Accountability within Minority Political Participation

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Accountability relations play a central role in modern conception of democracy. To whom society should entrust the power to govern and how those entrusted should be held accountable are important questions in the context of political participation theme. Accountability is intrinsically linked with such other concepts as representation and responsiveness. Those who are elected to represent and to govern are expected by democratic theory to be responsive to the needs and demands of their constituencies. The constituencies in their turn are envisioned to have effective means to sanction representatives for their lack of responsiveness.

While any conceptualizing of accountability and representation has at its core the notion that representing implies acting in the interest of represented, positive political theory makes us aware of plentitude of situations when normatively desirable outcomes are not easily achievable. The central concern in the analytical approaches to representation is a problem of politicians' self-interest. As one group of scholars put it, "politicians have goals, interests, and values of their own, and they know things and undertake actions that citizens can not observe or can monitor only at a cost".[1] This is a problem that has been conceptualized more formally in literatures on principal-agent relations and on delegation of power, which explore numerous implications of conflict of interest between principals and agents.[2]

There is no reason to believe that politicians that come from ethnic minority groups are less self-interested or somehow different in this respect from politicians of majority group. This basic insight has largely escaped the attention of scholarship that deals with issues of minority political participation. Writings in this research area avoided conceptualizing   minority constituencies as principals and their elected representatives as agents and examining the implications of such conceptualization. The focus has been instead on discussing norms and mechanisms that can ensure minority group-based representation.

There are obvious reasons for such a focus in the literature. In many national contexts minority communities have long suffered from inability to articulate and voice their distinct

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[1]Bernard Manin, Adam Przeworski, and Susan Carol Stokes, "Elections and Representation," in Adam Przeworski, Susan Carol Stokes, and Bernard Manin, eds., *Democracy, accountability, and representation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

[2] See, for example, Gary J. Miller. The Political Evolution of Principal-Agent Models. *Annual Review of Political Science* 8:203-225, 2005; Kaare Strom, Wolfgang C. MuÌller, and Torbjorn Bergman. *Delegation and accountability in parliamentary democracies*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2003.

concerns. Providing them with opportunities to do so often requires introducing special mechanisms to ensure, among other things, their presence in local government, national legislature and executive. Getting minorities in positions of visibility and power has thus been a priority in normative thinking and applied research in this area. This priority has also been firmly grounded in belief that descriptive representation matters a lot and that ensuring such representation will make a difference in the fortunes of minority communities.[3]

Now when substantial, albeit controversial, progress in recognizing minority rights and in designing special mechanisms for minority representation is achieved, it might be time to have a more analytical and critical approach to understanding relationship between minority constituencies and their representatives. This chapter takes part in this refocused discussion of minority political participation by examining three types of issues. First, it considers the general issue of policy responsiveness of minority representatives. Second, it focuses on patterns of recruitment and leadership inside minority organizations. Third, it returns to the questions of the design of rules and procedures that determine who gets into positions of leadership in minority communities. The chapter examines these issues in the context of legislative representation of ethnic minorities. Legislatures constitute a principal arena for deliberation and decision making in contemporary democratic polities, which justifies such choice of context for discussing accountability relations in minority communities.

Policy responsiveness

The idea of mandates for policy, as one of scholars of representation notice, has been appealing to citizens, politicians, and democratic theorists.[4] By means of elections citizens choose their representatives and provide them with mandate to enact policies that citizens prefer. The nature of mandate and content of preferred policies depends on characteristics of constituencies that elect representatives. How faithfully representatives execute policies favoured by their constituencies is frequently a matter of degree. As any attentive observer of politics can testify, organizations and their leaders do occasionally use their mandate to put into effect policies that are not favoured by their voters.

Monitoring is a critical device for ensuring the representatives' compliance with the wishes of their constituencies. The practice of monitoring the performance of elected representatives by citizens is often implicit in our understanding of democratic process. Citizens evaluate policy actions of their representatives and decide in the next round of elections - whether it is parliamentary elections or elections to a leadership position/ board membership in a political organization – either to keep their representatives or exchange them for a set of different ones. This promise of retrospective evaluation is an important check on representatives' willingness to diverge in their pursuit of policies from the preferences of their voters.

