National Homogenization and Ethnic Reproduction on the European Periphery

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LA TEORIA SOCIOLOGICA
E LO STATO MODERNO

Saggi in onore di Gianfranco Poggi

a cura di Marzio Barbagli
e Harvie Ferguson

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cern with quality betrays support for discriminatory policies of population control. This she then differentiates from birth control as a technology of liberation and empowerment when directed by individual agency. For demographers, however, the concept of quality emphasised the wellbeing and freedom of the individual, differentiating the field from policies that, in their determination to directly restrict or increase population quantity, would cause hardship, breed resistance, and ultimately prove damaging to government, science and the populous**. The qualitative improvement of a population was not merely a desirable consequence of quantitative control; it was the means towards its realisation. Through aligning individual interests and the needs of the state, the concept of quality allowed fertility dynamics to become at once governable and distinct from direct government intervention.

** Linda Gordon's analysis of the relations between eugenics and demography in the postwar era was groundbreaking. However, in failing to recognise the way in which the practices of government have come to depend upon the agency of the governed, Gordon (1976, 307-312) celebrates demographic surveys of «excess» fertility for revealing the desire for contraception among the poor. This, she argues, constituted a challenge to eugenic assumptions. Yet these surveys were, of course, conducted and promoted by the very «eugenic demographers» that she criticises. The importance and effectiveness of individual freedom and responsibility over authoritarian models, is consistent with studies of governmentality, genetic risk and eugenics in modern society [Lenke 2005].

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National homogenization and ethnic reproduction on the European periphery

The hyphen that joins the terms in the expression «nation-state» conceals a question: the question of the relation between the imagined community of the nation and the territorial organization of the state. Where nation and state are prevailingly understood to be coextensive, as in the United States, most of Latin America, Japan, and much of Western Europe, this question is seldom posed. But where nation and state are understood, as in Central and especially Eastern Europe, as independent orders of phenomena – the nation as grounded in culture and especially in language, the state in institutionalized rule over a particular territory – the question has been central.

From the middle of the nineteenth through the middle of the twentieth century, throughout Central and Eastern Europe, the «national question» – precisely this question of the proper relation between nation and state or, more broadly, between ethnocultural community and political authority – was every bit as significant as the «social question» that dominated political life (and social theory) in Western Europe.

1 This question is treated in passing in Poggi's superbly concise The Development of the Modern State and The State: Its Nature, Development, and Prospects [Poggi 1978, 1990] but it is not a central concern of either.

2 For a survey of the national question in East Central Europe, see Brubaker et al. (2006, ch. 1). The national question, to be sure, was not confined to Central and Eastern Europe; it was politically central in Ireland, Spain, Belgium, and elsewhere. But it was not central in Britain, apart from the Irish question (Scottish and Welsh nationalism did not pose comparably significant challenges), in France, or in the post-Great War United States. And since these were widely understood, even by Central Europeans like Marx, as the «dead societies» that would show the rest of the world «the image of its own future», it was the social question, not the national question, that was the central point of reference for social theory throughout the nineteenth century and for most of the twentieth. By the «social question», I mean not only questions associated with class conflict and class structure but also, more broadly, the problems and contours of the distinctively modern society that was seen to be emerging, within largely taken for granted national and state boundaries, as a legacy of intertwined commercial, industrial, scientific, technological, and democratic transformations.
The social question was focused on economic inequality, grounded in the new class structure created by industrial capitalism, the national question centered on a particular kind of political inequality, grounded in the new understandings of the relationship between culture and politics that were engendered by the rise of nationalism.

For most of human history, the relationship between culture and politics was of little moment to rulers or ruled. Rulers did not seek to create culturally homogenous populations; and the ruled did not seek to be governed by rulers of their own culture (religion was sometimes, but by no means always, an exception [Smith 1986, ch. 1, 3, and 4]). Only in the nineteenth century did this change decisively. Cultural nationalism became politicized, and politics increasingly «culturalized»; the principle of nationality, according to which political authority should be based on nationhood, was expressly formulated and recurrently invoked. The prevailing normative model of the nation-state came to envision the coincidence of cultural and political boundaries and the seamless joining of the imagined community of the nation with the organizational reality of the state.

1. National minorities and national states

As the hyphen linking «nations» and «states» came, in aspiration if not in reality, to signify a close congruence, a new form of political inequality was created: unequal access to a national polity of «one's own».

Nationalist movements responded to this newly felt inequality (which they had of course helped to create) by seeking to establish new national states through secession (in the Ottoman Balkans, Norway, Ireland, and elsewhere), unification (Germany, Italy), or both (Poland), and also by creating more or less autonomous national polities within the frame of larger multinational empires (Hungary).

3 As Ernest Gellner put it, rulers «were interested in the tribute and labour potential of their subjects, not in their culture» (Gellner 1994, 62).

4 As Max Weber noted in introducing his discussion of «the nation», certain strata are privileged «by the very existence» of a polity: namely those who share its dominant culture. See also Wimmer (1997) for an interpretation of ethnopolitical conflict focused on unequal access to core political goods of the modern state.

