VALUE-BASED CONFLICTS IN THE REGION BETWEEN THE ODER AND THE DANUBE

MAPPING STUDY AND GOOD PRACTICES

EDITORS
Dušan Ondrušek
Boris Strečanský
Zuza Fialová

EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR NON-VIOLENCE AND DIALOGUE

PDCS

EDITORS: Dušan Ondrušek, Boris Strečanský, Zuza Fialová

This mapping study is a part of the programme titled **European Network for Non-Violence and Dialogue (ENND)**, which intends to seek non-violent approaches to current value-based conflicts. It helps the collecting and sharing of the information that diverse CSOs have learned about third-party interventions and of process-based tools for public debate in seven different countries: **Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Germany.** It aims to create a functional network that will become a counterbalance to the diverging direction of Central and Eastern Europe from the ideals and values that frame the project of a united Europe and a network of civil society organisations and individuals active in intervening in value-based conflicts and de-radicalisation with the purpose of learning from one another, collecting tested conflict intervention approaches, supporting one another's interventions and organising public campaigns promoting common goals and values.

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AUTHORS OF COUNTRY CHAPTERS:
Bulgaria: Daniela Kolarova
Czech Republic: Tatiana Dumbrava, Mariana Zbořilová, Michaela Stejskalová
Germany: Tina Heise, Oliver Kossack, Anika Posselius
Hungary: Júlia Vida, János Wagner, József Rostás
Poland: Marcin Ślarzyński, Maciej Tański
Romania: Anda Totoreanu
Slovakia: Zuza Fialová

RESEARCHERS AND CONTRIBUTORS: Elmira Nesheva, Eva Viorela Sfarlea, Andrei Trubceac, Janek Lassau, Katarína Bajzíková, Lukáš Zorád, Juraj Havlík, Jiří Chovaneček, Johana Kollárová, Alžbeta Micsinaiová

REVIEWERS:
Erik Láštic – Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University Bratislava
Bartek Pytlas – Geschwister-Scholl-Institut für Politikwissenschaft, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
Boris Strečanský – Center for Philanthropy, Bratislava

STUDY COORDINATOR: Katarína Bajzíková
GRAPHIC DESIGN & LAYOUT: Zuzana Číčelová
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Introduction

1. New emerging challenges, old dividing lines

In the last quarter of a century we have been witnessing the fascinating experiment of the transformation process of the post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) from totalitarianism to liberal democracy. This offers a considerable amount of knowledge about the global social dynamics of the development of social conflict. This transformation is not unilateral or unidirectional and it has not been easy at all. However, the general outcomes are positive. With the exception of the former Yugoslavia, we have not experienced civil war in the CEE countries during the last 25 years, a market economy is taking root and the prevailing measures of life expectancy and quality of life are generally improving. Of course, the price for this move is high and the positive consequences of these societal changes are not distributed equally among all generations, all strata of the involved societies and all sub-regions in this territory. We are also learning important lessons about the transformation dynamics of whole societies from the perspectives of conflict resolution and conflict transformation.

The character of the conflicts in this region is changing as well as the strategies to cope with the new emerging challenges that are rooted in the old dividing lines of our societies.

In the starting phases of this large transformation process, Czech philosopher Václav Bělohradský (1992) perceived societal conflicts in the context of striving for democracy in three directions:

1. Insuppressible conflict between *legitimacy* and *legality*. Simplistically, this is about the conflict between obligation of the law for all citizens and the necessity to create such mechanisms for participation in political decisions, which minimise the risk that decisions which are obligatory for everyone may harm the interests of individuals.
2. Conflict between *rationality* and *reasonableness*, whilst 'rationality is to use every means which effectively helps us to reach our goals. Our goals are reasonable if they stand a chance of competing in the market of ideas where people criticise everything.' (Bělohradský, V., 1992, p. 571) Reasonableness means seeking solutions which consider the partners in the changes as well. That is why reasonableness often happens to be in conflict with rationality – this means searching for ideally correct solutions. The conflict between rationality and reasonableness can, in the most extreme state, also manifest in the fact that through very rational procedures we can obtain very unreasonable results.
3. Conflict between *government* and *opposition.* An approach which is derived only from an emphasis on legality (and does not consider legitimacy) and on an approach which aids only rationality (even at the expense of reasonableness) leads to the worsening of the conflict between government and the opposition. Such a unilateral approach leads to the polarisation and fragmentation of society and sooner or later to the escalation of the conflict. Bělohradský sees the process of democracy as a positive solution to these conflicts. The development of democracy is the development of the legitimacy of the laws and the reasonableness of the individuals. Reasonableness asserts itself through the ability to assimilate the knowledge that several 'truths' can remain together without the claim for only one correct explanation of reality, for one rational truth. More important than this truth is the continuous process of dialogue. The ability to translate ideas into an 'inter-language' means to be prepared to give those ideas up for criticism and be able to listen to the ideas of others.

The conflict between the government and the opposition in a democratic society does not endanger the functioning of this society. Despite conflicts, the stability of the society is secured by mutually shared rules of the fight for political power. Bělohradský supposes that the leading forces in society would be able to cultivate an understanding of the development of society and a more democratic view of ways to deal with obstacles in the conflict of two or more parties.

The post-communist countries started the process of democratisation and developing open societies by stressing the institutional architecture of building democratic institutions (parliaments, electoral bodies, governing structures, courts, transparent processes of local and national institutions) and other key principles of democracy such as a free media, rule of law and civil society. This was a necessary base for institutional mechanisms to cope with diverse interests. The other important part of major social change is linked to developing

and cultivating the democratic culture (archiving societal memory institutions, education for citizenship and democratic culture, reflecting the values of freedom, minority rights and democracy.) In this 'democratic culture area' there is still a great deal to be done. The words of T.G. Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia, 'Now that we have a democracy, what we also need are democrats' still hold true (Pehe, 2014).

The missing capacity for a democratic culture is visible in the destructive nature of everyday clashes of diverse interests. These interests are backed up by non-negotiable moral values and beliefs that are believed to be mutually exclusive and each claim superiority over the other, regardless of whether these are essentialist values of moral systems based on divinity or human rights or procedural values of dialogue and deliberation. The fear that one side would override the other through the force of the state power increases this tension and feeds distrust. The possibility of the existence of a slight overlap between conflicting values or the necessity of value coexistence is pushed back.

The changed environment that influences the character of a new conflict is connected with increased fragmentation in society, dramatic polarisation, a transformed way of public discourse that has moved to social networks and social media and new formulation of the dividing lines when describing and understanding our own value identities.

1.1. Fragmentation

We live in an age of fragmentation. People have the tendency to remain in their own closed communities and groupings and to avoid contact and communication with other people of different opinions, values, needs. Without intensive bidirectional communication every day we are creating invisible communication 'bubbles' that filter the information that does not support our perspectives; this is the basis for developing prejudices and stereotypes and creating greater distance between interest groups. This is one of the core challenges of our times. John Paul Lederach (Lederach, 2016) observes that our fragmentation breeds dehumanisation. The powerful dynamics of social fragmentation suggest we have not adequately engaged the qualities we must nurture to catalyse leadership for re-humanisation. Societal fragmentation may also be explained as the result of the pressures of modernity (Bauman, 2000)

1.2. Polarisation

Recent years of public discourse in the region of Central Europe have been characterised by speedy polarisation either whilst issues and positions are formulated or right after this happens. The social forces that invade our language and our responses fall into the false binary of 'us' against 'them'. The polarisation of our common discussion and polarisation in expressing our own attitudes is often created by the cascading process of forming opinions when we relate not as much to the facts as to objective points of interest; rather we are influenced by the opinions of our group opinion partners. 'As polarisation escalates we can find ourselves retrenching to the safety of conversations only with those who agree with us, and too easily falling prey to the patterns of blame, defensiveness, and reactivity. We need to take one step back and imagine our common web of relationships and mobilise the concern for the wider common good, and stand for and with our shared humanity beyond the borders and boundaries of whatever our divided identities.' (Lederach, 2016, p.1).

1.3. Dialogue degrading because of social networks and social media

Moving the channels of interaction from traditional face-to-face dialogue and traditional media usage to online discussions, more asynchronic interaction using virtual space has changed the character of public dialogue dramatically. Social media sites have democratised the media landscape, allowing anyone to create and distribute content to their friends and family. This has brought a great many advantages in increased speed and scope of the possible actors involved but at the same time it has a visibly serious downside: Without the quality filters traditionally supplied by mainstream media outlets, there is much more room for total nonsense to circulate widely. The increasing polarisation of news through social media allows the creation of parallel non-communicating worlds and enables large opinion groups to live in different versions of reality. This is making it harder and harder to sustain the open exchange of information and opinions that is a critical condition for a democratic system to function.

Too often we are witnessing the phenomenon that is called *'scienceploitation'* (a term created by Tim Caufield) to describe the situation happening more and more frequently when social media reporting takes a legitimate

area of science and inaccurately simplifies it for the general public (Groshe, Bronda, 2016). In the world of online discussions we are observing the so-called *'online disinhibition effect'* (labelled by John Suler) – posting to strangers, anonymously, semi-anonymously, or with pseudo accounts factored in. 'Commenters that aren't face to face with each other and are able to dissociate from the fact they're dealing with other human beings. Altogether this forms a rationale for why users tend to become uncivil and aggressively defend content that may not even be accurate.' (Groshek, Bronda, 2016, p.1). Sometimes there are tendencies to explain the changes in society and to speak about a 'post-truth' or 'post-factual' society. A large part of these phenomena may be understood by analysing the changed methods of public discourse that result from a reliance on social networks and social media.

2. Methodology of conflict mapping

This study is a part of the European Network for Non-Violence and Dialogue (ENND) project, which, as its title states, is mostly a networking and activist initiative aimed at linking successful initiatives mitigating conflicts and promoting dialogue in European societies. Accordingly, the present study is mapping the value conflicts in seven EU countries, focussing mostly on the possible actions of civil society actors to deal with these conflicts in a peaceful way. It does not aspire to be an in-depth scientific analysis on all value-based conflicts present in the region, but rather to perform extensive mapping of value-based conflicts in selected countries, their reasons, the parties involved and possible future scenarios drafted. Its purpose is to create an information basis on future actions of the civic actors' network.

The seven countries described in this mapping study are united by a common post-communist heritage (in the case of Germany this is only true for part of the country) so the political culture is influenced by a similar experiential and educational background. Of course, each of these countries is unique and the development after the changes of the authoritarian regimes has followed specific paths. In some countries the Roma minority and the Roma/non-Roma relationships have played an important role as a part of the public discourse in clarifying democratic ways of coping with minorities; in some countries the LGBT minority have served as a point of public interest. We insisted that the mapping study in each observed country would be written by local analysts. They might have a deeper understanding, though a rather emotionally committed view in these analyses. Nevertheless, we consider these perspectives as of crucial importance. The selection of the observed phenomena and the depth of the analysis are slightly different in the individual chapters describing specific countries and regions. That is why real understanding and interpretation of the described phenomena is possible only in the broader perspective of the whole region.

2.1. Value-based conflicts subjected to mapping

To deal with the polarisation of society, we worked according to the premise that there are value-based conflicts we should focus on, since these are the conflicts that are dividing societies, communities or even families, causing emotional discussions 'by the Sunday dinner table'. In defining a value-based conflict we used the concept of Christopher W. Moore (Moore, 1996) on the distinction between types of conflicts according to their main source:

- Conflict of relations: People personally dislike or hate each other, their behaviour provokes a conflict;
- Conflict of information: Different sources of information are used by the parties, incomplete or invalid information is used, difference in interpretation of the same information;
- Conflict of interests: The parties want to satisfy their needs, the resources they are competing for are scarce;
- Conflict of structure: An institution does not fit the tasks it must fulfil, an organisation is causing internal misunderstandings and conflicts since there is no clear and fair distribution of power or competences;
- **Conflict of values: Opposite, or seemingly opposite values are promoted, and presented as excluding each other.** These values must, obviously, not be verbalised (e.g. authoritarian vs. liberal society; national identity vs. multiculturalism, individual rights vs. common good for community).

Power issues in value-based conflicts

A long time ago peace activist Gene Sharp (1973) provided a broad list of sources of power. These sources included: authority (the right to give directives); human resources (the amount of people who support and assist the leader); skills/knowledge/talents; the presence or absence of a common faith, ideology or sense of mission;

and last but not least, sanctions or reprisals which the leader is both willing and able to use against her/his own constituency and/or an adversary. Power was described mostly as the potential for coercion.

When we use the term 'power' in the context of conflict resolution and societal changes we still frequently use the term as 'coercive power to accomplish our own goals'. But repeated experience shows that coercive power does not work over the long term. It creates enemies and provokes never-ending cycles of revenge and vengeance. Exchange and integrative power are much safer and in many ways, more effective forms of power.

When we speak about value-based conflicts we need to analyse the role of power in the sense of moral, political and economic power. We need to address asymmetries and injustices in conflict situations. For example, recommended good practice focusses on work with disempowered parties to introduce nonviolent action strategies and foster local peace movements. Social justice and peacebuilding are also promoted through institutional, legislative and policy change as well as influencing or changing the leadership or power elite. Because they often create change through processes of confrontation and conflict enhancement, however, these strategies are used more circumspectly for certain conflict stages or conditions.

As Marie Dugan (2003) states 'the parties must rebuild their integrative power, their capacity to live together, to be a community. Unfortunately, the individual desire for revenge tends to be mirrored in national and international policy in responding to terrorism and to ethnic cleansing. We tend to respond with the stick, sometimes carrots, but almost never the hug. The renewal of civil community requires the catalyst of empathy. If we seek to quell modern warfare, be it gang warfare, terrorism, or ethnic cleansing, we need to commit ourselves to helping fragmented communities build their own integrative power.'

In this study we focus on mapping **real-life conflicts** (of power, interests, institutions, etc.) **that are fuelled by differing values**. Sometimes value-based conflicts may be manifested as structural conflicts (e.g. conflicts between the majority and the minority over legislation anchoring i.e. typically expanding rights of minorities) or information conflict (conspiracy vs. mainstream information), but in their source there are incompatible (or seemingly incompatible) values, beliefs and world views. The next criteria for selection of the most relevant conflicts in each country were:

a. Conflicts have a **potential for escalation**: Large groups of people agree to protest (even peacefully) on the streets, petitions are organised, referendums planned, court trials monitored by the media, cases of violence are present (even in non-physical form). Conflict parties do not communicate directly, opinions are polarised, opinion camps become isolated from each other;

b. They are of **national importance**, though some of their manifestations or peace activities described may be of local character;

c. Conflicts that are **not solvable by simply changing policy** or adding more public resources;

d. Topics that are **used in pre-election campaigns** by politicians of various profiles.

2.2. Conflict descriptions

The conflict descriptions were prepared in each country following the schemes that are provided in literature on conflict analysis. Each conflict has a short summary explaining the reason why it was selected. In the conflict timeline, crucial events were mentioned, covering the years 2015 and 2016 that influenced the character of the conflict.

An important part is represented by the description of the actors in these conflict, their interests (what they really want), positions (what they say they want), and eventually worries (what they try to prevent). The relations among the actors are also explained. The actors are divided into three categories:

- **Primary actors:** They are directly involved in the conflict and have a direct interest in the conflict, they are the parties to the conflict;
- **Secondary actors:** Not actual parties to the conflict but they have a high degree of interest in and influence over it, often due to their proximity;
- **Tertiary actors**: They are other parties with interests in and influence over events, including regional and global players, who can play a significant role in conflict resolution and therefore need to be considered in the analysis. They are actors usually not taking any party's side and they may be involved in the conflict involuntarily, which is why the conflict matters to them. They bear its consequences.

Special interest has been devoted to **civic actors that may play a positive role in conflicts:** active individuals, organisations – CSOs, informal groups, online initiatives, academics and other professionals, journalists/media, business (if relevant), religious leaders, and in some cases also local governments (in the event that they present a local and genuine peace approach). We were looking for civic actors and civic projects, initiatives, approaches that work in conflict resolution, releasing tensions, setting up dialogue, de-escalation of conflicts, reconciliation and mobilising activities promoting tolerance and mutual respect.

Other parameters included in the conflict analysis were the dynamics of the conflict (whether it is in its escalation phase or a latent phase), the reasons and sources of the conflict (deep structural reasons, as well as starters), conflict background (economic, social, political or historical) and possible future scenarios and trends as to how the conflict may develop in the near future.

2.3. Time period covered by mapping

The mapping study is covering especially conflicts that manifested in the society in public discourse or in the form of petitions, rallies and referendums in 2015 and 2016. When describing the chronology of a conflict or its background, sometimes there are references to the past. Civic activities (interventions) became a subject of mapping if they took place in 2016. We are aware that a timeline grows old very fast and that each of the described value-based conflict is continuously developed further.

2.4. Sources and methods of collecting information

In the first phase, national mapping teams were asked to conduct media monitoring, which enabled them to see which events gained public resonance in the respective time period. To cover various opinion groups of the society, they monitored at least two mainstream media portals with different profiles and audiences (e.g. one liberal and one socialist), as well as two 'alternative' portals. 'Alternative media' were defined as media not using traditional sources of information, promoting conspiracy theories often mixing facts and manipulation, presenting extremist thoughts on the boundary of legal acceptance, and all whilst pretending (in their form, layout, style) to be standard media. These four basic media monitoring techniques were later supplemented by other media resources. This served as a mirror of opinions, reflections and thoughts that resonated in the society in the respective time period.

Another important source of information was the secondary analysis of survey reports of respectable national (public and private) research institutions and think tanks. All relevant national publications not older than 2010 were subject to analysis. They provided sources of scientific data, as well as more in-depth information on sources of conflicts, the background, and prospects for the future. When possible we try to interpret the country's situation in the framework of a comparative perspective, using the same sources of data that exist for a particular conflict area.

In the second phase, a series of interviews with experts and influential persons in the capitals, but mostly in the regions, took place. About 15–20 people were interviewed in each country, e.g. young activists, bloggers, YouTubers, persons from the sphere of culture who are socially active, representatives of various activists groups from regions, representatives of new social movements, experts, as well as some sympathisers of extremist or radical groups (if relevant) etc. Several focus groups were organised in each country to collect more information on conflicts and current approaches.

Drafts of conflict analyses were reviewed peer-to-peer among the countries and the methods of work were continually discussed.

3. Common value conflicts and their parameters

In spite of the differences between our countries, there were more common value-based conflicts than we had expected. Moreover, many of the monitored conflicts have similar parameters as for the background and sources of the conflicts. Thematically, most of the conflicts can be divided into five categories[1]:

- **Conflicts related to the so-called 'migration crisis'** of 2014—2015. This was identified by the mapping teams in all seven countries as one of the crucial value-based conflicts, regardless of whether the country

1 The original national mapping studies were shortened when edited. Most of them have analysed more conflicts. This section refers to the original number of value-based conflicts identified in each country.

in question was confronted with real migrants or not. The conflict appeared in four dimensions: cultural openness vs. closeness, economic burden vs. economic benefit, securitisation of migration and last but not least, state sovereignty vs. EU solidarity.

- The other strongly represented group of conflicts (in all seven countries) are **conflicts related to the position of LGBT minorities, gender issues, the position of women in society, abortion and domestic violence**. Here the axis revolves around the conservative position of the 'traditional family' and the liberal approach to human rights, non-discrimination, equality and the empowerment of women.
- **Conflicts related to ethnic and religious minorities** who have been living in our countries for decades or ages. In Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and the Czech Republic there is a Roma minority; in Poland it is a Ukrainian minority; in Bulgaria there are also the native Muslim ethnic groups. Negative attitudes towards these minorities point to the problem of interethnic tolerance and to the ethnocentric definition of a 'nation'. However, when taking a closer look, in most countries these conflicts have a dimension of deserving vs. undeserving which can also be interpreted as a conflict between communal values of solidarity and individualistic values of individual responsibility for one's own life. The issue is how the nation will share the resources and who deserves support from the state. Additionally, in some cases, some of the minorities (such as the Roma in Slovakia or Bulgaria) have an underclass or undeserving status.
- **Conflicts related to the environment and economic development** (Germany, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czech Republic): They are not only discussing the value of nature preservation for future generations vs. economic prosperity for the present, but more subtle questions of to whom the public space belongs, what the proper development should look like and how the benefits of development should be distributed.
- Other conflicts mentioned were related to the **increase of extremism** (Slovakia), **post-truth society** (Germany), **geopolitical issues** on cultural and security references (Slovakia, Bulgaria), **the character of democracy** (Poland), and the values that the education system of the country should represent (Poland).

3.1. Migration crisis

This conflict was identified by all seven countries as one of the most striking, regardless of whether the country has to deal with migrants at present (Germany, Bulgaria), has had to deal with them in recent years during the 'migration crisis' (Hungary, Romania), or it is a country almost untouched by migrants (Slovakia, Poland, Czech Republic). In the countries studied, only Germany can be considered as a target country. Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary can be defined as transit countries whilst Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland can be described as countries only very slightly affected by the Middle East migration. As is shown clearly below, the conflict manifests strongly regardless of the group of countries is concerned. In 2017 the conflict is no longer at its highest escalation phase; however it can be expected that it may again become hot easily as it is 'kept warm' by politicians and certain media.

'The conflict concerns the issue of how German society is defined, especially who is included and who is excluded. There are three dimensions of the issue that are currently the most salient and shall be described in more detail below: 1) the right to asylum and the humanitarian responsibility of Germany vis-à-vis asylum seekers, 2) the conflict between those who define German society as an ethnic and cultural construct and legitimise the exclusion resulting from this view, and those who view immigration and diversity in society rather positively, and 3) the securitisation of immigration.' (Germany)

'Most of the asylum seekers only applied for asylum in Hungary for formal reasons and then moved on to Western European countries, especially Germany. … those few hundred who received protected status in Hungary and then stayed in the country receive no support from the state, since all integration benefits and services were abolished in June 2016. Due to this fact and the Hungarian government's effective measures in diverting masses of refugees away from the border, in 2016 the integration of refugees/migrants is not a real problem in Hungary. Nevertheless, this is still a hot conflict.' (Hungary)

'Escalation of the conflict occurs often as conditions in refugee camps worsen and communities rise up against what they perceive as threats to their security, whilst political entities aim to stir the conflict further without providing much in the way of viable solutions.' (Bulgaria)

'The conflict over the admission of refugees from Asia and Africa into Poland is peculiar. It does not take place as a reaction to the presence of peoples representing different cultures and ethnicities – there are very

few refugees in Poland. One can, therefore, say that the discussion about refugees takes place in Poland without the refugees themselves.' (Poland)

'The social discourse on the so-called "migration crisis" has disclosed a value conflict in Slovak society that was manifested in several perspectives. The most visible was the contradiction between the humanitarian and solidarity approach towards the refugees on one side and the strict rejection of any kind of migrants and assistance to them on the other side. The second perspective was the question of European solidarity vs. the sovereignty of Slovakia in deciding on the acceptance of refugees or migrants. The third conflict we can identify here is on the character of Slovak society in future, whether it will be open and multicultural, or an ethnic and religiously homogeneous society (ignoring or denying the existing diversity we already have).' (Slovakia)

Exploitation of the conflict by extremists. The migration crisis was used by extremist, neo-Nazi and anti-systemic groups that consciously spread fear, xenophobia, anti-Islam and anti-European moods among the people.

'During 2014 and 2015 anti-Islam protests were organised almost daily by the initiative's (We Don't Want Islam in the Czech Republic) supporters in major cities, which demonstrated the substantial mobilisation potential of the initiative. … This new phenomenon of masked extremism proves that the negative discourse against Islam and Muslims has become a neutral and common means of expression across society, without being perceived as "extremist" or connected to the extreme right wing.' (Czech Republic)

'The choice of factors allowing for labelling Europe as "decadent" shows the set of values important for this segment of society: faith in God (but only the Christian God), a strong preference for heterosexuality as a sign of health, aversion to individualism, idealisation of the past, strong attachment to blood bonds and the rivalry of cultures.' (Poland)

'This is also a minority vs. majority type of conflict, with the twist that the minority are barely even present. As there is a lack of actual contact with the object of prejudice, people's fears concerning the unknown and the different are stronger and much more easily manipulated and fomented.' (Hungary)

'The two polar oppositions regarding this conflict are those who view (German) society as an inclusive and pluralistic community, often referring to the fact that its members are committed to mutual respect as well as respect for human and constitutional rights. The opposite pole banks on the image (or claim) of a homogeneous, exclusive society based on common (often undefined "Judeo-Christian") traditions and German ethnicity.' (Germany)

'There is also an information conflict related to this issue. For example, there is misinformation that all migrants are Muslim or that they are illegal immigrants. However, there is also a long history of collaboration between Muslims and Romanians, but the media fuel fear. The media very rarely mention the many cases of mixed marriages between Romanians and citizens from Middle Eastern countries, or the well-integrated communities of Muslims, especially from the southeast region (Dobrogea) of Romania and in the capital, Bucharest.' (Romania)

Securitisation of the migration issue was mentioned in all countries. In most of them, the governments or other political forces were capitalising on the fears of people by positioning themselves as 'saviours' in elections or referendum campaigns.

'The rhetoric of the Minister of the Interior focussed from the very beginning on securitisation, even though the Czech Republic was not and is not the target country of asylum seekers in most of the cases.' (Czech Republic)

'This group perceives refugees mainly as a threat: there can be terrorists among the incoming groups, who have been sent by, for example the Islamic State. There is also the threat that they will not respect the laws and customs commonly accepted in Poland and create chaos. Refugees are perceived as dangerous to the public moral order because some of them (the number usually is magnified to "all" or the "majority") do not know how to behave in a Western country, especially in the context of sexual behavior.' (Poland)

'The extradition of suspected foreign fighters has raised the country's counterterrorism profile. In response to the perceived increase of threats, the government has worked to enhance its prevention and enforcement tools, including the criminalisation of foreign fighters and developing a new counterterrorism strategy for countering violent radicalisation and terrorism that is awaiting approval by the Council of Ministers after having been posted for public comment in November 2016." (Bulgaria)

'The most vulnerable groups are refugees originating from Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Because of the history of the war, the general public perception is that they will have a negative attitude towards the

West. The manifestations of this conflict can be seen through the mosque incident in Bucharest, as well as the backlash against the building of two refugee centres in Satu Mare.' (Romania)

'Most voices usually connect terrorism only to Islamism, whereas terrorist attacks from the extreme right are often not viewed as terrorist acts – the NSU case being one of a very few counter-examples. It is quite striking, though, that those who advocated securitisation after an Islamist terrorist attack were much less vocal after the NSU killings, and even more so in reaction to the abundant attacks against refugees and their (future) homes. This ethnic and religious framing of terrorism, then, is used to fuel racism and promote the exclusion of immigrants and asylum seekers/refugees, particularly those who are (perceived to be) Muslims, since they are collectively suspected to be (potential) terrorists.' (Germany)

'They (the government) claim that their interests coincide with that of the majority of the population as keeping the refugees/migrants out of the country will keep us safe. However, it is more likely that the government's interest is to create an enemy which it can then "defend" us against. Due to the government's behaviour xenophobia and hate speech against refugees has become much more acceptable.' (Hungary)

'Several months before the elections in Slovakia, a country practically untouched by the refugee crisis, an atmosphere of anxiety concerning refugees is created. There is a strong feeling of threat combined with the hope that refugees will not come and resolute resistance towards accepting refugees and providing aid to them. The attitudes of the public are inclining towards refusing EU policies and supporting the policies of the Slovak government.' (Slovakia)

Deserving vs. undeserving. The conflict was also discussed in economic terms, where it touches on the solidarity value as well as questions on who can benefit from social welfare; who deserves assistance; and whether Europe can benefit from migration.

'Another argument often used by the opponents is that only some of the people coming to Europe are refugees escaping from a war zone. Others are economic migrants whose goal is to enter the European Union illegally and collect social benefits without contributing to the welfare of the society.' (Poland)

'The government has already suffered heavy criticism for failing to combat poverty and adopt policies that can improve the living standard of a large part of the population living below the poverty line. The presence of poorly educated foreign groups detained on their way to Western Europe and kept against their will increases the public apprehension about security, social, economic, health and safety risks.' (Bulgaria)

'These actors also argue frequently that immigration should also be opposed due to the fact that it is a burden on the social and welfare systems and that these should benefit "Germans" first. Thus, they combine the issue with more economic values, such as (in-)equality and wealth.' (Germany)

An interesting point is the difference in the perception of migration between the Western and Eastern parts of Germany:

'Despite the small percentage (1 to 2 per cent) of people with an "immigration background" in Eastern Germany, the conflict and potential for violence have become especially strong there. Here, various factors such as a feeling of neglect by Western Germany in the aftermath of reunification, generally weaker economic development and worse employment conditions, could be argued as some additional causes of racism, xenophobia and violence – alongside specific personal factors, such as chronic stress and violence/denigration in the family, ideological dispositions towards group hatred and violent extremism and transgenerational continuities of the family in historic fascism and authoritarianism. The low percentage of immigrants and more widespread right-wing radicalism and extremism might also be the reason why immigrants have rarely moved to the east, especially to small towns and rural areas, which again has added to the recent increase of the majority population's feeling of being overwhelmed by the arriving refugees.' (Germany)

In all countries except Germany, the migration issue has a strong anti-EU undertone nurtured by many national politicians standing against the 'EU dictate' on accepting refugees, yet at the same time criticising the inability of EU to deal with the problem effectively.

'The other side of the conflict underlines the importance of sovereign decisions (migrant quotas would, therefore, be enforced by external powers against Poles' will)…' (Poland)

'The refugee crisis disclosed the strong potential for anti-Europeanism among the Slovak population. Emotional reactions were provoked especially by the decision of the EU Council to redistribute refugees. The President and some of the elites appealed for solidarity within the EU, and the international responsibility of Slovakia.

These arguments proved to be very minor… The most common was the traditional picture of Slovakia as a small country, not responsible for the wars in Africa (which is not true, given the facts of the Slovak arms trade) and thus not obliged to take any responsibility for "the crisis"… Moreover, solidarity has turned into a commodity. The discussion turned on weighing the economic costs of rejecting refugees and risking a decrease of the structural funds from the EU for our cities.'.. (Slovakia)

Last but not least, several reports stressed the effort of various civil society actors to help in humanitarian needs as well as with the integration of migrants.

'Even though the opponents of Islam have a loud presence in media and social networks, there have been many citizens, initiatives, organisations and institutions showing support to Muslims since the "refugee crisis".' (Czech Republic)

'On one hand, people have provided 'first aid' for refugees and asylum seekers and assisted the often completely overwhelmed public administration. Some have also launched political advocacy to ameliorate asylum seekers' and refugees' conditions. In fact, civil society created the Willkommenskultur ("culture of welcoming") that Chancellor Merkel later reclaimed for her politics whilst at the same time smoothing over the initial lack of capability of the administration.' (Germany)

3.2. Rights of LGBT people, gender philosophy, family models, abortion, position of women in society

This group of conflicts was mentioned in all seven countries. There were 7 conflicts related to LGBT minorities as such (some of them included gender issues as well, e.g. Germany), and another 4 conflicts related to women, gender, abortion and domestic violence separately from the LGBT issue (Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Poland). All these conflicts have a great deal in common, since they deal with the vision of family model and the role model for its members. In all of them the churches are involved and religious beliefs affected. Some of them experienced an escalation phase during the monitoring period and all of them are suspected to be potentially hot at any time in the future.

'The new so-called 'Western' ideas about feminism and the roles of men and women in society being fluid seem to be in direct clash with the 'traditional' family roles mostly proclaimed in Romanian society by right-wing Christian NGOs. These groups argue that Eastern Europe is the true Europe, because the people have not abandoned the 'traditional' roles that are 'natural'. These so-called 'traditional' values are: anti-gay, anti-abortion and pro-abstinence. In addition, they are firmly against sex education in schools.' (Romania)

'Conservative Christian, right-wing populist, and radical circles and journalists have picked up the issue in a propagandistic manner and adamantly rejected the very idea of gender equality in established newspapers and magazines – thus heading for a backlash of already achieved consent on issues of employment and towards equal pay for equal work. Their main lines of argumentation interpret gender mainstreaming as an ideology and as a project of "unnatural" re-education of the population by liberal forces without any democratic legitimisation. Furthermore, it is argued, with a slant towards conspiracy theories, that the claims of gender mainstreaming lack any scientific basis and really are a political agenda aiming to destroy traditional "masculinity" and "femininity" and the traditional family as such. The general rejection of the concept of gender mainstreaming is usually accompanied by a strong rejection of homosexuality and gender diversity more broadly.' (Germany)

'The values at play here can be described in a few ways. On a general level there is a conflict between the traditional Catholic values applied to specific social institutions (procreation as the fundamental purpose of marriage) and a stance according to which society should incorporate in its institutional arrangements the postulates of minorities. Homosexuality is described in the narrative pertaining to the group supporting the latter point of view as a deviation which should not be spread by the introduction of laws that would sanction its validity through official legal recognition. This could threaten the traditional model of te family and the concept of marriage as the union of a man and a woman.' (Poland)

What resonated in almost all the countries was that members of a camp of 'conservatives' or those opposing the rights of LGBT people and gender equality are more often aggressive, using hate speech, conspiracy theories (this issue is being exploited by far-right extremists), and even violence (in the case of extremist groups). Sometimes it is question of 'hurt feelings', but in some cases there are real violations of the rights of these groups.

'On the part of gender critics, simplifications, polemics and hate speech have become features of the discussion culture. By labelling gender mainstreaming as an "ideology" gender critics use the issue on one hand to prove more generally that the EU, the Green Party, feminists, gays and trans people are attempting to destroy the traditional family and that they threaten traditional society ("Volksgemeinschaft").' (Germany)

'The resulting conflict has been marked by clashes, hate crimes, discrimination and a multitude of other physical and non-physical acts of intolerance… LGBT people in Bulgaria face violence and inequality – and sometimes execution – because of how they look or who they are.' (Bulgaria)

'The level of emotions and animosity is considerably higher on the side of the anti-LGBT movement, which is due also to some overlapping of this group with ultra-nationalist and extremist political forces. The anti-LGBT movement also includes political parties that claim to be mainstream … In their rhetoric, they intentionally mix the rights of LGBT people with sexual deviations and illnesses (paedophilia, sexual mania etc.). People defending the rights of the LGBT community are labelled as "gender ideologists" or followers of a "culture of death". Anti-LGBT efforts are accompanied by struggles against abortion and defence of life starting at the moment of conception.' (Slovakia)

In many countries the issues around LGBT and gender have a high mobilising potential, which is used by 'conservatives' more often. Attempts to change the law restricting or not advancing the rights of LGBT people and/or women are frequent across our countries.

'One particularly successful movement was run by some Orthodox and Catholic Church branches and organisations such as Coalitia pentru Familie (Coalition for Families), which managed to gather three million signatures to change the definition of the family in the Romanian Constitution as being the union between a man and a woman. Pro-LGBT NGOs in Romania, including more liberal Christian groups, see this as a form of stigmatising and condemning LGBT people as if they were "heretics", eliminating the possibility for an open dialogue on LGBT issues because it is "considered a betrayal of true Christianity".' (Romania)

'On the other hand gender is addressed on an everyday basis in public rallies, demonstrations and other political events. Via the internet and social media both sides increasingly mobilise for petitions and demonstrations for and against gender-related issues.' (Germany)

'The so-called Black Protest (or Black Monday, or Umbrella Protest), a loose network of various organisations and individuals, was organised also on other occasions, including the occasion after the Sejm rejected the anti-abortion project… There is, however, a very vivid discussion in the media involving journalists supporting two sides of the conflict. The stage is highly polarised on the issue. Rarely, if at all, can one find media sources and journalists who behave in a neutral way and who describe and explain the meaning of the events. Instead, almost everyone feels compelled to take sides.' (Poland)

The conflict is framed by 'conservatives' as being that LGBT rights, abortion or gender equality would endanger families. However, most of them are less active when pragmatic issues of family protection are in question (e.g. economic support, domestic violence, divorce etc.).

'This idea has not been developed well enough to explain why recognising same-sex unions might endanger heterosexual families. One can guess that it is based on the assumption that homosexuality is a matter of choice and that people might be tempted to choose their homosexual orientation depending on current fashions and expected benefits.' (Poland)

'The common argument of these actors is that LGBT adoption induces a form of oppression against traditional heterosexual couples and destroys the traditional values of a family.' (Czech Republic)

'…active and vocal opposition from parties such as the Orthodox Church and far-right, nationalist parties and groups in Bulgaria seek to prevent the full integration of LGBT members into society, claiming that they pose a serious risk to Bulgarian children and traditional family values.' (Bulgaria)

'Hungarian society is very patriarchal and sexism and violence against women is still a very serious and widespread issue. … Oppression can manifest itself in many forms, from a lack of equal pay to the glass ceiling to a lack of presence in politics to domestic violence and rape. …The treatment of cases of violence is also very poor. Many cases of rape are not even reported or if they are, they are dropped. … There are also a great deal of myths and misunderstandings around rape and domestic violence and thus people still often try to blame the victim. The Hungarian government is not working on resolving these issues, for example they refuse to ratify the Council of Europe's Treaty of Istanbul about the prevention and treatment of domestic violence and violence

against women. On the contrary, they often emphasise and try to reaffirm the traditional roles of women, calling any attempt to improve their situation "gender craziness or ideology".' (Hungary)

'The characteristic feature of the conflict is that the rights of LGBT people (registered partnerships, legal rights of same-sex couples, criminalisation of hate speech against LGBT people, etc.) are put into contrast with family values. All anti-LGBT groups use family symbols and claim that they defend the family. However, issues like the prevention of divorce, domestic violence, the rights of the child, or the protection of low-income families are not put on the public policy agenda by these groups. The rights of LGBT people were, to a certain extent, successfully presented as a threat to family values, the reason for the low birth rate, and the reason for the low percentage of marriages.' (Slovakia)

'The current labour market conditions and regulations also maintain gender inequality. Even the improvement of women's rights, such as the right to vote, better job market access, etc. can be only seen as a success for some women. When white women upgrade, women of colour are taking over the burden of this improvement.' (Germany)

'In Romania, as in many other countries, the gender conflict is tied to religion, specifically the debates on abortion, contraception and transgender issues. Along with these aspects are the issues tied to labour such as equal access to employment, paternity and maternity leave and other issues. A major part of the conflict also concerns domestic and sexual violence, which is indirectly reflected in the scarcity of services for victims of domestic violence.' (Romania)

Some of the reports express slight optimism towards the future in the sense that, despite the attempts of conservative groups, the public are becoming little more tolerant and open. In Romania and Hungary, there are significant connectors identified among churches and liberal Christian NGOs.

'Churches take varied positions. Catholics are generally the most conservative, however progressives can be found among them as well. The Lutheran Church is normally the most supportive and its members also tend to be active in this area. It is also important to note that churches can exert their influence the most effectively through politics.' (Hungary)

'Liberal Christian NGOs have been very influential in creating a bridge between the two groups, and they could be used in future as mediators.' (Romania)

'…according to the Centre of Public Opinion Research, 3/5 of the population interviewed in June 2016 recognised the right of same-sex couples to adopt their partners' children.' (Czech Republic)

3.3. Position of ethnic and religious minorities

There have been a total of 7 conflicts of this type analysed in all the countries except Germany. In 5 countries it was a Roma minority conflict, in 2 there were other minorities (the native Muslim ethnic groups in Bulgaria, the Ukrainian minority in Poland).

What all these minority conflicts have in common are securitisation and tendencies towards the approval of discrimination measures for the security of the majority.

'The government also views Roma people often as security problems, which can pervade the attitudes of local law enforcement. The ghettos that some of the Roma population live in often contribute to this perception, as those who live there have lower levels of education and live in poverty.' (Romania)

'On one hand, increased criminality among the Roma population is likely to be true, on the other hand the low effectivity of the law enforcement bodies to investigate and punish crimes causes a lack of trust on the part of the citizens in these law enforcement bodies. The Slovak Republic is often criticised by European human rights institutions for police brutality against the Roma. … Double standards are used when a crime is committed by the Roma compared to the same or an even worse crime committed by a member of the majority. For example, poor Roma people stealing wood for fuel from forests are blamed for the terrible state of the forests, yet large private companies or state actors extract even more wood illegally, with greater economic gains than the Roma, who steal out of necessity.' (Slovakia)

'Over 100 people gathered in the Liulin neighbourhood in Sofia and protested against a Muslim house of prayer, where, according to them, radical Islam is being preached. As some of them admitted, the core of the conflict was the security threat related to international Islamist radicalisation. These consequent events created the groundwork for the wider public support of the burqa ban legislation. At the same time, the inhabitants of

most regions in Bulgaria with a significant concentration of the Muslim population and other ethnic minorities (Jews, Pomaks, Karakachans, Vlasi) have lived in peace and close collaboration (Shumen, Razgrad, Kurjali, Sliven, Vidin, Dupnitza). This means that the conflict was provoked mainly from international events combined with local political pressure with a nationalist or other agenda.' (Bulgaria)

'The conflict between Polish far-right organisations and groups that oppose them (Association of Ukrainians in Poland) consists in the differences in understanding of the values on which the state should be built. The differences in the understanding of history, which are very unlikely to be completely reconciled, existing between Poles and Ukrainians on one side of the conflict are perceived as obstacles which should not stand in the way of positive relations, whereas for the opposing side they constitute an impenetrable barrier, making positive relations impossible.' (Poland)

In all the respective countries the Roma minority are not only an ethnic minority (visibly distinguishable from the majority), but at least a part of this minority deal with marginalisation, segregation, multiple forms of discrimination, poverty, limited access to education, undignified living conditions and multiple adversities. The conflict in all the countries is about social welfare and the deserved or undeserved use of social benefits. The issue of economic fairness and responsibility for one's own life emerges in this context and is misused to aggravate emotions and hurt feelings.

'The "Roma problem", according to the Romanian government… is due to socio-economics rather than to racism and discrimination.' (Romania)

'Often conflicts appear and escalate, especially in cases related to housing (illegal Roma buildings), unpaid bills for electricity in the Roma neighbourhood (and the consequent cut-off of electricity by the provider); the heavy load on the social security system used predominantly by the Roma through social benefits, family allowances etc. The prevailing opinion in Bulgarian society is that the government applies double standards towards its citizens and in some cases the Roma enjoy more privileges than responsibilities. Poverty among the Bulgarian population is also high, especially in some regions such as the northwest, and particularly among the elderly living on small incomes. The conflicts between the Roma and the rest of the society are fuelled by the low incomes and the lack of economic opportunities among the general population. A large part of the people feel extremely vulnerable and exposed to criminality without justice or protection.' (Bulgaria)

'The aspect that is the most visible concerning the Roma, but goes much further, is on who deserves social assistance and why. The public tend to believe that social assistance should be granted only to those who contribute to the public budget. However, this opinion disregards the fact that not only the Roma, but also disabled or handicapped people can never contribute enough to "deserve" social assistance. … Instead of using the need as a key, such an opinion emphasises only the "usefulness" to society. This opinion is actively nurtured by far-right extremists.' (Slovakia)

Most of the reports show positive examples and the need for desegregation and inclusiveness organised from the bottom up in the communities as a chance to release conflicts.

'The relationship between parents is essential. School segregation is in close connection to segregated housing. Where there is no segregated Roma settlement, the situation might be better. There is at least some interaction between the people; they have experience with each other so they are (somewhat) more tolerant towards each other. In cities and towns with a segregated Roma settlement there is the silent agreement that segregation is the pledge of peace. … If we are unable to effectively desegregate schools and provide quality education for everyone, this will lead to social tragedy in the near future. We will have an ageing society with many uneducated young people not being able to participate in the open job market. This will only strengthen radicalisation and exclusion of the Roma.' (Hungary)

Unfortunately the Roma, due to their vulnerability and low political representation in all monitored countries, have a large chance of becoming the scapegoat in whatever social conflicts will escalate.

3.4. Conflicts on the environment, public space, and share of the wealth

There are three conflicts with these topics in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Germany. Apart from the topics of nature preservation vs. construction, energy policies and climate change, there is one interesting conflict in Germany dealing with gentrification in big cities. It is opening broader value questions on to whom the public space belongs and who should participate in decision making on public space and the use of natural resources.

'Environmental conflicts usually concern the relation between the values of sustainability and protection of the environment and of rather short-term economic prosperity. Economists have long ignored the fact that infinite growth has been reached only through the use of finite resources and at the cost of a loss of biodiversity. The approaching limits of resources, such as coal, oil and gas, have fuelled the search for alternative energy sources and made the issue of sustainability more pressing to those beyond environmental activists. … At the practical level, the most pressing issues related to this value conflict in Germany are the process of energy transition and the (de-)industrialisation of agriculture.' (Germany)

'The main cause of the conflict is the strategic control of natural resources and the financial wealth that such control brings. Moreover, very often an environmental conflict manifests itself as a political, social, economic, ethnic, religious or territorial conflict, or a conflict over resources or national interests. These are traditional conflicts induced by environmental degradation. Environmental conflict is characterised by the principal importance of degradation in one or more of the following fields: impoverishment of the living space, overburdening of the environment's sink capacity, overuse of renewable resources, and pollution. … A number of factors have influenced the Karadere conflict. Economic stability, governmental policy, demography, patterns of consumption, historical consciousness and power dynamics all play a role in construction in this milieu. These factors affect the vulnerability of populations, institutions, and ecosystems to degradation and environmental change.' (Bulgaria)

Gentrification is not a very well-known phenomenon in Eastern Europe; however, its signs as described by the Germans can be observed in more than one country.

'The conflict around gentrification, i.e. increasing costs of living in urban spaces through renovation and upgrading of houses combined with a general economisation of the public space is present in cities across the globe and, thus, also in Germany. Many German cities have witnessed a dramatic increase in rents and a shortage of affordable and especially social housing in the past decade. In this process, properties have become the subject of real estate speculation and, especially in the in-districts of major cities, people have been forced to move out to allow for renovation or rebuilding of the houses in order to maximise the revenue or rental income of the investors. … In the first place, gentrification seems to be more of an economic issue or conflict but it is also essentially value-based. Similar to the environmental consequences of the paradigm of unlimited economic growth, gentrification has become probably the most prominent expression of the social risks connected with unconfined neo-liberal capitalism in urban environments.

'The fact that many districts have become unaffordable even for people with middle-class incomes and that constantly increasing rents often force long-term residents to move further away from city centres have raised the question of whether economic growth should be seen as a value of its own that largely benefits a small economic elite or whether the economy should rather secure the welfare of (the majority of) the people. In an urban context, this more general issue can be summarised under the claim of a "right to the city" for its inhabitants. This comprises the dimension of securing affordable housing in a city and not only on the outskirts and avoiding socio-economic and ethnic segregation.' (Germany)

There are reasons to believe that these conflicts will be on the rise in the near future due to the scarcity of natural resources and increasing social differences in Europe.

3.5. Other conflicts and their common parameters

In two countries, Bulgaria and Slovakia, the issue of the geopolitical orientation of the countries is perceived as an important value conflict. In both countries, due to historical reasons, Russia has a major political and cultural influence. In Bulgaria it is accompanied with a serious economic influence as well. The actors linked to Russia are often not visible as they use proxies. Idealisation of Russia and anti-EU sentiments are suspected to lead to real questioning of these countries' membership in Euro-Atlantic structures.

'The West versus East opposition is closely related to Bulgaria's past as a communist country and a part of the Eastern Bloc, its policy, economy and political elite being strongly tied to the Soviet Union and its present situation as a member of NATO and the European Union nowadays. This reflects on the concept of left- and right-wing political parties in Bulgaria, the understanding of which is confused and often bearing a different meaning than in older democracies, as the left is linked to the regime of the communist times and right, just the opposite – to its total denial; to some extent this is an opposition of generations in Bulgaria. Tension rises because of the collision of economic interests related to the strong Russian participation in Bulgarian economic projects in the energy sector, which make Bulgaria's economy substantially dependent on Russian interests.

All the mainstream parties have accumulated resources and power through a network of dependencies and business connections, often hidden behind untraceable offshore ownerships. The influence of Russia through economic occupation is even more direct. According to the recent study conducted by CSIS and CID, Russia uses corruption as an instrument to buy its way and gain control over the economy and political situation of Eastern European countries.' (Bulgaria)

'Pro-Russian propaganda works successfully with myths persisting in public discourse. Slovakia, as a young state and a relatively young political nation has not undergone broad public discussion on its history. The history of WWII has not been properly discussed as well, thus many Slovaks believe in the Russian (communist) version of the events, including the exaggerated role of Russian-supported communists in the Slovak National Uprising of 1944. Despite the well-being of Slovak citizens, which has never been better at any other time in history, there are many groups of citizens who feel that they are "left behind". The political class (not only the extremist forces) were successful in blaming the EU for many problems of internal politics or the economy (failing to protect Slovak agriculture sufficiently, opening the country too much to global markets, closing some branches of industry, corruption etc.). Since 1989, a consumerist approach to politics (including international politics) has developed. If we have no direct benefit from NATO, we should leave it. Together with a resistance towards creating one's own history, it seems very attractive to have "a big friend in Russia" that will protect us, not asking for our contribution. Conflict has been more or less present in society over the course of time, but it was escalated by the Maidan uprising, the annexation of Crimea and the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war.' (Slovakia)

Three conflicts deal with the basic pillars of democracy and what the future political and social regime of the country should look like. Germany is describing the conflict over a 'post-truth society'.

'Together with the rise of the above-mentioned breakthrough of right-wing populism fuelled particularly by forces with a strong anti-establishment platform like the AfD, an entire milieu of society has become increasingly sceptical towards the established political parties and towards "mainstream" media, such as the nationwide daily newspapers and public TV stations. In 2014 the term Lügenpresse ("lying press"), which is directly taken from Nazi jargon became a frequent rallying cry among the far right and served as a standard accusation against journalists. Like many other elements of hate speech from the far right, this term and the underlying framing have made inroads into parts of mainstream society and have thus created a belittlement of the term…. At first glance, the very issue at the heart of the conflict may suggest that this conflict is more about informational resources than of values. However, the manner in which this issue is framed also allows for a different/additional interpretation. Those who do not even accept or rationally criticise "mainstream" media devalue them collectively with labels, such as "government-run" or "green-left filth", and – most importantly – usually refrain from any serious discourse on that matter. This kind of criticism clearly reveals that their opposition has a different, more deeply rooted source. The fact that they are usually found in the same camp or are the very same people who advocate a closed and exclusive society suggests that their scepticism is rather a facet of their authoritarian and anti-pluralistic values than of the missing representation of their issues and positions in the media.' (Germany)

In Poland, the conflict on the character of democracy is described as a conflict between the government and its supporters on the one side – introducing legislative changes limiting the checks and balances among various branches of state power, with the argument that democracy mechanisms limit the effectiveness of the government – and the opposition, which sees the limiting of democratic institutions (judicial power) as a way towards an authoritarian regime.

'The conflict over the Constitutional Tribunal resulted in a destabilisation of the balance of power between the legislative, executive and judiciary branches of the system: the Constitutional Tribunal, regardless of the opinion on the whole dispute, could not function properly since there was always a risk that its verdicts would not be published. … On one side there is a notion that emphasises the primary importance of the efficacy of government, which can be hampered by the obstacles created by the judicial branch in connection with the Constitution. This argument is often connected with the opposition to all limitations to sovereign decisions taken by a government – the rights of minorities, the EU and other international organisations – the prevalence of a conservative vision of Polish society, which could be transformed as a result of a strong external influence and the negative persistence of the legacy of socialism, which is also present among judges. On the other side there is a vision of a more liberal system, which respects the rights of minorities and limitations of the law.' (Poland)

In Slovakia the conflict is described as neo-Nazi forces being a member of the Parliament, raising support and, above all, openly struggling to change the democratic regime of the country.

'Analysing far-right extremism and ultra-nationalism from the perspective of social value-based conflicts brings to light several value clashes within Slovak society (e.g. democracy vs. authoritarianism, multiculturalism vs. ethnic nationalism, cultural and political orientation of West vs. East, the paradigm of interpretation of national history etc.). In a certain perspective, far-right extremism represents a cross-cutting issue that can be identified in all value conflicts in Slovakia. In spite of this, the rise of far-right extremism as a relevant political power should be analysed as a separate value conflict, since unlike in other European countries (e.g. France or Germany), far-right extremist political forces work openly for the elimination of the present form of liberal democratic constitutional rule in the country. Their goal is to replace parliamentarian democracy with some form of authoritarian rule with fascist elements segregating citizens according to ethnic and "social usefulness" criteria in relation to their rights and duties. That is why this value conflict concerns the manner in which society should be governed and organised.' (Slovakia)

There are some common features to all the conflicts in all the country reports, as expressed by the German authors:

'… a nearly unbridgeable divide between the promoters of a pluralistic or liberal (not necessarily in the economic sense) society vs. the promoters of a closed or illiberal one. Most value-based conflicts are shaped by this very opposition and characterised by a similar constellation of actors. … phenomena of group hatred, such as racism, sexism, homo- and transphobia, that are promoted by the AfD and similar actors rarely appear individually but rather intersect and often mutually reinforce each other. This also goes for the different value-based conflicts that are described below. Hence, it is hardly surprising that there are similar alignments of actors in many of them. For approaches of conflict prevention and resolution it is important, however, to take these intersections into account and develop approaches that also address people who are affected by multiple forms of discrimination.' (Germany)

4. Summaries for seven European countries

In this part, we present the most important findings that each country's monitoring team considered as interesting in their own country.

4.1. Bulgaria

Bulgaria developed as a complex society where **multiple value systems overlap and sometimes oppose.** The vast majority of Bulgarians respect the values of liberty and solidarity, tolerance and human rights, democracy and the rule of law and perceive their personal and national identity as best positioned among the European Union community of values. At the same time, **one of the big challenges of the country is its ability to live up to these values, especially promoting the rule of law in all spheres of life.** Civil society is in a position to constantly provide pressure upon the changing governments to combat corruption and organised crime, to respect human rights through policy decisions and their implementation, to ensure that the judicial system is strong and impartial, to protect minorities and eliminate all forms of discrimination and to ensure that the country has a well-functioning market economy. **Another societal challenge is to reinforce democratic practices to deal with various interests and inter-group disagreements and to prevent violent escalations when conflicts are triggered**.

The value-based conflicts analysed in Bulgaria reflect the inability of the recent governments to address the various challenges effectively, which has created an internal social and political crisis. Acute **confrontation and a lack of fruitful political dialogue, perception of a deficit of justice and increasing distrust in institutions** are the characteristics of these conflicts.

The slow reforms related to the corrupt system of justice, a poor healthcare and education system and a lack of government support for entrepreneurship and innovation have created a **deprivation of hope and common perspective**. This situation is exploited by interest groups and political parties whose aggressive behavior, increased use of smear campaigns and attempts to use public opinion to achieve political objectives have led to division, hatred and tension in society. There is a widespread negative attitude towards political parties and people involved in politics.