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[3] On importance of descriptive representation see Anne Phillips. *The Politics of Presence*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1995.

[4] G. Bingham Powell. *Elections as instruments of democracy : majoritarian and proportional visions*, New Haven, Conn. ; London : Yale University Press, 2000.

Ethnic minority communities' ability to monitor activity of their representatives in policy making especially on a national level faces some peculiar challenges. Implementation of policy pledges that minority representatives make to their constituencies depends critically on support of other political actors. Policy implementation is often based on majoritarian decision making, which requires a construction of numerical majorities to pass policy decisions. By definition, representatives of minority constituencies do not control such majorities and face a constant need to engage in coalition building to enact policies their constituencies prefer.

These structural characteristics of a national political setting make it difficult for minority constituencies to evaluate performance of their representatives.   These representatives can routinely assign blame for the failures to implement policies that minorities favour to politicians representing ethnic majority group, accusing them in the lack of cooperation on minority-related issues. This strategy of blame attribution helps minority representatives to deflect criticism from their own actions. While failures to implement policy pledges are often a product of the lack of majority politicians' support, they also more than occasionally arise from minority representatives' lack of efforts, prioritization of other political goals, or inability to formulate realistic policy initiatives in the first place.

Self-interested pursuit of goals by minority politicians can take many different forms. Rather than focusing on maximizing policy benefits that minority communities receive, minority representatives might prioritize achieving such other goals as political career advancement, accumulation of personal wealth, or securing economic gains for narrowly defined interest groups. The activity of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), the Turkish minority party in Bulgaria, for example, has been plagued by numerous accusations of personal corruption and self-serving links between the party and a small group of businesses.[5] This is a typical case of clientalistic exchange between politicians and interest groups where the former use their access to government decision making in order to exchange procurement decisions or regulatory favours for financial contributions. Similar instances of self-interested behaviour of minority politicians can be reported by the scholars of minority politics across many national contexts.

Lack of success in policy implementation due to the abuse of office powers for private gains is, of course, a problem that is different from the issue of the lack of policy success due to inability to construct legislative coalitions in favour of minority-oriented policies. Minority representatives' departure from the earlier stated policy positions or modification of some earlier formulated objectives might result form the need to seek compromises with majority politicians. Minority policy goals can often be only partially met and meeting even these partial goals requires negotiation, bargaining, and concessions. Monitoring strengthens minority community's ability to differentiate between these two major types of causes of a failure to implement policies

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[5] For a general review of MRF, see John T. Ishiyama "The Movement for Rights and Freedoms in Bulgaria" in John T. Ishiyama & Breuning, M., *Ethnopolitics in the New Europe* (Boulder, CO : Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998). MRF leadership has been, for example, implicated in operating business center from the premises of their political headquarters. Another major allegation against MRF's leadership concerns its ties to socialist security apparatus. These ties are alleged to continue to operate in the after-socialist period, benefiting MRF's political and business operations. On these points, see, for example, Darik Radio interview with Mehmed Dikme (former MRF Minister of Agriculture), 15th November 2008, accessed at http://dariknews.bg/view_article.php?article_id=304999.

preferred by minorities. It also allows minority communities to better judge performance of their representatives and to make better-informed decisions about rewarding or sanctioning them.

Transparency in the work of legislatures and other types of institutions where minority representatives participate reduces the cost of monitoring for the constituencies. Politicians, of course, might resist the efforts to improve the monitoring of their activity. They might even try to devise strategies that intentionally limit the amount of information available about their activity. With respect to parliamentary process, for example, one comprehensive recent study of voting records across the large number of legislatures found out that there is a considerable amount of difference about the availability of roll-call data records.[6]

Growing demands for transparency worldwide combined with information technology advances, however, rapidly increase the amount of information on legislative activity available for experts, scholars, non-governmental organizations, and interested public. This includes roll-call data; transcripts of parliamentary debates and hearings; committee decisions and resolutions on individual bills; documentation on committee membership, parliamentary group affiliation, and parliamentary group change by individual deputies; individual legislators' records of speeches, bill sponsorship, and interpolations/requests to the executive agencies.

