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THE ETHNIFICATION OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS IN CENTRAL EUROPE: THE CASE OF THE HUNGARIAN MINORITY IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at the political role and treatment of Slovakia's Hungarian minority. It assumes that political identity formation is cumulative, building upon past experiences, and that collective memory is a crucial factor in the formation and maintenance of ethnic identity.

The thesis is interdisciplinary in its approach, and consists of three parts. The first part analyzes the development of citizenship as a status as well as a practice in Slovakia. It examines the extent to which the history of Slovak-Hungarian relations has had an impact on Slovakian citizenship legislation and its implementation, and on the public debates related to them. The second part takes a closer historical look at the years following WWII in which the Hungarian and German citizens lost citizenship rights and underwent waves of transfers. This event is placed into the conceptual context of ethnic

identity formation and considers the impact of the post-war years on Slovak-Hungarian relations and identification in the present day. The third and last part of the dissertation focuses on the dynamics of Slovak – Hungarian relations and identity at the local level. It is based on original survey research carried out from May to August 2003 in the South Slovakian town of Komárno. The survey research compares the attitudes and collective memories of members of the political public and political elites in Komárno. This comparison shows that historical references are more present in the attitudes among the political elite than in the political public. Moreover, in both groups, ethnic identity plays a role only in a few instances where there were heated public debates on controversial topics.

The interdisciplinary approach to inter-ethnic relations taken in this work provides a better understanding of ethnic identities, dynamics, and conflicts than studies that focus only on contemporary public opinion data or take a purely historical view. Taken together, the different parts of the dissertation—historical and empirical--show that collective memory can serve as a key factor in ethnic mobilization. However, it is not a static feature of inter-ethnic relations, and must be mobilized by political elites to affect public attitudes and day-to-day life.

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ANO	Alliance of the New Citizen
EU	European Union
FIDESZ	the Young Democrats
FKgP	Independent Smallholders' Party Hungary (Hungarian: Független Kisgazda Földmunkás- és Polgári Párt)
HzDS	Movemement for Democratic Slovakia (Slovak: Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko)
KDH	Christian Democrat Movement (Slovak: Kresťansko-demokratické hnutie)
MDF	The Hungarian Democratic Forum (Hungarian: Magyar Demokrata Fórum)
MSZP	The Hungarian Socialist Party (Hungarian: Magyar Szocialista Párt, MSZP)
NRSR	National Council of the Slovak Republic (Slovak: Národná rada Slovenskej republiky)
SMER	Party Direction- Social Democracy (Slovak: Strana Smer-sociálna demokracia)
SMK	The Party of Hungarian Coalition (Slovak: Strana maďarskej koalície)
SNS	Slovak National Party (Slovak: Slovenská národná strana)
SR	Slovak Republic
SZDSZ	The Alliance of Free Democrats – Hungarian Liberal Party (Hungarian: Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége – a Magyar Liberális Párt)

INTRODUCTION

The Slovak Republic will be marking the 20th anniversary since the Velvet Revolution which toppled the communist regime. The country has undergone a transition towards democracy, stabilization of the system, and an economic boom. The Slovak Republic has become a member of the European Union (EU) in 2005 and has introduced the Euro as one of the first of the "new" EU countries.

As a nation that has realized its statehood only recently, Slovakia has been unsurprisingly plagued with high level of nationalism. The "enemy" of choice, especially on the political scene, is the Hungarians, with whom we share the longest border and longest history of common statehood. This doctoral thesis explores the dynamic aspect of ethnicity. What motivates people to rally around the flag of national identity? What is the role of institutions and elites in the process of ethnic mobilization? What is the trigger for and sustenance in this process? What impact do policies have on ethnicity and vice versa?

Examining the relationship between institutions, elites, and ethnicity requires a truly interdisciplinary approach. In this relationship, particular attention is devoted to the role of collective memory, as it is presumed to be an operational concept that captures the dynamic nature of ethnicity and connects the different factors and elements at play.

The first chapter examines the history and current legal provisions of the Slovak citizenship. Through legal history, national ambitions and quest for an independent statehood throughout the twentieth century are explored. Citizenship has two aspects to it: as a status, it is the legal set of policies that define rights and obligations of the citizenry, as it developed through the decades shaped by internal and external political events, situations and relations. As a practice, it is the way it is understood by the political leaders, thinkers, and the public, the way policies are implemented in day-to-day life and the discussions that surround them. Both aspects are closely connected to the way the nationhood is perceived, the relationship of ethnic communities with the state.

The Slovak citizenship history and current practice was defined particularly by its closest neighbors – the Czechs and the Hungarians, both of whom Slovakia have shared common statehood for a long time. The Hungarian factor tends to carry more emotional weight with it. The Slovak-Hungarian relationship is weighed down by the heritage of the common state going back more than one thousand years. The current Slovak national imagination portrays this period of time as a yoke of suffering and oppression that the Slovaks have overcome in their independence, with the Czechs in 1918 and on their own in 1993. The Hungarian policies are closely watched and they impact the policymaking process at home. The social reality in Slovakia is currently changing also due to the wider migration patterns. Especially since the Slovak Republic has joined the EU, the influx of immigrants from "new" countries is greater and the reaction to these groups is shaping, leaning towards fear and refusal.

The second chapter looks closer into one of the formative events for the ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia: particularly the years following the Second world war that deprived the Germans and Hungarians of their citizenship on the basis of the presumption of collective guilt, amidst the waves of forced transfers and migration in Central and Eastern Europe. This chapter ties the traditional concepts related to ethnicity and nationalism to the historical experience of the Slovak-Hungarian relationship, and looks at the tools that the state uses to justify itself, often in terms of claiming ethnic majority as the entitlement to control and govern the territory.

The third chapter targets the dynamic element in ethnicity that motivates people towards certain attitudes and behavior. This process is particularly triggered and sustained by use of collective memory, a constructed, selective and purposeful historical narrative that provides a link between individual identity and the community a person belongs to. Finally, the concepts that are discussed in this thesis are illustrated on a case study and tested on an illustrative public opinion survey from an ethnically mixed town in Southern Slovakia, focusing particularly on the relationship people and political leaders have towards historical events in the common past and their use in current political agendas. Public debates as they are transmitted through the media would suggest that political leaders are more inclined to use and misuse the past for furthering political goals.

CHAPTER 1

The Slovak Question and the Slovak Answer: Citizenship During the Quest for National Self-determination and After[1]

Citizenship is both a status and a praxis. As a status, it is defined by a collection of laws and regulations. In Slovakia, these have been shaped by both principles of ius soli and ius sanguinis, the latter gaining importance especially after the First and the Second World War. The praxis involves the civic and political participation by citizens as well as the policies of governments concerning the implementation of the law in relation to its citizens as well as to non-citizens. The latter depend strongly on the political situation of the times. The first two turbulent decades of the Czechoslovak Republic were marked by attempts to ethnically homogenize the 'Czechoslovak' nation, targeting primarily the German and Hungarian minorities (but also Roma and others) as unwanted elements, culminating in three years of 'homelessness' after the end of the Second World War. Only the communist Government restored their civil and political rights. Yet it was unable to do away with the national sentiments of the Slovaks, striving to achieve national self-determination within or without Czechoslovakia. The Federation of 1968 (and the Warsaw Pact tanks that preceded it) quieted the nationalist voices until 1989, when they echoed through the public squares with all the more vigor. The dissolution of Czechoslovakia, which followed in 1993, made for a messy transition period in

[1] This chapter was published in Bauböck R., Persching B., & Sievers, W., Eds. (2007). *Citizenship Policies in the New Europe.* Amsterdam: IMISCOE, Amsterdam University Press. Used with the permission of the publisher Copyright is owned by chapter authors. The second edition of this book is currently in print.

citizenship policy with the need to address both issues related to the end of the communist regime and its victims, as well as to the status of Czech nationals in Slovakia.

The last decade has also brought new challenges connected to the integration of Slovakia into the European Union and marked by general globalization processes. Slovakia is figuring out its relationship towards an influx of newcomers from parts of the world with which it had no cultural contact in the past. International institutions shape these policies to a large degree, although the careful observation of Hungary's –the closest neighbor and historic adversary – citizenship policies seems to have just as much impact on shaping the public debate and legal provisions taken in Slovakia. While we will be focusing in this chapter primarily on citizenship as a status, the political praxis of governments does need some attention to complete our understanding of what shaped citizenship policies at different times.

1.1 History of Slovak Citizenship

1.1.1 History of Citizenship Policies since the First Czechoslovak Republic

Czechoslovak citizenship was created with the first Czechoslovak Republic on 28 October 1918. The collective identity to which it referred was cumbersome, to say the least, and was a result of the historical path of the Czech and Slovak nation-building processes as well as of the peculiar nature of the new state that had resulted from the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and from the peace treaties following the

First World War. The Wilsonian principle of self-determination influenced the understanding of the concept of citizenship and contributed to the growing role of ethnicity in its legal definition. Concepts of citizenship and ethnic nationality are often difficult to set apart neatly. They influence each other, and both depend heavily on political interpretations. The Czechoslovak Republic consisted of a multitude of ethnic groups and the leadership struggled with asserting the dominant position of the Czech and Slovak nations in their newly established Republic. National minorities, especially the three million Germans and close to a million Hungarians, formed 44 per cent of the total population. The Czechoslovak Government thus enforced an official Czechoslovak nationality[2] (instead of separate Czech and Slovak nationalities).

The sovereign nation needed to be propped up by some 'objective' quantifiable measures of dominance. Population censuses helped to provide these measures and also allowed citizens to be distinguished from foreigners.[3] The power of numbers as represented in the census was becoming apparent to national leaders prior to the foundation of Czechoslovakia. With the growing turbulence over what was then called the 'nationality question' within the Habsburg Empire the census was becoming more and more powerful as an expression of 'real' power, as a ticket to future control over territory and as one of the determinants of state formation and boundaries. In 1900, for example, the German newspaper in Bohemia appealed to its readers: 'Dear fellow citizens! Please pay

[2] Nationality in this context is not a synonym for citizenship, but refers to membership of an ethnic nation. The idea of a Czechoslovak nation did not take root – it was popular neither with Czech and Slovak political representatives nor with the general population and was eventually abandoned in favour of separate Czech and Slovak nationalities.
[3] For a detailed history of census taking and practices see Kertzer & Arel 2002.

close attention to column 13 (Umgangssprache) in the census form. The future of our nation depends on this minor entry. 1. What is the language used on a daily basis? It is the language most commonly used by an individual. Daily use means the communication in the family, among people that live together, in their employment, with an employer. Wherever this communication happens in the German language, no other language should be entered into column 13. Is the language used on a daily basis identical with the mother tongue? Absolutely not. Czech employees [...] use in their German employment the German language instead of their mother tongue. German is their language of everyday use.' (Zeman, Z.A.B., 1994, p. 37). In a similar manner Czech, Slovak and Ruthenian leaders appealed to their respective constituencies to enter their mother tongue. Data were collected by census officials, often with the aid of the army and police and accompanied by threats, blackmail or violence.

The census remained important, especially in border disputes after 1918. The northern part of the Czech Teschen-Silesia region as well as the southern part of the Slovak borderlands with Hungary were heavily disputed after the war and nationality was used as a tool for demarcation policies. Polish representatives based their arguments on census data from before 1918, which showed a clear majority of ethnic Poles in those territories. As the populations here were ethnically mixed and their mother tongue was often Polish or Hungarian, the question in the 1921 census carried out by the Czechoslovak Government was promptly changed to ask directly about nationality. A Silesian nationality was created (besides Polish and Czechoslovak). Respondents in this category

were then automatically counted among Czechoslovak nationals. This resulted in a complete change of population proportions. While the percentage of Poles fell to 25 per cent (from 139,000 to 69,000), the percentage of Czechoslovaks grew from 40 per cent to 65 per cent (from 123,000 to 177,000) (Paul, E.L., 1998, p.163).

The fate of Teschen-Silesia was decided at the Paris Peace Conference. Polish representatives succeeded in their demand for a plebiscite. If this had been carried out, Czechoslovakia might have lost some of these economically strong territories. However the international commission overseeing the plebiscite could not agree on the conditions, the Red Army was quickly invading Poland, and legal norms in Czechoslovakia were confusing due to the existing state of legal dualism where Czech lands inherited the legal system from Austria, and Slovakia that of Hungary. A plebiscite was to be carried out not only in Silesia, but also in the northern Slovak areas of Spiš and Orava, which would result in implementing two plebiscites regulated by differing sets of laws. The northern boundary was therefore finally decided upon the recommendation of the Allied Powers. Poland was compensated for much of Silesia with 25 settlements in Orava and Spiš (Klimko, J., 1980; Peroutka, F., 1991).

Legal dualism was caused by differing practices in granting citizenship and domicile before 1918 following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. While in Austria domicile, i.e. a legal title of residence in a municipality (Heimatrecht), was closely

registered, it was not in the Hungarian part of the empire that included Slovakia.[4] Even though domicile was granted to all those born and residing in a municipality, the gentry had a right to deny some people domicile even if they were born or had resided in the locality for a long time. Jurová (2002) maintains this was the fate of many Roma who moved from village to village. This was due to arts. 8-15 of the municipal law (XXVII/1886) that tied the acquiring of domicile of those who move and/or marry to fulfilling certain duties towards the municipality, thus giving the authorities opportunities for convenient interpretation. Furthermore, Act No. 222/1896 amended some provisions of the 1863 municipal law that specified conditions under which a Roma could be granted domicile.

The Roma and Hungarians were groups that succeeding Czechoslovak governments sought to minimize statistically after 1918. The census of 1921 shows a remarkable number of 'foreigners' without Czechoslovak citizenship that still have domicile on Slovak territory. The extent to which these groups were affected by citizenship policies has unfortunately not been extensively researched and quantitative data in this area are missing (Jurová, 2002).

Czechoslovakia's citizenship regulations were further disturbed by the events of the Second World War. Slovakia experienced its first (debatably) independent statehood as a Nazi puppet state, while the Czech lands were occupied under the Third Reich's

[4] For a more detailed description of the development in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia see Baršová, A., *Czech Citizenship Legislation Between Past and Future.* In Bauböck R., Persching B., & Sievers, W., Eds., 2007.

Protectorate. The end of the Second World War and the restoration of Czechoslovakia led to the adoption of ad hoc laws that introduced the criterion of ethnicity into citizenship legislation. The new legislation was linked to the post-war massive emigration and population exchange. Under the President's Constitutional Decree No. 33/1945 Coll. (Collection), Czechoslovak citizens of German and Hungarian ethnic origins were deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship.[5] This also meant their exclusion from official institutions (Order 99/1945 of the Slovak National Council), as well as from reimbursement for war damages, and implied other practical consequences.[6] Further decrees also disbanded German and Hungarian associations and organizations.

The transfers of ethnic Germans were agreed to by the Allied Powers at the Potsdam Conference in 1945. They did, however, not approve of applying the same policy based on a principle of collective guilt to Hungarians. The alternative solution found by the Beneš Government was a 'voluntary exchange of populations' between Czechoslovakia and Hungary. This plan resulted in the removal of 89,660 ethnic Hungarians, who were moved into Hungary, in return for receiving 73,273 ethnic Slovaks (Vadkerty, K., 2002, p. 32). Oral history projects document that the nature of the exchange was in many cases coercive. Another wave of transfers, labeled by the Czech historian Karel Kaplan as an

[5] The Presidential Decree exempted from loss of citizenship those citizens of German and Hungarian ethnicity who had joined in the fight for liberation or were victims of Nazi persecution. The legislation also established a possibility to apply for the (re-) granting of Czechoslovak citizenship (a policy called 'Re-Slovakization in Slovakia') within six months after the Decree entered into force.

[6] For decades, the topic of the transfers of ethnic Hungarians was taboo in Slovak literature. The few texts that were written were from the pen of Hungarian authors in Slovakia – Zoltán Fábry's The Accused Speaks Out (written in 1946) was published in the 1960s, and in 1982 Kálmán Janics's Czechoslovak Policy and the Hungarian Minority, 1945-1948 was published in the US in a small edition of a few hundred copies.After 1989 the topic was grudgingly picked up. The most comprehensive analysis and documentation was published by K. Vadkerty (2002).

'internal colonization' (Kaplan, K., 1993, p. 9), was based on the Presidential Decree No. 88/1945 on universal labor service. Ethnic Hungarians were recruited for 'voluntary agricultural work'[7] into the then vacant Sudetenland. Age limits imposed by the Decree were also frequently ignored and property left behind was confiscated (in direct violation of the Decree) (Kusá, D., 2005). These policies were accompanied by a program of re-Slovakization, passed by the Slovak National Council in June 1946. This policy gave ethnic Hungarians an opportunity to 'reclaim' Slovak citizenship (based on the premise of previous coercive Magyarization of Slovaks) within the time span of one year. Some 320,000 Hungarians were granted Slovak citizenship on this basis. However, as the census of 1960 shows, many returned to claiming Hungarian ethnicity in the census as soon as the political situation allowed for it.[8]

This era has been dubbed by the Hungarian authors as the 'homeless years'. The second chapter will focus on this era in greater depth. Citizenship was eventually restored to the Germans and Hungarians remaining in Czechoslovakia in 1948 by the newly established communist government; most Hungarians who had been transferred to Sudetenland have returned. Many, however, never recovered lost properties. The Beneš Decrees and their legal and practical consequences remain a painful open wound in Czech and Slovak political memory to this day and have been repeatedly debated, especially in connection

[7] The voluntary part was secured by leaflets promising return of Czechoslovak citizenship in return for being recruited as agricultural labourers. Leaflets also reiterated that this was the very last chance for Hungarians to reacquire Czechoslovak citizenship.

[8] The Czechoslovak census of 1947 records 390,000 Hungarians in Slovakia, the 1961 census records 518,782 (data from Kocsis & Kocsis-Hodosi, 1998).

with possible compensation for those affected and their descendants. Representatives of German and Hungarian communities sometimes call for an annulment of the Beneš Decrees, yet due to the complexity of the political situation of interwar and post-Second World War years and a lack of political will in the Czech and Slovak Republics, it is unlikely that such a measure would be adopted. Some conciliatory steps were taken by the Czech and Slovak Governments in the past decade on the level of bilateral declarations (the Czech-German Declaration of 1997) or public speeches (e.g. Hrušovský, P., 2003).

1.1.2 Regulation of Czechoslovak citizenship in 1949-1968 and the 'Slovak Question'

The rise of communist monopoly rule meant, ironically enough, the end of 'homelessness' for the Hungarians and Germans in Czechoslovakia. Citizenship laws were, however, misused for other political purposes, as one of the tools to keep the lid on the population, as a sort of preventive blackmail of those who might think of publicly voicing their disapproval of the communist regime.

The legal process of acquisition and loss of Czechoslovak citizenship in the period following the February putsch of 1948 was governed by the Act on the Acquisition and Loss of Czechoslovak Citizenship No. 194/1949, as amended by the Act No. 72/1958 Modifying the Regulations on the Acquisition and Loss of Czechoslovak Citizenship.[9]

[9] See also Baršová, A. for the same pieces of legislation from a Czech perspective.

The Czechoslovak citizenship could be acquired in four ways: 1) by birth: Czechoslovak citizenship was transferred to the child by his or her parent citizens regardless of whether the child was born in the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic or abroad. If the child was born in the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic, it was sufficient if one of the parents was a Czechoslovak citizen;[10] 2) by marriage: A foreigner could acquire Czechoslovak citizenship on demand upon marrying a Czechoslovak citizen. This acquisition needed to be investigated and approved by a district National Committee within six months; 3) by grant: A foreigner could be granted Czechoslovak citizenship upon request after meeting two principal conditions: residing in the Czechoslovak territory for five consecutive years and abandoning his or her previous citizenship. There was no legal entitlement to be granted citizenship; 4) by reacquisition: This applied to the acquisition of citizenship by the 'homeless' persons of German and Hungarian nationality ex lege after taking a citizenship oath without the need to apply or to fulfill other conditions.[11]

The loss of Czechoslovak citizenship was possible by 1) renunciation upon request,[12] 2) revocation by the state due to hostile acts against the Republic, illegal emigration, or not returning to the homeland for the period of five years or upon request of the Ministry of the Interior, 3) marrying and acquiring citizenship in another country (with a possibility

[10] Children born from mixed marriages, where one parent was a Czechoslovak citizen and the other was the citizen of the Soviet Union, Poland or Hungary, represented an exception. In that case citizenship was determined by an agreement of the parents at the time of inscription in the book of births. In case agreement wasn't reached, the child acquired the citizenship of the parent in the state of birth. If the child was born in the territory of a third state, it acquired citizenship of the state on whose territory the child's parents had resided before they went abroad.

[11] Act No. 34/1953 Coll. Concerning the Acquisition of Czechoslovak Citizenship by Particular Persons and Act No. 245/1948 on the Nationality of Hungarian Nationals.

[12] Stipulated by art. 6 of the Act on Czechoslovak Citizenship.

to request retention of Czechoslovak citizenship), 4) a court decision as a penalty for 'high treason, espionage, desertion of the Republic, military subversive activities, war treason, assassination of a state official',[13] 5) naturalization in the United States of America, and 6) as a consequence of agreements on dual citizenship.[14]

During this period of time, and especially during the détente period of the 1960s, when literature and arts were flourishing after the denunciation of the Stalinist doctrine, Slovak leaders and intellectuals voiced their desire for self-determination of the Slovak nation in a federative arrangement. They did not wish to be Czechoslovak citizens, but Slovak citizens of Czechoslovakia. While the Czech elite focused on market liberalization and democratization of the regime, Slovaks called for 'first federalization, then democratization' – a slogan that reappeared repeatedly in public squares after 1989 in a much more malevolent form. This issue divided Czech and Slovak intellectuals during the entire duration of the communist regime, as the Czech cultural leaders failed to see the urgency of this issue for the Slovaks. The Soviet leadership, however, duly noted Slovak aspirations for federation. Thus when the tanks rolled into Prague and Bratislava on the 21 August 1968 it brought with it different realities for the two nations. While the oppression following the Warsaw Pact invasion was equally suffocating in both parts of the country, it also brought the desired federation for the Slovaks. Dissent in Slovakia was therefore more muted compared to the Czech region. The Soviets poured investment

[13] This provision was defined by Act No. 86/1950 of the Penal Code. Such penalty included the loss of citizenship rights, expulsion from the army, and forfeiture of property. Act No. 63/1965 abrogated this penalty and the next codification of the Czechoslovak Penal Law did not include this kind of penalty.
[14] Most socialist states had concluded bilateral agreements that excluded dual citizenship among them.

into the Slovak industry in the post-1968 era further contributing hereby to different perceptions of the 'normalization' period between the two nations.

What was an era of darkness for most Czechs was seen by many Slovaks as a repressed society, but with real industrialization and federation at least on paper. While this reality itself may not have had an immediate impact on citizenship laws and practice, it certainly reverberated on the political scene after 1989, when the cultural divide between Czechs and Slovaks escalated into the 'Velvet Divorce'.

1.1.3 Regulation of Czechoslovak citizenship in 1969-1992: Czechoslovak Socialist Federative Republic

Until 1968, when the Czechoslovak Federation was established, Czechoslovakia was a unitary state with a single Czechoslovak citizenship. The establishment of a federation also resulted in the creation of Czech and Slovak citizenships. Constitutional Law No. 143/1968 Coll. on the Czechoslovak Federation, which came into force on 1 January 1969, is based on the principle of individual preference when determining the citizenship of the two constituent republics.[15]

The original text contains a provision according to which every citizen of one of the republics is also a citizen of Czechoslovakia (art. 5). Citizenship was regulated by the Constitutional Act of the National Council of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic No. 165/1968 Coll. On the Principles of Acquisition and Loss of Czech and Slovak

[15] See also Baršová, A.

Citizenship, followed by the Act No. 206/1968 Coll. of the Slovak National Council on Acquisition and Loss of Citizenship of the Slovak Socialist Republic.

Normally citizenship at the level of the two republics was determined by the place of birth or by the citizenship of the parents, if that could be identified. Czech or Slovak citizens could however choose a different citizenship until 31 December 1969. The Act precluded dual citizenship; one had to choose one or the other. The Slovak National Council passed Act No. 206/1968 Coll. to apply these rules in domestic legislation.

