

ABSTRACTS

Miklós Bakk – István-Gergő Székely: On the Chances of the Emergence of a Multi-ethnic Regionalist Party in Transylvania

The aim of this debate starter is to assess the likelihood of the emergence and success of a multi-ethnic regionalist party in Transylvania, by analyzing a series of factors that may have an impact on such a phenomenon, and to formulate several questions considered as important by the authors for future debate. The actuality of the issue is given primarily by two recent developments: the success of the multi-ethnic Most-Híd party in Slovakia, and the amendment of the Romanian electoral system, which resulted in the replacement of the two-tier proportional representation system used since the regime change with a variant of the First Past the Post system.

The paper consists of four major sections. The first part focuses on terminology, trying to clarify several key concepts, such as ethnic parties, (ethno)regional(ist) parties, multi-ethnic parties and non-ethnic parties. The second section analyses the most important factors that influence party success in general, and more specifically the perspectives of a multi-ethnic regionalist party. Mirroring the main approaches of the political parties literature, it addresses three types of factors: institutional (the electoral system), sociological (the social distances between the ethnic groups) and actor-related (the strategies of the existing parties, discussing separately the Romanian “mainstream” parties and the ethnic parties of the Hungarian minority). From the conclusions of this analysis we would like to highlight three. First, while the old, proportional electoral system played a key role in the maintenance of the ethnic voting patterns displayed by the Hungarian community, as well as of the high level of party nationalization characteristic of the mainstream Romanian parties, the new plurality system is likely to bring about some changes concerning both aspects, working against the perpetuation of ethnic voting and creating more favorable conditions for a multi-ethnic regionalist party. Second, the group distances in Transylvania do not clearly favor multi-ethnic initiatives, at least when compared to the situation of the Hungarian minorities of Slovakia and Serbia, where multi-ethnic parties already emerged. However, the decreasing weight of the Hungarians in some counties, combined with the plurality electoral system, may

bring about changes in this respect. Finally, both the mainstream Romanian parties and the ethnic parties of the Hungarian minority are interested in maintaining the model of ethnic voting, which reduces the chances of a regionalist party. As a consequence, we consider that a regionalist party is more likely to appear as a greenfield project, and less as a result of the transformation of some established party. These two alternative scenarios are explored in more detail in the third section of the paper, which also offers a brief review of the past attempts to create a regionalist party, and an assessment of the reasons that led to their failure. The final part of the paper reiterates the most important claims and conclusions, and formulates a series of questions that the potential contributors to the debate are called to reflect on.

Keywords: ethnic parties, regionalist parties, multi-ethnic parties, Romanian electoral system

András Bethlendi: The Problematique of the Individual and Collective Rights in the Protection of the National Minorities (I)

Two centuries after the French revolution, we start to contest one of the most important heritage of it, the legitimacy of the nation-states. The liberal tradition seems to be very tolerant with the assimilation tendencies of the well known symmetrizing formula: one country – one nation, which is far from the reality in most of the cases. We can also see that in the majority of the armed conflicts after the Cold War, the reason is the aspiration of a national minority group for self-determination, to reach an equal status with the majority.

Why are the liberalism and the nationalism so compatible with each other? Is the nation-state able to rise to the challenge of the multicultural society, or we should step forward for a better solution? Can we fulfill the requirement of equality, and liberty of the individual without collective rights? These are the questions to what I am seeking the answers.

This study is trying to find the basic principles of the fair society, which meets the legitimate requirements of both of the minority and majority groups at the same time. It will examine the conflict of the individual rights with the collective ones reflecting to the connection of the liberal tradition, historical background and the modern minority protection. The hypothesis of this study is that if our society is based on the liberal values of freedom and equality, we must have collective rights founded on the existence of

ethnocultural groups, in the lack of which the protection of the national minorities is weak, miss-targeted and with no guaranties.

