed the connections of Dogan's circle with the Bulgarian Secret Services. Moreover, Ankara has encouraged Dal to take over the leadership of MRF and commence a democratic overhaul of the party in order to restore its prestige among the Turks. As it proved impossible to dislodge Dogan and his aids from the MRF's helm, in the beginning of 2013, Kasim Dal established the newest Turkish minority party - *People's Party Freedom and Dignity* (PPFD). For there are virtually no Turkish minority media in Bulgaria, in the process of gathering support for his cause, Dal tried to connect with the Turkish electorate via Facebook. This method was not successful due to the low Internet connectivity of Bulgarian Turks. Hence, I believe

Turkish party was indeed established in 2013, following backing from Ankara, the results of the last parliamentary elections (May 2013) demonstrate that the Turkish community continues to be politically unified and supportive of MRF. It remains to be seen if Kasim Dal's *People's Party Freedom and Dignity* (PPFD) will gain political momentum and provide breeding grounds for the emergence of oppositional Turkish media in Bulgaria. If the thesis of this study is correct (pluralization of minority political spheres results in pluralization of minority media spheres), this is something to be expected in the near future when the need to mobilize political support will force the leaders of the two Turkish parties to invest in the promotion of close to them 'media circles', following the example of Albanian and Hungarian minority elites from Macedonia and Romania.

Hence, the Hungarian case has helped us identify another factor that indirectly accounts for the pluralization of the media spheres of security sensitive minority groups. This is the extension of *political bridges* between homeland and diaspora political spheres. If such bridges are built, one can expect transferring of the shocks and cleavages from the former (homeland) to the latter (diaspora's) political sphere. Then, the ideological split in the diaspora's political domain will most probably transfer into the media sphere of the community, which will split along political lines. This will result in pluralization of the media of diaspora groups and invigoration of public debates within their public spheres. However, the pluralization of minority media often comes at a price, namely, drawing minority media into the orbit of competing minority political formations. This process, which we monitored in the development of Albanian minority media in Macedonia, we see now replicated in the Hungarian minority media in Romania. Professor Magyari confirms

that launching of close to PPFD media is to be expected soon, which will boost the development and pluralization of the Turkish minority media in Bulgaria.

that the merging of Hungarian political and media spheres is much more pronounced today than ten years ago.¹⁸⁷ Chiriac is of the same opinion: “Hungarian media are very close to politics today.”¹⁸⁸

Based on their proximity to the political sphere, Salamon distinguishes between three groups of Hungarian press. First, this is the group of ‘conservative’ titles, leaning towards the figure of László Tőkés and the inspired by him oppositional parties. Second, is the media that lack clear ideological profile. Finally, there are newspapers that lean towards the liberal camp and its political embodiment UDMR.¹⁸⁹ According to Salamon, the majority of Hungarian titles fall within the group lacking clear ideological orientation.¹⁹⁰ However, there are a number of influential media that openly support the liberal and conservative camps within the Hungarian political sphere. This makes Salamon conclude that “the Hungarian press today has a good balance of opinions expressed in them.”¹⁹¹ This results in the establishment of a self-tuned Hungarian media sphere where at any given time there are media outlets that counter the attacks of rival political formations and close to them media. Hence, one can conclude that the Hungarian minority media today are truly pluralistic.

The fate of the UDMR’s organ - ‘*Uj Magyar Szó*’ - provides good illustration of the advanced here argument. During our conversation, the editor-in-chief of ‘*Uj Magyar Szó*’ confirmed that

¹⁸⁷ Magyari, 2007.

¹⁸⁸ Chirac, 2007.

¹⁸⁹ Salamon, 2007.

¹⁹⁰ One can find on their pages articles that advertise liberal as well as conservative agendas.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

UDMR relies on it to ameliorate and balance the critical comments, distributed in the Hungarian media by the oppositional '*Krónika*'. In fact, the necessity to counteract attacks of oppositional media was among the main reasons why the UDMR leader purchased '*Uj Magyar Szó*' and saved it from bankruptcy. "Now, a day does not go by without our paper publishing a picture of Béla Markó [UDMRs president at the time]," admits Salamon.¹⁹² The financial plight of '*Uj Magyar Szó*' is somewhat reminiscent of that of the MRF organ '*Rights and Freedoms*' in Bulgaria. At a certain point, both newspapers found themselves in dire financial straits. If '*Uj Magyar Szó*' was bailed out for political reasons, '*Rights and Freedoms*' was let down by its own political patrons because it was not needed. MRF had little incentive to maintain a party organ when the party had not been challenged by any rival Turkish formations or newspapers. With the appearance of a second Turkish party on the horizon, this is about to change. Going back to the Hungarian group, UDMR cannot afford the luxury to remain without a party organ when attacked by political competitors and watchdog conservative titles like '*Krónika*'. This accounts for the support that UDMR offers to '*Uj Magyar Szó*' and other pro-UDMR newspapers and channels.

To sum up, this section has provided additional evidence to the main argument of this thesis, namely, that there is a strong correlation between the processes occurring within the political and media spheres of security sensitive minority communities. This chapter has shown that the liberalization and pluralization of the media spheres of such groups occurs as a result of the pluralization of their political spheres. The appearance of alternative centers of minority political power triggers the formation of circles of supportive media around them. The latter are often

¹⁹² Ibid.

connected to their political patrons by clientelist links, although the bond between them could be also a result of the ideological preferences of the media editors and owners.

9.4.3. Importance of having pluralist Hungarian media

What has been the impact of the pluralization of the Hungarian media on the Hungarian community? Why is it important? According to Magyari and Brubaker et al., one of the major benefits of the diversification of the Hungarian media voices has been the stimulation of debates in the Hungarian public sphere.¹⁹³ Brubaker et al. describe Hungarian media as the “infrastructure” and “backbone” of a distinctive Hungarian public sphere in Romania.¹⁹⁴ Chiribuka confirms that Hungarians inform themselves mostly by following the locally produced Hungarian media, which enable them to engage in critical deliberation of public events in the Hungarian public domain.¹⁹⁵ This results in greater involvement of Hungarians in the Romanian public life, minimizing their capsulation and aiding their overall integration.

