

# Hungarian Minority Politics in Post-Socialist Romania: Interests, Strategies, and Discourses<sup>1</sup>

Tibor TORÓ

Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania  
Department of International Relations and European Studies  
torotibor@sapientia.ro

**Abstract.** This paper analyses the integration strategies formulated by the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania and the Hungarian political elite in the post-communist period. It argues that the internal debates of the political community are formulated in a field where other actors (the Hungarian and the Romanian state, political parties, European institutions, etc.) carry out their activities, which deeply influences both the chosen strategies and the needed resources for their implementation. Moreover, it questions the monolithic organization of the minority organization, showing that DAHR as the representative of the minority community was shaped by several internal debates and conflicts. Also from 2003 these conflicts have grown beyond the borders of the organization and since 2008 we can follow a whole new type of institutionalization. In achieving this, I introduce three strategies – individual integration, collective integration, and organizational integration – which are chosen by different fragments of the Hungarian minority elite both toward the Hungarian and the Romanian political sphere. Throughout the 1989–2012 period, the outcome of the conflict between the supporters of these strategies is deeply influenced by the policies of the two states.

**Keywords:** minorities, Hungarians in Romania, elites, post-communism, political mobilization

After the 1989 Revolution, the Hungarian minority in Romania organized itself quickly, the Hungarian elite formed its political organization, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR), right at the peak of the new era. This Organization was the sole representative of the Hungarians of Romania until 2008, still being the most influential organization.

This paper analyses the integration strategies formulated by the DAHR and the Hungarian political elite in the 1989–2012 period, by linking these efforts to the actions of the Hungarian and the Romanian government. It is important to

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underline that these strategies and interests of a minority community are neither constant nor unified. First, the internal debates of the political community are formulated under the influence of other actors (the Hungarian and the Romanian state, political parties, European institutions, etc.) and, second, the DAHR as the representative of the minority community is not a monolithic organization – its 22 years of existence were shaped by several internal debates and conflicts. Also from 2003 these conflicts have grown beyond the borders of the organization and since 2008 we can follow a whole new type of institutionalization.<sup>2</sup> In the paper, I present three integration models that have influenced the formulated strategies of the Hungarian community toward the Hungarian and Romanian state and I argue that the supporters of these strategies were constantly competing for power positions, and their success is determinatively influenced by the changes within Hungarian and Romanian state politics. Consequently, the success of different actors within the minority political field is determined by their adaptability to these changes.

I have chosen to analyse the 1989–2012 period because of two reasons. First, the post-2012 period opens up new processes both within the Hungarian minority's relationship with the Hungarian and the Romanian government, but as these do not comprise in a completed cycle it seemed logical to close the analysis in 2012.<sup>3</sup> Second, as the paper is aimed more at how interest is constructed and how the political field of the two involved states influence it, the inclusion of the post-2012 period would not change the argument substantially.

From methodological point of view, I critically analyse the existing secondary literature and I process interviews conducted with Hungarian local and national political elite in 2006, 2012, and 2016. Also, in my analysis, I use primary sources such as documents and memoirs.

In order the grasp both the internal diversity of the Hungarian political community and the possible external influences, I use Rogers Brubaker's 'triadic nexus' theory (Brubaker 1996: 55–76) as an analytical framework, which would allow the usage of both internal and external relational approaches. Analysed this way, the internal political debates, decisions, expectations, and strategies developed within the DAHR and the Hungarian political community are framed by events occurred in the Hungarian and Romanian political spheres. These events shape the context of the decisions, forcing the actors representing the minority to adapt their strategies to the new situation. This view is not novel to the literature dealing with the future of the Hungarian political community in

2 In 2003, the internal opposition left the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania forming a new Hungarian political party, the Hungarian Civic Party, in 2008. In 2011, a third party, the Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania (HPPT) is founded.

3 A good analysis that tries to grasp these changes from the Hungarian–Romanian relations' point of view is Kiss & Székely's 2016 work.

Romania (Kántor 2002, Salat 2003), but a coherent analysis from this perspective has not been conceived as yet.

The article is organized as follows. The first section clarifies the most important aspects of the triadic nexus theory developed by Brubaker, presenting its shortcomings as well. The second section presents three models of integration that were used by the Hungarian political elite in Romania in their relationship with Hungary and the Romanian political sphere. The third section emphasizes the contextual character of these strategies, demonstrating how the changes within these latter spheres cause changes within the power structures of the minority field.

## **I. The Triadic Nexus as a Possible Analytical Framework**

In Central and Eastern Europe, at the dawn of the post-socialist transition, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, nationalism and claims for national minority rights dominated public discourse and ethnic conflicts emerged in several of the democratizing states. In order to shape the research on these processes, Rogers Brubaker developed a widely usable and intuitive analytical framework, which could not only explain the nature of the conflicts but shifted the focus from nations and ethnic groups ‘as real entities, as communities, as substantial, enduring collectivities’ (Brubaker 1996: 13) to the relational and institutional aspect of group formation and group identification process.

In the triadic nexus, the initial point of departure is a system with three actors: two states and a national minority which is linked to one state by citizenship and to the other by culture. The members of the minority experience opposite processes: on the one hand, the nationalizing nationalism of the state where they live in and the unifying nationalism of their national homeland, on the other. Therefore, a triadic nexus is formed, where the strategies and decisions of each actor are influenced by the other two actors’ behaviour.

Brubaker does not conceive the states and the national minority as compact groups or fixed entities, but changing and ever-redefined political fields, which accommodate to the situation.<sup>4</sup> The national minority, for example, is a ‘dynamical political stance’, which, on the one hand, needs a ‘public claim’, a formulation of the minority as a category, and the presence of a group of people, who identify themselves with this category. On the other hand, it assumes the existence of an elite that can formulate claims on political and cultural rights in the name of the ‘group’. From this perspective, the national minority is ‘a field of differentiated positions and stances adopted by different organizations, parties, movements, or individual

<sup>4</sup> Brubaker rejects those who make the unit of their analysis the groups themselves, labelling these approaches as groupisms (Brubaker 2004: 3–10).

political entrepreneurs, each seeking to represent the minority (...) each seeking to monopolize the legitimate representation of the group' (Brubaker 1996: 60–62).

Similarly, the nationalizing state has as objective the formation of a nation-state. The process of nation building requires concrete political decisions and programmes from in-state actors. Therefore, these actions are not directed by the state itself but by actors that are legitimate representatives of the state. A state does not become nationalizing only if it declares such intentions and conducts activities that can be considered nationalizing or if these activities are considered nationalizing by the other actors involved (Brubaker 1996: 63–66).

The kin-state can be considered a dynamic political stance as well. This status is conditioned by a declaration of interest in the kin-state role and by decisions, strategies, and types of behaviour that have as objective to support the national minority. Within the homeland, as a political field, different policies, strategies, and declarations compete for how the involvement should look like. Some would even negate the necessity of support, while others could urge even the outbreak of an armed conflict (Brubaker 1996: 66–67).

An important specificity of the model is that the above presented dynamical fields are in interaction. They not only influence each other but a decision in one of them can change the whole internal dynamics of the other two (Brubaker 1996: 68). In other words, for example, the radicalization of the actions in one field not only forces the other fields to react but it could generate internal movement in all of them that would change the internal hierarchies and strategies.

