

BOOK REVIEW

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE TERRITORIAL AUTONOMY BASED ON ETHNIC CRITERIA OF THE SO-CALLED “SZEKLERLAND” BY IOAN LĂCĂTUȘU. BOOK REVIEW

Samira Cîrlig³⁶⁰

ABSTRACT

This material is a review of the book entitled Arguments against the territorial autonomy based on ethnic criteria of the so-called “Szeklerland” written in 2008 by sociologist Ioan Lăcătușu. The importance of the book is crucial for at least two reasons: because of the time when it was written, i.e., when the discussion about the autonomy of the so-called “Szeklerland” was growing. The discussion arose in the context of the unilateral declaration of independence of the province of Kosovo from Serbia. The second reason why this book is important is the concise and complex manner in which the arguments against territorial autonomy on ethnic grounds are presented. The structure of the paper will firstly deal with the context of the publication of the book, the objectives of the paper, the geostrategic importance of the subject, the general arguments and then the specific ones, the medium- and long-term effects of such an initiative and the actions of the Romanian state on this subject.

Keywords: autonomy, Transylvania, Romanians, Hungarians, cohabitation, assimilation.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT IN WHICH THE BOOK APPEARED

The unilateral declaration of independence of the province of Kosovo, in Serbia, has brought back into the Romanian public space, the debate on obtaining territorial autonomy of the so-called “Szeklerland”, a debate provoked by the leaders of the Hungarian community in Romania³⁶¹. In this context, sociologist Ioan Lăcătușu offered a series of counterarguments, both historical and political, cultural, linguistic, economic, etc. to combat this baseless initiative, which is illegal as it violates the Romanian Constitution.

In less than 200 pages, the author presents a detailed but extremely precise situation of the problems faced by the Romanian community in this area. The work

³⁶⁰ PhDc in Sociology, University of Bucharest, Researcher at the European Centre for Ethnic Studies, Romanian Academy, E-mail contact: oana.samira.cirlig@gmail.com.

³⁶¹ Ioan Lăcătușu, *Argumente împotriva autonomiei teritoriale pe criterii etnice ale așa-zisului “Ținut Secuiesc”* [Arguments against the territorial autonomy based on ethnic criteria of the so-called “Szeklerland”], St. Gheorghe, Eurocarpatica Publishing House, 2008, p. 5.

is also a veritable collection of documentary sources, as it includes no less than 19 appendices, which develop the problems presented. It must be said here again that the publication of this book is a private initiative that has not been supported by any state institution. For this reason, it should surprise no one that this monumental work (like a last call for help from the Romanians) has been completely ignored by Romanian decision-makers.

In the current state of the subject, more than 14 years after the publication of the book, the problems of the Romanians in this area have not been solved even partially. In contrast, the process of accelerated assimilation of the Romanians by the Hungarians is even more aggressive, discrimination is more and more frequent, and the Romanian state is more and more absent every day. The issue of autonomy is a recurring theme in the discourse of Hungarian leaders, although legally, the initiative cannot become possible because it violates the fundamental act of a state: its constitution.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORK

First, the paper under discussion presents, in a synthetic form, some arguments against the territorial autonomy on ethnic criteria of the so-called “Szeklerland”, in the hope that they will constitute subjects of reflection and action of the Romanian state, but also of the Hungarian state.

Second, the study shows that

“The supporters of separatism and enclavization on ethnic criteria, approaching an ethnocentric attitude, ignore the Romanian-Hungarian ethno-cultural interferences established over time in this part of the country”³⁶².

Therefore, the book discussed is a genuine proof of resistance to the accelerated assimilation of the Romanians from Harghita and Covasna.

THE GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

The discussion about the autonomy of the so-called “Szeklerland” concerns not only Harghita and Covasna counties, but the whole of Transylvania. For Romania, Transylvania is a matter of national interest as it is its “state centre”, its “Mittelpunkt”. The concept belongs to the German geopolitician Friedrich Ratzel, who considered the *Mittelpunkt* the political and cultural “ethno-spiritual core of a nation”³⁶³.

