

**Between Friends or Foes: The Case of the Hungarian Revisionist
Foreign Policy Towards Romania**

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Abstract

The concept of lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy is new in the literature. In general, it aims at defining a state's position in the international system and/or relative to neighboring countries, being also a repertoire of diplomatic practices that leaders use to represent the interest of the 'authentic' community on the international stage. However, in the current literature, there is no analysis to present the way in which this lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy operates. This thesis aims to explore the traits of the Hungarian revisionist foreign policy towards a neighboring country, Romania. More specifically, I will investigate what this foreign policy targets and how it operates. The findings shows that the "struggles" of ethnic Hungarians from Transylvania are raised at a foreign policy level, being at the center of Hungary's lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy. The ways in which these "struggles" are tackled by the Hungarian government is through diaspora integration processes (such as the non-resident citizenship) and diaspora identity processes with cultural, economic, or political programs sponsored by the government or other national foundations.

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Introduction

Topic, research problem and gap

There is a growing recognition in the literature that populism today is not exclusively a phenomenon of domestic politics, but that it significantly influences outcomes in world politics as well. In understanding this concept, the challenge is not only due to its chameleonic or slippery (Chryssogelos, 2017) nature, evident in both academic debates and public discourse, but also to its empirical heterogeneity, since it appears in multiple iterations in varying geographical contexts. After the 2016 presidential elections, Donald Trump proved that, even in the United States, an iconoclastic, antiestablishment style of politics was possible, many worrying about the weakening of multilateral institutions, the proliferation of international disputes due to aggressive approaches to international politics and a rising unpredictability in world politics (Destradi and Plagemann, 2018). Thus, populism became a keyword in the debates for future directions not only for internal affairs but also for international affairs.

While populist actors took over executive and legislative powers all over the world, the implications of their populist rise become even more relevant for international politics. While small populist parties can influence foreign policy by being partners in coalition governments (Verbeek and Zaslove 2015; Destradi and Plagemann, 2018) or by shaping the political discourse while in opposition, the election of populist leaders and the formation of populist governments will have a much more immediate impact on the foreign policy of states (Chryssogelos, 2017). We as scholars need to understand better what populism means for the international stage and foreign policy, what are its consequences in this field (Steward, 2017) and how does the future holds, both for policy and politics.

However, before we emphasize the external implications of a populist foreign policy, it is also relevant to understand, from an internal perspective, what are the factors that brought the changes in a foreign policy, and the current literature on populism and foreign policy is rich when it comes to the populist sources of systemic change in foreign policy. And by taking a closer look at this issue, I managed to identify four populist causes that can lead to changes in a foreign policy in Eastern Europe: (1) the change of political regime (Democratic backsliding, hybridization) (2) the heritage/tradition of a foreign policy towards national diaspora (3) the influence of statecraft intellectuals (4) the strategic interactions between states.

The first cause of the changes in foreign policy is the change of the political regime. Populists are usually seen to pose a threat to liberal democracy and its institutions (Dawson and Hanley 2016), where the political regime is in a state of degradation. This continuous degrading is explained in the literature through three concepts. The first concept, the “breakdown of democracies”, describes the transformation of a political regime, for instance, a democratic regime starts degrading, eventually transforming into an autocracy (Luhmann, 2019 p4). The second concept in the literature is “the democratic backsliding”, deterioration of democratic governance qualities, or if we follow Bermeo’s definition, a “state-led debilitation or elimination of any of the political institutions that sustain an existing democracy” (Bermeo, 2016 p8). And the third concept is a global phenomenon, namely autocratisation, which is a gradual phenomenon that comes in waves, similar to the democratic waves (Luhmann 2019, p5). This term covers both sudden breakdowns of democracy and gradual processes in/or outside democratic regimes where the democratic traits declined. Cause of the erosion of liberal rights and democratic participation, Hungary and Poland are good examples. Venezuela, where Hugo Chavez aggregated executive power, restricted political opposition, and attacked various academics is also a good example. All

these examples compose a larger picture of “democratic retrogression” (Huq, 2018), in which liberal democracy is being constantly degraded over time.

The second cause is the heritage/tradition of a foreign policy towards the national diaspora. This trait can be found in almost every foreign policy, being passed from one government to the next one. This form of nationalism, firstly, can be found as an idea, that can be used to spark the cultural and political engagement of the population (Kovacs, 2020). Later, it is presented by the authorities as a national issue that needs to be addressed and resolved accordingly. And the last stage is the actual implementation of policies that would tackle this problem. In the case of Hungary, the specifics of this form of nationalism in foreign policy is based on the historical diaspora, wherein in 1998 the communist regime from Romania attempted to assimilate the Transylvanian Hungarians through a plan of ‘systematizing’ minority settlements (Jenne, 2021 p 333). Fueled by nationalist sentiments, between 1989-1990, this news became a national issue being raised as a problem of foreign policy, where after several public opinion polls it was revealed that 85% of Hungarians believed that Hungary should assist the Hungarian minority in Romania. By the end of 1990 after the parliamentary elections in Hungary, a new foreign policy was passed to ‘liberate the ethnic Hungarians outside of the state’s border’ (Jenne, 2021 p334) and, in 1996, an Office on Hungarians Abroad was further set up to institutionalize ties with Hungarian minorities abroad. This form of nationalism continuously perpetuated and passed to the next government is a specific issue for the Hungarian foreign policy.

The third cause of changes in foreign policy is the influence of statecraft intellectuals. In the region of the Central and Eastern European countries, the role of intellectuals was regarded as being important after the 1970s, when dissidents against the communist regimes nourished

alternative, pro-Western, foreign policy discourses. However, the importance of dissidents has diminished, giving place to a ‘Europeanization’ of foreign policies (Denca, 2009). As it is today, this intelligentsia can be seen as “intellectuals who offer normative and imperative rules for the conduct of strategy and statecraft by the rules of the state”, and owes its influence on various national institutions, such as universities, private research institutes, think tanks, the media and government agencies (Coleman, 2016). In the literature two types of intelligentsias are discussed, the democrat-liberal and the conservative, and for my research, I shall focus on the conservative one because of its importance in this revisionist style of foreign policy. In the case of Poland, there are three waves of conservative right-wing intellectuals, the last one’s goal is to support the current party in power (PiS) in forging an intellectual alternative to liberalism (Trencsenyi, 2014). It is worth mentioning the ongoing foreign policy projects (1) Intermarium project, emphasizing Poland’s role as a regional power. Hungary also had its conservative network that stood at the basis of several major foreign policy projects (1) 2010 law concerning the Hungarians leaving in neighboring countries, around 700.000, and granting them dual citizenship (2) Eastern Opening policy, a guiding paradigm for Hungarian foreign policy, for subordinating the foreign affairs to foreign trade and stressing out the importance of attracting investments.

The fourth cause of changes in foreign policy refers to strategic interactions. Proposed by Aron Buzogany (2017), these strategic interactions can be defined as long-term partnership agreements, large scale investments, or even bilateral policies that facilitate economic and investment interactions. This interpretation is perfect for understanding contemporary Russian-Hungarian relations since both countries perceive mutually beneficial cooperation possibilities. For Russia, these are mainly related to the possibility of preventing the EU (and NATO) from speaking with one voice, and for the Hungarian government there are economic reasons, the “triple

energy” dependence on Russia (oil, gas, and nuclear) and the hope for lucrative markets in Russia have called for pragmatic reasons (Buzogany, 2017). The new “Eastern opening” policy would bring a more Eastward orientation in foreign policy, establishing a department dealing exclusively with Chinese and Russian affairs.

As presented above, if these systemic (internal) changes do occur, a country’s foreign policy can go through a process, known also as revisionism, which will impact the external implications of its foreign policy. When revisionism occurs, the state of the foreign policy is dynamic, being shaped depending on the political needs of the current government, focusing on the interests of the in-group and advancing them (the interests) on the international stage. It can be seen also as state practices aimed at fundamentally reconfiguring a state’s position in the international system and/or relative to a neighboring country (Jenne, 2021). In this case, Hungary is a key factor in defining and analyzing a revisionist foreign policy, in which it promotes the interests of the in-group (being the Hungarian diaspora) on the international stage. For Hungary, the heritage/tradition of a foreign policy towards national diaspora is relevant, and it is promoted constantly.

All the issues mentioned above, related to populism and foreign policy have been studied, such as the analysis of populist leaders or party’s foreign policy preferences, their principles, rhetoric, and strategies (Chryssogelos, 2017). Also, works in the literature are focusing mostly on the internal systemic changes that would affect the foreign policy. By taking into consideration all these aspects, I managed to identify several gaps in the literature that needs to be tackled. First, there is a need for a better understanding of the concept of revisionism, with its implications in foreign policy. Second, more focus on how this revisionist foreign policy interacts with the neighboring countries, and its modus operandi. For my study case, I will analyze the Hungarian

revisionist foreign policy and its modus operandi towards Romania. It will be interesting to observe how this phenomenon is projected towards Romania, since the Hungarian diaspora from Transylvania is one of the largest in Europe.

