

ETHNOPOLITICS OF THE HUNGARIANS, SZEKLETS, AND SAXONS IN TRANSYLVANIA

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Introduction

From a cultural-anthropological viewpoint the symbolic use of ethnopolitics¹ is intriguing regarding the way it is used to sharpen or to blur ethnic boundaries.² This paper focuses on practical Transylvanian examples of current *ethnomanagement*³ or those of the recent past of the Hungarians, Szeklers, and Saxons.

At the beginning the main parameters of Romanian minority rights and the minority rights discussion will be introduced. Within that section there will be two subsections – one from the Hungarian and one from the Saxon points of view – regarding the different demands for autonomy of the Szekler Land, which reach from cultural to territorial autonomy.

The second chapter deals with Transylvanian ethnopolitics within the frame of the *culture of remembrance*. The activity of remembering implements interplay between subjective and intersubjective images and ideas, which are enriched with (one's own or external) cultural stereotypes, historical narratives or moral concepts.⁴ Anyway, the examples should show the interlacement of the political and of the ethnic group's imagery and they will illustrate some core activities of the *ethnomanagement* of the Hungarians, Szeklers, and Saxons.

The third chapter of the paper introduces examples of *ethnomanagement from abroad*, namely from Austria, Germany and Hungary. They cover cultural as well as ethnopolitical phenomena.

The fourth and last chapter is titled *Transylvanian Hungarians and Szeklers. Ethnopolitical Games of Deception*, because there are no distinct ethnic boundaries between Transylvanian Hungarians and Szeklers. The ethnic group formation of the Szeklers is closely connected with their self-designation "we Szeklers" (orig.: *székelyek*) and with the demand for autonomy for the Szekler Land (orig.: *székelyföld*).⁵ Therefore the

¹ The article is part of research project P 20 060 of the Austrian FWF.

² In the sense of *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, ed. by Frederick Barth, Oslo, 1969. See further Idem, *Enduring and Emerging Issues in the Analysis of Ethnicity*, in vol. *The Anthropology of Ethnicity*, ed. by H. Vermeulen, C. Govers, Amsterdam, 1994, pp. 12-32.

³ The author wants to point out that the term *ethnomanagement* (and its scientific concept) is basically conceived neutral – particularly it is not pejorative.

⁴ Astrid Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen*, Stuttgart, Weimar, 2005, p. 102.

⁵ They also refer to their past respectively to their historical narrative and within that to the old Szekler counties as an independent region. In other words: "Awareness of being embedded in secular, serial time [...] engenders the need for a narrative of 'identity'." Cf. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London-New York, 1983, p. 205.

different *ethnomanagement* of the Transylvanian Hungarians and the Szeklers let them drift further and further apart.

1. Minority Rights and Ethnopolitics

1.1. Parameters of the Romanian Minority Legislature

Since 1992 the Romanian Constitution (art. 59 para. 2) has guaranteed each national minority a seat in the Romanian Parliament. From 13 seats in the year 1992 the number has risen to 18 since 2000.⁶ It is subject to the rule of electoral law that minority organizations contesting an election have to be treated in the same way as political parties. However, this legal freedom of movement is restricted to only one organization per national minority.⁷

The *Council for National Minorities* was implemented in 1993. It was adapted to current political requirements by 2001. Since that time the Council has become an advisory council of the Romanian Government. It has gained more influence and it changed its name to the *Council of National Minorities*. At present the Council is part of the *Department for Interethnic Relations*.⁸

In the context of the usage of minority languages the Romanian Constitution highlights the importance of administrative districts (Romanian: *județ*).⁹ The law on local public administration (215/2001), even in its amended version (286/2006), stipulates that in order to be able to profit from the law a minority must add up to at least 20 percent of the total population of an administrative district.

Even the Romanian legal academic Sergiu Constantin criticizes this fact: "The need for improvement of the existing legal framework is clear when we think about the situation of small or dispersed minorities. The implementation reports show that persons belonging to such national minorities cannot take advantage of the rights stipulated in the legal framework because either they don't represent at least 20 percent of the population in their municipality, or there are not enough students, requests from parents, or teaching staff in order to establish educational units with tuition in their mother tongue. Most of the minority mass media depends on financial support from the state budget."¹⁰ "However, small minorities that live in compact groups in certain areas can benefit to a greater extent than a larger minority scattered all over the country."¹¹

In October 2007 the Romanian Parliament signed the *European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages* and recognized ten languages according to art. 5 of the charter.¹² Above all the German and the Hungarian language achieved exclusive rights: "[...] the state

⁶ Sergiu Constantin, *Romania*, in vol. *European Integration and Its Effects on Minority Protection in South Eastern Europe*, ed. by E. Lantschner et al., Baden-Baden, 2008, p. 142.

⁷ Christoph Pan, *Die Minderheitenrechte in Rumänien*, in Ch. Pan, B.S. Pfeil, *Minderheitenrechte in Europa*, Wien, 2002, p. 358.

⁸ See <http://www.dri.gov.ro/index.html?lng=2> (10 March 2009).

⁹ In total there are 40 administrative districts in Romania and one capital district.

¹⁰ S. Constantin, *Romania*, p. 165.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 154.

¹² <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/148.htm> (10 March 2009).

shall allow the administrative authorities to draft documents in one of these two minority languages and it shall either make bilingual administrative texts and forms available or publish them in Hungarian or German.”¹³

Basically the Romanian minority legislation still lacks a *framework law on national minorities*. Since 1993 nine different draft laws have been elaborated. In February 2005 the *Department for Interethnic Relations* presented a new legislative proposal. It was developed with the aid of minorities’ organizations as well as international experts. After approval, the Romanian Government referred it to the Parliament. The draft was also sent to the *Venice Commission of the Council of Europe* for review. The review was published in the same year.¹⁴ Inter alia the draft law and the review deal explicitly with the sensitive subject of “cultural autonomy” (see points 58-73 of the review). The operative point is that the Romanian Parliament has looked for reasons to delay the passing of the framework law on national minorities down to the present day.

