

# ETHNIC MINORITIES AND LOCAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ROMANIA. CASES OF ETHNOCULTURAL TENSION AND SEGREGATION

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of the research is to reveal some of the characteristics and shortcomings of the local governments' public policy and operation in the ethnically mixed areas of Romania, as well as the occasional ethnic bias that can be observed at that level. The research entailed carrying out 55 interviews with LG representatives, public servants and representatives of the local minority communities. In addition to the interviews, 572 questionnaires have been completed within the investigated local communities, applying a quota sampling. The sites selected for the research were two towns, Sfintu Gheorghe and Cluj. Both are capital cities in their county, the former with a Hungarian majority, the latter with a Romanian majority. Both are situated in the Western region of Romania, called Transylvania. Both cities include a significant community of Roma, too.

In Romania, the ethnic minority issues the local governments are confronted with spring from two main sources of tension: the tension between the Romanians and the Hungarians, and the tension between the local (relative) majority and the Roma communities. The two types of relations are quite different in character, though similarities are not inexistent or insignificant.

### *1.1. General Characteristics and Formal Regulations of Local Public Administration in Romania*

#### *1.1.1. The Structure of Local Public Administration*

Public administration in Romania is organized for the time being on two levels: state level public administration and local public administration. The state level public administration comprises two levels as well: *central administration* (including the presidency, the government and the specialized institutions of central state administration some of which are independent, some subordinated to the ministries) and *territorial state administration*, the latter consisting in deconcentrated state authorities functioning within the frameworks of the 42 territorial administrative units called counties (including the municipality of Bucharest which has a county status). The deconcentrated state authorities are embodied by the prefect, the representative of the Government in each of the counties, and the decentralized services of the different ministries or departments of the Government. The structure of the local public administration is defined by articles 119-120 of the Constitution and by the Law on Local Public Administration (215/2001), the latter defining the territorial limits of the 42 counties, 262 towns and 2.686 communes of the country. The main authorities of the local public administration (LPA) in Romania are the following:

- the *local council*, which is the elected deliberative authority in each town or commune, with a large autonomy in deciding upon the priorities of the local community;
- the *mayor*, as the elected executive authority in each town or commune, which is, at the same time, the representative of the state in the respective territorial administrative unit;

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- the *council of the county*, an elected body which has the role to coordinate the activity of all of the local councils in the cities and communes which are to be found on the territory of the respective county;
- the *president of the county council*, which is the head of the county level public administration, is elected by the councilors from among the council's members.

The local council, the mayor and the county council are elected, in accordance with the Law on Local Elections, for a term of four years.

According to the provisions of the relevant Romanian legislation, counties, towns and communes are legal entities that may hold and dispose of public and private property and have full authority and responsibility in all the matters related to the administration of local public interests within their established territorial units. The degree of the local autonomy, guaranteed by the law, is reflected in the capacity of the LPAs of communes, towns and counties to determine and approve revenue and expenditure budgets and to institute and collect local duties and taxes, according to the provisions of the Law on Local Public Finances (72/1996) and the Law on Local Taxes (27/1994). The Law on Local Public Finances has been 14 times modified since its adoption in 1996, last time by an order of the government (1482/2001).

According to a recent assessment of democracy and governance carried out by USAID<sup>2</sup>, while there has been a gradual devolution of authority to the local level over the last decade, the transfer of fiscal authorities has not kept pace with the transfer of responsibilities. About 50% of LPA revenues still come from the national level redistribution, and the exact amount is often conditioned by political considerations, city halls headed by representatives of the opposition being frequently disadvantaged by the revenues allocated from the capital.

The competencies of the deconcentrated state authorities and of the LPAs are as follows<sup>3</sup>.

### ***1.1. 2. The Prefect and the County Council***

The *prefect*, as the representative of the government on the county level, exercises the following main rights and duties: to ensure the protection of national interests and the observance of law and order; to monitor the legality of administrative documents issued by local and county public administrative authorities; to appoint and dismiss heads of deconcentrated ministry or other central government services in the county; to order legally constituted bodies to take adequate measures to prevent infringement of the law and protect citizens' rights; to ensure the fulfillment of nonmilitary defense; to present an annual report to the government on the general, economic, social, cultural and administrative status of the county; to present an annual account of the county council regarding the activities of the deconcentrated ministry and other central government services operating in the county; to exercise other powers as established by law or entrusted by the government.

The prefect may challenge unlawful acts adopted by local authorities through the Administrative Disputed Claims Court. Ten days before such a challenge is made, the prefect is obliged to request that the public authorities (local and county) review and analyze the acts in order to modify or revoke them. Once the challenge has been made, the attacked acts are suspended de jure.

The Local Public Administration Departments within the prefectures are responsible for the implementation of government obligations with respect to local governments, oversee the execution of mayoral duties and may

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<sup>2</sup> *Democracy and Governance Assessment of Romania*, USAID/Romania, 2001

recommend appropriate measures to the government. Internal control of legal matters is provided by the legal department and by the secretary, and external control by the legal department of the prefect's office. Financial control is exercised by the Court of Accounts.

The *county council* is the legislative body at the county level which comprises a number of councilors established by the order of the prefect, regularly between 37 to 45, depending on the population of the county. The president, vice-president and the five- to seven-member permanent delegation of the county council are elected by and from among the council's membership. The president and vice-president of a county council have executive powers to implement council decisions and are president and vice-president of its permanent delegation.

Local government at the county level is responsible for coordinating the activity of commune and town councils and for securing the quality of those public services that are of county-wide interest. The county government deals with economic development activities and establishes the general guidelines for spatial planning, environmental policies and establishes county fees and taxes. It is in its capacity to name streets, squares and other places of local interest and to ensure necessary conditions for organizing scientific, cultural, artistic, sport and youth activities. Internal statutes regulate the number of votes required to pass a council decision, according to the importance of the issue.

The *president of the county council*, as the head of county public administration, is responsible for the functioning of the administration and represents the county in the relations with the natural or legal persons of the country and abroad as well as in court. The president exercises the following rights and duties: presides over the county council's meetings as well as the permanent delegation's sessions; ensures the execution of county council decisions; supports the activity of institutions and public companies of county interest; appoints the personnel of the county public administration; submits reports to the council annually or as necessary on state and administrative activity and the social and economic status of the county. The president issues decisions that become executory after being announced to the institutions or persons concerned.

Each county also has an administrative commission, which includes the prefect as chair, the president of the county council and the mayor of the county's capital city. The commission meets quarterly or whenever necessary by the prefect or the president of the county council. Debates may be attended by all mayors within the jurisdiction of the county, as well as by other supports public services of the ministries and the county public administration.

### ***1.1.3. The Mayor and the Local Council***

The *local council* of a commune or town is responsible for all matters of local interest not delegated by law to other public authorities and has the following powers: to elect the deputy mayors; to approve the council's statutes, based on guidelines elaborated by the government; to establish, on proposal of the mayor, the public administration's organization and staff; to approve the formulation and execution of the local budget, credit transfers, use of budgetary reserves, loans and closing accounts; to establish local taxes and duties and special duties for a limited period in accordance with the law; to administer the public and private domains and

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<sup>3</sup> Cf.: Pena Coman–Eugen Crai–Monica Rădulescu–Gabriella Stănciulescu: "Local Government in Romania", in: Kandeava, Emilia (ed.): *Stabilization of Local Governments*, Budapest: OSI/LGI, 2001, 355-416.

municipal companies of the commune or town; to found institutions and economic agents of local interest; to decide on the concession of public services to trading companies; to appoint and dismiss the administrative boards of municipal companies and council members to trading companies of local interest established with integral state capital; to review quarterly reports of state representatives sitting on the boards of local trading companies; to ensure the functioning of the administration's communal services, local transport, municipal networks and of institutions addressing education, sanitation, culture and youth; to implement public works; to ensure public service delivery in a timely manner; to create recreational facilities and ensure the provision of opportunities for scientific, cultural, artistic, sporting and other activities; to restore and protect the environment and to preserve historic and architectural monuments, parks and natural reservations; to implement social security programs; to ensure free trade and fair competition and stimulate free initiative; to organize fairs, markets, cattle markets, parks and entertainment; to establish local charity institutions; to ensure the maintenance of public order and the observance of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the citizens; to confer the title of "honorary citizen" on Romanians or foreigners of special merit; to collaborate with other local councils or economic agents at home and abroad to address common interests.