Roll-call data, which is the records of individual legislators' vote on a given bill, is a major source of information on legislators' behaviour. This data comes from the floor voting, which is a critical procedural element of all democratic legislatures. Monitoring of such votes by interest groups has been a long practice in the US, where 'report cards' based on legislative voting records are issued by groups ranging from pro-gun lobby to environmental organizations. Positions that parties and individual legislators take on minority-related bills should also be a subject of constant interest to non-governmental organizations and groups advocating minority interests. A number of such bills in ethnically diverse polities can be quite considerable; the bills can deal with such policy issues as affirmative action, minority education, language use, multiculturalism, special social welfare and economic development programs.

A lot of important legislative activity takes place outside the voting floor. Much of this activity, which involves negotiation between parliamentary groups and inside the groups between group leadership and rank-and-file legislators, is not observable from the outside of legislative arena. Yet there are many other indicators of legislative behaviour which can serve as valuable sources of information on how legislators serve minority community interests. Committee assignments that minority representatives take indicate policy areas in which they plan to specialize. While committee membership is usually not solely determined by the preferences of legislators, committee assignments indicate in what substantive policy area the legislators' substantive contributions to law-making should be expected.

Bill sponsorship or co-sponsorship is another source of information on legislators' commitment to minority issues. Even when some minority-related draft bills do not have chances to be passed, such legislative initiatives have important symbolic value and serve as registers of

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[6] John Carey, *Legislative Voting and Accountability*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

minority public policy concerns. Efforts that individual legislators put in identifying specific policy issue, drafting and introducing the bill, signal these representatives' attention to ethnic minority concerns. Speeches made in the different venues of parliamentary deliberation as well as interpolations/requests send to the executive government agencies regarding some specific issues of policy implementation can also contain an important information for evaluating legislators' performance.

Overall, increasing the amount of systematic information about legislative behaviour is highly beneficial for minority constituencies' ability to held their representatives accountable. Where such information is not available, its systematic collection and release should be prioritized. Improvements in transparency are essential for strengthening accountability relations; transparency helps to address informational asymmetry between representatives and their constituencies and to achieve a higher decree of representatives' compliance with constituency wishes. It allows constituencies to make informed decisions about sanctioning or rewarding their representatives.

Recruitment and leadership in minority organizations

The question how minority organizations structure their internal life has significant implications for responsiveness of these organizations to the needs of communities they claim to represent. Social inclusiveness and internal democracy in minority organizations are two important characteristics in this respect. Minority communities' ability to articulate and communicate their concerns are significantly affected by the quality of their representatives, which, in turn, depends on how inclusive, competitive, and fair is the process by which organization members decide on whom to put in positions of prestige and power in their organizations.

Considerations of inclusiveness highlight the importance of social diversity inside any type of organization. With respect to minority organizations, inclusiveness criteria require paying attention to social characteristics other than ethnicity. Minority communities can differ as much as majority communities on such important dimensions as gender, age, education, occupation. Organizations that reflect social diversity of their constituencies are better equipped to attend to various needs and concerns of these constituencies. As a substantial amount of research on policy implications of social background of parliamentary representatives indicate, social characteristics do matter in how politicians perceive their jobs and articulate their policy priorities.[7]

The lack of inclusiveness, on the other hand, heightens the risks of organizations being non-responsive to the needs that communities might have on social dimensions other than ethnicity. From ethnic entrepreneurs' perspective, politicizing some ethnically salient issues and

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[7] See, for example, Marian Sawer, Manon Tremblay, and Linda J. Trimble. *Representing women in parliament : a comparative study*, Abingdon : Routledge, 2006; Esaiasson, P. & Heidar, K. 2000, *Beyond Westminster and Congress : the Nordic experience* Columbus, OH : Ohio State University Press; Carol Swain, Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.

prioritizing finding policy solutions for these issues might be a good strategy for mobilizing support. Pursuit of these particular policy goals by political entrepreneurs, however, might not necessarily fit the list of priorities that community has. Multidimensionality (quality) of representation should be an important criterion in judging the performance of minority organizations.