Keywords: nation-state, minority, individual rights, collective rights, liberalism

Endre Borbáth: Nationalism and Liberalism – Historical and Logical Links (I)

In the current paper I examine the relationship between nationalism and liberalism from a historical and a philosophical view-point. From the historical perspective I consider the events of the French Revolution, from the political philosophy's perspective I analyze the arguments of the two ideologies.

I will start with the historical investigation, than I explore the theoretical paradoxes of the form of national sovereignty instituted by the French Revolution and in the last part I consider whether there is a necessary, logical connection between the ideas of freedom and nation.

As a conclusion I argue that the most important theoretical link is between the idea of freedom understood as self-governance, coded in democracies' processes, and the idea of a sovereign nation as the modern form of political community.

Keywords: national sovereignty, Rousseau, French Revolution, Sieyès, liberalism, enlightenment

Zsuzsanna Noémi Both: Service of the People and Compromise. Life-work in the Socialist Romania

The emergence of the need for empirical social research and the maturing of its epistemological arsenal are two hundred years old, just like nationalism, as E. Hobsbawm states it. The coincidence is not mere chance: it indicates that the professional (re)construction of the national past is an important element in the narratives of national identity. For this reason 1918 marks a turning point in the historiography of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania, as the need for self-preservation in a context of assimilation rose to prominence, and achieving this by intellectual means was suffused with the idea of *service of the people*. Given that the values of *service of the people* were not compatible with the ideology of the totalitarian regime

established in Romania in the late 40s, the representatives of the former were driven onto paths of necessity, trying to remain true to the values which had formed during the inter-war years. In my study I tried to give an insight, via the lives and careers of the most notable Transylvanian Hungarian historians of the Socialist period, into the workings of the value-saving strategies opposing the official ideology.

Keywords: Imreh István, historiography, Hungarian minority, socialism, Transylvania

Gergely Illyés: Mixed Party or Voting Another Aarty?

In recent years, the prevalence of ethnic voting is seemingly decreasing in the Carpathian Basin. The authors of the keynote also emphasize the topicality of the issue: in Upper Hungary and in Vojvodina as well a significant number of Hungarian electors vote parties which don't define themselves primarily along their ethnic identity. So far in Transylvania this trend is less observable, at least it is not at all as significant as in the aforementioned regions. Yet, if we examine the election results in the last five years, we can easily conclude that there are a significant number of Hungarian electors, who don't vote Hungarian parties. My brief analysis attempts to demonstrate this hypothesis through the elections results; subsequently I comment on the prospects of the emergence in Transylvania of an ethno-regional party, in the light of the situation in Upper Hungary and Vojvodina.

Keywords: mixed party, ethno-regional party, election system

Ágnes Kiss: Informal Practices within the Romanian Communist Censorship System

Based on interviews, memoirs, diaries and correspondence of media personnel, publishing houses and representatives of other cultural institutions, as well as interviews with employees of the first censors' office (Direcția Generală a Presei și Tipăriturilor – General Directorate of Press and Printing), the paper identifies informal ties and practices emerging between the main actors of the censorship system from communist Romania in the 1970's and 1980's. More specifically, it deals with practices that were based on trust-centered relationships nurtured by peers, but also on nexuses of similar nature existing between the controllers and the controlled. Having this focus, the analysis counterpoints the dominant narrative on the

functioning of the censorship system that evokes merely strains and conflicts, but it also nuances the results of institutionalist approaches that process primarily legal norms and administrative documents. Furthermore, the analysis sheds light on important components and mechanisms of self-censorship.

The sources reveal that people involved in publishing tended to develop similar and rather stable responses to uncertainty related to formal censorship norms and practices. Informal practices built on positive interpersonal relationships served to compensate for the scarcity of information released through formal channels and to influence the censorship process of a highly secretive and intricate nature.