The local council meets regularly for monthly sessions as determined by the mayor. Extraordinary sessions are convened whenever necessary, upon the mayor's request of at least one-third of the council members. The agenda is announced to the inhabitants in the local press or by other means. Draft decisions may be proposed by councilors or by the mayor. In order to ensure independent voting during the council's meetings, the Law of Local Public Administration stipulates that council members in office may not be legally prosecuted for the expression of their opinions in public or the manner in which they vote. Local council decisions are signed by the chair of the respective session, countersigned by the secretary and communicated to the mayor. Normative decisions are in force from the date of public announcement, and decisions affecting individuals from the date of their communication to the individual concerned. In territorial units where national minorities represent a significant percentage of the population, decisions also must be announced in their respective language.

The Law on Public Administration provides the general framework for organizing council committees. City councils designate committees to oversee particular areas (such as committees on economic affairs, on finance and budget, on public health and quality of life, on environmental protection, on urban planning, etc) and council members may choose the maximum number of committees in which they would like to participate. Each committee elects a chair from its members and appoints a secretary.

Regularly, each commune or town in Romania has one mayor and one deputy mayor. As the heads of local governments, mayors are responsible to the local council for the functioning of the administration. In addition, the mayor represents the commune or the town in interactions with natural or legal persons of the country and abroad, as well as in court.

The *mayor* has the following rights and duties: to ensure the observance of the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens, the Constitution, national laws, decrees of the Romanian president, government decisions, documents issued by ministries and other official boards of central administration, and county council decisions; to execute local council decisions and inform the prefect if he or she finds a decision to be improper in any way; to propose referendums to the local council, organize such public consultations at the request of the council and take measures concerning the organization of public meetings; to forward reports on the economic and social status of the commune or town to the council; to elaborate a draft budget and final closing accounts and submit them for

approval to the local council; to exercise the rights and ensure the fulfillment of all obligations that are incumbent upon the commune or town as a civil legal person; to take measures to prevent or reduce the consequences of catastrophes, epidemics and other threats to health and property in cooperation with specialized state bodies; to coordinate and supervise the activities of public security guards, custodians and care-takers; to monitor the hygiene and sanitation of public premises and of food products for sale to the population; to ensure the elaboration of local urban regulations and plans; to elaborate the draft framework for human resources and submit it for approval to the local council, setting forth the organizational structure, the number of employees and their salaries; to appoint the staff of local public services, excluding the secretary; and to monitor their activities; to supervise the inventory and administration of assets belonging to the commune or town; to exercise any other powers granted by the local council. In exercising his or her authority, the mayor issues decisions and may delegate powers to the deputy mayor, the secretary or other officials under the provisions of the law.

The prefect appoints the secretary of the local council, and the public administration department appoints the secretary of the county council. Secretaries are required to have a degree in law or public administration, as is the director of the public administration division (for those local governments that have such a division) and may not be members of political parties. The mayor has the power to delegate some of the secretary's responsibilities to the director of the public administration division.

Collaboration among authorities of various levels and with the central authorities is based on the principle of local autonomy, in the sense that local authorities are not subordinated to the central government. Similarly, local councils in towns or communes are not subordinated to their respective county councils.

According to the already mentioned USAID assessment of democracy and governance, the efficiency of the work of LPAs is often hampered by conflictual relationships between mayors and local councils. Since mayors are elected directly while both local and county councils on the basis of party lists, the mayors have no assurance of council majorities, which often results in a certain tendency of immobilism in elaborating and implementing local public policies. The political – and often ethnic – diversity which is reflected in the councils is, however, an important chance for a pluralistic representation and a more responsive governance on local level.

#### ***1.1.4. Services Provided by the Local Governments***

Besides the various functions listed above, the primary goal of LPAs is to provide services to the local community. In terms of service delivery the distribution of the functions among the different levels of governance in Romania is as follows.

As far as *education* is concerned, local councils are responsible for the maintenance of schools and high schools; county councils have no competencies; while the central government provides salaries for the personnel employed in the sector, holding property of the corresponding buildings and assets.

In terms of *transportation* local councils hold the ownership and are in charge with the maintenance of roads of local interest and with organizing local public transportation; county councils are in charge with the maintenance of county roads which are their property, together with domestic airports; and central government holds the ownership and provides maintenance for the national and European roads.

Regarding *social assistance* competencies are divided on all three levels, providing assistance for unemployed being the main responsibility of the central government.

As far as *civil protection* and *housing* is concerned, one can find competencies distributed on all three levels, while in terms of *culture* the main roles are being played by the county and local authorities. Central government is exclusively in charge with *health services*, the function is being carried out however through the deconcentrated directorates on county level, while to take care of *sanitation* is the exclusive duty of LPAs.

#### ***1.1.5. Ethnic Issues within Local Public Administration***

The new Law on Local Public Administration, issued in April 2001, provides important language rights for national minorities, legalizing bilingualism or multilingualism in local public administration, in cases in which a national minority represents more than 20% of the population in the respective administrative territorial unit. These provisions include bilingual signs and notices, use of the minority languages in communication with local authorities, both written and oral, the obligation to publish in minority languages the information of general interest and the use of minority language in county or local council meetings if at least one-third of the councilors belong to a minority group, Romanian translation in those cases being mandatory.

In terms of employees within the LPAs minority under-representation is still a problem. Hungarians, for instance, comprise only 3,3% of employees working in the fields of public administration and its related services, in spite of the fact that they represent 7,1% of the total population. The situation is particularly difficult for Roma, who have no representation in the county and local councils either, and the presence of their representatives among the LPA staff is particularly scarce, in spite of the recommendations of the Romanian Government's Strategy for the Improvement of the Situation of the Roma, adopted as Order of the Government no. 430/2001. It is expected that this situation may gradually improve due to entering into force of a recently adopted law (48/2002), aimed at preventing all forms of discrimination.

### ***1.2. The Local Context***

#### ***1.2.1. Geographical Situation***

Sfântu Gheorghe is located in the central part of Romania. It is the capital town of Covasna County, in the south-eastern part of Transylvania. Cluj lies in the north-western part of Transylvania, it is the traditional capital city of the province. Both towns are situated in a region dominated by hills, not far from the Carpathian range.

#### ***1.2.2. History and Demography***

*Sfântu Gheorghe* has been an administrative center since the middle ages. At that time it was the capital of one of the 'szek'-s (shires), called Sepsiszek. Since 1878 it has been the main settlement of Haromszek County, in spite of the fact that the number of its inhabitants was hardly around two-three thousands throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to the findings of the 1850 census, of the total number of 2302 inhabitants 422 (18%) were Romanians, 62 were Roma, and the rest Hungarians. Between 1850 and 1910 most of the Romanian population was probably assimilated into Hungarian, since during the 1910 census only 108 people declared that they were Romanian. The industry of the town began to bloom in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the significant population growth started only in the 1960s. While the number of inhabitants in 1910 was 8,665, by 1966 it reached already twice

as much (20,768), out of whom 2,560 were Romanians, 17,739 Hungarians, and 331 Roma. In 1977, out of the 39,524 inhabitants 5,756 were Romanians, 32,784 Hungarians, and 758 declared themselves Roma. In 1992, the population of the town, including the surrounding villages, was 68,359. Out of these, 16,092 (23%) were Romanians, and 51,073 (75%) Hungarians. The quick growth of the Romanian population in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was due mainly to the fact that most of the Romanians moved to the city from other settlements and from the neighboring counties (especially Brasov and Bacău).