Research goal, research questions, and hypothesis

As previously explained, the scholarly works focus mostly on the populist systemic impact over a country's foreign policy, with its specifics and outcomes. Besides, in the literature, there are just a couple of papers that tackle the idea of a revisionist foreign policy, and none of them explains the modus operandi of this revisionist foreign policy towards a neighboring country. In Eastern Europe, Hungary and Romania are key partners and play an important role in the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), so it is essential to understand the interactions, at a foreign policy level, between these two states.

This research aims to explore the Hungarian revisionist foreign policy with its traits towards its neighboring country, Romania. More specifically, I will investigate how this foreign policy operates, and what it targets. To do so, I have defined the following research questions are:

1. Who and why is at the centre of the Hungarian revisionist foreign policy?

The hypothesis which corresponds to this part of the research is as follows:

The current Hungarian revisionist foreign policy is mostly shaped based on historical events, such as the Treaty of Trianon. In the current Hungarian official discourse, Trianon is seen as a national tragedy, and it plays a major role when it comes to interacting with neighboring countries. When the treaty was signed, Romania regained Transylvania, and a large Hungarian population remained outside of the national Hungarian borders, in this region. I hypothesize that the current Hungarian revisionist foreign policy is mainly focused on the population outside of the

homeland borders, namely the diaspora. This community is important for the Hungarian political sphere because it can bring internal votes back home, and/or it can form a lobby in another state's internal political affairs.

2. How does the Hungarian revisionist foreign policy operate towards its neighboring country, Romania?

The hypothesis which corresponds to this part of the research is as follows:

The Hungarian diaspora from Transylvania is at the centre of this style of foreign policy, mostly being backed by the current Hungarian government through policies, such as dual citizenship, and other cultural, economic, or political programs sponsored by the government or other national foundations.

Methodology

Although lateral/territorial revisionism was present in the Hungarian foreign policy even before 2010, being a post-1989 political legacy, nevertheless the year 2010 (and after) is a reference point for the Hungarian diaspora politics. During that year, the policy of non-resident citizenship with voting rights for Ethnic Hungarians living outside of the national borders was introduced, Fidesz-led government at that time naming this project the “national reunification beyond the borders”. After the implementation of this project, the lateral/territorial revisionism amplified, the government implementing multiple projects transnationally and directly interacting with their diaspora, digitally bringing it closer to the homeland.

In my case, after 2010, Hungary exerted its lateral/territorial revisionism in Transylvania towards its diaspora through the idea of diaspora politics. By taking into consideration the aspects presented previously, I managed to identify two ways in which the Hungarian lateral/territorial

revisionist foreign policy is connecting with its diaspora: first, through diaspora identity processes and second, through diaspora integration processes. To understand better these two processes, my analysis will be divided into two dimensions: the first dimension, the diaspora identity dimension, will cover the implementation of “Kos Karoly Plan”, the financial investments of the “Pro Economica Foundation” in the region and the birthrights program implemented by the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation (HHRF), “ReConnect Transylvania”. The second dimension, the diaspora integration dimension, will cover the non-resident citizenship, which offers political rights and social benefits for the Hungarian diaspora, strengthening yet again the relations between the homeland and its ex-pat community. All the strategies, projects and policies mentioned above were implemented in the last 11 years, playing a key role in Hungary’s lateral/territorial revisionism.

First, for the diaspora identity dimension, the sources used for the analysis of the “Kos Karoly Plan” are policy papers and newspaper articles that discuss this strategy since the programmatic document of this plan is not available. The timeframe of the analysis starts from 2018 until 2021 since it got better media coverage. For, the “Pro Economica Foundation”, the information was gathered from their main webpage and newspaper articles. The timeframe of the analysis is the same as in the previous one since both “Kos Karoly Plan” and “Pro Economica Foundation” are interconnected. And for the birthright program implemented by the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation (HHRF), I have used as a source their web pages and articles written on the news portal. The timeframe of this analysis starts again from 2018. And second, for the diaspora integration dimension, which covers non-resident citizenship, the sources used are policy papers and newspaper articles written about it. The timeframe of the analysis starts from 2010 since it good implemented. As the method of analysis, discourse analysis will be used.

Theory: revisionist foreign policy and policies towards diasporas

Lateral/territorial Revisionist Foreign Policy

For my analysis, the most fruitful concepts that help in understanding this revisionist foreign policy is the „ethnic-nationalist leader” concept, the lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy concept, both proposed by Erin Jenne, and the diaspora politics concept proposed by Eva Østergaard-Nielsen. First, the idea of revisionist foreign policy is new in the literature, aiming at defining a state’s position in the international system and/or relative to neighboring countries, being also a repertoire of diplomatic practices that leaders use to represent the interest of the ‘authentic’ community on the international stage. And, depending on the type of leader (ethno-nationalist leader, populist leader or ethno-populist leader) we can expect two types of foreign policy revisionism: lateral/territorial or systemic (Jenne 2021).

Second, an ethno-nationalist leader would take measures if the ethnos, or the dominant ethno-national group, is endangered. Measures can include strengthening transborder support for co-ethnics by pursuing foreign policy favors or adopting more restrictive policies in national immigration. In my case, an ethno-nationalist leader would use a lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy.

As stated before, foreign policy revisionism can be divided into two dimensions: systemic revisionism and lateral/territorial revisionism. Even though both dimensions are equally important, my argument is that, in external affairs, Hungary exerts only a lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy, when it comes to neighboring countries. In the case of a lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy, the state seeks to ‘correct’ its boundaries or fundamentally reorder its relations with neighboring countries. This style of foreign policy includes policies such as annexing territories outside state borders but also increasing restrictions for immigrating, or applying for asylum

(Jenne, 2021). Revisionism is used mostly by ethno-nationalist leaders to elevate the preferences of the national in-group to the foreign policy level by favoring national in-groups relative to out-groups. In my case, the “struggles” of ethnic Hungarians from Transylvania are raised at a foreign policy level, being the key factor in this revisionist foreign policy.

In the case of Hungary, we are dealing with an ethno-nationalist leader, using a lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy. Even though this type of foreign policy proposes a physical annexation of the territory and hardening of the borders, in the case studied, Hungary exerts its influence towards the neighboring countries through diaspora politics, which can be seen as a digitalized unification between the homeland and diaspora, rather than physical unification.

Diaspora Politics

Since diaspora is at the center of the Hungarian revisionist foreign policy, diaspora politics theory is essential in understanding it. It can be seen as an approach that embodies the politicization and political behavior of diasporas, the relationship between the host and the home country, and the efforts of the home country to engage its diaspora in its affairs (political, economic, social etc.). In the case of Hungary and its diaspora from Transylvania, diaspora politics is mostly performed one-way, namely from homeland towards the diaspora. Eva Østergaard-Nielsen argues that when diaspora politics is initiated by homeland, the motivation can be economic, such as sending home remittances to support the homeland’s economy through investments, or political nature, such as increasing the political influence of the main homeland political party in the diaspora host country through the lobby.

Diaspora Identity/Integration

In his paper entitled “The emigration state and the modern geopolitical imagination”, Alan Gamlen suggests that there are two ways in which a home country can engage with its diaspora: one, by propagating a sort of diasporic identities, and two, by diaspora integration (Galem 2008). First, to depict diasporic identity cultivation, for instance the Hungarian government can finance national language media, through cultural/educational or economic programs (Galem 2008). Second, diaspora integration means the establishment of reciprocal ties between the homeland and the diaspora. This is done through the extension of political and/or social rights (citizenship, voting rights, social benefits) to the diaspora outside of the national boundaries. In turn, the state (homeland) might expect political and/or economic benefits such as investments (expatriate tax), lobby, political participation (in host or homeland elections) from the diaspora. My argument is that Diaspora Identity and Integration processes encompass how Hungary is exerting its lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy towards Romania.

The Hungarian Diaspora Identity dimension will cover the implementation of the “Kos Karoly Plan”, the financial investments of the “Pro Economica Foundation” in the region and the educational and cultural “ReConnect Transylvania” program. These strategies and programs aim to strengthen the diaspora identity and the relations between the homeland and this community. And the Hungarian Diaspora Integration Dimension will cover the non-resident citizenship, which offers political rights and benefits for the Hungarian Diaspora, and again, it strengthens the relations between the homeland and this community.

Roadmap of the thesis

The literature review will introduce the types of the revisionist foreign policy depending on the type of leader and continuing with details about diaspora politics, diaspora identity and integration. The first part of the empirical analysis will discuss the diaspora integration dimension with dual citizenship. The second part of the empirical analysis will discuss the diaspora identity dimension, including the “Kos Karoly Plan”, the financial investments of the “Pro Economica Foundation” in the region and the birthrights program implemented by the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation (HHRF), “ReConnect Transylvania”. As the chapter proves, the integration and identity dimensions are the main ways in which Hungary exerts its lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy towards Romania.

Literature Review: populist leaders and diaspora approaches in foreign policy

Types of leaders and how they change a state's foreign policy

Introduction

In this section, I aim to present the state of the art in terms of how a foreign policy is shaped by populism and its chameleonic shape. As stated previously in the theory chapter, depending on the type of leader (ethno-nationalist leader, populist leader or ethno-populist leader) we can expect two types of foreign policy revisionism: lateral/territorial or systemic (Jenne 2021). In the first part of the literature review, I will bring more insights into what it means to be an ethno-nationalist leader, populist leader or ethno-populist leader, with its implications at a foreign policy level. The second part of the literature will tackle diaspora politics with its two dimensions, diaspora integration and identity dimension from a lateral/territorial foreign policy.

