Majority-Minority Relations in Romania:

Discursive Change without Structural Transformation

Discourse Analysis of Debates about 'Multiculturalism' and Minority Higher Education

(1997-2000)

by

Szabolcs László

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Supervisor: Professor Michael L. Miller

External supervisor: Professor Will Kymlicka

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Abstract

The general aim of my research is to examine how the global diffusion of the political discourse of multiculturalism was received and implemented within the context of identity politics and state-minority relations in Romania, at the end of the 1990s. This question is investigated by focusing on a central issue: the political claim for minority-language higher education, and the ensuing debate which framed the reception of multiculturalism. The purpose is to identify the discursive positions involved in the political interaction, to analyze how they are constructed, and explain how they are transformed through the processes of ethno-political contention. Consequently, analyzing how the appropriation and instrumentalization of the discourse of 'multiculturalism' was articulated in the interaction between the domestic majority and minority political actors, and the intervening international actor (the HCNM), reveals why this concept (originating from a theory of pluralist democracy) failed to become an effective and novel alternative to addressing antagonistic state-minority relations in Romania. Paradoxically then, the introduction of multiculturalism re-strengthened the existing ethno-political boundaries, producing a visible discursive change which represented an ideational shift of the majority political rhetoric in the wider context of 'European integration', without bringing a significant structural transformation in minority accommodation.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Arguably, the concept of 'multiculturalism' is one of the most globally widespread, and also theoretically or practically least clarified political terms of the last decades, playing a leading role in various debates and policy designs for addressing and managing cultural diversity. As such, the concept was a positively charged universal 'buzz-word' or 'portmanteau term' in the 1990s, and entered into East European domestic environments with no clear definition, yet a strong international prestige. In spite of this global promotion, in Romania 'multiculturalism' quickly became a highly contested political term of inter-ethnic relations at the end of the 1990s, propelled to the center of heated ethno-political conflicts over minority-language education. Why did this initially vague concept become the main problematical focal point of these debates? Why was it appropriated and strongly promoted by majority actors, and bitterly contested and rejected by minority actors? What kind of political impact did the debate over the concept have in managing cultural diversity in Romania?

As a scholarly attempt to answer these questions, the general aim of my research will be to examine how the "global diffusion of the political discourse of multiculturalism"[1] was received and implemented within the context of identity politics and state-minority relations in Romania, at the end of the 1990s. The present thesis will address how and why did the ensuing debate – which framed the reception of this global discourse – transform the way inter-ethnic relations and multiethnic diversity is recognized, and influence the way it is managed in the given context. This will be examined by focusing on a central question of state-minority relations: the political claim for minority-language higher education. The purpose of the research will be to identify the discursive positions involved in the political interaction, to analyze how

[1] Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

they are constructed, and explain how they are transformed through the processes of ethno-political contention.

The research will be carried out through a comprehensive discourse analysis of the political and academic debates related to 'multiculturalism' involving various actors representing the Hungarian minority, the Romanian authorities, and the international community. In order to have a more accurate analytical grip on the power-relations involved in the addressed discursive antagonisms, and their subsequent changes, discourse analysis will be complemented by a focus on the institutional contexts present in the social field. The debates emerged in connection to: the political request by the Hungarian minority elite for the establishment of an independent, state-funded, minority-language university, and strongly connected to the problem of the 'multicultural' restructuring of the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca (BBU), an institution seen as a significant 'master symbol' of ethno-political contention in Transylvania.

From the perspective of political dynamics, the story of the minority claim and the debate can be summed up in the following way. In the political program and discourse of the DAHR[2], next to the request for local autonomy and collective language rights, the establishment of a separate, state-funded Hungarian university in Transylvania played a central role. On the one hand, this claim was founded on historical reasoning, presented as the 'restoration' of the 'original' Hungarian Bolyai University (founded in 1945 and merged with the Romanian Babeș University in 1959 under the Communist regime), and if granted, it would have possibly broken up the BBU in Cluj (which incorporated some Hungarian lines of study). On the other hand, it was based on the claim that the Hungarian minority (7% of the total population of Romania) was being under-represented in higher education (only 4.4% of students being Hungarian).

[2] Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania

After the DAHR was included in the 1996 political coalition which ousted the Iliescu-government, and was seen as bringing a 'democratic change' in Romania, there arose the chance to negotiate demands for minority accommodation. In spite of this potential, as regarding the political request for minority-language university, the coalition "moved from hesitant approval in 1997 to firm rejection in 1998 and after."[3] The issue sparked an intense political and discursive conflict in the period between 1997-2000, which drew the attention and mediation of Max van der Stoel, the HCNM at the time. Moderate members of the coalition (like Prime Minister Ciorbea and President Constantinescu) were willing at first to discuss the idea of the Hungarian university, but gradually, due to the internal fights within the heterogeneous coalition, the nationalist rhetoric of the opposition, and the general unpopularity of the project, there was a general retreat from accommodating this minority claim. An overwhelming part of the coalition forces opted for providing state-funded minority higher education exclusively though integrated institutions, and backing Andrei Marga's (the BBU rector, and later Minister of Education) promotion of 'multiculturalism'. The endorsement of this discourse by the intervention of the HCNM proved decisive, and through his facilitation an open-ended, de facto political consensus emerged, leaving room for possible later contestations of the settlement, yet only through the imposed logic and controlled definition of the multicultural framework.

From the perspective of the discursive dynamics and conflicts which emerged connected to the minority claim, and the restructuring of the BBU, the picture is more complex, and requires nuanced conceptualization and detailed analysis. In my investigation of the political and academic debates centering on this issue, I will conceptualize them as symbolic exchanges coming from different rhetorical cultures that give them meaning, and which interact on a given

[3] Ibid.

'discursive field.' The research will address the political interaction of two internal, 'nationalizing' political projects (each representing lose constellations of multiple, occasionally competing actors and voices which aim to speak on behalf of putative, ethnicized communities), and the external position of the HCNM, who's role as a detached, pragmatic and professional 'mediator' I will problematize and evaluate in the course of the thesis. The explanation of this conflicting discursive interaction will be done through the focused analysis of the reception and implementation of 'multiculturalism'.

The process of promoting the discourse of 'multiculturalism', and the ensuing controversy, highlights the antagonistic discursive positions of the two internal 'nationalizing projects', conceptualized as opposing paradigmatic visions of how to address diversity and state-minority relations. The research conceptualizes this as a symbolic confrontation of two rhetorical cultures representing discursively constructed 'ethnic worlds' (or in other words, parallel and opposing 'common senses', structured sets of meanings built on narratives which instrumentalize historical memory). Yet, what the contestation process also shows, is that these discursive positions are not coherent, compact 'worlds', and the emerging attitudes of Hungarian and Romanian political elites facing the new discourse of 'multiculturalism' creates internal oppositions promoting different views on the question of inter-ethnic relations.

Also, it is important to keep in mind that – although the political self-definitions of each ethno-political project (and much of the studies discussing it) paint the picture of opposing nationalizing processes which seem equal discursively (or symbolically) – from a structural perspective there is an obvious asymmetry between the two, with the nation-building state having significantly stronger and more extended institutional, financial and political grounding. Thus when looking at the political interaction of the majority-minority domestic actors with the

intervening international actor in the debate concerning the establishment of an independent Hungarian language university and the concept of 'multiculturalism', the explanation needs to start from the analytical interdependence and circularity of ethno-national discourses, institutions and actors. Only through the mutual attention to discursive and extra-discursive aspects can one understand what are at stake in the addressed political debate, and why it played out the way it did.

The analysis of the wide-ranging political debate, which framed the reception of the global discourse of 'multiculturalism', aims to highlight and examine the discursive limits, or 'thresholds', of the antagonistic positions between the two internal 'nationalizing projects'. This approach will assess why certain minority claims, framed in a paradigmatic minority discourse, are perceived as crossing a symbolic majority 'threshold'; and why some measures or discourses coming from the authorities are seen as endangering the existence and cultural reproduction of the minority. The research will examine how the introduction and reception of a 'multicultural' discourse, within the wider process of a 'return to Europe', challenges and potentially changes these internal 'nationalizing' projects. It will demonstrate how this prolonged promotion process created a significant discursive change in state-minority relations in Romania, without bringing the necessary structural and institutional transformation.

Chapter 2 – Approach to 'multiculturalism' – Methodology

2.1. Global diffusion of 'multiculturalism'

As Stuart Hall observes, the term 'multiculturalism' today is universally used in several contexts, yet this "proliferation has neither stabilized nor clarified its meaning", rather – similarly to terms like race, ethnicity, identity, diaspora – made it 'discursively entangled', so a definition or clarification is highly difficult.[4] This 'portmanteau term'[5] became a contested frame of reference for questions addressing diversity, and it was appropriated by various approaches which aimed to handle and codify the pluralist nature of societies. Hall himself lists several types of 'multiculturalisms': conservative (assimilation to the majority), liberal (integration into mainstream through universal individual citizenship), pluralist (enfranchising differences), commercial (recognition in the marketplace), corporate (managing differences), critical or revolutionary (emancipating subaltern groups) etc., all of which have global circulation to a certain extent.[6]

In order to comprehensively address the heterogeneous nature of this global diffusion, it is useful to think of 'multiculturalism' as one of the many 'ideoscapes' circulating through the processes of globalization. As Appadurai explains, such significant 'keywords' of political life pose problems of a semantic and pragmatic nature: "semantic to the extent that words require careful translation from context to context in their global movements"; and pragmatic "to the extent that the use of these words by political actors and their audiences may be subject to very

[4] Stuart Hall, "Conclusions," in *Un/settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, "Transruptions,"* ed. Barnor Hesse (London: Zed, 2000), 209.
[5] Homi Bhabha, "Culture's in Between," in *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity*, ed. David Bennett (London: Routledge, 1998).
[6] Hall, ibid.

different sets of contextual conventions that mediate their translation into public policies."[7] Consequently, for the purpose of the present research, the concept of 'multiculturalism' will be treated as an example of an 'ideoscape' with multiple 'meanings' and implications. It will be seen as a 'floating signifier'[8], that is, as a discursive element that can interact with various conventions, and can be appropriated, negotiated, contested and rejected by the different actors present in the discursive field.

When describing the 'global diffusion of the political discourse of multiculturalism', Will Kymlicka – one of the most influential theoreticians of the concept – is also working with a general understanding of this 'portmanteau term', but in a strictly normative sense. The global diffusion refers to the (re)internationalization of minority rights, while 'liberal multiculturalism' to the set of policies devised with the purpose of recognizing and accommodating various types of minorities. In his assessment, the emergence of these practices is the result of a transformative process through which "older models of assimilationist and homogenizing nation-states are increasingly being contested and displaced by newer multicultural models of the state and citizenship", a process which fundamentally changed the relations between states and ethno-cultural minorities.[9] Importantly, Kymlicka points out that the nature and extent of this transformation depends on the 'endogenous domestic political processes' of each specific country.

Thus, in treating 'multiculturalism' as an 'ideoscape' in the discourse analysis carried out in this thesis, I want to make a number of conceptual clarifications. Following Kymlicka, the multiple versions of 'multiculturalism' will be seen as political discourses and practices which

[7] Arjun Appadurai, 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,' in *The globalization reader*, eds. Frank J. Lechner, John Boli (USA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 101-120.
[8] Bhabha, ibid.
[9] Kymlicka, p. 3

aim to address the recognition and accommodation of certain minorities (in our case, 'national minorities' in East and Central Europe). Nonetheless, by placing this highly contested term in the focus of a discursive approach, I wish to distinguish it from Kymlicka's normative generalization (through which he names various policies related to minority rights as multicultural), and to examine the political contexts in which the term appears explicitly, as a discursive element interacting with conventions, and legitimizing practices. This conceptual restriction is important, since as the analysis will demonstrate, this globally known, 'free-floating' term can be appropriated and instrumentalized in the given domestic contexts by certain political actors, who will oppose it to other political discourses which promote different visions or policies for minority accommodation.

2.2. Methodology – Discourse analysis

Since I plan to do a comprehensive discourse analysis of the political debates related to 'multiculturalism' in Romania, it is necessary to describe how I wish to use this methodology. Discourse analysis proposes a certain 'mode of thinking' about social relations, going against "an epistemic realism, whereby the world comprises material objects whose existence is independent of ideas or beliefs about them", and providing a "logic of interpretation that concerns itself with considering the manifest political consequences of adopting one mode of representation or another."[10] Accordingly, the aim is to "illustrate how textual and social processes are intrinsically connected, and to describe the implications of this connection for the way we think

[10] Qtd. in J. Milliken, "The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods," *European Journal of International Relations* 5.2 (1999): 225-54. p. 225

and act in the contemporary world."[11] Compared to other approaches, its added value in social research is to produce "new interpretations of empirical objects, either by rendering visible phenomena previously undetected by dominant theoretical approaches, or by problematizing existing accounts and articulating new interpretations."[12]

Post-structuralist Discourse Theory (DT) emerged from the works of Foucault, Derrida, and Laclau and Mouffe, proposing that all social phenomena and objects obtain their meaning(s) against a background of historically specific discourses, which should be seen as "relational systems of signifying practices" or "a contingent horizon of structures in which meaning is constantly negotiated and constructed."[13] DT emphasizes the political relations of the knowledge/power nexus, and states that "discourse is constructed in and through hegemonic struggles that aim to establish a political and moral-intellectual leadership through the articulation of meaning and identity."[14]

In conceptualizing the macro-logic of the discursive field it seems useful to focus on DT's notions of articulation, hegemony and antagonism. Articulation can be defined as a practice that establishes a relation among discursive elements ('floating signifiers') that invokes a mutual modification of their meaning, and the construction of nodal points which partially fix this meaning. Hegemonic practices of political articulation unify a discursive space by linking together different discursive elements into a common project of ideological totalization, and creating equivalences between a particular set of demands and meanings, in order to structure the

[11] Ibid.
[12] David R Howarth and Jacob Torfing (eds.), *Discourse Theory in European Politics: Identity, Policy, and Governance* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 320.
[13] Ibid., p. 8
[14] Ibid., p. 14

'field of intelligibility' and construct the 'social imaginary'.[15] Antagonisms are relations of subordination articulated as socially constructed oppositions of oppression and domination, or in other words: differences, limits, in the hegemonic discourse that must be articulated as antagonisms by groups in order to subvert or disarticulate the hegemonic discourse. Thus, the identification of antagonisms in the social field make possible the investigation, disarticulation, and re-articulation of a hegemonic discourse.[16]

In this sense discursive practices not only determine meaning, but are productive in multiple ways. Through articulation they produce and operationalize 'regimes of truth' which make "intelligible some ways of being in, and acting towards, the world, while excluding other possible modes of identity and action."[17] Discourses produce authorized 'subject positions', selectively "constituting some and not others as 'privileged storytellers' to whom narrative authority is granted."[18] It also creates 'knowledgeable practices' for the subjects towards the objects the discourse defines, "rendering logical and proper interventions of different kinds, disciplining techniques, implementations."[19] In order to legitimize hegemonic practices, discourses produce publics or audiences: putative 'communities' on the reception end of political communication who are supposed to share the societal 'common sense' of the dominating discourse.[20]

Additionally, given the specific context of the debate the research will be addressing, it is important to clarify the specific conceptualization of 'public sphere' in Romania where the

[15] Nico Carpentier and Benjamin De Cleen, 'Bringing discourse theory into Media Studies: The applicability of Discourse Theoretical Analysis (DTA) for the Study of media practises and discourses,' *Journal of Language and Politics*, Volume 6, Number 2 (2007): 265-293.
[16] Kevin DeLuca, "Articulation Theory: A Discursive Grounding for Rhetorical Practice," *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (1999): 334-348.
[17] Milliken, p. 229
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., p. 237

ethno-political conflict played out. Firstly, since the analysis will focus on written press articles, it is more accurate to speak of a 'mediated public sphere', as a general "institutional setting where a structured public communication between particular communicators and the broader public is mediated through a given country-wide media," which can serve as a 'magnifying glass' in the forum for political debates.[21] And secondly, due to the structural and institutional antagonism (and imbalance) between the two nationalizing projects, this mediated public sphere has to be seen not as a singular entity, but as consisting of two interacting and overlapping (yet not equal) media spheres, two communicative or discursive arenas (each with its own conditions of access and modes of conduct).[22] The asymmetry between these two parallel, institutionally grounded, ethnically defined media worlds can be conceptualized, as the interaction of the mainstream, central (majority Romanian) public and the secondary, marginal (minority Hungarian) counter-public.[23] Thus, the nature of the 'public debate', the reception and negotiation of 'multiculturalism' is determined by the separate and intermingling existence of the two paradigmatic rhetorical 'regimes of truth', and linguistically different press worlds. The task will be to read these media sources so as to identify what kinds of communications and 'transgressions' did take place, and what were their effects.

