

The Extreme Right in Eastern Europe and Territorial Issues

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Abstract: This article analyses and compares the different territorial conceptions of the extreme right in Eastern Europe and their political impact, with a view to explaining how important the historical legacy of the supposed territorial and border claims and injustices is for the identity of the extreme right (or their parts) in contemporary Eastern Europe. It analyses the historical roots of the territorial claims of the extreme right in the area, the current situation regarding their territorial claims and disputes, and the impact of these territorial claims on domestic politics, on the politics of the extreme right at the European level and on regional security in this area.

Key words: *Annexation, Eastern Europe, Extreme right, Irredentism, Separatism, Territorial claims*

1. Introduction

The extreme right constitutes an important part of the political spectrum in the political systems in East Central Europe. One of the important issues in researching the extreme right is its relation to territorial claims in this area. This problem is an interesting challenge not only for research into extremism, but also for security studies and political geography. The historical roots of contemporary problems relate this research also to historical science, or, more precisely, to contemporary history.

Extreme right politics in Eastern Europe is accompanied by territorial claims of organizations and movements from this part of the political spectrum. Extreme nationalists attempt to change the borders according to their historical conceptions. Clashes between the different historical legacies and historical myths related to territorial claims led to many disputes between extreme right organizations from various countries. Territorial claims have an impact on the basic identity of some extreme right organizations and movements which attempt to enforce

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territorial changes. These issues are often an important part of their domestic political propaganda. This paper analyses some of the important issues which are connected with the territorial claims of the Eastern European extreme right.

It tries to answer the question how these historical territorial legacies determine contemporary policies and the identity of the East European extreme right. The goal of the article is also an assessment of the territorial claims of the extreme right as a security risk in this area, including the analysis of relations between the extreme right and the main political forces in Eastern European countries. In this article, by the term "Eastern Europe", we understand the former communist bloc in Europe; Europe is defined in the geographical sense (the Caucasus is not included).

The conceptualization of the extreme right in East Central Europe in this article is derived from the approach of Lubomír Kopeček, who was inspired mostly by Cas Mudde. Kopeček speaks about the growing convergence of the East Central European far right and the Western European far right. However, he also writes about the situation in the East Central European region: "Anti-immigrant nationalism is almost non-existent, or appears only as a fringe phenomenon. But a nearly-equivalent 'substitute' has appeared in the form of the numerous traditional national resentments and animosities that existed in the region before the Communist era, both in relation to neighbors, as well as toward various minorities. In particular, nationalism influenced by history (and linked to xenophobia) became the most visible feature of the local far right." (Kopeček 2007b: 288)

2. Territorial disputes and nationalism as a challenge to security and democracy

The international order in Eastern Europe has included intrastate as well as international territorial disputes since the establishing of modern nations in this area. According to Stanislav J. Kirchbaum, "in the process of self-determination in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries national homogeneity was a core value that had to be achieved. However, the history of nation-building experience in the region tells us that the attainment of such homogeneity was simply not possible." (Kirchbaum 2007: 4) This problem determined the development of the crisis in this region in the 20th century, following the emergence of new states after the end of World War I.

Judy Batt analyzed the situation concisely: "the idea of the nation in the Central and East European context began to depart from the state-centered French concept, which defined citizens in terms of residence on the state's territory, and moved towards a definition which drew political borders along cultural and linguistic lines" (Batt 2003: 12). Batt presents another

important result of her research regarding the new interwar states: “most states were not ‘nation states’ in the sense in which their new rulers had expected – states of and for a single, united nation, but contained sizeable minorities, more or less aggrieved at the changes in borders that had taken place over their heads” (Batt 2003: 13).

Nationalist clashes were partially frozen during the communist era. After the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, the rise in nationalism led to several armed conflicts, the disruption of former federal states (Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia) and an increase in domestic as well as international disputes between various national and ethnic groups, including disputes over territorial status. These issues determined also the democratic development of the states in question.

In 1994 Donald H. Horowitz wrote: “In Eastern Europe, democracy has progressed furthest in those countries that have the fewest serious ethnic cleavages (Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland) and progressed more slowly or not at all in those that are deeply divided (Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, and of course, the former Yugoslavia)” (Horowitz 1994: 140). National conflicts and border disputes posed serious threats to security in the post-communist countries, not to mention the economic differences between transforming economies and unrestrained armies and weapons arsenals (Oswald 1993: 104). The dramatic situation of the 1990s was replaced by the more stabilized order of the new century; however, several problematic regions and a number of risk factors are still a threat to security in this area.

In 2000, Ted Robert Gurr analyzed 275 ethnic groups in the context of his risk study. According to Gurr, in Eastern Europe and in the newly formed independent states in the 1990s, “the creation of new states and the politicization of ethnic cleavages within them have increased sharply the number of politically active minorities” (Gurr 2000: 13). On the other hand, “the increase in number of groups is offset by a decline in their aggregate proportion of the regional population” (Gurr 2000: 13).

Together with Monthly G. Marshal, Gurr arrived at the conclusion that the situation in the Balkans, the situation of Russians in the near abroad and the situation in Moldova can be assessed as a medium for future ethnic wars, despite the fact that the risk level has declined (Marshall, Gurr 2000: 239-244).

The situation in Eastern Europe might be considered a security risk at the end of the first decade of the new century as well. Territorial demands – mostly irredentism – have been and still are amongst the most important issues when assessing threats to security. However, the process

of Europeanization has created a new situation. Right-wing organizations have taken the place of the official state policy as the main promoters of irredentist and other territorial demands.