In 1850, in the area currently occupied by the city of *Cluj* there lived 19,612 people, out of whom 12,317 (63 %) were Hungarians, and 4116 (21%) Romanians, but within the administrative unit occupied by the town at that time, only 14% were Romanians. According to the census data, there were 585 Gypsies in the town at that time. The population of Cluj reached 100,000 at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which made it the biggest town in Transylvania. Approximately 15-20% of the population were Romanian at that time. By 1930, of the 115,000 inhabitants, 35% were Romanians, 45% Hungarians, but the rest of the population (Jews, Hungarianized Germans) also spoke Hungarian. By 1992, the population of the city reached 326,000, out of whom 75% Romanians, and 22% Hungarians.

As a consequence of these ethnocultural patterns characterizing the two cities, when we will refer in what follows to the *local minority* it will mean the Romanians in the case of Sfântu Gheorghe, and the Hungarians in the case of Cluj, their percentage ranging in both cases around 22-23% of the cities' total population.

### ***1.2.3. Ethnic Representation in the Investigated Local Governments***

In Sfântu Gheorghe, out of the 21 members of the city council, 18 are representatives of the Hungarian ethnic party (Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania – DAHR) and 3 Romanians: 2 represent the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and 1 the Great Romania Party (GRP). Both the mayor and the deputy mayor, as well as the president and the two vice-presidents of the county council are Hungarians.

In Cluj, the city council includes 31 members, of whom 5 councilors represent the GRP and support Gheorghe Funar, the famous nationalist mayor of the city who is at his third mandate, while the rest make up a loose coalition, with a hard core consisting in 8 DAHR representatives (ethnic Hungarians) and 6 SDP representatives, completed by 3 Christian Democrat National Peasant Party (ChDNPP) representatives, 1 councilor from the Alliance for Romania (AFR), 2 from the Party for the National Unity of Romanians (PNUR), 2 from the National Liberal Party (NLP), and 2 from the Democratic Party (DP).

The mayor of the city belongs to the GRP, one of the deputy mayors is Hungarian, representing DAHR, while the other is Romanian, being a SDP representative. One of the vice-presidents of the county council is also Hungarian.

## **2. Preliminary Considerations for the Research**

### ***2.1. Framing the Problem***

In our analysis we start from the following general considerations. On the level of the local communities, the relationships between the LG and the local ethnic minorities are characterized by the dominant interethnic relationships at the county level. Within this, we can distinguish the following two main patterns:

- a. In the entire western part of Romania, in all the seven counties of Transylvania, one can speak about the impact of Romanian-Hungarian relations on the local public administration. The two counties that we have selected, Covasna and Cluj, represent two main cases.
- In the first, the Hungarian minority is the majority population at the local level, and in the second case, the Hungarians are the minority at the local level also. In general, the relation is characterized by the fact that the representatives of the Hungarian community in the local administration try to consolidate their linguistic-cultural and symbolic representation, because they feel that as compared to the first half of the communist period (1946-1965), and more intensely after this, their symbolic position gradually worsened until 1989, after which it improved, but not enough. The gradual reduction of the influence they have in the public sphere is perceived as a threat to the equality of opportunities not only by the leaders, but also by a significant part of the population, too.
- This strife meets the opposition and sometimes the resistance of the local Romanian community, whether they can really hinder the symbolic representation of the Hungarians in the public sphere or not. A significant part of the leaders of the local Romanian communities consider that it is unacceptable to change the ethnocultural status quo of the 1980s, which would mean that they have to give up the cultural hegemony they enjoyed during the last decade of the communist dictatorship. Thus, the relationship between the ethnic group that dominates the local administration and the minority population is characterized by tensions and mutual mistrust.
- b. The other specific relation is the one between the local majority (Romanians *or* Hungarians) and the Roma population. This type of relationships is defined by the fact that the Roma population is socially deprived in several aspects, regardless to the ethnic community that is dominant in the LPA. The nature of the tensions is in this case not symbolic, but rather social, and to some extent - mainly from the anthropological point of view - cultural. Due to the different forms of behavior and the social conditions of the Roma tensions occur within the local majority, that often lead to a strongly prejudiced attitude. The representation of the Roma communities is unresolved, which means that they have no representatives in the LPA, either at the decision-making or at the executive level. As a consequence, the discussions about their problems and the attempts to find solutions to those problems often display the unilateral perspective of the local majority, which frequently results in hidden forms of the tendency to reinforce segregation. The pattern introduced in point a.) affects the Roma issue inasmuch as the Roma have been assimilated either by the Romanian or the Hungarian community, and in this case certain Romanian-Hungarian tensions can be translated at the level of the Roma – local majority relation also.

## ***2.2. Patterns for Interpreting the Results***

As regards the provision of local public services, in both of the investigated towns, and maybe in general in all Romania, there is no discrimination against the members of ethnic minorities. In the provision of basic services, equal chances are ensured to all ethnic groups, and this perception is confirmed by the population. In the local councils proportional representation of the minorities (except for Roma) is provided, according to the law. The use of minority languages – especially Hungarian – though provided for by the law, is not always possible,

especially in places where Hungarians are non-dominant at the local level. The Roma communities are generally not represented in the local council. However, a recent governmental order stipulates that the councils should include representatives of the Roma community in towns where the Roma live in significant numbers.

In light of the theses presented in the previous sub-chapter, we can particularize the situation in the two towns as follows.

In both towns we can notice that both the Romanian, and the Hungarian communities display two types of ethno-political discourse as regards the minority policy of LGs: one which we have called the *ethnocentric*, and another which might be labeled as the *open* discourse.

In *Sfântu Gheorghe* the LG is dominated by the political representatives of the Hungarian community (through the DAHR representatives), and the dominant ethno-political discourse is the ethnocentric one, promoted by the mayor and most of the councilors, especially the members of the so called Reform Group, a rather radical platform of DARH. The open discourse is displayed by the deputy prefect, the county councilors, and some of the local councilors. This means that the local policies are dominated by the ethnocentric approach, which means in other words that the interests of the Hungarian community are dealt with as a priority. The leaders of the Romanians in Sfântu Gheorghe also promote the ethnocentric discourse, which includes the message that the Hungarian leaders make decisions that disadvantage the Romanians, and thus humiliate them by neglecting, not supporting, or not promoting the Romanian symbols. The open discourse of the Romanians, on the other hand, admits that the local force relation between the Romanians and the Hungarians is basically balanced as regards use of language and symbolic representations, but still it claims some disadvantages the Romanians suffer at local level.

In *Cluj*, the mayor and the smaller part of the Romanian councilors are advocates of the ethnocentric discourse. They came to power as representatives of the GRP, an extremist, populist right-wing party. They consider that Romania is a unified national state, and that the members of the Hungarian minority do not deserve any particular rights. The mayor is famous for his nationalistic behavior, which is generally manifest in connection with issues that pertain to the Hungarians, but he is frequently displaying anti-Roma feelings, too. The representatives of the other parties are mostly promoters of an open discourse. Since 2000, when the last local elections were held, together with the Hungarian councilors, they have represented the majority in the council, and in general support the initiatives of the Hungarian councilors. The ethnocentric discourse is dominant at the level of the local DAHR organization, under the leadership of the representatives of the same Reform Group, the radical DAHR platform. However, slightly more than half of the councilors, the deputy mayor and the vice-president of the county council are practitioners of the open discourse.

In the following, we will tackle each problem encountered in the two towns one by one, and analyze them from the perspective of the above introduced typologies.

