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Shifting linkages in ethnic mobilization: the case of RMDSZ and the Hungarians in Transylvania

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The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) has been the most stable actor in the Romanian party system over the past two decades. However, in this article, we argue that beyond this apparent stability, the linkages between RMDSZ and its voters have undergone a gradual, yet significant shift. The ethnic block voting of Transylvanian Hungarians was closely connected to the concept of a self-standing and parallel "Minority Society," and to the practices of institution building that the minority elites engaged in in the early 1990s. However, since its first participation in the Romanian government in 1996, RMDSZ has gradually departed from this strategy, a phenomenon that was also closely connected to a process of elite change within the organization. The present RMDSZ leadership puts less and less emphasis on policy programs that could reinforce the institutional system of the minority; consequently, it is unable (and unwilling) to organizationally integrate the community activists of the minority society who previously had played a key role in the process of (electoral) mobilization. At the rhetorical level, RMDSZ did not abandon the goal of building a parallel Hungarian minority society, but in its linkages to the Hungarian electorate, clientelistic exchanges have become predominant.

Keywords: ethnic politics; ethnic parties; ethnic mobilization; political particularism; pork barrel; Hungarians in Romania

Introduction

If one were asked to characterize the electoral behavior of ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania in a single word, stability would definitely be the best description. It is common knowledge that in the parliamentary elections of the last two decades, the overwhelming majority of Hungarians supported an ethnic party, namely RMDSZ.[1] According to our estimates,[2] the proportion of RMDSZ voters among ethnic Hungarians casting a ballot has never fallen below 80%.[3] Political analysts also frequently emphasize that RMDSZ has been the most stable actor in the Romanian party system since 1989. The main argument of this paper, however, is that beyond this apparent stability, very important changes have occurred in the past two decades, as the nature of the linkages between RMDSZ and its voters has undergone a gradual, yet significant shift. In setting out our arguments, we draw primarily on theoretical models of ethnic parties and mobilization based on rational choice theory, which highlight the importance of patronage politics.

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The electoral mobilization and the main demands of Hungarians in Romania – including various forms of autonomy or self-government which often served as the core elements of RMDSZ's electoral campaigns – have been closely connected from the earliest stages to the conception of a self-standing *Minority Society* (an idea developed in the interwar period by Hungarian intellectuals and refurbished in the aftermath of the 1989 regime change), and to the practices of institution building that the minority intelligentsia engaged in. However, RMDSZ has gradually departed from this strategy of ethnic institution building, primarily as a consequence of repeated participation in governing coalitions. The leadership of RMDSZ puts less and less emphasis on policy programs that could strengthen the minority institutional system; consequently, it is unable (and conspicuously also unwilling) to organizationally integrate societal actors (sub-elite political and ethnic activists) who previously had played a key role in the process of (electoral) mobilization. At the rhetorical level, RMDSZ did not abandon the goal of building a parallel Hungarian minority society, but in practice, it is governmental participation that has become the central element of the party's strategy.

We believe that our case also reveals a number of insights about the broader universe of ethnic parties. First, the case of RMDSZ helps to explain that shifts in the strategies of ethnic parties are not driven solely by choices over more radical or more moderate programs. Second, the relationship between ethnic minority parties and their voters is partly shaped by the behavior of the majority political parties and the general political context of the respective country.

With regard to (changing) ethnic party strategies, the classic theory is the thesis of ethnic outbidding (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Horowitz 1985), which postulated that intra-ethnic competition leads to a radicalization spiral. Though it still has numerous followers, the theory has been significantly refined and alternative strategies have been described for ethnic parties engaged in competition with each other (e.g. Coakley 2008; Bochsler and Szőcsik 2013; Zuber 2013; Székely 2014). Furthermore, typologies of ethnic mobilization demands have gone beyond classifying parties on a (purely programmatic) moderate-radical continuum (Bugajski 1993; De Winter 1998; Dandoy 2010), and place increasing emphasis on the interconnection of ethnic politics and clientelism or patronage (Fearon 1999; Kitschelt 2001; Gunther and Diamond 2003; Chandra 2004; Laitin and Van Dder Veen 2012). However, these accounts still do not address in sufficient detail the shifts in strategy or party–voter linkages. On one hand, both the outbidding thesis and its refinements assume that a more radical/moderate tone usually only means a shift toward more/less extreme programmatic demands, for instance, from cultural to territorial autonomy claims or even secession (see Mitchell, Evans, and O'Leary 2009). On the other hand, the accounts which emphasize the propensity of ethnic parties to clientelism usually neglect intra-ethnic competition. Our case makes it readily apparent that not only the program of an ethnic party may change, or even if such shifts occur, these may not be the most important ones: also the mechanism of reaching out to the voters may vary over time, and this has significant consequences for intra-ethnic party dynamics.

Existing theories about the propensity of ethnic parties to clientelism (mostly rational choice-based) are inclined to explain the particularistic behavior of ethnic parties exclusively with the very variable of ethnicity, regardless of the context of their operation. However, we argue that the primary driver of RMDSZ's shift toward patronage politics was not its ethnic nature, but the strategies of majority political parties and the general Romanian political climate. Our argument is similar to that of Chandra (2004), who argues that the clientelistic operation of ethnic parties requires certain well-specified conditions, namely patronage democracies.

We start our argument with a review of the relevant literature about ethnic parties, highlighting the importance of both programmatic and clientelistic linkages. This is followed by a discussion of the concept of the parallel Hungarian Minority Society and the manner in which RMDSZ gradually shifted from this conception toward a strategy based primarily on securing state resources. In the final part of the paper, we discuss the role of mainstream (Romanian) political actors in the maintenance of the ethnic cleavage and in the strategy shift of RMDSZ.

Ethnic parties and political particularism

The literature provides numerous typologies of ethnic parties, most of which place the parties on a scale according to how "radical" or "moderate" their demands are in terms of the extent of the restructuring of state power that would be required to fulfill them.[4] While the "radical"/"moderate" opposition is part of everyday political discourse on and among Transylvanian Hungarians and it has been employed in scholarly accounts about the case (Stroschein 2011; Bochsler and Szőcsik 2013), we believe that this dichotomy is unable to fully grasp the internal political dynamics of Hungarians in Transylvania in particular and of national minorities in general.

Instead, we argue that shifts in the nature of *party–voter linkages* are more important than changes in *programmatic goals*. Consequently, for our purposes, typologies that differentiate between ethno-political aims related to nationalism and to the allocation of (state) resources are more useful. Such classifications can be found in the works of Rudolph and Thompson (1989) and Rudolph (2006), who distinguished between *output-oriented* goals on the one hand, which involve access to resources, and *authority, regime,* and *community* goals, on the other hand, the latter being anchored in nationalism and requiring the restructuring (or even the dissolution) of the state. Such typologies allow for interpreting ethnic mobilization in a broader sense: besides ethno-cultural or ethno-political goals related to minority rights, the possible objectives of ethnic mobilization also comprise the aim of improving the material condition (or social position/status) of the groups through access to state resources. On the other hand – and this is the most important for the purpose of our study – such typologies make it clear that ethnic mobilization is often (even if not necessarily) limited to pure resource accumulation.