Given that

³⁶² „adeptii separatismului și ai enclavizării pe criterii etnice, abordând o atitudine etnocentristă, fac abstracție de interferențele etno-culturale româno-maghiare, stabilite de-a lungul timpului, în această parte de țară”, in *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³⁶³ Ilie Bădescu (coord.), Dan Dungaciu, Sandra Cristea, Claudiu Degeratu and Radu Baltasiu, *Sociologia și geopolitica frontierei, [Sociology and Geopolitics of the Border]*, Vol. I, Bucharest, Blue Flower Publishing House, 1995, p. 48.

“The state is maintained around a centre, and this centre is precisely the Mittelpunkt out of which the state is built”³⁶⁴.

The following statement is justified:

“The problem of normalizing the climate of interethnic coexistence in Covasna, Harghita and partly Mures counties is not only the problem of those who live in this blessed part of the country, but it is the problem of all Romanian citizens. If there will be peace and quiet in these counties, there will be peace and quiet in the whole country”³⁶⁵.

GENERAL COUNTER-ARGUMENTS

1. The situation in Kosovo is not like the case of Harghita-Covasna because European law and practice promote the idea of coexistence. Moreover, Romania has managed the minority issue after 1989 in an exemplary manner³⁶⁶, which cannot be said of the Hungarian state regarding the Romanian minority in Hungary, or about Romanian minority in Romania: I refer here to the counties in Romania where Hungarians are statistically the majority.
2. The model of autonomy proposed by Hungarian leaders for the localities of the so-called “Szeklerland” is not viable, because, firstly, it has never existed in history in this form and, secondly, it completely ignores the ethno-cultural interferences in this area³⁶⁷.

Why is knowing of ethno-cultural interference so important?

The importance of knowing ethno-cultural interferences is crucial because:

“The Szekler population is misled about the Romanian people. They have been misled about their past and their qualities”³⁶⁸.

Awareness of these ethno-cultural interferences is also important because they represent

“The basis for future actions to remove the ethnic Hungarians and the Szekler population from the manipulation to which they are currently subjected by most of the

³⁶⁴ „statul se menține în jurul unui centru, iar acest centru este tocmai Mittelpunkt-ul din care statul se plămădește”, in *Ibid.*, p. 49.

³⁶⁵ „problema normalizării climatului de conviețuire interetnică din județele Covasna, Harghita și parțial Mureș, nu este numai problema celor care locuiesc în această binecuvântată parte de țară, ci este problema tuturor cetățenilor români. Dacă va fi liniște și pace în aceste județe va fi liniște și pace în întreg spațiul românesc”, in Ioan Lăcătușu, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³⁶⁸ „populația secuiască este „indusă în eroare cu privire la poporul român. I s-a format în mod meșteșugit o părere falsă asupra trecutului și calităților lui”, in *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Hungarian media and for the natural formation of the perception and self-perception of their place and role within the Romanian state³⁶⁹.

PUNCTUAL COUNTER-ARGUMENTS

1. Linguistic

In the history of interethnic coexistence in the counties under discussion, several historians, including the distinguished scientific researcher Vasile Lechințan from Cluj, have highlighted the influence of the Romanian language on the language and life of the Hungarians and the Szekler population³⁷⁰. It should also be said here that these scientists have demonstrated, with the help of documents that prove the historical truth, that Hungarians and Szeklers are two distinct nations³⁷¹.

These linguistic borrowings reveal two important aspects:

- a) Both the Szeklers and Hungarians have borrowed words from Romanian in their everyday speech³⁷².
- b) The documents show that they took Romanian as a second language without administrative coercion (until the Great Union of 1918)³⁷³.

This confirms the words of the scientist Stefan Ludwig Roth, who stated that “The official language of historical Transylvania has been, for centuries, the Romanian language”³⁷⁴.

In addition to the Romanian words and expressions used by the Hungarian population in the area, Vasile Lechințan, gives the names of more than 100 Hungarian people from “the Sejm”³⁷⁵ who knew Romanian language.