External factors like the Middle East crisis and the refugee waves towards Europe have added new challenges to Bulgarian society, which was not prepared to deal with asylum seekers. In addition, as one of the EU's most significant receptors of refugees from the region, **Bulgaria has suffered due to the EU's lack of readiness to manage this crisis effectively.** This new situation has been assessed as a main national security threat and has exposed another deficit in the national governance: the lack of national security policies.

In this context, grounds for conflicting activities by various groups have been prepared. They have the potential to provoke violence and mobilise supporters maintaining a public discourse which excludes those of their opponents. Some have **questioned the European or the Western orientation of the country**. **Ethnic conflicts** have come roaring back into political life. Nationalism has increased in popularity and found its way into the Bulgarian Parliament, shaping the public discourse and focusing more on the perceived external imperialistic threats than on internal minority issues. The **Bulgarian Roma**, who are severely disadvantaged compared to other citizens, have experienced **increased discrimination** and have become a reason for organised or spontaneous local community protests demanding measures against illegal Roma settlements, various illegal activities and crimes. The **refugees and migrants from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan**, who most often enter the country illegally on their way to Western Europe, are unwelcome and blocked by obstacles in the event that they choose to stay. In this confrontational climate untraditional groups such as **LGBT people who demand equal rights and freedoms** in society easily become an object of aggression. Even the traditional **environmental conflicts** between pro-industry stakeholders and pro-nature preservation activists reflect increased tensions and the weakened ability for public dialogue around significant social issues.

4.2. Czech Republic

All the chosen conflicts have been affected by the democratic transition since the Velvet Revolution. Some aspects of the manner in which the democratic transition affects value conflicts in society are reflected in the lack of quality journalism, lack of a strong civil society, preference for the status quo over new challenges, poor political ethics, low exposure and tolerance to differences etc.

The media play a major role in framing all the selected value conflicts, especially shaping their intensity and giving voice to certain experts/actors whilst silencing others. A good example of such a biased selection of information can be observed during the **'refugee crisis'**, where many experts on fields distantly related to the matter were given space in mass media whilst migration experts were almost invisible in the public discourse. **Disinformation in mass media, hoaxes on social networks and the increasing power of the latter create another convenient pool for conflict escalation.** On the other hand, the lack of information, the lack of fact checking habits of the Czech audience and their habit of seeking simple answers to complex problems have encouraged simplified, black and white journalism. The lack of information is the most pertinent in creating **attitudes towards Islam and Muslims** but also in the **approach to nuclear energy**, which for that very reason is mistakenly considered to be an 'innovative' and ecological source of energy.

Another trait common to all the conflicts is the danger of normalisation and the fear of deviating from the crowd, a residue of the communist era. Blind trust in expert systems and institutions, even if they prove to be discriminatory or malfunctioning, persists. This applies especially to the approach to home birth.

This aspect goes hand in hand with an **outdated education system**, which, despite various attempts at reform still **train children to have very little or no critical thinking** and no initiative to seek alternatives. The terrorist attacks in European countries, little experience with immigration and a lack of strong public figures create the background for the recent tensions towards Islam and Muslims. **Roma minorities have ceased to be the media's focus of attention and Muslims have become the new 'Roma' maladjusted minorities**. In the case of same-sex adoption, the novelty of the topic, heated discussions in Parliament and a wide range of **prejudices against the LGBT community** set the background for value conflicts in society.

4.3. Germany

Throughout the country, Germany is witnessing a visible escalation of value-based conflicts that has not been known since reunification. This trend of polarisation and rising racism and group hatred is strongly linked to the **rise of right-wing populist groups**, parties and even media sources, most prominently the political party 'Alternative für Deutschland' (AfD; 'Alternative for Germany') and the PEGIDA 'movement' ('Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident'). Even though the financial and economic crisis has not affected Germa-

ny as strongly as many other European countries, it has been the most prominent issue on the political agenda during the later stages of the last decade and the first years of this decade. In this period the AfD positioned itself as the only outspoken Eurosceptic party in Germany. The party's strong Euroscepticism was combined with an outright neo-liberal economic agenda, anti-establishment rhetoric and ultra-conservative positions, including nationalism, chauvinism, racism, (hetero-) sexism and homo- and transphobia. This combination has garnered support among a significant share of the population.

The increasing number of asylum seekers that have arrived in Germany since 2014 have forced German politics and society to deal with the basic needs of people arriving in the country and, thus, brought these **issues of immigration and integration/inclusion to the political agenda**. The AfD have provided simple solutions and have managed to start and maintain a discourse about the openness of German society that the party have connected to other issues, such as social services and pensions, law and order or gender issues. With this agenda, the AfD was the most outspoken party criticising Angela Merkel's initial pro-refugee agenda and could thus regain strength after a period of massive internal struggle.

During this time value-based conflicts have gained increasing salience in German politics and society. Moreover, this development has generated a nearly **unbridgeable divide between promoters of a pluralistic or liberal (not necessarily in the economic sense) society vs. promoters of a closed or illiberal one. Most value-based conflicts are shaped by this very opposition and characterised by a similar constellation of actors.** Currently, the most salient expressions of value conflicts in Germany concern the following issues: **immigration and integration/inclusion, including the issues of asylum, inclusive and exclusive concepts of society, and the securitisation of immigration; gender rights and diversity; trust in the media, gentrification; and environmental issues.** The constellation of actors in the latter two conflicts diverges somewhat from the above-mentioned opposition.

Recently, the moderate and pragmatic voices of the first two decades after the reunification of Germany have remained characteristic for the pluralistic/liberal camp whereas the proponents of an exclusive society have become more populist and more radical. In this vein, the discourses on these value-based conflicts have not only become more salient but they are also witnessing an increasing polarisation and a positional shift of the actors towards the right – combined with a loss of decency and moderation.

Of course, value-based conflicts have always been characteristic of German post-war politics and society. However, rarely have they caused the **current level of polarisation**. Having said this, it is not surprising that the AfD is the first right-wing populist radical party that has managed to take hold in post-war Germany in spite of the strong 'cordon sanitaire' among the vast majority in the country against any organisation that comes only close to right-wing extremism and neo-Nazism – and the leading figures of the AfD certainly do. The polarisation also becomes manifest in the mobilisation of a pro-democratic and pro-human rights civil society as well as an 'uncivil society' that advocates exclusion, racism and xenophobia, thus creating a societal climate in which the number of attacks against refugees or their (future) housing has grown dramatically.

It needs to be added, however, that phenomena of group hatred, such as racism, sexism, homo- and transphobia that are promoted by the AfD and similar actors rarely appear individually but rather intersect and often mutually reinforce each other. This also goes for the different value conflicts that are described below. Hence, it is hardly surprising that there are similar alignments of actors in many of them. For approaches of conflict prevention and resolution it is important, however, to take these intersections into account and develop approaches that also address people who are affected by multiple forms of discrimination.

4.4. Hungary

As research and common experience show, Hungarian society is one of the most authoritarian societies in Europe. This means that there is a high expectation of government involvement in different areas of life. An essential part of the population do not just accept, but respect the 'strong hand' of the government in steering the country as security is their highest value priority. Thus, it should not come as any surprise that the **common point in the conflicts analysed is the role of the government, which is a major actor in each**. The responsibility of the government is very high in dealing with these issues. Often what happens, though, is that after their intervention in these conflicts the situation does not substantially improve or even grows worse. In some cases the government's actions can be a factor in the conflict escalation. **Out of the five analysed conflicts, four are minority vs. majority conflicts. The position of the government regarding these is maintaining**

the status quo: protecting the very traditional interests of the majority of the society and excluding the minority groups and their interests. As a result of this, the majority of the society feel supported in their discriminative approach. Prejudiced, discriminative, often radical opinions or actions are tolerated and starting to become normalised.

As regards the economic-social background of the conflicts, we have gone from first to last in economic competitiveness among the ex-socialist countries. Even though we are a member of the EU, the quality of life in Hungary is very far below that of the countries of the West. Therefore, there is already a great deal of tension among the people as they have a hard time earning enough money to meet their everyday expenses. Fear of unemployment is also very strong. In a closed, inward-looking society where a large number of people are fighting for survival, value-based conflicts can be deeply entrenched and easy to capitalise upon.

4.5. Romania

According to previous studies on values and value orientations, Romania is portrayed as a society inclined towards traditional values that emphasise at times contradictory beliefs and orientations on values of hierarchy, consensus, equality and solidarity.

This mapping study assesses how individuals in Romania have arrived at collective orientations on these values and how they translate them into collective national or regional attitudes and behaviours that can cause or drive conflict. Conflicts often emerge from societal polarisation on matters like perceptions of discrimination and access to services (housing education, health), as well as the environment.

Institutions that serve to further this polarisation through divisive rhetoric and action include: government bodies, institutions of the church (i.e. Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant), and the media. Government bodies often fail to ensure effective enforcement of legislation on certain issues. In addition, the institutions of the church are often reluctant to accept the LGBT community, reproductive rights, and the Roma population. The media can shape public opinion on current events and seem to highlight a rift between generations in the country.

4.6. Poland

Since the beginning of the majority rule of the Law and Justice (PiS) political party in November 2015, Poland has been going through many conflicts of various backgrounds. Some of them have been revived, as the **conflict over the abortion law**; some emerged for the first time, as the **conflict over the admission of Muslim migrants,** which had been one of the key issues of the 2015 electoral campaigns. As for the latter category, there were issues of which the polarising nature would have been very difficult to foresee, e.g. the conflict over the **introduction of education reform**.

The very high level of tension was to a large extent caused by the change of the incumbent and the fact that the PiS government, for the first time in the history of the Third Polish Republic, has a majority in both chambers of Parliament and the post of the President (Andrzej Duda), which, however, is insufficient to allow the party to change the Constitution. **Each new policy and reform can potentially provoke a conflict not only because the opposition in practice does not have any other choice except for the mobilisation of extra-parliamentary groups and the support or organisation of protests and manifestations.** Policies being introduced can also, as in the case of the education reform, put large groups' status or employment stability at risk. Last but not least, certain policies, such as the changes introduced in the law regulating the activity of the Constitutional Tribunal, can simply raise the doubts of many people, especially if these changes are perceived negatively by many external actors such as the US or the European Union, i.e. states and international organisations, initiatives or public figures in whose eyes Poland was previously a positive example of a country going through a period of transformation, economic recovery and the implementation of democratic reforms.

Except for the abovementioned value-based conflicts over the education reform, admission of Muslim migrants and, implicitly referred to, conflict over the shape of the Polish democratic system, the report focuses on three other polarising issues that have stirred public debates and mobilised Poles to manifest their opinions on the streets. Three remaining contentious issues are: conflict over the desired model of the family, the abortion law and the status of Ukrainians in Poland.

4.7. Slovakia

All of the five analysed conflicts have caused deep polarisation of the society, going deep to the level of private relationships and families. Some of them are currently on 'standby mode', having been hot in 2015–2016 (i.e. the migration crisis, LGBT rights), some are on a slow rise (far-right extremism and geopolitics), and one is long-term and has the possibility to break out anytime (Roma).

What is common in all these conflicts, except the high level of emotions and rather spare representation of facts in the arguments in public discussions, are these common features:

Minorities are the objects rather than the subjects of the conflicts. Refugees, the Roma and LGBT people received very low representation in discussions about their rights or position in society. In all cases it was more 'on them' than 'with them'. Even in the case of LGBT people it was difficult to find relevant actors representing their positions; human rights organisations were more visible. Refugees/migrants/foreigners are almost totally omitted, the Roma are represented very sporadically.

In all five conflicts, the far-right extremist party Kotleba – ĽSNS is a visible actor. In some, it is a primary actor, in some it is a secondary one. Another group of actors present in all conflicts are the so-called 'alternative media', i.e. pro-Russian and conspiracy portals spreading hate, suspicion, a mix of half-truths and obvious lies. All signs show that both actors will rise in power and influence in the near future.

Political elites, parliamentary parties and most of the visible politicians from various political options **show a very high level of populism, often intentionally nurturing these conflicts and using them for their own political agenda.** However, taking into account the lowering of trust towards traditional political parties as such, often such behaviour (un)intentionally helps far-right extreme political forces to grow. There are very few exceptions of politicians being unafraid to stand up for minorities and for unpopular solutions.

In all conflicts the split between Bratislava and other regions of the country is visible. On one hand Bratislava is more liberal and open than the rest of the country. On the other hand Bratislava's actors are quite ignorant of the problems, expectations and attitudes of the regions. All of the analysed conflicts may at some phase evolve into division between the centre vs. the peripheries.

Positive activities and actions can be often found outside the spheres of the 'usual suspects', i.e. traditional parties and NGOs. There are small, sometimes individual initiatives promoting tolerance, inclusion, combatting propaganda or hate speech. The right way to network and support them is still an open question.

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CONFLICT ANALYSES FROM SEVEN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

BULGARIA

Introduction

Bulgaria has developed as a complex society in which multiple value systems overlap and sometimes oppose. The vast majority of Bulgarians respect the values of liberty and solidarity, tolerance and human rights, democracy and the rule of law and perceive their personal and national identity as best positioned among the European Union community of values. At the same time, one of the major challenges of the country is its ability to live up to these values, especially in promoting the rule of law in all spheres of life. Civil society is in a position to constantly provide pressure on the changing governments to combat corruption and organised crime, to respect human rights through policy decisions and their implementation, to ensure that the judicial system is strong and impartial, to protect minorities and eliminate all forms of discrimination and to ensure that the country has a well-functioning market economy. Another societal challenge is the reinforcement of democratic practices to deal with various interests and inter-group disagreements and to prevent violent escalations when conflicts are triggered.

The value-based conflicts analysed in Bulgaria reflect the inability of the recent governments to effectively address the various challenges which have created internal social and political crises. Acute confrontation and lack of fruitful political dialogues, perception of a deficit of justice and increasing distrust in institutions are some of the characteristics of these conflicts.

The exploitation of public dissatisfaction by various interest groups. Slow reforms related to the corrupt justice system, a poor health and education system and a lack of government support for entrepreneurship and innovation have created a lack of hope and common perspective. This situation is exploited by interest groups and political parties whose aggressive behaviour, increased use of smear campaigns and attempts to use public opinion to achieve political objectives have led to division, hatred and tension in society.

Discretisation of institutions. There is a widespread negative attitude towards political parties and people involved in politics. The lack of rules in the political struggle, the active search for external support and attempts to involve institutions in the process of political confrontation reduce their credibility and discredit them in the national and international aspects. The efforts of the centre-right government coalition led by the political party GERB (Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria) since 2014 to introduce changes in all problematic areas seem insufficient and ineffective in the public eye, which led to the election of a left-wing president and the resignation of the government in November 2016.

External factors like the Middle East crisis and waves of refugees into Europe have added new challenges to Bulgarian society, which was not prepared to deal with asylum-seekers. In addition, as one of the EU's most significant receptors of refugees from the region, Bulgaria suffered from the EU's lack of readiness to manage this crisis effectively. This new situation has been assessed as one of the main national security threats and has exposed another deficit in the national governance: the lack of national security policies aiming to ensure the stability of essential institutions and their capacity to function and avert any significant social collapse and disorder. *'Government relies on the natural course of things, within which the likelihood of catastrophic events, a social collapse and anarchy remains negligible.'* (National Security … 2013)

In this context, groundwork has been prepared for conflicting value-based activities by various groups. These groups have the potential to provoke violence and mobilise their supporters, maintaining a public discourse which excludes the input and ideas of their opponents. Some have questioned the European or the Western orientation of the country. Ethnic conflicts have come roaring back into political life. Nationalism has increased

in popularity and has found its way into the Bulgarian Parliament, shaping the public discourse and focusing more on the perceived external imperialistic threats than on internal minority issues. Bulgaria's Roma, who are severely disadvantaged compared to other citizens, have experienced increased discrimination and have become a reason for organised or spontaneous protests by local communities demanding measures against illegal Roma settlements, various illegal activities and crimes. Refugees and migrants from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, who most often enter the country illegally on their way to Western Europe, are unwelcome and blocked by obstacles in the event that they choose to stay. In this confrontational climate untraditional groups such as LGBT[1] people who demand equal rights and freedoms in society easily become objects of aggression. Even the traditional environmental conflicts between pro-industry stakeholders and pro-nature preservation activists reflect increased tensions and the country's weakened ability to create public dialogue around significant social issues.

The above conflicts related to the geopolitical orientation of the country, ethnic tensions, discrimination against the Roma population, refugees, the preservation of nature and the attitude towards the LGBT community have been identified as conflicts of values that are dominant, visible and have a real chance to escalate and transition to violence. Four conflicts have been chosen for analysis in this study because polarised opinions around these issues have led to contention in communities, divided families and tensions in work organisations. All of them are affecting more than one region of the country.

There is a good pool of civic actors, active in the country, who support official efforts in the prevention of and intervention in social conflicts and who provide innovative approaches to conciliate interests and reinforce democratic values.

1. Ethnic conflict in Bulgaria: The burqa – a threat of Islamic radicalism and a menace to national security

Short summary of the conflict

In recent years ethnic Bulgarian nationalism has re-emerged under perceived threats of Islamic radicalism due to the conflicts in the Middle East and events such as the war in Syria, which has forced the displacement of millions of people with Muslim beliefs toward Europe. Violent terrorist attacks against innocent citizens in European cities have instilled in the public a considerable amount of apprehension towards minority groups sharing an Islamic creed. Some members of the public view them as a threat to the public's national security, or to the Bulgarian identity. There have been incidents of religious violence against Muslims and protests against Muslim practices outside mosques, supported by far-right nationalist parties and groups.

The political exploitation of religious differences that led to violent clashes started in 2011 with protests against the volume of the loudspeakers of Sofia's Banya Bashi mosque. The protest was organised by two Bulgarian far-right nationalist parties – Ataka and VMRO. Ataka also sent an open letter to the municipality of Sofia asking for a ban on use of the space outside the mosque for religious rites. This protest escalated into violent conflicts in which the police became involved. After this incident, there were others related to Muslim religious practices. The protests were a part of a series of activities against court applications by the office of the Grand Mufti, the spiritual leader of Bulgaria's Muslims, for properties historically owned by the Muslim community. The court applications have been lodged under the country's Religious Denominations Act, which makes a provision for such applications by all officially recognised religious groups in Bulgaria. The protests took place in Sofia (2014), Plovdiv (2014) and in other towns near Sofia: Kjustendil (2015) and Goze Delchev (2015). In March 2016, there were other protests. Over 100 people gathered in the Liulin neighbourhood in Sofia and protested against a Muslim house of prayer, where, according to them, radical Islam is being preached. As some of them admitted, the core of the conflict was the security threat related to international Islamist radicalisation.

These consequent events created the groundwork for wider public support of the burqa ban legislation. At the same time, the inhabitants of most regions in Bulgaria with a significant concentration of the Muslim population and other ethnic minorities (Jews, Pomaks, Karakachans, Vlasi) have lived in peace and close collaboration

1 This abbreviation is used throughout this publication to indicate different kinds of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex conditions: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, intersex, queer, asexual, agender, aromantic and other diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

(Shumen, Razgrad, Kurjali, Sliven, Vidin, Dupnitza). This means that the conflict was provoked mainly from international events combined with local political pressure with a nationalist or other agenda.

One manifestation of an emerging religious conflict is the debate about **wearing the burqa in public places**. It was brought up in 2014 in the Pazardjik Municipality, a region with a heavier concentration of Roma Muslim communities; a small group of them are related to Salafism. Strong public pressure heated by media publications led to the May 2016 decision of the Municipal Council of Pazardjik to prohibit wearing of the burqa in public (including public buildings and town streets). Cases of violation of this ban were to be punished by a fine of 300 leva (150 euros).

In September 2016, the Bulgarian National Assembly voted on placing a ban on wearing clothes which conceal one's face partially or completely. The ban is in effect in public places such as schools, recreational areas, parks, sporting facilities and administrative buildings. The fine for non-compliance ranges between 200 and 1,500 leva (100 to 750 euros).

These legislative initiatives have been pushed by intense Islamophobic movements in the last 12 months. Protests have been organised in front of mosques in Kjustendil and Karlovo, for instance. In Sofia, people clamoured against muezzin prayers, deeming them 'offensive to Christian Bulgarian traditions.' Moreover, in the last presidential election, nationalist parties pushed anti-Islamic rhetoric, which helped them to secure third place in the vote count.

Under growing public and political pressure, the Ministry of the Interior has identified and mapped different risk areas in the country which are prone to ethnic conflict. The Minister of the Interior has said that the main purpose of government is to create an environment of tolerance among different groups and to provide the necessary social services in support of vulnerable groups in order to build a secure, safe and sustainable environment.

Timeline

- 2011 – Violent clashes and protests against the loudspeakers of Sofia's Banya Bashi mosque.
- 2011—2013 – Protests organised by far-right nationalist parties – Ataka and VMRO – against Muslim religious practices which disturb the rest of the population (for example, the loudspeakers outside mosques). Letters are sent to municipalities to ban religious rites outside mosques.
- 2014—2015 – Protests in Sofia, Plovdiv, Kjustendil, Gotse Delchev and other towns against the application of the Grand Mufti to acquire properties historically owned by the Muslim community.
- March 2016 – Protests in Sofia and other cities against Muslim houses of prayer where the preaching of radical Islam has been suspected.
- September 2016 – The National Assembly bans wearing clothes which conceal one's face partially or completely.

Actors in the conflict

Primary actors:

- Far-right nationalist parties (Ataka and VMRO).
- Informal nationalist groups.
- Grand Mufti.
- The Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF), a political party which is led by ethnic Turks and supported by the Turkish minority.
- NGOs such as the association Opportunities without Borders and others who defend ethnic and religious rights, The Atlantic Club of Bulgaria, the Centre for Media Studies and Audio-visual Policy of the University for National and World Economy, the International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations and the Open Society Institute in Sofia.

Secondary actors:

- Municipalities, central government officials, media, NGOs.

Tertiary actors:

- The EU, Turkey, other international institutions and NGOs.

Relations among actors in the conflict

The Grand Mufti was initially a voice of tolerance and moderation, even complaining that the government was not a strong enough partner in this effort. The nationalist movements demand that the country keep Bulgaria's Christian religious identity and traditions intact and remain cautious and restrictive towards other religious beliefs. The Muslim community leaders such as the Grand Mufti and the political party Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) approach the burqa ban as a discriminative measure towards the Muslim community and insist on the protection of the rights to the freedom of religion and freedom of speech. The resulting tense conflict has delivered zealous rhetoric from both sides. Many Bulgarian NGOs are promoting ethnic tolerance, human rights and citizenship education, and participate in the conflict by maintaining the values of human rights, solidarity, justice and freedom.

The parliamentarian debate that preceded the burqa ban legislation initiated by the Patriotic Front (PF) coalition exposed the political confrontations and positions towards this issue. The Patriotic Front positioned it as a measure to limit radical Islam, spread and funded by external agents. The political party Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) defined this move as the price the ruling party is paying the Patriotic Front to stay in power. They insisted that Bulgarian Muslims have no traditions concerning the wearing of burqas and that this legislation would, instead, alienate groups of society and create a problem where there was none. *'The burqa ban resolves no single problem in society. While there are some arguments related to national and public safety this problem is a sham problem, pure populism,'* said Tuncher Kardjaliev of the MRF (Поредна точка за ПФ… 2016).

Sources and causes of the conflict

The burqa ban has reflected **public fears of the risk of radicalisation** of some groups of society and has exposed the country's vulnerability as the EU border with the Islamic world. As a small country with comparatively little political clout, Bulgaria has proven vulnerable to outside pressure. One particularly strong sense of threat has been the stereotyped threat from neighbouring Turkey and the Islamic minorities within. Other factors have also served to intensify it: the uncertain role of Bulgaria as an EU border country, responsible for upholding security; the central role Turkey has set itself to play in the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union and its ambitions as a protector of Muslim minorities in the Balkans. The feeling of threat is further heightened by the uncertainty of what constitutes a national minority by international standards and what the precise implications of its legal recognition would be. The refugee flow and terrorist attacks reinforce this feeling.

Differing opinions aside, the main difficulty in reaching common ground in this ethnic conflict is due to **opposing approaches to minority rights**. The fears expressed by the nationalist movements about the recognition of national minorities are based on the **danger of secessionism** that actually has taken place in neighbouring Balkan countries. Farfetched as these fears might seem at first, the ambiguous and controversial approach of the international organisations to the questions of self-determination versus territorial integrity compounds these concerns. Some members of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) request the recognition of national minorities as the only guarantee for their survival.

For their part, the Pomaks, a minority in the southern part of Bulgaria speaking the Bulgarian language but adhering to the Muslim religion, have persevered in their refusal to conform to a definite type of ethnic identity. Indeed, they have in general refused numerous attempts on the part of political entrepreneurs—both those in pursuit of national integration and those in pursuit of political separatism—to politicise their cultural identity. There have been no Pomak separatist movements and little effort until recently to obtain group rights in the political arena. It is important to emphasise, however, that as a group, Bulgarian Muslims have remained almost completely politically, socially, and economically separated. The economic crisis has played a crucial role in contributing to the **politicisation of the Muslim and Pomak cultural identity**. Political agents are attempting to exploit economic grievances in an effort to transform cultural cohesiveness into a political identity. Political parties and other groups exert strong pressure on the Muslim population to make its cultural identity politically relevant. And this raises tensions in Bulgarian society.

Other factors that influence the conflict are related to the **impact of emigration** on the religious education of some old Bulgarian Muslim communities in religious academies in countries of the Arab world; the religious interactions between migrating Muslims from Bulgaria and local Muslim immigrant communities in Western Europe; and between local Muslims in Bulgaria and immigrating Muslims from countries of the Muslim world.

Dynamics of the conflict and prospects for improvement

After the presidential elections in March 2017 the tension decreased. The Patriotic Front (NFSB, VMRO, Ataka and others), which appeared to be the third political power in the country secured places in the parliament and positioned itself as a coalition partner in the government, created the winner of the election – GERB. GERB, which reaffirmed its pro-EU, pro-Western orientation and maintained balanced politics towards other regional powers imposed more moderate, more careful language on its coalition partner.

Another stabilising factor is the political party Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), which is also represented in the parliament. Recent years in Bulgaria's history abound in unexpected twists. This ethnic party has become a balancer in critical situations. Rejected at the beginning of transitions from both the left and the right of the political spectrum, it is now wooed by both sides. The party itself has found its place in the ruling coalitions over the past 10 years. And when the success of the Bulgarian ethnic model became irrevocable, the party gained certain rights for its followers among the Turkish population. The state mandated that Turkish would be studied in schools. Democracy provided opportunities for the free profession of Islam even though it became clear that Bulgarian Muslims, just as the Christians, are not overly religious.

Another critical factor in the political formula for maintaining interethnic peace in Bulgaria has been Turkey's restrained behavior with regard to the Turkish population in Bulgaria.

Whilst successfully resolving some controversies, others began to emerge. While the ethnic minorities during the time of state socialism suffered from equalisation and assimilation, now the misfortune comes from differentiation, separation, marginalisation and poverty. Before, the pressure came from above, from the political and administrative spheres, from the government. Now it comes from the economic realities and from public opinion, which is easily manipulated when the majority suffer similar social and economic pressures.

The notion of the 'Bulgarian ethnic model' has become part of the rhetoric of Bulgaria's political elite referring both to the long history of the peaceful coexistence of various minorities, including the rescue of Bulgarian Jews during the Second World War, and to the political participation of the Turkish minority, which has played a stabilising role in contemporary Bulgaria. Yet politicians and civil society have a great deal to do in order to address the three distinct challenges that this ethnic model is facing: 1) the existence of racism, discrimination and exclusion; 2) the issue of minority rights; and 3) the popularity of nationalist parties which now, in 2017 enjoy executive power. Many of these challenges motivate the work of NGOs such as the Open Society Foundation, Creating Effective Grassroots Alternatives Foundation, Catholic Relief Services, Partners Bulgaria Foundation, and other entities whose projects are designed as conflict-prevention programs aiming at the integration of ethnic minorities and their economic, educational and social advancement.

Background of the conflict

Ethnic groups in Bulgaria are dominated by a Bulgarian majority: 76.9 %. This is followed by two substantial minorities: Turkish (8 %) and Roma (8 %), then by another 0.7 % (including Russian, Armenian, and Vlach). Unlike other countries in the region, in Bulgaria, ethnic heterogeneity has not become an obstacle to democratisation. When the anti-Turkish assimilation policy was officially ended in December 1989 and the rights of ethnic Turks began to be restored, this reversal of policy provoked both an outburst of nationalist sentiments among the majority of Bulgarians and the re-emergence of Bulgarian ethnic nationalism. As a sign of majority/minority disagreements, the leaders of Bulgarian nationalist groups even denied the existence of any ethnic minorities in Bulgaria. In a climate of ethnic tensions and mass protests, the Turkish-dominated Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), the largest and most influential ethnic minority party in Bulgaria, barely won any legal recognition in the '90s. Since then it has taken time for Bulgaria's society to achieve the political consensus and cooperation essential for democracy. The political establishment today includes Bulgaria's largest and most influential ethnic minority party, the MRF. The democratic processes of bargaining and cooperation between different ethno-religious groups have prevailed over intolerance and divisiveness, providing an effective solution to ethnic minority problems and the integrity of the state. This political development has suppressed the public anxiety of separatist trends. As a result, Bulgarian ethnic nationalism has focused more on external threats than on internal minority issues even though Bulgarian Roma do experience increased discrimination and exclusion. Ethnic violence tends to be focussed on Roma or, to a much lesser extent, the Turkish minority.

Possible future scenarios

A realistic scenario in the context of the current Middle East crisis is a strong government with increased capacity to manage security risks, which cooperates closely with EU and NATO allies and with all internal stakeholders. The main risk for the country is perceived to be the **risk of radicalisation**. Experts have identified four radicalisation risks to Bulgarian society stemming from external factors and influences. These are the risks that need assessment, management and programmes for risk reduction. The first risk involves the risks related to the activities of various terrorist organisations such as IS and al'Qa'ida. Bulgarian intelligence services point out that the level of risk of a terrorist attack by international terrorist organisations or individual terrorists on Bulgarian territory has become higher since the first and thus far only terrorist attack on 18 July 2012, committed against Israeli citizens at Sarafovo Airport in Burgas. The second risk is associated with the **transit of foreign fighters** through Bulgarian territory to and from the Middle East. Foreign fighters returning to their home countries with strong combat experience and a high level of radicalisation are considered to pose a high security risk for the region in general, including Bulgaria when passing through its territory. The third risk involves the potential for infiltration by radicalised persons and terrorists through the intensified inflows of irregular migrants. The fourth risk is related to the influence that higher religious educational institutions abroad might exert over Bulgarian citizens who graduate from them. The 'risk' influences are related to the probability of the propagation of radical ideas based on interpretations of Islam that are not common to the Muslim tradition in Bulgaria. These risks are observed and managed by government institutions and under the country's commitments to the EU and NATO.

The internal security risks identified by experts are associated with the social deprivation and exclusion of some communities, which make them vulnerable to radical (religious) ideologies; the accessibility through the internet of radical propaganda; and the potential of provocation and spread of Islamophobia and xenophobic attitudes. Civil society organisations working in human rights and democracy are key partners for central and local governments in their efforts to reduce these risk factors. Another key player is the media, which play an important role in conflict prevention or conflict escalation by influencing the public opinion and leading it towards intolerance and violence or towards tolerance and moderation.

2. Polarising opinions about refugees

Short summary of the conflict

Since the Syrian crisis began in 2011, millions of people have been displaced and have sought refuge in the neighbouring countries and beyond. Affected by the war, these people have begun spreading across Europe. Bulgaria faces the continued migration of asylum seekers from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries, many attempting to cross the Bulgarian borders illegally only to continue on towards other countries. Being perhaps the poorest and least equipped EU member state to deal with the refugee crisis, Bulgaria represents only a means to an end for most migrants, who seek to continue on towards Germany or other wealthier Western European countries. Bulgarian reception centres registered more than 16,000 refugees in 2016 but fewer wanted to stay in the country. There have been incidents such as vigilantes 'hunting' refugees and an Afghan was shot for trying to cross the border. It is the 'European welfare state' or social safety which migrants seek – and that is in the West, where both living standards and financial support for refugees are higher. Yet thousands have no choice but to remain in Bulgaria.

Public opinion towards refugees has changed over the years. The first refugees were well accepted – they were looking for safety and in 2013 and 2014 many were well-educated Syrians. Nowadays most refugees enter the country illegally, aiming to reach Western Europe and they are young Iraqis and Afghans allegedly fleeing violence, insecurity or threats. *'Nine out of ten threw away their IDs, and few are interested in work or integration,'* according to Harmanli refugee camp manager Jordan Malinov. Jobs such as baker or cook have been offered to them but no newcomer has accepted a commitment that can postpone his or her goal to reach Germany. This attitude only reinforces the negative public perceptions.

Protests against migrant groups became a frequent occurrence in 2016, many of them involving local people demanding better government control over the refugee situation. Other protests have been organised by nationalist groups such as the October 2016 protest in Sofia around the central area of Lavov Most, organised by the 'National Resistance' movement.

Escalation of conflict occurs often as conditions worsen in refugee camps and communities rise up against what they perceive as threats to their security, whilst political entities aim to stir the conflict further without providing much in the way of viable solutions. Only recently, in November 2016, medical examiners were brought to the Harmanli refugee centre on suspicions that an outbreak of a contagious skin disease had occurred. Upon inspection, they concluded there was no risk of an epidemic; however, quarantine measures were put into place. Dissatisfied with the fact that they were restrained and not allowed to leave the camp, around 2,000 refugees protested, which ended in violent clashes with the police and local residents, the demolition of the camp and acts of arson, arrests and consequent legal procedures for those who assumed responsibility for the violence.

Timeline

- 2013 – Tensions regarding migrants from the Middle East are exacerbated when Bulgaria becomes the recipient of far more foreign nationals who entered the country illegally in comparison with previous years.
- August – October 2016 – Anti-migrant protests take place, organised by nationalist groups such as the 'National Resistance' movement.
- November 2016 – A parasitic skin disease breaks out in Harmanli refugee camp and the medical authorities impose a quarantine and restrict movement outside the camp.
- November 2016 – 2,000 refugees protest against the mobility restrictions in Harmanli; it turns into a violent fight with the police, causing the breakup and vandalising of the camp.
- December 2016 – Staff working in the refugee camps begin to protest their poor working conditions.
- November – December 2016 – Anti-migrant protests continue, organised by far-right nationalist movements.

Actors in the conflict

Primary actors:

- Migrants who entered the country without authorisation on their way to Western Europe, coming from Syria, as well as Iraq, Afghanistan, Algeria, Palestine, Mali and other countries.
- Citizens of towns and villages near the refugee centres and camps of the southern Bulgarian border such as the towns of Harmanli and Lyubimets.
- Vocal groups and parties with more extreme views, who criticise the lack of efficiency of government efforts to round up migrants for processing, aid and accommodation. They insist that migrants should not be allowed to enter the county in the first place.
- 'National Resistance' movement – a nationalist organisation opposing major establishments and ideologies such as liberalism, globalism, capitalism and parliamentary democracy.
- Government agencies enforcing the current European policy of rounding up illegal foreign nationals for processing and the provision of aid and accommodation.

Secondary actors:

- Bulgarian workers providing aid and services for the migrants.
- Police and army forces in charge of the border and area security as well as government officials tasked with processing and accommodation.
- NGOs and government institutions involved in directing policy regarding the treatment of migrants entering the country illegally and seeking refuge; humanitarian organisations like 'Friends of the Refugees'.
- Bulgarian citizens and residents, members of the public who follow the situation closely and take a stance, express opinions, voice concerns on public forums, etc.

Tertiary actors:

- NATO and European leaders and institutions dealing with the refugee wave.
- Countries involved in the war in Syria, with interests in the region: Turkey, USA, Russia.
- Major policy influencers such as France, Germany, the UK and other European states.

Relations among actors in the conflict

Foreign nationals in Harmanli, where the largest refugee camp in Bulgaria is located, express a prevailing desire to leave the country and continue on towards Western Europe. They want the authorities to let them cross the borders and move on. Almost none of them want to remain and settle in Bulgaria. What they do not want and what they worry about is to be forced to return to their home countries.

The **local Bulgarian population,** which has direct contact with the refugees is closely related to the conflict. In fact, many are very sympathetic and cooperate with the authorities or participate in humanitarian activities providing aid. Some are helping refugees or working for them by providing interpretation, orientation or other services. Local businesses are benefitting by the increase of customers and consumption of their services and goods. Reports say that local people are involved in the illegal trafficking and transportation of refugees. However, there are people who consider refugees as a threat to their way of life. Some residents of Harmanli, Lyubimets, Boyanovo and Sofia's Lavov Most and Ovcha Kupel districts have participated in numerous demonstrations demanding strict control over refugees and the relocation of refugee camps.

Nationalist parties such as VMRO, NFSB and Ataka have loudly denounced the government's efforts regarding the manner in which migration is managed. They insist that the government cease the operation of refugee camps and begin deporting migrants who enter the country illegally. Natsionalna Saprotiva (National Resistance), one of the most vocal anti-migrant groups, claims to have witnesses along the border who have counted 700–1,000 people crossing unhindered and undisturbed every day. All of them are heading to the Serbian border on their way to Western Europe. The nationalists insist that the vast majority of migrants are not registered, not monitored and not documented, which increases the risks for the public.

According to data gathered by the **State Agency for Refugees**, the majority of illegal migrants in 2016 are not Syrians fleeing the war in Syria. They are primarily from Afghanistan and Iraq, and their purpose is to reach Germany or other Western European countries.

Government structures, agencies and international and local NGOs such as the National Parliament, Ministry of the Interior, National Security Agency, National Legal Aid Bureau, The Academy of the Ministry of the Interior, the Sofia Administrative Court, the UNHCR in Bulgaria, UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration, the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee and others recently came out with a common action plan aiming to guarantee administrative control over illegal foreign nationals in Bulgaria. They argue that Bulgaria, as an EU member state, must honour its obligations towards upholding international civil protection laws by utilising funding provided through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism for delivering aid to people seeking safety from violence. (ПЛАН ЗА ДЕЙСТВИЕ, 2016).

Staff working in the migrant camps. In late 2016 workers who cook at and maintain the refugee centres started to protest their working conditions and demanded higher than minimum wage, as they consider the working conditions stressful and taxing. Security and medical personnel on duty at the migrant camps felt ill-equipped to handle such a large mass of people. (Проект: Сблъсък… 2016)

Relations among these actors are strained. There are vastly differing stances between the government agencies, humanitarian organisations, parts of the public and the nationalist groups and parties. While the agencies and institutions work towards implementing policies set by national and European legislation using the available funding and expertise, the opposition argues that these are the wrong policies to follow and even when they are followed, the government fails to manage the various risks. There appears to be no meaningful dialogue with the public (especially those directly affected by the presence of refugee camps) on how the situation should be handled.

Sources and causes of the conflict

Even though protests organised by local groups or nationalist movements tend to generalise and separate people into groups, the data suggests that at present most migrants come from a low socio-economic status. Integration could prove highly challenging to overcome in the years ahead, especially when most have no motivation to stay and integrate into Bulgarian society. The government has already suffered heavy criticism for failing to combat poverty and adopt policies that can improve the living standard of a large part of the population living below the poverty line. The presence of poorly educated foreign groups detained on their way to Western Europe and kept against their will increases public apprehension about security, social, economic, health and

safety risks. The government's reactive behaviour without a clear strategy to ease tensions and ensure a long-term sustainable migration policy only feeds this anxiety.

The main source of the problem is the manner in which illegal migrants are being handled. According to data gathered by the State Agency for Refugees for the period of 1993 – October 2016, in 2013 the number of refugees seeking asylum in Bulgaria increased to over 7,000, a spike from 1,500 in 2012 and less than 1,000 in 2011. Significant spikes have been observed in the following years as well: over 11,000 in 2014; over 20,000 in 2015; over 16,000 by October 2016.

For the reported period, the total number of Syrians is 19,667, whereas Afghans and Iraqis account for 23,256 and 17,807, respectively. In 2016, the number of Syrians looking for aid dropped to 2,122, while the number of Afghans and Iraqis was 7,961 and 4,708, respectively. In October 2016, demographically, 50 % of the refugees were male, 38 % were children, and only 12 % were women. In terms of education, nearly 79 % of the migrants in Bulgarian refugee camps have not finished high school and 27 % have not attended school at all (State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers).

The data indicates that the majority of migrants are poorly educated, single young men. This fact alone causes the neighbouring communities and the public to become worried about and riled up against them, but even more negative attitudes are directed against the government, which seemingly fails in its responsibility to properly process and handle their presence.

The negative development at this stage is largely defined by inaction or a lack of sufficient action from the responsible institutions. Inadequate measures or a lack of measures altogether could lead to further deterioration. The political instability and the resignation of the government in the autumn of 2016 were also contributing factors. Parties and groups aiming to push their own political agendas end up creating more chaos than order.

Background of the conflict

The influx of new and culturally different people who disrespect law and order by entering the country through illegal channels, with some potentially perceived as a threat, has inevitably sparked much controversy and raised tension among the resident population. Public opinion is divided between those who support the country's commitment to accommodate refugees as fulfilling its humanitarian duty and those who perceive refugees mainly as a threat. The National Security Council has announced that the increased pressure from migration is one of the most serious challenges to Bulgaria's national security in recent years, mainly because the country does not have sufficient resources nor the necessary administrative and technical capacity to manage processes associated with the growing number of illegal migrants.

Some of the hotly discussed issues relate to the state's provision of adequate measures regarding security, the screening process and the community, social and economic impact of migrants in the country.

Dynamics of the conflict, prospects for improvement

Insufficient resources to manage migration have been a primary concern. To address that concern, the EU Commission has allocated increasing funds, from 5.6 million euros in 2013 to 160 million euros in 2016, specifically for the purpose of dealing with migrants seeking aid in Bulgaria. In 2014, the European Refugee Fund granted 5 million euros to increase the capacity of the National Agency for Refugees. Towards the end of 2014, another 15 million euros were allocated to boost border control. The majority of this funding, however, has yet to be utilised.

Government institutions, specialised agencies and NGOs have been engaged to develop action plans and effective measures for managing migration, including the application of a differentiated approach to the needs and interests of various groups of refugees. Women, unaccompanied children, families with children and people with disabilities have been objects of special interest and protection by NGOs specialised in defending their rights. Educational institutions have been prepared to work with children and adults who want to study the Bulgarian language and integrate into the society.

Along with migrants seeking refugee status and economic migrants, some hostile agents, including militants, have been identified. There are continuing deportations of people considered to be national security risks. The extradition of suspected foreign fighters has raised the country's counterterrorism profile. In response to the perceived increase of threats, the government has worked to enhance its prevention and enforcement tools,

including the criminalisation of foreign fighters and developing a new counterterrorism strategy for countering violent radicalisation and terrorism that is awaiting approval by the Council of Ministers after having been posted for public comment in November 2016. It aims to strengthen interagency coordination in combating terrorism and improving cooperation with civil society, business organisations, communities and religious leaders.

Finally, the government has developed a draft action plan on the strategy for countering radicalisation and terrorism, including the development of a national programme by 2020 for members of extremist groups to help them de-radicalise, rehabilitate, integrate and return to normal.

Possible future scenarios

A realistic conflict prevention scenario is one that is based on a stronger leadership in handling the refugee situation. Based on accumulated funding and resources from the EU there is a move towards stronger management and technical skills related to the implementation of measures that are timely, adequate and effective: from stricter border control to timelier processing, proper services to refugees and communities which accommodate them and better supervision of these services.

Most of the peace actors – NGOs, government agencies and citizens – fit in this scenario by providing services and focusing on the need to work with the public. Civil society organisations providing services, including mediation and facilitation, have shown enormous potential, taking into account all the actors and agents in the conflict.

Finally, taking a chance on things as they are, Bulgaria could improve its demographic situation, reduce its brain drain and develop a better future through the creation of equal opportunities for migrants, engaging young and motivated migrants in educational and economic activities and working towards improving the standard of living for all of its citizens.

3. Nature preservation vs. economic development

Short summary of the conflict

Despite its relatively small area, Bulgaria is amidst the richest countries in Europe with regards to biodiversity and wild nature. Unfortunately the protected areas cover only about 5 % of the country. Bulgaria is part of the Natura 2000, a European ecological network of special protected areas. Ecologists, organised in various NGOs, have been raising the alarm for years that this nature is facing complete destruction as a result of the chaotic economic development of the last 25 years. Precious and beautiful parts of the country are being built up, forests are being felled, wetlands are being dried, there is serious poaching – all of this is taking place with no measures, order or morals. Violations of the nature preservation laws happen on a daily basis.

Conflicts arise when constructions or tourist facilities expand into new territories which are important natural centres. Green activists, government and business enterprises are commonly parties to these conflicts. These constructions affect ecosystems and cause conflicts between people's aspirations for economic prosperity and their need for a healthy life and a clean environment. The challenge is to find solutions that achieve both social and environmental goals. One concern about coastal development projects is the water quality in seaside resorts. A minimum level of water clarity is required to make the water attractive for bathing. The rampant development of coastal resorts in Varna and Bourgas Bays has led to deterioration of the water quality because the tourism capacity has expanded without an adequate corresponding increase in the waste management capacity. These poorly maintained wastewater treatment plants have not changed in number or type since 1975. Most of the newly constructed tourist facilities in these resorts lack a connection to the sewer system, increasing the input of nutrients and suspended solids into coastal waters.

One 'hot spot' of this conflict has been the business development plan of Karadere to build the 'Black Sea Gardens' resort. Karadere is an emblematic site in Bulgaria and one of three beaches used for ecological tourism. Ecologists believe that the urbanisation plan would destroy the nature. An ecological assessment of this urbanisation plan has not been approved and environmental activists suspect that private economic interests are working their way around the public interest in preserving the biodiversity of Karadere. A corruption scheme has been detected and described by *Bivol*, a newspaper of investigative journalists.

Timeline

- April 2013 – Madara Europe submits documents to the Bulgarian Ministry of Energy, Economy and Tourism to receive a first-class investor certificate to build the 'Black Sea Gardens Resort' in Karadere. The complex was designed by Norman Foster. The documents leak online through the anonymous sharing platform Balkanleaks[2] and are marked as 'strictly confidential.'
- July 2013 – The Ministry of Energy, Economy and Tourism gives a negative opinion.
- March 2014 – Madara Europe resubmit the documents to the Ministry of Energy, Economy and Tourism.
- September 2014 – Madara Europe publicly announce a project for the construction of a large holiday village in Karadere. In the documents of the company, filed with the Trade Registry, the following is written: 'a project called Black Sea Gardens'.
- October 2014 – Approval of the project by the Ministry of Economics and the Regional Inspection of Environment of Waters – Burgas.
- October 2014 – Protests organised by green activists demand a change of the authorities' decision and an assessment of the ecological consequences. The decision was made without any inspections on the site and only pursuant to the investors' documentation, which was supposed to represent these investors' interests. The Biodiversity Foundation submits a letter of protest demanding a reversal of this decision. As a result and under public pressure the Regional Inspection change their decision and demand that an assessment of the environment be performed.
- 2015 – Madara Europe appeal the reversed decision of the Regional Inspectorate to Bulgaria's Highest Administrative Court. In October 2015 the Highest Administrative Court approves the first decision of the Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water, which did not require an ecological assessment. As a result, it provokes new waves of protests organised by green activists.
- 2016 – The municipality of Bjala makes the decision to divide Karadere into two parts, one of them to be given a new name and approved for investment projects.
- May – December 2016 – Protests against the authorities' decisions to find ways to support the project and the danger represented by implementing the Black Sea Gardens project and by overbuilding the Karadere.

Actors in the conflict

Primary actors:

- Domestic and international businesspersons and investors in tourism and infrastructure by the Black Sea coast (Madara Europe, Bulgarian Properties Investment Trust, Norman Foster etc.).
- Green activists – Za Zemjata, For Nature Coalition, 'Bulgarian Black Sea Coast' association, Biodiversity Foundation and others.
- Regional Inspection of the Ministry of Environment and Water.
- Citizens living near the area or visiting protected beaches by the Black Sea coast.

Secondary actors:

- The Government – the Ministry of Energy, Economy and Tourism; The Ministry of Investment Planning.
- The municipalities of Varna, Bjala and Burgas.
- The media.

Tertiary actors: Bulgarian society, the EU.

Relations among actors in the conflict

The conflict began with the Ministry of Energy, Economy and Tourism and the Regional Inspection of the Environment and Water – Burgas approving the business plan for the development of the Black Sea Gardens resort. An assessment of the environmental consequences of this plan was missing. Protests in Varna, Burgas and Sofia started in front of the Ministry and its regional offices, demanding the preservation of one of the last wild beaches by the Black Sea. The protests were organised by green activists to demand a change of the authorities' decision and the provision of an assessment of the ecological consequences. They pointed out that

2 https://balkanleaks.eu/madara-europe-2013-karader-investment-project/

the authorities made a decision without performing any inspections on the site and only after consulting the investors' documentation, which was supposed to represent the investors' interests. In the meantime the municipality of Bjla developed and approved a new plan for its territories in which the Karadere area was divided and one part was excluded from the Karadere protected territory and listed as adequate for investment projects. This created a new wave of protests in which green activists accused the authorities of being part of a corruption scheme and of neglecting the public interest. Their point is that Bulgaria needs politicians who clearly defend its national interests and it is expected that 'in future they will stand firm against contracts that are unprofitable and environmentally dangerous for Bulgaria,' as stated by the 'For Nature' Coalition Association.

Sources and causes of the conflict

The main cause of the conflict is the strategic control of natural resources and the financial wealth that such control brings. Moreover, very often an environmental conflict manifests itself as a political, social, economic, ethnic, religious or territorial conflict, or a conflict over resources or national interests. These are traditional conflicts induced by environmental degradation. Environmental conflict is characterised by the principal importance of degradation in one or more of the following fields: impoverishment of the living space, overburdening of the environment's sink capacity, overuse of renewable resources, and pollution.

A number of factors have influenced the Karadere conflict. Economic stability, governmental policy, demography, patterns of consumption, historical consciousness and power dynamics all play a role in construction in this milieu. These factors affect the vulnerability of populations, institutions, and ecosystems to degradation and environmental change.

Climate change is likely to further stress both the ecosystem and resource management, as the meteorological records of the last 10 years show that summer temperatures, as well as the frequency and intensity of rain and of storm events, have increased substantially along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. The implementation of proper management is hampered by the lack of cooperation between the different stakeholders and decision makers and within the ministerial infrastructure.

Dynamics of the conflict and prospects for improvement

The policy environment for natural resource management has changed dramatically since 1989, from centralised top-down conservation approaches to community-based (municipality) livelihood approaches, which are increasingly seen as offering pro-poor alternatives to resource management. In Bulgaria, recent decentralisation efforts have reinforced pluralism in property, stakeholders and uses, and complex relationships among a wide range of social actors and resource users. The intensive development of tourism and projects for economic improvement are characterised by a combination of uses, users, resources and rules that govern resource use. However, economic crises during recent years have led to more severe environmental exploitation, and people and institutions compete for the natural resources they need to ensure or enhance their livelihoods.

The main NGOs active in recent months are 'Za Zemiata' ('For the Earth') and 'For Nature Coalition'. They are following the development of the Karadere case and are determined to work for self-sustainable lifestyles and for responsible personal and political decisions, while combating the exploitation of people and nature. These NGOs are the main peace actors and they have provided a number of legal and other initiatives for the resolution of environmental disputes and conflicts; this is an important component for long-term sustainability in which issues of diversity and well-being are considered.

The key points of the dialogue between an ecologically orientated NGO and the government are:

- Productivity has to be environmentally sustainable;
- Polarised debate is replaced with dialogue and facilitated information sharing;
- Active listening is practiced as part of appreciating the underlying concerns of others.

Background of the conflict

After the 1990s, tourist resorts in Bulgaria expanded greatly, especially these that were situated on the seaside and the mountains. In recent years, construction on the coasts of Varna and Bourgas Bays and tourism have become two of the area's main sources of income, wealth and employment, whilst exerting additional pressure on the ecosystem. The same is true of the ski resorts in Pirin and Rila. The hardships of the political transition

in the early 1990s pushed environmental issues ever lower on the political agenda. The privatisation of former state property led to a revival in resort development and today, tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors of the local economy and accounts for 61% of the local gross domestic product (GDP), with trade services included. These decisions for building on new territories affect the ecosystems and cause value conflicts between social values, aspirations for economic prosperity and environmental outcomes.

Possible future scenarios

This conflict shows no indicators that it will grow into violence but it is persistent and will continue to exist. Progress in applying integrated ecological management in Bulgaria is rather limited due to the economic, political and institutional constraints inherited from the previous (communist) regime. Although a number of economic and political obstacles and legacies of the past still prevent Bulgaria from allocating the resources necessary for ensuring sustainable development, the main problem is the implementation of the legislation, not the legislation as such. That is why the conflict between eco-activists and business investors in Bulgarian society is so persistent – while the business investors' interest is to circumvent the laws and achieve their goals, the ecologists insist upon more responsible local and central governments that work in the interests of the people. Since corruption in Bulgaria is a major issue, economic profit prevails and the country is losing its last preserved sites by the Black Sea coast.

Even though all the stakeholders have recognised the importance of tourism for Bulgaria, the direct link between the health of ecosystems and the development of tourism is obvious. The green activists' point is that natural resources should not be managed as mere production inputs, but more as ecological systems of integrated processes for stable economic development. In the long term, continued inaction regarding ecological problems could cause greater losses to the national economy.

4. The LGBT community and traditional values

At its core, the conflict involves opposition between LGBT minority groups and proponents of the 'traditional' understanding of sexuality, chiefly accepted as heterosexuality.

Short summary of the conflict

The LGBT community desires to reach a point of general acceptance and acknowledgement of their basic human rights by all members of society, so that they can continue to be themselves without fear of persecution or discrimination. In return, active and vocal opposition from parties such as the Orthodox Church and far-right, nationalist parties and groups in Bulgaria seek to prevent the full integration of LGBT members into society, claiming that they pose a serious risk to Bulgarian children and traditional family values. The resulting conflict has been marked by clashes, hate crimes, discrimination and a multitude of other physical and non-physical acts of intolerance.

Timeline

18 June 2016. A more recent example of the ongoing conflict is the ninth Annual Sofia Pride parade, which gathers together over 2,000 people. The LGBT communities, as well as heterosexual citizens, join the event to express their desire for equal rights for all, and to protest the continuing discrimination against people of differing sexual orientations in Bulgaria. The rally, which includes a march through the streets of central Sofia and a concert later in the evening, proceeds without any violent collisions, unlike previous years when far-right extremists made attempts to attack the rally, provoking minor clashes with the police. This time, however, Sofia Pride faces a counter-protest of right-nationalist parties and movements against the rights of LGBT people to express themselves. Along with homophobic slogans and posters, the counter-protest carries the warning title 'protect children from debauchery'.