However, regarding their impact on the working of the formal censorship system, informal practices had opposite outcomes: some of them undermined it, whereas other practices reinforced it. Negotiations between the “good censors” and “good editors-in-chief” and „pulling strings”, that is, intervening through personalized networks on behalf of the text, could result in bending the borders between the forbidden and permitted topics, in saving certain texts from interdiction. Conversely, obtaining information on censorship norms and practices from colleagues or from “good censors”, as well as the preventive strategies employed by editors-in-chief, namely counseling and informal agreements with controllers, contributed to the self-censorship of the editorial offices, a phenomenon that subserved the formal scopes of the censorship system. Informal practices composing this second cluster, be it „forewarning” or „advice” mutually regarded as benevolent gestures or informal agreements, did not infringe but replaced and completed official commands. In other words, they reconstituted formal censorship mechanisms in the domain of informality. Hence, regardless of the intentions and of whether the actors engaged in informal practices were aware of the consequences of their acts, these informal practices contributed to the effective functioning of the formal system.

Keywords: communist censorship system, cooperation, informal relationships, informal practices, self(editorial)-censorship

Regional strategy, regional party. A selection from the writings published in *Provincia*

Gabriel Andreescu: Ethnic minorities: the strategy of the Social Democratic Party and of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania;

Miklós Bakk: The logics of separate development; Antonela Capelle-Pogăcean: The new self-definitions of the Hungarian minority in Romania after 1989; Al. Cistelean: Speeches for Transylvania; Gusztáv Molnár: The prospects of a consociationalist democracy in Transylvania; Zsolt Attila Borbély: The totality of the Hungarian nation and Transylvaniam; Gabriel Andreescu: If the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania was left in power, would that be the first step in Romanian consensual democracy?; Antonela Capelle-Pogăcean: Remarks on the issue of establishing a regional party; Zoltán Kántor: Consociationalism in Transylvania. Processes and models; Sabin Gherman: Letter to the *Provincia*; Marius Cosmeanu: Letter to Sabin Gherman; Traian Ștef: Answer to the letter of Sabin Gherman; Elek Szokoly: *Provincia* – plank above the barricades; Memorandum to the Parliament on the establishment of regions in Romania, The *Provincia* round-table discussion on December 8th 2001: „... What sort of Transylvania do we want...”; *Provincia* round-table: “What kind of region do we want?” II

Keywords: regional strategy, consociationalism, consensual democracy, Transylvania

Szidónia Madaras: Ethnicity – from a Triple Perspective

The writing sums up the questions and answers formulated at the book launch event of the Romanian and Hungarian edition of Rogers Brubaker, Margit Feischmidt, Jon Fox, Liana Grancea’s *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* held on March 24th 2012.

Keywords: Rogers Brubaker, Margit Feischmidt, Jon Fox, Liana Grancea, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*

Nándor László Magyar: Nearing Party System Change. Reflection on the Keynote Address of Miklós Bakk and István-Gergő Székely Entitled On the Chances of the Emergence of a Multi-ethnic Regionalist Party in Transylvania

In my contribution first of all I examine the theoretical background and *hiatuses* (in a philosophical sense) of the crisis which might inevitably lead to the emergence of a trans-ethnic regional party, either as a resolution or as a protest. The crisis is not only the symptom of the exhaust of

the ethno-nationalist political paradigm; it also reflects how the Hungarian political field in Romania tipped its balance on right. Therefore I consider that the simultaneous solution of both factors causing the crisis could constitute the preliminary leading to the establishment of such a new party, in which global depression would also have a role to play. Consequently I presume not only the emergence of the new party, but parallel to this the radical change of the political *scene* as well. The authors of the keynote assume the contrary, namely the stability of the political field, and they model within this field the election prospects of a regional, ethnically mixed Transylvanian party, in the context of conjuncture – though real – components, like the transformation of the election system and possible regionalization.

Keywords: trans-ethnic regional party, election system, regionalism

Árpád Márton: It Is Possible to Found a Regional Mixed Party in Transylvania, but Would That Be Suitable to Hungarians?

A possible mixed party could count only on the votes of Hungarians, since most of Romanians from Transylvania still have a significant aversion towards the Hungarian community, and they find completely unacceptable its rights to language usage and to self-determination.