The 'triadic nexus' became an important explanatory framework of the Central and Eastern European conflicts and nationalism, but as a result of its broad usage several important critiques were formulated.

One of the major critiques is related to its operational difficulties. As Vello Pettai points out in a review of three books that use the triadic nexus as their methodological framework, most of the authors use only a 'conventional understanding' of the model, ignoring the inner dynamics of the involved fields, which would allow the understanding of how the perceptions and positions of some actors form or change (Pettai 2007: 134).

Another critic argues that Brubaker does not deliver any guidance on how one can decide if a state is 'nationalizing' or not. In other words, which are the criteria of the nationalizing stance, what policies, decisions or strategies come into consideration (Wolczuk 2010: 676). In a latter paper, Brubaker answers some of the critiques, underlying the consequences and the nature of the involved fields. He redefines the concept of 'nationalizing state' by drawing attention to the fact that it cannot be grasped by criteria and characteristics: 'First, the concept of nationalizing states is not a theory. It does not enable one to predict *how nationalizing* states will be or – more interestingly – *how* they will be *nationalizing*. Second, the concept of nationalizing states is not a device for

classifying states as nationalizing or non-nationalizing...' (Brubaker 2011: 1807). The concept is only an analytical category, which assumes the appearance of some specific political and discursive processes. Therefore, the state can become both the agent and the subject of the nationalizing project: the agent, through its representatives and political institutions, and its subject from the perspective of the population, which is 'undergoing' nationalization (Brubaker 2011: 1808).

This paper focuses only on one of the fields: the national minority stance. My goal is to present its relation to the other two fields, emphasizing the internal changes that can be linked to outside transformations. In other words, I try to explain the changing aspects of the minority strategies and internal power relations with the help of external factors. Although this approach is inevitably one-sided as it does not address the possible changes within the politics of the kin-state and the nationalizing state as a result to the minority decisions, it reveals new features on the transformation of the political representation of the Hungarian minority in Romania.

## **II. Three Models of Political Integration**

In the following section, I present three models of integration – individual integration, organizational integration, and collective integration – that were used by the Hungarian political elite in the past 22 years in order to pursue the interests of the Hungarian community in its relationship with Hungary and Romania. Before moving on, three comments need to be made. First, the ones presented are not the only existing strategies within the Hungarian community in the analysed period, but these can be considered the dominant ones, consequently the others may be disregarded. Second, I do not intend to introduce an accurate history of the events that took place, but I seek to present a possible typology from three perspectives: what objectives, strategies, and discourse characterize them and how its presence changed the internal power relations and hierarchies of the minority. Third, I explain how these models influenced the internal debates of the Hungarian community and how their success or failure is conditioned by the outside influence of the nationalizing state and kin-state.

### **1. The Individual Integration Model**

The 1980s in Romania were one of the darkest periods of the century for Hungarians as they had to endure both the tyranny of the totalitarian state and the national-communist politics of the Romanian Communist Party (Gilberg 1990, King 1980, Verdery 1991). In this context, minority rights were out of the question as survival and keeping the national identity of minorities was at

stake.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, Hungarians were under-represented in the structures of the Communist Party and by the middle of the 1980s only a few were named in responsible positions on national or county level. Moreover, those who managed to keep their position could not represent efficiently and openly the interests of the Hungarian community.<sup>6</sup>

Despite all the attempts, the communist system could not destroy in totality the reproduction of the Hungarian community in Romania. In the 1980s, several underground journals appeared and the members of the cultural elite tried to cope with the situation by meeting small informal societies, where the most important problems of the Hungarian minority were discussed.<sup>7</sup> Also, the function of identity reproduction was filled by the cultural elite, who formulated messages relevant from communitarian and identity formation perspective through literature, theatre, and journalism, on a metaphorical voice. Lőrincz D. József called this strategy ambivalent discourse, where the language of Marxist-Leninist discourse was kept, but the message was nationally altered (Lőrincz 2004: 68–88). The usage of ambivalent discourse therefore not only contributed decisively to the reproduction of identity but it was used by the members of the elite to keep their legitimacy in spite of the positions filled in the communist regime.

After 1989, the same cultural elite was the one organizing the Hungarian community. Within a week after the revolution, local DAHR organizations were formed in many of the Hungarian-inhabited cities, and the national organization was founded in Bucharest by a small group of intellectuals. It is clear that in the first few months the dominant groups, which started building the organization on local and national level, were those who managed to convert their cultural capital gathered in the communist era into a political and social one. The other group which managed to seize power were the dissidents, which was formed of persons who actively resisted the communist regime or participated in the anti-communist uprising, gathering a considerable amount of symbolic capital as a result of their action.<sup>8</sup> Although the engagement of the cultural elite in post-communist transition is not uncommon to the Central and Eastern European countries (Bozóki 1999, Tismăneanu 2005, Wasilewski & Wnuk-Lipiński 2001), in our case, it differs in three ways. First, the Hungarian cultural elite in Romania is the only motor of transformation, while in other cases (the national elites in Hungary, Czechoslovakia,

5 The repressive policies involved the degradation of the minority educational system (Vincze 1998), the persecution of the minority elite, discrimination in language use, and employment policy (Salat et al. 2008).

6 Partial results could be achieved in book publishing, where the members of the elite used their own network and social capital in order to prevent censorship of books considered to be important. About these activities, see the memoirs of Géza Domokos, Director of Kriterion Publishing House in the 1980s and the first President of the DAHR (Domokos 1996: 56–57).

7 On these journals and societies, see Salat et al. 2008: 51.

8 The most eloquent example of this category is László Tőkés, the Protestant priest from Timișoara, whose actions led to the outburst of the 1989 Revolution. See Ratesh 1991.

Poland, or even Romania) it is only one of the groups who came to power. Second, as presented above, the Hungarian cultural elite in Romania had a singular pathway in the communist era (individual integration and ambivalent discourse), while many of the members of the cultural elite in CEE countries were dissidents and open opponents of the communist system. Third, the Hungarian cultural elite in Romania did not seek power in the classical sense, they only organized politically the Hungarian minority and formulated their claims.