The organisers of these two events apply to the municipality for permission to hold them and this year, just before they begin, it emerges that the hours and locations of both events overlap. As a result, the municipality of Sofia proposes staggering the starting times of the two events. Sofia Pride's organisers say that they rely on the assistance of the police for a peaceful passing of the parade. Moreover, Sofia Pride's organisers release an open letter to the municipality, calling on it to act to prevent the event from being confronted with an 'aggressive

counter-demonstration, provided by representatives of sports hooligans and ultranationalist informal groups.' The head of Sofia's police force states that they will take preventative measures to avoid clashes.

The focus of the 2016 Sofia Pride is *Parents, Friends & Allies*. Families and friends can provide a nurturing, inclusive, and supportive environment for LGBT people, help the broader society to understand the challenges LGBT communities face, and promote tolerance between different generations and different groups. This year's Sofia Pride also takes place some days after the mass shootings at an LGBT club in Orlando, Florida, which increases security concerns among the LGBT community in Sofia.

As has become customary in the years since Sofia Pride began, the parade has come under verbal attack from the **Bulgarian Orthodox Church** and from nationalist political groupings. City municipality councillors for the nationalist VMRO have called for the parade to be banned, citing – as does the Church – objections that the date is the same as that on which the Orthodox Church marks All Souls' Day, the day of commemoration of the dead.

The organisers of the event protesting Sofia Pride say in a Facebook post that their aim was to keep children and young people from demonstrations of debauchery: 'For yet another year, the sodomites come out to demonstrate their depravity, as they target the children of Bulgaria. For yet another year, we come out to demonstrate morality.'

In recent years, Sofia Pride has generally passed peacefully, with a strong police presence. In counterpoint to the annual condemnation by the Orthodox Church and far-right groups, the Pride event traditionally attracts statements and demonstrations of support from ambassadors from Western countries.

Actors in the conflict

Primary actors:

The Sofia Pride group of volunteers who organise the event every year. Through the annual Sofia Pride event as well as their website, social media participation in public discussions and debates, the group aims to sustain a public dialogue about the need of LGBT people to be treated fairly and equally. Specific short-term and long-term goals include:

- Passing legislation which criminalises hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Easy, low-cost access to services allowing the change of one's gender in social security records.
- A clear message by state institutions condemning hate speech, including hate speech based on sexual and gender orientation.
- Adding current, relevant scientific information about LGBT people in schools' curricula by first providing teachers and school staff with the necessary training on issues of discrimination and school bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Better health services responding to the specific needs of LGBT people.
- Legalising and equalising the status of all families, regardless of gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.
- The GLAS Foundation. This organisation leads campaigns against hate crimes and aims to overcome prejudice and stereotypes in the media about LGBT people. They also aim to work with parents of children with a non-heterosexual orientation in order to help them cope with feelings of confusion, embarrassment, guilt or anger they may have experienced whilst raising their children.
- LGBT Youth Organisation 'Deystvie'. Its main goal is to defend the rights of LGBT people by standing up to homophobia and transphobia via information campaigns and exposing efforts to spread disinformation regarding issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. They provide free legal advice to LGBT people.
- The Bulgarian Orthodox Church. The Church has condemned any non-heterosexual relations as sinful and unnatural. Days before the 2016 Sofia Pride event, Patriarch Neofit called upon the public to stand against the portrayal of homosexuality and transsexuality as the norm (Църквата ни заклейми … 2016).
- Ataka and VMRO. The two nationalistic parties have declared their opposition to such events as Sofia Pride. According to their political platform, the far-right groups believe such events should be banned because not only do they go against traditional family values and morality, but they are a forceful way of pushing a political agenda. As part of its policy and legislation proposals to the parliament in 2016, Ataka included a specific amendment to the Penal Code which prohibits 'public demonstrations of homosexuality.'

Secondary actors:

- The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee. An independent non-governmental organisation for the protection of human rights, the BHC aims to support the LGBT community by raising awareness about their issues. Radoslav Stoyanov, one of the biggest supporters of the LGBT movement and an expert analyst at BHC, has been working for equal rights since 2008.
- Government institutions. Currently, government institutions are falling behind in constructing meaningful reports on crimes related to homophobia and transphobia; statistics are lagging behind in comparison with other types of criminal behavior. Furthermore, analysts such as Radoslav Stoyanov point out that crimes of a sexual nature (including those based on homophobia and transphobia) are often covered under the guise of other, more neutral wrongdoings and are thus reported incorrectly.

Tertiary actors: International organisations, NGOs, the EU.

Bulgarian society has seemingly grown more accepting of the LGBT community, as evidenced by many and various initiatives in the business and public sectors supporting the equal rights of sexual minorities. However, people tend to remain wary and sceptical of any public displays of sexuality, especially homosexuality and transsexuality, which can sometimes cross over into what people refer to as 'vulgar territory', or over the top, ham-fisted or forceful displays of one's freedom of expression.

Relations among actors in the conflict

LGBT people in Bulgaria still have to live their lives in the shadows. Those who come out risk losing their friends and their jobs. 'I've got nothing against LGBT, so long as they remain invisible' and 'I have nothing against gays, as long as they don't show who they are in public.' This is how many Bulgarians think. In addition, most LGBT people accept this condition and try to remain as discreet as possible. The main argument against LGBT people is that they destroy traditional family values, tread on Christian morality and are a bad role model for younger generations.

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church condemns homosexuality and LGBT people, calling their behaviour 'a sin which must be confessed or eradicated.' The Bulgarian Nationalist parties and movements have also been strongly critical and intolerant of LGBT people. Citizens who support their position often comment: 'I don't mind gay people, I just don't like them parading and kissing in public,' or 'How do we explain this to our children?'

The conflict between conservative advocates of traditional family values and the activists who work for the protection of the human rights of LGBT people has persisted in our society for more than 10 years. The general public attitude is overwhelmingly against same-sex marriage, which is still not legal in Bulgaria. According to a 2015 survey by the European Commission, just one-half of the Bulgarians agreed that gay, lesbian and bisexual people should have the same rights as heterosexual people, a proportion that has barely changed since 2006.

Extreme political parties always seize the opportunity to be seen protesting against LGBT citizens (for example, at the Sofia Pride parade), while mainstream parties generally shy away. Despite that, embassies of EU countries and the United States actively support public events for the protection of rights for LGBT people; only a few Bulgarian politicians have joined in.

The media are the main obstacle to productive public conversations about the rights of LGBT people in Bulgaria. Regarding the study provided by the Democracy Foundation and the Institute for Modern Politics, a significant part of the Bulgarian media is rife with hate speech against LGBT communities and human rights activists, especially online. This is not the only obstacle towards the broader acceptance of LGBT people. Political apathy in the community often dissuades its members from reporting discrimination or hate crimes. As a result, LGBT people live in a closed world that creates a positive but private environment. There is silence and little else on LGBT issues in Bulgaria. Some LGBT activists seek legal reforms, such as an amendment to the Bulgarian Penal Code to include hate crimes based on sexuality. Currently, these are reported as acts of 'hooliganism'. Moreover, a new administrative process is needed to facilitate the change of one's gender in legal documents. Bulgarian laws still lag behind those of other European countries. In Europe, 28 states recognise same-sex relationships in one way or another.

Sources and causes of the conflict

The main source of the conflict is a common belief about the nature of human sexuality. That there is only one normal, natural, and moral sexual behavior and it involves sexual activity between a man and woman – perhaps

restricted to couples who are married to each other. Moreover, the lack of adequate information makes people fear those who have a different sexual orientation or a different gender identification. However, demands for marriage equality in the LGBT community have brought out some of the worst examples of religious homophobia. The LGBT demands of rights for social and legal equality have been challenged by a very large and well-resourced pool of religious adherents.

Dynamics of the conflict

LGBT people in Bulgaria face violence and inequality – and sometimes execution – because of how they look or who they are. The existing LGBT organisations work for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people's rights, and with activists representing multiple identities and issues. They document and expose abuse based on sexual orientation and gender identity in Bulgaria, including violence; unequal treatment; censorship; medical abuse; discrimination in health, jobs and housing; domestic violence; child abuse; and denial of family rights and recognition. These organisations advocate for laws and policies that will protect everyone's dignity. LGBT activists want legal reforms, such as an amendment to the Bulgarian Penal Code to include hate crimes based on sexuality and new administrative processes to facilitate the change of one's gender in legal documents.

Representatives of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church believe that society must oppose LGBT people and their behaviour and resist any attempts to support their public manifestation and equal rights.

Nationalistic parties and movements have declared that that LGBT people should not have the right to express their sexuality through parades. Moreover, they have proposed jail sentences and huge fines for 'public manifestations of homosexuality', which have been rejected from the Bulgarian Assembly.

The political party Ataka have proposed a change in the Penal Code that would introduce a strict ban on 'public manifestations of homosexuality'. The proposition was rejected, so in response, Ataka drafted a new Amendment to the Law of Gatherings, Meetings, and Manifestation. These nationalist parties use LGBT people as a political instrument for their personal agendas. In turn, the LGBT activists are fighting for legal reforms, such as an amendment to the Bulgarian Penal Code to include hate crimes based on sexuality and the establishing of new administrative processes to facilitate the change of one's gender in legal documents. What was missing was the clear argument this is a pure form of discrimination because it is treating a certain group of the society worse than it treats the rest of the people in the country. It is hard to change the Bulgarian society's conservative attitudes if there is no open debate. Because of this, the main activities of LGBT organisations are related to organising public debates and raising awareness about who LGBT people are and the needs that they have.

Currently, the freedom of LGBT expression is in the shadows. The 'community' consists in groups of homosexuals and transsexuals in big cities like Plovdiv, Sofia, Varna and Bourgas which have a strong network among themselves, but who are forced to keep their sexual orientation secret from the outside world. The LGBT communities want to be accepted, not to hide. They also wish to be able to legally report on and seek protection from violations of their civil rights in cases of violence, harassment or discrimination. At the same time, nationalists, who have gained popularity and political power in recent years, routinely object to LGBT people gaining civil rights.

Possible future scenarios

As a whole, the LGBT society in Bulgaria is not as organised as it should be and this can be viewed as self-sabotage on some level. One negative scenario would be that this trend would continue, which could be an obstacle to making a positive change for LGBT people in political, legislative or social terms. There have been violent confrontations in the past between LGBT people and nationalists (especially during the annual Sofia Pride parades) and the potential for such confrontations is still present and is likely to continue in the foreseeable future. Moreover, only a few organisations work in the field of protection of LGBT rights whilst there are so many problems to be addressed in the fields of legislation, healthcare services, education and social issues. Some initiatives include educating the LGBT communities through blogs, providing information to people about good practices all over the world, raising awareness of LGBT issues and promoting their feeling of belonging to the wider LGBT community, both locally and globally.

Despite difficulties, the future development of the LGBT community seems optimistic because of the strong public opposition towards extreme forms of intolerance. Examples of other European countries and how they protect their LGBT communities are becoming more visible.

The Bulgarian Protection against Discrimination Act prohibits all direct or indirect discrimination on many grounds, explicitly including sexual orientation. Moreover, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, by which Bulgaria is bound, prohibits any discrimination based on sexual orientation. In addition, Bulgaria should act upon the recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to its member states, including Bulgaria, to combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.

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CZECH REPUBLIC

Introduction

The ongoing transition in the Czech Republic affects diverse value conflicts in society. These are manifested e.g. by the lack of quality journalism, lack of a strong civil society, decreased trust in expert systems, poor political ethics, little tolerance for differences etc. Disinformation and hoaxes in the mass media create another convenient source for conflict escalation. Another trait common to all conflicts is the danger of normalisation and the fear of deviating from the crowd, a remainder of the communist era. Blind trust in expert systems and institutions, even if they prove to be discriminatory or malfunctioning, persists.

This aspect goes hand in hand with an education system in which, despite various attempts to reform it, children possess little or no critical thought.

The future of the conflicts will probably be shaped by the results of the parliamentary elections in autumn 2017 and the presidential elections in January 2018.

1. Muslim minority vs. majority relations

Background of the conflict

According to a comprehensive analysis titled 'Muslims in the Czech Republic' (Topinka, 2016), there are approximately 22,000 Muslims in the country (the majority being Sunni). This figure was counted regarding residence, statistically registered by the Ministry of the Interior. This figure included Czech converts (approximately 400 people). Three-fifths of all Muslims are economically active and are better educated than the average Czech population, which makes them more similar to the Muslims settled in the USA than to those living in Western European countries. Muslims in the Czech Republic are not organised (politically or otherwise); they do not form a community, as they are usually presented wrongly by the media and for most of them religion is, above all, a private concern. Their perception of what Islam is and the way they practice it varies enormously as well. Praying rooms or mosques, besides being scarce and not having the exterior look of such religious places, additionally fulfil the role of social, cultural, educational and caritative meeting points, as largely practiced in other parts of the world. Despite their invisibility in public life and the fact that the majority of people have never encountered a Muslim in the Czech Republic, there is a great deal of animosity that has been created around Islam and Muslims in the past 2–3 years.

Negative attitudes towards Muslims are a relatively new phenomenon in the Czech Republic. Tomáš Janků from the 'Sociofactor' Institute explains that in the '90s we could talk about negative attitudes toward 'Arabs', thus the main focus was on ethnicity rather than religion. This was the case of Arab students, an almost invisible and unknown group to the public, facing many assaults and hate behavior in student dormitories. In 1998 a tragic hate crime (Kostlán 2012) occurred in Prague, when a Sudanese student was murdered by 2 young neo-Nazis, one of whom was sentenced to prison for 13.5 years. On the other hand, Muslims drew public and media attention in the '90s as well, but rather in a neutral or positive way, as many asylum seekers from the former Yugoslavia were received and welcomed in the Czech Republic. The overall discourse was rather charity-oriented, rich in narratives of war, survival and need of help. Since then, no major interest was shown in this topic until very recently. Sociologist Vanda Černohorská (Černohorská 2015) suggests that negative attitudes towards Muslims started in the Czech Republic far before the Charlie Hebdo massacre in Paris in January 2015, which is considered to be responsible for triggering hate speech against Muslims in Europe. She pointed out the results of the election calculator EUvox from May 2014, designed and analysed by the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences (Sociologický ústav Akademie věd ČR 2014). This report concluded that more than one-half of the respondents perceived Islam as a potential source of danger for society. This observation made the Czech Republic one of the first European countries expressing reluctance towards welcoming Muslims prior to terrorist attacks. This ambience is the result of a lack of personal contacts with Muslims, poverty and exclusion of Czechs, leftist politicians' failure to offer meaningful alternatives to economic and political crises as well as media disinformation campaigns

and online hate speech. The radicalisation of European youngsters, the terrorist attacks across Europe in 2015/2016, Russian propaganda and a lack of credibility in the media also contribute to the complexity of this conflict.

Timeline

Negative attitudes towards Muslims and the worsening of Muslim vs. majority relationships were registered much earlier than the 2015 terrorist events.

2013 – Two female students, one from Afghanistan, one from Somalia, are banned from wearing hijabs covering their heads and necks during classes at a secondary nursing school in Prague. Ombudsman Anna Šabatová supports the students at that time, declaring that the school's behaviour is discriminatory (ČR čeká šátkový… 2016). In 2016 one of the students takes legal action against the school.

Spring 2014 – Another scandal emerges around a book written by the Muslim parish chairman Vladimír Sáňka, who is accused of instigating hate and supporting radical Islam and is threatened with a 10-year prison sentence. As a reaction to the book's release, the police's Organised Crime Division storms the Prague Islamic Foundation during a Friday prayer in April 2014 and detains 10 people. The entire intervention lasts 4.5 hours. Another intervention occurs in the prayer room on Blatské street, where approximately 70 Muslims, including women and children, pray at that time of the day. The police comment on their actions as legitimate and sensible towards the Muslims, who, on the other hand, condemn the police for interrupting them in the middle of their most valuable prayer time and encouraging a mood of hatred against Muslims in the Czech Republic. In September 2016 a judge decides that Salafism – the main approach used in the book – is not a movement but an ideology and Sáňka is released.

Summer 2014 – Prague City Hall refuses the request of the Muslim parish for a non-public cemetery, as the parish is running out of burial space in Olšany Cemeteries, its usual place. Deputy Mayor Vladimíra Ludková sparks outrage with an article published on an information server dedicated to the citizens of the Municipal District of Prague 8. She alerts readers by arguing that this is just the 'beginning' of an Islamic invasion of the Czech Republic. Her article produces heated debates (Janda 2014). The municipality distances itself from this stance, though, declaring that the article only represents her private opinion.

September 2014 – The Muslim parish, after 10 years of being registered officially, requests second-level registration, which would enable the parish to establish schools or to teach Islam in public schools. The request is refused, as some legal duties have not been met. A petition against the registration is launched by the initiative 'We Don't Want Islam in the Czech Republic', led by Martin Konvička and it is signed by more than 24,500 people. The same initiative organises frequent protests against the 'Islamisation' of the Czech Republic during 2014 and 2015, mobilising more than 80,000 sympathisers on their Facebook page in the first year.

2014/2015 – In the last few years, Teplice has been the epicentre of many cohabitation conflicts between Arab spa visitors and locals, or at least this is how the media have portrayed it. In 2015 friction between them sparks again, as Arab tourists allegedly throw garbage in public parks. Long-term Arab residents of the city then organise a cleaning 'campaign', cleaning the park and educating tourists on the use of trash bins.

December 2014 – A chain of protests and demonstrations occurs in Prague, Brno and other cities, organised by NGOs working with migrants as a reaction to the refusal of Minister of the Interior Milan Chovanec to accept 15 seriously injured Syrian children with their families, arguing that the Czech Republic will do better at helping the neighbouring countries of Syria. He also refuses to consent to a quota system. As a result of international pressure, the government accepts Syrian children in January 2015.

2015/2016 – Animosity increases mainly after each terrorist act, starting with Charlie Hebdo in January 2015 and finishing with the Berlin Christmas market in December 2016. The attacks reinforce the perception of Muslims being connected to terrorist groups and putting European cities in danger. The nationalist, anti-Muslim movement 'We Don't Want Islam in the Czech Republic' starts to gain more power and followers. Along with this, people are puzzled by the refugee crisis and the asylum seekers themselves, who do not seem to match old images of poor female refugees with children on their laps. Their new look leads to many conspiracy theories, all suspecting young Daesh fighters of invading Europe. On one hand, there is an abundance of online hate speech addressed at Muslims, and a hate crime against a Syrian man takes place in Prague in January 2016, but on the other hand, there are many individuals, initiatives and institutions helping asylum seekers in the Czech

Republic or in the Balkan region, where a Czech team of volunteers has taken the lead over slow, institutionalised humanitarian organisations. Many campaigns are also launched to counter disinformation, as many other 'campaigns' have started to spread hoaxes and anti-Muslim beliefs, which seem to be more visible and more frequently heard in online space.

Actors in the conflict

Primary actors: The media and politicians.

It would be right to count a substantial part of the mainstream media and the majority of the so-called 'alternative media' as among the primary actors in framing Muslims in the Czech Republic as a conflicting topic. One of the biggest failures would be the silence on the conflict in Syria since its beginning and the portrayal of the refugee crisis as something unexpected. Czech readers have been very poorly informed on the issue and have perceived the 'flow' of refugees as irrational and unfounded, which has provided space for various conspiracy theories to take root on social media. The following examples bring evidence in that regard.

Sociologist Michal Tkaczyk from Masaryk University analysed the way 3 information gateways (Novinky, iDnes and ČT24.cz) constructed the media representation of the refugee 'crisis' in the second half of 2015 (Tkaczyk, 2017). One of the main findings conveys the securitisation of the topic and its presentation as a threat to the local population. Asylum seekers were not interviewed at all or were rarely interviewed, male respondents being overrepresented (85 %–90 %) compared to the real configuration (58 %), which reinforces the popular picture of asylum seekers as being strong and dangerous young Muslim radicals invading Europe.

At the beginning of 2016 FTV Prima television was accused of having manipulated the translation of one Iraqi refugee, pretending to criticise the living conditions in the Czech Republic (Břešťan 2016). The affair came to the attention of the Institute of Independent Journalism, which later collected evidence on how the management of the television station 'ordered' staff to portray the refugee 'crisis' in a negative light. The whole case caught the attention of the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting (RRTV) of the Czech Republic, which required further explanations from the TV station on several other news reports.

Another issue the Czech media face is the abundance of fake news. In November 2016, Czech Radio (Český rozhlas 2016) collected the 20 most often shared news items from standard information servers and from disinformation websites. The findings pointed out that disinformation news is shared on Facebook 4 % more often than news coming from standard servers, a percentage that makes a significant difference when it succeeds in instigating hatred and spreading confusion.

Another pilot study conducted by sociologists from Masaryk University (Macková, A., Žádník, Š., Macek, J. 2017) concluded that the media lack credibility for their readers and for that reason, social media or 'alternative' sources are prone to become more popular and to be perceived as being trustworthy.

The collaboration with experts in the field and use of accurate terminology was another issue the media failed to address. Space in mass media was given mainly to the experts opposing the acceptance of refugees as such and little space was offered to sociologists, religionists, refugees themselves or social workers in direct contact with the target group. Inappropriate terminology and a lack of knowledge of international law sparked useless animosity and created false interpretations of the facts.

Along with the media, the majority of top-level politicians are also major players in the conflict. Most of the public and media appearances featured Minister of the Interior Milan Chovanec and Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka. The public statements of the Minister of the Interior focused from the very beginning on securitisation, even though the Czech Republic was not and is not a target country for asylum seekers in most cases. Many procedural mistakes occurred as well when dealing with asylum seekers crossing the country. The detention of refugees, including children, in the Bělá-Jezová detention camp in summer 2015 was harshly criticised by Ombudsman Anna Šabatová (Šabatová 2015), who stated that the Czech Republic was violating the European Convention of Human Rights. Populist manifestations were also more visible in the media than neutral, constructive or positive declarations. Figures including Tomio Okamura, a Member of Parliament and the leader of Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD), as well Tomáš Vandas, the leader of the Workers' Party of Social Justice made public appearances at many protests against the 'Islamisation' of the Czech Republic. The most shocking utterances against Islam and Muslims were declared by the current president of the Czech Republic.

Secondary actors: Anti-Islam and Muslim-defending camps.

The most prominent figures in the 'anti-Islam' camp are, for instance the initiative 'We Don't Want Islam in the Czech Republic', the former Muslim and avid blogger Lukáš Lhoťán, Reflex journalist Jiří X. Doležal, right-wing sociologist Petr Hampl, paramilitary groups, the White Media platform, the Eurabia portal and many others. Of particular interest is the initiative 'We Don't Want Islam in the Czech Republic', which was founded in 2009 by Martin Konvička, an entomologist and senior lecturer at the University of South Bohemia. The initiative emerged originally from the Czech Defence League (a replica of the English Defence League), which was banned for its extremist views. In June 2015 Konvička launched the movement 'Bloc against Islam' jointly with former Deputy Jana Volfová and sociologist Petr Hampl, which intended to be a political 'superstructure' of the initiative 'We Don't Want Islam…', but it was dissolved in May 2016 after political clashes with Volfová and with the political party Dawn (Úsvit – Národní koalice). The most intriguing fact about the initiative is the way it gained popularity on social networks in record time. In December 2010 it had 55,000 supporters on Facebook; in December 2014, more than 110,000 people; in October 2015, prior to the cancellation of the page, more than 160,000 people. During 2014 and 2015 anti-Islam protests were organised almost daily by the initiative's supporters in major cities, which demonstrated the substantial mobilisation potential of the initiative. One of the reasons for such an achievement could be the impression they created in offering an alternative to the current corrupt political scene and excessive orientation towards Brussels ('Brussels engineering') and by showing prompt disinterest in any political engagement. The initiative was supported by many intellectuals and seemingly 'educated' people, which countered the thesis that only uneducated people were prone to be brainwashed, as in the case of extreme right-wing formations. This new phenomenon of masked extremism proves that the negative discourse against Islam and Muslims has become a neutral and common means of expression across society, without being perceived as 'extremist' or connected to the extreme right wing. The Ministry of the Interior assessed the activity of the initiative as being extremist in a report in 2015 (Ministerstvo Vnitra České Republiky 2015) and its Facebook page has been banned since then. The initiative is very active, however, on its website and criticises the Facebook ban as an act of censorship.

Another secondary actor, the Eurabia news portal (founded in 2005), shares the same rhetoric of distancing itself from racism, xenophobia and hatred, while the content of the portal demonstrates rather clear anti-Islam attitudes and gross generalisations. The website is collecting information to demonstrate the 'danger' Islam and Muslims represent to Europeans and European values.

Apart from the media, some anti-Muslim and conservative youth activist groups have played the role of secondary actor. For example, the right-wing alternative is an activist group called 'Identity Generation', very well connected with other European 'Generations'. The Czech group is composed mainly of former neo-Nazis from the Autonomous Nationalists. According to activist and journalist Simon Kovner (Kovner 2017), their ideology is a compilation of traditional conservatism, hidden racism, and surprisingly, the leftist protest movements of '68. Their specific element is the intellectualisation of their discourse, which is the reason they are not very popular in the Czech Republic even among other right-wingers.

Primary actors on the other side of the value-driven conflict.

There are a few initiatives, organisations and institutions that have shown support to Muslims since the start of the 'refugee crisis'.

One of the most prominent actors is the Consortium, an umbrella organisation unifying most of the NGOs working in the migration field, having a strong lobbying and campaigning agenda. A key role in raising awareness and fostering public education in matters of distinguishing hoaxes from facts has been played by the campaign Hate Free Culture – led by **Hate Free Initiative**.

Hate Free Culture was a government-funded campaign against hate violence meant to draw the public's attention to fake news and on how to counter it in a non-violent way. Many similar counter-hoax campaigns then emerged at the university/NGO level. Religious communities were also affected by the conflict, and while some of them showed empathy selectively to Christian asylum seekers, some of them adopted a more embracing approach towards Muslims. An important Catholic figure in the Czech context is the theologian, religionist, philosopher, university teacher and political activist Tomáš Halík, one of the few Catholic representatives inviting people to build interreligious dialogues. Apart from NGOs and academia engagement, many informal, local, grassroots initiatives emerged. Social networks abounded in self-organised groups of volunteers helping refugees in the Balkan region during 2015. Many of these groups became more professional and formal with time

('We Help Fleeing People', which later became an NGO), whilst many of them dissolved as well ('Antiphobia') and some of them continued their activities on a more moderate level ('No to Racism').

Tertiary actors: Muslim minority representatives living in the Czech Republic themselves.

Very recently, Islam as a religion has started to spark curiosity and force Muslims themselves to take action. Many Muslims, quite invisible and anonymous until that date, accepted the invitation to speak in public, to tell their story in schools (living library projects) and counter the amount of hoaxes and prejudices levelled at their religion. However, many of them were assaulted verbally or physically and encouraged to stay silent, according to the testimonies in the previously mentioned publication titled *Muslims in the Czech Republic*. Regardless of hate speech, many interesting projects inviting the creation of an intercultural and interreligious dialogue were created at the initiative of Muslims; for instance, the Czech-Arab Centre for Cultural Dialogue, funded by a Czech-Palestinian named Šádí Shanaáh, a political scientist well-known for deconstructing Islam as a uniform, homogeneous religion. An Islam cultural centre was recently created in Brno by successful businessman Abdulrahman Adday, who, despite receiving threats, pursued the construction of the centre and is willing to turn it into a meeting point for all people, regardless of religion or origin.

Possible future scenarios

Although negative attitudes towards Muslims still prevail, especially after the Brexit and Trump elections, the topic is no longer a headline; however, it might gain popularity again before the legislative or presidential elections, especially in relation to the current government crisis, where thus far the Minister of Finance has embodied the only opposition to the government and his sympathisers, coming mainly from marginalised social groups and lacking a rebel leader, might find solace in populist figures such as Tomio Okamura, who has the tendency to radicalise his admirers' attitudes with his strong anti-Muslim discourse.

2. LGBT parents' possibility to adopt children

Background of the conflict

A registered partnership law was passed in March 2006 and went into effect on 1 July 2006. Since then more and more same-sex couples in the Czech Republic have been willing to adopt their partners' children. According to the Czech Statistical Office, there are about two thousand children raised by same-sex couples and the number is increasing every year. These children have only one parent registered on their birth certificate, therefore only one parent (the biological parent) has parental rights, even though there are two parents loving and taking care of them. This situation creates stress and complications in the everyday lives of the parents, especially of the 'social' (non-biological) parent, who is factually parenting without having the legal right to do so. This may prove risky for the well-being of the children in the event that they lose their biological parent, which legally puts them in the position of having no parents and they might be forced to enter foster care. Moreover, children who have formally only one parent cannot claim an inheritance from the non-biological parent or an orphan's financial support. Furthermore, they are not entitled to receive child support as a result of their parents' separation.

Timeline

In August 2014 a legislative proposal is initiated by 27 deputies headed by Radka Maxová, the president of the Permanent Commission on Family Issues, Equal Opportunities and Minorities, in an attempt to address the issue by recognising the parenting rights of both parents de jure, whilst one of the parents is the biological parent of the child. It is important to mention that the proposal does not concern the adoption of children from foster care institutions. The proposal gains considerable support from other deputies across the political spectrum, but it also triggers a wave of disagreement from certain parts of society and from political figures. Both sides launch campaigns immediately and raise parallel petitions to support their opposing causes.

As the proposal reaches the parliament in August 2014, it encounters a continuous delay in the opening of the debate and no progress is made until summer 2016, when a stormy discussion among deputies freezes the topic again with no prospect of opening it very soon. Also in summer 2016 the Constitutional Court confirms the right of a registered same-sex couple to adopt a child and it defines the current law as discriminatory towards such couples.

In order to boost the importance of the proposal on the parliament's agenda, the government – specifically, Minister of Justice Robert Pelikán and Minister of Human Rights Jiří Dienstbier – take the initiative to create a government proposal, which would have priority in the parliament. The proposal is approved on 24 October 2016 and it is forwarded to the Chamber of Deputies for its first reading. People on both sides are then encouraged to send their concerns and support to the parliament.

Actors in the conflict

At a basic level, the entire LGBT adoption cause draws on the conservative/liberal dichotomy ruling the political representation in the parliament. Thus at the primary level of the actors there are politicians deciding about the regulatory framework on both sides of the conflict.

On one side, there are the conservative democratic parties (ODS, TOP 09, KDU-ČSL), which have abstained from taking a clear stand or have voted against the proposal. On the other side, there are the Czech Social Democratic and ANO parties, which convey more liberal values and sympathise with same-sex adoption, even though there is no consensus within these very parties. One strong opponent of the cause is the Deputy (and at that time Social Democrat member) Pavlína Nytrová, whose statement that 'homosexuals will strive to have sex with adopted children,' triggered a huge scandal in the parliament in summer 2016. She is also known for initiating a counter campaign and a petition against the cause, signed by 24,990 people and supported by other deputies, especially by Deputy Jitka Chalánkova (TOP 09) and Deputy Marek Benda (ODS). Her main argument centres around the protection of traditional families and the vulnerability of adopted children, exposed to the promiscuous behaviour of their same-sex parents. Disagreement with such beliefs has been expressed by many politicians from the same political party as Nytrová: the Head of the Government Bohuslav Sobotka, Vice-Chairperson of the party Lenka Teska Arnoštová and Head of the Chamber of Deputies Jan Hamáček.

The pool of secondary actors comprises large numbers of lawyers, psychologists, all kinds of experts and organisations on both sides. Same-sex adoption was supported, for instance, by the majority of the lawyers questioned in a survey by the newspaper *Lidové noviny*. According to Ombudsman Anna Šabatová, the current law, which prohibits same-sex adoption, is discriminatory and incompatible with the Czech Constitution and with the European Convention on Human Rights. The Chamber of Social Workers declared in 2014 that they do not agree with the legitimacy of only one correct family model. The Platform for Equality, Recognition and Diversity (PROUD) is another significant actor; their campaign for same-sex adoption has been running since 2013 and many experts and politicians have joined their efforts since then. Anti-LBGT adoption supporters endorse their position by employing expert statements on the matter – for instance, those of the psychologists Jeroným Klimeš and Jaroslav Šturma; journalist and former homosexual Tomáš Bílek; French psychoanalyst Tony Anatrella; Mark Regnerus, a sociology teacher at the University of Texas; and more. The common argument of these actors is that LGBT adoption induces a form of oppression against traditional heterosexual couples and destroys the traditional values of a family.

The last layer of the conflict (tertiary actors) includes the wider population; according to the Centre of Public Opinion Research, 3/5 of the population interviewed in June 2016 recognised the right of same-sex couples to adopt their partners' children. Same-sex couples themselves have started to be more visible actors thanks to the Platform for Equality, Recognition and Diversity (PROUD); these activities have motivated couples to share their experiences in public and to debunk many myths.

Dynamics of the conflict

On 21 February 2017 a proposal on same-sex adoption was rejected by the Chamber of Deputies in the first reading, with 24 votes missing. Deputies voting 'yes' came from the Czech Social Democratic party and the ANO party, with some exceptions; those voting against the proposal came mainly from the conservative democratic parties, which argued the urgency of other, more important matters to be discussed in the parliament than adoption by same-sex couples.

After this result, the leaders of the campaign 'Different families, same rights' from the PROUD platform encouraged people not to despair and that same-sex couples should continue to be visible, to talk to others in their surroundings, to vote carefully in autumn 2017 and to support non-government organisations and their networks.

In July 2017, the Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic recognised the parenting rights of a same-sex couple who married in the USA, have two children and have struggled to register both parents on the children's

Czech birth certificates. The Constitutional Court previously denied the right of both parents to be recorded on the Czech birth certificates, arguing that this would disrupt the public order. The recent ruling gives hope to same-sex parents that their rights will be recognised one day in the Czech Republic.

Possible future scenarios

Parliamentary elections are expected in autumn 2017 and the supporters of LGBT adoption fear a longer impasse, as the next parliament might not be as 'centrist and leftist'. If the proposal fails to pass in the current political constellation, it is even more unlikely to be successful after the elections. Finding new same-sex families willing to expose their intimate stories to the wide public will be difficult as well. On the other hand, the legislative procedure might prove unpredictable and many surprises are still possible.

Although LGBT adoption touches only a part of society nowadays, it is only a matter of time before it will return to the deputies' agenda.

3. Roma children accessing quality primary education

The Roma in the Czech Republic are the largest minority; however, estimates are that the Roma population accounts for 2.3% of the entire population of the Czech Republic (i.e. about 245,800 people). This means that Czech society is not really accustomed to the idea of various minorities living equally, side by side with the majority. The situation of the Roma in the Czech Republic is characterised by two main features: a) the fact of being an ethnic and linguistic minority, the members of which are visibly different from the non-Roma population and b) social disadvantage, exclusion and poverty.

The conflict between the Roma and non-Roma populations in the Czech Republic has deep roots that extend far into the past. The focus of this analysis will be placed on their access to quality education; first, because of its importance for future prospects in finding a job. As various data show (ČŠI 2014, Greger 2010), Czech society is typical in showing a high correlation between the level of education and future employment and income, whilst the quality of education a child receives and the school he or she attends is far more important for his or her future in/exclusion than the house in which he or she was raised. On the other hand, because of the fact that, with the start of inclusion within primary schools in September 2016, Roma involvement in mainstream schooling (among other groups, such as children with disabilities) has become a hot topic.

Timeline

Since the introduction of compulsory school attendance at the end of the 18th century, Roma people have perceived school as a hostile and repressive institution of the majority (Liégeois, 1995). In Czechoslovakia during the communist era, the government was aware of the importance of education for the integration of Roma people; it offered various advantages to Roma parents in order to make preschool education more attractive to them. These policies were, however very assimilationist and the Roma children continued to fail in mainstream schools (Višek, 1999). However, the recent history of this particular Czech-Roma conflict dates from 2000, based on the fact that the right to equal access to education was supported (and demanded) upon the foundation of the Czech Republic in 1993, when the Czechs became a party to most of the major human rights treaties.

- 2000 – D. H. and Others vs. the Czech Republic. 18 Roma students in the Ostrava region complain to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) that they were wrongly assigned to special schools for children with learning difficulties where they received an inferior education, solely on the basis of their ethnicity.
- 2004 – The new school bill is approved by the government; for primary schools it brings curricular changes based on Framework Educational Programmes for Basic Education (Rámcový vzdělávací plan pro základní vzdělávání), which offers sufficient opportunities for adaptation in order to meet the needs of each and every child whilst ensuring quality primary education. This change brings a huge wave of concerns from the teachers and headmasters, as they fear that they are not competent enough to create school educational programmes and adhere to them in a manner that favours each child. With this Act, 'aberrant schools' are renamed 'practical basic schools' and their pupils complete their primary education, yet they have been educated according to the specialised Attachment to the Framework Educational Programme for pupils with mild mental disabilities. This Act also establishes the right of every child to attend the school that is closest to his or her home – the tool of school assignment areas is used to ensure this.

- 2006 – The Chamber of the ECHR decides that discrimination has taken place in the case of D. H. and Others vs. Czech Republic. This case has been exceptional and has created a new precedent on patterns of discrimination that can also take place in the public sphere, due to the fact that segregation is also an instance of discrimination and the confirmation that equal access to education is a persistent problem all over Europe.
- 2007 – The League for Human Rights, an NGO, forms a system recommendation on segregated schools dealing with four types of segregation of Roma children: in practical schools, in primary schools attended mostly by Roma children, in special classrooms within mainstream schools and in segregated classrooms, where the children are placed solely on the basis of the director's decision and their own ethnicity.
- 2009 – The new Antidiscrimination Act is adopted, stating that in access to education any kind of unequal treatment based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion or any kind of disadvantage is prohibited.
- 2009 – The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, the Czech School Inspection and the Department for Information in Education conduct independent investigations to determine the level of segregation of Roma schools outside the mainstream. They ascertain that up to 35 % of all Roma children are educated in these practical and special schools and they bring these findings to the attention of the Office of the Czech Ombudsman.
- 2012 – The Office of the Czech Ombudsman conducts its own research, reaches similar conclusions and establishes that this overrepresentation is definitely a case of discrimination along with providing recommendations of things that need to be changed in order to eliminate segregation.
- 2015 – The pressure on integration brought by international bodies is growing; the parliament and the government adopt a new School Act. However, its adoption is quite reluctant and highly influenced by the threat of not receiving support from European Funds if the situation were not rectified. The Act is reacted to with widely supported petitions on its various controversial aspects, such as bringing two-year-old children to kindergartens, a compulsory year of preschool education and the inclusion of children with special needs (especially mild mental disabilities, also known in this case to concern mostly Roma children) in mainstream schools.
- September 2016 – Practical schools become basic/primary schools and are supposed to follow the same programme as the mainstream schools; however, only children with mild mental disabilities (an IQ of less than 70 points) can still be enrolled in these schools. They are not a part of the school assignment areas and the only real change is in the legal opportunity to take a child from this school and place him or her (preferably with an assistant) into a mainstream school. This is seriously feared not only by parents in mainstream schools, but also by teachers at both types of schools. In the end only 200 children are moved using this option, which is quite understandable, because they would have been required to attend the same years at both schools. However, the curriculum in these former practical schools is a year or two, sometimes even more, behind the same year in mainstream school, so the children who are moved would necessarily fail, especially in the higher years.
- 2017 – The last report on the situation of the Roma minority in 2016 shows that about 30 % of the Roma school population is still being educated in special schools designed for children with mild mental disabilities. In addition to this, research conducted by the Agency for Social Inclusion shows that in some cities, especially in the Moravsko-slezský District, the share of Roma pupils in special schools easily increases up to 60 % within a particular school. For example, in the town of Vsetín (Zlínský District), a special school is attended by 50 % of the Roma population (of school age) in Vsetín; meanwhile, 98 % of the students of the former practical school are of Roma origin. The statistical probability of such a high proportion of Roma children having an IQ of less than 70 points is almost impossible. The problem, however, lies in the tests, the low preschool attendance connected with preschool preparation and the social disadvantages.

Actors in the conflict

Primary actors	Secondary actors	Tertiary actors
Agentura pro sociální začleňování (the Agency is one of the departments of Sekce pro lidská práva při Úřadu vlády ČR and belongs under the management of the Ministry of Justice of the Czech Republic).	**Primary schools** (83 primary schools in which more than 50 % of the children are Roma). 136 schools in which more than one-fourth and fewer than one-half of the children are Roma)	Roma children and their parents themselves.
Radical anti-Roma groups and movements (such as Čeští lvi)		**Národní ústav pro vzdělávání** (National Education Institute) an assessing institution reviewing the process determining children's placement in educational institutions in collaboration with ČŠI (Czech School Inspection) **CAHROM** Ad hoc board on Roma issues in the Council of Europe.

4. Economic versus environmental values in the approach to nuclear energy

Background of the conflict

The conflict between the economic and the environmental approaches to the protection of nature has been one of the most frequent social conflicts since the 1960s. At the core of the problem there are two different sets of values: the first expects that economic growth can address the issue of preserving natural values, the other represents the premise that the only path to sustainable development is to limit our needs and to slow down economic growth.

The political representation of pre-1989 Czechoslovakia did not allow the public to participate in decision-making on the protection of nature and the environment. This only increased the level of interest after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The most pressing issues in Czech society are now the devastation of the soil: the conflict between small and large farmers, as well as the approach to landscape protection from the point of view of the Ministry of the Environment (ME) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MA), the protection of water sources (maintaining water in the landscape, the Danube-Oder-Elbe water corridor), the issue of air pollution (the air in the Ostrava region is among the most heavily polluted in Europe) and the Czech Republic still does not have a new waste management law even after years of debate. The most prominent conflict worldwide concerns climate protection. On the Czech scene, mainly due to the influence of the political representation and the complicated nature of the issue, this is not a frequently debated topic. A conflict that has resonated in Czech society since the beginning of the '90s and remains topical, concerns the nuclear energy industry.

Summary of the Conflict

The Czech Republic has a long tradition in the protection of nature and the environment. The Czech Union for Nature Conservation (CSOP) was founded in 1979, during the communist regime. At that time, during the former regime, the country was a key location for the metallurgical industry – coal mining and processing. There is also a long-standing tradition of nuclear energy generation – the Dukovany nuclear power plant started operating in the mid-'80s and plans to build the Temelín nuclear power plant also started in the 1980s. During the '90s, construction works in Temelín were marked by large protests and blockades on the border crossings. There were concerns that the plant, near the border with Austria, would not be safe. Further concerns involved nuclear waste and the significant burden on the environment related to the construction and operation of a

nuclear plant. Activists, mainly Austrian but also Czech, protested most dramatically against the commissioning of the plant at the start of the '90s. A large protest organised by Greenpeace Czech Republic took place early in 1991, after the fall of the Iron Curtain and during the fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Some of the experts, as well as the general public on both sides of the Czech-Austrian border took part in protests against the plant. 'The Temelín Battle' took place even on the international political scene and it threatened to complicate accession negotiations with the EU. The situation improved only after the Czech-Austrian Melk agreement of December 2000. In addition to other things, the Czech side committed to re-examine the environmental impact of the nuclear power plant under the supervision of the European Commission. Resistance against the completion and commissioning of the plant was still very strong around 2000. The power plant was commissioned in 2002.

There are several reasons for the Austrian resistance against the Temelín nuclear power plant: Austria never commissioned its one and only nuclear power plant after the majority of its citizens spoke against it in a referendum in the 1970s. Another cause is the fear of a nuclear disaster, which was strong in Europe after the accident in Chernobyl, Ukraine. Another significant factor is the generally pro-environmental line of thinking in Austria, where the Greens entered the parliament in the mid-'80s.

While many European countries have been supporting renewable energy sources in the last two decades, in the Czech Republic, the effort to support centralised sources of energy prevails. This follows from the position of the political representation, as well as public opinion. In May 2017 a public opinion survey took place, which included questions on the issue of nuclear energy as part of the ecology topic. One-third of the citizens believe that the share of electricity generated from nuclear power should increase, whilst most of the respondents – two-fifths – want nuclear power to remain at the current level. In practice, maintaining the current level means building additional units of the power plant in future.

However, the views of the general public are in sharp contrast with the situation in some regions, as we shall demonstrate in the following chapters of the analysis.

Sources, causes and dynamics of the conflict

Since the beginning, the construction of the Temelín power plant and the additional units has been a source of regional conflict. Shortly after the conflicts on the Austrian border, the situation was further complicated by the issue of depositing nuclear waste. There were huge waves of resistance from the public caused by the selection of possible locations for the nuclear waste repository, which happened in 2003 without the knowledge of the towns in question. They held a referendum in that same year, wherein they categorically refused the construction of the repository in their area. Since that year they have been issuing regular updates on the government's measures concerning this issue, actively monitoring the situation. The **Platform against the Repository** is a not-for-profit voluntary association comprising two dozen towns and communities affected by the projects for the construction of deep repositories of spent nuclear waste. They run the website **nechcemeuložiště.cz** ('We Don't Want the Repository'), hold public events and discussions and call on the political representation to open a dialogue. One significant event was the 'Day against the Repository' in April 2015. The protests counted hundreds of people in several locations and the event was covered by the national media. In 2016 there was a referendum on the repository in the last of the towns affected. Between 80 and 99 per cent of the citizens were against the repositories in each of the polls, and barring a few exceptions, the turnout was over 70 per cent in each municipality. In 2016, the government issued a ruling on delaying the geological surveys, but insufficient and disorganised communication on the part of the state still provokes angry reactions. The municipalities still have incomplete information and they still resist the construction of the repositories. The last meeting with the representatives of the *Radioactive Waste Repository Authority* – a government body – took place in July 2017 and the outcome held no new information. With the general election coming up in October 2017, it is probable that nobody will want to deal with the problem. Citing the mayor of one of the affected towns: 'Nobody wants to anger the voters before the election.'

Considering the conflict of values, one important party in the conflict is the association **Energy in the Třebíč Region.** The association was founded in 2013 with the mission to maintain nuclear energy and the related economic development in the region. Its members include the town of Třebíč, the local Vocational Engineering School and the towns of Dukovany and Rouchovany, which are in the immediate vicinity of the Dukovany nuclear power plant. The association wishes to protect its members' interests in relation to maintaining and further

developing the energy industry in the region. It supports the construction of new nuclear units, as long as the principles of sustainable development and security are upheld.

The association organises educational seminars and conferences for experts and the general public and round tables with politicians and potential investors in the possible expansion of the Dukovany nuclear plant. In July 2016, the association issued a statement on the repositories of spent nuclear fuel. It decidedly refused the delay in the geological survey to determine the most suitable towns to deposit spent fuel. While there are repositories in the towns of Temelín and Dukovany and the current energy plan is in place, supporting nuclear power, the association considers that it is necessary to select the best locations right now. According to the association, it is a threat to the self-sufficiency and energy security of the Czech Republic to put off the decision.

Setting aside regional interests, the conflict has other very influential players: a key part in the conflict is played by the company ČEZ, a.s., the largest producer of electricity in the Czech Republic. The company emerged in 1992 after the state enterprise České energetické závody was transferred to a private owner. In 2014, it was the most profitable business in the Czech Republic; it is the second biggest employer and it supplies energy to other European countries. It generates and distributes electricity, mostly from coal and operates both nuclear power plants.

Another key party to the conflict is the political representation. It is political decisions that define further developments in the national energy industry. The most important milestone in recent years was the approval of the energy policy of the Czech Republic. The policy is a strategic document, binding for the next 25 years. Despite the protests of many environmental initiatives, a plan was approved which defines nuclear power as the key energy source for the upcoming decades. Another player is the **Czech Development Bank**, which subsidises nuclear energy based on the state's decision.

Timeline

April 1986 – Nuclear disaster in Chernobyl, which influences global nuclear energy policies.

June 1989 – The Czech Union for Nature Conservation (CSOP) holds an event in České Budějovice related to the topic of the environment, collecting signatures against the construction of the Temelín nuclear power plant.

April 1991 – The biggest protest against Temelín, with 10,000 people taking part.

June 2000 – A petition is circulated to hold a referendum on the power plant, organised by the DUHA movement and signed by 70,000 people.

December 2000 – The Czech-Austrian Melk agreement defines the security rules for the operation of the Temelín power plant.

December 2000 – The operation of the Temelín nuclear power plant is authorised.

June 2002 – Trial operation of the power plant is launched.

2003 – The government publishes a list of the municipalities it has deemed suitable to host deep repositories of spent nuclear fuel.

2003 – The Platform against the Repository is founded, bringing together the towns affected by the repositories of nuclear waste.

November 2006 – The commercial operation of Temelín starts.

2013 – The foundation of the Energy in Třebíč Region group, promoting nuclear energy in the region.

April 2015 – 'Day against the Repository' event, with hundreds of people from the affected towns participating.

May 2015 – Approval of the energy policy of the Czech Republic, a strategic document that is binding for the next 25 years.

July 2016 – The government decides to postpone the geological survey to determine the most suitable towns to deposit spent fuel.

December 2016 – Approval of the EIA (environmental impact assessment) amendment, which excludes nuclear power plants from the obligation to undergo an assessment – they are subject to the 'atomic law' and an environmental assessment does not concern them.

July 2017 – A court decides that CEZ may withhold information on nuclear fuel.

Possible future scenarios

From the approved energy policy of the Czech Republic for the 25 years, we can assume that national politics will aim to promote and expand nuclear energy production. However, the key decision is about the investment of state funds, and according to experts, it is most likely that we will not know about it until the end of the future government's mandate, i.e. in almost five years. The path towards building new nuclear units has been significantly cleared by the amendment to the Construction Act, which impedes societies from interfering in administrative procedures to approve construction projects. The future influence on the development of conflicts related to nuclear energy will be mainly that of foreign investment and international negotiations.

The only possibility is to promote nuclear energy as a primary energy source for the Czech Republic. Since this would mean enormous state investments and an increase of the state cash deficit, this decision could fuel conflicts in society. The other option is the gradual departure of companies that would invest in nuclear energy and slowly transitioning to renewable sources of energy.

The situation in regions where repositories of nuclear waste are planned is unpredictable. One of the possibilities for ending the regional conflict even if the repositories were built, is if the state were to pay compensation to the affected towns. This, however, could provoke anger in the towns of Temelín and Dukovany, which already host repositories. There are many different scenarios, and the regional conflicts might escalate.

From the point of view of conflict resolution, spreading awareness and promoting education about sustainable development will play a significant role. For most of the non-expert, as well as expert public, nuclear energy is considered a 'clean' source of energy. According to surveys, the general public wishes to maintain and develop nuclear energy. The probability of the aforementioned regional conflicts becoming a nationwide problem is low.

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GERMANY

Introduction

Germany is witnessing a visible escalation nationwide of value-based conflicts that has not been experienced since reunification. This trend of polarisation (Zusammenfassung zentraler Ergebnisse, 2016) and rising racism and group hatred is strongly linked to the rise of right-wing populist groups, parties and even media sources, most prominently the political party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD; Alternative for Germany) and the PEGIDA 'movement' (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident). Even though the financial and economic crisis has not affected Germany as strongly as many other European countries, it has been the most prominent issue on the political agenda during the later stages of the past decade and the first years of this decade. In this period the AfD positioned itself as the only outspoken Eurosceptic party in Germany. The party's strong Euroscepticism was combined with an outright neo-liberal economic agenda, anti-establishment rhetoric and ultra-conservative positions, including nationalism, chauvinism, racism, (hetero-) sexism and homo- and transphobia. This combination has garnered support among a significant share of the population.

The increasing number of asylum seekers that have arrived in Germany since 2014 have forced German politics and society to deal with the basic needs of the people arriving in the country and, thus, have brought issues of immigration and integration/inclusion to the political agenda. The AfD provided simple solutions and managed to start and maintain a discourse about the openness of German society that the party connected to other issues, such as social services and pensions, law and order and gender issues. With this agenda, the AfD was the most outspoken party to criticise Chancellor Angela Merkel's initial pro-refugee agenda and could thus regain strength after a period of massive internal struggles.

During this time, value conflicts have gained increasing salience in German politics and society. Moreover, this development has generated a nearly unbridgeable divide between the promoters of a pluralistic or liberal (not necessarily in the economic sense) society vs. the promoters of a closed or illiberal one. Most value-based conflicts are shaped by this very opposition and characterised by a similar constellation of actors. Currently, the most salient expressions of value conflicts in Germany concern the following issues: immigration and integration/inclusion, including issues of asylum, inclusive and exclusive concepts of society, and the securitisation of immigration; gender rights and diversity; trust in the media; gentrification; and environmental issues. The constellation of actors in the last two conflicts diverges somewhat from the above-mentioned opposition.

Recently, the moderate and pragmatic voices of the first two decades after the reunification of Germany have remained characteristic for the pluralistic/liberal camp whereas the proponents of an exclusive society have become more populist and more radical. In this vein, the discourses on these value-based conflicts have not only become more salient but they are also witnessing an increasing polarisation and a positional shift of the actors towards the right – combined with a loss of decency and moderation.

Of course, value-based conflicts have always been characteristic of German post-war politics and society. However, rarely have they caused the current level of polarisation. Having said this, it is not surprising that the AfD is the first right-wing populist radical party that has managed to take hold in post-war Germany in spite of the strong 'cordon sanitaire' among the vast majority in the country against any organisation that even comes close to right-wing extremism and neo-Nazism – and leading figures of the AfD certainly do (Gemütszustand eines, 2016). The polarisation also becomes manifest in the mobilisation of a pro-democratic and pro-human rights civil society as well as an 'uncivil' society that advocates exclusion, racism and xenophobia, thus creating a societal climate in which the number of attacks against refugees or their (future) housing has grown dramatically.

It needs to be added, however, that the phenomena of group hatred, such as racism, sexism, homo- and transphobia that are promoted by the AfD and similar actors rarely appear individually but rather intersect and often mutually reinforce each other. This also goes for the different value-based conflicts that are described below. Hence, it is hardly surprising that there are similar alignments of actors in many of them. For approaches of conflict prevention and resolution it is important, however, to take these intersections into account and develop approaches that also address people who are affected by multiple forms of discrimination.

1. Immigration and Integration

Short summary of the conflict

The conflict concerns the issue of how German society is defined, especially who is included and who is excluded. There are three dimensions of the issue that are currently the most salient and shall be described in more detail below: 1) the right to asylum and the humanitarian responsibility of Germany vis-à-vis asylum seekers, 2) the conflict between those who define German society as an ethnic and cultural construct and legitimise the exclusion resulting from this view, and those who view immigration and diversity in society rather positively, and 3) the securitisation of immigration.

