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## Inclusion, Participation and Self-Governance in Plural Societies: Participation of National Minorities in the CEI Area

The initiative for a thematic journal issue on the political participation of national minorities emerged at an international seminar in Trieste in 2016. This article presents the concept and the framework, as well as the limitations in researching complex and dynamic social phenomena, such as minorities, inclusion, integration and participation. It stresses the social conditionality (based upon values and ideology) of research, research results, findings and interpretation(s), as well as the problem of funding that does not enable long-term, systematic and holistic research. Discussing social inclusion, integration, participation and democracy as the framework for the political participation of minorities, it presents a model of the social and political participation of minorities and their members as a tool for research and the interpretation of research results.

**Keywords:** participation, democracy, inclusion – exclusion, integration, majority – majority, rights and protection of national minorities.

## Vključevanje, sodelovanje in samouprava v pluralnih družbah: participacija narodnih manjšin v regiji SEI

*Pobuda za tematsko številko o politični participaciji narodnih manjšin je nastala na mednarodnem seminarju v Trstu leta 2016. Prispevek predstavlja zasnovo številke, njen okvir ter omejitve raziskovanja kompleksnih in dinamičnih družbenih pojavov, kot so narodne in druge manjšine, vključevanje, integracija in participacija. Poudari družbeno pogojenost raziskovanja, rezultatov, ugotovitev in interpretacij ter problem financiranja, ki ne omogoča celovitega, poglobljenega in dolgoročnega raziskovanja. Vključevanje, integracijo, družbeno in politično participacijo ter demokracijo predstavi kot kontekst politične participacije manjšin. Model družbene in politične participacije manjšin in njihovih pripadnikov opredeli kot orodje za raziskovanje politične participacije manjšin in interpretacijo raziskovalnih rezultatov.*

**Ključne besede:** participacija, demokracija, vključenost – izključenost, integracija, manjšina – večina, pravice in varstvo narodnih manjšin.

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## 1. Introduction: A Brief Presentation of the Genesis of this (Special) Thematic Issue

The initiative to prepare a special thematic issue of a scholarly journal on political participation of national minorities was born at the international seminar Models of Political Participation and Self-governance of National Minorities in Central European Initiative Member States. This event held in Trieste, Italy on 17 June 2016 was organised by the Slovene Research Institute from Trieste (Slovenski raziskovalni inštitut – SLORI), with the Central European Initiative (CEI) and Institute for Ethnic Studies (Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja – IES/INV). The venue of the seminar was a very symbolic one, at least for the Slovene national minority in Italy. The participants, who included scholars, some politicians, public/civil officials and minority activists from the CEI countries met at the Narodni dom/National Home, the building now owned by the University of Trieste that kindly offered the venue to the organisers and officially welcomed the participants at the opening session. The current building was (re)built on the very site of the cultural centre of the Slovenes, the Narodni dom designed by the famous Slovene architect Maks Fabiani that the Italian Fascists burnt down in July 1920 (Pozzetto et al. 1995). This historic regression is important also for the very topic of this special issue: it shows that the situation(s) of minorities, majority-minority relations and the protection of minorities in a certain environment can and do change over time. Historically, in the period of Austria-Hungary, regardless of occasional problems and social divisions, Trieste was considered a multiethnic, multilingual and open port-city with numerous ethnic communities. Regardless of sharp social and economic divisions, ethnic coexistence and cooperation were (quite) good. That changed dramatically after World War I. Especially in the Fascist period, the Italian state and authorities discriminated against, repressed and persecuted minorities, in this area particularly the Slovenes (Čermelj 1945). Although the Special Statute of the London Memorandum (of Understanding) of 1954 determined some political, social and cultural rights and the protection of the Slovene national minority in Italy,<sup>1</sup> tensions and problems in Trieste and other regions where the Slovene minority lives in Italy continued also in the post-World War II period. The situation started to improve (gradually) in the 1970s with the process of the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE that later transformed into the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe – OSCE)<sup>2</sup> that paid attention also to the rights and protection of national minorities. The improved East-West relations enabled the signing, adoption and ratification of the Treaty of Osimo between Italy and Yugoslavia<sup>3</sup> in 1975 that reconfirmed the minority rights established by the Special Statute (Jeri 1975). The trend of the gradual improvement of minority protection and the overall situation has continued, with some ups and downs, particularly after the

independence of Slovenia<sup>4</sup> and its membership in the European Union (EU). The CEI, particularly with its Instrument for the protection of minority rights (CEI 1994) and the promotion of regional cooperation in diverse fields, has contributed to these positive developments. However, several open issues and problems regarding the situation, rights and protection as well as social and political participation of the Slovene national minority in Italy are still present (Vidau 2017).

