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Transylvanian Society

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Cluj-Napoca – Kolozsvár

2022

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Zsombor Csata[1] – Emese Emőke Tóth-Batizán[2] – Gábor Lelkes[3]

Report on the Self-perceived Health Condition of Minority Hungarians in Central and Eastern Europe

Abstract

In this article, we analyze the health condition of minority Hungarians in Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, and Ukraine using data from a transnational survey conducted in 2018-2019. The study's main focus is on assessing the subjective health status and behavior of adult Hungarians in each region, identifying key social determinants, and investigating whether minority Hungarians' health indicators are more similar to their respective countries or Hungary. Proxies for physical health, such as chronic illnesses, medication use, and hospitalizations, show marginal variations across regions. Age, financial status, living in rural areas, and living alone after marriage are linked to the onset of chronic diseases. Physical activity and healthy eating habits vary among regions, influenced by age, education, and marital status. Smoking rates range from 25% to 33%, with gender and age playing significant roles. Alcohol consumption patterns are affected by gender, education, income, and urban residence. In terms of mental health, we utilized the PHQ-8 depression scale, and have observed a higher prevalence of depression among minority Hungarians compared to their host countries and Hungary. Relationships and social interactions play vital roles in mental health outcomes. The subjective assessment of health reveals variations among regions, with social factors such as age, gender, education, and living arrangements influencing self-perceived health.

Keywords: self-perceived health, socioeconomic status, health disparities, minority Hungarians, comparative research

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Introduction

In this article, we aim to assess several self-reported aspects of the health condition of minority Hungarians living in Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, and Ukraine, using data from a transnational survey conducted in 2018-2019.[4] The purpose of this endeavor is multifold. Firstly, we aim to evaluate the subjective health status and health behavior of the adult Hungarian population in each of the mentioned regions. Secondly, we seek to identify the key social factors that influence self-perceived health status and health behavior, aligning our study with a series of recent analyses exploring this relationship in other countries (Bakhtiari et al 2018, Bakhtiari 2022). As we know, the *relative* social positions of the Hungarian minorities living outside Hungary have experienced a decline compared to the majority/titular ethnic groups over the past century (Bárdi et al., 2011). In this context, an important question is whether the minority experience, ceteris paribus, causes noticeable self-perceived health disadvantages, as has been shown in many cases for other ethnolinguistic minorities (Nielsen-Krasnik 2010; Kolarcik et al., 2009; Kocsis-Feith, 2022). Another question is to determine whether in terms of health behavior and health status, minority Hungarians are more similar to the averages of their respective countries or to the conditions in Hungary (Lampl, 2004; Bakos-Tamus, 2011; Pikó-Brassai, 2007; Pikó et al., 2013; Kovács, 2018). Therefore, where possible, we will compare our research results with national data from previous international studies (primarily the European Health Interview Survey).

To gain a deeper understanding of these questions, we use a wider range of explanatory variables. Along with traditional socio-economic indicators (gender, age, marital status, education, place of residence, income level), we also considered additional factors that might influence the success and well-being of individuals belonging to ethno-linguistic minorities. These factors include social relationships (emotional and functional), language proficiency (in the titular/official language of the country and English), and local-level ethno-demographic indicators (such as the number and proportion of Hungarians in the area).

Based on the above, our analysis covers the following main topics, and the structure of the study aligns accordingly. To operationalize self-perceived health, we utilized standardized measurement instruments from the EHIS (European Health Interview Survey). Regarding physical health, respondents were asked three questions: whether they had any chronic illnesses, whether they had taken any doctor-prescribed medication in the two weeks before the survey, and whether they had been hospitalized as inpatients in the past year. The questionnaire also

4 The survey titled "Quality of Life and Well-being" was conducted as part of the project EFOP-1.12.1-17-2017-00003 "Macroregional Research in the Carpathian Basin to Strengthen Community Development and Social Responsibility," under the guidance of the National Institute for Strategic Research in Budapest. The survey (referred to as RINS 2018 in this paper) received responses from a total of 1,100 individuals in Transylvania (Romania), 800 in Southern Slovakia, 800 in Vojvodina (Serbia), and 600 in Transcarpathia (Ukraine), all of whom identified themselves as Hungarians. The margin of measurement error for these samples was 3.1%, 3.5%, and 4%, respectively. The samples were designed to be representative of individuals (not households) by gender, age group, educational attainment, and the region of residence.

inquired about the use of health services (such as the last time they visited their GP and the frequency of check-ups) as well as various dimensions of preventive health behavior (exercise, consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, smoking, and alcohol consumption). Additionally, the EHIS depression scale was employed to assess mental health complaints, and subjective perceptions of health were also explored. In the following chapters we will delve into each of these topics, paying special attention to their socio-economic and ethno-demographic determinants. The article will be rounded off with a summary and conclusions.

Similar analyses have been done in the past decades regarding minority Hungarians. However, these studies often focused on a single region (Bocskor, 2006; Kállay, 2013; 2017; Szabó, 2004; Lampl, 2004) or specific social groups like young people (Ádám et al., 2016), high school students (Szabó, 2004; Bakos-Tamus, 2011; Pikó et al., 2013), university students (Pikó-Brassai, 2007; Kovács, 2018), mothers (Sántha et al., 2020; Sántha, 2021) etc. Our analysis aims to complement these endeavors as it compares health indicators across adult minority samples and occasionally with those of the titular countries and Hungary.

Physical health, health behavior

In terms of *physical health*, similar proportions were reported across the four regions for having a long-standing or chronic illness (30-35%), having taken medication prescribed by a doctor in the two weeks prior to the survey (39-46%), and having had inpatient hospital care in the past year (8-14%). These differences between regions are not significant and fall within the margin of measurement error (Figure 1).

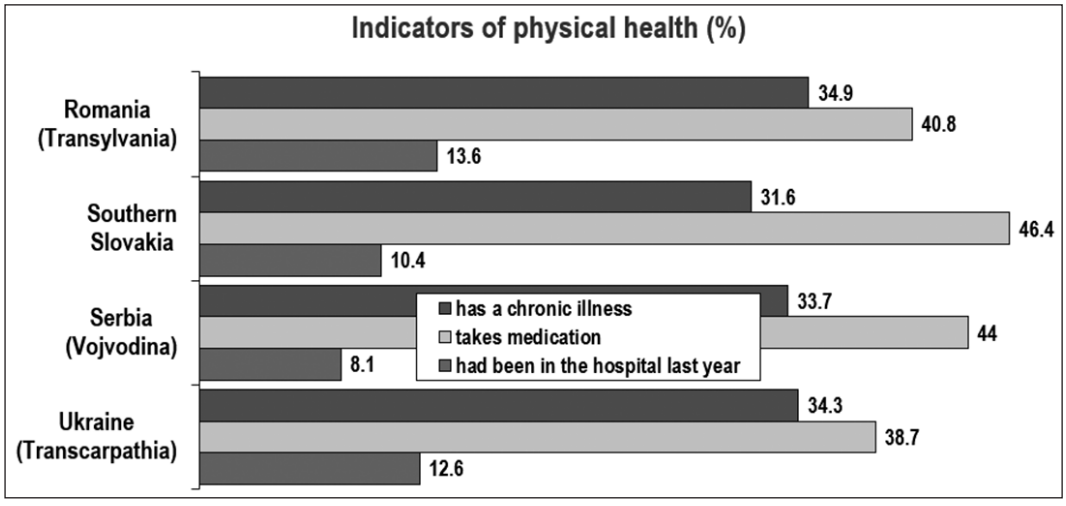

Figure 1.

The regions also exhibit similarities regarding the factors contributing to the higher frequency of these events/processes. The occurrence of *chronic diseases* shows a strong correlation

with age, exerting a much greater impact than any other factor (refer to Table 11 in the appendix). A significantly higher percentage of young people in Ukraine (15.3%) self-reported chronic diseases compared to their counterparts in Romania (6.2%), while the rates among the elderly are similar, standing at 55.1% in Ukraine and 59.4% in Romania. Apart from age, the prevalence of chronic diseases is also partly explained by the financial situation, though to a lesser extent. In Romania and Slovakia, they are significantly less frequent among individuals with higher household income per capita. Additionally, living in a rural area or living alone after marriage increases the incidence of chronic diseases, with both relationships being significant in Ukraine. Furthermore, there is a general negative association between better language skills and the incidence of chronic diseases. However, this relation is statistically significant only in Slovakia, where proficiency in the titular language may be linked to health benefits of this nature.

Similar socio-demographic patterns are also observed when explaining the prevalence of *medication use* (see Table 12 in the appendix). Again, the effect of age remains the strongest, with a significantly higher proportion of older people taking medication prescribed by a doctor compared to young and middle-aged individuals. In Romania and Ukraine, education also plays a role: those with primary education tend to take less medication, although this relationship is significant only in Romania.

The odds of *hospitalization* are the least predictable using the included factors, as its occurrence varies more significantly across different groups and regions compared to chronic diseases or medication use – these latter being better indicators of a long-term poor health situation (Table 13 in the appendix). Hospitalization is more common among men (although the relationship is significant only in Romania and Ukraine), middle-aged individuals in Slovakia, the elderly in Romania, those living alone after marriage in Slovakia and Ukraine and those with higher education in Ukraine. The lower explanatory power of the models and the variability of their can likely be attributed to the fact that hospitalization may act as a proxy for both the presence of more serious illnesses and social differences in access to more complex healthcare services.

While chronic illness, medication, and hospital visits clearly show poor or worsening health, visiting a GP or attending a check-up can have two meanings. It might indicate a health problem, but it could also show that someone is proactive in seeking professional help, even when they are healthy or have minor complaints, as part of their health awareness. Around two-thirds of Hungarians in neighboring countries visited their *general practitioner* in the year before the survey (Figure 2). The proportion was slightly lower in Ukraine (60%) and higher in Slovakia (77%). The percentage of those who had never visited a general practitioner ranged from 1% to 6% (including Slovakia and Ukraine). In all regions, women, the elderly (significant in Romania and Serbia), and those with higher education were significantly more likely to visit their GP. Generally, there is a negative relationship between language skills and visits to the doctor, except in Ukraine, where a good knowledge of Ukrainian increases the chances of visiting the GP annually.

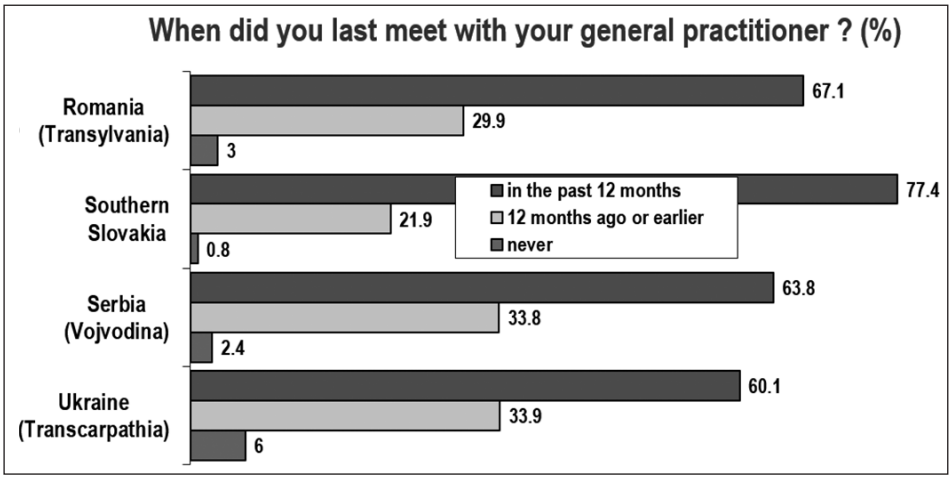

Figure 2.

Between 15 and 20 percent of minority Hungarians attend *screenings* every six months, while 42-63 percent undergo screening annually, with higher rates in Slovakia and Ukraine, and lower rates in Serbia and Romania. Approximately one-fifth of the Hungarian population in these regions has never had a screening test. The social determinants influencing this phenomenon are similar to those of doctor's visits, but fewer factors have a significant effect. In general, women, the elderly, and those with higher education tend to attend screenings more frequently. However, in Romania and Slovakia, the effect of language skills (especially English) surprisingly shows a negative correlation. It is possible that this association may be linked to a higher prevalence of self-diagnosis on the internet among those who speak languages other than Hungarian. While this study does not allow for further analysis and verification, considering that this effect is also present in doctor's visits, it may be worth investigating more closely in future research.

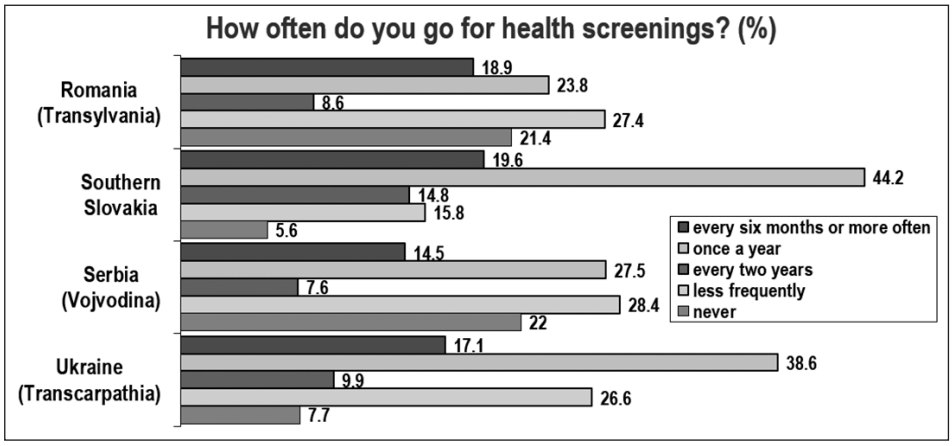

Figure 3.

In this research, we examined four behaviors that could indicate *health-conscious habits*. We inquired about exercise routines, frequency of consuming fruits and vegetables, smoking habits, and alcohol consumption. Among minority Hungarians, the percentage of those who have never exercised ranges from 34% (Serbia) to 53% (Romania), with a further one-fifth of the population taking part in less than weekly intense physical activity. According to these self-reports, Hungarians in Serbia have the highest proportion of people engaging in physical activity more than once a week (37%), while those in Slovakia have the lowest proportion (16%).

Table 1. *How often do you engage in sports activities such as swimming, running, cycling, playing football, doing aerobics, or other forms of physical exercise? (%)*

	Romania (N=1005)	**Slovakia (N=799)**	**Serbia (N=795)**	**Ukraine (N=601)**
never	53	46,5	34	42,2
less than once a week	19,5	22,4	18,1	22,7
once a week	9,9	15,3	10,6	10,3
several times a week	17,7	15,8	37,4	24,8
N	1005	799	795	601

Sporting habits exhibit higher social differentiation along socio-demographic factors than what we observed in the case of health status, screening tests, and doctor visits. In Table 16 (appendix), we estimate the likelihood of engaging in weekly sports within the usual social categories. According to this, in every region, there is a consistent trend that regular sports participation increases with education level – this relationship is particularly strong in Slovakia: a person with a university degree is nine times more likely to engage in intense physical activity compared to someone with only primary education. Age also plays a significant role, with 2-3 times fewer older individuals participating in sports compared to those under 35. In all regions, except for Slovakia, significantly fewer individuals who live alone after marriage (divorced or widowed) engage in physical activity. With slightly lower odds ratios, the same holds true for those who are married or in a long-term partnership. Generally, living in an urban area increases the likelihood of engaging in sports. The relationship with income is positive, though not statistically significant in any region; hence, a better financial situation alone does not significantly increase the likelihood of sports engagement. Contrary to common beliefs, regular intense physical activity is more characteristic of women, though this observation can be asserted with sufficient certainty only for those in Serbia.

There are large differences between regions in how often minority Hungarians *eat fruits and vegetables*. Interestingly, this phenomenon does not seem to be related to the economic development of the regions; at least, consuming vegetables or fruits every day is far less common among those in Slovakia (47%) compared to Ukraine (66%) or Romania (73%). While the phenomenon is far less socially differentiated than physical activity, there are significant differences between socio-demographic groups (Table 17 in the appendix). For example, in all regions, women are more likely to eat fruit or vegetables and this practice increases with age

and higher education (except in Ukraine), and better language skills also have a positive effect. Marital status also matters (with the exception of Serbia): those who are married or in a long-term partnership tend to consume vegetables and fruits more often. The effect of income and place of residence is not straightforward: in Romania, people with lower incomes eat fruit and vegetables less often, while in Slovakia, the opposite is observed. In Serbia, urban areas have higher rates of vegetable and fruit consumption, but in Slovakia and Ukraine, this habit is more prevalent in rural areas.

Table 2. *How often do you eat fruits or vegetables? (%)*

	Romania (N=1009)	**Slovakia (N=798)**	**Serbia (N=799)**	**Ukraine (N=604)**
twice or more a day	39,9	17,5	24,5	28,3
once a day	33,4	29,8	33,8	38
4-6 times a week	12,5	17,8	14,7	14,2
1-3 times a week	9,7	23,4	20,6	15,6
less than once a week	4,2	10,6	6	3,3
never	0,4	0,9	0,5	0,6

Regarding *addiction/substance use*, we first inquired about smoking habits. The differences between regions are not substantial: the lowest percentage of smokers is in Ukraine (25%) while the highest in Slovakia (33%). Approximately 58% of those in Romania and Ukraine, and half of those in Slovakia have never smoked. About 15-17% of respondents reported being former smokers, with the majority having quit more than a year before the survey (Table 3).

Compared to the previous indicators on health and health awareness, smoking appears to be less socially differentiated, with fewer general patterns common across all regions. Only gender and age consistently have an impact in all locations: women and older individuals are less affected. The gender differences are most significant in Ukraine, while the age disparities are most pronounced in Romania (refer to Table 18 in the appendix). In Romania, a young person is four times more likely to smoke than an older person, while in Ukraine, a man is six times more likely to smoke than a woman. A higher income does not confer any advantage regarding smoking habits in any region, and higher education is only a protective factor in Slovakia. In Serbia and Ukraine, the relationship with education is negative but not significant, while in Romania, the opposite holds true: more individuals with secondary and higher education smoke. The likelihood of smoking is higher in urban areas (Romania and Serbia) and among those living alone (Romania).

Table 3. *Which statement best describes you in relation to smoking? (%)*

	Romania (N=1009)	**Slovakia (N=798)**	**Serbia (N=799)**	**Ukraine (N=604)**
currently smoking	26,7	33,2	29,2	25
quit smoking less than a year ago	1,3	2	2,7	2,4
quit smoking more than a year ago	13,9	14,7	14,3	14,4
never smoked	58,1	50,1	53,8	58,2
N	998	791	792	594

According to self-reported data, 4-6% of minority Hungarians *consume alcohol* daily, and 34-34% weekly. The highest proportions are in Slovakia and the lowest in Romania, where 15, respectively 36 per cent of the population said they had never consumed alcohol or had only a few sips in their lifetime (Table 4). In all regions, men tend to drink more heavily, and living alone after marriage significantly increases the odds. However, Hungarians in Romania are an exception in the latter case, where the influence of age is positive: older individuals consume alcohol in greater proportions. Having a higher level of education offers relative protection against heavy alcohol consumption (the relationship is significant in Slovakia and Serbia), as does having a higher income (Slovakia and Ukraine), and living in urban areas (Slovakia).

Table 4. *How often do you drink alcohol?*

	Romania (N=1009)	**Slovakia (N=798)**	**Serbia (N=799)**	**Ukraine (N=604)**
every day or almost every day	5,5	6,3	4,2	5,8
5-6 days a week	1,7	1,6	1	1,5
3-4 days a week	5,3	7,6	5,7	3,5
1-2 days a week	11,4	19,4	16,7	13,6
2-3 days per month	8,7	12,1	9,6	15,7
once a month	7,8	12,9	13,6	13,1
less than once a month	21,3	21,7	15,7	22,7
not in the last 12 months, as I no longer drink alcohol	5,8	2,9	8	6,1
never, or in my whole life, only had a few sips	32,5	15,4	25,5	18,1
N	998	795	788	592

Finally, in relation to physical health, the results on *body mass index* (BMI) were discussed. The BMI index is widely used as a general indicator of whether a person's body weight is healthy in relation to their height. It is a priority area of public health research because obesity is a serious public health problem: significantly increases the risk of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers, and can also be associated with

various psychological problems. In addition to the individual risks, the treatment of diseases related to obesity is costly, imposing a significant burden on health system resources. (Eurostat – Overweight and Obesity, 2021: 1).

Because BMI is a simple and widely used measure, it was included in various studies, including the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS). The EHIS's 3rd wave coincided with our research (2018-2020), and in 2021, EUROSTAT published essential national distributions,[5] allowing us to compare them with the data collected for minority Hungarians.

The most important indicator derived from BMI is the proportion of overweight and obese individuals in a population, classified based on BMI values above 25 and 30, respectively. In the EU, the percentage of overweight and obese women in the adult female population in 2019 was 45% and 16% (Figure 4). These figures closely match the national averages in Slovakia and Serbia. In Romania, the overweight rate is significantly higher than the EU average (51%), while the obese rate is notably lower (10%). In Hungary, both the overweight and obese rates are considerably higher than the EU average (52% and 23%, respectively). For men, the obese rate is the same as for women (16%), but the overweight rate is significantly higher (58%). Nevertheless, the differences between countries closely resemble those measured for women, with only slight percentage variations.

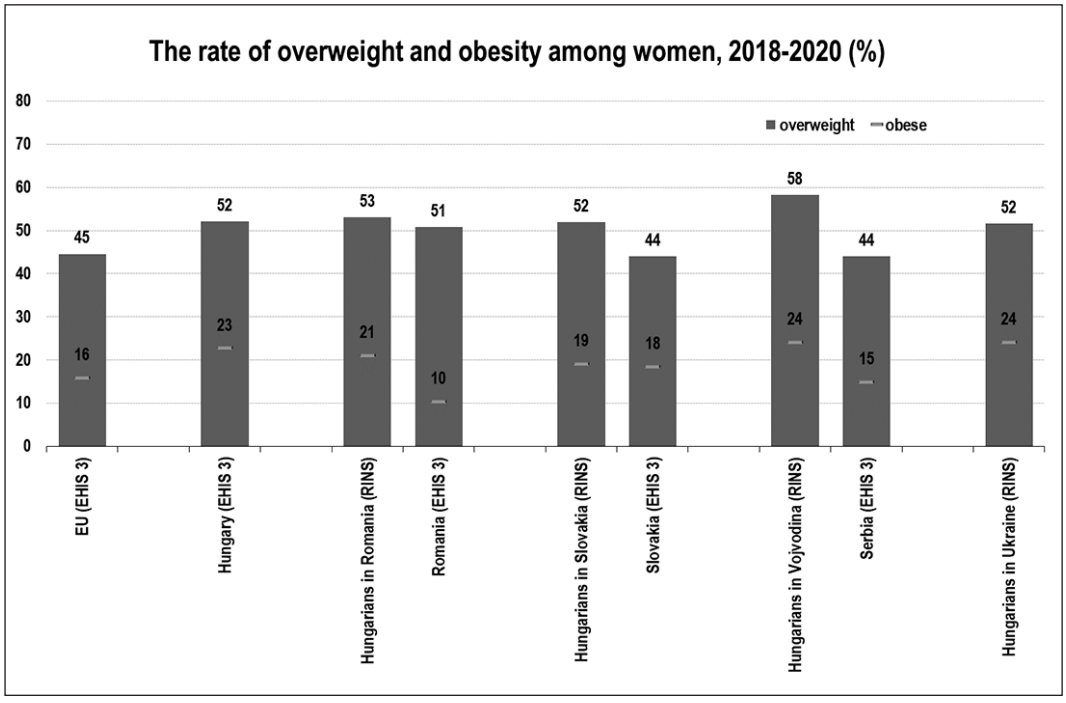

Figure 4.

5 Source of EHIS data: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/5/59/Overweight_and_obesity_Health2019_-_update.xlsx , retrieved on 10 December 2021.

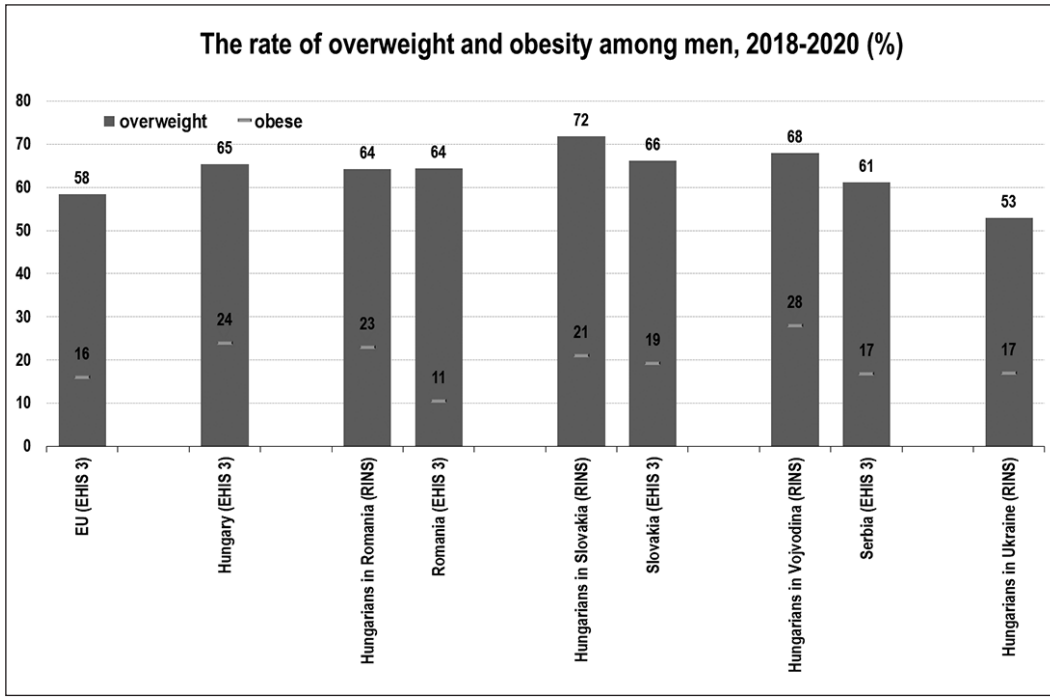

Figure 5.

In the case of minority Hungarians, the prevalence of overweight and obesity generally falls between the average for their own country and the Hungarian average (and even surpasses it for Hungarians in Serbia), but overall, they are closer to the Hungarian average.[6] An important question to explore in the future is whether the specific linguistic and cultural connections between Hungarians in Hungary and those in the neighboring countries play a role in shaping health awareness and behaviors that could also impact changes in body weight.

Body mass index increases with age and generally follows a linear growth pattern until the age of 60-65. After this point, it generally starts to decline due to higher age-specific mortality in overweight/obese individuals (Table 5). There are no significant differences in this regard between countries or among minority Hungarians from different regions. For instance, the proportion of overweight and obese Hungarians in the 18-24 age group in Romania was 25% and 10% respectively, whereas in the 65-75 age group, these proportions increased to 70% and 24% respectively. To fully understand whether these differences are due to cohort or generational effects, longitudinal data would be necessary. Among the regions included in our study, the highest rates of overweight (35% and 31%) were found among Hungarians in Slovakia and Hungary. As for obesity, the highest rates were observed among Hungarians in Hungary (11%) and Romania (10%).

6 For a better illustration of the distances, see Figures 10 and 11 in the appendix.

Table 5. *Proportion of overweight and obese individuals by age group*

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	total
	overweight							
EU (EHIS 3)	25	39,3	49,7	57,1	62,7	65,7	59,3	51,3
Hungary (EHIS 3)	31,3	43,9	55,4	65,9	71,2	76,4	67,3	58,3
Romania (EHIS 3)	25,4	42,8	55,4	66,5	74,7	72,3	62,3	56,4
Hungarians in Romania (RINS)	29,5	38	57,6	66,4	72,1	70,3	61,3	58,4
Slovakia (EHIS 3)	23,8	42	58	64,4	72,4	77,3	73	57,8
Hungarians in Slovakia (RINS)	34,6	46	60,4	72,4	64,4	75	86	61,9
Serbia (EHIS 3)	24,1	42,1	51,8	58,8	65,9	65,1	53,8	52,4
Hungarians in Serbia (RINS)	31,3	52	59,5	62,2	81,7	70,5	72	62,9
Hungarians in Ukraine (RINS)	12,9	51	43,1	62,5	70,3	63,6	67,7	52,1
	obese							
EU (EHIS 3)	6	10,5	14,8	18,2	22,2	22,3	17,3	16
Hungary (EHIS 3)	10,5	14,5	21,1	27,5	34,6	33,6	24,6	23,9
Romania (EHIS 3)	1,4	4,8	6,9	12,5	19	16,5	13,9	10,5
Hungarians in Romania (RINS)	10,3	9,5	15,2	32,7	27	30,9	25,4	22,2
Slovakia (EHIS 3)	3,1	10,9	16,6	21,9	28,7	32,4	25,7	19,3
Hungarians in Slovakia (RINS)	6,5	12,8	17,5	25,2	19	23,2	46,4	20,1
Serbia (EHIS 3)	4	9,6	17,6	19,5	23,3	24	16,2	16,8
Hungarians in Serbia (RINS)	10	18,2	22,1	22,9	36,2	32,8	30,5	25,5
Hungarians in Ukraine (RINS)	2,9	16,3	15,4	27,4	31,9	18,2	48,4	20,6

As we have seen earlier, higher levels of education are generally associated with increased health awareness and preventive health behaviors. This would lead us to expect that the proportion of overweight individuals would be lower among the more educated. However, this association is only consistently seen among women in all regions (and in all EU Member States, as stated in Overweight and Obesity, 2021: 1), but not among men (Figures 6 and 7). Surprisingly, in the four countries where the EHIS survey was conducted (Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Serbia), we consistently found that men with lower education had the lowest rates of overweight. This gender difference can likely be explained by a higher proportion of men with lower education being engaged in physically demanding jobs that require more intensive physical activity.