1. The right to asylum

The conflict over the right to asylum and the more general debate between proponents of a liberal and a restrictive asylum and immigration regime has gained momentum following the immense influx of refugees into Germany since 2014. However, it is an issue that has been present in German society at earlier times and which revealed its potential for conflict decades ago. Germany witnessed the last peak of asylum seekers in the early 1990s, which was accompanied by fierce protests, a climate of hate, and arson attacks on refugee/immigrant homes by neo-Nazis and 'active bystanders' from the 'middle of society', the most prominent of these arising in Rostock-Lichtenhagen, Hoyerswerda, Solingen and Mölln. In an attempt to contain radical right forces in society, Christian and Social Democrats passed a broad political compromise on asylum policy, which restricted access to asylum and the rights of refugees. After this, the conflict diminished somewhat until mid-to-late 2014, when it escalated significantly and mobilised large parts of society. On one hand, people have provided 'first aid' for refugees and asylum seekers and assisted the often completely overwhelmed public administration. Some also launched political advocacy to ameliorate asylum seekers' and refugees' conditions. In fact, civil society created the *Willkommenskultur* ('culture of welcoming') that Chancellor Merkel later reclaimed for her politics while at the same time smoothing over the initial lack of capability of the administration. On the other hand, campaigns, rallies and demonstrations against refugee accommodation in people's neighbourhoods jointly run by locals and (partly local) neo-Nazis, calls for restrictions on the (maximum) number of asylum seekers, and increasing hatred against citizens who support refugees have become the norm in many sectors of German society since 2014. This development has also provided the primary momentum for the rise of the AfD and PEGIDA. In spite of a moderation of the conflict after closing the Balkan Road, the right to asylum and rights for asylum seekers in Germany strongly feed into the debate on who belongs to German society, which is discussed in the next section.

2. Inclusive and exclusive concepts of society

As mentioned above, the conflict concerning the question of who belongs to the German 'nation' and who does not (or what a person needs to do in order to belong) is now strongly connected to the issue of immigration and asylum, which serves regularly as a catalyst for bringing up and escalating this conflict. Although millions of refugees and immigrants have undoubtedly become an integral part of German society since the end of World War II (especially in the western part), governments have continued to deny that the country is a 'society of migration' and, thus, denying immigrants – or, by the 1980s and 1990s, their sons and daughters – the right to be a part of society, whether they hold a German passport or not.

The strong ethnic and cultural underpinnings of the concept of German society are also evident in citizenship and naturalisation regulations. Only in 2000 did Germany (widely) abandon the 'ius sanguinis' principle of citizenship in favour of the general application of 'ius soli' and the administration remains very restrictive concerning dual citizenship. Moreover, the regulations about dual citizenship are still a matter of political and societal contention, which has become visible since the incidents in Cologne and in the recently troublesome relations with Turkey. These issues have significantly fuelled demands to restrict the possibility of dual citizenship.

The fact that more than one million refugees have settled in Germany in the last couple of years – many of them probably with the plan to stay regardless of whether the armed conflict or the economic situation in their countries of origin improves – has again sparked the discussion about inclusion and integration, and the question of who should belong to the German 'nation'. In this regard, there are very different points of view of how (and partly even whether) to include these people in society. This concerns more general values and concepts of the inclusiveness/exclusiveness and homogeneity or diversity of a society/nation but also

very practical issues, such as accommodation; access to labour, civic, political and social rights; and the social climate in which 'new' people live in Germany.

The two polar oppositions regarding this conflict are those who view (German) society as an inclusive and pluralistic community, often referring to the fact that its members are committed to mutual respect as well as respect for human and constitutional rights. The opposite pole banks on the image (or claim) of a homogeneous, exclusive society based on common (often undefined 'Judeo-Christian') traditions and German ethnicity. Today's pivotal role of anti-Muslim attitudes is rather new in this discourse. The mostly Muslim Turkish communities have always been one of the main enemy images from this point of view, but religion has never occupied such a crucial position in public discourse. The extreme (and partly also the populist radical) right occupies the most radical and exclusive position here. They frame 'the German nation' as a *völkisch* community, i.e. as an organic community that is bound by 'blood ties' and strives for homogeneity on the basis of race, gender orders and other principles of an exclusive logic. These actors also argue frequently that immigration should also be opposed due to the fact that it is a burden on the social and welfare systems and that these should benefit 'Germans' first. Thus, they combine the issue with more economic values, such as (in-)equality and wealth. Not least for this reason, the frame also resonates well beyond the extreme and radical right, though more moderate forces may not have such a clear *völkisch* idea of who does or does not belong to the 'nation'. This example already illustrates that there are many competing concepts and framings of immigration and of how inclusive a society should be between this polar opposition that leans more to one or the other side. The most prominent argument that favours immigration is probably the point of view that immigration is a benefit to society as long as it is good for the economy. Here, immigration is approached positively under certain conditions, such as the level of the qualification and education of immigrants, a limitation of their number, and often the call for immigrants to 'integrate themselves', i.e. an understanding of immigration/inclusion as assimilation into the 'majority culture'.

3. Securitisation of immigration

The terrorist attacks in Belgium, France and Berlin show that Islamist terrorism is a real threat in Germany. Apart from the danger of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack, there are also potential sources of value-based conflicts connected to the issue. First, securitisation touches upon the question of security and, thus, on the balance between freedom and openness vs. the restrictions and exclusiveness of society. Hardly any voice in Germany would speak out against the fact that preventing terrorist attacks requires some security measures. While some hold the view that there will be no complete security against terrorist attacks and advocate as few restrictions of freedom as possible, others prefer strict law-and-order measures and promote securitisation as the only credible reaction to terrorism.

Second, most voices usually connect terrorism only to Islamism, whereas terrorist attacks from the extreme right are often not viewed as terrorist acts – the NSU case being one of a very few counter-examples. It is quite striking, though, that those who advocated securitisation after an Islamist terrorist attack were much less vocal after the NSU killings, and even more so in reaction to the abundant attacks against refugees and their (future) homes. This ethnic and religious framing of terrorism, then, is used to fuel racism and promote the exclusion of immigrants and asylum seekers/refugees, particularly those who are (perceived to be) Muslims, since they are collectively suspected to be (potential) terrorists.

Timeline

During the 1950s, '60s and '70s, (West) Germany actively recruited so-called 'guest workers' from other (mostly) European countries but failed to devise the necessary integration policies. In the early 1990s another peak of immigration to Germany was met by widespread racism, xenophobia and violence. Under pressure from the far right, CDU/CSU and SPD changed the Constitution in order to impose serious restrictions on the right to asylum in Germany. In 2000, the Schröder government introduced the 'ius soli' principle to German citizenship law that had been hitherto dominated by 'ius sanguinis'. At the same time, Chancellor Schröder called on civil society to stand up against right-wing extremism and installed extensive governmental funding programmes as a reaction to incidents of extreme right-wing violence. In 2011, the incidental self-revelation of the right-wing terror cell 'National Socialist Underground' (NSU) shed light on the incapability of the German police and secret services to recognise racist violence and even right-wing terrorism.

20 October 2014 – First demonstration of the racist and xenophobic PEGIDA 'movement' in Dresden.

2015—2016 – Drastic increase in applications for asylum.

2015—2016 – Dramatic increase in racist violence and attacks against (future) shelters and accommodation for refugees (2014: 199; 2015: 1,031) (Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik…2015).

2015—2016 – Civil society forms numerous groups, initiatives and associations to support refugees (from collecting and distributing clothes and food donations to giving German language courses and legal counselling) since the public authorities have not been able to deal properly with the huge number of asylum seekers in the country.

January 2015 – The largest PEGIDA demonstration to date in Dresden, numbering 17,000–25,000 participants (depending on sources) (Statistik zu Pegida… 2017).

July 2015 – Rightward shift of the AfD: the populist radical right wing of the AfD seizes power and quickly replaces representatives of the neo-liberal Eurosceptic faction around the party's co-founder, Bernd Lucke. Consequently, the latter group largely leaves the party.

25 August 2015 – Racist riots of about 1,000 people against accommodation for refugees in Heidenau. Similar riots happen in Meißen, Freital, Dresden and other German towns.

31 August 2015 – Press conference by Chancellor Angela Merkel in which she reacts to the influx of refugees with the (in-)famous statement 'We can do it.' (*'Wir schaffen das.'*).

13 September 2015 – Germany re-establishes border control as a reaction to the influx of immigrants.

17 October 2015 – Cologne's mayor, Henriette Reker, is attacked with a knife by a racist during her election campaign.

23 October 2015 – (Mostly restrictive) changes in asylum legislation: Asylum Package I comes into force. Kosovo, Montenegro and Albania become safe countries of origin. Freedom of movement is restricted and food vouchers are reintroduced as a standard during the initial phase of the asylum application process (maximum 6 months, though often longer in practice).

31 December 2015 – sexual abuse and rape of women by large groups of non-white men in Cologne. The police are largely unprepared and do not manage to react effectively. Instead of debating the issue of this violence against women, however, the discourse about these incidents focuses on the origin of the perpetrators and spreads largely racist generalisations against non-white immigrants. Mostly white male centre and radical right-wing politicians make 'saving their women' their core issue even though they had never before engaged in strengthening women's rights, be it connected to the prevention and punishment of rape and domestic violence or more broadly.

January 2016 – AfD co-leader Frauke Petry says that police should use force of arms against 'illegal' immigrants at the country's borders in case of need. Beatrix von Storch, one of the party's co-leaders, goes even further in supporting the use of guns even against refugee children in a Facebook post (Storch, 2016).

17 March 2016 – Restrictive changes in asylum legislation: Aslyum Package II (*'Asylpaket II'*) comes into force. Among other things, this package shall increase the number of deportations and it installs a two-year suspension of family unification for immigrants who have been granted subsidiary protection only.

18 March 2016 – The EU makes an agreement with Turkey to reduce the number of refugees coming to Europe; since then, the numbers of refugees coming to Germany have reduced significantly.

18 July 2016 – Islamist terrorist attack on a regional train in Würzburg; 5 people injured.

24 July 2016 – Islamist terrorist attack in Ansbach; terrorist dies, 15 people injured.

27 September 2016 – Right-wing terrorist attacks on a convention centre and a mosque in Dresden.

2 October 2016 – Germany and Afghanistan sign an agreement that allows Germany to deport Afghans whose application for asylum has been denied; parts of the country are considered 'safe'.

September 2016 – Angela Merkel distances herself from her statement 'Wir schaffen das' after massive pressure from more right-leaning members of the CDU as well as the CSU and AfD. This underlines the government's rightward shift on asylum policy in recent months.

7 December 2016 – The CDU party convention votes against dual citizenship (in opposition to most of the party leadership, including Angela Merkel): the party wants to re-introduce the obligation for children of non-German parents to choose between German citizenship and that of their parents.

19 December 2016 – Islamist terrorist attack on Christmas market in Berlin; 12 people killed, more than 100 injured.

31 December 2016 – As a reaction to the incidents of New Year's Eve 2015, Cologne's police kettle and frisk men whom they believe to have originated from North Africa or the Middle East in order to prevent a series of sexual assaults against women, as happened a year ago. This police tactic sparks a debate about racial profiling, although most prominent politicians and actors defend the police and object to the accusation of racial profiling.

1 January 2017 – Restricted access to social services for EU citizens comes into force.

February 2017 – Several SPD-led federal states stop deporting asylum seekers to Afghanistan despite the contrary order from the Federal Ministry of Interior.

February 2017 – A UN report criticises Germany for not combating institutional racism and urges better implementation of the anti-discrimination law.

Actors in the conflict

Actors	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Federal government: • Opened borders for refugees in 2015; has since implemented severe restrictions on asylum and immigration policy.	×		
CDU: • Wants to limit immigration and especially asylum applications significantly but without defining an upper limit for the admission of asylum seekers; supports the suspension of family reunification. • Further extension of the list of safe countries and opposition against creating legal ways to apply for asylum in Germany (currently virtually impossible due to the Dublin Regulation); strong support of the 'refugee deal' with Turkey. • Demands severe restrictions for terror suspects; demands a stricter deportation and border control regime, including deportations to Afghanistan, which has been declared partly safe contrary to the reports of several human rights organisations. • Integration is viewed as a one-sided process of assimilation; opposes dual citizenship.	×		
CSU: • Limiting immigration and especially asylum applications; stopping the admission of refugees as soon as possible and introducing an (annual) upper limit of refugees admitted to the country are core demands of the party; strong support for suspension of family reunification. • Further extension of the list of safe countries; opposition against legal ways to apply for asylum in Germany; strong support of the 'refugee deal' with Turkey. • Demands severe restrictions for terror suspects and a stricter deportation and border control regime, including deportations to Afghanistan. • Integration is viewed as a one-sided process of assimilation and, altogether, rather critically opposes dual citizenship	×		

SPD: • Wants to better control immigration and limit the number of asylum applications but without defining an upper limit for the admission of asylum seekers; partial support for the suspension of family reunification (the left wing against it, the party in government supported the policy). • Partial support for extension of the list of safe countries, though not in the current discussion about Maghreb countries; moderate support of the 'refugee deal' with Turkey, especially from party leaders in government. • Demands some restrictions for terror suspects, mostly through more intense surveillance; demands a stricter deportation regime, including deportations to Afghanistan; party is divided on border control at German borders. • Integration and immigration are often framed in terms of labour market criteria and are still viewed by many as a one-sided process of assimilation.	×		
Bündnis 90/Die Grünen: • No restrictions on the right to asylum, for it is a human right (with a few prominent exceptions in the party); opposes suspension of family reunification. • The majority of the party oppose the extension of the list (and even the concept) of safe countries, though some prominent figures supported an extension; opposition to the 'refugee deal' with Turkey • Restrictions for terror suspects only in the field of surveillance; no deportation to conflict areas; no border control at German borders. • Positive attitude towards inclusion/integration, which is mostly framed as a process that involves everyone in society; in favour of dual citizenship.	×		
Die Linke: • No restrictions on the right to asylum, for it is a human right (with very few prominent exceptions in the party); opposes the suspension of family reunification. • The majority of the party oppose the extension of the list (and even the concept) of safe countries; opposition to the 'refugee deal' with Turkey. • Rather rejects special restrictions for terror suspects; no deportation to conflict areas; no border control at German borders. • Predominantly positive attitude towards inclusion/integration, which is predominantly framed as a process that involves everyone in society; in favour of dual citizenship.	×		
AfD: • Drastically limiting and strictly controlling immigration and especially asylum applications by introducing an (annual) upper limit of refugees admitted to the country, some members of the party probably oppose immigration more generally; strong support for suspension of family reunification. • Further extension of the list of safe countries; opposition against legal ways to apply for asylum in Germany. • Demanding severe and multiple restrictions for terror suspects and a much stricter deportation and border control regime, including deportations to Afghanistan. • Integration/inclusion is mostly opposed; if accepted it is clearly viewed as a one-sided process of assimilation; opposes dual citizenship.		×	

PEGIDA and local radical right-wing and anti-immigration initiatives; influential right-wing populist/radical media (online and offline), such as Compact or Junge Freiheit: • Drastically limiting and strictly controlling immigration and especially asylum applications by introducing an (annual) upper limit of refugees admitted to the country, some sections oppose immigration more generally; strong support for suspension of family reunification. • Massive extension of the list of safe countries. • Demands a huge increase of deportation and stricter and more extensive border controls; massive deportations are considered the best pre-emptive action against terror suspects. • Integration is strongly opposed/deemed impossible.	× (PEGIDA and local initiatives)	× (right-wing media)	
Pro Asyl: • No restrictions on, but rather extensions of the right to asylum, for it is a human right. • Strongly opposes the concept of safe countries and the Dublin Regulation; demands safe ways to apply for asylum in Germany/Europe. • No special restrictions for terror suspects; no deportations to conflict areas. • Positive attitude towards inclusion/integration, which is predominantly framed as a process that involves everyone in society; improving refugees' and immigrants' rights.	×		
Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland: • The right to asylum is a universal human right but the country has a limited capacity to admit refugees for reasons of the society's inclusion capacity. • Gave support to security measures against terror suspects. • Are confronted with increasing anti-Muslim racism.		×	
Human rights organisations, think tanks and NGOs/CSOs: • Oppose restrictions on the right to asylum, for it is a human right. • Mostly oppose the concept of safe countries and the Dublin Regulation; demand safe ways to apply for asylum in Germany/Europe. • No special restrictions for terror suspects; no deportations to conflict areas. • Positive attitude towards inclusion/integration, which is predominantly framed as a process that involves everyone in society; improving refugees' and immigrants' rights.		×	
Catholic and Protestant Churches • Oppose restrictions on the right to asylum, for it is a human right. • Oppose the concept of safe countries; demand safe ways to apply for asylum in Germany. • No special restrictions for terror suspects; no deportations to conflict areas, such as Afghanistan. • Rather positive position on inclusion/integration.		×	
Heads of state of other countries, especially V4, Erdogan, Putin, Obama, Trump: • Visegrád countries oppose German asylum policy and hinder an EU-wide solution (together with other EU members); oppose the admission of asylum seekers in their countries (and throughout Europe); promote and partly implement extensive (and partly inhumane) security measures against asylum seekers (as does the US under Trump).			×

Relations among the actors in the conflict

The conflict is more between the camps of pro-immigration and anti-immigration actors. The green lines symbolise pro-immigration positions, the red lines anti-immigrant positions and the yellow lines a divided platform. Also, when curved lines combine, it does not mean that these actors have necessarily joined forces; it has rather been used for clear arrangement of the figure.

Sources and causes of the conflict

The most recent manifestations of the conflict have been caused by the high number of asylum seekers coming to Germany. The deeper causes, however, might lie rather in the ethnic and cultural concepts of society and citizenship that still prevail among significant parts of society and the phenomena resulting from them, especially xenophobia and racism. Moreover, it is also connected to the socio-economic situation in the country and a large and constantly growing gap between rich and poor. Even though the German economy has probably been least affected by the economic crises of the last decade compared to the other EU member states, there is a fear in the middle class of losing some of their privileges or having to share them with others while the upper classes continue to accumulate the assets of economy. In this vein, a general lack of solidarity beyond 'first aid' might also cause a problem. Despite the small percentage (1 to 2 per cent) of people with an 'immigration background' in Eastern Germany, conflicts and the potential for violence have become especially strong there. Here, various factors such as a feeling of neglect by Western Germany in the aftermath of reunification, generally weaker economic development and worse employment conditions, could be argued as some additional causes of racism, xenophobia and violence – alongside specific personal factors, such as chronic stress and violence/denigration in the family, ideological dispositions towards group hatred and violent extremism and transgenerational continuities of the family in historic fascism and authoritarianism. The low percentage of immigrants and more widespread right-wing radicalism and extremism might also be the reason why immigrants have rarely moved to the east, especially to small towns and rural areas, which again has added to the recent increase of the majority population's feeling of being overwhelmed by the arriving refugees.

Dynamics of the conflict

There is a constantly high level of escalation regarding this conflict, although its latest peak may have been late 2015/early 2016. There are, however, still a very high number of attacks and a high level of hate speech and discrimination against refugees and people of colour in general – and the terrorist attack in Berlin sparked new, heated debates around refugee and immigration issues. However, the main questions of integration/inclusion have not been addressed in any sustainable fashion so there is the danger that today's immigrants may face the same challenges regarding access to education, civic, social and political rights, as well as a feeling of belonging to German society as did those who arrived several decades ago. Moreover, it is likely that this conflict will reach another peak during the 2017 election campaign.

Background of the conflict

The background of the conflict lies in the fact that Germany has been a country of immigration for several decades without acknowledging this fact. The country has largely maintained an ethno-cultural understanding of national belonging which has led to the large-scale exclusion of and discrimination against immigrants and minorities. Officially, the country's status as a country of immigration found its legal expression in the immigration laws in the 2000s but the transformation into people's awareness and behaviour is still in process and might take even more time in the eastern part of the country, where the indigenous majority population has been far less in contact with immigrants until recently compared to the territory of the 'old' Federal Republic of Germany or the main cities.

Possible future scenarios

Apart from changes in government that could affect the situation in one or the other direction, the fact that refugees (have been) settled in most municipalities throughout the country has created a situation in which they are part of almost everyone's everyday life, e.g. as neighbours, co-workers, customers, employees, shop owners, patients, pupils, activists, parents etc. Also, the labour and housing market, social and health services, schools and education and many other institutions need to adapt to a more diverse population and should find ways to

be inclusive towards refugees. While this is a more or less familiar situation in the western part of the country (which does not mean that people and institutions have completed the task), it is rather new in Eastern Germany. In the long run, this is likely to lead to a normalisation of diversity and could foster a more inclusive society in the region. In order to achieve this properly and quickly, however, it is necessary not to repeat the mistakes of the past by denying immigrants access to society – be it formally by setting high obstacles to obtain German citizenship or limited access to social and health services and education, or more informally by adhering to an ethnic and cultural, and thus rather exclusive, concept of society in everyday life.

2. Gender rights vs. gender ideology

Short summary of the conflict

This conflict is about the concept and impact of 'gender' in German public debate and politics; 'gender' here comprises male, female and non-binary gender roles within society, as well as the recognition of a diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations.

Gender has been a subject of public controversy for more than ten years in Germany. After the legal recognition of same-sex partnerships in 2001, the starting point for public debate was the implementation of an EU directive introducing gender equality into German national law: the Anti-Discrimination Law (AGG – Allgemeines Gleichstellungsgesetz). The 2006 'anti-discrimination law' was strongly connected to the term of gender mainstreaming, which is understood by the EU as well as by German law as a cross-sectional task, aiming for the equality of men and women in a binary understanding of the terms, and formulates the demand that politics, institutions and organisations review and adapt their structures and activities in order to achieve gender equality. In spite of the recognition of same-sex partnerships in 2001 there is still no full equality between same-sex partnerships and heterosexual marriage, e.g. in the right to adopt children or to file joint tax returns. At the same time the improvement and implementation of parental leave and parental allowance have entered into force and include heterosexual marriages and same-sex partnerships, aiming at better compatibility between family and work. For mothers the return to work after having a child should become easier and fathers should be more encouraged to act as caretakers for their child(ren) for some time. Against this background, conservative Christian, right-wing populist and radical circles and journalists have picked up the issue in a propagandistic manner and adamantly rejected the very idea of gender equality in established newspapers and magazines – thus heading for a backlash of already achieved consent on issues of employment and towards equal pay for equal work. Their main lines of argumentation interpret gender mainstreaming as an ideology and as a project of 'unnatural' re-education of the population by liberal forces without any democratic legitimation. Furthermore, it is argued, with a slant towards conspiracy theories, that the claims of gender mainstreaming lack any scientific basis and really are a political agenda aiming to destroy traditional 'masculinity' and 'femininity' and the traditional family as such. The general rejection of the concept of gender mainstreaming is usually accompanied by a strong rejection of homosexuality and gender diversity more broadly. Those positions and lines of argumentation, which were formulated by Christian conservative, but also non-confessional conservative and even some more liberal journalists, have been expressed in well elaborated articles and publications in the leading media (e.g. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Der Spiegel*) but have also resonated with populist and extreme right-wing circles. Here the contestations have been more explicit by interpreting gender mainstreaming as a threat to the idealised ethnic community ('Volksgemeinschaft'). Right-wing populist and extremist propaganda often speaks of 'gender terror'.

In its first phase the discourse about gender took place mostly in mainstream media online and offline. The 'old' radical right, such as the National Democratic Party (NPD), had included these issues in their agenda, but did not play much of a role in public discourse. For the AfD, however, gender has become a core issue that is frequently picked up in various outputs of the party and its members. Thus, the AfD did not merely make the issues more popular in the populist and radical right. The party also influenced and radicalised the discourse on gender issues, particularly in social media.

On the part of gender critics, simplifications, polemics and hate speech have become features of the discussion culture. By labelling gender mainstreaming as an 'ideology' gender critics use the issue on one hand to prove more generally that the EU, the Green Party, feminists, gays and trans people are attempting to destroy the traditional family and that they threaten traditional society ('Volksgemeinschaft'). On the other hand, gender is addressed on an everyday basis in public rallies, demonstrations and other political events. Via the internet and

social media both sides increasingly mobilise for petitions and demonstrations for and against gender-related issues. One of the biggest demonstrations is organised by the network 'Bundesverband Lebensrecht (a pro-life federal association), called '1,000 Crosses for Life'. This has been held in Berlin since 2002 (since 2008 it has been called 'March for Life'). They protest against the right to abortion, medically assisted suicide and pre-implantation diagnostics as well as stem cell research. The march is accompanied by counter-demonstrations from two major alliances – the alliance of sexual self-determination political parties like the SPD, LINKE, B90/Grüne and other humanitarian groups and the WTF alliance formed by feminist and anti-fascist groups.

Timeline

2014/2015 – The state government of Baden-Wuerttemberg decides on a reform of sex education in schools that includes the diversity of gender and sexual orientations. An initiative of Christian organisations and conservative family associations files a petition against the reform and conducts several information stands, a symposium and several demonstrations with the slogan 'Demo für alle' ('Demonstration for All'). These demonstrations, which strongly mirror the French 'Manif pour Tous' marches take place approximately 10 times between April 2014 and October 2016 in Baden-Wuerttemberg and, since summer 2016 also in the federal state of Hesse. Since the successful mobilisations in Baden-Wuerttemberg identical initiatives have been formed in the federal states of Hesse, Bavaria and Saxony-Anhalt. So far, all activities by 'Demo für alle' have been accompanied by counter-protests and demonstrations.

June 2015 – 4,000 people demonstrate in Stuttgart with the slogan 'Marriage and family first! Stop gender ideology and the sexualisation of our children.' The core of the demonstrators' self-understanding is the rejection of gender mainstreaming, sexual diversity and gay marriage – and it claims to represent the 'middle of society'. By this, it is able to attract a wide range of cross-party and cross-organisational actors ranging from conservative and Christian to right-wing radical. So far, the initial initiative in Baden-Wuerttemberg is still the most active one and has even hosted speakers from neighbouring France.

31 December 2015 – Sexual abuse and rape of women by large groups of non-white men occurs in Cologne. The police are largely unprepared and do not manage to react effectively. Instead of debating the issue of violence against women, however, the discourse about these incidents focuses on the origin of the perpetrators and spreads largely racist generalisations against non-white immigrants, former refugees who have become German citizens. Mostly white male centre and radical right-wing politicians make 'saving their women' their core issue even though they have never before engaged in strengthening women's rights, be it connected to the prevention and punishment of rape and domestic violence or more broadly.

January 2016 – #ausnahmslos (#without exception): 22 feminists start a campaign against sexualised violence to counter a racist instrumentalisation of the incidents on New Year's Eve in Cologne. The feminist online campaign #aufschrei also lobbies against sexism and racism.

May 2016 – The German Federal Anti-Discrimination Office demands the rehabilitation of homosexual men convicted according to §175 StGB that punished homosexual acts between men prior to 1994.

July 2016 – The German Bundestag passes a 'prostitution protection bill' – sex work activists and charitable organisations complain a decline of protection and further stigmatisation of sex workers.

October 2016 – The national-populist party PiS and the Catholic Church of Poland attempt to tighten the already restrictive abortion law. In solidarity with Polish women, thousands protest in Germany and all over the world for sexual self-determination.

Actors in the conflict

Actors	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Federal government: • Implementing EU directives on a national/regional level. • Appealing to gay voters and conservative voters at the same time.	×		
• The CDU and more liberal sections of the CSU oppose laws to open marriage to homosexual people. • Support of gender rights and gender equality to a certain degree (e.g. accepting registered homosexual partnerships). • Neglecting the right-wing concept of so-called 'gender ideology'.	×		
Conservative Christian circles, conservative parental organisations, ultra-conservative Christian organisations: • Within these circles anti-gender positions have been circulating since the mid-to-late 1990s; they were adapted mainly from the US but had no influence in public debate; against abortion, in favour of heteronormative families. • Against sex education in schools.		×	
Liberal-conservative journalists: • Express their anti-gender positions in well elaborated articles in mainstream media. • Gender mainstreaming is interpreted as the destruction of identities and feared as measures for gender re-education. • Scepticism against gender studies and gender theorists.		×	
Populist and radical right-wing actors: • Transfer mainstream anti-gender discourse to their ideology to be more appealing; gender threatens their idealised ethnic community and the ideal of heteronormative white families. • AfD – denouncing gender as an ideology is crucial to their agenda; opposed to gender diversity and rights; often combine gender issues with racism.		×	
Militant masculinists, men's/father's rights movement: • Different political currents of anti-feminism are acting online using platforms for networking, creating their own anti-gender Wiki and using hate speech against feminist activists. • Against feminist standpoints. • Feel oppressed and discriminated against by women*. • Strengthening cis men, heteronormative families, and 'fathers' rights' activists who feel discriminated against and see themselves as victims of gender equality e.g. 'Children of divorce are denied the right to see their fathers', battered women's shelters are ideological places – women are supposed to be the violent ones. • Against gender studies and gender equality (laws).		×	
Gender activists (various organisations in the LGBT community) + liberal left-wing parties + liberal parents: • In favour of sex education reform in schools. • In favour of marriage for all, the right to adoption for all. • In favour of sexual self-determination (abortion, contraceptives). • In favour of trans*, inter* and women* rights.		×	

Sources and causes of the conflict

The conflict on gender diversity as such is a conflict existing all over the world and can be described on a structural level with the term of 'patriarchy'. Women and LGBT people have experienced discrimination and oppression on a structural level over a long period of human existence. The current labour market conditions and regulations also maintain gender inequality. Even the improvement of women's* rights, such as the right to vote, better job market access, etc. can be only seen as a success for some women. When white women upgrade, women of colour are taking over the burden of this improvement. The conflict, especially under the term 'gender' and 'gender mainstreaming' has become livelier in the years since 2000. Since then, the different parties have become more and more outspoken and more polarised in their demands.

Dynamics of the conflict

Offline manifestations and online hate speech against women and LGBT rights activists have increased drastically in the last few years. In combination with a growing feeling of insecurity related to Islamic terrorism and growing racist speech and acts, the situation is used to enforce the idea of a white, heteronormative idea of gender roles, family and gender identities. Various civil society organisations advocate an open-minded and diverse society; not only do they counter-protest against regressive forces, they also play a part in forming society.

Background of the conflict

An economic factor can be identified in the conflict around gender, especially in terms of caregiving. Caregiving, such as taking care of children and elderly people, is still done mainly by women, especially lower-class women and women of colour. This often illegalised, unpaid or badly paid sector is in the interests of patriarchal and capitalistic structures. A social factor can be identified in Germany by taking a closer look at still existing East-West differences. The politics of the former GDR promoted women at work, resulting in higher employment rates of women in the eastern part of Germany to date. Nevertheless these women experience(d) the triple burden of job, household and caregiving work. In comparison, women from Western Germany work part-time more often or stay at home with their families. Since the year 2000, EU directives on gender equality have been transferred on the national level. These reforms have started public discussion about gender equality, family structures, LGBT rights etc. Christian conservatives, some otherwise liberal-minded voices and (extreme) right-wing actors feared the disruption of their gender worldview and the loss of their privileges in a (white) male-dominated society. Politically, the governing parties have had to implement more progressive laws and please conservative voters at the same time.

Possible future scenarios

In the event that the right-wing forces grow, the situation of women and LGBT people will worsen and they may even witness an erosion of gender rights or find that new issues are being championed, like the prevention of equality of marriage for homosexual people and of the right of gay couples to adopt children; the increased toleration or even glorification of rape culture or domestic violence; or the registration of trans and inter-people or sex workers. Local and national elections will have an influence on the development of social attitudes towards these topics. Gender will continue to be a hotly debated issue in society. As gender equality in neighbouring countries is already regressive, for instance the freedom of sexual self-determination regarding contraceptives, abortion, the role of women etc., it might even be challenging to sustain the existing status quo of gender equality in Germany.

3. Credibility of (mainstream) media and the 'post-truth' society

Short summary of the conflict

Together with the rise of the above-mentioned breakthrough of right-wing populism fuelled particularly by forces with a strong anti-establishment platform like the AfD, an entire milieu of society has become increasingly sceptical towards the established political parties and towards 'mainstream' media, such as the nationwide daily newspapers and public TV stations. In 2014 the term *Lügenpresse* ('lying press'), which is taken directly from Nazi jargon became a frequent rallying cry among the far right and served as a standard accusation against journalists. Like many other elements of hate speech from the far right, this term and the underlying framing have

made inroads into parts of mainstream society and have thus created a belittlement of the term. Often, leading figures and even 'ordinary' members of demonstrations, such as the PEGIDA marches, have denied interviews or even media coverage of protest activities on this basis.

This mistrust is strategically spread and used by the AfD, PEGIDA and other (right-wing) groups to mobilise support and create fear. Moreover, casting doubt about the most important and widespread media sources in the country (leaving aside online social media here) is an essential tool that these forces use to present themselves as the only alternative to the 'elite' and as the representative of the will of the ordinary, 'pure people', who, they claim are not represented in the media. The problem here is that these actors do not rationally criticise particular reports or even provide arguments for their claims, rather they stylise and generalise the media as a government-controlled left-wing institution that directs public opinion.

Around these right-wing populist actors a range of online and offline media claim to represent and spread this allegedly existing general will of the people by providing print publications and blogs that range from quite high-quality and analytical though rather one-sided news coverage to content that does not even try to meet any journalistic standards and those that obviously publish propaganda and even conspiracy theories.

Here, they resonate very well with other (right-wing) conspiracy theorist groups, such as the so-called *Reichsbürger* ('Reich Citizens') ideology. These Reich Citizens claim that the Federal Republic of Germany has not been a sovereign state since after World War II but that the German government is only managing a so-called *BRD GmbH* ('FRG Corporation'), which, they argue, is actually controlled by external powers, such as the US, the Illuminati, or also the Jews – often publicly referred to with the usual anti-Semitic codes like 'the East Coast of the US' or the 'Rothschild Empire'. Consequently, the Reich Citizens refer to the German Reich, mostly within its borders of 1937 or 1939, as a still intact German state. This idea goes along with the fact that they do not accept the authority of the GDR, including public administration, police, and the state monopoly on violence. In this vein, several adherents to this conspiracy theory have not only installed their own 'Reich Governments' or crowned new kings and printed their own passports and documents but they try to paralyse and undermine public administration and to arm themselves. Their opposition to state interventions, their anti-Semitic and often racist ideas provide connections to right-wing actors, such as the AfD or PEGIDA. Coupled with the armament, the milieu of the Reich Citizen also resonates with more militant right-wing forces and poses a real threat to political opponents and the state, which became visible when a Reich Citizen shot a police officer who was part of a unit that tried to confiscate his weapons in 2016.

Online hate speech has increased over the last years. Here, the division and polarisation of society have become the most visible. Groups like the European 'No Hate Speech Movement' were also introduced in Germany to prevent hate speech and discrimination, develop counter-strategies and to support affected and concerned persons.

During 2016, the issue of the credibility of media broadened and became even more prominent through increasing debates about 'post-truth societies', filter bubbles and echo chambers, and, of course, the growing range and influence of fake news. 'Post-truth' describes the idea that 'perceptions/feelings are reality'. This concept is used by populist actors like Georg Pazderski, the Chair of the AfD's Berlin section, who claimed in the recent Berlin election campaign that 'perception is reality'. Appealing to feelings has always been part of politics, but it becomes dangerous when feelings are used to divide society. Right-wing actors increasingly use idealised frames of a 'we' group against 'the others'. After Trump's election as President of the US the discussion also arose in Germany as to whether Google or Facebook should limit access to diverse news items by applying personalised search functions and algorithms. The whole debate was accompanied and is more and more dominated by the discussion about (how to deal with) fake news that has been spread abundantly, for instance, about the alleged criminal activities of refugees[3]. Politicians have discussed how to control fake news in the media, especially in preparation for the elections in September 2017.

At first glance, the issue at the heart of the conflict may suggest that this conflict is more about informational resources than about values. However, the manner in which this issue is framed also allows for a different/additional interpretation. Those who do not even accept or rationally criticise 'mainstream' media devalue them collectively with labels, such as 'government-run' or 'green-left filth', and – most importantly – usually refrain from any serious discourse on that matter. This kind of criticism clearly reveals that their opposition has a different,

3 Hoaxmap (http://hoaxmap.org/) and Mimikama (http://www.mimikama.at/) are websites that review fake news. Hoaxmap specifically reviews fake news about allegedly 'criminal' refugees.

more deeply rooted source. The fact that they are usually found in the same camp or are the very same people who advocate a closed and exclusive society suggests that their scepticism is rather a facet of their authoritarian and anti-pluralistic values than of the missing representation of their issues and positions in the media.

Timeline

Late 2014 – PEGIDA does not comment on media requests and calls on their members not to speak to the media anymore. They use and spread the term 'Lügenpresse' ('Lying press') against the mainstream media. Some journalists are even attacked by demonstrators when they tried to conduct interviews or report on the demonstrations on site.

December 2014 – The media magazine Zapp published by the public TV station NDR reacts to news about Ukraine and publishes a survey by the institute Infratest dimap that shows decreased trust in the media in Germany. In addition, the weekly paper Die Zeit (26/2015) debates trust in the media. No clear conclusion on the reasons for the loss of trust can be identified.

January 2016 – The 'Julia' case: a Russian-German girl from Berlin disappears, then reappears. In the meantime, Russian media and German right-wing populists spread racist rumours about the girl's disappearance for their own propaganda. This case becomes one of the most popular cases that is later identified as fake news.

June 2016 – The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth funds participation in the European campaign/movement 'No Hate Speech'. An initiative of young journalists with diverse cultural competences and linguistic skills, 'Neue deutsche Medienmacher', that advocates diversity in the media becomes the coordinating organisation.

September/October 2016 – The concept of post-truth politics is used frequently and increasingly during the US election campaign and the Brexit referendum. In Germany, Angela Merkel uses the word 'postfaktisch' ('post-truth') in a public speech for the first time. During the 2016 Berlin Senate elections the debate about post-truth politics takes up speed.

November 2016 – After the election of Donald Trump as President of the USA the term 'fake news' increasingly enters German debates to describe politically motivated false or very biased 'news'. In this course, the debate about filter bubbles and echo chambers arrives in German media, which discuss whether they have influenced recent elections.

December 2016 – The 'Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache' ('Society for German Language') selects 'postfaktisch' ('post-truth') as word of the year.

January 2017 – The German government plans to strengthen the right to act against online hate speech and fake news, e.g. on Facebook, Twitter, etc.

January 2017 – Important media CEOs disagree with politicians that fake news is on the rise. They suggest that fake news is not a specific problem of our time.

March 2017 – Facebook engages the initiative corrective.org to check potential fake news. In the case of 'verified' fake news, it will be marked with a warning notice.

Actors in the conflict

Actors	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Mainstream print media and public TV (e.g. ARD, ZDF, FAZ, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Der Spiegel, Die Zeit): • Have to regain and stabilise trust and credibility. • Have to deal with hate speech. • Want to provide critical news coverage.	×		
New right-wing media and conspiracy theorists (*Junge Freiheit*, *Compact*, *Sezession*, KenFM, PI-News, Russia Today Germany, Tichyseinblick, Achgut.com sowie Deutsche Wirtschaftsnachrichten, former FAZ journalist and conspiracy journalist Udo Ulfkotte, publishing houses like Kopp): • Criticise mainstream media as censored or controlled by politicians and the elite. • Spread right-wing populist views and conspiracy theories.		×	
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter): • Want to remain non-partisan. • Are profit-oriented. • Are forced by law to mark fake news and check hate speech.			×
PEGIDA, AfD: • Weaken the reliability of and trust in mainstream media. • Propagate their right-wing perspectives and increase divisions between an in-group and an out-group. • Gain issue ownership on important topics, especially immigration and inclusion. • Spread fake news. • Believe in a post-truth society.	×		
Government/mainstream politicians (CDU, SPD, Grüne, Linke, FDP): • Are accused of working to guide the mainstream media to publish propaganda. • Are under pressure to find solutions to fake news and mistrust of the mainstream media and politics. • Push for laws against fake news also regarding the upcoming elections.		×	

Sources and causes of the conflict

With the increasing range and popularity of online and social media, the position of power of 'traditional' mainstream media in print and on television has been challenged. Broad access to social media and comment fields of news agencies have made not only public opinion but also isolated views, discrimination and hate speech more visible. Together with the increasing number of refugees arriving in Germany in 2014, not only did a 'welcome' mentality emerge but also feelings of misrepresentation and racism – often masked as 'feelings that are reality' or the point of view of the 'ordinary people' – were expressed in PEGIDA demonstrations and online. Formerly unutterable words and ideas spread into mainstream society and discourses. Right-wing (populist) actors like AfD and PEGIDA used the mistrust against the mainstream media to weaken their credibility and to strengthen their own ideologies. A definite flashpoint was the election of Donald Trump in the USA that fuelled the discourse in Germany about a post-truth era and fake news.

Dynamics of the conflict

In the current pre-election phase mainstream politicians try to prevent fake news by enforcing laws to control news in social media. Facebook is urged to take action against fake news and hate speech. The mainstream media are trying to stabilise (or regain) their credibility. The regulation of the media by law is the approach that is most frequently put forward by (government) politicians. As we have argued, however, the conflict is (by and large) not about a critical perspective of the media, but rather means to discredit mainstream media and stir up fear in order to strengthen right-wing populist perspectives. Right-wing actors spread fake news to shift the political focus on topics to their advantage. Media campaigns like #aufschrei and #ausnahmslos are creating counteractions against right-wing populist opinions and propaganda. Protecting the media from fake news and online hate speech is only one way to deal with this conflict. The difficult task of starting a dialogue requires real political solutions and efforts beyond online and social media campaigns to create bridges and dialogue between these opposing positions in society.

Background of the conflict

The conflict is based on a mix of political, economic and social frameworks. First, right-wing political actors try to destabilise the mainstream media, create their own new right-wing media and spread fake news and conspiracy theories that the established parties have to rectify. More importantly, the 'mainstream' have to provide their own topics and frames and ideas to avoid a right-wing takeover of public debates. Second, the traditional media have economic power that is endangered by their shrinking credibility and social media often do not want to get involved in politics in order to assure profit.

Possible future scenarios

Worst case scenario: With regards to the elections in September 2017 right-wing populists will use fake news and 'post-truth politics' to destabilise their opponents as well as mainstream media. They will use social media and the new right-wing media to share their racist, inhumane agenda and try to gain issue ownership on important topics, not least of which is the above-mentioned issue of immigration and inclusion including false accusations against refugees. Journalists and politicians will be insulted, will not respond and their credibility will sink. Society will be completely divided. In a different scenario, people will start to communicate with each other from different positions and exchange information about their hopes, needs and fears on the basis of rational facts and arguments as well as empathy and respect. This process could (and should) be initiated and facilitated by a strong civil society.

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Hoaxmap: www.hoaxmat.org

Mimikama: www.mimikama.at

Correctiv: www.correctiv.org

HUNGARY

Introduction

As research and common experience shows, Hungarian society is one of the most authoritarian in Europe. This means that there is a high expectation of government involvement in different areas of life. An essential part of the population not just accepts, but respects the 'strong hand' of the government in steering the country as security is their highest value priority. Thus, it should not come as a surprise that the common point in the conflicts analysed is the role of the government, which is a major actor in each. The responsibility of the government is very high in dealing with these issues. Often what happens, however, is that after government intervention in these conflicts the situation does not substantially improve or it even grows worse. In some cases the government's actions can be a factor in the escalation of a conflict. The conflicts analysed here are minority vs. majority conflicts. The position of the government regarding these is to maintain the status quo: protecting the very traditional interests of the majority of society and excluding the minority groups and their interests. As a result of this, the majority of society feel supported in their discriminative approach. Prejudiced, discriminative, often radical opinions or actions are tolerated and starting to become normalised.

As regards the economic-social background of the conflicts, Hungary has gone from being the first in economic competitiveness among the former socialist countries to being the last. Even though Hungary is a member of the EU, the quality of life in Hungary is very far below that of the countries of the West. Therefore, the people are already under a great deal of stress as they have a hard time earning enough money to meet their everyday expenses. Fear of unemployment is also very strong. In a closed, inward-looking society where a lot of people are fighting for survival, value-based conflicts can be deeply entrenched and easy to capitalise upon.

Methodology

In accordance with the common methodology of the ENND project, throughout the mapping process we have analysed articles published in the past year to a year and a half (until December, 2016) in four online journals. The mainstream journals selected were 444.hu and index.hu; the two 'alternative' extremist ones were kuruc.info, and alfahir.hu. In addition, as a part of our desk research we reviewed other relevant articles, websites and studies that in our view contained important information regarding the different conflicts (see the footnotes and the 'works cited' section). In our field research, we performed semi-structured interviews with actors and experts (see the list of interviews at the end of our study) and held a mapping meeting. Finally, we also had a round of proofreading of our study by different experts in the fields of conflict who helped improve our text with their comments and suggestions.

It is important to note here that this study cannot provide an in-depth analysis of the issues dealt with here, rather an overview of the actors, major trends and dynamics which are intended to lay the foundation for the network building process of the ENND project to be carried out in its next phase.

1. Social acceptance and equal rights of LGBT people in Hungary

Short summary and timeline of the conflict

This conflict is about the social acceptance and equal rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people in Hungary. Currently, it is made up of several 'smaller' issues and events which can be organised into four categories: 1) issues related to the Pride parade; 2) issues of equal rights; 3) issues of discrimination; 4) issues of defamation and hate speech.

1. The Pride parade, when LGBT people march in the streets of Budapest is a focal point of the conflict and it has been a scene of escalation of the conflict. The event was first organised in 1997. It was in 2007 when the most (physically) violent attacks occurred against the parade and therefore, since 2008 the event has been protected with the strong presence of police officers and separated from the public by cordons. In 2016 there were no anti-parade protesters but there was still a police cordon to separate the marching masses from the people walking

in the streets. The event was preceded by hate speech by the political party KDNP (Christian Conservative Party) (Herczeg, 2016) and the far-right Jobbik party, who call the participants in the event 'deviants' (Herczeg, 2016).

2. LGBT people are in the middle of the field in the area of equal rights in comparison with other EU countries. They are allowed, for example, to enter into civil unions[4]. However, marriage is impossible for them and adoption can get complicated.[5] In one instance of this, in 2016 a lesbian couple were prevented by Child Protective Services from adopting a little girl in Pécs (a city in southern Hungary); the ombudsman handled their case (Csarnó, 2016).

3. Discrimination is still a general issue, however, Christian conservative and extreme right-wing politicians and sympathisers are the ones who engage in it most openly. The harshest attempt was in November 2016 when the mayor of Ásotthalom (a small city in the south of Hungary), who is a well-known member of the far right banned 'gay propaganda' in his city, making it clear that gay citizens (and Muslims) are not welcome (Kovász, 2016).

4. There is a growing tendency to use homosexuality as a weapon in political campaigns, which we believe can be considered as hate speech. In 2016 Gábor Vona, the leader of the Jobbik party was accused several times of having participated in gay parties, which he denied. When his wife intervened on his behalf his masculinity was also questioned by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

Actors in the conflict

PRO				CONTRA	
Primary actors					
members of the LGBTQ+ community			majority of non LGBTQ+ HU citizens	ultra conservative, right-wing HU citizens	
Secondary actors					
NGOs	DK party	other left-wing, liberal parties	Fidesz government		KDNP JOBBIK parties
Tertiary actors					
allies from majority society e.g: Christians for gays group, embassies, companies		churches government institutions		police	

The primary actors here are the members of the LGBT community, of whom the most visible are well-known people (e.g.: celebrities or politicians) or victims of issues of discrimination who have appeared in the media. On the other side there are members or sympathisers of the far right Jobbik party and Christian and other conservative groups, among them members or sympathisers of the KDNP (Christian Democratic People's Party) and some members of the governing Fidesz party. The actors on the extreme right are very radical in this issue. One of their online newspapers, called *Kurucinfo*, usually lashes out against LGBT people using harsh, obscene and humiliating words. They do not accept any other minorities either, including the Roma, migrants, Jews etc. They also have paramilitary groups, e.g.: Magyar Gárda, whose members have appeared at Gay Pride parades as 'anti-protesters'.

The Hungarian population are generally rather conservative and also have little contact with LGBT people in comparison with the European averages. According to the 2015 Eurobarometer research results only 49 % of Hungarian respondents totally agreed with the statement that LGBT people should have the same rights as heterosexual people (the EU-28 average was 71 %). In addition, only 57 % said they would be comfortable or moderately comfortable with an LGBT work colleague (the EU-28 average was 72 %) (Ilga Europe, 2016).

4 Also known as registered partnership.

5 Legally, it is impossible for a same-sex couple to adopt as a couple; only as single parents.

Among the secondary actors we can find NGOs like HÁTTÉR, an advocacy association protecting and providing services for gay people; LABRISZ, an organisation for lesbian women; and Transvanilla, an association of trans people. The LGBT alliance is an umbrella organisation for these NGOs. They are occasionally joined by human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and the Helsinki Commission.

As for political parties, the most party most in favour of LGBT rights is the small left-wing Democratic Coalition, which even supports gay marriage. Other left-wing and liberal parties are moderate supporters. The Fidesz government takes a 'no intervention necessary; this is a private issue of the citizens' position. This means that they do not support LGBT people, but also do not attack them openly. The political actors who are most against the gays are the far-right Jobbik party and the Christian conservative KDNP (which is a smaller coalition member of the government). However, Jobbik have lately taken a populist turn, which means that in their communication they try to appear to be moderate about these issues.

Among the tertiary actors we can find allies from the majority of society, e.g. the Christians for Gays group. Some are from other minorities who feel solidarity. Foreign embassies of countries that consider LGBT rights important (e.g. the United States and Norway) usually send a representative to the Pride parade. Private companies that support the rights of the LGBT communities also appear there. In Hungary, one of these is the company Prezi, the owner of which is openly gay. Law enforcement officers also play a role, especially when protecting the Pride parade. However, police officers as well as supposedly neutral governmental institutions like the National Tax and Customs Administration and the Child Protective Services can often act in a hostile manner out of prejudice or under the direct orders of prejudiced superiors.

There are also state institutions that are required to act ex officio on behalf of LGBT people in these issues; one of them is the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights (About the Office, 2017) and the other is the Equal Treatment Authority, which is responsible for overseeing the enforcement of the Equal Treatment Act (Important information on… 2017). There is a very good anti-discrimination law, but its enforcement is not often effective.

Churches take varied positions. Catholics are generally the most conservative, however progressives can be found among them as well. The Lutheran Church is normally the most supportive and its members also tend to be active in this area. It is also important to note that churches can exert their influence the most effectively through politics.

Possible future scenarios

Positive: LGBT people will acquire more rights, e.g. the right to marry and adopt children as couples. This is not likely at this time as it does not fit into the government's ideological view. This is the most obvious as shown by the fact that when revising the Constitution, they included a passage which defines marriage as a union of two people of the opposite sex.

Nevertheless, in civil society some activists report a positive tendency of minority groups who realise that their problems are not unique, thus there is a necessity for minorities to work together to protect themselves. If this continues it can give LGBT people more power and effectiveness in representing their interests.

Negative: Further deterioration of the problem through radicals gaining more power with the possibility of a loss of rights, e.g. the right of LGBT couples to enter into a civil union. This can also happen if the current government decides to embrace some narratives and initiatives of the far right. Either way, a great deal depends on the political climate.

Third party actions can intervene in the form of positive campaigns about members of LGBT groups and the human rights education of people, especially youth.

2. Issue of refugees, migrants in Hungary

Short summary of the conflict

In Hungary in 2015 there was an unprecedented influx of refugees/migrants arriving in Hungary with the majority coming from war-torn Syria and Afghanistan. Compared to 2014 the amount of asylum seekers arriving in Hungary in 2015 was 6 times greater. There was also a huge change as regarded their country of origin. In 2015 there were almost 9 times as many people coming from non-European countries than in the previous

year.[6] However, most of the asylum seekers only applied for asylum in Hungary for formal reasons, then moved on to Western European countries, especially Germany (Juhász et al, 2015). Furthermore, those few hundred who received protected status in Hungary and then stayed in the country received no support from the state, since all integration benefits and services were abolished in June 2016. Due to this fact and the Hungarian government's effective measures in diverting masses of refugees away from the border, in 2016 the integration of refugees/migrants is not a real problem in Hungary. Nevertheless, this is still a hot conflict. Even though the main actors are not present the conflict produces tension and radicalisation is still going on. The effect is palpable in conflicts and tension in settlements close to refugee camps where migrants (the number of whom is about 500) are staying and come into contact with the locals. Another effect is on the life of foreigners in Hungary, especially those who are non-European looking (dark-skinned, dark-haired etc.) or wear a hijab or other clothing prescribed by the Muslim religion.

Timeline

- Spring 2015 – A huge amount of refugees arrives in Hungary; they appear in Budapest as well at railway stations. Civilians become very active in order to provide different kinds of help for the migrants.
- June 2015 – Viktor Orbán, the Prime Minister of Hungary, starts to build a fence on the southern border to prevent the refugees from entering.
- August 2015 – Angela Merkel announces that refugees are welcome in Germany. However, citing EU laws authorities do not allow refugees to continue without valid travel documents, thus they hold a protest in the Keleti railway station.
- 15 September 2015 – The authorities close the border with Serbia, as they say there are too many refugees there who disturb traffic. This results in a refugee revolt (300–400) at one of the border gates, Röszke. Refugees try to break through the border, but they are stopped by policemen. As a result the government closes the borders for 30 days. The police arrest 10 refugees and Ahmed H. as the leader of the revolt (Röszkei zavargás, 2017).
- October 2015 – The government seals the border with Croatia as well. This way the problem is diverted from Budapest.
- The Council of EU Ministers of the Interior decides upon the establishment of a temporary quota to redistribute 120,000 refugees from Italy and Greece to other EU countries; Hungary would receive about 1,200 people.
- December 2015 – The Hungarian government says no to the quota decision and turns to the European Court to challenge it.
- February 2016 – Viktor Orbán announces that he will initiate a referendum about the decision of the EU Commission.
- March 2016 – Orbán declares a national state of emergency and sends 1,500 soldiers to guard the border.
- June/July 2016 – The Hungarian government starts a poster campaign against refugees in order to persuade people to vote 'no' on the referendum (Rovó – Dull, 2016). In return, the 'Two-Tailed Dog' party (a Hungarian joke party) collects money for and starts a funny anti-poster campaign.
- 27 September 2016 – Amnesty International in London presents a negative report on the rough and unjust treatment refugees receive in Hungary. The report states that thousands of refugees suffer inhumane and humiliating treatment and/or unlawful expulsion and that hundreds of asylum seekers are detained in camps under dreadful conditions (Dezső, 2016).
- 2 October 2016 – A Hungarian referendum is held about the refugee issue.
- October/November 2016 – The government attempts to modify the Constitution in order to include an anti-quota passage, they fail to pass it in the parliament (Dull, 2016).
- 30 November 2016 – The court of Szeged sentences Ahmed H. to 10 years in prison for his role in the revolt in Röszke, which they consider an act of terrorism. Amnesty International protests the decision as does the US Department of Foreign Affairs. Viktor Orbán acknowledges the decision of the court as appropriate since the government warned the refugees that they had to comply with Hungarian laws (Janecskó, 2016).