The participants of the seminar agreed that Treatises and Documents, Journal of Ethnic Studies would be the best option for a special thematic issue on political participation of national minorities in the CEI area. As the invited initial keynote speaker at the seminar, I was asked to be the guest editor of this special issue. Considering the suggested topic very important, I agreed. Fortunately, the editorial board of the Journal liked the idea and accepted the proposal. In addition to presenters at the 2016 seminar, we invited some additional scholars studying minority participation in the area and its countries to join the initiative and write a scholarly article on the general situation of the political participation of national minorities in individual countries or a specific case study of a selected minority. All received articles, this one included, underwent a double blind review process by reviewers of the Journal who contributed excellent comments and suggestions that helped authors improve their texts. I would like to thank the reviewers for their contributions to the improvement of the articles and this thematic issue. Additionally, upon receiving the positive reviews from the reviewers, the authors of the selected articles received my editorial comments and suggestions aimed at contributing to the linguistic, terminological and thematic homogeneity of this special issue. I am thankful to all the authors who tried their best to follow the reviewers' and my comments and suggestions, regardless of the time pressure of short deadlines determined by our desire to publish this thematic issue as soon as possible. I hope our efforts contributed to the focus and clarity of individual contributions as well as to the thematic issue as the whole. Particularly, I would like to thank Sara Brezigar and Zaira Vidau for their assistance in communication with authors, reviewers and the technical staff of the Journal, as well as in the technical editing of the articles.

Finally, I would like to present the aim, content, organisation and structure of this thematic issue. The central aim of this issue is to present and explore the inclusion and integration of national minorities and persons belonging to them in the CEI member states, particularly regarding and through their political participation. Consequently, this introductory article with a brief presentation of the general context is followed by a series of case studies. These present the legal framework, the historical and political context of the political participation of national minorities, as well as the current situation and position of a specific minority or national minorities in general in a respective country, paying special attention to recent developments and problems. It should be stressed that the

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situation and developments in each of the countries are dynamic, complex, specific and unique. Moreover, often substantial diversities and differences, including different legal and political arrangements might exist within a single country, thereby contributing to the increasing complexity and multidimensionality of the studied topics and cases. Although some common features and characteristics regarding the political participation and self-governance of minorities could be detected in all countries of the area, any generalization for the whole CEI area might be problematic. Additionally, it should be underlined that political participation of national minorities and persons belonging to them presents just one, although very (in the current context, possibly, the most) important dimension of inclusion, integration and full participation of minorities. I would consider that the main added value of this thematic issue is that it presents the current situation of political participation of minorities in the selected countries of the CEI area providing data and analysis that otherwise might be difficult to find in the available scholarly literature. In establishing the order of the presentations in this special thematic issue, considering their nature as national or specific minority case studies, the editorial decision was to arrange them according to geographic criteria from West to East and from North to South. Consequently, the case studies relating to Italy are followed by case studies on Austria, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Romania.

## 2. The Broader Context: Phenomena, Research Methodology, Concepts and Definitions

Before addressing the topic of full participation of persons belonging to national minorities as individuals and of national minorities as specific collective entities, I believe a broader context needs to be discussed and clarified – one that is unfortunately often overlooked and/or forgotten by scholars and the general public, particularly in interpreting research results and findings. The term and concept of political participation of (national) minorities refer to complex social phenomena that manifest themselves and are interpreted differently in every society.

To avoid possible misunderstandings, first the concept of phenomenon requires some explanation. All natural and social phenomena are complex, dynamic, interrelated and interdependent processes that among several specific characteristics and dimensions share (at least) three key interwoven dimensions: relational, spatial and temporal. However, as complex as they are, phenomena are just segments of our integral complex, dynamic and constantly changing natural and social realities. Additionally, the relations and interdependence of phenomena in a certain environment constantly change and evolve. For this reason, scholars should avoid studying and interpreting individual phenomena as isolated and independent or static, frozen in time. An important problem in this context is that

