

# **Migranthood and self-governing rights: a new paradigm for the post-communist Eastern Europe**

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## **Abstract**

*Nowadays migratory phenomena impinge on the sphere of human security and democracy over Eastern Europe, in turn affected by the threat of ethnic turmoil and instability alongside national borders due to the high-level of disloyalty that national minorities have been showing since the collapse of the Soviet and Yugoslavian regimes. Since 2015, the wider region has started to constantly deal with the humanitarian refugee crisis within its geographical corridors and routes, throughout an abundance of human rights violations, the rise of selfish boundary policies and stubborn nationalisms that has exacerbated the public realms among locals and newcomers. This paper aims to lay out an overview of the interstate relations in light of “migranthood” phenomenon in order to feed the implementation of self-governing rights as an essential strategy to fully secure the States of the Eastern Partnership Agreement, and facilitate the process of democratization of the latest EU Member States and EU Candidate States.*

**Keywords:** migranthood, human security, self-governing rights, national minorities, post-communism, Eastern Europe

## **Introduction**

Similar to the massive migratory phenomena that weakened Eastern Europe due to the rise of ethno-transnationalism and counterinsurgencies throughout the Communist downfall, the Syrian refugee crisis alongside the Balkan corridors and the movements of a large number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP-s) from Ukraine to South Caucasus, are currently interplaying a relevant role. Moreover, while the multiplying wave of newcomers (e.g., refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants) began to campaign for more political recognition and legal protection within the new host-States, historical requests and claims of Eastern European autochthonous minority groups have been awakened accordingly.

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In the first part of the paper, I will briefly introduce the philosophical hostility of the Yugoslavian and Soviet regimes against the concept of “minority” and how the static boundary-place membership was shaken after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of the exclusively state-centred notion of human security into the former Eastern Bloc. In so doing, I will pay attention to those disloyal minorities and their emancipatory demands linked with political claims for regional autonomy and self-determination (Stavenhagen, 1991) in those post-Communist States-within-a-State (Caspersen, 2012) which do not yet constitute an instance of topography in terms of ethnicity after twenty-five years since the beginning of the process of democratization<sup>1</sup>. Throughout the paper I will provide a wide range of open sources (e.g., reports, research papers, articles) and constitutional texts or international covenants in order to deeply outline how *migranhood* (Nail, 2015) in comparison to the historical fear of ethnic minority groups’ takeover are nowadays worsening the institutional day-to-day politics. The entire overview will come to be used in the discussion on the linkage between boundary instability constantly impinging the region’s *securization* from within, and the high-level of intimate acquaintance, livelihoods and sense of solidarity that newcomers began to feel and develop with Eastern Europe’s autochthonous national minorities inside new “catchment spaces”, the so-called “transnational social spaces” (Sagynbekova, 2016).

Meanwhile, I will compare those former Soviet and Yugoslavian regimes entrenched with external migrations and internal processes of enacting radicalization among national minorities by referring to the Democracy Index 2017 (10 = perfect), which labels the wider region<sup>2</sup> full of *flawed democracies* ( $6 \leq s < 8$ ), *hybrid* ( $4 \leq s < 6$ ) and *authoritarian regimes* ( $0 \leq s < 4$ ). Although an exception on many accounts due to the uniqueness of each State, the description of the homogenous and repository region of negative characteristics (Teodorova, 1994) (e.g., lack of high-quality electoral systems, representative institutions and procedural legitimacy, vulnerability to succession, false loyalty distorting the political arena, low-information environments and invisible dissident) (Graeme, (2011) will be used to step towards the core of the *problematization*. Hence, the paper will be mainly twofold.

First, rather than addressing Western models where the concept of ethnicity is understood as a marginal phenomenon, and the circle of minority rights has no relevance due to the liberal idea of civic society within which all individuals are entitled to equal rights and liberties, I will point out the bondage between

<sup>1</sup> The Velvet Revolution, well-known also as the “Gentle Revolt”, was a non-violent transition of power in Slovakia that overthrew the Communist leadership and symbolized the beginning of democratic transition all over the region.

<sup>2</sup> Except for Serbia, oddly enough, which fares better as “just” a *flawed democracy*. See more *Democracy Index 2016 Revenge of the “deplorables”* (a report by The Economist Intelligence Unit), 2017 January.

migrants' and ethnic minorities' groups not merely as an analogy. On the one hand, the theory elaborated here will refer to Will Kymlicka's theory of minority rights among other insights by Gutman, Sagynbekova, Nail and Della Porta, as the win-win strategy for security management and preventive policy for those Eastern Europe EU States and those of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) EU Candidate States. The former could also serve as a theoretical framework for field analysis and macro-region researchers over the wider regions that share similarities and willingness to promote developing projects across borders. On the other hand, the paper claims to theoretically contrast the domestic authoritarian practices and thereby pave the way to the establishment of tangible measures through the implementation of self-governing rights in light of the *kinopolitics*, the politics of movement (Nail, 2015) from the Greek word *kino*.

