‘FUZZY STATEHOOD’ AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE
Project Ref: L213252001

FULL REPORT OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

BACKGROUND

The idea of `returning to Europe' has been central to the transformation of post-communist states. Reclaiming a lost `European' identity for Central and East Europeans means recovering national self-respect as a member of the family of free, independent and above all modern European states. Bringing the state into line with `European norms' of democracy, the market economy and protection of minorities is recognised as a prerequisite for admission to the EU and NATO. But the `Europeanization' of the state turns out to be a much less straightforward enterprise than was at first assumed. There has never been a single model of European statehood, nor of Europe itself as a system of states or a `Europe of the regions', as supranational or multinational model of integration, or as a civilisation. `Europe' is a moving target, perhaps never more so than today.

At the same time, the relationship between the `national' and the `European' components of identity is less self-evident for Central and East Europeans than it appeared in the phase of euphoric unity when the communist order broke down. Different ideas of what `national self-determination' and `being/becoming European' means have appeared, and these play a central role in debates over constitutional reform, where what is at stake is the redefinition of the state. These ideas are particularly likely to be invoked in areas like regional reform/decentralization, and minority rights, both of which touch on sensitive issues of sovereignty and on the question of who the state is for. Different groups seize upon different aspects of the `nation' and `Europe' to justify their claims and competing demands for the distribution and institutionalisation of powers and rights within the state. Some groups question the goal of `returning to Europe' itself.

There are important differences among Central and East European states in the degree of consensus, and the pattern of political cleavages formed around definitions of the `nation' and its place in `Europe'. These differences permeate debate about specific aspects of constitutional reform, and contribute to the shaping of constitutional outcomes. In most states (and not only in Central and Eastern Europe), there can appear a tension between expressing the unique nature of the nation and defending its `sovereignty', and conforming to `European norms' (whether prescribed from outside by the Western institutions which these states seek to join, or defined by internal actors by reference to some idealised, universal `European model'). This tension can be seen in terms of a conflict between `nationalists' and `Europeanizers' or `cosmopolitans', but this is an over-simplification. What we are more likely to encounter are multiple competing paradigms of the state - complex constructions combining ideas and beliefs about what a `nation' is (its `objectivity', fixity, and unity); interpretations of the given nation's history, salient traditions and place in Europe; and broader projections of what the `New Europe' of today is, or ought to be. These paradigms contain prescriptions for the internal ordering of the state (the degree of decentralisation and the accommodation of regional and ethnic diversity), and define the limits of its openness to European integration - in other words, its internal and external sovereignty.
OBJECTIVES

1) To contribute to knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of state transformation in CEE in the context of European integration by means of empirical and comparative studies of the role of ideas about nation, state and Europe, held by political actors in state capitals and at the ‘periphery’ – sub-state regions and ethnic minorities, as these shape constitutional and political debates over regionalization of the state, implementation of minority rights, and cross-border cooperation involving regions and minorities.

We completed a wide range of studies on debates on regionalization in national capitals and/or regions of CEE states that will be published in mid-2002. In addition to covering Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Ukraine and Yugoslavia, we took on additional studies of Estonia and Bulgaria, with additional OES funding. Work on Yugoslavia was postponed until early summer 2001 due to political conditions in that country, and is currently being written up. We compared states both with respect to their histories of state formation and border changes, and their respective positions in terms of EU accession. Our regional case studies covered a wide variety of regions. A key point of comparative interest proved to be between regions that will be on the EU’s new external border after enlargement, and its implications for regional identity politics, centre-periphery relations within CEE states, and inter-state relations between ‘ins’ and ‘outs’ in the accession process.

2) To contribute material of interest to political theorists arising from these debates, insofar as they draw on rich and neglected indigenous CEE intellectual traditions of federalism, ethnic consociationalism and multiculturalism.