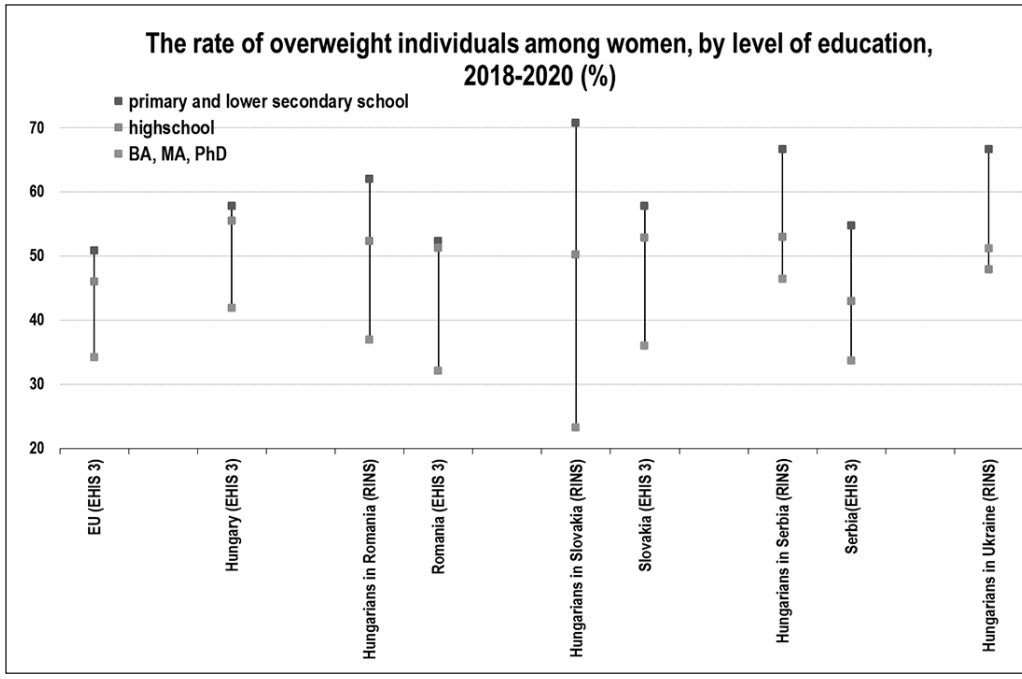

Figure 6.

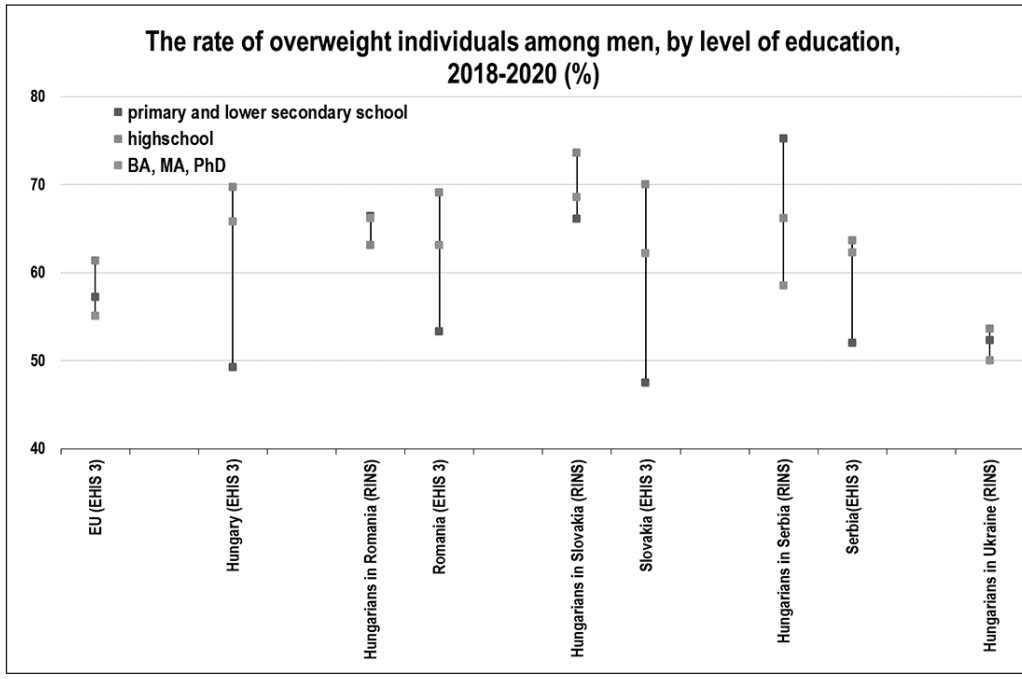

Figure 7.

When examining the effects of age and education together with other sociodemographic factors in joint explanatory models, we gain a clearer understanding. Because of gender-specific differences, separate models were constructed for women and men (see tables 20 and 21 in the appendix). For women, one consistent finding across all regions is that the proportion of overweight individuals increases with age. In other words, as women get older, their likelihood of being overweight is nearly three times higher in Romania and can go up to seven times higher in Serbia compared to younger women. The impact of higher education, presented earlier, is only strong enough in Slovakia to be able to say with sufficient certainty that education reduces the chances of being overweight. A noteworthy finding compared to our previous observations is that marital status is associated with body mass index (BMI). In Romania, for instance, a person with a family or in a long-term relationship – all other factors being equal – is three times more likely to be overweight compared to someone who is single. Moreover, those who live alone after marriage have an even higher likelihood of being overweight, with odds of more than four times. In Ukraine, the situation is quite similar, but the connection is even stronger. Additionally, the desirable weight is more prevalent among women whose families have a higher per capita income (in Serbia and Ukraine) and among those living in urban areas (in Romania). In Serbia, having a higher proportion of ethnic Serbian acquaintances and friends is associated with a lower likelihood of being overweight. While this alone is not conclusive evidence of ethno-specific overweight patterns, given the significant differences between the results obtained from the national (EHIS) and minority Hungarian sample of this study, it holds important hypothesis value that worths to be explored in the future.

For men, we see similar patterns as in case of women: age matters (though only significant in Romania and Serbia), as well as education and place of residence (Serbia). The impact of marital status is even more evident for men: except for Hungarians in Serbia, men with a family or having a partner are more likely to be overweight compared to those who are single. Lastly, having more direct connections with members of the majority ethnic group also plays a role: in Serbia, this significantly reduces, while in Ukraine, it increases the chances of being overweight.

We also looked into the social factors influencing obesity separately, but they didn't show significant differences compared to the trends we observed for overweight (Tables 22 and 23 in the appendix). Living in an urban area (for men in Slovakia and for women in Serbia) and having a lower income (for men in Serbia) reduce the likelihood of obesity. Additionally, in some regions, the extent and ethnically segmented nature of social connections also have a significant impact, although these effects do not consistently point in the same direction across regions. Therefore, a more detailed exploration of these factors would require further analysis.

Mental health

To measure *mental health complaints* in our study, we used the Hungarian version of the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-8) depression scale, which has been validated in several studies (Gilbody et al., 2007; Kósa-Bíró, 2018). This scale aligns with the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) and inquires about depression symptoms experienced

in the two weeks preceding the assessment: sadness or depression, reduced interest, difficulties with sleep (insomnia or hypersomnia), fatigue or loss of energy, changes in appetite (poor appetite or overeating), excessive guilt or numbness, reduced ability to think or concentrate, psychomotor agitation or "slowing down". Each of these symptoms is individually rated on a scale from 0 to 3, based on their frequency during the reference period (0 – not at all, 1 – a few days, 2 – more than half of the two weeks, 3 – almost every day). By summing up the scores of the eight items, a total score of 10 or higher indicates the presence of depressive symptoms (prevalence): scores between 10 and 14 suggest "mild" depression, while scores above 14 indicate depression of "moderate to severe" intensity (Hapke et al., 2019: 58).

The PHQ-8 scale, originally used in clinical studies, has also proven effective in epidemiological surveys of broader populations (Kroenke et al., 2009). Among these, the most comprehensive is the EHIS (European Health Interview Survey), conducted in all EU member states, including Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. The results of the depression scale are only available for the second wave of surveys,[7] conducted between 2013 and 2015. Several international comparative analyses have utilized these results, though the reported prevalence of depression varies slightly, likely due to different weighting methodologies. According to Hapke and colleagues (2019), the estimated proportion of people with symptoms of depression in the EU was 7.9% in 2019, with higher rates in Hungary (9.6%) and lower rates in Romania (5.1%). Slovakia had the lowest prevalence of depression among EU countries, at 3.4%. In contrast, a recent study by Arias-de la Torre and colleagues (2021) reported different figures, estimating the prevalence of depression at 8% in Hungary, 4.4% in Romania, and 2.6% in Slovakia (with only the Romanian data not significantly differing from the EU average). Although the differences between the results of the two surveys are not trivial, they are less relevant for our analysis because the values we measured among minority Hungarians are much higher: 11.8 percent in Romania, 13.1 percent in Slovakia, 13.7 percent in Serbia and 17.8 percent in Ukraine. Given these major differences, a valid concern arises about the potential presence of some form of systematic error in the data collection or processing methodology.

7 The third wave of the EHIS data collection took place between 2019-2020, on which EUROSTAT provided only some basic data, such as the BMI index discussed earlier

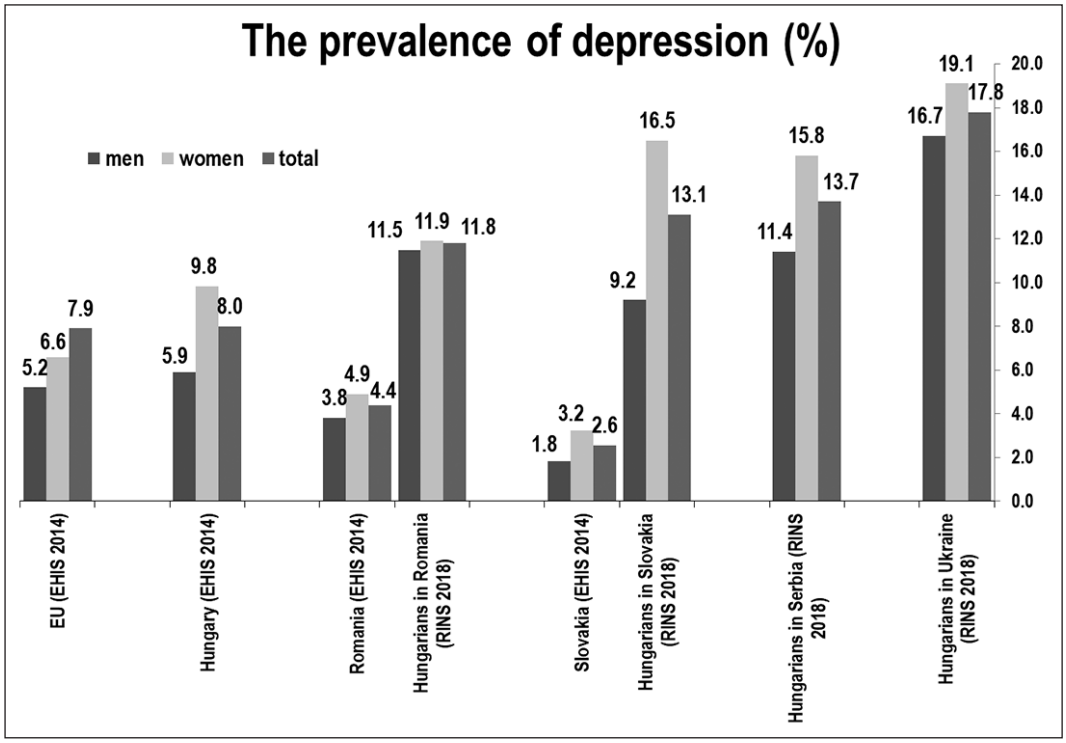

Figure 8.

However, even after repeated checks, we did not find such errors. Four alternative explanations for the difference seem plausible. The first reason is related to the time gap of nearly 5 years between EHIS-2 and the current survey. During this period, the prevalence of depression might have increased in all populations, potentially diminishing the observed differences with minority Hungarians. Furthermore, it is a common trend of increasing mental health literacy, with people becoming more informed about depression, recognizing its symptoms in themselves, and seeking help when needed. The results of the EHIS 3rd wave conducted in 2019-2020 will soon shed light on this matter. Another explanation is that the EHIS survey covered the population aged 15 and older, while the present survey focused on the 18+ population. This means that young individuals who are less susceptible to depression (see below) are slightly overrepresented in the EHIS study, which could lead to lower prevalence values. The third explanation concerns the missing responses, suggesting that those among the minority Hungarians who are less prone to depression might have skipped the question. However, the data does not support this claim. In fact, the groups with the highest non-response rates were those where depression is generally more prevalent: the elderly, individuals with lower education, and men (see the relevant regression tables below). This suggests that our study may actually underestimate, rather than overestimate, the proportion of people with depression. (At the same time, we have little reason to assume that among the elderly or those with lower education – especially those with good mental health – would have declined to respond). Finally,

the fourth alternative explanation pertains to the possibility of slight, but non-trivial, differences in the wording of the PHQ-8 questionnaire in different language versions. However, this issue is not exclusive to language minority surveys; it may also arise in international comparative studies. Nevertheless, when comparing the Hungarian and Romanian versions of the PHQ-8 question, no meaningful differences in interpretation were identified.

This suggests that the disparities in prevalence values between the majority (EHIS-2) and minority (RINS, 2018) samples can only be partially explained by the alternative factors mentioned earlier. It is more likely that these differences actually exist in reality, and that minority Hungarians show a higher prevalence of depressive symptoms compared to members of the titular ethnic groups. Moreover, these indicators are even worse for minority Hungarians when compared to Hungarians living in Hungary, suggesting that besides specific socialization patterns stemming from cultural closeness and language community, structural aspects of minority existence (such as possible disadvantages in chance opportunities, worse social positions, etc.) also might contribute to the higher reporting of depressive symptoms among the Hungarians outside Hungary. These hypotheses certainly warrant further investigation.

The comparison between regions also reveals that, while differences in mild symptoms of depression are apparent (a significant contrast between Romania – 7.7 percent, and Ukraine – 13.2 percent), the prevalence of moderate or more severe depression remains relatively consistent across all regions: approximately 4-5 percent of the Hungarian population living outside Hungary, in the neighboring countries, is affected.

Table 6. *Prevalence of depressive symptoms among minority Hungarians (%)*

	Romania (N=906)	**Slovakia (N=750)**	**Serbia (N=753)**	**Ukraine (N=552)**
no depression	88,2	86,9	86,3	82,1
mild depression	7,7	9	10,1	13,2
moderate or more severe depression	4,1	4,1	3,6	4,6
total	100	100	100	100

We also looked into which of the eight symptoms listed in the scale were most commonly reported (Table 7). It was found that people mostly complained about fatigue and low energy (with average scores ranging between 1 and 1.4 on the scale of 0 to 3). Sleep disturbances were also frequently mentioned, with scores around 0.8 to 1. On the other hand, psychosomatic complaints were the least common, with average scores ranging from 0.2 to 0.4 for difficulties in concentration, and from 0.1 to 0.3 for slowed or accelerated speech or movement.

Table 7. *Depressive symptoms among minority Hungarians (Mean values on a scale from 0 to 3: 0 – never, 3 – every day)*

	Romania (N=906)	**Slovakia (N=750)**	**Serbia (N=753)**	**Ukraine (N=552)**
Feeling tired or having little energy	1,02	1,18	1,28	1,40
Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much	0,81	0,98	0,86	1,01
Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0,59	0,70	0,74	0,83
Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0,52	0,62	0,65	0,69
Poor appetite or overeating	0,34	0,50	0,46	0,60
Feeling bad about yourself – or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down	0,33	0,51	0,40	0,52
Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television	0,24	0,44	0,33	0,36
Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or the opposite – being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual	0,17	0,25	0,22	0,26

Finally, in relation to mental health, we examined the social groups most likely to experience symptoms of depression. Looking at the simple uncontrolled distributions, we observe that depression is more prevalent among individuals with lower levels of education and significantly less common among those with higher education levels. Additionally, in Romania and Ukraine, the prevalence of depression among individuals with secondary education is lower than the regional average. Given these findings, it is unlikely that mental health awareness, which tends to be associated with higher education, would generally contribute to an increase in depression among minority Hungarians. However, this trend is not yet apparent in Eastern European countries, including among minority Hungarians. In regions like Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine, it is the elderly who reported significantly higher rates of depressive symptoms compared to the regional average (in Slovakia, the differences by age are not significant). The general European trend that depression is more common among women is not confirmed everywhere: this gender difference is significant only in Slovakia and Serbia. Similar variations were observed across regions when considering the effects of marital status. Being single after marriage (due to divorce, widowhood, or separation from a spouse) is associated with significant psychological burdens everywhere. By economic activity, the prevalence of depression is generally lower among employed people and higher among the retired. As almost all retired people fall into the elderly category (55+), it is difficult to determine whether the higher prevalence is related to advanced age (with its accompanying health and lifestyle issues) or if it is also influenced by the fact that they are no longer working and are not engaged in remunerated

economic activities.[8] By place of residence, we only observed significantly higher prevalence rates among those in Ukraine, where individuals living in villages reported more depressive symptoms. At first glance, language proficiency also plays a role: the prevalence is lower among those who speak English well in every region, and poorer knowledge of the majority/titular language is associated with higher rates of depression in Romania and Serbia. Perhaps one of the most important observations is that symptoms are more prevalent among those who socialize less, but it also matters whether they have friends, relatives or acquaintances to whom they can turn for financial assistance (Romania, Serbia) or ask for help in official matters (Romania). Surprisingly, however, the prevalence of depression is not lower among those who have confidants with whom they can discuss their personal problems, and a better household income situation only reduces the prevalence in Romania, not in the other regions.

Table 8. *Prevalence of depression (odds ratios)*

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
male	1,182	0,296	1,04	1,502
middle aged (35-54 years)	1,969	0,389*	0,999	3,231*
elderly (55+)	1,914	0,455	2,075	2,432
upper secondary education (high school)	0,219‡	0,547	1,031	0,179‡
tertiary education	0,321*	0,393	0,967	0,104†
married or in a long-term relationship	0,381*	0,774	2,012	0,294*
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	0,573	0,361	1,71	1,765
household per capita income	0,999	1	1,002	1,006*
urban residence	0,666	0,868	0,896	0,513
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	0,994	1	1	1,004
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1†	1	1	1
number of trust relationships	1,555	0,884	1,321	2,485*
number of recreational contacts	0,548	0,321†	0,423†	0,294†
number of functional relationship (money lending)	0,492*	1,351	0,68	0,532
number of functional relationship (handling official matters)	0,512*	1,307	1,113	1,042
has relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group	1,306	0,405*	2,619†	0,894
speaks the titular language well	0,613	2,044*	0,485*	1,764
speaks English well	0,722	0,372	0,956	2,526
Nagelkerke R^2	0,247	0,150	0,108	0,351
N	577	511	524	346

8 We cannot answer these questions in our regression models below: due to a collinearity problem, the economic activity variable is omitted from the model.

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English.

We conducted a multivariate logistic regression with the listed variables, where we included the prevalence of depression as the dependent variable and the usual socio-demographic variables as independent variables (Table 8). According this model, gender differences do not matter anywhere; the apparent correlation is likely explained by underlying factors that show a connection both with gender and the occurrence of depression. One such factor could be the more frequent social interactions among women, which apparently reduces the likelihood of depression. Indeed, among those who have regular companions to go out for entertainment, clubbing, hiking etc. have a significantly lower prevalence of depression. However, there is an exception among Hungarians in Romania, where functional relationships (such as assistance with lending money and handling official matters) seem to be beneficial in this regard. Therefore, it has been clearly confirmed that in large-scale studies of mental health, it is important to collect data on various aspects of social cohesion (Kósa-Bíró, 2018: 108); otherwise, the real relationships may remain unclear. The effect of age is not as straightforward as initially appeared. Although in Romania, Slovakia, and Serbia, an elderly person is twice as likely to experience depressive symptoms compared to a young person, these odds ratios are not statistically significant.[9] In comparison, in Slovakia it seems that middle-aged individuals are less likely to exhibit depressive symptoms, while in Ukraine, they are more likely. The model's fit is strongest in Ukraine, indicating that, in this region, the occurrence of depression can be best predicted based on the considered factors.

Self-perceived health

Finally, we have collected data on the *overall health assessments* of minority Hungarians. This was measured on both a five-point scale (as used by EHIS) and a ten-point scale.[10] According to EHIS standards, the health situation of the minority Hungarians is the worst in Ukraine, where just over one third of Hungarians rate their health situation as good or very good, compared to about half of adult Hungarians in the other regions. Specifically, 9% of Hungarians in Slovakia, 13% in Serbia, 14% in Romania, and 17% in Ukraine reported a particularly poor

9 The smaller number of significant relationships in the regression table could be attributed to the fact that these models have a lower number of cases (only those who answered all questions could be included), leading to an increased chance of measurement error and wider confidence intervals.

10 The question used in the EHIS/EVS/ESS survey was: "How is your health in general?", and one could choose between the alternatives "very good", "good", "satisfactory", "poor" and "very poor". The other question was "How satisfied are you with your health?" where 0 was coded as "not at all satisfied" and 10 as "very satisfied". The correlation value between the two questions ranged from 0.644 (Southern Slovakia) to 0.671 (Romania).

or very poor health status (Figure 9). On the 10-point scale, Hungarians in Romania expressed the highest satisfaction with their health (with an average score of 7.18), while those in Ukraine were the least satisfied (with an average score of 6.26).

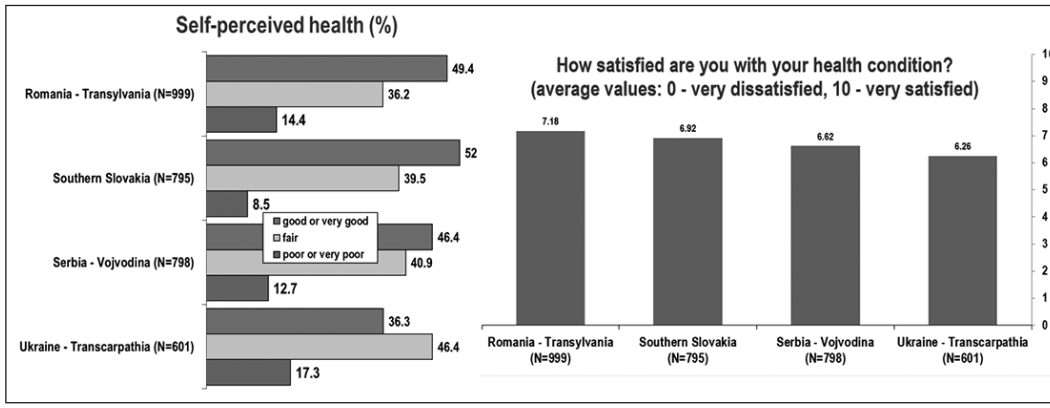

Figure 9. *Self-perceived health*

Social differences play a significant role in the assessment of health status (Table 9). The elderly (in Ukraine, Romania, and Serbia), men (in Slovakia and Ukraine), individuals with lower educational attainment (in Romania), and those living alone after marriage (in Ukraine) reported less frequently that their health status was good or satisfactory. More important than these expected correlations is the observation that social relationships are not indifferent when it comes to good health: in all regions except Ukraine, there are significant health benefits of having more friends, acquaintances and relatives to rely on. With the exception of Romania, being proficient in the language of the majority is also associated with increased satisfaction with the health situation (this positive association is significant only in Serbia). Using linear regression, we conducted the analysis on the ten-point scale as well, which yielded similar results (Table 26 in the appendix), but further highlighted the prominent role of age and, for the ones living in Slovakia, the positive effect of income. In fact, higher income positively correlates with health status in all regions, but these relationships are not significant.

Table 9. *Determinants of good or satisfactory health conditions (odds ratios)*

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
middle aged (35-54 years)	1,018	0,458*	0,878	0,512*
elderly (55+)	0,551	1,491	0,245	0,397
upper secondary education (high school)	0,110*	0,979	0,034*	0,173†
tertiary education	2,118*	1,448	0,981	1,713
married or in a long-term relationship	6,586*	1,716	2,587	1,414
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	1,259	0,698	1,085	0,289

	Romania	Slovakia	Serbia	Ukraine
household per capita income	0,776	0,445	1,143	0,132*
urban residence	1,001	1,001	1,001	1,003
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	1,682	0,471	1,787	5,102
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1,003	0,980	1,005	1,033
middle aged (35-54 years)	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
number of relationships	1,189*	1,307*	1,187*	0,955
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	1,035	0,628	0,94	0,962
speaks the titular language well	0,624	1,533	2,483*	1,091
speaks English well	n.a.	1,239	0,236	n.a.
Nagelkerke R^2	0,277	0,122	0,259	0,329
N	611	541	553	363

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, unmarried (living alone), economically active, living in a village, no majority contacts, not proficient in the titular language or English.

Finally, we have also examined which of the previous indicators of health status and health-conscious behavior has a greater influence when it comes to subjective perceptions of health (Table 27 in the appendix). The findings reveal that the strongest association is observed almost everywhere with depression: a 5-point increase in the depression scale raises the likelihood of someone rating their health as satisfactory or good by at least 50%. Another notable predictor is medication use, followed surprisingly by engagement in sports, which has a greater impact than hospitalization or the occurrence of chronic diseases. In Romania, excessive alcohol consumption worsens, while regular consumption of vegetables and fruits improves health perceptions. These associations suggest that besides the presence of illnesses, lifestyle habits also significantly influence how people perceive their own health.[11]

Table 10. *Good or satisfactory health status according to health indicators (odds ratios)*

	Romania	Slovakia	Serbia	Ukraine
BMI index	0,987	0,976	0,938	,967
alcohol consumption scale	0,770‡	0,951	0,945	1,020
currently not smoking	1,473	1,491	1,585	1,225
engages in sports or physical activity at least once a week	3,906‡	2,086*	2,459†	2,811†

11 In this context, it is important to point to the possibility of reverse causality, as it is equally plausible that depression could be a consequence of poor health. Similarly, people may engage in sports because they perceive themselves to be healthy and fit.

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
eats fruit and vegetables daily	2,765†	0,884	0,735	0,851
was hospitalized in the last year	0,198‡	0,480*	0,576	0,200‡
has a chronic illness	0,568	0,629	0,198‡	0,684
is taking any medications	,150‡	0,207†	0,527	0,274†
attends screening tests at least every two years	0,605	1,052	0,997	0,834
has seen their GP in the last year	1,204	0,902	0,714	0,672
depression-score	0,832‡	0,870‡	0,830‡	0,840‡
Nagelkerke R^2	0,559	0,286	0,441	0,436
N	809	657	690	513

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: currently not smoking, exercising less than weekly, not eating vegetables daily, no chronic diseases, no medication in the last two weeks, no check-ups in the last two years, no appointments with GP in the last one year.

Summary and conclusions

In this article we focused on the assessment of the health status of minority Hungarians in Romania (Transylvania), Slovakia (Southern Slovakia), Serbia (Vojvodina) and Ukraine (Transcarpathia).

As for *physical health*, similar proportions were reported across regions regarding individuals suffering from long-standing or chronic illnesses (30-35%), taking doctor-prescribed medication in the two weeks prior to the survey (39-46%), or receiving inpatient hospital care in the past year (8-14%). The regions also show similarities in terms of the factors that explain the higher incidence of these events or processes. The onset of chronic diseases is most strongly associated with age but is also linked to poorer financial status, living in rural areas, and living alone after marriage. While medication use and hospitalization may both indicate the presence of a more serious illness, they also suggest access to preventive or more complex healthcare. The same applies to doctor visits and the use of screening tests. In terms of health awareness and preventive behavior, we asked about the frequency of physical activity, healthy eating habits, and the occurrence of substance use or addiction. Among minority Hungarians, the proportion of those who have never engaged in exercise varies between 34% (in Serbia) and 53% (in Romania), with an additional one-fifth of the population doing exercise less than once in a week. In each region, regular physical activity tends to be more prevalent among those with higher education and decreases as people age. In general, living in an urban area also increases the likelihood of doing sports, with a positive correlation with income, although this is not significant in any of the regions. Fruit and vegetable consumption is more common among women and this habit increases with age and higher education levels, except for Ukraine. Marital status is also important, individuals in a long-term partnership/marriage tend to consume fruits and vegetables more frequently. Among minority Hungarians, the smoking rate ranges from 25% (in Ukraine) to 33% (in Slovakia). This habit is less specific to certain groups, with

only gender and age showing clear effects: women and older individuals are less affected in all regions. Higher income does not seem to provide any advantage in terms of smoking prevalence, and higher educational attainment appears to be a protective factor only in Slovakia. Based on self-reported data, approximately 4-6% of minority Hungarians consume alcohol daily, and about 34-34% consume it on a weekly basis. The highest proportion is observed in Slovakia, the lowest in Romania. Men tend to have higher rates of more intensive alcohol consumption across all regions, and living alone after marriage significantly increases the odds. In some of the regions, having a higher education, higher income, and living in urban areas seem to provide some protection against more intensive alcohol consumption.

Regarding physical health, we finally analyzed the results related to body mass index (BMI). BMI is widely studied in international research and is a significant area of interest in public health surveys, as obesity poses a major health concern, significantly increasing the risk of chronic diseases and certain types of cancer. We compared our data with the results from the third wave of the EHIS survey, conducted in 2018-19. The findings indicate that among minority Hungarians, the occurrence of overweight and obesity generally falls between the average of their own country and the average of Hungary (in the case of Hungarians in Serbia, it even exceeds the Hungarian average), but overall, they are closer to the conditions observed in Hungary. An important question to explore in the future is the potential role of linguistic and cultural connections between Hungarians in Hungary and those in neighboring countries in shaping health awareness and behaviors that could also influence changes in body weight. In terms of social differences, we find that for women in all regions, the likelihood of being overweight increases with age. However, significant differences based on educational attainment are only observed among Hungarian women in Slovakia, where higher education reduces the chances of being overweight. Moreover, women from families with higher per capita income (in Serbia and Ukraine) and those living in urban areas (in Romania) are more likely to maintain a desirable body weight. Similar patterns emerge for men, where age (in Romania and Serbia), educational attainment, and place of residence (in Serbia) play a role in overweight tendencies. The impact of relationship status is even more pronounced for men compared to women: except in Serbia, the likelihood of being overweight is consistently higher among those in long-term relationship/marriage.

To measure *mental health complaints*, we used the Hungarian version of the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-8) depression scale, which has been validated in several previous international studies. Comparison with national data shows that the prevalence of depression among minority Hungarians is significantly higher than both in the country where they live and the national average in Hungary. These findings indicate that structural aspects of minority existence (such as potential disadvantages in opportunities, lower social positions) may play a role in the increased reporting of depressive symptoms among Hungarians living outside Hungary. Certainly, these assumptions need to be further explored and studied. One of the key findings about the social factors influencing depression is the importance of relationships: in all regions, depressive symptoms are more common among people with fewer social interactions. Additionally, having someone to turn to for financial assistance (in Romania and Serbia) or for help with official matters (in Romania) also has a protective effect.