3. Territory and extreme right-wing identity

In European history, territorial claims have not dominated the politics of the extreme right only. They have been articulated and enforced by various political forces. However, the contemporary extreme right is often the only representative of open territorial claims towards other states. It articulates their territorial claims openly, while other political forces are mostly moderate in this area, or they have given up on these claims altogether because of current international standards (UN Charter 1945, The Helsinki Final Act 1975, The Charter of Paris 1990 etc.) or the values of mainstream European political culture. In this sense, the traditional border disputes and conflicts in Europe (and with some exceptions also in Eastern Europe) were often transferred almost entirely to the extreme right part of the political spectrum – at domestic, transnational and European levels.

Traditional extreme right-wing identity is closely connected with territoriality, because territory is one of the most important elements of the national state. A strong national state presents the highest value for most extreme right-wing organizations in the modern world. Nationalism is one of the basic elements of extreme right-wing identity (Segert 2006: 60).

The beliefs of traditional extreme right-wing organizations are influenced by geopolitics, in the sense that “political identity and action” are “(more or less) determined by geography” (Evans, Newnham 1998: 197). The great state is, according to the traditional extreme right, a strong state. The traditional national interests – soil, natural resources, access to water etc. – are important to extreme right-wing propaganda. This was the main reason for extreme right-wing expansionism in the past (Blamires 2006).

Territory is an important element in the survival of a nation in the contemporary extreme right-wing ideological background as well (Faye 2006: 88-89). Today, the extreme right-wing focus on territorial claims is often motivated by the position of a “protector” of the historical national legacy, which the extreme right claims for itself. Historical national struggles in Eastern Europe – as well as modern wars – are related to territorial disputes. A very important factor in the case of the “great state” concepts (see below) is the idea of unifying one’s own nation in one national state.

In the first half of the 20th century, extreme right-wing demands were not only focused on the restoration of their respective national territories (in their perception of “fair, traditional

borders”), but also on expansionism and colonialism, mostly in regimes under the rule of extreme right-wing movements (Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and the struggle for “*Lebensraum*”) (Borejsza 1999: 271). During World War II, the German Nazis organized a European fight against bolshevism and “World Jewry” with an imperial dimension (such concepts are still important to contemporary neo-Nazis).

After World War II and after the decolonization process, most extreme right-wing demands have been connected chiefly with the historical territorial extent of some states (in the sense of the national myths about “justified territory” for the respective nations). The traditional extreme right enforces its territorial demands with aggressive and intolerant rhetoric and sometimes by the use of violent methods. Disclaimers of such claims could be designated as a tendency to moderation, modernization or *Salonfähigkeit* of extreme right subjects in most cases.

Part of the European extreme right attempts to overcome traditional nationalist disputes, mostly in favor of a common European identity (along the lines of the right-wing attitude towards preserving and respecting traditional nations). They aim to defend the European territory against various internal and external enemies. However, traditional nationalist conflicts – mostly territorial conflicts and disputes over the historical interpretations of various events – cause complications in transnational extreme right-wing cooperation.

The traditional spectrum of extreme right-wing territorial demands, which is valid also in contemporary Eastern Europe, could be divided into the following categories:

- a) separatism (in the strict sense of the word – separating the territory of more states to form new ones) or secessionism (the secession of the territory of one state in order to establish a new state on this territory); extreme right separatist or secessionist organizations are only one ideological stream of separatism/secessionism, as there are many left-wing and other separatist/secessionist organizations;
- b) annexation (the territory of a current foreign state is to be annexed to another state’s territory; it is either the whole territory of one or more states or a part of the territory of one or more states), which is, as a rule, related to irredentism;
- c) irredentism (the territory containing the population of the same nationality or religion borders to a state where this nation or religion have a dominant position; irredentism is often closely interconnected with annexation; current extreme right-wing irredentist organizations among ethnic minorities are often connected with expansionist extreme right-wing organizations in the states where the ethnic group constitutes a dominant majority).

Thomas Ambrosio distinguishes between various levels of irredentism – actual annexation, effective annexation, contested annexation, informal acceptance of borders, formal acceptance of borders and full withdrawal of territorial claims (Ambrosio 2001: 23).

Extreme right-wing organizations in other countries (threatened by such demands) formulate their counter-strategies. Various forms of extreme right-wing extremism could also be part of ethnic extremism (Zariski 1989); on the other hand, extreme right-wing orientation is uncommon amongst ethnic extremists in contemporary Europe (Mareš 2003a: 335).

4. Historical territorial changes in Eastern Europe and the role of the extreme right

Border changes are typical within the context of European history. Many current border disputes between extreme right-wing organizations from different countries have their roots in the distant past. Some areas were under the rule of various states during various eras and they have multinational populations. It is impossible to find historical “justice” that would be respected by all the sides that are engaged in conflict to gain a particular territory.

Major current disputes in Eastern Europe are connected with four historical eras. The first of them is the development after World War I. After the “great war” and the breakup of great empires (the German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires), Eastern Europe fell into many local armed conflicts (Allmayer-Beck 1990) and disputes over borders (namely between Poland and the Ukraine, between Czechoslovaks and Hungarians, between Romanians and Hungarians, between Austrians and Yugoslavians etc.) or conflicts caused by different political orientation (mostly left-wing extremists against other parts of the political spectrum; the civil war and intervention in Russia after the Bolshevik revolution and the war between the Soviets and Poland in 1921 had a special character). The small military or paramilitary units of the new or provisional state units were mostly under the influence of strong nationalism and a part of their members created a base for new fascist and ultraconservative right-wing extremist movements.

The territorial division of Europe, embodied in the Treaty of Versailles (with Germany), the Treaty of Trianon (with Hungary), the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine (with Bulgaria), the Treaty of Sévres (with Turkey) and the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (with Austria), was not accepted by many people and politicians from the disfavored nations; on the other hand, those who gained territories were strongly against critics of the post-war settlement. The most visible critics of the territorial organization of interwar Europe were the extreme right-wing politicians

from the leading nations of the former Central Powers (Germany, Hungary and only partially Austria).