5 For the half-century before the First World War, Hungary was a quasi-national state within the Habsburg Empire, almost completely independent in matters of domestic policy, and many other Habsburg national movements sought territorial and other forms of autonomy within the Empire.

The creation of new national polities, however, could not fully solve this problem, and in some respects only intensified it. The intricately intermixed population throughout the region made it impossible to match cultural with political boundaries. No matter where boundaries were drawn or proposed, the territories they enclosed turned out to be ethnationally heterogeneous, and the reorganization of political authority along national lines made this new form of political inequality much more conspicuous: to be a minority meant one thing in a multinational empire, and something quite different in a nation-state. To be an ethnically Polish subject, for example, was one thing in mid-nineteenth Prussia, and quite another in late nineteenth century Germany; to be a Bohemian German was one thing when Bohemia belonged to the Habsburg Empire, and quite another when it became part of the putatively national Czechoslovak state [Broszat 1972, 126-128; Bahn 1999].

The inequality became glaringly acute after the First World War, when political space throughout East Central Europe was reorganized along ostensibly national lines, and an array of new and reconfigured nation-states arose on the rubble of the multinational Habsburg, Ottoman, and Romanov empires. In these new states, understood by political elites and ordinary citizens as the states of and for particular ethnocultural nations, members of the core, «state-owning» nation were sharply distinct from the large segments of the population — comprising from 30% to as much as 50% of the population in Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia — who did not see themselves, or were not acknowledged by others, as belonging to that nation.

This distinction was aggravated by the fact that the new and newly enlarged states were not simply national but nationalizing states [Brubaker 1996]. Despite possessing «their own» states, the core nations in these states were represented by political and cultural elites as demographically, culturally, or economically weak and as threatened by large, powerful, or potentially disloyal national minorities; and state power

6 The Soviet Union, to be sure, was reconstructed on most of the territory of the Romanov Empire as an avowedly multinational state; but internally, it too was organized along national lines as a (nominal) federation of nationally defined states.

7 Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were officially construed as the states of and for the Czech and Yugoslav or «South Slav» nations, respectively, which comprised, in theory, substantial majorities of the respective citizenries. Yet while the states «belonged» in theory to the encompassing Czechoslovak and Yugoslav nations, they were increasingly seen in practice as the states of and for the Czech and Serb core nations.
was deployed to promote the language, culture, demographic prepon-
derance, economic flourishing, or political hegemony of the core na-
tions. Such measures further alienated minorities, some of whom, nota-
bly Germans and Hungarians, suffered a sharp and shocking trans-
formation from dominant (or at least relatively privileged) national groups of Great Powers into second-class citizens of what they considered third-class states (especially Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania); these minorities were as a result even more inclined to identify with their neighboring «kin» states and to place their hopes in the revision of territorial frontiers to which those states were committed.

In the interwar years, then, the foundational political inequality inher-
ent in ethnationally heterogeneous nationalizing states was deeply destabili-
zizing, and it contributed to the tensions and crises that were bound up with the background to and the outbreak of the Second World War.

2. National homogenization

The presence in a nation-state of persons who belong to the state but not to the nation - who are formally fellow citizens but not fel-
low nationals - is unstable even when it is not destabilizing. This holds
quite generally, not only in settings like interwar East Central Europe,
with its overheated ideological climate and fraught geopolitical con-
figuration.

The anomalous status of nonnationals in a national state can be
represented as illegitimate by minority elites on the one hand and by
state and majority nationalist elites on the other, and it can be so un-
derstood by their respective constituents. To the former, it is an illegi-
etimate form of inequality; to the latter, an illegitimate form of heteroge-
nity. Both sorts of representations and understandings contribute to the
instability of this situation.

Besides seeking collective exit from second-class citizenship through
the establishment of a state (or autonomous polity) of their own, per-
sons not belonging to the «core nation» can seek individual exit from
this status through emigration or assimilation. These forms of collec-
tive and individual exit from the polity, or from the anomalous status of
non-national, all contribute to the national homogenization of political
space, though without necessarily intending to do so.

State and nationalist elites, of course, often pursue national homog-
ernization more directly. The point I wish to underscore here is that na-
tional homogenization is found not only in states that are in the throes
of fevered nationalist mobilization, but is endemic to nation-states in
general. It proceeds not only through violence - though ethnic cleans-
ing, compulsory resettlement, and mass murder have indeed been its
most extreme (and, alas, not ineffective) instruments [see for example
Mann 2004; Rieber 2000; Ther 2001] - but also through quieter mi-
gations of «ethnic unmixing» [see for example Brubaker 1998] and
countless trajectories of inter-generational assimilation, both of which
may be induced with greater or lesser force by the state, or undertaken
more or less spontaneously by individuals. Moreover, national ho-
logenization is not simply a political project but a social process that
can occur within the institutional and territorial frame of the state even
when there is no specifically nationalizing political intent*.