Regarding the health status of minority Hungarians, lastly, we collected data on the *overall subjective assessment of their health*. According to EHIS standards, the perception of health is worst in Ukraine, where barely over a third of the population rates it as good or very good, while in the other regions, this percentage is about half among adult Hungarians. Social differences play a significant role in the assessment of health status. Older individuals, men, those with lower education, and those living alone after marriage less frequently reported having good or satisfactory health. What's even more important than these expected correlations is the observation that social relationships are not indifferent to good health: in all regions except Ukraine, there are significant health benefits of having more friends, acquaintances and relatives to rely on. It was also revealed that self-assessment of health status is most strongly associated with symptoms of depression. Furthermore, apart from the presence of diseases, lifestyle habits also play a significant role in shaping people's perception of their own health.

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Appendix

Table 11. *Do you have any longstanding illness or (longstanding) health problem? (By longstanding I mean illnesses or health problems which have lasted, or are expected to last, for 6 months or more)? (the effect of socio-economic factors – odds ratios)*

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
male	1,280	1,353	0,861	1,021
middle aged (35-54 years)	6,618‡	3,522‡	2,069*	2,618†
elderly (55+)	36,349‡	6,879‡	8,674‡	5,334‡
upper secondary education (high school)	1,248	0,947	0,769	1,157
tertiary education	0,96	1,156	1,095	1,138
married or in a long-term relationship	0,719	1,264	1,487	1,482
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	0,91	1,502	1,271	2,717*
household per capita income	0,998*	0,999†	1	0,999
urban residence	0,641	0,387	0,655	0,287*
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	0,999	0,986†	0,996	0,984*
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1	1*	1	1
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	0,847	1,631	0,953	1,484
speaks the titular language well	0,779	0,407‡	0,986	1,064
speaks English well	0,494	0,873	0,894	0,779
Nagelkerke R^2	0,363	0,239	0,247	0,208
N	629	579	563	388

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English

Table 12. *During the past two weeks, have you used any medicines that were prescribed for you by a doctor? (the effect of socio-economic factors – odds ratios)*

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
male	1,034	1,16	0,778	0,597*
middle aged (35-54 years)	1,586	1,534	2,323*	1,646
elderly (55+)	12,372‡	5,953‡	9,366‡	4,525‡
upper secondary education (high school)	1,731*	0,669	0,733	1,273
tertiary education	1,581*	0,578	0,932	1,924
married or in a long-term relationship	0,821	1,43	1,537	1,443
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	0,755	1,469	1,267	1,598
household per capita income	0,998	1	1	1,001

	Romania	Slovakia	Serbia	Ukraine
urban residence	0,924	1,335	0,759	0,596
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	0,994	1,003	0,998	0,998
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1	1	1	1
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	0,934	1,527	0,766	0,956
speaks the titular language well	0,838	0,515†	0,857	1,095
speaks English well	0,565	0,895	0,469	0,264
Nagelkerke R^2	0,291	0,254	0,297	0,162
N	633	579	568	395

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English

Table 13. *During the past 12 months, have you been in hospital as an inpatient, that is overnight or longer? (the effect of socio-economic factors – odds ratios)*

	Romania	Slovakia	Serbia	Ukraine
male	1,842*	1,276	1,061	2,438*
middle aged (35-54 years)	0,48	0,129†	0,653	1,905
elderly (55+)	2,442*	1,172	1,216	1,461
upper secondary education (high school)	0,965	2,241	0,737	5,141*
tertiary education	0,724	0,973	2,383	9,544†
married or in a long-term relationship	1,507	5,327*	2,135	3,549
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	1,284	5,701*	3,437	8,151*
household per capita income	0,999	1,001	0,998	0,996
urban residence	0,499	0,507	2,178	0,834
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	1,002	1,012	1,008	0,981
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1	1*	1	1
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	0,944	1,01	0,592	0,539
speaks the titular language well	0,859	1,13	1,562	2,063
speaks English well	1,139	0,226	0,523	0
Nagelkerke R^2	0,125	0,198	0,092	0,339
N	633	579	568	395

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English

Table 14. *During the past 12 months, have you consulted a GP (general practitioner) or family doctor on your own behalf? (the effect of socio-economic factors – odds ratios)*

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
male	0,597*	0,627*	0,536†	0,479†
middle aged (35-54 years)	0,730	0,616	0,947	0,751
elderly (55+)	2,441*	1,274	3,656‡	0,916
upper secondary education (high school)	2,113*	1,296	1,278	1,328
tertiary education	2,257*	1,265	1,652	0,954
married or in a long-term relationship	1,568	1,430	1,330	1,663
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	1,920	1,456	1,457	2,078
household per capita income	0,999	1,000	1,000	1,000
urban residence	0,938	1,148	0,993	0,383*
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	0,998	1,007	0,997	0,993
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	0,946	1,560	0,659	1,044
speaks the titular language well	0,762	0,596*	0,954	1,800*
speaks English well	0,424*	0584	0,870	0,318
Nagelkerke R^2	0,152	0,084	0,182	0,102
N	460	578	568	390

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English

Table 15. *Have you had any health screening tests in the past two years? (the effect of socio-economic factors – odds ratios)*

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
male	0,927	0,817	0,634	0,394‡
elderly (55+)	3,398‡	1,647	4,335‡	1,219
upper secondary education (high school)	2,838†	1,593	,978	1,611
tertiary education	1,910	1,859	2,198	0,661
married or in a long-term relationship	1,087	1,968	2,339	1,397
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	1,430	4,158	2,166	2,110
household per capita income	0,999	0,999	1,000	1,000
urban residence	1,002	0,599	0,781	0,477
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	0,997	0,998	1,003	0,996

	Romania	Slovakia	Serbia	Ukraine
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1,000	1,000	1,000‡	1,000
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	0,638	1,642	0,587	1,214
speaks the titular language well	0,579	0,584	0,830	1,460
speaks English well	0,175*	0,108†	4,151	
Nagelkerke R^2	0,159	0,150	0,203	0,108
N	399	346	381	226

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English

Table 16. *Have you engaged in sports or physical activity at least once a week? (the effect of socio-economic factors – odds ratios)*

	Romania	Slovakia	Serbia	Ukraine
male	0,986	0,916	0,531†	0,855
middle aged (35-54 years)	0,490†	0,331‡	0,715	1,348
elderly (55+)	0,287‡	0,342†	0,551	0,640
upper secondary education (high school)	2,220†	3,684‡	1,130	1,738
tertiary education	3,887‡	9,386‡	2,151*	2,198
married or in a long-term relationship	0,537*	0,819	0,356†	0,418
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	0,386*	0,826	0,235†	0,164‡
household per capita income	1,001	1,000	1,000	1,002
urban residence	1,915*	3,383†	1,257	0,567
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	1,008*	1,018†	1,008	0,994
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1,000	1,000†	1,000	1,000
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	1,784*	0,969	1,034	1,302
speaks the titular language well	1,211	1,825†	1,317	0,598
speaks English well	1,684	3,733†	0,891	2,044
Nagelkerke R^2	0,310	0,324	0,135	0,185
N	631	578	565	394

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English

Table 17. *Do you consume vegetables or fruits daily? (the effect of socio-economic factors – odds ratios)*

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
male	0,712	0,543†	0,491‡	0,700
elderly (55+)	1,207	1,742*	1,500	0,768
upper secondary education (high school)	2,240*	3,260‡	4,276‡	0,646
tertiary education	1,331	0,759	1,235	0,955
married or in a long-term relationship	2,162*	1,080	2,077*	0,815
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	1,176	1,266	0,565	2,314†
household per capita income	0,587	0,841	0,901	1,506
urban residence	0,998†	1,001†	0,999	1,001
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	1,027	0,442*	1,657*	0,353*
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1,002*	0,985†	1,017‡	0,997
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
speaks the titular language well	0,810	0,899	0,847	1,407
speaks English well	1,762*	1,157	1,758*	1,550
Nagelkerke R^2	1,203	2,072*	2,475*	0,968
N	0,085	0,130	0,164	0,092

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English

Table 18. *Do you currently smoke? (the effect of socio-economic factors – odds ratios)*

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
male	1,440*	1,590*	1,415	5,791‡
middle aged (35-54 years)	,915	0,745	1,013	2,683†
elderly (55+)	,285‡	0,342†	,353†	0,854
upper secondary education (high school)	1,845*	0,525*	1,123	0,939
tertiary education	1,333	0,355†	0,706	0,461
married or in a long-term relationship	1,494	0,740	0,971	0,712
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	2,531*	0,569	1,067	0,404
household per capita income	1,001	1,000	0,999	1,000
urban residence	2,828†	0,911	1,654*	0,473
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	1,011†	0,999	1,005	0,982*
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	1,416	1,248	1,598	0,847

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
speaks the titular language well	1,087	0,874	0,884	0,661
speaks English well	1,267	0,728	0,616	3,077
Nagelkerke R^2	0,142	0,105	0,108	0,255
N	628	574	564	394

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English

Table 19. *Do you consume alcohol on at least three days a week? (the effect of socio-economic factors – odds ratios)*

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
male	-0,452‡	-0,358‡	-0,421‡	-0,421‡
middle aged (35-54 years)	-0,055	-0,066	0,045	0,051
elderly (55+)	0,072	0,055	0,125*	-0,017
upper secondary education (high school)	0,032	-0,087	-0,113†	0,022
tertiary education	-0,023	-0,092*	-0,110*	-0,043
married or in a long-term relationship	-0,017	0,071	0,109	0,084
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	-0,049	0,172†	0,146*	0,125*
household per capita income	-0,033	-0,116†	0029	-0,157†
urban residence	0,093	-0,146*	0,037	-0,137
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	-0,037	-0,051	0,091*	-0,107
number of Hungarians in the municipality	-0,285‡	0,116*	0,034	-0,105
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	-0,104†	-0,033	0,020	0,068
speaks the titular language well	0,031	-0,015	-0,009	-0,032
speaks English well	0,058	0,027	-0,018	-0,030
Nagelkerke R^2	0,255	0,255	0,289	0,247
N	616	584	561	391

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English

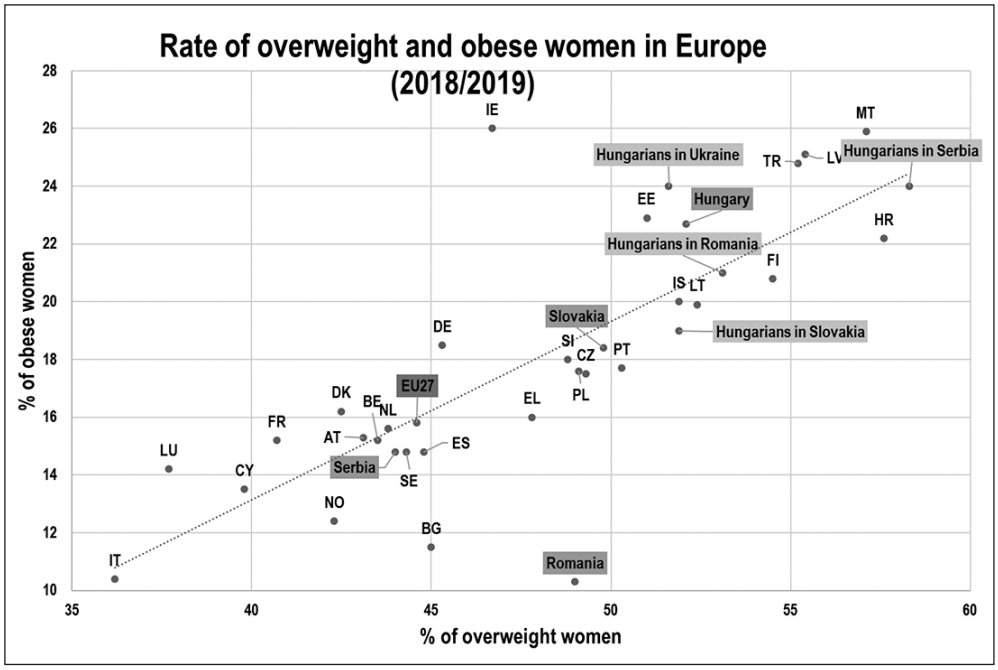

Figure 10.
Source: RINS 2018, Eurostat 2019 (hlth_ehis_bm1e)

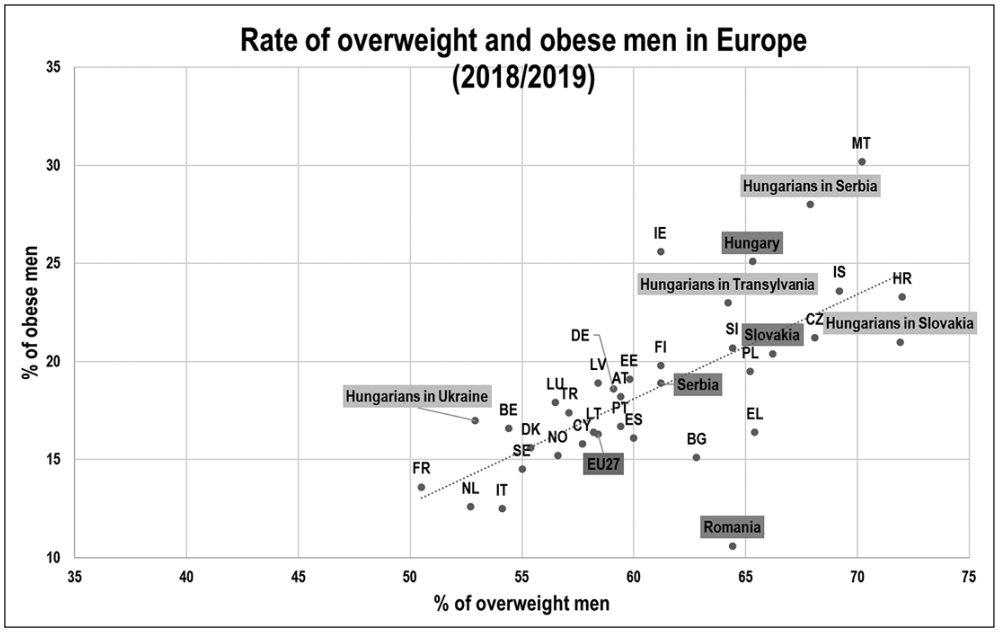

Figure 11.
Source: RINS 2018, Eurostat 2019 (hlth_ehis_bm1e)

Table 20. *Sociodemographic determinants of overweight (BMI>25) among women (the effect of socio-economic factors – odds ratios)*

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
middle aged (35-54 years)	1,307	2,079	3,144**	1,611
elderly (55+)	2,657*	3,433*	6,841***	4,536**
upper secondary education (high school)	1,312	0,849	0,939	0,605
tertiary education	,832	0,352*	1,712	0,582
married or in a long-term relationship	3,081*	0,665	1,389	17,958***
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	4,337**	0,707	0,555	17,727***
household per capita income	1,001	1,001	0,994**	0,993**
urban residence	0,360**	0,63	0,604	0,440
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	1,000	0,995	0,997	1,000
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1,000	1	1,000	1,000
number of relationships	1,044	0,95	0,944	1,135
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	1,287	0,641	0,442*	0,980
speaks the titular language well	1,320	0,684	1,101	1,246
speaks English well	1,054	0,535	0,938	0,184
Nagelkerke R^2	0,161	0,209	0,260	0,347
N	321	252	280	208

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English.

Table 21. *Sociodemographic determinants of overweight (BMI>25) among men (the effect of socio-economic factors – odds ratios)*

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
middle aged (35-54 years)	2,410*	1,772	1,643	1,717
elderly (55+)	2,692*	1,668	2,542*	2,165
upper secondary education (high school)	1,342	1,415	0,445*	1,282
tertiary education	1,116	1,685	0,342*	2,511
married or in a long-term relationship	2,963*	2,297*	1,790	2,682*
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	0,842	1,450	0,747	10,128**
household per capita income	1,002	1,000	1,001	0,998
urban residence	1,110	0,501	0,360*	3,190
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	1,005	0,986	1,005	1,025*
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
number of relationships	0,910	0,943	0,975	1,017

	Romania	Slovakia	Serbia	Ukraine
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	0,436	1,303	0,485*	4,035**
speaks the titular language well	1,505	1,320	1,540	0,835
speaks English well	1,072	0,691	0,463	0,923
Nagelkerke R^2	0,203	0,135	0,228	0,238
N	266	255	254	151

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English.

Table 22. *Sociodemographic determinants of obesity (BMI>30) among women (the effect of socio-economic factors – odds ratios)*

	Romania	Slovakia	Serbia	Ukraine
middle aged (35-54 years)	0,830	1,406	0,749	1,992
elderly (55+)	0,518	0,828	1,871	5,802†
upper secondary education (high school)	0,592	0,377*	0,666	1,216
tertiary education	0,194*	0,066†	1,604	1,237
married or in a long-term relationship	3,799*	2,743	2,420	7,336*
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	6,772*	5,168	1,585	6,423*
household per capita income	1,002	1	0,996*	0,995
urban residence	0,580	0,170*	0,608	0,856
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	0,999	0,985	0,989	1,003
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1,000	1	1,000	1,000
number of relationships	0,969	0,996	0,964	1,329*
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	0,818	0,769	0,467	2,563
speaks the titular language well	1,830	1,552	0,929	0,571
speaks English well	0,980	0,996	0,998	0,252
Nagelkerke R^2	0,107	0,224	0,133	0,260
N	321	252	280	208

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English.

Table 23. *Sociodemographic determinants of obesity (BMI>30) among men (the effect of socio-economic factors – odds ratios)*

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
middle aged (35-54 years)	4,626	1,334	1,053	1,514
elderly (55+)	5,002*	1,001	1,448	1,075
upper secondary education (high school)	3,630†	2,328	0,878	0,568
tertiary education	5,103*	2,881	0,591	0,682
married or in a long-term relationship	2,710	1,569	2,799*	4,405*
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	2,470	3,225	0,946	8,660†
household per capita income	1,000	0,999	1,001	0,993
urban residence	0,376	1,499	0,469	7,521
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	0,987	1,012	1,011	1,036*
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
number of relationships	1,059	1,112	1,013	1,100
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	0,384*	1,219	0,501	0,481
speaks the titular language well	0,756	0,704	1,445	0,478
speaks English well	2,049	0,972	0,630	0,475
Nagelkerke R^2	0,193	0,070	0,139	0,226
N	266	255	254	151

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English.

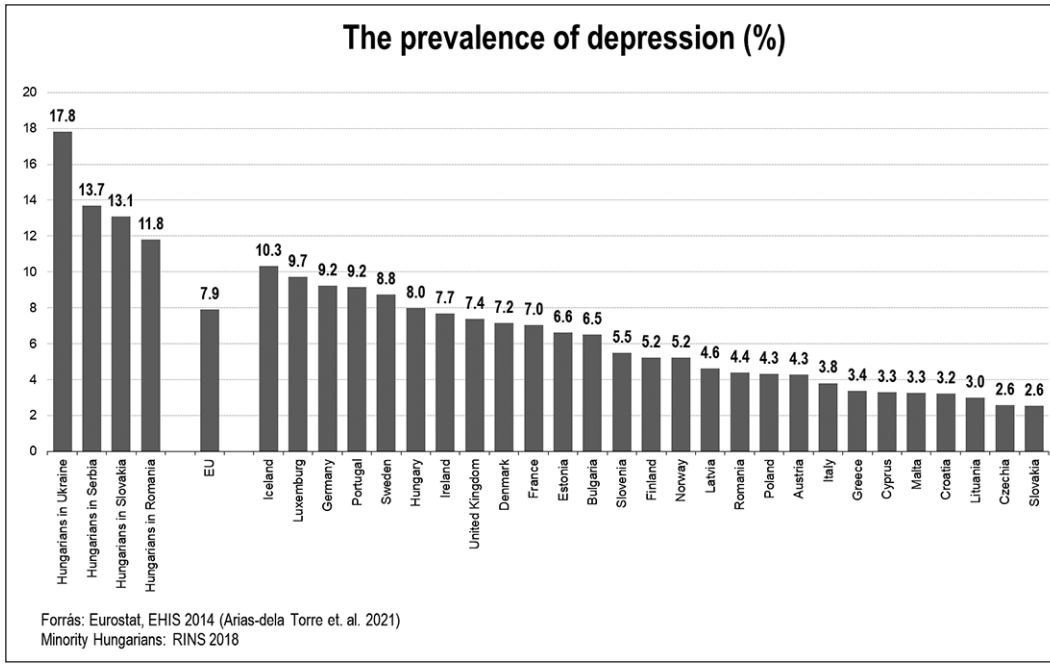

Figure 12.

Table 24. *The prevalence of depression across various social categories (%)*

	Romania (N=906)	**Slovakia (N=749)**	**Serbia (N=752)**	**Ukraine (N=552)**
gender				
male	11,5	9,2*	11,4*	16,7
female	11,9	16,5*	15,8*	19,1
age				
young (18-34 years)	3,3*	12,8	8,6*	5,0*
middle aged (35-54 years)	8,4*	12,6	9,3*	14,4*
elderly (55+)	19,3*	14,1	19,7*	33,9*
level of education				
primary or lower secondary education	22,1*	18,0*	18,6*	37,0*
upper secondary education (high school)	8,9*	12,4	11,2	14,4*
tertiary education	4,6*	8,3*	9,4*	6,6*
marital status				
single	7,2*	14	7,2*	16,2
married or in a long-term relationship	9,6*	13,1	13,3	11,8*
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	22,3*	11,5	20,9*	41,9*
economic activity				
economically active	6,0*	12,9	10,5*	10,9*

	Romania (N=906)	Slovakia (N=749)	Serbia (N=752)	Ukraine (N=552)
retired	19,6*	13,6	21,4*	37,1*
unemployed	31,0*	17,5	6,3	17,6
other inactive" (e.g., student, parental leave)	6,5*	10,4	10,1	11,2*
residence				
rural residence	10,4	13,2	13,7	20,9*
urban residence	13,4	13,1	13,9	13,1*
social relationships				
trust relationships	12,6	12,8	14,5	17,1
recreational contacts	6,9*	9,3*	8,1*	8,9*
functional relationship (money lending)	8,4*	12,9	12,4*	17,6
functional relationship (handling official matters)	9,8*	12,9	14,1	20,1
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	12,2	8,9	18,9*	13,0
language skills				
speaks the titular language well	9,9*	12,3	11,4*	18,4
speaks English well	4,7*	4,8*	6,3*	4,0*
total				
Total	11,7*	13,1*	13,7*	17,9*

Legend: *significant relationships

Table 25. *Socio-economic determinants of good or satisfactory health status (- odds ratios)*

	Romania	Slovakia	Serbia	Ukraine
male	1,018	0,458*	0,878	0,512*
middle aged (35-54 years)	0,551	1,491	0,245	0,397
elderly (55+)	0,110*	0,979	0,034*	0,173†
upper secondary education (high school)	2,118*	1,448	0,981	1,713
tertiary education	6,586*	1,716	2,587	1,414
married or in a long-term relationship	1,259	0,698	1,085	0,289
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	0,776	0,445	1,143	0,132*
household per capita income	1,001	1,001	1,001	1,003
urban residence	1,682	0,471	1,787	5,102
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	1,003	0,980	1,005	1,033
number of Hungarians in the municipality	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
number of relationships	1,189*	1,307*	1,187*	0,955
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	1,035	0,628	0,94	0,962
speaks the titular language well	0,624	1,533	2,483*	1,091
speaks English well	n.a.	1,239	0,236	n.a.

	Romania	Slovakia	Serbia	Ukraine
Nagelkerke R^2	0,277	0,122	0,259	0,329
N	611	541	553	363

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English.

Table 26. *Socio-economic determinants of self-perceived health (the effect of socio-economic factors – standardized OLS regression coefficients)*

	Romania	Slovakia	Serbia	Ukraine
male	-0,065	-0,017	-0,025	-0,084
middle aged (35-54 years)	-0,064	-0,070	-0,164†	-0,298‡
elderly (55+)	-0,429‡	-0,283‡	-0,413‡	-0,523‡
upper secondary education (high school)	0,043	0,098	0,020	0,132*
tertiary education	0,092*	0,093	0,059	0,039
married or in a long-term relationship	-0,025	0,023	-0,026	-0,052
living alone after marriage (divorced, widowed)	-0,142*	-0,009	-0,087	-0,158*
household per capita income	0,030	0,101*	0,024	0,027
urban residence	0,034	-0,039	-0,020	-0,081
proportion of Hungarians in the municipality	0,084*	-0,010	0,069	0,142
number of Hungarians in the municipality	0,055	0,039	0,045	0,131*
number of relationships	0,036	0,093*	0,086*	0,018
has relationship with members of the majority/ titular ethnic group	0,005	0,006	-0,009	0,015
speaks the titular language well	0,010	0,034	0,085*	0
speaks English well	-0,017	0,065	0,006	0,024
R^2	0,250	0,147	0,168	0,356
N	600	551	552	360

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: female, young (18-34 years), primary education, single, rural residence, does not have a relationship with members of the majority/titular ethnic group, not proficient in the titular language/English.

Table 27. *The self-perceived health as a function of health indicators (standardized OLS regression coefficients)*

	Romania	**Slovakia**	**Serbia**	**Ukraine**
BMI index	-0,038	-0,087*	-0,064*	-0,145‡
alcohol consumption scale	-0,052	-0,050	-0,069*	0,046
currently not smoking	0,005	0,009	0,047	-0,038
engages in sports or physical activity at least once a week	0,144‡	0,180‡	0,110†	0,163‡
eats fruit and vegetables daily	0,074*	0,015	-0,018	0,035
was hospitalized in the last year	-0,124‡	-0,053	-0,033	-0,087*
has a chronic illness	-0,134‡	-0,072*	-0,116†	-0,077*
is taking any medications	-0,195‡	-0,247‡	-0,225‡	-0,203‡
attends screening tests at least every two years	0,029	-0,021	0,036	-0,030
has seen their GP in the last year	-0,009	-0,035	-0,052	0,003
depression-score	-0,292‡	-0,233‡	-0,349‡	-0,337‡
R^2	0,378	0,322	0,375	0,367
N	802	657	689	502

Legend: cells in grey: significant relationship, *p ≤ 0.05; †p ≤ 0.01; ‡p ≤ 0.001. Reference categories: currently not smoking, exercising less than weekly, not eating vegetables daily, no chronic diseases, no medication in the last two weeks, no check-ups in the last two years, no appointments with GP in the last one year.

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Sports and the Identity of Ethnies: the Case of Basque and Frisian

Abstract
Full-fledged nations have had, and continue to have, the possibility to strengthen their national identity by participating in international sports competitions, such as the Olympic Games, and can use positive results in the international sports arena for national self-assertion. Globalization has opened up even more possibilities for nations to participate in international competitions. Ethnic and national minorities, classified as ethnies in the sense of Smith (see references), are excluded from these possibilities. Athletes and teams of ethnic and national minorities can only participate in international competitions if they join the sports ranks of the majority nation. However, another strategy is observed among ethnic and national minorities in order to make use of sports as a tool of soft power to strengthen internal cohesion and to team up with international sports organizations, like the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF). It turns out that among ethnic and national minorities, unique sports are to be found that form a substantial attribute of their identities. In this paper, this sports strategy of ethnies will be illustrated with two case studies, namely autochthonous sports that have originated from the Basque minorities in Spain and France and the Frisian minority in the Netherlands.
Keywords: sports, ethnic and national minorities, ethnie, Basque sports, Frisian sports, soft power, globalization

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Introduction

In this paper, we will take a closer look at how sports are used as a tool of soft power by ethnic and national minorities to strengthen collective identity and international prestige. The paper discusses two case studies, namely sports in the Basque Country and the Dutch province of Fryslân. Before examining these case studies, we will first discuss the conceptual toolbox, which

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will enable us to conduct a deeper analysis. In the following section, we will discuss the definition of sports, the status of ethnic and national minorities compared to nations in the context of sports, and sports as a tool of soft power within the framework of globalization.

Concepts

Let us first consider the definition of 'sports'. Undoubtedly, everyone has, to a certain extent, an idea of what a sport actually is. Football and tennis, for example, are activities that can quite certainly be regarded as sports. However, activities such as darts or chess are much more often subject to debate about whether these activities should be regarded as sports. Given these different activities that are subject to debate, a clear definition of the concept of 'sports' must be given. Two definitions of sports are put forward by international organizations operating on the international and supranational levels of global sports governance. The Council of Europe has elaborated a European Sports Charter, which includes a definition in Article 2/1a of the document.[2] According to this definition, sports are "all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels." Another definition is put forward by the Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF). The GAISF is the umbrella organization for all (Olympic and non-Olympic) international sports federations as well as the organizer of multi-sports games and sport-related international associations. It has 97 full members, including international sports federations governing specific sports disciplines worldwide; thirteen associate members, including organizations that conduct activities closely related to the international sports federations; and eleven international federations that have observer status at the GAISF.[3] According to the GAISF, an activity can be regarded as a sport when there is a certain element of competition present, there is no element of 'luck' involved, there is no equipment monopoly, and the activity ought not to be harmful to the participants.[4] In both definitions, the competition aspect of sports plays a defining role.

Now that the definition for the concept of 'sports' is clarified, the concept of the 'nation' will be discussed. The concept of the 'nation' is rather vague and controversial, and thus many different scholars have put forward many different definitions over the years.[5] In this paper, we will follow the definitions of 'nation' and 'ethnie' as put forward in the work of Smith. In Smith (2005: 13), the concept of 'nation' is defined as "a named human community occupying a homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, a common public culture, a single

2 See for "The Revised European Sports Charter" the website of the Council of Europe. https://rm.coe.int/16804c9dbb. Accessed: January 26, 2023.

3 See for the members of GAISF: https://gaisf.sport/members/. Accessed 2023, January 26.

4 See for this definition the website of World Lacrosse. https://worldlacrosse.sport/about/gaisf/. Accessed: 2023, January 30.

5 See for the discussion of 'nation' and related concepts Weber (1978: 385-389); Deutsch (1966); Smith (1988, 1991, 1999, 2005); Anderson (1992); Gat (2013); and Leerssen (2018).

economy, and common rights and duties for all members." According to Smith (2005: 13), there are key differences between the concept of 'nation' and the concept of 'ethnie', which he defines as "a named human community connected to a homeland, possessing common myths of ancestry, shared memories, one or more elements of shared culture, and a measure of solidarity, at least among the elites." Relevant for the present discussion is that ethnic and national minorities fall under the definition of 'ethnie', and that the definition of nation is irrelevant in this respect.