### **3. The Findings of the Research**

#### ***3.1 Ethnopolitical Tension in the Relationships Between the Local Government and the Local Minority Communities from the Perspective of the Public Servants***

##### ***3.1.1. The Roots of the Problems***

The interethnic tensions observed in the two towns, but in other towns of Transylvania as well, have historical bases. In the last two centuries in Transylvania the relations between the Hungarians and the Romanians have been generally peaceful, though on a few occasions there have been confrontations. For instance, during the Revolution in 1848, and in 1867, on the occasion of the Austrian-Hungarian Treaty, then beginning with the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Hungarian State led an increasingly aggressive anti-minority policy, with the outspoken goal of Hungarianization, which meant that the Romanian minority institutions were disrupted or Hungarianized. After World War I, Transylvania became part of Romania, and the Hungarians changed their status from a dominant ethnic group into a minority. As a result, many of the institutions and the rights that had so far been granted to the Hungarian elite, came to an end. In parallel, led by the ideal of establishing a unified national state, the Romanian governments between the two world wars deprived the Hungarians of many of their minority rights, and started employing an anti-minority policy against the Hungarians almost to the same extent as the Hungarian state had done before the unification of 1918 with the Romanians (and other minorities).

Between 1940-1944, the northern part of Transylvania - where most of the Hungarians lived, and where the towns we selected are to be found - was returned to Hungary. The experiences of the right and extreme right governments of the time had a rather negative impact on the Romanian population. After World War II, the Romanian state had a relatively peaceful and balanced national minority policy, within the frame of the communist political practice. It made sure to include the representatives of the Hungarians in leadership and administration, it granted territorial autonomy to Hungarians living in concentrated territories (the Hungarian Autonomous Region), it developed a complete education institution system in Hungarian language, including the independent Hungarian University and the colleges. After Ceaușescu took power and started to enforce his personal dictatorship, this period was followed by a strong anti-national minority policy practice. This policy overlaps with the years between 1975-1989, when gradual efforts were made towards the elimination of instruction in Hungarian language, and disruption of cultural institutions of the Hungarians, some of which were Romanianized, and others gradually dissolved. The use of minority languages was gradually reduced in administration and justice. In addition to this, the symbolic representation of the Hungarian community became also hindered at the local level. Hungarians were less and less appointed in leading position. This practice is probably one of the main factors that influence the Romanian-Hungarian relationships in Romania today. As a political consequence, the Hungarians' trust in the Romanian leaders gradually reduced, especially from the point of view of respecting the rights and institutions of Hungarians. After the change in 1989, in the context of the democratic transition, the representatives of the Hungarians strive to restore, both at the local, and at the national level, the system of institutions and the use of the Hungarian language, as it existed in 1950-1960. However, in the meantime, in several towns, the ethnic proportions and relations have dramatically changed. In Széklerland, where the Hungarians are the majority population in towns (such as Sfântu Gheorghe), a significant number of

Romanian minority emerged, who speak little Hungarian, and by no means at the level of official conversations. The number and proportion of Hungarians has dropped in general in Transylvania. In numerous towns (such as Cluj), the Hungarians turned from a slight majority into a minority. Since the significant percentage of the Romanians in town do not speak Hungarian, they behave rather suspiciously concerning the attempts of the Hungarian political leaders to gain back the achievements of the 1950-1960s in terms of minority policy such as the independent Hungarian university, use of minority languages in the public administration and in justice, symbolical representations such as bilingual plaques, street names, etc.

According to a specialized public opinion poll conducted recently on the basis of a nationally representative sample, inter-ethnic relations in Romania have improved after 1989. From a total number of 2000 respondents, which included special sub-samples for the minority, 46% of Romanians and 70% of Hungarians living in Transylvania declared that the relation is mostly collaboration on their region (county), and only 5% out of Romanians and 6% out of Hungarians from Transylvania said that the relation is mostly conflictual in the local level<sup>4</sup>.

### ***3.1.2. The Situation in Sfântu Gheorghe***

Sfântu Gheorghe is situated in one of the two counties Transylvania where the Hungarians constitute the relative majority of the local population. The ethnic proportions in the county, Covasna, and in the town are similar: the Hungarians make up 75% of the population. The political representation of the Hungarians is ensured by the DAHR, so the local elections were perceived as ethnical elections. As we have seen, there is a Hungarian majority in the local council, as DAHR holds over three fourths of the mandates. Between 1975 and 1989, the employees of the local administration, especially the leaders, were of Romanian ethnicity. Since 1990, the Hungarians have dominated the local leadership. As a result of the above-presented historical reasons, the Hungarian political elite of the town decided to strengthen the Hungarian characteristic of the cities at both the symbolic, and the concrete level. Before 1989 the streets were mostly named after Romanian personalities, and Romanian historical events. At present, the Hungarian leaders of the town feel that now they have really "taken over" the power, while the Romanian community's representatives feel that they have been marginalized, and are in a disadvantaged position. The prefect of the county is Romanian, appointed, as we have seen, by the government. The Romanian local councilors and the Orthodox Church, as well as the leaders of the Andrei Șaguna Cultural Association, an influential NGO on local level, are promoters of the ethnocentric discourse. Open discourse is only promoted by people in lower positions, such as teachers, and some of the county councilors. Based on the interviews conducted, one can state that the ethnocentric discourse contains the following elements that give rise to ethnic tension:

1. In order to occupy a position in the local council, one must speak Hungarian, which is discriminatory towards the Romanians that do not speak Hungarian
2. According to the local administration law, the meetings of the council may be held in Hungarian, and therefore the Romanian councilors are obliged to participate with the aid of interpreters who do simultaneous translation, which the Romanian councilors find humiliating and disadvantageous.

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<sup>4</sup> *Barometrul relațiilor interetnice*, Cluj: Centrul de Resurse pentru Diversitate Etnoculturală, 2001.

3. The Hungarian leaders of the town and the Romanian cultural organizations were planning to celebrate the day of St. George together, but since this did not come off, the festival turned into a "Hungarian" one.
4. The mayor's Office sued the Orthodox Church, the former demanding to be returned the land on which the Orthodox Church was built.
5. The names of the streets are constantly changed, and there are fewer and fewer streets that are reminiscent of Romanian personalities or events. As compared to this, some streets are named after Hungarians that "did wrong" to the Romanians.
6. In a house where, since 1799, there has been a Romanian school, the LG refuses to support the establishment of a school museum..
7. The county council did not manage to get either position of deputy prefect for a Romanian, though one quarter of the population of the county is Romanian..
8. They only erect monuments in memory of Hungarians in the town; they refuse to financially support the reconstruction of Mihai Viteazul's Statue, and they will not approve the erection of monuments of interest to the Romanians (a cross, for instance, in memory of Mihai Viteazul, one of the greatest Romanian national hero). The county council rejected to include in the coat of arms of the county a symbol of Romanian population, an orthodox cross.

Problem no. 2 occurs in the open Romanian discourses also, but it also includes the solution: the Romanian members of the council would accept live translation, they are only bothered by the simultaneous translation equipment. The open discourse presents problems as an impact of ethnic segregation rather than thematically – we will deal with these later on. The Hungarian discourse does not mention points 3, 4 and 6. The Hungarian ethnocentric discourse, which we may call dominant at the level of LG, does not admit that the policies of the mayor's office puts the Romanian population at a disadvantage, though they do admit that Hungarian has to be spoken in most places if one seeks employment, but they think knowledge of Hungarian is necessary in the given circumstances.

Topic no. 2 does occur, but we think that it is a symbolic manifestation against the introduction of the Hungarian language, and it is not handled as a real problem. The Romanian councilors feel this is a mere anti-Romanian manifestation, because all of the councilors, regardless to their ethnic background, speak Romanian. The Hungarians are convinced that the fact the street names were changed is legitimate. The ethnocentric discourse employs a historical set of argumentation, according to which the entire population of the town used to be Hungarian once, and the street names should reflect the past of the town. The Romanian ethnocentric discourse argues with the ideal of the Romanian national state that the streets should bear the names of Romanian historical personalities and events. The representativity of some Hungarian personalities after whom streets are named is really doubted. They feel the Hungarians choose street names that implicitly humiliate the Romanians. Most recently, the political pact that is under negotiations between Covasna county SDP and DAHR representatives includes the provision that streets shall be named after Romanian personalities also, but with names that the Hungarian community also accepts. The issue of the Romanian school museum is complicated because the house is inhabited by a Roma family, for whom the Romanians have arranged with a company to build a new house, but the mayor has not yet allocated land for this purpose. The open Hungarian discourse admits that when naming streets, they should pay more attention to the Romanian national feelings, and it also admits that the position of one of the vice-presidents of the county council should be occupied by a Romanian.

