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Use of Collective Memory in Political Discourse:

Slovakia-Hungary Citizenship Dispute

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Language of politics, especially in matters related to ethnicity and interethnic relations, works withemotions. It steers, manipulates towards attitudes and actions. Use of specific words and cultural codes represent actions that are, when successful, followed by specific responses of the target audience. Reaction often follow from external audiences, if they are politically and emotionally invested in the same issues. References to cultural trauma in political discoursetend to lead to such specific impact on the political discourse and relations.
This paper examines the Slovak-Hungarian relations within the framework of the political discourse connected to the status of Hungarians living abroad. This is an initial exploration into the relationship of language, politics, and ethnic identity. This paper presumes that the use of emotionally charged frames and cultural codes, even if not the most visible element of the discourse, colors the decision-making processes, steering them from the sphere of the rational into the arena of the emotional. The paper focuses on the last ten years of Slovak-Hungarian relations surrounding the Acton Hungarians Living in Neighboring Countries (the Status Law) to the acts on citizenship in both countries.Focus is primarily on the Slovak reaction to these developments. It claims that it was primarily the politics of identity that led to the genesis of the new citizenship legislation both in Hungary and, in return, in Slovakia. The issue of citizenship in both countries is bound to national identity and the conception of a nation, which is perceived as ethnically homogeneous and exclusive[1].

> *"Identities are formed at the unstable point where personal lives meet the narrative of history. Identity is an ever-unfinished conversation" - Stuart Hall (1932-2014).*

Slovakia and Hungary had a relationship marked by greater or lesser tensions ever since they parted ways in 1920. Although the tensions were placed in the proverbial Rupnik's freezer during the communist regimes, when the East Bloc countries were meant to unite through their proletariats, tensions emerged almost immediately after 1989. During the twenty five years of democratic transition and consolidation, they were nourished and sustained by nationalist rhetoric on the margins of both societies, entering the center stage of their political scenes significantly several times, usually in connection with specific pieces of legislation, treaties, agreements that touched upon the topic of Hungarian minority in Slovakia or historical eras perceived as traumatic.

By mid-2010, when Hungary passed the law on dual citizenship, which extended the possibility to claim citizenship to Hungarians living abroad, the politics of identity has gradually crept into the mainstream in Hungary and in Slovakia, strengthened as a result of a reaction to each other's

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discourse. While the tensions have subsided somewhat, populism and nationalism remain an integral part of both political discourses, supported by other developments in the two countries.

TundePuskás places the beginning of the present ethnopolitical discourse in Hungary to 1990, when Hungary's first Prime Minister JózsefAntall stated that "in spirit he felt he was the prime minister not of ten, but of fifteen million Hungarians"… not with the intention to count all the Hungarians but to "evoke the loss Hungarians experienced following the 1920 Treaty of Trianon" (Puskás, 2009, pp. 81, 82). Hungarian nation is conceptualized geographically around all of the ethnic Hungarians living in the Carpathian basin and policies oriented towards Hungarians living abroad, in the neighboring countries, started almost immediately, particularly in the area of culture and language.

In Slovakia, the fear of the attempts to restore the Great Hungary, even if just psychologically, underlined by the topic of autonomy for the Hungarian minority in Slovakia marked the early years of the transition. It was perceived by the Slovak nationalists as an almost automatic route towards secession of Southern Slovakia to join Hungary. Autonomy has served as a monster in the closet that could be pulled out whenever minority rights were discussed, whether in relation to the state language and languages of national minorities, usage of bilingual signs in ethnically mixed territories or in discussions around the territorial administration redesign, where proportions of ethnic Hungarians became a significant factor in gerrymandering. The Hungarian minority in Slovakia was often caught inbetween two millstones, viewed with suspicion from Bratislava and pressured from Budapest. Both governments used it as a pawn in their political games against each other.

The characteristic feature of political tensions between Slovakia and Hungary is the presence of historical references – the "return of history" after 1989. Those, in turn, are a part of the broader narrative of ethnic identity that tells the story of the nation, its origin, mission, its grandeur as well as injustices and the enemies who perpetrated them. Stepping back and observing them at a distance, such narratives tend to be remarkably similar, only names, places and years are different.

In the next part, we will consider the workings of ethnopolitical language and the place of cultural trauma narrative within it. It is an approach that combines communication studies with the constructive approaches to ethnic identity and conflict, searching for a dynamic model of ethnopolitical discourse in bilateral relations.

Ethnopolitics as a narrative

Paul Chilton importantly reminds us that politics is primarily about competition and cooperation. The Lasswellian "who gets what when and how". Competition and cooperation take place within institutional frameworks devised by laws and regulations, which, in and of themselves, are communicative acts.„What is strikingly absent from conventional studies of politics is attention to the fact that the micro-level behaviors … are actually kinds of linguistic action – that is, discourse. Equally, the macro-level institutions are types of discourse with specific characteristics – for example, parliamentary debates. And constitutions and laws are also discourses –written discourses, or texts, of a highly specific type. However politics is defined, there is a linguistic, discursive and communicative dimension, generally only partially acknowledged, if at all, by its practitioners and theorists (Chilton, 2004, s. 4).

