

Conceptualizing the Community in the Hungarian Pamphlet Literature
in 1790-1791

by

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Abstract

The subject of my investigation is the discursive strategies and political languages of the conceptualization of the community in the Hungarian pamphlet-literature of the early 1790's, a period which marks an early phase of Hungarian nation-building. In this analysis, I focus on the possibilities of using and combining some findings of the so-called contextualist and conceptual history methods.

One of the aims of my thesis is to provide a “photograph” of the different semantic structures and usages of the concept of community and its semantic matrix in order to make a further investigation possible concerning the comparison of this period with earlier and later times in Hungarian nation-building and Hungarian political thought. Concentrating on the authorial intentions, the collective works and the specific features of different political utterances relating to the conceptualization of the community, I would like to accentuate the peculiarities of the discursive space of the region, the complexity and ambiguity of certain concepts, or, in other words, some important dilemmas of the genesis of the modern social-political vocabulary in early-modern Hungary.

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Introduction

In the past few decades, the question of national consciousness and collective identity has become an important and flourishing branch of historical research, partly due to new findings in the history of ideas and conceptual history. This tendency has moved to the centre ground in East-Central Europe as well, where the question of the birth of national consciousness and collective identity seems to dominate historical narratives: it is, above all, the result of a construction of some sort of an artificial process.¹ However, these results of the constructivist tendencies are not entirely convincing, even though they seem to come closer to reality. Quite often, the modernist/constructivist theories fail to give a relevant explanation, even if their contribution to a better understanding of the subject is beyond doubt.² Another seemingly relevant thought is that the concept of nation is also a result of a long process that can be characterized by the importance of cultural transfers between local contexts, and between these contexts and the western part of Europe. Receptions, translations, transmissions also form crucial parts of this complex intercultural process, which necessarily leads one to a certain type of comparative approach. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that in most cases, this comparison has been the study of diverse “influences” in historical researches. In recent times, several historians have attempted to rethink this question.³ They recognize that this kind of intellectual history is by definition comparative: no text stands entirely isolated, not even on the level of cultural transfers between different regions of Europe in the early

¹ See the terminology of the so-called *constructivist* branch of the literature of modern nations. See note 36.

² For the „ethnicist” approach: Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (London: 1971), Anthony D. Smiths, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* (London: 1987)

³ Mention must be made of two relatively early works: Hazard, Paul, *La crise de la conscience européenne* (Paris: 1935), Pierre Chaunu, *La civilisation de l'Europe des Lumières* (Paris: 1971)

modern period.⁴ That is to say, there is no text that is not a kind of reaction, commentary or interpretation of other texts and concepts.

Nationalism has also become a significant field of contemporary historical research in the post-socialist countries, focusing on the political, social, or even anthropological aspects.⁵ National identities, born mostly in the 19th century, are not natural facts, but rather the results of constructions/creations. The process of this creation had transformed certain (neutral) elements of the past (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*) in order to establish the base of a given collective identity. This process began at the end of the 18th century and continued into the 19th century. Moreover, this long process can be considered as a *transnational* phenomenon, with a great amount of cultural exchanges. The historiography of this question in the last two decades has already shown the most important elements of this process: the identification of the founder ancestors, the rediscovering of the folklores, the monuments, or even the language can be found among them.⁶ Moreover, the birth of a coherent political vocabulary is also part of this process, sometimes in a transnational context mentioned above. My thesis aims at studying collective identity and the concept of community from a discursive perspective, containing a certain vocabulary and marked by certain semantic and syntactical characteristics, and at the same time to reconstruct the context of discourses referring to national identity in a precise *corpus*⁷. It is important to mention that the concepts of which this vocabulary consists can also be considered as *objets circulatoires*; that is, their circulation within different contexts can lead to shifts in meaning, connotations and semantic structures, depending on the given (social) context. In order to justify the necessity of creating a “modern” nation, politicians and thinkers appeal to concepts which are not new in their forms

⁴ Kontler László, „Translation and comparison: Early Modern and Current Perspectives.” in: *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 3 (2007), 71-102.

⁵ For instance: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* (London: 1991), Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*, (Oxford: 1998), Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1983), for further references see note 36 on page 21.

⁶ Anne-Marie Thiesse. *La création des identités nationales* (Paris: Points: 1999).

but which have important, new contents from the point of view of the description of the (national) community. This moment of conceptualization of the community plays a major role in a political entity like the Habsburg Monarchy, where several cultural and linguistic groups coexisted in a fairly complicated political constellation.

In this case study, I would like to focus on a given corpus of political pamphlets written in Hungarian in 1790-1791. The question of collective identity, strictly related to a new emergence of the concept of nation, became an important issue at the beginning of the 1790's in the wake of the death of Joseph II, and in reaction to the explosion and radicalization of the French Revolution. Inspired by these political events, many Hungarian (or more exactly, Hungarian-speaking) thinkers tried to emphasize the necessity of the independence of the Hungarian Kingdom, as well as the necessity of a *modern state* supplied with modernized institutions. A very intensive political discourse came into being with the active participation of the intelligentsia and of noble thinkers. A new type of vocabulary, which formed a crucial part of the political literature, emerged from this discourse and debates. In this discourse, the emphasis was placed on the importance of collective identity, more exactly on the semantic matrix of this concept. The most important and more frequent elements of this matrix are the concepts of nation (*nemzet*), *patria*, fatherland (*haza*), constitution (*alkotmány*), citizen (*polgár*), freedom (*szabadság*), etc. One of the main endeavors of this thesis is to demonstrate how these concepts became indispensable elements of the conceptualization of the community in the political thought in Hungary at the end of the 18th century. Moreover, the usage and meaning of the concept of nation considerably changed during the last two decades of the 18th century. The usage of Werbőczy, which identifies the concept of nation exclusively with the nobility, together with its duties and obligations, exemptions and prerogatives, defined the meaning of the concept between the 16th and 18th

⁷ Concerning the possible theoretical approaches see the methodological chapter.

centuries.⁸ However, in the last third of the 18th century, and especially immediately after the death of Joseph II and before the Diet of 1790-1791, a new political situation emerged. Even though the official language of administration of the Hungarian Kingdom was Latin (until 1844), the usage of Hungarian was beginning to spread considerably at the official level. Moreover, in reaction to the homogenization of Josephism, the “Hungarian” cults of “national” peculiarities regained vitality. This period also marks an important change in the ensemble of the collective memory of the noble-nationalist elite. In this process, certain elements of the past disappeared partially or entirely, while other elements came to the foreground in the field of this memory. In other words, the elites “nationalized” the past in different ways. For instance, they unconsciously changed the semantic structures of social and political concepts. Taking this change into account can be useful in emphasizing important discursive continuities and studying the ways in which early-modern discourses and conceptual frameworks were appropriated and used in the nineteenth and twentieth century discourses of nation building.

A short explanation is needed for my choice of primary sources. Diverse sources seem to be relevant from the point of view of an analysis of collective identity, since the epoch in question provides a large selection of identity-building texts in the region, as well as in Hungary. Some of them are intended to be read publicly (pamphlets, plans of constitution, journal articles, literary/philosophical works, translations etc.), while others as documents of the private sphere (letters, correspondences, memoir-literature). The Hungarian context is abundant in these kinds of sources in terms of the phenomenon of identity-building in the political and ideological sense. These texts, of course at different levels, have all contributed to the long process of creation of a collective identity in the region, and in this sense my case

⁸ Werbőczy István, *A dicsőséges Magyar Királyság szokájogának hármaskönyve*, (Budapest: 1990)

study represents only a small, but important segment of a larger investigation, which I intend to conduct in the near future. One of my main aims would be to locate these texts as accurately as possible in the complex process of Hungarian nation building. These authors do not necessarily form part of the national canon in terms of identity-building, even though some of them were already considered as important figures from the point of view of the emergence of the “national idea” in the region. Although some of them have already received attention on the part of historians and historians of literature, more often than not they were studied from a linear perspective of the development of modern national idea. The issue is further complicated by the framework of a “composite monarchy”, as the participation of Hungary in this composite state-structure determines the nature of the discourse of collective identity on a fundamental level. At the same time, this idea can serve as a basis for a relevant comparison of different regions of the same multi-national entity from the point of view of intellectual history and the emergence of the “national idea”.

Because in the past these texts have been studied from a linear perspective, the task would be to recontextualize them from a discursive perspective, exploring their common European cultural references, ideological functions, and conceptual frameworks. I would like to examine to what extent these “patriotic” discourses were adjusted to the different ethno-cultural and confessional structures, which characterized the country. In other words, what was the relationship of the different layers of collective identity in the early-modern period, such as corporate, territorial, linguistic, dynastic, etc., which eventually came to be fused in the national romantic construct of nationhood in the later period?

The influence of the cultural sensitivities of the Enlightenment on the conception of “Fatherland” and the opposition of cultural and constitutional patriotism in the second half of the eighteenth century is also an issue which cannot be neglected. The following question

necessarily arises: it is meaningful to discuss the presence of Enlightenment in Central Europe, including Hungary?⁹ This problem is also part of our investigation. Nevertheless, if we talk about European Enlightenment, more precisely the question of unity or fragmentation of this intellectual period, we have to be aware of the importance of the comparative perspectives, including the task of analyzing the complex process of the formation, reception, and transmission of early-modern political and philosophical discourses. This issue also concerns the question of collective identity in the regional contexts.

The following view seems fairly widespread: the lack of a sufficient framework of legal, social and political institutionalization, and of political cultures did not leave any space for a patriotic modality of political discourse. However, one can attempt to approach this phenomenon from another side. One can observe that in their discussion of social-political institutions, these figures were referring to the lack of them in their own context.¹⁰ In one way or another, they were sensitive to this lack, which deeply influenced their respective thoughts on collective identity (especially in the framework of a composite monarchy). Since I am concerned with a composite monarchy in both the multi-ethnic and administrative sense, I have to clarify the difference between the various levels and frameworks of discourses.

Combining the tools of conceptual history and contextual analysis, I hope to discern the various political attitudes, ideas, and loyalties, which play a role in the discourse of conceptualizing the community. I hope that this case study will also focus on the early-modern Hungarian thematizations of the concept of community, and will briefly compare them to other Central-European cases as well as to German and French examples. Along these lines, I also hope to map their references, such as the concrete or abstract Fatherland, the

⁹ Kontler László, *The Enlightenment in Central Europe?*, in Balázs Trencsényi and Michal Kopecek (ed.), *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central Southeast Europe (1770-1945)*, (CEU Press, 2006-2007) vol. 1, 33-44.

patriotic rhetoric of denominational identity-discourses, the clash of regional and state loyalty, the symbolic place of the crown in evoking patriotic allegiance, and the cultivation of language as a patriotic duty. In doing so, I would like to take into account the socio-cultural *embeddedness* of political ideas, which seems indispensable for understanding the usage of certain concepts. But first, it seems necessary to make a short digression about the international methodologies of intellectual history, which I will employ in analyzing a segment of the Central European collective identity discourse. Needless to say, the methodological elements of the project are not really introduced and established in East Central Europe, where the study of early-modern intellectual history usually falls under literary studies¹¹, or remains subordinated to a more factographically oriented political history, which usually handles ideas as epiphenomena.

¹⁰ See the examples of the constitution and the language company in different types of discourses in chapter 2.

¹¹ For a more detailed image see: Bene Sándor, *Theatrum politicum*. (Debrecen: 1995)

Chapter 1. A Comparison of Concepts and Political Languages: Reflections on Methodological Issues

1.1. (In)compatible Approaches: History of Ideas and Begriffsgeschichte

In this short chapter my aim is to discuss some methodological and theoretical observations regarding one of the most innovative branches of the historical investigation of the last few decades – the approach of conceptual history and contextualism¹². By comparing and highlighting the main points of these approaches, I will reflect on other problems, such as the possibilities of comparison posed by various historical approaches, and on the possibilities of the usages (and adaptation) of these approaches in different historical and historiographical contexts.

In his article *Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas*, Quentin Skinner draws the following conclusion, “The understanding of statements uttered in the past clearly raises special issues, and might yield special insights, especially about the conditions under which languages change.”¹³ This statement can be understood in different ways and it suggests different solutions in terms of the possibilities of understanding any kind of textual (historical) sources of the past. It is also important to highlight that the two authors whose texts will be presented in more detail exhibit slight differences in their special fields of investigation: Skinner is focusing especially on the sources of history of ideas, while Koselleck is working on more diverse sources, including literary, artistic, and many other

¹² From the so-called Cambridge school I would like to focus on works of Quentin Skinner and J. G. A. Pocock.

¹³ Skinner, Quentin, *Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas*, in James Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context. Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), 64.

types of works¹⁴. Below, I would like to focus on the similarities of certain elements in their approaches to linguistic understanding, such as their view of anachronism and antihistoricity, in an effort to harmonize them, if possible, or, at least, to raise the question of a possibility of reconciliation. I will argue that the two thinkers have much in common at the point of departure, even if their solutions to the problem at a certain point take clearly different directions.

First, I have to clarify what can be considered as “antihistoricity” on their views. Both methods are interested in different usages of political, social vocabulary and discourses, and even though this notion is well known in every field of historical investigation, in this particular case, it implies the problem of misinterpreting texts and concepts. The basic aim of both Skinner’s and Koselleck’s texts is to warn the historian against anachronistic ways of interpretation by underlining the necessity of treating (political and social) vocabularies in an appropriate way. Skinner discusses the antihistoricity in the work of certain historians, like George Sabine¹⁵, who tend to focus on the works of only a small number of thinkers considered as classical authors. Such an approach, according to Skinner, is far from the real historical reconstruction and understanding of history of ideas¹⁶. Nevertheless, Skinner and Koselleck seem to find different points of relevance of their methods. The problem of semantic structure leads them to different aspects of investigation while they continue to focus on the problem of antihistoricity.

At first sight they pose their questions in a very similar way. The difficulty of comparing them lies in the idea that Skinner views entire texts as speech acts, while Koselleck

¹⁴ Koselleck, Reinhart, *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time*, (Columbia University Press, 2004), especially the chapters *Modernity and the Planes of Historicity*, 9-26. and *Begriffsgeschichte and Social History*, 75-93.

¹⁵ Sabine, George, *A history of political theory* (London: 1951).

believes that the historical reconstruction cannot be restricted to the analysis of individual speech acts. Skinner argues that both the exclusively textual approach and the contextual method of analyzing a work are insufficient for a proper understanding of texts and concepts. He views them as main sources of misinterpretations and distortions since “they both share the basic inadequacy: ... both methodologies... commit philosophical mistakes in the assumptions they make about the conditions necessary for understanding of utterances”¹⁷. Koselleck is also interested in this issue, even though his approach tends to be somewhat contextualizing. Their common starting point is a critical attitude towards inconsistent and incoherent usage of concepts (Koselleck repeatedly emphasizes the difference between *word* and *concept*) that are related to the present or to diverse periods of the past. A concept may be designated by several words and terms, and sometimes these several expressions must be tracked down in order to chart a history of a given concept. The plurality of vocabulary for the same concept is the main source of historical misunderstanding and anachronisms. An appropriate understanding of the concepts in question would help one avoid the danger of such misunderstandings. They both argue that the main changes and conflicts of the early modern period (which is their primary field of investigation) become understandable by the interpretation of the most important concepts. Skinner also clarifies the difference between *word* and *concept*. In his essay *Language and Political Change*, he argues that it cannot be a sufficient condition of our possessing a concept that we understand the correct application of a corresponding term, “There is still the possibility that I may believe myself to be in a possession of a concept when this belief is in fact mistaken”¹⁸. According to Skinner, misunderstanding most often results from the mistakes that historians make while interpreting texts; despite the fact that intellectual history is marked by the employment of a stable

¹⁶ Quentin Skinner, *Meaning and Understanding*, 30.

¹⁷ Quentin Skinner, , *Meaning and Understanding*, 29.

¹⁸ Quentin Skinner, , *Language and political change*, in Terence Ball (ed.), *Political innovation and conceptual change* (Cambridge University Press, 1989). p. 8.

vocabulary of characteristic concepts, very often with invariable forms, there can be considerable shifting in their meaning depending on the type of discourse¹⁹. Continuities in political and social language can persist despite changes in circumstances, while shifts may occur in the words or expressions designating a concept in the same or different periods.

These concepts might play a crucial role in the different kinds of acts of misunderstanding (*mythologies*)²⁰. The similarities of certain concepts in form can lead us to misinterpret, or even to judge texts and thinkers. One of Skinner's concrete examples is Machiavelli, whose usage of concepts can be easily misunderstood. In his usage of some formally invariable concepts, Machiavelli may appear as an irreligious and immoral person who is to be condemned. But such judgment would be based on a grave anachronism, namely on the idea that we judge or praise the authors of the past "according how far they may seem to have aspired to the condition of being ourselves"²¹. In other words, if one is unaware of the fact that Machiavelli is using formally invariable concepts with a very new meaning, one can fall prey to an anachronistic reading. If one does not take into account this important change in meaning, the process of understanding (which has to be completed by the reconstruction of the double "meaning") will be irreversibly distorted.²² Additionally, the interpretation of concepts in Skinner's approach is related to the question of reinterpreting language as an act.

¹⁹ See also J. G. A. Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time essays on political thought and history*. (Cambridge: CUP, 1970)

²⁰ Skinner makes the difference clear between several types of so-called *mythologies* that are able to make the understanding distorted, and that are the main reasons of anachronisms in the textual interpretation: the most important mythologies are that of the doctrines, coherence and *prolepsys*. Skinner, Quentin, *Meaning and Understanding*, especially 36-43.

²¹ Skinner, *Meaning and understanding*, 35.

²² *Ibid*, 38.

The emergence of certain political modernities is also due to the changes in semantic structures, according to Koselleck²³, who did his investigations mostly on the early modern German discursive scene. Even though chronological time is related to political events or visible social changes, Koselleck argues that the real cleavages in historical time are rather tied to a fundamental change of experience of time of human beings²⁴, and these changes have a deep influence on the semantic changes of basic political and social concepts.

