

## HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE MEDIA IN ROMANIA AS A SOFT POWER TOOL: POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIETAL SECURITY

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**Abstract:** *Hungarian language media in Romania is employed as a soft power tool by the Hungarian Government, which aims to maintain the loyalty of the Hungarian ethnic minority in Romania. Its functioning is characterized by a high centralization, reproducing the media model in Hungary, described by the Media Freedom Rapid Response community as the "archetypal case of state captured media" at the EU level. Through a strong grip over Hungarian language media in its neighboring states, the Hungarian Government advances its goals of keeping united the "Hungarian political nation", a concept used extensively, to include communities living abroad. While the support given by states to national minorities abroad is legitimate under inter-state agreements, conflicting state interests may arise, partly due to the region's model of nation building processes which were rather based on the "ethnic nation". This could lead to barriers in social integration and building cohesion with the majority. The article analyses the frames relevant for identity building and national cohesion, transmitted through Hungarian language news websites in Romania on a day of significance for the Hungarian nation, 15 March - "National Day of Hungarians Everywhere", problematizing the role of mass-media in fostering societal security.*

**Keywords:** *media; soft power; identity; cohesion; societal security*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The end of the First World War, marked by the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, led to the establishment of new borders between nation states. Transylvania – a region where most inhabitants were ethnic Romanians, was attributed to the Kingdom of Romania through the Trianon Treaty in 1919. The attribution continued to be a source of friction between Romania and Hungary until the last decade of the 20th century. The fall of communism in both states, the democratization processes, and the aspirations to be part of Western organizations – such as the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance, came with improvements of neighborly relations between Romania and Hungary, as well as with more rights for the Hungarian minority. At the societal level, the relations between Romanians and Hungarians living in Transylvania have known tensed episodes for several decades - as power regularly made the different other subject to discrimination and sometimes even violent treatment.

With the democratization, Hungarian political parties were formed in Romania. The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR)

became part of the Romanian Government for the first time in 1996, ensuring political representation for Romania's largest ethnic minority. However, this did not contribute to establishing a successful model of inter-ethnic relations according to Kiss et. al. (2018:92-93), but rather one of asymmetries between the minority and majority. Political bargaining did not lead to an actual conflict resolution. Earlier, Medianu (2002:40) described the Romanian model of inter-ethnic relations, as "political accommodation" of minority rights, referring to the role played by DAHR in tempering territorial autonomy claims in exchange for other benefits. The Eastern model of nation building process – based on the ethnic nation, is relevant for understanding lasting tensions between Romanians and Hungarians. In Eastern Europe, the formation of nation states was impacted by the existence of poli-ethnic Empires with three dominating ethnicities (Russian, Ottoman, Austrian). After the fall of the Empires, ethnicities sought to obtain autonomy, independence and form their own nation states, sometimes through forced attempts to transform other ethnicities, and homogenize cultures, which was followed by contrary effects (Smith, 1986:131-145).

Hungary has strengthened ties with kin communities in neighboring states after the 1990s. Hungarian minorities abroad have become a significant part of public discussions, a state Office of Transborder Hungarians was formed and publicly funded Duna TV was established, which provided broadcasting for communities in neighboring states. Since the Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége – FIDESZ (Alliance of Young Democrats) political party took office in the Government in 2010, the relations have been strengthened even more. Ethnic Hungarians were given the possibility to obtain Hungarian citizenship and thus - right to vote, while the 2011 Hungarian Constitution – the first one fully developed under a democratic regime, announced Hungary's position towards Hungarian communities abroad:

...Hungary shall bear responsibility for the fate of Hungarians living beyond its borders, and shall facilitate the survival and development of their communities; it shall support their efforts to preserve their Hungarian identity... (2011:5)

The fall of the communist regime in Romania came as well with the freedom for minorities to organize cultural manifestations, including the commemoration of Hungarian historical events. Such manifestations are “powerful cultural objects” (Brubaker and Feischmidt, 2002:700-701) with rich and varied possibilities of interpretations of the past. The authors argued that the past is instrumentalized “the politics of the present therefore not only shapes the representation, but as often entails the misrepresentation, of the past”.