The editors of Hungarian media are aware of the important role their outlets play in keeping the Hungarian public sphere alive. Thus, they try to fulfill their journalistic duties as professionally as possible. “I see the value of our newspaper in the fact that we try to flesh out all viewpoints and opinions, which is of paramount importance for the functioning of the Hungarian public sphere in Romania,” says the editor of *‘Kronika’*.¹⁹⁶ His colleague from *‘Brassoi Lapok’* admits

¹⁹³ Magyari, 2007.

¹⁹⁴ Brubaker et al., 292.

¹⁹⁵ Chiribuka, 82.

¹⁹⁶ Csinta, 2007.

that although people today can gather information from the Internet, they still turn to the Hungarian country press, as Internet publications rarely offer professional journalistic analysis and the readers are often suspicious about the authenticity of the information they find online. This is why it is important that Hungarian media provide their readers not only with information, but also with opinions about what happens in Transylvania and Romania: “The purpose of Hungarian media today is to aid the opinion formation and public debates that take place in the realm of politics, economics and social life. As a result, there is a lively Hungarian public sphere, which functioning is aided by the locally produced Hungarian media.”¹⁹⁷ Csinta is optimistic about the future of both Hungarian media and public spheres, for an increasing number of Hungarian newspapers are employing young Hungarian journalists who believe in the values of liberal media and the necessity of maintaining a liberal marketplace of ideas in the Hungarian community. For him, the future of the Hungarian public sphere depends on this new generation of Hungarian journalists who bring about a new breed of liberal Hungarian media to the fore. “This is the new culture of the Hungarian media-making, brought about by a new generation of Hungarian journalists!”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Amrush, 2007.

¹⁹⁸ Csinta, 2007.

10. Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, the author undertook the task to examine the variables that condition the development of Hungarian minority media in Romania. The identified here factors appear to be similar to the variables examined in the previous two case studies. The *size* of the Hungarian minority, combined with its good *educational standing*, has proved important for the establishment of a thriving market for Hungarian minority media in Transylvania. Many of them are self-sustainable and depend on revenues from sales and advertisement. The Hungarian political elites, however, utilize ‘subsidization’ and ‘ownership’ mechanisms to keep some influential media outlets under their control and use them to mobilize political support. The 160-year-long *tradition* of making Hungarian media in Transylvania has helped them survive the repressive communist regime of Ceaușescu and make a successful comeback after the democratic opening in 1989. Media experience alone, however, did not bring about the diverse Hungarian media sphere that we witness today. In fact, ten years ago, Hungarian media were featured by authoritarian, monolithic and anti-pluralist discourse. The rise of nationalist sentiments in the 1990s led to the strengthening of the political cohesion within the Hungarian community and to clamping down on the independent media voices within the group.

Hence, the key variable, explaining the present pluralist outlook of the Hungarian media scene had to be searched elsewhere. It was found in the processes occurring in the political domain of the group, namely, in the genesis of a pluralist Hungarian political sphere. The Hungarian case has supported the main thesis of this study that the development of pluralist media of minority groups is possible only when their political spheres become pluralist. The pluralist dynamics then

transfer from the political to the media domains of minority communities and stimulate the emergence of pluralist media spheres. The mere situation of minority media institutions within the pluralist media structures of the adoptive countries does not guarantee the pluralization of the former. The liberalization of minority political life does. Hence, the political structures of security sensitive minority groups have greater impact on the development of minority media than national institutional and normative contexts. Indeed, the EU political conditionality (*external system pressure* variable) resulted in liberalization of the minority and media legislations in Romania. It failed, however, to produce liberal and pluralist Hungarian media. The latter occurred only when the politically united Hungarian group split up into rival political camps. Driven by monetary incentives and ideological preferences, some Hungarian media formed 'media circles' around the competing Hungarian centers of political power. Others struggle to maintain their financial and editorial independence. This is how pro-moderate (pro-UDMR), pro-conservative and neutral 'media centers' were established within the Hungarian media domain. The monolithic and anti-pluralist discourse of the latter had ended, giving way to genuine media diversity. According to Habermas (1989), plurality of the media voices stimulates the emergence of liberal marketplace of ideas and gives impetus to public debates. Both these process are evident in the media and public domains of Transylvanian Hungarians today.

The Hungarian case has also added another dimension to this thesis, namely, I have observed that the media spheres of security sensitive minorities not only replicate the processes occurring within their political spheres, but also mimic their intensity. Following the cleavage within the Hungarian political camp in the 2000s, the Hungarian media splintered along political lines where the relative strength of the opposing media camps resembles that of the opposing political centers of minority power. Finally, the comparison of Albanian and Hungarian minority media

has helped identify another intriguing variable that indirectly affects the pluralization of the media of diaspora communities. This is the building of *political bridges* between homeland and diaspora groups. If such bridges are extended, one can expect to observe transferring of the political cleavages from the bigger (homeland) to the smaller (diaspora) political sphere. The ideological split within diasporas' political domains will then transfer to the media spheres of these communities, triggering their pluralization. Hence, one can conclude that the media spheres of security sensitive minority groups follow the processes occurring within the political domains of these communities. The pluralization of the media of security sensitive minority groups depends on the liberalization of their political spheres. The emergence of competing political and media centers within the community of Transylvanian Hungarians has invigorated the debates in the Hungarian public sphere, stimulated the political participation of Hungarians and aided their overall integration in the Romanian polity. ⁽¹⁴⁾

Chapter 6 Conclusion

Ethnic minority groups are a distinctive feature of modernity where the advance of globalization and democratization projects has enabled them to cross national borders in search for better opportunities. Other ethnic communities have been living in foreign lands for centuries, following dismemberment of empires and redrawing of political borders. As a result, there are thousands of different ethnic groups around the world today and at the same time less than 200 nation states, only small percentage of which are ethnically homogeneous. The widespread of ethnic minorities has made them a popular topic of research. Formation of ethnicity, factors that bring about ethnic conflict, economic and political consequences of ethnic diversity, are among the hot topics in social sciences today, which have been examined from different theoretical perspectives and continue to remain at the top of researchers' agenda. The examination of media produced by ethnic minority groups, however, has remained relatively neglected by students of ethnicity and media. This might sound surprising bearing in mind the significance of ethnicity today and the important role ethnic media play in multiethnic societies. Riggins (1992), Husband (1994), Splichal (1994), Browne (1996), Jeffres (2000), and Matsaganis (2011) have documented the importance of these media for the formation and preservation of ethnic identities. Browne (2005) and Brubaker et al. (2006) have touched upon their political role but have not examined it in detail. In essence, the existing research on ethnic minority media focuses on their history, functions and structuring, but pays little attention to the input of minority political actors in their development. This dissertation has ventured to address this gap by adopting a comparative angle of analysis and studying the media of the largest ethnic minority groups in the Balkans. The novelty of this study is that it examines the dynamics of interaction between the political and

