

**Understanding Organizational Pluralism within National Minorities: An
Explorative Study on the Cases of Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania and Slovakia**

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Abstract

The paper examines the prospects of political pluralism within national minority communities, that is, whether these minorities are represented by a single ethnic party or by multiple ones. The focus is on four communities: the Turks in Bulgaria, the Albanians in Macedonia, and the Hungarians in Romania and Slovakia. Special attention is devoted to the strategies adopted by the ethnic parties representing these groups (most importantly participation in government) in order to understand the logic behind the appearance of different splinter groups and alternative organizations, and their chances for success. The conclusion is that contrarily to an argument that can be found in the literature, ethnic parties are not particularly vulnerable to assuming governmental office, though the choice of such a strategy undoubtedly entails risks by offering ammunition for rival organizations. Rather, the success of alternative ethnic parties depends heavily on the structural characteristics of the group, as well as on the opportunities of entry into the political system. The organizational divisions within the ethnic groups can be classified into two categories: alternative parties formed with the aid of some of the elites of the majorities with the explicit intention of weakening the main ethnic parties, and rival parties formed because of disagreement about the strategy that should be adopted, which usually demand more a more radical strategy.