The DAHR formulated its claims in its first documents: internal self-determination of the Hungarians in Romania and collective rights (Bakk 1999). Their optimism was backed up by the Romanian state and the politics of the National Salvation Front, which committed itself to resolving the problem of minorities in a declaration (January 6, 1990). However, the optimistic atmosphere of the first weeks was gradually repressed by the changing politics of Iliescu's National Salvation Front. Starting from February 1990, propaganda against the Hungarians and the newly formed democratic parties was growing. The situation peaked in March, when an interethnic conflict between Hungarians and Romanians broke out in Târgu-Mureş, a split city of 50 percent Romanians and 50 percent Hungarians, ending up in a large number of casualties.<sup>9</sup> Most of the political analyses of the period agree that the nationalizing politics of the state was used by the Iliescu regime to strengthen its legitimacy and to 'take out' its potential challengers in the upcoming elections in May 1990.<sup>10</sup>

In this context of euphoria and deception, the leaders of the DAHR, both on the local and the national level, chose similar strategies in order to pursue the perceived interests of the Hungarian community. I named this individual integration model. At the basis of the model are the strategies adapted from the communist period: individual integration in power structures and the use of both their position-given power and network to change the decision-making process in their favour. In Transylvania, most National Salvation Front councils<sup>11</sup> had Hungarian members, while Iliescu invited three of the prominent Hungarian intellectuals – Géza Domokos, László Tőkés, and Károly Király – to take part in the activities on national level. In order to back up this statement, I present an important example. In its programme, the DAHR formulated the need of collective rights, but their first and most important official claim was the restoration of the

9 On the riots in Târgu-Mureş, see Stroschein 2012: 94–123 or László & Novák 2012.

10 Alina Mungiu, in a book written on the Romanian transition, presents in detail the propaganda mechanism of the Front. She argues that by controlling the mass media and by taking advantage of the lack of democratic political culture of the population Iliescu managed to seize power, but in order to mask the growing number of economic and social problems he needed to divert attention from these issues (Mungiu 1995).

11 The National Salvation Front was formed as the provisional ruling body after the revolution, but it gradually changed into a political party. In February, when Iliescu announced that the Front will transform into a political party, the rule was transferred to Provisional Councils of National Unity (proto-parliament on the national and proto-councils on the local level).



Hungarian educational system, which was abolished by the previous regime.<sup>12</sup> In order to achieve this goal, the Hungarian leaders resorted to their social and cultural capital. Géza Domokos, President of the DAHR, relied on his membership in the Front and his personal friendship with President Iliescu to convince the Romanian authorities, while the Hungarians present in the ministry of education were working on the issue from the inside (Domokos 1996: 149–50). Similarly, in many places at the local level, members of the local elite managed to resolve the re-establishment of the independent Hungarian high-schools by using their informal network (Toró 2015). These talks, however, had occasional successes and depended mostly on the context, and not on the power or social capital of the persons involved.<sup>13</sup>

Toward the Hungarian government and the international community, the individual integration model worked similarly. Some of the DAHR's leaders used their individual network and social capital to attract funds and support or to represent the Hungarian minority in its external relations. Many of the DAHR leaders (e.g.: László Tőkés, the Honorary President, or Szócs Géza, the Vice President of the organization) managed to build foreign relations not only with representatives of Hungarian parties but many western countries as well.<sup>14</sup> Although functioning similarly, the two strategies had one important difference. Most of the politicians involved tried to exploit their own symbolic and social capital, but while in their relationship with the Romanian government this had been earned before 1989, in the case of the Hungarian and international relations, it was gathered from their resistance to the communist regime.

In sum, the individual integration model did not create any real positions of power neither for the Hungarian minority nor for the DAHR because it did not assure decision-making or institutional resource-distribution positions. It mostly tried to influence decision-making, to set the agenda, or to gather resources for the organization in a limited way. In other words, it personalized power relations, assuring the leading positions in the DAHR for those who had the necessary social capital to influence the Hungarian or the Romanian government in some way.

12 The situation of the Hungarian school system under communism is analysed in detail by Vincze (1998). He argues that the Communist Party was forcing assimilation by weakening the educational system. They used several strategies: 1. abolishing the Hungarian high schools and creating mixed Romanian-Hungarian ones, 2. reducing the number of Hungarians admitted and the number of Hungarian teaching hours at the University, 3. controlling the labour market by forcing the Hungarian students to take jobs outside Transylvania, leaving the Hungarian schools without new teaching personnel.

13 The strategy on the national level is clearly a failure since there is no clear pattern of success in the restoration of Hungarian schools. Schools were separated and restored in Timișoara or Cluj, but not in Satu Mare, Arad, or Târgu-Mureș. In the latter case, the issue served as a starting point for the bloody riots in March.

14 For example, László Tőkés, in his speech at the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of the DAHR, enumerates the results he achieved on his international tour (Varga 1990).



## 2. The Collective Integration Model

Similarly to the previously presented model, the collective integration model is valid in both the Romanian and Hungarian relations, but it has a different meaning and objectives.

In its founding documents, the DAHR was envisaged as an organization with a dual structure. On the one hand, a political organization which fights for the collective rights and internal self-determination of the Hungarian minority in Romania<sup>15</sup> and, on other hand, a social network that intends to reconstruct an autonomous Hungarian society in Romania. In order to achieve this, the DAHR defined itself as an umbrella organization which holds together 'all professional, advocacy, cultural, religious organizations and associations'.<sup>16</sup> Strictly speaking, the DAHR formulated the Hungarian community's need for cultural and territorial autonomy and looked at itself as a framework where the Hungarian civil society could develop.

The collective integration model, therefore, had two important pillars. First, since the beginning of the 1990s an autonomist political block had made its presence, which not only criticized the consensus-oriented politics of the DAHR leaders but propagated information on the several types of autonomy – cultural, territorial, and personal – which function in Europe. In 1991, as a result of their activity, the DAHR formulated a document entitled *The Kolozsvár (Cluj) Declaration*, which named internal self-determination as its main objective.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, in 1993, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the DAHR, the idea of autonomy became the central element of the adopted programme. Since then, several draft laws have been formulated and submitted to the Parliament.

Despite the clear objectives, this pillar of the collective integration model did not develop a crystallized agenda. Two competing options were propagated. On the one hand, many of its early supporters believed that there is no point in looking for a dialogue with the Romanian majority, but problems should be solved by involving the international organizations and democratic powers such as the Council of Europe, OSCE, the EU, or the USA. Therefore, these members of the DAHR were looking for partners outside the borders of Romania, triggering the resistance and protest of almost all actors from the Romanian political sphere (Pavel & Huiu 2003). On the other hand, the newer representatives of the collective integration model – gathered around the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania (HNCT) and the Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania (HPPT)

15 See the Manifesto of the Provisional Executive Committee of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (Bárdi & Éger 2000).

16 Memorandum of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania. *Romániai Magyar Szó*. January 18, 2012.

17 See the Declaration of the DAHR on the national question in the first issue of *Magyar Kisebbség* in 1995.

since 2003 – recognized the importance of the Romanian–Hungarian cooperation, but believed that the autonomy of the Hungarian community cannot be reached without a clear formulation of the claim and a constant public pressure. From a discursive point of view, the model presented a mixture of references to European norms, to nationalist claims of self-determination and victimization.

The second pillar of the model is related to the internal organization of the Hungarian community. As the DAHR formulated itself as both a framework for civil society and as a political party that is specialized in the representation of Hungarians in Romania, it had to present itself as a unified ethnic party to the outside and as a pluralistic organization to the inside. To resolve this tension, at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress, they introduced the principle of internal self-government, which aimed to manage the internal ideological conflicts of the Organization. In other words, it created a ‘state within a state’ model (Bakk 1999), according to which Hungarians would have had their own political organizations, president, parliament-like representative system, and a specialized governing body, the executive presidency being all under the umbrella of the DAHR. Although most of the members agreed on this new structure, certain procedural aspects caused its failure: some proposed that only DAHR members should vote, while others demanded voting rights for all Hungarians in Romania (Szilágyi 2003).