### *3.1.3. The Situation in Cluj*

In the Cluj local council there is a Romanian majority, and the mayor is Romanian. Until 2000 the majority of the council supported the mayor's ethnically biased local policy. In the City Hall of Cluj only about 1-2% of the employees are Hungarians, which is a very poor match for the city's 22% Hungarian population. This situation is a consequence of the mayor's conscientious politics: he is the secretary general of the GRP, and one of the major promoters of the ethnocentric discourse at the national level. The mayor and the supporting GRP – and the PNUR before 1996 – have initiated several actions that offend the ethnic identity of the members of the Hungarian community. The situation is also characterized by the fact that the town used to be inhabited predominantly by Hungarians before 1956, after which the proportion of the Romanian increased gradually. In addition, since today's significant Romanian majority was not adequately reflected by the image of the city center, the changes that have been made to it also represent part of the nationalist strategy.

The president of the local DAHR, an MP at the same time, worded the ethnocentric Hungarian discourse most comprehensively. According to him, but to many others, as well, the topics that lead to tension in the LG's policy are the following:

1. The mayor's actions to forbid the bilingual signs and inscriptions in the city. Today the bilingual plates are permitted by the law, but this fact has contributed to a bad atmosphere in the town.
2. The Hungarian historical monuments are pushed to the background; there are repeated attempts to destroy memorial plaques. In a leading position is in this respect the case of the statue of the Hungarian King Mathias, located in the very center of the city. The mayor tried to humiliate the Hungarian population of the city by displaying on the statue a plaque suggesting that the great king was only once defeated in battle when, despite his supposedly Romanian origin, he turned against his 'own' nation fighting against the army of Moldavia. Nearby the statue the mayor had erected huge iron posts which have several Romanian flags displayed on them. In addition, in the immediate vicinity of the statue, following the recommendations of mayor two big holes were dug in order to uncover Roman vestiges, proving thus the ancient Roman origin of the city. In spite of the relative modest value of the discovered vestiges, neither the archeologists, nor the government could make him cover the holes up, thus marring the image of the center, and diminishing the aesthetic and symbolic value of the statue. The Hungarians perceive this as premeditated anti-Hungarian action. The goal of the activities was undoubtedly to stir interethnic tension, and use this as political capital for the benefit of Funar and his party colleagues.
3. The names of streets in Cluj had been Romanianized to a large extent even before 1989, but after 1990 this trend continued, and between 1992-2000 many traditional, especially Hungarian-related street names were changed to Romanian names, particularly in the central part of the town. Though this action stopped, and in a certain respect it has turned round, in the sense that nowadays streets-name are being given after Hungarian personalities, especially in the suburbs, according to Hungarians the street names are expected to reflect the history of the town, not the ethnic proportion. This is why it is rather offensive that there are relatively few Hungarian street names in the center of the town.

4. In all the public spaces of the town, including parks, the benches are painted in the national colors, thus emphasizing the "Romanian" nature of the town, which is humiliating for the Hungarians, because they feel their past and present are being denied.
5. The mayor is unwilling to apply the stipulations of the new law on local public administration, stating that there are less than 20% Hungarians in the town, though the criteria for the application of the law – the data of the 1992 census – would not allow him to do so. He is resisting to have Romanian-Hungarian-German nameplates displayed, despite the decision to this end of the local council.
6. He often makes offending public statements in which he hints at the Hungarians' statute in Romania (and therefore in Cluj), saying they are foreigners, and that they should go to Hungary if they are not satisfied with the local conditions.
7. Hungarian cannot be used at the marriage registry office either; moreover, in case of informal remarks added in Hungarian the authority makes use of the power it is invested with.

The open Hungarian discourse also points out the presence of these offences, or at least if operators have insisted on the question, the non-ethnocentric representatives of the local minority admit that such cases have occurred indeed, but that they do not think they are so significant. In addition, they underline that since 2000 anti-Hungarian actions are not frequent or dominant in the council, and that they can cooperate with most of the Romanian colleagues, those that do not belong to the extremist parties. The Romanian ethnocentric discourse does not admit any of these accusations, though individually there are differences between their statements. In the case of the street names the open Hungarian and Romanian discourses overlap, and along this line they started changing street names to the advantage of the Hungarians since 2000. All these offences were also identified at the level of voices of the Hungarian public opinion. It seems undeniable that such policies cause bad feelings and reduce the trust of the Hungarian population in the leaders of the town, and implicitly encourage their emigration to Hungary.

### ***3.2. Segregation and the Roma Issue***

#### ***3.2.1. Parallel Societies***

In both towns, the above-described ethnocultural tension worsen the Romanian-Hungarian relations, and this leads to a certain degree of segregation at the level of interpersonal relations. According to a survey carried out in Transylvania in 2000<sup>5</sup> the Romanians and the Hungarians build their social network out of members of their own ethnic group in a percentage of 90-95. In Sfântu Gheorghe both the Romanian intellectuals and politician mentioned that there is no communication, no interaction between the community lives of Romanians and Hungarians. The council usually is divided along ethnic fault-lines, and most issues bare a relevance to ethnicity. The Romanians would have liked to celebrate the days of the city (St. George's day) together with the Hungarians, but it did not come off. The open Hungarian discourse contains it that in Sfântu Gheorghe there are parallel Romanian and Hungarian 'societies'. The Hungarian ethnocentric discourse does not perceive that as a problem: they feel segregation is a good thing, and regards the Romanians as un-welcome guests in the town.

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<sup>5</sup> The influence of National identity on the social network formation, BBU, coord. by Veres, Valer, financed by RSS Praga

There is even some territorial segregation in the sense that in the older quarters of the town there live Hungarians mostly, while in the newer quarters half or the majority of the population is Romanian. This in itself would not be a problem, because this is a specific result of the urbanization of the town, but the problem lies in patterns of communication and in the lack of cooperation..

Since the last elections of 2000, in the Cluj council there is, as we have seen, a stable majority that includes the representatives of DAHR and of the present government parties. The cooperation among them is considered to be a good one even by the promoters of the Hungarian ethnocentric discourse. However, the Romanian ethnocentric discourse calls this Romanian-Hungarian cooperation at LG level the 'monstrous coalition'. The segregation of the population is not as significant as in the case of Sfântu Gheorghe, but there are signs that indicate that with age, the connections between the Hungarian and the Romanian youth are reducing, though this is not true for the opposite. In this we see some perverse effects of the minority educational system.

### **3.2.2. The Situation of Roma**

In both towns, the *Roma* population lives in segregation, even in geographical sense of the term. In *Sfântu Gheorghe*, the Roma live compactly in the quarters called Örkő. The town leaders do not think this segregation would be a problem. They have set up a special school there for the Roma children, which is very popular, though with one exception the teachers are all Hungarians, and the language of instruction is Hungarian. The Town Hall intends to set up a special office so that the Roma do not queue with the majority population when they come to the Town hall, because 'Gypsies smell', according to a Hungarian councilor. In the Roma colony called Örkő there are no paved streets, there is no sewage, and there is no running water in every house. The town does have a Roma strategy, but it is too general, it does not contain enough details, and in many respects it is objectionable from the theoretical point of view, too. Until the 2000 election, DAHR managed to get one Gypsy councilor in the council, but this was discontinued at the elections in 2000. Rather, they delegated somebody to "gain the trust of the Gypsies", which not many hold as a realistic hope. The fact is that one of the deputy mayors deals officially with the Roma issues, but the attitude of the clerks is often influenced by deep prejudice. They were planning to resolve the construction problems in the Roma quarters with the employment of Roma workers, thus gaining cheap labor, and also providing social help to some Roma people. But since some of the unqualified Roma workers did not work as well as their supervisors had expected them to do, they concluded that 'it is hard to deal with the Roma', thus legitimating the fact that they stopped employing Roma workers.

