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Like the sea in a drop...

*Transborder minority identities: Hungarians in the
Carpathian Basin*



“No picture [...] and no history can present us with the whole truth, but those are the best pictures and the best histories which exhibit such parts of the truth as most nearly produce the effect of the whole”.

Thomas B. Maculay

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Handledare: Albdulhadi Khalaf

ABSTRACT

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**ABSTRACT**

Ever since nationalism emerged over a century ago, discussions have been lively about its survival or declination. These questions still are actual and in the process of globalisation and internationalisation perhaps even more so. Multiethnic societies grapple with nationalism and ethnic problems all over the world; so also in Central Europe. Nevertheless, the expressions of nationalism are varying; its effects take different turns in different settings. This paper aims at describing expressions of a specific kind of national affiliation: the Hungarian national identity development and preservation situation in the Carpathian basin, where discontinuous, disrupted Hungarian ethnic minorities meet continuous, preserved Hungarian core-identities. Hungarians are presented and categorised in accordance with their geo-political situation governing the formation of their identity during the 20th century, establishing diverging social, cultural and political developments, both for the individuals and for the groups within their respective 'homelands'.

The paper presents some relevant scientific, trans-disciplinary, psychosocial and sociological theoretical and methodological issues that hopefully can provide some guidelines to the understanding of the transborder identity preserving endeavours of the Hungarian peoples. Empiric data from the arsenal of instruments used by Hungarians is plentiful; here I intend to focus on the discourses on the *Internet (web)*, utilised among the variety of Hungarian peoples, arguing for possible positive and negative outcomes of those, related to the desired goal of re-inventing the national unity of a Hungarian nation.

I want to direct special thanks to my supervisor, Abdulhadi Khalaf for his patience, support and help on my way of searching for order from chaos. I also thank Christian, for his help with editing my text and the study group members for their patience during our presentations and discussions.

Key words: discourse, nation, nationalism, ethnicity, identities, memory, majority, minority, diaspora, Hungarians, core nation, transborder national minorities



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Introduction

This paper is about Hungarians in the Carpathian basin. My interest in Hungarians and their endeavours in transborder ethnic identity preservation relies on my Hungarian origin and the intriguing nature of the topic itself. Ever since the 70s, when I moved to Sweden, I have found it important to follow events in Hungary. In addition to my personal interest, as a research student at Lund University, during my studies I have met various theories of national/ethnic anomalies and I found that with presenting the particular kind of transborder nationalism that characterises the Hungarian one¹, one might introduce a new angle to the issue. Little is known about the distinctive effort with national affiliations arising in the middle of Europe and if it is mentioned in literature, it often ends up as a footnote. I propose though, that the '*Hungarian case*' might contribute to the study of how ethnic contacts can be kept alive also in times of unfavourable - or even hostile - conditions.

My interest deepened after the system collapse in 1989 owing to surfacing facts: such as national affiliations, feelings, identities, diaspora existence, growing into an ambiguous situation labelled today as the '*Hungarian-Hungarian issue*' [*magyar-magyar kérdés*]. A complex social, political and sociological situation is hidden behind the label: causing a 'quiet turbulence' in Central Europe during the 90s. The '*Hungarian-Hungarian issue*' covers efforts taken by Hungarians to strengthen aspects of their national and cultural identities that became eroded during the socialistic era. These issues have occupied the political, social and cultural sphere both in Hungary, and in some other neighbouring Central-European countries, to a greater extent than Western countries have been aware of. Hungary's efforts to join the EU has also been motivated to a large extent by its wish to make the process of national 're-unification' possible, by peaceful means.

1.1 Definition of problem and aim

The ongoing oppositional polarisation and fragmentation processes that are part of our globalised existence today justify the topic, because they also influence Hungarians trying to put an end to an 80-year-old state of polarisation and fragmentation and realize the political, social and cultural 'reunification of the nation', which proved to be a bumpier issue than expected, taking rather unanticipated turns.

I argue that, when the time finally arrived, after the system change in 1989, for realising the goals with creating a solid ground for establishing a '*newly*' restored Hungarian nation, the ever-changing conditions of social realities interfered with the original plan of re-unifying the



Hungarian nation, reframing the Hungarians' social and cultural realities in an unexpected, but not inexplicable, way. Nevertheless, the need for a national discourse has not disappeared.

1.2. Purpose of the study

My intentions are to investigate the possibilities for maintaining national affiliations among ethnic national minorities living apart, working against the odds. Opportunities opening up for conflicts have been obvious, but it never came to that in the case of Hungarians, because they approach this possibly inflammatory subject by using *discourse of cultural continuity*, and by *adjusting to political and social demands of our time*.

My main proposition is that ethnic and cultural national affiliation is possible to maintain to a certain degree in separation but the concepts and contents of this affiliation change over time. The thought of seeking 'objective historic justice' or 'redemption' and to 'return to pre-eras' whatever they might be, and to find the 'stolen history' is not an easy pursuit – actually quite impossible – in a retro-perspective. But to a certain degree, some kind of *imagined unity* and silent understanding can be achieved, which might be an achievement enough.

The *Hungarian-Hungarian transborder-national identity preservation* efforts are stretching over borders of eight nation states², whereas identity forging is dependent on the existence of boundaries³, separating members of the Hungarian conglomerate⁴. My primary sources are documents from Hungarian discourse, most of them available on the *Internet*. My secondary source is both Hungarian and international literature on the issue.

1.3. Methodology

I intend to take a transdisciplinary view, using historical, psycho-sociological, sociological, and cultural concepts that might aid my describing the strategies and tools applied by different Hungarian ethnic groups in searching for appropriate cultural platforms to gather around. My view is that it is possible to establish a common ground for a cultural structure, but the structure will be quite different from the expected, owing to the marks left by time and space.

The method that I shall use is qualitative, describing the 'true situation' with the diversity of the Hungarian national identity. True situation I call a situation, which might be a construct, imaginary or mythical discourse; nonetheless a situation that Hungarians regard to be their everyday reality. Before looking into the empirical illustrations, I wish to consider some theoretical issues and terms, commenting them in lesser or greater extent, depending on their importance for my case. Likewise in using theoretical terms; only the relevant ones shall be lifted afore.



I am not thriving for totality or objectivity in my study for various reasons. Objectivity means being without bias and that is difficult to apply, in my view, when analysing and observing human behaviour (as in social sciences) unlike investigating subjects in natural sciences (laboratory environment). Social representations are neither fair, nor real or objective. I do not believe, that some ‘*external reality*’, or ‘*truth*’, can guide a researcher when studying the links between concepts like national or ethnic belonging, language or/and ideology, and people’s infinite number of perceptions about events. My hope is to recognise, and avoid inconsistency and inconclusiveness in the observations and analysis and to give a fair chance to situations that might corroborate or falsify my thesis, interpretations or proposals. B. Macaulay’s aphorisms on history express my relations to the Hungarian endeavours with the reunification tasks: history “*begins in novel and ends in essay*”. and ‘*fictions are so much like the facts and the facts so much like the fictions*’.

The subject of my investigation is discourse applied by Hungarians on the *Internet*. The discourses intend to facilitate transmission of information and contact keeping among Hungarians in the Carpathian basin. My choice is motivated by the following factors.

Internet-communication has during the last decades intensified worldwide, which has been utilised among Hungarians in the Carpathian basin⁵ for their purpose. There is an increasing consciousness of availability and range of web-published material. *Internet* facilitates individuals, groups and /or organisations expand their social and communication relations. It makes it easy and direct for people to get information across off-line boundaries; people can be linked together, exchange information and maintain relationships by means of material published on the *web* around common topics, interest or projects. Like social network analysis (SNA), focusing on patterns of relations among people, organisation, or nation states (Wasserman & Faust, 1994), *Internet* works through connecting social entities (people, groups, organisations) by a set of relationships (affiliations, common interests, shared projects). SNA may be used for understanding interplay between computer-mediated social processes (Garton, Haythornthwaite & Wessman, 1997: 725-737). The newly developing *Internet*-based communication research concentrates on the *web* not simply as a technological tool, but as a newly emerging social (communicational) channel, where the sites represent a relational connection (link).

The seemingly unlimited *Internet*-based information flow on Hungarian info-sites is striking. The flow is multilateral: both core-Hungarians and transborder-Hungarians contribute with thousands of home pages. Hungary has given significant economic aid to Hungarian organisations during the years to build out the *web* in the neighbouring countries where



Hungarians live. This was one of the reasons why I decided to study the material published there. Another reason, connected to the first one, was the availability range; an important factor for the investigator (me) living at a distance (1000-3000 km) from the subject of investigation (Hungarians in the Carpathian basin). By approaching the discourse via the *Internet*, the delimitations by distance and economical considerations are of minor consequence.

My main sources were the Hungarian home pages, as shown in the Appendix, and in the following addresses listed below, providing thorough information flow on Hungarians in the Carpathian basin. The first ones are especially useful for readers who do not comprehend Hungarian, but many of the others provide information in English or Swedish as well.

http://htm.hu/en/033_map/text037/doc_upload/heritage.jpg - <http://www.mtaki.hu/english>
<http://www.smosz.org/sindex.htm> - <http://magyarsag.lap.hu>; - <http://csango-ro> -
<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Bluffs/9648/links.html>; <http://www.kiallitas.mtaki.hu>
<http://www.erdely.ma/autonomia.php?> - <http://www.erdely.ma/moldaviaimagyarsag.php?> -
<http://magyarhaz.ch/xxxx/linkek/sajto.htm> - <http://www.filolog.com/crossculture.html>;
<Http://www.geocities.com/Eureka/8808> - <http://www.adatbank.transindex.ro> -
<http://www.webenetcics.com/hungary.yugo.htm> -
www.kulugyminiszterium.hu.archivum/Kulugyminiszterium/HU/magyarsag.hu -
<http://www.magyarország.hu> - <http://www.gondola.hu/cikk.php?szal=809>.

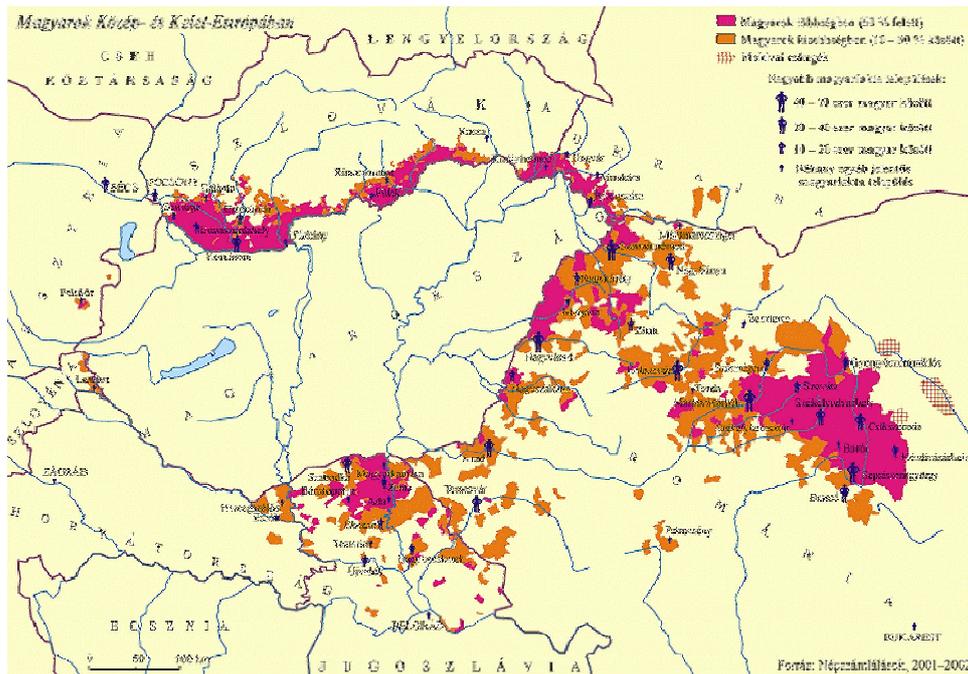
All the addresses above open up hundreds of other contacts. In other words, the abundance of material on the *Internet* I found fascinating and it gives me some hints about the range of contact-keeping possibilities. On the other hand, because of the huge material, I was compelled to delimit my choices, which were random. The only consideration that led me was to find material characteristic for Hungarian discourse conveying images of the Hungarian cultural heritage. The categories of discourse I chose shall be introduced further on.