From a social perspective, several professional, cultural, and advocacy organizations were created,<sup>18</sup> which should have served as bases for the reconstruction of the Hungarian society in Romania. However, as Bíró A. Zoltán points out, the primary objective of these organizations was not their professional devotion but the construction, reconstruction, and maintenance of ethnic boundaries. Also, these national umbrella organizations helped the elite to take control of the social spheres they had created (Bíró 1995: 251). Moreover, Bíró argues that by focusing on boundary construction and power conservation the elite gets further and further away from the Hungarian society, misunderstanding their ‘real’ needs (Bíró 1998: 42). While Bíró mostly focuses on the relationship between elites and society, the processes described above can be analysed from a minority–majority perspective as well. Bíró sees institution building as an agent for the elite to seize power. However, it can be interpreted as a response to the nationalizing politics and discourse of the state: the ethnic claims, ethnic institutions, and ethnic voting are results of the xenophobic state propaganda as well.<sup>19</sup>

It is important to point out that the debates on the internal organization of the Hungarian society are over-politicized. While in the 1993–2003 period the

18 Hungarian Cultural Society of Transylvania, the Transylvanian Museum Society, the Hungarian Teachers’ Association of Romania, Hungarian Farmers’ Association in Romania, and others as well.

19 The nationalistic threat is a recurring element in several writings and memoirs of the early 90s: Domokos 1996, Király 1995, Zonda 1998.

ideological pluralism of the DAHR and the unity of the political representation were constantly under debate,<sup>20</sup> the social and economic construction of the community was not developed. Although intellectuals criticized party politics on this issue, the responses from the political sphere are formulated strictly in political terms. The answer of László Borbély, one of the DAHR leaders in 1994, to a study written by Levente Salat is eloquent from this perspective. While Salat points out the lack of programmes that address the social and economic problems of the Hungarian community (Salat 1994), Borbély in his answer enumerates the institutional developments of the DAHR, underlining how well the newly formed executive presidency works (Borbély 1994).

The collective integration model toward Hungary works in a different way. In 2010, the Hungarian government changed the Hungarian Citizenship Law, according to which non-Hungarian citizens – ‘whose ascendant was a Hungarian citizen or whose origin from Hungary is probable and whose Hungarian language knowledge is proved’ – can apply for Hungarian citizenship easier and without an active residency in Hungary (Tóth 2010). Furthermore, the electoral law was changed as well, permitting the new citizens to vote in the Hungarian elections. As pointed out in several articles (Kopper 2010, Körtvélyesi 2011), this is a change of paradigm in the citizenship politics of the country. On the one hand, it legally integrates in the nation those members of the Hungarian cultural nation who live outside the borders of Hungary, and by granting them voting rights makes them members of two different political nations (in our case, the Hungarian and the Romanian). On the other hand, it is the first time when the Hungarian state establishes a direct legal connection with Hungarians living outside its border without addressing their representative associations first.<sup>21</sup> In this new condition, even the existence of the minority political sphere as an independent field can be questioned. For example, the leaders of the Hungarian Civic Party (HCP) believed at that time that the Hungarian community in Romania is part of the Hungarian nation as a whole, its main interest should be the development of a common national politics, while the European and Romanian political context is secondary. Moreover, the Party’s leaders believed that the political organizations of the Hungarians in Romania need to choose their partners in Hungary on ideological bases, the HCP aligning to the governing party, the FIDESZ.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the collective integration model in this

20 See, for example, the debates published in the journal *Magyar Kisebbség* (Hungarian Minority) in 1998 and 1999.

21 Levente Salat, for example, argues that this new politics have major pitfalls because, on the one hand, it creates a cleavage between those who applied for citizenship and those who did not and, on other hand, by linking the members of the minority to the kin-state individually, it atomizes the community as well (Salat 2011: 186–190). In this paper, I do not intend to analyse the validity of these ideas; I am more interested in the changing relationship between the Hungarian kin-state and the leaders of the Hungarian community.

22 ‘The real solution of the problem is a Budapest-centred politics (...) The Carpathian-Basin should be defined and influenced from and through Budapest. The leaders [of the Hungarian minority]

case denies the existence of the minority field, and envisages a common Hungarian nation that expands outside the borders of Hungary, reproducing even the main ideological and party cleavages of the kin-state.

### 3. The Organizational Integration Model

The main principle behind the organizational integration model is that in its relations with the state the political organization(s) of the minority should develop some institutional and elite-driven relations. Although the DAHR has participated in parliamentary and local elections since 1990, this type of integration became salient only after the 1996 elections, when the Alliance entered the governing coalition formed by the Democratic Convention. The new strategy was backed up by an ideological stance as well, which argued that the ‘situation of the Hungarian minority can be solved only in Romania and by participating in the government’, which has become the main idea of the DAHR politics ever since.

Although the governmental cycles differ in the function of the achieved results, there are several common features which constitute the main characteristics of the model. First, from a minority perspective, in the 1996–2004 period, several important laws were adopted (decentralization, educational law, language law), important results were achieved (restitution of real estate, land, forest), and many Hungarians were appointed in important positions (ministers, state secretaries, prefects, sub-prefect, agency directors).<sup>23</sup> However, in spite of these successes, the central claims of the organization (territorial and cultural autonomy, Hungarian state university) were overshadowed. This process can be explained in two ways. For example, István Székely believes that when entering the government the leaders of the DAHR kept only the consensual claims of the Alliance, leaving out those that were still disputed. This generated conflict in the heart of the organization, which led to the marginalization of the supporters of the collective integration model, who in the end left the organization. However, according to the dominant interpretation, in the coalition talks, the DAHR leaders ‘presented only those elements of their programme which were compatible with the rhetoric and minimal programme-consensus of the Romanian parties’ (Salat 2003: 560). This point of view is backed up by Romanian analysts as well. Dan Pavel in a book written on the history of the Democratic Convention states that several elements of the DAHR politics (autonomy statutes, the memorandum presented in front of the CoE, etc.) created conflict within the coalition. In order to be fully

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regardless of party affiliation should think in the capital of every Hungarian. Because, when we speak of Hungarian interests, the capital is Budapest, not Belgrade, Bucharest, or Bratislava. I am positive about this’ (interview with Jenő Szász, president of HCP at the time – 2012).

23 For the analysis of the first and second governmental cycle, see Kántor & Bárdi 2002, Márton 2003, 2004.

accepted, the DAHR signed a declaration of the Democratic Convention, which guaranteed that all the members accept the territorial integrity of the country and that they would not claim autonomy for a specific region but equally for every county (Pavel & Huiu 2003).