I asked the Head of the *Department for Interethnic Relations* of the Romanian Government when he thought that this draft might finally become a law. His very short answer was: “When there will be political will.”¹⁵

1.2. The Hungarian Demand for Autonomy

Besides the above mentioned demand for *cultural autonomy* within the new framework law on national minorities the more radical of the Hungarian political parties, DAHR (Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania) and HCP (MPP) (Hungarian Civic Party), and many Hungarian political protagonists and ethnomanagers demand the *territorial autonomy* of the Szekler Land or in some cases of Transylvania as a whole.¹⁶

The Romanian side tends not to approve of these actions. The social scientist Christoph Pan emphasizes that for the Romanian politicians the notion of autonomy is considered bad style, because it is by mistake used synonymously with separatism.¹⁷

One timely example of the Romanian denial of Hungarian territorial autonomy demands was the reaction of the Romanian president Traian Băsescu when he answered questions from Hungarian journalists regarding the autonomy demands for the Szekler Land during a press conference within the frame of a meeting with the Hungarian president László Solyom in Budapest on 2 February 2009. There, President Băsescu underlined the Romanian position that there would be neither territorial autonomy nor a state run Hungarian University in Romania.¹⁸

¹³ S. Constantin, *Romania*, p. 148.

¹⁴ For the review CDL-AD(2005)026 of the Venice-Commission see [http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2005/CDL-AD\(2005\)026-e.asp](http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2005/CDL-AD(2005)026-e.asp) (10 March 2009).

¹⁵ S. Constantin, *Romania*, p. 162.

¹⁶ Approx. 670,000 Szeklers are living in the Szekler Land, most of them in Harghita (84.6%) and Covasna (73.8%) counties.

¹⁷ Chr. Pan, *Die Minderheitenrechte in Rumänien*, p. 359.

¹⁸ N.N., Băsescu: “soha nem lesz Székely autonómia,” in “Erdély Napló,” 4 February 2009, http://www.hhrf.org/erdelyinaplo/archivum.php?id_lapszam=368.

Sergiu Constantin has tried to find an objective point of view regarding autonomy demands and keeps his distance from the demands of DAHR: "DAHR's political program has used concepts like collective and individual rights of the Hungarian minority or personal, cultural and territorial autonomy for Hungarians since its establishment. But the representatives of the different 'platforms' of DAHR have different priorities and are using different modes of action."¹⁹

Anyway, the demographic data show that the Hungarian minority in Romania is one of the largest minorities in Europe. There are of course many European nation states with a smaller number of inhabitants. Therefore the question of autonomy should be allowed to be raised in order to find political solutions for unresolved ethno-national conflicts between the Romanian majority population and the Hungarian minority including the Szeklers.

In Transylvania itself the recent demand for autonomy is accompanied by the demand for an official referendum in the Szekler Land. From December 2006 to February 2008 an unofficial referendum was held by the *Szekler National Council* (Székely Nemzeti Tanács, SZNT) in more than 600 communities. 99.3 percent of the 200,000 participants voted for *territorial autonomy*, but the Romanian media were rather skeptical about the result and wrote that No-ballots were thrown away before counting.²⁰ Currently the SZNT and HCP (MPP) make attempts to hold an official referendum (Hungarian: *népszavazás*).²¹ On Friday, 30 January 2009, Attila Tulit, a functionary of HCP (MPP), recommended the installation of a special autonomy fund, which should cover future costs of public meetings, of self-administration and of the referendum.²² In addition to that the *Hungarian National Council of Transylvania* (Erdély Magyar Nemzeti Tanács, EMNT) also demands the territorial autonomy of the Szekler Land.²³

Within the frame of the demands for territorial autonomy the example of the autonomous region of South Tyrol in Italy²⁴ is often used as a role model. In January 2009 the journalist Attila Németh even used the term "South-Tyrolisation" (Hungarian: *dél tirolozás*) of the Szekler Land and he generally speaks from a cult surrounding South Tyrol.²⁵

This affiliation with the doubtless properly functioning autonomy in South Tyrol has a high symbolic value²⁶ for those who demand territorial autonomy for the Szekler Land. Some

See further N.N., *Bănescu: În România nu va exista niciodată autonomie teritorială*, in Mediafax, 2 February 2009, <http://www.mediafax.ro/politic/basescu-in-romania-nu-va-exista-niciodata-autonomie-teritoriala.html?1687;3851345>.

¹⁹ S. Constantin, *Romania*, p. 143, f.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 163.

²¹ See <http://www.sznt.ro/hu-sic/index.php?lang=hu> (12 February 2009).

²² N.N., *A hét hiray/Péntek*, in "Erdélyi Napló," 4 February 2009, http://www.hhrf.org/erdelyinaplo/archivum.php?id_lapszam=368.

²³ See <http://www.hhrf.org/emnt/autonomia.htm> (10 March 2009).

²⁴ Concerning the autonomy legislation of South Tyrol, see Christoph Pan, *Die Minderheitenrechte in Italien*, in Ch. Pan, B.S. Pfeil, *Minderheitenrechte in Europa*, p. 187. See further Oskar Peterlini, *Autonomie und Minderheitenschutz in Trentino-Südtirol. Überblick über Geschichte, Recht und Politik*, Wien, 1997.

²⁵ Attila Németh, *A Dél-Tirol-kultusz, és ami mögötte van*, in "Erdélyi Napló," 26 January 2009, http://www.hhrf.org/erdelyinaplo/archivum.php?id_lapszam=366.