Therefore, such multicultural proposal can be employed in combination with the renewed *Statis-States* dichotomy (Nail, 2015) which the Communist legacy had established until their downfalls and the historical fear of proliferation of (sub-)/regional instability over Eastern Europe<sup>3</sup> in terms of loss of interstate relations, risks of human rights violation against newcomers and autochthonous minority groups' members. Despite the fact that the term "group" is vague, I label newcomers (e.g., asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants) as members of a specific minority according to the Nail's and Kymlicka's classifications<sup>4</sup>, and the phenomenon of "migranthood" as one of most relevant social forces that have historically brought changes into the State (R. W. Cox 1982) and within the public sphere. Second, I will consider Kymlicka's theory of minority rights as a relevant management model for solving controversies among ethno-cultural diversities within the public sphere, and a successful form of reparation and prevention for avoiding unsustainability by the extensive promotion of integration between of the majoritarian cultural system and minority groups through cooperation, integration and relations and other ties.

<sup>3</sup> Partnership Member States (e.g., de facto and Moldavia e.g., the "Four Days War in Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and de facto entities of Donetsk and Luhansk in Ukraine) and the political exacerbation of interstate relations for EU Candidate States (e.g., Serbia/Kosovo).

<sup>4</sup> Directly at the core of the matter, the Canadian philosopher includes immigrants into specific minority groups together with *National Minorities*, *Religious Groups*, and *Sui Generis Groups* in his theory of Minority Rights. See more D. Hys (2004) *A Critical Assessment of Will Kymlicka's Theory of Minority Rights: Dilemmas of Liberal Multiculturalism*. Library and Archive Canada. In addition, Thomas Nail labels immigrants as *Nomad*, the migrant expelled from the territory (a) *Barbarian*, the migrant expelled from political status or citizenship (b) *Vagabond*, the migrant expelled from the juridical order (c) and *Proletariat*, the migrant expelled from the control over the economic process. See T. Nail (2015a) *Migrant Cosmopolitanism*. Public Affairs Quarterly 29, no. 2.

Last, the aim of this paper is to offer an exhaustive picture of the proposed theory of self-governing rights compared politically to the veiled struggle for territory, identity and power over Eastern Europe, and historically to the uneasy background of mass-migrations and ethnic breakups that seem to awaken fear among populations due to the *migrancy* across borders. I will focus on such conceptual framework from within to claim reasons for protection over immigrant groups, immigrants as ethnic communities, a better understanding of evolving migratory phenomena in politics, in order to point out how they can productively coexist to secure and democratize the region.

## 1. A problematic background

While the former Communist States began to politically take responsibility for maintaining order and regulating relations between national and minority groups, the downfall of the Communist legacy brought the conclusive chapter of the most important experience in the shared humankind to light. In Soviet and Yugoslavian orbits, different populations have been living within a common realm (Shenk, 2006) where ethnic, national and cultural identification was never recognized, however forcedly reduced towards an intersecting element within a psychological model and epistemological configuration of hybrid subjectivity simplified on behalf of the International Great Proletariat. Under those circumstances, hostility against the concept of *minority* (-ies) has forced Russians, Ukrainians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Tatars, Gypsies, to lean towards a side-by-side life within a rigid cultural and linguistic model - politically centralized and linguistically homogenous (e.g., Russian or Serbo-Croatian language) -, without self-realization (Tlostanova, 2004, p. 194) or self-awareness with regards to tradition, heritage, religion, culture. The whole came to culturally shape a theoretical axiom under which a metaphysical totality had exceedingly suppressed national and minority identities by promoting a crystallization of species-beings (Erdađi, 2014) and supporting an ideological umbrella of the human freedom understood as Marxist moment on the way to Communism. As time went by, such bond-place membership apparently favouring the internal populations and based on the Marxist contribution for the humanitarian relations with the civil society, has shaped a “*Statis-and-States*” dichotomy (Nail, 2015) negatively repressing and rendering any species-being invisible. Unlike Western Europe that faced the public sphere change due to the wave of newcomers, such as workers, women, and peasants (Habermas, 1990), and their way of expressing interests far from naturally harmonious (Vavřik, 2010), external movements over the Eastern Bloc were restricted due to security issues in comparison to the internal cross-borders movements of internal population. In retrospect, long incubated grievances led to a large number of tumultuous secessions and internal turbulences after the downfall of Soviet and Yugoslavian systems, with the breakup of former boundary

policy, which had removed risky threats of inner immigration in the European countries under Socialism (Glavanakova, 2016, p. 57), that began seriously to compromise the sphere of human security. As time went by, cross-borders movements have been taking place alongside national territories of inhomogeneous Nation-States where a wide range of ethno-national minority groups appeared immediately to be secessionists rather than irredentists and disloyal (Kymlicka, 2004) to the former Communist central governments. Similarly to former Soviet populations immediately after the collapse of old regimes, Balkan people have been exposed to constant and forced assimilation, ethnic persecution and cleansing, and a wide range of slaughters (including the war in the form of natural resources) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century after the crisis of the Ottoman Empire and, once again, the Yugoslavian breakups and Communist downfalls.