The status of 'nation' or 'ethnie' has enormous consequences for participation in international competitions, as Hobsbawm (1997: 142-143) points out. According to Hobsbawm, only nations can participate in international sports competitions, like World Cups or Olympic Games. In these international competitions, the nations are symbolically represented by an individual athlete or team. These athletes serve as a tool of nation-formation and express the competitive self-assertion of the national community. Elsewhere, I have argued that Hungary invested heavily in their national sports, such as saber fencing, to compensate for the loss of national prestige during and after the First World War. These efforts led to a domination of Olympic fencing by the Hungarians for a large part of the twentieth century (Marácz, 2019).

In modern times, the fact that the 'nation' is an actor in the international sports arena also makes it a vehicle of soft power in globalization, as Nye (2004) argues. The Soviet Union put a lot of effort into sports to beat Team USA in the Olympic medal ranking during the Cold War (Nye, 2004: 74), and China wanted to demonstrate its readiness to participate in globalization by organizing the Olympic Summer Games of 2008 (Nye, 2004: 88). However, in processes of globalization, not only nations or hegemonic states can play an important role and make use of soft power for distributing values worldwide; popular sport clubs or teams can also play a role in communicating values. Competitions in the US, like national basketball games, Major League Baseball games, the National Football League's Super Bowl, and the National Ice Hockey League, project the idea that anyone who participates in sports can become famous and rich (Nye, 2004: 47). The most popular sports team in the world is, however, a European sports team, i.e., Manchester United, with 200 fan clubs in 24 countries (Nye, 2004: 40). This shows that the globalization of sports can be influenced by smaller, non-US entities as well.

Although ethnies, including ethnic and national minorities as defined by Smith above, do not directly play a role in international competitions reserved for nations, they can employ globalization to be present at the international or supranational level of global sports governance and sports networks. This is done in order to strengthen internal cohesion, community consciousness, and to gain international recognition for their cause. Let us consider two of these cases, i.e., Basque and Frisian sports, respectively.

Basque Sports

The Basques have lived for a long period in the southern part of France in a continuous strip with their co-nationals in the northern part of Spain. [6] In both countries, they have the status of ethnic and national minorities, although in the Spanish part of the Basque Country, the Basque communities enjoy autonomy within the framework of a federated Spanish state. Basque nationalism did not succeed in guaranteeing a separate state for the Basque nation; rather, the Basques are considered an ethnie in the sense of Smith, as discussed above.[7] The Basque language plays an important role in securing the Basque identity, as it differs substantially from the Romance languages of French and Spanish (Smith, 1988: 27-28). The Basques have managed to revitalize their ethnic identity, in which sports play a prominent role as an identity marker (Smith, 1999: 138).

Abrisketa (2012) discusses a Basque sport, i.e., 'pelota' (ball game), which is primarily played in the Basque Country. The book also provides details of the history of Basque pelota and the role it plays in Basque culture. The essence of the ball game is about hitting a ball against a wall (frontón in Basque), and when the ball you have hit bounces more than once or bounces out of play, you score a point.[8] The most popular version of the sport involves two individuals competing against each other and playing with their bare hands. However, many different varieties of the sport exist. Pelota can also be played in pairs and with different materials, such as wooden rackets or basket-like gloves called 'xisteras' in Basque.

From a historical perspective, pelota has indeed been part of Basque identity for many centuries. The oldest document in which pelota is mentioned dates all the way back to 1509. It is an ordinance from the municipality of Bilbao prohibiting the game of pelota from being played in the cemetery of the Santiago church. In the early days of the sport, before the introduction of the frontón, pelota was predominantly played against walls of churches. Another document that traces all the way back to the sixteenth century is a description of the Basque Country by Johannes Lange. In his description of Basque identity from 1526, Lange mentions the play of the tambourine, the uniqueness of their language, and the game of pelota as typical Basque characteristics. Pelota even plays a role in local Basque legends (Abrisketa, 2012: 37-38). According to one of these Basque legends, ancient giants used to play pelota with colossal rocks in the Basque countryside. In our day and age, these colossal rocks can be found across the mountainous Basque countryside, representing the leftovers of these ancient giants playing pelota. Besides these ancient legends, former pelota players throughout history have become legends themselves as well. Well-known examples of such pelota players are Perkain and Azantza.[9]

6 See Deutsch (1966: 42) for a linguistic map of the Basque territories.
7 See for an extensive discussion of the history of Basque nationalism Seton-Watson (1977: 56-59).
8 See for the basics of Basque pelota the website of Fitpeople: https://fitpeople.com/sports/others-sports/the-basics-of-basque-pelota/. Accessed: 2022, January 26.
9 Ibid., 51-53.

Perkain was a renowned pelota player from the French side of the Basque Country. When the French Revolution broke out in 1789, he was forced to live in exile and thus moved to the Spanish side of the border. When one day he was invited to play a match in a Basque town on the French side of the border, Perkain surprisingly accepted the offer. According to the legend, during this particular match, the police arrived to arrest him. Perkain subsequently knocked the officers down by precisely hitting them with his pelota balls, and he could thus miraculously escape to the Spanish side of the border again. The Azantza legend is less subject to historical controversy. Azantza was a pelota player from the higher ranks of society who played during the nineteenth century. Azantza never minded playing against players from other classes. Many upper-class friends of his criticized him for playing with men from lower classes, but according to Azantza, on the frontón, social ranks and classes did not matter; the only thing that mattered was the quality of the players. Until this day and age, this mentality is still very much present on the pelota court, and Azantza is highly appreciated for this.

Pelota is also related to the Basque identity due to the frontón. The frontón itself is much more than merely the court on which pelota is played. In most Basque cities and towns, the frontón stands literally in the center of the community, as it is often located close to or next to the town's central square. In some towns and villages, the pelota court even functions as the central square. In these cases, the frontón is not only the place where pelota is played, but also the place where the community comes together on various occasions besides pelota matches. One could think of local dance festivals or markets being organized on the frontón. Hence, the frontón plays a prominent role in Basque community formation. Besides this function, the pelota court is also used to deliver messages. Over the last decades, an increasing number of pelota matches have been broadcasted on television, and many advertisers eagerly try to make use of this opportunity. During important matches, the left-hand wall is more than often decorated with a great number of advertisements. In this way, commercialization has reached the pelota court. Switching our focus from the professional courts to the street courts, local courts are often used by political activists for Basque independence to express their political and national ideals. It is not uncommon to come across the slogan "Iraulza ala hil", which translates to "Revolution or death" (Abrisketa, 2012: 333-346; Woodworth, 2007: 101-102). In sum, the frontón plays a prominent role in Basque society, as it is much more than merely the court on which pelota is played. It is the place where communities come together, where advertisers unobtrusively try to persuade the Basque audiences to buy their goods, and where Basque political activists manifest their extreme nationalist ideas. Hence, we conclude that the frontón is an inherent attribute of Basque community life.

The fact that pelota and its court, the frontón, play a central role in Basque community life is also emphasized in an interview with two professional Basque pelota players, namely Julen Martija Ollakarizketa, the current Basque pelota champion, and Erik Jaka, the pelota champion of 2020.[10] Ollakarizketa confirms that pelota is "very important to the Basque culture" and that "the sport really is a sport from the Basque Country." For Jaka, the fact of a "national"

10 I am indebted to Remko Munnik for conducting these interviews. The interviews were compiled online on May 6, 2022.

pelota competition provides strong support for the Basque identity: "The fact that during the competition, you travel around the Basque Country to play your matches and, as a result, you get to know different people and different towns and cities throughout the region strongly contributes to the sense of belonging to the Basque community." Both interviewees also emphasize that besides this sense of belonging to a community, there are also certain values present in pelota that accordingly represent Basque society at large, namely nobility and honesty. "It is expected from pelota players that they play the game honestly at all times. This aspect of the sport can be related to a saying well known throughout Spain and Latin America: 'La palabra de Vasco,' which would translate to 'The word of a Basque.' This saying stands for absolute honesty. When you give someone 'The word of a Basque,' it means your word is bond against all costs. Another aspect present in the game of pelota and that of Basque society at large is that of ingenuity. When playing pelota, one's goal is to play the ball where your opponent least expects it in order to fool him and score a point. This characteristic is also present in the Basque style of conversating and negotiating, as Basques can come up with proposals where you least expect them."

The previously presented data on pelota and the Basque Country demonstrate that pelota is a sport under the definitions of the Council of Europe and GAISF, in which not only the competition element, evidenced by the existence of a national pelota competition, is satisfied but it also clearly contributes to physical fitness and social relationships, such as a common Basque public culture. The fact that pelota is considered a sport is also supported by the International Federation of Basque Pelota (FIPV) which is recognized by the IOC and is a member of the GAISF.[11] Hence, this Basque sport is a significant attribute of the Basque ethnie. This is also underlined by the following anecdote that recently occurred in the Spanish parliament Abrisketa (2012: 370). A Spanish member of parliament was referring to his four colleague politicians from the Basque Country by stating: "I don't know what those four pelotaris want." Here, the Spanish politician referred to his Basque colleagues as 'pelotaris,' i.e., pelota players.

The times when Basque pelota was played only by members of the Basque diaspora in the Americas are long gone (Totoricagüena, 2005: 199). The Basque ethnie has managed to promote Basque pelota at the international and supranational levels of global sports governance by establishing the FIPV, which is now a federative organization with 33 member countries all over the world. The FIPV, which organizes world championships in Basque pelota, has been a member of GAISF since 1929. Basque pelota has also enjoyed the attention of the IOC, having been a demonstration sport at four Olympic Summer Games: Paris (1900, 1924), Mexico City (1968), and Barcelona (1992). These successes in promoting Basque pelota at the international and supranational level of global sports governance contribute to the self-assertion of the Basque ethnie. In the following section, we will discuss Frisian sports.

11 See for more details the website of the International Federation of Basque Pelota on the list of members of GAISF. https://gaisf.sport/members/#pelota. Accessed: 2023, January 26.

Frisian Sports

The Frisian ethnic and national minority lives in the northern parts of the Netherlands, particularly in the province of Fryslân (in Dutch, Friesland). The province is officially bilingual, with both Dutch and Frisian being recognized languages. Frisian is the official second-state language in the Netherlands. Of the 600,000 inhabitants of the province of Fryslân, around 200,000 speak the Frisian language as their native language. The rest of the inhabitants speak either Dutch or mixed, hybrid, or co-switched variants of Frisian and Dutch. This is made easy due to the close relationship between Dutch and Frisian languages. Unlike the Basque case, the Frisian language cannot be considered a strong, contrastive identity marker (Marácz, 2011: 136-143). As a result, Smith is not optimistic about the revitalization of the Frisian ethnie and concludes that it is about to disappear (Smith, 1988: 92). However, apart from the revitalization efforts targeting the use of the Frisian language in the official media of the province of Fryslân, which broadcasts primarily in the Frisian language, and the representation of bilingual signs all over the territory of the province, there are other strong identity markers that are promoted in the province of Fryslân as well. These include the production of Frisian foods and drinks, dominating the milk industry via the multinational company Friesland Foods, and the promotion of Frisian sports to shape the collective Frisian identity. Let us discuss the following sports: 'keatsen' (Frisian handball), 'fierljeppen' (Frisian pole vaulting), 'skûtsjesilen' (Frisian sailing competition), and the so-called 'Alvestêdetocht' (Eleven Cities Tour).

Frisian handball, called 'keatsen' in Frisian (and 'kaatsen' in Dutch), is a traditional Frisian sport related to Basque pelota, American handball, and fives. Frisian keatsen is most commonly practiced in the province of Fryslân and is believed to be one of the oldest ballgames. The scoring is comparable to tennis, with the first team to score six games winning the match. The major Frisian handball tournament, called the PC (an abbreviation of Permanent Committee), has been held in the city of Frentsjer (Dutch Franeker) since 1854 and is considered the oldest regular sports tournament in the world.

Frisian handball is played on a rectangular lawn measuring 10 meters by 32 meters, with two teams consisting of three players each. In the center of one short side of the field is a receiving zone measuring five meters by 19 meters, defended by two players, while the other team member remains a field player. One of the opponents serves the hard leather ball with their bare hand from a serving box approximately thirty meters from the receiving zone. If they do not succeed in reaching the receiving zone, the receiving team gets a direct score. When the receiving team, whose players are allowed to wear a single hardened leather glove, returns the ball over the short line behind the serving box (called the upper line, or 'boppe' in Frisian), they also get a direct score. Of course, the serving team is allowed to prevent this from happening by hitting or holding the ball before the upper line. The place where the ball remains after such a rally is marked with a small woodblock called a 'keats', which is best defined as an undecided score. When two such undecided points occur (or one, if one of the teams is on game point), the teams change places. In the next rally, the team that then has the receiving position tries to

hit the ball past the first 'keats' and, if any, in the next rally past the second 'keats', thereby deciding the undecided points. Then, they start all over again.[12]

The word 'fierljeppen' is a Frisian language compound of 'fier' meaning "far" and 'ljeppen' meaning "leaping". Hence, it can be translated into English as "far-leaping". Fierljeppen is another traditional sport of the Frisian minority in the Dutch province of Fryslân. The sport involves a long pole and a body of water. The pole is between eight and thirteen meters long and has a flat round plate at the bottom to prevent it from sinking into the muddy river or canal bottom. A jump consists of a sprint to the pole over the jump ramp, jumping and grabbing it, then climbing to the top of the pole while trying to control its forward and lateral movements over a body of water, and finally finishing by landing on a sand bed opposite the starting point. Due to considerable parts of the Netherlands being below sea level, it has many waterways. Fierljeppen originated as a way for Frisians, especially farmers during agricultural work, to get around the waterways easily. Over time, it turned into a competition, with the first official match in 1771. However, the sport was not properly structured until 1957 when the Dutch Fierljep Federation (NFB) started to manage fierljeppen on a national basis, including fierljeppen associations that were active in the western part of the Netherlands as well.[13]

Skûtsjesilen is a Frisian regatta involving 'skûtsjes', which are cargo sailboats. In the early 19th century, competitions were organized with skûtsjes, for example, in 1820 in Snits (Dutch Sneek). Regattas were held when farmers had no cargo, and sailors could sometimes earn a cash prize when innkeepers organized a competition during a fair. The prize ceremony would be held in the inn. In the second half of the 19th century, clubs were founded to organize skûtsje regattas, and during this period, the amateur sport developed. Professional competitions became rarer, as professional skippers could not spare the time, and the number of participants began to decline. However, in the 20th century, cargo ships became increasingly motorized, and the number of skûtsjes began to decline. The cargo sailboats became available to amateurs as well. The Sintrale Kommisje Skûtsjesilen (Central Committee Skûtsjesilen or SKS) was founded in 1945.[14] While the number of race committees grew after the Second World War, the number of skûtsjes fell. In the 1950s, it was difficult for skippers to keep up payments to own a skûtsje. Foundations were set up to buy a skûtsje to support participation, and thus the current SKS championship arose with skûtsjes that came from a town or village which acted as sponsors. The Frisian shipyard owner Lodewijk Meeter was important for the continued existence of the sport during this period. In 1953, when the regatta would have been canceled due to low participation, Meeter arranged enough boats so the competition could continue. He was also the first skipper whose skûtsje was specially bought for competitions. In the 1970s and

12 See for more information on 'keatsen' the official website of the Royal Dutch Keats Federation. https://www.knkb.nl/. Accessed: 2023, January 30.

13 See for more information on fjierljeppen the official website of the NFB which has two members, namely the Frisian Ljeppers Federation (FLB) and the Dutch Polsstok Federation Holland (PBH). Together they represent 600 active fierljeppers in the Netherlands. https://www.nederlandsefierljepbond.nl/. Accessed: 2023, January 30.

14 See for more information the official website of SKS. https://www.skutsjesilen.nl/. Accessed: 2023, January 30.

1980s, it became possible for individuals to possess their own skûtsje. However, since these skûtsjes did not fit into the rules of the SKS proscribing that skippers had to come from a family of skippers, these skippers set up an alternate organization. In 1981, the 'Iepen Fryske Kampioenskippen Skûtsjesilen' (Open Frisian Championships Skûtsjesilen or IFKS) was formed. Currently, there are two Skûtsjesilen championships in Friesland. The SKS regatta has long been attended by a fixed number of fourteen skûtsjes, although there are skipper or crew changes, and often the ships are the same. The IFKS regatta has also grown over the years, and there are currently about sixty skûtsjes in four classes.[15]

The Frisian Alvestêdetocht (Eleven Cities Tour) is a long-distance tour skating event on natural ice, almost 200 kilometers long, which is held both as a speed skating competition with 300 competitors and a leisure tour with 16.000 skaters. The tour follows a closed or circular route along frozen canals, rivers and lakes visiting the eleven historic Frisian cities: Ljouwert (Dutch Leeuwarden), Snits (Dutch Sneek), Drylts (Dutch IJlst), Sleat (Dutch Sloten), Starum (Dutch Stavoren), Hylpen (Dutch Hindeloopen), Warkum (Dutch Workum), Boalsert (Dutch Bolsward), Harns (Dutch Harlingen), Frentsjer (Dutch Franeker), Dokkum (Dutch Dokkum), then returning to the Frisian capital Ljouwert again. The tour is held annually only if the ice is, and remains, at least 15 centimeters thick along the entire course as about 15.000 amateur skaters take part, putting high requirements on the quality of the ice. When the ice is suitable, the tour is announced and starts within 48 hours. The last tours were held in 1985, 1986 and 1997. All participants of the Eleven City Tour must be members of the Royal Association of the Eleven Frisian Cities.[16] A starting permit and bib are required which cost €100 in 2017. Skaters must collect a stamp in each city, and at three secret checkpoints, and must finish the track before midnight. There are often points along the route where the ice is too thin to allow mass skating. These points are called "kluning points" (from Frisian klúnje meaning to run on skates over a carpet), and the skaters walk on their skates to the next stretch of good ice. In 1997 ice-transplantation was introduced to strengthen weak spots in the ice, for instance under bridges. The finishing point of the Eleven Cities Tour is a canal near Leeuwarden, called the 'Bonkevaart'. The Eleven Cities Tour has been declared to be in danger of "extinction" due to climate change. In the past 50 years, the Eleven Cities Tour has taken place only three times, most recently in 1997. The Eleven Cities Tour is the biggest ice skating tour in the world.

The Frisian sports introduced above involving 'keatsen', 'fierljeppen', skûtsjesilen, and the so-called Eleven Cities Tour can be rightly referred to as "sports" in harmony with the definition of the Council of Europe and GAISF discussed earlier in this paper. In all the four sports there are clear competitive elements involved and they have a strong social function of bringing people together. For the Frisians these sports contribute to their collective identity and are considered as important identity markers of the Frisian culture. Besides the implications for

15 See for more information the official website of IFKS. https://www.ifks.frl/. Accessed: 2023, January 30.

16 See for more information on the Frisian Eleven Cities Tour the official website of the Royal Association the Frisian Eleven Cities. https://www.elfstedentocht.frl/de-vereniging/. Accessed: 2023, January 30.

local culture, the Frisian sports contribute to the perception of the Frisian culture to the outside world.

The Frisian sports are clearly recognized as such in the rest of the Netherlands. Some of these sports have spread to other parts of the Netherlands, like keatsen and fierleppen mobilizing Dutch participants. A number of the members of the Royal Association the Frisian Eleven Cities are from outside the province of Fryslân and have a permit to start in the skating competition or in the recreative tour of the Alvestêdetocht. Remarkably, also skûtsjesilen has appeared outside the province of Fryslân. In May 2014 under the name of Skûtsjesilen Holland a skûtsjesilen regatta took place near the city of Rotterdam for the first time. The overarching keats federation KNKB which was founded in 1897 includes 124 keats associations with almost 10.000 active players. Ten of the member associations are active outside the province of Fryslân in other parts of the Netherlands. The KNKB organizes the national keats competition and has supervision over the rules. It is seated in the city of Frentsjer (Dutch Franeker) where it also manages a keats museum. The NFB is the overarching federation of fierljeppen in the Netherlands. Since 2013, it has organized a cycle of eight competitions which include annually 140 official tournaments.

The Frisian sports do not only attract a number of recreative practitioners and spectators from the province of Fryslân but also a number of tourists from the rest of the Netherlands. Keatsen, fierljeppen, and skûtsjesilen competitions are visited by a number of national and international tourists in the summer months and are real social gatherings. The Eleven Cities Tour, when organized, has become a mass event with extensive national media attention. Due to unfavorite climate conditions, the tour has not been organized annually in Fryslân and alternatives have been elaborated. The skating competition is organized every year – except when it can be organized in Fryslân – in other European countries, like Sweden or Finland with better winter climate conditions for skating. In Fryslân itself the tour takes place each year in the summer months as a biking and rollerskating event with a number of recreative participants.

Of the four Frisian sports we have discussed above, only keatsen has reached the international and supranational level of global sports governance. Although the KNKB is not a member of global umbrella organizations like GAISF, keatsen was featured as a demonstration sport at several Summer Olympic Games, including the 1928 Summer Olympics in Amsterdam.[17] The KNKB is, however, a member of the Confédération Internationale du Jeu de Balle (CIJB), which was founded on May 13, 1928. The CIJB has strived to develop one international handball game variant based on several different autochthonous variants, such as Frisian keatsen, Basque pelota, and others, including autochthonous variants in European countries like Belgium, Italy, England, Wales, Ireland, and Sweden. The CIJB itself has become a worldwide organization that supervises European and World Championships in the international variant of the handball game.[18]

17 Compare Van Rossem (1928).

18 See the website of the CIJB. https://cijb.info/. Accessed: 2023, January 30.

Conclusions

In this paper, we have discussed two case studies concerning the sports of ethnic and national minorities, i.e. the Basques and the Frisians. These ethnic and national minorities are considered as 'ethnies' in the sense of Smith. Nations have the opportunity to use sports as a vehicle to strengthen their national identity and consciousness in international sports competitions, like the Olympic Games and World Championships. These international competitions contribute to the self-assertations of the national participants. This level of participation is not open for ethnies. These being excluded from these international and supranational levels of sports representation have cultivated the sports they have inherited and are closely associated with their collective identity. Two such cases were discussed in this paper, i.e. the Basque sports of pelota and the Frisian sports of keatsen, fierljeppen, skûtsjesilen, and the so-called Alvestêdetocht. At the local level, these sports contribute to the revitalization of the collective identity. This is especially important in the Frisian case where the role of language as an identity marker is much more limited due to its similarity to Dutch than in the Basque case where language is a strong contrastive marker compared to Spanish and French. In the former case, sports identity can compensate for the loss of language identity.

In the age of globalization, sports are employed as soft power instruments for the projection of national prestige. In the case of ethnies that are excluded as minorities from international competitions, we observe that their unique sports disciplines are spreading and developing into worldwide organizations and events. The representative bodies of these unique sports disciplines can become members of international sports federations, such as GAISF and CIJB, which is the case for Basque pelota and Frisian keatsen. These sports have also joined the international level of sports governance by featuring as demonstration sports at Olympic Games. These are strong soft power tools to popularize these ethnies' sports and to give their representative bodies an international position within global sports governance. As a side effect of globalization, an intensification of the commercialization of sports appears. The commercialization of ethnies' sports can boost the promotion of these sports, which can, in turn, be used as a tool of soft power to gain international recognition. In the case of Basque pelota, we interviewed two professional pelota players who make a living by playing the game, just like soccer players from the Basque professional soccer club Atletico de Bilboa. In the case of the fierljeppen competition in the Netherlands, the Austrian company Red Bull, producing energy drinks of the same name, turned out to be the main sponsor of the national fierljeppen events in 2022.[19]

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19 See the website of the Red Bull Fierljeppen competition in the Netherlands. https://www.redbull.com/nl-nl/red-bull-fierste-ljepper-2022. Accessed: 2023, January 30.

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Sport Diplomacy in the European Union: The Development of a Soft Power Strategy

Abstract
This paper examines the emergence of sport as a tool of the European Union's (EU) soft power, due to its popularity and cost-effectiveness. Public diplomacy is gaining momentum and is increasingly used by state and non-state actors as means to influence the behaviour of others. The EU is developing its sport policy, laying the foundations for what could become a formal sport diplomacy strategy in the future. Using a qualitative methodology combining content analysis, case studies and interviews, this paper studies the benefits of an EU sport diplomacy strategy and the form it should take. It argues that for the EU to gain a comparative advantage over other state and non-state actors, it should adopt a hybrid sport diplomacy strategy that is based on soft and smart power and reflects its norms, values, and unique structure. Key actions it should consider are collaborating with international (sport) organisations and developing grassroots projects. This thesis also provides recommendations for a future EU sport diplomacy strategy.
Keywords: European Union, sport diplomacy, soft power, strategy, grassroot

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Introduction

On the 16th of January 2022, Serbian tennis player Novak Djokovic was expelled from the Australian Open tournament due to his vaccination status not being compliant with the legal requirements of the State of Victoria, thereby triggering a diplomatic incident between Australia and Serbia (Henley & Pantovic, 2022). This huge controversy highlighted the impact of sport on international politics. The relationship between sport and diplomacy is an understudied field of research, mainly due to both concepts being studied as separate disciplines (Parrish & Zintz, 2019). However, since the early 2000s, the sport has increasingly been regarded as creating spill-over effects that go beyond the competitions themselves (Cha, 2016; Parrish &

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Zintz, 2019; Sonntag, 2020). The increased interest in the relationship between the concepts of sport and diplomacy has led to the emergence of the concept of 'sport diplomacy' and is the driving idea behind this research project. The concept now includes non-state actors, such as the European Union (EU), which is seen as a newcomer by traditional sports diplomacy actors (Katsarova & Halleux, 2019; Sonntag, 2020). However, according to Articles 6 and 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the EU only has limited competencies regarding its sport policy (Foster, 2019; Katsarova & Halleux, 2019). Paradoxically, the European continent is home to some of the most competitive national sporting leagues, 'Sport Mega Events' (SMEs), and some of the most powerful international sports federations and organizations: the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). There is potential for the EU to harness these continental assets and add a new dimension to its projection of soft power, defined by Nye (2004) as the use of non-coercive means by state and non-state actors to obtain desired foreign policy outcomes. The gap on which this article focuses is explicitly stated in the introduction of the 2021 EU report promoting a strategic approach to EU diplomacy: sport plays an important role in European society, yet it is not formally part of the EU's foreign policy (Parrish et al., 2021). Non-state actors, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) or the Council of Europe, as well as several state actors, have successfully developed sport diplomacy strategies, and the EU is lagging even though it possesses the institutional capacity to build a plan of action (Constantin et al., 2021).

Therefore, how can the European Union (EU), a hybrid power actor in international relations, benefit from a sports diplomacy strategy? This article aims to fill a gap in the literature on sports diplomacy, and more specifically on EU sports diplomacy. It does so first by highlighting the benefits for the EU of pursuing a well-defined sport diplomacy strategy and second, by providing concrete recommendations for such a strategy, based on three existing models. The core hypothesis is that although its impact should not be overstated, sports can be a useful tool of soft power for the EU. It will be argued that the EU does not possess exclusive and legally binding competencies in this policy area and should adopt a sports diplomacy strategy based on different levels of governance. Grassroots sport, which refers to all non-professional physical activity, represents an innovative and more participatory approach, while cooperating with international sport organizations is also crucial, as they are the main power holders in sport (Garamvölgyi et al., 2020). Not only would both approaches be beneficial for the EU's foreign policy objectives, but they are relatively low-risk and low-cost, thus in line with the concept of soft power, the theoretical framework underpinning this research. This article employs a mixed qualitative methodology, as the EU can exert soft power in numerous ways and combines text and document analysis as the principal method, followed by case-study analyses. Core readings are selected from a range of academic sources: books, newspapers, journal articles, EU treaties, and government reports, enabling the construction of a comprehensive picture. The main argument is developed throughout five core chapters, which proceed as follows.

1. Soft power and its place in the EU's foreign policy

a) From 'power' to 'soft power'

Power can be understood as the ability to achieve desired outcomes and influence the behavior of others (Nye, 2004). Traditionally, a great power in the world order was measured by its strength in wars (Nye, 1990). However, by the end of the twentieth century, power was measured less in terms of military capability and more in terms of factors such as technology, education, and economic strength and growth (Nye, 1990). Other non-state actors, such as international organizations, possessed these increasingly 'powerful' resources, enabling them to influence the behavior of others (Nye, 1990). Power is gradually shifting away from being exercised via traditional means, and the world is evolving into a 'softer world', a concept Joseph Nye defined in 1990 as outcomes achievable without coercion (the stick) and through inducement (the carrots). Soft power cultivates compliance using various policies, qualities, and other factors of attractiveness that both state and non-state actors may possess (Gallarotti, 2011). The United States of America's (USA) invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the more recent chaotic withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan in 2021 demonstrated the negative impact and the consequences of a failing hard power strategy (Nye, 2004). What becomes important in this new world order is winning the peace and asserting one's image as a positive actor, rather than trying to influence the behavior of others through destructive means, as seen with the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

b) 'Smart power'

To achieve this, access to information is important, and Nye (2014) argues for the emerging 'information revolution', where power is shifting from the 'capital-rich' to the 'information-rich'. Channels have diversified, leading to a diffusion of power away from governments to non-state actors (Nye, 2014). The internet has enabled individuals to become soft power actors, as seen with the examples of Wikileaks and Edward Snowden. Soft power is thus also about the control and portrayal of information and how it is broadcast in the media. Such examples can be seen in sports, especially in how an SME opening ceremony is portrayed on television. Non-state actors benefitting from the information revolution do not possess the same power resources as states and are not able to use hard power (Nye, 2004). Soft power, along with military (hard) power and economic power, is an important source of power in a multipolar world (Nye, 2004). Nielsen (2013) argues that the weakness of soft power is when it tries to replace hard power; the two forms of power should be used as complements rather than as alternatives. In 2003, Nye called this complimentary use 'smart power'. Nations "have everything from smart bombs to smartphones to smart blogs" (Wilson, 2008: 113). As states become smarter in how they balance both forms of power, so do non-state actors, such as Al Qaeda, promoting values seen as repulsive by most of the world but still appealing to certain extremists (Nye, 2004; Wilson, 2008). Gallarotti (2011) argues that what really differentiates soft and hard power is the context in which they are used. The distinction between the two forms of power is "one of degree, both in the nature of the behavior and in the tangibility of the resources" (Nye, 2004: 7). Smart power can thus be simply defined as effective soft power that does not involve high costs.

c) What type of power is the EU?