media spheres of minority communities. More specifically, it explores for a first time the role of minority political elites in the development of the media institutions of security sensitive ethnic minorities - numerically and politically strong communities that play a key role in maintaining the stability of their adoptive states. The examination of their media is important for two reasons. First, developed ethnic media institutions serve as a major source of information to such communities, which are usually characterized by social capsulation and low levels of integration in their host societies. Second, pluralist ethnic media help stimulate public deliberations in minority public spheres, thus assisting in the formation of minority public opinion. The latter is re-captured by minority media and relayed back to the political 'black box' in the form of valuable feedback, which helps authorities in multiethnic states fine-tune pursued by them minority policies. This is how ethnic media may help minority agents partake in the public life of their host societies and enhance the system of democratic governance. This makes the development and study of these media important, especially with respect to young democratic regimes characterized by lingering interethnic tensions. The primary goal of this thesis has been to identify the factors that condition the development and pluralization of the media of security sensitive minorities. It has been driven by the following questions: *What factors determine the development of the media of security sensitive minority groups in the Balkans? What causes the anti-pluralist media spheres of such communities to liberalize and pluralize? What informs the media policies of majority and minority elites with respect to security sensitive minority groups?*

2. Theoretical Framework and Contribution to Scholarly Literature in Related Fields

Before starting the actual examination of the media of security sensitive minorities in South Eastern Europe, I constructed a theoretical framework for their analysis. The second chapter of this thesis offers review of four bodies of literature, some of which have provided the building blocks of its analytical framework, whereas others have informed the selection of independent variables. Two theoretical approaches have offered the backbone of this thesis' theoretical framework, namely, the instrumentalist approach to ethnicity and Herman and Chomsky's 'Propaganda' model. Both theories focus on the engineering powers of elites and complement each other well for the purposes of this research. In addition, the review of literatures on ethnic media and media liberalization in Eastern Europe has informed the selection of the independent factors of this thesis. I will discuss next the input of each of these bodies of literature into my research and the contribution of this dissertation to scholarly debates in related fields.

The review of literature on ethnicity has examined the major approaches to this phenomenon and determined that the instrumentalist approach has the greatest utility to my investigation, as it conceptualizes ethnic groups as political communities whose identity is manipulated by elites for political and economic gains. The "ethnicization of politics and politization of ethnicity" in the Balkans (Genov 2004) is well accounted for by the instrumentalist approach, which made me select it for the analysis of interethnic relations and ethnic media development in the region. The examination of the three case studies has demonstrated that local political elites have utilized different approaches (normative, regulatory, financial) to establish control over the media of

security sensitive minorities in order to harness their ethnicization and mobilization powers in the political process. By subjecting ethnic media to financial and administrative controls, minority politicians have effectively become the 'information gatekeepers' of their respective communities, directing the messages produced by minority media and setting the tone of discussions in minority public spheres. This has enabled minority elites to keep their ethnic electorates under control and prevent the liberalization of minority political and media domains. This is how the elite-centered perspective of the instrumentalist approach has allowed me to tag the functioning of minority media in the Balkans to the interests of local political elites. In addition, I have drawn upon Brown's situationalist approach to ethnicity (in the analysis of Albanian media in Macedonia) to demonstrate that the consociational design of multiethnic polities affects positively the development of ethnic minority media.

The application of the instrumentalist approach in the analysis of these media has been complemented by Herman and Chomsky's 'Propaganda' model, which examines the role of elites in the operation of liberal media systems. My analytical framework has adopted two of their filters - *ownership* and *advertising* – to flesh out the mechanisms of political control over minority media, exercised by the political elites in the Balkans. Although the 'Propaganda' model comes from the field of political communication studies, it overlaps with the instrumentalist approach in the sense that both frameworks focus on the engineering powers of political elites. If the instrumentalist approach accounts for their incentives to manipulate media institutions and content, the 'Propaganda' model explains their ability to do so. Thus, combining elements from both approaches into a single analytical framework has provided me with opportunity to examine the role of elites in influencing both the structures and content of ethnic minority media, as well as to flesh out the clientelist links between minority politicians and minority media institutions.

Finally, analysis of literature on media liberalization in Eastern Europe has revealed that liberal media mechanisms are still in the process of formation in the region. Although the adoption of liberal media laws has ensured on paper the independence of local media institutions, the lack of proper implementation of these norms accounts for the susceptibility of the media in the region to political and corporate controls, which opens the door for the application of the 'Propaganda' model in their analysis.

The review of literature on ethnic minority media has revealed that their emergence and progress depends on the ability of minority groups to produce their own media as well as on a few regulatory mechanisms, which are all in possession of state authorities. The latter are normative regulation of the access of minorities to media, structuring and operation of media regulators, development of media funding mechanisms and training of minority media professionals. The assessment of the intensity of application of each of these instruments by the Bulgarian, Romanian and Macedonian authorities has been used to determine the degree of their involvement in the development of minority media in the Balkans. The analysis of minority media literature has revealed an important area that has escaped the attention of media scholars. This is the key role that minority politicians play in the development of the media of their respective communities. Browne (1996), Splichal (1994) and Gross (2002) recognize the input of majority elites in the development of minority media, but fail to examine the role of minority politicians in it. Other media scholars have only touched upon the importance of political organization of minority groups for the development of their media institutions. For example, Browne (2005) claims that numerous ethnic communities with strong political representation

have better funded media than smaller groups with anemic political powers.¹ He fails to examine, however, the effect of the political organization of minority communities on the development of their media spheres. As the examination of the three cases has suggested, ethnic minorities featuring *pluralist* political spheres and party systems are associated with pluralist minority media domains (Albanians in Macedonia and Hungarians in Romania), whereas communities characterized by *monolithic* political spheres and non-pluralist party systems are associated with non-pluralist and monolithic minority media spheres (Turks in Bulgaria). Thus, I concluded that scholars of ethnic minority media need to factor the *political organization (political coherence)* of minority groups in the process of assessment of the effect of minority political representation on the development of minority media institutions. The focus of the present study on the political organization of security sensitive ethnic minority groups (pluralist vs. monolithic) and its impact on the development of these groups' media is the main contribution of this thesis to the media literature. It helps explain the change in the architecture of minority media spheres, namely, it reveals the forces behind their progression from monolithic and authoritarian to liberal and pluralist modality. Such media shifts have important consequences for the inclusion of ethnic minorities in the public life of their adoptive states and for their overall integration in the latter.