6 Data from the Office of Immigration and Nationality, in Juhász et al. 2015.

Actors in the conflict

PRO		CONTRA
Primary actors		
Refugees, migrants		HU citizens against refugees, migrants
Secondary actors		
human rights NGOs	liberal, left-wing political parties two-tailed dog party	government, right-wing parties
Tertiary actors		
Muslim Church foreigners living in HU NGOs, charities which provide support civilians who donate		police, border guards

The primary actors are refugees/migrants, but as we said earlier there are not many living in Hungary. The majority of Hungarian citizens are against migrants. Citizens in settlements where there are refugee camps often oppose them even more strongly.

Human rights NGOs, both national (e.g. TASZ) and international (e.g. Amnesty International) are secondary actors in the forefront of fighting for the refugees' rights. Other secondary actors are representatives of Hungarian political parties who can argue for or against refugees/migrants. Left-wing/liberal parties are usually pro-refugee, while the government and the extreme right-wing Jobbik party are fiercely opposed.

Tertiary actors are NGOs such as Menedék and Artemisszió, which have programmes that strive to aid the refugees. Hungarian Muslim religious organisations are also attempting to aid them. The government often attacks these organisations even though their initiatives are all peaceful and humanitarian. Interestingly, there is a group of religious charity organisations like Malta Red Cross and Hungarian Interchurch Aid which also help refugees with material support and services and which are members of the so-called Charity Council convened and headed by the Ministry of Human Capacities. These are the only organisations doing this kind of work which are supported by the government.

There are also foreigners living in Hungary who are affected. Authorities, especially soldiers and policemen guarding the border also play a key role, nevertheless they mostly just follow orders from above.

Positions and interests of actors in the conflict

The position of the average citizens who are against refugees/migrants is that they do not want them to be in Hungary. Behind this stance is a great deal of fear of the unknown. The arguments that they usually list include poverty, that is, we cannot afford to help the refugees as we are a poor country and they might take away the little that we have. Another similar idea that often comes up is that we already have enough problems with the Roma. There is also the argument of safety. In their opinion, one of the risks arises from refugees coming from a different culture, which they would want to impose on us once they are here. Most of this is in relation to differences in religion (Muslim vs. Christian) and differences in respect for human rights, e.g. women's rights. Another and even greater risk arises from terrorism, as it is possible – they claim – that terrorists will arrive in Hungary pretending to be refugees. However, the refugees mostly just want to go through Hungary to get to Western Europe.

The most interesting face is the position and interest of the government in this issue. Their discourse and actions have without doubt deepened, if not created the conflict. Their biggest event in their campaign against the refugees/migrants was the October referendum. Before that time they attempted to persuade people to

vote 'no' on the referendum question: 'Do you want to allow the European Union to mandate the resettlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary without the approval of the National Assembly?' 98 % of the voters said 'no', but not enough people voted (fewer than 42 %) to make these results valid. Even though there was no valid result the government considered the referendum a victory (Miklósi, 2016).

One of their most important campaign tools was huge billboard posters with which they capitalised on the fears of poverty and risks to the safety of the Hungarian people by using sentences like: 'If you come to Hungary you cannot take our jobs', 'The Paris terror attacks were committed by migrants', 'Since the beginning of the refugee crisis more than 300 people have died in terror attacks' and 'If you come to Hungary, you need to respect our culture'. They claim that their interests coincide with that of the majority of the population as keeping the refugees/migrants out of the country will keep us safe. However, it is more likely that the government's interest is to create an enemy which it can then 'defend' us against. Due to the government's behaviour xenophobia and hate speech against refugees has become much more acceptable.

It is also important to mention that not much has been done against the hatred campaign of the government. The most effective and far-reaching attempt has been that of the Two-Tailed Dog party, which raised money to create partly funny and partly awareness-raising billboard posters with lines like: 'The average Hungarian sees more UFOs than refugees.' This is also a minority vs. majority type of conflict, with the twist that the minority are barely even present. As there is a lack of actual contact with the object of prejudice, people's fears concerning the unknown and the different are stronger and much more easily manipulated and fomented.

Dynamics of the conflict

The tension around the conflict was very high when refugees appeared in the Hungarian railway stations as the problem was very visible then. Since that time, tension has been maintained at a high level by the government until the October referendum. However, it can be predicted that the level of this tension cannot be kept up unless something else of importance happens in the matter. According to a survey by the company Medián, Hungarian citizens considered the question of refugees the second most important issue to solve in September, but by November 2016 it had fallen back to only the fourth most important. Nevertheless, the conflict can cause violence (verbal as well as physical) on an individual level, when Hungarian citizens meet refugees, or rather refugee-like people on the streets, as has happened several times thus far.

Possible future scenarios

Positive scenarios

The situation would improve if Hungarian society understood that migrants can also be seen as resources (there are historical examples), and learnt to believe in cultural diversity, that cooperation between different cultures can enrich us. Migrants and foreigners can add to our culture, for which we already have good examples (Turkish, Chinese and Albanian groups of foreigners are visible and well integrated in Hungarian society). Education can do a great deal as well, if teachers understand diversity they can represent the value of tolerance in the classroom. (The Menedék Association is also providing sensitisation trainings for schoolteachers.) Safety concerns regarding terrorism should also be addressed by effective and well-targeted measures in which cooperation at the EU level plays a key role. All of this depends primarily on the political will from part of the government.

Negative scenario

In the event that a larger number of refugees were to enter the country in this hostile political climate there could be a possibility for serious escalation of the conflict.

3. Sexism and violence against women

Short summary of the conflict

Hungarian society is very patriarchal and thus sexism and violence against women is still a very serious and widespread issue. Male chauvinism is very deeply rooted in Hungarian society and is often so automatic that not even women realise when they are the victims of oppression, or if they do, they still go along with it. Oppression can manifest itself in many forms, from a lack of equal pay to the glass ceiling to a lack of presence in politics to domestic violence and rape. As regards the last issue, according to a recent Eurobarometer survey slightly less than one-half of Hungarians – 47 % (including women) – think that under certain conditions

a sexual encounter without mutual consent is acceptable. This number is twice as high as the European average (Kovács, 2016). The treatment of cases of violence is also very poor. Many cases of rape are not even reported or if they are, they are dropped. Between 2013 and 2015 only 30 % of the cases registered with the authorities were prosecuted. The situation is worse in the case of sexual coercion, where only 16.4 % of the cases go to court (Janecskó, 2015). Even if cases are prosecuted, perpetrators often get away with little or no punishment. There are also a great deal of myths and misunderstandings around rape and domestic violence and thus people still often try to blame the victim. The Hungarian government is not working on resolving these issues, for example they refuse to ratify the Council of Europe's Treaty of Istanbul about the prevention and treatment of domestic violence and violence against women. On the contrary, they often emphasise and try to reaffirm the traditional roles of women, calling any attempt to improve their situation 'gender craziness or ideology'.

Timeline

- 13 December 2015 – Speaker of the National Assembly László Kövér claims at a congress of the Fidesz party that 'we do not want gender craziness' and that 'we do not want women who hate men or feminine men who are afraid of women.' 'We want our daughters to feel that their highest level of self-realisation is to bear children for us.' The audience applauds (Kövér:… 2015). A popular pop singer called Ákos, favoured by the government, supports his approach and says in a TV interview that 'It is not women's task to earn more money than men. It is their task to fulfil the female principle and bear children.' (Munk, 2015). In reaction to this, a group of women start a Facebook group where many women uploaded their negative pregnancy tests and some of them also send these tests to László Kövér at the parliament (Munk, 2015). He reacts by saying that he is sorry for them (Thüringer, 2015).
- January 2016 – Following the example of László Kövér and Ákos, Emőke Bagdy, a well-known psychologist also attacks 'gender identity ideology', which in her opinion is impossible and contradicts the laws of personality development. A group of psychologists and others working as professional helpers write an open letter opposing her statements, claiming that by being normative she reaffirms stereotypes and raises prejudice against women. Eventually 634 people sign it, among them 521 professional helpers (Kiakadtak Bagdy, 2016).
- February 2016 – József Balogh, the mayor of a small settlement in Hungary and a Member of Parliament from the leading Fidesz party beats up his wife, Terike. When the issue comes to light he claims that it was not he who injured her, but that his wife tripped over their dog and fell. Later he confesses to the crime. His wife moves back in with him. The court only sentences him to pay a fine and he is able to keep his position as a mayor.
- May 2016 – A doctor throws acid at his ex-girlfriend's genitalia because he cannot grasp the fact that she broke up with him. First the court does not want to deal with this case, saying that there is a lack of evidence. At first instance he is sentenced to 4 years in prison. The case is continuing in the court of appeals as no one was happy with the verdict (Janecskó – Munk, 2016).

Actors in the conflict

PRO		CONTRA
Primary actors		
women victims of violence against women		male chauvinistic people perpetrators of violence
Secondary actors		
NGOs which fight for the rights of women feminist activists	government	courts right-wing/ conservative opinion leaders
Tertiary actors		
progressive other professionals		

Positions and interests of actors in the conflict

The interest of women regarding violence is, of course, to stay safe while the interest of the perpetrators is to get away with everything they can. Unfortunately, too often perpetrators can get away with their crimes very easily. This is due to the flaws in the judicial system as well as the shame the victims and the affected families feel and the prejudices and stereotypes against women. As regards other issues of sexism and oppression, opinions differ in the case of both men and women. Many people still believe that it is important to maintain the status quo or even go back in time as regards women's roles and rights. They consider that otherwise the 'order of things' will fall apart and we will face chaos in which men and women do not know how to be or to act. Other people, especially liberals and leftists, believe that women need to be empowered to do whatever they want to do with their lives and that they are entitled to equality with men in every walk of life. The government tries to sweep the issue of violence against women under the rug. In addition, they are very traditionalist as regards women's roles, often stating openly that women should stay in the kitchen and bear as many children as they can, as that is in the interests of our society. This does not just contradict the reality of modern life, but as they are lenient towards sexism and even misogyny they make these attitudes socially acceptable, which deepens the conflict. As sexism often happens beneath the surface or has become normalised, a large amount of people do not even realise it exists. This makes the work of activists and NGOs harder because it is difficult for them to gain appreciation for their efforts. This can be very well understood in comparison, as in Serbia, for example, the fact that male chauvinism and its consequences are much more obvious provides the basis for a strong women's movement. In addition, the life of activists and NGOs is also hard due to a lack of funding. Most of the work is done through volunteering, which leads to quick burnout and the women's movement is dismantling. In addition, there have been several value-based conflicts among activists (lately especially between left-wing and liberal feminists), which further weakens the movement.

A great deal depends on tertiary actors who are not gender professionals, who sometimes do not even call themselves feminists, but represent a progressive stance regarding women's roles and issues. Among them are, for example, those psychologists and other professionals who signed the open letter opposing Emőke Bagdy (see above).

Sources and causes of the conflict

The sources and deeper causes of the conflict lie in the clash between the old patriarchal ideals and traditions regarding female roles and the needs and demands of life in this 21st-century European society. The conflict is there because of stereotypes and prejudices against women, but also because old recipes no longer work and new strategies that work well for everyone have still to be developed and institutionalised. We are currently in a phase of transition concerning these strategies and change is not easy to manage.

Dynamics of the conflict

At the moment a certain apathy of the people can be observed regarding this conflict. Issues continue to arise; however the majority do not react to them. People have learnt to focus on their own problems and there is a lack of interest and solidarity regarding the problems they feel do not concern them directly.

Possible future scenarios

Women's movements have already achieved a great deal regarding women's rights in Hungary as well. Even though there is a backlash now compared to the beginning of the millennium, it is possible that we can get through this phase and move forward. However, if the leaders of the country move in a direction that is even more sexist and restrictive to women the situation will only get worse. Then there will be an even greater need for female solidarity and grass-roots initiatives. A great deal will also depend on education: how open-mindedly young generations are brought up, and whether progressive young people are ready to take part in shaping the discourse about these issues. In addition, the attitude of men counts immeasurably. Men openly supporting feminism and women's issues can do a great deal in changing the mindset of people in this regard.

4. Access to the education and integration of Roma children

Short summary of the conflict

The Roma account for an estimated 5–10 % of the population of Hungary. There are many issues regarding prejudice and discrimination in every walk of life including education, healthcare, employment and housing. Conflicts often escalate to violence. The gravest conflicts were a series of racially motivated killings that were committed against Roma people between 2008 and 2009. We have decided to analyse the education issue, as it is a crucial one from the point of view of the situation of the Roma in Hungary and it has been a hot topic in 2016 as well. According to a recent study published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, if a person does not finish his or her secondary education, this person will either be unemployed or can only count on temporary employment. Every second young Roma adult is in this situation in Hungary, which shows clearly how important this issue is (Kertesi – Kézdi, 2016).

Timeline

The Chance for Children Foundation (CFCF) (Rólunk, 2015), a Hungarian human rights organisation has taken it upon itself to move this issue forward in the legal sphere by representing the case of Roma children who do not gain access to quality education as a result of school segregation. They have built up their cases by referring to EU legislation and the Hungarian Equal Treatment Act.

Several cases that appeared in the media in 2016 are the following:

- The Kaposvár case. A local elementary school put Roma children in segregated classes and provided lower quality education to them. The school had already been sued successfully due to this behaviour 6 years ago, however nothing has happened since then. In another trial in 2016 the court ruled that the school had to be closed down and the students re-distributed to other schools in the district. (Először zárnak, 2016)
- The Gyöngyöspata case. Roma children were put into segregated classes in the local elementary school and received an education that was of a much lower quality. The court ruled in their favour in 2015, but nothing changed. The only thing that happened was that non-Roma parents started to take their children to other schools. The Roma are now trying to sue for indemnity (Cigány gyerek… 2016).

EU involvement

In an earlier case in Huszártelep, Nyíregyháza the Hungarian court first ruled against the Greek Catholic Church's attempt to establish an all-Roma school. However, the Supreme Court later accepted an appeal and allowed the school to reopen, claiming it to be necessary in order for the students to be able to exercise their religion freely. The CFCF decided to take the case to the European Commission. The European Commission started an infringement procedure against Hungary in 2016. They disapprove of the Hungarian laws that allow the existence of segregated schools such as the one in Huszártelep, as well as the overrepresentation of Roma in special education (Magyarország szüntesse… 2016).

Actors in the conflict

PRO			CONTRA
Primary actors			
Roma parents (not in deep poverty)	Roma parents in deep poverty	schools teachers	non-Roma parents (often middle-class)
Secondary actors			
Roma rights activists, NGOs anti-segr. experts, roundtable	media	minister of HR courts local Roma leaders (pro-segr)	maintainer (government) maintainer (church)
Tertiary actors			
Good practice schools, teachers, principals supportive local governments	pro-Roma parents		

There are Roma parents who want desegregated education, good service, equal rights, equal opportunity and acceptance from the teachers and from the non-Roma parents. However, there are also Roma parents who are against desegregation. The segregated school is safer for them and they trust it more. There are fewer conflicts in that institution, thus they believe it is a better place for their children. They have good relationships with the teachers at the segregated school and they feel that the teachers there are tolerant and more understanding with them and with their children. Many of the Roma parents who are against desegregation live in abject poverty and since their primary needs are not met, their only concern is survival. Therefore, it is hard to awaken interest in them on this issue.

A great many non-Roma middle-class parents are against desegregation as their primary concern is to provide a good education for their children, which they consider to be at risk in the event that too many Roma children attend their child's class or school. They also want a school where their children can feel safe. They are prejudiced against the Roma as they believe that the Roma children are less healthy, less able or willing to study and often cause trouble.

Teachers tend to have similar prejudices to the non-Roma parents. They may favour segregation as homogeneous groups of students are easier to teach and require less effort. Even if they want to help the Roma children they often do not have the necessary tools and/or suffer from a lack of autonomy to do what they want in the classroom. School directors are also often tempted to act against desegregation. Even though schools do not receive per capita financial support, a certain number of children attending a school is essential for them to justify the school's existence and to employ more teachers. Thus, there is a competition between schools in order to enrol more children.

Local (Roma and non-Roma) leaders can also intervene in these issues on both sides. For example, in the Kaposvár case the local Roma leader was also against closing down the segregated school.

As regards the central government's role, before 2010 there were several public policies put in place by the previous government in an attempt to implement desegregation. However, after the rise to power of the Fidesz government these were deemed ineffective. In addition, the Minister of Human Capacities repeatedly claimed that he believes in 'loving segregation'. The government now attempts to pass the problem on to the churches, which tend to establish or maintain segregated schools. The state also makes some efforts to support the lowest achieving (mostly segregated) schools from EU funds to improve the quality of education.

The role of the media can be negative or positive. It is negative if their reports about cases increase the tension between the two sides to the conflict. However, by transmitting a positive image of Roma people they can have an influence on eradicating stereotypes and prejudices (A három lánytestvér… 2016).

Relations among actors in the conflict

The relationship between parents is essential. School segregation is in close connection to segregated housing. Where there is no segregated Roma settlement, the situation might be better.[7] There is at least some interaction between the people; they have experience with each other so they are (somewhat) more tolerant towards each other. In cities and towns with a segregated Roma settlement there is the silent agreement that segregation is the pledge of peace.

The acceptance of 1 or 2 Roma children in schools of the white middle-class occurs when the children maintain good personal relationships with the non-Roma and have an acceptable financial situation.

Sources and causes of the conflict

This is a typical minority vs. majority conflict based on racially motivated hatred and discrimination. The conflict has been present in Hungary for decades.

Dynamics of the conflict

Although more than one scenario is possible the following is one of the typical possibilities. It starts with these signs: complaints by Roma parents that their child was not accepted by one of the schools. In most of the cases the parents complain to each other. At the same time non-Roma parents complain about how bad the situation is in the school, so something needs to be done. (Their solution is that Roma children should not be in the classroom, or even better, they should not attend the school.)

As an answer to the needs of the majority of parents, segregation happens quickly. Segregated Roma and non-Roma classes are established within the school or in some cases, the children are divided into two segregated schools in the community. Arguments that seem rational are used to explain the situation (the classroom or the school is open to everybody, however not all the children can meet the entrance criteria; Roma parents do not want to take their children into this school, it is their choice…) Very often situations develop to a phase in which the actors do not really talk to each other anymore, but dissatisfaction and tension increase. The next phase of the conflict escalation is when a human rights organisation enters the situation. (This has happened in only a few cases in Hungary.) This is usually an organisation coming from the outside. They get their information from a small group of parents, or maybe from a Roma community leader. This is followed by activity on the part of the organisation resulting in a court procedure. At that moment the local and national media also report on the situation. The tension will be visible; all actors have to take a side in the conflict and even the members of the Roma community will be divided. This results in even higher tension and the danger of violent action is always present.

Possible future scenarios

If we are unable to effectively desegregate schools and provide quality education for everyone this will lead to social tragedy in the near future. We will have an ageing society with many uneducated young people not being able to participate in the open job market. This will only strengthen radicalisation and exclusion of the Roma.

Successful **desegregation is a long process**. It requires decades of work with precise planning and long-term strategy as well as real political will. Successful integration requires a huge investment from the government and all the actors. There is a need to prepare both Roma and non-Roma actors for change, acceptance, tolerance, responsible behavior, participation, conflict resolution etc.

Schools and teachers need to learn pedagogical methods for integration. There should be a well-functioning, supportive social and professional network around the schools and families in order to facilitate and support the whole process. In Hungary, some of the elements of this holistic system already exist; however they need development for effective service and performance. Even if we prepare all the involved parties well, desegregation activities can lead to **major conflicts** and a great deal of tension in the communities in the short term. What can dissolve this contradiction is, for example, clear local political will behind the attempts at desegregation and a strong leader, as in the case of Hódmezővásárhely (see our best practices section).

7 It is important to note here that, of course, school segregation can happen even without ghettos, for example through classifying Roma children as special needs students.

Another possible approach to improve the access of the Roma to education is the development of so-called **magnet schools,** following US examples. This means that the segregated school is developed and equipped until it becomes a high quality institution. Some experts, however, think that prejudice against the Roma in Hungary is so strong that it will prevent non-Roma parents from taking their children to this school. The other issue is the possible huge resistance of the society towards spending more money on a 'Roma school' compared to the non-Roma institutions. Last but not least, experts strongly criticise this approach, saying that it solidifies segregation, enhances social distance and does not resolve the problem on a large scale.

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POLAND

Introduction

Since the beginning of the majority rule of the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość political party (PiS – 'Law and Justice') in November 2015 Poland has been going through many conflicts from various backgrounds. Some of them have been revived, as with the conflict over the abortion law; some have emerged for the first time, as with the conflict over the admission of Muslim migrants, which had been one of the key issues of the 2015 electoral campaigns. As for the latter category, there were issues the polarising nature of which would have been very difficult to foresee, e.g. the conflict over the introduction of education reform. A very high level of tension was caused to a large extent by the change of the incumbent and the fact that the PiS government, for the first time in the history of the III Rzeczpospolita (Third Polish Republic – 'III RP'), has a majority in both chambers of the parliament and is the party of of the President (Andrzej Duda) which, however, is insufficient to allow the party to change the Constitution. Each new policy and reform can potentially provoke a conflict not only because the opposition in practice does not have any other recourse except the mobilisation of extra-parliamentary groups and the support or organisation of protests and manifestations. Policies being introduced can also, as in the case of education reform, put the status of large groups or of employment stability at risk. Last but not least, certain policies, such as the changes introduced in the law regulating the activity of the Constitutional Tribunal, can simply raise doubts on the part of many people, especially if the changes are perceived negatively by many external actors, such as the US (the critical remarks of Barack Obama during the 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw) or the European Union (Venice Commission), i.e. states and international organisations (initiatives or public figures) in whose eyes Poland was previously a positive example of a country going through a period of transformation, economic recovery and the implementation of democratic reforms.

Except for the abovementioned value-based conflicts over education reform, the admission of Muslim migrants and, implicitly referred to, the conflict over the shape of the Polish democratic system, this report focusses on three other polarising issues that have stirred public debates and mobilised the Poles to manifest their opinions on the streets. Three remaining contentious issues are: the conflict over the desired model of family, the abortion law and the status of Ukrainians in Poland.

1. Conflict over the desired model of the family

Short summary of the conflict

This conflict is connected with the desired character of the family in Poland. On one hand there are, to call them in a general way, some groups that emphasise the importance of maintaining and supporting the 'traditional' model of the family, which should be based on marriage between a man and a woman sanctioned by a representative of the Catholic Church, and children should be born out of a sexual act, not through any medical intervention. Although if we take into consideration Polish laws connected with e.g. inheritance, there is no differentiation between couples who have married in a church and those who have only undergone a civil marriage. There is, however, a difference concerning concubinage[8] and the two types of marriage contracts given above. There is no fixed manner of, for example, the confirmation of inheritance acquisition or responsibility to support a former partner. The main conflict over the model of the family does not focus, however, on the legal status of informal relationships. There are groups that emphasise the need to make concubinage equivalent to marriage. The Catholic Church also has an explicitly negative attitude toward this proposal, but this issue does not have a high mobilising potential.

The situation is completely different in the case of the legal recognition of same-sex couples. Same-sex unions are not legally sanctioned – the Constitution explicitly defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman. In the political history of III RP there were, however, attempts at establishing a legal framework for the recognition of same-sex unions. In 2004, under the leftist government a law that would have granted gays and lesbians the right to conclude civil unions was accepted by the Senate but eventually failed to pass. Similar drafts were

8 An informal interpersonal relationship of people who engage in an ongoing sexual relationship without being married.

rejected by the Sejm (Polish Parliament) in 2007 and 2013. In each case, the works on the drafts were met with protests from politicians in the parliament and various organisations with rare and mostly verbal clashes on the streets. As of 2017 Poland is one of 7 countries in the EU that do not recognise civil unions.

The values at play here can be described in a few ways. On a general level there is a conflict between traditional Catholic values applied to specific social institutions (procreation as the fundamental purpose of marriage) and a stance according to which society should incorporate in its institutional arrangements the postulates of minorities. Homosexuality is described in the narrative pertaining to the group supporting the latter point of view as a deviation which should not be spread by the introduction of laws that would sanction its validity through official legal recognition. This could threaten the traditional model of the family and the concept of marriage as the union of a man and a woman. This idea has not been developed well enough to explain why recognising same-sex unions might endanger heterosexual families. One can guess that it is based on the assumption that homosexuality is a matter of choice and that people might be tempted to choose their homosexual orientation depending on current fashions and expected benefits.

Timeline and dynamics of the conflict

Due to the fact that the last widespread public discussion on the introduction of same-sex unions took place in 2013, the topic has not been on the agenda or at least it has not been as widely discussed as issues connected with other conflicts described in this report. The main reason is the explicitly firm stance of the current government: the possibility of the introduction of any type of law recognising same-sex unions is practically non-existent.

Both sides were active in 2016 and 2017 even though the conflict was in its dormant stage: banners with slogans referring to the postulates put forward by LGBT groups were, for example, exhibited during the annual Equality Parade organised in Warsaw on 11 June 2016 (Equality Parade 2016). As always, the parade met with protests. In 2016 they were very scarce – there were couple of dozen individuals holding banners of the far-right political party Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski (NOP – 'National Revival of Poland') (Equality Parade 2016. 2) – and much smaller than, for example, in 2010. In general in the last 10 years counter-manifestations have been organised by the far right, among others the aforesaid NOP and the Młodzież Wszechpolska (MW – 'All-Polish Youth'). These were directed not only against the possibility of the introduction of civil unions for same–sex couples but against public displays of the LGBT agenda in general.

Actors in the conflict

Primary actors: Love Does not Exclude (MnW), Coalition for Civil Unions and Marriage Equality (KnRZPiRM), Campaign against Homophobia (KPH), All-Polish Youth (MW), National Revival of Poland (NOP).

Secondary actors: Razem, SLD, PZ, PiS, the Catholic Church.

Tertiary actor: European Commission.

Relations among actors in the conflict

The actors taking part in the conflict are organisations supporting the legal recognition of same-sex unions or associated individuals who are pursuing this goal in Polish courts (MnW, Miłość nie Wyklucza – 'Love Does not Exclude', Koalicja na Rzecz Związków Partnerskich i Równości Małżeńskiej, KnRZPiRM – 'Coalition for Civil Unions and Marriage Equality'), organisations that focus on LGBT rights in general (Kampania Przeciw Homofobii, KPH – 'Campaign Against Homophobia'), political parties supporting the legal recognition and acting as partners of the Parade (Razem – 'Together', Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej, SLD – 'Democratic Left Alliance', Partia Zieloni, PZ – 'The Green Party') and, on the opposing side, far-right parties (MW, NOP), right-wing parties (PiS) and the Catholic Church.

Possible future scenarios

As has been emphasised, there are organisations on both sides of the conflict that are constantly focusing on the dispute. Possible escalation can take place as a consequence of, for example, a legal battle of a specific same-sex couple or the introduction of a law that would be regarded as discriminatory by LGBT milieus. An important role could also be played by the European Commission or EU institutions in general, which have already been attempting to influence the member states, Poland included, with respect to the problem of the legal recognition of same-sex unions. One can assume, however, that due to the lack of interest of the PiS in

the liberalisation of the law, at least until the end of the term (in 2019 but in practice, 2020) there will be no open and direct conflict between LGBT groups and their adversaries: the LGBT milieu will not see any chance to forward their agenda. It is possible that LGBT organisations will take part in protests concerning other issues; for example, women's reproductive rights.

2. Conflict over Education Reform

Short summary of the conflict

The conflict over the educational reform planned by the PiS government is mostly focused on one issue: the evaluation of the role of the *gimnazjum*. A *gimnazjum* is a type of school providing secondary education introduced in the Polish education system in 1999 as a result of the reforms carried out by the centre-right Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność and Unia Wolności (AWS – 'Solidarity Electoral Action', UW – 'Freedom Union') coalition government. The school system structure then created was the following: 6 years of primary school, 3 years of *gimnazjum* and 3 years of a lyceum or 3–4 years of *technikum* (professional technical school), or 2–3 years of vocational school. Each phase was to be concluded with an appropriate exam. The reform planned by the PiS would modify this structure by coming back to the system functioning before 1999 by reintroducing: 8 years of primary school and 4 years of lyceum or 5 years of *technikum* (professional technical school), or 3–5 years of vocational school (3 years of the first degree and 2 years of the second degree). The main result of the reform would, therefore, modify the structure from 3-step to 2-step. This change was included by the PiS in the party's electoral platform (Program Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2014: 130).

It is important to note that the current debate on education reform in Poland is not fully free of value-based conflicts. In the background, but regularly accentuated by the Ministry of Education, is the conflict over school curricula (the focus of the PiS government on 'patriotic' education, and emerging controversies on the content of several new textbooks criticised for promoting a closed, inward-looking interpretation of collective identity).

Timeline

A series of protests started shortly before the official presentation of the draft by Minister of Education Anna Zalewska on 16 September 2016. The first manifestation of around 300 participants took place on 1 September in front of the Ministry of National Education in Warsaw and was organised by, among others, Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego (ZNP – 'Polish Teachers' Union') (Protest 1.09.2016), which on 18 October started a nationwide protest action called 'NO to Chaos in Schools'. The ZNP's arguments were referring to the potentially unstable employment status of many teachers after the introduction of the reform. Subsequent protests were organised on 19 November in Warsaw (approximately 35,000 participants) and 29 November (a smaller manifestation in front of the Sejm). There were also many smaller protests in different parts of Poland. The organisations that took part in most of these protests were the ZNP, Obywatele dla Edukacji (OdE – 'Citizens for Education'), Rodzice przeciwko Reformie Edukacji (RpRE – 'Parents against the Education Reform') and Koalicja "NIE dla chaosu w szkole" (KNdcws – 'NO to Chaos in Schools' Coalition). The protests were also supported by opposition parties: PO, Modern and Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (PSL – 'Polish People's Party').

Actors in the conflict

Primary actors: Ministry of National Education (MEN), Polish Teachers' Union (ZNP).

Secondary actors: Citizens for Education (OdE), Parents against the Education Reform (RpRE) and NO to Chaos in School Coalition (KNdCwS).

Tertiary actors: Fundacja Edukacja dla Demokracji ('Foundation Education for Democracy'), Federacja Inicjatyw Oświatowych ('Federation of Educational Initiatives').

Sources and causes of the conflict

There is no straightforward value conflict on which this issue is based. One can, however, indicate several opposite stances, connected with specific values, the definition of which could make the structure of the conflict more feasible. The conflict itself is driven by the political decision of the PiS government to reform the elementary, primary and high school education system. The propositions of this kind of reform, especially the

postulate of the liquidation of the *gimnazjum*, had been put forward by some milieus (e.g. by the SLD political party in 2013) so the critique of the current reform is not a new phenomenon. According to some recent polls, which have also been emphasised by the PiS, Poles in the majority are not satisfied with the 1999 education reform. That being said, the conflict is partially a partisan clash of the government and most of the opposition and, as a consequence, their electorates.

As is stipulated in the draft of the bill, and emphasised in the presentation of the reform in the official materials made available by the Ministry, there are social values behind the reform proposal. First of all, the current reform, i.e. the existence of the *gimnazjum,* and connected with it, is often based on the need for the higher mobility of a child who, in some situations, has a primary school and a *gimnazjum* in different buildings. In theory the new reform would limit the need of a child's mobility in this regard to only one situation: after finishing the 8th grade of primary school and the selection of a high school or its systemic equivalent. There are two opposing values involved: the existence of a *gimnazjum* often forces a child to change his or hers social surroundings whereas the new reform would limit this process. The latter case is, therefore, more desirable since it would make the process of socialisation of young people more stable, which could result in their higher attachment to their immediate surroundings. The explicit goal of the reform consists also in the following: 'the school should regain its educational function'. Hence the aim of establishing 'small schools' – centres of cultural education, 'educating oneself for one's entire life' in small milieus. Another term used to name the desired shape of the education institutions is 'centre of local culture' (MEN Presentation). Superimposed on this conflict is the attitude toward the change of and respect for institutional stability, disregard for social and expert consultations and the good results of Polish pupils in international comparative researches (Polscy uczniowie… 2016).

Informal groups protesting against the reform formulate also pose many arguments that refer to its immediate consequences. These encompass organisational problems, which include the need of the publication of new manuals and the initial intermingling of children following the old programme with those whose educational path would have to follow the requirements of the new reform. The latter consequence could result in high age differences between children spending time in the same building and misunderstandings as to the curriculum (NIE dla chaosu w szkole).

Possible future scenarios

Due to the fact that the reform was introduced in September 2017, the conflict is ongoing. The ZNP is pressuring the government in order to achieve certain labour guarantees. There are still possible conflicts connected with education system: the composition of a core curriculum (conflict in this field is usually ideologically driven due to decisions that refer to the character of the books that the children are going to read) and the reform of higher education. There is also a high potential for many local disputes caused by practical reasons of the liquidation of some schools and teacher redundancies.

3. Conflict over the Abortion Law

Short summary of the conflict

The topic of abortion has been revived many times throughout the history of the III RP. The conflict over this issue usually has three sides: a group that wants to tighten the abortion law, a group that does not want to change it and a group that supports its liberalisation. The conflict is not abstract, it is connected with discussions over the applicable law and proposals for its potential modification.

The right to an abortion is regulated in Poland by two pieces of legislation: The Law Concerning Family Planning, the Protection of the Human Foetus and the Conditions Under Which Abortion is Allowed, which was adopted on 7 January 1993; and the regulations that are contained in the Criminal Code of 1997, Chapter 19 'Offences against Life and Health' which are set forth in Articles 152–154; 157. According to the former piece of law abortion is permitted in three circumstances: when 'pregnancy poses a risk to the life or health of the pregnant woman', 'prenatal testing or other medical premisses indicate a high probability of severe or irreversible impairment of the foetus or incurable illness which is life threatening' and 'there is a reasonable suspicion that the pregnancy resulted from an illegal act (through the 12th week following conception)' (Jaszkiewicz et al. 2013: 285–286).

Timeline

In 2006, 155 MPs of the then ruling coalition (PiS, Liga Polskich Rodzin, LPR – 'League of Polish Families', and Samoobrona – 'Self Defence') and the PSL proposed to amend the Constitution by adding a statement according to which human life would have been protected from the moment of conception. This project was rejected. There have been several instances throughout the last 10 years in which the conflict over reproductive rights has been revived.

The escalation, however, took place after 23 September 2016 when the Sejm voted against the rejection of a draft law tightening abortion regulations and rejected the proposition of its liberalisation. In consequence, the former proposal was supposed to be discussed in the Committee of Justice, whereas the Committee rejected it completely, without the possibility of further proceedings. This event invoked a reaction from various organisations and individuals. On 3 October manifestations against the draft legislation took place in many Polish towns. The so-called Black Protest (or Black Monday, or Umbrella Protest), a loose network of various organisations and individuals, was also organised on other occasions, including the occasion after the Sejm rejected the anti-abortion project on 6 October.

Actors in the conflict

The primary actors involved in the conflict are pro-life organisations (mainly Pro – Prawo do Życia ['Pro-Right to Life'] Foundation and Ordo Iuris Institute as proponents of the new anti-abortion regulations), feminist and women's organisations (Ratujmy Kobiety – Save the Women) and numerous public figures (e.g. actress Krystyna Janda, professor of law Monika Płatek) taking part in the Black Protest. The secondary actors are the Catholic Church, as a point of reference for protesters on both sides and an active agent on the 'pro-life' side, and political parties: PiS (the incumbent), the left-wing Razem and the liberal/centrist PO and Nowoczesna.

'Pro-life' organisations' goal is to make abortion illegal by introducing changes in the law that would abrogate the three aforementioned situations in which abortion can be carried out. The opposing side, i.e. individuals and organisations gathered under the name of the Black Protest, support either the existing status quo or liberalisation of the regulations (e.g. the draft law rejected without further proceedings proposed the introduction of abortion on demand until the 12th week of pregnancy; Save the Women). The 'pro-life' organisations describe abortion as 'murder' and claim that they defend the human rights of 'people in the prenatal period of their life' (the value of respect of any form of life) (Stop aborcji: 2.). Their opponents focus on the rights of women to decide about their lives (the value of freedom) and their so-called reproductive rights.

Tygodnik Powszechny (The Catholic Weekly) can be identified as a tertiary actor.

Sources and causes of the conflict

The conflict is based on two general concepts: the definition of the moment when life begins and the right of women to make decisions about their own bodies, even if this includes abortion. A very important point of reference here is the doctrine of the Catholic Church, which emphasises that sanctity of life is a fundament of Western civilisation and, from moral point of view, a non-negotiable value. On the other side of the conflict, regarding the definition of the unborn, one can either find arguments that a foetus in its early stages of development should not be defined as a human being and/or that it should be woman's decision whether she wants to have a child.

Conflict dynamics

The Black Protest continues its activities incorporating other topics into its agenda, e.g., the issue of violence against women. The same refers to the 'pro-life' organisations whose activists and members were very disappointed with the final decision of the Sejm (Polish Parliament). The level of escalation has gone down, maybe temporarily. There is, however, a very vivid discussion in the media involving journalists supporting two sides of the conflict. The stage is highly polarised on the issue. Rarely, if at all, can one find media sources and journalists who behave in a neutral way and who describe and explain the meaning of the events. Instead, almost everyone feels compelled to take sides.

Possible future scenarios

Since the conflict takes place usually as a clash provoked by the character of specific pieces of law, one can predict that a great deal will depend on the incumbent. It is safe to assume that the current national-conservative

government will not liberalise the law. Due to potential protests and differences among its MPs and electorate, the PiS is also unlikely to attempt to make the regulations more restrictive. That being said, 'pro-life' organisations (e.g. the aforementioned Ordo Iuris) will probably try to make their postulates more visible in order to pressure the government, which eventually will provoke a conflict with feminist and left-wing organisations. The stance of the Catholic Church will definitely not change, which also means that if a left-wing party wins elections, a very unlikely scenario as of now, its attempts at liberalisation would definitely be met with very intense protests, since the Church can arguably have a high potential for the mobilisation of organisations connected with it. In short, the conflict is very unlikely to be resolved. Due to the fact that it can be connected with other issues, e.g., sex education in schools, violence against women and equal rights for same-sex couples, it is possible that without stimulus from the government, these protests could continue. Some kind of reconciliation, understood rather as acceptance of the status quo, not liberalisation, is possible. As has been emphasised, a great deal will depend on the political actors.

4. Conflict over the admission of Muslim immigrants

Short summary of the conflict

The conflict over the admission of refugees from Asia and Africa into Poland is peculiar. It does not take place as a reaction to the presence of peoples representing different cultures and ethnicities – there are very few refugees in Poland. One can, therefore, say that the discussion about refugees takes place in Poland without the refugees themselves. The discussion itself refers to the potential admission of, for example, Syrians into the country. This possibility has been framed in different ways by various organisations, individuals and political parties.

There are two main stances, each can be more or less moderate. First of all, there are groups which are completely against the acceptance by Poland of any refugees from the Global South (mainly from Syria, Libya and certain African countries). This group perceives refugees mainly as a threat: there can be terrorists among the incoming groups, who have been sent by, for example, the Islamic State. There is also the threat that they will not respect the laws and customs commonly accepted in Poland and create chaos. Refugees are perceived as dangerous to the public moral order because some of them (the number usually is magnified to 'all' or the 'majority') do not know how to behave in a Western country, especially in the context of sexual behavior (the events in Cologne and Uppsala are often treated as perfect examples of the upcoming threat). Another argument often used by the opponents is that only some of the people coming to Europe are refugees escaping from a war zone. Others are economic migrants whose goal is to enter the European Union illegally and collect social benefits without contributing to the welfare of the society. An important role in counter-argumentation is played by a hidden plot theory saying that the current influx of refugees to Europe is a pre-planned action aimed at conquering the continent and transforming it into the land of Islam. This argument is usually connected with a critique of Western Europe which is depicted as 'decadent' (very low reproduction rates, acceptance of homosexuals, secularisation, and the rejection of traditional identities) and incapable of defending itself. The choice of factors allowing for labelling Europe as decadent shows the set of values important for this segment of society: faith in God (but only the Christian God), a strong preference for heterosexuality as a sign of health, aversion to individualism, idealisation of the past, strong attachment to blood bonds and the rivalry of cultures.

The opposite side of the conflict emphasises the argument that the Poles, as people living in relatively good conditions, are morally obliged to help everyone who escapes from a war zone. There are also many groups which place themselves in the middle by, for example, accepting that Poland must help refugees but that the help should be provided in places where the people who need it live (see also Bachman 2016; Kurgiel, Sasnal 2015).

Actors in the conflict

There are many actors involved in the conflict. The primary actors are definitely the political parties whose role was strengthened even more by the fact that 2015, the beginning of the crisis, was an election year in Poland. The main topic around which the whole discussion was organised was the negotiation among the members of the EU about the nature of European solidarity in the face of massive inflows of migrants to the continent, i.e. migrant quotas. The former PO-PSL government had initially accepted the quota system, which provoked a very strong reaction from the current incumbent – the PiS. This topic divided many spheres of Polish public life, e.g., there is a clear divide between journalists and whole media groups; for example, the centre-left Gazeta

Wyborcza supports the acceptance of refugees, emphasising the importance of European solidarity, whereas the right-wing TV Republika and Gazeta Polska Codziennie (a daily) take the opposite stance.

Primary actors: PiS, PO, other political parties.

Secondary actors: TV Republika, Gazeta Wyborcza, Gazeta Polska Codziennie, NGOs supporting refugees (e.g. Chlebem i Sola, Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej).

Tertiary actor: Tygodnik Powszechny (The Catholic Weekly).

Sources and causes of the conflict

The conflict of values consists in the differently perceived desired character of the nation and an attitude that results from this view, which creates differences in the perception of other cultures. The side that does not regard refugees as a potential threat to Poland usually, apart from moral obligations, emphasises the inevitable benefits that other cultures could bring and the fact that Poland needs immigrants due to its shrinking population (pragmatic reasoning). The other side of the conflict underlines the importance of sovereign decisions (migrant quotas would, therefore, be enforced by external powers against Poles' will) and the sustenance of the traditional Polish identity, which could be undermined by the influence of other cultures. A very popular argument raised by the opposing side is the notion that one group of immigrants is less threatening for Poland than another. According to this way of thinking Poland should, first of all, admit Poles living abroad, namely in the former Soviet Republics (e.g. Kazakhstan, where their ancestors were sent by the Soviets). Very positive characteristics are attached to the Ukrainians and Belarussians, who are regarded as similar to Poles and hence would not have problems with integration. Religion is also perceived as an important factor: Catholics from Syria should, therefore, take precedence over Muslims.

Dynamics of the conflict

The actors are divided into more or less stable camps. There are almost no initiatives to build some bridges of understanding or aiming at bringing peace to this hot debate. A very important factor was the fact that there is no longer a specific project for migration quotas on the table. The initial conflict escalated because the former coalition government accepted the proposal of the division of refugees. This decision was used by the current incumbent to show that the PO-PSL coalition did not defend Polish sovereignty (the right to oppose unfavourable measures).

Possible future scenarios

The conflict is dormant for the time being but it can be revived if there is another big inflow of migrants into Europe or a plan to reallocate them from other EU countries. The behaviour of other EU members will be very important – an aspect very difficult to predict in the face of Brexit and the low amount of information on the international policy of the US under the new administration. The conflict over the admission of Muslim immigrants and frequent anti-Islamic attitudes presented by some of the actors can potentially be harmful for Muslim minorities and people from Arab countries already living in Poland. This was especially evident in reactions to an event in Ełk (a city in northern Poland) where on New Year's Eve 2017 a 21-year-old Pole was stabbed to death by a Tunisian working in a kebab restaurant. After this tragedy several kebab restaurants in Poland were attacked.

5. Conflict over the status of Ukrainians in Poland

Short summary of the conflict

Polish-Ukrainian relations have a long history, the often painful character of which (Szeptycki, 2016) can bring many difficulties for contemporary citizens of both states. A good example of such an event is the discussion over the recently released Polish film Wołyń (2016), which tells the history of the 'Volhynian slaughter', an ethnic cleansing which took place in 1943–1944 and was carried out by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)'s North Command. Between 76,000 and 106,000 Poles died as a result of this action. The information about the film itself has provoked a negative reaction in Ukraine where there are disputes as to whether it should be screened in cinemas (Wilczak, 2016). Shortly before the premiere Poland's Sejm officially recognised the 'Volhynian slaughter' to be genocide. If one considers the fact that currently there are at least one million Ukrainians living in Poland (Ambasador Ukrainy: Milion Ukraińców w Polsce to migranci ekonomiczni), this can bring many difficulties for

contemporary citizens of both states. In Warsaw, as has been emphasised by a worker of an association whose goal is to help Ukrainians who live in Poland, there are only singular examples of discrimination against the minority. The situation looks different on the border where local disputes are connected on both sides, e.g., with the politics of the commemoration of the Polish-Ukrainian War of 1918—1919 (Zhurzhenko, 2014).

Examples of conflict manifestation

There is, therefore, no conflict that would encompass the whole of Poland but there are instances of harsh disputes in cities like Przemyśl, where on 26 June 2016 a group of mostly Ukrainians celebrating the Day of Ukrainian National Remembrance was attacked by Poles who were aggressively shouting anti-UPA slogans and pushing people in the crowd. A similar event took place during a march organised in Przemyśl under the patronage of Robert Choma, the town's mayor, by patriotic and far-right organisations (among others Obóz Narodowo Radykalny – Przemyśl, ONR-P – 'National Radical Camp – Przemyśl') and MW-Przemyśl Division [MW-P]). During the march celebrating the 98th anniversary of the Battle of Niżankowice its participants shouted anti-Ukrainian slogans. In response, the Ukrainian Embassy requested a reaction from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which did not take place (Reszka, 2016). An official statement about the event was also made by Związek Ukraińców w Polsce (ZUwP – 'Association of Ukrainians in Poland') (Gorczyca, 2016).

Actors in the conflict

Primary actors: MW-P (Przemyśl), ONR-P (Przemyśl), ZUwP.

Secondary actors: Robert Choma, Ukrainian Embassy in Poland, NGOs assisting Ukrainians in Poland, Ministry of the Interior.

Sources and causes of the conflict

The conflict between Polish far-right organisations and groups that oppose them (including ZUwP but also organisations opposed to ideas promoted by the far right) consists in the differences in understanding of the values on which the state should be built. The differences in the understanding of history, which are very unlikely to be completely reconciled, existing between Poles and Ukrainians on one side of the conflict are perceived as obstacles which should not stand in the way of positive relations, whereas for the opposing side they constitute an impenetrable barrier, making positive relations impossible.

Dynamics of the conflict and possible future scenarios

As has been emphasised, the conflict is limited mostly to some of the localities near the borders with Ukraine. There are, however, signs that these kinds of events are proliferating (Tymots, 2016). It is too early to tell if the local/regional conflict is spreading to different parts of the country, although there are instances of mostly physical chauvinistic attacks on Ukrainians in other Polish cities in 2016 and 2017: Kutno, Legnica, Rzeszów, Zakopane and Rudnik. Some basis for a deeper conflict definitely exists: the relatively large population of Ukrainians in Poland and the growing visibility of far-right organisations which, however, do not have their own partisan representation in the parliament (there are, however, 5 MPs who have been elected from the Kukiz'15 list with the support of the far-right National Movement). There are many possibilities for positive civic initiatives, there are individuals (e.g. Paweł Kowal – see the good practices section of this report) and organisations of which the goal is to mediate and keep negative emotions in Polish-Ukrainian relations at bay.

Closing Remarks

One of the characteristics of Poland is, and this becomes explicit on the basis of the analysed good practices, that there are very few organisations that focus solely on conflict resolution or even regard this issue as one of its main activities. The fact that, for many interviewees, describing their activities as even partially focused on mitigating and lowering the conflict's temperature was sometimes met with surprise is also very telling. Hence the selection of organisations for which conflict resolution is a secondary activity.

It is difficult to find specific reasons for the lack of the stated type of organisations. We would like, however, to offer an explanation. First of all, the history of the III RP, unlike some short exceptions during the time of state socialism, has not been marked by violent conflicts which would consist, for example, in clashes on the

streets. The peaceful, self-limiting Solidarity Revolution of 1980–1989 deliberately refrained from taking to the streets. The 'revival' of street protests without economic inspirations can be traced back to 2011 when right-wing organisations conducted fiery demonstrations on 11 November, Poland's Independence Day.

During the 1990s, due also to the diminishing influence of labour unions, the number of protests, usually related to economic issues, was very low in comparison with many countries of Western Europe. That being said, it is worth noting that labour unions were the main organisers of street protests. Furthermore, practically since the end of the Second World War Poland has been one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries in the world (as of 2011, 97.1 % of the people who lived in Poland declared that their national-ethnic identification is 'solely Polish' or 'Polish and other'; GUS) in which the vast majority of the population adhere to one religious denomination (over 90 % is Catholic; GUS2) hence there are very little experience and awareness with respect to conflicts connected with discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities. If they occur, they, again, take place on the local level (Ełk, Wrocław, Lublin).

Traditionally, in Poland mitigating initiatives during any periods of social tension were undertaken either by clergymen or by academics, generally by people with high social status and authority. This *modus operandi* reflected the hierarchical dimension of Polish culture. Now that the majority of formerly unquestionable authorities have taken sides voluntarily or by force, or have been unwillingly labelled with partisan affiliations, that method of reducing tensions is no longer available. The other method, the one of being a catalyst of agreement, an agent of mutual understanding without pressure to necessarily agree with an opponent, has not found its way through yet. Since Poles on average rather try to avoid the uncertainty of negotiations and prefer to fight, as the saying goes, 'to the last drop of blood' or to give way before the one who has the power of authority, it is a difficult matter to find respected, mutually accepted agents of peace, even among non-partisan NGOs. During a time of polarisation you can scarcely manage to mitigate a conflict, not to mention solving it. For years, many analysts have been striving to understand the twofold shape of Polish culture. On one hand, there is a courageous, uncompromising, militant attitude which historically has helped to survive the most challenging developments, especially acts of external aggression. On the other hand, we can see a more negotiable, deliberating face of Polish society. Apparently the time has now come for the former to take charge.

However, similar processes of polarisation have recently been taking place in other societies of the Western Hemisphere so there must also be other factors influencing the processes of societal polarisation.

We tried hard to find examples of individual or group activities that would contribute to reducing tensions. To our surprise, it was very difficult. However, what we can observe is a gradual process of disapproval of a militant vocabulary and aggressive behavior. This can be seen and heard in rare singular opinions uttered, for example, in social media (such as Jacek Dehnel, Katarzyna Batko-Tołuć and Grzegorz Kramer) or in public discussions (for example, compare a discussion between Katarzyna Wigura and Piotr Zaremba in 'Kultura Liberalna' or the discussion on the Polish NGO website ngo.pl under the general title 'Will NGOs glue society?'). Mass street protests in summer 2017 against three new laws changing the relations between the judiciary and executive powers were declaratively peaceful and void of harsh attacks and aggression against the ruling party and the President. This was intended to stand in striking opposition to what is perceived as an attempt to change the country's political system without changing the Constitution. Such voices were almost absent before the early months of 2017. They might be perceived as harbingers of exhaustion and a new wave of reactions to threats posed by the recent disturbing developments.

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ROMANIA

Introduction

According to previous studies on values and value orientations conducted by Hofstede (Hofstede, 2013), Schwartz (Schwartz, 2006), Inglehart (Inglehart, 2004), David (David, 2015), Voicu (Voicu, 2010) and others, Romania is portrayed as a society inclined towards traditional values that emphasise, at times, contradictory beliefs and orientations on values of hierarchy, consensus, equality and solidarity. This survey assesses how individuals in Romania (evidenced through the timeline section) have arrived at collective orientations on these values and how they translate them into collective national or regional attitudes and behaviours that can cause or drive conflict. The highlighting of embedded and interdependent values can be utilised for positive social and political change. Conflicts often emerge from societal polarisation on matters like perceptions of discrimination and access to services (housing education, health), as well as the environment.

Institutions that serve to further this polarisation through divisive rhetoric and action include: government bodies, institutions of the church (i.e. Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant), and the media. Government bodies often fail to ensure effective enforcement of legislation on certain issues. In addition, the institutions of the church are often reluctant to accept the LGBT community, reproductive rights and the Roma population. The media can shape public opinion on current events (i.e. the February 2017 anti-corruption protests) and seem to highlight a rift between generations in the country. Detailed lists of actors have been compiled for each of the conflicts identified.

Due to their dynamic nature, most of the conflicts included in the study oscillate between the following stages (Pondy, 1967): **latent** (participants are not necessarily aware of the conflict, **perceived** (participants are consciously aware of the conflict), **felt** (an accumulation of stress and anxiety), and **manifested** (open conflict which can be directly observed and measured). The final stage, the **aftermath**, refers to the outcomes, resolutions and dissolutions of certain conflicts. These, however, are not always directly apparent, and therefore not always measurable. The specific conflicts analysed in this report, as well as the good practices in targeting them, have been selected because of their prevalence in qualitative interviews conducted with experts in academia, research institutes, NGOs, IGOs, local and central government authorities and social workers. The intensity of the conflicts analysed in this study is based on a four-level scale.[9]

The described conflicts can be divided into two categories:

a) Conflict of inter-ethnic and inter-cultural relations

One of the major categories of conflict in Romania is the debate surrounding the inclusion of so-called 'foreigners' into Romanian society. Traditionally this refers to the integration of migrants into the domestic space. Through our interviews, however, we have also found that the ethnic Romanian majority often consider ethnic minorities as foreigners. For this reason, we have decided to divide the category into two sections – inter-ethnic conflict (those people perceived as foreigners but who have been Romanian citizens for a long period of time), and the inter-cultural conflict related to refugees, asylum seekers and labour migrants (those who are not Romanian citizens and have recently come from 'foreign' countries). The value-based conflict here can be summarised as the fear resulting in a perceived threat to one's identity.

In Romania, cultural polarisation is on the rise with an intensified populist political discourse and rhetoric of xenophobia and hate speech. This is coupled with the increasingly complex and unstable regional and global security environment.[10] The lack of structured public dialogue in Romanian society as a tool for aligning shared values poses a threat, as current ethnic and cultural tensions might give rise to self-isolationist behaviours at the personal level. These attitudes are further propelled by the mainstream media (i.e. Romania TV, Antena3, Realitatea TV, Digi 24, ProTV, etc.), of which the discourse on this issue focuses on the failures in Western Europe at accepting, hosting and integrating immigrants, which has caused a backlash against multiculturalism in Eastern Europe (Raport annual cu… 2015).