in studying complex phenomena or their specific segments as well as in interpreting research findings and realities scholars use research approaches and methods that determine their research, findings and interpretations. These approaches and methods as well as definitions, concepts and measures (yardsticks) that evolved over time and are declared objective (or, at least, objectivised) are in reality social conventions, agreed upon and used with more or less consensus in the scholarly community. In order to be applicable, usually, they tend to simplify studied phenomena and realities, particularly by reducing or neglecting their complexity, dimensions and interdependence. Additionally, particularly in quantitative research, using these approaches and methods scholars determine and treat a certain selected phenomenon or a certain characteristic or segment of a phenomenon as an independent variable that determines the process and the reality. Mathematically we cannot calculate formulae in which all variables are unknown and dependent. Being unable to detect, describe, comprehend and interpret the whole multitude, diversity and complexity of studied phenomena and realities as well as lacking the capacity to express in formulae and calculate them adequately, such (systemic and systematic) simplifications are necessary and surely helpful, particularly in explaining and interpreting social phenomena, relations, processes and realities. However, in using and interpreting research results and findings we shall be aware of their problems and limitations, and shall recognize that research results are just approximations and tools that can help us understand certain dimensions of our realities. In other words, research results and findings are our simplified interpretations of realities and, consequently, approximations of studied phenomena and realities that should not be confused with and presented as the actual realities. Considering the complexity, dynamic nature and multidimensionality of social phenomena as well as their interplay and interdependence, it seems useful that in studying them we combine different research approaches, disciplines and methods, thereby reducing at least some of their limitations. I would advocate methodological pluralism as the most adequate approach that stimulates the use of multi-, trans- and interdisciplinary approaches and methodologies.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, we shall be aware that all approaches and methods as well as research, results, findings and interpretations are conditioned by values and ideology.<sup>6</sup>

The relational dimension of social phenomena can be presented as the dimension that refers to the existence and complexity of links and relations between (at least two, but usually more) individuals and/or collective entities (e.g., groups, communities, organisations, institutions, etc.) functioning as and being organised in diverse social networks. In the case of national minorities, the relational dimension is reflected in the interpersonal, intergroup and inter-institutional relations within a specific national minority, as well as in the relations of this minority (as individuals belonging to the minority on the one hand and as a collectivity on the other hand) with its specific environment and all (other)

individuals and collective entities within this environment. In this context, we often pay special attention to the majority-minority relations; however, different types of minority-minority relations and their social relevance in a respective plural environment should also be studied considering the existence of diverse (e.g., national, linguistic, religious, cultural, gender etc.) minorities.

The spatial dimension of social phenomena refers to the physical (geographic and social) and symbolic (imagined, sometimes mythical) space in which a specific phenomenon exists and with which it is connected/interrelated. In the case of national minorities, the spatial dimension usually refers to the territory of a state as well as a specific society in which a respective minority lives. However, as is the case with this thematic issue of the Journal, in addition to individual states also broader territories and regions, such as the CEI area, as well as continents and the global international community might be considered – either as case studies or as comparative context(s).

Finally, every social phenomenon has its temporal dimension. Social phenomena as complex, dynamic and constantly changing processes evolve and transform over time. In other words, they are not simple, static, fixed and unchangeable; rather, as processes in time they are complex, internally diverse and externally distinguishable, dynamic and constantly changing (fluid, transforming). These changes can be gradual and evolutionary or sudden and abrupt, usually described as revolutionary ones. With regard to the existence and duration of social phenomena, symbolically, we could speak of their life cycles. In such life cycles of social phenomena as processes, we can determine the moment or period of their origin(beginning/birth), duration (existence/life) and end (death).<sup>7</sup> This applies also to different types of ethnic communities, including modern (ethnic) nations, national and linguistic minorities.

Of course, in addition to the three mentioned key dimensions that all natural and social phenomena possess (and share) they might and do have a number of additional dimensions and characteristics that determine them and should be taken into consideration when those phenomena are studied, described and defined.

In studying social phenomena such as national minorities, possibly overwhelmed by the complexity of those phenomena, broader social processes and networks of communication and relations<sup>8</sup> as well as environments,<sup>9</sup> we scholars tend to ignore or overlook one or more of the mentioned dimensions or at least certain segments of these dimensions. Frequently, this is true for the temporal dimension as a certain phenomenon is studied at one point (cross-section) in time or in a certain, relatively short period. This deficiency is conditioned also by the system and nature of (both public and private) research funding that usually does not fund and promote basic holistic long-term research in the social sciences and humanities. Rather, research funding (particularly funding from private sources, lately also public funding that builds upon the principles