²⁶ For symbolic values in a social structure see Pierre Bourdieu, *Zur Soziologie der symbolischen Formen*, Frankfurt/M, 1983, p. 60 ff.

photographs of demonstrations for autonomy show banners, with the Hungarian terms “székelyföld – dél-tirol” (Szekler Land – South Tyrol) linked together.²⁷

1.3. The Saxons and Their Negative Attitude towards Autonomy

In June 2006 the then-publishing house manager of ADZ²⁸ Wolfgang Wittstock wrote an elaborate commentary regarding the above-mentioned draft of the new Romanian framework law on national minorities. By and large he endorsed the implementation of the framework law, because it would be able to close a gap. Contemporaneously Wittstock called the demand for *cultural autonomy* “brisant” (hot).²⁹ The dimension of a board for *cultural autonomy* for the German national minority in Romania would be calculated on the basis of the results of the current census; in proportion to the census of 2002, which recorded 60,000 Germans, the board would consist of 15 members. These cultural autonomy “counselors” would receive widespread competences regarding the organization and administration of the minority’s school system and of the cultural institutions of the Germans.³⁰

Otherwise the functionaries of DFDR,³¹ neither in 2006 Ovidiu Ganț, the then-member for the German minority in the Romanian Parliament, nor in 2008 Klaus Johannis, the present Chairman of DFDR and Mayor of Hermannstadt/Sibiu,³² supported any application for *cultural autonomy* for the Saxons in Transylvania.³³

2. Ethnopolitics within the Frame of the Culture of Remembrance

2.1. Ceremonies of Remembrance of the Hungarians

The Hungarian ceremonies of remembrance in Transylvania are closely connected to present ethnopolitics, because Hungarian politicians use them effectively as a public arena. The following examples are related to: firstly, the Szent István Day (20 August), which symbolizes the founding day of the Hungarian kingdom as well as the end of the ‘successful’ land seizure; secondly, the remembrance of the outstanding revolutionary events in 1848/49 (15 March),³⁴ which symbolize the struggle for freedom of the Hungarians against the

²⁷ See for instance the photos at the home page of the SZNT, <http://www.sznt.ro/hu-sic/index.php?lang=hu> (10 March 2009).

²⁸ ADZ = “Allgemeine Deutsche Zeitung für Rumänien.”

²⁹ Wolfgang Wittstock, “Zufrieden stellender Rahmen für den Schutz der Minderheitenrechte”: *Im Regierungsentwurf des Statuts der nationalen Minderheiten steckt viel politischer Zündstoff*, in ADZ, 4 June 2006, <http://www.adz.ro/archiv/m060406.htm>.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ DFDR = *Demokratisches Forum der Deutschen in Rumänien* (Democratic Forum of the Germans in Romania).

³² Names of villages and cities in minorities’ regions will be cited at their first mention in the minority language (German or Hungarian) and in Romanian. Afterwards names of villages and cities will be mentioned only in the minority language for better understanding of the minority issues.

³³ N.N., *Sachsen fordern keine Autonomie in Siebenbürgen*, in ADZ, 25 February 2008, <http://www.adz.ro/p080225.htm>.

³⁴ How 15 March and 23 October became national holidays, see István Rév, *Retroactive Justice. Pre-History of Post-Communism*, Stanford, 2005, pp. 145-148 for 15 March and pp. 194-201 for 23 October.

Habsburg Empire; thirdly, the remembrance of the outstanding revolutionary events in 1956 (23 October), which also symbolize the struggle for freedom of the Hungarians.

Within the frame of a wreath laying ceremony on 23 October 2007 at the Imre Nagy Monument in Snagov the Chairman of DAHR Béla Markó emphasized that this struggle for freedom had not been completed to that day, neither in the sense of individual Hungarian national identity nor in that of the Hungarian nation itself.³⁵

i) On 20 August 2007, in Atosfalva/Hotești, a statue of Queen Gizella, who was the beatified wife of the Holy King István I, was dedicated. The dedication ceremony was managed by Árpád Szabó, Bishop of the Unitarian Church, and László Tókés, Bishop of the Calvinistic Church. Béla Markó spoke about a feast for a successful king of a successful folk.³⁶ On the same day there was another dedication of a monument at the Óriáspince Tettő hill nearby Maksa/Moața³⁷ within the frame of a meeting of Hungarians of Háromszék County from around the world. After the speech of Béla Markó the monument was festively dedicated by representatives of the Catholic, Unitarian, and Calvinistic Churches.³⁸

The importance of the Szent István Day for the Churches as well as for the Hungarian national identity was reflected on 20 August 2008 in Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe, too, when the Roman-Catholic priest Lajos Szábo emphasized that it was a holiday for all Hungarians and that Saint István would not only have been canonized by Rome, he would have been canonized by the common folk.³⁹

ii) On 15 March 2008 the Transylvanian main ceremony of DAHR with about 5,000 participants took place at the Szekler Martyr Monument in Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureș. Béla Markó proclaimed that the example of 1848/49 showed that nobody was able to take something away from the Hungarians forever – “we will restore what belonged to us.” He further said that in Marosvásárhely⁴⁰ and in Transylvania it was clearly demonstrated that the oppression of the Hungarian nation and hate against it would get nowhere. Armed masses attacked the Hungarians, only because they reclaimed what had been taken away from them – the Hungarian language, the Hungarian school, and nobody would ever have apologized.⁴¹

Interestingly, SZNT held a parallel ceremony on the same day in Marosvásárhely at the Petőfi Monument with about 500 participants. The Chairman of SZNT Balázs Izsák spoke only in the name of the Szeklers when he announced that the Szeklers would use

³⁵ DAHR Archive, 23 October 2007, Nemcsak a nemzetek, a diktatúrák is szolidárisak egymással – 1956-os megemlékezés Snagovon, <http://archivum.rmdsz.ro/script/mainframe.php?lang=hu>. Imre Nagy, the leader of the 1956 Revolution, was imprisoned in the Romanian village Snagov, before he was executed in Budapest on 16 June 1958.