9 Level 1 – Real chance for escalation, e.g. if there was a referendum it is a high level of escalation; Level 2 – Potential to transfer to a form of physical clashes/violence; Level 3 – Polarised opinions, parties do not communicate, they rearm for fighting; Level 4 – Conflict is dividing families, communities, is affecting more than just one region/locality of the country.

10 An example of this is the protracted and armed conflict and instability in Romania's neighbour, Ukraine and the civil war in Syria.

The promotion of equality and equity for vulnerable groups in a society with historical legacies of systematic discrimination and social polarisation creates resistance and resentment from the majority group. Studies on the potential of violence in diverse societies show that the probability of violence decreases in conditions with high levels of diversity and grows in ethnically polarised societies (Alesina, 2003). While it is fair to expect that Romanian nationalist sentiments will not disappear anytime soon, Romania is also likely to remain a multi-ethnic society. Changes in values happen gradually and rarely involve the total creation of new values. These changes are determined and stimulated by interaction between groups with different value orientations, changing economic conditions and technological progress, as well as generational changes.

b) Gender Roles and Sexual Orientation

This second category of conflicts concerns two groups of Romanians – the LGBT community, and women. During our interviews we also identified these two groups as vulnerable parties.

The new so-called 'Western' ideas about feminism and the roles of men and women in society being fluid seem to be in direct clash with the 'traditional' family roles mostly proclaimed in Romanian society by right-wing Christian NGOs. These groups argue that Eastern Europe is the 'true' Europe, because the people have not abandoned the 'traditional' roles that are 'natural' (Traditional values… 2014). These so-called 'traditional' values are: anti-gay, anti-abortion, and pro-abstinence. In addition, they are firmly against sex education in schools.

One particularly successful movement was run by some Orthodox and Catholic Church branches and organisations such as Coalitia pentru Familie (Coalition for Families), which managed to gather three million signatures to change the definition[11] of the family in the Romanian Constitution as being the union between a man and a woman (Coalitia pentru Familie… 2016). Pro-LGBT NGOs in Romania, including more liberal Christian groups, see this as a form of stigmatising and condemning LGBT people as if they were 'heretics', eliminating the possibility for an open dialogue on LGBT issues because it is 'considered a betrayal of true Christianity.'[12]

These issues are not insignificant, if the majority population find that they are unwilling to accept or tolerate a spectrum of sexual orientations or redefined gender roles, the conflict could easily escalate into violence. Liberal Christian NGOs have been very influential in creating a bridge between the two groups, and they could be used in future as mediators.

1. Relations between the Roma community and the majority population

Short summary of the conflict

The conflict between the Roma and the majority of Romanian citizens has pervaded Romanian society since the Middle Ages. Historical oppression and the stereotypical images of Roma displayed through media channels often contribute to a negative public perception of this ethnic minority. With the prospect of the integration of Romania into the European Union came the mandate to create a strategy of inclusion for the Roma people of Romania.

The state as well as national and international human rights and Roma-specific NGOs have monitored these strategies. The Romanian government at both the national and the local levels has not been as proactive in securing these rights as the Roma people, or non-Roma activists for Roma rights, have argued. Although the amount of violence has decreased over time, the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights argues that a phenomenon called 'anti-Gypsyism' (Agarin, 2014) still exists.

The social and economic exclusion of the Roma in Romania is predicated on stereotypes and perceived differences in values. This allows systemic violence to be excused on the presumption that this ethnic group is somehow the 'other', lesser in value, and not fully cultured human beings. The strategies for Roma inclusion are not effective if the media propels stereotypes, the general public believes them, and politicians do nothing to expunge these myths.

11 As it stands, the Romanian Constitution defines the family as being based on the union between spouses – gender neutral. The Civil Code specifies that it is between a man and a woman, this is why gay marriage is not legal. What the Coalition wants to do is change the Constitution to be gender specific, too. This way, it will be close to impossible ever to legalise gay marriage (Iulia Merca, Email conversation with Anda Totoreanu, 13 April 2017).

12 Ibid., 20.

Timeline

2000—2007 – The pre-accession process of Romania to the European Union requires the Romanian government to respect the fundamental rights of its minorities to a greater degree than it had done before accession.

2010 – The European Commission creates the document '10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion' (European Union, 2009).

2011 – The EU Commission issues the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 (European Commission, 2011).

2012 – The Roma Integration Framework is created by the Romanian government: it is announced that 'Roma social inclusion [is] an issue that should be reflected in all fields of activity on the agenda of each central and local institution,' according to the strategy (Romanian Government, 2012).

2015 – Revised Strategy of the Government of Romania for the Inclusion of the Romanian Citizens Belonging to the Roma Minority (Romanian Government, 2016).

2016 – Evictions, racial discrimination in hospitals and schools and other public places (see ERRC Report 2016); 'Incidents of hate speech and hate crime, and acts of violence committed by state and non-state actors [against the Roma] remain all too frequent.' (European Roma Rights Centre, 2016). The expulsions of Roma in France, Italy, and Germany also contribute to discussions and actions against the Roma community in Romania.

Actors in the conflict

Type of actor	Type of sector	Institutions / Organisations
Primary	In support of furthering Roma rights	Roma Centre for Social Intervention and Studies (Roma CRISS); Policy Centre for Roma and Minorities; Centre of Resources Apollo; Roma Education Fund Romania (REFR); National Agency for Roma (NAR); Institute for the Study of National Minority Issues (ISPMN); Pata-Cluj Project.
	Hindering the furthering of Roma rights	New Right Party (PND).
Secondary	In support of furthering Roma rights	Foundation DESIRE; Amare Rromentza; Nevo Parudimos; Civic Union of the Roma Youth in Romania (UCTRR); Phiren Amenca; Romano BoutiQ; E-Romanja.
	Hindering the furthering of Roma rights	Mayors of Baia Mare and Eforie; Directorate for Culture and Heritage Timis (ICTT); Casa Muhle.
Tertiary	In support of furthering Roma rights	European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO); Nicolae Paun – Roma representative in Romanian Parliament; Damian Draghici – Roma musician and senator in Romanian Parliament; Catrinel Motoc – Campaigner on Romania, Amnesty International; The Foundation for the Development of Civil Society (FDSC); 'Together' Agency; ActiveWatch; National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD).
	Hindering the furthering of Roma rights	Media e.g. B1TV.

Sources and causes of the conflict

The deep causes, or sources, of this conflict come from a misunderstanding of the Roma by the non-Roma, as well as the other way around. The Roma have long been stereotyped as a backward, uncivilised, primitive,

antisocial, unorganised and apolitical people (Agarin, 2014). This, along with the assumption that the Roma want to live nomadic lives and that they are 'bound to cause trouble' means to some that it is all right to treat Roma differently and 'seek retaliation under the pretext that the Roma frequently exhibit undesirable behaviour.' Media, politicians, and police who 'fail to condemn the abuse of stereotypical images' encourage this retaliation.

The government also views Roma people often as security problems, which can pervade the attitudes of local law enforcement. The ghettos that some of the Roma population live in often contribute to this perception, as those who live there have lower levels of education and live in poverty. The 'Roma problem', according to the Romanian government (2016), is due to socio-economics rather than racism and discrimination.

Dynamics of the conflict

This conflict can be categorised as a definite polarisation (Level 3) and social divisions (Level 4), with the possibility that there could be a potential for violence (Level 2). At the moment, the possibility for escalation into violence comes from the hostile policies of some local Romanian governments in Baia Mare, Cluj-Napoca and Alba Iulia, which are using evictions to contain Roma communities that seem to be unable to integrate.

Background of the conflict

a. **Socio-economic factors**: The low education level of Roma people in Romania, along with discrimination in housing and employment lead to a cycle of poverty that many Roma cannot escape. These factors then lead to non-Roma perception of the Roma as poor and draw attention to those who commit petty theft, labelling them as criminals. According to a CEDIME-SE Report, this has been 'effectively employed for political purposes.' (Minorities in the Southeast, 2001).

b. **Regional and international influences:** International and Regional (EU) Human Rights and minority rights standards seem to clash with stereotypical historical perceptions of the Roma people perpetuated by the media and local authorities. These standards are followed at the state level but do not seem to reach the local level despite hard work by NGOs on this, due to lack of monitoring and interest.

c. **Structural and institutional factors**:

- Exclusion from housing, including evictions, by the local authorities, with little regard to the national strategy on Roma inclusion, has been one of the key factors of the conflict. These evictions keep Roma from maintaining jobs in the city, from health services because of the lack of a proper address, and make it difficult to reach schools because of the distance.
- Roma children are also often separated when at schools with non-Roma children, or put into 'special schools' under the pretext of keeping them safe, but often the reason is because non-Roma children's parents will take them out of schools where they might come into contact with Roma children.
- In government institutions with regards to political representation, there are very few Roma hired, and the Roma are very rarely included in debates or committees that involve their very livelihood.

Possible future scenarios

After conducting interviews with a number of stakeholders working with and for Roma rights, it seems viable to conclude that the perspective of future relations between the Roma and non-Roma in Romania is positive. There have been a number of changes in the legal and political sphere expanding Roma participation, education, housing rights, labour rights and others. However, many of the interviewees feel that if Romania's neighbours radicalised, Romania might do the same, and the group most likely to be blamed for social or economic problems at that time would be the Roma.

2. Refugees, asylum seekers, and other migrants

Short summary of conflict and actors

Romania has three different types of migrants – beneficiaries of protection who have refugee status as well as those who receive subsidiary protection (BP), labour migrants (RTT), and those attempting to attain refugee status (asylum seekers). There are, in addition, over 500 relocated refugees to Romania (Mixed Migration… 2016).

The total number of migrants into Romania in 2015 was 226,943, according to the IOM (Global Migration… 2015). The conflict related to the migrant issue is not overt nor particularly violent at this moment, but has the potential for escalation and so should be kept under observation.

There is also an information conflict related to this issue. For example, there is misinformation that all migrants are Muslim or that they are illegal immigrants. However, there is also a long history of collaboration between Muslims and Romanians, but the media fuel fear. The media very rarely mention the many cases of mixed marriages between Romanians and citizens from Middle Eastern countries, or the well-integrated communities of Muslims, especially from the southeast region (Dobrogea) of Romania and in the capital, Bucharest.

The **primary actors** in the conflict are the government, the media, emergency transit centres, and NGOs working directly with migrants and on migrant issues – identified in the actor mapping. The media often show only one-sided or fake news of terrorism that incites fear amongst misinformed groups. The **secondary actors** that we identified are returnees, the Romanian people who have worked in Western Europe, especially in the '90s. Some have since returned as strong advocates against change and against accepting certain types of migrants, such as Muslim refugees.

They are not organised, but they could play an influential role.[13]

Looking at the background, one reason could be their negative experience in the Romanian diaspora: having to adapt to a foreign environment, they see Romania as a safe place which they want to preserve, where they do not want to have to adapt, therefore they can often be more conservative. They have felt mistreated themselves while working abroad, and did not experience a healing process – they are looking for stability. Also, many of them have lived in Muslim neighbourhoods and regard their process of integration negatively.

According to interviews on this topic, the **most vulnerable groups** are refugees originating from Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Because of the history of war, the general public perception is that they will have a negative attitude towards the West. The manifestations of this conflict can be seen through the mosque incident in Bucharest, as well as the backlash against the building of two refugee centres in Satu Mare.

Timeline

30 June 2015 – Decision No. 59 of the Chamber of Deputies says that Romania will only share the 'burden' of refugees with EU countries on a temporary basis[14] (Romanian Government, Chamber… 2015).

2015 – Prime Minister Victor Ponta signs a deal which allows the Turkish government to build a large mosque in Bucharest. Outcry from the Orthodox Church and former president Traian Basescu (Lupu, 2015).

16 September 2015 – The National Immigration Strategy for the period of 2015–2018 written by the Romanian Government does not encourage civil society consultation and involvement in the alien integration process, unlike the previous strategy (National immigration… 2015).

October 2015 – First meeting of government officials, NGOs and local authorities on the issue of refugees (Sebe, 2016).

October 2015 – National Coalition for the Integration of Refugees created.

2016 – Romania has the lowest percentage of total population formed by immigrants in the EU (Migration and… 2016).

13 Other secondary actors include CSOs that promote human rights and openness in general that can help in deconstructing prejudice against refugees, such as LADO. The Church is a secondary actor that could take a more important role in terms of helping refugees – minority churches seem to be more involved in coordinating such actions. Along with the Church and CSOs are the academic institutions, such as the Romanian Centre for the Research of Migration, which are creating platforms to accurately measure the integration of BP and RTT that are positively helping refugees.

14 Romanian Government, Chamber of Deputies, *Decision No. 59,* 2015, Bucharest: Romanian Government, 30 June 2015.

Actors in the conflict

Type of actor	Type of sector	Institutions / Organisations
Primary	In support of furthering 'foreigners'' rights	Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (ISPMN); refugee research centres; the International Office for Migration (IOM); Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants (ARCA); Jesuit Service for Refugees, Romania (JRS).
	Hindering the furthering of 'foreigners'' rights	Media – e.g. B1TV.
Secondary	In support of furthering 'foreigners'' rights	Equality and Human Rights Action Centre (ACTEDO); MigraNet; youth (especially urban, well-educated youth); cultural centres; asylum centres (e.g. Somcuta); cultural mediators through the 'Migrant in Intercultural Romania' project.
	Hindering the furthering of 'foreigners'' rights	New Right Party (PND).
Tertiary	In support of furthering 'foreigners'' rights	The League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADO); Romanian minority churches; Emergency Transit Centres (ETC); European Refugee Fund (ERF); UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD); General Inspectorate for Immigration; National Council for the Refugees (CNPR); International Organization for Migration (IOM).
	Hindering the furthering of 'foreigners'' rights	N/A

Sources and causes of the conflict

Based on the data sourced from the well-known large-scale comparative studies European Values Study (EVS) and World Values Survey (WVS), solidarity in Romania specifically targets the ones in need. Geographical proximity-driven differences overlap: there is a certain solidarity directed towards those living in Romania who were born in Romania, and this solidarity is stronger than the care which concerns any other of the status groups under consideration. The immigrants from Romania and those who do not live here, irrespectively of their social status, are placed relatively lower than 'people from Romania.' Local and regional solidarity are as low as global solidarity.

The refugee crisis has been portrayed in the media along the terms of an 'invasion' – this has caused an attitude of rejection in society, which was then inflated by the terrorist attacks elsewhere in Europe. For example, the project of building a large mosque in Bucharest triggered a wave of rejection against all Muslims (not specifically refugees) – public protests were organised in the summer of 2015. This could potentially affect refugees as a group, as well, since they are mostly Muslim and there is a common labelling of refugees as a homogeneous Muslim group. The intention to open two refugee centres in a rural area in Satu-Mare County also triggered strong protests from the local communities, mainly diaspora returnees, which succeeded in stopping the project.

Dynamics of the conflict

The level of this conflict is at a 4. There are high prospects for escalation and lower prospects for improvement. What is helping to de-escalate this conflict is defining a sense of community that is not protectionist, but includes values of openness and inclusion. Some civic education initiatives do this through online storytelling platforms; positive media influence; open, participative meetings; and discussions between refugees and locals – in churches, schools and kindergartens. In this context, *exposure is the key* – once people see the realities, they feel less threatened.

Background of the conflict

a. **Socio-economic factors**: low level of civic education and also education in general – people with a lower level of education might tend to reject differences in appearance and language to a greater extent.

b. **Regional and international influences:** EU scepticism, reluctance, the impression that having to accept something imposed by the EU will pave the way for more impositions and disregard of national interest, experiences of mobility.

c. **Structural and institutional factors**: legislation in place as a response against the assigned quota, mainstream media are very political, the government is not acting to deter hate speech and punish it accordingly; lack of transparency and efficiency needed for the resettlement process; minimal standards not developed for refugee centres; new policies of social inclusion (access to education, the social housing policy, state aid) form a feeling of injustice across the majority population.

Possible future scenarios

A positive influence can come from moderated online platforms that focus on using storytelling as a showcase for demonstrating individuals' human sides. However, unaccountable online media but also mainstream media can lead to the escalation of the conflict. While there is an assumption that small, rural communities are less diverse and open, and would tend to oppose migrants (especially refugees), there is a relevant case of a rural community in Somcuta Mare where the locals welcomed them very openly and warmly – a strong potential for positive development resides in understanding the conditions and factors that contribute to these kinds of supportive responses.

The conflict could escalate if political representatives were to use the issue in a divisive way, by exaggerating the phenomenon and reinforcing the perception of refugees as a major threat to Romanian values and society as a whole. However, the issue of the refugee crisis was not exploited during the parliamentary elections – perhaps because it is not a primary political concern for Romanian citizens. In addition to this, the CNRR and LADO are both working to help improve legislation for refugee integration, to foster the political participation and policy involvement of migrants, and to diminish xenophobia (Summary Overview… 2016).

3. LGBT community and majority population relations

Short summary of the conflict

The LGBT community has long been contentious in the Romanian context, as has the role of men and women in society and discussions of gender. The Romanian government is considered to be socially conservative, with acts of homosexuality considered illegal as late as 2001.[15] The prospect of EU accession is one of the major reasons that Romania has become more liberal socially, because the government needed to prove that sexual minority rights are not violated by the country's policies and legislation.

There have been changes made for the benefit of LGBT people in Romania, such as the decriminalisation of homosexuality, laws against homophobic hate crimes, LGBT Pride parades and laws outlawing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. However, there are still prohibitions against same-sex marriage, which are present in the country's civil code. The bills that have been proposed to change this were rejected by large margins in 2013, 2014 and again this year. With regards to transgender people, there are also very vague laws pertaining to changing their identity.

As discussed, these issues of gender and LGBT have caused divisions in society that have polarised the Romanian population, but these divisions have not remained on a verbal level – in fact, there is a potential for violence (Level 2), and even a potential for high level escalation (Level 1). For example, on 6 June this year, a 25-year-old journalism student was beaten up by four men on the way to the Pride parade, in the metro close to Unirii Square in Bucharest for wearing rainbow suspenders (Tita, 2017). According to the article, many of the victims do not report these incidents because they believe the Romanian police and other law enforcement will continue the aggression and stigmatise them.

15 Emergency Ordinance No. 89/2001 eliminated Article 200 of the Penal Code to avoid discrimination against LGBT people in the prosecution of sexual offences.

Timeline

2000 – The Romanian Parliament enacts a law to explicitly outlaw discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in a variety of fields – this law has been used to fine firms and individuals for discrimination (Overview of Lesbian… 2008).

2001 – Decriminalisation of homosexuality; Adrian Nastase signs Emergency Ordinance No. 89/2001, which adjusts articles referring to sex offences to avoid discriminatory treatment (Hassenstab, 2015).

2007 – Romania's Accession to the EU, pressure to follow the *aquis communautaire* on human rights and minority rights (Treaty between… 2005).

2013 – 20 February screening of the film *The Kids Are All Right* is violently interrupted by 50 people who assault the filmgoers (VIDEO. Scandal la Muzeul… 2013).

2013—2016 – Green Party MP Remus Cernea announces a proposed law to give same-sex civil unions the same rights as heterosexual ones. The bill is rejected with 2 votes in favour, 110 against. The bill is introduced again in October 2014 and in 2016, but is rejected both times (Chiriac, 2013).

2016 – One online LGBT media channel – Angelicuss TV; LGBT people given permission to join the army (Dilema Armatei… 2006).

Actors in the conflict

Type of actor	Type of sector	Institutions / Organisations
Primary	In support of LGBT rights	ACCEPT!; MozaiQ.
	Hindering LGBT rights	Family Research Council (FRC); Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF).
Secondary	In support of LGBT rights +	Be an Angel Romania (BAAR); Les Sisterhood – Cluj, TransForm; Rainbow Romania; Rise Out; Campus Pride; Q Sports.
	Hindering LGBT rights	Neo-Protestant Church; New Right Party (PND); The Coalition for Families (CPF).
Tertiary	In support of LGBT rights +	Former Green Party MP Remus Cernea; Equality and Human Rights Action Centre (ACTEDO); National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD); Association of Romanians for the Defence of Human Rights (GRADO); League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADO); Petre Florin Manole, Cristina Pruna.
	Hindering LGBT rights	European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ); World Congress of Families (WCF).

Sources and causes of the conflict

This particular conflict has arisen due to the deep incompatibility of the so-called 'traditional' values and roles of men and women in society and in their private relations with the so-called Western liberal values. Both sides feel that their integrity and the fundamental nature of their beings are being threatened. Politicians, the media, and even individuals themselves who take the conflict to a violent level exacerbate these fears.

In addition, there is the discussion of whether or not the state (or church) should be involved in dictating one's identity, relationships, gender role, or the choice to have a baby. The discussions around this topic have been heated and have come to the forefront of political discussion due to the massive funding and manpower of right-wing Christian NGOs focused on bringing the Romanian public back to its 'traditional' roots (Traditional values… 2014).

Dynamics of the conflict

At the moment, Romania is behind many countries in Europe in its record of protecting sexual and gender minorities – according to ILGA Europe, it is ranked 34th (ILGA-Europe Rainbow… 2016). There is definitely a potential for violence (Level 2), and a possibility that this will eventually be triggered into a high-level escalation (Level 1).

The 'traditional' values proclaimed by right-wing groups such as the Coalition for Families seem to be directed at the LGBT groups in society. MozaiQ, ACCEPT, ACTEDO, ActiveWatch and other LGBT and human rights groups in Romania argue that these values and proposed legislation changes are meant to subtly isolate LGBT people from society. They believe that it is the responsibility of Romanian politicians to sustain human rights, sending a message to the Romanian people that 'human rights are not negotiable and the separation between church and state is an essential principle of the Constitution.'

Background of the conflict

a. **Socio-economic factors**: These factors are discussed above in the section on the causes of the conflict. The social factors involved in this conflict include the conflicts around the definition of family and gender roles in society. Oftentimes these definitions are influenced by income, access to education, migration experience and urban vs. rural environments. One of the biggest challenges with the LGBT community is drug use and incarceration, which is due, in large part, to the discrimination against the group by health-care professionals, as well as a lack of acceptance by the larger community. Another socio-economic argument, brought into discussion by the LGBT supporters, is that legalising civil partnership or gay marriage would be beneficial to the general economic status of the resulting families and of the state. And legalising adoption by same-sex couples would improve the lives of the children and of the couples. Children and teenagers losing parental support/housing because they are LGBT; people losing jobs, sometimes access to services, like medical or rent; discrimination in single-parent adoptions. Though all of these are illegal, they are common and rarely brought to justice.

b. **Regional and international influences:** The regional and international influences that further the anti-LGBT movement include funding from right-wing Christian groups in the US for right-wing Christian groups in Europe. On the opposite side, the Council of Europe advocates for the involvement of local and regional level authorities in combating discrimination as well as the cooperation and exchanges of good practices between authorities at these levels and LGBT advocacy groups to increase LGBT access to social rights (Guaranteeing lesbian, gay… 2015). In addition, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is concerned by the violation of the fundamental rights of transgender people (Discrimination against… 2015) and the European Court of Human Rights defends them (Sexual Orientation Issues, 2016).

c. **Structural and institutional factors**: The structural and institutional factors of this conflict include the prohibitions against same-sex marriage in the Romanian Civil Code, even though Article 26 in the Romanian Constitution protects the families of all Romanians. The Romanian Parliament is also lacking in the promotion of an open dialogue that takes sexual and gender minorities into consideration.

Possible future scenarios

While LGBT issues have not been discussed on a massive scale in Romania, recent attempts to change the Constitution have brought up discussions of Romania's values revolving around family and gender roles. Some priests and other religious authorities have argued that Romania must be a moral leader for the rest of Europe through a return to traditional values that discriminate against LGBT people (Traditional values, 2014). The resilience of the civic society platforms in Romania, however, are proving to be quite a force.

There is a strong chance that Romanians will become more and more open towards these groups and especially towards ensuring their equal rights to health, housing and jobs. The issue of marriage and civil partnership, brought up in the Romanian Parliament, however, is not one that is going to be resolved easily. In addition, Romanian adoption agencies are not expected to budge anytime soon on their discriminatory practices towards same-sex couples.

Prospects for the improvement of this conflict are increased by the human rights groups, liberal Christian NGOs and peacebuilding actors listed above, which include the following peace initiatives in their objectives: a) promoting education for human rights, democracy and civic spirit as well as sex education; b) developing a civil society and the legal defence of people whose rights have been violated; and c) preventing actions of discrimination and mediating between groups or individuals to reduce that discrimination.

4. Inter-gender relations

Short summary of the conflict

In Romania, as in many other countries, the gender conflict is tied to religion, specifically the debates on abortion, contraception and transgender issues. Along with these aspects are the issues tied to labour such as equal access to employment, paternal and maternal leave and other issues. A major part of the conflict also concerns domestic and sexual violence, which is indirectly reflected in the scarcity of services for victims of domestic violence. Other issues related to the conflict are work-life balance and affirmative action, such as the quotas for women in parliament (which many Romanians oppose). The gender conflict in Romania alternates between being an important topic in Romanian society and being unimportant, due to policy fluctuations.

However, these policy inconsistencies are the result of party changes and not because this is an issue highly discussed in Romanian public discourse, according to Stefan Luca of the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC). One of the major actors in the conflict at hand, which do bring the issue into public discourse is the Coalitia pentru Familie, which advocates the 'elimination of public subsidies for abortion and methods of contraception and channelling these funds towards maternal health services,' in addition to the reinstatement of the 'penalty for infanticide immediately after birth.' (50 Proposed Measures… 2015).

Timeline

1990 – Communist policy restricting abortion reversed. Abortion made legal during the first 14 weeks of pregnancy.

2000 – The Romanian Government passes Law No. 137/2000 that sanctions and prevents all forms of discrimination (OG 137/2000 privind… 2014).

2002 – The Romanian Government passes Law No. 202/2002, which concerns equal opportunities between women and men (LEGE Nr. 202…, 2002).

2014 – Penal Code Article 201 (1) punishes the performing of an abortion when done under any of the following circumstances: a) outside medical institutions or medical offices authorised for this purpose; b) by a person who is not a certified physician in the domain of obstetrics and gynaecology and free to practice this profession; or c) if the pregnancy has exceeded fourteen weeks.

18 June 2015 – Law No. 154 for the amendment of Government Emergency Ordinance No. 96/2003 regarding workplace maternity protection (Country Report: Gender…, 2016).

October 2015 – The National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men is re-established.

2016 – Significant maternal leave and parental leave; equal access to employment no longer contested but a woman's role in the workplace is.

Actors in the conflict

Type of actor	Type of sector	Institutions / Organisations
Primary	In support of redefining gender roles.	Centrul Filia; Asociatia pentru Libertate si Egalitate de Gen (ALEG); Asociatia ANAIS; Asociatia FRONT.
	Against redefining gender roles.	Coalition for Families (CPF).
Secondary	In support of redefining gender roles.	E-Romnja; Association for Roma Women Emancipation; Asociatia Necuvinte.
	Against redefining gender roles.	Neo-Protestant Church; Orthodox Church.
Tertiary	In support of redefining gender roles.	ActiveWatch; Romanian Association for Human Rights Protection Group (GRADO); League of Defence for Human Rights (LADO); National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD); Equality and Human Rights Action Centre (ACTEDO); European Court of Human Rights (ECHR); National Commission in the Field of Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (CONES); Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR); ANES (National Agency for Gender Equality).
	Against redefining gender roles.	World Congress of Families (WCF); European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ); Sulfina Barbu, former MP of the Democratic Liberal Party.

Sources and causes of the conflict

The gender conflict in Romania has risen to prominence due to civil society activism and the implementation of EU standards for human rights. The deeper causes of this conflict have roots in the communist-era suppression of abortion and the extreme traditional religious ideas of the family, which were also propelled by the communist state in order to increase the population. These come into conflict with the post-Cold War ideas of a balanced household and an equal society where women can decide their own fate with regards to reproduction.

Dynamics of the conflict

While there are significant issues having to do with socio-economics and structural failures to protect the rights of women, there is no real change for the eruption of violence on a societal scale. There is little contestation about a woman's right to vote, to work in any industry or to be accorded equal pay. However, there are definite polarised opinions (Level 3) that normally have to do with transgender rights or abortion, as well as social divisions (Level 4) in more than one region of the country.

Background of the conflict

a. **Socio-economic factors:** Inter-ethnic tensions and poverty can be compounded when there is also gender discrimination. Through centuries of discrimination, women have fallen behind on the socio-economic scale, and without significant motivation by authorities to remedy this, it will be difficult to make change happen.

b. **Regional and international influences:** Rural environments reduce access to authorities and hospitals that can protect and aid women in cases of domestic violence. The rise of international organisational involvement in Romanian gender rights has risen in the past decade and has increased the transparency and communication between Romanian organisations.

c. **Structural and institutional factors:** The structure of laws pertaining to gender rights in Romania often does not require monitoring. This then allows manipulation of the law, through the simple fact that there are no repercussions.

Possible future scenarios

Romania's constitution prohibits sex discrimination and sexual harassment, has principles of equal pay for work of equal value and has specific equal treatment legislation. However, there are still no provisions having to do with discrimination due to gender identity[16], no national laws defining the parameters for establishing the equal value of the work performed, the EC's recommendation of equal pay through transparency is not applied and the legislation does not address the issues of justifications for pay differences.

With regards to abortion, Romanian women have the legal right to an abortion up until the 15th week of pregnancy, but there have been attempts by Coalitia pentru Familie to restrict abortions, with the backing of prominent political parties such as the Democratic Liberal Party (PNL).

The future of women's rights in Romania is quite promising, with the number of NGOs and IGOs working together on these issues.

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SLOVAKIA

Introduction

In this study, five conflicts were analysed. All of them caused deep polarisation of Slovak society, going deep to the level of private relationships and families. Some of them are currently on 'standby mode', having being hot in 2015—2016 (i.e. the migration crisis, LGBT rights), some are on a slow rise (far-right extremism and geopolitics), and one is long-term and has the possibility to flare up anytime (the Roma).

What is common in all these conflicts, apart from the high level of emotions and rather sparse representation of the facts in the arguments in public discussions, are these features:

- Minorities are the objects rather than the subjects of the conflicts. Refugees, Roma and LGBT people have been represented very little in discussions about their rights or their position in the society. In all cases it was more 'on them' than 'with them'. Even in the case of LGBT people it was difficult to find relevant actors representing their positions, human rights organisations were more visible. Refugees/migrants/foreigners are almost totally omitted, the Roma are represented very little.
- In all five conflicts, the far-right extremist party Kotleba – ĽSNS was a visible actor. In some, it was a primary actor, in others it was a secondary actor. Another group of actors present in all conflicts are the so-called 'alternative media', i.e. pro-Russian and conspiracy portals spreading hate, suspicion, mixtures of half-truths and obvious lies. All signs show that both actors will rise in power and influence in the near future.
- Political elites, parliamentary parties and most of the visible politicians from various political options show a very high level of populism, often intentionally nurturing these conflicts and using them for their own political agendas. However, taking into account the lowering of trust towards traditional political parties as such, such behaviour often (un)intentionally helps far-right extreme political forces to grow. There are very few exceptions of politicians being unafraid to stand for minorities and for unpopular solutions.
- In all conflicts, the split between Bratislava and other regions of the country is visible. On one hand Bratislava is more liberal and open than the rest of the country. On the other hand Bratislava's actors are quite ignorant of the problems, expectations and attitudes of the regions. All of the analysed conflicts may at some phase evolve into a division between the centre and the peripheries.
- Positive activities and actions can be often found outside of the spheres of the 'usual suspects', i.e. traditional parties and NGOs. There are small, sometimes individual initiatives promoting tolerance and inclusion and combating propaganda or hate speech. The best method for networking and supporting them is still an open question.

Methodological note

In this mapping we see four main media sources covering events in 2015—2016 related to the five topics discussed. They include two mainstream portals, the liberal *Denník N* and the leftist *Pravda*, as well as two anti-systemic 'alternative' media, *Zem a vek* and *Hlavné správy*. The purpose is to show both sides of the picture and the arguments used in particular conflicts. Quotations from these media are used to illustrate certain positions of the parties in the conflicts. In addition, secondary analysis of research studies has been conducted, as well as interviews and focus groups with experts.

1. Migration crisis

Short summary of the conflict

The social discourse on the so-called 'migration crisis' has disclosed a value conflict in Slovak society that was manifested in several perspectives. The most visible was the contradiction between the humanitarian and solidarity approach towards refugees on one side and the strict rejection of any kind of migrants or assistance to them on the other side. The second perspective was the question of European solidarity vs. the sovereignty

of Slovakia in deciding on the acceptance of refugees or migrants. The third conflict we can identify here is on the character of Slovak society in future, whether it will be open and multicultural, or an ethnic and religiously homogeneous society (ignoring or denying the existing diversity we already have).

What is crucial when describing the Slovak situation is the fact that Slovakia is a country resistant to migration, with a relatively low number of migrants and that it is one of the last in the EU concerning the number of asylums issued. This did not change during the 'migration crisis'. Media coverage of numerous groups of migrants heading to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea and via the so-called 'Balkan Road' came up in summer 2015. Hot discussions across Europe were taking place in autumn 2015. And the Slovak parliamentary elections were planned for March 2016. Almost all the political parties made the migration crisis the main topic of their election campaign (Mesežnikov, 2016). Politicians used people's fear of the unknown, traditional reticence towards foreigners and emotional media pictures to create an atmosphere of threat and to position themselves as the 'saviours of Slovakia'. Not all the parties have profited by gaining votes as a result; however, the public discourse has been shifted to more radical anti-European and anti-democratic rhetoric, which remained even after the main 'crisis' was over.

According to the Eurobarometer poll, immigration was considered to be bigger problem in Slovakia than in Italy, Greece, or Croatia in 2015 (Mikušovič, 2015), while the number of asylum seekers in Slovakia was among the lowest in the EU and in 2016 only 167 people were granted asylum (International Organization for Migration, 2017). Another interesting aspect was that all the hot discussion in 2015—2016 was going on without including the migrants themselves (whether they were the 'current' ones who had arrived recently or the 'old' ones already integrated into Slovak society). Except for some very rare cases, the migrants had no opportunity (though often, probably, also no motivation) to speak their views. 'Migrants and refugees turned out to be one of the instruments for securing political hegemony. They were just the topic of the political debate, not its actors.' (Chudžíková, 2016, p. 104).

Timeline

These are the key events and factors influencing the discourse on the topic and shaping the character of the conflict.

- Summer 2015 – Peak of the 'European refugee crisis' in the media: stories of deaths in the Mediterranean Sea, thousands of refugees walking along the Balkan Road.
- June 2015 – A violent protest takes place in Bratislava during a bike race. Several thousand protesters attack visitors, police, and police cars. Around 60 are detained by the police for riotous conduct and violent attacks on persons. The protest is organised through social networks with several radical football fan clubs from Slovakia and the Czech Republic taking part. The radical party Kotleba – ĽSNS is the most visible among the organisers.
- August 2015 – Gabčíkovo, a village in southern Slovakia organises a referendum against the shelter for asylum seekers that the Ministry of the Interior has planned to organise there. The Ministry ignores the referendum, since it was not legally binding. Radical political groups frame it as ignoring the will of the citizens. The shelter is up and running later without major problems in relation to the local population.
- September 2015 – The media report on the tragic deaths of 71 refugees at the Slovak-Austrian border. The people were locked in an abandoned van and all died of suffocation. This event provokes an initiative/petition titled Appeal for Humanity. It is joined by many celebrities, NGOs and ordinary citizens.
- Autumn 2015 – Slovakia sends several dozen border police forces to Slovenia. The Slovak military take part in the exercise in Hungary
- Autumn 2015 – The Christian civic initiative ktopomoze.sk (Who Will Help) announces that it has gathered more than 2,000 volunteers prepared to assist refugees with their integration.
- October 2015 – The Open Society Foundation in Bratislava opens a call for projects helping refugees (humanitarian help and integration projects). They redistribute resources from the state lottery TIPOS in the amount of 500,000 euros to Slovak NGOs.
- October 2015 – The Ministry of the Interior officially asks the UNHCR to change the implementation agency for refugee agreements in Slovakia. It refuses the NGO Human Rights League for 'non-constructive critique of the government.' The reason is their criticism of the official police intervention in the Medveďov refugee camp, where refugees were beaten (Tódová, 2015).

- November 2015 – The Paris terrorist attacks mean a further step towards securitisation of the refugee issue. Prime Minister Fico announces 'monitoring of every Muslim,' increasing the number of police patrols and reinforcing the numbers of police.
- Winter 2015 – Several months before the elections in Slovakia, a country practically untouched by the refugee crisis, an atmosphere of anxiety concerning refugees is created. There is a strong feeling of threat combined with the hope that refugees will not come and resolute resistance towards accepting refugees and providing aid to them. Public opinion is definitely shaped by political speeches, but on the other hand, public opinion could work as instruction for the politicians to solidify their positions (Mesežnikov, 2016).
- December 2015 – Slovakia submits an appeal to the Court of Justice in Luxembourg (for the decision of the Council of the EU on 'quotas on refugees').
- December 2015 – Official acceptance of 149 Iraqi refugees (Christians). The group are brought to Slovakia within the private project of a Christian NGO that made an agreement with the government and covered the costs of their transport and board. The refugee families have to stay several months in a detention institution and only in March 2016 are they to be moved to the Nitra region. Despite the initial intention of NGOs and Christian organisations to integrate them in villages, the government decides to keep them in state institutions as long as possible (Kern, 2015). One of the reasons is the strict refusal of the villages to receive refugees. There is no awareness campaign or meeting with the villagers to explain more about the situation to them. One by one, approximately one-half of these refugee families decide to return home. The official version of their reason is that they could not get used to life in Slovakia (Janečková, 2016).
- December 2015 – Parliament passes the so-called 'anti-terrorist packet' of amendments to the Constitution and laws with the intention to enforce the combating of terrorism.
- March 2016 – Parliamentary elections in Slovakia show that mainstream parties did not receive many more votes as a result of their anti-migration rhetoric. On the other hand, the social atmosphere of fear of refugees has helped the extremist right to get into parliament (Kotleba – ĽSNS).
- June 2016 – Shortly before the start of the Slovak presidency of the EU Council, the government promises to accept another 100 refugees.
- Autumn 2016 – The anti-Islam rhetoric of Fico and Sulík continues in public speeches and debates, as well as social network posts. In addition, members of the Kotleba – ĽSNS party speak publicly using strong anti-immigration rhetoric.
- Autumn 2016/Winter 2016 – The hate speech of politicians has shifted to a serious extent against Muslims and Islam. The Slovak National Party (member of a ruling coalition) submits a bill restricting the registration of smaller religious communities. The action is aimed against Muslims in Slovakia, as explained in the programme of the party (Mesežnikov, 2016).

Actors in the conflict

Primary actors:

Róbert Fico – the Prime Minister, leader of the governing party SMER. He is concerned as a primary actor, since he was the one intentionally boosting the issue in the media and making it his main pre-election agenda. Other political parties simply followed the trend. He set the discourse of 'securitisation' and the anti-Islam character of the topic. His position was well expressed by the pre-election slogan 'We Protect Slovakia'. The party has been in power for many years, and it is more and more difficult to find an agenda that is not marked by big corruption scandals and social discontent. Refugees came as a good populist solution for him and his ruling elite, which are unable to address voters with a relevant political programme in areas of practical politics. Fico was successful in raising the fears of the population in Slovakia to such an extent that people put immigration (a non-existent problem in Slovakia) above all the real social problems they saw. Polls have shown that the people have approved him as a successful leader in dealing with migration and with the 'unjust' decisions of the EU. Thus, he has set the discourse to which all other political powers have been contributing. Obviously, Fico is interested in nurturing the topic further to legitimise himself and his party. In present, the agenda is shifting from refugees (who are almost non-existent in Slovakia), to Muslims (who are few, but there are some). He presents them as security threat, declaring that 'he will not allow compact Muslim communities in our territory.' Muslims are, in his wording 'a foreign element that is not able to integrate into Slovak society.' He ignores the fact that the Muslim community in Slovakia lives peacefully with the majority of the society (Mesežnikov, 2016).

Andrej Kiska – the President of the Slovak Republic. From the beginning of the 'refugee crisis' to the present, Kiska has been the only top political actor to counterweigh the position of Fico and most of the rest of the Slovak political scene. In September 2015 Kiska issued an appeal on the topic of refugees. He described debate on refugees as a 'struggle for the heart and character of the country.' He appealed to politicians to 'stop threatening people with refugees,' to treat refugees on the principles of humanity and solidarity. He refused the notion that accepting several hundred refugees would put the values and lifestyle in Slovakia in danger. He opposed the rumours about refugees, that they would be 'economic speculators' or potential terrorists (Kiska, 2015). Kiska has many times declared solidarity within the EU, the international responsibility of Slovakia, a humanitarian approach towards refugees, and a pragmatic approach towards migration. He was also the only politician trying to include migrants and refugees in the debate.

Marián Kotleba and his party, Kotleba – ĽSNS. In 2015 this was an extremist extra-parliamentary far-right party famous for its xenophobic, anti-Roma and neo-Nazi rhetoric (see more in Chapter 2). As for migration, they were distinguished by their absolute resistance against refugees coming to Slovakia. They linked refugees directly to terrorism and criminality. Their ethnic, racial and religious xenophobia was targeted against the integration of any foreigners in Slovakia. Individual members of the party often presented themselves with aggressive anti-immigration hate speech. Their resistance to immigration was framed by the effort to protect 'Christian Europe' (Mesežnikov, 2016, p. 135). Members and sympathisers of the party organised anti-immigration meetings mobilising citizens against migrants, especially Muslims. Kotleba can be considered a primary actor, since the benefits he gained from the 'refugee crisis' were the biggest of all the political actors. He moved his party into the parliament after the elections. His neo-Nazi and fascist rhetoric have become more legitimate and have moved into mainstream politics.

Secondary actors:

The secondary actors can be divided into political actors and civil actors. These are the actors taking clear positions in the conflict and those who can be relevant for the future.

Richard Sulík – leader of the strongest opposition party, Sloboda a solidarita SaS (Freedom and Solidarity), a member of the European Parliament. This political party defines itself as liberal; however, according to its priorities and presented views it is a more economically oriented libertarian party strongly emphasising economic freedoms in particular. Less space is given to liberal values (e.g. human rights and freedoms) and very little to solidarity (the second notion of the party's title). Sulík has built his image on anti-European, often populist, views, which he presents as 'pragmatic' (Kern, 2015). During the refugee crisis and the struggle for votes in the pre-election campaign he presented strong resistance to the acceptance of refugees and migrants, as well as to solidarity in the solution of the problem among EU states. '…It is necessary to close the borders, build exterritorial refugee camps outside the EU and decide there about asylum.' (Rusnák, 2015). His interest is to gain more popularity from people with views unfriendly to foreigners and the EU and gain the sympathy of the anti-government voters who feel threatened by global changes; he uses Eurosceptic moods to solidify his own popularity.

Other politicians of the SMER party – government members: Minister of the Interior Róbert Kaliňák, whose areas of competence within the conflict are interior policy, protection of the borders and combating terrorism. The main position was to create the impression that the government is taking measures to protect citizens from terrorists/refugees/Muslims. Among other SMER politicians, Ján Podmanický can be mentioned as openly promoting anti-Islam views, e.g. presenting the fact that London has a Muslim mayor as a great failure on the part of Europe (Mesežnikov, 2016, p. 125).

Other politicians of various political parties using the 'refugee crisis' for gaining public support: Boris Kollár is a businessman who established a political party, Sme Rodina (We Are Family) exclusively on the grounds of an anti-refugee and anti-Muslim campaign. He has expressed his views in xenophobic form, often in an aggressive and vulgar way, mostly on social networks.

Among the civic actors active in the conflict we can find the traditional NGOs as well as ad hoc initiatives and strong individuals as well as groups of volunteers.

- Liga za ľudské práva (Human Rights League) – Legal aid to refugees, official implementation agency of UNHCR. Their leader, Zuzana Števulová, has spoken up openly, criticising the migration policy and related institutions.

- CVEK (Centre for Research of Ethnicity and Culture) – A research and advocacy organisation in the area of the integration of migrants. They are presenting many positive examples from abroad.
- Človek v ohrození (People in Peril) – Extensive humanitarian aid provided along various points of the Balkan Road, public collection of goods and finances, mobilising Slovak volunteers.
- Výzva k ľudskosti (Appeal for Humanity) – Initiative of personalities of public life (led by Martin Dubéci) that started as a petition (signed by approximately 12,000 citizens) and continued by some advocacy activities towards the government.[17]
- MAGNA Deti v núdzi (Children in Need) – The only Slovak NGO working in Syria providing humanitarian help in bombed cities, public collection of finances.
- Thecivic initiative Kto pomôže (Who Will Help) organised by the Martin Hanus Association. It brings together volunteers willing to help in integration.
- Slovak volunteers, medical workers helping refugees abroad in refugee camps – Vladimír Krčméry (famous humanitarian worker) and his team, etc.
- Individual activists organising public collections for humanitarian purposes – Kaja Bernátová, Marek Kapusta.

On the other side of the conflict stand those people and organisations protesting against refugees, especially those who were supposed to have refugees housed directly in their villages. The people of Gabčíkovo together with their local government representatives protested against the refugee shelter. People from villages around Nitra where Christian Syrians were supposed to be placed explained to the media their worries about their security and their way of life (Kern, 2015).

The media can be considered as active actors in this conflict, since most of it was manifested through public discourse, which was directly influenced by the picture created by the media. The daily newspaper *Denník N* is actively promoting a picture of the immigration topic that is different from the mainstream. It brings reports from Slovak volunteers providing assistance to refugees (Becková, 2015), as well as many eyewitness reports from the Balkan Road (Vasilko, 2016), or testimonies from people who have had positive experience with immigrants (Sudor, 2015). On the other side of the opinion spectrum one can mention the internet portal Hlavné správy. Their mixture of selected agency reports and authors' texts supports the attitude of fear of Muslims and migrants (Gdovin, 2016). The portal is one of the conspiracy websites presenting themselves as 'alternative'.

Tertiary actors:

There are very few actors visible who can fulfil the role of peacemakers in this conflict. Most likely they are the European Commission and some other EU institutions. Then, the governments of influential European states can be mentioned (though of the V4 countries the only possible peace actor could be the Czech Republic), Germany (especially Chancellor Angela Merkel), Austria as a neighbouring country successfully integrating refugees, Ireland as a country similar to Slovakia with a positive policy towards refugees (at the same time accepting a high number of economic migrants from Slovakia). Pope Francis could play a peace role as well, and not only to those who are members of the Catholic Church.

Relations among actors in the conflict

Róbert Fico is in open political rivalry with Andrej Kiska on which of them is the more widely supported political leader in Slovakia. Each of them represents a different vision of Slovakia and of citizenship. Their relations are proper, but extremely competitive. Relations within the SMER party are rather vertical. Nobody would question the opinions of Fico, even Lajčák, who was aware of problems concerning his aspirations to become the UN Secretary General. Sulík is in opposition to all, even to some members of his own party. NGOs active in helping refugees are rather independent from each other, with some of them communicating; some were competing with one another a bit, but not very openly. The common petition Výzva k ľudskosti (Appeal for Humanity) was the platform where most of the civic leaders spoke in a common voice.

Sources and causes of the conflict

When looking for the sources of the conflict, one should again see the three value dilemmas in which it is manifested. First is the dilemma between a humanitarian approach towards refugees and the rejection of

17 For more see the website http://osf.sk/financny-prispevok-vyzvy-k-ludskosti/

assistance and migration as such. A not inconsiderable part of Slovak society is ready to represent the former position (a humanitarian approach); however, the mainstream takes the latter stance (the rejection of immigrants). The readiness to offer charity, responsibility for others, the readiness to share welfare – these attitudes are not common. They are often mocked as naïve and immature, or inspired by motivations that are other than humanitarian (i.e. foreign grants). Politicians, together with most of the media have been putting into contrast the (reportedly) well-off refugees and the poor Slovak citizens and communities that deserve help. 'It is understandable that the majority of citizens feel threatened by the fact that the state should guarantee to refugees a standard of living that exceeds the possibilities of the poorer strata of its own people.' (Ondruš, 2015). 'Humanity and offering help to those in need is an act worth appreciating. Even the less wealthy Slovak families would happily appreciate similar help, for example in the form of new housing for free.' (Ďuriš, 2015).

The refugee crisis disclosed the strong potential for anti-Europeanism among the Slovak population. Emotional reactions were provoked especially by the decision of the EU Council to redistribute refugees. The President and some of the elites appealed for solidarity within the EU, and the international responsibility of Slovakia. These arguments proved to be very minor (Chudžíková, 2016, p. 102). The most common was the traditional picture of Slovakia as a small country, not responsible for the wars in Africa (which is not true, given the facts of the Slovak arms trade) and thus not obliged to take any responsibility for 'the crisis' (Hlavné správy, 2016). Moreover, solidarity has turned into a commodity. The discussion turned on weighing the economic costs of rejecting refugees and risking a decrease of the structural funds from the EU for our cities (Chudžíková, 2016, p. 98).

The third arena of the public discourse was the question of the possible integration of refugees/immigrants. Those rejecting integration argued for the Christian character of Slovakia in contradiction to Muslim culture, though neither 'Christian character' nor 'Muslim culture' could be defined precisely. The cause of the Iraqi Christians showed that despite the fact that government declared that only Christians could be integrated, the locals resolutely rejected them and one-half of them left Slovakia and returned to Iraq. With the passage of time, Islamophobia is becoming a more and more legitimate attitude. Conspiracy media are the spreading fear of an 'invasion of Muslims' and 'the changing genetic code of Europe' (Pokorný, 2016). Multiculturalism is presented as a 'failed project' by both mainstream and extreme politicians. Some authors reject opinions that Slovakia has a problem with xenophobia, mentioning the popularity of one tabloid celebrity (coming from Mali), kebab, Roma artists and foreign sportsmen (Ondruš, 2015).

Dynamics of the conflict

The conflict escalation started in late August with the tragic deaths of 71 refugees on the Slovak border. The controversial public discussion mobilised Slovak society. Currently (spring 2017) the conflict has reached its peak; this occurred in early 2016, before the elections. The primary actors are trying to 'rearm' with new arguments, shifting more to attacking Islam and Muslims in general. The Muslim community that lives in Slovakia is very small and its coexistence with the majority is peaceful. What could bring the conflict back to escalation is any kind of terrorist attack (or criminal act committed by a Muslim) in Slovakia or in Europe.

Background of the conflict

The conflict is influenced by the dynamics of political debate within the EU. It fits within the broader conflict on European values, of which solidarity has recently been questioned by many political actors. The dynamics of the political discussion around the refugee crisis will obviously have an impact on this conflict within Slovakia.

The phenomenon of 'securitisation' of the refugee problem was also very visible in Slovakia when the politicians were declaring their resolve 'to protect our citizens'. There was a tendency to move the solution of the refugee problem outside Slovakia, or even better, outside Europe. This rhetoric corresponded to the traditional position of the Slovaks (similar to some other Central European nations) to see themselves as an object rather than a subject of history. Arguments of the type that migrants should be accepted only by those who are responsible for the conflict in Syria, under the assumption that it does not concern us, were far from rare. At the same time the government was taking symbolic measures to show their readiness to contribute to the security of the EU, e.g. by sending several dozen police officers or military forces to the borders (Slovenia, Hungary). Meanwhile, the number of Slovak volunteers actively helping in humanitarian aid on the EU

borders or willing to help in integration in their own communities is assessed at several thousand (according to NGO sources)[18].

Possible future scenarios

Since there is no real policy subject of the conflict, it is difficult to search for peace on the practical level. The atmosphere of anxiety in society cannot be eliminated easily. There is no visible political power (except the President, who is quite lonely in this position) representing a rational and peaceful approach. The most probable scenario is that there will be some incidents in other EU countries (terrorist attacks) and these will be used as arguments for strengthening security measures limiting the freedoms of citizens. Intensifying the xenophobic rhetoric of the political class will bring to the political arena more and more extremist political powers that will find better legitimacy than the traditional democratic parties. The alternative (although less probable) scenario is that an alternative power emerging from civil society will appear on the political scene. It will build its legitimacy on values other than fear and xenophobia.

2. Rise of the popularity of far-right extremism and ultra-nationalism

This value conflict concerns the basic principles of governing the state: whether Slovak society should follow democratic and liberal political standards, or whether there should be authoritarian rule with different rights and obligations for various groups of citizens.

Short summary of the conflict

Analysing far-right extremism and ultra-nationalism from the perspective of social value-based conflicts brings to light several value clashes within Slovak society (e.g. democracy vs. authoritarianism, multiculturalism vs. ethnic nationalism, cultural and political orientation of West vs. East, the paradigm of interpretation of national history, etc.). In a certain perspective, far-right extremism represents a cross-cutting issue that can be identified in all value conflicts in Slovakia. In spite of this, the rise of far-right extremism as a relevant political power should be analysed as a separate value conflict, since unlike in other European countries (e.g. France or Germany), **far-right extremist political forces work openly for the elimination of the present form of liberal democratic constitutional rule in the country.** Their goal is to replace parliamentarian democracy with some form of authoritarian rule with fascist elements segregating citizens according to ethnic and 'social usefulness' criteria in relation to their rights and duties. That is why this value conflict concerns the manner in which society should be governed and organised.

Though far-right extremism and ultra-nationalism are nothing new in Slovak society, the fact that Marián Kotleba, one of the key actors became governor of the Banská Bystrica Region in 2013, and that his far-right extremist party Ľudová strana naše Slovensko (Kotleba – ĽSNS) entered the parliament after elections in 2016, accounts not only for the increase of these forces, but also for giving political and public legitimacy to these openly fascist tendencies.

In this study we will follow the definition of Mesežnikov and Gyárfášová (2016, p. 11) who consider **extremists** to be such groupings that organise their activities outside the legal framework of the democratic political system, or through their programme they directly challenge the democratic political system and strive for the elimination of the liberal democratic regime existing since 1989. Furthermore, their methods of work contain violence of all types (including brutal street fighting and violent crime). Representatives of the **ultra-nationalist** stream (e.g. Slovenské hnutie obrody) also use radical rhetoric, verbally attacking ideologies they consider unacceptable. Unlike the extremists, they neither call for violent action nor commit violent attacks themselves. However, they often host extremists at their events and work in cooperation with them.

It is worth mentioning that both streams do not hesitate to use (and misuse) democratic tools to reach their goals. They register legal civic associations and political parties, they refer to the freedom of speech and assembly (though interpreted very freely) and the right of citizens to vote.