1.4. Disposition of the paper

The first section shall present the historical background of the Hungarian situation, followed by some theoretical issues, terminologies and key terms with historical, psycho-social, sociological and sociolinguistic content on discourse, nation, nationalism, memory, identity and diaspora guiding my study. Thereafter the present status of the Hungarian national attachment will be discussed, with a presentation of the strategic tools used by the members of the nation to achieve their goal of virtual, national reunification. In the last part of the paper some analytic reflections on the outcome of the discursive strategies of Hungarians will be made.



2. Historical survey



Map 1 shows the spread of Hungarians outside Hungary

2.1. Development of historical Hungary

Hungarians have been around in Europe for a thousand years, thus being one of the oldest peoples in Europe with a distinct and unique language with a Western European type of religious (Christian) and cultural affiliation. This is a *mantra* in Hungarian political discourse; it became particularly important to emphasise after 1989 and in connection with the application to become a member in the EU (early 1990s).

The roots to the ‘*Hungarian-Hungarian issue*’ of today stretch a long way back to the historic developments in Central Europe. L. Namier described the situation (Mandelbaum, 2000:1) in 1948, as “an *alien minority within the State, or an intensely coveted terra irredenta, are both likely to distort the life of the nation... The alien community within the disputed borderland, hostile to the State /.../ provokes repressions /.../ while fellow-countrymen across the border awaiting liberation keep up international tensions...*” The potential conflicts he identified then are persisting today, because the conditions have not changed.

The ‘*Hungarian-Hungarian issue*’ has the character of conflicting self-identification and identification by others. The reasons are political-historical.

Hungary proper was created without the Hungarians’ will, actually against their will, after WW1 in 1920. The grounding principles for Hungary’s statehood were “national” (ibid), a principle embedded in the thinking of peoples in many places of the world. But ‘few countries

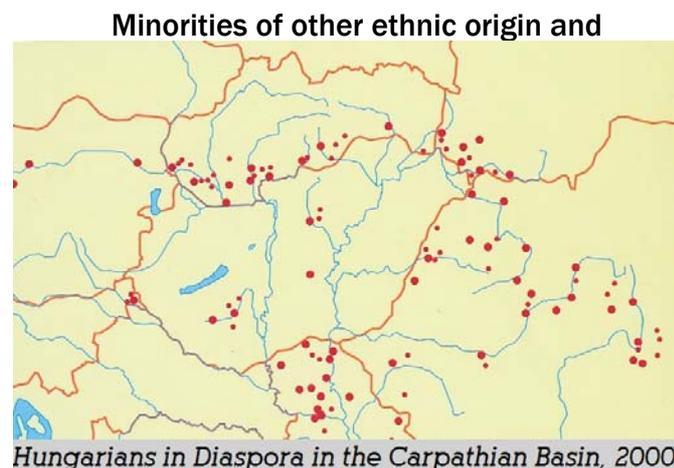


consist entirely of one nation; not every self-described nation has its own state; not every nation is gathered into a single state; some are distributed among several' (ibid.). This is a mismatch situation between state and nation causing difficulties as we have seen an example of in the 1990s in ex-Yugoslavia, where the driving source of conflict was not drive for territory, glory or the like, but one national group within the borders of a jurisdiction being dominated by another nation⁶.

Historic Hungary, the Kingdom of Hungary, was exposed to various imperial ambitions of mighty nations (Ottomans, Austrian, Russian), without ever yielding to foreign domination in regard to 'ethnic identity'. On the contrary, these events strengthened it, they brought about a resistance and they also nourished many a national myth and historical debate. *Magyars* (Hungarians) occupied the Central European basin during the 10th century, and by the Middle Ages they consolidated a powerful feudal state encompassing a multitude of ethnicities, with Hungarians predominating the 'nation' (without modern kind of 'ethnic' connotations as yet).

2.2. Compound of the historical Hungarian nation

The reminiscent of this heterogeneous state is illustrated by László Sebők's picture here below, where both minorities of other ethnic backgrounds - within the country - and Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring countries are illustrated (dots). The ethnic minorities in Hungary today have their own local governments, authorities, schools and cultural representations both locally and in the Hungarian Parliament.



Map 2. Source: *Identitás, kultúra, kisebbség, [Identity, culture and minority]*



2.3. End of historical Hungary

The Ottomans put an end to this state (1526) and for 150 years the kingdom of Hungary was divided into three parts, between Turks (with the majority of Hungarians living there (middle section), Habsburgs in northwest, and the relatively independent principality of Transylvania in south-east. When the Turks were expelled (late 18th century), the Habsburgs expanded. German, Slav and Romanian migrants repopulated the depopulated areas of Hungary and the multiethnic character of the 'nation' was strengthened even more. Later (from 1867) the Hungarian part made up the Austrian-Hungarian Dual Monarchy together with the Austrians, lasting until 1918.

2.4. Creation of Hungary proper

After WW1 Hungary became a nation state (according to the conditions of the Paris/Trianon Treaty) as a result of ideological and strategic considerations⁷. Hungary's fate was predestined⁸ and the situation of 'truncation' (Mandelbaum, 2000: 25) was a *fait-accomplit*: "the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination was applied exclusively to the benefit of nations represented by the successor states" (ibid). As a result of this act, a minority of 3-4 million Hungarians have been living dispersed in the successor states for the past 86 years, sometimes under harsh conditions, but in any case cut off from the rest of the '*Hungarian nation*'. The imposed Hungarian separation 86 years ago set marks that still affect Hungarian political, social and cultural life. The national discourse on '*Trianon*' is very much vivid.

The linguistic uniqueness and exclusivity of Hungarians has isolated the Hungarians from other peoples in the middle of Central Europe; therefore the links to historical roots through language are very strong among all Hungarians. The link is less evident towards other Finno-Ugric people because of the vast temporal and spatial distance to them. The bond is tight to other Hungarian ethnic groups instead.

Hungarians take also pride in the nation's literary and cultural production - Hungarians contest to being a cultural (literary) nation - which Hungarian ethnic groups feel strongly attached to. Literature is said to be the bearer of Hungarian identity, especially for the transborder Hungarians⁹. The established thought of sharing common historic, cultural and linguistic values provides a base for the Hungarians' ideological foundations, wherever members of the virtual Hungarian nation are stationed. To be a Hungarian is an ideological concept, as the Hungarian saying goes. The concept of a Hungarian nation has been greatly upset by the Paris/Trianon-treaty in 1920, which fact is kept alive in the collective memory of Hungarians. The image is often displayed as illustrated by the picture at the end of the paper¹⁰.



2.5. Compound of the Hungarian nation after WWI

The new conditions after WWI brought about changes both for Hungarians, and for the other ethnic members of the Hungarian nation. Hungarians regard the change that occurred as a major trauma both politically and historically. For the other national members, such as Slavs, Ruthenians or Romanians, it meant also profound changes, because they were cut off from their mother-nations. Their descendents live still in Hungary; they are the reminiscent of the once heterogeneous state of the Hungarian Kingdom from before WWI¹¹. Counting in figures, when Austro-Hungary was split up into several new countries in 1918-1920, Hungary lost one-third of its population and three-quarters of its former areal, and the nation state as it is known today was established after a Western model, containing a majority of ethnic Hungarians. Consequently various contingencies of Hungarians live outside Hungary today. These autochthonous Hungarians can be divided into different categories.

3. Categories of Hungarians

This chapter will try to clarify the question of “*who, or what is Hungarian*”? The question has been occupying the scientific fields of Hungary for a longer time; it is the favourite quiz-question of historians, ethnologists, sociologists, linguists, anthropologists and writers. Despite this fact, there is yet no adequate answer. Frequent answers are, as suggested before, that to be a Hungarian is a state of mind, an ideology, an enigma, or a heroic act. It all depends whom you ask. To avoid the pitfalls of scholars’ argumentations, or counter-questions such as ‘*what a nation is*’, ‘*what members of a nation is*’, ‘*what ethnic is*’, or any risky debates, Hungarians settle for the definition that to be a Hungarian you will have to state the fact that you are a Hungarian. This might seem to be a fairly loose definition; it is nevertheless quite logical considering the facts. There are actually a variety of Hungarians who can be divided into various categories. For simplicity, they will be divided into two main categories by me, one being the so-called mother-nation, (core Hungarians: approximately ten million), living in the Republic of Hungary. The other, joint category (approximately 3-4 million), consists of different Hungarian minorities living partly in the Carpathian basin, within the successor states, partly scattered over the world.

As former majority peoples, the minorities in the neighbouring countries have never adjusted themselves to being a minority, partly because they have not always been treated well, this we can witness even today in Serbia¹². These problems have been in the background, mostly latent after WW2, because ethnic confrontations were not something openly discussed during the communist era (regarded as ‘*petit bourgeois tendencies*’ in the socialistic countries).



Despite the latent conflicts between Hungary and some other countries¹³ in Central Europe, the question never became widely known and it was never allowed to develop into open clash¹⁴. The Hungarians in the neighbouring states have since their partition from the core nation insisted on their Hungarian cultural/linguistic heritage and they have acted thereafter, which was not always well seen in their host nations. Nevertheless, the socialistic brotherhood provided just enough basic conditions to live out ethnic affiliations; the general idea was that a little romantic folklore could not do much damage, and besides there were other problems that demanded attention¹⁵.

Nevertheless, not speaking of a problem does not imply that it does not exist. This trivial fact was confirmed again after the system break in 1989, when the century long experience with a '*split Hungarian nation*' has become the focal interest of the Hungarians in the Central European democratisation process. The dichotomising division between the core nation and the diaspora Hungarians¹⁶ became more and more transparent and the attention of Hungarians turned towards it. The Hungarians living outside the Hungarian borders¹⁷ are divided into the following categories.

3.1. Categories of Hungarians-beyond-the border

The Hungarians who live outside the Hungarian borders can be divided into different categories.

1. *Hungarian diaspora*¹⁸ in West shows many of the above criteria: people left their home-land (Hungary) for settling in other places, they relate positively to the receiving (host) country; they keep a close eye on the developments in the old country; they keep in touch with the home-land; they show interest in the well being of the old home-land; they relate to other diaspora Hungarians. They also have a life-long emotional longing relationship with the home-land and they are proud of the cultural heritage they preserve and try to hand it down to the next generation. This group will not be taken into consideration here because of the different attitude directed towards them by Hungary and the other transborder minorities. They are treated differently by all other categories.

2. *Hungarian ethnic minorities (diasporas) in Central Europe* have different characteristics and significantly differ from each other, especially culturally. These are the Hungarians who are denominated in Hungarian discourse as '*Hungarians-living-beyond-the-borders*', alternatively transborder-Hungarians, the '*hyphenated Hungarians*'. There is also a modern abbreviation applied to these Hungarians; '*htm-Hungarians*' (Határon Túli Magyarok



= Hungarians Beyond the Borders), which sounds particularly appropriate in connection with my study object: the discourse maintained on the *Internet*.

The main characteristics of the *Hungarians-beyond-the-border* are that they speak Hungarian, they consider themselves a Hungarian culture; they have not left their homeland (birth-place) to become a minority; previously they belonged to the majority population; they consider Hungary to be their mother-land (even if they never lived within a Hungarian state); they show great affiliation towards the core nation and they are also not all too positive to their host countries¹⁹. The majority of them are less a *diaspora* (I feel this description is often too vaguely used) than an autochthonous population. Some of them build ‘real’²⁰ diasporas (in the Czech Republic²¹, in Moldova). The total number of the category of Hungarian minorities together is appreciated²² to be around 2,5 – 3,5 million.

3.2. Categories of Hungarian minorities in Central Europe

When studying each category, the first thing to consider is the population’s variety. There are as many Hungarian ethnic minority groups as there are countries, and/or regions they live in. This indicates a split Hungarian identity, or rather split identities within the category as well. Consequently, the greater is the effort put into the actions by these minorities to try to identify, assure and secure continuity, and a common Hungarian identity.

Hungarians in their original locations in the Carpathian Basin are named in Hungarian discourse after the country or region they live in. Thus one speaks of²³:

1. Szlovákiai (Slovakian)-Hungarians in Slovakia (approx. five hundred sixty thousand)²⁴
2. Ukrán (Transcarpathian)-Hungarians in the Ukraine, (approx. one hundred and fifty thousand)
3. Erdélyi (Transylvanian)-Hungarians and Sekler-Hungarians in Romania, (approx. one million six hundred thousand)
4. Vajdasági (Voivodina)-Hungarians in Serbia-Montenegro²⁵ (approx. three hundred thirty nine thousand)²⁶
5. Horvátországi (Croatian)-Hungarians in Croatia (approx. twenty two thousand)
6. Muravidéki (Muromerja)-Hungarians in Slovenia (approx. seven thousand)
7. Örségi (Burgenland)-Hungarians in Austria. (approx. six thousand seven hundred)
8. Moldvai (Moldova-) and Bukovina-Csángó Hungarians in Romania²⁷, a category of its own (some thousand).