Our case study analyses the Hungarian language (online) media representation of such an event, seeking to portray its use as a soft power tool, to justify the politics of the present conducted by significant political actors for the Hungarian community in Romania.

The 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 has marked 175 years since the beginning of the Hungarian revolution in 1848, when the popular uprising started in Budapest. The year has a central role in the Hungarian national mythology and collective memory and even to a greater extent among transborder Hungarians in neighboring states. The revolution has been commemorated on the date by the Horthy regime since 1928 from nationalist reasoning, emphasizing irredentist claims and militarist themes (Brubaker & Feischmidt, 2002:710-711). In 1998, when Hungary celebrated 150 years since the beginning of the revolution, the

public discourse of the event, reflected in the media, was sensitive to Hungary's foreign policy goals, as in the same year the state started accession negotiations for integration in the European Union. The narrative framing of the event in Hungary had a “liberalization, democratization, modernization, Westernization, (...) even supranational integration” approach, and previously promoted events such as violent struggles were de-emphasized, with the focus abandoning national and ethnic claims which were ill-suited in the provided context (Brubaker and Feischmidt, 2002:708). FIDESZ political leader Viktor Orbán adopted an intermediate stance in his commemorative speech, interpreting the 20<sup>th</sup> century history of Hungary as a series of tragedies that left the 1848 goals unaccomplished. While various press accounts and political actors' discourses in Hungary were generally aligned to the “Westernization” framing, portraying the struggle for freedom as a multiethnic one, the case was not the same in the transborder dimension (Brubaker and Feischmidt, 2002:719-720).

Conservative press in Hungary covered the situation of Hungarians abroad eliciting emotional tones and stances, while emphasizing the tragedy of the nation. The Hungarians in Transylvania connected the 1848 liberation struggles to claims for autonomy and minority rights. Minority leaders, by contrast to political actors in Hungary, spoke about national oppression and about the struggle for freedom and independence, which was not over. Local newspapers in Transylvania continued publishing stories about the violent clashes between Hungarians and Romanians, highlighting that there was still no reconciliation. For Hungarians in Transylvania, 15<sup>th</sup> of March continued embodying the unity of Hungarians. The commemoration of 1848 posed therefore problems of political loyalty and national identity for the Hungarian national minorities (Brubaker and Feischmidt, 2002:720-729).

FIDESZ-led Government has been investing in the Hungarian media system in neighboring states as part of the funding scheme, which are tools of much value for keeping the minority anchored to its “kin” state realities.

## 2. MEDIA - THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANINGS RELEVANT FOR SECURITY

Admitting the potential of the media to be employed as a soft power tool, we acknowledge that the media can attract, legitimize actors' actions,

and ultimately influence audiences in adopting certain perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors.

Pierre Bourdieu (1991:170) stated that language is a source of symbolic power, referring to the three types of capital specific to power he proposed (economic, cultural, and symbolic). According to the philosopher, speech acts may express and legitimize symbolic power, which he described as an invisible force that constructs through language realities, determines people to have a certain worldview and creates the same effects as the physical or economic powers. To Bourdieu, symbolic power can go as far as to transform the social order, not by words alone, but through the audiences' trust in their legitimacy, and the speaker.

John Nye introduced the concept of "soft power" to provide a missing analysis framework that would describe how objectives can be attained through persuasion and attraction, contrary to coercion and payments which were specific to "hard power" (2017:2). The concept was found appealing in the political realm, being increasingly more used in practice. Nye (2004:5-7) argued that political leaders understood quite fast that power comes from attraction, and therefore, making others want what the leader himself wants is less costly. Appeals to common values, duty, and justness proved to be efficient in inducing cooperation and favorable behaviors.