A considerable degree of variation in social inclusiveness of, for example, parliamentary factions of ethnic minority parties could be found across Europe. Parliamentary mandates are positions vested with a lot of prestige and influence. Social profile of politicians that occupy these posts could serve as an important indicator how willing ethnic minority parties are to commit themselves to the goals of social inclusiveness. One recent study of social profiles of parliamentary representatives in Romania found out that the group of deputies elected to the parliament on the list ethnic minority party, the Hungarian Democratic Federation of Romania (UDMR), has been consistently less inclusive in terms of gender and occupational backgrounds than the rest of parliamentary groups. Thus, although the Romanian parliament is firmly positioned on the lower end of the distribution of the European parliaments in terms of gender parity, the UDMR's score was even lower. The share of female parliamentarians in the Romanian parliament for the 1990-2007 period was 7.9%, in the UDMR's parliamentary group - 2.2%. The party has controlled more than twenty seats in each of consecutive Romanian parliaments, the number of UDMR's female MPs varied between 0% and 6.9% across individual parliamentary terms during this period.[8]

A somewhat similar picture of female presence or, more adequately, female absence from ethnic minority party lists emerges when one analyzes gender composition of Bulgarian parliament. The overall share of women in the Bulgarian parliament during the 1990-2008 period was significantly higher than in the Romanian case − 14.7%. At the same time the share of female deputies in the MRF's parliamentary group was only 5.8%. Given that the size of deputy groups that represent UDMR and MRF in respective national parliaments is very similar, MRF emerges as having a slightly better record of gender inclusion. This nevertheless is an example of a very poor record.

At the other end of social inclusiveness continuum, at least, in terms of female representation are Albanian minority parties in Macedonia. The share of female MPs in Albanian parliamentary groups rose from 0% in the first post-communist rounds of parliamentary elections to 26.7% in the last two parliamentary terms. Although the gender parity indicators for ethnic minority parties in Macedonia are still below the indicators for the parties that represent ethnic majority group, the progress in female representation has been quite dramatic. This progress is mainly due to the introduction of gender quotas into Macedonian electoral law in the early 2000s. Ethnic minority legislators were part of legislative coalition that pushed these legal changes through the parliament.[9]

While more inclusive recruitment practices could be mandated through electoral laws or some other changes in national legislation, parties can modify their candidate selection

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[8]Oleh Protsyk, Marius Matichescu and Baptiste Chatre **"**Representational Consequences of Special Mechanisms for Ethnic Minority Inclusion: Evidence from Romania," ECMI Working Paper N.41, Flensburg, September 2008.

[9] Figures for gender composition of parliamentary groups of MRF in Bulgaria and etic Albanian parties in Macedonia come from European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI), ECMI Dataset on Minority Representation, Flensburg.

procedures on their own. Minority organizations, including minority political parties, have a considerable degree of discretion on how they organize the process of candidate selection. In terms of party system regulations, for example, there are only very few countries that specify detailed legal criteria for candidate selection.[10] This means that in majority of national contexts the composition of parties' electoral lists, governing bodies, and leadership councils is a product of internal decision making.

This internal decision making could be more or less open in terms of ability of the rank-and-file members to have a say in selection of candidates to various bodies of the organization. A very open process is based on various forms of vote by the general membership of the organization. A very close process rests on a selectorate that is comprised of very few members or even a singe individual. The latter process usually entails appointment rather than voting for a candidate. Having a broader selectorate rather than a smaller exclusive party oligarchy to decide on candidates for various positions inside organization seems to constitute normatively a more appealing position. There is, however, concern in the literature that broader selectorate might be inattentive to the needs of achieving social diverse composition of the ruling bodies of their organizations. Thus, for example, the general process of democratization of candidate selection methods in Western European party systems took place parallel to the increase in the use of representation correction mechanisms.[11]

Overall, inclusiveness of the process of selection and recruitment in minority organizations depends, to a considerable extent, on internal rules of organizations and on willingness to ensure social diversity inside the organizations. The lack of social inclusiveness and democratic deficit in minority governance can compromise the ability of minority communities to achieve their collective goals and undermine the legitimacy of efforts to establish specialized forms of minority representation on national political scene.