The communication within the groups has been tightened after 1989 when one recognised the grade of decline in Hungarian population in certain territories, such as Burgenland/Örség, Croatia/Horvátország, Muromerja/Muravidék and Voivodina/Vajdaság²⁸, which are described as ‘catastrophic’ (ibid.). The number of young people with Hungarian ethnic identification declines and the proportion of old people still claiming to be Hungarians increases all the



time²⁹, thus the danger of ‘extinction’ for these groups is seen as inevitable. The other areas with Hungarians have not yet reached these levels but they are also likely to go toward assimilation.

The initiative to turn the situation around, or at least try to slow the negative trend down, came from Hungary for multiplex reasons: there is the above mentioned demographic decline both in the core Hungarian population, and also among the transborder-Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin. Another stressing factor is the so called ‘Trianon-syndrome’³⁰, which served as a catalyst for re-activating myths, as expressions of ‘*collective desires*’ (E. Doutté³¹), Girardet’s four categories in his classification of myths³² were suddenly reinvented by Hungarians and were greeted with enthusiasm both by the transborder minorities and by the core Hungarians. After accepting the logic of *Dolchstosslegende*³³, and having accepted the idea of a nation being deprived of its own capacity of governing its own fate, the discourse on the animosity of other nations with the aim to undermine the force of self-preservation has surfaced after 49 years in exile. Within short, a strategy was launched with the aim to convince the members of EU that the unified Hungarian nation indeed has always existed (non non-imaginary³⁴), and that it, despite the political boundaries, worked as a unified one. Another subjective was that the Hungarian nation was entitled to act unified as a cultural nation because of its common cultural roots³⁵.

This was also an argument considered to be less threatening (than confrontation) to the political order of Europe³⁶. The topos and details of the whole ‘*myhologeme*’ is widely spread among Hungarians today: by using myths of the past, myths of the present are created. To a great extent, the cultural hegemony is maintained and strengthened by literary means: books, informational material, spreading TV-sets and programs in Hungarian all over the world (through the ‘*Duna-TV*’). There is an impressive cultural production among Hungarians aiming to preserve the declining ‘cultural capital’.

Yet, the interest is not evenly spread. Transylvania’s contribution in the Hungarian identity formation and establishment is unquestionable. This has its historical and cultural explanation: it has always served as a kind of ‘*stand-by*’ Hungary, a territory from which the majority of Hungarian national literature and art production derives. It has been labelled the ‘other Hungary’, an essential (basic) part of the Hungarian ethnic and cultural identity. Hungarians on either side of the borders have never reconciled themselves to the loss of Transylvania as a linked nation. The ‘*Uplands*’ (Hungarian historical term for Slovakia) and the ‘*Southlands*’ (Hungarian historical term for Voivodina) have also been lost but not forgotten; nevertheless, the cultural connotations have never been that strong as in the case of the loss of the



Transylvanian contact. Nevertheless, contact through negotiations, talks and discussions with **all** these regions have been intensified after 1989; the extent of it as shown on the *Internet* and in other documents is impressive.

4. Theoretical frame

In this section some theoretical view are outlined followed by the choice of method used in the forthcoming sections: those concepts, theories and terms that I find central for my study of Hungarian discourse for realising the establishment of a united cultural nation. The variety of definitions and terminologies found in literature indicate the complexity of the nature of the concepts used; of which only those shall be presented here that I find useful and relevant in connection with the Hungarian case. They are also interconnected by their applicability both on individuals and collectives. I shall begin with the introduction of discourse, as part of the main strategy the Hungarians use to achieve the goal.

4.1. Discourses

Various strategies and instruments are at disposal in discourses³⁷ used also in the process of re-unification of the nation. Discourses on nation, nationalism, national membership, identity, ethnicity, language and memory, just to mention a few here, are important. Especially memory plays an important role as a recurring instrument to be used for establishing identities³⁸, or common grounds for national affiliations. I contend to show the kinds of discourses used by Hungarians to stress on national affiliation, national cohesion and hegemony. I find especially social consciousness and the cultural sphere (symbols, language and literature) interesting, because, in my opinion they have a decisive role in these actions.

In discourse, socially established senses, from media discourses to institutionalised discourses, are contested. They are interrelated and more or less legitimated, but as discourses are normally power relations, they express ideologies that people are subjected to during their everyday life. Discourses are to be found between those who have power: in our case the majority people (legitimised, institutionalised), and those without power, i.e. ethnic minorities (marginalised). They get textualised and contextualised. My view is that in our case the discourses presented in the form of texts through media (on the *Internet*) give expression to an imaginary state of a (*virtual*) unitary Hungarian nation by presenting its various cultural fields of commonness.

The concept of culture I simply use in an almost post-structural sense; it is people's traditions, customs and rites used not necessarily in close relation to reality, but as texts by their own right and logic. Consequently, no difference between truth and fiction will be taken



into consideration; I accept that the past and the interpretation of the present appears in a ‘*discursive space*’³⁹, which itself changes over time. Truth is embedded in the discourse of the actual era. In my study, I have found support and help in books and home pages of various Hungarian ethnic groups, and also in co-literary production of different Hungarian societies in this respect. I speak of *transborder Hungarians* or *Hungarians-beyond-the-border* interchangeably.

4.2. *Nations and Nationalisms*

In recent nation-discourses the importance of the concept of nations has been stressed in relevant research. Brigitte Krulic, a French historian, discusses whether the concept is now passé⁴⁰ or not; it has rather gained importance during the last two decades. With the events in Southern Europe in fresh memory, she argues that in our time, people in Europe are divided between the alternatives of globalisation and national affiliations. The events on the Balkans have created a negative context for the use of the concept ‘*nation*’. She supports the opinion that nations and connected concepts are still alive around us; they are nevertheless adjusted to the historical demands of our time.

Nationalism and connected, national feelings have lately been considered to be out-of-date, old fashioned concepts in human development (Krulic); national feelings being irrelevant in human relationships in our modern, or postmodern world. This has been a rather distinct ideological belief, especially in the West. The negative perception of the nation-concept has been underscored by the conflicts arising in the 1990s in our neighbourhood on the European continent: on the Balkans, which also supports my conviction that discourse on nationalisms is also in our day the most widely understandable political discourse, even if it has never gained the same understanding within Academia. There has been a tendency to regard nationalism in Eastern Europe in the post-socialistic period as a simplified version of nationalism, in reality hiding a complex juridical and political situation, and as remnants of an almost exclusively Eastern European decadent ideology. Being geographically, mentally and culturally close to each other in Europe, people are affected by, and therefore concerned about, how different kinds of ‘*national affiliation*’-concepts affects their neighbourhood and their own sphere of life. Therefore, the concept of national belonging and identities does seem relevant even in our time.

4.2.1. “*The Central European*” *concept of nation*

I want to point out that when I am speaking of ‘*nation*’, I use it as the concept understood in most of the Central European countries⁴¹. It is a truism that ‘*West*’ has had a different



experience in developing nations, national and ethnic identities than the 'East'. Schöpflin points out that it comes to clear misunderstandings and incomprehension – or (at best) half-understandings between the East and West – so wide is the gap in style and substance in discourse. The fact is certainly emphasised in Central European literature when discussing concepts such as nation and ethnicity⁴². Hungarians are no exception in this regard; they use the 'Central European concept of nation'⁴³. Nationalism is a related term, often used in connection with the Hungarian endeavours. In Western societies a civic dimension of nationhood can be found, while in Central and Eastern Europe the concept of nation is built primarily on language; "if there is a language, then its speakers constitute a community; if a community has its own language, it must be a nation; and as a nation it has the right to constitute its own state and become a subject of history." (Schöpflin, 2000: 121).

4.2.2. Nationalism

Y. Suleyman constructed a categorisation over nationalism studies⁴⁴ that appeals to me in its simplicity. One kind, he argues, is the study where one seeks to generalise from empiric observations, and on account on those, offering a set of explanatory ideas (theories) to be further tested. The other kind is, he argues, when one looks into a particular nationalism and relates it to others. The latter shall be my starting point, using the theories from the former wherever necessary. Similarly to nationalism, the concept of nation is sometimes interpreted in negative terms: it is evil and as such, it should be fought. In my experience, Western Europe often sees Eastern European 'nationalistic endeavours' in such a light.

The reason for regarding it as a negative concept is that nationalism is an ideology that it is utilised by nations who feel that they have something to defend and safeguard against others or to force their own ideology on others. It is often used to oppress other members of society, regularly those who are excluded by the majority and defined as 'others'. In other cases, nationalism is interpreted as a positive sentiment, often described as 'patriotism'; serving one's own country. Membership of a nation is closely linked with the hegemony; the means are language as marker and part of identity.

4.2.3. National unity

One important aspect for a nation is to create order and coherence and avoid chaos. The safeguarding of coherence is expected from those who have power, i.e. the state. This is often achieved by language, as language has a central function in maintaining and executing power, in addition to its role as 'identity marker' and 'culture-carrying link' (Fishman, 1999: 31).



To secure national coherence was an important motive behind the Hungarians' actions after the system change in 1989. They began to use discourse and symbolic language for that purpose. Through discursive monopoly, also including symbolic language, one tries to concentrate beliefs, ideas and concepts to make ambiguity impossible, and to exclude alternatives to make a joint effort possible (Schöpflin, 2000). Symbols are rewarding elements of discourse and can be utilised for various reasons. Those that have disappeared can be revitalised to serve a purpose. Here in our case, they are used to secure national/ethnic coherence, whereas a common ethnic background – maintained by the same language – is the strongest argument in the discourse. This is true for the Hungarian discourse where commonly used symbols are of great importance for stressing a common ethnic background, in which language is the sacred core. *‘The nation lives in its language’* as Hungarian writer Gyula Illyés puts it.

4.3. Language

A language (mother tongue) is generally seen as an ingredient of great importance in the formation of national identities (Fishman, Kontra, Phillips, Schöpflin, Skutnabb-Kangas, Suleiman, Várady), and is a strong ethnic marker *“particularly in Central and Eastern Europe”* (Schöpflin, 2000:118), including Hungarians, wherever they live. Therefore the issue of human rights to native language use with links to the concept of ‘nation’ is a serious argument in minority policies, both from the hosting states and from the minorities in question (see European Union Parliament Session, Recommendations 1735 (2006)) and it has been a serious argument in the Hungarians' actions. Minority language policies are still ambiguous issues, also within the EU, (Phillipson, 1999). Discrimination of minorities through language policy is common, manifested in *‘linguistic fundamentalism’* (Bordás et. al, 1995, 100), which has often been the cause of social unrest between the Hungarian minorities and their hosting nations (majority). The so called *‘beatings of Hungarians’* is an example on today ongoing physical – and psychological - abuse in Voivodina (Serbia) targeting Hungarians, involving language use and expressed ethnic identity.

4.4. Identity

*“Hiába füröszöd önmagadban,
Csak másban moshatod meg arcodat”*
(József Attila)

*“In vain you bathe it in yourself,
it is only in others you can cleanse your face.”*
(Attila József⁴⁵)

These words can illustrate the role of identity, which is non-existent in its own right (not essentialist); it only shows in the eye of the beholder (relationist⁴⁶). Identity is a social phenomenon; its shaping begins during early childhood and continues during lifetime through



socialisation. Each person has a need for an identity⁴⁷ – both self defined and defined by others. For Hungarians, the 20th century has been the time for constant identity searching and shaping, affecting their individual and collective identity.

4.4.1. Psychological approach

The word ‘identity’ as such is derived from the Latin word *idéntitas*, which means “the same” or “*sameness of essential character*” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1974). These definitions in ‘*themselves constitute to individually or socially constructed definitions of the organism as meaningful and identifiable object of action within the category of human beings*’⁴⁸. Every human being, every person presupposes the possession of an (at least one) identity. As for the individual, psychologically, there is a need of identity to generate psychologically productive feelings of self-recognition, self-acceptance and “ontological security” (ibid.). As for the community of people, there is a cultural and social need to be amongst people with whom one shares a common identity. Stier concludes that lack of identity may cause existential ruminations, disrupted identities and conflicts that may manifest in feelings of despair and discontinuity, such as those we recognise from literature by writers such as Camus, Kafka, or Kertész. There is a need for individuals – and groups – to continuously and actively define and redefine themselves, on both the personal and collective level.

