HUNGARIAN-MINORITY AUTONOMY WITHIN TRANSYLVANIA

EXPANDING BORDERS:

CREATING LATITUDE FOR HUNGARIAN-MINORITY AUTONOMY WITHIN

TRANSYLVANIA, ROMANIA, AND A NEW EUROPE

By

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation outlines the dynamic between the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians (DAHR) – the political party representing the Hungarian minority in Romania – and the state. This elite-based research locates itself directly within political theories of minority rights and attempts to deepen an understanding of how politics intersects with culture. Of theoretical import to this study is the tension created by certain cultural constituencies within a nation-state for recognition that might be politically codified. By outlining the political implications of recognizing territorially-based national minorities, this dissertation argues that minority claims and democratic consolidation are interrelated rather than competing processes.

Hungarian political discourse reveals contested notions of citizenship and belonging in Romania. Hungarian claims for autonomy within Romania are directed toward changing traditional bases of legitimacy based on ethnicity. Importantly, these claims for autonomy are framed explicitly as 'democratic claims'. At the heart of these discussions is an attempt to create a place for the Hungarian minority within rather than excluded from the Romanian state. To do so, however, requires that the terms of inclusion and exclusion in Romania be reconceived. Toward this end, the Hungarian minority situates their claims within the global processes already impacting state sovereignty in Romania. A discussion of autonomy is therefore simultaneously a discussion of the changing relations of power inflecting this sovereignty. By engaging international bodies, namely the European Union, Hungarian politicians have placed pressure on the state to devolve powers to the regions. The 'recognition' of Hungarian claims by international bodies has increased the legitimacy of these claims within Romania – highlighting how global forces can be used to further democratic goals within states.

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PROLOGUE

- A View from the Border -

"Words begin as descriptions. They are prismatic, vehicles of hidden, deeper shades of thought. You can hold them up at different angles until the light bursts through in an unexpected colour. The word carries the living thing concealed." Susan Brind Morrow (1997)

Let me start with a description.

On my first trip to Romania I left the plane knowing very few people, little of the language, and an impression gained only through books. These books told me about the terrible legacy of communism under Ceaușescu, the violent revolution that overthrew him, and the difficulties Romania was experiencing post-1989 compared to other countries in East Central Europe. The picture these books painted was a dark one and admittedly my first impression was similarly-hued.

In my memory, I am walking down Bulevardul Magheru from Piaţa Romană to Palatul Paliamentului, past buildings pock-marked with signs of the revolution. Each piaţa that I pass through, reveals a small wooden cross - "Glorie Eroilor" (Glory to the Heroes), "Eroilor Anticomunişti" (Anticommunist Heroes) – the whisper of a revolution in the clatter of horns and traffic. At Piaţa Universitatii I look to my right at black graffiti on a grey background - "Zona Libera de Neocomunism" and "Piaţa Tienanmen II" - written during the student protests of 1990. It was during these same protests that Romania's newly elected and 'democratic' president, Ion Iliescu, invited coal miners to walk into Bucharest and defend their government against the 'fascist' students with clubs and axes.

Continuing toward the parliament, I notice an expanse of grey concrete buildings that extends to the horizon. These were built on the rubble of the 1977 earthquake that demolished much of Bucharest's original Byzantine architecture. Some of these older, more

colourful buildings remain, the quiet nostalgia they evoke augmented by the grey of the surrounding Communist blocks.

Finally, I round the corner to my destination and Bucharest's most devastating view - the Palatul Parliamentului. The building, inspired by Ceaușescu's trip to Pyongyang in 1971, larger even than the Pentagon, defies description and stands as a monument to the terrible legacy of the *conducateur*. Its weight overwhelms.

Slowly though, I start to see past this dark horizon.

Bucharest, I will come to know, is a city of great contrasts; with many bright colours set against its grey backdrop. Importantly, there is a stark beauty in these contrasts: brightly dressed Romanis in their horse-pulled wagons being passed by dark grey BMWs; grey and blue clad soldiers, with their black rifles guarding soft pastel embassy walls; a drab-coated elderly couple sitting in the lush green beauty of Cișmigiu Gardens listening to an opera on a hand held radio; a group of pensioners playing chess on glistening white marble tables in the park; ubiquitous bright red, yellow and orange flower stands, silhouetted by Ceaușescu's grey legacy.

It is easy to be seduced by these contrasts – to lock my gaze on the lines separating these worlds. Yet there they all are, in the same glance. I start to think that these lines, demarcating differences, are not so clear.

CHAPTER 1

This dissertation is about the lines between 'different' things that nonetheless find

themselves within the same field of view. I have in my mind an image of borders - lines

drawn on various maps - some real, some imagined, all of them demarcating differences.

These lines help to create clear categories, ways that make it easier for us to understand the

complicated world we find ourselves in: culture/politics; nations/states; local/global;

past/present. The lines themselves give the illusion that these things can, in fact, be clearly

separated.

We are still feeling the reverberations of such attempts at clear separation; particularly

in Eastern Europe, where Woodrow Wilson's vision of self-determination and statehood has

been met with devastating consequence. Wilson suggested this principle (1919) as a

mechanism to divide territory along lines of 'nationality' following WW1. What Wilson

meant by 'nationality' and, by implication, what groups were entitled to self-determination

has been widely debated. Self-determination could be considered a feature of democratic

government, expressed through shared citizenship. Alternately, it could also imply that all

groups that define themselves as nations should have a right to form their own state.[1]

The legacy of the decisions made at the 1919 Peace conference and the corresponding

minority tensions and ethnic conflicts over this past century have highlighted the practical

[1] There is therefore a paradox inherent to the principle of self-determination (see Bishai 1998). On the one hand, all national groups should be entitled to self-determination. On the other hand, the state is sovereign over all groups within its territory.

impossibility of drawing territorial lines based on the concept of 'self-determination'.[2] Currently we are witnessing a rise in ethnic conflict in the regions impacted by the peace treaties:[3] according to Hobsbawm (1992, 5), "the chickens of WW1" have come "home to roost". This resurgence of conflict suggests that we need new ways of responding to cultural diversity both nationally and internationally - a task that James Tully (1995, 15) has referred to as the "political centre of gravity of the age."

Ethnic conflicts *within* states, rather than across national borders, have become a defining feature of the post-cold war world (witness Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Israel). These conflicts emphasize that another line is increasingly in question: the one demarcating the nation-state and its monopoly on sovereignty. This sovereignty is being eroded from within and without, in a complex interplay between regional and global forces, and has created a "crisis" for the territorial nation-state (Held, 1995). Unfortunately, nowhere within this post-Westphalian world is there a map - a clear course of action - to respond to these pressures on the state, rather than a nostalgic reiteration of the same. It seems that the territorial borders of the nation-state, if nothing else, have come to signify the end of our imagination.

This lack of imagination is evident in national and international responses to intrastate conflict. In the realm of political theory, the need to explore ways to accommodate diversity, within the bounds of the nation-state, has only recently been on the minds of theorists. The approach advanced by Will Kymlicka (1995), coupled with that of Charles Taylor (1994), and

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[2] Even Woodrow Wilson's secretary of state Robert L. Lansing voiced concerns over the use of self-determination as an organising principle for states asking would it not "breed discontent, disorder and rebellion? …It will raise hopes which can never be realized. It will, I fear, cost thousands of lives" (Barber 1995, 10).

[3] Notably Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Northern Africa

James Tully (1995) represent some of the most important contributions to early debates on multiculturalism. These theorists have convincingly linked minority rights to the pursuit of a 'just' society, thus increasing the legitimacy of minority claims both nationally and internationally (Shachar 2001, 296). Nonetheless, they have met with greater difficulty in specifying precisely how to do this.

Numerous approaches have been advanced: Michael Ignatieff (2000) has argued that a predominantly 'rights' based language is sufficient to express the ties that bind diverse communities through universal values such as justice and tolerance; in contrast, Will Kymlicka (1995) suggests that 'values' alone are insufficient to create this unity and that 'identity', and not simply abstract values, need to be shared at some level. What each of these perspectives highlights is the difficulty encountered when applying general principles, emerging from political theory, to specific contexts. There are inherent limitations to applying justice based normative thinking to applied political questions. It is for this reason that Shachar (2001) has emphasized the need for empirical studies of these normative questions.

This work takes up this challenge directly by outlining the claims and aspirations of the Hungarian community in Romania. Specifically, I will explore the dynamic between the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians (DAHR) – the political party representing Hungarians in Romania – and the Romanian state.[4] The political claims of the Hungarian minority in Romania are based in their historic relationship with the region of Transylvania and they can be considered a territorially based national minority. Of theoretical import to the study is the

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[4] Following Rethmann (2001, 5) I use the word 'state' to describe the Hungarian experience of hegemonic forms of government.

tension created by cultural constituencies within a nation-state for recognition that might be politically codified.

History plays an important role in a region where identity has long been central to establishing political inclusion or exclusion. In particular, Hungarian and Romanian identities have long been held in tension; suspended along political, cultural, geographic and historic lines. Given these shifts, borders become the reified reference for concrete power relations:

> "Borders are always in flux and subject to constant and often contradictory
> efforts to fix them and keep them in a specific place. These social and
> political practices which develop, maintain or restructure specific boundaries
> are embedded in power relations" (Hipfl et al. 2002, 73).

In order to better understand the impact of (shifting) boundaries and borders, this dissertation is divided into three distinct sections. Part One outlines the historic legacy of border changes and their impact on contemporary relations between Hungarians and Romanians. Transylvania, the region where the Hungarian minority is concentrated, has been particularly affected by territorial changes. Importantly, this legacy continues to influence Hungarian identity in Romania, and correspondingly their political claims. A discussion of past borders, and the power that inflects them, is central to the Hungarian minority's struggle for an autonomous future.

In Part Two, my focus shifts to the present, and to boundaries that are more cultural than territorial. These cultural lines of difference are framed within a discussion of nationalism and belonging. Specifically, when describing Hungarian identity my contributors posit it in opposition to Romanian identity – an identity from which they feel excluded. Further, they challenge how an exclusive form of Romanian nationalism has been used by the state to define the terms of inclusion. This section presents the intimate impact of these

terms of inclusion on the Hungarian community and the disjuncture of being Romanian

citizens, but of Hungarian nationality. This situation creates a distict challenge for my

contributors who desire recognition for their rights and equality *within* Romania. Part Two

also provides a theoretical basis for understanding minority rights and links the legitimacy of

minority claims to the possibility for democracy.

Part Three focuses directly on the political. Specifically, I question the democratic

credentials of the Romanian state in view of the claims made by the Hungarian minority. My

contributors direct their encounters with the state toward changing the official lines of

inclusion and exclusion. These official lines are best glimpsed in a discussion of the state's

formal and written constitution. Part Three is therefore focused explicitly on Romania's

political future and creating a place for the Hungarian minority within its mental, as well as

physical, geography.[5]

The result of this work will not be an all-encompassing and elegant theory for minority

rights. Rather, the story I have to tell is more specific and subtle. However, its consequences

are nevertheless important and part of a growing recognition that another border be crossed:

that between the cultural and the political. Although 'culture' as a constitutive feature of

politics has a history within the anthropological literature,[6] it remains a relatively recent

addition to political theory. For example, we are only recently acknowledging the cultural

dimensions of Western democracies and institutions (see Kymlicka, 1995).

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[5] Hedetoft (1999, 83) introduces the term 'mental geography'.

[6] The anthropology of development, in particular, has highlighted these links between the cultural and the political (for example, Escobar, 1995; Scott, 1985)

This dissertation locates itself directly within political theories of minority rights and attempts to deepen an understanding of how politics intersects with culture. I am particularly interested in understanding how 'cultural difference' itself becomes politicized. How does the Romanian state respond to Hungarian demands for recognition? How is difference codified within official documents such as the constitution?[7] Does the degree of freedom from the nation-state associated with the pressures of globalization involve relinquishing local identity for a pan-European notion of citizenship? Or by challenging the nation-state, does the discourse on European enlargement simply strengthen ethnic and regional identities? How has the legacy of empire in Romania influenced notions of belonging to the European project? And, does this legacy influence Romania's largely negative reaction to Hungarian claims for autonomy?

To date, Romania has largely been resistant to Hungarian claims for autonomy, highlighting the fractured political and cultural identities that underlie 'belonging' to the Romanian state. It is important, however, to state that the Hungarians are not the only minority in Romania - though they are certainly the most politically organized. The 1992 census recorded 16 national minorities, with the three largest being the Hungarians (8%), the Roma (2%), and the Saxons (0.5%). According to Oprescu (2000, 77) the Hungarians and the Roma are the only two minority groups with "specific and major problems" with the situation of the Roma being more "serious and complex". Many from the third largest

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[7] How identity is constructed and recognized by the Romanian state is reflected in constitutional debates since 1991. The DAHR did not vote in favour of the 1991 constitution largely due to article 1 asserting that: 'Romania is a sovereign, indivisible, organic and *National* state' (emphasis mine). The Hungarians oppose the view that Romania is comprised of one nationality and have recently argued for changes to the constitution.

minority, the Saxons (mainly concentrated in Transylvania) have emigrated since 1989 due to the general deterioration of ethnic relations.

The reaction of the Romanian state, and the electorate, toward minority claims has, at times, been extreme. At the root of the state's reaction to the Hungarian minority is the view that their claims for autonomy are inherently secessionist. This "climate of suspicion" is generated by the "rival and unachieved ambitions of creating national states" (Salat, 2001) in the region and has greatly influenced the relationship between the state and the Hungarian minority in Romania. The historic legacy in this region has led to a relationship of reciprocal mistrust, a cycle that, according to Salat (2001, 3) needs to be broken:

> "Unless this vicious circle of collective self-stirring is broken, there is the risk that the regions may be detoured to the realization of the ambitions of national states, the population becoming more homogeneous gradually by ethnic cleansing and assimilation, either willful or as the side effect of more or less peaceful measures."

Thus, central to changing this relationship between the state and the minority group is the need to reject unilateral 'solutions'.

The DAHR has explicitly rejected radicalism and has engaged the Romanian parliamentary system as a way to achieve their goals. Since 1996 a formal relationship has developed between the Romanian state and the Hungarian minority in government: with the underlying impetus on both parts being Romania's potential inclusion into the European Union. The EU has specified that Romania must improve its relations with its minority groups as part of the accession criteria (Kymlicka 2002, 1).[8] In 1996, the DAHR became part, albeit minor, of the governing coalition and held one cabinet post. With the change in

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[8] The Copenhagen European Council specified stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities as accession criteria.

government in 2000, the DAHR, although not part of the governing coalition, has signed

collaboration protocols with the current government, the Party of Social Democracy (PSD).

It is clear from these protocols that potential inclusion into the EU fuels this collaboration.[9]

Return to Europe

Although intrastate diversity is my focus - specifically, the claims made by a national

minority – it is clear that the possibility to accommodate this diversity is increasingly

impacted by international forces. European enlargement, in particular, is having a significant

influence on traditional ways of conceiving of 'identity' in relation to the nation-state.

Specifically, belonging to 'Europe' requires imagining social relations that transcend the

boundaries of the nation-state. Nonetheless, forging a pan-European identity, beyond

notions of place, has been difficult to achieve in Western Europe. This difficulty is evident in

the increasing popularity of anti- European rhetoric expressed by politicians such as Jean

Marie LePen. It is also evident in the difficulties in codifying European citizenship. The

challenge of the 'European Project' is even greater in Eastern Europe given the central role

of the state, the resurgence of national identities, widening disparities in wealth between

Western and Eastern Europe and the tentative position of these states to actually be

'included'.

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[9] An excerpt from the *Agreement on co-operation between the Social Democratic Party and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania in 2002* states: "Maintaining political stability in our country bears a fundamental importance to accelerating the European and Euro-Atlantic accession process…[We are] aware of the necessity to fulfill adhesion criteria at the parliamentary and executive levels [by] accelerating negotiations with the European Union… SDP and DAHR commit to support in their international relations, the fundamental interests of Romania, [and] the government's policy on European and Euro-Atlantic accession."

Since 1989 in Eastern Europe a popular sentiment has emerged equating 'democracy' with a 'return to Europe' (Kaldor and Vejvoda 1997, 60). Democratic consolidation, a necessary condition for inclusion into the EU, has been challenged by the nation-building activities of 'states' in Eastern Europe. This nation-building process is not necessarily incompatible with democratization, however, how it is pursued greatly impacts the substantive level of democracy.[10] This exclusive focus on the formal elements of democratic consolidation (i.e. inclusive citizenship, free and fair elections, separation of powers) obscures deficits in the substantive elements (i.e. enforcement of the rule of law, human rights, minority rights, role of the media, and civil society). Implicit to this discourse is an underlying sense that creating universal 'citizens' is all that is required to ensure stability in culturally diverse regions. Nonetheless, recent lack of stability *within* states would suggest otherwise. Kymlicka (2001b) directly challenges the belief that democratic consolidation will mean an end to ethnocultural demands. Specifically, he states that this has not been the case in the West, and that therefore ignoring ethnocultural identities is *not* a solution (2001b, 83). Although democracy is required to promote minority rights, democracy alone cannot guarantee these rights. Gyurcsík (1993, 43) also highlights the misguided premise that by

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[10] Kymlicka (2001b, 53) highlights that nation-building is not in itself incompatible with liberal democracy, as it is a process that Western states are also engaged in. Nonetheless, it is *how* this nation-building is pursued that makes the process either more or less liberal. Kymlicka (2001b, 54) identifies this liberal/illiberal continuum as based on: 1/ The degree of coercion used to promote a national identity 2/ Liberal states having a more restricted sense of the relevant 'public space' within which the dominant national identity should be expressed 3/ Liberal states being unlikely to prohibit free speech or political movements that challenge national identity 4/ Liberal states having an open definition of the national community 5/ Liberal states having a 'thin' conception of national identity 6/ Liberal nationalism does not view the 'nation' as a supreme value 7/ Liberal national cultures as more cosmopolitan 8/ Liberal nations less likely to insist on exclusive national membership 9/ Liberal nations give public space and recognition to national minorities.

securing human rights, minority rights will be unnecessary. Since 1989, it is evident that this is a faulty premise and that a codified system needs to be developed.

Given the resilience of minority claims in the West coupled with continued ethnic violence throughout the world, evidence suggests that democracy is a *necessary* but not a *sufficient* condition to achieve a viable political community under pluralist conditions. It is therefore essential that we explore new political and institutional designs to accommodate cultural diversity in varied international contexts. One design that has proven particularly effective at accommodating pluralism, under democratic conditions, is federalism:

> "A political system which includes a constitutionally-entrenched division of powers between a central government and two or more sub-units, defined on a territorial basis, such that each level of government has sovereign authority over certain issues" (Kymlicka and Raviot 1997, 10).

Kymlicka (2001b, 61) suggests that the situation of national minorities in East Central Europe has similarities with the West, implying that federal or quasi-federal forms of territorial autonomy may also be appropriate for this region. The term 'federalism', however, is contentious in Eastern Europe, given its perceived links with disloyalty or separatism.

Interestingly, 'regional autonomy' for Transylvania is a central premise of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarian's political platform. Nonetheless, very few of the individuals that I interviewed were willing to attach a 'federal' label to themselves, although they advocated a power sharing arrangement, on a quasi-regional basis, that could be realized by federalism. In fact, many were reticent to even use the word 'region' and preferred to use the less political word 'judets' (county) to frame their claims. Responding to this attitude, Kymlicka (2001b, 63) states that the West was also initially wary of federal political systems.

This cautious attitude gave way to the realization that "loyalty is best insured by encouraging minority identity and by enabling forms of minority self-government."

Nonetheless, Kymlicka (2001b, 64) does highlight factors unique to Eastern Europe that complicate the minority rights debate. These factors include: 1/ perceptions of the pseudo-federalist legacy of communism; 2/ the close proximity of 'kin states' and the possibility for irredentist minority groups; and 3/ the perception of minorities as allied with external collaborators that have historically oppressed the majority group. Each of these factors has coloured the debate over minority rights in Eastern Europe and led to assumptions that: minorities are disloyal; that a strong stable state is concomitant with having weak minority groups (a zero-sum relation); and that the treatment of national minorities is a question of national security rather than one of justice (Kymlicka 2001b, 67). It is unfortunately within this 'clash of civilizations' mentality that minority rights are approached.

With a view to overcoming such clear demarcations and a desire to imagine what politics might look like beyond such deterministic assertions, I will turn now to my own travels across these lines.

Methods

This dissertation is based on research garnered during three separate field trips to Romania in the fall of 1999, 2000 and the spring of 2001. My first trip in 1999 was for 6 weeks – much of which was spent getting familiar with the Romanian political system. Initially, I had been interested in interviewing young politicians from each of Romania's political parties, in order to get some sense of the next generation's hopes and aspirations,

along with their impressions of the current 'transition' to democracy. These initial interviews were invaluable at providing me with a sense of political culture in Romania and in familiarizing me with key players and parties. The sheer number of political parties, however, proved a daunting task in attempting to refine my research goals. I feared I had spread myself too thin.

During this time I became acquainted with several young members of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians (DAHR) – a party representing the Hungarian minority in Romania. My affinity for members of this group – political outsiders in Romania – was perhaps fuelled by the cultural disorientation I myself was feeling. During this period the ultra-nationalist 'Greater Romania Party' (GRP) was surging in popularity (leading to their success in the 2000 elections) and conversations with several young members of this party made me keenly aware of the potential consequences Romanian politics might have for non-ethnic Romanians. Mostly though I think I was struck by the content of the conversation I seemed to be having with the Hungarians – a large territorially concentrated minority. It resonated with one I had grown up listening to between Quebec and Canada. This resonance is not to say that these two contexts are at all similar and it was precisely the desire to discover where they diverged that led me to the project I undertook: to understand the claims and aspirations of the Hungarian minority in Romania.

For anthropologists, who usually develop a degree of empathy with those they research, elite-based research poses distinct challenges. According to Marcus (1983, 23) this "working empathy can be misconstrued as ideological sympathy". It is evident in this project that I did feel a degree of empathy with members of the DAHR. The affinity I felt for the Hungarian minority was not only based in an understanding of their political goals, it also

had an undeniable cultural component. As mentioned, I initially began interviewing

individuals from a cross-section of political parties in Romania, and by far the easiest to

access (and definitely the most punctual) were members of the DAHR. Of course, as will

become evident in this dissertation, the Hungarians have a strategic interest in

communicating their goals to an international audience. Nonetheless, I do believe there are

factors specific to the DAHR that make them stand out in the Romanian political sphere.

One specific factor that became evident in my interviews is the firm commitment of the

Hungarian community to parliamentary processes, frequently narrated to me in terms of a

'long history of constitutionalism'.

There was an air of sophistication or learnedness to the Hungarians that I interviewed

that, I came to learn, might be perceived in negative terms. For example, from a Romanian

viewpoint, this attitude was often interpreted as a semblance of arrogance.[11] Although my

study did not look at day-to-day perceptions of cultural differences between Romanians and

Hungarians, an 'Ethnobarometer' conducted in Romania in 2000 provides some insight into

how these two communities differentiate themselves and each other.[12] When Hungarians

were asked to characterize Romanians, they described them as 'religious, united and

hypocritical'. In contrast, Romanians described themselves as 'hospitable, decent and

hardworking'. From the alternate viewpoint, Romanians viewed Hungarians as 'united,

hardworking, civilized, vain and selfish'. Although Hungarians also considered themselves

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[11] In fact, some Western colleagues who have read my research have also remarked that the Hungarians seem to have a culturally superior attitude. Nonetheless, from my own perspective, and after having done interviews across a spectrum of political parties in Romania, I would rather describe this attitude as a form of confidence. I experienced, first hand, much more blatantly arrogant positions from politicians in other parties.

[12] This study on interethnic relations in Romania was financed by the United States Agency for International Development.

hardworking, they went on to describe themselves as 'civilized, intelligent and clean'. These

attitudes reveal how the Hungarian community in Romania is perceived as having a certain

intangible affluence and is therefore somewhat atypical as a national minority.[13]

I returned to Romania in the fall and spring of 2000 and 2001, for a total of 5 months,

to interview members of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians (DAHR). I used an

informal interview format to interview 37 individuals affiliated with the DAHR.[14] According

to Bernard (1995, 209) these unstructured interviews are not informal in the sense that they

are based in a 'clear plan'. Nonetheless, they are characterized by a minimum of control on

the part of the researcher, allowing people to express themselves in their own terms. The

role of the researcher within this format is to focus conversation on a particular topic whilst

permitting the informant to define the content of the discussion (Bernard 1995, 211).[15]

Developing my research questions was an iterative process. After my first trip to Romania, I

developed an interview checklist of general themes (see Appendix 1). These themes evolved

as I spoke with people informally. By my second trip to Romania I was able to begin more

formal interviews. I spoke very little during these interviews, other than to probe certain

comments or to refocus the discussion. I have included an example of my typical responses

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[13] It is important to mention that this affluence is not financial. Although under communism there was a certain leveling of social affluence, the Hungarian community has still faced barriers in terms of employment and social mobility.

[14] I interviewed some of these individuals several times on different research trips.

[15] The interview has been described by Eyles (1988, 7) as the method that 'lies between' the survey and participant observation. In a formal interview, questions are asked and answers recorded in a standardized form. In contrast, informal interviews are based on the interaction between the researcher and the respondent (Eyles 1988, 7). Within this format, conversation is used in order to ensure that questions have the same meaning for all respondents. Although the wording and sequence of the questions are not explicitly defined, there is a framework – in the form of a check list – to ensure that key issues are discussed.

during an interview (see Appendix 2). The responses of my contributors often seem highly sophisticated, and it is important to note that I did not bias the language that they used. I was very careful to mirror their own language (i.e. their use of the word autonomy) rather than to introduce my own terms. The only exception was when contributors began discussing 'regional autonomy' I would then ask them how they viewed 'federalism'. Federalism represented the outlying boundaries of possibility for the Hungarian minority, and for this reason it was a topic that I consciously probed. This conversation, situated at the margin of political imagination and impossibility, reveals how political power in Romania is perceived by the Hungarian minority and how they actively sought to change it.

These interviews lasted anywhere from 45 minutes to two hours and led to hundreds of pages of text that I then analyzed upon my return to Canada. I analyzed these data by coding them thematically and looking for relations between different themes. As such, the methods used can be considered inductive. The use of analytic induction helps to avoid prior categorization of the data and identifies earlier categories that may not fit with the data (Eyles 1988, 4). The process of progressive categorization and refinement of theory is based on the premise that the emergent findings will be consistent with the data. Theory within this framework is not conceived in terms of logical deductions but rather through relations between observed phenomena (Eyles 1988, 4).

Most of these interviews were based in Bucharest – which is the political centre of Romania. Given the official surroundings and the sensitive and confidential nature of the workings of a political party, participant observation was not an option in this context. I did, however, spend a great deal of time sitting in the lobby of the party office at the parliament, talking with MPs and Senators who were drinking coffee in between votes in the parliament.

Often, a more formal interview would follow. The age and gender breakdown of my sample is as follows: I interviewed a total of 37 individuals - 27 men and 10 women. I spoke with 4 men and 6 women between the ages of 20 and 30; 7 men and 2 women between the ages of 30 and 40; 8 men and 1 woman between the ages of 40 and 50; 5 men and 1 woman between the ages of 50 and 60; and 3 men who were above 60 years of age.

My Bucharest interviews took place in the party offices at the Parliament, the Senate, or at the party headquarters. Many of these interviews were scheduled in advance, others were simply the result of an individual having spare time in-between votes in parliament. The interviews most often took place in privacy, in a separate room, at both the parliament and the senate - though I did speak with approximately 6 people within earshot of others. I also spent time in Tîrgu Mureş and Cluj – cities in Transylvania with a high concentration of Hungarians – to interview local party workers and to get a feel for the region. Nine of these interviews were conducted in French and then translated by myself into English. The rest were conducted in English. All participants were fluent in each of these languages and communicated effectively in them.

These formal interviews were with a variety of individuals working for the DAHR in both the executive and the elected branches of government: expert counselors, ministers of parliament, senators, media spokespeople, and youth leaders. Some of these individuals had an extremely high profile in Romania: for example, former ministers and representatives to the European Union.[16] Due to the high rank of some of my informants, the relatively small community of officials, and the potentially inflammatory content of some of these

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[16] According to Marcus (1983, 20) the less visible members of the organization are equally as important for revealing underlying beliefs and contradictions.

conversations - from the perspective of both members of the DAHR and the Romanian government – how to represent this work while retaining individual anonymity was a challenge. Anonymity was an important factor in getting my informants to speak in greater depth, beyond the official party platform.

I have therefore based my representation of the narrative material following a technique that Feldman (1991) used in his study of the cultural construction of political violence in Northern Ireland. Although people agreed to be recorded, personal anonymity was an essential requirement of his participants. To do so required that he identify individuals only by their gender, their political affiliation, and sometimes by their age (Feldman 1991, 11). Further, Feldman (1991, 11) considered it necessary to present the narrative material non-sequentially in the text:

> "I met with informants on the border of a political, cultural and historical
> situation and our conversations were transactions of the border – restricted
> exchanges."

This dissertation is also constructed along political borders, where the stakes are high and, as such, I have followed Feldman's (1991) model. Though admittedly the level of violence characterizing Northern Ireland and Romania are different (since the early 1990s at least); Romania's history of state-sanctioned violence along with its geographic location (bordering the Ukraine and Yugoslavia) must be taken into account when representing a marginal group that is, in certain circles, deemed a 'threat to the state'.

Following Feldman (1991), I will not use either names or aliases. Rather, the interview content will be presented non-sequentially to retain anonymity.[17] The umbrella-like

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[17] On two occasions I use the first letter of a name: i.e. "S- says". I do so because I am referring to individuals that I am friends with and want to express a more intimate relationship.

organization of the DAHR allows a variety of political platforms to exist within its main structure.[18] These various platforms also represent competing versions of Hungarian interest in Romania, and sequential presentation of narratives could allow individuals to be identified and perhaps compromise their position within the party. It is essential that the unguarded way in which many of these individuals spoke to me on a variety of contentious topics – such as federalism and Romanian nationalism - be preserved. Additionally, it is not my project to outline the various political factions in the DAHR. I am much more interested in the similarities between them. Presenting this level of coherence is justified, as long as it is kept in mind that the DAHR is a political alliance and therefore this coherence is, in part, a political strategy. Nonetheless, it is a strategy that is supported by the larger (and inevitably more diverse) Hungarian community in Romania.[19]

One constraint, however, with this approach is that it does not permit the reader to develop a personal connection with any one individual. I have struggled with how to bring these unnamed individuals to life in the colourful and compelling way that they were to me. To do so, I have identified their genders and given as much information about their response and demeanour that I can. I have also struggled with what to call the individuals that I interviewed, and have decided that the word 'contributor' most aptly describes our

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[18] Although I will refer to the DAHR as a 'party' in this dissertation, when I used this term conversationally with my interview partners they would always make a point to remind me that it was an 'alliance' rather than a political party in the traditional sense.

[19] The DAHR has consistently received between 6 and 8 per cent of the vote in respective elections (1990 – 7.23%; 1992 – 7.45%; 1996 – 6.60%; 2000 – 6.8%; and 2004 – 6.17%). Considering that the Hungarian population is estimated to be 7-10% the Romanian population this electoral support is significant.

relationship.[20] I do use the term 'interview partner' at times to suggest a reciprocal relationship connoting elements of trust. Nonetheless, the word contributor seems to best reflect how these individuals helped to shape this thesis. The word contribute is active, as was their role in conveying issues of political import to the Hungarian community in Romania to me. They also contributed time, effort, and patience toward my questions.

While in Bucharest I was based at the Institutul de Cercetari Politice, headed by Daniel Barbu and Cristian Preda. The Institute was a vibrant environment to work in. I was fortunate to be surrounded by some exceptional colleagues who helped to familiarize me with many issues and introduce me to certain key political players in Romania. After arriving in Bucharest, I would sit down with whomever happened to be in the office that day, tell them what I was interested in, and they would, between deep inhalations on a cigarette, rhyme off names and cell phone numbers into the smoky mist. I would then call people, introduce myself and make arrangements to meet. These connections would inevitably lead to others.

Once I had decided to base my study more exclusively on the DAHR, I was greatly helped by individuals in the organization itself, namely, Iulia Pataki, Zsuzsa Baretski and Miklos Lovasz. I also received support from individuals at the Canadian Embassy, who would invite me to conferences and introduce me to individuals of note in Romania. Emerging from this connection with the Embassy, I also taught a course at the University of Bucharest, to the Masters Students in Canadian Studies. The course entitled "Theoretical Approaches to Diversity" was of direct relevance to my dissertation and discussions with the

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[20] Other words just did not seem to do justice to these interchanges. 'Informant' sounded too cold and conspiratorial; 'interviewee' had an air of objectification to it; and 'participant' just seemed too sporting.

students allowed me to interrogate my own position and biases along with providing insight into Romanian approaches to this issue. The candid and honest ways in which my students approached the topic were very helpful at providing insight into Romanian perspectives on how to accommodate pluralism.

In writing this dissertation I have chosen to stay very close to my ethnographic material. Theory and literature will be used to complement this ethnographic material, but I have been very careful to not attempt to force these narratives into pre-existing categories. Rather I would prefer that the narratives themselves tell the story, keeping in mind the limitations of this story. This is not a general study of Hungarian cultural identity in Romania. Rather, this dissertation is founded on Nader's (1972) challenge to study 'up'. The story told here is that of the political construction of Hungarian identity, by elites, in order to advance claims for autonomy within the Romanian state. In other words, I am interested in what is at stake at this intersection between the cultural and the political as it is revealed by the political expression of this national minority, narrated by members of the DAHR. Because it is the political implications of this cultural identity that are my interest, I do not claim to provide a comprehensive perspective on Hungarian culture in Romania. My conversation was with the elite and it was one that focused on politics. In view of Marcus' (1983, 11) claim that elites can be considered the 'prime movers' in society, this was an important conversation for Romania's political future.

This conversation revolved around a central problem: how can pluralism in Romania be accommodated and incorporated into the state? Searching for sources of cohesion is particularly challenging in Romania given the legacy of empire in the region. Contemporary Romania (post 1918) has at varying historical periods been under Ottoman, Russian and

Austro-Hungarian Rule. The legacy of these empires continues to influence domestic politics

by making national identity a central concern. According to Haddock and Caraiani (1999,

260): "Emerging as it did from the collapse of three empires, the Romanian state has never

enjoyed a clear identity or settled boundaries." The consequence of this legacy is that

political legitimacy has historically been treated as a function of cultural identity (Haddock

and Caraiani 1999, 263). Of particular import is the relationship of Wallachia and Moldavia –

or historic Romania – to the Transylvanian region, which was under Austro-Hungarian rule.

As part of the Hapsburg Empire, Transylvania is the only region in contemporary Romania

that has historically been part of Western Europe. Further distinguishing this region,

Transylvania also experienced periods of regional governing autonomy overseen by local

Hungarian and Saxon representatives.

In the following section I will introduce the Hungarian minority and situate their claims

historically, culturally, politically and geographically in the region of Transylvania.

Grounding Difference

Hungarians in Transylvania were, historically, the governing authority – a political, if

not demographic, majority.[21] According to one contributor, this position changed

dramatically following World War One:

> 1.1 There are many nations here in Europe, and they all have minorities
> abroad. Practically there is no European country without minorities. My
> parents, my grandparents and my great-grandparents stayed in the same city :
> the border has been moved. That's how my community became a minority.
> Maybe you know? The peace-treaties, after the First World War, after the
> Second World War... After the treaty at Trianon, Hungary lost two thirds of

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[21] According to the 1910 census, Hungarians made up 32% of a total Transylvanian population of 5.2 million. Currently Hungarians make up approximately 22% of the 7.7 million people in Transylvania. In two regions, Harghita and Covasna, the Hungarians are a majority (between 80-95%).

its territories. The community of Hungarians in Romania is now the largest minority in East Central Europe.

With a humble segue - "Maybe you know?" - he provides insight into the overwhelming consequences of history on a community. What he is referring to is how, following WW1, the Great Powers gathered at Versailles and decided the fate of the Hungarians of Transylvania. It was here that the Treaty of Trianon was signed, forcing Hungary to cede Transylvania to Romania. Through this decision the Hungarians became one of the largest minorities in Europe. Current estimates are that the Hungarians make up 7-10% of Romania's population, mostly concentrated in Transylvania. The historical connection felt by the Hungarians toward Transylvania is palpable:

> 1.2 Hungarians have lived in this area for almost 11 centuries. In 1918 our experience of being a minority began. Until this moment we were part of the population that was in government in power in the Austro-Hungarian alliance. We want to maintain our community. In this way, we are a bit like Quebec - in the sense that we live in a compact area, a territorial region.

This contributor describes how the Hungarian community and the region of Transylvania are bound geographically, historically, politically and culturally. Underlying this connection to Transylvania is the loss of power associated with his experience of becoming a minority. How Hungarian identity has survived this experience is notable given attempts made by the Romanian state throughout the communist period to assimilate them (see Deletant, 1999). According to my next contributor, history itself, has been central to resisting these attempts at assimilation:

> 1.3 Maybe it is because of the history that we have this strong sense of being Hungarian. We have our own history and our own culture, our own way of life and our own way of thinking. And this sense is very strong, it is very defined. We know what we are and we strongly want to remain what we are. This is very difficult for other people to understand.

My contributor describes the tension between the minority Hungarians and the majority

Romanians as rooted in historical differences. He looks directly at me while repeating the

word 'strong' - an insistent adjective used to convey the importance of maintaining his

identity. What he does not mention is that, until 1918, the Romanians in Transylvania were

relegated to the merely 'tolerated', effectively excluded from all political power. In 1918,

when Transylvania was incorporated into Romania, it was the Hungarians who found

themselves vying for power and acceptance by a state largely hostile to their community's

aspirations. This legacy of exclusion has continued, and has posed a distinct challenge for

Hungarians who wish to retain their identity in Romania. When I asked why retaining this

identity is important:

> 1.4 That's a big question, an individual question. I grew up with Hungarian
> culture, Hungarian feelings, parents, and my native language is Hungarian. I
> grew up with Hungarian literature, music. But it's not a problem to me that
> others grow up differently - that's diversity, and I love that. This is Romania
> it's a very diverse country with 18 nations. They should be proud of that,
> they shouldn't hide it. They should be proud of it.

My contributor describes his 'right' to identity as central to Hungarian claims for autonomy.

He also insists that it is diversity itself that he loves about Romania. When he describes the

lack of pride, or alternately, the sense of shame that the Romanian state is perceived as

feeling toward the Hungarian minority, his eyes are downcast and his voice is tinged with

disappointment. In political terms, this disappointment results from the state's reticence to

recognize the Hungarian minority. Their very presence is an affront to the self-esteem of

Romania's national character and the constitutional assertion (Article 1) of the 'unitary,

organic, and national' Romanian state.

Since 1989, Romania's national character has been central to political debates and

ethnic belonging has emerged as the tacit basis for political legitimacy in Romania (Verdery

and Kligman 1992, 146). Within this framework, nationalism is both "a vehicle for ethnic

identity and political identification" (Hedetoft 1999, 74). As a collective form of

identification, nationalism is distinguished from others by its 'all-encompassing' nature (see

Hedetoft, 1999; MacLure, 2003), whose ideal expression is the conjoining of culture, politics

and territory. It is in the disjunct between the ideal and the reality of nationalism that

"border disputes and a territorial mentality" emerge (Hedetoft 1999, 74). Tismaneanu (1993,

346) has highlighted nostalgia for nationalism in Romania and his fear that the profound

despair characterizing contemporary Romania could translate into the rise of social

demagogues.[22] Nonetheless, the diversity of Romania is a refrain oft repeated by those who

are excluded:

> 1.5 What I like in Romania is the diversity. I like that I go in the church, and
> then go to the market and listen to Balkan music. This diversity exists mainly
> in Transylvania. People here know that this is a multiethnic society. You
> have to live with this diversity.

My contributor emphasizes that diversity is 'recognized' in Transylvania, differentiating this

region from Romania as a whole. My contributors frequently describe 'cultural diversity' as

an inherently valuable feature of Transylvania, and one that should be protected. Individual

identity is central to preserving these values:

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[22] The potential appeal of the extreme right has increased in Romania and was evident in the recent
electoral success of the Greater Romania Party (GRP) headed by Corneliu Vadim Tudor. In 1992 the
GRP gained 3% of the vote (Dellenbrant 1991, 213) whereas in 2000 they gained 29% of the vote
(McNeil 2000, 14). Tismaneanu and Tudoran (1993, 48) have termed this extremist appeal the
"Bucharest Syndrome" where "communists and fascists [are] closing ranks to fight liberal democracy
with any weapons available."

> 1.6 I think that my identity is a question of being the keeper of some values.
> I'm very proud of my treasures - of my beautiful words, my literature, my
> way to feel love, to dance, to play music. I am the keeper, I preserve these
> kinds of values. I am absolutely sure that my country would be much poorer
> if we lose these values. Because I know my values, I want to preserve these
> values so I am attached to this self. You know everybody has their own scale
> of values. I think to preserve and to understand a thousand years of culture,
> to be a part of this culture, you are richer.

My contributor describes the lack of political recognition for Hungarians in Romania in
intimate terms. He emphasizes that identity for him is closely linked to values – a core
component of his 'self'. Rather than be ashamed of diversity, his Hungarian identity is a
source of pride and richness. Although he describes the importance of identity in cultural
terms, the desire to have this identity 'recognized' by the state invariably has political
implications. The challenge put forth by the Hungarian community to officially recognize
their identity is a distinctly political challenge. In other words, when my contributor speaks
about 'preserving values', he is suggesting that these values – and the 'self' that is attached to
them – need to be given status within the structures of the Romanian state. Another
contributor helps to clarify what is involved with being Hungarian in Romania:

> 1.7 My view is that I am a Hungarian in Romania and I can't measure that. I
> know some Hungarian nationalists and I'm not one. I'm a liberal type. I
> think that we shouldn't exaggerate. I don't like Hungarians who say that
> because 'I'm Hungarian that means this and this and this'. I believe I am a
> Hungarian, that is my identity. It's personal. My education was different, my
> socialization was different. I live in the community of 86% Romanian. I still
> believe my Hungarian identity is strong but I'm not going to throw at you.
> But for me, I was born in Romania and I love it. I want to live well in
> Romania. I'm concerned to build my life here. I don't want to go to
> Hungary. Lots of young people leave. They say 'I don't have a social status
> here, I should go elsewhere'.

Despite a perceived lack of social status on the part of other young people, my contributor

describes his desire to be able to live well as a Romanian citizen *and* to retain his Hungarian

identity. He describes Hungarian identity as fluid rather than prescriptive – personal rather

than political. Nonetheless, his desire to simultaneously express both of these 'identities' –

Romanian citizen and Hungarian identity – is overtly political due to the lines defining

political insiders and outsiders in Romania. Bluntly stated, to benefit from all the rights

conferred to citizens in Romania one must be ethnically Romanian. When I asked about

what is involved in identifying oneself as Hungarian in Romania, another contributor put it

this way:

> 1.8 There are a few levels here. One is a Romanian citizen, that is obvious.
> One is the member of the Hungarian community, or the Hungarian nation if
> you wish. And these things are pretty much equal in importance. But again,
> one feels to be a Transylvanian. Which is important in Romania. I don't
> know if it's just as important as being a Normand or being a Breton …or an
> inhabitant of Normandy or Brittany. Over here being a Transylvanian is very
> important. So there are quite a lot of levels in one's identity.

My contributor describes Transylvania as a bridge between these two identities – Romanian

citizen, Hungarian nationality. For him, being a Transylvanian is something he 'feels' and it is

central to his attachment to Romania. Nonetheless, it is precisely this link between identity

and a tangible territorial place that creates a sense of fear around the political implications of

recognizing this identity on the part of the state. Another contributor describes how border

changes factor into this fear:

> 1.9 I was born here my parents were born here. We have a lot of relatives in
> Hungary of course who are separated from us by the borders of 1920.
> Sometimes it's hard to be Hungarian when the Romanians are talking about
> you saying that Hungary wants back Transylvania - which is just not possible
> in the current political situation in Europe.

Despite the decision of 1920, that has separated him from parts of his family, my contributor

reiterates that changing borders is not a current political reality. Although borders are not

being discussed, Transylvania's 'status' in Romania, *vis a vis* the Hungarian minority, certainly is.

Transylvania's contested history continues to feature prominently in both Hungarian claims and the Romanian state's response to these claims. Being Hungarian in Transylvania involves a sense of separation from Hungary proper, created by the border changes of 1920, but also the reality of being politically marginalized in Romania. Retaining this cultural identity, given the history of border changes in the region, unfortunately creates the fear among Romanians that the borders might once again be redrawn. The Romanian state's fearful response to Hungarian demands highlights the close link between identity and locality, culture and politics.

Transylvania on the Margin

The link between Hungarian identity and the region Transylvania is central to Hungarian claims in Romania. It is here that their experience as a national minority began. As such, Transylvania is not simply distinguished as an abstract, disembodied 'place' but rather as the territorial expression of the Hungarian community.

> Julie - When you say 'our country' what do you mean?
>
> 1.10 I mean first Transylvania after Romania. I feel home in Transylvania but not in Bucharest. It's a different cultural heritage a different way of thinking a different way of dealing with people. Here in Bucharest, in the Eastern part of Romania, the main value is to be generous to be good. I help you because I am generous, but you are under me. You are not equal with me. In Transylvania, which is closer to a Western European way of thinking I help you because this is correct, we are equal. You are a man, a human being so we are equal. And this is also in politics.

My contributor invokes the historic legacy of empire in the region – Transylvania as a part of Western Europe and Romania as part of the East – to situate her identity. She suggests that

this legacy has resulted in different ways of being in the world, and importantly, a different 'politics'. In order to emphasize this difference, the cultural heritage that she ascribes to Transylvania, and correspondingly to herself, is a distinctly Western one, centred on enlightenment conceptions of equality. Her tone of voice rises and betrays a frustration when she describes her experience in Bucharest – an attitude of being 'under' or less than others. In Bucharest or the 'East', she states that the cultural heritage is one of patronage and hierarchy, in other words, pre-Enlightenment values.

My contributors repeatedly made distinctions between East and West, a line they described as running through the centre of contemporary Romania. In particular, it was the location of Transylvania on the European side of this line that was important to them. One contributor describes this line and its conspicuous geographic features:

> 1.11 Romania's regions were separated by the mountains. Transylvania is a region with very different cultural and social attitudes. We are part of central Europe. This area though is a part of the Balkans (Bucharest). That is the real problem and that is why people get nervous.

This refrain of 'belonging to Europe' featured prominently in any discussion I had about identity. In many ways the Hungarians view themselves as a bridge for Romania due to their historic links to Europe. Nonetheless, they also describe themselves as 'distinct' from Europe – staking out a position between East and West. This identification as 'different' from Western Europe is evident in discussions about their relationship to Hungary. Although, its development was different, the relationship between Transylvania and Hungary – the so-called mother country – is nonetheless important. One contributor describes these links as essential to the cultural survival of this community:

> 1.12 The relationship with Hungary is important. The relationship with all the diverse Hungarian communities - even in Canada - is very important. In

the context of globalization, it is very important for us to look after our culture - so that it won't disappear. We believe that there exists a normal relationship between a mother country and its minorities in other countries. We need the help of Hungary to be able to maintain our culture.

She describes Hungary as a mother figure, something that nurtures Hungarian identity in Romania. Nonetheless, I sense from my contributor that this mother is also separate from her children; concomitantly that the Hungarians of Transylvania are distinct from her. Another contributor similarly describes Hungary as the mother, and then goes on to characterize Romania:

1.13 You know Budapest and Hungary is still the mother country. Romania is not the step-mother but it is maybe a step-father country. I hope that in the future that Romania will be a real father. But Hungary and Budapest is still the mother country because of the culture and history and sometimes we get more help from Budapest than Bucharest. We cannot totally separate because in the 150 years of Turkish occupation the Hungarian state was surviving in Transylvania. And also a lot of artists, poets, and writers come from Transylvania.

My contributor's perception of Romania's as a 'step-father' reveals much of how she views her relationship to the state. The state does not nurture in the way that a mother, or one step removed, a step-mother would, but is rather cast in the stern role of the step-father. Her hope that the state might one day be a real 'father', highlights a currently loveless relationship, that holds the promise of greater affection and acceptance. Nevertheless, this paternal designation implies that, in her view, the state will always be authoritative.

At the heart of this discussion about 'mother countries' and 'fatherlands' is a desire to distinguish Hungarian identity in Transylvania: precisely at the border between Hungary and Romania. This identity is influenced by both parents but is nonetheless described as different from both. This position on the border of two cultures is a constitutive element of

Hungarian identity in Transylvania. Another contributor elaborates on the importance of

diversity to Hungarian identity:

> 1.14 I never felt very well in a pure atmosphere. At school the great majority
> were mixed. My friends were mixed. I feel great with only Romanians or
> Hungarians for a few days, but I need other air. I like both perfumes. The
> majority has no idea what my background is - that I have a Romanian mother
> and a Hungarian father. Where I grew up we talked both Romanian and
> Hungarian.

My contributor describes diversity as a central feature of her well-being. In her case, having a

Romanian and a Hungarian parent means that others accepting diversity as a principle is

essential to her sense of self. Tellingly, she describes her mixed background to me in hushed

tones.

I sense from other contributors that there is pressure for the Hungarians of

Transylvania, even those of mixed descent, to situate themselves in the essential terms

demarcated by 'Romanian' and 'Hungarian' national identities. As my previous contributor

suggests there is a certain lack of fit when attempting to describe oneself in such stark terms.

I found that people were much more comfortable on the margin between these essential

differences. When tipped over onto one side or the other of these essential categories -

Romanian or Hungarian - the result is to be excluded from both. Another contributor

describes this discomfort:

> 1.15 Just yesterday I was saying that I missed Hungary. I studied there. I feel
> Hungarian there. Of course my accent is from Transylvania and they
> recognize it. It has happened to me a couple times that they said 'you're
> Romanian because you come from Romania'. It was quite embarrassing. In
> Hungary they're sending me back to Romania as a Romanian and in Romania
> they're sending me to Hungary because I'm Hungarian. I am left floating in
> the air. Sometimes they ask me how do I know how to speak such good
> Hungarian. It bothers me to hear that. Because I'm sure that I know much
> more Hungarian history and geography literature and so on than they do. But
> I really feel good especially in Budapest because 70 percent of my childhood

> friends have left Romania for Hungary and they are living there and doing well. They are doing much better than I am here in Bucharest and sometimes they say I'm crazy for staying here. I guess I'm stupid.

My contributor evocatively situates her identity, as a Hungarian from Transylvania, as 'floating in the air' above the lines demarcating essential differences between Hungarians and Romanians. Although she describes this paradox of non-belonging light-heartedly, her eyes become downcast when she suggests that being different from both these identities also involves being excluded from both. The only position left for her is one 'in the air'. Citing the success of those who have definitively crossed the line and moved to Hungary, she suggests that settling for this position 'in between' involves a certain stupidity on her part. Although she says this somewhat jokingly, the long pause that follows reveal that she does, in part at least, believe it.

My contributors convey sadness when discussing their lack of fit with Hungarians from Hungary. One contributor describes this sadness in terms of being forgotten by Hungary:

> 1.16 In Romania, I'm Hungarian. When I go to Budapest, I'm Romanian. I was shocked that they didn't know we were here. In 50 years we were forgotten. Victor Orban likes us. He comes to Transylvania. He has a special program for Hungarians abroad. It is mostly a political gesture. The people don't get much but it is a kind of protection for us. It's just a piece of paper, but it's a big deal for the old people who were actually born in Hungary until the borders changed. Now they are being recognized as Hungarians instead of being told they are Romanian. If we would have been a Slavic people or a Latin people we might be Romanian now. But Hungarians are completely different. Our history is very different and we are proud of our culture.

The piece of paper he refers to is the recent 'status law' – a bill put forward by Hungary to recognize Hungarians living outside of Hungary. This law, which was highly contentious, gives the Hungarians of Transylvania symbolic recognition of their identity, not by the

Romanian state but rather from Hungary.[23] Despite this recognition from one side of the

border, the sense that Transylvania is distinct from both Romania *and* Hungary remains

central. Another contributor was more irritated than saddened by Hungary's attitude toward

the Hungarian minority in Transylvania.

> 1.17 I can tell you one thing, I don't like to go to Hungary. Because over the
> years, before 89 and now, if I am going there I'm not from Transylvania I'm
> Romanian. Because you know Transylvania was always a very special place in
> Europe. It was a centre of universal values, Italian, German, Roma,
> Hungarian, Romanian everything. Even Russian. All the kings that we had in
> Transylvania tried to gather all the literate people from all over Europe. The
> truth is that every person who grew up in Transylvania has at least two
> cultures. We are much more wealthy as people coming from Transylvania.
> We have too much culture (laughs).

My contributor responds to his lack of acceptance in Hungary by emphasizing the richness

and diversity of Transylvanian culture – a factor that distinguishes it from Hungary proper.

Being perceived as Romanian in Hungary, though admittedly a Romanian citizen, is a

frustrating simplification of his identity as a Hungarian from Transylvania. He conveys this

rich dual identity – Hungarian from Romania – with a sense of superiority. What comes

across here as superiority is described by another contributor simply as a different mind-set:

> 1.18 It's strange. I like Hungary, but I would never go to stay there. First of
> all it's not my home. There are big differences in mentality. From my high-
> school, 80 percent went to study in Budapest. But these Transylvanian
> Hungarians don't mix with the other Hungarians. It's a different mentality.
> You can't really catch it, it's very subtle.

Although he describes a cultural identification with Hungary he does not consider it 'home'

– a role he reserves for Transylvania alone. The sense of pride derived from being

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23 This law was negotiated between the Hungarian and Romanian governments without the
involvement of the DAHR.

Hungarian, in general, also inflects the relationship between *different* Hungarians. Another

contributor provides insight into these various perspectives:

> 1.19 I have to say that Hungarians in general are very proud. The
> Hungarians from Budapest are feeling superior to the Hungarians from the
> county or Hungarians in Transylvania. But the Hungarians in Transylvania
> are feeling like they're superior too. Historically we exported a lot of
> intelligent people. Now when you watch Hungarian television every second
> person is from Transylvania. They're the intellectuals.