We completed work on C19 and early C20 thinkers, some of which has been published. The objective will be fully met when the rest (now in draft) is published in the project synthetic volume. Chapter 1 ties this in with current developments in political theory on European citizenship and liberal multiculturalism. The study of the Hungarian ‘Status Law’ of 2001 (what be called a blueprint for ‘fuzzy citizenship’) offers new perspectives in this regard. This is due for publication as an OES Working Paper in Dec 2001.

3) To set the study of post-communist redefinition of statehood in the broader comparative pan-European context of more general uncertainty about the meaning of ‘sovereignty’ and the substantive purposes of the ‘Nation-State’.

Notwithstanding the alternative traditions referred to above, we found that ‘nation-state’ discourse remains powerful in CEE. For example, while Estonia revived a celebrated inter-war law on cultural autonomy that might be argued to challenge traditional notions of internal sovereignty, its relevance in practice was found marginal in current Estonian conditions. Nevertheless, our studies traced how openness to European conditionalities due to aspirations for EU membership, as well as intense identification with ‘Europe’ alongside, rather than in opposition to national identity, could mitigate CEE ‘nation-statists’ inter-war tendencies to unitarist centralism and ethnic majoritarianism. However, Hungary stood out as a case where contemporary European debates about ‘the end of sovereignty’, ‘demise of the nation-state’ etc were salient, and provided justification for controversial laws (for both internal ethnic minorities and Hungarian minorities abroad) that have had unsettling effects both in Hungary’s relations with its neighbours, and in EU/Council of Europe
fora. This case raises questions about how far the ‘demise of the nation-state’ can really go in practice without jeopardising internal and external stability. Project members attended and spoke at joint workshops/conference panels with other OES teams working on these issues from an EU/west European perspective to mutual benefit.

4) To produce policy-relevant research accessible to, and addressing key concerns of UK and European policy-makers in EU enlargement: how to manage the relationship between ‘ins’ and ‘outs’? What conception of ‘Europe’ will the new EU member-states bring with them? Does the view from the capital accurately reflect the political dynamics of the country as a whole, especially in the regions? Can CEE proposals for collective forms of minority rights be accepted onto the agenda of international human rights policies?

Our regional case studies in particular generated much interest from policy makers, especially where these touched on the issue of implementing the Schengen regime after EU enlargement; and on Roma minority issues. We gained much advice on dissemination to users from our Advisory Board. Our extensive activities are fully documented in the IMPACTS section below.

METHODS

Our team carried out fieldwork in national capitals and in selected border regions. Our regional studies aimed to produce ‘thick’ description of remote and little-known regions, with close attention to historical background and the uses of history in political discourse. This provided the basis for our qualitative fieldwork methods: semi-structured elite interviews with representatives of political parties, ethnic minority organizations, human rights NGOs, central and local government officials, journalists and local academics. In Romania and Yugoslavia, we employed local assistants as interpreters. In fact, most of our interviewees there spoke English and were eager to use it. Elsewhere, interviews were conducted in the local language. Many of our regional case studies were pioneering, aiming to lay the groundwork for future research by providing contextual knowledge necessary for more comprehensive quantitative and qualitative surveys (see FUTURE RESEARCH PRIORITIES below).

Desk-based research was conducted in UK and in the field applying qualitative analysis of official government, party and ethnic-minority organizations’ documents, electronic and print media, published opinion polls and various unpublished materials provided by our CEE contacts. We contributed funds to support an opinion poll in Vojvodina on values and regional identity, conducted in September 2001.

