

ARTICLES

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Cleavages in Cross-Border Magyar Minority Politics, 1989-1998

ABSTRACT: *The study treats three major topics:*

1. *The issue of “existence on the other side” – a conceptual approach. The author gives an overview of political self-definition and scientific approaches, and presents the independent development of Hungarian communities living outside Hungary and the emergence of separate identity under forced coexistence. From the point of political history, between 1918 and 1940, and since 1989, Hungarian organizations functioned as independent political entities.*

2. *The paper also looks at cleavages within Magyar politics in specific countries (i.e., Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, and Yugoslavia) along ethnic, territorial, religious and linguistic divisions.*

3. *The treatise ends with an outline of three important topics, part of every popular debate on minority issues: a) the changing role of the intelligencia in the new situation; b) the relation of minority parties to the community they represent; c) Hungary’s relation to Hungarian communities living across state borders.*

This study examines three phenomena: I.) the theme and concept of “existence on the other side of the border”; II.) the potential fault lines within the political elite; and III.) the most important debated public issues regarding Magyar minorities which have arisen over the past ten years.

Part of the basis of the paper is the experiences gathered through the document-collection project on cross-border Magyar interest groups since 1989. There was a great deal learned through preparing the chronologies

and bibliographies for that same project. The most useful source was the series of discussions I conducted on this paper's topics with experts on cross-border issues.¹

The importance and timeliness of the discussion of this topic is based on the fact that, given they usually deal with specific areas, studies on Magyar minorities are unable to provide a complete picture of what's behind political relations. This paper hopes to provide analysts with a description of the actual issues (inner and outer conflicts), something that only a few studies (some of which are unpublished) have attempted to do.² Short-term phenomena and long-term effects and processes cannot be separated from one another. For this reason, issues often appear as a series of exigencies, while strategic positions remain undefined.

Another important issue is the composition of the Magyar political initiatives in neighboring countries.³ On one hand, this will allow us to place events in the context of Central-European processes, while on the other, it is a means of approaching the policy of Budapest toward Magyar minorities living across Hungary's borders.

I. The Definition of the Concept

Literature and press both in neighboring countries and in Hungary uses and mixes a series of *political self-definitions* and *social-science approaches*. Regarding the former, the term *nation* (*nemzetiség*), which was common in the 1980s, is no longer used. Those living across the borders went from using the term *national minority* (*nemzeti kisebbség*) to the term *national community* (*nemzeti közösség*)⁴ as the general term of self-definition used to represent their status as independent political subjects. The documents of the VMDK (Voivodina Magyar Democratic Community) employ the term *Magyar ethnic group* (*Magyar népcsoport*), while the KMKSZ (Sub-Carpathian Magyar Cultural Association) uses the phrase *population freely deeming itself to be Magyar* (*magát szabadon magyarnak valló lakosság*) in its autonomy programs. The program goal of the national community was declared using the term *co-nation*.⁵ In political life in Hungary the term *national community* has recently become common, while in mass media the terms *those across the borders* (*határon túliak*), and *scattered Magyars* (*szórványmagyar*) have become

common along with the term (*torn-away*)⁶ *parts of the nation* (*elszakadt nemzetrészek*). Minority press, at the beginning of the 1990s, often used the term *mother-country* (*anyaország*) to describe Hungary, but this practice has become less common.⁷

Social science literature uses the terms Magyar ethnicity (ethnic community), societies of given regions (sub-regions), Magyar life-world, Magyar sphere, Magyar institution-system, or Magyar Diaspora, but these all refer to an unwritten Magyar society (with its own operational mechanisms) living beyond the borders. This category is difficult to describe because researchers in different areas of expertise use different means (anthropological, sociological, statistical, demographic, linguistic, economic, legal) to describe the criteria of the given social group.

Given the way they were established, the Magyar societies across the borders, in the sense of history and the changes of empires, are *forced communities*. Their developments are defined on one hand by the challenges of inner and outer modernization, and on the other by the efforts of the majority/state-founders of the given countries at state-building, or the political efforts of the ‘mother country’, along with the responses to such. Beginning in the 1920s these broken societies, adapting to the new situation (depending on their inner (strata-) structure and regional traditions), developed separately – in different environments – from the mother country and the Magyar groups of other detached areas. In a paradoxical way it was precisely *developing-apart*, or the most effective adaptation to local conditions, which ensured the institutions of self-identity. It was in this way that, during the Second World War, groups with unique group-identities and strong regional (minority) identities from Upper Hungary (Slovakia) and Transylvania rejoined Hungary. Through the generation change following 1945, the dual attachment developed by the 1970s, and the institutionalization of the bridging role, the cultural elites defined a new and independent self-identity ideology, which incorporated differences from the mother-country and from the majority of the state-founding nation.

In terms of political history, between 1918 and 1938/40/41, as well as after 1989, the Magyar minorities presented themselves as independent political communities, and based on ethnicity they established separate political parties. Between 1944/48 and 1989 various groups tried to present Hungarian interest within minority- or *Magyar-policy* (*magyarságpolitika*).

The establishment of the independent Magyar communities after 1990, besides the democratic changes in Central Europe in 1989, came about based on the following:

1. The renewed Magyar cultural and political elites could not assert their linguistic- and identity-policy interests within the modernization-democratization strategies of the political parties of the majority nation. Hence, their efforts began to be institutionalized as separate political interests in developing independent civil society initiatives and parties.

2. The new constitution-drafting process repeatedly put them in minority positions, as they were not declared a state-founding group equal to the majority society.⁸

3. Hungary's post-1990 foreign policy efforts, besides aiming at euroatlantic integration and neighbor-policy, attempted to represent the interests of Hungarians living across the borders. The minority issue was treated as an international affair: the Antall doctrine meant that Hungary declared itself the protecting authority regarding the affairs of the Magyars living across the borders, and considered the Magyar parties of the neighboring countries as a factor in international relations.

4. The cross-border Magyar elites worked out their autonomy concepts between 1992 and 1996 as a way of establishing visions for the future. They did not find political partners among the majority nations for the realization of these plans (in reality for high-standard techniques for handling minority issues). These plans made the necessity of the establishment of independent cultural and educational institution systems a cornerstone of minority politics.

In order to shade the rather dense text, I must point out some editorial and attitudinal problems.

I treat the Austrian and Slovenian Magyars as cultural communities who realize their interests through their given majority institutional systems or municipal governments. The Magyar political organizations in Croatia are closely connected to the parties of the majority, and it is within these relationships that they try to realize their interests.⁹

The image of given minority societies in their own, or Hungary's, public sphere is established by cultural and political elites, meaning we are dealing with constructed images and communities. Thus I must stress that when speaking of political communities and political life, I am really

analyzing and generalizing the conditions of the elites. This may seem a banality viewed from Budapest, but it is common for those dealing with these topics to talk as if they were referring to unified cross-border communities. That the structures are not complicated and not stratified is shown by the fact that in parliamentary elections the Magyar parties, regardless of the social position, can count on the unified support of the local Magyars.

My third comment refers to the lack of synchronicity between the differentiated political system in Hungary and the attempt to unify political conditions for the Magyars of neighboring counties. Election campaigns to date show that while in Hungary debates in political life center on various factual issues, in Slovakian, Ukrainian, Serbian, and Romanian political life such issues are transformed to represent questions of national fate: *political life is based on national, not democratic, legitimacy*. This is becoming truer of the Magyar politicians of neighboring countries, who conduct their own ethnic/national discourse for their own voters. When they are meeting with parties and the public from Hungary, they continue to use this discourse. This has the effect of either leading Hungarian politicians to dissect ethnic and cultural issues in an unsophisticated manner, or having their statements appear foreign and general.

II. In Search of Cleavages

Political differences of opinion within cross-border Magyar organizations are presented in the minority and Hungarian press as if they reflected divisions within the community as a whole. The splitting of parties shows, however, that the conflicts primarily concern the inner circles of political and cultural elites.¹⁰ The naming of orientations within the inner debates has developed, and most of the literature to this date has indicated that these relate to the clash of political interests. The most common categories are: liberal-national-popular-Christian; right-left; escort-solid core-collaborator; kuruc-labanc; moderate-radical; value- versus interest-oriented.¹¹ If we consider outer conflicts, as when the basic state treaties were being debated, or when language-policy conflicts arose, the above-mentioned markers did not help in distinguishing statements, which were often quite similar, regardless of which group presented them.