This contributor reiterates a previous position – that there is a certain cultural superiority

derived from being both Hungarian and from Transylvania. What he highlights in his

description is the different cultural and historical experience of Transylvania from both

Hungary and Romania. This unique position is derived, in part, from Transylvania's isolation

from Hungary proper during the past 60 years of Romanian communism. Interestingly

enough, it is through this isolating experience with Romanian communism that the

Hungarian minority derives a certain authenticity. One contributor elaborates:

> 1.20 Hungarians say that we speak more nicely the Hungarian language than
> they. Probably because we have been less influenced by modernization and
> globalization here in Romania. Hungary is a more developed society, more
> open society, more Western-oriented society. I cannot tell you exact
> numbers but a large number of Hungarians left Transylvania. There is no
> family in Transylvania without somebody in Hungary. Hungary as a country,
> its culture, is loved by Hungarians in Romania, but they love more
> Transylvania. So those Hungarians that left, living in Budapest, they are
> always nostalgic. They always want to go home somehow. They know that
> the salaries are better there, three times higher, more stability, and many of
> them know very well that they will never return. But their families are here.
> It's a very deep connection a very intimate connection.

My contributor describes this authenticity as a function of Transylvania's isolation from the

West, and the associated processes of modernization and globalization. Being less

influenced by modernization and globalization is a way for him to counter the exclusion that

he experiences in Hungary. Although he feels an affinity to Hungary, his main source of cultural belonging is, unequivocally, to Transylvania.

Interestingly, when describing their relationship to Romania rather than Hungary, my contributors emphasize precisely the opposite – that historically they belong to Western Europe. Thus there is a certain slippage between these two lines – Hungarian and Romanian – in narratives constructing Hungarian identity in Transylvania. This sense of not *fully* belonging to either allows Transylvania's Hungarians to stake out a distinct position in between. Transylvania, as 'home', is described as 'different' from both Hungary and Romania. This difference demarcates Hungarian identity and attaches it to a tangible place. It is precisely in this link to Transylvania that Hungarian claims for autonomy are situated.

Politicizing Identity: Links Between Culture and Politics

This position on the historic border of East and West is central to Hungarian politicization in Romania and is used to distinguish their political strategy from that of their Eastern partners, the Romanians. One contributor describes his position as a minority struggling for rights:

> 1.21 To be Hungarian now in Romania means always to be a person who belongs to a minority, also to be a person who fights for his rights, not in a Yugoslavian way, but in a Western European way. This is the good luck of Romania, that the minorities are, or they were, a few thousand years a part of Western European culture. This is the reason why, although it was worse than in Yugoslavia, we never fought against the state… just in a parliamentary way. We provided a lot of good examples, for instance, the first time in the whole world, religious freedom was proclaimed in Transylvania in 1550 already, and at that time in the 16th century we had refugees from Western Europe, from Switzerland, from England, from Germany, so Transylvania was always a multicultural country, and even the Jews can say better that in the middle ages they were persecuted in all Europe except Hungary.

My contributor invokes Hungarian identity, or more specifically, the link between Hungarian

identity and Western culture, to outline his political strategy. He describes this strategy as

inextricably linked to a long Hungarian tradition of 'tolerance'.[24] He emphasizes that it is this

tradition that dictates that the methods they have chosen to make their claims are explicitly

non-violent. Of further note, he emphasizes that the Hungarian minority have been tolerant

despite the lack of tolerance the Romanian state expresses toward them.

Through this tradition, the Hungarians view themselves as moderating a situation that

has led to open conflict elsewhere in the world. Open conflict was something that all of my

contributors clearly opposed. When I asked about the contentious relationship between

Romanians and Hungarians one contributor was insistent:

> 1.22 You must first remove any tool other than the method of parliamentary
> democracy. I say OK, Romanians and Hungarians respect the rules of
> democratic games. No violence, no open conflicts. This is a minimum. You
> know as I told you, in Transylvania, there is no tradition of open conflict like
> in the Balkans, like in Serbia. It's a very specific Hungarian tradition to
> respect the law. Not because we are some kind ubermensch. In our history in
> the time of Austro-Hungarian Empire, the law was very serious. We have the
> tradition to believe in the law and the role of rules. In the Balkans are many
> many tribal traditions that are very strong and that try to solve problems with
> force - to eliminate their counterpart. We have a tradition of state - in
> Hungary and Austria - to respect the law. From this point of view we are
> West Europeans. It's not superior. It is a way, a tradition, a mentality.

My contributor suggests that this respect for the 'law' is due to Hungarian experience with a

Western European tradition of state. He describes this tradition in stark contrast to the

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[24] For an interesting parallel see Susan Gal's (1991) article about representations of Europe in
Hungary proper. She suggests that both 'Europe' and 'Hungary' do not have a single meaning for
Hungarians but change according to context. Following the end of communist rule, political parties
were focused on bringing Hungary closer to Europe while still representing the values of the nation
(Gal 1991, 455).

'tribal' traditions of the Balkans: namely, force and violence.[25] What he leaves unstated,

though implied, is that this tradition distinguishes Hungarians from Romanians. This

parliamentary approach, he states, is less immediately effective in garnering results, but

nonetheless, it is important to his identity as a Hungarian in Romania. He clearly wants me

to understand this point and raising his voice slightly, continues:

> 1.23 The Hungarians in this country chose the democratic parliamentary way.
> No Kalashnikov, no bombs, no terror. Debate in parliament, yes. And it's a
> very curious choice because if you examine who is paid better the bomber, or
> the Kalashnikover or which minority has some advantages, it is the minority
> with bombs, the Kalashnikovs that has political currency compared to the
> minority who works for this kind of emancipation in a legitimate way,
> through parliamentary democracy. You must see that in very very very few
> situations, this choice of parliamentary democracy is made. Look at former
> Yugoslavia, look at Albania. We can speak of different values and specific
> issues but it was the strategic choice that was made by the Hungarians.

By invoking the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia – Romania's neighbour – he clearly

distinguishes the choice made by the Hungarian minority to negotiate their claims in a

'legitimate' way.

Over the past ten years, they have not strayed from pursuing their claims within the

parliamentary structure of Romania.[26] Although these claims are argued within the

parliamentary structure of Romania, they seek to redefine this very structure. When the

content of these claims is outlined, the link between identity and politics becomes evident.

One contributor directly addresses this link:

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[25] Europe and the Balkans have frequently been placed in opposition. According to Todorova (1997, 188): "the Balkans have served as a repository of negative characteristics against which a positive and self-congratulatory image of the 'European' and the 'West' has been constructed."

[26] I would argue, that this strategy has had a positive impact on the democratic legitimacy of the Romanian government as a whole. How effective it has been in furthering their claims remains tentative.

> 1.24 Identity is very important. First of all we are ethnic Hungarians with Hungarian language and culture. But at the same time it is not less important that we are citizens of Romania. Because it's a matter of our everyday life, we have to deal with the fact that we are Romanian citizens so we cannot lose sight of that. And we do not lose sight of that. I think that if the situation improved in Romania, and if minority communities were helped to feel more at home in their own country it would have the added bonus of making them loyal citizens. Many Romanians will say that Hungarians are disloyal to the country and so on. But in most cases I would say it's a response to how the state behaves toward them. Which is basically acting like they don't exist. If that attitude changed there would be much stronger loyalty. Hungarians in Transylvania are not loyal toward the Hungarian state as it is now. They are loyal to their identity, to their common history and so on.

My contributor describes Hungarian 'identity' as a way to resist the Romanian state's response toward them. This state response has been a lack of 'recognition' and has had a negative impact on Hungarian loyalty to the state. For this contributor, acknowledging his cultural existence would allow him to feel 'at home' in Romania – a condition that, his tone of voice suggests, he longs for. This acceptance would also allow him to feel like a citizen.

Another contributor addresses this link between identity and citizenship:

> 1.25 For the Romanians this is very simple and natural to be Romanian in Romania. But to be Hungarian you have to work twice as hard, you have to speak their language and learn their culture and history. You know we are much more wealthy because we have two cultures. My basic culture is Hungarian, but I know and I like Romanian culture. But they don't like my culture, because they have this mentality that I'm the enemy. I'm proud I'm Hungarian, I'm respecting Romanian culture but I expect them to respect me.

Again, my contributor describes this lack of acceptance by the state in more intimate terms, as a lack of respect toward him. The long history of dualism between these two identities – Hungarian and Romanian – was frequently characterized in these terms. In political terms, this lack of respect is considered a barrier to Hungarians becoming loyal citizens of Romania. According to another contributor:

> 1.26 In Europe, in general, identity is defined by cultural, historical, religious
> and language codes and patterns. In our case, we consider ourselves
> Hungarians culturally. We know that we are Romanian citizens, so we pay
> taxes, we respect the laws, we do not want to leave the country so we
> consider ourselves loyal citizens. We expect the country to assure the
> framework to preserve our community, the values of our community. In our
> view the program would be realized by autonomy, by creating special
> institutions. We define ourselves by language, by religion and by culture. So
> these three elements are different I think than the majority culture.

For her, being a 'loyal citizen' is closely linked to having her identity recognized by the state.

Minority groups are simultaneously citizens and members of an ethnic group (Bishai 1998, 173) – and it is this dual political and social identity that the Hungarian minority seeks to bridge. Accordingly, this recognition, based on 'difference', would require that autonomous institutions be established to provide access to this 'identity'. This link between identity and political autonomy is central to Hungarian claims. Given the history of border changes and the past fifty years of authoritarian rule in Romania, the Hungarian community has looked for an alternate means to achieve this autonomy – specifically, the EU. As I have previously outlined in the DAHR's protocols with the ruling government, the catalyst for collaboration, on the part of both the minority and the state, is the EU. One contributor elaborates the central role that Europe plays:

> 1.27 Our region during the centuries, has been affected by war. Many times
> the border has been broken by war, so we want economic welfare, and in our
> view, economic welfare, social stability, social security could be assured only
> if we have the security umbrella of the EU. Especially because of the past, of
> the way the communist system was created, of the part played by Russia, by
> the Soviet Union. Our countries were under occupation, not necessarily
> under the occupation of foreign troops, but under the occupation of a
> human system.

My contributor states that war has made security for the Hungarian minority within the EU central to their goals. It is interesting that the Hungarians are seeking help from precisely the

same powers who decided that they would become a minority in Romania. This approach

flags a significant lack of trust in their relationship to the Romanian state. The desire to be

integrated into the EU is simultaneously a desire to escape the impact of living as a minority

within the borders of the Romanian state. Another contributor expresses this hope in

somewhat utopian terms:

> 1.28 My idea is that I retain my identity as a Hungarian. But I also hope that
> we will integrate into Europe and that we will be a European country. No
> Hungary, no Romania, no Sweden, no Germany, it's beautiful.

The possibility for this 'beautiful future' is complicated and, perhaps compromised, by a

difficult past.

To begin, Part One will provide the necessary historical background for this discussion

of the Hungarian minority's encounters with the Romanian state somewhere along the road

to Europe.

PART I

- Dividing Histories -
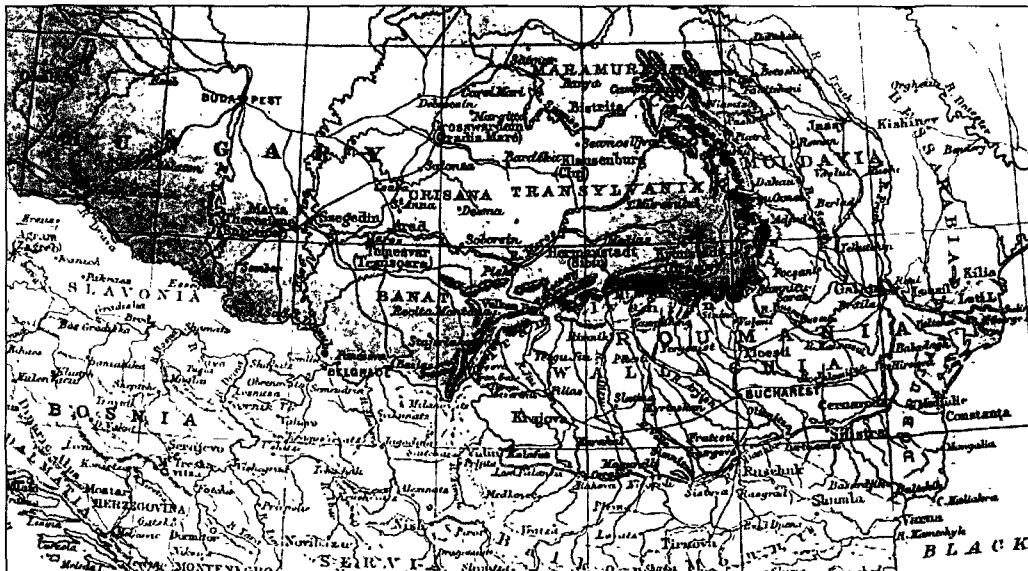
Figure 1: Eastern Europe 1914
Hungary and Romania

While in Romania, I was asked to speak at a Canadian Studies conference in Baia Mare – a town in the northern part of Transylvania. The organizers asked me to draw some parallels between Romania and Canada gained from my experience working in Romania over the past couple of years. Recognizing the hazards that such a talk might pose (how could I fairly compare two countries with entirely different social, economic, political and historic backgrounds?) I chose to frame the talk around the fairly general notion of 'diversity'.

After an initial disclaiming statement along the lines that I just stated, I began my presentation with what I considered to be a fairly benign comment: "Both Romania and Canada are countries with diverse groups of people within their borders and both have had to explore different ways to respond to this diversity." At this point I planned to focus my talk on Canadian debates surrounding Quebec and the constitution, the lessons learned, and then speak briefly about what I had learned about debates surrounding the Romanian Constitution. Now, given the Canadian experience of collective slumber whenever the 'constitution' gets mentioned, I anticipated that my talk would have a similarly sedating effect on my Romanian audience.

I was sorely mistaken. I had barely finished uttering my introduction before a Romanian professor from the Transylvanian region interjected: "Romania is not diverse in the way you are saying – in fact Romania is made up of Romanians." I agreed with her that the diversity in Romania is not a result of immigration, as it is in Canada – however, I disagreed with her assessment of Romanian diversity. Romania's 1992 census recorded 16 national minorities, including a very large (10%) Hungarian minority (Andreescu 2001, 271). One of her colleagues joined in the discussion to tell me that perhaps these people exist but that now Romania is 'run by Romanians' and that any minority groups would 'just have to

accept that'. Two other professors quickly stepped into the fray, and attempted to diffuse the tension. Meanwhile, the rest of the room (including myself) remained silent. These two new voices were, diplomatically, trying to find some common ground. To do so, they agreed with me and, very diplomatically, suggested that there is a lack of representation of minority groups within the Romanian constitution that requires some sort of redress. One mention of the Romanian constitution, however, and opinions became irrevocably and glaringly polarized. The argument continued and then ended abruptly when the first professor loudly declared: "Well we were here first!"

We decided to adjourn and have a coffee break. I must admit that I was quite taken aback by this incident. I was particularly surprised because the two professors who took issue with my claim actually specialized in Québecois literature and politics. I mistakenly anticipated a similarly sympathetic take on the Hungarian situation in Transylvania. As I contemplated my miscalculation, another professor, who had been silent, came up to me to introduce himself as 'Hungarian'. He told me that he felt terrible about how the conversation went but that he did not feel comfortable enough to contribute to the debate, or to identify himself as Hungarian. I soon realized that it was both the silences and the proclamations that would teach me about the intimacy of history and politics in post-socialist Romania. On the long train ride back to Bucharest I acknowledged that, unpleasant as it may have been, this was a truly valuable learning experience.

Upon my return to Canada I stumbled upon a collection of articles by anthropologists working in post-socialist countries that resonated with my own experience. In particular, an article about researching the national imagination in Macedonia brought me back to this incident in Baia Mare. The author, Brown (2000, 40), describes experiencing strong

reactions to his work when he presented versions of events that did not mesh with those prevalent. In response, he asks (2000, 32): What role remains for the anthropologist entering an environment where 'historical truth' is so sanctified yet at the same time people are creatively reshaping the past? Given the legitimation crisis in the post-socialist world, the disputed past takes on particular relevance. It is perhaps this link to legitimacy that sheds light on the high stakes involved in the past and the need to discuss it with such certainty. As I learned, definitive declarations such as - 'We were here first!' - are quite effective at impeding the expression of alternate viewpoints. This is not to dismiss these assertions as historical fictions of another time, or as simply unimportant to current issues. Boym (1994, 228) maintains that "creating the future through reinventing the past often goes hand in hand with an inability to understand the present." The impact of 'history' – disputed or not – is nonetheless real.

Beyond the impact history has on personal relations, it also has political consequences that are intimately felt. Often the stories narrated are not simply to make sense of a turbulent social reality - they also have pragmatic consequences linked to particular political agendas (Živković 2000, 53). These stories have "repeatedly emerged in disparate political circumstances" (Gal 1991, 441) and are situated at the confluence of local history and European "geopolitical imaginings". Within this context, discussions of the past are about:

> "The European periphery struggling to define its identity, its borders and a
> livable society in a bewildering post-Cold war world where the logic of
> nation-states is entwined with the logic of globalization" (Živković 2000, 63).

This hefty statement aptly conveys the weight that inflects discussions of the past in Eastern Europe. Specifically, in this region the logic of nation-states has been greatly influenced by the dynamic between empires at various historical periods.

Understanding the identity of the Hungarian minority in Romania involves journeying to a region that has long been situated on the margin of empire. Transylvania is the traditional homeland of the Hungarian minority in Romania and, as a concrete place, is inextricably bound, not only with Hungarian culture, but also with the political aspirations of this community. Given its position on the margins of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires, until its eventual incorporation into Romania following WW1, Transylvania's history is one that has been particularly influenced by the movement of borders. It is perhaps this position on the edge – sometimes within, sometimes without – that makes Transylvania such a compelling place to begin this journey.

Bram Stoker has described this region as an "imaginative whirlpool" - a description that, fictional or not, is hard to resist when traveling into the Carpathians. My first encounter, tunneling into this wall of jagged peaks by train, left me with a distinct sense of passage. Passage where, I was not yet clear.

We begin by traversing the history of this land between.

CHAPTER 2

Before beginning this journey into the past, I should mention that it was an unexpected one for me. Perhaps a bit naively I had come to Romania to discuss its political 'future'. I was well–versed in the recent history of life under communism and the events of the transition period - a topic that I address in Chapter 3. Much to my surprise, however, it seemed that every time I sat down to discuss this political future, the conversation had a strange way of turning around until, there I was, listening to a story about a time as far away as the 15th century. Even my most mundane conversations traveled this circuitous journey.

I recall my landlady, an elderly Romanian woman, dropping off some cut flowers for me one morning and asking me what it is that I am researching in Romania. Stepping onto the elevator, I casually mention that I am interested in the Hungarian minority. That evening she drops by with a heavy stack of leather bound books and we sit together at my table as she takes me, one by one, through maps documenting the history of Romania. These maps were published during the communist period, and they represent the nationalist dream of a historic 'Greater Romania'. According to them, Romania originally encompassed practically all of South-Eastern Europe. I sit patiently and listen, all the while wondering how mentioning an interest in the future of the Hungarian minority led so directly to these maps of the past.

Faced with these historical turns, I began to understand that politics in Romania has a Janus face. Specifically, understanding the current political claims of the Hungarian community requires that we look simultaneously at recollections of the past, and hopes for the future.

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The story about how the Hungarian minority came to be in Romania begins in Transylvania and this chapter will focus on Hungarian history in Transylvania up until WW2. Chapter Three will outline the Hungarian experience in communist and post-communist Romania, and the more recent politicization of the community. Throughout Part I, my account of the 'authorized' history will be punctuated with the narrative accounts of my contributors. My goal is not to label one correct and the other incorrect but rather to highlight what is at stake in discussing history in post-revolutionary Romania. For Lambek and Antze (1996, xxi), a discussion about history, is simultaneously a discussion of identity. How my contributors discuss the past is not important for what it reveals of the historical record; rather it is what the past reveals of Hungarian identity and belonging in Romania that is our concern. Of particular import is how my contributors invoke history to justify Hungarian claims for autonomy.

For the Hungarians of Transylvania, political claims are framed in terms of a right to their identity: a concept that involves a complex interplay between history, culture and place. Equally complex is Transylvania's own identity. Given the changing jurisdiction of this region – first Hungary, then Romania - there are high stakes involved, both politically and personally, in discussing Transylvania's past. Katherine Verdery (1983, 19) aptly summarizes these difficulties:

> "The more I have read of Transylvanian history, the more convinced I have
> become that an objective rendering of this history is almost impossible.
> There seems no position on any major issue in Transylvania's past that will
> not be found to be biased toward either the Romanian or the Magyar side
> and therefore unacceptable to the other."

That said, she then goes on to write an account of this very history. In this chapter I rely on Verdery's (1983) account in addition to that of Seton-Watson (1963), the predominant

historian working in this region during the interwar period and following WW2. These were the most in-depth and, I would argue, least biased accounts that I came upon.[27] My purpose in presenting these accounts is simply to distinguish Transylvania from both Hungary and Romania proper. This distinction is one that has broad consensus in the literature. It is also one that my contributors make, albeit for different reasons. Approaching a difficult history, such as Transylvania's, involves not submitting to the temptation to find out what 'really, really' happened but rather stepping back and analyzing the very premises of the conflict (Dudwick 2000, 21). What is important for this discussion is how history is used to construct what are seemingly solid lines between Romanian and Hungarian identity. Part Two and Part Three will outline the cultural and political implications of this division.

Given the inherent hazards to entering into a historical discussion about Transylvania I want to make explicit what my purposes are in this chapter. First, I will show how this region has a history, reflected in the literature, distinguishing it from both Hungary and Romania proper – a distinction that underlies Hungarian identity in Romania and their corresponding claims for autonomy. Second, I will show how history is used to situate Hungarian identity in opposition to Romanian identity – a distinction that, although essentialized, is important to the political claims of the Hungarian minority. Thirdly, I will address how my contributors feel about the Treaty of Trianon, when Transylvania was incorporated into Romania, and the moment where Hungarian experience as a minority in Romania began.

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[27] If anything these accounts are slightly biased toward the Romanian perspective.

Before getting more specific, let me first present how my contributors feel about 'history' in general.

History/Identity

My contributors talk explicitly about the firm ties between history and identity. Although most frequently discussed in positive terms, one contributor highlights the negative consequences of this link.

> 2.1 I don't think people have the right concept of identity. They think too much in terms of history. I don't like history. In my mind, it just creates oppositions between people. If I start to read a book about history, about Romanians, and about Hungarians, about the war between the nations, I start to feel angry inside. But I control this anger, I will never be angry with people on the street. But other people don't think like that. They say, "Romanians destroyed our homes and took Transylvania" and they are angry. I don't know if Hungarian history books are correct, maybe they are. But the Romanian historians contest them, and everyone interprets history in their own way. This is why so much conflict exists.

My contributor conveys his frustration at history and the oppositions it creates. He highlights how these oppositions can have real consequences in terms of the conflicts that they generate. When faced with this history, like many of those interviewed, he feels anger. Nonetheless, in his view this anger should never go beyond private sentiment and he objects to its public expression and political implications. Recognizing that history itself is a fluid process, my contributor remains hesitant to lay blame. With a view to getting beyond future conflict, he goes on to highlight the differences between Hungarians and Romanians:

> 2.2 There's a difference in how Romanians and Hungarians think. Maybe we can never agree upon our history because it was full of conflict. But what is important now is that we move toward the future. I leave history for the historians. I don't dislike other values but I also don't want my own values disrespected.

My contributor emphasizes the enormous difficulties that he and many others experience when trying to overcome historically derived divisions. Nonetheless, while he objects to how these divisions can lead to conflict, he continues to maintain a separation between Hungarians and Romanians. In other words, what he objects to are the unequal power relations between these two identities, and the conflicts that they invariably generate.

Identity and difference are implicit to discussions of history and the conflicts it might create. For my contributors, discussing the relationship between Hungarian history and identity is concomitantly a discussion of the differences between Hungarians and Romanians. Within this framework (and repeated countless times in my interviews) identity is conceived in relation: it is impossible to speak of Hungarian history in Transylvania without also addressing Romanian history. This notion of history as relational, however, comes from the perspective of the Hungarian minority and is not necessarily shared by the Romanian majority. Another contributor outlines what are different conceptions of history:

> 2.3 The problem is that Romanians remember only their history, but both histories are important. I think history is less important to Hungarians. It is important to show belonging to community. But to the Romanians history is perceived as legitimacy. Historically though, Transylvania was actually an autonomous region and not traditionally part of Romania.

There is an undertone in this statement of history as a negative force. My contributor draws attention to the consequences of Romanian invocations of history on the Hungarian community. He specifies that history becomes negative when it is used to create legitimacy, suggesting that this is the 'Romanian approach' to history. In contrast he describes the Hungarian approach to history as a positive force used to forge community. Effectively, he suggests that history is only important to the Hungarian community insofar as it has a cultural, and not a political role. This view of two potential uses for history (cultural and

political), indicate a desire on his part to distinguish himself from his Romanian

counterparts. Nonetheless, the view that the cultural and the political can be tidily separated

is put into question by his last claim: that Transylvania was an autonomous region and not

historically a part of Romania. The implications of this claim are certainly political.

Transylvania's lost autonomy has undeniable political consequences for the Hungarian

community. One contributor outlines these implications:

> 2.4 The problem between Romanians and Hungarians is a historical problem.
> There is still the debate about who was here first - in Transylvania. History
> says that economic development was the work of the Hungarians. At the
> beginning of this century, the Hungarians had elevated the economic level in
> Transylvania. In Transylvania life is better than it is here in Bucharest and
> the Hungarians are now always angry because of money. The money from
> Transylvania is sent to other regions in Romania, like Bucharest and Moldova
> - and this is not fair. In Moldova you cannot imagine how poor they are.
> They're eating grass there.

My contributor suggests that it is the history of Hungarian jurisdiction over Transylvania that

has led to its increased affluence. She argues that Transylvania's relative wealth is now being

redirected to other regions in the country, a situation that frustrates the Hungarian

community. Her lack of sympathy for the poor 'grass eating' Moldovans seems to suggest

that they are deserving of their situation. In this sense, poverty is viewed as a lack of

ingenuity and an inability to develop economically. This notion of the Transylvanian region

as more 'developed' intellectually, economically, culturally and politically was one that

surfaced throughout my interviews and highlights the regional divisions in Romania. For my

contributor, the point of this statement, however, is not to emphasize regional diversity but

rather to show the negative impact of Transylvania's lost autonomy.

Transylvania's history as an autonomous region is a long one and exploring its roots is

integral to understanding the contemporary claims of the Hungarian community. This

autonomy has had a very different impact on both Romanians and Hungarians at different

historical moments and shows how, in this region, history, culture and politics have long

been entwined. Although my contributors frequently highlighted Transylvania's diversity,

they made little mention of how the Romanians were treated during periods of Hungarian

jurisdiction over the region. Toward understanding this relationship between Hungarians

and Romanians in the region, the following section will outline Transylvania's autonomous

status up until the 17th century, its eventual incorporation into the Austro-Hungarian

Empire, and its inclusion into Romania following WW1.

Transylvania's early autonomy was based on its ability to maximize its strategic position

between two empires – the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian. Currently the Hungarians

of Transylvania are attempting to do the same by positing themselves between Europe and

Romania. A brief look at the history of the region will help to illustrate why.

Transylvania Under Hungarian Jurisdiction, (pre-WW1)

As part of a fortification of Hungary's heartland, Transylvania was made into a special

military zone ruled by a *voievod*, or governor in the 16th century (Verdery 1983, 82). During

this period, the voievods or princes were adept at maneuvering between Hapsburg and

Ottoman forces to gain concessions for Transylvania.[28] In 1538, Ferdinand II and János

Zápolya, the voievod of Transylvania, signed the Treaty of Várad to ratify the separate

existence of Transylvania as a state unit (Seton-Watson 1963, 104). Notably, Transylvania

signed the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) as a sovereign signatory.

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[28] Within this system, the prince took an oath to the King of Hungary, though the estates were free
to elect their own prince In contrast, in the two Romanian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia,
the prince was often imposed by the ruling empire.

This period of native princes (1540-1691) also coincided with the reformation - a time of violent religious disagreements in Europe. In order to lessen conflict among Transylvania's diverse population a law was passed to establish four 'received religions'. These included the Evangelical (reform or Calvinist), the Lutheran, the Roman Catholic, and the Unitarian. This law assured the free exercise of these religions and their equal status within Transylvania. In addition to this edict on religious tolerance, a law was also passed to form a "brotherly union" between the three 'recognized' nations of Transylvania (1437) – the Magyars, Székels, and Saxons (Seton-Watson 1963, 102). A notable absence from this basis of privilege, of nationality and religion, were the largely Eastern Orthodox Romanians (Verdery 1983, 83; Seton-Watson 1963, 110). Nations not included in these categories, such as the Romanians and also the Jews, were merely 'tolerated'. In other words they did not possess citizenship rights or have access to political life.

Within the social, political, and religious categories established by Hungarian jurisdiction over the region, there were clear separations between the ruling Hungarians and the largely peasant based Romanians. This distinction between 'recognized' and 'tolerated' nations and religions effectively became a basis for conflict in the region. Interestingly, however, when discussing the history of this region with my contributors, they rarely mention the low status of the Romanians. In contrast, it is Transylvania's culture of 'tolerance' that they emphasize. One contributor explains this tolerance as a necessity of Transylvania's geographic position between empires:

> 2.5 If you just check the history of Transylvania you'll see that this land was always disputed by different powers and has always had a multi-ethnic and multi-religious tradition…and a tradition of tolerance.

My contributor suggests that this position between empires, contributed to Transylvania's diversity. Importantly, he states that this forced Transylvania's rulers to develop a tolerant attitude toward diversity. My contributors were clearly proud of this history of tolerance. Another continues:

> 2.6 Transylvania was always very diverse. Always. It was also independent. From both the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Turkish Empire. It was the first region in the whole world that had freedom of religion. It continued to be a diverse area in a positive sense.

My contributor suggests that Transylvania's diversity and independence go hand in hand – a refrain I will hear repeatedly. Though admittedly Transylvania's tradition of tolerance was ahead of its time in medieval Europe, there is little mention by my contributors of the exclusion of the fourth and, no less numerous, Romanian nation from political power.

When the Hapsburgs took Transylvania from the Turks in 1691, they made no attempt to regulate its internal complexities and rather guaranteed its autonomy, internal constitution and jural order (Verdery 1983, 87). For the Emperor Leopold, this guarantee also meant inheriting a large, anti-Hapsburg Magyar nobility that was independent from the monarch. The Turkish period left the Hapsburgs with a Hungarian nobility that was not used to centralized rule and who opposed Hapsburg attempts at centralization. Hapsburg efforts to centralize the empire disrupted Transylvanian autonomy due to the limitations it placed on the authority of the Transylvanian nobility (Verdery 1983, 104).

The Hapsburgs used the Catholic Church as a potential source of unity in their fragmented empire (Verdery 1983, 107). They sought to gain the loyalty of the predominantly Romanian peasantry by encouraging them to become Catholic and by introducing feudal reforms. Nonetheless, attempts to catholicize the population were made

particularly difficult given the tradition of religious freedom in Transylvania. Specifically,

Transylvania had become largely Protestant during the Turkish occupation – a tradition that

was codified as early as the 1600s.[29] One of my contributors narrates the importance of

these early religious differences to distinguishing Transylvania from Hungary proper:

> 2.7 From the 16th century onward, when Transylvania became independent
> (though we had to pay the Turks), political, social, and literary life were very
> different from in Hungary. Hungary was closer to Austria and the re-
> catholization was stronger than in Transylvania. You know 100 years after
> Luther 95% of Hungary was protestant until 400 years later there were only
> 25%. In Transylvania we remained mainly protestant. In this way
> Transylvania had a different development than Hungary.

My contributor attempts to distinguish Transylvanian development from that of Hungary by

drawing attention to religious differences. For the Hungarians of Transylvania, Protestantism

was a symbol of opposition to Hapsburg centralism.

Throughout this history, the Romanians in Transylvania remained the victims of a

severe feudal system headed by the Hungarians (Seton-Watson 1963, 183). The Empress

Maria Theresa took note of these conditions in a memorandum (1770) where she deplored

these conditions and stated that the peasantry should be able to support themselves and their

families, and that the rights of the 'seignior' should be secondary to these factors (Verdery

1983, 97). By suggesting that the feudal lords be subject to regulation, the peasantry felt they

had found an ally in the Empress. The Emperor Joseph II also observed the deplorable

conditions of the Romanians in Transylvania during a visit in 1768. In 1791 he introduced

equality of citizenship for all Transylvanians (Seton-Watson 1963, 172). These efforts at

reform led the serfs to attack the feudal system, in the Emperor's name, with the goal of

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[29] The Turks allowed Protestantism as a way to prevent the Transylvanian nobles from making alliances with the Catholic nobles of Austria (Seton-Watson 1963, 173).

ending noble privilege in Transylvania (Verdery 1983, 99). This uprising failed and feudal

order was restored in 1790.[30] Although the interests of the peasantry seemed to coincide

with those of the Hapsburgs, in reality the monarchy's efforts were more directed at

disrupting the Magyar nobility than emancipating the peasants (Held 1983, 96).[31]

By the turn of the century, revolutionary ideas from Paris were kindling latent

nationalisms in the region and making attempts to centralize increasingly difficult for the

Hapsburgs. In particular, Hungarian pressure for greater 'Magyarization' was threatening to

the Romanians in the region.[32] As a means to achieve greater 'Magyarization', Transylvanian

aristocrats argued for the union of Transylvania with Hungary (Verdery 1983, 118). The

Romanians of Transylvania were against this potential union and simultaneously underwent

their own national awakening. A petition[33] was presented to Emperor Leopold II in 1791, on

behalf of the Romanians of Transylvania, asking that their civic rights be confirmed and

respected (Verdery 1983, 119). In order to address a previous injustice, the Romanians asked

to be recognized as the fourth nation of Transylvania, and for Eastern Orthodoxy to be

considered a recognized rather than merely tolerated religion. This petition was rejected,

with the rationale being that the Transylvanian constitution rested not on nationality but on

nobility – a status to which a number of Romanians had been raised, thus proving they had

rights (Seton-Watson 1963, 190).

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[30] Known as the Horea-Cloşca revolt (see Held, 1983) the Romanian peasants demanded political equality and land reform. According to Seton-Watson (1946, 300) this revolt was the first sign of Romanian national awakening in Transylvania.

[31] According to Maria Theresa, 'enlightened rule' involved reducing peasant obligations to the landlords to free peasant resources for the State.

[32] 'Magyar' is the word that the Hungarians use in their own language to describe themselves.

[33] The *Supplex Libellus Vallachorum.*

Despite the questionable terms under which the petition was rejected, nationalism would soon emerge as the language through which all conflict would be fought in Transylvania (Verdery 1983, 122; 181). This new emphasis on nationalism had its roots in Hapsburg attempts to centralize the empire by promoting discord between other national groups (Cadzow et al. 1983, 89; Held 1983, 104). For example, during this period of national awakening (1839), the Hungarian parliament outlined its goal of achieving in the briefest possible period the Magyarization of all other ethnic groups in the country (Seton-Watson 1963, 275). Increased nationalism on the part of the Hungarians also influenced the Hungarian revolution of 1848 and led Hungary to renegotiate its status in the empire in 1867 (Verdery 1983, 182). Other ethnic groups in Transylvania, such as the Romanians, began to feel very threatened.

When the question of extending rights to Romanians was raised in Transylvania (1848), Titan Baron Wesselényi gave an impassioned speech demanding that the Romanians be recognized.[34] Louis Kossuth, however, disagreed arguing that the Romanians were conspiring against Hungary (Seton-Watson 1963, 283). Kossuth's rhetoric toward the other nationalities greatly escalated tensions within Transylvania.[35] A few members of the Transylvanian government recognized the potential danger in alienating non-Hungarians and a law was proposed in April 1849 to guarantee the free development of all nationalities on Hungarian soil (Seton-Watson 1963, 290). According to this law, Romanians were to have a

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[34] An excerpt from his memorable speech: "The future is darker than the night of my eyes. Only peace and understanding can save us. St Stephen told his son, happy is the country in which are many nationalities. ... There remains only to unite in spirit with the nationalities, to make alliance with them, to embrace them as sisters and to share all things with them" (Seton-Watson 1963, 283).

[35] After being asked to accept a compromise with the Romanians he allegedly said: "For the Romanians I have only bullets and cannon."

national guard, an Orthodox faculty at the University of Pest and given amnesty. This law did not pass. By October, 1849 Hungary had been reduced to the status of an Austrian province and its constitution annulled (Seton-Watson 1963, 293). Transylvania was placed directly under the jurisdiction of Vienna.

The new constitutional Hungary was linked to the Empire of Austria in a dual system of two equal sovereign states. Under these conditions, minority groups were considered destined for assimilation by the Hungarian majority. Nonetheless, the following section will outline how, with the murder of Archduke Ferdinand, the tide would turn dramatically in favour of the Romanians.

The Peace Conference and the Transylvanian Question

Romania has been described as one of the most fortunate countries at the peace conference of 1919 (Seton-Watson 1967, 198), benefiting from allied concerns over the potential threat of Bolshevism in both Russia and Hungary. The immediate result of these concerns was that Romania's territory was increased in order to secure a strong political presence between Germany and Russia (Berend 1998, 175). Given the Bolshevik threat posed by Russia, the Great Powers[36] viewed Romania, as opposed to Hungary, as a natural ally (Pastor 1983, 175). On June 4, at Versailles, Hungary was forced to sign the Treaty of Trianon and cede Transylvania. To provide a sense of scale, this meant that Hungary lost more territory to Romania (102 787 square kilometres) than it had left (91 114 square kilometres) (Cadzow et al. 1983, 28).

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[36] Britain, France, Italy and the United States

The Great Powers therefore decided Transylvania's status without any agreement between Romania and Hungary, negatively impacting the legitimacy of this decision. Hungarians vigorously opposed this decision, arguing that Transylvania was an integral part of the Hungarian body politic and had been for the past 1000 years. They argued that losing the province was an unacceptable occurrence and simply the result of their military defeat (Fischer-Galati 1983, 181). Although Transylvania was under Hungarian control, of various forms, from the 11th century until 1918; the Romanian representatives argued that Transylvania was historically a Romanian province, despite these centuries of foreign rule (MacMillan 2001, 261). Asserting that Transylvania had originally been part of Romania was without grounding. Strengthening the Romanian claim to the region, however, was statistical evidence that showed that Romanians made up more than half of Transylvania's population. Romania's entitlement to Transylvania was therefore framed within Woodrow Wilson's new language of 'self-determination' for the nations of Eastern Europe.[37]

The Trauma of Trianon

Understandably, this abrupt change in borders had a significant impact on the Hungarian community. The trauma of 'Trianon' was consistently mentioned to me when I asked people about Hungarian relations with the Romanian state. I began to view the Treaty of Trianon as the founding myth of the Hungarian minority in Romania – a narrative that is characterized by a distinct sense of loss. When I ask one contributor how he views Hungarian belonging in Romania, he begins:

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[37] Despite this emancipatory discourse, in the end it was not the principle of 'self-determination' but rather Romania's attitude toward the Soviet Union and Hungary – as defenders of Eastern Europe against communism – that decided the fate of Transylvania. Nonetheless, 'self-determination' as a legitimizing principle would continue to influence ethnic claims in this region for decades to come.

> 2.8 After the First World War in Versailles, in France, the Trianon Treaty decided that Transylvania would become Romania. It was not a referendum. People living in Transylvania were never asked – even if in Western Europe, people were asked by referendum (for example, Alsace). Actually we consider ourselves the victims of history. But still, there is no radical movement among Hungarians, claiming the borders or claiming a violent way to fight for our rights. We are aware that the first value in this region is stability, we want to build better living conditions for ourselves and for our country.

My contributor is silent about the historical exclusion of Romanians from this tradition of tolerance. Nonetheless, he does emphasize the beginning of Hungarian exclusion in Romania and the injustice of not having been consulted at Versailles. With a raised tone of voice he states that this decision, made by the Great Powers, has made the Hungarians in Transylvania the 'victims of history'. So that I do not misinterpret his statement he looks at me directly and continues, asserting that despite this injustice, there is no desire to redress history by rewriting borders. According to him it is the loss of autonomy, rather than territory, associated with the Treaty of Trianon that requires redress.

The shock of having Hungary's borders changed 'overnight' featured prominently in many of my interviews. This was a decision made by the Great Powers alone, according to another contributor:

> 2.9 I've never seen an opinion poll about the real sentiments of the Hungarians, but probably the majority of them think that we are forced to be here. When the border was drawn, there was no referendum. That was the decision of the Great Powers. And after that, everybody agreed that we... well, history decided, the Great Powers decided that we should live here. And our request is to be allowed to live here, as human beings and as Hungarians at the same time. So our request is double. We would like our general human rights respected and also the special rights that are connected with your identity.

Although the current discontent of the Hungarian community is based on their relationship with the Romanian state over the past century, my contributor acknowledges that the Great

Powers were responsible for relegating the Hungarians of Transylvania to the position of a minority.[38] Although she perceives the borders as unjust she resigns herself to 'living here'. Although my contributors reacted to Trianon with both sadness and anger, it is clear that there are no secessionist aspirations in this group. This contributor conveys Trianon and the challenge it poses to her desire to be both a 'human being' and 'Hungarian' in Romania with sadness. Asserting the continued importance of living in Transylvania as a 'Hungarian', she emphasizes that this is a larger task than simply granting human rights – it also requires that cultural rights specific to this region be recognized. Her narrative highlights how Hungarian cultural identity has been formed, in part, out of the sense of loss and powerlessness associated with the redrawing of borders in 1920.

The Treaty of Trianon thereby emerges as a site where identity is constructed – a collective memory for the Hungarian minority in Romania. The history of Hungarian autonomy in Transylvania can be framed in Maurice Halbwachs' (1950) language: retreating like an ocean and leaving behind lakes and rock formations.[39] The memory of Hungarian autonomy in Transylvania remains alive in these lakes, yet is now shaped and contained by the rocks, or 'places' of memory. Trianon is one such rock. Although remembering Trianon

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[38] This may have influenced contemporary Hungarian claims to autonomy: they are looking for the West to redress this decision by integrating Romania into Europe.

[39] Maurice Halbwachs' (1950) research during the interwar period introduced the concept of 'collective memory' to discuss common historical memories. Importantly, Halbwachs argued that the capacity of memories to endure is closely linked to the power of social groups (Hutton 1993, 6). Halbwachs (1950) used the term 'collective memory' to highlight how memories only exist when supported by the conceptual structures of larger communities and that these communities, in turn, define what is 'remembered'.

is itself an imaginative exercise (Hutton 1993, 78), its legacy has been intimate and real.

Another contributor conveys this intimacy:

> 2.10 Let me tell you something, I used to say we are classic minorities. We stay here all the time and the border moves from right to left, from East to West. You know the old joke – there are some individuals who have changed their citizenship five times in a lifetime and have stayed in the same village. It was Hungary, it was the Soviet Union, it was Ukraine it was Czech Republic. The same village! You know that's Europe and its history.

The image he creates – of people walking the streets of a nameless village while the border jumps from left to right - is somewhat farcical. Nonetheless, the impact of this so-called 'joke' is not really that funny given the consequences that Europe and its history had on those living within these migrating borders.

In a more serious tone, one of my older contributors, narrates the trauma of Trianon and how it has impacted Hungarian/Romanian relations:

> 2.11 We were a majority in Hungary who then became a minority. In a day! Monday was Hungary and Tuesday becomes Romania. This was a huge psychological and historical shock. For everybody I suppose. It's very strange to talk about shock and the psychological effect after 80 years, but it was. A shock in let's say, the collective memory, or the collective consciousness of a part of these people – I speak of the Hungarians – we needed time to accept this new situation. But then before the 2nd World War a part of Transylvania was re-attached to part of Hungary. After the 2nd World War it was re-attached to Romania. In many ways the public memory and the public consciousness – let's say the psychological climate of both the majority and the minority is ill. The Romanians are always in fear that Transylvania will go back to Hungary. Therefore they've practiced in these past 80 years a very strong homogenizing nationalist policy that we feel with fear in our skin.

My contributor outlines the impact that the collective memory of Trianon has had not only for Hungarians, but also for Romanians. In this way, Romanian and Hungarian identity, though divided, remain intimately linked, with one being a foil to the other. He implies that these two identities are 'ill', and describes their collective symptom as fear. From the

Romanian perspective this fear is expressed surrounding Transylvania's possible secession.

From the Hungarian vantage the fear expressed is that of their assimilation by the Romanian

state. My contributor emphasizes, however, that fear of border changes on the past of the

Romanian state has led to homogenizing nationalist policies – something he perceives as

unjust. Underscoring this perceived injustice, another informant stated bluntly: "Historically

the Romanians have reason to be insecure".

According to my contributors, the injustice of 'Trianon' is on the minds of both

Hungarians and Romanians. One contributor describes directly how this border change has

impacted contemporary relations between the two:

> 2.12 Any time there are any issues between Romania and Hungary, the
> Romanians are always saying 'please write down again that you respect the
> Treaty of Trianon'. This is foolish to say. We try to explain to many
> Romanian politicians that you shouldn't have fear because we don't want to
> put Transylvania back – a bigger territory than Hungary – in Hungary. We
> see in the German reunification how difficult economic and social
> reunification is. They don't believe though that we don't want Transylvania
> back. We had a four year period during the 2nd World War where we had
> Transylvania back and the authorities from Budapest came and tried to teach
> us how to rule the country and it was awful.

My contributor conveys a perspective that I heard time and again in my interviews: that

despite the injustice underlying the decision to redraw the borders of Transylvania, that the

Hungarian minority has no desire to have the borders redressed. What they do desire,

however, is to live as 'Hungarians' in Romania - to have what they describe as autonomy.

The tenuous grounds on which Romania was given Transylvania remain central to these

claims for autonomy. Outlining this injustice, another contributor continues:

> 2.13 This fear from the past - that you obtained land without any right to that
> land – is that you can always lose it. If I am stealing something from
> somebody, I will always have the fear that they will take it back. This fear also
> exists because, even though there was coexistence among Romanians and

> Hungarians in the last 600 years, this coexistence was poisoned in the last
> fifty years by the communists. I mentioned that the biggest problem of
> Romania is that they idealize and mythologize history. This is exactly what
> happened in Yugoslavia. In these fifty years the communists have changed
> the history of the Romanians – first they were a Roman nation, now they are
> a Dacian nation. This is an old-fashioned view of history. They tried to
> prove that the Romanian nation was here before the Hungarians. This means
> that they have rights because they were here first. But if you think that way
> then all of Europe should go back somewhere. This is the biggest problem.
> They are still fixated on really old history.

Although my contributor points out the Romanian tendency to idealize and mythologize

history, arguably, his claim that there was peaceful coexistence between Romanians and

Hungarians over the past 600 years does much the same. Nonetheless, by alluding to

Yugoslavia he acknowledges the hazards of such idealizations – specifically, ethnic violence.

Taking the high road he emphasizes the futility of engaging in debates over 'who was here

first' – a debate that preoccupied Romanian communists (see Verdery, 1991). Another

contributor makes a similar case about history and its consequences:

> 2.14 In the beginning Stephan III the king of Hungary said that he wanted a
> multinational state. And Hungary was never a country of just one nation,
> ever in its history. That was not the case of France, Italy, or Germany. But
> the Hungarians never had the intention to produce a country of just one
> nation. Starting from this position, assimilating minorities was never
> Hungary's program. And so in the 18th century when the nations were
> forming as selfish communities it was different in Hungary where
> Romanians, Slovaks and Serbs also lived. The problems started after the
> First World War. When the Hungarian kingdom was dissolved many states
> were created. When Czechoslovakia and Romania were expanded
> Hungarians remained in those areas. Romanians wanted to assimilate the
> minorities, not only the Hungarians, all of them. They either emigrated or
> were assimilated.

Given the history of Transylvania presented and the official Hungarian policy of

'Magyarization' prior to WW1, it is apparent that my contributor has an idealistic vision of

the past. Again, this idealization has a practical purpose. Specifically, it allows him to take the

moral high ground by distinguishing Hungarian and Romanian attitudes (*read* tolerant and

intolerant) towards minorities.

Only one of my interview partners drew parallels between the Hungarian policies (pre-

WW1) to assimilate minorities and the more recent policies of the Communist party.

Interestingly, this contributor was half Hungarian and half Romanian. Perhaps tellingly, she

had a notably empathy for both sides of this debate:

> 2.15 Where assimilation is concerned, first I must say that assimilation was a
> very common process of large states. And it was the policy of the Austro-
> Hungarian Empire and while Transylvania was a member of the Austro-
> Hungarian Empire there was an unfair assimilation process aimed at
> assimilating the Romanian population. Which was, I think, almost always in
> the majority in Transylvania. But then the political situation turned against
> us, the Hungarians. But now with democracy it's not acceptable to us that
> there could be a policy of assimilation by any state be it Romania or France
> or anywhere. But it is still going on. It was very strong during the communist
> regime. The Hungarian community has everlasting ties to this land though, it
> has such a long history. This helps us to feel strongly about our identity, and
> this will make it very difficult to break.

Although my contributor conveys empathy toward Romanian history in Transylvania, she

clearly opposes recent attempts to assimilate the Hungarian minority. She describes her

cultural identity, and its 'everlasting ties to this land', as integral to resisting assimilation.

History is invoked to ground Hungarian identity in Transylvania and, correspondingly,

Romania. Although the Hungarian community is clear about their place in Transylvania,

they describe themselves as excluded from Romania and its political structures.

The following section will describe how the roots for Hungarian exclusion in Romania

were laid during the interwar years.

Interwar Romania

As mentioned, Romania was very fortunate at the Peace Conference of 1919. However, it now faced a new set of problems: attempting to organize a territory that was both twice its previous size and population (Barbu 1981, 155). Within this newly formed state, thirty per cent of the population belonged to ethnic minority groups, with Hungarians being the most numerous (Berend 1998, 171). Following WWI, Romanian leaders therefore faced the problem of having to gain consensus and solidarity within this newly diverse community.

In order to gain consensus and solidarity among minority groups, some political leaders attempted to nationalize minorities; however, this conflicted with the ethnic autonomy and self-government guarantees of the minorities treaty (Berend 1998, 177). In response to minority institutions that were well-organized, a number of other leaders 'waged war' on these groups (Turczynski 1971, 109). Following the Treaty of Trianon, the Hungarians in Greater Romania became second-class citizens (Seton-Watson 1946, 300). Despite the minority treaties, Bucharest viewed any attempt to intervene in minority issues an affront to Romania's sovereignty (Fischer-Galati 1983, 182).

During this period many difficulties faced Romania's political leaders, reflected in their party's frequently changing platforms (Barbu 1981, 155). Remaining constant, however, in this political landscape was an empty 'centre' coupled with stronger traditional parties to the right and much weaker Social Democratic and Communist parties to the left. Although democratic ideologies were present immediately after WWI, the problems associated with greater Romania were too great for these concepts to be sustained (Barbu 1981, 155). The end of democratic reform and the beginning of ethnic conflict were a direct result of the dominant political forces in play: Wallachian supremacy; authoritarian governments;

rejection of social reform; anti-communism; anti-Semitism; and antidemocratic electoral law (Fischer-Galati 1991, 35).

Political ideology during this period was closely related to the difficult economic conditions of early twentieth century Romania. The Romanian economy at this time was largely agricultural with 80 per cent of the population being employed in this area (Barbu 1980, 380).[40] Within Romania the upper class was both heterogeneous and extremely small with 80 per cent of the population belonging to the traditional agrarian class. The middle classes were made of ethnic minorities such as Jews, Hungarians and Greeks and were concentrated in urban environments. Many cities in Translylvania, the Banat, the Bukovina, and Bessarabia had non-Romanian majorities (Turczynski 1971, 108). This ethnic division between rural and urban communities greatly increased tensions between the middle classes and the peasants. This unstable social structure was further complicated by the predominantly agrarian economy and the corresponding impediment this economic base posed for 'effective' modernization (Barbu 1980, 380).

As a response to the socio-economic conditions in Romania that made it increasingly difficult to modernize, there was an increased acceptance of right-wing nationalist parties. Romania's socio-economic conditions meant that although the struggles of the peasantry were recognized, this recognition would not lead to any true social reform (Turczynski 1971, 106). In contrast, an inability to create social change given Romania's economic problems was expressed in negative attitudes toward ethnic minorities and Romania's eventual decline into fascism prior to WW2.

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[40] Barbu (1980, 380) states that as little as 10 per cent of the agrarian class were involved in industry as late as 1939.

In the following section, we return to Transylvania to listen to what prominent

historians of this period had to say about Transylvania's status and ethnic relations in a newly

enlarged Romania.

The Unresolved Question of 'Transylvania'

Following the decline into fascism in the 1930s the axis dictators decided to partition

Transylvania again, in an attempt to bring all of South-Eastern Europe under their control

(Seton-Watson 1946, 302). With Hitler's support, Hungary was returned about two fifths of

Transylvania and part of the Banat (MacMillan 2001, 270). This new border was short lived

and the borders established at Trianon were restored by the Allies in 1945. Romania's

defection from the Axis in August 1944, ensured that North Transylvania was restored to

Romania at the end of WW2 (Seton-Watson 1946, 435). This constant movement of borders

greatly exacerbated the already poor relations between Romanians and Hungarians in

Transylvania.

Writing during the 1940s, Hugh Seton-Watson (1946, 304) – the most prominent

historian of the region - stated that the partition of Transylvania was poorly conceived and

that the past 70 years have demonstrated that no nationalist government in Bucharest or

Budapest would treat as 'equal' the members of another nationality.[41] Given this observation,

he favoured regional autonomy for the province of Transylvania. Seton-Watson (1946, 309)

outlined his view, that the only possible solution for the region was a federal one given that

both Hungarian and Romanian nationalists have "shown themselves incompetent" to deal

with the Transylvanian question. He states (1946, 306):

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[41] Interestingly, Seton-Watson is generally considered to be more sympathetic to the Romanian
position (see Lendvai 2003, 23).

> "This [federal solution] would recognize that Transylvania is neither
> Romanian nor Hungarian but has a particular character and unity of its own,
> to which both nations have contributed. Transylvania would form an
> autonomous unit within a larger federation which would include not only
> Romania and Hungary but also several other neighbouring states."

Recognizing the role that Western Europe plays in this region, he stated that a federal possibility would greatly depend on the international distribution of power at the end of WWII rather than any internal desire for autonomy on the part of Transylvania. This statement highlights the enormous impact the international community has had on this region for the past century and foreshadows the decision that was made by the Allies in 1945 to restore the boundaries of Trianon. Seton-Watson (1946, 307) has suggested that an autonomous identity existed in Transylvania on the part of both Hungarians and Romanians – separate from either Romania or Hungary – based in their historic experience in the Hapsburg Empire that differentiates them from historic Romania (Wallachia and Moldova). It is precisely this unique *identity* – culturally, politically and historically – that he suggests formed a basis for autonomy in this region, while he was making his observations in the 1940s.