Between 1969 and 1992 it was possible to acquire Slovak and Czech citizenship by birth,[16] by choice (within one year after the establishment of the federation), by marriage, or by grant (after five consecutive years of residence for foreigners and two years for Czech citizens with permanent residence in Slovakia).

Loss of citizenship in the 'normalization' era was similar to previous regulations. It could be renounced, lost due to acquiring Czech citizenship, or one could still be deprived of it on the basis of art. 7 of Act No. 194/1949 Coll., naturalization in the US, or according to agreements on dual citizenship.

[16] A child whose parents were Slovak citizens acquired Slovak citizenship. If one of them was Slovak and the other Czech, and the child was born in the Slovak territory, then the child acquired Slovak citizenship. If the child was born abroad, it acquired the mother's citizenship. Parents could also agree on the child's citizenship by statement until six months after birth.

After the fall of communism, both Czech and Slovak national elites struggled to assert the position of their nations within Europe. National identity had to be reconstructed and to a large extent even re-invented. Both elites turned to their past to seek linkages and justification for steps towards self-determination. Czechs and Slovaks, however, sought friendship with very different animals from their past. Czechs built on Masaryk's democratic ideals from the first interwar republic, while Slovaks viewed this era suspiciously with a memory of the Czech 'Pragocentrism'[17] and of the refusal of the Czechoslovak Government to grant Slovakia a right to self-determination or autonomy in a federation. Instead, Slovaks referred to the legacy of the Slovak puppet state created by the Nazis.[18] The discrepancy in perceptions of the post-1968 era added to the rift between the two nations. This 'failure to find a decent past' together, as Igor Lukes (1995) coined it, contributed to the choice of separate paths for the future by the political elites, whose sentiments were, however, not reciprocated by the majorities of populations on either side of the new border.

In the confused atmosphere of rampant nationalism that had anti- Czech, anti-Hungarian, anti-Semitic, and even anti-Western traits in the years prior to the Velvet Divorce, Slovak representatives raised many issues that seemed to be frivolously escalating the conflict into what popularly became known as the 'hyphen war', i.e. the war about the spelling of

[17] Pragocentrism was a term used by the Slovak leaders to denote the tendency of the Czech representation to rule the country from a strong unitary centre, Prague. Slovak elites had qualms with Pragocentrism ever since the creation of the first republic in 1918.

[18] This claimed heritage is a controversial and complex one. Though perhaps only the Slovak National Party would fully claim the legacy of the Slovak Republic of the war period, together with the persona of its President, Jozef Tiso, responsible for sweeping anti-Semitic measures, all parties and most leaders do recognise at least its partial validity as the first form of official Slovak statehood.

'Czechoslovakia'. Slovak delegates claimed that the term Czechoslovakia was discriminatory to the Slovaks, who are commonly mistaken for Czechs abroad. Claims were backed by invoking the myths of one thousand years of suffering by the Slovaks under the Hungarian yoke, only to be replaced by the Czech yoke in 1918. The Federative Assembly finally settled on 'Czech and Slovak Federative Republic' as the name for the post-communist state.

The Slovak Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar conducted a policy of blackmail, threatening the Czech leadership with the possibility of secession over each major political issue. The Czech Prime Minister Klaus eventually called his bluff and startled Mečiar by accepting the proposal for separation. The divorce was decided at the top political level without being ratified by popular participation, but also without strong protests from the Czech and Slovak public. Over half of the respondents in public opinion surveys voiced their desire to remain in the common state and/or to have an opportunity to decide its fate in a referendum (Nemcová, K., 1992). It was instead decided by political elites. On 1 January 1993 the two nations started a new period in their history and had to determine their identities and related policies anew. Even before the dissolution, the citizenship laws had been growing in significance, and many Czechs and Slovaks were using their right to choose their republic-level citizenship.

In Slovakia, the nationalist craze played out directly in many legal provisions that concerned anybody 'other' than ethnic Slovaks.[19] Such was the case with the 'Sign Law' (a law regulating public inscriptions such as topographical names of towns, villages, streets and store signs), the Act on the Official State Language, which was passed without any provisions for the use of languages of the national minorities (which were adopted only in 1997), the 'Territorial Arrangement' that redrew district boundaries to lessen the percentage of ethnic Hungarians in areas where they were concentrated, and other legislation. This policy has also affected the practice of allowing access to those seeking asylum, with possible hopes for eventually acquiring citizenship in the Slovak Republic. While the legislation regulating the asylum procedures was not markedly different from other countries, the political environment was palpably hostile. During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina Slovakia, just as many other countries, received an influx of refugees. The Migration Office of the Ministry of the Interior was at that time particularly untoward in granting anyone the status of a refugee. Many, if not most, displaced persons had to contend with a protective status of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees office in Slovakia, and most were turned back after a few months, not always into safe conditions.

1.2 Current Regulations of Acquisition and Loss of Slovak Citizenship

In the first years of the Slovak Republic, Slovak citizenship was either determined by law or could be individually chosen. Those who were citizens of the Slovak Republic before

[19] For a description of the developments in the Czech Republic see Baršová, A..

31 December 1992 automatically became citizens of independent Slovakia, as stipulated in Act No. 40/1993 Coll. on Citizenship of the Slovak Republic. Czech citizens could apply for Slovak citizenship until 31 December 1993 by way of a written request to the District Office in the territory of the Slovak Republic or to the Diplomatic Mission or Consular Office of the Slovak Republic abroad. This option was open freely to all citizens of the former Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. Those applying for Slovak citizenship had to provide proof that they were Czechoslovak citizens as of 31 December 1992 and state their place of birth and permanent residence (art. 7).

1.2.1 Acquisition of Citizenship

Slovak citizenship can be currently acquired by birth, by adoption, or by grant. The laws regulating citizenship are comparatively generous towards individuals with Czech or Slovak roots, allowing for a plural citizenship and extending considerable citizenship rights to the Slovak expatriates living abroad.

Acquisition of citizenship by birth is firmly based on ius sanguinis except in those cases where a child would otherwise become stateless. In current legislation a child acquires Slovak citizenship only if at least one of the parents is a citizen of the Slovak Republic or if the child was born in the territory of the Slovak Republic to parents who are stateless or whose citizenship is not transmitted to the child iure sanguinis.[20] If citizenship cannot be established, a child is considered to be a citizen of the Slovak Republic if he or she

[20] Art. 5 of Act No. 40/1993 Coll. on Citizenship of the Slovak Republic.

was born or was found in the territory of the Slovak Republic and his or her parents are not known. If one of a child's parents is a citizen of another country and the other is a citizen of the Slovak Republic, then the child is a citizen of the Slovak Republic even if it is later established that the child's parent who is a citizen of the Slovak Republic is not the child's natural parent. A child can also acquire citizenship when he or she is adopted by a Slovak citizen. In case of disagreement between the parents, Slovak citizenship can be determined by a court judgment on the basis of one parent's or a legal guardian's request.

Citizenship of the Slovak Republic can also be granted upon request to a foreigner. This requires consecutive permanent residence and physical stay in the Slovak territory for at least five years immediately prior to submitting an application for citizenship. Slovak law also requires sufficient basic proficiency in the Slovak language. Applicants must also have a clean criminal record, which means that they must not have been prosecuted for an intentional crime during those five years before the application, must not be under an administrative expulsion order from the country of residence or subject to extradition proceedings.[21] Facilitating factors in the application procedure are if an applicant is stateless or voluntarily renounces his or her previous citizenship. Furthermore, citizenship can be granted upon request to those who have entered into marriage with a Slovak citizen (after living in the Slovak Republic for a period of three consecutive years), or those who have made special contributions to the Slovak Republic through

[21] Art. 7 of Act No. 40/1993 Coll. on Citizenship of the Slovak Republic.

their achievements in the field of economy, science, culture or technology. There are also special provisions for the restoration of citizenship to those who lost it according to previous legislation. A person whose former Czechoslovak citizenship expired or who lost the Czechoslovak citizenship due to a long absence or on the basis of citizenship law during the communist regime, may be granted citizenship of the Slovak Republic even if the above-mentioned condition of five years consecutive permanent residence has not been met. Former Slovak citizens returning to live in Slovakia have to have permanent residence in the Slovak Republic for two years prior to filing an application for citizenship.[22]

1.2.2 Loss of Citizenship

Slovak citizenship can be lost, only upon the holder's own request, by releasing the person from the state bond. Only those can be released who already possess another citizenship, or who will acquire another citizenship as soon as they are released from Slovak citizenship. A Slovak citizen cannot be released if he or she is being prosecuted, is currently serving a sentence or is due to serve a sentence or has outstanding taxes or other debts to pay to the state. The District Office, Diplomatic Mission or a Consular Office of the Slovak Republic makes the final decision on the loss of citizenship. Citizenship is lost on the day of receipt of the document stating his or her release from the state bond of the Slovak Republic.

[22] Art. 7 of Act No. 40/1993 Coll. on Citizenship of the Slovak Republic.

1.2.3 Procedure

Slovak citizenship acquired by naturalization is awarded by the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic based on a written application. This application has to be filed in person at a District Office, Diplomatic Mission or Consular Office of the Slovak Republic. It must include personal data about the applicant and must be accompanied by a dossier of documents including a brief curriculum vitae, an identification card, a birth certificate, a personal status certificate, and a certificate of residence in the Slovak Republic. Former Czechoslovak citizens that qualify for restoration of citizenship have to provide a document stating the release from the state bond of the Czechoslovak Republic, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic or the Slovak Socialist Republic (whichever applies). Former Slovak citizens applying for citizenship after two years of residence in Slovakia can submit a Slovak Status ID as a form of identification. The Ministry of the Interior can ask for other documents if required to render a decision.

The application is accompanied by a questionnaire on the basis of which the authorities evaluate the applicant's Slovak language skills. Verification has to be done in a way that takes the applicant's circumstances into account. The District Office has the right to request a statement from the police and will then forward the complete application with all documents and statements to the Ministry of the Interior for a final decision. When making its decision, the Ministry of the Interior has to take into account the public interest as well as statements of state institutions and of the police. It has nine months

from receipt of an application to issue a decision. If statements of state institutions and of the police are required, the processing period is prolonged to one year.

Slovak citizenship is acquired by obtaining a Certificate of Acquisition of Slovak Citizenship at the District Office, Diplomatic Mission or Consular Office of the Slovak Republic and after taking the obligatory oath. The citizenship oath reads: 'I promise on my honor and conscience that I will be loyal to the Slovak Republic, I will respect the Slovak Constitution, laws and other legal rules and will duly fulfill all duties of a Slovak citizen.'[23] If the applicant doesn't pick up the Certificate of Acquisition within six months of receiving a written notification the Ministry will stop the procedure. If the Ministry rejects the application then the applicant can apply again after a minimum waiting period of one year.

1.2.4 International Treaties

Slovakia is party to many international multilateral and bilateral treaties that impact on domestic citizenship regulations. International treaties take precedence over domestic law – if they differ from the provisions in the Act No. 40/1993 Coll. on Citizenship of the Slovak Republic, the legal regulations of international law outweigh domestic law (art. 17).

[23] Art. 8a, sect. 9 of Act No. 40/1993.

As in the case of the Czech Republic, the treaty with the United States that precluded naturalized American citizens of Czech and Slovak origin from holding dual citizenship (the 1928 Naturalization Treaty) expired in 1997. This allowed many former citizens and their descendants to restore their Slovak citizenship and to file claims for restitution of property with the Slovak state.

Among the other important bilateral treaties was the Agreement on Slovak-Hungarian Neighborly Relations from 1995, which had implications for the practical implementation of certain cultural and educational rights of ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia. Many international provisions – including this one – were passed only due to extensive pressure from European institutions dangling the carrot of EU accession in front of the Slovak leadership. The Slovak-Hungarian Treaty was passed at the peak of the Mečiar Government era, to the bewilderment of his followers and perhaps of himself, after Slovakia had received demarches from the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and other international institutions regarding its practices concerning national minorities and foreigners. The international community thus played a key role in shaping domestic policies in this transition period keeping the ugly dragon of nationalism and xenophobia on a somewhat shorter leash.

1.2.5 Dual and Multiple Citizenship

Slovak legislation tolerates dual citizenship. Regulations of dual and multiple citizenship on a European level are, however, developing slowly and with obstacles. The regime

changes and successive creation of new states after 1989 created a need to come up with common regulations regarding citizenship policies that resulted in the European Convention on Nationality (ETS No. 166), which entered into force on 1 March 2000. It was the first international document to establish core principles and rules applying to all aspects of citizenship to which the domestic law of the parties to the treaty should conform. The Convention was opened for signature to Member States of the Council of Europe as well as non-members on 6 November 1997. Slovakia signed and ratified the Convention, as did the Czech Republic.

Among other issues the Convention covers questions of multiple citizenship. Art. 14 directly stipulates the right to dual citizenship in the case of acquiring citizenship of another country by marriage. The force of the Convention is however softened by arts. 15 and 16, which give the parties the right to determine whether their nationals who acquire or possess the nationality of another state retain or lose their citizenship; and the right of state parties to make the acquisition or retention of their citizenship conditional upon renunciation or loss of another citizenship unless it is not possible or cannot reasonably be required).

These articles are often used in practice to preclude multiple citizenship. There have been speculations as to whether Slovakia could use them in this way if the Hungarian Parliament passes the law on dual citizenship for ethnic Hungarians living abroad. This would not be possible without amendments to the current law, which stipulates that the

loss of Slovak citizenship results only from a person's own request to be released from the state bond. The state cannot on its own initiative deprive any person of their Slovak citizenship. It is, however, possible that some ethnic Hungarians residing in Slovakia could be released from the state bond upon their own request after gaining Hungarian citizenship, thus becoming Hungarian foreign nationals living in Slovakia. This status would, however, bring more inconveniences than benefits to the applicants. It is far more probable that, if Hungary passed the dual citizenship law, most ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia would hold on to their Slovak citizenship.

As was already mentioned, Czech and Slovak nationals could choose their citizenship for a period of one year after the dissolution of the Czechoslovak Federative Republic. This situation was not without complications. It rendered tens of thousands of Roma living in the Czech Republic stateless due to improper documentation, permanent residence in Slovakia (many migrated from Slovakia to Czech lands before 1989), lack of information about the procedure (and the need to apply), a criminal record or other reasons.[24] Furthermore, from 1994 it became harder for Czech or Slovak citizens to live and work in the other part of the former common republic. In 1999, after years of continuous pressure from European institutions and non-governmental organizations, and following a Czech Supreme Court decision of 1997, which ruled that the Czech citizens who chose Slovak citizenship in 1993 did not lose their Czech citizenship, the Czech citizenship laws were amended to allow for reacquisition of the Czech citizenship for certain groups

[24] See European Roma Rights Center report 'Personal Documents and the Threat to the Exercise of Fundamental Rights Among Roma in Former Yugoslavia', www.errc.org, retrieved in May 2006.

of people within a stipulated period. Further revisions of the Czech law were passed in September 2005 to allow for dual citizenship for Czechs living in Slovakia, who had lost their Czech citizenship by acquiring the Slovak nationality between 1 January 1994 and September 1999.[25] Applications for dual citizenship can be submitted to the Consular Office of the Czech Embassy in Bratislava. The application process takes up to two months. Approximately five thousand people requested dual citizenship in 2005.[26]

1.3 Current Political Debates and Reform Plans

1.3.1 The Hungarian Status Law and referendum on dual citizenship

Slovak-Hungarian relations have been an inflammable issue on the Slovak political scene since the fall of communism. Much nationalist rage was directed against the former dominant nation, the Hungarian part of the dual monarchy. Policies of forceful Magyarization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the turbulent dissolution of the empire that left one third of the ethnic Hungarians outside the borders of the Hungarian state, provide historical memories that shaped mutual relations in a controversial fashion. The myth of a thousand years of suffering under the Hungarian yoke has long been nurtured by Slovak nationalists and after 1989 it often served as a useful rallying point.

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[25] See also Baršová, A. for provisions in the Czech Republic.
[26] Embassy of the Czech Republic in Slovakia, www.mzv.cz.

The question of Hungary's relationship with ethnic Hungarians living abroad, especially in the areas immediately bordering on Hungarian state territory, was therefore watched closely and suspiciously. The issue exploded in the Slovak media in 2001 when Hungary passed the Status Law (the law on Hungarians living abroad) and again in 2004 when a referendum was held on allowing ethnic Hungarians to acquire dual citizenship. The content and impact of these Hungarian initiatives are described in detail in other literature (See Kovács, M. M. and Tóth, J. *Hungary: Kin-state Responsibility and Ethnic Citizenship* chapter in Bauböck R., Persching B., & Sievers, W., Eds., 2007), so I will focus here only on the repercussions in Slovakia.

The Hungarian Status Law

The question of ethnic Hungarians living abroad was not used for a nationalist agenda in Slovakia alone. It also polarized the political scene in Hungary and deepened the left-right divide. Viktor Orbán's FIDESZ played on national sentiments of Hungarians about co-ethnic minorities in neighboring countries and produced a bill on benefits for ethnic Hungarians living abroad, passed by the Hungarian Parliament in 2001.

The first version of the law, which entered into force on 1 January 2002, provided for financial stipends for students of Hungarian ethnic origin abroad. Members of Hungarian minorities could also apply for Hungarian identity cards (Status ID), with which they can access further benefits such as discounts in Hungary for public transportation and entrance fees for museums and cultural and educational events. The Status ID was

handed out on the basis of a recommendation from local cultural organizations representing Hungarian minorities abroad by the newly established Office for Hungarians living abroad with its seat in Budapest. After the refusal of the Slovak and Romanian Governments to allow implementation of the Status Law in their states' territories and after criticism by the Venice Commission that was asked by the Council of Europe to examine the matter,[27] the law was amended in summer 2003. Since then the education stipend is no longer addressed to individuals, but to institutions that offer education in the Hungarian language or on Hungarian culture. The financial aid is thus accessible not only to ethnic Hungarians but to anybody who wishes to study Hungarian culture and history.

The amended version was approved by a majority of the Hungarian Parliament, with the exception of the FIDESZ party, the originator of the law, and the FKGP, the Smallholders' Party, which had lost seats due to a large corruption scandal involving its president. It was also accepted by the Venice Commission and Romanian Government. Slovak representatives, however, remained opposed to it, and the political parties of the ruling coalition (apart from the Party of Hungarian Coalition SMK) contemplated passing an 'anti-law', which would prevent the implementation of the Status Law in the territory of the Slovak Republic. The lengthy, emotionally charged squabble between Slovak and Hungarian leaders was finally resolved in December 2003 by the Slovak-

[27] Among the main objections was the charge of ethnic discrimination concerning access to the benefits of the law. The Status Law is also territorially limited in implementation to certain neighbouring countries where the Hungarian minority is numerous and where the standard of living is not higher than within Hungary itself. Austria was therefore not included among the countries where the Status Law was to be implemented.

Hungarian Agreement on Support for the National Minorities in the Areas of Culture and Education. An article on the Slovak-Hungarian Agreement in the daily paper SME summarizes its key points.[28] The treaty identifies two specific cultural foundations that are permitted to distribute financial aid to cultural and educational institutions only (some university students qualify as an exception). It establishes a principle of reciprocity, and the distribution of funds will be subject to annual control by a Slovak-Hungarian commission of experts.

The crux of the tensions, however, was apparently not in the law itself. Old historical grievances were voiced in the circles of the law's critics, accusing the political representation of Hungary of 'soft irredentism', i.e. attempts to recreate the Hungary of the times of the Hungarian kingdom on a psychological level, and of lurking historic revisionism among the Hungarian minorities themselves.

František Mikloško, one of the most prominent Christian Democrats and the former Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, expressed views that can be attributed to Slovak representatives in general:

> I voiced my opinion even on TV, and my Hungarian colleagues hold it against me. I would say that the Status Law psychologically creates the concept of a Great Hungary. The Slovak side made mistakes too, when the Law was debated

[28] I. Stupňan, 'Schválili dohodu s Maďarskom' [Agreement with Hungary Approved], SME, 12 December 2003.

> we were sleeping and suddenly we were confronted with a done deed. There is one serious problem however: Hungary is passing a law that is implemented in the territory of the Slovak Republic. We don't mind if Hungarians have some advantages, but it seemed to be a precedent that would not be good, and the Venice Commission has also denounced it.[29]

The representatives of the Party of the Hungarian Coalition in Slovakia, which had seats in the Slovak coalition Government, found themselves between the grindstones as it were of the two national leaderships. Both sides looked to them for resolution and they drew fire from Slovak nationalists for being 'irredentist Hungarians', as well as from Hungarian leaders in Hungary for being too passive". László Nagy, member of the SMK Presidium and chair of the Committee for Human Rights, Nationalities, and Status of Women of the NCSR, laments:

> One problem of the Law is that it became a part of the internal political game. We are not affected by it, but Dzurinda and others assume that the voter expects rejection of the Status Law by the Slovak political leaders, which may be an erroneous assumption. It has played a negative role in Slovak-Hungarian relations that got decidedly chilly in 2002.[30]

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[29] The interview with František Mikloško was conducted by the author in Bratislava on 13 June 2003.

[30] The interview with László Nagy was conducted by the author in Bratislava on 18 June 2003.

The subject of the Hungarian Status Law is divisive among the Slovak- Hungarian population of the Slovak south as well[31]. Although tensions between Slovaks and Hungarians in this ethnically mixed region are usually less than in the rest of the country, they have been palpable in the topics related to the quasi-citizenship of the Status Law (see Appendix I) and the question of dual citizenship, which emerged shortly afterwards.

The question of dual citizenship for ethnic Hungarians

The question of dual citizenship for ethnic Hungarians living abroad emerged as a hot political issue in 2003. The first requests to the Hungarian leadership came from the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina, later accompanied by similar demands from Hungarians in Romania. The World Federation of Hungarians prepared a petition for a referendum about dual citizenship. Its goal was to achieve Hungarian citizenship for all applicants who already were holders of a Status ID under the Hungarian Status Law.

This initiative was supported by the opposition political parties in Hungary – the Young Democrats (FIDESZ) and the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), which managed to rally enough support to get the required number of signatures on the petition for a referendum that would decide whether to grant Hungarian citizenship to ethnic Hungarians from abroad. The referendum took place on 5 December 2004, but, since

[31] See Appendix 1 for opinions on the Hungarian Status Law among the surveyd population of towns Komárno and Štúrovo in the Slovak South

over 60 per cent of eligible voters decided to stay at home, the referendum results (in favor of dual citizenship by a small margin) were invalid.[32]

Dual citizenship for ethnic Hungarians was justified mainly on the basis of empathy with ethnic kin. The press again debated attempts to repair the 'Trianon Injustice' that truncated the Hungarian nation after the First World War. On the other hand, the initiative was also designed to give practical advantages resulting from Hungarian nationality. This would be relevant especially for Hungarians living outside of the EU borders. The ruling parties MSZP and SZDSZ stood firmly against the referendum, appealing mostly against the costly consequences that implementation of the law would have. The situation was further complicated by the fact that Romanian and Ukrainian legislations preclude dual citizenship, thus ethnic Hungarians acquiring Hungarian citizenship would have to renounce their original citizenship, which could lead to an untenable situation for the Hungarian Government.

The Slovak leadership watched the development leading to the referendum with a heightened sense of insecurity and antagonism. According to diplomatic sources (report of Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Slovakia was prepared to protest in the EU if the referendum was successful, based on its inconsistency with the Agreement on Slovak-

[32] Only 37.5 per cent of registered voters participated in the referendum. 51.5 per cent of the voters were in favour of dual citizenship, 48.5 per cent against. 50 per cent of eligible voters have to participate for a referendum to be valid in Hungary (or an equivalent of over 25 per cent of all eligible voters must select the same answer on the referendum). Source: 'Neplatné Maďarské referendum o dvojitom občianstve [Invalid Hungarian Referendum on Double Citizenship], BBC Slovak.com, 6 December 2004. www.bbc.co.uk.