The opposed positions are grouped around two topics: 1. the relation of the Magyar political organizations to the majority nation's democratic/euro-atlantic-oriented forces, and the ensuing cooperation strategies; 2. the basic question of *identity policy*: is the preservation of minority self-identity enough to ensure civic equality before the law and linguistic rights, or is there a need beyond this for establishing independent minority institutions?

Oszkár Jászi, in the spring of 1918, saw the interest-differentiation of minority politicians, from the viewpoint of integrative minority policy, in the following way: "As long as a minority has no schools teaching in its own language, public administration, or courts, it is impossible to spark the interest of its members in different problems, and it is impossible to open a path to policy regarding natural class conflicts and differences in world-views."¹² There is consensus in the literature on the point that in the last ten years in Central Europe, integrative minority policy has not defined the framework for Magyar minority politics. We have also seen that the so-called moderate-radical opposition does not characterize the responses to the tightening of language or institutional rights: those minority politicians considered moderate have vehemently thrown themselves into the verbally active struggle.

In my opinion, based on the events of the last ten years, the debates and divides within the minority elites cannot be described along the lines of traditional political values and world-views – they are better described by utilizing other factors. (The world-view approaches cannot be denied, but they are not of primary importance, and I feel their role is found more in defining strategy.) Below, starting from the history of minorities between the two World Wars, I re-examine the fault lines of that time in terms of minority-policy strategy, generational issues, territory issues, denominational differences, and language use.

1. Minority Policy and Self-Organization Strategies

The relations of Hungarian interest groups with the political organizations of the majority society may be put into three categories.

1. In the first phase of self-organization the Czechoslovakian FMK (Independent Magyar Initiative) tried to be politically active within the

NYEE (Public Against Violence) movement; the representatives of the RMDSZ (Romanian Magyar Democratic Alliance) participated in the National Salvation Front until the Spring of 1990; the KMKSZ supported a Ukrainian candidate in the vastly Magyar-populated riding of Beregszász (Berehove) in the 1990 parliamentary elections. These were those early attempts where movements based on Magyar culture tried to realize their interests through close cooperation with, or within, various majority organizations. The roots of cooperation were different in the three cases, but the Magyar organizations all cooperated with the given country's actual regime-transforming organizations.

In the Magyar-populated areas of Slovakia and Yugoslavia the majority parties ran a large number of Magyar candidates in Parliamentary and municipal elections. Even though in Slovakia a satellite party was founded under the leadership of György Gyimesi, serious results were not attained.¹³

2. Another model is the autonomy approach based on political legal status (of the early and mid 1990s) and the principle of self-organization. This model thought in terms of unified organizational structures, where the movement could also serve as the local government of the Magyars of the given territory. Within this model the institution tended to take on the characteristics of a political party and became the embodiment of autonomy. Thus the movement has the dual role of managing resources as a self-government, and as being a parliamentary interest group as a political party. The most developed of these forms was the RMDSZ's "state within a state" concept.¹⁴

The construction of such an autonomy concept failed in the situation of the Yugoslav war and the opposition of other elite groups, and this led to the collapse of the VMDK leadership in 1994. Due to the infrastructural weakness of the KMKSZ, and also due to the relation of other elite groups to the Budapest and Ungvár-centered attempts and the lack of personnel, no significant autonomy concept was worked out in Ukraine. In Slovakia, due to the divisions of the Magyar party and the active language- and administration-policy of the Meciar government, the "co-nation" concept and the Révkomárom decree remained only as plans.¹⁵ Concerning the latter, the fear of party politics was what kept the Great Council of 100 – which was to provide the framework for the attempts at planning autonomy – from being elected. In the RMDSZ, the outlines of the "state within a state" concept were developed after the Kolozsvár (Cluj) Declaration

(1992) and the Brassó (Braşov) Congress (1993), but the establishment of the inner cadaster and the organization of the elections were put off due to political contingencies.¹⁶

3. In 1996 and 1998 respectively, a new political situation arose in Romania and Slovakia, which gave the Magyar parties an opportunity to participate in government and come into power as coalition partners.¹⁷ In Slovakia this was preceded by giving up the demand for ethnically-based territorial autonomy, and in a quiet way this happened in Romania as well. In the new situation – along with regrouping within the minority cultural-political elite – the hope of personal participation in authority and cooperation in transforming political institutions came to the fore.

Differences in consideration of minority policy and strategy cannot be explained by singular factors. I feel it is very important to consider the genesis of the parties and concepts, as this was where socialization differences – regarding how given political personalities developed approaches to minority issues – became apparent.

Below I consider the divergent approaches to self-organization country-by-country, and I try to answer the question of which factors are the most significant in defining the institutional framework of minority Magyar political activity.

Ukraine

Those Magyar intellectuals who were accepted by the county leadership hoped to bring the local Magyar cultural clubs (which were sprouting like mushrooms in 1988) into one regime-conform cultural organization in a manner similar to that of *CSEMADOK* (Czechoslovakian Magyar Workers' Cultural Alliance). In this case, the Party, in the interest of control, might have contributed some modest sums. The example of the county Ukrainian Shevchenko Society, which was being organized at the same time, showed that an ethnic-based social organization could be established without the direction of the state and party organs. This meant an opportunity for the intellectuals – who to that point had moved only on the periphery – to institutionalize their informal influence over local Magyar

self-organization. In February of 1989 the young KMKSZ was established as a clearly independent (of state authority) Magyar interest group, which felt its primary role was to protect Magyar cultural values. The movement was embodied in the person of Sándor Fodó. He had behind him the official Magyar cultural elite and his circle of students and friends. The first group slowly wore away from the circle of the president. The leadership of the rapidly-grown but inexperienced organization was chaotic in many ways, and depended on the president – it was criticized by the *Demokratikus Platform*, founded in 1992 by György Dupka. In 1993 the tensions centered around two issues. The first was the basic state treaty between Hungary and Ukraine, which was agreed upon without taking into consideration the positions of the Sub-Carpathian Magyars. The second concerned the parliamentary candidate for Beregszász. Regarding the first issue, media in Hungary and tensions between political parties destroyed the unified position of the leadership of the KMKSZ. In the case of selecting the election candidate, strategic considerations, not external factors, were in the fore. Fodó, the president of the KMKSZ, came into conflict with Mihály Tóth, the commissioner of the local public administration and the candidate of the local KMKSZ chapter. That is to say that the representatives of the national KMKSZ found themselves at odds with Fodó, who was an open MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum) supporter, a member of the Magyar elite who had experience in administrating, of whom it was hoped that local issues could be well-handled, and who was also supported by the opposition parties in Hungary. After the local candidate's election victory the political fallout continued with the establishment of the UMDSZ (Ukrainian Magyar Democratic Alliance) and the MEKK (Community of Magyar Intellectuals in Sub-Carpathia). The number of members of the KMKSZ, which had the largest base of popular support, hardly decreased. The separation brought to life an intellectual group well-represented in the press and in Hungarian mass media, which introduced the discussion of real local problems and drew up plans for solving them, but whose inner material resources and meager outer (mostly Budapest) support did not make possible the realization of bigger plans. The leadership of the KMKSZ, which was now isolated from the Hungarian government and the county leadership, worked out a local autonomy concept and, after support from Hungary fell (in 1994), established a "private infrastructure" and

founded its independent institutional system through the establishment of the Beregszász Teachers' College.¹⁸ The government in Hungary could not deny support for the new institution, and thus the KMKSZ was able to establish on one hand its own basis for training and keeping elites, and on the other hand the cornerstone for the all-important issue of educational autonomy. In the 1998 parliamentary election Miklós Kovács, the new president of the KMKSZ, defeated Mihály Tóth. According to Kovács' radical rhetoric, the fault line is drawn between the collaborating nomenclature and the hard core, or credible representatives of minority interests. According to the other camp the problem-solving, compromise-seeking, economy- and social-organization centered group stands opposed to a group which is trying to gain exclusive representation of the Sub-Carpathian Magyars and is directed by the right wing in Hungary, which is radically opposed to the Ukrainian government, and which concentrates on national grievances. Thus, the debate on division centers not on the attractiveness of autonomy, but instead on the nomenclature past (or present?).