Identity is formed both intra-personally (through psychological and biophysical processes) and interpersonally in processes of socialisation and internalisation.

4.4.2 Sociological approach

Additionally to the above author’s arguments, I argue here that there is an even more accentuated need for doing it in situations when the individual or group feels threatened by external conditions, which has often been the case with Hungarians during the 20th century. To strengthen internal cohesion, there is an experienced, or imagined, use for solidarity, loyalty and devotion through glorification of the ‘*sociocentric sacred*’⁴⁹, correlated with *status hostilis* (enmity sentiments) towards outgroups. If the differentiation among ingroups and outgroups⁵⁰ is accelerated, the outcome is described as ‘*ethnocentrism*’⁵¹. Individual and collective identities are nevertheless classifications (class, gender, nationality, race) also created by the relationship with ‘the other’ (outsiders, strangers).

The “*necessity of strangers*” as G. Simmel puts it, formulates identity. McIver (2003: 45) discusses the dynamics and development of a national identity when describing the Irish national identity, which in certain aspects can be compared to the Hungarian national identity,



in so far that it partly has been formed in opposition to *'other nations'*⁵². The author argues that the dynamics of the relationship with *'the other'* is crucial to the development of identity and thus also to the utilisation of e.g. the national identity, whereas *'the other'* exists in the literature and discourse on nationalism and national identity as an *"implicit assumption"* (Triandafyllidou, 1998:593). The metaphor of *'sea'* and *'land'* by McIver, can be used to describe the interplay between the self and the other. It is the movement resulting in friction, explaining the interdependence and influence of those on one another, which makes sea and land to each other's conditions. One cannot exist without the other. Identity is born in this interplay between the self and the other, just as Somer discussed in her relationist theory.

Ivar Neuman points out the importance of friction, the mutual dependence between national members and the others, by arguing that *'ethnic groups'*, which are parts of a nation, *'were reproduced by the very maintenance of the boundaries that separate them from other groups'* (Neumann 1999:4), arguing that the relationship between *'the self'* and *'the other'* should be studied thorough the boundary. Boundaries are in other words necessary to maintain differences between different groups. The friction with *'the other'*, or perhaps the existence of *'the other itself'*, is a necessary condition to sustain (national) identity and the concept of nation, it *'provide[s] us with more unmistakable signs of nations than the direct attempts by national citizens to imagine their own national communities'* (Hedetoft, 1995:91).

My point is that the concrete identity of *'outsiders'* is not essential; essential is the concept of *'outsider'* defined by the individual or the group against who they can limit themselves. With other words, it is necessary to have the *'other'* for establishing own identity in all cases. The *'outsider'* can be represented by a place, a region, a territory or a country, just as well as by other humans. The means for creating both the self and the other (outsider, stranger) are narratives, which change over time. The narratives created are result of conscious or unconscious psychological developments or choices in respond to a given context surrounding the individuals providing living conditions for the individual or the group. The aim of narratives, which are created to maintain individual and group identities and target the maintenance of cohesion of a whole community, use special tools. One such tool is memory.

4.5. Memory

Memory has always been an important factor in people's identity forging and preservation; i.e. in their national identity⁵³ forging and the affiliations thereof - and they still continue to influence in our time. Collective (historical) memory is often used in nationalistic ideology with the aim of strengthening ingroup⁵⁴ identity within the nation. It generates boundaries



between ingroup members and outgroup members by which the different social groups define and differ themselves from others. This is very much the case in connection with the Hungarian ethnic groups; memory is kept alive on a personal and individual level by families and by political means on the official level. Hungarians use memory for establishing a common historical and cultural past to motivate a common future and to maintain the idea of national unity under a diaspora situation. This is the only way, as I see it, to explain the ‘*transborder-national*’ Hungarian identity preservation efforts.

The memory of one Hungarian nation, one Hungarian country and one Hungarian cultural and historical heritage has been maintained by goal-oriented discourses during the 20th century, sometimes covertly, in private, sometimes overtly, by official help, depending on the historical context surrounding the Hungarians. I begin with dividing memory into two categories: one psychological and one sociological and discuss it from these viewpoints.

4.5.1. Psychosocial view on memory

The past, or history, or the relation to the past, is an important pillar of identity and a unifying element of keeping a community together. Therefore to relate to the past (history) is a natural common activity both for the whole community, and it is an important element for the individual, thus shaping both the collective and individual identity of people. Social self-identification is connected to the common, shared memories of a community, thus also establishing linkage to history. It is essential for a community to remember and to share common memories to secure continuation for the community but also to strengthen group identity and cohesion, because in case of internal or external confrontations, the recollection of historical events serves as a group identity-strengthening device. This kind of dynamics can be found, to a greater or lesser extent, in all societies that are built on a heterogeneity of groups (professionals, political preferences, economic interests), and even more so in societies with a multiple ethnic population. In such case, references to the cultural differences are known to be exploited for the reproduction of group identities. It is also good to keep in mind that when it comes to remembering, it is just as well important to remember, as it is to forget. It is worth pointing out in connection with forgetting, that only those parts of the past (memories) will be forgotten that have no referential frames in our presence.

However, collective memory is reconstructive; it is constantly reframing itself applying the reforming referential frames for itself. In social sciences and also during the last decades in socio-psychology a special approach has been developed to deal with the analysis of social and historic knowledge, namely the study of narratives. Hayden White⁵⁵ argues that historical



events are not real because they happened, but first of all because they were considered worth while remembering and telling, thus finding their natural place in a chronological order of events. There is an agreement on the fact that societies need their past to be able to define themselves and their future.

Nevertheless, memory is not objective and one has to remember that to keep the memory of the past alive, one applies a selective memory, both consciously and unconsciously. Furthermore, memory is also interpretative and conjuring, always in the service of a certain purpose. Halbwach⁵⁶ claims, following Durkheim's theory on memory being socially determined, that it is necessary to find referential frames for a society to remember. People need to fix their memories and reactivate them whenever need be. Memory is always individual, but a collective pledges the referential frame, and when we state that collective itself has no memory, we must consider that a collective is necessary because it is the collective that influences the memory of its members. Thus even the most individual memory will be conceptualised in the interaction and communication within the frame of a social group.

Group members remember their interactions with others and they also recall the narratives they hear from other group members, thus acquiring experience in the framework of meanings, which have social relevance; '*No memory without perception*', as argued by the French historian Pierre Nora who also sees collective memory and the historical knowledge (value system and world outlook) that derives from it as a construction.

Memory is, in short, the dynamic product of human groups, always developing, changing in the dialectic of remembering and forgetting. Memory can hide for longer times and reappear when there is a need. Memory is multiple: there are as many memories as there are collectives. Memory is multiplying, collective, pluralistic and at the same time individualistic, it has roots in space and in time, it is conceptualised as pictures and objects; and it is absolute. To remember, one must find its locality; to remember it is possible only if there are means ('*lieux de memoir*', as P. Nora calls them, referred to by Krulic), which Gábor Gyóni⁵⁷ specifies as follows: "*Places of remembering are created in the intersection of the lived and spontaneously working memory (i.e. traditions) and history (reconstructed past) in a moment, when there still is ground for building up the wanted and wished historical memory.*" Memory and history are linked together, they strengthen each other, and thus they have relevance in group identity and consciousness building in a society. To establish the range of memory is not easy; especially the memory of a collective. One can generally state that a living memory, which relies on direct experience, has a coverage of 70-80 years prior to an event; while by using history in education, it can reach as long as up to 150 - 180 years⁵⁸ back in time. That would give an



explanation to the fact that certain historical events from the past might influence the ideological framework of presence. Examples for this fact will follow further on.

4.5.2. Sociological view on memory

Memory from a sociological viewpoint has been focusing on two main categories of memory: the individuality and collectivity. Beginning with Halbwach's study, memory has served in the study of relativity of historical knowledge (mainly from the 70s), with stress on 'collective' memory and its strategic use in connection with history and its interpretations. In this context I particularly find the focus on *remembrance* and *handing down* of memories (Lavabre, 1994)⁵⁹ useful for the Hungarian case. As an important corner stone in discussing memory from sociological point of view is its link to *nation* (Italic by me), whereas memory is often called 'collective' because it is national. Lavabre tries in her article to answer the question of how collective memory acts upon individual representations, an important question, containing various parts (used by Hungarians as well) such as commemoration, monument, political and controversial/strategic use of the past and also remembrance of personal or handed-down experience. Lavabre's definition on 'collective memory' is how memory is used by the Hungarian collectivities. She defines 'collective memory' as 'historical memory', or 'common memory' "of what has been experienced in common" (ibid.).

In this sense, the memory kept alive through discourse for Hungarians serves as an instance of recollection of commonly endured events, and it has both spatial and temporal dimensions; and it is conveyed as "*events of communication*" in inter-individual situations, *handing down memories*⁶⁰ to each other. These events constitute the reality of social groups. Groups, parties, associations and other representatives of the individual can carry this way the notion of 'nation' further. Articles by P. Jedlowski (published on the *Internet*⁶¹), dealing with the sociology of memory, adds another relevant point to the two above mentioned memory categories (individual and collective): i.e. the category of *cultural attitudes* towards memory.

If one would to describe unity among Hungarians, then it is the issue of cultural attitude that would come first to the mind: the pride the members take in their cultural background is common for all Hungarians; and this is conveyed in the social discourse among Hungarians confirming familiarity and common understanding on individual and common identities⁶² and a common homeland. This strategy aims at achieving national coherence.

4.6. Home and Homeland

In connection with a transborder state, I refer to my previous study within sociology meeting with the concept of 'home', which might be recalled in the case of Hungarians in



Central Europe searching in space (and time) for establishing a home, which for some of them might only be a fictive (virtual) construct. It is not unusual that when asked some Hungarians, they confess to the fact that they have a citizenship and a actual homeland in one country, and a national belonging in another, and to complicate things, they confess, that their 'real' homeland is Hungary⁶³.

4.6.1. Theoretical view of home

According to Somerville's classification (Somerville, 1992: 530-533) of various dimensions of 'home', words such as shelter, hearth, heart, privacy, roots, abode and paradise⁶⁴ comes to the mind, as it is very much the situation with the Hungarian ethnic groups – as I see it – living in various places in Central Europe. Cangbai⁶⁵ and Siu-lun give an interesting example of how Chinese people construct a 'home' using compounds of different 'old', experienced or fictive (imagined) homes in Indonesia. This might also be remembered in the case of Hungarian minorities living outside the mother land, recalling the 'old' times, and 'old' home(land) experienced together, through memory.

Further reference can be made in connection with the concept of home to Easthope⁶⁶ who discusses a "*place called home*" used within geography, who are concerned with the concept of 'place' in general and 'home' in particular. Heidegger⁶⁷ and Bourdieu⁶⁸, both arguing for the importance of relationship between place (space) and people with relevance to identity. Massey⁶⁹ argues that place is a social construction as it is the people who 'make places'. In Massey's conceptualised 'home' the notion of boundedness, settlement and coherence is threatened in an "*increasingly unstable and uncertain world*" (Massey, 1995:48) of "*stretched out*" social relationships. All these influence people's identity, she claims. I feel also Massey's arguments are useful in relevance to transborder Hungarians: because of their 'home-coming' (not necessarily physically moving to Hungary), and the feeling of 'joining the family' and 'finding at last at home', as the arguments go.

Massey⁷⁰ distinguishes between 'rootedness' (unselfconscious *homeness*⁷¹) and 'sense of place' in connection with the concept of 'home', ambiguous images for some Hungarians as the concept of home often connects to the idea of 'homeland', which is a category of its own for Hungarian minorities. In rhetoric, one often uses the expression 'coming home' when Hungarian minorities argue for their right to consider Hungary as their 'real' homeland. In other words Hungary is an imagined, desired, virtual homeland, where they have placed their sanctuary. I find, that Easthope's 'home' as a psycho-social and a socio-spatial entity, where people find their ontological *security*, and a safe identity with stimulation applies for many



Hungarians, especially those, who wished to 'join' the family and move to Hungary when it became possible (after 1989) looking for the *Gemeinschaft* and familiarity of being at home. Also some of Mallet's emotional and personal features⁷² ('home' as 'real and ideal', 'actual and remembered' '*home and haven*', '*home and family*', '*being at home*' (in the world⁷³) can be recalled here (mentioned by Easthope in her article). Aspects of linkage between '*home, self, identity and being*' are given in the context of Hungarian minorities who have been 'home'-seeking for the past 90 years.