In sum, this dissertation contributes to minority media and ethnicity literatures by offering pioneer research on the impact of political organization of ethnic minorities on the organization and progress of their media spheres. To answer the research question of this thesis, the author has embarked on a comparative qualitative study of the media of three security sensitive minorities in the Balkans – Turks in Bulgaria, Albanians in Macedonia and Hungarians in Romania. The cases

¹ The media experience of Bulgarian Turks refutes this argument.

have been selected so that all possible values of the dependent variable are observable, namely, an ethnic minority group that has developed and pluralist media (Albanians), an ethnic minority community that is featured by underdeveloped and non-pluralist media (Turks), and an ethnic minority that is characterized by liberalizing and pluralizing media (Transylvanian Hungarians). The Turkish case has been used as a departing point of my investigation. It shows how the authoritarian and homogeneous nature of the Turkish political sphere translates into diminishing and uncritical Turkish media sphere. The Albanian case has exemplified the final destination of minority media progression, whereas the Hungarian case has illustrated the transitional process from 'monolithic' to 'pluralistic' modality of minority media organization.

3. Variables and Conclusions Drawn

The examination of the three cases has shown that situating the media institutions of ethnic minority groups within the liberal structures of mainstream majority media does not entail automatic liberalization and development of the former. Instead, the development of pluralist media spheres of security sensitive minorities is a complex process that depends on the interplay of a set of independent variables that are external and internal to the group, and pertain to three levels of analysis - micro, state and system. These variables have been organized into three groups. First, minority-level institutional and resource constraints where the following variables have been examined: *degree of political cohesion (political pluralism)* of ethnic minorities, *status of interethnic relations* in multiethnic polities and overall level of *education* of minority groups. Second, minority media-level constraints, which include *traditions (experience)* in making ethnic

media and availability of *funding* mechanisms for their production. Third, state- and supranational level constraints, where *external system pressure* and *grand polity design* have been examined. After studying the effect of each of these variables on the values of the dependent variable – development of pluralist media spheres of security sensitive minority groups – I have concluded that the political factors among them play dominant role. In particular, the *political cohesion* of security sensitive minorities has been identified as the dominant variable that determines if the media spheres of such communities are going to be pluralist or monolithic. I will summarize next the impact of each of these variables on the dependent variable and the conclusions drawn in the process of researching.²

3.1. Minority-level Institutional and Resource Constraints

First, investigating the *political pluralism (cohesion)* of security sensitive minorities in the Balkans, I have determined that their political spheres can be either *monolithic* (that is, made up of just one ethnic party) or *pluralistic* (that is, made up of at least two rival ethnic parties). The results of my research suggest that the greater the political coherence of given minority group, the less pluralist its media sphere is going to be. For example, the leaders of the politically coherent Turkish community in Bulgaria have been working to diminish the pluralism in the Turkish media domain in order to retain their control over the group, preserve its political coherence, and maintain the elite status quo. By obstructing the liberalization of the Turkish media sphere, the single Turkish political party - Movement for Rights and Freedoms - has prevented the establishment of watchdog Turkish media, which could provoke critical deliberations within the

² Consult “Table 5: Main independent variables and their scores” in the Appendix section.

community and encourage reshuffling of the Turkish political elite. Similar dynamics have been recorded with respect to the development of Hungarian minority media in Romania. Until the establishment of alternative centers of minority political power within the Hungarian camp, the plurality of opinions in the Hungarian media had been sacrificed on the altar of maintaining the political unity of the group under the guidance of its one and only political broker – the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania. In contrast, the pluralist political party system of Albanians in Macedonia has stimulated the proliferation of pluralist Albanian media, which are among the best-developed ones in the Balkans. Comparing the Hungarian and Albanian cases, I have discovered that in a situation of intragroup multi-party competition, minority elites offer support to media outlets that are sympathetic to their parties and use them as political mobilization vehicles, thus assisting in the pluralization of the media domains of their communities. The comparison of the Turkish and Hungarian cases has revealed that elites of politically coherent (non-pluralist) minorities use their power and resources to block minority media liberalization, as they believe that critical reporting can challenge the political unity of ethnic electorates and endanger elite status quo. Summarizing my observations from the three cases, I have concluded that the major factor that determines if the media sphere of a given security sensitive minority group is going to be pluralist or monolithic is the structure of political organization of the group, that is, the degree of its political coherence and pluralism.

Second, the Bulgarian case has shown that the status of *interethnic relations* may have direct or/and indirect effect on the progress of ethnic minority media. On the one hand, the surge of ethno-nationalist sentiments in Bulgarian society has led to the organization of mass protests and petitions against the access of Turks to Bulgarian public broadcasters. On the other hand, the rising influence of right-wing nationalist formations in Bulgarian politics has enabled the Turkish

party (MRF) to clamp down on the liberalization of the media institutions of the group, arguing that the political and ideological unity of Turks is paramount for their survival as a group. The same process has been documented with respect to the development of Hungarian media in Romania in the 1990s. The Hungarian case has revealed another 'political' factor that indirectly accounts for the pluralization of the media of security sensitive diaspora communities. This is the extension of political bridges between homeland and diaspora's political spheres. For example, the close corroboration between politicians from Hungary and their Hungarian colleagues from Transylvania has resulted in transferring of political cleavages from the former to the latter political spheres, leading to pluralization of the party system of Transylvanian Hungarians. The emergence of conservative and moderate political camps within the Hungarian community has triggered the formation of supporting media circles around the rival Hungarian political parties, leading to pluralization of the previously monolithic media sphere of the group. Thus, I have concluded that pluralization of political spheres of minority communities is the key variable that causes pluralization of their media domains.