James and Shadd (2001) state that "identity is produced discursively through lived experiences". It is built and developed with its use. It is learned and perceived and in turn represented towards others.

Usually confined in the sphere of the subconscience, by learning the language (mother tongue) or about particular events of *our* (national) history or through supporting *our* (national) sports team, we are expressing our allegiance and belonging to the group while realizing the separateness from other (national, ethnic, linguistic…) groups. Moreover, this allegiance to a group tells us who we are. It can be argued that without using *our* language, or learning *our* history, nourishing *our* traditions it would be hard (or even impossible) for the members of this or that group to enjoy the sense of belonging, which identity provides (James & Shadd, 2001).

When politics has to do with ethnicity, it almost inevitably entails conflict. Ethnicity is among those key social cleavages that shape political scenes and give rise to political groupings that are formed on such basis. The principle of ethnicity is the dichotomization into “us” and “them”. Brubaker and Cooper (2000), in their attempt to redefine the concept of identity and to do away with vagueness or reification of the term resulting from its proliferation in academic use, usefully differentiate between identity as a category of analysis and a category of practice. They highlight the political aspect of identity as a category of practice, for it is primarily politics that seeks to transform identity categories into “unitary and exclusive groups” that give power to identity politics (p. 1). “As a category of practice, it is used by "lay" actors in some (not all!) everyday settings to make sense of themselves, of their activities, of what they share with, and how they differ from, others. It is also used by political entrepreneurs to persuade people to understand themselves, their interests, and their predicaments in a certain way, to persuade certain people that they are (for certain purposes) "identical" with one another and at the same time different from others, and to organize and justify collective action along certain lines” (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, s. 4,5). Brubaker and Cooper suggest usingthe terms identification and categorization instead of identity, to avoid the vagueness of the latter and achieve some descriptive accuracy. “The state is a powerful "identifier," not because it can create ‘identities’ in the strong sense - in general, it cannot - but because it has the material and symbolic resources to impose the categories, classificatory schemes, and modes of social counting and accounting with which bureaucrats, judges, teachers, and doctors must work and to which non-state actors must refer”(Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, s. 16).

The Slovak-Hungarian ethnopoliticaldiscourse around the Status Law and the citizenship laws is a practice of identification and categorization, fostered by the respective narratives. The narratives are primarily historical and often include references to a traumatic past, and the context is primarily political. They foster commonality and connectedness, “groupness” that can serve as a reservoir for political support. It is a process and a practice rather than a status of an unchanging ethnic identity.

JurgenHabermas directly justifies the sociopsychological term identity within a linguistic theory: identity designates „the symbolic structures constitutive for the unity of the collective and of its individual members.“ Linguistically, identity refers with personal pronouns to ourselves and others. (Matušík, 1993, s. 87).“The unity of the collective is the point of reference for the communality of all members which is expressed in the fact that they can speak of themselves and each other in the first-person plural. At the same time, the identity of the person is a presupposition for members being able to speak with one another in the first-person singular” (cf. Matušík, 1993, p. 87)). Therefore, identity serves as an important link between the self and the society. This link is readily graspable and available for political manipulation.

Elsewhere (Kusá & Michela, 2013) we describe ethnic identity as a system of communication, where narratives serve as channels of information, and are managed by the gatekeepers – identity carriers (in our case the political leaders who mobilize on the grounds of ethnic identification). Inspired by Sperber'stext on epidemiology of representations (1985), we hold that certain narratives – certain stories that we tell ourselves about others and about ourselves – are better equipped to travel and spread successfully to new recipients than other stories. Those are such stories that carry emotional appeal, that convey a sense of belonging, uniqueness, a historical mission and particularly the stories about cultural trauma. These are stored in the cultural memory (longer-term depositary of historical narratives, embodied in museums, historiography, textbooks…) and circulated within the current communicative memory (public discourse, media, day to day interactions) (Assmann J. , 1995).

Emotionswithin thepolitical language

The role of language in interethnic relations is certainly non-negligible. Language and its use unite, divide and, most importantly for our case, manipulate (whether arbitrarily or not) its intended audience. The potential to manipulate hides in each speech act performed by any actor from either side in a dispute or conflict. Language is not only active during ongoing conflicts, but it can be their initiator and effective communication can bring them to a swift end.

Specificities of political language

In O'Barr&O'Barr (1976), the term *politicolinguistics*describes a study of how language intervenes and affects political processes. It is specifically this filter of *politicality*through which we will be looking at influential discourse in our topic.But what represents the criterion of *politicality* in language? When does a regular statement turn political? In what cases do we make a distinction between a regular speech and a political speech?

