

**Dynamics of Party Politics, Electoral Competition and Cooperation  
within the Hungarian Minorities of Romania, Serbia and Slovakia**

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that no parts of this thesis have been submitted towards a degree at any other institution different from CEU.

I hereby declare that this thesis contains no materials previously written and/or published by any other person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

István Gergő Székely

April 30, 2014.

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Signature



## Abstract

Intra-ethnic political dynamics are a rather neglected topic in political science, ethnic groups and minorities being regarded most of the time as unitary actors. This dissertation aims to contribute to the dismantling of this obviously oversimplifying perspective through an analysis of the political divisions of the Hungarian minorities of Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. For this purpose the thesis blends the triadic nexus of nationalisms of Brubaker with the toolkit of research on *ethnic* and *ethnoregionalist* parties. It proposes a framework of analysis that is innovative primarily because of the central role attributed to external actors (the kin-state) and to the relative weight of different types of party-voter linkage mechanisms (especially to the clientelistic potential of the parties) in party competition. Building on this framework, the dissertation aims to explain why more radical party appeals were less successful in the case of the Hungarian minorities and why intra-ethnic electoral cooperation is rather the exception than the rule in the case of these communities.

Taking into consideration the absence of institutionalized power-sharing in the studied countries, I argue that the key to the more moderate parties' electoral success lies precisely in their higher clientelistic capacity, as states are more ready to provide access to the national patronage system than to transform themselves into multi-national states. A minority party can maintain high clientelistic capacity primarily by participation in power in the host-state, however, this is conditional on the moderation of ethnopolitical demands. Being excluded from power, the more radical intra-ethnic challengers are unable to counterbalance the clientelistic potential of the moderates, as they can rely almost exclusively on the aid of the kin-state. However, the magnitude of the latter has gradually fallen behind that of the resources accessible in the host-state.

The dependence on host-state resources has important consequences on the incidence of intra-ethnic cooperation too. The incentives of the moderates to cooperate with their more radical counterparts are reduced not only by the need to keep the ethnic coalition minimal, but also because cooperation with the radicals decreases their overall chances of access to resources, due to the resistance of the majority elites. This argument explains why ethnic minorities are often unable to overcome their electoral strategic coordination problems. I go on to argue that this model of interactions between majority and minority elites is better understood as a mixed model of incorporation also entailing softer elements of cooptation and control, than as informal power-sharing. The more moderate minority elites accept this model in order to maintain their access to resources and implicitly their dominant position within the electorate, while for the majority elites this represents a cost-effective solution avoiding the radicalization of the minority.

The thesis also analyses the differences between the electorates of the rival minority parties, provides an account about the interrelatedness of party preferences across the borders (in the case of the newly enfranchised Hungarian dual citizens), and includes an analysis of successful and failed instances of electoral competition between minority parties, which once again confirm the very significant impact of the kin-state, but also the importance of both programmatic and strategic differences between the parties.



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## List of abbreviations

### Romania

**CDR** – Convenția Democrată Română – Romanian Democratic Convention  
**EMNP** – Erdélyi Magyar Néppárt – Partidul Popular Maghiar din Transilvania – Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania.  
**EMNT** – Erdélyi Magyar Nemzeti Tanács – Consiliul Național Maghiar din Transilvania – Hungarian National Council of Transylvania  
**MPP** – Magyar Polgári Párt – Partidul Civic Maghiar – Hungarian Civic Party.  
**PDL** – Partidul Democrat-Liberal – Democratic-Liberal Party  
**PDSR** – Partidul Democrației Sociale din România – Party of Social Democracy in Romania  
**PNL** – Partidul Național Liberal – National Liberal Party  
**PSD** – Partidul Social Democrat – Social Democratic Party  
**RMDSZ** – Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség – Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România – Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania  
**RT** – Reform Tömörülés – Blocul Reformist – Reform Group  
**SZNT** – Székely Nemzeti Tanács – Consiliul Național Secuiesc – Szekler National Council

### Slovakia

**EPM** – Együttélés Politikai Mozgalom – Spolužitie - Political Movement Coexistence  
**FMK** – Független Magyar Kezdeményezés – Maďarská nezávislá iniciativa - Independent Hungarian Initiative  
**HZDS** – Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko – Movement for a Democratic Slovakia  
**KDH** – Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie – Christian Democratic Movement  
**MKDM** – Magyar Kereszténydemokrata Mozgalom - Maďarské kresťanskodemokratické hnutie - Hungarian Christian-Democratic Movement.  
**MKP** – Magyar Koalíció Pártja - Strana maďarskej koalície - Party of Hungarian Coalition. Until 2012. Since 2012 Magyar Közösség Pártja - Strana maďarskej komunity – Party of Hungarian Community  
**MNP** – Magyar Néppárt - Maďarská ľudová strana - Hungarian People's Party  
**MPP** – Magyar Polgári Párt - Maďarská občianska strana - Hungarian Civic Party  
**OKS** – Občianska konzervatívna strana – Civic Conservative Party  
**SDK** – Slovenská demokratická koalícia – Slovak Democratic Coalition  
**SDKÚ** – Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia – Slovak Democratic and Christian Union  
**SMER** – Smer – sociálna demokracia – Direction – Social Democracy  
**SNS** – Slovenská národná strana – Slovak National Party  
**VPN** – Verejnost' proti násiliu – Public Against Violence

### Serbia

**DS** – Demokratska Stranka – Democratic Party  
**DSS** – Demokratska Stranka Srbije – Democratic Party of Serbia  
**LDP** – Liberalno-demokratska Partija – Liberal-Democratic Party  
**LSV** – Liga Socijaldemokrata Vojvodine – League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina

**MK** – Magyar Koalíció (2008, VMSZ, VMDK, VMDP) – Mađarska Koalicija – Hungarian Coalition  
**MNT** – Magyar Nemzeti Tanács - Nacionalni Savet Mađarske Nacionalne Manjine – Hungarian National Council  
**MÖK** – Magyar Összefogás Koalíció (2007, VMDK, VMDP) – Koalicija Mađarska Sloga – Hungarian Cooperation Coalition  
**MPSZ** – Magyar Polgári Szövetség – Građanski Savez Mađara - Hungarian Civic Alliance.  
**MRM** – Magyar Remény Mozgalom – Pokret Mađarske Nade - Hungarian Hope Movement.  
**SNS** – Srpska Napredna Stranka – Serbian Progressive Party  
**SPS** – Socijalistička Partija Srbije – Socialist party of Serbia  
**SRS** – Srpska Radikalna Stranka – Serbian Radical Party  
**VMDK** – Vajdasági Magyarok Demokratikus Közössége – Demokratska Zajednica Vojvođanskih Mađara. – Democratic Community of Vojvodina Hungarians  
**VMDP** – Vajdasági Magyar Demokrata Párt - Demokratska stranka vojvođanskih Mađara - Democratic Party of Vojvodina Hungarians.  
**VMSZ** – Vajdasági Magyar Szövetség - Savez vojvođanskih Mađara – Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians.

## **Hungary**

**DK** – Demokrtatikus Koalíció – Democratic Coalition  
**Együtt-PM** – Együtt 2014 - Párbeszéd Magyarorszáért – Together 2014 - Dialogue for Hungary  
**FIDESZ** – Fidesz - Magyar Polgári Szövetség – Fidesz - Hungarian Civic Union  
**KMKF** – Kárpát-medencei Magyar Képviselek Fóruma – Forum of Hungarian Representatives from the Carpathian Basin  
**LMP** – Lehet Más a Politika – Politics Can Be Different  
**MÁÉRT** – Magyar Állandó Értekezlet – Hungarian Standing Conference  
**MDF** – Magyar Demokrata Fórum – Hungarian Democratic Forum  
**MIÉP** – Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja – Hungarian Justice and Life Party  
**MSZMP** – Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt - Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party  
**MSZP** – Magyar Szocialista Párt – Hungarian Socialist Party  
**SZDSZ** – Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége – Alliance of Free Democrats

## Introduction

Notwithstanding recent developments in the field (e.g. Bochsler, 2007, 2012; Coakley, 2008; Mitchell *et al.*, 2009; Zuber, 2013), intra-ethnic political competition within minority groups remains a rather neglected aspect in both the ethnic politics and the parties and party systems literatures. The occurrence of electoral cooperation (as opposed to competition) between the parties standing for the same national minority group is an even less researched topic.<sup>1</sup> The still dominant perspective in literature about ethnic groups and minorities is to view them as compact entities or unitary actors. This thesis aims to contribute to the dismantling of this obviously oversimplifying perspective by addressing exactly the internal political dynamics of the minorities, building on insights from three countries that host large Hungarian minorities: Romania, Serbia and Slovakia.

The general research questions this thesis aims to answer is the following: What are the factors that influence political fragmentation, competition and cooperation within national minority communities? More specifically: Why are there sometimes multiple parties that claim to stand for the same minority and sometimes only one? If there are multiple parties, what are the most important differences between them in terms of appeals, goals and strategies? What factors explain their relative success, or more precisely, what can explain that – contrarily to the well-known proposition from the ethnic outbidding thesis – more radical party appeals are not always successful? Is there congruence between the rival parties and their voters? And finally: when and why are the multiple parties (un)able or (un)willing to cooperate? While competition and cooperation are of interest both within a single political organization and between multiple parties, the emphasis will rather be on the latter type of situation, though the first type will also be addressed.

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<sup>1</sup> Note, however, that this is true not only of the specific types to which the parties studied in this thesis belong, but also in general of the party politics research. As Enyedi (2006: 231) remarks, political science is generally weak “on cooperation and fusion, as opposed to competition.”

## **Why focus on intra-ethnic political fragmentation and competition?**

Though the importance of the intra-ethnic dynamics is recognized, especially because of its consequences on inter-ethnic relationships, the internal divisions of the ethnic groups, their institutionalization and the factors that affect this outcome remain rather under-researched topics. Most of the literature about ethnic parties or ethnic politics treats ethnic groups or national minorities as monolithic segments of society, as the focus is on the inter-ethnic dimension of politics, its consequences upon the prospects of peace and stability and/or quality of democracy (e.g. Rabushka & Shepsle, 1972; Horowitz, 1985; Ishiyama, 2001, 2009; Stroschein, 2001; Radnitz, 2004; Chandra, 2005; Birnir, 2007a) or economic development (e.g. Collier, 2000; Alesina *et al.*, 2003). Alternatively, even when the existence of internal divisions is acknowledged, the position of the largest organization of the ethnic group may be used as a proxy for the position of the whole group (e.g. Jenne, 2007).

The importance of intra-ethnic fragmentation and competition can be justified on various grounds. The first group of arguments is grounded in democratic theory. The fact that the plurality of political options that is taken for granted for the majority is denied to the minority raises serious issues in democratic theory. Representativeness, accountability, democratic control all fall short of democratic standards. Also, the demand for the possibility of alternation of political elites is present within highly organized minority groups just like in the case of nations. All these considerations should appear with increased salience if a minority constitutes the majority in a particular region, dominating the political life there (Bochsler, 2007; Szócsik & Bochsler, 2013).

Keating (2001a, 2001b) argues that nations are deliberative and decision-making spaces, but this is not exclusively true for nation-states, but also for minorities that live under the jurisdiction of another state, yet maintain strong nationalist movements, such as stateless nations or national minorities. Consequently, democracy requires the constitution of decision-

making spaces at the level of these communities. Kymlicka (2001) also considers that if there are multiple societal cultures in a country, then the institutions should promote these cultures in an equal way.

Tsebelis (1990) points out that in an ethnoculturally divided society, in the absence of internal competition, the party in hegemonic position can sell virtually any platform to the ethnic group it claims to represent, because transfers of votes across the groups are limited. The existence or lack of pluralism may also affect the performance of the ethnic parties, because if a party does not have to compete with others but gets reelected easily, then it will have fewer incentives to achieve. The importance of multiple-parties is also recognized by the students of Western ethnoregionalist movements. Writing about a case that is considered to be among the most successful in the world in what concerns both ethnic claims-making and conflict management (South Tyrol), Benedikter (2010: 77) remarks that although the ability of the *Südtiroler Volkspartei* to constantly obtain the support of the south-Tyrolese was an asset when it came to negotiations with both Rome and Vienna, this was “probably not a healthy situation regarding internal democracy and pluralism”. In a similar manner, Alonso (2005) argues that the existence of multiple parties within the ethnoregionalist bloc in Spain is important because it allows the dissatisfied voters to change their vote without changing their bloc allegiance.

Second, intra-ethnic political dynamics are also interesting from the perspective of democratic stability, through their influence on inter-ethnic relations. Even Donald Horowitz, the most important theorist of the integrationist school of ethnocultural diversity management (which favors institutional designs that compel ethnic leaders to expand their appeals beyond their co-ethnics) has an argument about the positive consequences of intra-ethnic competition for democracy. Horowitz argues that federal states are better than unitary states, because even in ethnically homogeneous federal units competition will develop within the group that is

dominant there, and this experience of competition will be beneficial for moderation when these politicians will advance to the federal level (Horowitz, 1991). Alonso (2005) also considers the presence of multiple parties standing for the minority group important, but for different reasons: she argues that the existence of smaller and more radical parties allows the major ethnoregionalist party in a region to moderate its discourse and target a larger group of voters. In this perspective the more radical ethnic parties serve as safety valves, which relieve the major party from the burden of dealing with the preferences of the more radical voters.

Dropping the unitary actors approach to ethnic groups also allows for a better understanding of the occurrence or absence of electoral cooperation between the various political parties that compete for the votes of the group. Despite the arguments presented above in favor of intra-ethnic competition, not only excessive political fragmentation, but mere organizational pluralism within a minority may be detrimental for the prospects of efficient representation, it may even endanger their representation by posing problems of strategic coordination (Cox, 1997). Though in the literature ethnicity is regarded as a factor that facilitates coordination within the groups (Cox, 1997) but not between groups (Wahman, 2011a), empirical reality often contradicts this. The explanation is that such a perspective does not take into consideration the trade-offs between votes, policy and office-maximizing strategies (Strøm, 1990). The office spoils of minority parties depend on the prospects of collaborating with parties of the other ethnic groups (the majority), and in the absence of power-sharing arrangements their bargaining position is significantly reduced. As a consequence, the choice between a comprehensive coalition encompassing the entire ethnic electorate and the maximization of office spoils may become a serious dilemma, because of the refusal of majority parties to share power with minority elites perceived or pictured as extremist by them. While this trade-off arises for all party types, in the case of ethnic

minority parties it is rendered especially serious by the limited nature of the electorate and the danger of losing group representation.

All these arguments substantiate the relevance of studying intra-ethnic political dynamics within national minority communities. I argue that the existence of multiple parties within the same minority group warrants the treatment of these parties as forming a *party system* or at least a *party subsystem* of the minority, as the parties compete primarily (though not exclusively) with each other for the same well-delimited subset of the national electorate (the votes of the ethnic group) and actively reflect on each-others' actions. This phenomenon is somewhat similar to that of the subnational party systems of regions inhabited by an ethnoculturally distinctive population, however, with the important difference that institutionally the system is not (or it is less) delimited.<sup>2</sup> Despite the lack (or lower level) of institutional delimitation, the primary reference points for the minority parties will be precisely their closest competitors, that is, the other minority parties, and this will be heavily reflected in their communication and in the discourses that dominate the minority's public sphere. Thus, even if some of the minority parties remain (willingly or unwillingly) insignificant in national politics, at the level of the community they may still be relevant actors, and as such, deserve scholarly attention.

### **Literatures addressed and contribution**

The thesis uses and addresses a series of literatures. Primarily, it is meant to be a research about political parties, consequently it employs the toolkit of the scholarship about parties and party systems (the subfields of ethnic parties and ethnoregionalist parties), and voting behavior.

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<sup>2</sup> In the absence of subnational regions endowed with a significant level of political autonomy (as in the case of the regions in Belgium, Spain or Italy or the devolved assemblies in the UK), the local or regional administrative assemblies or the elected bodies of a non-territorial minority self-government can serve as a framework for the minority party system, functioning as a more or less autonomous arena of contestation for the minority parties.

While the number of parties in a system is a well-researched issue in political science, and ethnicity even features as one of the core structural determinants to this outcome (e.g. Ordeshook & Shvetsova, 1994; Amorim Neto & Cox, 1997; Cox, 1997; Mozaffar *et al.*, 2003; Moser, 2005; Brambor *et al.*, 2007), to my knowledge the only comparative study that aims to explain the occurrence and operation of “multi-party systems among ethnic minorities” has been authored by Bochsler (2007). Bochsler employs very similar structural and institutional explanatory variables as the general literature on party systems: the territorial concentration of the minority and whether it forms a local majority in certain regions or not, and features of the electoral system (thresholds, the existence or absence of special seats for minorities, the number of seats in parliament and average district magnitude). Using a Boolean algebra approach (QCA), Bochsler finds that the key variable for intra-minority political competition is the existence of a region where the minority constitutes a local majority. In such areas the group will afford local competition between multiple political organizations without risking the loss of representation. Eventually, this competition will spill over to the national level, unless the national electoral system prevents this (by too high thresholds).<sup>3</sup> While it remains the only large-N comparative effort for studying intra-minority pluralism, Bochsler’s paper has important shortcomings. The first is that only those cases are considered as positive instances where more than one minority organization wins at least one seat in the national parliament, which excludes situations when some parties are fairly strong at the local or regional level though they remain weak at the national level or are not interested to compete there. Second, and more importantly,

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<sup>3</sup> This finding is corroborated by case studies. For instance, Stroschein (2011: 189) writes in the case of the Hungarians of Romania that “outbidding is more likely to be a luxury of enclave regions”. It should be noted that Stroschein speaks about “outbidding”, but in fact her dependent variable only captures the success of a challenger ethnic party, not the success of an *outbidding* challenger, as the study does not contain any argument about why the challenger succeeds on a more radical platform, it only concludes that intra-ethnic competition is more likely to occur in areas where it does not endanger the representation of the minority.

Bochsler's model is purely structural-institutional, but in order to capture the complexities of the intra-ethnic dynamics, agency has to be included too into the explanation.

As opposed to a large-N strategy, in this thesis I perform a thick analysis (Collier *et al.*, 2004) of three cases, which also allows a better understanding of the role of agency. I employ a more qualitative perspective, and I also try to grasp the actors' own perceptions and understandings (e.g. how they define the communities and the goals they pursue, what social and political organizational model they find appropriate for the community).

A study about intra-ethnic dynamics cannot avoid addressing the ethnic outbidding model (Horowitz, 1985; Rabushka & Shepsle, 1972), which postulates that the presence of multiple ethnic parties is detrimental to stability, as it leads to a spiral of increasingly radical claims. One contribution of this thesis to the literature about party competition is that I put forward an argument about why successful ethnic outbidding was rather the exception than the rule among the Hungarian minorities, which takes into consideration not only the programmatic features of the parties, but also their strategies towards political actors from both the host- and the kin-states<sup>4</sup> and their capacity to maintain clientelistic exchanges. The essence of this argument is that in the absence of institutional guarantees for participation in power, the more moderate minority parties will accept to be partners to a mixed model of minority inclusion, which combines elements of informal power-sharing with cooptation and control (Lustick, 1979; Rothchild, 1997). Such arrangements suit the purposes of both the titular majority parties (as the minority will not radicalize) and of the more moderate minority elites, as relying on state resources they will be able to maintain their position in the community against their more radical intra-ethnic challengers, who will be unable to counterbalance the clientelistic capacity of the moderates.

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<sup>4</sup> In this thesis I will use the terms host-state and kin-state. Csergő (2007: 75) criticizes the term "host-state", employed by Brubaker (1996) in his account about the triadic nexus of nationalisms, because it implies that the minority is a guest on someone else's land, and also argues for the term "kin-state" as opposed to "external homeland", as the latter term obfuscates the fact that the homeland of national minorities is the territory on which they seek to perpetuate their culture, and not the territory of the kin-state.

Second, the thesis can also be read as a comparative monograph about the three most numerous Hungarian minorities from the countries surrounding Hungary, the communities from Romania (Transylvania), Slovakia and Serbia (Vojvodina). The Hungarians from Ukraine (and the rest of the countries bordering Hungary) are not included, as they are too small to be relevant in national politics, and the focus of this thesis is mainly on the national level, local politics are addressed only occasionally.

The case selection makes it possible to keep certain features relatively constant (all three minorities are Hungarian, their kin-state is the same) while also ensuring variation in the institutional and political context (both across cases and over time). The three communities can be considered fairly similar in many respects. Though their size differs, all three are sufficiently large to be significant in national politics, but too small to render the polity genuinely multi-ethnic. The community from Slovakia makes up almost 10% of the population, the one from Romania a bit less than 7%, and the one from Serbia almost 4% (without Kosovo).

Naturally, the three minorities also differ along a series of important characteristics. Schöpflin (2000: 380-386) identifies three important differences between the Hungarian communities of Romania, respectively Slovakia and Serbia beyond their size. In terms of their elites and internal stratification the communities of Vojvodina and Slovakia are described as sociologically weaker, lacking a significant intellectual stratum (in Vojvodina the atrocities perpetrated during WWII, while in Slovakia the expulsions after WWII deprived the community of its educated elite). Conversely, in Transylvania there was a continuity, moreover, after the Treaty of Trianon the Hungarians were in a more advantageous position in the stratification system than the Romanian majority. Second, there are important Hungarian national myths attached to the territory of Transylvania, while this is not the case in the other two territories, which renders this minority special from the

perspective of Budapest. Third, the Hungarian question was not of primary importance throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia (the relationship between the constituent nations being the primary issue in these countries), but it was in Romania, where Hungarians constituted the largest ethnic group after the titular nation. The degree of attention paid by Budapest to the three communities also varied: Hungarian governments were most concerned about Transylvanian Hungarians, while the ones from Vojvodina received less attention, despite the threats they were exposed to during the wars (Saideman & Ayres, 2008).

Despite these differences, all three communities entered the post-communist period with high hopes. Their elites put forward claims for recognition as separate political subjects, which entailed the granting of various forms of self-government or autonomy to them. Though the situation of all three minorities has improved to some extent compared to the early post-communist period in what concerns the rights they enjoy (primarily due to the process of European Union conditionality in the case of Romania and Slovakia, and to the involvement of international actors in the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars in the case of Serbia), only the Hungarians in Vojvodina obtained some limited form of cultural autonomy so far.<sup>5</sup> It also has to be mentioned that all three communities are shrinking at a very fast pace.

The elites of all three minorities defined their communities unequivocally as parts of the Hungarian nation in cultural terms, while the relationship with the Hungarian political community remained more equivocal. However, the salience of the latter issue increased considerably since the possibility of obtaining Hungarian citizenship without requiring residence in Hungary<sup>6</sup> has been put to a failed referendum in 2004. Since 2011, members of the Hungarian minorities may become dual citizens, and this rendered the question of the

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<sup>5</sup> In January 2014 the Constitutional Court of Serbia invalidated some of the most powerful competences of the minority national councils, which amounts to a significant curtailing of cultural autonomy.

<sup>6</sup> In the remainder of the thesis: dual citizenship.

political community one of the most important potential fault-lines that may structure in the future not only the relationships between the kin-state and the minorities, but also the internal political dynamics of the latter.

Throughout the period elapsed since the fall of communism, Hungary engaged in a very active kin-state policy towards its external minorities. Csergő and Goldgeier (2004, 2006) write that Hungary's "virtual nationalism" has been the most systematically pursued kin-state policy in the CEE region. However, this engagement has been driven not only by the desire to help the ethnic kin beyond the borders, but also by domestic party competition considerations (Saideman & Ayres, 2008; Ablonczy & Bárdi, 2010; Waterbury, 2010), leading often to conflicts between minority and kin-state actors. The thesis also addresses the different and often clashing conceptions about the minorities and the Hungarian nation, as well as the role of the kin-state in the political life of its external minorities, by blending the study of political parties with the triadic nexus of host-state, kin-state and minority nationalism (Brubaker, 1996). By this, the thesis also aims contribute to the broader field of ethnic politics and nationalist studies.

The political relevance of the Hungarian minorities in their host-states and the active policy of Hungary have prompted a lively scholarly interest in the cases studied in this thesis lately. Although comparative studies covering all three cases remain few (but see Bárdi, 2000; Friedman, 2006; Jenne, 2007; Szócsik & Bochsler, 2013), an increasing number of efforts is based on a comparison of two Hungarian communities (Stroschein, 2001; Csergő, 2002, 2007; Mihailescu, 2008; Szócsik, 2012; Bochsler & Szócsik, 2013b, 2013a), usually justifying their case selection by the similarity of the Hungarian minorities. At the level of single case studies, the Hungarian community from Romania is probably one of the best documented minorities in Europe (see e.g. Crăiuțu (1995), Shafir (2000), Medianu (2002), Mihailescu (2005), Birnir (2007a), Stroschein (2011), Andriescu and Gherghina (2013);

conversely, for Slovakia and Vojvodina the literature is less voluminous (but see e.g. Ishiyama and Breuning (1998), Minárik (1999), Harris (2007) for Slovakia; Jenne (2004), Zuber (2012, 2013) and Zuber and Mus (2013) for Vojvodina). However, most of this literature consists of case studies about the most important party of the minority, or only touches upon the role of the parties while focusing on the overall situation and evolution of the minority's situation. Except for the writings of Stroschein, Szócsik & Bochsler and Zuber, the issue of intra-ethnic competition is not addressed, while intra-ethnic cooperation is almost completely neglected.

The literature in Hungarian language is considerably more extensive on all three cases, though a large part of these writings are overly descriptive and lack solid theoretical foundations; furthermore, comparative studies are rather scarce in this language too (an important exception is Blénesi & Mandel, 2004).<sup>7</sup> There is no point to provide a review of these in this introduction, the more important writings in Hungarian will be referenced in the empirical chapters, which discuss the development of the minority party systems and the features of the parties.

### **Methodological aspects**

The timeframe covered in the thesis is the period elapsed since the fall of communism to 2012, though a stronger emphasis will be put on the developments since 2000. The choice of the beginning of the period is straightforward: this is the point when political pluralism became once again possible in the studied countries. The choice of the endpoint is motivated by the fact that parliamentary elections took place in 2012 in all three countries, but also by the need to terminate the fieldwork and data collection in due time. Still, occasionally some references will be made to the developments since the 2012 elections too, especially in what

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<sup>7</sup> Also, in 2012 two comparative projects have been started, financed through the grants OTKA K82051 and Domus Hungarica C2011021. Publications from these projects are due in 2014.

concerns the aspects related to dual citizenship and the enfranchisement of the new citizens for the Hungarian elections.

The focus in this research is on the political parties *of the minorities*, which may be ethnic parties or multi-ethnic parties. Inclusion is not based on the degree to which the parties conform to the requirements of theoretical typologies (e.g. ethnically exclusive or inclusive appeals), but rather on an assessment of which ethnic community can be considered to be the “owner” of the party as a political project. The decisive criterion was to include those parties that are perceived as being (primarily) of the Hungarians, both by experts and by the politicians themselves. This warranted the inclusion of the multi-ethnic Most-Híd from Slovakia, and the exclusion of regionalist parties from Vojvodina. Most-Híd is included based on the consideration that it is the project of a predominantly Hungarian elite, and both Slovak politicians and its Hungarian opponents acknowledge that it is “a party of the Hungarians”. Conversely, the regionalist or mainstream parties in Serbia which obtain a relatively significant proportion of the Hungarian vote are parties with a Serbian core, into which Hungarian (and other minority) politicians have also been coopted. Furthermore, only those Hungarian parties are considered relevant in this research, which contested at least two subsequent elections (regardless of type) and obtained at least 2% of the overall votes cast for Hungarian parties.

The thesis uses a wide variety of data sources, such as administrative data (census, election results), survey data (though primary databases are only available in good quality for Romania, being rather scarce for Slovakia and unavailable for Serbia), party documents (manifestos, statements, statutes), legal documents (especially party and electoral laws), or press materials. I also conducted a series of interviews with politicians and political analysts

from the three countries (see Appendix 1). I also rely on secondary literature about all three countries, most of these writings being in Hungarian.<sup>8</sup>

### **Overview of the thesis**

The first part of the thesis is dedicated to a review and clarification of the main concepts encountered in the literature on ethnic groups, minorities and parties putting forward appeals based on ethnicity. It offers a synthesis of several bodies of literature which deal with similar topics but do not communicate sufficiently with each-other, also highlighting more subtle differences between apparently similar concepts and refining the relationship between some types.

The first chapter positions the studied communities in the extant classifications of ethnic groups and minorities, and highlights two alternative perspectives that may be useful to map the internal divisions of the communities. The first perspective is that of *national minorities*; this perspective emphasizes the very high level of social and political organization and the demands related to self-government of the groups, anchored in nationalism. While the existence of a kin-state is a central feature in this perspective too, the focus is on the ethnopolitical struggle within or against the host state. Conversely, in the second approach, that of *external minorities or diasporas*, the emphasis is on the relation of the minorities with their kin-state, so this approach is better suited for analyzing the nexuses between minority and kin-state actors.

The second chapter contrasts the research about *ethnic* parties and *(ethno)regionalist* parties, two bodies of scholarship which deal with related phenomena, but are only weakly integrated. The ethnoregionalist literature is useful for this thesis mainly due to its party politics apparatus and the fact that it is concerned, at least implicitly, mainly with parties representing minority groups (while the ethnic parties perspective does not require that the

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<sup>8</sup> The details of the interviews are listed in Appendix 1.

represented groups be minorities). On the other hand, the ethnic parties literature (which belongs more to conflict studies than to the party politics approach) offers an important distinction between ethnic, multi-ethnic and non-ethnic party appeals, which is important because (also in the case of Hungarian minorities) minority representation may also be accomplished through multi-ethnic parties. Another important idea in the ethnic parties literature is the high propensity of these parties to establish and maintain clientelistic linkages, an aspect almost completely absent from the Western ethnoregionalist perspective, which puts the emphasis on programmatic party goals related to the restructuring of state power. While ethnic parties are very often pictured as clientelistic machines interested only in extracting resources without having a real program, I argue that the internal fragmentation of the minorities can only be understood by taking into account both types of linkages. Furthermore, following Zuber (2013), I argue that the adoption of ethnoregionalist appeals can be considered an alternative strategy for parties of minorities.

The third chapter reviews the main theories of intra-ethnic party competition, namely the outbidding thesis and its critics, and reinterpretations of the consociational democracy model. This chapter also contains my main arguments about why radical outbidding strategies proved to be less successful within the studied minorities, despite repeated attempts to create more radical new parties.

The second part of the thesis starts with Chapter 4, which presents the framework of analysis that will be employed to characterize the Hungarian minority parties of Romania, Slovakia and Serbia. It discusses a number of typologies of ethnopolitical demands and party strategies, presents briefly the policies of Hungary towards its ethnic kin beyond the borders and explains how the relative importance of the different types of party-voter linkage mechanisms will be assessed. Each of the following three chapters (5-7.) traces the emergence of new parties, mergers and instances of electoral cooperation in one of the three

studied communities. But beyond this rather descriptive endeavor, these chapters also provide an analysis of the political divisions on the elite or supply side of the electoral market, according to the previously sketched framework. These three chapters build to a large extent on party documents, media materials and interviews I conducted with party leaders and local political analysts. Chapter 8 compares the three cases and revisits and assesses the main argument about why radicalization did not pay off among the Hungarian minorities.

The ninth chapter complements the picture from Chapters 5-7 by analyzing the political divisions on the demand side, at the level of the electorate. Using administrative (census and electoral) and survey data, I aim to identify the variables that differentiate between the electorates of the minority parties. The chapter consists of three sections: the first assesses the impact of the territorial concentration of the Hungarian minority on the relative success of the more moderate, respectively more radical parties. The second section presents an analysis of voting behavior based on survey data and secondary literature. The final section of the chapter addresses the relationship between party preferences in the host- and the kin-state.

After having uncovered the factors that influence political fragmentation and party competition, in the last empirical chapter I turn to the factors influencing electoral cooperation between the parties. The theoretical framework employed in this chapter is the literature on pre-electoral coalitions (Golder, 2006), adapted to the specific situation of minority parties, while the method is crisp set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (csQCA) on party dyads (Ragin, 1989; Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). The coding of the explanatory variables is based on the analysis performed in Chapters 5-7, which traced the development of the party scenes.

## **Chapter 1. The Hungarian minorities: national minorities and external diasporas**

The aim of this chapter is to review and assess the terminology used in the literature about ethnicity, ethnic groups and minorities, and thus to arrive at a set of concepts that will be employed throughout the thesis, also establishing this way the universe of cases to which reasonable generalizations can be made.

In order to grasp the internal political dynamics of the Hungarian minorities of Romania, Slovakia and Serbia, I will adopt a dual approach. On the one hand, these groups are *national minorities*, that is, groups in a numerical inferior status that display a high level of social and political organization, aim for institutional completeness in order to perpetuate their societal culture, and engage in nationalist mobilization vis-à-vis their host-states. On the other hand, they are the *external minorities/diasporas* of Hungary, and while they rely on the support of the kin-state, the relationship is not always devoid of tensions. In the following sections I will review the essential literature in order to highlight and contrast the specific features of these two types of minorities, and to argue for the adequacy and advantages of adopting such a dual perspective.

### **Ethnic groups with adjectives**

The common denominator in the literature about *ethnicity* and *ethnic groups* is the emphasis on the differentiating characteristics of the groups or the shared beliefs of group members about the existence of such features. Max Weber ([1922]/1968) defined *ethnic groups* as “human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization or migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists”. In a similar vein, Horowitz writes that “[e]thnicity is based on a myth of collective ancestry, which usually carries with it traits believed to be innate. Some notion of ascription, however diluted, and

affinity deriving from it are inseparable from the concept of ethnicity.” For Horowitz ethnicity is an umbrella concept that “easily embraces groups differentiated by color, language, and religion; it covers ‘tribes’, ‘races’, ‘nationalities,’ and castes” (Horowitz, 1985). In her earlier works, Chandra also agrees that ethnic identity means “nominal membership in an ascriptive category, including race, language, caste, or religion” (Chandra, 2005).

While these differentiating features might seem straightforward (see the contention of several authors that ethnic groups or minorities are easily recognizable, e.g. Simon (1997) quoted in Packer (1999); Van Evera (2001), or the famous dictum of OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities Max van der Stoep that “I know a minority when I see one”), the umbrella nature of ethnicity also raises problems. It is not entirely clear which features are ethnic, and which pertain to other aspects of social life (such as religion, language etc.): some authors would subsume religious denominations under ethnicity, some would include race too, while others would adopt precisely the opposite strategy, and would treat ethnicity as a subdivision of race (Petersen, 1975). The existence of multiple possible levels of identification (Posner, 2005) further complicates the situation, as the set relationships between various levels are not always clear.

The issue of conceptual clarity in the study of ethnicity and ethnic groups has probably been raised most poignantly by Kanchan Chandra, one of the leading theoreticians of the constructivist school (Chandra, 2006, 2009b). In her opinion, the failure to define precisely the concepts related to ethnicity leads to a situation in which such effects are attributed to ethnicity, which in fact are not caused by ethnicity, but by some additional variable that is not a necessary defining element of ethnic groups. The failure to employ an appropriate definition leads to claims that “cannot be taken as reasonable [...] about the effect of ethnic identities in general”, and which “should be reformulated as claims about *a specific*

*subset of ethnic identities*, or claims about the effect of ethnic identities combined with some additional variable” (Chandra, 2009b). For Chandra, an ethnic category or group is an umbrella term for a number of identities, and an identity category can encompass simultaneously one or multiple identities. It follows that “only a handful of our causal claims rest on the intrinsic properties of ethnic identity”, most of such claims are better attributed to additional features, shared only by a subset of the ethnic groups (Chandra, 2009b: 406). Analogously to the ideas of Collier and Levitsky (1997) about *democracy with adjectives*, one can state that in Chandra’s framework all previous definitions of ethnic groups become *ethnic groups with adjectives* within the now much broader universe of ethnic groups.<sup>9</sup>

Chandra’s ideas are important in order to properly demarcate the universe to which this research can be generalized. This thesis deals with large and well-organized minorities, which display a high level of national consciousness and aim for institutional completeness comparable to that of nation-states in order to perpetuate their culture under the sovereignty of states in which they are not the titular nation. Consequently, their internal political dynamics may not be generalizable to of any ethnic minority. Moreover, the presence of a kin-state, more specifically the relationships between minority and kin-state actors are of central importance for understanding the party politics within the former groups, and such dynamics are not necessarily characteristic of other types of ethnic groups or minorities either.

## **Minorities**

In light of these considerations, the first important narrowing of the focus that is necessary for the topic of this thesis is from ethnic groups in general to minority ethnic groups. But the

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<sup>9</sup> “Democracy with adjectives” refers to “diminished subtypes” of democracy, that is, regime types falling short of the classic concept of liberal democracy. However, in the case of “ethnic groups with adjectives”, no loss of normative content is involved when adding adjectives to the root concept.

universe of ethnoculturally distinctive groups that are in a numerical inferiority situation is still excessively broad and multifarious.

Probably the most important distinction within the universe of minority ethnic groups is the one between migrant and non-migrant minorities,<sup>10</sup> which is reflected in the various adjectives appended to the term “minority”, such as “old”, “native”, “autochthonous”, “indigenous”, “traditional”, “established” or “historical” on one hand, and “new”, “recent”, “allochthonous” or “of immigrant origin” on the other (e.g. Spiliopoulou Åkermark, 2002; Medda-Windischer, 2004; Triandafyllidou & Anagnostou, 2005; Klemenčič & Harris, 2009; Plăeșu, 2010). The first group of adjectives refers to communities which often became minorities as a consequence of a re-drawing of international borders, which did not obtain statehood for some reason, or which came about through migration, but in a bygone past time. The second category of adjectives specifies “groups formed by the decision of individuals and families to leave their original homeland and emigrate to another country generally for economic and, sometimes, also for political reasons”, as well as their descendants (Medda-Windischer, 2013 2-3).

This distinction between “old” and “new”, “historical” and “immigrant” has been heavily criticized, primarily because such a differentiation would contravene the principles of universalism and egalitarianism, and because of the inevitably arbitrary character of establishing any time requirement for the presence of a group on a specific territory (Packer, 1999; Sasse, 2005b; Sasse & Thielemann, 2005; Medda-Windischer, 2013).

Notwithstanding this criticism, powerful arguments for a differentiated treatment have been put forward in various typologies of minorities in the social sciences, and even some international lawyers criticize the universalistic approach of the extant minority protection

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<sup>10</sup> In the official terminology of some European countries, most importantly in the UK, “ethnic minorities” simply stand for immigrants. The source of this practice – characteristic of both academic literature and public discourse – is the fact that “minority” sounds more politically correct than “immigrant”, and also because it is not correct to describe second-generation members of such communities as migrants (Sasse & Thielemann, 2005; Medda-Windischer, 2013).

instruments. Moreover, the self-perception of the groups should also be taken into consideration, however, without falling into the trap of reification.

In the remainder of this chapter I will highlight the specific features attributed in relevant typologies to two types of groups: *homeland communities/national minorities* and *external minorities/diasporas*. I propose this dual approach because I believe that drawing on two alternative (and seemingly contradictory) perspectives provides a more appropriate framework for grasping the internal political dynamics of the Hungarian minorities of Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. These communities have been living in their traditional homelands for centuries and have little in common with immigrants. Their elites unequivocally define them as national minorities or homeland communities, and they are usually treated as such also in the literature (Csergő & Goldgeier, 2004). The historical character is a core element of their self-definition, while the (perceived) tendencies of international organizations (especially the EU) to conflate the treatment of autochthonous minorities and immigrants represent a constant source of frustration for their elites.<sup>11</sup>

Given this self-definition and the scholarly agreement with it, drawing also on the diaspora literature might seem odd and needs further justification. The minority elites reject the idea of diaspora outright, due to the element of migration or dispersion it implies (Sik, 2000). Yet, these communities are also Hungary's "external minorities" (Wolff, 2001; Csergő & Goldgeier, 2006) or "ethno-national kin minorities" (Bauböck, 2007: 2438), which have participated in the process of Hungarian nation-building until the Treaty of Trianon, and ended up under the sovereignty of states alien to them for reasons beyond their own will. Thus it is understandable that they still conceive themselves as part of the Hungarian cultural

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<sup>11</sup> Only for the sake of illustration, consider the statements of RMDSZ's secretary general Péter Kovács and of Kinga Gál, a Fidesz MEP born in Transylvania, both of whom complain that the EU is paying less attention to the issues of national minorities than to that of immigrants: <http://reply.transindex.ro/?cikk=362>; [http://galkinga.hu/nyomtat/az\\_eu\\_nem\\_ad\\_egyvertelmu\\_megoldast\\_a\\_kisebbsegi\\_kerdesekre](http://galkinga.hu/nyomtat/az_eu_nem_ad_egyvertelmu_megoldast_a_kisebbsegi_kerdesekre)

nation, and to a certain extent also the Hungarian political nation.<sup>12</sup> While in the national minorities approach the point of vantage is primarily *internal to the community or the host state*, the diasporas literature provides an *external* perspective, which is better suited for highlighting some crucial aspects of the relationship between minority and kin-state actors, most importantly the opportunities and constraints that follow for the minority parties from the policies of the kin-state's government and political parties. The *external vs. internal* dichotomy also raises the question: where should the decisions affecting the minorities be taken: exclusively in the host-state, or does the kin-state also have a say in this regard, and what are the trade-offs between strategies of orientation towards one of these centers of power?

### **National minorities**

The distinctive nature of national minorities as a subtype of ethnocultural minorities has been emphasized by a number of leading scholars in interethnic relations, ethnic conflict or political theory.

The distinction between immigrant and non-immigrant minorities has been expressed particularly sharply by Esman (1994), who distinguished between *homeland societies* and *immigrant diasporas*. *Homeland societies* are characterized by a long history of dwelling on a particular territory, which is reinforced by a distinctive geography, historiography, national literature and myths, all of which link the community to the territory. Conversely, *diasporas* are formed as a community in the receiving countries where they immigrate to, and though they organize in order to preserve their culture and maintain material and sentimental links to their former homeland, they cannot credibly claim control over territory in their new host-state. Markusse (2007) further refined this typology by adding another dimension, namely the

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<sup>12</sup> Belonging to the Hungarian nation in political terms was an even more salient issue in the interwar period, when even accepting membership in the political community of the new host states was debated, the primary ethnopolitical goal being success of Hungary's revisionism (Bárdi, 2004). The possibility to obtain dual citizenship since 2011 has brought the issue of a single Hungarian political community once again to the fore.

presence or absence of common national identification with the titular majority in another state (that is, the existence of a kin-state).<sup>13</sup> Though Markusse employs the term in a broader sense, in the 2x2 table that emerges from his criteria I will use the term *national minorities* with a narrower meaning, namely *communities inhabiting a historical homeland which have a kin-state* (see cell 1 in Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1. The typology of European ethnic minorities of Markusse (2007)**

		Live in a historical homeland or are perceived as originating from outside	
		Homeland	Outside
National identity of another state	Yes	(1) Homeland communities with a kin-state – national minorities	(3) Diasporas formed through migration (both “historical” and new migrants, settlers, refugees)
	No	(2) Homeland communities without a kin-state (regional minorities, stateless nations, indigenous peoples)	(4) Other minorities, e.g. Roma

This narrower meaning is grounded in the specific features attributed to national minorities in some important typologies of ethnic groups or minorities. For instance, national minorities are considered a specific type of ethnic group in the *Minorities at Risk* (MAR) project (Gurr, 1993, 2000). The most basic distinction in the typology elaborated by Gurr is between *national peoples* and *minority peoples*. *National peoples* are regionally concentrated groups that have lost their autonomy to expansionist states but still preserve some of their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness and want to protect or reestablish some degree of political separate existence. Expressed in the terms of Hirschman (1970), their primary goal is mostly exit from the societies they live in. In contrast, *minority peoples* have a defined socioeconomic or political status within a larger society – based on some combination of their

<sup>13</sup> In Markusse’s original model the category of minorities perceived as originating from outside does not refer to groups usually treated as “new” minorities (e.g. Maghrebis in France or Turks in Germany), but to “historical immigrants” in European states, such as Swedes in Finland, Russian-speakers in the Baltic states or ethnics of Yugoslav republics on the territories of other successor states.

ethnicity, immigrant origin, economic roles and religion – and are mainly concerned about securing their right to voice, to protect or improve their status. Initially, Gurr (1993) divided national people into *ethnonationalists* and *indigenous peoples*. *Ethnonationalists* are large, regionally concentrated peoples with a history of organized political autonomy who have pursued separatist objectives or at least sought greater autonomy at some time during the last half-century. *Indigenous peoples* are conquered descendants of the original inhabitants of a region, who typically live in peripheral regions, practice subsistence agriculture or herding, and, as opposed to ethnonationalists, engage mostly in reactive rather than proactive political action (retaining control of what is left of their land and resources, separatist movements being rather exceptional among them). Later, Gurr (2000) added a third subcategory of national people, namely *national minorities*, defined as “segments of a trans-state people with an organized political autonomy, whose kindred control an adjacent state but who now constitute a minority in the state in which they reside.” Most national minorities live in East Central Europe and represent a legacy of the historical shifting of the boundaries of the nation-states. Although they are sometimes called *diasporas*, Gurr warns that this is a misleading term, as many of these peoples have lived for generations in what they regard as part of their national homeland (Gurr, 2000 17-18).

Another important author who treats national minorities as a distinct type is the Canadian philosopher Will Kymlicka (1995, 2001). Kymlicka’s main purpose is to justify a differential set of rights that liberal states should grant to *national minorities* and *ethnic (immigrant) groups*. *National minorities* are parts of a larger nation, that is, “a historical community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language or culture” (Kymlicka, 1995: 11). They respond to majority nation-building by seeking greater autonomy and engage in their own competing nation-

building to protect and diffuse their societal culture throughout their traditional territory. Belonging to a national minority is involuntary, it has historical reasons, it is a matter of luck.

*Ethnic groups*, on the other hand, are groups with common cultural origins, but whose members do not constitute an institutionally complete society concentrated in one territory. Membership is voluntary, as such persons have chosen to enter a new society and leave their original culture behind. Immigrant groups are not nations, and they do not occupy homelands. While they assert their right to express their ethnic particularity, they do so within the institutions of the host society. Even if they reject assimilation, they do not strive to set up a parallel society, they do not engage in nation-building. They accept the expectation to integrate, they only try to “renegotiate their terms of integration”, demanding a more tolerant or multicultural approach from the state, allowing them to maintain various aspects of their ethnic heritage (Kymlicka, 2001: 32).

A state that contains more than one nation is not a nation-state, but a *multination* state, while countries with significant immigrant groups are not *multinational*, but *polyethnic*. Based on this distinction, Kymlicka argues that national minorities should be awarded self-government rights, which would allow them to maintain their identity and societal culture, they should have the same tools of nation-building available to them as the majority nation, subject to the same liberal limitations. Conversely, ethnic groups should contend themselves with polyethnic rights, that is, rights that promote their integration into society (Kymlicka, 1995 11-17; 2001 27-32).

Within the broader category of national minorities, Kymlicka (2001) also distinguishes two important subtypes. The first are *substate nations*, that is, nations which do not currently have a state in which they are a majority, but which may have had such a state in the past, or which may have sought such a state. They usually mobilize using a nationalist discourse, using the language of nationhood. The other subtype of national minorities are

*indigenous peoples*, that is, peoples whose traditional lands have been overrun by settlers, and who have then been forcibly, or through treaties, incorporated into states run by people they regard as foreigners. They typically do not seek to have their own independent nation-state, but the ability to maintain their traditional ways of life and beliefs while nevertheless participating on their own terms in the modern world.

The relationship between *national minorities* and *stateless nations* deserves further attention. We have seen that Kymlicka treats the latter as a subtype of the former; Gurr has initially subsumed both under the umbrella of ethnonationalists, but once he added the category of national minorities to his typology, ethnonationalists could be reinterpreted as stateless nations. Keating also makes this distinction: although both stateless nations and national minorities resemble nations in that they are “not mere cultural communities but also socio-political entities with a wide range of social institutions and a shared political identity” (Keating, 2001a: 5), the defining characteristic of stateless nations is that they lack a state altogether, while that of national minorities is that their co-ethnics have a state somewhere else. National minorities “involve[e] people within a state whose primary reference point is a nation situated elsewhere”, are “groups located territorially within a wider nationality but who do not identify with it, often because they identify with a group elsewhere, including one in another state” (Keating, 2001a x, 5).

The central role of the idea of nation and nationalism in the case of national minorities is emphasized by other authors too. Nationalism is about institutional forms of reproduction, and the core feature of nations is that they evolve a public culture and strive for self-governing institutions on their homeland, without necessarily seeking independent statehood (Calhoun, 1993; Smith, 2001; Csörgő & Goldgeier, 2004).<sup>14</sup> While this is not true of all

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<sup>14</sup> Keating (2001a, 2001b) differs from these authors in that he believes that the issue of various forms of self-determination (falling short of classical statehood) is only relevant in the case of stateless nations, but national minorities do not constitute themselves as a distinct group claiming self-determination, as their co-ethnics from the kin-state have already achieved this.

ethnic groups, as some have no political referent, not even a public culture or a territorial dimension, it is true for national minorities just like for fully-fledged nations. Brubaker (2000: 5) also argues that national minorities' self-understanding is framed in specifically national rather than ethnic terms, they demand the recognition of their distinct ethnocultural nationality and assert collective, nationality-based cultural or political rights, and this distinguishes them from the ethnic groups generally referred to as diasporic formations.<sup>15</sup>

One can see that the advocates of the specific nature of national minorities point to various additional elements that they putatively possess in addition to ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities: they inhabit a historical homeland, they have been separated from the state controlled by their ethnic kin at some historical point in time, but still maintain close ties to their kin-state and display some (perhaps even greater) loyalty towards it than to the country where they live. They struggle to maintain their own public culture and a thick institutional network, and display high levels of social and political organization which allows them to function in a way which comes close to being complete societies. Usually they put forward rather strong ethnopolitical claims, including demands for self-determination, All in all, national minorities are at the highest possible level of social and political organization among minority ethnic groups and have an institutionally complete societal culture (or at least aim for these), and nationalism plays a central role in their politics.

There is one further element which is often regarded as a central feature of national minorities: territoriality or geographical concentration. It is highlighted regularly not only to distinguish them from immigrant communities, but also to provide the basis for the stronger demands they put forward. The fact that only territorially concentrated groups are able to pursue self-determination, including territorial autonomy, is a recurrent idea in the literature (e.g. Mikesell & Murphy, 1991; Rudolph, 2006; Benedikter, 2010).

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<sup>15</sup> Brubaker's ideas about the concept of diaspora are discussed in greater detail below.

While generally speaking national minorities certainly display higher levels of territorial concentration than immigrant groups, territorial concentration should not be considered a *differentia specifica* of national minorities for multiple reasons. First, since their transfer under the sovereignty of their current host state, the demographic composition of the minority's homeland may have significantly changed, due to (voluntary or involuntary) population movements or assimilation. Second, a national minority may be concentrated in its historical homeland without constituting the majority there or in any administrative unit of the state, especially if the host state implemented a disadvantageous administrative division. Third, the concentration of the minority may vary across a larger territory, while its institutional network can still cover the entire area concerned, allowing thus for a high level of social and political organization even in those parts of the historical homeland where the demographic share of the group is low. From this it follows that although geographical concentration is a prerequisite for territorial autonomy, other, non-territorial types of self-government are also conceivable if the minority is spatially more dispersed, or if the degree of concentration varies over a larger territory. To summarize: the homeland community criterion (Smith, 2001; Csergő & Goldgeier, 2004; Csergő, 2007) is not the same as mere territorial concentration: the former is a core distinctive characteristic of national minorities, while the latter is better treated as a variable feature.

### **Diasporas – external minorities**

The concept of diaspora has already appeared in some of the typologies discussed so far, juxtaposed to national minorities or homeland communities (Esman, 1994; Markusse, 2007). Gurr (2000 17-18) even warned that calling national minorities *diasporas* is misleading, as many of these peoples have lived for generations in what they regard as part of their national homeland.

Gurr's warning should be interpreted in the context of a continuous broadening of the meaning of the *diaspora* concept, up to the point of overstretching (Brubaker, 2005; Faist, 2010). Originally, *diaspora* referred to a subtype of migrant groups, more precisely to exilistic, expatriate or uprooted communities, the victims of forced dispersion by a tragic or catastrophic event, who lost their homeland, and still maintain a collective memory of the catastrophe or traumatism (Sheffer, 2003; Safran, 2004). The prototypical example for such communities are the Jews, but some other similar groups also fit this rather narrow definition, most notably the Greek and Armenian diasporas. Later the term also came to cover "minoritized" religious communities (groups that had to move after conversion, such as early Christians, Huguenots, Pomaks), and to trading communities (Kokot *et al.*, 2004; Safran, 2004). But even with this broadening of the universe covered, the special nature of diaspora groups arguably remained more or less consistent, their shared core characteristics being dispersion, a strong commitment to maintain their culture through institutions, and the maintenance of tight contacts with the homeland and with other communities of the same origin. It is important to stress that diasporas do not simply maintain a strong relationship with, but also *seek political influence* in their left-behind homelands or other communities of the same perceived origin (Sheffer, 2003; Kokot *et al.*, 2004), and their role in violent conflicts waged by their homelands has been widely documented (e.g. Hockenos, 2003; Koinova, 2011). This differentiates them sharply from most *traditional immigrants*, who have left their homelands with the *full intention to assimilate* into the hostland culture (Safran, 2004; see also Kymlicka, 1995; 2001).

However, the broadening of the concept of diaspora did not stop here. Sheffer (2003) complains that the borderlines between temporary sojourners, persons residing permanently abroad, immigrants, guest-workers, asylum-seekers, refugees and members of permanent ethno-national diasporas are blurred in the literature. Brubaker (2005) argues that the concept

of diaspora has become obviously overstretched, being employed to *denote virtually any group that is to some degree dispersed in space*. Basically none of the core elements of the original concept of diaspora remain consensually shared by the students of ethnic groups, and Brubaker finds that this is true even for the criterion of dispersion through migration. In an earlier article, Brubaker (2000) himself uses the term “accidental diaspora” to denote minorities that came into being through the disintegration of previously multinational political structures, such as the Habsburg, Russian or Ottoman empires, or the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

While this blurring of the concept certainly entails problems, it also opens up new avenues for interpretation. Adapting the diaspora concept allows for an alternative perspective for studying the political dynamics within minority groups that are usually treated as national minorities (homeland communities with a kin-state). In the *national minorities* or *homeland communities* perspective the emphasis is on societal completeness and the ethnopolitical demands directed towards the host-state, the vantage point is that of the groups themselves, and the kin-state appears as an external patron which aids the minority (to varying degrees) to further its ethnopolitical struggle *within or against the host state*. Conversely, in the diasporas approach the emphasis is on *the relationship between minority and kin-state* in the sense of *the strategic deployment of one entity by the other for its internal purposes* (that is, kin-state actors may rely on the diaspora for domestic purposes, while minority actors may recourse to kin-state actors in order to further their interests within the minority community). For our purposes, the essential element of the concept of diaspora is that of mutual interference, the other features of the original concept can be treated more flexibly.

The idea of conceiving of the Hungarian minorities as diasporas of Hungary has been raised lately by some authors (Sik, 2000; Waterbury, 2010; Salat, 2011).<sup>16</sup> The first author to do so was Sik (2000). While aware of its limitations, Sik tried to adapt the concept of diaspora elaborated by Bonacich (1973), which consists of the following elements: (1) an ambivalent but powerful relationship of the community with the country of origin, where the members of the diaspora nurture plans to return while being aware that they will never in fact do so, and which makes their sojourn in the host country emotionally conceivable as only temporary; (2) an ambivalent relationship with the host country and its majority population, which often view them as alien or not fully loyal to the state; (3) a strong and often introverted community, characterized by an over-developed awareness of “us”, coupled with cultural self-defense and often economic isolation.

With some adjustments, the definition may be appropriate to describe non-migrant communities as the Hungarian minorities too. The requirement of dispersion through migration obviously has to be dropped, and the homeland left behind has to be replaced with a state populated by the minority’s ethnocultural kin, where the members of the minority and most of their ancestors have not actually lived. Longing for return to the homeland could be substituted by a nostalgia for the times when the community was part of the kin-state, an era which is also appropriate to function as some sort of a mythical golden age.<sup>17</sup> The other requirements of the original diaspora concept need no modification. The minorities are committed to maintain their culture through institutions of their own. They maintain a tight, though ambivalent relationship with their kin-state (involving also the potential of exercising voice in the domestic affairs of the latter). Even a collective memory of a traumatism in the past exists, concerning the moment of separation from the kin-state. Their relationship with their host-state is also ambivalent, and there is some level of hostility towards them from the

<sup>16</sup> I would like to emphasize that the point is the conceptual approach, not the terminology used by the scholars who have written by the Hungarian minorities.

<sup>17</sup> On the concept of golden age and its importance in nationalism see Smith (1997).

majority population, leading the community to become introverted to a certain extent instead of enthusiastically embracing integrationist strategies.

Unfortunately, Sik's argument is based mostly on the perceptions and opinions of kin-state policy-makers, and lacks an analysis of the actual behavior of the involved actors. While his conclusion is that there is "no such powerful resistance" against treating Hungarian minorities as diasporas, most stakeholders he quotes in fact dismiss the question as illegitimate, being repulsed by the very idea of applying a term which involves migration.

A second author who employs the diaspora framework when analyzing Hungary's kin-state nationalism is Waterbury (2010). Her conceptual choice is guided by similar theoretical assumptions: ethnic diasporas are citizens "of states in which they are not regarded as full members of the majority nation [and] maintain important cultural, economic, social, and even membership ties to an external state and nation" (Waterbury, 2010: 2). She argues that for the kin-state the relationship with its external minorities can have a significant impact on the construction of national identity, the dynamics of political contestation, as well as foreign and domestic policymaking. On the other hand, the choices of kin-state policymakers may affect the ability of the minorities to remain independent political actors. She further argues that the diaspora politics of a kin-state should not be regarded as driven by a moral sense of ethnic affiliation or a resurgence of nationalism, or by demands put forward by the minorities (reactive kin-state), but rather by the interests and perceptions of political elites who regard the minorities as resources.

Waterbury distinguishes three types of resources: material, cultural-linguistic and political. The first type refers to any material gains in the present or future (including remittances in the case of migrant diasporas, but also the goal of filling the demographic deficit of the kin-state), the second encompasses symbolic resources such as the resistance of the minority to assimilation, which can be a source of national pride or a hope against fears of

cultural dilution. Finally, minorities may also be looked upon as political resources: kin-state elites may attempt to derive legitimacy from the actions taken for the protection of the minority (saviors of the nation), but members of the minority may also be treated as potential constituents who can influence domestic political outcomes through media connections or even through gaining the right to vote. As a consequence, kin-state elites will feel strong incentives to control the ties with their external minorities and their organizations, and will attempt to establish clientelist relations extending across the borders (Waterbury, 2010 6-9).

However, this may be perceived by minority elites as excessive interference into their internal affairs, and may also provide grounds for the host-state actors to perceive the minorities as fifth columns. From the vantage point of the kin-state, the diaspora also poses risks besides being a resource: diaspora members might be difficult to (re)integrate or they may be perceived as aliens or competitors by at least one part of the population of the kin-state. This may lead to domestic conflict concerning the diaspora issue in the kin-state (Saideman & Ayres, 2008: 11; Waterbury, 2010). From the perspective of the minorities, being defined as a diaspora is at odds with the idea of a distinct political community (as entailed by the features of national minorities discussed in the previous section), as pointed out by Bauböck (2007 2440-2441). In the case of a (self-)definition as a diaspora, membership claims will be oriented towards the kin-state and the solution sought is citizenship or at least some sort of quasi-citizenship. Conversely, the other scenario implies the transformation of the state into a multi-national democracy, in which the minority can be nested as an autonomous political entity. Bauböck argues that there is inevitably a trade-off between the two goals.

Salat (2011) raises the idea of the Hungarian minorities being transformed into “institutionalized diasporas” of Hungary in the aftermath of Hungary’s decision to grant citizenship under eased conditions to its ethnic kin living outside its borders, and puts

forward a similar argument to that of Bauböck. According to this, the very extension of Hungarian citizenship (but especially a situation in which the number of ethnic Hungarians from the neighboring countries applying for it would reach high magnitudes) may be at odds with the ethnopolitical goals that have been regarded as the most central within these communities since the fall of communism: obtaining various forms of autonomy and transforming their host states from nation-states into some kind of multinational states. Moreover, the availability of Hungarian citizenship for minority Hungarians may contribute to the emergence of a cleavage between those who apply for it and those who do not, as from the perspective of the kin-state the former will inevitably enjoy priority at the expense of the latter. Salat concludes that in the aftermath of the extension of Hungarian citizenship members of the Hungarian minorities face some sort of loyalty dilemma: should they apply for citizenship and satisfy the expectations present in the Hungarian public sphere even if by this they risk that they have to withdraw from the struggle of the minority for rights in the host state, and also that they might contribute to the development of a deep division within the minority community?

### **Conclusion: a dual perspective - national minorities and external diasporas**

The goal of this first chapter was to contrast two alternative approaches that may be useful to describe the Hungarian minorities of Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. On the one hand, I highlighted arguments from the literature that national minorities are a specific type of ethnic group – in a numerical minority, but displaying a high level of social and political organization, having a kin-state, and putting forward claims rooted in nationalism entailing collective rights ranging to various forms of self-determination. The national minorities perspective is an internal one, emphasizing the political mobilization of the group primarily in its host state. Conversely, the diasporas or external minorities approach is better suited for an analysis of the relationship of various minority actors with their kin-state counterparts.

Blending the two perspectives enables grasping the competing visions or conceptions within the minority groups and provides the grounds for analyzing the strategies of their political parties on a continuum, with the host-state and the kin-state at the two endpoints, as well as the trade-offs involved in these orientations.

The presence of the kin-state and the political divisions within it regarding the issue of the ethnic kin beyond the borders heavily influence the opportunities of the parties that compete for the votes of the national minorities. As a consequence, the internal political dynamics of the minority will be structured not only by the domestic and party politics in their host state, but also by the domestic and party politics from the kin-state. The interplay of the party politics from the host- and kin-state with the internal divisions of the groups (which may be rooted in structural-sociological factors, but also in different attitudes concerning ethnopolitical goals) creates a highly complex system of interactions, a phenomenon little studied so far from the perspective of party politics.

Party politics within a national minority are conditioned by what Brubaker (1996) labeled the triadic nexus of nationalisms. The nexus consists of the nationalizing nationalism of the would-be nation-state, the trans-state (or unifying) nationalism of the external homeland (kin-state), and the nationalism of the minority, which, being at an almost similar level of social-political organization as fully-fledged nations, also engages in nationalist mobilization, asserting demands for certain “collective, nationality-based cultural or political rights” (Brubaker, 1998: 277).<sup>18</sup> None of these three nationalisms should be viewed as a fixed entity, but rather as “variably configured and continuously contested political fields”. Just

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<sup>18</sup> Several authors (Smith, 2002; Harris, 2007) have proposed the inclusion of a fourth element into the model, namely of international actors such as the organizations conventionally discussed in the literature on EU conditionality. A recent article also argued for adding the relationship between the various minorities from the same host state as a fifth element of the model (Germane, 2013). Discussing the impact of international actors on the situation of the Hungarian minorities is beyond the scope of this paper. One could also propose that the presence of Romanian, Slovak or Serbian minorities in Hungary should be taken into consideration too when discussing the situation of the Hungarian minorities. However, the national minorities of Hungary are not ethnopolitically relevant communities, consequently the argument of “reciprocity” or “mirror image” has little substance.

like the two fully-fledged nations between which it is caught, a national minority is not simply a group, but “a family of related yet competing stances” (Brubaker, 1996: 60). Nationality-based assertions of collective cultural or political rights vary widely in their content, not only across groups, but also within the same group, and so do attitudes towards the political institutions and actors from the host-state, and – what is less obvious – also from the kin-state. There may be competition even between those who put forward claims as a national minority and those who reject the designation national minority, or between those who accept (if only implicitly) that the group be treated as a diaspora and those who reject interference from the kin-state. To summarize: the basic relationships of the triadic nexus are complicated by the political and power relationships internal to the various actors.

Of particular importance is the idea that although the relationship of the kin-state with its external minorities is usually of support, resulting from national sentiment and national interest, the relation may also become conflictual, if their political agendas are mutually incompatible. Such situations may emerge, for instance, if the minority does not reciprocate the irredentism of the kin-state or vice versa (Wolff, 2001). However, more moderate options than the ones mentioned by Wolff may also clash. Schöpflin (2000 371-372) warns that it would be misleading to assume that the interests of the minorities are always identifiable with those of their kin-state. The minorities seek to use the kin-state for their own purposes, but this does not automatically coincide with the interests of the latter. Speaking specifically about the Hungarian minorities, Schöpflin argues that these communities have a clear-cut identity of their own, and this sometimes leads to tensions between them and the kin-state, especially in the case of the Hungarians of Romania, the largest and strongest minority in the region. The conception of a self-standing parallel society nurtured by some minority elites clashes not only with the (assimilationist) nationalism of the host-state, but also with the visions of the kin-state about a single nation governed from the capital of the kin-state, as

discussed at the end of the section about diasporas (Bárdi, 2004; Bauböck, 2007; Waterbury, 2010; Salat, 2011).

This thesis blends the triadic framework of Brubaker with the toolkit of the party competition literature to come up with a well-grounded account of the dynamics of party politics within national minorities. This is important because although the existence (e.g. Gherghina & Jiglău, 2011) or the changing behavior (e.g. Jenne, 2007) of a kin-state is sometimes included in comparative studies on ethnic mobilization as a categorical variable, Brubaker's triadic nexus is rarely explored in depth, even less with a focus on party politics; rather, a positive relationship (even if of varying intensity) between kin-state support for the minority and the ethnic mobilization of the latter is usually assumed.

While clearly fitting into the major topics of ethnopolitics research, the topic of this thesis remains special in many respects. It is about numerically inferior groups that are ethnoculturally different from the majority ethnic group, and which have a kin-state which pursues an active nation-policy, but which is not consensual across political parties, neither in the kin-state, nor within the minority. Consequently, the propositions put forward in this thesis and the results to which it arrives should not be read as universal statements about ethnic politics or ethnic parties, but should be regarded as only applying to a specific subset of ethnic phenomena, along the argument of ethnic groups with adjectives put forward by (Chandra, 2006, 2009b). Of course, this does not mean either that the phenomena I deal with would be singular. There are many instances of national minorities where the varying level of engagement of the kin-state and the internal divisions concerning this issue have a serious impact on the party politics going on within the minorities (e.g. the Serbs in Croatia, Poles in Lithuania, Greeks in Albania, Turks in Bulgaria, the case of South Tyrol etc.). While this study is limited to the Hungarian minorities of the Carpathian Basin, it will be the task of future comparative research to uncover further variance in the intra-ethnic political dynamics

of this type of groups. Generalizations to other types of minorities should only be attempted keeping in mind the differences between the groups. For instance, in the case of stateless nations the nature of political fragmentation and competition is purely “domestic”. The insights that might apply to Third World communal contenders stem from the relevance of clientelism in the case of ethnically based parties. The thesis does not intend to contribute to the understanding of the political dynamics of immigrants (including classical diasporas) and other types of minorities.

## **Chapter 2. Ethnic parties, (ethno-)regionalist parties, minority parties**

After having clarified the two alternative conceptual approaches that are appropriate for the groups of interest for this thesis (national minorities/diasporas), this chapter deals with conceptual issues from the literature on political parties that put forward claims on behalf of ethnic groups or minorities. The aim is, once again, to clarify the terminology and the conceptual apparatus, and to present insights relevant for the case of the Hungarian minorities.

There are two broad bodies of literature about political parties that claim to represent ethnic groups. The first consists of mainly Western-focused scholarship about (*ethno-*)*regionalist parties*, and the second of research conducted on *ethnic parties* in Central and Eastern Europe and in other parts of the world (Africa, Asia and Latin America). Notwithstanding the fact that both approaches build to some extent on nationalism studies, ethnopolitics and the party politics literature, the two research programs developed in a parallel fashion, with relatively few interferences, and their integration is still far from being accomplished. The scholarly interest coming from different directions also prevented the emergence of a clear terminology; basically, both strands of literature have developed a distinct terminology of their own. As Szócsik and Zuber noticed, this “heterogeneous use of terms has detached scholars working on ‘ethnoregionalist’ parties in Western Europe from scholars focusing on ‘minority’ parties in Central and Eastern Europe” (Szócsik & Zuber, 2012a).

### **Ethnoregionalist parties**

The phenomenon of the (ethno)regionalist parties of Western democracies is rooted in the classic theory of cleavages developed by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), the presence of these parties being indicative of a strongly politicized center-periphery cleavage.<sup>19</sup> The universe of

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<sup>19</sup> There are multiple alternative terms used in the literature to refer to these parties: *regional parties*, *regionalist parties*, and *ethno-regional* or *ethno-regionalist parties*, *non-state wide parties*, *autonomist parties*, *ethno-*

cases in the (ethno)regionalist literature consists of parties that operate in regions which enjoy some degree of self-government and display a considerable level of “regional assertiveness” (Van Houten, 1999, 2000), meaning that the main political debate is about the sharing of competences between the central and the regional government. The most researched cases are the regions of Spain (Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia, but sometimes also other *comunidades autónomas* that are less distinctive in ethnocultural terms), the UK (Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland), Italy (South Tyrol, The Aosta Valley, Sicily, Sardinia), Belgium (Flanders and Wallonia), to a lesser extent France (again, Catalonia and the Basque Country, as well as Corsica, Occitania, Bretagne, Alsace) or Canada (Quebec), and sometimes the island autonomies of Northern Europe (Åland, Faroe Islands, Greenland) are also included. While this universe overlaps rather well with the phenomenon of stateless nations as discussed in the works of Keating (1996, 2001a, 2001b), it also includes some cases which are better classified as national or linguistic minorities (as South Tyrol or the Swedish-speaking population of Finland).

Some definitions of the *(ethno)regionalist* party concept are rather minimalist, as they focus just on the territorial coverage of the parties’ support, requiring that they be confined to only one region or a few regions. For instance, Brancati (2007: 138) writes that “[r]egional parties [...] are defined as parties that compete and win votes in only one region of a country [...] and] tend to focus their agendas on issues affecting only these regions. Regional parties stand in stark contrast to state-wide parties, which compete and win votes in every region of a country and tend to focus their agendas on issues affecting groups throughout the country.”

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*nationalist parties, nationalist parties, minority nationalist parties, or ethnoterritorial.* These terms are only rarely encountered in non-Western-focused efforts (some exceptions are Strmiska (2000), Romaşcanu (2004)). Conversely, only rarely can one encounter the term *ethnic parties* in a Western European context (e.g. Knutsen, 1998; Alonso, 2005; Alonso & Ruiz-Rufino, 2007; Caramani, 2012). Caramani’s (2012) article is interesting as it distinguishes between ethnic and regionalist parties within the Western-European universe of cases: the author classifies the Swedish People’s Party in Finland as *ethnic*, while noting that the most important *regionalist* parties exist in Belgium, Italy, Spain and the UK.

However, other authors require more for a party to be considered (ethno)regionalist. For Müller-Rommel (1998: 19), “ethnoregionalist parties are defined as referring to the efforts of geographically concentrated peripheral minorities which challenge the working order and sometimes even the democratic order of a nation-state by demanding recognition of their cultural identity”, while de Winter considers that “[t]he defining characteristic of ethnoregionalist parties’ programmes is undoubtedly their demand for political reorganisation of the existing national power structure, for some kind of ‘self-government’” (De Winter, 1998: 204).

The point is that some definitions of (ethno)regionalist parties consist only of a structural requirement (the fact that their electorate is confined to a single region), and are in this sense similar to the definitions of ethnic parties (where the core element is the ethnically defined electorate). However, other definitions also emphasize a programmatic element, the fact that the main goal of these parties is to obtain some sort or reorganization of the state, in favor of the region and at the expense of the center. As it will become clear in the next section, this is an important difference from the ethnic parties perspective, where the structural criterion is regarded as sufficient to define the parties.

A few further comments are in order about (ethno)regionalists. First, *regional* party is often used interchangeably with *regionalist* party or *regionalized party*. However, Cohen (2009) argues that *regionalized* parties are not the same as *regional* parties: though their territorial support may be uneven, they need not be explicitly focused on the regions in which their vote is most concentrated, or their non-state-wide coverage may only be a consequence of insufficient organizational development. The geographical distribution of the vote is not sufficient for a party to be considered regionalist; it is also necessary that the party consciously limits its appeal to the region and claims to represent it against the center.

Second, so far I have put “ethno-” purposively into brackets. The reason is that ethnicity is not necessarily a defining feature of these parties, or at least not to the same extent as territoriality. Though some authors treat the two elements as equally important,<sup>20</sup> parties operating in regions that are not culturally distinctive are also often subsumed into the studied universe, being often labeled only as *regionalist*.<sup>21</sup> Brancati (2007) argues that regional parties are not necessarily ethnic parties, and vice-versa, quoting Chandra’s (2004) ideas about the ethnically exclusivist nature of the latter type as the main reason for the differentiation.

According to Strijbis & Kotnarowski, the major reason why regional and ethnic parties are seen as belonging together in the literature about Western ethnoregionalist parties is that Rokkan believed that in the centre-periphery conflict territorial and cultural opposition coincide. However, “ethnic identity does not necessarily go together with territorial concentration” (Strijbis & Kotnarowski, 2013: 3), and this is true not only in the case of immigrant groups or special minorities like the Roma or Sinti, but may also hold for homeland communities like national minorities, as I have discussed in Chapter 1. A party’s regional focus may or may not be based on ethnic differences, and consequently the ethnocultural distinctiveness of the electorate is not necessarily considered a defining characteristic of ethnoregionalist parties, but treated often as an explanatory variable for the success of these parties (e.g. De Winter, 1998; Fearon & Van Houten, 2002; Gordin, 2001; Sorens, 2008; Tronconi, 2006; Van Houten, 2000).

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<sup>20</sup> From the already quoted authors Müller-Rommel (1998) is clearly an example for this. Other authors that regard ethnic distinctiveness as important are Türsan (1998), who considers ethno-regionalist parties ethnic entrepreneurs and outlines two common denominators in their case: a sub-national territorial border and an exclusive group identity, and Miodownik and Cartrite (2006), who argue that the primary goal of ethnoregionalist parties is to redefine the center-periphery relationship with regards to a specific territory or group.

<sup>21</sup> Another consequence of the primacy of territory as opposed to ethnicity is that sometimes parties that operate in regions that are not ethnoculturally distinctive, and even some borderline cases which are arguably better classified as radical right are also subsumed to the universe of ethnoregionalist parties, e.g. the Italian Lega Nord or the Flemish Vlaams Blok/Vlaams Belang (see Mudde, 2007 50-52).

Third, though ethnicity is not a requirement, the *minority* criterion (numerical inferiority) is implicit in the fact that the parties stand for a certain region and do not compete in the whole country. Some authors also argue that it is meaningless to speak about regionalist parties operating in the center, they are only meaningful in the peripheries (Cohen, 2009).<sup>22</sup> Being confined to a periphery region also implies a finite and well delimited electorate, however, less so than in the case of ethnic parties, as theoretically the appeals of the parties need not be restricted to one particular ethnic group within the region, their nationalism can be framed in a civic-regional manner, open to other groups too.