Their theories diverge when Skinner continues to reconstruct the meaning (sense) of the text and complete it by the question of authorial intention. By doing so, Skinner hopes to fit the vocabulary successfully in its original theoretical and intellectual environments. Moreover, on his view this environment can be correctly reconstructed if one pays enough attention to the political and social vocabulary of a given period. This notion can also be found in Koselleck's theory, though the main question that arises in *Begriffsgeschichte* is: to what extent is a vocabulary, which has been formally invariable for a long time, able to describe the conditions of social and political modernities? This method is a kind of mixture of synchronic and diachronic processes, which, inspired by different scientific traditions, treat the question of semantic structures by highlighting different aspects of the problem. Koselleck does not consider concepts as a part of speech acts; rather, he contextualizes by underlining the role of the aspects that are beyond the language itself, "whoever speaks of modern civil society and simply calls it 'civil society', seemingly tied to the present day, cannot dispense with the traditional meanings of this concept."²⁵ In his article *Three bürgerliche Worlds?*, he demonstrates how a concept can be thematized in different social contexts, how new usages

²³ The dictionary *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* presents these type of concepts (more than 115 ones) and the changes in semantical structures. An excellent analysis of the project: Richter, Melvin, *The History of Political and Social Concepts* (New York: 1995), especially 9-58.

²⁴ Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past*, especially the chapter *Begriffsgeschichte and Social History*, 75-93.

can be determined by previous variations in semantic structures²⁶, and how very divergent experiences can be condensed into strictly different concepts, according to the language. That is why the *Begriffsgeschichte* cannot neglect the synchronic analysis of social and political conditions. Without taking into account this analysis, understanding the function and importance of these concepts would be problematic. According to Koselleck, by examining concepts, one can really understand the significant changes in the past since such shifts are related to the fundamental changes of the mind of the actors of a society rather than to great historic events; the real cleavages are the changes of the most important (social and political) concepts. This phenomenon becomes evident in the recognition of the fact that people's consciousness can deeply change from generation to generation, and such changes leave traces in the semantic structure of the concepts used by these different generations²⁷. Here one can see a fundamental difference between Koselleck's approach and that of Skinner, namely the role of the *longue durée*, in which different understandings become intelligible. Moreover, it would be misleading to argue that this sort of diachronism is the most important aspect of *Begriffsgeschichte*, even if at first glance it appears to be; it is in the aspect of a process that the most important changes become discernable.

Skinner chooses another method to make innovative usages of concepts visible. He dismisses the pure textual and contextual approaches, and instead focuses on the intentions (and/or more exactly the intention of the authors²⁸) in order to make the innovations and new usages of concepts more intelligible²⁹. This proposition is already different from Koselleck's

²⁵ Reinhart Koselleck, "Three bürgerliche Worlds? Preliminary Theoretical-Historical Remarks on the Comparative Semantics of Civil Society in Germany, England and France", in idem., *The Practice of Conceptual History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press: 2002), 209.

²⁶ also in Koselleck, Reinhart, *Futures Past*, 78.

²⁷ One of Koselleck's most elaborate examples is the appearance of the so called future-oriented concepts in the 18th century.

²⁸ In discussing authorial intention, he adapts certain aspects of the speech act theory, which concerns illocutionary and perlocutionary acts.

²⁹ Quentin Skinner, *Meaning and Understanding*, 63.

approach, which holds that without common concepts there is no society and, above all, no political field of action³⁰. Consequently, on such view, the relationship between a society and its ensemble of concepts is burdened and complicated. Terence Ball adds the following question to this train of thought: which concepts are to be the common coin of discourse, given the constant conflict of concepts and their users³¹? In my view, the synchronic analysis is assigned an important role at this point: the investigation of a conceptual framework of a given source (which can be a speech act) has to be completed, if possible, by other types of political actions, which are not necessarily speech acts, in order to avoid distorted results of a conceptual vacuum. That phenomenon can be hereafter investigated on a diachronic scale, and different types of sources of political action can supplement our understanding of them. Moreover, the investigation of a source using this conceptual approach is always just a photograph which has to be completed and placed on a larger scale, as mentioned above. This issue is crucial in the analysis of my primary *corpus*.

An attempt at harmonizing the views of Skinner and Koselleck does not seem hopeless because conceptual investigation and reconstruction of individual intentionality do not mutually exclude one another. Despite a great number of differences, the common features can fit within the framework of different subjects of investigation. The basic intention of both approaches is grounded in the same critical attitude toward antihistoricity and anachronistic projection of the usage of discursive elements. The individual act and the collective framework can and should complete each other. Moreover, individual acts are always embedded in collective (discursive) frameworks; it is in these collective and horizontal environments that these (speech) acts become intelligible. An entire research project can be based on the harmonization of these approaches, with the aim of combining, if possible, the

³⁰ Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 76.

³¹ Terence Ball, *Transforming Political Discourse*, (Oxford: 1988), 9.

two directions (on the one hand, individual intention vs. discursive environment, and on the other, the problem of diachronic changes). Of course, it must be noted that such a combination is not always possible in all fields of investigation.

We can state that both of these approaches, which analyze and observe the usage and the emergence of concepts and terms that are relevant from the point of view of social and intellectual history, are special ways of approaching the sources critically. One of the main aims of both of these approaches is to avoid anachronisms, however, due to different historiography traditions, their answers reveal diverse elements. Perhaps a more productive comparison of the two approaches and their basic assumptions would adapt them to concrete subjects of investigation, and determine different points of relevance in an effort to clarify the difference between the main goals.

1.2. Possibilities of Using Methods

The question concerning the possibilities of making use of the results of these approaches in other fields of historical investigation automatically arises. Could these methods, especially in combination with one another, work in other social and cultural contexts³²? Although Skinner frequently notes that the problem of understanding, and consequently the method he suggests, is the same in the case of a work of literature or philosophy³³, he does not mention the implications of different geographical contexts for the application of his methods. That is, the search for an answer to the question of feasibility of such methods is further complicated when one becomes aware that both Skinner's and

³² An example of the adaptation of Begriffsgeschichte on the French social and political conditions; Reichardt, Rolf – Schmitt, Eberhard, (dir.), *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich 1680-1820*, (München: 1985).

³³ Quentin Skinner, *Meaning and Understanding*, 29.

Koselleck's works are based on sources and materials that are very different from those of the East-Central European context in the early modern period, and consequently differ significantly in their meanings. While the English and German ways of conceptual history or contextualism can be combined in various ways depending on the nature of the field of investigation, the East-Central European (including Hungarian) case seems more problematic. Even though the basic assumptions (the link between the conceptual and political change, the importance of vertical and horizontal ways of investigation) seem to be relevant, one faces a number of problems. At this point I would like to discuss the problematic phenomena of the unity (or fragmentation) of Enlightenment. This question, already indicating an enormous difference between the western and eastern part of Europe, if one may employ this rather simplified dichotomy, seems very relevant in terms of conceptual issues. One of the most serious challenges is the crucial role of cultural transfers in several segments of culture, as well as in political thought. This phenomenon is a challenging dilemma for a historian who plans to devote his work to a diachronic analysis (*à la Koselleck*) of the social and political language of the second half of the 18th century in Hungary (or in other parts of the region). Because of the great number of adaptations (by translations etc.) from different parts of the "more developed" half of Europe, the necessary coherence of a linear development is very problematic. One solution might be a certain type of "transnational" view of these phenomena that does not exclude some aspect of *Begriffsgeschichte* and speech act analysis. In relation to the transnational approach it is worth making a brief digression concerning the abstract idea of *culture*. From this point of view, the unity of a given national culture seems rather questionable, especially at the end of the 18th century. Moreover, we can say that a given (national) culture appropriates in many different ways a number of elements during its evolution, which, like the culture itself, is generally an artificial construction. The reasons for

such an appropriation could be numerous, but gradually, these elements become integrated as essential components of a local or national identity³⁴.

Some historians are already rethinking certain segments of European history from the angle of encounters of diverse cultures and their connections with each other. Moreover, such an investigation calls for a very unusual definition of culture. This scientific intention is related to the most recent comparative approaches, as well as to the question and role of cultural transfers in historical investigation. This new approach rejects the traditional idea of the definition of culture, which only considers the central norms and standards of a given society, the high culture of the elites. Instead, it takes into account and investigates every symbolic and material form of all kinds of human activities. Hence, this approach presupposes that a culture cannot be described as one or several fixed points to which certain values are attached. On this view, Culture is rather a mobile inventory of human values and rules of human interaction: due to people whose cultural activity is undoubtedly active, it undergoes a constant process of change. That is, culture is always changing; it is a process that is being formed by various kinds of transnational interactions. During this process, certain elements become assimilated and adapted, thereby transforming the culture on a regular basis. Even though national cultures have played a crucial role in modern history, new comparative approaches and investigations are needed in contemporary historiography, one of the most important fields of which is the question of culture³⁵. Additionally, these cultural issues played a crucial role at the end of the eighteenth century, even in East-Central Europe.

³⁴ Mention must be made of a volume which gives a number of examples of this phenomenon: Werner, Michael–Zimmermann, Bénédicte (dir.), *De la comparaison à l'histoire croisée* (Paris: 2004). We have to remark that the notion of *identity* is also complex and problematic. See Laclau, Ernesto (ed.), *The making of political identities*, (London: 1994).

³⁵ One of the most recent and most influential approaches of a new type of comparison, with very sensitive methodological and theoretical issues, and with an effective applicability is the so-called *histoire croisée*. The „manifest” of this method: Werner, Michael – Zimmermann, Bénédicte, *Penser l'histoire croisée: entre empirie et réflexivité*, dans *Annales HSS*, janvier-février, 2003, also see Espagne, Michel – werner, Michael, *Les*

Of course, this problem of a constantly changing culture is inseparable from the problem of the genesis of national identities and nationalisms. National identities, born mostly in the nineteenth century, are not natural facts, but rather creations or constructions³⁶. The processes of identity constructions transform neutral components of the past in order to create a basis for a given national identity. The genesis of national identities is still subject to debate among contemporary historians, who represent completely different approaches to the origin of nationalisms. Furthermore, these phenomena of the genesis of national identities concern intercultural exchanges (this seems particularly true in the Hungarian case). A number of studies has already revealed the main components of such a process.³⁷ Patriotic militancy and transnational exchanges of ideas created entire divergent identities. Moreover, the birth of a coherent political vocabulary is also an important part of the mentioned process. In order to find a pretext for creating a modern nation, thinkers and politicians appeal to strict definitions of concepts which are not new in their forms, but rather in their semantic structures, which are renewed or transformed, from the point of view of the national identity. The modernist approaches are the focus of several critics who argue that the origins of the so-called modern national identities reach back to the early modern period. The conceptual issues point to another problematic phenomenon, namely, the question of the existence of Enlightenment in

transferts culturels franco-allemands (Paris, PUF: 1999), *De la comparaison à l'histoire croisée*, dir, Michael Werner – Bénédicte Zimmermann, (Paris, Seuil: 2004).

³⁶ It is difficult to in such a short writing the most relevant and controversial points of the different nationalism theories. Just for mentioning some examples among the „modernist” and „ethniciste” theories that shows very often interesting aspects of the East-Central European context: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* (London: 1991), Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Oxford: 1998), Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1983), Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1990), Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe, A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups Among the Smaller European Nations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* Conférence faite en Sorbonne, le 11 mars 1882. in : *Œuvres complètes 1*, 887-906, A. D. Smiths, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: 1987), Alain Dieckhoff, *La nation dans tous ses Etats, Les identités nationales en mouvement* (Paris, Flammarion: 2000).

³⁷ Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La Création des identités nationales* (Paris, Seuil: 1999), 23-83.

East-Central Europe³⁸. Although the question of whether this part of Europe had Enlightenment or not can be investigated through the lens of conceptual approaches³⁹, comparative perspectives are also indispensable if one is to arrive at a more precise answer.

1.3. Political Languages

The approach which has become widespread due to the work of the previously discussed Cambridge School suggests that in investigating the history of ideas, one has to devote himself to the examination of different political languages and modalities instead reconstructing the history of the development of certain ideas in grand narratives⁴⁰. The identification of different political languages, however, is by no means an easy task, especially in a context where transfers and multiethnic conditions play such a crucial role. However, it can be a good approach if we aim to identify different systems of argumentations, conceptual framework or political language (the label is not even that important in this case). The most important thing to grab is the concrete framework of the given discourse that consists of a more or less coherent vocabulary, even though the shifting of the concepts make the given language more interesting, but sometimes harder to identify if we want to avoid the arbitrary categorization. It is also important to mention, that these discursive unities seem to be quite uncertain, since their existence, or their “discovery” depends on the historian, more exactly on the chosen investigated subject, which is in my case the conceptualization of the

³⁸ For a detailed presentation of the problem, see: László Kontler, “The Enlightenment in Central Europe?”, in Balázs Trencsényi and Michal Kopecek (eds.), *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central Southeast Europe (1770-1945)* (CEU Press: 2006-2007), vol. 1, 33-44.

³⁹ A good example of this conceptual analysis is given by Richard Butterwick who examined changes in the semantic structure of the concept of *oswiecenie* in Poland: Richard Butterwick, *What is Enlightenment (Oswiecenie)? Some Polish answers, 1765-1820*, *Central-Europe* 3/1, 2005, 19-37.

⁴⁰ See especially J. G. A. Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time essays on political thought and history*. (Cambridge: CUP, 1970). J. G. A. Pocock, “The Concept of a Language and the métier d'historien. Some Consideration on Practice in Anthony Pagden (ed.) *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*. (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1990)

community. The question of the intention and the usage of concepts become definitely important in this way, since they seem to be able to complete the analysis based on the identification of the diverse political utterances and their “mixture”.

Through an investigation of the most important subjects of the epoch, it becomes possible to pinpoint the complex character of different types of discourses, and the semantic complexity of certain concepts. But how could one describe these discursive panels and political languages? First, the subjects of the written materials can be of great help, since the political-social vocabulary is used more or less coherently (and sometimes subversively) in terms of any given subject. In order to clarify the difference between them, I would like to approach the concept of community from the angles of different types political languages.

The concept of *communitas* is definitely one of the most important issues, and it is also represented by different modalities and different types of discourses. These discourses are mostly affected by their local conditions; the role of the social-cultural (e. g. confession, education) context is also crucial.

Taking into account these approaches I would like to identify the different types of political discourses in the sources of the period in question, and to argue that even though it is possible to differentiate between diverse types of political languages and their vocabulary, the borderline between them is not necessarily fixed since they are connected by shifting concepts that can be found in several discourses at once. I would like to focus on such shifts in relation to the idea of the collective identity and its semantic matrix in different types of discourses.

Chapter 2. The Hungarian Context

2.1. The Role of the Transfers

Transfers seem to play a crucial role in the creation of Hungarian national identity, especially in the eighteenth century. The transfer relations between France and Hungary are fairly unilateral or uni-directional. However, one must take into consideration the usage of the French cultural transfers, which arrived in a complex, not institutionalized discursive space. This is true for the last decade of the eighteenth century, when a number of elements of political thought were adapted by thinkers writing in Hungarian (but very often in German and in Latin as well). This phenomenon marks an important early phase of the process of Hungarian nation building, in which cultural transfers have a peculiar role. At this time, Hungary maintains a very strict political, economic and cultural relationship with German and Austrian territories, the latter of which is contained in the framework of the same empire⁴¹. The geographical proximity is already favorable. But in a characteristic way, the Hungarian elite – the definition of which is rather complicated – remains in permanent contact with France of the Enlightenment and revolutionary epoch⁴². The thinkers in Hungary very often respond in a subtle way to the politico-cultural events of the Revolution and to the main works of the previous decades of the Enlightenment. In this process, some elements are assimilated to the new social and political context. However, they cannot be investigated in the same way, as the assimilation of these elements (concepts) is more than a simple “journey” of certain political or cultural influences. As I will try to demonstrate, in several

⁴¹ Even if this relation is really complex and complicated in the legal, political and economic sense.

⁴² The first figures of this tendency can be found in Vienna, in the immediate environment of the sovereign: Deme László, *MariaTheresa's noble lifeguards and the Rise of the Hungarian Enlightenment and Nationalism*, in: Béla K. Király and Walter Scott Dillard, (ed.), *The East-Central European Officer Corps, 1740-1920's: Social Origins, Selection, Education, and Training* (1988), 197-212.

cases that different types of reception do not necessarily mean the lack of original answers to the political and social phenomena of a given context.

The *Diéta*⁴³, meeting in Buda in June of 1790, brought an abundance of written political material, unprecedented in its history, to the countries under the Hungarian crown, as well as to the other parts of the Empire. This rich pamphlet literature anticipated and later accompanied the failure, in a political sense, of the Josephist system. Concerning the subject of the *Diéta*, an enormous number of pamphlets was written. At this time, a new public discourse, which parallels the resistance against the absolutism of the sovereign in Hungary, began to develop. The dances and costumes considered as traditionally Hungarian, as well as other elements of folklore became very popular again. *Germanophobia* gained more support and strength. At the same time, the ancient theories of continuity between Huns and Hungarians, which were already used for some time in the eighteenth century by Hungarian nobility against the Habsburgs in order to affirm and prove their political rights, arrived at a new point of vitality. Moreover, the pamphlet genre became fairly common in the Hungarian Kingdom by the second half of the eighteenth century and even earlier.⁴⁴ However, it was not until the Josephist era that this genre came into full force.

After each royal order of Joseph II a great number of pamphlets emerges. These pamphlets tried to predict the effects of new laws and royal orders, and make use of the occasion to criticize the governing style of the sovereign. At the end of the preceding era, marked by the reign of Joseph II, opponents of the regime were forced to engage in a theoretical debate which manifested itself publicly in different ways, the most widespread of which was the political pamphlet. The pamphleteers of the day were members of at least two easily distinguishable groups with different political agendas: the representatives of the

⁴³ Contemporary name of the „parliament” or Diet in Hungary.

⁴⁴ Ballagi Géza, *Politikai irodalom Magyarországon 1825-ig* (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1888).

traditional feudal resistance, adopting parts the Enlightenment's political thought, and a more radical group, made up of members of the nobility and intellectuals, who based their ideas on the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*. Inspired by contemporary works of the French Enlightenment, Hungarian authors emphasized the need for the creation of the modern Hungarian nation.