In East Central Europe, this process of national homogenization has
been particularly striking. Ethnographic maps of the region from a cen-
tury ago show an extraordinary ethnolinguistic and ethnore-
ligious patchwork; and the maps understated the degree of heterogeneity,
since major dialectical differences separated speakers of «the same»
language, while differences of language and religion separated inhab-
itants of towns from one another, and from the surrounding coun-
try-side. Today, ethnolinguistic maps look much more like political maps,
suggesting cultural homogeneity within political boundaries. Ernest
Gellner (who grew up in what he recalled as «tricultural» - German,
Czech, and Jewish - Prague in the 1930s), captured this process with
his image of a transition from the painterly style of Kokoschka, charac-
terized by shades and patches of light and color, to that of Modigliani,
characterized by clearly outlined blocks of solid colors [Gellner 1983,
139-140]**.

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* Linguistic homogenization and standardization, for example, are fostered by state-wide school systems and mass media, regardless of how expressly «nationalizing» they are. A homogenization of the built environment, or of the organizational and institutional landscape, may derive from state-framed and state-side economic pro-
cesses and policies, or from a state-wide legal or administrative system. And Watkins has documented a convergence of basic demographic indicators within states in From Provinces into Nations [Watkins 1991]. All of these may coincide with a discursive celebration of diversity and may continue in the absence of expressly nationalizing policies. Both dimensions of national homogenization - self-conscious project and un-
effective process - are abundantly illustrated in Eugène Weber's classic Peasants into Frenchmen [1976].

** For Gellner's reminiscences about Prague, see the 1991 interview with John Gray for «Current Anthropology», excerpted at http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/gell-
ner/InterGellner.html.
The extraordinary ethnonational heterogeneity that once characterized the region is a thing of the past. New forms of socioeconomic, sociocultural, and even (in some cases) ethnic heterogeneity (and of course striking new forms of inequality) have emerged since the end of four decades of notorious homogenizing communist rule. But ethnonational heterogeneity - the specific form of heterogeneity that made these societies not only linguistically and religiously heterogeneous but multinational - has disappeared (or is merely vestigial) throughout much of the region; and even where it remains more significant, it has come under considerable pressure.

3. Ethnodemographic change in a Transylvanian town

The Transylvanian town in which I did sustained research, and Transylvania as a whole, offer poignant illustrations of this process [Brubaker et al. 2006, ch. 3]. The large town of Cluj, Transylvania's unofficial capital and major cultural center, is today 80% Romanian, and just under 20% Hungarian; a half-century ago, it was half Hungarian, half Romanian; a half-century before that, then part of Hungary, and known as Kolozsvár, it was 80% Hungarian (and included a large and flourishing Jewish population and a small German-speaking community). Earlier still, when it was known also as Klausenburg, the town was populated by a mix of German- and Hungarian-speakers.

Cluj is distinctive in having been ethnolinguistically relatively homogeneous at the turn of the twentieth century; its mixed population thereafter was a transitional phenomenon, representing the passage from a Hungarian to a Romanian nationalizing regime. The town is typical of the region, however, in having been sharply distinct in language and religion from the surrounding countryside at the turn of the twentieth century. Elsewhere in Transylvania, too, the rural-urban ethnographic divide was conspicuous: towns were predominantly Hungarian (and disproportionately German and Jewish as well), while the countryside was predominantly Romanian.

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[2] In addition, there is a small Roma or Gypsy population. These and other data from census questions, on which I draw throughout this paper, should not be taken as indicators of sharply bounded groups. On the distinction between categories and groups, see Brubaker et al. [2006, 11-13; 209-210]; Part II of that book addresses the everyday workings of the categorical identities that this paper takes simply as data.

How did the population of Cluj, overwhelmingly Hungarian at the turn of the twentieth century, become overwhelmingly Romanian at the turn of twenty-first? The post-First World War settlement - when Transylvania passed from Hungarian to Romanian sovereignty - established the framework for what nationalist intellectuals conceptualized as the conquest of the ethnonationally «alien» towns, dominated by Hungarians, Germans, and Jews. The small prewar Romanian population quickly quadrupled, to about a third of the population, as Romanians flocked to the town to take up newly available positions in the public sector. But the Hungarian population, after an initial decline as officials and some others fled to Hungary, resumed its growth as well, and Hungarian remained the dominant language of public life throughout the interwar years. This prompted complaints from Romanian nationalists, impatient at the slow pace of nationalization.

In a 1940 territorial adjustment brokered by Hitler, Hungary recovered northern Transylvania, including Cluj. Romanians fled south in large numbers, Hungarians poured in to town, and for four years, the city was once again as overwhelmingly Hungarian as it had been before the First World War. But it was now Hungarian in a narrower, more racialized sense. In the late nineteenth century, what mattered, in defining «Hungarianess», had been language, and Hungarian-speaking Jews had understood themselves, and had been accepted, as Hungarians. Now, however, Jews were socially, politically, and legally excluded from membership of the core nation. And shortly after Nazi Germany occupied Hungary in March 1944, the Jews of Cluj, like other Hungarian Jews outside Budapest, were deported to Auschwitz. Most survivors emigrated in subsequent years. The 17,000 Jews of Cluj in 1941 had comprised 15% of the population; by 1992, only 340 Jews were recorded, just 0.1% of the population.