4.6.2. Features in Hungarian home-building

There is one feature that makes the Hungarian's transborder home-finding case particular, pointed out by Stewart's study⁷⁴. He and his team argue that the special aspect is that the initiative for acting comes from the motherland (1992) and it was decided on the political level⁷⁵, even though the arguments have always been carefully stressing on the cultural-nation aspect. The idea of embracing the minorities was wholeheartedly supported by the Hungarian minorities in the successor countries, together with the core-Hungarians, both sides establishing institutions to make things happen. The strongest arguments for a '*re-union*' were on the one side political: the unjust Trianon Treaty, on the emotional level there was the common Hungarian identity manifested in language.

With that in mind, it was an unexpected result we saw in the voting of the Hungarian core nation, declaring in a plebiscite in December 2004, that they did not wish to legalise the relationship with *Hungarians-beyond-the-border*. One can interpret the result, that the people, who voted⁷⁶, gave expression to their belief that the linguistic and ethnic relationship already established should be adequate and there was no need for further deepening.

4.7. Ethnicity

One talks about ethnicity⁷⁷ when there are at least two ethnic groups in a society: one in majority, which than is not considered as ethnic, while the other, the minority group is spoken about as an '*ethnic group*'.

Ethnicity is seen as a rather modern concept⁷⁸. The first entry in the Oxford English Dictionary is from 1972, nevertheless, the word was used by David Reisman in 1952, for the first time.(ibid). The word *ethnos* (derived from Greek *ethnikos*) meaning *heathen* or *pagan* is nevertheless much older and has been used to describe different, mostly inferior social groups in societies (Italians, Jews, Irish, etc.), such as the American one. Ethnicity, generally speaking, is often linked to a common origin; while e.g. Hobsbawm argues that this aspect is irrelevant, because the essential basis (social organisation) for an ethnic group is cultural, not



biological (1997: 85). Nevertheless, he gives allowance to the *Magyars* in Europe to call themselves an ‘*ethnic society*’ already in the 11th century, owing to the fact that they originated (or they were said to be) from tribes in Central Asia, they spoke a language that was unique in the surroundings and they lived on a specific ecologic environment (ibid, p. 86).

In sociology and social anthropology, there was little attention directed towards it to begin with – with the acceptance of M. Weber (‘*Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*’, 1922) speaks of ‘*ethnic groups*’ as being human groups with a subjective belief in a common descent, owing to similarities in physical attributes or customs, or both and they form a group on basis of their believes, without relevance if there was any objective blood relationship existed within the members of group. On the contrary, ethnic membership (*Gemeinsamkeit*) is built on presumed identities. In his terminology, ‘*language group*’ is also pointed out as an important factor, as a bearer of a specific “*cultural possession of the masses*” (*Massenkulturgut*), making mutual understanding (*Verstehen*) possible or easier. Ericson argues further that besides religious belief, which is consanguinity-independent and community of language, the differing perception of the conduct of everyday life are important to maintain ethnic differentiation. According to him:

“Wherever the memory of the origin of a community by peaceful secession or emigration /.../ from a mother community remains for some reason alive, there undoubtedly exists a very specific and often extremely powerful sense of ethnic identity, which is determined by several factors: shared political memories or, even more importantly in early times, persistent ties with the old cult, or the strengthening of kinship and other groups, both in the old and the new community, or anther persistent relationships. Where these ties are lacking, or once they cease to exist, the sense of ethnic group membership is absent, regardless of how close the kinship may be.” (Ibid, p 29.)

Common language, customs, traditions, economic conduct, external factors (clothes), housing, food, division of labour between the sexes, family patterns and religious beliefs are part of the performance of ethnic affinity; whereas these ascribe the correctness of behaviour within the groups and decide acceptability (by *group honour*, or *Massenehre*) and belonging. By that it is also easier to maintain the status of a group and exclude others. From here, the step is not too long to the concept of ‘special’ or ‘chosen’ people (Ericson, p 37). Later, the anthropological and sociological definitions have been extended and changed manifold, but so far there is an agreement that the colloquial meaning of ‘ethnicity’ have a ring of ‘ethnic minority issues’ and they refer to certain aspects of relationships between social groups which regard themselves, or are regarded, as culturally distinctive. Weber’s and Ericson’s view and definitions are highly relevant in connection with Hungarians, who draw on religion, language, folklore, culture (folk dances and songs), representatives of ‘a common Hungarian literature’, traditions, common historical events, etc. which have bearing on our case.



4.8. *Minority concepts*

Most nation-states have a heterogeneous population, which can be divided into different groups: one being the majority and several others, building national minority groups (or nation, see end-notes⁷⁹, not necessarily counted in numbers). To end up as minority in a society is not an act of God, often it is the result of act of people, of political decisions, whereas the minority has restricted right to express itself. It is often a negative experience to belong to a minority: resulting in problematic, eroding identities in changing societies.

Thus, transborder Hungarians have developed double minority identities: they are minority in their homeland (with a different ethnic background), and they are seen as minorities by core-Hungarians (nevertheless, believed to be sharing the same ethnic and linguistic background.). Once finding oneself in minority status, it is not easy to change it, unless not emigrating or starting an armed uprising (guerrilla war, revolution, civil war), but then the price might be too high. There is also the possibility to turn to greater powers for arbitration⁸⁰, but this seldom results in satisfactory solutions (example is Hungarian minorities and the EU⁸¹). For groups once building a majority becoming minority can lead to conflicts⁸² and it can constitute to the loss of self-respect, self-esteem and identity, if the worse comes to the worse. The question now is either to maintain status quo or to do something about the situation of the ‘Hungarian-Hungarian issue’ by undergoing modifications, which are considered necessary to reconcile the animosity sensed in the Carpathian Basin after the time spread after WWI. The overall goal is still to keep the cultural control over Hungarians living in Diaspora.

4.8.1. *Diaspora minority*

One special branch of minority is diaspora minority. Diaspora originates from the Greek *dia-* (‘across’) and *-sperien* (‘to sow or scatter seeds’), originally referred to displaced communities of people who had been dislocated from their own home nation, or state, or from their original geographical location of origin. (Durham Peters, quoted in Braziel & Mannur, 2003: 1), meaning ‘*disperse*’, and it has been used for describing ‘*scattered*’ or ‘*spread people*’, i.e. people who for one or another reason had to leave their homeland or the part of the world they consider as their homeland. One definition of minority explains migrant minority groups as living in host countries, still preserving their strong emotional and practical bonds to the state of origin, which they regard as their homeland (discussed by Sheffer quoted in Braziel and Mannur). Diaspora people live in different kinds of groups and in different societies. The original meaning of the word was used in ideological, ethical and theological senses, especially in connection with describing the Jewish people who had been living without a homeland for thousands of years⁸³. Today’s use and usability of the word is differing greatly from the



original meaning: it has become a metaphor for the temporal and spatial mobility of people, providing a new context for its possible interpretations.

4.8.2. *Diaspora-research*

Diaspora-research in general has become the focus of many research activities during the last two decades and with the globalisations and internationalisation of the world, the discourse has become more and more versatile. The category of diaspora has become central in this kind of research, often forgetting to take into consideration the semantic changes the word has recently undergone, thus neglecting to reflect on the breach between the modern semantic use and meaning of the word and the traditional historic meaning of it, which I find important to note. There is also an imaginative side to it, which cannot be neglected when discussing diaspora-existence. The gap is made up by the image of diaspora-existence people have in mind and the experienced diaspora-existence. Today, diaspora embraces situations of various kinds; such as the description of transborder, national, ethnic and cultural spaces and the meaning of non-uniform and partial identities. The American-Armenian researcher Khachig Tölölyan⁸⁴ gives a good understanding of how the word ‘*diaspora*’ is interpreted and used today⁸⁵. There is also criticism against this wide use of the word stressing on the importance on research on diaspora theorising, mostly because diaspora forces us to rethink the rubrics of nation and nationalism while refiguring the relations of citizens and nation-states; but also because “*diaspora offers myriad, dislocated sites of contestation to the hegemonic, homogenizing forces of globalisation*”. International migration has reshaped the map of Europe after WW2. The interest for diasporas has apparently two main driving engines today: one is the globalised postcolonial and post-communist world and the migrant and ethnic movements that are part of it, creating newer diasporas all the time. The other one is the ‘*construction*’ of new societies, which take place in the receiving countries where the new diasporas bring along new identities, influencing the receiving state.

4.8.3. *Migration and diaspora*

Some common facts still exist in the various ideas about diaspora; one being diaspora as result of migration: i.e. leaving one place for another. This is not always true: a good example for it is the Hungarians living in Slovakia, in the Czech Republic or in Moldavia. Another common idea is that in all diaspora situations people have a special relationship to the receiving country and they have a feeling of loss of the homeland manifested in a lifelong longing to olden times. Time and space get restructured: the beginning of time is set to the time



of leaving the old country, or arriving to the new place where a new life evolves with new realities, having nothing to do with the life lived before the departure.

5. Hungarian collectivity expressed

In addition to the above-described fraction of traditions, there are also texts representing the collectivity of Hungarians, which are consciously utilised in order to keep memory and in the service of community preservation. Discourse is organised and structured, using the media in all forms: i.e. radio broadcasts, TV-programs for Hungarians, which by the help of satellite and antenna dishes can be received all over the whole world. The advantages with *Internet* have been recognised by many for the purpose. I have chosen some of the discourses from the *Internet* and I intend to make a selection of them.

5.1. Discourse instruments

In this section some of the discourses characteristic for Hungarian discourses will be presented. The discourses on the Internet contain various aspects of everyday social life. They will be categorised in accordance with their content discussing scientific, cultural⁸⁶, (religious, educational, folklore), political and economic aspects of everyday life within the region and outside, wherever Hungarians live and work. They use national (cultural) symbols and myths, which play an important role in the maintenance of national belonging despite geographic separation. The aim is to embrace – and by that involve – all Hungarians in the information on what is going on within the community. Collective memory is maintained by using narratives and discourses of high days and working days alike; using references to the commonly shared historical, political, demographic, geographic and cultural past, including memorial days (birth-, death days of celebrities and important Hungarians from all parts of the Diaspora), national days, national symbols, religious festivals. N.B.: national days and symbols refer to the core-Hungarian ones commemorated by Hungarians in their host countries – not always an appreciated act by their host nations.

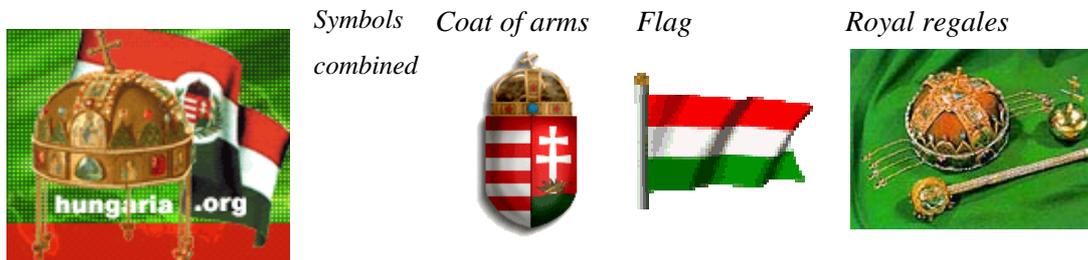
5.2. National, cultural symbols

By the help of *Internet* the national, cultural and geographic symbols are frequently utilised to serve collective memory in a space shared by coexisting alien and kin national majority and minority groups. The use of symbols show how socially construed reality is reflected in the use of connecting commonly recognised, familiar items. Individual and group reiterate and continue the multi-thread story, which is the result of the often-narrated history whereby individuals specify themselves as members of one – or the other – ethnic and national



community. I do not see it possible to judge if they are true or right; here I only intend to demonstrate their use and effect.

- *Instruments used: Symbols, Discourses*



The most profoundly honoured symbols of Hungarians are presented here: combined, from the title page of a Hungarian home page on the *Internet*, and then separately. They can be found in various contexts and relevance, whenever the attention of Hungarians is needed.