Hungarian Neighborly Relations from 1995, as well as with the principles of the EU of non-discrimination and democratic governance. The SMK was once again caught in the middle. While the executive Vice-President of the SMK, Miklós Duray, supported the idea of the referendum, the official SMK position, as represented by its chairman Béla Bugár, was to support policies that will help ethnic Hungarians to stay in the country where they were born. He warned that the initiative might antagonize Hungarians living in Hungary and members of Hungarian minorities. "We find ourselves unwillingly amidst the Hungarian internal political struggle and are receiving one slap after another. We have not received such slaps even in our native country. We want to remain in our native country, pay taxes there, etc."[33]

The heated debate ended up in Court in Slovakia. The Slovak National Party (SNS) sued the Vice-Chairman of the SMK, Miklós Duray (one of the more radical leaders of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia), for treason because of his speech in favor of the dual citizenship initiative in the Hungarian Parliament.[34] The ethnically charged debates about the Status Law and the referendum on dual citizenship have probably also contributed to

[33] Peter Stahl, 'Maďari hlasujú o dvojitom občianstve'[Hungarians Vote on Double Citizenship], Hospodárske noviny [daily newspaper], 3 December 2004. hnonline.sk.

[34] The SNS sued Mikloš Duray many more times afterwards for treason, libel, damaging the name of the Republic, and more. Each charge was dismissed by the court. SNS leader Jan Slota called the representatives of the Hungarian minority 'radioactive extremists' (Slota: 'Politici z SMK sú rádioaktívni extrémisti' [Politicians from the Party of Hungarian Coalition are Radioactive Extremists], 6 June 2005, www.sns.sk). Shortly before the parliamentary elections of June 2006 SNS popularity climbed to almost 10 per cent in public opinion polls. In the June 2006 elections, the populist left-leaning party SMER-SD came out on top with 29 per cent of the votes. SNS came in third with almost 12 per cent of the votes. The former leader of the Government coalition SDKU´ received 18 per cent of the votes (Source: SITA [Slovak Press Agency], 18 June 2006).

support for Slovak nationalist and populist platforms, which has grown over the past two years.

1.3.2 Comparison of the Slovak Act on Expatriate Slovaks with the Hungarian Status Law

The Hungarian Status Law is not a unique invention without parallel (as it sometimes appeared to be from the indignant reactions in the Slovak press). In 1997 the Slovak Republic passed Act No. 70/1997 on Expatriate Slovaks. Prior protection of Slovak nationals living abroad was guaranteed by a declaration of support in the Slovak Republic's constitution. The House of Expatriate Slovaks, founded by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, has also been in existence since 1995 focusing on cultural cooperation and support of expatriate Slovak institutions. According to the Act No. 70/1997, it is sufficient to apply for the status of an expatriate Slovak or to be a direct descendant of a Slovak national. If the applicant cannot provide any documentation certifying his or her ethnic origin, a letter from an institution representing Slovaks abroad or two witnesses that have the status of expatriate Slovaks will do. Application is submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the Slovak Republic and the application process takes two months. If it is successful the MFA issues an Expatriate Slovak Certificate. Among the benefits that this status brings is the permission to reside 'for a long time' in the territory of the Slovak Republic and the opportunity of applying for permanent residence in Slovakia. It is likewise possible to apply for studies at any of the Slovak universities or to apply for a job without the

permanent residence in Slovakia or employment authorization required by other foreign nationals. [35]

The Hungarian Status Law has inspired changes in the Slovak Status Law. In 2005 the National Council of the Slovak Republic passed an Amendment to the Act on Expatriate Slovaks [36] (now labeled 'Slovaks living abroad') that established the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad, which is funded from the state budget and is responsible for carrying out the official state policy towards Slovakia's external citizens. The Office also issues Certificates of Ethnic Slovaks Living Abroad (Slovak Status IDs) that make the process of claiming benefits related to the status easier. Financial support is tied to the areas of culture, education and research, information, and media. Individuals and institutions can apply for funding in 'activities that further the development of Slovak identity, culture, language, or cultural heritage in these countries.'[37]

Hopefully the amended law will help to provide assistance to Slovaks living abroad at the place of their residence. Some representatives of the Slovak institutions abroad complain that the direct result of the Slovak Status Law is a brain drain of young people who leave to study and work in Slovakia rather than financial support for Slovak publications and cultural events in the areas where Slovaks living abroad are concentrated.[38] The most remarkable difference between the Slovak and Hungarian

[35] Arts. 5 and 6 of the Act No. 70/1997 Coll. on Expatriate Slovaks and Changing and Complementing Some Laws.
[36] Act No. 474/2005 Coll. on Slovaks Living Abroad and on Amendments and Additions to Certain Laws.
[37] Art. 5 of the Act No. 474/2005 Coll. on Slovaks Living Abroad and on Amendments and Additions to Certain Laws.

[38] Štefanko, O. (2006) *Slovenská republika a zahraniční (dolnozemskí) Slováci* [Slovak Republic and Foreign (Hungarian) Slovaks], Český a slovenský svet [Czech and Slovak World], retrieved in May 2006, www.svet.czsk.net

Status Law in their current form is the territorial limitation of the latter, which restricts the implementation of the law to neighboring countries with a large proportion of Hungarian minorities. The Slovak counterpart has no such stipulation. This is easily explained by the fact that most of the Slovaks living abroad reside in the United States (over 1,200,000 Slovaks).

1.4 Statistical Trends (Acquisition of Slovak Citizenship Since 1993)

After the fall of communism, Slovakia experienced tumultuous shifts in population, largely in connection with the dissolution of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, but undoubtedly also as a result of its strategic position as a bridge between Western and Eastern Europe. There have been shifting migration trends, too. In the early 1990s, the Slovak Republic was losing its citizens to the Czech Republic. This trend ceased after 1994 when Slovakia started gaining population from abroad and increasingly so, from the East. Most migration is temporary and circular with migrants returning after short stays in Slovakia. The number of those who actually ask for Slovak citizenship changes with domestic and international events, circumstances and legislation. The following tables and graphs show the numbers of successful applicants who acquired Slovak citizenship.

Table 1.1: Number of persons who acquired citizenship of the Slovak Republic (1993-2005)

Year	Czech citizens	Other citizens	Total
2005	2,439	539	2,978
2004	2,262	1,508	3,770
2003	942	3,100	4,042
2002	805	3,539	4,344
2001	175	1,362	1,537
2000	3,903	623	4,526
1999	849	417	1,266
1998	399	535	934
1997	416	1,519	1,935
1996	575	768	1,343
1995	1,379	910	2,289
1994	20,612	1,393	22,005
1993	64,834	1,550	66,384

Source: Ministry of the Interior, Slovak Republic

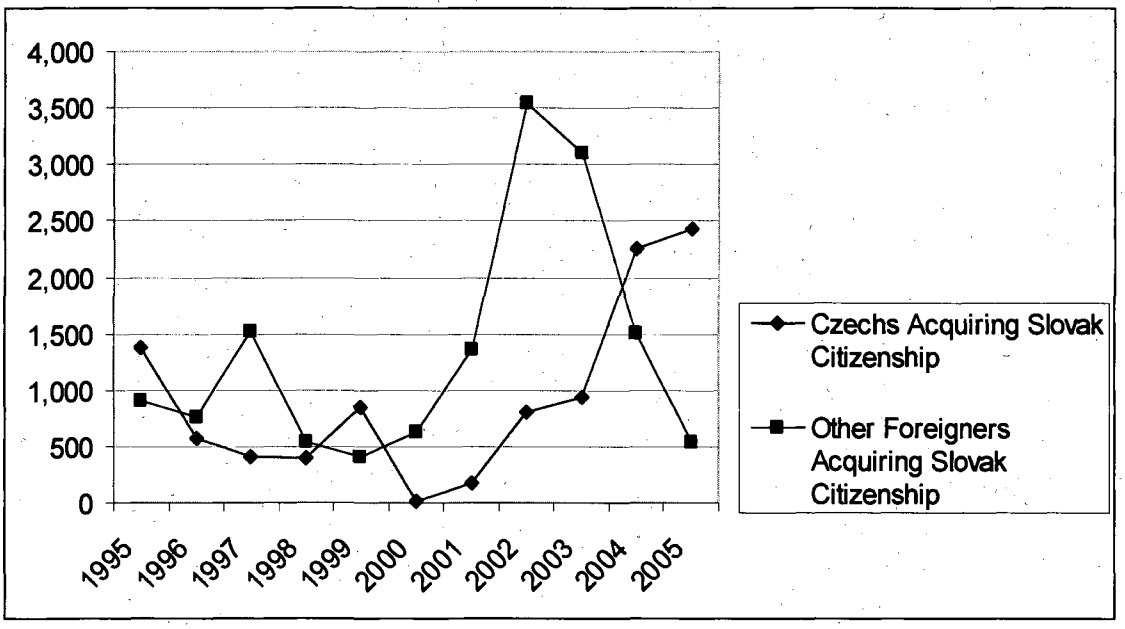
As can be seen from Table 1.1, in 1993 and 1994, the vast majority of those who acquired Slovak nationality were Czech nationals. Due to the possibility to choose citizenship in 1993, the proportion of Czech nationals among the successful applicants for citizenship was overwhelming. This proportion has gradually declined thereafter and was lowest in

1996 to 1998, which is probably due to the political situation in Slovakia. The numbers of Czech applicants rose again especially after the amendments to the citizenship law in 1999, and have also been growing in recent years.

For other than Czech nationals the trends in the acquisition of citizenship are quite different. Notable is again the decline in numbers in the years 1995 and 1996, followed by an increase due to the influx of refugees fleeing from the countries of former Yugoslavia. There is a marked increase in the naturalization of foreigners from outside former Czechoslovakia especially since the year 2000, when more applicants from Asia and the Near East sought to settle in the Slovak Republic.

Figure 1.1 illustrates the diverse trends in the two populations who have acquired Slovak citizenship over the past decade. (The years 1993 and 1994 have been excluded here due to the high number of Czech applications for citizenship resulting from the dissolution of Czechoslovakia.) We can clearly see the impact of the Czech amendments to the citizenship law in 1999 in the resulting increase of Czech nationals applying for and receiving Slovak citizenship. The rapid increase in citizenship granted to other foreign nationals cannot be readily explained on the basis of legislative changes, but rather on the basis of new migration patterns. Compared to previous times, many more foreigners looking both for asylum and for citizenship have settled in Slovakia.

Figure 1.1: Czechs and other foreign nationals who acquired citizenship of the Slovak Republic in 1995-2005



Source: Ministry of the Interior, Slovak Republic

Among those that seek Slovak citizenship are people fleeing from persecution, violence, civil war, or other conditions threatening their lives and security in their home countries. Close to 46,000 foreigners have applied for asylum in Slovakia since 1992. However, asylum status had been granted only to 575 of them by the end of August 2005. This tendency makes Slovakia a country with one of the lowest rates of refugee recognition in Europe (Vaňo 2005: 60). The highest number of applicants was recorded in 2004. Increasingly, they come from countries such as India, Russia (especially Chechnya), Pakistan or China.

Table 1.2: Refugees and asylum seekers in the Slovak Republic

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Asylum applications	359	415	645	506	1,320	1,556	8,151	9,734	10,358	11,395
Persons granted refugee status	68	129	65	49	27	11	18	20	11	15
Refugees granted Slovak citizenship	0	4	14	22	2	0	11	56	40	15

Source: Vaňo 2005: 59

1.5 Conclusions

The evolution of policies relating to the definition, granting and withdrawal of citizenship in Central Europe was closely tied to turbulent events on the international and regional political scene. More than in the West, the ideals and practices of citizenship were marked by struggles for national self-determination, as well as power struggles between the small neighboring states squeezed in between the warring superpowers during the Cold War period.

Slovak national development had not run its course in the period before 1948. The Slovaks had not achieved a truly independent statehood and were not content to be submerged in a centralized Czechoslovak state after the Second World War. The Slovak Question emerged as a dominant issue at several turning points in history. It impacted on citizenship policies within the common state of Czechs and Slovaks in 1968, when the Slovaks received the gift of federation from the invading Soviet troops, and then again after 1989, when it led to the Velvet Divorce between the two nations.

Citizenship practices as well as the understanding of what citizenship entails and should entail were murky due to frequent changes in policies prior to 1989, due to their ad hoc nature and inconsistencies in the first years of the post-communist regime, as well as because of the tumultuous political scene in Slovakia and new challenges resulting from Slovak independence in 1993.

Slovak citizenship policies were strongly shaped by international influences, especially by pressures from the European Union and binding treaties with the Council of Europe. On the other hand, they also reacted to the heated, historically and emotionally charged political debates on the status of Hungarians living abroad and the possibility of their acquiring dual citizenship in Hungary. Central European reality shows us how closely citizenship and identity are intertwined and how easily they are misused for political machinations that further the egoistic agendas of parties and leaders.

Citizenship policies are being gradually simplified and fitted to the new migratory trends that result from membership in the EU. Central European neighbors have not quite yet abandoned nationalist appeals and contentious policies that seek easy enemies to rally supporters. At the same time, they have to quickly figure out how to absorb inflows from parts of the world very different from theirs. All these developments occur in the context of an enlarging European Union with the common citizenship of the Union linking the nationality policies of its Member States to each other.

Table 1.3. Chronological list of citizenship-related legislation in Czechoslovakia/the Slovak Republic

Date	Document	Content	Source
1990	Socialist Republic Act No. 88/1990 Coll. Amending Regulations on Acquisition and Loss of Czechoslovak Citizenship	Setting regulations for re-acquisition of Czech or Slovak citizenship by emigrants or others who were deprived of Czech or Slovak citizenship prior to 1989.	In the Slovak language: www.zbierka.sk
1991	Constitution of the Slovak Republic	Contains the provision that, 'no one shall be deprived of his or her citizenship against his or her will', and the Bill of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, including the 'right to choose one's nationality'	In the Slovak language: www.government.gov.sk Excerpts in English: www. legislationline.org
1993	Act No. 40/1993 Coll. on Citizenship of the Slovak Republic	New citizenship code which entered into force in the Slovak Republic after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia.	In English: www.coe.int In the Slovak language: www.minv.sk
1997	Act No. 70/1997 Coll. On Expatriate Slovaks and Changing and Complementing Some Laws	Slovak status law defining rights and benefits of the Slovaks living abroad.	In the Slovak language: www.gszs.sk
2002	Act No. 480/2002 Coll. on Asylum, amended by Act No. 1/2005 Coll.	Law defining key terms and regulating asylum acquisition procedure.	In the Slovak language; www.unhcr.sk
2005	Act. No. 265/2005 Coll. Amending the Act on Citizenship of the Slovak Republic	Introduced remedial provisions with regard to pre-1989 Czechoslovak nationals, regulates acquisition of Slovak citizenship by Slovaks living abroad.	In the Slovak language: www.zbierka.sk

2005	Act. No. 474/2005 Coll. on Slovaks Living Abroad and on Amendments and Additions to Certain Laws	Established the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad and regulates the competencies of the state administration regarding state support for Slovaks living abroad.	In the Slovak language: www.gszs.sk

CHAPTER 2
Historical Trauma in Ethnic identity: the Years of Homelessness of the Hungarian Minority in Post-war Slovakia[1]

The ethnic identity of nations, minorities and ethnic groups is to a large extent built on the fragile puzzles of collective memory, and hinges especially upon significant historical turning-points - victorious and heroic events as well as the tragic losses that history brings. Ethnic communities operate skillfully with these memories by imprinting them on the minds of the largest possible number of community members or, when desirable, by wiping them out of the historical text-books and surrounding them with an aura of taboo. Often the negative events involve direct conflicts with another ethnic community, which serve to boost feelings of group solidarity and allegiance, yet sometimes such events might be perceived as so harmful or confusing that the community or its leadership attempts to push them into the darkness of forgetting, or at least misinterpretation.

Many historical instances show that it is necessary for nations to deal with their traumatic historical past in order to reconcile tensions within society and to be able to face the future. For this purpose, the Truth and Reconciliation Committee was set up in South Africa, the current German government has issued an official apology for atrocities committed against Jews in the Holocaust during the Second World War, and purification ('lustration') committees were set up in the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland after

[1] This chapter was published in Breuning, E., Lewis, J., and Pritchard, G., Eds. (2005). *Power and the People: A Social History of Central European Politics, 1945-56* (pp. 130 – 149). Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press. Used with the permission of the publisher.

the breakdown of the Communist regimes there, to exact retribution for the crimes of the Communist establishment.

Slovakia and Hungary failed to undergo the purification process successfully. It will be argued that this is due to the legacy of older historical traumas that beset the Slovak-Hungarian relationship, especially those of the years 1945-48 connected with the transfers of members of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. The present chapter will consider the domestic and international causes that led to the mistreatment of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia in that period, the social situation of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia prior to and after the 'exchange of populations' between Slovakia and Hungary in 1947 and 1948, and the impact of the advent of Communism in Czechoslovakia on the situation of the Hungarians in Southern Slovakia. Historical traumas serve as a crucial part of the formation of ethnic identity, for most often they contribute to the definition of 'otherness', of what the ethnic community defines itself *against.* In the case of the Slovaks and Hungarians of Slovakia there was a number of such defining turning-points, from the Austro-Hungarian settlement of 1867 that marked the beginning of decades of 'Magyarization', and the Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920 that placed one-third of all Hungarians outside the borders of the new Hungary, with almost one million of them becoming part of the Czechoslovak Republic. The Vienna Arbitral Award of 1938[2] which transferred a large portion of Southern Slovakia back to Hungary

[2] The Vienna Arbitral Award was signed on 2 November 1938 by the German and Italian foreign ministers; in return for Hungary's co-operation with Hitler's Germany, the Award granted her the territories in Southern Slovakia inhabited mainly (but by no means exclusively)by ethnic Hungarians. Out of what she had previously lost, Hungary received, under this Award, 12,700 km2 of territory, and 1,030,000 persons,

was perceived by Czechoslovakia as a betrayal by the Western powers. Czechoslovakia was forced into agreement by Germany, Italy and Hungary, and abandoned by the Western powers. The massive transfers to Germany in the later 1940s of populations from all over Eastern Europe on the basis of collective guilt remain among the region's most sensitive international issues. Yet the question of the transfer of Hungarians in the years 1946-48 is even more painful. for it remains taboo to this day. Hungarians avoid the risk of using the topic as leverage in political discussions, yet public opinion, when tested, reveals that this wound is still raw among the Hungarians of Slovakia.

An interesting sociological and ethno-psychological piece of research was carried out in Southern Slovakia in 1994, which showed that the question of the southern border of Slovakia is still a sensitive one today: 71 percent of Hungarians living in the ethnically mixed region of Southern Slovakia consider the partition of Hungary after the First World War as the origin of a major misfortune that has afflicted the Hungarians of Slovakia ever since. By contrast, 68 per cent of Slovaks living in that area tend to think that the Hungarians were always expanding their territory at the expense of someone else (Bordás, S., Frič, P. Haidová, P., Hunčík, P. et al, 1995, pp. 46-7). The boundary issue has the effect of reinforcing the myth of a 'national Calvary' on both sides. On the Slovak side, this myth is connected with the 'thousand years of suffering' of the Slovak nation under Hungarian supremacy, which is believed in by 78 per cent of the Slovaks living in

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including 830,000 Hungarians, 140,000 Slovaks. 20,000 Germans, 40,000 Ruthenes and others. (C. Wojatsek (n.d.) *From Trianon to the First Vienna Arbitral Award,* Retrieved on January 20, 2009 from Corvinus Library on the World Wide Web: http://www.hungarian-history.hu/lib/woja

the ethnically mixed region. The Hungarian side connects the suffering with the aftermath of the Trianon Treaty, which deprived Hungary of two-thirds of its historic territory. The transfers of Hungarian population in 1947 are thus viewed as the sequel of Trianon. 87 per cent of Hungarians in Southern Slovakia still consider the transfers unjust (Ibid., p 47).

2.1 Key Concepts

Before we proceed to discuss the events leading to the transfers of ethnic Hungarians from Southern Slovakia, a few of the main concepts relevant to the subject need to be reviewed. Firstly, the concept of 'ethnic community' and the reasons for using this term, together with the related concept of 'ethnic identity', will be discussed. Secondly, we shall define the concept of 'territoriality', which should serve to clarify some of the intentions and consequences of the transfers, their place in the collective memory and their effect upon the relationship between the two ethnic communities.

As the reader will already have observed, the term 'ethnic community' is here being used in preference to more common terms such as 'nation' and 'national minority'. The term is used to denote all those communities that identify themselves on the basis of their possessing in common a history, culture, moral and social norms, language and territory, without distinguishing between communities on the basis of their position within the state. Since it includes the categories of nation, minority and ethnic group, this term allows us to disregard the notion of power which the other three terms carry, and to

compare ethnic communities more freely by placing them on an equal footing. It is therefore a wider term than the other three, although these latter will be used where the aspect of power does play a significant part.

When referring to the nation, I will use the definition formulated by Benedict Anderson, namely, of the nation as an imagined political community that is limited by, albeit elastic, boundaries (Frederick Barth would add, by physical as well as imagined boundaries), and is sovereign, for this concept was born in the era when the legitimacy of the hierarchical and dynastic rule of emperors and of the Pope was being questioned (Anderson, B., 1991, p. 6-7). An important classification, useful for the purposes of this study, was propounded by George Brunner, who distinguishes between the 'state nation' and the 'cultural nation'. The state nation is characteristic for the countries of Western Europe and signifies the idea of a spatial entity which includes ethnic differences and also allows of regional and personal differentiation (Brunner, G., 1996, p.17). The modern concept of the state nation (which is not to be confused with the concept of the nation-state) dates from the time of the French Revolution and relates to a specific state with a civic constitution.

A nation of this kind is held together most of all by a common history. Central and Eastern Europe operate largely with an understanding of the nation as a 'cultural nation', which emphasizes certain common criteria such as language, culture, roots and history - where territory and state did not originally play such a significant role, but were

nevertheless included from the end of the nineteenth century (Ibid., p. 18). The importance of establishing these categories will become apparent when we consider the differences between the Czech and Slovak perception of the nation in the inter-war period, when the former was equated with the idea of the state nation, the latter with the idea of the cultural nation.

The legal understanding of the term 'national minority' (e.g. Recommendation 1201 of the Council of Europe or the Framework Convention on National Minorities of the Council of Europe) defines it basically as a group of people living in a territory which they have long inhabited, and possessing specific ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic traits in common. Such a minority is smaller in number than the rest of the population, but is still sufficiently numerous, and motivated, to maintain its collective identity, culture and language (http://www.coe.fr).

Definitions of 'ethnic identity' are as broad and abstract as are definitions of the nation or the state, and may mean different things to different groups of people. While in some situations ethnic identity is equated with race, in other instances it may concern the rights of indigenous populations, carrying a notion of oppression or discrimination within itself. For present purposes, the term will be used only in relation to the concept of ethnic community as defined above.

First of all, ethnic identity denotes *self-definition* and a subjective perception of who an individual is: it embraces his or her own authenticity, uniqueness, belonging in time and space, as an individual or as a member of a human group or community (Bačová, V., 1996, p. 10). This aspect of ethnic identity is especially important in the context of Slovak-Hungarian relations, for the official statistics may not in fact reflect the reality of someone's underlying self-identification. A brief look at the numbers of Hungarians in Slovakia appearing in the censuses throughout the twentieth century (see Chart 2.1) will show that the drastic fluctuations in the size of this minority were probably due not to any process of change in ethnic identification, but rather to the effect of changing external conditions upon the position of this ethnic community in relation to others.

Seen from this angle, a second aspect of ethnic identity that is rarely mentioned stands out as significant. This is the aspect of *strategic choice* when it comes to proclaiming ethnic identity. Barth and Bačová both assert that, if individuals are to represent themselves as members of a given ethnic community, it is necessary that they should perceive membership as offering some benefit. Individuals weigh the pros and cons of belonging to an ethnic community, and if it brings more disadvantages than benefits they will tend to claim an ethnicity other than that which they might perceive on a deeper level as being their own. It is therefore essential to keep this distinction in mind. Another related factor is the *will* of the community to maintain its identity through time. As Bačová asserts, of all the aspects of ethnic identity, the single most important for its survival is perhaps the knowledge that a significant number of members of the

community identify themselves *ethnically* with that community. The cultural attributes, language, or territory of the ethnic community may vary over time, and many communities have even ceased to exist. Yet, as the case of the Hungarians in Slovakia shows, there are numerous other communities that have kept their identity despite the obstacles posed by external conditions and even despite (or arguably partially also owing to) the overt attempts of other ethnic communities or state authorities to eliminate it.

The third aspect of ethnic identity that is important from the perspective of this study is that of *control.* In pre-modern times, ethnicity was 'untamed', but with the creation of the modern state it has become organized and controlled. It has become a tool for gaining access to decision-making, the distribution of resources, etc. This aspect brings us directly to the last of the concepts to be considered before proceeding to our case study of the Hungarians in Slovakia after the Second World War.