Fourth, the ethnoregionalist label may cover parties that differ from each other quite considerably in what concerns their goals, and this also implies that the ethnoregionalist parties of the same country are not necessarily natural allies. The parties are usually classified according to the nature of their demands, which range from rather moderate to very radical goals (the typologies of demands will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 4). But a qualitative dichotomy that is also often encountered in the literature deserves special attention, namely the dichotomy between *ethnoregionalists (autonomists)*, who do not aim for secession, and *ethnonationalists*, who do (Mudde, 2007 28-29; Gadjanova, 2013). Sorens (2008) argues that a regionalist or autonomist party may find that its primary enemy is a secessionist party from the same or another region of the country (as the secessionist threat may deter the center from further concessions to the regions, or the region threatening to secede may secure “too many” concessions, leaving the other regions worse off). Other interesting sources of conflict between ethnoregionalists are situations when a party representing one region puts forward claims concerning another region too (as in the case of the Basque parties that also claim Navarre, or in the case of Brussels), or when in a deeply

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<sup>22</sup> However, the case of the *Fédéralistes Démocrates Francophones* (until 2010 *Front Démocratique des Francophones*) from Brussels seems to contradict this claim. Dandoy (2010) also remarks that the Flemish ethno-regionalist parties are unique as they represent a community that constitutes the majority of the population, and not a minority.

divided society all parties are regional yet represent different communities, as in Northern Ireland (Masseti & Schakel, 2012).

Ethnoregionalist parties are contrasted not only to state-wide parties in general, but to the other party families or *familles spirituelles* (Beyme, 1985; Seiler, 1986). Though some scholars have formulated objections against treating ethnoregionalists as a full-fledged party family, primarily due to the lack of a common ideological orientation or of similar positions adopted on the main dimension of political competition (Gallagher *et al.*, 1992; Mair & Mudde, 1998), the increasing attention these parties receive in comparative research and the number of edited volumes dedicated to them seems to indicate a growing recognition of the family. Although lately one could witness efforts to treat ethnoregionalist and ethnic parties as similar and closely related phenomena (Spirova, 2012; Caramani, 2012; Szócsik & Zuber, 2012a), parties from non-Western regions are only seldom included into the family. One exception is Caramani (2012), who treats ethnic minorities' parties and parties for regional autonomy as separate families, yet groups them together under the broader label of “minority parties”

### **Ethnic parties**

As opposed to the ethnoregionalist agenda, the research on *ethnic parties*<sup>23</sup> developed from the studies of ethnic conflict in the Third World (Rabushka & Shepsle, 1971, 1972; Horowitz, 1985). The research on post-Communist Europe also mostly belongs to this tradition (e.g. Bugajski, 1993, 1994; Stroschein, 2001, 2011; Birnir, 2007a, 2007b; Ishiyama, 2009; Ishiyama & Breuning, 1998, 2011).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Similarly to the Western ethnoregionalist universe, there are multiple terms in use: *ethnic* or *ethnically based parties*, *ethnopolitical parties*, *ethnic-mobilizing parties*, *minority parties*, or *ethnic minority parties*.

<sup>24</sup> According to Chandra (2009a: 257), the number of ethnic parties is relatively high in Europe as compared to other regions of the world. In what can probably be considered the most comprehensive count of ethnic parties in the world, she identifies a total of 1346 ethnic parties, of which 554 are from Europe, 143 from Latin America, 183 from Asia, 202 are located in the Post-Soviet region, 215 in Africa, 33 in the Middle East and 16 in North America.

The research on *ethnic parties* gained momentum in the 1970s with the seminal studies of Rabushka and Shepsle (1971, 1972), who argued that the emergence of ethnic parties is characteristic and, to a certain extent, unavoidable in the deeply divided societies of the postcolonial world. The authors drew a generally negative picture about ethnic parties, pointing out the dangers inherent in the ethnicization of politics in their famous theory of ethnic *outbidding* (which will be discussed in the next chapter).

According to Donald Horowitz, whose definition (provided in his 1985 book *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*) is still one of the most widely cited passages in the field, “an *ethnically based party* derives support overwhelmingly from an identifiable ethnic group (or cluster of ethnic groups) and serves the interests of that group. In practice, a party will serve the interests of the group comprising its overwhelming support or quickly forfeit that support, so the test of an ethnic party is simply the distribution of support” (Horowitz, 1985 291-292, emphasis added). Thus, in order to establish whether a party is ethnic or not, one has to simply examine the distribution of its support among the ethnic groups: the point is not that members of a certain ethnic group should overwhelmingly vote for a certain party, but that the votes of a certain party should overwhelmingly come from one or a few specific ethnic groups.

Just like Rabushka and Shepsle, Horowitz discusses ethnic parties in the context of ethnic conflict. In conflict-laden societies ethnic parties reflect the “the mutual incompatibility of ethnic claims to power” (Horowitz, 1985: 294). In such polities ethnic parties not only struggle to control the state, but also to exclude others from state power. However, here it should be added that although this idea is much less quoted in the literature, Horowitz concedes in a footnote that ethnic parties may form for defensive reasons, too, being characterized in certain settings by “attempts to resist exclusion, demands for equal treatment and for an inclusive polity” (Horowitz, 1985: 294, footnote 8).

After Horowitz, a number of definitions have been proposed for ethnic parties (e.g. Brass, 1991; Bugajski, 1994; Chandra, 2004, 2005, 2011; Chandra & Metz, 2002; Gunther & Diamond, 2003; Ishiyama, 2009; Ishiyama & Breuning, 1998; Mozaffar & Scarritt, 2000; Van Cott, 2005). Without offering a complete overview, two definitional issues are worth being discussed: the requirement that the group represented by the party be a minority, and the exclusivist nature of ethnic parties.

In what concerns the first criterion, contrarily to the *ethnoregionalist* literature, where even if not always emphasized, the numerical inferiority of the groups represented is at least implicitly assumed, it is not self-evident whether *ethnic* parties are restricted to ethnic minorities or not (Strijbis & Kotnarowski, 2013). Not all definitions of ethnic parties require that the groups that ethnic parties pledge to represent be numerically or sociologically in a minority situation, consequently (at least some of) the parties of majority groups may also be considered ethnic parties.<sup>25</sup> For instance, in a paper about the Hungarian minorities of Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine, Stroschein (2001) also treats the extreme nationalist parties of the majority groups (which claim to protect the titular nation against the perceived threats posed by the minorities and other agents) as ethnic parties, though she adds a qualifier, calling them “titular” ethnic parties. The up to date only expert survey focusing explicitly on ethnic parties (Szöcsik & Zuber, 2012b) also includes some parties which represent the titular ethnic groups of the respective countries.<sup>26</sup>

The literature is more consensual about the second criterion, that of exclusivity: this feature is overwhelmingly treated as a requirement in order to classify a party as ethnic. The

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<sup>25</sup> From the definitions cited above, only Van Cott (2005) includes the minority condition into her definition: an ethnic party is “an organization authorized to compete in elections, the majority of whose leaders and members identify themselves as belonging to a *nondominant ethnic group*, and whose electoral platform includes among its central demands programs of an ethnic or cultural nature.” (Van Cott, 2005: 3, emphasis added).

<sup>26</sup> For instance Ataka in Bulgaria, the For Fatherland and Freedom party in Latvia, the Homeland Union - Christian Democrats of Lithuania, the Serbian Radical Party, the Democratic Party of Serbia, the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo and the Vetëvendosje party from the same country, as well as the Slovak National Party. Furthermore, all relevant parties from Macedonia and Montenegro are classified as ethnic.

criterion of exclusivity is especially important because it provides the grounds for distinguishing *ethnic parties* from *multi-ethnic parties* or *non-ethnic* ones. The idea of such a classification already appears in Horowitz's work. For Horowitz (1985), ethnic parties may draw support from multiple ethnic groups, but only if all these groups are located on the same side of the main ethnic cleavage. Conversely, a party is *multi-ethnic* only if it spans the major groups in conflict. That is, what matters is whether the main (thus, exclusive) cleavage is spanned by the party, while secondary cleavages may remain within the electorates covered by the multi-ethnic party. In a recent article Chandra comes up with a similar typology, though her definition of the *multi-ethnic* party is a bit different and arguably more demanding, as such parties must champion the interests of *all* significant segments, without excluding any (Chandra, 2011: 155). Elsewhere, Chandra (2009a: 257) writes that multi-ethnic parties also make open appeals related to ethnicity, but assume "a position of neutrality or equidistance toward all relevant groups", thus, they differ from ethnic parties only in their inclusiveness.

Both Horowitz and Chandra define a third type too, the *non-ethnic* party, which does not champion the interests of any ethnic category whatsoever, consequently they treat it as a residual category. While Horowitz (1985: 301) writes that it is not even clear whether such parties are indeed possible in deeply divided societies, Chandra (2009a: 259) classifies those parties as non-ethnic, which do not make "an open or a central appeal to an ethnic category, whether exclusive or inclusive."<sup>27</sup>

While maintaining the three-fold classification into ethnic, multi-ethnic and non-ethnic parties (and also the exclusivity criterion in what concerns the ethnic type), a recent article by Chandra (2011) deserves special attention because the author introduces the most elaborate list of criteria up to date which can be employed to identify instances of ethnic

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<sup>27</sup> This threefold typology has also been employed to classify party systems as consisting primarily of ethnic, multi-ethnic or non-ethnic parties (Bogaards, 2008; Elischer, 2008).

parties. Chandra puts forward eight criteria to identify ethnic parties: (1) whether a party includes references to an ethnic group in its name; (2) whether it makes explicit references to ethnic categories in its platform; (3) whether it sends coded signals to an ethnic group in its platform (implicit activation of ethnic identities, usually if explicit appeals are not possible due to bans or other regulations); (4) the past legislative behavior of the party, whether it benefits an ethnic group disproportionately; (5) the distribution of group vote – whether an ethnic group votes for the party in disproportionate numbers; (6) the composition of the party's votes – whether most of its votes come from an ethnic group; (7) the composition of party leadership, whether it is drawn disproportionately from an ethnic group; (8) the arena of contestation – whether the party contests elections mainly in constituencies where an ethnic group is in majority, or the if there are separate electoral rolls, reserved seats. Chandra does not regard any of these indicators as superior or preferable, instead she points out and illustrates empirically that the choice of any criterion from the list may lead to a very different universe of cases. Although Chandra repeatedly stresses that the ethnic nature of parties should be assessed to the extent to which they act “to the exclusion of others”, some of the proposed criteria – if only implicitly – suggest that the exclusive or inclusive nature of a party may be better conceived of as a matter of degree than of kind. This is especially true for coded signals, legislative behavior and the distribution of group vote, but also party name may be problematic, especially in the presence of ethnic party bans.

### **Ethnic parties as clientelistic machines**

While the discussed threefold – (mono-)ethnic, multi-ethnic and non-ethnic – classification is a very useful heuristic tool for the analysis of parties in deeply divided societies, an attempt to place ethnic parties into a broader context of (mainstream) party theory may still be useful. The reason is that although for the discussed authors who approach the phenomenon from the perspective of ethnicity it is the non-ethnic party which appears as a residual category, in the

mainstream parties literature the parties formed along ethnic lines that are the ones that often treated as something atypical.

According to Aldrich (1995), political parties form in order to solve *collective action* problems (e.g. obtaining scales of economies in mobilization and campaigning or the pooling of resources) and *social choice* problems (that is, aggregating the individual preferences of politicians into a coherent program which is suitable to address societal problems). Following Aldrich, Kitschelt (2001, 2000) distinguishes four ideal-types of parties, according to which problems they are able to solve. If parties solve both the social choice and the collective action problem, they can be considered *programmatic*. Voters will be compensated indirectly, through policy packages adopted while in government, and the redistributive consequences will be supported by all voters, regardless of whether they voted for the party or not. If only the collective action problem is solved, the party only invests in organization-building, and party-voter linkages will be of a *clientelistic* nature; the bonds will be direct and personal, and mostly of material nature, only those who voted will benefit, and monitoring will be tight. If none of the two problems are solved, parties will only be able to operate as the electoral vehicles of *charismatic* politicians. Charisma is hostile to both organization-building and elaborating programs, as the leader is not interested in investing resources into something that can divert attention from his/her very personality (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007; Kitschelt, 2000).<sup>28</sup> Parties with low organizational capacities are unable to maintain extensive patronage or clientelistic networks; however, one possible substitute for a strong party organization is leader charisma, (Tavits, 2013, Chapter 2), which can be of special importance in a setting loaded with nationalist sentiment.

Kitschelt unequivocally classifies ethnocultural parties (including linguistic, ethnic, religious or regional parties) into the clientelistic type, while liberal, socialist or left-

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<sup>28</sup> The fourth possibility is to solve only the social choice but not the collective action problem, but according to Kitschelt this combination is irrelevant in the era of universal suffrage, such legislative caucuses being characteristic of competitive oligarchies.

libertarian parties are considered programmatic. The sharp boundaries of ethnic groups provide a propitious environment for ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, because by conveying a sense of threat it is very easy to monitor and sanction the behavior of group members; moreover, by keeping their electorate dependent on the ethnic clientelistic network, the emergence of cleavages cross-cutting the group (e.g. class) can also be prevented (Kitschelt, 2000). Elsewhere, Kitschelt writes that the lack of programmatic appeals and the recourse to clientelism is a consequence of the inability of their elites to adopt a clear stance in socio-economic issues, or of their reluctance to do so, for fear of dividing the ethnic electorate and losing part of it (Kitschelt, 2001: 305).

A very similar approach to Kitschelt's concerning ethnic parties can be found in the party typology of Gunther and Diamond (2003). As discussing the whole typology would be beyond the scope of this chapter, I will restrict the presentation to the types that are relevant from our perspective.<sup>29</sup> The primary distinction is between mass-based and other types of parties. Mass-based parties can be organized according to a socialist, nationalist or religious ideology, and each can be further divided into pluralistic and proto-hegemonic types (socialists vs. communists, nationalists vs. fascists, Christian-democrats vs. fundamentalists). Among the non-mass-based parties one finds electoralist parties (which are organizationally thin and only intensify their activity before elections), movement-parties (an organizational form characteristic of emerging parties, but also of left-libertarians and post-industrial extreme right parties), and, interestingly, *ethnicity-based* parties. The latter category is further divided into *ethnic parties*, which seek to mobilize only their own ethnic group, and *congress parties* (named after the paradigmatic Indian example), which are coalitions of ethnic parties or political machines.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> The authors distinguish 15 party types based on three criteria (the thickness of party organization, programmatic features and whether the party is tolerant towards pluralism or proto-hegemonic).

<sup>30</sup> The concept of congress party is similar to (or, more precisely, can be considered a subtype of) the concept of the *mosaic cleavage party*, coined by Enyedi to denote parties that were able to successfully integrate "hitherto

In Gunther and Diamond's view, the main goal of ethnic parties is "to secure material, cultural and political benefits (and protections) for the ethnic group in its competition with other groups", while their programmatic commitment and coherence is "extremely low". "Neither do they typically have a very developed organizational structure or formal membership base", consequently they "[tend] to mobilize pre-existing clientelistic relations", and they are also prone to be dominated by a single charismatic leader, who mobilizes by "powerfully emotive symbolic issues of identity and even cultural survival." However, unlike all other party types (including the *nationalist* party!), electoral mobilization is not intended to attract other sectors of society (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 184).

Gunther and Diamond put forward a very interesting argument about the goals of ethnic parties. As the ethnic party primarily aims to channel resources to its exclusively defined electorate, it will not be interested in transforming the state power structure, (devolution, autonomy or secession), but rather in maintaining existing state structures, which can be exploited to extract resources. As a matter of fact, this seems to be the most important difference between *ethnic* parties and *nationalist* parties, which clearly aim for such transformative goals. The examples cited by the authors for ethnic parties include mostly third world examples (from Nigeria, South Africa or India), but also the Movement for Rights and Freedoms in Bulgaria and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania. In what concerns the nationalist party, one of the examples provided is the Basque Partido Nacionalista Vasco, and this type is very similar to that of the Western ethnoregionalist parties.

### **Insights for the parties of national minorities in Central and Eastern Europe**

First, I would like to emphasize that I subscribe to the opinion that the fact that both minority parties and majority radicals appeal to ethnicity or nationalism does not warrant treating them together, as a single type. Nationalism can be of more types. Gellner's (1983) famous

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separate segments" of society by coordinating organizationally and culturally isolated electorates, thus channeling minor cleavages into a major one (Enyedi, 2005: 701, 715; Deegan-Krause & Enyedi, 2010: 9).

definition of nationalism according to which “the political and the national unit should be congruent” is a good characterization of radical majority nationalists, who strive to eliminate cultural heterogeneity within the territory of the state which they consider their exclusive property. Conversely, apart from secessionist cases, minority nationalism is primarily concerned with counterbalancing such efforts. Formulated in the words of Wimmer (1997), the main difference between majority and minority nationalists is that the former belong to the group which “owns the state”, while national minorities can at best rely on the fact that their co-ethnics own a state elsewhere.<sup>31</sup>

The highly asymmetric demographic proportions between majority and minority in the countries studied in this thesis also have important consequences concerning the party system. The minorities are too small to make the ethnic cleavage the main axis of party competition at the national level (as opposed to polities where the balance of groups is more equal, like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Northern Ireland and Belgium, as well as a number of democratizing countries in the Third World which lack a clear ethnocultural majority). As a consequence, the party systems of these states can be regarded as a middle ground between the “conventional” party systems of ethnically homogenous societies and the systems of deeply divided societies, which are made up preponderantly of ethnic parties (Spirova, 2012). Given that the ethnic cleavage is of secondary importance in the party system, I argue that these systems come closer to the “conventional” party systems, as only *some* parties are organized along ethnic lines. Appeals to ethnicity are central features of the parties’ identity only in the case of the minorities and possibly of some nationalist radical right parties, but not

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<sup>31</sup> Further arguments for treating the ethnic parties of minorities and of majorities as different phenomena can be derived from the already quoted typology of Gunther and Diamond (2003). In their classification of political parties the type that comes closest to majority ethnic or nationalist parties is not the *nationalist* party (which is a mass party striving for more self-government or even secession, that is, something very similar to ethnoregionalist parties), neither the *ethnic* party (which lacks a well-developed party organization and is rather a clientelistic machine seeking to extract resources within the existing framework of the state), but the *ultranationalist* party. These parties are “proto-hegemonic in their aspirations, [...] advance an ideology that exalts the nation or race above the individual, detests minorities and openly admires the use of force by a strong, quasi- military party often relying upon a uniformed party militia.” Not only fascist parties are classified into this category, but also parties like Tudjman’s HZD in Croatia (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 181).

of all actors in the party system. The most important parties from the system usually refrain from explicit ethnic identification, though occasionally they may play the “ethnic card”. As Brubaker *et al.* (2006) emphasize, in such societies the majority is an *unmarked* (normal, default, taken for granted) category, while the minority is a *marked* (special, other) category. The unmarked nature of belonging to the majority category simply preempts the need of majority parties for continuously emphasizing ethnicity. Conversely, for the parties that depend on the limited minority electorate, ethnicity is permanently important, due to the marked nature of the category.<sup>32</sup> This is true not only for exclusivist ethnic parties, but to some extent also for multi-ethnic ones. For majority nationalists ethnicity is important despite the unmarked nature of belonging to the majority category, or because they strive to create a sense of markedness (grounded in perceived threats from the minority) in parts of the ethnic majority electorate.

One of the most important differences between the two traditions from the perspective of this thesis is the differential emphasis put on the different types of linkage mechanisms. The well-delimited nature of their electorate renders ethnic parties especially prone to clientelism, as monitoring and sanctioning voter behavior in ethnic groups is relatively easy. Reliance on such linkages may prevent ethnic parties from appealing on ideological grounds or engaging in the elaboration of programs, and makes them especially dependent on state resources. The literature also points to an interesting dilemma concerning ethnic party claims: while ethnopolitical demands aiming for the empowerment of the represented groups are natural claims for ethnic parties, their interest in the maintenance of existing state structures which allow the continuation of clientelistic activity may prevent them from voicing demands

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<sup>32</sup> Chandra (2009c: 38) also notes that “in many countries, majority groups often do not activate ethnic identities—the word “ethnic” is typically reserved for “minorities.”” [...] “there are only a few very polarized countries at particular points in time, such as Yugoslavia in 1992, where almost the entire population lines up behind parties activating an ethnic identity.”

for the reorganization of the state (Gunther & Diamond, 2003).<sup>33</sup> Conversely, the topic of clientelism is also almost entirely absent from the ethnoregionalist literature, or at least it is not regarded as a central feature. Though low ideological coherence is sometimes imputed to the ethnoregionalists too (De Winter, 1998) and despite the debates about whether nationalism may qualify as an ideology or not, the linkage type considered characteristic of ethnoregionalist parties is primarily programmatic, pertaining to the primacy of goals related to state reorganization and nationalism.<sup>34</sup>

For the purposes of this thesis, the goal- or ideology-related features and the linkages of other nature are considered equally essential for the understanding of intra-ethnic fragmentation within the minority groups and the differences between their parties. While Central and Eastern European parties may be especially prone to clientelism as compared to their Western European counterparts, regardless of whether they are ethnic or not (Kopecky & Scherlis, 2008; O'Dwyer, 2004), it is equally true that the level of programmatic cohesion in the region's party systems is out and away higher than in the party systems of the Third World.<sup>35</sup> In this sense, the recognition of the importance of clientelism in the ethnic parties literature is equally relevant as the goals- or demands-based typologies of ethnoregionalist parties.

The other very important difference from the perspective of this thesis between the two approaches concerns the nature of the parties' appeals. The repertoire of alternative appeals and strategies is of a special relevance for our topic because not all parties that claim to represent the interests of Hungarian minorities can be considered ethnic parties, minority elites may also rely on strategies based on non-exclusivist appeals.

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<sup>33</sup> This point will be revisited in more detail in the next chapter.

<sup>34</sup> Yet, the importance of charismatic leadership is emphasized in both literatures (see, on one hand De Winter, 1998; Gómez-Reino Cachafeiro et al., 2006; and on the other Gunther & Diamond, 2003).

<sup>35</sup> Though experts on Africa argue that even in such (semi-)authoritarian regimes it is more reasonable to view voting and party behavior as a combination of policy and patronage considerations (van de Walle, 2006; Wahman, 2011a).

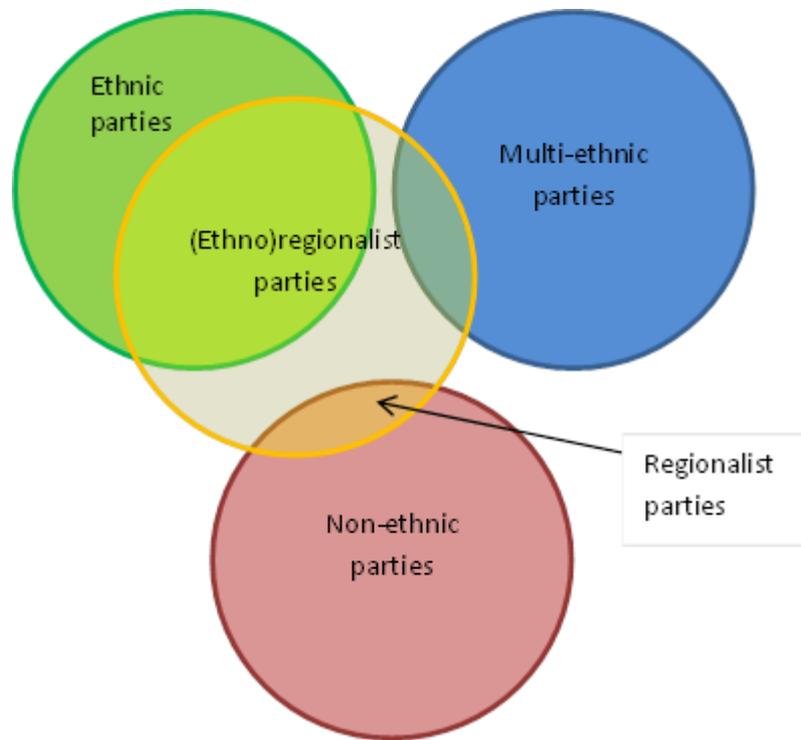
The defining element of ethnic parties is the ethnic distinctiveness of their electorate, while territorial concentration is either implicitly assumed or employed as an explanatory variable for party formation or success. As a consequence of the nature of their electorate, their appeals are considered exclusivist, as opposed to the inclusive appeals of multi-ethnic parties or to non-ethnic appeals; representing the interests of one group automatically entails the rejection or exclusion of other groups. Conversely, the primary defining feature of the ethnoregionalist party is territory, while the ethnocultural distinctiveness of the region often appears only an explanatory variable for success. Exclusivity is not a core feature of ethnoregionalist parties, and although their electorate is also well-delimited, and as such, constrains their strategies, some paradigmatic examples from Western European regions (especially Catalonia and Scotland) have been praised for the inclusive nature of the nationalism they pursue, which is in principle open to the whole population of a certain region, regardless of ethnocultural characteristics

Zuber (2013: 763) has argued that the inclusion of regionalist appeals amounts to a departure from exclusivist ethnic appeals, consequently the minority parties that choose this strategy cease to be ethnic in the terms of the definitions of ethnic parties of Horowitz and Chandra. Thus, ethnoregionalist appeals may be considered an alternative to exclusivist ethnic appeals. However, I believe that different conceptualization is also possible, as ethnoregionalist appeals are not precisely the same as bare multi-ethnic appeals either.

Instead of claiming that adopting territorial appeals cancels the ethnic nature of a party, I find it more fruitful to imagine an intersection of regionalist appeals with all three types of party appeals described by Horowitz and Chandra. This means that ethnic, multi-ethnic and non-ethnic parties can all combine regionalist appeals into their rhetoric without losing their identity on the other dimension. A tentative graphical representation of the

relationship between the various party types is provided in Figure 2.1, in the form of a Venn diagram.

**Figure 2.1. The relationship between ethnic, multi-ethnic, non-ethnic and (ethno)regionalist parties**



In practice, the extent of overlap of regionalist parties is the highest with ethnic parties, as most ethnic groups live more or less territorially concentrated and most regions that have a distinctive political movement are also ethnoculturally specific. However, those regionalists mentioned earlier, which prompted putting the term “ethno-” into brackets, are located in the area of overlap with non-ethnic parties, as even though they appeal to a distinct regional identity, that has nothing to do with ethnicity (e.g. the regionalist parties from the ethnoculturally not distinctive regions of Spain).

In the case of multi-ethnic regions, both ethnic and multi-ethnic parties may incorporate regionalist elements into their appeals, but this does not mean that they will become alike. An ethnic party may realize that the interests of the ethnic group it represents are best furthered if the region is strengthened against the center. As opposed to this, a multi-ethnic regionalist party may appeal to the multicultural character of the region in order to

differentiate itself from the mainstream parties that oppose empowering the region, while having a very different attitude concerning the handling of ethnic diversity in the region from that of an ethnic regionalist party. This contrast can be very well illustrated by the case of Serbia, where the regionalists from Vojvodina (primarily the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina) are a perfect example for the area of overlap with the multi-ethnic parties, while VMSZ falls into the area of overlap with ethnic parties.

The graph also shows that not all ethnic parties are ethnoregionalist. Obviously, the parties of non-territorial minorities like the Roma would belong to this latter category, but parties of territorially more concentrated ethnic groups need not pursue regionalist strategies either, if they believe that the interests of the group are not furthered best by the improvement of the region's situation. This thesis will make it clear that there are also Hungarian parties that do not regard themselves as ethnoregionalist, or which have very limited possibilities in this direction because of the unfavorable territorial settlement patterns. Analogously, multi-ethnic parties need not be regionalist either. In the case of Slovakia's Most-Híd, the regional component is significantly weaker than in the case LSV, given that the settlement patterns of the Hungarians are not favorable for this, so the party is better positioned outside the area of overlap with the regionalists.<sup>36</sup>

Minority elites involved in ethnic and multi-ethnic parties profess very different conceptions about the nature of the minority community. Leaders of multi-ethnic parties rather subscribe to a multicultural view of society or an overarching identity transcending ethnic ties, and to the idea of individual integration of the members of the minority. Conversely, the elites of minority ethnic parties mostly conceive of their group as a distinct political community or a self-standing society, which should be integrated in a collective and vertical fashion into the polity (as a pillar). In political science jargon, one could say that

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<sup>36</sup> Still, the party emphasizes representing the interests of the southern parts of Slovakia.

elites of ethnic parties are more sympathetic towards a Lijphartian (consociational) power-sharing solution, while elites of multiethnic parties are more inclined towards Donald Horowitz's integrative approach of ethnic conflict resolution. Framed within the triadic nexus of Brubaker (1996) introduced in the first chapter, a multi-ethnic party strategy also implies that political integration into the host-state is prioritized over the ties to the kin-state.

Though the idea of bridging the interethnic divide conveys a downplaying of the salience of ethnicity, the appeal is still targeted to voters who attribute some importance to the fact that an ethnic cleavage exists. In societies composed of a clear majority and a clear minority ethnic group, such voters will be found preponderantly (though not exclusively) within the minority. In a society with an asymmetric distribution and power of ethnic groups, which can be described with the marked and unmarked categories of Brubaker *et al.* (2006), a program of interethnic reconciliation has to be interpreted as targeting primarily the minority voters even if it entails a denial of ethnic exclusiveness, as for the majority a non-ethnic program would be the most appealing, which is more in line with the unmarked nature of their ethnic membership.

Naturally, the national party systems of the host states of the minorities will also contain parties which are neither ethnic, nor trying to bridge the divide between minority and majority. These parties often describe themselves as "civic", and emphasize their disapproval of the idea of organizing political parties along ethnic lines, which is quite often the strategy of the minorities. "Civic" carries a heavy normative loading in the discourse of these parties, as it is meant to imply the rejection of ethnic particularisms, portrayed as atavistic and harmful. However, by these claims these parties fall into the trap of what Kymlicka (2001) calls the myth of the ethnocultural neutrality of the state. In a multiethnic society, a civic or neutral attitude of the state (or a party), meaning the refusal to institutionalize ethnicity, inevitably reinforces the majority societal culture and works against the minorities. Because

of this, minority elites may become suspicious of this variant of the idea of “civicness”, advocated by the parties of the majority, and perceive it as a covert version of anti-minority sentiment.

Though the main parties of the party systems (except for the radical right nationalists) are organized in a non-ethnic manner at the national level and behave like that most of the time, I will rather refer to them as “mainstream” parties. I prefer this term to “civic” party due to the normative loading with which the parties themselves use this latter term, but also because the term “civic” is present in the name of some parties in the region, which would cause confusion. I prefer “mainstream” to “non-ethnic” because it is more neutral, and it also captures the reality better, as even mainstream parties display episodic deviations from the non-ethnic behavior pattern.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> It may also be possible for the same party to behave as non-ethnic at the national level and as multi-ethnic or even ethnic at the local or regional level, in regions where the ethnic group dominant at national level constitutes a minority of the population. The opposite may also be true: parties that act in an ethnic fashion in the center may act in a non-ethnic manner at the regional or local level (due to the need to address non-ethnic issues). However, the focus of this thesis is (mainly) on the national level, so these contextual shifts are of lesser importance. I am indebted to Zsolt Enyedi and Tamás Kiss for these suggestions.

### **Chapter 3. Theories of ethnic party competition and cooperation**

After having highlighted the specificities of the groups that constitute the object of our study as compared to the broader universe of ethnic groups and minorities, and having identified the relevant research directions that address the phenomenon of parties that put forward ethnicity-related appeals, this chapter is dedicated to theoretical models of party competition. The bodies of scholarship that provide starting points for the analysis of our topic of interest are the theories of competition in ethnic party systems (more precisely the theory of ethnic outbidding and its criticism) and the consociationalism literature. Though the latter is rather a theory of inter-ethnic elite cooperation, its reinterpretations provide important insights about intra-ethnic competition. Drawing on the reviewed theories, in this chapter I also formulate my own argument about why ethnic outbidding strategies proved to be less successful with the Hungarian minority electorates.

#### **Ethnic outbidding**

The topic of intra-community pluralism is most directly addressed in the literature about “*ethnically based party systems*”, that is, systems made up mainly of parties that appeal exclusively to voters from their own ethnic group rather than to all voters, and where the main (and sometimes only) cleavage is the ethnic one (Horowitz, 1985; Mitchell *et al.*, 2009). Though I have argued in the previous chapter that the party systems of the studied countries resemble more the “conventional” party systems, as due to demographic asymmetry between the ethnic groups, ethnicity is not the primary axis of competition, the salience of ethnicity (or the minority issue) is still high in these systems, as shown by the presence of the parties of the minorities and of the extremist-nationalist parties of the majority (or *titular ethnic parties*, to use Stroschein’s term). As a consequence, the insights gained from the ethnic party systems literature can be applied also to the universe of ethnic parties representing groups

that are clearly minorities, adapted to the different structural and institutional reality of these non-ethnic party systems.

The earliest but still widely accepted theoretical model of competition in ethnic party systems is the *ethnic outbidding thesis*. The argument originates in the rational choice inspired model developed by Rabushka and Shepsle (1972), but Donald Horowitz proposed a similar argument based on a sociologically grounded analysis in his seminal book *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (1985).

Rabushka and Shepsle argue that the emergence of ethnic parties is characteristic and, to a certain extent, unavoidable in the deeply divided societies of the postcolonial world. In these societies the conditions for interethnic competition were not given during the colonial era, as the various ethnic groups mobilized on the same side, against the colonial powers. The broad multiethnic coalitions that emerged after independence disintegrated soon, as they proved unable to handle the challenge of distributive decisions. This gave way to the ethnicization of politics, which, in turn, led to the rise of extremists in all groups through the so-called ethnic *outbidding* process, and eventually often to violence.

The essence of the outbidding thesis is that where ethnicity (or race, religion etc.) is salient, moderation on the ethnic issues will not prevail. Multiethnic parties do not stand a chance, because they will be outflanked by exclusivist ethnic parties; moderate ethnic parties, open to compromise with the opposing groups will inevitably be challenged by more radical parties within their group, which will accuse the former of selling out the interests of the community. As a consequence, politics will develop a centrifugal dynamic and society will become increasingly polarized, until the breakdown of democracy and peace. Without proper institutions to prevent this, the outcome can be catastrophic. Majorities will permanently exclude minorities, while minorities might engage in preemptive violence to avoid this outcome. Outbidding is considered the most convenient strategy for mobilization because

intransigency is the easiest way for challengers to differentiate themselves from the incumbent elites. Rabushka and Shepsle conclude on a very pessimistic tone that: “[m]oderation on the ethnic issue is a viable strategy only if ethnicity is not salient” (Rabushka & Shepsle, 1972: 86).

The contribution of the outbidding thesis to the still widely shared negative opinion about ethnic parties (e.g. Brass, 1991; Mitchell, 1995; Pickering, 2004; Reilly, 2006) is hard to be overstated. Even four decades after the formulation of the theory, students of ethnic politics (especially from the integrationist school) still complain that “by making communal appeals to mobilize voters, the emergence of [ethnically-based] parties typically has a centrifugal effect on electoral politics, thereby aiding extremists and heightening ethnic tensions” (Reilly, 2006: 811).

### **Alternatives to outbidding**

One important problem with the outbidding thesis is that as a matter of fact it is not clear what its main dependent variable is. The model predicts that (1) challengers will adopt a strategy based on a more radical tone; (2) that by doing so they will successfully outflank the moderates; (3) this may lead to the breakdown of democracy and stability. Yet, party *emergence* and *success* are two distinct phenomena, which have to be treated separately. Moreover, recent developments in the field provide evidence that none of these predictions is necessarily true: new ethnic or minority parties do not always emerge on a more radical platform, a radical platform is not always more successful than a moderate one, and the success of the radicals does not necessarily put democracy to risk. From the perspective of this thesis, the most interesting of these predictions is the second one. However, before addressing the issue, the other two propositions will be briefly discussed. The second prediction, concerning the relative success of radicals and moderates will be discussed last, because this is the most important from the perspective of the questions asked in this thesis,

namely whether outbidding platforms are indeed successful, and what accounts for the relative success of the moderates and radicals.

### **New party formation**

Theoretically, by modifying the main assumptions of the model, alternative outcomes are also conceivable, not only centrifugal dynamics. Empirically, there is a fair amount of evidence that new parties putting forward ethnicity-related appeals (or existing parties that shift their position) may also adopt other strategies than outbidding or radicalization. Thus, polarization is not inevitable even in ethnic party systems. Moreover, in the case of ethnic minority parties that operate in “conventional” party systems the structural asymmetries may render moderation even more attractive, provided that a certain level of inclusion and participation is guaranteed.

The most important assumption of the outbidding model which is not necessarily realistic concerns the distribution of voter preferences, which is assumed to be perfectly U-shaped in the outbidding model, with highest density at the two ends and an empty center.<sup>38</sup> But it is not too realistic to think about ethnic electorates as containing disproportionately many radicals and only a few moderates. Rather, the electorates resemble a normal distribution (usually assumed in Downsian models too) in both groups, with few radicals on one side and a similar proportion of those for whom group membership is not so important on the other. The overall distribution will be bimodal, but the modal points will not be at the two ends, but there will be radicals on both sides and a middle ground between the two peaks (Coakley, 2008).<sup>39</sup>

Given this spatial distribution of voters, strategies other than outbidding also become possible. Coakley (2008) identifies two other possible strategies for intra-ethnic challengers

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<sup>38</sup>Assuming for the sake of simplicity that society is composed of only two ethnic groups.

<sup>39</sup>Based on survey data representative for the population of Estonia, Brady and Kaplan (2000) find a similar distribution of Estonians and Slavs (Russians, Byelorussians, Ukrainians), with about 20 percent of the Estonians and about 36 percent of the Slavs in the overlapping region of the distribution. The authors measure ethnic identity with a more refined indicator than the categorical question: their Graded Ethnic Identity scale is developed through a factor analysis of social distance, media usage and group evaluation items.

beside *outbidding*: ethnic *underbidding* (centrist appeals targeting the “middle-ground” voters caught between the two groups) and *non-ethnic counterbidding* (attempts to impose alternative, non-ethnic cleavages, which cut across the ethnic one).

Building on Coakley’s work, Zuber (2013) further refined the repertoire of party strategies, based on two variables: (1) the appeal of the parties (which, in line with the ideas of Horowitz and Chandra, can be exclusively directed towards the members of an ethnic group, or non-exclusive, targeting both ethnic groups), and (2) policy positions on the main dimension of party competition. The appeal criterion is considered to be absolute (either ethnic or non-ethnic), while the position criterion is to be understood in relative terms, and can be more radical, more moderate, or unchanged, as compared to the former strategy of the same party or the strategy of the main competitors (in case of new parties). Based on these two criteria, Zuber distinguishes between *ethnic underbidding*, *static (ethnic) bidding*, *ethnic outbidding*, *lateral underbidding*, *lateral bidding* and *lateral outbidding*, as depicted in table 3.1.

**Table 3.1. Ethnic outbidding and alternative party strategies**

Appeal criterion	Positional criterion		
	More moderate	No shift	More radical
Exclusive	Ethnic underbidding	Static bidding	Ethnic outbidding
Non-exclusive	Lateral underbidding	Lateral bidding	Lateral outbidding

Source: Zuber (2013: 781).

All types in the last row of the table imply that the party widens its appeal beyond the ethnic group and also takes a position on another dimension beside the ethnic one. While lateral underbidding and lateral bidding are realistic strategies, Zuber argues that lateral outbidding remains mostly a theoretical possibility, because in reality it is difficult to imagine that opening towards a new, cross-cutting electorate can be compatible with a more hardliner position on the ethnic issue.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup>Still, arguably new politics or green issues may at least in theory be suitable for the pursuance of this strategy. For instance, in Transylvania the opposition of RMDSZ (most importantly László Tőkés) not only adopted a more radical stance in what concerns ethnic issues, but also formulated a very firm position of rejection

Furthermore, Zuber proves that ethnic outbidding is not inevitable in a most-likely setting that should induce such an outcome (the post-Yugoslav context, characterized by a general environment of politically mobilized ethnicity, the legacy of the repression of the Milošević regime towards minorities, and easy conditions for forming minority parties). She finds variation in strategies under the same set of institutions and opportunity structures not across groups, but across parties within the groups. Consequently, the fact that a party is ethnic does not determine a specific strategic behavior, let alone outbidding.<sup>41</sup>

Further evidence against the pre-determinedly more radical position of splinter ethnic minority parties is provided by Bochsler and Szócsik (2013b), who argue that the position of the newcomers rather depends on that of the formerly existing party, from which they wish to differentiate themselves. As party splits usually occur along the moderate-radical division, this implies that if the existing party radicalized, the challenge will be mounted along a more moderate platform. To sum up: the challenger parties of the minorities are neither necessarily more radical, nor more moderate than the previously existing ones, but their position will depend on the interplay of a number of conditions.

### **Consequences of outbidding**

Of the other two predictions of the model, I address first the one concerning the negative consequences of outbidding. Several accounts in the literature suggest that although this indeed keeps the ethnic issue at high levels, the consequences need not be that catastrophic as predicted by the original model.

Van Houten (2000) has shown in the context of Western European ethnoregionalist parties that intra-ethnic competition may occur along the outbidding logic without jeopardizing democracy. According to his findings, regional assertiveness (demands for

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concerning the issue of the Roşia Montană/Verespatak gold mine project, ending up on a common platform not only with majority green activists, but also with majority nationalists.

<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, Zuber also concludes that an ethnic outbidding strategy remains the most attractive for new entrants into the intra-ethnic competition. However, her time-frame only covers a few years, and this statement could be qualified in a longer time- perspective, as it will be illustrated in the next chapters with further examples of minority party formation.

changes in the distribution of competences between the national and regional level of government in favor of the latter) is higher where multiple regionalist parties compete against each-other than in regions where a single regional party competes against national parties. The reason is that if there is only one regional party in a party system, appealing to the territorial cleavage is sufficient to garner regional support. However, if there are more parties, mobilizing on the territorial cleavage will not suffice to distinguish themselves from each-other. Consequently, making stronger demands (like fiscal autonomy) becomes a “credibility test” for a party representing regional interests. The overall result will be an escalation of demands vis-à-vis the center, but, contrarily to the original outbidding thesis, the outcome is not ethnic conflict, only the peaceful weakening of the centralized state. In a similar manner, Alonso (2005) argues that the presence of radical parties allows the moderates to appeal more effectively to a larger group of moderate voters.

While these accounts do not refer specifically to situations when the outbidding challenger is more successful than the moderate competitor, others have pointed out that democracy need not be endangered even if the radicals defeat the moderates, as they often become more pragmatic after having displaced the moderates. It is possible for parties to maintain hardliner positions on some issues (mainly those related to identity), while moderating on other issues and modernizing themselves (Gormley-Heenan & Macginty, 2008), or they may adopt a dual discourse, communicating an intransigent stance towards their own constituency, while behaving in a pragmatic manner in the inter-ethnic arena (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001; Mitchell *et al.*, 2009).

Mitchell, Evans & O’Leary (2009) argue that in a system of power sharing, the moderation of the centrist ethnic parties will offer a possibility to the hardliners too to move towards more accommodating positions. Based on the example of Northern Ireland, the authors show that after the Good Friday agreement the hardliner ethnic parties on both sides

(the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin) transformed into *ethnic tribune parties*,<sup>42</sup> that is, “parties that combine robust ‘ethnic identity mobilization’ with increased pragmatism over political resource allocations” (Mitchell *et al.*, 2009: 397). Ethnic tribune appeals convey that they are the most competent and effective in protecting the interests of the community, but at the same time they also “seek to maximise the group’s share of resources extractable from participation in the power-sharing institutions” (Mitchell *et al.*, 2009: 403), so they will act in a more cooperative fashion in order to avoid the breakdown of the power-sharing framework. In the formulation of Bochsler and Szöcsik (2013b: 763), ethnic tribune parties “[adopt] two faces, a responsible face towards the mainstream society, and a radical face for electoral purposes towards the kin group.”

### **The success of outbidding**

So far I have shown that within ethnic groups new parties do not always emerge on a more radical platform and that even if outbidding is successful, that does not necessarily endanger democracy. Now I turn to the third, and from the perspective of this thesis, most important proposition of the outbidding model, which posits that if the ethnic issue is salient, more radical challengers will be more successful than the moderates.

On one hand, this is an empirical question, and as such, it will be analyzed in the case about the three Hungarian minorities in Chapters 5-7. On the other hand, the really important theoretical question is *how* this outcome can be avoided. Responses to this question are provided in the literature on ethnic conflict management through appropriately designed institutions. However, in the cases studied in this thesis outbidding parties are not really successful despite the lack of institutionalized power-sharing practices. After discussing the

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<sup>42</sup> The ethnic tribune parties described by Mitchell *et al.* must not be confused with de Winter’s (1998: 230) description of ethno-regionalist parties adopting a *tribune strategy* (discussed in a later section), which entails acceptance of the rules of the game (no anti-system attitude), but refusal to join governments. A party adopting such a strategy may aim for the role of the “strongest voice”, but for de Winter the emphasis is not on this, but on the refusal to join governments. Also note that refusal to join a government is at odds with the maximization of extractable state resources for the ethnic group.

main tenets of the power-sharing literature and the role of intra-ethnic divisions in power-sharing, I will propose an argument for why this is the case.

### **Power-sharing and intra-ethnic dynamics**

Most students of ethnic conflict resolution subscribe to one of the two broad approaches of institutional engineering, usually labeled as the *integrative* and the *consociational* schools of power-sharing (for assessments, see Sisk, 1996; Bogaards, 2000; Reynolds, 2000; Reilly, 2002; Roeder & Rothchild, 2005; McGarry *et al.*, 2008; Wolff, 2009). The main difference between the two schools is that the former proposes to deinstitutionalize the ethnic cleavage and thus increase the interactions between the groups, while the latter aims to institutionalize it, to reduce contacts to the minimum and allow the groups to live their own parallel lives, as pillars of society, confining interactions to the elite level.

Consociationalists propose institutional guarantees for each ethnic group by prescribing grand coalitions comprising the parties standing for each segment, proportionality in the electoral system and in the allocation of public sector positions and public funds, as well as a veto and autonomy for each segment in matters of central importance for them. The formation of *ethnic* parties for each segment is facilitated by proportional representation (PR) electoral systems (Lijphart, 1969, 1977). The main protagonist of the integrative approach, Donald Horowitz (1991, 2002a, 2003) criticized consociationalism by arguing that such institutional arrangements only reinforce societal divisions by isolating the segments from each-other and thus perpetuate ethnic conflict instead of solving it. Instead, integrationists aim to channel competition along non-ethnic lines by encouraging the formation of *multi-ethnic* parties. This implies that cleavages cross-cutting the ethnic one should be made more salient, in order to dampen the ethnic fault-line, and that such institutions should be adopted which would compel the elites of the rival groups to moderation and cross-community appeals. The core element of integrationist designs is an electoral system that facilitates vote

transfers across the groups and conditions victory on support from more than one group (primarily the Alternative Vote in ethnically mixed districts).

Intermediate or mixed models have also been proposed. The most frequently recommended modification to the original consociational model replaces closed-list PR by the Single Transferrable Vote (STV), which also contains vote-pooling mechanisms (Reilly, 2002; McGarry & O'Leary, 2006). More interesting from our perspective is the proposal of Reynolds (2000), who, besides STV, has also advocated relaxing the requirements of mutual vetoes and segmental autonomy (the latter being replaced by a strong individualistic bill of rights to guarantee minority cultural rights), the only element maintained from the consociational solution being the requirement of grand coalitions. Reynolds recommends this alternative model, labeled “integrative consensus system”, for cases where society is conflictual, but politics are not necessarily determined by the ethnic cleavage, other cleavages (class, wealth, region, clan etc.) being salient too, arguing that such a solution encourages cross-cutting cleavages while ensuring the fair representation of minorities in decision making.

One can see that all the solutions for preventing extremist outbidding agree on what could be called the “moderation through inclusion” argument: that assuming governmental office is conducive to moderation. It is the cornerstone of consociationalist democracy that participation in power urges for moderation and pragmatism, but integrationists like Horowitz or Reilly also argue that only the thirst for power can compel elites to become more moderate.

The mechanism underlying the moderation through inclusion argument at the elite level is rather clear, so the fact that participating in government alters the balance of power within a single party in favor of the moderates (Bochsler & Szócsik, 2013b) needs no further clarification. What is less obvious is why electoral support will also be tilted towards the

moderates, especially if the masses are as intransigent as they are pictured by the theories. However, none of the rival models of conflict resolution through institutional engineering discusses intra-ethnic political dynamics in detail.

From our perspective (intra-ethnic political competition and cooperation) the theory of consociationalist democracy is the most relevant from these alternative models, as it treats the ethnic groups as well-delimited entities, as political sub-communities. The classic formulation of consociationalism (Lijphart, 1969, 1977) shares with the outbidding thesis the assumptions that masses are intransigent and the distribution of popular preferences is bimodal, with strongly opposed preferences in the rival groups and the peaks at the two extremes of the axis. But the two theories differ diametrically regarding the behavior of the elites. While in the outbidding model the parties will take positions that reflect this distribution or even push the masses further to the extremes in an instrumentalist fashion, consociationalists believe that wise elites are capable of moderation and compromise, while also successfully keeping the (intransigent) masses deferential.

Unfortunately, Lijphart was little concerned with the dynamics going on within the segments. Moderation is assumed to be brought about by self-fulfilling prophecies (refusal to cooperate will lead to the breakdown of the system), the virtue of statesmanship, or, at best, by favorable conditions such as the small size of the country, lack of economic inequalities between the groups, external threats etc. The “internal political cohesion of the subcultures” is also mentioned among the factors that are favorable for the success of consociational democracy (Lijphart, 1969: 221), but this is all to be found about the internal life of the segments. Moreover, this favorable condition disappears from later works of Lijphart, which suggests that the internal cohesion of the blocs is simply taken for granted (Bogaards, 1998: 478).

An interesting way to overcome this shortcoming has been proposed by Tsebelis (1990, Chapter 6), who reinterprets consociationalism using the framework of *multiple-level games* (Putnam, 1988), which he re-labels *nested games*. While in the works of Lijphart and most of his followers the emphasis is mostly on the interaction of the elites and their willingness to compromise, Tsebelis argues that the elites of the segments are engaged simultaneously in games in two different arenas: in the parliamentary (and governmental) arena and in the electoral arena. The payoffs for the elites in the nested game are a combination of the payoffs in the two arenas. The parliamentary game is nested in the electoral game, that is, what happens inside the segment has a more serious impact on how the elites behave in bargaining than the other way round.<sup>43</sup>

Despite retaining the assumption that elites are more open to compromise than the masses, Tsebelis shows that compromise is not the best strategy under all circumstances for the elites; instead, the attractiveness of strategies depends on the actions of the other elites. Furthermore, the payoff structure of the elites and of the followers is not the same. Though the most preferred strategy of both elites and followers is to be intransigent when the other segment yields, for elites the second best is mutual compromise and yielding when the opponent is intransigent is preferred to mutual intransigence. Conversely, yielding when the opponents are intransigent is the worst possible strategy for the masses, while their remaining two options can be ordered either way.

This discrepancy between the preference orderings becomes a problem for the elites because they cannot completely disregard their followers. If the incumbent elites are unable or unwilling to match the preferences of the masses, competitive elites may emerge inside the segment, which will promise to act according to the preferences of the masses (Tsebelis, 1990 162-167). The weight of the electoral arena in the calculations of the elites is influenced by

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<sup>43</sup> Technically, both nested games and multiple-level games are games with variable payoffs. The payoffs of the game in the principal arena vary as a function of events in one or more other arenas, and the actors try to maximize their utility by taking into account all these variable payoffs.

the amount of information available to the masses and the probability of being challenged (monopoly of representation). If there is no challenger, the incumbents can propose almost any alternative, because followers will have no choice but to accept it, as voting for elites of rival segments is not an option. However, if there are two competing elites, they will have to converge towards the median voter of the segment in a Downsian manner.

The availability of new elites depends on issue salience, costs for entering the game (institutional thresholds) and resources (party organization, endorsement by societal organizations e.g. the church, control over the media, over financial resources received from the host-or the kin-state, connections with economic groups etc.). Tsebelis considers that incumbent elites will always have an advantage over the newcomers, as they can easily reposition themselves or discourage entry by various means. However, new entrants do not always aim to take over power completely, they might only want to act as a blackmail group, and in this case they can only be deterred by institutional constraints (Tsebelis, 1990 167-172). As a matter of fact, Tsebelis (1990, Chapter 4) also describes another type of nested game (in a context that has nothing to do with ethnicity), in which one arena is used to change the rules for the other arena. Applied to our context, this means that incumbent minority elites may use their bargaining power (including the threat of the radicals) in the governmental or parliamentary arena not only to extract more policy or resource concessions, but also to create more difficult institutional conditions in the electoral arena for their intra-ethnic challengers.

The core of the arguments of Tsebelis is that minority leaders face the following dilemma: if they demonstrate commitment to a less compromising position, that may rally support from the constituents, but at the same time it decreases the chance of agreements with the elites of the other groups. On the other hand, compromising too easily in the inter-ethnic bargaining game has a negative impact on the acceptance of the deals within their own

constituency, and opens up the floor for challenges from more radical rival elites. How they solve the dilemma has important consequences on both their appeal strategies and their willingness to engage in intra-ethnic cooperation.

### **An alternative argument for moderation**

As I have mentioned earlier, the main problem with the “moderation through inclusion” arguments is that while they explain easily the pragmatic behavior of the elites, they do not address why the electorate within the segment will follow them. In the following paragraph I will sketch an argument about why the more moderate position prevails over the more radical one at the electoral level, which builds both on the theory of alternative linkage types discussed in Chapter 2 and on the nature of ethnopolitical inclusion models prevalent in the Central and Eastern European region.

I have argued in the previous chapter that the nature of intra-ethnic competition can only be understood properly if one takes into consideration the capacity of the parties to maintain both programmatic and clientelistic linkages with the minority electorate. Here I develop this line of thought further. I claim that the key of the moderate parties’ immunity against outbidding challengers is their ability to secure constant and safe access to public resources, which will be extremely difficult for the radicals to counterbalance.

From the theoretical models discussed above, the one which attributes similar significance to both types of linkages is the ethnic tribune parties model. Its essence is that even radical parties become more pragmatic in order to have access to public resources, but simultaneously they maintain their image of the most credible representatives or defenders of the ethnic cause by conveying radical messages towards their constituency. Their success is explained by a combination of valence judgments about which party is perceived to be best able to deliver the community’s interests, and compensational voting: voters do not want too

watered down policy outcomes, so they vote for a more hardliner alternative, to make sure that after bargaining the outcome will still be acceptable for them (Kedar, 2005).

Before I outline the argument in more detail, a brief discussion of the spatial and valence type of competition is necessary (Stokes, 1963; see also Budge and Farlie, 1983). While positional issues can be represented as an ordered set of alternatives and enable the spatial representation of the positions of parties and voters, valence issues involve some condition that cannot be ordered on a continuum, as it is regarded as good or bad by the electorate in general, but which is linked to the parties in different ways.<sup>44</sup> Some parties are perceived as more credible to deliver in certain policy fields, they come to be regarded as “owning” the issue. In order to have valence competition it is not necessary to have complete agreement, it suffices that the parties and the electorate have considerably converged in this respect, meaning that the policy space is rather narrow (Green, 2007).

However, some authors firmly contest the distinction, claiming that with appropriate reframing any valence issue can be turned into a positional one, and the other way round. Though everyone would agree that it is desirable to have more (or less) from a particular good, as soon as securing that good will require trade-offs, the issue turns into a positional one. While policy objectives may be of the valence type, politics is also about the means to obtain those goals, and this brings us back to positional competition, as the means can easily be ordered spatially (Kitschelt *et al.*, 1999: 137-138; Kitschelt, 2007: 528-529).

The outbidding theory is a spatial type of party competition theory, moreover, it is a directional type of spatial theory rather than a proximity type (Rabinowitz & MacDonald, 1989), as members of the ethnic groups will not vote across the ethnic divide. What happens in the outbidding model is exactly the opposite of the Downsian (1957) convergence towards

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<sup>44</sup>Stokes’ classic example for valence issues is corruption. No party would campaign for more corruption, and all voters would agree that corruption must be fought. However, some parties may be associated more with corruption than others and some parties may claim more credibly that they will fight corruption. Conversely, the classic example for positional issues is government intervention into the economy: some parties and voters will advocate more intervention, others a minimal state (Stokes, 1963: 372-373)

the median voter: such a convergence is impossible in an ethnically divided society, because the distribution of voter preferences is not uni-, but bimodal (see Fearon, 1999; Coakley, 2008). The critics of the outbidding thesis have derived the alternative strategies precisely by calling into question the characteristics of the voter distribution, but underbidding and lateral bidding strategies can also be interpreted only in a spatial framework. In this sense, the lower support of radicals could be explained by the fact that the median voter rejects more radical solutions. Certainly, there is something to this explanation also in the case of the Hungarian minorities, and I will revisit this question in Chapter 9. However, outbidding is not always more successful in minority-dominated areas either, which suggests that the spatial distribution of voter preferences cannot explain everything.

As opposed to the outbidding model, the ethnic tribune parties argument is derived from the valence issue model: voters support the radicals because they are perceived as the most competent and trustworthy representatives of the community. However, this perception is still equated with a more radical tone, just like in the outbidding thesis. Conversely, I argue that credibility is not necessarily the same as the strength of the demands: sometimes less radical programmatic claims may be more credible, especially if the more radical stance (even if not extremely radical) seems unrealistic to accomplish. The ability to deliver any type of goods, be they of policy or particularistic nature, can be framed for the electorate as evidence of competence, the moderation of demands as responsible behavior. This can serve as a source of legitimacy for the party, which will be effective especially if the closest opponents of the party (its intra-ethnic rivals) are unable to do the same, and the more radical demands of the latter can be framed as irresponsible and unrealistic.

The detailed argument has three important elements<sup>45</sup>:

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<sup>45</sup> Elements of this argument has been put forward in Kiss, Barna and Székely (2013a) and Kiss and Székely (2014).

(1) First, in the absence of institutional guarantees for participation in power, combining more radical ethnopolitical demands with the ability to deliver state resources in a credible fashion is hardly possible for a minority party.<sup>46</sup> The case of the ethnic tribune parties of Northern Ireland is rather special, given that their participation in government is an accomplished fact, as the specific power-sharing institutional design strongly encourages the inclusion of all parties into power, not only of the moderates.<sup>47</sup> However, if governmental participation is not institutionally mandated, entering power will require toning down ethnic demands to a significantly higher extent. In both Romania and Slovakia one of the conditions for ethnic parties to be accepted as coalition parties was to abandon or at least shelve some of their central demands, most importantly autonomy (Bárdi, 2000; Csörgő, 2002, 2007).

(2) Second, extracting resources from the state should be easier than obtaining significant structural ethnopolitical concessions related to the ideal of self-government, to the restructuring of the state. As a consequence of the violent conflicts of the early 1990s and the EU conditionality process, the outright exclusion of minorities is no longer an acceptable strategy in Central and Eastern Europe. States had to implement anti-discrimination policies, had to accept the participation of minorities in national power and their access to state resources; however, they proved less ready to go further and provide ethnopolitical concessions involving a more significant restructuring of the state. This can be attributed partly to an unintended consequence of the EU accession process: as nation-states had to relinquish their sovereignty to the EU in a significant number of policy domains, they became even less flexible in matters in which the EU has no or only limited say, and the field of minority protection is precisely such a domain. Furthermore, the fact that European

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<sup>46</sup> Maintaining a dual discourse as assumed by the ethnic tribune parties model is still feasible, as argued in the two papers referenced in the previous footnote. However, here I have in mind the demands put forward vis-à-vis the majority elites.

<sup>47</sup> An important difference between the failed 1973 Sunningdale Agreement and the successful 1998 Good Friday Agreement was that the former only envisaged the inclusion of the moderate parties into power on both sides, while the latter also the incorporation of the radicals (Horowitz, 2002b).

monitoring institutions were generally positive about the situation of minority rights before EU accession, further eroded the space for political claim-making for the minorities (Sasse, 2008: 855).

The literature also points out that post-socialist states are generally prone to patronage politics (Kopecky & Scherlis, 2008; O'Dwyer, 2004). As a consequence of all these, it is easier for minority elites to access state resources and develop clientelistic networks than to base their strategy of mobilization exclusively on programmatic goals related to nationalism (ethnocultural or ethnopolitical policy concessions). Moderates may even compensate lower levels of policy output through channeling direct benefits to the constituency in the forms of patronage or pork barrel directed towards the territories inhabited by the minority electorate.

(3) Third and finally, if moderates are successful in securing state resources, their more radical intra-ethnic challengers will experience considerable difficulty to counterbalance this. If they do not obtain a share of power, the options remaining for them are to rely on patronage networks and resources channeled from the kin-state (if available), or to push for more radical programmatic goals. Due to this advantage, the less radical parties will become the more credible ones through conveying a responsible and realistic stance based on their ability to deliver state resources.<sup>48</sup> Conversely, the radicals' push for more radical ethnopolitical goals may be depicted as irresponsible populism, a combination of loud rhetoric and low chances of delivering anything, and even entailing the danger of deteriorating inter-ethnic relations.

The strategy of the more moderate elites is in line with the observation of Gunther and Diamond that ethnic parties are not necessarily interested in transforming the state power structure, (devolution, autonomy or even secession), but rather in maintaining existing state

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<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the argument about the ability to secure state resources is valid not only during periods when the moderates participate in power and control ministries, as if anyone is likely to retain any influence over distributional issues even when not in government (e.g. within the institutions that allocate funds for financing minority culture etc.), those will be the moderates.

structures, which can be exploited to extract resources. However, as opposed to Gunther and Diamond, I believe that programmatic goals cannot be excluded either. Claiming that moderates rely exclusively on patronage and their radical challengers exclusively on programmatic (or perhaps charismatic appeals) would be unrealistic; yet, the point is that more radical minority elites who are excluded from power clearly start with a disadvantage in what concerns patronage, and this has serious consequences on the relative balance of power within the minorities.

### **Consequences on intra-ethnic cooperation**

The increased weight of public resources for some minority parties has important consequences for the incidence of intra-ethnic political cooperation too. Tsebelis (1990: 166) writes that different players involved in the nested game need not weight the inter-ethnic and the intra-ethnic arenas in the same way, but in his model it is the electoral arena that matters more. I argue that for some minority party leaders (the more moderate ones), the parliamentary or more precisely the governmental arena at the center may become the primary one. This is where they can strike bargains with the mainstream parties, concerning not only policy but also office spoils and state resources. Moreover, incumbent minority elites may use their bargaining power in the parliamentary arena even to create more difficult institutional conditions in the electoral arena for their intra-ethnic challengers. How they will behave in the electoral arena (whether they will be interested in cooperating with other parties that also claim to represent the same group) will depend on the consequence of this on their prospects of entering government.

This strategic choice can be interpreted in the framework of Strøm (1990) about the trade-offs between votes, office and policy. Minority elites interested in joining power will push for more radical policy goals only inasmuch as they have to in order to maintain sufficient electoral support, but they will not necessarily aim for vote and seat maximization,

which would increase the weight of the segment and provide better chances for the restructuring of the state. Contrarily to the predictions of the electoral strategic coordination literature (Cox, 1997; Golder, 2006), ethnicity will not facilitate joint electoral action, as a vote and seat maximization strategy which requires forming electoral alliances with more radical minority parties would reduce the expectations of moderates concerning office spoils. Majority parties will refuse to invite minority elites perceived as extremist into power, and more radical minority elites may be reluctant to make the same compromises as their moderate counterparts. Thus, the more intransigent minority elites would become ballast for the more compromising ones in what concerns the chances of the latter to enter governments.

The idea that ethnic parties are especially prone to pork barrel or patronage politics is one of the central tenets of the ethnic politics literature. The mechanism behind this is that when divisible resources are at stake, there is a strong incentive to limit the size of the winning coalitions to minimum. While all parties aim for this, ethnicity is regarded as especially appropriate to reach this goal because it is a feature that is difficult for individuals to change (Fearon, 1999; Chandra, 2004; Posner, 2005; Laitin & Van Der Veen, 2012). According to these accounts, the reluctance of the more moderate elites to ally themselves with their more radical intra-ethnic rivals could also be interpreted as a simple reduction of the winning coalition. These arguments are powerful, and I do not wish to challenge them. However, the argument presented above claims more than this. The unwillingness of the moderates to cooperate with their more radical rivals is not motivated simply by the desire to divide the extractable goods between fewer members of the coalition. It is also driven by the fact that access to these resources is putatively easier if they are not taking along the radicals.

### **A mixed model of minority incorporation**

Consociational democracy is often criticized for being too rigid and susceptible to deadlocks. Instead, institutional designs that do not prescribe rigid safeguards (such as grand coalitions,

veto or autonomy) are sometimes acclaimed as being able to ensure minority participation while being significantly more flexible. The previously discussed *integrative consensus systems* (Reynolds, 2000) is one example for these proposals. However, in the absence of institutional safeguards for the minorities, participation in power remains extremely fragile and depends on ad-hoc elite deals. As a consequence, when the minority party is ousted from power, the consequences may be serious also in what concerns the access of minority members to the public sector or public funds, or because of the possible setbacks in the minority rights regime.<sup>49</sup> However, a less evident drawback is that such informal solutions of minority inclusion may lead to a mixed model of minority incorporation, which can also be interpreted as some softer form of elite cooptation.

Elite cooptation is a core feature of less celebrated models of ethno-political conflict management, such as the solutions labeled *control* (Lustick, 1979), *hegemonic control* (O'Leary & McGarry, 1994), *hegemonic exchanges* (Rothchild, 1997), or *ethnic democracy* (Smooha, 1990, 1997; see also Ganim *et al.*, 1998). These ideal types are approximated in reality primarily in (semi-)authoritarian regimes; however, some of their elements may be encountered in liberal democracies too.

According to Lustick (1979), control is an alternative to power-sharing for ensuring stability in deeply divided societies, which may involve different mixes of coercive and non-coercive techniques. While power-sharing is about mutual cooperation, under control the strongest segment of society enforces stability by constraining the political actions and opportunities of the other segments, heavily relying on the state, which does not behave as a neutral umpire but as the legal and administrative instrument of the dominant group. The room for bargaining under control is much more restricted, as the interests of the segments are not symmetrical (as opposed to the symmetrical interest of maintaining system stability

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<sup>49</sup>A minority rights regime refers to the totality of policies in a specific country that “accommodate diversity and grant members of minorities certain rights” (Rechel, 2009a).

under power-sharing): the superordinate group is concerned with finding cost-effective techniques for manipulating the subordinate group, while the latter with coping in a satisfactory manner with the consequences of subordination. According to O'Leary and McGarry (1994), (hegemonic) control is achieved through a mix of coercive domination and elite cooptation. Extreme forms of control or ethnic domination were characteristic in slave systems or colonial regimes, but softer forms are also possible in formally liberal democratic states. Basically anywhere where the communities do not agree on the basic institutions and policies of the regime, majority rule can become an instrument of hegemonic control.<sup>50</sup> Rothchild (1997) writes that hegemonic exchanges between an autonomous central-state actor and the considerably less autonomous ethnoregional interest groups imply the inclusion of powerful ethnic notables into the central government in order to prevent their defection. The holders of central power provide some degree of status, autonomy, power or economic resources to minority leaders in exchange for their support and compliance with the state's regulation.

The idea of control through cooptation or hegemonic exchanges has been applied in the post-communist Central-Eastern European setting too, in the case of Estonia (Pettai & Hallik, 2002) or Romania (Medianu, 2002). As these authors also emphasize, in this region control or hegemonic exchanges are not a core and a stable feature of the system (as opposed to some post-colonial states), the *level* of control may vary considerably. Nevertheless, employing some elements of control provides a less costly way for majority elites to accommodate minority claims than institutionalizing power-sharing, as they do not require redefining the nation-state (Medianu, 2002). Conversely, under the asymmetric conditions which prevail in the studied countries, sketched in Chapter 2, minority elites will have to

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<sup>50</sup> Apartheid South Africa was an extreme form for hegemonic control in a formally democratic state. Further, less extreme examples provided by O'Leary and McGarry are Northern Ireland in the 1970s and the treatment of the aboriginals in Canada. Lustick applies his model of control for Israel, which is also the prototype of ethnic democracy according to Smooha.

accept that what they agree to can be interpreted as a softer version of cooptation, which may provide relatively easy access to state resources, but considerably more limited opportunities to further ethnopolitical claims rooted in minority nationalism.

Although the avoidance of successful outbidding is certainly reassuring for those who worry for democracy, one should also keep in mind the drawbacks of such mixed models of minority incorporation. While increased willingness for moderation by the minority elites may be beneficial to stability, and access to state resources is undoubtedly a very important realization for minorities, it does not necessarily lead to an improvement of the quality of the minority rights regime and does not bring closer to self-government, while also reducing the overall democratic record of the system. Conversely, in line with the ideas of authors like Van Houten or Mitchell and his colleagues, intra-ethnic pluralism need not be regarded as unequivocally detrimental even if the division is related strictly to the ethnopolitical dimension and not to some cross-cutting cleavage, especially if the radicals too stop short of pursuing genuinely extremist goals (e.g. secession) or strategies (violence, subversive activity).

At the end of this section I would like to highlight that the propositions put forward here about the interest of more moderate minority elites to have constant access to power can also be read as an alternative, or rather as a complementary explanation to those widely encountered arguments which claim that inter-ethnic coalitions are motivated by the increased salience of another (usually the economic) cleavage relative to the ethnic one (Jenne, 2007), or that more Western-oriented majority elites include the minority parties into government in order to bring about democratic change (Csergő, 2007; Skovgaard, 2009, 2011). This is not to say that I regard the arguments anchored in EU conditionality as unimportant; to the contrary, the process of Euro-Atlantic integration has certainly contributed to the amelioration of the situation of minorities, not only in the three countries

that I study, but in the whole CEE region (Kelley, 2004; Rechel, 2009b). Nevertheless, I believe that it is important to shed light on a different side of the phenomenon of minority incorporation too, and on its consequences on intra-group democracy.

## **Chapter 4. Classifying the parties of the Hungarian minority - the analytical framework**

This chapter prepares the ground for the three chapters that follow, in which I will trace the development of the Hungarian minority party scene in Romania, Slovakia and Vojvodina, and provide an analysis of political divisions and competition at the elite level, that is, the supply side of the electoral market. The previously discussed models of ethnic party competition operate with a simple dichotomy: moderates and radicals. While this simplification is necessary in order to ensure the parsimony of theory, a fine-grained analysis of intra-ethnic political dynamics requires a more sophisticated conceptualization of the differences between the parties. The role of the present chapter is to elaborate the analytical framework employed for the comparisons of the parties in the case studies that follow.

Describing the position of the Hungarian minority parties in terms of the economic left-right is largely irrelevant, intra-ethnic competition has little to do with these issues. The lack of explanatory power of the classical socio-economic left-right does not mean, however, that no single axis of competition can be identified. I argue that the pattern of competition can be best understood by paying attention to several aspects related mostly to the agenda of minority rights and identity politics, namely: (1) the ethnopolitical goals of the parties, with special emphasis on their conceptions about the desired social and political organization of the community (this implies, but cannot be reduced cannot be reduced to their stance towards full integration into the host-state as opposed to autonomy); (2) their strategies in the politics of the host-state, referring to their attitudes towards the mainstream political parties, and concerning participation in power; and (3) their relationship with the political parties and the government of Hungary. Finally, as I have previously mentioned, the analysis also takes into account a fourth aspect on which the parties differ: (4) the different types of party-voter linkages, most importantly the relative weight of the programmatic and clientelistic linkage mechanisms.

The chapter consists of four sections, each of which discusses how these four aspects will be evaluated in the case studies. The third section, dedicated to Hungary's policies towards its ethnic kin beyond the borders (*nemzetpolitika*), is somewhat different from the more methodologically grounded other three sections. However, the information presented here is indispensable for the understanding of the party relationship spanning across the borders.

### **Programmatic goals**

The programmatic appeals of political parties are usually grasped in research through expert surveys or quantitative content analysis (most importantly the *Comparative Manifestos Project* - CMP). Both approaches assign scores to the parties along various dimensions prescribed by pre-defined coding schemes. However, even the (to my knowledge) only expert survey up to date focused specifically on ethnic parties (the *Ethnonationalism and Party Competition* (EPAC) expert survey of Szócsik and Zuber (2012b)) only covers the more successful parties of the minorities I study, and only at a single point in time (2011).<sup>51</sup> In what concerns the CMP, the original coding scheme touched upon the issue of ethnicity only very superficially. Though more specific coding schemes for ethnicity-related appeals have been derived from the CMP lately (Protsyk & Garaz, 2011; Gadjanova, 2013), these not only suppose a cumbersome coding of party documents, but are also better suited for the comparison of *all* the parties from a particular party system along ethnicity-related issues (indeed, producing clear differences between the ethnic, multi-ethnic and non-ethnic parties in this sense) than for the comparison of the rival parties *within* a particular minority. While a fine-grained content analysis of the party manifestos might yield some differences in

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<sup>51</sup>Only those parties were included which either obtained representation in the national parliament or at least one seat and at least 3 percent of the vote in at least one region in the last elections. This means that in Romania RMDSZ and MPP were covered, but EMNP not, and in Serbia only VMSZ and VM DP were included. Obviously, parties that ceased to exist by 2011, like the predecessor parties of MKP in Slovakia, were not covered either.

emphasis, previous work comparing official party documents concluded that there are no major programmatic differences between the parties (Friedman, 2006; Bochsler, 2009).

As a consequence, instead of attempting to code the studied parties according to some quantitative scheme, I will resort to a more qualitative approach to assess the differences between the parties, relying on my reading of *party rhetoric* (as reflected in both official party documents and press materials), combined with the opinion of the experts from the countries whom I interviewed.<sup>52</sup>

### **Typologies of ethno-political goals**

A number of authors have elaborated typologies of ethno-political demands that nationalist movements, ethnic or ethno-regionalist parties may put forward in political competition in order to improve the situation of their constituency. As the thesis is about parties of national minorities, in this review I will not cover those goals which are characteristic of majority nationalist mobilization (e.g. hegemony). Naturally, in the case of no ethnic group is there complete consensus over the content of the demands to be pursued, rather, there will be a diverse range of factions with varying opinions. This is precisely why these typologies are appropriate to make sense of party competition within minority groups.

According to Keating (1996), at the most general level, ethnic politics can be *integrative* (when integration into the political community is sought), *particularistic* (when it targets special status within the political community) and *disintegrative* (if solutions outside the political community are looked for). Within these broad categories more concrete aspirations can be distinguished.

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<sup>52</sup>The idea of classifying parties based on their rhetoric is borrowed from Chandra (2009a). In her “Constructivist Dataset on Ethnicity and Institutions” she adopts a more qualitative approach than the CMP, relying not on manifestos, but on party *rhetoric*. The essence is that more subtle aspects of party rhetoric than their covert manifesto are also taken into consideration, like the coded or implicit ethnic signals or actual behavior. Unfortunately, her original analysis is deployed in order to establish whether a party is ethnic or not, and the precise methodology is not explained in detail. However, the main idea, namely that manifestos may not be the best grounds for comparison is very important.