After the war, Romania regained control of Northern Transylvania, and the migration flows of Hungarians and Romanians were reversed. Yet in 1948, Romanians still comprised only 40% of the population. It was only in subsequent decades, through state-sponsored heavy industrialization, that thoroughgoing Romanianization occurred. The Romanian population increased by 200,000, more than quintupling, between 1948 and 1992, while the Hungarian population barely grew at all. Nationalizing policies contributed to this shift. Cluj was officially a «closed» city, and it was difficult for Hungarians to receive permission to settle in the town, or for enterprises to hire Hungarians. Yet since the rural population available for migration to rapidly expanding industrial centers like Cluj was heavily Romanian, the Romanianization
One distinctive circumstance that I would like to highlight in the case of Cluj is the combination of nationalization and ethnic reproduction. National homogenization has not come at the expense of the ethnic reproduction of the Hungarian population; it has occurred in spite of Hungarian ethnic reproduction. Throughout the twentieth century, and despite living under Romanian sovereignty since 1918 (except from 1940-44), the Hungarian population was reproducing itself not only biologically, but socially: Hungarians were reproducing themselves as Hungarians. National homogenization occurred not through the large-scale assimilation of Hungarians, but in Cluj and other Transylvanian towns, through the "swamping" of the previously largely Hungarian urban population through large-scale Romanian migration from the countryside.

To understand the nature of (and prospects for) nationalization, we need also to understand the nature of (and prospects for) ethnic reproduction. In Cluj, this means understanding the structure of the Hungarian "world" - a parallel society embedded within the wider Romanian society (Brubaker et al. 2006, ch. 9).

Although ethnicity has no territorial base in Cluj - there are no Hungarian enclaves or predominantly Hungarian neighborhoods - it does have a strong institutional base: an extensive network of Hungarian schools, from preschool through university, supplemented by churches, cultural institutions, foundations, civic and recreational associations, a modest cluster of enterprises, and a flourishing Hungarian-language media. Outside this institutionalized sector, the reach of the Hungarian world is extended through networks of friends and acquaintances shaped within schools and other Hungarian institutions. It is possible to buy groceries or second-hand clothes at stores where Hungarians are known to work, to frequent cafes or bars where Hungarian can be spoken, to buy one's (Hungarian) newspaper from a Hungarian vendor, or through networks of personal referral, to find a Hungarian doctor, dentist, lawyer, tutor, painter, plumber, handyman, or auto mechanic.

The institutional core of the Hungarian world is the school system. The large majority of Hungarian children in Cluj attend Hungarian elementary and high schools; since the change of regime, it has become possible to study in Hungarian in a wide range of fields at the university as well. The comprehensive Hungarian-language school system so-

4. National homogenization and ethnic reproduction

I have described the process of nationalization as if it were inexorably inscribed in the very nature of the nation-state. But this is too abstract and stylized a view. Nationalization proceeds not from some generalized feature of the nation-state per se; it proceeds in particular ways in particular circumstances.

In Cluj, the small German community had declined from 2% to 3% of the population through assimilation to Hungarians in the final decades before the First World War; it disappeared almost entirely after the Second World War.

Although Germans were not expelled en masse from Romania after the Second World War, as they were from Czechoslovakia and elsewhere, their numbers were reduced by about a third between 1941 and 1948. During the 1970s and 1980s, Ceausescu in effect sold Transylvanian Germans to West Germany; most of the rest emigrated to Germany after 1989.

13 Even as Romanization was progressing, the Hungarian population continued to grow until the 1980s. There were in fact more Hungarians in Cluj in 1977 than at any time except briefly during the Second World War.
sicalizes children as Hungarians; more important, it associates them with other Hungarians. By pervasively shaping contact probabilities at key stages in life, the Hungarian school system (supplemented by Hungarian churches, workplaces, and associations) provides a powerful institutional matrix for ethnically patterned friendship circles and, crucially, for ethnic endogamy.

Ethnically endogamous families and ethnically homogeneous friendship networks, in turn, provide the social environment within which schooling choices are made for the next generation. They may even make choice unnecessary. For one who grows up in a Hungarian family, attends Hungarian schools, develops a largely or exclusively Hungarian network of close friends, and marries another Hungarian from a similar background, it is ordinarily matter of course, not of self-conscious choice, to send one's children to a Hungarian school. The process of institutional reproduction can thus become self-sustaining, as persons socialized within institutions that nurture a strong sense of a distinct Hungarian "world" associate with other inhabitants of that same world, find partners within the networks of friends and acquaintances shaped by its core institutions, and find it natural to channel their children into the same institutions.

5. Is nationalization over?  

Some have argued that national homogenization is no longer operative in today's transnational or postnational world [see for example Appadurai 1995; Beck 2000; Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1995; Sheffer 2003]. They see the nation-state as weakened by the global circulation of people, goods, messages, images, ideas, and cultural products, and as having progressively lost its ability to control its borders, regulate its economy, impose its culture, homogenize its population, address a variety of border-spanning problems, and command the loyalty of its citizens. The old model of the homogenizing, nationalizing, assimilationist nation-state, based on comprehensive social control, exclusive claims on citizens' loyalty, and a close congruence between political territory and cultural identity, is seen as obsolete. In its place is emerging a new relationship between politics and culture, territorial state and de-territorialized identities, that enables immigrant and diaspora populations to sustain ethnic identities over time and across space.