Narratives are never *de facto*outcomes of a first-hand experience, but results of a chain of ongoing rhetorical acts of interested parties. Whether it is the media, individual politicians or political parties belonging to one side or the other, their account of or even the motive to perform an act of public communication is usually a well thought-out, calculated and deliberate move with a final aim of gaining more power. In cases when it is not so, the act ends up having a political tone anyway (Joseph, 2006). How we see political or non-political actions is a matter of intention and reception. Once a speech act evokes a reaction that has an impact on the social structure of a given society, we are talking about a political speech. In our case, and in the words of Robin TolmachLakoff, "politics is language... and language is politics" - the communication between individual sides becomes the creative force of politics. We shall use the concept of frameworking, attributing individual topics to 'frames' that the politicians (of both sides) use and the peoples understand. Frames are the cultural codes, "an area of experience" in a particular culture (Werth, 1999, p.107). They are theoretical constructs, having some cognitive, ultimately, neural reality. In terms of their content, frames can be thought of as structures related to the conceptualisation of situation types and their expression in language (Chilton, 2004, p. 51).

Language used by the members always reflects "the conditions of the community at large". Events and happenings are a fuel for political interaction, which then, subsequently provides the basis for civil interaction (Chilton, 2004).When a speech or act is being discussed and reacted to, it is always discussed as the speech of a representative (political identity carrier) of a given party or a minority

group or of a state, which also consists of further 'identity carriers'. If there is dialogue, it is the dialogue between the representatives.

In the case of the citizenship dispute between Slovakia and Hungary, there are the representatives of the Slovak government and of the Hungarian government, and then either the Slovak or Hungarian citizens who express their opinions, act with the motive of sending a message, either by ridding themselves of the Slovak citizenship in favor of a Hungarian, or those who keep the Slovak one and forego the opportunity to gain the Hungarian citizenship; those who express their support of the Hungarian policy or of the Slovak reaction.

Some frames are used specifically with the motivation to mobilize voters towards support of a particular policy or in terms of electoral support. The Trianon trauma on the one hand, and the fear of attempts to recreate the Great Hungary (physically or psychologically) on the other hand, serve as such frames readily and with immediate potency.

It is further important to note that verbal language is not the sole domain of political communication. In ethnopolitics, symbolic action plays an equally if not sometimes a more important part. Symbolic action get played out in the public squares, through posters, statues, displays of flags, tricoloras, special clothing, etc., which in themselves serve as political speech acts and carriers of the communicative frames.

It is impossible to compose a complete list of potential conflict triggers in the Hungarian - Slovak discourse, since their presence and meaning shifts, and it is difficult to anticipate the triggers in the future. As much as an event is perceived traumatic and acute today, it may decline in importance and other events or eras may gain in significance. The Trianon itself had diverse interpretations and varying salience within the Hungarian discourse over the decades and has been gaining in significance within the Hungarian political discourse in the past few years. Furthermore, trauma narratives are not equally represented in every political discourse. The Slovak historical narrative, for example, does not have an equivalent of equal salience to the Trianon trauma. It is more reactive to the Hungarian narrative and seeks to identify frames that are of equal emotive power. With a strong dose of exaggeration, one may be tempted to say that it acts upon the impetus of a “trauma envy”, since the narrative of a cultural trauma provides for a powerful tool of identification and groupness.

But there are certainly issues which, if discussed in public today, have a potential to launch a strong public and media reactions and are connected to Slovak-Hungarian relations. Distressing historic events or eras (Magyarization, Trianon, the Beneš Decrees and population transfers, and related border disputes) are most often the underlying triggers of the displays of nationalism in either country.

Impact of emotive language on political discourse and relations

Politics is an arena where ethnic identification serves special added purposes. Its emotional and very personal, intimate appeal to the members of ethnic community, provides for a powerful tool to mobilize towards specific action. Petersen describes the impact of emotions on our thinking, behavior, and motivations for behavior (Petersen, 2002; Suny, 2004), distorting rational decision-making process. Emotions, and particularly negative emotions as fear, anger, resentment, hatred, impact the way we seek and select information, perceive them and arrive at decisions. National

narratives are saturated with emotions that have been created through teaching, repetition, and daily reproduction until they become common sense (Suny, 2004, pp. 8, 9).

Chilton (2004) offers an elaborate scheme of how politicians can, through discourse, influence the emotions of people, touching especially on their patriotic feelingsthrough instigation of fear. By offering accounts of "enemies" threatening our homes, plotting to take over parts of our territory or turning us away from a natural, healthy patriotism, politicians have the power to stimulate the mobilizing negative emotions.

> We can be even more precise. The fear is linked to fear of invasion (including the historical memories of the Second World War that the speaker can presume some of his hearers will have) and fear of domination. The protectiveness is towards one's family. The sense of security is related to one's geographical territory, the loyalty towards those with whom affinity can be established or assumed. Underlying this there seems to be some general schema of self versus other, or that which is close versus that which is distant. There is good reason to think that these emotions are ones that
> have evolved in human brains for reasons of survival – but any functional component can be recruited in particular circumstances for particular ends (Chilton, 2004, p. 117).