It is relevant to question whether the EU can be considered a soft power or a smart power actor. Not only is there an academic and political debate about what form the EU should take, but there is an ongoing debate about its power structure. The EU transcends Westphalian norms and has evolved into a hybrid form, mixing supranational and international governance characteristics (King, 1999, as cited in Manners, 2002). In the post-Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) era, the Union has been praised for its uniting capabilities, which carry a good deal of soft power (Nielsen, 2013). However, Nielsen (2013) points out that the EU's soft power creates a gap between the expectations it engenders and its ability to pursue its desired policies and fulfill its role in world politics, a phenomenon he names the 'Capability-Expectations Gap'. Therefore, is it adequate to perceive the EU's foreign policy through the prism of soft power? As Portela (2007, as cited in Nielsen, 2013) notes, soft power was not a concept purposefully formulated for the EU, unlike 'Normative Power Europe' (NPE), defined by Laïdi (2008, as cited in Corduneanu et al., 2014: 42) as a "preference for a rule-based system" established through treaties and conditions. Nielsen (2013) argues that normative and soft power share similarities, but their main difference is that normative power connotes the type of power the EU is.

The most important factor shaping the EU's international role is not what it does, but what it is, and in this case, normative power seems more appropriate than soft power (Manners, 2002). An opposing force to NPE is realism, the oldest theory in international relations (Pollack, 2010). The EU is motivated by both material interests and normative values, and the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is used by realist critics as an example of the EU's reliance on hard power (Manners, 2002). The EU does use political and economic conditionality as a normative power diffusion mechanism, but Manners (2002, as cited in Nielsen, 2013) rejects the idea that NPE requires a willingness to use force in an instrumental way. Currently, the military dimension of the EU is geared towards humanitarian intervention, for which it is by far the largest provider: 70% of overseas assistance, four times more than the USA (Nye, 2004; Nielsen, 2013). What stands out when studying the EU is not its military power; it is its narrative of peaceful integration and the 2004 enlargement, which are examples of soft power triumphs (Nielsen, 2013). Lastly, Wagner (2017) proposes the idea of 'Liberal Power Europe' (LPE) to overcome the debate between realists and constructivists. In LPE, only stable democracies can become member states, and the EU institutions themselves have endorsed a liberal-democratic identity. Conceiving the EU as such does prevent a radical reinterpretation of the EU's foreign policy. In its dealings with its near abroad, the EU does act as a normative power. In other instances, it may act as a hard power, such as in its current sanctions regime against Russia after the invasion of Ukraine, even though it remains too early to draw any conclusions on the EU's stance. NPE, LPE, or hard power are not necessarily relevant for stating what the EU partakes in, but for what the EU is, which is still an ongoing debate (Manners, 2002, as cited in Hyde-Price, 2006). The EU is a hybrid form of power, and this article focuses on what the EU does and, more specifically, on how it should embrace the benefits of this unique political structure. Public diplomacy and sport diplomacy are concepts identified here as tools to facilitate the EU's assertion as a dominant soft and smart power actor.

2. The emergence of sport diplomacy and the EU sport policy

a) Diplomacy, public diplomacy, or sport diplomacy?

Murray (2018) defines diplomacy as a fundamentally important human invention, aimed at stabilizing relations between societies. Diplomacy is the means to a state's foreign policy ends (Cohen, 1998, as cited in Murray & Pigman, 2014; Murray, 2018). Murray (2018) makes a distinction between 'traditional' high-level diplomacy and what he refers to as a 'softer side' to diplomacy, or public diplomacy, involving a larger cast of actors, many of which are non-states: multilateral institutions (UN, IOC), global firms (Apple, Nike), or famous sportspeople, such as Cristiano Ronaldo or Roger Federer (Trunkos & Heere, 2017). The contemporary diplomatic environment provides ideal conditions favoring the appearance of new diplomatic channels and actors (Murray & Pigman, 2014). The process of EU integration since the Second World War is one of its greatest achievements and an example of a successful public diplomacy strategy, a key soft power tool (Nye, 2004). Public diplomacy also makes use of mechanisms short of war to attain foreign policy outcomes but involves direct communication of interests to the foreign public, rather than between governments (Cull, 2009, as cited in Fourneyron & Zintz, 2016; Rofe, 2014; Parrish et al., 2021). From NGOs to citizens, anyone has the power to become a relevant diplomatic stakeholder, and state actors are no longer in possession of the monopoly of power (Melissen, 2011, as cited in Garamvölgyi et al., 2020). Two important aspects of public diplomacy are cultural diplomacy and sport diplomacy, popular channels through which messages can be conveyed to vast international audiences (Nye, 2004; Mai'a & Melissen, 2013; Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2015; Dubinsky, 2017; Murray, 2018; Parrish et al., 2021).

Sport nowadays generates trillions of dollars and affects billions of fans, operating at local, national, and international levels (Manzenreiter, 2008, as cited in Murray, 2018). Murray (2012, as cited in Garamvölgyi & Dóczi, 2021) defines the concept of sport diplomacy as the governmental use of sporting events and sportspeople to create a favorable image among foreign publics. The most famous example of a country developing an official sport diplomacy strategy is Australia (Cha, 2016). The key objectives are to enhance the image of Australia abroad, build linkages with neighboring countries, maximize trade and tourism, and strengthen the Indo-Pacific communities (Parrish, 2021). Similarly, Qatar hoped to achieve comparable results regarding its own foreign policy objectives when it organized the Football World Cup in November 2022, even though it was accused of poorly treating foreign workers (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2015). Likewise, private sport organizations such as the IOC or FIFA are increasingly becoming aware of the political implications of their events and can influence both diplomacy and global governance (Fourneyron & Zintz, 2016; Sonntag, 2020). International sport organizations are occupying a very lucrative regulatory space, which can be explained by the rise of transnational private authority in a globalizing world and the states delegating powers (Meier & García, 2015). International sport organizations are thus able to formally organize themselves, as seen with the creation of the Global Association of International Sport Federations (GAISF), which groups all the international sport federations. This is an important argument for the alleged relative influence of sport diplomacy and a reason why the EU should

collaborate with international sport organizations. This will be further explained in the last two parts.

Critics of sport diplomacy and its alleged efficacy do exist, with sceptics perceiving sport as a parody of international relations, plagued by corruption, violence, racism, and cheating (Murray, 2016). Furthermore, although sport keeps diplomatic channels open, it will not eliminate world hunger and poverty, nor will it contribute to gender equality or facilitate women's rights in fundamentalist societies (Murray, 2016). Another limitation is the temporal reality of SMEs (Murray, 2016). As shown with the 2010 and 2014 World Cups, which respectively took place in South Africa and Brazil, the high building and renovation costs of both countries' stadiums highlighted the potentially disastrous legacy of the World Cups' organization (Cornelissen et al., 2011; Cha, 2016). On the other hand, both sport and diplomacy are embodied by representatives of their states, competing in contests involving secret plays, tactics, and aiming for winning results (Murray, 2018). The growing number of state and non-state actors funding sport diplomacy initiatives points towards a growing trend in the belief that sport is an effective tool of soft power. The EU has made progress in this field, with the Erasmus+ Programme becoming the embodiment of its soft power strategy and a tool to overcome the 'Capability-Expectations Gap', by promoting non-state actors' exchanges and pushing forward its integration project (Garamvölgyi et al., 2020; Parrish et al., 2021). This article sees sport as a triggering factor, from which it will be possible to address other important diplomatic aspects, such as trade or agriculture. The second model in the case studies section is a relevant example of this argument: by developing grassroots projects in the Western Balkans, the EU enables the spread of its values and norms, which will be useful if these states become EU member states in the future.

b) EU sport policy development

Before arguing why the EU should adopt a sport diplomacy strategy, it is important to understand the context surrounding the EU's growing interest in sport diplomacy, at a time when integration has stalled and it is struggling to develop a positive international reputation, although this may change following the EU's reaction to the war in Ukraine (Kaplan, 2014; Fourneyron & Zintz, 2016). While the benefits of sport were already acknowledged in the Commission's 2007 White Paper on Sport – raising public awareness, enhancing sport's visibility, and giving strategic orientation to its role – sport diplomacy was not yet addressed as a concept (European Commission, 2007: 9). The second milestone is the adoption of Article 165 TFEU in 2009: the EU and member states "shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organizations in the field of education and sport" (Foster, 2019: 63). In 2014, sport was formally incorporated into the Erasmus+ funding program, which unlocked European structural and investment funds (€550 million dedicated to sport out of €26 billion for the period 2021-2027) (Constantin et al., 2021; Parrish, 2022). The Erasmus+ Programme is the main funding instrument of the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission (DG EAC) and is an important tool of soft power (European Commission, 2021a). Consequently, Commissioner Tibor Navracsics of DG EAC mandated a High-Level Report in 2015 to assess the potential of a formal EU sport diplomacy strategy (Fourneyron & Zintz, 2016). The main recommendations

published in 2016 include some of the following: act in interaction with national governments and non-state actors, make use of the EU's sport expertise to develop partnerships with third countries, recognize the potential of staging SMEs in the EU, and extend the Erasmus+ Programme to non-EU member states (Fourneyron & Zintz, 2016). This report can be considered the third milestone in EU sport diplomacy, as it builds on the legal capacity granted by the TFEU to elaborate what could become a formal strategy, even if it remained a slow-moving process in need of financial engagement (Parrish et al., 2021). Since 2018, the EU has mainly focused on the development of grassroots projects, which are bottom-up initiatives studied in the second model of the next part (Sonntag, 2020). In 2021, Parrish et al. (2021) published "Promoting a Strategic Approach to EU Sport Diplomacy", which is used in this article to make concrete suggestions for the future EU sport diplomacy strategy. In 2021, the EU also launched an advertising campaign with UEFA regarding the EU Green Deal, studied in the first model of the following part. The EU attempts to cooperate with international sport federations and organizations to appeal to civil society, which can be very beneficial and should become one of the main tenets of its future sport diplomacy strategy.

c) Why should the EU adopt a sport diplomacy strategy?

The introduction of the 2021 Parrish report highlights the puzzle this article underlines: sport is very predominant in Europe, but still lacks a prominent role in the EU's external relations (Sonntag, 2020; Parrish et al., 2021). Although the arguments in favor of sport diplomacy are numerous, Mariya Gabriel, the Commissioner in charge of sport among other policy areas, did admit a lack of real strategy (Constantin et al., 2021). The EU Commission's aims are to develop sport diplomacy in three different ways: (1) at the regional level, by bringing the Balkans regions closer to the EU, (2) promoting a new Erasmus+ Programme which includes international partners, and (3) further developing the existing bilateral cooperation between the EU and third countries (Sport and Citizenship, 2020). While sport diplomacy generally involves low risks and low costs, the EU needs to be aware of its potential challenges (Parrish et al., 2021). The EU is a unique hybrid system, and one may ask whether a sport diplomacy strategy could work, considering the supranational context and the limited competencies granted by the TFEU (Parrish & Zintz, 2019). The main issue for the development of an EU-based sport diplomacy strategy is the reaction of the member states, which have already developed their own strategies, such as Hungary, limiting how sport can be deployed at the supranational level (Parrish, 2022). The EURO2020 match between Germany and Hungary became a fight over European values when UEFA refused a request from the Munich municipality to illuminate the Munich football stadium with colors of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender + (LGBTQ+) community, due to the Hungarian government voting a ban on the depiction and promotion of homosexuality to under-18s (Beake, 2021; Constantin et al., 2021). The main limitations of EU sport diplomacy, which were further highlighted by this row, are its potential lack of unity when developing a strategy and the difficulties in being viewed as a legitimate actor (Constantin et al., 2021).

For an official EU sport diplomacy strategy to be adopted, a number of conditions first need to be met: (1) an EU-based strategy should not clash with the national strategies of the member states, (2) it should respect the EU competencies in this policy area and especially the principle

of subsidiarity, (3) it should be a cross-cutting strategy in nature and assist with the implementation process in existing areas of competences, and (4) it should engage with the Erasmus+ Programme (Parrish, 2022). The EU could draw inspiration from its cultural policy, in which it possesses supporting competencies, and act in a 'smart-complementarity' way, to add value to the existing member states' actions, at grassroots or regional levels, for instance (Constantin et al., 2021). The following case-study analysis argues why the EU should focus most of its attention and funding on grassroots projects, as well as cooperating with international sport organizations, such as UEFA, and taking inspiration for the construction of its own action plan from existing strategies.

3. Three models for one hybrid EU sport diplomacy strategy

a) The EU and UEFA #EveryTrickCounts advertising campaign

In 2021, the EU launched a public awareness campaign with UEFA about the need to tackle climate change, in an effort to promote the 'Green Deal', an EU roadmap of key future climate policies ("European Commission and UEFA", 2021; Kurmayer, 2021). The advert features famous footballers using football tricks to save energy ("European Commission and UEFA", 2021; "#EveryTrickCounts", 2021; Kurmayer, 2021). The video was first broadcasted on television on October 19th, 2021, in 57 countries, during UEFA's football competitions, as well as on social media (with the #EveryTrickCounts) and in football stadiums ("European Commission and UEFA", 2021; "#EveryTrickCounts", 2021). The clip itself cost around €700,000 to produce, which was funded by the corporate communications budget of the Commission and freely distributed by UEFA (Kurmayer, 2021). The advert was estimated to have reached an audience of up to 40 million people per football game, on average (Mathiesen, 2021). Despite the limitations highlighted in the analysis, this collaboration demonstrates how the EU can benefit from associating itself with international sport organizations. Studies will have to be carried out in the future to measure the extent to which this advertising campaign has raised awareness regarding the Green Deal. The EU should use its previous experience to collaborate with UEFA, FIFA, and IOC to harness the power of sport as a means to exercise influence (Sport and Citizenship, 2020; Constantin et al., 2021). Not only would it benefit the EU, but it could also actively push these organizations to make more efforts to comply with international human rights standards (Sport and Citizenship, 2020). A related initiative the EU has already launched is to associate itself with the organization of SMEs, such as the Olympic Games in Paris in 2024 while ensuring that it is not becoming embroiled in political disagreements with its member states and fueling public opposition (Constantin et al., 2021).

b) The EU grassroots projects in the Western Balkans

At the grassroots level, the EU launched the #BeActive campaign in 2015 to promote physical activity as part of the European Week of Sport, which has involved 40 million Europeans in more than 100,000 events in 38 countries and has become the largest public-funded sport initiative in the world (Katsarova & Halleux, 2019; European Commission, 2021b). Sport projects conducted by the civil society and supported by the Erasmus+ Programme have

become the most visible sport-related activities of the EU in recent years, and the Western Balkans were added to the campaign in 2018 (Sonntag, 2020; European Commission, 2021b). The Western Balkans dimension of the European Week of Sport aims to increase the number of young women and men practicing physical activity under the official title of 'EU 4 Youth European Week of Sport in the Western Balkans' (European Commission, 2021b). The countries taking part in this initiative are the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Montenegro, with a total budget of €1 million, shared equally over a two-year period, entirely allocated by the EU (European Commission, 2021b). EU 4 Youth explicitly aims to promote physical activity, develop Western Balkans states' relationships, exchange good practices, and promote European values through sport (European Commission, 2021b; Former DG EAC official, March 9, 2022). In the document laying out the exact EU 4 Youth strategy, a second more implicit objective is written: the promotion of European common values (European Commission, 2021b). To do so, all necessary measures are taken to publicize the fact that the EU funds grassroots projects, highlighting "to the relevant target audiences the added value and impact of the EU's interventions" (European Commission, 2021b: 10). This initiative aligns with the diplomatic aims of DG EAC and the policy recommendations of the Parrish et al. (2021) report: develop sport diplomacy on a regional level inside and outside of the EU, support the implementation of the #BeActive campaign, and consider the benefits of a value-based network (Sport and Citizenship, 2020). The EU uses sport diplomacy to cooperate with civil society through funding small-scale projects. Regular contact points at the grassroots level are essential for enabling the development of diplomatic relations at higher political levels. The Erasmus+ Programme and its affiliated projects give an international dimension to funding opportunities for the EU, which facilitates the process of EU integration. Sport diplomacy thus becomes a tool for the EU to carry out projects that are not related to sport in the first place.

c) The Hungarian national sport diplomacy strategy

The case of Hungary is interesting for this article, as it is the EU member state investing the largest share of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in sport: 2.5%, while the rest of the EU averages 0.7% (Eurostat, 2017, as cited in Martín & Hernández, 2021). This strategy is linked to the concept of 'nation-branding', the marketing process by which companies distinguish their products from the competition (Dinnie, 2008). It is possible, in a respectful manner that acknowledges appropriate limits, to apply this concept to nations and thus treat them as brands. Nation-branding is defined as the blend of elements, including sport, that provide relevance for its target audience and culturally differentiate a nation from others (Dinnie, 2008; Li & Feng, 2021). Hosting SMEs has been used by nations to publicize their place on a global scale, as seen with the United Kingdom (UK) and how it organized the Olympic Games in 2012 (Dinnie, 2008; Sport and Citizenship, 2017; Parrish, 2021). A survey conducted by Grix and Houlihan (2013, as cited in Parrish, 2021) indicated very positive perceptions of the UK's international image after the Games' opening and closing ceremonies. Hungary is aiming to do the same and organizes its strategy according to five pillars.

Firstly, the improvement of its image through the organization of SMEs, with a clear goal in mind: organizing the Olympic Games (Garamvölgyi & Dóczi, 2021). Secondly, it aims to

use sport and especially football as a tool to strengthen the expression of national identity and self-determination (Garamvölgyi & Dóczi, 2021). Between 2013 and 2018, the Hungarian state-funded $87 million to Hungarian minorities' football clubs in its neighboring countries: Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Croatia, and Slovenia (Martín & Hernández, 2021). The third pillar is the representation of Hungarian interests in international sport federations and links with the fourth pillar: the representation of Hungarian sport companies and inventions abroad (Garamvölgyi & Dóczi, 2021). ‹PBT Fencing›, established in 1991, gradually asserted itself as one of the leading fencing equipment brands on the market. The last pillar is the appointment of ex-athletes, such as former Hungarian President Pál Schmitt, a former successful Olympic fencer, and member of the IOC, in (inter)national diplomatic positions (Garamvölgyi & Dóczi, 2021). He chaired the HLG on sport diplomacy in 2015 and drafted the EU report under Commissioner Navracsics, who is also Hungarian (Fourneyron & Zintz, 2016).

In comparison, the EU still lacks an effective action plan. Due to its unique political structure and the Erasmus+ Programme, the EU has the potential to surpass the Hungarian's sport diplomacy budget, as well as being able to cooperate with international organizations, such as UEFA, and develop grassroots projects in its candidate countries. National governments can pursue collaborations with international bodies as well, but the EU has a greater reach. The three models described above can be linked to strategies the EU has either already put into practice (the first two models) or from which it may inspire itself when developing its own plan of action (the third model). The aim of this part was to build on three existing areas of focus of sport diplomacy, to then highlight the most suitable one for the EU.

4. Towards an EU sport diplomacy strategy

As argued in this article, the EU's functioning mirrors characteristics of various political systems, and it is unclear whether the EU should be classified as a (supranational) state, an international organization, or an intergovernmental organization (Manners, 2002, as cited in Hyde-Price, 2006). To benefit from its unique hybrid structure, the EU should adopt a strategy that targets different levels of governance, ranging from local to international. The first part of this chapter highlights the limitations of each of the three models studied above and argues why the EU's sport diplomacy strategy should not be based solely on any single model.

a) Limitations of the respective models

In the first model, the #EveryTrickCounts advertising campaign, the EU and UEFA asserted that it does not matter who emits the greenhouse gases; they all have the same negative impact ("EU and UEFA team up," n.d.). This claim has been criticized for shifting the burden onto individuals rather than companies, creating a distraction from the systemic shift required to reach net-zero emissions (Kurmayer, 2021; Mathiesen, 2021). The Corporate Europe Observatory referred to this advertising campaign as a massive goal for the EU, as the clip was broadcast during a football competition sponsored up to February 2022 by Gazprom Russian state-owned gas company, one of the world's biggest emitters of CO2 (Kurmayer, 2021;

Mathiesen, 2021). This highlights a broader issue: the economic ties between international sporting organizations and the oil and gas industry. In May 2011, undercover journalists reported that some of FIFA's Africa Committee members had been bribed by Qatar to vote for the 2022 Football World Cup to be held in that country (The Guardian, 2011, as cited in Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2015; Meier & García, 2015; Murray, 2016; Parrish, 2021). On the other hand, the EU has committed to certain normative principles, such as the rule of law and the protection of human rights, thereby engaging in incompatible governing practices (Nielsen, 2013). Focusing solely on collaborating with international sporting organizations is risky for the EU, as such collaborations may undermine its reputation.

The second model is the most promising out of the three, and the EU should consider a values-based network model that encompasses public and non-state actors involved in grassroots projects. This approach is appealing due to its cost-effectiveness, its alignment with both soft and smart power, and its innovative bottom-up approach (Jacob Schouenborg, 2020, as cited in Sport and Citizenship, 2020; Parrish et al., 2021). However, the effects of such projects are spread across numerous areas of action: increasing the number of women and men practicing sport, increasing the number of organized sport activities, promoting physical activity, and fostering the EU's common values, which could undermine its overall efficiency (European Commission, 2021b). In order for grassroots projects to become an effective and far-reaching tool of soft power, and for the EU to benefit from its multilevel impacts, they should be complemented with other actions targeting higher policy levels and form part of a hybrid strategy.

The combination of the first two models with the third one appears more challenging due to the incompatibilities between the Hungarian national sport diplomacy strategy and the EU's hybrid strategy. The EU's limited competencies in the field of sport (Article 165 TFEU) empower the EU only to support, coordinate, or complement sport policy measures, with the EU acting as a subsidiary (Katsarova & Halleux, 2019). Another limitation relates to the nature of the strategy: national sport diplomacy does not function well in a supranational context (Parrish & Zintz, 2019; Sonntag, 2020). During SMEs, playing for one's nation is considered a great honor for athletes, which is difficult to replicate at the supranational level, as there are no national affiliations (Murray, 2016). The third limitation is the difference in scope between the nation-states and the EU's objectives regarding sport diplomacy. While Hungary aims to organize the Olympic Games, the EU focuses on grassroots projects.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the Hungarian sport diplomacy approach, while being a prominent example in Central and Eastern Europe, remains controversial. The development of sport in Hungary leads to funds being withdrawn from culture and community events, and by choosing to focus mostly on elite sport, it neglects grassroots initiatives (Garamvölgyi & Dóczi, 2021). Funding Hungarian minorities› sport clubs also leads to tensions and an increase in nationalistic reactions by supporters in neighbouring countries when local teams play against teams considered "Hungarian" (Garamvölgyi & Dóczi, 2021). Finally, the presence of Hungarian sports leaders in international sporting federations has declined in the last decade (Garamvölgyi & Dóczi, 2021).

Therefore, bearing in mind these limitations, it appears more legitimate for the EU to develop a hybrid strategy, based on a combination of the three models, as this would enable it to express its institutional capabilities to the fullest while making the most of its limited com-

petencies. It would also allow the EU to look beyond the traditional state-centric approach and mark a demarcation with national sport diplomacy strategies, making its strategy relevant and unique (Parrish, 2022).

b) How can the EU benefit from a sport diplomacy strategy?

As previously argued, the most important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or says, but what it is (Manners, 2002). Developing a unique hybrid model would be the best way for the EU to ensure that its sport diplomacy strategy reflects its hybrid institutional structure. To appear legitimate, this strategy should be based on diplomatic tools of soft and smart power, as well as on the EU's historical narrative of peaceful integration (Nielsen, 2013). The following recommendations are based upon existing national and international sport diplomacy strategies analysed previously, recommendations of the 2016 HLG report, as well as the resulting published documents. They are grouped into five themes, ranked from least to most beneficial: (1) diplomatic channels, (2) the EU and SMEs, (3) institutional reforms, (4) reforming the Erasmus+ Programme, and (5) collaborating with international (sporting) organizations. These are in line with Parrish's (2022) report recommendations: no competence issues raised, the ability to assist with policy implementation in existing areas of competencies, and to engage with existing financing instruments and frameworks.

1. Diplomatic channels

Sport is often perceived as a cost-effective tool of soft power (Garamvölgyi et al., 2020). Elite sporting events and international sporting successes can raise a region's visibility and improve its image, as seen with the concept of nation-branding (Garamvölgyi & Dóczi, 2021). The EU is not a country but can still increase its visibility by creating a network of sport ambassadors to promote EU values through sport (Fourneyron & Zintz, 2016; Parrish et al., 2021). The EU has already started to use such a strategy, as seen with the #EveryTrickCounts advertising campaign with UEFA. Furthermore, the EU should raise awareness of the potential of sport as a tool of soft and smart power in the foreign affairs ministries of its member states to convince the remaining sceptics (Council, 2016; Fourneyron & Zintz, 2016). A Union-wide enthusiasm for sport diplomacy would facilitate the construction and adoption of a strategy.

2. The EU and SMEs

In 2024, the Olympic Games will be held in Paris, creating enormous benefits for France in terms of public diplomacy (Murray, 2016). SMEs help promote the organizing country, and when they take place in an EU member state, they can also benefit the EU (Dubinsky, 2017). The EU must balance support for the bidding process of its member states while preventing potential conflicts with its member states' national sport diplomacy strategies. This is why it seems very unlikely for the 'EU Games' to ever be organized. If the EU had its own football team, for instance, the combination of fans and national football teams from its member states could have a divisive, rather than inclusive, effect (Kaplan, 2014). Furthermore, due to its limited competencies, the EU cannot organize SMEs. This is also because of the autonomy of sport's international organizations, which do not need the EU's supporting capacities. UEFA has a larger budget than the European Commission's DG EAC Sport Unit, for instance, and

thus has the potential to determine which events will be organized under its auspices. On the other hand, the EU does not finance a structure; it finances projects with a certain duration because it does not have the competencies nor the funds to do so. Constantin et al. (2021) have suggested that the EU should do what it already does in other policies, i.e., add value to its member states' actions through 'smart complementarity'. Doing so would ensure respect for the principle of subsidiarity, provide the most cost-effective sport diplomacy strategy, and prevent any conflicts regarding the organization of SMEs.

3. Institutional reforms

Currently, responsibility for the EU's sport policy lies with the Commission, specifically the Sport Unit of DG EAC (Parrish, 2022). The Parrish et al. report published in 2021 called for greater centralization and suggested that sport diplomacy should be mainstreamed throughout all EU institutions. The EU possesses the institutional capacity to carry out a sport diplomacy strategy, and its institutions, departments, and agencies should become more involved in both its design and implementation (Constantin et al., 2021). DG EAC has taken a first step in that direction by seeking to further enhance its portfolio and by connecting the EU's sport policy to its foreign policy objectives (Barbé & Morillas, 2019, as cited in Parrish, 2022). Sport diplomacy should also be more systematically integrated into the work of the EEAS, with the establishment of a portfolio and individuals named as responsible (Parrish et al., 2021). Doing so links sport to an array of policy areas and confirms the idea of sport as a triggering factor capable of generating spill-over effects. This article agrees with the recommendations of Parrish et al. (2021): the need for a new specialist body, located within the Sport Unit of DG EAC, to coordinate the strategy across all EU institutions. This article goes further and recommends, based on the Parrish et al. (2021) report, to give a greater role to Commissioner Mariya Gabriel. It also calls for more networking to take place between the different levels of governance in the EU, to establish strong connections between the grassroots projects at the local level and the decision-makers at the top level. In the long term, if new countries become members, the EU should mandate a 'High Representative for Sport' or even a 'Commissioner for Sport', appointed with the task of coordinating all areas of sport diplomacy.

4. Reforming the Erasmus+ Programme

The Erasmus+ Programme is the embodiment of the EU's soft power and now includes state and non-state actors outside the EU, such as the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership members, and the South-Mediterranean countries (Constantin et al., 2021; Parrish, 2022). Its successes have been proven with the European Week of Sport. The second model has shown that opportunities to use the Erasmus+ Programme to support international grassroots projects in third countries remain limited, with the Western Balkans receiving lower funds as they are not Erasmus+ partners (Ecorys, 2018). Based on the Parrish et al. report of 2021, this article suggests that the EU should give a broader international dimension to the Erasmus+ Programme. A first reform would be to ease the terms according to which a third country can become a partner. The EU could develop a similar model to the Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) of the Council of Europe, to give the same funding opportunities regarding grassroots sport projects to both partner and non-partner countries. The Council's EPA budget for

sport-related policies is topic-oriented, and there are no specific criteria. The EU should also provide additional financial support to research activities and knowledge dissemination on issues linked to sport diplomacy (Katsarova & Halleux, 2019; Parrish et al., 2021).

5. Collaborating with international (sport) organisations

In traditional diplomacy, states are considered the only significant actors in world politics (Nye, 1990). However, the growing influence of public diplomacy has led to non-state actors, such as FIFA, becoming increasingly important in sport and possessing the monopoly of power to govern and regulate world football from the rules of the game to the economic and social dimensions (Nye, 1990; FIFA 2015, Article 1-13, as cited in Meier and García, 2015). These international sport organizations benefit from access to power on a high level due to their control over competitions and their expertise. Consequently, the EU should push for further cooperation with them to obtain a comparative advantage in sport diplomacy over other state and non-state actors. The EU should also seek further cooperation with international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN) or the Council of Europe, in line with both proposal number 25 of the 2007 White Paper on Sport: "the EU will make its best effort to create synergies with existing programs of the UN, Member States, local authorities and private bodies" (European Commission, 2007: 9). The EU is not the first non-state actor to venture into sport-related diplomatic activities (Sonntag, 2020). UNESCO and its Kazan Action Plan, as well as the Council of Europe, are examples of intergovernmental organizations that are active in the field of sport diplomacy (Sonntag, 2020). Furthermore, these non-state actors have not been accused of corruption or disregard for human rights, and the Council of Europe already works closely with the Sport Unit of the European Commission, thus facilitating further collaboration. Cooperating with these international bodies allows the EU to operate on two fronts: (1) the sport rule makers and SMEs organizers (FIFA, IOC, and UEFA) and (2) intergovernmental actors that are also pursuing a sport diplomacy strategy. The EU could benefit from this to a great extent, as it prevents having to target countries individually. Projects such as the joint #EveryTrickCounts advertising campaign with UEFA are a first step in this direction.

Conclusions

This article has aimed to fill a gap in the literature by highlighting the benefits for the EU to pursue a sport diplomacy strategy and providing concrete recommendations. This has been done according to the concept of soft power, which in turn has enabled the conceptualization of smart power: a form of cost-effective soft power. Consequently, international politics are switching from exclusively high-level diplomacy to public diplomacy, embodied by non-state actors and through which cultural and sport diplomacies occupy larger spaces (Gregory, 2011, as cited in Garamvölgyi &0 Dóczi, 2021; Pamment, 2013; Murray, 2018; Parrish et al., 2021). The EU, which has gradually evolved into a hybrid form of power, has seen its window of opportunity increase. The three major milestones in its sport policy were Article 165 TFEU, the 2016 HLG report laying the bases for a future sport diplomacy strategy, and the incorpo-

ration of sport into the Erasmus+ funding programme in 2014. However, this article has also established the EU's relative inexperience in the field of sport diplomacy.