Mikesell and Murphy (1991) consider that the most moderate goal of ethnic mobilization is the *recognition* of the group's distinct identity, without seeking proportional representation in the national government or access to the national patronage system and while rejecting separation or autonomy. The second level is to demand *access* and *participation* in the larger national society. This may be combined with more radical demands of *separation* or *autonomy*, although the former two goals imply "wanting in", while the latter rather "wanting out" of the larger society. Finally, the most radical goal is *independence*. The authors state that there is a profound break between the first three and the last three goals, as the latter also involve territoriality (though this is inconsistent with their definition of separation as exemption from societal norms or "community autonomism", which may mean also some sort of non-territorial autonomy).

A very similar typology is provided by Jenne (2007), who writes that minorities may seek *integrationist* and *segregationist* rights. The former refer to the opportunities of groups to integrate and obtain equal standing in a society dominated by a different ethnic majority, and can justify demands ranging from nondiscrimination, affirmative action to cultural or linguistic autonomy. The latter are linked to the idea that groups that have a distinctive national identity and legitimate grievances due to discrimination are entitled to the right to self-government, and can be used to justify demands ranging from territorial autonomy to secession or irredentism. Jenne also provides a more concrete scale of demands, ranging from affirmative action to irredentism/secession, through intermediate claims for cultural autonomy, regional autonomy and territorial autonomy/federalism.

The typology of De Winter (1998)<sup>53</sup> distinguishes between five types of party goals. *Protectionist* parties fight for the preservation and development of the group's cultural identity, within the framework of the existing state. *Autonomist* parties demand power-sharing

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<sup>53</sup> An earlier but very similar typology has been elaborated by Bugajski (1994).

between the central government and the region, in such a manner that their region be treated differently from other territorial entities of the state. The third type is the *federalist* party, which demands that power be devolved to all the regions of the country. While these three types do not challenge the existence and unity of the state, the remaining two do. *Independentist* parties aim to turn their region into a sovereign state, while *irredentists* not only aim to break away, but wish that their region be united with or annexed by another nation-state with a similar cultural identity (the kin-state). In a later effort, de Winter and his colleagues (Gómez-Reino Cachafeiro *et al.*, 2006) further refined the typology, adding the type of *devolutionist, regionalist or decentralist* parties (between that of autonomists and federalists) and that of *confederal* parties (between federalists and independists). While the goals of the confederal party are straightforward, the distinction between autonomists and devolutionists is not sufficiently clarified. Dandoy (2010) developed this typology even further, maintaining some categories in an unchanged form but dividing others into further subtypes. His classification contains eight types, grouped into three broader categories. The category of *protectionist* parties has been further divided into *conservative protectionists* (who aim to stop discriminative measures and intend to preserve cultural specificities vis-à-vis a culturally overwhelming state), and *pro-active or participationist protectionists* (which beside this also want to reach an improvement in the cultural situation, such as the recognition of the minority language as official, or positive quotas for minority members in civil service). The second, intermediary category is labeled *decentralist*, and contains the already familiar *autonomist* and *federalist* types,<sup>54</sup> as well as the more radical *confederalists*, who envision that the regions hold the sovereignty and decide which competences and tasks they delegate to the state. The most radical category is that of the *secessionists*. Its first subtype, that of the

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<sup>54</sup>Contrary to de Winter, Dandoy argues that federalist parties should not be regarded as more radical than the autonomists, as radicalism does not depend on the scope of the demanded change (which is, indeed broader than in the case of autonomists, as it affects the whole territory of the state), but also on the content of the autonomy claims in each policy domain.

*independentists* is already familiar, but the *irredentist* type is reinterpreted as aiming not for annexation *by* another state, but as favoring the annexation *to* the newly created sovereign state of other territories that belong to another nation-state.<sup>55</sup> The type labeled irredentist by de Winter is renamed *rattachist* by Dandoy.

A common feature of these typologies of ethnic mobilization demands – perhaps with the exception of Mikesell and Murphy, who mention access to the national patronage system – is that they consist of *programmatic* goals with heavy symbolic load, related to the ethnocultural or linguistic domain, to the standing of the groups as *societal cultures* (Kymlicka, 1995). Of course, improving the standing of a minority societal culture also implies increased access to resources, but the emphasis is on the symbolic ethnocultural and ethnopolitical achievements which can serve as the building blocks for the transformation of the state into a multi-national one. Conversely, there are also typologies which devote more attention to the possibility of ethnic mobilization for goals that are less connected to nationalism than to access to public resources.

Rudolph and Thompson (1989) and Rudolph (2006) distinguish four major types of mobilization objectives. The first type, *output* goals, refers to the ethnic community's access to the resources of the state, to the enhancement of the share they obtain. It covers demands for civil rights, funding for education, immigrant resettlement, but also areas that are not related to the cultural or linguistic domain, but simply to obtaining a share of state resources, like health care or assistance for economic development. The other three types of goals require at least some degree of power-sharing, and are essentially linked to nationalism, just like the demands of the more conventional typologies covered previously. *Authority* goals refer to advancing the status of the community inside the state (participation in government, demands for affirmative action). *Regime* goals involve reshaping the state's decision-making

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<sup>55</sup> The example for this is the Basque Country + Navarre.

structure to give a group greater say in the decision-making process (including vetoes, autonomy, decentralization, devolution, regionalization, federalization). Finally, *community* goals challenge the existence of the state system (the political community), are closely linked to the idea of self-determination, and their fulfillment involves the breakup of the state, whether peacefully or not.

The account of ethnic group grievances elaborated by Rothchild (1997), based on the experience of African states, expresses the difference even more sharply. Rothchild draws a distinction between non-negotiable and negotiable ethnic group “grievances”. The first imply conflict over structural or symbolic conditions, like group insecurity, inequality, recognition, status, cultural survival, identity, assimilation, the restructuring of power, border rectification or territorial separation. These are easier combined with ethnic fears and pose fundamental challenges to the organizational principles of states, consequently they are less amenable to bargaining and usually trigger aggressive responses.

Conversely, access to economic, political and social resources and opportunities, with special emphasis on the “less complex dimension of divergent economic interests” (Rothchild, 1997: 26) is more amenable to negotiation. These are mostly distributive (divisible) issues with tangible referents (e.g. goods, jobs, taxes, roads, schools), which are more open to political solutions (unless a profound sense of group deprivation prevails within one group as a consequence of long-term exclusion).

Table 4.1 summarizes the reviewed typologies. One can see that although the terminology may differ, the content of the demands is very similar in most typologies, even if some classifications may be more detailed and have more types than others. It is already familiar from the first chapter that not all types of minorities are able to pursue all types of demands, and that not all demands are relevant for all types. From the full range of ethnopolitical demands presented in Table 4.1 only those highlighted with grey are relevant in

the case of the parties of the Hungarian minorities, defining a rather narrow issue space for competition. These demands are located between the moderate end and the middle of the continuum, the most radical claims put forward being that of territorial autonomy (federalization appears only very sporadically). In other words, no disintegrative (Keating, 1996), community (Rudolph, 2006) or secessionist (de Winter, 1998; Dandoy 2010) goals have been voiced by the Hungarian minority parties (though occasionally some individual politicians might have formulated such ideas). While ethnic extremism exists, it is really marginal. In this, Hungarian minority parties conform to the observation of Ishiyama and Breuning (1998) that Eastern European substate nationalist minorities are generally less radical in their demands than their Western counterparts.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, the most moderate demands, like pure inclusion goals (e.g. non-discrimination, individual rights etc.) or conservative protectionism (Dandoy, 2010) are also not relevant for competition. These are not an issue because they are more or less guaranteed in the area, but also because all the parties agree that the minimum of rights that their community should enjoy extends significantly beyond such minimalist goals. However, as I claimed in the argument from Chapter 3, goals related to resource access are very important.

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<sup>56</sup> The analyzed Western cases are the Flemish regionalist parties Volksunie and Vlaams Blok in Belgium, the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru, while the Eastern ones the Hungarian parties in Slovakia, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms in Bulgaria and the Russophone parties of Estonia and Latvia.

**Table 4.1. Typologies of ethnopolitical demands – synthetic table**

author	Minimal demand										Maximal demand	
Keating (1996)	Integrative goals			Particularistic goals						Disintegrative goals		
Mikesell & Murphy (1991)	recognition	access	participation	separation	autonomy			independence				
Esman (1994)	Inclusion of <i>individuals</i> , access to institutions, no discrimination		Inclusion of <i>communities</i> , power-sharing, non-territorial federalism	Cultural autonomy	Territorial autonomy / federalism			Independence		Hegemony (also implies how the state will look like)		
Jenne (2007)	Integrationist rights				Segregationist rights							
	Affirmative action / non-discrimination			Cultural autonomy	Regional autonomy	Territorial autonomy / federalism		Irredentism / secession				
Bugajski (1993)	Cultural revivalist			Political autonomist (need not be territorial)	Territorial self-determinist: territorial reorganization up to federalization or confederalization			Separatist	irredentist			
De Winter (1998)	Do not challenge state unity						Challenge state unity					
	Protectionist			autonomist		federalist		independist	irredentist			
Gomez Reino et al (2006)	Cultural protectionist			Devolutionist, regionalist, decentralizing	(asymmetric) autonomist	National-federalist	confederal	Independist or sovereignist	Irredentist			
	protectionist			decentralist			secessionist					
Dandoy (2010)	conservative protectionist: (preservation, no discrimination)	Pro-active, participationist (improvement)		Autonomists		federalists	confederalist	independist	Irredentist (annex other territories to their newly created state)	Ratacchist (same as irredentist in the previous ones)		
Rudolph & Thompson (1989); Rudolph (2006)	Output goals (emphasis on resources)		Authority goals	Regime goals			Community goals					

As autonomy is a central concept in the political life of all three studied Hungarian minorities (most of their parties demand some sort of autonomy), a final brief note about this demand is necessary. Some accounts of ethnic claim-making reviewed above assume that the different autonomy types can be ordered on a scale, ranging from the mildest claims for decentralization through functional autonomy through cultural or personal autonomy through regional autonomy to territorial autonomy and federalism (e.g. Esman, 1994; Jenne, 2007, see Table 4.1). Indeed, territorial autonomy requires more reorganization of state power than arrangements based on the personality or functional principle, as autonomies organized on the personal principle are most often confined to competences in cultural or educational matters, while additional political competencies are only to be seen in territorial arrangements (Brunner & Küpper, 2002).

Notwithstanding this, I argue that an ordering of the parties based on whether they regard territorial or other types of autonomy as the main goal (e.g. personal or functional) would be misleading. The main reason is that the settlement structure of the minority groups may be such that even if the creation of a territorial autonomy were feasible, a significant part of the community would remain outside the borders of such a region. Moreover, other types of self-government may also display significant variation concerning the radicalism of the demand. For instance in the case of personal/cultural autonomy aspects like whether the autonomy's envisaged institutions should have a status under the public or private law, or the demand for direct elections based on special electoral rolls as opposed to other methods of composition (e.g. delegation, indirect elections) may constitute sufficient grounds for heated debated within the community.

### **Differences in strategy**

Beside the content of the ethnopolitical demands or goals, the means that the parties are willing to deploy in order to achieve these are also of utmost importance. In this sense the

typology of de Winter (1998) is especially useful, who observes that ethnoregionalist parties can pursue three types of strategies: *anti-system*, *tribune* or *governmental*.<sup>57</sup> An *anti-system* strategy implies a non-adherence to democratic rules and often also violence. While it is characteristic in regions like Northern Ireland or the Basque Country, and has also been employed in the Western Balkans (e.g. Bosnia, Macedonia or Kosovo), no party of the Hungarian minorities embraced such a strategy. A *tribune* strategy means a refusal to participate in government and a preference for exercising pressure from opposition, often by seeking support from international organizations or the kin-state. *Governmental* strategies obviously imply the implementation of policy goals by participating in the power coalitions and also provide the best access to public resources. While policy leverage may be higher, it also implies concessions and sometimes the complete shelving of certain demands or means of interest articulation.

The question emerges whether these strategies are mutually exclusive, or a party may combine them at the same time or within a narrow time-frame. The two endpoints are clearly incompatible with each-other, yet an alternation of government participation and issue-based parliamentary support for the government is a viable combination. Also, it is possible to combine an opposition strategy with occasional recourse to non-violent means of protest, which challenge the legitimacy of state institutions, without subverting them in an outright manner (e.g. illegal protests, unofficial referenda, civil disobedience etc.). Violence obviously cannot be combined with any other but an anti-system strategy. Of course, parties may move in time from one strategy to another, however, this usually requires longer periods of time.<sup>58</sup>

Argelaguet (2003) points out that anti-system-ness may be also a consequence of the other parties' efforts to render a party as such, for instance by continuously refusing to

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<sup>57</sup> Certainly, the use of these strategies is not limited to this party family, but due to the central importance of the issue of the reorganization of state power structure, the difference between these strategies becomes especially trenchant in their case.

<sup>58</sup> Perhaps the most spectacular shift is that of Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland, which over two decades transformed from an anti-system party to a governing party.

cooperate with them, as in the case of Vlaams Blok in Flanders, which has been marginalized not because of the use of violence, but because of the extreme-right elements on its agenda. This also points to the fact that the boundaries of these categories are not clear-cut, but depend on the strategies of the other parties too. In certain cases already an autonomist stance may lead to stigmatization as separatists or irredentists, and the nationalist parties of the majority will not hesitate to misuse these epithets in order to increase their support by instigating against minorities and displaying themselves as protectors of the majority nation. But also the minority parties may employ these labels to push their intra-ethnic rivals into the box of extremism.

The choice of strategy has very important consequences on intra-ethnic dynamics. According to Szócsik and Bochsler (2013), when only a single ethnic party exists in the case of a minority, moderates should be considered office-seekers and the radicals policy-seekers. The authors also emphasize that government participation is especially likely to intensify intra-ethnic conflicts, between the more moderate and more radical factions (or between office and policy-seekers). When in government, moderates (pragmatics) tend to have the advantage, however, when in opposition, radical voices become dominant. Moreover, inclusion into government alters the balance of moderates and radicals within the party in favor of the former, while going into opposition shifts the balance towards the more radical faction. The argument of the authors that moderates seek office and radicals seek policy can also be extended to instances when more than a single party exists.

The relationship between the ethnopolitical demands and the strategies or means deployable to obtain them also needs attention. This relationship could be characterized as one of partial correspondence or overlap. For instance, it is not very likely that a minority would resort to mass rioting or violence only to obtain only some affirmative action (at least not in Central Europe); if such more radical strategies are chosen then the objective sought

will be probably something more radical too. Similarly, secession is seldom sought only through participation in the national government. However, the goals located in the rather narrow policy space identified in the previous section are compatible in theory with both governmental and tribune strategies, even if in practice autonomy proved to be difficult to reconcile with participation in power.

Participation in power captures one side of the interlocked triadic nexus of nationalisms (Brubaker, 1996), the relation between the minority and the host state. For the purposes of my argument another side of the triadic nexus, namely the relationship of minority parties with actors from kin-state is equally important, as it may have a similar impact on party strategies as the attitudes towards host-state actors.

As I argued in Chapter 1, given the dual nature of the studied communities as national minorities and external diasporas, it also makes sense to conceive of a national minority as a community that is caught between two states (and two political communities) and to position the minority parties on a continuum on which one end-point is integration into the host-state and the other is orientation towards the kin-state. Since the mass naturalization of the members of the minorities also means increased political integration with Hungary, this duality has become even more evident. There are evident trade-offs between the two orientations: closer ties to actors from one polity or increased participation in one political community may require a departure from the other. More concretely, if a minority party chooses a governmental strategy, that may or may not be compatible with the actual goals of the kin-state's government. On the other hand, an anti-system or even a tribune strategy need not be backed by the kin-state's government either. Thus, I will assess the strategies of Hungarian minority parties by taking into consideration their valences towards the political communities of both the host-state and the kin-state, as well as towards actors from both

states. For this, a discussion of Hungary's policies towards its kin beyond the borders is necessary.

### **Relationship with kin-state actors**

While refraining from irredentism, Hungary's "virtual nationalism" was indeed one of the most systematically pursued kin-state policies in the CEE region (Csergő & Goldgeier, 2004, 2006), which entailed not only external lobby activity of varying intensity (Jenne, 2007), but also the provision of financial subsidies to the minorities. The extent to which lobbying for the ethnic kin beyond the border is considered a foreign policy priority of the kin-state, as well as the willingness of the kin-state to accept policy input from the minorities in this respect clearly have an impact on the viability of the alternative strategies available for the minority parties. But from the perspective of intra-minority political dynamics influencing the distribution of funding from the kin-state is at least equally important, as these resources can be used by the minority parties to maintain clientelistic exchanges, in a similar manner as host-state resources. Competing minority elites may differ in what concerns their access to resources from both countries; as a consequence, the relative magnitude of the resources extractable from the two states is a very relevant aspect from the perspective of intra-minority dynamics. The influence that the minority parties are able to exert on both of these aspects will vary according to their relationship with the Hungarian government and with the political parties from Hungary.

Hungary's constitution (as amended in 1989)<sup>59</sup> stipulated that "The Republic of Hungary bears a sense of responsibility for the fate of Hungarians living outside its borders and shall promote and foster their relations with Hungary." The new Fundamental Law adopted in 2011<sup>60</sup> expresses this responsibility even more strongly, also adding that Hungary

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<sup>59</sup> Available at [http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file\\_id=190398](http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=190398)

<sup>60</sup> Though this is not reflected in the English translations, the formulation has been changed from "*felelősséget érez*" (which can also be translated as feels responsibility) to "*felelősséget visel*" (bears responsibility).

shall support “the effective use of their individual and collective rights, the establishment of their community self-governments.”<sup>61</sup>

However, there is only a very thin consensus between the political parties about the interpretation of this constitutional undertaking. While no party in Hungary openly advocated territorial revisions after 1990 (perhaps with the exception of the extreme-right *Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja*), there have been considerable differences between the parties on the left and right in what concerns the policies towards the ethnic kin beyond the borders (*nemzetpolitika*).<sup>62</sup>

The issue of the ethnic kin beyond the borders is organically embedded into a much more fundamental debate in Hungary, namely the lack of consensus about national identity and national memory (the assessment of the interwar era, the communist period, the traumas of Trianon and the Holocaust). Due to the lacking consensus about what constitutes the Hungarian nation, the parties on the left and right are engaged not simply in electoral competition, but in building identity communities, and the Hungarian minorities occupy a central position in this discourse, especially on the right (Ablonczy & Bárdi, 2010). Moreover, the main dimension of party competition in Hungary is not the socio-economic left-right, but the socio-cultural left-right (Kitschelt et al. 1999; Enyedi 2007), and the issue of the Hungarians beyond the borders is almost perfectly mapped onto this main axis of competition.

On the right, the framework was set in the immediate aftermath of the regime change through the so-called “Antall-doctrine”. This was based on two main principles: (1) Hungary should make use of available international human rights and minority protection instruments

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Compare article 6(3) of the Constitution in effect between 1989 and 2011 and article D of the new Fundamental Law, in effect since 2012.

<sup>61</sup> Available at

<http://www.kormany.hu/download/a/1c/11000/The%20New%20Fundamental%20Law%20of%20Hungary.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> The totality of the policies directed towards the co-ethnics beyond Hungary’s borders is denoted by the terms *magyarságpolitika* (policies concerning Hungarians) or *nemzetpolitika*.

and push for their further development, and should obtain the status of protecting power for the Hungarian minorities, which would imply that the situation of the minorities cannot be considered the domestic affairs of the host-states;<sup>63</sup> (2) no decision should be taken which could affect the minorities without the consent of their representative organizations (Bakk, 2006). As a consequence, in the foreign policy of the Antall-cabinet the situation of the minorities was often treated as more important than good relations with the neighboring countries. The attitude of Hungary's first post-communist government was best illustrated by Antall's much cited and (mis)interpreted pledge to be, in spirit, the prime minister of 15 million Hungarians.

Conversely, on the left an increasingly anti-nationalist discourse was adopted, primarily as a reaction to the re-emergence of anti-Semitic voices on the right, but also because of security policy considerations related to the external minorities. The Socialist Gyula Horn spoke about only ten million Hungarians when he became prime minister in 1994, and the minority question was soon subordinated to Euro-Atlantic integration considerations, which required stabilizing Hungary's relations with its neighbors. The assessment of the left-wing parties among the Hungarians beyond the borders was seriously affected by the signing of the bilateral treaties with Slovakia (1995) and Romania (1996), as the Hungarian government did not take into consideration the dissatisfaction of the minority leaders with the treaties (the treaties did not guarantee collective rights and self-government for the minorities).

The treaties created a new opportunity for Viktor Orbán to reposition himself as the most credible protector of the minorities' interests in Hungary, by conveying towards the minority parties that Fidesz will be a partner after MSZP has let them down.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, Fidesz increased the budgetary allocations to the minorities in 1999 (Bárdi & Misovitz, 2010), and

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<sup>63</sup> The inspiration for this goal was the case of Austria and South Tyrol.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Nándor Bárdi.

passed the controversial Status Law in 2001, which created a direct legal link short of citizenship between Hungary and its ethnic kin in the neighboring countries, but also endowed the minority parties with an infrastructure set up and maintained from Hungary's state budget (on the Status Law see Csergő & Goldgeier, 2004; Ieda, 2006). The network of offices created to process applications for the Hungarian certificate and for the distribution of subsidies for children attending Hungarian-language schools could also be used for the domestic purposes of the minority parties.

Fidesz also created the Hungarian Standing Conference (MÁÉRT) in 1999, meant as a decision-making forum in the domain of the policies towards the Hungarian minorities, reuniting the Hungarian government, the parliamentary parties of Hungary and the representatives of the minorities (including both the national minorities of the Carpathian Basin and the "genuine" emigrant diaspora). The main role of MÁÉRT was to confer higher legitimacy to policies targeting the external minorities and to prepare the elaboration of the Status Law, however, in practice it was Fidesz who was setting the direction of policy.

After 2002 the MSZP-SZDSZ cabinet returned to the strategy pursued by the Horn-government, prioritizing foreign policy considerations over the minorities. However, the minority parties were appeased by obtaining increased control over the distribution of the allocations from Hungary's budget. Until 2002 (even during the first tenure of the socialists) the distribution of the funds was carried out primarily according to the preferences of the decision-makers from Budapest, with varying influence from the minority leaders. Compared to this, the lobby power of the Hungarian minority leaders increased considerably from 2002, basically the Hungarian government left the decisions to the leaders of the "legitimate" minority parties, that is, the strongest ones. This situation seemed favorable for both sides, as the decision makers in Budapest felt relieved of the responsibility of the decisions, while the

minority leaders were eager to affirm to their constituencies that the decisions are not taken in Budapest but by the beneficiaries themselves (Bárdi & Misovitz, 2010).<sup>65</sup>

In 2004 the World Federation of Hungarians succeeded to push through a referendum on dual citizenship. The referendum, held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, 2004, failed due to low turnout, and only a very narrow majority (51.57%) was supportive of the issue. Fidesz campaigned for dual citizenship, while MSZP and SZDSZ against, relying, among others, on welfare chauvinist arguments. This event created a crisis in the relationship of Hungary and its external minorities, the latter felt insulted and betrayed by the Hungarian left, most importantly in Vojvodina (and Transcarpathia), where the prospects of Euro-Atlantic integration seemed remote. The referendum reinforced Fidesz's ownership of the issue and completely undermined the credibility of MSZP and SZDSZ, which they were unable to regain despite increasing the budgetary spending for the minorities and relaxing the conditions for citizenship in 2005 (Bárdi & Misovitz, 2010). However, the main lesson learned from the referendum was that Hungary's parties relate to the minorities not with a focus on the real problems of these communities, but subordinate the issue to their interests related to domestic party competition. Fidesz itself was against dual citizenship earlier, preferring to grant only some privileges through the Status Law, while MSZP and SZDSZ regarded the referendum simply as an opportunity to defeat Fidesz, no matter what the question is about (Ablonczy & Bárdi, 2010; Waterbury, 2010).

The second Gyurcsány-cabinet further alienated the minority parties when it suspended the operation of MÁÉRT in 2006. Though as a compensation the speaker of the Hungarian Parliament initiated the formation of an alternative body, the Forum of Representatives of the Carpathian Basin (KMKF), the decision of the government clearly

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<sup>65</sup> Also, interview with Nándor Bárdi.

signaled that it did not wish to offer too much room for policy input from the minority parties.

After returning to power in 2010, it was one of the first tasks of Fidesz to pass a law about dual citizenship. Although the law was supported by the parties of the left too (with the exception of three Socialist MPs), Fidesz was once again reinforced as the party which cares for the Hungarian minorities. Until early 2014, almost 550,000 ethnic Hungarians applied for citizenship, their overwhelming majority from Romania and Serbia (NPKI, 2014). Slovakia passed a counter-law in 2010, which deprives of their Slovak citizenship those who obtain the citizenship of another state without residing there, and as a consequence the number of applications for Hungarian citizenship from Slovakia remained rather low. The new citizens also obtained the right to vote in the Hungarian parliamentary elections.

The main difference between the Hungarian left and right concerning the external ethnic kin is that the right-wing governments regarded the Hungarian minorities first and foremost parts of the Hungarian (cultural) nation, while the left as citizens of their host-states. The right sought their national reintegration without changing the borders, or with the transformation of the borders in a unified Europe, and as a consequence, was at least as interested in maintaining a system of Hungarian-Hungarian institutions as in pursuing good bilateral relations with the neighboring states. Conversely, the left-wing governments considered that in order to support the minorities, Hungary should invest more in negotiations with the neighboring governments than in coordination of minority strategies from Budapest. The fact that RMDSZ and the Hungarian parties in Slovakia were not allowed to participate in the negotiation of Hungary's bilateral treaties with Romania and Slovakia meant a reinforcement by the Hungarian government of the status of Romania's and Slovakia's Hungarians as internal minorities (Csergő, 2007; Ablonczy & Bárdi, 2010). The left-wing parties also encouraged the integration of the minorities into their host states through the

participation of their parties in the governments. This conception builds on the idea of the minorities' dual ties (culturally to the kin-state and politically to the host state, as citizens) and their role of a *bridge* between the kin- and the host-state, which can be traced back to the official doctrine of the MSZMP from the 1960s (Schöpflin, 2000; Bárdi, 2000, 2013).

However, one can also identify important differences within the two ideological camps, most importantly on the right, between MDF and Fidesz. The Antall-doctrine stated that the Hungarian government should treat all legitimate parties of the minority as partners and refrain from taking important policy decisions without their consent. This implied that the government allowed the minority parties a very important say in policy-making. Sometimes the cabinet unconditionally accepted the ethnopolitical conceptions elaborated by the minority parties and considered these as benchmarks in the negotiations with the neighboring countries (Kéri Nagy, 2004).

Conversely, in 1998 Fidesz did not return to this strategy of reacting to the grievances of the minority parties and supporting their policy plans. Instead, the cabinet of Viktor Orbán affirmed that the concept of a single Hungarian nation also entails that the nation has a single center, and important decision affecting Hungarians, regardless of their residence, must be taken by the Hungarian government. Although the creation of MÁÉRT was meant to convey the appearance of a partnership between equals, Fidesz aimed to transform Budapest into the single power center responsible for the policies that impact the Hungarian minorities, and the minority parties were expected to adapt to the new situation. The second Orbán government went even further, and the dual citizenship and enfranchisement of the minorities indicate that in the conception of Fidesz Budapest is no longer only the *cultural* center of the nation, but it should also be the first and foremost *political* and even *legal* center for all Hungarians. While the policies of the first Orbán cabinet (1998-2002) led to only minor confrontations with some (factions within the) minority parties, and Fidesz was also open to cooperate with

organizations that maintained a closer relationship with the center-left parties earlier (primarily VMSZ<sup>66</sup>), after the proclamation of the System of National Cooperation (*Nemzeti Együttműködés Rendszere*) in 2010 Fidesz engaged in a previously unseen aggressive policy towards the minority parties that were reluctant to embrace the course set in Budapest. While favoritism towards one or several organizations is not necessarily a new policy of Hungarian governments (and was sometimes characteristic also of the left), what is certainly a novelty is the unequivocal hostility towards the organizations that are not seen as compatible with the conception of Fidesz about the policies to be pursued with regard to the ethnic kin beyond the borders. Not surprisingly, the organizations that challenged the principle of Budapest as the sole political center are precisely the ones that are best integrated into their host-states' political community and had participated in the governments of their host-states for multiple cycles. The direction adopted by the second Fidesz government strongly points into the direction of treating the external minorities as diasporas, and this has clashed heavily with the course previously pursued by the strongest parties of the minorities, which expected from the kin-state primarily support in their ethnopolitical struggles, but not interference.

### **The relative weight of the different types of linkage mechanisms**

I have argued in Chapters 2 and 3 that political fragmentation and competition can only be understood by taking into consideration also other types of party-voter linkages beside programmatic goals. The characterization of the parties in this respect will be based on the framework of Kitschelt (2000, 2001) discussed in Chapter 2, with a special emphasis on the ability of the parties to maintain clientelistic exchanges.

Kitschelt distinguishes three types of linkages on which the responsiveness and accountability of political parties can be based: *programmatic*, *clientelistic* and *charismatic*. Although Kitschelt considers that the three types may be difficult to combine, it is legitimate

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<sup>66</sup> But not with the Ukrajnai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség (UMDSZ) of Transcarpathia.

to argue that every party displays a mix of all three ideal-typical linkage mechanisms. Every party, no matter how programmatic or charismatic, will maintain a certain degree of clientelistic linkages, and in a similar fashion, the personal qualities of the leaders will be important regardless of the degrees of programmatic crystallization and clientelism. Given that all minority parties are programmatic in the sense that they advocate ethnopolitical demands of varying intensity, as reflected in the typologies discussed in the first section of this chapter (minority rights, restructuring of the state), I will classify the parties according to *the relative importance of each type of linkage in their overall electoral success*, as compared to the other two components.

One particular problem with clientelism is the difficulty of measurement (see Kitschelt *et al.*, 2009; Muno, 2010; Volintiru, 2010). In this thesis I will attempt to characterize the clientelistic capacity of the parties based on an assessment of their access to various types of resources. Parties of national minorities can be considered special in this sense, as they may rely on multiple sources. First, through participation in the government of their host-state they gain access to the resources of ministries. Second, they can also control resources from regional or local government structures they control or participate in. While these types of resources are relevant for any type of party, in the case of minority parties there are two additional and more specific sources too. The third type refers to budgetary funds allocated by the host-states for the financing of minority culture, over the distribution of which various minority elites will have varying degrees of influence. Finally, national minority parties may also have some influence over the distribution of resources from the kin-state.

The clientelistic potential of the parties as discussed here covers three types of particularistic behavior, as described by Kopecky and Scherlis (2008): *patronage* (the distribution of public sector jobs or contracts among individuals close to the party), *pork-*

*barrel* or political pork (the direct channeling public of funds and state resources to a specific territory by the parties, in the form of infrastructural developments, e.g. roads, schools, sewage etc.), and *clientelism* (a direct exchange of material goods, e.g. food or presents for votes).<sup>67</sup> While the last type works best in the case of electorates living in extreme poverty and involves exploitation, and as such, it is less relevant in our cases, the ability of minority parties to influence financial flows from both the host- and the kin-state create the conditions for softer forms of clientelism. Patronage capacity depends primarily on access to host-state resources, but a limited number of jobs and contracts can also be distributed in domains pertaining to the maintenance of ties to the kin-state. Conversely, the pork barrel capacity of the minority parties is related only to access to power in the host state.

The financial aspects of minority party competition are a delicate and insufficiently transparent domain. As the financing of political parties or candidates by foreign interests is banned in all three countries,<sup>68</sup> the financing from the kin-state refers to such indirect forms of access as the support provided from Hungary to NGOs from the parties' halo, the ability of the parties to exert influence over the distribution of some funds through personal nexuses to kin-state decision-makers, or to the fact that they (or NGOs from their halo) perform various administrative tasks on behalf of the kin-state, (e.g. processing the applications for the Hungarian certificate under the Status Law or lately for dual citizenship, or the distribution of subsidies for the minority education system).

Providing a thorough analysis and precise figures about the finances of the minority parties, as well as about the subsidy systems of both Hungary and the host-states is beyond the purposes of this thesis. Due to the considerations detailed below, empirical data will only be used for illustrative purposes, as a tentative assessment of the capacity of the parties to

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<sup>67</sup> The fourth type of forms of particularistic political behavior described by Kopecky and Scherlis is *corruption*, which means the illegal appropriation of public goods to serve private ends. It is less relevant for the analytic perspective of this thesis, as corruption does not have a direct electoral finality (Volintiru, 2010).

<sup>68</sup> See IDEA Political Finance Database <http://www.idea.int/political-finance/>

maintain clientelistic networks and of the relative weight of the different sources (i.e. host-state vs. kin-state) in these activities.

The structure and magnitude of the financial aid provided by Hungary to its ethnic kin beyond the borders through official channels is relatively well-documented (see Bárdi (2004, 2007), Bárdi and Misovitz (2010) and Papp (2010)). However, there are good reasons to believe that additional resources flow through less official channels (e.g. donations by state-owned companies or transfers from special reserve funds), which are very difficult to track. Furthermore, given the complex (and changing) schemes of funding, it is also very difficult to establish to what extent the parties are able to use these funds for clientelistic purposes (or even whether some components of the funding scheme are appropriate to be used for such purposes), as influence varies not only across parties or time-periods, but also across the various decision-makers or advisory boards in charge for distributing these funds.

The resources extractable from the host-states are a more elusive and less transparent domain (Bárdi & Misovitz, 2010), though some accounts about the systems of financing the cultural activities of the minorities are available (for Romania see Mohacsek (2009), for Slovakia Tóth (2006); Nagy and Tóth (2006); for Serbia I am not aware of such studies). However, from the point of view of my argument, the most important resources are not these allocations for minority culture,<sup>69</sup> which amount to relatively low sums of money, but the fact that participation in the government of the host-states opens access to resources of a significantly higher magnitude. This is even more difficult to measure, and I will not even attempt to provide numbers for this aspect. The main justification for this is simply the fact that the magnitude of the subsidies provided for the ethnic kin by Hungary is simply too low:

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<sup>69</sup> I would like to emphasize for readers unfamiliar with the context that the funds allocated for minority culture by both Hungary and the host-states do not refer to the costs of maintaining public institutions of education or culture functioning in the minority language, as these are financed from the state budget just like the similar institutions of the majority, but to resources that can be redistributed in the domain of minority culture (e.g. to NGOs and other organizations and projects) through various types of grants or subsidies.

it has only amounted to 0.1-0.2% of the budget of Hungary; moreover, this refers to aid for *all* Hungarian communities beyond the borders, and a considerable part of this money is destined to the Hungarian education system, which is less appropriate for clientelistic exchanges. The allocations for minority culture in each of the host-states has been even lower than the estimated share of the finances from Hungary going to the respective minority communities.

In the next three chapters I will trace the development of the Hungarian minority party scenes of Romania, Serbia and Slovakia, according to the framework outlined here. I will also assess the logic of party splits and party emergence in the framework of party appeals (outbidding and its alternatives) discussed in Chapter 3. This analysis, performed on the basis of party rhetoric, documents, press materials and interviews conducted with party leaders and political analysts from the three countries will sketch the background of political divisions within the three communities at the level of the elites. After this, in Chapter 9 I will assess the political divisions at the level of the electorate (the demand side), making use of administrative and survey data; thus, these chapters together will also enable us to assess the quality of representation. Finally, in the last chapter I will use the characterization of the parties put forward in the three chapters that follow to analyze intra-ethnic electoral cooperation in the last chapter. The three case studies differ somewhat in their structure and length, which is primarily the consequence of the differences between the minorities and the environment in which they live (e.g. the administrative structure, the national party system, the institutional setting, but also other path-dependent factors and idiosyncrasies).

## Chapter 5. The Hungarian Parties of Romania

Hungarians in Romania are the largest minority of the country and the largest Hungarian community beyond the kin-state's borders (decreasing from 1.62 million in 1992 (7.1%) to 1.43 million (6.6%) in 2002 and 1.24 million in 2011 (6.5%).<sup>70</sup> About 99% of the Hungarians live in the Northwestern region of Transylvania, but also within this region their share in the population varies to a great extent: there is a compact Hungarian majority area in eastern Transylvania – the Szeklerland – consisting of the counties Harghita/Hargita, Covasna/Kovászna and the eastern part of Mureş-Maros county, and there are also Hungarian-majority areas along the border with Hungary.

The Romanian party system gradually shifted from a bipolar pattern to a tri-polar one in the mid-2000s. The first years of transition have been dominated by the Party of Social Democracy in Romania (PDSR) led by Ion Iliescu, which governed with the sometimes tacit and sometimes formal support of nationalist parties until 1996, when it was defeated by a broad umbrella coalition of center-right and center-left parties (the Romanian Democratic Convention and the Social-Democratic Union). In 2000 the reformed PDSR (later relabeled Social Democratic Party - PSD) came back to power, winning the elections in front of the ultra-nationalist Greater Romania Party (PRM), while the parties of former governing coalition collapsed. While in the 1990s the Romanian party system consisted of a post-communist leftist and a pro-market-economy and Western oriented center-right bloc (with the majority nationalists as a third, smaller camp), since the mid-2000s polarization, bloc stability and bloc relevance in the system all display decreasing trends. Presently, ideological/programmatic differences between the parties are rather minor and alliances between them change relatively often. (Enyedi & Casal Bértoa, 2010). The three major parties, the Social Democrats (PSD), the National Liberals (PNL) and the Democrat-Liberals

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<sup>70</sup> National Bureau of Statistics. [www.insse.ro](http://www.insse.ro)

(PDL) have governed in all possible combinations since 2004. The decrease of programmatic differences between the parties went hand-in-hand with the increased significance of patronage (Volintiru, 2010).

### **Pluralism within a unified organization**

Despite being the largest of the three discussed communities, the Hungarian minority in Romania succeeded to maintain a single representative organization for the longest time, from 1990 to 2003. This organization, *Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség (Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, RMDSZ)* remains the strongest Hungarian party today and the only one that has been represented in the Romanian parliament.<sup>71</sup> Though in the early 1990s it was on the verge of isolation in the Romanian party system, in 1996 RMDSZ was invited to the governing coalition by the parties of the “democratic opposition”, and since then, it consolidated itself as the most stable actor of the Romanian party system, being almost permanently part of the governing coalitions, except for short periods between 2008-2009 and 2012-2014 (between 2000 and 2004 RMDSZ only provided support in parliament for the minority government of PSD, which negotiated Romania’s accession to the EU).

RMDSZ was formed a few days after the fall of the Ceaușescu dictatorship (December 25, 1989), as a loose alliance of local Hungarian organizations. It was not intended to be a political party, and it is not registered as such even today. In the first years of transition it fulfilled three roles in parallel: it was a mass movement which reaffirmed the identity of the minority, it substituted for a very weak civil society and it performed the political representation of the community (Bakk, 2000). The organization reached impressive

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<sup>71</sup> There were several early attempts to create other Hungarian ethnic parties in Romania, but these remained insignificant actors and disappeared. At the 1990 elections the *Független Magyar Párt* (Independent Hungarian Party) obtained 0.02% of the votes (~0.3% of the Hungarian vote). In 1996 the leaders of this party re-created the organization under a different name: *Romániai Magyar Szabaddemokrata Párt* (Hungarian Free Democratic Party of Romania), and ran at the 1996 and 2000 parliamentary elections, obtaining 0.12% (~1.8% of the Hungarian vote) in 1996 and 0.03% (~0.4% of the Hungarian vote) in 2000. RMDSZ claimed that both of these parties were set up with the assistance of the Romanian secret services. In 1996 an organization called *Székely Ifjak Fóruma* (Forum of Szekler Youth) was created as a Szekler ethnic party, that is, the initiators wanted to have the Szeklers recognized as an ethnic group distinct from the Hungarians. The party obtained 0.02% of the votes (~0.3% of the Hungarian vote) in 1996.

membership figures (533,000 in 1991 and more than 600,000 in 1995) and included a wide array of ancillary organizations, from youth to professional and cultural organizations (Shafir, 2000; Toró, 2013). However, after assuming governmental duties, the importance of membership and civil society partners began to decline, and RMDSZ became increasingly similar to political parties (Bakk, 2000).

Given its inclusive nature, RMDSZ has been a very factionalized organization from the very beginning. At the price of gross simplification, the main division within RMDSZ can be described as an opposition between a more radical autonomist wing (which, in 1993 created a platform called *Reform Tömörülés*, RT – Reform Group), and a more pragmatic group which advocated a strategy of small steps for securing minority rights instead of self-determination claims, and was more willing to compromise with the majority. These differences were more or less overlapping with a generational divide too, many members of RT were previously active in the umbrella organization of youth organizations *Magyar Ifjúsági Szervezettek Szövetsége* (Federation of Hungarian Youth Organizations), and maintained a close relationship with Hungary's Fidesz, also on a generational basis.

The two strategies can be best illustrated by two significant events that took place in 1993. In the summer of 1993, three leaders of RMDSZ participated at a secret informal meeting with PDSR, mediated by the American NGO *Project on Ethnic Relations*, where they negotiated some concessions in the field of education and linguistic rights. The event became known as “Neptun-gate”, after the name of the seaside resort where it took place, and it unleashed a very serious conflict, as the three leaders did not have a mandate from RMDSZ. Eventually, RMDSZ officially condemned the actions of the three and distanced itself from the document that was signed, but no sanctions were taken against the participants, moreover, all of them obtained key party and public offices later (Horváth, 2002 36-38, 103). For the autonomist faction “Neptun” became and remains the synonym of the betrayal of the

autonomist strategy (Toró, 2013; for the interpretation of the autonomist faction see Borbély, 2013). Conversely, the participants claimed that Neptun represented a turning point for inter-ethnic reconciliation, enabling a breakthrough in the development of the minority rights regime.<sup>72</sup>

The second event occurred in September 1993, in the context of Romania's accession to the Council of Europe, when RMDSZ drafted a memorandum, raising a list of complaints about the unsatisfactory situation of the minority. As a reaction, the CoE formulated a series of recommendations for Romania. This petition was regarded as a very important result of the "foreign policy" of RMDSZ,<sup>73</sup> even if at the end of the day Romania was admitted to the CoE without fulfilling all the recommendations (Toró, 2013). On the other hand, it led to the temporary straining of the relationship between RMDSZ and the parties of the Romanian Democratic Convention (Horváth, 2002 36-38; Pavel & Huiu, 2003).

The essence of the autonomist strategy was not simply that arrangements falling short of autonomy are not acceptable and that the host-state must be pressured with the assistance of the kin-state and possibly the international community to grant this to the minority; it also entailed that first the community should set up the institutions of autonomy even in the absence of a legal basis for this (as the right to internal self-determination provides sufficient grounds for this), and after these institutions become functional, the host-state has to be pressured to recognize and legalize them (Bárdi, 2000).

Despite the internal divisions, RMDSZ resisted splits for more than a decade due to a very democratic organizational structure. At the third congress in 1993, the so-called *self-government model* (also known as the *state-model*) was adopted. This organizational structure basically copied the institutional structure of nation-states, with the intention of providing an

<sup>72</sup> See the statements of László Borbély, one of the participants of the Neptun meeting at <http://itthon.transindex.ro/?hir=33726>

<sup>73</sup> In an interview with the author, Béla Markó stated that the petition to the CoE was one of the most important results obtained by RMDSZ from the international community.

institutional framework for the management of the community's internal affairs until autonomy would be obtained. The model was based on party platforms organized along ideologies and foresaw direct internal elections for an internal parliament, the Council of the Representatives (*Szövetségi Képviselek Tanácsa - SZKT*), and as such it can be considered "the institutional embryo of a separate political system" (Shafir, 2000: 107). The elections should have been organized based on a special electoral roll, compiled by the organization itself, onto which all ethnic Hungarians from Romania should have been registered (Bakk, 1999; Székely, 2000; Toró, 1999; Borbély, 2000).

At the same congress, the rival factions agreed to elect a compromise candidate perceived as centrist in the person of Béla Markó, while both the previous president, the moderate Géza Domokos and the former first secretary, the radical Géza Szócs stepped back. Another prominent personality of the more radical/autonomist group, the Reformed bishop László Tőkés, who played a central role in the unfolding of Romanian revolution, was elected honorary president of RMDSZ.

Shafir (2000: 116) notes that until 1995 each congress of RMDSZ marked a programmatic radicalization, triggered by the adoption of various pieces of legislation unfavorable to the Hungarians, like the 1991 constitution, which defined Romania as a unitary nation-state or a restrictive education law in 1995. In October 1992 a declaration about the self-government of the community was adopted, reinforced by a solemn oath by the leadership of RMDSZ. The document known as the Declaration of Kolozsvár (*Kolozsvári Nyilatkozat*) claimed state-constituting status for the Hungarian community in Romania and stated the goal to obtain internal self-determination, which will enable integration into Romanian society as a community.<sup>74</sup> At the fourth congress in 1993 the definition of the community as a "national minority" was replaced by "national autonomous community", and

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<sup>74</sup> Az RMDSZ nyilatkozata a nemzeti kérdéstről (1993). Reprinted in Bárdi and Éger (2000).

also an explicit commitment to territorial autonomy has been included into the program (Borbély, 2000).

All these developments seemed to reflect that the ethnopolitical conception of RMDSZ crystallized gradually towards a firm autonomist stance, and that the more radical faction was gaining momentum within the organization. However, in reality the distribution of power slowly shifted in favor of the pragmatic wing. At least three factors contributed to this. First, the adoption of a more radical autonomist program in 1993 paradoxically coincided with the election of a moderate leadership, so the program of autonomy should have been carried out by a leadership less enthusiastic about the self-determination perspective (Borbély, 2000). Second, in September 1996, the government of Hungary signed a treaty of good neighborly relations with Romania without taking into consideration the objections of RMDSZ regarding the insufficient undertakings of Romania in what concerns minority rights. Thus it became obvious that foreign policy considerations are more important for the Hungarian government than the situation of the minority, and the autonomists had to come to terms with the fact that they cannot count on the support of the kin-state in their efforts. Third, the parties of the Romanian Democratic Convention conditioned their cooperation with RMDSZ on the recognition by the latter of Romania's territorial integrity and the shelving the autonomy program (Pavel & Huiu, 2003).

### **The erosion of unity and the unfolding of organizational pluralism**

Assuming governmental office in 1996 was a critical juncture in the history of RMDSZ not only from the perspective of the autonomy issue, but also because of the organizational consequences that followed. In line with the thesis of Bochsler and Szócsik (2013b), as the number of those who held public office increased, the balance of power shifted gradually in favor of the moderates also in SZKT or the congress. The last attempt of the autonomist faction to obtain the leadership of RMDSZ occurred at the sixth congress, in 1999. However,

the moderate leadership was reelected relatively easily, Béla Markó obtained 63.6% of the votes (Márton, 2007).<sup>75</sup>

The autonomist wing of RMDSZ, especially RT, could comfort themselves with the fact that Fidesz won the 1998 elections in Hungary, and reaffirmed its support for the minority elites with which it has been maintaining close ties since the early 1990s.<sup>76</sup> The support of Fidesz for RT compensated for the strengthening of the moderate wing which resulted from governmental participation, and RT could also rely on some strong territorial organizations. However, before the 2000 elections the central leadership started to interfere seriously with the internal affairs of the territorial organizations, replacing some candidates of the internal opposition with persons loyal to them (for examples see Toró, 2013: 116). The concentration of power at the highest level of leadership has already started around 1996, the powers of the Operative Council of RMDSZ (the body in charge of leading the organization between meetings of the SZKT) have been repeatedly expanded at the expense of the SZKT (Márton & Orbán, 2005).<sup>77</sup>

After the parties of the center-right coalition suffered a heavy defeat at the 2000 parliamentary elections, Ion Iliescu and PDSR came back to power. As PDSR pursued nationalistic policies during his first tenure between 1990 and 1996, it was surprising that RMDSZ agreed to offer support in parliament to the cabinet of Adrian Năstase. This decision further escalated the internal tensions in RMDSZ, the autonomist wing accepted cooperation with the former communists even harder than the decision to enter government in 1996.

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<sup>75</sup> Jenő Szász, future president of MPP and a prominent member of the autonomist faction recalled in an interview with the author that the sixth congress was the last when they believed having realistic chances to obtain the leadership of RMDSZ.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Nándor Bárdi.

<sup>77</sup> According to the authors, the first situation which proved that the Operative Council had in fact more powers than the SZKT arose in 1996, when RMDSZ joined the governing coalition. It was the OT that took this decision, arguably by bypassing the statute of RMDSZ, and SZKT was only convened to ratify it (Márton & Orbán, 2005).

By 2000 it became clear that even if internal elections would be organized, this would occur under completely different conditions than the original conception, as in 2000 the SZKT adopted a resolution in which it allowed the organization of internal elections also with indirect methods, through electors (Borbély, 2000). Moreover, the radical faction suffered a further important defeat in relation to the implementation of Hungary's Status Law, in 2001-2002. Fidesz intended to entrust the infrastructure necessary for the implementation of the law in Romania to RT, in order to strengthen them against the moderate central leadership of RMDSZ. However, RMDSZ president Béla Markó succeeded to prevent this, by convincing Fidesz that the smooth operation of the status offices would be best ensured within the premises of RMDSZ's regional branches, otherwise the Romanian authorities may attempt to boycott their operation.<sup>78</sup> As a consequence, the central leadership of RMDSZ obtained control over very important infrastructural resources created and operated from Hungarian public funds; moreover, they were also responsible for staffing the offices, which enabled the employment a significant proportion of RMDSZ's apparatus through this network of offices.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, Fidesz was defeated in Hungary at the 2002 elections, consequently the internal opposition of RMDSZ lost the support of the kin-state's government.

All these developments reinforced the perception of the radicals that their chances to ever take control of RMDSZ have been compromised, and RT decided to boycott the seventh congress of RMDSZ in early 2003.<sup>80</sup> The congress stripped László Tőkés of his function of honorary chairman (because Tőkés previously sued RMDSZ for failing to hold internal elections), though he was not excluded from RMDSZ. As a consequence, RT disbanded as a platform within RMDSZ, and though not all of its members left RMDSZ immediately, they began to build alternative organizations.

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<sup>78</sup> Interview with Nándor Bárdi.

<sup>79</sup> Anonymous communication of a current member of RMDSZ's Secretariat General.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Toró T. Tibor.

Of the three alternative organizations that were created, two were not intended to be political parties. The *Erdélyi Magyar Nemzeti Tanács (EMNT, Hungarian National Council of Transylvania)* was conceived in a similar spirit as the self-government model of RMDSZ, as a precursor to the council of a future autonomy. However, it was obvious from the beginning that in this quality it would fail, as RMDSZ obviously refused to recognize it as such, even if there were RMDSZ members who individually participated in EMNT. The *Székely Nemzeti Tanács (SZNT, Szekler National Council)* is not a political party either but an organization coordinating the movement for the territorial autonomy of the Szeklerland, its most important actions included mass protests and the organization of informal referenda about territorial autonomy.

A third organization, *Magyar Polgári Szövetség (MPSZ, Hungarian Civic Alliance)*, also created in 2003, was intended from the beginning to be a political party, a challenger for RMDSZ. The choice of MPSZ's name is a direct reference to Fidesz, which changed its name to *Fidesz – Magyar Polgári Szövetség* in 2003.<sup>81</sup> MPSZ grew out of a citizens' group from the Szeklerland, which contested the local elections already in 2000 against RMDSZ, headed by Jenő Szász, a prominent member of RT.

However, MPSZ failed to register before the 2004 elections, partly due to the very restrictive rules regarding party and minority organization registration, and partly to mistakes committed while gathering the signatures. After the failed registration, MPSZ candidates attempted to run at both the local and the parliamentary elections on the lists of a minor Romanian mainstream party (*Partidul Acțiunea Populară – People's Action Party*). This strategy, however, proved to be a complete failure, as ethnic Hungarian voters refused to endorse a Romanian party label.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Note that MPSZ in Vojvodina also adopted its name for similar considerations.

<sup>82</sup> In the campaign, one of RMDSZ's main slogans was "Hungarian party – Hungarian interests, Romanian party – Romanian interests".

The organization was finally registered before the 2008 local elections, under the label *Magyar Polgári Párt (MPP, Hungarian Civic Party)*. MPP obtained mixed results at these elections: while nationwide they were supported only by around 15% of the Hungarian voters, in the compact Hungarian Szeklerland region their result exceeded 30%; yet, they were not able to take control of any important city or county. After failed negotiations with RMDSZ for cooperation at the parliamentary elections of the same year, MPP decided not to field its own candidates, but to back a few independents. This proved to be a failed strategy again, only one of the independents obtained more than 20% of the vote in his single-member district.<sup>83</sup>

Still, the results of MPP at the 2008 local elections were relieving for RMDSZ, because one year earlier László Tőkés obtained a surprisingly strong result when running for the European Parliament as an independent candidate (but with the support of all organizations that defined themselves as the opposition of RMDSZ).<sup>84</sup> Due to the significantly higher turnout of ethnic Hungarian voters than the extremely low national average (29.46%), both RMDSZ and Tőkés got elected. RMDSZ obtained 5.52% of the vote, and Tőkés 3.44%. The success of Tőkés sides was a real surprise, and a shock for RMDSZ. The distribution of support within the Hungarian electorate between RMDSZ and its opposition came close to 60:40, signaling a strong opposition, possibly the end of hegemony and a shift towards a bipolar structure, which, however, did not materialize eventually.

For the 2009 elections for the European Parliament, Tőkés and RMDSZ were able to reach an agreement; the bishop was offered the top position on the RMDSZ list and got elected again, along with two RMDSZ candidates. This was not a proper coalition from a

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<sup>83</sup> MPP president Jenő Szász admitted that the party stayed away from the elections in order to avoid a defeat. The choice to support some independent candidates was motivated by the personal ambitions of some party members, which the party did not wish to suppress. Interview with Jenő Szász.

<sup>84</sup> Tőkés ran as an independent as MPP has not been registered yet by the time of the elections. Also, the conditions for running and the electoral threshold are less demanding for independents than for parties at the EP elections.

legal point of view, Tőkés was simply included on the RMDSZ ticket, which was, however, labeled *Magyar Összefogás (Hungarian Cooperation)*, and the logos of both RMDSZ and EMNT appeared on campaign materials. The success of the joint list (8.92%) was once again facilitated by extremely low national turnout (27.67%). However, the cooperation did not last for long, and after Tőkés and EMNT announced the establishment of a third political party, RMDSZ leaders repeatedly accused Tőkés of betraying RMDSZ after being elected on their list.

The cooperation between EMNT and RMDSZ at the 2009 elections for the European Parliament, as well as the failed attempt of MPP to conclude an electoral coalition in 2008 with RMDSZ also brought to the surface serious conflicts within the opposition of RMDSZ, most importantly between Tőkés and MPP president Jenő Szász.<sup>85</sup> MPP portrayed Tőkés's acceptance to run on the RMDSZ ticket as a betrayal, a return to RMDSZ. Moreover, in 2009, Szász changed the statute of MPP, increasing the powers of the party president and making his removal more difficult.<sup>86</sup> This meant that the chances of the faction of Tőkés to obtain control over MPP were compromised, and as a consequence EMNT decided in 2011 to register a third Hungarian party, *Erdélyi Magyar Néppárt (EMPN - Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania)*. EMNT was not dissolved after the creation of EMNP, but continues as an ancillary organization of the party. The main reason for this is that financial resources from Hungary are channeled towards EMNP through the NGOs in their halo, including EMNT, as Romanian party law forbids party financing from abroad.

At the 2012 local elections MPP and EMNP obtained rather similar results, and their joint result roughly equaled the result of MPP obtained four years earlier, meaning that RMDSZ was able to maintain the support of approximately 83-85% of the Hungarians who

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<sup>85</sup> Another factor that also contributed to the deepening of the conflict between MPP and EMNT was that before the 2008 parliamentary elections, RMDSZ actually engaged in negotiations with both organizations, playing them against each-other. Interview with Toró T. Tibor.

<sup>86</sup> <http://kronika.hhrf.org/index.php?action=open&res=26881>

voted along ethnic lines. MPP stayed away again from the parliamentary elections in 2012, Jenő Szász claimed that his party would only contest the elections if RMDSZ would agree to a formal coalition (preferably of all three parties).<sup>87</sup>

EMNP contested the 2012 parliamentary elections, but fielded candidates only in some single member districts. One goal of EMNP was to obtain at least 50,000 votes,<sup>88</sup> however, they also had to convey to the voters that their participation does not endanger the representation of the Hungarian community. The party based its electoral strategy and communication on reaching the alternative threshold (finishing first in six districts for the lower house and three for the upper house),<sup>89</sup> fielding candidates for the Chamber of Deputies only in the districts with a high proportion of Hungarian population, to minimize the loss of Hungarian votes, but for the Senate also in districts with lower proportion of Hungarians, to increase their chances of reaching the targeted number of votes. EMNP did not succeed to get elected, but it obtained 58,765 votes for the Senate (0.79%). RMDSZ obtained the weakest result of its history, 5.13% for the Chamber of Deputies and 5.23% for the Senate, keeping its nine seats in the Senate, but losing four of its 22 representatives in the lower chamber. Thus, RMDSZ continues to enjoy the support of approximately 85% of the Hungarian electorate, while its opposition shares the rest of 15%, with an increasing shift from MPP towards EMNP.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> The electoral law (Law 35/2008), contains two types of electoral thresholds: a percental one, which is 5% for single parties and progressively increases for electoral alliances (7% for two members, 8% for three, and 10% for four or more members), and an alternative threshold which implies obtaining relative majority simultaneously in six single-member districts for the Chamber of Deputies and in three districts for the Senate. As opposed to the percental threshold, the alternative one does not differentiate between parties and electoral alliances. On the Romanian electoral system see Marian and King (2010).

<sup>88</sup> According to the law on political parties (law 14/2003), parties that obtain less than 50,000 votes at two consecutive elections may be dissolved. However, MPP has not been dissolved despite failing to obtain this number of votes at the 2012 local elections and not running in the parliamentary elections of 2008 and 2012.

<sup>89</sup> See previous footnote.

<sup>90</sup> According to a survey conducted in June 2013 by the Romanian Research Institute for National Minorities 77.8% of the Hungarian voters who expressed a party preference supported RMDSZ, 10.9% EMNP and 4.8% MPP.

## A note on institutions

The development of the minority party scene has also been influenced to a great extent by institutional context, especially the conditions for registering political organizations, which have been made progressively more restrictive over time. Until 1996, only 251 signatures sufficed to register a party.<sup>91</sup> After 1996 10,000 signatures were required and also a territorial distribution scheme has been introduced, meaning that at least 300 signatures were needed from at least 15 counties (of the 41).<sup>92</sup> The party law has been made even more restrictive in January 2003 (one month before the split of RMDSZ!), the new requirements (still in force) require 25,000 signatures and at least 700 signatures from at least 18 counties and Bucharest.<sup>93</sup> The latter condition is difficult to fulfill by Hungarian minority organizations, as the Hungarians live in Transylvania, which consists of only 16 counties, but also among these counties in a few their share is very low. Romanian electoral legislation, however, recognizes another organizational form that can serve as a vehicle for representation, the *organization of persons belonging to national minorities*. RMDSZ itself is registered in this form. However, the 2004 amendments to both the local and parliamentary election law introduced restrictions in this sense too.<sup>94</sup> According to the electoral laws, if 15% of the total number of persons who declared themselves as belonging to the minority exceeds 25.000 persons, then the requirement for registering an organization representing national minorities is 25.000 signatures again, just like in the case of parties, though the territorial distribution scheme is somewhat less demanding, yet still difficult to fulfill, as at least 300 signatures are required from 15 counties plus Bucharest. Later, the number of signatures required was reduced to 20,000, but the geographic scheme remained, and the requirement of being of public utility

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<sup>91</sup> Decree Law 8 of 1989.

<sup>92</sup> Law 27 of 1996.

<sup>93</sup> Law 14/2003.

<sup>94</sup> Law 67 of 004, Law 373 of 2004.

has been added, which can only be obtained after three years of uninterrupted activity.<sup>95</sup> Both the party law and the amendments to the electoral laws were supported by RMDSZ in parliament, as the primary targets were challenger Hungarian (and Roma) organizations. The electoral legislation also contains a discriminative rule, as the minority organizations already represented in parliament are automatically allowed to run in the elections, while new minority organizations have to fulfill the criteria outlined above. Partly as a consequence of these amendments, it took almost five years for the first challenger party of RMDSZ to be registered.

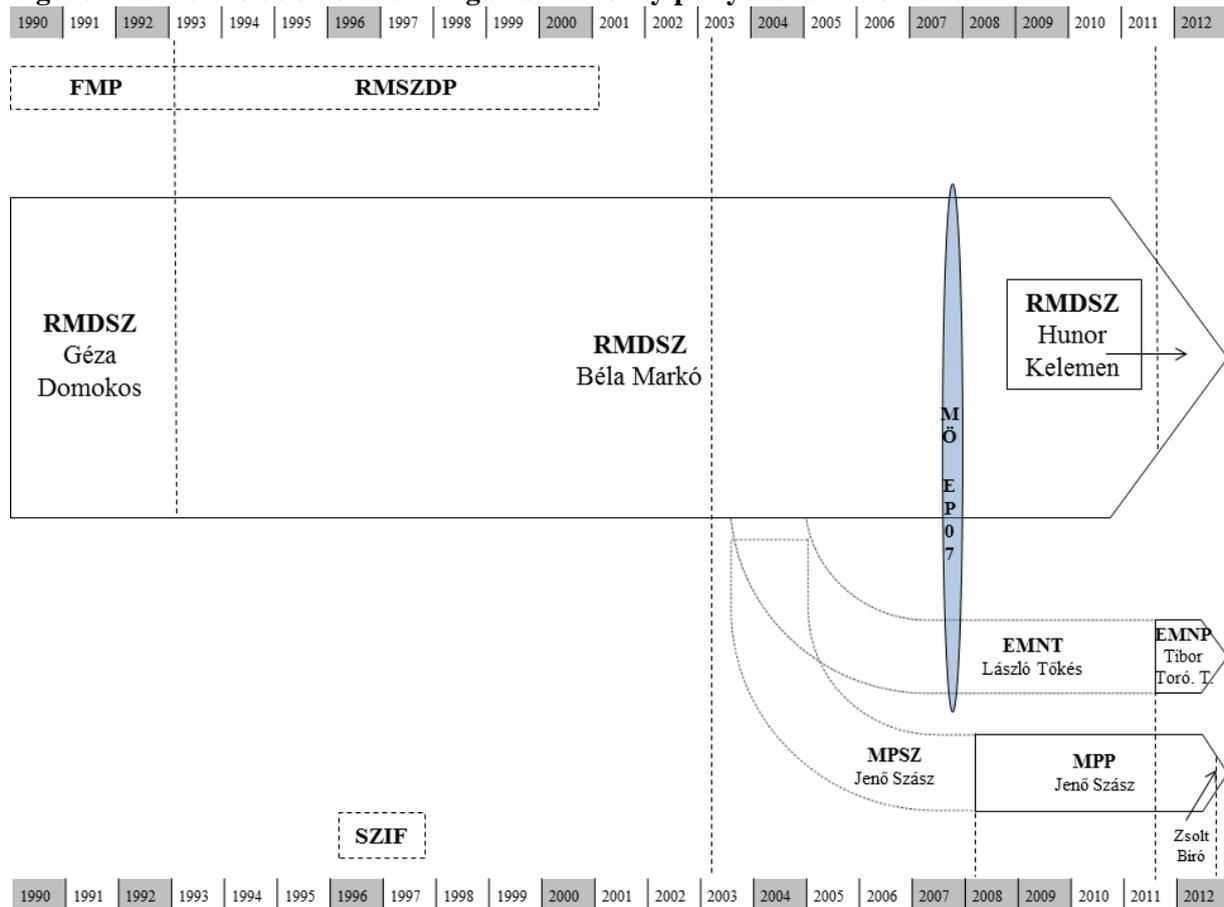
### **Making sense of the Hungarian party system of Romania**

The development of the Hungarian party system of Romania (represented graphically in Figure 5.1.) can be summarized very briefly as two attempts for outbidding the dominant party, RMDSZ, of which none was successful. However, the position of RMDSZ did not remain unchanged during the past two decades either. Assuming governmental office in 1996 brought about a significant moderation of demands and rhetoric as compared to the course followed previously, while the emergence of the rival ethnic parties compelled RMDSZ to revert to a more radical tone again, though this time by adopting a dual discourse (Kiss *et al.*, 2013a).

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<sup>95</sup> Law 35 of 2008.

**Figure 5.1. The evolution of the Hungarian minority party scene in Romania**



Arrows indicate splits, ellipses electoral coalitions, irrelevant organizations shown with dashed lines.

### Programmatic goals

In Romania, all three relevant Hungarian parties can be classified as autonomist, and if only the goals are considered, competition can be safely described as valence competition on the issue of autonomy. The tradition of territorial autonomy in the Szeklerland can be traced back to the historical autonomous status of the Szeklers within the Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg Empire, but also the existence of a Hungarian Autonomous Region (*Magyar Autonóm Tartomány*) between 1952 and 1960 (Bottoni, 2003) is an important point of reference for the territorial autonomy claims formulated after 1989. However, less than half of the Hungarians of Transylvania live in the compact Szeklerland area), consequently other forms of autonomy than territorial or regional were also regarded as necessary by the Hungarian elites, most importantly personal/cultural, and special administrative status for isolated localities with Hungarian majority.

After the “most radical” period of RMDSZ (1991-1995), which culminated with an explicit commitment to territorial autonomy at the fourth congress (Shafir, 2000), autonomy almost completely disappeared from the agenda of RMDSZ after assuming governmental responsibility in 1996 (Márton, 2004), to resurface after the split, in 2004.<sup>96</sup> Since then, RMDSZ is once again pursuing a strong autonomist rhetoric. However, the return to the autonomist agenda also entails a dual discourse, with a more compromising message being conveyed towards the mainstream parties and a more intransigent rhetoric towards the minority electorate, in a similar fashion to the ethnic tribune parties of Northern Ireland (Kiss *et al.*, 2013a).

The essence of the message of RMDSZ’s intra-ethnic challengers is basically that RMDSZ abandoned the quest for autonomy.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, the official party programs of MPP<sup>98</sup> and EMNP<sup>99</sup> are strikingly similar,<sup>100</sup> reinforcing the statement that the parties compete according to a valence logic. Already in the aftermath of RMDSZ’s split in 2003, the opposition organizations refurbished some earlier drafts elaborated by RMDSZ experts between 1991 and 1995, and one of these was also submitted to parliament at the request of SZNT, but was rejected. However, its real significance rather lay in the fact that it compelled RMDSZ to return to the issue of autonomy (Bakk, 2004). As a reaction, RMDSZ elaborated a bill on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in 2005, which also contains a section on cultural autonomy (Bakk, 2004; Bognár, 2006). The adoption of this bill was

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<sup>96</sup> The electoral slogan of RMDSZ in 2004 was “Együtt, az auonómiáért!” (Together, for autonomy!).

<sup>97</sup> MPP president Jenő Szász stated in an interview with the author that “had RMDSZ done its job, there would have been no need for MPP”. In October 2012, EMNP and EMNT commemorated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Kolozsvár Declaration, also repeating the oath and summoning those RMDSZ members who “have broken their oath” to step down. <http://www.neppart.eu/20121029huszeves-a-kolozsvari-nyilatkozat.html>

<sup>98</sup> Új lehetőség. A Magyar Polgári Párt keretprogramja (2009). Available at [http://www.polgaripart.ro/index.php?option=com\\_rubberdoc&view=category&id=55%3Aprogram&Itemid=892](http://www.polgaripart.ro/index.php?option=com_rubberdoc&view=category&id=55%3Aprogram&Itemid=892)

<sup>99</sup> Az Erdélyi Magyar Néppárt keretprogramja: A megtalált út. Esélyt és szabadságot Erdélynek (2012). Available at <http://www.neppart.eu/a-megtalalt-ut-politikai-keretprogram1.html>

<sup>100</sup> This is due to the fact that the same person has contributed to a great extent to the drafting of both documents. Before 1995, this person has also contributed to a number of the autonomy conceptions of RMDSZ.

included into the program multiple cabinets that RMDSZ has been part of, but it still has not been adopted by parliament.

Though at the level of legal codification it was personal/cultural autonomy that has been at the center of RMDSZ's agenda lately, it would be a mistake to state that the Alliance would have abandoned the idea of territorial autonomy completely. The fact that the counties of Harghita/Hargita and Covasna/Kovászna have been led by RMDSZ since the first local elections (1992) has created the opportunity for local leaders to engage in a process of regional branding in the Szeklerland. This process gained momentum especially after the adoption of a Szekler flag by SZNT in 2004, which compelled RMDSZ to react again according to a valence logic.

### **Strategies in Romanian politics**

In the early years, RMDSZ was very divided over the attitude towards the mainstream parties, and some factions of the radical group even questioned whether the presence in Romania's parliament was meaningful. In this period, advocates of the cooperative strategy have been accused of legitimizing the nationalist regime of Iliescu, as best illustrated by the "Neptun-gate" (Horváth, 2002; Toró, 2013), while after the organization assumed governmental position in 1996, the essence of criticism became that RMDSZ was unable to obtain significant policy success (Toró, 1998). After the split, no significant groups openly opposing the cooperative strategy and governmental participation remained within RMDSZ. Moreover, RMDSZ was able to cooperate with all significant Romanian mainstream parties, regardless of the latter's ideological orientation, in line with Béla Markó's doctrine that ideological considerations should not play a role in the representation of minority interests (Markó, 2004, 2007).<sup>101</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the challenger organizations that were created by the former internal opposition continued to advocate a tribune strategy, and a core element of their rhetoric was

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<sup>101</sup> Also, interview with Béla Markó.

the criticism of RMDSZ's participation in power, which they tried to depict as unprincipled and purely office-driven. Both MPP and EMNP state in their program that their priorities are the local and county-level self-governments, as opposed to a focus on parliamentary politics and governmental participation.<sup>102</sup> As neither MPP nor EMNP became relevant actors at the national level, their opposition rhetoric cannot be confronted with their behavior, as they had no actual opportunities to join power. Their willingness to cooperate with Romanian mainstream parties cannot be tested even at the level of the counties or municipalities, as both obtained good electoral results only in Hungarian-majority administrative units, primarily in the Szeklerland.

Though both parties affirm in their program that cooperation with Romanian parties would be possible on ideological and regional grounds (meaning that the parties exclude a cooperation with PSD but not with PDL and other center-right parties, and would welcome as partners Romanian regionalist parties in Transylvania), both party presidents admitted that their organizations lack connections to the mainstream parties.<sup>103</sup> MPP president Szász emphasized that the electorate of his party contributed to the reelection of Traian Băsescu in 2009, while RMDSZ has been campaigning for PSD candidate Mircea Geoană.<sup>104</sup>

### **Relations with the parties and government of Hungary**

The relationship of RMDSZ with the MDF and the first MSZP government was generally good, though not without conflicts (most importantly the signing of the bilateral treaty by the

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<sup>102</sup> Új lehetőség. A Magyar Polgári Párt keretprogramja (2009); A megtalált út. Esélyt és szabadságot Erdélynek (2012).

<sup>103</sup> EMNP president Toró stated that he could imagine cooperation with mainstream parties which oppose the "socialist-liberal restoration", that is, with center-right parties, primarily PDL and other smaller parties that formed since 2011, and Jenő Szász stated that MPP had contacts only with PDL and Traian Băsescu. Interviews with Jenő Szász and Tibor T. Toró.

<sup>104</sup> It is doubtful that Băsescu's ability to obtain the majority of Hungarian votes was indeed related to the messages of the Hungarian leaders; rather, it was the direct appeals of Băsescu to the Hungarian community that made the difference.

During this presidential election campaign the president of MPP celebrated the national day of Romania alongside Traian Băsescu, which attracted very harsh criticism from other Hungarian leaders and the questioning of his commitment to an opposition strategy. Szász was reproached also because in 2002 he had been the most vocal in protesting against Hungary's prime minister celebrating alongside Romania's prime minister in Budapest on the 1st of December.

See <http://kitekinto.hu/karpat-medence/2009/12/04/arulo lett a magyar vezet/#.Ux4R4j-SyyU>

Horn cabinet caused serious frustrations within RMDSZ, and played an important role in pushing the moderate leadership to seek cooperation with the Romanian Democratic Convention). The various factions and later platforms within RMDSZ were maintaining closer ties with parties from Hungary according to ideological proximity. The most important of these were the ties between the Liberal Circle platform and SZDSZ, and especially between RT and Fidesz. As discussed, under the first Orbán cabinet Fidesz aimed to improve the position of RT within RMDSZ, but eventually it was the moderate leadership who was able to take advantage of Hungary's Status Law.

RMDSZ split less than one year after the end of Fidesz's first tenure in government. After the split Fidesz maintained its close relationship with the same persons who made up the internal opposition of RMDSZ before 2003, most importantly László Tőkés and RT, and aided the creation of both MPP and EMNP in an effort to weaken the monopoly of RMDSZ, Fidesz leaders, including Viktor Orbán, even participated in Romanian election campaigns, actively campaigning against RMDSZ while supporting Tőkés or MPP.

However, there are multiple points of linkage of the opposition of RMDSZ to Fidesz. While the mainstream of Fidesz is rather supportive of László Tőkés, EMNT and EMNP, speaker of the parliament László Kövér is maintaining close personal relationships with the president of MPSZ/MPP, Jenő Szász. After the 2009 elections for the European Parliament it became increasingly clear that Fidesz is unable or unwilling to settle the rivalries between MPP and EMNT/EMNP.<sup>105</sup>

The relationship of the post-split RMDSZ with the parties from Hungary is more equivocal than that of the splinter organizations. Béla Markó advocated a policy of equal

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<sup>105</sup> Shortly after the 2012 parliamentary elections, Jenő Szász has been appointed director of the newly created Institute of National Strategy in Hungary (*Nemzetstratégiai Kutatóintézet*), a decision which has been interpreted initially as an attempt to remove him from Transylvanian party politics in order to facilitate the rapprochement of MPP and EMNP. However, MPP elected a new president loyal to Szász (Zsolt Bíró), and since 2013 the party seems to be seeking cooperation with RMDSZ rather than EMNP. By the time of the finalization of this thesis MPP agreed to support RMDSZ at the 2014 elections to the European Parliament, though it was offered no seat on the RMDSZ ticket.

distance towards all parties (with the exception of the extreme right), and aimed for good relationships with the Hungarian government regardless of its color, in exchange for non-interference from the kin-state into the affairs of the minority (Markó, 2004, 2007).<sup>106</sup> The relationship of RMDSZ with Fidesz became tensioned when RMDSZ president Markó stated already before the second round of the 2002 elections that RMDSZ is convinced of having a good cooperation with MSZP and SZDSZ in case of their victory.<sup>107</sup>

After taking power back in 2010, Fidesz escalated the conflict, and beside less friendly symbolic gestures and public statements,<sup>108</sup> the new Hungarian government also cut RMDSZ off the functioning channels of financial flows from Hungary. Since May 2011 the network of offices established under the Status Law and operated by a foundation of RMDSZ are no longer entitled to process applications for the Hungarian certificate (requests can instead be submitted at Hungary's consulates), and the distribution of the funding for children enrolled in Hungarian-language schools has been transferred from another foundation of RMDSZ to the Union of Hungarian Teachers (*Romániai Magyar Pedagógusok Szövetsége*) (Pap, 2011). This way, RMDSZ lost not only a network of offices but was also deprived of the handling fees, which amounted to 8% of the total sum to be distributed in Romania, equivalent to approximately 2.1 million USD per year (Bárdi, 2007). Moreover, the newly created network of offices (called *Demokráciaközpontok - Democracy Centers*), in charge with processing the requests for Hungarian citizenship, have been entrusted to EMNT instead of RMDSZ.<sup>109</sup> Given the intertwining of EMNT and EMNP, these offices also serve provide

<sup>106</sup> Markó explained in an interview of the author that towards the parties from Hungary an attitude of “equal closeness” should apply, while towards the mainstream parties of Romania an attitude of “equal distance”.