There are also two ways of coercion that can follow from speech acts – emotional and cognitive. Emotional coercion happens when the representatives work with frames that evoke mental representations of things, places, ideas that are linked to our emotional selves (emotional centers in the brain, in fact).Such acts involve terms as danger, urgency, evil; they trigger an emotional response of seeking protection and that of hostility towards anyone who is perceived to breach the safety. Cognitive coercion is more subtle. People, assuming politicians to be credible and truthful, inherently accept a good deal of the proposed information. If they are told that there *IS* an enemy, they take it for granted, and accept that we have to find a solution or fight back. For this, the legitimizing vocabulary that consists of wordssuch as "evil", "strange", "foreign", "hostile", etc.

The master historical narratives in Slovakia and Hungary are framed against each other to some extent (the Slovak discourse being more reactive to the Hungarian one). Despite the centuries of coexistence within one state, or perhaps because of it, the current narratives tend to assign opposing or significantly differing meanings to a number of crucial historical events, thus failing to find a shared decent common past. 1848, 1918, 1920, 1938, 1945…all present controversies that are not easy to reconcile between the two main storylines. Magyarization, Trianon, and Beneš Decrees perhaps belonging among those that stir most emotions on both sides. These events are protracted in the master narratives to a different degree and at a different salience. In Hungary, the Trianon trauma discourse assumes a more central place within the mainstream political and social life. There is no equivalent that would play quite such a role in the Slovak discourse(s). Furthermore, the ethnic Hungarian community in Slovakia identifies to some extent with both the Hungarian and the Slovak narrative, and weaves its own narrative of an ethnic minority between the two national political wills.

Nation-state and citizenship frames

Last but not least, the particular conception of a nation-state in Central Europe, the primacy of the idea of homogeneous ethnic nations seeking the maximum amount of self-determination, plays an important role in the direction the Slovak and Hungarian political discourse surrounding the issue of

citizenship have taken. Slovak and Hungarian Constitutions alike represent this vision and elevate it to a constitutive principle within the two political systems. The Slovak Preamble from 1992 opens with the proclamation: “We, the Slovak nation…”, implicitly excluding the members of the minorities to second-rate citizens, who are kindly tolerated.

The Hungarian Constitution, adopted amidst the citizenship tensions between Slovakia and Hungary in April 2011, an initiative led by Fidesz, was perceived by its neighbors to stand on ethnic principle and therefore viewed as a potential threat to their territorial sovereignty. Criticism related to the conception of a nation referred mainly to the “preamble committed to defending the intellectual and spiritual unity of the nation, which experts warn could be a future source of tension”(Hungarians protest against new Fidesz constitution, 2012). Tens of thousands of Hungarian citizens protested when the Constitution entered into force in 2012, opposing also important social and political issues related to the definition of marriage, protection of unborn children, or redefinition of the electoral system.

Similar territorial fears of violation of sovereignty were expressed by the Slovak government, as the paper will illustrate, in the case of the Status Law and the Act on Dual Citizenship. We maintain that the conceptualization of a nation and ethnopolitical narratives rooted in that conceptualization, have significantly added to and have driven the tensions between Slovakia and Hungary from the inception of the Status Law in Hungary to the abolition of dual citizenship for the Slovaks voluntarily acquiring foreign citizenship. But the primary target audience is domestic - the Hungarian and the Slovak voter, respectively.

TheSlovak-Hungarian ethnopolitical discourse

As mentioned in the beginning, history entered the Slovak and Hungarian political discourse immediately after the fall of the communist regime in 1989. The new place of the post-socialist countries within Europe was being sought, turning to historical inspirations and mythmaking. Nationalist current has been strong in both societies, with fluctuating power throughout the years. In Slovakia, the myth of one thousand years long suffering under the yoke of the Hungarian oppression and the mentioned fear of Hungarian expansionism were present early on. The nationalist streak left its mark on Slovak historiography as well, which sought to identify the national origins, re-interpret the Slovak history within the Hungarian kingdom, construct a heroic narrative of a Slovak nation from the ancient past to glorious present. It was a highly politicized process, supported by the political representation. The current political leadership also participated in cementing the mythicized past in the public discourse, often claiming the heritage of the “Old Slovaks” or through unveiling of the Svätopluk statue, both harkening back to the times of the Great Moravian Empire.

