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Unity or Regional Identity: Differences of the National Identities of the Minority Hungarian Communities

Conference paper

Conference title: Nationhood in the Carpathian Region
Hungarians and their Neighbours – Sociological Perspectives

Abstract

The presentation is based on the comparison analysis of the ethno-national identity of Hungarian minorities living in Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine, including the identifications to majority community and the relationship with Hungary, respectively.

We comparatively analysed the way in which ethnonational belonging and the identification to the citizen's status functions among different ethnic Hungarian minority communities inside or outside of the European Union: Slovakia, Romania, Serbia (Vojvodina) and Ukraine, the effect of (ambivalent) mobilisation coming from Hungary in relation to the unity of the Hungarian ethnocultural nation. Second, we also aim to understand how citizenship and the relationship toward the state of residence is framed and reflected in the ethnonational identity of Hungarian minorities, and we are interested if this is affecting majority–minority relations and patterns.

According to the empirical results of Karpat Panel study, a unitary ideological knowledge may be detected and the huge majority of our Hungarian minority respondents agree that they are a part of the “unitary” cross-border pan-Hungarian nation. In the same time, in every Hungarian minority population, the community with the pan-Hungarian ethnocultural nation, and the identification with actual Hungary, is less important than regional Hungarianness in the minority identity of Hungarian minority members from outside the borders of Hungary. The primary in-group is the self-minority community in every country: Transylvanian Hungarians, Slovakian Hungarians, Vojvodian Hungarians and Trans-Carpathian Hungarians. This identities may be empirically grasped both on the level of the perceptions of social distances and on stereotypes toward Hungarians from Hungary and toward majority populations (Romanians, Slovaks etc.).

To some extent, significant differences may be observed in the identity of Hungarian communities from different countries, which may also be interpreted in the sense that they have become integrated in the majority nation at different levels from the point of view of citizenship community. Romania exhibits the most advanced level in this respect (the majority consider that the Hungarian minority is also part of the Romanian nation in sense of citizenship community, they feel that they are closer to the majority in terms of social distances and they have fewer problems correlating their Hungarian ethnonationality and their “non-Hungarian”/Romanian/Slovak/Serbian/Ukrainian citizenship).

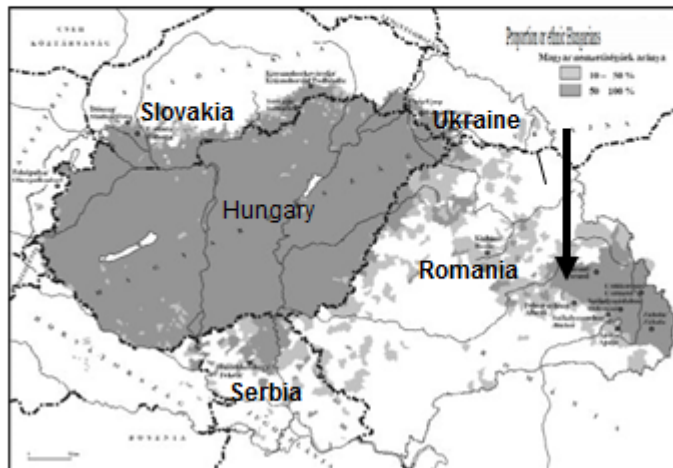
Hungarians from Serbia are the least integrated into their Serbian citizenship in their perception of their minority situation and experiencing discrimination, which is mainly due to the Yugoslav wars and their consequences.

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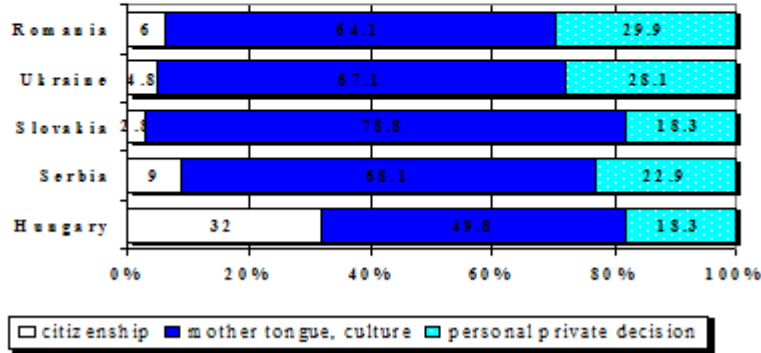
The analysed population

Ethnic map of Hungarians from Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine



The ethno-cultural character of identity 2

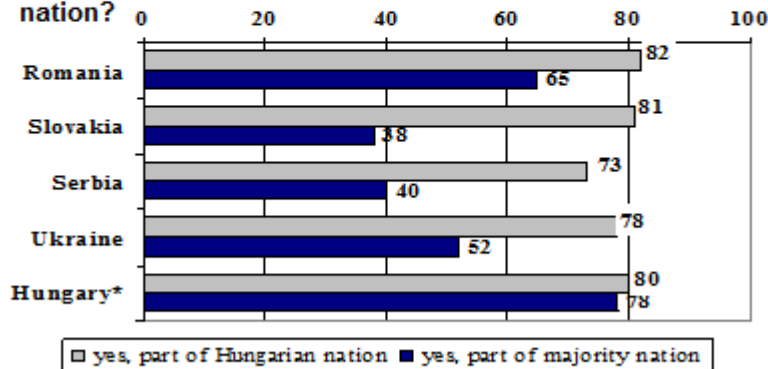
■ What best defines your national belonging?