If it is easier today for territorially dispersed immigrants and their descendants to preserve their identities than it was in the closed, bounded, assimilationist nation-state of the past, it ought to be even easier for historically rooted, territorially concentrated minorities like Transylvanian Hungarians to do so, especially when such minorities are supported by an elaborate network of institutions like those that I have just described. Transylvanian Hungarian institutions have been substantially extended and strengthened since the fall of Ceaușescu. In the late Ceaușescu era, nationalizing policies had restricted Hungarian-language schooling, especially at high school and university levels. Under pressure from the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities and other international organizations, whose seal of approval has been important in certifying candidates for European and Euroatlantic integration, state policies have become much more supportive of minority-language education (and of minority rights in general).  

The end of the Ceaușescu regime also meant a sudden and dramatic opening up of what had been a notoriously closed state. Insofar as this involved a new and massive exposure to the full range of European and American broadcast media through now-prevalent cable and satellite television, as well as to other aspects of international consumer modernity, it worked in a transnationalizing and perhaps de-nationalizing direction. Insofar as the opening up of the country also involved the re-establishment of close ties between Transylvanian Hungarians and Hungarians, however, it worked in a nationalizing direction — but with nationally dissimulating, not nationally assimilating or homogenizing effects. Not only can Transylvanian Hungarians easily maintain ties with friends and family in Hungary, or work and study in Hungary; they can also watch Hungarian television, including a special channel designed for transborder Hungarians. And Transylvanian Hungarian cultural institutions are heavily subsidized by the Hungarian state. Hungary even introduced a form of quasi-citizenship for Transylvanian and other transborder Hungarians — a formal legal status for which transborder Hungarians can apply, and which entitles them to certain benefits in their countries of residence and in Hungary.

9 The restrictions on free internal mobility that made it difficult for Transylvanian Hungarians to move to Cluj and other urban centers with substantial Hungarian populations were lifted, as were the restrictions on Hungarian-language schools, which had obliged many Hungarians to attend Romanian schools (and, as a result, had increased the likelihood of intermarriage and intergenerational assimilation).
Another strand in the literature on post-national and transnational trends has argued that European integration has strengthened minorities vis-à-vis nation-states. In this spirit, nationally minded Hungarians have welcomed the eastward expansion of the European Union: the attenuation of the state borders separating Hungarians in Slovakia and Romania from their «mother country», they suggest, will create a space within which the Hungarian ethnocultural nation, divided among several states after the First World War, can be socially, culturally, and economically - if not politically - reunified.²⁷

6. Nationalization without nationalism

All of these factors, it might be thought, should favor ethnic reproduction and work against further national homogenization. Yet national homogenization continues even today in Cluj and elsewhere in Transylvania. This cannot be explained by the nationalizing policies and practices of the Romanian state. The absolute and relative decline in the Hungarian population of Cluj and other Transylvanian towns accelerated after 1989, even as minority rights were strengthened and the network of Hungarian institutions expanded substantially.

Of course, nationalism still flourishes in a variety of forms, at local, regional, statewide, and interstate levels. At the local level, Cluj in particular was the site of intense and intractable ethnonational conflict between 1992 and 2004, pitting the town's notorious three-term mayor and his allies in statewide Romanian extreme nationalist parties against the Cluj-based Democratic Alliance of Hungarians of Romania (DAHR), at once a statewide political party with its electoral base in Transylvania and an umbrella organization claiming to represent and further the interests of the Hungarian minority in Romania.²⁸ In speaking of «nationalization without nationalism», I am suggesting that the dynamics of national homogenization are largely independently of such ethnopolitical contention.²⁹

I observed above that the national homogenization of Cluj and other Transylvania towns under Ceaușescu was due primarily to mass migration from the countryside, not to assimilation, and that the nationalization of the towns, though reinforced and accentuated by nationalizing policies, was in the long run an inevitable concomitant of industrialization and urbanization in a setting in which rural labor reserves were overwhelmingly Romanian. Since the fall of communism, national homogenization in Cluj and other towns has continued to be driven by migration - but now by out-migration (and more specifically by emigration from Romania), not in-migration.³⁰ Romania as a whole has experienced substantial emigration since the change of regime, but emigration has been considerably heavier among Transylvanian Hungarians than among Romanians, thanks to the proximity and comparative prosperity of neighboring Hungary. And while emigration is in some cases a response to nationalist pressures, Transylvanian Hungarian migration to Hungary and elsewhere is driven primarily by economic concerns.³¹ It is thus the increasing international and transnational openness equal partnership with the Romanian nation as a constituent element of the Romanian state. At the same time, it characterizes Transylvanian Hungarians as an «organic part» of the Hungarian nation, and claims the right to cultivate relations with the «mother country» across the border. It demands collective rights for Hungarians as a national minority, and territorial autonomy for Hungarian-majority regions. It demands the right to public, state-funded education in Hungarian at every level and in every branch of the educational system. And it demands the re-establishment of an independent Hungarian university in Cluj. On nationalist politics in post-Communist Romania, see Brubaker et al. (2006, ch. 4).