2. Ethno-cultural

Ever since their settlement in the intra-Carpathian area after the 13th century, the Szeklers established and maintained good neighbourly relations with the Romanians of Moldavia and Muntenia. Some evidence of this:

- a) Raising the localities of Târgu Secuiesc, Brețcu, Frumoasa and Gheorgheni among the fairs³⁷⁶;

³⁶⁹ „baza acțiunilor viitoare de scoatere a secuilor și maghiarilor de sub influența ampleror acțiuni de manipulare la care sunt supuși în prezent de cea mai mare parte a mass-mediei maghiare și pentru formarea percepției și autopercepției firești despre locul și rolul lor”, in *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ „adevărata limbă oficială a Transilvaniei istorice a fost, de-a lungul secolelor, limba română”, in *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁷⁵ Secuime, in *Ibid.*

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

- b) “In the chancelleries of the towns of the former Szekler seats there was a Romanian logofat who was in charge of writing letters in Romanian to the Moldavian and Muntenian nobles”³⁷⁷;
- c) The links of the Szeklers with the Romanian principalities were economic, cultural, and political. Old documents speak of some military services and benefits given to the Romanian voivodships³⁷⁸:

“The Szekler community of Ciuc was present in the anti-Ottoman battles led by Stephen the Great. More than 5000 Szekler soldiers participated in the battle of Vaslui in 1475. The same fairness was shown by the Szeklers towards Petru Rareș and Michael the Brave, and their efforts did not go unrewarded. After the participation of the Szeklers in the battle of Șelimbăr, on the side of Michael the Brave, on November 28, 1599, the Romanian leader gave them back their old Szekler freedoms”³⁷⁹.

It should also be pointed out here that the Szeklers never fought willingly against the Romanian Principalities. The battles they fought in these parts were fought by royal or princely orders, not by will³⁸⁰.

3. Ethnic, confessional, and territorial

- 3.1. Ethnic structure: according to the 2002 census in Covasna, Harghita and Mures counties 40% of the total population is Romanian and Roma, i.e., not Hungarian. This means that Hungarians represent only 59.18% of the total population of the three counties³⁸¹. This also means that the Hungarian elite cannot demand autonomy as long as almost half of the population is not Hungarian.
- 3.2. Confessional structure: people belonging to the Orthodox (402,499 people) and Greek-Catholic (13,985 persons) religions represent 37% of the total population of Covasna, Harghita and Mures counties³⁸². We see therefore that even from a confessional point of view, the community in this area is not compact, and the Romanians continue to have a significant percentage of the population of the three counties.
- 3.3. Territorial issues: the Romanians in the so-called “Szeklerland” are viewed with suspicion and are accused of seeking the “Romanianization of Szeklerland”. However, since their settlement in the 13th century in the Carpathian Mountains, the Szeklers and Hungarians have lived and continue to live surrounded by Romanians³⁸³.

³⁷⁷ „La cancelariile orașelor din fostele scaune secuiești exista câte un «logofăt român» care se ocupa cu redactarea scrisorilor în limba română, adresate boierilor moldoveni și munteni”, in *Ibid.*, p. 18.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁹ „Oastea comunității secuiești din Ciuc a fost prezentă în luptele antiotomane conduse de Ștefan cel Mare. La lupta de la Vaslui, din 1475, au participat peste 5000 de oșteni secui. Aceiași corectitudine au manifestat secuii și față de Petru Rareș și Mihai Viteazul, iar osteneala lor nu a rămas fără răsplată. După participarea secuilor la lupta de la Șelimbăr, de partea lui Mihai Viteazul, la data de 28 noiembrie 1599, domnitorul român le redă vechile libertăți secuiești”, in *Ibid.*

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 25.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

4. Assimilation of the Romanians in “Szeklerland”

The Romanians of “Szeklerland” have been subjected to an extensive process of Hungarianization since the second half of the 19th century. This denationalisation process has three main stages:

- a) In the first phase, bilingualism is used³⁸⁴;
- b) Then the mother language is lost³⁸⁵;
- c) Finally, the confession is also lost³⁸⁶;

The most “vulnerable” to the Hungarianization process were the small Romanian communities, with less than 200 members because they could not ensure the existence and functioning of the main identity institutions - church and school³⁸⁷ (more than 60 localities were in this situation³⁸⁸).