Third, the average *level of education* of minority groups is another minority-level constraint that has direct effect on the development of minority media institutions. As a rule of thumb, the higher the level of education of given ethnic minority, the more versatile and developed its media institutions are for well-educated communities pose greater demand for print media and generate professional and cultural elites to run them. This has been exemplified by the experience of Hungarian and Albanian minority groups whose good educational standing, proficiency in minority language, and developed educational institutions have generated burgeoning markets for ethnic media and sufficient stock of media professionals. At the same time, communities with restricted access to education show lesser demand for print media and experience lack of media

cadres. The Bulgarian case has demonstrated how the constrained access of Turks to higher education, combined with the exodus of the Turkish intelligentsia from Bulgaria in the 1980s, have prevented the community from reproducing its intellectual core and training media professionals. This has impaired the efforts of Turks to restore their media sphere after the democratic opening in 1989. The *level of education* variable, however has no direct effect on the prospects of liberalization of given minority group's media, as the comparison of Albanian and Hungarian cases has compellingly demonstrated.

3.2. Minority Media-level Constraints

Established *media traditions* or *media-related experience* is a media-level constraint, which turned out to have significantly less importance for the progress of ethnic media than originally thought. Minority groups with strong intellectual cores and professional elites naturally have greater experience in minority media production. This is the case with Transylvanian Hungarians, who have enjoyed locally produced Hungarian media since the times of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The 160-year-long tradition of Hungarian media in Transylvania has certainly helped the preservation of these media during the authoritarian era and aided their re-establishment after the fall of the communist regime in 1989. This solid media experience, however, affected little the prospects for pluralization of the post-totalitarian Hungarian media sphere. Moreover, the explanatory power of this variable significantly diminished after examining the media of Albanians in Macedonia. Although Albanians have had little experience in producing their own media, they enjoy today one of the most developed and pluralist ethnic media in the Balkans. For a short period of only two decades, they have established an elaborate and liberal media scene, which approximates in its complexity and surpasses in its diversity mainstream Macedonian

media. In addition, looking solely at the 'media experience' factor, one can hardly account for the present poor standing of Turkish minority media in Bulgaria, which have a century-long tradition of development. Based on these findings, I have concluded that *media experience* cannot be relied upon as a dependable indicator for the development and pluralization of minority media institutions. Instead, the broader political and institutional context, within which these media are situated, needs to be taken into account if one wants to explain why rich on media experience minority groups advance to a stage where their media virtually disappear, and why minority groups lacking media knowledge develop in a short period of time full-fledged and pluralist media spheres.

Availability of diverse sources of *funding* for minority media production has been identified as another media-level constraint (with pronounced political overtones), which directly affects the development of ethnic media in the Balkans. Four major sources of funding have been identified, namely, state subsidies, revenues from advertisement, revenues from sales, and external funding provided by civil society (NGOs) or supranational organizations (EU). It has been determined that the better developed minority media in the region (Albanian and Hungarian) sustain themselves through utilizing all four sources, though in different proportions. If the Hungarian media rely mostly on the developed market for Hungarian titles in Romania, the Albanian media depend heavily on advertisement contracts provided by the Albanian parties in the government. Hungarian and Albanian political elites have recognized the mobilizing powers of minority media and have looked for ways to develop and use them in the political process. Turkish political elites have gone the opposite direction. Being the only political broker of the Turkish community, the leadership of the Turkish party has downplayed the mobilization potential of the Turkish media and relied instead on clientelist links with Turkish clan leaders to mobilize the support of the

community. However, this is soon to change with the emergence of a second Turkish political party in Bulgaria, which, if the thesis of this dissertation is correct, will generate competition in the political and media domains of the group, revitalizing the Turkish media sphere in the process.

Political ownership, governmental grants, and public ads have been identified as the principal financial instruments that the Hungarian and Albanian politicians utilize to control the media of their respective communities. The application of Herman and Chomsky's 'Propaganda' model (more specifically its *ownership* and *advertising* filters) has helped me expose the clientelist links between minority elites and minority media institutions. The Albanian and Hungarian cases have shown that it is a common practice for minority politicians in the Balkans to become owners of influential ethnic media outlets and direct public funding to them in order to build circles of supporting media around their parties. This demonstrates the flexible array of funding mechanisms available to minority politicians to control the media of their respective communities. Despite attempts to subjugate minority media to political controls, the media spheres of Albanians and Hungarians are characterized by genuine pluralism and watchdog journalism that keep minority politicians in check. The pluralist architecture of the Albanian and Hungarian political spheres is the key variable that explains the pluralist nature of these groups' media spheres. Rival Albanian and Hungarian parties compete for influence in the political and media domains of their communities, which results in: 1) transferring of the competition from the political to the media sphere of these groups, and 2) formation of circles of friendly media around competing centers of minority political power. The media experience of Hungarians and Turks has shown that political pluralism precedes media pluralism. The mere placement of minority media institutions within the liberal structures of mainstream media does not entail liberalization

and pluralization of the former. The pluralization of the internal political life of security sensitive minorities is the factor that kicks off pluralization and further development of these group's media institutions. Hence, the main conclusion of my research is that ethnic minority political pluralism breeds ethnic minority media pluralism.

3.3. State- and Supranational-level Constraints

The Albanian and Hungarian political elites have chosen to promote the media of their respective communities in order to harness the ethnicization and politicization powers of these media in the political mobilization process. Turkish politicians have chosen to leave Turkish minority media dissipate, as they are afraid of assisting in the genesis of their own nemesis – liberal Turkish media and watchdog journalism. There are instances, however, when majority political elites aid the media of security sensitive minorities despite the mobilization potential of the latter. In Romania and Macedonia, for example, government subsidies have provided a solid platform for the development of the local Hungarian and Albanian media. In fact, these security sensitive communities receive the greatest financial assistance from their host states and enjoy the longest airtime on the local public broadcasters compared to other smaller ethnic minorities residing in these countries. This thesis has identified two factors that account for the willingness of majority elites to assist in the development of the media of security sensitive minorities. First, this is the *external system pressure* imposed by the EU on the examined here states to improve the plight of their national minorities. Liberal minority requirements have been included in the political criteria for accession to the Union, which all three countries had to satisfy before opening negotiations for EU membership. The EU stimulus has resulted in liberalization of their national legislations, which improved on a normative level the access of minority groups to the

educational and media spheres of these states. Because of this, minority programming on public broadcasters has been extended, public funding for minority media has been secured, training of minority media professionals in state universities has been guaranteed. Unfortunately, significant control over the operation of media regulators and grant-allocation agencies has been granted to the political elites of examined minority groups, which accounts for the political bias in the performance of these institutions.