In this process, new ideas and understanding of the concept of community/*societas* (or more precisely its semantic matrix) emerged, and became one of the main topics of public debates among Hungarian thinkers and politicians. The authors also began to use regularly, and with a certain coherence, concepts designating communities, already mentioned in the introduction, like *nemzet* (nation), and its semantic matrix, such as *haza* (homeland, Fatherland), *szabadság* (freedom), *polgár* (citizen), *nemzeti nyelv* (national language), or *alkotmány* (constitution), thereby creating a political vocabulary in order to encourage social changes that were long overdue. The two last decades of the eighteenth century (especially until 1795) were an interesting era from the point of view of history of ideas. In this period a lot of questions arose, and a great number of thinkers react to them by elaborating theoretical or more practical responses. These thinkers, mostly but not exclusively of noble origins, revealed their opinion concerning the social and political changes of the Josephist era. They disclose, sometimes in a very progressive way, their ideas concerning the necessity of a “constitutional” and independent Hungary by writing pamphlets, draft constitutions, or even by translating foreigner political and philosophical works. The pamphlets are more philosophical and theoretical in orientation; the plans of constitutions, on the other hand, are rather concerned with practical questions. This cleavage in orientation, however, is by no means absolute. Of course, an analysis of other types of literary genres⁴⁵ is indispensable, since the political concepts of a given period cannot be related to only one kind of discursive

⁴⁵ Mostly poems and theatrical works.

manifestation, as is true of our case; these types constitute only a part of a larger discursive framework which determines their usages and semantic structures⁴⁶. The pamphlets written around 1790-1791 can be considered as real speech acts. The intentionalities, which frequently depend on the authors' social position and origins, and dilemmas of these authors often emerge in a characteristic way.

Independently of the discontinuities which characterized the development of social and political thought in Hungary, the last third of the eighteenth century can be considered as a transitional period in modernity, related to the adaptation of the intellectual results of the Enlightenment, which can be observed in conceptual issues. One of the main dilemmas of the authors was the difficulty of redefining certain existing concepts in the pre-modern vocabulary through an application of different semantic meanings to already existing terms, generally without any formal changes. Skinner remarks, that a reliable indicator of a group or a society's conscious possession of a new concept is the development of a corresponding vocabulary, which can be used to pick out and discuss concepts with consistency⁴⁷. The situation in Hungary, as described above, is very similar to this statement of Skinner. Hungarian political literature revealed a certain confusion about the new concept, or rather, concepts of community, since there was no real consistency in the usage of this term. The authors provide different criteria concerning their affiliation with a community, also designed by different corresponding terms. Some of these criteria exhibit elements which were clearly derived from the western enlightened traditions, while others show innovation. The confusion in the terminology reveals a serious inconsistency in the usage (the question of the effort of

⁴⁶ Mention must be made of the (im)possibility of coherence or consistency in certain authors, as developed by Pocock. See, J. G. A. Pocock, *Verbalizing a political act: toward a politics of speech*, in: Michael Shapiro (eds.) *Language and politics* (Oxford: 1984).

⁴⁷ Quentin Skinner, *Language and political change*, in Terence Ball (ed.), *Political innovation and conceptual change* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1989), 8.

the extension of rights, culture, religion, “national” language etc. can be the examples)⁴⁸. One must be careful to avoid the big pitfalls of such an analysis

The corpus seems appropriate from the point of view, that the actors are not necessarily the biggest names of their time. The individual usage of the conceptual framework, their questions and answers are possible to analyze, instead of giving them the evident label of „enlightened“ (or other ones)⁴⁹. Additionally, comparative aspects provide further research possibilities. By employing this approach, one can analyze how the above-mentioned concepts were used by Hungarian authors, and how their original meaning was transformed in a public political discourse, which was fundamentally different from its French and German counterpart. It is also important to investigate the way the use of the idea of *societas*/community and of symmetrical and asymmetrical concepts varied according to the social embeddedness of the author, and to examine this process in the wider context of uniformity and fragmentation of the European Enlightenment. The aim of my thesis is to construct a photographic image of the usage and semantic structures of the above-mentioned concepts (synchronic description) in this period in order to make a diachronic investigation of the earlier periods of Hungarian political literature possible⁵⁰. I want to emphasize that for a coherent image of the nature of political discourses, the analysis must be completed by other discursive frameworks of the period (e.g. the sources of the *Diéta*). In the future, as an extension of my research, it would be possible to present a connection between the use of language and the relevant social historical questions of the period, as well as to examine these concepts as cultural transfers vacillating between two or more different social and political contexts, or to compare the Hungarian case to different parts of the East-Central European region, which show similarities in these issues (e.g. Poland). By observing how these concepts

⁴⁸ Báróczi, Aranka, Szaitz, Rácz, Gáti, Darvas, Szatsvay can be mentioned as examples. See chapter 3.

⁴⁹ The idea of „no obsession with big names” seems particularly important in the Hungarian context.

were used in political literature, one can pinpoint certain implicit characteristics of different social phenomena. In this way, a systematic analysis of the discursive environment in East-Central Europe can contribute to the methodological and theoretical issues noted above. Finally, an attempt to find a balance between textual reconstruction and contextualism in the process of applying the above-discussed methodology to a concrete subject of investigation is an additional challenge implicitly addressed in my thesis.

2.2. Political Constellations

Although an analysis of the internal and external political situation of the Hungarian Kingdom is beyond the scope of my research, it is useful to have a glance at the most problematic issues which can affect the understanding of political utterances of the period. One of the most important questions is the definition of the Habsburg Monarchy itself, as well as that of the relationship between the Empire and the Hungarian Kingdom. The nature of this relationship, which was the subject of various political discourses in different ways, was clear neither in the eighteenth nor in the nineteenth century. The various phenomena of the complex political constellation are verbalized in the form of different types of writings, but are nevertheless related to the (external as well as internal) political and social situation, not to mention the social cultural background of the actors.

Hungary is one of the most important parts of the Empire in terms of its size and its population, even if the notion of Hungarian Kingdom often corresponds to different entities⁵¹. In the eighteenth century several laws mention the position of Hungary in the Empire, but due to the fact that they emerge from different political conditions, they approach the question

⁵⁰ These early periods were partly investigated from conceptual point of view by Hungarian historians: Kristó Gyula, *A magyar nemzet megszületése* (Kossuth Kiadó: 1998), Szűcs Jenő, *A magyar nemzeti tudat kialakulása*, (Budapest: 1997).

differently⁵². The importance of the *Pragmatica Sanctio* from the point of view of political discourses lies in the idea that the act of reinforcing the privileges of the orders returned in different forms in later political utterances. Article X in 1791 states that Hungary is a free country, which must be administered by its own (partly unwritten) laws, traditions and practices, and cannot be subjected to any other country or people⁵³. These customs and conditions consist above all of the laws of the *Corpus Juris*, the customs compiled by Werbőczy in the *Tripartitum*, and in the *Plenum Tabulare*. At the same time, the laws of the hereditary provinces are completely different. However, in terms of the independence, I want to emphasize that Hungary enjoyed only a relative autonomy in the framework of the Monarchy. This autonomy to some extent concerns the legislation, administration and jurisdiction⁵⁴. Hungary contributed to the creation of a central army for a defined aim: the nobility participated in an effective way in the military defense (*insurrectio*). When it was needed, the sovereign was allowed to convoke the *insurrectio*⁵⁵. This type of “tax”, with the *subsidium*, was a burden which the nobility had to bear⁵⁶, even if it benefited from the traditional exemption of taxes. However, we can state that “the payment of taxes with blood” was quite often a reality⁵⁷. For instance, Koppi’s draft constitution, which shows interesting

⁵¹ We can make the difference clear between the Hungary in the narrow sense and the Hungarian Kingdom that contains Croatia (called Croatia-Slavonia at that time) of which the territory was 324 857 km². See Schwartner

⁵² For instance, the *Pragmatica Sanctio*, ratified by every assembly of the Habsburg Empire, but last time by the Hungarian Diete, recognizes the hereditary right on the Hungarian throne of the female members of the Habsburg family. As an exchange, the dynasty reinforces the privileges of the feudal orders. Hungarian historiography has always had the tendency to put the emphasis on the inseparability of the Hungarian Kingdom (article II), by obscuring the fact that basically every country of the Monarchy ratified the *Pragmatica Sanctio*. Moreover, this act emphasized a sort of integration of the provinces, even though it is problematic to speak about a very integrated unity.

⁵³ “[...] szabad, független, azaz semmi más országnak vagy népnek alá nem vetett, hanem saját állami léttel és alkotmánnyal bíró, [...] tulajdon törvényei és szokásai szerint igazgató és kormányozandó ország.” Citation extraite de : Pajkossy Gábor (dir), *Magyarország története a 19. században, szöveggyűjtemény*, (Budapest: 2003), 54.

⁵⁴ This happened only twice during the eighteenth century (1741, 1744). For the system of the local governments and further information concerning the complicated administrative system: Marczali Henrik, *Az 1790/1-diki országgyűlés*. (Budapest: 1907.), Mályusz Elemér, *Sándor Lipót főherceg nádor iratai, 1790-1795*, (Budapest: 1926.)

⁵⁵ Szijártó M. István, *Nemesi társadalom és politika*, (Budapest: 2006), 150.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 152.

parallels with the contemporaneous French political thought, is one of the most radical examples at that time⁵⁸.

As I have tried to sketch, in the eighteenth century, Hungary was in a really ambiguous political situation within the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy. It is a strange situation in the politico-juridical sense, since theoretically Hungary is a country to be administered according to its own laws; its affairs have to be separated from those of the Monarchy, with which it is nevertheless in an indissoluble framework by a personal union. In the modern sense, the constitutional situation can be explained as follows: on the strictest interpretation, the ruler cannot make any decision that was not submitted to the Diet in the form of a proposition of a law. Without the consent of the Diet, the ruler cannot make use of the legislative power. However, in a sense, this situation also means that, in theory, none of the problems or political phenomena which in one way or another concern the country can be solved or handled unilaterally by the ruler and his advisors. This contradictory situation gives occasion to permanent political and constitutional debates from several angles in various discursive forms⁵⁹.

Besides the political constellation, it would also be beneficial to have a glance at the characteristic features of the demographic conditions of the Hungarian Kingdom. According to the population count of Joseph II, the population of the territories of the Hungarian Crown comprised of 9.5 million people, and of 6.5 million people exclusively on the territory of Hungary⁶⁰. It is necessary to note that due to several waves of colonization and repopulation, the ethnic, linguistic, confessional and demographic map of the country changed considerably in the eighteenth century. The basic knowledge of these facts and conditions is indispensable

⁵⁸ For Koppi in Hungarian: Balogh Piroška, “...*ut nulla Historiarum vos unquam statietas capiat.*” Koppi Károly történetészprofesszori székfoglaló előadása 1784-ből. in : *Sic itur ad astra*, n° 4, 2000, 13-47.

⁵⁹ See in a greater detail in chapter 3.

for understanding some references in the political discourses at the end of the eighteenth century. However, the official statistics do not take into account the ethnicities that were counted for the first time in 1851. According to Fényes, seven different ethnic groups could be found on the territory of the country at that time⁶¹. The Hungarian group is the largest one, even though its number did not reach fifty percent of the entire population. This group was also the most influential in the social and economic sense, and was concentrated in the central part of the country, occupying the most fertile lands⁶². Moreover, the confessional map of the country was by no means less complex⁶³. This confessional and ethnic variety is an important factor since it determined social mechanisms at that time, and had a powerful influence on social relations and political discourse.

⁶⁰ Transylvania: 1.44 million; Military Territories: 700 thousands; Croatia and Slavonia altogether: 650 thousands.

⁶¹ The biggest group is that of the Magyars 4.8 million including Transylvania, (37% of the total population). The other groups are: Romanians (17%), Slovaks (13%), Germans (9.8%), Serbs (9.7%), Croats (7%), Ruthens (3.5%). See Fényes Elek, *Statistik des Königreichs Ungarn*, (Pest: 1843-1844), 2 vol. However, it is important to mention that only the Hungarians had a complete society, including nobility, *bourgeoisie*, non-noble elites and peasants.

⁶² For the history of ethnic conditions: Szekfű Gyula, *Állam és nemzet*, (Budapest: 1942), 128-177, Arató Endre. *A nemzetiségi kérdés története Magyarországon 1790-1840*. (Budapest: 1960.)

⁶³ The seven ethnic groups belong to seven different confessions (six Christian confessions with two Catholic and three Protestant branches). These confessions are: Catholics (47.5% - Hungarians, Germans, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats), Orthodox (18% - Romanians, Serbs), Calvinists (14% - almost exclusively Hungarians), Greek Catholics (10% - Ruthens, Romanians, Hungarians), Lutherans (8% - Slovaks, Germans, Hungarians), Unitarians (0.4% - Hungarians). The only non-Christian religion, the Jewish includes around 80.000 people. The combination between ethnic groups and confessions is numerous. Only a few confessions can be considered as heterogenic: the Unitarians are all Hungarians; two ethnic groups belong to only one confession: the Croats are all Roman Catholics, and the Ruthens are all Greek Catholics.

2.3. Political Literature of the Period in Hungary

The last decade of the eighteenth century, as I have tried to demonstrate, is a problematic period since it raises a lot of political and social questions and challenges. It is, above all, a period in which new social and political phenomena arise, and a period in which the actors of the society try to express, in a conscious or less conscious way, the complexity of the political life.

The two major types of political literature at that time, especially in 1790-72, are pamphlets and draft constitutions⁶⁴. Through these types of writing, thinkers express their opinion on social and political issues. The cleavage between them is far from obvious, but in general the pamphlets express a more philosophical branch, while the draft constitutions primarily focus on practical issues, though they frequently engage with political-philosophical elements as well. One can make a rather general statement that the political debates in Hungary are more active than in the hereditary provinces or other parts of the Habsburg Monarchy. In the case of the latter territories, Leopold II managed to pacify the resistance and reestablish royal power relatively easily by reinforcing privileges. However, in Hungary, the situation is more demanding. A more radical movement interprets Hungarian liberty through a characteristic incorporation of the social contract theory into the draft constitutions. According to this movement, Joseph II, in governing without convoking the Diet, forfeited the rights of the Habsburgs to the Hungarian Crown, and broke the contract with the Hungarian nation. The nation (very often nation means the nobility of the same rights in the pamphlets), therefore, has the right to reclaim its rights and to choose a sovereign on its own⁶⁵. In the draft constitutions, the main type of political discourse is organized around the concept of the good sovereign, for whom the most important features requirements are the taking of the

⁶⁴ See in greater details in the next chapter.

indispensable coronation oath and the possession of the coronation diploma⁶⁶. The concept of constitution affects the discourse of these kinds of drafts, since the meaning of constitution is intentionally opposed to its widespread usage during that epoch⁶⁷. Koppi, who did not come from a noble family, but, as a history professor, was rather part of the Hungarian intelligentsia, was able to transform the concept of constitution and introduce a new vocabulary into the public political discourse.

2.3.1. Pamphlets in Hungary and the Monarchy

First, I have to clarify which type of political writing I consider a pamphlet. In this thesis, I do not use the term “pamphlet” in the common and most widespread sense. According to the common usage, a pamphlet has characteristic features concerning form and content. The pamphlet in its original sense designates a thin, generally but not necessarily unbent, booklet with a hard cover or binding. Very often it may consist of a single sheet of paper with print on both sides. When it is folded in half, thirds, or fourths, it is often called a leaflet. However, in most of the cases a pamphlet consists of a few pages that are folded in half and stapled at the crease to make a simple book. The genre of the pamphlet in the original sense was already in use in Hungary in the second half of the eighteenth century⁶⁸. But during the Josephist period, this form of writing, not always having the literary marks of the *pasquillus* itself, became even more important. In stimulating vitality in the public sphere, these writings gain a new function and purpose, and begin to gradually lose the literary

⁶⁵ *Verwirkungstheorie*: Originally, the expression comes from Leopold I, who state in the 1680's that Hungarians, due to their resistance, lost the right of the self-government.

⁶⁶ Péter Balogh, Károly Koppi, Sámuel Teleki. See Marczali Az 1790/91 évi orsz

⁶⁷ See the question of the constitution in the next chapter.

⁶⁸ Ballagi Géza, *A politikai irodalom Magyarországon 1825-ig*, Budapest, 1888, p. 347.

criteria of the original *pasquillus*⁶⁹. In this thesis, I use the term “pamphlet” in a looser sense to refer to every piece of writing, which deals with relevant social-political questions from diverse points of view, and the length of which varies from one to about fifty pages. I feel justified in assigning these writings the label of “pamphlets” because the features of the original pamphlet genre disappeared in the usage of the authors themselves, and even historiography seems inconsistent concerning this terminology. I will use the term *pasquillus* to refer to the works which preserved more of the original marks of the genre.

As for their content, pamphlets can be concerned with anything from everyday practical questions to political, religious, or philosophical issues. It is important to mention that pamphlets play a crucial role in the change of the public discourse since they are cheap to produce, and easy to circulate and distribute to those who are interested in them. The pamphlet is by no means the invention of the eighteenth century, and is not even a novel genre for Hungary at that time; the genre of the *opusculum*, mostly dealing with religious questions, was already widespread in the earlier centuries in the Hungarian Kingdom⁷⁰.

After each patent, regardless of its importance, a whole series of writings, dealing with opinions concerning the new laws and orders, emerged (mostly) on Austrian territories⁷¹. Historians and literary historians consider the 1780's as a period when the number of printed materials is increasing considerably, as compared with the previous decades. At this time,

⁶⁹ For the *pasquillus* literature of that time: *Külömb-külömb féle jó és rossz szagú virágokkal tellyes kert. Pasquillusok a XVII-XVIII. századból*, (Budapest: 1989)

⁷⁰ Among the many examples: Erdődy Gábor, *Opusculum theologicum, in quo queritur, an et qualiter possit princeps, magistratus, dominus catholicus, in ditone sua retinere haereticos; vel contra poenis eos, aut exilio ad fidem catholicam amplexendam cogere?*, [s.l.], 1721. For the draft constitutions see Marczali Henrik, *Az 1790/1-diki országgyűlés*. (Budapest: 1907.)

new *ateliers* publish periodicals, journals, books and pamphlets. Several historians have devoted themselves to the investigation of the (political) literature of this epoch: Ernst Wangermann examined a part of the pamphlets in the Monarchy of Habsburgs⁷², and Horst Haselsteiner and Marianne Lunzer investigated the critical materials concerning the reign of Joseph II⁷³. The pamphlets disseminated in Hungary were also the research subject of Géza Ballagi in the 19th century⁷⁴. Even though Kálmán Benda⁷⁵ and Éva H. Balázs devoted a large part of their work to this question, Ballagi's monograph (or rather "inventory") is practically the only one which was written in the nineteenth century, with the exception of Győző Concha's⁷⁶.