To determine how the EU can benefit from a sport diplomacy strategy, this article has studied three models: (1) at the international level, the #EveryTrickCounts EU-UEFA collaboration; (2) at the local level, the 'EU 4 Youth European Week of Sport' grassroots project in the Western Balkans; and (3) at the national level, the Hungarian sport diplomacy strategy. Through a qualitative methodology combining content analysis and case studies, this article has argued that for the EU to benefit to the greatest extent from sport diplomacy, it should adopt a unique strategy featuring characteristics from each of the three models in order to reflect its multilevel political structure and distinguish itself from other international organizations. The EU strategy should reflect core norms, such as the centrality of peace, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, as well as operate according to soft and smart power. The third model, based on the Hungarian national strategy, is the most limited one. Significantly differing from the EU's political system, it would be short-sighted to consider it as a model to follow. The first and second models also have limitations, such as the risk of undermining the EU's reputation, or the fact that grassroots projects only target civil society, but this article has argued that they remain the most promising and beneficial action plans to follow. Other recommendations include the establishment of intra and inter-EU diplomatic channels, smart complementarity through the support of SMEs organized in EU member states, institutional reforms to favor a collective EU multilevel approach to sport diplomacy, and lastly, the reform of the Erasmus+ Programme.

As argued by Boniface (2021), geopolitical awareness of sport diplomacy will grow, and this article provides avenues for further research. Firstly, it could focus on specific recommendations, such as identifying where reforms should take place in the EU institutions, to assist in the construction of a cost-effective EU sport diplomacy strategy. Secondly, the arguments formulated in this article could be applied to other international state and non-state actors, such as Australia or the UN, through a comparative analysis approach. Thirdly, more research could be undertaken on the last recommendation (collaboration) and analysed from the other end to study how international actors and NGOs collaborate with the EU to achieve their own sport-related foreign policy objectives. Finally, it is worth placing this article in the current political context. The EU and its soft power approach are being challenged by the spectre of remilitarization. Sport diplomacy is carried out to prevent crises, and if other states are not willing to take part in soft power initiatives, it becomes difficult to enforce their participation. Further research could be conducted on the impact of sport sanctions against countries waging wars, using the sanctions against Russian sport as a case study.

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Appendix: List of Abbreviations

CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union
DG EAC	Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission
EPA	Enlarged Partial Agreement
EU	European Union
FIFA	*Fédération Internationale de Football Association*
GAISF	Global Association of International Sport Federations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HLG	High-Level Group
IOC	International Olympic Committee

LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender +
LPE	Liberal Power Europe
NPE	Normative Power Europe
SME	Sport Mega Event
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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The Hungarian Fencing Elite in the Service of the Soviet Union

Abstract

The Soviet Union was not part of the international sports circuit during the Interwar period. After the Bolshevik October Revolution, the newly formed communist state focused on developing its own political structures, which also affected sports in the Soviet Union. After the Second World War, the policy of isolation was given up and the Soviet sports management targeted the Olympic Games as a platform to demonstrate the superiority of the communist system by planning to win the Olympic medal tally. The Soviets considered fencing a class-hostile, 'bourgeois sport' and did not promote it among civilians during the Interwar period. This radically changed as soon as the Soviet political and sports leadership decided to participate in the Helsinki Olympic Summer Games of 1952. The 21 medals that the Olympic fencing competition had to offer became interesting for the medal ranking. Against the backdrop of the Cold War, knowledge and experience in fencing became highly relevant for the USSR. The geopolitical relations had changed after the Second World War; now, the Soviet Union was ruling over Central and Eastern Europe, and Hungary became one of its satellites. Hungary had a long fencing tradition and dominated international and Olympic fencing competitions, especially in saber, during the Interwar period. By the end of 1951, a delegation of Hungarian elite fencers and coaches was brought to Moscow to prepare Soviet fencers for the 1952 Olympic Games. Based on this exchange and its follow-up sessions in the first half of the 1950s, the success of the Soviet fencing team progressed quickly, and in the course of the 1960s, the Soviets took over the Hungarian hegemony in the Olympic discipline of fencing.

Keywords: Hungary, Soviet Union, fencing, Hungarian elite fencers, 1951 Moscow joint Soviet-Hungarian training camp, Olympic Games

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1. Introduction

After the Second World War, Hungary became integrated – against her will – as a satellite state into the Soviet Empire. The Red Army ensured that a small group of local communists could install a communist regime. This dependency relation also had an impact on Hungarian sports. This was certainly true for fencing, which was cultivated after the First World War in Hungary as a national sport. Saber fencing originated from the Hungarian hussar tradition and was part of the national self-image and archetype. In the twenties, a lot of effort was put into the innovation of technical styles and training methods in this national sport. These efforts were successful. In the Interwar period, Hungary dominated saber fencing at the Olympic Games. Almost without exceptions, all gold medals in the men's individual and team saber fencing competitions were won by Hungary. The Soviet Union had chosen to stay apart from the international sports movement. Soviet sports policy was characterized by almost international isolation (Riordan, 1977: 391). Furthermore, fencing was considered a bourgeois, class-hostile sport. For serious practice of fencing sports, there was, apart from military circles, little opportunity in the USSR.[2]

Hungary and the Soviet Union had no official sports contacts in the Interwar period. These started after the Second World War in 1945 when Hungary was occupied by the Soviet Union (Riordan, 1977: 391). According to Riordan, in the period between 1945-1956, other socialist states were more or less obliged to learn from the Soviet model, form Soviet-type administrative organizations, and run physical fitness programs. This was despite the long sporting traditions of Central European countries, like Hungary, which had competed successfully in international sports many years before Soviet participation (Riordan, 1977: 380). The position

2 It is far beyond the scope of this contribution to present a history of fencing in Russia and the Soviet Union. Here are some notes to provide some guidance in this domain. A characteristic of fencing in both Russian and Soviet sports history is that it was related to the military. Russian fencing has its roots in the Tsarist military, where it was popular among officers and members of the aristocracy. The first fencing club was established in 1857 in the capital of Russia, St. Petersburg, after the abolishment of serfdom, enabling the organization of fencing in private clubs in major cities by well-to-do middle-class and liberal noblemen (Riordan, 1977: 10). The Officers' Fencing Gymnasium in St. Petersburg was soon followed by other military clubs in the Empire, notably at Warsaw and Kyiv (Riordan, 1977: 14). The close connection between the military and fencing in the early years of the Soviet state was inherited from the Tsarist regime (Riordan, 1977: 289). The quasi-military aspect of fencing was implemented in the 'Vsevobuch' (see section 2 for a discussion of 'Vsevobuch') in the beginning of the Soviet Union between 1917 and 1920 (Riordan, 1977: 74). This close relation with the military under Soviet rule might explain why fencing belonged to those sports pursued in schools between 1945 and 1958, aiming to contribute to the military education of school children (Riordan, 1977: 179). In 1966, the number of sports participants per one part-time instructor was increased, particularly in those sports with the closest association with military training, such as combat sports, including fencing (Riordan, 1977: 272). Despite this, fencing did not appear in the list of sixteen sports by the number of participants between 1940 and 1970 (Riordan, 1977: 189). However, according to Riordan (1977: 376), in four types of sports, including those characterized by combat, artistic expression, cerebral skills, and quasi-military aspects, the USSR was successful at the Olympic Games. Fencing belonged to the type of quasi-military sports.

of self-chosen international sports isolation changed when the Soviet Union decided to develop a different sports policy after the Second World War. In 1951, the Soviet Olympic Committee was formed and affiliated with the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The Soviet Union joined the ranks of the International Fencing Federation (Fédération Internationale d'Éscrime, abbreviated FIE) in 1952 (Riordan, 1977: 364). Hence, it could start to participate in the Olympic Games from 1952 on. The Olympic medal mirror became against the backdrop of the Cold War an instrument of soft power. A higher ranking on the medal mirror could be used to demonstrate that the communist state system was better than the one of the capitalist West, and vice versa. Due to this, the Olympic Games became a theatre of the Cold War, and the medal ranking served as an important propaganda instrument. As a result, there was additional attention to Olympic disciplines where substantial medals could be won. This was also true for fencing. Already at the London Olympic Games in 1948 a delegation of Soviet observers noticed that in the Olympic fencing tournament, seven gold medals could be scored: in the men's category at all three weapons, namely foil, epee, and saber both in the individual and team competition; and in the women's fencing tournament only one discipline was on the program of the Olympic Games, namely the women's individual foil competition (Riordan, 1977: 364). So, at the Olympic fencing tournament 21 medals could be won in total.

The Soviet leadership that took the decision between 1948 and 1952 to participate in the Olympic Games surely realized that successes in the Olympic fencing competition would mean an unelectable contribution to a higher ranking on the medal mirror. In the Olympic fencing tournament, seven gold medals could be won after all.[3] In the men's category, the tournament took place in three weapons, i.e. foil, epee, and saber, both in the individual and team competition; in the women's category, the fencing competition was restricted only to individual foil competition. Hence, in the fencing tournaments, 21 medals could be won out of a total of 459 medals, of which 149 were gold medals distributed over all of the sports disciplines featured on the Olympic program in 1952. Consequently, the Soviets made a detailed study in the first half of the fifties of the Hungarian elite fencers and their coaches.

The Hungarians were expected to transfer every detail of their fencing knowledge, including their technical and tactical skills, to the Soviet sports management. This was especially the case for saber fencing, in which Hungary had enjoyed half a century of absolute hegemony. At the end of 1951, the complete Hungarian national fencing selection was flown to Moscow to serve as a 'study object' for Soviet fencing management. This 'training method' would soon pay off. At the end of the fifties, the advance of Soviet fencing began at the Olympic Games. At the Summer Games in Rome in 1960, the first gold medal was gained in the comparatively new sport of fencing. Once the Soviet Union had made its international debut, even in an old 'aristocratic', comparatively new sport like fencing, Olympic medals were within reach (Riordan, 1977: 369; 374). Although Hungary still won the fencing medal ranking at the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 1964, it became clear that with the victory of the Soviet men's saber team, the USSR would take over the hegemony in fencing from Hungary. The foundations for this

3 See for the medal mirror of the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games the official website of the IOC: www.olympics.com/en/olympic-games/helsinki-1952/medals. Accessed: 2022, May 31.

were laid in the above-mentioned joint training session in Moscow at the end of 1951 and their follow-up sessions.

2. Sports in the Soviet Union

The developments of sports in the Soviet Union served several different functions, such as strengthening the communist ideology, promoting social integration, facilitating nation-formation, and serving as an instrument in international relations. Additionally, sports also functioned as an instrument of soft power.

When the Bolsheviks took power after the October Revolution of 1917, sports and physical education became integral to the revolutionary discourse, used as tools to introduce and promote a new communist lifestyle through political, social, and cultural means (Grant, 2014: 724). The concept of 'Homo Sovieticus,' individuals completely dedicated to the socialist cause, emphasized the importance of physical education. The idea was that physically stronger Soviet citizens could outperform their weaker capitalist counterparts. Sports and training also contributed to the overall health condition of Soviet citizens, enabling them to be more efficient in their workplaces (Riordan, 1988: 570). Soviet propaganda thus worked diligently to expand and popularize sports to cultivate healthy and strong socialist citizens.

The Marxist perspective assumes that the human organism develops under external conditions, such as the social environment. Consequently, a strong connection exists between the social and mental development of the individual, which is also influenced by society (Riordan, 1976: 153). Sport is not separate from society; instead, it is closely intertwined with politics, socio-economic relations, and social classes. According to Marx, both the mind and the body needed to be trained. The body was primarily trained in gymnastics schools and through military exercises. Additionally, a physical and technical training of the body was necessary to acquire the fundamental principles of the production process and the essential instruments of all professions (Riordan, 1976: 155). Lenin, himself an active athlete, also subscribed to the Marxist view of the role of sport in society (Elwood, 2010: 79). He strongly supported daily physical training through gymnastics (Riordan, 1976: 158). This not only aimed to improve the health of individuals in the interest of socialism but also to provide the army with sufficient recruits.

Recruits who were in better condition could more effectively commit themselves to the defense of the motherland. This necessity called for an active state policy towards sports. After the October Revolution, all existing sports associations were closed, and all sports equipment was directed to the 'Vsevobuch,' a portmanteau for 'Universal Military Training,' governed by a central body that coordinated military training–the Chief Administration of Universal Military Training of the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs between 1918 and 1923. The Red Army needed healthy young men to successfully defend the young Soviet state against any domestic and foreign pressure (Mertin, 2009: 471). Sport also played a crucial role in stimulating women's emancipation. Lenin considered sports an opportunity for women to participate in public life and quickly achieve a measure of equality with men (Riordan, 1976: 159).

Sport was considered a vital vehicle to propagate the ideology of the communist regime in society. Under communism, the boundaries between public and private were blurred, leaving no space for individualism within society. Instead, collectivism was strongly encouraged. Throughout the communist era, grassroots sport was emphasized as an expression of an egalitarian society. Recreational sport received significant support because "the proletariat was seen as a collective force in the battle for freedom and liberty; not a single person completing heroic deeds but a whole class of heroes." (Mertin, 2009: 473). Grassroots sports events, such as physical culture parades or the Spartakiads, served as platforms for political and ideological messages, aimed at unifying the diverse nationalities within the Soviet Union and symbolizing a common communist nation-building effort." (Mertin, 2009: 471).

In addition, sports also served to foster stronger ties with other countries. Riordan lists several points that contributed to the promotion of international sport in the Soviet Union. Firstly, he notes that sport was used to promote "relations with pro-Soviet and potentially sympathetic groupings abroad and undermining 'bourgeois' and social democratic authority." (Riordan, 1988: 570). The Soviet Union sought to establish good relations with other socialist countries through sport. Sport was also used to "promote good-neighborly relations with states bordering on the USSR." (Riordan, 1988: 572). This was for strategic reasons and to demonstrate the progress made under socialism. These sports relations were particularly characteristic of the early Soviet Union period between 1917 and 1945. Later, there was a cultivation of ties with "newly independent or dependent nations in Africa, Asia, and, later, Latin America." (Riordan, 1988: 572). For this purpose, the Soviet leaders organized sports competitions with other socialist brother states and sent Soviet coaches to those countries to train their socialist brothers in various sports. Finally, sport served as a soft power tool for the Soviets to demonstrate the superiority of the communist system. The international sports relations established by the Soviet Union with the help of this foreign policy strategy began in the late 1940s and were intensified during the 1950s. This also included contacts with the IOC." (Riordan,1988: 586).

Sergey Pavlov, the chairman of the Central Sports Committee, stated in 1981 that "sport was a great diplomatic weapon, for it boldly crosses political, religious, and other frontiers, unites people, helps to strengthen co-operation. It helps young people of different states to understand one another better; it encourages them to gain a sense of deep respect for both their own and other nations, nationalities, and people." (Riordan, 1988: 578). Despite this, one of the most significant functions of sport during the Cold War was to demonstrate the superiority of one's own system and undermine its counterpart. International prestige was thus measured by the victories of each side's athletes. By the late 1940s, the Soviets no longer viewed the international sports arena as a threat but rather as a platform with great potential for publicity. Ideologists and politicians assumed that the successful participation of Soviet athletes in international competitions and championships would positively influence the image of the Soviet Union. The idea was that achieving good results in top sports competitions would garner admiration from the foreign public for the communist society (Mertin, 2009: 471). The medals gained at international sports competitions such as the Olympic Games were supposed to demonstrate the efficiency of the Soviet model (Mertin, 2009: 473). The athletes who achieved extraordinary results in national and international competitions were decorated with one of the

highest awards in the Soviet Union, the Order of Lenin. These athletes were seen as heroes (Mertin, 2009: 475). Their "heroes" in sports were used to show what socialism and socialist ideas were capable of (Riordan, 1993). Fencing came into the picture during the preparations for the Helsinki Olympic Games in 1952.

However, an important ideological obstacle stood in the way of fencing in the Soviet Union. Fencing was viewed in official sports propaganda as a 'bourgeois sport' or so-called class-hostile activity. As a result, modern sport fencing was relatively unfamiliar, and knowledge of fencing under the Tsarist regime was primarily preserved within military circles in the USSR. Despite these ideological and practical objections, the Soviets had to set them aside in preparation for their participation in the 1952 Olympic Games. Unorthodox means were used to ensure full participation in the race for medals. The geopolitical situation had changed dramatically after the Second World War, allowing the Soviet Union to become the master of Central and Eastern Europe.[4] Hungary, which was also occupied by the Red Army, became annexed to the Soviet Empire as a satellite state. This granted the Soviet Union access to fencing knowledge, modern fencing sports experiences, and training methods that had been developed to a top level in Hungary during the Interwar period. Hungary ranked among the top three countries in fencing alongside Italy and France and dominated saber fencing at the Olympics (Terret et al., 2007; Onyestyák, 2013).

This provided the Soviets with a shortcut to acquire high-quality fencing knowledge when it became opportune for them. Under the guise of 'friendly exchanges of fencing experiences,' the Hungarian top fencers and their coaches were more or less forced to transfer their knowledge of fencing to Soviet sports management. The first of these exchanges, of which there exist references, was organized in Moscow at the end of 1951, in preparation for the Olympic Games of 1952. The entire Hungarian fencing elite, both athletes and coaches, took part. During this 'exchange,' the Soviets laid the foundations for their hegemony in Olympic fencing, which they would take over from Hungary in the late 1960s. Below, the joint Soviet-Hungarian training camp of 1951 in Moscow is discussed in greater detail. This so-called study fencing session organized by the Soviets belongs to the forgotten chapters of sports history and is mentioned only a few times in passing in official publications of sports historiography.[5]

4 The close relation between sports and geopolitics is also discussed at length in a recent study of Boniface (2021).

5 In Ottogalli et al. (2013: 113-151), a study published at the occasion of the centenary of the FIE a whole chapter (partie 3) is devoted to a detailed elaboration of the road of Soviet fencing to hegemony which according to the authors lasted from 1956 until 1982. However, the joint Soviet-Hungarian training sessions in the beginning of the fifties of the twentieth century offering the basis for the Soviet hegemony are not referred to. The authoritative study of Riordan (1977) on sport in Soviet society mentions the contribution of Hungarian coaches to the development of fencing, swimming and pentathlon in the USSR but does not provide any details (Riordan, 1977: 383).

3. Fencing in Hungary

This section analyzes the origins of Hungarian hegemony in saber fencing.[6] This was the result of successive geopolitical circumstances during the turbulent first half of the twentieth century. For Hungary, these were marked by the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, the Treaty of Trianon that the Allies concluded on June 4, 1920, which left Hungary badly damaged, the re-establishment of the Hungarian state, and the establishment of an authoritarian regime under regent Miklós Horthy, which came under the influence of German and Italian fascism in the course of the 1930s. All these geopolitical factors contributed to the development of fencing in Hungary. The tradition of Hungarian fencing, and in particular saber fencing, grew out of military fencing, which was a compulsory part of Austria-Hungary officer training (Clair, 1879; 1930; Arlow, 1902). The 'saber' is a weapon used in the military, especially by light cavalry regiments. The standard equipment of a Hungarian mounted soldier called 'huszár', or 'hussar', included a 'saber' (called 'szablya' in Hungarian) (Marácz, 2017: 312-313). The military saber was usually a curved sword of iron sharp on one side. The hussar regiments with their elegant uniforms played an important role in the defense of Hungarian sovereignty against the Ottomans and the Habsburgs in the 15th and 16th centuries (Kun, 1969: 52-55; Földes et al., 1977). By the way, the model of the Hungarian hussar regiments spread all over Europe. Military fencing contributed to the development of saber fencing which was considered a national sport in Hungary. Hence, the saber was traditionally regarded by the Hungarians as the "Hungarian" weapon and was an inherent part of the external Hungarian image and the Hungarian self-image (Marácz, 2007: 174-176).

With the establishment of the first sports associations in Hungary, sports fencing took off. The 'Magyar Athletikai Club' ("Hungarian Athletic Club"; MAC for short) was founded by Count Miksa Esterházy and Lajos Molnár in 1875. This first sports club in Budapest was founded after the British example. Count Esterházy had been attaché to the Austro-Hungarian Embassy in London, where he had studied extensively the establishment of English sports associations. Sports associations were established all over Hungary after MAC was founded. MAC's first fencing teacher was József Keresztessy. He developed a Hungarian style of saber fencing that would later be refined by Italian masters who settled in Hungary around 1900. The Italian fencing masters brought a lighter saber more suitable for sports fencing. This contributed to a profound change in Hungarian saber fencing techniques and tactics.

In 1894, MAC organized the first national fencing demonstration in Budapest. The following year, the first official fencing competition was held. In 1896, sports fencing became an official part of the 'Thousand Years of Hungary' program to celebrate the official foundation of the Hungarian state in 896 AD (Marácz, 1996: 33-37). This was a huge boost for sports fencing. Between 14 and 20 May 1896, a major international fencing competition took place in the 'Vigadó', a large concert hall on the east bank of the Danube built in 1859. The best 140 fencers from Europe took part in these fencing competitions (Földes et al., 1977: 205). The

6 See Marácz (2019) for a more detailed discussion of the origins of Hungarian fencing against the backdrop of the remaking of the Hungarian state in the twenties of the twentieth century.

masters category was won by the Italian fencing master from Florence, Italo Santelli, who received his fencing training at the prestigious Italian military fencing institute 'Scuola magistrale militare di Scherma di Roma'. Because of his victory in the Millennium fencing competition, Santelli was offered a contract as a fencing master with MAC, which he accepted. Later he founded his own fencing hall in Budapest, 'Salle Santelli', and even during the Interwar period, Santelli had a lot of influence on fencing in Budapest. Hungarian fencers were also actively involved in international fencing competitions early on. From 1900 Hungarian fencers competed in the Olympics, and in 1902 Dr. Béla Nagy's drafted his first proposal for universal, conventional fencing rules. A year after the FIE was founded in Paris, in 1913, the Hungarian Fencing Federation was founded ('Magyar Vívó Szövetség', abbreviated MVSz). Nagy was chosen as the first president of the MVSz. He would become a well-known sports diplomat with an international reputation. As Vice-President of the FIE in the years 1913 and 1914, he continued to work in Paris on the universal sports fencing conventions (Dávid, 1988: 46).

In addition to the civilian fencing societies that spread across the country, the education of military fencing in the Interwar period remained the responsibility of the Hungarian army. Within Austria-Hungary, the training of military fencing teachers took place at the Austrian Theresianum Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt, where officers had to follow a 'Militär-Fecht- und Turnlehrer-Kurs'. After the 'Ausgleich' between Austria and Hungary in 1867, which resulted in the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, Hungarian officers also received their fencing training at the Theresianum. Several first-class fencing masters taught at the Theresianum, such as the Croat Milan Neralić and the Italian Luigi Barbasetti. The Theresianum thus formed the starting point for many Hungarian fencing teachers who would play an important role in the development of saber fencing in Hungary after the First World War. One of the outstanding military fencing masters was László Borsody (Máday, 2017b; Marácz & Máday, 2019).

Borsody was born into a poor Jewish family in a small village near Pest in 1878. During the fin-de-siècle in royal Hungary, national consciousness grew. The Borsody family converted to Catholicism and changed their German name 'Pfeffer' to 'Borsody'. The Magyarization of surnames was a common practice among people who aimed to climb the social ladder of multi-ethnic Hungary. In 1899, Borsody was expelled from the University of Pest for engaging in an illegal duel. He then joined the Royal Hungarian Army. Later, he received his diploma as a fencing teacher at the Theresianum, where he was an assistant to the fencing master Neralić for a while. László Borsody was highly successful in the Austro-Hungarian military fencing competitions he participated in, excelling in both saber and foil. In 1906, the head of state Emperor and King Franz Joseph attended one of the competitions and was so impressed with Borsody's fencing style that he immediately promoted him to the rank of second-class fencing master. From 1902 to 1925, Borsody taught fencing at the Royal Hungarian Ludovika Academy in Budapest, which was the cadet training school of the Hungarian army until 1945. In 1916, Borsody was promoted to the rank of captain and appointed as the head fencing master. In the Austro-Hungarian army, ranks held great significance, as only higher-ranking officers could become chief fencing instructors. The end of the First World War and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire had a profound impact on the development of fencing in Hungary. The

country faced severe repercussions from the Allies for its participation in the war on the side of the Central Powers.

For Hungary, the First World War formally ended with the Treaty of Trianon that was concluded on June 4, 1920. Due to the treaty, Hungary lost more than two-thirds of its territory and a third of ethnic Hungarians ended up as a 'minority' in the new or enlarged successor states of Hungary (Marácz, 1996: 130). The Hungarians experienced the Trianon Peace Treaty as a 'dictate' (Marácz, 1996: 129). However, the peace treaty allowed Hungary to build a new army. This decision was influenced by Britain, which sought to prevent France from dominating Central Europe and to keep Central Europe from drawing closer to the Soviet Union. Thus, Britain authorized the establishment of a Hungarian National Army in Szeged. The context for this decision stemmed from the events of 1919 when Hungarian communists proclaimed the Hungarian Council Republic on March 21. Subsequently, the Romanian army, with the support of France, occupied Budapest on August 9 of the same year, leading to the downfall of the Council Republic in a short period. Admiral Miklós Horthy, the last Commander in Chief of the Austro-Hungarian Navy and a trusted confidant of Emperor and King Franz Joseph, was appointed as the commander of the Hungarian National Army. Following the signing of the peace treaty, Admiral Horthy assumed a prominent role in Hungary and became its strongman. He established a conservative-authoritarian regime that heavily relied on the Hungarian army for support and stability. The officers of the Hungarian National Army received their training almost exclusively at the Austrian Theresian Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt. Fencing was an obligatory part of the officer training curriculum at this institute (Szikora, 2013). The institutions of the Hungarian state had to be rebuilt. This also applied to the Hungarian army's fencing courses. The Theresianum in Wiener Neustadt could no longer be called upon. Hence, on May 1, 1920, the Hungarian Ministry of Defense set up its own training course for fencing and gymnastics teachers. This course 'Military Fencing and Physical Education' was taught at the Hungarian Royal Ludovika Academy (Marácz, 2019). The aim was to train certified military sports instructors in eight months. The teaching staff consisted of officers trained at the Theresianum, including Borsody. Although the Treaty of Trianon restored Hungarian sovereignty, Article 111 of the treaty prohibited all activities related to rearmament. That is why the Military Fencing and Physical Education course had to be discontinued on July 1, 1922 (Martin, 1924: 500). In the second and third decades of the twentieth century, the Horthy regime facilitated the development of institutes for training modern military fencing and gymnastics instructors (Szikora, 2012). The aim was to improve the physical condition of the Hungarian army, but in terms of fencing, it was also aimed at raising the level of fencing so that Hungary could successfully compete in the international arena. The motivation for sports fencing at the Ludovika Academy was, thus, a direct response to the Treaty of Trianon. The general opinion was that, due to international successes with the "Hungarian" weapon, revenge had to be taken for the humiliations of the Trianon Treaty. After the sports blockade by the Allies was lifted just before the Olympic Games in Paris in 1924, Hungary was able to participate in the Olympic Games again (Kun, 1969: 111).

It was not until 1925 that the course for fencing teachers was allowed to be organized again by the Hungarian army. This was now embedded in a broader course for training fencing instructors. The course was also no longer held at the campus of the Ludovika Academy but

was moved to another military campus in Budapest. Borsody, previously promoted to the rank of major, was appointed the chief fencing master of the Royal Hungarian Military Course for Sports Instructors. Here, Borsody started developing his own method of saber fencing. He also put a lot of energy into the training of future champions. Borsody had his sights set on the Olympic Games in Amsterdam in 1928. With success: his student Ödön Tersztyánszky eventually won Olympic gold here, after competing in a Hungarian-Hungarian final against Attila Petschauer, a pupil of Santelli (Van Rossem, 1928).

After his victory on August 12, Tersztyánszky traveled to London to meet the conservative British aristocrat, a member of the House of Lords, and newspaper magnate Lord Harold Rothermere. Rothermere had launched a campaign in his newspaper 'The Daily Mail' in June 1927 entitled 'Justice for Hungary', making him the only Western European politician to openly support Hungary's claims for a peaceful revision of the Treaty of Trianon (Romsics, 1989: 181-183; Marácz, 1995: 49). As a sign of respect for Rothermere's pro-Hungarian attitude, the fresh Olympic champion gave him the saber with which he had fenced in the final in Amsterdam. When Tersztyánszky returned to Hungary and met his fencing master, Borsody, he qualified Tersztyánszky's action of gifting his saber to the British Lord as follows: "Your deed is worthy of a Hungarian army officer, worthy of Hungarian saber fencing." (Máday, 2017a: 30).

On March 1, 1932, the 'Royal Hungarian Military Course for Sports Instructors' was replaced by the 'Miklós Toldi Royal Hungarian Military Academy for the Education of Hungarian Sports Instructors and Fencing Instructors' (abbreviated as SPOTI). Until his retirement in 1936, Borsody remained the chief fencing master at this institute and continued to achieve successes with its military fencers. At the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles, his favorite student György Jekelfalussy Piller won gold in both the men's individual and team saber competitions. Piller would also carry on Borsody's legacy as a trainer at SPOTI from 1927 to 1932. Moreover, in the context of the present paper, he would prove to be a key figure during the Soviet-Hungarian fencing exchanges in the early fifties of the twentieth century (Máday, 2017b: 96).

During World War II, Jekelfalussy Piller served as a lieutenant colonel on the Eastern Front, including Lake Balaton. Between May and August 1945, he became a Soviet prisoner of war in Austria, where he was interned. Piller was eventually repatriated to Hungary on a POW train. At Kelenföld station, he was noticed by police chief Gábor Péter, who would later become the feared head of the Hungarian communist security service, the ÁVH. Péter recognized the Olympic champion and is quoted to have said: "That one can come in handy later." (Polgár, 2017: 56-70). In 1946, Jekelfalussy Piller was allowed to function as a fencing coach again, but now at associations that had been given a "socialist sounding name," such as Vörös Meteor S.E., which translates to 'Sports Association the Red Meteor'. Starting from 1948, Piller became the head coach of the Hungarian national saber team, working under the guidance of state coach Béla Bay. However, in 1951, he unexpectedly returned to Russia, but this time not as a front officer. Instead, he went as a fencing master, tasked with teaching the Soviet fencing trainers and top athletes the intricate details of the Hungarian saber school.