They are combined by various memorabilia: such as historic symbols of a once great Hungarian kingdom by using a third Hungarian symbol, the symbol of sovereignty: the Holy Crown of Saint Stephen⁸⁷. These symbols are used worldwide on important occasions by all Hungarians; also on the *Internet* (see above). Similarly important symbols are the national anthem⁸⁸, and the Summon; both products (texts and music) of the Romantic era, when the status of Hungarian language was established. Hungarians in all parts of the world sing them today at national celebrations.

- *The Turul bird*

The *turul* is a mythical creature, a griffin, a bird that has been part of the myth of origin, the ‘ur-mother’ symbol of the nation, as legend has it. The *turul* is used in many regions, where Hungarians live. These places serve almost as hedonic meeting places for Hungarians. The *turul* monument on the picture is from a village in Romania, but *turul* is to be found also in other countries in Central Europe⁸⁹.



5.3. Categories of Discourse

The whole Hungarian conglomeration uses discourse strategies in one or another form. Discourses may be categorised in different ways: I categorise them in accordance with their



content and speak of: folklore, scientific, religious, cultural, political, and social discourse. They are not always clean cut categories, they more or less float, but there are some tendencies we can observe. Especially social issues are behind many of the topics published on the net. Here below follows a short summary of the content of some of the discourse categories. The various discourses draw upon the common understanding of the discussed matters; touching upon social realities of Hungarians in their ‘homes’: i.e. human right issues, such as ethnic minority discrimination, through limited language use and educational obstacles, employment conditions, and religious discrimination.

- *Folklore*

Because folklore has such an importance as an identity reinforcing power in the common Hungarian discourse, I chose to classify it as a category of its own. Folklore motives are frequently utilised by Hungarians in diaspora, still strongly linked and insisting to their cultural folklore traditions: both folk songs and dances are an intrinsic part of the Hungarian culture: especially on the rural and archaic parts in Transylvania, Seklerland⁹⁰ and other regions they serve as identity preserving instruments⁹¹. There is of course the imperative of the intellectual heritage of the *Volkkultur* (*népi kultúra*), left by Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, Hungarian icons in music history.



Woman in traditional costume- Moldavia



Dressing the bride – Transsylvania

The memories of historical defeats⁹² are honoured, so are the religious festivals when traditional costumes are worn⁹³. These items and traditions serve as identity reinforcing devices; kind of manifests to establish ethnic belonging. Most Hungarians are proud of their traditions and they perform traditional songs and dances, and many play archaic instruments as well, at cultural activities.

- Scientific discourse

The scientific discourse has been dominated by the historic discussions of post-socialistic discourse in all the Central European countries after 1989, dealing with the problems of socialistic and transitional problems; represented by metaphors of ‘lost history’, or ‘return to...’ – whatever stage it might have been in history. Also ‘redemption’, ‘restitution’,



'objective historical justice', 'reality' and similar questions have addressed the the 'Hungarian-Hungarian issue'. A great deal of research within the Hungarian ethnic community deals with the research of Hungarian national and ethnic identity and its manifestations. Through ethnographic, sociolinguistic and sociological studies scholars have tried to follow up the state of Hungarian identity⁹⁴; grappling with diaspora-problems and the declining Hungarian consciousness in the Carpathian Basin. Scientific achievements from different parts of the Basin, and from the Western diasporas, are presented on the *Internet*.

- Religious discourse

I consider it important from the Hungarian identity viewpoint even if religion is of varying importance for Hungarians living in different environments. There is one unifying factor among Hungarians in the Carpathian basin, the Catholic Church. Some of the Hungarian groups live among people with a Greek or Russian orthodox faith, and their only identification marker is the Roman Catholic religion (Moldova, Romania), because language is no longer spoken. The majority of core-Hungarians belongs to the Catholic church (around 70 percent), even though the religious affiliation has been weakened already during the socialistic era. This process accelerated during secularised and economically focused life preferences⁹⁵ of the transition period. Still, there is a certain appreciation of the religious values among the population: ethical and moral references are often drawn with the background of the Church. Peripheral transborder-Hungarians have stronger religious affiliations⁹⁶.

- Cultural discourse

The cultural field, seen as a less harmless one from a political point of view, was tolerated as an ethnic marker even under socialism in Central and Eastern Europe in communicating identities. It is the most often utilised field for Hungarians to lift afore their common ethnic belonging⁹⁷, after language. National (ethnic) identity supporting, or weakening devices, such as language, education, theatre, arts, religious affiliations, and other, both high-cultural and folklore products are seen as part of the Hungarian cultural (folklore) heritage and a part of that is to be found abroad (not accessed by all). Most of these areas were neglected or strongly inhibited during the past 50 years: especially branches linked to language were problematic area. There is lack of understanding, not because of lack of common words, but because of a discourse or rhetoric that has been developing on their own, in differing environments during the past 90 years. It is a language contaminated by other thoughts and words (loans from other languages) and in lack of education in Hungarian and lack of everyday usage of the language sociolinguists today cry for help because in their opinion, Hungarian outside Hungary is going



to meet a sad end. The threat of Hungarian diminishing, and by that the whole Hungarian nation diminishing is overhanging, if one can believe the reports of scholars with sociological content. This aspect leads us to the political discourse, because this is used to express these fears.

The on-line publication *Kisebbségkutatás* [Minority research] issued from Hungary has a versatile presentation of all kinds of cultural (literary, research, folklore, etc.) articles introducing writers, poets, and researchers from the diaspora environment.

- Political discourse

Within this field both central (core-Hungarian) and peripheral (minority-Hungarian) actions are listed. It is highly institutionalised: both in Hungary and in all of the surrounding states, there are hundreds of organisations and foundations dealing with the ‘*magyar-magyar*⁹⁸’ relations. Meetings on regular basis are organised, where also members of the majority state are invited to participate. It has been a roller-coaster area since 2000, when the Hungarian National Assembly accepted the so-called Status Law⁹⁹. Closely linked, issues of human rights¹⁰⁰ are frequently discussed; mainly with regard to language use but also other aspects are relevant¹⁰¹.

The discourse on human rights issues used towards Hungarians fills the role to some extent; nevertheless, it does not always reaches the wished reaction. It has met negative reactions both from the host countries (speaking of political meddling with internal affairs), and the EU, (not wanting any disturbances either with regard to the older member states (West), or the newly joining states (Slovakia, Hungary) or the future member states (Croatia, Romania). The reaction from West seems to reassure the Hungarian notion that West is not interested in matters of ethnic nature.

5.3. Evaluation of the effect of discourse

With regard to discourse, today we meet more and more the monopoly of discursivity: monology as S. Dentith¹⁰², and M. Holmquist¹⁰³ put it, which together with cognitive closure, aims at concentrating ideas and beliefs to make common action possible. In the use of this kind of discourse the language of symbols have great value. Nevertheless, symbols lose their power after a while and if one cannot substitute them, they might disappear. Some of the strongest symbols of our time have disappeared¹⁰⁴ already and their substitution is not manageable. A powerful tool used in discourse is myths (Kosovo in Serbia, Transylvania in Hungary), whereas hegemony of concept is built up which becomes impossible to deny in the long run (‘*crowding out by presence*’). The power of metaphors is well known; these are also used



frequently in the Hungarian discourse (blood, borders of a thousand year, family, or common places), which in most of the cases is understood by all of the members of the group, but sometimes its original meaning has become lost for some of them. In that case, it is not easy to feel that all that claim to be Hungarians are like ‘us’.

The Hungarian nation-uniting discourse has been positively received¹⁰⁵ by the Hungarian society (with a positive sociological affect) to a certain extent, but not entirely. The reasons for its failing to the extent the designers¹⁰⁶ hoped for are mostly social; fear of migration, fear of loss of work has made it hard for Hungarian kin-migrants to establish themselves in Hungary, while it might be seen as a political failure. But there might be other explanations for the failure of discourse. Here below I shall make some comments and interpretations on how I see the discourse at action.

Reflections

“We need a shared world, a world in which we exist by virtue of shared interests rather than mutual alienation, to which we can bring our chosen commitments and hopes.”

‘The New Nomads’, by Eva Hoffman¹⁰⁷

This is the main driving force behind the project of reunification of Hungarians. Examining the less successful result so far (with the plebiscite result from 2004 in mind), one can ask the question, why that is so, when the motives are ideal¹⁰⁸ and the means of execution and the goals that have been accepted by a majority of core-Hungarians 2001 so positively? What has happened in the two years, between 2001 and 2004 that changed the Hungarians opinion so significantly?

There might be various reasons for the project of ‘reunification’ of the Hungarians not bringing about the desired results. One of them, I find, rests in the term itself. Reunification applies an underlying notion of once being united; then separated, and now being led back to a state when the parts were acting as one. This is not the case with Hungarians for various reasons. First, the Hungarian nation has always been heterogeneous and its ‘ethnic’ parts with Hungarian background (kinspeople) have always been living separated from each other (Moldavian, Transylvanian Hungarians and core Hungarians). Second, the project is kept on the ‘cultural level’, as the option of geo-political changes is void (no border-changing actions would be tolerated) in Europe today. Third, the time and space gap is much too big to be able to override it

The Hungarian national feeling strengthening discourse could be described to answer the Weberian ‘triade’ of *moderation, responsibility and commitment* (Leidenschaft¹⁰⁹; his term) at



least if we consider it from the Hungarians' part. It is not the case if we ask the neighbours¹¹⁰; they might not agree to the first concept at least. There are political motives behind this fact. Considering the discourse itself, there are various reasons for why the national discourse has not been successful as hoped for by the bearers of the idea.

One reason might be, as discussed in the introduction, that all kind of Eastern European discourse, which can be characterised as an ethnocentric/nationalistic discourse, is seen with great suspicion in the world around us. It is so partly because of the traditions of Western view on nationalism, partly because of the atrocities on the Balkan during the 90s. Also power distribution contributes and in this aspect, language plays an important role, as contested by many. I am convinced of the fact that language plays an important role in establishing, maintaining and reproducing power. Language is used to explain and inform in a way that all people can understand the message and it is used to delete incoherencies and chaos in society: i.e. to strengthen power¹¹¹.

To '*fight for compatriots*' became part of the official political¹¹² discourse in Hungary, represented first by the conservative liberals, later by the young liberals taking charge in 1998. We know from practice, that systems that become much too open, driving strongly towards one side, often become a problem. When the discourse becomes more like a monology than a dialog, coherence gets threatened (Schöpflin, 2000). I feel, this is the case with the Hungarian discourse: economical considerations, globalisation and socio-political realities (pragmatism) dominate.

Additionally, the quality of discourse might also add to the change in ideology and behaviour. The discourse used as tool includes concepts (revision of the *Trianon Treaty*, changing conditions for Hungarian ethnic minorities living in other countries, or create unity among the spread parts of the '*Hungarian nation*') that are seen as abstractions by many Hungarians today, after 90 years of separate political and cultural realities. Not everybody understands them now and not all Hungarians care. The generation that grew up with the direct affects of the partition in 1920 is old or gone; the next coming generation has been fed with the ideas of socialist internationalism and the young generation of today does not take the arguments seriously and they have problems of their own.

The situation can be likened with the case of Western citizens meeting Eastern European phenomenon such as ethnic conflicts, or references to great deeds in the past¹¹³. This applies also for the Hungarian conglomerate as a whole: core Hungarians have difficulties with the expression of too emphasised Hungarianness (ethnocentrism), which is one of the most



important arguments from the ‘*peripheral*’ transborder Hungarians (‘*screening out by absence*’).

Another important impact of the discourse to consider is, in my opinion, – considering the present real-political conditions - the eventual outcome of a re-united nation: geo-politically dispersed, with 86 years separate political, cultural and social development in different countries, the difficulties are great. The ‘*Hungarian-Hungarian issue*’ also involves the interests of other countries and nations, which makes the situation extra sensitive.

Still, when speaking of the discourse production – on the net and otherwise - of the members of the ‘*Hungarian nation*’, one might believe that there actually are common issues for the different groups of Hungarians. It is just the direction of endeavours and focus of goals that are slightly different. If the discourse has any future effect one can speculate; it all depends – and it might be followed up by later research - if the owners of power can secure the reproduction of readability for all of the members.



