



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
Johan Skytte Institute of
Political Studies

FATIGUE

Comparative Analysis Workshop June 12, 2020

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Case study: Székelyland

- **Ph.D. Title:** *Triadic Nexus Relationships in an age of Populism: Interactions Between Romania, Hungary, and the Hungarian Minority in the Székelyland*
- *FATIGUE Chapter: Mnemonic and identity reactions of ethnic Hungarians in Székelyland*
- **Objectives:** Investigate, based on the Triadic Nexus theory, the causes and effects regarding how the 'Homeland majority's (Romania)' political instability, appeal to nationalism during elections campaigns, centralism, and external homeland's kin-activism (Hungary) affect the political identity and representativity of the ethnic Hungarian minority from Romania (i.e., the largest in Eastern Europe)
- **Phase 1: To reveal how domestic populism, appeal to nationalism are increasing the political instability**
- **Phase 2: To understand the ethnic parallelism and the strategies, discourse elements employed by the Hungarian kin-activism and external homeland**
- **Phase 3: a) To identify how populism-nationalism affects the political representativity of an ethnic minority; and b) To reveal how kin-activism discourse and economic strategies are incorporated and internalized into minority's rhetoric**
- **Results:** Demonstrate that key factors that change the political identity of the minority



Research questions

- To what extent and how populist was the Social Democrat Party (PSD) between 2015-2019?
- How have the cultural actions and economic projects initiated by the Hungarian government been framed in the discourses used by the Hungarian kin-state activists to mobilize the ethnic Hungarians to demand autonomy?
- How have ethnic Hungarian identity politics and mnemonic discourses shifted under the pressure of two cross-directional stimuli: kin-state politics of the Orban government and Romanian populism during the PSD administration between 2015-2019?



Conceptual framework

Homeland majority

Article 1 – Discursive institutionalism (Schmidt, 2008);
Populism as political style (Moffitt, 2016)
Article 2 – Populism as a strategy (Weyland, 2001);
Memory politics (Confino, 1997; Bernhard & Kubik, 2014)
Cultural trauma (Smelser, 2004)



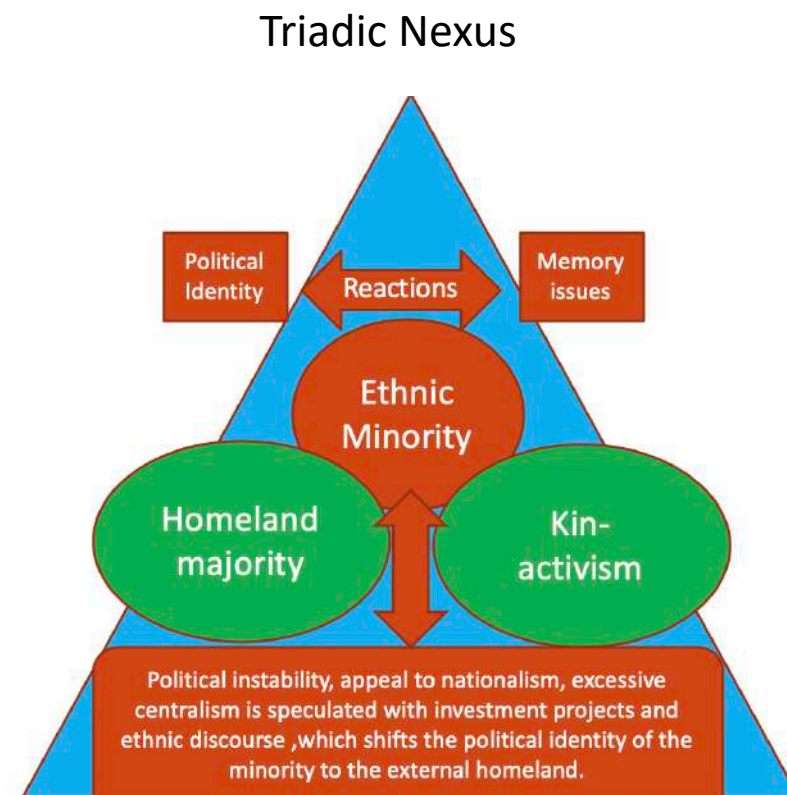
External homeland's kin-activism

Article 1 – Context article - ethnic parallelism (Kiss, 2019)
Article 2 – Kin-state activism (Pogonyi, 2017)
Transborder mobilization (Waterbury, 2010)
Memory regimes (Bernhard & Kubik, 2014)