18 Only the initiative Kto pomôže (Who Will Help) at www.ktopomoze.sk has mobilised more than 2,000 individuals/families/communties who wanted to help in the integration of refugees. The problem was actually that there were not enough refugees to provide voluntary job for all the willing volunteers. In addition, there were hundreds of volunteers helping Slovak and foreign NGOs on the Balkan Road to mitigate the humanitarian crisis there.

An integral element of Slovak extremist and ultra-nationalist ideologies is historical revisionism glorifying the period of the wartime Slovak Republic (1939—1945), which was a totalitarian state, a satellite of Hitler's Germany. Their state-forming ideas refer to its political and legislative framework.

According to some experts (e.g. Juraj Smatana), extracting far-right extremism and ultra-nationalism does not fully reflect the problem. There are groups, organisations and initiatives which are radical left with inclinations towards communism (Charta 2015) and pro-Russian paramilitary groups that declare themselves to be anti-fascist (Slovenskí branci). They share anti-system views and often cooperate on actions aimed at the destruction of democratic institutions. Some of them have been proven to be financed by the Russian government.

Timeline

The conflict has roots deep in the history of Slovakia in the 20th century. The communist regime of 1948—1989 did not allow open discussion on the history of WWII. On the contrary, a false interpretation of history was used to legitimise the communist regime. After 1989, with freedom of speech and open public debate the ultra-nationalistic forces rose and the Slovak political scene was shaped by ethnic hatred and nationalism. This led to the division of Czechoslovakia and the domination of the Slovak political arena by populist anti-democratic parties (1992–1998), which caused international isolation and the economic stagnation of the country. At the beginning of the new millennium people were satisfied with membership in the EU and the majority of the population experienced improvement of the economy, so it seemed that ultra-nationalism was on the decline. However, for reasons mentioned below in this analysis, a new generation of far-right extremists started to organise. In 2004, a prominent ultra-nationalist political actor was established as a civic association – Slovenské hnutie obrody (SHO). In 2005, a far-right extremist civic association, Slovenská pospolitosť (SP) was registered as a political party led by Marián Kotleba. The party was abolished by the Supreme Court in 2006 for its unconstitutional character. The civic association SP continues to exist. In 2009, Marián Kotleba left SP and established his own political party (Kotleba – ĽSNS), bypassing the process of registration with a juridical trick – changing the name of an existing political party (Mesežnikov – Gyárfášová, 2016). Since that time, they have organised a series of anti-Roma protests and marches, usually symbolically related to anniversaries of the first (Nazi) Slovak state and its president, Jozef Tiso. More recently there have been other topics used such as anti-Islam, anti-refugee, anti-EU, anti-NATO or anti-LGBT. Those marches have usually failed to avoid physical violence and direct contact with the police. In 2013 Marián Kotleba won the election for governor of the Banská Bystrica Region. This timeline covers the period of autumn 2015 until the end of 2016 and it reflects events important in the conflict development:

- October 2015 – A case arises in which a paramilitary extremist organisation, Slovenskí branci enters elementary schools and provides 'courses in survival and military training'. These courses are connected to lectures about 'patriotism'. The Ministry of Education conducts monitoring at the schools and issues instructions to the school directors that 'they should not accept offers for gun use shows from various unofficial groupings or so-called history lectures with content that is not based in facts, but which aims at promoting specific nationalist or racist flavoured ideology.' (Balážová, 2015).
- February 2016 – A rally of about 200 people against the Islamisation of Europe takes place in Bratislava. The protest is organised by a movement called Odvaha – Veľká národná a proruská koalícia ('Courage – a Great National and Pro-Russian Coalition') that wanted to run in the March elections.
- Winter 2016 – Pre-election surveys do not show that Kotleba – ĽSNS will have a chance of gaining seats in the Slovak Parliament.
- March 2016 – Kotleba – ĽSNS enters the Slovak Parliament, gaining 8 % of the votes. With its rather isolated position in the current parliament it has almost no coalition potential. The election result is a shock for the political elite and most of the public.
- March 2016 – Anti-fascist rally in Bratislava (1,000 people) as a reaction to the election of Kotleba – ĽSNS to the parliament. The organisers appeal to the Prosecutor General to submit a request to the Supreme Court to abolish the party.
- March 2016 – President Andrej Kiska does not invite Marián Kotleba to the post-election meeting of leaders of the parliamentarian parties. The reasoning is that 'the President will not meet with extremists.' (Dugovič, 2016).
- March 2016 – Governor Marián Kotleba personally stops a theatrical play in the middle of the performance. The reason is that he did not like the expressive language. In August 2015 he abolishes the Festival of Dance theatre, because he does not like the style of dance they perform.

- March 2016 – Joint declaration of the Slovak Catholic Church and the Jewish Community on the anniversary of the establishment of the Slovak Republic of 1939—1945. It contains a clear condemnation of the crimes of the war state, racism and anti-Semitism, but also of the new extremist powers that 'want to cloak themselves in God and faith.' (Mikušovič, 2016).
- April 2016 – Kotleba – ĽSNS initiates volunteer guerrilla guards on public trains 'guaranteeing the security of proper citizens". The activity is provoked by a case of violent attack by a youngster in a train. After an emotional public discussion revolving around the argument that this is the first step towards creating illegal militias, Slovak Railways issue a transport regulation in August 2016 forbidding 'any activity in trains that does not relate to travel,' namely political propaganda.
- April 2016 – A Kotleba – ĽSNS party activist submits a complaint to the police against (in this person's opinion) the illegal promotion of Zionism in relation to an exhibition commemorating the victims of Auschwitz. That complain is rejected as unjustified.
- April 2016 – Marián Kotleba officially asks for a minute of silence in the parliament to commemorate Jozef Tiso, the president of the wartime Slovak Republic, who was sentenced to death for war crimes and crimes against humanity in 1947. Tiso is identified by all relevant historical sources as a person responsible for the Holocaust in Slovakia as well as for other crimes committed by the Nazi regime in this state.
- May 2016 – A law banning the founding of militias using public resources is adopted in the parliament. The same law allows the abolishing of a political party that would violate the rights of the citizens or call for racial, ethnic or religious hatred. It is the first proposal for a law submitted by the opposition that is supported by the majority of the parliament, including, surprisingly, the Kotleba – ĽSNS party. They announce before the elections that they plan to establish militias from public donations for parliamentarian parties. Their reasoning for supporting the law is that their party does respect the rights of the citizens.
- June 2016 – Two opposing rallies take place in Bratislava. An anti-Islam rally, a repeat from the previous summer (in 2015, attended by approximately 3,500 people) has about 500 participants. It is organised by Slovenská pospolitosť, without the support of the Kotleba – ĽSNS party. The anti-fascist demonstration has far more supporters. Politicians from various political parties take part.
- June 2016 – The Ministry of Justice prepares changes in criminal laws that should punish hate speech, extremism and racism more effectively.
- July 2016 – The Kotleba – ĽSNS party starts to collect signatures for the petition demanding referendums on Slovakia leaving the EU and NATO (Hlavné správy, 2016).
- July 2016 – The Open Society Foundation starts a campaign against hate speech in online space. The central topic of the campaign is the connection between hate speech and extremism.

Actors in the conflict

Primary actors:

Marián Kotleba and his party, Kotleba – ĽSNS: Marián Kotleba has been working systematically on his political career for several years, since he became active within Slovenská pospolitosť. From an openly racist and extremist violent position of a street fighting grouping they have shifted to more careful language and behaviour, so as not to give a reason to state bodies to dissolve the party. Kotleba, the most visible and popular representative of the party, is positioning himself as defender of 'decent ordinary citizens', taking to the fore the problems of the majority of the population, offering easy and simple solutions. Although in his programme document the main goal is a complete change of the political system of the country, abolishing equality of rights and equity, and a total change of the geopolitical orientation of Slovakia (towards Russia), in daily life he speaks about different priorities. The main topics in his agenda are:

- Anti-Roma ('anti-Gypsy') racism is based on arguments of social injustice (the Roma do not work and they misuse our social system) and security (the Roma are all criminals). Since last year, this racism has also been broadened to include Muslims and foreigners (refugees), where animist nationalism is added (they are invading us to change our genetic code).
- Combating corruption is the agenda used especially in relation to finances from the EU. Kotleba is defining himself as different from all the present political class, refusing Euro funds for his region, since they tend

to finance 'various useless so-called strategic documents.' He claims to 'not use the money of good Slovak taxpayers for Gypsy projects' or other nonsense (Hlavné správy, 2015). Though checks have shown that his office is one of the two with the most defects in economy and transparency, he maintains his position of one who is not stealing public money (as opposed to the other politicians).

- A good leader who is interested in problems of ordinary people. He and his party very often visit 'forgotten' regions with high unemployment and other social problems, organising help and talking to people.

There is one specific worry of Kotleba and his far-right extremists that is evident at the moment. They dramatically fear theatres. Banning performances, refusing to sign financial support for theatres, or direct verbal attacks on theatrical plays show that, for some reason, theatre is something that these people are really afraid of. One explanation is that the art of drama is so far removed from their mental world that they do not understand it. Another explanation is that theatre and drama affect the emotions of the people, they can personalise the suffering and other emotions of those whom extremists want to de-personalise (e.g. the drama *Natalka*, about a Roma girl suffering from a violent extremist attack) (Folentová, 2017). The performances of extremists also affect the emotions of the public, which that is why the theatre provides tough competition for them.

Other organisations of the far-right extremist and ultra-nationalistic scene: Slovenská pospolitosť is a civic association with political ambitions, surviving an attempt at legal dissolution in 2008. It continues to organise public events linked to anniversaries of the wartime Slovak Republic and its president, Jozef Tiso, as well as anti-Roma and anti-Islam protests. Currently they are in conflict with Kotleba – ĽSNS due to personal animosities between their leaders.

Slovenské hnutie obrody was a civic association until 2016 when they decided to re-register as a political party. Formally they adhere to democratic values in their documents, but their activities prove the opposite (Mesežnikov – Gyárfášová, 2016). Potentially, SHO will profile as competition against Kotleba – ĽSNS in the next election with an image as a more professional and intellectual alternative.

Slovenskí branci is a paramilitary group providing military training combined with pan-Slavic and pro-Russian ideological indoctrination. SB was established by persons who underwent military training in Russia and now keep close relations with Russian special forces. It has been in existence since 2012 and calls itself 'domobrana' ('militia'). Formally, it is an unregistered sport military club. SB denies that it is a 'right-wing extremist' organisation and claims to carry on the legacy of the antifascist Slovak National Uprising (SNP). It criticises NATO and the West. SB members assist in environmental or other public events in municipalities. SB is a tool of Russia's influence in Slovakia.

Civic actors in anti-fascist movements are mostly movements, associations of NGOs or free groupings that react to the fact that extremists are now in the parliament (Nie v našom meste – 'Not in Our Town', Nie exrémizmu – 'No to Extremism', Stop fašizmu – 'Stop Fascism', Bratislava bez náckov – 'Bratislava without Nazis'). The traditional Slovak NGOs known for combating extremism (Ľudia proti rasizmu – 'People Against Racism', Nadácia Milana Šimečku – 'Milan Šimečka Foundation') are less visible. The campaigns that were launched (www.protinenavisti.sk, http://www.alehejtneskryje.sk/) lacked grass roots support and public resonance. On the other hand, there are tiny 'private' campaigns; for example, the scandal around racist comments on the website of the private company Nebbia because of a black-skinned model presenting a new collection. In several blogs the company resolutely condemned racism and extremism with several thousand readers and followers (Pecko, 2017). Radovan Bránik is an expert on extremism, a blogger and civic activist actively combating extremist groups by revealing their illegal activities.

Political actors: Though the far-right extremist party Kotleba – ĽSNS is now a member of the parliament, only a few politicians are primary actors, whether it be in naming a conflict or in anchoring their statements in certain values. One group of opposition members of the parliament that stand actively against Kotleba's initiatives in the parliament can be mentioned (Viera Dubačová, Ondrej Dostál, Martin Poliačik, Ján Budaj and approximately 10 others). The president, Andrej Kiska (Dugovič, 2016) openly declares his resistance against extremism in his speeches. He also visits the regions experiencing difficulty and talks to citizens about their problems, trying to understand the support for Kotleba – ĽSNS. In his office he is striving to frame politics in values (*Denník N*, 2016).

It is possible to find other primary actors related to the state, such as the Commission for Combating Fascism recently formed in the parliament; Minister of Justice Lucia Žitňanská, who has already been mentioned as being responsible for legislative changes of the Criminal Code; and some individual politicians and state employers.

Catholic Church of Slovakia: The attitude of the Catholic Church towards extremist movements is rather controversial. The main problem is that it never officially condemned the regime of the wartime Slovak Republic (1939—1945), as well as the so-called Christian national socialism, which was its official state ideology, and President Tiso, who was a former Catholic priest. According to Kocúr (Kocúr – Mesežnikov, 2015), 'This revisionist interpretation of Tiso's politics and the state, a satellite of the Third Reich, causes confusion mainly in the interpretation of the extremist tendencies in current nationalistic movements which connect Christianity and national identity, seeing the inspiration for their current politics in the politics of the fascist state.' There have been cases of some individual priests openly supporting Kotleba and ultra-nationalistic organisations. On the other hand, top church officials refused to give an open negative statement on these acts, arguing that the Church does not interfere with the political views of its priests (Jetotak, 2016). It seems that there is no united position within the Slovak Catholic Church, despite the position of the Pope, who is clearly against extremism and racism. The Protestant churches also show little activity, with the exception of some individual priests.

Matica slovenská was originally a cultural and research institution established in the 19th century to support Slovak culture and language. Since 1989 its top representatives have been active in politics on the side of ultra-nationalistic parties. There have been people in the institution openly glorifying the wartime Slovak Republic and its president. There are signals that they provide a good cultural and ideological ground for far-right extremism.

Relations among actors in the conflict

After the Kotleba – ĽSNS party entered the parliament, there were signals that various political parties had tried to conclude agreements with it. Richard Sulík, the leader of the main opposition party admitted openly that he is ready to cooperate with Kotleba (Pravda, 2016). The strong position of the President probably helped to lessen their willingness to cooperate. The representative of the ruling SMER party, Ľubomír Blaha was trying to lessen the problem of extremism by labelling as extremists the opposition parties' leaders who organised public rallies against the corruption of the SMER leaders. 'They spread more hatred in the parliament than neo-Nazis, they want to hang people in the streets, they lynch, they yell, they form public tribunals from furious masses…' (Hlavné správy, 2016). Signs of extremism were officially condemned by the Committee for the Prevention of Extremism of the Ministry of the Interior. In summer 2016 it called for the establishment of a special working group involving representatives of government institutions, municipalities and civil society.

Sources and causes of the conflict

There are several deeper tendencies of the development of Slovak society to be pointed out. In spite of a certain period of enthusiasm and hope after the revolution in 1989, there is rather increasing public doubt regarding the efficiency of the execution of power. Many people think that the political elites are incapable of dealing with social problems or that they even avoid any attempts to approach them. What adds to this problem is the incapability of a significant part of the public to adapt to the new social conditions after 1989. In such an atmosphere, the mobilising power of ethnic nationalism and anti-Roma racism increases. Then there is also the ideological heritage of the (Nazi) Slovak state, while the formation of the historical consciousness of the young generation, for example in history classes or civic education at schools, fails to some extent. Many myths and controversial symbols are supported even by the government coalition, many times not excluding isolationism, anti-Americanism, EU-phobia or anti-West attitudes. Moreover, certain patterns of value orientations and types of political culture are deeply rooted in Slovak society, such as authoritarianism, paternalism or xenophobia (Mesežnikov – Gyárfášová, 2016). In Eurobarometer 2015 the citizens of Slovakia showed themselves to be among the least tolerant nations in Europe. Intolerance includes not only Muslims or homosexuals, but also senior citizens and the disabled (Mikušovič, 2015).

There are situational actual trends and flashpoints related to the described conflict, such as the recent migration crisis. Though in reality the refugees have almost totally bypassed Slovakia, the public and political discourse was very emotional and became one of the main issues in the 2016 elections. Social media have started to experience increasing power, where in addition to hateful and violent content various alternative historical narratives and conspiracy theories spread, as an ideological infiltration. Standard political parties seem to be more and more unable to approach voters. Kotleba – ĽSNS gained 23 % of the votes of first-time voters (exit poll of Markíza TV) and it became attractive to previous non-voters.

Moreover, the state institutions are still relatively insufficient in prevention and repression activities. For instance, many racist excesses are still being overlooked. One of the reasons is that many state officials and clerks share extremist views in private. On the other hand, a lack of practice and implementation rules for existing laws leads to unprofessional dealing with existing cases, and inappropriate penalties (too hard or too soft).

Background of the conflict

It is necessary to analyse the behavior of Marián Kotleba to understand that he is making good use of many political, economic and social factors that help to escalate the conflict. He and his party are no longer attractive solely to young men with a low intellectual capacity. His popularity is growing among the common people as well (Sudor, 2016). Regardless of his extremist views and plans, he has started to behave as mainstream politician addressing the core problems of ordinary citizens.

Alienation of people from mainstream politics: Kotleba visits small cities and villages, often the most problematic regions with high unemployment. He spends time with the people, talking to them, offering simple solutions (concerning most of which he has no authorisation). As a governor, in his region he can provide grants and donations to municipal projects. His critique of the system is well received among people who feel ignored by the system because of unemployment, lack of perspective and many accompanying social pathologies.

Corruption: Most of the population feel tired and angry due to the high-level major corruption scandals of people in power. Kotleba has been successful in creating his image as one who is managing public money well and who is not corrupt. For this, he uses his own party journal, the official journal of the region (published in the colours of this party), as well as the so-called 'alternative media'. Though official checks have proven nepotism and bad management, this is interpreted as slander. Besides, nepotism is not something negative in rural culture, since it is highly positive to help one's own family and more distant relatives.

Refugees: The topic was artificially brought forward by mainstream politicians in the 2016 election campaign. Despite the fact that almost no refugees lived in Slovakia, it became the top problem of Slovak citizens (see Chapter 1: Refugee crisis). In this context Kotleba was the most authentic figure in the anti-refugee and anti-Islam positions, which convinced many people to vote for him.

Security and safety: In the long-term perspective, Kotleba – ĽSNS is presenting the Roma as a security threat to 'good citizens'. The effort to organise militias and 'train them near Roma settlements' is perceived positively by many, not only by those who have experience with Roma criminality and the low law enforcement efficiency of the Slovak justice system.

Last but not least, the justice system is not efficient in punishing manifestations of extremism, even when they take the form of crime (including murder). There are many cases of unpunished 'open' cases where nobody has been convicted (e.g. the case of the murder of Daniel Tupý or case of the violent attack on Hedviga Malinová). Experts state that most extremist crime is 'invisible' also because many representatives of the police and justice system sympathise with these views (Mikušovič, 2016). The recent amendments to the law performed by the Minister of Justice are, therefore only part of the solution.

Dynamics of the conflict

Despite the fact that the Kotleba – ĽSNS party has no coalition potential in the parliament, far-right extremism and ultra-nationalism in Slovakia has a stronger voice than it has had since World War II, and now this voice is even politically legitimate to some extent. The quality and content of political debate has radicalised abruptly in the last months, even in the coalition and the rest of the opposition, which, together with international events such as Brexit or the victory of Donald Trump in the USA presidential elections creates a very fragile social atmosphere, where basic democratic principles are being questioned. In spite of many specific reactions from members of civil society, some of whom can be identified as peace actors, a unified, systematic, strategic society-wide reaction is still missing.

Possible future scenarios

An optimistic and rather utopian future scenario could contain this unified, systematic, strategic and society-wide action, which would integrate both state activities and activities by civil society, taking forms of prevention and de-radicalisation, hand in hand with laws, concepts and theories with practical application in areas ranging from education to justice. A more realistic scenario could contain both bottom-up and top-down

actions, rather chaotically organised, but creating a functional net of islands of positive deviation, thus providing a counterbalance to the far-right extremist and ultra-nationalist tendencies. Both scenarios would need a certain level of 'forgetting our differences' related to a necessary awareness – 'we can argue about that later, but this is about saving our democracy now' – mainly on the political level.

A more negative future scenario can take the form of further devaluation and radicalisation of political and public discourse, which could be related to a gradual withdrawal of standard political parties or a disappearing of the differences between standard and anti-system parties. In the current international situation where institutions are losing their legitimacy and global problems seem insoluble, a critical mass is prone to sacrifice its freedom in order to gain 'at least' some feeling of assurance and security. In the worst case, this could lead to restrictions of current democracy, if not to its total replacement by a different system or regime.

3. Roma minority

The value conflict on the situation of the Roma minority is positioned more on the axes of solidarity vs. individualism than on tolerance vs. intolerance towards minorities. Under the Roma vs. majority issue it is possible to find deeper value conflicts on the 'deserving and undeserving poor'.

Short summary of the conflict

The social conflict on how to deal with the social marginalisation and discrimination of the Roma is a value conflict but (unlike the refugee crisis in Slovakia) it has very practical consequences not only on the Roma minority, but on the whole of society. The conflict is shaped on one hand by the concrete experience of coexistence between the majority and the pathologies related to excluded Roma communities. On the other hand, the conflict is shaped by a majority that is in almost no contact with the Roma as there are parts of the country with a negligible percentage of Roma population.

In 2015–2016 the conflict on the Roma was influenced mainly by the parliamentary elections. Some political parties discussed the Roma issue within the pre-election campaign, though the refugee crisis was a much more widely discussed topic than the Roma issue. As described in previous chapters, the party that was well-known for its anti-Roma protests and rhetoric won 8 per cent of the votes and got into the parliament (Kotleba – ĽSNS). Compared with some years ago, the vocabulary of populist parties and groups has changed. Often they are attacking not Roma (or Gypsies)[19], but the 'non-adaptive citizens' (which is, in general, a euphemism for the Roma from slums). With the increased hatred in social media, it is possible to find more open verbal assaults on Roma (Gypsies).

What this conflict has in common with the conflict around the refugees is that Roma issues are most often discussed without the Roma people themselves. The minority are not politically organised and the Roma elites often do not want to speak for the whole Roma minority. Their political parties and NGOs are quite weak and fragmented (Koník, 2015). Last but not least, stigmatisation leads to anxiety and a lack of courage to speak out (Hebertová, 2016). There is not much effort on the part of the present government to deal with the real problems of the Roma minority and its relations with the majority (SITA, 2016).

All in all, the public discourse includes the following aspects:

a. Extreme poverty and social exclusion of the Roma communities: A frequently repeated populist opinion blames their laziness and inability to adapt to the rules accepted by the majority for their situation. Another extreme approach, performed especially by some CSOs, is to develop 'dependency on assistance' providing too much assistance that is not wanted and not needed.[20] The stereotypical opinion is that the Roma people are the 'undeserving' minority (Dinga, Ďurana and Chovanculiak, 2016).

b. Discrimination of the Roma who are integrated in the majority: Discrimination at work or in the education system; refusal to provide them services – hairdressing, spa, restaurants, hotels (Dugovič, 2016); mobbing by security services in shops and institutions (Gehrerová, 2016). A European survey conducted by FRA showed that discrimination against the Roma is a serious problem on the EU level (Vražda, 2016).

19 The Kotleba – ĽSNS party used the term 'Gypsy parasites' in their 2013 campaign. It provoked discussion and even court proceedings. In recent years they have been more careful with their expressions, at least formally.

20 This approach brings to mind defects often criticised in international development assistance: paternalism of the provider, a low quality of need assessment, insufficient involvement of the beneficiaries in designing assistance, etc.

c. Security and police incapacity: On one hand, increased criminality among the Roma population is likely to be true,[21] on the other hand the low effectivity of the law enforcement bodies to investigate and punish crimes causes a lack of trust of the citizens in law enforcement bodies. The Slovak Republic is often criticised by European human rights institutions for police brutality against the Roma (SITA, 2016b).

d. Overestimation of the crimes committed by Roma people: Double standards are used when a crime is committed by the Roma compared to the same or an even worse crime committed by a member of the majority. For example, poor Roma people stealing wood from forests for fuel are blamed for the terrible state of the forests, yet large private companies or state actors extract even more wood illegally, with greater economic gains than the Roma, who steal out of necessity.

The aspect that is the most visible concerning the Roma, but goes much further, is on who deserves social assistance and why. The public tend to believe that **social assistance should be granted only to those who contribute to the public budget**. However, this opinion disregards the fact that not only the Roma, but also disabled or handicapped people can never contribute enough to 'deserve' social assistance (Dinga, Ďurana and Chovanculiak, 2016). Instead of using need as a key, such an opinion emphasises only 'usefulness' to society. This opinion is actively nurtured by far-right extremists.

Timeline

- November 2015 – Reports in the media about the termination of criminal proceedings against policemen suspected of the brutal beating of men, women and children during an intervention in a slum near the village of Moldava nad Bodvou (2013). An internal investigation of the police does not find any signs of misconduct.
- March 2016 – A protest meeting in the village of Šarišské Michaľany is organised by the Kotleba – ĽSNS party with the participation of about 300 people. The reason is the 'too mild punishment' for Roma criminals who killed a young boy after a fight in a disco club. The highlights of the meeting are that 'the state should care more about the security and safety of its citizens' and that punishment 'cannot be a hotel'. A local Orthodox priest participates in the meeting.
- March 2016 – Rudolf Urbanovič becomes the nominee of the Slovak National Party for the State Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior. He is a person known for his anti-Roma and anti-Hungarian texts on the internet.
- April 2016 – A non-Roma, Ábel Ravasz, becomes the nominee for the post of Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities. He is a publicly unknown technocrat of Hungarian origin.
- May 2016 – An appeal is made to the Constitutional Court for the insufficient and not independent investigation conducted by the police's internal affairs division concerning the police intervention in Moldava nad Bodvou.
- September 2016 – The parliamentary opposition party of Boris Kollár (Sme Rodina) submits a proposal for 'the law on protection against non-adaptive persons'. This law would allow municipalities to displace persons defined as 'non-adaptive' (Hlavné správy, 2016).
- December 2016 – Prime Minister Robert Fico, during the annual meeting of his party, SMER, points out that 'the era of political correctness is over' and emphasises the 'need to create order in the Roma settlements.' Around 80 % of the population agree with Fico's statements, according to a poll and a similar percentage think that Fico is not discriminating against the Roma minority by making these statements (aktuality.sk, 2016)[22].

Actors in the conflict

Primary actors:

Marián Kotleba and his political party, Kotleba – ĽSNS. He starts his political career by making anti-Roma protests. His position is to present to the majority an easy solution to their problems. Using the Slovaks' traditional reserve towards people of a different ethnicity, he is successful in creating a scapegoat of the minority, which is politically weak and has few possibilities to defend itself in an effective way. His position is to present the Roma as 'non-adaptive', and consequently to emphasise the 'securitisation' of the issue. He

21 The official statistics do not reflect the ethnicity of the perpetrator.

22 Róbert Fico is using hard rhetoric towards the Roma when speaking in the domestic arena. This also helps the radicalisation of the vocabulary related to this conflict.

is building political legitimacy as 'protecting decent citizens', which is what official law enforcement bodies fail to do properly.

Róbert Kaliňák, the Minister of the Interior and one of the top leaders of the SMER party. He is active in this topic in a position supporting police officials who are suspected of the brutal treatment of the Roma. Kaliňák is known for interfering in police work in other cases of racially/ethnically based crimes as well. (The most famous case was Hedviga Malinová – a violent attack in 2006 that has not yet been resolved.) His interest is in maintaining his popularity among the police and other services officers of his ministry. As one of the SMER leaders, he wants to present the government as efficient in combating crime. The case of a 'secret list of villages with strengthened police presence'[23] rationalised by the presence of Roma settlements causes controversial discussion. The office of the plenipotentiary is subordinate to his ministry (as well as the Euro funding related to the Roma minority) so he wants to have a person there who is loyal to the government, not escalating conflicts and not discussing the Roma very often.

Miroslav Pollák, the former Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities. He is a person from a poor Roma family, known for trying to solve problems with the ownership of the land on which the Roma slums are located. While in office he strove to bring attention to the problems of Roma slums. He was criticised by Roma intellectuals for solving problems from the position of the majority. He became famous for his 'Roma Reform', which included, for example the obligation to work for receiving 'aid in material need' (dávka v hmotnej núdzi – the social benefit for the poorest citizens).

Ábel Ravasz, the current Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities. His start in office was not easy, since he was criticised for being not a representative of the Roma minority. He is active in the field of education, pointing out the discrimination and disadvantages Roma children experience. His problem-oriented approach is very useful in the public discourse.

Boris Kollár and his political party, Sme Rodina. This is a populist party creating their political legitimacy on the Roma issue. They present openly racist views. Their proposals for laws or propositions for solutions are usually not based on any data or facts. A prominent party member is Milan Krajniak, former advisor to the Christian-Democratic Minister of the Interior (2010—2012) on the topic of 'Roma criminality'.

Secondary actors:

- Citizens of the villages/cities where the coexistence of the Roma minority and the majority is difficult (criminality, land ownership issues, the spread of infectious diseases, etc.). These people are frustrated by the incapability of the government to solve their problems, so they often tend to incline towards populist or extremist solutions.
- Victims of crimes committed by people of Roma origin, their neighbours and families. They feel hopelessness and anger because the state cannot protect them.
- Municipalities with Roma slums in their neighbourhood. There is a tendency to push the Roma from their slums, stating the illegality of their dwellings with, however, no idea of alternative housing for them.
- Schools with a significant number of Roma pupils from the slums. Roma pupils are a problem for many non-Roma parents, which is why schools tend to find ways to get rid of the Roma through segregated classrooms or schools, excessive diagnosis of mental disorders, recommendations for special schools etc.
- Government bodies: education, social affairs, the interior (plus all government workers whose job description includes dealing with this problem). Their position is that they implement all EU requirements towards minorities. Their interest is to leave the Roma issue in silence, since it would require financial and human resources, as well as consistent long-term policies that no government is ready to handle. Giving resources to the Roma is very unpopular among Slovak voters. Individuals who are trying to do their jobs are often frustrated and demotivated.
- NGOs working with the Roma in slums having successful projects and results: Milan Šimečka Foundation, Open Society Foundation, People in Need Slovakia, ETP Slovakia, CVEK, SGI, EduRoma, Teach for Slovakia, In Minorita, Združenie mladých Rómov, and many small initiatives and projects.

Tertiary actors, peace actors:

- Stano Daniel – Roma intellectual and politician, currently working abroad.

23 See https://domov.sme.sk/c/20429071/kalinak-ukazal-obce-v-ktorych-chce-bojovat-s-romskou-kriminalitou.html#axzz4jW9fGc55

- Vlado Rafael – Director of the film *Tvoj čas* (*Your Time*) about Roma political leaders; leader of EduRoma.
- Rytmus – A celebrity, popular hip-hop star claiming to be of Roma origin, a major authority for youth in general.
- Sellasie – A famous Youtuber who promotes social topics to children and youth, also touches upon Roma problems (Selasie, 2016).
- Heads of municipalities with positive experience with the Roma – majority coexistence (e.g. Spišský Hrhov, Raslavice).
- INESS – A private economic think tank publishing a study about the real costs of poor Roma families on the rest of society (Dinga, et al., 2016).
- Positive examples of Roma projects for the majority, e.g. the project United Colors (community laundry and ironing point) that is appreciated by social innovation organisations (Vražda, 2016).

Relations among actors in the conflict

After the change in the person holding the position of the Plenipotentiary there has been no visible person of Roma origin in the political or social arena who will stand for the Roma in public discussion. Ábel Ravasz has shown that he is ready to stand for the Roma, and his party Most-Híd has declared this intent as well. However, Roma voices are still quite exceptional. All primary actors in this case are in political rivalry, using the Roma issue to show their readiness to 'protect citizens', with the exception of the Most-Híd party and Ábel Ravasz. There are no clear coalitions or interest groups among the secondary actors. Even NGOs working on positive solutions are often more in competition than in coalition and they do not speak with one voice. The Roma elite are fragmented and have very limited influence.

Sources and causes of the conflict

The deep causes of the conflict are historical. A series of unlucky policies towards the minority starting in the communist era resulted in a loss of the ethnic identity and the development of dependence on social aid in many Roma communities. Since the fall of communism there has been no consistent long-term strategy implemented to address the social inclusion of the Roma minority. Social problems have grown and no government has been courageous enough to start comprehensive reform. The current governing elite are well known for their conservative approach (performing no reforms at all, just running the state the old way), so nobody expects any change from them. In addition, a poorly functioning law enforcement system (police, prosecution, courts) results in anxiety and feelings of insecurity in relation to the Roma. It is true that a large part of the minority have fallen into risk of criminality because of poor or no education, no prospects for the future and no chances to work. Total marginalisation has left them in extreme poverty and with an emptiness of values.

Similarly to the refugee conflict, we can observe a process of 'securitisation' of the Roma problems on the part of the primary political actors. That means reducing the solutions for punishment, expelling them from municipalities, and other restrictive measures. It is also very easy to generalise in public discussion and to speak about the Roma in general with all possible stereotypes. This leads to discrimination against those Roma who are integrated as well as those who are marginalised. Furthermore, this approach of the majority does not give good motivation for the slum Roma to change their style of life, since they will never became full-value citizens.

Dynamics of the conflict

The conflict is in a silent phase at the moment. Some analysts expect that, because there will be no more refugees in the upcoming years and the problem of the legitimacy of the political elite will persist, it is highly probable that the conflict around the Roma will escalate in political debates in the near future to cover other deep problems in the society as demonstrated by the Prime Minister's talk in December 2016. 'Securitisation' of the problem will continue. The only possible peace actors can be found at the local level, in municipalities. Positive examples of Roma inclusion can be promoted and spread to other localities. It is also necessary to promote positive models for youth and Roma political and intellectual leaders. New potential can be sought in circles of artists, Youtubers, or other celebrities. It is noticeable that in middle-class discussions, anti-Roma racism is not 'in' anymore.

Background of the conflict

The conflict should be viewed within the framework of economic problems. More and more lower-middle-class Slovak citizens are forced to deal with socio-economic marginalisation. The 'social scissors' are opening wider and more formerly middle-class people are falling into poverty. They have to travel abroad for work, deal with debt, executions etc. The unemployment of youth with a university degree is rising. In this context it is very easy to direct their anger towards a group of the most powerless and less sympathetic. The political context is that the traditional political class is losing its legitimacy. Politicians are focusing public debate on topics that they think they can deal with easily. One of these is 'protection against non-adaptable persons.'

Possible future scenarios

The most probable trend is that the conflict will escalate more in the coming years. In particular, any criminal incident caused by persons of Roma origin can be used as an excuse for unrest or physical violence. The law enforcement bodies cannot fulfil the role of impartial and fair actors symbolising justice. On the contrary, they may rather become a party to the conflict. In this case, open violence against the Roma can evoke sympathy on the part of non-Roma citizens and provoke discussions about the reasons for and real solutions to the problem.

A better scenario would be that there will be other, 'bigger' problems in the ongoing public discussions and that silence will be maintained on the Roma issue. NGOs and municipalities can work on concrete solutions in this atmosphere, despite political emotions, and help more Roma youth to stand for themselves as 'fully equipped citizens' who cannot be ignored by the political elite.

There have been attempts by some NGOs to conduct community mediation in Roma settlements. These mediators, however, usually worked only as long as financing from external sources lasted, which was not very long (project-based activity). In January 2017 the Plenipotentiary appointed a community mediator responsible for implementing community mediation. As at spring 2017 not much was published about its progress.

4. LGBT rights vs. the 'traditional family'

Name of the conflict

The value conflict is framed as a contradiction between the rights of members of the LGBT community and values of the 'traditional family' or 'natural family'. The latter is defined (though not very specifically) mostly as heterosexual parents and children.

Short summary of the conflict

The described value conflict is characterised by high levels of emotions, manipulation, and hate speech towards LGBT people. The primary actor is the Slovak Catholic Church, accompanied by some other Christian churches.[24] The Church provides the ideological background of anti-LGBT organisations, politicians, individuals. Despite the official position of Pope Francis (Lang, 2016), most of the Slovak clergy represent antagonistic, 'old-fashioned', and sometimes outright hateful positions towards the rights of LGBT people; the LGBT community and defenders of their rights are rather diverse and fragmented. The level of emotions and animosity is considerably higher on the side of anti-LGBT movement, which is due also to some overlapping of this group with ultra-nationalist and extremist political forces. The anti-LGBT movement also includes political parties that claim to be mainstream (Slovak National Party – SNS, Christian-Democratic Movement – KDH). In their rhetoric, they intentionally mix the rights of LGBT with sexual deviations and illnesses (paedophilia, sexual mania etc.). People defending the rights of the LGBT community are labelled 'gender ideologists' or followers of a 'culture of death'. Anti-LGBT efforts are accompanied by struggles against abortion and defence of life starting at the moment of conception.

The characteristic feature of the conflict is that the rights of LGBT people (registered partnerships, legal rights of same-sex couples, criminalisation of hate speech against LGBT people etc.) are put into contrast with family values. Anti-LGBT groups use family symbols and claim that they defend the family. However, issues like the prevention of divorce, domestic violence, the rights of the child, or the protection of low-income families

24 The Catholic Church backed the 2015 Referendum on the Family campaign not only ideologically, but also logistically and financially.

are not put on the public policy agenda by these groups.[25] The rights of LGBT people were, to a certain extent, successfully presented as a threat to family values, the reason for the low birth rate and the reason for the low percentage of marriages. In this context the EU is seen as the main promoter of LGBT rights, 'imposing' them on Slovakia. The positive experience of many EU states with legal rights for LGBT people is mostly ignored.

The social acceptance of gays, lesbians or bisexuals in political positions, at the workplace and in the closest circles in Slovakia is one of the lowest in the EU-28 (48 % of Slovaks would feel uncomfortable if a gay, lesbian or bisexual were in the highest political position, vs. 21 % in the EU-28; 34 % of Slovaks would feel uncomfortable if this happened at their workplace, vs. 13 % in the EU-28; 71 % of Slovaks would feel uncomfortable if one of their adult sons or daughters were in a relationship with someone of the same sex, vs. 32 % in the EU-28).

Slovakia belongs among the countries with the lowest portion of people believing that gay, lesbian and bisexual people should have the same rights as heterosexual people (36 % in Slovakia vs. 71 % in the EU-28); that there is nothing wrong in a sexual relationship between two persons of the same sex (33 % vs. 67 %) and that same-sex marriages should be allowed throughout Europe (24 % vs. 61 %) (Discrimination… 2015).

The Referendum on the Family in early 2015 contained three questions related to the heterosexual definition of marriage, restricting adoptions for homosexual couples and voluntary sex education at schools. Given the fact that there was no political intention to promote laws in this area, analysts saw the referendum campaign as an ungrounded attack on LGBT people (Gális, 2015). Due to low participation (21 %), the referendum was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, for a few months the issues of the LGBT community, the protection of the 'traditional family', adoptions by same-sex couples and sex education became a more considerable topic of public discourse than ever before. The public discussion, before and after the referendum, was full of stereotypes, myths and ungrounded arguments. If Slovakia wanted to increase its sensitivity and openness towards the LGBT minority as many other European countries do, the referendum has made these steps rather unrealistic over the next few years.

After the referendum, the conflict rather passed into the background. In October 2015 an Action Plan for LGBT people for 2016–2019 was presented by the government. The material was criticised for not really intervening into the current situation and not changing anything. In summer 2016 two Pride parades took place in Bratislava and Košice, accompanied by counter-initiatives either organised by Christian initiatives or the far-right extremist party Kotleba – ĽSNS. Support of the Pride parade in Budapest by the Slovak Embassy caused conflicts among politicians and a negative attitude on the part of Slovak Christians.

The conflict may evolve in its anti-European version, since 'alternative' portals nurture myths about LGBT people in a general picture of a 'morally spoiled Europe', which fits with the official Russian propaganda as well. 'Slovakia and Western transatlantic structures finance "Slovak" NGOs promoting free sex, general sexual freedom, lechery, sodomy and feminism, as well as a relationship of whomever with whomever stamped on paper.' (Režo, 2016).

Timeline

- 2014 – A Strategy of Human Rights Protection in the Slovak Republic is adopted. This document is rejected by Christian organisations, since they felt their comments had not been implemented. None of the parties (human rights activists, Christian actors) feels satisfied either with the process or with the result.
- February 2015 – The Referendum on the Family (that is, on the definition of marriage, adoptions of children by same-sex couples and sex education) finishes unsuccessfully due to low participation. The referendum was initiated by the Alliance for the Family, supported by the Catholic Church of Slovakia.
- September 2015 – National March for Life. Several months after the invalid referendum took place, Christian organisations supported by the Conference of Bishops of Slovakia organise this event in Bratislava. According to their records, 85,000 people took part. The event is mostly oriented on 'family values', defined in its declaration as the union between a man and a woman and the protection of life from the moment of conception until natural death, as well as the protection of young mothers in need.
- October 2015 – The governmental Action Plan for LGBT People for 2016—2019 is presented by the Ministry of Justice. The LGBT community criticise it for 'lack of action' (Balážová, 2015), other ministries and government members present their objections (Hlavné správy, 2015).

25 Two exceptions are the Forum of Christian Institutions (FKI) organizing a Family Day in Bratislava, Banská Bystrica and other cities of Slovakia, and the Yes to Life organization, which deals with violence against women. There are quite a lot of charitable or community-based activities dealing with these problems, however the attempts to influence policies or legislation are far less visible than those directed against LGBT, as well as against abortion.

- May 2016 – The Kotleba – ĽSNS party and 'alternative media' (Garman, 2016) interpret a school carnival as an LGBT event bent upon brainwashing children (Vražda & Šnídl, 2016), the case provokes verbal attacks on the school's director.
- July 2016 – The Bratislava Pride parade counts approximately 2,000 participants, while the initiative Hrdí na rodinu (Proud of the Family) gathers about 200 in a countermarch. The party Kotleba – ĽSNS organises an unregistered 'Protest against the March of the Sickos in Bratislava', officially named as a petition action against NATO. Only a few activists participate, the police block them from disturbing the Pride event (Dugovič, 2016).
- June 2016 – KBS (the Conference of Slovak Bishops) makes a statement in relation to the Slovak presidency of the EU Council, considering the demographic crisis and crisis of families, relating these issues to extremism and xenophobia.
- July 2016 – The Slovak Embassy symbolically supports the Pride parade in Budapest with a rainbow flag, which causes political turbulence within the government (Kern, 2016). Some blame Minister Lajčák for this act, as they see it as being a part of his campaign to become the UN Secretary General.
- July 2016 – The Alliance for the Family is fined for illegal interference into the election campaign by promoting candidates who have signed their memorandum.
- August 2016 – Marián Kotleba is awarded the anti-prize of Homophobe of the Year.
- August 2016 – A Protestant priest loses his job because of his public support of LGBT rights. His family lose their source of income. Civic organisations organise a public collection of several thousand euros, which help him to overcome a difficult time (Gehrerová, 2016).
- August 2016 – Pride parade in Košice.
- August 2016 – Anton Chromík, the former face of the referendum, announces another petition to change EU legislation to allow exclusively heterosexual marriages.

Actors in the conflict

Primary actors:

The Conference of Slovak Bishops (KBS) is the highest representative of the Catholic Church in Slovakia. It frames in a negative way not only the rights of LGBT people, but also terms like 'gender equality', 'human rights', 'rights of the child' etc. In 2012, in a declaration related to (at that time) the bill on registered partnerships it stated: 'The homosexual feelings of some persons cannot lead to a permanent community of life with legal protection, because homosexual partnerships cannot be considered on the same level as a natural marriage bond between a man and a woman. Homosexual acts are by their character… in full contradiction to the sacredness of the sexuality of a man and a woman in marriage.' (Chautur, 2012). The KBS call the principles of gender equality a 'gender ideology', and accuse its promoters of influencing children to engage in 'alternative forms of partnerships' and of promoting the individual choice of sex (Konferencia biskupov Slovenska, 2013). Another frequently used term is 'culture of death', which is linked to human rights and gender equality, presented as a cause of the splitting of families and a 'threat to life'. (biskupi Slovenska, 2013). The KBS officially support the referendum. The KBS are usually not very visible in the conflict, using proxies like Alliance for the Family or certain other organisations and individuals. Most of the Slovak clergy are not prepared for the new challenges of the 21st century and lag far behind the contemporary views presented by Pope Francis.

It is very difficult to identify a primary actor on the other side of this conflict. The LGBT community are fragmented. One example of a common voice is Životné partnerstvo (Life Partnership); another is the initiative Inakosť (Otherness), which are platforms of CSOs working on creating and maintaining a positive attitude of the public towards the rights of LGBT people. They have proposed registered partnership as a legal institute available to couples of both a homosexual and a heterosexual nature.

CSOs representing the LGBT community, visible during the referendum and after: Iniciatíva Inakosť (Martin Macko), TransFúzia (Romina Kollárik), Pride Košice (Róbert Furiel), Q-centrum (Romana Schlessinger). During the referendum campaign they argued about human rights and equality in relation to the LGBT minority, which was not a very effective argument in the Slovak context, where human rights have an ambivalent or often a negative connotation. Their aim was to discourage people from taking part in the referendum so that it would be invalid. Possibly the low turnout in the referendum was more the result of a campaign of anti-LGBT groups that

many people found too aggressive. The failed referendum is hard to assign as a success to the LGBT community (Gális, 2015). On the other hand, the Pride parades they organise are becoming more popular, probably thanks to their peaceful and positive character.

Secondary actors:

Alliance for the Family (Anton Chromík) – The initiator of the referendum with the support of the KBS. His organisation was fined for breaking the rules of the 2016 election campaign, since he actively promoted certain candidates who signed his Declaration for the Family. After the unsuccessful referendum he started a new petition campaign as a part of a European initiative to change the laws on marriage and registered partnerships. This initiative was organised under a new organisation, Otca, mamu deťom (Father and Mother to Children). He is working to mobilise people against the rights of sexual minorities. There is a possibility that he is preparing himself for a political career.

Other Christian CSOs creating and supporting the Alliance for the Family: Fórum kresťanských inštitúcií, Fórum života, Slovenská spoločnosť pre rodinu, Godzone etc. They supported the referendum and actively acted against the legalisation of registered partnerships. Their communication was less confrontational than that of Chromík.

Human rights NGOs active in protecting the rights of sexual minorities: Amnesty International Slovensko, Helsinský výbor pre ľudské práva na Slovensku, O.Z. Občan, demokracia, zodpovednosť (Janka Debrecéniová), CVEK. These organisations and their representatives often use confrontational language when defending rights, which does not help in dialogue or in creating change.

Official representatives of the state:

- Jana Dubovcová – Ombudsman attending the Pride parades, supporting the rights of LGBT people, promoting an open and tolerant society[26].
- Lucia Žitňanská – Minister of Justice, Head of the Committee for Rights of LGBT people, actively supports legal arrangements for the LGBT minority. 'People should have legal space to arrange their lives regardless of their sexual orientation.' (Dugovič, 2016).
- Tomáš Borec – The predecessor of Žitňanská, the representative of the SMER party most open towards LGBT people.
- Miroslav Lajčák – Minister of Foreign Affairs (SMER party) who started to support the LGBT minority slightly at the time of his campaign for UN Secretary General. When the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Budapest supported the Pride parade there with a rainbow flag, he faced criticism from his own party and the Slovak National Party (Andrej Danko) (Hlavné správy, 2016).

Political parties:

- The Slovak National Party (Andrej Danko) as a coalition nationalistic party shows strong antagonism against LGBT people. Its representatives have made public promises to block the rights of LGBT people in the parliament (SITA, 2016).
- Kotleba – ĽSNS represents far-right extremist positions, it is hateful towards sexual minorities, actively provoking public discussion by manipulated or incomplete news brought by 'alternative portals'.
- The Christian-Democratic Movement – KDH position themselves as a modern European Christian conservative party, however, they follow the line of argumentation of the KBS and the Alliance for the Family.
- Sme Rodina (We Are Family) – The party of Boris Kollár attacks LGBT people in a vulgar and aggressive way.

Individual politicians:

- Politicians decisively supporting anti-LGBT campaigns (referenda, pre-election campaigns etc.): Andrej Danko (SNS), Jozef Mikloško (KDH), Erika Jurinová (OĽaNO), Alena Bašistová (Sieť party) (Mikušovič, 2016), Anna Verešová – former speaker of the Alliance for Family and Branislav Škripek (OĽaNO), Richard Vašečka, Veronika Remišová (OĽaNO), Anna Záborská and Ján Figeľ (KDH), Daniel Lipšic (NOVA).
- Politicians decisively supporting the rights of LGBT people: Monika Flašíková Beňová (SMER), Martin Poliačik and Juraj Droba (SaS) (SITA, 2016). Among those who are rather supportive are: Viera Dubačová (OĽaNO), Richard Sulík (SaS), Katarína Neveďalová and Ľuboš Blaha (SMER), Ondrej Dostál (OKS) and Jozef Viskupič (OĽaNO).

26 As of 2017 there is a new ombudsman, Mária Patakyová

Other actors:

- Academics and public figures supporting the LGBT minority: sociologists Jarmila Filadelfiová, Michal Vašečka.
- 'Alternative media' presenting the LGBT minority as a threat: Zem&Vek (Juraj Režo, Patrik Sloboda, Artur Bekmatov, Milan Pullman), Hlavné správy etc.

Tertiary actors:

- Andrej Kiska – President of the Slovak Republic. He is slightly conservative, in the referendum he supported a heterosexual definition of marriage and restricting adoptions for homosexuals. However, he is promoting the values of an open society, tolerance and human rights. He took over the auspices of the Inakosť film festival.
- Priest and theologian Tomaš Halík openly supports LGBT people. He is a great authority among Christian philosophers. Slovak Catholic organisations consider him controversial for his open criticism of the Church.
- Pope Francis and his position of love towards all minorities and inclusiveness of God's mercy. Though he supported the referendum, his image is liberal and his views are much more open than those of the Slovak clergy.

Relations among actors in the conflict

Christian organisations backed by KBS are in clear opposition to human rights NGOs which are engaged in LGBT issues. In some cases, such as in the discussions before the referendum, they refused to debate each other. If there were discussions, they were even more polarising, since radicals from both sides were usually taking part in them. The moderate voices were very rarely present in public, as well as expert views. Lately, both parties are not often in direct contact. The Alliance for the Family tried to cooperate with some politicians who might support the 'traditional family' before the elections, for which it was fined in summer 2016.

Sources and causes of the conflict

The 'traditional family' is a social construct. It has changed constantly throughout history, in relation to time and space, in relation to cultural contexts, its structure, function, understanding, the roles of men and women, the style of bringing up children and other aspects. Today there is a considerable shift towards the pluralisation of family forms and norms of family life. The Slovak context, which is largely Christian, rural and conservative, naturally clashes with the trends coming from some European, Western liberal societies. These deep causes of the conflict are then manifested in fear of losing 'traditional families'. Churches present the LGBT and gender equality concept as a cause of the destruction of families, but do not support it with any research or any kind of data. People feel a cultural threat to family values, but the Christian version fails to identify its roots. Scant attention is paid to the consumerist way of life that includes the hedonistic pleasures of marriage and family. Divorces, which are very common in Christian families have little to do with gender concept. They are rather related to an emptiness of values and to mass culture. Churches do not adequately reflect the violent abuse of family members (women, children or seniors). On the other hand, LGBT and human rights activists sometimes use radical rhetoric (e.g. some anti-religious sayings), claiming rights that are unrealistic in Slovakia for the time being (e.g. marriage). Both sides are unable to maintain a dialogue, discuss facts and find solutions. The pre-referendum campaign has caused a polarisation of society that was beneficial only to those nurturing anti-European moods.

Christian activists are not ready to admit that their campaign is being misused by the anti-systemic extremists who are working on diverging Slovakia from the EU and NATO. On one hand, they disagree with right-wing extremism; on the other hand their views are often very coherent with Kotleba – ĽSNS and similar groups.

The state and its attitude towards human rights (visible in human rights strategy preparation) is acting in a very insensitive way in relation to Christian organisations. Some state administered financing (e.g. Norway funds) was contingent upon agreeing with human rights documents, so it discriminated against conservative Christian organisations. In Slovakia, the issue of human rights has not been properly discussed in society, since the '90s it has been presented mostly as a fight for minority rights and a condition of European integration. That is why a significant part of Slovak society see human rights as something external, unnatural for our society.

Dynamics of the conflict

After the referendum, the conflict rather passed into the background of public discourse. Though both sides carry on fostering their visions, the discussion is largely paralysed, keeping the public opinion rather overloaded and polarised than clarified with a hope of agreement. An escalation could be stimulated by any proposal for a law regarding these issues, which is very unlikely to happen. On the other hand, far-right extreme forces and pro-Russian organisations may use this topic to artificially raise hatred towards minorities, human rights and European values. The only effective peace actor could be Pope Francis, speaking directly to Slovak Christians, not 'translated' by the KBS. He represents a modern approach towards minorities and his word could help in easing the dialogue. On the other hand, it would require softening of the radical rhetoric of human rights and LGBT organisations as well.

Background of the conflict

Frameworks that influence the conflict include:

- Effects of consumption ethics, which is in deep contradiction to Christian values;
- Loss of trust towards political institutions;
- Marginalisation of large groups of society resulting in the looking for a scapegoat;
- Post-truth society and influence of 'alternative media' supporting discussions based on manipulation and lies;
- Active work of pro-Russian media, presenting Russia as a country of 'traditional values' that is combating sexual minorities as deviants.

Christian organisations see dangers in LGBT claims and (not always correctly) link them with the decay of family values. The value clash also manifests through:

- The low birth rate in Slovakia: Christian organisations claim that 'gender ideology' causes a low birth rate (this claim has not been supported by the empirical data). The issues of the pro-family policies of recent governments are not properly discussed.
- Promiscuity vs. monogamy and sex related exclusively to marriage, especially in light of the discussion about sex education at schools. The delicate questions of sexuality in the contemporary world are often being simplified and politicised.
- Rights of the child: liberals and conservatives have different interpretations of these rights, here the claim for the protection of life from conception is in conflict with the pro-choice philosophy of feminist movements.

Possible future scenarios

A positive, though less probable, future scenario could be represented by a political power which would gradually incorporate legislative and symbolic changes that would be carefully communicated to the public, to improve the position of the LGBT minority. Of course, a favourable societal climate would be necessary to reach this, as well as the willingness to agree expressed by most of the actors in the conflict. A more realistic future scenario is to keep the conflict in its current, suspended stage by not making major moves in the form of claims for LGBT rights regulations (e.g. introducing the institute of registered partnership). The danger remains that the KBS and its proxies will artificially escalate the conflict before the elections to gain support for Christian candidates and parties. As a very probable scenario, the external influence of pro-Russian and conspiracy media can be expected in the framework of provoking an anti-EU agenda.