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Periodicals Books and the Internet

- Bécsi Napló (Paper in Hungarian issued in Vienna, Austria, distributed to Hungarians in the world)
- Híradó (Paper, issued in Bromma, Sweden by the Riksorganisation of Hungarians in Sweden [Central Organisation of Hungarians living in Sweden])
- The Hungarian Quarterly (Literary periodical issued in Budapest, Hungary)
- Magyarok a Világban*. Kárpát medence [Hungarians in the World. Carpathian basin], CEBA, 2000

Internet:

- Various Hungarian pages and other relevant addresses (both in the section of Methodology and listed in the Appendix)
- wangcb@hku.hk
- <http://www.m.stewart@ucl.ac.uk>



End notes

¹ For detailed knowledge on this, please see the study by M. Stewart and S. Fowler (UK, 2000, <http://www.m.stewart@ucl.ac.uk>) on transborder Hungarian citizenship marking the uniqueness of the situation with the motherland making efforts to unite its dispersed minorities, contraire to the usual minority-motherland situation, whereas diaspora minorities try to find ways to hold on to the mother-land.

² Hungary, denominated as the mother-nation or core-nation; Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, the Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia.

³ Bounderies in this paper are not merely geographically separating lines, but lines also cutting through cultural, social and political spheres.

⁴ I here use the Hungarian terminology to include the whole Hungarian community in the Carpathian Basin.

⁵ This has been facilitated by Hungarians themselves: internet subscriptions, home pages, - lately blogs - have been supplied to Hungarian co-nationals in transborder situation either from the mother nation or from the Western diaspora, together with computers, radio and television sets.

⁶ Conflicts like this were also seen in other parts of the world (i.e. Hutu leading the genocide against the Tutsi in Central Africa, in 1990s).

⁷ Zsuzsa L. Nagy "Peacemaking after World War I: The Western Democracies and the Hungarian Question" in Stephen Borsody, ed., *The Hungarians: A Divided Nation* (New Haven, Conn., Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1988), pp. 32-48.

⁸ Many secret agreements between the Allies and the Slavic nationalities on the division of Hungary from 1916 contest to this fact

⁹ As discussed by Béla Pomogáts, in 'Bécsi Napló', XXVII.évfolyam 2. szám, 2006 március-április, pp. 11

¹⁰ The picture was copied by me some ten years ago. It was spread to Hungarians in the world, in the form of a post card by the Hungarian Association of the Netherlands

¹¹ For more information, see: Hungary – Minorities, by [dov gutterman](#)

¹² I refer to the ongoing 'Hungarian-beatings' in Voivodina today, which are open to the world to see. (More information In The Appendix.)

¹³ There are two countries, with which Hungary has had somewhat strained relationship; Czechoslovakia and Romania where the biggest and tightest Hungarian ethnic populations live

¹⁴ A vast literature discusses these questions, both under the socialistic and transition era. I shall only mention some of the Hungarian scholars dealing with the matter. Some are to be found in the edited volume *Ethnicity in Eastern Europe. Questions of Migration, Language Rights and Education*, (ed.) Sue Wright; another discussing the matter is *Kisebbségek-közösségek határon innen és túl, 1988–2002*. by Demeter Zayzon Mária, 2002, BIP; and the third is Gereben Ferenc, *Identitás, Kultúra, kisebbség*, Osiris, 1999,

¹⁵ West with its imperialistic and antidemocratic intrigues was one; support to the third world was another.

¹⁶ In M. Mandelbaum (ed.), *The New European Diasporas. National Minorities and Conflict in Eastern Europe*. Council on Foreign Relations Press, N.Y., 2000, a more detailed description of the Hungarian diaspora is to be found.

¹⁷ While a majority of the Hungarians were excluded from Hungary in 1920, a great number fled into exile in the Western world after the 1956 after the defeat of the uprising against the oppression of the Soviet Union.

¹⁸ Diaspora is used here in the sense Manuer and Schelter defines it – see above.

¹⁹ On the matter of Hungarians becoming minorities in the successor states, see more from Schöpflin *Nation-Identity – Power*, 2000, or Mandelbaum, *European Diasporas*, 2000;

²⁰ In Hungarian terminology people's groups under twenty thousand build Diaspora.

²¹ They have been forcedly moved onto the Czech part of Czechoslovakia from Slovakian parts of the country during the 40s-50s. Their number is very low today and the majority of them is assimilated by now.

²² There is great uncertainty regarding the reliability of statistical data from many of Central European countries.

²³ Source of data as to the number in the various regions: *Magyarok a világban. Kárpát medence*. CEBA Kiadó, 2000. [Hungarians in the world. Carpathian Basin.]. Also see for more approximation the individual group's home pages with self-presentations. Eastern Europe

²⁴ Deborah S. Cornelius, *In Search of the Nation: The New Generation of Hungarian Youth in Czechoslovakia, 1925 – 1931*. Referring to interwar times, yet giving insight into the development of the Hungarian ethnic minorities soon after the closure of the Treaty of Trianon.

²⁵ For more detailed information on the situation of Hungarian minorities in Yugoslavia see Tibor Várady, *Minorities, Majorities, Law, and Ethnicity, Reflections of the Yugoslav Case*

²⁶ Central Europe Review. Gusztav Kosztolanyi: *Erosion or Survival?* Vol 1, No 19, 25 October 1999.

²⁷ The Moldova and Bukovina Csángó Hungarians are the most exciting Hungarian minority groups, which have been living isolated, politically, culturally and linguistically, from the other parts of the Hungarian nation the last three hundred years. Their ethnographic, religious, ethnological, linguistic and etymological background is extremely unique and shows differing features from the Hungarians. They live in highly developed mystical and



mythological traditions (laments, folk songs, sagas, proverbs, dance words, etc.); their ballads, music, narratives with mythological features have already lost their ways in modern societies of today. They have not developed the same Hungarian ethnic and national identity as other Hungarian ethnic groups and identify themselves by religious affiliations (Catholics, so Hungarians). Their language, on the other hand, now on the verge of extinction, is a beautiful, ancient Hungarian. There are a handful of archaic people living in far off Moldavia, in Romania, almost assimilated to Romanian, but some of them still speak this kind of Hungarian from the Middle Ages. They have their roots in, and living conditions on the level of, the Middle Ages.

²⁸ *Magyarok a Világban*, [Hungarians in the World], p. 27

²⁹ The average of older people in the population in the above named four most threatened areas (44,7 %, 29,8 %, 26,3 % . resp. 24,1 %) show the state of older Hungarians' proportion.

³⁰ A term used in Hungarian historygraphy and political sciences.

³¹ 'A modern politikai mítoszok technikája. [Technique of modern political myths.] In *Politikai antropológia*. [Political anthropology] ed. Zentai Violetta, Budapest, 1997, Osiris, Láthatatlan Kollégium, pp.37-50

³² 1. theory of plotting, 2. 'golden age' mythologies, 3. arrival of national heroes and 4. unity myths of lesser-greater communities. Raoul Girardet: *Mythes et mythologies politiques*. Paris, 1986, Seuil, 9-24.

³³ Introduced by the Germans after 1920

³⁴ B. Anderson's imaginery-nation concept. *Imagined Communities*, 2003, VERSO.

³⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 1-36

³⁶ Owing to the strong reactions and conflict threat with some of the nations around Hungary, Hungarians were especially keen on avoiding severing the situation

³⁷ Discourse is used here not only in the linguistic sense as language, concept and text, but also as a sociocultural phenomenon that include symbolic actions, rites, rituals that reflect cultural affiliation, according to which Hungarians organise their concept of national belonging and create coherence and bring order into disorder. In other words, it is a system for thought, reason and action.

³⁸ Foucault (2005:64-70)

³⁹ Foucault, *A diskurzus rendje*. [Order of discourse] Holmi, 1991, július, pp. 868-869,

⁴⁰ Krulic referring to the politologues, Grawitz, M.; Leca, J. In: Baritz In: 'La nation, une idée dépassée?' *Problemes politiques et sociaux*, 1999. 832. no. 1-85. p.

⁴¹ There are different notions of it in the different countries, (e.g. semantic differences, such as in Hung. 'nemzet' used in a cultural sense, vz. Rom. natiun', used in a political sense), but in the majority of the countries there is an agreement that there are differences between the Western European and the Central-, and Easter European concepts.

⁴² More on this topic in Schöpflin, *Nations and Identity*, 2000 chapter 9 Language and Ethnicity in Central and Eastern Europe, pp- 31-34.

⁴³ During the development of nations there was a response to the political, cultural and economic development in the Western European countries during the 19th century. The division in the development of nations has been described by Smith as territorial and ethnic (1986: 130. 134-135); today we often refer to it as political and cultural nation buildings. The difference can be sensed also today; communism did not help to change the situation, on the contrary it merely destroyed certain elements of national consciousness, but not the ethnic dimensions of it. I believe this fact served as a reason why some countries in the region began to develop their post-communist, democratic order on an ethnic basis.

⁴⁴ Suleyman relies on J. Fishman's monography, 'Language and Nationalism' (1971), a highly appreciated source for everyone studying these topics, along with his 'Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity', (ed.), 1999, Oxford UP

⁴⁵ Attila József (1907-1935) is one of the most – according to some, the most - important poets of the 19th century in Hungary.

⁴⁶ M. Somer's theory, followed up by Brubaker. Somers 1994, *The narrative construction of identity. A Relational and Network Approach*. Theory and Society, 23 1994, pp. 605-649.

⁴⁷ In the post-modern world it is agreed upon that there exist various, context-based, constructed multiple identities.

⁴⁸ Weiger, Smith, Teitge & Teitge, 1968:31, quoted by J. Stier, 1998:48.

⁴⁹ Own cosmology, ideology, social myth, or world outlook (Weltanschauung).

⁵⁰ In- and outgroups is discussed in more detail further on.

⁵¹ The term 'ethnocentrism', coined by Sumner in Folkways in 1911, describes a schismatic in-group/out-group differentiation where one group considers another as antagonistic (enemy) which must be fought. (*The Sociobiology of Ethnocentrism*. V. Reynolds, V. Falger, I. Vine (eds.), Croom Helm, 1987.)

⁵² McIver quotes Mac Laughlin, 2001:169) who argues that Irishness "has been forged in opposition to 'big-nation' British nationalism in the course of the nineteenth century".

⁵³ National identity is understood here as a particular kind of collective identity



⁵⁴ Tajfel (1974) argues that the ingroup/outgroup distinction is based on belonging. For individuals it means categorisation according to identity, comparison and psychological distinctiveness to which ingroup members respond. Others suggest that fear for others might have biological origin (Dubos, 1973, Bolles 1979) while McGuire (1969) discussed possible genetic transmission of xenophobia (hate of outgroup members). V. Reynolds, V. Falger, I. Vine (eds.) *The Sociobiology of Ethnocentrism. Evolutionary Dimensions of Xenophobia, Discrimination, Racism and Nationalism*, 1987, Croom Helm, London & Sydney

⁵⁵ Krulic referring to White, 1999

⁵⁶ *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, [The social frameworks of memory], (1925),

⁵⁷ mek.oszk.hu/01300/01327/html/olah4_9.htm

⁵⁸ In her book '*Felébresztett történelem*', [Awakened history], Éva Blénessy provides the reader with a socio-psychological study of memory and its effects on the individual and the collective.

⁵⁹ For the Sociology of Collective Memory Marie-Claire Lavabre, Séléction sur le thème de la mémoire. *Le fil rouge. Sociologie de la mémoire communiste*, Presses de La FNSP, 1994, 319 p.)

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⁶⁰ Originally discussed by M. Bloch in *Introdução à história*. (M. C. Santos, Trad.). Lisboa: Publicações Europa-América. (Original publicado em 1974. (1987).

⁶¹ *Memory and Sociology: Themes and issues*. Cited from: *Time & Society*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 29-44 (2001), 2001 SAGE Publications

⁶² My own investigations point into this direction among Hungarians in diaspora, in Sweden.

⁶³ On account of this fact, the well-known Brubakerian concept of '*extended homeland*' is not applicable in our case

⁶⁴ For a couple of days ago I made an interview with a Transylvanian-Hungarian woman, who used the word "Paradise" when talking about Hungary, a country she knew from the tales of others (family, friends). It was not allowed for Transylvanian-Hungarians to visit Hungary, unless for very serious reasons (burial of close family member), especially during the Ceaucescu-era.

⁶⁵ Cangbai, W. *Home as a Circular Process: A Study of the Indonesian Chinese in Hong Kong*. wangcb@hku.hk.