²⁷ One might suppose that the sharp decline of the Hungarian population of Cluj was a consequence of the hyper-nationalist local politics of the 1990s. But the decline was even sharper in Oradea, another Transylvanian town which has an equally large Hungarian population, yet which did not experience the nationalist contentiousness that characterized Cluj.

²⁸ The massive industrialization-related rural-urban migration that was decisive under communism ended in the mid-1980s. People continue, of course, to move to Cluj, as well as to leave Cluj for elsewhere in Romania or abroad; but such internal migration to Cluj is no longer likely to contribute to further national homogenization, since the ethnonational composition of Cluj is now similar to that of Transylvania as a whole (and the great majority of migrants to Cluj come from Transylvania, not from elsewhere in Romania).

²⁹ Shared language, family ties, and identification with Hungary have of course facilitated the migration of Transylvanian Hungarians to Hungary. Yet nationalist pressures in Romania do not appear to have been a significant push factor in post-1989 migration.
of the Romanian state, not its nationalistic closure, that has most seriously threatened the self-reproducing Hungarian world since 1989, and contributed thereby to the ongoing process of national homogenization.

There is a further irony. Romania's membership of the EU has made it easier than ever for Transylvanian Hungarians to study, work, and resettle in Hungary. The re-integration of the border-spanning Hungarian ethnocultural nation within the EU may therefore accelerate rather than arrest the demographic decline of Transylvanian Hungarians in Cluj and elsewhere. European integration, heralded as weakening or even transcending the nation-state, may in this way contribute to strengthening it, making Romania more rather than less national.

Theorists of a post-national and diasporic world generally see assimilation as a thing of the past. But this is sociologically naive. One need not adopt an equally naive (and normatively problematic) nation-state view of the world to recognize that assimilation is a generic social process that has by no means lost its relevance. In Cluj and elsewhere in Transylvania, assimilation contributes significantly — along with emigration — to the absolute and relative shrinkage of the Hungarian population. In recent years, for example, about a quarter of all Hungarians who have married in Cluj have married Romanians; this means that 40% of all marriages involving Hungarians have been mixed marriages. On the one hand, the fact that three out of four Hungarians in Cluj marry other Hungarians shows a strong pattern of ethnic endogamy. If ethnicity were irrelevant, one would expect the figure to be about one out of five, given the relative sizes of the Hungarian and Romanian populations. Yet rates of intermarriage are high enough to erode the Hungarian world at the margins. Children of mixed marriages are unlikely to attend Hungarian schools, especially Hungarian high schools and university; unlikely, as a result, to develop predominantly Hungarian circles of friends; and unlikely to marry Hungarians. Most children and grandchildren of mixed marriages thereby come to identify as Romanians.

Assimilation is not engendered by nationalizing pressures, any more than emigration is. It reflects rather the incomplete «encapsulation» of the Hungarian world. Given the lack of residential segregation, and the prevalence of mixed workplaces, even those Hungarians with ethnically homogeneous school-based friendship networks routinely encounter Romanians at work and in social settings. And the logic of relative group size [see for example Blau 1977] means that outside Hungarian institutional enclaves and the social networks they generate, Hungarians encounter far more potential Romanian than Hungarian partners. The result is mixed. On the one hand, ethnic endogamy contributes to ethnic reproduction; on the other hand, intermarriage contributes to assimilation at the margins.

7. The limits of minority rights

Can minority rights arrest this trend and help preserve ethnonational heterogeneity? There are grounds for skepticism. Consider Finland, often cited as an exemplar of generous minority rights for the country's Swedish-speaking minority [see for example Solsten and Meditz 1990, 96-101; Östern 1997]. Swedish is an official language of the country alongside Finnish, with a constitutionally guaranteed equal status. The language of local public administration is governed by the census: wherever at least 3,000 persons (or 8% of the population) are native speakers of one language, that language is used, either alone or in conjunction with the other language. By these criteria approximately 5% of the country's municipalities were Swedish, and another 9% bilingual in the 1980s. The state provides Swedish-language day care for pre-school children and Swedish-language instruction at all levels; there is even a separate Swedish-language university. Yet the relative size of the Swedish minority has shrunk by nearly half since 1940, from nearly 10% of population in 1940 to 5.5% in 2003. Emigration to Sweden has played a role, but intermarriage and subsequent intergenerational language shift have been more important. The institutionalized protections afforded the Swedish language have no doubt slowed down the process of national homogenization; but they have not been able to arrest it.

23 Nationalizing pressures are often counterproductive: by invoking reactive ethnopolitical mobilization, institution-building, and solidarity, they can actually retard assimilation.
A variety of specific rights concerning the public use of minority languages and the provision of minority language education are contained in Romanian law and in international agreements to which Romania is a signatory. The DAHR has proposed strengthening these in several ways and has asserted other rights, notably to territorial and non-territorial forms of autonomy. Territorial autonomy is a special case, to which I return below. But even if the other rights were realized in full — in the sphere of education, public administration, media, and culture — it is not clear that this would have much of an effect on emigration or assimilation.