Other authors adopt an even more radical approach regarding the relation between ethnically based parties and political particularism. According to Kitschelt (2001), ethnic parties are necessarily inclined toward clientelism. Further developing the party theory of Aldrich (1995), Kitschelt distinguishes four ideal-types of political parties, according to whether they solve *collective action* problems (e.g. obtaining scales of economies in mobilization and campaigning or the pooling of resources) and/or *social choice* problems (i.e. aggregating the individual preferences of politicians into a coherent program which is suitable to address societal problems). The following are the corresponding party–voter linkage types in Kitschelt's account:

(1) If none of the two problems are solved, parties will only be able to operate as the electoral vehicles of *charismatic* politicians; people will vote for them because of their real or putative individual traits.
(2) If only the collective action problem is solved, but the social choice problem is not, then the party only invests in organization building, and party–voter linkages will be of a *clientelistic* nature.

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(3) If parties solve both the social choice and the collective action problem, they can be considered *programmatic*. They differ from clientelistic parties, in that the (similarly developed) organizational infrastructure is not deployed to secure direct material advantages to their voters; rather, electoral support stems from the implementation of coherent social policy programs.
(4) The last possibility, when parties elaborate programs but do not develop and maintain a robust organizational structure, is not relevant in modern mass democracies in Kitschelt's opinion (2001, 301–304).[5]

The programmatic type is obviously regarded by Kitschelt as the most favorable for democratic accountability, although the clientelistic type may also be suitable to ensure a certain degree of accountability and responsiveness. In his treatment of Eastern European party systems, Kitschelt considers liberal, socialist, or left-libertarian parties to be programmatic, but unequivocally classifies ethno-cultural parties (including linguistic, ethnic, religious, or regional parties) into the clientelistic type, and argues that they do not have a chance to become modern programmatic parties, because by doing so, ethnic entrepreneurs would run the risk of alienating part of the ethnic constituency (2001, 305). However, they may resort to charismatic leaders if excluded from power for a long time.[6]

While Kitschelt is dismissive of the capacity of ethnic parties to develop coherent programs, Fearon (1999) argues that ethnic politics can be based on both policy and patronage considerations, a point that will also be sustained by our case study of RMDSZ. According to Fearon, two types of political goods encourage voters to support a party: policies favorable to the voters (*policy goods*), and direct material benefits channeled to voters mainly from public funds (*political pork*). Policy goods can be further classified as *unimodal* or *polarized*. Thus, the rewards that motivate voters can be of three types.

Unimodal public policies (e.g. taxes and welfare services) may obtain a centrist consensus in the electorate because there are only relatively few voters on the "right" or the "left" of this modal value. In such cases, the best strategy for the parties is to address the voters concentrated in the center, which leads to a convergence toward the center in a Downsian (Downs 1957) manner. In the case of *polarizing public policies,* the distribution of voters has two modal values, at the "left" and "right" of the (relatively empty) center, but the supporters of one of the two options may end up as a permanent minority. Given this, politicians and entrepreneurs representing the minority option have two alternatives: they may try to convert some individuals from the competing faction or force compromises by means of non-conventional politics, that is, political action transgressing electoral politics (such means can range from making use of international pressure to civil unrest or even violence (Fearon 1999, 9)).

Finally, the third category of rewards described by Fearon consists of *pork barrel* or *political pork* goods, meaning rewards flowing directly from state sources. These goods resemble a *zero sum game*: when someone consumes more (and everyone would like to consume more), less remains for others. This phenomenon is not a feature of some kind of "atavistic" political behavior (that modern democracy can eliminate), since goods related to social modernization are fundamentally of this kind: for example, investments in infrastructure, roads, sewerage, schools, hospitals, sports facilities, and so on. State funds or jobs in the public sector also belong to this category. The distribution of preferences in the case of pork goods is completely different from those regarding policy goods, because by definition, everyone seeks the same thing: to obtain as much as possible.

Fearon argues that both polarizing public policies and political pork may serve as the basis of ethnic party structures, while obviously, *unimodal* public policies (where

members of all ethnic groups have similar preferences) can hardly constitute the *differentia specifica* of a party that addresses only one ethnic group. Polarizing public policies have a great chance of becoming the foundations of ethnic party construction in two cases. First, it is possible that an intervening variable creates an uneven distribution of policy preferences among different ethnic groups. An obvious criterion is the position of the groups in the ethnic stratification system. For example, Irish Catholics are overrepresented among Northern Ireland's blue collars, while Protestant Unionists are overrepresented among white collars.[7] This is why Catholics traditionally tend to support a left-wing alternative while Protestants support a conservative one.[8] In a similar fashion, it would be obvious for a Roma movement to connect to social welfare problems.[9] Second, public policies may be linked directly to ethnicity with such issues as language usage or state symbols. It is quite probable that everyone would like his or her mother tongue to be the official language of the state (or at least to be widely used in official settings). If there are two (linguistically different) ethnic groups, the preferences on language policies can be expected to diverge toward two modal values, while preferences within the groups can be expected to be relatively homogenous. As we will discuss in the next sections, it is especially this second possibility that is relevant in the case of Hungarians in Romania.

Concerning pork barrel, we already mentioned (when referring to Kitschelt) that the territorial concentration of ethnic communities makes it easier for ethnic parties to lobby for direct investments and material goods for their own constituencies. Fearon (1999, 12–15) brings another argument in this regard by pointing out that the political struggle for resources urges the creation of *minimum winning coalitions,* since such coalitions reduce the number of actors that have to share the limited spoils. In such situations, actors favor features not easily chosen or changed by individuals (similar to the ascriptive feature of ethnicity) to identify the participants of the coalition. This assures that in case of electoral victory, others will not join the coalition. The problem leads us to the politics of *exclusion* or *social closure*, a phenomenon already recognized by Weber (1922), who linked ethnic group formation to limited access to certain goods. Another consequence is that dominant groups have an obviously better chance to limit the access of others to valuable goods, and this prompts us to consider the role of the strategies of majority actors too in our explanation of minority political behavior, an issue to which we will return in the last section of the article.