Second, the organizational integration model guaranteed resources and power positions. By participating in the government, the DAHR leaders not only gathered insights and knowledge on state administration but gained the right to influence the resource allocation process, directing important funds to Hungarian-inhabited areas of the country.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, this power contributed to the growth of the Hungarian community, and strengthened the power of the DAHR leaders in their relationship with the local political elites at the same time. This possibility produced two strategies. First, the ethnic boundary construction is redefined. The DAHR leaders argued that the acquired rights and positions can only be preserved by a continuous participation in the government, which is possible solely through a strong and united Hungarian ethnic mobilization. In other words, the fate of the community is linked to the electoral success of the organization. Second, as no new rights were achieved after the post-2004 period, they developed a position- and resource-centred attitude. This attitude can be traced in an interview with the current President of the organization, who – when asked about the achieved results – starts to enumerate the new power positions achieved by minority representatives.<sup>25</sup>

The new objectives produced new types of strategies. Most of the scholars agreed that the Alliance did not only break with the collective integration model but in its relation with the Romanian political sphere it developed a consociational strategy.<sup>26</sup> According to this, the DAHR imagines the Hungarian community as a pillar that is integrated into the Romanian society by its elite, which resolves its claims by participating in the government. Also, as a result of its power positions, the DAHR would control the claims of the Hungarian community

24 The DAHR became the sole organization responsible for distributing the budgetary resources allocated for the Hungarian minority and they also could successfully influence the allocation of resources to infrastructure improvements. As in the Romanian political practice a lot of funds are distributed by 'manual control', these were considered important achievements by many of the Hungarian political actors involved (interview with Béla Markó – 2012).

25 'The Romanians are very pragmatic, our manoeuvring space was growing with each and every cycle. In '96, we achieved only a state secretary position in education and culture (...) later we accessed ministry positions and several state secretary positions. Also, many institutions opened up in front of Hungarian policy makers. (...) In 2005, we had a Minister for Communications, Minister of the Environment...' (interview with Hunor Kelemen, the President of the DAHR).

26 These studies heavily relied on the theory of Aarend Lijphart, who believed that in deeply divided societies a consociational or power-sharing model of democracy should be used. In his opinion, a successful power-sharing system has five characteristics: 1) grand coalition between the different segments of the elite, 2) mutual veto, 3) the depoliticization of different segments and institutions of the society, 4) proportionality, 5) autonomy for the different groups (Daalder 1974, Lijphart 2014: 258).

(Bakk 2000b, Salat 2003). However, as the integration of Hungarians in Romania lacked both the structural and institutional characteristics of the consociational model, scholars used it more in a normative sense. On the one hand, it presented a working and achievable model for Romanian–Hungarian reconciliation,<sup>27</sup> and, on the other hand, it was a critique of the DAHR politics as it demonstrated that the behaviour of the Alliance would have been compatible with an ethnic power-sharing system, but without the institutional and legal guarantees it is a very controverted strategy. Most of the critics argued that without the institutional guarantees, the organizational integration model only ‘institutionalizes bargain’ (Kántor 2004: 112) as the main motor for satisfying their claims. In other words, the rights and positions are assured by governmental presence and coalition talks, and not by a clear and unimpeachable system of rights and institution. This construction has clearly an ‘ad-hoc’ nature: benefits are specified by the outcome of the coalition talks, and not by strategic planning and long-term political programme (Salat 2003: 564). Moreover, as the participation in government is not automatically granted, failure is always an option. Leaders of the DAHR, however, used this uncertainty for their own advantage. First, they linked the possible drop-out to the loss of the already gained rights and, second, they underlined the necessity of a single, unified political option for all Hungarians. Therefore, the ad-hoc nature of the organizational integration strategy is exploited not only for ethnic mobilization for the elections but in de-legitimizing the other ethnic organizations that threaten the Alliance’s singularity.<sup>28</sup>

A second strategy used within the organizational integration model is the de-ethnicization of political issues. In the Romanian Parliament, when ‘Hungarian issues’ are on the agenda, the Hungarian MPs try to conceal the ‘Hungarianness’ of these topics, believing that they would pass more easily if their ethnic character is missing. Usually, they use the so-called professionalization strategy, which would allow them to emphasize the professional aspects of the problem, instead of its Hungarian–Romanian confrontational or ethnic nature (Toró 2017).

The organizational integration model strengthened the party-like functions of the organization to the detriment of the society and community-building functions. The DAHR centred its human resources mainly on administrative

27 This idea was present most emphatically in the writings of the Provincia-group, a group of Romanian and Hungarian intellectuals, who deliberated the possibilities of the consociational transformation of Romania (Molnár & Szokoly 2001).

28 ‘I’ve said it a lot of times: we can negotiate successfully with the Romanians, only because they see 1.5 million Hungarians behind us. If they won’t see this anymore, even though we are prepared, we can achieve nothing. The Romanian President is already coming to Szeklerland as a sugar daddy to the kindergarten. Why are we fooling ourselves?’  
‘Everything could fall: the laws that would limit our language rights are in parliament. (...) The ex-mayor of Cluj, Gheorghe Funar [a well-known Romanian nationalist politician], who is now an MP, is delivering amendments in order to expulse Hungarians and to banish Hungarian language and symbols in the public sphere on a daily basis’ (Markó 2007).

issues related to government and the different aspects of negotiation, gradually leaving the actions taken for the (re-)construction of the Hungarian institutional system behind (Bakk 2000a: 26–31, Biró 1998: 148, Salat 2003: 560).

The ideological perspective of the organizational integration model was formulated by the former president of the organization ('Markó-doctrine') and it has three pillars: 1) compromise and recognition of mutual interest with the Romanians, 2) ideology-free ethnic politics, and 3) sovereign Hungarian politics in Transylvania.

The first pillar is based on governmental participation. On the one hand, it believes that 'for the Hungarian communities from the Carpathian basin results can be achieved through moderation, which is the sign of true courage as well' – it recognizes that some claims need to be forgotten in order for others to become achievable. On the other hand, it believes that the Romanian–Hungarian relationship should be based on the recognition of common interests.<sup>29</sup>

The second pillar, the ideology of ideology-free ethnic politics, on the one hand, legitimizes the government-oriented politics since it declares that the DAHR should look for partnerships in order to advance the Hungarian–Romanian reconciliation and to secure the rights of the Hungarians in Romania, and thus it should not choose its coalition partners on ideological basis.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, by the institutionalization of bargaining, the main element of ethnic politics is participation in government and accession to resources and positions. This understanding is used in Hungarian relations as well: the DAHR believes that in their relations with the Hungarian government the minority political organizations should not take account of the ideological affiliation of the parties in power. On the other hand, ethnic politics means the permanent construction and reconstruction of the boundaries of the Hungarian identity. The constant reference to unity,<sup>31</sup> collective rights, the society-building function of the DAHR,<sup>32</sup> and the periodical allusion to the nationalist threat of the state<sup>33</sup> serve

29 'The classic mutually exclusive alternatives – the space is ours or the space is yours – should be substituted with something else, with common space, the ideology of common space, which is not in contradiction with autonomy and the idea of an autonomous decision' (Markó 2009a).

30 'The moral of the story is that Hungarian–Romanian relations can be changed only by political means, and this change becomes sustainable only if we choose ethnic politics. (...) In other words, to think about who is the DAHR or the Hungarian political representation governing with the left or the right is totally unnecessary because it is a matter of political conjuncture. The collaboration is not ideological, it is ethnic: it is not a Hungarian–liberal, Hungarian–social democrat, or Hungarian–Christian democrat union, but it is based on Hungarian–Romanian reconciliation' (Markó 2009b).

31 'The DAHR believes that in our fight for ethnic rights parliamentary politics can be successful if we all say black or we all say white. By seeing one and a half million Hungarians behind us, the Romanian political actors can be forced to solve our problems' (Markó 2008).