However, some other political forces with specific territorial claims also leaned towards the extreme right, mostly various separatist movements in the new multinational states (Croatian separatists in Yugoslavia, Slovak separatists in Czechoslovakia etc.). Irredentist movements were related to right-wing movements and (later) regimes in neighboring countries (e.g. German or Hungarian irredentism in Czechoslovakia). Anti-Bolshevik nationalists from the Ukraine, Belarus and other areas occupied by the communist Soviet rule tried to organize resistance abroad or (to a certain extent) on their own territories.

The second era began after the start of the Nazi German eastward expansion between 1938 and 1939 (the “Anschluss” of Austria, the occupation of the Sudetenland after the Munich Agreement and later the occupation of the rest of the Czech Lands) and the Soviet expansion in Poland, the Baltic states, Finland and Bessarabia between 1939 and 1940. It continued during World War II. New border changes came into place. These events formed the basis for some major contemporary right-wing extremist models (e.g. the shape of Hungary after the Vienna arbitration in 1939). The Legacy of World War II is important especially to neo-Nazis of various nations, because the territories from this era were part of the “New European Order” (Kestler 2007), which is a model for the current plans of neo-Nazi organizations.

The era of World War II constitutes a significant source of historical traditions for nationalists in some countries as well, because in those days, their national states existed as (quasi)independent units (e.g. the Croatian state, the Slovak state etc.) for the first time. Current nationalist propaganda often emphasizes the formal independence of such states of the Third Reich, sometimes with the use of territorial arguments. For example, Slovak nationalist historian Milan S. Ďurica wrote in 2000 that in 1941, Slovakia claimed small territories in “*Grossdeutsches Reich*” (in current Austria) and in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia under German rule. For him, this is evidence of the sovereignty of the Slovak state, because it was criticized as “unacceptable interference” in Germany. According to Ďurica, it was a very specific case in the context of the World War II in Europe (Ďurica 2000: 27-28).

After World War II came the third era of significant territorial changes in Eastern Europe, mostly to the benefit of the Soviet Union (annexation of Eastern territories of former Poland, new occupation of the Baltic states, annexation of Subcarpathian Rus, which was until 1945 part of Czechoslovakia). A specific territorial change was the transfer of Poland towards the

East. Poland received former German territories behind the Oder-Neisse line. The German population was expelled from East European territories (Benz 1994: 117).

According to Jaroslav Krejčí, “The scope of ethnic conflict was considerably reduced by the huge transfers of population and changes of boundaries after the Second World War. The idea of separating peoples of different ethnic and/or religious affiliations who, because of acute communal hatred, cannot live peacefully together, was followed on an unprecedented scale in Central Europe.” (Krejčí 1991: 11)

These territorial changes were mainly realized without significant engagement on the part of the extreme right, which was, in the post-war atmosphere, mostly prohibited in East European countries. Only some small nationalist (and often extremist) guerilla units tried to fight in the second half of the 1940s against the new rule (e.g. Ukrainian Insurgent Army UPA or some units in Belarus and the Baltic states); however, without any significant effect.

The communist era and the Cold War froze the border changes in Eastern Europe, as well as significant activity of the far right on their territories. The far right in Germany claimed the lost territories behind the Oder-Neisse line, while the far right in Italy claimed territories in Slovenia and Istria. Some far right-wing separatists operated from exile in western democracies, e.g. Croatian or Slovak separatists. Croatian separatists also started a terrorist campaign against Yugoslav targets. A very important factor in the post-World War II changes was the fact that the territorial benefits of some nations were guaranteed by the Soviet Union and the new territorial order was accepted and defended also within communist movements. However, territorial disputes existed also within the Eastern Bloc, mostly in the case of Romania and its claims in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina on the one hand, and Hungarian claims in Transylvania on the other hand. These problems led to a strong nationalistic tendency in Romanian communism (Fischer-Galati 1988: 50-51).

The fall of communism and the (mostly violent) dissolution of former communist federal states caused problems with minorities and borders. The strongest conflicts took place in former Yugoslavia as well as in the former Soviet Union. Russian minorities in the new post-Soviet states, which are a specific legacy of communism, are (after the break up of the Soviet Union) a focus of Russian extreme right-wing extremist propaganda. However, territorial and national conflicts are not characteristic of post-Soviet or post-Yugoslav areas only. Territorial disputes and claims are – to a certain extent – typical of many extreme right-wing organizations in Eastern Europe. Also, the extreme right in former non-communist states (Finland, Italy, re-unified Germany) asserts traditional territorial claims towards neighboring countries in the East.

5. Major contemporary territorial claims of extreme right-wing organizations in East Central Europe

Contemporary extreme right-wing politics in Eastern Europe is characterized by various territorial disputes. The most sensitive of these are claims to “Great States”, in the sense of a struggle for the unification of one nation into one national state. Various historical conceptions are used for the rationalization of such demands. Other states, quite understandably, protest against the threat to their national territory to the benefit of foreign nations.

The concept of “Great Hungary” has its historical roots in post-World War I period, when the Hungarian territory was limited to the benefit of neighboring states, and after the Vienna Arbitration in 1939. Current Hungarian extreme right-wing groups support the irredentism of territories, together with Hungarian minorities in Southern Slovakia, the Ukraine, Romania (Transylvania), Serbia (Vojvodina) and Croatia, with the goal to create a greater Hungarian state, mostly within the borders from 1920.