<sup>107</sup> *Magyar Nemzet*, April 8, 2002. <http://mno.hu/migr/marko-bela-gratulalt-a-partoknak-775638>.

<sup>108</sup> One emblematic moment was the tenth Congress of the RMDSZ in February 2011, when the delegate of Fidesz (and implicitly the Hungarian government) transmitted the message that Fidesz makes partnership conditional on a shift of direction in RMDSZ. See: [http://hvg.hu/vilag/20110226\\_rmksz\\_tisztujito\\_kongresszus](http://hvg.hu/vilag/20110226_rmksz_tisztujito_kongresszus)

<sup>109</sup> Currently, [www.demokraciakozpont.org](http://www.demokraciakozpont.org) redirects to [www.emnt.org](http://www.emnt.org)

the infrastructure for EMNP, and EMNT and other associations also received funding from Hungary on less transparent channels.<sup>110</sup>

Despite its conflicts with Fidesz, RMDSZ should not be considered a strategic partner of the center-left parties from Hungary either. Indeed, the influence of RMDSZ in Hungary's policies towards the ethnic kin beyond the borders increased to a great degree during the MSZP-SZDSZ cabinets after 2002, especially in what concerns the distribution of the subsidies from Hungary's state budget, over which the government relinquished control almost completely (Bárdi & Misovitz, 2010).<sup>111</sup> However, the referendum about dual citizenship in 2004 was frustrating for RMDSZ leaders too, and the suspending of MÁÉRT in 2006 was not met positively either. As a reaction to the actions of Fidesz after 2010, RMDSZ engaged in a well-mediatised rapprochement with the Hungarian left, culminating in 2013 with an apology by the president of MSZP for the referendum about dual citizenship. RMDSZ and MSZP also signed a document of cooperation between their party foundations.<sup>112</sup> However, numerous local leaders of RMDSZ, especially in the Szeklerland, still prefer Fidesz and maintain close ties with it, and reject the idea of closer ties to the Socialists or any other party of the Hungarian left.<sup>113</sup> Moreover, by the time of finalization of this thesis, some rapprochement between Fidesz and RMDSZ was visible, in the context of the Hungarian elections.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Sipos (2013) estimated that the financial flows from Hungary towards EMNT/EMNP in 2012, including both subsidies awarded as grants and donations from state-owned companies, amounted to approximately 1.4 million USD, while press outlets from Transylvania belonging to interest groups close to Fidesz received approximately 2.56 million USD.

<sup>111</sup> Also, interview with Nándor Bárdi.

<sup>112</sup> [http://erdely.ma/kozeletunk.php?id=134095&cim=egyuttmukodesi\\_megallapodast\\_kotott\\_az\\_rmksz\\_es\\_az\\_mszp\\_alapitvanya](http://erdely.ma/kozeletunk.php?id=134095&cim=egyuttmukodesi_megallapodast_kotott_az_rmksz_es_az_mszp_alapitvanya)

<sup>113</sup> See especially some statements of the leaders of the Covasna/Kovászna county branch of RMDSZ: <http://maszol.ro/index.php/belfold/7680-az-mszp-nek-szekelyfoldon-nincs-keresnivaloja>;

[http://www.3szek.ro/load/cikk/56641/kinek\\_tetszik\\_kinek\\_nem\\_mszp%E2%80%93rmksz\\_talalkozo&cm=85792](http://www.3szek.ro/load/cikk/56641/kinek_tetszik_kinek_nem_mszp%E2%80%93rmksz_talalkozo&cm=85792)

<sup>114</sup> Better relations were important for Fidesz in order to obtain the aid of RMDSZ in the campaign of registration for the Hungarian elections, as its smaller partners simply do not have sufficient organizational capacity for such a task. Another element of the deal between Fidesz and RMDSZ could have been the safe seat offered by Fidesz to László Tőkés on its ticket for the EP elections, which amounts to a removal of Tőkés from electoral competition in Romania.

Hungary's radical right party Jobbik currently lacks a partner party in Transylvania, though the press has reported about Jobbik's ties to both MPP and EMNP, especially among the rank and file of the parties and the youth organizations close to them. However, the central leadership of both parties rejects a cooperation with Jobbik and emphasize their partnership with Fidesz. Rather than seeking partnership with the existing parties, in 2013 Jobbik started to establish groups of sympathizers in the neighboring countries, including Romania.<sup>115</sup>

### **The nature of linkages**

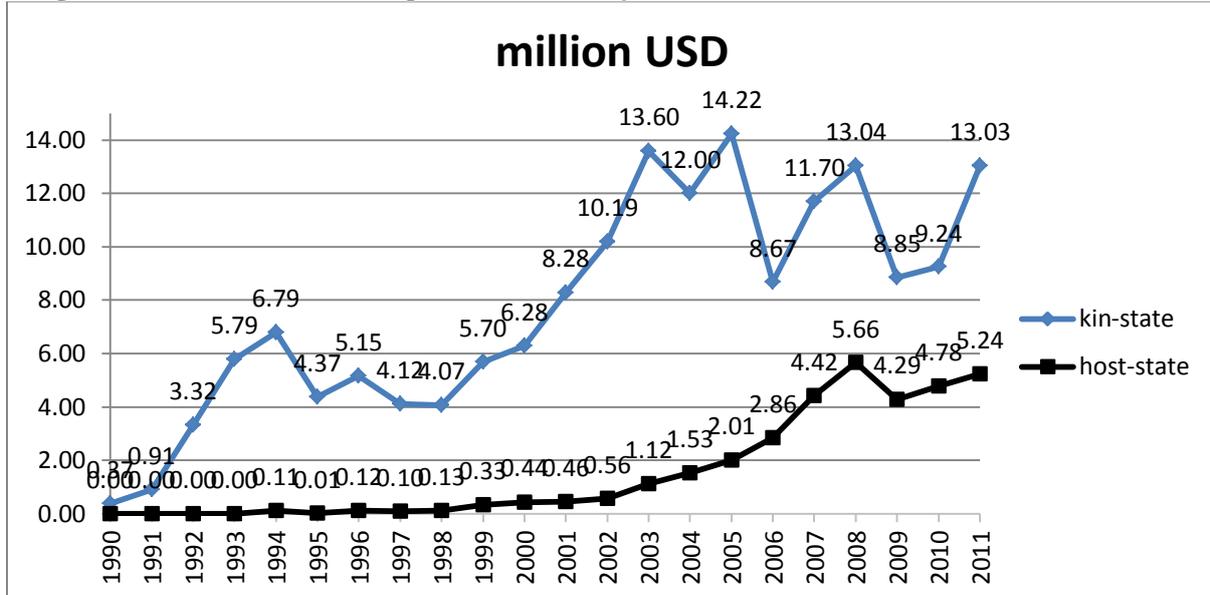
We have seen that the programmatic differences between the three Hungarian parties of Romania, as set out in the party documents, are not significant. Conversely, since the mid-1990s, clientelistic linkages can be considered increasingly important in the case of RMDSZ. Since 1994 the Romanian state budget allocates financing to the organizations of national minorities, and RMDSZ has complete control over these resources.<sup>116</sup> As shown in Figure 5.2, though the magnitude of these resources was rather low in the beginning, it grew to 5.66 million USD in 2008. Since the early 2000s the distribution of these resources in the community was met with increasing criticism, as RMDSZ distributed less than half of this money through open grants, using the rest for the running costs of its party organization (Gazda, 2004).

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<sup>115</sup> <http://jobbik.hu/hireink/kolozsvaron-megalakult-jobbik>. By the time of the finalization of this thesis, eight such Jobbik groups existed in Transylvania.

<sup>116</sup> Initially, it was not RMDSZ that received this funding directly, but the Communitas Foundation, also controlled by RMDSZ. The reason for this was that this way RMDSZ could also receive funding as a parliamentary party. However, in 2009 RMDSZ renounced to the latter source, as the sums received as a political party only amounted to ~3% of the money allocated to the Hungarian minority. See <http://www.kronika.ro/belfold/tizennyolcmillio-lejt-kap-az-rmdsz>

**Figure 5.2. Funds for the Hungarian community of Romania from the kin- and the host-state**



Author's computations. Sources: for Hungary: Bárdi and Misovitz (2010); Papp (2010); <http://www.bgazrt.hu/>; for Romania: Mohacsek (2009); yearly laws on Romania's budget.

However, access to really important resources became possible only after 1996, when RMDSZ became a governmental party, and obtained such portfolios as tourism (in 1996), public works and regional planning, commerce and communication (2004), environmental protection (2007, 2009) or culture (2009). It should be emphasized that the leaders of the radical faction did not obtain important public office during the government tenure of RMDSZ and some former RT members switched to the moderates after obtaining public office.

RMDSZ was also the beneficiary of the financial flows from Hungary, though in this respect the moderate leadership had to share the resources with its more radical opposition. The fact that the moderate leadership was able to obtain the control over the infrastructure created by Hungary for the implementation of the Status Law was a decisive moment which determined the balance of powers between the factions. However, as opposed to the allocations from the Romanian budget, the data about the Hungarian subsidies presented in Figure 5.2 should not be interpreted as resources that can be used by RMDSZ for strictly

clientelistic purposes. These figures are only an approximation,<sup>117</sup> they also include the running costs of the Hungarian subsidy system, and the extent to which RMDSZ could exert influence over their distribution has varied to a significant extent over time and also across the main components of the subsidy system. The data are only presented to illustrate the changing relative magnitude of the funds obtained by the Hungarian community from the kin- and the host state. The figures show that although financing from the kin-state is still significantly higher than from the host-state, the relative weight of the latter source has increased significantly, especially since 2007.

After 2010, Fidesz attempted to counterweight the dominant position of RMDSZ by taking away the existing structures of financial flows from RMDSZ and by entrusting the new infrastructure related to the applications for dual citizenship to EMNT/EMNP, and by decreasing the influence of the minority leaders over the decisions about the distribution of financial subsidies from the Hungarian state budget. The figures for Hungary also indicate that while these subsidies may exceed the direct funding provided by the Romanian budget for the Hungarian community, they are unequivocally of a lesser magnitude than the resources to which RMDSZ has access by controlling ministries with higher pork barrel potential.

Finally, in what concerns charisma, two leaders of the Hungarians of Romania stand out: Béla Markó, who has been the president of RMDSZ between 1993 and 2011, and László Tőkés, who has been the leader of RMDSZ's internal opposition and honorary president until 2003, and the most prominent leader of the RMDSZ's external opposition since then. The

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<sup>117</sup> The figures for Hungary have been computed in the following way: the subsidies for pupils studying in Hungarian schools (*oktatási-nevelési támogatás*) and the funding for higher education (Sapientia foundation) have been subtracted from the entire sum allocated from Hungary's budget, as these funds cannot be employed for clientelistic purposes by RMDSZ (though, as mentioned earlier, RMDSZ obtained about 2 million USD from the handling and processing costs of operating the system). The value obtained this way was multiplied by 37% (the estimated share of the funds destined for Transylvania from the entire budgetary allocation for the Hungarians beyond the borders, discounting exceptional investments; this is not a fixed share, I extrapolated the average of the shares of the funds going to Transylvania between 2010 and 2012 to the previous years too).

familiarity index of both politicians has been higher than 95% since data are available (1999), but probably also before, as both played a very important role in RMDSZ, moreover, Tőkés was also involved in the 1989 events that led to the fall of the communist regime. Based on survey data<sup>118</sup> it can be established that Tőkés was a more divisive leader than Markó, but his general approval turned into negative only in 2011. This, as well as the difference between his results at the 2007 elections for the European Parliament and the results of the two smaller parties at all other elections since 2008 proves that the charisma of Tőkés was a major asset for the opposition of RMDSZ, which, however, could not be converted to votes when he was not running in the elections. While Markó can also be considered a charismatic leader, the relative importance of his charisma for RMDSZ was significantly lower than that of Tőkés for the opposition, given the high clientelistic capacity of RMDSZ.

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<sup>118</sup> Surveys by CCRIT (2004, 2006), Max Weber Association (2005), TransObjective Consulting (2007, 2008), Kvantum Research (2010) and the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (2011).

## Chapter 6. The Hungarian parties of Slovakia

Slovakia is home to the second largest Hungarian minority, numbering 567,296 in 1991 (10.8% of the population), but decreasing to 520,528 in 2001 (9.7%) and 458,467 in 2011(8.5%).<sup>119</sup> The administrative division adopted in 1996 by Vladimír Mečiar's government and left almost unchanged in 2001 by the center-right coalition (also including the only Hungarian ethnic party existing by that time) is very unfavorable for the Hungarians, who live overwhelmingly in 16 districts (and in the cities of Bratislava and Košice) in a narrow stripe in the southern part of the country, along the border with Hungary, but constitute the majority only in 2 districts and in none of the regions (Petőcz, 1998). This community consequently differs from the Hungarian minorities in Romania and Serbia in that the areas they inhabit cannot be regarded as a coherent geographic region.

The Slovak party system has consisted of two major blocs since the fall of communism, but the identity of the blocs has undergone some changes over time. In the 1990s, the main cleavage was related less to the economic left-right or to attitudes towards communism (apart from the years prior to independence<sup>120</sup>), but rather to issues concerning the nation and to the nature of the regime. In the 2000s the economic dimension gained in salience, but it did not displace the former cleavage; rather, the two aspects overlay, pitting the economically leftist and Slovak nationalist parties against the economically right-wing and less nationalistic parties. The parties of the Hungarian minority sided always with the latter bloc, though cooperation was not always smooth. There is a very important difference between the two blocs in what concerns fragmentation: while the national left bloc has always been dominated by a large party (Vladimír Mečiar's HZDS in the 1990s and Robert Fico's SMER since the mid-2000s), the right was always fragmented, with several middle-sized parties fighting for the leading position (Deegan-Krause, 2006, 2013).

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<sup>119</sup> Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

<sup>120</sup> Slovakia became independent on January 1, 1993.

### **The first phase of Hungarian multi-party politics**

As opposed to Romania and Serbia, in Slovakia not a single political organization has been formed within the Hungarian minority, but four political parties emerged in the immediate aftermath of the regime change, of which three became relevant actors. The four parties - all of them ethnic - merged in 1998 after the adoption of a very restrictive electoral law. The period of representation through a single party lasted until 2009. The second phase of organizational pluralism is unique among the Hungarian minorities, as for the first time a multi-ethnic party has been created by Hungarian minority elites.

The first party that appeared after the regime change was *Független Magyar Kezdeményezés (FMK, Independent Hungarian Initiative)*. Initially, it was organized as a movement, and maintained close ties with the umbrella organization of the Slovak democratic opposition, *Verejnost' Proti Násiliu (VPN, Public Against Violence)*, on whose electoral lists it contested the 1990 elections, obtaining 5 seats in the Slovak National Council. FMK was also included into the Slovak government, holding the position of deputy prime minister. In 1992 FMK turned into a political party, changing its name into *Magyar Polgári Párt (MPP, Hungarian Civic Party)*. FMK/MPP defined itself as a liberal party, approached the minority issue from a human-rights perspective and prioritized the democratization of the country over minority rights, as it believed that the situation of the Hungarian minority can only be improved through governmental participation and the improvement of democracy in Czechoslovakia. FMK/MPP envisaged organizational pluralism within the minority: the Hungarian parties should cooperate with each-other in matters of national importance, but otherwise with the ideologically related parties of the majority. Cooperation along ideological lines with the mainstream parties was also considered as facilitating the presence of Hungarians in power, as regardless of the

ideological orientation of the cabinet the Hungarian party closest to it ideologically could have joined the government (Gyurcsík, 1996; Öllös, 2004; Szarka, 2004).<sup>121</sup>

FMK was also promised the creation of a federal ministry responsible for national minority issues, for which the party wanted to nominate Miklós Duray, the probably best-known Hungarian human rights activist and dissident in Slovakia, but eventually the ministry was not created. The failure convinced Duray that the Hungarian minority must go its own way instead of trying to integrate along ideological lines into the Slovak majority parties, consequently he created another organization in January 1990, called *Együttélés Politikai Mozgalom (EPM, Coexistence Political Movement)*. Initially, EPM was conceived as an umbrella for Slovakia's all minorities, so beside Hungarians, it also had Ruthenian and Polish members, but after Slovakia became independent in 1993, it turned into an exclusively Hungarian party. Contrarily to FMK/MPP, EPM prioritized the situation of minorities over the general issues of transition, and approached the minority issue from a self-determination perspective. EPM imagined the minority as a distinct pillar of Slovak society on top with (a preferably single) ethnic party, adopted the most radical tone among the three relevant parties, including demands for autonomy, and rejected participation in the government until 1997, advocating a "constructive opposition" strategy. There has been also a generation gap between FMK/MPP and EPM, the leadership of the former being socialized in the 1980s, while the latter belonged to a large extent to the 1968 generation active previously in CSEMADOK, the Hungarian cultural umbrella organization under communism (Gyurcsík, 1996; Bárdi, 2000; Öllös, 2004; Szarka, 2004; Csergő, 2007).

The third political party, *Magyar Kereszténydemokrata Mozgalom (MKDM, Hungarian Christian-Democratic Movement)* originated in a movement created in early 1990 as an initiative of Catholic intellectuals to reach out to rural religious voters. As such, the

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<sup>121</sup> Also, interview with László Öllös.

organization was also endorsed by FMK and EPM. Though initially MDKM sought cooperation with the Slovak Christian Democrats (KDH), due to the increasingly nationalist behavior of the latter, MKDM formed an electoral coalition with EPM at the 1990 elections. While lacking a distinctive image of their own in the beginning, from 1991 on MKDM adopted a markedly Christian-democratic doctrine, joined the European Democrat Union (EDU), and gradually developed into the largest Hungarian party under the leadership of Béla Bugár (Gyurcsík, 1996; Öllös, 2004; Szarka, 2004).

A less important party, *Magyar Néppárt (MNP, Hungarian People's Party)* was formed in the summer of 1991 by a splinter group from EPM, who were joined by some former MKDM members who were expelled because of advocating a tighter cooperation with EPM, possibly even a merger. The choice of the name was meant to indicate continuity with the main Hungarian organization from Czechoslovakia from the short post World War II democratic period. The main reason for the creation of the party was the fact that the three parties represented in the legislature voted in 1990 in favor of a law which established Slovak as the only official language of the country. MNP did not succeed to garner significant support, obtaining only four local counselor's seats at the 1994 local elections, but it was included in the electoral coalitions of 1992 and 1994, and also participated in the 1998 party merger (Angyal, 2004; Szarka, 2004).<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Several other small, insignificant parties claiming to stand for the Hungarian minority also emerged in Slovakia later. *Magyar Népi Mozgalom a Megbékélésért és a Jólétért (Hungarian Popular Movement for Reconciliation and Welfare)* was created in 1995. The existing Hungarian parties agreed that the organization was created as an attempt for a counter-party, with the assistance of the Mečiar-government, and regarded it as lacking any legitimacy within the community. The Party obtained 6.587 votes (0.19%) at the 1998 election (Szarka, 2004). Later the party changed its name into *Magyarok Szocialista Pártja (Socialist Party of Hungarians)*. In 1999 *Szlovákiai Magyarok Szocialista Pártja (Socialist Party of Hungarians in Slovakia)* was formed by a splinter from the former party (Korpás, 2001). Both parties remained insignificant. In 2001 members of the World Federation of Hungarians (Magyarok Világszövetsége) formed the *Magyar Föderalista Párt (Hungarian Federalist Party)*, a radical party which called for the federalization of Slovakia and the abolishment of the Beneš decrees. MFP only contested the 2002 local elections, obtaining 20 seats in the local governments, and the 2004 elections for the European Parliament, obtaining about 1.7% of the Hungarian votes (Orosz & Popély, 2005; HTMH, 2006b). A party of Hungarian-speaking Roma also existed in Slovakia, called *Szlovák Köztársaság Romáinak Magyar Demokratikus Mozgalma (Democratic Movement of the Hungarian Roma in the Slovak Republic)* (Korpás, 2001). All these small parties were banned in 2005, because of failing to comply with the registration requirements of the new law on political parties in Slovakia (European Free

### **Electoral alliances in 1992 and 1994**

Negotiations for electoral coalitions occurred between the Hungarian parties before the parliamentary elections of 1992, 1994 and 1998. In 1992, the talks were initiated by MPP after a disappointing participation in the VPN-led cabinet. EPM and MKDM already contested the 1990 elections in an electoral coalition, and obtained 8.66% of the votes. Given that the proportion of Hungarians was 10.8% in Slovakia according to the 1991 census, one could infer that the support of MPP was significantly lower than that of the two-party coalition, and it was expectable that it would not pass the threshold (which was just raised from 3% to 5%) on its own. While EPM and MKDM reached an agreement relatively easily again in 1992, no electoral coalition was concluded with MPP eventually. The main reason was that the other two parties imposed very strict conditions, demanding that MPP leave the governing coalition immediately, distance itself from the minority policies of the government, agree to stay in opposition after the elections, and endorse the idea of autonomy.<sup>123</sup> Though the first condition was later dropped, MPP refused to accept the other demands and criticized the other two parties for denying the results obtained by them while in government. Also, MPP reiterated that efficient minority protection can only be warranted by the majority, through legislation that protects the minorities, which indicated the party's continuing intention to participate in power.<sup>124</sup> After the failure to come to terms with MPP, the small MNP was invited to propose a few candidates for the joint list of EPM and KMDM, but was not recognized as a coalition partner and did not receive top slots on the ballot that would have provided a safe seat (Orosz & Popély, 2005: 377). The EPM-MKDM coalition obtained 7.42% of the votes and 14 seats (divided 9:5 between EPM and MKDM), while MPP failed to pass the threshold with 2.29% of the votes.

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Alliance, 2005). In December 2013 the number of Hungarian parties grew to three with the registration of *Magyar Kereszténydemokrata Szövetség (Hungarian Christian-Democratic Union)*.

<sup>123</sup> Az EPM és az MKDM közös nyilatkozata. *Új Szó*, March 12, 1992.

<sup>124</sup> A Magyar Polgári Párt Nyilatkozata *Új Szó*, March 24, 1992.

In 1994 the negotiations for a comprehensive Hungarian pre-electoral coalition were successful, MPP was also included into the electoral alliance called *Magyar Koalíció (MK)*, though the other partners were able to impose very unfavorable conditions on them. MPP could only nominate 9 candidates for the 200 positions on the coalition list, and of these only one was a relatively safe position (Gyurovszky, 1994b; Szarka, 2004). This meant a share of 4.5% of the total candidates and definitely less than 10% of the seats that could be obtained, which was obviously below the party's electoral support, as MPP obtained 23.6% of the Hungarian votes<sup>125</sup> at the previous parliamentary election and a similar result at the local elections that took place less than two months after the 1994 parliamentary elections.<sup>126</sup>

Also, the protocol of the coalition<sup>127</sup> reflected the ideology of EPM: a high emphasis was put on collective rights, while economic and social issues or the local governments were hardly mentioned. Moreover, the parties pledged to pursue conservative and Christian values as well as the traditions of Hungarian national liberalism in their parliamentary activity. MPP regarded this as an exclusion of other ideological orientations, socialism and liberalism other than national (Gyurovszky, 1994a). MNP members were again included on the list on non-winning positions (but the party was not accepted as a coalition partner).<sup>128</sup>

The parties entered the coalition for different reasons. After two years outside parliament MPP became isolated and had to choose between disappearing and accepting unfavorable conditions. After the 1992 failure it was obvious for the party that in order to survive they will have to accept any offer from the other two parties, and as a consequence, in the two years between the elections MPP pursued a strategy of almost unconditional cooperation with EPM and MKDM at the local and regional level and continuously

<sup>125</sup> Relative to the total support of MPP and EPM-MKDM.

<sup>126</sup> At the 1994 local elections, 24.9% of the elected Hungarian mayors and 18.5% of the Hungarian council members belonged to MPP (Csörgő, 2007 42, 48).

<sup>127</sup> Szerződés a Magyar Kereszténydemokrata Mozgalom, az Együttélés és a Magyar Polgári Párt együttműködéséről és koalíciójáról (1994). Reprinted in Fazekas and Hunčík (2005 215-222).

<sup>128</sup> This time the electoral system also played a role in this, as the threshold for 2 or 3 parties was 7%, but for 4 or more parties 10%, which would have rendered a four-member coalition much riskier.

emphasized the importance of cooperation in the media.<sup>129</sup> The senior partners of the coalition, especially EPM probably accepted to include MPP due to increased societal pressure for cooperation. Before the elections more than 100,000 signatures were gathered by civil society in favor of a “threefold” coalition, and polls indicated that even within the electorate of EPM the support for the coalition was very high (Gyurovszky, 1994a).

MK obtained 10.19% of the vote and 17 seats (9 EPM, 7 MKDM, 1 MPP). Despite the success of the joint endeavor MKDM decided to form its own parliamentary group, and increasingly distanced itself from EPM throughout the 1994-1998 parliamentary cycle, positioning itself between the two other parties (Angyal, 2004). This strategic move was also related to the government change in Hungary, as MSZP was less comfortable with the more radical EPM, while MPP was too small and ideologically close to SZDSZ; consequently, MKDM became the best potential partner for MSZP (Bárdi, 2000).<sup>130</sup>

### **The party merger of 1998**

The 1998 elections were a watershed moment in Slovak politics, leading to the removal of Vladimír Mečiar from power. However, the outcome of the election could not be taken for granted, as in order to prevent opposition coalescence, the Mečiar government adopted a new electoral law which introduced a very unusual electoral threshold: all members of an electoral coalition had to obtain at least 5% of the vote, otherwise the whole coalition remained outside parliament (Mesežnikov, 1997). Due to these prohibitive conditions the Slovak opposition parties created an electoral party called *Slovenská Demokratická Koalícia* (SDK), which allowed for dual party membership, so all member parties could maintain their identity (Marek & Powell, 2011; see also Angyal, 2004). While this option was also considered by the Hungarian parties, the Hungarians felt insecure with this solution and decided to merge the

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<sup>129</sup> Interview with Péter Vörös.

<sup>130</sup> Also, interview with Nándor Bárdi.

four parties. This way the *Magyar Koalíció Pártja* (MKP, *Party of Hungarian Coalition*) has been created (Öllös, 1998).

Former MKDM president Béla Bugár became the president of the new party and former EPM leader Miklós Duray was appointed honorary chairman. Further two deputy chairmen's positions were created, one for former MPP president László A. Nagy and another one for MKDM. The party statute also mandated the creation of two platforms in the party, one reuniting the national conservatives and Christian democrats and one liberal, with a relative weight of 80:20 in favor of the former (Öllös, 2004; Szarka, 2004).

After the 1998 elections MKP was included into the center-right coalition led by Mikuláš Dzurinda, and stayed in power for eight years (for assessments of this period see Hamberger (2004); Öllös (2006)). Governmental participation had important consequences on the party's internal affairs and organizational structure. As the party was busy in nominating personnel for public office, the institutionalization of the platforms was no longer treated as a priority, and they were soon abolished. Gradually the factions organized more or less along ideological lines that were the legacy of the predecessor parties were replaced by informal interest groups.<sup>131</sup> Two important groups developed: one composed mainly of public office holders better embedded into Slovak political and economic circles, and another with better nexuses towards Hungary. The latter group was mainly composed of former EPM members, the key politician being Miklós Duray, while the former contained politicians from all predecessor parties, though MPP members were somewhat overrepresented. MPP was somewhat advantaged in occupying public office, being the party with the strongest expert network, trained during the short participation in power between 1990-1992.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Interviews with, László Öllös, Géza Tokár.

<sup>132</sup> Interview with Péter Vörös.

While in power, serious conflicts were avoided within MKP, as an informal division of labor was maintained between the two interest groups.<sup>133</sup> Beside a great influence on the distribution of financial resources from Hungary, Duray was also contended by the fact that his position of honorary president (1998-1999) and later executive deputy chairman (1999-2007) basically amounted to a second presidency: while all other vice-presidents had a concrete domain they were responsible for, Duray could take decisions in any domain, which otherwise should be the privilege of the party president. This organizational feature was the consequence of the fact that due to his divisive personality and low acceptance by the Slovaks, Duray could not become MKP's president at the merger, so he stepped behind in favor of Bugár, but he was compensated with this parallel structure. Beside this, he also controlled considerable organizational resources within the party, having a great influence on CSEMADOK, the umbrella organization of Hungarian NGOs, and later the network of offices in charge of processing the applications for the Hungarian certificates under the Status Law (the SZKC offices).<sup>134</sup>

### **Change of leadership and split of MKP**

After eight years of governing, MKP was left out of the new coalition led by Robert Fico's SMER in 2006, who chose to form a cabinet with the ultra-nationalist *Slovak National Party* (SNS) and Vladimír Mečiar's much weakened HZDS. In opposition the internal balance soon tumbled within MKP. There were several issues over which the disagreements came to the fore with a vengeance.

First, party members were divided in what concerned the policy success of MKP during the past eight years, many considered that the most important issues have not been settled in a favorable way for the Hungarian minority: no Hungarian-majority county has been created by the 2001 administrative reform, the 1999 minority language law has not been

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<sup>133</sup> Interviews with Béla Keszegh, László Öllös, Géza Tokár

<sup>134</sup> Interviews with László Öllös, Zoltán Bara, Péter Vörös and Nándor Bárdi.

properly applied, a law on the financing of minority cultures has not been passed, and no highway has been constructed in the southern part of the country. The establishment of the Selye János University in Komárno/Komárom was the only significant achievement. Dissatisfied party members blamed the Bugár leadership for not being resolute enough during the EU conditionality period. This relative lack of success in the ethnopolitical domain created frustration especially among politicians belonging to the more radical group.<sup>135</sup>

Another issue that bred discontent with the Bugár leadership was the alleged inability of the party presidency to control the economic interest groups within MKP. In the interviews with the author several leaders of the post-split MKP complained that they felt that the presidency was simply an executive for the decisions of the economic committee of the party, which worked in a completely unaccountable manner.

The tensions between the factions reached a critical level when Bugár attempted to reduce Duray's powers at the 2007 March congress, while at the same time the more radical faction mounted a challenge against the Bugár leadership. Duray once again refrained from running for party president, but backed Pál Csáky in his challenge against Bugár,<sup>136</sup> making use of his huge influence on the district branches. Also, as Bochsler and Szócsik (2013b) pointed out, the fact that MKP was out of power shifted the internal balance of power in favor of the more radical group. However, what these authors did not address is that an important aspect of this shift of relative power was that the radicals could still rely on resources from Hungary, while the integrationist faction was relatively weakened by losing access to host-state resources.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Interviews with Béla Keszegh, László Öllös, Gyula Bárdos. The Selye János University was bargained by MKP in exchange for Bugár renouncing the position of speaker of the parliament to KDH, a position that should have been received by MKP as the second largest government party after the 2002 elections (Interview with Péter Vörös).

<sup>136</sup> There has been a personal rivalry between the two politicians, Csáky has already challenged Bugár twice unsuccessfully for the presidency of MKDM too.

<sup>137</sup> Interviews with László Öllös, Gyula Bárdos.

At the 2007 congress Csáky defeated Bugár by 169 votes to 155, and Duray maintained the second position in MKP as vice-president responsible for strategic issues.<sup>138</sup> Though Bugár has been offered the position of honorary president, he refused to accept any position in the new leadership, and it soon became clear that the new leadership attempted to completely marginalize Bugár and his closest circle within MKP.<sup>139</sup>

After the leadership change MKP began to emphasize ethnopolitical demands more resolutely, a shift that can be interpreted as radicalization. Csáky frequently mentioned autonomy in his speeches and also demanded the abolishment of the Beneš-decrees. Though a radicalization of discourse can be regarded as natural in opposition, MKP's change of tone occurred in a context of rising nationalist sentiment on the Slovak side (due primarily to the presence of SNS in the cabinet). As a consequence, the new direction of MKP has been depicted by the Slovak media as the counterpoint of SNS's nationalism, being stigmatized as radical and intransigent, as opposed to the cooperative and pragmatic direction followed by the previous leadership. After a few months of Csáky's leadership, MKP found itself isolated in the Slovak party system.<sup>140</sup>

The perceived radicalization of the party in an environment loaded with Slovak nationalism and feelings of insecurity among the Hungarians created a new opportunity for the former leadership of MKP. The split was consummated on June 7, 2009, one day after the elections to the European Parliament. This election result was not affected by the internal crisis yet, MKP maintained its 2 MEPs. The splinter group deliberately waited for the EP election, in order not to be seen as disadvantaging their former party.

It is important to emphasize that the split of MKP did not occur along the lines of the predecessor parties, the divisions that were determinant in 1998 have been reordered in the past decade. Rather, the divide that could no longer be reconciled ran between the more

<sup>138</sup> <http://www.bumm.sk/7992/uj-elnok-van-bugar-game-over-kepripot.html>

<sup>139</sup> Interviews with Zoltán Bara, László Solymos, Géza Tokár.

<sup>140</sup> Interviews with Dusan Héglí, József Berényi, Szabolcs Mózes, Péter Vörös.

radical group with close connections to Hungary and the group better integrated into the Slovak polity, the core of the latter being the former economic committee of MKP. While most people in the more radical group had a history in EPM (and to a lesser extent MKDM), the splinter group contained people from all three predecessor parties, as well as politicians who joined MKP after 1998.<sup>141</sup> Both Béla Bugár and Pál Csáky used to be members of MKDM, while József Berényi, who became the next president of MKP in July 2010, was a member of MPP.

### **The second phase of Hungarian multiparty politics**

No electoral cooperation occurred between MKP and Most-Híd at the four elections that took place in Slovakia since the split (one regional in 2009, one local in 2010 and two for the parliament in 2010 and 2012), except for sporadic agreements at the local elections.<sup>142</sup> Yet, in September 2012, at the pressure of Hungarian civil society, the parties agreed upon a document laying out the minimal level of minority rights that should be consensually assumed and demanded.<sup>143</sup> The document avoided delicate issues as autonomy or the Beneš-decrees, and little has been accomplished from the goals it has set out, yet it created a point of reference in what concerns programmatic goals and accountability.

At the first confrontation between the two parties at the regional elections of November 2009, MKP obtained 40 seats in the councils of the regions (counties), while

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<sup>141</sup> Interviews with József Berényi, László Öllös, László Solymos, Géza Tokár, Péter Vörös.

<sup>142</sup> After the end of the time period covered in the thesis, regional elections were held one more time, in 2013, and there were presidential elections in March 2014. At the regional elections there was partial cooperation between the two parties in two of the five regions where there is a significant Hungarian population. In each district of the Banská Bystrica/Besztercebánya region both parties fielded only a number of candidates equal to the half of the seats available for the district plus one, while in the Bratislava/Pozsony region both parties were part of a broad coalition of the center-right parties. In Slovakia, the electoral system at the regional level is a variant of majority voting in multiple-member constituencies (which are the administrative districts), which can turn into a block vote if citizens vote strictly along party lines, but in practice voters often split their votes among the candidates of multiple parties. Concerning the presidential elections, this was a first time when an ethnic candidate ran, in the person of Gyula Bárdos (MKP). Most-Híd did not support Bárdos, but a joint candidate together with KDH and SDKÚ, Pavol Hrušovský. Bárdos obtained 5.1% of the votes, while Hrušovský 3.3%.

<sup>143</sup> Available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/106793067/a-szlovakiai-magyarok-megmaradasanak-es-fejl%C5%91desenek-alapfeltetelei-alairt-valtozat>

Most-Híd only 2. However, the result was heavily distorted by the majoritarian electoral system, as the distribution of Hungarian votes was closer to 2:1 in MKP's favor.<sup>144</sup> At the 2010 parliamentary elections Most-Híd obtained 8.12% of the vote and 14 seats, while MKP failed to pass the threshold, obtaining only 4.33%. The Most-Híd ticket also included four candidates of the small Slovak *Občianska konzervatívna strana (OKS, Civic Conservative Party)*, all of whom got elected as a result of preferential voting.<sup>145</sup> Most-Híd was included into the cabinet of Iveta Radičová, obtaining the position of deputy prime minister for human and minority rights, as well as two ministries. While Most-Híd has become the strongest party of the Hungarian minority at the national level, at the 2010 local elections it was MKP again that performed better, obtaining 129 mayors and 1194 councilor's seats, while Most-Híd only 95 mayors (of these 85 in localities with a significant Hungarian population and the rest located in northern districts) and 908 local councilors (Tokár, 2011). At the 2012 parliamentary elections Most-Híd lost some support (6.89%), but stayed in parliament, while MKP was unable to improve (4.28%) and remained out of parliament for the second time. However, as SMER obtained an absolute majority, Most-Híd was not invited into the government in 2012, though it was entrusted the position of Government Commissioner on National Minorities (the office of the deputy PM of the previous cabinet being abolished).

Electoral cooperation between the two parties was not even discussed as a serious option at either the 2010 or 2012 parliamentary elections. In 2010, MKP expected that Most-Híd would not pass the threshold, and would disappear soon. This strategy was based on the results of the 2009 regional elections, but also on a poll conducted three months before the elections, which indicated that 51% of the Hungarians supported MKP and only 28% Most-Híd (Lampl, 2010). Consequently, the rhetoric of MKP in the 2010 campaign was very negative towards Most-Híd, they tried to portray them as traitors of the community, of the

<sup>144</sup> MKP obtained about 67.5% of the joint vote of the two parties, while Most-Híd 32.5% (Ravasz, 2013). For the electoral system see footnote 142.

<sup>145</sup> The Slovak preferential electoral system is discussed later.

nation.<sup>146</sup> The success of Most-Híd in 2010 in spite the polls has been explained by political analysts by a spiral of silence, the novelty of an alternative after 12 years of unity, but also by strategic voting by MKP supporters who wanted to make sure that both parties pass the threshold (Lampf, 2010; Ravasz, 2013).

However, taking the result of the regional elections as a starting point was flawed not only because in the meanwhile Most-Híd could institutionalize, but especially because at the parliamentary elections the entire territory of the country is a single electoral district. Thus, the parties only need to field a single national list of candidates, which is advantageous for parties that have charismatic leaders like Bugár. As an MKP leader formulated it, this way Most-Híd “didn’t have to find eight Bugárs for each district.”<sup>147</sup>

In 2012 there were some exchanges between the parties concerning a potential electoral cooperation, but the parties proposed unacceptable deals for each-other. Most-Híd offered each third position on its list to MKP, but the latter demanded a coalition between equal partners,<sup>148</sup> considering that abandoning their own party label would mean self-liquidation.<sup>149</sup> MKP leaders were obviously also hoping that their 2010 result was a one-time failure,<sup>150</sup> moreover, significant changes occurred within the party since the last election which provided grounds for optimism: Pál Csáky was replaced as president by the more consensual József Berényi, and MKP deployed a positive campaign in 2012 instead of demonizing Most-Híd.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Interviews with Dusán Héglí, Géza Tokár, Péter Vörös

<sup>147</sup> Interview with Gyula Bárdos

<sup>148</sup> Interviews with Gyula Bárdos, Péter Vörös.

<sup>149</sup> Also, there was a negative precedent in this respect. As mentioned, in 2010 four members of OKS have been elected on the Most-Híd ticket. However, Most-Híd denied OKS the possibility to have a vote in the council of the coalition and to grant them a share from the funding received as a parliamentary party. This was another argument against MKP accepting positions on Most-Híd’s list. Interview with László Öllös, Szaboles Mózes.

<sup>150</sup> Interview with József Berényi

<sup>151</sup> The changes continued in MKP after the elections. In September 2012 the party changed its name into *Magyar Közösség Pártja* (Party of Hungarian Community). The change was motivated by the fact that since the creation of Most-Híd, the party cannot claim to function as a coalition, but the new name also conveys the goal of collective rights and integration into Slovak society as a community.

Contrarily to 2010, in 2012 it was Most-Híd who were arguably less interested in cooperation, as they were hoping that a second failure of MKP to enter parliament would be a very serious and perhaps fatal blow to the latter.<sup>152</sup> Also, regardless of the form of cooperation (a proper coalition, or MKP candidates on the Most-Híd ticket), the preferential electoral system could have been advantageous for MKP rather than Most-Híd. In MKP there is no charismatic leader like Bugár, but there are more politicians with moderate levels of popularity than in Most-Híd, and this could have advantaged them if running on a joint list.<sup>153</sup>

One can conclude that the better results of Most-Híd at the parliamentary elections and their weaker performance at the local and regional level (also corroborated by the results of the 2013 regional elections) are due to the differential organizational capacity and societal embeddedness of the two parties (in which respect MKP does better) and to the nature of the electoral system used for the parliamentary elections, which advantages parties with charismatic leaders (in which Most-Híd has an advantage). Bugár's charisma is indeed the most important asset of Most-Híd, and this factor was also crucial in the success of the party to move beyond ethnic appeals, a feature which I will address in more detail.

### **Most-Híd – a multi-ethnic party based on leader charisma**

While between 1990 and 2009 the Hungarians in Slovakia have been represented only by ethnic parties, Most-Híd was established as a multi-ethnic party which also includes ethnic Slovak politicians. Although its support base remains concentrated in the southern districts, where there is a significant Hungarian population, the party pursues a state-wide strategy and

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<sup>152</sup> Interviews with Szabolcs Mózes, László Öllös

<sup>153</sup> This belief was widely shared in MKP (interviews with Gyula Bárdos, László Öllös), but also Péter Vörös of Most-Híd considered it plausible. A comparison of the preference votes cast for the two parties' top 15 politicians in 2010 yielded 12 Most-Híd vs. 8 MKP candidates for the first 20 positions of a hypothetical joint list, and 14 Most-Híd vs. 6 MKP candidates in 2012 (20 was the number of MPs obtained by MKP in 2002 and 2006). However, such a simple comparison is also distorted by the difference of the votes cast for the two parties, which advantages Most-Híd, so the hypothesis remains plausible, especially if one considers that the relevant figures for the two parties were the 2010 results. One should also note that in 2010 four of the elected candidates on Most-Híd's ticket were actually OKS members, and three of them advanced from rather low positions to get elected.

has branches also in the northern part of the country, even if it cannot claim having become a nationwide party.

The name of the party means “bridge” in both Slovak and Hungarian, and Most-Híd defines itself as the party of inter-ethnic cooperation. Although Most-Híd is a multi-ethnic party, it must be stressed that it emerged as an initiative of Hungarian elites, into which also Slovaks were invited, and its leaders define it as a multi-ethnic party in which Hungarians constitute the majority.<sup>154</sup> Though sometimes MKP depicts Most-Híd as not national enough or even anti-national, implicitly they also regard it as a party of the Hungarians, as demonstrated for instance by the joint document of September 2012 mentioned above. This is the main reason why the party is included into the analysis of intra-ethnic political dynamics in this thesis, contrarily to some multi-ethnic parties in Serbia which also obtain a significant number of Hungarian votes, but which are dominated by majority elites who coopted minority politicians into their organizations.

Multiple factors played a role in the decision to form a multi-ethnic party instead of an ethnic one. With another ethnic party it would have been more difficult for the initiators to explain the split after having emphasized for a decade that one must not divide the community. By creating the new party as multi-ethnic it was also easier to differentiate it from MKP, to frame it as a moderate party of cooperation and MKP as a radical party which cannot be attractive for the Slovaks.<sup>155</sup> The changing demographic conditions are also favorable for multi-ethnic appeals. The incidence of intermarriage among Hungarians and Slovaks is high and increasing (28.1% of the Hungarians married a non-Hungarian partner in the period 1990-2010 according to Gyurgyík *et al.* (2010)), and 17% of Hungarian children

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<sup>154</sup> Parliamentary group leader László Solymos stated in an interview with the author that a Slovak majority would be difficult to imagine in the party.

<sup>155</sup> Interviews with Béla Keszegh, Szabolcs Mózes, Gyula Bárdos

attend Slovak-language schools.<sup>156</sup> Strong ethnic appeals are less attractive for these groups of voters, and an increasing proportion of the Hungarians simply does not want confrontation.

However, the most important factor that rendered a multi-ethnic party project feasible was the very high popularity of Bugár among both Hungarians and Slovaks. It was straightforward to build an ideology of inter-ethnic reconciliation on Bugár's personality and charisma, peculiarly in a context marked by a resurgence of Slovak nationalism. Bugár was not only popular with the electorate, he was also regarded as a trustworthy partner by the Slovak parties (as opposed to other MKP leaders as Duray, Csáky or even Berényi, who were (and are) not trusted on the Slovak side).<sup>157</sup>

Given that the pool of Hungarian voters is limited and shrinking, another ethnic party could have easily ended up as MPP in 1992, with insufficient support to pass the electoral threshold.<sup>158</sup> Consequently, cross-ethnic appeals were considered essential for expanding the electorate by the initiators of Most-Híd. As a matter of fact, also the pre-split MKP was able to obtain some Slovak votes, especially in 2002 and 2006 (see table 9.1.). Given the high bloc relevance and stability of the Slovak party system, but also the high fragmentation and turnover of parties (Deegan-Krause, 2013: 277) and the absence of a real charismatic leader on the Slovak right, if the party could grow above 15%, it could hope to transform into a major governing party, even a *formateur* in a future government.<sup>159</sup> But given that the share of Hungarians dropped below 10% at the 2002 census, such a goal could only be obtained by opening towards the Slovaks. While such a strategy could not be pursued within MKP, as the more radical group never accepted to involve Slovaks into the party,<sup>160</sup> it could be credibly

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<sup>156</sup> Interview with Pál Csáky

<sup>157</sup> Interview with Dusan Héglí

<sup>158</sup> While sometimes parallels are drawn between MPP and Most-Híd, especially by more radical MKP leaders, both József Berényi, the current president of MKP and Péter Vörös, a former Most-Híd MP confirmed (as former MPP members) that the idea of transforming MPP into a multi-ethnic party never arose.

<sup>159</sup> Interview with Zoltán Bara

<sup>160</sup> Interview with László Solymos

embraced by Bugár, who has regularly performed better in national polls than most leaders of the Slovak right-wing parties.<sup>161</sup>

The central role of leader charisma in Most-Híd's success is reflected clearly by the distribution of the preference votes<sup>162</sup> at parliamentary elections. Preference votes indicate that Bugár is not only the most popular politician among Hungarian voters, but also that he was more popular among Slovak voters than any Slovak candidate who ran on the Most-Híd ticket.

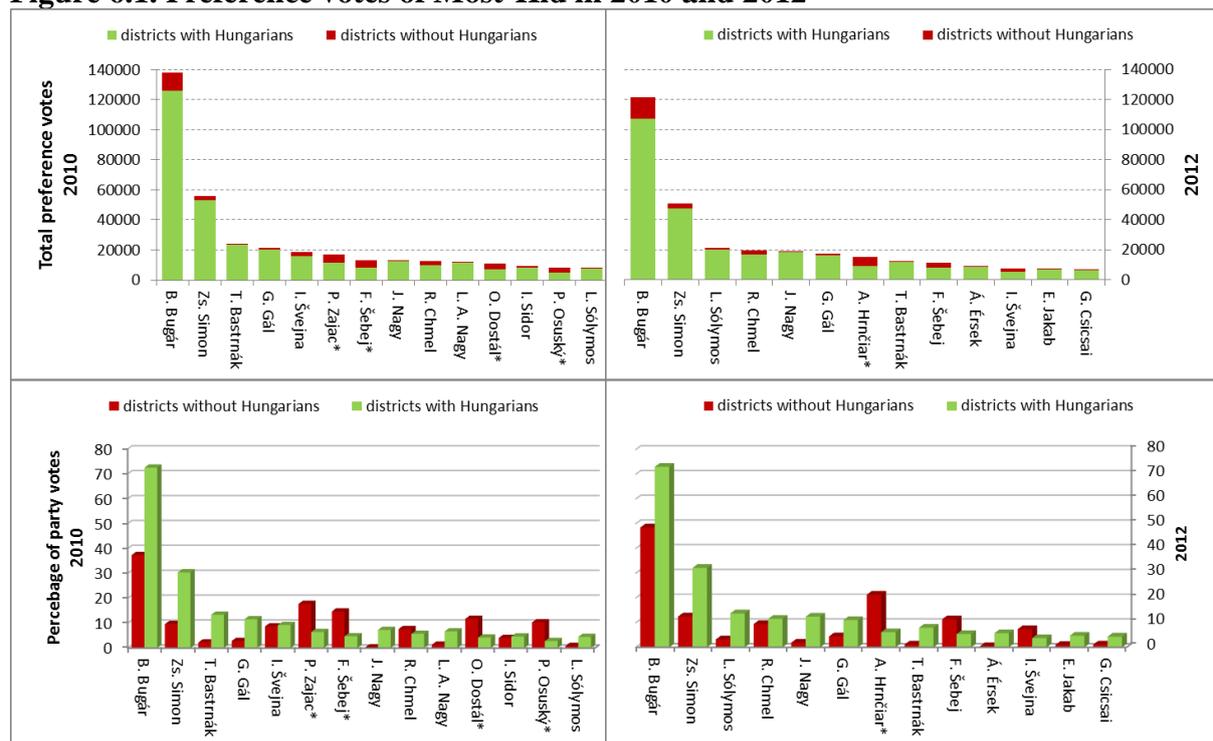
The graphs in Figure 6.1. display a considerable gap between the preference votes of Béla Bugár and the second most popular candidate on the ticket. More interesting from our perspective is the breakdown of preference votes according to their origin (electoral districts in the Hungarian language area and outside), which is a good approximation of the distribution of the preference votes according to the ethnicity of the voters. The graphs show that Bugár is the most popular politician of Most-Híd also in the northern parts of Slovakia, that is, also among the ethnic Slovak voters of the party. In 2012 the number of his preference votes that came from the north was more than double as compared to that obtained by the most popular ethnic Slovak politician of the party. The 2010 results show a somewhat narrower advantage for Bugár, but in 2010 the Most-Híd ticket also included four well-known Slovak intellectuals fielded by OKS.

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<sup>161</sup> Bugár was usually among the five most trustworthy politicians according to nationally representative surveys, and even such polls were published in which he was regarded as the most credible politician in Slovakia, e.g. in a poll from 2012, 68% of the respondents had a positive opinion about him (<http://www.topky.sk/cl/1000080/1299033/Prieskum-dovekyhodnosti-politikov--Mojsejova-je-nesympaticka-pre-81-5--ludi>)

<sup>162</sup> The Slovak electoral system uses open party lists, allowing voters to mark four (or fewer) candidates on the ballot. Since 2006, candidates that obtain 3% of the preference votes move to the top of the list, and if more candidates achieve this, they are ranked according to the number of their preference votes (Beblavý & Veselkova, 2012)

**Figure 6.1. Preference votes of Most-Híd in 2010 and 2012**



Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. Candidates marked with \* are members of the OKS party in 2010 and independent ethnic Slovak candidates in 2012.

According to Ravasz (2013), there are significant differences between the voters of MKP and Most-Híd in what concerns the factors that influence party choice. Data from a poll conducted by the Focus agency on a sample representative of the Hungarian electorate, reproduced in Table 6.1, show that for Most-Híd voters the most important factor influencing party choice is the person of the leader. Conversely, for MKP voters the person of the leader comes only third, after the representation of Hungarian interests and the party program.

**Table 6.1. Main factors influencing party choice among Hungarians in Slovakia in 2012**

	Total sample	Most-Híd	MKP	Slovak parties	undecided	abstainers
Party leader	1.88	1.65	2.06	2.00	2.31	2.45
Representation of Hungarian interests	1.96	1.73	1.24	3.83	2.92	2.27
Party program	1.98	1.93	1.96	1.93	2.29	2.64
Local candidates	2.45	2.28	2.09	3.09	3.15	3.50
Electoral campaign	2.70	2.51	2.67	3.16	2.69	3.00
Habit	2.92	3.07	2.26	3.49	3.50	2.27
Gorilla-file	3.37	3.60	3.23	2.86	3.71	3.55

Source: Ravasz (2013). The numbers represent the means of evaluations on a 1-5 scale, 1 being very important and 5 not important at all

### **A note on institutions**

As opposed to Romania and Serbia, the impact of institutions on the development of the minority party system has been relatively low. Until 2005 it was not difficult to register a political party, but since then 10,000 signatures (but no territorial distribution) are required.<sup>163</sup>

By the time of the legislation change MKP was the only relevant Hungarian party, so the law did not influence the development of the minority party system, though some less relevant Hungarian parties were deleted from the register of political parties as a consequence of the new law.<sup>164</sup> However, the electoral law exerted an enormous impact in the merger of the Hungarian parties in 1998. Also, the 5% threshold and the absence of any facilitating rules has contributed to the wasting of about 40% of the Hungarian votes in both 2010 and 2012, and about 25% in 1992.

### **Making sense of the Hungarian party system of Slovakia**

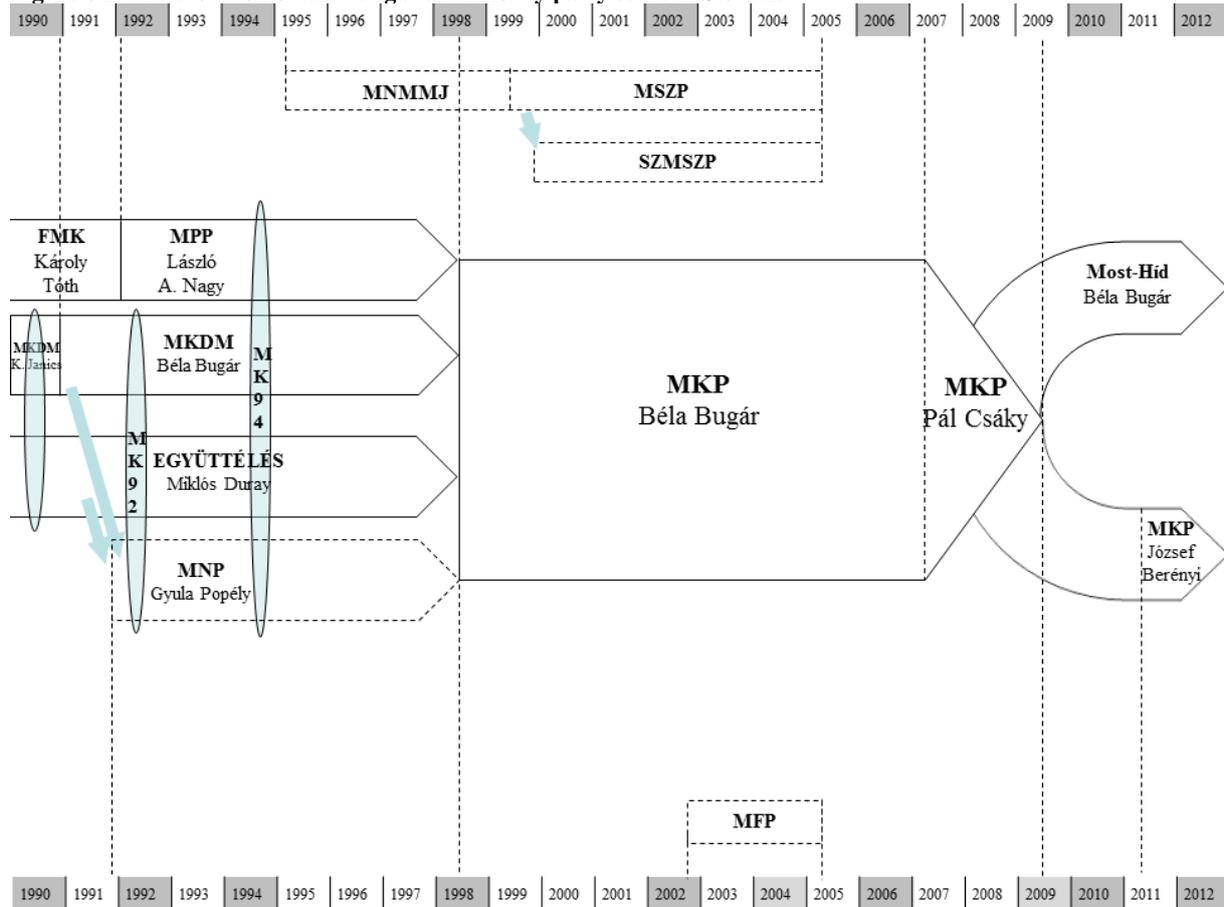
Given that two distinct phases of organizational pluralism can be distinguished in the case of the Hungarians of Slovakia, it makes more sense to compare only the parties that were active simultaneously than to classify all the organizations that have existed since 1990. Though I will also attempt to highlight the differences between the parties across the different phases (before 1998, between 1998 and 2009 and after 2009), the comparison within the two phases of multipartism enjoys priority. The process of the emergence, splinters and mergers of Hungarian parties in Slovakia is illustrated in Figure 6.2.

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<sup>163</sup> Law on political parties (2005), art. 6 (4).

<sup>164</sup> Note, however, that the most recently registered Hungarian party, MKDSZ, was created by “buying” and transforming a previously existing (non-ethnic) political party.

Figure 6.2. The evolution of the Hungarian minority party scene in Slovakia



Arrows indicate splits, ellipses electoral coalitions, irrelevant organizations shown with dashed lines.

In Slovakia we find successful party emergence on both outbidding and underbidding strategies. Most-Híd is clearly an example for successful new party entry on an *underbidding* platform, moreover, it can be classified as *lateral underbidding*, as the relative weight of ethnic issues (as opposed to other issues, most importantly economic) is significantly lower than for any of the other Hungarian parties that have been active in Slovakia. Going back to the predecessor parties, the creation of EPM on a more radical platform was triggered by Duray's frustration over FMK's cooperationist strategy which was insufficient for creating a ministry for the minorities, and as such, it can be classified as an instance of *outbidding*. Moreover, EPM remains the only Hungarian minority party which for some time was more successful on an outbidding platform than its rivals. Conversely, MKDM's growth at the expense of EPM can also be linked to a toning down of the party's rhetoric; thus, this shift of strategy is another example for the success of *underbidding* appeals.

## Programmatic goals

The salience of the autonomy issue in Slovakia can be considered relatively low when compared to Romania or Serbia. Partly, this is explained by the unfavorable settlement pattern of the Hungarians, which is not suitable for territorial autonomy, but also by the relatively more prosperous economic situation of Slovakia as compared to Hungary since the early 2000s, which rendered integration into the host society a more attractive option for minority members.<sup>165</sup>

In the first phase of multi-party politics EPM was the most vocal advocate of autonomy, but MPP<sup>166</sup> and MKDM<sup>167</sup> also elaborated conceptions about various types of self-government (cultural and educational autonomy, a special status for administrative units with a Hungarian majority). The earlier documents of EPM reflected a corporatist approach which could be traced back to the ideas of the 1968 state reform (Öllös, 2004). They first proposed that the representatives of the minorities elected to Slovakia's parliament should function as a separate chamber, with decisional rights in the domains related to the identity of the minorities (culture, education, regional development and investments in the areas where they form a majority etc.).<sup>168</sup> Later they demanded the recognition of the Hungarians as a partner nation, on equal footing with the Slovaks.<sup>169</sup> EPM referred to the Hungarians as to a *national community* instead of a *national minority*, and was the only party which regularly used the term *territorial* autonomy in its discourse. The most important event in the history of the Hungarians' struggle for autonomy in Slovakia, the Komárno/Komárom Meeting of January 1994, was also organized by EPM, with assistance by MKDM. The document

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<sup>165</sup> Interview with Zoltán Bara.

<sup>166</sup> Gazdag kisebbséget. A Magyar Polgári Párt nemzeti kisebbségi programja (1992). Reprinted in Bárdi and Éger (2000).

<sup>167</sup> A Szlovák Köztársaság Nemzeti Tanácsának törvénye a nemzeti kisebbségek és etnikai csoportok helyzetéről és jogairól a Szlovák Köztársaságban. A Magyar Kereszténydemokrata Mozgalom javaslata (February 1993). Reprinted in Bárdi and Éger (2000)

<sup>168</sup> Az Együttélés 1990. évi választási programja. Reprinted in Bárdi and Éger (2000).

<sup>169</sup> Az elnyomott kisebbségből legyen társnemzet (January 10, 1993). Available at [http://www.duray.sk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=81:az-elnyomott-kisebbssegbl-legyen-tarsnemzet-&catid=1:dm-cikk&Itemid=60](http://www.duray.sk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=81:az-elnyomott-kisebbssegbl-legyen-tarsnemzet-&catid=1:dm-cikk&Itemid=60). See also Duray (2014)

adopted here demanded the creation of either (1) a single administrative unit spanning the entire southern strip of the country, where the proportion of the Hungarians would have been over 60%; or (2) the creation of three counties with Hungarian absolute majority, in Western, Central and Eastern Slovakia. Though the initial plan of EPM was to set up a committee of 100 members entrusted with the outward representation of the community and the adopted declaration and which could be considered a provisional Hungarian National Council (Duray, 2014), this body was not formed at the resistance of the other parties, especially MPP, which was already reluctant to participate at the meeting (finally they participated as “guests”), and did not consider the demands realistic. MPP did not endorse the idea of a partner-nation either, and instead of the creation of “ethno-regions”, advocated the free association of municipalities in its documents about autonomy (Öllös, 2004).

Beside these, there were also further important differences between the parties in the first phase of multi-party politics. First, there was a divide between FMK/MPP and EPM concerning the judgment and critique of the communist system. For the former, the idea of regime change also entailed a reform of the Hungarian institutional system, most importantly of CSEMADOK, and the dissociation of civil society from the political parties. But given that the backbone of EPM was precisely the former communist cultural organization, EPM was not interested in this project, and instead imagined the creation of a Hungarian pillar of society, with a single political party on top of the hierarchy, above all important societal organizations, and the integration of this pillar in a corporatist fashion into Slovak society. Due to their positions in the past regime, EPM was also reluctant to formulate a critique of the former communist regime. Second, because of the self-determination perspective EPM was more supportive of Slovakia’s independence (arguing that in an independent Slovakia the relative power of Hungarians would grow as their proportion would have increased), while MPP and MKDM believed that the federal structure can provide political stability and

contain Slovak nationalism. Third, classical ideologies played a significantly more important role in Slovakia than in the other two studied countries: FMK/MPP advocated liberal individualism, MDKM defined itself as Christian democratic, and although EPM did not embrace any ideology at the declarative level, it was best characterized as national conservative (Öllös, 2004; Csergő, 2007).<sup>170</sup>

In preparation for the 1998 elections, the parties of MK signed a cooperation protocol with the *Slovak Democratic Coalition* (SDK) in 1997, in which they agreed to refrain from demanding territorial autonomy based on ethnic principles.<sup>171</sup> As a result of governmental participation, the issue of autonomy disappeared from the agenda of MKP for more than a decade. Instead, more emphasis was put on the reform of the local self-governments and from 2002 on the need to correct the disadvantageous administrative division adopted in 2001. The term “autonomy” resurfaces only after the split of MKP, in the 2012 election manifesto of the party,<sup>172</sup> but only as a general aim, without details.

Most-Híd’s programmatic documents issued until the end of the time-period covered in this thesis<sup>173</sup> do not contain any references to minority self-government or even to the necessity of correcting the administrative system. Of the 22 points of the short version of Most-Híd’s program<sup>174</sup> only one deals with minority-related issues, the concrete tasks mentioned being the adoption of a law about the rights of national minorities and about the

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<sup>170</sup> Note, however, that despite their differences, both MPP and EPM adhered to the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party (Orosz & Popély, 2005).

<sup>171</sup> A hosszú távú együttműködés alapja (December 2, 1997). Reprinted in Bárdi and Éger (2000). The Hungarian parties also pledged to refrain from demanding a Hungarian language university and to tackle the issue of the Beneš decrees.

<sup>172</sup> Available at <http://www.mkp.sk/cikkek/sajtokozlemenyek/2012/01/25/magyar-koalicio-partja-valasztasi-programja-2012>

<sup>173</sup> However, in 2013 Most-Híd commissioned a strategic document about minority policies, which is supportive of cultural and educational self-government (accomplished through a “smaller elected body”), and raises the issue of administrative reform (while regarding territorial autonomy as not feasible). This document, adopted after the endpoint of the period covered by the thesis, brings Most-Híd’s platform very close to that of MKP, so its adoption can be interpreted as an attempt to engage in valence competition with MKP in the aftermath of the agreement about the “minority minimum” in 2012. It is an open question how claims for minority self-government can be made compatible with multi-ethnic appeals. See: A Híd szlovákiai magyar nemzetpolitikai stratégiája. Available at <http://www.most-hid.sk/sites/default/files/magyars%C3%A1lpolitika.pdf>

<sup>174</sup> Available at <http://www.most-hid.sk/hu/node/276>

financing of minority cultures. Beside these, many of the party's more concrete proposals are related rather to interculturalism and multiculturalism than minority self-government.<sup>175</sup> This warrants classifying Most-Híd as a protectionist rather than an autonomist party, more towards the minimalist end of ethno-political demands continuum than all other Hungarian parties from all three countries.

### **Strategies in Slovak politics**

Concerning party strategy, EPM and also MKDM can be classified as pursuing a tribune strategy until 1997, which is obviously not independent from the fact that during this period – with a short break in 1994, when all Hungarian parties supported the Moravčík-cabinet in parliament – nationalist governments were ruling the country. But EPM and MKDM were advocating an opposition strategy even before 1992, when MPP was participating in power. However, after 1997 all Hungarian parties accepted to participate in government. MKP stayed in power for eight years, and party leaders I interviewed acknowledged that they would have eagerly continued, had SMER not refused them. Not even the post-split MKP has reverted to a tribune strategy, they continuously emphasize their willingness to cooperate, despite the perceptions that developed about them in the Slovak public sphere.

Most-Híd defines itself as the party of Slovak-Hungarian reconciliation and puts even higher value on cooperation, as reflected in their party slogan (Strana spolupráce - Az együttműködés pártja). Beside this, another important element of Most-Híd's strategy is to picture MKP (especially in the Slovak press) as a radical party which is unsuitable for interethnic cooperation and also a puppet of Fidesz. In this sense Most-Híd comes close to the behavior of Slovak politicians and media, who tend to either ignore MKP or portray it as radical, to depict it as identical with Fidesz or even Jobbik. MKP leaders deny accusations of being unable to cooperate with the Slovaks, as they do that at the local and regional level, and

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<sup>175</sup> A Most-Híd párt programja (2009); Most-Híd Választási program 2010; Csak felelősen. A Híd párt program-célkitűzései a 2012-es parlamenti választásokra (the documents are no longer available online).

many of their leading politicians were involved in the Slovak governments between 1998 and 2006.

While Most-Híd emphasizes cooperation and rejects MKP's rhetoric as exclusivist, too radical and sometimes even atavistic, MKP politicians believe that a multi-ethnic party is at odds with the interests of the Hungarian community, and that the policies and rhetoric of Most-Híd assist the Slovaks in accomplishing the "silent assimilation" of the Hungarians. The strongest formulation was used by former MKP president Pál Csáky, who stated that the emergence of Most-Híd is "simply a national catastrophe."<sup>176</sup> MKP leaders claim that most politicians of their rival are opportunists, political adventurers who have nothing to do with minority issues, the party is nothing more than an economic interest group hidden behind an intercultural rhetoric,<sup>177</sup> and also claim that the party sends different messages to Slovak and Hungarian audiences.

### **Relations with the parties and government of Hungary**

The formation of multiple minority parties in the immediate aftermath of the regime change allowed them to maintain a closer relationship with the parties from Hungary along ideological lines: FMK-MPP with SZDSZ and initially Fidesz (which was a liberal party by that time), MKDM and EPM with MDF and KDNP. Although the Antall doctrine implied that the Hungarian government should treat all legitimate minority partners as partners, the primary partner for the right-wing government was EPM. During the socialist government of Gyula Horn MKDM became the cabinet's primary partner, as in this period MPP was too weak to be a counterweight of EPM, but also too close ideologically to SZDSZ.<sup>178</sup> EPM continued its good relationship with the right-wing parties, now also including Fidesz, which transformed from a liberal to a conservative party (Bárdi, 2000). The tenure of the first Orbán government coincided with the participation in power of MKP, the single Hungarian party by

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<sup>176</sup> Interviews with Pál Csáky and József Berényi

<sup>177</sup> Interview with Géza Tokár

<sup>178</sup> Interview with Nándor Bárdi.

that time, and in this period the faction of Miklós Duray consolidated its position as the politician with the best embeddedness in Hungary. As opposed to Romania, where the central leadership of RMDSZ was able to prevent the more radical RT to obtain control over the infrastructure for the implementation of the status law, in Slovakia the network of offices was entrusted to an association over which Duray had great influence. As a consequence, Duray was successful in maintaining his strong position in Budapest also during the MSZP-SZDSZ cabinets in power between 2002 and 2010.<sup>179</sup>

When Fidesz got back into power in 2010, there were already two minority parties in Slovakia, and Fidesz clearly chose the side of MKP while declaring outright war on Most-Híd, claiming that a multi-ethnic party is at odds with Hungarian national interest.<sup>180</sup> Most-Híd has not been invited either to MÁÉRT or KMKF. Although Most-Híd leaders stress that the Hungarian government should not ignore the option of the majority of Hungarian voters in Slovakia and should treat all legitimate organizations as partners,<sup>181</sup> the tensioned relationship with Fidesz also allows Most-Híd to easier differentiate itself from both the Hungarian government and MKP, which increases their acceptance and coalition potential among the Slovak parties.<sup>182</sup> With the words of a journalist I interviewed, this way Most-Híd can claim to be “good Hungarians who are not Orbán’s friends.”<sup>183</sup> Compromise with Slovaks is seen as the key to policy success, as opposed to good relations and embeddedness in Budapest. However, the price for Most-Híd’s ability to capitalize on keeping distance from the Hungarian government is that Hungarian public media often portrays Most-Híd as more anti-Hungarian than even SNS.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Interviews with László Öllös, Nándor Bárdi.

<sup>180</sup> The speaker of the Hungarian parliament, László Kövér declared in the aftermath of the 2012 parliamentary elections in Slovakia that Béla Bugár, the president of Most-Híd, betrayed the Hungarian nation. See: [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20120316\\_kover\\_ugynoktorveny](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20120316_kover_ugynoktorveny)

<sup>181</sup> Interviews with Dusán Hégli, László Solymos, Péter Vörös

<sup>182</sup> Interviews with Dusán Hégli and László Öllös

<sup>183</sup> Interview with Szabolcs Mózes

<sup>184</sup> Interview with Dusán Hégli

Despite the poor relationship with the right in Hungary, Most-Híd did not develop a close relationship with the parties of the left in Hungary either.<sup>185</sup> The main explanation for this is primarily that Most-Híd defines itself as a center-right party, which was also reflected in their application for membership in the European People's Party (where MKP has been a member since 2000).<sup>186</sup> Béla Bugár, as the former president of MKDM, has always considered himself a Christian Democrat, and other party members indicated similar ideological preferences.<sup>187</sup> Beside ideological proximity also strategic considerations played a role in Most-Híd's application for EPP membership: it would increase Most-Híd's coalition potential with the Slovak right-wing parties, as both KDH and SDKÚ are EPP members, and this way Most-Híd scored another victory over MKP.<sup>188</sup> Although center-left parties from Hungary often defend Most-Híd, they do so rather in order to criticize the policies of Fidesz than due to real sympathy or close ties. Thus, the general picture remains asymmetrical, with Fidesz backing MKP and Most-Híd lacking a partner party in Hungary and being rather uninterested in developing ties across the border.

### **The nature of linkages**

Among the three studied cases, programmatic differences between the Hungarian parties have been the strongest in Slovakia, and because of this the type of competition departs the most from valence competition in this country. This was due to the presence of organizational pluralism from the very beginning and the fact that classic ideologies (liberalism vs. national conservative and Christian democratic orientations) also mattered.

However, the parties also differed considering their clientelistic capacity. Although MPP joined the government early on, before 1998 it was arguably EPM which had the

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<sup>185</sup> Interview with Péter Vörös.

<sup>186</sup> Most-Híd was accepted into EPP in November 2013. MKP, Fidesz and RMDSZ voted against the acceptance, while SDKÚ and KDH endorsed the application. See [http://hvg.hu/vilag/20131113\\_A\\_MostHid\\_is\\_a\\_Fidesz\\_partcsaladjaba\\_ker](http://hvg.hu/vilag/20131113_A_MostHid_is_a_Fidesz_partcsaladjaba_ker)

<sup>187</sup> Interviews with Péter Vörös, László Solymos. Solymos for instance emphasized that he is not a liberal and that he opposes same-sex marriages.