(Czech)Slovakia

The 1989 elections found the Magyars of Slovakia in a unique situation: they had established an umbrella cultural organization (*CSEMADOK*), the Minority Rights Protection Committee operated illegally, and in the person of Miklós Duray, they had a personality with a past in the opposition and good relationships who was relatively well-known and charismatic. There were four different concepts at play at the beginnings of party organization.

The generation of 1968 hoped to attract the new organizations to *CSEMADOK* and to thus establish a unified Magyar movement, which they would lead. They further hoped to realize Magyar interests by personally participating in government.

Opposed to them were the young intellectuals, from Duray's former circle of colleagues, who formed the FMK partly to support ideological differentiation. They felt that Magyar organizations should participate more effectively in the general changes taking place in Central Europe, and that

minority issues could be best handled by helping the NYEE movement to change the political system.

After a few months Miklós Duray, who joined the Czechoslovakian political processes only in December of 1989, was thinking in terms of independent Magyar political activity and party establishment – likely based on his experiences in Prague – through enlisting self-proclaimed Magyars from *CSEMADOK*, the teaching profession, and public administration.

The establishment of the MKDM (Magyar Christian Democratic Movement) was first proposed by the leaders of FMK, who hoped it would win over rural, religious Magyar voters. Later the movement separated from the Slovak Christian democrats, due to their nationalist traditions, and moved toward identifying with *Együttélés* (Co-existence) in the interest of unifying a strong organization. Its strategic relevance increased when, after 1994 (the Révkomárom Meeting), the mass media in Slovakia gave more space to the party's leaders. Due to the increase in influence of its voters, the Horn government in Budapest, which was hoping to achieve results in Slovak-Hungarian relations, found MKDM to be a more “pragmatic” partner in negotiations than was *Együttélés*.

In the time of the political isolation of Slovakian Magyars (1992-95) the leadership of *Együttélés* presented the Magyars as independent political legal subjects, and had worked out a co-nation concept and various autonomy plans. These plans related not only to the use of language and public administration techniques, but attempted to present a vision of the future based on the principles of equality of opportunity and equality of political status.

Due to the complicated nature of Slovakian Magyar political life, it would be misleading to consider the MPP (Magyar Civic Party) – MKDM – EPM (Co-existence Political Movement) axis to reflect a spectrum of positions moving from pragmatic-cooperational to autonomy and self-determination. For example, the MPP has its own serious autonomy concept. But the various strategies of the groups behind the parties was not visible under the active rights-decreasing Meciar Magyar-policy. This was foremost because, from the vantage point of human rights, the policies denied basic demands and took away some existing language-use and public administration rights. For this reason, despite political-organizational differentiation, we can observe a continuous convergence of positions concerning minority-national issues – as witnessed already in the 1930s.

Yugoslavia – Voivodina

The Yugoslavia Magyar cultural elite developed in the 1970s and 1980s, and the advantages they had compared to other Magyar groups became disadvantages in the 1990s. Some of the members of this elite had positions in the political leadership of Voivodina, and had serious institutional backgrounds: Forum House, Hungarologia Institute, editing journals and weeklies. This was all based on the Yugoslavist integrative minority policy in the “brotherhood-unity” ideological period. A situation developed where access to resources could be gained by adopting intense Yugoslavism. There was no opportunity to publicly present problems which were purely local, pertained to ethnically based self-organization, or which were uniquely Magyar. Those who did not play by these rules were punished by the Magyar-language institutional system itself (Mírnic-, Yugoslavian Magyar Language Teaching Association-, Sziveri-, Viczei-affairs), or were accepted after individual compromises (*Új Symposion*, generational Sziveri period).¹⁹

A legitimate change took place in Yugoslavia in the 1980s. The ideology of Yugoslavism and welfare-liberty was replaced by national rhetoric. This led to the self-awareness of national communities, and national perspectives came to the fore in conflict-resolution and local policy. This national consolidation could not be followed by the Voivodina Magyar elite, as its entire socialization had been geared to increasing the effectiveness of the Yugoslav self-management system (the work of László Reháák). Another contributing factor was that the careers of the Sziveri-generation, which brought up actual problems, were broken by the elite of the Forum House, and the cultural elite did not know how to respond to the Ristić-affair.²⁰

Thus, by the end of the 1980s, there was no group able to think through self-definition and consciousness, and there was no well-known, credible, or even symbolic leader to gather around. Instead, the state-owned publishers (or those with ambiguous ownership), journals, dailies, and the Hungarologia Institute/Department of the Újvidék University (Novi Sad University), that is to say the previous framework for public-opinion formation and socialization, remained.

Among these attributes, two strategies were articulated. Some saw the solution in participating in the civic transformation of Serbia. One usually

refers to Tibor Várady regarding this approach, but the election results show that this strategy has considerable support in Magyar circles.²¹ The other notable approach was the independent political legal status advocated by the VMDK, which was put forth in their autonomy concept. The leadership of the VMDK accepted the representation of a Magyar-speaking social group, which was socialized in a completely different system of legitimation, in the face of Serbian attempts to build a nation-state. In this way the autonomy concept was worked out partly as a technique, and partly (just as importantly), it articulated and made public the need for ethnic differentiation and self-government. This all took place in the context of the war. The above-mentioned process of transforming viewpoint and self-image strengthened the Magyar-established, grass-roots anti-war peace movement, which was unique in Serbia. As a movement the VMDK was rather burdened by the circumstances of the war, and the aid tasks and the settlement of Serbian refugees in Voivodina led to regular (public-administration and ethnic) conflict. Some other social-spiritual processes were just as important. The use of Magyar-language media was of key importance to the VMDK in spreading autonomy efforts and consciousness of being an independent community. However, these were state-owned and ambiguously-owned and thus could not be influenced. In this situation of conflict the leaders of the VMDK developed a *doctrinal tone*, which was increasingly criticized in the press in 1993-94. In the middle class, the radical disintegration of the previous Yugoslav self-management framework, the difficulty in making ends meet, and the change in the relationship with the mother country (going from being the rich to the poor cousin) led to mass exodus and a *public feeling of hysteria* – as among the Serbs. Thanks to these, the conflicts between Voivodina Magyars and Hungarians become more difficult to handle, and the tone of press polemics grew coarse. The third important factor was the *effect of aid*. Beyond the above-mentioned change in relationship/status with Hungary, the material aid sent under ambiguous conditions and the responsibilities of making use of the aid compromised the moral base of not only individuals and local communities, but of organizations as well.

The disintegration of the VMDK had many causes: obstacles to presenting a platform, the effect of the Hódi affair, the efforts of the Budapest and Belgrade governments, the unmet needs of social organization among

the Magyars, and the scattered and differentiated constellation of interests. Although there are likely small degrees of difference, each of the above contributed roughly equally to the collapse of the VMDK and the establishment of the VMSZ. From the viewpoint of strategic considerations, the Zenta (Senta) meeting was characteristic, with the documents pertaining to the establishment of the VMSZ clearly showing the difference in the two levels of minority political activity.²² Those elected to local governments concentrated on local affairs, possible compromises, and the quick resolution of issues, while the leadership of the party felt its responsibility was to articulate “nation-policy” affairs, self-definition, and all-Voivodina Magyar and minority interests. In the time of political isolation in all the above-mentioned countries (1991-1996-1997) the VMDK, with its given structure, after the drafting of the autonomy concept and the independent political community consciousness-raising efforts, could not realize the development of its inner structure. The VMSZ tried to make up for this deficiency and make better use of the political sphere (toward the Budapest and Belgrade governments, and toward Serbian parties). Change in strategy turned out to be as follows: while the VMDK thought in grass-roots and chosen-autonomy terms, but could not realize this technically, the VMSZ worked out a system whereby various expert groups could work within the autonomy concept.²³ Since its election victory its policy priority has moved from ethnic autonomy to Voivodina autonomy, in conjunction with participation in the civic transformation of Yugoslavia. The awakening of the Magyar minority society’s political consciousness has taken place, but the elite group, which led the process, has collapsed, and in this way participation in the country’s democratization has come to the fore. Whether the Magyars can be integrated in such a strategy, despite the disintegration of their elites, and while the authorities continue their efforts at national exclusivity, is an important question.