This tendency is most significant in the name of the organization the Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement (*Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom* – HVIM). Before the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, Hungary was composed of 64 counties, including the territory of current neighboring states (Bernáth, Miklosi, Mudde 2005: 87-88). However, also other Hungarian right-wing extremists tried to profile themselves in the field of territorial claims. The current position of the extreme right in Hungary is weak on the level of the political system (no extreme right-wing party has parliamentary representation). However, there exists a relatively strong militant scene.

A risk element is represented by the Hungarian Guard (*Magyar Gárda*), a paramilitary branch of the Movement for a Better Hungary (*Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom*). In 2007 the National Guard (*Nemzeti Örsereg*) was established. In November 2008, their members tried to commemorate the results of the Vienna Arbitration in 1938 (Hungarian territorial benefits in southern Slovakia and in Sub-Carpathian Rus); however, the Slovak police detained the militants (Tlačová agentúra Slovenskej Republiky 2008).

Romanian extreme right-wing groups oppose strongly the Hungarian claims; on the other hand, they attempt to enforce their own concept of “Great Romania”. It means current Romanian territory plus the territories of Bukovina and Bessarabia, which are currently under Ukrainian and Moldova rule. The complicated situation in Moldova fuels up extreme right-wing demands in Romania. The most important representative of the aforementioned concept is the Party of Great Romania (*Partidul România Mare* – PRM). This concept is supported also by other

extreme right-wing organizations, including the New Right (*Noua Dreapta* – ND) with paramilitary tendencies (Shafir 1999: 218-219).

The state with the greatest territorial losses in the post-communist territorial development is Serbia. Its last territorial loss is the Kosovo territory in 2008. However, Serbian nationalists struggle for the establishing of the “Greater Serbia” on territories with a Serbian minority, as well as in Kosovo, which is claimed to be a historical part of Serbia.

The most important representative of the “Greater Serbian” concept is the Serbian Radical Party (*Srpska Radikalna Stranka* – SRS). Its goal is to annex Montenegro, the Serbian part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbian Dubrovnik, Serbian Dalmacia, Serbian Kordun, Serbian Banovina, Serbian Slavonia, Serbian Western Srem, Serbian Baranjej and Serbian Macedonia to central Serbia. This party also supported the existence of Republika Srpska Krajina. This claim is aimed at contemporary Croatian territory (Sovák 2007: 39). The SRS is a strong party within the Serbian party system. A number of smaller, often militant organizations (*Obraz*, *Legion of st. Tsar Lazar* etc.) also support the idea of “Greater Serbia”.

A concurrence for Serbian claims is in the concept of “Great Albania”, which is supported by Albanian nationalists. It means the creation of an Albanian state from all the territories in the Western Balkans with an Albanian population – Kosovo, a part of Montenegro, a part of Serbia, a part of Macedonia and a part of Greece. In contemporary Albania, the idea of “Great Albania” is supported only by small extreme right parties (the Party of Progress and Law – *Partija Lëvizja e Legalitetit* – PLL and National Front – *Ballit Kombëtar* – BR). This idea has limited support in Kosovo (Stojarová 2007: 184-185); however, some guerilla and terrorist units are fighting for this concept in Macedonia, Serbia and Greece.

In the post-Yugoslavian area, there are also several other extreme right-wing organizations which try to use myths about a “justified” territory for their own nations in their propaganda. The myth of the historical state of Karantania is very important to Slovenian nationalists. The Slovenian National Party (*Slovenska nacionalna stranka* – SNS) uses in its propaganda, namely in the party logo, the map of Slovenia drawn in 1853 with the current state territory and parts of the neighboring countries – Austrian Carinthia, Croatian Istria and Italian Furlania-Julian Region (Peace Institut, Trplan 2005: 245). However, it plays a marginal role in the actual policies of the party. The idea of Carinthia is very important also to other right-wing organizations in Slovenia.

Border disputes have also existed between Bulgarian and Macedonian nationalists. The former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia is in a specific situation because Greece rejects its

name out of fear of hypothetical Macedonian claims on the territory of contemporary Greece. This has led to Macedonian-Greek disputes (Honzák, Pečenka, Stellner, Vlčková 2001: 375).

There are border disputes and claims also in other areas of post-communist Europe. A very specific claim was declared by the Association for the Republic – the Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (*Sdružení pro republiku – Republikánská strana Československa* – SPR-RSČ). Its leader Miroslav Sládek requested the re-annexation of Sub-Carpathian Rus to Czechoslovakia, repeating this request also after the break-up of Czechoslovakia and the creation of the Czech Republic, despite the fact that the Czech Republic has no common borders with the claimed territory. However, at that time, it was more of a tabloid matter than a real proposition (Mareš 2003b: 209).

Similarly, Polish ultranationalist claims in Lithuania and the Ukraine and Slovak claims in Poland have only a relatively limited strength within the extreme right-wing spectrum today. No real claim has been declared by Slovak nationalists in the South Moravian territory in the contemporary Czech Republic (in contrast to the World War II period, when some Moravian Slovaks supported it). However, some Slovak nationalist organizations and historians regard Moravian Slovaks as part of the Slovak nation and they consider this territory as part of the historical Slovakia (Bednář 2006: 29-30).

The Russian extreme right-wing struggle for the unification of Russia into one state presents a specific dimension of territorial claims. Russian minorities in the post-Soviet states outside Russia are under strong mental pressure – once members of the leading nation of the Soviet empire, they have sometimes turned into second-class citizens of the new states. In relation to that, Pål Kolstø speaks about “post-imperial diasporas” (Kolstø 1996: 613). Their feelings benefit the extreme right-wing propaganda within these minorities as well as in Russia. Paradoxically, in this context, a part of the extreme right supports the re-unification of the Soviet Union.