The literature on minority rights has devoted relatively little attention to the social processes involved in national homogenization and ethnic reproduction. The influential work of Will Kymlicka, for example, highlights the «dilemma of nation-building and minority rights» [Kymlicka 2001]. This focuses attention on state policies and practices on the one hand, and on minority ethno-political claims and institutionalized minority rights on the other. While these are certainly important, this way of framing the problem leaves out of focus the dynamics of the social processes — as distinguished from public policies or legal rights — that bear on ethnolinguistic persistence or change. It neglects the dynamics of migration, of intermarriage, and of language use, school choice, and ethnonational identification in mixed families. By treating national minorities as entities and casting them as actors, the normative literature obscures the ways in which private action can subvert public goals, to borrow David Laitin’s formulation [Laitin 1994]. By emphasizing the desire of «the Hungarians» (or any other minority population) to preserve their language and culture, the literature obscures the ways in which what particular Hungarians (or members of other minorities) want may undermine collective projects of ethnic reproduction, for example via emigration, or via intermarriage and subsequent intergenerational assimilation (without, of course, any conscious intention to assimilate). The Hungarians who choose to emigrate or to marry Romanians may agree in principle about the desirability of preserving Hungarian language and culture in Transylvania; but this has little influence on concrete decisions about marriage, migration, or school choice for children in mixed families.

The political program of the DAHR takes similarly little account of these sociological realities. The program aims at building up the «institutional completeness» of the Hungarian world by expanding Hungarian-language schooling, media, associations, cultural and leisure activities, and workplaces. Yet a more institutionally complete and encapsu-

inated world may not prevent the further weakening of the Hungarian presence in Transylvania. Encapsulation within the Hungarian world cuts Hungarians off (economically, culturally, socially, politically, and linguistically) from the wider Romanian world; it also connects them more closely to Hungary. Hungarian schools, churches, firms, associations, and media all work in this direction. Given the crucial role of networks in shaping migration flows, and the persisting economic gap between the two countries, it is not surprising that these institutional, mediated ties to the motherland should foster migration from Transylvania to Hungary. Schools and universities are particularly important in this connection; Hungarian-language university education prepares students for work in Hungary as much as it does for work in the small Hungarian ethnic economy in Transylvania.

In the ethno-political discourse of Transylvanian Hungarian elites, it is assumed that a richly elaborated Hungarian world, by allowing Hungarians to flourish in their native land (and in their native language), should reduce migration to Hungary. But «flourishing» is understood in this discourse in a manner that is too exclusively ethnocultural. Transylvanian Hungarians, like Transylvanian Romanians, are preoccupied with getting by, getting ahead, or (in some cases), getting out; they are not preoccupied with preserving their culture. The emigration of Transylvanian Hungarians to Hungary, since the fall of Ceauşescu, has not been driven by a desire to flourish culturally, or by a desire to escape a repressive nationalizing regime; it has been driven by a desire to flourish economically. To the extent that migration is mainly economically and not culturally driven, the building up of the institutional density and strength of the Hungarian world can have the perverse effect of increasing rather than decreasing migration to Hungary. In this way, the institutional strength of the Hungarian world may, ironically, contribute to its own erosion.

Hungarian ethno-political claims also extend to territorial autonomy for the Szekler region of eastern Transylvania, where Hungarians comprise a substantial majority of the population. Unlike minority rights in the domain of language, culture, media, or education, territorial autonomy — by establishing a «political roof» or protective «shell» for Hungarian language and culture in Transylvania — would probably work in favor of ethnic reproduction. But territorial autonomy is problematic for a number of reasons. First, it would be relevant only to Hungarians...

26 On the importance of territorial autonomy for ethnolinguistic reproduction, see for example Lapoue [1987].
who live in the consolidated area of Hungarian-majority Székler region (about a third of Transylvanian Hungarians); it would not affect Hungarians in Cluj or others who live as local minorities or as majorities in villages outside the Székler region. Second, unlike other forms of minority rights, territorial autonomy is not required by any international agreement. More to the point, territorial autonomy is highly conflictual, and there is no chance of the Romanian state agreeing to it, not least because it evokes the specter of Hungarian revisionism. Throughout the interwar period, the revision of the post-First World War territorial settlement, and the return of Transylvania in particular, were central to the political and cultural life of Hungary. And as I noted above, northern Transylvania, including the Székler region, was in fact returned to Hungarian sovereignty under the terms of the «Second Vienna Awards» between 1940 and 1944. It is therefore unsurprising that territorial autonomy and even weaker forms of administrative decentralization are repudiated by Romanian nationalists as a step along the slippery slope towards secession. Nor is the resistance to territorial autonomy distinctive to Romania. Territorial autonomy has arisen elsewhere in the region almost exclusively through military conflict, not through negotiated devolution.27

In sum, there is a lack of articulation between demands for minority rights and analyses of social processes. Minority rights were designed to protect individuals against arbitrary and discriminatory state power28; apart from territorial autonomy, they are not designed—and cannot effectively serve—to protect «communities» against the aggregate consequences of the individual decisions of their members. Minority rights may not be sufficient to prevent further national homogenization, and they may even be counterproductive: a focus on cultural rights at the expense of economic development may promote rather than arrest emigration. Both emigration and assimilation can of course be driven by nationalism; but they are not so driven in this case. Emigration is induced not by the lack of opportunity to speak Hungarian in Transylvania, or by the lack of cultural rights, but by the existence of more attractive opportunities for work or study in Hungary29. Assimilation is not imposed by the nationalizing policies of the state, but is an unintended consequence of mixed marriages, which in turn result from the incomplete encapsulation of the Hungarian world.