Every ethnic community, regardless of its position within society, has links with a particular territory (real or mythical) in which its identity is rooted. Territory, and control over it, is thus crucial to ethnic communities today, especially since political representation is one of the most important means of survival for communities within states. Territories are, however, not usually inhabited by one homogeneous ethnic group, and the struggle for power among different groups can take various forms.

Robert D. Sack defines territoriality as 'the attempt of individuals to influence, control people, phenomena and relations by establishing and implementing control over a certain geographic area' (Sack, R. D., 1986, p. 19). Territoriality in this sense may be seen as constituting a *continuum of political action.* At one end of this continuum are the attempts of ethnic communities to create nation-states while eliminating the rights of other ethnic communities over the territories to which they lay claim, or the attempts of minorities to secede from the state of which they are citizens. Yet territoriality may take more subtle forms than these 'ultimate solutions'. Territoriality can take the shape of regional, political or cultural autonomy granted to an ethnic community, or merely of political representation at all levels of society - from seats in municipal government to membership of parliament and government, or a combination of any of these. Such forms of territoriality would be located at the other end of the continuum.

Territoriality is closely linked with the control aspect of ethnic identity - it is a modern feature of ethnic relations, connected with the creation of the modern state with its specific boundaries which have for the first time been precisely defined on the map. Anderson recognizes two important features of what I here label 'territoriality': the *map* and the *census.* Both of these represent the "totalizing classification [which has] led their bureaucratic producers and consumers towards revolutionary consequences . . . [T]he entire planet's surface had been subjected to a geometrical grid which squared off empty seas and unexplored regions in measured boxes" (Anderson, B., 1991, p. 173) Ernest Gellner famously compares the pre-modern and the modern map with the paintings of

Kokoschka and Modigliani respectively. While the one map is a mixture of colored points and areas that flow into one another, the other, that reminiscent of Modigliani, is a jigsaw puzzle of well-defined variously colored pieces strictly separated by lines, on which it is clear at first sight where one piece begins and another ends.

The concept of territoriality aptly illustrates the motivations behind the Czechoslovak political leadership's specific actions and plans in regard to the Hungarian minority, and it also illuminates the sensitivity of certain issues which have been a factor in developments. The southern border of Slovakia remained Kokoschka-like until the Trianon Peace Treaty, when it was arbitrarily defined by the representatives of the Allied Powers, who ignored ethnic and historical boundaries (regional and district). Thus it remains a sensitive issue to this day, even though the Hungarian government has officially given up the goal of border revision and concentrates solely on the issue of political representation within the ethnically mixed regions, aiming for some level of political and cultural autonomy, for the sake of which any claim to territorial autonomy is strictly avoided.

When we glance at the censuses (Table 2.1.) enumerating the population of Slovakia in the modern period, we notice the steady increase in the size of the Slovak population (except for the period of most vigorous 'Magyarization' around 1910, which introduced Hungarian as the only official language and was reflected in the census of 1910), as opposed to the fluctuations in the population trends of Hungarians and Ruthenes. The

first census following the First World War, that of 1921, was already marked by the attempts of the Czechoslovak leadership to create a less ethnically diverse state by means of statistics. The accounts of the 1921 census reveal that the directions given to the census-takers were aimed at achieving the highest possible number of 'Czechoslovaks' - in other words, at creating a politically constructed nation, and hence the illusion of a dominant nation within this extremely diverse state. Thus many people who merely demonstrated some knowledge of Czech or Slovak (especially in the Southern Slovakian and Silesian regions) were recorded as 'Czechoslovaks', which caused a decline in the numbers of the other ethnic communities (Kusá, 1999, pp. 28-9). The Vienna Award, which redrew the Southern Slovak border and awarded a large portion of Slovak territory to Hungary, resulted in a dramatic increase in people claiming Hungarian identity.

The greatest fluctuation is visible in the early post-war years, which saw a major decline in both the official and the actual numbers of the Hungarian ethnic community in Slovakia because of the causes described in detail below. Yet, as we know, the official tactics aimed at eliminating this minority largely failed, for the numbers of those claiming Hungarian identity have risen steadily ever since the 1950s, and the membership of this community is today well established and secured through the organized political and cultural representation of this group, and also as a consequence of the significant markers of history that serve as a glue which holds this community together and allows it to define itself over against other ethnic communities and especially the Slovaks.

2.2 Key Issues Determining the Transfer Processes After the War

Turning to our actual case study to demonstrate some of these aspects in practice, it is necessary to consider the causes that led to the expulsion of Hungarians from their homes after the Second World War and the denial of their citizenship rights for a period of three years. We shall look first at the different concepts of the nation which prevailed among the Czech and Slovak political representatives, respectively, and which led to their having different ideas about the internal organization of the state. Next we shall consider the historical issues that were at play, and then turn to the international situation, which had a major impact on the actual process of the transfers as well as on their mere possibility. Lastly, the transfers process itself, and its consequences for the present relationship between the two ethnic communities, will be summarized.

During the war, the Western Allies recognized the Czechoslovak government-in-exile in London as the official government of Czechoslovakia. It was made up of the political elite of Czechoslovakia, including the former president, Eduard Beneš, and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Milan Hodža. The National Council established in exile decided that the election of Emil Hácha as president of the Czech Republic was invalid, instead recognizing Eduard Beneš as the president of Czechoslovakia despite his resignation in 1938 (Kostya, S., 1992, p. 151). The government-in-exile was united only in appearance. There were serious differences, especially between Hodža and Beneš, concerning the internal organization of the state and the position of the individual ethnic communities within it. One needs to understand these differences as well as the specific

situation in which the exiled elite found itself in order to understand the origins of the idea of transferring the German, Hungarian and Ruthene minorities of Czechoslovakia. There were two major opposing approaches to the question of the internal organization of Czechoslovakia with regard to its rich ethnic composition. One was that of a truly multi-ethnic democracy based on representation, participation and a large degree of self-government for minorities, propounded most prominently by the Slovak statesman Milan Hodža. In stark contrast was the approach advocating the establishment of a new Czechoslovakia, after the Second World War, as a nation-state, which called for the realization of the idea of the 'Czechoslovak nation' and demanded that Czechoslovak territory should be 'cleansed' of the non-Slavic minorities. This approach at the far end of the continuum of territoriality was advocated by the President, Eduard Beneš, who was himself largely responsible for orchestrating the transfers.

Milan Hodža was an influential inter-war statesman who had been attempting to reform the public administration of the first Czechoslovak Republic in order to allow for the multi-ethnic composition of the state. He recognized the necessity for co-operation among the ethnic communities and the impossibility of artificially creating a Czechoslovak nation, It was he who, in 1926, invited the German and Hungarian minorities to participate in the government, and who implemented a substantial administrative reform which created four self-governing regions, Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia. Hodža advocated his idea of 'regionalism', as opposed to the strengthening of centralism sought by Prague and the extreme

autonomism pursued by nationalists in Slovakia. Ethnic communities were to manage their own affairs at regional level, which would lead to their satisfaction and increased co-operation. This approach lay at the opposite pole of territoriality, seeking to exert control through political representation and participation.

Shortly before the imposition of the Munich settlement, Hodža had managed, after years of struggle with his colleagues in government, to get the Statute of Minorities through the federal parliament; this granted equality and freedom to choose one's nationality to all citizens of the state, and was later broadened by the language law, These arrangements represented a comprehensive and detailed guarantee of minority rights, but could not be implemented in practice, for Munich and the Second World War were around the corner (Žudeľ, J., 1984: 211).

Hodža was also famous for his ideal of a Central European Federation. His view was that the small nations that made up Central Europe could implement their right to self-determination only within a larger political unit. This unit would include all Central European and most Slavic ethnic communities, each enjoying a large degree of self-government.

Edvard Beneš was the exact opposite of Milan Hodža. He believed that national homogeneity was necessary if the country was to be stable and democratic, and he had therefore been considering the transfer of the German, Hungarian (and Ruthene)

population since the outbreak of the Second World War. Kálmán Janics writes: 'The thesis authored by President Beneš [was] that the war had been caused by the national minorities; the world press popularized the idea that the minorities must either be promptly liquidated by expulsion or left to their destiny and assimilation by the majority, with no protection of their minority rights as nationalities" (Janics, K., 1982, p. 30). Beneš was one of the advocates of the Czechoslovak nation, an idea which he had eventually to abandon. This construct was to be used as a tool for establishing the rule of the homogeneous dominant nation over the other ethnic communities, but it was not acceptable either to the Slovak leadership or to Czechs and Slovaks in general.

Beneš also advocated a confederation, but not in the 'Hodža style'. He was intent on fulfilling the wishes of the superpowers rather than on implementing ideals, and thus advocated a confederation with Poland. He admitted several times that he was considering this confederation solely because of the attitude of Britain and the United States towards Poland (Zeman, Z.A.B, and Klimek, A., 1997, pp. 164 – 92). In the question of transfers, he largely relied on the help of the Soviet Union, and in negotiations with the United States, Great Britain and France, he maneuvered skillfully to get them on his side (Janics, K., 1982, pp. 51-75; Kostya, S. A., 1992, pp. 155-7).

Beneš mostly made decisions alone, submitting them to the National Council for approval as a *fait accompli.* In relation to minorities in Slovakia, he first discussed his program in detail with Moscow, which was much more receptive to his idea of transfers

(for many similar processes were underway in the Soviet Union itself), and subsequently with the Western powers. Beneš and the rest of the émigré elite made a strict distinction between the Hungarian and the German question. The transfers of Sudeten Germans from Bohemia were based on the acknowledged principle of collective guilt, which justified the plan in the eyes of the Allies. Moscow and the Communists of Czechoslovakia did play a crucial role in the resettlement of the Hungarians: it was the latter that carried the program out, but it could not have been realized without the initial support of Moscow (Vago, R., 1989, p. 27). Great Britain gave its approval to the transfer of the German population in 1942. At the same time, Beneš started to advocate the same treatment for the Hungarians in Slovakia, but this was never approved on the same terms by either Great Britain or the United States (where Milan Hodža and Jan Masaryk were greatly influential). Nor did Moscow initially agree to the unilateral transfer of Hungarians. "Till the spring of 1944 the transfer of Hungarians was only Beneš's theory. There is no evidence in any literature that anyone has approved of Beneš's attempts in this sense" (Janics, K., 1982, p. 67).

Since Beneš was not finding support for his plan for the Hungarians, he began to consider how to simplify it. Instead of being transferred, the Hungarians of Slovakia were to be 'exchanged' for the Slovaks living in Hungary, which would have the same effect - the desired ethnic homogeneity. The Czechoslovak government-in-exile, the Slovak National Council and the Moscow leadership of the Czechoslovak Communists

continued to differ on the Hungarian issue until 1944. Thereafter, the Slovaks and the Communists, too, adopted an anti- Hungarian stance and proceeded to put it into practice.

Prior to the enunciation of the Košice Program (Dimond, 2005, n.8, p. 213), the founding document of the post-war Czechoslovak government after its return from exile, domestic affairs were directed by Presidential decree. Many of these were already replete with pronounced anti-Hungarian sentiment and were directed towards promoting the future plan for the 'exchange' of populations. The Hungarian Party *(Magyar Párt)* was dissolved, as were other Hungarian associations. The civil service was 'de-Hungarianized'. Hungarian representatives were not allowed to participate in municipal governments, even in towns with an overwhelming Hungarian majority. Despite these harsh measures, the question of the resettlement of the Hungarians was never discussed publicly in Czechoslovakia at the time. When the Slovak National Council returned to Slovakia from exile, the issue was not even mentioned in its Memorandum of February 1945. All it asked for was the return of supporters of the former Hungarian regime to Hungary (Čierna-Lantayová, D., 1992, p. 76).

The peace agreement concluded between the Allies and Hungary on 20 January 1945 declared the provisions of the Vienna Arbitral Award to be invalid and recognized the pre-Munich Czechoslovak borders. It demanded that all Hungarian administrators and soldiers should leave the occupied territory of Southern Slovakia, that war-time costs should be reimbursed and all decisions made by the Hungarian administration of the

territory rescinded, and that the property and valuables that had been seized should be returned (Šutaj, Š., 1991, p. 10).

The Košice Program was issued on 5 April 1945, immediately after the Czechoslovak Government, led by Zdeněk Fierlinger, had taken power. Its eighth section (out of a total of sixteen) laid down that the Hungarians and Germans were to be deprived of their rights as citizens and that administrative posts in ethnically mixed regions were to be staffed by Slovaks. The ninth section concerned the confiscation of Hungarian land and the fourteenth the dissolution of minority schools throughout the entire territory of Czechoslovakia. The resultant discriminatory measures meant that Hungarian property came under the control of the state, Hungarian civil servants were dismissed and lost their entitlement to pensions, the use of the Hungarian language was forbidden in religious services, Hungarian priests were expelled from Slovak territory, Hungarian students were excluded from Slovak universities, Hungarian cultural and public associations were dissolved and their property was taken over by the state, etc. (Hunčík, P. and Gál, F., 1993, p. 25).

Hungarians were also much more severely punished for crimes of collaboration with the Tiso regime of 1939-45. Janics claims that the proportion of Hungarians facing criminal charges was ten times higher than that of Slovaks (0.8 per cent of Hungarians as opposed to 0.08 per cent of Slovaks), and the former generally received higher sentences for similar crimes (Janics, K. 1982, p. 67). This aspect is sometimes illustrated by the fate of

the leading figure in the Hungarian community in Slovakia, Count János Esterházy. While he was a member of the collaborationist Slovak parliament, Esterházy was the only representative who did not vote in favor when the parliament was voting on the issue of the deportation of the Jews (Ibid.). He also came under constant attack by the German-language *Grenzbote* and the Slovak paper *Gardista.* Yet, after the war, he was accused of collaboration with the Nazi regime, taken to the Soviet Union by the KGB, later extradited to Czechoslovakia, and sentenced in 1947 on the charge of 'betrayal of the Republic' to death by hanging. This sentence was subsequently commuted by the President to life imprisonment. He died in prison in 1957 (Augustín, M., 1997, p. 102).

The Transfers

Following the enactment of the Law on the Protection of the Republic, the deportations of 'unreliable' Hungarians began. Those from Bratislava were moved to a detention camp in Petržalka and those from the rest of Slovakia into a former concentration camp for Jews in Sered'. Presidential Decree No. 33/1945, signed on 2 August 1945, deprived all Hungarians and Germans living on Czechoslovak territory of their rights as citizens, and became the basis of all subsequent discriminatory policies and actions. The loss of citizenship was automatically followed by exclusion from state institutions and offices, from reimbursement for nationalization of property and for war damage, etc. This decree was issued on the very same day that the Potsdam conference refused to include a

paragraph on the deportation of 200,000 Hungarians in the peace treaty with Hungary (Bibó, I., 1996, p. 549).

In consequence, the Czechoslovak government decided to resolve the situation by other means. Hungarians from Southern Slovakia were forcibly resettled in the distant parts of the Czech Republic vacated by the Germans deported to Germany. Other methods of eliminating the Hungarian community were 're-Slovakization', and the 'exchange' of Hungarians for Slovaks living in Hungary on the basis of a bilateral agreement.

Czechoslovakia could afford to treat its minorities in this way because "the fate of the Hungarian minority did not interest anyone after the Paris Peace Conference" of 1946 (Janics, K., 1982, p. 219). The resultant peace treaty, signed on 10 February 1947, did not include any provision concerning the protection of minorities. After the advent of Communism, the Hungarians in Czechoslovakia lost all possibility of self-defense. Individuals could no longer rely on being able to own private property, independent small businesses shrank to nothing and there was no chance to form small, informal associations within the now-paralyzed Church.

Resettlement in Bohemia was euphemistically labeled 'recruiting' of labor. The signs on the trains carrying the Hungarians from Slovakia said 'voluntary agricultural workers'. In reality, it was a deportation aimed at obtaining forced labor. The Czechoslovak administration began to carry out this program in 1945 on the basis of Presidential

Decree No.8 8/1945 on universal labor service. "It was on this basis that the compulsory labor service of the Hungarian population of South Slovakia was decreed (in November 1946), the intention being that, by the same token, the ethnic structure of South Slovakia's population would be altered" (Samuel Campbell quoted in Janics, 1982, p. 153) Decree No. 88/1945 empowered the government to draft men between the ages of sixteen and fifty-five and women between the ages of eighteen and forty-five into labor service for a period of one year. However, the deported Hungarians were of all ages and their property was confiscated, which was an illegal act and could not be justified under the Decree (Janics, 1982, p. 159). The Paris Peace Treaty declared that the matter of minorities was a question of domestic policy, and so not subject to outside interference, a provision which was widely used as an excuse for action against minorities in Czechoslovakia (Šutaj, Š., 1991, p. 13). The Slovak and Hungarian churches protested publicly against this treatment, but theirs were among but few lonely voices amid the silence of the vast, and largely uninformed, majority.

The Czech historian Karel Kaplan has labeled these transfers "internal colonization", the political aim of which was to transfer a part of the Hungarian minority away from the Hungarian border and to destroy it as a compact territorial unit. This colonization also had an immediate industrial goal – to provide the depopulated areas with a new workforce (Kaplan, K., 1993, p. 9).

The first stage of the resettlement involved the transfer of Hungarians from south-western Slovakia in exchange for the transfer of Slovaks from Hungary into that same region of Slovakia. The second stage took place in July and August 1946, under the slogan "Slovak agricultural labor assisting the Czech lands". The Hungarians who remained in southern Slovakia after the first wave of transfers were sent off to western Bohemia, a region vacated after a unilateral expulsion of the Sudeten Germans there.

The third and most large-scale phase of resettlement took place from November 1946 to February 1947, when 44,000 Hungarians were recorded as having been removed from 393 villages and seventeen South Slovak districts. The unofficial numbers given for Hungarians resettled in Bohemia between 1945 and 1948 are much higher (Šutaj, Š., 1993, p. 14). According to Janics:

> The deportations of Hungarians from Southern Slovakia came to a sudden end on February 25 1947. The decision to stop the deportations had come, most likely as a result of the unfavorable publicity in the West and under pressure of the Great Powers, the United States in particular . . . Thus, the Hungarians in the eastern counties of Southern Slovakia from Rožňava (Rozsnó) to Vel'ké Kapušany (Nagykapos) were spared the experience of being deported to Bohemia.. . . It was no secret that the deportations had a twofold objective. Its aim was to weaken the Hungarian ethnic element in Slovakia on the one hand and to force the execution

> of the population exchange agreement with Hungary, on the other. In that sense, the action was successful on both counts (Janics, K., 1982, p. 13).

The policy of re-Slovakization had already started with the decrees of the Slovak National Council issued immediately after the war. As already mentioned, the Hungarians along with the Germans were deprived of all rights of citizenship. Furthermore, a decree of May 1945 declared that Hungarians might no longer be members of Slovak political parties; thus, alongside the dissolution of all Hungarian political parties, all opportunities for legitimate self-defense were suppressed.

Re-Slovakization itself was announced by the Slovak National Council in June 1946 and lasted for a year. Its terms guaranteed citizenship to everyone who declared himself to be a Slovak. Re-Slovakization was officially a matter of free choice, but when we consider the options available to the Hungarians, we are obliged to conclude that it was a process of forcible assimilation. Opting for Hungarian ethnic identity in the census or for official purposes was highly unfavorable to a person's status. Declaring oneself to be Slovak meant being allowed to keep one's citizenship status, property and security: not doing so meant homelessness, statelessness, discrimination and financial insecurity. Thus the state institutions rudely interfered with personal identification and choice. Nor was Slovak citizenship automatically granted to everyone who applied, contrary to the provisions of the Decree. Out of over 400,000 requests, 81,142 were turned down by the Slovak authorities on the grounds of insufficient proof of Slovak origin. Every application for

citizenship had to be accompanied by a "certificate of nationality" to make sure that no person of German or Hungarian nationality would receive civil rights (Ibid.). The Czechoslovak statistics show that 326,679 people were re-Slovakized (Vago, R., 1989, pp. 31-2). However, in the 1960 census, 533,900 Hungarians reappeared (see Table 2.1 and 2.2.). Thus, re- Slovakization was considered "unsuccessful" in the long run. Nevertheless, it managed to worsen relations between Slovaks and Hungarians further.

The population exchange was carried out on the basis of a bilateral agreement between Czechoslovakia and Hungary of 26 February 1946, which provided for the voluntary exchange of 40,000 people. This agreement laid the foundations for an unequal trade-off. The Slovaks in Hungary were to decide freely, whilst the number of Hungarians to be transferred to Hungary from Slovakia was to be determined by the Slovak authorities. They wanted first of all to get rid of the Hungarian intelligentsia and political figures. When the Hungarian authorities were hesitant and procrastinated over carrying out the exchange, the Czechoslovak side pressured them through the deportations of Hungarians to the Czech borderlands and the policy of re-Slovakization.

At the time, the nationalist hysteria was running out of steam, owing to international condemnation of the Czechoslovak treatment of the Hungarian minority, and the Yugoslav example of reconciliation with the Hungarians. The overall numbers given for those exchanged differ. According to Renner, the overall number of Hungarians transferred to Hungary was 89,000 (leaving behind 15.700 homes) while the Slovaks

coming from Hungary reached 70.000 (leaving behind 4.400 homes) (Fazekas, J. and Szárka, L., 1994, p. 231). The last train transport from Hungary departed on 21 December 1948. Only half of those Slovaks who had applied to be exchanged actually turned up. Usually this was due to their dissatisfaction with the property allocated to them; in many cases, they were also scheduled to be sent to the Czech borderlands, which were still suffering from a shortage of labor (Čierna-Lantayová, D., 1992, p. 78).

"The history of Hungarians in Slovakia," states Raphael Vago, "is clearly divided into the period before and after 1948, when the Communists reversed, albeit slowly, their line of discrimination" (Vago, R., 1989, 27). Unfortunately, the historical record is darker than Vago suggests. The resettlement of Hungarians in the Czech borderlands was officially stopped and the Communist government restored their Czechoslovak citizenship and allowed them to return to Southern Slovakia. In the meantime, however, their property had been confiscated. and their land and houses had been given to Slovak newcomers or those who had been repatriated. Their return thus did not represent a solution, but in many instances merely a tempering of the problem (Šutaj, Š., 1991, p. 14). They were allowed to sue for the recovery of confiscated property and continued to do so for years. Only a few were successful. for the time was never really ripe for compensation to be paid (Janics, K., 1982, p. 172). Moreover, another wave of transfers was planned as late as 1949. "Action South" was approved directly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Shortly after it was launched in Šamorín in October

1949, it had to be stopped, since it was highly unrealistic and quite obviously in flat contradiction to the Communist ideal of supra-nationalism.

The Communist accession to power brought with it the establishment of a totalitarian regime for the rest of Slovak society. The paradox of this era is, as Vago makes clear, that it resulted in an improvement of the Hungarians' situation. The Slovak Communists, although they had participated extensively in the persecution of the Hungarians before 1948, could no longer pursue this line, for it did not correspond with Communist ideology. The Communist Party came to power in neighboring Hungary and the need for reconciliation became obvious. 1948 thus marked the end of the "years of homelessness" for the Hungarians in Slovakia and meant an improvement in the position of this minority within the state.

After their civil and political rights had been restored to the Hungarians, they were eligible for election to the national committees, the new local representative bodies combining the executive powers of the state with the Party line. In 1954, they had 4.4 per cent of representatives in the regional, 6.8 per cent in the district and 11.9 per cent in the local national committees (Šutaj, Š., 1991, p. 17). *Csemadok,* a Hungarian cultural association of workers, was established in 1949, and *Új Szó,* a Hungarian daily, first appeared in December 1949. Hungarians were allowed to return to Slovakia from the Czech lands, where. However, approximately 13,500 of them remained because they had nowhere to return to.

As early as 1953, the Communist Party condemned the treatment of the Hungarian minority in 1945-48 as politically mistaken, and in 1956 it granted minority rights to all national minorities under a constitutional law. According to which the Slovak National Council was responsible for securing adequate industrial and cultural conditions for the development of the Hungarian and Ukrainian minorities. Of course, the censorship that was imposed on the Slovak media and culture was imposed on their Hungarian counterparts, too, so that we cannot really speak of the liberation or improvement of the conditions of individual Hungarians. The oppression was especially tightened around 1956 in view of the revolutionary events then taking place in neighboring Hungary. But the paradox of the improvement of the situation of the Hungarian minority as a group remains an important part of Slovak common history and also contributes to the fact that Communism as such has been perceived differently in the Czech lands and in Slovakia.