<sup>188</sup> Interviews with Pál Csáky, Géza Tokár, Zoltán Bara

highest capacity for clientelism, despite being in opposition, due to its stronger presence in the local governments and its influence over financing from Hungary. After joining the government in 1998, MKP's capacity for clientelism increased considerably, as the party obtained ministries with very serious pork barrel potential (e.g. construction and public works or the environment, and from 2002 also agriculture). As discussed at great length, the access to state resources also played an important role in the split of MKP. After 2010, Most-Híd's clientelistic potential has clearly surpassed that of MKP, as the multi-ethnic party once again obtained the ministry of agriculture, environment and regional development in the Radičová cabinet, while MKP remained outside parliament. Still, MKP can rely on the local self-governments it controls, and has significantly better access to and influence over the distribution of financial subsidies from Hungary. The infrastructure created through the Status Law has been controlled since its creation by a foundation close to Miklós Duray.<sup>189</sup> In 2011, similarly to Romania, Fidesz changed the foundation in charge for distributing the subsidies for the children attending Hungarian-language schools, as its president became a member of Most-Híd, and entrusted the task to the Union of Hungarian Pedagogues and the Union of Hungarian Parents, both organizations being closer to MKP.<sup>190</sup>

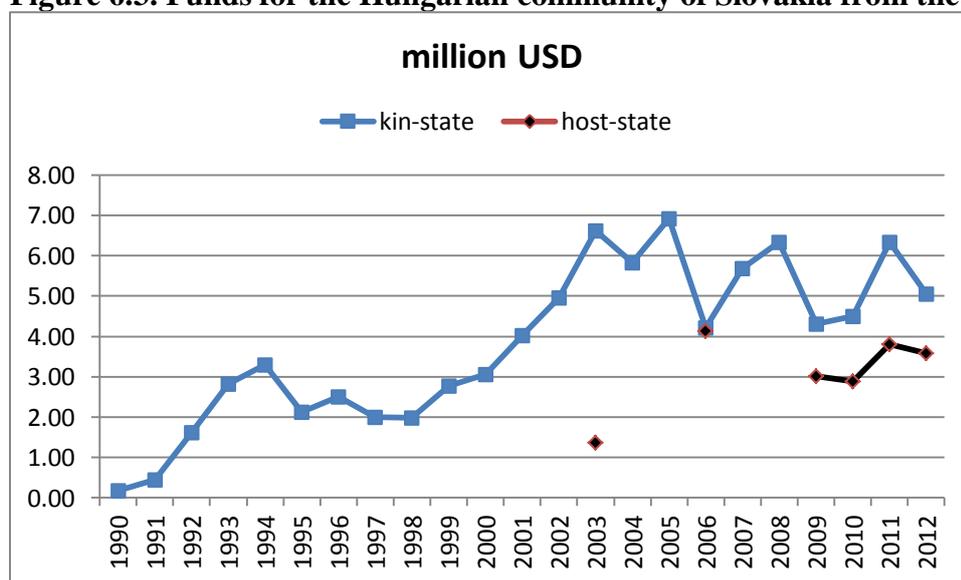
A rough estimation about the magnitude of subsidies flowing from Hungary to Slovakia, obtained according to the same method (and subject to the same caveats) as in the case of Romania, is presented in Figure 6.3, along some data about the financing of minority cultures by the host-state. It is important to note that in Slovakia there is still no law about the financing of minority cultures, so the subsidies must be negotiated with the government each year. Although I have no time series data about the subsidies, the several data points reconstructed from newspaper articles still render a comparison possible. In 2012 the money

<sup>189</sup> In Slovakia no network of offices processing applications for Hungarian citizenship has been set up, as the Slovak parliament passed a counter-law forbidding dual citizenship.

<sup>190</sup> <http://www.bumm.sk/55073/mar-nem-a-pazmany-osztja-a-penzt-a-magyar-iskolasoknak.html>

destined to the Hungarian minority amounted to about 3.8 million USD;<sup>191</sup> and the highest sum distributed for Hungarian minority culture was about 4.14 million USD in 2006, the last year of MKP's participation in government, and during both SMER cabinets the trend was decreasing.<sup>192</sup> The subsidies from Hungary were roughly twice as high as the resources allocated by Slovakia, except for 2006. Moreover, before 1998 the subsidies from Hungary were even more important in relative terms, as Hungarian cultural organizations (including CSEMADOK) did not receive financing from the Slovak state (Tóth, 2006).

**Figure 6.3. Funds for the Hungarian community of Slovakia from the kin-state**



Author's computations. Sources: for Hungary: Bárdi and Misovitz (2010); Papp (2010); and <http://www.bgazrt.hu/>; For Slovakia: newspaper articles from [www.mediaspajz.info](http://www.mediaspajz.info).

One can conclude that the Hungarian subsidies play a very important role for the minority in Slovakia. However, one should also note that the Hungarian civil sector in Slovakia is much less tied to the political parties than in either Romania or Serbia (Tóth, 2004, 2006), which reduces the importance of this type of clientelistic linkages. Furthermore, the magnitude of the cultural subsidies from both the kin- and the host-state are only small change as opposed to the resources that become accessible through the control of several ministries.

<sup>191</sup> Source: <http://uj szo.com/napilap/szalon/2013/02/16/mennyi-az-annyi-avagy-a-kisebbségi-kultura-penze>

<sup>192</sup> [http://kitekinto.hu/karpat-medence/2010/10/04/szlovakia\\_jovre\\_tobb\\_penzt\\_ad\\_a\\_kisebbségi\\_kulturara/#.UyyYC6iSyyU](http://kitekinto.hu/karpat-medence/2010/10/04/szlovakia_jovre_tobb_penzt_ad_a_kisebbségi_kulturara/#.UyyYC6iSyyU)

The role of charismatic linkages was discussed in great detail in the section dedicated to Most-Híd. This type of voter-party interaction became really important only after the split of MKP. Although MKP also profited from Bugár's personality between 1998 and 2007, in this period charisma did not matter in intra-ethnic electoral competition as there was only a single party. In the first period of organizational pluralism, at least until 1994, charismatic leadership was more important EPM than in MKDM, as Bugár was a less experienced politician, often overshadowed by Duray. However, as opposed to Bugár, Duray was a divisive character, his charisma was important for EPM voters, but he was less sympathetic for the voters of the other parties.

## Chapter 7. The Hungarian parties of Vojvodina, Serbia

The Hungarian community of Serbia numbered 345,376 in 1991 (4.39% of the population without Kosovo), a figure that decreased to 293,299 in 2002 (3.91%) and 253,899 in 2011 (3.53%). Among the three countries studied in this thesis, Serbia is the only one where an autonomous province with an elected assembly exists, the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. Around 99% of the Hungarians live in this Province, where they represented 16.94% of the population in 1991, 14.28% in 2002 and 13% in 2011.<sup>193</sup> Administratively, Serbia is divided into municipalities (*opštine*). These are rather large administrative units, which may comprise even more than ten localities; thus, they come closer in size to the districts (*okres*) in Slovakia than to single localities. A considerable part of the Hungarians live concentrated in eight municipalities<sup>194</sup> in the northern part of Vojvodina.

### The Serbian party system

The Hungarian minority of Serbia differs from the similar communities of Romania and Slovakia in that the degree of voting along ethnic lines is lower. This is due primarily to the strategy of some mainstream and multi-ethnic regionalist parties to compete directly for the minority vote, often by fielding ethnic Hungarian candidates in Hungarian-populated areas.

Throughout the 1990s, Serbian politics have been dominated by the *Socialist Party of Serbia* (SPS), led by Slobodan Milošević, while the opposition was divided between the ultra-nationalist *Serbian Radical Party* (SRS) on one side and a fragmented “democratic opposition” on the other. The dynamics of the party system evolved mainly according to the relationship between SPS and SRS: when the two parties were able to cooperate, the system came closer to a bi-polar pattern, and when they got into conflict, it moved towards a tri-polar dynamic. In 2000, the *Democratic Opposition of Serbia* (DOS) umbrella coalition succeeded

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<sup>193</sup> Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia.

<sup>194</sup> Hungarians constitute an absolute majority in Kanjiža/Magyarkanizsa, Senta/Zenta, Ada/Ada, Bačka Topola/Topolya, Mali Idoš/Kishegyes and Čoka/Csóka municipalities, and a relative majority in Bečej/Óbecse and Subotica/Szabadka.

to oust Milošević from power, and the *Democratic Party* (DS) established itself as the main force in the “democratic” bloc. After the 2008 elections the *Serbian Progressive Party* (SNS) has been created as a splinter from SRS, however, on a much more moderate platform. While SNS won the elections in 2012, SRS did not enter the parliament (Goati, 2000; Sekelj, 2000; Todosijević, 2004; Bochsler, 2009). After these transformations the party system come closer to a bipolar logic, with the nationalist SNS on one side, DS on the other, and the reformed SPS in a pivotal role. SPS played a key role in cabinet formation at the last two elections, siding with DS in 2008 and with SNS in 2012, in the latter case also being able to obtain the office of prime minister.

From our perspective it is a very important feature that beside the state-wide parties there are also regionalist competing in Vojvodina. The 1963 and 1974 Yugoslav constitutions granted the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina competences almost equaling those of the republics, and the distinct identity of the province was anchored in the multiethnic character of the area and the spirit of tolerance. However, in 1990 the Milošević regime practically cancelled the autonomy of Vojvodina with the new Serbian constitution. (Stjepanović, 2008, 2009). This fueled a movement that aims for the restoration of the competences and finances from Belgrade to Novi Sad/Újvidék. The most important regionalist party advocating more autonomy for Vojvodina is the *Social Democratic League of Vojvodina* (LSV), which has even called for the federalization of Serbia (Todosijević, 2004; Bochsler, 2009). LSV can be considered a multi-ethnic party: it appeals to all nationalities and builds heavily on the myth of Vojvodina as a multiethnic province, where six languages have an official status. By appealing to the minority electorates, which are naturally sympathetic to the idea of greater autonomy for the province, LSV becomes a direct competitor for national minority parties.

Both the regionalist and the ethnic parties are natural allies for the “democratic bloc” of the Serbian party system, given the centralizing and often anti-minority attitudes of SRS

and SPS (Bochsler, 2009), but also the reformed SNS pursues a centralizing agenda. However, exactly the awareness of the parties of the “democratic bloc” that the regionalist and minority electorates will not vote for SRS or SPS motivates them to appeal to them directly. Thus, while DS is the natural ally of the Vojvodina regionalists and Hungarians, there is also fierce competition from the DS (and other smaller mainstream parties) for minority votes.

### **The unfolding of the ethnic Hungarian party system**

Just like in Romania, the Hungarians in Vojvodina have been represented by a single political organization in the first years following the onset of political pluralism. However, after a series of splits and the emergence of genuinely new organizations, the Hungarian party scene in Vojvodina became the most fragmented among the three countries, the number of registered minority parties being higher than in Slovakia and Romania taken together. At the end of the time period covered by this thesis there were five ethnic Hungarian political parties in Vojvodina.<sup>195</sup>

The first ethnic Hungarian political organization in Vojvodina, *Vajdasági Magyarok Demokrata Közössége* (VMDK, Democratic Community of Vojvodina Hungarians) was created in December 1989, its president was András Ágoston, a former high-ranking trade-union leader (Vékás, 1991). VMDK advocated democratization, multi-party elections and transition to market economy, however, the core of its program consisted of minority-related issues. VMDK recognized the territorial integrity of Serbia and never put forward irredentist or secessionist claims, but it also proclaimed the unity of the Hungarian nation, called for establishing closer ties with the kin-state, and soon started to advance various plans for the autonomy of the Hungarians. VMDK did not define itself as a political party, but as a

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<sup>195</sup> In May 2013 another Hungarian party (rather ironically) called *Magyar Egység Párt* (*Hungarian Unity Party*) has been created after a split of VMDK ([http://www.magyarsozso.com/hu/2012\\_05\\_23/kozelet/26572/](http://www.magyarsozso.com/hu/2012_05_23/kozelet/26572/)).

political interest organization with a mass movement character,<sup>196</sup> which, however, also fulfilled certain party-like functions, most importantly the political representation of the community (Vékás, 1991; Hódi, 1992; Mirnics, 2000). This self-definition was the consequence of the idea that multi-party politics within the Hungarian minority would only make sense after the creation of the institutions of a Hungarian ethnic autonomy. VMDK conceived of the Hungarian community as a self-standing political community, which should integrate into Serbian society in a vertical fashion, through its own institutions (Bárdi, 2000).

### **The disintegration of VMDK**

Until 1994 VMDK remained the only significant Hungarian political organization.<sup>197</sup> However, in 1994 a series of splits was set off by the dissatisfaction of various groups in the organization with the doctrine followed by the central leadership. Under Ágoston, VMDK hoped to obtain autonomy and solutions to the other grievances of the community with the aid of the international community, relying on the support of the kin-state, and refused to cooperate with any party that did not endorse the demands for a Hungarian autonomy, including even the regionalist parties of Vojvodina.

This strategy was not completely senseless in the context of the various peace plans that have been put forward by the international community in Croatia and later in Bosnia. However, it did not yield any results, while the everyday living conditions were deteriorating due to the Yugoslav wars and the ensuing economic hardships. Engaged in a windmill fight for a future autonomy pictured as a panacea for all the problems of the Hungarians, the central leadership of VMDK neglected the everyday problems of its electorate, while the local branches were less and less willing to support the internal isolation strategy that cut

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<sup>196</sup> According to Ágoston (interview with the author), VMDK membership reached 26.000 in early 1992.

<sup>197</sup> The only attempt to challenge the monopoly of VMDK in this period was mounted through an organization called *Magyarok a Hazájukért, Szerbiáért és Jugoszláviáért* (Hungarians for their Fatherland, Serbia and Yugoslavia), created in early 1991. The leadership and most members of this party were ex-Yugoslav police and state security officers. The party defined itself in sharp contrast to VMDK, and rejected all the claims of the latter, e.g. autonomy or the idea that Hungarians should not be drafted to the army. The party obtained insignificant results and soon disappeared (Mirnics, 2000; HTMH, 2006a).

them off any resources. After a while the support from Budapest also began to wane, as the Euro-Atlantic integration of Hungary took precedence over the issues of the Hungarian communities in the neighboring countries. In such a context the intransigency of VMDK's leadership was increasingly viewed as a nuisance in Budapest too.<sup>198</sup> The Hungarian-language press in Vojvodina became increasingly critical of VMDK's rhetoric too, which it considered doctrinaire (Bárdi, 2000).

In February 1994 a financial scandal broke out in VMDK, when vice-president Sándor Hódi, in charge of a foundation which absorbed financial aid from the Hungarian government meant to guarantee the operation of VMDK during the war, refused to account to the central leadership about his activity (Garai *et al.*, 1994; Mirnics, 2000). By this time it was clear that several factions existed within VMDK, the central leadership being caught between a radical group which did not rule out that even more than autonomy could be obtained in the context of the war and the pragmatists that pushed for a more cooperative stance with the Serbian parties (Friedrich, 1994; Major, 1994; Sebestyén, 1994; Hódi, 1997). At the general assembly meeting of VMDK in March 1994, the factions clashed. While the leadership insisted on holding Hódi accountable, the internal opposition attempted to replace the leadership and to modify the statute so that the creation of ideological platforms would be possible. Both sides failed to reach their goals. The new statute did not allow platforms; instead, some amendments meant to decrease the freedom of factions within the organization were adopted: holders of public office were required to submit an undated and signed resignation sheet to the group leader, and the collective membership of civil society organizations was abolished.<sup>199</sup> Ágoston was reelected president of VMDK with 136 votes, while his challenger, Ferenc Csubela received 66 votes (Vékás, 1998).

<sup>198</sup> Interviews with András Ágoston and Nándor Bárdi.

<sup>199</sup> Statute of VMDK, March 27, 1994. <http://www.freeweb.hu/faktum/EBib/VMDKdok/D940327i.html>; VMDK - A községi képviselők és helyi közösségi tanácsstagok magatartási kódexe. <http://www.freeweb.hu/faktum/EBib/VMDKdok/D940327j.html>; [Last accessed September 30, 2011.]

In July 1994 the internal opposition created a new organization, called *Vajdasági Magyar Szövetség* (VMSZ - *Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians*). The first president of VMSZ became Ferenc Csubela, and after his sudden death in December 1995 József Kasza, the mayor of Subotica/Szabadka took over the presidency, and stayed in office until 2007. An overwhelming majority of the local leaders from the compact Hungarian-populated area joined the new organization, so most Hungarian-majority municipalities came under VMSZ leadership. Of the five MPs in the national assembly, three joined VMSZ, so did one of the three federal MPs and 13 of the 17 representatives in the Vojvodina Assembly. Thus, the splinter group basically deprived the central leadership of control over the party organization. With the change of government in Hungary in June 1994, Ágoston's group was further weakened,<sup>200</sup> as the parties of the center-left coalition from Budapest actively aided the consolidation of the more pragmatic VMSZ (Bárdi, 2000, 2004),<sup>201</sup> although VMDK maintained some of the financial aid from Budapest until VMSZ also obtained electoral legitimation.<sup>202</sup>

In these circumstances VMDK redefined itself as a political party at its next general assembly meeting in March 1995. Dual membership was forbidden and members suspected of sympathizing with VMSZ were excluded.<sup>203</sup> Initially, VMSZ has set itself up as a minority interest organization too, and allowed the existence of ideological platforms, just as its founders demanded when still in VMDK.<sup>204</sup> Nevertheless, they decided to register as a party in June 1995 (Mirnics, 2000; HTMH, 2006a). VMSZ adopted a much more pragmatic stance

<sup>200</sup> The relationship of VMDK with the Hungarian government was actually very tensioned already in 1993, during the MDF cabinet (Bárdi, 2004; Jenne, 2007).

<sup>201</sup> Also, interview with Nándor Bárdi.

<sup>202</sup> Budapest nem békéltet. *HVG*, 4 March, 1995.

[http://archivum.hvg.hu/article/199509Budapest\\_nem\\_bekeltet.aspx?print=1](http://archivum.hvg.hu/article/199509Budapest_nem_bekeltet.aspx?print=1)

<sup>203</sup> A VMDK 1995. III. 11-én Szabadkán megtartott közgyűlésének határozata a kizárásokról. Available at <http://www.angelfire.com/my/vekasjanos/EBib/VMDKdok/D9503111.html> [Accessed February 14, 2014.];

Interview with András Ágoston.

<sup>204</sup> The creation of platforms was necessary because also the more radical faction of Sándor Hódi joined VMSZ.

than VMDK, dropping the isolationist strategy and seeking cooperation with the Serbian political parties.

The erosion of VMDK did not come to an end with the creation of VMSZ. At the 1996 federal, provincial and local elections, VMDK and VMSZ clashed for supremacy over the ethnic Hungarian electorate. VMSZ obtained 81.311 votes and three seats in the federal assembly, while VMDK only 46.807 votes and no seat (Vékás, 1998).<sup>205</sup> However, the real defeat was suffered at the provincial and local levels, where the two-round majority electoral system catalyzed an overwhelming victory for VMSZ. In the provincial assembly, VMSZ obtained 13 seats while VMDK only one, and in the municipalities from the Hungarian-majority area, VMSZ won more than 130 seats, while VMDK less than 10.

The second phase of the conflict unfolded within VMDK in the period preceding the federal and local elections, sparked by a proposal for a coalition by VMSZ. VMDK vice-president Sándor Páll kept on advocating the idea of a coalition even after the general assembly of the party rejected the offer. Moreover, Páll refused to submit the signatures gathered for the federal list of VMDK to the central leadership, and chose to run as a citizens' group, without the label of VMDK in the municipality of Bečej/Óbecse (Hódi, 1996; Vékás, 1998). Despite being excluded from VMDK for these actions, Páll convened the general assembly in December 1996, dismissed the leadership and annulled all the modifications to the statute that have been made since the 1990 founding meeting of VMDK, as well as the expulsions of 1995. VMDK also declared its openness to cooperate with other political parties, especially VMSZ and the parties of the "democratic opposition" (Mirnics, 2000). A series of lawsuits followed, but eventually the Ministry of Justice recognized Páll as the legally elected party chairman (Vékás, 1998). As a response, Ágoston and his close

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<sup>205</sup> The victory of VMSZ in terms of seats was also amplified by the electoral system: Serbia was divided into 29 electoral districts, with a 5% threshold applying at the district level (Lucić, 1997). The relatively low district magnitude (which was 3.72, given the 108 seats to be distributed) and the absence of a national tier of seat distribution led to the wasting of about 36% of the votes cast for Hungarian parties.

collaborators created a new organization in February 1997, called *Vajdasági Magyar Demokrata Párt* (VMDP - *Democratic Party of Hungarians in Vojvodina*). Since then, both organizations have been claiming to be the legitimate bearers of the legacy of VMDK.

It is important to note that the disintegration of VMDK also had a strong geographic dimension. As mentioned, most branches from the compact Hungarian majority area of Vojvodina joined VMSZ. Furthermore, in 1997 and 2000 VMSZ decided to contest the national elections only in the two electoral districts where the fairly high share of Hungarians rendered the election of Hungarian candidates feasible. As a consequence of this, VMDK and VMDP were able to maintain a relatively stronger following in the municipalities falling outside of these two districts, although their support eroded slowly throughout the 2000s.<sup>206</sup> MPSZ also emerged as a local citizens' group and was not successful in developing a more extensive party organization. Thus, while VMSZ is able to cover the entire territory of Vojvodina, its smaller intra-ethnic challengers remained relevant players only in a few municipalities.

### **Other small parties**

Three other small parties also emerged between 1995 and 1997, but these were never able to acquire the relevance of the organizations discussed so far.<sup>207</sup> After this a period of seven years passed without any new party emerging. The next relevant party to appear was *Magyar Polgári Szövetség* (MPSZ, Hungarian Civic Alliance), founded by László Rác Szabó, a former VMSZ member who quit the party in 2000, claiming that VMSZ slipped too much

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<sup>206</sup> The main stronghold of VMDP is Temerin, while that of VMDK Bečej/Óbecse.

<sup>207</sup> *Vajdasági Magyar Polgári Mozgalom* (Hungarian Civic Movement of Vojvodina) was created in March 1995. It focused on the autonomy of Vojvodina without dealing with other types of autonomy. *Vajdasági Magyarok Kereszténydemokrata Mozgalma* (Christian-Democratic Movement of Vojvodina Hungarians) was a VMDK splinter, founded in January 1997. In 2000 it merged with a splinter platform of VMSZ called *Európa-Platform* and changed its name into *Keresztény-Demokrata Európa Mozgalom* (Christian-Democratic Europe Movement). *Kereszténydemokrata Tömörülés* (KDT, Christian-Democratic Alliance) was founded in Senta from a former platform of VMSZ which can be traced back to the faction of Sándor Hódi, and registered as a party in 1997. The latter three parties contested the 1997 parliamentary elections, but none of them obtained more than 3000 votes. KDEM and VMPM merged with VMSZ in 2005 (Hódi, 1997; Vékás, 1998; Mircics, 2000; HTMH, 2006a).

towards the left (implying the collaboration of VMSZ with SPS in Subotica/Szabadka). Rácz Szabó has been a prominent member of the nationalist organization *Magyarok Világszövetsége* (World Federation of Hungarians). Before registering as a political party in 2007, MPSZ competed in the 2004 local elections as a citizens' group in Senta/Zenta. The doctrine of MPSZ is based on right-wing, conservative, Christian-democratic and Hungarian national values, and a core element of their discourse is the Holy Crown of the Kingdom of Hungary (Szent Korona).<sup>208</sup>

*Magyar Remény Mozgalom* (MRM, Hungarian Hope Movement) was founded in January 2009, after a failed attempt to replace the leadership of the Subotica/Szabadka branch of VMDP. The initiators motivated their attempt by the low intensity and quality of party activity, the failure to elect a new leadership for 12 years, but also the low autonomy of the local branches in VMDP, culminating with a ban on participation in municipal coalitions, which in their opinion served to prevent the rise of local leaders who could eventually become challengers for the center.<sup>209</sup> As the VMDP central leadership did not recognize the new local leadership and qualified the attempt to be a coup, the initiative committee decided to form a new party.

MRM maintains close ties with the radical right youth movement *Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom* and the radical party *Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom*, and as such, it can be considered the most radical Hungarian party in Vojvodina. Similarly to *Jobbik*, MRM is a generational party: when the party was launched, six of the eight members of the presidency were younger than 30.<sup>210</sup> The first elections for MRM were the ones for the Hungarian National Council, where they obtained 2,114 votes (2.77%) and one seat of the 35. In 2012 MRM did not contest the elections at the national level, but at the provincial level

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<sup>208</sup> Interview with László Rácz Szabó.

<sup>209</sup> Interview with Bálint László. Indirectly, Ágoston also admitted the low levels of party activity in Subotica in an interview with the author.

<sup>210</sup> The composition of the presidency has been changed since then, presently 3 of the 7 members are younger than 30. <http://mrm.rs/felepites/elnoekseg>

they emerged as the second strongest Hungarian party after VMSZ, even if at a great distance behind (5,991 votes as compared to 62,275 for VMSZ in the proportional component of the electoral system).

### **Electoral competition and cooperation between the Hungarian minority parties**

Since the disintegration of the original VMDK, an all-inclusive coalition between the Hungarian parties has never been materialized. As already mentioned, in 1996 VMDK refused an electoral coalition with VMSZ, despite pressures from Budapest. Rejection was not surprising, as these elections were the first after the split, so both VMDK and VMSZ were more interested in competing alone, in order to settle the balance of forces. The failure to agree repeated one year later at the national elections, which took place after the second stage of the VMDK split (establishment of VM DP), as the parties were unable to agree on the distribution of seats (Minorities at Risk Project, 2004).

In May 1999 VMSZ and VMDK signed a cooperation protocol about the creation of the Hungarian National Council (*Magyar Nemzeti Tanács*, MNT), and coalitions in several municipalities (Mirnics, 2000), however, the cooperation did not last long, due to conflicts over the MNT, and no electoral cooperation occurred in this period. At the September 2000 federal and provincial election VM DP ran on its own, VMSZ supported the DOS umbrella coalition only in the districts without significant Hungarian population and fielded its own candidates in the remaining two districts, and VMDK was on the DOS list. Only VMSZ obtained one seat in the federal parliament, while in the province VMSZ obtained 14 seats and VM DP 1. In the December 2000 Serbian parliamentary election VMDK and VMSZ ran again on the DOS list, while VM DP did not participate (Vékás, 2004). In December 2003, due to the newly introduced 5% national electoral threshold<sup>211</sup> the Hungarian parties decided to run in coalitions with other ethnic or regionalist parties. VMSZ ran within the “Together

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<sup>211</sup> Previously the threshold applied at the level of the electoral districts.

for Tolerance” coalition (with LSV and the Sandžak Democratic Party), VMDP on the lists of the Vojvodina Reformists, while VMDK boycotted the elections. Though none of the parties got represented, as a result of this failure the Serbian parliament modified the electoral law, excepting the parties of the minorities from the electoral threshold at all levels,<sup>212</sup> and the number of signatures required to run in the elections has been reduced in 2007 from 10,000 to 3,000 (OSCE/ODIHR, 2007).<sup>213</sup>

### **The VMDP-VMDK coalition of 2007**

The first time when two relevant Hungarian parties reached an electoral coalition for a national level election was in 2007, when VMDK and VMDP joined forces in the *Magyar Összefogás Koalíció* (MÖK – *Hungarian Cooperation Coalition*). The first position on the list of MÖK was occupied by VMDP, the second and the third position went to VMDK, and the fourth again to VMDP. The core of the program of the coalition was a document endorsing both territorial and personal autonomy, support for dual citizenship, a demand for the proportional representation of minorities at all levels through reserved seats (instead of the application of the implicit threshold), and commitment to stop the settlement of ethnic Serb refugees in Vojvodina.<sup>214</sup> MÖK also stated that they “will not necessarily enter a coalition in Belgrade with the self-declared democratic forces in Serbia, which only support minority rights at the declarative level.”<sup>215</sup> Though MPSZ also participated in the initial negotiations, eventually they did not join MÖK, claiming that a coalition would only make sense if all four parties participated.

<sup>212</sup> Law on the election of the members of parliament, art. 81.

[http://legislationline.org/download/action/download/id/4225/file/SER\\_law\\_Election%20members\\_parliament\\_2000\\_am2011\\_en.pdf](http://legislationline.org/download/action/download/id/4225/file/SER_law_Election%20members_parliament_2000_am2011_en.pdf)

<sup>213</sup> These changes of legislation were due primarily to the recognition by DS that minority votes that get lost weaken the pro-European bloc in its competition against SRS.

<sup>214</sup> Lesz „Összefogás”! *Magyar Szó*, November 29, 2006.

<http://gombos.vajdasagban.eu/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=827>; Magyar koalíció Óbecsén. *Hét Nap*, December 6, 2006. <http://www.hetnap.rs/uj/index.php?zg=3038&no=117>; Magyar Összefogás Koalíció – Ágoston András – dr. Páll Sándor : Közlemény. January 6., 2007. 2007.

<http://www.shp.hu/hpc/web.php?a=commorakozigaz&o=1168175823>

<sup>215</sup> MÖK: Kisebbségi autonómiát! January 14, 2007.

<http://www.commorakozigaz.shp.hu/hpc/web.php?a=commorakozigaz&o=1168798970>

VMSZ refused to cooperate with MÖK, making it clear that it will pass the threshold on its own too, as both VMDP and VMDK have an insignificant following in the electorate. They also pointed out that VMDP's activity can be summarized in issuing statements, and VMDK became untenable as a partner after entering a coalition at the local level with SRS. The statement of VMSZ ended with the remark that it was time for the party to prove that it enjoyed the overwhelming support of the Hungarian minority.<sup>216</sup>

Though only at a very narrow margin, but MÖK did not pass the implicit threshold and did not get into parliament (12,941 votes). VMSZ ran on its own and obtained about four times as many votes as MÖK (52,510), but only 3 seats, which was a very poor result even if the party reentered parliament. VMDP leader Ágoston admitted that the only result of MÖK was to ensure the political survival of VMDP and VMDK.<sup>217</sup> The 2007 elections showed that the balance of powers between the three parties was close to 80-10-10%, and together they could have obtained 5 seats instead of the 3 obtained by VMSZ.

### **The Hungarian coalitions of 2008**

The main reason behind the creation of MÖK in 2007 was that both VMDK and VMDP have shrunk to the limit of survival, yet the new electoral regulations created a window of opportunity for them. Clearly, the key actor for all-inclusive cooperation was the strongest party, VMSZ.

VMSZ has been engaged in a tight cooperation with DS since the 2000 elections, József Kasza was even deputy prime minister of Serbia between 2000 and 2003. Although VMSZ found itself out of the national parliament in 2003, the partnership with DS continued at the provincial and local level. At the 2004 provincial elections VMSZ and DS even agreed to avoid confrontation in the majority component of the electoral system for the Provincial

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<sup>216</sup> Decision of VMSZ presidency, 15th of November 2006.  
<http://www.shp.hu/hpc/web.php?a=commorakozigaz&o=1169552935>

<sup>217</sup> Interview with András Ágoston.

Assembly, though at the local elections held simultaneously they competed.<sup>218</sup> On the other hand, cooperation between VMSZ and its ethnic Hungarian rivals was non-existent at these elections.

The 2004 elections were not a real success for VMSZ. The number of their provincial representatives fell from 14 to 11 and the number of their mayors from 7 to 4. But the most significant loss occurred in the municipal assemblies, where the number of their elected representatives dropped from 171 to 104 (and in the municipalities located in the Hungarian majority bloc from 150 to 71).<sup>219</sup> However, it was not the challenge from the Hungarian rivals that brought about this loss, a significantly more important factor was the fact that mainstream or multi-ethnic regionalist parties (primarily VMSZ's closest ally, DS) intensified their "ethnic predated" activity (Zuber, 2012), fielding a high number of ethnic Hungarian candidates in the areas populated by the minority.

The recognition that the most dangerous competitors of VMSZ for the Hungarian votes are no longer VMDK or VMDP but DS, brought about a change of strategy in VMSZ. Another important factor that contributed to the strategy shift was that after 12 years József Kasza stepped down and István Pásztor became the new party president in May 2007.<sup>220</sup>

In January 2008 presidential elections were due. This offered a low-stake opportunity for VMSZ to test electoral cooperation with the other Hungarian ethnic parties, while in the second round they could still rally behind the candidate of DS. As a consequence, for the first time an ethnic Hungarian candidate ran for the presidency of Serbia in the person of István

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<sup>218</sup> Except for one municipality. See: Győztes koalíció. *Magyar Szó*, 21st of August 2004.

<http://archiv.magyarso.com/arhiva/2004/aug/21/main.php?l=kozeletunk.htm#cikk1>

<sup>219</sup> Sources: [www.vmdk.org/content/HU/irnak\\_3.html](http://www.vmdk.org/content/HU/irnak_3.html), <http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ObjavljenePublikacije/G2005/Pdf/G20056002.pdf>, HTMH Observer 39/2000 and 40/2004.

<sup>220</sup> Close cooperation with DS was one of the cornerstones of the political creed of József Kasza. After 2007 Kasza became honorary president of VMSZ. Yet, in 2010 he was excluded from VMSZ because he repeatedly criticized the party for engaging in conflict with DS. <http://www.vajma.info/cikk/vajdasag/9763/>

Pásztor, under the label of *Magyar Koalíció (MK, Hungarian Coalition)*.<sup>221</sup> VMDK and VMDP agreed to support the candidacy of Pásztor on the condition of VMSZ supporting their autonomy conceptions, which later materialized in a joint document about autonomy. Pásztor received 93,039 votes (2.30%), the highest number of votes a Hungarian ethnic party received since 1993. Therefore, the three parties decided to continue their collaboration at the national, provincial and local elections due in May 2008.

The agreement behind MK had two main components. First, a programmatic document has been signed in March 2008, entitled the *Autonomy Conception of the Hungarian Coalition*,<sup>222</sup> which, beside demands for various types of autonomy also asked demanded a number of reserved seats for the national minorities in the assemblies in Belgrade and Novi Sad/Újvidék, proportionally to their share in the population. The second component of the agreement concerned the allocation of seats.<sup>223</sup> Based on the results of the 2007 parliamentary elections, VMSZ was entitled to 80% of the seats, while VMDP and VMDK had to share the remaining 20%.<sup>224</sup> According to Pásztor,<sup>225</sup> the three parties designed several packages for the precise distribution of the seats to be won, depending on the success of the coalition. As the expectation was to win five or six seats in the Serbian parliament, the first four seats belonged to VMSZ, the fifth to VMDK or VMDP (in case of six seats won, both would have received one seat),<sup>226</sup> and a potential seventh seat again to

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<sup>221</sup> Politicians from all three parties emphasized that the leadership change in VMSZ was an essential factor that made cooperation possible, as the relationship of Kasza with both Ágoston and Páll has been plagued by mutual offences. Interviews with Áron Csonka, András Ágoston, Zoltán Dévavári.

<sup>222</sup> A Magyar Koalíció autonómiakoncepciója. Available at [http://www.vajma.info/docs/MK\\_autonomiakoncepcio\\_2008\\_03\\_17.pdf](http://www.vajma.info/docs/MK_autonomiakoncepcio_2008_03_17.pdf)

<sup>223</sup> I was unable to obtain this document, so the details that follow were reconstituted from press materials, interviews and the outcomes of the elections.

<sup>224</sup> VMDP hírlevél VI/96, June 13, 2008., Ágoston: Széthullik a Magyar Koalíció? In *VMDP Hírlevél* VI./108, July 10, 2008.

<sup>225</sup> Ezt a kört önállóan kell megfuttunk. *Családi Kör*, April 17, 2008.

<http://mx.csaladikor.co.rs/HU/200816/Riportok/612/> The main aspects of the agreement as presented by Pásztor in this interview were largely corroborated by the leaders of the smaller parties in the interviews conducted by the author.

<sup>226</sup> The interviews I conducted revealed that the destination of the fifth seat caused serious tensions between VMDK and VMDP. While Áron Csonka, the new president of VMDK (who did not participate in the negotiations) stated that the seat should have been theirs, VMDP president Ágoston only recalled having debates

VMSZ. In the provincial assembly, all parties were entitled to at least one seat, which in reality meant that VMDP and VMDK would both receive one seat, while the rest would go to VMSZ. At the local level, the scheme for the distribution was based on the results of the 2004 elections in each municipality.

The fourth Hungarian party existing by that time, MPSZ, also participated in the initial coalition negotiations, but later withdrew. However, MPSZ pledged to support the autonomy document of MK, did not run in the elections for the parliament and fielded only one individual candidate for the Vojvodina Assembly.

The results of MK at the parliamentary elections of 2008 fell almost 18,000 votes short of Pásztor's presidential result, and were sufficient for 4 seats in the Belgrade parliament. This meant that only VMSZ members entered the parliament, VMDP and VMDK remained outside. In the Vojvodina Assembly MK obtained only 9 seats, of which 8 went to VMSZ and one to VMDP. The results at the municipal level were also mixed. MK obtained about 150 seats in the municipal assemblies, a clear improvement to 2004, and won the mayor's office in six municipalities.

The choice of VMSZ to form a coalition with its former Hungarian rivals instead of its previous partners (DS, LSV) also meant that it had to face competition from the latter. VMSZ was able to win only three of the nine Hungarian-majority districts for the Vojvodina Assembly against the ethnic Hungarian candidates of the DS-G17+ coalition. Nevertheless, DS and MK (VMSZ) continued their partnership after the elections and formed the ruling coalition in the Province and also in most municipalities with a significant Hungarian population.

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about this issue with Sándor Páll, before the question became objectless. However, according to Serbian electoral legislation, the order of the candidates on the ballot is not binding. Thus, the decision over the ownership of this seat might have been postponed until after the elections. (Law on the election of representatives (updated as of May 2004), art. 84, <http://legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/3871>).

Cooperation under the label of MK only lasted for a few months. The junior partners complained already in the immediate aftermath of the elections that VMSZ did not consult with them before negotiating with DS, and that it assumed only partially the political platform that the three partners agreed on. VMDK was the more vocal of the junior partners,<sup>227</sup> especially after in Bečej/Óbecse (which used to be VMDK's strongest municipality) VMSZ and VMDP agreed to form a coalition without VMDK at the resistance of DS.<sup>228</sup> The conflicts between the parties became more and more frequent in the fall of 2008, when the debate of the law on the minority national councils got under way, and MK disintegrated completely after the law on the minority national councils has been passed.

For VMSZ the most important gain from the rapprochement with its intra-ethnic rivals was not office-related, but rather the ability to consolidate itself against them. Though not necessarily better off in terms of the total seats obtained, VMSZ was lucky to be the only party to send representatives to Belgrade, which reduced the ability of VMDK and VMDP to hold VMSZ accountable. Through this, and by retaining the right to nominate all but one of the individual candidates in the SMDs for the Vojvodina Assembly (one candidate was fielded by VMDP), VMSZ remained significantly more visible than the other two parties. Through this and the agreements concluded at the local level, VMSZ was also able to surpass its rivals in the few municipalities that counted as the last strongholds for the latter (especially Bečej/Óbecse in the case of VMDK and Temerin in the case of VMDP). VMSZ also capitalized on the label of MK, which transmitted a message of inclusiveness, maintaining it in its communication even after the dissolution of the coalition, creating a perception that basically VMSZ was MK. Continuing this strategy, the VMSZ ticket for the

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<sup>227</sup> A VMDK csalódottsága. September 29, 2008.

<http://www.vmmi.org/index.php?ShowObject=kronika&id=1285>

<sup>228</sup> <http://www.becejski-mozaik.co.rs/sh/481/feljton/10187/?tpl=24>, [http://www.magjarszo.com/fex.page:2010-05-25\\_Obecse\\_A\\_VMDK\\_kilepett\\_a\\_Magyar\\_Koalicio.xhtml](http://www.magjarszo.com/fex.page:2010-05-25_Obecse_A_VMDK_kilepett_a_Magyar_Koalicio.xhtml)

MNT elections in 2010 was called *Magyar Összefogás (Hungarian Cooperation)*, though no other parties were present on the list, only members of civil society organizations.

In 2012, VMSZ ran on its own at the parliamentary, provincial and local elections, avoiding cooperation with either DS or the other Hungarian parties. Initially VMDP, VMDK, MPSZ and MRM were planning to form a coalition against VMSZ (called *Magyar Fordulat – Hungarian Turning Point*), on a joint platform focusing primarily on the shortcomings around the MNT and the law on minority councils. Some organizations of other minorities were also willing to join this platform; however it was precisely this that eventually brought the cooperation of the Hungarians to a dead end. The main reason was that the *Bosniak Democratic Union* (a radical organization led by chief mufti Muamer Zukorlić) assumed a leading role in this coalition, offering VMSZ the opportunity to picture the coalition as a non-Christian endeavor. MRM withdrew from the coalition stating that they are only willing to cooperate with Hungarian parties. VMDP also shared this opinion, but for them the real problem was that Fidesz openly stated its support for VMSZ, so Ágoston preferred to stay away from the national elections in order not to detract votes from Fidesz' partner. Eventually, only VMDK and MPSZ stayed in the minority alliance, which won one seat in Belgrade (which went to the Bosniaks) but obtained a disastrous result in Vojvodina. MRM only contested the elections at the provincial and local level, and emerged as the second strongest Hungarian party at the provincial level, even if they obtained less than 10% of the support of VMSZ.<sup>229</sup>

### **A note on institutions**

The extreme fragmentation of the Hungarian party scene in Vojvodina is partly a consequence of the very lax party registration conditions that were in force until 2009, and

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<sup>229</sup> The Hungarian parties maintained the same electoral strategies for the 2014 early elections, except for VMDK, which will run on the ticket of the DS, and MRM, who despite its earlier objections joined the “List of National Communities”, a continuation of the Sve Zajedno coalition. VMSZ obtained 6 seats in Belgrade, while the other Hungarian parties failed to get elected.

the abolishment of the 5% parliamentary threshold before the 2007 elections. Until 2009 only 100 signatures were sufficient to register any kind of party in Serbia (Goati, 2000). Since 2009 mainstream parties require 10,000 signatures, but minority parties only 1,000 signatures. Re-registration is compulsory each 8 years, but those parties that obtained at least one seat in the national parliament or in the parliament of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina are exempted.<sup>230</sup> Though some minority leaders expressed their discontent with the regulation, all four small Hungarian parties succeeded to re-register after the new law has been passed.<sup>231</sup> The non-application of the electoral threshold means that at the national level minority parties can get represented with 0.4% of the vote, and in the Assembly of Vojvodina with 1.67%. Moreover, the exemption applies not only to parties, but also to their coalitions. This combination of institutional rules contributed to the survival of the small ethnic parties and encouraged their further proliferation.

However, electoral conditions have been made more restrictive later. Already before the 2008 elections, the number of signatures necessary to run in the national elections has been raised from 3,000 to 10,000 for minority parties too, moreover, the veracity of the signatures has to be certified by a notary, which entails significant material costs.<sup>232</sup> This decision did not influence the Hungarian party scene in 2008, as at its adoption the Hungarian parties were already in coalition. However, in 2012 its impact could already be felt by the smaller organizations. Moreover, an electoral deposit has also been introduced in 2011 (restituted to minority parties if they obtain 0.2% of the valid votes), making it even less likely for smaller minority parties to be able to run on their own. These changes in the rules

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<sup>230</sup> Law on political parties (2009), art. 8., 9. and 30.

<http://www.legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/15592>

<sup>231</sup> And MRM and MEP have been registered under these conditions.

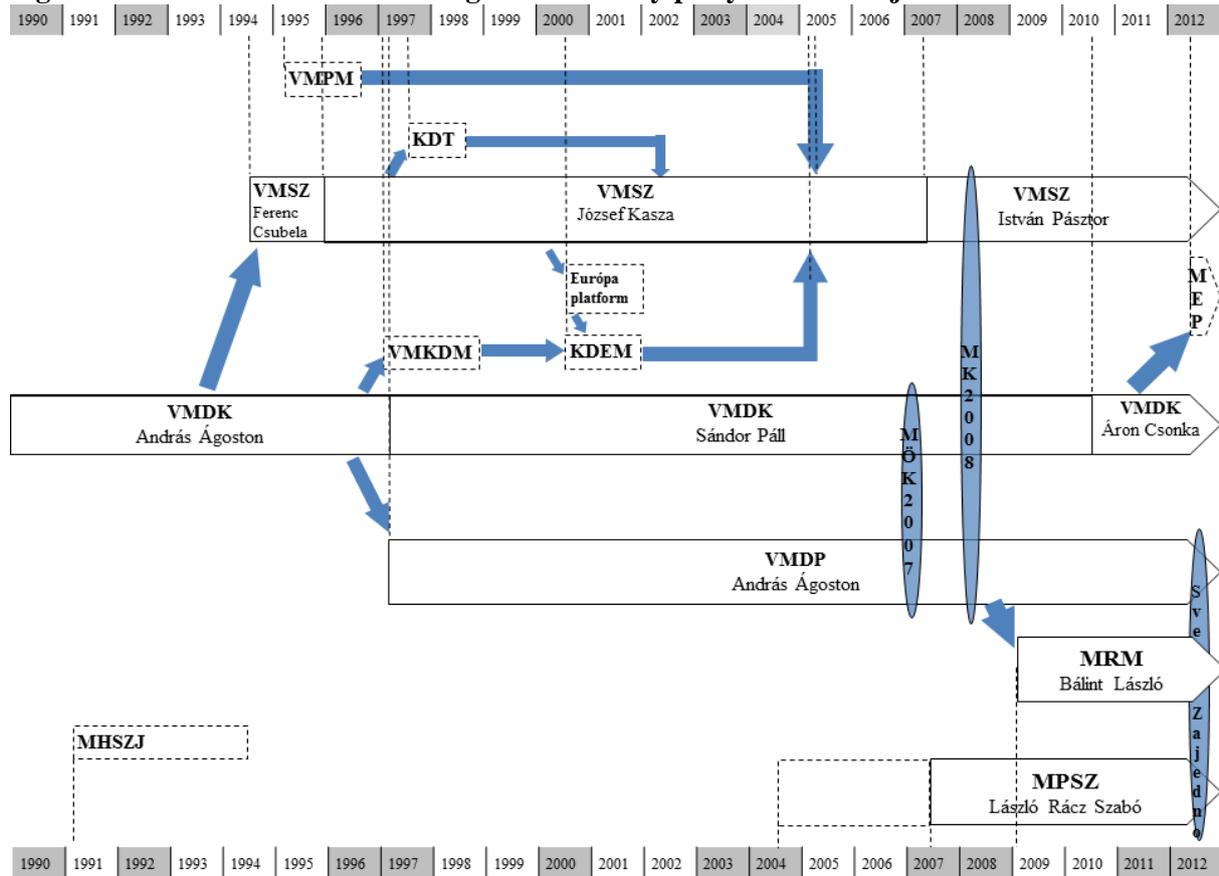
<sup>232</sup> [http://kitekinto.hu/karpat-medence/2012/04/29/a\\_vmsz\\_a\\_szerbek\\_es\\_a\\_kicsik\\_-\\_kire\\_szavaznak\\_a\\_vajdasagi\\_magyarok/#.UxjGOz-SyyU](http://kitekinto.hu/karpat-medence/2012/04/29/a_vmsz_a_szerbek_es_a_kicsik_-_kire_szavaznak_a_vajdasagi_magyarok/#.UxjGOz-SyyU)

undoubtedly contributed to the smaller Hungarian parties' decision to join broader coalitions of minority organizations or to give up participation at the parliamentary elections.

### **Making sense of the Hungarian minority party system**

The process of party emergence, splinters and mergers is illustrated in Figure 7.1. After short period of unity the competition for the strongest Hungarian organizations has been won by VMSZ, and the situation gradually evolved towards a situation similar towards the one from Romania, with a dominant moderate party; however, as opposed to Romania, the opposition of VMSZ has been very fragmented. The other two organizations that used to play a relevant role until the mid-2000s entered a decline that is probably irreversible due to the age of their leading politicians, the unsatisfactory operation of recruitment channels and their poor access to resources. MPSZ also seems to conform to the same pattern as VMDK and VMDP, despite its more recent creation. On the other hand, MRM is a radical right generational party, which emerged as the second strongest organization in 2012, though at a great distance to VMSZ.

**Figure 7.1. The evolution of the Hungarian minority party scene in Vojvodina**



Arrows indicate splits, ellipses electoral coalitions, irrelevant organizations shown with dashed lines.

Interpreting the development of the Hungarian party scene in Vojvodina according to the framework of alternative appeal strategies discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, one can identify one successful instance of new party emergence on an ethnic underbidding strategy (VMSZ), and multiple instances of less successful outbidding. The VMDK-VMDP split of 1997 is more difficult to describe in this framework, as both successor parties claimed the legacy of the original VMDK. However, Páll's VMDK proved to be more cooperative with both VMSZ and the mainstream parties than VMDP, consequently it is reasonable to state that the new VMDK is also an instance of ethnic underbidding as compared to both the original VMDK and VMDP, while still being more radical than VMSZ. Conversely, VMDP emerged on a static bidding platform as compared to the original VMDK, and on an outbidding platform as compared to VMSZ. The appeals of MPSZ and MRM can unequivocally be classified as outbidding towards all minority parties that existed at the time of their

emergence. The success of VMSZ and the decline of the more radical parties means that in the case of the Vojvodina Hungarians outbidding strategies did not work

### **Programmatic goals**

If one should pick the concept that has been at the heart of most political debates between the Hungarians parties of Vojvodina, that concept would undoubtedly be the issue of autonomy, and all parties discussed in this chapter can be classified as autonomist.<sup>233</sup> Despite this, it was not until March 2008 that all the parties were able to agree on a joint autonomy conception. This is evidence for valence competition, similarly to the case of Romania. However, there are also two important specific features about autonomy in Serbia.

Generally speaking, all Hungarian parties agreed that the situation of the Hungarians would be best solved through the implementation of multiple types of autonomy, however, their priorities differed. Though the original VMDK also issued a document about a three-pillar autonomy conception (consisting of personal autonomy, territorial autonomy for the Hungarian-majority northern part of Vojvodina, and a special status for the localities that have a Hungarian majority population but are located outside the relatively compact ethnic Hungarian area), strongest emphasis was put on personal autonomy. After the split, VMDF continued to focus on personal autonomy, while VMDK reverted to the earlier three-pillar conception and later became the party that put the strongest emphasis on territorial autonomy (Mirnics, 2000; Korhecz, 2004). The more recently emerged parties, MPSZ and MRM have not elaborated autonomy conceptions of their own, but have endorsed various documents proposed by the other parties.

Though its intra-ethnic rivals often charged VMSZ of the contrary, VMSZ actually endorsed almost the same types of autonomy in its programmatic documents as the ones already mentioned. However, the party has increasingly emphasized the idea of developing

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<sup>233</sup> However, the rhetoric of MPSZ and MRM also contains elements that sometimes point beyond autonomy, even if they do not voice outright irredentist demands (e.g. the use of the phrase “severed parts of Hungary”), which clearly renders them the most radical of the parties.

the autonomy of the multicultural autonomous Vojvodina province. In 2002 Vojvodina regained some of the competences it has been stripped of during the Milošević-era through the so-called omnibus law, and as a consequence the stakes of VMSZ in the province became increasingly important, as it has been continuously participating in the executive of the province since 2000. Also, polls indicate that Hungarian voters almost unanimously favor the extension of the competencies of the province (Badis, 2008; SCAN, 2009). While the other Hungarian parties are not against a more extended autonomy for Vojvodina, they do not consider this a priority, but regard it as a Serbian issue in which Hungarians should not get involved. Regardless of whether their priority is personal or territorial autonomy, the four more radical Hungarian parties agree that autonomy on ethnic grounds for the Hungarians cannot be substituted for by increasing the competences of the province (see also Zuber, 2013).

The second difference between the parties relates to the Hungarian National Council (MNT), a body of cultural autonomy with (mostly consultative) competences in the fields of education, culture, mass communication and use of minority languages. Although the case of the MNT is very interesting and also relevant because, as Zuber and Mus (2013) point out, it represents an alternative arena for intra-ethnic competition, a more detailed discussion is unfortunately not possible due to considerations of space.

VMSZ was the party that played the most important role in setting up a provisional (and consequently illegal) MNT in 1999, as well as in legalizing it through a federal law in 2002. Besides VMSZ, only VMDK participated in the Council, but only for a short period (on the early years of the MNT see Korhecz, 2004, 2010). Before the 2008 general elections, VMSZ, VMDP and VMDK reached consensus on a joint document about autonomy as part of the MK coalition agreement, and though not part of MK, MPSZ and MRM also endorsed this document. Based on the conception of personal autonomy outlined in this document,

VMSZ was able to negotiate the adoption of a new law, which created the conditions for the direct elections of the minority councils, by citizens listed in a special electoral roll, and also laid down their competences in more detail. However, VMDK and VM DP claimed that the a very watered-down version of the original draft has been accepted, despite the pivotal position of VMSZ in the parliament. The two parties continue to regard the MNT as illegitimate and boycotted its election in 2010. The main objections of the two parties were that the state refused to compile the electoral roll and left this to the parties themselves, that NGOs could also field candidates, creating thus a back-door for mainstream and regionalist parties to run for the councils, and that the councils are still lacking real competences.<sup>234</sup> MPSZ and MRM agreed with most of this criticism, but participated in the elections, obtaining one seat each. VMSZ obtained a landslide victory for MNT in 2010 (28 of the 35 seats), while the rest of the seats were obtained by lists supported by DS (4), respectively LSV (1). Thus, the issue of the MNT pits VMSZ against the other four parties, the former framing it as the embodiment of Hungarian autonomy, while the latter constantly questioning its legitimacy.

### **Strategies in Serbian politics**

The original VMDK and later VM DP propagated a rather consistent strategy combining tribune and sometimes even anti-system aspects. This strategy, labeled as the “opposition of the opposition”<sup>235</sup> implied the rejection of cooperation not only with Milošević and his allies, but also with the Serbian “democratic opposition”, because they were unsupportive of Hungarian autonomy plans. In 1992, VMDK even refused the position of vice-president in the Vojvodina Assembly (Vékás, 1998), though this did not imply a participation in the power coalition. Initially, this strategy was followed also at the municipal level, VMDK willing to participate in power only if able to govern alone. The pre-split VMDK and

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<sup>234</sup> Interviews with András Ágoston and Áron Csonka.

<sup>235</sup> Interview with András Ágoston.

subsequently VMDP also rejected electoral cooperation with the minority parties they considered to be non-autonomist, especially VMSZ. In the statement of purpose of VMDP András Ágoston argued that upholding the demand for autonomy is more important than “having a few MPs”<sup>236</sup> VMDP refused even to join the electoral coalition of the “democratic opposition” in 2000 and contested the elections on its own.

The post-split VMDK led by Sándor Páll continued a similar discourse of a non-compromising autonomist party. However, in 2004, VMDK entered a municipal coalition that was hardly imaginable before and cast serious doubts over the party’s credibility: in the municipality of Bečej/Óbecse they reached an agreement with SRS, after failing to form a coalition with VMSZ and VMDP.<sup>237</sup> The decision was motivated by the shared commitment of VMDK and SRS for an administrative reform that would shift the local self-governments from the municipality to the locality level.<sup>238</sup> But Páll also elaborated a doctrine about the equally nationalist and anti-Hungarian nature of all Serbian parties (the difference being only that some assume this overtly, while others pursue covert campaigns against the Hungarians), consequently, a coalition with SRS would not differ from cooperation with the Serbian “democratic forces”.<sup>239</sup> Although Páll reminded that VMSZ too has formed local coalitions with Serbian parties, including SPS,<sup>240</sup> the VMDK-SRS cooperation has been heavily criticized by all other Hungarian parties and was met with negative feelings in Hungary too.

VMSZ tried from the very beginning to advance the situation of the minority through a dialogue with the Serbian political parties, moreover, with a short intermission in 2008 it even prioritized the mainstream and regionalist parties over the Hungarian competitors.

<sup>236</sup> Mit akar a Vajdasági Magyar Demokrata Párt? Reprinted in VMDP Hírlevél, Vol 11., no. 292. (December 21, 2013).

<sup>237</sup> Tudja Páll, mit kaszál? *Magyar Szó*, October 12, 2004. <http://archiv.magyarszo.com/arhiva/2004/okt/12/main.php?l=center.htm>

<sup>238</sup> A vajdasági magyarok ügyét szolgáljuk. Beszélgetés dr. Páll Sándorral, a VMDK elnökével. *Magyar Szó*, November 10, 2004. <http://archiv.magyarszo.com/arhiva/2004/nov/10/main.php?l=kozeletunk.htm>;

<sup>239</sup> Interview with Áron Csonka.

<sup>240</sup> Nem leszünk egy koalícióban a radikálisokkal. *Magyar Szó*, October 6, 2004. <http://archiv.magyarszo.com/arhiva/2004/okt/06/main.php?l=kozeletunk.htm>; Óbecsei adok-kapok. *Hét Nap*, April 27, 2005. <http://www.hetnap.rs/uj/index.php?zg=1540&no=32>

During the Milošević era, VMSZ formed coalitions with SPS in some Hungarian-majority municipalities, attracting criticism not only from VMDK and VM DP, but also from the Vojvodina regionalist parties and the Serbian “democratic opposition”, which did not seek collaboration with VMSZ basically until 2000 (Mirnics, 2000).

Between 2000 and 2012 VMSZ has been a constant coalition partner of DS at both the national and the provincial level, though in the municipalities there were also numerous conflicts between the parties. After the watershed 2000 elections, VMSZ became part of the government both in Belgrade and in Novi Sad and at the 2004 provincial elections they even concluded a pre-electoral agreement with DS.<sup>241</sup>

The involvement in power in the Province and the competition from DS and the regionalist parties pushed VMSZ towards the adoption of regionalist patterns of behavior. After 2008, István Pásztor increasingly emphasized in his statements that VMSZ is a regional party, and VMSZ voted against the budget of Serbia in 2009 (despite the support provided previously to the DS government), motivating the decision with the failure to allocate the constitutionally prescribed 7% for Vojvodina (while the regionalist LSV voted for).<sup>242</sup> Also, VMSZ started to establish branches in some municipalities with very low Hungarian presence (e.g. Odžaci/Hódság), but also in Belgrade, in order to prove that it is not an exclusivist party.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> After the 2012 elections, which were won by SNS, VMSZ stayed in opposition at the national level, but the DS-VMSZ coalition retained the control of the Vojvodina Province. At the municipal level VMSZ continued its cooperation with DS in most cases, but there were also some municipalities where they entered a coalition with SNS [http://www.rtv.rs/hu/vajdasag%20A%20g/szhp-vmsz-koal%20ADci%20B3-kevev%20A1r%20A1n\\_391520.html](http://www.rtv.rs/hu/vajdasag%20A%20g/szhp-vmsz-koal%20ADci%20B3-kevev%20A1r%20A1n_391520.html); [http://www.magyarso.com/hu/1887/vajdasag\\_nagybecskerek/92463/Hatalmi-koal%20ADci%20B3ban-a-VMSZ.htm](http://www.magyarso.com/hu/1887/vajdasag_nagybecskerek/92463/Hatalmi-koal%20ADci%20B3ban-a-VMSZ.htm). After early elections have been announced for 2014, VMSZ indicated the intention to become part of the governing coalition alongside SNS. See: Pásztor István: A hatalom részesei kívánunk lenni. *Vajdaság.ma*, February 14, 2014. <http://www.vajma.info/cikk/vajdasag/16723/Pasztor-Istvan-A-hatalom-reszesei-kivanunk-lenni.html>

<sup>242</sup> Elfogadták a költségvetést. *Magyar Szó*, December 22, 2009.

<http://www.vmmi.org/index.php?ShowObject=kronika&id=3632>

<sup>243</sup> <http://www.vajma.info/cikk/kertelesnelkul/193/Penz-beszal.html>; Interview with Attila Márton.

The record of MPSZ and MRM can only be evaluated at the local level. In the few municipal assemblies where MPSZ got elected, it did not refrain from joining the power coalition. In 2010 MPSZ agreed to squeeze out VMSZ from the municipal coalition in Senta, together with DS and LSV. As a consequence, VMSZ became extremely critical of MPSZ, even claiming that its election campaign for the MNT was financially backed by DS.<sup>244</sup> The youngest party, MRM, only contested the elections in 2012, and despite its good result at the provincial level, its local results were too poor to become relevant in any municipality.

### **Relationship with the political parties and the government of Hungary**

The pre-split VMDK maintained good relations with the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), but already in 1993 MDF distanced itself from VMDK (Bárdi, 2000; Jenne, 2007). Relations with Fidesz (which was a liberal party by that time, but started to move towards the right soon) were also good.<sup>245</sup> As VMDK's erosion coincided more or less with the cabinet change in Budapest, VMSZ became the most powerful party during the government tenure of MSZP and SZDSZ. While VMSZ enjoyed the support of a wing of MDF too, the MSZP-SZDSZ government aided the consolidation of VMSZ against VMDK, and treated it as its primary partner against both VMDK and VMDP. Although VMDK retained some control over the finances from Budapest until VMSZ contested its first election, since 1997 VMSZ had the greatest influence over the distribution of resources from the kin-state regardless of the color of the cabinets in Budapest. Consequently, VMSZ was interested in maintaining good ties with any party that was governing in Budapest, and it is the only party in Vojvodina to do so with left-liberal cabinets too. Although after the December 5, 2004 referendum about dual citizenship the relationship soured for a while,<sup>246</sup> a number of important investments

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<sup>244</sup> Interview with Zoltán Dévavári.

<sup>245</sup> Interview with András Ágoston

<sup>246</sup> See the statement of József Kasza, president of VMSZ at [http://www.kettosallampolgarsag.mtaki.hu/allasfoglalasok/allasfogl\\_30.html](http://www.kettosallampolgarsag.mtaki.hu/allasfoglalasok/allasfogl_30.html)

The issue of dual citizenship has been much more salient among the Hungarians in Serbia (and Ukraine) than in Slovakia, which was an EU member already by the time of the referendum and Romania was in the accession process.

have been financed by Hungary during the tenure of the left-wing governments (e.g. the TV station Pannon RTV, the Institute for Hungarian Culture in Vojvodina, the premises of the headquarters of both VMSZ and MNT).<sup>247</sup> The other parties hardly received any funds from Hungary while socialist-liberal cabinets were governing. They were distant from the Hungarian left also in ideological terms, but since the early 2000s behind their rejection of MSZP and SZDSZ one can also identify a mechanism of rationalization by the party leaders who are experiencing difficulties in coming to terms with their parties falling into insignificance.

Since 2010 VMSZ is the primary partner of Fidesz in Vojvodina. Beyond the personal relationships of the new VMSZ elite with Fidesz politicians there are two other factors that contributed to this. First, none of the alternative parties has significant electoral support, and in the context of the high level of voting across the ethnic divide for DS and the LSV it is a rational decision by the Hungarian government to support the strongest party of the Hungarians. Second, of the four larger Hungarian minorities beyond the borders, only the community in Serbia has obtained some sort of autonomy, and the MNT is clearly the policy success of VMSZ.<sup>248</sup>

Among the smaller parties, the case of VMDP is special, as it enjoyed the support of Fidesz since its creation in 1997. During the first Orbán cabinet (1998-2002), Fidesz regarded both VMSZ and VMDP as partners. VMSZ could not be ignored, being the largest party, but the good personal relationship between Orbán and Ágoston contributed to a much better treatment of VMDP than of VMDK or of the other small parties active in that period. Today, VMDP behaves as a mouthpiece for the Hungarian government's policies in Vojvodina, and

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<sup>247</sup> Vajdaság: Gyurcsány Magyar Házat avatott Szabadkán. May 28, 2005.

<http://www.magyarország.ma/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=3247>; Interview with Nándor Bárdi.

<sup>248</sup> See the statement of Hungary's minister of foreign affairs, János Martonyi after the HNC elections of June 6, 2010: [http://www.dunatv.hu/otthon/martonyi\\_nagy\\_siker\\_vmsz\\_gyozelme.html](http://www.dunatv.hu/otthon/martonyi_nagy_siker_vmsz_gyozelme.html)

after Fidesz endorsed VMSZ, VMDP decided not to contest the 2012 and 2014 elections in order to observe the wishes of “the prime minister of the nation” (Viktor Orbán).

Though very similar in electoral support, Páll’s VMDK never enjoyed the same recognition from Budapest as VMDP, although the party was also leaning towards the right-wing parties of Hungary. The new party leader, Áron Csonka recognized the isolation of his party and stated that they are struggling to establish connections with Fidesz,<sup>249</sup> but did not obtain significant progress in this sense.

While the case of MRM is rather straightforward, the party being openly a partner of Jobbik, MPSZ is a more complicated case. MPSZ leader Rácz Szabó used to be a sympathizer of Fidesz, which is also reflected in the choice of his party’s name.<sup>250</sup> However, Rácz became extremely disillusioned after the formation of the second Orbán cabinet in 2010, because Orbán failed to abandon VMSZ for the sake of MPSZ,<sup>251</sup> consequently MPSZ is also increasingly leaning towards the Hungarian extreme-right.<sup>252</sup>

### **The nature of linkages**

VMSZ is the only party that (especially since 2000) had access to a significant amount of public resources from the host-state that render possible the development of clientelistic linkages (including resources from both the republic and province, but they are the strongest Hungarian party in the municipalities too). After 2000, VMSZ led the Provincial Secretariat for privatization (2002-2008) and later for economy (2008), as well as the secretariat for legislation, administration and national communities (2000-2010), and later education, administration and national communities (2010-2014). Moreover, the 2002 “omnibus law” has restored some of the competences of the Province which were canceled in 1990 by the Milošević regime. Due to the differences in the political context, the clientelistic potential of

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<sup>249</sup> Interview with Áron Csonka.

<sup>250</sup> Since 2003, the complete name of Fidesz is Fidesz – Magyar Polgári Szövetség.

<sup>251</sup> Interview with Attila Márton

<sup>252</sup> Interview with László Rácz Szabó.

VMSZ after 2000 should be considered much greater than that of the original VMDK in the early 1990, despite the fact that the latter also had a dominant position in the Hungarian community. However, VMSZ gained access to important resources from the Serbian state and the Province of Vojvodina, while VMDK's isolationist strategy only allowed for access to resources from Hungary and the municipalities with significant Hungarian population.

After the pluralization of the party scene, the smaller parties (VMDK, VMDP and MPSZ) only had access to resources in some municipalities where they remained strong and were usually part of the local power coalition. However, all of them underwent a clear decline in this respect (presently only VMDP remains significant in the municipality of Temerin, until 2012 VMDK was fairly strong in Bečej/Óbecse and MPSZ in Senta/Zenta). MRM, as the newest party clearly scores the lowest on this aspect.

Since 1997, VMSZ has also been the party that receives and distributes the bulk of the financial resources from the kin-state, either through the MNT, which is controlled by them due to the overwhelming majority they possess, or through various foundations (most important being the *Concordia Minoritatis Hungariae* Association and the László Szekeres foundation of the MNT). The infrastructure for the implementation of the Status Law (the network of *Concordia Minoritatis Hungaricae* offices) is also under the control of VMSZ, and since 2011 these offices are also in charge of processing the applications for dual citizenship. VMDP also has access to a limited amount of kin-state resources due to their special connection to Fidesz, but these are only sufficient to ensure the survival of the party.

The issue of the special Hungarian electoral roll also has to be mentioned here. As clientelistic exchanges require the possibility of directly targeting and monitoring the voters, the ability of VMSZ to set up a database comprising about 60% of the potential ethnic Hungarian electorate during the registration process for the MNT election should be considered a very important realization. Being registered on the electoral roll is already

employed as an advantage when it comes to the supply of certain goods, for instance the university scholarships awarded by the MNT for ethnic Hungarian students.<sup>253</sup>

Unraveling the financial affairs of the Hungarian community of Vojvodina is beyond the goals of this thesis. However, it can be reasonably argued that among the three cases studied in the thesis, the relative weight of the resources from Hungary can be considered the highest in the case of Vojvodina. In the early 1990s this was the consequence of the isolationist strategy of VMDK, but later the economic downturn caused by the wars also maintained this. Vojvodina (as well as Transcarpathia) are actually subject to positive discrimination in what concerns the distribution of the allocations from Hungary's budget among the regions from the neighboring countries (discounting special investments), receiving a higher percentage of the funds than their proportion in the community of Hungarians beyond the border. Another reason why the funds from Hungary play a relatively more important role is that the minority parties of Vojvodina have not participated directly in national governing coalitions (apart from the 2000-2003 period, when József Kasza was deputy prime minister), they were part only of the executive of Vojvodina.

Furthermore, the minority national councils only receive financing from the Serbian state only since 2004, moreover, these are disbursed through various ministries and not a single item of the budget. Leaders of the MNT affirmed that the subsidies from Budapest have always played a more important role in the financing of the minority's institutional system than the Serbian resources.<sup>254</sup> Based on the budgets of the MNT between 2010 and 2014, one can conclude that the weight of the financing from Hungary was between 65-70%, amounting to 2.72-3.64 million USD.<sup>255</sup> Comparing this to the figures obtained with a similar method as for Romania and Slovakia, one can see that the finances distributed directly by the

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<sup>253</sup> A Magyar Nemzeti Tanács felsőoktatási ösztöndíjprogramjának pályázati felhívása (July 4, 2011).

<http://mntosztondij.org.rs/hirek-mnt-news/30-osztondijmntfelsoktatas>

<sup>254</sup> Interviews with László Józsa, Jenő Hajnal and Zsolt Várkonyi.

<sup>255</sup> The budgets are available at <http://www.mnt.org.rs/153-Hatarozatok>

MNT amount to approximately the half of the finances destined to Vojvodina from Hungary, the rest being subject to decisions in Budapest.

Turning to the programmatic aspect, VMDP and MRM score the highest on this. On one hand they have the most unique profiles, VMDP because of the issues of personal autonomy and dual citizenship, which they have been consistently advocating since their creation, and MRM for being the most radical. On the other hand, all four small parties score higher than VMSZ in what concerns *the relative weight* of the programmatic dimension, because they need to put more emphasis on ethnopolitical issues in order to differentiate themselves. This does not mean, however, that VMSZ does not have a comprehensive programmatic proposal; moreover, it is also the only party to dedicate sections in its manifestos to non-ethnic issues.<sup>256</sup> The point is that programmatic appeals have a relatively lower importance for VMSZ than in the case of its challengers, as the latter are unable to deploy clientelistic linkages.

Regarding charisma, VMDP and MPSZ are clearly one-person parties, their support is drawn mostly from the charisma of Ágoston<sup>257</sup> and Rác Szabó. The same was the case with VMDK until the death of Sándor Páll in 2010, but the charismatic linkage type is no longer significant since the new president assumed office. Since then, the programmatic element remains the most important, as the party has no access to resources on which they could maintain clientelistic networks. For VMDP, VMDK and MPSZ, charisma remains the primary substitute for a strong party organization. It has to be emphasized though that despite their central role in the appeals of their parties, the presidents VMDK, VMDP (and MPSZ) are rather divisive personalities, who could rally their own supporters around the flag but were rather unpopular among the supporters of the other parties. According to an opinion poll

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<sup>256</sup> It should be mentioned that law and order issues are a non-ethnic topic which resurfaces in the rhetoric of all Hungarian parties.

<sup>257</sup> Ágoston retired from the presidency of VMDP in February 2013, being replaced by Béla Csorba. However, the direction of the party did not change.

from 2007, both Ágoston (VMDP) and Páll (VMDK) were very well-known politicians, however, their approval rating was very low among the Hungarian voters, lower not only than that of VMSZ's leading politicians, but also than that of most Serbian politicians (Badis, 2008).

## **Chapter 8. Comparing the cases and revisiting the argument**

After having discussed in detail the development of the three minority party systems, in this chapter I proceed to compare the three cases, and will revisit the main argument put forward in Chapter 3.

Based on the case studies one can conclude that the main dimension of competition within all three communities was of ethnopolitical nature. At the risk of gross simplification, the main divide in all three countries can be described as being between a more radical and a more moderate camp. The former were advocating autonomy more vocally, were less enthusiastic about cooperation with mainstream parties, and wished to obtain concessions from the host-state through pressures from the kin-state and the international community. They were also inclined towards a historizing-romantic view about the Hungarian community and grounded their claims in historic injustice or the principle of self-determination, while also depicting their rivals as not sufficiently Hungarian or even anti-national. Conversely, the moderates or pragmatics were more open towards inter-ethnic cooperation and considered that the problems of the minority have to be solved in the host-state through participation in power, and not by Hungary. They were more open towards a human rights approach to minority rights and often rejected the conceptions of the radicals as atavistic and excessively nationalist.

However, when it comes to classify the parties according to the ethnopolitical goals contained in the typologies discussed in Chapter 4, one can conclude that all parties fall into a rather narrow policy space, ranging from proactive protectionism or cultural revivalism to territorial autonomism. On one hand, even within this interval, parties putting forward demands falling short of some sort of autonomy are rather exceptional; actually, only the multi-ethnic Most-Híd from Slovakia can be classified as such. On the other hand, the most “radical” demand of any Hungarian minority party was territorial autonomy, no claims

challenging the integrity of the host-states being voiced, which renders even the radicals more moderate in what concerns their goals than the average Western European ethnoregionalist parties, as Ishiyama and Breuning (1998) have also pointed out. This also raises the question of what the labels moderate and radical really mean, to which I will return in more detail below.

Given this narrow policy space, electoral competition between them is best described as *valence competition*. This is clearly the case in Romania, where the new party entries were all justified as a return to the original goals and organizational principles of RMDSZ (internal self-determination and the self-government model), from which the latter, however, has putatively departed. The situation is similar in Serbia: even if the rival parties have put emphasis on different types of autonomy, they all agree about the overarching importance of autonomy and engage in valence competition on the issue. There are, however, two important specific features in Serbia which have important consequences on the goals of the parties. First, as a consequence of the fact that Vojvodina has regained some of its competences as an autonomous province through the so-called omnibus-law in 2002, VMSZ shifted its focus to expanding the autonomy of the province instead of territorial autonomy for the Hungarian-majority areas. Second, after the implementation of (some limited form of) cultural autonomy through the MNT, one of the main points of contention between VMSZ, who has been dominating the MNT and its challengers refers precisely to the institutional features of personal autonomy. While VMSZ emphasizes the need to develop the MNT, the smaller radical parties are demanding a reform of the law on national councils and some of them even question the legitimacy of the MNT.

The Hungarian community of Slovakia is somewhat different than the other two minorities. First, autonomy did not emerge as the overarching goal structuring competition. Second, in the first phase of organizational pluralism also the ideological features of the

parties played a role, and there was a more fundamental divide concerning the preferable principles of the community's social and political organization, pitting a liberal-pluralist alternative against a corporatist conception. Though all three parties put forward conceptions about various types of minority self-governments, the competition between them was not purely of a valence type, rather, two competing conceptions were clashing. In the second period of pluralism the divide between MKP and Most-Híd is somewhat different and can be regarded as more fundamental, as the consensus among the Hungarian political elites about the desirability of representation through exclusively ethnic parties has been broken.

Given the very narrow policy space in which the party goals can be ordered, the strategies and attitudes of the parties towards the actors of both the host- and the kin-state, as well as the rhetoric they adopt to frame the grievances of the community provides a more fruitful avenue for differentiating between the parties. The analysis has revealed that most parties display a mix of the idealtypical strategies identified by De Winter (1998), though pure participationist/governmental strategies are better approximated in reality than pure tribunal strategies (or the mix of tribunal and anti-system strategies). Consistent opposition strategies were characteristic rather in the early 1990s (VMDK, EPM), when the minorities were more optimistic about the opportunities of pressuring their host-state through the international community, relying on the kin-state, and when majority nationalism was also more heated in the host-states. However, these strategies did not yield the expected results and their attractiveness decreased. Presently, opposition strategies are only pursued by small parties. Beside principled reasons, a more practical explanation for the vociferous discourse of rejecting participation in power also exists in these cases: the fact that they are too small to have coalition potential, except for the local level. This applies for MPP and EMNP in Romania, and for VMDP, VMDK, MPSZ and MRM in Serbia. In the case of some parties (VMDK, MPSZ in Serbia, MPP in Romania), instances of opportunistic behavior cast doubt

on the credibility of their uncompromising rhetoric. None of the parties could be classified as pursuing an anti-system strategy (apart from occasionally engaging into non-conventional types of political participation like protests), yet this does not prevent some of the mainstream parties or the majority media from responding to their more intransigent manifestations by labeling them as extremists and refusing to cooperate with them, and sometimes the more moderate minority parties also recourse to such strategic labeling.