The Western opinion that former Soviet countries could independently perform within the boundaries of another sovereign State to defend citizens from grave and sustained human rights abuses, seemed to be immediately mistaken since a wealth of States began to protect their interests by claiming protection for their kin-fellow citizens. Since then, the anxiety for full-scale military escalations alongside neighbouring States that have not been fully secured, as well as the lack of legal protection and caretaker policies to those minority groups currently left out from political mainstream and living under the conditions of unsolved concerns, has affected the wider region. Over the last two years, both Balkan and Caucasian scenarios could serve to describe how migratory phenomena and disloyal minorities which tend to live nearby their kin-States, have raised human security issues across national borders and over different national public realms.

For instance, the resettlement within the region of Nagorno-Karabakh of twenty-five families of Armenian Syrian refugees, which led Syria after the first wave of civil strife, brought the unsolved issue about the sub-regional conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan to light. On the one hand, the herculean Armenian Minister of Diaspora policy to (re-)/accommodate Armenian refugees by providing food supplies and plots of land in the disputed region is nowadays threatening the unstable state of affairs. On the other hand, Azeri diplomats and institutions have been claiming respect for the *de jure* territory of Azerbaijan including Nagorno-Karabakh, home to hundreds of thousands of Azeri refugees who had to leave the region due to the Armenian aggression in 1988 until the 1994 ceasefire agreement (Ushakin, 1978). Also, Azeri officials have been officially condemning the Syrian Armenian refugee resettlement in order to reaffirm the breach of international law. This brought a new sense of Armenian charity towards the settlers who might be probably conducting a historical and ongoing campaign for the recognition of the *de facto* Republic of Artsakh where Armenians' righteousness for self-determination is opposite to the sovereignty idea of the Republic of Azerbaijan over the disputed region. In fact, Syrian and Lebanese

Armenians are currently moving to the insecure region of the so-called Artasakh because of an inner sense of belongingness that has recently reflected the Armenian attempt of recollecting memory from collective traumas (Denishinko, 2015) from the 1915 Genocide conducted by Young Turks and breakups inside Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) in 1988.

Similar to both South Caucasus *de facto* entities within the Georgian territory, namely the Abkhazia and South Ossetia, pro-Russian secessionist issues are looming combination between the fragility of former Communist national borders and forced vast mobility of the internally displaced peoples (IDP-s) who left – or are currently leaving - the Southern Ukraine. In the Southeast Balkans, cross-movement to Bulgaria from Turkey - country understood as a leading threat (Elster, 1994) due to the Ottoman legacy in the region -, has improved the negative trends towards Muslims and RAE minority groups (e.g., Romani, Askhalis, Egyptians), whose lifeworld made in time Macedonia, Greece and Southern Serbia very nervous (Delaney, 1994, p. 40). Those Muslim minority groups, such as the Pomaks, namely the “Muslims of Bulgaria”, who are inappropriately considered to be ethnically Turks or Romani<sup>5</sup> although three-fifth of their Christian affiliation and a strong Bulgarian-speaking attitude, have been blended to the Syrians and refugee movements and the disloyal radicalization of tiny Muslim communities living over the country. Because of that, since the peak of the humanitarian refugee crisis, “patriotic vigilantes” started patrolling and rounding up the Southern lands of Bulgaria around the city of Yambol in order to hunt refugees down and obstruct their willingness to illegally cross the Turkish-Bulgarian border. By spreading out the idea through public broadcasters that every illegal immigrant is likely to be a jihadist able to overthrow the social order of the country, human rights abuses and mistreatments along the Bulgarian-Turkish borders have provoked more backlashes and turmoil than migrations *per se* create from within<sup>6</sup>.

Just like in the past when minority groups faced a set of forced migrations due to unstable scenarios, the current migranhood involves ethnic minority groups with “migrant origins” residing in host-countries (Glavanakova, 2016) inside the so-called “pathological hotspot” of Europe (Nordstrom, 1995). For instance, ethnic RAE members and Gorani have been outflowing the Kosovar

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<sup>5</sup> Pomaks, as well as Tatars, show an idiosyncratic form of Islam that incorporate elements of Christianity and Paganism together with Muslim livelihoods. Bulgaria’s ethnic minority groups preserve such structural and cultural differences that remain well-sustained and generally unbridgeable with the core society.