In *Cluj*, the more open-minded councilors, both Romanians and Hungarians, are sensitive to the Roma issues. The Hungarian deputy mayor is in charge of the Roma issues. The problem is that the mayor is also against the Roma. The town has no Roma strategy, the municipality simply does not think this would be necessary. There have been cases when from an abusively occupied condominium they evacuated only the Roma people, not the Romanians. Recently, the mayor managed to prevent a Roma organization from being allocated land to build a social home for the Roma. The mayor argued that these Gypsies declared themselves Hungarians at the census, so they do not 'deserve' the land. The main representatives of the ethnocentric Hungarian discourse are not open to the Roma issues either. In issues pertaining to the Roma, the local president of the DAHR approached the issue politically, stating that "this problem will be treated politically for a good while, this community will be

treated like that; the absence of both culture and political culture has predestined this community to this. The compass of the Roma community seems to be quite good, and they always try to find advantageous solutions. Obviously, we do not have to attempt to follow their example and undertake a kind of cheating, useful policy". This discourse is heavily loaded with prejudices. On the one hand, it regards the Roma culture as non-existent, and then it implies that the Hungarian culture is superior to that. In addition, the second strongest political organization's head in the town passes even a moral judgement. This type of approach ignores receptiveness to the situation of a minority, exactly as a result of the ethnocentric approach, and it helps the deepening of segregationist processes.

### ***3.3. Discriminatory Situations Generated by Local Governments, as Perceived by the Public Opinion***

With the aid of questionnaires, we examined whether the population perceives any negative discrimination due to their belonging to a certain group, especially to the ethnic group. All the questions pertaining to discrimination in the questionnaire were open questions, so the answers that we obtained were recorded in their narrative forms, and subsequently grouped and coded. In this part, we regarded as discrimination all those cases that the respondents named as such, even if from the sociological or legal perspective they could not be regarded as discrimination.

First of all, we can conclude that according to the local majority practices of ethnic discrimination is not typical. On the contrary, in the case of a significant proportion of the local minority communities, which live in the middle of a minority that outnumbers it locally, the perception is that they are discriminated on the basis of ethnic belonging.

In Sfântu Gheorghe, two thirds of the Hungarians feel they have never been discriminated on because of their ethnicity, and most of the remaining one-third (24% of the respondents) considers that they have been discriminated only rarely. The rest (9%) declares that they have often been discriminated. However, if we examine the site where these cases have occurred, we notice that two thirds of the cases happened outside the town. In the town, such cases occurred over ten years ago. In the same town 88% of the Romanian population consider that they have not been disadvantaged due to their ethnicity, 8% think that they have rarely been discriminated, while 4% state that they have often been exposed to discrimination. In all, the Romanians feel more rarely that they are treated differently than those belonging to the local Hungarian majority. The difference is that the Romanians have mentioned cases of discrimination that they have experienced since 1990. In fact, over half of the cases have happened since 2000. (For details see Appendix nr. 5.)

As far as Cluj is concerned, half of the Hungarians who live there have not experienced such cases, 36% of them have rarely been discriminated, and 13% state they have often been exposed to discrimination. According to the respondents 92% of these cases have occurred in Cluj, which is why we believe this is worth dealing with in more detail.

Upon examination of the particular cases that the respondents have mentioned, in which they considered to be personally discriminated, we notice that the negative attributes ('bozgor'<sup>6</sup>, countryless) are mentioned in both towns, which is in fact not an act of discrimination. The rest of the answers did not manage to name the concrete form of discrimination. About 10% of the respondents mention that in Cluj they were warned not to speak

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<sup>6</sup> Pejorative Romanian term for Hungarians.

Hungarian, they were not promoted at their workplace, or were discriminated in their studies on account of the fact that they are Hungarians.

Out of the Romanians in Sfântu Gheorghe, somewhat over a quarter of those who felt discriminated have been exposed to this attitude for reasons of the language, about the same percentage have experienced the same for their ethnicity – failing, however, to mention exactly how – 22% were discriminated at their workplace (i.e. they were not promoted) and in other circumstances.

One of our questions referred to the institution or concrete place in which they felt they were discriminated. Only 6% of the Hungarians in Cluj mentioned the public institutions, or an office of the local government. In Sfântu Gheorghe 9% of the Hungarians and 28% of the Romanians named in their answers the local government or the local labor office. The rest of the situations of discrimination occurred at the workplace or in public spaces, and in educational institutions (for details see Figure 4.)

In the case of the Hungarians, in both towns, one third of the cases happened before 1989, two-thirds after 1989, while in the case of the Romanian community 90% of the cases have taken place since 1990 (Figure 5.)

We have also analyzed the frequency of discriminatory events. This is only worth examining in Cluj, given the number of the cases mentioned. Approximately 51% of the victims state that they have experienced discrimination once, twice or three times, 5% remember 5 cases, 12% can recall 5-10 cases, while close to one third state they have experienced discrimination over 10 times, i.e. often.

In the end, we asked whether the LG has taken decisions that had a negative effect on any of the ethnic communities at the local level, the question including an inquiry about the decision itself, as well as about the victimized community. Except for 1-2%, in Sfântu Gheorghe everyone answered the question: 89% state there have been no such decisions, while 10% state there have. 17% of the Romanians did not answer, supposedly they were afraid to do so, 32% state there have not been such decisions, whereas 51% believe there have been decisions with a negative impact. According to 40% of the Hungarian respondents the Romanians were affected by the decision, 6% believe the victims were the Gypsies, and the rest consider that the Hungarians were affected negatively. The Romanian respondents all state that their community has been affected negatively.

In Cluj, 75% of the Hungarians answered that there had been such decisions or actions, while 2% did not answer. 98% of the Hungarian respondents feel that the Hungarians were affected negatively, while a few respondents think that the Jews and the Gypsies were the victims.

Finally, it is worth seeing what are the most frequently mentioned discriminatory decisions.

The complaints of the Hungarians in Cluj, in the order of their frequency, are the following:

<b>Decisions, actions in Cluj</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1. Town name plates only in Romanian	23
2. Funar's anti-Hungarian behavior	21
3. The excavations in the city center	13
4. Use of Hungarian language according to the law	8
5. Language used in the marriage registry office	1.5
6. Street names not reflecting Hungarian past	1.5
7. Others (anti-Roma measures mainly)	32

The Romanians in Sfântu Gheorghe have mentioned the following LG decisions perceived by them as being discriminatory:

<b>Decisions, actions in Sfântu Gheorghe</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1. Street names not reflecting Romanian past	30
2. Language barriers in accessing a job	16
3. The Church being sued for the land under the Orthodox cathedral	11
4. Simultaneous translation into Romanian in the council	7
5. The general situation of Romanians in the city	4
6. Use of Hungarian language in public administration	1.5
7. Others	30.5

A significant part of the respondents from both ethnic communities that are in minority at the local level, but especially most of the Hungarians in Cluj, find that there have been numerous LG decisions that had a negative effect on the equality of chances. If we take a close look at the answers, we can observe that they tie in very well with the issues of ethnocultural tension that can be traced in the discourse of the political elite, which we presented in the first part. Two differences in emphasis need to be underlined, however. The first is that the experiences of the Romanian population in Sfântu Gheorghe, as deductible from the results of the survey, mostly confirm practically the open discourse: few of the respondents have had first-hand experiences of discrimination, and even fewer sustain to have had such experiences in connection with public institutions. The tension is exaggerated by the local Romanian elite, which is also caused and occasionally reinforced by the dominance of the local Hungarian ethnocentric political discourse. Due to that the situation could be improved significantly with little effort. Another good sign is that at least 4% of the Hungarians in Sfântu Gheorghe admit that the Romanians are disadvantaged by some decisions, though this percentage is too small to influence the discourse of the elite.