2.3 Resonance of the Transfers in Present-day Political Relations between Slovaks and Hungarians

The 'solution' of the Hungarian question in Czechoslovakia proved to be inhumane, unsuccessful and largely counter-productive. In the period following the transfers, a leading Hungarian intellectual, Zoltán Fábry, wrote a manifesto addressed to the Czech and Slovak intelligentsia and entitled *The Accused Speaks Out,* in which he asked why none of them had stood up against the persecution of the Hungarians in Slovakia. Only

years later did a few Slovak intellectuals admit that he was right. Among them was a communist Vladimír Mináč. Who wrote in his memoirs in 1990:

> I remember the successive waves of hatred against the Hungarians, especially in the time after the war, when we focused on our small Slovak revenge, taking no account of political affiliation or religion, when we were willing to come to terms even with Beneš if he transferred enough Hungarians to the Sudetenlands, when we persecuted the Hungarians not as collaborators but just as unwanted aliens, when we hated not just Hungarians, but even their language. We need to apologize humbly for each Slovak misdeed, for the suffering thus caused to every individual Hungarian. It is not of wolves, but of our citizens that we speak (Mináč, V., 1993, pp. 115- 16).

Neither the Czech nor the Slovak Republic has declared the Beneš decrees to be legally invalid. The Slovak leadership has also failed to deal with the Communist past in the way the Czech government has. The widespread restitution of nationalized property now taking place has, for example, raised the issue of the restitution of Hungarian property confiscated in the 'homeless' years. Yet the Slovak government has failed to address this topic and admit that the above-mentioned measures against the deported Hungarians were unjust. The issue keeps cropping up on the political scene today. Although never referred to directly (for a representative of a Hungarian political party would be liable to be called an irredentist, secessionist and chauvinist if he mentioned the issue of the

southern borders or the transfers). These questions are implicit in the demands made by Hungarian representatives. When Slovakia was undergoing a process of territorial reorganization, a part of the Hungarian leadership has expressed a wish that a large 'Hungarian' region, approximately coinciding with the areas where the Hungarian minority is present in significant numbers, should be created. This has caused considerable turmoil on the political scene in Slovakia but, apart from the traditional general comments about 'extreme Hungarian nationalism', it has not received any further attention from the Slovak public, and has never been taken seriously or even discussed by those planning the territorial reorganization.

I do not recall the processes described above ever being mentioned during my schooldays in Slovakia, and present-day historical textbooks describe the democratic principles of the post-war government in flattering colors. It is also significant that for decades, the only publication on the topic of the transfers is by a Slovak Hungarian, Kálmán Janics. This historical account was published first in English in 1982, and was brought out in Slovak only much later, in 1994, by a Hungarian publisher, in an edition numbering a few hundred copies. Yet when one looks back at the results of the simple sociological soundings that were taken in 1994 of the feelings of the communities of Slovaks and Hungarians concerned, one realizes that the traumatic events of 1945-48 are far from being forgotten, despite half a century of attempts by the political leaderships to make them disappear; instead, they continue to define the nature of the relationship between Hungarians and Slovaks in Slovakia.

Figure 2.1.: Demographic trends of ethnic communities in Slovakia 1880 - 1991

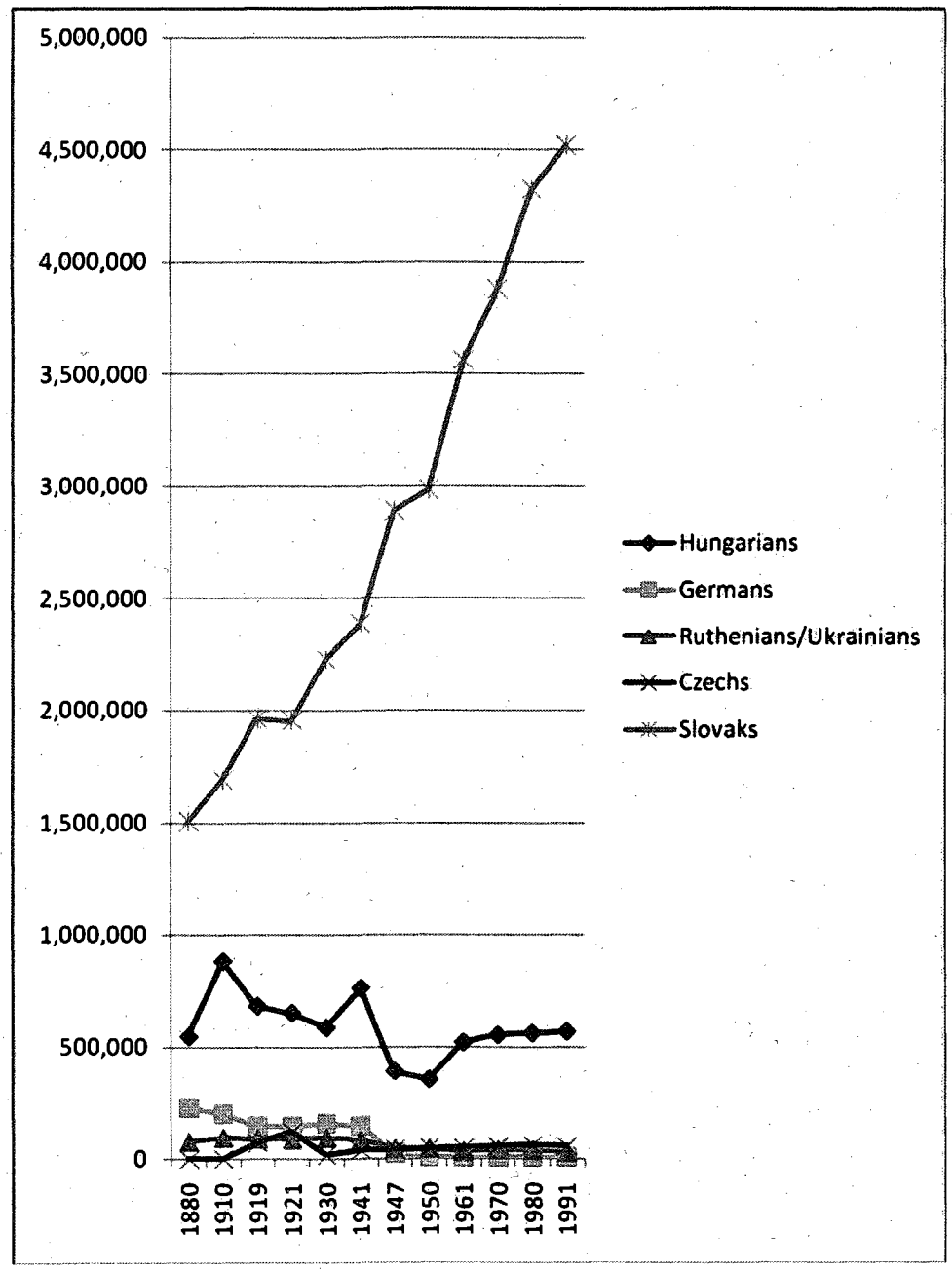


Table 2.1: Ethnic composition of present-day Slovakia, 1880-1991

Year	Total	Slovaks	Czechs	Hungarians	Germans	Ruthenians	Other nationalities
1880	2 460 865	1 502 565		545 889	228 581	78 402	105 428
		61,1%	-	22,2%	9,3%	3,2%	4,2%
1910	2 916 086	1 687 800	-	880 851	198 461	97 037	51 937
		57,9%		30,2%	6,8%	3,3%	1,8%
1919	2 935 239	1 960 391	72 137	681 375	145 139	92 786	55 468
		66,8%	2,4%	23,2%	4,9%	3,2%	1,9%
1921	2 958 557	1 952 866	120	650 597	145 844	88 970	48 143
		66,0%	926	22%	4,9%	3,0%	1,7%
			3,7%				
1930	3 254 189	2 224 983	17 443	585 434	154 821	95 359	72 666
		68,4%	0,5%	17,6%	4,5%	2,8%	3,0%
1941	3 536 319	2 385 552	37 000	761 434	143 209	85 991	142 690
		67,4%	1,1%	21,5%	4,0%	2,4%	4,2%
1947	3 399 000	2 888 000	40 365	390 000	24 000	47 000	13 000
		85%	1,2%	11,5%	0,7%	1,4%	0,3%
1950	3 442 317	2 982 524	45 721	354 532	5179	48 231	11 486
		86,6%	1,1%	10,3%	0,1%	1,4%	0,4%
1961	4 174 046	3 560 216	47 402	518 782	6259	35 435	7 633
		85,3%	1,0%	12,4%	0,1%	0,9%	0,2%
1970	4 537 290	3 878 904	55 234	552 006	4760	42 238	11 980
		85,5%	1,1%	12,2%	0,1%	1,0%	0,3%
1980	4 987 853	4 321 139	59 326	559 801	5121	39 758	6 800
		86,6%	1,1%	11,2%	0,1%	0,8%	0,2%
1991	5 274 335	4 519 328	56487	567 296	5414	30 478	92 493
		85,7%	1,1%	10,7%	0,1%	0,6%	1,8%
*1991**	5 274 335	4 445 303	56 487	608 221	7 738	58 579	98 007
		84,3%	1,1%	11,5%	0,1%	1,1%	1,9%

Note:* Recorded by mother tongue.
Sources: 1880. 1910: Hungarian census data (mother/native/tongue); 1921, 1930, 1947, 1950, 1961, 1970, 1980, 1991: Czechoslovakian census data (ethnicity); 1991: Czechoslovakian census data (mother/native/ tongue); 1941: combined Hungarian and Slovakian census data. The data between 1880 and 1941 for the present territory of Slovakia were calculated by K. Kocsis, in Kocsis, K. and Kocsis-Hodosi, E. *Hungarian Minorities in the Carpathian Basin* (Budapest. 1998), p. 56.

Table 2.2. : Ethnic composition of Slovakia, 1857 - 1910

Year of the Census	*Total*	*Slovaks*	*Hungarians*	*Germans*	*Ruthenians*	*Other nationalities*
1857	2 551 935	1 441 307	599 398	154 799	199 506	156 925
		(56,5%)	(23,5%)	(6,1%)	(7,8%)	(6,1%)
1880	2 787 205	1 613 350	775 065	256 882	123 747	24 161
		(57,9%)	(27,8%)	(9,0%)	(4,4%)	(0,9%)
1890	2 958 062	1 654 917	873 166	247 189	130 433	36 758
		(56,5%)	(29,7%)	(7,1%)	(4,5%)	(1,2%)
1900	3 190 022	1 742 200	1 024 488	225 206	138 634	35 773
		(55,0%)	(32,4%)	(7,1%)	(4,4%)	(1,1%)
1910	3 350 600	1 686 712	846 271			
		(50,3%)	(25,6%)			

Source: Šutaj, Š., 1991, p. 4

CHAPTER 3
"Je Me Souviens"...Collective Memory on the Stage of Central European Politics

> "What connects us across the canyon of time is the small history of human life, marked by birth and by death. They, too, are full of turning historical events, struggles, aggressions and coups, victims and treasons, victories and losses, altogether events that shine so glamorously in history books. Only we don't explain them as results of artificial abstractions in small history, but as results of impulses that forever accompany human life, love and hate, faith and hopelessness, modesty and pride, ambitions and weakness, and of all that that magnificently stands out in human stories that are preserved and that we tell again and again" (Šimečka 1992).

It is not that long ago that the Central European nations became to think about themselves in ethnic and national terms. Prior to the late 19th century only a few intellectuals assumed a 'Czech', or a 'Slovak' identity. Most people perceived their identity through the village, town, or region they lived in. Only towards the end of the 19th century did the 'Budweisers' or 'Pressburgers' progressively turn into Czechs, Germans, Slovaks, or Hungarians.[1] During the time of the national revival movements, or 'renascence', history and the need for collective memory, played a crucial role. Czech

[1] A thorough critique of primordial views of ethnicity and a detailed history of creating ethnic consciousness in the Czech lands is to be found in Jeremy King, *Budweisers Into Czechs and Germans* (2002).

intellectuals forged two historic documents, Slovaks strained the evidence to prove the existence of 'Slovak-hood' in the distant past and Hungarians dug out ancient chronicles glorifying the era of the forefathers of their nation. The use of collective memory played a crucial role in mobilizing the peasants politically to become members of ethnic communities, served to claim the allegiance of the masses during the turbulent times marked by the two World Wars, their aftermaths, and the Cold War, and continues to be a key political tool in the present. It provides a unifying factor that unites a community and transfers the membership in it into an intimate and personal tie. "...Historical consciousness transcends the exclusive preoccupation with what happened in the past and has become a history, and uses this knowledge as an element in shaping the thoughts and actions that will determine the future" (Schieder T., 1978: 1).

After the "Velvet Revolution" of 1989, the newly emerged Czech and Slovak leaderships sought quickly to legitimize their leadership and justify their country's place in a democratic Europe by claiming selected particular historical heritage. Both turned to their past to seek the linkages. Czechs and Slovaks, however, sought friendship with very different entities from their past. The Czechs built on the message of Masaryk's democratic ideals from the first interwar republic, while the Slovaks viewed this era suspiciously. Instead, Slovaks saw a legacy in the interwar Slovak state, which existed during the time when the Czech lands were under German occupation. For the Czechs, this was the darkest era in the Czech 20th century history, but for the Slovaks, it was an era of (admittedly problematic, yet still) independent statehood. The Czechs turned to the

positive experience of the rise against the totalitarian Communist rule in the late 1960s in Czech and Slovak public and cultural life. The Slovaks, on the other hand, were mollified by the gift of a federal status within the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and an era of industrial growth that followed the invasion of the Warsaw Pact armies in 1968. The rigid totalitarian regime of 'normalization' that followed the invasion is again perceived as one of the darkest eras in the Czech collective memory. This "failure to find a decent past" together, as Igor Lukes coins the situation (Lukes, I., 1995), led to the choice of separate paths for the future and dissolution of Czechoslovakia.

On January 1993, the two nations started a new period in their history and had to figure out their identity anew. The Czech and Slovak political leaders had to do their own searching of historical references in order to legitimize the suddenly independent entities in the European space.

Collective memory has been nurtured especially by the fringe nationalist leaders of all present ethnic groups. It comes into play most significantly before the general election, or during debates on important legislative changes that have some impact on inter-ethnic relations. In Slovakia, such was the case with the Act on the Official State Language, the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, the Act on the Territorial Arrangement that redrew districts, lessening the percentage of ethnic Hungarians, the Hungarian Status Law, discussions around the possible dual citizenship, and numerous others.

It is apparent that political leaders have some impact on public perceptions and attitudes towards the "other". A recent survey of ninth grade students carried out by the Center for Research on Ethnicity and Culture ("Postoj detí k Maďarom prekvapil", 2008) shows increased racism towards the Roma and increased negative attitudes towards the ethnic Hungarians. The latter engender the most negative attitudes. This trend, according to the authors, is a direct result of the increased nationalism in public debate at the top political level, directly using the quotes floated by political leaders and charged with strong negative emotions.

Role of Collective Memory in Ethnic Mobilization

"And perhaps we will awaken only when the short ugly riders with bowed legs on even uglier furry horses will arrive again on 'félvidék'."[2]

Illustration 3.1: Commemoration of 150th Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of March 1848 by the ethnic Hungarians in the southern Slovak town of Komárno

That was a statement of a Slovak nationalist politician Ján Slota, Member of the Slovak Parliament, during the Slovak National Party press conference. The "short ugly riders" referred to the alleged Hungarian predecessors, Avars and Huns, who entered the Central European region more than one

[2] SNS Press conference, 13 January 2005

thousand years ago[3]. When the European Union started the accession rounds with Turkey in 2005, the Guardian commented on the discussions taking place in the Austrian and German media: "Austria and Germany still think of the geese whose honking woke the army when Vienna was under siege from the Ottoman Turks" (Bunting, 2005) around the time when parts of America were still being discovered. There are more subtle and peaceful messages, too. Québec license plates, for example, state simply: „Je me souviens" -- "I remember, I recall". It harks back to the distant motherland and claims it as part of its own heritage.

We are used to inflammatory remarks that draw historical parallels from our politicians or in the media. What drives public figures to dive deep into the past and select these references in order to throw them into the pot of current political issues? How successful are they in stirring the masses through the politics of memory? How do the ethnic mobilization attempts contribute to the perpetuation of ethnic conflict in Central Europe?

Twenty years after the wave of the revolutions that toppled the communist rule in Central Europe after half a century, Slovakia and its neighbors are members of the European Union with fully consolidated democratic regimes. Yet their domestic political scenes are still split along ethnic lines and latent ethnic conflict is palpable within as well as across the borders. This chapter focuses on one of the main factors that feeds the

[3] This reference is commonplace among Slovak nationalists (in a negative sense) as well as among Hungarian nationalists (in a positive sense), even though no direct link between Avars or Huns and the present-day Hungarians can be proven.

continuing ethnic tensions in politics – the manipulation with collective memory by the political leaders. The national elites often use references to the events in ethnic groups' past as ready-made weapons against the representatives of other ethnic groups, or as a lure to attract voters within their own community. My field research shows that the level of awareness and interpretation of events and eras highlighted in collective memories of this or that ethnic group varies by nationality, but also by belonging to the ranks of the national or local elite. Common people, simply put, seem to have more pedestrian priorities than linking ancient histories to current political squabbles.

In this chapter, I will explore the dynamic component of ethnicity. I look at the theoretical background of ethnic mobilization under political leadership, and examine the tools utilized to further political agendas, with a particular focus on the manipulation of collective memory. To deeper illustrate this dynamic, I look at a case study from the southern Slovak town of Komárno.[4]

Collective memory has been a concept increasingly permeating the social sciences literature in the past few decades: from sociology to anthropology, ethnology, political science, and particularly the literature on identity and ethnic conflict. Lately, it is also impacting the applied practical fields such as conflict resolution or mediation.

[4] This chapter has been researched during my Junior Visiting Fellowship at the Institut fur die Wissenschaften vom Menschen in Vienna in 2005.

This chapter pulls together some of the threads from these theories and defines collective memory not as a static trait of ethnic communities, but as a purposeful and selective process of the creation of a historical narrative of identity-based groups that relies on the intimate connection of an individual to individual memory, shaped by social realities and that serves the purpose of fostering group cohesion and ethnic mobilization. Emotions that are linked to individual memory play a crucial role as the driver of group action and attitudes in this process. The level of ethnic mobilization is also situational rather than a permanent state of mind of people or groups (see particularly Brubaker, R., 2006).

The theory is illustrated by a case study of the ethnically mixed Komárno, a Slovak-Hungarian borderland city with a peculiar history of one statue that represents the purposeful action embedded in the concept of collective memory through the dialogue of multiple layers of actors. A public opinion survey conducted in Komárno in 2003 further highlights this dynamic and the constructed nature of collective memory.

History and memory

Collective memory is a thread of selective remembrance of past events and eras through the lens of the present needs and priorities. Like pearls on a string, they are threaded into one necklace, one narrative of the origin, place, and mission of an ethnic community or a nation. Pieces that don't fit in are discarded, forgotten, or swept under the rug. However, collective memory can be fleeting and remarkably flexible, changing with the varying political situation and atmosphere.

Furthermore, the concept itself is a bit murky, as in reality it is at best a metaphor for a collective exercise of a negotiation of meta-memories; a constructed narrative with a forward-looking purpose in mind (Halbwachs,M., 1997; Ross, M., 2007). The term has met the fate of many other popular concepts in social sciences. It is often used as an amorphous all-embracing cliché and its' explanatory value often borders on justification of behavior or attitudes of ethnic and religious communities. It is often depicted as an unshakable God-given trait. This is similar and related to the traditional static definitions of ethnic communities or nations, explained on the basis of economic industrialization Gellner, E., 1983) or of cultural industrialization and unification (Anderson, B., 1991), or others. Ethnic community is depicted as a group that shares language, culture, tradition and common historical heritage, therefore as a unit that transcends the individuals. The concept of collective memory as a pool of memories of the most significant events and heroes of an ethnic community supports the primordial view of ethnic communities rather than challenges and enriches it. It is therefore useful to look at the collective memory within the dynamic of ethnic tensions and conflicts, and explore how it is connected to the motivation of political actors and to mobilization of ethnic groups.

3.1 Collective vs. Individual Memory

Ultimately, collective memory is neither entirely "collective", nor really a "memory" in the true meaning of the word. It is not entirely collective, because the repository of

memory is in the individual mind. It is, at best, a "meta-memory" – a recollection of memories as they are transmitted by grandparents, parents, teachers, scholars... A true collective memory would presuppose a group endowed with traits of a living being, an independent organism above and beyond individuals.

Maurice Halbwachs (1992) has devoted much of his work to relating individual memory to social groups. "While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember." (cited from Coser, L., 1992). Individual memory is formed in a social context, shaped by objects and people around the individual that become partially fused with him or herself. It is therefore not possible to tell what is an external observation and what is internal (Halbwachs, M., 1992, p.169). Without this intimate dialogue between individual consciousness as reflected in the present situation and the larger social groupings, evolution would be impossible; society would be static, relying entirely on traditions and logic (Ibid, p.188).

Despite a growing consensus among academics that collective memory is constructed in a selective and purposeful process, the political leaders (particularly those that have nationalistic and populist leaning) and a large portion of populations take it at a face value, as an existing reality. This enables direct utilization of collective memory in a political process. It also points to the limits of constructivism – if taken to an extreme, it ceases to correspond fully with the social reality as it is perceived.

Selective construction of historical narratives.

> Another source of impediment for the reconciliation of Slovak and Hungarian society is that each views the past, present and future differently. Regarding the past, there is practically nothing to agree on. There was ample evidence of this when in 1996 the Hungarians commemorated the 1100 anniversary of the foundation of the Hungarian state and the Slovak state apparatus, at the initiative of the opposition and with public opinion approval, could launch attacks [*sic*] against Hungarian celebrations and memorials (Duray, M., 1996).

A whole bulk of recent literature in the conflict resolution field tends to deal with conflicts that have their roots in people's identities. This literature, reflecting the practice it describes, appears to have been residing in a parallel universe to the academic literature on history, memory, or identity. Much attention has been paid to the techniques of negotiation and/or mediation, seeking causes for ethnic mobilization and conflict in the disputed resources and tangible interests that the parties in conflict claim to be the root of the disagreement and/or violence. Marc Howard Ross (2007) maintains that most conflict analysis and conflict management literature entirely ignores identity needs and emotionally charged psychocultural narratives. Identity and culture offer an alternative (to rationalistic) explanatory account of conflict. Widely shared narratives offer emotionally meaningful accounts of the world, defining groups and explaining their motives and actions. Psychocultural analysis not only examines group narratives, but also considers the many ways they are enacted in daily life and in community's sacred rituals (Ross, M. H., 2007, p. xv).

Ross and others explain ethnic conflict by ethnic groups subscribing to divergent narratives of the past events (Ibid., p. 30). Opponents "select opposite metaphors, place emphasis on different events, cite different motives and communicate varying emotions to such degree that an outside observer has a hard time telling that they are referring to the same conflict" (Ibid., p. 31).

Practical work with ethnic communities in conflict sheds more light on this. Group dialogues and conciliation processes that utilize historical narrative approaches show that it is usually not the narratives themselves that are clashing. Phil Gamaghelyan and Ceren Ergenc of the *Imagine Dialogue* have developed a methodology that works with the historical narratives of the groups in conflict for their work with Turkish and Armenian groups, later with Armenian and Azeri groups in the United States (Kusá, D. et. al., 2008). During the dialogue process, the members of the two ethnic groups write down the defining moments from their past as they relate to the conflict between their group and that with which they are in conflict. This timeline does not enumerate all historical facts that the group members can amass between themselves, but only those events that the group considers most significant and that are known to each member of the group. It captures the elements that are alive in public discourse rather than an exhaustive list of facts and events. This timeline represents a historical narrative of the community, from its origin, and its' mission, to the rights and wrongdoings against it. From the perspective of the other group, it appears as a collection of lies and falsifications, hate, malice and insults. But a closer look at the narrative of the other group reveals that it is usually strikingly similar to the first one, conveying the same emotions, justifications, motives.