Populism/Populist leader

In today's globalized world, populist leaders are now in the position to shape their respective countries' foreign policy. Even though the research on the topic of populism is abundant, it is not sure yet what are the consequences of this phenomenon on a country's international position towards other actors (Plagemman & Destradi, p 110). Several findings in the literature point out that: (1) politics is less an exclusively domestic sphere, the national events spilling over into the international context and the international events affecting the domestic affairs (Verbeek, p. 1); (2) the distinctiveness or chameleonic (Lee, 2006) features of this populist

phenomenon will bring variations at the level of actors' foreign policy preferences. In what follows I will show how foreign policy is shaped by populism, nationalism and ethno-populism.

The literature on populism features a great debate on how to define the concept, most academic works defining the phenomenon as being structured around cultural, economic, ideological, or strategic articulations (Kaltwasse, p 29). Populism is considered to ultimately separated two homogenous and antagonistic groups (one-dimensional space), “the pure people” vs “the corrupt elite” (Mudde 2004). In its nature, populism is a form of sovereignism, looking for, partially or totally, the political independence of a territorially defined community. This community demands a new political leadership that could ‘rupture with an existing order’ (Laclau, 2005) to address perceived gaps in the in-group’s exercise of sovereignty. In various regions, this form of sovereignism mounted societal pressure and demanded changes on behalf of the authentic people against the exploitative elites (Collier 1991). The people within semi-peripheral states that are ethnically diverse, with a socio-economically weak population, were inclined to support emancipatory movements against global financial institutions and their foreign backers (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013).

During this fervor, for a sovereign leader with populist tendencies the goal is to promote the interests of the political group, where the in-group is represented by all those with membership in the political group, while the out-group is represented by the elites (or the establishment). The literature points out that populists are more likely to adopt policies that challenge the domestic and international political establishment, such as adopting protectionist and isolationist foreign policies for protecting the ‘the people’ (or underdog or the demos) from the confiscation of power by supranational bodies such as the UN or the EU, or the ravages of globalization (Jenne 2021, P. 2). This is a general phenomenon; however, it differs depending on the local context and region.

Likewise, to understand a particular populist politics, it is essential to study the articulation between the populist dimension (DeCleen & Stavrakakis 2020) and the other dimensions of that politics, such as the nationalist dimension.

As an example of a “pure” populist revisionism, it was in Latin America and south-eastern Europe when, during 1990s and 2000, this form of sovereignism mounted societal pressure and demanded changes on behalf of the authentic people against the exploitative elites (Collier 1991). In Venezuela, the 1998 elections brought Hugo Chavez and its Fifth Republic Movements party in power, promising to run the government in the name of the people. During his campaign, Chavez stressed out that “the people are the fuel of the engine of history”, his movement “serving [the] interests...of the majority, those of the “poverty-people”- the marginalized classes (Habla el Comandante, p. 87). By steering the country in a different direction, the attention was switched to the majority, the poverty-people (now being the in-group) while the out-group was defined based along the class and partisan lines, known also as the elite (Jenne, 2021). And coming to power in 1999, Chavez brought a different orientation of Venezuela’s foreign policy, being much more aligned with the perceived interests and needs of the political in-group (Jenne 2021, p337). In simple terms, his political incursion brought revisionism in Venezuela’s foreign policy, ending 50 years of good relations between Venezuela and the United States, and launching on a “strikingly independent and confrontational course vis-à-vis the United States”, promoting “closer relations with US rivals such as China and Russia, and with US adversaries like Cuba and Iran” (Dodson and Dorraj 2008, p71-72). During this time, Chavez’ revisionism was purely populist, with no impression of lateral revisionism tendencies.

Ethno-nationalism/Ethno-nationalist leader

Nationalism or ethno-nationalism, alongside populism, is also a form of sovereignism. Since populism and nationalism (ethno-nationalism) are two entangled concepts, they are most effectively defined as analytically distinct, but not analytically independent, according to Rogers Brubaker in a debate with Stavrakakis and DeCleen (2017, 2020). Brubaker points out that many populist politics is nationalist and almost all populist politics is happening on the nation-state level. Nationalist discourse is structured around the nodal point “nation”, seen as a limited and sovereign community. It exists through time, tied to a certain space, and constructed as a horizontal in/out axis that distinguishes (but does not oppose) members (or ethnos) from non-members (national others) (DeCleen& Stavrakakis 2020). This form of sovereignism started being present after the fall of the communist regime, where almost all the post-communist governments of Eastern and Central Europe committed to the liberal order of Western societies.

These types of sovereign leaders are more likely to adopt policies that tilt the playing field towards members of the national in-group, both inside and outside the state’s borders, that would differentiate them from other nations, preserve the nation and give preference to political representation by the nation for the nation (Jenne 2018, p). Highly nationalistic leaders are believed to be more aggressive because nationalism promotes hegemonic groups, prioritizes ethnic ties across state boundaries and leads to the overestimation of one’s military capabilities. It is a common trait that state leaders would combine nationalism with populism to amplify the effects of nationalism at a regional or systemic level. (Verbeek p3). And in combination, in some cases, these two dimensions give rise to a third one, the ethno-populist dimension.

Post-communist Albania is a good example of an ethno-nationalist leader revisionism. Having a strong diaspora, numbering millions, outside of its national borders, Albania had desired

that all its ethnic Albanians (the in-group) be surrounded by the homeland's borders. In this scenario, the ethnic Albanians outside of the national borders are considered to be threatened by the host state. This lateral revisionism was reinforced by Albanian intellectuals and politicians between 1991 and 1992, by proposing a project of "re-establishing greater Albania" (Jenne 2021 335). Nonetheless, this ethnic-nationalist impulse was toned down by the need of attaining western aid, plus the support for NATO and the EU integration. In this case, Albania's foreign policy pursued a pattern of lateral revisionism, however, because of the commitments towards its western allies, it did not reach a critical level.

Ethno-populism/Ethno-populist leader

Nationalism and populism cannot stand alone and in politics, they are often entangled. Thus appears a third sovereignism dimension, Ethno-populism. This form of sovereignism exploits an issue to appeal to the desires and prejudices of ordinary people. It promotes the core interests of the ethno-political group, the members of the in-group considered to be all those with membership in the ethno-political group, while the elites and national 'others are framed as the out-group. It is a discourse that associates 'the people' with 'the nation' and holds that sovereignty should be an expression of the will of the 'nation-people'. It propagates narratives by which enemies from beyond (migrants, immigrants, ethnic minorities) couple or conspire with enemies from above (EU, UN, IMF, global elites, foreign powers) to undermine or even de-nationalize the nation-people. Populations appear more attracted to ethno-populist (or authoritarian populist) discourses in the wake of global and national crises, such as the Great Recession of 2008 (Kriesi & Pappas, 2015) or the end of the Cold War. When populist gain access to state power, they tend to induce paranoia and dehumanization towards the out-groups, leading to state policies aimed at policing the boundary between in and out groups.

The case of the former American president, Donald Trump, is a good example of an ethno-populist leader. During his political campaign in 2015, Trump reframed the US political field in which the national in-group, the “great American people”, is dominated and constrained by the out-group, a combination of political elites and other ethnic minorities, and also promising to “put America first”, by rectifying the flaws that can be found in international commitments. In doing so, Donald Trump initiated multiple national and international revisionist policies that would adjust the US image on the international stage. In terms of national revisionist policies, he signed orders for a US-Mexican border wall to be built, so that entrance restrictions can be placed for refugees and other foreigners coming from multiple Muslim states. Besides these revisionist border policies, the Trump administration took measures so that the US can withdraw from multiple international institutions and commitments, such as the withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

During the 2018 speech to the UN, Trump emphasized that the International Criminal Court is illegitimate and the US “will never surrender America’s sovereignty to an unelected, unaccountable global bureaucracy” (Papazoglou 2019). To conclude, when it comes to ethno-nationalist leaders, they tend to support their co-ethnic outside of the national borders, being under threat by the host country. The populist leaders protect the non-ethnic defined people, from the hegemonic western powers. The ethno-populist leaders, emphasize the importance of the ethno-political group on the international stage, elevating their specific in-group interests.

The concept of Diaspora Politics and its dimensions

Diaspora politics

Since my research is focused on how this lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy is projected towards neighboring countries, diaspora plays a central role in it, and it is important to understand and define this concept. In the literature diaspora politics, compared with migration and transnational engagement, is a new phenomenon. Since the increased growth of transnational networks and migration across regions, governments observed the benefits of diaspora institution-building. And as of today, more than half of all states have set various institutional arrangements to include expatriates and diasporas (Gamlen et al. 2013). However, before the fall of the communist regime, diaspora politics was taboo in the countries of the Warsaw Pact (Pogonyi 2013; Fowler 2004). After 1989, most of the states from the Central and Eastern Europe, including Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Poland Ukraine and Russia adopted internal policies to their constitution that would assume specific responsibilities for the protection of kin-minorities living in foreign countries. These changes were occurring mostly due to the fact of internationalization of minority rights, becoming a concern for the international community. Besides the awareness of the duties of the homeland towards diaspora in their national constitutions, “Externally heterogeneous” (Elster 1991, 450) states started connecting even more with their transborder diasporas. Countries like Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, or Poland adopted laws, or “External quasi citizenship” rules” (Baubock 2007b) that allocates, in the neighboring countries, benefits to co-ethnic minorities. In most of the cases, the homeland institutionalize diaspora and transborder relation, hoping for economic benefits and/or for the political support of the ex-pats.