Romania

The main difference between the Magyar minority in Romania and the others is its magnitude. Given this, it has a larger group of intellectuals, allowing varying groups of experts to work simultaneously. Another impor-

tant and unique characteristic is that while the vast majority of intellectuals coming out of the 1960s among other minorities have built their institutions based on leftist principles, the intellectuals of Transylvania have experienced some continuity and awareness of minority intellectual life from the inter-war period.²⁴

After the changes of 1989, the RMDSZ had the broadest political apparatus. It had an internationally-known, credible and charismatic personality in László Tőkés. It had a person with a definitive reputation in intellectual circles, who was experienced and knew the Bucharest political elite well, in Géza Domokos. It had a person after 1989 who had mastered the political language of the young, had good contacts with the new government in Hungary, and had a dissident past, in Géza Szócs. The development of strategy was defined mostly by responses to the efforts of the majority's government. The government was not receptive as a potential partner for the cooperational politics represented by Géza Domokos. (Later the RMDSZ had to quit the oppositional party alliance.) It is important to note that the issue of transformation after Domokos was solved by the elite in part through pragmatic personal politics (with the integrative personality of Béla Markó in the foreground) and in part through constructing techniques to handle value conflicts (the roundtable led by Sándor N. Szilágyi). The maintenance of unity was further made possible because the voter base was defined ethnically (one of the RMDSZ campaign slogans in 1992 was "Let's state our Magyar-ness!"), and if one were to run in a significantly Magyar-populated area without being an RMDSZ candidate, he/she had no chance of winning. (In the case of municipal elections, this held true even for areas without a Magyar majority. Those Magyar candidates running as independents in the Sekler-lands were successful, and they were later integrated into the local RMDSZ leadership.) After the Kolozsvár declaration and the Brassó congress, two strategies had been outlined. One group consisted of those who wanted to realize autonomy through inner elections, and another was made of those who thought in terms of a longer process. Taking into consideration the opportunities in Romanian politics, they hoped to realize autonomy through institutions and parliamentary rights, and did not try to present autonomy as a given fact/situation. The tensions came to the surface in concrete political debates: the Neptun-affair, the Benedek Nagy memo affair, the omission of the national cadaster and the

inner elections, the coalition negotiations, the Bólyai University issue, the review of coalition work. The activity of the so-called autonomists and radicals is largely taken up by criticizing the coalition. There is no evidence indicating that the RMDSZ is capable of replacing its current participation logic or of working out a positive program while it is participating in government.

Based on the descriptions of the countries outlined above, we can trace three types of Magyar minority interest protection over the last ten years: 1. Representing minority interests through direct participation in the practice of authority; 2. Cooperating with the given country's civic, democratic, euro-atlantic integration-oriented forces (within their movements or within a party alliance) in the interest of transforming institutional systems to conform to European norms (within this the realization of a subsidiary relationship, the changing of the substance of borders, and the respect of international minority right norms are the means of securing the linguistic and institutional rights of the Magyar minorities); 3. Only the securing of collecting rights and the recognition of autonomy in the given country can guarantee the institutional protection of identity. This can best be guaranteed by constructing the institutions of autonomy, and based on this position one can negotiate with the representatives of the political parties of the majority as an equal.

Over the last ten years a new minority Magyar political elite has formed in neighboring countries. Their inner debates, with the exception of Romanian Magyars, have led to disintegration and the establishment of new institutions. On the level of political rhetoric there is a general emphasis on unity and the need for a unified approach, which reflects a demand for stability. These parties must respond to the efforts of the given country's majority to establish a nation-state and to the expectations of various parties in the 'mother country'. From this point of view, those Magyar groups which are lowest in number, and are weakest in terms of existence, are the most defenseless, i.e., those in Croatia, Sub-Carpathia, and Voivodina. The change in government in Budapest in 1994 affected the conditions for the KMSZ and UMDSZ-MEKK, which had close ties to the MDF. The leadership of the VMDK tried to realize its independent political strategy not only in Belgrade, but in Budapest as well, and in this way – through the

Balladur plan(s) and the Hódi-affair – its relations were soured before 1994. The neighbor-policy efforts of the post-1994 Budapest government found a Yugoslav partner which was more flexible and pragmatic than the VMDK in the VMSZ, while in Slovakia the natural ally, the MPP, had very low Parliamentary representation and influence, and thus the MKDM came into the fore. After the 1998 elections the most popular Slovakian Magyar party, the MDKM, evaded earlier promises to cooperate with the MPP, and allied itself with *Együttélés* to form the backbone of the MKP (Magyar Coalition Party). Transylvania is an exception in these regards, as the RMDSZ is able to elevate those politicians into prominence – if not into the top echelon, then close to it – who can maintain intense relations with whichever coalition is in power in Budapest.

If we try to divide the last ten years of Magyar minority interest protection, then we can see three separate periods: 1. From 1989-1992, the movements built their organizational frameworks and infrastructure, and the work of cultural personalities, who had been leaders to that point, was taken over by that of those dealing exclusively with politics; 2. In the following years these organizations drafted their autonomy concepts and attempted to map out a vision of the future for their communities, which were not accepted in any of the political institution systems defined by the majority. While consciousness of national and ethnic togetherness visibly increased in the entire region, the Magyar minority parties, from the time of constitution-drafting in their countries, become politically isolated. This was strengthened by the fact that the main foreign policy interests in the mother country had to do with euro-atlantic integration. In terms of international interest and attention, Magyar minority issues were vastly overshadowed by the distant Balkan conflicts; 3. The third period began with the RMDSZ's (1996) and the MKP's (1998) acceptance of roles in the governments of their countries. The experience of the Ukrainian Magyar minority differs, as the KMKSZ has strengthened politically, and it hopes that it can establish a type of educational autonomy. The Voivodina Magyars find themselves in a new situation, where after the increase in the number of political parties, personal contact networks, and the collapse of institutions there is no unambiguous path for acting out minority policy.

2. *The Generation Gap*

After the First World War, the public mood of the first decade of the Magyar minorities was characterized by the term “torn-away Magyars”: the new situation of minority status, brought about by the change of empires, led to the development of value-defending, revision-expecting behavior. This was surpassed by some groups of the generation that graduated in new conditions in the 1930s²⁵ which established the ideology of inner self-organization for minority society and the necessary intellectual consciousness of calling: the idea of *servng the nation*.²⁶ In the neighboring countries, at the middle/end of the 1960s, the institution-building efforts of the Magyars were infused by those activists using socialist phraseology, who stressed leftist tradition. Their efforts brought a new emphasis on both social action and the guiding role of the intellectuals. In the 1970s, in Romania and Yugoslavia, the so-called 1968 generation remained in the definitive position in Magyar cultural life; in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union this group was pushed to the periphery. In the 1980s a generational group came to prominence, which demanded greater expertise in the cultivation of minority self-awareness and which rejected the developed role and strategy of the Magyar minority elite. Such were the colleagues of the Voivodina *Új Symposion*, the *József Attila Klub* in Pozsony (Bratislava), those studying social science in the *Új Mindenés Gyűjtemény* and the illegal Minority Rights Protection Committee, the ethnology-anthropology group in Csíkszereda, and the philosophy-of-science circle in Sepsiszentgyörgy. In the above-mentioned Sziveri-affair, the youth questioned the cultural policy of *Forum*. In the Romanian folklore debate the Csíkszereda (Miercurea Ciuc) group took issue with traditional views of peoples. The same group, before 1989, stated that the cultural elite was presenting its own cultural values and institutional interests as if they were the interests of all of Transylvanian Magyar society.²⁷ At the same time the lack of independent and professional social science institutions was noticed everywhere.