In Cluj, the population's state of mind, as expressed by the public opinion, about the LG politics is rather fiery, and it ties in with the position of the advocates of ethnocentric discourse. In connection with street names, one can feel the difference between the two types of discourses. Here also we can notice the overlapping between the opinions of the population and of the elite. It would be useful to describe the sociological profile of the population to see who are the people who feel most discriminated. This would be possible by using the data of the survey, but for reasons of size of the paper, we have decided to postpone this exercise for a later phase of the research.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Based on the findings reproduced above we can conclude that examples of ethically biased policies, as defined in the *Who Benefits?* paper<sup>7</sup>, are present in both investigated municipalities.

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<sup>7</sup> Petra Kovacs: *Who Benefits? Ethnic Bias and Equity in Access of Ethnic Minorities to Locally Provided Public Services in CEE*, Paper prepared for the 10<sup>th</sup> NISPAcee Annual Conference, p. 5.

*Disproportionate power* on defining policy goals and priorities of one of the competing ethnic communities (Hungarians in Sfântu Gheorghe and Romanians in Cluj) is manifest through the symbolic representation in the local public sphere in both cases, which results in certain decisions favoring the locally dominant ethnic group.

*Structural arrangements favoring one of the competing ethnic communities* (Hungarians in Sfântu Gheorghe and Romanians in Cluj) have been identified at the level of human resource policies of the investigated municipalities. It is a general trend that job-candidates belonging to the locally non-dominant community have very limited access to the positions within the two city halls and subordinated institutions, in spite of the fact that the level of their education is not below the average of the locally dominant group. The human resource policies can be considered as ethnically biased even if there is no evidence of clear-cut discrimination, since frequent examples of preferential employment facilitated by ethnocultural segregation or the effects of (local) minority neurosis which discourages representatives of the non-dominant groups to apply for LG positions are evident. The minority neurosis is permanently reproduced in both cases due to the monopolization of the symbolic representation in the public sphere and by the maintenance of a relatively high level of ethnocultural tensions.

The third element of the ethnically biased local policy-making, the *biased distribution of public resources*, can be considered as demonstrated by the research in the cultural and religious fields and in terms of support offered from the local budgets for NGOs and non for profit organizations. The presence of ethnic bias in contracting services is probable, too, but a subsequent phase of the research would be required in order to provide reliable data on that aspect of the investigated phenomena.

In the case of members belonging to culturally and socially marginalized communities, particularly the Roma, the effects of the above are amplified by the local ethnocentric policies which are involuntarily (at least in most of the cases) reinforcing the existing segregation. In their case one needs to take account of the relative deprivation as far as some of the basic services are concerned, lack of access to the agenda setting and decision making of the local communities. While in Sfântu Gheorghe there is a local strategy for improving the situation of Roma, containing, however, elements which reinforce segregation and can produce undesirable effects on the long run, in Cluj there is no local strategy, and the mayor is reluctant to apply some of the provisions of the strategy elaborated by the Government, too.

## **5. Recommendations**

In order to gradually eliminate some of the shortcomings of multiethnic coexistence identified by the research and to improve the quality of governance on local level, different approaches are needed for the different patterns of relationships identified in the two investigated communities.

In the particular case of Hungarian-Romanian relationships, for which the realities on the local level are powerfully influenced by top level policies, the most efficient way of improving local governance would be probably to elaborate a detailed and far reaching intergovernmental strategy aimed at reducing inter-ethnic tensions, preventing the ongoing reproduction of mutual mistrust and enhancing cooperation on all levels, but with special focus on younger generations.

In addition to that, the minority related legal regulations, which are quite generous in many concerns, need to be further elaborated and diversified, the law enforcement significantly improved.

On the level of LPAs concrete policies would be required that could prevent the monopolization of the symbolic representation in the public sphere by locally dominant communities: policies that would foster joint interethnic projects (including partners from Hungary), divers forms of cooperation between educational and cultural institutions belonging to the minority and majority, or NGOs with different ethnic background. In running programs of that kind it is critically important not to facilitate institutional or organizational opportunism, and to prevent the linguistic marginalization of minority partners that take part in similar forms of confidence-building cooperation. Though in theory it would be extremely simple to generate such programs on local level, experiences of the past twelve years yield sufficient evidence that success of local confidence-building measures largely depend on national policies.

As far as the relationship of Roma and the local – either Romanian or Hungarian – majority is concerned, the most important objective is to gradually eliminate those social differences that reproduce and reinforce the hidden or evident forms of segregation. The best one can do in this concern is probably to explore the possibilities of implementing the Strategy of the Romanian Government, aiming at improving the situation of Roma, which has been elaborated with the participation of the most influential Roma organizations, and which requires, in order to be effective, a large coalition of all actors involved and interested, capable to produce a lasting change in the life of the sizable Roma communities in Romania.

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## Appendix

### 1. The number of the population in ethnic distribution between 1850 – 1992

#### Sfântu Gheorghe

Years	Romanians		Hungarians		Roma (Gypsy)		Other (Jew, German etc)		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
1850	422	18,3	1716	74,5	62	2,7	102	4,4	2302
1880* <sup>1</sup>	31	0,6	4986	94,6	.	,	251	4,8	5268
1900*	50	0,7	6994	98,0	61	0,8	26	0,3	7131
1910*	108	1,2	8361	96,5	.	,	196	2,3	8665
1930	2181	20,2	7826	72,3	187	1,7	624	5,8	10818
1956 <sup>2</sup>	2317	12,3	16308	86,3	53	0,3	218	1,2	18896
1966	2613	11,8	18976	86	331	1,5	138	0,6	22058
1977	5812	14,2	33975	83,3	785	1,9	232	0,6	40804
1992	16092	23,5	51073	74,7	886	1,3	308	0,5	68359

\*Distribution according to mother tongue (the ethnic distribution was not questioned in Hungarian censuses)

<sup>1</sup> Including the population of Simeria

<sup>2</sup> Including the population of Chilieni (Kilyen) and Coşeni (Szotyör)

#### Cluj-Napoca

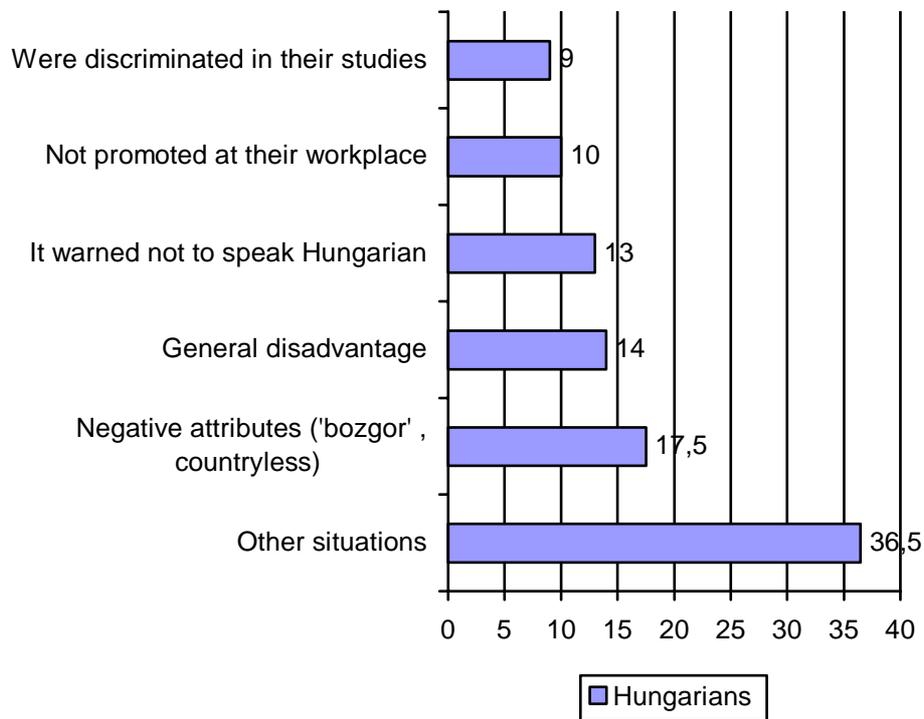
Years	Romanians		Hungarians		Roma (Gypsy)		Other (Jew, German etc)		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
1850	4116	21	12317	62,8	585	3	2594	13,2	19612
1880*	5618	17,1	23676	72,1	.	,	3537	10,8	32831
1900*	7185	14,1	41311	81,1	.	,	2412	4,7	50908
1910*	8886	14,2	51192	81,6	.	,	2655	4,2	62733
1930	37029	35,7	48271	46,5	1168	1,1	17372	16,7	103840
1956 <sup>1</sup>	74033	47,8	74155	47,9	444	0,3	6091	3,9	154723
1966	104914	56,5	76934	41,4	178	0,1	3637	2	185663
1977	173003	65,8	86215	32,8	628	0,2	3012	1,1	262858
1992	248572	75,6	74871	22,8	3201	1	1958	0,6	328602

\*Distribution according to mother tongue (the ethnic distribution was not questioned in Hungarian censuses)

<sup>1</sup> Including the population of Someşeni.