Fischer-Galati (1983, 180) also argues that the resolution of the Transylvanian question after WWI was deficient in many respects. He finds inadequate the suggestion that peaceful relations between Romanians and Hungarians in Transylvania were impossible due to 'irreconcilable' national interests. Rather, he suggests that the external powers' rationale for exploiting tension between Romanians and Hungarians was of greater consequence than any historic grievance between the two nations. What is clear, however, is that the decisions of the Great Powers have since increased tensions between Romanians and Hungarians in Transylvania.

Addressing Trianon: Traversing Borders

It is virtually impossible to engage in a conversation about the history of this region,

with both Romanians and Hungarians, without also discussing borders and the impact that

Trianon has had. A discussion of past borders infiltrated many of the conversations I had

about the political future. One contributor elaborates:

> 2.16 In contemporary Romania people are most concerned with dealing with
> economic and social matters, not with borders. And I think that's why
> they're looking forward to (Hungarians especially) a united Europe-where
> borders have no importance, and don't carry that much significance.

My contributor outlines his future hope - to escape history and the borders it has

demarcated through inclusion into the European Union.[42]

Transylvanian history, both written and narrated, presents a number of important

issues that underlie Hungarian claims in Romania. The so-called 'official' or written history

reveals: Transylvania's historic experience as an autonomous region; the role of empire and

international forces on border changes in the region; and the exclusion of Romanians from

political power until 1918. Each of these factors inflects Hungarian political claims, and the

Romanian state's contemporary reaction to these claims. Nonetheless, it is not the details of

history *per se* but rather how identity is constructed in relation to history that is integral to

understanding contemporary ethnic relations in Romania.[43] The narratives presented reveal

"twisted plots of history" rather than a single straightforward script of events (Boym 1994,

9). In other words, they emphasize Transylvania's historic diversity and autonomy while

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[42] Similar statements indicating a desire for a future where 'borders no longer matter' was mentioned
in almost all of my interviews and will be revisited in Chapter 7.

[43] I find the term 'ethnic' conjures an essentialist reading of identity. This thesis will explore this term
in greater depth – especially as it features in discourses surrounding civic vs ethnic nationalism.
Nonetheless, for the time being I am restricted to using it to convey the notion of cultural identity.

omitting how the Romanians in the region were excluded from political power prior to WW1.

Perhaps the most important theme to emerge, thus far, is of essential differences between Hungarian and Romanian identity. Within these narratives, my contributors describe these 'twisted plots of history' in terms of straight lines or 'borders' – both territorial and ideological – that demarcate differences between Hungarians and Romanians. These narratives link history and identity in a way that is simultaneously cultural and political. My contributors distinguish Transylvania, territorially, historically, culturally, and politically from both Romania and Hungary. The Treaty of Trianon represents the historical moment where this difference was fixed and the Hungarians became a minority in Romania. The border changes therefore not only represent a territorial line, but also the moment where culture, politics and history became entwined in the experience of being a minority. Prior to 1918, the Romanians were a political (though not demographic) minority in Transylvania. Following the Treaty of Trianon, the Hungarians found themselves in this position. It is in relating the impact of borders and empires that Hungarian and Romanian identities are held in tension.

The following chapter will outline the impact of this newly enlarged Romania on the Hungarian minority. Specifically, interethnic relations during the communist period and following the democratic transition in 1989 will be outlined. The state's emphasis on assimilation, during the communist period, has directly contributed to the politicization of Hungarian identity in post-communist Romania.

CHAPTER 3

The decisions made by the Great Powers in 1919 resulted in a complex relationship between national minorities and the Romanian state. The conditions under which the Treaty of Trianon was made (without any local input) meant that there was no voluntary association on the part of minorities with the state and no common goals to work toward. Rather, the Romanian state began to be perceived by minorities as the political expression of exclusively Romanian interests (Gilberg 1990, 162). Nonetheless, what was perceived as unjust by the minorities was the "long overdue achievement of state and nationhood for the suffering Romanians" (Gilberg 1990, 163). The resulting tension between national minorities and the state has since been central to the Romanian political landscape. Stated plainly by Shafir (1985, 158): "There is hardly an issue more sensitive in Romanian politics than the problem of national minorities in general, and that of the Hungarian minority in particular."

The previous chapter outlined the beginnings of Hungarian experience as a minority in Romania, up until WW2. This chapter will focus on the dynamic between the Hungarian minority and the Romanian state throughout communism and immediately after the revolution of 1989. Through the collective experience of being a 'minority', over the past 80 years, Hungarian identity in Romania has become politicized. Interspersed throughout this discussion will be the reflections of my contributors on both the legacy of communism and the current political situation in Romania. The overtly nationalist character of Romanian communism had explicitly negative consequences for national minorities within Romania's borders, a legacy that continues to influence the post-communist political landscape.

Undoubtedly, the communist period was a dark one for many of Romania's citizens. Its overwhelming and indelible mark first struck me while visiting the Museum of the Romanian Peasant – a place in Bucharest that I visited often. This museum is a veritable palimpsest on the Bucharest landscape. Formerly the 'Marxist Leninist Museum' this building is what Svetlana Boym (1994, 11) would refer to as a 'common place'.[44] Constantly changing, it became a place for me to discover what was spoken or silent in contemporary Romania. I would return here, on each trip to Bucharest to get my bearings and to see what had changed.

By and large, the collection housed here is centred on the spirituality of the Romanian peasantry, a project infused with nationalist undertones. The ethereal images on display are undeniably beautiful - ancient icons, delicate pottery, and intricately painted eggshells line the first and second floors of the building. Nonetheless, on my first trip to the museum, I was most amazed by what I encountered in its basement. As I walked downstairs I noticed that the walls were lined with roughly drawn, blood red hammers and sickles. Busts of Lenin were defaced, red-painted eyes staring at walls or each other – an image of seemingly endless debate. A portrait of Ceauşescu stared menacingly across the room at a sign reading 'to the voting station'. The arrow on the sign pointed to the bathroom.

This monument to communism, buried deep in the basement of the Museum of the Romanian Peasant, says much about how Romanians, in general, feel about the communist period. Nonetheless, Romanian communism had a particularly negative impact on national minorities. In the following section we will unearth this buried past.

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[44] Historically, common places were familiar sites of memory that link space, word and image.

"National" Communism Under Ceauşescu

Nationalism was a central feature of Romanian communism from its early years, and posed a distinct challenge for minority groups in Romania who wished to resist assimilation. From 1965 onward, Nicolae Ceauşescu as Secretary General of the Romanian Communist Party used the symbols and rhetoric of Romanian communism initiated by his predecessor Gheorghiu-Dej as a way to maintain popular support (Roper 2000, 45; 47). These symbols combined Romanian nationalism with Marxist discourse as a way to both increase the party's popular support and to assure a degree of autonomy from the Soviet Union over economic matters (Roper 2000, 37). Although in the early years of communism nationalism was used as a vehicle to consolidate the party, these early conceptions of the nation were inclusive (Roper 2000, 47). Specifically, nationalist rhetoric attempted to unite Romanians and Hungarians into a common Romanian 'political' nation.

This inclusiveness, however, was short-lived and ethnic and political notions of the nation became increasingly conflated. In 1968 Ceauşescu eliminated the Hungarian autonomous region with the result being that the Hungarians were no longer in a clearly delineated bloc that could be used as a basis for claiming autonomy (Deletant 1999, 107). This autonomous region was established in 1952 in an attempt to placate the Hungarian minority in Transylvania following WW2. Shafir (1985, 160) states that the existence of this region satisfied no one: "For what appeared to be the inadmissible existence of a 'state within a state' to the Romanian majority, was considered a Bucharest-managed ghetto by its Hungarian inhabitants."

Further increasing tensions with the Hungarian minority was Ceauşescu's

condemnation of the invasion of Czechoslavakia by the Soviet Union in 1968 (Roper 2000,

49; Deletant 1999, 109). Romanians perceived this condemnation as an expression of their

nationalism and independence from the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, the Hungarian

government condemned Ceauşescu's decision, leading to concern over the potential

response of Romania's ethnic Hungarians. A National Council for both ethnic Hungarians

and ethnic Germans was established to ensure that Romanian condemnation of the invasion

would not be used as a rationale for the Hungarian minority to pressure for a change in party

leadership (Roper 2000, 49). Ceauşescu's greatest fear at this time was that the Soviet

leadership would use minority unrest as a pretext to intervene in Romania (Shafir 1985,

158).[45]

With the declining economic situation in Romania during the 1970s Ceauşescu relied

even more heavily on nationalism to garner popular support (Roper 2000, 53). His initial

preference to integrate national minorities soon gave way to more assimilationist aspirations

(Deletant 1999, 107). Nationalism was now focused on the task of assimilating ethnic

minorities – in particular ethnic Hungarians. Historians were recruited to argue that the

Geto-Dacian civilization (Romania's ancestors) predated that of the Hungarians and Slavs.

Minority groups perceived these efforts as a denial of their historic claims, reducing them to

the status of the "merely tolerated" (Shafir 1985, 159).[46] Additionally, minority language

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[45] Ceauşescu's fear was probably misguided since the Hungarian public – in both Hungary and
Transylvania - was against the invasion (Deletant 1999, 109).

[46] The use of the word 'tolerated' resonates historically with the language used to describe the
position of the Romanians vis a vis the recognized nations and religions of Transylvania, pre WW1.

instruction at universities and technical schools became increasingly rare.[47] Most notable

however, was a policy instituted in the 1970s that assigned jobs to university graduates. This

policy had clear assimilationist goals and was directed toward relocating ethnic Romanians

into Transylvania and relocating Hungarian graduates from Transylvania to predominantly

Romanian areas. These decisions gained support by playing on Romanian fear about

Hungary's claims to Transylvania. Ceauşescu fuelled this fear, stating that the Hungarian

government in Budapest was merely a "Russian surrogate that promoted the elimination of

Romanian culture and desired the reincorporation of Transylvania into the Hungarian state"

(Roper 2000, 54).

Although ethnic Hungarian intellectuals were greatly constrained by the regime, its

nationalist policies also curtailed any dissent on the part of Romanian intellectuals (Roper

2000, 54). This lack of dissidence distinguished Romania from other countries in Eastern

Europe (Verdery, 1991; Mungiu, 1996; Verdery and Kligman, 1992). Verdery (1991, 9)

argues that the 'nation' became a symbol of legitimacy and thus emerged as a central feature

of struggles for cultural representation within Romania. Specifically, she outlines intellectual

struggles during socialism that attempted to disrupt Marxist discourse (founded on notions

of differentiation and change) by appealing to nationalist discourse (founded on notions of

unity and continuity). Through the symbol of the 'nation,' intellectuals "drew boundaries

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[47] In April 1974, Ceauşescu publicly denounced complaints regarding the lack of minority language educational facilities by stating that when Romanian specialists are sent to Arab countries they are expected to learn Arabic (Shafir 1985, 162). The obvious message underlying this statement is that minorities have the status of a visitor in Romania – rather than as a group of people that have always lived in this region.

and sought advantages" (Verdery 1991, 302).[48] In this sense, dissidence in Romania was restricted to defining what would be best for the Romanian nation rather than appealing to a form of dissidence to communism that crossed national boundaries.[49]

As previously mentioned, the saliency of the 'nation' as a legitimizing symbol in Romania existed prior to communism (Verdery 1991, 302; Haddock and Caraiani 1999, 261). Nonetheless, it was enhanced by the mode of control exerted by Ceaușescu's government. According to Verdery (1991, 85) three modes of control were used by governments in Eastern Europe: remunerative, coercive, and normative relying respectively on material incentives, force, and moral/ideological appeals. Verdery (1991, 85) argues that while other countries were reforming their government policies, Ceaușescu began to strengthen symbolic, coercive, and ideological controls within Romania.[50] In this context, Radio Free Europe (RFE) became one of the only means to publicize dissent. Nonetheless, within the country, Romanians lacked an effective means of communicating with one another. Thus, Ceaușescu's mode of control, coupled with intellectual activity focused on the concept of the 'nation', effectively hindered dissident activity.

Within this domestic context, Ceaușescu remained unchallenged. Nonetheless, his international reputation had completely deteriorated by the late 1980s largely due to his

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[48] The implication of this discourse was that following the revolution, moral legitimation and thus power was gained by demonstrating that one had suffered *for* the Romanian nation (Verdery 1996, 109).

[49] Such as Charter 77.

[50] For example, all typewriters were registered in Romania and writers houses were searched for unregistered typewriters (Mungiu 1996, 343) making secret opposition virtually impossible. As further evidence of the extent of the control exerted by Ceaușescu in the private sphere, Kligman (1998) describes reproductive politics in Romania where abortion was banned in 1966 as a way to encourage population growth. She argues (1998) that Ceaușescu's pro-natalist policies brought the State into intimate contact with the bodies of its citizens.

policies toward ethnic minorities. Stated plainly by Gilberg (1990, 156): "The policies of the Ceauşescu era have been hostile toward all minorities, particularly the Magyars, and these policies have now become an international issue of considerable magnitude." In particular, the Helsinki Agreement (1975) internationally codified human rights, and by extension minority rights, opening the door for international scrutiny into Romania's treatment of minorities (Deletant 1999, 126). Importantly, the agreement also linked economic concessions and trade to a country's respect for these rights. Romania had a terrible reputation, even among Soviet Bloc countries, on human rights issues (Deletant 1999, 126). Though Romania had signed many international agreements guaranteeing the rights of national minorities, its adherence to these treaties was arbitrary. Hungarians from Transylvania illegally produced samizdat publications that were sent abroad to document Romania's lack of adherence to minority treaties (Deletant 1999, 127).

In his final years in power, Ceauşescu made increasing efforts to assimilate minorities into one 'Romanian nation' by combining his ethnic and economic policies (Roper 2000, 56). He used three main strategies to encourage assimilation: 1/ the migration into Transylvania of Romanians, and the migration out of Transylvania of Hungarians and Germans; 2/ a decrease in the number of minority language schools;[51] and 3/ an increase in the prominence of the Romanian language as a necessary skill for social mobility (Deletant 1999, 129). Not surprisingly, in 1987 and 1988 there was an exodus of Hungarians crossing the border from Romania to Hungary - direct evidence of Ceauşescu's worsening policies toward the Hungarian minority (Gilberg 1990, 177) The culmination of Ceauşescu's goal to assimilate

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[51] A serious disappointment for the Hungarian minority was the merger of the Hungarian-language Bolyai University in Cluj (the cultural centre of the Hungarians in Transylvania) with the Romanian-language Babeş University (King 1973, 153).

minorities was his policy of 'systemitization' – which involved destroying rural villages as a way to create a more efficient economy. In 1988, he announced a plan to raze 6000 villages, most of them in areas with ethnic Hungarian communities (Roper 2000, 56). This policy drew heavy criticism from Hungary, Western Europe and the United States.

The Revolution

Roper (2000, 57) states that the political repression, economic austerity and ethnic assimilation that characterized the Ceaușescu years led to 'desocialization.' This desocialization meant that although individuals were isolated from the ruling elite yet, there was no organized opposition to pressure for political reform. It is not surprising then that the initial criticism of Ceaușescu came from within the regime itself. In March 1989, six party veterans signed and circulated a letter criticizing Ceaușescu's economic policies. Regardless of this internal criticism, Ceaușescu declared the country's continued adherence to communism and denounced events in neighbouring Eastern European countries (Roper 2000, 58).

Dissatisfaction with the governing regime reached a critical point on December 17, 1989 when thousands of Romanians and Hungarians took to the streets in Timișoara to protest the eviction, by the police, of Pastor Lászlo Tökes from his parish house (Roper 2000, 58). Tökes had been evicted due to his outspoken remarks regarding the systemitization plan – Ceaușescu's program to destroy rural, largely Hungarian, villages. By refusing to leave, a candlelight vigil in his support was rapidly transformed into an anticommunist demonstration. Thousands of civilians joined the protests and troops from the Ministry of the Interior were directed by the government to violently disperse the crowd.

The military, however, refused to attack civilians and the revolution against 'communism'

soon spread. A pro-Communist rally on Dec 21, 1989 in Bucharest was rapidly transformed

into an anti-Ceauşescu demonstration, following which Ceauşescu and his wife were taken

by helicopter to an unknown location. On Dec 25, 1989 their executed bodies were

broadcast on state television.[52]

The Impact of the Communist Period on the Hungarian Minority

Many of my contributors detail the negative impact of Ceauşescu's efforts to assimilate

minorities, and the regime's emphasis on nationalist discourse. Notably, this legacy –

whereby nationalism is the basis for political legitimacy - continues to have an impact on

contemporary politics in Romania. Describing the role that nationalism played during the

communist period, one contributor begins:

> 3.1 Well you must know that Romanian communism was a 'national'
> communism, the leaders succeeded in combining nationalism and
> communism very well. In some ways, the extreme left and the extreme right
> are the same thing. Nationalism and communism are both extremes.

Similarly, another contributor discusses the negative impact of the communist period on the

Hungarian minority:

> 3.2 After the 2nd World War, Romania was a communist state. And at this
> time the problem of minorities was frozen. Nobody spoke, silence. But
> Romania was Romanian first and communist second. They promoted a
> nationalistic politics in foreign politics and pursued domestic politics against
> national minorities. They promoted a homogenizing policy inside the
> country and a strong nationalistic politics outside of the country. Therefore
> after the [1989] revolution, this problem arose again. And to this day this is a
> problem that has to be solved.

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[52] Farocki's *Videograms of a Revolution* is a remarkable documentary film about these (disputed) events.

My contributor describes Romania's national priorities as ethnic (nationalist) first and

political (communist) only second. Interestingly he highlights continuity with the

'homogenizing policies' initiated during the Ceauşescu period, and the policies that would

take effect after the revolution. Another contributor describes immigration as a direct

consequences of this legacy:

> 3.3 Ceauşescu had a detailed plan for the Hungarians. Ceauşescu wanted the
> Hungarians wiped out of Romania. A lot of people emigrated from here. A
> lot of Hungarians went to Hungary, Canada, America.

Throughout my interviews, the state policy of assimilating ethnic minorities during the

communist period was reiterated. This legacy continues to impact my contributors'

perceptions of Romania's post-revolutionary political intentions. One contributor describes

how a supposedly 'liberal' politician recently evoked this memory:

> 3.4 Now you know there was this report on certain minority issues given and
> the Romanian member of this committee, chairman of the National Liberal
> Party, kept repeating the same thing – that there is one Romanian political
> nation and even the Hungarians are members of it. And this, for us, is
> extremely dangerous, extremely dangerous because in the last years of the
> communist regime Ceauşescu proudly declared that there are 'no such things
> as Albanians and Hungarians living in Romania, there are only Romanians
> with Hungarian mother tongue, or Romanians with German mother-tongue
> but they are Romanians nonetheless'. So if some people try to remake that
> sort of idea, that it is quite dangerous.

Given Ceauşescu's legacy, my contributor emphasizes that the notion of the Romanian

nation as a *political* concept, remains unconvincing to the Hungarian minority. Given this

historical experience, it is no wonder that my contributor describes the dangers inherent to

this politician's position – language that resonates more with assimilation than it does with

political inclusion. This conflation of ethnic and political 'nations' within Romanian political

discourse creates a distinct challenge for the Hungarian citizens of this 'nation'.

In addition to its negative impact on minority groups, other characteristics of

Romanian communism have made the transition period particularly challenging. One

contributor outlines these challenges by comparing Romanian communism to other

communist countries in Eastern Europe:

> 3.5 It's quite simple, you see Poland Hungary and Czechoslovakia they had a
> democratic tradition. They chose to adopt, or were forced to adopt, a
> version of soft communism. Which meant that private enterprise was
> encouraged to a certain degree, which means that starting with the late 80s a
> lot of Hungarians, of Slovaks of Poles went to study in the US, in the UK,
> and in Germany. They studied economics, and engineering and medicine
> and whatnot and they returned to their countries. So when the turnover
> came there were a lot of people who knew how to run a capitalist economy.
> But there were none in Romania. None. Here everybody praised the idea of
> a centralized economy. So you can imagine that whenever someone spent
> his whole adult life knowing that the state must plan everything in advance
> then it's quite difficult to change your mind just suddenly and say from now
> on we won't plan anything we'll just privatize everything.
>
> On the other hand, this country has a longstanding history of corruption.
> Probably it was the only country in the world where the ruler had to buy his
> throne from the Sultan and this went on for about a hundred years. From
> 1716 to 1821. And the rulers had their throne for 2 or 3 years and they just
> took everything to pay the Sultan and to retain something when they were
> ousted from office. And this went on and on. And so basically there were
> some people in 90 after the revolution who thought "Great, now we have to
> privatize…goody goody, we can steal a lot".

This underlying theme of corruption, both during communism and following the revolution

was consistently mentioned in my interviews. Interestingly, my contributor attributes this

corruption to Romania's historic experience in the Ottoman Empire. This link makes it

possible for the Hungarians to distance themselves, as members of the Austro-Hungarian

Empire, from the corruption they feel is inherent to Romania's 'Balkanic' system. The

impact that this historic experience in the Ottoman Empire had on the communist system

was repeatedly mentioned. Another contributor elaborates:

The communist period is described as having a negative impact on both Romanians and Hungarians. Nonetheless, narratives surrounding the communist period also delineate Hungarians and Romanians as different. This difference extends beyond the communist period and reaches into the present, negatively impacting Transylvania.

> 3.8 The Romanians have taken over the Transylvanian system and it has become a Balkanic system. With blackmail, corruption, and centralized systems. This approach was common in the communist system, when Romanians were ruling the country. Even in Transylvania. Maybe you will believe me better if I say that there is a fight – maybe not a fight but how should I say it, we have a big fence between us as Romanians and Hungarians. But the same problem existed with Moldavians and Southern Romanians. Because the Moldavians are a little bit different. If you look at just the buildings you see this, Romania had a Russian and Polish and Jewish connection, in architecture. The south had more Turkish and Arabic influence. If you look at monasteries. So when we are speaking about regionalism and some people say that 'there is no regionalism in Romania' well that's not true. People say that because they are afraid, because regionalism means separatism for many Romanians.

Initially, my contributor uses the words 'fight' and 'fence' to place a firm line between Hungarian and Romanian identity. Nonetheless, he tempers his remarks by describing the diversity found throughout the many regions of Romania. This claim is used to counter the myth of a 'unitary' and national Romanian state and to situate Hungarian claims within the context of regionalism in Romania.

The conflation of ethnic and political notions of belonging within constructions of Romanian nationalism, promoted during the communist period, has contributed to Hungarian exclusion, both past and present, from the Romanian nation-state. Although they find themselves within the territorial boundaries of the Romanian state, the conflation of ethnic and political notions of belonging during the communist period, designated the Hungarian minority as outsiders. Given this exclusion, Hungarian cultural identity soon

post-communist Romania (Gallagher 1995, 75). Such hopefulness may have prompted

Hungary to be the first country to recognize the new Romanian government on Dec 23,

1989. This recognition also helped to dispel fears that Hungary might pursue territorial

claims against Romania during this vulnerable period. A declaration issued by the NSF on

the status of minorities in Romania on Jan 5, 1990 continued to raise hopes:

> "The National Salvation Front solemnly declares that it shall achieve and
> guarantee the individual and collective rights and liberties of all the national
> minorities" (in Gallagher 1995, 76).

Specifically, these rights were to be enshrined in the constitution and a 'Ministry of National

Minorities' would be established. Nonetheless, these optimistic statements, heralding a new

age of minority relations in Romania were made quickly, by only a few people, and in a

confused environment (Gallagher 1995, 77).

The Hungarians quickly organized themselves into a political body following the

revolution named the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR). This

coalition group representing the Hungarian minority led to minority concerns becoming an

early political focus of the government. Geza Domokos, its leader, made statements to

assure the Romanian public that the Hungarian minority respected the "territorial integrity

and sovereignty of a free and democratic Romania" but that a "new vision" was required for

interethnic relations in Romania that would guarantee the rights of Hungarians (in Gallagher

1995, 78). Despite this optimism, Hungarian efforts to secure these rights in the realm of

education soon became a source of friction (Andreescu 2000, 94). By emphasising the

oppressive aspects of Hungarian control pre-1918, the media conveyed an image of

Hungarians as 'arrogant and insensitive' (Gallagher 1995, 80). The initial cooperation of

Romanians and Hungarians during the revolution soon gave way to historic memories of past grievances on both sides.

These initial good intentions, expressed by Iliescu and the NSF toward minority groups, became peripheral to the problems associated with securing political authority. Additionally, Iliescu's autocratic tendencies and inability to share power among competing interests made the Hungarian goal of having a degree of autonomy over their own affairs in Romania seemingly impossible to achieve.[55] According to Gallagher (1995, 83):

> "This Hungarian aspiration conflicted with the unitary character of the Romanian political system present ever since a Romanian state had taken shape after 1859."

When the NSF published its programme on Feb 6, the minimal references to minority rights and the absence of reference to 'collective rights' indicated that the DAHR had lost its influence with the government. Once relations with the NSF had ended, the Hungarian leadership began to advocate the use of strikes, marches and petitions as alternate strategies.[56] During March 1990, the DAHR organized protests in support of cultural autonomy and the separation of Hungarian schools from Romanian ones (Niculescu 2001, 2).

The relations between the government and the Hungarian minority reached their lowest point during clashes between Romanians and Hungarians in Tîrgu Mureş in March 1990. Tîrgu Mureş (known as Marosvásárhely in Hungarian) was, until 1968, the capital of the Hungarian Autonomous Region and became a key area for Romanian relocation during

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[55] A loss of hope in achieving any minority rights in post-communist Romania was evident in the mass exodus of the Saxons of Transylvania.

[56] In particular, these strategies were aimed toward the reinstatement of the Bolyai University in Cluj.

the Ceauşescu period (Andreescu 2000, 92). Reports of what actually took place to lead to violence between Romanians and Hungarians remain questionable. Foreign journalists stated that violence first occurred on March 19, 1990 at a demonstration organized by Vatra Româneaşca, the first ultra-nationalist organization to come to prominence in Eastern Europe after 1989. Members of this extreme-nationalist group demonstrated in front of the DAHR offices and attacked the Hungarian writer Andras Suto as he left the building (Gallagher 1995, 88). A parliamentary inquiry into the events later found that Romanian villagers had been bussed by mayors and public functionaries into Tîrgu Mureş to reinforce the ethnic Romanian presence in the crowds. The rationale was that local officials were deeply interested in protecting their interests and political authority (Gallagher 1995, 87). [57] A peaceful demonstration was held on the 20th by members of both Romanian and Hungarian communities to protest the previous day's attack. More fighting ensued with the arrival of more anti-Hungarian protesters and the Hungarians began to retaliate, gaining the upper hand.

On March 21 the government issued a statement blaming the ethnic violence in Tîrgu Mureş, not on local political authorities, but on Hungarian celebrations for the anniversary of the 1848 revolution (March 15). The government described these celebrations as 'open attacks against the nationalist sentiments of the Romanian People' (Gallagher 1995, 89;

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[57] The parliamentary inquiry was published in January 1991 and was linked to Romania's application to join the Council of Europe. Concern had been expressed by the Council about the Romanian government's human rights record and a delegation stated that it would only consider Romania's membership bid after a commission to investigate the Tîrgu Mureş violence and the violence in Bucharest on 13-15 June (Gallagher 1995, 92).

Niculescu 2001, 2).[58] The media portrayed these actions as irredentist and the consequences

of this attitude were evident in the government's reluctance to send the army and the police

to respond to this violence (Gallagher 1995, 90). Of additional consequence was the

government's unwillingness to condemn Romanian ultra-nationalists – giving the underlying

message that the government was willing to negotiate with extremist groups.

In the elections of May 1990, the NSF was elected into government with Iliescu

receiving over 85% of the vote due to the lack of any real opposition (Roper 2000, ch.4).[59]

The DAHR became the strongest opposition party with 8% of the votes (Niculescu 2001, 3).

The first task of this government was to draft a new constitution. Although over 81% of

MPs voted in favour of the newly written constitution, almost all members of the DAHR

voted against it. Adopted in December 1991 the Constitution stipulated that Romania is a

'national, unitary and organic state' with Romanian as the only official language – effectively

denying the multicultural reality of Romania (Andreescu 2000, 91).[60]

Iliescu and the newly named Social Democracy Party (PDSR) went on to win the

September 1992 elections (Niculescu 2001, 4). During this period, Iliescu continued to

manoeuvre between Romanian nationalists and minority interests without taking initiatives

to resolve these tensions. In the first part of 1993 Iliescu began making overtures to the

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[58] The 1991 parliamentary report on the events criticizes the DAHR for not explaining the 1848 celebrations but found that there was no basis to believe that these celebrations were in any way irredentist – as suggested by the Romanian media.

[59] There was also an antipathy toward opposition that was fostered by the party and was evident in the use of violence to quell any dissenting voices. The most obvious example of this antipathy was in response to student protests at the University of Bucharest in June 1990, where the government called in miners from the Jiu valley to violently disperse the students (Roper 2000, ch.4).

[60] The 1992 census reported 16 national minorities in Romania (Andreescu 2000, 91).

ultra-nationalists – in particular the Greater Romania Party (Roper 2000, ch.4).[61] These ultra-

nationalist groups maintained that Hungarian groups, in particular the DAHR, were a threat

to Romanian sovereignty in Transylvania (Gallagher 1995, 201). A statement issued in

October by the foreign ministry suggested that an attempt was being made by the

Hungarians to persuade international opinion that 'Transylvania and Romania are two

separate entities' and that the government was required to protect Romania's territorial

integrity against such a threat (Gallagher 1995, 128).

Iliescu became increasingly reliant on these ultra-nationalist parties to pass legislation in

parliament (Roper 2000, ch.4). At the same time, however, Iliescu was attempting to

normalize relations with the West, to boost the legitimacy of his regime and to gain financial

support for the battered Romanian economy (Gallagher 2001, 108). As a strategy to address

international concerns over minority issues, Iliescu announced that a Council for National

Minorities would be established in 1993 (Gallagher 1995, 130).[62] Rather than being a genuine

gesture of goodwill, it was evident that this decision was made to improve Romania's

chances of joining the Council of Europe (Roper 2000, ch.4). Suspecting the government's

intentions, the DAHR withdrew from participating in the council (Oprescu 2000, 73).

Despite domestic courting of the ultra-nationalists, the government's desire to 'return

to Europe' began to positively influence minority relations in Romania through a tacit

admittance that the treatment of minorities by the State was no longer strictly an internal

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[61] A formal Alliance was made between the ultra-nationalists (GRP) and the PDSR in 1995 in order
to ensure a majority in Parliament (Niculescu 2001, 4). Following this alliance the Minister of internal
affairs declared that the DAHR should be outlawed.

[62] This announcement was made without any consultation with the DAHR – who read about the
formation of the Council in the press.

matter (Gallagher 1995, 131).[63] Specifically, it became apparent that achieving integration with Western institutions such as NATO and the EU was inextricably bound to resolving the status of the Hungarian minority in Romania (Roper 2000, ch.4). International bodies such as the Council of Europe stated explicitly that Romania must improve its relations with its ethnic minorities to be considered for membership.[64] This desire to 'return to Europe' was a powerful incentive and was evident in the unanimous backing in parliament for Romania's application for EU entry (Gallagher 2001, 108).[65]

1996-2000

In December 1996 a liberal opposition coalition, headed by Emil Constantinescu, won the elections representing the first time in sixty years that the electorate had changed the head of state in Romania (Roper 2000, ch.4). Also significant, the ruling coalition initiated a policy of reconciliation with the Hungarians and invited the DAHR into government (Niculescu 2001, 5).[66] This decision was historic as it represented the first time the Romanian government had adopted an inclusive political strategy toward minority groups - standing in contrast to the exclusive/assimilationist strategy used by Iliescu and Ceauşescu

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[63] During this time the government focused its efforts on membership to the Council of Europe to gain some respectability. The Council's stated focus is to protect human-rights and democratic freedoms. Romania was given special guest status in February 1991, though Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia had been granted full membership.

[64] Despite this focus, when it was apparent to Iliescu that he might lose the next election he became increasingly reliant on nationalistic – specifically, anti-Hungarian – rhetoric (Roper 2000, ch.4). Iliescu stated that a CDR-DAHR coalition government would 'enact a federal system and dismantle the State" (Roper 2000, ch.6).

[65] The NATO bid received a similar endorsement.

[66] The coalition members were the Democratic Convention of Romania (CDR), the Social Democratic Union (USD) and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians (DAHR). Each of these parties were themselves coalitions – making it difficult to reach consensus and make decisions (Shafir 2001, 86).

(Shafir 2001, 91). Sounding a more cynical note, however, Oprescu (2000, 74) states that the

DAHR was only allowed to take part in the coalition to decrease Hungarian criticism of the

government and to convey a positive image abroad.[67] As a member of the coalition, the

DAHR participated fully in all political debates (such as privatization and access to securitate

files) and according to Shafir (2001, 91):

> "As a matter of fact, the DAHR has been the only formation in the coalition
> that genuinely tried to mediate between rival camps and rival personalities
> and, much unlike the other two coalition components, it has strictly
> respected parliamentary discipline once the government managed to make a
> decision one way or the other."

Given this initial strong showing it was expected that the DAHR would play a central role in

governing over the next four years.

As part of its platform the governing coalition attempted to align itself with the West

by focusing on the subversion of democratic values through corruption and the threat posed

by criminal organizations to government (Gallagher 2001, 109). This approach was initially

well-received by the Romanian public (Gallagher 2001, 110).[68] Despite this initial public

optimism, the government's failure to act on its promises both demoralized Romanians and

led to Western scepticism about Romania's ability to reform. With Romania's failure to join

NATO at the Madrid summit in July 1997 tensions were increased within the coalition and

the initially inclusive strategy of the government toward minority rights began to wane

(Shafir 2001, 95). The changing attitude within the coalition became apparent as laws to

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[67] In order to increase this positive image, the Department for the Protection of National Minorities was established in 1997.

[68] In 1997, public support for membership in the EU was 76% and in NATO was 80% (Gallagher 2001, 110).

strengthen minority rights began to fail in parliament (Andreescu 2000, 90).[69] Within this new political landscape the DAHR was increasingly isolated and the ultra-nationalists once again began to gain ground (Roper 2000, ch.4; Gallagher 2001, 112).[70]

The November 2000 elections brought the PDSR back to power, with Iliescu as president, and the ultra-nationalist Greater Romania Party (GRP) as the official opposition. The Greater Romania Party has openly denounced Romanies, Jews, the West and Hungarians – positions often expressed in their weekly journal, Romania Mare (Hockenos 1994, 190). The leader of the GRP, Corneliu Vadim Tudor has also claimed that minority leaders have plotted a "bloody ethnic division of Romania on Yugoslav lines" in order to increase his popularity (East and Pontin 1997, 177). The electoral result in 2000 solidified this increase in popuarity: in 1992 the GRP gained 3% of the vote (Dellenbrant 1991, 213) whereas in 2000 they gained 29% of the vote (McNeil 2000, 14). Given the success of both Iliescu (a former communist) and Tudor (Ceauşescu's former court poet), many viewed the 2000 election as a setback to consolidating democracy in Romania. The following section will outline the impact of the last 12 years on Hungarian minority politics in Romania and the challenges faced after the elections of 2000.

The Beginning of an Alliance

One of my interview partners provides a synopsis of the past 10 years of political life in Romania, from a Hungarian perspective:

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[69] For example, George Pruteanu, the chairman of the Senate's education commission began to campaign against government ordinances on education, and was able to overturn the July 1999 stipulations on having history and geography taught in mother tongue (Shafir 2001, 95).

[70] Gallagher (2001, 113) states that the mainstream press in Romania has played a significant role in advocating the views espoused by ultra-nationalist parties such as the GRP.

3.9 The first period, the year of 1990, was characterized by instability. In March 1990 there was a bloody ethnic clash in Tîrgu Mureş, which was organized by the former secret service in order to create a base of legitimacy for the new secret service.

After we passed the constitution, the situation changed a little bit because the second freely elected parliament contained fewer political parties than the first. After the constitution was adopted and after the elections of 92 the balance was a little bit more measured because the opposition became stronger.

Between 92 and 96 a four-part coalition was formed in 94 between Iliescu's party and the extremists - the GRP the Socialist Workers Party and the National Unity Party. It is a special characteristic of Romanian political life that an important part of former communists became nationalists at the same time.

After 96 the Euro-oriented parties formed the government. It was a large government, a large range of Parties. The Christian Democratic National Peasant Party, the Social Democratic Party, the National Liberal Party and the Hungarian's Alliance. We worked in the government between 96 and 2000. That period could be characterized by good intentions and no effective results. So we can describe the success of the former government by the destiny of the main party – the Christian Democratic Peasant Party – who did not enter in the parliament of 2000.

This failure was because of incoherence, of inconsequent political actions, and of too many interests. We had no conflict management strategies, or concrete management inside the coalition. So there were divergent interests. In addition, many of the ministers had no experience in state administration.

We were happy with our time in government though. The nationalists were saying that Hungarian presence in the government strongly destabilized the country and the region – which was not the case. They said that our activity, our aims, our program, our alliance all represented a threat to the country.

My contributor highlights the general challenges faced in governing post-communist Romania. In particular he mentions a lack of experience as contributing to the failure of the democratic coalition that ruled from 1996 to 2000. He also emphasizes the challenges faced by Hungarian politicians in this climate – specifically, that they were labeled a 'threat' to the state by nationalist parties.

Another contributor describes the impact of the nationalists on the post-1989 political

landscape:

> 3.10 After the anti-Communist revolution the nationalist propaganda was
> really deep in people. As a result, the main political message after the
> revolution was changed from ideocracy to ethnocracy.

In this post-revolutionary context, ethnicity rather than ideology became central to

governing. In some sense, it is ethnicity itself that became the dominant ideology. The

Democratic Alliance of Hungarians began in the midst of this new political climate:

> 3.11 Our alliance was founded in the last few days of '89, immediately after
> the revolution. I became involved in politics after the tragic events in March
> 1990. You know, in Târgu Mureş, my town, there was a pogrom against the
> Hungarians organized by the former members of the Securitate. A team from
> the government was sent in my town to negotiate between the Hungarians
> and the Romanians, and I was one of the Hungarians, because we needed a
> lawyer. I engaged in this cause because in 1990 I found out that we have to
> be together, to try to withdraw the discriminations which were against the
> Hungarians (they still are, but not as much as 10 years ago).

> Since then we have won some rights. For instance, in 1990, celebrating
> March 15, which is our national day, ended in a pogrom. It was considered a
> good reason for power to be used against us. Now, in 2002, the prime-
> minister of Romania congratulated the Hungarians in a letter, and he sent a
> minister of his cabinet to read the letter. Education in our mother tongue has
> expanded even at the university level. We can use our language in local
> administration, where we are 20 %. On the other hand, there are a lot of
> other things that we still have to obtain - for instance the Hungarian
> University, in Cluj, we want that. We want some more schools in mother
> tongue, we want the properties of the churches to be rendered, and some
> other rights.

> So I think that positive trends have started in Romania. I don't agree that
> Romania is a positive example, but I do believe that it could be a positive
> example if all these targets would be achieved. The trend is positive, anyway,
> and we hope that it will go on that way.

My contributor emphasizes that the violent clashes directed toward Hungarians were the

basis for his decision to become involved in politics. Like others interviewed, he describes

the Alliance as being successful in gaining certain rights in the past 12 years. By noting the

changed government response to the March 15 celebrations, he acknowledges a shift in the

Romanian state's response to the Hungarians though he is reticent to label Romania as a

positive *example*, preferring to state that there are some positive *trends* in Romania.[71] Given

the continued presence of nationalist discourse within the Romanian political sphere it is not

surprising that this distinction is important to him.

Another contributer outlines how the Alliance was organized to address the post-1989

nationalist focus of Romanian politics:

> 3.12 Well, the Alliance is a sort of umbrella. We have political platforms
> within it, we have social organizations, professional NGO's, cultural
> organizations, youth movements. The need for a common and efficient
> policy given the nationalist focus of Romanian politics held the Alliance
> together - even if we had very serious discussions especially inside the
> political elite about the goal, about where we should go. These conceptions
> inside the alliance about the future – whether our goal is autonomy, or simply
> cultural rights say - are the basis of different platforms, internal fights.
> Pluralism is necessary. It is normal. It's normal to have different currents,
> different platforms, the question is how to make consensus, how to resolve
> the conflict, and that's the problem of democracy, of pluralism.

Interestingly, my contributor does not describe the Alliance as homogeneously representing

all Hungarians. In contrast, he states that the DAHR is a diverse organization focused on

pluralism. In this way, he views it as fundamentally democratic. Another contributor outlines

a similar perspective:

> 3.13 Compared to the other parties I think it's the most democratic party.
> Because it's not focused around an ideology, instead it represents Hungarian
> interest. You can find all kinds of different ideologies and platforms in the
> party. People are free to change ideas, and everybody has a word in the

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[71] This distinction may have been made in response to international perceptions of the situation in
Yugoslavia – Romania's neighbour. Specifically, much has been made of ethnic relations in Romania
not having spiralled into similar violence. On April 15, 1999 Bill Clinton made a speech recognizing
Romania as a model for ethnic relations in the region.

> decisions made. There are extremes too within the alliance, not extremes like Vadim,[72] but extremes. But we're able to moderate things through communication.

According to this contributor, the Alliance is based not on ideology, but on interest. He defines this 'interest' as the collective experience of being 'Hungarian'. Despite this ethnic definition for interest, the DAHR has a moderate platform committed to working within the parliamentary structure of Romania. Contrasting some of the distinctions made between ethnic (*read* extreme) and civic (*read* moderate) nationalism in the literature (see Ignatieff, 1994) this 'ethnically' based party is neither extremist nor homogeneous in their outlook.

Although the political programs of ethnically based parties may differ from the extreme and exclusionary to the more moderate, political belonging in Romania has largely been defined in ethnic terms since 1989. One contributor links this ethnic basis for political identification to 'fear':

> 3.14 What holds us together? I would say that the main cohesion force is fear. Fear and interest. In the early nineties the fear was that we could be outlawed, physically wounded, or even killed. Tîrgu Mureş taught us that. Because of this threat the minorities are very well organized. Personally I believe that Hungarians should vote on other than ethnic grounds. But this is a necessary evil right now- to vote based on interest rather than ideology. These are the complex ways that we organized against a threat.

Once again, the threat of violence is mentioned as a central organizing feature for Hungarians in Romania. My contributor suggests that this 'fear of the other' is reciprocated by Romanians, and is a core feature of political motivation in Romania:

> 3.15 Why do the Romanians fear us? Well in some ways I think they've helped us be as organized as we are. Since the Hungarian minority has not been allowed into other politics, the result has been the United Alliance of Hungarians. They fear the results of their actions. The fear something that is more united than they are. The idea of changing borders though is not

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[72] The leader of the Greater Romania Party

> easy or wise. I don't think that attaching Transylvanian to Hungary would solve anything.

A discussion of Hungarian unity, by my contributor, becomes a prelude to a discussion of borders. Specifically, she addresses and dismisses the perceived potential for territorial revisionism. Despite this assertion, my contributor feels that this fear has fuelled Romanian nationalism and resulted in a united Hungarian reponse. She suggests that this fear on the part of Romanians is groundless, stating that 'changing borders' would not help anything. My contributor's statement is the first example of what will become an unresolvable tension between Hungarian and Romanian identity, where cause and effect become indistinguishable. Romanian nationalism fuels Hungarian political unity; Hungarian unity is perceived as threatening Romania's borders and fuels a nationalistic response to Hungarian claims.[73] The cycle continues.

Although the Hungarians are perceived to be united, it is evident that diversity exists in the number of different but coexisting political tendencies within the Alliance – such as Liberal, Christian, radical democrat and other independent factions (Gallagher 1995, 182). Within post-revolutionary Romania, the threat posed to Hungarian interests by Romanian nationalists and an initially unsympathetic government has allowed the DAHR to maintain a cohesive coalition – organized around a political program rather than more ideological appeals. This seeming unity among the Hungarians – set against the disunity of the

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[73] According to Žižek (1992, 194-197), this cause/effect cycle becomes reversed in the construction of nationalism (what he terms the *nation-thing*): "This paradoxical existence of an entity that 'is' only in so far as the subjects believe in its existence, is the mode of being proper to ideological Causes: the 'normal' order of causality is here inverted since it is the Cause itself that is produced by its effects (the ideological practices that it animates)...The national Thing exists as long as members of the community believe in it; it is literally an effect of this belief in itself....The basic paradox is that our Thing is conceived as something inaccessible to the other and at the same time threatened by it."

Romanian political parties – further increases the perception on the part of Romanians of

the Hungarians as a potential threat (Gallagher 1995, 183). In particular, they are viewed as

an ethnic group that has never reconciled themselves to living in Romania – once again

alluding to the decisions made at Trianon.

Countering this perception, I was told that Hungarians have very much reconciled

themselves to living within Romania:

> 3.16 In 1996 the alliance was invited into government. This was a
> tremendous sign. We wanted to prove to Romanians that we were there to
> govern for Romania and not for Hungary or not for just Hungarians. We
> have a different sense of political honour than those who lived under Turkish
> rule. The Romanians got used to politics where you plan a day ahead - the
> policy of the small deal. But in 1997 it was apparent that we wouldn't
> abandon the ship and I think this changed politics in Romania.

My contributor makes clear that Hungarian politicians will work within the structures of the

Romanian state, toward goals that will not only benefit Hungarians. Interestingly, history is

once again used to distinguish the political culture of Romanians from that of the

Hungarians. Specifically, he distinguishes Hungarian 'honour' from Romanian, a cultural

practice emerging from historic experience with different empires. Interestingly, it is

precisely this historical difference, framed in terms of 'honour,' that results in Hungarian

loyalty to working *within* the Romanian political system.

Despite this articulated desire to be loyal, the success of both Iliescu and Tudor in the

2000 elections left the Hungarians with the message that they remain political outsiders in

Romania. These elections were a great disappointment to the Hungarians in Romania due to

the success the extreme-right, and the presence of Tudor in the presidential run-off. My

contributor aptly describes her disappointment:

> 3.17 It was horrible - a big big loss. It was a punishment for the last government. And maybe for fun the population voted for Iliescu or the Greater Romania Party. I hope that they didn't vote for the Greater Romania Party because of their beliefs. I was really really sad. When I found out that the first place was Iliescu and the second was Vadim Tudor I was really sad. I had to go and vote for the least bad - Iliescu. It was awful.

My contributor attempts to rationalize the popularity of the GRP as an instance of 'punishment' rather than a true adherence on the part of the Romanian populace to the positions of the extreme right. The sadness she felt at having to choose between these two men – both of whom have not only opposed Hungarian claims but also, to varying degrees, advocated violence toward the Hungarians – made intimate her experience of political exclusion in Romania. Another contributor had a similar response:

> 3.18 We had to choose between Vadim and Iliescu. Now we're happy that there is Iliescu. It was a trauma, when everyone realized they had to make this choice. Iliescu was responsible for the protests in 1990 and the miner attacks in Bucharest and in Tîrgu Mureş. So the Hungarians do not like Iliescu but they had to vote for him because of Vadim, because Vadim is crazier.

These words to describe the 2000 election resonate with previous descriptions of the traumatic impact of Trianon - both concrete moments of Hungarian exclusion in Romania. My contributor outlines the personal trauma involved in voting against ones beliefs in order to be included in the political process. Although Iliescu is not popular, he is not considered as threatening to the Hungarians as Vadim Tudor:

> 3.19 The Greater Romania Party is a terrible thing. Their leader is a real dictator. He speaks very badly of us, of all minorities – Roma, Gypsies. He became popular though because he has such strong nationalist speeches. We have a problem with this Romanian nationalist rhetoric. Romanian people like these kinds of speeches. Many Romanian people are nationalists.

My contributor states bluntly her position – that Romanians are nationalistic. This overt generalization reveals the vast gulf between Romanian and Hungarian identity – a

generalization that the success of the extreme right provides the necessary fodder. The

explicit dangers of the extreme nationalist approach is further conveyed in a parallel between

the Greater Romania Party and fascism:

> 3.20 Like Hitler, it's exactly the same thing you know. I mean you are
> jobless, you are penniless, you are hungry, your self-esteem is below freezing
> point and then there comes a guy that says 'hey, you are Romanian therefore
> you are the centrepiece and the masterwork of God. You are not to be
> blamed for anything because the Hungarians and the Jews and the gypsies
> they are. So vote for me and I'll restore your self-confidence and I'll make
> you proud to be Romanian'. 'We are Romanians' – and they start singing.
> It's exactly the same things Hitler did in the 30s in Germany.

By drawing a parallel with Hitler, my contributor highlights the dangerous possibilities

associated with extreme-right wing movements that emerge out of disparate socio-economic

circumstances. According to many of my contributors, socio-economic conditions have

increased the popularity of the extreme-right:

> 3.21 The 2000 elections were particularly worrying for us because of the
> sudden popularity of the Greater Romania Party. That popularity is due to a
> number of complex reasons. One would be dissatisfaction with the
> economic and social situation. I do not believe that almost a quarter of the
> Romanian population are oriented to the extreme right. I do not think that.
> It was a protest vote I think, about a particular context. I think this was
> because of four years of bad government.

This contributor is reticent to believe that one quarter of the Romanian population is

oriented toward the extreme-right. Regardless of the true 'beliefs' of the population, she

states that the difficult socio-economic conditions in Romania 10 years after the revolution,

have created a situation whereby nationalist messages continue to resonate with the

electorate. The popularity of Tudor is the embodiment of a degree of Hungarian exclusion

from Romanian society that deeply unsettled my contributors.

Evident in the results of the 2000 elections, lines of exclusion and inclusion have continued to be drawn according to ethnicity since 1989. The impact of these demarcations has been interethnic tension. Romanian state policies, in their emphasis on assimilation (communist period) or in their denial of the multiethnic character of Romania (post-communist period) reflect an underlying fear of Hungarian irredentism or territorial revisionism. Despite the Hungarian presence within Romania's borders since WW1, this perceived threat has designated the Hungarians in Transylvania as political outsiders, whose very existence is interpreted as antithetical to that of the 'unitary, national' Romanian state. These exclusions are based on the conflation of ethnic and political conceptions of the Romanian 'nation' that became prominent during the Ceauşescu regime.

In the turbulence that followed 1989, ethnic rather than political conceptions of belonging continued to be the tacit basis of legitimacy for the new government. Iliescu's response to the violent ethnic clashes in Tîrgu Mureş in 1990 highlight the consequences of these definitions on the Hungarian minority. Within the post-revolutionary context, the possibility of violence against the Hungarian community created a common basis for a political organization. That this organization is based on identity rather than ideology – described as a 'necessary evil' by one of my contributors – has continued to fuel accusations from the extreme-right in Romania about the potential territorial consequences of recognizing the Hungarians. The saliency of this fear of territorial claims, exacerbated by the poor socio-economic conditions in Romania, was reflected in the electoral success of the Greater Romania Party in 2000.

Despite these accusations, during the past 12 years the DAHR has made continued

efforts to work within the Romanian political system.[74] There are, however, distinct

challenges associated with being a political party based on identity rather than ideology. In

particular, there is the temptation to fix identity into essential categories, as a way to argue

strategically for claims. These difficulties are particularly pronounced considering that

Hungarian identity has historically been placed in opposition to the identity, based on

ethnicity, currently embraced by the Romanian state.

In Part Two, I will look at how relations between Hungarian and Romanian identity are

presently constructed in opposition, and the challenge this poses to future political

possibilities.

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[74] Since the 2000 elections, the DAHR has signed a number of collaborative protocols with Iliescu
and the PSD indicating a clear willingness to work within state structures.

PART TWO

- The Lines Between -
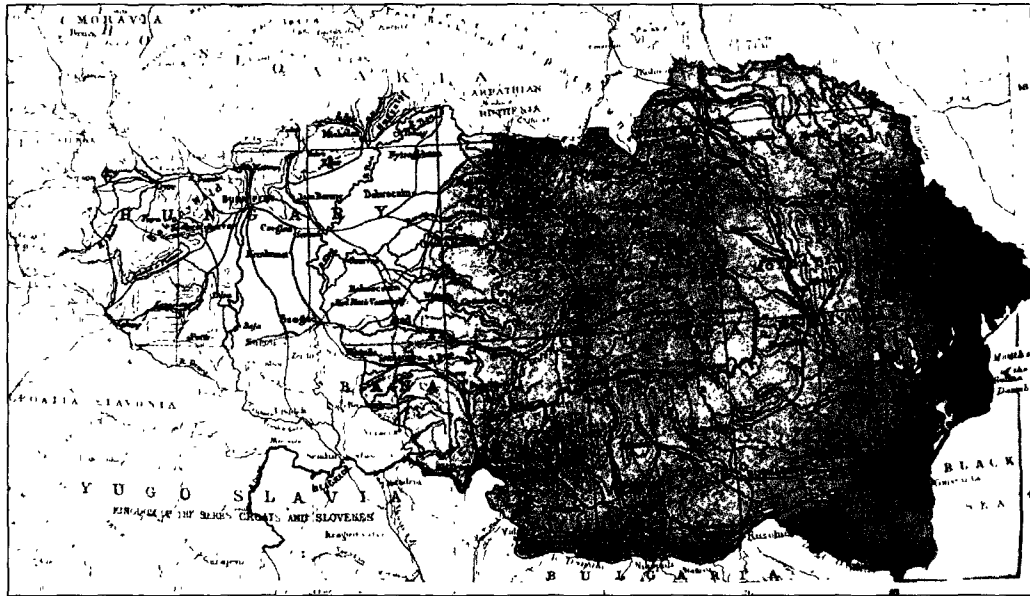
Figure 2: Eastern Europe 1922
Hungary and Romania

Nowhere in Romania are the political, historical and cultural lines that divide Romanian and Hungarian identity more visible than in the town of Cluj. Historically known by the Hungarian name 'Koloszvár', it remains the cultural and political centre for Hungarians in Transylvania. Nonetheless, the impact of an extreme right-wing mayor has, very visibly, increased tensions between Romanians and the Hungarian minority.

There is a burst of colour when entering the city by train – blue, yellow and red striped flags wave hello. By their sheer number, I soon realized that these flags demarcated something more profound than a simple patriotic welcome. While in Cluj, I watched these three colours ride their way up park benches, swirl around street posts and surround all old monuments. The statues of Hungarian princes were particularly vulnerable to assault - from above by insistent flags, and from below by the deep pits of archeological excavations. These excavations have been commissioned by the mayor to provide 'evidence' that there are older Dacian/Romanian ruins beneath the Hungarian ones.