We are aware though of the fact that the new Romanian election law will certainly speed up this process, since in those constituencies, where people think that Hungarian votes would be lost, on one hand the Hungarian electors would be inclined to vote a party with higher chances, on the other hand among Hungarians willing to get involved into politics there would be more and more persons who would try out parties with such prospects. Thus political assimilation will speed up not only in those counties, where the percentage of Hungarians is below 7, but also in those parts of Transylvanian counties with significant Hungarian population, where a constituency can't be won by a Hungarian candidate.

This situation can be avoided through election laws, which make possible the joining of all Hungarians, so we should urge the passing of such laws, in addition we should aim at union in our attitude as well.

Keywords: mixed party, Romanian election law, political assimilation

**Zoltán Alpár Szász: Considerations for Interpreting the Keynote Article
by Bakk Miklós and Székely István Gergő**

My short paper presents some considerations and observations regarding both the methodology, theoretical framework and concepts used in the keynote article of the present issue and the way its authors view the chances of an interethnic regionalist party in Transylvania. From a methodological point of view, I point out that the authors tacitly adopt a normative stance by envisaging the end of ethnic voting and the creation of a(t least one) multiethnic party in the region. In what regards their theoretical considerations, definitions and empirical examples, these invite little criticism. However, I consider their definition inspired by work on other continents than Europe somewhat unfortunate and misleading. Their analysis of electoral system change and its effect on ethnic parties is extremely well-crafted and the way they envisage the development of party strategies in Romania interesting. Nonetheless, in my view, the main dilemma in terms of creating a multiethnic regionalist party in Transylvania is elite and follower recruitment. The reason is the apparent absence of genuinely regionalist, not only locally oriented, clientelistic elites in Romania and of vote-pooling or exchange of votes that transcends ethnic barriers. Moreover, political processes or phenomena facilitating the creation of such parties are not underway, yet. Hence, I cannot be optimistic in what concerns the appearance of such a party in Transylvania.

Keywords: interethnic regionalist party, ethnic party, electoral system, ethnic vote

István Székely: Remarks on the Study of Miklós Bakk and István-Gergő Székely Entitled *On the Chances of the Emergence of a Multi-ethnic Regionalist Party in Transylvania*

By today one of the main features of the keynotes published in *Magyar Kisebbség (Hungarian Minority)* is that the topic is approached from various points of view, aiming at plenitude. The studies are not polemical writings which leave the questions open, but rather sum up and close the topic without stimulating debate. This study is also of the sort, and I would highlight as a strong point of it the terminological clarification of ethnic parties.

I comment on three issues raised by the keynote: on the incidence of the useful vote principle, on the connections between the field delimited by

the political discourse and the ethnic vote, and on the relevance in Transylvania of the interpretation given by Ervin Csizmadia on the development of Hungarian parties.

I argue that although due to the modification of the election law the conditions for establishing ethnically mixed parties improved, the conditions to their headway and strengthening are not given. Concerning future I don't think that a possible propagation of regionalism would give birth in public policy to a new principle, which would prevail against the ethnic component in political representation. We are still too many for that.

Keywords: regionalist party, ethnic vote, Romanian election law, political representation

Csilla Zsigmond: A Few Reflections on the Keynote of Miklós Bakk and István-Gergő Székely

To answer to the issue formulated by the keynote of Miklós Bakk and István-Gergő Székely, I think that in the near future the authentic emergence of a regionalist mixed party is hardly possible. Ethnic voting and central management of the parties is too prevailing for that to happen. However, regional cooperation, and the spreading of horizontal territorial politics can certainly support this process. Alike, these might lead to the strengthening of local political actors, therefore local and regional political agreements or coalitions concluded along local interests might gain a greater significance, which would also decrease the importance of the centralist party management. These regional interests could promote regional representation as well. Yet, I think that its realization would be hardly possible as a "Greenfield Investment", or as the clear outcome of a "turn towards regionalism", but rather as a combination of these.

Keywords: regionalist mixed party, regional cooperation, local political agreements