The theoretical arguments reviewed here share the widespread assumption in the literature that ethnic parties tend to rely on political particularism in establishing linkages to their electorate.[10] Before proceeding to the discussion of our specific case (RMDSZ), the last task to be performed is to describe the more concrete forms of particularistic political behavior. In this sense, Kopecky and Scherlis (2008) differentiate between multiple related yet distinct phenomena. The first type is *patronage*, referring to the distribution of public sector jobs among individuals close to the party. The second type is *clientelism*, denoting a direct exchange of material goods (e.g. food or presents) for votes. Clientelism is characterized by a significant asymmetry between patron and client, and works best in the case of electorates living in extreme poverty. The third type is pork barrel or political pork, which refers to the phenomenon of parties directly channeling public funds and state resources to a specific territory. Pork differs from clientelism because the benefits reach not only those who voted for the party, but everyone who lives in the respective settlement or electoral district, whether they voted for the party or not. Moreover, pork barrel lacks the element of exploitation, which is present in clientelism.

For the purpose of our study, patronage and pork barrel (tactical, targeted distribution of public funds) are the most relevant forms of particularistic party–voter exchanges. While

Kitschelt uses the term clientelism, there is no doubt that his arguments also implicitly cover what Kopecky and Scherlis define as patronage and pork barrel. Similarly, although Fearon (1999) speaks explicitly about pork (targeted public funds), his analysis can easily be extended to include patronage and clientelism too. Thus, in the remainder of this paper, we will use the term clientelism in this broader sense.[11]

The changing strategies of RMDSZ

The program of the minority society

Today, nearly 1.3 million Hungarians live in Transylvania (19% of the population).[12] In the past century, not only did their proportion decline significantly (according to the census of 1910, the proportion of Hungarian native speakers in this area was 31.6%), but their situation has also been deeply affected by the transformation of the ethnic stratification system. Hungarians used to be in a dominant position in public administration, the economy, and urban life before 1918, and they partially succeeded at keeping this status in the interwar period. However, the socialist modernization processes of the post-war era brought about major changes in this respect, and ethnic Romanians became the majority group in the major urban centers of Transylvania. Today, the societal positions of the Hungarians are less favorable than those of ethnic Romanians (lower proportions of individuals with higher education, lower average income, lower proportion of city-dwellers). Despite this, the relationship between Romanians and Hungarians – to use the term of Horowitz (1985) – is *unranked*: on the one hand, Hungarian ethnicity is not a marker of status and, on the other hand, there are institutional channels of social mobility controlled by Hungarian elites, which played a crucial role in post-1989 political mobilization.

We believe that it is impossible to fully understand the political participation of the Transylvanian Hungarians solely from the perspective of the general typologies on ethnic parties and mobilization. In this respect, it is of primary importance to emphasize the path-dependent nature and the relative stability of the political behavior of Transylvanian Hungarians (at the level of both the elites and of the electorate). The *ethnic voter habitus*, characteristic of the overwhelming majority of Hungarians[13] and the political structure that sustains it have both taken shape in the early 1990s, and are practically still valid today. During the early 1990s, RMDSZ provided a frame for the reaffirmation of a wide scale Hungarian national movement, and aimed for a significantly broader spectrum of political participation of the Transylvanian Hungarians than mere electoral mobilization or political campaigning. RMDSZ did not even define itself as a political party, and analysts also described RMDSZ as an organization fulfilling several functions or roles during the first half of the 1990s. For instance, Szilágyi (1991) discussed RMDSZ, the social movement alongside RMDSZ, the political party. This qualification remained valid later on, since analysts continued to emphasize the difference between the role of RMDSZ in politics and in community organizing (Bárdi and Kántor 2000). Furthermore, we have to emphasize that authors who went beyond the analysis of the mere formal programmatic elements of RMDSZ highlighted the central importance of the concept of the so-called *Minority Society,* which could be conceptualized as a comprehensive ethnically based Hungarian social and institutional structure, imagined to function in parallel with Romanian (majority, mainstream etc.) society. (See Biró 1998; Kántor 2000; Bakk 2001; Brubaker et al. 2006; Brubaker 2009)

The idea of a parallel society is not unfamiliar for scholars of interethnic relations and ethnically divided societies. Horowitz (1985) suggests that the presence of multiple (unranked) ethnic groups in a state entails the possibility of the formation of parallel

societies and characterizes these ethnic groups as *incipient parallel societies*. Another very influential orientation outlining the concept of parallel society has been developed by Lijphart (1969, 1977) who coined the term "pillarization (*verzuiling*) of society."[14]

The roots of the idea of a Hungarian Minority Society, which is of primary importance for our study, reach back to the interwar period when the Hungarian urban elite and middle class (previously in a dominant position) was confronted for the first time with minority status. Moreover, the idea survived tenaciously during Communism in spite of radical social changes.[15] Thus, it was not by accident that the Hungarian elites went back to these ideas when they set out to organize RMDSZ in the early 1990s.

The essence of the Minority Society has been formulated most plastically by István Sulyok, a Hungarian intellectual of the interwar era. In his view, the Minority Society is a "social totality" (or a "container society," as we would say today) which, similarly to the nation state, comprises all sorts of social relations, or in Sulyok's words, "embraces its members in every respect, and tries to provide for all of their needs" (1931, 174). However, there is a fundamental difference between the Minority Society and a nation state, namely that minorities lack state power, which, in the case of nation states (or a nation that owns a state), is the most effective means of social organization. Sulyok's ideology of this ethno-civil society gained in value after 1990. Certain fundamental points of Sulyok's account deserve further emphasis. The Minority Society, in the sense of a parallel society or "Hungarian world" is more than a description of social reality; it is also a political program, a desirable state of affairs, which, according to its supporters, should be pursued by the Hungarian elite. Following Egri (2010), we should note that the idea of the Minority Society emerging in the 1930s mirrored a radical change in the perspective of Transylvanian Hungarian elites, reflecting an attempt to adapt to the new situation that emerged after the Treaty of Trianon. From a majority (dominant) perspective, ethnic encapsulation may seem to be an anomaly, and of course, the Hungarian elites of Transylvania themselves did not regard it as desirable before World War I. Before Trianon, Transylvania (the entire territorial unit) was taken for granted for social and political organization, and the main goal was to carry this out under Hungarian leadership or domination, and – just like in the case of the Romanian elites in the post-Trianon era (See Livezeanu 1995) – the nationalizing state was regarded as the primary means[16] for that.

As a last remark, one has to emphasize that Sulyok considered that conventional minority politics (reliance on political and legal means for protecting the rights and interests of the community) are far from being sufficient. It should be complemented by a social movement which undertakes active work in community organizing, and thus creates, maintains, and broadens the Minority Society and the institutional system on which it is based. This remark is of particular importance with regard to the evaluation of the ethno-political strategies followed by RMDSZ, to which we turn in the next section.

To conclude this section, the initial strategy of RMDSZ was based on a (normatively loaded) vision of a parallel Minority Society, considered a precondition for obtaining the supreme programmatic goal: Hungarian political autonomy. This involved a fully fledged institutional system, mass mobilization, and also non-conventional means of political participation. In the next section, we discuss how RMDSZ gradually turned away from this strategy.