Many expectations were vested into the accession of the Central European countries into the European Union in 2004. Among them was the expectation that ethnic tensions between the neighboring countrieswill lose much of their appeal within their political relations and descend from national to local level of interactions (Harris, 2007). Yet, as Harris’s research shows, political relevance of ethnic identity has not diminished within the EU.Within the twenty five years since the 1989 Revolution, according to her, nationalism has underwent several stages: first, there was a mobilization of ethno-territorial character, which has dominated the transition in many countries and has led to disintegration of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Soviet Union. Dominant groups in politics

in particular practiced nationalism in the daily political life (Harris, 2007, p. 45).“Elites, for all their exploitation of the group’s identity, in terms of political capital, are not wholly responsible for this dynamic – they could not succeed without building on the foundations of historical memory, which is easily invoked when pointing to new insecurities”(Harris, 2007, p. 45). “The role of the external homeland in any analysis of majority-minority relationship in Central Europe is crucial. Slovakia and Hungary have been prime examples of this dynamic. Each government and opposition at various times in their political fortunes and misfortunes relied on historical events to mobilise their respective groups (Harris, 2007, p. 45).

The second stage is Europeanization and deepening of democracy, which is the stage Slovakia and Hungary find themselves in presently. Europeanization refers to the “transformation of the domestic structures of a state by European frameworks, norms and rules…Domestic structures entail the formal institutionsof the state and its legal system and administration but also the perception and public discourse about national and ethnic identity and the meaning of citizenship and the role of the state and political traditions” (Harris, 2007, p. 46).The third stage – transnationalization (reformulated meaning of borders and nations and increased trans-border cooperation) – shouldor could come as a result of the second stage process. Harris finds that Europeanization had an impact on national groups within the state, not so much, or not at all on the conceptualization of national identity as such or its reformation within the common European framework.

The Slovak-Hungarian relations on national political level certainly show no progress towards a transnational identity since the time of the writing of Harris’s article (2007). The TIT-FOR-TAT strategy in the citizenship laws dispute points to the opposite pulls, at least for now. The Status Law and citizenship disputes illustrate that the discourse which has emerged well before the entry of Slovakia and Hungary into the EU continues virtually unchanged and which is potentially hardening in recent years.

The Act on the Hungarians Living in Neighboring Countries – The Status Law

The conceptualization of Hungarian nation as that of all Hungarians living in the Carpathian basin came into the limelight during the process of passing the law on Hungarians living abroad, the Status Law. As this law targeted not all Hungarians living abroad, but those living in the neighboring countries and offered them specific, especially cultural, benefits, it was from the beginning perceived as politically motivated and as a security threat to the neighboring countries with large Hungarian populations. The Status Law was passed few months after the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Trianon.In 2001, upon the 81st anniversary of the Trianon,Hungarian radio launched a program bringing together families from both sides of the border. The goal was to enable them „consciously profess together belonging to one community“.„[Presenter] Neither Trianon [the peace Treaty of Trianon signed in 1920 in the Little Trianon Castle in Versailles, as a result of which Hungary lost two-thirds of its former territory and over 10 million of its former population after World War I], nor our planned accession to the EU can make us forget that we belong to one nation“ (BBC Monitoring European-Political, 2001).

The ruling coalition of M. Dzurinda in Slovakia vehemently objected the Status Law, claiming it a breach of territorial sovereignty. After two years of negotiations, accompanied by complaints also from the Romanian government and an official note from the Venice Committee of the Council of

Europe, the Hungarian Parliament passed an amendment and the Slovak and Hungarian governments, after a few months of frozen interactions, reached an Agreement on Support for the National Minorities in the Areas of Culture and Education.(Kusá, 2013). The amended version of the law shifted the benefits from individual level towards contribution to cultural associations and opened the access to anyone who would wish to study Hungarian culture and language.

The uneasy feelings were shared among the left-wing, populist sphere of the political scene and the right, including some of the outspoken proponents of Slovak-Hungarian reconciliation. FrantišekMikloško, veteran MP and one of the leading members of the Christian Democratic Movement opined that „the Status Law psychologically creates the concept of a Great Hungary. The Slovak side made mistakes too, when the Law was debated we were sleeping and suddenly we were confronted with a done deed. There is one serious problem however: Hungary is passing a law that is implemented in the territory ofthe Slovak Republic. We don't mind if Hungarians have some advantages, but it seemed to be a precedent that would not be good, and the Venice Commission has also denounced it (from a personal interview conducted on June 13, 2003, cf. Kusá, 2003, p. 19).

There were, however, conscious attempts to lessen the tensions as well. Notably, the ten year anniversary of the Slovak Republic Speech of the Parliament Speaker PavolHrušovský*The Face of a Country* for the first time officially extended acknowledgment of own wrongdoings in the past and suggested accepting them as a natural part of our narrative. Among those acknowledged "scars" was the exchange of the population with Hungary following the WWII. This gesture was appreciated by many Hungarians, notably by one of the leaders of the Hungarian coalition in Slovakia BélaBugár as „the first swallow"of the possibility of a change in the Slovak stance towards the shared past (Bugár, 2004, p. 93) or by Georges Schöpflin, who has stated: "This speech was for all practical purposes the first made by a leading Slovak politician that accepts and sees positively the shared aspects of Slovak-Hungarian history. The fact that it was made on such an auspicious occasion as a tenth anniversary of independent Slovakia adds to the symbolic weight and resonance of the argument.(Schopflin, 2010, pp. 96,97).