Electoral process in minority communities

The concept of accountability relations introduced in the beginning of this chapter relied on a notion of elections as an important instrument of democracy and key mechanism for holding representatives accountable. Minority organizations claiming to represent minority communities in national political process receive their mandate through the vote cast by citizens in the elections. But can minority representatives be actually changed with the help of electoral mechanisms? This question is far from trivial in the context of electoral rules that prescribe how minority organizations can participate in political process. Our focus here is on the rules that regulate representation of ethnic minority interests in national parliament.

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[10] Reuven Y. Hazan and Gideon Rahat. Candidate Selection: Methods and Consequences. In: *Handbook of Party Politics*, edited by Richard Katz and William Crotty, London:Sage, 2005, p. 109-122.

[11] Reuven Y. Hazan and Gideon Rahat. Candidate Selection; Pippa Norris. Recruitment. In: *Handbook of Party Politics*, edited by Richard Katz and William Crotty, London:Sage, 2005, p. 89-109.

One type of problems with minority communities' ability to change their representatives is well illustrated by the situation that members of ethnic Hungarian community in Romania face. A key provision of Romania's electoral system since the 1996 elections – a 5 % electoral threshold in a PR segment of electoral competition - means that maximum one Hungarian party could achieve legislative representation. This is because the size of ethnic Hungarian group is 6.6% of total Romanian population. Casting a vote for several ethnic Hungarian minority organizations under this electoral system means splitting Hungarian vote and risking to prevent any Hungarian party from crossing the electoral threshold.

The existence of such risk consistently benefited UDMR, the leading Hungarian minority organization. UDMR managed to maintain its electoral dominance even though there is a considerable extent of community discontent with UDMR's responsiveness and performance. This discontent gave a rise to a number of attempts by other Hungarian minority organizations to mount a credible electoral challenge to the UDMR's monopoly on parliamentary representation.[12] Neither of these alternative groups of ethnic Hungarian politicians has so far been able to resolve ethnic Hungarian voters' coordination problem and find means to credibly advertise a new political project around which the voters could coalesce. In situations like the one that ethnic Hungarians face, a high electoral threshold has an effect of stifling intra-community competition and effectively limiting the community's ability to sanction its representatives.

Electoral rules that guide participation of minority organizations in political process are often not of their own making. These rules are a part of overall institutional design constructed by majorities and impact that these rules have on minorities could be of unintended nature. Introduction of high electoral thresholds, for example, are often a product of desire to balance goals of achieving broad representation with a need to secure a modicum of effectiveness. Meeting the latter objective requires limiting the degree of fragmentation in legislative assemblies, which is often a key rationale for introduction of electoral thresholds.[13] Whether minority organizations could be exempted from threshold provisions or whether these provisions could be modified in order to provide more space for political contestation inside minority communities and to strengthen communities' ability to hold their representatives accountable is a question that requires more scholarly and policy attention.

Although minorities can rarely set electoral rules on their own, minority representatives often have a major say in designing procedures and regulations that structure participation of minority communities in political process. In such circumstances, it is important to understand motives that shape these representatives' preferences over alternative set of electoral institutions. Their position on issues of electoral design might be guided by considerations of own political self-interest rather than by the interests of minority communities. Romania, as a country with one of the most advanced sets of provisions for minority participation in Europe, provides also a good illustration of this type of a problem.

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[12] Monica Caluser, Minority Participation at the Local and National Level in Romania, unpublished manuscript, Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, Cluj, 2008.