5. Geopolitical tension as a proxy conflict in a value-based realm

The value-based conflicts featured above do not create an exhaustive list but only a selection that stands out from the rest due to its intensity and propensity for violence, whether physical, verbal or structural. These conflicts have one further important salient feature that deserves attention in this context. This is the tension over the geopolitical orientation that functions as a catalyser and amplifier of the other conflicts mentioned above.

This tension can be framed by the question that faces Slovak society: 'Do we belong to the West with its institutions (EU, NATO) and to the North Atlantic realm shaped by the USA, or do we rather incline to the East,

represented by Russia and its concept of "Russkij mir"? Or should we, as some people honestly believe, stay somewhere in between?'

Its roots go deep, to the first half of the 19th century when the idea of Pan-Slavism began to disseminate across Europe. For some emerging nationalist intelligentsia (not only the Slovaks), Tsarist Russia was seen as state worthy of being unified with at that time. After the passing of one century and especially after the Velvet Revolution and the end of the Cold War, it seemed that the Russian influence was over. In reality, the hesitation over its geopolitical orientation turned in Slovakia into a latent conflict, which fully escalated during the Maidan uprising in Ukraine in 2014 and the consecutive events – the annexation of Crimea and the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Slovak pro-Western intellectual elites have a relatively low impact on public opinion and it is 'in' to be anti-Western in recent times (SITA, 2016). Even some previously liberal and anti-communist intellectuals are nurturing anti-European moods and belittle the values of a liberal democracy. Paradoxically enough, those glorifying Stalin and those glorifying Tiso (the wartime Slovak president, an ally of Hitler) are in 'populist coherence' against those who would stand for liberal democracy and an enlightened version of European values. According to the polls, most Slovaks would like Slovakia to be 'in the middle' between West and East.

Not only does this geopolitical tension have political ramifications, it stretches to the realms of the value landscape where it manifests in largely common positioning and antagonistic rhetoric on the issues of LGBT people, anti-Western positioning, conspiracy thinking etc. of different actors as ultranationalist groups, far-right or anti-systemic political parties (Kotleba, Sme rodina), conservative currents in the clergy and the lay members of the Catholic Church, mainstream political parties (such as the Slovak National Party or OĽANO) and public figures. These positions, skilfully nurtured by 'alternative media' and social media, promote Russia as a strategic ally of Slovakia and perceive NATO as evil. However, they go beyond the field of foreign policy, supporting a variety of moral beliefs and convictions including 'the belief that Russia is presently becoming a defender of the traditional values and morality that are at risk in the West.' (Mesežnikov & Gyárfášová, 2015, p. 154). This widespread argument is frequently used despite the fact that it is not grounded in any facts (with the exception of Russian legislature against LGBT people). The geopolitical value conflict thus becomes a proxy conflict for other value-based conflicts and exacerbates them further. And there is mounting evidence that it is nurtured by disinformation and propaganda efforts of Russian origin (Slovenskí europoslanci… 2018).

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GOOD PRACTICES

Very interesting examples of successful civic activities were found while conducting conflict analyses in all seven countries. Nevertheless, to be chosen for this section, the good practices had to meet special criteria. First, they had to be truly grass roots civic initiatives, not projects supported by donors (whether they are domestic or international). Second, they had to be of an inclusive character, not focusing solely on certain groups of citizens. That is why various advocacy initiatives defending the rights of certain social groups were excluded if they had the potential rather to escalate than to mitigate conflict. Third, pure assistance to marginalised groups, or even their empowerment, was not interesting for this section, since this also often escalates conflicts. (The majority can feel discriminated against when not receiving assistance despite their difficult situation.) As for their influence on conflicts, activities that promote dialogue, mitigate conflict, combat stereotypes and otherwise bring different people together were selected. They are divided into four broad categories: online initiatives, live dialogue projects, the integration of minorities and empowering communities, and LGBT–Christian dialogue.

1. Combating disinformation, hoaxes and hate speech

These activities show various approaches to counteracting hate and disinformation, especially in online space, by providing exact information, counter-narratives and most of all, organic grass roots activity of professionals (e.g. journalists and social scientists) or laypersons (e.g. secondary school students) who become involved.

Grass Roots Initiatives Combating Extremism in Online Space – Slovakia

Online abuse, far-right propaganda and conspiracy theories have recently increased dramatically in the CEE region. Social media are acting as a powerful amplifier for hate speech and myth dissemination. Although governments, international organisations and companies such as Facebook are actively attempting to reduce online abuse through laws and regulations, they are far from successful. As a result a number of small initiatives have decided to combat hate speech, disinformation and online extremism by adopting a bottom-up approach. These initiatives are mostly run by young people and some of them are very efficient and have great public resonance.

A recent study demonstrated that 59 per cent of all links shared on social networks are not actually clicked on, but the number of shares and comments on them is vast. This implies that most reactions are based solely on the headline and/or an accompanying picture, rather than actual reading of the article. Discussions under posts tend to include various dimensions of hate – from racist agitation to celebrating reports of attacks on refugees to the abuse of individuals. To counter the online abuse expressed in Facebook comment sections, a Facebook group called **#somtu** https://www.facebook.com/groups/somtu/ was established. It was inspired by the Swedish initiative #jagärhär. #somtu is a discussion support group that counterbalances hate speech and conspiracy theories on the internet. Its members firstly share links to posts where online abuse is present and subsequently start commenting there. The point is not to become aggressive or offensive but to calmly demonstrate a different opinion. Rather than staying silent and quietly reading comments full of hate speech, the members of the initiative decide to speak up, showing the more humane side of the issue. The main advantage of this voluntary activity is that the members support each other's comments (which are easily identified thanks to the hashtag #somtu), therefore polite and reasonable comments become more visible and hateful speech becomes less visible. Subsequently, this encourages others to contribute with 'positive' comments which results in these positive comments outweighing the presence of hate speech.

In addition to the growing trend of online hate speech, it has become popular to criticise mainstream media outlets. As a result, an increasingly large proportion of the public are turning to alternative narratives. A recent study on the subject demonstrated that 'alternative media' sites tend to employ 'intentional use of disinformation tactics' to weaken the public and make it easier for them to be controlled. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that we are able to distinguish between conspiracy websites and those providing us with the truth and facts. With this goal in mind, the initiative **www.konspiratori.sk** publishes an online list of conspiracy websites and websites with deceptive and/or misleading content. Their intention is to help companies not to advertise on these pages. Another initiative helping the public to distinguish between facts and alternative narratives has created an application at https://www.websupport.sk/bullshit-detector to identify controversial content. More-

over, student projects like www.truefighters.sk and the Facebook group https://bezpointy.sk/ are striving to combat disinformation, myths and conspiracy theories. Another interesting initiative is an anti-fascist website created and maintained by Marek Mach, a 15-year-old student at a secondary school https://mladiprotifasizmu.sk/o-projekte/. The real impact of such initiatives can only be assessed but it is surely nothing but positive that young people are at least trying to fight extremism, 'alternative facts' and abuse in online space.

Sociofactor – Czech Republic

Sociofactor is a research and education institution based in Olomouc, providing research services, trainings and capacity building programmes, requalification courses and the evaluation of social services.

Among their successful projects and researches is the recent publication on the lives of Muslims in the Czech Republic. The publication provides a substantial insight into the lives of Czech Muslims, deconstructing multiple hoaxes and revealing the attitudes of Muslims towards negative perceptions and hate speech. The publication is the first synthesis thus far on the topic and one of the few books based on fieldwork and interviews with Muslims in the country. It emerged through close collaboration with Czech mosques and Muslim communities. One of the main findings demonstrates the diversity of Muslims in terms of their own attitudes towards religion. This finding is crucial as it counters the general image of Muslims as a unified group sharing the same values and identities.

The organisation strives to conduct applied and action researches, meaning that the results are directly applied in the fieldwork or specific recommendations for further implementation are delivered. Regardless of the chosen methodology, the researchers endeavour to conduct ideology-free research and present only the facts and figures without taking the side of the target group or of the contracting authority. Their main philosophy consists in finding and presenting the facts, as facts are able to 'speak for themselves'. Sociofactor holds respect and neutrality towards both sides of a conflict, which is required as a prerequisite to any research contract. This approach tends to be more successful in countering hate speech and prejudice when compared to the advocacy work of other organisations active in issues of migration. The outcomes of Sociofactor's research are reader-friendly and reflect the facts without triggering emotions or reflecting the strong positions of the researchers' ideology.

Sociofactor organises many conferences, round tables and debates presenting their outcomes, strengthening the work of social workers in the field and putting forward recommendations for local authorities or even ministries. All of this enables them to activate system changes at a higher level. Among their contractors are the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, municipalities of different cities, universities, NGOs, networks etc. The organisation holds many trainings and methodological materials accredited by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which ensures a high quality and dissemination potential in the field.

https://www.sociofactor.eu/

'Neue Deutsche Medienmacher' (New German Media Professionals) – Germany

Neue deutsche Medienmacher are a large active group of more than 250 members and a network of more than 1,200 people from all over Germany. They are a nationwide association of journalists, directors, photographers and authors for print, online, TV and radio with diverse backgrounds, competences and language skills. Utilising these resources, their goal is to promote diversity in the media – both in front of the cameras and microphones and behind the scenes, on the editorial as well as the executive level.

Neue deutsche Medienmacher try to ensure balanced and nuanced media coverage on issues of diversity, migration and integration. They strive to increase the appreciation of and support for diversity and intercultural competences within the media and foster a culture of recognition that values the potentials of a diverse society. With this aim in mind, they have created local networks throughout the country to transfer knowledge. For instance in 2009, they started the training project 'Bi-cultural Cross-media Journalism' in cooperation with the 'Bildungswerk Kreuzberg' in Berlin. Since then, several journalists with a migrant background have successfully completed the 15-month course.

In 2010, they started a mentoring programme supporting young journalists from immigrant families or exiled journalists. In addition, they offer a database of experts of ethnically diverse professionals and specialists (www.vielfaltfinder.de), created a glossary with wordings around the topic of migration and asylum to guide journalists (glossar.neuemedienmacher.de), and they coordinate the European 'No Hate Speech Movement'

campaign in Germany by supplying background information, revealing ways to counter hate speech and offering assistance to affected parties (no-hate-speech.de).

They are successful because they are a unique network that unites the skills and knowledge of professionals working in the media with diverse backgrounds. This strong network creates visibility in the mainstream media and puts forward a diverse perspective that has not been supported in Germany for a long period of time and is still only visible in German (mainstream) media to a limited degree. With their mentoring programme and trainings they support young professionals who can affect future media. They also attend conferences and network meetings to reach multipliers.

http://www.neuemedienmacher.de/

Correctiv – Germany

Correctiv is the first non-profit investigative newsroom in the German-speaking world composed of renowned journalists and programmers. Some of them hold leading positions in regional and national media outlets. They are specialised in investigative journalism and have long been advocating more transparency in society and the media. The main figures are Correctiv's CEO David Schraven and editor in chief Markus Grill. Another important figure is Christian Humborg, who was the CEO until 2016 and now works as an external counsel. In total, 16 people are working as editorial staff. Moreover, there is a board of directors and an ethics council.

Correctiv wants to be an answer to the current media crisis. They want to make investigative journalism and credible fact checking more easily available for the media in Germany. For this reason, Correctiv are not only performing investigation themselves but have initiated an education programme to pass on their methods of investigative journalism. This can help empower citizens to gain access to information and promote transparency. Correctiv research the threats and challenges our society faces, such as abuse of power and corruption in politics, business, sports and culture in various topics, e.g. the environment, education, health and social justice as well as right-wing and religious extremism. Currently, Correctiv have started talks with Facebook in order to evaluate whether a cooperation to check fake news on Facebook is possible and how it should be done.

Correctiv is financed exclusively through charitable endowments as well as donations from readers and users. In cooperation with various media, Correctiv share their investigations and stories with large and small newspapers and magazines as well as with radio and TV stations. Beyond that, they look for innovative ways to publish larger stories on the internet. With no print or circulation costs, Correctiv focus on content. Most of their funds go directly into extensive investigative research that many media outlets can no longer afford. Moreover, they have won several awards and gained a great deal of media attention in recent debates about fake news

https://correctiv.org/

Hate Free Culture, Choose Your Information, Encyclopaedia Tackling Migration – Czech Republic

In the CEE region, several campaigns were launched in 2015 and 2016 as a reaction to the amount of hoaxes and hate speech abounding in social media.

The first, biggest and most successful campaign tackling hate speech in the Czech Republic is **Hate Free Culture**. Unlike other government projects, even in its early stages, it has gained many sympathisers, followers and replicators and it has changed the online behavior of social media users in a positive way. The campaign combined elements of counter narratives (deconstructing hoaxes), as well as alternative narratives (putting forward positive stories), accompanied by offline events such as 'Open breakfasts', inviting locals and foreigners to network, or panel discussions, conferences, workshops etc. The campaign is very popular also due to its art of using humour and non-violent language.

In January 2017, an exhaustive **Migration Encyclopaedia** tackling migration appeared online. It was initiated by the Student Movement for Solidarity in collaboration with 5 Prague universities. The encyclopaedia provides rigorous analyses of migration to European countries, exploring this phenomenon in all its complexity from political, historical, sociocultural and legal perspectives. Narratives of migrants are also employed to sensibilise the public with real lives and real people. The biggest contribution of this project is perhaps providing migration experts the space in which to explain the entire context and historical-political background of the 'migration

crisis', which the media have failed to present to the wider public. Another asset is perhaps a very clear differentiation between facts, definitions, analysis, interpretation, assessment and subjective comments and the usage of simple and concise language.

Universities from other cities have started to be active in the matter as well. In 2016 the Faculty of Art at Masaryk University launched the campaign '**Migration, minorities and intercultural dialogue**', bringing the idea of migration as a frequent phenomenon in the history of human evolution and the image of Islam in all its complexity and variety of forms, practices and interpretations. In addition to seminars and workshops on Islam and migration, the campaign offers pro bono services such as translation and interpretation provided by graduates of foreign languages or Czech language lessons for foreigners.

The same year, 9 students from the Faculty of Social Studies from the same university launched the campaign '**Choose your information**', aiming to improve the media literacy of high school students by using a short and simple 'surfing guide'. They visit high schools and debate with students on the topics of conspiracy theories, hoaxes, and hate speech in media. They explain how facts can be differentiated from fake news.

http://www.hatefree.cz/

http://encyklopedie.org/

http://migrace.phil.muni.cz/

http://zvolsi.info/

No Hate Speech Movement – Romania

In Romania, the No Hate Speech Movement campaign was launched with the aim of spreading the #NoHate message. The citizens engaging in the movement have developed and are using educational materials aiming to raise awareness of the causes and negative effects of incitement to hatred and violent communication, but also to decrease its incidence, especially in the online environment in Romania. Also, the movement works on media monitoring, introducing a 'Bookmarks' manual into the formal education system as well as on the development of reporting mechanisms for hate speech. Educational activities on preventing and combating hate speech have already been carried out by NGOs and individuals in more than 15 cities.

http://nohatespeech.ro/

Centrum Monitorowania Dyskursu Publicznego (Center for Monitoring Public Discourse) – Poland

Centrum Monitorowania Dyskursu Publicznego was established with the aim of providing objective valuable information from various sources.

CMDP is an independent project carried out by Anna Piechocka, Andrzej Meler and Radosław Sojak, PhD, three sociologists connected with the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. They contribute to the regularly updated database, which contains information on the activities of mainstream media broadcasters (radio, TV) and politicians (e.g. their level of presence in these media). The database is openly available to the public.

The main goal of this project is to provide cumulative information on public discourse compiled not on the basis of an ideological bias but in accordance to an *ex-ante* defined methodology described in detail on the website. The project participants, through their Facebook page, regularly disseminate the results of their analyses, supplementing them with links to and summaries of other studies on public discourse.

The database has already been used by journalists pertaining to different ideological camps, which proves that the project is perceived as a non-partisan initiative. Hence it can contribute to a more balanced presentation of arguments by polarised actors and stakeholders on the political scene in Poland.

http://www.cmdp.pl/

2. Live discussion projects promoting tolerance, understanding and de-radicalisation

Several examples of various discussion and debate formats or even more creative offline interaction formats (e.g. guided city tours) or mixed offline and online activities (e.g. youth clubs) show how dialogue can be launched. Instead of quick results the sustainability of most of them is interesting, since they require patience and long-term commitment.

Live Discussion Projects 'Spoločná Krajina' (Common Country), 'Zabudnuté Slovensko' (Forgotten Slovakia), and nomadSPACE – Slovakia

Concerned about the rise of the support of extremist and anti-systemic parties among youth, students, researchers and teachers of the Department of Political Science at the Comenius University started a project titled **Common Country**. The aim of the initiative is to educate young people about history and to contextualise current topics that tend to be misinterpreted by right-wing extremists, such as the refugee crisis or the lives of minorities in Slovakia in order to reduce extremist thought and attitudes. More specifically, the project consists of open discussions with secondary school students in 'forgotten' regions of Slovakia where the support of extremist parties is the highest. The discussions take place in the atmosphere of a school classroom and are attended by one class of students (approximately 20–30 people) who already know each other well and it is, thus, expected that they should feel comfortable speaking up even about controversial topics.

During the discussions, students meet interesting people from public life, including those who have survived the Holocaust, members of minorities living in Slovakia, journalists writing on relevant topics and many others. Through talking with Holocaust survivors or members of the Roma community face-to-face about their real experiences, students often understand that the prejudice and misinformation disseminated by extremist parties are far from being true.

Crucially, the project is not polarising and students are welcome to discuss any topic they are interested in and any opinion (even extremist) they hold. The students are never told that they cannot support an extremist party, rather, it is expected that they understand the dangers extreme right-wing parties may cause and the false premisses on which they are built. In other words, the students are not being persuaded by anyone, rather, they are led to form their own opinions. https://www.facebook.com/spolocnakrajina/?fref=ts

The Common Country project is linked with the **Forgotten Slovakia** project, launched by famous Slovak reporter Andrej Bán. He organises public debates as well as discussions in secondary schools in towns far away from Bratislava where support for extremist parties is the highest, on topics sensitive to extremists. In the morning, the guests visit high schools and meet students, while in the afternoon they meet the public, discussing the same issues with both groups. A crucial difference between the Common Country and Forgotten Slovakia projects is that while in the former's discussions, all of the students involved can express their own opinions and openly discuss sensitive topics, in the latter's debates around 300 people take part and it is, therefore, impossible. These discussions, though showing the true face of the Kotleba party (the members of which often threaten the public), are more polarising. During the discussions, extremists can demonstrate their presence and 'strength' in an audience of several hundred people, which creates limited space for deeper interaction and it is difficult for the attendees to discuss sensitive topics openly. However, this direct confrontation is a strength as much as a weakness of this format. Often, regular citizens attending the events speak out about their feelings or frustrations and appreciate being heard by publicly known people. https://www.facebook.com/zabudnuteslovensko/?ref=timeline_chaining

Similar to the two abovementioned projects, **nomadSPACE** travels into small and medium-sized cities and meets their inhabitants with the aim of reducing xenophobia, racism and extremism in these areas. NomadSPACE is a travelling gallery where visitors experience art in an interactive way. Descriptions of the pieces of art are absent; rather, visitors are encouraged to proactively interpret what they see with the help of mediators. The dominant topics of the gallery's art are migrants, refugees and extremism. The project is successful mainly thanks to bringing art to areas where galleries or museums are absent. Explaining social issues and value conflict in an interactive way through art in areas where art is not otherwise present is a unique concept that seems to work well.

https://sk-sk.facebook.com/potulnagaleria/

Stakeholder Management Process 'Power Plant Forum' in Gönyű – Hungary

Since 2007, E.on Power Plants Ltd. (E.on Erőművek Kft.) in cooperation with the Partners Hungary Foundation has met regularly with the citizens of Gönyű in order to maintain dialogue on the gas power plant investment in the small town. E.on is a German company which has built and is now operating the gas power plant in the town. According to the state regulation and E.on's protocol, the company was obliged to inform the public about the plans and have some dialogue about it with the citizens. Crucially, in this case, E.on went further than it was obliged to do. The company made sure all stakeholders and citizens who had an interest in the issue were invited to the forum and were able to contribute their remarks. The initial idea was to have the **Power Plant Forum** only during the construction period, however as E.on and other stakeholders felt its usefulness and it has been running for 10 years now.

The key goal of the process is to maintain a dialogue between the citizens of Gönyű and the representatives of E.on. The regular work of the forum is designed and facilitated by Partners Hungary Foundation (PHF) as an external organisation creating a framework for useful, effective communication and cooperation.

The stakeholders are different representatives of the smaller and wider community. They were mapped, interviewed and invited by PHF to be members of the power plant forum. The forum now works with about 20 local participants representing institutions, civil and business organisations and regular citizens. In the first two-year period during the construction and the start of operation 10 forums were organised. Now the forum is organised once a year based on the needs of the participants. The goals of the stakeholder management process are to share information, ask questions and get first-hand answers, share opinions and different views, define the problems and develop suggestions for solving them, to listen and understand, and last but not least to develop real cooperation among the stakeholders.

The initiative helped the citizens form a clear picture about the operation of the power plant. Through this process they gained trust and there is a good relationship between the company and the citizens.

https://www.eon-hungaria.com/en/corporate/uniper-hungary-kft/gonyu-power-plant

Cultures Interactive e.V. – Germany

After the reunification of Germany in the 1990s, right-wing extremist and neo-Nazi milieus sprang up significantly in Eastern Germany. Later, inner city districts were struck by migration-related ethnic and religious tensions. In 2005, **Cultures Interactive** (CI) started targeting both the sources of tension and the conflicts. CI has since developed and piloted innovative approaches to prevent and counter youth extremism/fundamentalism, group hatred and violence and to promote capacity building in view of a resilient human rights-based civil society.

CI's approach is novel in that it surpasses the largely cognitive methods which most civic education and prevention programs apply. CI combines youth cultural and social media practices (graffiti, break dancing, skateboarding, DJ-ing, YouTubing, punk, electronic music, parkour, slam poetry etc.) with non-formal civic and political education (e.g. anti-bias, intersectional, gender-reflective approaches) and psychologically based narrative group work – thus including cultural and emotional intelligence in educational work. In addition, CI provide trainings and counselling for youth workers and other stakeholders in the field of prevention and youth work. The organisation is a part of various national and international networks and conducts empirical research.

The combination of hands-on, interest-based practices from youth cultures and (social) media with civic education modules enables CI to reach out to those young people who are often unresponsive or not interested in any of the traditional pedagogical interventions – and are at risk of turning away from schools, education and society at large. Youth cultures and social media do not only add practical and interest-based aspects. They also enhance pre-vocational skill training (team-based peer teaching) and vividly include civil rights, social justice and anti-racism history, e.g. through hip-hop culture, also spurring empowerment, civic engagement and participation which renders education less abstract and more related to the young people's world. One particularly effective method may be the element of narrative exchange (rather than argumentative/persuasive) while clearly demarcating CI's base reference in human rights.

http://cultures-interactive.de/en/

Bubap – Budapest Walk Shop – Hungary

Bubap is a project of organising alternative, socially conscious walking tours in the city, mainly for locals. There are four categories of walks:

- political – about the political past of Budapest,
- about minorities (ethnic, religious) in the city,
- gender – forgotten feminine spaces, LGBTQ+,
- city development and politics (including real estate corruption).

The project was started in 2011 by a Muslim artist named Anna Lénárt. She was later joined by other experts in different areas. Now they have 3 permanent colleagues and 10–15 part-time guides. The walks serve as space for the locals to enjoy a type of cultural entertainment which also allows them to become more acquainted with their city and its diverse communities. There has been a great deal of tension in Hungarian society, which has had an impact on the city as well. People are trapped in their own realities, from which social tensions/problems and history often seem abstract and there is no space to talk about these things.

The project successfully aims at eradicating tensions from communities in Budapest. The walks provide the opportunity for citizens not only to learn more information, but also to have an emotional experience through which they can feel more connected and more competent and can let go of some of this tension. Their audience is made up of 95% university educated professionals; two-thirds of them are women. They also often attract media professionals, whom they also try to educate through these walks. The general age group is people between 20–30 and over 50. Their regular clients include schools, universities and recreational clubs and centres.

The programme is also intergenerational, as older participants have the opportunity to share their stories with youth including – at times – their own grandchildren. They have a good partnership with organisations that work in different social areas, for example Roma integration or gender equality, they work together with them to develop the walks. In addition, there are places which help them by selling their tickets e.g.: the Trafó Centre for Modern Art and the Writers' Bookshop. They issue a newsletter with their walks; they also have a website, a Facebook page and Instagram. There is a non-profit association and an Ltd. as well behind the project, but the non-profit is becoming more and more in focus.

http://www.bupap.hu/en/aboutus2

https://www.facebook.com/bupap.hu/?fref=ts

Platform of Eight Cultural Centres to Enable Dialogue and Debates – Bulgaria

Public debates on key civic interests provide citizens with the opportunity to influence political processes and are therefore crucial for the formation of active citizenship, which in turn enhances democracy. However, in the countries of the CEE region, there tends to be a lack of public space for civic debates on topics of key interests to citizens. With this problem in mind, the **Red House Centre for Culture and Debate** (a project of Gulliver Clearing House) was created to provide a stage for debates where different opinions and orientations can meet and argue about their benefit for the country. The Red House is positioned in the centre of Sofia and organises and presents socio-political, artistic and cultural as well as socially engaged and educational programs. Their activities include stimulation of political and social debates as well as the development of dialogue between various communities.

In 2009 the Red House for Culture and debate spread their idea by initiating **Bulgarian Networks for Civil Dialogue**, which is a national project of 8 independent cultural organisations from different cities in Bulgaria. The network was created as an effort to meet the need for open public spaces where civil, not fully expert, debate and discussion may take place; where debating may be practiced on topics of key interest; and which can serve as 'laboratories for civil participation' that address the feeling of remoteness some citizens get from policy and decision-makers. The initiative aims to create space for debate and discussions in different cities, to promote lively debates on topics of key civic interest. The project has initiated various debates on the concept of left and right; pro-Russia and pro-Western orientation; the communist past and its influence on the country's current development. These discussions provide opportunities to get a closer look at value-based positions and disagreements related to geopolitical orientation; they explain the meaning of 'left' and 'right', 'pro-Western' and 'pro-Russia' and show how their understanding can be related to 'key policy dilemma' and issues important for Bulgarian society. In this project, both right and left activists and experts provide rational arguments and talk in various facilitated discussions with the public.

Examples of such debates are: 'Should Inequalities be Settled and How?' with the participation of Vania Grigorova (Solidarity Bulgaria – a modern leftist movement) and Georgi Ganev (CLS); 'Railway Transport: State or Private?' with the participation of Veselin Kirev (Citizen Initiative for Public and Railway Transport) and Peter Ganev (Institute for Market Economy). Left-wing and right-wing perspectives toward memories of communism with the participation of: Michael Gruev (historian) and George Medarov (sociologist). The success of these debates may be due partially to the fact that they are held in the Red House, a sight popular for organising events and a variety of discussions. The events were promoted not only through its website and its Facebook page but directly to the visitors of all the events. The Red House is supported by media partners who disseminate its information (http://www.redhouse-sofia.org/Content.aspx?id=26). The participants in the above debates have maintained and provided arguments for their positions and created a useful model of a political debate of opposing positions. In this way, they help to release the tension between contrary positions and concentrate on the issues rather than on the opposition itself.

3. Projects integrating migrants or minorities, combating stereotypes and empowering communities

The initiatives mentioned below are either conducted by the members of migrant/minority communities themselves, or are organised with their strong involvement. The most valuable are those which are empowering members of minorities, but at the same time not escalating the conflict of minority vs. majority. Inclusiveness and the community character of the projects guarantee that they can have positive effects in de-escalating conflicts.

Multikulti Map – Bulgaria

Bulgaria is developing at a steady rate from an emigrant country to a country attracting more and more immigrants from the EU and third countries, and refugees who have been granted protection by the state. For much of Bulgarian society, however, all these foreign communities are still unknown or wrapped in stereotypes, which leads to discrimination, racism and xenophobia. The **Multi Kulti Map** project's aim is to make cultural diversity in Sofia, Bulgaria visible as well as to show the positive human face of various communities living in the same cities and neighbourhoods. The project takes a step towards building a society that appreciates the cultural diversity of foreigners in Bulgaria and so, in the long run, promotes the two-way process of integration into Bulgarian society.

To be more specific, The Multi Kulti Map is a project by Multi Kulti Collective Association and has been around since 2013. It is a bilingual digital and paper map that shows authentic migrant and Bulgarian restaurants and food stores in Sofia, Bulgaria. It includes personal stories of restaurant owners from Bulgaria, the EU and third countries. The Multi Kulti Map demonstrates the cultural and culinary diversity of Bulgaria. One can find there authentic restaurants and food stores owned by people from more than 20 countries, including Bulgarians, refugees and foreigners from other EU states. In the map, the owners share a piece of their personal story, talk about their favourite childhood dish, about what they like in Bulgaria and what they miss from their countries. Each story is beautifully and professionally illustrated by artists from the international-award-winning studio Compote Collective.

In addition to the stories that give the map a personal touch, the map is very practical and useful for both tourists and locals wishing to explore restaurants in Sofia. There is general information about each spot, photos, interviews with the owner and an illustration of him/her. Moreover, the map's contents are not fixed as the public are invited to suggest spots that are not yet on the map or to provide information that might be missing. Multi Kulti Collective checks whether suggested places are eligible to be included and then collects all the necessary information, conducts an interview with the owner, translates it into English, takes a photo, creates an illustrated portrait of the owner, updates the website and promotes it. Furthermore, the map helps Multi Kulti Collective to enrich its network of partners with the restaurants and food stores supporting them in organising tasty Multi Kulti Kitchen and other public events, culinary courses, catering etc. These events serve as meeting points for people from different cultural and socio-political backgrounds and effectively build good relations in communities.

http://multikulti.bg/project/map

The Initiative: I Am a Roma Doctor – Romania

Many members of majority groups in the CEE region hold biases, prejudices and stereotypes that motivate their everyday behaviour towards the members of Roma communities. Stereotypes that are prevalent throughout Europe, such as the idea that the Roma are disproportionately reliant on welfare, or are the exclusive perpetrators of various kinds of crimes, pose significant obstacles to overcoming negative attitudes towards these persons. At the same time, Roma people often come from underprivileged backgrounds, which makes them unable to break out of the vicious circle of biases and stereotypes.

Through the financial and personal support of Roma youth from underprivileged backgrounds, the initiative **I Am a Roma Doctor** contributes to gradually breaking down the stereotypes. The initiative, run by the organisation ActiveWatch, gives Roma students who want to pursue medicine scholarships in Iasi, Bucharest, Timisoara, Craiova and Cluj. More than 600 Roma students have received academic scholarships so far (2008—2016). In addition to scholarships, the students were assisted by mentors and attended camps advocacy, volunteering activities and medical congresses. The scholars are encouraged to actively assume their Roma identity.

Along with helping Roma youth pursue a higher education, the second aim is to educate the public about the Roma, and this is done through 'disruptions' in society, where the Roma break down the stereotypes ascribed to them by the majority. Stereotypes about the Roma people are based on negative stories. It is in the power of honest stories to change the narrative about the Roma and implicitly question the stereotypes that most people automatically assume. Realising this, the positive story of the initiative was publicised through a documentary film in which five young people, fellows of the Roma Health Scholarship Program, became the first doctors in Romania who proudly assumed their Roma ethnicity.

I Am a Roma Doctor is a statement that appears in a society where the belief that Roma people embarrass Romania is often encountered. The effect of this belief, the social rejection, occurs, grows and multiplies. This initiative is successful not only because it inspires Roma children to pursue higher education, but also breaks down widespread stereotypes and false beliefs. Additionally, it is successful due to the professionalism of the films and the wide reach of the project, extending across the country. The project deliverables have been communicated through Facebook, the ActiveWatch website, and YouTube.

http://activewatch.ro/ro/antidiscriminare/evenimente-si-activitati/foto-sunt-doctor-rom-expozitie-2016

Pécs Step by Step School and the Hódmezovásárhely Model – Hungary

The city of Pécs is the fifth largest city in Hungary with 145,666 inhabitants, of which approximately 10 per cent consists in Roma population. The main characteristics of the socio-demographic situation of the Roma in Pécs is deprivation as they are still gravely affected by the loss of industrial employment since the 1980s. The spatial dispersion of Roma in the city is uneven and they live mostly in segregated areas, which makes integration with the majority population difficult.

The Budai Városkapu Iskola is an integrated institution located close to different Roma segregated areas. The school has 450 students, the Roma population of the school is about 40 per cent. About 50 per cent of the total school population come from disadvantaged families. The school's location was traditionally the mining area of the city before the political changes in 1989.

The school has used the child-centred Step by Step (SBS) teaching methodology since 1997. The method was developed by the Open Society Foundation and builds on cultural diversity, equal opportunity, participation, cooperation, respect, personal and joint responsibility, having in focus the integrated child-centred educational approach. In 2014, the school became a Step by Step Regional Methodological Centre. At the beginning of the SBS programme in Hungary back in 1994 there were about 300 institutions and approximately 1,000 teachers involved. Today the estimated number of SBS users is 45–50 institutions and about 200 teachers. The school could easily have become a segregated institution, but as a result of their activities, there are both Roma and non-Roma students in integrated classes.

One of the key factors due to which the integration activities of the school have succeeded is the fact that they use the SBS teaching method. This is a child-centred approach to teaching that emphasises the importance of family involvement in elementary school learning. The school organises various activities and programmes for parents which are joint for both Roma and non-Roma. There is no tension between Roma and non-Roma parents

and conflicts between the two groups are not common. Therefore, the integration takes place on multiple levels of society, both among children and the older generation.

Thanks to the school having a good professional reputation among the parents, it has a good name in the community as such. The institution organises open-door days so that anyone interested in its teaching method, facilities or any other aspect can visit and witness it firsthand. Another factor that contributes to the success of the integration endeavours is the fact that the school has good relationships with kindergartens in the area, it has sister classes in the kindergarten and it organises activities there as well. The transition from kindergarten to school is then quite smooth for students, which helps them to adapt quickly. Lastly, the school building is attractive, newly renovated and very well equipped with advanced sport facilities that enable the organisation of attractive extra-curricular activities.

Despite all of these activities, Mrs Jákiné Szabó Rita, the head of the Step by Step Methodological Centre, says that there is a growing number of Roma students in the school. She further adds that if the process of segregation speeds up, they will not have enough tools to stop the process.

Another school that attempts to integrate the majority population and the Roma minority is in Hódmezővásárhely, which is a medium-sized city in Hungary with about 48,000 inhabitants. In the year 2006, the city realised that that in 10 years' time the elementary school enrolment had dropped from 1,000 to 400 and that this would cause major problems in the educational system. In 2007, the city management started a project to redesign the whole elementary school system of Hódmezővásárhely focusing on good quality, effective, integrated education that also served the needs of the labour market.

The city management closed down all 11 existing elementary schools and funded 7 new institutions, two of which were not managed by the city. The institutions are supported with a school bus system run by the city. They have worked out a district system focusing on the equal distribution of children with multiple disadvantages in different elementary schools. During the process, the city cooperated with the Roma Minority Self-Government, the citizens, the parents, teachers, human rights organisations and the local and national media. The whole project resulted in an integrated elementary educational system, in institutions being more effective, and in the students having better results. The general opinion of experts is that this unique example is an extremely successful model for integrated education. The model could be spread and used in other cities as well where there is strong enough political willingness on the side of the city management.

http://www.budaivaroskapu.hu/

https://www.hodmezovasarhely.hu/welcome-to-the-website-of-hodmezovasarhely

Intercultural Workers in Brno City Municipality – Czech Republic

A positive example of how municipalities can prevent potential friction and security issues is represented by Brno City Municipality, which tries to take responsibility in the successful inclusion of migrants by creating a safe environment for both its local citizens and the migrant communities. One of the Municipality's current projects focuses on mapping the local leaders of migrant communities and their chosen communication platforms and channels. The aim of the project is to come closer to the migrant communities in order to meet their needs and provide adequate support.

Another innovative and pioneering project starting in autumn 2017 will bring intercultural mainstreaming among public institutions. The local administration will be offered the services of intercultural workers coming from the migrant communities themselves. Brno City Municipality will create a team of employees for working with incoming migrants. Members of the team will have the necessary language skills and will assist public institutions when dealing with foreigners. The needs of this group of people will continue to be mapped and new policies will be adopted if and when needed. The team will also be responsible for field work and cooperation with individual city districts and will help create a strategy for the integration of foreigners in Brno.

Additionally, special trainings to enhance the intercultural sensitivity of the local administration staff will be organised. A sustainable concept of integration will occur as one of the project outcomes as well. The final goal of the project is to develop intercultural permeability in various areas in public administration, to use the potential of foreigners in building a more vibrant and diverse city and to encourage their engagement in building a dialogue with local authorities. One of the advantages of these projects is the direct and active involvement of migrants and refugees in the integration efforts.

‘Jugendliche ohne Grenzen’ (Youth without Borders) – Germany

In many European countries, migrants and refugees are often dealt with through a ‘deputy concerned policy’. However, an organisation called Youth without Borders from Berlin follows the principle that those concerned have their own voice and do not need a deputy concerned policy. Individuals should decide themselves which forms of action they choose, and how they approach them.

Youth without Borders is an organisation of young refugees who can provide credible, first-hand information about their situation and formulate demands from the group they affect the most. They are multiplying their experience-based demands to the broader public quite effectively through inputs and workshops in conferences, educational events and participation in networks as well as political activism in campaigns or demonstrations. Being young people, they can reach the important target group of youth quite effectively (though it is not their only target group).

To be more specific, Youth without Borders organise political, cultural and educational activities. Most importantly, the network unites young refugees and supports them in becoming active members of society. They organise annual conferences and demonstrations around their core demands of a more humane asylum policy and stopping deportations and they engage in multiplying their demands through speeches, inputs, workshops, campaigns, publications, peer-learning activities etc. The organisation’s related goals include: the unreserved implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; the equality of refugees with the natives; the legalisation of people without papers (so-called illegals); equal opportunities, especially in the fields of education and the labour market; the right of return for specific deported individuals. http://jogspace.net/

Kto pomôže? (Who Will Help?) – Slovakia

In 2015, during the largest refugee crisis in the Middle East since 1948, the Slovak government declared that Slovakia had no capacities for the integration of refugees. In response to this declaration, the initiative Kto pomôže? was established as a national call for volunteers.

The first step of the initiative was to call on the Slovak government to accept 100 refugee and displaced families from Syria and Iraq in Slovakia. At the same time, they demanded that the government introduce a plan containing specific steps for integrating these families into communities and Slovak society as a whole. The government’s plan ought to be a public promise by thousands of Slovak families, individuals, organisations, churches and businesses committed to helping integrate the accepted women, men and children. The initiative found expert assistance and assistance in accepting refugees with partners from the non-governmental sector who have long been working in the field of integration.

The initial campaign http://ktopomoze.sk/ was able to collect more than 2,000 volunteers (individuals, families, communities) who have declared their readiness to provide very concrete assistance to refugees in their integration. One of the advantages of the campaign was the fact that it was publicly supported by well-known people. It was initiated by people from Christian Catholic circles having good relations and cooperation with church institutions and individual priests. However, crucially, it was inclusive of all people regardless of their religion.

Later, the organisation was run under the well-established Christian intellectual NGO Spoločenstvo Ladislava Hanusa (Ladislav Hanus Society) https://www.slh.sk/. The NGO, among several other organisations, received an official grant from the government to help refugees from the Middle East and North Africa. They trained several hundred people all around Slovakia who were ready to help with the integration process. The most striking problem they faced was the low number of refugees wanting to live in Slovakia. Thus, the initial enthusiasm of many volunteers has declined. In 2017, the initiative is transforming itself into an independent organisation, Mareena https://www.facebook.com/ktopomoze.sk/. It is a non-polarising, inclusive, locally based initiative of national significance giving various people and communities support in their attitude to help the needy. Their key activities revolve around integration and education and are community-based. The organisation works with both locals and refugees and aims to create a dialogue and cooperation between the two groups which will lead to integration. The organisation is planning to organise educational courses at schools where they will teach students about refugees and their role in integration. The initiative can be easily replicable because of its de-centralised and simple model of operation.

Welcome Migrants and Sunday Lunch Menedék – Hungary

Menedék – the Hungarian Association for Migrants is an NGO promoting the social integration of foreign citizens migrating to Hungary, as well as Hungarian and other citizens emigrating from Hungary. Menedék have been active for more than twenty years and currently have around 50 staff members. Menedék have developed a comprehensive system of services to support refugees and other foreigners in Hungary. They also organise sensitivity trainings for professionals who deal with immigrants in their course of work (social workers, teachers, police officers and armed security guards working in immigration detention centres). The NGO have their headquarters in Budapest, but they have colleagues working also in Bicske, Fót and Vámosszabadi. It is also their objective to make the majority of society more open to immigrants and refugees and they operate cultural and educational programmes toward that aim.

One of these programmes is called **Welcome migrants.** In this project, celebrities have agreed to host a migrant or a family in their homes for a few days. Their time together was documented in a video. Menedék produced 4 videos and a 'making of' documentary which were then disseminated online. The videos and newspaper articles about them received more than one million views. The films were also disseminated at an offline event in a well-known Hungarian bar. There was a round table discussion about the civic solutions of migrants' housing problems and people could try meals from international cuisine.

A few years ago Menedék also had a programme called **Sunday lunch**, which aimed at building a bridge between migrants/refugees and the majority of society through the culinary arts. It included events where immigrant and Hungarian families cooked for each other, a cookbook publication with international recipes written by a Hungarian gastro blogger who interviewed 15 immigrants living in Hungary and short films documenting encounters between immigrants and Hungarians. The project ended with a final event where the films, photos and cookbook were presented and participants were given a taste of some of the meals. Menedék also organise leisure programmes for minority and majority citizens together such as yoga, boxing classes and gardening in a community garden.

The success of Menedék lies not only in the more than twenty years of experience with issues of migration and integration, but also in the innovative and non-polarising character of their activities. Using multimedia such as short videos and films which are disseminated via the media and with the help of publicly known people is a good way of reaching a large audience. Additionally, the organisation of various leisure activities for both migrants and locals where both groups can relax, have fun and establish relations among themselves is a great tactic for successful community building, which leads to smooth integration.

http://menedek.hu/

Kinder im Zentrum Gallus e.V. – Germany

The non-profit association Kinder im Zentrum Gallus e.V. runs a multi-generation house in Frankfurt am Main. Over 75 full-time employees work in the house and are supported by 100 volunteers and interns.

The NGO is a **migrant self-organisation** that focusses on the field of education in Frankfurt's Gallus district. The multi-generation house provides a huge variety of offers for people of all ages in the neighbourhood. It is seen as a meeting point and a space for activities and learning, which comprises, for instance, prenatal classes, kindergartens (the first Arabic-German bilingual kindergarten), education programmes for gifted youth, special programmes for elderly people, social assistance for families, job orientation courses, German language courses (e.g. German courses for mothers), music classes, cultural events, a tailor's shop, a cosmetic studio, a café and many other things.

The target group are the residents of Frankfurt's Gallus district, many of whom have a history of migration in their families, who have lived there for generations. People from neighbouring districts also take advantage of these offers. Originally, the core target group was youth but since the house was turned into a multi-generation house in 2007, the target group comprises locals of all ages. In the past few years, they have also offered support for refugees from nearby shelters in various languages.

The house has a very good reputation in the neighbourhood. Municipal institutions like the 'Volkshochschule' (an adult education centre), public music school and the opera house support and cooperate with them as do large and small companies and businesses. International business people living in the nearby 'Europaviertel' neighbourhood cooperated to finally open the first grammar school in the Gallus district in 2013.

By now, the organisation can look back at 40 years of experience in making offers to people from the neighbourhood. Quite importantly, being a migrant organisation always enabled them to be aware of the needs of their largely migrant target group. Hence, they were able to support them with the right offers and did not plan activities that did not meet the locals' demands. In addition, their cultural experience and linguistic skills made it easier for them to bond with their target group. Pursuing an empowering approach creates an open atmosphere that invites everybody to participate. They have cooperated with the city municipality to include regular educational institutions into their multi-generational house instead of sending children to more distant institutions.

http://www.kiz-gallus.de/

United Colors: Social Enterprises of Roma – Slovakia

The Roma minority are often associated with various negative stereotypes. They tend to be viewed as lazy, dirty or even criminals by the majority of the population. At the same time, because of the disadvantaged backgrounds they often come from, there is high unemployment among the Roma people. Social enterprises of the Roma help fight stereotypes, link the minority and the majority, and give self-confidence and jobs to the minority.

An association of young Roma have launched a **laundry and ironing service, United Colors**. The social enterprise is run by the community centre in Valaska, in central Slovakia. In 2016, it won a prize for the best social enterprise. The laundry and ironing service creates opportunities for increasing employment and minority access to a regular income and reducing poverty and social exclusion. Through work and education, its clients discover their skills and qualities, build self-confidence and learn to take responsibility for their lives. Currently, around twenty people are employed in the Multifunctional Community Centre in Valaska, near Brezno.

United Colors do not provide their services in Valaska only; in 2016 they came to Pohoda, the biggest summer music festival in Slovakia. The visitors to the festival were surprised when they first saw the laundry and ironing service. However, as soon as the initial surprise was overcome, people went there to wash their clothes. Customers talked with the employees and were interested in finding more about this intriguing project. Some visitors to the festival even offered financial or other support. The initiative is non-conflicting, positive and connecting rather than dividing. Through social enterprises, young Roma successfully fight social insecurity.

http://www.youngroma.sk/kontakt/

MigraNet: Regional Network for Migrant Integration – Romania

The MigraNet Project began in 2016 and lasted until May 2017, with the League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADO) as the main Romanian organisation running it. The project created a network aimed at improving the process of integration for beneficiaries of protection (BP), i.e. refugees and third country nationals (TCN), typically labour migrants in the Romanian context. The project offers the capacity for cooperation between institutions and relevant actors, as well as supporting BP and TCN economically, socially and culturally.

This is the first and only project connecting institutions and non-governmental organisations working with refugees in Romania and it allows refugees to access all the information they need by simply arriving at one point of this network. For instance, a BP who goes to a social worker will be told about counselling services, Romanian language courses, cultural meetings and many other things. The project is supported by a network of intercultural mediators, a network of journalists, and academics. The project has had a number of publications, local seminars, counselling services, Romanian language courses and hundreds of beneficiaries.

The MigraNet project offers assistance and guidance in three areas. First, it offers guidance services for access to the labour market. Second, it offers counselling services regarding the rights and obligations of migrants in Romania; medical, educational, social protection, legal and psychological assistance; and help with obtaining Romanian citizenship and a residence. Third, the project offers material support for numerous needs that include the payment of health insurance, medicines, psychological services, costs of document translation and legalisation, legal services, Romanian language courses, groceries, kindergarten or boarding school costs etc.

http://ladocluj.ro/proiecte/migranet/

Innovative educational programme in Hejőkeresztúr – Hungary

A small village in Borsod County, Hungary, with one thousand inhabitants had a problem with depopulation until 2006. In order to attract more pupils and students, the local school (more precisely, the director of the school) decided to adapt and implement a curriculum and method called the 'Program for Complex Instruction' (PCI), which is based on several pillars, and was first piloted by Stanford University.

The method builds on teamwork during lessons, where participants use board games and other informal educational tools to make the best of their time. Another pillar involves calling for intergenerational problems to solve, thus it creates a dialogue between the children and parents, who are equally involved in the process of effective learning. The phenomenon of locally adapted initiative is usually cited as the 'hejokereszturi model', a pedagogical methodology. It intends to make a tangible difference in compensating for students' disproportional inequalities by teaching and developing the differently achieving students put in one class (heterogeneous classrooms), providing them with the best of quality in terms of encouraging integrated education. It adherently decreases the gaps of educational outcomes and general achievements of the students involved, especially with a focus on the gap between the Roma and the non-Roma. The findings of a series of studies point out that adapting 'PCI' (in Hungarian: KIP – Komplex Instrukciós Program) methodology benefits both the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students. Further, it improves the underachieving and overachieving students' cognitive development, as well as their behavioural patterns, which require space to grow.

Apart from Hejokeresztur, more than 20 primary schools and 4 high schools (the Hungarian formulae of *gimnazium* or *szakkozepiskola*) participate in the respective pedagogical program utilising PCI nationwide. Currently, numbers reveal that more than 4,000 students and approximately 400 pedagogical experts and teachers utilise this methodology. The respective model has a high reputation worldwide, and is widely known by fellow professionals and practitioners. In 2016, an important milestone was realised with the founding of a Regional Centre of Hejokeresztur's PCI with the co-sponsoring support of the University of Miskolc.

In a Hungarian context, the success story of the 'hejokereszturi model' inevitably targets the Roma population. Such good practices do exist nationwide, but regarding the aspect of sustainability, this program seems to be one of the most outstanding in upholding its working flow, its process, and the overall commitment of all relevant stakeholders. Here, the notion is that piloting the methodology in more than 30 municipalities indicates that only the most committed board of teachers and institutions are convincing enough to make a paradigm shift for the better, for the students.

http://www.hejokeresztur.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=281&Itemid=201

4. Specific initiatives aimed at dialogue between LGBT and Christian communities

Here are several examples of interesting approaches on how to start public discussion of the issues dealing with LGBT and family values. The method depends on the specific country context, however, what these examples have in common is the attempt to show similarities and common good rather than differences in faith and values.

Christians for Gays Movement – Hungary

The Christians for Gays Movement is an informal group of Christian people consisting in about 10–20 members from different denominations who work on a volunteer basis. Their objective is to begin a dialogue between Christian and LGBTQ+ communities, as they have found that there is often tension between them even though they get along on an individual level. These two types of communities tend not to know each other and to have an unrealistic image about the other. Once they can be brought into the same space and start to get to know each other, their opinion can change.

The movement first appeared with some pictograms at the Budapest Pride; for example 'It is awful how the Church treats you, I'm sorry!', 'We would like to listen to you and understand you', 'Jesus loves us all'. Later the group started attending festivals like LIFT (Festival of Lesbian Identities) as well as church events. Last year they organised an event as part of a larger programme called 'LGBT history month' where clergymen and gay Christians discussed various topics of interest with the group. This year the movement visited a Protestant congregation where they held a workshop.

The Christians for Gays movement feel that their attempts at promoting reconciliation between Christians and LGBTQ+ are successful as people gain information at their events which – sooner or later – changes their mindset or shapes their opinion. They primarily provide spaces for people from 'opposing sides' to meet and provide the opportunity for invited speakers to say things that influence people to become more tolerant. The success of the initiative lies mostly in the strategy of dialogue and reconciliation of the two opposing groups, rather than their further polarisation.

https://keresztenyekamelegekerthu.wordpress.com/

https://www.facebook.com/KeresztenyekAMelegekert/?fref=ts

Same-Sex Adoption Campaign: Different Families, Same Rights – Czech Republic

Even though the 'Different Families, Same Rights' campaign of the PROUD platform did not achieve its goal this year, there are many constructive elements which could be replicated in other civic initiatives dealing with similar topics. The campaign was launched in 2013 with the aim to legalise the adoption of a biological child by the social parent, and to legalise individual or same-sex adoption in registered partnerships. Its focus was not reduced only to lobbying and changing discriminatory legislation, but the campaign focused on making visible Czech homoparental families and their concerns to the wider public and to educate the latter.

One of the strengths of the campaign was that they approached and gained the attention of influential political figures. PROUD prepared the proposal for same-sex adoption and received support from 30 deputies across all political parties, which is very rare. The activists launched a petition to back up the proposal and encouraged citizens to actively approach deputies with their concerns. When Parliament did not concede to bring forth the proposal, PROUD negotiated it with the government and gained support from 12 ministers, which was an historical success. Their lobbying strategy and negotiation methods proved to be crucial in gaining support from politicians from different or even opposing blocks.

Additionally, politicians, economists, artists and other public figures were asked to support the cause by taking pictures of themselves wearing a T-shirt stating that they encourage the proposal of same-sex adoption. A gallery of more than 100 public figures emerged, including Minister of Justice Robert Pelikán, Minister of Finance Andrej Babiš, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Michaela Marksová-Tominová, former Human Rights Minister Jiří Dienstbier and many others.

Another attempt to engage the public in a participative way and to counter prejudice was to ask same-sex couples to post pictures with their children from Christmas celebrations on social network, showing there are no differences in the everyday life of same-sex and heterosexual couples. Many couples did so and once more demonstrated their 'normality'.

The biggest achievement of the campaign was the improvement of the perception of same-sex couples and adoption in the whole of society. PROUD conducted many workshops with youngsters and seniors as well as dozens of public debates and many negotiations with companies to be more open to all employees regardless of their sexual orientation. They created the bePROUD prize for the best employer of the year. Their work with the media was based on personal contact and careful work with journalists. As a result, the image of same-sex couples and families improved and so did public support, which increased from 58 % in favour of same-sex adoption in 2014 to 62 % in 2016. Although the topic itself might seem marginal – 'only' 2,000 children are currently being raised by same-sex couples – the campaign succeeded in sensibilising a large part of society, to be supported and accepted by heterosexual couples.

http://proud.cz/

Let Us Offer Each Other the Sign of Peace – Poland

The 'Let Us Offer Each Other the Sign of Peace' campaign started in September 2016 and was financed by the Open Society Foundations. Its title refers to a custom, the exchange of a handshake or a bow, performed during the Catholic mass. The poster for the campaign, a photo of a handshake, refers directly to this gesture. The campaign was incepted by the Kph, Wiara i Tęcza (Faith and Rainbow – WiT) and Tolerado. Its uniqueness consists in the fact that these three LGBT organisations were joined by, among others, three relevant Catholic periodicals, which in the provided documents were described as 'media partners': *Więź*, *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Znak*.

An explicit goal of the campaign was not to support specific legal solutions concerning the LGBT community but to promote civil discourse between often antagonistic milieus: Catholics and LGBT groups. The project was popularised through the distribution of billboards, posters and short films with statements from people, e.g., members of the editorial teams, taking part in the campaign.

It is difficult to verify what impact this campaign had on the dispute over LGBT people. Its pioneering character, however, was noticed in the media: information on the campaign was included in every relevant periodical and TV station. What has to be emphasised is that it was criticised by the authorities of the Catholic Church (the Polish Episcopal Conference issued an official opinion according to which 'Catholics should not take part in the campaign') and the right-wing media. Thus, it would be naive to expect that the campaign would bring about unification of the two opposite poles with Catholics on one hand and LGBT groups on the other. However, it cannot be denied that the campaign was an important first step that can lead to a dialogue between them.

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PDCS
Štúrova 13, 811 02 Bratislava, Slovakia
phone: +421 252 925 016
email: pdcs@pdcs.sk
www.pdcs.sk

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