The Hungarian minority in Slovakia was in a rather difficult position. Being a part of the ruling coalition in Slovakia at the time, the representatives were strongly pressured by their Slovak colleagues as well as by the political leadership from Budapest. The Hungarian population in the ethnically mixed South was divided on the issue as well. Some were confused as to the practical purpose of the Status Law and Status ID – an identification card that ethnic Hungarians could apply for and did not consider applying for it. Others were content with the travel or cultural benefits the ID card offered and yet others just with the symbolic value of holding such a card. The last view was perhaps most poignantly expressed by a 90 year old guide in the Csemadok gallery in Komárno: "I do have the Status ID. I won't be going to Hungary anymore and I don't have children in school. But at least now I can die with some dignity" (personal interview, July 14, 2003).

Dual citizenship for the ethnic Hungarians andrevocation of dual citizenship for the Slovaks

The Status Law was a step towards the law on dual citizenship that was being discussed in Hungary for a long time before it finally materialized in 2010. In 2004, FIDESZ led the initiative to hold a referendum on dual citizenship. The measure failed due to a low turnout of the population, but it did manage to stir emotions on both sides again. The motion was again justified by empathy with ethnic kin living across the Hungarian borders. From abroad, however, the debate on installing dual

citizenship for ethnic Hungarians was a cause for raising an alarm. A Romanian informational bulletin *Focus*later commented:

> "As a politician, Orbán has long been moving toward a conservative, nationalist populism. He may thus try to use this instance to reach the patriotic-inclined Socialist electorate. It is not by chance that the skillful manipulator of words told a gathering in Budapest's Hero Square on 27 November: "The invitations to the 5 December wedding were sent 84 years ago, before adding that recreating a 15 million nation from a 10 million country is a historic deed." And emulating former West German leader Willy Brandt's famous 9 November 1989 speech at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Orbán told the crowd that the vote was about 'forging together what history has broken to pieces'"(Asociatia de Investigatii Media in Balcani, 2010).

It is not that surprising that Orbán-led FIDESZ government has managed to push through the Act on citizenship in 2010, when Orbán took power in the government and FIDESZ gained two thirds in the Hungarian parliament. This act has been usually ascribed to Orbán's political motives or to a nationalist craze following the economic crisis in Hungary. GáborEgry, however,importantly points out the mentioned centrality of the conceptualization of a nation-state in the escalation of nationalist sentiments and mainstreaming of ethnopolitics within the citizenship dispute:

> „If one reads only the minutes of the parliamentary debate or deputy prime ministerZsoltSemjén's most recent interviews one's inescapable impression is that the underlying motive of this action is far more profound and significant. It is not the establishment of the diverse, multi-layered citizenship, corresponding with the realities of the present world as envisioned by Spiro and Stavila. Semjén's argumentation reveals a more traditional concept of state, nation and citizenship, binding these three to the legal institution of citizenship as nationality on an individual level. The deputy prime minister argued from the beginning that the aim of the law is to let people express their national identity in a natural way, but he always referred to citizenship as the sole expression of national identity. For him, the nation-state is the nation's state and exactly this dual identification makes it compelling to provide co-nationals living outside its borders with the possibility to acquire its citizenship"(Egry, 2010).

When the Hungarian bill on citizenship was debated in Hungary, the Slovak political leadership reacted with no small dose of hysteria. The Minister of Interior and Vice Chairman of the ruling party SMER-SD Robert Kaliňák argued in a TV debate that what is taking place in Hungary is exceptionally bad and dangerous. He pointed to the parliamentary discussion of the bill in Hungary, maintaining that it is no longer a matter of some obscure political parties on the margins, claiming that the MPs defended the Vienna Artbitral Award, the Munich Dictate and spoke of Trianon as the greatest injustice that has ever encountered Hungary (Hruška & Lunter, 2010). Kaliňák repeated the same statements on several occasions, thus falling on the same mobilizing frames that the Slovak representatives used in the Slovak-Hungarian discourse on similar occasions in the past.

The media monitoring service demagog.sk corrected Kaliňák'sobservations in print in the next days, specifying that indeed only the members of the right-wing Jobbik spoke about the Vienna Arbitral Award and the Munich Dictate (referring to them as legitimate international agreements at the time, which furthermore respected ethnic boundaries). Trianon, as a subject perceived as traumatic by a wider circle of Hungarian political elite and society, has been referred to also byFIDESZ MPs as well, but in a far less dramatic manner as the Slovak political representation portrayed it. It was referred to as the crucifixion of Hungary and as the source of many current problems by two MPs (Hruška & Lunter, 2010).