As such, I will be giving a first-hand analysis of the Hungarian and Romanian language print media discussing the topic, scholarly articles written on the subject of the debates, the archive of the OSCE, the BBU Senate, the DAHR, and the Bolyai Society, and also the Romanian legislation on education. The newspapers were selected so as to cover representative

[21] Mathieu Petithomme, "Framing European Integration in Mediated Public Spheres: An Increasing Nationalization and Contestation of European Issues in Party Political Communication?," *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*23.2 (2010): 153-68.
[22] S. Clayman, "Arenas of Interaction in the Mediated Public Sphere." *Poetics* 32.1 (2004): 29-49.
[23] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." *Social Text*, No. 25/26, (1990): 56-80

discursive positions of both media worlds: thus, for the Romanian sources there are two local dailies from Cluj, the '*Adevărul de Cluj'* (Adevărul from now on) repeatedly manifesting explicit anti-Hungarian attitudes, and the more moderate '*Monitorul de Cluj'* (Monitorul); and two dailies from Bucharest with nationwide distribution, '*Cotidianul*' and 'România Liberă'; and as a counterbalance, a leftist-liberal weekly, '*Revista 22'*. For the Hungarian press, the research relies on the two most important dailies of the Hungarian minority, the nationwide '*Romániai Magyar Szó*' (RMSz), and the local '*Szabadság*', in Cluj, being the main media platforms for minority politicians and intellectuals. The articles were selected from the 1997-2000 period, topically focusing on the issue of minority education, the establishment of the Bolyai University, the promotion of 'multiculturalism', and the institutional structure of the BBU.

Chapter 3 – Theoretical grounding – Contextualizing the debate

The purpose of this chapter is to critically engage with the theoretical literature on nationalism, state-minority relations and minority rights in East and Central Europe in order to contextualize the political debate the thesis will be analyzing. It is divided into four interconnected parts, each discussing a significant aspect of the phenomenon under discussion. First, it addresses the European context of a 'paradoxical and ambiguous' minority rights regime, and then moves on to conceptualize the role of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in localized interventions. This is followed by a focus on the postsocialist or transitional context of Romania, in order to theorize the centrality of nationalism, or 'identity politics', in the political dynamics of the discursive field; and to identify the institutions and actors involved. The last part is dedicated to the critical presentation of the specific Romanian context involving the antagonistic 'nationalizing projects' of majority and minority, and the structural asymmetry and imbalance between them.

3.1. The European context of minority rights

The internationalization of minority rights in Europe emerged in the 1990s when several supranational organizations adopted explicit approaches to influence and shape state-minority relations in Eastern Europe after the fall of Communism. Officially promoting 'liberal' and 'democratic' models of dealing with diversity, and the transformational process of 'returning to Europe', the articulation of ideas related to minority rights was motivated by a rationale which feared the potential of escalating ethnic conflicts in the postsocialist countries, and wanted to

ensure international peace and stability. Kymlicka identifies three forms of how European organizations wanted to influence state-minority relations: publicizing 'best practices'; formulating legal norms; and engaging in case-specific interventions.[24]

While the first method was a formal attempt at advertising 'successful' minority scenarios in 'West Europe', and proved to have little influence on the audience it was disseminated to, the latter two approaches gave rise to significant political, legal and institutional forms. With the aim of designing, and then monitoring, pan-European 'norms and standards' for minority protection the Council of Europe (CoE) developed the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM); the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) set up the Office of the High Commission on National Minorities (HCNM); while the European Union and NATO required all candidate countries to cooperate with these organizations, as a criterion for membership.[25]

In spite of the consensus that the political and economic conditionality put forward by these organizations can be regarded as powerful instruments for shaping the process of transition and minority protection in the prospective East European member states, the political profile of 'Europeanization' has been far less clearly defined than the economic one.[26] Thus, in spite of the significant efforts, the 'European minority rights regime' has received criticism from several directions. Besides the charges of institutionalizing a state of inequality between existing Euro-Atlantic states and the post-communist states through the codified double-standards relating to the recognition of minorities[27], critics point out the lack of clear, principled definition for

[24] Ibid., p. 174
[25] Ibid., p. 197
[26] David J Smith, "Minority Rights, Multiculturalism, and EU Enlargement: the case of Estonia," *Journal of Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe,* (2003): 1-39. p. 4
[27] Adam Burgess, 'Critical reflections on the return of national minority rights regulation to East/West European affairs,' in *Ethnicity and Democratisation in the New Europe*, ed. Karl Cordell (London: Routledge, 1999).

'national minority' which undermines the consistency of the monitoring practice.[28] Furthermore, as Graham Smith noted, the 'norms and standards' of the 1990s developed a limited conception of minority rights, according to which minorities are to be protected through upholding the individual rights of the members of these communities. The OSCE repeatedly eschewed the promotion of group or collective rights, "the protection of multicultural rights based upon affirmative action policies, consociational political structures, recognition of local diasporic group rights or dual language policy".[29] This is in direct relation with David Chandler's observation that the area of Central and Eastern Europe has been treated as a 'security issue' by the European organizations, and as a consequence the main focus has been placed on "stability, consolidation of state sovereignty and preservation of existing borders rather than the promotion of minority rights *per se*."[30]

In Kymlicka's evaluation, the results of the European internationalization of minority rights are 'mixed, confusing and schizophrenic', because the institutional efforts "simultaneously encourage and discourage minority politics."[31] Overall, he states that the explicitly articulated norms are an 'updated version' of the 'right to enjoy one's culture'[32], and do not put forward any general principles that could guide democratic states in dealing with the "distinctive characteristics and aspirations of national minorities."[33] Echoing Chandler's assessment, he states that the normative long-term goal of diffusing – in his definition – 'liberal multiculturalism' was abandoned for the "short-term exigencies of maintaining stability in

[28] Smith, ibid.
[29] Graham Smith, "Transnational Politics and the Politics of the Russian Diaspora," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22 (1999).
[30] David Chandler, "The OSCE and the Internationalisation of National Minority Rights,' in *Ethnicity and Democratisation in the New Europe*, ed. Karl Cordell (London: Routledge, 1999).
[31] Kymlicka, p. 245
[32] Originally phrased in Article 27 of the UN's 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
[33] Kymlicka, p. 214

transition", rendering the 'minority rights regime' both "politically ineffective and conceptually unstable."[34]

A completely different, yet more successful method was perhaps the ad hoc case-specific intervention-model enacted by the international actors in various contexts. In cases of conflict, through mediating negotiations and drafting agreements between governments and minority leaders these interventions reintroduced stability. Yet – because the provisions which were adopted in such interventions are not based on any general standards, and there is no consistency of approach in different cases –, this practice has similarly drawn criticism, especially from national minority political actors. In Kymlicka's assessment, the interventions are motivated in the overwhelming majority of cases by the already mentioned 'security track' focusing on the monitoring of regional stability, and the nature of the ensuing negotiations are grounded in 'realpolitik', and not conceptions of justice and rights.[35]

Drawing upon the critics of the European minority rights system, it can be concluded that there are no clear, universal and effective standards to follow in negotiations and conflicts over minority issues, and as a result such debates overwhelmingly depend on the various political actors involved in the given 'endogenous domestic political processes'. Thanks to the ambiguous and paradoxical nature of the 'minority rights regime' in such domestic debates multiple, competing political discourses are activated to address, manage and govern "the problems of diversity and multiplicity which multi-cultural societies throw up."[36] International actors, like the HCNM, (as we shall see in the following sub-chapter) through their mandate and diplomatic

[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., p. 238
[36] Hall, ibid.

strategies, can legitimize or undermine such political discourses, while still necessarily adapting to the structural circumstances of the given context.

3.2. The High Commissioner on National Minorities as an International Actor

As the special representative of the OSCE, and (in the local perspective) of the European community in general, the High Commissioner on National Minorities (Max van der Stoel, holding office from 1993 to 2001) was one of the decisive actors taking part in the ethno-political interaction in Romania addressed by this thesis. Thus it is of particular importance to analyze the role his repeated interventions played in the political debate. Although the office was explicitly created as a mechanism for invoking international norms to prevent ethnic conflict, the actual, complex range of activities performed by the HCNM in 'facilitating conflict transformation'[37], and getting involved in the local negotiations related to issues of minority recognition and accommodation, are rather difficult to define and evaluate.

As Heiko Fürst describes[38], the office of the HCNM can act and decide independently from other OSCE institutions in carrying out its work of preventive (or 'quiet'[39]) diplomacy, which regularly involves confidentiality. As a leading actor in the conflict prevention machinery of the OSCE his task is not 'solving' complex ethno-political disputes, rather: in the short-term "to prevent acute escalation of tensions", and in the longer term, "to help set in motion a process of dialogue between the government and minority that will address the long-term relationship

[37] István Horváth, *Facilitating Conflict Transformation* (Hamburg: CORE, 2002):1-142.
[38] Heiko Fürst, "Reconstructing Political Order: The High Commissioner on National Minorities in Transylvania," *Southeast European Politics*, Vol. IV, No. 2-3 November (2003): 122-140.
[39] Walter A. Kemp, *Quiet Diplomacy in Action: The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2001).

between them, and deal with the root causes of the tensions."[40] Thus, although the role of the HCNM is clearly not to become an ombudsman for national minorities, as David Chandler observes, his activity represents "a new and qualitatively different level of intrusiveness into the affairs of the states of East Europe."[41]

The activity of the HCNM is "characterized by consent-oriented, cooperative working procedures"[42], and operates through the appointment of 'expert committees' to examine the issues at hand, and through the issuing of targeted, case-specific, non-binding recommendations to the parties involved. The HCNM also diffused general recommendations that were not directed at a particular country, dealing with the issues of education, linguistic rights and participation in public life.[43] (e.g. *Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities* in 1996)

The mandate of the HCNM can be defined and assessed as that of an international mediator (or 'broker') who – through specific forms of authority stemming from institutional and structural circumstances – has the power to intervene discursively regarding the 'normative structure' of minority protection in various domestic contexts by interpreting and articulating 'international standards' related to minority rights.

Steven Ratner describes the HCNM as a 'normative intermediary', as a third party authorized by states and an international organization "who involves himself or herself in a particular compliance shortcoming of a state and seeks to induce compliance through a hands-on process of communication and persuasion with relevant decision-makers."[44] In this process of

[40] Steven Ratner, "Does International Law Matter in Preventing Ethnic Conflict?," *NYU Journal of International Law and Politics*, 32 (3), Spring (2000): 591-698. (p 618)
[41] Chandler, p. 7
[42] Fürst, ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ratner, p. 669

conflict resolution the domestic parties involved in the dispute utilize the mediation of the HCNM "to change their perceptions, positions, or behavior, without the ability by that party to resort to physical force and without a legally binding effect of that party's decisions."[45] The success and effectiveness of the mediator is determined by the willingness of the parties to accept the authority of the HCNM, and also the degree to which they are connected to the normative international community, in our case the European minority rights regime.[46]

Going further, a Weberian approach to IOs and their representatives as bureaucratic forms[47] helps to frame the HCNM as an inherently 'political creature' who creates social knowledge, and – in spite of lacking material sources – exercises power through constructing and categorizing the social world. The general acceptance of the HCNM as an impersonal, technocratic and neutral mediator makes his office an 'autonomous site of authority', and paradoxically confers power to it thanks to the appearance or aura of depoliticization and professionalism. This specific power is exercised through discursive interventions and manifests in defining shared international tasks, creating categories of and interests for actors, and disseminating models for state-minority relations and minority accommodation in Europe. By acting as a 'conveyor belt' for the transmission of such norms of 'good' political behavior, the intervention of the HCNM has a significant, but problematic influence on the outcome of domestic political debates.

Starting from a complex understanding of 'power', Jacob Skovgaard defines the HCNM as having the 'power to interpret norms' and thus to make normative statements about the situation of various national minorities. This ability is conferred upon the HCNM by holding

[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore, "The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations," *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 4, (1999): 699-732.

moral authority (stemming from embodying the values of human rights, and being seen as independent from the interests involved in the conflict) and expertise authority (due to being recognized as demonstrating superior knowledge over the issue at hand), making it possible to legitimize other actor's use of power with the aim of conflict resolution.[48] Skovgaard uses this conceptualization to show how the discursive interventions of the HCNM (and the CoE) through interpreting contested minority protection norms shaped EU policy regarding national minorities. Yet such an assessment of the HCNM mandate can also be applied for the domestic context of ethno-political debates, where the discursive intervention of the international actor legitimizes or undermines certain political positions, and changes the discursive dynamics and eventual outcome of the debate.

Additionally, the discursive nature of this 'power to interpret and disseminate norms' represents also a practical and tactical limitation to the intervention of such international actors as the HCNM: once the promoted concepts and categories (of minority rights and 'multiculturalism', in our case) are appropriated or assimilated by the domestic actors, the relevance and political effectiveness of the external mediator diminishes significantly. As the analysis will show, the main 'pathology' of this type of discursive intervention consists in facilitating only a mimetic discursive adoption of the globally disseminated concepts like 'multiculturalism', yet failing to generate and monitor important structural or institutional transformation in state-minority relations.

[48] Jakob Skovgaard, "Power beyond Conditionality: European Organisations and the Hungarian Minorities in Romania and Slovakia," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 14.4 (2011): 440-68.

3.3. The postsocialist context – modernist transitology, institutions and actors

Since my analysis will focus on the codependency of ethno-political discourses and institutions concerning state-minority relations in a postsocialist context, there is a need for a critical approach towards the supposed influence and effectiveness of 'Europeanizing' forces. Sociological and anthropological examinations of East Europe can provide the necessary analytical tools to examine the structural aspects of the reception, contestation, negotiation and implementation of 'ideoscapes' like 'multiculturalism', by conceptualizing the centrality of nationalism, or 'identity politics', in the political dynamics of the discursive field; and by identifying the institutions and actors involved.

As Paul Blokker observes, the mainstream trend of scholarship dealing with postsocialist states – grouped under the label of 'transitology' – portrays the transition process as a "political and cultural convergence of the ex-communist societies with Western Europe."[49] The *telos* of social change in the general 'convergence thesis' holds that East European countries need to adopt the political, economic, legal and financial institutions suggested by the 'West', so they can rearrange their state structures according to 'Western' norms. This paradigm has a singular view of 'modernity' which aims to universally impose its own discourses, practices and experiences on different temporal and spatial contexts. This view of transition endorses a process of gradually assimilating and incorporating East European countries through the 'enlargement rite' into the 'European project'. Such a process is facilitated by transferring the 'right' institutions to the new contexts, and empowering the local 'functional' or 'transformational' elites, the 'agents of change', who "portray the right dynamic and rational attitude necessary for

[49] Paul Blokker, "Post-Communist Modernization, Transition Studies, and Diversity in Europe," *European Journal of Social Theory* 8.4 (2005): 503-25.

a rupture with the old system, and who are capable of designing, implementing and sustaining the new order."[50]

Alternative and critical approaches to social change in postsocialist countries question the applicability of a straightforward convergence, and show how social transformation in these contexts is determined by older social relations, institutions and discursive traditions, and therefore can better be understood through incorporating a historical perspective. As Michael Kennedy notes about the postsocialist societies, "transition, as process of global transformation, can only be understood against the newly anachronistic political, economic, and cultural systems of socialism."[51] Thus, the transformation of political cultures and the emerging debates in East Europe have to be examined not only as specific cases against the background of global trends, but also in view of the continuities present locally. Blokker calls for the critical revisiting of the impact of such dominating discourses (like European integration, minority rights and 'multiculturalism') "while simultaneously acknowledging local adaptive and innovative power, and the continuing reformation of the present by legacies of the past."[52]

One of the most important aspects of postsocialist societies which work against the 'modernist transitology' paradigm is how strong discursive traditions and 'historically formed cognitive frameworks', centered around the national idea and nationalism, shape the course of transition, and domestic politics. Katherine Verdery repeatedly shows in her works how the "organization of socialism enhanced national consciousness and how aspects of the supposed exit to democratic politics and market economies aggravate it further."[53] Her argument is based

[50] Ibid., p. 517
[51] Michael D. Kennedy, *Cultural Formations of Postcommunism: Emancipation, Transition, Nation, and War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2002), 5.
[52] Blokker, p. 519
[53] Katherine Verdery, "Nationalism and National Sentiment in Post-socialist Romania," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (1993): 179-203. p. 180

on the theory that socialist regimes increasingly homogenized the social field so "the Party could justifiably claim to represent and serve the interests of society as a whole, a collective subject from which it had effaced meaningful difference."[54] Even after the collapse of the regime, this homogenization continued to recreate an undifferentiated social field which nationalist political actors can claim to represent on behalf of an ethnically defined 'nation'.

Furthermore, as Jan Kubik argues, historical legacies only have import in the present if articulated by significant actors and grounded on central institutions.[55] Moving on to focus on these elements, there are two alternative approaches critical of the 'modernist transitology' that seem useful for my research.

The approach of 'historical institutionalism' views politics as "the complex set of relationships between actors and ontologically prominent institutions"[56], and proposes that the study of nationalism be 'structured' to "account for the subjective and political importance that culture sometimes takes, to explain the specific patterns of agency featured by mobilization, and to connect marco-structural contexts to mirco-level outcomes."[57] In this perspective, institutions are central forces which determine the political mobilization of ethno-national identities, and also shape the agency of ethno-political elites and their interaction with the masses. The homogenizing power of political nationalism in Eastern Europe rests on the developmental pathways or path dependency of the nation-state principle (and all of its aspects). This guarantees continuity in time: the working and reproduction of a homogenizing institutional order which

[54] Ibid.
[55] Jan Kubik, "Cultural Legacies of State Socialism: History Making and Cultural-Political Entrepreneurship in Postcommunist Poland and Russia," in *Capitalism and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe: Assessing the Legacy of Communist Rule*, eds. Grzegorz Ekiert and Stephen E. Hanson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 317–51.
[56] André Lecours, *New Institutionalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2005).
[57] Ibid., p. 177

sets the parameters for agency and generates patterns of action. David Stark and László Bruszt[58], while examining the several continuous patterns which determine the transition period, argue that the postsocialist world is not constructed on an 'institutional void', but it is built by interactions with the legacies of the socialist past, which explains the nationalist homogenization of the social field in the case of Romania. They also argue that the interaction of past institutional legacies with new, external models leads to "forms of institutional 'bricolage' which potentially end in some kind of innovation,"[59] thus the emerging forms of institutions (for example, the 'multicultural' reconfiguration of the Babes-Bolyai University) are results of the mixtures of older, integrative practices with newly imported, internationally endorsed discourses and models.