<sup>6</sup> Tensions in Bulgaria’s Harmnali Refugee Camp Escalates, Novinite, 24 November 2016, <http://www.novinite.com/articles/177634/Tension+in+Bulgaria's+Harmanli+Refugee+Camp+Escalates> (accessed on 27 November 2016).

districts of Mitrovica, Dranica, Shala, Drenese, Skenderaj and Vushtri<sup>7</sup> by experiencing the migrants' perilous journey through the Serbia corridor towards the Schengen Area. Balkans, a territorial segment of spatial mobility for locals and newcomers challenged by *their movement* (Nail, 2015), became an escaping alleyway where the rise in the number of asylum seekers is perceived as a "potential threat to European stability" (Vermeersch, 2004), and made minority issues one of the key deciding factors on the readiness for EU membership.

In Macedonia, the decision to close the Gevgelija Railway Station at the Greek-Macedonian node, between which a large number of refugees have been waiting to leave Greece, was taken in order to secure the integrity of national borders and to protect the internal population against risky infiltrations, as well as the national boundary policy challenged that previous early spring. The military attack against one of the Macedonia Police Checkpoint triggered by a group of Kosovar Albanians wearing the UÇK<sup>8</sup> insignia in the Northern area, and the following clashes in the city of Kumanovo, where thirty ethnic Albanians were charged with terrorism<sup>9</sup>, have firstly shown the weakness and poor interagency communication and competing security structures after the Balkan War. Secondly, the Albanians' disloyalty and communitarian interests (e.g., ethnicity, religion, nationhood) across Albania, the newly-established country which bears the name of Macedonia and the most recent political experiment called the Republic of Kosovo (Cvetković and Durić, 2012, p. 61).

All of these resulted in a region deeply vulnerable to exploitation and proliferation of turmoil whereas the lack of integration and coordination between the countries' various entities and ethnic groups disempower a staging ground for preventive operations.

## 2. A conceptual framework for challenging scenarios

Over the last two years, Eastern Europe has experienced the fallout from the continuing crisis of the countries where there has been no regime change (Leviev-Sawyer, 2015, p. 149) in the way most external observers anticipated,

<sup>7</sup> See Poverty spurs mass migration from Kosovo EurActiv.com, 16 February 2015, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/poverty-spurs-mass-migration-from-kosovo/>.

<sup>8</sup> "Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës", meaning "Kosovo Liberation Army", was an ethnic-Albanian paramilitary organization that sought the separation of Kosovo from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and eventual creation of a State of "Greater Albania" including the entire Kosovo and Western Macedonia.

<sup>9</sup> During the hostilities in the Macedonian town, eighteen people were killed, eight of whom police officers. See Tanjug. "Lack of EU and NATO Integration to Blame for Conflict" B92 11 May 2015. <http://www.b92.net/eng/news/region.php?yyy=2015&mm=05&dd=11&navid=94070>.

with a revival of instability due to the new ethno-political breakups. The increasing number of migrants flooding from Syria to the Balkans, and from the South Caucasus to Ukraine, is now leading to a severe existential crisis on the self-professed values of the region, raising the inevitable question about the “Others” in public debates across the borders and at home, where images of geographical location have been hazily projected according to collective identities. Because of that, it is unsurprisingly that the entire region warns against the growing cross-border movement, and began regionally to awaken nostalgia about the former Communist prohibition of nomadism and external migrations that have been guaranteeing internal stability for many decades.

In this regard, the current boundary instability seems to run in tandem with the historical anxiety upon possibilities of further proliferation of turbulences in the way they escalated after the collapse of the Communist system, making masses of people seriously vulnerable (Peachey, 1993, p. 30) within a region never consolidated and ethnically pacified from within. Since 2015, the humanitarian refugee crisis has unveiled the regional unknowability to recognize “Others-ness” (Bebgy and Burgess, 2009) within public realms, while providing ample examples in terms of worsening perceptions about immigrants and minority members, i.e. more negative than they were in the early 1990s after the downfall of authoritarian regimes<sup>10</sup>.

In my opinion, although not an easy notion to grasp either theoretically or practically, an exclusive implementation of the democratic exercise of self-governance (e.g., political autonomy and public recognition) remains the accessible strategy to handle the ongoing state of affairs. This might be provoking a partial (or full) abandonment of the modern myth of a homogeneous Nation-State which, more than in the past, seems to be neither exclusive nor absolute (Caspersen, 2012) and not a bounded territory used to mean people identifying themselves by language and religion rather than by specific pieces of land. At present, the latter undergoes rigorous reconsiderations due to the forthcoming today’s concept of fluid borders, centres and margins (Bauman, 2007), and it utterly fails to even raise the question whether post-Communist States would legitimate a welcoming acceptance of the newcomers’ social force (Bebgy and Burgess, 2009) within society, finance sector, or domestic policy (Leview-Sawyer, 2015, p.151) for sample.