The most influential Russian extreme right-wing party – the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, does not only aim to re-establish the Russian empire within former USSR borders, but also to expand the Russian Empire to the Indian Ocean (Umland 2006: 385). This party also has regional branches in various post-Soviet republics, together with some other Russian extreme right-wing groupings (National Bolshevik Party of Russia – *Национал-большевистская партия* – NBP, NBPR; Russian National Unity – *Русское Национальное Единство* – RNE) (Likhachev, Pribylovskii 2005).

These and similar organizations are most active in the Baltic states; in Estonia, border disputes also play an important role (Vikoroova 2007). In Belarus, extreme right-wing Russian

organizations cooperate with political forces that support the Lukashenko regime, as well as with some Belorussian nationalists (Holzer, Novák 2002: 58-59). However, other Belorussian nationalists protested strongly against the plan to unify Belarus with Russia in the second half of the 1990s (the Belorussian National Liberation Army even opened fire on the Russian embassy in Minsk in 1997) (Zharinov 1999: 129). There are also strong tensions between Russian and Ukrainian nationalists, e.g. because of the dispute over Crimean territory (however, traditional historical tensions are more important).

The separatist Transdniestrian Republic on Moldovan territory has a specific support from Russian nationalists. It struggles to be part of Russia because of strong “russification” of this territory (Honzák, Pečenka, Stellner, Vlčková 2001: 400). On the other hand, the Finnish extreme right claims contemporary Russian territory in Karelia, because Finland lost this territory in the 1940s (Pekonen, Hynynen, Kalliala 1999). This is unacceptable for the Russian extreme right.

The German extreme right also has territorial interests in Eastern Europe. In the post-war period, some territories of the former German Reich were claimed by the extreme right in West Germany. These territorial claims are also made by contemporary German right-wing extremists. The most important are former German territories beyond the contemporary German border with Poland at the Oder-Neisse line. Another claim is aimed at the Sudetenland in the contemporary Czech Republic (Fromm 1994: 46). A broader demand by German right-wing extremists consists in re-establishing the German Empire (*Reich*) in Europe, in which various European nations should live under German leadership. This idea is also supported by the strongest German neo-Nazi party – the National Democratic Party of Germany (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* – NPD) (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands 2008). This idea also has support of some neo-Nazi groups in Eastern Europe; however, it is strongly rejected by anti-German nationalists and pan-Slavonic extreme right-wing forces.

Since the break-up of former communist federal states – Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, there are no strong secessionist (in contrast to irredentist) movements. Existing secessionist movements (part of the Crimean Tatars, the Moravian movement and the Silesian movement) mostly have a centrist or an ideologically unclear profile. An extreme right-wing identity is relatively rare (which is similar to Western Europe, where traditional ethnic separatists are mostly left-wing, as in the Basque country or in Corsica; groups of South Tyrol irredentists and Flemish separatists have a right-wing orientation, for historical reasons). It is connected mainly with the interference in small parts of the regional movement in Moravia and

in Silesia from German neo-Nazism with a view to incorporating these territories into the aforementioned Reich. Because of this, it is mainly the regional identity (rather than the Slavic national identity) that is supported. On the other hand, the Moravian movement was, in the area of autonomous (not secessionist) demands, also supported by the Czech extreme right (Bednář 2006: 32-33).

6. The impact of territorial claims on the domestic political position of the extreme right

Territorial claims play an important role in the domestic political strategies of extreme right-wing parties and organizations in Eastern and Central Europe. However, it is very difficult to find a correlation between the territorial propaganda and the electoral or other political success of the extreme right. The politics of the extreme right includes issues that have a greater impact on their domestic political position (such as anti-establishment rhetoric, social issues, Roma-phobia, anti-immigrant issues, anti-Semitism etc.).

In some countries, territorial re-ordering is not connected only with the extreme right. In some cases, it is the subject matter of extreme left-wing propaganda. Such is the case in the struggle for the renewal of the Soviet Union carried out by Russian communists. Communist parties generally defend the post-war territorial order.

Specific claims for territories based on religious preferences have recently been declared by some Islamist extremists in Eastern Europe (for example in Sandjak of Novi Pazar in Serbia). Jihadists in the whole world, including those in Eastern Europe, generally struggle for the establishing of local caliphates and, eventually, for a “global caliphate”. Such concepts are rejected not only by the extreme right, but quite often also by other parts of the political spectrum in the potentially disfavored countries.

Territorial demands were not, at least in the 1990s, proclaimed only by extremist forces. It was also the established parties and diasporas that played with irredentist or separatist ideas (in Hungary, Romania etc.). Under the pressure of Europeanization, openly declared territorial demands transferred mainly into the extreme right-wing part of the political spectrum. The exclusive use of this issue did not cause an automatic increase in the number of voters.

In the 1990s, extreme right-wing parties with territorial demands were more successful than in the following decade, with several exceptions (see examples below). However, the process of the formation of the spectrum of parties has not yet come to an end. Old right-wing parties as well as new organizations with irredentist ideas have a chance to be successful in several countries.

The Hungarian extreme right is one of the most striking examples. At the beginning of the 1990s, the former member of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) Istvan Csurka voiced irredentist and anti-Semitic opinions. This party was a member of the governmental coalition and Csurka had support of several deputies as well as a part of the electorate. Following a negative reaction from Western Europe and the USA, he was expelled from the MDF (Ambrosio 2001: 125-127). After the accession process of Hungary into the NATO and into the EU had started, the official policy of the party gave up irredentism (but it defends the rights of Hungarian minorities in the neighboring states and it criticizes the Treaty of Trianon in the historical context).