The relationship with the Hungarian government and with parties from Hungary is to a certain extent overlapping with the differences in goals and the type of strategy pursued in the host-state. One important feature of the Hungarian-Hungarian relationships is that the relationship of the minority parties with their counterparts from Hungary is highly asymmetrical: while the ties on the right (Fidesz and partly Jobbik) are rather clear, one cannot state that any of the minority parties would have considered MSZP, SZDSZ or other left-wing parties a close partner.<sup>258</sup> The large moderate parties (RMDSZ and VMSZ) can be positioned in this respect on the leftmost position within their party systems, but this is simply due to the fact that as the largest (or only) parties of the minority they were interested in maintaining good ties with any party that was governing in Budapest, thus also with MSZP and SZDSZ. The case of Most-Híd is special, as this multi-ethnic party is less interested in maintaining close ties with any party from Hungary. It should also be mentioned that in the rhetoric of the more radical minority parties the term “left-liberal” (*balliberális*) is used with outright negative connotations since the referendum about dual citizenship.

Conversely, on the right side of the minority party systems the intertwining with the parties from Hungary is quite significant. This is the case primarily with EMNP and MPP in Romania, VMDP in Vojvodina, and to a lesser extent also with the post-split MKP. All these parties openly declare themselves strategic partners of Fidesz, and sometimes act as its

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<sup>258</sup> RMDSZ has a platform that maintained close ties with the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) until the collapse of the latter, and FMK/MPP also considered SZDSZ a partner (in the early years of democratization along with Fidesz, which was back then a liberal party).

mouthpieces in the minority communities. Fidesz aided the creation of MPP and EMNP with the deliberate aim of weakening RMDSZ. The case of MRM is special, as it is currently the only minority party that maintains a partnership with Jobbik.

While closer ties between minority and kin-state parties were characteristic also before, under the second Orbán cabinet a very significant shift occurred in this respect, as Fidesz unequivocally affirmed a preference ordering among the parties of the same minority. This had consequences not only at the rhetorical level, but also concerning the minority parties' access to the financial resources from Hungary. Fidesz attempted to help its partners by cutting RMDSZ and Most-Híd off the kin-state resources, and in Romania it also entrusted newly created infrastructural resources to EMNP. Vojvodina, however, does not conform to this pattern.<sup>259</sup> Although Fidesz maintained its relationship with VM DP, VMSZ is also treated as an official partner, being thus only minority party that is the most moderate within its community and is also well integrated into the Serbian polity, yet remains a partner of Fidesz. The closest partners of Fidesz also put a very high value on the integration of the fresh dual citizens into the Hungarian political community. However, Slovakia is different in this respect, because of the counter-law that forbids dual citizenship.

One important consequence of the tight ties of some minority parties to Fidesz is that these parties score very low on what Panebianco (1988) has called *party autonomy*, that is, the extent to which the resources that are indispensable for their operation are controlled by the organizations themselves. While in the literature the classical examples for parties with low autonomy are parties that are dependent on external organizations as the trade unions or the church, in these cases it is a party of the kin-state which supplies the overwhelming part of the resources necessary for the operation of these minority parties, especially if they do not hold important positions in the host-state, including the local governments. The price for

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<sup>259</sup> In Ukraine, Fidesz unequivocally supports KMKSZ, while its relation with UMDSZ is almost as bad as with Most-Híd.

financial dependence on a party of the kin-state is reduced freedom of action and lower coalition potential towards the mainstream parties. The most obvious example for low party autonomy so far was the withdrawal of VM DP from the elections of 2012 and 2014, when kin-state patron decided to support VMSZ.

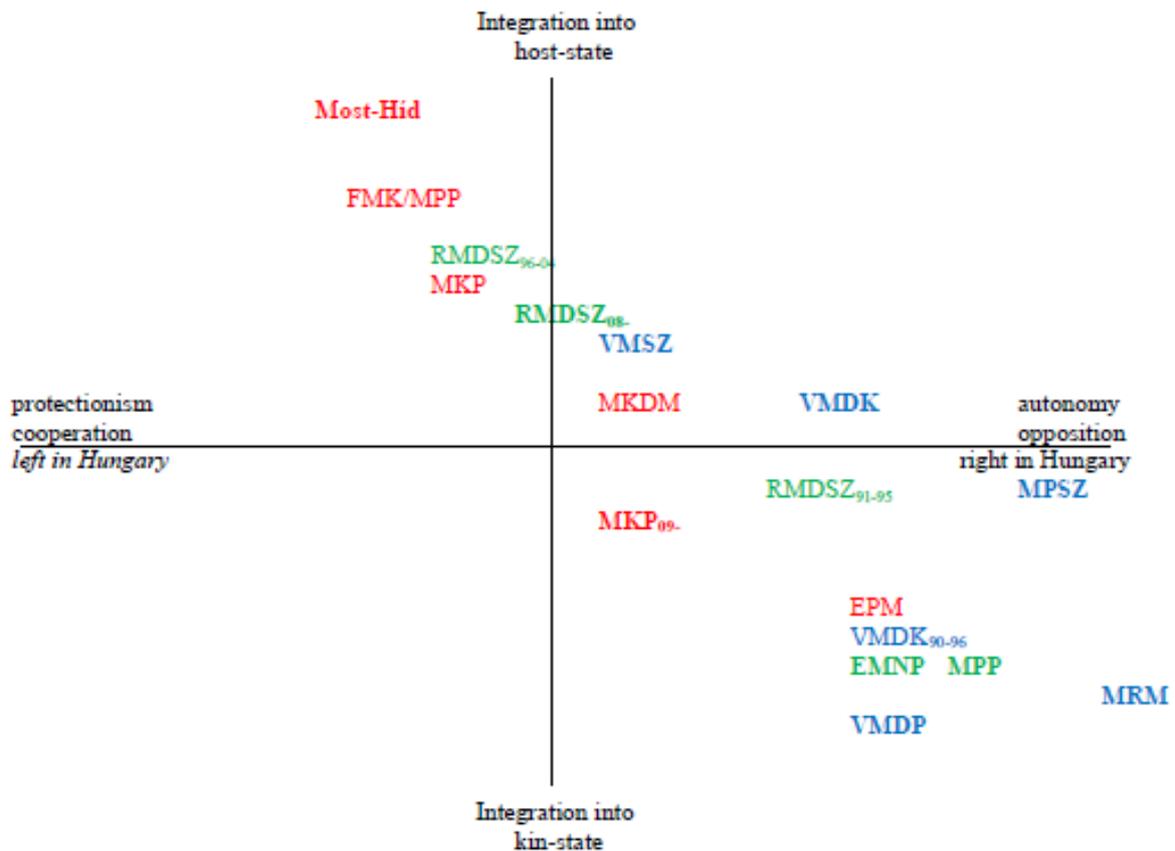
Note, however, that the government of the kin-state does not always support the more radical minority parties, or it does not support all of them, and this is true not only of the left-wing parties of Hungary (e.g. Fidesz's support for VMSZ). On the other hand, it may also be the case that the more radical factions of the minority maintain more influence in the kin-state than the moderates even under the tenure of left-wing governments, as the example of Miklós Duray illustrates.

The three features of the parties discussed so far are closely interrelated, though not perfectly. The covariation renders possible the mapping of the parties on a single dimension, similar to the horizontal axis of Figure 8.1. However, representing the orientation of the parties towards the kin-state or the host-state as another dimension on the graph allows a better differentiation, especially in what concerns the deviations from the general pattern. Naturally, the placements in the graph are not intended as precise measurements, the graphical representation is only meant to offer an overall view about the party systems. The graph is also not appropriate to incorporate all the changes of the past 20 years. Multiple positions are provided only for the parties that underwent really significant shifts, i.e. the ones that continued with the same name after splits that also involved changes in some of their characteristics (VMDK, MKP, RMDSZ). Moreover, for RMDSZ three positions are provided, one for the period before 1996, one for the period since 2008 (the registration of the first challenger party) and one for the period in between.

Note that the lower left quadrant of the graph is empty, reflecting the absence of left-wing ideologies and the lack of partnerships with the left-wing parties of Hungary, but also

the incompatibility of ethnopolitical demands of very low intensity with an orientation towards the kin-state. The leftmost region of the upper part of the graph also remains unpopulated because of the lack of partnerships with the Hungarian left. The densest areas on the graph are the lower right quadrant (containing the more radical parties) and the surroundings of the intersection of the axes (where the more moderate parties are located).

**Figure 8.1. The positioning of the Hungarian minority parties**



The parties from the different countries are plotted with different colors, to emphasize the differences also across the party systems of the three communities. One important message of this representation is that the overall level of “radicalness” varies across the countries. For instance, the post-split MKP is positioned closer to the moderate parties of Romania and Serbia, except for its position on the vertical axis, which is the consequence of its isolation in the Slovak party system and the presence of Most-Híd. Also note that both

parties positioned closest to the upper leftmost corner of the graph are from Slovakia. Generally speaking, the parties from Serbia are represented as the most radical on average, and those from Slovakia as the most moderate. This brings us to the issue of how to interpret radicalism, more precisely to the idea that whether a party is considered moderate or radical depends not only on its profile, but also on the context.

Based on these considerations it is reasonable to classify the parties in a 2x2 table, in terms of the absolute and relative or contextual radicalness of their behavior, as in Figure 8.2. Absolute radicalness refers to the ethno-political demands as presented in the party platforms (that is, it is based primarily on the assessment of programmatic goals and the ties to parties from Hungary), while the relative or contextual assessment also takes into consideration the strategic interactions between the parties in the system. Based on the analysis performed in the previous chapters, only the two small parties from Vojvodina leaning towards the Hungarian extreme right can be classified as genuinely radical, that is, also in absolute terms. The cell combining genuinely radical demands with a treatment as moderate is naturally empty. The most interesting is the cell with parties that are considered radicals in the party system, although their actual demands do not necessarily justify this treatment. The most important example for this is MKP after the 2009 split, which ended up in this situation primarily because of the emergence of the multi-ethnic Most-Híd on a significantly different platform. Otherwise, MKP is more similar to RMDSZ or VMSZ (e.g. in what concerns its participationist strategy), and arguably even less radical than them, especially if we consider that autonomy does not play such a central role in its platform. The rest of the parties that are usually treated as radical are indeed more radical in absolute terms than MKP, but considerably less so than MRM or MPSZ. As a consequence, EMNP, MPP (Romania), VMKD, VMKP and EPM appear in an intermediary cell in this respect.

**Figure 8.2. Absolute and contextual radical party appeals**

		Contextual or relative strength of demands	
		Moderate	radical
“Absolute” strength of demands	Moderate	MPP, Most-Híd; RMDSZ, VMSZ; MKDM	Post-split MKP
			EMNP; MPP; VMDK; VMDP; EPM
	Radical	----	MPSZ; MRM

### Appeals and linkages

Given the declarative consensus about autonomy as the overarching goal, one typical scenario of new party entry is outbidding by newcomers trying to depict themselves as uncompromising and more competent in obtaining this, as opposed to their established rivals who have sold out the case of autonomy. This is the case with MPP and EMNP in Romania and with MPSZ and MRM in Serbia. The message of these parties is basically limited to the minority issue and especially autonomy, and to the criticism of their more moderate rival, RMDSZ and VMSZ. The more radical stance of EPM in Slovakia can also be classified into this type, though here the parties emerged simultaneously.

Note, however, that among all three communities, there was only a single instance when a party was able to be more successful than its rivals on a more radical platform, namely EPM until the mid-1990s. Conversely, the emergence of VMSZ against VMDK or of Most-Híd against MKP are successful instances of underbidding (in the latter case arguably lateral underbidding), while the emergence of MPP and EMNP in Romania, as well as of MPSZ and MRM in Serbia are all unsuccessful cases of ethnic outbidding. One of the most important questions that this thesis aimed to answer is why the more radical parties were unable to be successful among the Hungarian minorities.

I have argued in Chapter 3 that the key to this phenomenon is the differential access of the parties to resources that can be deployed for clientelistic purposes, and that the moderate parties are able to access resources of such magnitude in their host-state which the

radical challengers are unable to counterbalance. In the case studies I have tried to assess the clientelistic potential of the parties also comparing the magnitude of the resources they can access from the host- and the kin-state. Though the systems of subsidies are very complex and insufficiently transparent in both the kin- and the host-states, and the clientelistic potential inherent in various components of the system may vary, a rough comparison of the relative weight of the different sources is still meaningful.

The funding for the minorities has increased both in Hungary and the host-states over the past two decades, though the trends were not monotonous and some of the exceptions are quite notable, as in the case of Slovakia under the Fico governments. The resources from Hungary still represent higher amounts of money than the allocations of the host-states for similar purposes, and as such they are very important for the sustainability of the institutional system of all three Hungarian communities (especially in the case of Serbia). However, the gap has clearly decreased as compared to the early 1990s in all three countries.

What is really important, however, is that the subsidies for the ethnic kin (summed for all Hungarian communities beyond the borders!) from Hungary only represent a rather low amount of money (between 0.1-0.2% of the budget of Hungary, the highest value being 74.6 million USD in 2008), and a considerable part of this can be used for clientelistic exchanges only to a limited extent (e.g. in the case of the education subsidies the party can only benefit from the infrastructure). Consequently, their weight is clearly inferior in magnitude as compared to the resources that become accessible through participation in the governments of the host-states and/or controlling local governments. Moreover, participation in government enables not only softer forms of clientelism and a limited number of jobs or contracts that can be employed for patronage purposes, but also pork barrel, that is, public investments directed to areas with a high proportion of Hungarians. This means that relying solely or

overwhelmingly on funding from Hungary is not sufficient to mount a challenge against the parties that are able to control host-state resources while in government.

However, the price of access to government is moderation, and in both Romania and Slovakia this entailed the shelving of more radical ethnopolitical demands, such as autonomy (Bárdi, 2000; Csörgő, 2007). The capacity of the minority parties to bargain for resources is further reduced by the lack of guarantees for their participation in power, as in all three countries their inclusion into the government depends on ad hoc deals and the need of the mainstream parties to secure a majority in parliament. Their only important asset is that relative to a mainstream party of similar size, they may be cheaper coalition partners (Kiss *et al.*, 2013a). The governing record of RMDSZ and especially MKP and Most-Híd also prove that the minority parties obtained little progress in restructuring the state.

The explanation put forward here for the lack of success of outbidding parties also has some notable implications. First, in the context of the nationalist climate that dominated all three countries in the early 1990s, the access of Hungarian minorities to host-state resources was very poor, and in this period, radical platforms were more successful. EPM remained the strongest Hungarian party in Slovakia until the mid-1990s, and the relative weight of the radical factions within RMDSZ was also higher, keeping alive the hopes of obtaining the leadership of the organization. Second, the support of the kin-state and influence over its resources can still make a difference in situations when access to host-state funds is discontinued, as it happened in the case of the change of leadership in MKP in 2007. Third, the fact that Vojvodina does not conform to the pattern of the other two cases, as the strongest party which is also best integrated into the Serbian polity is still able to remain a close partner of Fidesz, can be revisited in light of the fact that the relative weight of the Hungarian subsidies is still the highest in the case of Serbia. VMSZ has not yet controlled ministerial

portfolios in the national government, only in the executive of the Vojvodina province, which is only entitled to 7% from Serbia's central budget.

Naturally, I do not claim that everything boils down to the aspect of the relative weight of the resources that the parties have access to. In what concerns the higher success of the radicals in the early 1990s as compared to period after 2000, also the changed international context played an important role. The fact that VMSZ is able to maintain more radical goals in absolute terms in Serbia while participating actively in power is also due to the different historical legacy of the Yugoslav experience, where autonomy was not an anathema. However, my aim in this thesis was to sketch an additional aspect of the phenomenon of inter-ethnic coalitions or of the moderation through inclusion argument, and not to actively engage the debate about EU conditionality.

While the positive consequences of the inclusion of minority elites into governing coalitions are obvious from the perspective of stability, the other side of the coin is that inclusion is conditioned on the toning down of ethnopolitical demands, which in absolute terms are not necessarily even that radical. The most that the majority ethnic groups are willing to provide (especially in Romania and Slovakia) are output goals (Rudolph & Thompson, 1989) or access and participation (Mikesell & Murphy, 1991), that is, only integrationist goals are accommodated to a certain extent, but particularistic demands or segregationist rights (Jenne, 2007; Keating, 1996) are rejected, as is the restructuring of the state in the form of formalized power-sharing or autonomies with real competences. Under such a situation moderate minority elites who participate in power are unable to reinforce their legitimacy through policy achievements in the ethnopolitical domain, but turn to clientelistic exchanges instead (Kiss *et al.*, 2013a). For the moderate minority elites the situation is convenient because they can access resources and can also feel safe against challengers within their own segment. The fact that the moderates can establish themselves

within the minority relying on public resources is also convenient from the standpoint of the majority elites, as this way the radicals will remain marginalized.

However, the asymmetrical nature of inter-ethnic cooperation and the fact that certain fundamental aspects of the state are not open to negotiation, render this model of minority incorporation reminiscent of arrangements based on elite cooptation and control (Lustick, 1979; Rothchild, 1997). The moderate minority elites receive some degree of status, power and access to economic resources in exchange for compliance with the state's regulation and agreement not to tackle certain "delicate" issues.

## Chapter 9. Intra-ethnic political competition – the demand side

The previous chapter discussed the development of the Hungarian minority party scene in Romania, Serbia and Slovakia, addressing the differences between the parties at the level of the elites, that is, the supply side of the electoral market. The present chapter is intended to complement the three case study chapters by analyzing the phenomenon of political fragmentation and competition at the demand side of the electoral market. Making use of electoral and survey data I will attempt to answer the following questions: (1) are there any differences between the electorates of the rival Hungarian minority parties? (2) what is the nature of these differences, are they better explained by socio-economic or attitudinal factors? (3) are the differences identified at the level of the elites mirrored in the electorate? (4) to what extent are the three communities similar in these respects?

The voting behavior of ethnic minority electorates is a rather under-researched topic, most importantly because at the level of the national party system they seem to be very stable and disciplined groups of voters (Cox, 1997; Birnir, 2007a). Furthermore, the smaller ethnic minority parties rarely reach significance at the national level, and as a consequence the political divisions within the minority only seldom have relevant consequences for the whole party system. In what concerns the three communities studied in this thesis, to my knowledge the only study in English which investigates the topic of intra-ethnic political competition making use of survey data remains Székely (2007).<sup>260</sup> Other authors who touch upon the intra-ethnic electoral dynamics employ administrative (census and election) data at various levels of aggregation (Stroschein, 2001, 2011; Szőcsik, 2012). The Hungarian-language literature about the topic is more extensive, but most of these studies are limited to the analysis of a single election and are rather descriptive (e.g. Bakk *et al.*, 2004; Lelkes, 2004; Szász & Bakk, 2007; Lampl, 2010); only some recent efforts perform multivariate analysis

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<sup>260</sup> The MA thesis of the author.

on survey data representative of the minority electorate (Kiss, 2009; Kiss *et al.*, 2013b; Ravasz, 2013).

The chapter consists of three sections. The first part employs administrative data to assess the impact of the territorial concentration of the minority on the support of the rival minority parties which differ according to the radicalness of their demands and also addresses briefly the extent of voting across ethnic lines, that is, for mainstream parties. In doing so it follows previous research that has established that the territorial concentration of a minority facilitates intra-ethnic competition (Stroschein, 2011; Bochsler, 2012), and that the effectiveness of appeals of varying radicalness depends on local demography (Szócsik, 2012; Bochsler & Szócsik, 2013b). The second section employs survey data to analyze the differences between the electorates of the rival Hungarian minority parties and to identify the socio-demographic and attitudinal factors that are relevant in intra-ethnic party competition. The third section deals with the phenomenon of “party preferences across the borders”, that is, the attitudes of the minority electorates towards the kin-state and the relationship between their preferences concerning host- and kin-state parties.

## **9.1. Territorial concentration and voting behavior**

### **Romania**

In Romania, the estimations based on electoral results concerning the proportion of ethnic Hungarians voting for mainstream parties at the parliamentary elections range between 6-13%, depending primarily on the perceived stakes and closeness of the election.<sup>261</sup> At the same time, the number of votes received by the Hungarian parties from the majority population is negligible. There are, however, considerable regional differences in what concerns the degree of voting along ethnic lines, more precisely, the level of ethnic voting

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<sup>261</sup> The degree of ethnic voting is estimated as the share of votes obtained by the minority parties divided by the share of the minority in the population in a particular administrative unit, also correcting for the different age structure of the minority. For details see Kiss *et al.* (2013b).

increases with the proportion of the Hungarians, but in areas with low Hungarian presence it can be as low as 65% (Kiss *et al.*, 2013b; Székely, 2013).

The share of the Hungarian population also has a significant impact on the relative support of the rival political parties. Figure 9.1 shows the average support of RMDSZ and its intra-ethnic challenger at the 2007 elections for the European Parliament (independent candidate László Tőkés) and the 2008 local elections (MPP),<sup>262</sup> according to the share of the Hungarians in the locality.<sup>263</sup> The left side of the figure reports the overall results, while the one on the right displays the relative support of the rival parties or candidates within the ethnic electorate, that is, their share from the sum of votes cast for them. The graphs clearly show that the difference between the rivals decreases as the proportion of Hungarians in the locality increases, the moderate RMDSZ loses and the more radical challenger gains. The trend holds for both elections, but while in the case of the 2007 EP elections the relative support in the localities with an overwhelming Hungarian majority comes close to 60:40 in favor of RMDSZ, at the local elections MPP was only able to obtain on 20-25% of the Hungarian votes even in these areas. One can also see that the support of MPP is basically non-existent where the proportion of Hungarians is under 30%. It is important to emphasize that the lines do not intersect even in the case of the EP election (dashed lines), the support of RMDSZ is higher everywhere than that of its intra-ethnic challenger.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> The parliamentary elections are less appropriate for assessing the relative support of the parties, as MPP did not participate in any parliamentary elections so far, while EMNP only fielded candidates in some of the electoral districts in 2012.

<sup>263</sup> The graphs are based on data from 586 localities, where the share of the Hungarian population was higher than 3% according to the 2002 census.

<sup>264</sup> Note, however, that in the Szeklerland, Tőkés obtained a better result than RMDSZ: in Covasna county he obtained 61.5% of the ethnic vote, and in Harghita county the result came close to a tie, 50.4% for RMDSZ and 49.6% for Tőkés. Consequently, the advantage for RMDSZ in the localities with an overwhelming majority is a consequence of the localities from outside the Szeklerland.

**Figure 9.1. The relative support of the Hungarian parties in Romania (2007-2008), according to the proportion of the minority**

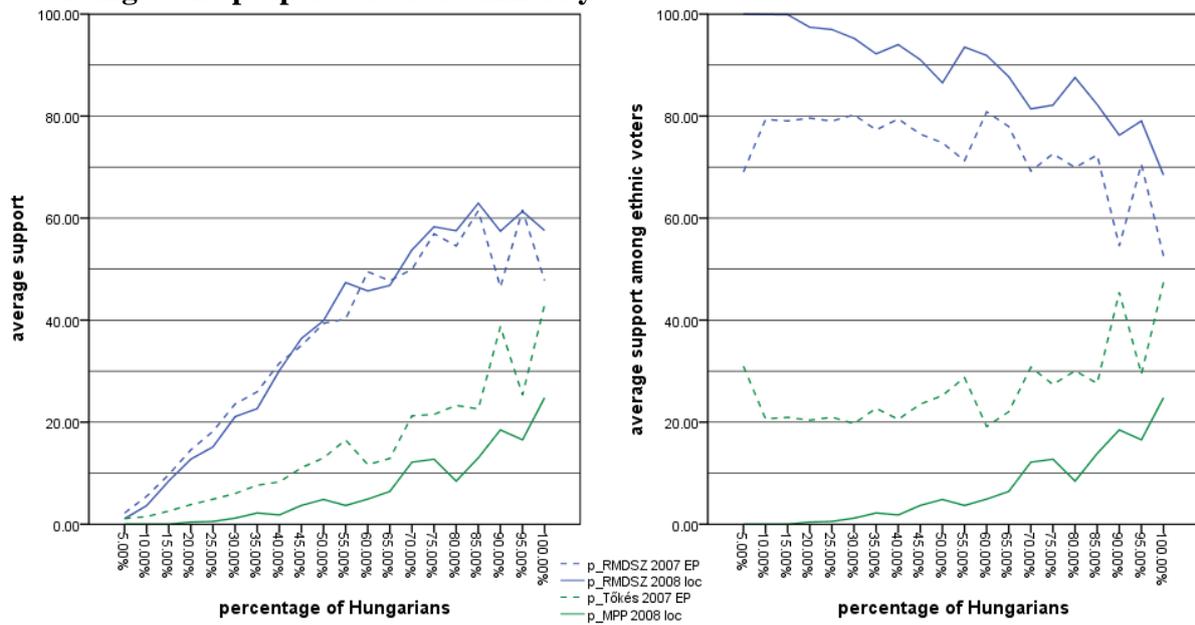
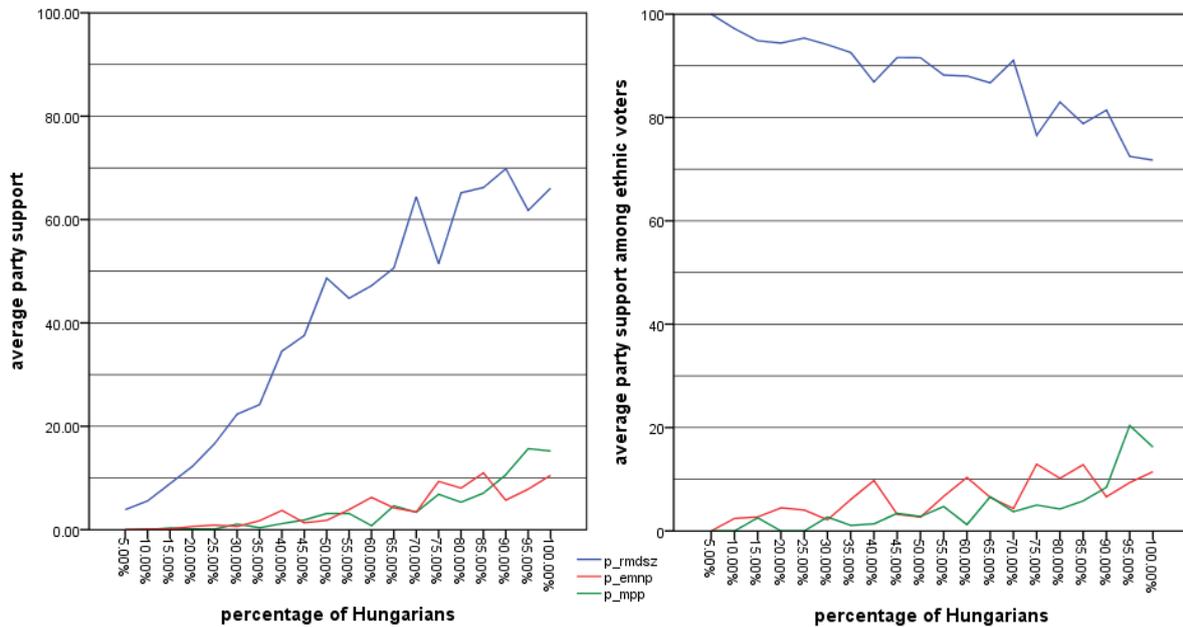


Figure 9.2 reports similar data for the 2012 local elections, allowing an assessment of the support of all three Hungarian parties active in the present. One can conclude that the relative support of EMNP is also increasing with the proportion of the Hungarians in the locality. EMNP does somewhat better than MPP throughout the interval between 5 and 90% of Hungarians, but in the category of localities with over 90% Hungarian population, MPP is stronger. On the other hand, the support of RMDSZ remains very similar to the one from 2008, indicating that to a large extent the support of MPP from 2008 has been divided up between the two challenger parties in 2012.

**Figure 9.2. The relative support of the Hungarian parties in Romania (2012), according to the proportion of the minority**



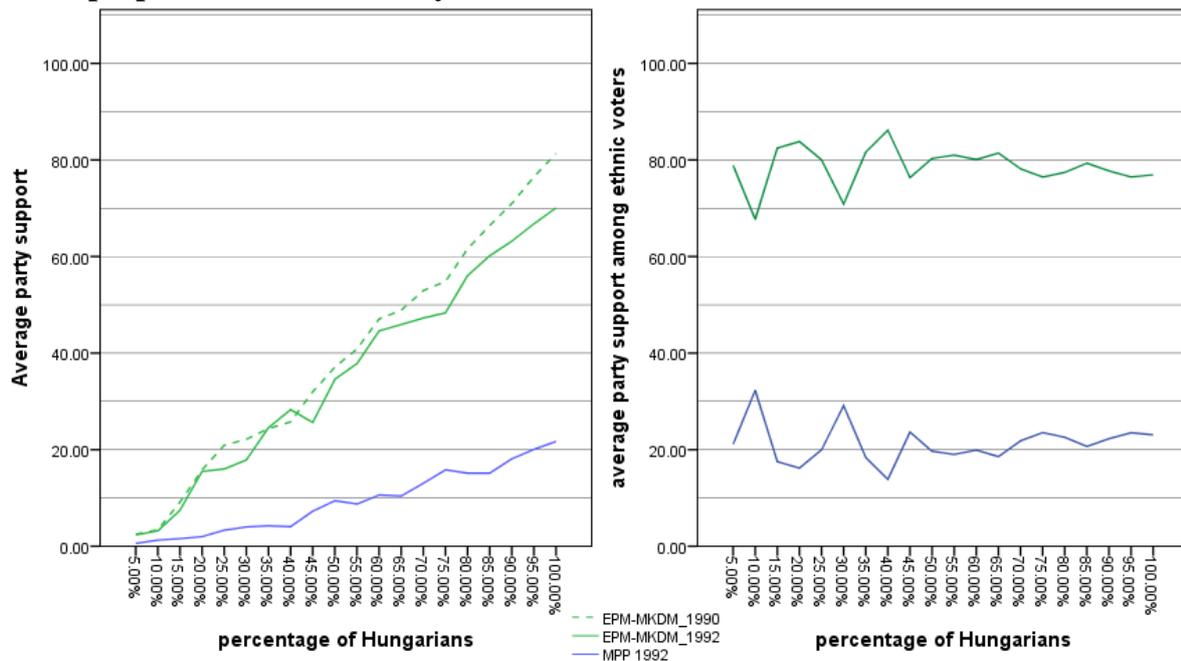
### Slovakia

In Slovakia the support of mainstream parties among the Hungarian electorate is somewhat higher than in Romania. Ravasz (2013) estimates that about 15% of the ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia have constantly been voting for mainstream parties, yet in the second phase of multiparty politics this group grew even further, reaching 18.6% in 2012. Unlike Romania and Serbia, the variations in the degree of voting across ethnic lines depend not only on the concentration of the Hungarian population, but there is also a divide between the districts located in the economically more developed western, respectively the economically less developed central and eastern parts of the country, the support of the mainstream parties among the Hungarians being higher in the latter areas (Székely, 2006).

For the first phase of multiparty politics (1990-1994), the impact of the territorial concentration of the minority on the relative support of the Hungarian parties can be assessed on the results of the 1992 elections, when only EPM and MDKM ran together at the

elections, but MPP was not included into *Magyar Koalíció*.<sup>265</sup> The average support of MPP and of the EPM-MKDM coalition within the electorate at large and among the ethnic voters is plotted against the proportion of the Hungarian population in the localities in Figure 9.3.<sup>266</sup>

**Figure 9.3. The relative support of the Hungarian parties in Slovakia (1992), according to the proportion of the minority**

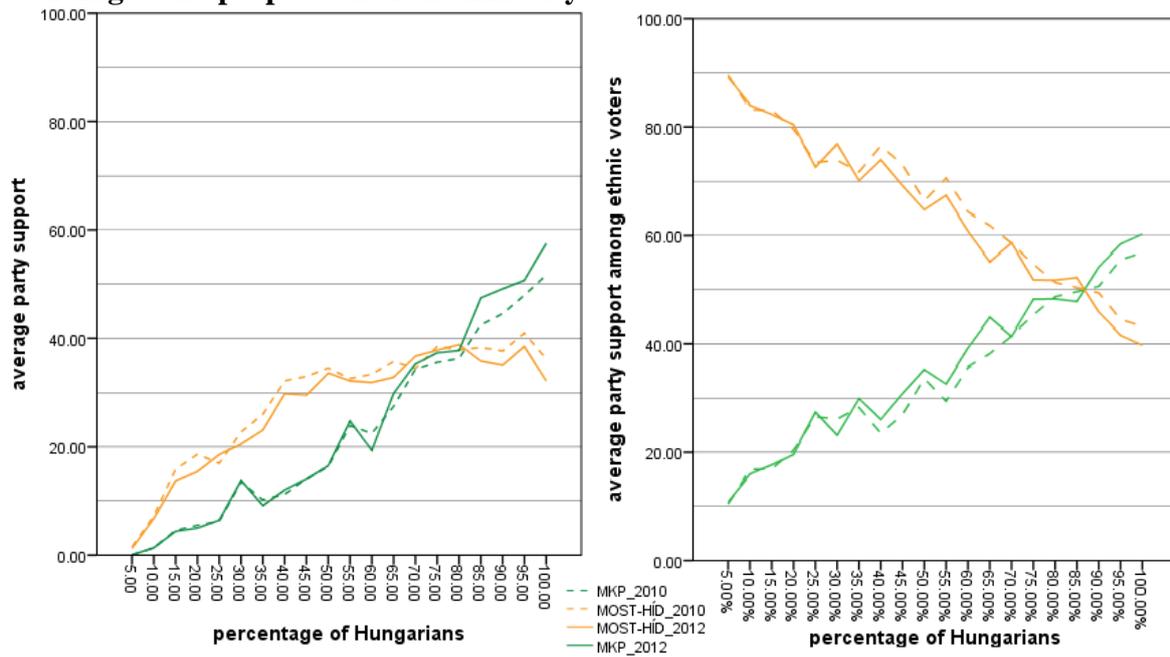


While the graph on the left look similar to the analogous ones presented for Romania above, it should be noted that in this case it was the alliance of the more radical parties (EPM and MKDM) which had a higher support regardless of the proportion of the Hungarians in the locality. The graph on the right reveals no connection between the relative support of the two blocs and the proportion of the Hungarian minority. That is, in the first phase of Hungarian multiparty politics in Slovakia, the proposition that the more moderate party is performing better in areas with lower shares of the minority and the more radical parties are doing better in ethnically compact areas does not hold.

<sup>265</sup> Unfortunately we are unable to assess the differences in the territorial support of EPM and MKDM, as the results of the local elections, where the two parties competed against each-other, are not available. However, given that Slovakia consisted of only four, large constituencies until 1994 and is a single electoral district since 1998, the impact of territorial concentration can be safely assessed on the results of the parliamentary elections, as differential party entry does not distort the results.

<sup>266</sup> The graphs are based on data from 523 localities, where the share of the Hungarian population was higher than 2% according to the 2002 census.

**Figure 9.4. The relative support of the Hungarian parties in Slovakia (2010-2012), according to the proportion of the minority**



Conversely, the similar graphs for the second phase of multiparty politics (Figure 9.4) reveal a completely different picture. One can see that the lines for the two parties intersect: below 80% Hungarian population Most-Híd does better, but above that MKP becomes stronger. The graph on the right expresses the relationship even more strongly: the average relative support of Most-Híd decreases steeply as the Hungarian presence in the locality increases, while the pattern for MKP is exactly the opposite. Moreover, the relationship was even stronger in 2012 than in 2010, as the difference between the solid and dashed lines indicates. While the situation in Slovakia is similar to that in Romania in the sense that the support of the more radical party improves as the share of Hungarians increases, the relationship is considerably stronger: in Slovakia the lines intersect, and there is a considerable difference between the support of the two parties at both ends of the X axis.

However, the support of Most-Híd (especially towards the left end of the X axis) is distorted by the fact that an estimated 20-30% of its voters are ethnic Slovaks. As the Hungarian minority lives in a narrow stripe in the southern part of the country, it is possible to break down the results of the two parties according to whether they came from the

municipalities located within the “Hungarian language area” or not. One can see in Table 9.1. that in 2010 Most-Híd obtained 15.4% of its support in localities where Hungarians are virtually nonexistent, and in 2012 this proportion was 16.3%. Conversely, the share of the post-split MKP votes coming from north of the Hungarian language border is negligible. Before the split, MKP too was able to obtain a non-negligible number of votes from territories where virtually no Hungarians reside, but the share of these votes in the overall result of the party only amounted to 3-3.3% in 2002 and 2006. The pattern for the predecessor parties of MKP is similar to that of MKP, the share of the votes from outside the language area is minimal.

**Table 9.1. Geographical distribution of the minority parties' votes in Slovakia**

	1990	1992		1994	1998	2002	2006	2010		2012	
	EPM-MKDM	EPM-MKDM	MPP	MK	MKP	MKP	MKP	MKP	Most-Híd	MKP	Most-Híd
Within language area	286444	226278	69522	289105	302604	310712	261012	108585	173993	108626	147322
% within	97.95	98.86	98.35	98.69	98.69	96.77	96.99	99.04	84.65	99.22	83.66
Outside language area	6003	2607	1167	3831	4019	10357	8099	1053	31545	857	28766
% outside	2.05	1.14	1.65	1.31	1.31	3.23	3.01	0.96	15.35	0.78	16.34
Bratislava + Košice	11978	10559	2513	13428	13017	25629	17850	3159	29188	3130	26301
% B + K	4.10	4.61	3.56	4.58	4.25	7.98	6.63	2.88	14.20	2.86	14.94
<b>Total</b>	<b>292447</b>	<b>228885</b>	<b>70689</b>	<b>292936</b>	<b>306623</b>	<b>321069</b>	<b>269111</b>	<b>109638</b>	<b>205538</b>	<b>109483</b>	<b>176088</b>

Source: author's computations based on data from the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

However, the area south of the language border also comprises mixed municipalities. Ravasz (2013) argues that in these areas of interethnic contact ethnic Slovaks voted in higher proportions for Most-Híd than in the northern, homogenous Slovak areas, estimating the support of Most-Híd among ethnic Slovaks to be around 1.5% in the north and 2.3-3.1% in the ethnic contact zone. This way, Ravasz estimates that roughly one quarter (24-27%) of the party's electorate consists of ethnic Slovaks.

The support of Most-Híd obtained in the two large cities (Bratislava and Košice) cannot be explained either solely by ethnic Hungarian votes. One can see in Table 9.1 that almost 15% of Most-Híd's votes came from the two big cities, while in the case of both MKP

and the predecessor parties this value was significantly lower. Also note that the values are the lowest in the case of the post-split MKP. The relative weight of the Hungarians living in the two big cities within the entire community has been 5.5% in 1991, 4.9% in 2001 and 4.5% in 2011. While in the case of the predecessor parties and also in the case of MKP in 1998 the weight of the votes from the two cities was similar to these values (though somewhat lower), in the case of Most-Híd the differences are so high that they cannot be explained otherwise than as coming from ethnic Slovaks. Also note the higher values for MKP in 2006 and especially 2002,<sup>267</sup> and the lower values after the split. Thus, these figures demonstrate that Most-Híd is especially attractive for ethnic Slovaks from the large cities (some of whom probably also have ethnic Hungarian origins), and although this group is smaller than that of the Slovak voters from the north, it represents a serious asset for the party.<sup>268</sup>

### **Serbia**

Assessing the electoral performance of the ethnic Hungarian parties in Serbia in a longitudinal fashion is a more difficult task, as data broken down to the appropriate level is not always available, furthermore, these parties often ran in various coalitions with mainstream or regional parties, or fielded their own candidates only in some of the districts. According to my estimations,<sup>269</sup> in the early 1990s, the degree of ethnic voting was comparable to that witnessed in Romania or Slovakia (reaching 83.3% at the federal elections of May 1992 or 87% at the 1996 federal elections). However, in the 2000s the Hungarian ethnic parties have lost ground, not only in the absolute number of votes, but also in what concerns the degree of ethnic voting. In the late 2000s the degree of ethnic voting seems to

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<sup>267</sup> The 2002 campaign of MKP (recalled as the best by many leading MKP politicians in the interviews with the author) was designed by the same person who is responsible for the brand and marketing of Most-Híd. Interviews with László Öllös and Géza Tokár.

<sup>268</sup> The high proportion of Slovak votes for Most-Híd raises the possibility that at the 2012 parliamentary elections Most-Híd might not have passed the threshold for the parliament only with ethnic Hungarian votes.

<sup>269</sup> I have estimated the size of the potential ethnic Hungarian electorate by multiplying the number of voting-age ethnic Hungarians at the census (approximated by 80% of all ethnic Hungarians) by the turnout registered at the election, and compared the votes obtained by the Hungarian parties to this value.

have stabilized between 45-65%, also depending on election type (e.g. 49% at the 2007 parliamentary elections, 63% at the 2008 presidential elections but only 51% at the same year's parliamentary elections, 57% at the 2012 parliamentary elections and 63% at the same year's provincial elections). Survey data from the late 2000s also indicate that between one third and one half of the Hungarians support mainstream or regionalist parties, primarily DS and LSV (Badis, 2008; SCAN, 2009; Döme, 2010). Similarly to Romania and Slovakia, the degree of ethnic voting varies according to the territorial concentration of the Hungarian minority, being lower in areas with low Hungarian presence;<sup>270</sup> however, even in the compact Hungarian regions the ethnic parties obtain a lower share of the ethnic vote than in the similar areas of Romania and Slovakia. The main reason for this is that the mainstream and regionalist parties also field ethnic Hungarian candidates in these municipalities.

Unfortunately, an assessment of the impact of territorial concentration on the relative support of the Hungarian parties is not possible in Serbia at the locality level, due to the unavailability of appropriate data for the elections which brought about outright competition between the Hungarian parties.<sup>271</sup> Consequently, the graphs presented in Figure 9.5 below plot the relationship at a higher level of aggregation, that of the municipalities.<sup>272</sup>

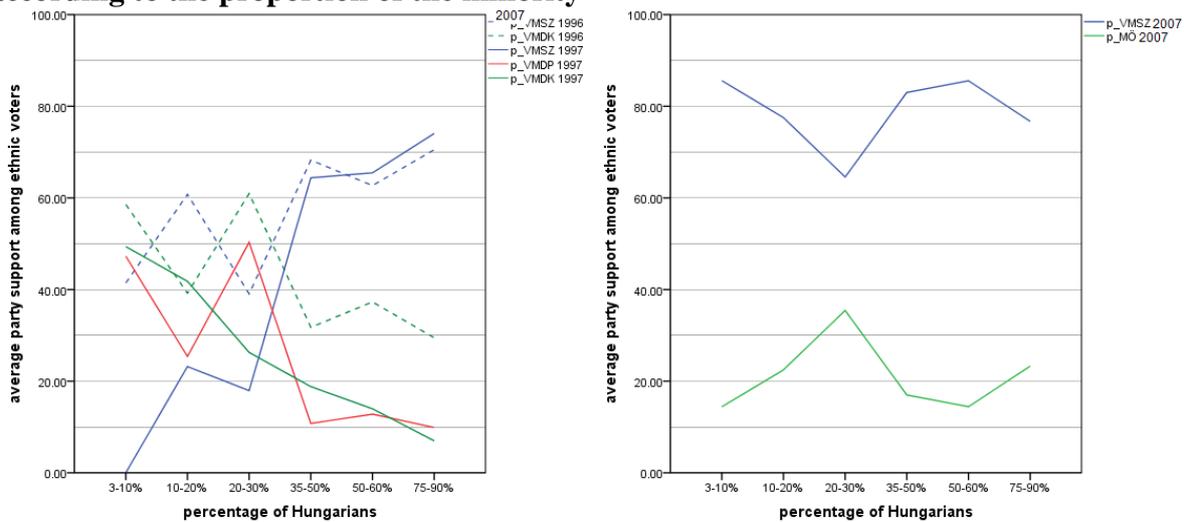
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<sup>270</sup> Correlations computed at the municipality level (N=31) revealed a strong negative relationship between the share of the Hungarian population and the estimated percentage of votes cast for mainstream or regionalist parties: for the 1997 parliamentary elections  $r=-0.676$ ,  $p<0.001$ , for the 2000 September federal elections  $r=-0.526$ ,  $p<0.01$ , for the 2007 parliamentary elections  $r=-0.565$ ,  $p<0.01$ . No relation was found, however, for the 1996 parliamentary elections:  $r=0.043$ ,  $p=0.820$ .

<sup>271</sup> Of the datasets available on the web site of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (<http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/Public/PageView.aspx?pKey=431&URL=http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ElektronskaBiblioteka2/Pretraga.aspx?pubType=8%26areaId=07>), only those for the parliamentary elections of 2003, 2008, 2012 and 2014 permit a matching of the election results with the census results at the level of the localities. However, these elections are not appropriate for my purposes: in 2008 the Hungarian parties ran together under the label of *Magyar Koalíció*, while in 2003, 2012 and 2014 some Hungarian parties were part of multi-ethnic coalitions and others did not run. The results of local or provincial elections are not available either at the locality level.

<sup>272</sup> Of the 45 municipalities of Vojvodina, the proportion of Hungarians exceeds 3% in 31. The graph for 2007 is based on these 31 municipalities. However, due to the nature of electoral districting another municipality (with 6.6% Hungarians in 2002) had been excluded, as no Hungarian party fielded candidates in the electoral constituency to which the municipality belonged. Due to the low number of cases, instead of the 20 categories used in the case of Romania and Slovakia, the municipalities of Serbia have been classified only into 6 categories.

**Figure 9.5. The relative support of the Hungarian parties in Serbia (1996, 1997, 2007), according to the proportion of the minority**



The left side of Figure 9.5 presents the relative support of the rival Hungarian parties within the ethnic electorate at the 1996 federal and the 1997 parliamentary elections, and the right side provides information about the 2007 parliamentary elections. In 1996 (dashed lines) VMDK and VMSZ had a rather similar support in the municipalities with lower share of Hungarians, but the more moderate VMSZ emerged clearly stronger in the municipalities with a higher proportion of Hungarians. The 1997 pattern seems even more clear-cut: VMSZ becomes weaker in the areas with low shares of Hungarians, while VMDP and VMDK are performing even worse in areas with higher concentrations of Hungarians than one year earlier.

This pattern looks like the opposite of the one witnessed in Romania and Slovakia, as the more moderate party (VMSZ) is stronger in the territories with higher concentration of Hungarians, and the radicals (VMDK, VMDP) obtain a higher share of the votes in areas with lower proportions of ethnic Hungarians. The explanation lies in the path dependent development of the party scene in Vojvodina. As discussed in Chapter 7, in the process of the disintegration of the original VMDK most of the municipal branches sided with VMSZ, with some important exceptions: VMDP remained the strongest party in Temerin (29.5% Hungarians in 2002), and VMDK in Bečej/Óbecse (48.8% Hungarians in 2002), the

municipalities where the party presidents lived. One further factor that contributed to the fact that the more radical parties were able to maintain their following in these and some other municipalities was the electoral system in force in the late 1990s in Serbia, and VMSZ's strategy adopted at these elections.

At the elections held between 1996 and 2000 (September federal elections) Serbia was divided into 29 multi-member constituencies, with a 5% threshold applied at the constituency level and no national tier of seat allocation (Goati, 2000). The proportion of Hungarians was sufficiently high to render the election of candidates fielded by Hungarian minority parties realistic in two of the seven districts located in Vojvodina, and in 1997 and 2000 VMSZ only fielded candidates in these two constituencies. However, some municipalities with a significant proportion of Hungarian population, including the above-mentioned strongholds of VMDK and VMDP were not part of the two constituencies.<sup>273</sup> Consequently, the strategy of VMSZ to run only in the districts where it has realistic chances to elect candidates meant that in the municipalities located in other districts it conceded those voters who were unwilling to vote for mainstream or regionalist parties to its intra-ethnic rivals, the more radical VMDK and VMDP.<sup>274</sup> Due to this strategy, the figures for 1997 (especially the 0 value for VMSZ at the leftmost end of the graph) are actually distorted by the uneven electoral entry of VMSZ, as in the majority of the municipalities with a lower share of Hungarians only VMDK or VMDP candidates were available. The absence of VMSZ at two elections of national importance slowed down the erosion of VMDK and VMDP in these municipalities, and later it became more difficult to level out these differences due to the stickiness of voting habits, VMSZ only succeeding to defeat its two more radical rivals in the "home" municipalities of the latter towards the late 2000s.

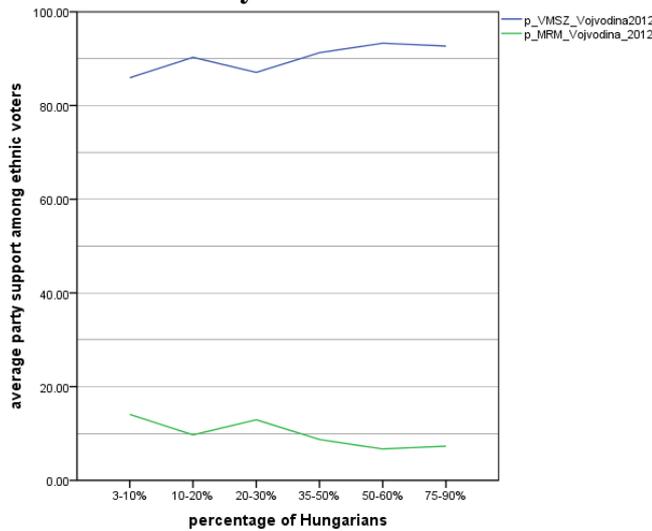
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<sup>273</sup> Bečej was part of the Zrenjanin district in 1997 (the district with the second highest proportion of Hungarians), but of the Vrbas district in 1996 and 2000. Temerin was part of the Vrbas district at all three elections.

<sup>274</sup> And those voters, who were willing to vote across the ethnic divide, to its mainstream or regionalist competitors. At the 2000 elections VMSZ openly endorsed DOS in the districts where it had no candidates.

As shown in the right panel of Figure 9.5, in 2007 the support of both VMSZ and the parties of the *Magyar Összefogás Koalíció* (VMDK and VMDP) was already significantly more evenly distributed, regardless of the proportion of the Hungarians. VMSZ is dominant everywhere, except for the municipalities where the share of Hungarians is between 20 and 30%, the latter value being distorted by the result from Temerin, the stronghold of VMDP.

**Figure 9.6. The relative support of VMSZ and MRM (2012), according to the proportion of the minority**



Finally, Figure 9.6 compares the relative support of VMSZ within the ethnic votes to that of MRM, which emerged as the second strongest Hungarian party (even if at a considerable distance) at the 2012 elections for the Assembly of Vojvodina (the proportional component of the electoral system).<sup>275</sup> The lines on this graph are fairly flat too, the support of the radical MRM does not improve as the proportion of Hungarians increases, rather a slight increase for VMSZ is visible on the right side of the graph. The pattern of relative support for MRM is somewhat similar to that of MÖK in 2007, though consistently lower, which lends itself to the explanation that part of the former supporters of the more radical parties migrated to MRM, due to the fact that VMDP did not contest the 2012 elections and VMDK (and MPSZ) ran in a controversial coalition with a radical Bosniak ethnic party.

<sup>275</sup> The votes of the Zajedno coalition, of which VMDK and MPSZ were part of, were not included into the sum of the votes cast along ethnic lines.

## Assessment

The comparison of the three minorities shows that the electoral market in all three countries is imperfectly segmented along ethnic lines, yet to a considerably varying degree – Romania coming closest to the segmented ideal-type and Serbia being the farthest away. In Romania and Slovakia a clear majority of the Hungarians vote for the parties of the minority and only a relatively small proportion support mainstream parties, though the extent of the phenomenon varies with the territorial concentration of the minority. Serbia, however, is different, here the ethnic parties only control a narrow majority of the ethnic electorate, and “predating” activity (Zuber, 2012) from the mainstream and regionalist parties is significant.

The territorial disparities in the electoral results show (and the survey data discussed in the next section confirm) that one of the most important variables which impact the relative support of the rival minority parties is the territorial concentration of the minority. In Romania and Slovakia the more radical parties (MPP, EMNP, respectively the post-split MKP) are more successful in compact Hungarian areas, while the more moderate parties (RMDSZ, Most-Híd) are doing better where the proportion of the minority is lower. However, no impact was found in the first phase of multi-party politics in Slovakia, and Serbia displayed the opposite pattern in the late 1990s.

This signals that while territorial concentration may be important, it is not the only factor that influences the relative receptiveness of the electorate to party appeals of varying intensity and radicalness. In the case of Slovakia one could argue that the 1992 elections were held too early (after only 2 years of democracy) to allow a differentiated crystallization of voter attitudes in the ethnopolitical domain in compact Hungarian and ethnically mixed areas. Conversely, in Serbia path-dependent factors led to a situation in which the radicals maintained higher support in areas with low Hungarian presence, while the relative support of

the more moderate Hungarian party (VMSZ) was higher in the municipalities from the compact Hungarian areas.

## **9.2. Socio-demographic and attitudinal differences between the party electorates**

After having assessed the impact of the territorial concentration of the minority on aggregate data, in the second part of this chapter I turn to surveys to analyze whether the parties are linked to particular social groups, or if their voters differ along certain issues and attitudes. The focus is on the differences between the electorates of the rival Hungarian minority parties, the factors that are relevant from the perspective of voting for mainstream parties will be addressed only briefly.

Unfortunately, the availability of data constrains the analysis. Survey data of relatively good quality representative of the Hungarian minority population is available only in Romania. For Slovakia I rely on the database of a survey from 2012 and on secondary literature, while for Serbia only on secondary literature. Note that the surveys were not designed for the purposes of testing theories of electoral behavior, but with the much more practical goal of assessing the electoral intentions of the Hungarian electorate before the elections (being commissioned by the parties themselves, in Romania by RMDSZ and in Slovakia by Most-Híd). Consequently it was sometimes difficult to find measures or proxies that would capture theoretically relevant concepts. Nevertheless, these are the best data sources available, and they still reveal interesting aspects about intra-ethnic competition.

### **Romania**

In Romania surveys representative of the Hungarian minority have been conducted since 1999.<sup>276</sup> Here I will conduct multivariate logistic regression analyses on the datasets of two surveys, to uncover the factors that influence the vote choice of the minority electorate. The selection of the surveys is motivated first by their timing (relevant from the point of view of

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<sup>276</sup> The datasets are available at the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities. For a detailed description and assessment, see Kiss *et al.* (2013b).

the development of the multi-party scene) and second by the availability of meaningful questionnaire items. The first survey dates from April 2008, that is, it comes after the 2007 European Parliament elections which brought about the first serious electoral confrontation between RMDSZ and an intra-ethnic challenger (the independent candidate László Tőkés, backed by all opposition organizations), but before the 2008 local elections, when for the first time two Hungarian political parties competed (RMDSZ and MPP). The second survey has been conducted in December 2011, after the registration of EMNP, so it allows for a comparison of the electorates of all three parties existing in the present.

For each survey two models were fitted, the first containing only socio-demographic variables, while the second also attitudinal and issue-related ones. The variables entered into the models vary across the surveys, depending on the availability of meaningful items. Concerning the second group of variables, I tried to find measures that are able to capture the theoretically relevant concepts employed in the analysis at the elite level, outlined in Chapter 4, such as the programmatic goals of the parties (autonomy, ethnopolitical demands), their strategy, as well as the attitude of the electorate towards the kin-state. The detailed coding of the variables is presented in Appendix 2. Binary logistic regression models were fitted on the 2008 survey, while for the 2011 survey multinomial logistic regression was employed, given the presence of two challenger parties. In each case RMDSZ voters were the reference category, to which the voters of the intra-ethnic challengers are compared.

The 2008 survey permitted a comparison of RMDSZ and its intra-ethnic challenger at the peak of the latter's support, after the 2007 elections for the European Parliament, when an independent candidate jointly backed by all opposition organizations obtained almost 40% of the Hungarian vote. The coefficients and odds ratios obtained through binary logistic regressions are reported in Table 9.2.

**Table 9.2. Binary logistic regressions - Romania, April 2008**

Tökés vs. RMDSZ				
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
%_hun	0.007	1.007	0.008	1.008
Urban	0.152	1.164	-0.123	0.885
rural (REF)		.		.
Age	0.071**	1.073	0.079**	1.082
Age <sup>2</sup>	-0.001**	0.999	-0.001*	0.999
gender_women (REF)		.		.
gender_men	0.229	1.257	0.307	1.359
income_problems (REF)		.		.
income_coping	0.558**	1.747	0.678**	1.971
income_well	0.756***	2.129	0.865**	2.375
education_primary (REF)		.		.
education_vocational	-0.219	0.804	0.001	1.001
education_secondary	0.144	1.155	0.284	1.329
education_higher	-0.103	0.902	-0.325	0.723
region_Szeklerland (REF)		.		.
region_lowhun	-0.906*	0.404	-0.535	0.586
region_central	-0.747**	0.429	-0.504	0.604
region_Partium	-0.627*	0.534	-0.651	0.522
religion_Calvinist (REF)		.		.
religion_RomCath	0.048	1.049	0.064	1.066
religion_other	-0.259	0.772	-0.341	0.711
church_weekly (REF)		.		.
church_monthly	-0.042	0.959	-0.498	0.608
church_yearly	-0.223	0.800	-0.408	0.665
church_never	-0.027	0.973	-0.259	0.771
issuesmatch			0.169	1.184
Ethnic issue salience			-0.107	0.898
RMDSZ_aut			0.750***	2.116
RMDSZ_parl			0.760**	2.138
RMDSZ_govt			1.352***	3.863
L-R_self			0.064	1.066
Constant	-3.052***		-8.012***	
Cox and Snell	0.089		0.270	
Nagelkerke	0.125		0.382	
RMDSZ % correctly pred	100.0		99.2	
Tökés % correctly pred	17.9		44.9	

Source: 2008 April survey by TransObjective Consulting

In the model containing only the socio-demographic variables, age, subjective economic welfare and region have a statistically significant effect. The positive sign on the linear term and the negative on the squared term show that the propensity to vote against

RMDSZ increases with age up to a certain point, but the rate of increase is smaller and smaller. The support of the opposition candidate increases with subjective economic welfare, but neither religion nor frequency of church attendance reaches significance. The most important variable in this model is region: it shows that the propensity to support Tőkés has been lower in all areas located outside the Szeklerland, but the difference is the lowest in the border region with Hungary (Partium, which is the second region with the highest concentration of Hungarians).

In the second model, which also contains attitudinal and issue-related variables, the impact of region disappears (while the effect of age and income remains). From the new variables entered into the model the perception about the attitude of RMDSZ towards autonomy, the importance attributed to RMDSZ being represented in the Romania's parliament and the opinion about the participation of RMDSZ in the Romanian government have a significant impact, while the salience of ethnic issues, the degree of issue congruence and left-right self-placement do not. A belief that RMDSZ does not prioritize autonomy and that the party should not participate in the government increases the likelihood of voting for the intra-ethnic challenger. Furthermore, the vote for the challenger of RMDSZ is related to a disapproval of the governmental strategy and to lower importance attributed to parliamentary representation. The loss of significance of the region variable when the attitudinal items are in the model can be explained by the higher salience attributed to these issues (especially autonomy) in the compact Hungarian-populated areas, especially the Szeklerland.

While the regressions conducted on the 2008 datasets only contrasted the electorate of RMDSZ with that of a single challenger (MPSZ in 2004 and Tőkés in 2007), the 2011 survey was conducted already after the registration of the third Hungarian ethnic party, EMNP, so it

also allows for comparisons between the electorates of the two challenger parties beside comparing them to that of RMDSZ.<sup>277</sup>

The model containing only the socio-demographics reveals that the percentage of Hungarians in the locality has a significant positive effect on the support of both EMNP and MPP, being, however, stronger for the latter, which is perfectly in line with the findings on aggregate data from the first section of the chapter. The effect remains also when the attitudinal variables are entered into the model. The urban-rural contrast matters only in the model containing the socio-demographic variables only, support for both challenger parties being higher in urban areas, but the effect is stronger for EMNP. Region is significant again, though only in the full models for both parties. On one hand, this signals that both challenger parties, but especially MPP<sup>278</sup> are significantly weaker outside the compact Szeklerland area (MPP especially in the Partium region). However, the fact that as opposed to 2008, region does not turn insignificant when the attitudinal items are in the model signals that the higher support of the more radical parties in the compact Hungarian areas cannot be explained exclusively by the differential attitude structure.

As opposed to the 2008 survey, both religion and the frequency of church attendance differentiate the voters of the challengers from the RMDSZ electorate: Roman Catholics are less likely to vote for either EMNP or MPP as compared to Calvinists. While in the simple model the effect is stronger for MPP, once attitudinal variables are entered into the model, the effect remains only for EMNP. Church attendance is only relevant for MPP, the only significant difference being between those who go very rarely to church and those who attend

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<sup>277</sup> Merging the two voters of the two small Hungarian parties that constitute the opposition of RMDSZ does not highlight any other variables than the ones discussed below that could add to the explanation. Results not reported, they are available upon request.

<sup>278</sup> Note that for MPP there is quasi-complete separation in the data, shown by the unusually high B coefficient and the absence of a p significance level. Quasi-complete separation refers to situations in which for some categories of a factor (categorical) independent variable there are no cases with one specific outcome of the dependent variable. In this case there are no MPP voters from the Partium region in the sample. Indeed, MPP became virtually inexistent in the Partium after the appearance of EMNP.

weekly (the latter being more likely to be MPP voters), and even this disappears once the attitudinal variables are in the model.

**Table 9.3. Multinomial logistic regressions, Romania 2011**

	EMNP		MPP		EMNP		MPP	
	B	exp(B)	B	exp(B)	B	exp(B)	B	exp(B)
Constant	-4.207***		-5.297***		-3.081		-6.414***	
p_hun	0.399**	1.490	0.843***	2.323	0.366*	1.442	0.922***	2.514
Age	-0.036	0.965	-0.035	0.966	-0.059	0.942	-0.045	0.956
age <sup>2</sup>	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.001	1.001	0.000	1.000
Gender (man)	0.411	1.509	0.395	1.484	0.279	1.322	0.230	1.258
urban	0.948**	2.580	0.825**	2.282	0.730	2.076	0.656	1.927
income_well	-0.477	0.621	-0.554	0.574	-0.504	0.604	-0.656	0.519
income_coping	0.321	1.378	0.199	1.221	0.238	1.268	0.182	1.200
income_problems (REF)								
education_higher	0.393	1.482	-0.044	0.957	-0.043	0.958	-0.072	0.930
education_secondary	0.459	1.583	0.563	1.755	0.901	2.463	0.259	1.295
education_vocational	0.401	1.493	0.216	1.241	0.667	1.948	0.559	1.749
education_primary (REF)								
region_rest	0.605	1.832	0.834	2.302	-0.178	0.837	1.170*	3.221
region_partium	-0.182	0.834	-20.549	0.000	-1.434**	0.238	-21.030	0.000
region_Szeklerland (REF)								
religion_other	0.432	1.540	-0.180	0.835	-0.064	0.938	0.242	1.274
religion_RomCath	-0.629*	0.533	-0.966**	0.381	-1.222***	0.295	-0.716	0.489
religion_Calvinist (REF)								
church_yearly	-0.490	0.613	-0.736*	0.479	-0.639	0.528	-0.511	0.600
church_monthly	-0.275	0.759	-0.185	0.831	-0.522	0.593	0.011	1.011
church_weekly (REF)								
No Romanian in family	-0.650	0.522	-0.690	0.502	-0.462	0.630	-0.641	0.527
Ethnic issue salience					0.217	1.243	0.359	1.432
RMDSZ_parl					1.086***	2.962	0.954**	2.596
RMDSZ_govt_stay					-0.734	0.480	-0.039	0.962
RMDSZ_govt_switch					-1.667**	0.189	0.712	2.038
RMDSZ_govt_leave (REF)								
Hungarians_discriminated					-0.051	0.951	-0.431*	0.650
social_distance_rom					-0.295**	0.745	0.088	1.092
dualcit_applied					0.129	1.137	-0.087	0.917
dualcit_planning					0.106	1.111	0.200	1.222
dualcit_not_apply (REF)								
Cox and Snell	0.087				0.154			
Nagelkerke	0.148				0.260			
McFadden	0.103				0.186			

Source: 2011 December RIRNM survey

Of the five attitudinal and issue-related variables entered into the second model, four displayed significant effects, though only one for both parties. First, the lower the importance attributed to RMDSZ's parliamentary presence, the higher the likelihood to vote for any of the challenger parties, the effect being somewhat stronger for EMNP. This is similar to the findings from the 2008 dataset. The second variable is the attitude concerning the participation of RMDSZ in government. This was measured in this survey slightly differently than in the previous one, the options being whether the party should leave the government, stay in government or switch the coalition partner. Though there is no significant difference between those who preferred RMDSZ to stay in the cabinet and those who wished that it go into opposition, this variable still revealed an interesting finding: those who indicated the switch option were significantly less likely to vote for EMNP than those who considered that RMDSZ should leave the government. This result indicates that also the composition of the cabinet matters. Changing the coalition partner would have meant leaving the center-right government of PDL and joining forces with the center-left PSD, and the coefficient of EMNP points to the rejection of the left-wing parties (perceived as post-communist).

Third, the perceived degree of discrimination against Hungarians displays a positive relationship with the likelihood of supporting MPP against RMDSZ, but it is not significant for EMNP, though the direction conforms to the expectations (the negative sign of the coefficients is due to the fact that a low value on this variable indicated high perceived discrimination). Fourth, and rather surprisingly, the likelihood of supporting EMNP against RMDSZ decreases with the social distance towards Romanians (measured on a 7-point Bogardus scale, with higher values indicating more distance), while the effect of the variable is in the expected direction for MPP, but not significant. The fact that EMNP voters are more tolerant than RMDSZ (and also MPP voters, as revealed by the crosstabs) is probably a consequence of the fact that the share of urban voters is higher in the EMNP electorate,

which also explains why type of locality loses significance in the model with attitudinal variables. Finally, though the coefficients for the salience attributed to ethnic issues are in the expected direction for both parties, they do not reach significance.

The full model also contained an item about the status of the respondent concerning dual citizenship, but the variable did not differentiate between the electorates of the three Hungarian parties.<sup>279</sup> Notwithstanding this, the issue of the Hungarian citizenship will be revisited in the last section of this chapter.

Finally, although voting across ethnic lines is not the main focus of this analysis, the most important variables that have a significant impact in this respect should be discussed briefly.<sup>280</sup> The most important socio-demographic variable which increases mainstream party support is the presence of an ethnic Romanian family member (spouse, parent), which indicates that ethnic voting can also be interpreted in the framework of assimilation (see also Kiss *et al.*, 2013b in this respect). Second, in 2008 the proportion of the minority in the locality had a significant negative effect on the likelihood of mainstream party support, in line with the discussion from the first section of the chapter. Third, the attitudinal variables also matter: a lower perceived commitment by RMDSZ to the issue of autonomy, opposition to its participation in government and a lower importance attributed to representation in parliament decrease the support of RMDSZ as opposed to that of mainstream parties. However, in the case of the latter two variables the mechanism is probably different from the one characteristic of the voters of the more radical ethnic parties: these variables matter not because the voters of mainstream parties are dissatisfied with how RMDSZ delivers on ethnopolitical issues, but because they reject the ethnicization of politics or simply do not care for these issues. Finally, in 2008 the salience attributed to ethnic issues was also significant, with a negative sign, showing that although ethnic issue salience (as captured by

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<sup>279</sup> However, a multinomial logistic regression model also containing mainstream parties as a choice option (not reported) revealed that dual citizens are less likely to vote for mainstream parties.

<sup>280</sup> Regression results not reported, available upon request.

the top 3 issues by the survey respondents) may not matter in the intra-ethnic competition, it is able to differentiate between those who vote along ethnic lines and those who vote across.

### **Slovakia**

For Slovakia, survey data is available only for the period after the split of the MKP, but not for the first phase of multi-party politics within the Hungarian minority (the period preceding the merger of 1998 and the creation of MKP).<sup>281</sup> Most of the results reproduced here are based on polls conducted by the Focus agency on samples representative of the Hungarian population (N~700), reported by Ravasz (2013). For one survey (April 2012) I was able to use the primary dataset too.<sup>282</sup>

Based on a survey conducted in January 2012, Ravasz (2013) reports significant differences for only a few socio-demographic variables. The MKP electorate contains significantly higher proportions of men (45.5% vs, 52.5%) and rural residents (46% of their voters, as compared to Most-Híd's 40%), while Most-Híd supporters are younger (6% among students as compared to 4.6% among MKP's electorate), more educated (7.5% completed college or university, vs. 5.6% in the case of MKP) and economically better-off (28.7% assessed their subjective economic welfare as good or very good a 5-point scale, while only 18.6% in the case of MKP). An earlier survey (Mészáros, 2009) also found a significant difference for age in 2009, MKP supporters being older, but no other differences.

Table 9.4 reports univariate statistics about the impact of certain socio-demographic variables on party choice, as well as the results of a multivariate binomial logistic regression, conducted on data from a survey conducted in April 2012 by the Focus agency (with Most-Híd voters as the reference category). At the univariate level education, the type of housing, age, the number of family members and the income of the family display significant differences across party choice (significance tests are reported in the first column, under the

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<sup>281</sup> Surveys are also available from the period of the unified MKP, but these are obviously of little use for the study of intra-ethnic political competition.

<sup>282</sup> Data made available courtesy of Ábel Ravasz.

variable labels). Once again it is confirmed that MKP voters are older, less educated and have a lower income than either Most-Híd voters or supporters of Slovak mainstream parties, and a higher proportion of them lives in family houses than in blocks of flats (the latter variable can be used as a proxy for the rural-urban divide, which has not been included into the survey). Locality size does not have a significant impact, still the distribution shows that a larger part of MKP's electorate lives in smaller localities than in the case of Most-Híd. The differences in subjective income and age reported by Ravasz for the earlier survey are reconfirmed, but the differences do not reach statistical significance even at the univariate level.

**Table 9.4. Socio-demographic variables and party choice, Slovakia (2012)**

		MKP	Most-Híd	Slovak parties	MKP vs. Most-Híd	
					B	Exp(B)
Constant					-1.650	
Age	Mean	50.45	44.80	42.95	-0.022	0.978
p<0.001	(SD)	(15.33)	(14.92)	(15.43)		
Age <sup>2</sup>					0.001	1.001
Gender	Men	52.0	48.1	50.6	0.111	1.118
p=0.749	Women (REF)	48.0	51.9	49.4		
Education	Primary	32.2	26.1	29.6	-0.409	0.664
p=0.018	Secondary not completed (incl. vocational)	38.2	31.5	18.5	-0.259	0.772
	Secondary completed	23.7	35.3	42.0	-0.351	0.704
	Higher (REF)	5.9	7.1	9.9		
Subjective economic well-being	Very good or good	20.0	30.3	26.0	-0.061	0.941
p=0.181	Average	55.3	52.9	60.5	0.411	1.508
	Below average	21.3	12.5	9.9	0.361	1.143
	Poverty (REF)	3.3	3.8	3.7		
Type of housing	Family house	81.6	72.6	75.1	0.492*	1.636
p=0.075	Panel/block (REF)	18.4	29.6	24.9		
Size of locality	<2000	48.0	39.0	38.3	0.507	1.1661
p=0.454	2000-5000	15.8	15.4	14.8	0.133	1.142
	5000-20000	17.1	21.6	27.2	-0.223	0.800
	20000-50000	11.8	15.4	16.0	0.261	1.298
	50000+ (REF)	7.2	8.7	3.7		
Income of family	median category (€)	751-800	851-900	851-900		
p=0.022						
Cox & Snell R <sup>2</sup>					0.092	
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>					0.126	
Most-Híd % correctly pred					85.8	
MKP % correctly pred					29.7	

Source: FOCUS April 2012 survey. Below the variables in the first column the p values for chi-square tests (categorical variables), respectively one-way ANOVA tests (continuous variables) are reported.

Though I do not report the distribution of party support according to occupation due to the high number of the categories, some categories are worth being emphasized. First, 32.2% of the MKP electorate is composed of pensioners, while in the case of Most-Híd this proportion is only 17.8%, and within the voters of Slovak parties 17.3%. Entrepreneurs are underrepresented in MKP's electorate: 5.9% of the party's voters are entrepreneurs, this value is 7.5% in the case of Most-Híd and 8.6% in the case of Hungarian voters of Slovak mainstream parties. The same is true of those performing creative intellectual work (3.9% MKP, 4.6% Most-Híd and 7.4% mainstream parties) or any type of intellectual work, including clerks (12.5% MKP, 19.6% Most-Híd and 16.0% mainstream parties). On the other hand, unskilled workers are also underrepresented: 3.9% MKP, 7.5% Most-Híd and 7.4% mainstream parties.

The differences can be summarized as follows: as compared to Most-Híd, MKP has an older, less educated and economically worse off electorate, which is partly the consequence of the fact that a large proportion of these voters live in small rural localities. Concerning the differences between Most-Híd and mainstream party supporters, the higher proportion of voters with higher education in the latter group is worth mentioning. Otherwise, with minor differences, Most-Híd supporters are more similar in socio-demographic terms to those Hungarians who vote for mainstream parties than to MKP voters.<sup>283</sup>

While the univariate analysis shows significant differences in the case of some variables, the multivariate binary logistic regression (reported in the last two columns of Table 9.4) which compares the likelihood of voting MKP as opposed to Most-Híd, only one variable has a significant effect, namely the type of housing (which, as already mentioned, is also a proxy for type of settlement): voters who live in family houses are significantly more

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<sup>283</sup> Unfortunately the survey did not contain information about the ethnic composition of the localities of the respondent, moreover, not even the name of the localities was available in the dataset I obtained, so the impact of this variable could not be tested.

likely to be MKP voters than those who live in blocks of flats, which is in line with the high support of Most-Híd in the two largest cities of Slovakia, discussed in the previous section.

One can conclude that despite the apparent differences on some variables between the parties, a model containing only sociodemographic variables can explain very little of the differences between the voters of MKP and Most-Híd. Unfortunately, the survey database contained no attitudinal or issue-related items that could be employed in the analysis, so these have to be reconstructed from secondary literature.

According to Lampl (2010), unemployment was the most salient issue within the ethnic Hungarian electorate in 2010 (39%), second came social and health care (37%), third poverty (28%), and fourth the state of the economy (19%). The most salient ethnicity-related issue only appeared on positions 8-10: 13% of the respondents were concerned about the general situation of Hungarians in Slovakia, 11% about the phenomenon of ethnic Hungarian parents sending their children to Slovak-language schools and 10% about the decrease of the number of ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia. In the same survey respondents stated that the government should primarily deal with unemployment (72%), the economy (28%) and the health care system (28%), the situation of the Hungarian minority being mentioned by 25%.

However, this does not mean that the minority voters do not expect that a party that represents them to pursue ethnic issues. In a 2009 survey more than 90% of the respondents expected that a Hungarian party should strive to develop the regions inhabited by Hungarians and to maintain and develop the education system in Hungarian, over 85% also considered that the party should deal with the extension of language rights and the operation of cultural institutions, and the support for the Hungarian civil sector was deemed important by more than 75% of respondents (Mészáros, 2009).

Unfortunately none of the quoted authors presents data on the previously mentioned issues broken down according to party preference, although the surveys they refer to have

been conducted after the split of MKP. Still, Mészáros (2009) reports that the Hungarians are rather divided in what concerns autonomy, the Beneš-decrees, the issue of the administrative system and the phenomenon of assimilation. Only 37% of the Hungarians endorsed the idea of autonomy, 24.5% agreed to some extent, while 38.5% rejected it. MKP voters were significantly more pro-autonomy (47.9%) than Most-Híd supporters (32.1%).