After 1989, in Sub-Carpathia, the founding group and original leaders of the KMKSZ was brought together mainly from the group of young intellectuals who were followers of Sándor Fodó. This group later split in two (in a way reflecting the two literary groups of pre-1989, the *Forrás* circle and the József Attila Literary Studio),²⁸ but in truth no new generation

has appeared in this organization, nor in similar organizations. In Sub-Carpathia there are no Magyar lawyers or experts trained to conduct social-statistical, sociological studies.

In (Czech)Slovakia, the individuals who had leading roles in 1968 mostly joined *Együttélés*. In a paradoxical way, of the young, trained, social-science group seen as Miklós Duray's, only Iván Gyurcsik worked in *Együttélés*; the others joined the leadership of FMK or MPP. Through political activity in local government, several young intellectuals (many with technical degrees) joined MPP, while the former *CSEMADOK* activists and the pre-1989 Magyar public administrators tended to join *Együttélés*.

Regarding Yugoslavia, it would be a stretch to speak of generational groups, as András Ágoston was the number-two person in *Forum*, before the establishment of the VMDK, which later provided the background for the later "restoration opposition". The main problem in these political organizations is the lack of thirtysomethings. The reasons for this are partly the dissolution of the Sziveri-led *Symposion* group, partly the mass exodus of this generation (to other countries), and partly the lack of social-science training. There are a number of Magyars with legal or economic training working now, but whether there are reserves is questionable.

The political cooling-down period in Romania, which began in the first half of the 1970s, and which spread throughout the region, saw the generation, which took part in establishing minority institutions in the 1960s, adopt the "grass will bend" ideology. They expressed their minority grievances in letters sent to Party leaders in Bucharest, then to Budapest.²⁹ At the beginning of the 1980s the authors of *Ellenpontok* (Counterpoints) began to write of the discrimination Romanians used against Magyars as a human rights issue. By the middle of the decade those circles which attempted to maintain social self-awareness had developed (editors of *Kriterion*, Limes circles, Csíkszereda ethnology-anthropology circle, Sepsiszentgyörgy (Sfântu Gheorghe) philosophy-of-science circle). After 1989, MISZSZ (Alliance of Magyar Youth Organizations) took part in the first congress, and had an important role in electing Géza Szócs as general secretary. Later, the politically active Reform Group came from the Alliance, and currently it is the most dedicated representative of autonomy efforts. The potential reserves behind the thirtysomethings are guaranteed by very active leaders of the university student organizations. In local poli-

tics, particularly in Sekler-country, those entrepreneurs in their 30s and 40s with technical backgrounds, and who show a certain social sensitivity, are attaining an increasingly important role. Another group, which does not exist elsewhere, has also appeared: the circle of intellectuals who have completed their university studies in Hungary, and have returned.

To summarize the above, the lack of young people with legal, economic, or social science training appears to be a long-term problem. In the case of Slovakia and Romania, where thanks to higher populations the situation is somewhat better, I feel the institutional integration and securing of jobs (in the home country) for those youth with this kind of training is a key issue.

Given their somewhat unique paths, which diverged from the norm, I view the MPP and the Reform Group in Romania as generational organizations. Both groups attained positions of importance in their respective parties (MKP, RMDSZ) by engaging in professional political activity.

3. The Problem of Territory

The conflicts within the Magyar minority parties often appear as being between scattered Magyars and those living in areas where they form the majority, and among cities considered centers. The political activity of those cross-border Magyars living in minority or majority areas cannot be described through generalizations. Instead, one must keep in mind that Magyar-settled areas have a series of linguistic, labor, and institution-management problems which can be handled through municipal government, but that these problems are much more difficult to manage in areas of mixed ethnicity (minority areas). Here, minority public personalities are much more sensitive to unique ethnic interests, offenses, and symbolic gestures. Further, given knowledge of the other group and the willingness to compromise, the majority of Magyar minority politicians, even dating back to the interwar period, come from settlements where the Magyars do not have definitive majorities.

In Slovakia, the Magyars are found in a torn block to the east, but there exists a divide between East-Slovakia and the western areas: before 1998, 80% of the Magyar representatives in Slovakian Parliament lived within a

30 km radius of Pozsony. In Sub-Carpathia the border-area Beregszász County and the Ungvár (Uzshorod), i.e., scattered, Magyars differ on autonomy concepts, and there is a constant conflict regarding the nomination of candidates for Parliament. But given that the KMKSZ leadership teaches in the Beregszász Teachers' College, this is where the center of gravity tends to be. In the case of Transylvania, it is common to speak of radically different political situations in the Sekler lands and in the scattered counties, given that Hargita (Harghita) and Kovászna (Covasna) counties had a uniquely Magyar life even under the previous regime. Another important political problem is the situation of the two 50% cities, Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureș) and Szatmárnémeti (Satu Mare), where it is still uncertain how the municipal governments will handle ethnic rivalry. Beginning in the 1970s, thanks to the effects of Hungarian television, the Partium region has developed differently than Transylvania in terms of community organization and flow of information. After 1989, with the permeability of the borders, Debrecen and Nyíregyháza became the region's supply and consumption centers. In Voivodina, the local government of the densely Magyar-populated areas by the Tisza made up the mass base of the VMDK, and later the VMSZ. With the strengthening of the latter organization, the leadership is now mostly from Szabadka (Subotica), as opposed to Temerin-Újvidék.

Rivalry between given cities tends to concern attaining the role of center. An important element is that the center of the majority Magyar areas is often not the same as the administrative and political center of the region. Thus a choice must be made between putting the political decision-center in the center of the given region or in the center of the Magyar-settled areas. In Slovakia, Dunaszerdahely (Dunajska Sreda) or Komárom (Komárno) cannot compete with Pozsony even in terms of geographical proximity. However, this has led to a situation whereby Dunaszerdahely, despite being the regional center of Csallóköz, does not have its own minority institutions. As the Slovakian parliamentary election system is based on party lists, we cannot anticipate a move of the center away from Pozsony. The situation is similar in the Ungvár-Beregszász relationship, with the difference that while the KMKSZ office remains in Ungvár, the college, theater, and central library are all found in Beregszász. In Romania, the traditional Bucharest-Kolozsvár rivalry appeared within the first few

weeks of the RMDSZ's existence. With the exit of Géza Domokos, the practical political work has moved to Kolozsvár, with the president's office operating in Marosvásárhely, while the Parliamentary faction and international operations are located in Bucharest. Regarding the centuries-old Marosvásárhely-Kolozsvár rivalry, the former, due to the change in ethnic ratios, is less and less able to fulfill the role of "capital of Sekler-land." At the same time, Csíkszereda is beginning to become the definitive center of the Sekler-land sub-region. This is mostly due to the development of the growing city resulting from the introduction of the county system. In the 1980s, masses of young technically-trained intellectuals settled here, feudal relations found in other Sekler cities are not characteristic here, and thanks to mass construction, the opportunities to house institutions are good. In the last few decades the Szabadka-Újvidék rivalry – in the absence of points of crystallization – has been an excuse for all kinds of things. A view of Szabadka as a bastion of civic, Magyar values, and Újvidék as a cosmopolitan, valueless city, has been constructed.³⁰ (The dissolution of the Új Symposium in 1983, as well as current cooperation within the framework of the VMSZ, are examples of Újvidék-Szabadka unity.) The role of Újvidék since the end of territorial autonomy has decreased, and further, since the breakout of the south-Slav war, the economic significance of Szabadka, as a border town, has increased.

4. Denominational Differences

Magyar minority politics between the World Wars was in part characterized by the important roles of religious denomination belonging, inherited denomination rivalries, the identity-choices of numerous Magyar Jews, churches with independent institution systems, the noteworthy minority-protection activities of freemason movements, and the fit of all these in minority political life. Following post-W.W.II secularization, the issue of denominational difference lost much of its significance. The social weight of churches decreased, but their significance as the last unique institution system of the minority societies increased. After 1989, the churches developed differing relations (by denomination and by region) to the widening minority institution system.