The media and popular culture are commonly thought of as soft power tools (Nye, 2004:49). The media's use as soft power tool by political actors is more effective in the Internet era than before. Media contents are further reaching as physical barriers were surpassed by the information revolution. Individuals are given endless possibilities to stay informed, which comes however with content creators' efforts to gain the audiences' attention and ultimately, loyalty.

In an earlier article (Avadanei, 2023:47-56) we argued that Hungary's National Security Strategy (NSS) has a mixed approach to societal security, both "identity-oriented" – specific to Copenhagen School and centered on "life-giving functions" – specific to the Nordic functionalist approach to security studies. When it comes to the Copenhagen School approach, which sees large scale collective identities as the referent object of societal security (Buzan, 1997:17), we showed that in the NSS, national identity is reflected in terms of survival, eulogized, and considered the basis for national existence, and thus subject for preservation. Moreover, Hungarian identity is to be instilled through education, which should be balanced

between teaching practical notions and instilling patriotic feelings to strengthen the society's cohesion. As Hungary considers itself the guardian of Hungarian communities abroad, which are considered a part of the "Hungarian political nation" (Csiki Varga, 2021:5) that are expected to contribute to the preservation of culture and language, we argued that since both Hungary and Romania seek to build societal cohesion, conflicting "loyalty" dilemmas may arise. In the current article we explore how Hungarian media speech in Romania, contributes discursively to advancing Hungary's goals.

To debate on the media's use as a soft power tool, the framing theory provides a good framework to approach our current research and analyze how realities are discursively constructed. Robert Entman's enunciation of the theory explained that "to frame" means to:

...select certain aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (1993:52)

The frames influence the way that media content is understood by the public, describing the power of the communicating text (Entman, 1993:51). Frames can be found in four locations in the communication process, according to Entman: the communicator, the receiver, culture and the text itself. Of the four, the latter is of interest for the current analysis, as it refers to observable, manifest frames, that we can identify in media speech, namely:

the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements (Entman, 1993:52).

We will further argue on the power of Hungarian language media in Romania, in shaping local realities for the ethnic Hungarian community, by looking in our case study, firstly at the breadth of (online) media control, and secondly at relevant frames for (Hungarian) national identity and societal cohesion. For our case study we selected the news published by the most significant online media assets for Hungarians in Romania living in Harghita and Covasna counties, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2023. The focus on the media that "speak to" the selected communities was chosen as on the one hand, Hungarians make up the majority

ethnicity in the two counties, and secondly because the region is traditionally known for being the most entrenched in its ethnic origins, with many of the Hungarians considering themselves descendants of the “Szeklers”

### 3. HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE ONLINE MEDIA: FRAMING LOCAL REALITIES

Hungary’s investments in “kin” ethnic communities living in neighboring states have been increasing since the FIDESZ political party took office at the Hungarian Government in 2010. The financing of local media is only part of the funding scheme, with other investments in education, sports, churches, and NGOs being widely common (Keller-Alant, 2020). Tamás Kiss (2018:323) described the system so created for the Hungarian minority in Transylvania as “ethnic parallelism” which translates in a lack of participation to the public sphere in Romania of the ethnic minority, as they live in the state but more connected to Hungary.

Kiss (2018:323) also argued that the media has an important role in nation building and the formation of the nation, as three parties seek to institutionalize their projects: the “host” state – wants to integrate the community; the minorities’ elites want to keep the minorities mobilized or sustain institutional parallelism; and the “kin” state wants to unify the nation. Of the three, the winning party is to Kiss the Hungarian state, which managed despite physical borders “the virtual unification” of the transnational Hungarian nation.

We argue that Hungary’s “virtual unification” of the “Hungarian political nation” is done through the implementation of a “soft power” approach, which is most visible, in Romania’s case, through the media contents of the Hungarian language media supported by owners linked to the FIDESZ government. The soft power approach is correlated to the objectives in Hungary’s NSS (2020), where the security of Hungarian communities living abroad is considered “inseparable from Hungary’s security” (The Government of Hungary, 2020:17).