Governmental participation and resource allocation

We consider that the voting behavior of Hungarians in Transylvania is still closely linked to the idea of the Minority Society, and to the process of ethnic institution building initiated by

Hungarian intellectuals in the early 1990s. The habitus of voting along ethnic lines has also taken shape in this period and continues to determine the political options of the Hungarians in Transylvania to a large extent. However, RMDSZ has gradually distanced itself from the strategy and ideology outlined above, which it vocally advocated in the early aftermath of the regime change.

Toró (2013) analyzed in detail the turning points that occurred in the political strategies of RMDSZ. He argues that the critical shift started in the second half of the 1990s; since then, RMDSZ has gradually drifted away from its former strategy that relied on extensive political mobilization (of a social movement type) and a wide range of political action aimed at reinforcing and broadening the "Minority Society." Instead, the newly emerging political strategy of RMDSZ prioritized the parliamentary arena and the (often covert) negotiations with majority political actors. In this context, the main aim of RMDSZ became governmental participation, and the main legitimizing principle (toward the Hungarian community), the allocation of public resources to Hungarian institutions and regions populated by Hungarians. Toró argues that the shift toward a strategy relying on bargaining with majority political actors has been legitimized by Béla Markó's[17] thesis, according to which "the problems of Hungarians in Romania can be solved only in Romania through governmental action" (i.e. by means of law and state power through political compromise with majority political actors).

This shift in political strategy was interrelated with a gradual elite change in the party. As shown by Biró (1998), intellectuals working in cultural domains (some of whom had played a mediating role between the Hungarian community and the party–state structures during state socialism) occupied the dominant positions in the first half of the 1990s. However, this group of intellectuals gradually lost ground to economic, entrepreneurial interest groups. Indirectly, the change of party elites further contributed to the erosion of the habitus which focused on community organizing and movement-type political action.

We would like to emphasize that the erosion of the habitus (and the legitimizing principle) focused on community organizing and building/operating a parallel Minority Society does not mean that during the last decade, RMDSZ has ceased to initiate programs aimed at improving or broadening the Hungarian institutional network. Our main argument is that an essential split occurred within the formally integrated Hungarian national movement between the emerging (or put euphemistically: "professionalizing") political class and the broader stratum of intellectuals and activists in charge of operating/broadening the Hungarian institutional network. This split came about primarily because of the growing importance of the parliamentary arena and bargaining with Romanian political leaders. The negotiations between RMDSZ and Romanian parties routinely take place at the top level (at most several dozen politicians are involved) while the broader stratum of political and community activists are squeezed out of the ongoing political processes. According to the literature on consociational democracy (Lijphart 1977; see also Tsebelis 1990), this split between the top leaders and sub-elite-level activists is of primary importance, as the elites of societal segments have to balance between two major principles. First, in the interethnic parliamentary arena, they have to maintain a cooperative relationship with the political leaders of the rival segments. Second, in the intra-ethnic electoral arena, they must retain the support of their followers, who (if the social segment they claim to represent is really encapsulated) may hold a more intransigent position.

Although Romania is not a consociational system, RMDSZ top leaders have to cope with a very similar task. What Lijphart writes about the "followers" is of primary importance:

> The term "follower" here does not refer primarily to the mass public, which tends to be rather passive and apolitical almost everywhere and therefore does not present a great danger to the possibilities of elite accommodation, but refers more specifically to the middle-level group that can be described as subelite political activists. (1977, 53)

RMDSZ's top leaders have detached themselves from this wider stratum of "sub-elite activists," who were involved more directly in the building and maintenance of ethnic institutions. The RMDSZ leadership cannot (and apparently does not want to) effectively integrate this stratum, which formerly had played a key role in the mobilization of the Hungarian community.

Furthermore, the dual task of acting simultaneously in the parliamentary arena (bargaining with majority parties) and in the electoral arena (securing popular support for its political course within the segment and preventing the emergence of intra-ethnic challengers) entails serious trade-offs (Tsebelis 1990). This has led RMDSZ to adopt a dual rhetoric. According to its official agenda (formal programs, public rhetoric), RMDSZ has never given up the aim of maintaining and broadening the parallel Minority Society – a par excellence programmatic and ideologically loaded goal, which involves primarily bipolar policy conflicts with the Romanian majority in Fearon's terms. Nonetheless, in reality, the primary aim of RMDSZ has become assuming governmental positions and increasing obtainable governmental funds.

It would be, however, a mistake to suppose that the Hungarian electorate (and even the "sub-elite level" of political activists or nationally committed intellectuals) would totally disapprove of this new strategy of the RMDSZ elite. Table 1 provides evidence from surveys that Hungarian voters strongly support RMDSZ in assuming governmental responsibilities.

The shift in the political strategy of RMDSZ presented here is worth being analyzed from the perspective of theoretical considerations outlined in the previous section of this paper. The changes we uncovered are consonant with the thesis that ethnic parties are prone to connect to their electorates through political particularism and clientelistic networks.

Accommodation and pork barrel

In this section, we interpret the change of RMDSZ's strategy within the theoretical framework outlined in the first part of the paper. In the early 1990s, the Hungarian national

Table 1. Support for RMDSZ's participation in the government 2007–2011.

	July 2007 ($N = 1706$)	April 2008 ($N = 1114$)	September 2009 ($N = 1240$)
RMDSZ should stay in the governmental coalition	83.0	84.5	85.1
RMDSZ should leave the governmental coalition	5.7	10.7	9.2
DK, NR	11.3	4.8	5.7
	December 2010 ($N = 1143$)	December 2011 ($N = 1190$)	
RMDSZ should stay in the governmental coalition	55.6	62.8	
RMDSZ should leave the governmental coalition and try to form another government	17.2	9.1	
RMDSZ should leave the governmental coalition and remain in opposition	12.5	6.8	
DK, NR	14.8	21.2	

Source: Surveys representative of the Hungarian electorate of Transylvania carried out by TransObjective Consulting, Kvantum Research, and the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities.