In Slovakia, from the beginning of the 1990s, the MKDM demanded the establishment of an independent Magyar episcopate. In terms of party preference, the Calvinist Magyar settlements seemed to favor Együttélés, while the Catholic Magyar settlements favored MDKM. In the period of MKP's local development, functional relations through the Catholic communities became an advantage, thanks to the central role of MKDM.

In Sub-Carpathia the church is in a stage of revitalization. Its significance is not to be found in the spheres of politics or culture, but instead in social work. Only this system of institutions, making use of outside resources, responded to the deficiencies of the social welfare system. Its ministers are not active in minority political life, but at the local community level they are definitive leaders of Magyar public opinion.

In pre-1989 Yugoslavia, religious life was confined to the private sphere. The significant humanitarian work of the churches during the south-Slav war did not result in influence in other areas. The integration of the church institution-system into Magyar minority policy is blocked by the right of Belgrade to name bishops.

In Romania, the person of László Tőkés and the wide church institution system – which has significant historical traditions and serious grievances – is in close contact with the political activity of the RMDSZ. Several attempts have been made to realize Magyar educational autonomy through church institutions (in a manner similar to the inter-war model). However, the postponement of church reparations has made this impossible. Between the wars, denomination had the largest role here, but today it is insignificant. What difference is visible is in the public political activity of denominational leaders, but this is more reflective of individuals than institutions.

5. Use of Language

The language use of the public figures of cross-border Magyars can be split into three types.

1. The first-person plural form developed before 1989, which refers to national grievances and historical-ethnic symbols, was used mainly for

internal addresses (commemorations, election propaganda). Speakers of this type speak for their entire communities, and this point is emphasized by (generally Hungarian) journalists: e.g., “What are the expectations of Transylvanian Magyars?”

2. Pragmatic political language: regarding events as political processes, and interpreting them as such. This style does not always refer to ethnic-national connections, but instead expresses and debates direct political interests.

3. The language of self-reflex, which refers to internal affairs of the minority, responds to the personal position of the publicist. Their opinions are not meant as messages, programs, or judgments, but instead as the interpretations of situations. This is a unique approach of publicists in media, who are more and more independent of the cross-border Magyar parties.

III. Topics of Importance

I would like to draw attention to the following three emphasized topics, which, from the viewpoint of the future of cross-border Magyars, are of definitive importance.

1. The Structure of Intellectual Roles

Before 1989 the situation of the Magyar minorities in political decision-making and state structure varied from country to country. At the end of the 1980s in Romania, only those Magyars who were openly supporting the regime remained in central Party organs. Among those working within the state structure, only Géza Domokos, the director of *Kriterion* Publishing, commanded the respect of the Magyar intellectual circles. In Czechoslovakia the situation was better, as Magyar participation in state structures was wider through the employment of Magyar experts in *CSE-MADOK*, *Madách* Publishing, various riding offices, and the Pozsony governmental sphere (e.g., József Gyönyör, László Vég). Even wider participation was characteristic of the Yugoslavia Magyar elite until 1988, which later contracted to activity in local governments and Magyar-language cul-

tural and educational institutions. The Magyar political elite in Sub-Carpathia was part of the county nomenclature, but it represented mainly local economic interests, and not unique Magyar issues. The few Magyar humanities intellectuals worked at the publisher (which also published in Magyar), in the Magyar Department of Ungvář University, and in the educational sphere.

In the last ten years this has all changed. In Voivodina and Sub-Carpathia key institutions, where intellectuals might be trained and socialized (Hungarologia institutes in Ungvář and Újvidék, *Forum, Kárpáti Igaz Szó*, Ungvář textbook publisher), have remained under tight state control. The meager number of new public opinion-leading institutes is too limited for the intellectuals. For this reason a number of them have repatriated, and others, after undergoing further training in Hungary, have not come back. Many have become stuck in the existing structures, while the political representatives of the Magyar minority constantly attacked them. By this I do not mean foremost the key institutions mentioned above, but instead the school network and the old-style management models still used there. In these places, the system for replenishing the Magyar elite is very weak, although the local governments are still able to function.

In Romania and Slovakia the press and book publishing are no longer under state control. Thus, the Magyar intellectuals working in this field can work freely, and their role in opinion-formation ties them to the Magyar political parties.

The participation of Magyars in the coalition parties in Romania and Slovakia has further divided the political elite.

1. Some have attained positions in government and state apparatus, while other members of the party elites have not. (This means approximately 300 positions in Romania and 100 in Slovakia.)

2. In both countries municipal governments have a greater role than before. If this situation remains, then it is possible that Magyar local government and public administration careers can be built independent of Magyar parties.

3. The coalition agreements have made it possible for Magyar experts to join the apparatus of their given fields.

4. In both countries the circle of entrepreneurs who are independent of the parties is growing, who, through the coalition, can gain information, direct representation of interests, and freedom from discrimination.

Among the figures of Magyar minority politics, differentiation began in terms of who was a member of which party, who the politicians were, and who was active in influencing minority issues outside of organizations (e.g., publicists, experts, journalists). On the other hand, the circle of those party politicians using demonstrative language, and of expert roles, developed internally.

2. *The Relationship of Minority Parties to Their Own Societies*

The political struggles within the Magyar minority parties over the last ten years have shown that the parties cannot be *political parties* and resource managing *self-governments* at once. In the first half of the 1990s, in the four largest Magyar-inhabited areas, techniques for making political decisions and distributing resources, as well as incorporating oversight by elected (from below) and legitimate bodies, had been concretely worked out.³¹ The opposition of the minority political parties, however, stopped these plans. The problem is not that the parties could trap themselves in the role of distributor of resources. Of more concern is that authority over local social, cultural and economic life might be introduced without *social control*. (This is a historically necessary result of unified, single-party minority communities.)

Regarding the non-ethnic issues of their own societies, the minority parties are in a paradoxical situation. By the middle of the 1990s they prepared less and less comprehensive election platforms (which deal with more than just the issues of their own ethnic group).³² This may be explained by the fact that they see fewer opportunities to have a meaningful say in national matters. This is supported (paradoxically) by the experiences of the RMDSZ in the government coalition, where the partners do not allow these parties to contribute to the development of policy outside of the areas of minority- and human rights, and perhaps foreign policy.

In the second half of the 1990s it became common for Magyar political observers in neighboring countries to complain of apathy and passivity. Beyond parliamentary and local elections, the biggest part of minority soci-

eties has no connection to the current parties, which were formerly movements. Magyar minority politicians continue to present foremost direct ethnic problems when appearing in public. At the level of local Magyar societies, the fact that one cannot organize and strengthen inner collective life through direct ethnic discourse and cultural events can be experienced every day. Comparing the press of some cities with the national-level Magyar media organs, we see that the former write less about ideology: they write about different problems, and in a different style.

The building of the series of Magyar minority institution systems at the end of the 1930s was based on *society-directing people-serving activism*, aimed at the self-organization of Magyar society and the feeling of being “torn-away Magyars”. The Vienna decisions, and the consequences of World War II, did not allow for this generation and these institutions to develop. By the 1950s and 1960s only the tradition of leftist intellectual behavior remained, but as we could not speak of Magyar minority policy, but only of the given country’s/government’s Magyar-policy, the new institutions appeared in just this context. If these institutions began to act independently and stretched the official boundaries of Magyar policy, then they in practice, by degree, became the personal contact network of given definitive individuals. Lacking external control, the institutions working in the shadow of the Magyar-policy of the majority nations and could not separate the representation of individual intellectual interests and opinions from perceived or actual Magyar interests: these became indistinguishable in the adoption of people-serving issues. The vast majority of cultural and political elites, which came of age in these contact networks, became critical, but not problem-solving elites. They could not have been socialized in a different way. These cross-border elites are politically active today as spokespersons for the interests of their societies, in the center of ethnic problems, but they have neglected the functioning of self-developing institutional structures.