Ravasz (2013) reports similar issue priorities, moreover, in contrast to the previously quoted authors, he also breaks the data down according to party preference (Table 9.5). In January 2012, the voters of both MKP and Most-Híd ranked socio-economic issues as the most important, and the salience level of minority-related issues (language issues, education, culture, minority rights, local governments) was also similar in the two groups. However, Ravasz further differentiated between ethnic issues related in his opinion to the condition of the minority (education, culture, language rights) and ethnic issues more closely related to nationalism (dual citizenship, the activity of Ján Slota, intolerance towards Hungarians, Hungarian-Slovak relations), and found that the latter type of issues were considered significantly more salient by MKP voters than by Most-Híd supporters. Note, however, that economic issues also proved to be more salient for MKP than for Most-Híd voters. Quoting a national survey (Bútorová & Gyárfášová, 2010), Ravasz also points out another important difference between MKP and Most-Híd voters: the latter feel proud of Slovakia in significantly higher proportions than the former, 45% vs. 21%.

**Table 9.5. Issue salience among Most-Híd and MKP supporters in 2012 January**

Party	economic	Minority issues	Nationalism-related	"no problem"
Most-Híd	49.6	34.3	18.1	15.1
MKP	58.9	31.8	36.4	6.2

Source: Ravasz (2013)

Beside the issue salience and attitudinal questions concerning ethnopolitical goals, Mészáros (2009) also reports some differences perceived by the respondents between MKP and Most-Híd. The highest-ranking answers were the willingness to cooperate with the

Slovaks (33.6%), leadership style (18.8%), the extent to which the parties deal with the issues concerning the Hungarians in Slovakia (12.2%, but the direction of the difference is not specified). 10.2% of the respondents saw no difference between the parties, and 20.8% answered that they did not know.

Summarizing the differences between the electorates of the two parties of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, one can see that socio-demographic variables have a low explanatory power despite the fact that MKP is rather a party of the older, worse-off, less educated rural voters when compared to Most-Híd. On the other hand issue-related and attitudinal items indicate a higher salience of ethnic issues for MKP voters, despite the fact that it is not the ethnic issues that are considered the most salient, similarly to Romania, and to a certain extent also Vojvodina. Notwithstanding the lower salience of the ethnic issue as compared to bread-and-butter issues, ethnic Hungarians expect the party they vote for to deal with ethnic issues, though unfortunately we are unable to explore this aspect further, due to the lack of data. The attitudinal differences regarding symbolic issues like autonomy and the Beneš-decrees in the electorates are in line with the party profiles sketched in Chapter 6.

### **Serbia**

For Serbia only very limited survey data is available based on which one could assess the voting behavior of ethnic Hungarians: a report of a survey representative of the Hungarian population conducted in 2007 (Badis, 2008) and of a survey from 2009 representative of the population of Vojvodina, where 13.9% of the 1480 respondents were ethnic Hungarians, that is, 206 respondents (SCAN, 2009). Moreover, due to the rather low support of the smaller Hungarian parties, the available two surveys only help us to shed light on the background of the votes cast for VMSZ and for the mainstream parties, but are less helpful in differentiating between the smaller ethnic parties, as most of the proportions that can be retrieved fall within the margin of error.

The 2009 SCAN survey report reveals that men are somewhat more likely to vote for VMSZ than women (5.4% vs. 4.9%), that the party is strongest in the age groups 36-45 (6.3%) and among voters older than 65 (6.1%), and the weakest among the young voters aged below 25 (2.4%). VMSZ support increases somewhat with education: while among the least educated (those who have not completed primary education) the party has no support at all, 4.6% of those with primary, 5.3% of those with secondary or vocational training and 5.6% of those with college or university degrees declared their support for the party. According to occupation, the categories that display the highest level of VMSZ support are agricultural workers (9.9%), skilled and qualified workers (6.9%) and housewives (6.5%). The support of the party is somewhat higher in rural areas (5.5%) than in the cities (4.9%). However, the latter two relationships follow from the occupational structure and the settlement patterns of the Hungarian minority.<sup>284</sup>

The 2007 survey was carried out on a sample representative of the Hungarian electorate, consequently it is more insightful in what concerns the socio-demographic characteristics of the party electorates. In line with the SCAN survey, the data reveals that women are somewhat more likely than men to vote for mainstream and regionalist parties as opposed to the Hungarian ethnic parties (17.8% vs. 19.9% for DS, 9.6% vs. 11.7% for LSV), though these differences are not significant statistically. A gender difference also emerges in the case of MPSZ, but in the opposite direction, and within the sampling error (2.2% men vs. 0.6% women).

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<sup>284</sup> Unfortunately in the survey report the data only appears broken down according to the proportions on the independent variable, so it is not possible to assess the differences between the parties in what concerns the composition of their electorate (e.g. to assess whether the proportion of those with higher education or young voters is higher in the electorate of VMDK or VMSZ). This also renders the values reported for VMDK – the only Hungarian party included as a response option beside VMSZ – useless, as due to the very low electoral support of this party all respondent categories display scores that are lower than the sampling error (the support of VMDK is of the magnitude of 0-1.5% in all response categories obtained after the breakdowns according to various socio-demographic variables).

For three of the four Hungarian parties (VMSZ, VMDP, VMDK) the likelihood of support increases with age (while for the mainstream parties this is not true, DS being the strongest among the mid-aged and LSV support being rather evenly distributed among age groups). Obviously, voting for mainstream parties is more pronounced among the younger generations (about half of the voters), though about one quarter of the oldest age group also does not vote for the Hungarian ethnic parties. Though the figures should be interpreted with care, as the differences are below or around the error term, the exception among the Hungarian parties seems to be MPSZ, whose support seems stronger among the younger generations. Interestingly VMDP is also doing relatively well within the youngest age group, which might be related to the fact that VMDP used to have a rather active youth organization. (Note that the survey was conducted before MRM, which can be considered a generational party, split from VMDP, so it is quite likely that VMDP lost its relatively good standing among the younger voters since then to MRM.)

In what concerns education, a negative curvilinear relationship stands out in the case of VMSZ (Table 9.6). The support of the party is highest (58.1%) in the first two categories (uncompleted and completed primary education), but those with vocational training also display a fairly high level of support (45%). Voters with secondary or secondary vocational education are the least likely to support VMSZ (36.6-39.5%), but support once again rises among those who completed higher education (49.2% among college graduates and 42.6% among university alumni). Although for the small Hungarian parties no clear pattern emerges, some of the results still stand out. It is noteworthy that MPSZ completely lacks support among the more educated, while VMDK's support among those who have completed less than 8 grades is striking (12.9%, while their second highest share is within the vocational training group, 4%). This might be related to the fact that VMDK was the first Hungarian party to be established, and the least educated are also the least informed and the least

capable of following important political developments. VMDP's support is highest among those with vocational training and secondary education. On the other hand, among the mainstream parties the support of DS clearly increases with education, while LSV's support is once again the most evenly distributed, except for the lowest category, those with primary education.

**Table 9.6. Party support among Vojvodina Hungarians according to educational level**

	mainstream			Reg.	Ethnic Hungarian				Other/DN
	DS	G17+	LDP	LSV	VMSZ	VMDK	VMDP	MPSZ	
<8 grades	6.5	3.2	0	3.2	58.1	12.9	3.2	3.2	9.7
Completed primary	13.8	4.6	2.3	10.8	58.1	3.1	3.1	1.5	2.7
Vocational	13.6	4.5	6.3	10.2	45.5	4.0	6.8	3.4	5.7
Secondary vocational	20.4	8.9	6.7	13.4	39.5	2.9	1.6	1.3	5.3
Secondary	15.8	4.0	18.8	10.9	36.6	2.0	7.9	0	4
College	22.9	9.3	5.1	8.5	49.2	1.7	1.7	0	1.6
University	27.7	4.5	9.0	8.4	42.6	1.3	1.9	0.6	4

Source: Badis (2008)

One particularly important detail revealed by the 2007 survey is that (similarly to Romania), the nationality of the spouse is of utmost importance in what concerns voting for mainstream or multiethnic regionalist parties. Those who have a Serbian spouse are about twice as likely to vote for DS, LSV and G17+, while for LDP the odds ratio is almost 4. VMSZ support among voters living in homogenous Hungarian families is 50.8%, while among those who live in a mixed marriage only 13.8%. Moreover, no one living in a mixed marriage indicated voting intention for any of the three more radical Hungarian ethnic parties.

Beyond the impact of the socio-demographic variables, the 2007 survey offers only some limited information about the relevance of other variables. Attitudinal items were not included into the questionnaire, only some questions concerning the issues deemed most salient by the electorate at the level of the province of Vojvodina are available for analysis.<sup>285</sup>

Issues related to the constitutional status of the province were regarded as most important by

<sup>285</sup> The question wording was the following: "which of the following are the most urgent to do in the province?" Concerning the local and the national level, no ethnic issues were included among the response options. Respondent could pick three issues.

the respondents: restoring the property of the province (mentioned as first by 20.9%, as second by 8.8%, and as third by 7.4%), strengthening autonomy and competences (20.5%, 15.3%, 8.7%). This was followed by social issues (health care, education), creating jobs, supporting the economy and agriculture, and developing infrastructure. Issues with ethnic content were clearly regarded as less urgent: real equality for the nationalities in Vojvodina (9.3%, 14.2%, 19.8%), setting up a separate Hungarian educational system (1.7%, 2.8%, 5.1%), a self-standing Hungarian theater (0.2%, 0.4%, 0.7%), or a Hungarian TV station (0.4%, 0.7%, 2.8%) all scored rather low on salience.

Though no cross-tabulation of issue salience with party preferences is available, the patterns of distribution of the issues according to their salience is very similar to what is characteristic in Romania or Slovakia, namely that socio-economic issues are regarded significantly more salient by the minority voters than ethnic ones. However, the case is also special because of the high salience of the issues related to the status of the province, and among the Hungarian minority parties these issues are clearly owned by VMSZ. Unfortunately we lack the relevant data to establish whether the voters of the more radical ethnic parties attribute higher salience to ethnic issues in Vojvodina too.

### **Assessment**

The fact that the structure and quality of available data is not uniform across the three countries renders a comparison more difficult. Nevertheless, some conclusions are readily apparent. One can establish that the capacity of socioeconomic variables to differentiate between the voters of the rival Hungarian minority parties is rather low. While for Serbia a meaningful comparison is made problematic by the fragmentation of the radical side into four parties and the poor availability of data, in Romania and Slovakia regression models based only on socioeconomic variables have a very low explanatory power, as shown by the values of the pseudo- $R^2$  statistics. However, the second block of attitudinal and issue-related

variables brings about considerable improvement in Romania, pointing to a minority community divided rather on attitudinal than on a sociological basis.

Among the socio-demographics the variables related to the territorial settlement pattern of the minorities stand out. In Romania the impact of region and to a certain extent also the proportion of the Hungarian population is perfectly in line with the election results and the discussion from the first section of this chapter. In Slovakia the type of housing has a significant impact, differentiating between the more urban Most-Híd voters and the more rural MKP electorate. Although this is primarily a proxy for settlement type, one should also keep in mind that the compact Hungarian areas in Slovakia are predominantly rural. Though the proportion of the Hungarians in the locality was not included into the analyzed Slovak survey, one should keep in mind from the first section of the chapter that the ethnic composition of the locality is one of the strongest predictors of party preference in this country too.

There is evidence that education and economic well-being also matters, even if in Slovakia these variables only reached significance in the univariate analysis and in Romania their effect was not consistent across the surveys. Note, however, that these variables had an opposite impact in the two countries: while in Slovakia higher levels of education and wealth increased the likelihood of supporting the more moderate Most-Híd, in Romania they were favorable for the more radical challengers. Perhaps the right explanation has less to do with the ideological profile of the parties than with the fact that that more educated, economically better off voters are more open to change parties and more critical of the formerly hegemonic parties (MKP and RMDSZ), and probably also have a stronger expectation for multi-party politics.

Another interesting result for Romania is that religion was found to matter in 2011, though not in 2008.<sup>286</sup> The explanation is probably that the low stake 2007 European elections were a special occasion, when the supporters of the former Calvinist bishop László Tőkés also included a high number of swing and protest voters; conversely, in a more usual setting Tőkés's connection to the challenger organizations (MPSZ initially and EMNP later) render the religion variable significant, and the phenomenon might also be related to the more national orientation of the Protestant churches in Transylvania (as compared to the Catholic Church whose room of maneuver is restricted by its universalist doctrine).<sup>287</sup>

Unfortunately for Slovakia no attitudinal items could be added to the regression, and for Serbia not even secondary literature is available about the connection of attitudes and party choice. However, the analysis above established that in all three communities, issues related to ethnicity are not the ones considered the most salient by the voters. Instead, voters care most about socio-economic issues, though in Serbia the status of the Vojvodina province seems equally important. Despite the secondary importance attributed to ethnic issues, and the lack of a significant effect for the ethnic issue salience variable in Romania, a more critical attitude towards the integrationist-participationist strategy became apparent among the supporters of the parties that put forward more radical ethnopolitical claims. A perception of the neglect of the autonomy issue, and low importance attributed to participation in government consistently turned out to decrease the likelihood of supporting RMDSZ, and on one occasion also the lower importance attributed to parliamentary representation emerged as significant. The fact that in Slovakia MKP voters attributed more importance to ethnicity-related issues than Most-Híd supporters can be considered a similar feature.

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<sup>286</sup> And also in a regression on data from 2004, which is not reported due to space considerations.

<sup>287</sup> The religion variable was not available in the Slovak survey. Note, however, that the denominational differences are considerably more important in Transylvania, where in 2002 about 46% of the Hungarians were Calvinists, than in Slovakia, where the proportion of Calvinists among the Hungarians is much lower, less than 20%.

One can conclude that the differences between the electorates of the rival minority parties at the socio-demographic level are not very clear-cut, although some variables display a significant effect. Conversely, the settlement patterns of the minority have clearly a higher impact on intra-ethnic electoral competition, and the electorates of the rival parties also differ according to their ethnopolitical attitudes. Partly, it is this differential distribution of attitude as a function of the territorial concentration of the minority that explains the higher support of the more radical parties in the compact Hungarian areas.

### **9.3. Party preferences across the borders**

Since 2011, members of the Hungarian minorities can obtain Hungarian citizenship without residing in Hungary, and those who do can also vote in the Hungarian elections. At the Hungarian elections of April 2014, Fidesz obtained 95.49% of the votes cast by mail by the voters who do not have a permanent address in Hungary (that is, the newly enfranchised minorities), Jobbik 2.28% and the electoral alliance of center-left parties 1.13%.<sup>288</sup> Unfortunately, due to the fact that dual citizenship is a delicate issue in some of the countries neighboring Hungary, the votes will not be published broken down according to the country of origin. Given that Ukraine and Slovakia do not allow dual citizenship, it is reasonable to assume that the overwhelming majority of the mail votes came from Romania and Serbia, and that the distribution of party preferences in these two countries does not differ considerably from the overall result.

The number of valid votes cast by mail amounted to only a relatively low proportion of the newly enfranchised citizens: 128.429 votes were valid,<sup>289</sup> while it can be estimated that the number of dual citizens of voting age reached 450.000 before the elections.<sup>290</sup> In light of these figures one can state that the electoral result does not reflect the political preferences of

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<sup>288</sup> See [www.valasztas.hu/hu/ogyv2014/861/861\\_0\\_index.html](http://www.valasztas.hu/hu/ogyv2014/861/861_0_index.html)

<sup>289</sup> However, the proportion of invalid ballots was extremely high, close to 20%, due to the unfamiliar nature of the voting procedure.

<sup>290</sup> Based on the statements of Hungary's deputy prime minister Zsolt Semjén, made about 3 weeks before the elections. See <http://kronika.ro/erdelyi-hirek/mar-hatszazezren-kertek-magyar-allampolgarsagot>

the entire Hungarian minority populations. The third section of this chapter is dedicated to the attitudes and preferences of the minorities concerning politics in Hungary, based on the limited amount of available survey data. The results of the voting being known, the predictions of the surveys about the support of the parties are less interesting; rather, from our perspective the relationship between Hungarian citizenship and party preference in the host country, and the connections between party preferences in the host- and the kin-state deserves attention.

### Romania

Although in the multivariate logistic regressions for 2011 the status of the respondents concerning dual citizenship did not have a significant effect in Romania, cross-tabulating this variable with party preference in the host country yields interesting differences: the support for EMNP almost doubles among those who already obtained or at least applied for Hungarian citizenship as compared to those who are only planning or do not intend to apply, while in the case of RMDSZ and MPP no differences are discernible (see Table 9.7). Moreover, the same pattern emerged in all three years that passed since Hungary eased the conditions for obtaining dual citizenship.

**Table 9.7. Minority party preference according to status concerning Hungarian citizenship**

Status concerning Hungarian citizenship	Date	RMDSZ	MPP	EMNP	mainstream	Total
Already obtained or applied for	December2011	80.3	6.6	10.9	2.2	100
	July 2012	81.9	4.8	13.3	0.0	100
	May 2013	72.6	5.7	16.1	5.7	100
planning to apply	December2011	81.0	5.9	5.9	7.1	100
	July 2012	84.4	6.8	6.5	2.3	100
	May 2013	80.6	4.6	9.9	5.0	100
will not apply	December2011	79.1	5.3	5.0	10.6	100
	July 2012	86.3	5.5	3.3	5.0	100
	May 2013	80.8	2.8	4.7	11.7	100

Source: December 2011, July 2012 and May 2013 RIRNM surveys

The other aspect of interest is the interconnectedness of the individual preferences concerning minority parties and the parties from Hungary. The cross-tabulation presented in Table 9.8 reveals not only that the support of Fidesz was the highest among EMNP voters, but also that the electorate of EMNP was the most active and decided, the share of the undecided or of respondents without a party preference being the lowest within this group. But also MPP voters were significantly more decided than RMDSZ supporters, who were closer to the voters of mainstream parties in this respect (though the latter stand out due to the highest non-response rate).

**Table 9.8. Party preferences in Romania and Hungary**

	MSZP	FIDESZ-KDNP	LMP	Jobbik	DK	other	DN	NR	Total
MPP	14.6	56.1	.0	2.4	0.0	2.4	22.0	2.4	100.0
EMNP	4.2	68.8	4.2	2.1	0.0	2.1	18.8	0.0	100.0
RMDSZ	5.0	47.9	0.0	2.5	0.8	2.0	36.0	5.8	100.0
Mainstream	0.0	31.7	2.4	0.0	9.8	4.9	36.6	14.6	100.0

Source: RIRNM survey, May 2013.

Notwithstanding this, the level of Fidesz's support was also very high among RMDSZ and MPP voters (82.3%, respectively 74.3%, if we consider only those who expressed a party preference for Hungary). Given that the relationship between Fidesz and RMDSZ has been rather tensioned between 2010 and 2013, one can conclude that this very skewed support for Fidesz within the minority electorate is not in line with the relationships between the party elites across the border.

### **Slovakia**

Of the three Hungarian minorities studied in this thesis, the community from Slovakia seems to be the most detached from Hungary. Lampl (2010) reported that 31% of the Hungarians in Slovakia did not agree in 2009 with Hungary's interference into the issues of the minority, 45% believed that Hungary should only express its opinion but refrain from interfering, while 24% endorsed active interference into the issues of the minority. Furthermore, 55% of the respondents believed that the relationships between Hungarian politicians from Slovakia and

Hungary should only extend to the point until when such activities do not insult Slovak politicians, while 45% did not agree with this statement.

According to Mészáros (2009), Hungarian voters in Slovakia considered in 2009 that their parties should cooperate primarily with Fidesz (34.3%), MDF (4.4%) and Jobbik (4.1%), while the center-left parties of Hungary did not appear as serious options, and 22.1% of the respondents considered that the minority parties should not cooperate with any party from the kin-state. Interestingly, Mészáros found no significant differences in this respect between MKP and Most-Híd sympathizers. However, MKP sympathizers proved to be much more tolerant in what concerns the interference of the kin-state in issues related to the minority than Most-Híd voters.

The data published by Mészáros stands in stark contrast with the party preferences reported four years later by Ravasz (2013), according to which the right and the center-left parties of Hungary stood at an approximate parity among those who would vote. A survey conducted in May 2013 by the Focus institute found a support of 15.4% for Fidesz in the entire sample, 4.7% for MSZP, 2.3% for Együtt-PM, 1.6% for LMP, 3.7% for Jobbik and 4.9% for DK.<sup>291</sup> The rest of the respondents either declared themselves undecided (25.4%) or stated no intention to vote (41.9%). Recalculated for those who indicated a party preference, Fidesz garners the support of 47%, the center-left bloc of 41%, the remaining 11% going to Jobbik. Thus, the data show that the center-left parties of Hungary have the highest support in Slovakia among the Hungarian communities from the countries neighboring Hungary.

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<sup>291</sup> The value for DK, which is actually the second highest, was met with considerable skepticism in the media, and even Ravasz admitted in personal communication with the author that he cannot find a satisfactory explanation for it.

**Table 9.9. Cross-tabulation of party preferences for Hungary and Slovakia**

	Fidesz	MSZP	Együtt 2014	DK	LMP	Jobbik	Un- decided	Would not vote	Tota l
MKP	36.3	5.5	1.4	2.1	0	8.9	19.2	26.7	100
Most-Híd	17.9	5.9	4.4	9.2	3.3	1.5	23.4	34.4	100
Mainstream parties	3.9	3.9	1.3	9.1	3.9	5.2	37.7	35.1	100
Overall	15.4	4.7	2.3	4.9	1.6	3.7	25.4	41.9	100

Source: Ravasz (2013)

The cross-tabulation of preferences towards parties from Slovakia and Hungary (Table 9.9) reveals very important differences: only 17.9% of Most-Híd's voters would support Fidesz, while among MKP voters this value is 36.3%, and among voters of mainstream parties only 3.9%. Among those Most-Híd voters who expressed a party preference for Hungary, 42% would support Fidesz, 54% one of the center-left parties and 4% Jobbik. Within the MKP electorate these proportions are 67%, 17%, respectively 16%, while among voters of mainstream parties 14%, 67% and 19%. The joint distribution indicates a clear connection between sympathy for Fidesz and MKP, but more interestingly also between the support of Most-Híd and of the center-left parties of Hungary. While the rather high value for Jobbik among voters of mainstream parties is surprising, the similar support among MKP voters may be related to the alleged connections of MKP's youth organization, Via Nova ICS with the radical right party from Hungary. It is also important that MKP voters were more willing to participate and more decided (26.7% would stay away and 19.2% undecided) than Most-Híd voters (34.4% would not vote and 23.4% undecided). The voters of mainstream parties displayed even higher values on the latter two categories, 35.1% would not vote and 37.7% were undecided about their party preference.

Based on the same survey, Ravasz also provides a comparison of the various voter groups according to the salience they attribute to the issue of Hungarian citizenship. The importance of dual citizenship being measured on a scale ranging from 0 to 10, MKP voters

rated the issue on average to 5.65, while Most-Híd supporters only to 3.97, being closer to the voters of mainstream Slovak parties in this respect (3.64).

One can conclude that MKP-voters attribute more importance to Hungarian citizenship and reported a higher propensity to participate than Most-Híd supporters, even if this does not have relevant consequences for voting behavior given the law which forbids dual citizenship in Slovakia. On one hand, this division is similar to that from Romania (and as we shall see later, in Serbia) in that dual citizens are more likely to support the party which is treated as a partner by the Hungarian government than those who care less about citizenship, and the electorate of the party closest to Fidesz is also the most active and decided about the elections in Hungary. On the other hand, Slovakia stands out in what concerns the overlap of voter preferences for Most-Híd and the center-left parties of Hungary, which is rendered even more interesting by the fact that the connections at the elite level between the parties have a low intensity.

### **Serbia**

For Serbia the only information about preferences towards the parties in Hungary comes from an online survey conducted in July 2013 (Kiss, 2013). Being an online survey, it cannot be considered representative of the Hungarian population of Vojvodina, moreover, the survey call was addressed only to persons who already obtained or applied for Hungarian citizenship, so it is not possible to draw conclusions about those who did not apply yet or do not even intend to do so. However, this is the only source of information available about the voting behavior of the Hungarians of Vojvodina in what concerns the elections in Hungary.<sup>292</sup>

According to the survey, 47% of the Vojvodina Hungarians would support Fidesz, 8% Jobbik and 2% LMP, 43% being undecided. Among certain voters Fidesz has a support of 82%, Jobbik 13%, LMP 3% and DK 1%, while MSZP 0. 29.28% of the respondents would

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<sup>292</sup> Data made available courtesy of Igor Kiss.

certainly vote and 24.7% would probably vote at the elections for the Hungarian parliament. More interesting from our purposes is the propensity of the newly enfranchised voters to participate in the Hungarian elections, and the cross-tabulation of their party preferences in the kin- and the host-state. Tables 9.10 and 9.11 provide information on these aspects. First, one can see that the voters of mainstream and multi-ethnic regionalist parties displayed the lowest activity, only 38.2% stated that they would surely or probably vote. Second, the supporters of the smaller and more radical parties were more active than the voters of VMSZ, the highest proportion of those who intended to surely or probably cast a vote in the elections being measured for VMDP supporters (89.3%).

**Table 9.10. Party preference in Serbia and participation in Hungary**

	surely vote	probably vote	probably not	surely not	DN	total
VMSZ	38.5	25.7	16.2	6.8	12.8	100.0
VMDP	50.0	39.3	0.0	3.6	7.1	100.0
VMDK	61.5	15.4	0.0	15.4	7.7	100.0
MPSZ	66.7	16.7	0.0	0.0	16.7	100.0
MRM	43.3	30.0	13.3	0.0	13.3	100.0
mainstream or regionalist	14.7	23.5	23.5	26.5	11.8	100.0
undecided	16.5	24.2	17.0	17.0	25.3	100.0
total	28.6	25.5	15.8	13.1	17.1	100.0

Source: Kiss (2013)

In what concerns party preferences in Hungary, the supporters of four of the five ethnic parties were heavily inclined towards Fidesz, the exception being MRM, whose voters preferred Jobbik. This is not surprising, as MRM is the sister organization of the radical right party from Hungary. The highest support for Fidesz emerged once again among VMDP voters, and the highest proportion of undecided respondent was found within the electorate of the mainstream or regionalist parties, but the proportion of those without a party preference for Hungary was also rather high among VMSZ supporters.

**Table 9.11. Party preferences in Serbia and Hungary**

	Fidesz	Jobbik	Left total	LMP	other	DN	Total
VMSZ	61.6	4.8	1.5	2.1	0.7	29.5	100
VMDP	78.6	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.9	100
VMDK	75.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	100
MPSZ	66.7	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	100
MRM	23.3	60.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	13.3	100
mainstream or regionalist	58.5	1.5	1.5	3.1	0.0	35.4	100
undecided	27.9	1.7	0.0	1.1	0.0	69.3	100
total	47.2	7.1	0.2	1.5	0.4	43.1	100

Source: Kiss (2013)

### Assessment

Though the acquisition of Hungarian citizenship did not have a significant effect in the multivariate regressions fitted for Romania, the cross-tabulations for all three countries have shown that those who become Hungarian citizens are more prone to support minority parties that are oriented rather towards the kin-state and which maintain a closer relationship with Fidesz, as opposed to the integrationist and more moderate minority parties (and the supporters of mainstream parties are the least likely to become dual citizens). We have direct evidence for this in Romania and Slovakia, but the fact that the discussed online survey from Vojvodina, conducted on a sample consisting exclusively of dual citizens, found significantly higher support for the more radical parties than their real support, can also be interpreted as indirect evidence for this. The differences between the attitudes of the electorates of the rival minority parties concerning the kin-state and dual citizenship are the most remarkable in Slovakia, and the ban on dual citizenship in this country may further reinforce this division.

In what concerns the political participation in Hungary of the newly enfranchised members of the minorities, one can see that the electorate of all minority parties is heavily skewed towards Fidesz, perhaps with the exception of Serbia's MRM, which is the sister party of Jobbik, and of Slovakia's Most-Híd, whose voters prefer the center-left parties of Hungary. Furthermore, the voters of the parties which maintain the closest ties to Fidesz (EMNP, MKP, VMDP) display a higher propensity to participate in the elections. It should

be emphasized that both of these factors contributed to the overwhelming support obtained by Fidesz at the 2014 elections among the Hungarian minorities, as it was precisely the supporters of Fidesz who participated in higher proportions at the elections, and the minority parties also played an important role in their mobilization.

## **Conclusions**

At the end of the chapter, it is time to return to the questions asked at the beginning. In what concerns the first two questions about the existence and nature of the differences between the electorates of the rival Hungarian parties, one can conclude that there are certainly *some* differences in this respect, even if these are obviously less pronounced than in the case of the rival parties of classic party systems. The impact of the variables connected to the settlement pattern of the minorities (region and of the demographic weight of the Hungarians) is readily apparent from both electoral and survey data. Other socio-economic differences have little explanatory power, though some variables, like material well-being, education and even religion have some effect, but are able to explain only a very low part of the variance.

Conversely, attitudinal variables increase the explanatory power of the regression models for Romania to a great extent (and secondary literature proves that attitudes also matter in Slovakia). Within the category of attitudinal and issue-related items the impact of the variables concerning strategy (participation in government, representation in parliament) deserves special emphasis, as they confirm the argument put forward in Chapter 3 that party strategy matters at least as much as the declared ethnopolitical goals, and voters also care about this. Unfortunately, we could only test this in the case of Romania.

The very strong impact of the settlement patterns is explained to some extent by the differential distribution of ethnopolitical attitudes in the compact Hungarian regions and the areas where they are clearly a minority, the former type of voters being more radical in what concerns ethnopolitics. This is confirmed for the regressions for 2008, but not for 2011. This

also adds something to the explanation of why the more radical parties are more successful in ethnically compact areas in both Romania and Slovakia.

Several scholars have already observed that the conditions for more radical ethnic parties are more favorable in the compact minority areas, explaining the phenomenon with the lower risk of losing representation (Bochsler, 2007, 2012; Stroschein, 2011),<sup>293</sup> or, more appropriately, with a different (arguably more radical) structure of opinions and issue salience in the compact Hungarian areas, which provide more fertile ground for outbidding appeals (Bochsler & Szöcsik, 2013b; Szöcsik, 2012). The findings for Romania and Slovakia reinforce the latter line of argumentation. However, the deviant pattern for Serbia shows that territorial concentration is not the only factor that matters when it comes to explaining the success of outbidding. Beside the discussed path-dependent factors (the development of the party scene and the electoral strategies of the more moderate party), also the fact that it was the moderate VMSZ that was able to obtain some form of personal autonomy, even if of limited extent, might have contributed to the lower attractiveness of the more radical parties in the compact ethnic Hungarian areas of Vojvodina.

The explanatory power of the attitudinal variables in Romania, as well as the differential salience of the ethnic issues in the electorates of the Hungarian parties from Slovakia is pointing towards a positive answer also to the third question, which concerned the congruence of party leaders and voters. The analysis revealed that the voters of the more radical parties indeed have more radical attitudes, sharing the opinions of their leaders, at least to some extent. The same is true about the attitudes towards Hungary, as those who already obtained dual citizenship are overrepresented among the supporters of the more

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<sup>293</sup> Stroschein (2011) writes that outbidding is more likely in areas where the minority forms a local majority, using the example of Romania (RMDSZ and MPP). However, what she actually demonstrates is only that intra-ethnic competition is more prevalent in such areas, not that a more radical party, on an outbidding platform, would be more successful, as the main explanation for the occurrence of intra-ethnic competition is that in compact minority areas fragmentation does not involve the risk of losing power to the other ethnic group

radical parties. These differences, however, are not spectacular, the conclusion is only that the voters of the more radical parties are themselves slightly more radical and more oriented towards the kin-state.

Although this thesis does not intend to venture into the domain of normative political science, it should be stressed that there is also a negative side to the attitudinal congruence between the parties and their voters in the ethnopolitical domain, especially in the case of the parties considered more radical. From the point of view of the quality of representation, the fact that the more radical parties are more often out of their host-states' parliament than in also means that one part of the minority electorates, with a rather clear-cut attitudinal profile, is left almost permanently without representation. As I argued in Chapter 3 and will try to prove in the last chapter, the more moderate parties do not regard this as a problem, and only turn to intra-ethnic cooperation under special circumstances.

Although the status of the voters concerning dual citizenship is only a weak predictor of minority party preference, it cannot be excluded that the supporters of the more radical parties will orient themselves primarily towards the political community of Hungary in the future and will increasingly withdraw from participation in the host states. The repeated electoral failures of the smaller radical parties against the more moderate parties in the host-states could only reinforce this alienation. The consequences of such a scenario can potentially be very negative for the social cohesion of the minorities, Hungarian citizenship may turn into a real cleavage, to the point of calling into question the survival of the minorities as an imagined political community. The future developments will depend primarily on the strategy of the more moderate, integrationist minority parties towards

participation in Hungary,<sup>294</sup> but also on that of the Hungarian center-left parties, which were basically ignored by the minority electorate in 2014.

The last question addressed in this chapter referred to the similarities and differences across the communities. The three minorities are similar in what concerns the low overall salience attributed to ethnopolitical issues as compared to bread-and butter issues, but also in the fact that ethnic issues still have an impact on competition, being somewhat more salient among the voters of the more radical parties in Romania and Slovakia. Furthermore, the communities are rather similar in what concerns the distribution of political preferences across the borders: the voters of the more radical parties are more prone to participate in the Hungarian elections, and are more sympathetic towards Fidesz. Based on these one can safely state that the general division and the dynamics of competition are analogous in all three cases. However, two important differences also emerged. First, Slovakia seems special as the Hungarian center-left parties seem to have a significant number of sympathizers only here, more precisely among the voters of Most-Híd. Their specific situation is interesting also the perspective of the third question: this link at the level of the electorate is not only unique, but it emerges in the case of the party whose leaders are most detached from the kin-state. The second important unique feature is the fact that territorial concentration does not have the same effect in Serbia than in the other two cases, showing that other, path dependent factors also matter for the success of outbidding appeals beside territorial concentration.

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<sup>294</sup> However, it should be mentioned that before the 2014 elections in Hungary, Fidesz reached an agreement with RMDSZ, and the latter also became involved in the registration process for the Hungarian elections beside EMNP/EMNT, some of its leaders openly encouraging the dual citizens from Transylvania to register and vote. If RMDSZ choses to endorse the political participation of the newly enfranchised Hungarian citizens from Romania in the long run, the differences in party preference between citizens and non-citizens of Hungary may decrease. In Serbia VMSZ also actively embraced registration and participation. These developments decrease the likelihood of such a scenario.

## **Chapter 10. Intra-ethnic Electoral Cooperation**

After having analyzed intra-ethnic political fragmentation at both the elite and the electoral level, in the last chapter of the thesis I address the issue of cooperation between political parties standing for a particular national minority. While for political parties in general the default option is to contest the elections on their own and engage in electoral cooperation with other parties only under special circumstances, in the case of minorities whose proportion in the population barely exceeds the electoral threshold, intra-ethnic competition can easily jeopardize political representation of the group. The main question addressed in this chapter is under what circumstances are political parties of the same minority more likely to form electoral alliances with each other, and when are they more likely to engage in competition against each-other, possibly putting the representation of the group in peril.

I have argued in the first chapter that national minorities are characterized by a high degree of political organization, comparable to that of nations and stateless nations, and most of their elites conceive of the group as a self-standing pillar of the host society and seek integration in a vertical fashion, also aiming for some sort of self-government. In such groups the issue of internal political pluralism becomes very important, for the same reasons as in democratic nation-states: legitimacy, meaningful choices, accountability. Yet not all states provide an institutional setting that would function as an arena for “safe” internal competition, while also guaranteeing the adequate representation of the minority in the national political institutions. Rather, the situation is that unconstrained competition between the parties of the minority can easily lead to sub-optimal electoral outcomes or even loss of representation, creating collective action dilemmas for the rival minority elites.

I approach the phenomenon of electoral cooperation from the perspective of the research on pre-electoral coalitions (PECs). The first section reviews the most important arguments of this literature. However, this literature deals mainly with electoral coalitions

aiming to take control of the government, and not with alliances between small parties whose primary goal is to enter parliament. Thus, in the second section I derive some insights from the PEC literature for small parties representing national minorities, taking into consideration the arguments about electoral cooperation as a nested game (Tsebelis, 1990) and the dual nature of the Hungarian communities as national minorities and diasporas. The third section describes the case selection and the operationalization of the explanatory conditions, and the fourth presents a crisp set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (csQCA), with party dyads as the unit of analysis. This is followed by the presentation of the results and their discussion.

### **Strategic electoral coordination and pre-electoral coalitions**

Whether multiple parties that claim to represent the same ethnic minority decide to run together in the elections or engage in competition with each-other can be considered a problem of strategic electoral coordination. Successful coordination refers to the ability of fielding the optimal number of candidates or party lists in light of the available electoral support, which depends primarily on the nature of the electoral system, the characteristics of the group, but also on agency-related factors, namely, the motivations and perceptions of the leaders. Most importantly, coordination will succeed only if both voters and competitors care most about the outcome of the current election for the group as a whole, and not about long-term goals, for instance securing dominance within the group. However, if candidates care more about their own representation than about that of the group, or are motivated by revenge or the desire to prove their blackmail potential, then they may decide not to cooperate (Cox, 1997: 145-150).

Ethnic or religious groups are usually pictured in the literature as least likely cases for coordination failure. They are perceived as well-organized groups, that have leaders who can speak for their interest in an authoritative fashion, and so they are advantaged when it comes to coordination, because challengers will be discouraged from entering the competition (Cox,

1997). However, by zooming in from the level of the party system to that of the minorities' internal political dynamics one also witnesses plenty of examples of failed coordination. The mere fact that ethnic minorities should be a most likely setting for electoral coordination also allows us to say something about electoral coordination in general, by studying the factors that facilitate or impede electoral cooperation within minority groups.

According to Sona Golder (2006: 1), “electoral” or “pre-electoral” coalitions (PECs) are instances when (1) party leaders announce to the electorate that they plan to form a government together if successful at the polls; or (2) the parties agree to run under a single name with (2a) joint lists or (2b) nomination agreements (fusion candidacies). PECs are not the same as party mergers. Even if it is possible to regard parties as “long coalitions” of politicians created to solve problems of collective action and social choice (Aldrich, 1995), PECs are a different phenomenon, most importantly because the existence of the parties is not put to an end. The pre-electoral agreement holds in principle only for that particular election (Kellam, 2011; Verthé & Deschouwer, 2011), about 60% of all PECs stay together only for one election, and there are even examples of parties shifting through PECs across elections (Marek & Powell, 2011).

The most important distinction from our perspective is, however, that some PECs are formed with the aim of increasing the chances of electoral victory and of forming the next government, while others only aim to overcome the representation threshold (Golder, 2006; Allern & Aylott, 2009). Wahman (2011a) calls the PECs created with the ambition of forming a government *coalitions of contestation*, and the alliances between small parties aimed to secure parliamentary representation, or between niche-parties aiming to promote a certain ethnic or ideological position *marginal coalitions*.

The focus in the literature is overwhelmingly on PECs between parties whose goal is to enter government, those created to jump the hurdle of the threshold are not discussed in

detail. In the remainder of this section I will review the most important factors influencing PEC formation in general, and then try to apply these insights to PECs formed by parties of national minorities, based on the considerations of their smallness and the specificities of the ethnic minority context.

### **Advantages of pre-electoral coalition formation**

Regardless of the precise form that they take, PECs are created mainly for two reasons. The first is strategic coordination aimed to obtain electoral benefits: to avoid splitting the vote between ideologically close parties, or to take advantage of the bonus inherent in the electoral system for larger competitors. While coalescing maybe most profitable in majoritarian electoral systems (Bandyopadhyay *et al.*, 2011; Blais & Indridason, 2007), economies of scale are inherent even in fairly proportional electoral systems (Gschwend & Hooghe, 2008). The economies of scale argument refers not only to vote-pooling, but to any resources important in the campaign (money, media time etc.). Campaigning together leaves more resources to be invested against the opponents (Carroll & Cox, 2007). Conversely, campaigning separately requires that the parties distinguish themselves from each-other, and this will have negative consequence on mutual trust and may make it more difficult to arrive at a policy compromise after the election (Kellam, 2011; Verthé & Deschouwer, 2011).

The second reason why PECs form is to influence which government will form, or to increase bargaining power in the cabinet formation process. Becoming the largest electoral competitor is advantageous in all electoral systems, as it offers the best chances to become the cabinet *formateur* (Golder, 2006). Related to this, the prospects of PEC formation also depends on the degree of coordination on the opposition side, and the parties also care about the composition of a potential government formed by their opposition, the fear of an ideologically distant government may also act as an incentive to coalesce (Blais *et al.*, 2006; Golder, 2006; Bandyopadhyay *et al.*, 2011).

To conclude, whatever the reason for coalescing, the literature is consensual that parties will only coalesce if doing so is advantageous, if they sense that benefits can be obtained “collectively or not at all”. It is also emphasized that all these considerations may be especially salient for parties that recently experienced some kind of “external shock.” An electoral defeat, a long period out of office or a change in the party system which puts the party into danger, or any prospect that a party will end up marginalized makes it more likely that the party will be willing to form a pre-electoral coalition, even if it entails more concessions (Allern & Aylott, 2009).

### **Costs of pre-electoral coalition formation**

While PECs do not form if not advantageous for the parties, they do not always form even if seemingly they would be advantageous, as running together entails not only benefits, but also costs. PECs are in many respects similar to governmental coalitions. Potential partners have to overcome distributional and policy differences, and this process is prone to failures. Furthermore, PECs also have to promote a new entity on the political market, a brand name that must be recognizable for the voters (Kaminski, 2001). The flip side of the latter problem is even more annoying for the parties: entering a PEC may involve renouncing to run under the party’s own label and the possibility of having an individual election result. This is a serious disadvantage, as a party that does not distinguish itself from other parties in the campaign runs the risk of blurring its platform and being perceived by its voters as a sell-out. Thus, forming PECs may potentially dilute parties’ policy reputations, and even their identity. Also, both parties and their voters lose a clear point of reference for the next election if they forgo an individual result. Running under another label (and even more so under another party’s label) may have consequences on the party’s survival as an influential brand (Kellam, 2011; Verthé & Deschouwer, 2011). Due to this, parties prefer staying out of pre-

electoral pacts especially if the risk of losing is not negligible (van de Walle, 2006; Wahman, 2011b).

### **Insights from the PEC literature relevant for parties of national minorities**

With some adaptations, most of the insights reviewed so far should also be valid for PECs constituted not in order to obtain the role of cabinet *formateur*, but also for marginal PECs whose primary aim is to secure representation in parliament. Even among small parties, the situation of the parties of national minorities can be considered specific, for two reasons. On one hand, the limited nature of their electorate, in combination with the electoral thresholds, should provide strong incentives to coalesce, moreover, parties arguably face strong societal pressure not to jeopardize the representation of the minority. On the other hand, a cooperation between *all* relevant parties standing for the same ethnic group can be regarded as something similar to a grand coalition, as the parties who will have to coalesce may be each-other's most bitter enemies within the community, especially in areas where the minority forms the local majority, and this may be at odds with smooth cooperation. In what follows, I will adapt the main hypotheses of the PEC literature to the parties of national minority, keeping in mind these considerations.

First, some of the factors identified in the previous section should not impact the parties of national minorities in different ways than any other type of party, as there is nothing ethnicity-specific about them. The costs of renouncing to run under their *own label* is one such factor, so newly formed parties should be less likely to participate in PECs, especially not with the party from which they recently split. The impact of *external shocks* can be expected to be similar regardless of party type too, though what constitutes a shock should be defined more precisely. A shock can be either the loss of representation at a previous election, but also increased ethnic predating behavior (Zuber, 2012) by the mainstream parties towards the minority electorate. Such a situation is perceived as a threat

and shock by the political elites of minorities not simply because of the potential loss of votes, but also because the principle of participation in the polity through their own (ethnic) parties is challenged, as is the idea – characteristic of most elites of national minorities - that the group forms a self-standing segment of society, some sort of political community which should be integrated into the host state's polity in a vertical, collective fashion, and not individually. As a consequence, a situation when a minority party loses ground to mainstream parties or multi-ethnic parties can be regarded as an external shock too.

Concerning the *electoral system* it is not the potential bonus stemming from cooperation that matters most, but the magnitude and nature of the electoral thresholds that apply for political parties or electoral coalitions of the minorities, taking into consideration the share (and in case of thresholds applied at the regional level, also the geographical distribution) of the minority in the population of the country. The likelihood of forming PECs should increase if the situation arising from the interplay of the electoral threshold, the demographic characteristics of the group and the distribution of electoral support among the competing parties is such that group representation is imperiled. Sometimes more relaxed rules may apply for organizations standing for minorities (such as waived thresholds), but these do not necessarily diminish the incentives for cooperation, the potential gains or threats vary according to the nature of these rules.

In the PEC literature the differences or distances between the parties usually refer to *ideological or policy distances*, captured with socio-economic or socio-cultural left-right scales, or with the position of the parties on certain issues. However, these conventional tools used in the mainstream party literature are not very helpful for my purpose, given the characteristics of party competition discussed in Chapters 5-7. This brings us to those factors relevant for PEC formation which need to be adapted in order to apply for parties of national minorities.

As I have argued in Chapter 3, existing expert surveys (even if specifically designed for ethnic parties (Szócsik & Zuber, 2012b)) do not cover (all) the parties studied in this thesis; inferring the distances from voters' self-placements in surveys is not possible either, as there are very few surveys representative of the minority groups. The more specific coding schemes for ethnicity-related appeals derived from the Comparative Manifestos Project (Protsyk & Garaz, 2011; Gadjanova, 2013) are better suited for the comparison of *all* parties of a particular party system along ethnicity-related issues (indeed, producing clear differences between ethnic, multi-ethnic and non-ethnic parties in this sense) than for the comparison of the rival parties of a particular minority. Also, the few existing case studies comparing minority parties using their main programmatic documents find little difference between them (e.g. Bochsler, 2009; Friedman, 2006).

As a consequence, based on the insights of the analysis presented in Chapters 5-7, I will attempt to grasp the differences between the parties of the Hungarian minorities based on three aspects: their main *programmatic goals*, captured by their conception about the preferable model of social and political organization of the minority community, the *strategy* they advocate for obtaining their goals, most importantly their attitude towards participation in government, and their relationship with actors from the *kin-state*.

### **Programmatic goals**

I have argued that the standard typologies of ethno-political demands (e.g. Bugajski, 1994; De Winter, 1998; Dandoy, 2010), which classify parties based on the strength of their claims concerning the restructuring of the state and minority rights, do not permit a sufficiently fine-grained differentiation between the minority parties, as there is not sufficient variation in this respect among the Hungarian minority parties. On one hand, the most radical goals ever put forward by any relevant party were demands for various forms of autonomy. On the other hand, based on the analysis from Chapter 5-7 one can conclude that there are too few parties

that should not be classified as autonomist, as they limited their demands to less substantial minority rights. However, there may be important programmatic differences also between two autonomist parties, if their conceptions about the social and political organization of the community differ considerably. Moreover, autonomy and the stance of the parties towards it is also a path dependent issue, because if some sort of autonomy has been implemented, that can give rise to debates about the legitimacy and genuineness of the arrangement. Thus, the parties' goals will be coded according to their conception about the social and political organization of the community they regard as desirable, which includes, but cannot be reduced to the issue of autonomy.

### **Strategic differences**

Strategic differences between the parties are captured by their attitude concerning *participation in government*. According to de Winter (1998), ethnoregionalist parties can pursue three types of strategies: anti-system, tribune or governmental. As no party of the Hungarian minorities embraced a full-fledged anti-system strategy implying non-adherence to democratic rules and possibly also violence, of De Winter's types only governmental and tribune/opposition strategies are relevant in our cases. A tribune strategy means a refusal to participate in government and a preference for exercising pressure from opposition, often by seeking support from international organizations or the kin-state. Governmental strategies obviously imply the implementation of policy goals by participating in the power coalitions, but also increased access to public resources.

The dichotomy of governmental vs. tribune strategies is especially important for our cases because at least some of the parties that compete for the minority vote are involved in something what Tsebelis (1990) has called a *nested game*, their payoffs depending on the returns from both the intra-ethnic electoral arena and the inter-ethnic parliamentary arena. In Chapter 3 I have put forward a modified version of the argument of Tsebelis, namely that the

arena that matters the most for some minority party leaders might not be the electoral one, but the parliamentary or more precisely the governmental arena at the center, where they can strike bargains with the mainstream parties. How they will behave in the electoral arena (whether they will be interested in forming PECs with other ethnic parties) will depend on the consequence of this on their prospects of entering government. This idea connects back to the second reason of PEC formation: influencing the composition of the cabinet. While for the small parties of national minorities the goal cannot be to become *formateurs*, they will put a value on being attractive for the *formateur*, and entering a PEC with other parties of the minority may become a burden when it comes to this, as I have argued in Chapter 3.

Entering government will always require toning down ethnic demands, even if to varying degrees. Thus, forming an electoral alliance with other ethnic parties of the minority may reduce their expectations of office spoils, not only because of the incentives to keep the winning coalition minimal (Fearon, 1999; Laitin & Van Der Veen, 2012), but also because of the refusal of majority parties to invite minority elites perceived as too radical into power, and because of the unwillingness of the more radical minority elites to make the same compromises as the more moderate ones. Thus, the more intransigent minority elites would become ballast for the more compromising ones in what concerns their chances to enter governments and obtain access to state resources. Because of this a PEC is expected to be less likely to form if the parties differ concerning their stance towards cooperation with the parties of the majority and in what concerns participation in power.

### **The role of the kin-state**

Finally, departing somewhat from the PEC literature, I argue that *the relationship of the minority parties with the government of the kin-state* should also matter for intra-ethnic electoral cooperation. The relevance of this variable does not follow from the PEC literature, which focuses almost exclusively on domestic factors, but from the literature on nationalism,

most importantly the triadic nexus of Brubaker (1996), and from the dual nature of the Hungarian minorities discussed in Chapter 1, as *internal national minorities* of their host-state and *external minorities or diasporas* of Hungary (Waterbury, 2010; Salat, 2011).

As I have discussed earlier, the Hungarian left regards the Hungarian communities of the neighboring countries primarily as internal national minorities of their host-states, while in the approach of the right (especially Fidesz) they are increasingly viewed as external diasporas. The latter approach also implies that the government in Budapest should be the only one to set the direction in the domain of the politics of the nation, and only such organizations in the neighboring countries are accepted as partners, which share this vision. This attitude, however, is not welcome by all minority parties, as it is similarly at odds with their conception about a self-standing political subject and parallel society, as are the refusal of the titular nations to recognize them as such. Consequently, after 2010 Fidesz developed strategic partnerships with some of the minority parties, while ignoring others or rejecting them to the point of mutual feud. It is reasonable to expect that if one or some of the parties from a specific country are treated as partners by the government of the kin-state at the expense of their rivals, the chances of intra-minority electoral cooperation will decrease.

While the selectivity of the Hungarian government in the relationship with the minority parties undoubtedly reached a qualitatively different level during the second Fidesz government, the policy of non-interference was not always observed by the center-left governments either. The most important manifestation of kin-state interference was the creation of VMSZ against VMDK in 1994-1995, a process aided by the MSZP-SZDSZ government in order to facilitate the consolidation of a less intransigent Hungarian party in Serbia.

### **Case selection and the coding of the explanatory conditions and outcome**

Only elections for federal, national or regional parliaments, for the European Parliament, and presidential elections are included into the analysis. Though there are certainly important differences between these types of elections, the inclusion of all of them is necessary in order to ensure a sufficient number of cases. Furthermore, some specificities following from election type will be treated as explanatory conditions (variables) in the analysis. The exclusion of local elections is motivated by the difficulty to obtain data for all elections and the fact that at the local level party behavior may depend to a great degree on the demographic composition of the localities and other idiosyncrasies, which cannot be covered in a satisfactory manner. Where the demographic weight of the minority warrants it, competition is the “natural” state of affairs at the local level, and the elections for the Hungarian National Council (MNT) in Serbia have been excluded because of this same reason. When other types of elections (presidential, regional) took place concomitantly with the parliamentary ones, only the latter were included, as including both types would bring up the issue of the lack of independence of the cases.

Elections that took place in periods when only one relevant party existed within the minority are not covered by the analysis. Thus, for Romania the parliamentary elections that took place between 1990 and 2004, for Slovakia the parliamentary elections of 2002 and 2006, as well as the European elections of 2004 and 2009, and for Serbia the national and federal elections that occurred before 1996 are not considered. The reason is that although the interaction of rival elites within the framework of a single political organization is an issue equally relevant as the interactions between rival parties standing for the same ethnic group (Caspersen, 2010), these phenomena pertain to the internal dynamics of political parties and are better approached from the perspective of the literature on internal party democracy and party splits. There is, however, a single exception to this, namely the 1998 Slovak

parliamentary elections, when all existing Hungarian parties merged on the eve of the elections. Due to the conditions of the merger (induced by a severely restrictive modification of electoral legislation), this case can be regarded as a special type of PEC. Founding elections are also excluded, as are the watershed elections of 2000 in Serbia, where intra-ethnic competition between the Hungarian parties was overshadowed by the formation of the broad umbrella coalition of the “democratic opposition”, created with the aim of overthrowing the Milosevic-regime.

This leaves us with a total of 18 elections, of which 12 are elections for a national parliament, two for the European parliament, one for a federal parliament, one for a regional parliament, and two presidential elections. However, the unit of analysis is not the election, but the party dyad. As already mentioned, those parties were considered relevant, which contested at least two subsequent elections (regardless of type) and obtained at least 2% of the votes cast for Hungarian parties.

The method employed is crisp set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (csQCA), using both the fsQCA (version 2.5) and the TOSMANA (version 1.3.2.0) software. The csQCA method is a case-oriented method based on Boolean algebra and set theory, requiring a good knowledge of the cases (Ragin, 1989; Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). One of the advantages of QCA is that it allows determining which conditions are necessary and/or sufficient to produce a particular outcome or its absence. Furthermore, QCA is appropriate to uncover instances of so-called *conjunctural causation*, when a certain outcome is only produced by a certain combination of conditions (something similar to the joint effect of multiple variables), and of *equifinality*, when different combinations of conditions lead to the same outcome (for a detailed discussion of the QCA method and its terminology, see Schneider & Wagemann, 2012).

The method is appropriate for the purposes of this paper because (as I have argued in the theoretical section of the chapter) electoral cooperation may emerge due to multiple reasons. Most importantly, in our case one of the goals is to establish whether there is something specific about national minority parties as opposed to the general predictions of the PEC literature, which should be valid regardless of party type. Thus, it is possible that some instances of electoral cooperation will be explained by the general logic of PEC formation, while other cases will be driven by conditions specific to the minority context.

Given that the method is based on set theory, all empirical information has to be transformed into membership scores in the condition sets and the outcome set. In crisp set QCA, this means that all conditions, as well as the outcome need to be coded as dichotomies. In this section the basic principles behind the calibration of the sets (the coding of the explanatory conditions) are explained, a more detailed presentation is reported in Appendix 3.<sup>295</sup>

The outcome in the analysis is the occurrence of electoral cooperation between two parties standing for the Hungarian minority. Separate analyses will be performed for both the presence and for the absence of this outcome. The parties are grouped into dyads, that is, it is examined for all possible combinations of parties whether they concluded a pre-electoral coalition with each other or not (regardless of whether the PEC had other members too, and if yes, whether these were also parties of the Hungarian minority or not). The PEC is not interpreted in a strict legal sense, that is, it does not matter if a formal coalition had been concluded or if candidates of a certain party were accepted on the ticket of another party.<sup>296</sup> The outcome is coded as 1 if the members of the dyad cooperated and as 0 if they did not. If a party boycotted an election, the dyad is coded as 0, because the boycott implies a signal to the electorate of the party to stay at home instead of supporting some other party. This method of

<sup>295</sup> In QCA notation, the presence of the outcome or of a condition (1) is indicated by writing down the label with capitalized letters (e.g. K, E), while lowercase letters (e.g. n, g) indicate the absence of the condition (0).

<sup>296</sup> The importance of the concrete legal form of cooperation was addressed in more detail in Chapters 5-7.

coding yields a total of 51 dyads, of which 17 are instances of successful cooperation and 34 are failed ones. This number of cases amounts to a medium-N population, ideal for QCA.

Using party dyads instead of elections as units of analysis has several advantages. First, at some elections there were more than two minority parties running, thus partial coalitions were also possible, that is, PECs consisting of some but not all of the parties. If the election was the unit of analysis, a decision should be taken whether partial coalitions should be treated as successful or failed cases of cooperation. The dyadic approach avoids this problem. Second, the coding of several conditions becomes more straightforward with the dyadic approach. For instance, with elections as units of analysis it would be more difficult to assess the occurrence of external shocks (i.e. how many parties should have experienced a shock? All, or only one? Which one?), the relationship of the various parties with the government of the kin-state, but also the differences between the parties concerning autonomy and/or governmental participation (e.g. a PEC concluded between two parties that are reluctant to participate in government and one which is eager to do so is not the same as a PEC between two parties aiming to get into power and one that is reluctant to do so).

However, due to the characteristics of the QCA technique, using dyads as units of analysis may result in situations in which various dyads related to the same election are covered by different solution terms. While this may seem problematic at the first glance, in fact it allows uncovering that different parties entered the same pre-electoral coalitions for different motivations. Nevertheless, this should be taken into consideration when connecting the results to the actual cases.

Six explanatory conditions are included into the analysis<sup>297</sup>:

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<sup>297</sup> Naturally, beside these six conditions, other factors could possibly be important for the occurrence or absence of electoral cooperation, but it is not possible to take into account all potentially relevant factors in a QCA analysis, as it brings about increased limited diversity. Some possibly omitted factors will be revisited in the final section of the chapter.

1. *A restrictive electoral system (E)*. The calibration is based on an assessment of whether cooperation would make a difference for *both* members of the dyad, whether it would considerably increase their chances of getting represented. In the case of presidential elections, the condition is coded as 0 for all dyads, as no minority candidate can seriously hope to get elected. For other types of elections, the assignment of membership scores takes into account the proportion of the minority in the population, the nature and magnitude of the electoral threshold (also considering whether the thresholds are higher for electoral alliances), and the approximate support of the parties.<sup>298</sup> The requirement of *both* members benefitting is meant to handle the fact that some small parties can only hope to get represented if they run together with a larger party, while the latter could make it on its own too. Moreover, if the dyad is made up of two very small parties, which stand no real chances to get represented even if running together (e.g. a threshold of 5% and two parties that enjoy the support of less than 1% of the electorate), the membership of the dyad in the set of restrictive electoral systems is coded as 0 again.

2. *External shocks (S)*, The dyads are calibrated as 1 if there were serious electoral failures suffered by one or both of the parties of the dyad at the last elections (loss of representation in parliament), or if competition by mainstream or multi-ethnic regionalist parties for the ethnic electorate increased significantly, a phenomenon described as “ethnic predating” behavior by Zuber (2012). Otherwise, membership in the condition set is coded as 0.

3. A condition capturing whether one of the parties of the dyad was a *new organization (N)*. Though in most cases this refers to post-split situations (meaning that the newly emerged party have to forgo an opportunity to have its label recognized if it decides not to run alone), the criterion for coding the dyad as 1 is actually broader: whether the

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<sup>298</sup> The approximate support of the parties is assessed based on the proximate previous election results, and where available, on opinion polls published before the elections.

concerned party will contest a nationally relevant election for the first time (thus also allowing parties that previously contested local, but not national elections to be treated as new organizations when they decide to enter the competition at the national level).

4. A condition capturing the relationship of the parties with the government of Hungary, more precisely their *divisive preferential treatment by the kin-state* (K). The membership of the dyad in this set is 1 if the Hungarian government maintains a hostile relationship with one of the parties of the dyad and a friendly one with the other, or, put differently, if it supports one party at the expense of the other. If none of the members are prioritized or both of them are, the dyad is coded as 0.

The differences between the parties are captured by two conditions, one referring to their programmatic goals and the other to their stance concerning strategy (their attitudes towards governmental participation).

5. The fifth explanatory condition refers to *significant differences between the parties concerning governmental participation* (G). Dyads are coded as 0 if both members of the dyad are against participating in power or both of them embrace the idea, and 1 if only one does so. This condition also captures to a certain extent the impact of election type, as it is assumed that differences regarding the attitude towards governmental participation only matter at parliamentary elections, but not at presidential<sup>299</sup> or European ones, so dyads referring to these types of elections are also coded as 0.

6. The final condition is *significant differences between the parties in terms of ideology or programmatic goals* (P). This is captured by taking into consideration their conception about the preferred social and political organization of the minority, which includes, but cannot be reduced to their stance towards integration into the host-state as opposed to autonomy. In the simplest case this refers to a dichotomy between autonomist and

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<sup>299</sup> The chances for a Hungarian candidate to be elected president are virtually zero, so the reason for minority parties to field candidates is not participation in power.

non-autonomist parties, but only in some cases do the differences boil down to such a simple situation. In Romania all relevant Hungarian parties can be considered autonomist and compete against each-other according to a valence logic. Consequently, all dyads have a membership score of 0 in this condition. In Slovakia the situation is different. On one hand, here we find the only non-autonomist party, Most-Híd. On the other hand, in the first phase of organizational pluralism there was a rather clear difference, primarily between FMK/MPP and EPM (and to a lesser extent MKDM) about the preferred social and political organizational model for the Hungarian community, the former arguing for a pluralist model and the depoliticization of civil society, while the latter for a hierarchical corporatist model with a single political organization on top of the Hungarian civil society. Also, the ideological underpinning of the approach of MPP and EPM (and to a lesser degree MKDM) to the minority issue differed: the former advocated a human rights perspective, while the latter affirmed the right of the community to self-determination. Consequently, dyads from the second phase of multiparty competition have membership scores of 1, as have the dyads from the first phase involving FMK/MPP.

In Serbia all parties are autonomist too. However, unlike the other two countries, the province of Vojvodina has regained some of its competences through the so-called omnibus law in 2002, and some sort of personal autonomy (even if limited) has been implemented too. Due to these features, the path-dependent development of the parties' stances on autonomy was considered too when coding the dyads, in accordance with the description from Chapter 7. There are two main differences between the parties. The first is that since 2002, VMSZ has increasingly focused on expanding the autonomy of Vojvodina, arguing that this is the key to the improvement of the situation of the Hungarian community. This can be interpreted as a shift towards ethnoregionalist (as opposed to exclusivist ethnic) appeals. Conversely, the other Hungarian parties maintained their demands for various types of ethnically based

autonomy for the Hungarians, and dismissed the situation of the province as the business of the Serbs. The second difference refers to the fact that after 2002 no other relevant Hungarian party regarded the first MNT as legitimate. Thus, the dyads have been coded as follows. For the period before 2002 (the year of the formation of the first MNT and the adoption of the omnibus law), all dyads have membership scores of 0, as all parties were autonomist, even if there were differences between them concerning the details. For the period between 2003 and 2007 the dyads involving VMSZ and another party have membership scores of 1, and the rest of 0, because of VMSZ's shift towards ethnoregionalist appeals and because of the conflict between VMSZ and its intra-ethnic rivals concerning the first MNT. The dyads from 2008 were coded as 0 again (because before the elections of that year the parties reached an agreement about a joint autonomy conception). Finally, for the period after 2010 all dyads involving VMSZ have membership scores of 1 and the rest of 0, because after the dissolution of *Magyar Koalíció* the situation reverted to the one characteristic between 2000 and 2007, pitting VMSZ against the other four parties.

## **Analysis and results**

### **Analysis of necessary conditions**

The first step of the analysis is to check for the existence of necessary conditions, for both the presence and the absence of the outcome of electoral cooperation. For the occurrence of the outcome one necessary condition emerges (consistence necessity is 1): no divisive preferential treatment by the government of the kin-state (k). A second condition comes rather close to being necessary: that neither of the members of a dyad be a new organization (n)<sup>300</sup>: of the 17 cases of successful electoral cooperation there was only a single instance when a new minority organization entered into a pre-electoral coalition with another party

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<sup>300</sup> The third value of consistency necessity comes at a distance, the lack of differences regarding programmatic goals (p) has a score of 0.765

(consistency necessity equals 0.941).<sup>301</sup> For the absence of the outcome no necessary condition emerged, the highest consistency value is found the absence of divisive preferential treatment by the kin-state ( $k = 0.618$ ).

### **Minimization of the truth table**

The truth table that will be minimized by employing the Standard Analysis technique (Ragin & Sonnett, 2004), also showing the cases covered by each row and the consistency scores, is presented in Appendix 3. The truth table consists of 64 ( $2^6$ ) rows, but only 30 cover empirical cases. The consistency of five truth table rows is 1 for the occurrence of pre-electoral coalitions, while 21 rows cover only failed occurrences (or, have a consistency of 1 for the absence of the outcome). The remaining four truth table rows are contradictory. There are multiple strategies to deal with contradictory truth table rows. One can choose to add further conditions to the truth table before performing the minimization process, to drop cases or include ones, or to revisit the set membership of the contradictory cases in the outcome or the explanatory conditions. Alternatively, one can handle the contradictory rows during the minimization process, by excluding them all, including them all, or leaving the task of selective inclusion to the computer. Yet another strategy is to decide about inclusion based on a consistency threshold (Schneider and Wagemann 2012: 121-22). In the analysis this latter strategy was followed, with a consistency threshold for inclusion set at 0.67 for both the presence and the absence of the outcome.<sup>302</sup> This means that beside the fully consistent truth

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<sup>301</sup> This is the case of the pre-electoral coalition between MPSZ and VMDK at the 2012 Serbian parliamentary elections, which basically meant that both organizations joined a broader coalition of minority organizations “All together (Sve Zajedno)”. Actually MPSZ is not a new organization, as it has been existing since 2004; however, this was the first time when the party expressed interest in national-level politics, before it rather resembled a local citizen’s group.

<sup>302</sup> 0.67 is a rather low consistency threshold by widely accepted standards (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012: 127); however, I have decided to include these rows into the minimization after examining the “deviant” dyads that are covered by the rows, as both of them are somewhat special, leaving some room for interpretations. The failed dyad included into the minimization of the presence of the outcome (2003srb\_VMSZ\_VMDK) was actually a case when one of the parties boycotted the elections. The successful case included into the analysis for the absence of the outcome was from a Romanian presidential election (ro2009pres\_RMDSZ\_EMNT), when EMNT endorsed the presidential candidate of RMDSZ in the first round, but in the second round the two organizations did not support the same candidate anymore.

table rows one additional contradictory row was included into the minimization process for the presence of the outcome (thus covering 14 successful dyads and one failed dyad), and beside 20 fully consistent rows one additional contradictory row has been considered for the absence of the outcome (covering 31 failed dyads and one successful dyad). Two contradictory truth table rows (with a consistence value of 0.5, marked with grey in the table from Appendix 1, covering two successful and two failed cases) have been omitted from both minimization processes. The deviant cases from both the included and excluded contradictory rows will be revisited briefly after the presentation of the results of the QCA analysis.

In the following sections only the intermediate solution formulas are presented and discussed. The conservative solution, which is based only on the rows that have empirical correspondents, and the parsimonious solution, which takes into account those simplifying assumptions that contribute to the simplification of the Boolean expression, are reported in Appendix 3. The intermediate solution is the most trustworthy, as only those simplifying assumptions are allowed into the solution formula, which do not contradict our theoretical expectations concerning the direction of the effect of each single condition, or the claims of necessity discussed above. Put differently, the intermediate solution guarantees that no difficult counterfactuals (that is, logical remainders that would contradict our theoretical expectations) are included.

### **Explaining the presence of the outcome – successful PEC formation**

The directional expectations entered into the model in order to obtain the intermediate solution were the following: a restrictive electoral system and a shock should contribute to the outcome in their presence, while the other four conditions in their absence: no new organizations, no divisive preferential treatment by the kin-state, and no programmatic, respectively strategic differences should lead to electoral cooperation.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> The intermediate solution required the inclusion of only one simplifying assumption (easy counterfactual), namely ES<sub>nk</sub>GP. Schneider and Wagemann (2012 198-199) warn that one should check whether the simplifying

**Table 10.1. The intermediate solution for the presence of the outcome**

	Raw coverage <sup>304</sup>	Unique coverage <sup>305</sup>	Consistency <sup>306</sup>	Cases covered
E*n*k*g	0.353	0.353	0.857	ro09ep_RMDSZ_EMNT, sk92_EPM_MKDM, sk94_EPM_MKDM, sk98_EPM_MKDM, sk98_EPM_MPP, sk98_MKDM_MPP, <b>srb03parl_VMSZ_VMDK</b>
e*S*n*k*p	0.353	0.352	1	srb07_VMDP_VMDK, srb08parl_VMSZ_VMDP, srb08parl_VMSZ_VMDK, srb08pres_VMSZ_DPV, srb08pres_VMSZ_VMDK, srb08pres_VMDP_DCV
E*S*n*k*P	0.117	0.117	1	sk94_EPM_MPP, sk94_MKDM_MPP

Solution coverage: 0.824, solution consistency: 0.933. Cases in bold are uniquely covered by the respective path. The case highlighted with grey is a dyad of unsuccessful PEC formation.

The solution formula consists of three paths. The first path combines a restrictive electoral system with the absence of new organizations, no divisive preferential treatment by the kin-state government and a lack of differences concerning strategy. The path covers about one third of the cases, however, a dyad of failed cooperation is also covered. The second path has a similar coverage (both raw and unique), but is fully consistent. Here the driving condition is the experience of a shock, despite the non-restrictive nature of the electoral system, while none of the parties is new, they do not differ on programmatic goals, and there is no divisive preferential treatment by the kin-state. Finally, the last path describes the cooperation of parties which are not new, differ concerning programmatic goals but not regarding their relationship with the kin-state, and cooperation is induced by the joint presence of a restrictive electoral system and a shock. The message to be kept in mind from the last solution term is that cooperation is also possible between parties that are rather

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assumptions, as some of them might be incoherent or implausible. More precisely, one should check whether the simplifying assumptions contradict a statement of necessity, whether they do not run against formal logic or common sense. Fortunately, no such problems arise in the case of our intermediate solution term. The statements of necessity discussed earlier are observed, and the simplifying assumption is perfectly plausible empirically, even if it covers no real cases in our dataset.

<sup>304</sup> Raw coverage scores indicate the number of cases that the path is able to explain.

<sup>305</sup> Unique coverage scores show the number of cases that only that specific path is able to explain.

<sup>306</sup> Consistency scores express the proportion of the cases covered by the path which display the appropriate outcome.

different concerning their goals, if the electoral environment is perceived as extremely unfavorable (the electoral system is restrictive AND at least some of the parties experienced a shock).

Due to the presence of the necessary conditions  $k$  and  $n$  in all three terms, the intermediate solution can be rewritten in a simpler way:

$$nk(Eg + eSp + ESP) \rightarrow O$$

Based on this format of the solution formula we can summarize the conditions leading to cooperation. The solution is in line with our earlier observation that the absence of new organizations and of divisive preferential treatment by the kin-state are necessary (or almost necessary) conditions for electoral cooperation. Beside this, the solution highlights the role of a restrictive electoral system and of external shocks suffered by the parties, and the positive impact of the lack of ideological and strategic differences on cooperation is also borne out. A restrictive electoral system or an external shock is present in each term, and when the parties differ along their programmatic goals, both of the latter conditions must be present in order to bring about cooperation.

One should note that the dyads cluster into the various paths of the intermediate solution largely according to the election, and to a certain extent also according to the country to which they belong. Only the first path covers cases from all three countries, however, the dyad from Serbia is an inconsistent one (I will return to this later). The dyad from Romania is the successful cooperation of RMDSZ and EMNT (Tőkés) at the 2009 elections for the European Parliament, which did not imply any stakes concerning the stance of the parties towards governmental participation. Regarding Slovakia, the first path covers all the dyads of successful cooperation from 1998 (the party merger), while for 1992 and 1994 only those party dyads belong here, which did not differ concerning their attitude on governmental participation (involving EPM and MKDM). All these instances of cooperation occurred

between parties that did not differ concerning their strategy, or at elections at which there were no governmental stakes.

The third path covers only the dyads of the 1994 Slovak election. In this case it was a rather restrictive electoral system and the shock suffered by MPP, which lost representation at the previous elections, which induced the party to cooperate with the other two parties, despite the differences between them concerning both party goals and strategy. This path refers to cooperation induced by the joint effect of the electoral system and a shock, despite considerable differences between the parties.<sup>307</sup>

Finally, the cases covered by the second path come exclusively from Serbia, from the 2007-2008 period. While the electoral threshold has been eliminated in 2007 for the parties of national minorities, rendering the electoral environment non-restrictive, this period came after the loss of representation in the national parliament in 2003. Although VMSZ succeeded to get back into parliament in 2007, it obtained a very weak result, which was brought about mainly by the intensification of the “predating” behavior (Zuber, 2012) of mainstream and regionalist parties within the ethnic Hungarian electorate, as discussed in the case study in Chapter 7. VMDK and VMDP formed a PEC in 2007, but missed out the implicit threshold of 0.4% by a few hundred votes. Thus, it is reasonable to state that basically all Hungarian ethnic parties were recovering from a shock in this period. Also, this was the period when the differences between the parties regarding autonomy were the lowest, the rapprochement culminating with the issue of a joint document on autonomy in 2008. Thus, the essence of this path is a post-shock situation and the lack of differences concerning goals.

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<sup>307</sup> It is a joint effect because the electoral system did not change from 1992, but the distribution of the votes between the parties in 1992 was such that it became clear that another failure to cooperate can lead to a loss of representation. In 1990 the coalition of EPM and MKDM obtained 8.66%, and in 1992 7.42%, while the 2.29% of MPP became wasted votes, as the party failed to get represented. After this result the danger of losing representation completely became quite real, as the threshold for coalitions formed of two or three parties was 7%.