³⁶ Szövetség, September 2007, <http://archivum.rmdsz.ro/script/docs/Szovetseg/szovetseg-szept-2007.pdf>.

³⁷ From 1630 to 1739 this is where the general assemblies of Szekler Seats were held.

³⁸ DAHR Archive, 20 August 2007, Megtartani a szülőföldet – Markó Béla ünnepi beszéde a Háromszéki Magyarok Világtalálkozóján, <http://archivum.rmdsz.ro/script/mainframe.php?lang=hu>.

³⁹ Péter Váry O., *Minden magyarok ünnepe*, in “Háromszék,” 21 August 2008, <http://www.3szek.ro/modules.php?name=3szek&id=12063&Cikk=Minden%20magyarok%20unnepe>.

⁴⁰ In 1990 there were riots between Romanians and Hungarians in the city.

⁴¹ DAHR Archive, 15 March 2008, Markó Béla ünnepi beszéde as RMDSZ Március 15-re emlékező központi rendezvénylén, <http://archivum.rmdsz.ro/script/mainframe.php?lang=hu>.

democratic means for their struggle for collective rights and that it would be without violence.⁴²

HCP (MPP) held a ceremony on 15 March 2008 in Székelyudvarhely/Odorhei Secuiesc in the Áron Márton Place. There the Chairman of the HCP (MPP) and Mayor of Székelyudvarhely Jenő Szász proclaimed that the Hungarians of today need the same character traits as those who lived in 1848: morals, identity, and backbone. József Szájer, member of the EU Parliament for the Hungarian conservative FIDESZ Party,⁴³ said that there were often discussions about the Szeklers not only in Hungary but even in the European Parliament.⁴⁴

Another example of a 15 March ceremony is from Szentkatolna/Catalina, where the mayor and a history teacher referred to the contents of the 1848 Revolution, and pupils of the local grammar school dressed in historical Szekler clothes recited poems.⁴⁵

iii) Béla Markó, the Chairman of DAHR, published his speech, which he gave in October 2006 at a formal soirée in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the 1956 Revolution. He drew a parallel between the 1848 and the 1956 Revolutions, because both of them were in his opinion a struggle for freedom of the Hungarian nation together with a social revolution. And he further mentioned that the 1956 Revolution “did not go on with weapons, but it went on in the people’s minds.”⁴⁶

Béla Markó used similar imagery on 23 October at the 1956 remembrance ceremony of DAHR in Snagov, which was also attended by Hunor Kelemen, executive manager of DAHR, and Richárd Baday, Chairman of DAHR Bucharest. Anyway, the Hungarian Ambassador in Romania János Terényi spoke more consensually when he emphasized that in 1956 the Hungarian national consciousness did not clash with that of the Romanians.⁴⁷

2.2. Hungarian and Szekler Demands for Autonomy within Ceremonies of Remembrance

Hungarian and Szekler ceremonies of remembrance in Transylvania are frequently used by ethnopoliticians to embed the Hungarian demand for autonomy. Some explicit examples of the Transylvanian *ethnomanagement*:

On 15 March 2008, at the ceremony in Marosvásárhely, Béla Markó – as well as Hunor Kelemen on the same day in Nyergesztető – underlined the political will of DAHR to demand autonomy for Transylvania as a whole. Béla Markó emphasized in his speech that

⁴² N.N., *Két helyszin, külön ünnep (Marosvásárhelyen)*, in “Háromszék,” 17 March 2008, [http://www.3szek.ro/modules.php?name=3szek&id=7886&Cikk=Két%20helyszin,%20külön%20ünnep%20\(Marosvásárhely\)](http://www.3szek.ro/modules.php?name=3szek&id=7886&Cikk=Két%20helyszin,%20külön%20ünnep%20(Marosvásárhely)).

⁴³ FIDESZ = *Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége* (Alliance of Young Democrats).

⁴⁴ N.N., *Székelyföldnek autonómiára van szüksége (Székelyudvarhely)*, in “Háromszék,” 17 March 2008, [http://www.3szek.ro/modules.php?name=3szek&id=7887&Cikk=Székelyföldnek%20autonómiára%20van%20szüksége%20\(Székelyudvarhely\)](http://www.3szek.ro/modules.php?name=3szek&id=7887&Cikk=Székelyföldnek%20autonómiára%20van%20szüksége%20(Székelyudvarhely)).

⁴⁵ István lochom, *Szentkatolnán*, *ibidem*, <http://www.3szek.ro/modules.php?name=3szek&id=7867&Cikk=Szentkatolnán>. See also part 4.

⁴⁶ DAHR Archive, 20 October 2006, Markó Béla – Egy hosszú forradalom, <http://archivum.rmdsz.ro/script/mainframe.php?lang=hu>.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, 23 October 2007, *Nemcsak a nemzetek ..., loc. cit.*

the Hungarians did not want to destroy the country via autonomy, but autonomy should develop and restore Transylvania and the Szekler Land.⁴⁸ Hunor Kelemen argued that the Hungarians only wanted to implement what representatives of the Romanian folk promised in the year 1918.⁴⁹

Jenő Szász, the Chairman of HCP (MPP), only demanded autonomy for the Szekler Land and said that they wanted to get it by means of European democracy.⁵⁰

2.3. Ceremonies of Remembrance of the Saxons

On 12 June 2005 there was a broadcast on Austrian radio (Ö1) about the famous Saxon author Eginald Schlattner, who wrote a few autobiographical novels based on the contemporary history of the Saxons in Transylvania.⁵¹ In his books as well as in this radio feature Schlattner cross-referenced an aphorism of the Romantic German author Jean Paul, which is in a metaphorical way able to describe the main components of the culture of remembrance of the Saxons: “Die Erinnerung ist das einzige Paradies, aus welchem wir nicht getrieben werden können” (Jean Paul)⁵² (Memory is the only paradise we cannot be banished from).