The forms of these written materials which were circulated in Hungary are various. Although the writers of these pamphlets were influenced by different philosophical works and traditions, frequently responding to one another, their writings were practically always directly inspired by actual political events. The languages of the writings from 1790-92 are Hungarian, German and Latin. The Hungarian pamphlets are numerous, representing different intellectual levels. Géza Fülöp pointed out in one of his works that the readers did not usually

⁷¹ For the nature of these writings: Bodi, Leslie, *Tauwetter in Wien. Zur Prosa der österreichischen Aufklärung, 1781-1795*, (Frankfurt a. M.:1977) 97.

⁷² Wangermann, Ernst, *Von Joseph II. zu den Jakobinerprozessen*, Wien-Frankfurt-Zürich, Europa, 1966 ; *id.*, *Die Reaktionen an die Reformen Josephs II. in der Broschüren-Literatur*, in : Glatz Ferenc (ed.), *A tudomány szolgálatában ? Emlékkönyv Benda Kálmán 80. születésnapjára*, (Budapest: 1993), 249-257. See also Engel-Jánosi, Friedrich, « *Josephs II. Tod im Urteil der Zeitgenossen* », in : *Mitteilung der österreichischen Geschichte*, n° 44, 1930, 324-345, some monographs of Gugitz, Gustav, for example Gugitz, Gustav – von Porthei, Max, *Friedrich Freiherr von der Trenck*, 1921.

⁷³ Haselsteiner, Horst, *Bemerkungen zur Beurteilung Josephs II.*, in : Glatz Ferenc (dir.), *Európa vonzásában. Emlékkönyv Kosáry Domokos 80. születésnapjára*, Budapest, 1993 ; Lunzer, Marianne, *Josephinisches und antijosephinisches Schrifttum*, in: Zöllner, Erich (dir.), *Öffentliche Meinung in der Geschichte Österreichs*, (Wien: 1979), 53-63, see also Rosenstrauch-Königsberg, Edith, *Literatur der Aufklärung 1764-1800*, Wien-Köln-Graz, 1988

⁷⁴ Ballagi Géza, *A politikai irodalom Magyarországon 1825-ig* (Budapest, Franklin Társulat: 1888).

⁷⁵ Benda Kálmán, *Emberbarát vagy hazafi?* (Budapest: 1967).

⁷⁶ Concha Győző, *A kilencvenes évek reformeszméi és előzményeik* (Budapest, Franklin Társulat: 1885).

keep or collect these pamphlets, but circulated them after having read them⁷⁷. It would be difficult to determine the exact number of people whom these writings could reach, however, such questions lie beyond the scope of my investigation, as my primary focus is on the content of these pamphlets from a conceptual perspective rather than on the reception⁷⁸.

In these pamphlets various types of public discourses, which accompanied the decline of the regime of Joseph II, came into being. Moreover, this discourse also contributed to the fall of the political system. Parallel with the resistance to the absolutist policy of the ruler in Hungary, the so-called Hungarian traditions become popular⁷⁹. One can also observe in some of the pamphlets that the common past is being constructed in terms of special perceptions according to the authors' intention⁸⁰.

It is necessary to emphasize that the categorization of the pamphlets is by no means an easy task, even if it is possible to thematically separate them into several groups, such as the writings celebrating some elements of the reign of Joseph II, those attacking the absolutist policy, etc. However, if one's aim is to understand the modalities of the texts and the different intentions of the authors, it would be more useful to divide them according to the different political languages used by certain groups of texts. These political utterances are organized around different concepts, some of which are discussed with more coherency than others, making the borderline between the different languages flexible. These imprecise borderlines

⁷⁷ Géza Fülöp is one of the first experts who tried to focus on the reading culture of the period of the Enlightenment in Hungary, using the sources of that era. He states that the development of the reading culture in Hungary is related to the period of the Enlightenment and to the aspiration to „independence”.

⁷⁸ Here I would like to precise that I am focusing on two collections of political writings, the so-called Ballagi-collection and the Szűry-collection. Both of them were used to be private collections, today they can be found at the Széchényi National Library and the Szabó Ervin library of Budapest.

⁷⁹ For some elements of this noble movement: Benda Kálmán, *Emberbarát, vagy hazafi?*, (Budapest: 1978), 232-287.

⁸⁰ See in chapter 3.

give birth to some sort of a combined, proto-nationalist vocabulary,⁸¹ which is complicated by the adaptation of the elements from other discursive contexts.

⁸¹ Similar assumptions were made by Takáts József, „Politikai beszédmodok a magyar 19. század elején.” *ItK*, 5/6, (1998); 668-686.

Chapter 3. The Community in Different Discourses

Every man has the right to think, but it is primarily the Patriot who has the obligation not only to think about what is either good or harmful for the Patria, but also to express these thoughts as long as they seem useful.⁸²

– Anonymous pamphlet, 1791.

This short quotation from an anonymous pamphlet can be a nice epigram for the subject, since these few, at first glance very simple lines aptly show the main dilemmas of the political thought in Hungary at that time. The responsibility for the Patria, for its development and happiness, is required to anyone who thinks to belong to the community: but how can we exactly define this community? What does the word *Patria* mean in different cases? The authors have different strategies to answer this question in the highly complex social and political conditions of their time. Moreover, in the changing social and political constellations they try to describe the phenomena by different motivations and from different points of view. In this chapter, I would like to identify some systems of argumentation, sometimes dialogues, some interesting usages of concept and individual intention, in which the concept of community has a crucial role.

3.1. Language – a “Political” Basis of an Identity?

The Hungarian language plays a crucial role in the birth of the concept of collective identity. This subject produced a great number of works in Hungarian, mainly in literary

⁸² “Szabad minden embernek szabadon, és igazán gondolkodni, de főképpen a Hazafinak kötelessége is, hogy azokról, melyek Hazájának akár jó, akár mostoha állapotját érdeklik, ne csak gondolkodjon, hanem gondolattait, amennyiben hasznosnak látszanak, ki is nyilatkoztassa.” *Minek a pap az országgyűlésben?*, [s.n.], 1791.

historiography⁸³. Despite the great variety of languages and ethnic groups in the Hungarian Kingdom in the eighteenth century, no real problems were caused by the coexistence of several languages. This relatively peaceful coexistence was upset when the concept of collective identity, based on Hungarian language, appeared in the Hungarian-speaking thinkers' works. The influence of Herder is undoubtedly of crucial importance. As they explain in their works, Hungarian noblemen feared that Herder was right when he wrote in his *History of Mankind* that the Hungarian language would completely disappear in a few centuries⁸⁴. The other example mentioned in the pamphlets is that of the contemporary France. However, although the question of national language existed in France at that time, it was by no means a primary concern at the center of political discourse, unlike in many cases in Hungary. According to an important source concerning the linguistic context in France, *Rapport présenté à la Convention par l'abbé Grégoire [...] sur l'usage du français et des divers patois et jargons...*, French is the mother tongue of less than half of the population⁸⁵. Historians of literature insist that the question of Hungarian language in the 1780's comes up almost exclusively in connection with the question of sciences and literature⁸⁶. Other approaches maintain that despite the increase of the coinage of neologism, the situation of the Hungarian language was so marginal, that the orders of Joseph II did not have to attack it, as from this perspective Hungarian did not really exist in the epoch⁸⁷. Hungarian was far from being spoken by the entire nobility at that time.

In the philosophical debates of the Enlightenment in Western Europe, a more or less standardized and flexible literary language is already at the disposal of the representatives of these different philosophical positions. However, the same cannot be said of the situation in

⁸³ It would be a very long list to enumerate all of these works. See for instance: Bíró Ferenc, *A felvilágosodás korának magyar irodalma*, (Budapest:1998)

⁸⁴ This oracular statement and the work itself were well known in Hungary at that time. Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, Leipzig, 1791), vol 4, 20.

⁸⁵ Daniel Baggioni, *La langue nationale. Problème linguistique et politique*, in: *La Pensée*, n° 1, 1980, 35-49.

⁸⁶ Bíró Ferenc, *A felvilágosodás korának magyar irodalma*, (Budapest:1998), 120.

the Eastern European regions, including Hungary, even though the status of the Hungarian language gradually improved in the public and political life⁸⁸. Since the Hungarian language is rather a marginal language of the nobility, the question arises whether, the requirement of Hungarian as an official language could be taken seriously at that time. The possible causes of this phenomenon are numerous, and the intentions of the authors are sometimes difficult to reconstruct. Irrespective of these problems, what is of importance is that the concept of collectivity becomes more refined with the addition of the common language issue.

It is interesting to see how Hungarian authors express their opinions concerning the importance of a common language for the concept of community. The language is practically the only issue which is discussed in almost all types of discourses, independently of the given vocabulary and of the social and confessional position of the author. However, it is also true that it plays a more important role in the case of the representatives of the high and middle nobility.

Szaitz, a Servite monk originally born to a German family, supports a more conservative view. He defends the rights of a national language, characteristically embedding the concept of this language into the discourse on religious tolerance, derived from the humanist system of argumentation. Repeatedly identifying himself as a determined enemy of the Josephinian system, even though he knows very well the revolutionary events in France, Szaitz argues that the political status of the Hungarian language is to be preserved and to developed. His concept of nation is semantically organized around the language issue. He emphasizes that the usage of the Hungarian language has nothing to do with the extension of the political rights. Even in the case of language, one must follow the traditions of the

⁸⁷ Grünwald Béla, *A régi Magyarország*, [1st ed, 1888.], (Budapest: 2001), 321.

⁸⁸ Latin is the official language until 1844. Moreover, between 1790 and 1844 the Hungarian language became more and more important, including the field of the administration. After the assembly of 1790-1791 Hungarian became a “particular” subject in schools and in the educational program, even though Latin stays the language of administration (1791, article XVI.), partly due to the resistance of the Croatian orders. The laws of 1805 and 1840 (article VI) made the role of the Hungarian language even more crucial. During the first decades of the 19th

previous centuries instead of appealing to neologisms. In this type of political discourse, the notion of the common language is supplemented by the criterion of religious confession: only a Catholic who speaks Hungarian can consider himself a member of the national community⁸⁹. Claiming an etymological connection between the word *magyar* and the name of Mary (*Mária*), Szaitz, a fervent Catholic, considers himself to be such a member. Although Szaitz supports the toleration of the ethnic groups that do not speak Hungarian, he believes that they can never be a part of the nation.

Szaitz, by defending the position of the Catholic Church in his rhetoric, created a characteristic type of discourse combining some elements of the humanist discourse of toleration with the question of the nationality and language. Texts from the Bible were widely used in the controversies on toleration in the previous centuries. Even before the epoch of humanism, the golden rule laid down by Christ – do unto others as you would have them do unto you – grounded the widespread plea for charity among Christians in the early Christian period⁹⁰. Later on, other texts also came to play a crucial role in writings on toleration; one of the most famous texts is the parable of the tares. It is narrated as follows,

There was a man who sowed his field with clean seed; but while all the world was asleep an enemy of his came and scattered tares among the wheat. When this was discovered, his men offered to weed out the tares. But he said, No: or perhaps while you are gathering the tares you will root up the wheat with them. Leave them to grow side by side till harvest, and when harvest time comes I will give the word to the reapers, “Gather up the tares first, and tie them in bundles to be burned, and store the wheat in my barn.”⁹¹

According to Christ’s instruction in the passage, the good and the bad should be allowed to coexist until the Last Judgment⁹². On Szaitz’s interpretation, the role of the Last Judgment is

century the idea of bilingual laws stayed one of the permanent requirements of the Hungarian orders. For the text of the laws see: *Corpus Juris Hungarici*

⁸⁹ Szaitz Leó, *Micsoda vallású volt Szent István király?* 1790.

⁹⁰ Henry Kamen, *The Rise of Toleration*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company), 1967, McCollough

⁹¹ Matthew 13: 24-30; 36-43.

⁹² Cited by Kamen, *The Rise of Toleration*, 14. See also *Tolerance and Movement of Religious Dissent in Eastern Europe*, Béla K. Kiraly (ed.), Columbia University Press, 1975, Peter Grell, *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1956, especially 1-12.

fading away, and a very contemporary criterion – the political question of the language of the *community* – comes to replace it.

The concept of the Hungarian language takes the role of the “wheat”, previously played by dogmatic questions in humanist discourse. The motivation behind Szaitz’s usage of this example seems to be fairly complex; his personal education was certainly a greater factor in his motivation than in the case of other participants in this type of discourse. From childhood, he was forcefully compelled to respect Hungarian traditions, clothes and language.⁹³ He employed in parts the classic rhetoric of toleration, with which he was intimately familiar, somewhat subversively. With the intention of preserving the priority of the “Church of State, he completed this discourse of toleration with the question of the “Language of the State”. One can estimate the success of his intention by having a glance at the number of the responses to his work⁹⁴. Moreover, in the more conservative discourse of Szaitz, the community is shaped against the controversy against the Protestants, and his philosophical argumentation stops at the point of only one relevant concept of the community. His view can be reconstructed as follows: i) the Hungarian language as a constitutive element of the community is indispensable for Catholics; ii) the Protestants cannot be the members of the same community, even if they speak Hungarian, as they are not Catholics⁹⁵. In Szaitz’s polemic against the Protestants, which excludes them from the national community, the incoherence of his train of thought, and the contradiction between the original Humanist argumentation and his political intention become clearly visible⁹⁶.

⁹³ Szinnyei, *Magyar írók élete és munkái*, (Budapest: Hornyánszky Viktor, 1891-1914), Vol. 1-14.

⁹⁴ mostly from Protestant authors.

⁹⁵ Leó Szaitz, *Igaz Magyar*, 1790.

⁹⁶ Other pamphlets argue that it is not appropriate to consider someone as the member of a (political) community “purely on a confessional basis”. The same rights cannot be given to lower groups only because they are Catholics. Therefore, the community of the Hungarian nation must consist of the Hungarian nobility. This argumentation, with slight differences, is close to the discourse of the ancient constitution. See *Igaz katoikus Magyar, a ki Magyar Dánielnek rövid megjegyzéseire az ország törvényeiből felel*, 1790. See in the chapter 3.2.

Dániel Magyar's writing embodies a similar type of discourse in terms of the language of the community, but his intolerance is far greater than that of Szaitz⁹⁷. He supports the persecution and exile of all Protestants who do not speak Hungarian from the Hungarian territory. Moreover, the language issue is also crucial for his argumentation. He argues that even a good Catholic must be Hungarian, in the sense of speaking the language of the country, if he wishes to benefit from the liberty and other advantages related to the belonging to the country. Here the word "country" is not a simple descriptive term, but rather an equivalent of the concept of the (noble) nation.

Gvadányi, representative of the high-nobility, adopts a similar attitude, but in a less intolerant style. In his work, the value system of the middle nobility is opposed to that of foreigners, who "do not even speak the language of the nation and who wear foreigner clothes"⁹⁸. The culture "à la française", and in a larger perspective the Enlightenment runs counter to the defense of the Hungarian language. According to Gvadányi the two most important attributes of the nation are the language and the garments. If the country wants to be free, it must have the language spoken by every single member of the community, and an ensemble of traditions, the most important elements of which are the clothes and dances, among other folkloric customs. He warns the Hungarian nation against the permanent danger of cosmopolitanism, which it must avoid at all costs.

In the Protestant discourse, the questions of nation and nationality (*nemzet*, *nemzetiség*) are also related to the language issue. In this vocabulary, there is no nation without the language of the community, even if the country possesses some sort of a constitution⁹⁹. This type of discourse characterizes some sort of a proto-conservative attitude, the representatives of which come from the low-clergy, originating mostly from the middle

⁹⁷ According to Ballagi, Daniel Magyar is the pseudonym of Szaitz.

⁹⁸ Gvadányi, *Egy falusi nótáriusnak budai utazása*, Pozsony, 1790.

⁹⁹ The correlation between the constitution and the national language vs. Latin language is also interesting. In some more conservative opinions the constitution cannot exist without the Latin language. See next chapter.

nobility. One of the common elements of their discourse is that they ignore the country, the Hungarian Kingdom, as a category or entity of public right, and rather see an entity which they call “collectivity” or “nation” – categories which are irrelevant from the point of view of administration and constitution. The language becomes a much more important constitutive element than any other criteria, but it is assigned a different place in different types of political discourses.

This vision is obviously present in Verseggy’s pamphlet. This representative of the clergy was deeply interested in the movement of neologism. He once stated, “Take a pen and write on a column the name of those who take to heart the destiny of the language of the patria.”¹⁰⁰ In the argumentation of Verseggy, this sort of protection of the language is accompanied by a deep hostility towards the other ethnic groups of the Hungarian Kingdom. This kind of hostility can also be found in Darvas, who celebrates the nation in the feudal sense by humiliating and offending the language of the other ethnic groups, especially that of the Slovaks¹⁰¹.

One can distinguish between the discourse presented above and another branch of discourse concerning the issue of the Hungarian language. For instance, István Gáti argues that the Hungarian language is indispensable for the economic and scientific development¹⁰². Moreover, one can always have a more refined manner in the mother tongue (Hungarian), which is to become the national language. Although Gáti no longer identifies the nation with the nobility, the question of the language of the other ethnic groups still remains beyond the discourse. Moreover, Báróczi was much more explicit in this sense: he was convinced that it was necessary to “magyarize” the non-Hungarian-speaking groups¹⁰³.

¹⁰⁰ Verseggy Ferenc, *Emlékeztető oszlop*, [s. l.], 1790.

¹⁰¹ Darvas Ferenc, *Egy igaz hazafi intése*, [s. l.], 1790.

¹⁰² Gáti István, *A magyar nyelvnek a magyar hazában szükséges volt*, 1790.

