

## **Ethnic and National Minority Resistance in Central Europe (ENMinResCE)**

This project endeavours to offer a critical reflection on an under-researched area of the sociality of social discontent and ethnic and national minority resistance in Central Europe (ENMinResCE) during the rapidly changing global order and addresses an important topic linked to the quality of democracy in this region. In fact, this project concentrates on three broad topics – ethnic and national minorities, resistance and social change. The main research objectives are to: (1) to elaborate means, types and forms of covert and symbolic forms of resistance among ethnic and national minorities (ENM) in Central Europe, (2) to explain cross-national similarities and differences in the region, and (3) by empirical observation from Central Europe, to investigate the inter-linkage between different resistance form that contribute to social change. Our point of departure is that despite the fact that following the EU accession, the Central European states introduced mechanisms for protecting ENM rights, promoting civic and political participation, ENM have still faced challenges which hinder them to adapt and succeed in the societies. They still suffer political, social and economic inequalities (or they perceive they are discriminated based on their national origin) that have been intensifying discontent among those groups. They exercise in asymmetrical contexts and as weak groups without much resources their ability to act through traditional form of opposition is limited.

This project's theoretical framework is based on international literature on social resistance. Special attention here is paid to oppositional activities based on the everyday resistance concept. Oppressed people may be conscious of oppression and may intend to resist in some fashion. By so called *everyday acts of resistance* they mask the real nature of their activities to protect themselves from repression from the authorities, thus they are unrecognized from above (Ballard 2023). Four categories are explored here. (1) Firstly, we look at the *contexts* of ENMinResCE under the democratic conditions of EU. Taking into consideration the EU regional human rights system, it imposes an obligation on the EU states of equal treatment and non-discrimination regarding ENM. This project attempts to compare the Baltic states, Slovakia and Bulgaria as they have represented different approach to the concept of social inclusiveness and level of effectiveness of participatory democracy since 2004 (2007 for Bulgaria). (2) Secondly, regarding *resisters*, we analyse five marginalised groups of ENM in Lithuania (Poles), Latvia (Russian-speakers), Estonia (Russian-speakers), Slovakia (Roma) and Bulgaria (Bulgarian Muslims), (3) Then, we study the *agency* – means, forms and types of non-organised, informal, individual, small-scaled practices of ENM which are not necessary covert, and more hidden, latent but collective acts of objection. (4) Finally, we unveil the *consequences* of ENMinResCE. Our aim is to assess effectivity, productivity, creativity and mobility of the resistance to answer the question if resistance may challenge and transform ENM position in relation to the power.

From a methodological point of view this is a comparative study on multiple levels. Qualitative research design is planned is selected for this study. Moreover, the observational method and visual methods, as well as institutional-legal and document analysis are applied.