Another critical approach, drawing on neo-classical sociology, was put forward by Szelényi, Eyal and Townsley in their book entitled '*Making Capitalism without Capitalists*'[60] where they argue for the importance of examining the role of agency in the multiple projects of modernization, and analyze the adaptive strategies of the 'new ruling elites' in Eastern Europe. According to their theory, after the collapse of the socialist regime – determined by social and political capital – social structures changed in Eastern Europe, and as a consequence it is the logic of cultural capital (defined by educational and professional credentials) which dominates postsocialist countries. This insight is important for two reasons: first, international organizations and external agents tend to seek and establish contact with actors having cultural capital (legitimizing and then using their expertise); and second, the importance of cultural capital indicates that the means of acquiring the necessary credentials (mostly universities) receive significant political and economic focus, becoming central symbols of postsocialist societies.

[58] David Stark and László Bruszt, *Postsocialist Pathways: Transforming Politics and Property in East Central Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[59] Blokker, p. 509
[60] Gil Eyal, Iván Szelényi and Eleanor Townsley, *Making Capitalism without Capitalists: Class Formation and Élite Struggles in Post-Communist Central Europe* (London: Verso, 1998).

Yet, when examining academic and political debates, the primacy of cultural capital needs to be complemented by the important function of 'moral capital' or authority in postsocialist contexts. Katherine Verdery defines this as a type of political capital that has 'special currency' in East Europe because of the 'teleological', or value-centered, orientation of the local elites who gained legitimacy by trying to establish monopoly over definitions of morality, virtue, purity, obligation, 'the nation', or conversely, of 'Europe' or 'civil society'.[61] These elites were simultaneously producers of culture (that is 'intellectuals') and politicians who engaged in the 'common discourse' in order to argue about values, and the necessary knowledge of implementing them.[62]

With a focus on the interaction of the external, 'European' discourses (in our case political and academic discourses on minority rights), and the postsocialist structures determined by historical continuities, cultural and moral capitals, it seems useful for the purpose of this research to devise a sub-category of local elites that would encompass this duality. I propose to call this special category 'comprador elites', because similarly to the local traders in colonial contexts[63], and postsocialist manager-entrepreneurs facing foreign investments[64], this type of public actor interacts with international organizations promoting the 'modernist paradigm', and then imports, appropriates and creatively adapts 'European' models and discourses to the local, postsocialist circumstances. Leaving aside the negative connotations the term 'comprador' acquired in the Marxist tradition, I find it analytically more useful than the misleadingly neutral

[61] Katherine Verdery, "Civil Society or Nation? 'Europe' in the Symbolism of Romania's Post Socialist Politics," in *Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation*, eds. Ronald Grigor Suny and Michael D. Kennedy (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1999).
[62] Ibid., p. 305
[63] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *Post-colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2000).
[64] Szelényi et al. use the concept of 'compradore intelligentsia', specifying that: "This is a useful term if we can detach it from the value judgments placed on it by neo-Marxists. […] We would like to use the term analytically to refer to the existence of 'compradore intellectuals' who make it possible for foreign capital to penetrate post-communist markets." p. 174

concept of 'functional' or 'transformational' elites, because it problematizes the process of reception: firstly, it shows how these elites work within the local structures and continuities (as opposed to a 'rupture with the old system'), and also points to the hidden agenda of profiting from their role as 'translators' of these imported models. A prototypical example of such a category of intellectual-politician would be the rector-turned-Minister of Education, Andrei Marga, but several other political and academic actors who functioned at the meeting point of the global and the local discourses, fit the concept as well. They should not be seen as simple 'key agents of change' who have been positively socialized in the minority protection norms of the international community (following the logic of appropriateness), but rather as 'comprador elites' who got familiarized with globally accepted political discourses (like minority rights and 'multiculturalism'), and who appropriate the authority of an international mediator (the HCNM) in order to produce a discursive change in state-minority relations in Romania, without the necessary structural and institutional transformation.

3.4. Identifying and Contextualizing the Domestic Actors:

According to Rogers Brubaker[65] the dynamic interaction of different forms of nationalism that determine the politics of the postsocialist states in East Europe can be characterized through identifying and analyzing three collective political actors: the host state, the minority and the kin-state. This (already famous) formulation of the 'triadic nexus' was usefully extended by David J. Smith to include a fourth possible actor representing "the institutions of an ascendant and expansive 'Euro-Atlantic space'."[66] In his conceptualization, this additional position brings to the interaction the discourses and practices of 'Europeanization' and 'Westernization', which can be regarded as a "variably configured and continuously contested political field in which different states, organizations, parties, movements or individual political entrepreneurs vie to impose their own particular political agenda."[67] In the context addressed by this paper, the 'quadratic nexus' would comprise the 'nationalizing' Romanian state, the 'nationalizing' Hungarian minority[68], the 'external national homeland' (Hungarian state), and the international/European community (OSCE, CoE). For the purpose of my present analysis I will focus only on the two internal political projects, and the intervention of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, as an external, international actor (defined in subchapter 3.2.).

The main political entity in the interactive nexus, the Romanian 'nationalizing state', can be conceived and constructed for the purpose of this research as an ethnically defined nation-

[65] Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996).
[66] David J. Smith, "Framing the National Question in Central and Eastern Europe: A Quadratic Nexus?," *Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 2.1 (2002): 3-16.
[67] Ibid., p. 9
[68] Zoltán Kántor, "Nationalizing Minorities and Homeland Politics," in Nationalism and Contested Identities: Case Studies on Romanians and Hungarians, eds. Trencsényi, Petrescu, Iordachi (Budapest-Iaşi: Regio Books-Polirom, 2001): 249-274.

state, significantly involved in policies of nation-building which continue tendencies of the interwar and socialist period. It corresponds to the characteristics identified by Brubaker, especially by promoting the existence of a putative, 'titular' nation, defined in ethnocultural terms, and sharply distinguished from other putative groups living in the state; and codifying the idea that the 'core nation' legitimately owns the polity.[69] As Kántor points out (echoing many scholars who examined the political culture of the country), the nationalizing policy in Romania is best exemplified by the process of framing the constitution, and further on, by the several laws which "reinforced the national character and national orientation of the Romanian state."[70] The constitution was framed 'disregarding and opposing' the claims of national minorities within the state, since – as Irina Culic shows – the 'primordiality' of the putative nation determines the central values of the state, constructing a framework where "the evidence and elements of the historical existence and continuity of a nation-state represent the most salient and powerful arguments."[71] Accordingly, in his assessment of East European political cultures, Paul Blokker described the Romanian 'nationalizing state' as following an 'ethics of identity': the idea that the state exists "primarily to protect and further the interests of a rather narrowly defined ethno-cultural group, the Romanian nation, in (partial) detriment to the interests of various national minorities."[72]

The 'nationalizing' Hungarian minority political elites in Romania can be conceptualized as forming a separate and often antagonistic, competing project to the state efforts presented above. The political discourse of the Hungarian elites in Transylvania is based on a well-defined

[69] Brubaker, ibid.
[70] Zoltán Kántor, "The Status Law Syndrome and Regional/National Identity: Hungary, Hungarians in Romania, and Romania," In *Reconstruction and Interaction of Slavic Eurasia and Its Neighboring Worlds*, eds. Osamu Ieda and Tomohiko Uyama, Slavic Eurasian Studies, no. 10, (2006.), 155.
[71] Qtd. in Kántor, p. 169
[72] Paul Blokker, *Multiple Democracies in Europe: Political Culture in New Member States* (London: Routledge, 2010), 115

ethnocultural conception of a minority community, and the political claims are made in the name of nationality, totally unrelated to Romanian citizenship. Kántor proposes to view the ethnic party of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) „as both an ethno-political party and an ethnic organization", which aims to define the boundaries of the putative minority community, and also to organize it into an 'ethno-civil society'.[73] This process can be seen as a 'minority nation building', based on separate ethnically organized institutions, driving towards the actual and discursive construction of a self-contained, parallel 'Hungarian society/world' in Transylvania, nested within, and more or less isolated from the wider 'Romanian world'. Both discursively and socially, this 'Hungarian world' is 'produced and reproduced' through durable educational and cultural institutions, and the networks that result from these.[74] After the 1989 regime change this political discourse was strongly supported by all the consecutive Hungarian governments through the adopted ethno-cultural definition of the 'Hungarian nation' (which 'organically' included transborder ethnic Hungarians), and financial and institutional assistance.

The consensus in the studies examining this situation follows a logic of minority-majority dichotomy, presenting the two projects in continuous antagonistic position, since according to Kántor the 'nationalizing state' repeatedly questions the "legitimacy of the claims formulated by the Hungarian elite" so that the "Hungarian minority obtains only such rights that minimally affect the Romanian nationalizing process."[75] Zsuzsa Csergő describes these structurally conflicting positions as coming from opposite projects of defining national culture in the frame of the nation-state, where putative majorities and minorities hold separate notions of sovereignty and the right to cultural reproduction. In such circumstances, minority notions of entitlement to

[73] Kántor, *Nationalizing*, 256.
[74] Rogers Brubaker, Margit Feischmidt, Jon Fox, and Liana Grancea, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006), 265.
[75] Kántor, *The Status*, 156.

cultural equality challenge majority notions of entitlement to cultural dominance.[76] Katherine Verdery similarly shows, how the top-down homogenization of the social field in Romania produces an anti-Hungarian discourse (which continues the strong tendency of Ceaușescu's 'national communism'), undermining the possibilities of pluralizing discourses.[77] Thus, from a discursive perspective the nationalizing projects can be conceptualized as opposing paradigmatic visions of how to address diversity and state-minority relations, and their interaction as a symbolic confrontation of two rhetorical cultures representing discursively constructed 'ethnic worlds' (or in other words, parallel and opposing 'common senses', structured sets of meanings built on narratives which instrumentalize historical memory).

As key additional notes to this consensus on state-minority relations in Romania, it is important to point out two significant aspects of this ethno-political dichotomy which are rarely emphasized in the literature. The first one refers to the internal heterogeneity of the opposing projects (and assumes the analytical rejection of 'groupism'[78]) since a close attention to the actual political and academic discourses in the public sphere shows that neither of these 'archetypical' positions consists of coherent and unified discursive camps, but rather represents lose constellations of multiple actors and voices which aim to speak on behalf of putative, ethnicized communities.

The second aspect refers to the significant imbalance in the power-relations of the discussed political dichotomy. Although the self-definitions of each ethno-political project (and much of the studies discussing it) paint the picture of opposing nationalizing processes which seem equal discursively (or symbolically), from a structural perspective there is an obvious

[76] Zsuzsa Csergo, *Talk of the Nation: Language and Conflict in Romania and Slovakia* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2007), 19.
[77] Verdery, "Nationalism," 180.
[78] Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2004).

asymmetry between the two, with the nation-building state having significantly stronger and more extended institutional, financial and political grounding. In this sense, instead of inaccurately describing this dichotomy as consisting of parallel and competing nation-building projects, the asymmetry can be conceptualized in the following way: while the Romanian project is built on the 'material' institutional order of the nation-state (government, constitution, military, educational system etc.) which codifies, promotes and reproduces the ethno-nationalist homogenization of the social field in Romania (through the ideas of 'integration', 'unity', 'sovereignty', and linguistic domination); the 'ethno-civil society' of the Transylvanian Hungarians (although historically well grounded) rests mostly on semi-official, informal and private societal organizations (from cultural groups to the DAHR), or partial, weak institutions (high schools, theaters, university departments) which are dependent on the nationalizing and homogenizing state. Besides the serious imbalance in power-relations, the main consequence of this asymmetry is visible in the overall difficulty of producing a structural change in state-minority relations. In the political struggle for extended ethno-cultural accommodation it is always the structurally weak minority project which is repeatedly attempting to introduce institutional transformation (centering on plurality, autonomy or parity) against the structurally powerful, state-led nation-building project that – by default – resists change, favoring institutional continuity, homogeneity, and mechanisms of self-reproduction (inducing repetitive behavior on the part of institutional actors).

As a conclusion, when looking at the political interaction of the majority-minority domestic actors with the intervening international actor in the debate concerning the establishment of an independent Hungarian language university, and the concept of 'multiculturalism', the explanation needs to start from the analytical interdependence and

circularity of ethno-national discourses, institutions and actors. Only through the mutual attention to discursive and extra-discursive aspects can one understand what are at stake in the addressed political debate, and why it played out the way it did.

Chapter 4 – Analysis of the debate over 'multiculturalism' in Romania (1997-2000)
The political use of discursive ambiguity

The analysis of the debate concerning the request of the Hungarian minority for an independent university, and the central concept of 'multiculturalism', is divided into six sub-chapters, each addressing one salient aspect of the political interaction. The first part examines the nature and outcome of the minority claim in the context of ethno-political contention in Romania. The second and third parts investigate two general discursive aspects which framed the debate: the dramatized representation of ethno-political issues, and the discursive competition to appropriate the idea of 'Europe'. The fourth and fifth parts present and analyze the antagonistic discursive strategies of the majority and minority actors in framing the ideoscape of 'multiculturalism'. And finally, the sixth part conceptualizes and evaluates the international intervention of the HCNM which decided and finalized the political debate.

The general aim of the chapter is to demonstrate through the analysis of newspaper articles and political interviews spanning from 1997 to 2000 how the contradistinctive discursive framing of central concepts like 'Europe' and 'multiculturalism' was carried out with the direct function of legitimatizing one promoted ethno-political project, while simultaneously delegitimizing the 'opponent's' position: both domestically and internationally. The demonstration will be done through the examination of politically significant statements made by privileged 'narrative authorities' of the given nationalizing projects. The analysis will show that the introduction and reception of the global discourse of multiculturalism and the intervention of the HCNM, paradoxically, re-strengthened the ethno-political boundaries and antagonisms of

state-minority relations in Romania, producing a visible discursive change, but not a significant structural/institutional transformation in minority accommodation.

4.1. The political claim for minority-language university – "Between fundamentalist monoculturalism and discredited multiculturalism"

The issue of the minority-language university discussed in my thesis is an exemplary illustration of how the claims coming from the Hungarian 'homeland community' in Romania challenged majority ideas of 'titular' entitlements based on the sovereignty principle of the nation-state and national culture, and created a political conflict highlighting an inherent structural antagonism and also asymmetry between representatives of the majority and minority. According to Zsuzsa Csergő, this paradigmatic opposition developed because the question of education was imagined on both sides in a national framework, with political actors sharing the view that "the public education system was the most important institution for maintaining and reproducing a national language and, through this language, national culture and community."[79] In the wider political context of minority-language education, the idea of the 'university' in Transylvania became a central issue of highly charged contestation of institutional space, which eventually drew the involvement of the HCNM to facilitate a resolution to the problem.

More specifically, the debates in the late 1990s emerged in connection to the political request by the Hungarian minority elite, mainly the DAHR, for the establishment of an independent, state-funded, minority-language university; and simultaneously, to the 'multicultural' restructuring of the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca.

[79] Csergő, p. 146

The particular and complex political significance of the idea of a Hungarian university in Cluj-Napoca has to be pointed out. Since 1989, in the political discourse of the Hungarian 'nationalizing minority', and the DAHR, which proposed a plan for minority-language education 'from kindergarten to university', the establishment of a separate, autonomous, state-funded Hungarian university in Transylvania played a central role. In the spring of 1990 the 'Bolyai Society'[80] was formed, and engaged in a civil petitioning action directed towards the Ministry of Education, besides the political claims making of the DAHR.[81] Related to this activity, the new leadership of the BBU also commenced negotiation with the Hungarian academic community, and as a result some of the Hungarian lines and sections (eliminated in the Communist regime) were reinstated at the university. As Horváth relates, this started 'parallel processes': first, the slow institutional development at the BBU for Hungarian instruction, and second, the political promotion of reestablishing the independent minority-language university in Cluj, with the political elites viewing the former as simply a 'transitory/preparatory stage' for the latter.[82]

On the one hand, this claim for the autonomous institution was founded on 'historical' reasoning, presented as the 'restoration' of the 'original' Hungarian Bolyai University (founded in 1945 and merged with the Romanian Babeș University in 1959 under the Communist regime), and if granted, it would have possibly broken up the BBU in Cluj. This argument is closely connected to the basic assumption of most Hungarian elites that the potential creation of an independent minority-language institution must take place in Cluj/Kolozsvár, traditionally the symbolic and cultural 'capital' of Transylvania.