The purpose of self-governing rights comes as a part of multicultural policy and would most likely account for those *de facto* entities (e.g., Republic of Artsakh<sup>11</sup>, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic) within

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<sup>10</sup> See more *Two Decades after the Wall’s Fall. End of Communism Cheered but Now More Reservations* (November 2, 2009) The Pew Global Project Attitudes, pp. 49-55. Washington DC.

<sup>11</sup> The *de facto* Nagorno-Karabakh Republic renamed “Republic of Artsakh” in the new constitution, following the referendum held in the region on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and



post-Soviet States, as well as those that currently deal with ethnic rivalries (e.g., Ukraine, Moldavia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) over infusing areas not easily split by the act of drawing-borders. In the process of the recent circulation and sedimentation into citizens and States of migrants alongside Eastern Europe's national borders, the whole emphasizes how the role of today's migrant constitutes a counter-power and alternative to central structures (Nail, 2015). The proposal of self-governing rights might thereby come to lead to tangible problem-solving strategy for the national security system, in order to internally prevent dangerous infightings and further escalation (Jourek, 1999, p. 4) and allocate a strong dose of internationally provided surveillance and incentives in the form of political reparation. Both touch the possibility to essentially function into a given society (Kymlicka, 2001, p.12) and will protect the whole State from the internally destabilizing turmoil by *recognition*, in which *transparency* is the key factor through a procedure aiming to firstly avoid cross-cutting engagements of particular ethnic groups (Glavanakova, 2016, p. 65) more in social livelihoods than in geopolitical relations. Moreover, this will theoretically disempower those ethnic minority groups claiming exclusive requests and public policies by engaging them in new forums (Kymlicka, 1999) where local factors will come to legitimate and improve a rate of specific needs and sensitivities. Rather than continuing to promote a technocratic, controlling and constructed policy of forced assimilation and integration, this *recognition* aims to reduce native loyalties in terms of "local ownership" (Peachey, 1993) through the exercise of self-governance, which meaningfully promotes a better transmission of messages into/to the political arena. On the other side, it also discourages more territorial partitions, fractionalization and traumatic takeovers where, for example in the South Caucasus and Ukraine with Russia, as well as over the Kosovar scenario between Serbia and Albania, the pronounced spatial proximity with "kin-motherlands" is bringing *de facto* (or partially recognized) entities closer to becoming – although not *de jure* – parts of another State. According to the participatory-deliberative models, too, where inclusion is paramount, this recognition will take into account national minority groups in order to tailor further implementation over cultural needs and sensibility to relevant subjects, meanwhile discouraging any type of resistance against legal authorities and central institutions.

In the contemporary form of *migrancy* (Nail, 2015), where kinetic connections between immigrants and minority groups seem to point out a forthcoming area of studies upon migratory phenomena, this recognition is fundamentally different from the desire for material resources and economic exchanges. It implies, however, a type of recognition enhancing an inter-

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announced by the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic - Central Electoral Commission (CEC) on Feb. 21 according to preliminary results 87.6% (69,540 votes).

subjective state of mind by which human beings acknowledge the worth and the status of another human being or of that human beings' good, custom, and belief (Fukuyama, 2012, p. 41) towards a full accession to those peoples who will otherwise continue to suffer at large. Similar to *de facto* entities, indeed, to which recognition might address non-State populations within certain publics far from the conceptual and cognitive public-ness that political theory usually analyses, the *century of migrants* (Nail, 2015) is revealing the capacity of physical structures to influence behaviourism in public spheres (Parkinson, 2012, p.71) because of their occupation of space.

This large number of new locums, such as refugee camps, “welcome centres” and fenced open asylums, have shown an incredible capacity for signification, not incidentally, and brought to light a wealth of junctions between newcomers and minority members who began mirroring each other because of common self-interests and collective ambitions across national borders. Besides the lack of inclusion and failing policy of integration within the host-States, migrants and asylum seekers began to pigeonhole these transnational social spaces (Sagynbekova, 2016) due to familiar kin-based bonds within private and public dimensions (Faist, 1998). By contrast to leading to self-ghettoization and unvoiced sub-ethnic marginalization, transnational social spaces are tying up newcomers' political claims and social causes with those of minority groups, such as the struggle for more respect and protection over collective rights within society at large. This “practice” has opened up a complex of possible acculturations among identities that are emerging out of their traditional location and national topography, and it meanwhile discloses a paradigm that is neither an abstract nor a rhetorical construction. The former, however, conveys towards the challenging possibility to rethink the political theory from the primacy of social and cultural phenomena instead of the state as sovereign subject into the international orbit. All these factors in play do not fade away possibilities for further exchanges and junctions between immigrants and minority groups thanks to the current *migranhood* within a sense of practical solidarity among those marginalized groups seeking recognition which has paradoxically been outlining how boundary fragility can go forward to impinge national security. A scenario, in addition, which implements an anxiety is reawakened by an increasing collective fear of the possible threats of Islamist fundamentalism inclusion through *migranhood* - understood rhetorically as rolling Trojan Horse and as a stimulating process for radicalization of Muslim groups, such as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Albania, the Georgian Pankisi Gorge, Azerbaijan. In the cases of *involuntary migrants* (e.g., internally displaced peoples forced to leave their home or geographical locations) and *economic migrants* (e.g., “birds of passage”, or “*vagabond*” according to Nail' terminology), the Bulgarian “enigma-within-an-

enigma” of the Movement of Freedom and Rights (MFR)<sup>12</sup> as well as the Armenian denounce on the international terrorist networks penetrated over the Nagorno-Karabakh battleground from the Azeri side<sup>13</sup>, are just two examples.