Csurka founded the extreme right-wing MIÉP party. This party was successful in the 1990s, however, later it lost support. In 2003, the extreme right-wing party Jobbik was established. This party founded the Hungarian Guard in 2007. Massive anti-governmental protests in Budapest created a milieu for violent activities committed by the new Hungarian extreme right, including the HVIM and the Jobbik. Neither of the groups has parliamentary representation. However, the electoral success of the Jobbik in the next parliamentary elections is quite possible. In January 2009 it had a 4% support in surveys, in December 2008 it was 2% support (Szonda IPSOS 2009). However, the growth of preferences could be caused by other factors than irredentism, e.g. by Roma-phobia and the financial crisis.

The development of irredentism in Hungary has a strong impact on the situation in Slovakia. Hungarian extremism in Slovakia is a very limited phenomenon, despite the efforts of the Hungarian Guard and similar organizations to enhance their activities on Slovak territory. However, the more radical politicians (e.g. Pal Czáký) who demand Hungarian autonomy have won an important position in the moderate Party of Hungarian Coalition (SMK), which is currently in opposition. The Slovak extreme right uses the fear of Hungarian territorial demands in its political campaign. The targets of their propaganda are often Hungarians in southern Slovakia and official Hungarian policies, not only the Hungarian extreme right.

The Slovak National Party started the game with the “Hungarian card” at the beginning of the 1990s. With the exception of the years 2002–2006 it has had parliamentary representation. In 2006 it won 11.32 % of the votes. Since 2006, the SNS has been a member of the governmental coalition led by the social democratic party (SMER). The presence of the SNS in the government is one of most important causes of the contemporary crisis in Slovak-Hungarian relations. Extreme right-wing paramilitaries of both states engage in various acts of resistance (including the blockades of border checkpoints by the Hungarian Guard in 2008). On the other

hand, the Prime Ministers Robert Fico and Ferenc Gyurcsány try to calm down the situation by means of binary negotiations. Fico's popularity in Slovakia is continuously high.

The current focus of Hungarian extreme right-wing irredentism on Slovakia has toned down Hungarian-Romanian tensions in territorial issues. However, this topic is used by both the Hungarian and the Romanian extreme right. Romanian territorial demands are aimed not only at Hungary, but also at the Ukraine. Romanians are also involved in the Moldova conflict.

The Romanian-Ukrainian dispute over the Serpents' Island in the Black Sea was brought to the International Court of Justice (Jordan-Constantinescu 2008). However, this dispute is not a typical case in East Central Europe. The island is a territory without population. Both of the countries take an interest in this island for its economic potential, namely the resources in its surroundings.

The process of Europeanization has had an impact on the biggest representative of the Romanian extreme right with irredentist demands – the Greater Romania Party. It had parliamentary representation from 1992 to 2008. In the first European elections in 2007, the PRM received 4.15 % of the votes and it did not win any mandates for the first time since the beginning of the 1990s (Smrčková 2008). In the parliamentary elections in 2008, it won only 3.15 % of votes and it lost its parliamentary position.

In contrast to the situation in the new EU countries, territorial problems play an important role in domestic politics in Western Balkan countries. In Serbia, all relevant parties reject Kosovo independence. The Serbian Radical Party supports the idea of Greater Serbia intensively. The SRS also uses the refugee electorate from former Serbian territories in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. In the parliamentary elections in 2008, this party received 29.5 % of the votes, and with the exception of the 2000 elections (8,0 %) it has kept around 1/4 of Serbian voters (Sovák 2008: 202).

The demands for "Greater Albania" are proclaimed mainly by extreme nationalist groups; however, broader political support of such demands on territories with Albanian population is quite possible. The controversial development of the "Kosovo question" in the international context has led to the fact that potential supporters of the irredentist idea do not speak their mind in public.

In the official Russian security policy, the term "near abroad" plays an important role (Rywkin 2003). Russians see the former Soviet territories, mainly with a Russian minority, as areas where they are entitled to exert special influence. Russian politicians do not pronounce territorial demands openly; however, their interests in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea are part of the long-

term Russian strategy. The excesses of the Russian extreme right are more visible and Russian imperialism is an important part of the ideology of the successful LDPR as well as other Russian extreme right-wing parties.

7. The impact of the territorial claims of the extreme right on security in Eastern Europe

The era of post-cold war territorial and border changes in Europe is probably at its end. After establishing Kosovo independence, the main political forces in Europe seem to have lost the will to change current borders. According to Thomas Ambrosio: “the international community, through the use of positive and negative incentives, plays a critical role in determining the initiation and outcome of irredentist projects where ethno-territorial nationalism – the domestic precondition for the emergence of irredentism – exists” (Ambrosio 2001: 184).

Following the processes of democratization, Westernization and Europeanization (both in the EU member countries and candidate countries), territorial demands for “Greater states” have been occupied by extremist forces. Only in specific cases might certain governmental bodies become involved in extreme right-wing activities, mostly in non-EU countries in Eastern Europe (e.g. the involvement of secret services in extreme right-wing activity, non-cooperation in policing right-wing extremist activities on the international level, expressing support for some ideas etc.).

Political parties, movements, organizations (including paramilitary and terrorist formations) and subcultural groups (Minkenberg 2006: 28-29) can all strive to make a difference on the domestic political scene, in the issue of extreme right-wing territorial claims. These also include the diasporas – organizations from the claimed territories (e.g. some Serbian organizations in Srpska Krajina that cooperated with the Serbian Radical Party). Last but not least, some German “*Vertriebenverbände*” or their branches were interconnected with the extreme right. The following model – a pro-irredentist organization in the central state and an irredentist branch (open or secret) of this organization abroad – is typical of the concepts of the Great States (e.g. branches of Russian extreme right-wing organizations in the Baltic States and branches of Hungarian extremist parties in Southern Slovakia).

The impact of extreme right-wing territorial claims in Eastern Europe is very different. The most important factors include broader support of such demands within the population and the position of extreme right-wing subjects with such demands within the party system. Both factors can be combined in various ways. If the extreme right is an exclusive representative of the territorial demands, it could strengthen its political position.