Project management and quality assurance was effected through regular project team meetings in Birmingham (sample minutes available); by presentation of drafts for discussion at informal project workshops; and by consultation with an external Project Advisory Board, who were sent draft papers for comment, invited to project workshops, and asked for advice of effective dissemination especially to the wider user community.
RESULTS

The Research Agenda set out in our proposal comprised three parts:

- Paradigms of Statehood in the constitutional process, in the fields of decentralization/regionalization, and minority rights;
- ‘Fuzzy Statehood’: the rediscovery of regional and ethnic diversity;
- ‘Fuzzy Borders’: CEE experimentation with ‘Euroregions’

Our research project has completed a set of comparative case studies on the regional dimensions that span all three parts of the Research Agenda: debates in state capitals over regionalization, the re-emergence of regional identities in CEE, and cross-border issues/Euroregions. This will be published together in 2002 (see OUTPUTS.1 below). The findings can be summarised:

The fall of communism led simultaneously to the recovery of independent nation-statehood for CEE (including new state-formation in the cases of Estonia, Slovakia and Ukraine), and to far-reaching internal change. Decentralization (in contrast to the inter-war period) was now championed as a way of jettisoning the communist legacy of rigid centralization and dislodging local nomenklatura elites. It was also seen as part of ‘returning to Europe’, conforming with perceived ‘European standards’ of modernity and efficiency and EU conditionality. Moreover, it was being demanded by regional and ethnic minorities. Yet this reform was limited to the local level in the early years of transformation: reform of the regional tier evoked more controversy and hence in most cases was put on the backburner till the late 1990s, when the external factor of prospective EU accession entered into the picture, stimulating demands for new sub-state, regional-level institutions to ‘strengthen administrative capacity’ within the applicant states. Thus the accession process opened up the applicant countries to influences from external actors in areas that have traditionally been in the exclusive competence of sovereign states (including the EU member-states themselves). This coincided with a bottom-up revival of minority and regional identities, calling for greater regional autonomy. The removal of the communist political straitjacket dispelled the myth of national and territorial homogeneity propagated by many communist regimes. The resurgence of minorities and regionalism was hardly surprising in light of CEE’s ethnic and regional diversity, a well-known legacy of belated state-formation and frequent border changes.

The existing literature on decentralization in CEE was only weakly linked to wider post-communist issues of state transformation, and in particular, to the interface between institutional change and identity politics. Yet when major institutional changes in centre-periphery relations were embarked on, intensive debates on the notions of nation, state, sovereignty and Europeanization ensued. Our project examined how national-level processes were affected by (perceptions of) both sub-state level developments and external influences; and how the sub-state politics of identity were shaped both by national-level developments and by the dynamics of EU enlargement. By examining discourses surrounding reform of meso-level institutions, in national capitals as in the regions, we unearthed the dynamic nexus between regional and minority identities, the policies of the national capitals, and the diverse meanings of and influences that ‘Europe’ brings to bear.
Resurgence of minority and regional identities and decentralization

All of the CEE states we studied, bar Hungary, were bequeathed regional and ethnic diversity and thus, after the collapse of communism, were confronted with fundamental questions about how the state should be structured to cope with this diversity. In fact, none of the states championed decentralization in the name of diversity, and the new states (Estonia, Slovakia and Ukraine) turned out to be particularly wary of the dangers of centrifugalism emanating from sub-state regions and regionally-concentrated ethnic minorities, and hence put a premium on unity and cohesion embodied in a centralized model of statehood. Poland and Hungary had experienced major territorial discontinuities in the course of the twentieth century. While ethnic diversity greatly diminished, the dramatic shift of Poland’s territory perpetuated regional differences. For Hungary, territorial changes after the Treaty of Trianon meant not only a loss of historical statehood but also left behind sizeable Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries, such as Romania and Slovakia, where lingering suspicions as to their ‘loyalty’ were mobilized by nationalist forces to resist regional reform. Hungary itself, however, emerged as an unusually (in the CEE context) homogenous state in ethnic and regional terms.