[80] An NGO created by Transylvania Hungarian intellectuals, closely linked with the DAHR, with the purpose of mobilizing and lobbying for the reestablishment of the Hungarian language Bolyai University in Cluj. (www.bolyait.ro)
[81] *A romániai magyar főiskolai oktatás. Múlt, jelen, jövő*. Bolyai Társaság, RMDSZ, 1990. August.
[82] Horváth, *Facilitating*, p. 103

On the other hand, it was based on the claim that the Hungarian minority (7% of the total population of Romania) was being under-represented in higher education (only 4.4% of students being Hungarian). The numerical argument was based on the widely shared and mediatized conviction among minority members that the size of the Hungarian population (1.5 million according to the 2001 census, but usually framed as 'almost 2 million' in the Hungarian media) deems it plausible for the minority to have and control a tertiary educational institution ('we deserve to have our own university'). A survey conducted in 1999, representative for the Hungarian minority in Romania, showed that on an **"**official and symbolic dimension the dominant tendency is of identification with the political project of setting up an autonomous university", 90% of the respondents agreeing with the following statement: *The setting up of the Bolyai University/an autonomous state university with teaching in the Hungarian language should not be given up*[83].

The attempts made for the Hungarian university were consistently unsuccessful, but after the DAHR was included in the 1996 political coalition which ousted the Iliescu-government and was seen as bringing a 'democratic change' in Romania, there arose the chance to negotiate demands for minority accommodation. In spite of this potential, as regarding the political request for minority-language university (with was included even in the newly formed government program through the later highly contested Emergency Ordinance 36/1997), the coalition "moved from hesitant approval in 1997 to firm rejection in 1998 and after."[84] The issue sparked an intense political and discursive conflict in 1997-2000, which drew the attention and mediation of Max van der Stoel, the HCNM at the time.

[83] István Horváth, "Perceptions of multiculturalism," *International Journal of Education Law and Policy*, Special Issue: Romania. 1 September (2004): 33-62. (p. 59)
[84] Csergő, p. 175

This happened in spite of early developments which at first seemed to go against the conventional ethno-political project and antagonism, showing the possibilities of cross-ethnic political solutions. Moderate members of the coalition (like Prime Minister Ciorbea and President Constantinescu) were willing at first to discuss the idea of the Hungarian university requested by the DAHR (and Hungarian NGOs). Alternately, a number of Hungarian intellectuals (professors of the BBU and members of the Liberal Platform, an inner political sub-group of the DAHR) were prepared to join and support the emerging project of 'multiculturalism' (mainly promoted by Andrei Marga, the BBU rector, and later Minister of Education) which – in their vision – would ensure an integrated university, better structured for the needs of Hungarian instruction. Both these accommodating attempts were heavily attacked in the media from an exclusivist ethno-political position: most of the Romanian papers framed the establishment of a Hungarian university as causing the break-up of the BBU, and bringing about the 'segregation' of education and the 'federalization' of Romania, quickly pressuring the moderate politicians to retrieve their support. The minority Hungarian press attacked the initiative for an integrated institution as 'betraying the supreme cause', and generating the long-term assimilation of the Hungarian community. As a consequence, ethno-political positions radicalized, and the discourse of 'multiculturalism' became a politicized weapon in the traditional majority-minority antagonism. Starting with 1997, an overwhelming part of the coalition forces opted for providing state-funded minority higher education exclusively though integrated institutions, and backing Marga's promotion of 'multiculturalism'. The endorsement of this discourse by the intervention of the HCNM proved decisive, and through his facilitation an open-ended, de facto political consensus emerged, leaving room for later contestations of the

settlement, yet only through the imposed logic and controlled definition of the multicultural framework.

With the request to further develop the multicultural structure, the DAHR again attempted (and failed) in 2003 to impose on the BBU leadership the creation of separate Hungarian language faculties to ensure the autonomous Hungarian component within the institution. Similarly, in 2005-2006 the Bolyai Initiative Committee (another civil organization created to lobby for the establishment of the Hungarian Bolyai University) failed to raise convincing international support for the institutional separation of the BBU, but their action is indicative of the ongoing debate related to the issue.[85] In spite of these mediatized attempts of contesting the 'multicultural' establishment, the trilingual structure of the university stabilized after 2000. The university's 'multicultural character' could hardly be threatened in practice due to the internal political support it gained on a governmental level, and the international legitimization it achieved through strategic promotion, coupled with the continued support of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (Max van der Stoel, and most recently, Knut Vollebaek). The unflinching support for an integrated version of 'multiculturalism' also shows the un-settled nature of identity politics in Romania: the idea of the independent Hungarian university or even of the autonomous faculties within the BBU remain beyond the 'threshold' of the 'nationalizing state' and majority political discourse, even with the DAHR continuously being part of all coalitions from 1996.

In an international minority claims context, the political drive for the setting up of a minority-language university is listed by Will Kymlicka as one of the top-priority demands of

[85] A similar situation developed in 2012 at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Târgu Mureș/Marosvásárhely, when the request to establish autonomous Hungarian faculties within the institution (guaranteed by the 2011 Education Law) was opposed on the local level, and then completely blocked by the new left-liberal government. Cf. Szilárd-István Pap, *Facultatea de medicină în limba maghiară: înapoi la argument*. Available at: http://www.contributors.ro/dezbatere/facultatea-de-medicina-in-limba-maghiara-inapoi-la-argument/

national minorities, right after territorial autonomy.[86] As Brubaker et al. describe the motivation and goals of the minority elites, the existence of an independent university "can assure the reproduction of a vital and vibrant Transylvanian Hungarian culture, and prevent the assimilation or emigration of the intellectual and professional elite."[87] Its establishment and functioning would help to 'reproduce ethnicity intergenerationally', increasing the chances of ethnic endogamy, creating and reinforcing ethnic social network, furthering the continuous construction of the 'Hungarian world'. As the analysis will show in the following sub-chapters, opposed to this autonomous or 'segregated' vision, the option of institutional integration is seen by the 'nationalizing minority' as leading to assimilation in the long-run, and as producing the 'decapitation' of the minority group by forcing the potential elites to leave their community to achieve higher education or professional success.[88] The survey cited above also shows that 43% of the respondents agreed with the statement: *The idea of a multicultural university is a compromise that should not be accepted.*[89] As Csergő describes, the minority-language university became a 'cause celébré' in the late 1990s, seen by some of the minority elites as the 'touchstone of Romanian democracy', that is, as the test of the democratic potential of Romanian society.[90]

In consequence, it is understandable why cultural anthropologist Enikő Magyari-Vincze argues that the idea of 'the University' became a 'master symbol' for collective identity, an "icon through which people communicate, maintain and develop their knowledge about themselves and about each other", and a 'battleground' for ethnic identity politics and majority-minority

[86] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*, p. 194
[87] Brubaker et al., p. 147
[88] Kymlicka, p. 214
[89] Horváth, *Perceptions*, p 60. Important to note that a significant 31% of the respondents chose the 'did not know' option.
[90] Csergő, p. 171

relations.[91] Thus, it can be stated that when political debates center around the topic of the 'university', the debate is actually wider in scope, goals and effects; and furthermore, when the versions of 'multiculturalism' are discussed in the Romanian context, not only institutional structures are at stake, but also important questions of how the diverse and plural nature of society is to be addressed and handled through codified policies.

Thus, the analysis of how the politicization and instrumentalization of the discourse of 'multiculturalism' is articulated or negotiated tells the story of why this concept (originating from a theory of pluralist democracy) did not manage to become an effective and novel alternative way of addressing state-minority relations in Romania. Academics and liberal critics[92], writing from a meta-discursive position (and representing an idealist commitment to pluralism) expressed hopes that the introduction of such a concept could provide the possibility to 'talk differently', and move beyond the exclusivist, isolationist or assimilationist monocultural mechanisms, towards a "new social contract and consensus, which would reinvent Transylvania."[93] Yet, after observing the radicalization of ethno-political positions regarding the claims for the Hungarian university and the restructuring of the BBU, Magyari-Vincze makes the disillusioned remark about the state-of-affairs: "We seem to be stuck in transition between fundamentalist monoculturalism and discredited multiculturalism."[94] Paradoxically then, the introduction and reception of the global discourse of multiculturalism re-strengthened the ethno-political boundaries and antagonisms of state-minority relations in Romania, producing a visible discursive change, but not a significant structural/institutional transformation. The following

[91] Enikő Vincze, "*Battlegrounds of Identity Politics: Nationalising universities in a multicultural context."* Paper given at the Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen, "Europe or the Globe", seminar, 14 June 2006.
[92] Éva Cs. Gyimesi, Andor Horváth, Enikő Magyari-Vincze, Levente Salat, Gabriel Andreescu etc.
[93] Enikő Magyari-Vincze, "Imposibilitatea de a vorbi altfel," *Revista 22*, September 22-28, (1998): 10-11.
[94] Ibid.

analysis will highlight, categorize and evaluate these rearticulated antagonisms and the discursive frames though which they are manifested.

4.2. Ethnic neurosis

Before elaborating on the main topical or ideational elements of the political debate around the establishment of a Hungarian university and 'multiculturalism', it is important to examine a general feature of how the 'heated' discussions were framed and represented. In other words, I wish to show that the debate was 'heated' not only because of the political and symbolic significance of the issues addressed, but also thanks to the hyperbolized rhetorical nature of their presentation in the media. I use the concept of 'ethnic neurosis' to describe the consistent and continuous dramatization of state-minority issues both in the Romanian and Hungarian written media (carried out by journalists and politicians as well).[95] This is generally the result of emphasizing the 'ethnic' aspects of the represented social and political world, and reproducing the majority-minority dichotomous logic, while connecting 'worst case scenarios' and exaggerated negative future consequences to these issues.

As Kymlicka observes, on a normative and theoretical level, the dramatization and exaggeration of state-minority issues produces an extra-ordinary frame, a 'disrupted' situation, and effectively trumps the normal democratic processes of debate or negotiation, and eliminates arguments based on norms or principles of ethnocultural justice.[96] On a practical and (geo)political level, it re-enforces the approach of IOs to treat minority issues in East Europe according to the 'security track' which aims at conflict resolution, and not minority protection

[95] I borrow and expand the concept from Tivadar Magyari, who used 'minority neurosis' to describe how minority issues are represented in the Hungarian minority media in Romania. Cf. Tivadar Magyari, "Hungarian Minority Media in Romania. Towards a Policy of Professional Improvement," in *Media Policy Reform in East-Central Europe*, eds. Miklós Sükösd and Bajomi-Lázár Péter (Budapest: CEU Press, 2003): 185-202.
[96] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*. p. 193

and accommodation per se. This aspect of 'ethnic neurosis' helps explain the recurring, frequent visits of the HCNM to Romania, and his politically significant interventions, which I will be analyzing in sub-chapter 4.6.

Naturally, due to the specific ways in which historical memory and global political events are discursively interpreted in the two media systems, the debate around the establishment of a Hungarian university and 'multiculturalism' produces different kinds of 'neurosis' in each 'nationalizing project'. While the Romanian press treats it as a security question (where the sovereignty and unity of the nation-state are in 'danger' because of the Hungarian 'irredentists'), the Hungarian media projects it as an 'existential' issue, where any form of compromise in the minority claims will lead to assimilation (seen as the 'death' of the minority community).

Majority fears – 'national security'

The news articles of the Romanian media repeatedly treated minority claims and state-minority relations in a 'securitization' frame, as potential, yet strongly emphasized threats to national security, and the unity and sovereignty of Romania. In news reports, interviews, articles etc., the topics of minority-language education were constantly equated with the 'alarming' concepts of ethnic 'separatism', 'segregation', 'enclavization' and 'federalization'. Justifications explaining the 'security frame' mixed historical and contemporary political arguments, and invoked examples of well-known 'ethnic conflicts' which turned into war (like the case of Kosovo).

The 'historical' argumentation refers back to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, or the fascist Hungarian regime of WWII, and constructs a 'victim' narrative in which past 'injustices'

and ‘acts of oppression’ against the Romanian ‘nation’ are being echoed and repeated through the present minority claims. In such a frame, the ‘minoritized majority’[97] should not make any concessions to the representatives of the ‘historical enemies’ who aim to harm the nation. History professor of the BBU, Silviu Nistor gives voice to his outrage in the local paper, about the Prime Minister’s readiness to discuss the idea of an independent Hungarian university:

> The Romanian public opinion was shocked by the unexpected declarations of Prime Minister Ciorbea regarding the establishment of the Hungarian university. The population of this historical province is profoundly offended by the government’s blunt affront to the sensibilities and long suffering of Transylvanians, caused by the nationalist discrimination practiced by Hungary against Romanians. (April 4, 1997 – Adevărul)

Much more frequently, the Hungarian minority, and the DAHR, were framed as having a ‘malicious’ agency, articulating accusations of being ‘irredentists’ and functioning as a ‘fifth column’, collaborating with the kin-state. In this narrative, the Hungarian university in Cluj was labeled as “the Trojan horse of the DAHR introduced into the sleeping fortress of the coalition in power” (March 28, 1997 – Adevărul) by opposition political leaders. Yet, this framing was not specific to opposition rhetoric, since beginning with 1997 it was taken up by several actors of the ruling coalition as well: starting with the famous Christian Democratic politician, Ion Rațiu (PNȚCD), who declared early on that the claim for the university is a proof of “the reawakening Hungarian irredentism” (February 18, 1997 – Adevărul).

Complementing the historically framed threat to national security, the media made repeated connections between the Hungarian minority in Transylvania and contemporary examples of armed conflict involving minorities (mostly Kosovo). The implied fears in this comparison were related to the potential of ‘proliferation’ (the armed conflict might be imported

[97] Kymlicka, p. 194

into Transylvania) and 'escalation' (of the radical demands by the Hungarian minority).[98] In this regard, one of the main 'scare words' was 'federalization', a form of political restructuring which never featured in the programs of the DAHR, yet in the Romanian media it was constantly conflated with the request for an independent university, and projected to potentially break up the unity of the nation-state. An editorial in 'Cotidianul' entitled "*The true danger: federalization of Romania*" stated that this constant "attack against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Romanian state" is a "true threat, deeply felt by the entire population" (October 5, 1998 – Cotidianul). Going even further, a Christian Democrat Senator of the coalition, Gheorghe Pruteanu, known for his anti-Hungarian attitude, declared that:

> Romania is threatened by the federalization of its education. I just want to point out, that this is not Nagorno-Karabakh or Trinidad-Tobago, this is not a Romanian-Hungarian state… As regarding the Hungarian university, I would not make any concessions at all, because I think that it is a contemptible idea. To establish this university would mean to effectively break-up this country. I will set all my influence against this project, to stop it in any way. I will even mobilize street protests, if necessary… (August 25, 1998 – RMSz)

As concerning references to an actual armed conflict, the topic of Kosovo was highly reported on and debated starting with 1998. To illustrate this increased focus, take the following article: in the 'heat' of continuous debate concerning the minority-language university, the more moderate newspaper in Cluj published a long piece entitled: *"Could Transylvania turn into a Kosovo?"* (Aug 27, 1998 – Monitorul). In a detailed manner, the article draws a parallel between the two regions, and explicitly lists the issue of the university as the cause for the 'tense' situation between the majority and minority in Romania, claiming that "the present relations are deteriorating and this could prove dangerous"; and concludes that "Romania has to be very careful in its future political endeavors." Similarly, the president of the main opposition party,

[98] Ibid.

Adrian Năstase (PDSR) declared in an interview that the conflict in Kosovo "will cause and re-enforce ethnic tensions concentrically in East Europe", and the international intervention by NATO will "lead to the destabilization of Europe and the reemergence of revisionism everywhere." (July 14, 1999 – Szabadság)

As the above examples (selected from various positions on the political and media spectrum) demonstrate, the tendency to dramatize and exaggerate state-minority issues in the Romanian written media was realized through a 'securitization' frame, where minority political claims were discursively constructed as potential, yet strongly emphasized threats to national security, and the unity and sovereignty of Romania.

Minority fears: existential insecurity

In the articles of the Hungarian media in Romania, 'ethnic neurosis' emerged in the form of exaggerated alarms about the rapid assimilation or emigration of the minority. The putative Hungarian community or group is discursively constructed through personification into a collective actor constantly under threat of losing its ethno-cultural identity and distinctiveness against the homogenizing strategies of the majority nation-state. As a consequence, minority political claims related to cultural reproduction (like autonomous institutions, central among them the idea of the independent Hungarian university), and the repeated majority political opposition to these requests, are projected as 'existential' issues, where any form of compromise by the minority representatives will lead to imminent assimilation (seen as the 'death' of the minority community). Gábor Biczó describes this framing as the 'narrative of loss or deprivation' where assimilation is judged morally in reference to the holistic view of a 'nation',

and represents the loss of ethno-cultural identity, and also a collective downward slide in the social hierarchy.[99]

In this minority narrative, as presented by the media, the 'resistance' to assimilation is symbolically centered on the establishment, and autonomous management, of a Hungarian university in Cluj, seen as the 'savior' and solution to this discursively created existential crisis. Voicing the general opinion of Transylvanian Hungarian intellectuals, Andor Horváth (professor at the Hungarian Literature department of the BBU, and the president of the Bolyai Society at the time – thus an exemplary narrative authority) writes in an article that "the recognition of the Bolyai University would provide the means for preserving the ethnic and cultural identity of Hungarians, and averting the high threats of assimilation and mass emigration." (*Politics and profession*, April 29 – May 5, 1997 – Revista 22)

The president of the DAHR, Béla Markó, although representing the dominant, moderate wing of the minority political organization, nonetheless dramatized the issue of the university by framing the prospect of assimilation in a more alarming, 'historical' perspective:

> We, Romanians and Hungarians, are linked together, we depend on each other, and we cannot escape from this coexistence, so I hope that – in spite of history often repeating itself – the nightmare of aggressive assimilation will not terrorize us again. Yet time is running out, and the present circumstances, when even the request for an autonomous Hungarian university is irrationally opposed, are not reassuring. (July 27, 1998 – RMSz):

In another interview about the need for the university Markó gives voice to his concerns about "the road Romania is going down on", and his opinion that "Romanian politicians are being influenced by a nationalist press"; stating that the "present bickering" about minority-language instruction and institutions are just diversions, and the important question refers to

[99] Gábor Biczó, "Megjegyzések Vetési László: *Szórványstratégia, nemzetstratégia* címû tanulmányához," *Magyar Kisebbség*, 3 (2000): 3-16.