When the groups present the narratives to each other, stereotypes and assumptions about what they believe the other group knows and feels become apparent. When the two historical narratives are placed next to each other in a chronological order, and participants are asked to look at them from the perspective of an uninvolved observer, they do not seem to contradict each other. Rather, as one of the participants in the Armenian – Azerbaijani group put it: "one country could be in Asia and the other in South Africa, for they seem to have little in common". Events that construe the narrative of one group may be downplayed or entirely absent in the other group's narrative. Out of two pages of thickly written text in the timelines within this particular group, in which many years were discussed, only two years (1921 and 1994) were mentioned by both sides and even those were mentioned in a different context. Otherwise the narratives shared identical traits of victories and wrongdoings by others, cultural supremacy, and heroic missions, but with different interpretations of the "enemies" and the victims. This exercise helps the groups to understand the constructive nature of ethnicity and the role history plays in the process of its construction.

Collective memory is purposeful.

Its goal is to unite, differentiate 'us' from 'them', gloss over the unflattering parts, and exaggerate and mystify the positive ones. Thus it is an entirely different animal from the 'real' past, which 'honest' historiography strives to uncover. "Its relationship to the past is like an embrace... ultimately emotional, not intellectual", said American historian

Bailyn (In: Blight, 2002). Blight describes academic history as a secular exercise, striving to achieve maximum objectivity, while collective memory is like a church, where the nation and great stories about its heroism and suffering are put on a pedestal and worshiped as deities (Ibid.). Collective memory serves as a tool for personification of an ethnic community, a proof of its existence for its members and leaders. When some elements of the past are not entirely convenient, reliance on historical facts is replaced with reliance on imagination and myths, or some elements are overemphasized and missing facts are filled in with speculations in order to complete the narrative of the group's mission and purpose and to tug on emotional strings.

R. Brubaker et al. (2008) importantly remind us that identification with an ethnic group is not a constant and all-pervasive state of mind. The mundane things of everyday life normally take precedence over the importance of ethnic affiliation, which kicks in during a heated situation, especially when ethnic groups compete for access to resources and to decision making. "Although we speak routinely of persons *having* an ethnicity, we might more aptly speak of them *doing ethnicity* at such moments" (2008: 208).

3.2 Collective Memory within the Framework of Ethnic Identity

What makes collective memory such a potent tool at times, stirring masses of people towards a shared sentiment, mobilizing them towards action, sometimes driving them to mass violence? What makes it so personal that it touches the core of our beings and brings out the emotions of pride or righteousness, even willingness to die for a cause, or

the negative emotions of anger, hate, resentment, fear, or rage? Let us look at the theories of ethnic identity and instrumentalize the elements at work during the process of ethnic mobilization. Special attention is paid to the role of the political leaders and to the role of the emotions which link private identities of citizens to the national agenda, providing a handle which skilled political leaders can grab to warm their own soup.

Collective memory is addressed in the field of ethnology as well. It is presented as a formative part of our ethnic consciousness. That consciousness is understood "as a feeling of originality of an ethnic group. This feeling of originality and uniqueness can be based on scientifically founded facts, but may also be grounded in myths that cannot be proved by science or are false. Strong emotional charge is an ever-present feature of such imagination" (Kaľavský, M., 2001, p.1).

Ethnic consciousness is described as consisting of four elements: an ethnonym, collective aspirations of the ethnic community, social norms and customs, and collective memory (Ibid.). They all have potentially strong emotional charge, especially in times of perceived danger or threat. Ethnonym, or the name that the ethnic group claims, is an important part of an awareness of a group, especially if their existence is doubted or threatened. There is a strong emotional attachment to the label, and it always comes as rooted in the territory of a homeland (*Heimat)* – whether real, or imagined one (Ibid.; Maalki,L., 1996). Ethnic groups are said to be united through a common aspiration to continue their existence as a unique, original group. The emotional bond to their

imagined entity (as described by Anderson,B., 1991), as well as the benefits that membership in that ethnic community brings to individuals, foster the group's will to survive. Traditions, customs, social norms, cultural values and the 'way of life' serve as tools to identify a group of people, demarcate their physical and imagined boundaries in the world (Barth, F., 1969). Whereas the collection of social norms helps ethnic groups to transmit *positive* messages about themselves outwards (food and clothing, culture, traditions...), collective memory is described as serving the role of *negatively* defining the group against other ethnic groups.

Despite including the component of collective memory and highlighting the emotional aspect of ethnicity, the concept of ethnic consciousness as described above does not explain the process of ethnic mobilization towards action and shared attitudes and counts on the existence of ethnic groups as sovereign independent entities.

Role of emotions in ethnic mobilization

Identity is not only assumed through socialization into a community, but also ascribed by others from outside of the community. In this dialogue, the individual person internalizes many of the inputs and information and evaluates them on the basis of a continuously constructed framework of reference (Halbwachs, M., 1992). Inputs that are not in harmony with this framework – for example negative statements about one's ethnic community – can be seen as a threat, an attack. This applies to information that is internalized as part of collective memory. Information that contradicts the accepted

historical narrative causes feelings of an assault on dignity, anger, nervousness, or surge of pride. Collective memory thus offers a unique connecting link between a society and an individual, reaching to his or her emotional core, able to impact his or her thinking and behavior.

Collective memory is not only a collection of accepted historical facts and events. These alone would not have much meaning and impact. Information is interpreted through cultural codes, formulas that are used to decipher information on the basis of a system of values transmitted from the social environment, permeating norms and values from outside (Shestakov, A., 2008). Interpreted events are transmitted along with emotions that accompany them and they stack up on top of each other, packing up like snowballs that politicians readily throw at each other when matters of 'national importance' are debated. Any interpreted event recalls associations with similar events or emotions that can capture a span of decades and centuries. The year 1389, for example, represents an array of significant events for the Serbs, not merely the battle of Kosovo Field (Kosovo Polje) which took place in that year. It encapsulates the message of occupation, and oppression and suffering, which was utilized during the political rallies on that symbolically rich soil many times in recent decades, linking them to the national aspirations of the Serbs and the role of Kosovo territory in Serbian national imagination.

Such symbolic assaults become all the more potent if an ethnic group finds itself in a socially or economically marginalized position against another (or perceives it so), or

feels discriminated against or threatened by the other group's rhetoric or action (Rotschild, 1981). These are often highlighted by the leaders in a historical light, stressing how "this has always been so", and can and often do serve as launching pads for triggering mass emotions of fear, hatred, resentment, or in extreme cases of violent conflict, and rage (Petersen, R., 1996). Emotions are a potent driver for ethnic mobilization. Petersen describes the impact of emotions on collective action. He asserts that particularly negative emotions distort the way people perceive information, assess their needs, set priorities for action, and evaluate the best ways to reach them. The negative emotions trigger particular reactions. Fear induces a "fight or flight" response, while resentment might lead to a struggle to right the perceived wrong or discrimination, and anger might result in seeking vengeance against the perceived perpetrator (Petersen, R., 2004).

Collective Memory as a Symbolic Political Capital?

Even though collective memory may not correspond to a tangible reality defined by an independent collective entity, it is perceived and presented as such in the public life. The skill to utilize it in the political sphere represents a form of a political capital that can attract at least a part of the electorate.

As with any other capital, it requires a certain dexterity for its utilization and maintenance. Central Europe, where ethnic groups thrive in abundance and share a

complex and long past, offers a fertile soil for collective memory maneuvers and exercises. Whether it was the separation of the Czech and Slovak Republics, the territorial arrangement changes in Slovakia, or the Hungarian Status Law, political parties got extra mileage out of fanning the flames of sentiments related to the recent and distant past clashes and painting them in ethnic colors. The Velvet Divorce of the Czech and Slovak Republics in 1993 is among the most vivid examples of the politics of memory at play.

In the confused atmosphere of rampant nationalism that had anti-Czech, anti-Hungarian, anti-Semitic, and even anti-Western traits in the years prior to the Velvet Divorce, the Slovak representation raised many issues that seemed frivolous, escalating into what popularly became known as the 'hyphen war' – a disagreement about the spelling of "Czechoslovakia." The Slovak delegates in the Federal Parliament claimed that the term "Czechoslovakia" was discriminatory to the Slovaks, who are commonly mistaken for the Czechs abroad. Their claims were accompanied with recalling the myths of the one thousand year long suffering of the Slovaks under the Hungarian yoke, only to be replaced by the yoke of suffering of the Slovaks under the Czechs in the common state beginning in 1918. The Federal Assembly finally settled on the title "The Czech and Slovak Federative Republic". The Slovak Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar, pursuing his political agenda based on populist promises of national sovereignty continued to lead a policy of blackmail, threatening the Czechs with secession. The Czech Prime Minister (now the Czech President) Václav Klaus eventually called Mečiar's bluff and startled

him by accepting the proposal of the separation. The divorce was decided at the top political level without participation, but also without significant protests from the Czech and Slovak publics. More than half of the respondents in a public opinion survey voiced their desire to remain in the common republic and/or to have an opportunity to decide its fate in a referendum (Nemcová, K., 1992). It was instead decided at the top of the political pyramid. On January 1993, the two nations started a new period in their history and had to define their identities anew.

Relying on collective memory has been popular especially with the fringe nationalist leaders of all present ethnic groups. It comes into play most significantly during the political campaigns before the general elections, or during the debates on important legislative measures that have some impact on inter-ethnic relations or national minorities matters.

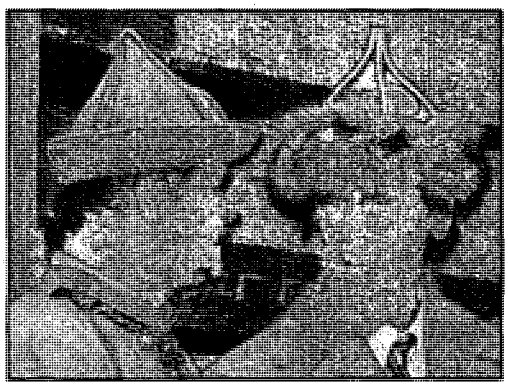


Illustration 3.2: Return of the Huns to the Hungarian Parliament, unsuccessfully applying for a status of national minority. April 2005 (© BBC)

Sometimes, however, the calculated attempts to stir up the mass feelings on the basis of allegiance towards shared collective memory also fail. Such cases are instructive in order to uncover the true political agendas behind these emotion-jerking exercises. The Hungarian political scene recently produced an obscure example of that in September 2004. A group

claiming to be the descendants of the Huns submitted a petition to the Hungarian Parliament demanding to be recognized as a distinct national minority (Thorpe, N., 2005). Although the Huns have dispersed across half of the Europe after their leader, Attila the Hun, died in 495 AD and there are no chronicles from that time that would document their presence and movement, here they were, demanding their right to be recognized, counting on wide public backing. After all, the Huns are popularly claimed as the predecessors of the Hungarian nation. The motivation of the group seems to have been mostly pragmatic, however. Hungary has a law on ethnic self-government, whereby each official national minority reaching a certain percentage of the population in the locality of their residence qualifies for government funding towards the support of culture and education. The Huns of the modern era were laughed out of the Parliament. Seventeen of the 21 members of the Committee for Human Rights and National Minorities voting against their bid, four abstaining and none voting in their favor. They did not fare much better with the public, becoming a major source of amusement for a few days.

3.3 Collective Memory in the Public Life in Southern Slovakia

The turbulent history of Southern Slovakia is similar to that of other borderlands. The oldest inhabitants, who were born here and had lived at the same location their entire lives, would have lived in five different states in their lifetimes without moving anywhere. In short, the struggle for identity took place on a physical as well as a

symbolical level. The latter is visible through the mementos of the eras in the public squares, street signs, statues, memorials, plaques.

Illustration 3.3: Unveiling of the Cyril and Methodius statue at Matica Slovenská in Komárno on 12th July, 2003 © M. Drozd, TASR

Once the national revival movements fully emerged in Central and Eastern Europe in the 19th century, monument fever struck towns and villages where ethnic identity mattered. Komárno saw statues and plaques put up, removed, and put up again; Štúrovo had to fight an epic battle for the restoration of a bridge over the Danube connecting it with the Hungarian Esztergom on the other side of the river. Southern Slovakia is certainly not unique in its battles for public space. The 'monument fever' entered the European stage with the national renascence movements and public space became contested by different ethnic groups, representing a convenient stage for embodiment and physical representation of collective memories. Destinies of many such places are detailed in academic literature. Jeremy King describes the ascent of ethnic identity in the city of Budějovice in his book *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans* (2002) as exemplified by a statue of a ship-builder E. Lána claimed by the Czech and German national revivalists alike as a local national hero. Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield edited a book that shows the politics of memory in action in public spaces across the former Austro-

Hungarian Empire. Erika Bourgignon (1996) beautifully captures collective memory and its partial fusion with the individual memory through a first person narrative of a Jewish girl that grew up in Vienna and returns there after more than half a century, stopping by at symbolically meaningful places. Zdeněk Hojda (1997) focuses on statues and monuments in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and recounts the behind the scenes accounts of their design, placement, or timing of their elevation or removal. He shows the skillful usage of references to ancient and more recent history as baits for motivating current political preferences and behavior.

In Southern Slovakia, as in other ethnically mixed regions, the "small history" of the local families living next to each other for ages often clashes with the "big history" – the events at the national or international level. This occurs not because of some existential clashes between the ethnic communities, but rather because the ethnic political platform presents an easy arena for this. National leaders occasionally meddle in the local affairs, extending their own battlefield that includes ethnic identity into it. This ambition, as noted above, is exemplified by the conflict over what to put in public spaces, reaching sometimes exhibitionist dimensions.

Hungarians and Slovaks normally share the public spaces in the Slovak South, where they live in proximity for centuries. Many are fully bilingual and claim a double Slovak and Hungarian identity. Komárno seats Hungarian cultural and educational associations, such as *Csemadok*, a branch of the Hungarian Economic University, Collegium of János

Sellye, as well as the Slovak ones – the Slovak high school, or the Slovak Heritage Foundation - Matica slovenská (Matica).

The peaceful cohabitation was seemingly abruptly interrupted in the summer of 2003, when a heated squabble about a statue in Komárno attracted the attention of all of Slovakia. The Slovak leaders crossed swords with the local Hungarian representatives (who hold a majority in the Komárno municipal government) about the placement of a statue of two Byzantine emissaries, symbols of the mythical Slovak ancient homeland.[5] Average Komárnians were hardly affected by the quarrel in any practical sense. Most just avoided the spectacle altogether. But the leaders of Matica and of the municipal government played the battle out in the media as if their life depended on it.

The quarrel about the Cyril and Methodius statue began some 13 years before that summer. When General Klapka, the Hungarian national hero of the 1848 revolution, made his return onto a pedestal on the main town square in 1990, Matica wanted to place a statue of the Byzantine Christian emissaries Cyril and Methodius in the public arena as well. The Matica had good reasons for this. Matica was created on August 4, 1863, a millennium after the introduction of Christianity by the Byzantine emissaries. Historic research suggests that it is possible that these missionaries passed into Slovak territories through Komárno. Dušan Čaplovič, (currently the Vice-Prime Minister for National

[5] Konstantin (later admitted to holy orders as Cyril) and Methodius were invited by Prince Rastislav of the Great Moravian Empire to bring Christianity to the people. Great Moravia, despite the fact that it included only small portions of today's Slovakia, is portrayed in Slovak national imagination as the ancient homeland of the Slovaks.

Minorities and a historian by trade) and a Member of Parliament (MP) for SMER at the time supported Matica's claim in a personal interview:

> We know everything only from narrative, indirect sources, most often we have to reconstruct a history, which a historian has a right to do. Cyril and Methodius passed through Blatnohrad and Kocel's areas, and along the Danube River. But there were two ways to cross the Danube river. One route would lead around the entire Danube river and so they could cross from the Tisa side. The other crossing was in Komárno, the old route across the Danube. That was the shortest route, so there is good reason to believe that Cyril and Methodius went that way, but it is not proven.

Vladimír Turčan (In: Krekovič, 2005, pp. 36–42) is of a different opinion:

> There is no registered archeological locality in Komárno which could support this conclusion. Not to mention that this route would be contrary to the situation in the Balkans at the time. The route that they used was hinted at by the missionaries themselves. They wanted to return to the Byzantine Empire through Venice, which was a part of the Empire and had a comfortable connection to Constantinople. It is more than likely that they would have used the same route on the way here. Furthermore, there is not even evidence of Komárno being integrated within the Great Moravia at the time (Ibid., p. 37).

Be it as it may, Matica insisted on the statue and approached the municipal government about it.

The municipal government did not have much enthusiasm for the project. The two sides could not arrive at a decision on where to place the statue. The sites proposed by Matica were either already taken or unsuitable for "technical reasons". The sites proposed by the town representatives did not seem dignified to Matica. They included a distant public park where the statue would share public attention with the public toilets, or an abandoned military church in a dilapidated condition. The statue was ready, but neither side was willing to step back and accommodate the other. After years of dispute, when the 140th anniversary of Matica's founding was approaching, Matica's leaders opted for a unique solution. Matica decided to mount the statue on top of their own building, which allowed them to forego obtaining the town's official construction permit. The date was set for the 5th of July 2003 and Matica proceeded with resolve.

On the set day, the municipal government summoned the city police to halt the installation of the statue. After a few verbal skirmishes, Matica proceeded with the mounting. Later, Matica sued the local government for limiting its freedom. The town representatives, on the other hand, charged Matica a million and a half SK fine for not having obtained a construction permit in advance. Eventually, the legal battle fizzled out without a victor.

The public unveiling of the statue took place on the 12th of July. The celebration itself was well attended. Sixteen buses brought nearly seven hundred people from all over Slovakia. Among those present were the clergy, leaders and members of Matica, the top representatives of nationalist political parties, such as the Slovak National Party (SNS), the Movement for Democratic Slovakia (HzDS), of centrist parties such as the populist SMER and ANO, and the Christian Democrats (KDH) who had been supporting Matica in its quest to erect the statue of the Byzantine brothers in a public place throughout the duration of the dispute. There were groups of men and women in folk costumes, members of a local senior club as well as youth in jeans. Disturbance came in the form of a few youths with closely cropped hair roaming around, along with a group dressed in the black uniforms resembling the Hlinka Guards, the Slovak counterpart to Hitler's SS guards during the interwar Slovak state. Members of this group, Slovenská Pospolitosť ("Slovak Togetherness") claim not to have neo-Nazi leanings and refer to themselves as Slovak patriots. They marched to the nearby state border crossing to deliver the message of the unveiling as they understood it: "Slovakia begins here!" and "Hungarians beyond the Danube!"

Illustration 3.4: Symbols of three eras from the Slovak historical memory share space around Matica slovenská in Komárno

The space where the emissaries' statue was placed is symbolically rich. The myth of the thousand years long presence of the Slovak nation, personified in the bearers of Christianization of the Slovak lands, crosses paths here with the message of the national revival of the Slovaks against the oppressive Hungarians embodied in the building of the Matica slovenská itself in 1863. Some ten meters in front of the building towers the statue of Milan Rastislav Štefánik, the leader of the Czechoslovak legions in the World War I and one of the founders and cabinet members of the first Czechoslovak Republic. It was placed there by the same Matica in 1990. All on the soil of a city that played a crucial role in the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, of which we are duly reminded by the statue of General Klapka on a nearby Klapka Square. The presence of the uniformed men of the Slovenská Pospolitosť at the unveiling also brought back the legacy of the interwar Slovak puppet state, which also claimed the Cyrilo-Methodian tradition.

The unveiling of the statue was not the end of the saga. It continues to play out in Komárno and elsewhere to this day. Komárno was abuzz again on the 5th of July 2005. The usual participants commemorating the entry of Cyril and Methodius to Slovak lands were present – the Matica slovenská, the clergy, the political parties, and a handful of believers and passers-by. Also present were the uniformed members of Slovenská Pospolitosť. They were not the only inflammatory group being watched by the police. About 40 Hungarian youths with buzz cuts showed up as well and engaged in a heated verbal exchange with their Slovak counterparts. The two groups had to be cordoned off by the police. The Matica slovenská and Slovenská pospolitosť denounced the Hungarian group as fascist provocateurs. Matica went so far as to suggest that the forty youths were a sign of: „fascism, chauvinism, the instigation of border revisions, a celebration of the Great Hungary by the young Hungarians"... and „proof of what some of Hungarian national and international party politics is about... Matica denounces the misuse of the St. Cyril and Methodius holiday as a dark spot on Slovak-Hungarian civil relations, a revival of irredentism in the Slovak South, incitement of unwanted provocations, a misuse of ecumenical Cyrilo - Metodian message for the purpose of fanning the flames of nationalist passions."[6] Gabriela Kobulská (Matica's Director in Komárno) opined that the Slovak uniformed men behaved well, merely wanting to pay respect to the two key figures in the Slovak national history. „[Slovenská pospolitosť] is a serious organization...it is one of the few associations that empathizes with the Slovaks" (SME, 7.7. 2005). The Hungarian youth yelled „Ria, Ria, Hungaria," and labeled the Slovak

[6] See http://www.matica.sk

participants as the "Beneš bootlickers"[7] who will be pushed out of the rightful Hungarian territory, the Slovak youth replied with the traditional: „Hungarians beyond the Danube! Hungarians beyond the Ural! Slovakia is ours!" Articles on the Slovenská Pospolitosť website refered to the Hungarians as 'the ugly Huns' and dismissed them as neo-Nazi hooligans. After three of the Hungarian visitors were arrested by the Slovak police for stealing a wreath from in front of the Štefánik statue, Pospolitosť held a minute of silence "for all the victims of Hungarian rage".

The mainstream Slovak and Hungarian media responded as one would expect. The Slovak dailies paid attention mainly to the three arrested Hungarians. The Hungarian daily Népszabadság and Magyar Nemzet wrote about the Slovak nationalists in uniforms resembling the Hlinka guards who hurled insults at the Hungarians, Jews, and the Roma (SME, 6.7. 2005).

The conflict between Matica and the Municipal Government was noticed by the political parties on the national level immediately. The nationalists and populists from HzDS and SNS were accusing the Hungarian SMK[8] of intolerance and discrimination. In May 2005, the MP for ĽS-HzDS Katarína Tóthová issued a statement conveying the deplorability of the Slovak Parliament's dismissal of her motion to request a government report on whether or not the case of the refusal of the municipal government to place the

[7] Reference to the President Edvard Beneš whose post-WWII Presidential Decrees served as a basis for removing citizenship from Hungarian and German citizens of Czechoslovakia and for transfers of populations.
[8] Strana maďarskej koalície (the Party of Hungarian Coalition).

Cyril and Methodius statue in Komárno is a case of ethnic intolerance. Tóthová was puzzled that "MP's for the Slobodné fórum (Free Forum) and for the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) who profess Christian principles and ethnic tolerance did not vote on this issue" (Vyhlásenie poslankyne...: 2005).

KDH was active in the matter of the statue placement from the beginning. In 2000, it blocked SMK's application for membership in the European Democratic Union – the umbrella organization for liberal democrat political parties – purely on the grounds of the issue of the Komárno statue (Repa, M., 2000).

Once the Komárno statue issue has been picked up by national and international actors, the 'phenomenon' was reported to spread to other cities. On 7th February 2004, the city of Rožňava (Rozsnó) unveiled the statue of Louis Kossuth, a controversial Hungarian revolutionary hero from 1848. The Slovak National Party immediately protested that this statue desecrates the memory of Ľudovít Štúr, hero of the Slovak national renascence. All of the old mutual accusations re-emerged and (briefly) shook the national press. "Slovaks cannot feel like foreigners in their own land", SNS opined (Pobúreni Kossúthovou sochou, SME, 2005). How long the battle for public spaces will capture the attention of the wide public remains to be seen.

Cyril an Methodius, the emissaries that are valued for bringing education, Christianity, and a culture of peace and tolerance into the Slavic lands brought very little of that to Komárno. Their statue became a national battle-ground for political visibility. It now

symbolizes the unwillingness of the political elites to find a practical solution and to peddle their own agendas, attempting to incite ethnic antipathy among their constituencies.

The locals, however, seemed to have more pedestrian priorities. None of those asked thought that the statue would influence the relationship of the local Slovaks and Hungarians, or would overall worsen the relationship of the Slovak and Hungarian nations. The dispute, they thought, found much greater resonance on the national political sphere.