Most ethnic minorities are regionally concentrated in all of the states covered (with the exception of Hungary, and with the exception of the Roma minorities everywhere); while the share of minorities varies significantly, from Poland, where minorities account for 5-7 percent, to Estonia, where they constitute about 40 percent. A no less important but often overlooked phenomenon is the persistence of diverse regional identities. As a result of the frequent border changes, most CEE states comprise regions that were once part of different empires, resulting in divergent political, social, economic and cultural traces that continue to make themselves felt today. All the historical regions we examined (Banat, Upper Silesia, Transcarpathia and Vojvodina) have changed hands – sometimes several times - between states at certain points in their history. The opening up of public space after the collapse of communism prompted a resurgence of regional identities, often combining historic elements with a more recently-discovered ethnic distinctiveness. What was particularly interesting was frequent reference in the regions to an idea of ‘European’ or ‘Central European’ identity to define their identity in contrast to the rest of the states of which they formed part. These developments delivered a blow to the cherished ideal of ‘national unity’ and bred a sense of insecurity where state capitals feared that centrifugal forces might lead to territorial disintegration (eg Ukraine, Romania, Yugoslavia). Although few claims for territorial revisionism have been officially made in the region (outside former Yugoslavia), such fears inspired continued reliance on a centralized territorial-administrative model in line with the nineteenth-century assumption in Western Europe that concentrating power in a single centre would afford the state better control and more efficient administration.

So while most states implemented decentralization to the local (municipal) level, the unitary state model, enshrined in national constitutions, commanded favour across the region (the only exception being Crimea in Ukraine, which was designated a federal component in an otherwise unitary, centralized state). Only Poland and Slovakia opted for far-reaching devolution of power to restructured regions, and it remains to be seen how the reform will be implemented in practice, especially in light of efforts in Slovakia to ‘dilute’ the territorial concentration of the Hungarian minority when defining regional borders. The tortuous process of regional reform had much to do with the uncertainties and divisions among the Slovaks themselves as to their
identity and national cohesion. Even in Poland, which embarked on political
decentralization, some concerns over supposed threats to territorial integrity were
voiced throughout the 1990s, but the strength of Polish national identity and the small
size of the minorities mitigated such concerns. The imperatives of decommunization
and Europeanization thus prevailed, allowing Poland to proceed with creating
political representation for its historical regions in 1999.

Estonia and Ukraine inherited large Russian and Russian-speaking minorities,
perceived as security threats in the early 1990s. Estonia rejected autonomy for Narva
region with its local Russian-speaking majority, instead reviving an inter-war law on
(non-territorial) cultural autonomy for minorities. Yet the right to exercise such
autonomy belongs only to citizens of Estonia and does not apply to the majority of the
Russian-speaking population, who have either taken up Russian citizenship or have
the status of permanently resident ‘aliens’. Ukraine refrained from re-constituting
historical regions and retained directly-elected institutions at the meso-level defined
by the existing oblasti, which were, however, deprived of any significant political
autonomy. Democratic self-government, restricted to the local level, poses little
challenge the highly centralized distribution of state power. Awareness of the fragility
of Ukrainian national identity, and fears of regional centrifugalism in practice enabled
self-interested ex-nomenklatura elites to retain control over the levers of power.

In Hungary, given the absence of regionalist demands, the arguments of
efficiency and limiting corruption provided convincing justifications for the retention
of a more centralized model and the establishment of purely administrative regions.
The entrenched position of the historical counties, and the lack of a clear model of
political decentralization from the EU side account for this outcome.