Ethnic minority

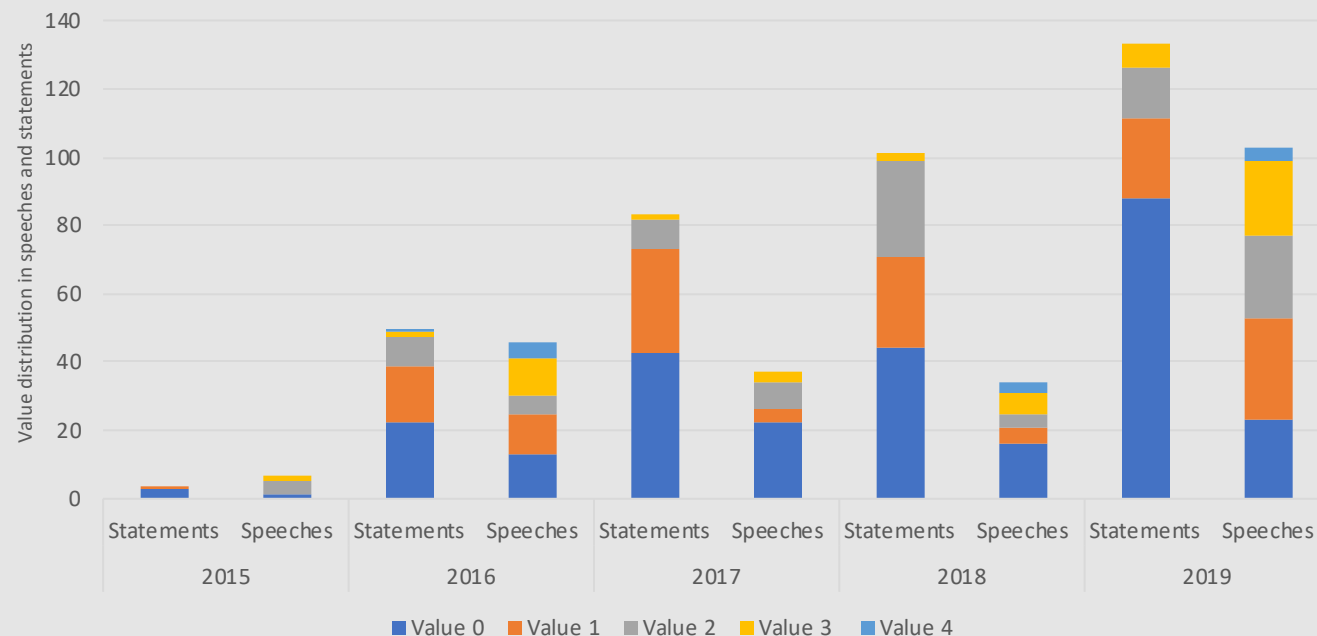
Article 1 – Ethnic minority (Harff and Gurr, 2004)
Political Identity (Kymlicka, 1995, Brubaker, 1996)



Brubaker, 1996



Graph 1. Frequency distribution of the Populist Political Style



Results Phase 1, Article 1: Homeland Majority



Concepts: Populism as a style (Moffitt, 2016)