The Public Opinion Survey in Komárno and Štúrovo

In order to determine the extent to which the politics of memory exists among ordinary citizens and local, not just national, politicians, I designed a public opinion survey, shown in Appendix 2 that focused on this issue. The interviews were conducted in May through August 2003 in two medium-sized towns in the ethnically mixed Slovak south. Both towns consist of a majority of inhabitants who are ethnically Hungarian (over 60% for Komárno and over 70% for Štúrovo). In addition, being close to the state boundaries, both towns have a history of being tossed between Hungary and Slovakia a number of times in the 20th century.

The survey targeted a random sample of population within this region. It was a purposive sample of convenience, focusing on places of frequent public use around the main square, cafes, schools, municipal administrative buildings, produce market. The respondents filled out the survey on the spot, therefore the response rate was above 80%. I relied on assistance of a local well known activist who accompanied me, introduced me to people and has approached some of the respondents to fill out the survey (see Appendix 1 on p. 127) , which undoubtedly helped with the response rate as well. The survey focuses on legal and institutional changes that flared up ethnic tensions in the Slovak public debate at the time of the field research and sought to estimate the level of resonance of past events with the current political topics.

A total of 117 questionnaires was collected for the purposes of assessing public opinion. Respondents were divided into "elite" (representatives of the municipality government, teachers, clergy, local opinion leaders, etc.), and random sample. The vast majority of the respondents were either of Hungarian or of Slovak ethnicity. Other demographic indicators – gender, age, income, how long have they lived in the town, and education, were also recorded.

The public opinion survey was complemented by in-depth interviews with the mayors of Komárno and Štúrovo, representatives from the municipal government, teachers, local opinion leaders, members of non-governmental and cultural organizations, clergy, and the media. Interviews mirrored topics from the survey, giving space for opinions on the

subject, personal stories from family history related to them, feelings and hopes for the future Slovak-Hungarian relations.

Survey Results

As discussed above, the unveiling of the Cyril and Methodius statue and the conflict between Matica and the municipal government that preceded it were dismissed by most local citizens as petty stubbornness of little importance to the local social and political life. The local political representatives, however. did not consider this issue to be trivial. Below are excerpts from interviews with the Mayor of Komárno, the Director of Matica slovenská in Komárno, and others.

Tibor Bastrnák highlighted the artificial nature of the conflict over the Cyril and Methodius statue in a personal interview:

> The SMK does pay attention to history, but at the community level, we don't pay much attention to it. Local politics is not about major historical trauma. It is about everyday things. Of course, there are issues such as the placement of the Cyril and Methodius statue, but that has nothing to do with history. It was a problem of communication from the beginning. I'm not saying it was only from Matica's side, the Town Hall had its share in it too... You know, I have inherited this case. However, I am certain that Matica intended this action as a provocation from the beginning. You must have noticed what it was going towards on Saturday. I

> don't think that putting up the statue of Cyril and Methodius corresponds with marching to the border with Hlinka's guard and all. The people behind these inflammatory remarks cannot be taking the idea of Cyril and Methodius seriously, because otherwise we would have found a different solution. Although in the seven months that I have served here as the Mayor, and I stress this everywhere, Matica did not come to me to talk about this.
>
> ...Unfortunately I know that there are not 700 people that would cooperate with Matica in Komárno. Matica in Komárno and elsewhere in southern Slovakia does not fulfill the mission for which it was created. It just serves the purpose of *being* here. That is why there were maybe 50 people from Komárno, the rest was brought by buses from elsewhere. The Slovak history is not to give them a meaning, but to help them create sensations that will be written about. Štefánik is standing on that same square while he has absolutely nothing to do with Komárno and has monuments in many other towns. Therefore, history does not mean the same thing to everybody. Now they put up the second monument and Štefánik might be turning in his grave wondering what's going on. But it's only sensationalism, so that the papers write about them.

Mária Kobulská, the Director of Matica slovenská in Komárno argued primarily in favor of the right to cultural heritage and its expression via symbols placed in the public space:

Matica slovenská has existed as a public institution for over 140 years in Slovakia and therefore is rooted in the historical needs of the Slovak nation that lived on this territory. It protects the Slovak culture and literature and its entire activity stems from this core. Some might be surprised, but the House of Matica slovenská has existed in Komárno since 1937. So, the Slovaks living in the South have always felt the need for togetherness, looking for a way to meet and develop on their own thing... The rights of the Slovaks are increasingly suppressed here and given to the Hungarians. It is painful that Komárno is becoming the center of Hungariandom.

In the beginning, there was a beautiful thought. Matica was created, or rather revived in Komárno on the occasion of the celebration of Cyril and Methodius in 1990. What concerns me is that it seems to have been countered by a surge in Hungarian plaques denoting houses where Kossúth slept one night, where someone was born, etc. There is even a memorial without a title. We don't know what it's about except that there are some poor people carrying a burden.[9] But nobody knows what that burden is. Everybody can explain it as they wish. In short, we have considered everything. We supported memorials even if they had nothing to do with Komárno so that we get an approval for the Cyril and Methodius statue. Komárno, with its location on the Danube crossing point, is certainly a town of memorials. The city disagrees with our solution, but we will

[9] Referring to the statue *Memento, 1944-48* by Peter Gaspar.

> leave it to the court. It is a pity, and it lacks dignity that we argue about such petty details when our Constitution guarantees a right to develop one's cultural heritage. Why are we not allowed to enjoy that right?

József Fazekas, the pastor from the Reformed Church in Komárno, noted:

> I have my own opinion. In the ancient times, the Romans let a stone be carved on the borders, where they had troops stationed. *Celem* in Hebrew, with the likeness of Caesar depicted on it, so that everyone knows what he looked like. I believe that this is similar. Matica would like to show that Komárno still belongs to Slovakia. And that statue is such a *celem*, a symbol that makes it true. They would like to have it everywhere and protect the Slovak nation and statehood that way.

Ľubica Balková of the Komárno weekly Komárňanské listy stated a prosaic opinion on what role this and similar historical issues play in the life of the local inhabitants:

> Somebody pulls something of this sort on the political scene, but the common citizen is dealing with other things – work, prices, and right now it is vacations, so there is not even a debate among friends within one community about it. It is only in the political arena that one feels that. Issues in education still have to be finalized. Or in relation to national problems, because those impact all citizens as

> such and not specifically the ethnic communities. So I personally don't feel the impact of this issue. Yes, we are reminded of it by five sentences here and there, but then we go on to personal matters.

It is impossible to dissect the responses to the whole questionnaire here in detail, thus this part of the chapter will focus on those that relate to the evaluation of the impact of some historical events on the Slovak-Hungarian relations. The survey also sought to establish the role that social positions play in the salience of collective memory in one's attitudes.

Statements presented to the respondents touched upon the common history of the Slovaks and Hungarians in the region, as well as in general. While there were statements that received similar reactions from all groups within the population, some received differing answers. As shown in Table 3.1, the single largest divisive factor was that of ethnicity. In response to the question on the policy of Beneš Decrees that followed WWII (see Chapter 2 for detailed discussion of the policies and their consequences), the majority of both ethnic groups thought that these decrees should be officially nullified, or at least not upheld by the government. Most of the Slovaks, however, thought that this issue is by-gone and should be left by-gone. Hungarians thought so significantly less (by 25%), presumably due to the importance of this period in their historical narrative and/or due to their minority status in Slovakia. This seems to support the notion that the

Hungarians are slightly more ethnically mobilized that we encounter in related literature on ethnic identity (Brubaker, R. et al., 2006).

Other questions that split the sample of respondents on the basis of ethnicity were also related to events or eras perceived as crucial in historical narratives of the two ethnic groups. The first concerned the era of Magyarization – the forceful elimination of the Slovak and other non-Hungarian languages from official use in this region and the abolition of cultural and educational institutions of these ethnic groups after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. About 85% of the Slovaks in Komárno and Štúrovo thought this to be the worst era in Slovak history, while only 38% of Hungarians considered it to be that bad. The two groups also didn't agree on the statement on the 'thousand year long oppression' of the Slovak nation by the Hungarians. Over half of the Slovak respondents opined that due to the 'Hungarian yoke', Slovaks are entitled to claim the dominant position in their own country. Only one quarter of Hungarians agreed. They have also not found a consensus on the openness of the Slovaks in their dialogue with the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. Three quarters of Hungarians believed that Slovaks were never open to such a dialogue, compared to a little over forty percent of the Slovaks who saw their openness in a more positive light.

The table 3.1. includes respondents from both elite and random samples. The chi square indicates the strength of the correlation between ethnicity and agreement with the statement while the Pearson's R measure indicates the direction of the relationship – in

the same direction if it is a positive number and in the opposite direction if the number is negative.

Table 3.1: Collective Memory in Daily Life

Percentage of those that fully or partially agree with the statements below. (‚No opinion' was treated as a missing value)

Statements	% of total population	N	% of Hungarian respondents	N	% of Slovak respondents	N	Chi square	Pearson's R
Hungarians are more conscious of their history than Slovaks	**77.8**	77	**77.3**	58	**79.3**	19	**.74**	**-.025**
**Magyarization was the worst era in Slovak history	**50.6**	38	**38.2**	21	**85**	17	**.000**	**-.34**
*After one thousand years of oppressions, Slovaks deserve to be in a dominant position in their own state	**34.1**	29	**25.8**	16	**56.5**	13	**.05**	**-.28**
Hungarians have fully accepted the dissolution of Hungary after World War I	**27.4**	23	**27.2**	18	**27.8**	5	**.07**	**-.08**
Hungarians were always in a position equal to that of other minorities in Slovakia	**34.3**	34	**28**	21	**54.1**	13	**.8**	**-.23**
*Slovaks were never willing to lead and open dialogue and to compromise with Hungarians	**67.1**	61	**74.3**	52	**42.8**	9	**.025**	**-.31**
Cohabitation of Slovaks and Hungarians here in southern Slovakia was always without problems	**65.4**	66	**61.8**	47	**76**	19	**.3**	**-.17**
We should draw a line behind the past and not come back to it	**61.2**	60	**54.2**	39	**80.8**	21	**.1**	**-.24**
The validity of the Beneš Decrees should be officially confirmed	**28.6**	22	**22.3**	12	**43.4**	10	**.25**	**-.22**
Beneš Decrees should be fully nullified	**74.4**	55	**81.9**	45	**52.6**	10	**.066**	**.3**
* These events (BD) have to be understood within the context of World War II	**67.9**	55	**59.7**	34	**87.5**	21	**.026**	**-.3**
Beneš Decrees were a fair payback for the wrongs committed by Hungarians and Germans in the past	**11**	9	**8.2**	5	**19**	4	**.06**	**-.235**

* The significance level for the chi-square statistic is less than 0.05
** The significance level for the chi-square statistic is less than 0.001

From the Pearson's R we can tell that the answers tend to go in opposite directions on most statements. While there are significant differences on some of the questions, it is interesting to note that some statements received almost the same answer. Both ethnic groups concurred that the Hungarian political elite in Slovakia is more aware of the Hungarian history and falls back on it more frequently and with greater ease than the Slovaks and did not seem to see this as problematic. They likewise agreed that Hungarians have fully accepted the dissolution of the Hungarian Kingdom after the First World War. It appears that the statements that are related to the power relations between the two ethnic communities trigger differences in response. It is also telling that most of the statistically significant differences are related to the dominant topics from the school history textbooks that are also periodically present in public discussions. The results indicate that the topics picked up on national level also permeate into individual consciousness and attitudes.

When the respondents reacted to the statements on an event in their history that they are most ashamed of, an ethnic divide was also present. It is interesting to observe that when it came to the identification of the negative events in the past, the ethnic Hungarians selected events from the history of Czechoslovakia as well as from the Hungarian past. As shown in Table 3.2 below, when it came to positive identification of national heroes, identification along ethnic lines was even more prevalent, with ethnic Hungarians opting mostly for heroes from the Hungarian past only.

Table 3. 2: "Historic period or event in my history I am most ashamed of":

	Frequency – total	Percent – total	Frequency - Slovak respondents	Percent of Slovaks	Frequency - Hungarian respondents	Percent of Hungarians
No response	66	56.4	19	63.3	47	54.0
"Magyarization"	**2**	1.7	0	0	**2**	2.3
1968	1	0.9	0	0	1	1.1
20th century	1	0.9	0	0	1	1.1
Beneš Decrees	**4**	3.4	1	3.3	**3**	3.4
Horthy's regime	**2**	1.7	0	0	**2**	2.3
Multiple	1	0.9	1	3.3	0	0
None	7	6.0	1	3.3	6	6.9
Slovak state (1939 – 1945)	**4**	3.4	**2**	6.7	**2**	2.3
Socialism	**4**	3.4	1	3.3	**3**	3.4
Division of Czechoslovakia	**5**	4.3	1	3.3	**4**	4.6
Trianon	**4**	3.4	0	0	**4**	4.6
WWII.	**16**	13.7	**4**	13.3	**12**	13.8
Total	117	100	30	100	87	100

Chosen only by Hungarian respondents (two or more)

Chosen only by Slovak respondents (two or more)

In this table we can also detect that topics from history textbooks being prevalent. The policy of Magyarization – a forced imposition of the Hungarian language on ethnic minorities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the interwar authoritarian Horthy's regime in Hungary and the Trianon decree which has divided Hungary after WWI were the most frequently chosen events by the ethnic Hungarian respondents. The Slovaks chose eras related to the WWII as well – the interwar puppet state, and the WWII itself (presumably related to the existence of the Slovak State at the time). Interestingly, events from the more recent history were more scattered. It might be related to the fact that post – 1945 history is not taught in the school history lessons and therefore the opinions might be more individual.

Collective Memory through Nations' Heroes

Table 3.3 indicates that when identifying national heroes, ethnic identification is more marked. A bi-monthly publication *História* (3/2003) has inquired among the students of high schools in ethnically mixed Southern region about the public figures of the pas Slovak and Hungarian life. A brief questionnaire with four questions was distributed among students in Komárno's Slovak and Hungarian high schools. Authors found similarities, but also telling differences between the two groups of students. In the answers to the first question: "Which event in the Slovak history strikes you as most important?", Slovak students divided their answers between the creation of the Slovak Republic in 1993 (11 out of 48), the codification of the Slovak language in 1843 (10), the November Revolution of 1989 (8), the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 (7) and the era of the Great Moravian Empire, especially the arrival of Christian emissaries Cyril ad Methodius (5). The Hungarian students concurred, considering the establishment of the Slovak Republic as the key event in Slovak history (37 out of 69, out of which 9 meant the Slovak state created in 1939). Fourteen of them also highlighted the codification of Slovak language. Six agreed on the importance of the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic, and six on the Slovak National Uprising during the WWII.

The second question asked: "Which public figure of the Slovak history do you consider most important?" A majority of Slovak students identified Ľudovít Štúr, one of the leaders of the national renascence movements as the leading figure (15 out of 48). Eight

of them wrote down the name of T.G. Masaryk, the founder and first President of Czechoslovakia and another three named E. Beneš – the Prime Minister and later the President of pre-WW II Czechoslovakia (both of whom are Czech). The first Republic is connected also with the name of the third popular leader, M. R. Štefánik (5). Hungarian students agreed that Ľ. Štúr was the most important person in the Slovak history (46 out of 69), five identified the Slovak poet P.O. Hviezdoslav, educated in Hungary, and four each gave votes to M. R. Štefánik and the first Slovak state President J. Tiso.

The third question inquired after the most important event in the Hungarian history. It showed that the Slovak students had some difficulty with identifying the turning points in Hungarian history with ten responding "I don't know". Twelve considered the breakdown of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and four the 1848 Revolution as the most important. The Hungarian students, on the other hand, highlighted the foundation of the Hungarian Kingdom and the settlement of the Carpathian basin by the Huns (31 and 18 out of 69). Twelve thought the revolutionary year of 1848 the most important, and six remembered the Trianon.

With regard to the question: "Which public figure of Hungarian history strikes you as most important?" 13 among the Slovak students were unable to identify any important Hungarians. The rest divided their votes between the writer S. Petőfi (12), the revolutionary leader L. Kossuth (8), and St. Stephen, the first King of Hungary (4). St. Stephen was the primary personality claimed by the Hungarian students (31 out of 69).

19th century revolutionary leaders came in second, with thirteen votes for I. Széchényi, five for L. Kossúth, and five for S. Petőfi. Eight students recognized the last Hungarian king of Hungary Mathias Corvinus.

Surveys asking for evaluation of historically significant personalities are available on national level as well. Those are interesting for the comparison and they provide a background for identifying larger patterns behind the support of this or that historic figure. The most comprehensive survey was carried out by the Institute for Public Analyses (Krivý, V., 2000, pp. 73 – 91). The survey only asks about the important personalities from the 20th century and the respondents choose from a list of personalities instead of writing in their own choice. The analysis also merges polls from 1991 to 1999 and tracks the shift in people's preferences. The most positively acclaimed figure in the 20th century was Alexander Dubček (viewed positively by 95% of respondents in 1991 and by 88.6% in 1999). M.R. Štefánik comes in second with 72.3% in 1997 and 73.5% in 1999. Popularity of all other figures was marked by statistically significant shifts: The Czechoslovak and later the Czech President V. Havel's popularity descended from 61% in 1991 to 44.8% in 1998, although the percentage of those viewing him negatively also diminished from 29.7% to 25.7%. Vladimír Mečiar, who enjoyed the popularity among 59.8% of respondents in 1992, saw his preferences drop to 28.6% in 1999. His negative evaluation rose from 18.4% to 47.8%. The first Czechoslovak President T.G. Masaryk was viewed in a positive light by half of the Slovak population in 1991, and negatively by close to 30%. In 1999, 45% still viewed him positively, while the dislike dropped to

10%. We do not have similar comparisons for the South Slovak region, but it is safe to assume, that similar shifts in popularity of national heroes among the respondents would take place there. Public opinion is always shaped by the current political issues and public discussion and this is also true about attitudes towards the events and figures from the collective memory. The fluidity of the public attitudes highlights the dynamic and constructive nature of collective memory and of ethnic identity.

The survey that I conducted in Komárno and Štúrovo in 2003, shown in Table 3.3, suggests an ethnic difference in the identification of national heroes by ethnicity with Slovaks opting for Alexander Dubček, Ľudovít Štúr and Milan Rastislav Štefánik, and ethnic Hungarians favoring Saint Stephen and Louis Kossuth.

Table 3.3: The greatest hero in the history of my nation

		Frequency – total	Percent – total	Frequency - Slovak respondents	Percent- of Slovak respondents	Frequency - Hungarian respondents	Percent – of Hungarian respondents
	No response	54	46.2	16	53.3	38	43.7
S	**Alexander Dubček**	5	4.3	2	6.7	3	3.4
H	**Arpád**	1	0.9	0	0	1	1.1
H	**Attila**	1	0.9	0	0	1	1.1
H	**Ferenc Deák**	1	0.9	0	0	1	1.1
H	**Gyorgyi Klapka**	**2**	1.7	0	0	**2**	2.3
H	**Imre Nagy**	1	0.9	0	0	1	1.1
H	**István Széchényi**	**5**	4.3	0	0	5	5.7
S	**Jánošík**	4	3.4	2	6.7	2	2.3
H	**King Matthew**	**2**	1.7	0	0	2	2.3
H	**Louis Kossúth**	**10**	8.5	0	0	**10**	11.5
S	**Ľudovít Štúr**	**5**	4.3	**5**	16.7	0	0.0
S	**Milan Rastislav Štefánik**	**5**	4.3	**5**	16.7	0	0.0

H	**Rákoczi**	**2**	1.7	0	0	**2**	2.3
H	**Saint Stephen**	**15**	12.8	0	0	**15**	17.2
H	**Sándor Petofi**	1	0.9	0	0	1	1.1
H	**Szent-Gyorgyi**	1	0.9	0	0	1	1.1
C	**T.G.Masaryk**	1	0.9	0	0	1	1.1
	Total	117	100	30	100.0	87	100.0

Chosen only by Hungarian respondents (two or more)
Chosen only by Slovak respondents (two or more)
S – Slovak historical figure
H – Hungarian historical figure
C – Czech historical figure

Do Community Leaders Think Like "Us"?

Another important factor which strengthened the differences in reactions to many of the statements in my survey seems to have been the factor of belonging to a local elite. While on its own the respondents from the elite and from the random sample did not disagree on the statements at a statistically significant level, the elite group tended to have more extreme opinions on the statements, leaning more towards full agreement or full disagreement (see Table 3.4 below). The statement on Magyarization was an exception. In this statement, there was a stronger negative correlation between ethnicity and agreement on the statement among the random sample, whereas such a correlation was not as strong among the elite group. The elite group respondents were more inclined to think that the Slovaks were never opened to compromise than the respondents from the random sample, where the differences were not at a statistically significant level in the latter group. Same was true for the statement that the Beneš Decrees were just a payback for the harms caused by the Hungarians and Germans to the Czechs and

Slovaks in the past. While random sample did not think much of the statement, the elite members believed it true and the difference was statistically significant at 0.009.

Table 3.4: Comparing Random Sample and Elite Groups

Crosstabulation

Group	Ethnicity		Beneš Decrees were a just payback for the harms caused by Hungarians and Germans in the past				Total
			1 Fully agree	2 Agree somewhat	4 Disagree somewhat	5 Fully disagree	
Random sample	Hungarian	Count	2	3	6	25	36
		% of Hungarians	5.6%	8.3%	16.7%	69.4%	100.0 %
	Slovak	Count	2	1	4	7	14
		% of Slovaks	14.3%	7.1%	28.6%	50.0%	100.0 %
	Total	Count	4	4	10	32	50
		% of Total	8.0%	8.0%	20.0%	64.0%	100.0 %
Elite	Hungarian	Count		0	2	23	25
		% of Hungarians		.0%	8.0%	92.0%	100.0 %
	Slovak	Count		1	3	3	7
		% of Slovaks		14.3%	42.9%	42.9%	100.0 %
	Total	Count		1	5	26	32
		% of Total		3.1%	15.6%	81.3%	100.0 %

Chi-Square Tests

Group	Slovaks were never open to compromises/dialogue with the Hungarian minority	Asymp. Significance (2-sided)	Pearson's R
Random sample	Pearson Chi-Square	.292	.198
	N of Valid Cases		
Elite	Pearson Chi-Square	.016	.507
	N of Valid Cases		

While we should not draw definite conclusions from the indications based on the elite variable due to the small number of the respondents, it is still informative and politically

significant. The shown differences support the initial thesis that representatives from the elite circles are more invested in the use of collective memory. Most of the administrators, teachers, and officials in the two towns are ethnic Hungarians, which also means that ethnic Slovaks were less included into the pool of respondents among the elite group. This can make correlations appear weaker in some cases. Small samples are less likely to show differences that are statistically significant. Further research in this area with more respondents would be useful and interesting, especially if compared with a similar sample from the ethnically more homogeneous areas of Slovakia.

Among other contributing factors towards the differences in the answers stated in the public opinion survey were age, gender, and how long the respondent lived in his/ her town. Women, older people, and those living in their town longer proved to be more optimistic in respect to the Slovak-Hungarian relationships and more accommodating of the other ethnic group.

Conclusion

It is impossible not to notice the central role of the few key actors involved in the stand-off between the Slovak and Hungarian leaders in Komárno. Locus of the conflict itself was between the representatives of the Slovak and Hungarian minority in the city, embodied primarily in the institutions of Matica slovenská and the Hungarian-dominated municipal government. The increasing involvement of national and international leaders and institutions illustrates the immediate utility of cultural codes picked up from the pool of collective memory for furthering and legitimizing political agendas. Local population

was hardly stirred beyond surface. The "small history" defined by mostly stable local relationships had precedence over the mobilizations attempts by political leaders.
The ethnic identification did come through the surveys conducted in the area. Results indicate that the Hungarian minority tends to *do* ethnicity more than the Slovaks, relying more heavily on historical references. There is also a tendency for the "elite" group to give more importance to statements on particular historical events.

When conducting interviews in 2003, almost all of the people expressed hope that the entry into the European Union will alleviate some of the inter-ethnic tensions in Slovak – Hungarian relations. But nothing so far indicates that anything of the sort is on the horizon. The mutual relations are in fact at the coldest point within the last twenty years, political representations on national level being barely on speaking terms. With the process of EU enlargement and increasing migration from "new" countries, purposeful ethnic mobilization targets a wider array of scapegoats at hand The 'other' is now being sought not only in the immediate geopolitical area, but also among immigrants, Turks, Muslims, or any other currently popular intruder. Politics of memory thus received a boost in its wings size, giving ever more space to imagination, interpretation, and borrowing. Hungarians, however, remain the most popular target of nationalistic resentment.