[13] Matthew Soberg Shugart and John M. Carey. *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics*, Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Romania's electoral system has a very elaborate system of reserved seats' provisions for smaller ethnic groups. These are the groups whose demographic size preclude minority organizations campaigning on their behalf from gaining parliamentary representation through the PR segment of electoral competition. The Romanian law guarantees a reserved parliamentary seat for each of these smaller minority groups, provided they receive ten percent of vote required for filling a seat in the regular PR segment of electoral competition. The key parameters of the Romanian reserved seats design are a one-seat-per-minority rule, nationwide constituency for reserved seats vote, and no restrictions on who can cast a vote for minority organization. The reserved seats system has been in place since 1990 and the number of ethnic groups that currently have a reserved seat representation in the Romanian parliament is 18. [14]

From the perspective of this chapter, the important advantage of the initial design of reserved seats provisions in the Romanian case was the openness of political contestation rules. In the majority of reserved seats contests held throughought the mid-1990s and early 2000s, more than one minority organization from each smaller ethnic group competed in elections - the reserved seat would go to the organization that received the largest share of vote. Thus, for example, two or three Bulgarian minority organizations participated in each round of the Romanian parliamentary elections during the 1996-2004 period. After the 2004 parliamentary contest, registration rules for electoral participation of minority organizations have been made much stricter. Sitting reserved seats deputies played a key role in lobbying for legislative changes that imposed more demanding registration requirements on minority organizations wishing to participate in the elections. The need to combat the abuse of reserved seats provisions by political entrepreneurs without strong ties to the minority communities was cited as a key official justifications for introduction of new rules. Organizations represented by sitting reserved seats deputies were exempt from the need to renew their registration for participating in elections.[15]

The passage of electoral amendments advocated by incumbent reserved seats deputies illustrates a power to influence legislative decision-making outcomes that a relatively small group of deputies can possess. Even a very limited presence in national politics that minorities usually enjoy can provide minority representatives with a leverage to push through the national legislature their preferred bills. Especially when they enjoy pivotal status in some of the areas of legislative policy making, minority representatives are able through bargaining and logrolling to secure majorities' support for policies they favour. Whether these policies necessarily benefit minority communities is a separate issue.

The effects of stricter electoral participation rules were immediately felt in the next round of Romanian parliamentary elections held in 2008. Only one minority organization from each ethnic group participated in this round of elections, meaning there was no choice available for ethnic minority voters wishing to vote along ethnic lines but unhappy with the performance of incumbent organization representing their ethnic group. New rules benefited the incumbent

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[14] For a detailed account of the evolution of Romanian reserved seats provisions see Ciprian-Calin Alionescu, "Parliamentary Representation of Minorities in Romania," *Southeast European Politics* 5 (1):60-75, 2004.

[15] Causes and details of changes in provisions regulating reserved seats elections are discussed in Monica Caluser and Oleh Protsyk, "Regulating minority reserved seats competition in Romania", ECMI Working Paper, forthcoming.

minority politicians by providing additional guarantees of continuation of their tenure but deprived communities of meaningful alternatives in terms of choice of minority representatives.

An increase in the level of political contestation inside minority communities is often feared on the grounds that it leads to ethnic outbidding. According to ethnic outbidding thesis, which has been frequently updated and refined in the long history of academic debates on this issue, democratic opening allows extremist politicians to enter public space, to radicalize public discourse, and to move politics to extremes.[16] While it is certainly true that democratization allows radicals to participate in political process and appeal to the voters with their agendas, it does not necessarily imply that minority communities will choose to support the most radical politicians and policies. Provided that democratic rules of political contestation are maintained, open and fair electoral competition can in fact lead to situations when minority constituencies deny radicals of broad electoral support. These constituencies might prefer moderate policy options as those that best serve their true interests.

A vivid illustration of the latter point comes from the review of a different type of ethnic minority experiences than those that were so far cited in this chapter. It is experience of non-recognized states that emerged as a consequence of a number of ethno-territorial conflicts in a wider Europe region.[17] Among these entities, Northern Cyprus features as having by far the most democratically robust political system. Prior to the 2004 referendum on Cyprus reunification the Turkish voters of the Northern Cyprus were presented with two visions of their future status. The radical one supported by the incumbent president opposed reunification plans. The moderate version presented by some other political forces in Northern Cyprus supported reunification and broader reconciliation efforts. Democratic openness of political process in this particular non-recognized entity allowed politicians with moderate agenda to campaign for voters' support and to win constituency approval of their strategy. The Northern Cyprus experience is in a stark contrast with the records of Eurasian non-recognized states where non-democratic political regimes consistently suppress opposition and deny voters of any meaningful choice, by presenting them only with the most radical option of their regions' development - which is to seek independence from the metropolitan state at any cost.[18]