5. Religious: Churches

The need to preserve the multi-ethnic and multi-denominational character of the area is also evident from the existence of churches that attest the permanence of Romanians in this area. Over time, precisely for this reason, the Churches have always been under attack. As proof, many of the old Romanian churches were demolished, most of them in the period 1940–1944, after the Vienna Dictate. However, due to their multitude, some have been preserved and still exist today. A few examples:

- a) Among the churches built in the 18th and 19th centuries, 27 churches have survived in Covasna County plus 3 that were built at the beginning of the 20th century³⁸⁹. In Harghita county, on the other hand, 23 Churches have been preserved³⁹⁰.
- b) If we talk about disappeared Churches, 19 have been identified in Covasna³⁹¹ and 18 in Harghita³⁹².
- c) During the Hungarian occupation (between 1940 and 1944), 11 churches and chapels were destroyed in Covasna³⁹³ and 13 in Harghita³⁹⁴.

Churches are extremely important because they protect the national and confessional identity of the Romanians, and at the same time attest their permanence over the years in this area.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 40–41.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 41–43.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 43–45.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 45–47.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 47–50.

6. Attitudinal. Which arise from the position of the Hungarian political and civic parties towards the Romanians in this area.

Even without the institutionalization of territorial autonomy on the ethnic criteria of the so-called “Szeklerland”, Romanians in this area were and are discriminated. Here are some examples:

1. In the cultural field:

- 1.1. Transforming Romanian museums into Szekler museums³⁹⁵.
- 1.2. Transforming Romanian professional folklore groups into “Szekler groups”³⁹⁶.
- 1.3. Lack of will and interest in ensuring the functioning of the professional folklore group “Ciobănașul” which, in the end, led to the dissolution of it³⁹⁷.
- 1.4. The transformation of the “Andrei Mureșan” Theatre in St. Gheorghe into a “host theatre”, which practically meant the ruination of the institution³⁹⁸.
- 1.5. The desire of some leaders of the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania – UDMR (such as Marko Bela, Kelemen Hunor, etc.) to abolish the National Museum of the Eastern Carpathians³⁹⁹.
- 1.6. Overfunding of Hungarian cultural events and underfunding of Romanian ones⁴⁰⁰.
- 1.7. Exclusion of Romanian-language performances from events financed by the Romanian state, such as the “Days of the Localities” – Miercurea-Ciuc, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Târgu Secuiesc, Sf. Gheorghe (with great difficulty it happened here), or the “Days of Harghita County”⁴⁰¹.
- 1.8. Absence of Romanian specialists and Romanian cultural events in most of the cultural houses in the two counties⁴⁰².
- 1.9. Tolerating the mockery of Romanian monuments and symbols and so on⁴⁰³.

2. In the area of religious services:

- 2.1. Boycott of the establishment of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Covasna and Harghita⁴⁰⁴.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

2.2. The reluctance of the local public administration to take action for the restitution of property belonging to Orthodox parishes, which were expropriated by the communist regime⁴⁰⁵.

2.3. Total lack of support for Orthodox parishes from the local public administration subordinated to UDMR interests⁴⁰⁶.

2.4. The Hungarian press presents the Orthodox Church in the two counties in an insulting manner (the domes are drawn in the shape of onions). The Romanian Church is also wrongly accused by the Hungarian media of “conquering the Szekler land”⁴⁰⁷.

3. *In education:*

3.1. Breach of the legislation on filling deputy headteacher posts in mixed schools. Specifically, Romanian teachers who want to apply for this job are rejected if they do not speak Hungarian⁴⁰⁸.

3.2. Abolition or refusal to establish Romanian classes. Only a few classes were hardly established, and only after several interventions with the Ministry of Education⁴⁰⁹.

3.3. Preferential allocation of funds to Hungarian schools and neglect of Romanian – schools (particularly the “Constantin Brâncuși” Group)⁴¹⁰.

3.4. Discrimination of Romanian pupils in some mixed schools (the case of the Economic -Administrative School Group in St. Gheorghe)⁴¹¹.

3.5. The initiative to name two schools in St. Gheorghe after great Romanians (Nicolae Colan and Constantin Brâncuși) was rejected. This was possible only after many attempts and after the intervention of the Ministry of Education⁴¹².

3.6. Harassment of the orphanage “St. Losif” in Odorheiu Secuiesc, owned by the Greek-Catholic monk order “Pure Hearts”⁴¹³.

4. *In Local Public Administration:*

4.1. Rejection of all Romanians from the leadership of Covasna and Harghita County Councils, or from other municipalities, towns, and communes with ethnically mixed inhabitants⁴¹⁴.