32 Until recently, the DAHR leaders underlined the society-building functions of the organization as against its party-nature.

33 'In Transylvania, the punchers are always Romanians and the ones suffering (or not!) are always



both as mobilizing strategy and as consolidation of power. One could say that the two elements of ethnic politics are in contradiction: the former emphasizes the importance of Hungarian–Romanian reconciliation, while the latter is used for boundary construction between the two. The two elements, however, activate in different fields. While the first works within the Romanian political sphere, the second is aimed at the members of the Hungarian minority.

The last pillar is the idea of sovereign Hungarian politics in Transylvania,<sup>34</sup> meaning that every decision regarding the Hungarians in Romania should be made with the inclusion of their legitimate representatives. While in the case of the DAHR's relationship with the Romanian political field this can be understood as participation in government coalitions, it has a slightly different meaning in their relationship with the kin-state. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Hungarian government has been taking responsibility for the Hungarian minority outside its borders, meaning mostly financial, professional, and moral support (Bárdi 2004). Simply put, the sovereign Hungarian politics in Transylvania asks for involvement in decision-making on legal issues and principles, and also in how the financial, professional, and moral resources are distributed.

### III. How Does the Triadic Model Work? The Hungarian Minority in Its Relationship with Romania and Hungary

In order to illustrate how the triadic model works in our case, I will analyse the relationship between some changes in the internal politics of Romania and Hungary and the changes within the chosen strategies and internal structure of the Hungarian minority. The models presented above did not exist in a vacuum, they coexisted, and conflict existed between their followers. The main argument of the paper, presented in detail below, is that the outcome of these conflicts were highly influenced by the political context dictated by political changes in Hungary and Romania.

Michael Krzyzanowski and Ruth Wodak in a study that theorizes the analysis of social change in Central and Eastern European context argue that change can be grasped by the co-usage of two important concepts, modernization and transformation. Relying on several modernization theories, they argue that while modernization has a cyclical nature, transformation is a gradual and linear

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Hungarians. The boss is Romanian, the subaltern Hungarian, power is Romanian and opposition (or the enemy) is Hungarian. In 1968, in the abolished Hungarian Autonomous Province, there was a saying: 'the car is Hungarian, but the driver is Romanian' (Markó 2009b).

34 This element appeared in the political strategies of the DAHR already in 1994, soon after Béla Markó was elected President (Béla Markó's speech at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the DAHR – *Orient expressz*, January 22, 1993).

process. Social change can be understood only by combining these two processes as all the important events of transformation have their own antecedents and run-times. Also, these cannot be separated – the seeds of one action co-exist or even depend on the consequences of another (Krzyzanowski & Wodak 2009). With these considerations, in the post-1989 period, in addition to the Fall of Communism in 1989, one can define four changing points in Hungary (1994, 1998, 2002, and 2010) and three in Romania (1996, 2008, and 2012).<sup>35</sup> These are mainly related to the electoral results and governmental changes within the two countries. Also, beyond these, important turning-points are the 1997 failed NATO- and the successful EU-accession of Romania in 2007.

1. Although after the 1989 revolution local Hungarian organizations were founded in several cities, the DAHR was formed by a group of Hungarian intellectuals in Bucharest, who published a proclamation on December 25, 1989 in the only national Hungarian newspaper *Romániai Magyar Szó*. By using their social network in Bucharest, they managed to convince the newly formed provisional government to grant several symbolic and practical gestures in minority rights. Also, encouraged by these gestures, in the first documents and at the first meetings of the DAHR, demands for autonomy and self-determination were formulated. However, this initial optimism gradually changed to confusion and despair as the number of nationalistic actions from the government grew. In April, as the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of the DAHR was organized, the individual integration model and the collective integration model co-existed, but there was no clear conflict between the two, several of the newly elected leaders believing that both of them can and should be followed. This dualism was codified in the new structure as well: the DAHR had two centres: Bucharest, where the Hungarian community should build its relations with the Romanian political sphere and the representatives of the international community, and in Cluj, ‘the capital of Transylvania’, for relations with the members of the Hungarian community and local DAHR organizations.<sup>36</sup> While in the first few month the few Hungarian leaders living in Bucharest tried to use their earlier relations with Romanian intellectuals and the nomenclature, after the first parliamentary elections their number increased to 41, the number of elected MPs in the Senate and the House of Deputies.

The two-headed DAHR structure and the nationalizing Romanian government had several consequences. First, as DAHR-structures were in formation, there was no informational link and control between the two centres. This resulted in a lack of transparency in the actions of the representatives in Bucharest.

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35 Although between 1996 and 2008 the Romanian government changed in 2000 and 2004 as well, the DAHR participated in one way or another in the newly formed governing coalitions. Because of this, I did not consider these events as turning-points.

36 See the documents of the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of the DAHR, 1990 (Varga 1990).

They participated in meetings and made political decisions in the name of the DAHR without notifying the governing bodies of the organization (Domokos 1996). Second, in the growing nationalistic intolerance, those in support of the individual integration model believed that they could pursue best the interest of the Hungarian community by avoiding interethnic conflicts. This was hard to comply with because DAHR-leaders were constantly incriminated by Romanian nationalists that they work together with Hungary in order to cede Transylvania to Hungary as a result of the politics of the newly elected Hungarian government, which announced its desire to support the Hungarians in Romania.<sup>37</sup> As a response to these accusations, those believing in the individual integration strategy distanced themselves from Hungary, arguing that the problem of the Hungarians should be solved within the borders of Romania by the Hungarian community itself.

The growing Romanian nationalism blocked the resolution of Hungarian claims, and those present in Bucharest put up a stout resistance, trying to protect the already existing institutional system and rights and avoiding political confrontation as much as possible. This strategy outraged those believing in the collective integration model. They argued that the minority rights should not be negotiated, and suspected the other side of betrayal. Moreover, they demanded the DAHR that it should ask for help from the international community, and force Romania to recognize the rights of Hungarians. In response, the President of the organization, one of the strongest supporters of the individual integration model, argued that ‘here, in Central Europe, the region of tragic clashes, dialogue, mutual goodwill (...) has no alternative. More exactly, it has: confrontation, decay, hatred for a long-long time. The DAHR, knowing its historical responsibility, rejects this second road’ (Domokos 1991).

Since results failed to appear, more and more believed that the collective integration model, the clear formulation of the autonomist claims, and a good foreign politics with the help of Hungary would prevail. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the DAHR, although Géza Domokos remained president, most of the members of his presidency were selected from those who demanded strategic changes and believed that parliamentary politics was futile. This group reached its peak in the 1991–1993 period, when the DAHR formulated two important claims: Hungarians should be accepted as a co-nation in Romania (Borbély 1991) and in a document entitled *The Kolozsvár (Cluj) Declaration* they stated that the main political claim of Hungarians in Romania is internal self-determination. On the international

37 In a famous speech, József Antall, the then Prime Minister of Hungary, announced that he considers himself the Prime Minister of 15 million Hungarians instead of the 10 million living in Hungary. Also, the Hungarian Democratic Forum included in the Hungarian constitution a passage declaring that the Hungarian state feels responsible for the life of Hungarians living outside the borders of Hungary.

level, they recorded temporary successes: László Tőkés, the Honorary President of the DAHR, participated in an official visit to the United States, the DAHR was accepted in the Federal Union of European Nationalities,<sup>38</sup> and the Council of Europe accepted the problems reported by the DAHR in a memorandum on the accession of Romania.<sup>39</sup> As the external politics of the Alliance was getting stronger, its situation worsened in Romania. The Organization has become more and more isolated – in addition to the attacks on the part of the governing party, it had to support the attack on the part of the Romanian opposition parties as well.