It is impossible to tour through this beautiful city and not feel as though it has been shamelessly painted into some sort of nationalistic carnival. There was, it seemed, little cause to celebrate from a Hungarian perspective.

In Cluj, the lines of these many flags – blue, yellow and red – stand as tangible evidence that the Hungarian minority are political outsiders in Romania. In Part Two I will provide an in-depth look at how the construction of majority and minority nationalisms influence the marginal position of the Hungarian minority. Specifically, my interview partners convey the Hungarian experience of Romanian nationalism and the exclusion it generates. They also attempt to construct Hungarian nationalism in such a way that it is not guilty of these same

excesses. Romanian nationalism, as experienced by the Hungarian minority, has a concrete impact on rights and equality.

In Part One, I outlined how nationalism has been used, throughout Romania's history, to garner political legitimacy. The ethnic basis for Romanian nationalism currently leads to a paradox for the Hungarians that effectively precludes their belonging in Romania: they are Hungarian by nationality, yet Romanian citizens. This paradox has led to the realization that some Romanian citizens, namely ethnic Romanians, are more equal than others. In order to resolve this tension, my contributors present the possibility for collective rights for the Hungarian community that might be achieved through what is loosely termed 'autonomy'. Autonomy itself will be discussed further in Part Three, but for now can be considered the terms under which the Hungarians conceive of belonging in Romania. These proposals for autonomy have, thus far, been opposed by the state as a threat to stability and social unity in Romania.

Stability – or 'social unity' – also features prominently in general debates surrounding minority rights. According to Miller (1999), an underlying problem with group-differentiated rights is that it is not clear whether they are compatible with social unity. Much of the opposition to group-differentiated rights, especially self-government rights, is based on the premise that these rights threaten democratic stability by politicizing ethnicity. Additionally, the notion of 'unequal' protection appears to conflict with liberal democratic theory (Bishai 1998, 175). Nonetheless, empirical evidence suggests that opposing these group-differentiated rights may actually pose the greater threat to stability and increase the possibility for violent conflict (Kymlicka 1995, 183; 2001b, 26). stated plainly:

"Empirically, the evidence shows that pressuring national minorities to integrate into the dominant national group simply will not work. Western states badly misjudged the durability of minority national identities" (Kymlicka 2001b, 26).

According to Kymlicka (2001a, 37) evidence supports the opposite claim that minority rights enhance rather than erode social unity.[75] Chantal Mouffe (2000, 55) terms these parallel needs, to accommodate pluralism and foster unity, a 'democratic paradox' asking: how can we imagine a commonality strong enough to institute a shared *demos*[76] that is also compatible with different forms of pluralism? She argues for developing a 'new vocabulary' to frame this relation of 'agonistic pluralism'.[77] Kymlicka (1995, 192) similarly outlines the need to develop "peculiar sentiment" to forge unity in pluralistic societies.

Communicating such sentiment between groups, whose very definitions are in opposition, is particularly challenging when their common history is ridden with conflict. As such, the vision of social unity tacitly conveyed by the Romanian state, and reflected in the constitution, is that of the unity of an exclusively defined Romania nation. The Hungarian minority and their claims for autonomy become a threat alongside a fetish-like obsession with borders and their integrity. Underlying this fear of border changes I suggest, is the fear that the state will never fully realize its desired definition. In other words, the vision of an ethnically homogeneous Romanian nation-state is impossible given its pluralist reality. It is by disputing this vision of the state that the Hungarian minority begin to make claims for

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[75] Kymlicka cites Canada as one such example.

[76] Implying a shared political space.

[77] Mouffe (2000) relies heavily on Wittgenstein to highlight the tension between corresponding grammars – the liberal and the democratic – that results in what she terms 'agonistic pluralism'. She uses the word 'agonistic' to conjure the image that these tensions should not be overcome (as that would entail the closing down of democratic space) but rather negotiated.

rights and equality. These claims are framed as 'democratic claims' and therefore asserting the impossibility of a unitary Romanian nation-state is tantamount to asserting the possibility for democracy in Romania.

The following section will show that how nationalism and belonging are defined in Romania is central to its democratic future.

CHAPTER 4

Communicating the 'peculiar' sentiment required to create a politically viable

community is difficult in a region where nationalism has traditionally been the basis for

legitimacy. This chapter will show how currently the predominant sentiment expressed

toward the Hungarian minority is that of the nationalist character of the Romanian state.

Nationalism, as it is experienced, enables the clear separation of Romanian identity from

Hungarian identity, and enshrines political lines of inclusion and exclusion. Within this

climate there is little sentiment available for the task of building a politically viable and

democratic community that might accommodate pluralism.

Specifically, there is little room for 'difference' within a mindset predicated on

belonging based in ethnicity. Of particular import is that the notion of difference itself is

considered distinctly threatening to the state. As such, minority/majority relations within this

context are characterized by suspicion. A joke I was told conveys the perceived sense of

threat the Hungarians pose in regions where they are a majority:

> 4.1 There's a joke… you know that Harghita county is 85% Hungarian even
> today. The joke is that the other 15% are the secret police, army, and others.

My contributor relates the sense of distrust between the state and the Hungarian minority.

This suspicion underlying minority relations with the state is perpetuated by nationalist

discourse. At its root, is the view that the Hungarians are a threat to the state, thereby

justifying their exclusion.

It is important to state that these national differences are not due to any essential

characteristics of being either 'Hungarian' or 'Romanian'; rather it is the construction of

these identities as antithetical, as clearly separated, that fuels this distrust. In Miller's terms

(2001, 303) Romanian and Hungarian identities can be considered 'rival nationalities'

implying that "part of what it means to belong to group A is that one defines oneself in

opposition to group B." This oppositional quality precludes the development of a 'nested

identity' which would involve identifying with both the smaller group and the larger political

community. Given the separation maintained between the state and the Hungarian minority

it is therefore essential to consider what role these separations play. In other words,

following Žižek (1989), it requires asking what impossibility does this nationalist discourse

mask?[78]

This chapter will outline how these national differences are constructed and the role

they currently play in Romania's political system. I suggest, specifically, that these

separations help to mask undemocratic elements of the Romanian political system. To show

the particular challenge that nationalism poses to minority relations with the state, I will

begin by outlining how nationalism is defined and influenced by factors specific to Eastern

Europe.

Nationalism and the Roots of Difference

Nationalism, in general terms, is the principle linking political integration to a shared

cultural identity (Kraus 2003, 241). According to Gellner (in Taylor 1999, 281) nationalism is

"the political principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent."

In historical terms, nationalism is a recent political programme that maintains that 'nations'

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[78] In a similar vein, Brubaker (1996, 16) describes the task of scholars of nationalism: "We should certainly try to account for this social process of reification – this process through which the political fiction of the nation becomes momentarily, yet powerfully realized in practice."

have a right to sovereign control over territorial states (Hobsbawm 1992, 4; Hobsbawm 1990, 9). Nationalism can be distinguished by other forms of collectivity through this convergence between ethnic and political identity. According to Hedetoft (1999, 74) it is nationalism's "all-encompassing nature" – specifically, the confluence of culture, politics and territory - that makes it so compelling.

Despite these features in common, nationalist imaginings vary greatly according to context. In Western Europe, the concept of the 'nation' was born from humanist ideology and the French Revolution (Berend 1998, 51; Calinger 1994, 12). This "love for an abstraction of the nation" became an integral organizing principle for the modern age and the 'nation-state' became the political expression of these "imagined" communities (see Anderson, 1983).[79] Specifically, it is how the past is imagined that determines nationalist mythology (Hobsbawm 1992, 3). In discussing the role that the 'past' has played in Eastern Europe a local academic stated that: "There is too much history in too little room. There are no liberals here, there are only nationalists" (in Barber 1995, 195).

Nationalism arrived in Eastern Europe in the 19th Century and diverged greatly from its Western counterpart (Calinger 1994, 19). Friedrich Meinecke (in Berend 1998, 53) describes two types of nation-building that are represented in Western and Eastern models respectively. In the Western case, the nation emerges from the long-term evolution of a common political history. In the Eastern case, where 'nations' were located in multinational

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[79] Guibernau (2003, 116) aptly distinguishes between the state, the nation and the nation-state. Following Weber, the state is "the human community that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory." A nation is a community that shares a common culture, a common past, a clearly demarcated territory and advocates future self-rule. A nation-state is the institutionalization of a state that "seeks to unite the people subject to its rule by means of cultural homogenization."

empires, a common political history for 'nations' was lacking and thus the state was built

from the national revival of an imagined "cultural property" (Berend 1998, 55).[80] In Eastern

Europe modern national consciousness was cultivated when the region was dominated by

imperial states; Eastern European nationalism therefore acquired an emancipatory

dimension (Harsanyi and Kennedy 1994, 159).

Nationalism has proven to be a particularly resilient mythology in Eastern Europe and

one that can be distinguished from its Western counterpart due to divergent social,

economic and historical contexts (Verdery 1992, 8). Supplementing these Western concepts

of nationalism was the German concept of *Kulturnation* (Seton-Watson, 1977). 'Kulturnation'

was an ideology developed by Johann Gottfried Herder and describes the self-realization of

a national community by accessing its own 'national spirit' rather than by imitating

foreigners. According to Herder (in Berend 1998, 54): "Every nation carries within itself the

central point of its own happiness." Through Herder's emphasis on the 'incommensurability

of culture' (Calinger 1994, 16) emergent nationalism in Eastern Europe distinctly lacked

liberal ideals (Sugar and Lederer 1969, 19).

Central and Eastern European nationalism has made defining the 'relevant' community

necessary for democracy a particularly challenging task. History provides evidence of this

challenge in the successive decline of these states – with the exception of Czechoslovakia –

into a form of authoritarianism during the interwar period (Seton-Watson, 1967; Rothschild,

1974). The resurgence of nationalism post-1989 has also posed distinct challenges for

democratization. Tismaneanu (1998, 7) suggests that post-communist nationalism is a means

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[80] These national revivals are thought to go through three stages including folklore, propaganda, and finally mass movement (Hroch 1985, 3).

of expressing the national values that were repressed due to the 'internationalism' of the communist period.

Although the past plays an important role in developing nationalist mythology it is important to emphasize that nationalism, per se, is not primordial. Its existence is not dictated or predetermined by a 'real' past, rather it is an imaginative exercise focused on the future. As such, one cannot essentialize about nationalist 'truths' – these truths are constructed and therefore nationalism itself is best conceived as a processual. Contemporary expressions of nationalism are rooted not so much in history as they are in imagination (Anderson 1983, 10; Przeworski 1995, 20). These visions, however, do have concrete and tangible effects.

The following section will outline how these nationalist imaginings impact the Hungarian minority. Specifically, I will outline how Hungarian identity is constructed in relation to Romanian nationalism.

Delineating Different 'Nations'

The nation was described to me as collective belonging in a cultural community:

> 4.2 Collectivism, in a cultural way, means the nation, because you are similar with another because you recognize cultural codes. It does not matter what citizen you are, you can live in Ukraine, in Slovakia, in Transylvania, in Croatia, in Slovenia, in Austria or in Hungary, but you can recognize certain cultural codes. In this way, thinking about collective, for us, is the same as, I say, thinking about my nation. It is not necessarily against somebody else, it is just defining a very important dimension of my identity.

My contributor identifies 'belonging' in both cultural and collective terms. She is careful, however, to specify that this undertaking is not 'against' anyone. Nonetheless, it is precisely that belonging to a nation is a collective venture, and one that exists beyond the boundaries

of nation-states, that makes it potentially threatening. In this way, another contributor

recognizes that definitions for the nation are inherently political:

> 4.3 The problem of the 'nation' as a word is firstly a political notion. It is the
> political nation that we are talking about - in general the nation is a political
> one. The word 'ethnic' means social relations. But if you want to put a
> border between the mother nation and other parts saying that the
> 'Hungarians' are those living in Hungary and that the others are 'ethnic
> Hungarians' - I do not agree with that. The term 'ethnic' implies mostly
> cultural, like the arts and literature. It doesn't credit that something has a
> historical existence. There are sentiments included as well, important
> sentiments. It's ridiculous to say that there is a Hungarian way of looking at
> mathematics for example. But there are some specific ways of thinking and
> communicating in the language. Because the language is a system and your
> way of thinking is based on this system. There are some main roads there are
> some streets and you have to travel along these. This pattern is in the
> language. There are affinities, there are some preferences there are a lot of
> things that are related to this problem of national being that exist outside of
> the borders."

My contributor directly addresses the inadequacy of territorial borders to encompass the

complexity of his identity. What he contests is the predominant (and simplistic) logic of the

past century: that a nation must correspond directly with established borders. He is also

keenly aware of the implications of having his identity, currently existing outside established

borders, described as 'ethnic'. According to Karakasidou (1997, 21) it is precisely the

attainment of territorial nation-statehood that ethnicizes minorities (*read* depoliticizes). It is

evident that this ethnicization identity is not acceptable to my contributor. He disputes as

inaccurate the distinction between 'Hungarians' and 'ethnic Hungarians' made simply because

of the presence of a border. The term ethnic, implying depoliticized cultural and social

relations, denies that his identity also has a historical existence. It is precisely this historical

link that contests the distinctions made between Hungarian identity – either ethnic or

national - across different borders. He cites language, as an example of how identity traverses

territorial borders. For him, language is not prescriptive and does not 'dictate' sentiments,

rather it provides a certain pattern, or way of thinking that is culturally specific.

Language was not the only factor emphasized when I asked my interview partners what

constitutes Hungarian identity. Another contributor elaborates on the many different levels

to this identity:

> 4.4 The idea is that there are a number of traits. First of all, nationalism is
> what one declares oneself to be. It's very easy for a French to define
> themselves as French being in France. But it's quite difficult for a Hungarian
> to define themselves as Hungarian in Romania. I can give you some
> guidelines for instance. First of all what one would declare oneself to be –
> Romanian or Hungarian? Also important is the language one declares to be
> his native tongue, which is Hungarian in my case. Also it is religion:
> Hungarians are Catholics while Romanians are Orthodox. Of course there
> are Catholic Romanians too, but not a significant number. Actually it is what
> culture you feel as being yours or what history you identify with. But basically
> being a member of a nation and declaring your self a member of a nation is
> probably as indescribable and indefinable as being in love. You can't define
> love you just feel it. You can't define being a Hungarian you just feel it.

My contributor describes an important feature of nationalism as simply 'what one declares

oneself to be'. This statement resonates with Charles Taylor's (1994) insistence on the

importance of identity to 'self'. Nonetheless, for my contributor Hungarian identity in

Romania is an inherently problematic venture, a sort of impossibility. While contemplating

this impossibility she asks me, how can one be Hungarian in Romania? Once again these two

identities are portrayed as mutually exclusive. By way of answering her own question she

contemplates the basis for these divisions, and highlights the role that language and religion

play. Although these characteristics represent tangible differences, she then goes on to

describe membership in a national group as intangible – as indescribable as being in love. In

the end she seems somewhat dissatisfied with her ability to resolve how to be Hungarian in

Romania. The intangibility she describes echoes with that of the previous contributor. He

described how for him, Hungarian language involves a certain intangible 'sentiment' about

his identity. For both contributors, this identity is *felt* rather than *thought* – is ontological

rather than epistemological – and as such, perhaps rings of essentialism. Nonetheless, the

implication of their link between national identity and sentiment is that to *not* recognize this

identity is, in effect, an assault on one's self. Another contributor addresses this link between

sentiment and nationalism:

> 4.5 The nationalists don't count on rational thinking, they appeal to
> emotions. And there are Hungarian nationalists as well as Romanian
> nationalists. I would say that the grounds are different. Romanian
> nationalists don't have to fight for the right to their identity.

Although both Hungarian and Romanian forms of nationalism have an emotional

component, my contributor makes what she views as an important distinction. Specifically,

she highlights the lack of equality between these two identities. Romanians, she says, simply

possess their identity (nation and state are the same) whereas Hungarians have to fight for

their right to identity.

This link between nation and state – what the Romanians possess and the Hungarians

do not – highlights how nationalism can influence future political possibilities. If Hungarian

identity is overly essentialized there will be little room for accommodation within an

exclusively defined Romanian nation-state. Nonetheless, a degree of essentialism is necessary

for my contributors to strategically argue to have their own identity acknowledged by the

state. In other words, essentialism is a necessary consequence of describing the needs of a

specific political community in the discrete terms required to make political claims.[81] There

was, however, little offensive or prescriptive about the national identity I encountered when

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[81] In particular, it is the nationalistic definition of the Romanian state, that requires that a degree of
essentialism be used

speaking with members of the DAHR. Even when speaking with members of the more

extreme factions within the DAHR there was never the sense that their identity could not

coexist with others. In contrast, this coexistence - described as rooted in the inherent

diversity of the Transylvanian region - is a constitutive element of this identity.

The perception of the Romanian state as exclusive, based on an essentialized notion of

Romanian national identity, was frequently mentioned when I discussed Hungarian identity

with my contributors. The impact of this construction of identity, however, is antagonism

and potential conflict between these two groups. One contributor outlines the roots of this

antagonism:

> 4.6 I don't think it should be a community thing. Romanians must know that
> they are Romanians, must be proud about it, but not to make a community
> action about it. "We are Romanians, and we have to unite our souls..." I
> don't see the sense of this.

My contributor makes a distinction between 'pride' in one's identity, versus having a moral

imperative to 'unite' one's soul with members of your community. He describes the action

required to achieve Romanian 'unity' as distinctly threatening for the Hungarian community.

It is the transcendental quality that he attributes to Romanian nationalism, this desire to

achieve unity, that creates a firm line between Hungarian and Romanian identity. Although

my contributors describe Hungarian identity in ontological terms – as a feeling – it is never

linked to transcendent goals.

It is at this line between the ontological and the transcendent that Hungarians

distinguish their form of nationalism from that of the Romanians. This sense of Romanian

nationalism as rooted in a mystical tradition and having transcendental goals was frequently

related to the Orthodox Church. Another contributor addresses the impact of religion:

4.7 You see in England, or the US or Canada or Germany well they mostly
tolerate protesters - which means they belong to religions that make them
think. Now the Orthodox Church is totally the opposite of this. You can see
that wherever there is an Orthodox country politicians are usually old people.
Why, because this is the very essence of their system. You must look up to
your daddy - regardless if it's daddy the Czar, Daddy Stalin, or Daddy
Ceauşescu or whoever else. You must see it as a paternal figurehead. And
the whole Orthodox Church is enforcing this idea. I mean look at their
priests, long beards and they look like the wise old men giving you all sorts of
advice about what to do, where to do, who to do it with. So the idea is that as
soon as you have such a figurehead, such a father and you have this people
who is accustomed to and desires to be guided wisely then it's quite an
explosive mix. And it is quite possible the parliament also becomes some
sort of figurehead after all. And the president becomes the man who wields
all the power.

My contributor seemed rather agitated and took on a somewhat contemptuous air when

describing the Orthodox Church. Nonetheless, it was not the Orthodox Church, in general,

that led to this agitation but rather the specific links between the Orthodox Church and the

Romanian political system. According to Haddock and Caraiani (1999, 259), the Romanian

Orthodox Church and its anti-western and anti-individualist underpinnings has influenced

Romanian national identity, and correspondingly, Romanian politics. My contributors

therefore adopted a tone that I would hear, almost exclusively, when they spoke of these

perceived links between the Church and the Romanian political system. Orthodox culture,

they felt, had a negative impact on Romanian politics. In this particular statement, my

contributor describes the Orthodox Church as overtly patriarchal with 'non-thinking'

members – conjuring an image of blind followers. Unfortunately, according to my

contributor, this notion of the blind follower is reflected in Romania's political system –

specifically, an overly centralized parliament, headed by a President who is unaccustomed to

criticism from the electorate.

Aside from the peripheral impact of 'Orthodox culture' on politics, other contributors describe more direct links between religion and politics:

> 4.8 We are strongly against the Orthodox Church being declared the national religion. They have tried. But there is no such thing as a national religion. Romania has an important community that is not Orthodox. There are Greek Catholics, and Romanians of other religions.

My contributor emphasizes the attempt on the part of the Orthodox Church to have itself officially and constitutionally recognized. Hungarians have resisted these efforts to 'nationalize' religion in Romania, although efforts have been made.[82] Given these attempts to nationalize the Orthodox religion in Romania, my contributors view it as in inherently intolerant institution. One contributor conveys this lack of tolerance with a frustrated tone:

> 4.9 Well Romanians are Orthodox and the Orthodox Church is not very open. I would like to see them be more open but I don't. For example if you want to be buried they have to pay the priest, or you won't be buried. In the villages they are still giving chickens and eggs and cheese to the priest. The priests are not officially represented in parliament but they still tell the government what to do. The government doesn't necessarily listen, but the church still has a lot of power. The church is very nationalistic. It was always nationalistic even in the communist era. During this time the Orthodox Church helped to relocate people from Moldova to Transylvania.

Again, sounding a contemptuous note when discussing the need to 'pay the priest', my contributor portrays the Orthodox Church as an archaic institution. Most importantly, however, she implicates the Orthodox Church in past attempts to assimilate Hungarians in Romania, through relocation.[83] This legacy contributes to a perception of mistrust.

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[82] Though not specified in the Constitution, in 1994 the Orthodox Church declared itself the "National Church" (Stan and Turcescu, 2000). The Orthodox Church also attempted, unsuccessfully, to obtain parliamentary representation for the Church hierarchy.

[83] She is referring to Ceausescu's policy of 'systemitization' and the perceived connection between Romanian communism and the Orthodox Church.

The Orthodox Church in Romania is described as an overtly nationalistic institution.

Hungarians are mainly Protestant and Catholic and thus perceived 'ethnic' differences are

further compounded by religious differences. One contributor describes the relationship

between ethnic and religious distinctions:

> 4.10 It is important to know that in Romania, in our case, the ethnic cleavage
> is forced by religious cleavage. For example, Hungarians living in Slovakia
> are in a better situation because Slovaks are Catholics. In our case, for
> example, restitution of confiscated property, confiscated property by the
> communist state is practically an ethnic issue. It's not just a religious issue or
> not just a property issue because in Transylvania the Roman Catholic and the
> Protestant Church had an important number of buildings. They were
> schools, they were charity organizations and they have a tradition to help
> people and to educate them. When the communists took power after 48
> they took private property and they nationalized many of the buildings of the
> churches. And now, the Orthodox Church is against restitution. The state is
> against restitution. So only our alliance is for restitution. And after 11 years
> nothing happened. Nothing, so I mean, private property is the base of
> democracy or the base of a free-market or the base of a free-society. From
> their point of view, from Romanian nationalist point of view, to make
> Hungarians poorer is the national interest or to not allow Hungarians to
> develop their community. This is their interest.

On the issue of restitution of property formerly held by minority religious groups, my

contributor describes the position of the state and that of the Orthodox Church as

uncomfortably similar. This attitude toward property, he suggests, highlights a major deficit

in Romanian democracy.[84] Additionally, he argues that this 'Romanian nationalist point of

view', subscribed to by both the Orthodox Church and the state, prevents the Hungarians

from pursuing their own interests. These two interests – Romanian and Hungarian - are

described as antithetical and compounded by the impact of the Orthodox Church. In this

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[84] Stan and Turcescu (2000) describe attempts made by the Orthodox Church in Romania to
influence the Romanian state throughout the democratization process, in particular over the
restitution on property

sense, both the Orthodox Church and the state are related by their intolerant attitude toward

the Hungarian community. One contributor elaborates:

> 4.11 I think that the level of tolerance is less than in the Western European
> state. First the Orthodox Church, for centuries, has been against many
> European values. They are against, for example, university, diversity as a
> value, or charity. Unfortunately the Orthodox Church was not reformed.
> One of the biggest problems I think in Romanian society is the church. It is
> slowly developing, slowly opening and accepting diversity and tolerance but
> they never accept the main concessions, the deep resolutions. They maintain
> their power.

My contributor emphasizes that it is difficult to reform Romanian society when the

Orthodox Church refuses to relinquish power. Importantly, this power is not simply over

spiritual matters but has political implications for the Hungarian minority. He states that the

church is intolerant which he attributes to a lack of a 'Reformation' in the Orthodox Church,

distinguishing it from a Western European tradition. This lack of 'Reformation' is also

evident in the implied lack of separation between Church and state in the Romanian political

system. He views the Church as a negative force, though one that is slowly changing.

According to another contributor, it is an institution that remains extremely important for

Romanians:

> 4.12 In every opinion poll among the most liked and most beloved
> institutions, the first is always the church and the second is always the army.
> Although, if you speak with a hundred Romanians from various places,
> probably 80 or 90 of them will say that, 'yeah I know an Orthodox priest as
> he's laid down all the women he can and he's drinking and he's stealing the
> money etc… etc…'. But when it comes to the Orthodox Church, oh yes yes
> it's the holy church, it's the only true religion. And the same happens with
> the army.

My contributor's overtly negative portrayal of an Orthodox priest – drinking, stealing etc… -

highlights his intense distrust of the motives of the Orthodox Church. This distrust fuels his

condescension toward the Orthodox religion and translates into an extremely negative

perception of Romanian nationalism. Given the lack of tolerance he perceives, what he is most frustrated by is the willingness of Romanians to trust this institution. He throws up his hands in exasperation when he tells me that this blind trust also characterizes Romanian attitudes toward the army.[85]

Distinguishing between different forms of nationalism – Romanian and Hungarian - is an integral component of Hungarian claims. These distinctions are based on obvious differences, such as language and religion. Nonetheless, there is also a distinction made between the overall impact of these two forms of nationalism. Specifically, Romanian nationalism is considered to have transcendental underpinnings – described as an *exclusive* enterprise focused on *uniting* Romanians. In contrast, Hungarian goals are described as more immanent and ontological –focused on Hungarian *inclusion* into a *diverse* Romania. As such, there is an underlying sense of Romanian nationalism as a negative force. One contributor clarifies the point at which nationalism becomes negative:

> 4.13 Some say that nationalism is normal and not necessarily negative. Others say that nationalism is bad, that it's something that is against someone. My view is that I am a Hungarian in Romania and I can't measure that. I know some Hungarian nationalists and I'm not one. I'm a liberal type. I think that we shouldn't exaggerate. I don't like Hungarians who say that because 'I'm Hungarian that means this and this and this'. I believe I am a Hungarian, that is my identity. It's personal. My education was different, my socialization was different. I live in the community of 86% Romanian. I still believe my Hungarian identity a strong but I'm not going to throw at you. I work here at the alliance not only because I feel it's my duty as a Hungarian. I like the job and want our community to develop. But then again I have to understand those Hungarian nationalists. Because if a society wants to root you out – you have to defend yourself.

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[85] I have previously mentioned that, when surveyed, Romanians continually mention the Orthodox Church and the Army as the two most valued and trusted institutions.

Initially, my contributor states that deterministic or prescriptive nationalism, on the part of either Hungarians or Romanians, is bad - an exaggeration. Nonetheless, there remains the strong sense that her identity as a Hungarian just 'is'. Additionally, although she distances herself from these 'bad' nationalists, she makes an exception for Hungarian nationalists, suggesting that it is a justified response to a society that wants to 'root you out'.

According to many of my contributors there is a qualitative difference between Hungarian and Romanian nationalism:

> 4.14 The Romanian way to think is to revise history and say that Adam and Eve were Romanian and that paradise was in the Danube delta. So they ask me what I think about this, do you believe this? And I say, 'you know we had this same illness in the 19th century when the Hungarians wrote some books'. It's difficult to say but I think that we Hungarians outgrew this illness in the 19th century, this dreaming about great Hungary that existed in the 13th to 15th century. We passed over this illness because we had the First World War and the Second World War and we learned what it means to be a minority. We learned how nationalism can be a very bad thing.

Again, my contributor describes the negative consequences of Romanian nationalism. Interestingly, he draws a parallel between contemporary Romanian nationalism and Hungarian nationalism in the 19th century. Common to both these periods was a nationalism characterized by territorial ambition – by attempts to create a 'greater' Hungary and a 'greater' Romania. Thus, it is not nationalism *per se* that my contributor considers negative; rather, he implies that it is the desired endpoint of this ideology that makes it either more or less ethical. The endpoint he describes, in this case, is that of border changes: to expand the nation-state to achieve 'sovereignty' over a greater territory. Accordingly, this sovereignty would result in increased exclusion of minority groups. My contributor describes this form of nationalism as an 'illness' – one from which, he implies, the Hungarians have since been cured. By making an absurd link, between Adam, Eve and Romanian nationalism, he both

ridicules this perspective and suggests that the Romanians have not yet recovered from this same illness.

My contributors were constantly aware of the negative connotations to nationalism and sought to distance themselves from this label. As a way to escape these negative connotations one contributor changes the terms he uses to describe belonging:

> 4.15 If you asked me today about Hungarian nationalism I would rather say Hungarian patriotism. A nationalist by definition is someone who puts their nation above and against another nation. Patriotism is someone who likes their nation but who accepts other nations. Romanian nationalism is still on the top. All the changes that Hungary, Czech Republic or even the Western European countries have made over the past fifty years Romania is just starting to do. The new generation, if they don't all immigrate, they will reform the system more quickly. I hope that in a few years Romanian nationalism will be patriotism instead. We hope this will be a fast change.

My contributor suggests that the word 'patriotism' more aptly describes Hungarian identity. He defines patriotism as an acceptance of other nations and it is therefore non-hierarchical and inclusive. In contrast, nationalism, as practiced by the Romanians, is hierarchical and functions by excluding other nations. His hope, and that of many others, is that this exclusive brand of nationalism will soon give way to greater acceptance of other nations in the form of patriotism.

Justifying Exclusion: The Hungarian Threat

Much has been written on the topic of nationalism as a predominant feature of Romanian politics (most notably Verdery, 1991; Tismaneanu, 1998). Dellenbrant (1991, 205) highlights how the extreme character of Romanian nationalism is central to Romanian politics and is historically associated with both left and right political programs. Given the continuity of this symbol in Romania it is not surprising that following the 1989 revolution

moral legitimation and thus power were gained by demonstrating that one had suffered *for*

the Romanian nation (Verdery 1996, 109).[86] As such, the nation emerged as the central

legitimating principle following 1989.

Underlying the central place nationalism has taken in Romanian politics is a sense of

fear associated with the instability of the Romanian state itself. According to Nedeva (1993,

130), anti-Hungarian sentiment is a key feature of Romanian nationalism. Specifically, it is

the fear that the Hungarian minority will attempt to separate Transylvania from Romania

that has led to xenophobia toward the Hungarians (Verdery 1992, 8). This fear provides the

necessary rationale to justify exclusion.[87] As such, my interview partners continuously

delineated Romania nationalism from other forms of nationalism:

> 4.16 Here it's not just nationalism, it's something more than nationalism. It's
> fear, a lack of dignity in the negative sense, narrow mindedness.

My contributor describes Romanian nationalism in exclusively negative terms, emphasizing

the role that fear plays in this mentality. By and large, as previously mentioned, the literature

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[86] Perhaps the most obvious example is the contemporary rehabilitation of Marshal Ion Antonescu, Romania's military dictator during World War Two, now considered a "national hero" (Tismaneanu and Pavel 1994, 413). Both historians and journalists understate atrocities under his rule (Tismaneanu and Tudoran 1993, 49): Antonescu ordered the deaths of some 300 000 Jews in forced labour camps (East and Pontin 1997, 155). Before Romania became allied with Germany, Antonescu had stripped Jews of their citizenship and introduced anti-Jewish legislation that was among the most severe in Europe (Hockenos 1994, 187). An unparalleled denial has surrounded Romania's holocaust, evident in April 1991, when the chamber of deputies rose in a minute of silence to honour Antonescu's memory (Deak 1992, 51; Hockenos 1994, 187). What is currently remembered is the myth of Antonescu as a military hero defending his nation against the mythic threat of Judeo-Bolshevik "vindictiveness" (Tismaneanu 1995, 319). This myth is one that is integral to an increasingly authoritarian political culture and highlights the silences that surround some of the "horrors perpetrated in the name of the Romanian nation" (Hockenos 1994, 188).

[87] According to Nedeva (1993, 130) Romanians currently display a national insecurity reminiscent of that following WW1: "The peculiar siege mentality and perception that Romanians are one ethnic group in the midst of a struggle for basic rights with other ethnic groups" is indicative of this insecurity. This is a curious position given that they are the majority in Romania.

on Romanian nationalism defines it in similarly negative terms (see Verdery 1991;

Tismaneanu, 1995; Hockenos, 1994). This nationalism is perhaps most evident in the state's

relationship with the Hungarian minority. Romanian nationalism and its preoccupation with

'unity' is based on the fear of border changes and possible state dissolution – a quality that is

not surprising given the high degree of instability that has characterized Romania's history.[88]

Nonetheless, this fear plays an important role at masking what I suggest, is the impossibility

of 'unity' – or alternately stated, an ethnically homogenous Romanian nation-state. For my

contributors, the problem of 'unity' features prominently in their discussions of Romanian

nationalism:

> 4.17 Romanian nationalism is in all the parties. In Romania Mare it is really
> exaggerated. But every party has something about 'Unity and solidarity'.

Importantly, my contributor describes this nationalist discourse as existing across the

spectrum of Romanian political parties. This emphasis on 'unity and solidarity' stands in

stark contrast to what would be its opposite: namely diversity and difference.

The impact of this fear is aptly conveyed in a discussion of 'Greater Romania' and

'Greater Hungary', with one of my contributors:

> 4.18 The problem of great Hungary, nobody is speaking about this. That was
> the intention of the Serbs to create a Greater Serbia. Romanians have a party
> in parliament with the name Greater Romania. And it's not a joke it's a very
> serious problem. It is a Hungarian writer who said that the main problem is
> in being a nationalist who is hurting some other nation instead of just
> preserving their own culture. Nationalism as a term is not bad or wrong, in
> my opinion. What you want as a nationality, that is where the problem can
> be. There are a lot of people who think that nationalism is not only wrong,
> but ugly. I don't agree. You can also think of it as a neutral term, ethically
> speaking.

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[88] Borders take on a fetish like power.

My contributor reiterates that a vision of territorial expansion is one that the Hungarians do not have. Nonetheless, he suggests that this is not a claim that the Romanians can make given the presence in parliament, as the official opposition, of a party entitled the 'Greater Romania' party. The link he makes with the Serbs in neighbouring Yugoslavia highlight the potentially disastrous and violent consequences that visions of ethnically 'pure' territories might create. Again, nationalism itself is not necessarily negative, rather it is the desired goal of this nationalism – specifically, the exclusion of minorities - that makes it unethical.

Conversations about Romanian nationalism and its negative consequences almost always led to a discussion of the Greater Romania Party (GRP). All my contributors view this party as particularly offensive. One contributor elaborates on what makes this brand of nationalism wrong:

> 4.19 The problem is that their nationalism hurts other people. If your self-confidence or your self-value needs to hurt other nations, other communities then you have the same type of nationalism that is cultivated by this party. The speeches of the leader of this party are anti Hungarian, anti-Semitic and xenophobic statements. His opinion about the Hungarians is that they are barbarians and that they are against the Romanians. But I don't want to make it sound like I am talking about the good Hungarian nationalism and the bad Romanian nationalism. Nationalism can be wrong or right on both sides.

Resonating with previous discussions, my contributor attempts to understand the appeal of the extreme-right. Many of my contributors openly pondered the appeal of the GRP when I asked them about Romanian nationalism. Tellingly, many were unwilling to accept that the attitude reflected in the GRP was something 'real' or 'authentic'. They frequently explained its popularity as being a result of external factors, such as poor socioeconomic conditions. To accept the GRP's position as authentic would involve contemplating a personal rejection of their identity, and by extension, themselves. In this statement, my contributor suggests

that the negative nationalism that characterizes the GRP results from low self-confidence or self-value. Nonetheless, it has very real consequences on those who it is directed against – Hungarians, Jews, Romanis and more intimately, himself. Given these consequences, it is not surprising that his tone reflected disappointment and sadness. Providing a more nuanced outlook on nationalism, he emphasizes that he does not view Hungarian nationalism as inherently good and Romanian nationalism as inherently bad.

Nonetheless, given the presence and popularity of the GRP in Romania, a negative tone inflects all discussions of 'nationalism' in Romania. Another contributor relates this perception:

> 4.20 The Greater Romania Party is a terrible thing. But now in this party there are problems. Their leader is a real dictator. In just two months they had 11 people leave the party. This is good for us. But he's still the leader and he is still speaking very badly of us, of all minorities - Roma and Gypsies as well. He became popular though because he has such strong nationalist speeches. We have a problem with this Romanian nationalist rhetoric. Romanian people like these kinds of speeches. Many Romanian people are nationalists, but we also have our own nationalists within the Hungarian movement.

Corneliu Vadim Tudor, the leader of the GRP, is well known for his vehement statements against minority groups in Romania. He is also known for his eloquence. When discussing him with my Romanian friends, who were equally offended by the content of these speeches, they would often mention how eloquent and intelligent he was. This position he held – intolerant while simultaneously admired – may explain some of his popularity (and that of many populists before him). According to my contributor, his intolerant speeches have only increased his popularity. Although, he acknowledges nationalism within the Hungarian movement, he argues that this nationalism has been mistakenly linked to that of the GRP:

> 4.21 Before 1996 we have always been cast opposite to Romania Mare. They compared us - they said here are the nationalist Romanians, and here are the nationalists Hungarians. But we've never had this same rhetoric, the same objectives, we've never instigated hatred. And Romania Mare in general is not just anti Hungarian, it's anti-Semitic and anti Roma.

My contributor highlights how the DAHR has been politically construed as the Hungarian counterpart to Romania Mare (GRP). Perceptions of the DAHR have provided Romania Mare with a certain justification for its platform and garnered the GRP popularity with the electorate. These parallels are also convenient for the largely nationalistic Romanian media.[89] Nonetheless, there is an enormous difference between these two parties and platforms, which my contributor aptly summarizes: the GRP emphasizes an explicitly exclusive and intolerant brand of nationalism whose objectives are the ethnic purification of Romania (the means unspecified) whereas the DAHR's platform is inclusive and has as its objective a Romania that accommodates diversity. Nonetheless, there is a sense that the GRP's brand of nationalism will not disappear easily:

> 4.22 Nationalism pays off. Extreme nationalism pays off really well. So first politicians must give up using this type of nationalism.

My contributor highlights how nationalism is used as a political tool in Romania. He suggests that politicians should avoid making gains through extreme nationalist discourse. Another contributor explains the difficulties faced in abandoning this discourse given the 'disappointing' circumstances that characterize Romania:

> 4.23 This is a close link between politics and disappointment, as I said, disappointment made people to make a wrong choice. People, if they had economic security, wouldn't think about these things. When there is an economic problem in the press, in the media, the government tries to bring in a problem about Hungarians, about Moldavians or so, to make the people who read about the mistakes of the government focus more on minority

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[89] For a discussion of the nationalist content of the Romanian media see Carey (1996).

problems, to read that instead of the truth. They try to make people not pay attention to the important things. And these ethnic problems are generated.

My contributor suggests that the Hungarians, and the potential threat they pose, provide a necessary distraction from the structural and economic problems plaguing everyday life in Romania. Another contributor has a similar explanation:

> 4.24 The problem could be that the economic situation has a big influence on the mentality of the people. If someone is hungry, it's very easy to convince them that there is an enemy there, the Hungarians want to take Transylvania from you. And that's why I think that one of our targets must be also the improvement of the economic life of the population.

This contributor highlights a quality of Romanian politics that is also reflected in the literature (see Verdery, 1991; Tismaneanu, 1998): that nationalism as a tool for political gain is not simply reserved to the GRP, but exists across the political spectrum.

This negative and nationalistic attitude across the spectrum of Romanian political parties was particularly evident, when the Hungarian government proposed a "Status Law" on Hungarians abroad. This law would provide certain cultural benefits for ethnic Hungarians living in neighbouring countries (Szász 2003, 107). Just before heading into a parliamentary session, one contributor took me aside to describe the impact of this law:

> 4.25 Today in this parliament we debate a kind of proposal of the ultranationalists, the Greater Romania Party, about our rights in former occupied territories. This kind of nationalistic heritage is very strong. This problem emerged when Hungary promoted a law on the status of Hungarians out of Hungary. It's a very contentious problem. But it's a kind of political chewing gum for Romanians. And we, not I, we stare and wonder what all our democratic friends from the former coalition and everybody is yelling about Romanian interest and defending Transylvania and Romania. They are able to coalesce around a single issue like this. Everyone has a national front against the Hungarians. It a kind of childish approach.

My contributor is quite agitated by being abandoned by his former coalition partners (in the 1996 government) and frustrated at having to defend the Hungarians against this national

front. He flags how, despite current collaboration protocols between the DAHR and the ruling government, the proposed Status Law has disrupted this relationship and led to a 'childish approach'. He is somewhat amazed that the rhetoric of the ultra-nationalists was able to unite Romanian (democratic) political parties around the need to 'defend' Romania and Transylvania from the Hungarians. His former 'democratic friends' are now part of a national front against the Hungarians. He eloquently describes the Hungarians as 'political chewing gum' in Romania – a useful distraction. Specifically, they distract the electorate from the economy, the state of democracy, levels of corruption in politics and an array of other potentially contentious issues that might reflect poorly on the state. Implicit to this statement is the view that the Hungarians mask the democratic deficits of the Romanian state.

The Status Law, in the end, did not emblazen Transylvanian separatists or irredentists such that the Romanians feared. Another contributor emphasizes its negligible impact:

> 4.26 The Status Law is more about culture, about being able to travel, rather than rights. The Romanians though had a very ugly reaction to it. The problem was that many Romanians didn't even read the law, though they were angry. The Romanians wanted to have the same rights in the status law as the Hungarians. But the status law says things like you can go to Hungarian libraries. What do the Romanians want with Hungarian books? This law wasn't important to me, it was a Hungarian government election promise. They promised it and they had to do it. The debate is finished here now and the result has been positive. The most important thing was that our party was always between the Hungarian and Romanian governments. We were the mediator.

My contributor highlights how, throughout the debates over the status law, the DAHR kept a mainly neutral stance and mediated between the Romanian and Hungarian government. This role clearly indicated that they harboured no irredentist goals. Nonetheless, the fear generated by this document highlights the impact that history continues to have on

contemporary attitudes toward the Hungarians in Romania, and the resulting 'nationalist' response.

Provided with a 'threat', nationalist political parties are better able to focus political life around national questions rather than the difficulties posed by democratic reform (Salat 2003, 20). The fear generated by minority groups – as potential enemies to society and the state – divert public attention from the burden of political and economic reform. Nationalist discourse rekindles historic flames and perpetuates a mentality based on fear of the 'other'. One contributor elaborates on how this mentality leads to a lack of understanding:

> 4.27 Well history made their mentality. They really cannot understand, they cannot understand that we are not a threat to their independence. Because Romania will remain Romania. Because nobody's such a fool to try to take apart Romania. There would be a lot of social and economic problems. And can you imagine if Hungary would take Transylvania? The Hungarians are not so stupid to take 6 million Romanians and to then to have to deal with a minority problem. This is an absurdity, they cannot understand. We are a very very poor country. We have a lot of social problems. I mean 75% of the people are very poor. And they are dealing with extremes, I don't have bread to eat everyday but I'm making politics telling that Hungarians are a dangerous party. You know all this is to find someone to blame."

My contributor aptly describes the 'absurdity' of changing borders – suggesting that Hungary would never want to deal with the 6 million Romanians currently living in Transylvania. Despite this absurdity, she suggests that due to poverty there is a need to find someone to 'blame'. Currently, Western insistence on the free-market and the corresponding economic decline have provided considerable support to the historic position of the right in Romania (Fischer-Galati 1991, 12). The radicalization of the right in Romania is therefore one response to the uncertain politics and frustrating socio-economic conditions that have emerged since 1989 (Tismaneanu, 1995). Tismaneanu (1993, 346) has highlighted nostalgia for collectivist forms of social protection in Romania and his fear that the profound despair

characterizing contemporary Romania could translate into the rise of social demagogues –

evident in the recent success of the GRP.

Despite understanding the socio-economic conditions that lead to this attitude,

invoking history to 'lay blame' is frustrating to Hungarians in Romania.

> 4.28 We have to be tolerant. Sometimes I feel though that I'm frustrated because I am punished for what happened in 1940 when my grandfather was alive. We can't forget the past because exists and this is what we've grown-up with. But we have to learn to be tolerant with each other and to respect each other. This is the first thing. And if not OK, we don't have to talk but you can't just stab the other person in the back."

My contributor suggests that history has led to a climate of suspicion between Hungarians

and Romanians. Although he suggests that the past is inescapable, he nonetheless argues that

a tolerant attitude might help to mitigate this legacy.

Despite being frustrated by the fear of irredentism that history generates, and despite

assertions that changing borders would be absurd, my contributors do convey a sense of

injustice and loss associated with *past* border changes. One contributor expresses this

attitude:

> 4.29 The fear is because many Romanians know that they got Transylvania – even when the history books are lying – they got Transylvania because they gave up the eastern part of Moldavia. You know like the story about Churchill, Stalin and Wilson over Poland – where they just put three matches on Poland and Stalin said 'From now on this is Poland'. If you see the changes of the last ten twelve years – there was a fear that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the collapse of Yugoslavia, of Czechoslovakia, the fear that the last one is Romania. And there is a real fear in many Romanians.

My contributor acknowledges that the tenuous terms (*read* illegitimate) under which Romania

took over Transylvania contributes to their fear, rather than any real threat posed by the

Hungarians. She identifies that the fear associated with border changes during the past

century resurfaced following the revolution in 1989, and was fuelled by the collapse of the

Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Given this context, it is not surprising that

Romanians were initially concerned about the integrity of their border. Nonetheless, my

Hungarian contributors were openly frustrated at constantly having to defend their

intentions:

> 4.30 For me it's normal to live in Romania. I was born here my parents were born here. We have a lot of relatives in Hungary of course who are separated from us by the borders of 1920. Sometimes it's hard to be Hungarian when the Romanians are talking about you saying that Hungary wants back Transylvania - which is just not possible in current political situation in Europe. It's impossible that the state would want to have another territory. I'm trying to say to people that it's ridiculous that Hungary would want back Transylvania since 6 million Romanians live in Transylvania and it means that the total population of Hungary would have one-third Romanian population. And then Hungary would have the big minority problem.

Again, my contributor evokes the absurdity of changing borders, to counter perceptions of

the Hungarian threat. Working through the practicalities of succession, is an effective

strategy for countering these accusations of irredentism. Many of my contributors ridiculed

the prospect that Hungary would actually *want* to take over Transylvania given the large

Romanian population that would come with it. This response, in effect, mocked Romanian

fears of irredentism as a sort of egoistic fantasy.

Simply stated, the story goes: Romania is so afraid of losing Transylvania, that they

have not even considered the possibility that nobody wants it. This was a story I heard often:

> 4.31 Romanians, I cannot speak for all of them, but in general I think they have a fear that Hungarians or Hungary want to take Transylvania. They think this at the general level of everyday people, not the intellectuals. If I met Romanians on the street and was talking to them the first question from them would be "why do you want take Transylvania". But nobody wants to take Transylvania. I mean there are less than 2 million Hungarians in Transylvania out of almost 9 million people, it doesn't make sense. First of all Hungary doesn't need Transylvania because Hungary is already on the road to the EU and Western Europe. They're on a straight road there. Romania is not. Nobody in Hungary needs Transylvania. The difference is

pretty big between Hungary and Romania. I don't know if you've noticed. The difference is almost like you traveled from Romania to Moldova, or the Ukraine.

With a bittersweet tone, my contributor emphasizes the great differences in affluence and modernization between Hungary and Romania. He suggests that this difference is reflected in their respective roads to Europe – for Hungary, unlike Romania, it is a straight one. Given this future, he suggests that the notion that Hungary would either want or need Transylvania is ridiculous and misinformed. Nonetheless, according to another contributor, this perception continues to have an impact on Romania's relations with the Hungarian minority.

> 4.32 It is a perception among Romanian politicians that they have to keep under control the Hungarians. If not, it could be a danger. Actually, many of them fear that we want to change the borders or to make Transylvania independent, while there is no Hungarian movement that wants to change the border or annex Transylvania to Hungary. But probably because the historical situation, they are against basic rights for us.

Although this fear is not grounded – specifically, there are no political movements seeking to change the borders and make Transylvania independent or part of Hungary – my contributor highlights how it nonetheless provides a rationale to deny rights to the Hungarian minority. He suggests that history has provided the necessary justification for this denial on the part of the Romanians. In contrast, for the Hungarian minority, he indicates that history justifies that these rights be met. When I ask another contributor what fuels this nationalistic response, he is unequivocal:

> 4.33 Traditional hysteria. I think it comes from history, and it's been very much inflamed since World War Two and the communist regime - there was always talk of the Hungarian threat. And even now it's being used. I mean I don't know why people fear Hungarians wanting to change the borders. It's unfounded. Even illogical.

My contributor describes the possibility for future border changes 'illogical' but suggests that history does give substance to the 'Hungarian threat'. This myth of 'threat' legitimizes Romanian nationalist rhetoric and the corresponding political exclusion of those not belonging to the Romanian nation.

Contemporary Romanian identity construction focused on defining the 'nation' is an inherently problematic foundation for future political structures as it is fundamentally exclusive. Simply put, political legitimacy based on nationalism (defined in essentialist terms in Romanian cultural mythology) leaves no place for minority groups in Romania's future political structures. This exclusion has real consequences on my contributors that they experience as an absence of 'equality'. The following section will expand on these consequences, intimately experienced as discrimination.

The Impact of Nationalism: Discrimination

Nationalist rhetoric based on exclusion translates into everyday experiences of discrimination for Hungarians in Romania. In particular, one contributor suggests it fuels resistance to granting Hungarians 'rights':

> 4.34 The majority responds badly to these claims for rights. In Brasov there
> is a small Hungarian population. There I was Hungarian. In Bucharest
> speaking Hungarian on the street, well the feeling is not very comfortable.
> People would stop me on the street and tell me to speak Romanian. For
> people speaking English and French they wouldn't care but Hungarian is a
> problem. I once got told to stop speaking Hungarian by two teenagers on a
> bus. In my mind the majority just overreacts. They say " oh yes you want
> Transylvania, you want to split Romania ". The level of culture is quite low
> in the south. Here in Bucharest they are fanatics.

My contributor connects discrimination she experiences to the Romanian fear that Hungarians pose a threat to the state's territorial integrity. Through this anecdote, she

highlights the personal terms in which Hungarians experience the 'myth' of Hungarian

irredentism - a myth that forms a central part of Romanian nationalism. My contributor

copes with this personal assault by labeling those who believe in this myth 'fanatics' and by

drawing attention to extremist aspects of this mindset.

Romanian nationalism is therefore expressed in subtle and overt forms of

discrimination. Another contributer relates the practical consequences of this discrimination:

> 4.35 There are still signs of discrimination against the community as a whole. This is something that has a long tradition and I don't think it's done very consciously, just unconsciously. It's some sort of inertia. During the communist regime Hungarians were intentionally discriminated against within budgets. For example, if you traveled to the areas where the Hungarians are a majority, and look at the roads, you'll see that they were much worse. If you look at the debate on Europe and a motor route coming from Hungary and seeing where it should go through Romania, it's still being debated. The Romanian government does not want it to pass through Transylvania but wants it to go through the south. Crazy. Traditionally the roads from Hungary went through Transylvania. But they wanted to cut Transylvania off economically. As I said, some of this is done unconsciously, and some of it consciously. It's a matter of allocating funds to repairing schools for example. Hungarian schools in Harghita are practically falling in on the children, they are in at a terrible state. Religion oh that's another matter. The Orthodox Church receives many more funds from the Romanian state than any other denomination. And also a lot of Orthodox churches are being built in majority Hungarian areas.

My contributor suggests that the discrimination that Hungarians experience is not necessarily

intentional, as it was during the communist era, but is rather unconsciously practiced. He

states that this discrimination continues due to inertia – a lack of will to stop it. Nonetheless,

when discussing the condition of roads in Hungarian regions, he changes his position,

implying that discrimination is somewhat more active than passive. One look at a map of

Romania indicates that bypassing Transylvania in establishing a motor route from Hungary is

a difficult venture – it takes definite effort to imagine a way to do it otherwise. Resonating

with previous examples, he gives the sense that Romanian nationalism tends toward the

'illogical'. He also suggests that Hungarian regions lack resources due to the Orthodox

Church.

When asked how she copes with everyday discrimination, one contributor discusses her

defensive attitude:

> 4.36 Here in Bucharest I have a lot of Romanian friends and every time we
> go out they have to remind me that I am Hungarian. It's OK because they're
> maintaining my identity. But they're making me into a porcupine - an animal
> with a lot of spikes. I start to feel like defending my Hungarian being. But in
> normal life, because I speak good Romanian, and my grammar is even better
> than a lot of Romanians they're not arguing with me on this topic.
> Sometimes I've been told not to talk Hungarian in public in Romania. This
> has happened in Timișoara. I feel that people don't like it on the trains when
> we speak Hungarian.

My contributor highlights an interesting result of discrimination – that it helps her to

maintain her identity by constantly reminding her that she is different. By drawing an

analogy to a porcupine, however, she conveys the personal cost of internalizing this

discrimination. Being told 'not to speak Hungarian' in public, or being self-conscious about

doing so was a very common form of discrimination experienced by many of my

contributors. Nonetheless, this discrimination was not always the result of strangers on

trains. One contributor discusses how discrimination inflects his friendships with Romanians

as well:

> 4.37 After the very special revolution here in Romania in 89, I wasn't at
> home and my wife suffered some problems and she was visited by some
> Romanian friends. One of the visitors asked 'how can you have so many
> Hungarian books here'. I mean this was after the Revolution even. My wife
> said because we are Hungarian and I like to read Hungarian. This man was a
> bit drunk and he said 'most Romanians don't have this many books. How
> come you're living in such good conditions and so many Romanians aren't'.
> My wife started to shout and sent them away. She went to tell the story to

> the neighbor, a friend, and the friend said that 'you Hungarians must be
> violent to have a Romanian to react like that'.

My contributor describes a situation where his wife, who belongs to a minority, is perceived

to have privileges that the majority themselves do not have. This story conveys a prejudice

that I alluded to in my introduction – that Romanians view Hungarians as elitist and

arrogant. My contributor's wife was criticized for her perceived elitism - for having

Hungarian books, and living in good conditions. Further, she received little sympathy when

discussing this incident and was told by another Romanian friend that she must have

provoked this reaction, through some sort of violence on her part. The Romanian friend

therefore made sense of the Hungarian woman's perceived elitism, by suggesting that her

reaction was 'violent' and therefore somewhat barbaric. The implied message of the

Romanian friend, is that the Hungarians are not as sophisticated as they think they are.