4.2. Positions in public institutions may be filled by Romanians only if they know Hungarian. As a result, there are no Romanian officials in

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

institutions such as the Covasna County Council. Nor in the town hall of St. Gheorghe, nor in Tg. Secuiesc, nor in Baraolt town hall, nor in most of the communes with mixed populations⁴¹⁵.

4.3. To get a job in the decentralised institutions, ethnic criteria must be respected rather than professional criteria⁴¹⁶.

4.4. The magazine of Sf. Gheorghe City Hall is published only in Hungarian⁴¹⁷.

4.5. Use of public money only for the benefit of the Hungarian population – the case of the meeting of Hungarians from all over the world in Moacșa (this meeting was used to promote irredentist, separatist and anti-Romanian ideas)⁴¹⁸.

4.6. Lack of symbolic representation of Romanians living in these two counties⁴¹⁹.

4.7. Ignoring Romanian symbols (most UDMR mayors do not wear the tricolour scarf, breaking the law – see the case of the mayor of Sf. Gheorghe, on National Day 2007). Also, Romanian symbols are missing from public spaces (see the meeting room of Sf. Gheorghe municipality) and so on⁴²⁰;

4.8. Changing the names of streets and public institutions is accepted only if they are not named after Romanian personalities⁴²¹.

4.9. Sf. Gheorghe local council refuses to award the “Pro Urbe” distinction to Romanian citizens from Sf. Gheorghe⁴²².

4.10. Breaking the law on the use of the Romanian language in public institutions – the case of the St. Gheorghe Local Council's Regulation of functioning and other similar regulations⁴²³;

5. *In politics:*

5.1. Lack of interest and even blocking the removal of discrimination against Romanians⁴²⁴;

5.2. Some parties positively discriminate against Romanians in the two counties⁴²⁵;

5.3. Explicit or tacit acceptance and encouragement of intolerant and anti-Romanian discourses was promoted by the Hungarian media in the two counties⁴²⁶;

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 58–59.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*

5.4. Romanian politicians and dignitaries are not welcome in these counties because the Hungarians consider them “the property of local Hungarian barons” and their friends from all over the world⁴²⁷;

Given these few examples, the situation being far from complete, sociologist Ioan Lăcătușu rightly wonders what the situation of the Romanian community will be if the Hungarians gain autonomy?⁴²⁸. The answer is not difficult to deduce from the examples discussed above.

RELEVANT ACTIONS OF THE ROMANIAN STATE

The Romanian institutions in charge of monitoring and sanctioning anti-Romanian discourse in the public space, instead of fighting Hungarian propaganda, punish all Romanians who defend their identity. In other words, they “fight” Romanian “nationalism”, but ignore the toxic impact of irredentist material promoted by the Hungarian media⁴²⁹.

Moreover, the Romanian state tacitly and implicitly supports the implementation of territorial autonomy based on ethnic criteria with money from its budget. In other words, the Hungarian elite wants the “Szekler” region to obtain autonomy, but this autonomy should be financially supported by the Romanian state. This is what the Romanian state is doing through the National Local Development Plan for example (see the conclusions of the report on Carei⁴³⁰).

MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS

1. Autonomy implies the **isolation** of the community, which will lead to the underdevelopment of the Hungarians in all aspects. Moreover, **discrimination** against Romanians will increase:

“An ethnic enclave is formed, in which the Romanian cultural patrimony, the Romanian history and language, the Romanian symbols, are not respected, and the Romanians’ fundamental rights are violated”⁴³¹.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴³⁰ Radu Baltasiu (coord.), *Situația actuală a frontierei de nord-vest a României la 100 de ani de la Tratatul de la Versailles – raport de cercetare*, [The current situation of Romania’s north-western border 100 years after the Treaty of Versailles – research report], Bucharest, Ethnological Publishing House, 2022.