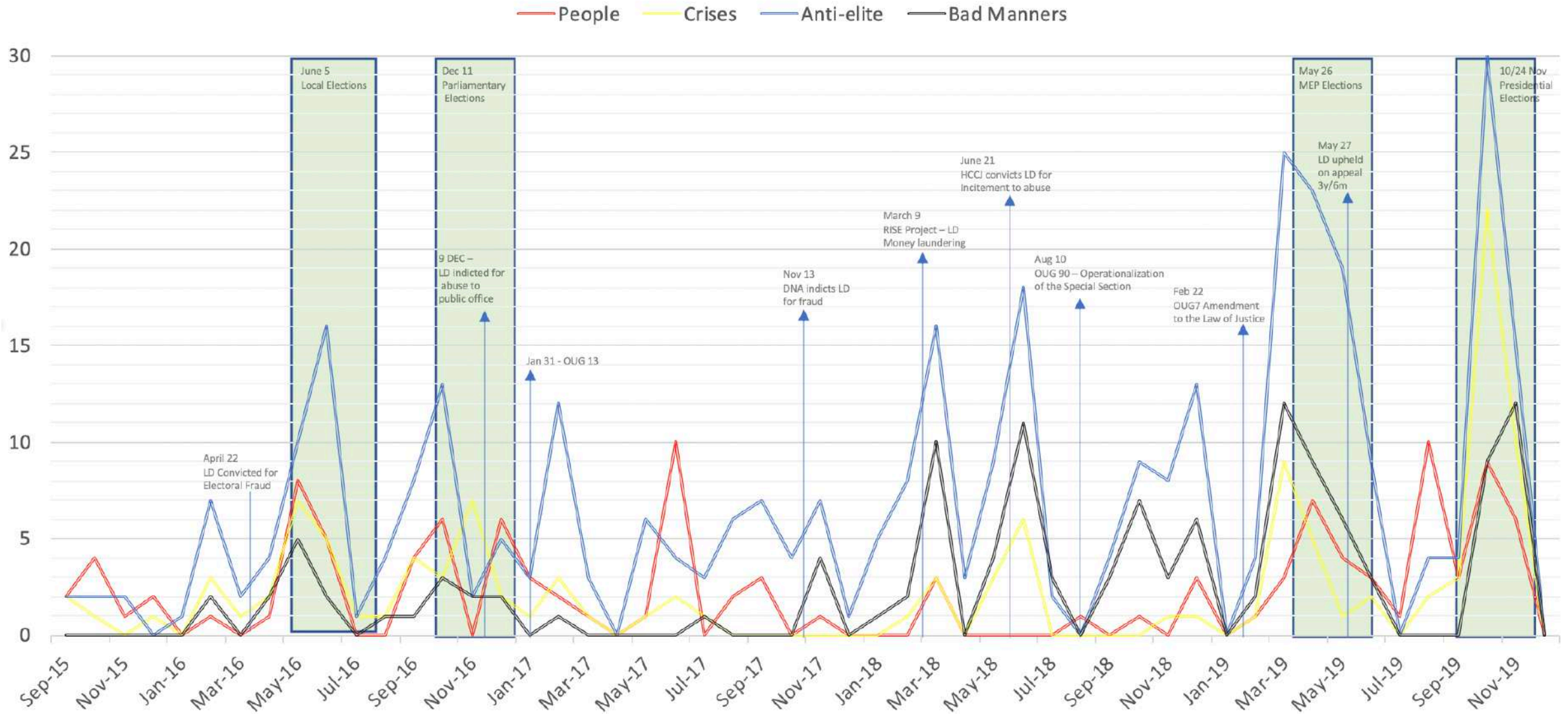
Discursive institutionalism (Schmidt, 2008)

Method – Content analysis

Results:

- Gradual increase in populist rhetoric
- Appeal to nationalist symbols, legionarism era-songs that promote an organic nationhood in elections campaigns
- Populism take a more definite form after each indictment, conviction, and during election campaigns.
- Discursive Institutionalism is an essential discursive component in the communication logic of populists
- Populist rhetoric and DI are interrelated, as the populist agent strives to frame the elements of the populist political style outside of the conventional political milieu
- Conspirational beliefs are adopted in the populist discourse
- Populism has specific socio-cultural traits

Chart 2. Transition to populist discourse



Phase 1, Article 2: Populism as a strategy / Memory politics

- **Conceptual framework:**

- **Populism as a strategy** (Weyland, 2001, 14) - *“through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercise government power based on direct unmediated support from large numbers of followers”*
- **Memory politics:** (Confino, 1997, 1393) - *““who wants whom to remember what, and why?” (Bernhard & Kubik, 2014, 12) “focus on strategies that political actors employ to make other remember in certain specific ways”*
- **Cultural Trauma:** (Smelser, 2004, 44): *“A cultural trauma is a memory accepted or given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation which is (a) laden with negative affect, (b) represented as indelible, and (c) regarded as threatening a society’s existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural pre-suppositions.”*
- **RQ:** How was the memory of Securitate instrumentalized in Romanian politics between 2017-2019? What kind of discursive strategies were used to bring the issue of Securitate in the present in order to reconfigure the rule-of-law institutions?
- **Methods:** Discourse analysis (Kaya & Tecmen, 2020) and Virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000)
- **Preliminary results**
 - Old Vanguard and New Vanguard – Overlapping new hegemonic narratives
 - Recreating the symbolism and language of Securitate in contemporary politics
 - The coalition’s victimization discourse
 - Revival of the Securitate in the present