This sense conveyed by 'Romanian friends', that Hungarians are not entitled to the

same privileges as Romanians are, was frequently mentioned. Another contributor describes

the impact of the perceived privilege of the Hungarian minority on his daughter:

> 4.38 In my mind I have a lot of stories about prejudice. For example, my
> daughter wanted to be an architect. The Institute of Architecture here in
> Bucharest is one of the few elite universities. There were two kinds of
> exams. In the first test she was third out of hundreds of candidates. Still, she
> didn't get into the faculty the first year-only the second. That was in 88. I
> have Romanian friends who asked me how I could have such pretensions to
> enter my daughter in an elite Romanian Institute. What they meant was that
> this Institute was not for Hungarians. That's how I see it.

My contributor highlights how it is precisely this perception of Hungarian elitism that

justifies his daughter's exclusion from an elite Romanian institution. Further, this exclusion is

not abstract but implicit even in his friendships with Romanians. In order to avoid such

unpleasant interactions with his Romanian colleagues, one contributor suggests hiding his

Hungarian identity:

> 4.39 I'm very proud to be Hungarian, but I do not much think about telling
> everyone that I am Hungarian. I am quite passive. In my soul, it is important,
> but I don't make it something to tell everyone. In my office I work with
> Romanians, and I don't think, I'm not interested to know their feelings about
> me. Maybe some of them think it's not too good to have a Hungarian
> colleague, but I make it so they don't feel that I am Hungarian. I talk in
> Romanian, I don't even say anything about it. I don't need any kind of
> tension.

The only way to avoid facing these personal criticisms, according to my contributor, is to

conceal his identity, to make it so his colleagues 'don't feel' he is Hungarian.

Although the impact of nationalism is often personal, I was frequently told that these

national differences were not overt in Transylvania, that people here were accustomed to

peaceful coexistence. In the time I spent in Transylvania I certainly saw examples of this

coexistence. A particular Easter weekend, spent with a friend and her family in Tîrgu Mureş,

comes readily to mind. S-'s father is Hungarian and her mother is Romanian. I was amazed

at the ease and humour of their communication – particularly because each parent spoke in

their native language, with S- addressing them in kind. This slippage between languages was

something that continued throughout the weekend, as we sat in their garden, sipping beer

among the daffodils.

In a similar vein, and paralleling historic accounts, one contributor describes everyday

life in the region as tolerant:

> 4.40 In the territory you cannot feel this so-called nationalism. It was started
> here from Bucharest, from the political side of Romania. I mean I don't
> want to say that everybody says - that I have neighbours who are Germans
> and Romanians etc. and we're not having problems. This is the truth. The
> local person is not thinking that I have a neighbour who is Hungarian or

> Romanian. Only if the person acts in a way that is not accepted by the whole
> society is it a problem.

My contributor labels this 'so-called' nationalism a political creation, originating in Bucharest.

He nonetheless recognizes that political gains can be made from appeals to nationalist

sentiment. Of particular concern to him is the political legitimacy that results from these

nationalist appeals.

The implication of nationalism, as a basis for political legitimacy, is that if these ethnic

cleavages disappeared politicians would then face different, and potentially damaging,

criteria.

Engaging Exclusion

Nationalism, as a basis for political legitimacy, has contributed to the sentiment of

Hungarians as political outsiders in Romania. It is the perceived threat that the Hungarians

pose to the Romanian nation-state, in particular, to its territorial boundaries, that relegates

them to this position. This exclusion is experienced in discrimination and a general lack of

'equality' within Romania. Frequently this position, as political outsiders, lacks precise

expression. One contributor outlines this difficulty:

> 4.41 There are no concrete resistances. It is something that you feel but you
> cannot catch it. You can't find the evidence. I can't just speak about hostility,
> because everywhere in the world there are narrow-minded people. But the
> last election was too much.

Again, my contributor identifies the 2000 election as a moment where this 'subtle' feeling

suddenly became tangible. The success of both Ion Iliescu and Vadim Tudor - as reflected in

the presidential run-off - and their (to varying degrees) negative attitude toward the

Hungarian minority is a concrete example of Hungarian exclusion.

Despite this occurrence, there is a sense now, through their persistent presence in

government, that the DAHR has had some success at accessing and participating in

Romanian politics. One contributor addresses this success:

> 4.42 A lot of things have changed. Our party, our organization has succeeded
> in changing a lot of things. Firstly the political affirmation, the political force
> of the Hungarian community is now respected. In the first years after the
> Revolution there were some devils - some memories of history. But in time
> we have become partners. A lot of Romanian people now understand that to
> be Hungarian is not an offence to them. We are different and that's all. The
> lowest level, the very primitive people, are not as loudly against us any more.
> If the economic situation would change here, and people didn't have
> problems with surviving this week, never mind next week, then a lot of other
> problems will be settled. I am convinced that there is no chance for a
> Kosovo here. That is because we are not Albanians. But the Romanians
> they're not Serbs. This problem of nations and nationalities here in Central
> Europe has other, very specific connotations, depending on where you are.
> It's not possible to speak in a single way about these issues here.

Importantly, my contributor suggests that Hungarian presence within Romanian politics has

allowed Romanians to realize that they are not a 'threat' or an 'offence'. He states that, in

contrast to this negative perception, the Hungarians, would like to be perceived as 'different'.

Specifically, he highlights their desire to become 'partners' with Romanians – a term he uses

strategically to suggest a relationship between equals. I quickly learn the importance of this

term to the Hungarian struggle when, during this conversation, I casually refer to the

Romanians as his 'adversaries'. He pointed his finger in a reprimanding way at me, and said

'no, no, no they are our partners'. It was in this moment that I first appreciated that this term

'partner' suggests an ideal political arrangement for the Hungarians - one that would allow

them to be 'equal but different' from the Romanians.

Although, such a demand could be considered threatening in Eastern Europe,

particularly in light of the situation in the former Yugoslavia, great care is taken to

distinguish the Romanian case: Hungarians are distinguished from Albanians and Romanians

from Serbs. This distinction emphasizes that there is little potential for violence in

Romania.[90] Another contributor outlines the damaging effects of violence as a means to

effect political change:

> 4.43 Violence does not solve this. Now the parties in Yugoslavia don't trust
> each other. There is psychological and other damage that won't go away.
> We are engaging in a dialogue, not in violence. Though I think that the
> Romanian nationalists try to instigate violence.

My contributor details the explicit use of non-violent means to advance Hungarian claims.

Despite this approach, he suggests that Romanian nationalists do attempt to instigate

violence, suggesting that there are factors specific to the 'Balkans' that make a negotiated

approach difficult in practice. Another contributor outlines these factors in greater detail:

> 4.44 In this region, there is something different going on. You know we have
> had a lot of bad experiences in the Balkans in the matter of solving minority
> problems. Basically every one agrees with cooperation and dialogue. Ok this
> is a beautiful idea, these are beautiful words. But the basic dilemma is how?
> How, how? In an institution in which none of the minorities or majorities
> have confidence. Everyone says 'Oh I know you've tried to assimilate me', I
> mean the Hungarian minority, since 1920. In all this time the basic idea was
> assimilation. This is true. They say, 'oh I know your mind. You're looking for
> a way to revise and disrupt Transylvania from Romania and connect it again
> with Hungary. You are not a loyal citizen and so on and so on'. And
> therefore there is this enormous lack of confidence. It's one of the basic
> problems."

Although my contributor considers cooperation and dialogue 'beautiful ideas', *how* precisely

to solve the 'minority problem' in the Balkans evades him. In particular, he suggests that

history detracts from the necessary confidence and trust required to build this relation based

on cooperation. He highlights that the historical experience of Hungarians in Romania (since

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[90] Of further import in this statement is the need to approach the issue of nations and national
minorities in Eastern Europe contextually - resonating with recent critiques of liberal theories for
accomodating pluralism.

1920) makes them highly suspicious of the state – namely, the state's policy of assimilation.

Importantly, he emphasizes that this leads to little confidence between majority and

minority. Otherwise stated, little of that 'peculiar sentiment' required for unity in pluralist

conditions. For the Hungarian minority, the historic legacy, coupled with concrete

arguments in favour of equality, provide a just basis for their claims in Romania. In contrast,

for the Romanian majority, this same legacy provides a justification to perceive the

Hungarians as a threat to Romania's national and territorial integrity.

Thus, factors specific to Romania greatly influence the ability of the majority to

respond to minority claims. Another contributor addresses these factors:

> 4.45 Understanding each other requires more time than solving discrete
> problems. People need to understand why you solved it that way. Romania
> is a conservative society, it's not always tolerant. Here you have to start by
> explaining what tolerance even is. The Balkans are different."

My contributor suggests that tolerance, as a principle, is not understood by Romanian

society. This poses a distinct challenge for the Hungarian minority to communicate their

claims. One contributor suggests that a societal transformation is required for this to occur:

> 4.46 It's not simply a matter of constitution matter or legislation. It's a social
> practice. By that I mean how do we succeed to transform the basic laws, the
> constitution, the special rights of minorities regarding using their mother
> tongue etc? The question is how? It's more than a legal issue, it's a political
> one. You need a counterpart, you need a partner for dialogue. And in my
> point of view my partner in dialogue must have the legal and political
> possibility to help me. And he, my partner, asks from me to be a real
> representative for the minority.

Again, the word 'partner' surfaces in conversations about Romania's political future and this

time, I am less casual about its implications. Nonetheless, I am left pondering a question that

remains unanswered: *how* precisely to make these changes?

The following chapter will explore the basis for concrete changes to Hungarian status in Romania.

CHAPTER 5

The previous chapter has highlighted how nationalism has been used to increase

political legitimacy in Romania since 1989 and contributed to ethnic tension. Within Eastern

Europe, Romania was no exception. The end of communism heralded the deterioration of

ethnic relations throughout Eastern Europe, with the most glaring example being the

outbreak of war in the former Yugoslavia. Within the uncertain political climate following

1989, opinions became increasingly polarized about the types of 'recognition' to which

minorities were entitled. According to Cuthbertson and Leibowitz (1993, 3) these renewed

tensions refute the view put-forth by Wilson following WW1 that 'self-determination' for

Europe's minorities would eventually stabilize these countries.[91] Given the historical

backdrop of border changes, the states of Eastern Europe have largely viewed the undefined

language of 'self-determination' as a distinct threat.

The principle of self-determination was initially adopted following WW1 as a means to

"shrug off the yoke of empire" (Bishai 1998, 164) rather than a rationale for intrastate

minority groups to secede. The League of Nations itself was primarily concerned with

guaranteeing the cultural and religious rights of minority groups impacted by the decisions at

Versailles (Hannum 1990, 55).[92] These protections did not include economic or political

autonomy. Further, the United Nations Charter, adopted following WW2, did not include

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[91] Although 'self-determination' was considered the basis for the division of territories following WW1, the inevitable pluralism of many regions made this an impossible goal. MacMillan's (2002) book on the 1919 peace negotiations in Paris indicates that it was political influence rather than 'self-determination' that formed the basis for many of the decisions made.

[92] Minorities represented from 15% to over 50% the population of the new states of Eastern Europe following WW1.

any concept of minority rights (Crawford and Marks 1998, 76). Codifying 'human rights' was the central principle guiding the UN Charter and the protection of individual rights was considered sufficient protection for those belonging to minorities (Hannum 1990, 57). The principle of self-determination, as an element of decolonization, therefore reinforced state structures following WW2 by being interpreted 'right to participate in governance' rather than a 'right to secede' (Crawford and Marks 1998, 76). With the UN Charter:

> "The codified acceptance of territory rather than ethnicity defined (and limited) the "self" that was entitled to move toward self-determination. It also locked in place a tension between the principles of self-determination and territorial integrity." (Bishai 1998, 159)

The underlying belief was that this language fed into minority aspirations that were inherently secessionist.

Alternately, however, it can be argued that it was precisely the lack of self-determination accorded to minority groups throughout the past century that has contributed to instability post-1989. Given the resilience of minority groups in the face of organized opposition over the past century, I suggest that addressing minority claims will be integral to the future stability of this region. Elaborating what the general language of self-determination means within specific contexts, is necessary to both consolidating democracy and encouraging stability in this region. Currently, however, there is no legal consensus on the term 'self-determination' (Cassese 1995, 2) and little international protection for minority rights. It is difficult to see how minority rights could be codified at an international level,

since these rights are extremely contextual, and therefore any discussion of minority rights

must be specific to circumstance.[93]

In Romania the dominant view over the past century is that minority problems are a

domestic issue to be solved through varying degrees of assimilation. Within this context, the

language of self-determination was invoked to advance state interests while national

minorities were denied this same opportunity. Given the central role that nationalism has

played in politics, much attention has been focused on minorities as a 'problem' to be

solved. As outlined in Part One, assimilation was the most obvious, though unsuccessful,

means to achieve this goal. In this next chapter I will highlight the inevitable failings of this

historic approach and explicitly argue in favour of recognizing minority rights.

The last chapter outlined the impact of Romanian nationalism on the Hungarian

minority. Given this discussion, it is not surprising that my contributors describe Romanian

nationalism as the factor that most hinders their political aspirations. This chapter will situate

Hungarian political claims in Romania within political theories of minority rights. The

previous discussion of nationalism has provided some insight into how the Hungarian

minority might frame their political claims. Specifically, their claims are directed toward

revising the exclusive terms of belonging generated by Romanian nationalism. When I asked

my contributors to describe what needed to change for them to feel 'at home' in Romania,

they consistently mentioned a need to 'change mentalities'. When I pressed them to

elaborate on what this change in mentality would involve, they began to speak of how they

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[93] Despite minority rights being country-specific, many minorities have highlighted problems with enforcing these rights (Kymlicka 2001a, 84). Liberals have suggested the Supreme Courts have jurisdiction, while many minorities view these as colonial powers and would prefer an international body to oversee enforcement.

view their 'rights' in relation to the majority. This chapter will highlight how, for the Hungarian minority, a 'right' to their identity is integral to their possibility for political inclusion within the Romanian state. Importantly, this right to identity involves acknowledging that the Hungarian minority requires *different* rights than the majority to ensure their equality within Romania. Such a position inevitably conflicts with the historic position of the Romanian state – to not acknowledge diversity.

This position also conflicts with traditional theories of citizenship that maintain equality is granted to individual citizens, and makes no 'special' exceptions for groups. The increased pluralism of modern societies throughout the world has nonetheless created the challenge to explore new theories of citizenship (Kymlicka and Norman 2000, 8). Given the central role that identity and culture play in the political claims of the Hungarian minority, achieving equality in difference-blind terms is unacceptable for them. As such, the arguments they present in favor of minority rights have distinct implications for notions of citizenship. Specifically, they advocate what has been termed a form of 'differentiated citizenship' or citizenship based on difference (see Young, 1989). Underlying this concept is the belief that specific representation is required for oppressed groups, as the privileged groups are already adequately represented (Young 1989, 262). Without this specific representation, difference-blind conceptions of citizenship would simply reinforce this privilege.

This contextually specific discussion of rights and citizenship will help illuminate the relationship between culture and political claims. Though culture is invoked to make these claims, their anticipated outcome is explicitly political. That is, this cultural distinctiveness, historically constructed, forms a basis for the right to self-determination – an explicitly political goal.

To begin this discussion, the following section will provide a liberal argument in favour of minority rights.[94] Such a background is necessary to provide the underlying assumptions of a 'just' basis for minority rights.

Theoretical Approaches to Minority Rights

Political theorists have until recently been surprisingly silent on the topic of minority rights.[95] The resurgence of nationalism in the emergent democracies of Eastern Europe, along with continued secessionist movements within Western liberal democracies have highlighted the need to theorize the links between group identity and democratic politics (Kymlicka and Norman 2000, 1).

Over the past decade Will Kymlicka (1995; 2001a; 2001b) has written extensively on the challenge to accommodate minority rights with a liberal democratic framework. Kymlicka and other early theorists of multiculturalism (see Taylor, 1994; and Young, 1990) have elaborated the links between minority rights and 'justice', and increased the legitimacy of minority claims both nationally and internationally (Shachar 2001, 296). O'Neill (1999, 220) identifies Kymlicka's work on the relation between liberalism and culture and Charles Taylor's influential article on the 'politics of recognition' as the "two most influential defences of multiculturalism offered by Western political theorists in the past decade."

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[94] I am focusing on liberal democratic theories since I would argue that these theories are most closely linked to a practical engagement with politics – which is also the focus of this dissertation. Additionally, I agree with Kymicka's (2001a) position that it is not evident how some of the more abstract discourses emerging from the 'post-modern' perspective (i.e. Mouffe, 2000), diverge from the liberal-culturalist position, other than in their use of language. Also, since the Romanian state is pursuing a future as a 'liberal-democratic' one, I feel it is justified to focus on this framework.

[95] Kymlicka (1995, 56) suggests that this post-WW2 silence was due to a number of factors including: the fall of the British Empire; the rise of the Cold War; the prominence of American theorists in postwar liberalism; and disillusionment with the postWW1 minority treaties.

Similarily, Thompson (1997, 789) labels Kymlicka's work as "the most detailed and defensible theory in support of group rights." Kymlicka's most systematic attempt to elaborate on the possibility to accommodate minority rights within liberal democratic theory can be found in his book Multicultural Citizenship (1995). His later work has built upon these theories (2001a) and recently he has been engaged in debates over how his ideas might be applied to East Central Europe (2001b).

A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights

Kymlicka (1995) begins *Multicultural Citizenship*, by distinguishing between national minorities and ethnic groups. National minorities are members of 'multinational states' that contain smaller nations that are then incorporated into a larger political community.[96] In contrast, ethnic groups are the result of migration and thus belong to polyethnic states (Kymlicka 1995, 11). According to Kymlicka (1995, 26) *all* liberal democracies are multinational or polyethnic and the challenge is to accommodate these differences in a morally defensible way. In particular, protecting group-specific rights requires elaborating a concept of 'group-differentiated' citizenship (Kymlicka 1995, 26). Importantly, he argues that the historic incorporation of minority groups – specifically, whether they are national minorities or ethnic groups - has an impact on the types of claims that can be made. Within Kymlicka's theory, national minorities are entitled to a wider range of group-differentiated

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[96] Kymlicka (1995, 11) defines a 'nation' as an institutionally complete historical community that occupies a set territory and shares a distinct language and culture. Importantly, when he refers to national minorities he is referring to cultural groups and not racial/decent-based groups.

rights – most notably self-government rights - than ethnic groups (Kymlicka 1995, 182).[97] As

the Hungarian minority in Romania is a 'national minority', in the terms defined by

Kymlicka, the following discussion will focus on these particular claims.[98]

Individual and Collective Rights

A central question to emerge within the multiculturalism debates has been whether

collective rights are compatible with individual human rights (Thompson 1997, 786). Since

the protection accorded to the individual within liberal democratic theory evolved in

response to the group rights conferred by feudalism, it appears to conflict with a concept of

'group rights'. According to Kymlicka (1995, 45), this zero-sum dichotomy between

'individual' and 'collective' rights is an overly simplistic and unhelpful distinction. Rather

what is required is a more nuanced vocabulary to describe both group-differentiated

citizenship and individual rights (Kymlicka 1995, 35). In order to contribute to this

vocabulary, Kymlicka (1995) elaborates two divergent types of group-differentiated rights:

external protections and internal restrictions.

External protections promote equality by addressing the inequalities that exist between

groups (Kymlicka 1995, 36). The goal of these rights is to protect the minority's identity and

ongoing existence from the impact of the larger society. In contrast, internal restrictions

involve a group restricting the liberty of its own members to promote group solidarity.

Kymlicka (1995, 152) states that group-differentiated rights in a liberal democratic

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[97] The justification for this distinction is that ethnic groups migrated on a voluntary basis and that therefore supporting equality through differentiated citizenship rights is sufficient (Kymlicka 1995, 114).

[98] Bishai (1998, 172) states that although there is debate over what actually constitutes a minority group that it is more important to understand is the concept the minority has of itself.

framework should promote external protections while rejecting the notion of internal restrictions. stated plainly: "A liberal view requires freedom within the minority group and equality within the minority and majority groups" (Kymlicka 1995, 152). This is therefore not a debate about 'individual' vs. 'collective' rights but rather the recognition that "justice between groups requires that members of different groups be accorded different rights" (Kymlicka 1995, 46). Plainly stated, collective rights do not override or supplant individual rights (Thompson 1997, 788) – as will become evident in the narratives to follow.

The following section will elaborate Kymlicka's theoretical link between individual autonomy and cultural membership.

Individual Freedom and Societal Culture

For Kymlicka (1995, 82) a liberal conception of individual freedom involves the ability to form and revise conceptions of the 'good life'. Importantly, this freedom is intimately linked to one's 'societal culture' as the underlying context for meaningful choice (Kymlicka 1995, 80).[99] Societal culture is defined as a shared vocabulary of tradition and convention, and forms a basis for both social practices and institutions. stated directly:

> "By a societal culture I mean a territorially-concentrated culture, centred on a shared language which is used in a wide range of social institutions, in both public and private life. I call it a societal culture to emphasize that it involves a common language and social institutions, rather than common religious beliefs, family customs or personal lifestyles. Societal cultures within a modern liberal democracy are inevitably pluralistic" (Kymlicka 2001a, 25).

In this sense, culture 'determines the boundaries of the imaginable' (Kymlicka 1995, 89) providing an anchor for people's own self-identification and is thus intimately linked to individual autonomy. According to Kymlicka, national minorities are the bearers of such

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[99] Kymlicka (2001a, 25) highlights that this is not a thick ethnographic use of the concept of 'culture'.

societal cultures and liberals should be concerned with helping them to maintain these cultures as an essential component of individual autonomy.[100] This link between 'culture' and 'autonomy' (in terms of individual freedom) makes minority rights a definitive concern of liberals and is central to what Kymlicka (2001a, 22) terms the 'liberal culturalist' position. According to this view liberal democratic states must adopt group-specific rights and policies that recognize and accommodate the needs of distinctive identities and ethnocultural groups (Kymlicka 2001a, 42). The following section will address the moral bases for this claim.

The Value of Culture

The first basis for minority rights, and the one in which Kymlicka relies most heavily, has already been mentioned – that cultural membership plays an important role in promoting individual freedom and autonomy. In this case, granting minority rights are an essential means to protect the cultural context in which individual choices are made. Underlying this position is the view that culture is an integral, constitutive aspect of politics (Tully 1995, 5).

The second basis for minority rights is the importance of recognizing identities. This view, put forth by theorists such as Charles Taylor (1994) asserts that the 'misrecognition' of one's identity has profound personal consequences.[101] Within this framework minority rights satisfy the need for recognition (Kymlicka 2001a, 47). Importantly, these demands for

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[100] Importantly, Kymlicka (1995, 103) states that there is no inherent connection between the desire to maintain a societal culture and the desire for cultural isolation. He explicitly states that the notion of a 'pure' culture is itself a fallacy, and one that is often promoted by the majority. Despite this assertion, Kymlicka has been accused of promoting this notion of an 'authentic' culture by Waldron (1990) – a position that I do not feel is substantiated.

[101] Taylor (1992) provides a detailed philosophical argument linking justice and equality to the politics of 'recognizing difference.' Importantly, he also emphasizes that liberalism itself cannot claim cultural neutrality.

cultural recognition are not simply attempts to 'preserve' culture but rather political claims

for appropriate forms of self-government (Tully 1995, 4). It is precisely this link to the

political that is often obscured in claims made in favour of cultural rights (Murphy, 2001).

The third basis for granting minority rights is that there is intrinsic value to having a

culturally diverse society. In this case, minority rights preserve this intrinsic value. According

to Kymlicka (2001a, 62) it is the first two instrumental bases for the value of 'culture' –

autonomy and recognition - that ground political claims. It is these moral bases that inform

concrete political arguments in favour of minority rights.

The Culture of States and the Myth of Ethnocultural Neutrality

Until now, my discussion has largely focused on the 'culture' of national minorities,

with little mention of the link between the state and culture. According to Kymlicka (2001a,

4) liberal theorists have elaborated little on the link between state nation-building and

minority rights due to what he terms the 'myth of ethnocultural neutrality'. According to this

myth: "The state is 'neutral' with respect to the ethnocultural identities of its citizens, and

indifferent to the ability of ethnocultural groups to reproduce themselves over time"

(Kymlicka 2001a, 23). Within this view, culture, like religion is something to be pursued in

private, and that the state's response should be one of 'benign neglect'. Nonetheless,

Kymlicka (2001a, 27) highlights that the state itself promotes its own 'societal culture'. For

example, liberal states implicitly invoke cultural membership to defend restrictions on

citizenship (Kymlicka 1995, 128). In this sense, the supposed principle of 'benign neglect' –

that culture is something to be pursued in 'private' - as a response to minority cultures is

made invalid by the liberal state's own implicit connection to culture (Kymlicka 1995, 108).

Once it is recognized that the demands of minority groups are a response to state nation-building (Kymlicka 2001a, 1), the burden of proof shifts from minority groups having to show why they deserve 'special status' to the state having to defend its monopoly on culture.[102] In particular, it requires that states recognize that substate nations have been the victims of an unfair normative double standard. In other words, national groups claiming self-determination are not asking for something special but are merely exerting their own democratic rights (Murphy 2001, 378).

The negative impact of state nation-building on minority rights and, by extension, democratic rights, transforms how claims made by minority groups are perceived.[103] Rather than being demands for 'special' privileges, minority claims made against the state are viewed as a response to the claims the state makes against minorities. The political implication of this perspective is that state nation-building is likely to be unjust unless supplemented by minority rights (Kymlicka 2001b, 50).

Why Kymlicka?

Since writing *Multicultural Citizenship*, Kymlicka has been subject to wide-ranging criticism as to how his ideas can be applied in a variety of cultural and normative contexts. A number of concerns emerge that are worthy of mention. What these recent critiques highlight are the problems associated with answering *specific* questions in *general* terms. In this

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[102] Faced with state nation-building, minorities have three options: 1/ to accept integration into the majority culture; 2/ to seek self-government rights in order to maintain their own societal culture or; 3/ to accept permanent marginalization (Kymlicka 2001a, 27).

[103] Kymlicka (2001a, 33) states that the debate over whether granting minority rights is unjust, is over: "Few people now think justice can be implemented according to difference blind rules".

sense, they do not so much question the foundations of Kymlicka and other early theorists as attempt to elaborate their premises.[104]

An example of one such generalization is the "simplistic treatment of culture" in this first wave of literature (Shachar 2001, 295). Belonging to a 'cultural community' is central to Kymlicka's (1995) argument though what this 'culture' and 'belonging' mean, in relation to a politically viable community, remains unclear. Perhaps highlighting a conceptual weakness in his own work Kymlicka (2001a, 209) states: "I think this view of the connection between individual freedom and cultural membership is essentially correct though difficult to articulate." Such a realization highlights that a problem of these early approaches is not so much that they treat culture simplistically as it is that it is impossible to draw general conclusions across diverse cultural, political and historical contexts. This difficulty becomes particularly apparent when attempting to normatively address problems such as: how to accommodate minority groups whose goals are not necessarily 'liberal'?[105] The assumptions underlying 'culture' and their relationship to the 'political' therefore require empirical grounding in future studies of minority rights and group-differentiated citizenship.

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[104] Shachar (2001, 259) has labelled these perspectives 'internal critiques of multiculturalism'. Shachar (2001) also outlines 'external' critiques of multiculturalism that argue for a 'difference-blind' approach to equality. These critiques explicitly reject the principles of multiculturalism elaborated by the first wave of theorists and will not be addressed.

[105] Kymlicka's (1995) argument requires that national minorities either subscribe to liberal values or eventually adopt liberal values so that internal restrictions on individual freedom will not pose a problem. According to O'Neill applying Kymlicka's theories to the controversy surrounding the Salman Rushdie 'affair' exposes two problematic features: 1/ that basing a theory of cultural rights on a liberal version of individual autonomy leads Kymlicka to defend cultures only insofar as they conform to liberal priniciples; and 2/ By defining culture as a 'context of choice' for individual autonomy, minority rights claims are robbed of their "unique force" in articulating a set of "shared ends".

Shachar (2001, 288) has highlighted that the initial debate on multiculturalism was pursued by political and legal theorists and therefore lacked empirically grounded contributions from sociologists, anthropologists and regional studies specialists. Thompson (1997, 786) argues that anthropologists in particular have much to offer this debate, given their knowledge of "culture" and the ethnographic expertise currently lacking in discussions of group-rights. Shachar (2001, 289) also cautions against all-encompassing theories and suggests that the diverse contexts in which minority claims are situated must be integral to future considerations. Once context becomes a part of future studies, she suggests, it is unlikely that anyone will come up with as 'elegant a theory' of group rights as Kymlicka's (1995).[106]

In order to explore the link Kymlicka makes between culture and the political, this chapter will present the perspectives of members of the DAHR on minority rights and group differentiated citizenship. Although not always appropriate, Kymlicka's categories and framework work remarkably well in the context of this particular study.[107] The Hungarian minority, as represented by the DAHR, are a national minority in precisely the sense intended by Kymlicka. Additionally, they are a liberal democratic minority that has chosen to pursue their claims exclusively through parliamentary means.[108] Further, many members

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[106] What many recent authors, including Kymlicka (see 1998), highlight is the difficulty normative political theories create when applied to particular contexts. Plainly stated, they often do not fit. In his defence, I would argue that Kymlicka (see 2001a, 45) recognizes these limitations and has since advocated a contextual approach to these issues.

[107] Some notable cases that do not fit Kymlicka's classification are: African-Americans (neither a national group nor an immigrant group), Indian diaspora in Asia and Africa (not voluntary immigrants), refugees, and guest-workers (Young 1997, 50).

[108] I would argue that in many ways the DAHR is the most democratic of all political parties in Romania.

of the DAHR are familiar with Kymlicka's work, which has perhaps influenced the language they use to present their claims. Given these factors, Kymlicka's theories provide a necessary framework to understand the claims of the Hungarian minority in Romania. The following section will outline Kymlicka's arguments in favour of minority rights.

The Cultural Meets the Political

Arguments in Favour of Minority Rights

Kymlicka (1995) highlights three main arguments used to defend minority rights based on: equality; historical agreements and the inherent value of cultural diversity. Each of these arguments are used, with varied emphasis, by the Hungarian community to advance their claims in Romania and each has divergent implications for the state.

My contributors mention equality, or lack thereof, as their main argument in favour of their claims. The foundation for the equality argument is that it is necessary to accommodate difference to achieve equality between individuals (Kymlicka 1995, 109). This argument is founded on the claim that group-differentiated rights such as territorial autonomy, veto powers and language rights can help alleviate the disadvantages resulting from decisions made by the majority. Central to this argument in favour of minority rights is the recognition that members of national minorities face systemic disadvantages that must be redressed to hallow them to maintain a distinct culture (Kymlicka 1995, 110-113). The underlying premise of this argument for group-differentiated citizenship is that the state should act fairly in governing minorities.

My contributors also mention the importance of historical rights. In contrast to those based on equality, historical arguments for granting minority rights emphasize the limits on

the state's right to govern minorities resulting from the way in which a national minority was incorporated (Kymlicka 1995, 117). For example, if incorporation was voluntary, minority rights could be granted through a federation; if not, minority groups are more likely to appeal to the equality argument. Both of these arguments – premised on equality and historical agreements respectively - focus on the obligation of the majority to the minority group (Kymlicka 1995, 117).

The final argument made in favour of minority rights - the inherent value of cultural diversity - is based on the interest (rather than the responsibility) of the majority and is therefore less persuasive (Kymlicka 1995, 121). This approach argues that cultural diversity is inherently valuable and that the larger society also benefits from promoting group-differentiated rights (Kymlicka 1995, 121). Kymlicka (1995, 126) suggests that the strongest of these three arguments in favour of minority rights is the 'equality' argument. In claims made by minority groups this 'equality' argument is frequently supplemented by appeals to historical agreements and the value of cultural diversity. As will become evident, my contributors use equality as the basis of their claims to self-determination, or what they term 'autonomy', within Romania.

Framed within the general terms of the multiculturalism debate, the following section will explore the basis for Hungarian claims in Romania. Specifically I will look at two components of the relationship between the Hungarian minority and the Romanian state. The first aspect of this relationship is the 'rights' that the Hungarian minority is seeking recognition for. The goal of this section is not to outline the specific rights outlined in the political platform of the DAHR but rather to discuss how rights are perceived and articulated by the Hungarian community and what this reveals of their relationship to the

state. Specifically, I am interested in how they use culture, and the cultural differences narrated in the previous chapter, to advance political claims. The second aspect of this relationship is the potential implications of this 'rights' discourse on notions of citizenship.

Rights

One day, while in Tîrgu Mureş my friend S- took me on a walk into the old town. Part way she suggested that we take a short detour, and led me past an enormous iron gate, down a dark hallway, through a courtyard around a corner and into a majestic room full of old books. This was a room not unlike other old libraries in Europe – leather bound spines and gold leaf covers, stacked high in tall shelves. Given my penchant for books (especially their covers) I was suitably impressed with what I saw on display. I nodded my approval at S- as she beckoned me over to look more closely at the covers. I began to realize that this was not a library like 'all the others in Europe' for her. Without asking, she began to tell me why.

These were books collected centuries ago by a Hungarian aristocrat, during Transylvania's autonomous period. S-, who is half Hungarian and half Romanian, is less interested in the fact that it was a Hungarian that collected these books. What is important to her is their content. She started to read their titles to me – *Discours sur l'origine de l'inegalité des hommes* (Rousseau), *Candide* (Voltaire), *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Locke), *De l'esprit des lois* (Montesquieu). These books were written during the Enlightenment. Though she had clearly been in this library before she continues to be amazed by it, exclaiming: "Julie, there are human values in these books."

Though these were old books, this library has become a repository of values that remain important to her. We started to talk about what an optimistic and hopeful time the

Enlightenment must have been, and about how topics like equality and tolerance are still

important ones. Giving way to the present, she told me something I would hear time and

again – that there needs to be a 'change in mentality' before this type of hopefulness is

possible, today, in Romania. For now, this library was a place for S- to imagine a world that

might someday approach the values she sees represented in these cherished books.

The need to change 'mentalities' was a recurrent theme when discussing the possibility

for minority rights in Romania. When asked about whether she felt her rights were

respected, one of my contributors responds:

> 5.1 It's a hard objective to be a good citizen. Here you have to bargain for
> your own rights. Respecting rights is the exception. I stopped being
> surprised about laws that are not enforced. The practice of the law is against
> the theory. Reality just looks different. For example you write a budget but
> you know that the money is going elsewhere. The black market is more
> attractive than the white one. They can't collect taxes. Our economy is a
> sick person and they cannot find the right medicine. The right medicine is
> not the EU, but one of mentality.

My contributor highlights the difficulties inherent to being a 'good' citizen given what she

views as corrupt political and economic conditions in Romania. Importantly, she highlights

the impossibility of having 'rights' without also having the possibility to enforce those rights

through the rule of law. She is, in effect, suggesting that the change required is one toward

democracy. Within this perspective the EU is considered a potential catalyst for democratic

change, rather than the 'antidote' to Romania's minority problems.

My contributor highlights the difficulties she encounters when attempting to bridge the

notion of 'rights' with everyday reality in Romania. Nonetheless, the complaints she has are

not necessarily isolated to the Hungarian community, but rather felt throughout Romanian

society. The absence of the rule of law suggests that gaining basic rights for all citizens is

problematic and foreshadows why it is difficult to gain support for the so-called 'special'

rights of the Hungarian community. Given the economic hardships facing most Romanians

and their own absence of rights, granting rights to the Hungarian community is viewed as a

potential threat. In other words, the majority views their own 'rights' – themselves often in

question - in a zero-sum relationship with the minority.

Another contributor contests this perception that granting minority rights will take

away rights from the majority:

> 5.2 Rights have to be for everybody. People need to understand that giving
> rights to minorities doesn't take away rights from the majority. It's a question
> of mentality first of all.

For many of my contributors, this notion that rights can be for everybody is difficult to

articulate. Another contributor decribes this difficulty:

> 5.3 We still have trouble convincing Romanians that we don't want to take
> rights away from them. I think it needs time. It's a matter of patience and
> confidence building. Our participation in the government was a very good
> thing. We tried to prove that we don't just have minority concerns. We have
> an economic policy, a social policy, and we are trying to help Romania as a
> whole. We are not just talking about our petty Hungarian interests. We've
> only had a moderate success because the press, the media, is mostly
> interested in Hungarian issues. Whenever they tried to mention something
> that had to do with the general political environment we weren't mentioned.
> Many times we weren't even asked what our opinion was on general policy.
> But that was coming from the media.

My contributor argues that the goal of the Hungarian community is *not* to take rights away

from the majority. In contrast, she makes the opposite claim: that giving rights to the

Hungarian community actually improves life for all Romanians. She argues that this positive

impact is because the platform of the Hungarian party is not simply about Hungarian

concerns, but also about the economic and social well-being of the country as a whole. She

becomes irritated when discussing the impact of the media on her ability to communicate

this message – specifically, that they portray the Hungarian minority as exclusively interested in their own narrow range of issues.

Another contributor disputes the perception that Hungarians are only interested in their own issues:

> 5.4 It's normal that Hungarians are fighting for the rights of the Hungarians. But those people who say that we're only working to help Hungarians are wrong - we aren't only promoting things in favor of Hungarians but also in favor of Romanians. These two things can be distinguished somehow and must be distinguished.

My contributor suggests that it is *normal* for Hungarians to defend their rights. Nonetheless, he maintains that they are also working to improve conditions for the Romanians, though he is less clear on how exactly they are doing this. When I pressed him to elaborate on the relationship between promoting Hungarian rights within Romania and improving conditions within Romania for all citizen, he states:

> 5.5 The minorities have one more right than the majority. They have the right to be *different*. And this is one of the main points. I'm trying to explain to people though that the Hungarians will live better only if the whole of the Romanian population also lives better. Because if autonomy is given to the territories, financial autonomy I mean, the whole region will develop more. It's normal to have a motor that's taking the whole country and that's what Transylvania is. But right now everything is centralized here in Bucharest and the money is not given back a hundred percent to the region and unless the money is given back there will be no development in that area of the country. If Transylvania is developed that means that 6 million Romanians are living better.

Therefore, his argument is that by granting the Hungarian minority rights, the economic situation of Romanians in Transylvania will also improve. In this sense, the type of minority rights that will benefit the majority are the right to financial and administrative autonomy in Transylvania. According to his perspective, decentralizing power in Romania, will have regional benefits for all the citizens of Transylvania. Though he focuses on the right to

regional financial autonomy, in discussing the positive aspects of granting minority rights, this is not the only 'right' that my contributor mentions. He also states unequivocally that the Hungarian minority also has a right to be *different*, highlighting the importance of identity to political claims. His emphasis on the benefits of regional financial autonomy is somewhat peripheral to his central claim – which is that the right to be 'different' on the part of the Hungarian minority requires political accommodation.

Potential financial gains are used by the DAHR to communicate the positive aspects of granting minority rights, to the majority. This argument is based on the regional concentration of Hungarians in Transylvania and is perhaps somewhat limiting when attempting to form a basis for minority rights claims. Similarly to Kymlicka's discussion of the 'inherent value of cultural diversity' as an argument in favour of minority rights, this financially based argument also rests on the interest of the majority and is therefore less persuasive than an argument based on obligation. This emphasis on financial gain does, however, highlight the difficulties encountered by the Hungarian minority when communicating the message that minority rights do not detract from the rights of the majority. This difficulty also indicates that the 'burden of proof' for arguing for or against minority rights in Romania continues to rest on the shoulders of the minority.

Given this difficulty it is not surprising that many of my contributors state that a 'change in mentalities' is required before minority rights will be accepted in Romania. Specifically, it is the opposition of the majority to Hungarian claims that necessitates this change in Romania. Another contributor tackles this problem of mentalities directly:

> 5.6 It's very simple, because Romania became a national state in 1920. It's a very young nation. From 1920 till now, the Romanians have been taught in a very nationalist approach. So it is very difficult to change their mentality, to

> explain 'Look, you have to live with these people, Hungarians, Germans or
> Jewish, and if they have the right to speak their mother tongue, it doesn't
> mean that your rights will be smaller'.

My contributor clarifies that the right to live in Romania and maintain his culture does not

diminish the rights of Romanians. From the alternate standpoint, however, he suggests that

Romanian nationalism *does* interfere with his rights. Another contributor addresses this

interference directly:

> 5.7 None of the claims of the Hungarian community interfere with
> Romanian ones. You know, the Romanian government could have killed the
> DAHR in the early 1990s by giving the Hungarians what they asked for. But
> they liked having the DAHR as the enemy.

In addition to stating that the claims of the Hungarian community do not interfere with

Romanian interests, my contributor also suggests a potential motive for *not* granting the

Hungarians rights. Specifically, he argues that the Hungarians have been a convenient

scapegoat for nationalists within Romanian politics.

At the root of this perception of the Hungarians as the 'enemy' many of my

contributors emphasized the continued fear that the Hungarians would make territorial

claims in Transylvania. One contributor describes this fear as misplaced:

> 5.8 Romanians are afraid that Transylvania will want to separate. This is
> ridiculous. Our problem though is that in Bucharest they won't do the right
> thing for the Hungarian community. From our taxes we want to build our
> institutions. What the government in Bucharest and what Romanians don't
> understand is that what we want is beside their rights. Not that we want
> their church - just that we want our church as well.

What my contributor alludes to here is his desire for *equality* with Romanians. Nonetheless,

the equality he wants is not difference-blind but rather based on establishing institutions,

such as churches, that are specific to the Hungarian community. Similarly, another

contributor outlines the tension between Romanian nationalism and rights for the Hungarian

minority:

> 5.9 Romania is a young nation. They think of themselves as a national state. This we cannot accept. Not just us, our grandfathers were here as well. We should have the same rights even if we're not Orthodox or not Romanian.

My contributor describes 'rights' in Romania as contingent on being Romanian and

Orthodox – in other words as being exclusively based on ethnicity. She is troubled by her

position as a political outsider given these terms of belonging, and responds by asserting her

own historical ties to this area.

My contributors highlight the perception that the Romanian majority is not receptive to

Hungarian demands for rights as these conflict with the exclusive terms of belonging

established by the Romanian state. Romanian nationalism, in particular, features prominently

when my contributors describe opposition to Hungarian claims. According to this view, their

claims are antithetical to the very definition of the Romanian state. By differentiating the

type of nationalism that characterizes Romanians and Hungarians – extreme and moderate

respectively – my contributors are able to further advance their rights based argument. One

contributor elaborates on the impact of extreme nationalism on Hungarian 'rights':

> 5.10 Nationalism seems to have the connotation of extremism. But there is a part of your identity that comes from belonging to a community. There's a difference though between a normal person and a nationalist. The normal person says that I belong to 'x' nation and this is my mother tongue and my culture. The nationalist says I belong to 'y' nation, which is the best of the best and all others are way below us and envy us and with enough strength they will fight us. It's this kind of nationalist that forgets to be tolerant and to accept difference. Hungarians have their own nationalists but as a rule they don't want to diminish other people's rights and all they want is equality. According to the Greater Romania Party, someone from a national minority can only be a citizen if they acknowledge the superiority of the Romanian nation and the Orthodox Church.

Once again, belonging to the Romanian state is viewed as contingent on being a member of the Romanian nation and the Orthodox Church – an impossibility for the Hungarians. Despite this official exclusion, my contributor maintains that the Hungarians have two important rights that must be recognized: the right to equality and the right to be different. Another contributor comments on the attitudes of Romanian political parties toward these rights:

> 5.11 I don't believe that Romanian parties are fighting for their own rights. How can you say that they are fighting for their rights when you're in the government, running the government. Romanian nationalist parties don't fight for themselves, they fight *against* our rights. This is why we have to fight for our rights. An example of how they fight against us is how the government relocated Romanians and Russians into this area to try to make sure that we stayed a minority.

Contrasting the view put-forth that Hungarian political claims *do not* have a negative impact on Romanian rights, my contributor highlights his perception that Romanian nationalist parties *do* have an exclusively negative impact on Hungarian rights. Thus, he articulates Hungarian claims as both positive and inclusive whereas the claims of Romanian nationalists are perceived as negative and exclusive. In other words, Romanian nation-building has an explicitly negative impact on the Hungarian minority, to which they must respond.

My contributors emphasize the need to 'change mentalities' in Romania to one that will no longer view minority rights in a zero-sum relationship with those of the majority. Concomitantly, this change would redefine the terms of belonging in Romania to one that included the Hungarian minority. Toward this end, some of my contributors have pointed out the potentially positive economic impact that granting Transylvania financial autonomy would bring to the Romanians living there. Once again, I would argue that this assertion is more of a positive spin-off than it is a central feature in Hungarian rights claims.

Interestingly, my contributors do not mention the potential for increased social stability in Romania as a positive impact of granting minority rights – perhaps because such a statement would be considered alarmist and threatening given the link made between granting the Hungarians rights and the possibility for territorial revisionism in Transylvania. The difficulties faced by Hungarian politicians are evident when even the smallest mention of minority rights has nationalist politicians raising the spectre of irredentism and thereby increasing majority resistance to granting these rights.

This initial discussion of rights has involved the repeated mention of both 'equality' and 'difference'. The following section will outline 'equality' as the central feature underlying Hungarian claims for rights.

Equality

One contributor outlines the relationship between equality and rights:

> 5.12 Our goals are the same as the goals of the majority. What we want is the same rights as the majority and we want these in a reasonable way. We don't want a separate Hungarian army. There are no special algorithms like say having seven percent Hungarian judges. All we want is equal opportunity.

My contributor simply states that he wants equal opportunity to the majority – or to be precise, the same rights as the majority. Implicit to his view is that currently Hungarians do not have the same rights. Another contributor elaborates on this perspective:

> 5.13 Are we equal in rights? As far as paying taxes we're equal, and having the same economic difficulties we are equal. Having education, we're not equal. I mean in rural areas if they're less than 10 students you can't have a class in Hungarian. But in Hungarian areas where there are 90% Hungarians if there were three Romanian children, that's enough to start a class. University is a problem. We have a university now because of the help of the Hungarian government. In 1996 the agreement of all the coalition members was that they would give back the Hungarian universities and it never happened. And it was signed and stamped by all members of the coalition in 1996. And now

they're saying that it is not possible to have a Hungarian state university. It's impossible because there is no *political will*. Once again it's Romanian nationalism.

Tellingly, the way in which my contributor perceives himself as 'equal' to Romanians is in exclusively negative terms – paying taxes and having economic problems. When it comes to the positive aspects of citizenship, such as the right to education, he feels discriminated against. He suggests that the underlying reason for this inequality is a lack of 'political will' – something Kymlicka would argue is necessary to successfully address minority claims. Nationalism remains the perceived reason for this lack of political will.

Access to language also featured prominently in discussions about equality. One contributor describes some visible evidence of this bias:

> 5.14 You will notice that on the signs, Romanian is large and Hungarian is very small. I mean there's a law that if there are twenty percent Hungarians then we should be able to use our language in administration. But we can't do this. The high level administrators don't want to speak Hungarian.

My contributor presents the size of the writing on signs as an indicator of the relative status of Romanian and Hungarian languages. Another contributor addresses this lack of status and representation for the Hungarian language:

> 5.15 We aren't suggesting that we should only use our language - but rather we should have the right to use our language. We are not asking that Romanians have to learn how to speak Hungarian - only that those Romanians who work in administration should have to know Hungarian. We don't ask that they have to be Hungarian - simply that they speak it as well as Romanian. But they only speak Romanian because right now Romania is a 'national unitary and organic state' where only Romanian is spoken and all the other languages are ignored. This is very different - to ask to use our language as well as theirs than to ask to *only* use our language and not theirs. This is an essential difference. This same difference exists in all our demands. We don't just ask that the state return the buildings that the communists took over from us. No we ask that they return all the buildings that belonged to everyone, our fellow citizens. Whereas the Orthodox Church states that if we give buildings back to the Catholics they will take over. The majority of the

population doesn't even know their own rights never mind the rights of others.

My contributor outlines, more specifically, how Hungarian rights do not detract from those of the Romanians. In particular, he maintains that they do not wish to take away rights from the Romanians, but rather to simply add similar rights for the Hungarians. He suggests that this goal is problematic given the 'national unitary and organic' definition for the Romanian state that is defined by the constitution. Once again, he attempts to counter the perception of majority and minority rights in opposition to one another. Nonetheless, he conceded that this is problematic given that the majority of people do not know their own rights.

Some contributors became openly frustrated when describing this lack of equality. With a raised voice, one contributor relays this frustration:

> 5.16 What we are asking for is exactly what the Romanians get. We want to get exactly the same as the Romanians get. Nothing more, nothing less. I remember that last year Mr. Nastase who was then the vice president of the house came to talk to us about this issue of national minorities. And eventually he said that well the Hungarians have the same right as the Romanians. Because just as the Romanians, the Hungarians have a right to learn anything, to study at any university etc... And you know it took me a while to figure out what was missing from the picture but eventually I did. And it's that most of the people in this country have the right to study whatever they want and wherever they want in their native language. Where others do not have the same possibility to study in their native language. So that is one of the things that we would like.

> We really don't want to secede, we don't want to separate ourselves. I mean this is our home goddamn it. And of course we would like some equal rights within Romania. And don't ask me what, we want them all equal!

My contributor is visibly agitated and irritated at the struggle he is involved in. Firstly, he has to constantly guard himself against accusation of separatism. Secondly, he is frustrated at having to ask for something that the Romanians simply have – rights. He resents being asked to itemize what these rights are. What he reveals is a desire to be 'equal' with

Romanians – but not in the terms defined by the Romanian state. He disputes Mr. Nastase's (the Prime Minister) claim that the Hungarians are equal because they have equal access to Romanian institutions. In contrast, my contributor maintains that equality for him is contingent on being able to live and study in his native language – not simply having access to Romanian institutions. What he advocates therefore is an equality with Romanians that is based on the concept of difference. Perhaps responding to the perceived threat associated with granting the Hungarians rights, he immediately states that his goal is not secession, but rather to live equally within Romania, which he views as his 'home'.

My contributors were sensitive to the perceived link, in the minds of the Romanian majority, between minority rights claims and secession. In response, one contributor directly contests this relationship between minority rights and secession:

> 5.17 That's why the DAHR has to stay together. Because we're not equal. There are prejudices here. I feel discriminated against. For example I can't study in my own language. And if I said to a Romanian that it's only fair that I should study in my own language, they would get mad at me. They would say "why? Why do you need to learn Hungarian. You want to take Transylvania. Slowly but step by step you want to take Transylvania."

My contributor is visibly frustrated at the accusations she must face when arguing in favour of minority rights. Specifically, the majority continues to view these rights as a step toward territorial revisionism. This memory of changing borders is used to resist Hungarian claims for rights – despite explicit assertions on the part of the Hungarians that this is not their goal.

This fear of border changes continues to draw implicit lines between those included and excluded politically within Romania. It is precisely this mentality that my contributors

state must be changed. When I ask one contributor how he responds to these accusations of separatism:

> 5.18 What do we say to this? Well, we say that we have rights because we are here. You don't have to give us anything special. You just have to give us what the international community says we deserve.

Like many others, when discussing 'rights' my contributor's tone of voice is laced with anger. This angry, frustrated or irritated tone was clearly different from the overtones of sadness expressed by my contributors when discussing nationalism and the exclusion it generates. This angry tone perhaps reveals the pragmatic content of a discussion based on rights and equality. Though they are clearly frustrated by their lack of rights, this is a conversation that is one step removed from a discussion of nationalism, which involves a rejection of their identity. In this particular case, my contributor justifies minority rights on the historic legacy of Hungarians in Transylvania. Additionally, much like Kymlicka, he contests the perception that minority rights are something 'special' and rather maintains that these rights are justified simply 'because we are here'. Although cultural identity is used to invoke these claims, the goal of these rights – various forms of autonomy – is explicitly political. Foreshadowing a discussion to come, the international community is invoked to justify these claims.

What has remained unspecified though implicit to this discussion of rights thus far is the relationship between individual and groups rights. The previous discussion has focused on the notion of minority rights in relation to the majority and the arguments advanced to justify these claims. The following section will explore how this difference is constructed and the individual perceived within claims for group rights.

Group vs. Individual Rights

One contributor describes the relationship between group rights and individual rights:

> 5.19 Yes, of course. I think that there are group rights and there are
> individual rights. They both exist. And there was a big debate on that. The
> Romanian politicians in general do not recognize group rights. We call them
> collective rights, in Europe. Collective rights exist and some of the rights of
> national minorities are collective rights. For example, using your mother
> tongue cannot be a personal right because I cannot use my mother tongue
> between four walls in my room, I have to use it collectively. But it is my
> individual right to speak my native language. So although some of the
> minority rights are collective rights, they are at the same time, individual
> rights. I think that there is no contradiction between them, I think that they
> are complementary rights and they have to be used as such.

Importantly, my contributor emphasizes that individual rights and collective rights are not

mutually exclusive, rather they are intimately related. Specifically, he states that certain

individual rights must be exercised collectively. In this sense, these rights are *both* individual

and collective. Such a position resonates with Kymlicka's view that cultural membership

provides the necessary context for the meaningful exercise of individual rights.

Another contributor had a very similar perspective:

> 5.20 It's my private choice to exercise a right, such as to speak my language,
> but if my choice is to use it, then I use it in a group, in a collectivity. If I
> accepted that these are only personal rights, how would you explain the
> existence of the Hungarian Alliance? We are represented in the Parliament
> collectively. I think that the reality proves that we exercise individual and
> collective rights simultaneously.

Once again, my contributor describes a notion of individual rights exercised within a

culturally meaningful context, thereby making them collective. Her position explicitly

contradicts the view that collective rights necessarily infringe on the individual. Nonetheless,

she does recognize that there is a perception on the part of Romanian politicians that

collective rights infringe on the individual rights of the majority.

Many of my contributors faced problems when trying to communicate the 'needs' of

the Hungarian minority in these collective terms. One contributor describes this challenge in

terms of vocabulary:

> 5.21 What I am arguing is that there is a community who has special needs.
> When I talk about rights about needs of this minority community, the
> Romanians say 'wait a minute, these are collective rights'. It's framed as
> another question. Our Romanian partners – you see I never say adversaries, I
> say partners – they say 'talk about anything, but NOT collective rights'. But
> these specific needs, for our university, or education in our mother tongue is
> not just linked to each individual person, it is linked to the community.