¹⁰³ Báróczi Sándor, *A védelmeztetett magyar nyelv*, Vienna, 1790

One of the most complete works is offered by Sámuel Decsy, a doctor born in a family of the middle nobility. From several points of view, his discourse and vocabulary can be related to the discourse of the public reason¹⁰⁴. He argues that the national language can guarantee entirely the public good, the good morals, and the happiness of the *citizens*¹⁰⁵. His argumentation is much more anticlerical, as becomes evident in his condemnation of Latin which serves the interests of the clergy. According to Decsy, the use of Hungarian, instead of German, should be made compulsory in the army as well as in the administration. At the same time, Decsy maintains the same idea as Baroczy: the non-Hungarian-speaking groups have to learn Hungarian, “if they want to eat the bread of the patria”¹⁰⁶. At this point, he refers to the French example: a scientific institution in charge of the Hungarian language has to be established, a dictionary of Hungarian language must be written, and the Hungarian language must be introduced as a compulsory subject at schools; otherwise, the “magyarization” of the inhabitants of the patria (sic!) would be ineffective. In his usage the concept of patria comes up as Hungary as a territorial notion, though he does not clarify what he means by that territory. Hence, the abstract idea of the patria and that of the country are considered as symmetrical concepts, even though, the former, as a well working rhetoric, remains much more frequently in this type of political discursive framework than the latter. The territory comes up as an interesting concept in Aranka as well, in a work entitled “About the Establishment of a Company defending Hungarian language in Transylvania”¹⁰⁷. The central element of his argumentation is the necessity of establishing a scientific circle or institution in Transylvania; otherwise, “the two Hungarian languages will be different,” and consequently, two languages will be in use “in one patria” instead of one elaborated language “in the two patria” – an unacceptable situation, from his point of view. He also argues that the “dialects”

¹⁰⁴ On the importance of the concept of the public reason see the next chapter.

¹⁰⁵ Decsy Sámuel, *Pannoniai Fénix, avagy hamvából feltámadott magyar nyelv*, 1790.

¹⁰⁶ Decsy Sámuel, *Pannoniai Fénix*, 1790.

¹⁰⁷ Aranka György, *Egy erdélyi magyar nyelv művelő társaság fel-állításáról*, 1791.

of the other ethnic groups have a harmful influence on the national language, which must be Hungarian. In this work, unlike in most of his other writings, he does not mention the questions of administration. In his writing the cultural force of the national language (which concerns everyone in the Hungarian Kingdom) is crucial, and only after the accomplished unity of language (in other words, after the accomplishment of national unity!) is it worth thinking about the issues of the administration.

The lines of a certain discursive type can be more or less easily identified. In this process of identification ethnocentrism plays an important part. The authors emphasize the necessity of introducing the Hungarian language as the official language of the state¹⁰⁸. Consequently, mastery of the Hungarian language is a compulsory task for every non-Hungarian-speaking inhabitant of the Kingdom, in exchange for other benefits from the “patria”¹⁰⁹. In this way, education becomes crucial in terms of the question of the national language, as a constitutive element of the nation (not in the sense of the old *natio*) itself. These debates are also closely related to the status of the Latin language. This question goes hand in hand with the argumentation for the necessity of a Hungarian language dictionary and a scientific institution after the French model¹¹⁰. The language of education has to be Hungarian, even in Swabian and Slovak schools. Additionally, every priest is expected to know Hungarian, due to the social role and responsibility of the clergy. Moreover, the discourse is really ambiguous and sometimes contradictory. Aranka¹¹¹ and Szatsvay¹¹² are good examples of this phenomenon, as their *Germanophobia* is particularly strong. At the same time, they defend the concept of the nation which includes the non-nobles as the

¹⁰⁸ The introduction of the Hungarian language as an official language is an important objective of the ethnocentrist nobility in the Diet of 1790-1791.

¹⁰⁹ See for instance: Rácz Sámuel, *Nemes magyar nemzethez rövid emlékeztető beszéd*, [s. l.], 1790.

¹¹⁰ With different argumentation and for different reasons, but the idea of this company already came up in the works of György Bessenyei, in the end of the 1770's. The question became the part of the discourse, and it was particularly interesting in 1790-1791 for a certain group of authors, which is proved by the fact that Bessenyei's work was republished several times in during this short period.

¹¹¹ Aranka György, *Egy erdélyi magyar nyelvmívelő társaság felállításáról való rajzolat, az haza felséges rendeihez*. Kolozsvár, 1791.

members of a national community, even though the delicate question of the extension of the rights of non-nobles remains undeveloped, and the usage of some concepts frequently shows only rhetorical function.

The language question is often organized around the question of the status of the Latin language. The intention of certain authors seems clear from the discourse: the Latin had a very important status in every field of the public life, and the question of the Hungarian language as an official language is a rather controversial issue. The argument in favor of Hungarian becoming an official language is not at all obvious, since the *Natio Hungarica* did not speak entirely in Hungarian. While reconstructing the motivation of the authors mentioned above, it is important to emphasize that the concept of *Natio Hungarica* is by no means a heterogenic one in the ethnic sense¹¹³; its members spoke different languages, but the official language was Latin. In 1785, Joseph II introduced German, which was to replace Latin as the official language¹¹⁴.

Although we do not have the criteria to judge the sincerity of these authors, we also have to keep in mind that in the multiethnic and multilingual conditions of the Monarchy the question of the official language was crucial for those who spoke other languages in addition to Latin, as was the case of the previously discussed Hungarian authors. In the period of the spread of literacy, the change of the official language from Latin to any other language would have been extremely advantageous for the given group which spoke the language in question. On the other hand, this sort of change would have meant the beginning of an irreversible process of social conflicts. We can state that intentions different from those which may have been explicitly stated in the texts might lurk in the background of this issue.

¹¹² Szatsvay Sándor, *Hazaíak tüköre : magyarok !*, [s. l.], 1790.

¹¹³ Szűcs Jenő, *Nemzet és történelem*, (Budapest: Gondolat), 1974.

¹¹⁴ Here we have to remember that the change of the official language into German by the Habsburg court cannot be considered as a moment of the German nationalism. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. (London: Verso, 1983), Grünwald Béla: *A régi Magyarország*. (Budapest, 2001), 266–267.

In the form of a dialogue, Báróczi also defends the usage of Hungarian, as opposed to Latin, in the fields of administration and education. He argues that even the ruler has to speak Hungarian, if he desires to be the sovereign of the Hungarian Kingdom. Báróczi gives the example of Joseph II, who spoke Czech but not Hungarian. On his view, Joseph II is not even “allowed” to be a member of the nation¹¹⁵. The defenders of the Hungarian language did not want to exile Latin entirely; according to them, it had to stay in the field of sciences, where it is understood rather than spoken. Sometimes, in this type of argumentation the rejection of German also surfaces. According to Rácz, it is conceivable to force everyone to use Hungarian even in education since that type of constraint had already happened in the country. He insists that those who benefit from the Hungarian freedom and those who use a Hungarian name in Hungary, have to learn the language. Báróczi’s opinion came closer to this idea, even though he is not violent:

However, by learning this [German] language, the nation could not hope for anything better; what is more, the nation was constantly afraid of something worse taking place. Would it be impossible to hope... that they accept the Hungarian language, and sacrifice themselves for a couple of years to a patria in which they can live a happier life than in other nations.¹¹⁶

However, the authors’ recognition of the possible usefulness of keeping Latin in the field of the sciences does not exclude their intention to make their mother tongue an official language. The language, as the “political” basis of identity seems to be relatively widespread in these works. Language lends character to the desire on the part of the authors of these pamphlets to form a community in various ways. However, we have to be aware of the incoherency of

¹¹⁵ Otherwise, Báróczi did not have a negative opinion on Joseph II: „Ne vessük mi az országlóra azt a hibát, mely egyedül mireánk háromlik! Úgy-é, hogy mindazokkal a népekkel, melyek birodalma alatt fekszenek, ugyanazon nyelven szól, melyen ezek a népek mind törvényeket, mind pedig ország dolgait folytatják...[József] igen jól tudott csehül. A pannoni lakosokkal, qua redivivus latinokkal, hasonlóképpen magok nyelveken kellett szólni.” Báróczi Sándor, *A védelmeztetett magyar nyelv*, Vienna 1790.

¹¹⁶ „...holott ezen idegen nyelvnek megtanulása mellett nemhogy valami jót remélhetett volna a nemzet, ső minden nap újabb-újabb rossztól tartott: miért ne lehetne hát ellenben azt reménleni, hogy...ne fogadnák el a magyar nyelvet és ünként ne tennék ezt az egynéhány esztendeig tartó áldozatot, egy olyan hazának melynek kebelében, más nemzetekhez képest, oly boldogságban élnek... Báróczi Sándor, *A védelmeztetett magyar nyelv*, Vienna, 1790.

certain concepts, the real political motivation of the authors, and we have to see the contradictory nature of the question.

3.2. Toleration and Community

As I have tried to demonstrate, in the discourse of the (in)toleration several “foreign” elements and concepts, like the concept of the Hungarian language, can arise. By foreign elements I mean the concepts that usually do not take part in controversies on toleration in the Western European context.

In the Hungarian context, the issue of toleration¹¹⁷ is burdened by concepts that are crucial from the point of view of the “construction” of a community. Of course, the discourse of toleration primarily concerned the members of the Catholic and Protestant churches, though a few lay thinkers also took part in the controversy from the point of view of the different social and political questions, such as the public reason or the reason of the state.

In order to contextualize as accurately as possible the discourse of tolerance and the correlation points between the discourse on toleration and the concept of community, we have to keep in mind that, as I already presented in the previous chapter, the confessional map of the Hungarian Kingdom is highly complex in the second half of the eighteenth century. The religious policy of the rulers of the Monarchy can hardly be described as tolerant towards the non-Catholic religions and confessions; this rather intolerant policy recalls certain features of some Western European contexts. In this sense, the intolerance on the part of the State is, in the opinion of an excellent Hungarian expert of this field, the heritage of the seventeenth century¹¹⁸. Although such an assessment might be a bit of an overstatement, it nevertheless

¹¹⁷ We have to remember that the word “tolerance” was used (from the birth of the word itself) in sense of *religious* tolerance: a concession of liberty to those who dissent in religion.

¹¹⁸ Mályusz Elemér, *A türelmi rendelet, II. József és a Magyar protestantizmus*. (Budapest: 1939), new edition (Budapest: Attraktor, 2006), see especially 11-26.

seems to be true that until the 1780's the situation of the Protestants was rather difficult in Hungary, even on the level of the everyday life¹¹⁹. Despite of some laws and orders, e.g. the *Carolina Resolutio*¹²⁰, which to some extent improved this situation, intolerance dominated the public sphere in the country. The laws in favor of the Protestants caused even more tensions between the different confessions. The confessional conflicts were much more widespread than the conflicts due to ethnical and linguistic differences on every level of the society¹²¹.

The relationship between nation and confession is also complicated. In the case of some groups of the Protestant representatives, mostly in Transylvania, the confession came closer and closer to the idea of a proto-national consciousness¹²². In the Hungarian Kingdom, confession also influenced different authors' perceptions of the concept of community, which often defined the criteria of belonging to the community through the question of tolerance.

The religious issue was one of the central elements of the enlightened reform policy of Joseph II. The Edict of Toleration, issued in 1781, gave a much greater freedom to Protestants than the *Carolina Resolutio*, several points of which were annulled. After the death of Joseph II, the Diet of 1790-1791 guaranteed that the Protestants could keep their independence in their internal ecclesiastical affairs¹²³.

I have already briefly presented the nature of argumentation of the Catholic representative, Szaitz, whose concept of community, consists of the elements of (in)tolerance

¹¹⁹ For the history of Hungarian Protestantism Bucsay Mihály, *A protestantizmus története Magyarországon 1521-1945*, (Budapest: 1985), Molnár Antal, *Katolikus missziók a hódolt Magyarországon, 1572-1635*, (Budapest: Balassi, 1999)

¹²⁰ According to the *Carolina Resolutio* Protestants were allowed to practice their religion at designated public places, and anywhere in the private sphere places. For greater details see Marczali Henrik, *Mária Terézia és kora, Magyarország története a szatmári békétől a bécsi congressusig (1711-1815)*, (Budapest: Athenaeum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Részvénytársulat, 1898) especially 110-149.

¹²¹ Mályusz Elemér, "A magyar protestantizmus a XVIII. században" in *A türelmi rendelet, II. József és a magyar protestantizmus*. (Budapest: 1939), new edition (Budapest: Attraktor, 2006)

¹²² See Robert Evans, Religion and nation in Hungary 1790-1849, in *Austria, Hungary and the Habsburgs. Essays on Central Europe, c.1683-1867*, (Oxford, 2006), 147-173.

¹²³ For the details of the religious policy of Joseph II, see Mályusz, *A türelmi rendelet*, especially 76-103, 244-359. Marczali, *Mária Terézia és kora*, 387-402. Marczali Henrik, *Magyarország története II. József korában*, vol. I-II. (Budapest: Pfeifer Ferdinánd kiadása, 1888), especially vol. II, 51-321.

mixed with other criteria such as the (national) language. The two most important elements of his concept of community are the common language and the Catholic religion, as without these criteria one cannot be a member of the community. The argumentation of the Protestants is concerned with the question of the Hungarian language to a lesser extent. In the discourse of a more radically anticlerical author, the religion itself can by no means be the criterion of belonging to a community; that is, the hierarchy among people cannot be based on religion. This perception also includes another concept of community, based on the coordination of different confessions. In this community, the clergy is not allowed to politically influence the civil society¹²⁴.

In some of the pamphlets, even from the Catholic side, the community was conceptualized by means of *skeptical* argumentation, embedded in the political problem of the *reason of the state*, close to a *republican* type of vocabulary. One of the best examples is a translation entitled *Az erőszakos térítőknék a szent vallással való káros visszaélésekről, egy igaz Catholicus*¹²⁵. This work is an example that clarifies why the religion and counter-example of how the (Catholic) Church itself cannot monopolize the discourse of community.

Concerning the questions of faith and morals, one cannot be sure that one is not mistaken when he condemns another simply because that other has a conviction that one thinks to be false. Moreover, violence is certainly ineffective at convincing the other believer about the religious erring.¹²⁶ This is clearly a skeptical argumentation for toleration: faith and religious conviction are personal preferences, questions of conscience which cannot be forced by anyone, including the sovereign. Intolerance begins at the point where one attempts to make an ultimate truth from one's convictions, and tries to spread these convictions to the

¹²⁴ *Az emberi polgárságban található valóságos elsőségnek igaz mértéke*, [s.n.], Vienna, 1790.

¹²⁵ This pamphlet is a translation, but not an entire one of Verenfels from German, applied to the Hungarian conditions.

¹²⁶ "Várat vinni okoskodásokkal, elmét ostromolni erőszakkal egyforma bolondság. Nincs olyan jozan, olly össze szorított okoskodás, a melly előtt egy vár le ne omollyon ha ezer Cicero szollana is. Nincs olly erőszak,

members of other confessions. From such convictions follows the belief that those who are convinced of the truth of their own religion have the right to compel others to conversion with violence or to simply kill them.¹²⁷ On the view of the skeptics, as it is articulated in the pamphlet *Az erőszakos térítőknék* as well, religion is basically a conviction that one is in possession of the ultimate truth which lacks any kind of rational or philosophical verification. A religious mind can easily aggravate the tendency to irrationality, hatred and aggressiveness, which are the ultimate causes of all kinds of religious persecutions¹²⁸.

In the same writing, the author argues that the fact that one can be granted the freedom of conscience as a benefit rather than possessing it as a natural right seems strange and inappropriate in a community which is supposed to be a “republic”. The author argues that in accordance with the natural law, this right cannot be alienated: even though the sovereign restrains or sanctions the public practice of certain rites of the subjects, “the alienation” of the freedom of conscience is impossible, and beyond his rights.¹²⁹

This problem is related to the question concerning the right of the sovereign: what is the sovereign allowed to do when his actions and laws affect the freedom of conscience (as a natural right) of his subjects? Where are the limits to his actions? These skeptical arguments emerged in the 17th century as reflections on the social and political conditions of that time, emphasizing the theoretical and practical impossibility, irrationality and absurdity of the

amelly az elmét, meg győzhese, ha a világnak minden hatalmasságai minden erejeket egybe tennék is.” *Az erőszakos térítőknék a szent vallással való káros visszaélésekről, egy igaz Catholicus*, 1790.

¹²⁷ For the same type of skeptical argument see Pierre Bayle, *Commentaire philosophique de ces paroles de Jésus Christ: contains-les d’entrer*, in Pierre Bayle, *Œuvres diverses*, É. Labrousse (eds), (Hildesheim, G. Olms: 1964-1990), 9 vol, vol. II, 387, John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. John Horton and Susan Mendus, (London: Routledge, 1991), For the philosophy of skepticism and its social background see The Social History of Skepticism, Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Skepticism from Savonarola to Bayle*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001) especially 189-283, Élizabeth Labrousse, *Pierre Bayle, hétérodoxie et rigorisme*, (Nijhoff, La Haye, 1964), Gianluca Mori, *Bayle, philosophe*, (Paris: Champion, 1999), Frédéric Brahami, *Le travail du skepticism (Montaigne, Bayle, Hulme)*, (Paris: PUF, 2001), Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670-1752*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), especially 63-164,

¹²⁸ *Az erőszakos térítőknék a szent vallással való káros visszaélésekről, egy igaz Catholicus*, 1790.