In order to win public support, trustworthy claims are needed. There is a great difference between the support for Great Serbia within the context of Serbian political culture on the one hand and the support for the annexation of Sub-Carpathian Rus in the Czech Republic on the other hand. The first case presents an emotional issue within the context of a nation which lost its superior status in the region, the second is a largely provocative excess of one party (other Czech extreme right-wing parties did not support such claims). The real socioeconomic and cultural situation also plays an important role in the claimed territories and in the states where the extreme right attempts to enforce the annexation of foreign territories (it was, for instance, the reason for the tensions between Russians and Estonians, including the extreme right in both countries).

In the case of states with strong national diasporas abroad, there exists the tendency of the extreme right to enforce the idea of Great States. Moderate political parties are usually restricted only to general support of the national and cultural identity of the diasporas; however, they cannot support any border changes for reasons of international stability. This is the case of large countries in Eastern Europe (e.g. Hungary, Russia, Slovenia etc.). There are particular limits and emotions related to Greece that exist in Macedonian politics.

The open struggle of moderate and major political forces for territorial changes (with the exception of small-sized changes) was typical only of some major forces at the beginning of the 1990s. This is the case of Albanian politics, where the struggle for Great Albania was, for major parties, only temporary (Stojarová 2007: 181-185).

In Romania, official attempts at Great Romania stopped during the process of Westernization and Europeanization. In Germany, giving up territorial claims behind the Oder-Neisse line was, for the established parties, a long-term process (in Western Germany, not in the German Democratic Republic). It ended at the beginning of the 1990s.

Demands for independence in former communist federal states had broad support in the whole of the political spectrum at the beginning of the 1990s (the independence of the Yugoslav Republic outside of Serbia, the independence of the Baltic states etc.). The broad support of Kosovo independence in Kosovo is a specific case (not support for Great Albania; this concept has little support in Kosovo). In some cases, former major supporters of independence occupied extreme right-wing positions in the new party systems; for example the Slovak National Party (*Slovenská národná strana* – SNS) (Kopeček 2007a: 492).

A potential loss of territory is opposed by major domestic political forces, as in the case of Kosovo in contemporary Serbia or in the case of Transdnestrria in contemporary Moldova.

Irredentist organizations on domestic territory and their supporters from abroad are seen as negative elements in East European states. According to domestic law such organizations are often illegal. For these reasons, some organizations do not declare their real goals openly.

Neo-Nazi movements usually operate on an underground basis. They declare their support in favor of German or pan-Aryan territorial conceptions (Hoffmann, Röpke, Speit 2004). However, as system factors they are weak, having notable strength only in several states within the respective subcultural scene (Germany, Czech Republic, Croatia etc.). The neo-Nazis in East European countries are supported only by non-state international networks (of course they do not have direct support from any governments).

Extreme right-wing territorial claims and disputes could also be conceptualized as external or internal security threats. The extreme right from both sides could radicalize ethnic tensions in some disputed territories (for example the Serbian-Hungarian clashes in Vojvodina). The results also include violent attacks born of ethnic hatred. The existence of paramilitary units is a security risk for inter-ethnic relations; this threat includes hate crimes.

However, they are not able to carry out effective military operations in contemporary Eastern Europe themselves (including the Baltic states and the Balkans), with the exception of guerilla operations of Albanian and maybe some Serbian units (in relation to the “Kosovo-question”). Russian and Ukrainian paramilitary organizations operating in Transdnistria also have specific capabilities to wage small wars.

The spectrum of youth subcultures, including neo-Nazis in Eastern Europe, has no military capability. Right-wing extremist youngsters only have the potential to intensify ethnic tensions and, in some cases, complicate inter-state relations. New armed territorial conflicts with the involvement of extreme right-wing paramilitaries might be expected to break out in the “Great Albania” area and in Transdnistria.

8. The impact of territorial disputes in Eastern Europe on extreme right-wing politics at the transnational and European levels

Territorial disputes in Eastern Europe have an impact not only on domestic politics, international relations and regional security in this area, but also on the European identity and cooperation of the extreme right at the transnational as well as European levels. The traditional geopolitical rule “your neighbor is your enemy – the neighbor of your neighbor is your partner” (Holzer 2007: 8), when transformed into the extreme right-wing milieu, currently determines many relations within the European extreme right, mostly in the Eastern part of the continent.

A good example is the coalition against Hungarian irredentism, with the members being the Slovak Community (*Slovenská pospolitost'* – SP), the Romanian New Right and the Serbian movement *Obraz* (Mareš 2006: 17). It has similar members and goals as the international interstate cooperation structure called “Small Agreement” (Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia) from the interwar period. On the other hand, the choice of extreme right-wing partners from foreign countries is nowadays only sometimes the result of a strategy aimed against a concrete enemy. In many cases, it is only the declaration of possible extreme right-wing cooperation.

On the other hand, the contemporary European extreme right often rejects the contemporary European Union (because of its “multicultural” and “anti-national” character). However, on the other hand, it supports the European identity in the sense of cooperation of traditional independent European nations against liberal and new left-wing values, against some internal ethnic enemies (the Roma, often Jews) and against the immigration from the third world. The motto “Europe for Europeans” is typical of this struggle (Mudde 2007: 158).