Here, although newcomers do not possess the societal culture to fully recreate set of institutions and practices (Kymlicka, 1995, p.65), their temporary resettlement and shared experiences with national sub-groups have simultaneously forged multi-stranded relations (Schiller and Basch and Blanc-Szanton, 1995) where a local legitimacy which seeks recognition has shown their membership to a specific minority not only in theory. Unlike the idea of “*We, the People*” (Elster, 1994), which was recognized in the sphere of constitutional law in former Communist countries in order to reconstruct national identity based on a majoritarian cultural system, newcomers’ and minorities members’ awareness to closely entrench each other is shaping another conception of “*We, the People*” (Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014, p.9). In between, such phenomenon explains a triadic relation between an engagement of immigrant groups within the host-State institutions (a) the linkage between sending States and the host-States (b) and the rise of new public realms (Faist, 1998) (c) where newcomer’s attempts to join one’s culture (Kymlicka, 2004) have displayed a sustainable orientation towards collective self-interests together with national minority groups. This action of trying to avoid cultural shocks - triggered by movement across borders and strengthened by the persistence of external threats (e.g., truncheons of the army or police, host-State’s majoritarian cultural system) has given to unvoiced minority groups the chance to express their willingness to raise awareness on their conditions of being “traded off”.

In retrospect, however, the proximity between immigrants and ethnic minorities has treated both as groups of “second class” due to the socio-political interactions that take place within isolated outskirts far from contemporary public realms and urban areas, which are almost unfailingly denying the approval for political gathering and inclusion. The struggle against the lack of adequate representation and visibility in the political mainstream does not regard only the minority groups’ attitude to raise democratic reasons and claims during democratic attempts to multiply inclusiveness. It also depends on the inclusiveness in time and space (Lefebvre, 1991, p.34) that gradually remove the

<sup>12</sup> MFR is a centrist political party in Bulgaria, whose main goal are the interests of the Muslims, especially Turks. While Bulgarians of Turkish ethnic descent, as well as Muslim Bulgarians (Pomaks) and Muslim Romani, lead and support the MFR, the party is careful to place ethnic Bulgarians, namely those who are neither Muslims Turks nor Romani. Bulgarian suspicion falls quite often on the MFR in light of the “electoral tourism” across Turkish-Bulgarian borders during the elections and the radicalization of Muslim minorities. See more, Leview-Sawyer C. (2015) *Bulgaria: Politics and Protests in the 21th Century*, Riva, Sofia, pp.48-59.

<sup>13</sup> See more: H. Demoyan, Ph.D., *The Islamic Mercenaries in the Karabakh War: The Way International Terrorist Networks Penetrated Azerbaijan*, Yerevan (2004).

threats of ghettoization determined by taboos and norms, as well as social barriers which are nowadays preventing immigrants' and minority groups' engagement to emerge within the public sphere. Once again, this is why political recognition through extensive allocation of self-governing rights will bring immigrants' and minority groups' requests and demands to discussion within public arenas where a mandatory consensus from both sides, namely from majority and minority groups, will enhance compromises and competitiveness based on equal terms. Speaking of the freedom of speech, for instance, which guarantees to unvoiced minorities and marginalized groups their rights to speak up their conditions, self-governing rights aim to promote rational argumentation as a method for decreasing *Islamophobia* and its rhetoric message of “*send-them-back-to-where-they-come-from*” (Leviev-Sawyer, 2015, p. 150), which has absurdly affected those societies without a massive presence of Muslims and asylum seekers.

Parallel to an extensive allocation of self-governing rights, the allocation of self-governing rights will benefit to all individuals in conducting as agents their exercise of expressing rights to equal treatment (Gutman, 2003, p. 41). Such an opportunity will thereby serve to democratize and make more concrete and practical the chances for both dwellers (e.g., all citizens) and users (e.g., economic migrants, refugees and asylum seekers) to express their own-ness (Engin, 2000, p. 12) in freedom and tolerance by also establishing the limits of government and giving to citizens the rights against it. This will come to secure minority groups from the overwhelming pressure of the cultural majoritarian system by giving them a wide range of liberal chances to express their own “right to be different”, and moderating the political arena without any type of censorship in politics, public sphere, academia paper and so forth. At the same time, this integration will firstly benefit the core society against the threats of immigrants' and ethnic minority groups' disloyalty and illiberal attitudes in everyday life, and secondly, it will open cooperating relations with those *de facto* communities still pledging to conquer their land of origin “within-a-State” (Caspersen, 2012) they do not recognize as their own.