The second structural variable, affecting the development of ethnic media and accounting for the readiness of majority elites to support them, is *grand polity structure*. I have shown that the model of democratic governance informs the multicultural policies (including in the media domain) of majority elites.³ The Macedonian case has demonstrated how the adoption of consensus model of democracy has propelled the development of Albanian minority media. Thanks to the consensual re-arrangement of the Macedonian polity, the access of Albanians to education in their mother tongue has greatly improved. This has resulted in training of Albanian media professionals and dedicated readers of Albanian press, which in turn has expanded the market of Albanian media products and improved their overall quality. The Ohrid Agreement has also greatly improved the access of Albanians to Macedonian public broadcasters.

Polity structure and *external system pressure* are two external variables that have only indirect impact on the development of ethnic minority media. Indeed, the EU political conditionality has resulted in liberalization of minority- and media-related legislations in all of the examined states, but it did not trigger pluralization of the media spheres of researched minority communities. This

³ According to Brown's *situationalist* approach to ethnicity (1989), national institutional settings affect ethnic identification and national minority policies.

shows that the institutionalist approach cannot account for the change in the organization of minority media spheres. The mere situation of minority media institutions within the pluralist structures of host states does not entail pluralization of the former. The liberalization of minority political life does. Hence, the political structures of security sensitive minorities have greater impact on the development of the media structures of these communities than national institutional and normative contexts.

In conclusion, the present dissertation has shown that the mere adoption of liberal norms and institution of liberal national media spheres is not sufficient for the initialization and pluralization of the media domains of security sensitive minorities. The advanced here model takes into consideration the effect of seven independent variables on the development of pluralist media spheres of such communities. The comparison of the three case studies has demonstrated that the *educational standing* of minority groups matters for the development of their media institutions, but affects little the chances for their liberalization. Accumulation of *media experience* is undoubtedly an important factor that determines the overall quality of minority media production, but not a critical one for the initialization and pluralization of minority media spheres. Conflicting *interethnic relations* between majority and minority populations limit the chances of development of minority media and impede their pluralization. The access of media producers to diverse sources of *funding* advance the development of minority media and so do consociational *polity arrangements*. Involvement of *supranational actors* that cherish minority rights provides institutional boost to minority media development, but has no effect on nurturing media pluralism. The key variable that accounts for the pluralization of the media domains of security sensitive minorities is hidden in the structure of political organization of these groups. Pluralization of the political spheres of Albanians and Hungarians is the factor that triggered the

pluralization and further evolution of their media domains. In contrast, the lack of pluralism in the Turkish political sphere has contributed to the monolithic and underdeveloped nature of the Turkish media institutions. Hence, this dissertation has supported its central thesis, namely, that there is a strong correlation between the structuring of the political and media spheres of security sensitive ethnic minority groups. The outlook of the media domains of such communities strongly depends on the structure and processes occurring within their political domains. The development of opinion-rich and diverse ethnic media is possible only when the political spheres of ethnic minority groups are competitive and pluralistic. The expectation that the mere situation of ethnic media institutions within the pluralist context of mainstream media will result in automatic development and liberalization of the former is false. The pluralization of the media of security sensitive minorities is a function of the pluralization of the political spheres of such communities. Ethnic minority political pluralism breeds ethnic minority media pluralism and development.

4. Justification, Applicability and Prognosis

The proposed here theoretical model of ethnic minority media progression is a result of examination of minority media institutions in the Balkans. Hence, its immediate applicability is linked to the security sensitive minority groups in the region. The personal communication of this author with researchers of ethnicity and journalists from Eastern Europe has revealed that the suggested here framework may also apply to the development of Hungarian minority media in

Slovakia⁴ and ethnic media in the Republic of Dagestan. Although time and financial constraints have prevented this author from including more case studies in the project, he believes that research on the media of other security sensitive minorities represents a promising avenue for future investigation, which can streamline, enrich and propel further the advanced here model. Taking into consideration that the theoretical pillars and working concepts of this thesis are borrowed from students of mass media in Western societies, one may expect the framework proposed here to be applicable to the development of ethnic minority media in other liberal polities outside the Balkans. As the globalization and Europeanization projects have led to an unprecedented rate of migration of ethnic minority groups across national borders, the author believes that the phenomenon of ethnic minority media will inevitably draw the attention of more scholars of ethnicity and media in the future. This thesis is just one step in this direction.

Media students have demonstrated that the development of ethnic minority media is important for the preservation of identity of minority communities. This is especially relevant today when ethnic minorities are present in almost every polity around the world. The development of pluralist minority media play also important role for the integration of minority communities in their host societies and for the betterment of the process of democratic governance. This point needs elaboration. Habermas (1989), Hartley (2000), Sampson (1996) and McNair (2000) have established the crucial role played by pluralist media for the functioning of national public spheres. Critical media ensure the existence of genuine marketplace of ideas in liberal societies and help citizens in the process of discovering the truth. By discussing events in the public domain, citizens formulate public opinion, which provides feedback to authorities and helps

⁴ According to latest census data, there are 458,467 ethnic Hungarians (8.5% of the population) living in Slovakia.

improve the process of democratic governance. Keane (1996), Gitlin (1998), Hartley (2000), Browne (2005) and Heller (2007) demonstrate that ethnic minority communities have their smaller public spheres, situated within national ones. The genesis and operation of minority public spheres, however, is conditional upon the existence of developed and pluralist minority media institutions. On the one hand, pluralist minority media serve as information sources to minority agents, providing them with topics and content for public deliberation.⁵ On the other, they serve as the locus of public discussions themselves.⁶ Hence, the more vibrant and pluralist the media sphere of given minority group is, the better informed the minority agents are and the higher the quality of their public debates. Discussing events in the public domain integrates minorities in the socio-political processes of their host societies and provides them with opportunity to partake in the public opinion formulation. The 'public' feedback of minority agents is relayed back to their political representatives with the assistance of minority media, thus improving the process of political representation. Hence, developed and pluralist ethnic minority media are important for the advancement of democracy in the era of globalization, especially in young democratic regimes, characterized by lingering authoritarian tendencies and capsulated minority communities. This makes investment into the examination of ethnic minority media worthwhile.