and goals of short-term efficiency, economic rationality, measurable profit and immediate results) favours short-term and applied research. I believe that in the long run such a practice can have negative social consequences, particularly in the context of successful regulation and management of socially relevant diversities. Insufficient for quality, holistic research of complex social phenomena and oriented to the short-term, research funding might not be available at all for the studying of phenomena and topics that funding agencies do not see as important from their perspectives conditioned by the formal definition of their mission(s) and goals. The missions and goals of funding agencies and bodies (that determine systemic funding and calls for projects), as well as the amount of funding, are decided by research policies adopted by the responsible (political) authorities. Although authorities and funding agencies should be independent and their decisions should be informed, objective and should take in to account the broadest public interests, they are often dependent upon different centres of power and particularly those (f)actors that provide some funding. At least in some cases, we could say that authorities and public funding agencies are unable to detect and comprehend the longer-term social relevance of social phenomena and topics that need to be studied. In some cases, due to the existing balance of power, the lack of their power and very limited funding available, they might simply be unable to realise their independent views and policies. Consequently, the interests, values and ideologies of (private) funders and power centres, particularly their narrow short-term profit logic, might determine public research policies and funding, including the selection of funded projects within calls. In these cases, the actual (social) relevance of research, interests and needs of a certain society, as well as the quality of research project proposals, might be ignored or marginalised. Consequently, I would conclude that long(er)-term perspectives, historical development(s), the evolution and transformation(s) of certain relevant social phenomena, their dynamic nature, evolution and transformation, as well as their broader social impact(s) and consequences, have not been and are not studied adequately. Furthermore, the situation has been deteriorating in recent years, when public funding has become even scarcer.

Presenting and interpreting research results, including this introductory article and the case studies presented in this thematic issue of the Journal, we shall be aware that the concepts and definitions used to describe and define studied phenomena (as processes) and situations at given times are social constructs. The same is true for all definitions, concepts and theories – in the natural and social sciences, as well as in the humanities and technology. Terminology, definitions and measures (yardsticks), methods and approaches as well as theories are conventions built upon the consensus of scholars and practitioners. Ideally, particularly in natural sciences and technology (the so-called hard sciences) they should be tested by controlled experiments that can be repeated in controlled environments and conditions. In the social sciences and humanities, usually such

practice and controlled repeatable experiments is not possible. Additionally, as already mentioned, regardless of all attempts at objectivity, research approaches and methods, concepts, definitions, theories, the research process itself, as well as results and findings, particularly their interpretations are conditioned by values and ideology. Consequently, any generalisations based upon them might be problematic and shall be made cautiously.

### 3. Inclusion, Participation, Democracy and Political Participation of National Minorities

Being included as an individual and as a member of a group or community (as a specific collective entity), belonging to a group or community and being able to participate in the decision-making and (social) life in one's environment seem to be basic human needs. In many ways, these needs define us as individuals and as members of a certain collective entity. Being included feels good and, consequently, offers and strengthens the feeling of our personal/individual safety as well as security that, ideally, we can describe and realise as human security.<sup>10</sup>

The Jeffersonian definition of democracy as the rule of the people, by the people, for the people seems to be broadly accepted and reflects its etymological origins and historic development.<sup>11</sup> The majority of scholars and authors writing about democracy as well as the public agree that the origins and early development of (political) democracy are linked to Athenian democracy in antiquity. Although some developments relevant for the evolution and development of democracy happened in between, the past three centuries are considered crucial for the development and evolution of modern democracy. In this period, modern political thought and theory of democracy, the concept of constitutional democracies as well as democratic ideologies, programmes and politics developed that encouraged and were used by political movements and elites that pursued and brought about democratic reforms and revolutions in states that evolved and, particularly in the European context, transformed into constitutional democracies and nation-states. Simultaneously, the aspirations of the people as the citizens of constitutional democracies to participate in democratic political processes and decision-making in accordance with constitutions and law grew and strengthened. Because of their pressure and political struggles, in addition to male citizens of age, initially often required to have a permanent residence and property, new groups and strata of the population<sup>12</sup> were included in democratic political processes as the number and share of those entitled to participate increased. Although they had to fight their way into democratic citizenry, once formally included they became entitled to enjoy political rights, including the right to participate as well as all other (human) rights that a democratic system guaranteed. The evolution of modern political democracy transformed its nature and functioning, replacing or at least complementing the initial principle



and practice of simple majority rule by limited majority rule and the protection of minorities.<sup>13</sup> In my view, however, political democracy as a specific type of social and political organisation and participation of the citizens in decision-making in (nation)-states formally declared as constitutional democracies is just a certain segment and specific dimension of true democracy that needs to encompass all spheres, segments and dimensions of (social) life. Consequently, in addition to political democracy and political rights, true democracy requires also the existence of social, economic and industrial democracy, as well as actual and holistic implementation of all human rights and freedoms. In this context, we could say that human needs and desires to be included and participate in as well as to belong to a community that I consider the basic content of true democracy predated the emergence of states (even in the form of proto-states) and the introduction of political democracy. As such, human aspirations for democracy might be as old as humanity.