**Regionalization and ‘Europeanization’**

The imperative of ‘returning to Europe’ shaped the dynamics of
regionalization in all our CEE states, and references to ‘Europe’ abounded in national
debates. But which ‘Europe’? All states are members of the Council of Europe, and
adhere to the European Charter of Local Self-Government. But this applies only to the
local level, whereas a revised Charter incorporating the regional tier is still in
preparation. Thus the European Union has potentially far greater impact on regional
reform in applicant states, insofar as ‘strengthening administrative capacity’ at the
regional level is exhorited as one of the conditions of accession. However, the
incentive to ‘Europeanize’ is not equally compelling for all post-communist states as
they have markedly different prospects for joining the EU, and Ukraine and
Yugoslavia are not candidates. Moreover, even for the applicants, EU conditionality
does not offer consistent policy prescriptions on regionalization. EU legislation does
not concern itself with sub-state institutions and does not envisage any particular
model of regional-tier government. This can mean purely administrative
regionalization, or political devolution of power – it remains a matter of choice for
individual applicants. This relatively ‘soft’ conditionality, in contrast to many other
areas of the acquis, tends to be attributed to the Commission’s desire not to interfere
in a domain traditionally reserved for sovereign constitutional politics. Yet, the case
of Hungary, where the issue of regionalization was almost wholly propelled by
concern to meet EU accession criteria, illustrates the extent to which the EU
Commission is primarily concerned with administrative capacity and not political
empowerment of the regions. The Commission prefers to deal with national rather
than regional governments because of the fear of greater corruption and
administrative incapacity at the sub-state level. So even if in general, there has been
progressive regionalization and decentralization amongst EU member-states, the Commission’s policy recommendations, however informal, have not always produced this result in Central and Eastern Europe.

The ambiguities of relatively ‘soft’ EU conditionality provided scope for issues of identity – national, regional, ‘European’ – to enter into debates over regional reform as a means of legitimating different proposals. Our research found that appeals to ‘Europe’ were a constant feature of debates on regionalization in CEE, and revealed how ‘Europe’ could be invoked in favour of quite different models of reform. Thus if being ‘European’ means being similar to any EU member-state, CEEs could choose among a wide range of models: from the traditional French model of a centralized nation-state through Spanish asymmetrical devolution to Austrian and German federalism. The first retains considerable appeal, especially for new states in CEE. Thus, Ukraine could equate its ‘European choice’ with the creation of a sovereign nation-state capable of unifying and consolidating disparate historical regions through a uniform set of sub-state institutions subordinated to the centre. Ukraine’s interpretation of the traditional European (in fact, French) trajectory of state-building was thus legitimized as a means both of ‘nation-building’ and of ‘returning to Europe’.

The imminence of EU accession had an impact on CEE states’ interpretation of what constitutes ‘Europeanness’. The fact that Poland, Estonia and Hungary were among the first to begin accession negotiations in 1998 stimulated faster progress in settling the question of regional reform; while Slovakia’s valiant efforts to make up lost ground after the change of government in 1998 included increased urgency in the pursuit of regional reform. Romania, now relegated to the back of the queue of new EU entrants, has been both less radical in its approach to, and less consistent in implementation of, new regional structures. Ukraine’s membership of the EU is not on the cards for the foreseeable future, if at all. So for Ukraine, it was the prescriptions of the Council of Europe, and in particular its emphasis on the local (municipal) level, which were the point of reference for defining ‘Europeanness’ when it came to sub-state institutional reform. Symptomatically, Ukraine followed all our other cases in seeking to justify and legitimate its domestic institutional choices by reference to international, ‘European’ norms.

*The Perspective from the Regions*

Our studies included cases of regionalism based on both ethnic and historical grounds, that is, cases where either an ethnic minority demanded special political provisions for self-government within a particular territorial unit; or where a region’s distinct history was referred to in order to justify such claims (concentrations of ethnic and regional minorities in Narva region and Upper Silesia respectively; ‘multiculturalism’ as a part of regional identity in Banat, Transcarpathia and eastern Poland). Only Silesia had a special autonomous status in the pre-war period, whereas a promise of autonomy for Transcarpathia never materialized in inter-war Czechoslovakia. All demands for the recognition of their distinct ethnic/ regional identities have been so far rejected by their host states, with the partial exception of Upper Silesia, which became one of the new Polish voivodships. This failure is not only because of the reluctance of the national elites to give in to such demands, but also reflects the limited capacity of ethnic and regional ‘entrepreneurs’ to exert any influence on the process of territorial-administrative reforms. Nevertheless, the exploration of views from the periphery revealed lingering strains challenging nation-states in CEE in the run up to EU enlargement.
The versions of ‘Europe’ that emanate from state peripheries differ from those in the national capitals. In several cases, regional distinctiveness is framed in terms of being more ‘European’ than the rest of the country, while ‘harmonious multicultural diversity’ in some regions was cited as proof of being more in line with European models and standards than the rest (especially clear in Banat, Transcarpathia and Vojvodina). Thereby, these regions’ inherent connection with Europe is emphasized, bypassing the nation-state. This linking of regions with Europe illuminates the way that domestic dynamics are intertwined with the external dimension, making the distinction between national and international politics increasingly blurred. In the case of Narva region, with a majority ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking population, ‘Europe’ is seen as a factor relaxing the nationalizing ambitions of the Estonian state. Even if the initial calls by the Russian minority for autonomy have subsided (due to their lack of a coherent identity and preoccupation with residential status and citizenship), Estonia’s Russians look towards ‘Europe’ in the hope of greater territorial autonomy once Estonia joins the EU.