My contributor outlines the limitations faced when attempting to argue in favour of rights

for the minority community. Specifically, he suggests that these rights are not only linked to

the individual but also to the community, making it impossible to escape the language of

collective rights. He continues to describe this limiting vocabulary:

> 5.22 The right of the Sikh Canadian policeman to put his turban on is an
> individual right. He has rights because he's in a democracy. But the Sikh
> people or the Korean people do not ask for their own university.
>
> But in the case of Quebec it is different, in the same way it is different for us
> here. You cannot solve this problem without using a kind of collectivism. I
> say it's your business to hate collective rights but give me the essence of
> collective rights – the possibility to respond to the specific needs of many
> people in the same community. This struggle involves advocating for the use
> of our mother tongue, local autonomy, cultural autonomy, and personal
> autonomy. Because we are not some kind of immigrants. We have been in
> this country for 11 centuries.

Interestingly, my contributor distinguishes between national minorities and immigrant

groups in terms that resonate with Kymlicka. Specifically, he distinguishes between the types

of rights that these various groups are entitled to by drawing a parallel with Canada. He

suggests that the immigrant (the Sikh) has an individual right to exercise their culture within

a democracy, however, the national minority (Quebec) has the right to collective forms of

rights. It is at this point that my contributor, attempting to argue for the 'essence' of collective rights, introduces the term autonomy. He describes autonomy as a multilevel concept – local, cultural and personal – and adds significant complexity to the demands of the Hungarian minority. This complexity is somewhat strategic – specifically, it distracts from the negative reaction generated by discussions of 'collective rights'. My contributor nonetheless counters this negative perception to collective rights directly by arguing for their 'essence'. He states unequivocally that the Hungarian minority are entitled to these rights since: "We have been in this country for 11 centuries". Although this statement is definitive, it is not exclusive. He does not advocate limiting Romanian rights, he simply and forcefully implies that given this historical context, that Hungarian rights should be recognized.

In discussing the possibility for minority rights in Romania it is evident that the burden of proof rests on the shoulders of the minority. The arguments made by my contributors in favour of minority rights communicate the notion that these rights do not exist in a zero-sum relationship to those of the majority, and that granting them will not have a negative effect. My contributors state that these rights are necessary to ensure equality. Additionally they argue that such claims are historically justified.

It is clear from my interviews that, currently, equality is only experienced in terms of the negative aspects of being a Romanian citizen and the poor socio-economic conditions that accompany it. Within the definitions for equality provided by the state, Hungarians perceive themselves as actively discriminated against. Specifically, one can only be equal in Romania if one is Romanian. Given this experience of exclusion, they advocate for equality with Romanians that is based on the concept of difference. In elaborating this concept my contributors outline the link between individual and collective rights – describing them as

complementary rather than contradictory. They also outline the reticence of the Romanian

majority to accept this notion of collective rights – viewed as a threat to the state.

Nonetheless, they also outline resistance to these claims due to what is loosely described as a

Romanian 'mentality', and more specifically labeled 'Romanian nationalism'. My contributors

suggest that the Romanian response is fuelled by the perception that granting minority rights

will lead to border changes. My contributors categorically deny this link.

As a way to argue for equality and inclusion, the following section will highlight how

my contributors would like to redefine the terms of belonging in Romania to reflect a more

inclusive form of citizenship.

Differentiating Citizens

One contributor describes how a lack of equality has a direct impact on citizenship:

> 5.23 I think that we are loyal citizens, in judicial terms. We respect the law
> and we pay taxes, we are working here, we want to build the whole
> establishment, but we feel that our social income is less than our social
> contribution. In terms of integration, we are not fully integrated into the
> society, because our access into certain institutions, especially at higher levels,
> is limited. It is not forbidden by law, but the reality is that we have no access,
> especially in the army, police, finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Secret
> Services. There are hardly any Hungarians or other minorities in these
> institutions, and these institutions are the strategic institutions in society.
> Maybe this is only one part of how to detect opportunity. Formally, we have
> equal rights, but there is a huge difference between equal rights and equal
> opportunity.

> Here, in Romania, after '89, I think many people started to think of
> democracy as a kind of egalitarianism. Anybody is equal, but only in terms of
> equal rights, not equal opportunity. The basic problem, in my view, talking
> about minorities in the region and in Romania, is how to establish the
> relationship between the person and the state, the relationship between the
> community and the state, to insure that these individuals have equal chances.
> This involves questioning the autonomy of the person and the autonomy of
> different groups.

Interestingly, my contributor identifies himself as a 'loyal' citizen, in predominantly legal

terms. In these terms, he argues that his goal is to benefit Romania as a whole. Nonetheless,

although formally he has 'equal rights', he feels that he contributes much more than he

receives. Specifically, he argues that the level of opportunity for Hungarians is much lower as

they lack access to key societal institutions. Given this discrepancy he argues there are

significant differences between having equal 'rights' and equal 'opportunities' that must be

accounted for in terms of citizenship. He suggests that establishing equality of opportunity

not only depends on establishing a relationship between the individual and the state but *also*

a relationship between the community and the state. It is within this dynamic that the

possibility for both group autonomy *and* individual autonomy lies. This link to autonomy will

be elaborated further in the next chapter. For now what is important is the intimate

connection that he makes between the individual and the group.

This relationship to the group features prominently in discussions linking rights and

citizenship. Implicit to this discussion is the importance of identity to the possibility to

exercise rights. Given this importance, a notion of political belonging in terms of citizenship

alone is not adequate to the Hungarians. Although legally they are entitled to equal rights as

Romanian citizens, they do not experience equal opportunity. This equal opportunity is

closely linked to their right to 'identity'. One contributor describes how she experiences this

discrepancy between citizenship and identity:

> 5.24 In Europe in general, identity is defined by culture, history, religion and
> language codes and patterns. In our case, we consider ourselves Hungarians
> culturally. We know that we are Romanian citizens, so we pay taxes, we
> respect the laws, we do not want to leave the country and so we also consider
> ourselves loyal citizens. We expect the country to assure the framework to
> preserve our community, the values of our community. In our view the
> program would be realized by autonomy, by creating special institutions. We

> define ourselves by language, by religion and by culture and we need
> institutions for these.

Similarly to others, this contributor defines herself as a 'loyal Romanian citizen'. She also

suggests that in return for this loyalty, the state should help provide a framework for her to

maintain her culture and her community. She argues that autonomy – or the creation of

'special' institutions - is required to achieve this goal. Thus although she is a Romanian

citizen, she is culturally Hungarian. Another contributor provides a similar perspective:

> 5.25 We accept that we are Romanian citizens, but we would never say that
> we are from the Romanian Nation. Hungarians feel close to the homeland.
> We are affiliated by our souls to Hungary - but we're still Romanian citizens.
> But we're second-class citizens. I do not feel equal to a Romanian citizen.
> After we get rights for our community, I will feel equal.

Tellingly, my contributor makes an important distinction between belonging to Romania in

terms of citizenship versus nationality. Specifically, he suggests that although he is a

Romanian citizen he does not belong to the Romanian nation but the Hungarian one. Given

this distinction he also states that he does not feel equal to an ethnic Romanian citizen,

implying that his equality is contingent on gaining rights for the Hungarian community and

highlighting the link between individual and group rights.

> Another contributor elaborates this distinction between citizenship and nationality:

> 5.26 I am a Romanian citizen of Hungarian nationality. It's quite weird when
> places ask you to fill out a form they always ask you about nationality. And
> then one always has to explain that it's a bit different between citizenship and
> nationality. I mean I thought that only we had this problem of being a
> different nationality than citizenship, I prefer the word nationality than the
> word ethnic background or ethnic origin. I don't have a background and I
> don't have an origin – I am a Hungarian.

My contributor states that there are unequivocal differences between citizenship and nationality. Additionally, he presents his Hungarian identity not as something that is derived, but rather as something that 'just is'. Another contributor makes a similar distinction:

> 5.27 No absolutely I'm Hungarian. I'm a Romanian citizen but this is not like it is in the states. It's a big confusion for the Americans for example, because there are Chinese Americans and Native Americans. I'm not Hungarian Romanian. No I'm Hungarian but I am a Romanian citizen. Maybe it is because of the history that we have this strong sense of being Hungarian. We have our own history and our own culture, our own way of life and our own way of thinking. And this is very strong, it is very defined. We know what we are and we strongly want to remain what we are. This is very difficult for other people to understand.

By distinguishing between not being a 'Hungarian Romanian' but rather a 'Hungarian and a Romanian citizen' my contributor reveals the tensions that exist between these two identities. To be a 'Hungarian Romanian' would seem to imply a type of belonging to Romania, and equality with Romanians that he simply does not feel. Additionally, to belong in the established terms of the Romanian state, namely by being ethnic Romanian, detracts from the Hungarian goal of autonomy within Romania – which he more aptly summarizes in terms of being 'Hungarian but a Romanian citizen'. Through this definition, the Hungarians are better able to assert themselves as equal but different. Another contributor relays the drive to maintain this distinction:

> 5.28 I will never be like a Romanian. I am always saying that I am a Hungarian with Romanian citizenship. This isn't nationalism but more a kind of way to defend yourself. Because I see in the last 50 years how many Hungarian communities have disappeared because of forced assimilation, because of immigration. After the revolution we learned what it means to be a little bit more equal if you were Romanian. These terms meant that the Hungarians needed to work twice as hard, learn twice as much to be equal. The hate from the Romanian majority was so strong.

My contributor states that maintaining the distinction between citizenship and nationality is necessary to defend against assimilation. Maintaining these lines of difference are therefore strategically important to resisting against the possible negative consequences of belonging in the terms defined by the Romanian state. In particular, the tacit definition for inclusion provided by the Romanian state – specifically, ethnicity - highlight these negative consequences. My contributor states that after 1989 it became apparent that being ethnic Romanian meant that one was 'more equal'. Maintaining a distinction between Romanian and Hungarian is therefore central to resisting assimilation and achieving an equality that is based on the notion of difference. Nonetheless, it also fuels Romanian fears about the 'loyalty' of the Hungarian minority and the threat they may pose to the overall stability and unity of Romania.

One contributor outlines how the Hungarian community defines itself against a majority who is suspicious of its intentions:

> 5.29 It's an interesting problem that a national community has its own
> conception about itself. These are communities that want to live and to
> preserve themselves. It's very interesting that the Hungarians in Romania
> after so much conflict and so many problems are a 'living' community. We
> want to preserve ourselves, to preserve our culture, our existence. The unity
> of the nation, with the parts of the nation that are living outside the borders -
> when these borders, in our case, are artificial borders from only some
> decades ago - this tendency to want a national unity is nothing else but a
> cultural and the living unity. I, and most people that I know do not want a
> greater Hungary. We do not want the border changed. No. No. But I am
> Hungarian I am not Romanian. I'm a Romanian citizen. But I am
> Hungarian. It's quite interesting this fashion to introduce the term ethnic. In
> talking about this problem of nationality people always speak about 'ethnic'
> Hungarians, 'ethnic' Romanians. In my mind this is a word like 'race'. This
> word I do not know what to do with because I'm not ethnic Hungarian, I am
> simply Hungarian.

Despite what is viewed as a conflict ridden past, my contributor describes the Hungarian community as a "living" and self-conscious community - actively engaged in preserving their culture, language and "existence". Although this is a project that extends beyond Romania's borders and is therefore threatening to it, he states that this desire for 'national unity' is simply cultural. Specifically, he states that he does not want the border changed. Nonetheless, his claim is not simply cultural, it is also a political claim: to be part of this 'living' national community within Romania. Much like my previous contributors, he describes the necessary dichotomy of being both Hungarian and a Romanian citizen. Neither of these is negotiable according to him – the implication being that the category 'Hungarian' cannot be assimilated into general citizenship terms. By questioning the concept of 'ethnicity' he is emphasizes that his identity as a Hungarian cannot be labeled as a sort of 'characteristic' but rather is ontological in its essence. He is Hungarian, and that simply *is*. In this sense, Romanian citizenship cannot replace, absolve or placate this essential quality. Asserting that he simply 'is' Hungarian, challenges the state to *recognize* this identity rather than negate it.

Although this problem of identity is frequently framed in cultural language, it undeniably has political implications. What is evident in these narratives is the desire for inclusion into Romania based on the concept of difference. Currently citizenship itself connotes a sort of difference-blind category. Nonetheless, the underlying definition for political belonging in Romania in ethnic terms suggests that the terms of belonging are not 'difference-blind' or universal. In contrast, these narratives describe a lack of 'equality' for non-ethnic Romanians. This exclusion has challenged the Hungarian community to define

their own terms for inclusion and has involved challenging the underlying definitions for belonging to the Romanian state.

Toward this end, Part Three will focus explicitly on the Hungarian minority's encounter with the Romanian state.

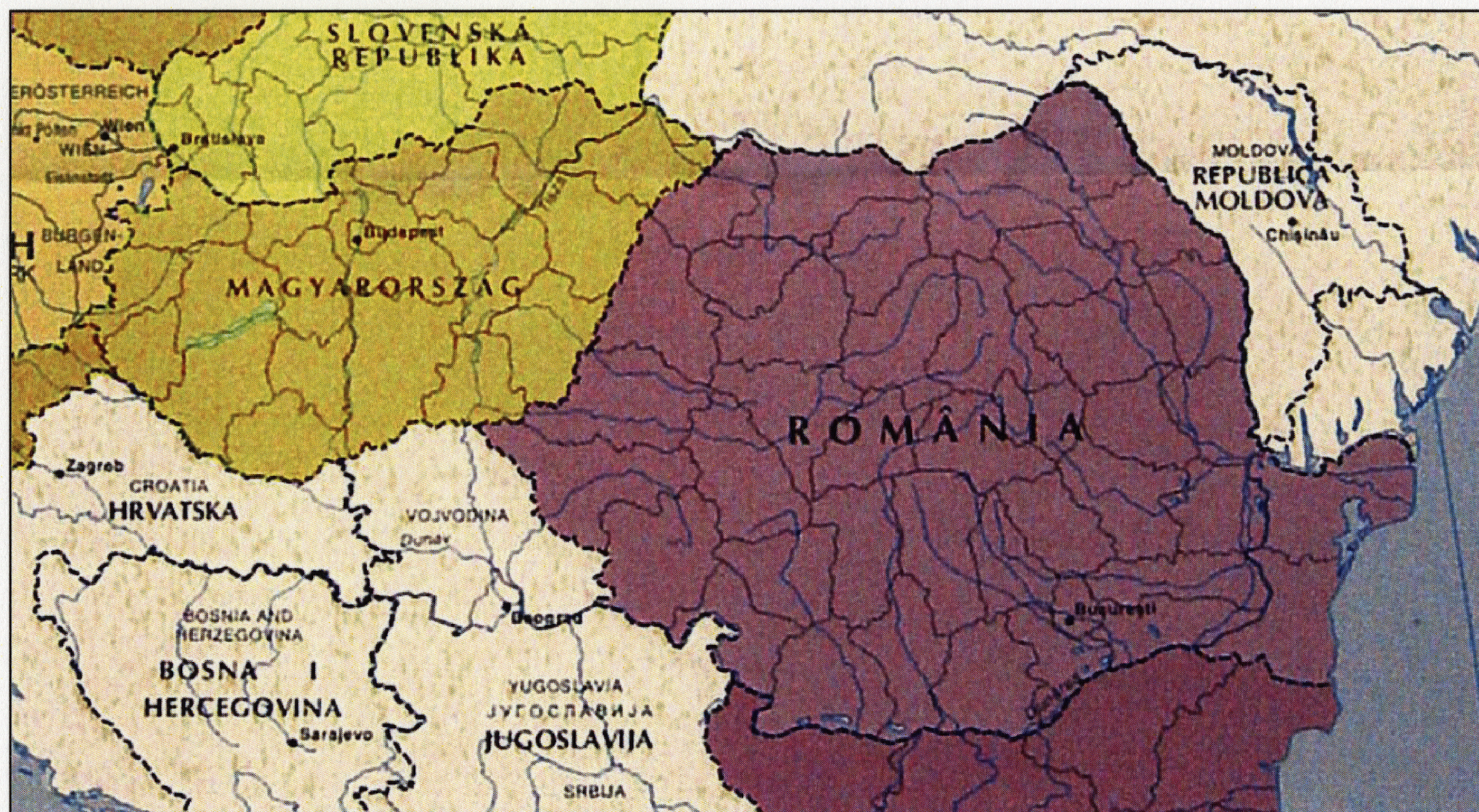# PART THREE

- Constituting Belonging -

**Figure 3: The European Union 2004
Hungary (EU) and Romania (EU Candidate 2007)**

In Part Two, my interview partners aptly express the difficulties they face in arguing for

Hungarian rights within Romania. Namely, they are construed as a threat and their claims

summarily dismissed. This dismissal, I suggest, indicates that there are positive benefits for

the state enabled by using ethnicity as a basis for political legitimacy. Remarking on culturally

divided societies, Hannum (1990, 6) argues that the important point to be made is that they

wish to remain divided. These divisions provide a channel for political dissatisfaction,

address internal contradictions, legitimize structural inequalities and therefore serve a

positive function for the state. Importantly, the notion of 'threat' is not external but is rather

constitutive of the democratic system itself (Jarve, 2000, 22 cited in Salat 2003, 24).[109]

Nationalism that centres on the notion of 'threat' will inevitably result in the exclusion of

those not belonging to the nation (Guibernau 2003, 117).

Importantly, this tendency toward exclusion is a fundamental tension in democratic

systems that result from the use of popular sovereignty as a legitimizing principle. According

to Taylor (1999, 265): "exclusion is the by-product of the high degree of cohesion required

in self-governing societies." Because democratic legitimacy is based in popular sovereignty,

who precisely constitutes the 'people' is of central importance (also see Kraus 2003, 244).[110]

Thus popular sovereignty requires a *demos*, or political community, pre-determined by factors

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[109] Smooha (2002, 475-503 cited in Salat 2003, 23) terms these political systems 'ethnic democracies': 1/ the 'state' is comprised of a single core ethnic nation; 2/ membership in the single core ethnic state is separated from citizenship; 3/ the state is ruled by the core ethnic nation; 4/ non-core groups have incomplete rights, both individual and collective; 5/ non-core groups are permitted to struggle for change via parliamentary methods; 6/ the state views non-core groups as a distinct threat to their survival.

[110] Taylor (1999, 274) highlights that there is also a drive toward greater inclusiveness or 'representation by all' within democratic systems. Nonetheless, given that democratic societies work best when there is a high degree of trust, it is important to consider that the tendency toward exclusion is "motivated by a commitment to democracy itself" (Taylor 1999, 275).

such as culture and history rather than democratic processes. Kraus (2003, 244) elaborates

on this dilemma:

> "The collective subject in whose name a democracy is established – the *demos*,
> democracy's 'we' – enters the democratic scene without democratic
> credentials. This has been called the paradox of sovereignty."

Given this paradox, cultural identity, which was considered 'pre-political', became an

invaluable resource for democratic integration (Kraus 2003, 245). Nationalism as a necessary

outgrowth of democracy was the process by which cultural and political identity were

merged (Taylor 1999, 268). Free societies require a higher level of commitment – or trust –

than authoritarian ones (Taylor 1999, 271). As such, nationalism - either "benign or

malignant" (Taylor 1999, 268) - has a greater impact on democratic systems than

authoritarian ones. It is no wonder that nationalism became a predominant feature of politics

in Romania following the revolution of 1989.

Defining a political identity - in other words, establishing precisely *who* comprises the

state (legitimized through popular sovereignty) - is of particular import to new democracies

(Taylor 1999, 273). It is not surprising then that the Hungarian minority is focused on the

need to redefine the current basis of political legitimacy in Romania. How the Hungarian

minority views their relationship to the Romanian state is an integral part of this discussion.

Gyurcsík (1993, 20) argues that rather than focus exclusively on minorities, the role of the

state itself needs to be interrogated. He suggests that in Eastern Europe, state policies

toward national minorities have directly contributed to conflict. Examples of such policies

include: constitutional definitions for a 'pure nation-state'; centralized state control; the

misuse of democratic means by the majority; the failure to prohibit xenophobic political

campaigns or media reports; and the creation through legislation of unequal opportunities to

the market economy (Gyurcsík 1993, 32). The Romanian state since 1989 has been guilty of many of these policies.

The Romanian state, throughout its legacy, has taken on monolithic proportions. Most concretely, Ceaușescu gave credence to this vision by building Romania's parliament building. This building is the second largest in the world next to the Pentagon and remains an exceedingly tangible monument to the Romanian state.

I had my own encounters with this monument – a tangible impression I gained through the considerable effort I exerted to actually, physically, get inside the building to meet with members of the DAHR. On my first attempt, I circumnavigated the entire building on foot, incredulous that there was not an entrance beyond the seemingly impervious metal gate surrounding it. I ended this first journey at the less intimidating Ministry of Defense, and was the subject of puzzled stares from a room full of Romanian soldiers. My conspicuous presence led me to seek refuge in the neighbouring Mariott Hotel where the individual I was scheduled to meet at the DAHR offices sent a car to fetch me.

On my second attempt I, at least, made it inside the building. The guards, however, sent me to the back door. Another kind individual then walked a great distance to retrieve me.

On my third attempt I walked with feigned confidence past the guards, up the lengthy driveway and through the enormous front door.

In Part Three, we pass through this door and interrogate the role of the state, and the forms of exclusion it generates. This discussion will show that when the roots of exclusion are enshrined in the very workings of the political system, finding a space to develop the 'peculiar sentiment' required to accommodate pluralism requires significant innovation.

CHAPTER 6

The construction of national minorities as a 'threat' is integral to both the structure and function of the Romanian state. Specifically, it defines state boundaries and legitimizes exclusion based on nationalism. This construction of threat justifies a form of *internal* exclusion – where minority groups who find themselves within the territorial boundaries of the state become political outsiders. This position of being internally excluded was aptly described in the previous discussion of nationalism, and occurs through both the formal and material constitutions of the 'state'.[111] Following Bhabha (1994), exclusion results from discordance between the pluralized life of national subjects and the representation of the nation as a self-identical site. This chapter will show the impact that these constitutions of the 'state' have on the Hungarian minority in Romania.

Given the links previously made between minority claims and the pursuit of a just society, constituting diversity *within* the state can be considered a necessary component of democratic stability. Minority nationalisms, as is the case with the Hungarian minority in Romania, are most often directed toward democratic and political ends rather than founded on the definition of a 'thick' identity (MacLure 2003, 46). Therefore, minority nations are not attempting to protect their identity from globalization; rather, they are engaging global forces to further their claims for autonomy within democratic structures. The relationship between minority groups and the state is therefore central to the democratic content of the emerging political system. According to MacLure (2003, 45) we need to conceptualize how difference

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[111] Following Hardt and Negri (2001, xiv) I am taking the 'formal' constitution to mean the constitution as it is written and the material constitution to mean how the system is structured and organized materially (i.e. the material realization of the formal conception).

is woven into the fabric of the nation-state. Further, he suggests (2003, 48) that stability and cohesion within nation-states must "in the end rest on something thinner than the sharing of 'national identity'". Within this framework, belonging to the state is transformed into the ability to express democratic freedom. It is the state, rather than minority groups, that threatens the conditions of stability in multinational democracies (see Gagnon, 2003).[112]

This potential threat to stability is evident in state responses to minority claims. When faced with claims for autonomy, the state effectively has two main options: to eliminate these claims or to manage them. Methods used for eliminating differences, such as, forced assimilation, succession, forced mass-population transfer and genocide are either illegitimate or unjust (Kymlicka and Norman 2000, 12). Certain methods used for managing differences, such as hegemonic control, or the prohibition of dissent through majority rule can also be considered unjust (i.e. Northern Ireland). The remaining options for the state to 'manage' differences are: territorial autonomy (i.e. federalization), non-territorial autonomy, and multicultural integration. Importantly, state strategies such as assimilation, forced emigration, and other forms of suppression have rarely succeeded (McRoberts 2003, iv).

Despite this relative inability to suppress minority groups by force, many multinational states have engaged another strategy: to simply deny the existence of internal minority nations. This negation is premised on the view that internal minorities contribute to instability within states – in particular, that they threaten its boundaries. There is little evidence, however, to suggest that minority nations are secessionist. According to McRoberts (2003, iv): "They have a primary attachment to their nation, but they also have a

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[112] Centralist state nationalism has directly contributed to secessionist aspirations of minority groups. According to Guibernau (2003, 130) Catalan nationalism has recently pushed for greater autonomy in response to state centralism.

sense of membership or citizenship in the larger state." This dual identity – of nation as

distinct from citizenship - resonated with that expressed by my contributors.[113] It is

unfortunately within this antagonistic mindset – that cultural difference predetermines

conflict - that minority rights are approached.

Contrary to this perception of clashing civilizations, a large number of minority

nationalisms are focused on expanding and strengthening democratic and collective rights

(Gagnon et al. 2003, 2). This democratizing impact of minority nationalisms is particularly

salient in post-totalitarian states – where minority groups have historically embraced

democratic values as a strategy to oppose the authoritarian state. Many minority groups

under totalitarian systems cultivated relations with Western democracies as a way to gain

legitimacy.[114] Given the absolute denial of minority claims under totalitarianism, linking

minority claims to the global human rights regime,[115] in particular, was a means to challenge

the absolute sovereignty of the state and secure some basic protections. As such, minority

groups in transitional democracies are frequently well versed in democratic practice. Such is

the case with the Hungarian minority in Romania. In contrast, I suggest that it is the state's

response to the Hungarian minority, rather than that the claims made by the Hungarian

minority against the state, that are potentially destabilizing democracy in Romania.

Despite the potential democratizing impact of minority groups, diversity has posed a

distinct challenge in Southeastern Europe due to the historic legacy of empire and border

changes in the region. These regions are: "burdened by the historical legacy of competing

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[113] Further, I would suggest it is reinforced by the state's policies of exclusion.

[114] Some notable examples are the Kurds, the Catalans, and the Basques. In many cases, these minority groups have had governments in exile in the West.

[115] This term is elaborated by Beetham (1998)

communal identities, as well as with the consequences historically unaccommodated

diversity" (Salat 2003, 16). Due to this legacy, the transition to democracy in the region has

been characterized by political action that ranges from "ethnic voting to ethnic cleansing"

(Stein 2002, 1; cited in Salat 2003). In particular, the use of nationalism to garner legitimacy

means that state actions are characterized by ethnic bias. In Romania, this bias is reflected in

the form that the post-1989 Romanian state has assumed: a semi-presidential system,[116] with

a highly centralized state administration.[117]

This centralized state structure poses a distinct challenge for the Hungarian minority's

claims for recognition and autonomy. This chapter will outline how, despite these

conditions, the Hungarian minority attempts to impact the formal and material constitutions

of the state in Romania, and concomitantly, its democratic practices. In particular, I am

interested in how Hungarian political action is directed toward expanding definitions of who

precisely is *entitled* to 'recognition' from the state and then politically codifying this

recognition in a form of 'autonomy'.

The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) is challenging the state to

develop a political language for belonging that, rather than being based on ethnicity,

recognizes diversity. The lack of official state recognition for the Hungarian minority is most

clearly emphasized in debates surrounding the constitution. Hungarian responses to the

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[116] This type of system creates opportunities for the president to increase their influence, particularly when the party system is fragmented (Salat 2003, 17). Lijphart (2004, 102) is critical of presidential systems in general, stating that they result in a 'politics of personality'. Commenting on semi-presidential systems he states: "Semi-presidential systems actually make it possible for the president to be even more powerful than in most pure presidential systems." This influence has been evident in the frequent use of ordinances in Romania – a situation to which the EU has been critical (Linden and Pohlman 2003, 322).

[117] This bias has also been reflected in the actions of the state, such as delays on property restitution.

constitution reveal contested notions of citizenship and belonging in Romania. There is an inherent tension between 1/ Hungarian identity predicated on the concept of 'difference' and by definition excluded from the state and 2/ their desire to be recognized by the state and achieve equality in terms of rights, citizenship and belonging. Hungarian responses to the constitution highlight how their claims for autonomy *within* Romania are directed toward changing traditional bases of legitimacy based on ethnicity.

Hungarian claims for autonomy run counter to the historically centralized Romanian state. Autonomy requires that the terms of inclusion and exclusion in Romania be reconceived, both formally and materially. Toward this end, the Hungarian minority situates their claims within the global processes already impacting state sovereignty in Romania. A discussion of autonomy is therefore simultaneously a discussion of the changing relations of power inflecting this 'sovereignty'. By engaging international bodies, such as the European Union, Hungarian politicians have placed pressure on the state to devolve powers to the regions. The 'recognition' of Hungarian claims by international bodies has increased the legitimacy of these claims within Romania – highlighting how global forces can be used to further democratic goals within states.

At the heart of this discussion is an attempt to create a place for the Hungarian minority *within* rather than *excluded from* the Romanian state. According to Tully (2001, 5) the primary goal of these struggles is not recognition but rather freedom: "The freedom of the members of an open society to change the constitutional rules of mutual recognition and association".[118] Changing these rules, however, requires that the state expand the terms of

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[118] Connolly (1991, 198) also highlights that democratic freedom entails the ability to re-open the terms of negotiation.

inclusion and exclusion, and relinquish its monopoly on definitions of the political subject

deserving recognition. Relinquishing this monopoly is necessary to end a structure of

domination and permit the exercise of freedom (Tully 2001, 6). This relationship, based on

either cooperation or exclusion, is reflected in the constitutional principles of a society.

According to Lane (1996, 11), in an ideal world, this 'formal' or written constitution is in

agreement with the substantive constitution.[119] The following section will outline the political

subject currently delineated by formal constitutions of the state in Romania with a view to

understanding how this relationship between the state and the Hungarian minority might be

changed.

Encountering the Post-Totalitarian state

A constitution is a document outlining the official definition of a society: it delineates

how members both recognize and cooperate with one another (Tully 2001, 11).[120] The

Romanian constitution defines statehood in ethnic and national terms rather than in civic-

territorial language, and reflects a form of 'ethnic bias' (Salat 2003, 17).[121] Identifying the

majority ethnic group as the 'state-forming' nation has consequences for minorities within

the boundaries of the state (Salat 2003, 17). Mayall (1994, 11) emphasizes that when a

democratic constitution is adopted without explicit minority protection, in a society with no

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[119] By substantive constitution he means the institutions who make and enforce the laws and conventions of the written articles of the formal constitution.

[120] In greater detail, a constitution: 1/ establishes a system of rules between members; 2/ stipulates the relations of cooperation; 3/ elaborates procedures for altering the rules; and 4/ outlines normative considerations that impact the rules (Tully 2001, 14).

[121] This division between ethnic and civic nations, originally proposed by Ignatieff (1994), is somewhat misleading. In particular, given the cultural content of all states, no such clear division exists (see Arel 2001). What this quote highlights, however, is the lack of inclusive terms of belonging reflected in the Romanian constitution.

democratic tradition, there will be a great temptation to discriminate against the minority. Simply stated, minority groups are not officially included as constitutive elements of the state and therefore do not hold the same privileges as those who are. This constitutional nationalism is a central feature of debates over the symbolic character of the Romanian state. Specifically, the constitution reflects the symbolic exclusion of the Hungarian minority from the state. This symbolic exclusion has been a constant feature of constitutions in Romania (1923 and 1965) and is historically consistent with a state policy that "held that national minorities did not really exist in Romania" (Nedeva 1993, 141). Although the nature of the constitutional debate is symbolic, its consequences are nonetheless real and experienced in terms of an absence of rights and equality.

Article 1(1), describing the 'Romanian state', most clearly conveys this ethnic bias:

"Romania is a sovereign, independent, unitary and indivisible National state."

The emphasis on the 'National' and 'unitary' character of the Romanian state, in the first article, clearly draws symbolic lines of inclusion and exclusion. These lines of exclusion are further expressed in the 'foundation' of the state outlined:

"The state foundation is laid on the unity of the Romanian people." (Article 4(1))

Thus rather than be defined in terms of territory or citizenship, the state derives its legitimacy from the 'unity of the Romanian people'. Due to the definition of the state proposed in Article 1, the message given is that the 'people' are also defined in national/ethnic terms. Recently (2003) Article 4 was revised to read:

"The state foundation is laid on the unity of the Romanian people and the solidarity of its citizens."

This revision embodies the very tension consistently expressed by the Hungarian minority between nationality and citizenship. Specifically, this language distinguishes the 'Romanian people' from 'Romanian citizens' in precisely the terms conveyed by the Hungarian minority – with the tacit implication being that they are not necessarily the same. Simply stated, the state foundation remains the unity of the Romanian people although *other* citizens are now included as constitutive elements of the state. Nonetheless, what is required of these *other* citizens to be *included* is that they be in solidarity with the Romanian people. To be included as constitutive of the state precludes citizenship based on the concept of difference. The notion of difference *per se* is considered antithetical to the definitions of the *united* Romanian state outlined in the constitution. Although there are certain articles pertaining to the' 'right' of citizens to equality and identity (Article 4(2) and Article 6) the underlying text is that minority groups are to be tolerated rather than included as constitutive elements of the state.

The following section will outline the Hungarian minority's response to this formal constitution of the Romanian state.

Who is the State?

My contributors directly address the implications of the constitution on conditions of belonging. In particular, they contest Article 1 describing the foundation of the Romanian state. This emphasis aptly reflects the stated goal of the Hungarian minority - to have their identity included and recognized by the state. It also highlights the contradictions between belonging based on nationality versus citizenship set out in the constitution. The implication is that some 'citizens' belong more than others. One contributor elaborates:

> 6.1 Romania is defined in the first article of the Constitution as a national state and a unitary state. We didn't agree that Romania is a national state.

> And that is why, in 1991, the representatives of the Hungarians Alliance voted against the Constitution. We never accepted it. And now also, we are asking to modify this article. Because, first of all, it does not reflect the truth. In Romania there are 14 national minorities represented in the Parliament. How can a nation be pure if it has so many minorities in the Parliament? There are contradictions between the articles of the Constitution. The first article states that Romania is a national state, and the sixth says that the minorities have the right to keep, express and develop their national identity. It's a contradiction, obviously. Another article says that Romanian is the only official language. But we can use our language in local administration. So, as you see, there are several contradictions. This is one of the problems.

The first priority, according to my contributor, is that these 'contradictions' be resolved. He suggests that the main issue is revising the description of Romania as a 'pure' national state to one that reflects that there are 14 national minorities represented in the parliament. Although these minorities are mentioned in the constitution (Article 6) they are not considered constitutive of the state. He elaborates on the problem of nationalism as a condition of inclusion:

> 6.2 The problem is that, from our perspective, in the second year of the 21'st century, it is not important (bearing in mind that we want to become members of the European Union) if a country is national or not, what matters is that we strengthen the important principles of a democratic country. Principles of democracy, pluralism and human rights, these should be in the first article of the constitution, not that Romania is a national state.

He suggests that whether a state is national or not is no longer important due to the possibility for European enlargement. Nationalism, he suggests, is becoming increasingly unimportant due to these integrating global processes. This dismissal of nationalism, however, I suggest is only half the story. His declared interest in modifying the constitution suggests that the national character of the state remains an important question. What his assertion does highlight is the hope that European enlargement and the democratic principles it brings with it will liberate him from the implications of living within the borders

of the nationally defined Romanian state. The symbolic content of the constitution remains

important and is reflected in his stated desire to have it changed. Another contributor

outlines a similar position:

> 6.3 We have to be satisfied, because, in all the problems that we raised in
> 1991, in time, it was proved that we were right. Concerning the national state,
> concerning the different attributions of the houses, concerning the
> relationship between the Parliament and the Government, how we elect the
> president and so on. So, we think that it's very important to change the
> constitution. Myself, personally, I don't think it will be changed in this
> mandate, until 2004, because the ruling party cannot make a two-third
> majority to vote on the modifications. If the ruling party will go in a
> European trend, it will have our vote and maybe the liberals' vote. Maybe, on
> some issues, the Democrat party also. But the Greater Romania Party will
> vote against.

According to this contributor, resolving the contradictions between nationality, citizenship

and inclusion necessitates that the national definition of the Romanian state be modified.

Although she describes the constitution as symbolic and thus its modification important

symbolically, another contributor suggests there are also practical implications:

> 6.4 We issued in 1991 a proposal, a special proposal, about who is a
> constitutive element of the state. Actually, there is a formula in the
> Constitution, that the unity of the Romanian nation is the basic element of
> the state. And we said that maybe this is a sentimental article, without any
> judicial consequences, although, unfortunately, we realized that there are
> judicial consequences, because many laws, especially in '93- '94, used in the
> motivation of the draft law this formula. "Because Romania is…, we propose
> that…"
>
> We proposed at that time that the unity of the Romanian nation and other
> minorities should be the base. We wanted to declare that we were
> constitutive elements of the state. It was not accepted at that time, in 1991.
> Not to define the country as having only Romanians, and only Romanians
> being the source, even if there are other articles prescribing certain rights of
> the minorities, but in the very first articles, it the conception of the state
> should be declared.

My contributor highlights the problems associated with the definition of the state provided in the Romanian constitution. Specifically, that these definitions for the state, based on an exclusive form of nationalism, legitimize state actions against the Hungarian minority.

Currently the first article defines the conditions for belonging and exclusion and therefore it was repeatedly mentioned in my interviews. One contributor elaborates on the implications of this first article:

> 6.5 The first article of the constitution has no validity anymore - Romania is not a "National organic and unitary state".

My contributor emphasizes Romania's diversity to counter the negating statement found in the first article of the constitution. This continued emphasis on the existence of pluralism and diversity in Romania, by my contributors, directly counters the official vision of a united Romania comprised of Romanians. These assertions of identity are directed toward gaining official recognition by the state. According to another contributor, this official recognition would be formalized through concrete changes to the constitution:

> 6.6 The problem in the constitution is with the idea of 'nations'. Hungarians want to change the constitution in Romania. But Romania is still a national country, which is not fair because there are 18 minorities in Romania. Romania is the last country in Europe, not speaking of the Ukraine and Russia, to have this type of constitution. Everybody else has changed theirs to a popular one, a republic maybe but not an organic nation. But according to the constitution here Romania is only for Romanians.

The underlying message of the constitution therefore is that Romania is only for Romanians - a message that is unacceptable to my contributor. By extension, he suggests that nationalism as a basis for state legitimacy is distinctly unfair to national minorities within this territory.

By describing Romanian resistance to changing the constitution, my contributors paint

a picture of Romania being behind other countries in the region. Specifically, one

contributor suggests that *who* is identified as constitutive of the state is not only antiquated, it

is also undemocratic:

> 6.7 The first article of the constitution, defines the Romanian state as a
> national, unitary, sovereign state. At that time, in 1991, when the constitution
> was passed, during the discussions in Parliament, we asked to eliminate the
> "nation", because we define ourselves as Hungarians, although we accept
> that we are Romanian citizens, judicially, we pay taxes, we obey the laws, we
> respect the constitution and everything, but we have the right, as persons,
> and as community, among ourselves, to be Hungarians.

My contributor suggests that this definition of the state, based on nationality, excludes the

Hungarians, although they do consider themselves Romanian citizens. As citizens, he argues,

they should be included in definitions for the state:

> 6.8 Now that we're discussing the possibility to modify the constitution, one
> of our basic objectives is to modify that provision of the Constitution that
> says that Romania is a National organic state. We are not discussing the
> unity of Romania - that is out of the question - we're discussing the national
> character of Romania.

Importantly, my contributor distinguishes a desire to modify the constitution to include the

Hungarian minority, from a discussion about the unity of Romania. This distinction is clearly

made to counter the perception that changing the definition of the Romanian state

concomitantly threatens the territorial integrity (*read* unity) of Romania.

The practical consequence of the political subject represented in the Romanian

constitution is one that the Hungarians seek to change. One contributor outlines the great

difficulties experienced, in attempting to amend it:

> 6.9 The 1991 constitution was written by a bunch of old communists. It's
> very difficult to amend this constitution. For example article 148 states that
> as long as there exists a Romanian state it is forbidden to modify the

constitution. That sounds like Hitler wrote it. From what I've heard they're
planning to remove that part of it. The point is that there have been no
amendments to the constitution since 1998.

My contributor attributes the constitution, and the corresponding difficulties amending it, to

the communist mentality of those who wrote it. He suggests that this mentality is evidence

that Romania is 'behind' Europe – a condition that he suggests will have to change if

Romania intends to be integrated.

My contributors frequently present these distinctions between Romania and Europe as

a rationale for change. One contributor outlines this relationship between Europe and

change:

> 6.10 Romanian political practice is very different from the European one.
> Here the government will just abolish a law. That makes it difficult to amend
> the constitution. Both NATO and the EU demand constitutional change
> and this is a good thing. Plus the constitution has been in place now for ten
> years and we know that it needs to be changed.

For my contributor, it is the centralized and authoritarian political culture in Romania that

distinguishes it from the West. He states that this quality is responsible for the difficulty in

amending the constitution, despite pressure from the EU. Although, I would argue,

constitutions are necessarily difficult to amend, my contributor reveals his perception of the

state as both authoritarian and exclusionary. In particular, it is a state that is considered

hostile to minority groups due to insecurity about its (historically) fluctuating borders.

Contested notions of history are therefore central to efforts to amend the constitution.

One contributor alludes to this historic legacy:

> 6.11 History makes Romanians nervous because they know the borders are
> unfair. We will never accept the borders as fair but we do accept them. In a
> united Europe we should think about regions and not countries. But right
> now we are in a Romania whose constitution doesn't even recognize us. We
> are not even accepted as a fact.

My contributor describes the borders that history has created as unfair yet accepted by the Hungarian minority. Despite this acknowledgment, she remains frustrated that the state does not recognize her. The only accepted 'fact', according to her, is that the Treaty of Trianon greatly increased Romania's territory. What remains unrecognized is that this border change also involved the creation of a large national minority in Transylvania.

The official remembrance of certain facts (the increase of Romania's territory) over others (the creation of a large national minority) has a distinct impact on Hungarian claims for autonomy. In particular, it highlights the Romanian state's reticence to loosen its hold on sovereignty, despite my contributor's emphasis on the legitimacy of Hungarian claims to autonomy in Transylvania. Given this reticence, the Hungarian minority is looking to engage alternate forces impacting state sovereignty. In particular they are hopeful that the pressures associated with European integration will be a catalyst to changing the political subject currently defined by the constitution. One contributor addresses the importance of Europe:

> 6.12 We did not vote on the constitution. We want to change it. And if there really exists a political intention of trying to become a European member, then we have to harmonize our constitution with the rest of Europe.

My contributor suggests that changing the constitution to include the Hungarian minority is contingent on Romania's inclusion into the European Union. Another contributor elaborates on the impact that Europe will have:

> 6.13 Well first of all, in the first constitution, we never accepted this constitution because of the first article where Romania is defined as a 'national' state. Our first demand was to remove this article. Anyway, it's a very archaic idea. No European state would have such a definition. If you want to be in Europe – I say this again and again – you have to be at the same level in a constitutional point of view as other member states. I think

we will succeed eventually in doing this but not in the first stage but in the second stage probably. My view is that we should be working toward an entirely new constitution – not modify the old one. We want a new constitution. We want a reformed constitution – not a modification. The whole thing must be changed. The best thing would be a new constitution without such tribal ideas.

Tellingly, my contributor describes the mindset behind Romania's constitution as 'tribal' and requiring modification if Romania is to be included into Europe. Nonetheless, another contributor acknowledges that this is an argument that does not necessarily hold sway within Romania:

6.14 When we said that the constitution is an old-fashioned one and Europe and the whole modern world asks us to change this constitution and throw away the terminology of 'national state' many Romanian politicians immediately took a stance against this. These politicians simply threw back the idea because they saw it as coming from the Hungarians. They keep telling us to be good Romanians.

My contributor suggests that Romanians interpret the Hungarian minority's desire to change the nationalistic language of the Romanian constitution as evidence of their lack of loyalty to the state. In response, he suggests that changing this language will improve Romania's chances at being included into Europe. He presents harmonizing the constitution with the rest of Europe as the rationale to have it amended.

By accessing an international body, the Hungarian minority attempts to increase their legitimacy with a state that refuses to recognize them. One contributor expands on this role of the international:

6.15 Our constitution states that in Romania there are only Romanians. I think this will change, though nobody really wants to change it right now. I mean no Romanian wants to change it. The political elite has to prepare themselves for this debate. They fear it because it would be something different. The national myth is so strong here. Things are starting to change though. They've accepted some of our claims because they see our party as a

group of responsible politicians doing what they say they will do. Changing
these things takes time.

Despite initial resistance to these changes, my contributor is optimistic about the possibility

for future amendments. Another contributor suggests that there are also practical reasons to

pursue change:

> 6.16 I think the constitution must be modified. Ten years of experience has
> shown that it's absolutely inefficient and it's not effective. For instance we
> have two chambers and each of these chambers make the same decision. We
> debate everything twice – there's no sense to it. The Senate must have its
> own authority and the Parliament should be the main legislative core. We
> have a lot of ideas about the basic ideas about human rights. These things
> need to be more specific. We have at the level of the declaration some very
> nice words – but we have no guarantees. I know people say that in the
> constitution the basic laws cannot be very specific. But I don't mean more
> specificity, I mean more guarantees of human rights. Not only at the level of
> national minorities. We have a lot of problems here in the judicial system.
> These things need to change. We have a very big problem – it will be hard
> right now. But sooner or later we'll need to make some changes. For
> example, the definition of state sovereignty will have to change if we are a
> part of Europe – you must give some of that up I think.

What my contributor highlights – and what I would suggest is at the heart of these debates

about the constitution – is that Hungarian claims for recognition are perceived as a direct

challenge to state sovereignty. To respond to this criticism, my contributors couch their

claims within the discourse of an expanded Europe – a goal that is shared by Hungarian and

Romanian politicians alike. Rather than challenge the state – which would surely generate a

negative reaction - they engage the international and global pressures that are already

impacting state sovereignty. What this tension highlights is that sovereignty, the founding

principle for the state system, is itself constructed and contestable. The following section will

provide a historical background to the concept of sovereignty and statehood as a way to

begin discussing the possibility to devolve power and make a place for Hungarian autonomy within Romania.

Sovereignty

The state system emerged from 'absolute' monarchies of the 15th to 18th centuries of Europe through: the growing coincidence of territorial boundaries with a uniform system of rule; the centralization of administrative power; the extension of fiscal management; the formalization of state relations through diplomacy; and the development of a standing army (Held 1995, 36). The crisis behind traditional forms of legitimacy as represented in the Reformation, created space for innovation (Held 1995, 69). This innovation became solidified in the newly secular concept of 'sovereignty' as the principle legitimizing political power. State formation through absolutism therefore increased variability among states whilst simultaneously attempting to reduce social, economic and cultural variation within states. According to Kaldor (1998, 91) the emergence of a sovereign system assured a zone of domestic stability within states at the price of an international order based on conflict between states. The nation-state thus subordinated religion to the state and sovereignty came to reside in the 'nation' (Calinger 1994, 14). Solving two problems simultaneously, the nation-state established a democratic mode of legitimation based on the social integration made possible by nationalism (Habermas 1996, 284). Precisely how the nation is defined is therefore central to its legitimacy.

The emergence of secular sovereignty, as the central concept underlying international relations, is attributed to the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 (Kaldor 1998, 94; Bishai 1998, 163). Sovereignty became contingent on the domestic legitimacy of states and their mutual

recognition by other, equally sovereign, states. The classical doctrine suggests that no one can be the subject of more than one sovereign; that only one sovereign can prevail within a given territory; and that the bond between citizens and the sovereign excludes aliens (Linklater 1998, 129). Nation-states, as imagined political communities, were both limited within territorial boundaries and sovereign within those boundaries (Anderson 1983, 6).

Following the French and American Revolutions, sovereignty became contingent not only on territory, but also on the consent of the 'people'. Defining who the relevant 'people' were within this given territory forged a link between popular sovereignty and nationalism within liberal theories of the 'state' (Bishai 1998, 163). Sovereignty, as a concept became sedimented within the territorial boundaries of the nation-state. Precisely *who* comprised the relevant political subject, within these territorial boundaries, is therefore central to the exercise of sovereignty. Nationalism became a useful tool to delineate this subject: it clarified the boundaries of the nation-state by denying rights to those identified as outsiders (Bishai 1998, 164).[122] This coupling of 'nation' with 'state' had the potential to be: "A formula for ethnic purification or at least hostile intolerance" (Bishai 1998, 160).

Sovereignty therefore evolved in order to defend state borders from external threats. Given this genesis, the system was ill-equipped to deal with the problem of internal conflicts (Bishai 1998, 158; Linklater 1998, 132). These internal conflicts and the challenge they posed to 'sovereignty' were therefore approached from the same vantage point as external threats, creating an adversarial relationship between the state and minority nations. The difference, however, between the notion of external and internal threat, I suggest, is an

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[122] This denial reached its apotheosis in the principle of 'self-determination' elaborated at the Treaty of Versailles and the great potential it allowed for exclusion (Bishai 1998, 174).

important one. Namely, relations between states are moderated through the international

codification of equal sovereignty of states; relations between states and minority groups are

not characterized by equality and as such there is great potential for abuses of power given

the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. This deficit in the ability of states to

respond to minority claims, suggests that:

> "A new conception of sovereignty must be recognized – one with
> cooperative and overlapping layers that reflects the reality of human social
> identities rather than imposing an absolute and necessarily conflictual one."
> (Bishai 1998, 161) [123]

This assertion suggests that moderating internal conflicts may require that states relinquish

their complete monopoly on political control and authority.

Before addressing how state sovereignty might be reconceived to accommodate

minority claims, it is necessary to look at the particular challenge the historically centralized

Romanian state poses to this possibility.

The State's Interest

The perception of the Romanian state as a monolithic and unquestioned authority is

outlined in this anecdote:

> 6.17 Let me give you one example about how people view the state, in
> general. There is a guy who has been arrested by the police because they
> think he has committed a burglary. Legally that's all. Every police crew is at
> the police and they are filming this guy, they are sticking his microphone into
> his mouth and saying, tell us what you did, confess in public. Whenever I
> spoke to my Romanian friends about this I said 'come on that's a gross
> violation of people's individual rights. I said I wouldn't like to see myself on
> TV with handcuffs'. And they say why? They say, it's very educational,

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[123] The word sovereignty is plagued by notions of absolutism due to its historic roots in the sovereign
power of the King. Nonetheless, it is impossible to speak of the 'absolute' sovereignty of states, in
part, because the principle of equality of states limits the sovereign rights of others (Hannum 1990,
15).

> people should learn that they should not do that. They will learn. And I said
> come on guys you don't get it. And they say what? You don't get it, they say,
> it's in the 'interest of the state'. So you see that's the point in many situations
> people tend not to think about their rights. But they are very concerned
> about the 'state'.

My contributor gives the impression that the state's interest supercedes all other interests; in

this case, individual rights. He implies that the activities of the state are legitimized not

through any kind of legal code, but simply by the state seeming to act in its own interest.

What this 'interest' is remains vague and indefinable. When I press him to clarify he

continues:

> 6.18 It's 'Oh the country, the country'. There is this idea, this sort of entity
> that is called 'the interest of the state'. It's not exactly the raison d'état but its
> something so vague that nobody can define what it is. So basically everybody
> says that something must be done in the 'interest of the state'.

It is precisely the vagueness that he attributes to this notion of state 'interest', that allows it

to assert control in the ideological field. Following Žižek (1989), state interest can be

considered a reified concept that masks inconsistencies and contradictions within the

ideological field itself.[124] In particular, the conflation of the state with the 'unity' of the

Romanian people shows precisely how this ideology has taken hold: "An ideology is really

'holding us' only when we do not feel any opposition between it and reality – that is, when

the ideology succeeds in determining the mode of our everyday experience of reality itself"

(Žižek 1989, 49). According to my contributors, the reality of Romania's diversity is masked

by the illusion of unity represented in the constitution. Importantly, this illusion structures

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[124] According to Žižek (1989, 45) ideology is an 'illusion' or fantasy-construction which structures our real social relations, hiding an insupportable kernel or antagonism – namely the traumatic social division that resists symbolization. Following Žižek (1989, 33) the structuring power of this ideological fantasy can be best conveyed in a rephrasing of Marx 'they do not know it but they are doing it' to 'they know very well what they are doing, but they are still doing it."

concrete power relations. Whether the constitution is a true representation of Romanian

beliefs is inconsequential – what is important here is how my contributors encounter the

ideology of the state and the power relations that support it.

Constructing the Hungarians as a 'threat' gives credence to this ideological fantasy of

Romanian state unity. Alternately stated, the impossibility of an organic and united state is

masked by the 'Hungarian threat'. The power assured by acting in the 'state's interest' is

facilitated through its lack of definition, further allowing it to assert hegemonic control.

Taussig (1992) uses the metaphor of a 'nervous system' to describe the fetish power of the

state - "might not the whole point be its fictive harmony?" As such, the Hungarian minority

has had to develop a concrete strategy to respond to the state, and to avoid being subsumed

by this fictive harmony. One contributor addresses this fear of being subsumed:

> 6.19 I do suspect that being given the opportunity they would subsume us.
> You see that from an exclusively political point of view I cannot condemn
> them. I mean eventually, when you've got these national minorities within
> your countries it means a whole lot of countries are interested in what you do
> internally. Now if you've got a minority of 2 million people, which is about
> 10 % then it means that the whole of bloody Europe is quite interested in
> what you do internally. So for them it would be easier to know that there are
> no Hungarians.

For my contributor, it is precisely this fear that drives the Hungarian minority to maintain a

separation between themselves and the state as a constitutive feature of their 'distinctive'

identity. She is also aware, however, that this separation also allows nationalists to

convincingly portray them as a threat.

The historically centralized Romanian state, defined in national terms, is one that the

Hungarian minority directly encounters as 'other' in their quest for inclusion. My

contributors embrace their identity as different from that of the nationally defined state, yet

make subtle attempts to mitigate the potential accusations (of threat) generated by this difference. Despite their presence in parliament, they consider themselves political outsiders – a position that is easily credited given the content of the Romanian constitution and the historic legacy of a highly centralized and nationalistic state. Although the DAHR is represented in the parliament, and it could be argued is within the state's structures and functions, only one contributor expressed the view that the Hungarian minority is actually a part of the state:

> 6.20 This state is not oppressive like it was before 1989. We are also part of the state so we cannot say that the Hungarians and the state are two different things. I think that this view is important to improving things.

Contrasting this view, the majority of those interviewed do not view themselves as a part of the state. As highlighted in conversations about the constitution, most consider themselves explicitly excluded. Therefore my contributors are not so much arguing for *inclusion* into the state per se as they are arguing for *access* to the power that legitimizes the state. A degree of antagonism is therefore central to advancing their claims and is also central to maintaining this distinction between them and the state.