Firstly, the Saxon handling of memory shows a difference between the past and the present; respectively it shows a duality of former prosperity and power in opposition to the demographic decrease since the change and considerable low importance on the political scene.

Secondly, a large proportion of the Saxon typical organization of the social life in Saxon villages and towns called “Nachbarschaften” (neighborhoods) disappeared after the Saxon migration. Anyway, the present *cultural memory*⁵³ of the Saxons assigns this typical social arrangement form to shared experiences. A “Nachbarschaft” is/was an important social-ethnic marker of the Saxons.

Thirdly, the Saxon culture of remembrance is therefore – in comparison with the above named Hungarian/Szekler examples – much more oriented to the past in the sense that they mostly do not try to give historical events a present (political) dimension: the preference is to escape into the paradise of memory.

The emphases of the program of the *Sächsische Kulturwoche* (Saxon Cultural Week), which took place from 1 to 8 August 2007 in the then-cultural capital of Europe Hermannstadt/Sibiu,⁵⁴ were laid on the area of folklore (marching bands, dancing groups,

⁴⁸ Ibidem, 15 March 2008, Markó Béla ünnepi beszéde as RMDSZ ..., *loc. cit.*

⁴⁹ Ibidem, 15 March 2008, Van egy álmom Székelyföldről – Kelemen Hunor ügyvezető elnök ünnepi beszéde a nyergestetői március 15-i ünnepségen, <http://archivum.rmdsz.ro/script/mainframe.php?lang=hu>.

⁵⁰ N.N., *Székelyföldnek autonómiára ...*, *loc. cit.*

⁵¹ E.g. Eginald Schlattner, *Der geköpfte Hahn*, München, 2005.

⁵² Jean Paul (Friedrich Richter), *Vermischte Schriften II*, München, 1978, p. 820.

⁵³ Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*, München, 1999; *Zivilisationsbruch und Gedächtniskultur. Das 20. Jahrhundert in der Erinnerung des beginnenden 21. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Heidemarie Uhl, Innsbruck et al., 2003.

⁵⁴ See the program of the Saxon cultural week, <http://www.siebenbuerger.de/zeitung/artikel/rumaenien/6804-das-programm-der-saechsischen.html>.

Saxon dialect theatre) as well as on visits to architectural monuments.⁵⁵ The Saxon Cultural Week 2007 was organized by the then *Landsmannschaft der Siebenbürger Sachsen in Deutschland* (Landsmannschaft of the Transylvanian Saxons in Germany)⁵⁶ and DFDR.

One of the cultural highlights of the Saxons – also in the sense of their *ethnomanagement* – is the annual *Sachsentreffen* (Saxon Meeting), which is held mostly in the community of BIRTHÄLM/Biertan. There, on 17 September 2005, the 15th Saxon Meeting took place, and on 16 September 2006, the 16th. These meetings are predominantly a demonstration of Saxon folklore tradition.⁵⁷

In the context of the culture of remembrance of the Saxons the various activities of the *Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession* should be mentioned. Lutheran worship is an inherent part of the above-mentioned cultural events. At the opening ceremony of the Saxon Cultural Week in Hermannstadt 2007, the Protestant Bishop Hans Klein emphasized that regarding the interpenetration of the Saxon municipal system and the church congregation both parts were nearly congruent.⁵⁸

3. Ethnomanagement from Abroad

3.1. Ethnomanagement from Austria and Germany. Examples

Saxon *ethnomanagement from abroad* is based on two umbrella organizations: *Verband der Siebenbürger Sachsen in Germany*⁵⁹ and *Bundesverband der Siebenbürger Sachsen in Austria*.⁶⁰ Another German alliance, which serves the purpose of connecting native Transylvanian villages and towns with Saxon migrants, is named “Verband der Siebenbürgisch Sächsischen Heimatortsgemeinschaft” (HOG)⁶¹ (Alliance of Transylvanian Saxon Home Communities). Some of the Saxon societies are called “Landsmannschaften” (‘territorial associations’), and within these organizations the argumentation regarding German group identity ranges from weak “German ethnical” to strong “German national”.

⁵⁵ Architectural monuments are the better part of the “material dimension” of the *culture of remembrance*. See Astrid Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis*, p. 102 f.; *Die Verortung von Gedächtnis*, ed. by Moritz Csáky, Peter Stachel, Wien, 2001.

⁵⁶ Since 3/4 November 2007 the *Landsmannschaft der Siebenbürger Sachsen in Deutschland* was renamed *Verband der Siebenbürger Sachsen in Deutschland* (Alliance of Transylvanian Saxons in Germany). See <http://www.siebenbuerger.de/> and <http://www.saxonlodge.org/>.

⁵⁷ Siegbert Bruss, 15. *Sachsentreffen unter dem Motto “Über Grenzen, einig ...”* in “Siebenbürger Zeitung,” 5 October 2005, <http://www.siebenbuerger.de/zeitung/artikel/drucken/index.php?id=4654>. Ruxandra Stănescu, 16. *Sachsentreffen in BIRTHÄLM: “Wir in Europa,”* ibidem, 21 September 2006, <http://www.siebenbuerger.de/zeitung/artikel/hog/5707-16-sachsentreffen-in-birthaelm-wir-in.html>.

⁵⁸ Frank-Thomas Ziegler, “*Siebenbürgisch-sächsische Kulturwoche*“ in Hermannstadt mit Festakt eröffnet, ibidem, 7 August 2007, <http://www.siebenbuerger.de/zeitung/artikel/drucken/index.php?id=6885>.