"what kind of a state Romania wants to be", ending with the conclusion that "the present situation is worrying." (August 18–24, 1998 – Revista 22) Such declarations implicitly construct the narrative in which the problems of the personified minority are not handled properly (or given central importance) by the personified majority, creating a worrying and dangerous context for inter-ethnic relations.

Another 'existential' problem for the minority community, connected by the media and politicians to the lack of a Hungarian university in Cluj, is the supposed 'mass emigration' of young people to neighboring Hungary for higher education and working purposes. The political inability to set up a fully autonomous, minority-language educational system "from kindergarten to university" is argued to cause the diminishing of the elite, professional strata, and undermining the full reproduction of the minority community (which is seen as being 'decapitated'[100] without the access to its 'own' university). Intellectuals grouped in the Bolyai Society or the Transylvanian Museum Society[101] are repeatedly decrying in the media the 'worrisome' state of Hungarian intellectual and professional life in Romania, complaining that the minority community lacks its 'own' "professionals in medical, pharmaceutical, legal, historical or archeological fields" (February 11, 1998 – Szabadság). This 'critical' state is generally explained by the restrictive educational policies of the past Communist regime, and the issue of re-establishing the Bolyai University is presented as the central solution, with the 'fate of the whole community depending on it'. The university must be reopened, says one articles, "otherwise, the massive emigration of young people to search for higher standards of living in Hungary and Western Europe will increase tremendously." (March 10, 1999 – Szabadság) Such narratives work with the exaggerated negative projections of the Westward 'brain-drain', and link the issue

[100] Kymlicka, *Odysseys*, p. 214.
[101] A Hungarian scientific organization, founded in the 19th century, and restarted in 1990. (www.eme.ro)

of higher education with the very existence of the minority community, simultaneously aiming to re-enforce the ethno-cultural boundaries of an isolated 'ethno-civil society'.

Introducing the concept of 'ethnic neurosis', this subchapter demonstrated how the issue of an independent minority-language university (being a significant element in a full-scale autonomous minority education system) was generally interpreted and represented in newspaper articles of both ethnicized media worlds in a dramatized and hyperbolized manner. It is this reoccurring extra-ordinary crisis frame: the repeated concerns about national security and unity in the Romanian media; and the negative projections about assimilation and migration in the Hungarian media, which give the discursive context, and set the tone, for the discussions and polemics about 'multiculturalism', which I will be presenting in the following sub-chapters.

4.3. Appropriating and instrumentalizing 'Europe'

Another general characteristic of the mediatized ethno-political discourses addressing the issue of the university and 'multiculturalism' is the consistent drive towards holding the monopoly of definition over such central concepts as 'Europe' and 'modernization'. The debate between the two political projects revolving around the shared control over education and cultural reproduction can be conceptualized on a broader level as a political competition to discursively appropriate and instrumentalize the ideas of 'European integration', of 'real democracy', and the progressive ethos of 'modernization'. Although still within the strong institutional and discursive context of the nation-state on the one hand, and the ethno-culturally

defined minority community on the other, after the political change in 1996, these symbolic concepts were placed at the top of the hierarchy of values in the public sphere of Romania.

Analyzing Romanian political debates in the early 1990s, Katherine Verdery concluded that "the pressure of a historically constituted discourse and its master symbol, 'the nation', compels all political actors in Romania to 'nationalize' their political instruments, and thus to strengthen 'nation' as a political symbol even further."[102] The discursive tendency after 1996 is structurally similar to her description, with the significant difference that now 'Europe' stood in the center of gravity (at least concerning the debate over education), compelling all actors to 'Europeanize' their rhetoric. Yet for the majority 'nationalizing project' this change did not mean also a break with the central importance of the nation-state and concepts of sovereignty: instead the idea of the 'Romanian nation' was merged with the positively constructed value of 'Europe', while notions of 'nationalism' were constructed as anachronistic and backward. Conversely, for the minority political elite, 'Europe' mainly signified an external reference to concepts of pluralist democracy, and especially to 'international standards' which were interpreted to guarantee extensive forms of minority protection and accommodation.

Thus, the competition for defining, appropriating and politically instrumentalizing 'Europe' (and related notions) became another boundary-making discursive factor, a central element of contention between the two 'nationalizing projects' based upon which both elites would cast the other 'side' in the negative role of 'non-European' or 'non-modern' (in this sense, the roles being the inversions of each other). This contradistinctive framing (also carried out inside the coalition itself) had the direct function of legitimatizing a promoted political project,

[102] Verdery, *Civil Society*, p. 306

while simultaneously delegitimizing the 'opponent's' position: both domestically and internationally.

This antagonism was played out in the context of the internationally endorsed and promoted discursive common ground which called for conflict resolution and reconciliation in state-minority relations, accepted as a premise by both political positions. Referring to the majority and minority, and also the two states, President Constantinescu summed up this common starting point in an interview: "The participation of the DAHR gives political stability to the coalition, and this is necessary for good governing. On a European and global level, the Romanian-Hungarian cooperation is considered to be a model which gives Romania a good chance in European integration." (December 10, 1997 – Adevărul)[103]

Majority framing

In the discourse of the majority political actors the main reason for framing the minority claims as being 'non-European' is the continuous emphasis of the DAHR on the distinct nature of the 'Hungarian community/society' (coupled with claims for cultural and territorial autonomy), and the request for setting up a full-scale educational system with Hungarian instruction (and special curriculum). Distinctiveness and institutional autonomy, as Andreescu observes, were translated and framed in the majority rhetoric as 'separatism' and 'segregation' (as a direct gesture of rejecting coexistence with the majority), and presented as the manifestation of a non-progressive, anti-reconciliation attitude on the part of the whole minority

[103] As one can notice, there is an ironic paradox between this generally accepted premise of reconciliation and the continuous dramatization of state-minority relations, as described in the sub-chapter on 'ethnic neurosis'. This paradox, I believe, is an essential feature of all ethno-political contentions.

community.[104] In the declarations of Romanian politicians, the claims of the DAHR were characterized as 'extremist' and 'separatist' (with constant references to 'irredentist' tendencies, as the previous sub-chapter showed), and were associated with the negative part of dichotomies like: modern or future-oriented or reformist vs. backward-looking or anachronistic; integrated or multicultural vs. nationalist or sectarian; enlightened or rational vs. passionate or irrational; professional vs. inexperienced etc.

Within this wider context, the minority claim for an independent Hungarian university was immediately framed as 'ethnic segregation', meaning the institutional isolation from Romanian society in general, and the breaking-up of the BBU in particular. As one of the central political and academic actors in the debate (becoming a narrative authority for the majority position), Andrei Marga attacked the 'separatist' claim from a 'European' position:

> The right of national minorities to higher education is unquestionable. The perspective of integrating into the Euro-Atlantic organizations requires that Romanians and Hungarians work out a new relation, based on European values. Separation brings disadvantages for both sides. The requests of the Hungarian community can be accommodated based on European conventions without antagonizing the two communities. (March 13, 1997 – Adevărul)

Later on, when the debate became more intense and positions radicalized, Marga – representing the Ministry of Education and the coalition – declared that the minority request for a university is "symbolic by its nature", that the plan for it was developed in an "unprofessional way by people who have no experience in the organizational and legal aspects of higher education", and it was intended to be a "divisive issue, raising passions and eclipsing reason." As opposed to this, the integrated and multicultural structure of the BBU, called "a successful

[104] Due to the negative framing of the words 'separate' or 'autonomous' in the Romanian media, Gabriel Andreescu proposes the term 'group privacy' for conceptualizing minority accommodation. Cf. "Multiculturalism in Central Europe: cultural integration and group privacy," *East European Perspectives*, January 9 (2002).

ecumenical experiment in East Europe," represents a "genuine alternative to assimilation and to separatism, having on its side the arguments of history, the current European strategies, and most of all, the argument of positive consequences." As a closing argument, he emphasizes the close association between the integrated model and the international community, saying that "European organizations repeatedly confirmed their strong promotion of multiculturalism, and not separatism", since "the strengthening of ethnic specificities is obstructing reform in general." (July 31, 1998 – Cotidianul)

This perspective was taken over, re-enforced and promoted by all members of the coalition, making it the official position of the state apparatus. Mihai Korka, the State Secretary for Higher Education, issued a document titled *"The ethnic segregation of Romanian higher education is inopportune"* in which he presents his office as "systematically confronting requests for ethnic segregation in various institutional guises".[105] Further on, the noted intellectual, Andrei Pleşu, Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, gave voice to his opinion that "separating the BBU is the wrong way of thinking about the issue", and expressed his hope that both sides will come to a 'mature and rational solution' which would be the accepting of 'multiculturalism', since this "is in concordance with the spirit of the times, and you cannot go against the Zeitgeist". (September 18, 1998 – RMSz)

In relation to the minority-request for a university, the political opposition utilized a similar, but more radical framing of the issue based on identification with 'European values', and the dichotomies which are derived from this position. The former president, Ion Iliescu (PDSR) declared that "the separatist actions of the DAHR and the idea of a Hungarian university are evidences of chauvinism." (October 19, 1998 – Monitorul) Following the denigrating rhetoric

[105] Gabriel Andreescu, *The Roulette, Romanians and Hungarians, 1991-2000*.
Available at: http://www.edrc.ro/docs/docs/Gabriel-Andree%2001.pdf

against 'ethnic particularities', Adrian Năstase (the new leader of the PDSR, then prime-minister from 2000) wrote an article entitled "*An overemphasis on the right to ethnic identity*" in which he stated that by rejecting the 'multicultural offer', the DAHR reintroduced an 'ethnic egoism' into the public sphere, demonstrating that the minority leaders are "out of touch with the values of Europe and of the Romanian society" since their "anti-European politics wants to extend ethnic enclavization and segregation, promoting the institution of internal frontiers, with no communication between majority and minority." (August 25-31, 1998 – Revista 22) Finally, it is a proof of how strong the Euro-centric rhetoric became after 1996 that even the 'ultranationalist' organization, the Vatra Românească was launching its attack against the DAHR from the consensual majority position, declaring that "the separation [of the BBU] is unjustified, unproductive, contrary to ideas of European integration, and will cause inter-ethnic strife." (March 20, 1998 – Adevărul)

Minority framing

As already noted above, the minority political discourse also started from the minimal, shared premise which held that European integration and majority-minority reconciliation are the ultimate, long-term positive goals for Romania. Yet their perspective on how this should ideally be achieved (through extensive minority protection and accommodation), and how 'Europe' or 'democracy' were to be understood (through institutionalized plurality and power sharing), positioned them in strong opposition to the majority political discourse which envisioned a 'Europe of nation-states'. At the time, the shared consensus of DAHR politicians and Hungarian intellectuals said that the central (and obligatory) requirement Romania needs to fulfill in order

to become 'truly European' is the satisfactory accommodation of minority claims, among which the autonomous education system and the independent Hungarian state university were most important (the re-establishment of the Bolyai University was often seen as a test or mirror for Romanian democracy).

The narrative which framed this consensus started from the common belief of many minority intellectuals that the Romanian state (in legal and moral sense) carried a continuous, historical responsibility for all the 'injustices' and nationalist politics of previous governments in the country (starting with the interwar, then Communist and postsocialist periods). The possibility for the state to 'redeem' itself, and become 'European', can be done through extensive minority accommodation, with the logical consequence that any political position which opposed the minority claims can thus be framed as representing the 'old', anti-European, nationalistic and assimilationist strategies of previous Romanian governments. In this sense, the above described ideational dichotomies, used to delegitimize the opposing political discourse, apply to this situation as well.

As such, in 1997, at the beginning of the political debate, the calls for the reestablishment of the Hungarian university were framed as the historical duty of the Romanian state. The first open letter of the Bolyai Society stated that "the whole Hungarian community and popular opinion expects that the authorities admit that the 1959 unification was unjust and dictatorial, aiming at the elimination of the national and cultural identity, and educational rights of the Hungarian community." (March 14, 1997 – Szabadság) Another open letter, written by a group of professors who originally taught at the Bolyai University before 1959 declares that "the present BBU is the product of the Communist dictatorship, and Hungarian higher education in Transylvania cannot be developed in such institutional context," so the Romanian state – in its

effort of European integration and building democracy – "needs to address and mend the injustice and aggressive decisions made by the Communist regime, and to provide a solution which accommodates the Hungarian minority according to the Romanian constitution and signed international treaties." (March 13, 1997 – Szabadság) The same position is articulated by the joint Committee of the Hungarian Churches in Romania, claiming that "it is the just request of the Hungarian national community in Romania that the despotic and illegal actions of the Communist regime be addressed and repaired through the re-establishment of the Bolyai University." (April 7, 1997 – Szabadság)

Set against such a background, in the minority discourse the 'road to Europe' for Romania necessarily means the satisfactory accommodation of minority claims. Since, as the Bolyai Society letter put it, "this is the way towards the creation of equality of chances, understanding and partnership between ethnic communities in a general reform leading to modernization and European integration." (March 14, 1997 – Szabadság) The president of the Society articulates this position in an interview for a Romanian weekly (first in 1997, and then again in 1998), introducing the recurring idea that the success of Romanian democracy depends on the re-establishment of the Bolyai University:

> in the present context, the idea of an autonomous Hungarian university is the touchstone of democracy in Romania. The acceptance of this idea would go against a tradition of anti-democratic nationalism in Romania which continuously treated the Hungarian community as second-rate. Thus, the recognition of the Bolyai University would be the abandonment of the assimilationist politics in Romania, providing the means for preserving the ethnic and cultural identity of Hungarians. (*Politics and profession*, April 29 – May 5, 1997 – Revista 22)

Similarly, referring to the importance of collaboration between the DAHR and the other members of the coalition, Minister-Delegate for National Minorities György Tokay (appointed by the DAHR), stated that the 'only alternative' for Romania, in which majority and minority

interests meet, is European integration which can be achieved if "the specialty of this country could become the elaboration of a Romanian model of inter-ethnic understanding." (June 24 – 30, 1997 – Revista 22) Other Hungarian commentators were quick to point out and stress the supposed consequences if the Romanian state fails to meet the claims of the minority, by saying that: "If there will be a Hungarian university and autonomous Hungarian education system then the principles of democracy and the state of law will be victorious in Romania. If not – and this is also a possibility – then the Romanians need to understand that they will exclude themselves from the world of free nations." (July 25 – 26, 1998 – RMSz)

In the last stages of the debate, when it became more and more clear that the independent Hungarian university (or even the German-Hungarian 'Petőfi-Shiller' idea) will not materialize, the reaction of the minority political elites became more radical, and framed the failed attempt as the distancing of Romanian political life from the projected path of "European integration". Consequently, the general rejection of the university idea by the majority political actors was explained as the resurgence of an 'inherent and backward nationalism' supposedly characteristic to Romania. An editorial in the main Hungarian newspaper writes that the constantly returning dictatorships in Romania since the 1930s obstructed the development of democracy, and the short period since the 1996 change was not enough to "disperse the deep delusions and strong poison of nationalism." The author claims that this 'poison' is still paralyzing the majority of Romanians, otherwise they would not have manifested such an 'irrational opposition' to the claim for the university. (July 28, 1998 – RMSz) Another article instrumentalizes the ideational dichotomies mentioned above, stating that the 'paradox' of Romania consists in the nationalist majority politics "keeping the largest minority community on the continent entrapped while

claiming to be heading towards Enlightened Europe," due to the fact that the 'autochthonous' population did not develop the necessary 'reflexes of democracy.' (May 15, 1999 – Szabadság)

One can notice the same type of Euro-centric framing of minority claims, and rhetorical attacks towards the general negative political attitudes of the majority actors regarding the accommodation of these claims, in the subsequent interviews of Béla Markó, president of the DAHR. According to the narrative emerging from these statements, the 'nationalism' of the coalition partners (giving the example of the PNȚCD) is "obstructing the way towards a so-called integrated Europe" (December 16–22, 1997 – Revista 22); then more bluntly: "unfortunately the coalition strayed away from the European road [which it consciously chose in 1996], and this lead not only to the freezing of legitimate minority rights, but the revocation of them too" (September 7, 1998 – Monitorul); and finally, in case of the failure to successfully address state-minority issues, the warning projects that the country will find itself "at the margins Europe" (November 21, 1998 – Monitorul).