Going back to the Balkans: can the post-communist institutional and cultural environment of the countries from the region provide for independent media institutions (majority and minority alike) to better inform the citizens and enhance the quality of public debates? This is a more

⁵ Browne, 2005, p. 196. This is especially relevant to capsulated ethnic minority groups that lack proficiency in the majority language and rely on media in their mother tongue for information.

⁶ John Hartley and Alan McKee, 4.

general question, which addresses the broader issue of media liberalization in Eastern Europe. My prognosis is that the authoritarian heritage of the Balkan states prevents them from establishing an optimal environment for the operation of independent media institutions. These states represent peculiar polities where the commitment to political pluralism and market economy coexist with historically rooted antidemocratic ideas and practices. The deficiency of democratic culture and liberal traditions translates into establishment of permeable to political control media structures. Thus, the political control over the media in the region will remain a reality until the spirit of liberalism impregnates local institutions and political cultures. One can only hope that the advancement of the European integration will intensify this process, propelling further the development of ethnic minority media in the Balkans. (fd)

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(fd)

Table 1.a. Turkish Print Minority Media in Bulgaria (1990 – 2000)¹

Name:	Ъшък Светлина[Light] Гювен Доверие[Trust]	Права и Свободи [Rights and Freedoms]	Мюсюманлар [Muslim]	Чър-Чър [Grasshopper]	Филиз [Youth]	Балон [Balloon]	Кайнак [Kainak]
On the market	1991 - 1996	1991- 1998	1990 - current	1992 - 1996	1992 - current	1994 - 2004	2000 - current
Type	Weekly newspaper	Weekly newspaper	Monthly newspaper	Monthly magazine for children and teens	Monthly newspaper for children	Monthly magazine for children	Magazine for Turkish culture and literature
Feature(s)		Organ of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms; stopped in 1997 and printed again in 1998	Organ of the Chief Mufti of Bulgarian Muslims			The most popular magazine among the Turkish kids	2000: printed one pilot issue 2001-06: 6 issues per year 2007: 2 issues
Circulation	4,000 – 5,000	10,000	1800 - 3800	n/a	5000 - 6000	7,500	1,200
Language(s)	Turkish and Bulgarian	Turkish and Bulgarian	Turkish and Bulgarian	Turkish and Bulgarian	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish
Ethnic origins of staff	Ethnic Turks	Ethnic Turks	Ethnic Turks	Ethnic Turks	Ethnic Turks	Ethnic Turks	Ethnic Turk (produced by one person)
Main Topics	Revival campaign, politics, economics, culture (literature from Turkish and Bulgarian authors), social problems of Bulgarian Turks, human rights, Turkish grammar	Revival campaign, politics, social problems of Bulgarian Turks, human rights, Turkish culture, religion	Muslim religion and rituals, translation of foreign materials on religious topics	Education, arts, entertainment, literature, Turkish language	Education, science-fiction, entertainment, culture, literature, Turkish language.	Literature and Turkish folklore , entertainment, science, Turkish language	History, literature and art of Bulgarian Turks
Status	Stopped due to financial constraints	Published with the financial assistance of the Turkish political party (MRF)	Continues to be published by the Chief Mufti of Bulgarian Muslims	Stopped due to financial constraints	Published with the financial assistance of Bulgarian NGOs	Published with the financial assistance of Bulgarian NGOs	Published with the financial assistance of Bulgarian NGOs

¹ Tables 1.a. and 1.b. combine data available in Ibrahim Yalamov (1998, 40-51) and data collected by this author.

Table 1.b. Turkish Print Minority Media in Bulgaria (2001 – 2009)

Name:	Права и Свободи [Rights and Freedoms]	Мюсюманлар [Muslim]	Филиз [Youth]	Балон [Balloon]	Кайнак [Kainak]	Делирман	Hosgure [Tolerance]
On the market	1991- 1997 1998 - 2001	1990 - current	1992 - current	1994 – 2003 2005 - 2006	2000 - current	n/a - 2005	n/a - 2007
Type	Weekly newspaper	Monthly newspaper	Monthly newspaper for children	Monthly magazine for children	Magazine for Turkish culture and literature	Regional magazine	Regional magazine
Feature(s)	Organ of MRF	Organ of the Chief Mufti of Bulgarian Muslims		Most popular magazine among the Turkish kids	Maintains an exclusive cultural focus. Popular among intellectuals.	n/a	n/a
Circulation	10,000	1800 - 3800	2007: 3,000 (down from 6,000)	7500	2007: ~ 900 (down from 1,500)	n/a	n/a
Language(s)	Turkish and Bulgarian	Turkish and Bulgarian	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish and short resume in Bulgarian	n/a	n/a
Ethnic origins of staff	Ethnic Turks	Ethnic Turks	Ethnic Turks	Ethnic Turk	Ethnic Turk (produced by one person)	n/a	n/a
Main Topics	Revival campaign, politics, social problems of Bulgarian Turks, human rights, Turkish culture, religion	Muslim religion and rituals, translation of foreign materials on religious topics	Education, science-fiction, entertainment, culture, literature, Turkish language.	Literature and Turkish folklore , entertainment, science, Turkish language, religion	Magazine for history, literature and culture of Bulgarian Turks	n/a	n/a
Status	Stopped due to dubious financial constraints	Continues to be published by the Chief Mufti of Bulgarian Muslims	Published with the financial assistance of Bulgarian NGOs	Stopped in 2004 due to financial constraints. Published 2005 – 2006 and then stopped due to lack of Turkish media professionals	2005: 6 issues; 2007: 2 issues (out of 6) due to financial constraints; 2008: 5 issues (out of 6) 2009: 5 issues (out of 6) Supported financially by Bulgarian NGOs	Published sporadically until 2005 and then stopped due to financial constraints	Published until 2007 and then stopped due to financial constraints