The transformation of (pre-modern) states and empires into modern nation-states determined as constitutional democracies, as well as the development and historic evolution of modern political democracy are central for the political participation of national minorities. National minorities as we know them today appeared when nation states emerged as a direct consequence of this transformation of states. When a state acquired its ethnic dimension<sup>14</sup> and became a national state of the respective titular (ethnic) nation that usually represented a majority of its population or, at least, a dominant ethnic group in it, those who ethnically did not belong to the titular nation became persons belonging to (i.e., members of) national minorities within the state. Initially, most nation states saw and treated them as problems and obstacles to desired national unity and ethnic homogeneity. Gradually, simultaneously with the development and evolution of political democracy and human rights, most states formally recognised their existence, while some also granted and guaranteed their (special) minority rights and protection. One of those minority rights is the right of persons belonging to national minorities to political participation, considered instrumental also for the implementation of other minority rights (Žagar 2002).

The case studies in this thematic issue, particularly the first one, discuss the theoretical framework and concepts of political participation of national minorities in specific states and in general. Avoiding unnecessary repetition, this section addresses just a few selected topics that are not discussed extensively in the following articles, but – in my view – determine a broader framework and might be useful for a better understanding and interpretation of the case studies.

For various reasons often addressed in the scholarly literature,<sup>15</sup> and particularly due to the reluctance of states to accept international standards that might impose new obligations on them, there is no universally accepted legal definition of national minorities. However, reflecting the complexity of the phenomenon and its interactions with respective environments and majorities

and other minorities there, we can find several different definitions of minorities in the scholarly literature that reflect specific interests, views and positions of authors as well as specific situations and broader contexts (Jackson-Preece 2014, Žagar 2002). Consequently, regardless of the existing international legal standards, it is largely the states that decide if and how they (are going to) define and treat their national minorities. In some states that recognise the existence of national minorities and grant them minority rights and protection, the national legislation determines the (official) definition of national, linguistic, cultural and/or ethnic minorities in their national legislation, while in other states that recognise and protect their national minorities this is not the case. In this context, the lack of the (official) legal definition might not be a problem, as it allows for faster evolution and development of minority protection if the countries and regimes are willing to provide the highest standards of minority rights and protection to their national and other minorities. It could even be an advantage for minorities if a certain regime is willing to grant these rights and protection to new minorities that might not satisfy all the criteria spelled out by the traditional definition, thereby improving their inclusion, integration, social and political participation.<sup>16</sup> However, in reality, particularly in times of crises when the situations, regimes and (public) opinion are not minority friendly and willing to improve the protection and status of minorities, the absence of the official definition might be a problem for minorities as it might result in lower (possibly, gradually decreasing) standards of minority protection.

In the absence of an universally accepted definition, most frequently the definition of national minorities of Francesco Capotorti is used by scholars, states, different institutions and international organisations as well as in expert discussions; this definition states that a national minority is

*/ ... / a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of the state – possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language (Capotorti 1977, 96, 1991, 98).<sup>17</sup>*

In discussions on the inclusion, integration and social and political participation of national minorities, considering particularly the right of the persons belonging to minorities to political participation, it is important to stress that, as collective entities, all majorities and minorities in contemporary societies are complex social phenomena. They are structured and complex, internally plural and diverse, non-homogeneous, dynamic and constantly evolving (social) processes that interact and interrelate with other social and natural phenomena in respective environments. Thereby, they are actors of the constant (re)shaping of their environments. Consequently, we could describe majorities