Existent research on the media system in Hungary, has shown that its functioning facilitates the advancement of the FIDESZ Government’s agenda. Media freedom in Hungary has been reported to be at risk on multiple areas, by the EU Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM). At the EU level, Hungarian media is generally considered the “archetype of state-captured media” (MFRR:2023), and this centralized and politically controlled media model is partially reproduced in Romania,

when it comes to the Hungarian language media serving the ethnic minority.

Different international institutions and organizations have signaled practices which ensure that the Hungarian Government holds a strong grip of the media which serves Hungarian communities abroad, through financing and control over the ownership. In Romania’s case, million-euro grants were reported to have been given, between 2017 and 2022, by the Hungarian FIDESZ-led Government to the “Erdély Médiatér Egyesület” (Association for Transylvanian Media Space - ATMS), known to have become the biggest Hungarian language media owner in Romania (Expert Forum, *Átlátszó Erdély*: 2021). Financing is coupled with control or “self-censorship” over the editorial contents, a practice that is not only common in Romania, but in other states with Hungarian ethnic minorities as well, such as Serbia and Slovakia (IPI, 2022:21).

The Hungarian online media market in Romania is characterized by ownership concentration, which favors the Hungarian Government in framing the reality of the Hungarian community. The most popular Hungarian news websites in Romania, belong either to the FIDESZ’ sponsored ATMS or are affiliated to DAHR. If prior to 2011 the relation of FIDESZ and DAHR has known some tensed episodes, reportedly a “non-aggression pact” was established between the political parties (Keller-Alant, 2020), which resulted in favorable media coverage of both.

The news websites were classified based on their affiliation, in accordance with information available on the websites and additionally, by confronting multiple sources: Kiss (2018:328-338), Brogi et. al (2019), Keller-Alant (2020), and Expert Forum and *Átlátszó Erdély* (2021). The classification might be subject to errors due to the lack of ownership transparency for some of the selected websites. Another criterion was the number of Facebook followers, seeking to provide some insights into their popularity (see fig. 1). Only some of the news websites are registered at the Romanian Transmedia Audit Office, and media market studies are scarce when it comes to media consumption patterns of the Hungarian community in Romania. Kiss (2018:337) stated that only 25% were users of classical news website platforms, according to a 2015 survey, while Facebook was more popular. A 2021 survey showed later that Internet usage was growing among ethnic Hungarians, including in the rural areas (MTI, 2021), and with the suspension of printing and

distribution of a series of local Hungarian newspapers by ATMS at the beginning of 2023, due to financial issues (Cseke, 2022), online consumption of news is likely to grow.

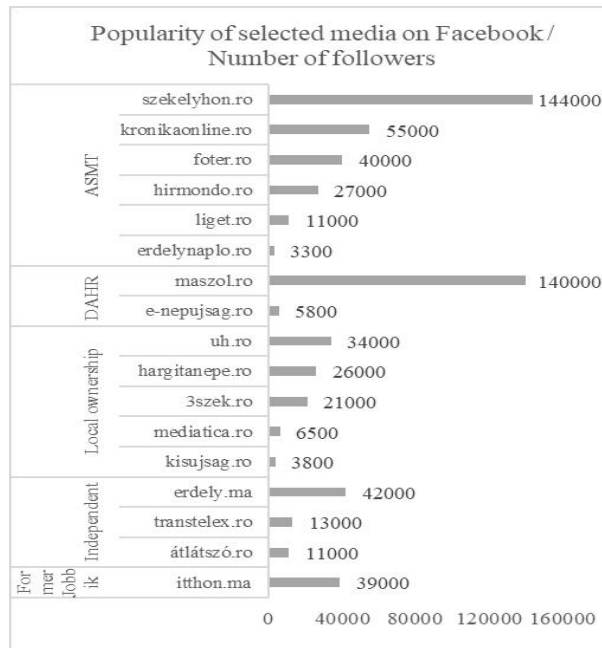


Fig.1 Popularity of the most relevant Hungarian language news websites in Romania for communities in Covasna and Harghita counties, by followers of associated Facebook pages (10 June 2023)