A more negative perspective about diaspora communities is established in the literature by Yossi Shain and Tamara Cofman Wittes, who argued that ethnic diaspora communities are “endemic” transnational political entities that operate on “behalf of their entire people”, capable of playing independently from any individual state, homeland, or the host country (Shain&Wittes 2002). Compared with the first view about diaspora, in which the homeland could economically and politically benefit, this view portrays this community as an entity that could decide its own, having no ties with the host country or homeland. And there are three reasons why this community can be seen as such: first, resident members within diaspora’s host states can organize domestically and maximize their political clout. Second, a diaspora can exert pressure in its homeland’s domestic political arena regarding issues of diaspora concerns (Shain 2003). Third, a diaspora can engage directly with third-party states and international organizations, circumventing its homeland and host state government (Shain&Wittes 2002).

Other approaches in understanding the concept of diaspora politics, can be depicted as a dispersed community that can be led by collective memory, to eventually return to their homeland (Safran 1991). The description of diaspora is adapted depending on the “various intellectual, cultural and political agendas”. In my case, diaspora can be seen as a “Stance or a claim” (Brubaker) and not as a bounded, coherent or homogenous group, because individuals from diasporas are subject to the diaspora politics of various governments, with varying degrees and intensity.

As stated previously in the introduction, diaspora politics embodies the politicization and political behavior of diasporas, the relationship between the host and the home country, and the efforts of the home country to engage its diaspora in its affairs (political, economic, social etc.). The homeland needs to demonstrate its responsibility towards expatriates because it can carry an

important message for the home electorate, and it can be considered as a way of boosting the electorate of the governing party.

It is argued that the longer a diaspora stays in the receiving countries, the less interest it has in the homeland affairs (Nielsen 2001), however, through these programs, the calling for the homeland might grow.

As observed in the previous paragraphs, diaspora politics is a complex phenomenon, that can be defined as a dispersed community led by collective memory, as a “stance or a claim” (Brubaker) shaped by the diaspora politics of government, or as an “endemic” feature of the international system in which this community decides its faith. However, in most cases diaspora politics is shaped based on the homeland’s internal politics and policies, and there are two ways in which the home country interacts and impose its policies: through diaspora identity processes and diaspora integration processes.

Diaspora Identity

When it comes to the diaspora identity, one patented way of engaging with the ex-pats is through birthright programs. Being practiced by multiple countries, it is a popular diaspora “tool” (Gamlen 2008) in which young individuals in the diaspora join a journey to rediscover the “home country”. In using this tool, as Shaul Kelner quarrel, these birthright strategies attempt to unite globally scattered communities by sharing a sense of belonging, and eventually remodeling them into political communities that are connected with the homeland (Kelner, 2010). The purpose of this strategy is quite clear, to present the perfect “homeland” through exceptionally emotional experiences by bringing together young adults who have in common their ethnic (or religious) ancestry, the second one being important in creating or maintaining group boundaries (Powers, 2011).

The initiator of birthright journeys is Israel, and it is seen as a “home tourism” program for the diaspora that started in 1990. After approximately 31 years more than 200.000 persons of Jewish ancestry have participated, in this program. The goal of the Israeli birthright strategy was to contest the assimilation in the diaspora and promote political socialization among young generations, today this journey reinforcing the national identification for diaspora members. In his work, Kelner argues that Israel is the perfect example of diaspora building, the aim being political and not ethnic or religious. Israel is not the only country that promotes the diaspora identity through birthright programs, Taiwan being also a notable point of reference. Audrea Lim, a former participant in a Taiwanese birthright program, emphasized how this experience framed a stunning Taiwan in the mind and hearts of the participants by the positive memories of the journey. Even though officially the birthright program had no political nature it embodied political socialization patterns (Lim, 2012). Besides Israel and Taiwan, which are relevant examples for our case study, Armenia, China and India have also a long tradition of birthright journeys. In all of the cases, the diaspora identity is brought at a foreign policy level, and by implementing these birthright programs countries engage with their diaspora outside of their national borders, which could interfere with other countries national issues. It is obvious that birthright programs are not the only way in which the diaspora identity is exerted, however it is the most commonly used and somehow internationally agreed by host countries of the diaspora.

Diaspora Integration

Diaspora Integration policies also play a major role in a revisionist foreign policy. Because of the complexity, the processes between states and diasporas are dependent based on interests, which can result in a diverse institutional framework. The idea of non-resident citizenship as a form of institutionalized bond between the homeland and the ex-pats is one of the most common

ways, however, there are other tools such as facilitating repatriation/return migration policies, official recognition of diaspora institutions, the introduction of separate government offices that would check the diaspora relations. In the literature, these types of policies can be categorized into five main types (Levitt and De la Dehesa): setting new government offices, investment and remittance-channeling policies, the extension of citizenship to non-resident populations, introducing new state services abroad, and launching programs to maintain emigrants' sense of belonging (Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003). Through these policies, it forms a diaspora integration tool that creates a legal bond between homelands and diasporas to extend membership privileges and extract obligations from diasporas (Galem 2008).

As stated before, one example of diaspora integration is the non-resident citizenship policy. The issue of dual citizenship, which is an important part of the current Hungarian revisionist foreign policy, is not new and it was at the forefront of bounding legally the homeland and the Hungarian diaspora. Being implemented in 2010, it was seen with negativity coming from neighboring states such as Slovakia and Ukraine and it has been politicized ever since. And because of the introduction of this initiative, the relationship between these two countries has been deteriorating. And because of it, countermeasures have been taken by the Slovakian government, namely by introducing a law in 2010 that would ban dual citizenship of Slovaks that would want to acquire also a Hungarian one. Regardless, the Hungarian government still encouraged ethnic Hungarians to apply in Slovakia for Hungarian citizenship by assuring them that the list of the candidates will not be shared, that it will be kept anonymous. However, people still publicly announced their choices, remaining without Slovak citizenship, and being revoked their driving license, ID cards and passports. In this case, these people could be, theoretically, deported from the country after three months if they do not apply for a residence permit. And by 2016, 1396

Slovaks naturalizing abroad (meaning that they were either half Hungarians or other nation) lost their Slovak citizenship. The Hungarian government claimed that this situation violated basic principles of international law as well as the Slovak constitution. Viktor Orbán stated that “Hungary cannot tolerate that Hungarians be deprived of their citizenship by a country of which they are resident” (“Elveszítette szlovák állampolgárságát a Magyar miatt ” 2011). However, since Hungary has the right to determine who should be offered membership, Slovakia is also free to ban dual citizenship, unless it results in statelessness or the loss of EU citizenship (Pogonyi, 2017).

In March 2021 a new scandal between the Hungarian government and the Slovakian one appeared with regards to non-resident citizenship. The direct scandal was provoked by the statement of the Secretary of State in the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Martin Klus, according to whom, if Hungarians in Slovakia acquire citizenship of another country based on their emotional or cultural connection, it would create similar problems like in eastern Ukraine, South Ossetia or Abkhazia. In other words, Martin Klus called the Hungarians in Slovakia a security risk, and by giving the example of the Russian interference in Ukraine, he invoked that these citizens might transform into separatist communities, later on becoming a military issue. The formation of the government in spring 2021 by the populist Igor Matovic promised again the intensification of Hungarian-Slovak bilateral relations, only that the quadripartite coalition was consumed by conflicts from the very beginning.

Until last year's failure (2020) of the Hungarian-Slovak mixed party Hid-Most, for ten years there was only one Hungarian representation in the Bratislava Parliament, and the ethnic party, backed by the Orbán Government, the Hungarian Community Party (MKP), was gradually removed from Parliament. But this continuous dispute between Hungary and Slovakia harms the whole community. Budapest insists on granting dual citizenship in Slovakia; however, this issue

of citizenship is considered even within the EU an internal matter, which falls within the competence of each of the Member States of the European Union. At the moment, the Slovakian government in power tries to amend the law, but no major changes are expected: those who apply for Hungarian citizenship will continue to lose their Slovak citizenship. Also, in Slovakia, fewer people applied for Hungarian citizenship and even the proportion of those who settled in Hungary is much lower than those settled in Romania, Serbia and Ukraine. Hungarians in Slovakia are more "eccentric" in the sense that since 2009 they have supported an organization to defend their interests which is not organized based on ethnic criteria.

The relationship between Ukraine and Hungary is almost the same as the precedent one, being against the non-resident citizenship law in Hungary. Reports from the Ukrainian secret services proved that ethnic Hungarians that were applying for citizenship were monitored and questioned, to determine if they could be deprived of the Ukrainian citizenship. It was treated in the same manner, all the individuals that were applying for Hungarian citizenship would remain anonymous, Hungary fighting for the human rights of the Hungarian diaspora living in the neighboring countries.