⁴³¹ „Se formează o enclavă etnică, în care patrimoniul cultural românesc, istoria și limba română, simbolurile românești, nu sunt respectate, iar românilor le sunt încălcate drepturile fundamentale”, in Ioan Lăcătușu, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

2. “Self-government” far beyond local autonomy, which **attacks inalienable attributes of the Romanian state**, also leads to the transformation of the ethnic group into a “state within a state”⁴³².
3. Important sectors of Romanian **public life will be affected**, including:
 - 3.1. The presence and activity of the several hundreds or even thousands of Hungarian civil servants and senior civil servants established in Bucharest, because of participation of the UDMR in the government of the country⁴³³;
 - 3.2. Creating uncomfortable situations for the many ethnic Hungarian students studying in the faculties of the country’s main university centres⁴³⁴;
 - 3.3. The normal functioning of the university extensions in Bucharest, Cluj Napoca, Sibiu, Brasov etc., which currently exist in St. Gheorghe, Miercurea-Ciuc, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Tg. Secuiesc, Covasna and Gheorgheni will also be affected⁴³⁵;
4. **Members of mixed families are also directly affected** by the consequences of ethnic separatism. The number of ethnically mixed families living in the three counties exceeds 10,000, which means that between 25,000–30,000 people will suffer the consequences due to baseless historical frustrations⁴³⁶.
5. Another significant category of citizens who objectively cannot accept ethnic separatism are people with a mixed identity. In the 2002 census, more than 14,000 citizens in Covasna, Harghita and Mures counties were people of dual identity, either of Romanian nationality and belonging to the “historical Hungarian churches” (Roman-Catholic, Reformed, Evangelical and Unitarian) or of Hungarian ethnicity and belonging to the traditional Romanian churches (Orthodox and Greek-Catholic)⁴³⁷.
6. Finally, for the Romanians in the area, the institutionalization of autonomy based on ethnic criteria would mean the **legalization of marginalization and discrimination** and the lack of any real chance of preserving and affirming their cultural, linguistic, and confessional identity in the future⁴³⁸.

CONCLUSIONS

From a geopolitical perspective

“The establishment of an enclave in the Covasna-Harghita-Mures area will not be beneficial for the Hungarians and will never be accepted by the Romanians.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 28–29.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

The historical and present realities of this area show us that the Hungarians here cannot develop against the Romanians, but only together with them⁴³⁹.

In other words, the ethnic Hungarians, using these actions, exclude themselves from the Romanian society and become an annex of Hungary, economically, politically, culturally, and so on dependent on Budapest. The Romanian state, on the other hand, allows an organic development by the Hungarians and not an artificial and conditional one, as is the case in Budapest.

From a historical perspective

“As the historian Vasile Lechințan recently pointed out, the Szeklers have never had Szekler prefects, Szekler parliament, or other state political structures. They had, as they do today, local autonomy within the seats (Mureș, Odorhei, Ciuc, Three Seats), but they never had autonomy from the Hungarian or Habsburg state⁴⁴⁰.”

From the perspective of the Hungarian leaders, the institutionalization of the territorial autonomy of the so-called “Szeklerland” is not motivated by obtaining new rights and freedoms because all of them exist at European standards. The achievement of this goal is rather symbolic and has arisen because of frustrations in the Hungarian mind.

From the perspective of the Romanian society in the area, even without the institutionalization of ethnic autonomy, there are vital problems for the Romanian identity that are waiting for equitable solutions in line with European practice.

I conclude by saying that the Romanian state is no longer an important player in the area. This implies the loss of sovereignty of the whole state because the duty of the state is to protect all its citizens, including from an identity perspective (ensuring societal security⁴⁴¹). In the absence of the Romanian state, the Hungarian state becomes more and more present and takes over the prerogatives of the Romanian state. Unless something concrete is done about this as soon as possible, the Romanians in this area will be completely assimilated.

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⁴³⁹ „constituirea unei enclave în zona Covasna-Harghita-Mureș, nu va fi benefică pentru maghiari și niciodată acceptată de români. Realitățile istorice și cele prezente, din acest areal, ne arată că maghiarii de aici nu se pot afirma împotriva românilor, ci numai împreună cu ei”, in *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴⁴⁰ „așa cum sublinia recent și istoricul Vasile Lechințan secuii n-au avut niciodată comiți (prefecți) secui, parlament secuiesc, alte structuri politice statale. Au avut, ca și azi, autonomie locală în cadrul „scaunelor” (Mureș, Odorhei, Ciuc, Trei Scaune), dar niciodată autonomie față de statul ungar și, respectiv, habsburgic”, in *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁴⁴¹ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde, *Securitatea. Un nou cadru de analiză* [Security. A new framework for analysis], CA Publishing, 2011.

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