As this sub-chapter demonstrated, in spite of both political projects remaining within the strong institutional and discursive contexts of the nation-state on the one hand, and the ethno-culturally defined minority community on the other, the discursive antagonism developed in the form of a competition for defining, appropriating and politically instrumentalizing 'Europe' (and related notions). As the great number of media sources (taken from all levels of political life) show the contradistinctive framing was done with the aim of legitimatizing the given nationalizing political project, while simultaneously delegitimizing the 'other's' position: both domestically and internationally. As the following parts will attempt to prove: the introduction, negotiation and political instrumentalization of 'multiculturalism' was carried out in this

'Europeanized' discursive field, and consequently, the international intervention of the HCNM had to engage with and adapt to this domestic context.

4.4. Declarative 'multiculturalism' – majority positions

As already presented in Chapter 2, in order to understand the various ways 'multiculturalism' was interpreted and utilized by both majority and minority actors in the political debate about higher education in Romania, the analysis needs to treat the concept as an example of an 'ideoscape' with multiple meanings and implications. By examining in detail the political contexts in which it appeared and was used between 1997 and 2000, it will become apparent that this imported term worked as a 'floating signifier' in the Romanian public sphere, that is, as a discursive element that could and did interact with various conventions, and was appropriated, negotiated, contested and rejected by the different actors present in the discursive field. As the previous two sub-chapters indicate, due to the antagonistic relation of the majority and minority nationalizing projects, the term was appropriated and instrumentalized very differently by the two political discourses: acquiring full legitimacy and endorsement in the former, and as a direct reaction to this, meeting strong contestation and rejection in the latter. Lacking even the common denominator of positive identification generated by the concept of 'Europe', the debates on the Hungarian university constructed the term of 'multiculturalism' to be a highly divisive, boundary-making discursive factor between the two ethno-political projects.

The main reason why this concept could be utilized relatively freely and creatively (with no theoretical or normative constraints) in public discourses on the Romanian political scene, points back to Stuart Hall's observation about the global circulation and proliferation of the term,

with no stabilized or clarified meaning. 'Multiculturalism' was a positively charged universal 'buzz-word' or 'portmanteau term' in the 1990s, and entered into East European domestic environments with no clear definition, yet a strong international prestige. In the Romanian case, the ideal, normative role envisioned by scholars[106] for the multicultural discourse to become the alternative perspective addressing issues of diversity and state-minority relations (as a 'third way' of conceptualizing these phenomena) could not develop as a viable, strong public policy because of a lack of political and discursive precedence. In the dynamic of constantly reproducing, antagonistic ethno-political projects (founded on institutional frameworks preferring continuity against change) there was no possibility for a pluralist political approach (focusing on power sharing and public management of diversity) to be articulated and implemented.[107] Thus, when introduced – having no theoretical or normative precedence to be discursively embedded in – the only available discursive convention with which 'multiculturalism' could interact with and assimilate to where: the nationalizing project of the nation-state, and the ethno-culturally constructed, nationalizing minority community.

In the official discourse of the state apparatus, the concept first appeared as a technical term, without definition, describing educational institutions which have instruction in other languages as well besides Romanian. It became politically significant when the minority claim for an independent university was framed as the break-up of the BBU, and was articulated by majority actors as signifying the multilingual status quo of the institution, as describing the 'cultural diversity of Transylvania', and as providing a successful 'European' and 'modern'

[106] Magyari-Vincze etc. – see above, sub-chapter 4.1.
[107] Only later, after 2000 was 'multiculturalism' seriously theorized and connected to other discursive and policy contexts by local social scientists. Cf. Levente Salat, *Etnopolitika: a konfliktustól a méltányosságig* (Marosvásárhely: Mentor, 2001). Or: Gabriel Andreescu, "Multiculturalismul normativ,", in *Interculturalitate. Cercetări şi perspective româneşti*, eds. Rudolf Polenda, François Ruegg and Călin Rus (Cluj: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2002).

solution to minority higher education. This declarative approach to 'multiculturalism' (acknowledging diversity publicly, but without the minimal normative or legal framework, necessary for a comprehensive policy design) was repeatedly used in the public sphere to oppose and delegitimize the DAHR's notions of 'distinct', 'separate' and 'autonomous' (and later even Hungarian and German institutional bilingualism). The articulation of the concept through a negative, contradistinctive definition was (understandably) perceived by minority political actors as a formula for codifying the symbolic, asymmetrical hierarchy of cultures, and the hegemony or dominance of Romanian language in the context of the nation-state. Thus, the antagonistic discursive interaction between the two political projects gave 'multiculturalism' an inherent ambiguity regarding its understanding and utilization in Romania. Deciding the outcome of the negotiation and debate over the concept, the majority political establishment gave a full-scale endorsement to the declarative articulation of multiculturalism (signifying integrated educational institutions, with necessary Romanian component), and this tendency met with the international support of the HCNM. As a result, this understanding of multiculturalism became the official and legitimate approach to state-minority relations, and to managing cultural and linguistic diversity.[108]

The concept first appeared in the 1995 Law of Education referring to the establishment of multilingual universities, stipulating that: "Institutions of higher education with multicultural structures and activities shall be encouraged for promotion of harmonious inter-ethnic relations and of integration both at national and European level."[109] The text established a permanent connection between the term 'integration' and 'multiculturalism', but nowhere was

[108] Restated in the 1999 amendment of the 1995 Law of Education, and also the newly adopted 2011 Law. Available: http://www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/legea_educatiei_nationale_lege_1_2011.php
[109] Law of Education, 1995, Romania.

"multicultural structure" or "multicultural activity" given a definition. The law was highly contested by the DAHR as being "highly restrictive and discriminatory regarding minority-language education"[110], yet this section remained the same in the Emergency Ordinance No. 36/1997, negotiated by the DAHR after joining the coalition. The wide-ranging political debate about the independent Hungarian university would emerge from the unresolved conflict and ambiguity between the part of the law which promotes 'multiculturalism', and the part of the 1997 amendment which gives the right to organize minority-language higher education in state-funded "groups, section, *faculties* and *institutions*."[111] At the end of the debate, when the amended Law of Education was adopted in 1999, the clause which referred to the possibility of independent minority institutions or faculties disappeared, leaving only the 'encouragement' of 'groups and sections' in the undefined, declarative 'multicultural structures'.

Although the DAHR was requesting the re-establishment of the Bolyai University since 1990 (the adoption of the Emergency Ordinance being one of the main conditions of them joining the coalition in 1996), the debate was sparked in early March 1997, by declarations of Prime Minister Ciorbea and President Constantinescu promising the possible creation of a state-funded, independent Hungarian university in Cluj (in conformity with the original coalition program). In the media reaction to these statements the potentiality of the minority-language university was framed as the breaking up of the existing BBU, and the coalition leadership was accused of endorsing 'ethnic separatism' (as shown in the previous sub-chapters). The leading voice contesting these promises was the rector of the BBU, Andrei Marga, who in the name of 'university autonomy' gathered a Committee of Romanian, Hungarian and German professors,

[110] Horvath, *Facilitating*, p. 93
[111] Emergency Ordinance no. 36/1997, Romania, emphasis mine. Available at: http://www.legex.ro/OUG-36-1997-11452.aspx

which voted 'unanimously' for the explicit 'multicultural organization' of the university. (March 31, 1997 - Adevărul) In the following two years, the campaign for promoting 'multiculturalism' and the wide-ranging media and political opposition to the idea of a Hungarian university was combined in the previously presented discourse of 'European integration' and 'modernization', and received the full endorsement of the majority political actors (the coalition together with opposition forces).

Naturally, the role of Marga in the debate should not be overstated, nonetheless the promotion and legitimization of the central concept of 'multiculturalism' is closely connected with his activity as BBU rector, and later as Minister of Education, creating for him the role of privileged 'story-teller' and narrative authority regarding the issue. His professional success, prestige and political influence can be derived from his function as 'comprador elite', placed at the strategic position where the international dimension and the local context meet: recognized as an authority (having cultural and moral capital[112]), and reformer both externally and domestically. The local newspaper presented the rector as being a "prominent agent of Europeanization and modernization, promoting the European integration of Romanian society in general and the university in particular." (February 6, 1997 – Adevărul) In this sense, his continued insistence on multiculturalism should not only be seen as a political project of maintaining the multilingual structures of the university (and having an impact on the politics of identity and state-minority relations in Romania), but also as a managerial project aimed at

[112] Being recognized as an international scholar, with books and articles published in several languages, and receiving the *Grand Officier de l'Ordre National du Mérite* (France) in 1999, and the *Herder Prize* (Austria – Germany) in 2005.

promoting the BBU through the 'brand' of multiculturalism on the one hand, and promoting his own career through the assumed labels of 'reformer' and 'modernizer'.[113]

In the political campaign for promoting 'multiculturalism', Marga and associated intellectuals/politicians were exercising their institutional power in holding the monopoly over how the term can be articulated. In lack of clear and explicit definition, the public use of 'multiculturalism' by these majority actors uncritically and unreflectively described the multilingual status quo of the BBU (and higher education of Romania in general) as already being 'multicultural', and representing a successful, European accommodation of minority needs. In declarations to the press, it was repeatedly pointed out that no internal member of the BBU requested the separation of the institutions, that there were no reported complaints about ethnic discrimination at the BBU, and that never have so many Romanian, Hungarian and German students learnt at the university as they did at that moment. The Academic Administration of the BBU issued a statement which said that the university "deliberately assumes the development of its own structures which can cater to the needs of the country, the Transylvanian context, and European integration." (March 26, 1997 – Adevărul) The supposedly satisfactory and positive nature of the 'multicultural structures' was described in the following way by Marga in an interview:

> At the BBU, multiculturalism means the implementation of a solution for non-conflictual cohabitation in a diverse cultural environment, with Romanian, Hungarian, German and Jewish cultural traditions. This structural form was supported by the professors from all ethnic backgrounds. Multiculturalism is a form of tolerance, and it is preferred to the provincial nationalism of monolingualism and monoculturalism. (August 18–24, 1998 – Revista 22)

[113] Both domestically and internationally the unique 'multicultural' brand of the BBU won repeated financial support for the institution.

The strongly promoted 'ideal' of 'ethnic and religious ecumenism' which was allegedly manifest in the institutional structure of the BBU was presented to fulfill the international requirements for minority-language education, and also to be in harmony with the cultural and historical specificity of Transylvania. Marga declared in an interview that "all the practical requests of the Hungarian intellectuals since 1989 regarding minority-language university education are resolved through the BBU" (July 31, 1998 – Monitorul). The already quoted document[114] of the State Secretary for Higher Education proclaimed that "one has to openly acknowledge the fact that the size and quality of minority-language higher education, as currently organized in Romania, has no competition in Europe or elsewhere."[115] Similarly, in a polemical article entitled *"The hypocrisy of establishing a Hungarian state university"*, Emil Boc (law professor at the BBU, vice-president of PD, and future Prime Minister) stated that the establishment of an independent Hungarian university cannot be sustained with political, legal or logical arguments, and referring to the Framework Convention on National Minorities, the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, and Romanian laws, went on to demonstrate that the BBU satisfies the principles of multiculturalism (basically defined as the opposite of 'ethnic segregation' and 'autonomy'). (August 10, 1998 – Monitorul)

Simultaneously, the promotion and implementation of the integrated model at the BBU was designed to follow "the historical and cultural structure"[116], or the "tradition and reality" of Transylvania, reflecting the diversity of cultures and confessions in the region, since according to Marga: "history proves that no initiative which aimed at ethnic segregation was durable in Transylvania." (July 31, 1998 – Monitorul) Another authoritative voice closely connected with

[114] Mihai Korka, *"The ethnic segregation of Romanian higher education is inopportune"*
[115] Ibid.
[116] *The multicultural character of the BBU*: http://www.ubbcluj.ro/en/despre/misiune/caracter_multicultural.html

the rector, prof. Teodor Pompiliu, a historian at BBU, stated that "the multiethnic history of the region generates the need for a multicultural institution which can work as a bridge between complementary European values" (September 15-21, 1998 – Revista 22), but similarly to the other declarative endorsements of the concept, he failed to problematize or clarify how the 'multiethnic history' of the region should be understood, or what kind of institution this history should generate.

As can be observed, the declarative use of 'multiculturalism' is based on the tactical eschewing of direct definition, and is articulated negatively, as the opposite of the concepts promoted by the minority actors, partially fixing and restricting its meaning. After the DAHR threatened to leave the government in the summer of 1998 (because the request for the university was not being addressed), the coalition leaders offered the solution of a Hungarian-German language university (a stillborn project bearing the name: Petőfi-Shiller[117]) to keep the alliance of the Hungarian party. When this government decree reached the Romanian media, Hungarian-German bilingualism (just like 'autonomous' or 'distinct' previously) was framed as incompatible with 'multiculturalism', which now was explicitly articulated as necessarily requiring a 'Romanian component'. An editorial in the daily *Cotidianul* openly contested the 'multicultural' label of the proposed bilingual institution since "it only has two cultures", claiming that it is a 'transparent trick' devised by the DAHR who plan to run the university, and furthermore that "Hungarians prefer the autonomous institution to the perfectly working multiculturalism at the BBU, since they do not want to study together with Romanians." (October 2, 1998 – Cotidianul) Opposition leader Ion Iliescu (ex-president, PDSR) declared that: "The multicultural idea already exists and there are such multicultural universities in Romania.

[117] Cf. Csilla Zsigmond, "A Petőfi-Shiller Egyetem megjelenítése az országos sajtóban," *Magyar Kisebbség*, no. 15 (1999).

The solution of a bicultural university is actually a masked reiteration of separation and segregation."[118] As Minister of Education, Marga explicitly stated that, contrary to the bilingual proposition: "the concept of multiculturalism must necessarily comprise studying in the official language of the respective state."[119] These strongly articulated restrictions on what 'multiculturalism' can mean, and how it can be used, indicate that the majority actors intended to hold the monopoly over the authoritative codification, management and accommodation of diversity in Romania. This position is described by Csergő as promoting an integrated educational system with majority language predominance, and imposing a model of integrated minority higher education with majority oversight, effectively preoccupied with maintaining the status quo of a homogenized Romanian social field.[120]

Through the debate and political negotiations over the establishment of an independent Hungarian university, the promotion of 'multiculturalism' became the main form of opposing the minority claim, and as a result the majority political establishment gave a full-scale endorsement to the declarative articulation of the concept. The leaders of the coalition parties (PNȚCD, PNL, PD, APR) all made statements approving of Marga's promotion campaign and the 'multiculturalism' of the BBU, and they were joined later by the Prime Minister Radu Vasile (September 19-20, 1998 – Monitorul), and president Constantinescu, who declared that "multiculturalism at the BBU is a true European value" (August 14, 1998 – Monitorul). Additionally, the Ministry of Education issued a statement in which it expresses a direct position in the debate, claiming that in the given context "the multicultural solution is incomparably better than the nationalist strategies of ethnic assimilation and the fragmenting strategies of

[118] Qtd. in Horvath, *Perceptions*, p. 40.
[119] Ibid., p 39.
[120] Csergo, p. 170.

ethnic separatism," while signaling that the majority of the coalition partners (excepting the DAHR, of course) are in favor of this approach.[121] As a result, the declarative and descriptive understanding of multiculturalism (with the presented restrictions) became the official and legitimate approach to state-minority relations, to managing cultural and linguistic diversity, and minority-language higher education, a discursive change that both international actors and domestic minority actors had to accept and work with.

4.5. 'Fake' versus 'real' multiculturalism – minority positions

As the previous sub-chapters already indicate, the reception and negotiation of 'multiculturalism' was played out in a significantly different way in the minority political discourse, the main goal of which (in the discussed period) was the establishment of an independent Hungarian university in Cluj. Discursively adapted and committed to the 'European integration' narrative concerning Romania, the minority media and political elites found themselves in a position of repeatedly attempting to contest and delegitimize the concept of 'multiculturalism' which was articulated by the majority actors in direct opposition to the development of an autonomous minority education system, and their claim for a Hungarian university.

In the initial part of the debate, there was still a strong internal conflict and disagreement between Hungarian intellectuals regarding the optimal solution for addressing minority-language higher education. A group of Hungarian professors from the BBU, members of the Liberal Platform within the DAHR, were prepared to join and support the emerging project of

[121] Minister of Education, decree, June 18, 1998, Romania.

'multiculturalism' at the BBU, arguing that this slow-paced development in an integrated university could ensure a more professional academic structure and environment for Hungarian instruction. Conversely, the mainstream line of the DAHR, the Bolyai Society and leading voiced in the minority Hungarian media were jointly calling for the re-establishment of the independent Bolyai University, framing it as touchstone, no-compromise issue (the legitimacy of which cannot be questioned or debated), and attacking/marginalizing the Liberal Platform members for 'betraying the supreme cause', and generating the long-term assimilation of the Hungarian community. As already noted in the first sub-chapter, the antagonistic positions of the two nationalizing projects radicalized, and the Hungarian media launched a campaign to 'anathematize'[122] the concept of 'multiculturalism'. Nonetheless – due to the significant institutional asymmetry described in sub-chapter 3.4. – it was ineffective in the face of the legitimization and implementation process backing the declarative version of the concept, carried out by majority actors and state institutions, and finalized by the international intervention of the HCNM. As a result, a de facto political consensus emerged with the DAHR (and even the Bolyai Society) backing down from the request for an independent university, and accepting that later contestations of the settlement can only be forwarded through the imposed logic of the multicultural discursive framework.