⁵⁹ For its structure on the local levels called *Landesverbände* (county alliance) and *Kreisgruppen* (district groups) see <http://www.siebenbuerger.de/verband/> (10 March 2009).

⁶⁰ For its structure on the local levels called *Vereine* (societies) and *Nachbarschaften* (neighborhoods) see <http://www.7buerger.at/> (10 March 2009).

⁶¹ See <http://www.siebenbuerger-sachsen-hog.de/> (10 March 2009). For examples of local HOGs see <http://www.hog-schaessburg.de/> and <http://www.hog-kronstadt.de/> (10 March 2009).

The *Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession* plays a decisive role. Firstly, there is the *Evangelical Church in Germany* (EKD), which gave migrants from Transylvania a “spiritual” home by special “Pastoral Care for Resettlers.”⁶² Secondly, there is a close connection between the EKD and the *Evangelical Church in Romania*.⁶³ Besides, the consistory of the *Evangelical Church in Romania* owns an honorary seat in the extended board of the *Verband der Siebenbürger Sachsen*: the current Protestant *Bezirksdechant* (Dean) Hans Bruno Fröhlich from Schäßburg/Sighișoara holds this position of esteem.⁶⁴ Thirdly, Volker Petri, the Chairman of the Austrian *Bundesverband der Siebenbürger Sachsen*, is a Protestant pastor.

It is still essential that the *Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession* is “the Church of the Transylvanian Saxons.” Saxon migrants never visit Transylvania without Lutheran worship. It is an inherent part of each visiting program for Saxons from abroad, whether it happens in a small village or in a city.

Relations between Saxons in Germany and Austria, and Transylvania are further promoted by so-called *Sommersachsen* (Summer Saxons).⁶⁵ These are Saxon migrants from abroad spending their summer holidays regularly in their former home. The number of the *Sommersachsen* has been increasing during the last decade.

3.2. Ethnomangement from Hungary. Examples⁶⁶

In a comparable way to the above listed organizations of the Saxons, in Hungary a separate “Governmental Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad” has been set up.⁶⁷ In addition there are many societies of Transylvanian Hungarians in Hungary, predominantly in Budapest. For instance, under the umbrella organization of *Erdély Magyarok Háza* (House of Hungarians from Transylvania) there are the *Erdély Magyarok Egyesülete* (Society of Hungarians from Transylvania) and the *Budapesti Székely Kör* (The Circle of Szeklers in Budapest).⁶⁸ And, there is another major society named *Erdélyi Magyarok Egyesülete* (Association of Hungarians from Transylvania).⁶⁹

A radical Hungarian national youth organization is named *Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom* (HVIM)⁷⁰ (Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement). It does not accept the borders defined by the Treaty of Trianon and tries to recruit members all over Hungary as well as in Hungarian minority regions abroad. In Transylvania for example, in January 2009,

⁶² EKD Bulletin 04/2002, http://www.ekd.de/english/1683-bulletin_4_2003_30.html.

⁶³ See the detailed “greetings” of Bishop Christoph Klein of the *Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania*, http://www.ekvw.de/fileadmin/sites/ekvw/Dokumente/Synode/2006/gw/Grusswort_Bischof_Klein.pdf.

⁶⁴ See <http://www.siebenbuenger.de/verband/personen/hans-bruno-froehlich.php> (10 March 2009).

⁶⁵ Romanians also call them “sași de vară.”

⁶⁶ For a short overview see George Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power. The New Politics of Europe*, London, 2000, chapters 24 *Hungary as Kin-State* and 25 *Hungary and its Neighbours*, pp. 370-409.

⁶⁷ See <http://www.hhrf.org/html/en/?menuid=0902> (10 March 2009).

⁶⁸ See http://www.erdelyimagyarokhaza.hu/erdelyi_magyarsag_magyarorszagon.php (10 March 2009).

⁶⁹ See <http://www.geocities.com/erdelyimagyarok/> (10 March 2009).

⁷⁰ See <http://www.hvim.hu/> (10 March 2009).

the HVIM of Székelyudvarhely called consumers to boycott shops which do not present their products with labels in both Romanian and Hungarian, according to a paragraph of the Romanian minority law.⁷¹

Another set of examples sheds light upon the Hungarian political parties as well as Hungarian politicians and their commitments towards the Hungarian minority in Romania. The Romanian parliamentary elections were held on 30 November 2008. On 23 October, during the run-up to these elections, the visit of the Hungarian President László Sólyom in Transylvania included the following meetings and events: in Csíkszereda/Miercurea Ciuc he took part in a ceremony of remembrance of the 1956 Revolution, and afterwards he visited the Transylvanian Hungarian *Sapientia* University.⁷² During the visit of the Hungarian President the blue-gold Szekler flag⁷³ waved from the Mayor's office in Csíkszereda. This flag triggered outrage on the part of the Romanian parties in Csíkszereda.⁷⁴

In Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş, President László Sólyom met the Chairman of DAHR Béla Markó; afterwards he met the Chairman of EMNT and member of the European Parliament László Tőkés. In Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe president Sólyom met Balázs Izsák, the Chairman of SZNT.⁷⁵

In his official speeches László Sólyom was very careful and he avoided the term "autonomy." In a broader context he said that the term "kulturális nemzet" (cultural nation) does not contradict "politikai nemzet" (political nation), and it means that one is able to be a loyal member of a political nation and belong in a cultural sense to another folk. Anyway, it was not appreciated by everybody within the Hungarian minority that the Hungarian President visited Transylvania so shortly before the appointed day of the parliamentary elections.⁷⁶

Within this subsection a very few examples in connection with political parties in Hungary supporting DAHR and/or HCP (MPP) in Transylvania will also be given.