The news websites sponsored by ATMS are among the most popular according to the number of Facebook followers. While Székelyhon (szekelyhon.ro) and Székély Hirmondo (hirmondo.ro) address ethnic Hungarians in Covasna, Harghita and Mureş counties, Kroniká (kronikaonline.ro), Főter (foter.ro), liget.ro and Erdély Napló (erdelynaplo.ro) address the wider Transylvanian Hungarian public. The popularity of Székelyhon and Kroniká is also verifiable at the Romanian Transmedia Audit Office, with about 11.500 unique visitors / day for the former and 9.600 for the latter in May 2023 (RTAO:2023).

DAHR affiliated news website Maszol (maszol.ro) belongs to the Progress Foundation (Expert Forum and Átlátszó Erdély, 2021), but according to its website it is sponsored by the Hungarian Government. The case of Népújság (e-nepujstag.ro) is similar, belonging instead to the Communitas Foundation. Thus, the Hungarian Government sponsored news websites are more likely to get their messages across, reaching local audiences.

Locally developed media sources are another category. Hargita Népe is owned by Harghita

County Council, addressing the locals, and Háromszék (3szek.ro) by a team of editorial staff, addressing mainly Hungarian speaking inhabitants in Covasna County (Kiss, 2018:330). Uh (uh.ro) addresses the public in Odorheiu Secuiesc city, Harghita county, and according to its website it is funded by advertising and donations. Kisújság (kisujstag.ro) addresses, according to its website, the locals in Gheorgheni city, Harghita county.

Among the independent media, Erdély.ma (erdely.ma) is one of the oldest, being founded in 2002, and according to its website it is supported by donations. Transtelex (transtelex.ro) is the newest established independent media in Transylvania, following the mass resignation of journalists from Transindex media, in sign of protest, after claims of high political pressure and the sale of the publication (Spiru:2022). According to its website, it is sponsored by readers' donations. The online investigative journalism portal Átlátszó Erdély (atlatso.ro), published by Átlátszó Erdély Egyesület is funded through international grants for investigative journalism and readers' donations. It is related to its sister publication in Hungary which frequently expresses criticism towards the Hungarian Government. Itthon.ma is another category of media supported by the Hungarian Government which does not belong to any of the conglomerates. It is reportedly owned by a former Jobbik politician in Hungary and is known for its salient nationalistic approach (Expert Forum and Átlátszó Erdély, 2021).

Contents of Hungarian language media in Romania were described as focusing on cultural topics, aiming rather to the preserve identity markers, such as the language and traditions. Thus, the media are generally less active in accomplishing their "watchdog" role, rather avoiding criticism towards the Hungarian political representatives, so that such contents would not be exploited by the Romanian majority community (IPI, 2022:25). Such a feature is correlated on the one side with financing, which reportedly conditions coverages, but on the other side it is also common for the minority language media to function as a "defensive tool" (Moring, 2007:20-22) for minority identities.

#### 4. RESULTS

In identifying the frames and themes we have included 50 articles from the above-mentioned websites, published on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2023. Some were variations of the same public discourses, covered by different media assets.

There are both resemblances and differences in the way that the 15<sup>th</sup> of March was narratively framed, compared to 1998 as presented by Brubaker and Feischmidt (2002). In the current context, known for Hungary's disagreement with some of the decisions taken at EU level, there is a visible delimitation from the 1998 "Westernization" project when Hungary's political voices were aligned towards achieving the goal of "supranational integration" and the current claims of the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and FIDESZ Government representatives, which portray the "European superstate" as threatening the Hungarian national identity.