At a meeting of the Liberal Platform in February 1997, the collective of Hungarian intellectuals expressed their opposition towards the political claim for an independent university in Cluj in a highly similar framing to the one put forward by Andrei Marga, drawing on arguments of practicality and professionalism. The group of professors (including Éva Cs. Gyimesi, Enikő Magyari-Vincze, Péter Egyed and László Magyari Nándor) stated that the

[122] Horváth, *Perceptions*, p. 50

initiatives for an independent university were formulated in an unprofessional, unfeasible way by inexperienced actors. In their view, this claim was more symbolic than practical or useful, and showed an ethno-political strategy facing the past and creating a myth out of the former Bolyai University. Instead, initiatives should be looking towards the future, and should depoliticize the issue, leaving the elaboration of modern solutions to the specialists, meaning: to the professors of the BBU who are engaged in contributing to the development of multiculturalism. (February 3, 1997 – Szabadság) Besides the strong ideational aspect framing the integrated model as future-oriented and European, this was the insider position of BBU academics, having a vested interest in maintaining the structural stability of the institution against what they saw as a highly uncertain plan for the realization of an independent university.

Contrary to this (self-declared) 'liberal' or 'civic' perspective the mainstream discourse of the DAHR was strongly promoting the claim for the re-establishment of the Bolyai University (the request representing one of the main programmatic points of the party since 1990). Created to lobby and mobilize for this issue, the Bolyai Society issued a statement in January 30, 1997, claiming to speak in the name of the whole 'community' in expressing that it is the "just and natural request of the Hungarian minority to ask the Romania state for the reinstitution of the Bolyai University", crucial in exercising the right of the minority for the preservation of their culture and identity. (February 3, 1997 – Szabadság) This position was strongly expressed through an exemplary editorial in the local Hungarian newspaper having the non-compromising title *"The establishment of the Bolyai University cannot be questioned*", arguing that there should be no debate (that is, no internal 'Hungarian conflict') regarding this issue since the "fate of the whole community depends on the existence of this university", and thus there is no other

solution for maintaining the identity and culture of the minority. (February 11, 1997 – Szabadság)

As a reaction to the internal, minority opposition, and the large-scale promotion of the 'declarative multiculturalism' by the majority media, the Hungarian media launched a negative campaign aiming to contest and delegitimize the concept (at least in the context of the Hungarian readers, but also in Romanian papers). At one level, the term itself was framed as a deceptive slogan, a political-rhetorical trick covering the 'hidden agenda' of the assimilationist nation-state, a narrative which fitted well with the previously presented belief of many minority intellectuals that the Romanian state (in legal and moral sense) carried a continuous, historical responsibility for all the 'injustices' and nationalist politics of previous governments in the country.

In this sense, it was a general tendency of the commentators to link, and equate, the present promotion of multiculturalism with past political strategies and slogans of the Communist period. Thanks to a minority historical reflex[123], the idea of integrated, multilingual institutions invoked the examples of the 1959 unification of the Romanian and Hungarian universities (diminishing Hungarian instruction almost completely by the 1980s), and the creation of the bilingual Ady–Şincai high school (in which the Hungarian part was eliminated, and the school renamed Gheorghe Şincai).[124] Even the prorector of BBU, Pál Szilágyi expressed his worries about the "traps and dangers of united institutions, since the Hungarian minority has had bad experiences with such structures." (February 14, 1997 – Szabadság) For local historian, Lajos Asztalos, the word itself sounded like a Communist propaganda slogan: "This

[123] Understood as a discursive common places, activated automatically in articles referring to the issue at hand
[124] Cf. Vincze Gábor, *Illúziók és csalódások. Fejezetek a romániai magyarság második világháború utáni történetébõl* (Csíkszereda: Status, 1999).

'multicultural' thing seems to be so beautiful… There is only one little thing wrong with the term. It sounds bloody similar to the favorite word of Ceausescu: 'multilateral'. So there is no need to discredit the term, it does it to itself." (July 11, 1997 – Szabadság) Another commentator is reminded by the 'reformist rhetoric of proletarian internationalism', calling 'multiculturalism' a gimmick ('multimaszlag' and 'mézesmadzag') which hides the same old homogenizing mechanism of the nation-state. These are described in a conspiracy-theory manner as:

> the very same covert assimilation strategies in action (now rebranded as multiculturalism) which were handed down from the Legionnaires to the national Communists of Ceausescu, and then taken over by the Great Romania Party and company, all of whom are ingeniously and effectively controlled from behind the scenes by politicians presenting themselves as enlightened Europeans. (September 4, 1998 – Szabadság)

At another level of the media attack, the political use of the concept by the majority actors was contested, and rejected, for being inaccurate, deceitful and instrumental. This serious contestation is a direct reaction to the declarative articulation of 'multiculturalism' by the state apparatus, which avoided offering any definition or standardization, leaving the door open for various attempts of deligitimization. For example, professor Samu Benkő of the Transylvanian Museum Society expressed his opinion that "the newly trendy theory of multiculturalism hides the idea that the Hungarian language is unnecessary." (April 27, 1998 – Szabadság) For others, it covers the "ignominious mechanism of linguistic imperialism" directed against the development of a minority-language education system. (October 20, 1998 – RMSz) Furthermore, the declarative utilization of the concept was attacked for suggesting that the 'minority issue' is successfully solved in contemporary Romania, by commenting it ironically: "not only is it solved, but over-solved, moreover, it is unique in the world, everyone should come and learn from our model." (August 4, 1998 – Szabadság) The declaration of Marga and the academic Committee officially calling the BBU 'multicultural' was seen as "essentially a brand name

which is held high, but which guarantees nothing that the Hungarian community would need in producing future intellectuals." In these accounts, the 'fakeness' or 'deceptiveness' of this positively promoted brand comes from the understanding that "it simply means that the instruction at the BBU is done in three languages, so it is multilingual", and it is intended as a "transparent attempt to codify a situation in which decisions for the minority are made by the majority" (July 11, 1997 – Szabadság) Or in other words:

> This *nation-state multiculturalism* means that at some specific university department, some courses are taught in the mother-tongue to some lucky, select few. But the details of what and how, who and when, are determined by the chieftains of the leading culture. And the representatives of the secondary or side-cultures are supposed to nod in a grateful, satisfied and enthused way! (August 4, 1998 – Szabadság, emphasis mine)

In their political negotiation for the establishment of an independent Hungarian university, the leaders of the DAHR were articulating the same rejection towards the declarative use of 'multiculturalism'. József Kötő, State Secretary of the Ministry of Education issued a minority report, going against the official declaration of the Ministry (devised by Marga), and framing its activity as "using the disenfranchising multicultural organization model to sabotage the right of the minority to an autonomous university" (October 8, 1998 – RMSz) The president of the party, Béla Markó, repeated in various interviews that the existing structure of the BBU should not be called 'multicultural' "because the Hungarian professors or the students are not equal partners to their Romanian colleagues, since they are lacking administrative or decisional power." (August 7, 1998 – Monitorul) He declared furthermore that:

> Multiculturalism is a hypothetical idea in Romania, but it should not exclude the possibility of autonomous institutions. The DAHR does not want the splitting of the BBU, we want the reestablishment of the old Bolyai University as a new institution, and the development of a *'real multiculturalism'* at the BBU. It is offensive that Romanian politicians do not want to leave the Hungarians alone in an institution, assuming that we

> would rebel against the state or the nation. (August 18 – 24, 1998 – Revista 22, emphasis mine)

Yet because the concept was perceived to be important, after 'denouncing' the official, declarative (or 'fake') articulation of it, the minority discourse generated positive definitions of and approaches to the 'real multiculturalism', attempting to appropriate the term. In the Hungarian media dozens of articles phrased the question: "*What does multiculturalism really mean?*", to fill in the normative void left by the state apparatus. With minimal references to other political contexts (the Swedish minority in Finland, and to Switzerland and Belgium appearing as occasional examples), or theoretical traditions, the Hungarian press promoted an understanding of 'multiculturalism' which aimed to legitimize the claims for a distinct institutional system, articulating a narrative of equal rights and chances for cultures/languages, based on the principles of partnership, parity and mutual respect.[125] Through these articulations, the minority discourse was attempting (unsuccessfully) to re-appropriate the power or authority over defining and codifying ethnic diversity, and the policy through which it is addressed. The example of the following editorial in the main Hungarian newspaper illustrates this framing:

> I don't understand, how is it possible to take this rich and beautiful word – which describes cultures living side by side and accepting each other – and use it for strategies of exclusion. Mr. Marga claims that they will not allow an autonomous Hungarian education system, because they are followers of multiculturalism. But of course, a strictly Romanian one can exist! The truth is that they don't want real multiculturalism, they only want their one and only culture. They are not willing to accept otherness! (July 25-26, 1998 – RMSz)

As the debate drew on, the dissatisfaction with how the term was being under-theorized and instrumentalized by majority actors became a general concern for most Hungarian intellectuals, and produced a coherence in their view on the articulations of 'fake' and 'real'

[125] Although no direct influence can be demonstrated, these minority articulations of 'real multiculturalism' have a similar conceptualization of the term as 'liberal multiculturalism' is understood in Kymlicka's work.

multiculturalisms. Exemplary in this regard is the disillusionment of professor Éva Cs. Gyimesi (another narrative authority among Hungarian intellectuals), who went from a strong support of the 'multicultural structures' at the BBU to publicly retreating from the promotion or endorsement of this model. In early 1997, as an educational specialist for the DAHR, she warned the party to stop the "the negative campaign against multiculturalism" since "it would lead to sad consequences if young people were scared away from the BBU with the slogans of multiculturalism." (June 23, 1997 – Szabadság) Yet by the end of the year, after several failed negotiations within the institution, she published an open letter to Andrei Marga, declaring that though at first she was willing to promote "the idea of a multicultural university which could be harmonized with the ethnic and religious diversity of Transylvania," thinking that in such a united institution the problem of minority-language higher education can be properly solved; but now she got to realize that "no one in the BBU Committee is taking the Hungarian requests seriously, and the Romanian academic community in Cluj is not receptive to the idea of real multiculturalism", so as a consequence she needs to reevaluate her "optimism and naiveté of thinking that the issue can be addressed properly within this frame at the BBU." (December 12, 1997 – Szabadság)

The articulations of 'real multiculturalism' in the minority discourse, as already noted, promoted the principle of 'equality and partnership' in opposition to the perceived institutional and symbolic domination of the majority declarative version. Professor Cs. Gyimesi defined the concept as the "equality of opportunities which guarantees in all areas of life the self-realization of individuals in their mother-tongue, by creating values based on the specific tradition of our own culture." (December 12, 1997 – Szabadság) This approach was shared by various commentators, with less focus on the individual, and more on the equality of the two reified

cultures and ‘nationalities’, describing the concept as: “a common platform where all partner-cultures enjoy equal rights and responsibilities, and can decide its own goals, methods and instruments, since none of them can project itself to be above or below the others” (August 4, 1998 – Szabadság); or as the “cultural equality, the mutual interdependence and understanding of nationalities which live together in regions and countries. In other words: it is the cultural dimension of a pluralist democracy” (October 16, 1998 - Népújság)

These articulation of defining the ‘real’ meaning of the concept, one which encompasses an approach to extensive minority accommodation, were aiming to frame and legitimize the main claim for a Hungarian university (or the secondary, intermediary goal of autonomous faculties at the BBU) as being ‘genuinely’ multicultural. As the article quoted above put it, in this view of the concept “it should be normal to have next to fifty Romanian universities one completely Hungarian university, since everyone should have equal rights to enjoy and develop their culture.” (October 16, 1998 - Népújság) Yet such understandings of the concept gained circulation mostly within the context of the Hungarian minority media, and even if articulated in the Romanian press occasionally, they were powerless and ineffective in face of the legitimization and implementation process carried out by majority actors and state institutions, and finalized by the international intervention of the HCNM. Conversely, by directly addressing and contesting the term, perpetuating the country-wide focus on it, the Hungarian media also contributed to maintaining the ideoscape of ‘multiculturalism’ as the central discursive element in discussing and codifying diversity, and the state policy through which it is addressed. Due to the structural asymmetry and institutional imbalance between the two nationalizing projects, the declarative understanding of multiculturalism (signifying integrated educational institutions, with

necessary Romanian component) became the official and legitimate approach to state-minority relations, and to minority-language higher education.

By the end of the debate, both in the discourse of the DAHR and the Bolyai Society, the previously un-compromising claim for an independent university was side-lined (although still insisted on as a symbolic point), and more focus was placed on re-articulating the 'multicultural structures' of the BBU by requesting an autonomous Hungarian faculty (similarly unsuccessful), and the alternative project of setting up a network of private Hungarian universities (eventually becoming the Sapietia University in 2000[126]). As such, in the Hungarian media the articualtion of 'real multiculturalism' became totally detached from social reality and the status quo, and was framed as belonging to the realm of 'minority utopia', as an ideal which can be realized somewhere in a future Romania:

> Until our 'conceptually confusing' times will get on the path of change towards the utopistic vision of mutually respecting each other's culture, we should put aside the compromised term of multiculturalism. Put aside, but not forbid, since there might be hope to breath life into it in the future. (December 7, 1998 – Szabadság)

The discursive change which put the ideoscape of 'multiculturalism' in the center of discussions about state-minority relations represented an ideational shift of the majority political rhetoric in the wider context of the narrative of 'European integration', yet it effectively did not bring a structural or institutional transformation regarding power-sharing and plurality in Romania. The idea an independent Hungarian university, or even of autonomous faculties within the BBU, remained beyond the 'threshold' of the 'nationalizing state' and majority political discourse. Nonetheless, the mimetic adoption of the political discourse of 'multiculturalism' by the majority actors produced a rhetorical 'integration' to global trends, and managed to attract

[126] See: www.sapientia.ro

the endorsement of the OSCE through the HCNM. Through the reluctant acceptance of the imposed centrality and institutionalization of multiculturalism as an official discourse by the minority actors, an open-ended, de facto political consensus emerged, leaving room for later contestations of the settlement, yet only through the logic of the multicultural framework, perpetuating the un-settled nature of identity politics in Romania.

4.6. The international intervention of the HCNM

The political debates and policy changes related to minority rights and accommodation in Eastern Europe in the 1990s and early 2000s have been addressed in the literature through two modes of explanation. The main tendency was to explain the domestic transformation through analyzing the extent and nature of international influence (by authors like Judith Kelley, Gwendolyn Sasse etc.[127]), focusing either on the effectiveness of promoted norms (socialization of key actors; the logic of appropriateness) or examining the dynamics of interests (promise of rewards; the logic of consequentialism). A less frequent scholarly attempt was to analyze the transformation from the local perspective, examining international organizations/actors, and the effect of their involvement "filtered through domestic lenses," as Zsuzsa Csergő writes.[128] I argue in this sub-chapter that in order to understand the nature and outcome of the ethno-political debate over the claim for minority-language university in Transylvania, and the intervention of the HCNM, one needs to take up such a domestic perspective.

[127] Cf. Judith Green Kelley, *Ethnic Politics in Europe: The Power of Norms and Incentives* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2004). Or: Gwendolyn Sasse, *EU Conditionality and Minority Rights: Translating the Copenhagen Criterion into Policy* (Florence: European University Institute, 2005).
[128] Csergő, p. 100.

The debate over the DAHR demand for Hungarian language higher education was carried out on two interconnected levels: the governmental and the local, academic/institutional. As Heiko Fürst observes, the intervention of the HCNM (consequently focusing on issues of minority education in Romania since the early 1990s) proved to be decisive: on the one hand, by transferring the debate from the governmental level to the local, institutional level in Cluj; and on the other hand, by endorsing Andrei Marga's project of reorganizing the BBU as 'multicultural'.[129] Echoing his similar interventions, the HCNM identified the case of the potential minority-language university as the 'core conflict' of minority-state relations in Romania.[130] In scholarly assessments of this particular intervention, the role of the HCNM in the debates and negotiations is positively described as a successful, detached 'mediator' and 'facilitator', who – judged from the 'conflict resolution perspective' of the 'security track' – managed to "permanently resolve the inter-ethnic crisis."[131] Furthermore, the supposed effect of the intervention was to 'de-politicize' and 'objectify' the discourses in the debates, and the endorsement of (an 'integrationist' model of) 'multiculturalism' is seen as the 'pragmatic, non-radical, alternative' solution to the question of minority-language university.

In a detailed report, István Horváth characterizes the political strategy of the HCNM as a balanced approach through which van der Stoel managed to "strengthen moderate actors and to isolate radical ones."[132] In his pragmatic strategy of external mediator, the HCNM "could not invent or initiate the processes of political differentiation" which would solve the issue, but instead he identified, shaped and endorsed the moderate solution, "preparing the ground for a

[129] Fürst, p. 132-133
[130] Fürst, p. 129
[131] Ibid., p. 122
[132] Horváth, *Facilitating*, p. 97

new political constellation" in Romania.[133] Yet, what is missing from the assessment of the role the HCNM played in the Romanian context is the examination of how his discursive intervention legitimized or undermined certain political positions, and changed the discursive dynamics and eventual outcome of the debate. Additionally, it is important to investigate how his endorsement of a particular model of 'multiculturalism' legitimized the political positions of the authorities, and consequently undermined, and eventually transformed, the discursive positions of the minority elites.