The members of minority society, having moved beyond the pre-1989 period (which made the minority role difficult in different ways across countries), today primarily seek assistance in transforming their individual life paths in light of the changes in opportunities. The life chances of given communities are not strengthened by people-serving activism, but can be secured by assisting everyday happiness and by building a network of

professional institutions (in the areas of education, economic development, social work, etc.). In the most successful places, giving up vertical relationships comes hand-in-hand with replacing the leading role of intellectuals and proclamations of the interest of the community with the mapping out of local processes and long-term opportunities, and connecting these to the building of institutions for local societies.

3. *Relations with Hungary*

The cross-border Magyar political efforts and goals of the governments of Hungary since 1918 can be divided into the following periods:

1. 1918-1938/40/41 – *revisionist view of the future*: the protection of cross-border Magyar broken-off societies' demographics, economies, cultural potentials, as the basis for an upcoming peace negotiation;

2. 1938/40/41-1944 – *the use of the principle of reciprocity and the further development of the 1868 minority law*;

3. 1944-1948 – after the narrowing of Hungary's foreign policy opportunities and the peace negotiations following W.W.II, cross-border Magyars came up as a topic only concerning the population exchanges with Czechoslovakia, and in domestic politics, this issue was *continuously taken out of public discussion*;

4. 1948-1956-1968 – the propaganda of the *automatic resolution* of the issue based on the principle of *internationalism*, and the acknowledgment that the minority issue is a *domestic matter* for all countries;

5. 1968-1972 – *emphasis on the dual-loyalty ideology: the identification of the bridge role*: although Hungary – unlike its neighbors – is able to avoid the means of national legitimation in the time of the differentiation of socialist countries (beginning in the early 1960s), attention is drawn by the national writers and the institutional construction undertaken by a new generation of Transylvanian, Slovakian, and Voivodina Magyar cultural elites, which takes place independent of Hungary;

6. 1972/74-1989 – *the rediscovery of the problem*: the grievances of the national folk writers and the cross-border (1968) elites: concerning the cultural and demographic situation; the role of the Transylvanian Magyar News Agency and the new generation of cross-border elites in the democratic opposition (*Ellenpontok, Limes, CSMKJB, ÚS*): introduction of

human rights issues and direct political issues. The foreign affairs office of the MSZMP (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) begins to deal with the problem as a pan-European one, not confined to the domestic affairs of given countries (Ohrid, Vienna, Madrid);

7. 1989-1996 – attempts to handle the problem institutionally: Minority and Ethnic Collegeum, 1989. Antall-doctrine: the Magyar minorities are factors in international political representation, the Hungarian government cannot make foreign policy decisions effecting them without consulting them, the cross-border Magyars organize themselves in independent institution systems; *the beginnings of political reintegration* (1990-1994)³³; *Participant-observer position*: the Magyar issue is second to integration; the minority issue does not exclusively define neighborly relations, the Magyar parties of the neighboring countries are part of the given state's political community.

From 1986-1990 the following principles became generally accepted:

1. Not the location, but the substance of borders needs to be changed.
2. The Magyars living across the borders, as broken-off societies, or as independent political communities, have the right to their independent institution system in order to preserve their self-identity.
3. The treatment of cross-border Magyar political organizations, and their representatives, as equals.
4. The representation of cross-border Magyar interests in international forums is a constant responsibility of the Hungarian government, based on international legal norms.
5. The policy of supporting cross-border Magyars is a continuous element of the Hungarian budget and public-purpose foundation structure.

Following the theoretical summary, I would like to introduce some "practical" problems.³⁴

Currently Magyar-Magyar relations are not based on mutual need, but on national solidarity. Support is not handled as long-term investment, but as aid. Party politics cannot be excluded from building relationships by any of the partners. The entire system of relationships functions in the new geopolitical space, the newly-structured region of the Carpathian basin.

The Hungarian political elite has to this point been unable to transcend party politics, and has not known how to begin to handle regional relations.

In terms of the question at hand, three important international conditions have changed: the change of the substance of borders; moving beyond handling the minority issue as strictly a domestic problem; and the unavoidable need to decentralize the structure of authority in the interest of the region's euro-atlantic integration policies. This process is represented most intensively in the region by Hungary. Given this fact, along with the country's geographical attributes and economic policy, it is becoming the Carpathian basin's definitive economic and political center. The space can also be seen as an historic area which until 1918 was integrated by the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy into a political and division-of-labor system, following which the region's development was defined by the state-building attempts of small nations and the (side-) deals of world politics. Beyond European integration, the current situation carries with it the possibility to develop a sub-region (new division-of-labor system and market). It is within this framework that the process of *reintegrating differing existing Magyar institution systems of different state frameworks* is taking place. Just as we can speak of dual (state and ethnic), or triple (regional-local) loyalties and ties of citizens, institutions can belong to numerous networks. *1990 saw the beginning of cooperation between Hungarian and cross-border (self-defined) Magyar institutions: political parties, self-governments, economy, media, education, science, culture, and civil society are all areas of cooperation.* (The divergent effectiveness of these areas of cooperation is the topic of a separate study.) This naturally initiated process (following models and resource access) depends on politics in Hungary and the neighboring countries, but it depends mostly on the decisions of the representatives of the cross-border Magyar political elite. Are they capable of establishing those institutions whose decisions will ensure their social control?

NOTES

- ¹ An OKTK program to collect written materials concerning the interest groups of cross-border Magyars ran from 1995 to 1997. The material can be found at the Teleki László Foundation Central-Europe Institute Library (hereonin: TLA KEI Kv.); selections from the collection can be found in: Nándor Bárdi and György Éger (eds.), *A határon túli magyar érdekvédelmi szervezetek dokumentumai 1989-1997*, 800 p. (upcoming). TLA KEI Kv. K-1978/97.; chronologies on Magyar political life in the given countries are also to be found here: András Jánki: Ukraine, Márta Orosz: (Czecho-)Slovakia, Ferenc Mák: Croatia, János Vékás: Yugoslavia-Voivodina (also appeared in: *Regio* 1998, no. 2, pp. 151-186.), Frigyes Udvary: Romania. Bibliographies on the given parties were prepared for the TLA KEI Central-Europe database by Zoltán Varannai.
- ² The following summary studies were prepared for the volume entitled *A magyar nemzeti kisebbségek Kelet-Közép-Európában*: Miklós Bakk, *Az RMDSZ mint a romániai magyarság politikai önmeghatározási kísérlete*, 35 pages, TLA KEI Kv. K-1979/97. (An earlier version appeared in *Pro Minoritate*, Fall 1996, pp. 11-30.); Károly Mirnics, *A vajdasági magyarok politikai önszerveződése és a magyar politikai pártok egymás közti harca a VMDK megalakulásától 1996-ig*, 22 pages, TLA KEI Kv. K-1980/90., Károly Mirnics, *A kisebbségi sors neveletlen gyermekei*, 28 pages, TLA KEI Kv. K-1981/97.; Iván Gyurcsík, *A szlovákiai magyar pártok politikai céljai, stratégiái 1989-1998*, 17 pages, TLA KEI Kv. K-1982/97. Some relevant analyses include: László Öllös, *A szlovákiai magyar kisebbségi szervezetek áttekintése*, 37 pages, TLA KEI Kv. K-2627/98.; "Történeti áttekintés" in *Tíz év a kárpátaljai magyarság szolgálatában*. KMKSZ, Ungvár, 1999. pp. 7-40.; Miklós Kovács, *A kisebbségben élő politikuskok által vívott hatalmi harcok logikája*, 8 pages, TLA KEI Kv. K-1669/96.; Imre Borbély and Attila Zsolt Borbély, "RMDSZ: érték, érdek és hatalom, 1989-1998," *Magyar Kisebbség*, 1998, no. 2, pp. 23-54.; Krisztina Szentimrei, 'Bal' és 'jobb' az erdélyi magyar politikában," *Erdélyi Magyarság*, no. 34, április-június 1998, pp. 7-12.; László Veress, *Az erdélyi magyar politika fő törésvonalai*. JATE Kortörténeti Gyűjtemény 4754.; Sándor Hódi, "A magyar kisebbségpolitika bukása a Vajdaságban" *Magyar Kisebbség*, no. 1, 1998, pp. 252-264., Sándor Hódi, "Vajdasági magyar pártpreferenciák. Politikai törésvonalak a vajdasági magyar körében" *Napló*, január 22, 1997, pp. 10-12.; György Szerbhorváth, "Vajdasági magyar bölcsek protokollumai," *Symposion*, no. 20-21, szeptember-október 1998, pp. 3-108.
- ³ Attempts to this point include: István Schlett, *Kisebbségözön* (Budapest: Kossuth, 1993), p. 269.; László Szarka, "Variációk nemzetstratégiára," *Debreceni Szemle*, no. 1, 1998, pp. 8-18.; Csaba Lőrincz, *A magyar nemzeti kisebbségek autonómiaformái és koncepciói* (manuscript, 20 p.), TLA KEI Kv. K-1983/97.; István Ijgyártó, "A szom-

szedős országok magyarság-politikája,” in *Közép-Európa az integráció küszöbén*. (Budapest: TLA, 1997), pp. 112-117.