The contents of the FIDESZ funded or affiliated online media in Romania, selected for our case study, covered the events that took place in different cities inhabited by ethnic Hungarians, focusing on citing public statements of FIDESZ representatives (with Viktor Orbán's letter to the Hungarian nation leaving outside the borders being customary at all manifestations) and of DAHR political representatives. Such coverages were not singular, as the news covered statements as well expressed by Hungarian People's Party Representatives, Church representatives (Reformed, Unitarian, Romano-Catholic Churches), ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania, and marginally the Romanian President and Prime Minister.

The central actors of the media coverages were Hungary and the Hungarian people, reflected especially in relation with the EU, and Romania (for the Hungarian minority). The EU was prominent in speeches expressed by Hungary's political actors, which framed the image of the organization as **a homogenizing force which threatens the nations' liberty and seeks to impose common values and education** (Kronika Online, 2023a). Hungary's image was framed as one that **stands for its identity and values and is responsible for minorities abroad** (Megyesi, 2023). Instead, the themes transmitted to legitimize Hungary's foreign policy approach were the following: **Hungary advocates for peace and equal nations and not for a European Empire** (Kronika Online, 2023b) – a theme that justifies Hungary's non-alignment with policies at EU level; **Education is a national competence** (Bodor, 2023) – a theme related with Hungary's non-LGBTQ stances and Christian values, but also consistent with the goal in the NSS, where education is a pillar through which the Hungarian identity should be instilled; **Hungarianism has to be passed on to future generations, to honor Hungarian ancestors' struggle for freedom**

(Kronika Online, 2023c); and **Hungary takes care of minorities abroad** (Barna, 2023a) – visible through inaugurations of education facilities and awards given on the day. The first two themes were scarcely reflected in the public discourses of Hungarian minority leaders in Romania, with the third being more preeminent. However, even the first two were legitimized through appeals to symbols that resonate with the local communities – such as the national poet Sándor Petőfi, who is said to embody *Hungarianism*, as 2023 marked 200 years since his birth, but also the figures of other revolutionaries. Even if the revolution was not explicitly referred to as a "peaceful transformation" as in 1998 (Brubaker and Feischmidt, 2022:715), nor was it framed as one of bloodsheds on ethnic grounds.

From the societal security perspective, the stereotyped image created by such frames and themes is one of a **Hungarian nation at threat**, due to the significant others who are attempting to change the Hungarians. From Buzan's (1997:17) account of identity, this image is consistent with a "closed-minded" view over changes to the Hungarian national identity. The speech adopted by political actors, discursively builds existential threats to the "Hungarian identity", and FIDESZ Government's policies are thus legitimized.

Public discourses of minority leaders are more entrenched in the local realities and experiences. Romania was rather implicitly presented as the actor which restrains Hungarians' liberty. The frames that dominated the discourses of local political actors portrayed **Hungarians as peaceful people** (Péter, 2023); **the distinctiveness of Hungarian identity** (Barabás, 2023); and **Romania as a state where - equality lacks and minority rights are disrespected** (Imre, 2023), while **DAHR was presented as - the guarantor of ethnic Hungarians' security and rights** (Botond, 2023). The main themes transmitted highlighted that **Hungarians need to continue peacefully their struggle for liberty** (Simon, 2023), with references being made to Ukraine, and the fact that there is peace in Romania since Hungarians chose dialogue to solve their grievances (Kovács, 2023). The leader of the Hungarian People's Party Representatives, László Tőkés stressed the idea of the 1848-1849 revolution (and subsequent ones) as unfinished since Hungarians lack liberty – an idea consistent with the party's declared positioning with regards to territorial autonomy (Botond, 2023). Another theme centered on building support for the main Hungarian political party in Romania while

arguing the need to participate in local politics: **DAHR Government membership ensures the security and liberty of the Hungarian community and ownership over their future** (Simon, 2023).