Since the amendment of the Law on Education in Ukraine in 2017, the Hungarian-Ukrainian interstate relationship has deteriorated, and no progress has been made since then in regulating the issue. In addition to the Law on Education, which deprives national minorities of their rights, Kyiv has also adopted and implemented a state language law that is no less anti-minority. As an answer to these laws, Hungary continues to block Ukraine's integration aspirations at all international forums, but so far this has proved insufficient for Kyiv to relinquish its position. The improvement of the situation was expected from the inauguration of the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenski, but since May 2019 it was not possible to organize the announced Orbán-

Zelenski meeting. On May 4, 2020, the President of Ukraine signed the decree amending the new Law on Citizenship where would fundamentally reorganize the political palette of Hungarians in Transcarpathia, as Hungarians here, including politicians, have used the possibility of obtaining citizenship en masse through simplified procedures. As a second step, the institution of dual citizenship would be banned in Ukraine. This law came into debate primarily because of the large number of Russian minorities living in separatist territories and Ukraine in general.

Case study: Hungary's revisionist foreign policy towards Romania. The role of Hungarian historic diaspora in Transylvania

Objectives of this chapter

In this chapter, I aim to analyze policies, programs, and strategies through which the Hungarian government operates its lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy towards Romania, specifically emphasizing its influence in Transylvania. The most notable projects and policies backed by the Fidesz regime in Transylvania being the non-resident citizenship policy, “Kos Karoly Plan”, Pro Economica Foundation and the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation with its birthright program ReConnect Transylvania. I argue that this Hungarian lateral revisionism is mainly carried out by engaging with its diaspora through (1) propagating a diaspora identity (2) by improving the diaspora integration, the programs and policy introduced above being the primary examples.

Since this thesis is concerned with how a lateral revisionist foreign policy is carried out towards a neighboring country, I consider the Hungarian diaspora in Transylvania as being at the forefront of this revisionism. And by using diaspora, in the lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy can be found tools and strategies towards this group of people, to protect them from the host country. Examples of tools and strategies might include naturalization policies, educational/cultural and economic programs. Since diaspora it is a central issue in the foreign policy of Fidesz towards neighboring countries, it became a moral obligation for Fidesz to support the ethnic Hungarians abroad that became the victims of the Treaty of Trianon consequences. One of the central mottos of post-2010 Fidesz politics was the propagation of the unified and single Hungarian nation which, in the government's interpretation, refers to a spiritual and symbolic

unification of the nation, however without any territorial (lateral) claims, in which there is room for all Hungarians, regardless of their place of residence.

In most parts of the relation between Romania and Hungary, the issue of Transylvania is the most important, since it is at the heart of the historical conflict between these two countries. This region is very important for both countries, mainly because of its cultural and identity aspects. During the 19th century, when the region was part of the Kingdom of Hungary, it was the subject of a Magyarisation process, however, with many smaller conflicts from the Romanian side, such as the national liberation movement of the Romanians from Transylvania or the uprising of the Transylvanian School, a political and social emancipation movement of the Romanians from Transylvania, demanding for political and linguistic rights. In 1918, after the defeat of the Central Powers and the collapse of Austria-Hungary, Transylvania regained its independence and shortly after it was incorporated into the Kingdom of Romania. The treaty of Versailles confirmed the territorial incorporation, and in June 1920 the Trianon Treaty drew the final lines of the new borders. Under the treaty of Trianon, Hungary lost two-thirds of its territory, including Transylvania.

After 1990, the preoccupation about diaspora from Transylvania (and other former Hungarian territories) became a central issue for the Hungarian foreign policy, this trait being passed from one government to the next one. In the contemporary narrative, after coming to power in 2010, Fidesz and the government of Viktor Orbán took the example of previous governments, amplifying the preoccupation about the ex-pats from Transylvania and transforming it into a national tragedy, being used as an instrument for the political struggle of the Hungarian minorities in the neighboring countries both for domestic and foreign political aims. After the 2010 Hungarian elections, the memory of Trianon and the idea of the unity of the nation beyond the borders of the

state has been cultivated constantly, used as a tool in shaping relations with its neighboring countries.

According to the 2011 census, in modern Romania there is a significant Hungarian minority, numbering around 1.2 million, the majority of them living in the Szeklerland (also known, in Romanian, as Ținutul Secuiesc or Secuimea), located in the south-east part of Transylvania. In terms of political representation, the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) represents this minority in the parliament. Founded in 1989 after the fall of Ceausescu's regime, UDMR plays a key role in representing the Hungarian minority from Transylvania, keeping close ties with the Hungarian government. And because of the current Romanian legislation and past negotiations for the European Union ascension, in which the Romanian state was obliged to grant the minorities a wide range of rights, this party has a word to say in the internal and external Romanian policies. Since UDMR is an important part of the Romanian politics, and mostly as a result of the past EU ascension process, the Hungarian minority has achieved extensive support for their national culture and language on different levels, such as in education (Hungarian schools specifically for the Hungarian minority, or all the subjects, besides the grammar and Romanian literature, can be taught in Hungarian) or administrative, the Romanian government is obliged to offer administrative services in Hungarian, or bilingual signs and noticeboards if the city or village has a population of which at least 20% is represented by minorities.

Structure of this chapter

In the first part of my empirical analysis, I will investigate the first way in which Hungary exerts its lateral/territorial revisionism, meaning the engagement with its diaspora through improving the diaspora integration- non-resident citizenship. And the second part of my analysis

will consist of analyzing economic, cultural and educational programs and strategies, that propagates a diaspora identity such as “Kos Karoly Plan”, Pro Economica Foundation and the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation with its birthright program ReConnect Transylvania.

Diaspora Integration Dimension

The issue of the non-resident citizenship

Diaspora integration, through the non-resident citizenship policy, plays an important role in the Hungarian lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy since it establishes strong connections of reciprocal ties between the homeland and the diaspora. The dual citizenship policy is not the only way through which the homeland connects legally with its diaspora, it could be done also by facilitating repatriation/return migration policies, official recognition of diaspora institutions, the introduction of separate government offices that would check the diaspora relations. Although non-resident citizenship is not the only legal way in which the homeland can connect with its diaspora and propagate its lateral revisionism, it is the most impactful across Hungary's neighboring countries, including Romania, because of the extended political and/or social rights that diaspora receives. In return for these benefits, it is expected that the diaspora outside of the national boundaries would support the state (homeland) with different political and/or economic benefits, such as investments (expatriate tax), lobby for the homeland politics, political participation (in the host or homeland elections). This Hungarian non-resident citizenship policy had different implications and outcomes in the neighboring countries, those states considering this policy as a threat to their national sovereignty and trying to counter (such as Slovakia and Ukraine), or states that would not consider it as a threat (such as Romania). Nonetheless, this tool is part of

the diaspora integration strategy from the lateral revisionist foreign policy, in which the Hungarian government increases its influence in various regions, Transylvania being on the list.

The previous Hungarian governments, before 2010, also implemented policies towards diaspora, especially after the fall of the communist regime, when Hungarian diaspora organizations recommended, since 1998, that the state should offer citizenship for Hungarians that are in the Carpathian Basin (Waterbuty 2010, p. 98). These organizations hoped at that time that with the implementation of this policy the Hungarian identity would be reinforced and the visa-free travel to Hungary could be solved. However, even with these benefits, the dual citizenship policy was rejected both by the left and right political spectrum, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán stating, in 1999, that Hungary was not even considering the possibility of offering citizenship for Hungarians outside the country (Pogonyi 2011). Even the Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time was considering dual citizenship as a danger for the transborder Hungarians. However, since there were issues for the Hungarians without citizenship regarding crossing the Schengen borders, a new law was introduced by the Fidesz government, known as the Status Law (“Legislation on Kin-Minorities: Hungary”; CDL 2002). In comparison with dual citizenship, the Legislation on Kin-Minorities would offer quasi-citizenship, meaning visa-free entry, limited employment opportunities, and access to educational institutions in Hungary, for ethnic Hungarians in neighboring states (Pogonyi et al. 2010). It was not the best solution in improving the connections between the diaspora and the homeland, however, internally it was supported and accepted from both political spectrums.

In several neighboring countries, the institutionalization of the Hungarian state with its diaspora was not seen as informed by good intentions. Romania was vehement, requesting from the Venice Commission (the European Commission for Democracy through Law) an investigation

upon the Status Law, to check whether it is following the EU law. In its request, Romania was arguing that the Status Law was violating the international norms, and it was interfering with its national interests, the government seeing it as extraterritorial legislation with ethnic discrimination tendencies (Venice Commission 2001, p. 81). As a response, the Hungarian Foreign Minister Janos Martonyi stated that through the quasi-citizenship the government from Budapest recognizes the territorial integrity of the neighboring countries and rejected the idea that the Hungarian government was pushing a policy that implies territorial revisionism (Pogonyi, 2011 p 84). Besides, by the introduction of the Status Law, the idea of non-resident dual citizenship is rejected by Hungary (Kovacs, 2005). Eventually, the Venice Commission (in its 2001 report) stated that the Status Law should be amended, that no state should allocate quasi-official functions to non-governmental institutions in another country because it can lead to extra-territorial legislation. Besides, the ambiguity of the term “nation” (used for the ethnic Hungarians outside of the home country) can lead to non-acceptance of host state borders, which can bring conflicts between the host and the home country.