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The idea of the symbolical unity of the nation

- In your opinion, the Hungarian minority community from Romania/Slovakia/Serbia/Ukraine/Hungary is part of the Hungarian nation?
- In your opinion, the Hungarian minority is part of the majority nation?



*In the case of Hungary, the second question referred if H(s) considered that Roma minority part of the Hungarian nation.¹⁴

How different are the Transylvanian respondents: unity with who?

Crosstabulation A. hataron-tuli magyarok reszet kepezik a magyar nemzetnek? * erdelyi magyarok reszet kepezik-e a roman nemzetnek?
Crosstabulation

% within i8 hataron-tuli magyarok reszet kepezik a magyar nemzetnek?

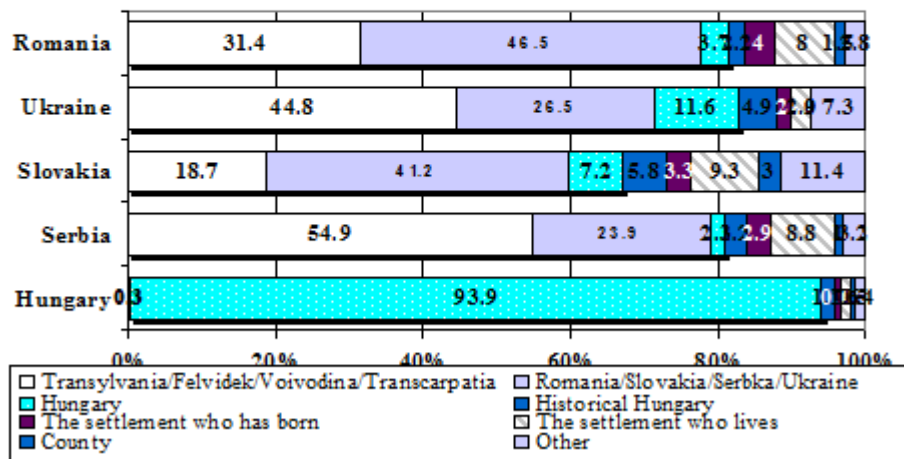
		i9 erdelyi magyarok reszet kepezik-e a roman nemzetnek?		Total
		1 igen	2 nem	
i8 hataron-tuli magyarok reszet kepezik a magyar nemzetnek?	1 igen	66.8%	33.2%	100.0%
	2 nem	62.8%	37.2%	100.0%
Total		66.2%	33.8%	100.0%

- No significant association between this two belongings.

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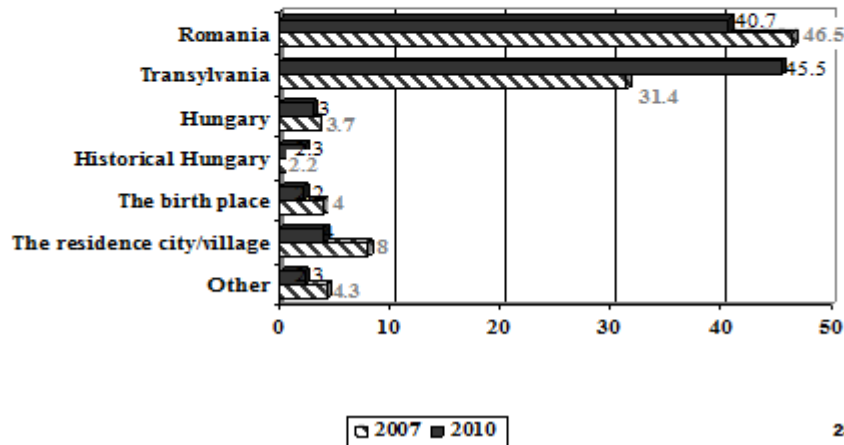
The concept of homeland (haza, patrie)

- What do you consider your homeland? Answers by countries



The changes in concept of homeland (haza, patrie) 2007-2010, Romania

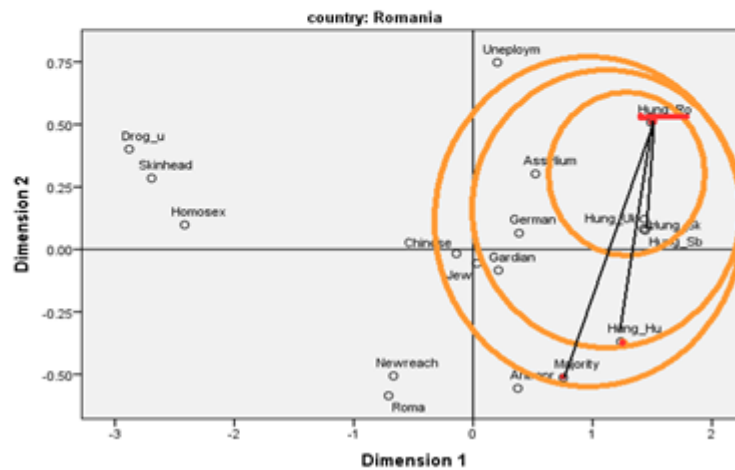
- What do you consider your homeland/fatherland?