Thus, mutually, from minority groups towards the core society, and vice versa (Kymlicka, 1995), this recognition based on *rationality* and *common sense* – understood in its Greek synonymous of *self-restriction* (σοφροσύνη) which comes into being -, will facilitate the reawakening of consciousness among populations and a more ethnical understanding. In the meantime, it will at least guarantee the inclusion unveiling permissive environment where radicalists and extremists need to survive and thrive.

Moreover, the theory of self-governing rights can foster those multicultural and liberal trends in societies where minority groups have shown integrationist outlooks. In Macedonia, for example, where the last mass-protests against the

VMRO-DOPMNE ruling party<sup>14</sup> and the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski have been triggered by different ethnic groups. In Armenia, too, where the activism of tiny ethnic minority groups throughout the last constitutional reforms has conducted their representatives to run for elections and having the right to seat in the National Assembly on behalf of those minority groups from where they ethnically belong to. In addition, this approach aims to endorse even those (self-) /isolationist immigrants or ethnic groups like Romani, for example, who consider themselves “sellers of votes” throughout political campaigns, and those *sovky* fringes of post-Soviet urban areas where the high-level of unemployment and corruption is converse to a low-level of education. The spectrum of self-governing rights will establish a subtle mechanism for social control through a mutual binary of compromise and negotiation, a two-way process which will imply forms of reparation and adjustment between those who govern and those who are governed (Engin, 2000, p.148), under which everyday life will be democratically negotiated within all structures of power. This approach will implement the challenging opportunities to replace today’s standard set of roles and identities that Eastern European States had to accept in order to maintain order and regulate relations between groups. In the context of immigrant groups, too, both integration and inclusion (Kymlicka, 2001, p.22) will come to fully recognize their membership into new host-States where institutions and entities law will accommodate them in accordance with cultural differences and communitarian identities.

In judicial manners, once again, *migranthood* across borders and ethno-political breakups have highlighted the lack of judicial protection and weakness over Eastern European jurisdictions, which have been adversely floating around for at least a decade. Because of that, the theory of self-governing rights will legitimate a combination and cross-fertilization between central authorities and *de facto* entities, if any, unrecognized minorities and unvoiced groups, such as immigrants among others. Although law representatives objected to the fact that international covenants contain provision for State-level reparations, which weakens the character of national legislation due to the applicability in the field, the application of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)<sup>15</sup> will come to harmonize the application of at least the minimum elements wherever the lack, such as in Bulgaria, where the Constitution declares ethnic parties illegal (Art. 11 – Section IV) and obliges minority groups members

<sup>14</sup> It stands for “Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity” (in Macedonian: Внатрешна македонска револуционерна организација – Демократска партија за македонско национално единство), simplified as VMRO-DPMNE, and it is one of the two major Macedonian parties.

<sup>15</sup> Article 27, for example, declares that in *States where ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.*

to “have the right” to learn the official language (Art. 34), or between Kosovo and Serbia Montenegro, where the Serbian minorities’ *securization* refers the old 1974 Yugoslavian Constitution.

The prism of self-governance tied with international drafts and liberal principles will not be working only on issues related to the “Movement for Rights and Freedom” (MRF)<sup>16</sup> in Bulgaria or for those “non-State Serbs” who trust neither Kosovar nor Montenegrin authorities. It will also endorse the current phenomenon of *migrancy* and immigrant groups that constitute part of a judicial feedback mechanism more than they have been since the end of colonialism, facilitating democratic controls over border-crossing and fostering pairs of States’ cooperation in the whole Eastern Europe. Hence, despite being apparently “over-simplified” and schematically (de-)/constructivist, the proposal for self-governing rights under the theoretical framework of multiculturalism as policy will come to perform as a form of reparation for those post-Soviet States (e.g., Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) that intend to provide an avenue for further *securization* within the Eastern Partnership (EaP), and it could serve as a core component to plenty re-joining Europe (Kymlicka, 2004) for those post-Communist States (e.g., Bulgaria and Romania) and post-Yugoslavian Western Balkans that have signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement where democracies and respect for human rights have been backsliding and stagnating over the past decade.

## Conclusions

Whether the failure of Western foreign policy outlines the necessity to find out a win-win strategy for advocating for diversity and the secure public sphere from within or not, the West itself appears too weak to intervene within sovereign nations and introduce the terms for solving threats in the sphere of human security accordingly.