¹²⁹ “Mert azon Isten kívánnya én töllem hogy magamat annak el hitelére ne engedjem és hogy számba se vévén a fenyegetődzéseket azt soha mind addig ne hidjem a mi nékem az igaznak lenni nem látszik, vagy bizonytalannak tetszik.” *Az erőszakos térítőknék*, [s.n.], 1790.

phenomena like religious wars, and the persecution of the Protestants (Huguenots in France)¹³⁰. The citizens (*polgár*) of a state can live peacefully with each other and civil and international wars can be avoided only if men put aside their religious, confessional controversies and differences, and let each religion flourish among different circles of believers. This argument differs in a basic way from the argument of constraint not only because the latter argues that the persecution is causeless from the point of view of conscience, but also because it (the latter) emphasizes that the consequences and possible positive effects are not worth the risk of bringing harm to society. Public reason is above everything, and intervention in religious activity cannot be in the field of jurisdiction of the public authorities. In the argumentation for the tolerance towards every member of the community, the words *res publica* or *Köz-Társaság* and *polgár* become the main concepts around which the rest of the discourse is organized. In the spirit of an equal society, the author of the pamphlet affirms that the most important aim is to achieve political peace and to avoid wars caused by religious heterogeneity. In order to do so, it is necessary to define the relationship of the state – more exactly of the absolutist ruler – and the subjects in terms of the questions of conscience, and to establish limits to the power of the sovereign who intends to control the subjects in order to develop the absolutist character of his reign. However, the philosophical argumentation becomes ineffective if the sovereign refuses to renounce any part of his absolutist reign for political reasons.¹³¹

However, the political instability of the community is caused by those members who are intolerant towards a dissenting minority.

¹³⁰ See: Robert Mandrou, *Louis XIV et son temps*, (Paris: PUF, 1973), Denis Richet, *De la Réforme à la Révolution. Etudes sur la France moderne*, (Paris: Aubier, 1991).

¹³¹ “Annyit tézzen hát, mást a vallásra kényszeríteni, mint azt kívánni ő tölle, hogy inkább féllye az Emberi parancsola Erőt, mint a tilalmazó Istent.” *Az erőszakos térítőknék*, 1790.

Sometimes, in order to avoid the label “cruelty”, those who err in religion are described as attackers of the Public Peace. But the subversion of the Public Peace is due to the zealous legal people rather than the fault of the Erring people.¹³²

Moreover, God did not give the right to any of the existing religions to prove their justice by the force. Otherwise, every religion would have the right to affirm that it is the one and only recipient of divine grace – a state which would lead to social and political violence and disorder. For this reason, different confessions must mutually recognize the interests of one another, and realize that whatever the interest of different religions may be, political stability of the state and the whole community is indispensable. In this way, the argument for political stability becomes as important as the argument of constraint:

Even the best arguments can be ineffective in the mind of men when these arguments are used with force in order to prove the right beliefs.¹³³

The intolerance can be the cause of political instability, which can originate from two reasons:

1) the right, supposedly owned by the sovereign, to prescribe the practice of his own religion to his subjects; 2) the natural right of the subjects to oppose constraints imposed on their conscience. Of course, the two are in an inherent contradiction, and politically stable conditions are unimaginable in a state, where religious persecutions are a frequent phenomenon. The sovereign has to guarantee tolerance for civil peace and prosperity. If he does not do so, the integrity of the state would be endangered, which would be disastrous for the whole community.

The concept of community is rather well articulated in the relationship between the question of religious toleration and the concept of “polgár” in its normative usage:

¹³² “Némellykor, a kegyetlenség gyűlölséges neve el-kerülése végett, a Vallásban tévelygők úgy is festetnek le, mint a Köz-Békesség meg-Háborítói...A Köz-Békesség megháborításának oka inkább inkább az igazság mellett álló félnek okatlan buzgoságában, mintsem a Tévelygő hibájában találhatik.” *Az erőszakos térítőknék*, 1790.

¹³³ “Még a leg-sikeresebb okoskodásoknak is elvész az emberek elméjére nézve minden erejek, mihelyt azokkal a Hitelt erőszakosan akarják ki-tsikarni.” *Az erőszakos térítőknék*, 1790.

The label “Tolerance” cannot be applied in the strict and *civil* sense for religions, which are official in terms of the laws of the country and the peacemaking acts.¹³⁴

The discourse of tolerance seems to be an important political language at the end of the eighteenth century. The tolerance becomes a moral argument, independent from any religion. This conceptual approach results in an entirely different perception of the *community*. According to the intention of the thinkers, this language of toleration can be more radical; in some cases it becomes the most efficacious means for building a strictly political community, even though the exact criteria and features of the political community are not theoretically clarified for the time being¹³⁵. In this type of discourse, similarly to the republican tradition, the religion has another role that we observed in the discourse related to the common language issue. Here, the religion has a moral importance, which must be in harmony with the moral of the community, but in order to reach this moral harmony between the citizens, the toleration is indispensable.

3.3. Towards a Radicalization of Enlightenment?

We can separate a group of writings that uses a more radical language in defining the community. In this discourse, the intolerance towards the clergy is more explicit, even though we can observe a certain mixture of different languages, rather than a coherently anticlerical discourse. This characteristic group of writings consists of the works of Friedrich Trenck, and some anonymous pamphlets.

Trenck’s definition of the Enlightenment is closer to an anticlerical attitude and is strictly related to the importance of the concepts of *Politzei* and *Industria*, as well as to the

¹³⁴ “A Türedelem nevezet, olly vallásokra nézve, mellyek Békesség-kötések, és Haza Törvényei mellett állnak, Polgári és szoros értelemben nem-is alkalmazható.” *Az erőszakos térítőőknek*, 1790.

¹³⁵ *Az igaz hazafi*, [s. n.], Pest, 1791.

question of the relationship between the governors and the governed¹³⁶. The proper form of government, according to his interpretation, takes into consideration the idea that a group of people cannot be a community if privileges, especially those of the clergy, are not eliminated. The ideal form of *Politzia* should be based on an idea of an equal society, not necessarily without a religion, but without the prerogatives of the (Catholic) Church. In order to set up a well-balanced government, the clergy should have the same kind of a diploma as the ruler. The government would be paralyzed because if the ruler attempted to somehow restrict the overly extensive power of the Church, he would be attacked by the clerical part of the society, and his act would be considered as an usurpation of rights. However, at the same time, a refined nation should not attack a ruler whose main aim is to eliminate social privileges. The integration of the clergy into the whole community is possible only if the clergy cuts off its relations with Rome and the Pope. It would be necessary to do so in order to create an entirely Hungarian community, since the clergy in Hungary would turn against the country if it were in its interests.

The ideal form of government is at the center of this discourse. The king, who ought to respect the freedom of the subjects, should not become a despot.

This anticlerical rhetoric has a strongly pragmatic side: the question of the freedom of conscience and the argument of the political stability have a marginal importance. The privileges of the clergy (not necessarily its existence!) is detrimental to each social class, even though it is the ruler who is often condemned when he wants to tax the privileged groups. If the interests of the community require the privileged to contribute to the solution financially, they must be compelled to do so. In this way, the central concept will be the *Industria*, namely the image of a community that is based on a commercial and financial development, and on the common work and refinement of the social and commercial relations. However, the clergy

¹³⁶ Trenck, *Mérő serpenyő*, mellyel a fejedelem és a papság hatalmát össze-mérte Trenck, [s.l.], 1790.

is one of the greatest obstacles to this sort of improvement because it prefers the “blessed laziness”.

The community and the *Politzia* cannot work if the executive power cannot be applied in a coherent way. However, the executive has a crucial role in the community, the most important principle of which is its multiple developments. The laws should guarantee that the members of the community have nothing to fear living side by side.

This type of discourse hides a basic type of the paradox of the tolerance that was already present in the political languages of toleration in the seventeenth century. The paradox concerns the question of toleration towards some social institutions that are supposed to be intolerant¹³⁷. The toleration of an intolerant attitude is a highly contradictory and controversial phenomenon. Trenck is aware of the fact that unlimited tolerance can easily lead to a complete disappearance of tolerance. That is, uncontrolled tolerance can eliminate itself in certain cases, such as when a tolerant attitude is expressed toward a more or less intolerant institution. In the period of the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries, the most obviously intolerant social institution or authority is the Church, and the anomalies concerning its function are multiple. However, Trenck is able to find the limits of practical intolerance since he does not explicitly discuss the complete elimination of the clergy, even though his rhetoric of accusing the Catholic Church is rather strong and sometimes exaggerated,

Saint Steven, the fanatic of his time would have gone with the obsessed Huns to the order of the Pope, with the Christian Crusaders to Jerusalem, and would have gotten all the people of Hungary killed.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ For the so-called paradox of tolerance in the early-modern and modern states and societies see Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, (London: Routledge, 1945), Kis János, *Az állam semlegessége*, (Budapest: Atlantisz, 1992)

¹³⁸ “Szent István, a maga ideje béli Fanaticus, vagy eszelősködő Hunussokkal, a Pápa parancsolattyára minden bizonnal el-ment volna a Keresztes Vitézekkel Jeruzsálembe, és kész lett volna Magyar-országot minden lakositol ki-üresíteni.” Trenck, *Mérő serpenyő*, 1790.

Another feature of the argumentation is the fact that the function of the clergy is primarily discussed from the point of view of the state, rather than from that of the *citizens*. Therefore Trenck does not speak from a clearly traditional republican approach. The most important feature of the church is its intolerance, which is an invincible obstacle of public reason. Moreover, in the lack of the public reason, neither the *Politzei* nor the community can function effectively in the moral way.

The elements of the republican argumentation are heavily present in this type of anticlerical language. The interior religious and moral convictions have a certain integral force in the life of the citizens. Moreover, the intention of Trenck is by no means to defend the Protestant Church or the Protestant believers against the arbitrary Catholic persecutions:

Neither do I defend the Protestants because my children grew up in the Catholic religion against which I am now struggling. The Protestants are just as violent as those religious people whose priests are now in the possession of power.¹³⁹

The lack of this intention becomes clear in his employment of one of the arguments of the seventeenth century tolerance discourse. According to this argument, one does not have the reason to suppose that the persecuted confessions, heretics, or any kind of dissent groups would follow a less intolerant policy than their persecutors if they were in the position of power¹⁴⁰.

However, for the interest of the ideal function of the state, there is a strong need for moral education of the members of the community. A central power of the government (sovereign) can fulfill this requirement, but the ruler can by no means become a despot. The task of the ruler therefore is to preserve the morals of the citizens. At this point, the role of the clergy is equally important: it has to educate the members of the community in order to have

¹³⁹ „Én a protestánsoknak sem fogom különös pártokat. Mert az én gyermekeim abban az R. Catholica vallásban nevelkedtenek, melyeknek helytelenkedései ellen én olly hevesen hartzolok. A Protestánsok szintén olly türhetetlenek, mint minden ollyan valláson lévők, a kiknél az hatalom, a papok kezeiben vagyon.” Trenck, *Mérő serpenyő*, 1790.

morally impeccable and useful citizens. The most important republican principles are articulated here, such as virtue, obligation and honesty. Virtue and obligation are synonymous with active action and responsibility for the whole community.

Trenck's argumentation seems to be deeply influenced by the enlightened principles of the Prussian ruler, Frederick II. Trenck was one of the Casanova-type adventurers of the eighteenth century. As far as we know from his biography, he spent a lot of time in the court of Frederick, from where he was exiled due to his liaison with one of the members of the royal family¹⁴¹. It is enough to have a glance at the work written by Frederick II himself, entitled *Des formes de l'administration*¹⁴² in order to discern the similarities with Trenck's political writing concerning the ideal type of ruler and government.

An anonymous pamphlet also contributes to this discourse by arguing that the clergy has no place in the political government of the community. Moreover, the government cannot function in a proper way if it is not entirely separated from the clergy,

... The Messiah commanded the Apostles to instruct the World by persuasion and argumentation, to spread [the knowledge of] the Evangels, to teach faith, love good acts, and other similar things. He never ordered them to take part in the affairs of the country, to make laws, to designate borders, or to pay attention to the Decima, the Army, the Urbarium and other similar affairs.¹⁴³

There is a sort of conceptual mixture in this type of argumentation between the elements of the anticlerical discourse and those of the discourse of the ancient constitution. Even though

¹⁴⁰ See the French and English case in the seventeenth century, See Charles Kors, *Atheism in France*, (Princeton, 1990)

¹⁴¹ An interesting source is Trenck's autobiography: *Trenck Frigyes Emlékezetes története*, (Budapest: Európa, 1989)

¹⁴² This work was translated by Aranka György into Hungarian: Aranka György, *Az igazgatás formáiról és az uralkodók kötelességeiről egy próba II. Fridrik prussiai király munkái közül. Francziából*. Kolozsvár, 1791. For the reign of Frederick I see Gerhard Ritter, *Frederick the Great: a historical profile*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), Charles W. Ingrao, *The Hessian Mercenary State: Ideas, Institutions, and Reform Under Frederick II, 1760-1785*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) especially 12-44.

¹⁴³ "Ugyanis a megváltó azt a kötelességet adta az Apostoloknak, hogy a világot oktassák meggyőzéssel, okoskodással az Evangéliumra, a hitre, a szeretetre, a jó cselekedetre, és több e félékre. Sehol sem parancsolja azt: hogy az ország dolgaiba válykályanak, hogy világi törvényeket hozzanak, hogy a határok terjedésére, Tiedekre, Katonaságra, Urbáriumra és effélékre vigyázzanak." *Minek a pap az ország gyűlésében?* [s.n.], 1791.

the anonymous author, probably a member of the middle nobility, recognizes the importance of the pastoral work of the Church, he wants to deprive it of all its privileges. However, this recognition of the necessity of separation of the lay and religious power and the emphasis on the indispensability of the elimination of the prerogatives of the clergy do not lead to the conclusion that every type of privilege should be eliminated. The community of the ancient laws and constitution is targeted to preserve the ideal type of government, without the participation of the clergy:

There certainly will be an assembly of the country, which will not drink from the bitter cup of Religion, since under the reign of Leopold we all are Hungarians again, brothers and patriots, not Papists, Calvinists, or Lutherians.¹⁴⁴

The terms “Patriots” and “Hungarians” do not include those who are not in possession of the customs and privileges; consequently, the political power cannot be an affair of all. Although the pamphlet celebrates “the rays of the Enlightenment that reached the country”, this interpretation of the essence of the Enlightenment is restricted to the idea of elimination of the political power of the Church. It is not anticlerical in the sense that it does not exclude the possibility of the moral function of religion: the good morals and education are the most important prerequisites of an enlightened community. The proper place of the clergy in this type of community is by no means in the political power, which is led by another privileged group.

The discourse attacking the authority of the Church (for obvious reasons) comes up mostly in anonymous writings, like the one entitled *A szerzeteseknek Franciaországban lett eltöröltetése alkalmával*. The elimination of the Church from the political power (it is the only writing that uses the word *kormány*) must lead to a complete transformation of the

¹⁴⁴ „Lesz már lesz valahát az országnak gyűlése amely a Religionak keserű poharát meg nem kostollja, mert Leopold uralkodása alatt magyarok vagyunk vagyunk ismét, vérek és Hazafiak, nem Páplisták, nem Kálvinisták, nem Lutheránusok.” *Minek a pap?*, [s.n.], 1790.

constitution¹⁴⁵. In the discourse on religious toleration and freedom of conscience the emphasis often shifts to the question of the proper form of government, the ideal *Politzia*. Even though one of the central elements of this type of argumentation is the discussion about the place of the clergy in the life of the community, we can hardly say that this discourse, or more exactly its authors have obviously subversive intentions towards religion itself. These authors attempt to rethink the relationship between the governors and the governed from different angles, and their different perceptions affect their conclusions and propositions.

Although the concept of the Enlightenment is more related to the questions of administration and the public state, in a very characteristic way the concept of the ideal, enlightened political power does not exclude the power of those who have privileges. However, the anticlerical type of conceptualization of the community does not seem less complex than the language issue.

3.4. Beyond(?) the aspects of politics

A perfectly characteristic concept of community, which is to some extent related to the previous models, was developed by the representatives of another branch of discourse, mostly after 1791. Among the most important features of the type of community conceptualized in this discourse one can find some sort of a moral, or moral-political thought: the essence of this community is identified with some value which can be crucial in the private life and private decision-making, and which can easily become the integrative force of a community. However, the problem is much more complex than that. The question of political power and the nature of the relationship between the governed and the governors is no longer at the core

¹⁴⁵ *A szerzeteseknek Franciaországban lett eltöröltetése alkalmával*, [s.n.], 1791. The enigmatic name of the place of edition tells a lot about the contain: *Nyomtatott Cosmopolisban*.

of the discourse¹⁴⁶. Unlike in cases of the common language and confession, the question of the community is not related to any kind of social dominance; rather, it maintains a tight connection with the phenomenon of the social-cultural intercourse between the members of the community. The “traditional” political aims and vocabulary like “freedom” or “independence”, and the question of the necessity of political activity are not at the center of the discourse, even though the community constructed using the various aspects of private social connections is also frequently referred to as *haza*. The proper, intelligent, educated and civilized ways of personal communications and interactions in everyday life, manners, and mutually respectful relationships become the main organizing principles of the community. The question arises: how does this sort of, at first glance, completely apolitical discourse become embedded in the social-cultural conditions of the country, and through what means does it contribute to the birth of a proto-nationalist discourse?

The key point of material and intellectual improvement is the necessity of the social intercourse, which have several forms and aspects. In order to produce intellectual “profit” for the development, one has to find the ideal lifestyle, which implies the necessity to establish a socially, but not necessarily active life.

I would be ungrateful towards this good Mother [Motherland], if I only attributed bad qualities to the countryside life, without any consideration. However, I have to admit that this rural lifestyle is an obstacle to the spread of the sciences. The lonely life, the isolated lifestyle does isolate us from thoughts as well.¹⁴⁷

The active and intellectually useful lifestyle becomes a model of the enlightened and educated intellectual, while the importance of political activity and self-sacrifice for the public affairs

¹⁴⁶ As for the European parallels of the type of discourse see for instance David Hume, *Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion* in: *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, (New York: Liberty Fund, Inc. Publication, 1987), 3-8, *Of Refinement in the Arts*, in: *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, (New York: Liberty Fund, Inc. Publication, 1987) 275-289.