Between 2002 and 2010, the issue regarding the connection between the homeland and its diaspora was still present on Fidesz agenda, being a particularity in its party image. During these eight years, a petition was initiated by the diaspora organizations regarding the introduction of non-resident citizenship for ethnic Hungarians leaving abroad, Fidesz backing it up. Because the discourse surrounding the petition was highly partisan and polarized along ideological lines (Waterbury 2010, 123-28; Kasnar 2014) a referendum was held in December 2004. The results were not in favor of non-resident citizenship, 18.9% of eligible voters supported the inclusion of ethnic Hungarians, while 17.75% opposed it (Pogonyi 2011, p85). However, even after the referendum defeat, Fidesz still pushed for non-resident citizenship, keeping the issue of national

reunification on the agenda (Pogonyi, 2011, p85). Now being backed even more by the leaders of the diaspora organizations, Viktor Orbán asked them to prepare strategies for introducing, later, the non-resident citizenship.

The year 2010 brought substantial changes with the newly elected government formed by Fidesz, which introduced a new nationalist reframing of social and political life for the ethnic Hungarians leaving outside the national borders, known as the non-resident citizenship policy. This policy of “national reunification beyond borders”, alongside the symbolic proposal of the commemoration of the consequences of the Trianon Peace Treaty, was a move to restore the nation unity broken after the 1920’s treaty, where Hungarians have been assimilated afterwards from their homeland by shifting borders. The Fidesz government, at that time center-right, claimed that this extraterritorial citizenship will improve the idea of national reunification and that it counteracts the consequences of the Trianon. The government also argued that to stop the ongoing assimilation of ethnic Hungarians in the neighboring countries, it is crucial to strengthen the Hungarian identity (Index. hu 2010) and integrate to the homeland through these policies.

Compared with the reaction to the introduction of the Status Law in 1999, this time the Romanian government had nothing to complain about, the non-resident citizenship did not spark many heated discussions between the Romanian and Hungarian governments. However, since 2011, the tendency of the Hungarian political elite in Transylvania to expect solutions to the problems of the Hungarian community in Transylvania has been inclined more towards the Budapest authorities, rather than the ones from Bucharest. The motivation for reorientation is often based on the forms of support, such as financial or political, which the Hungarian government grants. After 2013, the reorientation has increased, even more, UDMR (Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania) finally being in charge with the process of granting Hungarian citizenship

to Hungarians in Transylvania (Erdély, 2018). It became obvious for Fidesz that granting dual citizenship in Romania is now in their hands.

Research shows that most Romanians accept the idea of dual citizenship of Hungarians in Transylvania. In addition, the number of those who accept this idea is constantly growing, at present, with more than two-thirds of the majority population. However, from the perspective of the Romanian political sphere, the most pressing point is the phenomenon of diaspora integration, structured around the idea of the motherland, Budapest, and not Bucharest, being in the center. It is the processes by which Hungarian communities abroad develop in different or even opposite directions, however, united by a strong leader. And because of Hungary's activity towards the Hungarian minority, by granting them Hungarian citizenship and building up this disconnection between the host country and population, it undermines the loyalty of the population towards the Romanian state, affecting their integration with its country of residence, and building up the regional autonomy sentiments (Fati, 2021). This anxiety has been intensified especially after the annexation of Crimea and the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014, and by how the Hungarian government approaches the relations with Russia (Verseck, 2015). For many (Mesežnikov, 2020), Orbán is a friend of the Moscow regime, and the Moscow regime is a key security threat for the influence in the Republic of Moldova, which is a priority of Romanian foreign policy. Because of these concerns, this issue has been brought up during April 2021's meeting between the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Péter Szijjártó, and Romanian Foreign Minister Bogdan Aurescu. And by relaunching the Hungarian-Romanian Special Committee protocol, the Romanian side hopes to rebalance the Hungarian influence from the region. This protocol involves an old discussion between Romania and Hungary from 2011 that proposes projects and cooperation programs in the field of national minorities, as well as

examining and solving possible problematic situations of the Romanian minority in the Republic of Hungary and of the Hungarian minority in Romania: “it is a mutual effort to ensure the identity and integration rights of ethnic Romanians in Hungary, on the one hand, and ethnic Hungarians in Romania, on the other hand” (Protocol on ethnic Hungarians from Transylvania, 2011).

As stated previously, non-resident citizenship is one way in which the Hungarian lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy operates in a neighboring country. By introducing this policy, the government not only tries to connect better with its diaspora but also seeks to achieve a form of sovereignty over its population (Pogonyi, 2011) outside of the national borders. In introducing these policies and giving economic and political benefits, the Hungarian government hopes for a better symbolically and emotionally attached diaspora to its homeland, that would eventually bring more internal economic benefits by sending remittances and development aid (Fitzgerald 2009, p.175). Besides, it would also bring political benefits in serving governments’ internal political purposes (Pogonyi 2011 p79), the emigrant state wanting to increase its “political support among domestic constituencies that are ideologically committed to ethnic nationhood or socially linked to emigrant societies” (Collyer 2013, xv). And if the domestic authorities shape a nationalist project within the homeland (Oestergaard-Nielsen 2003, p18), the image can be an example for the diasporic communities.

In conclusion, non-resident citizenship plays a central role in the Hungarian lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy. Through this policy, the Hungarian government manages to bring legally the diaspora closer to the homeland. It is the most impactful way of asserting Hungary’s lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy across the neighboring country, mostly because of the extended political and/or social rights that diaspora receives through non-resident citizenship.

Diaspora Identity dimension

In this section, I will look at the diaspora identity strategy by analyzing three different programs that my analysis includes in the Hungarian lateral revisionist foreign policy. This Hungarian revisionism was developed through the Strategy of National Unity, a program implemented by the Hungarian government in 2011 with the official scope of reuniting the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin, being a continuous economic and ideologic expanding of influence in Transylvania. Besides this grand strategy, smaller projects are implemented specifically for the ethnic Hungarians from Transylvania, such as the “Kos Karoly Plan” financed in Romania by a Hungarian foundation named Pro Economica.

In terms of bilateral relations between Romania and Hungary, these strategies and programs have two different types of approaches, the unilateral approach, and the bilateral approach. Even though the bilateral approach of these programs and strategies would be the best way to contribute to the developing of the region and keeping a good relationship with the neighboring country, Hungary exerts for the last ten years a unilateral approach. This means that these programs and strategies are developed and funded only by one side, Romania not being involved (financially or strategically) in these projects. Almost all the projects implemented by the Hungarian government in Transylvania are without official agreement from the Romanian side (Marinescu, 2020) and can be interpreted as a threat to regional stability. However, officially, the goal of the Hungarian side, as described by the foreign minister Peter Szijjarto is to build the Carpathian Basin together, based on mutual respect “where Transylvania is seen as a resource, the Hungarian prime minister urging Romanian officials in April 2021, “to want a stronger Szeklerland, an increasingly strong Hungarian community,” because “this would mean more strength also for Romania”(Fati, 2021).

Kos Karoly Plan

Implemented starting with 2017, the “Kos Karoly” plan is the theoretical foundation of the Hungarian government's program in Transylvania (and implemented in other 16 counties), having as main goal the “intensifying and developing relations between Hungarian communities and economic actors in the parent country (Hungary), with a close interconnection of trade relations between local economic actors and those in Hungary” (Marinescu, 2020). It is officially funded by the Hungarian government and is addressed to farmers in Transylvania, who submit projects for subsidies in the Hungarian language. The program has been running since February 2018, when it was signed in Targu-Mureş. Péter Szijjártó, the Hungarian Foreign Minister, announced in September 2019 that the Hungarian government will expand in almost all western Romania the so-called Transylvanian economic development program, which until now had taken place only in the Szeklerland. Through these types of programs, Budapest filled the gap left by the Romanian government after it preferred to maintain the economic underdevelopment during the communist period in areas mostly inhabited by Hungarians (Fati, 2021). Budapest went further, following its Strategy by investing in the businesses of Hungarians in Transylvania, building kindergartens, schools, universities, even financing Romanian language meditations for students in their final years who needed good grades at the Baccalaureate. Practically, Budapest took over from the attributions of the Romanian state. However, this project was never debated between the governments of Romania and Hungary, being an initiative supported only by the Hungarian government.

However, in 2018, the Hungarian side thanks to the Romanian officials for supporting the project. The Hungarian news agency MTI wrote that "Levente Magyar, Secretary of State for Parliamentary Relations at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade,

considered it important that the Romanian government received the program positively and continues to show a positive attitude" (Erdély, 2018). In November 2019, Romania's ambassador to Budapest, Marius Lazurca, publicly told Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjen that the Hungarian government's program had not been discussed with the Romanian government and that Romania had not agreed to implement the measures. "We say it again, Romania has not agreed to the implementation of these measures and, therefore, requests that this program be carried out only with the involvement of the Romanian authorities, in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner." (Lupitu, 2021) As in the previous example with the non-resident citizenship, The Hungarian government kept mostly under the secrecy this project, the Romanian government "taking part" in it only through the UDMR.