‘Europe’, however, evokes not only benevolent associations. One of the most striking comparative findings was the way in which ‘Europe’ is becoming seen as a threat for those regions that will find themselves on the new external border of the EU as a result of enlargement. For these regions, the incongruity between discourses on European integration, and policies geared to tighten border controls and implement new visa regimes at the EU’s instigation, is thrown into sharp relief. Our regional case studies illuminated deep concerns about ‘Schengen’, which has become a by-word locally for impending disaster, threatening to disrupt mutually beneficial economic and cultural contacts that have been built up between regions straddling this border, and to disturb inter-ethnic relations. While for the national capitals in the applicant states, the introduction of Schengen raises issues of foreign policy and economic regional development, for the border regions the prospect highlights the problem of day-to-day economic survival and threatens deep marginalization, whatever side of the border they will find themselves on.

This is a particularly thorny question for the border regions of ‘outsider’ states (western Ukraine and Transcarpathia, Banat, Vojvodina). These regions’ claims to Europeanness are made regardless of the position of their respective country in enlargement process. As Romanian, let alone Ukrainian or Yugoslav, prospects of joining the EU are dim, to say the least, their border regions express an acute sense of frustration at their unacknowledged ‘Europeanness’. After enlargement their regional identities will not match the new geopolitical and economic boundaries of Europe, which is becoming synonymous with the EU borders. Thus, the elites in these border regions draw their own unique, discursive map of Europe. Banat, Transcarpathia and Galicia in Ukraine, and Vojvodina claim to belong to Central Europe, a claim which for the countries such as Poland or Hungary is by now largely passé. The notion of a Central European identity, which was revived in dissidents’ discourses in the 1980s was animated by the desire to oppose Soviet domination. By the mid-1990s, it had largely lost its vitality as at that time Europeanness began to be ‘measured’ according to the Copenhagen criteria. Yet by emphasizing their ‘Central Europeanness’ as former parts of Habsburg politico-cultural space, the border regions in Romania, Ukraine and Yugoslavia reinforce their intrinsic links with wider Europe. So even if by now ‘Central Europe’ denotes little more than an antechamber for EU applicants such as Poland or the Czech Republic, the notion of a Central European identity is far from moribund. It has moved eastwards and is embraced in western regions of countries excluded from integration.
The prospect of exclusion breeds frustration not only with ‘Europe’ but, perhaps most of all, with their respective national capitals for foot-dragging in ‘returning to Europe’. Appeals to ‘Central Europeanness’ are designed not only to show organic ties with wider Europe but also to counterpose ‘oppressiveness’ of national capitals, i.e. Bucharest, Kiev, and Belgrade, whose incompetence and inability to work out priorities hinders the European aspirations of the regions. This reveals the lingering – and potentially growing - tensions between the centre and periphery. This will have important policy implications for the EU’s external relations in general and its border management policy in particular. Thus, while the impact of enlargement on the new member states will be profound, developments on the outside of the future EU border may be even more difficult to predict.