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movement was organized primarily around programmatic or policy issues and less around resource-related considerations. The main reasons for this included the generally hostile climate toward the Hungarians, the Romanian governing parties being reluctant to allow the Hungarians access to power, and state resources for fear of losing votes. Thus, in this period, RMDSZ could not conform to Kitschelt's classification as a clientelistic party for the simple reason of almost complete exclusion by the majority parties.[18] Furthermore, in the terms of Fearon's account, RMDSZ's objectives polarized the Romanian political community[19] along ethnic lines, which were intimately related to the status of Hungarians as a community in Romania. The Hungarian elites were engaged in the institutionalization of the Hungarian parallel society and claimed recognition for it as an autonomous political entity. Besides (or in this very context), the issues of public and official language usage and of the Hungarian educational system were of primary importance. However, the majority of the Romanian political elite (and of the voters) supported the project of a unitary and culturally more homogenous political community. As the Romanian public opinion and political class seemed to be extremely intransigent and the Hungarians represented only 7% of the national population, RMDSZ was left with few chances for effective claims making through conventional means (that did not transcend parliamentary politics). Consequently, three means came to the foreground. First – as highlighted also by Stroschein (2012) – sustained mass protest was of particular importance in early 1990. Second, Hungarian leaders relied on the ideology of the Minority Society (as an ethno-civil society), in which the emphasis was on community organizing, and according to which, the success of ethno-politics did not depend primarily on parliamentary (or political) negotiations. Third, the Hungarian political elite tried to place the problem of the Hungarian community on the agenda of international politics.

There were several factors that contributed to the decline of this "introverted" strategy of RMDSZ (focusing primarily on the internal cohesion and mobilization of the Hungarian community). Probably, the most important was the pressure exerted by international actors, which persuaded the Romanian political elite about the necessity of negotiations with RMDSZ. Given the context of the Yugoslav succession wars and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the question of Transylvanian Hungarians seemed to be an issue of *security policy* for the international community.

The first serious attempt to facilitate negotiations between the Romanian government and RMDSZ occurred in July 1993, in the context of Romania's accession to the Council of Europe (Horváth 2002, 33–36). The negotiations were organized by an NGO specializing in elite-level interethnic dialogue, Project on Ethnic Relations (sponsored by the US government), and RMDSZ was represented by leaders belonging (by that time) to the second echelon. The event resulted in a jointly signed recommendation to improve interethnic relations in Romania, which, however, failed to be implemented ultimately. A direct consequence of this endeavor was the so-called Neptune-gate scandal (named after the seaside resort where the meetings took place), one of the most serious confrontations inside RMDSZ. After the fact of the informal negotiations became common knowledge, a large majority of RMDSZ deputies condemned the politicians who participated in the meetings and a declaration was issued which stated that the negotiators lacked a warrant to act in the name of the party.

A second important moment came in 1996, when – following the victory of the center-right opposition coalition – RMDSZ jointed the new government. According to Horváth (2002, 45), the propensity of the center-right parties to coalesce with RMDSZ did not stem from a deliberate strategy to defuse interethnic tensions, but rather reflected tactical concerns (such as to secure the support of Hungarian voters for the second round of the

presidential election). Nonetheless, the desire to impress the international community was probably the decisive factor. The international actors (primarily the Organization for Security Co-operation in Europe High Commissioner on National Minorities) played a key role also in keeping RMDSZ within the governmental coalition between 1996 and 2000 (Horváth 2002, 47).

After 2000, RMDSZ was almost continuously part of the governing coalitions or supported them in parliament[20] in spite of the softening of international pressure on Romania. From the perspective of our study, it is of primary importance that RMDSZ has undergone significant changes since it became a usual partner in governmental coalitions, becoming more moderate and developing more accommodative behavior toward Romanian political actors.

A first consequence of the shift toward accommodation was that autonomy demands were pushed to the background, even if only temporarily. There were no references to autonomy in the minority rights chapter of RMDSZ's electoral program of 2000. However, from 2004 on (because of the emerging intra-ethnic competition), autonomy resurfaced as one of the central messages of the electoral campaigns, despite the fact that in practice, RMDSZ made no serious efforts for negotiations on this topic with its Romanian political partners. This duality of rhetoric (pragmatism toward majority parties in the parliamentary arena and reaffirmed intransigence in the Hungarian public sphere) is very similar to the phenomenon described in the case of Northern Ireland as "ethnic tribune parties" by Mitchell, Evans, and O'Leary (2009). A second consequence was that RMDSZ practically ceased to raise the problems of the Hungarian minority at international fora. Third, the strategy shift contributed significantly to the hardening of the relationship between the two major factions inside RMDSZ. The so-called "moderates" (who were engaged in the daily process of governing and controlled governmental funds) consolidated their power, while the so-called "radicals" (who advocated a more intransigent position and the primacy of pushing for autonomy) accused moderates of excluding a large part of the party from decision-making. The radical wing eventually left RMDSZ in 2003 and established two new ethnic parties; however, neither of these succeeded to mount a serious challenge against RMDSZ.[21]

Turning back to the two types of political rewards that are deemed suitable for sustaining the support for ethnic parties by Fearon, we do not want to deny the importance of policy goods. However, it is clear that the direct material incentives became crucial in maintaining the stability of linkages between RMDSZ and its electorate. In fact, in the past decade, the main substantial element and legitimizing principle of the model of political representation implemented by RMDSZ has rested on the targeted allocation of public funds and public sector jobs. Given the geographical concentration of the Hungarians, for RMDSZ, it is a straightforward goal to lobby for the improvement of the infrastructure of the Hungarian-populated area.

Empirical surveys also demonstrate that pork barrel is of primary importance regarding the political options of Hungarian voters. According to a survey conducted in June 2013, 91% of Hungarian voters consider (to some extent or to a great extent) the ability of the parties/candidates to attract public funds for their region an important factor when choosing their representatives, and for 64%, this is one of the decisive factors. The abilities to "arrange problems in Bucharest" or "to understand each-other with Romanian politicians" are also considered important. However, in the eyes of Hungarian voters, ethnic bargaining is not necessarily at odds with an intransigent position regarding the "interests of the Hungarian community." This is well illustrated by the fact that in spite of the importance of pork barrel, voters appreciate representatives who "represent the interests of the Hungarian

community firmly, without compromise" or who "are concerned primarily with the problems of the Hungarian community"[22] (Table 2).

Furthermore, we would like to highlight that pork barrel is the domain where RMDSZ unequivocally surpasses its intra-ethnic competitors (EMNP and MPP), and the perceptions of the electorate also reflect this: 59% of the survey respondents considered that RMDSZ is best able to attract public funds/resources for their region or municipality, while only 3.5% and 1.7% believed that EMNP or MPP would outperform RMDSZ in this respect. This is a logical consequence of the success of RMDSZ in monopolizing the allocation of state and local-level resources for the Hungarian community. EMNP and MPP could rely solely on resources from Hungary (the right-wing Fidesz played a crucial role in the establishment of both of RMDSZ's intra-ethnic competitors). However, the magnitude of these Hungarian financial resources cannot be compared to those available for RMDSZ via the Romanian government and local administration, and their accessibility also depends on Fidesz's presence in the Hungarian government.[23]

One should note that the prevalence of particularistic political exchanges in the Hungarian community of Transylvania and the overwhelming advantage of RMDSZ vis-à-vis its intra-community challengers in this respect are also in line with Kitschelt's opinion that clientelistic linkages are suitable to a certain extent to maintain some sort of accountability, and that under such linkages, voters will only migrate to other organizations if the previously supported parties fail to deliver.