¹⁴⁷ „Háladatlan lennék ezen jó anya eránt, ha a mezei életnek minden határozás nélkül csak a rossz következtetéseket tulajdonítanék. De hogy a mezei élet a tudományok terjesztésében akadály, nem lehet meg nem vallanom. A magános, félre való élet, az elzárkozás a világtól, elzár a gondolkodástól is.” Kármán József, *A nemzet csinosodása*, 1794.

fades away. However, it is necessary to emphasize that this discourse of refinement is often mixed, in a very characteristic way, with a heavily ethnicist approach; the importance of the visible marks of ethnicity, and the natural inclination for culture frequently recurs in the texts, as part of the argumentation:

It seems that the irresistible force, the physical perfection, the noble body structure, the pure prudence (*sens commun*), and the natural ability of judgment that characterize the original Hungarian have chosen their place of habitation in this beautiful region.¹⁴⁸

This ethnicist viewpoint and the belief in the “national” character are developed and frequently supplemented by an negative view of the “other nations,” which likewise attempted to develop a refined character:

The less refined Hungarian in our endless *puszta* is provided with a more coherent ability of judgment than the refined foreigner in his point-of-pride towns. As an experienced man once told me, our nation has an important advantageous character: the reason why silly people are missing from Hungarian dramas is that this type of character cannot be found among Hungarians.¹⁴⁹

Although this approach uses a relatively different type of argumentation from those that we have seen in connection with political issues, its aim, though manifested in a highly different way, with a highly different approach of the community seems to be analogous: to keep some sort of an independence. The question of the political constellation and the independent political decision-making lurk in the background of this perception; however, it would be an exaggeration to say that this approach “builds” a community on a purely “cultural” basis. The key point is the concept of some sort of an unofficial association between the members of the society, which comes close to the meaning of the word *társadalom*, born in the movement of neologism in the 1790’s. It is important to note that this type of discourse mostly emerged

¹⁴⁸ „Az a teljes erő, az a fizikai tökéletesség, az a nemes testalkotás, mely az eredeti magyart ékesíti, az a jozan okosság (*sens commun*), az a természeti ítélletével, úgy látszik, mintha ebbe a szép tájékba választotta volna lakhelyét.” Kármán, *A nemzet csinosodása*, 1794.

¹⁴⁹ „A bárdolatlan magyar végeláthatatlan pusztáinkon egységesebb ítélletével van felruházva, mint amott a csinos külföldi az ő kevély városaiban. Nagy elsőse az nemzetünkek, amit egy nagy tapasztalású férjű egy alkalmazhatósággal előttem állított: hogy az együgyű kába személyek a magyar drámákban azért hasznavehetetlenek, mert ez a karakter nincsen magyarba.” Kármán, *A nemzet csinosodása*, 1794.

after the Diet of 1790-1791 and the sudden death of Leopold II. The era that began with the death of Leopold and the reign of Francis I, with some sort of a *événementielle* expression, belongs to a completely different period. The political aims, which were by no means coherent in 1790-1791, became more and more remote and inaccessible; the different nature of the policy and style of the sovereign, manifested in the tightening of censorship, for instance, affected the types of written manifestations and political thoughts themselves, including the question of the (national) community.

In another, slightly different branch of this type of language, the emphasis often falls on the necessity of professional education, which is the only proper education capable of eliminating the bad style in manners and of “refining” the members of the Patria. The Patria (*Haza*) does not designate the community of those who have prerogatives in this language, but rather refers to a community in a more general sense. However, the difference between the social groups in terms of these prerogatives is not to be eliminated: the Patria is a cultural-linguistic community rather than the community of the *Natio Hungarica*. Moreover, this complicated linguistic-cultural community has an important task of reducing, as much as possible, the differences in manners between different groups. This intention targets the realization of an ideal society in a paradoxical way, where the prerogatives do not negatively impact the commercial development and the spread of knowledge to the entire nation.

Vályi affirms that the objective of the education must be to create patriotic inhabitants for the country¹⁵⁰. Although the country and Patria designate a cultural-linguistic unity, the concept of the *plebs* remains a rather relational, interdefined term in the discourse. The *common inhabitants* of the country (“*közönséges lakosok*”) are one of the most important groups which are supposed to be educated in order to develop the *nation*, and the *country* in terms of manners, usable knowledge and happiness. However, the word “nation” is not the

¹⁵⁰ „Az Oskoláknak egyik fő tárgya a Hazafi lakosok készítése.” Vályi, *A nemzeti nevelésről*, 1791.

relational pair of *plebs*, even though in the discourse the latter retains its deeply relational connotation of a group of people without any privileges. On the other hand, the other side of the originally relational pair does not retain the same meaning as it did in the conservative discourse; the *Patria (haza)* becomes a more collective and normative term. This conceptual “mixture” is one of the most interesting aspects of this discourse on the education issue, which is also completed by the normative function of the language. In these frameworks of the nation, the more educated groups have the responsibility for the education of the *useful inhabitants*, the creation of whom was previously missing due to the inattention of certain members of the community:

All these phenomena could be eliminated if we had more working schools, if the Lords who own the lands would take to heart the advancement of the poor, if generally in each of the schools the industry, the human solidarity and the open heartedness provided examples for the Hungarians.¹⁵¹

The members of the community are living side by side; therefore, the interaction must be as perfect as possible, since ignorance can lead to conflicts, poverty and rudeness. These obstacles to the happiness of the Hungarian nation could disappear through a proper education:

The national mind would be awakened and set to motion, the silly, immature intentions would be improved and become rational, the different ways of the civil life could gradually flourish through a proper national education.¹⁵²

This general improvement is needed, since knowledge, even the knowledge of the working peasants, can be an investment into the development of the nation. This development does not imply a mere economic or material development, but also a refinement and politeness of taste

¹⁵¹ „Mind ezek kiirtodnának idovel, ha alkalmaztatott oskoláink volnának: ha a földes Uraság a szegény ember előmenetelét szíven hordozná, ha közönségesen minden oskolákban a szorgalmatosság, a felebaráti érzékenység, és a nyitott szívű egyenesség példákkal plántálhatna a magyarok között.” Vályi, *A nemzeti nevelésről*, 1791.

and behavior, “The national education involves every type of inhabitants, and hopefully it gives everyone the way for the social advancement.”¹⁵³ On the other hand, education is supposed to rationalize some social phenomena in order to take advantage of the various forms of social possibilities. This society is not static and immobile any longer: one can to some extent move up the social ladder independently, if it is in the interest of the community,

In our Patria, the offspring of the more famous inhabitants is only interested in official works; they simply cannot be the educators of the youth growing up in the whole Patria.¹⁵⁴

The dilemma of the integration of the *plebs* into the nation is solved in a very characteristic way, in part by using the language of manners or refinement. Here, Virtue¹⁵⁵ is no longer identified with different political aspects, or with an intensive political activity in the frameworks of the social and political forums and institutions. The character and definition of public acts changes: if one wants to be a useful member of the community, the most important contribution to the development of the community would be the promulgation of morals, manners, knowledge and refined taste. In Hungarian, the corresponding terms for these words are *gusztus*, *kellem*, *csiszoltság* and *stílus*¹⁵⁶. An analogous Hungarian term to the English word “manners,” which refers to a certain ensemble of morals, norms of behavior and ethical attitude towards the other members of the community, is the word *neveltség*, which has a strong connotation of education¹⁵⁷. However, as I have tried to demonstrate, education indeed

¹⁵² „Felélesztetne, munkába hozodna a nemzeti ész, megjobbulnának az éretlen, és az együgyű igyekezetből alkalmaztatások, a közönségesen a polgári élet modgyának mindenféle nemei virágzásnak jöhetnek lassanként, egy jól eltalált nemzeti nevelés által.” Vályi, *A nemzeti nevelésről*, 1791.

¹⁵³ „A nemzeti nevelés mindenféle lakosokra kiterjed, s lehetőképen utat nyit kinek kinek az előmenetelre.” Vályi, *A nemzeti nevelésről*, 1791.

¹⁵⁴ „Hazánkban mindenféle nevezetesebb lakosoknak magzattjai csak a hivatalokra tolnak, ezek pedig nem lehetnek az egész Hazában felnövő ifjúságnak dajkái.”

¹⁵⁵ The notion of Virtue is almost exclusively defined as *political virtue* at that time, except for this type of discourse. For the question of virtue in the eighteenth century, see J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History, Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Kontler László, *Az állam rejtelvei*, (Budapest: Atlantisz, 1997), especially 188-208.

¹⁵⁶ It seems very difficult to find the equivalence between these English and Hungarian words. It would be also very useful to compare these notions, written in Hungarian works with those that are written in German, sometimes by the same authors of that period.

¹⁵⁷ For instance Vályi, *A nemzeti nevelésről*, 1791.

had an integrative function of the community (*haza*) in this discourse. This issue becomes particularly important in the case of translations, mostly from German languages, when these concepts become part of the discursive space being adapted by the translators¹⁵⁸. However, it would be false to think that this type of discourse is apolitical, as it looks at first glance. If we put it in the context of the political changes and of the other types of argumentations, the political stake of the concepts of this discourse become more explicit.

Even at first glance, the discourse of manners and refinement seems particularly interesting, as it reveals a number of peculiarities which distinguish it from this type of discourse of other European contexts. At the same time, at certain points it is related to the tolerance discourse, not to mention the interesting conceptual shifts briefly noted above.

3.5. Diverse “Proto-Conservative” Attitudes

I would like to emphasize that the words “proto-conservative” and “attitudes” are contentious elements in the title of this section. I do not intend to make any sort of anachronistic projections by using the highly complex term “conservatism”; however, I do think that these words can be of help in specifying the place of this type of discourse in terms of the usage of concepts among the ones that we already saw. One can label these authors “conservative” or “proto-conservative” not because their writings somehow remind one of the future conservatives of the next generations, of the “canonic” figures of conservatism, with whose works conservatism becomes an influential and widespread ideology on the map of the political thought in any context. An effective way to come closer to their understanding is to

¹⁵⁸ The importance and the nature of the translations in the period of the Enlightenment is interesting from Hungarian point of view as well, the investigation of the effect of the translations on the conceptual issues would usefully, even indispensably complete the question of the identification of different political languages in the eighteenth century. For the general problem see Fania Oz-Salzberger, *Translation in*: Alan Charles Kors, *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), Fania Oz-Salzberger, „The

contextualize them within the different political languages of their own time, to identify the pieces of thoughts in the context of a local Enlightenment, and to have a glance at their usage of concepts in the period in question: what was their reaction and how did some elements of the Enlightenment affect their argumentation?

One may discuss attitudes rather than coherent, developed thought, since the sources and some elements of this political language reveal considerable differences in the usage of concepts and in the intellectual origins¹⁵⁹. In this short subchapter I do not want to follow the development of some elements of this complex discourse, but rather to show very briefly some peculiarities of this type of political language in a given (Hungarian) context and in a given period, and point out some differences within the language itself.

3.5.1. The Customs and the Constitution

In the pamphlets, the concept of the community of the ancient constitution seems to be a repeated argument of a certain type of discourse. In Werbőczy's work, the notion of *communitas* designates all nobles, independently of fortune, who enjoy one and the same liberty¹⁶⁰. The contradictory phenomenon consists of the fact that the constitution, the subject of the main reference of this discourse, never existed in the legal sense of the term. It is also

Enlightenment in Translation: Regional and European Aspects.” *European Review of History*, Volume 13, Issue 3 September (2006); 385 – 409.

¹⁵⁹ For the possibilities of the investigation of conservatism and for the problem of its historicity see Kontler László, *Az állam rejtelmek - Brit konzervativizmus és a politika kora újkori nyelvei*, (Budapest: Atlantisz, 1997), 13-28.

¹⁶⁰ Werbőczy listed in his work *Tripartitum* the nobility's cardinal privileges: these are the right to be free of arrest without any legal process; to be subject only to lawfully crowned king; exemption from servile obligations and from payment of taxes and to provide military service only in defense of the kingdom. See *A dicsőséges magyar királyság szokásjogának Hármaskönyve. Tripartitum opus iuris consuetudinarii incltyti regni Hungariae*. Hungarian-Latin Edition. (Budapest: 1990).

important to note that the elite and the Diet in Hungary have never had a “standard” language like, for instance, that of the *common law* in England in the seventeenth century¹⁶¹.

The ancient constitution comes up in the texts as an enduring source of the shared past of the nobility. The claim to the historic rights vested in the constitution lends shape the idea that the Hungarian nation had been in a continuous existence for over 800 years.¹⁶² According to the main argumentation, the present generation of the nobility does not own this ensemble of laws, customs and traditions. The consequence of such a “lack of control” is that the present generation does not have the right to change it in any way, and even the sovereign must respect it in the process of legislation¹⁶³.

In the language of the ancient constitution the concept of community is organized around the so-called *constitution*, which has several elements that place emphasis on the continuity of rights. In several pamphlets, the concept of the ancient constitution (sometimes called ancient freedom in the texts) is related to some sort of a common sentiment, in which the “national” past is an artificial construction. In a characteristic way, the name of Montesquieu appears in the texts as a permanent reference. Montesquieu’s work, *De l’esprit des lois*, was a highly popular book in Hungary at that time¹⁶⁴. Influenced by Montesquieu, the noblemen often refer to the *constitutio*, rather than to an ensemble of unwritten laws, traditions and costumes. Under the influence of *De l’esprit des lois*, the nobility designated its customary rights as a real constitution. In more than half of the pamphlets, the question (and

¹⁶¹ See J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), Kontler László, *Az állam rejtelvei*, (Budapest: Atlantisz, 1997).

¹⁶² Laszlo Peter points out the fact that the ancient constitution determined the discourse even in the second half of the nineteenth century. Laszlo Peter, “Language, the Constitution, and the Past in Hungarian Nationalism.” in Laszlo Peter, *Longue Durée in the History of Hungary, The Collected Works of Laszlo Peter*, Miklos Lojko ed, Aldershot: Ashgate, publication in progress (manuscript form, quoted with the permission of the editor).

¹⁶³ II. József az Elízium mezején, [s.n.], 1791, *Miért nem szerettetik József császár az ő népétől?*, [s.n.], 1790.

¹⁶⁴ Montesquieu made a short tour in Hungary in the first half of the eighteenth century, he compared the Hungarian political (“constitutional”) system to the English model. Even though certain features of the Hungarian system avoided his attention, his observations were very influential in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See Eckhart Sándor, *A francia forradalom eszméi Magyarországon*, Budapest, 1935. Laszlo Peter „Montesquieu’s Paradox on Freedom and Hungary’s constitutions 1790-1990”, *History of Political Thought* 16

even the word) of the *consitutio* comes up in the sense of real law, in the sense of basic, written law of the political system, just as in contemporary constitutional monarchies. I have already referred to the legal background of the relationship of Hungary and the Monarchy (the articles of 1790 actually mention the word *constitutio*) which supposed that Hungary had real laws and a constitution. This article became a constant reference point in the pamphlets, creating the “community of the constitution”. In the Hungarian pamphlets, the authors employ the word *alkotmány* instead of the Latin *constitutio*, sometimes referring to the contemporary French laws, blurring the main and obvious differences concerning the nature and language of these laws.

The Hungarian word *alkotmány*, which is an artificial translation of the Latin word *constitutio*, with the meaning of something built or assembled, begins to replace more and more frequently the Latin term when the authors write about the constitution of the *natio*. Here, we also have to remember of one of the main features of the sense of *natio*: the members of that *natio* are not related to each other by their common language, common ethnicities or common cultural consciousness. The main argument in the discourse of the ancient constitution is that *natio* is still a “legal” entity, and that its members are related by the common privileges. The semantic matrix of the concept of community has almost an exclusively descriptive character. The *country* is a completely neutral term in the texts referring merely to a political unity, a simple territorial entity which is the place of the political life of the *natio*. The *natio* here is opposed to the unprivileged people.

One of the most frequent arguments of the nobility of the ancient constitution is the theory according to which the ruler does not have the right to change the constitution. The constitution cannot be changed, not even by the ruler, since it must be the legal legacy of the next generation of the community of the constitution. This was an important issue after the

(1995), 77-104. See also Éva H. Balázs, *Hungary and the Habsburgs: An Experiment in Enlightened Absolutism* (Budapest: CEU Press, 1997), 134-142.

reign of Joseph II, who already forfeited the right to the crown even before his death because of his violation of the constitution. The ruler was not able to respect the system of the customary privileges in his unsuccessful reforms; therefore, part of the nobility demanded the restoration of the *ius restitendi*. In this type of argumentation it is emphasized that the fundamental rights of the nobility cannot even be discussed at the Diet. These traditional, customary rights are subject neither to revision nor to interpretation at the Diet. It is also important to remember that the so-called *bene possessionati* have the role of the strongest social opposition in the socially complex Hungarian nobility. Parallel to this resistance, the social influence of the *bene possessionati* was becoming deeper and deeper¹⁶⁵. This nobility had a crucial role in the resistance in the 1780's, when Joseph II attempted to dismantle the customary and traditional rights and privileges in question. In 1790, in the article cited several times, the rights of the nobility were restored¹⁶⁶. But at the same time, the argumentation sometimes brings up interesting concepts of *patria (haza)* and *populus (nép)*.

The concept of the ancient constitution is therefore strictly related to the relational concept of the nation. As I have tried to demonstrate, in the pamphlets a pre-modern term is used to refer to a concrete group of the (pre-modern) society which owns collective rights. We can state that this argumentation can be named as some sort of a commonplace of the proto-conservative language:

... without any doubt, this once famous country can reach its happiness only if The Sacred Laws and Golden Freedom, the evident truths can be maintained in innocence, protected from any damage.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ For this phenomenon see Szijártó M. István. *A diéta, A magyar rendek és az országgyűlés 1708-1792*. (Budapest: Osiris, 2005), Szijártó M. István. *Nemesi társadalom és politika. Tanulmányok a 18. századi magyar rendiségről*. (Budapest: Universitas, 2006)

¹⁶⁶ Article X of 1790. See note 53.

¹⁶⁷ „Mert minden bizsonnyal ezen hajdan nevezetes országnak tsak akkor maga boldogságához közelíteni láttatik, mikor a N. Haza Sz. Törvényi, Arany Szabadsági, szemén szedett igassági minden molyos homály férgétül megőriztetvén ártatlan karban fent állyanak.” Kenessey see also, Darvas Ferenc. *A jó magyarhoz. Az alkotmány helyreállítása felett érzett örömét kifejező vers*. Pest, 1790.