Table 2. Electronic Turkish Minority Media in Bulgaria 1990–2009

Name	Minority media format	Broadcast duration	Language	Ethnic origins of staff	Financing	Focus and main topics	Problems	Main goal(s)	Status
Radio Program for the Turks in Bulgaria	Part of majority media (Bulgarian National Radio)	3 hours daily	Turkish	Turks and Bulgarians	1. PBS budget 2. Bulgarian NGOs	Social, economic, gender, Turkish culture, religion, entertainment, official Bulgarian news	1. Lack of funding 2. Lack of media professionals 3. Tech. issues 4. Ethnic intolerance 5. Language issues 6. Lack of support from Turkish elites	1. Information 2. Social integration of Turks 3. Preservation of Turkish identity and culture	1994 – present: operates as part of Bulgarian National Radio. Subsidized from the budget of Bulgarian PBS
White Dove	Part of majority media (private channel)	30 min. weekly	Turkish (with Bulgarian subs)	Bulgarians and Turks	1. Bulgarian NGOs. 2. US Cultural Institute in Bulgaria	Social and economic problems of Turks, ethnic politics, MRF politics, Turkish culture, Turkish business, religion	1. Lack of funding 2. Lack of media 3. Professionals 4. Ethnic intolerance	1. Integration of Turks 2. Preservation of Turkish identity and culture 3. Building bridges b/w Turks and Bulgarians	2000 - 2004. Stopped in 2005 due to financial constraints, lack of professionals, and ethnic intolerance.
News in Turkish	Part of majority media (Bulgarian National TV)	10 min. daily	Turkish (with Bulgarian subs)	Turks and Bulgarians	1. PBS budget	Verbatim translation of official Bulgarian news	1. Lack of media professionals 2. Ethnic intolerance 3. Lack of support from Turkish elites	1. Information 2. Social integration of Turks 3. Building bridges b/w Turks and Bulgarians	2005 – present: operates as part of Bulgarian National Television. Subsidized from the budget of Bulgarian PBS

Table 3. Political Coherence of the Turkish Minority in Bulgaria

People who identified themselves as ethnic Turks were asked the following questions by NCPOS: ‘For which political party are you going to cast your vote if parliamentary elections were called today?’ or ‘For which political party did you vote on the last parliamentary elections’?

Year	Won't vote	Haven't decided	BSP	UDF	MRF	Other	Total
2005 (if elections were today)	14.4%	11.7%	4.6%	0%	69.3%	0%	100%
2005 (whom did you vote for?)	16.4%	n/a	7.3%	0%	74.9%	1.4%	100%
2006 (if elections were today)	19.1%	1.5%	1.8%	2.8%	64%	10.8%	100%
2007 (if elections were today)	8.8%	16.5%	3.6%	0%	67.6%	3.5%	100%
2008 (if elections were today)	8.8%	0.7%	4.6%	0.9%	76.7%	7.7%	100%
2009 (if elections were today)	11.8%	2.9%	4.1%	0.6	73.4%	7.2%	100%
2009 (exit poll)	n/a	n/a	1.9%	0.3%	88.8%	9%	100%

Source: data used in this table is drawn from public opinion surveys conducted by the National Centre for Public Opinion Survey (NCPOS) at the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Table 4. Electoral Influence and Parliamentary Representation of MRF (1990–2013)

Parliamentary Elections	Received Votes out of 100%	Seats in the Parliament	Electoral turnout
1990	6.03%	23 (5%)	90.6%
1991	7.55%	24 (10%)	84.8%
1994	5.44%	15 (6.25%)	74.35%
1997	7.60%	19 (7.9%)	62.4%
2001 (coalition Euro Roma/Liberal Union)	7.4%	21 (8.75%)	67.04%
2005	12.81%	34 (14.2%)	55.76%
2009	14.45%	38 (15.8%)	60.20%
2013 ¹	11.3%	36 (15%)	51.33%

Source: the data used in this table is drawn from Георги Карасимеонов, *Партийната Система в България* (София: ГорексПрес, 2006). Results from the most recent elections have been added to the table.

¹ *Results of the elections for members of parliament on 12 May, 2013* (Central Electoral Committee, 2013, accessed 16 May 2013); available from <http://results.cik.bg/pi2013/rezultati/index.html>.

Table 5: Main Independent Variables and their Scores

Cases	Bulgaria		Macedonia		Romania	
	electronic	print	electronic	print	electronic	print
Political coherence (Political pluralism)	4	4	4	4	4	4
Interethnic relations	3	3	1	1	3	3
Funding	3	3	3	3	3	3
Education	2	3	2	3	2	3
External system pressure	2	2	3	3	2	2
Media tradition (experience)	2	1	1	1	2	2
Grand polity design (Macedonia)	n/a	n/a	3	3	n/a	n/a

The table assigns a score to each independent variable to measure its effect on the development of pluralist ethnic minority media in each of the three case studies. Score designations: [1] insignificant, [2] somewhat significant, [3] significant, [4] most significant effect on the value of the dependent variable. The highest score of [4] is appointed to variable(s) that contribute significantly to both the development and pluralization of the media of researched security sensitive ethnic minorities. The score of [3] is given to variables that affect significantly either the development or pluralization of their media.

Consensual Elements of the Ohrid Agreement

- Devolution of central power to municipalities;
- Institution of the principle of double-majority voting (minority veto) in the Parliament for laws that affect minority culture, use of language, and use of symbols. In order for such law to pass, there must be majority approval from Macedonians as well as majority approval from representatives of all non-majority groups in the Parliament;
- Minority veto power on Constitutional revisions. Institution of the principle of ‘qualified majority vote’ (the agreement of two thirds of all representatives is necessary to make further changes in the Constitution) where there must be a majority of the votes of minority representatives from all minority groups;
- Double-majority vote for laws on local finances, local elections, boundaries of municipalities, self-government as well as the election of Public Attorney and Supreme Court judges;
- Amendments that aim to achieve equitable (proportional) presentation of minority groups in the country’s governing bodies. Provided given minority group represents 20% or higher of the local population, it has the right to use its national symbols. The mother tongue of the group becomes official in the regional government and administration. The same principle is valid at national level, which in practice has led to the recognition of the Albanian language as an official language in Macedonia;
- Regardless of their numerical size, all ethnic minority groups in Macedonia have the right to receive their education (from elementary to higher education) in their mother tongue;
- Change of the police force composition to achieve equitable Albanian representation;
- Ending of the special status of the Orthodox Church;
- Establishment of a ‘Committee for Interethnic Relations’ composed of representatives from all minority groups. The Committee is to consider issues of inter-community relations and make appraisals/proposals for their resolution to the Assembly. The latter is obliged to take them into consideration;