Why do majority actors accept/maintain the ethnic segmentation of the electorate?

So far, we have discussed the argument anchored in rational choice theory which postulates that ethnic parties are intimately linked to political particularism, and have shown that this seems to apply increasingly also in the case of RMDSZ. However, one cannot interpret the strategies of a minority ethnic party without taking into account the strategies of majority actors too.

First, it is of primary importance that in an international comparison, public administration is extremely politicized in Romania.[24] According to this, we argue that the inclination of RMDSZ toward particularism does not follow (solely) from its ethnic character, but it is also intrinsically linked to the characteristics of the Romanian party system. To put it more sharply, RMDSZ politicians have actually followed the patterns set up in Bucharest when they started their own patronage politics.

In what follows, we will highlight the deeply asymmetric character of the bargaining process between RMDSZ and its majority political partners. This asymmetry holds despite the fact that (compared to the 1990–1996 period) majority political actors have undoubtedly shifted to a more consensus-oriented political process in their relation with RMDSZ. At the turn of the millennium, some analysts suggested that this shift could be interpreted through the concept of consociational democracy, proposed by Arend Lijphart,[25] or at least have argued that some form of institutionally defined power sharing is a possible and desirable future of the Romanian political community.[26] However, the political participation (or the integration into the Romanian polity) of Hungarians cannot be adequately interpreted in the framework of consociational democracy or power sharing (Medianu 2002; Székely 2011). The main reason for this is that in Romania, legal or institutional guarantees that are characteristic of consociationalist models are absent. Because of this, achievements in resource allocation or representation in public institutions are not connected to any legal codification. The inclusion of the Hungarians and the share of public resources they are able to obtain always depends on ad hoc or one-time bargains (Bakk, Horváth, and Salat 2003; Salat 2003; Toró 2012).

Table 2. Factors influencing the electoral options of Hungarians in Transylvania (June 2013; $N = 1232$).

	To what extent do you take into consideration the following when choosing a party/candidate?		In your opinion of which of the three Hungarian parties are the following statements more characteristic?					
The party/candidate should …	To a great extent (is decisive)	To some extent		RMDSZ	EMNP	MPP	None of them	DK/ NA
be able to attract public funds/resources (roads, other investments) to your region or municipality	63.6	90.9	Is able to obtain public funds	58.9	3.5	1.7	18.5	17.4
represent the interests of the Hungarian community firmly, without compromise	60.1	88.1	Firmly represents interests …	43.5	14.2	2.8	20.4	19.0
be concerned primarily with the problems of the Hungarian community	59.4	87.3	Is concerned with problems of Hungarians …	50.2	14.5	4.2	11.2	19.8
not escalate the tensions between Hungarians and Romanians	59.3	85.9	Escalates tension …	17.7	18.3	7.8	30.1	26.0
draw the international community's attention to the unjust treatment of Hungarians in Romania	54.1	84.7	Draws the international community's attention …	46.1	19.2	3.9	11.6	19.2
maintain good relations with the Hungarian government	47.4	84.0	Maintains good relations with the Hungarian government …	43.3	18.7	7.4	7.7	22.9
be able to arrange our problems in Bucharest	46.4	82.5	Is able to arrange …	63.8	1.8	1.1	16.9	16.4
be able to understand each other with politicians from Bucharest	44.9	80.9	Understands each other …	67.4	2.5	1.5	13.2	15.4
be concerned with the problems of the country as a whole (not only of the Hungarian community)	31.6	66.2	Is concerned with problems of the country …	46.2	3.7	0.8	28.6	20.8

Source: Survey conducted in June 2013 by the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities, representative of the Hungarian electorate in Transylvania.

An alternative – and in our opinion more adequate – reading of the so-called "Romanian model of inter-ethnic relations"[27] is offered by Medianu (2002), who proposes an interpretation based on a model of hegemonic exchanges or control through co-optation. According to Medianu, the Romanian practice of political exchanges between majority and minority political actors is:

> illustrative for the societies in which the state is dominated by one ethnic group and national identity was built around the principle of ethnic homogeneity. [...] In these cases, political exchange leads to a policy of "control through co-optation" rather than to a consociational model based on segmental autonomy. In other words, political exchange allows for the accommodation of minority claims (which are conflicting with the national ideology of the majority) in a way which avoids a radical redefinition of the nation-state. (2002, 31)

We totally agree with Medianu's interpretation of the Romanian reality as conforming to a model combining informal power sharing with hegemonic political exchanges and control through co-optation. In what follows, we point out (remaining within the framework of rational choice theory) that the asymmetric character of political bargaining between majority and minority is essential for the understanding of the political participation of the Hungarian community in Romania. It is because of this asymmetry that majority political actors (although they have not renounced the concept of a unitary nation state) accept some degree of de facto power sharing.

The acceptance of elements of de facto power sharing by majority actors means first of all that Hungarians can participate in Romanian political life through ethnic parties (primarily RMDSZ), and majority parties do not target the Hungarian electorate. We would like to stress that by no means is it self-evident that majority parties could not target the minority electorate, and a set of complex causes lies behind the fact that in Romania, majority parties actually do not do so. Since Hungarians in Romania make up only 6.5% of the population, we obviously cannot state that at the national level, the main cleavage of the party system is articulated along the division between Hungarians and Romanians. However, in regions where the Hungarians represent a significant part of the population,[28] mainstream parties function mostly as Romanian ethnic parties (parties reserved for local ethnic Romanians).

This is the most evident in Harghita and Covasna counties, where in fact, all mainstream parties act continuously as the defenders of the "Romanian minority." In the two counties with a Hungarian majority population, monopolizing the local structures of the mainstream parties and confronting RMDSZ (instead of opening up the mainstream parties towards Hungarians) obviously pays off for the relatively small local Romanian elites. This strategy does not lead to electoral success, but it secures more resources for the Romanian elites, primarily through the deconcentrated institutions[29] "that cannot be entirely handed over to Hungarians."

In the ethnically more balanced counties (like Mureş and Satu Mare), it is obviously the ethnic cleavage that represents the main organizing principle of local politics. Here, mainstream parties have good chances for success in the elections; yet, the relatively high proportion of Hungarians (~38%, respectively, ~35%) remains a permanent threat for them. It is not at all accidental that before the local elections, formal or informal negotiations between mainstream parties take place routinely in these counties, and "Romanian grand coalitions" are often formed against RMDSZ. This "Romanian unity" is, of course, a serious obstacle in opening up the mainstream parties for Hungarians.