Political rally: Vrem Prosperitate, nu Securitate / We want Prosperity, not Security(ate)



Mitingul PSD din Piața Victoriei, București - 09.06.2018



Mitingul PSD din Piața Victoriei, București - 09.06.2018

2,291 views • 10 Jun 2018

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Phase 2, Article 1: External homeland – Context article: Ethnic parallelism

- Money are important twofold:
 1. Virtual ramification of Hungarian people separated by Trianon -“To live as they were in Hungary” – ethnic parallelism (Kiss, 2019).
 2. Spread illiberalism
- In 2015: 40 millions
- In 2018: 330 millions
- Biggest spending in Transylvania (special place in Hungarian identity)
- Transylvania Media Space Association (TV, Radio, Magazines, Sport facilities, Kindergartens)
- Reformed Church of Romania: 130 million and educational foundations
- Media Consumption has been surging since 2015
- (integrates the Hungarian language and FIDESZ's policies – anti-immigration)
- Promotes RMDSZ/UDMR message in 4/5 Hungarian state-controlled media



Phase 2, Art 2: Kin-state rhetoric – Autonomy demands (preliminary results)

- Memory is an essential theme in the discourse of kin-activism. Kin-activism anchors the ethnic Hungarian community with references to memory issues, such as Trianon to validate the community's autonomy demands.
- The rhetoric of kin-activism associates the representation of minorities with the image of FIDESZ government's cultural and financial support.
- Memory entrepreneurs link past unresolved problems with the current socio-political situation of ethnic minorities from Romania.



Representations	Ethnic minority	Majority	Political elites	Memory issues
2019	11	0	21	10
2018	10	7	17	9
2017	23	2	6	1
2016	7	2	6	0
2015	2	0	2	0



Counter-narrative of Kin-state rhetoric

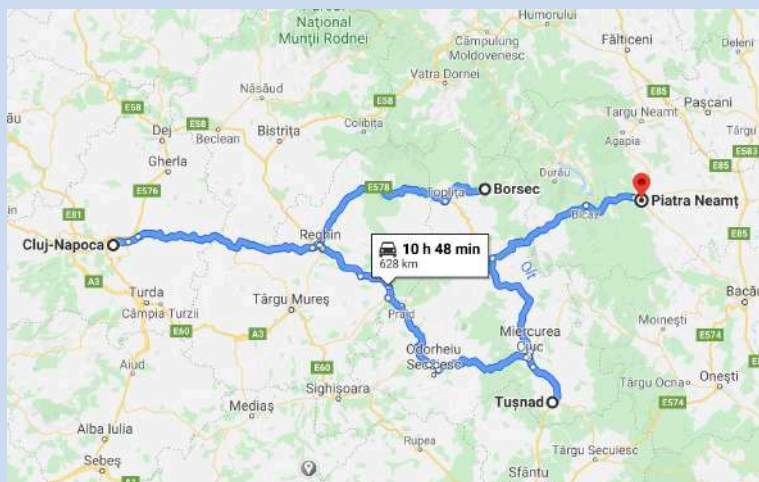
- Nationalist reactions of the Romanian authorities given to the demands of the Hungarian minority
- Two types of reactions: Judicial and administrative
- Attitudes of the Romanian authorities towards political issues of Hungarian Interest
- A) Territorial autonomy; B) Minority symbols; C) use of Hungarian language
- Reveal the leading arguments and motifs of the dormant Romanian nationalist discourse

Research Design – Article 3 / Fatigue chapter

- **Conceptual framework:**
 - Ethnic minority (Harff and Gurr, 2004)
 - Political Identity (Kymlicka, 1995, Brubaker, 1996)
- **Research questions**
 - How have ethnic Hungarian identity politics and mnemonic discourses shifted under the pressure of two cross-directional stimuli: kin-state politics of the Orban government and Romanian populism during the PSD administration between 2015-2019?
- **Methods:**