As already mentioned in sub-chapter 4.2., the constant dramatization and exaggeration of state-minority relations in the Romanian and Hungarian media, conceptualized as 'ethnic neurosis', played a significant role in generating a public discourse which constructed the question of minority-language university as a security and existential problem for both nationalizing projects. Additionally, sub-chapter 4.3. presented how the contradistinctive discursive competition to appropriate and instrumentalize 'Europe' compelled both ethno-political projects to 'Europeanize' their rhetoric, creating a debate which transcended the local context. As a consequence, in accordance with his mandate, the HCNM chose this particular educational issue as the 'core conflict' in Romania, and directed his statements and intervention towards facilitating a resolution to the matter.

This proved challenging at first, since in the domestic context his role as a representative of an IO became part of the political competition to discursively appropriate the ideas of 'European integration', and minority protection, respectively. Although the two antagonistic political projects accepted the mandate and authority of the HCNM in having a right to intervene in domestic debates (as part of the shared premise of European integration), but initially the

[133] Ibid., p. 98

symbolic role of this international bureaucrat was treated as potential free platform or canvas which can be appropriated for both sides of the argument, creating a paralyzing, ineffective ambiguity for the intervention.

In two consecutive visits to Romania in 1998, the carefully constructed, yet highly ambivalent statements of the HCNM on the issue of the university were interpreted distinctively by the two ethno-political projects as endorsing their claims, compelling Max van der Stoel to issue clarifications and dismissals of these domestic declarations after each visit. In February, he declared the there are no international standards which would prescribe the establishment of minority-language university in Romania, yet just the same, there are no legal obstructions to do this, leaving it up to the Parliament to weight the educational needs of the minority and make a decision. (February 10, 1998 – Szabadság) This declaration was interpreted by some of the coalition majority actors as promoting a "more restricted minority accommodation" in Romania, and conversely, as promoting the idea of the university by minority actors.[134]

In September, the HCNM issued a similarly ambivalent declaration: "I think that the development of multiculturalism can be indeed valuable, but I also think that the possibility of developing an alternative way for assuring minority-language education through a state university should be permitted."[135] Following the statement, the reports in the Romanian media had the title: "*Max van der Stoel supports the development of multiculturalism"*[136], while the Hungarian media (and some Romanian newspapers) wrote that: "*Max van der Stoel approves of*

[134] Referring to the following specification of the HCNM: "it would in my view not be desirable to include in the revised Law on Education a provision excluding the possibility of a state-funded university with education in a minority language"; later repeated in a letter to Andrei Pleşu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, March 2, 1998.
[135] Statement of the HCNM on Romania. The Hague, September 10, 1998.
[136] September 12, 1998 - România Libera.

the establishment of Bolyai University."[137] The ineffectiveness and confusing nature of these statements, contested by the domestic actors according to the discursive antagonisms present in the Romanian political field, determined the HCNM to take a more direct, un-ambivalent stand regarding minority-language education, and as a consequence, this gesture conferred a strong political role on his intervention.[138]

Breaking the ambiguity, the political gesture of Max van der Stoel – in conformity with his broader project of facilitating state-minority conflict transformation – used the (moral and expertise) authority, conferred on his office by parties who accepted the OSCE mandate (and the common premise of 'European integration'), not only to exercise his 'power to interpret norms', but more effectively, to make normative statements about the situation of the Hungarian national minority. The discursive interventions of the HCNM, starting from 1999, promoted the 'rather controversial' statement according to which the 'multicultural' structure of the BBU "can serve the needs of the minority" as an institution of higher education.[139] Furthermore, what needs to be pointed out is that the HCNM – through the discursive endorsement given to the declarative articulation of the 'integrationist' model of multicultural restructuring – transferred its moral and expertise authority to the majority political actors, enabling the state authority and the rector/minister Marga to define, design and construct the institutional form for and in the name of the Hungarian minority.

The politically significant endorsement by the HCNM of the 'integrationist' model of multiculturalism was done in several consequent diplomatic and mediating gestures, all of which discursively merged into the declarative articulation of 'multiculturalism' of the majority actors.

[137] September 12-13, 1998 – Monitorul; September 14, 1998 – RMSz
[138] Transforming him into a 'political creature' at the domestic level, as Barnett and Finnemore argue.
[139] Skovgaard, p. 454

Firstly, after the provisional founding of the 'multicultural' Petőfi-Shiller University in October 1998, the press statement of the HCNM strongly emphasizes that the "further development of the multicultural system at the Babes-Bolyai University remains indispensable."[140] Further on, the HCNM took a pro-active role aimed at "consolidating the existing multicultural structures of the BBU"[141], and in 1999 launched the project called "*Open Horizons/Minds. Development of a Multicultural Concept at the Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*." As a result of this project and an extended visit to Cluj, the office of the HCNM published its "*Recommendations on Expanding the Concept of Multi-culturalism at the Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*", on 17 February 2000. Similarly to the rhetoric used by Marga, this document states that the recommendations "are designed to build on the already existing foundation and tradition of multilingualism and multiculturalism at the University", referring to the existing few Hungarian lines of study. It explicitly follows and joins the project of the rector/minister, described as the "pioneering efforts which have been made in the past few years in order to make Babes-Bolyai a modern, multicultural University."[142] The support of the HCNM was quickly appropriated by the majority actors: even before the publication of the *Recommendations*, as Minister of Education, Marga claimed in January 19, 2000 that during the discussions, Max van der Stoel concluded that the "actual structure of the BBU is satisfactory from the perspective of multiculturalism"[143], (a problematic claim when faced with the detailed recommendation for improving multiculturalism at the Cluj university, yet never dismissed by the HCNM later on).

[140] Press Statement of the HCNM in 1998, http://www.osce.org/hcnm/52584
[141] Horváth, p. 111
[142] *Recommendations*, 2000. Available: http://www.bolyai.eu/dok/stoel_rec_2744_en.pdf
[143] January 19, 2000 – Adevărul.

In the *Recommendations*, besides the request to explicitly codify the 'multicultural' character of the university, the HCNM proposed a form of "positive discrimination in the decision-making process, making it more difficult for the ethnic majority to block minority initiatives", an "affirmative action hiring policy", and the "increased status of languages used within the university" (e.g. by issuing diplomas and other official documents as well as public information in all three languages).[144] Yet, as it becomes clear from Horváth's report, the leadership of the BBU (while developing the new 'multicultural' Charter) ignored both the institutional design requests of the Hungarian elites, and the above recommendations created by the expert team of the HCNM. Except for the appropriation of the explicit 'multicultural' definition as a 'brand' identity, the adopted institutional design basically codifies the linguistic status quo at the BBU, and provides no further, or more extended educational accommodation of the Hungarian minority.[145] Yet, after the Senate of the BBU adopted the new Charter in July 15, 2000, codifying the 'integrationist' model of multiculturalism, Minister Marga stated that "the new document guarantees the highest level of multiculturalism for the university, satisfying all of the recommendation proposed by the HCNM" (July 15, 2000 - Szabadság).

It is important to clarify at this point that the endorsement of the HCNM given to the majority actors did not refer to the discursive framing of 'multiculturalism' through the historical narrative of the 'minoritized majority', and the perpetuation of homogeneity and integrity through the nation-state. As one can see from all of his statements, press releases, letters, recommendations and speeches related to Romania, the HCNM carefully did not allude to historical factors at all, only to recent Romanian legislation and the present situation of the BBU. Most illustrative of his position was the speech he gave at the seminar organized at the BBU,

[144] Horváth, p. 113
[145] Ibid.

entitled "*Integrating Diversity in Higher Education: Lessons from Romania*", on 7 October 2000. Put into the domestic context of the debate, the speech shows the paradox of the discursive intervention of the HCNM.

On the one hand, Max van der Stoel elaborately describes his vision of 'multiculturalism' by referring to the outdated myth of the nation-state model (to be replaced with multi-nation state models), to the benefits of a pluralist democracy (through minority participation), and the ideal of integrating diversity by providing equality of opportunities for all individuals – a perspective which has much in common with the rhetoric of the DAHR and the articulations of 'real multiculturalism' presented above. Yet on the other hand, the HCNM gives his full endorsement to Marga and the BBU leadership, to the newly adopted Charter, and repeatedly expresses that the BBU is an "important center of multi-lingual and multi-cultural higher learning", a leading example of an evolving model for integrating diversity, and most importantly: the "embodiment of the multi-cultural character of this country", being "truly representative and reflective of the cultural pluralism of Romania." [146]

The paradox between these two parts of the speech show that: firstly, the HCNM is not familiar with the detailed nature of local antagonisms related to multiculturalism (that is, he is not aware how the concept was discursively framed by both sides historically); and secondly, that the political decision was already made to give full support to Marga's project of promoting 'multiculturalism', even if an attentive examination of the majority Romanian discourse would have shown that neither does it match the perspective of the HCNM about 'multiculturalism', nor was it specifically designed to accommodate the central minority claims. Although he referred to the dissatisfaction of the minority political actors ("I know that this decision was not

[146] HCNM speech at BBU. "*Integrating diversity: In Everybody's Interest*."
Available: http://www.osce.org/hcnm/42351

considered ideal for many professors of the Hungarian line of study")[147], the inconsistency between what he describes as being ideally 'multicultural' and then calling the BBU a successful multicultural model which represents the diversity of Romania can only be explained by the diplomatic decision to endorse the declarative articulation of the concept, with the aim of ending the short-term ethno-political conflict, yet without seriously reflecting on the normative and long-term consequences of this decision.

Thus, it was the transfer of his moral and expertise authority, and his discursive intervention in publicly endorsing key concepts like 'multiculturalism' and 'integration' (used and relied on by the moderate Romanian political actors in their rhetoric) which eventually finalized the debate, and determined policy outcomes. His discursive promotion of these key concepts provided their domestic, declarative use with international/European legitimacy and authority, and thus the HCNM supported the majority nationalizing project of codifying the status quo through an integrationist paradigm, and through the refutation of minority demands for 'distinctness' or 'autonomy'.

Consequently, what the involvement of the HCNM 'solved' was the immediate political conflict over the claim for independent minority-language university, since the DAHR did not leave the coalition as it threatened to do (or did not mobilize protests for the establishment of the institution). Breaking the ineffective ambiguity, the gesture of the HCNM was a political choice in the domestic context which ended a short-term conflict by delegitimizing continued talk of an independent Hungarian university, but in the long-run it did not resolve the reappearing claims of the DAHR and Hungarian intellectuals for autonomous Hungarian faculties, and a more accommodating definition and implementation of multiculturalism. The continuously un-settled

[147] Ibid.

nature of identity politics and state-minority relations in Romania show the practical and tactical limitations of the discursive intervention of the HCNM: once the promoted concept and model of 'multiculturalism' were appropriated and instrumentalized by the majority actors in Romania, the relevance and political effectiveness of the external mediator diminished significantly. As the analysis showed, the main 'pathology'[148] of this type of discursive intervention consists in facilitating only a mimetic discursive adoption of the globally disseminated concepts like 'multiculturalism', yet failing to generate and monitor important structural or institutional transformation in state-minority relations.

[148] Barnett and Finnemore, "The Politics, Power and Pathologies," 716.

Chapter 5 – Conclusions

The general aim of this research was to examine how the global diffusion of the political discourse of multiculturalism was received and implemented within the context of identity politics and state-minority relations in Romania, at the end of the 1990s. More specifically, the thesis addressed how and why the ensuing political debate – which framed the reception of this global discourse – transformed the way inter-ethnic relations and multiethnic diversity is recognized, and influenced the way it is managed in the given context. This question was examined by focusing on a central question of state-minority relations: the political claim for minority-language higher education. The purpose of analyzing the debate was to identify the antagonistic discursive positions involved in the political interaction, to discuss how they are constructed, and to explain what was the impact and outcome of the process of ethno-political contention, centering on the concept of 'multiculturalism'.

The issue of the minority-language university discussed in the thesis was an exemplary illustration of how the claims coming from the Hungarian 'homeland community' in Romania challenged majority ideas of 'titular' entitlements based on the sovereignty principle of the nation-state and national culture, and created a political conflict highlighting an inherent structural antagonism and also asymmetry between representatives of the majority and minority. In the wider political context of minority-language education, the idea of the 'university' in Transylvania became a central issue of highly charged contestation of institutional space, which eventually drew the involvement of the HCNM to facilitate a resolution to the problem.

The analysis of the political debate related to the claim for a Hungarian university in Transylvania, and the central concept of 'multiculturalism' revealed how the discursive antagonism between the two nationalizing political projects is constructed. Additionally, the examination of the conflict in Romania showed how the role of the HCNM can be evaluated in a domestic context, and how his discursive intervention influenced the outcome of the debate. As such, the comprehensive discourse analysis in Chapter 4 shed light on two important aspects of the debate under discussion. First, it revealed that the articles and statements which dealt with the topic under discussion can be characterized as manifesting 'ethnic neurosis': that is, the consistent and continuous dramatization of state-minority issues both in the Romanian and Hungarian written media. Secondly, it demonstrated that the discursive antagonism between the two ethno-political positions developed in the form of a competition for defining, appropriating and politically instrumentalizing 'Europe' (and related notions of 'real democracy', and the progressive ethos of 'modernization'), and created a debate which transcended the local context.

Further on, the main part of the analysis gave a detailed presentation of the contradistinctive discursive strategies employed by the two political projects in legitimizing and delegitimizing each other's antagonistic positions centering on the concept of 'multiculturalism'. The majority actors (with Andrei Marga playing a leading role) involved in the debate articulated a 'declarative' or descriptive approach to the concept (which meant the acknowledgment of ethno-cultural diversity publicly, but without the minimal normative or legal framework, necessary for a comprehensive policy design), and used in the mediated public sphere to oppose and delegitimize the claims of minority actors aiming for the setting up of an 'autonomous' educational system in Romania. Conversely, the minority actors repeatedly contested this declarative articulation (framing it as 'fake'), and engaged in promoting a counter-articulation of

'real multiculturalism' which aimed to legitimize the claims for a distinct institutional system. Through this oppositional articulation, the minority discourse was attempting (unsuccessfully) to re-appropriate the authority over defining and codifying ethnic diversity, and the policy through which it should be addressed.

Thus, the antagonistic discursive interaction between the two political projects gave 'multiculturalism' an inherent ambiguity regarding its understanding and utilization in Romania. Deciding the outcome of the negotiation and debate over the concept, the majority political establishment gave a full-scale endorsement to the declarative articulation of multiculturalism (signifying integrated educational institutions, with necessary Romanian component). As a result, this understanding of multiculturalism became the official and legitimate approach to state-minority relations, and to managing cultural and linguistic diversity. Consequently, the analysis of how the politicization and instrumentalization of 'multiculturalism' is articulated tells the story of why this concept (originating from a theory of pluralist democracy) did not manage to become an effective and novel alternative way of addressing state-minority relations. Instead, the introduction and reception of the concept re-strengthened the ethno-political boundaries and antagonisms of majority-minority relations in Romania, producing a visible discursive change, but not a significant structural transformation.

This change, which put the ideoscape of 'multiculturalism' in the center of ethno-political conflict, represented an ideational shift of the majority political rhetoric in the wider context of the narrative of 'European integration', yet it effectively did not bring an institutional transformation regarding power-sharing and plurality in Romania. The idea of an independent Hungarian university, or even of autonomous faculties within the BBU, remained beyond the 'threshold' of the nationalizing state and majority political discourse. Nonetheless, the mimetic

adoption of the political discourse of 'multiculturalism' by the majority actors produced a rhetorical 'integration' to global trends, and managed to attract the endorsement of the OSCE through the HCNM.

As a result of the analysis, the role of Max van der Stoel can be conceptualized as a decisive discursive intervention of publicly endorsing key concepts like 'multiculturalism' and 'integration' (used and relied on by the moderate Romanian political actors in their rhetoric) which eventually finalized the debate, and determined policy outcomes. His discursive promotion of these key concepts provided their domestic, declarative use with international/European legitimacy, and thus the HCNM transfered of his moral and expertise authority to the majority nationalizing project of codifying the status quo through an integrationist paradigm, and through the refutation of minority demands for 'distinctness' or 'autonomy'. The gesture of the HCNM was a political choice in the domestic context which ended a short-term conflict by delegitimizing continued talk of an independent Hungarian university, but in the long-run it did not resolve the reappearing claims of the DAHR and Hungarian intellectuals for autonomous Hungarian faculties, and a more accommodating definition and implementation of multiculturalism. These continued political efforts show the practical and tactical limitations of the discursive intervention of the HCNM: once the promoted concept and model of 'multiculturalism' were appropriated and instrumentalized by the majority actors in Romania, the relevance and political effectiveness of the external mediator diminished significantly. As the analysis demonstrated, the main 'pathology' of this type of discursive intervention consists in facilitating only a mimetic discursive adoption of the globally disseminated concepts like 'multiculturalism', yet failing to generate and monitor important structural or institutional transformation in state-minority relations. Through the reluctant

acceptance of the imposed centrality and institutionalization of multiculturalism as an official discourse by the minority actors, an open-ended, de facto political consensus emerged, leaving room for later contestations of the settlement, yet only through the logic of the multicultural framework, perpetuating the un-settled nature of identity politics in Romania.

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