4. The Hungarian Fencing Elite in Moscow

What happened in the joint Soviet-Hungarian fencing training camp in Moscow at the end of 1951 is mainly known from five short newspaper articles that appeared in the official sports newspaper of communist Hungary, 'Népsport' (People's Sport). The articles appeared under the name of Dr. Béla Bay, the national fencing coach. Bay is introduced in the first of these five publications, which were published in 'Népsport' on November 11, November 16, December 21, December 23, and December 24, 1951, as the state trainer who led the Hungarian fencing delegation in the "exchange of fencing experiences" with the Soviet fencers.[7] It is not entirely clear how long the training camp lasted. Bay talks about a training camp of several weeks. The training camp probably started just before his first report on November 11, 1951, and was finished around mid-December. The last three contributions, entitled "Our Fencers in the Soviet Union I, II, and III," are rather a brief look back at the camp that Bay likely wrote after the Hungarian fencing delegation returned to Budapest.

State trainer Bay came from a dynasty of aristocratic Transylvanian landowners and was initiated into the secrets of fencing by the well-known fencing teacher László Gerentsér during the interwar years. In 1936, he competed as a fencer at the Summer Olympics in Berlin. Despite coming from a so-called class-hostile background and starting his active fencing career under the Horthy regime, Bay managed to gain the trust of the Hungarian communist sports bureaucracy. During the 1948 Summer Olympics in London, he was added as a trainer to the Hungarian fencing delegation. From that point on, Bay held absolute power over fencing in Hungary until his retirement in 1977. He received support from the so-called National Sports Bureau, led by Gyula Hegyi, with István Kutas being the official responsible for fencing. Among other responsibilities, Bay had the authority to decide which weapon would be given priority, who would qualify for an international career as a top fencer, and which Hungarian fencer would be allowed to win if multiple Hungarians reached the final round in important international tournaments. His obliging attitude towards the Soviet sports management during the joint training camp in Moscow likely contributed to his firm control over the Hungarian fencing world as a single person. Not only was Bay appointed the national coach, but he also took charge of the theory of fencing as a lecturer at the fencing chair at the Budapest Sports University. Bay emphasized foil and epee stabbing weapons, feeling that they had not been able to develop sufficiently in Hungary due to the dominance of saber fencing. As a result, the further development of saber fencing was neglected. The fact that Kutas and Bay held absolute control over "socialist fencing" in communist Hungary is also confirmed by sports journalist Sándor Dávid in his official publication on the 75-year history of the Hungarian Fencing Federation. The booklet was written on behalf of the Hungarian Fencing Federation and appeared just before the fall of communism in 1988 (Dávid, 1988: 98). Dávid only briefly mentions the joint training camp in Moscow in 1951. In doing so, he writes in a remarkably jovial tone

7 Bay's articles and photographs are reprinted in Máday (2017a: 160-167).

about this first meeting between the Soviet and Hungarian fencers: "Our fencers, who had beaten the world, passed on 'the new fashion' to our new friends." (Dávid, 1988: 99).[8]

Bay's newspaper articles in 'Népsport' show that during the joint training camp in 1951, in addition to the training activities, there were joint meetings with Soviet sports officials (Bay, 1951a). The schedule also included time for cultural activities and visits to Soviet sports facilities (Bay, 1951a; Bay, 1951e). The Hungarian delegation brought a complete electric epee equipment as a gift (Bay, 1951b), indicating that the Soviet Union was not yet very familiar with modern epee fencing. However, this would soon change after the joint training session. In the meetings with Soviet sports officials, the duo of Kutas and Bay represented the Hungarian side. Kutas was in charge of the political leadership of the Hungarian delegation, while Bay himself gave a lecture on the development of Hungarian saber fencing since 1896. Additionally, György Jekelfalussy Piller, the 1932 Olympic saber champion of Los Angeles, and László Duronelly, epee teacher at the Sports University of Budapest, also contributed to the lecture (Bay, 1951b). Bay also reported on the state of affairs in Italian and French foil fencing during these meetings.

In his reports for 'Népsport', Bay spoke highly of the Soviet Union's achievements in the construction of stadiums, such as the Kirov Stadium in Leningrad (Bay, 1951e). The Kirov Stadium was a giant stadium in the form of a vast amphitheater with seating for 150,000 spectators (Riordan, 1977: 135). Bay mentioned that indoor games could be played, even when it was freezing outside. Bay's reports also contained ideological remarks. According to him, everything showed that sport was an important means for the Soviets to realize the concept of 'Homo Sovieticus'. Bay also wrote about the enormous interest in fencing among Soviet youth, particularly in working-class children's circles (Bay, 1951c). This kind of exaggeration was likely intended for the home front, as in the early years of Hungarian communism, fencing was often characterized as a "bourgeois sport for Europeans." (Dávid, 1988: 97). Apparently the communist authorities in Budapest needed reassurance that fencing was already ideologically sanctioned and socially accepted in the Soviet Union.

In all of Bay's contributions, he writes about the technical and tactical skills and training methods that the Hungarians passed on to the Soviets. At the same time, he praises the athletic ability of the Soviet fencers. According to Bay, the Hungarian fencers had a hard time keeping up with the Soviet athletes, especially during the warm-ups before the training sessions. The Soviet fencers spend a lot of time on warming up, and from this aspect, the Hungarian fencers can learn a lot.

There are two sources from which we can deduce who was present at the Moscow training camp: Bay's newspaper articles and photos. Bay's five articles list the names of both Soviet and Hungarian athletes and coaches who attended the camp. Additionally, there are three accompanying photos to the articles, which depict the participants. The group photo that appeared in the 'Népsport' provides a lot of information about those who were present.[9] Then there is a

8 Quote translated by LM.

9 See for this group photo also Horváth (2014: 165).

group photo of the event that has been collected by the French author on fencing history Gérard Six.[10]

According to Bay, the most important Soviet fencing teachers were present. The most famous among them was V.A. Arkadyev who taught fencing at the Moscow Sports University and belonged to the first generation of fencing coaches in the Soviet Union (Bay, 1951d). The first generation of Soviet top fencers, who won Olympic medals as early as the 1950s, were also present: Ivan Manayenko (1919-1985) competed in the 1952 Summer Olympics in Helsinki in the individual saber tournament and in the team saber competition; Lev Kuznetsov (1930-2015) won two bronze medals at the 1956 Games in Melbourne, both in the individual saber tournament and in the saber team competition. After his active fencing career, Kuznetsov became a successful fencing coach. David Tyshler (1927-2014) was a member of the bronze saber team at the 1956 Games. Tyshler reached the finals of the World Saber Championship five times between 1955 and 1959 and was seen as an innovative sabreur. (Dávid, 1988: 99). Yakov Rylsky (1928-1999) was a Soviet sabreur who competed in three Olympic Games and became an Olympic champion as a member of the Soviet saber squad in Tokyo in 1964. He was a three-time world champion in saber (Dávid, 1988: 99). The training camp also saw the participation of top Soviet floret fencers, including Mark Midler (1931-2012), who took part in four Olympic Games and won two gold medals. Women also took part in the Moscow training camp, at that time only competed individually in the foil section at international tournaments. Bay also refers to Nadezhda Shitikova (1923-1995), who participated in the women's foil individual competition both at the 1952 Helsinki and 1956 Melbourne Olympics (Bay, 1951d).

Photos were also published with the 'Népsport' articles. On three of them, participants of the training course can be seen. The 'Népsport' of December 21, 1951, published a photo with Ivan Komarov (1921-2005), a foil fencer who was a member of the Soviet team at the 1952 Olympics, and with Vladimir Vyshpolsky (1915-1987), who played in the saber team at the same games for the Soviet Union. Both Soviet fencers are in conversation with Aladár Gerevich and Pál Kovács, the absolute top Hungarian fencers who were already multiple Olympic champions on saber in 1951. The second photo shows how the national coach of the Hungarian saber team, György Jekelfalussy Piller, was teaching a few Soviet sabreurs the fine details of saber fencing. Jekelfalussy Piller, the 1932 Olympic saber champion who had fought against the Soviet Union on the Eastern Front in 1944, was in the Soviet Union again, but now to train the Soviet fencers. Apparently, the 'Népsport' had no ideological or political problem with the publication of this prominent photo of Jekelfalussy Piller, who had adjusted to the communist fencing world after his arrest and release after World War II. Jekelfalussy Piller remained the national team coach for saber until the Melbourne Olympic Games. These took place from November 22 to December 8, 1956, just after the suppression of the Hungarian Uprising

10 See G. Six as a co-author of the volume on the history of the FIE (Ottogalli et al. 2013) and his book on the interest of the founder of the Olympic Movement Pierre de Coubertin for fencing (Six 2013). I am indebted to Gérard Six for a copy of his group photo of the 1951 joint Soviet-Hungarian training camp. I will refer to this photo in the remainder of the article as "the Six photo".

against Soviet rule. Part of the Hungarian sports team, including Jekelfalussy Piller and other members of the Hungarian fencing team, decided not to return to communist Hungary. They were offered political asylum in the US.[11]

Then there is also an overview photo with the participants of the training camp. In his overview of the history of Hungarian saber fencing, Hungarian fencing master Géza Horváth has identified most of the Hungarian coaches and athletes in the photo (Horváth, 2014: 165). From his writing, it becomes clear that it was indeed the top of Hungarian fencing that participated in the 1951 joint Soviet-Hungarian training camp in Moscow. The political delegation leader was István Kutas. The fencing teachers who took part included Béla Bay (1907-1999), who was proficient in all three weapons and had achieved his Olympic results in the stabbing weapons; György Jekelfalussy Piller (1899-1960), a military fencer and fencing teacher, who was an Olympic champion in saber individually and in the saber team at the 1932 Los Angeles Games; Béla Somos (1912-1999), a military fencing master; János Szűts (1904-1976), a military fencing master; and Dr. László Duronelly (1907-1955), an epee fencing teacher and lecturer in fencing at the Budapest Sports University.

Horvath further identifies the following athletes: Gábor Delneki (1932-2008), a sabreur who won gold as a member of the Hungarian saber team at the 1960 Rome Olympics; the sabreur Bertalan Papp (1913-1992), who gained two Olympic gold medals as a member of the Hungarian saber team; Rudolf Kárpáti (1920-1999), one of the greatest Hungarian saber fencers, a multiple Olympic and world champion; Tibor Berczelli (1912-1990), a three-time Olympic champion as a member of the saber team; and Aladár Gerevich (1910-1991), who is generally regarded as the best Hungarian saber fencer of all time. Gerevich was already a celebrated champion in 1951 and was a multiple Olympic and world champion. He went on to gain seven gold medals at six different Olympics. The same accomplishment was achieved by Pál Kovács (1912-1995), a military saber fencer, who won multiple Olympic gold medals and world championships. Other notable athletes identified by Horvath include József Sákovics (1927-2009), an Olympic foil and epee fencer; Béla Rerrich (1917-2005), an Olympic epee fencer; and Ilona Elek (1907-1988), a foil fencing star who won two Olympic gold medals. Her sister, Margit Elek (1910-1986), was also an Olympic foil fencer. Additional athletes identified are József Gyuricza (1934-2020), a foil fencer, world champion, and bronze medalist as a member of the Olympic foil team; Endre Tilly (1922-1958), a foil fencer, Olympic and world champion; and Endre Palócz (1911-1988), who fenced in all three weapons and won an Olympic medal.

There are some differences between the Six photo and the one that appeared in 'Népsport'. The Népsport photo depicts the Hungarian and Soviet fencers, their coaches, and the ever-present Hungarian communist official István Kutasi. The group is bigger on the Sixth photo. In both photos, the Russian athletes are in their typical Soviet tracksuits with the Cyrillic letters

11 See also the documentary on the life of Jekelfalussy Piller 'The Last Captain', the story of Jekelfalussy (Piller) György, the 1932 Olympic Sabre champion who defected to the United States during the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne.' The documentary has been directed by Doug Nichols and produced by IMDbPro in 2017.

'CCCP' indicating the abbreviation of the Soviet Union 'USSR'. Most of the Hungarian athletes are wearing civilian clothes in both pictures, just like the Hungarian and probably Soviet officials in the Sixth photo. Only in the first row of the Six photos do we find Hungarian women fencers in tracksuits. In the leftmost position of that row, a Hungarian woman fencer is wearing the tracksuit of the Hungarian sports club 'Haladás,' as can be read from her training jacket. She could be a fencer of the Budapest 'Haladás' fencing club or an athlete of the railroad sports club 'Haladás VSE' from Szombathely, which included a fencing department between 1938 and 1995. On the Six photo, Olga Seregi and Géza Horváth were able to identify Pál Kovács, Aladár Gerevich, Tibor Berczelli, József Sákovics, Papp Bertalan, Somos Béla, Elek Margit, and Lev Kuznetsov, who are present on the 'Népsport' photo as well.[12] The following athletes could not be identified in the 'Népsport' photo but are present in the Sixth photo, including Paula Marosi (1936-2022). She won a gold medal in the women's team foil competition at the 1964 Olympics and a silver medal in the same competition at the 1968 Olympics. Lídia Dömölky (1936-) participated in the 1956, 1960, 1964, and 1968 Olympics, where she won a gold medal in the individual women's foil competition and two silver medals in the women's team foil competition. She became a world champion at the age of 19 and was married to the aforementioned fencer József Sákovics.

Magda Nyári (1921-2005) was a five-time world champion and earned a gold medal in the women's foil team competition at the 1964 Olympics. Erna Bogáthy-Bogen (1906-2002) won a bronze medal in the 1932 Olympics women's individual foil competition. She was married to the multiple Olympic champion Aladár Gerevich. Ilus Vargha (1910-1973) was an Olympic foil fencer and also held European and world champion titles. Lajos Maszlay (1903-1979) was an Olympic fencer in both foil and saber disciplines. He received his fencing education in the Borsody style at the Royal Hungarian Ludovika Academy. Lajos Somodi (1928-2012) won a bronze medal in the men's team foil competition at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. Tamás Gábor (1932-2007) was an Olympic and world champion epee fencer and secured a gold medal in the 1964 Olympic men's team epee competition. Kázmer Pacséry was a foil fencer and earned medals at four world championships. In addition, the following top coaches were also present: Árpád Nagy (1902-1975), who exclusively coached elite fencers; István Tari (1912-1996), an elite fencing and pentathlon master; and Gusztáv Rabe, who was an epee fencer, fencing master, and had a successful career as an international fencing referee.

After 1951, the Hungarian fencing delegation visited Moscow again in 1953 for a joint training camp. In return, the Soviets visited Budapest in 1952 for a four-week training course and again in 1954 for another joint training course. Additionally, in May-June 1952, a Hungarian fencing delegation visited the Soviet Union once more for a training camp. This visit is documented by a picture from the private photo archive of Lídia Dömölky, which has been published on the website of the digital fencing museum of the OSC Fencing Club. The text

12 These participants were identified by Olga Seregi, a former foil fencer and fencing coach on March 6, 2022 and by Géza Horváth on May 27, 2022 in personal communication. There is still a lot of work to be done concerning the photo identification of the participants, especially the Russian ones. I will leave this as a task for further research.

accompanying the picture mentions some of the participants, including Kázmér Pacséry, Bertalan Papp, Lajos Somodi, and Lídia Dömölky herself. Furthermore, Zsuzsa Morvay (1929-2009), a foil fencer who won three world championships in the women's team foil competition, can also be seen in the photo. However, she was not mentioned in connection with the previously discussed photos.

In the second half of the 1950s, the Soviet Union's fencing successes began to increase significantly. During the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, the Soviets secured seven out of the 21 fencing medals. Subsequently, at the 1957 Fencing World Championship in Paris, the USSR fencing team earned four medals, two of which were gold. It's important to recall that during this period, there were six fencing disciplines for men and only one for women, which was the individual foil event. However, starting from the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo, the women's events were expanded, resulting in more medals available for the fencing competitions. Despite Hungary leading the overall medal ranking in the Olympic fencing tournament of the 1964 Summer Olympics, the Soviet Union secured the second position that year. Additionally, during those Olympics, Hungary only won gold in the individual saber tournament, while the gold medal in the saber men's team competition went to the Soviet Union. This marked the beginning of a trend reversal. Prior to the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, Hungary had consistently dominated in the saber events. With the exception of the 1920 Antwerp Olympics, where Hungary was excluded from participation, and the 1924 Paris Olympics when Hungary only won the individual men's saber tournament, Hungary was victorious in both individual and team saber events from 1908 in London until the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo (Kereszténvi, 1976: 281). In 1968, the Soviet Union won the overall fencing ranking at the Mexico Olympics, and Hungary failed to win a gold medal in the saber disciplines for the first time since the 1908 Olympics. This marked the end of the Hungarian saber hegemony, and from that point on, saber fencing would be dominated by the Soviet Union.

In 1975, Horváth had the opportunity to interview Lev Kuznetsov during his stay in Budapest as the head coach of the Soviet saber team. Back in 1951, Kuznetsov (1930-2015) received individual lessons from the Hungarian elite saber masters Szűts, Somos, and Jekelfalussy Piller during a joint training course. In the interview, the Soviet saber coach claimed that Soviet fencing had undergone tremendous developments until 1956 under the guidance of his teachers, Arkadyev, and Manayenko. Kutnetsov considered himself on par with the great Hungarian top fencers of that time, stating, 'During that period, we developed fencing a step further than Hungarian fencing.' Kuznetsov openly admitted that his fencing style was the closest to the classical style and the most Hungarian among all Soviet fencers.

Dr. Ferenc Zöld, the last student of Italo Santelli and chef de mission of the Hungarian fencing team at the 1948 London Olympics, also mentioned that Soviet fencing began to rise from the 1957 fencing World Championship onwards. After the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, Dr. Zöld emigrated to the US. In 1958, he initially linked the rise of Soviet fencing to the fact that the Soviets had copied Hungarian fencing techniques (Zold, 1958a: 4). But in an article in the American Fencing Federation magazine later that year, he slightly changed his mind. According to Zöld, the rise of Soviet fencing was not solely due to the perfunctory copying of Hungarian fencing techniques (Zold, 1958b: 14). In 1949, when Zöld still supervised the Hungarian team, he believed that the Russians were not yet a serious match in fencing. How-

ever, he later confirmed that there had been an intensive exchange between the Soviets and the Hungarian fencing elite. Zöld mentioned that films were made of Gerevich, analyzing every single detail, and the Soviet trainers and fencers were receptive to criticism. Despite this cooperation, Zöld also acknowledged the Soviets' own contribution to the development of their fencing, which had been previously noted by Bay as well. Zöld observed that the Soviet fencing program had access to a vast pool of fencers with athletic prowess, and they were provided with all the necessary facilities and privileges for training. As a result, Soviet fencers became faster, had more stamina, and were physically stronger than their Hungarian counterparts. The innovations in fencing during the 1950s, such as electric scoring machines and lighter weapons, further opened up new opportunities for athletic fencers like those in the Soviet team.

4. Conclusions

Until the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, fencing was not extensively cultivated in the Soviet Union. This was due to the international isolation of the Soviet Union and the fact that the communists regarded fencing as a class-hostile sport. In 1951, the Soviet Union decided to join the Olympic movement and take part in the Olympic Games. During the Cold War, the medal standings of the Olympic Games were seen by both the East and West as a soft power instrument to demonstrate the superiority of their own political system. Fencing, as an Olympic discipline with 21 medals at stake, certainly counted in this context. Hence, the Soviets discarded their ideological and practical reservations against fencing.

Fencing, especially saber fencing, was practiced at a high level in Hungary. This was the result of a combination of identity-related, historical, and geopolitical circumstances. To quickly gain knowledge about fencing, the Hungarian top fencers and their coaches were ordered to Moscow in late 1951 to participate in an "exchange of fencing experiences." For the Soviet sports management, the Hungarian fencing delegation was an interesting object of study that helped the Soviet Union to surpass Hungary's hegemony in fencing in the late 1960s and add many Soviet fencing medals to the Olympic medal tally.

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Race, Empire, and the Horrors of a Hunnic Past in *Dracula* (1897)

Abstract
In this thesis, I seek to answer one of the central questions in Bram Stoker's Dracula: who is entitled to hold hegemony in Europe, and more importantly, based on what claim? The novel treats race as the primary decisive factor in answering this question, but also links race to policies of language, national identity, and civilizational progress. The novel approaches this question through a normative English subjectivity, such as that of Jonathan Harker's travel narrative, which juxtaposes English modernity and rationalism to the, supposedly, racially decadent Transylvanian locals. On the other hand, the novel presents Dracula as a cruel, authoritarian leader constructing an ideology of Székely (Sekler) racial purity based on militaristic achievements and an ancient Hunnic origin. The novel argues that these ideas are morally reprehensible, hence it deems these ideas a despicable, dangerous monster. Ultimately the novel is ideologically confused: it both positions the Dutch and America as potential leaders of a future of indefinite Western hegemony, and, strangely, appreciates some aspects of Dracula and his Transylvanian home. The first chapter deals with Harker's travel narrative and the English's claim to power based on modernity, while the second chapter analyzes its counter text, Dracula's lecture on Transylvanian history, a rhetorical speech promoting the racial status of his Hun-Székely background. Lastly, the third chapter elaborates on the novel's indecisiveness to the hegemony question and how its treatment of Dracula with both fear and fascination reflects tendencies in nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish Gothic literature.
Keywords: Dracula, Stoker, Transylvania, Székely, race, hegemony, language, national identity, modernity

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Introduction

Since the publication of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* in 1897 and its countless film adaptations, popular culture often associates Dracula with horror and blood-sucking, while in the Anglophone audience, "Dracula became synonymous with Transylvania … and later, after the

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province's transfer in 1918, with Romania as well" (Deletant, 2007: 225). Yet the novel, written and published while Transylvania was a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, gives much room to contemporary debates surrounding multilingualism, race, the rise and fall of European empires, and Western hegemony, and subsequently invites a reading of the unnerving encounter of Jonathan Harker and his companions with Count Dracula as an allegorized political commentary. While the Hun-Székely Dracula's goal is to invade, terrorize and colonize the British Empire from within, Jonathan Harker's vampire-hunting fraternity, composed of English, Dutch, and American members, embarks on a quest to wipe Dracula from the earth. The novel, through the opposition of the vampire-hunting fraternity and Dracula, thus presents a clash of civilizations, of modern and ancient, of West and East, of rational Protestantism and superstitious Catholicism, of imperialism and ethno-nationalist anti-imperialism. The novel's strategy to depict these seemingly opposite forces as interlinked illuminates the ideological crossroads at which late nineteenth-century Europe found itself. *Dracula* as a Gothic novel and commentary on nineteenth-century politics surrounds race as a claim to hegemony with all things frightening, suggesting that the topic incited fear in the nineteenth-century Anglophone audience.

Several scholars have already discussed the topic of *Dracula* and its nineteenth-century context before, for example, Matthew Gibson in his article "*Dracula* and the East". Gibson (2017) argues that in Stoker's creation of Dracula, he rendered the Wallachian warlord Vlad Dracul Székely and separated the Székelys from the Hungarians, so that Dracula could function as both an anti-Habsburg and anti-Ottoman monster (101). Another scholar who has researched the novel's commentary on its contemporary geopolitical context is Stephen Arata (1990), who in his article "The Occidental Tourist: 'Dracula' and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization" regards *Dracula* as a narrative of reverse colonization expressing "[t]he fear… that what has been represented as the 'civilized' world is on the point of being colonized by 'primitive' forces" (623). Both Gibson's idea of Dracula as an anti-Habsburg menace and Arata's view of *Dracula* as a narrative of reverse colonization push towards an in-depth analysis of Stoker's choice for Dracula as a Székely warrior descending from Attila the Hun, as European cultural discourse associates these ethnicities with struggles for self-determination and primitivism respectively. Ultimately, the question is why the novel chooses to depict specifically this set of ethnic affiliations as the ultimate threat to the British Empire.

This thesis argues that one of the central themes in *Dracula* is the struggle for hegemony in Europe, and that Dracula supporting his case for dominance by drawing on his ancient Hunnic roots, promoting racial purity and devolution, underlies the horror that the novel inspires. The novel struggles to provide a clear answer to this question. On the one hand, it participates in a well-known tendency of Anglophone Gothic writing to juxtapose Protestant rationalism and diligence with Catholic backwardness and superstition. On the other, the novel attests to a slight sympathy for the authoritarian, anti-imperialist ethno-nationalism the Count represents.

Since the novel treats race as a fundamental factor influencing the development of its plot, the postcolonial concept of racialization will prove useful. Broadly speaking, I adhere to the definition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which states that to racialize means "to categorize or divide according to race" (Oxford, 2023). More concretely, however, I work with the term

as provided by Steve Martinot (2010) in his book *The Machinery of Whiteness*, in which he defines the structure of racialization as "a cultural structure, a structure of social categorizations of people. It has nothing to do with blood or the inheritance of appearance. It is social status that is imposed on people through political definition" (172). Race is thus a social category and racialization is the process that creates these categories and designates peoples to them. Harker's travel narrative about Transylvania describes Transylvania and its people by casting its people as racially inferior to himself and to the English. Harker's stay at Dracula's castle provides Dracula with chances to narrate his own view on Transylvania and how his history as a Hun-Székely leader would entitle him to power and authority over the region. While Harker racializes Transylvanians to denigrate them, Dracula embraces a rhetoric of racial purity, a view with which the novel sympathizes. These cracks in the novel's Gothic rhetoric call for scrutiny, especially in the light of Stoker's Anglo-Irish background and the situation of the British Empire vis-à-vis its own multinational population.

Harker's Travel Narrative: English Exceptionalism and Local Barbarians

In the first chapter of the novel, Harker's travel narrative provides the reader with an introduction to Transylvania and its people in which he racializes the locals based on comparing his own English experience with his new Transylvanian experience. His racialization of Transylvanians relies on their disorganized infrastructure, confusing culture and superstitious religion, ultimately arguing that the English model of rationalism and modernity is superior and should be normative. As Harker crosses the Danube, he is quick to divide Europe into two factions: the West and East, the latter he describes as the realm of "traditions of Turkish rule" (Stoker, 1897: 5). Typical of the Gothic genre, Harker finds the East increasingly unpleasant the deeper he travels into it, writing that "it seems to me that the further East you go the more unpunctual are the trains. What ought they to be in China?" (Stoker, 1897: 6). Here, Harker emphasizes how much more chaotic the travel experience is compared to what he is used to, considering that this perceived underdevelopment is the case anywhere in what he categorizes as "the East." Before departure, Harker tried to locate Castle Dracula on the map, but without success, "as there are no maps of this country as yet to compare with our own Ordnance Survey maps" (Stoker, 1897: 5). Transylvania's lack of a developed infrastructure renders Harker's experience in the region unpredictable and chaotic, and the text's choice to narrate these events from Harker as the first-person subject dealing with these calamities suggests that these complaints are justified, and that consequently, the Transylvanian way of life should invoke feelings of discomfort and contempt. Conversely, these passages of English subjectivity projected on Transylvanian situations imply that the English experience is normative and superior. Therefore, the novel implies, the English have something to offer to the whole world, namely modernization in the form of punctual trains and detailed maps, supposedly thanks to their excellent organizational skills and pragmatic work ethics.

Since the novel narrates the entirety of Harker's travel narrative from his first-person subjectivity, the experience of Transylvania culture is likewise informed by what Englishness regards

as normal, which causes dissonance between the English Harker and the multilingual Transylvanians. This becomes apparent in Harker's encounter with the multilingual crowd fearing his departure to Dracula's castle:

> I could hear a lot of words often repeated, queer words, for there were many nationalities in the crowd; so I quietly got my polyglot dictionary from my bag and looked them out. I must say they were not cheering to me, for amongst them were 'Ordog'–Satan, 'pokol'–hell, 'stregoica'–witch, 'vrolok' and 'vlkoslak'–both of which mean the same thing, one being Slovak and the other Servian for something that is either were-wolf or vampire. (Stoker, 1897: 9)

The passage's transcription of the "queer words" and their English translations illustrate the linguistic storm Harker finds himself in; the challenge of not only having to interpret one foreign language, but many, including the nuances between similar sounding ones. The words are linguistically different, but they all point to the monstrous. In this way, the text endangers Harker in two ways: it foreshadows the doom that awaits him at Dracula's castle, but also generates fear for the unknown Other. The latter comes to Harker in the form of foreign languages and the practice of multilingualism: a practice he is not used to, but somewhat prepared for by relying on his multilingual dictionary and his "smattering of German" (Stoker, 1897: 5). The narrative's fear of the unknown is what makes it so adamant in gaining an understanding of Transylvania, which emerges in how Harker informed himself on the region, noting that "there are four distinct nationalities: Saxons in the south, and mixed with them the Wallachs, who are the descendants of the Dacians; Magyars in the west; and Szekelys in the east and north" (Stoker, 1897: 6). Yet while Harker attempts to keep Transylvanian culture under his control by understanding it, categorizing the region in separate nation-states, his real-life experiences complicate his attempt. His encounter with the multilingual crowd, the presence of various Slavic minorities such as "the Cszeks with their white, and the Slovaks with their colored, sheepskins" (Stoker, 1897: 11) and later the introduction of the Roma, who "talk only their own varieties of the Romany tongue" (Stoker, 1897: 42) indicate that Transylvania is home to a wide linguistic palette and thus perhaps does not even qualify to be a nation-state.[2] Furthermore, the lack of a lingua franca and the different languages spoken in the same place seem to segregate the locals living next to each other. This linguistic disintegration leaves Transylvania without a defined national identity and renders the country culturally hard to grasp for an outsider such as the English Harker. In turn, the novel's encounter with Transylvania's fractured culture with the English confidence of Harker opens the door to racialization.

The novel's racialization of Central Europeans intensifies when Harker shifts his focus from language to the physical appearances of the locals, as "some of them were just like the peasants at home or those I saw coming through France and Germany, with short jackets and round hats and home-made trousers; but others were very picturesque" (Stoker, 1897: 6). Harker is

2 For a discussion of late nineteenth-century conceptions of nations, see Leerssen (2007: 379).

keen to note in detail the clothing of the people he sees, especially those of the Slovaks, whom Harker finds "more barbarian than the rest" (Stoker, 1897: 7) and only marginally describes their physiognomy, noting their "long black hair and heavy black moustaches" (Stoker, 1897: 7). The text's choice to emphasize clothing implies that anthropologically defining people from an English subjectivity such as that of Harker is more effective than relying on language. It also highlights that material culture is a more reliable marker of social status and ethnic affiliation than biological qualities such as facial features or body proportions are. Apparently, materiality is what anthropologically colors people: from a modern imperial English point of view, it is decisive in deciding whether a particular people pass as Western or ought to be seen as "picturesque" or "barbarian". According to the novel's English subjectivity, locals behaving like Western peasants are still deemed acceptable, but those whose material culture deviates apparently deserve to be designated as barbaric. In this way, the novel illustrates that Englishness has its own conceptions of normality and barbarianism and remains suspicious of what it perceives as extravagant and unknown.