The perceptions of the top-level (Bucharest) elites of the mainstream parties do not favor the incorporation of Hungarians into these political organizations either. On the one hand, the Hungarian electorate is perceived by the Romanian political class as a disciplined community whose members follow faithfully the instructions of their leaders and

vote inevitably for RMDSZ. This means that in their perception, targeting the Hungarian electorate does not pay off. On the other hand, however, this perception is sustained by rational considerations too. Given the determination of the Hungarian political class to enter any governing coalition and the relatively low cost of their inclusion, it is rather comfortable for majority political actors to coalesce with RMDSZ (instead of other majority actors). The relatively low cost of including RMDSZ in governing coalitions is a result of the regionally concentrated nature of RMDSZ's interests, and of the asymmetric character of the bargaining process. For example, if one considers public office or public sector jobs, one can see that RMDSZ is by default directly interested (and able to deliver personnel) only in counties inhabited by Hungarians. Outside Transylvania, RMDSZ cannot fill the available positions even at the top level (because Hungarian candidates are rarely willing to move to distant parts of the country to occupy such positions and RMDSZ is unwilling to incorporate ethnic Romanians in order to surmount this issue). Theoretically, RMDSZ could be compensated with extra positions in counties with a significant share of Hungarians, where no (or less serious) staffing problems would arise. But actually, this is not the case, because the asymmetric character of the Romanian political structure does not allow for the underrepresentation of ethnic Romanians in Transylvanian counties (while easily allowing for the underrepresentation of the Hungarians both locally and nationwide). Thus, the theoretical maximum RMDSZ can achieve is the proportional representation of Hungarians in Transylvania. In this case, however, RMDSZ ends up (at best) with a share of public office that mirrors the proportion of Hungarians in the country's population and not the party's proportion in the winning coalition. Furthermore, so far, RMDSZ is unable to obtain even the proportional representation of the Hungarians in practice. This also means that an "extra profit" is obtained by the majority participants of the winning coalitions. To conclude, majority parties tolerate the presence of Hungarians in the government, but only to a level that is well below their proportion in the winning coalition.

Whatever the reasons may be, this perception of the Romanian parties plays a key role in the stability of RMDSZ and the persistence of ethnic voting. Due to this perception, Romanian parties do not even try to appeal to Hungarian voters. As a consequence, Hungarians rarely participate in politics through mainstream parties, and the instances when they do so can be best interpreted within the framework of assimilation (or at least, the Hungarian community leaders perceive or frame the phenomenon as such). To use the expression of Stroschein (2001), mainstream parties in counties with a substantial Hungarian population function as Romanian "titular ethnic parties." Thus, the only viable alternative that remains for the political participation of Hungarians is through ethnically based political parties, which practically means RMDSZ.

Conclusion

Our study focused on the changing nature of linkages between RMDSZ and the Hungarian electorate of Transylvania. The voting behavior of this electorate can be regarded as very stable, as Hungarians have overwhelmingly supported a single party, RMDSZ, which remains the dominant organization of the ethnic group even after 25 years. This also turned RMDSZ into the most stable actor of the Romanian parliamentary arena in the period since the regime change. Yet, despite this seemingly stable surface, the nature of the political participation of the Hungarian community has changed considerably.

In the early 1990s, RMDSZ was not merely a party-like organization, but also provided the framework for large-scale, social movement-type activism, spearheaded by the Hungarian intelligentsia of Transylvania. The intellectuals who re-organized the Hungarian

national movement after the fall of the state socialist regime returned to a set of socially deeply embedded roles and to the interwar idea of the Minority Society, which entailed the vision of a Hungarian world, where "one can live his/her everyday life as a Hungarian without having to attribute too much significance to the fact that this happens in Romania."[30] In this framework, the establishment and maintenance of Hungarian institutions were the primary objective. According to this program, reaching a certain level of institutional complexity may enable the community to maintain a parallel Hungarian society. Furthermore, it was emphasized that reliance on the conventional political and legal means of minority rights protection should have been complemented by a social movement and active work in community organizing that would create, maintain, and broaden the Minority Society – a par excellence programmatic and ideological goal, conceived as a logical necessity for the supreme objective of political autonomy.

In the framework of rational choice theory, one could argue that in the early 1990s, RMDSZ focused on this "introverted" strategy (social movement-type ethnic mobilization and community organizing) because it had few chances of joining a winning coalition in the parliamentary arena. Without the possibility to join the winning coalition, extra-parliamentary and non-conventional political means were of primary importance. Thus, the Hungarian elite tried to bring the problem of the Hungarian community onto the agenda of international politics and focused on organizing the community, a domain where the success of ethnic politics did not depend on parliamentary negotiations.

However, the situation has changed gradually starting with the late 1990s. International pressure on majority political actors was of primary importance in opening negotiations with RMDSZ. The Hungarian political organization joined the governing coalition for the first time in 1996 and – with short interruptions – has been continuously in the proximity of power since then. During this almost continuous tenure in government, RMDSZ developed a more accommodative behavior toward Romanian political actors. This accommodative strategy meant that RMDSZ practically had to renounce to make use of international pressure and that (at least in the beginning) it deliberately demobilized the Hungarian community, but the split of the party in 2003 can also be traced back to this shift.

It is also crucial that the linkages between RMDSZ and the Hungarian electorate changed too. In this respect, pork barrel has become of primary importance, pushing programmatic or policy-related goals to the background. Nowadays, Hungarians vote for RMDSZ primarily because they think that the organization is able to extract direct (publicly funded) investments for Hungarian-inhabited regions and Hungarian institutions. Pork barrel or clientelistic capacity is also the dimension where RMDSZ clearly surpasses its intra-ethnic competitors (EMNP and MPP).

The central importance of pork barrel and political patronage for RMDSZ in maintaining stable linkages with its electorate seem to confirm the arguments in the literature which claim that ethnic parties are intimately linked to political particularism. However, we also argued that the particularistic behavior of the Hungarian political class in Transylvania is not directly derivable from its ethnic character. On the one hand, particularistic political behavior is characteristic of the entire Romanian party system. On the other hand, given the profoundly asymmetric character of the bargaining process between mainstream parties and RMDSZ, majority actors are willing to maintain a system which mixes elements of informal power sharing and hegemonic political exchanges with RMDSZ, because this entails significantly lower costs for them than a partnership with a majority party of equal size would. Furthermore, keeping RMDSZ in or close to power is applied as a strategy for preventing radicalization within the Hungarian community.