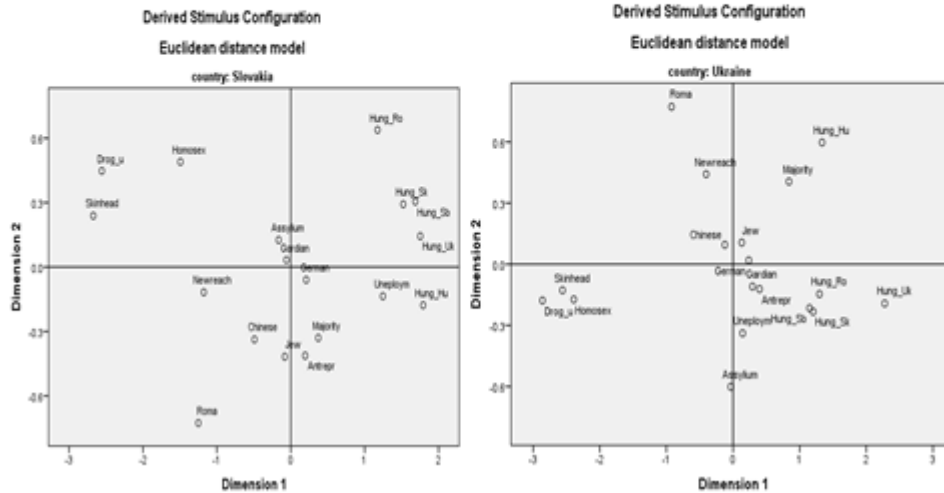
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The „map” of national attitudes

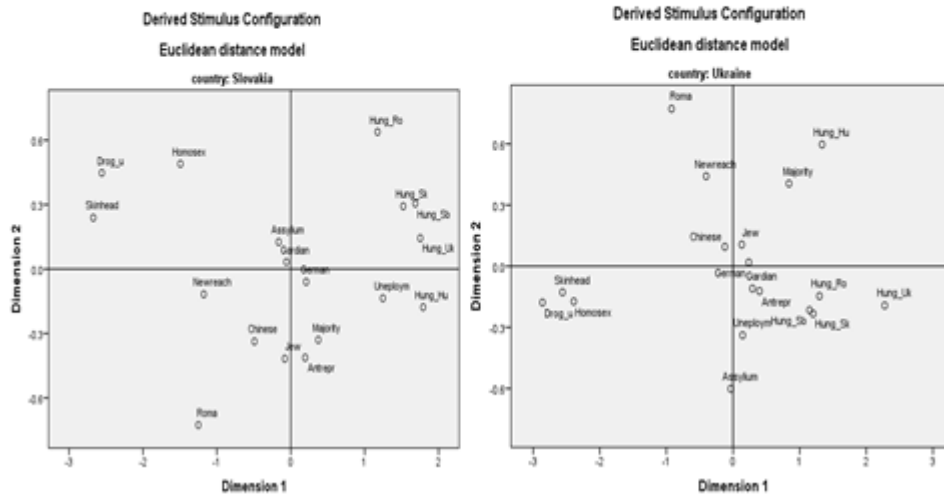
- How do you see the following groups? Answer-options ranged from 1 to 5, where 1=very agreeable 5=very disagreeable (the largest distance)
- MDS Models by countries: **Derived Stimulus Configuration**
Romania
Euclidean distance model



How do you see the following groups? MDS Models by countries: Slovakia, Ukraine



How do you see the following groups? MDS Models by countries: Slovakia, Ukraine





Conclusions

- In symbolic-discursive level, the Hungarian minorities, mostly share the representation about the unitary Hungarian ethnocultural nation in transborder sense.
- **But:** a kind of de-territorialization of national culture: to be Hungarian is disconnected from the affectual ties with Hungary.(mainly in Romania)
- In a social psychological sense, however, the regional Hungarian minority community members from Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine behave as separate in-groups: see the primarily group identifications with regional categories, stereotypes and the delimitation of group boundaries and social distances towards Hungarians from Hungary and towards majority populations): we observed the strengthening of regional identification, especially in Transylvania
- **We should underline:** the fact that strengthening the identification with the national civic community of the host countries as well as the integration in the national structure of a host state can be fulfilled without weakening the minority's ethnonational identity, including the asserting as part of pan-national community (cross border).