For a long time, the European extreme right has tried to establish its own pan-European structures, be it for ideological or pragmatic reasons (e.g. European financing); however, in several cases such attempts crashed because of nationalist tensions, including territorial disputes. In the 1930s, the German Nazis were not active in the international fascist organization called the Commission for the Coordination of the Settlement of Universal Fascism (*Commissione di Coordinamento per l'Intesa de Fascismo Universale* – CCIFU), organized by Italian fascists (Borejsza 1999: 260-261). One of the reasons was probably the fact that German Nazis were mainly interested in expanding into the East (connected with racially motivated anti-Slavic activities). In the 1950s, disputes over the South Tyrol issue between Italian fascists and right-wing extremists from German-speaking countries complicated the possibilities of extreme right-wing cooperation, as well as the existence of the Technical Group of the European Right in the European Parliament in 1989–1994 (Osterhoff 1997: 174).

It is interesting that in the second half of the 1990s, the Euronat, organized by Jean Marie Le Pen, included members of some parties with antagonist territorial interests. It is difficult to describe the membership base unambiguously, because it changed several times. However, in some lists, parties such as the Hungarian Justice and Life Party (*Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja* – MIÉP), the Party of Great Romania and the Slovak National Party (despite Hungarian claims in Slovakia and in Romania) or the German People's Union (*Deutsche Volksunion* – DVU) and the Czech SPR-RSČ (despite disputes about the Sudetenland) were put together (Fiala, Mareš, Sokol

2007: 180). The Euronat had a very free structure and it did not work consistently (Mudde 2007: 174-176).

The territorial claims of the National Democratic Party of Germany on Polish territory have caused the division of the European National Front (ENF), a European grouping of fascist and extreme conservative right-wing parties and movements. The founding member of the ENF, the National Rebirth of Poland (*Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski* – NOP), began to ignore these claims, as well as various disputes about the history of its joint activities with the NPD in the ENF, which was followed by some organizations from the Western Slavic area (Fiala, Mareš, Sokol 2007: 179).

The German-Polish territorial dispute was also connected with the creation of the extreme right group called Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty (ITS) in the European Parliament in 2007. The main founder of the ITS, Andreas Mölzer from the Freedom Party of Austria (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* – FPÖ), tried to win the League of Polish Families (*Liga Rodzin Polskich* – LPR) for this project. He announced his readiness to recognize the Oder-Neisse line. However, the LPR turned down his offer to become members of the group (Fiala, Mareš, Sokol 2007: 178). The end of the existence of the ITS at the end of 2007 was not caused by any territorial conflicts; it was caused by clashes between Romanian and Italian members because of Alessandra Mussolini's anti-Romanian speech.

Nowadays, “Euro-nazism” is rising in Europe as a specific subculture (Mareš 2008a). It is mostly the German neo-Nazis who try to organize it, giving their support to a strong European identity (e.g. on the basis of a common fight of foreign SS divisions in World War II). An idea common to many Russian and Western European right-wing extremists is “Eurasia” or “Euro-Siberia” (Faye 2006: 119-120). However, this struggle for a common European identity cannot stop traditional nationalist disputes between activists from various countries (Hungarians vs. Slovaks etc.).

Territorial claims are also important here. The German organizers of the Rudolf Hess March in 2004 demanded of Czech activists the recognition of the German claims in the Sudetenland territory. Some Czech neo-Nazis rejected these demands, while others supported the annexation of the Sudetenland to Germany (Mareš 2005: 202). In the recent past, the cooperation between Czech and German neo-Nazis has been less problematic, because the idea of a common Reich is respected (the Czech lands as a traditional part of the territory of the German Empire with mixed population of Czechs and Germans).

The neo-Nazi spectrum in Europe is also divided when it comes to the Kosovo question. Some European neo-Nazis support independent Kosovo or Greater Albania, due to the tradition of Albanian collaboration with Germans in the SS Division Skanderbeg; others (probably a stronger group) support Serbia and the Serbian extreme right, because of their anti-Americanism and because of the strong position of Serbian neo-Nazis on the contemporary European scene.

9. Conclusion

Major political forces in East European countries have accepted the current borders and the territorial situation, despite the fact that some of them sometimes use nationalist elements in relation to the “historical territorial injustices” in their propaganda. The part of the political spectrum which puts traditional territorial claims into their political agenda is, for the most part, the extreme right. Territory and territorial claims remain an important part of extreme right-wing identity. In this sense, it is an interesting area of research into extremism.

With respect to the importance of territorial claims to the extreme right-wing part of the political spectrum, any future historical, geographical or political science research into separatism (Spencer 1998) or irredentism (Ambrosio 2001) in this area should be more focused on the analysis of specific factors in domestic politics, rather than the politics of the state as a whole. In security studies, the threats of border disputes could be conceptualized in a similar context. However, the extreme right could be, in some cases, supported by governmental bodies in various ways, and in this sense, the traditional approaches in both disciplines are possible as well as necessary.

The intensity of the politicization and securitization of territorial claims and related phenomena (paramilitarism, consistent violence etc.) is different in a large part of the East European extreme right and in the mainstream of West European modern right-wing populism. The legacy of territorial struggles is very topical, mainly in post-conflict areas and in areas where the outbreak of a new armed conflict is a real possibility (Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Transdnistria).

In its traditional form, the extreme right has a strong potential in Eastern Europe. The new wave of modern right-wing populist parties that are more focused on “modern” rather than traditional enemies and that have given up territorial claims, is not likely to appear in most countries in Eastern Europe. The Westernization and Europeanization of politics in Eastern

Europe led to territorial claims virtually disappearing at the state level; however, not so much at the level of the extreme right.

Extreme right-wing territorial claims complicate the cooperation between extreme right-wing groups throughout Europe. On the other hand, it is likely that an interest in cooperation at the European level might moderate some extreme right-wing territorial disputes, as well as the common struggle against “new enemies” (mostly immigrants from non-European areas) of the European extreme right. However, in the middle-term perspective, in most areas of Eastern Europe the legacy of traditional territorial claims will be typical of the extreme right, despite the fact that in most cases such claims are not realistic.

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