One of the most remarkable political events is the fact that the Hungarian FIDESZ Party (Hungarian Civic Union FIDESZ) changed its priority. On 1 June and 15 June 2008 local elections were held in Romania.⁷⁷ Before these local elections the leading personality of the FIDESZ Party gave political support to HCP (MPP). László Kövér, the Chairman of the National Board of FIDESZ, for instance took part in the election campaign in the county of Hargita/Harghita together with Jenő Szász, the leader of the HCP (MPP). In

⁷¹ Dániel Gribek, *Bojkottra szólít a Székelyudvarhely HVIM*, http://szentkoronaradio.com/elszakitva/2009_01_26_bojkottra-szolit-a-szekelyudvarhelyi-hvim.

⁷² See <http://www.sapientia.siculorum.ro/sapientia/> (10 March 2009).

⁷³ See http://www.sznt.ro/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=84&Itemid=21&lang=en (10 March 2009).

⁷⁴ Teddy Tinca, *Kitűzik a Székely zászlót*, in "Székely Hírmondó," 4 November 2008, <http://www.szekelyhirmondo.ro/article.php/Kit%FBzik-a-sz%E9kely-z%E1szl%F3t/8372/>.

⁷⁵ S.H., *Jön Sólyom*, ibidem, 24-30 October 2008, <http://www.szekelyhirmondo.ro/article.php/Megyei-h%EDrek/8273/>.

⁷⁶ Teddy Tinca, "Ez az igazán jó ember!" ibidem, 28 October 2008, <http://www.szekelyhirmondo.ro/article.php/%84EZ-az-igaz%E1n-j%F3-ember33%94/8319/>.

⁷⁷ Holger Dix, *Die Kommunalwahl 2008 in Rumänien*, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung – Auslandsbüro Bukarest, http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_14008-544-1-30.pdf.

Gyergyóalfalu/Alfálu, Kövér emphasized in his speech that FIDESZ considered Jenő Szász and the Transylvanian HCP (MPP) as partners, who are able to organize Hungarian national politics together with FIDESZ. DAHR, on the other hand, would not have been able to stop migration from Transylvania and the loss of the “Hungarian nation” there.⁷⁸

The results of the local elections did not, however, fulfill the expectations of HCP (MPP) regarding a change, because DAHR politicians – specifically many mayors who are members of DAHR – asserted their positions in the area of the Hungarian minority.

On 20 June 2008, Viktor Orbán, Chairman of the FIDESZ Party, gave a speech in the Transylvanian village of Tusnádfürdő/Băile Tușnad, and Jenő Szász had to listen to the following: Orbán stressed that HCP (MPP) would have to conclude an agreement with DAHR concerning the parliamentary elections, because the promised local elections poll win of HCP (MPP) did not come to pass.⁷⁹ Eventually, Jenő Szász and HCP (MPP) did not conclude an agreement with DAHR: on 5 October 2008, the party executive committee of HCP (MPP) decided not to run for parliamentary elections on 30 November 2008. Instead of that HCP (MPP) supported independent Hungarian candidates.⁸⁰

4. Transylvanian Hungarians and Szeklers. Ethnopolitical *Games of Deception*

The ethnopolitics of the Hungarians, Szekler Hungarians, and Szeklers⁸¹ will not be introduced from the entire historical perspective or from Hungarian – and/or Szekler historical narratives regarding the *Terra Siculorum*.⁸² It will be introduced by practical examples of present ethnomangement from a cultural anthropological view – of course in relation to the previous sections of the paper, because the Szekler self-designation is closely linked to the above named demands for autonomy of the Szekler Land.⁸³

Incipiently – and once again – it will be pointed out that in Transylvania there are two different National Councils within the Hungarian speaking minority: on the one hand there is the EMNT, and on the other there is the SZNT. Both councils are in principle splinter groups from DAHR, and they were established at the end of 2003 (EMNT) and at the beginning of 2004 (SZNT) because of different opinions on the question of autonomy.⁸⁴

In its political statements and writings SZNT distinguishes between *Transylvanian Hungarian* (orig.: *erdélyi magyar*) and *Szekler* (orig.: *székely*); for example: “Egyetlen erdélyi magyar, egyetlen székely számára sem közömbös, hogy ...” (“Neither for a single

⁷⁸ N.N., *Új ritmus*, www.mpp-gyergyó.ro/?o=55 (10 March 2009).

⁷⁹ N.N., *Az Erdélyi Magyar Kezdeményezés platform az MPP útvesztéséről. “Hálátlanság a legrútább véték ...,”* in “Erdélyi Napló,” 27 August 2008, http://www.hhrf.org/erdelyinaplo/archivum.php?id_lapszam=340.

⁸⁰ N.N., *Ungarnverband will weiter mitreden. Béla Markó über die Zielsetzungen bei den Wahlen*, in ADZ, 13 October 2008, <http://adz.ro/p081013.htm>.

⁸¹ There are of course unsolved questions: Are Hungarians and Szeklers so different as to constitute two separate ethnic groups? Are the Szeklers more or less an ethnic subgroup of the Hungarians?

⁸² A relevant and timely opus regarding the history of the Szeklers is *Die Szekler in Siebenbürgen. Von der privilegierten Sondergemeinschaft zur ethnischen Gruppe*, ed. by Harald Roth, Köln, 2009.

⁸³ Kata Eplény, *Székelyek és autonómia – tervek a mérlegen (2003-2006)*, in “Regio,” 3, 2006, pp. 61-80.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 65 f.

Transylvanian Hungarian nor for a Szekler is it irrelevant if ...”).⁸⁵ Furthermore SZNT points to the fact that in the villages and towns of the Szekler Land, more and more blue-gold Szekler flags fly from city halls,⁸⁶ which are highly important ethnopolitical symbols.