In so doing, the Slovak political representation was already preparing to pass the Slovak law on citizenship reacting to the Hungarian one and was drumming up support for this motion using the same ethnic mobilization tactic, drumming up fear and resentment from the Slovak audiences. The working method of the Slovak political leaders was the use of emotionally charged ethnopolitical frames, not unlike in the case of Hungarian leaders prior to their passage of the citizenship law: "The nationalist agenda of the Slovak prime minister Robert Fico is not so very different from that of his Hungarian counterpart Viktor Orbán. And Fico leads a coalition government that includes the ultra-nationalist Slovak National Party. Slovakia has always opposed Hungarian moves to strengthen its ties with ethnic Hungarians in its northern neighbour country. Now, shortly before general elections on 12 June, Fico seems keen to escalate the conflict"(Baubock, 2010).The Slovak amendment to the citizenship law repealed the possibility to hold dual citizenship if a Slovak national voluntarily applies for and acquires citizenship of another country. The measure was primarily intended to prevent a large number of Slovak Hungarians from acquiring a citizenship of Hungary and, as was argued at the time, to prevent new Hungarian citizens from holding positions in the Slovak administration. The law however cannot select out those who apply for Hungarian citizenship, it applies to all of the Slovak nationals acquiring citizenship of another state. Fico's government has been replaced by the coalition government led byIvetaRadičová'sjust a few weeks later and, after two years, Fico made a comeback in a single party government after an early election.Neither was able tobring the controversies around the Slovak citizenship law to resolution.

The Hungarian community in Slovakia

As in the earlier cases of the Slovak-Hungarian disputes, double citizenship affair has met with a mixed response from the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. While some immediately took the opportunity and applied for Hungarian citizenship, others remained indifferent or opposed to it. Interview with Zsolt Simon, former minister of agriculture, and the Vice-Chair of the party Most-Híd representing mostly ethnic Hungarians revealed:

> "…[T]he government in Budapest does not understand the situation in Slovakia. Moreover, the Hungarian government commenting and engaging in Hungarian minority issues in Slovakia, Romania or Croatia tries to divert attention away from the real internal problems in Hungary...Returning once more to the issue of citizenship for the Hungarian minority; Hungarian prime minister, Viktor Orbán, gave the opportunity to achieve Hungarian citizenship for Hungarians living in Slovakia and Romania. This type of action aims to only get new votes for Fidesz (the political party of Viktor Orbán – editor's note), but it also brings more bad than good for those Hungarians living in these countries" (Popławski, 2012).

The consequences of the Slovak act on citizenship were in fact not conducive to results that would be in line with the original intentions of its authors. In three years since the act was passed, 641 people have lost their Slovak citizenship (as of October 2013). Of those, 274 claimed the Czech citizenship, 122 the German citizenship, 79 the Austrian citizenship. Only 42 Hungarians have lost their Slovak citizenship upon applying for the Hungarian one(TASR, 2013a). Some claim the relatively low number of those who lost the citizenship due to the acquisition of a Hungarian one is because of the impossibility to check the acquisition by the Slovak authorities. Although there is a sanction of 3 319 EUR imposed on those who fail to inform the state about the acquisition of a new citizenship, there is no mechanism of control – duty to report the acquisition of a new citizenship rests with the individual applicant. The leader of the Slovak National Party therefore complained: "By allowing for the award of Hungarian citizenship without the persons giving up their original citizenship, Viktor Orbán is mocking the laws in the neighboring countries. The oath of the five hundred thousandth

ethnic Hungarian from abroad is the five hundred thousandth mockery of Viktor Orbán towards his neighbors. These 500 000 new Hungarian citizens are in fact his new potential voters," stated Mr. Danko of the Slovak National Party(TASR, 2013b). Government is put under pressure from the opposition as well as the representatives of the former nationals deprived of citizenship. 37 members of parliament filed a complaint at the Constitutional Court that the Amendment of 2010 violates the Constitution in allowing for loss of citizenship upon acquiring a new one. The Constitutional Court has postponed the hearing several times and has not decided on the case as of yet. In February 2014,

Slovakia has witnessed a growth in, or mainstreaming of nationalist and intolerant narratives in the official political discourse in recent years of the second Fico government. It is oriented towards national minorities, especially the Hungarian and the Roma, but more broadly also against any minorities or progressive human rights discourse. With the regional elections producing a leader of a former (now banned) neo-Nazi platform in one of the regions and tensions resulting of upcoming Hungarian parliamentary elections, it is unlikely that these sentiments will subside anytime soon.

Andrei Stavila observed when the laws were freshly passed, the Hungarian act on dual citizenship on its own was liberal in principle – extending rights and freedoms to new groups of people (notwithstanding the political motives behind it). The Slovak reaction, au contraire, was illiberal, withholding rights previously granted from its current citizens."At the end of the day, at the individual level there is a lot to gain from the new Hungarian law – and nothing to lose. Conversely, at the same level there is a lot to lose from the Slovak amendment – and nothing to gain"(Stavila, 2010).