⁶⁵ In: *A place called home* by H. Easthope, In: *Theory and Society* Routledge, part of the Taylor & Francis Group Volume 21, Number 3 / September 2004

⁶⁶ *A place called home* by H. Easthope, In: *Theory and Society* Routledge, part of the Taylor & Francis Group Volume 21, Number 3 / September 2004

⁶⁷ *Being and Time* [BT]. E. Robinson and J. Macquarrie, trans. Harper New York. 1962.

⁶⁸ Bourdieu, *Social Space and the Genesis of Classes*, 1979.

⁶⁹ H. Easthope, *A Place Called Home*, Housing, Theory and Society, Vol. 21. No. 3

⁷⁰ D. Massey, 'A Place Called Home?' In: (ed.) '*The Question of Home*', New Foundations (Vol. 17), London: Lawrence & Wishart.

⁷¹ Italics by me

⁷² S. Mallett, *Understanding home: a critical review of the literature*. The Editorial Board of *The Sociological Review* 2004. Published by Blackwell Publishing Ltd., Oxford, UK

⁷³ The Transylvanian-Hungarian writer Áron Tamási might be cited here: 'We have been born into the world to be at home in it'. (My translation).

⁷⁴ M. Stewart, '*The Hungarian Status Law: A new European form of Transnational politics?*', WPTC-02-09, Study at the Dept. of Anthropology, University College London

⁷⁵ He argues that in transborder studies they find evidence for the misfortunate minority seeking contact with a more fortunate majority of kinspeople.

⁷⁶ It was a minority of the Hungarian population (34 %) who showed interest

⁷⁷ Ethnicity used as a descriptive concept when defining the self and the other, which gains meaning in social situations – whereas if a social situation becomes permanent, ethnicity also does. See more about ethnicity in T. H. Eriksen, *Etnicitet och nationalism*, Nya Doxa, 2000.

⁷⁸ N. Glazer and D. Moynihan, cited by T. H. Eriksen *Ethnicity, Race, Class and Nation*. In: *Concept of Ethnicity*, 1999, p. 28.

⁷⁹ National minority as defined by the European Parliament, Subcommittee on Human Rights, 25.01.94

Refers to "a group of persons in a state who:

- reside on the territory of that state and are citizens thereof,
- maintain long-standing, firm and lasting ties with that state
- display distinctive ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics,
- are sufficiently representative, although smaller in number than the rest of the population of that state or of a region of that state

are motivated by a concern to preserve together that which constitutes their common identity, including their culture, their traditions, their religion or language"



⁸⁰ The role of EU in this connection should not be exaggerated, even though its policy is significant in an international context. (Geddes, 2003 :4)

⁸¹ So far no concrete evidence has come afore when Hungarians turned to the Eu or UN in human right conflicts. Also in the case of legislation (Status Law) Hungary had to back down instead of getting support when applied for support.

⁸² An good example for changing and losing identities, is the case of Transylvania, when the region, which was divided between Hungary and Romania in 1940 (by the Second Vienna Award), whereas just about equal rations of Hungarian and Romanian minorities were divided by the two central powers Germany and Italy: an unpopular acquisition. Just as it was in accordance with the Trianon treaty when a great majority of Hungarians became a part of another (Romanian) nation. At the end of WWII, the victorious allied powers reverted Transylvania to its interwar state, whereby Romania again became the 'owner' of the multi-ethnic region, while Hungary remained the 'country deprived of her former territories and populations'⁸². The division in Paris, 1920 is called 'Trianon-syndrome', which has been haunting Hungarians ever since, while the overtaking by Hungary in Romania in 1940 has left its marks in Romania. It is not an exaggeration to state, that the Trianon-syndrome has lately been affecting the political and social discourse of All-Hungarians to a greater extent.

⁸³ The Hebrew equivalent is actually *galut*, which has an added meaning of captivity. Research on diaspora by Komoróczy, 1992, Tölölyan, Cohen, Bauman 2000, among others

⁸⁴ 'Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies', 1991.

⁸⁵ He points out the widened semantic meaning of the word, in which different categories, such as immigrants, migrants, expatriates, refugees, guest workers, expelled societies and overseas societies are included.

⁸⁶ Cultural products, such as book publishing, music production, theatre, press, etc., are included here.

⁸⁷ The 'Holy crown' was granted Stephen I. by Pope Sylvester II in the year 1000 to the first Hungarian apostolic king Saint Stephen. He rendered his kingdom and people to the Roman Catholic Church by accepting the crown. The Holy crown proves the unbendable strength of myths: we know it for a fact that the so called 'Holy crown' that Hungary possesses today and which has been held in the greatest sanctimonious respect by Hungarians during the centuries, was manufactured later, around the 13th century and therefore it could not have been the same crown as was sent to Stephen (king between 1000-1038).

⁸⁸ The national anthem (19th c. poem lately supplied by music) turns to God begging not to forsaken Hungarians and aid them in their bad fortunes, while the Summon, originally a 19th c. poem as well, turned lately into a song, with the same status as the national anthem, urges all Hungarians to be faithful to their homeland, where they must live until they die.

⁸⁹ I met a Hungarian youngster from the Ukraine some years ago on a train in Hungary; he was on his way 'home' to his native village from Budapest where he worked. He told me among other things, that there was one single place in his heart, which was the most beautiful, solemn place in the world, where he and his friend can find tranquillity, peace and bonding, when sitting telling stories to each other, while drinking beer together at the '*turul*'-monument just outside his village at the Hungarian-Ukrainian border. I have no doubt in my mind that the legend of the *turul* lives on.

⁹⁰ Peoples living in Hungarian enclave at the what is colloquially referred to as the "borders of one thousand years". in the South-Eastern parts of Romania with a strong Hungarian identification through linguistic and cultural belonging, but an alien genetic and ethnic background (allegedly descendents of the historic people called *petjenegs*),

⁹¹ This mentality is kept alive by many Hungarians in the dance-house movement, also cultivated abroad, among others in Sweden.

⁹² Hungarians have very few victory days to remember from their history; almost all historical memorials are held to the memory of defeats, such as 6th of October, e.g. the defeat of the Jacobine-complotte against the Habsburg dynasty, then the loss in the revolution-war in 1848-49 against Austria and Russia, then revolt of Autumn Aster in 1919, followed by the red Soviet revolt in 1921, and then of course the quintessence of the Hungarian defeats; the classic revolution in 1956 against the Soviet Union with severe losses.

⁹³ Many festivals are characterised by the regional Hungarian outfits (traditional cloths, wearing typical jewellery, religious and national festival attributes, and also various traditional customs during different seasons, such as watering the girls and egg painting at Easter, the procession with the Holy Right on the 20th August, religious processions on highly religious places (following the strong Hungarian Madonna-cult), and then there are the crying songs, funeral and wedding customs, etc., which are cherished by many Hungarians.

⁹⁴ On-line publications can be found through Hungarian pages on the net: www.hungary.hu; or www.mtaki.hu/kisebbsegkutatas or www.nemzetismeret.hu/index.php? or www.filolog.com/crossculture.html, or www.geocities.com-Eureka-8808-shunshor.html; or www.magyarsag.lap; or www.hhrf.org/xantusz/... etc.



⁹⁵ A great deal of analysis on the social development after 1989 is available in various books by Hungarian sociologists and other scholars, see the works by György Csepeli, Mária, Ferenc Gereben, Mária Zayzon Demeter, George Schöpflin, etc., discussing the affect of liberalisation and economic development on society.

⁹⁶ This is specially true for Transylvania, Moldavia and Seklerland (with the major population belonging to the Lutheran church) cultivate their religious beliefs and pay homage to the rites of the Church. In some religious processions to well-known places in Transylvania ten thousands participate every winter in a great procession. People both from Hungary and other neighbouring countries with transborder Hungarian minority travel as pilgrims to these places of the Church in Transylvania. There are also some amazing, old, archaic (Csángó-Hungarian) religious songs from Moldavia spread in Hungarian, printed for the first time during the 90s, showing the strong dedication of the people to the cult of Christ-mother Maria, and the Middle-Age fashioned language of the people living there.

⁹⁷ In this kind of discourse stress on the common origin (the landtaking dynasty: *Álmos-Árpád* line), the mythological ancestry (*turul*, the legend of *Hunor* and *Magor*⁹⁷, *Attila the Hun* and his son *Csaba*), the historic great – or less great – times), and of course the common language, plays an important part. Also important are the writers and poets (the great majority born on the land of Transylvania if one looks back in history), expressing themselves on this highly regarded, unique language, as Hungarians see their mother tongue; their role in official life (educating people) is not less important than their literary values. Therefore it is somewhat disappointing that it seems that to a certain extent it is the common language that keeps the various groups of Hungarians apart.

⁹⁸ Magyar is the ethnonym of Hungarians.

⁹⁹ The Hungarian Status Law aimed at giving certain civic privileges to Hungarians living 'beyond the borders', resulting in an plebiscite where the core-Hungarians rejected the idea of giving extended rights (to settle, to study, to work by issuing a 'Hungarian id' establishing the fact of belonging to the same national unity for the transborder Hungarians (close to citizenship). The Law ratified in 2001, has stirred up a great deal of problem among the peoples of Central Europe. It was not well seen and the Slovakian and Romanian governments, both, launched protests against it considering it as an act that threatened their own majorities. Today the Status Law has been in accordance of the wishes of these governments modified to a great extent, which makes it a rather wishy-washy arrangement.

¹⁰⁰ Within the EU the human rights issue include also the right to mother tongue (native language) in the case of minority rights.

¹⁰¹ There is an urging and problematic human right issue regards Hungarians living in Voivodina, Serbia-Montenegro. The so called 'beatings of Hungarians', mostly of young people, have been going on for some years now, despite reports and protests sent to the EU Parliament and the UN. Reactions from Hungarians from all over the world have been noted. One of them shown in the Appendix came from the Canadian Human Rights watch. By publishing their text on the Hungarian home page on the Internet is serving several goals. First, being in English it gives international weight to the information, which normally does not reach the wider public if, written in Hungarian (as the case often is). Secondly, it refers to previous historical unjust events connected with Hungarians (in ex-Yugoslavia), pointing out that the same kind of discrimination goes on even today against Hungarian ethnic minority people in Serbia-Montenegro. The message is obvious; nothing has changed in regard to Hungarian minorities in the Southern regions.

¹⁰² *Bakhtinian Thought and Introductory Reader*, London, Routledge, 1995

¹⁰³ 'Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World', London: Routledge, 1990

¹⁰⁴ I am thinking of concepts such as the Austrian-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, the tsar, the 'red star', the 'red army', and similar concepts.

¹⁰⁵ In the National Assembly, the Hungarian Status Law was voted through by over 90 % majority.

¹⁰⁶ The liberal parties, membes of the core nation and the great majority of the transborder Hungarians represented by their own organisations, all in favour of the Status law at that time, and let down in the plebiscite (according to the reaction from their part, also contested in the discourse on the net directly after the plebiscite votings in 2004).

¹⁰⁷ A. Acimen (ed.) 'Letters of Transit' Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language, and Loss. The New York Public Library, 1999.

¹⁰⁸ Ideal in a way that the whole 'reunification project' has been planned and executed so far via talks, discussions, meetings, discourses, without causing any major ethnic conflicts in the Carpathian basin, despite the fact that several nations are involved in the process.

¹⁰⁹ Hungarian translation: A politika mint hivatás. [Politics as a Call] 1958)

¹¹⁰ The Hungarian Status Law has caused great distress and resulted in protests from the part of Slovakia and Romania, who saw it as discriminatory against their own ethnic citizens, which meant that the Law had to be changed to include all Romanian citizens.

¹¹¹ Power in this case involves the power of the core nation in Hungary, plus the power of the majorities in the neighbouring countries that also has to be considered..



¹¹² The first freely elected national-conservative Prime Minister, Mr. László Antall (Chairman of Forum of Free Democrats) expressed (2001) openly in the press, that he saw himself 'in spirit, to be the PM of fifteen million Hungarians...' ,which was the triggering fact for the whole re-unification process. The neext election winner party, the socialistic faction toned this policy down, while the liberal party winning the elections in 1998, the Party of Young Democrats, led by Mr. Viktor Orbán (1998 - 2002), strengthened the actions for reunification. Under his period he saw through the Status Law and prepared for the plebiscite on transborder Hungarians' joining the core nation by legal means (identity papers granting certain rights to them), planned for December 2004. He could not follow up the plebiscite in office because the socialistic party had won the elections in the spring 2004 again.

¹¹³ One examplél is the discourse on the 'Saviours of Christianity'-image (Polish and Hungarian) from the 17th century.