Based on the objectives of the strategy, it explicitly targets Hungarian citizens, not the entire population of Transylvania, as it was suggested during the national debates, at the time of its launch. The "Kós Károly Plan" details and concretizes, as it puts it: "the decision of the Hungarian government to initiate a program of economic revitalization for Hungarian citizens in Romania" (Marinescu, 2020). This project plans to extend only to the Carpathians and not beyond - where for Viktor Orbán Central Europe ends (Tăpălagă, 2020)- expressly being dedicated (only) to Hungarian ethnics. A plan in which neither the Romanian state nor the Romanian government ever appears explicitly. Besides, another important aspect that needs to be taken into consideration, the plan bears the name of a Hungarian famous personality who was the initiator and promoter of the so-called "Transylvanism", an essential aspect in grasping its meaning. The whole plan can be seen, from one end to the other, as a political discourse or a doctrine. For some Romanian strategists that deal with national security, this plan is the first step of the Hungarian regime in the

effort to de-sovereignize Romania in Transylvania (Neagu, 2021), to revitalize "Transylvaniam", which is "the path of the Hungarian spirit in Trianonic Transylvania"(Dungaciu, 2020).

“Transylvaniam” was the ideology left to the Hungarian intellectuals who did not agree with the integration of the Transylvanian region in Romania. The idea behind this movement was to not legitimize the 1918 Romanian unification as to attempt to raise a barricade between. As a Hungarian senator from Budapest would say in the interwar period, "to be a Transylvanian means to live dangerously and to remain Hungarian"(Dungaciu, 2020).

For the Hungarian government and its supporters, Kos Karoly “was a Hungarian architect, writer, graphic artist, ethnographer and politician exponent of Transylvaniam in Austria-Hungary and Romania. He constantly campaigned for the integration of the Hungarian community in Transylvania in the Romanian society and the good understanding between the ethnic communities” (Marinescu, 2020). However, Kos Karoly was not a follower of the harmonious coexistence with the Romanian majority, but of "Transylvaniam", which is different. Never, before 1918, did the architect plead for a real recognition and a harmonious integration of the Romanian majority, which he never mentioned. Until then, Transylvania meant only Hungarians, Saxons and Szeklers. The "revelation" of Transylvaniam as a way of relating to the Romanians came only when Transylvania became, through the Union, part of the Kingdom of Romania. And even this did not happen suddenly, but in stages, that is, only when Kós Károly became convinced that there was no other possibility. He made his first "multicultural" gesture in the spring of 1919 when he organized the so-called "Republic of Calata", a Hungarian self-governing entity that appeared in reaction to the Union of December 1, 1918. Eventually, he admits at the beginning of 1921 that the battle seems lost and that it cannot be carried on as before. That is why in one of his last public appearances Kos Karoly send a message to the Transylvanian Hungarians, through the work titled

Kiáltó szó (The Shouting Voice): "We have to take into consideration all our forces, organize our work because we know the goal we want to achieve." (Dungaciu, 2020). This quote from 1921, quite ambiguous, is also the motto of 2017 of the Hungarian government's Action Plan in Transylvania. And the initiation of this phenomenon, Kos Karoly remained a representative symbol for the Hungarian minority.

Besides, in the Kos Karoly Plan, multiple elements are proving that the Hungarian government had no intentions of working together with their counterpart. First, the "Romanian state" never appears explicitly in the document. Even though Budapest bases its actions, through this document, by targeting Romanian citizens living in Romania, in the text, there is no explicit reference to the "Romanian state". Second, in the document Transylvania is represented more as a country than a region: "In the market economy that was established after the change of regime (since 1989), although one of the conditions of competitiveness is the capacity for cooperation, the culture of high-level cooperation, specific to Western states, was difficult to form in the former communist states, including in Transylvania" (Dungaciu, 2020). Third, the Romanian government is never mentioned in the document either, where the cooperation will be done between "the Hungarian government, UDMR, the representatives of the historical Hungarian churches in Transylvania, respectively the associations of Hungarian farmers in Romania and of the Union of Hungarian businessmen in Romania". Fourth, it is emphasized the idea of the "Szekler Land". Romania's official position about "Szekler Land" is well known: the non-recognition of the so-called "Szekler Land", which does not exist as an administrative-territorial unit in Romania and has no constitutional, legal or historical basis. However, the Hungarian document approaches it as a certain, indisputable reality, in clear contrast with the Romanian positions, without even introducing a footnote. Fifth, the direct partnership of the Hungarian Government in Romania with

UDMR, being the authors who signed this plan that concretize a decision of the Hungarian government. The general idea is that Budapest works in Transylvania directly, without intermediaries, having a direct partner, the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) where Budapest decides the direction, UDMR executes and writes the plan, and the Hungarian government implements.

This latera/territorial revisionism does raise issues in the relations of neighboring countries. Today, through its direct involvement, almost unfiltered by the Romanian state - from media exposure to investments in agriculture, from sports facilities to kindergartens, from football fields to citizens - the dependence and loyalty of Romanian Hungarians in Transylvania to the Orbán regime is increasing. And this situation helps Viktor Orbán in playing the nationalist card (referendums for territorial autonomy for instance) with Romania and the other neighboring countries. The Hungarian unilateral and revisionist approach could be interpreted as detrimental regarding its relations with the neighboring countries.

Pro Economica Foundation

As stated in the previous section, the “Kos Karoly Plan” is the theoretical basis of the strategy towards the Hungarian diaspora from Transylvania, while Pro Economica Foundation is the financial basis of supporting the “Kos Karoly Plan”. Based on its website, Pro Economica Foundation is a Hungarian organization supported by the Hungarian government and its strategists, which has as main goal the improvement of the living standards of the families in Romania, the development of the economic, social, cultural and religious living conditions, based on scientific and technical research, respectively the granting of financial and moral support (Pro Economica Status). The role of the Pro Economica Foundation in the Hungarian lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy is mostly based on economic reasons, and it is a way of bringing closer the diaspora

to the homeland, economic development and resources being an important factor in making the diaspora more dependable on the home country, rather than on the host country.

Transylvania has a special place in the Hungarian national identity and the 'trauma' - capitalized by Fidesz - caused by the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I, when Hungary before 1920 lost two thirds of its territory, half of the population being alienated in outside the recast state. Aiming at the 'virtual unification' of all Hungarians, the Hungarian government made it easier for them to obtain Hungarian citizenship and, through the local Transylvanian elites, it invested money in the ethnic Hungarian communities in Slovenia, Slovakia, Ukraine and Romania. Between these countries, the largest expenditures were made in Romania, specifically Transylvania - over 145 million euros in 2017. And by launching the Pro Economica Foundation – which it is a replica of similar smaller foundations from Slovenia and Serbia – the Orbán regime promised to pay 312 million euros in small funds for agricultural development. In addition, several other funds come from Hungarian central authorities and municipalities through cultural programs and sponsorships from state-owned companies. As in Serbia and Slovenia, Hungary has funded sports facilities, and Hungarian passport holders in Romania can apply for financial support for their families from the Hungarian state. The largest beneficiary in Romania is the Calvinist Church in Transylvania, with over 130 million euros (G4 Media, 2020). The church is run by Béla Kató, who was confronted with and denied numerous speculations that he is a good friend of Viktor Orbán, saying that they are only on good terms. By running kindergartens, schools and even a university, Transylvanian Catholic and Protestant churches are deeply involved in ethnic Hungarian communities, often being the only institutions offering community support programs in small towns and villages. A Catholic parish even owns a hockey academy, which also benefits from Hungarian funds.

The vast majority of Romanians regard the Hungarian financial support for its diaspora with great distrust, considering it as open interference in their internal affairs and an instrument of political corruption (G4 Media, 2020). They find most offensive the financial support which Budapest offers to companies, media and organisations of the Hungarian minority. Between 2017 and 2018 approximately €300 million (G4 Media, 2020) from the Hungarian state budget went into Transylvania, this money mainly goes to Hungarian media, foundations, being also used to build and renovate sports facilities, schools, kindergartens and churches. Additional resources go to areas inhabited by the Hungarian minority in Romania as part of cultural programmes (mainly the renovation of buildings and monuments which are important for Hungarian culture). According to the findings of Romanian investigative journalists (Alant, 2020), in recent years Budapest – with the aid of state finances and the Fidesz-supported Association for Media Space in Transylvania (Hungarian Erdélyi Médiatér Egyesület) – has de facto subordinated or taken over the region’s key Hungarian-language media (including press, radio and TV stations and websites, with the popular Székelyhon service at the head). The Hungarian government’s actions are visible and effective because, unfortunately, the counties that make up the Szeklerland region (mainly Harghita and Covasna) are among the poorest in the country. In 2017, GDP per capita in these two regions amounted to c. €19,500, which is 70% of the national average and just 44% of the EU average.

The financial support for these smaller projects increases the influence of the Hungarian lateral/territorial revisionism in Transylvania. Being funded by the Hungarian government, it aims at connecting economically the diaspora with the home country, making it dependable on these resources. It is a way also in showing that the current government cares about the ethnic

Hungarians leaving abroad, which is very important since the 2022 elections in Hungary is approaching.