Sites, rituals, and symbols of memory as communicative acts

The political discourse of cultural trauma does not only seep into public speeches of political leaders or exchanges in the media outlets. They have been accompanied and underscored by communicative acts of another kind – displays of the narratives in public spaces through memorialization, unveiling of statues and plaques, displays of symbols, symbolic gestures, etc. Robert D. Sack (1986) would include this behavior in the display of human territoriality – geographic strategic behavior to claim and control territory, assert domination over it. It is a "geographic expression of social power" (p. 5). This paper does not offer enough space to explore these public events and rituals at length as they would deserve, that would have to be a subject for a separate paper. But it is important to at least note that they are a crucial integral part of the discourse, often more powerful than words as they are more readily deployable to stir emotions, rally masses, mobilize towards action. Here a just a few examples from within the Slovak public practice of memorialization.

Komárno, a small town on the ethnically mixed borderlands between Slovakia and Hungary (with a majority of ethnic Hungarian population) has been a home to such displays of territoriality by both sides. In 2003, when the Hungarian Status Law was still protracted in Slovakia, MaticaSlovenská (Slovak Cultural Heritage Foundation) has succeeded, after more than a decade long argument with the City Council of Komárno, in placing the statue of Cyril and Metodius, Byzantine emissaries who brought Christianity and written word to Slovakia (though some historians claim they were neither alone nor the first in this endeavor), on their building, unveiled in the presence of sixteen buses from other parts of Slovakia and political leaders who took turn to claim this heritage. "Placement of the statue had mostly a symbolic meaning –to conquer the "enemy territory". Speeches included noble words, but nobody mentioned the crucial point that all felt intuitively: those statues will be here to

remind that WE were here first, long before you claimed your homeland! By this act of unveiling of the statue, we confirm our claim to this territory. Just as the statues used to remind their subjects who is their master and to whom they should be 'grateful for all their well-being,' the statues of the saints will remind the passer-bys 'who is the master here'. Sorry, Cyril, pardon, Method, you were misused for politics, it is not your fault. You merely wanted to give us the written alphabet…"(Repa, 2003). Since then, the site becomes a territorial stomping ground every July, upon the anniversary of the saints' arrival to present day Slovakia, often in attendance of the Slovak or Hungarian (on occasion both) neo-Nazi groupings. The statue has since been moved by the government from the Matica building to the center of a roundabout on the main road going through Komárno. Everyone passing through Komárno now has to circle around this memento of proclaimed Slovakness. However, Komárno is also a home to two Trianon memorials (one erected by ethnic Hungarians, one by Slovaks, one as a reminder of the loss, the other a reminder of the foundation of the first independent statehood within the first Czechoslovak Republic). The latter was erected at the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the signage of the Trianon Treaty by the Slovak National Party to "remind everyone, but especially the gentlemen from Hungary that they are crossing the Slovak border and entering the Slovak soil that will forever belong to us"(Babjak, 2010).Komárno also hosts a statue of Saint Stephen, the first King of Hungary. When the statue was unveiled in August of 2009, the Hungarian President Sólyom was stopped at the border crossing in Komárno and turned back to Hungary. Almost all of these displays of social power in the public space of Komárno included political elites from Bratislava or Budapest, only rarely, if at all, the local people. Komárno (and other places) has simply served as the stage for the ethnopolitical symbolic discourse due to its history and location.

Conclusion

There have been several attempts to soften the Slovak law on citizenship since the Amendment of 2010. Both Radičová and Fico governments have realized that the current situation is undesirable and has to be repaired. None of the attempts to do so has been successful in rallying enough political support in the parliament as of yet.

The citizenship dispute also contains several paradoxes. As Rainer Bauböck pointed out, "This conflict must be puzzling for many academic scholars and migration think tanks that have advocated the general toleration of multiple nationality and have welcomed recent European trends in this direction as indicating a move from ethnic to civic conceptions of citizenship. Dual citizenship has been interpreted as a step towards postnational conceptions of membership and the opening of new spaces for free movement and multiple identities across the borders of sovereign states. So how can we make sense of this conflict where Hungary advocates dual citizenship on purely nationalist grounds whereas Slovakia rejects it invoking the same ideology?" (Baubock, 2010).

Meanwhile, the parliamentary elections are approaching in Hungary and political parties are stepping up their campaigns. Slovak representatives keep a wary eye on the campaigns, nervous about the ruling party's campaigning efforts among the Hungarians in Romania where there is a sizable community of new Hungarian citizens and registered voters.Since FIDESZ's prospects in the opinion polls are more favorable than other political parties, it is quite likely that the discourse of ethnopolitics will color the official relations between Slovakia and Hungary for foreseeable future and the proclaimed needed changes to the Slovak citizenship law will continue to face obastacles. Separatist sentiments of small communities being on the rise (Catalonia, Scotland, most recently

Venice in Italy), it is also likely that we are witnessing a broader trend within the shaken web of fragile common Europe.

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