## Explaining the absence of the outcome – failed PEC formation

For the absence of electoral cooperation once again only the intermediate solution formula is discussed, the conservative and the parsimonious solutions are reported in Appendix 3. The directional expectations assumed for the intermediate solution are consistent with the ones employed in the case of the presence of the outcome: no cooperation should be induced by a non-restrictive electoral system, the absence of a shock, the presence of new organizations, divisive preferential treatment by the kin-state, and by the presence of significant differences between the parties of the dyad concerning strategy and programmatic goals.<sup>308</sup>

**Table 10.2. The intermediate solution for the absence of the outcome**

solution	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency	Cases covered
K*G	0.206	0.029	1	ro2012parl_RMDSZ_MPP, ro2012parl_RMDSZ_EMNP, srb1996f_VMDK_VMSZ, srb1997n_VMSZ_VMDP, srb2012_VMSZ_MRM, <b>srb2012_VMDP_VMDK</b> , srb2012_VMDP_MPSZ
K*P	0.147	0.029	1	sk2010_MKP_Híd, <b>sk2012_MKP_Híd</b> , srb2012_VMSZ_VMDK, srb2012_VMSZ_MPSZ, srb2012_VMSZ_MRM
N*K	0.265	0.029	1	ro2012parl_RMDSZ_EMNP, sk2010_MKP_Híd, srb1996f_VMDK_VMSZ, srb1997n_VMDK_VMSZ, srb1997n_VMSZ_VMDP, srb2012_VMSZ_MPSZ, srb2012_VMSZ_MRM, srb2012_VMDP_MPSZ, <b>srb2012_VMDP_MRM</b>
e*s	0.265	0.059	0.9	<b>ro2009pres_RMDSZ_MPP</b> , <b>ro2009pres_RMDSZ_EMNT</b> , <b>ro2009pres_EMNT_MPP</b> , ro2012parl_RMDSZ_MPP, ro2012parl_RMDSZ_EMNP, ro2012parl_MPP_EMNP, srb1996f_VMDK_VMSZ, srb1997n_VMDK_VMSZ, srb2012_VMSZ_MPSZ, srb2012_VMSZ_MRM
s*N	0.294	0.059	1	<b>ro2007ep_RMDSZ_EMNT</b> , <b>ro2009ep_EMNT_MPP</b> , ro2012parl_RMDSZ_EMNP, ro2012parl_MPP_EMNP, sk2010_MKP_Híd, srb1996f_VMDK_VMSZ, srb1997n_VMDK_VMSZ, srb2012_VMSZ_MPSZ, srb2012_VMSZ_MRM, srb2012_MPSZ_MRM
s*G	0.265	0.118	1	ro2012parl_RMDSZ_MPP,

<sup>308</sup> The intermediate solution has been obtained by including 28 simplifying assumptions into the minimization process (see Appendix 3). As no necessary conditions for the absence of the outcome have been identified, there is no need to worry about contradicting statements of necessity. One more aspect has to be checked, namely whether the same simplifying assumptions have been included when obtaining the intermediate solution for the presence and for the absence of the outcome or not, as such a situation would mean that contradictory simplifying assumptions have been made (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012: 198-211). The comparison shows that the single simplifying assumption used for the minimization process concerning the presence of the outcome (ESnkgP) has not been used for the absence of the outcome.

				ro2012parl_RMDSZ_EMNP, <b>sk1992_EPM_MPP</b> , <b>sk1992_MKDM_MPP</b> , srb1996f_VMDK_VMSZ, <b>srb2003n_VMSZ_VMDP</b> , <b>srb2003n_VMDK_VMDP</b> , srb2012_VMSZ_MRM, srb2012_MPSZ_MRM
e*P	0.235	0.147	1	<b>srb2004V_VMSZ_VMDK</b> , <b>srb2004V_VMSZ_VMDP</b> , <b>srb2007_VMSZ_VMDK</b> , <b>srb2007_VMSZ_VMDP</b> , srb2012_VMSZ_VMDK, <b>srb2012_VMSZ_VMDP</b> , srb2012_VMSZ_MPSZ, srb2012_VMSZ_MRM
N*G	0.265	0.088	1	<b>ro2008parl_RMDSZ_MPP</b> , ro2012parl_RMDSZ_EMNP, srb1996f_VMDK_VMSZ, srb1997n_VMSZ_VMDP, <b>srb1997n_VMDK_VMDP</b> , srb2012_VMSZ_MRM, <b>srb2012_VMDK_MRM</b> , srb2012_VMDP_MPSZ, srb2012_MPSZ_MRM

Solution coverage: 0.912, solution consistency: 0.969. Cases with bold are uniquely covered by the respective path. The case highlighted with grey is a dyad of successful PEC formation.

The intermediate solution can be restated as follows:

$$K(G+P+N)+s(e+N+G)+eP+NG \rightarrow o$$

The first three solution terms show that divisive preferential treatment by the kin-state prevents cooperation in combination with either a difference between the parties regarding their programmatic goals, or their strategy (government), or if one of them is a new organization. The absence of shocks also emerges as part of three different paths. First, it appears together with a non-restrictive electoral system, second, together with the presence of a new organization, and third, in combination with differences concerning strategy. The seventh term of the solution combines a non-restrictive electoral system with party dyads differing on their programmatic goals, while the final one refers to dyads composed of parties that differ along their strategy, and one of them is a new organization.

Of the eight alternative paths of the intermediate solution formula, the path eP (non-restrictive electoral system and significant programmatic differences) has the highest unique coverage value. The higher value comes in part from the fact that this term covers exclusively dyads from Serbia, the country where the number of parties has been the highest. Under this solution term PECs do not form because the parties differ concerning their programmatic goals and the electoral system does not compel them to cooperate. Under the term with the

second highest unique coverage value (sG) the reason for failure are strategic differences, with no shock to counterbalance this, and it covers dyads from all three analyzed countries, though uniquely only cases from Serbia and Slovakia. The path with the third unique coverage value combines the presence of a new organization with strategic differences (NG). The cases covered by this path are also predominantly from Serbia, but there is also one case from Romania. This path refers to typical post-split situations, and the presence of the condition G in the term can be interpreted here as signaling that most splits occurred due to differences concerning the strategy to be followed.

The solution term es (non-restrictive electoral system and no shock) mostly covers cases in which one of the parties of the dyads can be sure of obtaining representation even without cooperating. The exception is the dyad of MPP and EMNP at the 2012 Romanian parliamentary elections, but this dyad can be explained by other paths too, including sN, which contains the presence of a new organization (this was the first national election for EMNP). Also, the path only covers two unsuccessful dyads uniquely, and it also covers a successful case of PEC formation, namely the cooperation of RMDSZ and EMNT at the 2009 presidential elections (see below). The two other dyads of this election are also covered by this term. One of these refers to the refusal of MPP to do the same as EMNT, while the other, involving MPP and EMNT is not really meaningful, as neither of the organizations considered fielding a candidate of its own.

The three remaining paths, which consist of the combination of a divisive interference by the kin-state and the presence of programmatic differences (KP), strategic differences (KP), or a new organization (NK), only cover uniquely one case of failed cooperation each. Note that each of the three terms covers dyads from two countries (though there is no case uniquely covered from Romania), proving that the impact of kin-state preferences can be felt in all studied minority communities. These combinations of conditions are important because

they confirm not only the importance of the behavior of the kin-state, but also the fact that the selective support of the Hungarian government was closely linked to other differences between the minority parties. As I discussed in Chapters 5-8, the ties to the government and the parties of Hungary overlapped to a great extent with the strategic and sometimes also with the programmatic differences between the minority parties, as the more radical minority parties maintained closer ties with the right-wing parties of Hungary, while no analogous links were characteristic between the moderates and the Hungarian left (with some exceptions). The combination NK reflects the fact that the parties of Hungary also played a role in the emergence of some of the new minority parties, although interestingly the single case uniquely covered by this solution term was a slightly different situation. This dyad is formed of VMDP and MRM, and in this case it was not the party governing in Hungary by the time of the election (Fidesz) that has facilitated the split, but the other way round, the splinter group left Fidesz's partner and soon became a partner of Jobbik.

Before proceeding to the discussion of the results, a brief look is needed to the contradictory truth table rows. I will start with the not fully consistent truth table rows included in the minimization process.

The failed dyad that was included into the minimization for successful PEC formation refers to VMSZ and VMDK at the 2003 Serbian parliamentary elections, and is covered by the combination of conditions EsnkgP. In this combination the programmatic differences should prevent cooperation, while the restrictive electoral system should encourage it. This election eventually led to the loss of representation of the Hungarian parties, due to the introduction of a 5% threshold at the national level. The case was coded as a failed dyad because VMDK responded to the restrictive electoral system with a boycott, instead of seeking cooperation with its intra-ethnic rivals. The successful case covered by this truth

table row are from the 1998 Slovak election, when the very restrictive electoral system compelled the parties to cooperate despite their programmatic differences.

The successful dyad included into the minimization of unsuccessful PEC formation has already been briefly discussed: it refers to the support provided by EMNT to the presidential candidate of RMDSZ at the 2009 presidential elections, and it is covered by the combination of conditions *esnkgp*. No strong expectations can be formulated based on this combination, as there are neither significant differences between the parties, nor strong factors that would compel them to cooperate. It should be mentioned, however, that the successful dyad of cooperation only lasted for the first round of the presidential elections, in the second round RMDSZ and EMNT did not support the same candidate. Thus, this was an instance of superficial and fragile cooperation, which consisted only of a statement of support, but did not involve any undertakings by EMNT in the campaign. The unsuccessful dyads of this row are the other two dyads from the same election. Of these, the combination *EMNT\_MPP* is not quite meaningful, as none of these organizations considered fielding a candidate of its own, while the *RMDSZ\_MPP* dyad failed because the parties differed about the mainstream party candidate that should be supported in the second round, but also because in the aftermath of the EP elections (where RMDSZ and EMNT cooperated, but MPP not), MPP was interested in maintaining an image of the least compromising opponent of RMDSZ, in order to differentiate itself from EMNT.

Based on these two contradictory rows one can conclude that in both deviant cases the outcome that materialized was not exactly the opposite of the outcome that we tried to explain, but some less clear-cut situation. Turning now to the rows that have been excluded altogether from the minimization process, the first of these (*ESNkgp*) refers to parties that face a restrictive electoral system and at least one of them experienced a shock, but otherwise the only difference between the parties is that one of them is new. In this combination the

presence of a new organization should work against cooperation, while the electoral system and the shock should facilitate it. The two covered dyads look rather different at first sight: The successful one is the cooperation of two small Hungarian parties in Serbia at the 2012 parliamentary elections as part of a broader multi-ethnic coalition, while the failed one is the non-cooperation of RMDSZ and MPP at the 2009 Romanian EP elections. The successful dyad is not in line with the theoretical expectations because this is the only case when a party that was considered new entered a PEC, spoiling the perfect consistency necessity score of the condition  $n$  for the occurrence of electoral cooperation. However, as already mentioned, this party (MPSZ) was new only in what concerns the national level of politics, but has actually been operating for a few years as a local citizens' group. The other dyad, the failed one, is contradicting the expectations primarily because MPP came after a shock (failing to enter parliament in 2008), and the electoral system was restrictive. While neither programmatic nor strategic differences were significant between the parties in this dyad, note that the absence of strategic differences stems in fact from the type of the election. In this case one could argue that it was only MPP that could lose from refusing cooperation, as the other two organizations (RMDSZ and EMNT) have reached an agreement, which basically meant that the main leader of RMDSZ's opposition (László Tőkés) was included on the RMDSZ ticket, so the representation of RMDSZ was no longer endangered. MPP eventually did not run in this election, and their reluctance to participate in the PEC was also motivated by conflicts within the opposition of RMDSZ (between MPP and EMNT), as discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5. The stakes for MPP in this situation could have been to secure the position of the least compromising opponent of RMDSZ and to try to cast EMNT as reverting to the position of RMDSZ by accepting a place on the ticket of the latter.

The other contradictory truth table row (ESnkGp) covers parties that differ along their strategy in a restrictive electoral and post-shock setting. In this setting, strategic differences

are the main condition that should prevent cooperation, consequently it is more challenging to explain the failed dyad than the successful one. Interestingly, both dyads consist of the same parties (VMDK and VMDP in Serbia), but at different elections. At the 2004 elections for the Vojvodina Assembly the parties competed against each-other, while at the 2008 parliamentary elections they cooperated. However, the two cases differ not only in the type of the election, but also in the fact that in 2004 the other two possible dyads (VMSZ with these two parties) were also unsuccessful, while in 2008 the other two dyads were also successful, as a full-fledged PEC has been formed. I have also argued in Chapter 7 that while VMDP followed a rather consistent opposition strategy since its formation, in the case of VMDK it was the opportunistic behavior at the municipal level that warranted the coding of the dyad as differing on strategy. In 2004 both parties were already in a state of decline, and did not field lists for the proportional component of the electoral system, only some candidates in single-member districts. VMDK ran in 4 districts, VMDP in 5, but actually there was only one district where both parties ran. Consequently, the contradictory nature of this row is similar to that of the inconsistent rows included into the minimization process: it is best explained by a situation which cannot be described as intentional cooperation, but neither as outright competition.

## **Discussion**

The final chapter of the thesis approached the phenomenon of multi-party politics within national minority communities from the perspective of cooperation rather than competition, seeking to examine the conditions under which the parties claiming to stand for the same minority will reach agreements to contest elections together, in pre-electoral alliances. It adopted a novel methodological approach to this topic, making use of the crisp set QCA method, which is suitable to address the impact of not only single conditions, but of combinations of conditions (*conjunctural causation*), and is appropriate for situations in

which multiple different combinations of explanatory conditions can be expected to lead to the same outcome (*equifinality*).

The literature predicts that PECs are more likely to form if the electoral system rewards cooperation and punishes failure to coordinate, and highlights the importance of external shocks suffered by the parties and of the presence of new organizations that contest an election for the first time. Another important proposition is that parties that are close to each-other ideologically are more likely to form PECs. While in the case of the electoral system, previous external shocks and the presence of new organizations there is little specific to parties standing for national minorities, describing the differences between the parties posed a more serious challenge. As the classical measures of ideological distance are of little help when comparing parties of national minorities, a different approach has been adopted here. The programmatic differences between the parties were coded by comparing the conceptions of the parties concerning the social and political organization of the community (which includes, but cannot be reduced to the issue of autonomy), while strategic differences were captured by their attitude towards cooperation with the mainstream parties of the system and their willingness to participate in governing coalitions (as opposed to pursuing an opposition or tribune strategy). One of the most important hypotheses, derived from the argument presented in Chapter 3, was that PECs are not likely to form if the potential partners differ concerning their strategy, very important for ethnic parties: whether to push for a restructuring of state power and for minority rights from opposition, with the help of the international community and the kin-state, while keeping the level of participation in the political institutions of the host-state at a minimum level, or to assume a governmental position, which beside (or perhaps instead of) policy outputs enables the extraction of state resources, which can be redistributed among group members through clientelistic networks.

Another important condition included into the analysis was the role played by the government of the kin-state, the differential relationship it maintains with the various parties representing the minority communities. This inclusion of this condition followed from the discussion about the dual nature of the Hungarian minorities as national minorities and Hungary's external diasporas, and the ensuing dilemma for their political elites, addressed in Chapters 1 and 4. The hypothesis was that if the kin-state government treats one or more parties in a preferential manner to the expense of other parties, the chances of electoral cooperation will plummet.

The results of the QCA analysis confirmed the general predictions derived from the PEC literature. The impact of the electoral system and of the shocks experienced by the parties has been found important for marginal PECs formed by parties of national minorities too. The impact of new organizations was also confirmed, moreover, the absence of new competitors came very close to being a necessary condition for cooperation. This shows that the factors regarded as important for PEC formation in general are also important in the case of minority parties. More important for the specific expectations derived for parties of minorities as a special type of party, the two conditions capturing the differences in goals and strategy between the parties also proved to be relevant. These conditions appeared in two of the three solution terms for successful cooperation as absent, and as present in five of the eight paths for the absence of cooperation. However, one path also indicated that cooperation between parties that are distant according to their goals is also possible (moreover, the complex solution shows that the parties covered by this path actually also differed on strategy, but this was simplified during the minimization process), as an electoral environment perceived as very restrictive may sometimes override the differences between the parties.

Concerning the relative importance of goals and strategy, it is difficult to make a final assessment. No solution term emerged that would contain the two conditions with opposite values (differences in strategy but not in programmatic goals (Gp), or the other way round (gP)). The unique coverage of the solution terms for successful cooperation in which the parties do not differ on strategy is similar to that of the solution terms in which the parties do not differ on their goals (0.353 for both), but a similar comparison of the solution terms for failed cooperation that contain the opposite of these conditions yields a somewhat higher empirical relevance for the presence of differences concerning strategy (G, 0.265) than for differences concerning programmatic goals (P, 0.206).<sup>309</sup>

From the perspective of our argument from Chapter 3, more interesting than the overall coverage scores is an analysis of the failed cases according to whether they conform to the pattern of a stronger moderate party unwilling to cooperate with smaller radical parties in order not to decrease its chances of being invited to government (that is, only the dyads including the strongest moderate party uniquely covered by the solution terms containing strategic differences or programmatic differences are considered). In this respect, the solution terms including programmatic differences (P) turn out to be somewhat more important empirically. These terms uniquely cover the relevant dyads from four elections (Slovakia 2012, Serbia 2004, 2007 and 2012), while the terms with strategic differences (G) only from three elections (Romania 2008, Serbia 1997 and 2003; the 1992 Slovak elections are also covered, but here the stronger and more radical parties refused cooperation with a smaller participationist party).

If we shift the unit of analysis from the party dyad to the election, five cases of full-fledged electoral cooperation can be identified, when all relevant parties cooperated, not only some of them (Slovakia 1994 and 1998, Serbia 2008 presidential and parliamentary, and the

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<sup>309</sup> This refers not to the sum of the unique coverage scores of the solution terms that contain the condition, but to the unique coverage of the expressions  $G(K+s+N)$ , respectively  $P(K+e)$ .

2009 Romanian elections for the European Parliament). Two of these (Romania 2009 and the Serbian presidential elections) are actually low-stake elections from the perspective of the minority and do not imply participation in power. Thus, we can conclude about the relative importance of strategic and programmatic differences that strategic differences indeed matter, though the analysis did not confirm that they are more important than programmatic differences. Returning to the argument put forward in Chapter 3 about the reluctance of the more moderate parties to ally themselves with their more radical rivals at the elections in order not to reduce their chances for participation in power, one can conclude that of the five cases of full-fledged cooperation, only one is in contradiction with this argument. Apart from the two low stake elections mentioned above, at the 1994 elections from Slovakia the more radical partners were stronger, while in 1998 already all parties agreed to join the government in case of a favorable electoral result. The only election which contradicts the argument is the 2008 Serbian parliamentary election, however, in this case the willingness of VMSZ to cooperate may be explained by other factors, as leadership change and repeated previous electoral shocks.

Furthermore, the analysis unequivocally highlighted the importance of the involvement of the government of the kin-state. The absence of divisive preferential treatment by the kin-state government emerged as a necessary condition for PEC formation, and divisive preferential treatment by the kin-state appeared in three of the eight paths leading to failed cooperation. Even if the sum of the unique coverage scores of the latter three paths amounts to less than 10%, one should keep in mind that the number of cases that are relevant from this perspective is limited, as beside the aid received by VMSZ from the center-left Hungarian government in the mid-1990s, this kind of divisive preferential treatment became really characteristic only after the return of Fidesz to power in 2010. The elections

that took place after 2010 clearly indicate that the involvement of the Hungarian government is a very important factor in the internal political life of the minority communities.

Finally, it should be noted that none of the six explanatory conditions employed in the QCA turned out to be logically redundant, as all of them appear in at least one solution term for both the presence and the absence of electoral cooperation. However, I cannot claim having taken into consideration all relevant factors that may facilitate or impede intra-ethnic electoral cooperation. Based on the interviews I conducted (discussed in Chapters 5-7) and secondary literature, one can highlight at least two additional relevant factors that influenced the electoral strategies of the Hungarian minority parties. The first is leadership change, which played an important role at both 2008 elections in Serbia: the fact that a new president was elected in VMSZ made an agreement with the other parties easier. The second factor is the general inter-ethnic context. Two of the five full-fledged instances of cooperation with the election as the unit of analysis (Slovakia 1994 and 1998) occurred in the context of the pervasive majority nationalism of the Mečiar-era, while in the other two countries only a single Hungarian organization existed during the most heated period of majority nationalism. The effect of the strength of majority nationalism could be regarded as analogous to the proposition of the general literature on PECs that cooperation is facilitated by the threat of a potential ideologically distant government formed by the opposition.

## Conclusions

The thesis addressed the internal political dynamics of national minority communities, that is, the phenomena of intra-ethnic political fragmentation, competition and cooperation, through an analysis of the political parties of the Hungarian minorities of Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. It aimed to contribute to the dismantling of the obviously oversimplifying approach which treats ethnic or national minorities as unitary actors or compact entities, and to complement the dominant inter-ethnic perspective characteristic of ethnopolitical studies. The main starting point for this was the idea of combining the triadic nexus of nationalisms described by Brubaker (1996) with the toolkit of party politics research, as the internal political dynamics of national minorities cannot be understood fully if the focus is restricted to the party system of the states in which they live; the politics from the kin-state also exert a great deal of influence on such groups, so an analysis of their parties must consider both of these political fields.

The dissertation has two main parts, the first being dedicated to conceptual and theoretical issues, and the second to empirical analyses about the three communities. The main goal of the first part (especially the first two chapters) was to review and refine the relevant literature on ethnic groups and minorities, as well as of political parties that put forward ethnicity-related appeals. Beyond delineating the conceptual apparatus of the thesis, another intended contribution of the introductory chapters was to provide a synthesis about several bodies of literature that are insufficiently connected despite dealing with related phenomena, and to blend their central concepts and insights into a single framework of analysis, which can be deployed also beyond the cases studied here.

In the first chapter I argued that the adoption of a dual perspective for the studied groups is better suited for the understanding of the internal political divisions within the minorities, in line with the framework of Brubaker's triadic nexus. On one hand, the

Hungarian minorities can be considered *national minorities*, as they display high levels of social and political organization, and put forward ethnopolitical claims of varying intensity within or against the host-states in which they reside, and in this effort they can rely on varying levels of support from their kin-state. These claims are grounded in nationalism and also involve demands for various forms of autonomy or self-government. The elites of most Hungarian parties agree that their community should be a self-standing political subject. On the other hand, however, these communities are also the *external minorities* of Hungary, and the unprecedentedly active stance of the latter (which, especially in the past few years, also involved considerable interference into the minorities' internal affairs), increasingly rendered the application of the concept of *diaspora* appropriate too, with some modifications, as recently proposed by various authors, most importantly Waterbury (2010) and Salat (2011). Contrasting the two perspectives provides a useful framework for grasping one of the most important internal dilemmas of these communities, namely the trade-offs between orientation towards two distinct political communities, that of the host-state, respectively the kin-state, a dilemma which is also one of the main sources of the internal political divisions of the minorities.

In the second chapter I analyzed the main concepts of the scholarship about *ethnic* parties and (*ethno*)*regionalist* parties, two literatures that are dealing with very similar phenomena, but are only weakly integrated, most importantly because of their different scholarly traditions and geographic focus. Following the recent refinements to the theory of ethnic outbidding proposed by Coakley (2008) and Zuber (2013), I argued that in the Central and Eastern European context, ethnoregionalist appeals may be considered another alternative strategy for minority parties beside the ones familiar from the ethnic parties literature (Horowitz, 1985; Chandra, 2004, 2011): exclusivist ethnic appeals on one hand, and

multi-ethnic appeals aiming to downplay the salience of the ethnic cleavage, on the other hand.

Another important idea derived from the contrast of the two literatures was the relative importance of the different types of party-voter linkages. While the *(ethno)regionalist* perspective puts more emphasis on the programmatic goals of the parties, which are grounded in nationalism and involve the restructuring of the state (e.g. De Winter, 1998; Gómez-Reino Cachafeiro *et al.*, 2006; Dandoy, 2010) the universe of *ethnic* parties appears as a most likely setting for clientelistic linkages (Fearon, 1999; Gunther & Diamond, 2001b, 2003; Kitschelt, 2000, 2001; Chandra, 2004). I have argued for the incorporation of both aspects into the analysis of party competition, and following the framework of Kitschelt (2000 2001), I proceeded to characterize the parties of the Hungarian minorities according to the relative weight of the various linkage types for their relative electoral success in the empirical part of the thesis.

The third chapter reviewed and assessed the existing theories of intra-ethnic competition, starting from the classic model of ethnic outbidding (Horowitz, 1985; Rabushka & Shepsle, 1972) and its critics (Coakley, 2008; Mitchell *et al.*, 2009; Zuber, 2013). I argued for the need to disentangle the predictions of the classic model, as the theory is predicting both that new parties will *form* on a more radical platform and that more radical parties will be *more successful*. I have presented evidence from the literature that outbidding is not the only possible strategy of newcomer challenger parties, and that even if the challengers puts forward more radical appeals, they do not always become more successful than the more moderate actors they challenge. In the empirical part of the thesis I have assessed each new Hungarian minority party according to this framework too, and I have shown that instances of successful outbidding represented rather the exception than the rule.

This finding obviously calls for an explanation. I have put forward an argument for the reduced success of outbidders which builds both on the theory of alternative linkage types and on the nature of ethnopolitical inclusion models prevalent in the region. Further developing the arguments of Kiss and Székely (2014), I have proposed that the key to the higher success of the more moderate minority parties is the asymmetry between the moderates and radicals in what concerns their relative access to resources and the differences in their clientelistic capacities that follow from this.

According to this argument, extracting resources from the state should be easier than obtaining significant ethnopolitical concessions related to the ideal of self-government, to the restructuring of the state, as pointed out by studies about ethnic mobilization (Rothchild, 1997; Rudolph & Thompson, 1989; Rudolph, 2006). This is especially true in the absence of institutional guarantees for participation in power. As a consequence, the more moderate minority elites will increasingly shift towards a clientelistic type of accountability, their main legitimizing principle being their ability to deliver resources to their ethnic constituency. However, participation in power also requires toning down their ethnopolitical claims and refraining from certain demands, most importantly those implying various forms of autonomy or self-government for the minority. This participatory strategy pays off for the more moderate minority elites because their more radical intra-ethnic rivals are unable to counterbalance this relying only on their own resources and on the kin-state. In the empirical part of the thesis I provided evidence that the magnitude of the resources extractable from the kin-state is significantly lower than the resources accessible through participation in power in the host-state, although this has varied in time and across the countries.

Because participation in power is conditional upon toning down ethnopolitical demands, the more moderate minority elites will aim to minimize the winning ethnic coalition not only in order to maximize the share of resources that can be obtained by their

own party (Fearon, 1999; Laitin & Van Der Veen, 2012), but also because in such a setting the more radical elites become unwanted ballast when it comes to negotiations with the mainstream parties. This represents a modification (or even a reversal) of the argument of Tsebelis (1990) about the nested games played by leaders of ethnic segments in a power-sharing setting. While Tsebelis wrote that the behavior of the elites at the center is constrained by the challenges they face within their own segment (and they can use this to negotiate more concessions at the center), in my argument it is the central arena which has primary importance, and the prospects of intra-ethnic electoral cooperation are made conditional on the consequences of such a strategy on the prospects of participation in power.

I would like to emphasize that this argument should not be read as a rejection of alternative arguments about the emergence of inter-ethnic coalitions in Central and Eastern Europe. Previous studies have proposed that inter-ethnic cooperation in the region was motivated by the increased salience of another (usually the economic) cleavage relative to the ethnic one (Jenne, 2007), or that the reformist and Western-oriented majority elites included the minority parties into government in order to bring about democratic change, whether from domestic considerations or international pressure (Csergő, 2007; Skovgaard, 2009, 2011). This thesis does not claim to challenge these arguments, neither does it address the debate about the impact of international conditionality on the development of inter-ethnic affairs (e.g. Kelley, 2004; Sasse, 2005a; Rechel, 2009b). It only aims to provide a complementary perspective to these accounts, which also takes into consideration the less fortunate consequences (whether intended or not) of this model of minority incorporation prevalent in the region, which can be described as a mixed model combining elements of informal power-sharing with aspects of less celebrated ethnopolitical models, such as cooptation and control (Lustick, 1979; Rothchild, 1997; Medianu, 2002).

The essence of this type of incorporation is that although the titular majority tolerates the access of minority elites to state resources, at the same time it treats the transformation of the nation-state into a multinational state as a taboo, being reluctant to make any concessions in this respect. Access to power and resources is conditional on moderation, and the more moderate minority elites and the majority elites become interested in the same outcome: keeping the minority coalition minimal. The majority ensures this way that the minority will not radicalize, while the integrationist minority elites reinforce their position within their own segment through the higher clientelistic potential secured through access to state resources. Though the avoidance of radicalization undoubtedly is a desirable outcome, and access to state resources is very important for the minorities, this does not necessarily lead to an improvement of the quality of the minority rights regimes and does not bring them closer to self-government, and it may reduce the overall democratic record of the system. Moreover, what can be considered “moderate” or “radical” depends to a great extent on the context and on the actions of the other political parties, both mainstream and minority. The study also argued that compared to other cases of ethnoculturally divided societies, the analyzed minorities have not voiced such claims that could be considered genuinely radical in light of the extant typologies (e.g. irredentism, secessionism).

The second part of the thesis offered a monographic account about the political dynamics of the Hungarian minorities of Romania, Serbia and Slovakia, and provided an empirical test for the outlined arguments. Chapters 5-8 traced the development of the party systems and analyzed the main divisions at the elite level (the supply side of the electoral market), according to the nature of the parties’ appeals, goals, strategies towards the host- and kin-state actors, as well as the relative importance of the different types of party-voter linkages. The analysis has shown that the party systems of the minorities are not structured in

similar manner as the party systems of nation-states. No significant cleavage that would cut across the ethnic one exists, as, for instance in some Western European cases (e.g. Catalonia, Basque Country), and classical ideologies have mattered only to a limited extent in the first phase of multi-party politics in Slovakia. As a consequence, competition revolves almost exclusively around ethnopolitical topics, and the parties can be ordered on a continuum according to how radical claims they put forward, what strategies they adopt and how they relate to actors from both the host- and the kin-state.

However, the policy space in which almost all minority parties can be positioned is relatively narrow (in terms of the typologies of ethnopolitical demands discussed in Chapter 4, ranging from proactive protectionist goals to territorial autonomy). This pushes the parties towards valence competition, they fight to picture themselves as the most competent defenders of minority interests, while basically agreeing on most programmatic goals. The issue of autonomy plays a central role in Romania and Serbia, and the dynamics of the minority party system comes close to pure valence competition in these countries. The situation in Slovakia is somewhat different. The programmatic differences between the Hungarian parties were somewhat more significant here in the first phase of multi-party politics too (1990-1998), but since the emergence in 2009 of the multi-ethnic and non-autonomist Most-Híd, the division is even deeper. Still, in some concrete ethnopolitical issues that do not involve autonomy (e.g. language rights), the parties still compete according to a valence logic.

Chapter 9 analyzed the voting behavior of the Hungarian electorates of the three countries, providing thus a complementary picture to the one presented in chapters 5-8 by assessing the divisions on the demand side of the electoral market. The analysis has shown that in terms of socio-demographic characteristics there is rather little difference between the electorates of the rival Hungarian parties. Still, the impact of the settlement patterns of the

minorities stands out (e.g. region and the proportion of Hungarians in the locality in Romania, type of housing in Slovakia), and the analysis of election results showed the same. Although the effect could not be tested on survey data in Serbia, the result of election results revealed a different pattern there, as the relative support of the more moderate Hungarian party is higher in the areas with higher concentration of Hungarian population, while the more radical parties remained stronger in municipalities where the Hungarians are clearly a minority. This specific feature of Vojvodina could be explained by path-dependent factors, most importantly the geographical patterns along which the original political organization of the minority has split and the fact that the more moderate party neglected the areas with lower concentrations of Hungarian at several elections, which basically amounted to conceding some municipalities to the more radical intra-ethnic rivals (but also to the mainstream and regionalist parties).

While the socio-demographic variables had little explanatory power, the addition of attitudinal items improved the regression models. Most importantly, the variables capturing the perceptions of the electorate about both party goals (autonomy) and strategy (participation in power, representation in parliament) displayed significant effects in differentiating between the parties. Unfortunately, appropriate data for this was only available for Romania, but based on the secondary literature one can conclude that attitudinal and issue-related differences exist also between the electorates of the Hungarian parties from Slovakia. The analysis also provided evidence that the regional differences are at least partly the consequence of a differential structure of attitudes and issue salience in the compact Hungarian areas and the territories where Hungarians live in a minority.

The phenomenon that more radical ethnic parties have a higher support in regions that have a compact minority population has also been noticed by previous scholarly work. Some authors simply explained this by the fact that in compact minority areas competition does not

endanger representation (Bochsler, 2007, 2012; Stroschein, 2011). This is, however, not a satisfactory explanation, as if only this would be the case, there would be no connection between the radicalism of the appeals and the ethnic composition of the areas where the party is more successful. A more appropriate explanation is that more radical messages have a stronger impact in areas where the minority forms a compact majority (Bochsler & Szócsik, 2013b; Szócsik, 2012), while in areas where the Hungarians are in a clear minority situation radicalism is rejected because it is perceived as creating tensions among the ethnic groups and thereby putting the members of the minority to risk. The results for Romania and Slovakia are in line with these observations, moreover, this thesis goes beyond the findings of previous research as it brings evidence from survey data that the phenomenon is caused at least partly by a differential distribution of voter attitudes as a function of territorial settlement patterns. From this perspective the situation from Serbia, which shows that territorial concentration is not the only factor that matters when it comes to explaining the success of outbidding, would deserve a deeper analysis based on survey data, however, it is precisely this country for which data availability is the poorest.

This differential distribution of ethno-political attitudes depending on the concentration of the minority creates a dilemma for the minority elites, as radicalism in areas sparsely populated by minorities may backfire and allow mainstream parties to collect the votes of the minority. This is reflected by the inverse relationship between the share of the minority population and the degree of voting across the ethnic divide, which holds in all three countries. In this sense a multi-ethnic party may play the role of a buffer, keeping minority members within the ethnic sphere and preventing them from voting across the ethnic divide, as the case of the multi-ethnic Most-Híd demonstrates.

Differences in attitudes towards the kin-state and status according to dual citizenship are also present at the electoral level. First, dual citizens are somewhat overrepresented

among the voters of the minority parties that are closest to Fidesz. Second, although voter preferences are heavily skewed towards Fidesz within all three communities and within the electorates of the majority of the Hungarian minority parties (with two important exceptions), the proportion of Fidesz voters is the highest precisely among the electorates of Fidesz' partner parties. Finally, these voters displayed the highest levels of electoral activity at the Hungarian elections. This means that the asymmetry discussed at the level of the parties (the close ties across the borders on the right side of the political spectrum and the absence of these on the left side) is also reproduced at the level of the electorate, in all three communities. The two exceptions are MRM, the majority of whose voters sympathize with Jobbik, and Most-Híd, whose electorate is leaning more towards the center-left parties of Hungary. While in the case of MRM the voter preferences mirror the orientation of the party elite, Most-Híd stands out because the party elite does not consider itself closer to the Hungarian left but rather regards the ties to Hungary's parties as of secondary importance.

The final chapter of the thesis dealt with the phenomenon of intra-ethnic electoral cooperation, employing a methodology that can be considered innovative for the study of cooperation: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). The analysis has shown that those factors that usually matter for cooperation in the case of political parties in general, i.e. electoral rules, shocks, emergence of new organizations, are also important in the context of minority parties. More importantly, the findings also revealed aspects specific for national minority parties, primarily the role of a divisive preferential treatment of the minority parties by the government of the kin-state (in the sense that some minority parties are regarded as partners by the Hungarian government, while others are ignored or even considered enemies). Furthermore, the analysis has shown that differences concerning both strategy (participation in power vs. opposition or tribune) and programmatic goals matter when it comes to cooperation. One of the expectations in this chapter, derived from the main argument of the

thesis, was that stronger moderate parties are reluctant to cooperate with smaller radical parties in order not to decrease their chances of being invited to government. Although the analysis confirmed that strategic differences matter, the proposition that strategic considerations regarding participation in power matter more than programmatic differences in intra-ethnic cooperation was not unequivocally confirmed. Still, one should note that of the five elections which brought about full-fledged electoral cooperation (that is, coalitions in which all relevant parties were included), only one contradicts the importance of strategic differences; two of these were actually low-stake elections which did not imply participation in power (presidential and European Parliament elections), and in case of the other two the more moderate party was weaker than its more radical intra-ethnic rivals; moreover, the latter two elections occurred in the context of the pervasive majority nationalism.

One of the most important contributions of the thesis to the party politics literature is the documentation of the manner in which the political processes from the kin-state impact both the political divisions and the prospects for electoral cooperation within the minorities. While the minorities would not be compact, unstratified communities even in the absence of engagement by the kin-state, the divisions within the minorities were reinforced by the actions of the government and the political parties of Hungary. Although the conception of right-wing parties in Hungary has always been better aligned with the strategic conceptions of the more radical elites of the minorities (who were less ready to cooperate with the parties of their host states in order to improve the condition of the minority, but rather sought external pressure), since the return to power of Fidesz in 2010, this interlocking became especially strong.

The strategic differences between the parties concerning their attitude towards the political actors in the host state and the relationships they maintain with the government and the parties of the kin-state can also be conceived of as a single dimension, with integration

into one or the other political community at the two endpoints. More integration into the political system of the host-state usually comes at the expense of looser relationships and possible more lukewarm support from the kin-state, including less influence over the distribution of resources from Hungary; conversely, too tight connections in Budapest decrease the coalition potential in the host-state, and have negative consequences concerning party autonomy (Panebianco, 1988), as the parties will become dependent to a very great extent on resources from the kin-state. This not only restricts their freedom of action in the host-state, but also may leave them defenseless if their partner party loses power in Hungary.

We have seen that there is considerable correspondence between the elites and the masses not only in what concerns the attitudes concerning ethno-political goals and party strategies in the host state, but also in what concerns the attitudes towards the kin-state. This can be interpreted as good news from the perspective of political representation, as the parties and their voters resemble each-other. However, the phenomenon also entails several problems in the context of the triadic nexus of nationalisms. The latest developments in Hungary's policies towards its ethnic kin beyond the borders (dual citizenship and voting rights) point into the direction where members of the minorities might be caught between two political communities, that of Hungary and that of their host-states, and it is possible that eventually they will be forced to choose to which they wish to belong to. At the level of the elites, this could contribute to a further deepening of the division, with the more moderate elites seeking increased integration in their host-state, and autonomists seeking refuge at Budapest. The fact that the more radical parties rarely obtain representation in their host-states' parliament may further exacerbate this. At the level of the electorate, the consequence may be a gradual withdrawal of one part of the Hungarian voters from political participation in their host-state and increased orientation towards Hungary. This could decrease the overall electoral strength of the minorities in their host-state, and implicitly their capacity to improve

their situation (Salat, 2011), and may have serious consequences in the future for the social and political cohesion of the minority communities.

However, there is also evidence that the situation is not as clear-cut as this. A few cases do not conform to the pattern of unequivocal integration into one of the two political communities. Most importantly, VMSZ in Vojvodina is able to behave as the most integrationist Hungarian party in Serbia while also maintaining a strategic partnership with the Fidesz governments. MKP does not reject a participationist strategy either, though it became increasingly isolated lately. Finally, though the relationship of RMDSZ with Fidesz has deteriorated to a great extent after 2010, since 2013 some rapprochement could be witnessed. The future developments will depend primarily on the strategy of the more moderate, integrationist minority parties concerning political participation in Hungary, but also on that of the Hungarian center-left parties, which were basically ignored by the minority electorate in 2014.

### **Generalizability and limitations**

As I have outlined in the first chapter, the propositions put forward in this thesis should be read keeping in mind the arguments of Chandra (2006, 2009b) that not all effects that are usually attributed to ethnicity are in fact caused by ethnicity, but by some additional variable that is not a necessary defining element of ethnic groups. Thus, it should be emphasized that the Hungarian minorities studied in this thesis are only one specific type of *ethnic groups with adjectives*, which display the features of both *national minorities* and *external diasporas*.

It follows that further research has to assess the differences between situations similar to the Hungarian minorities (e.g. Poles in Lithuania, the South Tyrolese case, Turks in Bulgaria etc.) and others that are different, because, for instance, they do not have kin-state or their kin-state is less active. The latter category includes not only the group generally referred

to as stateless nations, but also non-territorial minorities like the Roma, or minorities that were formed as a result of more recent immigration.

A comparison with regional party systems, especially in ethnoculturally distinctive regions, could shed light on the differences that follow from the different levels of institutionalization of the “capsule of competition” (Bartolini, 1999). In two of the three cases studied here, competition and cooperation occur in the absence of an autonomous political sphere of the minority; the situation of Vojvodina Hungarians is somewhat different due to the existence of the Hungarian National Council (MNT), but this institution has also been challenged by some Hungarian organizations as lacking appropriate legitimacy. Yet, despite the lack of a universally accepted institutional framework for competition and cooperation, most of the rival minority parties studied here still share a consensus that their electorate forms a distinctive political sub-community. However, this sub-community is defined not in territorial and/or institutional terms, but simply through the membership in the ethnic group. The lower level of institutionalization of this setting as compared to ethno-regions, and the consequences of the level of institutionalization on the dynamics between the parties is definitely worth to be studied.

Another aspect of the broader topic of the thesis that has not been sufficiently addressed is local politics, especially in what concerns intra-ethnic cooperation. Such an analysis could complement the findings from the national level elections, and could be carried out also according to a large-N research design, employing statistical methods, which would represent a nice complement to the QCA performed in this dissertation.

## **Appendix 1 – List of interviews**

### **Romania**

Hunor Kelemen, president of RMDSZ since 2011, Cluj/Kolozsvár, July 11, 2012.

Béla Markó, president of RMDSZ between 1993 and 2011, Târgu Mureş/Marosvásárhely, July 25, 2012.

Jenő Szász, president of MPSZ and later of MPP until 2012, Odorheiu Secuiesc/Székelyudvarhely, July 19, 2012.

Tibor Toró T., president of Reform Tömörülés and later of EMNP, Cluj/Kolozsvár, July 18, 2012.

### **Serbia**

András Ágoston, president of VMKD (1990-1996) and later of VMDP (1997-2013), Temerin, December 1, 2010.

Attila Csengeri, leader of the ticket of Demokratska Stranka for the MNT, secretary for health care in the Executive of Vojvodina, Novi Sad/Újvidék, December 2, 2010.

Áron Csonka, president of VMKD since 2010, Ada, December 1, 2010

Zoltán Dévavári, vice-president of VMSZ, Subotica/Szabadka, November 30, 2010.

Jenő Hajnal, president of the Institute for Hungarian Culture in Vojvodina, Senta/Zenta, November 29, 2010.

László Józsa, president of MNT between 2002 and 2010, Subotica/Szabadka, November 30, 2010.

Bálint László, president of MRM, Subotica/Szabadka, November 30, 2010.

Attila Márton, journalist at Vajdaság.ma news portal ([www.vajma.info](http://www.vajma.info)), Novi Sad/Újvidék, December 1, 2010.

László Rácz Szabó, president of MPSZ, Senta/Zenta, November 29, 2010.

Zsolt Várkonyi, president of the administrative office of the MNT, Subotica/Szabadka, November 30, 2010.

Tibor Vass, leader of the ticket of LSV for the MNT, Zrenjanin/Nagybecskerek, December 2, 2010.

### **Slovakia**

Zoltán Bara, secretary for external relations of MKP between 2004-2009, Komárno/Komárom, June 15, 2012.

Gyula Bárdos, former leader of MKP's parliamentary club, Bratislava/Pozsony, June 19, 2012.

József Berényi, president of MKP since 2010, Bratislava/Pozsony, June 22, 2012.

Pál Csáky, president of MKP between 2007 and 2010, Bratislava/Pozsony, June 22, 2012.

Zsolt Gál, expert of Most-Híd in the domain of economics, Bratislava/Pozsony, June 20, 2012.

Dusán Hégli, expert of Most-Híd in the domain of culture, Bratislava/Pozsony, June 19, 2012.

Béla Keszegh, journalist, independent member of the Komárno/Komárom city council, Komárno/Komárom, June 15, 2012.

Zsolt Király, president of the Bratislava/Pozsony district branch of MKP, editor of the [www.korkep.sk](http://www.korkep.sk) news portal, Bratislava/Pozsony, June 19, 2012.

Szabolcs Mózes, journalist at Új Szó, Šamorín/Somorja, June 20, 2012.

László Öllös, political scientist, president of Fórum Institute, Šamorín/Somorja, June 20, 2012.

Péter Öry, campaign manager of MKP at the 2012 parliamentary elections, Štvrtok na Ostrove/Csallóközcsütörtök, June 22, 2012.

László Solymos, leader of the parliamentary club of Most-Híd, Bratislava/Pozsony, June 22, 2012.

Géza Tokár, political scientist, spokesperson of the Roundtable of Hungarians in Slovakia, Šamorín/Somorja, June 15, 2012.

Károly Tóth, founding member and first president of MPP, later director of Fórum Institute, Šamorín/Somorja, June 15, 2012.

Péter Vörös, party director of MKP between 1998-2007, Most-Híd MP between 2010-2012, Komárno/Komárom, June 21, 2012.

## **Hungary**

Nándor Bárdi, researcher at the Institute for Minority Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, March 11, 2014.

## Appendix 2 – Operationalization of variables in Chapter 9

NR and DK responses not listed, these were recoded as missing data if not noted otherwise.

### ROMANIA

#### Logistic regressions - overview of explanatory variables (Romania)

	2008 April (N=1114)	2011 December (N=1190)
<b>DVs</b>		
Intra-ethnic challenger	Y (Tókéş at EP, MPP at parliamentary)	Y (MPP and EMNP separately)
Swing voter	Y (Tókéş at EP, RMDSZ at parliamentary)	-
<b>IVs</b>		
<b>Socio-demographics</b>		
<i>Gender</i>	Y	Y
<i>Age + age<sup>2</sup></i>	Y	Y
<i>education</i>	Y	Y
<i>Subjective income<sup>310</sup></i>	Y	Y
<i>Religion</i>	Y	Y
<i>Frequency of church attendance</i>	Y	Y
<i>Region</i>	Y (4 cat.)	Y (3 cat.)
<i>Type of locality (urban-rural)</i>	Y	Y
Share of Hungarian population	Y	Y
<i>Romanian family member</i>	-	Y
<b>Attitudinal and issue-related</b>		
Ethnic issue salience	Y	Y
Issue congruence (self-RMDSZ)	Y	-
RMDSZ's perceived stance on autonomy	Y	-
RMDSZ representation important	Y	Y
RMDSZ in the government	Y	Y
Political interest (frequency of political talk)	-	-
Left-right self-placement	Y	-
Perception of discrimination	-	Y
Social distance from Romanians (7-point Bogardus scale)	-	Y
Dual citizenship	-	Y

*Variables in italics are treated as categorical (factor)*

<sup>310</sup> Subjective assessment of one's family's income was preferred to objective items about income due to higher response rates.

## **Socio-demographic variables**

**Gender:** dummy – (0) woman, (1) man

**Age:** continuous variable

**Type of locality:** dummy – (0) rural, (1) urban

**Share of Hungarian population in the locality:** continuous variable, based on census data.

**Income:** subjective assessment of one's family's income.

The question varied across the surveys. Due to the low number of responses in some categories, the variable has been recoded into three categories in each survey.

**2008:** 5 response categories: (1) subsistence living, (2) financial problems each month, (3) getting by economizing, (4) living fairly well, (5) no financial problems.

Recoded as follows: (1), (2) → low, (3) → intermediate, (4), (5) → low subjective income

**2011:** 5 response categories: (1) not sufficient even to cover basic needs, (2) only sufficient for basic needs, (3) acceptable, but we are unable to buy more expensive things, (4) we are only able to buy more expensive things by renouncing to other things, (5) we afford buying everything we need.

Recoded as follows: (1), (2) → low, (3) → intermediate, (4), (5) → low subjective income

### **Education:**

10 response categories: (1) no education, (2) lower primary (4 classes), (3) upper primary (5-8 classes), (4) vocational training, (5) lower secondary (9-10 classes), (6) upper secondary (11-12), (7) post-high-school secondary education (e.g. nursing schools), (8) college, (9) university, (10) post-gradual studies.

Recoded into 4 categories: (1), (2), (3) → primary, (4), (5) – vocational, (6), (7) → secondary, (8), (9), (10) → higher education

### **Region:**

**2008:** (4) Szeklerland: Harghita and Covasna counties, (3) Partium: Bihor, Satu Mare and Sălaj counties, (2) Central Transylvania: Mureş and Cluj counties, (4) the rest of the Transylvanian counties, with a share of Hungarian population below 10%

**2011:** three categories: (3) Szeklerland: Harghita and Covasna counties, as well as the eastern part of Mureş county; (2) Partium: Bihor, Satu Mare and Sălaj counties; (1) Rest of Transylvania

**Religion:** recoded as: (1) other (includes small denominations, as well as those without religion), (2) Roman Catholic, (3) Reformed (Calvinist)

**Frequency of church attendance:** recoded by inverting the scale as (1) once a year or less frequently, (2) a few times a year, (3) at least monthly, (4) weekly or more frequently.

**Presence of a Romanian family member:** coded on the basis of three items, asking about the ethnicity of the (1) spouse; (2) father; (3) mother. Coded as 1 if the response to any of these items was yes, and 0 otherwise.

## **Attitudinal and issue-related variables**

### **Ethnic issue salience**

Respondents were asked to select three issues which they regarded as the most important. These issues were classified as either ethnic or non-ethnic, and the number of ethnic issues mentioned by the respondent was summed, yielding a variable that can take values from 0 to 3.

The issues were the following:

**2008:** (1) decreasing taxes, (2) housing for young people, (3) fighting corruption, (4) increasing low salaries/pensions, (5) more support for the very poor, (6) restitution of private property nationalized during communism (land, forests, real estate), (7) improving health care, (8) creating Hungarian-language faculties at the Babeş-Bolyai University, (9) cultural autonomy, (10) territorial autonomy for the Szeklerland, (11) guaranteeing the proportional representation of Hungarians in the public sphere, (12) repairing the roads in Transylvania, (13) disclosing the identity of the collaborators of the Securitate, (14) agriculture and rural issues, (15) construction of the Northern Transylvanian highway, (16) restitution of church property nationalized during communism, (17) adoption of the law on the status of minorities.

Options (1) to (7) and (12) to (15) coded as non-ethnic, options (8) to (11), (16) and (17) as ethnic.

**2011:** The wording of the question was slightly different, respondents were asked to pick three issues that RMDSZ should deal with. The issues were the following

(1) creating jobs, fighting unemployment, (2) expansion of the Hungarian-language education system (including higher education), (3) creating a self-standing Hungarian-language university, (4) improving the quality of education, (5) repairing the roads in Transylvania, (6) obtaining autonomy, (7) increasing salaries, pensions, (8) achieving cooperation between the Hungarian political parties, (9) expanding the official usage of the Hungarian language, (10) infrastructural investments in the localities (water supply, sewage, roads), (11) economic consolidation of the regions populated by Hungarians, (12) improving health care, (13) agriculture, support for farmers, (14) improving the relationship between Hungarians and Romanians, (15) guaranteeing the proportional representation of Hungarians in the public sphere

Options (1), (4), (5), (7), (10), (12) and (13) coded as non-ethnic, (2), (3), (6), (8), (9), (11), (14) and (15) as ethnic.

### **Congruence of issue salience between self and RMDSZ (2008 only)**

The respondents were asked to pick three issues which they considered that RMDSZ is most preoccupied with. The response options were the same as the ones reported above for the issue salience question. The response options for the two questions were matched, that is, the number of matching issues was counted. The variable can take values ranging from 0 (no overlap between the issues regarded as salient by the respondent and the issues that RMDSZ is perceived to be preoccupied with) and 3 (perfect overlap, all three issues the same). The coding of this variable does not take into consideration whether the matching issues were ethnic or non-ethnic.

### **RMDSZ's perceived stance on autonomy (2008 only)**

Respondents were asked which of the following statements best suits the stance of RMDSZ about autonomy (in general):

(1) Autonomy is the most important goal of RMDSZ, (2) autonomy is important for RMDSZ, but not more important than other political goals, (3) autonomy is no longer really important for RMDSZ, (4) RMDSZ is obstructing those who really want to achieve autonomy.

### **Importance of parliamentary representation**

Some say that for the Hungarian minority it is important *that RMDSZ has representatives* in Romania's parliament, while others consider this less important. What about you? (1) important, (2) it makes no difference (3) not important.

### **Attitude about the participation of RMDSZ in governing coalitions**

**2008** (RMDSZ was part of the center-right cabinet led by PNL): Should RMDSZ stay in the governing coalition? (1) yes, (2) no, (8) DK. DK recoded as an intermediary category, treated as continuous variable.

**2011** (RMDSZ was part of the center-right cabinet led by PDL): In your opinion, what should RMDSZ do: (1) stay in the coalition, (2) stay in government but switch coalition partners, (3) go into opposition. Treated as a categorical variable.

**Left-right self-placement (2008 only):** standard 11-point left-right scale, with (1) indicating left and (10) right.

**Perceptions about the discrimination of Hungarians in Romania (2011 only):** the question was asked within a broader battery about various social groups that may suffer discrimination. Respondents were asked to rate whether Hungarians are discriminated: (1) to a very large extent, (2) to large extent, (3) to some extent, (4) to a very small extent.

**Social distance from Romanians (2011 only):** the item consisted of a 7-point Bogardus scale, part of a broader battery about various groups. Respondents were asked whether they would accept ethnic

Romanians (1) as family members, (2) as friends, (3) as colleagues, (4) as neighbors, (5) to live in the country, (6) to visit the country (7) not even to visit the country.

**Dual citizenship (2011 only)**

The question referred to both the respondent's status and intentions concerning Hungarian citizenship and participation in the Hungarian elections. The response options were: (1) I am a Hungarian citizen and I intend to vote, (2) I am a Hungarian citizen but I do not intend to vote, (3) I am not planning to apply for citizenship or to vote. The variable has been recoded as follows: (1), (2): obtained citizenship, (3) planning to apply for citizenship, (4) not planning to apply for citizenship.

**SLOVAKIA – Focus survey April 2012, N=759**

**Age** – continuous variable

**Gender:** dummy – (1) man, (2) woman

**Education:** 4 categories, treated as categorical: (1) primary, (2) vocational or unfinished secondary, (3) finished secondary, (4) higher

**Type of housing:** dummy – (1) family house, (2) block of flats

**Size of locality:** 5 categories, treated as categorical: (1) below 2000, (2) 2000-5000, (3) 5000-20000, (4) 20000-50000, (5) above 50000

**Subjective economic well-being:** 5 categories: (1) very good, (2) good, (3) average, (4) below average, (5) poverty. Recoded by pooling the first two categories, treated as categorical.

### Appendix 3 – Additional materials for Chapter 10 (csQCA)

**Table 2. The truth table of the analysis**

#	E	S	N	K	G	P	O	o	Cases O=1	Cases o=0
1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	ro2009ep_RMDSZ_EMNT	
2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	sk1992_EPM_MKDM, sk1994_EPM_MKDM, sk1998_EPM_MKDM	
3	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	sk1994_EPM_MPP, sk1994_MKDM_MPP	
4	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	srb2007_VMDP_VMDK, srb2008parl_VMSZ_VMDP	
5	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	srb2008parl_VMSZ_VMDK, srb2008pres_VMSZ_VMDK, srb2008pres_VMSZ_VMDP, srb2008pres_VMDP_VMDK	
6	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	sk1998_EPM_MPP, sk1998_MKDM_MPP,	srb2003n_VMSZ_VMDK
7	1	1	1	0	0	0			srb2012_VMDK_MPSZ	ro2009ep_RMDSZ_MPP
8	1	1	0	0	1	0			srb2008parl_VMDP_VMDK	srb2004V_VMDK_VMDP
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	ro2009pres_RMDSZ_EMNT,	ro2009pres_RMDSZ_MPP ro2009pres_EMNT_MPP
10	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1		ro2007ep_RMDSZ_EMNT, ro2009ep_EMNT_MPP
11	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1		ro2008parl_RMDSZ_MPP
12	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1		srb1997n_VMSZ_VMDP
13	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1		ro2012parl_RMDSZ_MPP
14	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1		ro2012parl_RMDSZ_EMNP, srb1996f_VMSZ_VMDK
15	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1		ro2012parl_MPP_EMNP
16	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1		srb1997n_VMDK_VMSZ
17	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1		sk1992_EPM_MPP, sk1992_MKDM_MPP, srb2003n_VMSZ_VMDP
18	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1		sk2010_MKP_Most
19	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1		sk2012_MKP_Most
20	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1		srb2003n_VMDK_VMDP
21	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1		srb2004V_VMSZ_VMDK, srb2007_VMSZ_VMDK
22	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1		srb2004V_VMSZ_VMDP, srb2007_VMSZ_VMDP, srb2012_VMSZ_VMDP
23	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1		srb2012_VMSZ_VMDK
24	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1		srb2012_VMSZ_MPSZ

#	E	S	N	K	G	P	O	o	Cases O=1	Cases o=0
25	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1		srb2012_VMSZ_MRM
26	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1		srb2012_VMDK_MRM
27	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1		srb2012_VMDP_VMDK
28	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1		srb2012_VMDP_MPSZ
29	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1		srb2012_VMDP_MRM
30	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1		srb2012_MPSZ_MRM
31	0	0	0	0	0	1				
32	0	0	0	0	1	0				
33	0	0	0	0	1	1				
34	0	0	0	1	0	0				
35	0	0	0	1	0	1				
36	0	0	0	1	1	1				
37	0	0	1	0	0	1				
38	0	0	1	0	1	0				
39	0	0	1	0	1	1				
40	0	1	0	1	0	0				
41	0	1	0	1	1	0				
42	0	1	0	1	1	1				
43	0	1	1	0	0	0				
44	0	1	1	0	0	1				
45	0	1	1	0	1	1				
46	0	1	1	1	0	0				
47	0	1	1	1	0	1				
48	0	1	1	1	1	1				
49	1	0	0	1	0	0				
50	1	0	0	1	0	1				
51	1	0	0	1	1	0				
52	1	0	0	1	1	1				
53	1	0	1	0	0	1				
54	1	0	1	0	1	1				
55	1	0	1	1	0	0				
56	1	0	1	1	1	0				
57	1	0	1	1	1	1				
58	1	1	0	0	0	1				
59	1	1	0	1	0	0				
60	1	1	0	1	1	1				
61	1	1	1	0	0	1				
62	1	1	1	0	1	1				
63	1	1	1	1	0	1				
64	1	1	1	1	1	1				

The truth table rows with grey were excluded from the minimization process of both the presence and the absence of the outcome. A value of 1 has been assigned in each of the two columns for O and o when consistency was higher than 0.67.

**Table 3. The conservative solution for the presence of the outcome**

	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency	Cases covered
E*s*n*k*g	0.294	0.118	0.833	sk92_EPM_MKDM, sk94_EPM_MKDM, sk98_EPM_MKDM, <b>sk98_EPM_MPP, sk98_MKDM_MPP, srb03parl_VMSZ_VMDK</b>
e*S*n*k*p	0.294	0.294	0.833	<b>sk98_MKDM_MPP, srb03parl_VMSZ_VMDK</b>
e*S*n*k*p	0.353	0.353	1	<b>srb07_VMDP_VMDK</b> , srb08parl_VMSZ_VMDP, srb08parl_VMSZ_VMDK, srb08pres_VMSZ_VMDK, , srb08pres_VMSZ_VMDP, srb08pres_VMDP_VMDK
e*S*n*k*p	0.353	0.118	1	
E*S*n*k*G*P	0.117	0.117	1	<b>sk94_EPM_MPP, sk94_MKDM_MPP</b>
E*S*n*k*G*P	0.117	0.117	1	
E*n*k*g*p	0.236	0.059	1	<b>ro09ep_RMDSZ_EMNT</b> , sk92_EPM_MKDM, sk94_EPM_MKDM, sk98_EPM_MKDM
Or				
S*n*k*g*p	0.294	0.059	1	<b>ro09ep_RMDSZ_EMNT</b> , srb08parl_VMSZ_VMDK, srb08pres_VMSZ_VMDK, , srb08pres_VMSZ_VMDP, srb08pres_VMDP_VMDK

Solution coverage: 0.824, solution consistency: 0.933. Cases in bold are uniquely covered by the respective path. The case highlighted with grey is a dyad of unsuccessful PEC formation.

Selecting prime implicants Enk<sub>g</sub>p and ES<sub>k</sub>P or Enk<sub>g</sub>p and ES<sub>g</sub>P lead to the first solution formula, while the choice of Snk<sub>g</sub>p and ES<sub>k</sub>P or of Snk<sub>g</sub>p and ES<sub>g</sub>P to the second one. The selection of the prime implicants also affects the raw and unique coverage scores – that is, the number of cases that the path is able to explain and the number of cases that only that specific path is able to explain. In the cells that contain more than one value for the parameters of fit the first one refers to solution obtained on the Enk<sub>g</sub>p implicant, and the second the values for the solution obtained on the Snk<sub>g</sub>p implicant.

**Table 4. The parsimonious solution for the presence of the outcome<sup>311</sup>**

	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency	Cases covered
E*n*k*g	0.353	0.353	0.857	ro09ep_RMDSZ_EMNT sk92_EPM_MKDM,

<sup>311</sup>

				sk94_EPM_MKDM, sk98_EPM_MKDM, sk98_EPM_MPP, sk98_MKDM_MPP, srb03parl_VMSZ_VMDK
e*S*n*p	0.353	0.353	1	srb07_VMDP_VMDK, srb08parl_VMSZ_VMDP, srb08parl_VMSZ_VMDK, srb08pres_VMSZ_VMDK, , srb08pres_VMSZ_VMDP, srb08pres_VMDP_VMDK
E*S*k*P	0.117	0.117	1	sk94_EPM_MPP, sk94_MKDM_MPP
or				
E*S*G*P	0.117	0.117		

Solution coverage: 0.824, solution consistency: 0.933. The case highlighted with grey is a dyad of unsuccessful PEC formation.

The third path of the parsimonious solution once again depends on the choice of prime implicants The first variant of the parsimonious solution has been obtained on the basis of five simplifying assumptions: **eSnKgp** + **eSnKGp** + ESnkgP+ *ESNkGP*+ *ESNkgP*

which can be simplified to

$$eSnKp + ESkGP + ESNkP$$

The second variant is obtained on the basis of six assumptions:

$$eSnKgp + eSnKGp + ESnkgP + *ESNkGP* + **ESnKGP** + *ESNKGP*$$

which can be simplified to

$$eSnKp + ESNGP + ESKGP + ESnkgP$$

It should be emphasized that the parsimonious solution formula contradicts the statements of necessity identified in the analysis, as two, respectively four simplifying assumptions (the ones in bold) contradict the statement of necessity concerning the lack divisive interference by the kin-state, and two simplifying assumptions for both variants (the italicized ones) contradict the (almost) necessary nature of the condition capturing the lack of new organizations.

The Boolean expression for the parsimonious solution can be restated as:

$$Ek (ng + SP) + eSnp \rightarrow O$$

**Table 5. Conservative solution for the absence of the outcome<sup>312</sup>**

solution	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency	Cases covered
e*S*n*k*P	0.147	0.147	1	srb2004V_VMSZ_VMDK, srb2004V_VMSZ_VMDP, srb2007_VMSZ_VMDK, srb2007_VMSZ_VMDP, srb2012_VMSZ_VMDP

<sup>312</sup>

S*N*G*p	0.147	0.118	1	<b>ro2008parl_RMDSZ_MPP, srb1997n_VMSZ_VMDP, srb1997n_VMDK_VMDP, srb2012_VMDK_MRM, srb2012_VMDP_MPSZ</b>
e*s*N*K	0.147	0.059	1	ro2012parl_RMDSZ_EMNP, srb1996f_VMDK_VMSZ, <b>srb1997n_VMDK_VMSZ, srb2012_VMSZ_MPSZ, srb2012_VMSZ_MRM</b>
E*s*n*k*G	0.118	0.118	1	<b>sk1992_EPM_MPP, sk1992_MKDM_MPP, srb2003n_VMSZ_VMDP, srb2003n_VMDK_VMDP</b>
e*s*k*g*p	0.088	0.088	0.75	<b>ro2009pres_RMDSZ_MPP, ro2009pres_RMDSZ_EMNT, ro2009pres_EMNT_MPP, ro2012parl_MPP_EMNP</b>
E*s*N*k*p	0.088	0.088	1	<b>ro2007ep_RMDSZ_EMNT, ro2009ep_EMNT_MPP, srb2012_MPSZ_MRM</b>
e*s*K*G*p	0.088	0.029	1	<b>ro2012parl_RMDSZ_MPP, ro2012parl_RMDSZ_EMNP, srb1996f_VMDK_VMSZ</b>
S*n*K*g*P	0.059	0.059	1	<b>sk2012_MKP_Hid, srb2012_VMSZ_VMDK</b>
s*N*K*g*P	0.059	0.029	1	<b>sk2010_MKP_Hid, srb2012_VMSZ_MPSZ</b>
E*S*N*K*p	0.059	0.029	1	srb2012_VMDP_MPSZ, <b>srb2012_VMDP_MRM</b>
E*S*K*G*p	0.059	0.029	1	<b>srb2012_VMDP_VMDK, srb2012_VMDP_MPSZ</b>

Solution coverage: 0.912, solution consistency: 0.969. Cases in bold are uniquely covered by the respective path. The case highlighted with grey is a dyad of successful PEC formation

There was no need to choose between prime implicants to obtain the solutions for the absence of electoral cooperation.



The five simplifying assumptions italicized above are contradictory, that is, they have been included into the minimization process for the parsimonious solution for both the presence and the absence of the outcome. This is problematic, consequently one should not rely on the parsimonious solutions.

The intermediate solution for the absence of the outcome has been obtained by including 28 of the simplifying assumptions that were also used for the parsimonious solution (the ones with bold are not used).

This can be simplified to:

$$eskG + sNkP + snKP + EsKG + SNKP + esnKg + EsNKp + eSNKg + eSnKG + eskP + eNkP + NkGP + nKGP$$

None of these simplifying assumptions is contradictory.

The parsimonious solution can be restated as:  $K+s(e+N+G)+eP+NG \rightarrow o$

**Table 7. Detailed coding of the cases**

	Parties	Electoral system	new party	“external” shock	Programmatic differences	Strategic differences	Relationship with kin-state government
Slovakia 1992	(EPM, MKDM) – FMK/MPP	Restrictive (PR with progressive threshold, 5% for parties, 7% for PECs with 2 or 3 members, 10% for PECs with at least 4 members) All dyads coded as 1.	No All dyads coded as 0	No All dyads coded as 0	Yes: classic ideologies, MPP/FMK envisages a pluralist organization of the community, while EPM a corporatist pillar Dyads involving FMK/MPP coded as 1, the rest as 0	Yes: MKDM and EPM against governmental participation, FMK/MPP for Dyads involving FMK/MPP coded as 1, the rest as 0	No. All dyads 0.
Slovakia 1994	(EPM, MKDM, FMK/MPP)			Yes, FMK/MPP in 1992 loses representation in parliament Dyads involving FMK/MPP coded as 1, the rest as 0.			
Slovakia 1998	(EPM, MKDM, MPP/FMK)			Very restrictive, minority representation endangered (PR with 5% for coalitions, but each coalition member must reach 5% for the coalition to get represented) All dyads coded as 1.			
Slovakia 2010	Most-Híd – MKP	Restrictive (PR with step threshold, 5% for parties, 7% for PECs with 2 or 3 members, 10% for PECs with at least 4 members) All dyads coded as 1. <sup>314</sup>	Yes – Most-Híd The dyad is coded as 1.	No The dyad is coded as 0.	Yes, Most-Híd not autonomist, moreover, multiethnic party The dyad is coded as 1.	No: both parties for governmental participation. The dyad is coded as 0.	Yes, Fidesz partner with MKP and in conflict with Most-Híd Dyad coded 1.
Slovakia 2012	Most-Híd – MKP			No The dyad is coded as 0.			
Slovakia 1996 FED	VMSZ – VMDK	Non-restrictive (PR, with 5% threshold at district level, but average M is 3.72 (108 seats, 29 districts)) <sup>315</sup>	Yes – VMSZ split from VMDK The dyad coded as 1.	No The dyad coded as 0.	No, all parties autonomist All dyads coded as 0.	Yes, VMSZ for participation, VMDK against The dyad coded as 0.	Yes: MSZP-SZDSZ cabinet aided the creation of VMSZ against VMDK

<sup>314</sup> One could argue that the 5% threshold could lead to a complete loss of representation in case of an almost perfect, 50-50% split of the vote within the Hungarian community numbering somewhere between 8.5-9.7% of the population. However, the polls continuously showed that both parties had chances to make it into parliament (being measured between 5 and 7%), even if the margins were sometime rather narrow: Source: <http://volby.sme.sk/c/6214798/parlamentne-volby-2012-preferencie-a-porovnanie-stran-v-grafe.html> Still, it was clear that competition will lead to a seriously suboptimal result.

Before the 2012 elections Most-Híd was continuously measured above the threshold (between 6 and 8.4%, see the same source as above), while only a single poll predicted that MKP could make it into parliament (the MVK agency predicted 5.5% for MKP and 7% for Most-Híd one week before the elections. Source: <http://www.bumm.sk/66147/az-mvk-a-parlamentbe-merte-az-mkp-t.html>). The argument for serious suboptimality holds again.

	Parties	Electoral system	new party	“external” shock	Programmatic differences	Strategic differences	Relationship with kin-state government
		All dyads coded as 0.					Dyads containing VMSZ coded as 1.
Serbia 1997 NAT	VMSZ – VMDK – VMDP	Non-restrictive (PR, with 5% threshold at district level, average M is 8.62 (250 seats, 29 districts)) <sup>316</sup> All dyads coded as 0.	Yes – VMDP split from VMDK, also first national election for VMSZ Due to the blurry situation after the series of splits, all dyads coded as 1.	Yes, VMDK was clearly defeated by VMSZ at the 1996 elections, but the actual shock was experienced by VMDP, as the old VMDK elite continued with this party. Dyads involving VMDP coded as 1, the rest as 0.		Yes: VMSZ for, VMDP against, VMDK unclear All dyads involving VMDP coded as 1, the rest as 0.	
Serbia 2003 NAT	VMSZ – VMDK – VMDP	Very restrictive, but not hopeless in case of cooperation (PR, 5% threshold at national level, the share of the Hungarian population was 3.91% according to the 2001 census). All dyads coded as 1.	No All dyads coded as 0.	No All dyads coded as 0.	All parties autonomist, but the issue of the MNT and Vojvodina autonomy divisive. Dyads involving VMSZ coded as 1, the rest as 0.	Yes, VMSZ for, VMDP against, VMDK unclear. All dyads involving VMDP coded as 1, the rest as 0.	No. All dyads 0
Serbia 2004 prov. (Vojvodina)	VMSZ – VMDK – VMDP	For VMSZ it was clear that it could pass the implicit threshold on its own. For VMDP and VMDK cooperation could make a difference. (Mixed system, with two round SMDs and PR with 1.67% implicit threshold) Dyads involving VMSZ coded as 0, the rest as 1.		Yes, all Hungarian parties lost representation in the national parliament after the 2003 elections. All dyads coded as 1			
Serbia 2007	VMSZ – (VMDK-VMDP)	PR, with implicit threshold of 0.4% for minority organizations or minority PECs. VMSZ clearly able to pass it on its own. For VMDP and VMDK cooperation could make a difference. Dyads involving VMSZ coded as 0, the rest as 1.					
Serbia 2008pres	(VMSZ, VMDP, VMDK)	Irrelevant: 2 <sup>nd</sup> round runoff, but anyway no realistic chance to win or even accede into second round All dyads coded as 0.		Yes, VMDK and VMDP unable to reach threshold in 2007; also, the share of ethnic parties of the Hungarian vote at a	No, all parties autonomist, rapprochement concerning autonomy. All dyads coded as 0.	Irrelevant, no governmental participation involved All dyads coded as 0.	
Serbia 2008	(VMSZ,	PR, with implicit threshold of 0.4%				Yes: VMSZ for, VMDP	

<sup>315</sup> Source: Goati (2000).

<sup>316</sup> Source: Lucić (1997); Goati (2000).

	Parties	Electoral system	new party	“external” shock	Programmatic differences	Strategic differences	Relationship with kin-state government
parl	VMDP, VMDK)	for minority organizations or minority PECs. VMSZ clearly able to pass it on its own. For VMDP and VMDK cooperation could make a difference.		historical low in 2007. All dyads coded as 1.		against, VMDK unclear, opportunistic. Dyads involving VMDP coded as 1, the rest as 0.	
Serbia 2012	VMSZ, VMDP, MRM (MPSZ - VMDK)	Dyads involving VMSZ coded as 0, the rest as 1	Yes, MPSZ and MRM. MPSZ only new inasmuch as national elections are concerned All dyads involving MPSZ or MRM coded as 1, the rest as 1	VMDK failed to get represented despite the PEC in 2008, VMDP lost its MP in the Vojvodina Assembly due to the split of MRM. Dyads involving VMDK or VMDP coded as 1.	All parties autonomist, but the issue of the MNT and Vojvodina autonomy divisive. Dyads involving VMSZ coded as 1, the rest as 0.	Yes, VMSZ for, VMDP and MRM against, VMDK and MPSZ unclear, opportunistic. Dyads involving VMDP and MRM coded as 1, the rest as 0.	Yes. Fidesz supports VMSZ and to a certain extent VMDP. Dyads involving one of these and any other party coded as 1, the dyad VMSZ-VMDP and those between any other parties as 0.
Romania 2007 EP	RMDSZ – EMNT	Restrictive, minority representation endangered (PR, 5% threshold for both coalitions and parties, implicit threshold of 2,86% for independents) The dyad coded as 1.	Yes, EMNT (Tőkés), first time when RMDSZ is seriously challenged The dyad coded as 1.	No The dyad coded as 0.	No, all parties autonomist All dyads coded as 0.	Irrelevant, no governmental participation involved. The dyad coded as 0.	No. All dyads 0.
Romania 2008	RMDSZ – MPP	For RMDSZ it was clear that it would pass the threshold (an alternative threshold of plurality in 3 senatorial and 6 deputy districts, and a districting that takes into consideration the ethnic distribution) The dyad coded as 0.	Yes, first election for MPP under own label The dyad coded as 1.	Yes, the result of Tőkés at the 2007 EP elections was perceived as a shock by RMDSZ. Dyads involving RMDSZ coded as 1.		Yes: MPP even voiced opinions according to which parliamentary representation is less important than breaking RMDSZ hegemony The dyad coded as 1.	No. All dyads 0.
Romania 2009 EP	(RMDSZ, EMNT), MPP	Restrictive, minority representation endangered (PR, 5% threshold for both coalitions and parties, implicit threshold of 3,03% for independents)	Yes, the battle for the “monopoly of the alternative” begins between EMNT and MPP. Dyads involving MPP coded as 1.			Irrelevant, no governmental participation involved All dyads coded as 0.	
Romania 2009 pres	(RMDSZ, EMNT), MPP	Irrelevant: 2-round runoff, but anyway no realistic chance to win or even accede into second round All dyads coded as 0.	No. All dyads coded as 0.	No. All dyads coded as 0.		Irrelevant. All dyads coded as 0.	No. All dyads 0.
Romania 2012	RMDSZ, EMNP,	For RMDSZ it was clear that it would pass the threshold (an alternative	Yes, EMNP. Dyads involving			Yes. RMDSZ for, EMNP and MPP	Yes. Fidesz supports EMNP and to a

	Parties	Electoral system	new party	“external” shock	Programmatic differences	Strategic differences	Relationship with kin-state government
	MPP	threshold of plurality in 3 senatorial and 6 deputy districts, and a districting that takes into consideration the ethnic distribution). For MPP and EMNP even running together would not have helped. The dyad coded as 0.	EMNP coded as 1.			against. Dyads involving RMDSZ coded as 1.	certain extent MPP, and is in conflict with RMDSZ. Dyads involving RMDSZ coded as 1.

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