HHR Foundation and ReConnect Transylvania birthright program

The Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, with its educational and cultural programs (ReConnect Hungary/Transylvania), play a key role in deepening the Hungarian lateral/territorial revisionist Foreign Policy by strongly supporting the Hungarian identity outside of its national borders. It is sponsored by multiple Hungarian organizations closed to Orbán's regime, and on top of it, it is sponsored by the Hungarian's Prime Minister's Office (Miniszterelnökség). It is a useful tool that increases the national identity of the Hungarians in Transylvania and supports the Fidesz plan.

Initially founded in Romania in 1976, the HHRF monitors the human rights conditions of 2.5 million ethnic Hungarians who live as minorities in Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia and Ukraine. It is the only professional organization in the West devoted to the rights of these communities. Currently, it operates from its headquarters in New York, with offices also in Budapest and Cluj, its main activities are documenting and reporting the level of the conditions of the Hungarian minority communities. It also provides various youth-focused initiatives such as human rights training and internship opportunities such as ReConnect Hungary and ReConnect Transylvania. ReConnect Hungary and Transylvania targets young Americans of Hungarian heritage aged 18-28 who have not lived in Hungary past the age of 13. Those who do not speak Hungarian and are also eligible for the program. The organizers try to find those candidates who have no or only very limited knowledge about Hungary and few contacts to Hungarian culture.

Hungarian Human Rights Foundation provides for individuals scholarships (Transylvanian scholarship), training on protecting the minority rights and visits to Hungarian sites. According to

the mission statement of the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, the Hungarian minority faces a struggle in fully regaining linguistic, educational, cultural, religious, and property rights. Even after 1989, the legacies of the intolerance against national minorities remained, combined with cooperation between various governments and extremist or neo-fascist organizations to incite the majority population against the Hungarian Minorities. The message the foundation sends is clear: Hungarian minorities are under pressure in their host countries, by not providing the necessary tools and rights for the Hungarian minority. Being one of the most important defenders of the Hungarian diaspora, the HHRF foundation led campaigns against “major atrocities” (HHRF’s Mission Statement) that were targeting Hungarians such as: during the Yugoslav war in the 1990s, the “onslaught against Hungarian-language speech in Slovakia with the Fico government’s collusion with extremists in the mid to late 2000s” (HHRF’s Mission Statement), “the escalated physical assaults against Hungarian children in Voivodina between 2002 and 2005” (HHRF’s Mission Statement) , “the ongoing failure to fully restitute communist-era confiscated religious properties in Romania since the early 2000s” (HHRF’s Mission Statement) and “the current-day attacks on Hungarian leaders, institutions, linguistic and educational rights in Ukraine” (HHRF’s Mission Statement). The image portrayed by the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation is grim, when it comes to the real situation of the Hungarian diaspora.

The HHRF foundation has also a news portal (section), disseminating news about the Hungarian Diaspora across Europe. Most of the news is in Hungarian, however, few of them are also translated into English, probably for their American and Canadian readers with Hungarian roots. The narrative presented in these articles involves victimizing the Hungarian minorities outside of the national border and blaming the host countries for various reasons. In one of their articles, the Romanian president Klaus Iohannis was portrayed as an individual who wants to

“Stoke xenophobic sentiments evoked exactly like other extremist nationalists” (Romanian President Vilifies Hungarian Minority, 2020), when involved in a political scandal. The president’s speech was criticizing the Social Democrat Party (PSD) and UDMR, at that time having a governmental majority, for giving “Transylvania to the Hungarians” (Ibidem) and “mocking the Hungarian language in front of millions of television views” (Ibidem). During the PSD and UDMR parliamentary majority, favors have been done towards UDMR, such as expanding the use of Hungarian language by reducing the threshold from which local authorities would be obliged to ensure (20% to 10%), or agreeing with the “Kos Karoly plan” and with the financial support of Pro Economica Foundation in Transylvania, Romanian government stepping aside and not interfering in their project, Viktor Orbán thanking personally the Social Democrat Party. The news in Hungarian is not different from the one in English presented above. Only this year (2021), out of 6 articles that have been written in Hungarian, 5 are about the issues of the Hungarian Diaspora in Romania (HHRF’s On the Radar section).

Between 2017 and 2019, PSD took control of the Romanian government, alongside UDMR and ALDE, the coalition becoming a replica of Fidesz, promoting almost the same illiberal ideas. Ideas released include the attack on banks (in general), Central Bank and multinational companies, changes of the electoral system that would favour them, attacks on specific individuals and international bodies (Soros, EU, international NGO’s). The idea of a closer economic relationship with China and Russia was backed by HHRF. And in an open letter addressed by a French NGO to the Romanian president, where the regional autonomy of Szekely land was proposed, HHRF was the first to back up the plan: “Concerning the autonomy issue, ELEN’s letter is similarly straightforward: regional autonomy for national minorities is a European best practice (...)” (ELEN’s statement, 2020).

Coming back to the smaller programs of the HHRF, one program that I want to emphasize is the birthright program ReConnect Transylvania offered by HHRF. Birthright programs are useful ways of engaging with the diaspora of a state. These types of programs search upon young adults in the diaspora (not from Transylvania) to join for a journey where the home country is rediscovered by them. ReConnect Transylvania program is not different, however for this program, the heritage part is disregarded, young adults from the US or Canada being brought in Transylvania for either 5 days or 3-6 months. For both cases, it is an “invaluable experience” (ReConnect Transylvania) where one can learn upfront and personal how other young Hungarians live; form life-long friendships and enrich one’s Hungarian identity through cultural immersion. Again, in this situation, the message is that Transylvania was part of the Kingdom of Hungary for 1,000 years, however, after WWI it was incorporated by Romania, meaning that the turbulent history of the largest ethnic Hungarian minority living outside the borders of present-day Hungary began. Promoted like a continuous struggle, the legacy includes the communist regime’s systematic campaign, lasting decades, to forcibly assimilate the 1.5 million-strong community. Besides, their schedule is focused only on Hungarian sites, with Hungarian names and descriptions.

Behind this Foundation and programs, the main sponsors, as advertised on the website, are the Bethlen Gabor Fund and the Prime Minister’s Office (Miniszterelnökség). The former is a separate state fund, with the purpose of promoting the achievements of the Hungarian government's national policy strategy. Its main task is to promote individual and community prosperity, protect the material and intellectual prosperity of Hungarians living abroad and preserve the Hungarian culture. Through its activities, the Fund contributes to strengthening the national consciousness of the entire Hungarian community, nurturing the Hungarian diaspora and

Hungarian population between the national borders relations. The latter is Viktor Orbán's office, most probably supporting the HHRF not only with funds but also with the Fidesz's rhetoric.

To conclude, the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation with its educational and cultural programs (ReConnect Hungary/Transylvania) increases the Hungarian lateral/territorial revisionist Foreign Policy in Transylvania. The idea behind this foundation and its birthright programs is to support the Hungarian identity outside of its national borders.

Conclusion

Summary of the results

In conclusion, this work has two major results. First, I have emphasized that the Hungarian diaspora from Transylvania plays a major role in the current Hungarian revisionist foreign policy, this community being economically and politically important for the current government. Second, I have highlighted how this lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy operates and is implemented in Transylvania, and it can be understood through the lenses of diaspora integration dimension and diaspora identity dimension.

The analysis of these two dimensions, with their projects and policies, will help future works that will focus on the lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy in Central and Eastern Europe, through the discovery of the identity and integration dimension patterns in the projects and policies of the country that exerts this type of revisionism towards its neighboring countries. My method can be used as a general framework for future analysis on other countries from Central and Eastern Europe, helping to identify the type of revisionism in a specific foreign policy. In accordance with my results, the diaspora identity dimension plays a greater role than the diaspora integration dimension since it is easier to be implemented, through programs and strategies, and financed by the homeland. The diaspora integration dimension could bring a couple of benefits; however, it might damage the bilateral relations with neighboring countries.

Limits of research

This work aimed at analyzing the Hungarian lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy through its projects and policies implemented towards its diaspora from Transylvania. The research on the Hungarian foreign policy and its strategies was limited, since the documents that are the basis of these strategies and plans were not publicly available, especially the documents of

the “Kos Karoly” plan and the “Pro Economica” foundation. However, other sources that were relevant and were covering these strategies and their results in Transylvania were taken into consideration. In terms of content analysis, a high number of papers focused on these strategies were either one-sided (where Hungary was seen as the villain and Romania as the protector of the region), or the paper was not trying to synthesize the way in which these plans work, but what are the effects.

Future research agenda

For future research on the Hungarian lateral/territorial revisionist foreign policy, I aim to focus on other neighboring countries in Central and Eastern Europe and analyze how the Hungarian foreign policy works in their context, later comparing the results between them and trying to draw a more accurate and generalized version on how this type of foreign policy operates. Hopefully, in another context, more sources will be publicly available and accurate results could be drawn from them.

Another course for the future research agenda is to apply the same design in other regions, where we are dealing with a leader with lateral/territorial revisionist claims. The region of Latin America might be a good ground for analysis; however, we need to pay attention in identifying which type of leader are we dealing with and what type of revisionism is establishing, systemic or lateral/territorial. Other regions from the European continent such as Western Balkans should bring fruitful results, taking into consideration the number of diaspora communities in the region.

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