To what extent RMDSZ will be able to maintain its electoral support relying on a strategy based primarily on resource allocation is an open question, and we do not wish to formulate speculative predictions for the future. Some factors are favorable for RMDSZ, others less so. Election results clearly show that while the Hungarian community had displayed higher mobilization levels in the early 1990s, today, Hungarians lag behind the national turnout rates (Kiss, Barna, and Gergő Székely 2013). This is without doubt connected to the waning of programmatic linkages and to the exhaustion of the social movement, and in the long run, it is questionable whether RMDSZ will be able to return to strategies that require higher levels of community mobilization even if a changed political context would call for this. However, the mobilization deficit so far has only translated into lower electoral turnout, as the vast majority of Hungarians who vote still vote along ethnic lines and support RMDSZ. Furthermore, majority actors (mainstream parties) are still interested in the survival of RMDSZ. This was confirmed when the mainstream parties endorsed the introduction of alternative thresholds into two consecutive electoral laws (in 2008 and 2015), meant to safeguard RMDSZ's presence in parliament in case it does not reach the 5% threshold. All these factors are likely to reinforce the strategy and habitus discussed in the paper.

Notes

1. In Hungarian: Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség, in Romanian: Uniunea Democrată a Maghiarilor din România (UDMR), in English: Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR). We will use the Hungarian acronym throughout the article.
2. When estimating the proportion of Hungarians who voted for RMDSZ, we used both municipal electoral macro-data and survey results. See Kiss, Barna, and Gergő Székely (2013).
3. This is not true regarding local elections. In the ethnically compact Hungarian majority Szeklerland region, RMDSZ had to face much stronger intra-ethnic challenges from other Hungarian ethnic parties and independent (Hungarian) candidates. In 2007, László Tőkés (formerly the honorary president of RMDSZ) ran as an independent candidate for the European Parliament and obtained 38.4% of the votes cast for Hungarian competitors.
4. The demands listed by such typologies usually range from softer claims for cultural or linguistic rights through various types of autonomy to irredentism or secession. See, for instance, Bugajski (1993); de Winter (1998); Dandoy (2010).
5. According to Kitschelt, this combination is characteristic of legislative caucuses or parties of notables operating in competitive oligarchies.
6. A very similar approach to Kitschelt's concerning ethnic parties can be found in the party typology of Gunther and Diamond (2003).
7. See Marger (2006) for the ethnic stratification system in Northern Ireland.
8. See Coakley (2008) for the evolution of the party system in Northern Ireland.
9. Sigona and Trehan (2009) argue that this is not happening because of neoliberal discourses, or from another perspective, *Gadje* (non-Roma) effectively dominate the Roma movement in Eastern Europe.
10. On the relation of political particularism and ethnic parties, see also Chandra (2004) and Laitin and Van Der Veen (2012).
11. Kopecky and Sherlis also describe a fourth type of particularistic behavior, namely *corruption,* defined as the illegal appropriation of public goods to serve private ends. This phenomenon is beyond the topic of our study.
12. We use the term Transylvania in a broad sense, meaning all the territories gained by Romania that belonged to the Hungarian part of the Habsburg Monarchy until 1918.
13. As we mentioned in the introduction, over 80% of Hungarians who voted have constantly done so for RMDSZ.
14. We should add that Brubaker et al. (2006, 265–301) reject the metaphor of a parallel society when they interpret the Hungarian world in the Transylvanian city of Cluj/Kolozsvár, because in their opinion, such a concept would conceal the pronounced asymmetry between minority and majority segments of society.

15. We do not consider it our task to review the history of the concept of the Minority Society exhaustively. Detailed discussions can be found in Bárdi (2006). We thank him for pointing out the conceptual continuity that extends back in time throughout the Communist period.
16. Egry (2010) argues that before World War I, Hungarian elites in Transylvania (especially those who lived in regions where the majority population was Romanian) often complained that the state was not sufficiently nationalizing, that is, they perceived it as not efficient enough in consolidating Hungarian national interests. Today, Romanian elites in Harghita and Covasna counties, where there is a Hungarian majority population, express similar concerns.
17. Béla Markó was the president of RMDSZ between 1993 and 2011.
18. In this period, resources from Hungary were crucial for the operation of RMDSZ. While this does not mean that an ethnically defined "RMDSZ clientele" did not exist in that period, our point is that due to the limited resources and the prevalence of the ideological vision of the Minority Society, the linkages between RMDSZ and its voters could be classified rather straightforwardly as dominantly programmatic.
19. We use the term *Romanian political community* (or *Romanian polity*) in the sense of the totality of Romanian citizens. Whether the Hungarians of Transylvania are (and if yes, in what sense) members of the Romanian political community is a controversial issue (see Salat 2008).
20. RMDSZ provided parliamentary support to the government between 2000 and 2004 and was part of the governing coalitions between 2004 and 2008, 2010 and 2012, and for most part of 2014.
21. The first party, MPP (Magyar Polgári Párt, in Romanian Partidul Civic Maghiar, in English Hungarian Civic Party) was registered in 2008, the second one, EMNP (Erdélyi Magyar Néppárt, in Romanian Partidul Popular Maghiar din Transilvania, in English Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania) in 2011.
22. This is also consistent with the arguments of Mitchell, Evans, and O'Leary (2009) on ethnic tribune parties.
23. Notwithstanding the close links between Fidesz and the opposition of RMDSZ by the time of the survey, a plurality of the respondents also perceived that RMDSZ is the party that maintains the closest relations with the current Hungarian government. More recently, there has been a rapprochement between Fidesz and RMDSZ, which may complicate in the future the access of RMDSZ's rivals to resources from Hungary.
24. The literature pictures post-socialist states as generally prone to patronage politics (e.g. Kopecky and Scherlis 2008; O'Dwyer 2004; Volintiru 2010). Further evidence for our argument is provided by a comparative study about the 10 post-Communist states that became members of the European Union (Enyedi and Casal Bértoa 2010), which concludes that even in a Central European comparison, the ideological or programmatic differences between the large mainstream parties are rather low in Romania.
25. According to Lijphart (1977, 106), plural societies have two main distinct features. First, divided societies are organized in distinct segments or pillars (*zuilen* in Dutch). Second, despite these deep cleavages and the lack of a unitary political culture, political elites behave in an accommodative way.
26. For a detailed account of this debate, see Székely (2011, 157–168).
27. The "Romanian model of inter-ethnic relations" was an expression prevalent at the turn of the millennium. For instance, Salat and Nastasă (2000) edited a volume sponsored by USAID about the "Romanian model" of interethnic peace and stability.
28. In Harghita/Hargita and Covasna/Kovászna, Hungarians form a majority of 85%, respectively, 74%. In Mureş/Maros, their proportion is 38%, in Satu Mare/Szatmár 35%, in Bihor/Bihar 25%, in Sălaj/Szilágy 23%, and in Cluj/Kolozs 16%.
29. Deconcentrated institutions refer to the county-level offices of the institutions of the central (governmental) administration (as opposed to the decentralized institutions, which are subordinated to the local or county-level administrations).
30. We borrow this description of the role of the Hungarian world from an interview with Salat (2012).

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