Ethnographic fieldwork




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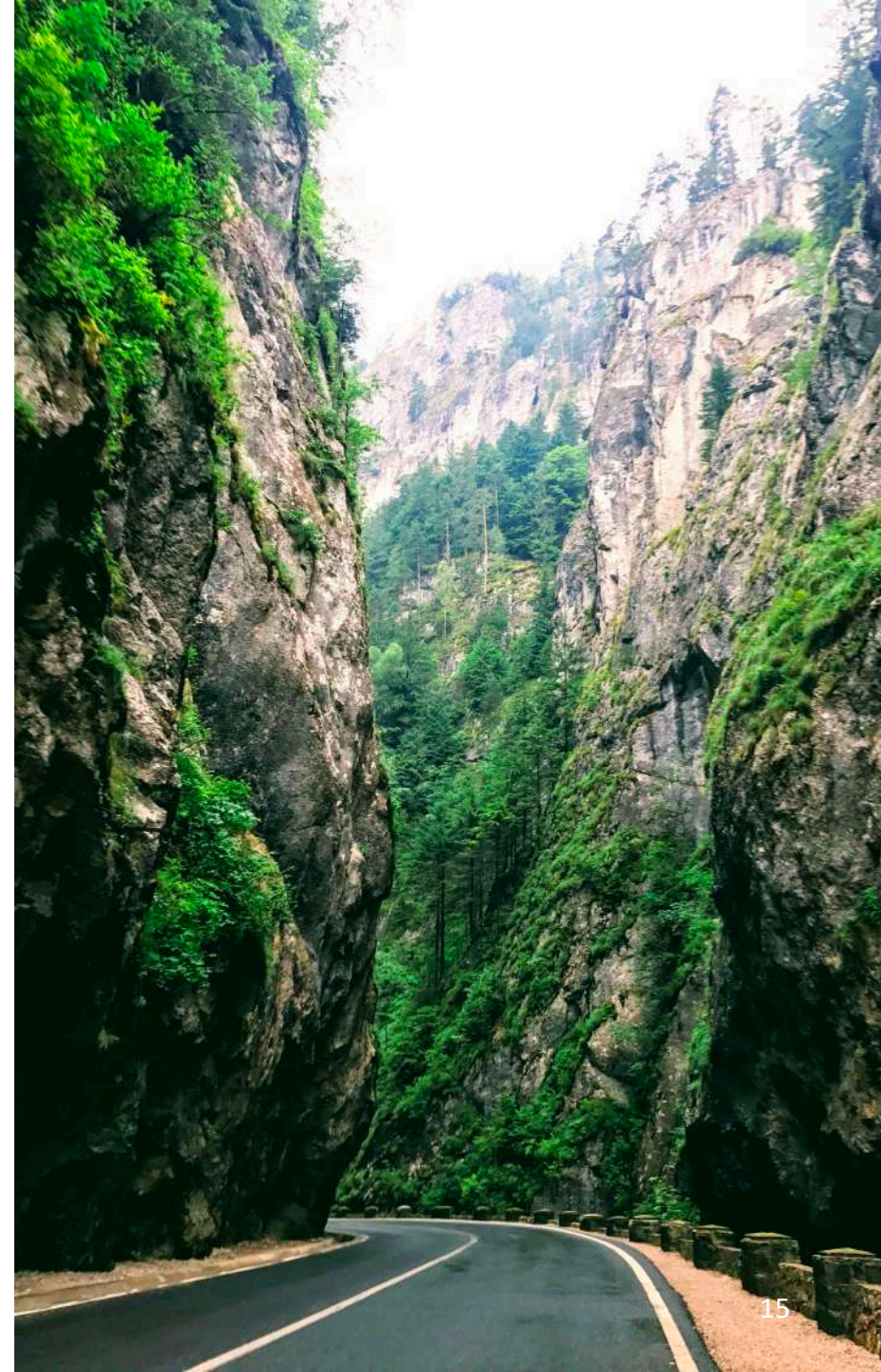
ROMANIAN INSTITUTE
FOR RESEARCH ON
NATIONAL MINORITIES

- Ethical clearance – due to be obtained
- B) Rescheduled fieldwork:
- **September 1 – October 20** at the Romanian Institute for the Study of National minorities
- **October – November** (Harghita county, 30 days criteria for travel reports)
- **November – December** (Harghita county)
- Consider other dates, perhaps Spring 2021





Fieldwork itinerary





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Thank you for your attention!

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