The long history of neighborly relations is selectively and purposefully misused to fan the flames of tensions to further political agendas. However, it is also a tool that can be

used to encourage understanding, appreciate complexity of history. With further research into the dynamic nature of collective memory and its concrete practical role in ethnic conflict as well as in conflict resolution, social realities can be shaped.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Additional Data from the Survey in Komárno and Štúrovo

Among the responsed that showed difference by declared ethnicity were those that related to the Hungarian Status Law - the Law on Hungarians Living Abroad (for more information, see Chapter 1). This Act had become a heated issue on the national political scene for many months, particularly since its implementation reached behind the borders, regulating assistance and support to ethnic Hungarians who are Slovak citizens. The public debate and resulting tensions have been translated to the local level. This mirroring is in agreement with an opinion expressed by some of the interviewed Komárno residents, that national issues tend to be more ethnically divisive than local issues. Three of the statements received responses significantly differing by ethnicity of respondents –relating to the issue of right to take care of a kin ethnic community within the borders of another state, the individual benefit of the Hungarian status, and the way the Slovak Government has handled the reaction to the introduction of this piece of legislation in the Republic of Hungary.

Table 4.1. Views on the Hungarian Status Law

Percentage of respondents that fully or partially agree with the statement

Statements	% of total population	N	% of Hungarian respondents	N	% of Slovak respondents	N	Chi square sig.
*Hungary has the right to protect her nation outside the borders of Hungary	**91.7**	67	**93**	53	**87.6**	14	**.003**
The way the Hungarian Status law (law on Hungarians living abroad) was passed seems unjust to me	**52**	26	**52.5**	21	**50**	5	**.711**
* I myself would apply/ have the Hungarian Status ID	**59.2**	42	**64.3**	36	**40**	6	**.007**
Most Slovaks are not bothered by the Status Law	**68.7**	46	**65.4**	34	**80**	12	**.39**
Status Law will worsen the Slovak – Hungarian relations	**43.7**	31	**46.4**	26	**33.4**	5	**.47**
** Slovak Government reacted to the status law adequately	**31.3**	20	**18.3**	9	**73.3**	11	**.001**

* The significance level for the chi-square statistic is less than 0.05

** The significance level for the chi-square statistic is less than 0.001

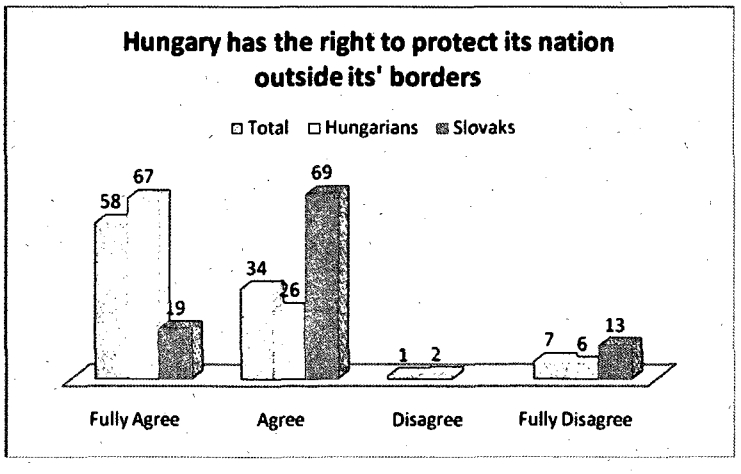


Figure 4.1

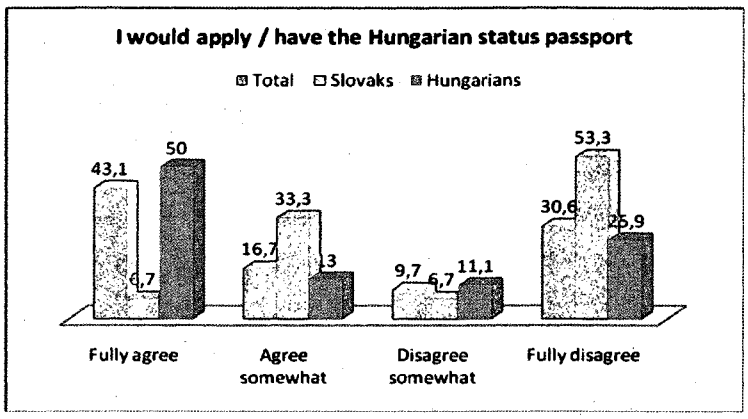


Figure 4.2

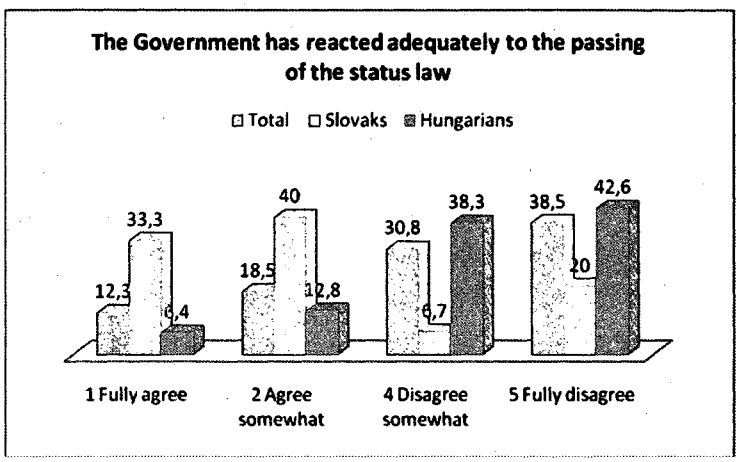
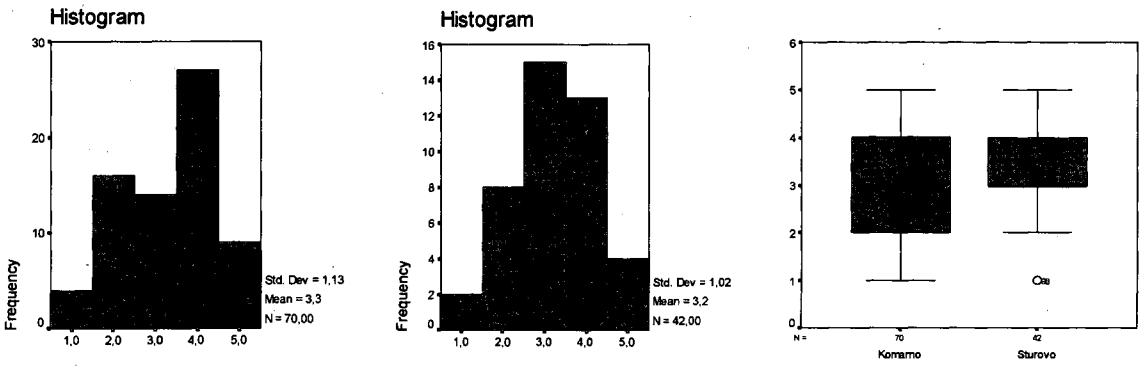


Figure 4.3

Differences by Town

The survey has been carried out in two towns of Southern Slovakia. There have not been found any significant differences between the responses by town of residence. The matter where people from Štúrovo felt slightly more strongly about than the respondents from Komárno related to the territorial arrangement reform in 1996, which has shifted the regional seat from Štúrovo to the distant

Figure 4.4 Satisfaction with the location of the regional self-government



The mean of responses from Komárno is 3.3, with the opinions ranging across the spectrum and the most frequent choice being "more dissatisfied than satisfied". The mean for respondents from Štúrovo is very close to that of Komárno - 3.2, but more people chose the option "I don't have an opinion on the subject" (3) and "More dissatisfied than satisfied" (4). Štúrovo has a history relating to this issue. Prior to the territorial arrangement there has been a petition in Štúrovo against the move of the regional seat and the issue has been high on the political agenda of the town at the time.

Appendix 2: Text of the public opinion survey

Impact of Institutional Changes and Historically Saturated Topics on Inter-ethnic Relations

Public Opinion Survey in Štúrovo and Komárno

Please devote 20 minutes of your time to fill out this questionnaire. It seeks to explore the nature of ethnic relations and the role of historical experiences in them in two towns in southern Slovakia (Štúrovo and Komárno). A lot has changed in our country since 1989. However, there are still tensions between Slovaks and Hungarians in Slovakia as well as across the borders. As both countries enter the European Union, it is useful to map out which institutions contribute towards lessening the tensions and promoting social integration, and which, on the contrary, incite conflict. It is desirable to identify contested points in our common history and their impact on political life today.

This survey is part of a doctoral research conducted by Dagmar Kusa, Boston University. Thank you for your time.

Age: .....

Gender: ☐ M ☐ F

Town: ☐ Komárno ☐ Štúrovo

Education: ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ University

Monthly income:

☐ Less than 11,999 SK ☐ From 12,000 SK to 19,999 SK ☐ From 20,000 to 49,000 SK ☐ Over 50,000 SK

Nationality (ethnicity): ☐ Slovak ☐ Hungarian ☐ Other :.....

Language of use at home: ☐ Slovak ☐ Hungarian ☐ Other:.....

I have been living in this town for ..... years

If the parliamentary election were to take place tomorrow, I would vote for:

☐ SDKÚ ☐ SMK ☐ KDH ☐ HZDS ☐ ANO ☐ SMER ☐ DS ☐ Green Party ☐ SNS

☐ Other ☐ I would not vote

If the communal election were to take place tomorrow, I would vote for:

☐ SDKÚ ☐ SMK ☐ KDH ☐ HZDS ☐ ANO ☐ SMER ☐ DS ☐ Green Party ☐ SNS

☐ Other ☐ I would not vote

Part I. Institutional and Legislative Changes in Slovakia

Institutional changes in Slovakia after 1989 were often accompanied by public debates. Let us look at some of those changes. Below is a list of statements; please check one box for each.

1. **One such change was the Territorial Arrangement from 1996 and 2000. We are interesting in knowing your opinion on the nature of changes it brought and their impact on your community.**

1a. With the location of the regional government I am:

☐ Completely satisfied ☐ Somewhat satisfied ☐ I have no opinion ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied ☐ Completely dissatisfied

1b. Let us take a closer look on specific impacts of the Territorial Arrangement on your community. Please mark one of the boxes next to each statement according to the legend under the table. You may perceive some of the statements as tendentious. However, we are interested in knowing your agreement or disagreement with them.

	CA*	SA	NO	SD	CD
The last territorial arrangement (in 2000) was the right step towards the economic and cultural development of our region.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The territorial arrangement had a negative impact on Slovak – Hungarian relations in our region.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The territorial arrangement ameliorated Slovak – Hungarian relations in general.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Regional self-governments are a good means for the representation of ethnic minorities in politics.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The party that won the last communal elections represents Slovaks and Hungarians equally.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The reforms of public administration were carried out with the goal of the integration of minorities in mind.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* CS=Completely agree, SS = Somewhat agree, NO = I have no opinion, SD = Somewhat disagree, CD = Completely disagree

2. **The law on the official use of languages of national minorities was widely debated. It allowed the use of the minority languages in state offices. Do you think this law will contribute towards better relations between Slovaks and Hungarians in Slovakia?**

☐ Certainly yes ☐ Probably yes ☐ No opinion ☐ Probably not ☐ Certainly not

3. **Imagine that you come to the local state or municipality office and the clerk refuses to communicate with you in your native language. What would your reaction be?**

☐ That's OK, I would just use another language ☐ I understand that not everybody speaks two languages, but I would ask to be served by somebody else ☐ I would be upset, because the clerk certainly knows my native language, but refuses to use it ☐ I would complain to the supervisor and demand that the situation does not repeat itself in the future.

☐ Other reaction:.

.....

.....

.....

4. **The Law on Hungarians Living Abroad (Hungarian Status Law) has caused a wave of tumultuous reactions from the Slovaks. This law gives ethnic Hungarians certain benefits from the Hungarian government.**

4a. Are you familiar with the contents of this law?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I have heard about it, but am not sure

If you marked ‚Yes', please fill in the boxes in 4b.

4b. Let us look at individual aspects of this law. Please mark your agreement or disagreement with the statements in the table below.

	CA*	SA	NO	SD	CD
Hungarians are entitled to protect their nation outside of Hungary's borders.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The way the bill was passed was not just.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would apply for (I already have) the Hungarian status ID.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Most Slovaks are not bothered by the Hungarian status law.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The status law will worsen the relations of Slovaks and Hungarians in Slovakia.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Slovak government reacted to the status law adequately.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* CA=Completely agree, SA = Somewhat agree, NO = I have no opinion, SD = Somewhat disagree, CD = Completely disagree

Other reaction /commentary:

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. **Komárno will soon have a Hungarian University. Three departments that will be located here will teach their subjects in the Hungarian language. Do you think there is a need for such institution in Slovakia?**

☐ Certainly yes ☐ Probably yes ☐ No opinion ☐ Probably not ☐ Certainly not

6. **Imagine that somebody has violated your rights. You have a feeling that you were discriminated against because of your nationality or ethnic origin. Which institution/office would you turn to for assistance?**

Part II. Historical Milestones in Political Present

Historical events often influence relations between nations and ethnic groups long after their occurrence. Central Europe is marked by the complexity of its history and ethnic entities. Therefore we turn to our history to find answers to current questions or outstanding situations that are perceived as traumatic.

Another series of statements follow. These statements focus on the relationship of Slovaks and Hungarians to their history. Please evaluate them according to your convictions.

1. **Hungarian minority leaders in Slovakia know their history better and rely upon it more frequently than their Slovak counterparts.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ I have no opinion ☐ Somewhat disagree

☐ Completely disagree

2. **The forced Magyarization at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century was the most traumatic experience for the Slovaks.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ I have no opinion ☐ Somewhat disagree

☐ Completely disagree

3. **The Slovak nation lived under oppression for one thousand years and deserves to be in the dominant position in its own state.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ I have no opinion ☐ Somewhat disagree

☐ Completely disagree

4. **Hungarians have fully come to terms with the division of Hungary after WWI.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ I have no opinion ☐ Somewhat disagree

☐ Completely disagree

5. **Hungarians always had a position equal to that of other nationalities in Slovakia.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ I have no opinion ☐ Somewhat disagree

☐ Completely disagree

6. **Slovaks were never open to a dialogue with the Hungarian minority.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ I have no opinion ☐ Somewhat disagree

☐ Completely disagree

7. **The greatest hero in the history of my nation: .....**

8. **An event or era in the history of my nation that I am ashamed of is:.....**

9. **The cohabitation of Slovaks and Hungarians here in southern Slovakia was always without problems.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ I have no opinion ☐ Somewhat disagree

☐ Completely disagree

10. **The Beneš Decrees are among the specific controversial historical points that influence the political scene at home as well as abroad to this day. These decrees deprived the Germans and Hungarians of their citizenship and prepared the ground for expulsion of Germans and transfers of population between Slovakia and Hungary after WWII. European Union put this topic on the table and we will be forced to deal with it when we enter the EU.**

10a. Are you familiar with the Beneš Decrees?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

10b. If you checked 'Yes', please express your opinion on the following statements.

	CA*	SA	NO	SD	CD
We should draw a curtain in front of our past and not come back to it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Beneš Decrees should be officially upheld.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Beneš Decrees should be proclaimed legally void.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
These events must be understood as a port of the Second World War.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Beneš Decrees were a just payback for the wrongdoings committed by Hungarians and Germans in the past.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* CS=Completely agree, SS = Somewhat agree, NO = I have no opinion, SD = Somewhat disagree, CD = Completely disagree

THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME TO FILL OUT OUR QUESTIONNAIRE.

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Interviews in Komárno:

Imre Andruszkó, municipal government member, director of the High

School of Hans Selye (12.7.2003)

J Bačová, psychologist, Center for Family Counseling (July 2003)

Ľubica Balková, journalist, Komárňanské listy

Tibor Bastrnák, mayor of Komárno, (15. 7. 2003)

Július Hrala, activist (informant, June, July 2003)

Gabriela Kobulská, Head of Matica Slovenská in Komárno (14.7.2003)

Michal Mácza, historian (17.7.2003)

Members of senior club

Members of Csemadok, Hungarian cultural association

G. Fazekas, evangelical minister, Reformed Church (14. 7. 2003)

Random population

Interviews with political leaders in Slovakia:

Dušan Čaplovič, MP for SMER (18.7. 2003)

František Mikloško, MP for KDH (13. 6. 2003)

Ivan Harman, SDKÚ General Secretary (18. 6. 2003)

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PUBLICATIONS:

Book chapters

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The Slovak Question And The Slovak Answer: Citizenship During The Quest For National Self-Determination And After (2007), In: Rainer Bauböck, Bernhard Perching, Wiebke Sievers (eds.). *Citizenship Policies in the New Europe.* University of Amsterdam Press, IMISCOE series. 2nd Ed. forthcoming in 2009.

Riešenie konfliktov I. and II. (2006). Bratislava: Nadácia za toleranciu a proti diskriminácii, EQUAL.

In Broken Glass, Many Reflections, East European minority media (2004). (Introduction, with Joost van Beek), Prix Iris Europa.

Historical Trauma and Ethnic Identity. The Years of Homelessness of the Hungarian Minority in Post-war Slovakia (2005), In: Breuning, E., Lewis, J. and Pritchard,G., Eds. *Power and the People: A Social History of Central European Politics, 1945-56.* Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

Human Rights and Minority Issues. The Ruthenian Commmunities in Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine (2001). In: Drent et al., eds., *Towards Shared Security, 7-nation Perspectives,* Groeningen: Harmonie Papers, Centre for European Security Studies.

Editor

Co-editor of the *EUROCLIO Bulletin*, January 2009 – present.

Editor of *Conciliation,* International Center for Conciliation Newsletter, March 2006 – present.

Articles

Review of the *Redrawing Nations, Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948* (Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, eds.), for the Journal of Cold War Studies, Summer 2003.

When Humanity Fails: Question of Responsibility in Darfur's Genocide, Listy SFPA, October 2004.

Training manuals

Mediating History, Making Peace. (2008). Boston: The International Center for Conciliation.

Guide for the Human Right Monitors (2000). Bratislava: the Slovak Helsinki Committee.

EXPERIENCE:

Instructor, 2001 – 2006
Boston University
Courses:
International Conflict and Cooperation (Instructor, Summer 2004)
Introduction to Public Policy (teaching fellow, Spring 2002, Instructor Summer 2002)
Introduction to Political Science (teaching fellow, Fall 2001, Fall 2002)
Introduction to International Relations (teaching fellow, Fall 2000, Spring 2001, Fall 2004)
Introduction to Comparative Politics (Instructor, Summer 2001, Summer 2005)

CONFERENCES AND TRAINING:

Imagine 2008: Armenian and Azerbaijani Student Retreat and Dialogue, organizer and facilitator,
Saluda Mountain Lake resort, North Carolina, May 24-June 1 2008.

Mediating History, Making Peace: Advanced workshop for professionals working with issues of justice, peace, and conciliation, organizer and facilitator, Boston, October 9-21 2007.

European Experts Meeting on Social Cohesion, co-organizer and facilitator, Amsterdam June 2007.

Mediating History, Making Peace: Advanced workshop in conflict resolution for Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and Teachers' College, February 11 2007.

Workshop in historical memory in sustained dialogue for the Cambodia-Vietnam Dialogue project, (organizer and facilitator), Phnom Penh, Cambodia, February 3-8 2007.

Workshops in historical conciliation for students and non-governmental organizations' staff in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, February 2008.

Binannual workshop in Conflict Resolution and Peace-building, (facilitator), Henry Martyn Institute, January 14-28 2007.

Advanced Workshop in Conflict Resolution and Peace-building Skills for Regional Monitors (facilitator), Henry Martyn Institute, Hyderabad, India, August 16-20, 2006.

Biannual Workshop in Conflict Resolution and Peace-building Skills, Henry Martyn Institute, September 4-17, 2006 and January 12-24, 2007 (facilitator).

Advanced Training for Skilled and Advanced Mediators: Mediating Identity Conflicts Between Social Groups Involving Violent Disputes Over History and Pained Memories (organizer and facilitator). International Center for Conciliation, Boston, July 14-16 2006.

Basic and advanced trainings in conflict resolution and communication skills for students of the DC School of Management and Technology (organizer and faciliator), Kerala, India, February and August 2005, August 2006.

Ethnic Politics and The Cold War series meeting in Ljubljana. Department of Politics, International Relations and European Studies, University of Loughborough (presenter), March 28-29, 2006.

14th Annual Conference of Europeanists (presenter), March 11 – 13, 2004 Chicago.

Seminar - Consultation on 'The Partition of India Revisited: Thinking Through & Beyond Violence, Trauma and Memory' (co-organizer), New Delhi, August 2005.

Nieman Seminar for Narrative Editors and *Nieman Conference for Narrative Journalism* co-organizer, Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University (organizer), February 2003 - July 2005.

Social History of Central Europe 1945 – 1953 (presenter), University of Wales, April 2001.

Human Rights Monitoring and Advocacy seminar for the Roma Local Monitors (organizer and facilitator), Slovak Helsinki Committee, May 2000.

Center for European Security Studies, Working Group on Minorities meeting (presenter), Kiev, April 2000.

International Helsinki Federation Minorities and Immigration working groups (presenter), Tirana, Albania, May 2000.

Minority Rights Group international seminar on minority rights and mechanisms (participant),

March 2000, Budapest.

Categorizing Citizens: The Use of Race, Ethnicity and Language in National Censuses (participant), Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University, Providence, R.I., February 1999.

United for Intercultural Action Conference (organizer) in Bratislava, 8- 12 January, 1997.

International Helsinki Federation Annual Meeting (participant) in Vilnius, Lithuania, (November, 1996).

Fund-raising Seminar (participant), Driebergen, Netherlands, June 1996.

Seminar on *International Mechanisms of Human Rights* (participant), 1995.

Organizing *SLOV-ART-VIA* exhibit at Duke University (Slovak Women in Art, Art Protis), organizer, 1995.

L'Est- Ouest, Slovaquie en Die (presenter), France, 1994.

Participation at festival *Destination- Demain!* in Paris, 1993.

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE:

Project Manager, *EUROCLIO* - The European Association for History Educators, The Hague, Netherlands, from September 2008.

Program Coordinator, *International Center for Conciliation*, Boston, MA, January 2005 – August 2005, February 2006 – present.

Conference coordinator, *Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University, Program on Narrative Journalism*, February 2003 – August 2005, part-time.

Project Coordinator, Slovak Helsinki Committee, September 1999 – August 2000.

Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic, March - July 1999, media monitoring.

National Council of the Slovak Republic, Department of Information and Analyses, PHARE Project Consultancy Services Relating to the Council's Internal and External Communication Systems and on the Development of Improved Working Methods and Procedures for the Council, interpreter and Project Assistant September 1996- July 1997.

United Nations High Commissioner Liaison Office in Bratislava, assistant and interpreter, September 1996- July 1997.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

Assistant / Interpreter during the research study trip of the Roma Group Slovakia in the United States (organized by the World Bank, Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for the Roma Issues and the Open Society Institute in New York) October 2002.

Coordination of the publication of the *Letters From Prison* by Milan Šimečka, Twisted Spoon Publishers, Prague, 2002.

Guest Lecturer at the Summer University *Citizenship in Central Europe*, Central European University, August 2001.

Volunteer work for the Thomas J. Watson, Jr. Institute for International Studies at Brown University, research for the Census and Identity Project (codirected by D. Kertzer and D. Arel), a part of Politics, Culture, and Identity Project, August 1998 - September 1999.

Volunteer work for Amnesty International in Durham, USA, Amnesty International Slovakia, 1994-1995.

Member of the Board of Directors of the Slovak Helsinki Committee, April 1996- April 1999.

Founding member of the Youth Initiative of the Slovak Helsinki Committee, 1996

Member of the GONG Theater Company (1982 – 1994) and of the Gold Dust Orphans (2006-present)

Modern dance, tap dance, boxing, road bike racing, painting.

LANGUAGES:
Native languages: Slovak and Czech.
Fluency in English and French.
Working knowledge of Russian.