To argue that minority rights regimes cannot arrest the long-term trend towards national homogenization is not to deny that they may be valuable for other reasons. They can help to establish international accountability for domestic policies and politics and thereby to attenuate and relativize notions of national sovereignty. In this sense, the specific content of minority rights provisions may matter less than the general principle that international and transnational organizations have a legitimate interest in monitoring the status of minorities and domestic policies towards them [Kymlicka and Opalski 2001, 4]. Moreover, the fact that post-communist ethnonational contention in and over Transylvania has been embedded in a dynamic international political field, in which membership in various European and Euro-Atlantic organizations has been made conditional on the institutionalization of minority rights (and, more generally, on demonstrating efforts to reduce ethnopoltical tension) has arguably been significant in reducing the chance that ethnonational struggles would turn violent.30

8. Conclusion

Nationalist imagery and ideals of autarchy notwithstanding, nation-states have never been fully closed, self-reproducing entities; they have always been embedded in and cross-cut by wider social, economic, cultural, political, and military flows and networks [Mann 1986]. This is even more true today than it was a half-century or a century ago. The worldwide hegemony of the English language, the insidious appeal of American popular culture, the irresistible power of international financial markets, the dictates of international institutions, and the inexorable flows of migrants are resisted by nationalists everywhere, and viewed with alarm as potentially denationalizing forces. Yet even in their more porous and seemingly more vulnerable condition, contemporary nation-states routinely succeed in reproducing national languages

27 See Kymlicka’s conclusion to Kymlicka and Opalski [2001], which contrasts the growing acceptance of territorial autonomy in the West with continued fierce resistance to it in East Central Europe.
28 There is disagreement in the literature about how well they perform this function. An important skeptical analysis was provided by Hannah Arendt [1973].
29 Opportunities for study in Hungary are of course richer and more diversified than opportunities for study in Hungarian in Transylvania; the establishment of an autonomous state-financed Hungarian-language university in Cluj, a central Hungarian ethno-national claim, would not alter this fact.
30 State elites, on this argument, have been «disciplined» by the process of European integration, and have had a strong incentive not to support extremist or poten-
and cultures through educational and other institutions. This holds not only for large nation-states, but even for diminutive states like Estonia, with fewer than a million native speakers of Estonian; it also holds for non-sovereign but more or less autonomous territorial polities like Quebec or Catalonia.

Can minority populations without autonomous territorial polities do the same? The answer is complex. In the short and medium term, minority populations like Transylvanian Hungarians can indeed reproduce their national language and culture. The densely interlocking institutions that comprise the Hungarian social world in Transylvania have in fact been remarkably successful in reproducing Hungarians intergenerationally during nearly a century of Romanian rule, despite decades of strongly nationalizing Romanian policies. They have managed to socialize new generations who continue to identify their ethnocultural nationality as Hungarian, who speak Hungarian as their native language, and who see it as natural that Hungarian can be spoken not only in private but in public, not only among family and friends but also in schools, churches, associations, media, theaters, and some enterprises. And the network of Hungarian institutions has itself been successfully reproduced from day to day as a result of Hungarians' unconscious decisions and practices (including friendship networks, language practices, religious affiliations, media preferences, marriage patterns, and school choices).

In the longer run, however, ethnic reproduction has its limits. The Hungarian world in Cluj and elsewhere in Transylvania is largely self-reproducing, but it is not fully so. It is open to erosion in three principal directions: from the enveloping Romanian world (through higher education and work in largely Romanian milieux, intermarriage, and intergenerational assimilation); from Hungary (through work, study, and eventual resettlement); and from within (though low fertility rates, compounded by disproportionate emigration among the young and the skewed age structure that this generates). The dynamics that lead to erosion in these directions have very little to do with Romanian nationalism; as I indicated above, erosion has increased even as Romanian nationalism has weakened. The process of erosion would be at best attenuated, not eliminated, even if all major Hungarian ethnopolitical demands - for extensive rights to the public use of Hungarian, for cultural and territorial autonomy, and for a complete publicly funded Hungarian-language education system, crowned by an autonomous state-funded Hungarian university in Cluj - were realized in full.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{31} The further weakening of the Hungarian presence in Transylvania would not mean the end of ethnic heterogeneity \textit{per se}, but - if present trends were to continue - it would mean the end of significant ethnological heterogeneity. Like other countries in the region, has a large and growing Roma population, which faces severe problems of poverty, stigmatization, and discrimination. Yet despite the efforts of some Roma activists to represent Roma as a transborder nonterritorial nation, Roma do not generally understand themselves, and are not generally understood by others, in specifically national terms, i.e. as a national minority.