Some of the public discourses, cited by the media, attempted to mobilize the community by highlighting the fragility of Hungarians' liberty and calling for more respect and equality with Romanians. To support the claims appeals were made to the incidents in Uzului Valley (Úzvölgye), and to constant attacks on Szekler symbols (Barna, 2023b). Such claims were consistent with the discourse of DAHR leader, Kelemen Hunor, who admitted in his speech the re-emergence of Hungarian hatred, that would however be solved by DAHR efforts (Székelyhon, 2023).

Calls for unity were a leitmotif of all public discourses, and minority leaders representatives appealed to symbology to legitimate its need: starting from the 12 points formulated by Hungarian revolutionaries in 1848, to metaphors depicting the Hungarian nation as a "human body", whose cells are Hungarians – part of the transborder nation (Bodor, 2023), or the Hungarian nation as a "grain of wheat that lingers among the millstones of Europe" (Szabolcs, 2023). To the Hungarian Prime Minister, Hungarian language is a social tie, described as "the most successful language of liberty" (Kronika Online, 2023b).

Contrary to 1998 media coverages as presented by Brubaker and Feischmidt (2022), an evocation of battles between Hungarians and Romanians was not depictable, appeals being made to obtaining more rights peacefully, which is also likely influenced by the war in Ukraine, as Hungarian political leaders advocate for the war to be ended.

The media also contributed to building the mood of the events, with atmospherics describing the public manifestations, accompanied by symbols such as the Hungarian and Szekler flags, the Hungarian cockade, march and parade of the Szekler hussars, Christian faith, national anthem, Szekler anthem, but also visits of different FIDESZ political party representatives on the occasion, whose presence communicate the idea of unity, and Hungary's assumed responsibility for minorities abroad.

The coverage of 15th of March 2023 by the media assets - not classified as linked to Hungary's affiliation or funding, presented both consistent and critical perspectives to affiliated ones. Some stand out for a more nationalistic approach (such as 3szek.ro - a news website which promotes the Szekler National Council, which advocates for

territorial autonomy), others published news articles whose messages were consistent with those associated to FIDESZ (hargitanep.ro, itthon.ro), while others presented criticism towards the political messages expressed on the event (uh.ro, transtex.ro). For some, not enough contents were identified to check on their alignment with the dominating FIDESZ & DAHR affiliated media.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The contents of the FIDESZ funded or affiliated online media in Romania portrayed the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 in a language that called for unity – the cohesion of the Hungarian nation, while discursively constructing threats to the Hungarian identity from different directions. While the Hungarian nation is affected by the European superstate's homogenizing efforts according to FIDESZ political actors, for Hungarian minority leaders in Romania, the identity-threats come from the lack of more liberties and equality in Romania for the Hungarian minority.

FIDESZ & DAHR affiliated media largely refer to identity markers in building their arguments for cohesion and political loyalty, while the common European values - emphasized in 1998, are less stressed, since EU is now blamed for the attempt of homogenizing opinions (to fit the Western ones). While the 15<sup>th</sup> of March is an event capitalized for building the societal cohesion of the Hungarian nation, political loyalty and attachment to the Hungarian identity, the political leaders' discourses also claim the lack of an appropriate treatment of minorities by the Romanian state, which is presented as unequal to the majority. Such frames are unfavorable to the formation of societal cohesion with the Romanian majority, discursively amplifying ethnic parallelism.

Considering that the current case study is limited in exploring extensively the occurrence of such frames in Hungarian language media discourse (examining it instead on a day that is generally characterized by the expression of nationalistic themes), further research is needed to assess if such representations are a constant. Future research should explore the correlations of media contents as well with the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of the Hungarian community in Romania, to assess their relevance for societal security in Romania. The current picture resulted from our case study is one which serves the political actors, being used as a soft power tool, while resulting in a reality which fosters division rather than security.

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