and minorities as complex coalitions of interacting and interdependent diverse (smaller) segments and structures with their specific life, characteristics, needs and interests. In this context, both majorities and minorities can be interpreted as dynamic and usually complex coalitions of diverse interconnected minorities. Internal pluralism and diversities, particularly different needs and interests that exist within every majority and minority in a certain environment, result also in the existence of political pluralism within those collective entities. In other words, majorities as well as minorities in contemporary plural societies are not homogenous and uniform. In more than twenty-five years my research into minorities, their cultural, social and political life, their cultural, social, economic and political organisation and activities in several European countries, but also in Africa, America, Asia and Australia, has confirmed that fact constantly. Although on average, there are just some 1 to 10 percent (seldom more) of persons belonging to minorities that are socially, culturally and politically active and (as activists) included in different (minority) associations, organisations, institutions and activities, I have detected internal pluralism and differences in every case I have studied. Consequently, I believe that internal homogeneity in the political or any other sphere of life should not be imposed on minorities – either by minority organisations, institutions, activists and political leaders within a respective minority, or by their broader environments (more precisely, by other minorities and majorities or organisations and institutions in the respective environments). Furthermore, I believe that a truly democratic environment should recognise the existence of internal pluralism and diversity within minorities and create adequate conditions for their (free) expression, which includes the context of political participation. In my view, imposed homogenisation is incompatible with democracy.

My research also confirms that any radicalisation in minority politics and policies (even with the intention of promoting and developing minority rights and improving the situation and position of certain minorities) might harm minorities<sup>18</sup> as it might result in radicalised and hostile discourse, reluctance, interference and problems in communication or even the break-down of communication, increased tensions and escalated conflict. Consequently, radicalisation frequently reduces tolerance and the willingness to include and integrate minorities and persons belonging to them, thereby negatively affecting their social and political participation in a certain environment.

Finally, in the form of a brief schematic overview, I present a theoretical model of (social and) political participation of (national) minorities that I developed for and use in my research of this phenomena. This model, used as a tool and yardstick, proved useful in various case studies of participation of minorities in individual environments, in my comparative research and in developing theory. In the model that serves as a checklist in researching political participation and representation of (national) minorities, I list some approaches to as well as

concepts, types and mechanisms of political participation of national minorities. This theoretical model evolves constantly, considering the specific topics, needs and interests of my research and is updated and supplemented. I am aware that each element of the model would deserve a special study and thorough elaboration, which would require another thematic issue or a monograph. At this point, it is just an attempt to systemise and classify presented approaches, concepts, types and mechanisms, thereby providing a possible tool for further exploration of the social and political participation of minorities in plural environments, but also for the understanding, analysis and interpretation of the following case studies.

### **(THEORETICAL) MODEL OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF (NATIONAL) MINORITIES AND PERSONS BELONGING TO THEM**

#### I. General approaches to political participation of (national) minorities:

- a. Formal participation: constitutionally and legally determined and guaranteed direct and indirect participation, including representation in legislative and executive branches of government at different levels and in public administration; formal basis and existence of consultative bodies and mechanisms<sup>19</sup>
- b. Informal participation: informal inclusion (usually based on specific policies, agreements and decisions) in political processes and decision making; lobbying  
Political parties, movements, organisations and associations:
  - Inclusion in mainstream political parties
  - Minority political parties
  - Other forms of social and political associations and organisations
  - Organised actions and movements
- c. (Neo)Corporatist approaches, arrangements, bodies, processes and mechanisms (particularly in the form of consultations and consultative bodies that include different relevant social and political actors, including trade unions that can influence decision-making)
- d. Consociative arrangements: elite power-sharing arrangements and systems, possibly legally regulated and/or informal
- e. Basic principles: human rights and democracy, equal rights, equality and justice, non-discrimination, limited majority rule, special rights and protection of minorities, inclusion and integration (policies)
- f. Specific systems and mechanisms of minority protection (at all levels), based upon the special rights of minorities

## II. Concepts, types and mechanisms of political participation of (national) minorities:

### a. Elections and electoral systems:

- Reserved minority seats – direct representation of minorities in legislative and representative bodies at different levels, usually representatives elected from special minority lists or in special minority electoral districts (possible also in the first-past-the-post systems)
- Special minority thresholds, possibly special quotas that ensure over-proportional representation of minorities
- Minimal quotas of minority representatives (possibly with the provision that they should be placed on the posts that allow for their election) on the lists of mainstream parties
- No formal special minority thresholds and quotas for the participation of minorities, but informal political agreement(s) or declaration(s) of (at least) some mainstream political parties that they will include a certain number or share of minority candidates on their electoral tickets/lists

### b. Political processes and parties:

- Inclusion and participation of minority politicians and representatives in mainstream political parties, determined by their statutes/constitutions, programmes or by specific arrangements or policies; in some cases those internal rules establish (minimal) quotas for national and other (e.g., gender, class, etc.) minorities
- Inter-party cooperation and consensus building on minority (related) issues
- Minority political parties and their participation in political life and processes, including elections

