



**Legacies and Incentives:
A Comparative Analysis of Post-Communist Minority Policy in Poland, the
Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary**

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PhD thesis defence on 24th November 2009

Abstract

The study attempts to fill a gap in the research on the legacies and incentives of minority policies in four Central Eastern European countries by comprehensively examining post-communist minority policy developments from the perspective of internal factors as well as external impacts. The main objective of the study, which encompasses four countries – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia – is to identify policy incentives and historical legacies that influenced the current minority policies. In addition, it also aspires to adjust existing typological theories which aim to explain the development of minority policies in the four countries after 1989.

By comparing minority policies in the light of three hypotheses on their main factors, namely the historical, international and domestic, it is argued that in spite of different initial policy directions, the minority policies in the four countries gradually converged.

The early post-1989 minority policies were shaped primarily by historical legacies and domestically conceptualised strategies, which reflected the importance of both domestic minority issues and kin nationals in neighbouring states. Together with the appearance of stronger international incentives (particularly the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and the European Union assessment during the accession processes), the countries gradually modified their positions, framing their policies around the norms provided by the FCNM.

In the conclusion, the thesis argues that existing theories on the development of minority policies in CEE could partially explain the preference for particular policy directions in the four countries. However, in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the contemporary shape of the minority policies, any further explanatory attempts should also carefully address the legacies of previous policy choices and the role of international norms on minority protection.



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Janusz Ryzner graduated in European Studies from the University of Economics in Krakow (1999). From 1999 he worked at the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Economics in Krakow, conducting research on Europeanization and policy formulation and implementation in the Central and Eastern Europe. Additionally, Janusz lectured on political science and international relations and delivered trainings on the EU policy making and institutional design. Janusz currently works for the European Central Bank in Frankfurt am Main.