Democratization of minority community life, when it is implemented with proper consideration of safeguards that ensure continuing operation of democratic norms and procedures, might benefit moderate voices and increase influence of political actors seeking cooperative relations with majorities. While it is much easier to conceive plans of proper democratization than to implement them, this should not dissuade those interested in bringing

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[16] See, for example, Jack L. Snyder. *From voting to violence : democratization and nationalist conflict*, New York : W.W. Norton, 2000. Donald L. Horowitz. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkley:University of California Press, 1985.

[17] On a description of these conflicts see, for example, Bruno Coppieters, Michael Emerson, Michel Huysseune, Tamara Kovziridze, Gergana Noutcheva, Nathalie Tocci and Marius Vahl. *Europeanization and conflict resolution : case studies from the European periphery*, Gent [Belgium] : Academia Press, 2004.

[18] On a detailed analysis of limits on political contestation imposed by one of such Eurasian non-recognized states, Transnistria, see Oleh Protsyk, "Representation and Democracy in Eurasia's Unrecognized States: The Case of Transnistria," *Post-Soviet Affairs,* forthcoming.

about democratic change or in improving the quality of democracy inside minority communities from pursuing normatively desired goals. At least in the context of wider Europe region, democracy promoters can rely on support and assistance of a broad coalition of domestic and international actors.

Conclusion

This chapter argued that motives and actions of minority politicians should be subjected to the same standards of scrutiny that majority politicians routinely face in consolidated democratic systems. This obvious standard is not easy to introduce especially in the context of transitional Eastern European societies. The discussion of minority political participation in this geographic region has been dominated by the concerns about real or perceived risks of escalation of ethnic tensions and conflict. The question of minority elite accountability has been of a secondary importance. The elites were assumed to faithfully represent real needs of minority communities. Appeasing and accommodating these elites rather than devising better mechanisms to keep them responsive to the needs of communities has been a dominant response of domestic and international actors.

Possibility that community needs can be in some degree of conflict with the interests of politicians claiming to represent these communities deserves to be seriously reflected upon. Failure to do so increases the chances of capture of minority representation by elites whose self-interested behaviour turns their communities into hostages or victims of elite ambitions. When proper checks are not in place, minority politicians can allow their narrowly defined self-interest to dominate their public policy pursuits, their priorities in building and staffing minority organizations, and their preferences with regard to the design of electoral rules and other procedures intended to regulate access to leadership positions inside minority communities.

This chapter's discussion pointed to some means and mechanisms that have potential to improve the ability of minority communities to hold their elites accountable. Ensuring greater transparency in what minority representatives do can help alleviate some of informational asymmetry that exists between constituencies and their representatives. The global spread of modern information technologies has already started to equip constituencies with better means of monitoring the work of their representatives both in legislative and executive functions. Increasing pressure on the leadership of minority organizations to democratize their internal life and to develop more inclusive recruitment and promotion policies can also help to improve the responsiveness of minority elites. Finally, introducing electoral mechanisms that increase competitiveness of the process of elite selection and the effectiveness of sanctioning by the constituencies is essential for realizing the full potential of democratic governance inside minority communities.

The focus of the analysis presented in this chapter was on minority representatives and minority organizations that directly participate in political process. The organizational life of minority communities is more complex than that. It is comprised of activities of many types of non-governmental organizations with no direct involvement in political process. It is also

increasingly open to experimentation in terms of organizational forms. Minority consultative bodies - hybrid organizations that combine representative, advisory, and expert functions – have recently emerged in a variety of national contexts. The general issue of accountability and many specific accountability-related themes covered in this chapter are as relevant to the functioning of these latter types of minority organizations as they are to minority organizations that seek public office.