The shift to the collective integration model needed a modified internal structure as well. In 1993, at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the DAHR, self-determination and autonomy was included in the Framework Programme of the Organization and the plan of an internal governing system was developed with state-like institutions and processes (own parliament, government, federal president, and internal elections).<sup>40</sup>

In conclusion, in the first few years of the 90s, the success rate of the chosen strategy was converted into power relations within the organization. As for the first half year of existence, there were no clear interest groups, only strategic options, which were all represented in the leading board of the DAHR. As the tensions grew between the two sides, the two-headed structure changed from collaboration to confrontation. Also, as a result to the growing nationalism of the Romanian government, the possibilities of those believing in Hungarian–Romanian collaboration decreased. The growing discontent with the Romanian political system gave the opportunity to act for those who believed in self-determination and international coercion.

2. The 1994 parliamentary elections in Hungary generated changes within the political strategies of the Hungarian leaders in Romania. As Nándor Bárdi points out, the newly elected socialist government changed its approach toward the Hungarians outside the borders of Hungary, believing that the Euro-Atlantic integration of the country and its reconciliation with the neighbouring countries is more important than the kin-state politics pursued by the previous

38 Speech of Géza Szőcs, General Secretary of the DAHR at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the Alliance – *Romániai Magyar Szó*, 29 May 1991.

39 The DAHR Memorandum addressed for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe formulates in 15 points its objections and expectations on the Romanian legal system. The Memorandum is published by Bárdi–Éger (2000), while its reception is analysed by Miklós Bakk (1994).

40 The DAHR did not consider itself a political party but an ethnic umbrella organization where all kind of ideological groups would fit into. Therefore, in the newly developed structure, these groups could have formed their own ‘parties’ and platforms within the DAHR and could have participated at internal elections, entering into the Council of Representatives as national parties enter into the parliament. The organizational method of the internal elections was heavily disputed and never organized.

government. In their opinion, ‘issues concerning Hungarians living abroad could not – even seemingly – endanger the stability of the region’ (Bárdi 2003), and in order to achieve this they initiated the signature of bilateral treaties with Romania, Slovakia, and the Ukraine. The treaty with Romania was signed after long diplomatic negotiations on September 16, 1996. The DAHR disagreed with the text of the treaty and lost one of its major allies in its international agenda at the same time.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, as the interest in minority rights gradually disappeared from the international context, the external politics encouraged by the followers of the collective integration model was becoming more and more fruitless. Therefore, the changing aspect of Hungarian kin-state politics reshaped the internal politics of the DAHR as well, its leaders looking for closer cooperation with the Romanian opposition.<sup>42</sup>

János Márton, in a comparative analysis of the political programmes of the DAHR, argues that a potential participation in government was prepared even from this period because all elements that were not accepted by their Romanian partners (autonomy, collective rights, co-national status, etc.) were erased from the electoral programme of the organization (Márton 2003: 329, 2004: 548). This fact is backed up by political declarations as well since both György Frunda, presidential candidate for the DAHR in 1996, and Béla Markó, the President of the DAHR, made allusions to a potential involvement in the government (Márton 2003: 313–316).

After the Democratic Convention had won the elections and the DAHR had been invited to participate in the governing coalition, claims such as autonomy, collective rights, and the separate Hungarian university were put aside. The new political course received severe critics from those believing in the collective integration strategy. They argued that the leaders of the DAHR consciously abandoned the most important claims and legitimated the minority politics of the country in return for positions and resources (Toró 1998: 223–224, 235).

Also, as the Romanian parties were open to accept the DAHR in the governing coalitions, the organizational integration model had become the norm,<sup>43</sup> which created internal tensions, and in the end it changed the internal balance of power. These can be grasped on three levels. First, from a normative point of view, the question ‘Is morally acceptable for a minority organization to participate in the

41 The former president of the DAHR has seen this opportunity in the following way: ‘I couldn’t say that someone threw away chances. We could blame Hungary, but they tried desperately to get closer to the European Union. Same as Romania, they were busy with integration’ (interview with Béla Markó – 2012).

42 This is backed up by Zoltán Kántor and Nándor Bárdi as well (Kántor & Bárdi 2002: 160), and it is mentioned even by Party President Béla Markó in 2004: ‘we had to learn that there are no miracles. The bilateral treaty is clearly not one, nobody will resolve our problems instead of us’ (Markó 2004: 27).

43 The DAHR participated in the governing coalition in the periods of 1996–2000, 2004–2008, and 2009–2012 and supported from the opposition the minority government in 2000–2004.

governing coalition or not?’ created severe tensions within the organization. Second, for the supporters of the organizational integration model, the government positions opened up new resources and negotiating possibilities. That is, those who had supported the participation in government successfully managed the ‘redistribution of symbolic and material resource’ gained in Bucharest (on these two aspects, see Biró 1998: 142–144, 148). Third, as pointed out earlier, for lack of a solid legal and structural framework, the ‘bargain was institutionalized’. Nevertheless, this was not compatible with the pluralistic structure introduced in 1993 as the internal critiques and alternative voices would have weakened the negotiating position of the Organization.<sup>44</sup> Thus, a gradual weakening of the opposition and the creation of a party-like structure emerged. This can be grasped in several decisive actions such as: the repeated postponement of the general internal elections, the increasing of the Presidency’s power to the detriment of the Council of Representatives (the Alliance’s parliament-like institution), the expansion of the Council with the technocratic elite<sup>45</sup> in order to strengthen the power of the leadership. Consequently the inevitable break comes in 2003, at the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the DAHR, when the representatives of the collective integration model leave the Alliance, and form the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania, a movement-like organization without legal entity, which formulates as its most important claim the achievement of cultural and territorial autonomy for Hungarians in Romania.

3. An important aspect of the organizational integration model is its desire of sovereign politics in the relationship with the Hungarian and Romanian government. While in the case of Romania this was fulfilled by the participation in the governing coalition, in the case of Hungary, it meant equality, partnership, and decision-making authority in issues related to Hungarians living in Romania. This second expectation was backed up by the fact that in the periods of 1996–2000 and 2004–2012 the DAHR–Hungarian government relationship received a second dimension: an official Hungarian–Romanian one, as in intergovernmental meetings the Romanian government was represented in many cases by a DAHR politician.

In this context, after the FIDESZ had won the elections in 1998, the kin-state politics of Hungary changed radically, propagating a more active policy toward the Hungarians living abroad. This approach created tensions between the Hungarian and the Romanian government, leaving the DAHR in a rather delicate situation in the middle (Kántor 2002: 213–215). The new Hungarian government

44 In the 1996–2004 period, members of the internal opposition, advocates of the collective integration model were present in the Romanian Parliament as well, representing around one-third of the parliamentary group of the DAHR. In 2002, they even created their own group named *Polgári Szárny* (Civil Wing).