This antagonism is a reality of the democratic game (Mouffe, 2000) – yet it is considered distinctly threatening to a state founded on the 'unity' of the Romanian people. As described by a previous contributor, the goal of the DAHR is to be 'partners' with the state rather than 'a part of' the state. To do so, requires that the state relinquish its monopoly on sovereignty and as such Hungarian narratives about the state focus on its 'centralized' character. One contributor provides insight into how she perceives the state:

> 6.21 It's difficult to say what my relationship is with the state. But I think that if the state would realize that decentralization and human rights, minority rights are important. Not because we are asking but because if they want to

> belong to a democratic world, Western Europe say, then it's a necessity. If two million Hungarians decided that they were Irish suddenly, and demanded Irish schools, the state should provide them. It isn't up to the state to decide my identity – that is up to me. If the Romanian state would realize this, they would realize they should change – not just because Europe wants them to. But there are signs that Romania wants to change – think of the protocol. But there are a lot of signs that keep me skeptical – like the bad quality of roads in Hungarian regions.

My contributor suggests that devolving power and granting minority rights would greatly improve the relationship of the Hungarian minority to the state. Further, she suggests that these changes are necessary if the Romanian state wishes to be democratic and accepted by Western Europe (*read* integrated into Europe). By contesting the prescribed unity of the Romanian constitution, my contributor is engaged in a democratic exercise directed toward redefining who is entitled to recognition from the state. She asserts that her identity is her democratic *right* – a fact that remains unrecognized by the (*read* undemocratic) Romanian state. She does, however, cite some positive changes – namely, the protocol agreements between the DAHR and the ruling party (PSD) since 2000 (outlined in Chapter One).

These agreements between the Hungarian minority and the ruling PSD party are an example of a democratic dialogue between the state and the Hungarian minority. Despite the positive impact of this dialogue, there is evidence that the content of these protocol agreements, over the past three years, has changed notably. In 2001 the protocol agreement was dominated by specific policy recommendations in favour of Hungarian demands. In contrast, the 2002 protocol was not divided into specific policy domains but was much more general and contained a significant increase in neutral statements (Szász 2003, 108).[125] The

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[125] For example 18.75% of the content of the 2000 Protocol Agreement were positive statements about multiculturalism. In contrast, positive statements about multiculturalism had decreased to 2.35% overall content in the 2002 agreement.

2002 protocol was focused around the general concept of decentralization – a factor that

Szász (2003, 109) attributes to Romania's eagerness to join the European Union. He suggests

that the current cabinet headed by Nastase is characterized by administrative centralism,

despite an articulated interest in decentralization. Further, Szász (2003, 109) suggests that the

DAHR-PSD collaboration protocols can no longer be considered to have a 'democratizing'

effect, due to a number of recent illiberal, undemocratic laws.[126]

The main issue, according to the Hungarian minority, continues to be the centralized

character of the state. One contributor describes this centralized character of the state and its

corresponding unwillingness to share power:

> 6.22 The greatest struggle in the system is devolution - giving a bigger role to
> local elected government. There is resistance to this idea. Probably because
> real decentralization also means letting go of money at the local level. It
> means that local taxes stay in the area.

My contributor suggests that devolving power would necessarily have a positive economic

impact on the state. According to another contributor, it would also have a positive impact

on the Hungarian minority in Transylvania:

> 6.23 In Transylvania in the last two years there is a need for the articulation
> of the regional interest. Because people realize, no matter if they are
> Hungarians, or Romanians, or Germans or Slovaks or other ethnic groups,
> they realize that Romania is an extremely centralized country as state
> administration goes and the interest of Bucharest is to collect money and to
> not give it back. Or to give it back they need money to give it back. We
> have to pay a bribe – when you corrupt somebody – to give back the money.
> People are starting to realize this. But the regional interest is not articulated
> on the political level. We started that. Our alliance is oriented to represent
> the regional interest of Transylvania. Now we started the discussion of the
> budget and my alliance started to compare the money distributed for
> counties from Transylvania and the money distributed to other parts of the
> country and we observe again in fact that Transylvania is ignored by the

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[126] For example, ambiguity in the Law on Classified Information could endanger freedom of the
press; and the legislative package on corruption has been weakened (Szász 2003, 110).

centre. Transylvania, the region that gives more than half of the GDP of the country, is ignored. So it's not an ethnic issue, its business but there is ground level propaganda that: no regionalism is needed because Hungarian regional entities will be created, and Hungarians will become dangerous for the country.

When discussing the pragmatics of devolving power, my contributor emphasizes that the region of Transylvania is central to Hungarian claims. Specifically, his claim is framed in terms of 'regional interest' – coupling together both ethnicity and place. This link, I would argue, is somewhat strategic – by emphasizing the diversity found within all Romania's regions, he is able to suggest that devolving power would benefit *all* Romanians. According to another contributor, this is a change that Bucharest, the centre, opposes:

> 6.24 They don't want to decentralize because then they will lose jobs in Bucharest. Of course, decentralization in Romania today means that you have all the rights to make changes in the regions, but you can't because the money stays in Bucharest. It's still who you know in the government that dictates if you get money. If there was a green light from the authorities to have autonomy in the central part of the country I would be very happy. When you are fighting just to keep your identity, you can't plan for a better future – for both Romanians and Hungarians.

Although my contributor emphasizes that the discourse may appear to be in favour of decentralization, that a lack of economic resources means it is impossible to exercise local autonomy. He nevertheless describes 'autonomy' as central to a democratic future.

In sum, the argument made by my contributors in favour of recognition for the Hungarian minority fits all the claims outlined by Tully (2001, 15): 1/ they suggest that the present form of constitutional recognition of their identity is non-recognition; 2/ they suggest that this is an injustice; 3/ they suggest that the proposed new form of recognition, framed in terms of autonomy, is just; 4/ and by linking the goal of autonomy to a democratic future within Europe, they further imply that providing recognition would allow

the overall constitutional identity of Romanian society to be more just and more stable. The following section will focus on this last claim and explore how 'autonomy' is articulated and framed in terms of movement toward a 'better' future for all Romanians.

Autonomy

I have previously described the nebulous concept of 'state-interest' – whose difficulty to define is precisely its strength in asserting ideological control. To this, I would suggest, my contributors have responded with the notion of 'autonomy' – a concept equally difficult to pin down, providing a flexible response to the hegemonic forces of state interest. My contributors describe 'autonomy' as the desired outcome of Hungarian claims for rights and equality based on the concept of difference. They direct this discussion of autonomy toward expanding the political subject formally identified by the Romanian state to include Hungarians. One contributor elaborates on how autonomy is defined:

> 6.25 In the alliance they are such diverse opinions that I don't think anyone can define what they mean by 'autonomy' perfectly. Everybody means something different by personal, cultural, and territorial autonomy. What is certain though is that individual rights are not enough.

According to my contributor, autonomy exists at a number of different levels – personal, cultural, and territorial – and has a multiplicity of meanings. Each of these levels has a wide range of impacts: on individual freedom, belonging in community, and belonging to a concrete 'place' respectively. 'Autonomy' as such, becomes an exercise of freedom, and directly challenges the state's definition of the relevant political subject - the united Romanian people. Discussions of autonomy are therefore simultaneously discussions of how power is exercised. Another contributor describes this relationship between power and autonomy:

> 6.26 The politicians in Romania, those who rule the country, want to have a centralized power. It is too slow, some steps were done, but not enough. The Hungarian Alliance is very consistently asking for local autonomy. We say that the people have the right to decide themselves in their problems, at the local level, county level.

My contributor outlines autonomy as the ability to exert power at a local level. Nonetheless,

its consequences are not simply pragmatic, according to another contributor, it also has

ideological implications:

> 6.27 Yes it's practical. But decentralization is also ideological. I want to be my own boss in my own garden. Of course there is a fear – in part because of the Palestinians. The idea that if they give us autonomy it will lead to something bad. But this is our duty to convince the Romanians that this won't happen. If I had the power or the money I would send all the politicians to study the Western European system. After the revolution, all people knew about the West was through television. In the parliament now I would say that 80% were involved in the former system. Just think of Iliescu – he invited the miners in 1990. I think we need another 10 to 15 years to have a new political class.

My contributor links an inability to accept decentralization - or share power - to the former

communist legacy. He suggests that 80% of the current politicians are former party

members[127] – a fact that is confounding the possibility for ideological changes in favour of

decentralization. What he leaves unstated, though implied, by referring to Iliescu's invitation

to the miners and the ensuing violence, is that this legacy is also confounding ideological

changes in favour of *democracy*. Despite the impediments faced, another contributor argues

that the Hungarians remain committed to pursuing autonomy through legal channels:

> 6.28 We don't want to be in a violent situation, to use violence to get into parliament. We only want our rights respected. This means the right to use your maternal language, to be taught in your maternal language at all levels, to use your language when dealing with administration, the courts. And having the right to make decisions over things that affect your life. These are the reasons why we are in parliament - to gain autonomy over our culture.

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[127] This estimate is high.

This means that all people who belong to this community have the right to make decisions in cultural, educational and other realms. In terms of territorial autonomy, we mean autonomy for the local administration.

But these terms are unacceptable to Romanians - the word self-government is not well-received. For Romanians self-government is the most evil thing in the world. So we say 'autonomy of the local public administrations'. They don't accept that local administrations in a region have a right to make decisions about things that affect them. The Romanians think that all government has to happen from Bucharest. Right now, we can only do things if Bucharest agrees. Our conception is totally different. We believe that for all the decisions that affect a local community need to be approved by the community. For local self-government to occur we need direct local financing. Right now all taxes are centralised - they go to Bucharest first and then get distributed.

My contributor defines autonomy as the freedom to make 'decisions over things that affect your life' – a vague yet all-encompassing assertion. He outlines two main categories for autonomy, namely culture and territory. His argument for autonomy, based on culture and territory, has undeniable political implications. Notably, his claims are directed toward achieving self-government. Nonetheless, my contributor emphasizes that the term 'self-government' is unacceptable to Romanians and therefore uses the less-threatening word 'autonomy'. Nonetheless, for another contributor even the less contentious term 'autonomy' evokes a negative response:

6.29 We don't dare mention autonomy much, because it instantly produces a negative response. What we mean is cultural autonomy, personal autonomy, and local autonomy. That's for smaller communities and means more responsibility given to local communities. It means they would have the possibility to deal with and resolve their own problems. And I think our striving for autonomy would converge with what the European union advocates. I think these ideas are perfectly compatible in Romania. If we continue decentralization, which is partly imposed by the accession process, and a little bit imposed on the ruling party by us as well. If we continue with that then we have a good chance. And I don't see any reason why, in Romania, it wouldn't work.

My contributor suggests that although 'autonomy' evokes a negative response from Romanians, it remains achievable. The reason for his optimism is that he believes that local autonomy converges with the goals of the European Union. Specifically, Romania desires membership in the EU, and therefore Romania will have to adopt these same values, despite the negative reaction the word 'autonomy' continues to provoke. The Hungarians are hopeful about the decentralization that is imposed by the accession process. This process presents a larger web of 'interest' beyond that of state sovereignty and is described by another contributor as a direct challenge to the absolute power exerted by the state over those within its territory:

> 6.30 Yes we're hopeful, but at the same time I don't think autonomy will be a community thing it will be more like a territorial thing. So it will not depend upon whether it's for Hungarians or not. It will be territorial. It could be a beginning. Because inter-ethnic relations are generally good and so I don't see why it won't work at a territorial level. There are a lot of mixed marriages, the separation between Romanians and Hungarians is not clear.

Importantly, my contributor describes inter-ethnic relations in Transylvania as quite good. Given these good relations, he suggests that the first step toward decentralization be territorial. Nonetheless, this coupling of autonomy with territory is precisely what causes a negative reaction from the Romanian state. Given this reaction, another contributor attempts to link Hungarian interests to regional interests within Romania.

> 6.31 I think that there is a huge overwhelming majority of Hungarians in Romania that think that it's useless to think about border issues. That it's nonsense because, especially in Transylvania, people live together and the overwhelming majority of people in Transylvania are Romanian. But at the same time we think that we can solve Transylvania's problems better than the present party because local autonomy, in the large sense of the word - I mean region - would be very useful for us because there are some differences between Moldavia and Transylvania. In the next twelve or ten years we have a lot of problems to solve - the judicial, and constitutional, problems. In the meantime we must improve social attitudes.

My contributor suggests that Romanians and Hungarians live well together, as a strategy to counter the dominant nationalist rhetoric that is focused on social division. She suggests that, unlike what is stated in the constitution, one not need be Romanian to be part of a united Romania. In contrast, she suggests that there is unity among diverse groups in Romania.

Despite this unity, the notion of difference remains the basis for Hungarian claims for autonomy. Nonetheless, a large part of this difference is described as derived from the region of Transylvania – a region they also share with Romanians – allowing my contributors to align themselves regionally as well as culturally. The notion of difference, as it underlies their claims for autonomy, is simultaneously cultural and territorial. As a political strategy arguing for regional autonomy, for both Hungarians and Romanians, is considered less threatening. What is implied, however, is that once territorial decentralization occurs, cultural autonomy will naturally follow.

One contributor describes this process in simple and direct terms:

> 6.32 We want autonomy for us, autonomy for the regions, Romania in
> NATO and in the EU.

For my contributor, culture, territory and global forces are intertwined in the process of 'decentralization', which he prioritizes as: 1/ Autonomy for the Hungarian minority; 2/ Autonomy for the different regions of Romania; and 3/ Romania within NATO and the EU. Although his first two assertions are clearly related given the concentration of the Hungarian community within the region of Transylvania; the link he makes between Hungarian autonomy and Romania being accepted by NATO and the EU is revealing. Specifically, he is recognizing that Romanian state interests are currently impacted by larger

global forces. State sovereignty over autonomy is being eroded from above – a process that

the Hungarians view as creating an opportunity to advance their own claims against the state.

Another contributor describes this approach in greater detail:

> 6.33 The strong roots of nationalism in this country, the fears and
> nightmares of Romanians to lose a part of their national territory make
> progress very difficult. But, I think that the special political situation of the
> country, the basic choice of Romania – basic trend maybe, not choice – basic
> trend is to go west. We try to use this basic trend to obtain our specific
> minority cause. Speaking with our Romanian colleagues in parliament: 'okay
> if you want to be part of this distinguished club, let's say council of Europe
> or EU or NATO, you must behave.' The rule is…and so on and so on. And
> all the time we use this kind of rhetoric, this kind of political action. In the
> meantime, we try to elaborate a special, specific Hungarian program inside of
> the country. Because it's not true that there is in Europe or somewhere in
> this whole earth a unitary accepted minority policy. It's a joke only. There's
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> minimal level is not enough and never was. Because all the time we make
> references to international regulation, to this minimal level of accepted by
> Helsinki etc.. But all the time we declare, there is a community who has
> special needs. The main field of battles is this notion of autonomy: local
> autonomy, cultural autonomy, personal autonomy. These were the main
> battlefields in these 11 years after the so-called revolution.

My contributor outlines the strategy to frame Hungarian claims for autonomy as part of the

process of Romania orienting West and becoming a part of Western structures. He makes

this link to Western European goals to counter Romanian nationalist discourse. Despite this

political strategy, my contributor remains skeptical that Western Europe has itself

demonstrated a successful way of responding to minority claims. He suggests that the only

general consensus on minority rights is in the Helsinki agreements and that the foundation

for this agreement was human rights (*read* individual) rather than minority rights (*read*

collective).[128] My contributor suggests that individual human rights are not enough – and that the Hungarian community must advance claims for local, cultural and personal autonomy. Europe, according to another contributor, remains the catalyst:

> 6.34 The most important issue is to let the different regions of Romania be autonomous. Not independent countries. But to let them have regional contacts with different regions of Europe – because this is the mainstream now in Europe.

This view that a new 'Europe' will liberate regions from the centralized Romanian state will be elaborated further in the following chapter. For now we will return to my contributors definitions of the subject deserving formal state recognition, in contrast to that currently recognized.

The Autonomous Subject

Although my contributors attempt to moderate the perceived threat that this discourse on autonomy poses by framing their goals within those of a united Europe, they nonetheless encounter resistances. One contributor elaborates:

> 6.35 Important issues cannot be discussed. There are many taboos in Romanian public opinion. This is not a normal society in these terms. We cannot discuss important issues connected with modernization of the society, the future of the society. We cannot discuss for example questions connected to regionalism, federalism, autonomy or other historical taboos. Those actors who have tried to put these issues on the table of public opinion, they were strongly sanctioned against.

Again, my contributor draws attention to what she perceives as abnormality within Romanian society. For her, this abnormality makes it impossible to speak of certain issues, in

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particular, issues that appear to threaten state sovereignty such as decentralization.

Nonetheless, another contributor argues that autonomy need not be perceived negatively:

> 6.36 I think in Western Europe there are positive examples of autonomy, absolutely progressive models, not static. The perception in Romania, actually, is that these problems could be resolved by a single law, and we would resolve them indefinitely. Or that by inviting the Hungarians' Alliance to government, in 1996, between 97 and 2000... we resolved the minority problem, because the Hungarians are in the government. This is an absolutely wrong and pathological perception, because this kind of relationship can only be changed in many years, with many measures, by changing mentalities, and having a package of laws. I don't know how familiar you are with the history of South Tirol, or of Åland Islands, or the Faroe Islands. These progressive models have found that autonomy is achieved by treaties, in a contractual situation between the community and the government, or between two governments. For example, the Åland Islands have a Swedish speaking population. It is between the Swedish and Finland, and they have a fairly large autonomy, and their status has been ratified by the United Nations. What is very interesting here is that ethnic autonomy came to be also a financial regional autonomy, so 90 % of the taxes stay at the regional level. In my country, we are lucky, because no minority group wants to fight violently for freedom. But the majority of the Hungarians accept that our situation could be consolidated by different forms of autonomy. Unfortunately, the issue of autonomy cannot be discussed with our Romanian partners. We can discuss on different laws, on different topics, but autonomy is taboo.

My contributor highlights the danger inherent to solving minority issues with simplistic

answers. He suggests that is impossible to make one law to deal definitively with minority

issues and to think otherwise would be misguided. His assertion resonates with Tully (2001,

6): "Struggles over recognition do not admit of a definitive solution." The unstated intention

of creating a law to deal definitively with minority issues would be that these claims, and by

extension that these groups, would disappear. Through this approach, who deserves

recognition by the Romanian state would remain unchanged: the law would simply become a

more sophisticated means to negate the existence of minority groups. Following Mouffe

(2000), I would suggest that this perspective – that minority issues can be resolved

My contributor suggests that although 'autonomy' evokes a negative response from Romanians, it remains achievable. The reason for his optimism is that he believes that local autonomy converges with the goals of the European Union. Specifically, Romania desires membership in the EU, and therefore Romania will have to adopt these same values, despite the negative reaction the word 'autonomy' continues to provoke. The Hungarians are hopeful about the decentralization that is imposed by the accession process. This process presents a larger web of 'interest' beyond that of state sovereignty and is described by another contributor as a direct challenge to the absolute power exerted by the state over those within its territory:

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My contributor highlights the danger inherent to solving minority issues with simplistic answers. He suggests that is impossible to make one law to deal definitively with minority issues and to think otherwise would be misguided. His assertion resonates with Tully (2001, 6): "Struggles over recognition do not admit of a definitive solution." The unstated intention of creating a law to deal definitively with minority issues would be that these claims, and by extension that these groups, would disappear. Through this approach, who deserves recognition by the Romanian state would remain unchanged: the law would simply become a more sophisticated means to negate the existence of minority groups. Following Mouffe (2000), I would suggest that this perspective – that minority issues can be resolved

definitively and singularly – would involve closing down the democratic space itself by

resolving the antagonisms that are integral to democracy.[129]

Responding to the perception of the state's attitude toward autonomy, my contributor

suggests that minority groups should negotiate contractually (*read* as partners) with the state.

Entering into such contractual negotiations, or partnerships, according to one contributor,

generates fear on the part of Romanians:

> 6.37 Areas that have a majority of Hungarians worry the Romanians. We call
> these areas 'Judets' because you can't even say the word 'region' here without
> the Romanians getting angry. This is considered a bad word. Because in the
> few years after WW2 began there existed a region that was Hungarian and
> autonomous. It's clear that if these two regions are autonomous that they
> should perhaps be self-governing. It should at least be recognized that they
> have a separate language. We think that this region should have autonomy in
> the same way that Quebec has autonomy.

My contributor suggests that not only the concept of autonomy, but also the interrelated

concept of region, generates anger on the part of Romanians. He describes this reaction

resulting from the historic legacy of Hungarian autonomy in Romania. The implication of

this legacy of autonomy, he suggests, is that it provides a historical basis for self-government.

By citing the example of Quebec – both a culturally and territorially autonomous province in

Canada – he explicitly links the goal of the Hungarian minority to self-government.[130] Self-

government, another contributor suggests, will require that the state relinquish its monopoly

on sovereignty:

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[129] Although in conditions of pluralism the relationship between groups is described as agonistic
(Mouffe 2000), disagreement is nonetheless legitimate because it is democratic (Tully 2001, 30). In a
democratic society, dissenters remain attached to society, despite disagreement, because it will be
open to future contestation.

[130] The implications of this link will be discussed in the following chapter in the context of
federalism.

> 6.38 The word autonomy does not ring nicely in the ears of those who have to give up some political power. But for us, we see that we give more tax than we get back. When you have administrative autonomy you can ensure that the roads are fixed. Plus, people can influence the local level more. But it would require trust and people would have to realize that we don't want to secede. This is what the nationalist parties are bargaining on – this fear.

Again, my contributor cites practical reasons as a basis for regional autonomy - namely, that local administration would be able to better address local issues. Regardless of the rationale, autonomy requires that the state give up a degree of political power, which also requires that they trust that the Hungarian minority would not push for seccession. Indeed, this was a constant theme in my interviews with the Hungarian minority - that they harbour no seccessionist goals.

Despite this assertion, the state continues to respond to the Hungarian minority as though they were a threat – denying them both official recognition and autonomy. According to one contributor, this construction of the Hungarian minority as a threat precludes any discussion of devolving power to the regions

> 6.39 But we cannot discuss for example about certain forms of autonomy, cultural autonomy, personal autonomy, like in Europe. We always quote for example, progressive western European examples like the state of the Swedish community in Finland and the treaty between Finland and Sweden because it influences all forms of autonomy – territorial autonomy, language rights, bilingualism, or the status of Germans in Belgium or the Spanish speaking populations in Germany or the German speaking population in Denmark. So there are many positive examples, such as Scotland. The devolution of Scotland is apparently not an ethnic issue. It's a regional issue but it's determined by cultural codes.

Interestingly, my contributor mentions Scotland as an example of regional autonomy that is not 'ethnic'. Nonetheless, he also suggests that the autonomy of this region is determined by cultural codes. According to my contributors, Transylvania as a region also possesses a unique cultural, historical and political heritage that is intrinsically bound to the identity of

the Hungarian minority. Despite these parallels to other regions of Europe, another contributor describes how the notion of autonomy remains a pariah for Romanian politicians:

> 6.40 So there is no normal discourse about this, no Romanian politician will assume the responsibility to discuss openly about this. There are intellectuals, progressive thinkers coming from civil society. They are very few. The mayor of Iasi, in 98 announced that he wanted to create a party of Moldavians and he was considered foreign agent, mentally ill. Somebody said that he never read the constitution of Romania just because he announced that he wants to create a regional party. And this was the mainstream. So this is I think the pathology of Romanian society. Like a human being who is disturbed, mentally disturbed and you cannot discuss different issues with him because he became angry or aggressive. So this is the biggest issue for me. That political culture or people's minds are changing too slowly. This is the tragedy of Romania.

A common refrain, my contributor refers to the perceived abnormalities of Romanian society that make it impossible to discuss certain issues. His anecdote about the Mayor of Iasi again alludes to the overwhelming negative reaction to initiatives that run counter to the 'interests' of the highly centralized Romanian state. Further, the perspective that a concept of regions is an affront to the constitution embodies this 'pathology'. My contributor suggests that this defense of the constitution is the mainstream, suggesting that the pace of change in Romania toward a more tolerant and inclusive society is much too slow. Despite these slow changes, the Hungarian minority remains committed to pursuing autonomy within Romania. Nonetheless, their relationship to the state – specifically, their negation by the state – requires that they look elsewhere for recognition.

Finding Recognition

The perceived foundation of the state, being based on absolute sovereignty, gives the illusion of fixedness. The conceptual link between sovereignty and territory is strong; yet,

territorial sovereignty has been fluid in this region due to the legacy of changing borders.

Despite the fluidity (or rather in spite of it) my contributors describe great resistance on the

part of the state to re-imagining political authority. Nonetheless, sovereignty and the

principle of mutual non-intervention can no longer shield states from responding to internal

minority claims (Bishai 1998, 178). Processes of globalization suggest that the 'nation-state',

in its nineteenth century form, and its monopoly on sovereignty is no longer adequate as the

dominant political institution (Kaldor 1996, 9; Guéhenno 1995, 14). Uncoupling the

territory, nation, state nexus requires acknowledging that sovereignty is itself contingent and

flexible. Linklater (1998, 117) suggests that the recognition of sovereignty itself be

contingent on constitutional guarantees for minority rights.

The norm of 'sovereignty', itself, is now changing in international law to a commitment

to democratic governance (Crawford and Marks 1998, 85). According to Connolly (1991,

202): "The state receives its highest contemporary legitimation when it presents a democratic

appearance." Importantly, there is an emerging consensus that democratic governance also

requires that the state engage in dialogue with those groups that exist within its territory yet

are excluded from political power.[131] This phenomenon of internal exclusion, I have

suggested, is far more damaging to democracy than the possibility that these groups will

attempt to secede from the state. Violent responses are more likely in the desperate

conditions generated by a lack of recognition by the state.

The persistence of minority claims suggests that multinational democracies must move

beyond the "sterile politics of mutual negation" (McRoberts 2003, v). These narratives

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[131] According to Kymlicka (1998, 144) there is a growing acceptance of the internationalization of
minority rights and that it is a legitimate and necessary state function to protect minority nations.

challenge the Romanian state to develop a political language for belonging that, rather than searching for unity, recognizes diversity. Autonomy for the Hungarian minority would represent a partnership with the state – and therefore requires that the state relinquish its monopoly on sovereignty. The devolution of sovereignty *within* states would allow for improved autonomy:

> "Personal and political autonomy is in some real sense the right to be different and to be left alone; to preserve, protect, and promote values which are beyond the legitimate reach of the rest of society." (Hannum 1990, 4).

Hannum (1990, 4) suggests that an independent state is not necessary to achieve this autonomy: rather, the devolution of meaningful power or the adoption of a federal system is adequate.[132]

Situated within the context of global pressures on the state, the following chapter will outline the possibility to devolve power in Romania by engaging in a discussion of federalism.

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[132] This assertion resonates with the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling on the Secession of Quebec. According to the court, external self-determination or secession is only entitled if a people are blocked from a meaningful exercise of their right to internal self-determination (Tully 2001, 31).

CHAPTER 7

Federalism varies widely among countries and as such it has resisted precise definition

(Watts 1994, 6; Kymlicka and Raviot 1997, 10). As a political framework, federalism was a

means to reconcile larger states with the identity of smaller political units (Watts 1994, 3). In

this sense, federalism forces a distinction to be made between state and nation, challenging

their common coincidence (Guibernau 2003, 117). In general terms it can be defined as a

political system involving a constitutionally-entrenched division of powers on a territorial

basis, between a central government and subunits (Kymlicka and Raviot 1997, 10). As a

constitutionally defined power-sharing arrangement, federalism gives institutional primacy to

territorial divisions (Whitaker 1992, 181).[133]

Since 1990, there has been a renewed interest in federalism as a way to manage conflict

in multinational democracies.[134] This renewed interest is intimately linked to increasing

global and local pressures on the state – and as Watts (1994, 5) asserts, is practical rather

than ideological.[135] For multinational states, these practical benefits are evident in

federalism's ability to simultaneously promote larger state unity while allowing a degree of

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[133] Although it is defined on territorial divisions, these divisions may represent the interests of minority nations making the federal system 'multinational'. This is the case in Canada, with its concept of asymmetrical federalism for Quebec. Nonetheless, this is not the case in the United states whereby each state represents an equal territorial unit. In this sense, federalism can be territorial though not necessarily multinational (Kymlicka and Raviot 1997, 19).

[134] Consociationalism is another possible way to manage diversity. Nonetheless, as a form of elite accommodation of 'subcultures', consociationalism by its very definition does not allow for autonomy (McRoberts 2003, vii).

[135] Other factors influencing this renewed interest are: Eastern Europe's revolutions against centralized regimes; the resilience of classical federations; and confidence in Europe's federal evolution (Watts, 1994).

recognition to minority groups (Simeon and Conway 2001, 338). According to Linz (1997, 15; cited in Simeon and Conway, 2001) when attempting to resolve minority conflicts in multinational democracies we should be thinking of federalism, rather than self-determination, as a less conflictual and ultimately more democratic solution. Despite this moderating potential, it is important to note that federalism is not a panacea that will eradicate ethnocultural conflict (Kymlicka and Raviot 1997, 23). Federalism's logic of disengagement and separation (Simeon and Conway 2001, 339) may simply represent the best possibility for democratic management of ethnic conflict.

Despite its suitability for mediating between the demands of substate nationalities and the state, whether federalism represents a stable political solution remains a central concern. [136] Specifically, federalism's position at the midpoint between secession and centralization has led to suggestions that it simply represents a transitional political system (Kymlicka and Raviot 1997, 22). Nonetheless, the durability and resilience of the classic federations (such as the USA, Canada and Switzerland) suggests otherwise. Additionally, although federalism itself may not necessarily be stable, neither is ignoring the claims of national minorities. Watts (1994, 23) reminds us that although federations may be difficult to govern, the reason the federal system was adopted in the first place was likely in response to this difficulty. Federalism can therefore be considered an effective means to stabilize decentralized government structures (Ferejohn 1998, 2).[137]

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[136] According to Kymlicka (2002, 14) multinational federalism is considered a failure from both a statist perspective (where ensuring the integrity of state borders is the priority) and a communitarian perspective (by institutionalising differences within state structures). From the liberal democratic perspective (based on the criteria of freedom, security, democratic rights and prosperity) it succeeds.

[137] Kymlicka (2001b) emphasizes that federalism and territorial autonomy are best regarded as 'tools' to be applied to the problem of ethnocultural conflict

Although decentralization of central state structures provides substate nations with a degree of recognition, it does not necessarily provide these nations with autonomy (McRoberts 2003, vii). In contrast, within federal systems autonomy is codified within the constitution. Nonetheless, federalism does not necessarily guarantee recognition for these internal nations and may simply be based on territory rather than any cultural or national differences. McRoberts (2003, viii) emphasizes that only in some cases (such as Belgium and India) is federalism exclusively multinational. For example, in the case of Canada, federalism is both multinational (in the case of Quebec) and territorial (in the case of the other provinces). The Canadian case therefore represents a form of asymmetrical federalism, whereby Quebec is (albeit tacitly) recognized as a distinct nation (see Gagnon, 2001).[138] This Canadian example highlights the difficulties inherent to asymmetrical federalism – frequently viewed as a challenge to the state's own legitimacy.[139]

Despite this challenge, multinational federalism has been largely successful at improving: peace and individual security; democracy; individual rights; economic prosperity and inter-group equality (Kymlicka 2002, 11).[140] To be successful, however, a federal system must adequately address the reality of the society in question. Specifically, a federal system requires that the normative and institutional framework for territorial autonomy be

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[138] Thus far this recognition for Quebec is somewhat tacit. As evidenced in the failed Meech Lake Accord there is great reticence on the part of the other Canadian provinces to recognize that Canadian federalism has both multinational and territorial components.

[139] For an outline of the moral foundations of asymmetrical federalism in Canada see Gagnon (2001).

[140] It is important to note however, that these successes were achieved by a degree of disengagement between groups rather than by encouraging dialogue between them. In other words, although the state itself may be more just, inter-group relations may be more strained (Kymlicka 2002, 13).The phrase 'two solitudes' is frequently used to describe the relations between French and English Canadians.

appropriate to the context (Requejo 2003, 32) and that there be a supportive political culture

(Watts 1994, 6). This political culture would foster: cooperation and consent; respect for

difference; and the recognition of multiple identities and loyalties (Kymlicka and Raviot

1997, 21). According to Simeon and Conway (2001, 360) there are also institutional

conditions under which federalism is more likely to succeed.[141] Importantly, they suggest that

federalism requires integrative counterweights – both societal and institutional factors – that

will accommodate dual loyalties.[142] Additionally, society must be willing to temper majority

rule and allow the institutionalization of difference:

> "Modern federalism is an institutionalization of the formal limitation of the
> national majority will as the legitimate ground for legislation. A functioning
> federal system denies by its very processes that the national majority is the
> efficient expression of the sovereignty of the people." (Whitaker 1992, 167)

This limitation on majority rule will only be effective if there is respect for constitutional

norms that take into account both commonality and difference.

Federalism, as a way to deconstruct sovereignty, therefore stands in stark contrast to

the 'unitary' nation- state (Whitaker 1992, 165-167) and, for our purposes, runs contrary to

the definition of the state specified in the Romanian constitution. By asserting a 'unitary,

national and indivisible' state the constitution effectively precludes any discussion of

territorial autonomy or federalism in Romania. Within this document, the loyalty of national

minorities is contingent on their willingness to denounce territorial autonomy (Kymlicka

2001b, 366). Given the definitions elaborated in the constitution, any proposal for territorial

autonomy or federalism on the part of the Hungarian minority can be interpreted as a

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[141] For example, they state that the divided and decentralized Canadian system is less stable than the more interdependent German system.

[142] Civil society is an important factor nurturing both commonality and difference.

potential security threat. Otherwise framed, asserting that Romania is a *multinational* state

contests the constitutional definition of the state and can be considered a direct assault on

state integrity.

This potential to be accused of disloyalty was apparent when I spoke with people about

the possibility for federalism in Romania. Most people in the DAHR were very reticent to

address this possibility directly, preferring to couch it in the more general terms of

'autonomy' out of fear of being labeled separatists. Territorial autonomy nonetheless remains

central to the DAHRs political goals. One contributor outlines this position:

> 7.1 It is important to see, from the very first moment, that federalism is the
> system defining the relationship between different regions and the state.
> Autonomy of different groups means defining a relationship between groups,
> even if they are not living in the same region. The whole process of
> decentralization and federalization started 5 years ago. In 1999, my Alliance,
> accepted a proposal to include in our program a new chapter, about
> representation of the regional interest of Transylvania. Because we are not
> only Hungarians, we are also Transylvanians. So we have special interests in
> our relations with Bucharest, sometimes against Bucharest coming from
> Transylvania.

My contributor distinguishes here between territorial autonomy - the relationship between a

specific region and the state - and the non-territorial autonomy of different groups. He

clearly states that regional (*read* territorial) interest is an integral aspect of the DAHR's claims.

They are at once Hungarian *and* Transylvanian – conveying both a cultural and a

regional/territorially derived identity. Given this link between culture and region, territorial

autonomy features prominently in Hungarian claims. Another contributor elaborates on the

importance of 'federalism':

> 7.2 The idea of federalism is very important for us. For the moment it's very
> difficult to talk about it, because now, most of the politicians, even the
> politicians in the ruling party think that we are talking about the
> federalization of the country, and they are afraid of that. But some steps have

been made, and we are speaking about 8 economic regions in Romania, it's a law, it will work, they will see that it's normal.

There are big differences between the regions in Romania, if you will go by car from Bucharest to Oradea, for instance, after passing the Carpathians, you will see a different architecture, a different system of values. Why ? Because in Transylvania there was the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it was a different mentality, which was a mixture of Hungarian, Romanian and German influences. Here, outside the Carpathians, they were dominated by the Russians, of the Ukrainians, or the Cossacks most of the time, and the southern Dobrogea was occupied by the Turks for more than 400 years. So the mentality here, in the south, is a Balkanic one, on the east is Russian, and in Transylvania you have the German one.

My contributor distinguishes here between the 'idea' of federalism and its realization in practice. She states that while the idea of federalism remains important to the Hungarians, it is considered distinctly threatening to Romanian politicians. Despite this fear, she states that some steps have been taken toward its practical realization; specifically, the identification of regions in Romania. These regions are defined according to divergent historical experiences of empire – the Austro-Hungarian, the Russian, and the Ottoman. Transylvania is the only region in Romania that is described as having a 'European' history due to its experience in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The impression given is that Transylvania can provide a bridge to facilitate Romania's entry into the EU.

Although different historical experiences delineate regions, my contributors are frustrated by reticence to discuss a territorial basis to autonomy in Romania. One contributor describes this reticence in blunt terms:

Well federalism is anathema over here. And the idea is history again.

My contributor states plainly that federalism is not something that can easily be discussed. He describes history as the backdrop against which these future political possibilities are

imagined, or in this case negated. When I ask him to elaborate on what he means by

anathema, he continues:

> 7.3 It is an absolute fear to talk about federalism. One of my Romanian colleagues told me "We cannot discuss normally about federalism, because Hungarians are in Transylvania." This is a paranoid feeling, absolutely abnormal. The responsibility of the Romanian leaders is to explain to the people that nobody wants to change the border, nobody wants to steal Transylvania, but we have to modernize our country, even if, and especially if we have Hungarians and other minorities.
>
> So autonomy for minorities and administrative decentralization could be two parrallel processes. Because I can imagine a federal country in which minorities have no rights, theoretically. Or a centralized state in which we have laws adopted by the central government regarding the status of the minorities, without any territorial decentralization. But these processes should be developed in parrallel, simultaneously.

Again, my contributor suggests that it is the Hungarian presence in Transylvania – or more

specifically, the historical experience of Hungarian autonomy in Transylvania – that

precludes any discussions of federalism. He highlights the perception that the Hungarians

pose a threat to state borders – a position he describes as 'paranoid and abnormal'. This

perception of the 'abnormality' of the Romanian state was reiterated in many of my

interviews and was a great frustration to my contributors who hoped to modify their

relationship with the state. In order to counter accusations of the Hungarian threat to state

borders, my contributor links territorial autonomy to the modernization of the country.

Further, he suggests that it is 'irresponsible' of Romanian politicians not to educate the

population about decentralization as a necessary feature of modernization.

Another contributor describes this reticence on the part of both Romanian and

Hungarian politicians to engage in a discussion over territorial decentralization and

federalism:

> 7.4 Federalism was discussed by civil society, sporadically, but not officially by politicians. Some Hungarians, some of my colleagues are afraid to discuss federalism. We initiated a discussion about this. Some Hungarians said it is not our business, that 'without Romanians we cannot realize anything'. So it's not our business, let's leave the Romanians to do it. Which is crazy of course. But because we are a pluralist organization, we have internal resistance within the DAHR. That's ok. But I'm a federalist for example. Though everyone agrees that Transylvania is discriminated against by the budget, there is no consensus to put federalism, as an idea, on the table. We are accused that we are federalists because we are Hungarians, not because we are democrats.

My contributor highlights how, given this context, even Hungarian politicians are unwilling to initiate a discussion about federalism. He takes issue with this 'crazy' perspective, and colleagues who state that it is effectively up to the Romanians to decide the political future of the country. Nonetheless, he also contends that the plurality of positions represented by the DAHR makes it difficult to come to a consensus about federalism. This difficulty is not surprising given the overwhelming opposition territorial autonomy for Transylvania generates from Romanian politicians. Specifically, being described as a federalist is tantamount to an accusation of Hungarian disloyalty. My contributor suggests that proposing federalism should be considered a democratic initiative rather than a threat to the state. That the state is not open to even a discussion of federalism, I would suggest, calls into question its own democratic credentials. In this sense, Hungarian perceptions of federalism differ dramatically form their Romanian counterparts.

Despite these differences, my Hungarian counterparts consistently approached the topic of federalism cautiously. Due to the fear of being considered disloyal, a discussion of federalism with one contributor quickly reverts to a discussion of regionalism:

> 7.5 Between federalism and regionalism there is a huge difference. Because I am a very cautious politician I think the first step is the regions. As I told you there are huge differences between different regions of this country and I

think that the management can be improved in this framework of regionalism. Why? Because the level of the decision will be in the field, not in Bucharest. And in the field the decision makers are a part and understand very well the local mentality and we need these people to elaborate rules and decisions with respect for local mentalities. And I think it will be much more efficient and effective.

My contributor outlines the practical benefits to regional decision-making. Nonetheless, another contributor elaborates how decentralization is interpreted differently from the Romanian standpoint:

7.6 From the Romanian side I know federalism means separatism. For me it means the ability for local people to decide about the things that affect them. Instead of people who know nothing about a city or a region making all the decisions. They don't know even simple things like the climate. They can't make decisions from Bucharest.

My contributor suggests that for the Romanians, federalism means eventual secession – a dramatic gesture. In contrast, she describes federalism in more mundane terms, as a practical way to improve day-to-day life in Transylvania. She suggest that it is better able to bring governing closer to the people of the region – with the result being more appropriate and democratic government. Another contributor suggests that given these advantages, federalism deserves some attention:

7.7 Power to the regions makes sense economically in terms of local autonomy. I think it's a good idea. We need a serious debate on this issue. It's still at an ideas level. This idea of succession of Transylvania is a problem though. There is the view that Transylvania carries Romania. This talk of federalism is interesting but a bit premature I think. It has many political connotations relating to this fear of succession. It's a political issue but it's also a social, cultural, economic issue. But we need, at least, to be able to debate this without being attacked.

Although he views adopting federalism as 'premature', my contributor states that there should at least be the possibility for discussion. He is nonetheless aware that the link made

by Romanian politicians between federalism and secession, effectively precludes this

possibility.

Thus, there is a distinct gap in Romanian and Hungarian perceptions of federalism

that my contributors seek to bridge. One contributor describes this disjunct:

> 7.8 This is one of our tasks to explain that regionalism and federalism are not
> bad for the country. That it doesn't mean that Romanians will lose one km
> from their territory. This is the biggest fear of the Romanians - to lose
> territory. Some of them cannot understand that it is not possible anymore in
> this Europe, in this new world, to gain or to take territories from a country.
> That is the biggest challenge to make them believe. And to tell them that
> with regionalism or federalism things would be changed in a better way. It's
> not just an idea, it's been implemented places and they can see the positive
> impact that it has had.

> Romanians are afraid that Transylvania will want to separate. This is
> ridiculous. The closer we get to a united Europe borders just won't matter
> anymore. It will be regions that decide what is best for a population - best
> for both Hungarians and Romanians.

My contributor introduces the idea of belonging to Europe as a bridge between these two

mind-sets. Specifically, he suggests that an enlarged Europe will facilitate Hungarian

autonomy while precluding the possibility for succession. According to my contributor the

process of European enlargement is concomitant with the possibility for federalism.

Despite the stated goal of Romania 'to be integrated into Europe', my contributors

were perplexed by the extreme reactions they met when discussing federalism. One

contributor states that this is an impossible discussion to have with Romanian politicians:

> 7.9 Two months ago some intellectuals mentioned the word 'federalism'.
> There was a huge scandal. I think we should be able to debate these subjects.
> We need to think of the goal- of both Romanians and Hungarians- to
> integrate into the EU I feel stupid talking about nation states- in the new
> Europe these won't matter. Then we'll be talking about regions – I think
> that makes more sense.

Despite these strong reactions to the federal possibility, my contributor suggests that the possibility to belong to the European Union is the one goal uniting both Romanian and Hungarians, and is the first example of confluence between these two rival identities. The appeal of a new Europe, to my contributor, is his perception of the declining importance of 'nation-states' within this supranational body. In this sense, Europe represents a readjustment of the power relations between the Hungarians and Romanians from that between a minority group and the state to one of 'regional' partners. It is therefore the 'idea' of Europe, rather than the 'idea' of federalism that is articulated by my contributors, as an indirect means to advance claims for territorial autonomy.

Embracing Europe, a shared goal between Hungarians and Romanians, is therefore used to counter accusations of disloyalty and separatism. One contributor descries Europe as the catalyst for change:

> 7.10 Transylvania can be a kind of local engine of Romanian transformation, but for this we need much more complex rules of management. I think this kind of regionalism is a first step for me. I don't know if we'll become a federal state. It's not necessary. I think that if we were integrated in Europe, in that moment, regionalism will be something absolutely natural and this ancestral fear of regionalism will disappear. Because, if you are a part of Europe then it doesn't matter if you are a state or a region. It's the same thing.

According to my contributor, federalism itself ceases to be important in the context of European enlargement. He implies that an 'enlarged' Europe means that regions rather than states will be the 'natural' (*read* legitimate) political entity. According to his reasoning, belonging to Europe will lead to the practical realization of federalism – by leveling the power relations between regions and states. Another contributor elaborates on how the EU can foster regional development in Romania:

> 7.11 Romania should be a federation of 8 regions, 8 historical regions. The
> Romanian Government was asked by the EU to create different regions for
> development, because certain funds are offered by different institutions of
> the EU for regional development. If your country has no regions, you have
> no access to those funds. Somebody in Bucharest created 8 regions, based on
> the actual administrative structure of the country, having 42 counties, and
> this structure does not reflect totally the historically regional structure. You
> cannot just draw a region like that, because a region is formed during the
> centuries, economically, culturally, and so on. I think this is an important
> problem of the Romanian political elite today to answer this question: "What
> about the regions?". It is clear that Romania will not be able to be maintained
> as a centralized state, if we really think about NATO and E.U. integration,
> but how to reform it?

According to my contributor, through European enlargement the centralized Romanian state

will be impossible to sustain. He suggests that this possibility is forcing Romanian politicians

to confront the question – what about the regions? To do so, however, requires

considering the EU and its relationship to the regions. The following section will elaborate

how the 'regions' factor into the European project, and whether it might be a catalyst for

Hungarian autonomy in Transylvania.

A Europe of the Regions?

The European project emerged from the ashes of WW2, in an attempt to overcome the

devastating consequences of nationalism (Kraus 2003, 246).[143] Taking the diversity of

European states as its foundation, the Council of Europe set out to create the conditions of

peaceful coexistence through a regime of common values (Schumann 1994, 87). In response

to extreme nationalism, cultural diversity therefore became a constitutive feature of the

European *demos* – a value reaffirmed in the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) (Loughlin and

Keating 2003, 153). Coupled with this focus on diversity, a somewhat ambiguous 'principle

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[143] For a history of the EU see Plattner (2003).

of subsidiarity', was established to increase powers to subnational institutions (Downs 2002,

173).[144] This official recognition of diversity, coupled with the principle of subsidiarity has

greatly increased the symbolic importance of the subnational level within the EU, and has

led to much discussion of the possibility for a future 'Europe of the Regions'.

The process of European integration has effectively challenged the absolute position of

national governments thereby creating a degree of leverage for minority groups (Loughlin

and Keating 2003, 162). This challenge is manifest in regional demands for greater autonomy

from centralized state institutions (Downs 2002, 172). The EU therefore provides

opportunities for regions to act beyond national borders and engage in paradiplomacy

(Lecours and Moreno 2003, 275).[145] This effect, whereby global pressures provide an

opportunity for local and regional forms of autonomy, has been referred to as

'glocalization'.[146] Global economic forces favour regional development and therefore

regions are able to increase their autonomy (Keating 2001, 58).

Although there do appear to be changes in the importance of the regions facilitated by

the EU, Mayall (1994, 8) asserts that these should not be overstated. For example, a regional

focus is not evident in the institutional structure of the EU. According to Kraus (2003, 248):

> "The Union is a multi-layered and contradictory institutional field, marked by
> the thorny cohabitation of the two opposed principles of supranationalism
> and intergovernmentalism."

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[144] The principle of subsidiarity states that: "the Community shall take action, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member states" (in Plattner 2003, 46).

[145] Paradiplomacy is the international relations of regional governments. Interestingly, federalism is not deterministic of paradiplomacy; rather nationalism is (Lecours and Moreno 2003, 270). In this sense, paradiplomacy can be considered a nation-building strategy of subnational groups.

[146] See Robertson (1992).

The paradoxical effect of this institutional arrangement is to encourage subnational groups while simultaneously relying on member states to provide democratic legitimacy.[147] Democracy remains 'bound to the national' and therefore constrains the development of a democratic European polity (Kraus 2003, 249). Specifically, the equality of states prevails over the equality of citizens (Kraus 2003, 255). According to Downs (2002, 172) there is little evidence that the importance of central governments will decrease. The European project therefore seems to represent, at best, an attempt to achieve a federation of nation-states.[148]

Despite these criticisms, a 'Europe of the Regions' remains compelling for minority nations (see Jones and Keating, 1995). This new dynamic between the subnational, national and international is therefore not being fuelled by the institutional reality of European integration. Rather it is the symbolic possibility generated by a 'return' to Europe that is so compelling in Eastern Europe. The return to Europe is not so much a geographical concept as it is a political one (Kumar 2001, 80). Within this context, European enlargement becomes a narrative of progress linked to the possibility to modernize and democratize the region. That it is being described as a 'return' is somewhat misleading given that Romania has had no historical experience with democracy.

Although, in reality, the EU is a union of sovereign nation-states, the image that it encourages of a post-national Europe is particularly compelling to subnational groups.

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[147] Scharpf (1999) has highlighted the problems associated with this 'democratic deficit' for governing in Europe.

[148] Whether the EU has federal aspects or is simply an intergovernmental arrangement is debatable (Plattner 2003 outlines the debate). Rupnik (2004) suggests that an imperial or 'network' based Europe is more likely than a truly 'federal' Europe.

Keating (2001, 61) emphasizes that: "With the new transnational order, stateless nations may find symbolic sustenance for their nationality claims." In this sense, the reality of an enlarged Europe is not as important as the symbolic possibilities that it generates. Specifically, subnational claims gain legitimacy by being framed in European terms. By invoking Europe, regions assert themselves as an alternative 'frame of reference' to the state (Keating 1995, 8).

How important the region really is to the European project remains uncertain. Kraus (2003, 255) remains skeptical: "My guess is that the EU is far away from superseding nationalism" (also see Hedetoft 1999, 73). This assertion suggests that although 'Europe' provides symbolic sustenance to minority claims, it may provide little else. The process of European integration is characterized by ambiguity, described as a "journey rather than a destination" (Plattner 2003, 43). It is precisely this ambiguous quality that allows the meaning of an enlarged Europe to fluctuate according to one's position. As such, 'Europe' takes on a very specific meaning for the Hungarian minority in their quest for autonomy in Romania.

The following section will outline how the possibility for European enlargement is impacting Hungarian struggles for autonomy within Romania. Of central concern to this goal is that the promise of Europe may, in the end, be more compelling than the reality.

Imagining Europe, Imagining Democracy

The perception that Europe is a catalyst for regional development was consistently mentioned in my interviews. One contributor elaborates on this regional focus:

> 7.12 The most important thing is to let the different regions of Romania be autonomous. Not independent countries - but to allow regional contacts with different regions of Europe – because this is the mainstream now in Europe.

My contributor implies that it is not simply regional development but also regional

autonomy that is enabled by the European project. He perceives this autonomy as the

'mainstream' in Europe and something that Romania would greatly benefit from.

Nonetheless, there are inherent problems to discussing regionalism in Romania, in large part

due to the divergences between regions. Another contributor describes these differences:

> 7.13 They're making this Euro regional talk. This is a problem though as you
> go further and further into the east, the territories are less and less developed.
> Here again the Transylvania complex arises. But it isn't the fault of
> Transylvania that they have well-developed neighbors who they have good
> relations with. It's impossible to do that with the Ukrainians for example or
> with Bulgaria. And now there is the beginning of regional politics. I'm not
> sure how serious they are about the European Union or whether they're just
> doing in because they think they have to. These are some of the same people
> in there just trying to make a profit. I'm not sure that they really think that
> getting into Europe is necessary.

The 'Transylvania complex' he refers to is the fear that Transylvania will be more successful

than the other regions of Romania by virtue of its border with Hungary – a more 'developed'

neighbour than Bulgaria or the Ukraine. My contributor also expresses skepticism about the

pro-European stance of Romania politicians. He suggests that these people are more

interested in making money than they are in getting into Europe.

Europe is therefore viewed as a money making venture rather than a socio-cultural

transition toward democracy and stability. This is clearly a different view than that expressed

by my contributors:

> 7.14 Hungarians are looking forward to a united Europe - a Europe where
> borders have no importance, don't carry that much significance.

For my contributor, it is the possibility to be released from the 'importance' of borders that

makes Europe fundamental to Hungarian goals. Plainly stated, Europe will release him from

the consequences of living, as a minority, within the borders of the Romanian state. This

interchange with another contributor aptly conveys the importance of Europe to Hungarian

politicians in Romania:

> 7.15 Now EU and NATO are the main issues in Romanian politics. First of
> all we need much more the EU and NATO then they need us.
>
> Julie- What do you need from them?
>
> Oh, almost everything (laughs).

My contributor suggests that the EU and NATO are currently the most important issues for

all of Romania's politicians.

Beyond elite interest, the Romanian population is also very positive about the

possibility to be included in the EU (Linden and Pohlman 2003, 322).[149] Europe has taken

on the symbolic role of saving Romanians from the difficult conditions of the transition

period and defending them against their historic threat, Russia.[150] Indeed, I witnessed the

importance of this issue while in Romania prior to their acceptance into NATO (at the

November 2003, Prague Summit) – where it was impossible to take a taxi without talking

about the pros and cons of NATO membership. At the time I was struck by the everyday

urgency conveyed about the desire to belong to these international bodies. Now that NATO

is no longer an issue, political attention is focused on gaining membership to the EU. One

contributor mentions how the DAHR has made European integration a central goal of its

platform:

> 7.16 Well the Hungarian minority was the first promoter of the EU. Our
> party went straight in that direction. Everybody knew that we were pro-
> Europe but nobody wanted to follow Europe at first. Slowly it's become

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[149] For Romanians the EU is the most trusted institution after the army and the Orthodox Church ((Linden and Pohlman 2003, 322)

[150] According to Mungiu-Pippidi (2004, 49) Russia's Cold War legacy lives on, reflected in its continued ambiguous status as both a "great power and a weak state."

> obvious that this is the only way to get somewhere. If not we have to choose
> between the older regime of Russian influence. You cannot stay in a gray
> zone between Russia and the EU. You have to belong somewhere.

My contributor suggests that the history of empire in the region makes belonging to Europe

so crucial to Romania's future. The location of these 'small' Eastern European states

between large imperial powers has meant that alliances have historically been central to

stability. According to my contributor, currently only two options remain for Romania:

Europe and Russia. The legacy of the past 60 years has made Russia an unpalatable option.

My contributor suggests that being 'somewhere' necessarily involves being in the West.