### c. Special procedures of decision making, including minority veto and obligatory or consultative opinions of minority institutions, organisations and/or representatives or joint consultative bodies, preferably determined and regulated by law to ensure the necessary stability or, at least, by political agreements

### d. Inclusion of minority representatives and elites in policy formulation and decision-making through various (Neo)Corporatist and Consociative arrangements and/or (formal and informal) bodies and institutions at all levels of government (from local to national), in different environments and in different contexts

### e. Affirmative action and other affirmative measures to promote inclusion and integration of minorities and persons belonging to them (sometimes described as actions and policies of positive discrimination)

### f. At least proportional, if possible over-proportional employment (quotas) of persons belonging to minorities in the public and private sectors, particularly among public/civil servants in state administration and public institutions

- g. Monitoring of the situation, position and status of minorities and persons belonging to them; internal and external mechanisms
- h. Autonomies – minority autonomy, particularly as diverse arrangements of self-rule and management at different levels (from local to national):
  - I. Formal and informal autonomies:
    - 1. Normative foundations and framework:
      - a. Constitutional
      - b. Legal
      - c. Political
      - d. Social consensus, usually informal (civic society, self-governing, etc. → fields, such as culture, sports, etc.)
    - 2. Extent and borders/limits of autonomy (geographic, functional)
    - 3. Content of autonomy (fields, powers, institutions, etc.)
  - II. Territorial autonomies:
    - 1. Federalism (always constitutional)
    - 2. Regionalism (constitutional and/or legal)
  - III. Non-territorial autonomies:
    - 1. Functional and personal autonomies (legal and/or political, possibly based upon (formal or informal) social consensus)
    - 2. Cultural autonomy (legal and/or political)

As mentioned, the presented theoretical model presents just a framework of reference, practical research tool and yardstick that, generally, can be used in research and interpretation of research results. Consequently, it could be useful also in interpretation, systemisation and classification of the results and findings presented by the following articles.

## 5. Conclusion

With the aim of introducing the following case studies on selected countries of the CEI area, this introductory contribution addresses just a few issues and general framework(s) related to the social and political participation of national and possibly also other minorities and persons belonging to those minorities in contemporary plural and diverse societies declared to be constitutional democracies. Discussing the social and political participation of minorities, in conclusion I would argue that its main goal and logic should be to promote, stimulate and enable voluntary, fair/just, equal and full social and political inclusion and integration of minorities and persons belonging to them. Their inclusion and integration, including their social and political participation, should be based upon principles of equal rights, equality, justice and solidarity, as well as human rights and freedoms and in this context (special) minority rights. In this process societies shall utilise and adequately combine all approa-

ches, procedures, tools, mechanisms and solutions of social, economic, cultural and political inclusion, integration and participation of minorities listed in the presented theoretical model, as well as those solutions that might exist in different environments. Among other things, these approaches, procedures, tools, mechanisms and solutions could include human rights, including minority rights and protection, all types and kinds of autonomy, inclusion and integration policies, programmes and actions, consultative (e.g. through consultative mechanisms and bodies) and representative presence and representation (e.g., through reserved seats, quotas, over-proportional representation) in decision making processes, etc.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The Special Statute of the London Memorandum of 1954 (officially titled the Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States and Yugoslavia Regarding The Free Territory of Trieste, Annex II. Special Statute) regulated the rights of national minorities in the former Free Territory of Trieste – namely of the Slovene minority in Italy (that recognized these rights only in the territory of the former Zone A) and of the Italian minority in Yugoslavia (Jeri 1975, 544–548).
- <sup>2</sup> See, e.g., information provided by the web-page National minority issues [OSCE].
- <sup>3</sup> Traite entre la Republique socialiste federative de Yugoslavie et la Republique Italienne/Treaty between Italy and Yugoslavia (UN Treaty No. 24848), for more on Osimo Treaty see, e.g., *Osimski sporazumi 1977*, 324–507.
- <sup>4</sup> The Republic of Italy recognized the Republic of Slovenia as the successor of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia with regard to the Treaty of Osimo (Drčar-Murko 1996).
- <sup>5</sup> In studying complex social phenomena and issues, disciplinary approaches and methodologies often prove to be inadequate. Consequently, new approaches and methodologies are being searched for and developed in social sciences that can be described as methodological pluralism. Reflecting the importance of this issue, one can find also a growing body of relevant scholarly literature (e.g., Della Porta & Keating 2008).
- <sup>6</sup> Discussions on the objectivity and subjectivity of research and particularly of social sciences have continued for several decades. Research methodologies and apparatus used strictly by researchers should contribute to the greater objectivity of research in the field of social sciences. However, as Gunnar Myrdall (1969) observes research, research results and particularly their interpretation in the social sciences and humanities, but also in other sciences, including natural sciences and disciplines are never value and ideology free.
- <sup>7</sup> The end of a specific social phenomenon can be and frequently is its transformation into another phenomenon or phenomena. In such cases, sometimes it might be difficult to determine the exact point of transformation (often this depends on the definitions and criteria used) and consequently it might be better to speak of a period of transition.
- <sup>8</sup> Referring to all diverse processes and networks with which respective phenomena or their specific segments and/or dimensions are interwoven and connected.
- <sup>9</sup> Including all micro and macro environments in which respective phenomena exist, with which they are related and on which they are dependent.
- <sup>10</sup> More on human security see e.g., *Human Security in Theory and Practice: An Overview of the Human Security Concept and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security* (UNTFHS 2009).