- ⁴ The conceptual definition of such has been put forth in the autonomy plans of Sándor N. Szilágyi and József Csapó. According to the former: “a) unique, differentiating (from others) ethnic, historical, cultural, religious, and usually linguistic characteristics; b) members see themselves as belonging to the given community, have community-consciousness, have a need for the recognition of their community by others, wish to keep their identity, and attempt to preserve all that stems from their self-awareness; c) have lived in the territory of Romania for at least 100 years; d) have at least 100 members.” Sándor N. Szilágyi, *Törvény a nemzeti identitással kapcsolatos jogokról és a nemzeti közösségek méltányos és harmonikus együttéléséről*, ch. 1, passage 1. TLA KEI Kv. K-386/94. With more direct political content: “The Romanian Magyar national community, as an autonomous political subject, is one and the same with the number of Magyars in the minority, whose homeland has historical, territorial, settlement, cultural, linguistic, and religious traditions, and whose members express their membership based on individual choice.” József Csapó, *A Romániai Magyar Nemzeti Közösség személyi elvű autonómiájának statútuma*, ch. 1, passage 1, TLA KEI Kv. K-1984/97.
- ⁵ *Ehnyomott kisebbségből legyen társnemzet*. (Pozsony-Bratislava: Együttélés Politikai Mozgalom), 20 pages.
- ⁶ This is more common in conservative media in Hungary than the term mother-country.
- ⁷ Experiences gained from using the *Pressdok* and *Hundok* press databases and document collections.
- ⁸ Károly Tóth (ed.), *Kelet-Európa új alkotmányai* (Szeged: Univ. Szegediensis, 1996), 360 pages.
- ⁹ “Ünnepélyes nyilatkozat,” March 2, 1996. Vienna. *Bécsi Napló*, no. 2, 1996, p. 2.; “A nemzetiségi közösség céljai és gondjai. Muravidéki Magyar nemzetiségi Önzagatási Közösség Végrehajtó tanácsa,” *Néptűjság*, November 15, 1991.
- ¹⁰ After the collapse of the VMDK, some districts followed their local leaders. In this way their local significance increased.
- ¹¹ The richest collection of terms is in Imre Borbély and Zsolt Borbély, cited above.
- ¹² Oszkár Jászi, “A nemzetiségi kérdés a társadalmi és egyéni fejlődés szempontjából,” *Huszadik Század*, no. 2, 1918, p. 105.
- ¹³ In Slovakia, the Magyar People’s Movement for Peace and Welfare. In the last Slovakian elections approximately 15% of the Magyar vote did not go to the MKP, and 2-3 Magyar representatives entered Parliament through other parties. In the 1996 elections in Voivodina more than half of the Magyar representatives were not supported by the three Magyar parties, but were instead independent or can-

- didates of Serbian parties. In any case, the most Magyar votes were for the VMSZ, especially in the second round. Sándor Hódi, op. cit.
- ¹⁴ The theoretical framework conceptualization of the model is in Sándor Tamás, *Egy nemzetiségi társadalom belső normatív rendszere, 1996*. TLA KEI Kv. K-1909/97., 8 pages.
- ¹⁵ *Az önkormányzat az önkormányzás alapja. Komárom 1994. január 8.*, (Komárom: Komáromi Lapok – Szinyei Kiadó, 1995), 264 pages.
- ¹⁶ The conditions of party structure and state institutions: Parliament–Council of Federal Representatives, parties–platforms, parliamentary factions–federal oversight and ethical committees, government–directing presidency, (strong) president–Federal President. See Krisztina Szentimrei, op. cit., p. 11.
- ¹⁷ The main difference between the political planning of the Carpathian-Balkan region’s two largest ethnic groups, the Albanians and the Magyars, stemming from different characteristics and circumstances, is that while the former has rejected cooperation with the oppositional-democratic-euroatlantic oriented groups of the majority – even at the cost of leading to the electoral defeat of these groups (Yugoslavian elections of 1993) – the Magyar political communities have always attempted to cooperate.
- ¹⁸ Ildikó Orosz, *Esettanulmány a kárpátaljai Magyar Tanárképző Főiskola születéséről*, TLA KEI Kv. K-1940/97, 23 pages.
- ¹⁹ Béla Csorba and János Vékás (eds.), *A kultúrtantí visszavág: A Sympson-mozgalom krónikája 1954-1993* (Újvidék: 1994), 175 pages.
- ²⁰ Document collection by Ferenc Mák, *Ristic és a szabadkai magyar színházügy*, TLA KEI Kv. K-1987/97.
- ²¹ Károly Mirmics, *A kisebbségi sors...*, op. cit.
- ²² András Agoston and János Vékás, (eds.), *A botrány* (Újvidék: 1994), 164 pages.
- ²³ Autonomy concepts and expert materials of the VMSZ and VDMK, TLA KEI Kv. K-1543/96.
- ²⁴ Reference individuals have been around consistently: Károly Kós, Áron Márton, Imre Mikó, József Venczel, Lajos Jordáky, Zsigmond Jakó, Attila T. Szabó, Rudolf Schuller, Ernő Gál, György Bretter, József Aradi, etc.
- ²⁵ Sarló, Prohászka Circles, Transylvanian Youth, Hitel circle, Szabadka Népkör youth section.
- ²⁶ “A kisebbségi értelmiség önképe a második világháború előtt,” (document collection) *Magyar Kisebbség*, no. 3-4, 1998, pp. 55-128.
- ²⁷ Based on pre-1989 manuscripts and debates: Zoltán A. Bíró, “Intézményképviselőt-civil társadalom,” *Átmenetek*, no. 1, 1990, pp. 5-19.
- ²⁸ István Tóth, “Filmszakadás,” *Kárpátaljai Minerva*, vol. II, no. 1-2, pp. 46-51.
- ²⁹ Letters of Károly Király, TLA KEI Kv. K-76/86; 89/86; 90/86.
- ³⁰ This is summarized in a table by György Szerbhorváth, *Ibid.* op. cit., p. 21.

- ³¹ Révkomárom Grand Meeting, Béla Csorba – Zenta VDMK Meeting, Géza Gulácsi's various Sub-Carpathian plans. For more detail, see Ádám Ríz, *Magyar autonómia koncepciók határon innen és túl* (Manuscript, 170 p.), TLA KEI Kv. K-1984/98.
- ³² There were no detailed party platforms in the 1996 Yugoslav elections: every group claimed it was the legitimate representative of Magyars.
- ³³ Róbert Győri Szabó, *Kisebbségpolitikai rendszerváltás Magyarországon a Nemzeti és Etnikai Kollégium és Titkárság története tükrében*, (Budapest: Osiris, 1997); Attila Ara-Kovács, *Határtalan vagy gátlástalan?* (Manuscript, 32 p.) TLA KEI Kv. K-1389/94.; Attila Ara-Kovács, *A többségi szándéktól a kisebbségi következményekig* (Manuscript, 13 p.), TLA KEI Kv. K-1554/96.
- ³⁴ Miklós Sz. Kovács, "Konvojban (A magyar-magyar viszonyról)," *Forrás*, no. 5, 1997, pp. 77-81.