Even culturally, the Western conviction that after the collapse of Communism, as ideology and regime, the wider region would level the internal process of democratization in a couple of decades, or at least to a certain extent seems currently more self-congratulatory than it used to be in the past, and even more patronizing in the light of the last ethnic turmoils. Moreover, while political philosophers and experts have been developing the theory of self-governing rights outside Eastern Europe, once again, Western institutions and authorities have been

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<sup>16</sup> Symptomatically, after the collapse of Bulgaria’s Communist regime, a court decision denied to the movement the right to adopt the first name, which was “Movement for Freedom and Rights of the Turks and Muslim in Bulgaria”. Since then, only the immediate pressure of the Council of Europe began to push the Bulgarian Constitutional Court to admit the MFR to participate in the elections for the Constitutional Assembly of June 10, 1990.

paradoxically regretting and contesting any type of implementation of this democratic exercise in the field. On the contrary, Western authorities have proven the ineffectiveness of such theory and approach (Kymlicka and Opalski, 2000) due to their tendencies to provide more blindness and ruthless suppression of identities than equality, inclusion and cooperation (Peachey, 1993) within the region. However, the trend of *migranthood* has been clear across borders over the two years, even asserting ethical outlooks and competences to pass moral judgement on the cultural and political ways of other people (Bebgy and Burgees, 2009) across borders for who the Western concept of sovereignty is limited to tackling new environmental concerns.

Because of all these, I ended the previous sections by drawing a parallel between Eastern Europe boundary vulnerability with the spatial proximity among ethnic and immigrant groups, in order to give coherence and order to the daily headlines in light of increasing the sense of solidarity and entrenchment that minority groups began to borrow from newcomers. Rather than maintaining the current status quo which keeps internal fighting between clans and different groups, the paradigm I claim above seeks to move “beyond sovereignty” in today’s understanding of its central authority of power and law, as well as on traditional mechanisms of cross-borders relations between States and Eastern European macro-areas. Whether the proposal for a full self-governance will come to represent the possibility to more territorial fragmentation, which is potentially open-ended and able to internally restore ethnic tribalism due to the absence of superpower entities or not, the proposal of self-governing rights aims to determine a mutual process of compromise and negotiation from within between majority and minority groups. Moreover, the more the sense of solidarity and entrenchment among ethnic and immigrants groups over the region have been clearly shown in the last two years, the less institutional day-to-day politics has been likely to successfully deal with the current refugee crisis and the marginalization of minorities.

Hence, instead of avoiding interaction of identities that according to conservative experts should be preserved for not generating conflicts and tensions, the implementation of the exercise of self-governing rights to immigrant and minority groups aims to firstly preserve particular collective identity, which should necessarily produce changes even in national structures of law and power, and respect their right to be different. Although former Communist States have shown internal legislation on migration and citizenship, the large number of ethnic, national and religious particularisms, as well as an overwhelming lack of domestically rational and political coherence, have seriously impinged any type of progressive process of democratization. In addition, such allocation of more self-governing rights will come to represent a management theory in preventing turbulences (Jourek 1999, p.4) by recognizing minority groups that have been attempting to destabilize those States where separatist issues have been rolling down into vulgar nationalism and rhetoric over ethnic rivalries across *de facto* and

*de jure* national borders. Moving closer towards European Union Candidate States, for example, the proposal for self-governing rights will contrast those domestic authoritarianism and practices that are currently making minority issues and migratory phenomena an elusive target of the EU democratic conditionality.

To sum up, this challenging paradigm aims to tackle with the current state of affairs within a region that seems to be pivotal in the international arena and within macro-areas in turn continuously in changing. As I mentioned above, while prior to the Communist fall boundary policies were set up in order to decrease internal displacement threats (Sagynbekova, 2016), the ongoing *migranthood* currently points out that it is worth noting that in many sub-regional areas the line demarcations between ethnicity, language and religion do not yet coincide with the idea of homogenous Nation-States. Hence, I claim that the proposal to implement the exercise of self-governing rights will involve new mutual and peaceful advocacy alongside public sphere and those transnational social spaces as a new extension of democratic arenas for the aspiration of unvoiced groups. Despite such recognition seems difficult to grasp because it challenges the classic idea of national borders – more in functional terms than in geopolitical ones –, the necessity to rapidly secure public spheres against false, distorted and reduced mode of being (Walzer, 1997), is nowadays needed.

In conclusion, such challenging paradigm may partially resolve the cultural tragedy that the whole Eastern Europe currently feels in being considered to be West due to its political system virtues and East due to its cultural history virtues (Kundera, 1984, p.1). Conversely, this paradigm aims to overcome the Western preservation of national identity as a natural and completed experiment, monolithic and normal area of standardized nation-states, which nowadays seems to heavily problematize the integration of immigrant groups and the examination of the proposal for self-governing rights from scratch in terms of effectiveness and particular protection for unvoiced immigrant and ethnic minority groups. Besides, the most important issue that such an approach outlines is to break down the Eastern European legacy understood as the poorest area of the European Continent and land of bloody conflicts and unresolved rivalries.

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