Despite this desire to orient west, many of my contributors mentioned the difficulties it

poses. In particular, there was a sense that Romania differs culturally and politically from

Europe. One contributor describes these differences:

> 7.17 Do I feel part of Europe? Yes and no. I don't feel that I'm very
> different from Europeans. But when I'm looking at say the draft laws I feel
> that we as a community are very far away. I mean twelve years later we still
> haven't fixed our constitution.

Although my contributor feels that he is like Europeans, when he looks at official political

documents (namely the constitution) he feels far away. He appears rather saddened by the

mental, if not geographic distance, between himself and the West. Despite this geographical

proximity to Europe's borders (the Schengen border (2004) is situated on Romania's border

with Hungary), another contributor highlights how differing mentalities make the gulf

between Romania and Europe vast:

> 7.18 I feel part of Europe already. When I was first asked to come to
> Bucharest my first reaction was oh my God no - because it was characterized
> as being Balkan with Balkan behaviors. Spitting in the street and throwing
> the trash. Unbelievable. And I've been here for three and a half years and I
> cannot accept and I cannot believe that people will throw their trash from
> the 10th floor or something as stupid as that. And I see how people from

the European Union react to seeing this. We have to get used to throwing
our trash into a trashcan. I really think that Romania should join the
European Union but I think we have to change a lot.

My contributor distinguishes herself, as someone who feels a part of Europe, from those

from Bucharest displaying 'Balkan-like' behaviour. She suggests this behaviour, such as

spitting, is distinctly non-Western and shocking to Europeans as well as herself.

Despite the perceived divergence between Hungarian and 'Balkan' behaviours, another

contributor describes Romania as a 'European' country:

> 7.19 I feel that we've always been part of Europe. Of course the whole
> Eastern bloc had this unfortunate period of communism. But even during
> communism some countries had a very open policy. Unfortunately
> Romania's dictatorship had an isolationist policy. It had relations with other
> regimes, similarly dictatorial. But as a population we've always been
> European, the entire population - Hungarians as well as Romanians. So I
> wouldn't say it's a return to Europe. Politically, even politically I would say
> we are European state. From the point of view of economic and social
> development it would be an improvement if we were admitted to Europe.

The link made by my contributor between Romania and Europe contrasts notably with

earlier discussions distinguishing Hungarians and Romanians according to their experience in

the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires respectively. It is therefore when discussing

the future, that my contributors describe the people of Romania - Hungarians and Romanian

alike - as European. They do, however, maintain that the Romanian political system is a non-

European one. This contributor suggests that it is an error then to speak of a 'return' to

Europe since the people themselves have always been European. Rather it is the history of

authoritarian regimes, or the political system, that is not European and needs to become

more democratic. Nonetheless, I would suggest, that the emergence of democracy in

Romania is not so much a return as it is an innovation.

This position of Romania fluctuating between East and West resonates with its history on the margin between empires. It is precisely this position that one contributor suggests makes Europe so very important to the Hungarians:

> 7.20 For the Hungarian minority, Europe means safety first of all, and then monetary advantages. And for me it means going to a commonplace, to democracy. It's the only way for us. Europe and the EU though are not the same for me. Europe for me is culture and history. A history I feel like I belong to. As a Hungarian I don't have any other choice than to go west.

According to my contributor, the EU is an institution that represents safety, security and democracy. Again, it is not the institution *per se* but rather the 'idea' of Europe that is so compelling for my contributor. She suggests that culturally and historically Hungarians are a part of Europe, which necessitates that they 'go west'. This idea of Europe and its relationship to the Hungarians was a constant theme. Another contributor conveys the importance of Europe in personal terms:

> 7.21 The idea of Europe is very important to me. I've seen the impact of international pressure on Romania - it's been huge - economically and politically. I think it's very important for Romania. The EU is a pressure for Romania but also a help. I don't really feel a part of Europe though. If you walk around and see the cities you may feel like we're in Europe. At other times you may talk to people and say 'Oh my god, no they're not'. Like South Africa to Vienna all in the same country.

Europe is important for my contributor precisely because of the positive impact that international pressure has had on Romania's domestic situation. She suggests that it has impacted the sovereignty of the centralized Romanian state and has improved prospects for Hungarian autonomy. Nonetheless, looking somewhat exasperated, my contributor relays that there are cultural differences that make her not quite feel a part of Europe. She suggests that Romania can be characterized on a continuum between South Africa and Vienna – South Africa demarcating ethnic strife and poverty and Vienna connoting culture, wealth

and cosmopolitanism. Her narrative portrays Romania on the border between progress and

backwardness. Another contributor discusses this need to modernize in terms of differences

between Hungarians and Romanians:

> 7.22 Hungarian people will always say that they want their life to be better.
> Romanian people have the slogan that 'I don't care what's happening, I just
> don't want to be worse'. They don't think it that it could be better, they just
> don't want it to be worse. This is not how a Hungarian thinks. It is a normal
> process for Hungarians to be integrated into NATO and the EU because
> they expect economic growth and change.

My contributor suggests that Hungarians are forward looking and embrace modernization.

Although he does not necessarily describe Romanians as backward, he does imply that they

are fatalistic when confronted with disappointing circumstances. For him, progress is a

normal process for Hungarians, while fatalism and pessimism, he implies, are the normal

state for Romanians.[151]

This perception of differences between Hungarians and Romanians quickly translates

into political differences. One contributor discusses the implications:

> 7.23 You know I am afraid that our fellow countrymen think that Europe
> simply means a higher living standard - more McDonalds more TV better
> apartments and flats, bigger cars. This is Europe in their mind. Whereas in
> our mind it's a kind of higher level of standard but only if there is a situation
> where you can respect the rules of democracy, a situation where you can
> respect the rules of democratic society. We want to feel this security for any
> citizen in a given state. This means democracy. I have my rights, I can be
> sure that no one can put me in jail or discriminate against me. Democracy, a
> higher level of democracy, that is Europe.

> We know we must work very seriously to achieve this level or standard. It's
> not a question of only material things, it's also a question of mentality. This is
> the basic problem for this country, the problem of social practice.

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[151] This discourse resonates with earlier discussion about religious and cultural differences.

My contributor suggests that these cultural differences have significant political effects. Namely, he implies that Europe to the Romanians is simply the possibility to improve material conditions through increased access to resources. In contrast, he states that although Europe may indeed result in material improvements; for the Hungarians Europe is foremost the possibility for democratic stability and security. My contributor suggests that social practice in Romania needs to be changed before this can be achieved. Despite this difficult task, one contributor displays a keen sense of optimism that change will be possible and that the Hungarian community has a large role to play in this process:

> 7.24 I'm optimistic. We have considerable chances to be integrated in NATO. And maybe in a decade we can achieve our basic goal to be integrated into the European Union. But the problem is the learning process. And I'm very proud that the Hungarian community has a lot to contribute to this learning process, to learning democracy. Investing in democracy. Because if you can, as a Romanian, for instance see that the Hungarian is a citizen like me, you will better understand your place in the larger community. But this developing and learning is not in terms of years it's in terms of decades.

My contributor suggests that the Hungarian community is central to the possibility for democracy in Romania. In other words, for Romania to be democratically legitimate it must negotiate a relationship with the Hungarian minority. Through this relationship with the Hungarian minority democracy will be 'learned' in Romania by creating a more just and inclusive political community. Acceptance of an enlarged political community is an essential component of European enlargement, and my contributor suggests it will be a test of Romania's ability to belong to such a community. He suggests that Romanian mentalities will become more tolerant, through their relationship with the Hungarians – what he considers a decades long, process.

Nonetheless, the Hungarian community has already seen the impact they have had in

encouraging Romania to be pro-Europe. One contributor outlines this achievement:

> 7.25 The accession to the European Union is very important. We have
> always been pro NATO and pro European Union and what they represent,
> from the very beginning. For our alliance accession would represent a
> guarantee for us, for democracy. That it will function well, that there is the
> rule of law, and that human rights and minority rights are respected, and that
> there's a market economy.
>
> We are very proud that our chances to be integrated into NATO are in a way
> the result of the DAHR. Because if Romania had an internal conflict, or
> inter-ethnic issue they would never ever be accepted in NATO. That means
> that we are real participants in this effort to move Romania into the Western
> hemisphere, the Western world of values. I am not interested in the military
> and political idea of NATO, I am interested in the Western system of
> democracy and values and therefore this movement for integration into
> NATO is very important for everybody, but most of all very important for us
> a minority. For a minority it is always important to be in a society that
> respects rights and so on.

My contributor described the DAHR as directly responsible for Romania's success in

NATO. In particular, he suggests that the DAHR's willingness to be partners with the state,

rather than in conflict with it, gave Romania the appearance of being 'ready' to belong to

NATO. His description of a 'partnership', was reiterated by many of my contributors when

they described the relationship they hoped to have with the state. According to this

contributor, it is not the military possibilities that belonging to NATO would enable that are

important to the Hungarian minority, but rather the Western system of democracy that is

endorsed by its member states. He describes NATO membership as a first step to symbolic

inclusion into the democratic West, and for the Hungarian minority, the possibility for

stability.

The stability engendered by democracy was frequently mentioned as a central goal of

the Hungarian community. Another contributor again describes history, as the necessary

impetus to orient West:

> 7.26 It is important because we are living in this region, not only because we
> are living in this country or we are Hungarians. This is, I think, a regional
> aim, or a regional identity. The source of the aim is a regional identity,
> because our region during the centuries, has been affected by war, many
> times the border has been broken by war, so we want economic welfare, and
> in our view, economic welfare, social stability, social security could be
> assured only if we have the security umbrella of the EU. Especially because
> of the past, of the way the communist system was created, of the part played
> by Russia, by the Soviet Union. Our countries felt under occupation, not
> necessarily under the occupation of foreign troups, but under the occupation
> of a human system.

My contributor suggests that the history of war, and the resulting border changes, make

economic and social stability so important to the Hungarian minority. Because of this past

and the uncertainty it generates, my contributor wishes to be within the 'security umbrella' of

the EU. He views this protection in terms of borders – where the vision of an all-

encompassing European border will provide protection for the Hungarian community that is

currently isolated within Romania's national borders. Borders themselves take on new

meaning for my contributors within the context of an enlarged Europe:

> 7.27 Now the international policy is not to change borders, not to start wars,
> but to find some peaceful solution. The peaceful solution is a united Europe,
> in which both nations and national minorities will have the same rights. This
> is the way we are going.

According to my contributor, within a united Europe borders would no longer represent the

possibility for *war*, an image in line with the concept of territorial sovereignty conceived in

the Treaty of Westphalia, but rather the possibility for *peace*. A peaceful solution would be

generated from equal power relations between the state and minority groups. In other

words, sovereignty itself would cease to be a defining principle of states within an enlarged

Europe.

Another contributor elaborates the role democracy plays in the possibility for equality:

> 7.28 Because we feel that the destiny of the country has not been decided yet.
> We are in Europe, and in the democratic world, but a very small deviation
> could be a big difference. A deviation when you are launching a satellite into
> space could be hundreds of kilometers. A deviation in Romania could
> endanger our democratic future. I think we have the whole establishment for
> democracy, but I don't think this establishment is consolidated and stable, as
> in UK or in Germany, or in France. We want to be sure that the future of the
> country, of the society is stable.

Although my contributor emphasizes that democratic institutions exist in Romania, the lack

of historical experience with democracy makes their consolidation uncertain – vulnerable

even to the smallest deviation. His vision of 'empty space' conveys vast and uncertain

possibilities for Romania's future.[152] Preventing deviations toward extremism therefore

requires inclusion into the overarching democratic European project. Another contributor

describes the security that Europe will provide:

> 7.29 Europe, here, now, in 2002, is safety and security. Security means, for
> us, progress. We are aware that, in our country, political extremism like Great
> Romania party, could be a danger.

My contributor suggests that the security provided by the EU is necessary due to the

domestic success of extremist political parties, such as the Greater Romania Party. Another

contributor describes the Romanian populace as vulnerable to this extremist appeal:

> 7.30 I'm a bit cynical about the electorate. In an election let's say that 50
> percent of the voters know the issue. All the rest of the voters go because
> they like someone's hair, they like the slogans, the propaganda. Or they want
> to punish somebody. How can one be sure of the party was elected for their
> policies and not for their PR? I mean in every country one of the easiest

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[152] A position perhaps historically justified given Romania's past democratic experience leading to
fascism.

ways to gain votes is to use racism – like Haider or Berlusconi. There is always the appeal of the populist. But what if such a party wins and worse what if such a party believes their platform. That's why I think it's necessary to have a supranational body.

According to my contributor, supranational bodies are required to moderate the negative impact of extremist political parties. This moderating role is necessary due to the social mindset currently in existence in Romania – reflected in the recent success of the Greater Romania Party. Another contributor conveys the absolute necessity of the EU to a democratic future in Romania:

> 7.31 There is a bright side and a dark side to European integration. The bright side is that you are accepted as a democratic civilized country. It also means that you will be able to develop economically – to live better and to travel. The dark side is that the mentality of a democratic civilized country is far away. This will take 50 years to achieve in Romania and maybe this is optimistic. I'm pessimistic. For example, we have to have police for the authorities. Right now we are in a strange cycle of control and over control.

My contributor highlights that the bright side associated with EU membership is the possibility for democracy. The dark side is that significant cultural changes within Romania are required for democracy to take root. My contributor is quite pessimistic about this possibility, citing the need to police even the authorities. In this sense, the basic features of a democratic system, such as the rule of law, remain beyond reach in Romania. Another contributor perceives the EU as necessary to steer the country in this direction:

> 7.32 The European union has two things to offer as I see it. Number one: a decent life with decent economics, social security, and decent pay. Number two: The very existence of a supranational but almost national power like the EU means that if there is a certain issue that due to internal restrictions can't be dealt with you can go to an international body. What this means is that when people complain to the politicians about decisions they've made the politicians can blame it on the European commission. This way your politicians can make more controversial decisions. For example, the European court of human rights had a tremendous impact on Romania where even the Romanian supreme court of justice didn't. In a way there's a

> new legitimizing body with the international community and the politicians
> don't really need the electorate.

My contributor states the EU would have an impact on Romanian politics by overriding state authority and enforcing controversial policies. He provides the European court of human rights as an example – an institution that legitimized decisions for politicians that were unpopular with the electorate. Interestingly, this possibility for politicians to make decisions *not* supported by the electorate could be described as undemocratic and therefore conflict with the perception of the EU as an institution that will advance democracy in Romania. In fact, it is this elite unelected decision making that has led to criticism of the 'democratic deficit' within the EU itself (see Plattner 2003, 54).

Interestingly, my contributors do not mention this democratic deficit. For democracy to be just and legitimate, according to the DAHR, it must accommodate pluralism even if this involves constraints on state sovereignty. There is a tacit perception among those interviewed that Europe is in favour of minority rights and that the democratic rights of minorities may even be on par with those of states within a united Europe. One contributor elaborates on Europe's rational approach to minority issues:

> 7.33 As a fact we are in Europe. As far as I can see Europe is trying to be
> rational about minority issues. When we have a big problem, a problem we
> can't decide in Romania, then we can take it to the European court.

Her implication is that Europe's 'rational' response exists in contrast to the (implied) irrational approach of the Romanian state. She considers the European court a route to circumvent state sovereignty that will allow controversial decisions to be made in favour of Hungarian claims. Further, another contributor suggests that it is Europe's responsibility to enforce these rights:

> 7.34 Yes for instance just think of this week's summit. The Jewish community just told the Romanian government that they must give back property taken over under Communism. I think the Romanian authorities often change their mind just because there is international pressure. We are in Europe and so it is also Europe's responsibility for Europe to solve problems in its house.

My contributor offers an example of the international community overriding Romania's sovereignty and enforcing an unpopular decision. He further suggests that without this pressure, such a decision would never have been made. The problem of property restitution is not described as a domestic issue; in contrast, it is described as 'Europe's responsibility' to enforce.[153]

Europe as Antidote?

One contributor did voice concern about Europe's ability to solve the Hungarian minority's problems in Romania:

> 7.35 Europe has not solved the minority problem. Take Ireland or Spain. In places other than Romania we have ethnic hatred. I don't think it's correct to ask Romania to solve these problems in ten years. It takes time and patience. It takes community work and pressure. All these are more effective if the alliance is involved in the act of government. You can make statements but you have to do something about them. That is why being in the parliament is important. Here we can change national consciousness, try to get funding for our schools, or for mother tongue use. Right now many Hungarians cannot write and read Hungarian. This diminishes them, they can't share the cultural values of their nation.

My contributor highlights minority problems in Europe as evidence that even in Europe there are no magic solutions. He states that for this reason the DAHR need to stay focused on domestic politics – that this is where they will make real gains. This position raises an

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[153] This perception of Europe's ability to enforce minority rights is overstated. Although indigenous rights are codified at the level of international law, there is no consensus on the rights of substate national groups. According to Kymlicka (2002, 6): "No international document has affirmed any principle of territorial autonomy or official language status for substate national groups."

important strategic question: is it more effective to work domestically to further claims, or

will these claims be better served by engaging international bodies? This is a question worthy

of further research – nonetheless, I would suspect the answer is a bit of both. Recent work

(see Szász, 2003) analyzing the protocol (2000-2002) agreements suggests that collaborating

with the government has decreased the prominence of Hungarian concerns in Romanian

politics, with little change in Hungarian circumstance. Additionally, collaborating with the

government makes it difficult to convince international bodies to then place pressure on this

same government.

Despite the role the DAHR has played in domestic politics, integrating into Europe

remains central to their goals. There is a tacit acknowledgment that the road to Europe will

not be easy, that it will involve sacrifice. Nonetheless, the sacrifice being referred to –

limitations on state sovereignty – is one that they are more than eager to make. This

particular sacrifice is one that, one contributor states, his Romanian counterparts are more

hesitant to make:

> 7.36 Ninety One per cent of Romanians want to join the EU. It has support,
> but they do not know what it means. They want to go there but they do not
> want to make sacrifices. They do not understand the process of being
> integrated, and how to get there. They just think that "when we will be in the
> EU everything will be fine". That's not the way it works. You have to give
> up some things in order to receive some. That's what more developed
> countries than us realized. Like Slovenia, have you been there? It's like Italy.
> We need the EU. Not only for monetary issues, but the market is an
> important part. But with EU integration you lose independence and
> sovereignty. Not just in financial terms.

My contributor maintains that the sacrifice that belonging to Europe entails is, quite

specifically, a loss of national independence or sovereignty – a sacrifice that he finds

invariably appealing. Nonetheless, he suggests that from the Romanian vantage point, it is

the financial possibilities that Europe represents that are most enticing. Similarly, Linden

and Pohlman (2003, 327) argue that the high level of trust Romanians have in the EU may

be related to a low level of knowledge about the consequences of the accession criteria. They

suggest that proximity to joining may increase negative attitudes toward the EU as domestic

decision-making is increasingly impacted.[154]

Despite the impact on state sovereignty that integrating into Europe will have on

Romania, one contributor is amazed that currently, even the ruling PSD government accepts

this process:

> 7.37 I think people in the PSD have changed a little because they are realizing
> that the only way Romania can develop is if they follow the European way.
> The problem is that they're the same people and people's behavior doesn't
> change in five years. There were voices for and against. Sometimes I feel
> that we're giving much more than we receive with this memorandum.
> They're promising and they say that yes we love Hungarians but they're using
> that as a tool or as a model to put in the shop to say to the others that 'see
> we are working together with the Hungarians'. Sometimes we're just like
> puppets. That is my feeling.

My contributor aptly describes the difficult position faced by Hungarian politicians, situated

on the border between Romania and Europe. He suggests that the DAHR has collaborated

with the PSD in order to increase Romania's chances of being accepted – a goal both parties

share. Nonetheless, there is also a sense that little has been gained domestically from these

agreements and that the Hungarians have become a 'shop window' for the Romanian

government's attempt to sell themselves to Europe. Thus, the DAHR has limited their

current ability to advance claims against the state, in the hope that these claims will be

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[154] For example, increased 'Euroscepticism' has been observed in the Czech Republic (see Linden
and Pohlman 2003). Rupnik (2004, 77) suggests that this is because Central Europeans no longer
view democracy as contingent on belonging to the EU.

addressed by future inclusion into Europe. This trade-off indicates the tacit belief that

integrating into Europe and minority claims are one and the same.

Another contributor describes this possibility for a democratic system that

accommodates minority rights as closely linked to international pressure:

> 7.38 I'm not an optimist, but a realist. It depends. Romania's history and
> policy was all the time very strongly influenced by the international situation.
> If there will be a common Europe and if, in general, national and minority
> and collective rights will be recognized and applied in Romania, they will not
> be doing it because they love the Hungarians, but because this is the
> international situation and they'll have to recognize them.

My contributor clearly states his view that without external pressure, the Romanian state will

never acknowledge Hungarian rights. He suggests that there is no great affection or trust

between these two identities and that therefore a third party able to create more equitable

relations between the two is necessary. This reliance on external forces to effect change in

Romania is described by another contributor as a risky venture:

> 7.39 Some people said that all great efforts in this country always come from
> the exterior, in all of history. But I think that you cannot accept to wait for
> external influences to do something good - expecting to be in Europe and
> then being pushed the right way. You must do something from your own
> experience and your own initiative. But it will be very difficult, we are in the
> first stages. We must invent a new social practice - how can the majority and
> minority work together?

My contributor takes issue with the assertion that change is only effected in Romania

through external agents. He suggests that it is necessary for Hungarians to take the initiative

to invent a new 'social practice' in Romania to improve relations between minorities and

majorities. He states that relying on Europe to influence this relationship is not sufficient.

Indeed, given that Hungarians have been negatively impacted by external influence (namely,

the Treaty of Trianon) it is interesting that, by and large, my contributors were

overwhelmingly positive about the role of the international. This positive attitude is perhaps

a desire to see the wrongs of Trianon righted. More likely it is a response to their

overwhelmingly negative experience with the Romanian state for the past 80 years. It is

therefore not international influence in general, but rather the specific link of the

international to a global discourse legitimating democracy that makes it so compelling. The

Hungarian interpretation of this democratic discourse is that it is explicitly in favour of

minority rights – a belief that is perhaps overly optimistic given the state of international law.

The possibility for international structures to positively influence majority/minority

relations was nonetheless reiterated by my contributors:

> 7.40 You cannot meet the criteria to be part of Europe without accepting the
> basic laws about the internal structure of society. If you accept the basic
> criteria of integration, I think almost automatically you must change your
> attitude about the relationship between majority and minority. But it's not
> easy. Take a look at Greek people. They are a part of Europe and yet they say
> that they have no national minorities. They are part of Europe – but only for
> a few years. It's a process, a long process.

My contributor makes a clear link between integrating into Europe and a changed attitude

toward majority/minority relations. For him, the idea of Europe is the necessary force to

change the negative 'mentality' toward the Hungarian minority in Romania so constantly

mentioned by my contributors. Nonetheless, in the Greek example - a European state that

does not acknowledge its national minorities – he alludes to minority problems in Europe

proper. Nonetheless, my contributor suggests that the Greek position can be attributed to its

recent membership. Notably he does not mention France, a longstanding EU member who

similarly does not acknowledge national minorities. Despite these examples contesting

positive perceptions of European attitudes toward minority groups, my contributor

continues to assert that belonging to 'Europe' is necessary to change Romanian mentalities.

His unstated hope is that a mental change would lead to concrete political changes and

perhaps, Hungarian autonomy

Revisiting Federalism

Federalism as a political system that would accommodate Hungarian aspirations again

emerges when exploring what a 'change in mentality' might look like politically. One

contributor takes up the topic of federalism directly:

> 7.41 We want some kind of federalism and to be understood. We are trying
> to make the Romanian people to understand that this is not a threat. All
> these elements are very important for next year, for Romania being part of
> the future of Europe. Everybody wants to be in Europe but they don't
> understand the risks and the obligations and what Romania will look like
> after we are integrated in Europe. And this is very important now. To me
> this is very positive.

Not only would Europe involve attitudinal changes, my contributor suggests that it would

also involve concrete political changes or 'some kind of federalism'. Importantly, he argues

that being 'understood' is central to these claims – something that would be made possible

through autonomy. Autonomy, which he frames in terms of federalism, would arise naturally

through European integration. Another contributor outlines this perception of the federal

possibility engendered by integration into Europe:

> 7.42 We are for European integration because we believe that in a united
> Europe, where countries are members of a large federation where all the
> nations are minorities and all the relationships between regions that are
> minorities are first of all European citizens. Our relationship with other
> Hungarians would improve. In NATO structures and European structures
> the extremist voices won't be tolerated.

My contributor describes a somewhat utopian vision of a united Europe – where majority

and minorities would simply be European citizens engaged in regionally based relationships.

Extremism would not exist and the national border between Transylvanian Hungarians and

Hungary proper would disappear. She continues:

> 7.43 But, we know that we are citizens of this country as well. If this country
> is poor then we too are poor. In this sense, our fate is shared with that of the
> Romanians.

Despite this European hope, my contributor recognizes with a certain resignation that,

currently, she is only a Romanian citizen and therefore shares the same fate as other

Romanians. On a more hopeful note, she suggests that this shared fate motivates her to

work toward an improved future for all Romanians within Europe.

It is perhaps this sense of shared fate – currently experienced in exclusively negative

terms (i.e. poor socioeconomic conditions) – that provides a bridge between Romanian and

Hungarian identity in Romania. Whether this shared sentiment toward Europe represents

the beginnings of a 'nested identity' between Romanians and Hungarians remains

questionable. A 'return to Europe' may simply represent the freedom to delineate differences

between these two groups and to consolidate these differences through regional autonomy

and political separation. Nonetheless, the differences between Romanians and Hungarians

are not nearly as clear as lines, past or present, on a map might suggest. One contributor

spoke directly of these lines:

> 7.44 You know sometimes everyone is tempted to believe the Huntington
> idea - the clash of civilizations - that our country is divided between the
> Orthodox and the Catholics. But I think that this idea is not quite real. We
> have a real possibility here to become a part of Europe because the
> Romanian people, the Romanian language, the Romanian culture is a
> European one. It's true that religiously they are part of the eastern orient, but
> in the point of view of culture they are part Western. In Transylvania we are
> a catalyst to help Romania assimilate much more quickly the Western values.
> If we can convince them that the minority in this country is not an alien and
> evil force against the Romanian state but is a part of Europe and he has some
> experience and he can add something to Romania's efforts to be accepted by

> Europe, then we have some chances to survive this short period. I think
> short period because we need ten or twenty years. If we succeed to maintain
> our identity for only ten years, or 15 years the problem of identity is solved.
> Because if Romania is accepted into the European Union all pressure will be
> changed because there will be a new dimension.

My contributor contests Huntington's (1996) simplistic portrayal of 'clashing civilizations'. Specifically, he suggests that the lines between cultures – in this case, Orthodox and Catholic – are not so clear. He re-iterates a position that was commonly mentioned by my contributors when asked about the future – that Romania is a European culture. This position deviates notably from discussions of the past where the Romanians are linked to the non-European East (the Balkans) in contrast to the Western Hungarians. This difference may also connote a shift in exclusive notions of belonging and identity to one framed in terms of a shared fate. Although the past represents 'difference', the future perhaps represents 'commonality', a place where the Romanian state and the Hungarian minority can belong equally and distinctly to a united Europe. What remains unstated but necessary to this vision is that Transylvania will provide a bridge between Romania and Europe through Hungarian autonomy. In other words, Hungarian autonomy in Transylvania is the key to realizing a shared democratic future in Europe. For democracy to exist, power relations between the Romanian state and the Hungarian minority must become more equitable.

According to this story, Transylvania, as a liminal space, exists on the border between West and East, between Hungarians and Romanians. Transylvania becomes both cause and effect on Romania's journey to belong to a united Europe. As cause Transylvania's history now belongs to both Hungarians and Romanians, and is therefore a catalyst for the 'social changes' required; in particular the acceptance of a larger political community necessitated by Europe. As effect, the legacy of border changes in Transylvania, responsible for dividing

Hungarians and Romanians will finally be traversed by a united Europe. Describing the

impact of this passage across borders, my contributor suggests that within a united Europe

identity will no longer matter. What he really means, I suggest, is that by facilitating regional

autonomy, Europe will release the Hungarian minority from the negative consequences of

the Romanian state and level power relations between the two. Another contributor

becomes quite impassioned when describing Europe's impact on Hungarian autonomy –

highlighting the importance of autonomy to his identity:

> 7.45 I am sick and tired of this question of identity being a political question.
> I want it to be a cultural one. You know. If I am part of Europe, to be
> French is a question of tradition, culture, language, just like you are a
> member of a very select club. I think in Canada it's not a very big issue,
> except Quebec, which federal state you are in. Of course, you are proud
> because you are German or English. And by preserving those languages you
> are a part of that select club but you are also part of Canada. I think that after
> these ten critical years I hope we will forget the tribal idea. The idea that 'this
> is mine, and I'll put my sign there and my flag there and its mine'. I used to
> say it was a reptilian philosophy because in the history of life the reptiles
> were the first to occupy a territory. To mark his territory. I think we are
> human beings and that we must have more values than to just put signs in
> the fields saying this is mine.

Plainly stated, my contributor wishes identity to be a purely cultural question rather than a

political one – a condition that would be satisfied by Hungarian autonomy.[155] What he

hopes is, precisely, that the lines between Romanian and Hungarian identity cease to be

important, cease to be demarcated by flags defining exclusive (territorial, political, cultural)

ownership. He suggests that this 'tribal' need to mark territory is useless, and that rather we

should be looking for common ground as human beings with shared values belonging to

both 'select clubs' and 'larger projects' such as nation-states. What he advocates therefore is

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[155] According to Hedetoft (1999, 90) culture has increased its importance because the "putty that
politics used to provide is coming unstuck at the seams in tandem with the apparent dislocation
between nation and state".

the simultaneous existence of difference and commonality. The role of shared values, he

suggests, will necessarily lead to a shared identity:

> 7.46 I don't know how my fellow countrymen see their place in time and
> history. I think we are very much tied to the past you know. And I feel we
> have some treasures from the future not from the past. By that I mean I
> think we have a lot of things to do. All this struggle here between majority
> and minority is a struggle to preserve some values. We have a heritage, we
> must preserve this heritage, and let's take this heritage and put it in a future
> Europe where these things will be much more valued than they are today. I
> think that a better standard of life is very important. I think that globalization
> will come and quickly improve our material life. But if we are only
> concentrated on material things, on the material level, we will be much
> poorer than we are now. And we are in a situation where our material life is
> already poor. Therefore I think the idea is to promote rules that make it
> easier to have cooperation between majority, minority and Europe. To build
> a very solid and stable economic situation in the whole of Europe - in which
> I dream we are a part. And only in this situation can you finish your mission -
> why we are here now to promote these values, to preserve this heritage.

Importantly, he suggests that 'dreaming' the future rather than reliving the past is central to

increased social, economic, and political stability. He argues that a united Europe will

preserve past values in such a way that they no longer compete or are placed in a zero sum

relationship with those of other groups. For him, Europe saves these values from extinction,

while simultaneously increasing their value. Improving material conditions is not enough –

he suggests that what is required is an improved relationship between the Romanian majority

and the Hungarian minority facilitated by 'Europe'.

My concluding remarks will address the possibility for him to gain what he dreams of

most – Hungarian autonomy in Transylvania, Romania and a new Europe.

CONCLUSION

- Expanding Latitude -

The relationship between state nationalism and minority nationalism has been described as "the most powerful dynamic in (and obstacle to) the newly democratizing countries of post-communist Europe" (Kymlicka and Straehle 1999, 66). Nonetheless, rather than view minority claims and democratic consolidation as interrelated processes, a paradox emerges when discussing the possibility for democracy in Eastern Europe. Specifically, there is a tendency to believe that the problem of minority nationalism will be solved through democratic consolidation:

> "In the ECE, many intellectuals and politicians are deeply pessimistic about the prospect that substate national groups can exercise territorial autonomy in accordance with liberal-democratic norms, yet are surprisingly optimistic that substate nationalism will simply disappear" (Kymlicka 2002, 19).

In contrast, western experience suggests that national minority claims for autonomy actually increase with liberalization and democratization (Kymlicka 2001b, 349). Rather than view these two issues as separate, responding to minority claims should be considered a necessary component of state modernization and democratization in Eastern Europe (Varady, 2001). This belief that national minorities are a security threat actually compromises the state's democratic practice (Kymlicka 2002, 20).

Establishing this link between minority rights and democracy begs the question: what might granting autonomy to this territorially-based national minority actually look like? Based on my extensive conversation with the party elite representing the Hungarian minority, federalism – or some sort of territorially based power-sharing arrangement - is one possible means to both accommodate pluralism and consolidate democracy in Romania. The

federal 'possibility' is one that also emerges when surveying the academic literature on how best to accommodate territorially-based national minorities. According to Simeon and Conway (2001, 364):

> "Short of repression, the territorial sharing of power that federalism represents seems essential in any formula for managing geographically concentrated ethnolinguistic divisions within the state. Federalism does not guarantee 'success' but it is hard to see any form of successful accommodation of multiple nations within a single state that does not include federalism"

Kymlicka (2001, 365) also argues that without territorial autonomy minority groups would inevitably be subject to long-term assimilation.

The consequences of adopting a federal system in Romania, however, are wide-ranging and beyond the scope of this dissertation. Federalism would have significant implications for all of Romania's citizens– not only the Hungarian minority in Transylvania. It would dramatically alter the relationship between elites in the central government and those at the regional level. It would impact other minority groups, and perhaps not address the concerns of minorities that are not regionally concentrated (i.e. the Roma). It would not only alter the place of Transylvania within Romania, but also that of other regions. Given the links made between federalism and separatism in the eyes of the Romanian majority, such a change would also meet with considerable resistance. For these reasons, exploring the federal possibility for Romania invites considerable further research, research that is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Nonetheless, it is within the scope of this dissertation to contemplate what a discussion of federalism – as perhaps the most entrenched political mechanism for power-sharing – reveals about current relations between the state and the Hungarian minority in Romania.

Specifically, considering the federal possibility is a useful exercise in exposing what is at stake in relations between these two groups. This discussion reveals: how power relations are currently conceived by the state and embodied in the constitution; how these conceptions of power might then be influenced by the claims made by the Hungarian minority; and how the state's resistance or acceptance of Hungarian claims for 'autonomy' - in other words, for power-sharing - might impact democratic consolidation in Romania.

There is great resistance in Eastern Europe to the idea of federalism or territorial autonomy for national minorities (Kymlicka 2002, 16). This skepticism exists even among Western organizations working in the region, who have advocated non-territorial rather than territorial based autonomy.[156] There is a perception that ethno-national groups in Eastern Europe are dispersed and therefore territorial based solutions will not work (Kymlicka 2002, 16). It has also been suggested that federalism and bilingualism are too costly. These explanations are simply not accurate. Some minorities in Eastern Europe are territorially concentrated, such as the Hungarian minority in Romania. In addition, the costs of federalism are overstated (Kymlicka 2002, 18).[157]

Objections to some sort of power-sharing arrangement, federal or otherwise, nonetheless reveal how the claims of minority nations are considered distinctly separate from the democratic practices of the Romanian state. In fact, the tacit assumption is that these two processes are antithetical: that minority nation claims actually place democracy in peril. This position is perhaps based on the premise that minority groups in the East are 'illiberal'

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[156] Max Van der Stoel, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities has advocated non-territorial autonomy (in Kymlicka 2001b, 361).

[157] Evidence suggests that bilingualism has negligible financial impact.

and therefore a threat to democratic consolidation (Kymlicka 2002, 18). Given the presence

of kin states, there is a further perception of minority groups as a disloyal 'fifth column'

(Kymlicka 2002, 19). The story goes: that because of the history of this region (namely

border changes), federalism, or some other form of territorially based decentralization, will

be inherently unstable.

In contrast, my interview partners explicitly linked their claims for autonomy to the

possibility for democracy in Romania. They therefore advocated a change in the 'mentality'

where minority claims are viewed isolation from democratic practices. Kymlicka (2002, 22)

also maintains that a change in mentalities is required for the activities of substate nations to

be viewed as a legitimate part of democratic politics. The consequences of such a mindset

become clear when framed negatively: believing that democratic consolidation and the

claims of minority nations are *not* linked is tantamount to embracing the exclusive and

essentialist definitions for belonging reflected in the official representations of the Romanian

state. Accommodating pluralism thereby becomes a democratic exercise, and one that can

take place *even* in this region.

Nonetheless, the difficult history of border changes in the region has led to a lack of

trust between majority and minority (Kymlicka 2001b, 360). As previously mentioned, trust

is necessary in a political system based on power-sharing – and is a quality lacking in

Romania's relationship with the Hungarian minority. Specifically, trust is compromised by

the majority's perception that territorial autonomy for the Hungarian minority in

Transylvania will necessarily lead to secession. According to Kymlicka (2001, 388) fear of

secession needs to be addressed before federalism can be perceived as a viable option.[158]

There is an acceptance in the West that political mobilization in favour of secession is a

legitimate activity (Kymlicka 2001b, 390). Despite this possibility Kymlicka (2001, 390)

asserts that democratic federalism reduces the possibility for secession.[159] Additionally, the

possibility for separation is unlikely due to demographic factors specific to this context: the

Hungarian minority is, quite simply, not a majority in Transylvania and therefore would

never gain a majority vote on secession. Additionally, my research clearly shows that

secession is not a goal of the DAHR.

This perception of threat nonetheless provides justification for a power structure

premised on domination, embodied in a highly centralized state, from which the Hungarian

minority is excluded. According to my contributors, one need not be outside the physical

territory of the state to be politically excluded. It is these internal lines of exclusion – less

visible than the territorial external lines of exclusion – that demarcate the nebulous terrain of

minority rights debates in Romania. Minority groups are told to support 'democratic

reformers' (Kymlicka 2001b, 358) – yet these same reformers are advocating a highly

centralized vision of the state. If democracy remains the goal, it is the deferral of minority

rights in Romania that is threatening this possibility.

Re-negotiating the terms of inclusion is a fundamental and ongoing task of democracy

(see Taylor, 1999 and Mouffe, 2000). As such, I regard this conversation between the

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[158] He suggests that the minority groups sign a 'loyalty' clause affirming their acceptance of state borders. Additionally, the neighbouring/kin country would then have to renounce irredentist claims. Kymlicka (2001, 388) states however that much of this has already been done in Eastern Europe with little improvement in the acceptance of territorial autonomy.

[159] This nonetheless requires that there be an acceptance of the possibility for secession. Kymlicka (2001, 392) suggests that this acceptance in the West is based on the belief that secession would not threaten the survival of the majority nation – in stark contrast to the outlook in Eastern Europe.

Hungarian minority and the state, directed toward expanding the terms of inclusion, as an

explicitly democratic exercise. Although ethnic relations in Romania are not characterized by

violence, I argue that the state's relationship with the Hungarian minority – the largest

minority group in Romania - is an integral measure of its democratic credentials. The

situation of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania - in particular, their relationship to the

state - remains of utmost importance to the democratic content of Romanian politics.[160]

Shutting down this conversation will lead to less democracy and less stability rather than

more.

Despite this claim, the chorus of voices advocating an increasingly centralized state as

an effective means to stabilize democracy in this region continues to sound. Only recently

this assertion was made by Alina Mungiu-Pippidi (2004), director of the Romanian Academic

Society,[161] in an article entitled "Beyond the New Borders". This article is an interesting

commentary on the impact of European expansion into a region where borders have

historically traveled "faster than people" (Mungiu-Pippidi 2004, 53). Mungiu-Pippidi (2004)

makes many astute observations to contradict Huntington's theory of clashing civilizations

and the inability of certain cultures to democratize. Huntington's ideas have been

appropriated on occasion as a rationale against European expansion into the East.[162] Mungiu

(2004, 55) contests this logic, arguing that when there are appropriate controls for economic

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[160] Kymlicka and Straehle (1999, 73) explicitly mention the Romanian state's current response to the Hungarian minority as an example of a state engaged in 'nation-destroying' activities.

[161] Dr. Mungiu is a significant voice in communicating post-revolutionary Romania to the West. She is also a consultant for the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program in the Balkans.

[162] Turkey has been the country most criticized for its cultural distance from Europe according to the lines advanced by Huntington.

development, whether one is Christian Orthodox or Muslim has little impact on beliefs about democracy. It is the legacy of communist rule – its duration and character – rather than religious or cultural difference that has a greater impact on attitudes toward democracy.

Given this view - that cultural difference does not preclude democratic tendencies - I would expect her to expand this positive view of diversity to the state itself. In stark contrast, she asserts precisely the opposite (2004, 55): that only "nation-states" have been successful at democratization and gaining membership into the EU, while multiethnic federations and ethnically disputed states have largely failed at both. Mungiu-Pippidi (2004, 56) goes on to suggest that some multiethnic states have fared reasonable well (including Romania), which she attributes to the following:

> "They are all unitary states and their political elites, as well as the
> international community, agreed to address the issue of multiethnicity as a
> minority problem…Their new constitutions define the nation in civic rather
> than ethnic terms, as consisting of individuals, not communities."

In contrast, I have found that it is precisely this unitary definition for the Romanian state, and its exclusive definition for legitimacy, that runs counter to democratic goals and is potentially destabilizing. Additionally, in the case of Romania, the political elite only chose to recognize the existence of minority nations as a result of international pressure (in particular, in response to their desire to gain access to the EU), rather than concomitant with. Further, my analysis of the Romanian constitution and Hungarian responses to it, contests Mungiu-Pippidi's (2004) assertion that the constitution is written in 'civic' rather than 'ethnic' language. Nonetheless, Mungiu-Pippidi (2004, 56) continues:

> "The first lesson regarding state-building in Eastern Europe, then, is that a
> successful transition requires a strong state and preferably a unitary one.
> Power sharing is all well and good, but it obviously cannot work if there is no
> power to share in the first place. Failure to grasp this simple truth is a thread

that runs through the history of post-communist state failure in Bosnia or Moldova."

In contrast, I suggest that it is the failure to grasp that power sharing is *essential* to just relations between national minorities and the state that has compromised successful transitions and led to state 'failure' in this region. Specifically, the desire to conjoin 'nation' with 'state', in the form of the unitary nation-state, has led to various forms of exclusion: discrimination, assimilation and at its most extreme, ethnic cleansing. It is this exclusion, embodied in the state, that has directly contributed to instability. The belief that 'there is no power to share in the first place' is used to justify excesses of power in an attempt to establish the strong 'unitary' state that Mungiu-Pippidi (2004) suggests is necessary for democracy. The notion of the 'weak state' becomes a powerful myth masking the pursuit of the unitary nation-state. It is the impossibility of this unitary nation-state, given the pluralism of Romania, and an inability to recognize it as such, that is destabilizing. Power itself, strong or weak, is exercised relationally and therefore abused in relative terms. Although these may be 'weak' states internationally, they are certainly not perceived as such by minority groups located within their borders.

Mungiu-Pippidi's (2004) position stands in contrast to the literature on divided and pluralistic societies and perhaps reveals a fundamental inability to conceive of these societies as pluralistic at all. In contrast, Lijphart (2004, 96) suggests: "In countries with deep ethnic and other cleavages...the interests and demands of communal groups can be accommodated *only* by the establishment of power sharing" (emphasis mine). Nonetheless, disclaiming statements proclaiming 'factors specific to this region' are frequently advanced as a rationale to oppose minority claims for autonomy. Although it is true that societies with ethnic

divisions face greater obstacles in democratizing, there is also broad scholarly consensus that "democratic government in divided societies requires two key elements: power sharing and group autonomy" (Lijphart 2004, 97). Additionally, for "divided societies with geographically concentrated communal groups, a federal system is undoubtedly an excellent way to provide autonomy for these groups" (Lijphart 2004, 104).

Despite a scholarly literature that advocates federalism for pluralistic societies with regionally concentrated minority groups, my contributors spoke cautiously of the possibility for federalism in Romania. In contrast, they preferred to discuss the possibility for regional autonomy within the rubric of an expanded Europe – a Europe that legitimized regions and held the potential to level relations between the state and this regionally concentrated minority. According to this perspective, Europe would facilitate devolution and decentralization and save the Hungarian minority from the consequences of living within a centralized and unitary Romanian state. In contrast to this optimistic portrayal of a 'Europe without Borders' on the part of the Hungarian minority, Europe's founding states fear that it will empty "the European project of its contents" (Rupnik 2004, 81). This ambiguous position that Europe begins to take on has been described problematically as an identity 'that properly belongs nowhere' (Kumar 2001, 269). Although, this ambiguity is problematic when attempting to form a European *demos*, for those who do not yet belong, it provides great imaginative potential. The elusive definition of the European project is precisely its strength for those wishing to be included.

For the Hungarian minority, the inevitable pluralism of an integrated Europe, is in line with a conception of their place in Romania – specifically, in partnership with the state. According to Keating (2001, 63): minority nationalist movements "command greater

legitimacy when they are inclusive rather than exclusive and recognize internal pluralism." [163]

Given this increased legitimacy, the Hungarian minority consistently maintains that diversity

is a constitutive feature of the DAHR – an alliance rather than a political party – and

attempts to advocate an inclusive form of nationalism. It is here that they are walking a fine

line between essentializing identity – used to make strategic claims against the state – and

advocating autonomy for the region of Transylvania. Framing their goals within belonging to

Europe, a goal shared with Romanians, resolves this tendency toward essentialism and

mitigates against accusations of disloyalty emerging from a desire for territorial autonomy in

Transylvania.

According to the Hungarian minority, European integration is important, not to

provide some kind of pan-European cosmopolitan citizenship but rather to release their

regionally based, cultural identity from the constraints of the state. The sense given is that

under the European project states will be required to become more cosmopolitan while

regional identities can become more essentialized.[164] This dynamic begins to answer Nairn's

(1997, 63) question: "Why has globalization engendered nationalism, instead of transcending

it?" These global processes are important, not for the new cosmopolitan identities that they

generate, but rather for releasing regional, cultural and historically derived identities from the

constraints imposed by the nation-state and its monopoly on sovereignty. This realization

counters Thompson's (1998, 179) claim that a 'return to the community' impedes

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[163] Framed negatively, Lecours and Moreno (2003, 281) state that: "When citizens in a substate community identify themselves exclusively, the institutional manifestation of their identification will tend also to be exclusive."

[164] I would suggest that the Hungarian minority is also able to resist essentializing their identity by situating their claims within Transylvania – a regional identity of both Hungarians and Romanians.

cosmopolitan projects. In contrast, my research shows that the desire to return to

community drives the cosmopolitan project in this particular context.

This return to the community has, however, been impacted by exclusive conceptions of

the nation-state. Alternately viewed, it is the nation-state rather than the community that

impedes the cosmopolitan project and is limiting democratic innovations in Romania.

According to Haddock and Cariaini (1999, 265):

> "The real issue for Romania is not how to redeem lost lands but how to
> ensure that ethnic rivalries do not become matters of principle. From this
> point of view, good relations with the Hungarian minority in Transylvania
> should be the first priority of the Romanian state. A cosmopolitan Romania
> in a cosmopolitan Europe is the only way forward. To dwell upon the
> collective identity of all 'true' Romanians is to face the future by looking to
> the past."

Haddock and Caraiani (1999, 262) go on to suggest that a cosmopolitan conception of

citizenship would be an innovation in the Romanian context, requiring an acceptance of the

'nation' as a construct rather than a natural fact.

How citizenship is conceived in relation to the 'nation' has a significant impact on

minority groups (see Kymlicka and Norman, 2000). In particular, the notion of an

"undifferentiated public subordinate to one sovereign power is untenable" and requires that

new forms of citizenship be developed (Linklater 1998, 130). Given the changing nature of

sovereignty, citizenship and belonging can no longer be under the exclusive jurisdiction of

the nation-state. Held (1995) has proposed the principle of cosmopolitan governance to

account for the limited sovereignty of nation-states and the democratic deficits of

international institutions. He argues (1995, 22) that the successful entrenchment of

democracy requires that legitimate political power be separated from the nation-state

through the development of an international democratic framework. This international

democratic framework would involve, what he terms, 'cosmopolitan citizens'.[165]

Whether this type of citizenship would be an effective means to promote democracy

remains questionable. The EU has faced tremendous difficulty in establishing a *demos* based

on some form of European identity to address the democratic deficit.[166] Mouffe (2000, 42)

cautions that it is precisely in establishing a cosmopolitan level of citizenship, that the demos

would be lost. Individual citizens "would be left, at best, with their liberal rights of appealing

to transnational courts to defend their individual rights" (Mouffe 2000, 42). Simply stated,

the 'liberal' would triumph at the expense of the 'democratic'. In order to address this deficit,

Linklater (1998, 114) has advocated a form of 'post-Westphalian' citizenship that would take

into account *both* subnational and transnational forms of belonging.[167] Citizenship would

therefore involve multiple and shared forms, that correspond to different territories (Murphy

and Harty 2003, 182). Such a project also entails recognizing multiple forms of political

authority – be it national, subnational or international.

It is for this reason that Hungarian minority in Romania directs their struggle for

autonomy toward redefining the *demos* to one in which they are included. Such a project

involves imagining new forms of belonging beyond the national. By accessing the

imaginative possibilities associated with EU membership they attempt to 'expand latitudes' –

to problematize the borders that demarcate sovereignty – in order to achieve autonomy.

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[165] The basis for this citizenship would be shared humanity rather than a shared national identity (Murphy and Harty 2003, 183).

[166] Mungiu (2004) suggests that a wider and expanded Europe may be achieved at the expense of a 'deeper' Europe.

[167] This citizenship would address the decreasing value of national citizenship resulting from globalization's impact on the state and its ability to respond meaningfully to its citizens.

Murphy and Harty (2003, 184) assert that achieving autonomy is the priority of substate nations rather than gaining representation in transnational institutions. The latitude the Hungarian minority truly seeks to enlarge therefore is not the European border *per se* but that of the state's attitude toward them. The border change the Hungarian minority advocates belongs to the realm of mental geography[168] and would lead to improved trust and generosity in minority/majority relations. It is through this change that the 'peculiar sentiment' – deemed so necessary for unity in conditions of diversity – might develop.

Toward developing such sentiment, my contributors spoke of a 'shared fate' with their Romanian partners. The hope is that this shared fate will be a democratic and prosperous one. Nonetheless, according to the Hungarian minority the possibility for a democratic future is explicitly contingent on their autonomy within Romania.

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[168] Again, Hedetoft (1999, 83).

EPILOGUE

I am about to leave the Parliament for what will be the last time, escorted by my

familiar traveling companion in these large halls. Z- is someone who kindly came to collect

me every day in the lobby during my research. He is charmingly lacking in subtlety, and his

pithy comments and quips, as shocking as they sometimes are, always make me smile. It is a

long trip down the elevator, through the hallway, and over to the guards to collect my

passport. Ready to leave, I say goodbye and thank him. He smiles and says -

> 'Remember Julie, sometimes silent water travels farther than a furious
> stream'.

Walking away I am struck by the depths that my friend, the furious stream, seems to possess.

As I wind my way back to my apartment I think that silence is not a quality I would

often use to describe Bucharest. In this one moment I take note of the clatter of trams, a

dog yelping, and an elderly woman screaming at a taxi driver. My phone rings and I attempt,

in this noisy midst, to have another stilted conversation across the Atlantic. I am exhausted.

I do know a place where there is some calm, and anticipating that it will be some time

before I return to Romania, I muster up the energy to go there. I climb into a taxi and make

my request: Muzeul Taranului Roman – The Museum of the Romanian Peasant.

After another wild and lane-defying trip through town, I am in that familiar place. I go

up the stairs to the beautiful second floor where I know it will be eerily quiet. It is, and I

move slowly, looking at all the impressive details of a life that was carved by hand. I am

surrounded by life-sized models – frozen and familiar – of these hard-working peasants.

As I round the corner, something catches the corner of my eye. I notice that one of

the curators is hard at work in a wing that I have never seen. I walk toward him in a hall that

is lined with more models. These are new faces, and they are wearing different sorts of

clothing. The curator takes a moment to introduce me to the tenants. There are Moldovans,

Saxons, Ukrainians, Romanis, and over in the corner, in traditional dress, a Hungarian

couple from Transylvania.

Z- is right.

Silent water does travel.

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APPENDIX 1

Initial Interview Checklist

- Ask for their consent to be recorded and to have the conversation transcribed. Establish conditions of anonymity.

General
- What is their experience working for the DAHR? What do they do? How long have they been there?
- General socioeconomic background – age, gender etc.
- What is the common ground that holds the DAHR together?

Background
- What have the last ten years been like working in the Romanian parliamentary system?
- What has the relationship between the DAHR and the other ruling parties been? How has it changed?
- How do they view the state of democracy in Romania? How has it changed?
- What role does civil society play in their work?
- What does the Romanian state represent to them? How do they view their relationship to it?
- How would they describe nationalism in Romania?
- How do they view the role of the church or religion in politics?

Identity
- What does it mean to be 'Hungarian'? How do they define it?
- Why is it important that being Hungarian have a political component?
- What would that look like? What kind of institutional form might it take? (Perhaps bring up federalism to gauge reaction).
- What does it mean to be Hungarian and also a Romanian citizen? What is the relationship between identity and citizenship?
- How do they view the relationship between group rights and individual rights?
- How do they view their equality in Romania?
- If different from Romanians, how can this difference be accommodated politically?
- How do they view the Hungarian state (in terms of belonging/not belonging)?
- Ask them to comment about the Status Law.

The Future
- What does 'Europe' mean to them?
- Why do they want to be a part of it?
- What is the importance of NATO expansion and European enlargement on their political goals?
- Has the international level helped or hindered their political goals?
- Do they see a trend toward internationalizing minority rights?
- What would they like the future to look like in Romania?
- What about the future of the DAHR?
- Do they have an experience they could describe that would illustrate why this issue is important enough to dedicate their work to?

APPENDIX 2

Example of my responses during a typical interview (duration 1 hour)

Julie – Could you tell me a bit about who you are and how you came to work for the DAHR?

- response

Julie – What is the role of the international?

- response

Julie – Will you tell me why that international support is important?

- response

Julie – What was your response to the last election?

-response

Julie – What does the alliance get out of this agreement with the PSD?

- response

Julie – What was the impact when the Council of Europe opposed the Hungarian position on the status law?

- response

Julie – Do you feel equal as a Hungarian citizen in Romania?

- response

Julie – Given what you describe about the constitution, how then do you respond to it?

- response

Julie – What is that experience like, to go to Hungary?

- response

Julie – What do you do with this history?

- response

Julie – Given your interest in regional autonomy, what do you think about federalism?

-response

Julie – What is that special fear of Hungarians about?

- response

Julie – What do you mean by autonomy?

-response

Julie – So you're hopeful about devolving power?

- response

Julie – Is that enough if the autonomy you achieve is exclusively territorial?

-response

Julie – Thank-you very much for this conversation.