Work in still in draft or in preparation covers minority issues. A set of papers (see OUTPUTS.3) is being put together on minority issues as a ‘companion volume’ to the regional studies. A book synthesising the broad conclusions of the entire project for a wider audience is in preparation for the OES/Palgrave series. Our papers on minority issues so far have revealed a similar pattern of ambiguities in European conditionality allowing room for varied interpretation in individual CEE countries according to national specifics.

- Estonia’s ‘cultural autonomy’ law was revived from an inter-war law, in line with the post-1991 Estonian state’s insistence on legal continuity with the inter-war nation-state. It goes far beyond the minimalist standards of many EU member-states (and of the Council of Europe’s framework Convention) in granting collective rights to recognised ethnic minorities. But these have to be constituted by citizens, hence the vast majority of the Russian/Russian-speaking minority is excluded from the law.

- Hungary has also found it in its ‘national’ interest to propound a far-reaching law establishing community self-government for its own (mainly small and scattered) internal minorities. This, designed mainly as a model that Hungary would like to see implemented for the Hungarian minorities in Slovakia and Romania, is ill-suited to the needs of the very large Roma minority, whose main preoccupation is the alleviation of acute poverty and integration with Hungarian society, not separate institutional structures which they lack the social capital to make work. Concern for the impact of Hungary’s EU accession on Hungarian minorities left on the ‘wrong side’ of the EU’s new external frontier, and fear of their possible mass immigration into Hungary, have prompted the Hungarian government to introduce a controversial ‘Status Law’ with extra-territorial remit to favour ethnic Hungarians over their fellow-citizens in Hungary’s neighbours in access to benefits in Hungary. This has elicited a sharp political response from the neighbours, and also has alerted the EU and Council or Europe to their lack of clear answers to the complexity of defining a common ‘European’ minority-rights acquis. The law is clearly problematic in terms of the non-discrimination principle at the core of EU law. Yet Hungarian policy-makers – including the Minister for Foreign Affairs – have eloquently marshalled impeccably ‘post-modern’ and integrationist arguments, presenting an alternative vision of ‘Europe’ to justify their ‘state-of-the-art’ approach to minority rights: ‘Europe of Regions’, where the nation-state is in decline, territoriality and hard borders are becoming things of the past, and so on. This seems to be a clear case of new laws adopted within a CEE country being framed in terms of a wider debate about new forms of statehood and
citizenship in an enlarged EU with an audience of EU specialists at least partly in mind.

- What emerges from our other studies is the diversity of national responses to ethnic minority issues in CEE. While Hungary is pressing forward with a ‘post-modern’ agenda – driven, however, by preoccupation with the Hungarian ethnic minorities beyond it borders - the majority in Romania remains intensely attached to an idea of the ‘nation-state’ firmly rooted in a perception of the trajectory of ‘European’ state-building – driven by deep historical insecurities about territorial integrity and sovereignty. This vision also informs Ukrainian state- and nation-building, yet here the ‘fuzziness’ of Ukrainian national identity leaves scope for negotiation and accommodation in the name of ‘civic’ unity. While concern for co-ethnics across its eastern borders has featured in Polish debates, this is outweighed by a broader vision of Poland’s new international role as both a pioneer of democratic transformation and a key player in future EU-East European relations.

Ideas of collective, territorial and non-territorial approaches to institutionalising equal political rights in multi-ethnic societies are not new to CEE, nor are they simply imported from the West. Our project also surveyed a set of neglected political thinkers from the region in the past 150 years, whose legacy was available to state-builders and reformers in CEE as an alternative – and indigenous – point of reference in the post-communist period. In fact, we found that it was only in Hungary that such a legacy was invoked with any conviction. But we concluded that, even though they had been of marginal relevance to contemporary reform debates in CEE, these ideas were worth exhuming insofar as they both challenge the kind of essentializing treatment of the ethnic issue that continues to enjoy wide influence (put forward, for example, by Rodgers Brubaker), and in important respects anticipate current developments in political philosophy on questions of citizenship, liberal multiculturalism, and the future of the state (by Will Kymlicka amongst others).