- <sup>11</sup> The term democracy derives from the ancient Greek word *demokratia*, composed of two root words, *demos* meaning the people and *kratein* meaning to rule. In ancient Athenian democracy, the term and concept referred to the (political) power of free male citizens that were formally politically equal, while all others were excluded. English (in the sixteenth century) and the majority of other (modern) European languages borrowed the French word *democratie* that, of course, derived from the ancient Greek root word (Held 2016).
- <sup>12</sup> Such as those citizens, economically weaker and without property, former slaves (following the abolition of slavery in respective states) and in the twentieth century women, following the successful fight of the suffragettes and women's movements for general and universal suffrage.
- <sup>13</sup> See e.g., Barber 1984, 1998, Beyme 2002, Bobbio, 1987, 1995, 2005, Butler et al. 2016, Dahl 1982, 1989, 1998, 2006, Held, 2000, 2016, Lijphart 1999, Lipset 1981, Sartori 1987, 2000, 2008, etc.
- <sup>14</sup> The ethnic dimension(s) of respective nation states, most frequently perceived as (ethnically homogenous) single nation states of titular nations, was determined by the introduction of official language and history, constituent myths of common origin and culture, etc.
- <sup>15</sup> For a brief overview, see e.g., Žagar (2002).
- <sup>16</sup> To show the relationship (and, consequently, hierarchy) between two key concepts, indicating that political participation is just a segment of broader social participation, in my research and for the purpose of this article, I decided to use this terminology also with regard to the participation of national minorities and persons belonging to them. In this context, the term social participation indicates (ideally, effective, full and equal) inclusion and participation of all individuals (individually and in cooperation with others) and distinct collective entities (collectively) in all spheres and segments of social life – understood as the life in and of a respective society. From this perspective, political life is just a segment of social life and political participation just a segment of social participation. The same applies to participation in economic, cultural and educational life, participation in all public and social services, particularly in public administration and in the structures and services of the welfare state (social life in a narrower sense, refereeing to social security and other aspects of human security) as well as participation in all spheres and structures of civic society. Consequently, the terminology regarding participation of minorities used in this article differs from the terminology most frequently used by official documents and scholars. They use the terminology of Advisory Committee on The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities Commentary on The Effective Participation of Persons Belonging to National Minorities in Cultural, Social and Economic Life and in Public Affairs (ACFC/31DOC(2008)001 – usually referred to as the ACFC (Thematic) Commentary No. 2). In my view, however, the effective individual participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs (i.e., political participation) does not include all the segments of social life indicated above.
- <sup>17</sup> This definition has been incorporated into some national minority legislation. In the CEI area we could mention Croatia and its Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities (13 December 2002), of which Article 5 reads:  
A national minority within the terms of this Law shall be considered a group of Croatian citizens whose members have been traditionally inhabiting the territory of the Republic of Croatia and whose ethnic, linguistic, cultural and/ or religious characteristics differ from the rest of the population, and who are motivated to preserve these characteristics.
- <sup>18</sup> See perceptions of some minority members of Serbian community in Bela krajina in Slovenia (Bešter et al. 2015, 188).
- <sup>19</sup> Such is Slovene case of the Roma municipal councilors (Bešter et al. 2017).