45 Those persons who hold institutional and power positions at the local or the national level as a result of the participation in the governing coalition.

defended the rights of Hungarians more actively and supported their claims for autonomy and collective rights as well. Moreover, it adopted the so-called Status Law, which focused on helping Hungarians from the neighbouring countries. The law promoted a new, cultural definition for the nation that included the Hungarians living abroad as well. The law was sharply criticized by the Romanian government, but was welcomed by the Hungarian community. The DAHR tried to conciliate the two attitudes, but it was rather a lose-lose situation because it could not address the issue in clear ethnic terms, as the Hungarian community would have wanted, and could not criticize the nationalistic outburst of his Romanian partners either (Kemp 2006: 117–118). As a consequence, those believing in the collective integration model found reinforcement from the FIDESZ-government to the detriment of the DAHR leadership.

After 2002, when the socialists won the Hungarian elections, the kin-state politics changed again. The Hungarian government granted the DAHR the right to decide what to do with the resources given to the support of the Hungarian cultural, social, and economic sphere in Romania. In this situation, the followers of the organizational integration model controlled the resource redistribution coming from both the Romanian and the Hungarian government. Its opposition, institutionalized in 2003, was marginalized, relying only on its relationship with the FIDESZ, which attempted to monopolize the national politics of Hungary, portraying itself as the real representative of the kin-state politics of the country. This generated tensions between the DAHR and the FIDESZ. The Alliance criticized the Hungarian opposition party for its relation with its own opposition, charging them with the exportation of inner tensions of the Hungarian domestic politics to Romania. Moreover, in the 2003–2012 period, as a member or supporter of the Romanian government, DAHR politicians took the liberty of taking up a more critical position toward the Hungarian opposition.<sup>46</sup>

In conclusion, the influence of Hungarian domestic politics and the Hungarian kin-state politics is two-folded. On the one hand, it has created the possibility for Hungarian politicians in Romania to build partnership with parties in Hungary and, on the other hand, after the FIDESZ had lost the elections in 2002, the supporters of the collective integration model lost their external support, and found themselves marginalized within the Hungarian minority.

4. The last two important examples for the influence of the Hungarian and Romanian political sphere came in the 2007–2011 period. In 2007, László Tőkés,

46 On the DAHR–FIDESZ relationship, see (Toró & Toró 2011: 22–23), but some declarations of Béla Markó, the President of the DAHR at the time, are telling as well: ‘(...) we should not talk about the interests of Béla Markó and László Tőkés, or even Viktor Orbán – I wondered why the domestic politics of Hungary appeared in this context. We should talk about the interests of the common Hungarians in Transylvania’ (Markó 2008).



the President of the HNCT, ran as an independent for a position in the European Parliamentary, and won against the DAHR. In this campaign, he had the moral and political support of the FIDESZ. Encouraged by these results, the Hungarian Civic Party is founded in 2008, which gained several important positions at the local elections in Szeklerland. After the FIDESZ had come to government for the second time in 2010, they supported the formation of a new party, the Hungarian Peoples' Party in Transylvania. The appearance of the new parties marginalized the DAHR in its relations with Hungary. On the one hand, as a consequence of the previous DAHR–FIDESZ conflicts, the new Hungarian government rejects the DAHR's sovereign politics and signs a partnership agreement with HNCT, and implicitly HPPT.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, as a result of a new citizenship law in Hungary, the strategy of collective integration model appears in the Hungarian–Hungarian relationship as well, but this time driven by the actions and decisions of the Hungarian government.

Although the two smaller parties do not reshape decisively the Hungarian ethnic voters' preferences,<sup>48</sup> their appearance changes the inner power structure of the DAHR. First, in the 2008 parliamentary elections, many national politicians of the DAHR leave their parliamentary position in order to run for positions at the local level. This, on the one hand, is related to the appearance of the HCP and the HPPT, which, by creating competition for the DAHR in municipalities and counties where Hungarians are in majority, forced the Alliance to choose its best candidates. On the other hand, these local positions were attractive as the law on decentralization, the administrative and local electoral law gave more rights and resources to mayors and county council chairmen.

The increasing decentralization strengthened the power of local leaders. Within the DAHR, this did not question the legitimacy of the organizational integration model, but it changed the strategic priorities of the Alliance. For example, in the 2010 report of the DAHR,<sup>49</sup> the main results are not related to minority rights and identity politics but to budgetary assistance given to local bodies and organizations in various areas (education, healthcare, infrastructural development, etc.). Also, since 2011, a structural change can be observed within the organization, through which the hierarchical construction is transformed to a horizontal one,<sup>50</sup> where local leaders have a greater manoeuvring space.

47 Beyond the partnership agreement, the HNCT has gained influential decision-making positions in the supporting politics of the Hungarian government and receives financial support for operating an institutional system called Democracy Centres, which, on the one hand, are actively involved in the assistance given in the acquisition of Hungarian citizenship and, on other hand, take on different tasks related to the Hungarian community's claims.

48 In the 2008 and 2012 local and parliamentary elections, the two smaller parties obtained around 12–20% of the Hungarian votes.

49 This is our work. Results and implementations in 2010. DAHR Executive Presidency, Cluj.

50 This horizontal organizational structure was strengthened by the electoral law adopted in 2008 as well, which changed the existing proportional electoral system to a hybrid majoritarian system (Székely 2009).

## IV. Conclusion

In this paper, I intended to present three integration models that shaped the political development of the Hungarians in Romania, which were formulated by different segments of the Hungarian political elite in order to pursue the perceived interest of the community. These strategies imply different objectives, styles, and discourses and can become successful in different structural conditions. In the 1989–2012 period, the supporters of these strategies competed with one another, sometimes even in a conflictual manner. Furthermore, by contextualizing these debates in a triadic nexus, I argued that in most of the cases the competition between these strategies, and the important structural and strategic changes resulting from it, were decisively influenced by changes within the political spheres of Hungary and Romania and by changes within the Hungarian community in Romania. In this perspective, for the members of the Hungarian elite, the most important resources which fuel success in the ‘in-field disputes’ are their capacity to recognize change in the other two fields and their capacity of adaptation to these.

This argument is important from several perspectives. On the one hand, most of the political actors and many of the political scientists and analysts consider the minority political field independently from the other two. Although they accept that some external events or changes affect its internal process, they focus on the internal debates, cleavages, and conflicts, giving the impression that the minority political elite gives its answers autonomously. Also, in this approach, they disregard the fact that the Hungarian political field in Romania does not have either legal or structural guarantees for this independence. On the other hand, by re-contextualizing the events in this new way, several disturbing processes can be reported, such as the absence of social and community-building agenda, the downfalls of the lack of legal and structural framework, or the growing tension between the Hungarian kin-state policy and the dominant organizational integration model on both the social and the political level within the minority sphere. Having said this, one could say that despite its past results, resource-gathering potential, and organizational development, the current Hungarian political elite in Romania is in crisis, and it is clear that a re-evaluation of the political programme and a reconciliation of the different political actors is necessary.

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