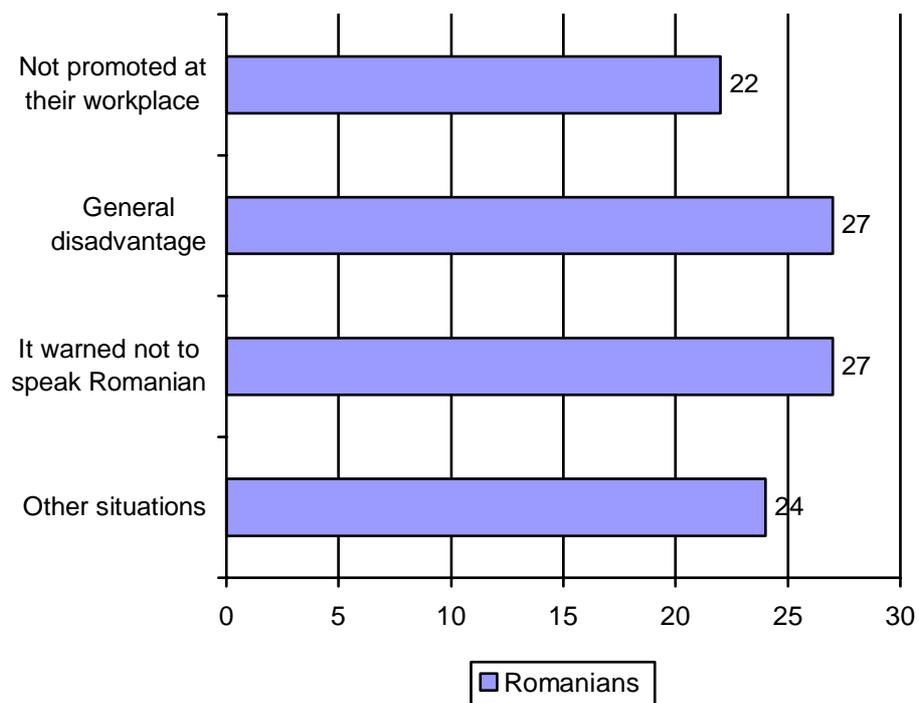
**2. The perception of the negative discrimination in everyday life. Answers in percents of the 86 persons (42 %) who declared discriminated because of the ethnic belonging**

**Ethnic Hungarians from Cluj:**

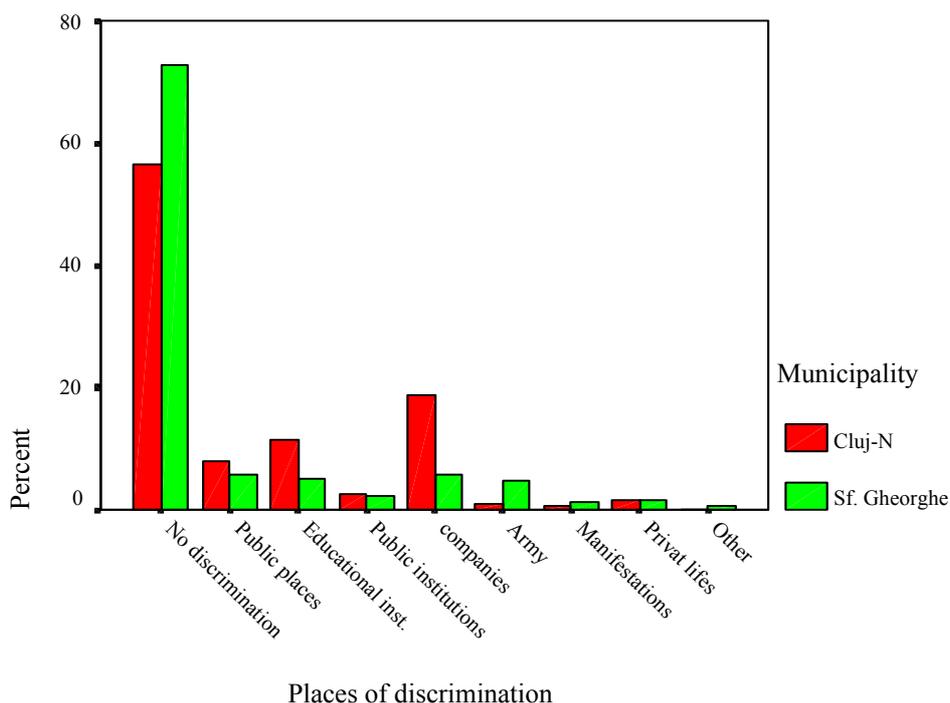


**3. The perception of the negative discrimination in everyday life. Answers in percents of the 41 persons (24 %) who declared discriminated because of the ethnic belonging**

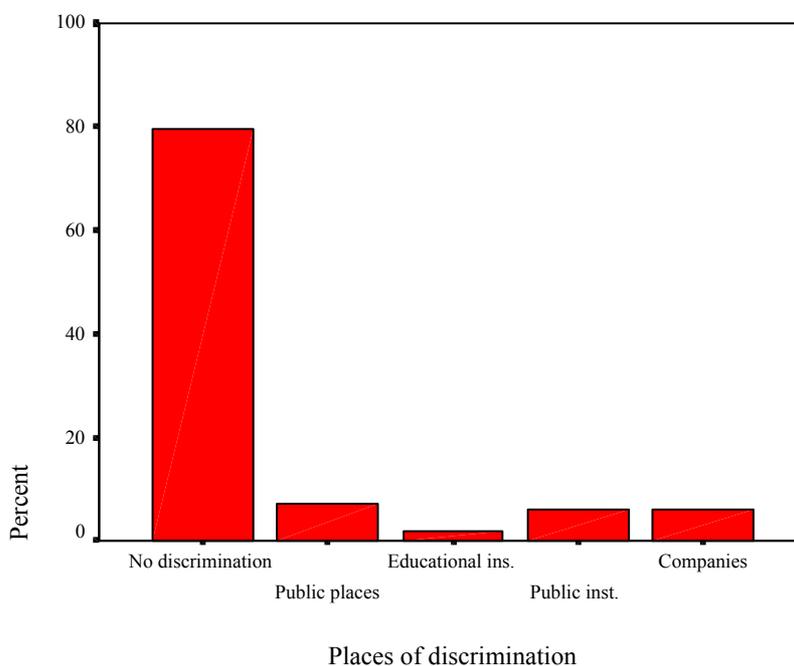
**Ethnic Romanians from Sfântu Gheorghe:**



**4. The place of discrimination**  
**a. Hungarians (N=372):**



**b. Romanians from Sfântu Gheorghe (N=170):**



**5. When happened the discrimination? Percentage of cases (from total nr. of discriminations):**

Ethnic groups	Before dec. 1989	1990 – 1996	1997 – 2002
Hungarians from Cluj	25	28	47
Hungarians from Sf. Gheorghe	24	32	44
Romanians from Sf. Gheorghe	9	23	68

6. How often occurred the discrimination. Percentage of cases (from total nr. of discriminations):