In many cases HCP (MPP) tries to go hand in hand with the ethnopolitical goals of SZNT.⁸⁷ Before the two elections were held in 2008, one was beholden to ask – especially in Central Europe – if HCP (MPP) is more or less *the* (sic!) party, which supports ethnopolitical attitudes of the Szeklers rather than DAHR?

The answer to this question was given by the voters in the Szekler Land. Despite the above named ideological and practical help from the Hungarian FIDESZ Party during the elections campaign, HCP (MPP) did not advance to number one in the Szekler Land. DAHR still holds the majority of governing mayors in the Szekler Land and of course in the other areas of the region of the Hungarian minority.⁸⁸

Another issue refers to the usage of the phrase “Székely Magyar” (Szekler Hungarian): it tries to overcome the boundaries between Szeklers and Hungarians, and suggests implicitly that the Szeklers are an ethnic subgroup of the Hungarians.

Two examples from public speeches on 15 March 2008 within the framework of the ceremonies of remembrance of the 1848 Revolution: in the main square of the town Sepsiszentgyörgy the actor and speaker of special occasion Tibor Szabó inter alia spoke about “the Szekler Hungarian people of Sepsiszentgyörgy” (orig.: *Sepsiszentgyörgy székely Magyar népe*).⁸⁹ In the main square in the village of Szentkatolna/Catalina, the Mayor Levente Tusa and the teacher Jolán Jakab inter alia used the phrase “a message addressed to Szekler Hungarians” (orig.: *székelymagyaroknak szóló üzenetét*).⁹⁰

Last but not least in the Szekler Land the implementation of a Szekler identity instead of a Hungarian or a Szekler Hungarian is a main goal. On the occasion of a meeting of the most important mayors of the Szekler Land in January 2009, the following activities and different solutions were presented as necessary in order to consolidate a Szekler identity: a) realization of the territorial autonomy; b) opening of “development agencies”; c) joint funding; d) joint energy program; e) publication of a historical Szekler monograph; f) booklets to introduce the Szekler Land; g) creation of a web site (*szekelytermek.ro*); h) standardization of agriculture; i) usage of Szekler symbols; j) organization of events; and k) cooperation of different institutions.⁹¹

⁸⁵ Quotation from Balázs Izsák, *Nyílt levél Markó Béla úrnak, az RMDSZ szövetségi elnökének*, 3 March 2009, http://www.sznt.ro/hu-sic/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=263%3AAnyilt-level-marko-bela-urnak-az-rmdsz-szoevetsegi-elnoekenek&catid=12%3Afolyamodvanyok&Itemid=16&lang=hu.

⁸⁶ N.N., *Székelyföldi Önkormányzati Nagygyűlést szorgalmaz az SZNT*, in “Erdélyi Napló,” 26 January 2009, http://www.hhrf.org/erdelyinaplo/archivum.php?id_lapszam=366.

⁸⁷ See also chapter 1.2.

⁸⁸ See *A helyhatósági választások eredményei – Mandátumok és arányok*, 6 June 2008, <http://www.rmdsz.ro/hirek.php?hir=482>.

⁸⁹ Réka Farkas, *A forradalom emlékéért ünnepeltük Sepsiszentgyörgyön*, in “Háromszék,” 17 March 2008, <http://www.3szek.ro/modules.php?name=3szek&id=7860&Cikk=A%20forradalom%20emlékéért%20ünnepeltük%20Sepsiszentgyörgyön>.

⁹⁰ Isván lochom, *Szentkatolnán, loc. cit.*

⁹¹ N.N., *Székely honismereti tankönyv készül*, in “Székely Hírmondó,” 13 January 2009, <http://www.szekelyhirmondo.ro/article.php/Sz%E9kely-honismereti-tank%F6nyv-k%E9sz%FCI/8748/>.

Conclusions

The examples of the ethnopolitics of the Hungarians, Szeklers, and Saxons in Transylvania illustrate the distinctions of each instance of *ethnomanagement*, because the political discussion in Transylvania is dominated predominantly by ethnic criteria.

In Romania, the passage of the minority legislation took place in 1992 and amendments were effected continuously. The lack of a *framework law on national minorities* cannot be ignored, and the framework law should be formed to the satisfaction of all minorities in Romania as soon as possible. The main question for the Hungarians and the Szeklers is the demand for territorial autonomy – and it seems that it will not be solved in the near future. Within that discussion the autonomy of South Tyrol serves as a role model.

Ethnomanagement abroad differs between the German and the Hungarian ethnic groups: regarding the Saxons the greater part of the financial support comes from migrant organizations, which are situated in Austria or Germany. A lesser part of the financial support comes directly from Austrian or German state run organizations. In relation to that the Hungarian state is much more anxious to give effective support to the Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries in general and to Transylvania in particular. Furthermore, one should not overlook the fact that the Hungarian conservative party FIDESZ interfered in the last two Romanian elections via political support – regarding the local elections they supported HCP (MPP), but regarding the parliamentary elections they “back paddled” and tried do find a solution for all Transylvanian Hungarians.

Ceremonies of remembrance of course differ in the collective memory of the Hungarians, Szeklers, and Saxons, because there are different historical focal points, differently laden, in different historical ethno-national narratives. The examples showed that the interpenetration of ethnopolitics and ceremonies of remembrance is much stronger regarding the Hungarians and the Szeklers than the Saxons. Anyway, the commemoration services due to above named occurrences invigorate the ethnic groups' national identity.

Finally, in trying to answer the questions whether the above-mentioned ethnopolitical activities of the Szeklers sharpen the boundaries between them and the Transylvanian Hungarians one must conclude: Yes, they do! On the other hand it may be that, since they are successful mainly on the local level in the communities of the Szekler Land, a significant influence on Romanian minority politics could only be possible together with all Transylvanian Hungarians.