The requirement of the ancient freedom of the noble Hungary here is also related to the question of the Hungarian language:

The Patria has already brought back to life one of its most important treasures, Freedom. It is needed that the Holy Hungarian Mother Tongue follow its trace by being placed on the highest *station*.¹⁶⁸

These two phenomena come much closer to each other than in the case of Báróczi, Rác and Aranka: there is no ancient freedom without the national language. This idea is characteristically embedded into the discourse of *public reason*, which is also a synonym of the ancient constitution. The idea of the necessity of the Hungarian language above all other languages of the *natio* refers to the same intention that we saw in the case of the authors mentioned above. However, Kenessey¹⁶⁹ makes more explicit the need that those who own the ancient rights, freedom and constitution have the responsibility of improving the language, and make it competitive against other languages in the country, mostly in the field of the sciences and administration.

Leopold, taking to his heart in a fatherly fashion the possible causes of the development of his loyal Hungarian People, decided by his own perfect willingness that among the instances of happiness that belong to the Hungarian Patria, the Hungarian Mother Language has to have the first place before any other languages in the country.¹⁷⁰

The community of language is the community of the ancient constitution, and the community of *freedom* has the task of preserving the justice of the *country*. At the same time, the idea of the “leadership” of those who possess these rights is articulated in a discourse of the state of

¹⁶⁸ „A N. Haza mivel egyik legfőbb kincsét a N. Szabadságit már élet erén folyására vezette: illendő, hogy nyomában az Édes Anya Magyar Nyelv is méltóságos fő állapot poltza vélek helyeztetne.” Kenessey, *A magyar szabadság*, 1791.

¹⁶⁹ It is important to mention that I could not find any biographical data of Kenessey; the family itself belongs to the *bene possessionati* of the Transdanubian region.

¹⁷⁰ „Leopold Attyai gondoskodo szivére vévén minden izeiben a N. Magyar hűséges népének előmenetelére tzelező lehetséges okait, önként valo tökéletes hajlandóságbul szorgalmazta azt, hogy a Magyar Hazát illető többi boldogsági közt a Magyar Anyai Nyelv első helyet minden egyéb nyelvek előtt az Országban érdemellyen.” Kenessey, *A magyar szabadság*, 1791.

the aristocrats, namely the “wise”¹⁷¹, meanwhile the relationship between *Hungarian Patria* and *country* becomes even more complex.

3.5.2. England – a Model of Constitution in the Discourse

In one way or another, the Hungarian thinkers were often influenced by French political thought. Sometimes the reaction to was rather hostile, as in the case of Szaitz, which could lead to some sort of a proto-conservative type of discourse. The French example was by no means unknown by the actors. In more than ninety percent of the pamphlets, the authors refer to contemporary French events in a positive or negative way. It is important to emphasize though, as I did in the introduction, that the term “influence” is not a proper word choice for this process of cultural transfers, since it implies a relationship of dominance. If that were the case, the Enlightenment would be considered as a homogeneous European phenomenon, the most important feature of which is the center-periphery relationship and “imperfection” of the original ideas, mostly disseminated from the French capital.¹⁷²

However, political thinkers and authors at the end of the eighteenth century seem to have been familiar with the contemporary English political system. This familiarity contributed considerably to the birth of characteristic answers to the social-political phenomena in Hungary¹⁷³. In his work entitled *Anglus-magyar igazgatásnak egyben vetése*, Aranka draws a comparison between the English and Hungarian political systems, and approaches the question of constitution from a different direction: the word constitution is an

¹⁷¹ *A jó magyarhoz*, [s.n.], 1790.

¹⁷² Kontler László, *The Enlightenment in Central Europe?*, in Balázs Trencsényi and Michal Kopecek (ed.), *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central Southeast Europe (1770-1945)*, (CEU Press, 2006-2007) vol. 1, 33-44.

¹⁷³ The analysis of the English “connections” at the end of the eighteenth century could be the subject of another entire thesis, since we own very important texts of this question. Besides the works on which I will focus on, mention must be made of the journeys and writings of Ferenc Széchenyi, Sámuel Teleki, József Podmaniczky, Gergely Berzeviczy.

entirely different concept from that of the discourses presented above. In Aranka's interpretation, unlike Austria, which depends on a bigger unity, the German Empire, the Hungarian Kingdom is a free country, depending only on God. The concept of community takes its form in the opposition of the country to the ruler: it is appropriate that this community is segmented in terms of right and social position¹⁷⁴. Moreover, it is an entirely legal situation, due to the fact that the higher classes, the *natio*, can keep customs and the ancient rights and privileges, the origin of which goes back far in time:

A Hungarian nobleman, of the sort which in fact comprise the estates of the country, is to be entirely distinguished from his peasants, exactly in the fashion in which a proprietor is to be legally distinguished from his property..¹⁷⁵

The constitution is closer to the meaning of newly established, written laws, but the question of the extension of the rights and the dilemma of how to "integrate" the *plebs* into the nation do not arise¹⁷⁶.

Law and justice have the same nature as money in terms of giving and getting it. The right to have them depends on how they are used in terms of the Law and the Custom.¹⁷⁷

The concept of constitution in Aranka's view seems to be a source of some kind of a dualistic power. The constitution is the base of a political community, and this political community is the owner of the power with the ruler. The central issue is the question of the balanced relationship between the *political community* and the ruler. However, this approach seems to stay closer to the archaic concept of constitution: it does not become a normative concept in

¹⁷⁴ Even though everyone is a subject, some are more equals – Aranka mentions the case of the slaves in America.

¹⁷⁵ "Egy Magyar Nemes Ember – millyenekből állanak tulajdonképpen az Ország Rendei – megkülönböztetett dolog a maga Parasztaitól, olyan megkülönböztetett dolog éppen, mint egy tulajdonos személy a maga tulajdonától Törvény szerint.", Aranka György, *Anglus és Magyar igazgatásnak egyben vetése*, Kolozsvár, 1790.

¹⁷⁶ "De hogy ő mellé egy korona tagja mellé a maga Parasztja egy rangba, egy szám alá tetessék, annál inkább hogy ő maga, az ő eredeti Nemesi Méltóságától meg fosztatván, arra az alaton sorsra vetessék amerre a természet és gondviselés az ő parasztját hívta; és minden paraszti terheket véle együtt viseljen: ez is a fennebb említett nagy szörnyű igazságnak mássa volna! Szörnyű igazság!" Aranka, *Anglus és Magyar*, 1790.

¹⁷⁷ "A törvény és igazság olyan adás vevés (*Commercium*) természetű dolog mint a pénz: hol miként élnek vele, Szokás és Törvény szerint, annyiban jár." Aranka György, *Anglus és Magyar*, Kolozsvár, 1790.

the sense that the ensemble of permanently valid written laws should determine the official process of legislation.

3.5.3. The Stake of Some Translations

I already briefly touched on the question of the different translations and adaptations of diverse works, which, by the act of the conceptual adaptation itself, can deeply influence a given political discourse. In the proto-conservative discourse, the importance of this sort of translations also seems crucial. There are several evident examples of the phenomenon, but only in two cases do we know the original work. One of the works is entitled *A köznép megvilágosodásáról ennek határaitól és hasznáról*, translated by a nobleman from North-Eastern Hungary, Bárány Péter, from the original work of Johann Ludwig Ewald. The title of another work, also translated from German, is *Frantzia Országi Revolúciónak okairól*. Unfortunately, the only available information about the translator is that he also came from the North-Eastern part of the country, the initials of his name are Sz. P. S, and he dedicated the work to Albert Szemere¹⁷⁸. Originally, he wanted to translate the work of Edmund Burke, but due to unavailability of this work, he decided to translate something similar from a German author. The text is particularly interesting from the point of view of German and Hungarian receptions of the contemporary conservative thoughts.

In each work, the representatives of the middle nobility form determined opinions by translating and, at the same time, by posing interesting questions concerning important phenomena like the civil government and education, the philosophical questions of the Enlightenment (Kant, Mendelssohn, D'Alembert), religious tolerance, or the natural law. At the same time, they form a characteristic opinion concerning the necessity of spreading

¹⁷⁸ Sz. P. S., *Frantzia Országi Revolúciónak okairól*, Tolcsva, 1794.

certain elements of the Enlightenment. Of course, these elements arrived in Hungary through diverse ways, mostly through translations of German and French works; consequently, their usage of concept reveals an interesting incoherence. Moreover, to refer back to my methodological chapter and the question of the transfers, the translations of Ewald's and the unknown German author's works, along with other translations, are examples par excellence of the arrival of Enlightenment thought in Hungary through the German "filter", which made an already complex discursive space even more heterogenic.

Conclusions and Perspectives

At the end of this analysis, I would like to return to some conclusions which are beginning to be illuminated by my research. So far, I have tried to investigate the strategies of the conceptualizations of the community in a concrete group of sources, the political pamphlets of 1790-1791, written in Hungarian. This investigation has an important methodological stake as well, namely the contextualist approach and the conceptual history method, the application possibilities of which in relation to the intellectual history of the East-Central European region still pose important questions. Moreover, the question of the conceptualization of the community has the potential to reveal some possible answers to these challenges, as well as to show the main dilemmas of the political thought of that time.

First of all, I have tried to make more or less clear the idea that one cannot really speak of a collective identity, but rather of collective identities in the plural within the complex social-cultural conditions of Hungary in the end of the eighteenth century. In trying to demonstrate this plurality, I first tried to point out the complexity of the political languages, which becomes apparent in the complex usage of certain concepts. This complex usage of concepts also implies a certain semantic ambiguity. The role of the local social-cultural contexts also seems crucial. The one-way process of the cultural transfers, in the forms of translations and receptions, is also an important constructive element of the discursive space (mainly the political ideas of the Western Enlightenment). These elements all contribute to the complexity of the discursive space at that time.

After a short introduction and some methodological reflections on the usability of some results of the international historiography, I tried to focus on the most characteristic features of the complex political constellation, Monarchy vs. Hungary, and on the social-confessional-ethnic map of the country, since these elements of the context contributed

heavily to the nature of the discourses. In the chapter on the nature of the Hungarian political literature, I discussed some possible dilemmas of the thinkers.

In the empirical part of the thesis, I tried to demonstrate the main discursive strategies of the conceptualization of the community. For instance, I tried to show how the language issue can have either in an implicit or explicit way a heavy political stake due to peculiar individual and collective intentions. In the subchapter concerning the question of toleration, I touched on problems like the Catholic-Protestant dividedness, its influence on the political culture and languages, and the usage of the elements of various types of discourses of the seventeenth-eighteenth century (skeptical, political arguments for toleration etc.). Certainly, the dividedness affects the other types of argumentations from several viewpoints. Contextualization is also indispensable in order to get closer to the real intentions of an author or of an entire discourse: this is the case of the “apolitical,” or generally considered as apolitical discourse of the language of refinement, which, using several element of the discourse of politeness, manners and refinement, seems to have serious political aims under the surface. These implicit intentions are difficult to grasp without the investigation of these discourses in their own context. This statement is also true for the “proto-conservative” discourse: the labels like proto-conservative can explain more accurately the character of the discourse if it is contextualized, rather than if we concentrate on the development of the idea itself (as “conservatism”). From this angle, an analysis has not yet been conducted in Hungarian historiography.

This thesis is the mirror of the beginning of a research project, and thus, its more important task is to clarify with some examples the most important basic assumptions and methodological issues of the research.

I would also like to touch on some possible, even necessary ways to continue this project. In order to get a detailed map, it seems indispensable to extend the research to the

German and Latin writings of that time. In this sense, it is enough to think of the “radical” authors of the Enlightenment (Hajnóczy, etc.). This kind of extension could yield interesting findings in the investigation. The relevant comparative perspectives also seem crucial: the very similarities of political and social conditions would make a comparative approach with the Polish case highly relevant, alongside similar methods.

On the other hand, the detailed investigation of the reception and adaptation of some elements from the different Western European discursive space would not only be interesting, but also indispensable. The conceptual investigations and the focusing on the intentions of certain individuals do not necessarily exclude each other in the complex Hungarian discursive space. Moreover, the two approaches must complete each other in order to come closer to the mapping of this discursive space. The concept itself and the understanding of the concept of community is difficult, even impossible to reconstruct if we only pay attention to the cases when the word community is explicitly referred to. Therefore, I tried to focus on diverse strategies, approaches and “languages” of the known or unknown authors, who are concerned with conceptualizing in one way or another the idea of the collective identity. In doing so, I have also tried to give attention to the fact that, after the approach of *Begriffsgeschichte*, the concepts do not exist by themselves, but in a complex discursive unity, in which the semantic matrix of a certain concept is at least as important as the given concept itself. It seemed important to complete the investigation by integrating the question of the usage of concepts into the research, since the concepts are obviously the central elements of the different utterances. In this system of different semantic matrixes, the concepts have tight correlations, and their meaning often depends on the nature of this correlation, as we saw it in the case of the concept of the community and its semantic matrix, namely how the relationship between the concept of *natio* in different discursive constellations with different individual intentions (e. g. the case of the common language).

The different political utterances mean here the different strategies of the conceptualization of the community under a certain political “pressure” at the time of the Diet of 1790-1791 and a bit later: which concepts and semantic matrixes come to the foreground in the argumentation, and what does this “selection” depend on? Among these most important factors are the confessional separation, education, and other aspects of the local social-cultural influences and conditions, as we have seen in the different instances (e. g. the nobility from the North-Eastern part of the country, or Aranka from Transylvania). These investigated written manifestations were not necessarily written by the “big names”, the canonic figures of “political thought” (if we can speak about canonic figures in Hungary at that time). Even the existence of the political thought in its most widespread sense is controversial in Hungary.

However, it is important to conclude that a given concept is by no means related to only one type of argumentation (a good example, among multiple, is the relationship of nation and *közjő* in different languages) or language. The shifting of some concepts from one type of argumentation to another can deeply influence the usage of other concepts, which is the case of the question of the (common) language several times. Moreover, not even a given author can be related to one specific type of argumentation, which makes the discursive map even more complex. The concept of community is affected in various ways in the frameworks of an empire, a highly complicated political constellation. In this situation, the political languages, sometimes more, sometimes less explicitly, are always related to existent or non-existent social institutions.

This type of investigation of the conceptualization of the community can enable us to point out the complex nature of the political discourse, and the ambiguity and complexity of the social-political concepts; one can reveal how some segment of these discourses are used in a very different way from our nowadays usages, and to observe the ambiguity of the constitutive elements of the political discourse. Such an investigation can also contribute to

the controversial issues in Hungarian historiography, for instance the polemical question of the problem of continuity between the ideas of the 1790's and those of the generation of political thinkers of the nineteenth century.

Authors of the Primary Sources

Aranka György, (1737-1817): Calvinist superintendent in Transylvania. He was especially interested in the question of governmental forms. He worked as jurist and teacher in Transylvania.

Bárány Péter, (?-1829): Born probably in Miskolc, he was a child of a noble family. In the 1770's he worked as the secretary of Széchényi Ferenc. He also worked for the periodical *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*.

Báránczi Sándor, (1735-1809): Member of the noble bodyguards in Vienna.

Darvas Ferenc, (1740-1810): Born in South-Eastern Hungary, in Nógrád county in a noble family. Deputy of Pest county at the Diet in 1790-1791. He wanted for introducing The Hungarian as an official language at the Diete.

Decsy Sámuel, (1742?-1816): Medical and jurist scientist, born in Gömör county. He studied in Germany and in Holland, after he stayed in Vienna. He was the founder of the periodical entitled *Magyar Kurír*.

Gáti István, (1749-1843): Calvinist pastor, he worked as a teacher in Szatmár in the 1790's. Defender of the Hungarian language against the Latin.

Gvadányi József, (1725-1815): Nobleman with Italian origins. He attended a Jesuit school. In the 1790's, he defended the Hungarian language and the ancient traditions.

Horváth Ádám, (1760-1820): Lawyer, born in Komárom county, in a Protestant family of the middle nobility. He was a freemason, and expert of astrological sciences. At the Diet, he was the deputy of different counties. He was the member of a freemason company in Zalaegerszeg

Hrabovszky György, (1762-1825) Evangelist pastor in Veszprém county, collector of books, defender of the Hungarian language and literature.

Kenessey György, Member of a Transdanubian noble family.

Nagyváthy János, (1755-1819): Born in Borsod county, freemason in Venna, he was writing in Hungarian from the very beginning of his career.

Ondrejovics Bálint, Nobleman, probably from Nógrád county.

Péczeli József, (1750-1795): Calvinist pastor in Komárom, the founder of the Scientific Company of Komárom (*Komáromi Tudós Társaság*). He started editing the periodical *Komáromi Mindenest Gyűjtemény*, one of the first Hungarian scientific periodicals.

Rácz Sámuel, (1744-1804): Medical scientist, the teacher of the University of Buda from 1777. Besides the medical sciences, his *œuvre* is important in terms of the development of the Hungarian language.

Szaitz Leó, (1746-1792) Servite monk, the author of several pamphlets on the nature of Catholic religion.

Szőnyi Benjámín, (1717-1794): Calvinist pastor, he attended the universities of Leyden and Utrecht. He worked in Békés until the end of his life.

Sz. P. Sz. – unknown author (translator), probably coming from the South Eastern part of Hungary.

Szatsvay Sándor, (1752-1815) Coming from a *székely* family from Transylvania, he was a publicist-journalist, partisan of the Enlightenment. He was the editor of two important journals. He had to quit his job after he published articles on the events the French Revolution.

Szentjóbi Szabó László, (1767-1795): Born in a low-noble family, he took part in the Martinovics conspiracy. He worked as an administrator in the Josephinian system, later he struggled against the hegemony of the feudal privileges.

Szirmay Antal, (1747-1812) Born in Eperjes, he worked after his school in Zemplén county, at the Diet of 1790-1791 he was the deputy of the same county.

Szrógh Sámuel, (?-1829) Calvinist nobleman in Miskolc, director of the Theatrical Company of Miskolc (*Miskolci Magyar Játékszín*).

Vályi András, (1764-1801) University professor, he worked in Pest and Kassa. He made a lot of journey in order to map the educational conditions of the country.

Verseghy Ferenc, (1757-1822): Poet, linguist, and member of the *Pálos* order. As a member of the Martinovics conspiracy, he translated several French contemporary works.

Virág Benedek, (1754-1830): Born in Zala county, he made his studies in Pest. Monk of the *Pálos* order, then laic priest in Fejér county.

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