Typical of the Gothic genre's contempt for Continental Catholic religious practices, Harker's quest to sort people into ethnic categories extends itself into the realm of religion. Regarding the locals' behavior, Harker notes that they are superstitiously religious and fervently pray "in the self-surrender of devotion to have neither eyes nor ears for the outer world" (Stoker, 1897: 11). Harker, however, distances himself from such irrational behavior when an old lady hysterically approaches him when he is about to travel to the Count's castle, noting in his journal that "it was all very ridiculous, but I did not feel comfortable. However, there was business to be done, and I could allow nothing to interfere with it" (Stoker, 1897: 8). Indeed, Harker posits himself as the down-to-earth, diligent English businessman, unfettered by the superstitious silliness of local Central Europeans. This is another example of Harker's taxonomizing impulse: by sorting everything and everyone strange he encounters into their respective ethnic boxes, he creates a rubric of peoples, categories to which one, based on their looks, behaviors, or languages, simply belongs or does not. In this way, everything that happens in Transylvania is a result of predictable cultural constructs, embodied by people who can only look and behave in stereotypical "barbaric" and "superstitious" ways. Here, Harker applies a colonial mentality to the region and its people, namely that, as Frantz Fanon (1963) writes in his *The Wretched of the Earth*, "the colonial world is a world divided into compartments" (37) and that "what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact of belonging to or not belonging to a given race, a given species" (40). Harker, a solicitor specializing in English common law, is not traveling to Transylvania to colonize, plunder, or exploit the region, so in the traditional sense, he is not a colonizer, nor has Transylvania ever been an English colony. Yet Harker represents the archetype of the enterprising businessman who ventures into the wide world to do business, to make England richer, in this case by selling English property to foreign investors such as the Count. Typically, transnational business comes about through intercultural communication and requires some sort of knowledge of the target culture to be successful. The novel colors Harker's approach to Transylvania with the nineteenth-century imperialist context of the British empire, which explains why he designates others as "barbaric". The novel equips him with anthropological instincts that push him to first simplify Transylvania by compartmentalizing it, chopping

lands up into national regions, and when that fails, creating clear ethnic categories that differ from each other, but collectively differ even more from that of his Englishness.

In short, Harker racializes peoples whom he deems Other so that a complex world becomes predictable and by extension more readily exploitable. In that world, the novel implies, it is the English who are racially superior due to their excellent work ethic and rational religion, offering the world similarly excellent infrastructure and emancipating economic opportunities, while Central Europeans are racially decadent, causing cultural confusion and infrastructural misery by wasting their time worrying about things that do not really exist.

Dracula's Lecture: Hun-Székely Continuity and Racial Purity

Count Dracula, however, challenges the right of the English to European hegemony and does so by constructing a narrative based on Hun-Székely racial purity. In hindsight, Dracula is an ethnically obscure figure, "clad in black from head to foot, without a single speck of colour about him anywhere" (Stoker, 1897: 18), and speaks "excellent English, but with a strange intonation" (Stoker, 1897: 18). Since Harker fails to racialize Dracula on the basis of language and clothing, he turns to his physiognomy, which Harker finds to be "very marked" (Stoker, 1897: 20). Harker observes: "his face was a strong–a very strong–aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils" (Stoker, 1897: 20). Dracula's "eyebrows were very massive" (Stoker, 1897: 20) and he had a "heavy moustache … with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years" (Stoker, 1897: 20). In addition, his pale ears were "at the tops extremely pointed" (Stoker, 1897: 20). Using degree adverbs such as "very", "peculiarly" and "extremely", the text illustrates the extent of Dracula's physiognomic monstrosity; the physical presence of Dracula is strangely enthralling and yet unbearable, causing Harker himself to experience "a horrible feeling of nausea" (Stoker, 1897: 20). In these passages, the text generates fear and disgust for Dracula to signal that some aspects of his being, his racial nature and the convictions he carries are of a despicable nature.

Yet for Harker, Dracula's facial features, although frightening, fail to provide him with clear racial cues. These cues eventually come from Dracula himself, in a lengthy speech about why his race possesses the ultimate right to wield power; "whenever he spoke of his house he always said 'we,' and spoke almost in the plural, like a king speaking" (Stoker, 1897: 30). Indeed, the personal pronoun 'we' in speeches invites scrutiny; who is the orator speaking for, and who do they represent? Dracula speaks for his house, but also for his race: "We Szekelys have a right to be proud, for in our veins flows the blood of many brave races who fought as the lion fights, for lordship" (Stoker, 1897: 30). These passages illustrate that Dracula's blood is of a royal nature, a status earned by fighting for victory like an animal. By invoking the image of the lion, the passage approaches the question of human race as a biological matter instead of a social construct, a hierarchy supposedly brought about organically such as in the animal world. Dracula's ideas are, from the perspective of the nineteenth century, alike *ancien regime* conceptions of how royalty is a separate bloodline rightfully wielding power over their subjects, well reflected in his rhetorically formulated question "what good are peasants without a leader?" (Stoker,

1897: 31). Ironically, however, Dracula feeds off the blood of others and therefore is more reminiscent of a parasite than the lion he compares himself with. Through this paradox, the novel suggests that ideas of racial purity spread easily but are undesirable for human society as they result in violence and death.

An alternate reading of Dracula's claim on blood is by redirecting the focus from his royal status to his Székely ethnicity, an identity that in nineteenth-century Hungarian discourse is similarly rooted in notions of "noble blood". The opening passage of Harker's account of Dracula's speech, namely: "we Szekelys have a right to be proud, for in our veins flows the blood of many brave races who fought as the lion fights, for lordship" (Stoker, 1897: 30), echo the words of Hungarian national poet and anti-Habsburg revolutionary Sándor Petőfi. In his poem "The Székelys" (1849), Petőfi romanticizes the Székelys' battle lust and celebrates their blood of which "every small drop is worth an expensive pearl" (Appendix 1). Here the "we" in Dracula's speech is an ethnic-political "we". In nineteenth-century Hungarian discourse, Hungarianness was a matter of political alliance and not of ethnic origin: Petőfi himself was of Slovak descent but spoke and wrote in Hungarian and promoted Hungarian independence from the Habsburg Empire. In Petőfi's poem "To the Székelys" (1848), the Hungarian narrator regards the Székelys as fellow Hungarians and calls on them to fight the Austrians, the common oppressor, by appealing to their special Hunnic origins, their descent from Attila (Appendix 2). In his speech, Dracula makes a similar appeal to his Hunnic origin, holding up his arms and asking rhetorically "What devil or what witch was ever so great as Attila, whose blood is in these veins?" (Stoker, 1897: 30). From a Petőfian perspective, the Székelys earned their greatness from their military culture and their Hunnic origins, which rhetorically places them in opposition against the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, especially against the imperialist aspirations of the Austrians. The Székelys fight is one of self-determination, yet in both Petőfi's poem and Dracula's speech their political status, earned by their militaristic achievements, is colored by references to an ancient past that is somehow recorded in their blood. The notion of racial purity is thus present in both texts, yet Petőfi's version is more symbolic in that it holds the Székelys as exemplaries of what true Hungarians should fight for, namely Hungarian sovereignty. Petőfi constructs a notion of Székely racial purity to call them to battle and aid him in his goal to remove Austrian influence from the Hungarian sphere. The novel, however, depicts Dracula not as the manipulated but as a manipulator who constructs an ideology of racial purity to maintain his position of power. In this way, the novel argues that a national culture informed by convictions of racial superiority is manipulative and misleading in nature.

Furthermore, Dracula's reference to his Hunnic origins promotes a civilizational worldview of primitivism, specifically that of devolution. Since the sixth-century writings of Jordanes,[3] European historiographers painted Attila as an anti-European menace, and leader of the Huns, a federation of pastoral nomad warriors. The discourse that regards the Huns as primitive barbarians continued into the nineteenth century but also evolved as civilization went through stages of modernization: when *Dracula* was published, the Enlightenment had already taken place, and the paradigm shifted from theocentric to humanist. The Scottish economist and

3 For a classical description of Attila, see Jordanes (1908: 56-57).

philosopher Adam Smith (1763) was especially concerned with the evolution of civilization, and in his *Lectures on Justice, Police, Revenue and Arms,* famously notes that "the four stages of society are hunting, pasturage, farming and commerce" (107). The Huns, as pastoral nomads, belong around the first and second stages, while Dracula, despite his apparent noble character and castle, belongs to the stage of hunters, as he tells Harker "Ah, sir, you dwellers in the city cannot enter into the feelings of the hunter" (Stoker, 1897: 21). With this remark, the novel juxtaposes Dracula the hunter to the English Harker, the former still possessed by primitive instincts, which have been distilled out of the English businessman through the comforts of modernity. The threat of devolution that Dracula embodies is thus one of the true horrors to the nineteenth-century Anglophone audience.

The view that Harker's and Dracula's respective racializations acutely relate to the course of civilization becomes clear when Dracula attacks the Habsburgs and Romanovs and describes himself as superior. Dracula tells Harker that "the Szekelys–and the Dracula as their heart's blood, their brains, and their swords–can boast a record that mushroom growths like the Habsburgs and the Romanoffs can never reach" (Stoker, 1897: 31). In this passage, Dracula again appeals to racial superiority provided by his blood and contrasts himself and his nation to the Austrian Habsburg and Russian Romanov dynasties, who similarly entitled themselves to power based on their royal bloodline. In the nineteenth century, both the Habsburgs and the Romanovs led large, multinational empires, while in the novel, Dracula is the leader of the multinational Transylvania. In turn, Dracula's ancestor, Attila, led the Hunnic empire, a tribal confederation in the fifth century. However, according to Dracula, the Habsburgs and Romanov dynasties are below him due to arriving later onto the geopolitical stage; Dracula's civilization, through his Hunnic blood, has been present in Europe since ancient times. He compares the Habsburgs and the Romanovs to mushrooms, a metaphor that is strikingly Burkean in nature. On 17 November 1772, Edmund Burke wrote in a letter to the Duke of Richmond that:

> Persons in your station of life ought to have long views. You people of great families and hereditary trusts and fortunes, are not like such as I am, who, whatever we may be, by the rapidity of our growth, and even by the fruit we bear, and flatter ourselves that, while we creep on the ground, we belly into melons that are exquisite for size and flavor, yet still are but annual plants, that perish with our season, and leave no sort of traces behind us. You, if you are what you ought to be, are in my eye the great oaks that shade a country, and perpetuate your benefits from generation to generation. (Burke, 1852: 190)

In these lines, Burke asserts that despite the achievements of individual members of the middling classes, only families of a long, old lineage ought to lead a country because their accumulated wealth can in turn enrich the country. Like Stoker's countryman Burke, Dracula similarly supports his claim to absolutism with ancient solidity. Through the mushroom metaphor, the novel makes Dracula's long and imposing speech Burkean and consequently offers legitimacy to his argument. Yet the novel also argues that Dracula has mere devolution to offer; that ideas of racial purity are undesirable because human civilization cannot modernize if it is

ruled by ideas that withhold change, and thus, progress. In the end, the novel confirms the unsustainability of racial purity, whether royal or ethnic, and provides hope with the defeat of Dracula. In this way, the novel also reflects how Burke opposed the antiquarian obsession with the past, which in his view threatened the present with "wanton and destructive energies" (Heimlich, 2021: 661). In Burke's view, historiography should always strive towards creating a peaceful society, yet "antiquarianism, with its characteristic bickering, trivial point-scoring, and above all its revisionism, loses sight of… the proper social and cultural telos" (Heimlich, 2021: 664). In the text, Dracula is both the oak, the ancient ruler of the country, and the antiquarian, who interprets Transylvanian history with a fixation on war, bloodshed and illusions of racial superiority, and thus has no intention of creating peace. While on the one hand, the novel supports Dracula's claim to hegemony with a reference to Burke, it also tends to an agreement with Burke's view on how antiquarian history writing is a threat to societal stability and is thus ought to be opposed.

Western Competition and Dracula's Transylvanian realm as a model state

As discussed in chapter 1 and 2, the novel stages a competition of the English Harker and Hun-Székely Dracula, each making their case for why their nation should be superior, namely modernization and racial purity respectively. Although the novel clearly supports the English's modernization over Dracula's racial purity, it is still confused regarding who should have the right to rule. Firstly, because it expands the confrontation between the English Harker and Hun-Székely by including the Dutch and the Americans as partners of the English, but also as potential hegemony holders. Secondly, the novel not only treats Dracula and Transylvania with fear, but also with fascination.

The Dutch Abraham van Helsing and American Quincey Morris provide aid in the quest to hunt down Dracula, and thus render the vampire-hunter fraternity an alliance of Western powers with the goal of upholding English hegemony. Yet Van Helsing's seniority and extensive knowledge allow him to take a leading position within the vampire-hunting fraternity. He collected information about Dracula's nature from his Budapestian friend Arminius and educates his team members on how to act, telling them "Now we must settle what we do. We have here much data, and we must proceed to lay out our campaign" (Stoker, 1897: 224). In these lines, the novel portrays Van Helsing as the backbone of the vampire-hunting fraternity, the leader who keeps the team together by speaking in the plural first person and commanding them by using verbs in the imperative form. In this way, the novel emphasizes the indispensability of the Dutch in upholding English hegemony, yet also begs the question of whether they themselves possess any right to rulership of the world. The novel, however, discourages the possibility of the Dutch themselves seizing hegemony through the intermittently-lucid psychiatric patient and Cassandra figure named Renfield, who tells Van Helsing: "I wish you would take yourself and your idiotic brain theories somewhere else. Damn all thick-headed Dutchmen!" (Stoker, 1897: 238). In this line, the novel suggests that the Dutch's accumulated knowledge simply does not, or rather, should not suffice as a claim to hegemony. It expresses a

certain contempt for the Dutch that urges them to take a step back on the world stage and temper their confidence before it turns into arrogance. The novel is somewhat confused regarding the Dutch, because it designates Van Helsing to be the most powerful actor in the vampire-hunting fraternity's quest to defeat Dracula, but also refuses to then admit that the Dutch could be the potential future hegemon. The novel thus sketches a role for the Dutch as partners in a future of indefinite English dominance, who should contribute to uphold this dominance, but are not allowed to interfere with it.

Despite the isolationist geopolitical strategy of late nineteenth-century America, the novel seriously considers the option of America as a world power through the character of Quincey Morris. In a letter to Mina, Lucy writes about Quincey that "he is such a nice fellow, an American from Texas, and he looks so young and so fresh that it seems almost impossible that he has been to so many places and has had such adventures" (Stoker, 1897: 56). Here, the text emphasizes Quincey's friendly nature, youth, health, and courage to present him as desirable. Dr. Seward goes even further and writes:

> What a fine fellow is Quincey! I believe in my heart of hearts that he suffered as much about Lucy's death as any of us; but he bore himself through it like a moral Viking. If America can go on breeding men like that, she will be a power in the world indeed. (Stoker, 1897: 162)

Dr. Seward is, like Lucy, keen to note how sympathetic Quincey is, but also adds a racial layer, comparing him to a "moral Viking" to illustrate his strength of character. The novel bases America's claim to potential future hegemony on the assertion that the people its policies and way of life produce are healthy, moral, and strong. Despite this, the novel still tones down its enthusiasm for the prospect of American hegemony through Quincey's death in the fight against Dracula and his living on as the son of the English Harkers, who name their child after Quincey (Stoker, 1897: 351). Like in the case of the Dutch Van Helsing, the Americans should be a part of the Western alliance, but only serve to uphold English hegemony. The novel illustrates that the fight for English hegemony, for modernism, for rational Protestantism, is dangerous, and if either of the powers must sacrifice itself for this sake, it will be anyone but the English. In this way, the novel makes the English not only compete against the Hun-Székely Dracula, but also internally against other Western world powers.

The novel's ideological confusion deepens in passages in which it expresses sympathy for Dracula and especially for his home, Transylvania. While Harker in his initial travel narrative aimed to racialize the peoples of Transylvania, he also had sympathetic things to say about them and their country. He describes Transylvania as "a country which was full of beauty of every kind" (Stoker, 1897: 6), and despite finding the locals silly due to their superstitions, he writes that "everyone seemed so kind-hearted, and so sorrowful, and so sympathetic that I could not but be touched" (Stoker, 1897: 10). Mina, in her travel narrative, likewise finds Transylvania "a lovely country; full of beauties of all imaginable kinds, and the people are brave, and strong, and simple, and seem full of nice qualities" (Stoker, 1897: 335). However, Mina feels compelled to state that "they are *very*, *very* superstitious" (Stoker, 1897: 335). In these passages, the novel argues that the locals' superstitious practices simply remain strange to the English, yet by

foregrounding their "kind-heartedness" and "nice qualities," it suggests that the locals' superstitious behavior springs from their deep desire to take care of the English tourists, as if this would be their way to make foreigners feel welcome. Furthermore, the novel scrutinizes the disdain the English carry for superstition, since the fear of the locals was, in fact, justified, and their modes of self-defense, including rosaries and garlic, turned out to be useful. In this way, the novel aims to romanticize Transylvania and its people, who although of different ethnic backgrounds and speaking different languages, are united through their religious practices, and despite living in primitive conditions compared to the English, have a home rich in its scenery. Ultimately, the novel tempers its contempt for Transylvania and the locals with an ambivalent appreciation of their way of life; perhaps it is not ideal, but it is, the novel seems to believe, authentic.

Paradoxically, the novel also treats Dracula with a sympathetic fascination, especially in relation to his political aspirations. When Harker recounts Dracula's rhetorical speech on his history, Harker seems to have enjoyed it, writing that:

> I have had a long talk with the Count. I asked him a few questions on Transylvanian history, and he warmed up to the subject wonderfully … I wish I could put down all he said exactly as he said it, for to me it was most fascinating. (Stoker, 1897: 30)

In addition, the way Harker regarded Dracula at that moment also changed; whereas he previously felt disgust for his appearance, he now writes that Dracula "grew excited as he spoke, and walked about the room pulling his great white moustache and grasping anything on which he laid his hands as though he would crush it by main strength" (Stoker, 1897: 30). Harker, impressed by Dracula's lecture on Transylvanian history, regards him as a "great" leader. Through Harker succumbing to Dracula's rhetoric, the text attests that an appealing leader convinces his audience not based on feel-good facts of progress but on postulation alone: Dracula presents himself as a powerful leader, and consequently Harker regards Dracula as such, even though Harker feels uncanny during his stay at Dracula's castle, writing prior to the deliverance of Dracula's speech that "the castle is a veritable prison, and I am a prisoner" (Stoker, 1897: 28). For the moment, however, the latter is irrelevant; the eloquence and poetic force of Dracula's speech renders him too much of an attractive leader to resist him. With this, the novel warns that a naive audience can accept even the most morally despicable ideas in the fervor of the moment. Part of the novel's fascination with Dracula thus does not lie in its appreciation for ideas of racial purity, but in the vigor with which they are delivered. Dracula, perhaps, teaches the English that they might sell their ideas of modernization if they offer an appealing illusion of grandeur with it.

While the novel depicts Dracula as a cruel, authoritarian leader, it simultaneously offers a reading of Dracula as a freedom fighter. Dracula is a staunch Transylvanianist, meaning that he revolts against Habsburg control over his region. This ideology of regional sovereignty seeps into his language: he rejects the Count title as subtly suggested by Harker (Stoker, 1897: 18-19) and exclusively speaks in terms of a Transylvanian nation: "we Transylvanian nobles" (Stoker, 1897: 26) and "we are in Transylvania; and Transylvania is not England" (Stoker,

1897: 23). More concretely, he describes the old struggle of the locals against the Austrians and Hungarians in terms of a fight between patriots and invaders (Stoker, 1897: 24), and argues that "after the battle of Mohacs, we threw off the Hungarian yoke, we of the Dracula blood were amongst their leaders, for our spirit would not brook that we were not free" (Stoker, 1897: 31). In other words, Dracula sees his historical struggles as fought between imperialists and natives, and regards himself as the latter, a leader protecting the people and fighting for freedom, which to him means Transylvanian independence. Transylvanian freedom, however, is of a collective kind and entails that native leaders should have the freedom to rule over their own country, even if it means that a tyrant such as Dracula would rule it. Despite his invasion and terrorization of England, the novel presents Dracula as an anti-imperialist leader dreaming of an independent Transylvanian state, primitive, full of peculiarities, but also of beauty and perhaps most importantly: a country that holds multilingualism as the norm. Unlike other empires, such as the British, Dracula does not force his subjects to assimilate to his Székely identity, and leaves the question of national identity undefined. The novel, through the English subjectivity of Harker, surrounds this multilingualism with fear and confusion, but eventually acknowledges through the appreciative descriptions of Harker and Mina that Dracula's lack of wanting to enforce a homogenous identity on his subjects provides them with the freedom to culturally develop themselves.

This alternative reading entailing the regional patriot Dracula and primitive but culturally sovereign Transylvania as attractive seems contradictory to the Gothic genre the novel belongs to, but becomes more logical when Stoker's Irish background, and the relationship between the British Empire and Ireland, are considered. The British Empire treated Ireland as a colony, with Anglicization and economic collapse in Ireland as a result, yet Stoker had a relatively privileged position within this context. Stoker, who hailed from the Protestant elite in Dublin orientated himself politically and

> imbibed Irish nationalism from Lady Wilde, yet also worked for Le Fanu's pro-imperialist paper. He was an ardent admirer of Gladstone and Home Rule, but sided with the conservative wing of the movement when the nationalist leader Parnell was disgraced. (Luckhurst, 2011: xxv)

Thus, the novel is a symptom of a culture in conflict: of Irish nationalism versus English imperialism, of the native Irish language versus the imposed English language, of the Catholic Irish countryside versus the Protestant Anglicized cities. In a reading of the novel as a parallel of the situation in Ireland, Dracula and his multilingual Transylvania represent a potential model for what Ireland could be like, an alternative of regional, religious and linguistic self-determination to the centuries of English colonialism. This reading of *Dracula* as a common Gothic novel and yet as anti-imperialist inspiration draws on the tendency in Anglo-Irish Gothic literature to portray resistance against English hegemony as both monstrous and attractive. Such an example is Sydney Owenson's *The Wild Irish* Girl, which paints the 1800 Act of Union symbolizing the marriage of the English Horatio to the Irish Glorvina on the one hand as dangerous to the English, yet on the other as an instance of "compassionate, even romantic paternalist colonization" (Heimlich, 2021: 674). *Dracula* is likewise keen to express sympathy

for Dracula and his ideas of anti-imperialist ethno-nationalism, but ultimately abandons them through the victory of the Western vampire-hunting fraternity. With this, the novel argues its preference for English modernization and imperialism over local ethno-nationalist sentiments to be fed, especially with the nineteenth-century threat of Germanic ideologies promoting racial purity and militarism looming.

Conclusion

Ultimately, *Dracula* juxtaposes two competing racializations: while Harker's travel narrative revolves around contrasting the perceived inferior nature of superstitious Transylvanian locals to his own modern, rational Protestant English self, and later provides to the reader a description of Dracula as a vile monster, Dracula turns the tables around and holds the Székelys to be a superior warrior race. Dracula bases this claim on two aspects: his Hunnic blood and the militaristic achievements of the Székelys. Through this juxtaposition, the novel illustrates that during the late nineteenth century, there were two opposing and competing ways for Europe to shape itself ideologically: either with modernism, rationalism, and economic progress or with an archaic worldview of racial purity and its wars, bloodshed, superstitious practices and socio-economic devolution. Although the novel portrays Dracula and his ideas as evil and parasitic, it also cherishes a certain degree of fascination and sympathy for him and his Transylvania. In the novel, the fascination with Dracula lies in the autocratic vigor and Burkean eloquence with which Dracula argues his morally reprehensible ideas, suggesting that an audience participating in the orator's illusion of grandeur is key to its persuasion. In addition, the novel, although first linking Transylvanian multilingualism to fear and confusion, also appreciates the multilingual population of Transylvania and its primitive way of life, arguing it is attractive in its own right. The novel's fascination and sympathy for Dracula and his Transylvanian subjects complicates a decisive answer to the question of who should have the right to rule Europe. Although the novel expresses its preference for the English program through the victory of the Western vampire-hunting fraternity over Dracula, the novel is nevertheless confused since it ambivalently considers the Dutch and the Americans as potential future hegemons. The novel's appreciation for Dracula and his Transylvania seems contradictory to its Gothic genre, but is in fact part of a larger tendency in nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish literature that holds resistance against English hegemony both as appealing and appalling. While this resistance is typically Irish, in *Dracula* the counterpart to the English is the Hun-Székely Dracula. Despite the novel not mentioning Ireland explicitly, the text can be read as a comparison of the situation in Ireland, since the Irish face English colonialism from the British Empire, and Dracula's Transylvania struggles for independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Regarding Hungarian-Celtic relations, a comparison of Dracula's rhetoric speech to the Hungarian revolutionary Sándor Petőfi's poetry on the Székelys reveals similarities to a striking extent, which illustrates that to Stoker, the Székelys were examples of regional patriots. In Hungarian discourse, the poets Sándor Petőfi and János Arany fought for Hungarian independence from Austrian control and sought solidarity with other ethnic groups. While Petőfi turned to a Hungarian subgroup, the Székelys, for support, Arany wrote about the Welsh. His poem "A walesi

bárdok [The Welsh Bards]" (1857) tells the story of how three Welsh bards refuse to recite a praise poem for the English king Edward I (Arany). These examples suggest that Hungarian-Celtic relations in literature form a counterpart to the English, Dutch and American vampire-hunting fraternity of *Dracula*. In addition, this imagined fraternity of Celtic nations and Hungarians is characterized by transnational sympathy for their respective efforts to retain their own identity in the wake of larger empires imposing their own programs, and thus demand further investigation. Another suggestion for further research on the novel concerns the discussion of politics in its afterlife. Is any of the novel's political commentary on the Hun-Székely Dracula retained in modern adaptations, such as films and cultural heritage sites? In other words, how has Dracula evolved in popular culture and what does that reveal about changes in context?

Appendix 1: Translation of Sándor Petőfi's "A Székelyek"

The Székelys

I don't have to say: go forward, Székelys!
You go forward anyway, heroic lads;
Each of them wishes to fight there,
Where the battle clamors most terribly.
The Székely blood has not degenerated yet!
Every small drop is worth an expensive pearl.

The way they approach death,
Is like how others attend weddings;
Flowers are attached to their hats
And they sing on the battlefield.
The Székely blood has not degenerated yet!
Every small drop is worth an expensive pearl.

Who would dare to challenge them?
Who carries such courage in their hearts?
They go, and fly, like the wind, and chase
The enemy, like the wind chases dust!
The Székely blood has not degenerated yet,
Every small drop is worth an expensive pearl!

Karánsebes, 17 April 1849.

Translated by: Viktória Marácz
Taken from: https://www.arcanum.com/hu/online-kiadvanyok/Verstar-verstar-otven-kolto-osszes-verse-2/petofi-sandor-DFB2/1849-FBA8/a-szekelyek-FC25/.

Appendix 2: Translation of Sándor Petőfi's "A Székelyekhez"

To the Székelys

The dark cloud encircles the sky,
A lonely star shines at the center.
That star is the Hungarian people's image,
That strange people have enclosed.

The world is vast, and we don't have brothers in it,
No one, who will join us in our sorrows.
Of course, the world isn't brotherly to the Hungarian!
Every human who sees him is his enemy.

If the Hungarian forsakes the Hungarian,
Then there will be no one for him,
He will vanish, like a star from the sky,
When the dark clouds fall on it.

Rise, Székely, rise, common is our enemy,
Who damages you, like they damage us,
Who chained you, like they chained us,
We will break the common shackles together!

Because we have to be free at last;
Let the whole world be against us!
Let us not fall into doubt,
Because we have the truth and God!

Let us show them: the Hungarian is not
Like a candle, that can be blown out;
The Hungarian has to live forever,
And may not be a slave any longer!

Rise, Székely, confront the enemy;
Who confronts them, if not the Székely?
Since Attila was their forefather,
Whom they named the scrouge of God!

In vain, Vienna, your wickedness in vain!
You may send to us the Serb, the Croat;
It shall stand, it shall stand, the Hungarian home!
We shall live, we shall live in freedom!

Pest, September 1848.
Translated by: Viktória Marácz

Taken from: https://www.arcanum.com/hu/online-kiadvanyok/Verstar-verstar-otven-kolto-osszes-verse-2/petofi-sandor-DFB2/1848-F625/a-szekelyekhez-FABB/.

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Reviews 2

ERDÉLYI TÁRSADALOM, 20(2), 2022, DOI: 10.17177/77171.269
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Henrietta Nóra Bocz

Rapidism, the Sports Phenomenon

Pompiliu-Nicolae Constantin (2020) *Rapidismul: istoria unui fenomenon sportive.* Pro Universitaria *https://www.editurauniversitara.ro/en/history-and-politics-14/rapidism-the-history-of-a-sports-phenomenon-pompiliu-nicolae-constantin.html*

One of the most comprehensive books about Romanian football history is *Rapidism. The History of a Sports Phenomenon* was published in the spring of 2021. It mainly focuses on the phenomenon of rapidism through the ages. Still, the detailed historical and social context also provides us with a good outline of Romanian football and its political relationship. Pompiliu-Nicolae Constantin, the author of the book, is a historian, journalist, and professor at the National University of Physical Education and Sports in Bucharest.

The strength of the book lies in the fact that it is based on thorough research, processing numerous press and archival documents, and also dozens of interviews with sportsmen, managers, and supporters, which provide a narrative history of the topic. In these stories, the author encounters contradictions and gaps, but with the help of the other material studied, he manages to create a comprehensive, analytical overview, which he presents to the reader with due criticism, but not in an offensive way towards the subject of the text. Over 350 pages, the author offers the reader a very informative and story-filled reading experience. Even without any prior knowledge of the topic, the reader will find this book easy to follow, which has a dual audience: lay people like me, but who are very interested in the social context, and enthusiastic supporters and people who are (professionally) interested in the sport.

The author has attempted to answer four specific questions, which he presents in the introduction of the book. The research focuses on the development and identity of the supporter base, one of the questions being: is rapidism just a sporting phenomenon or is it also a social movement? Furthermore, if it is an anti-regime 'movement' (before 1989 during communism), to what extent did political power succeed in intervening, and how did this affect the supporters? It also examines the question if rapidism can be considered an urban phenomenon, what rapidism means after 1989, and how much has it changed in the last three decades of post-communism. The book is structured into eight chapters, in which the author presents the Rapid Club's sometimes outstanding performances and sometimes periods of struggle for survival, in chronological order, dividing the chapters into historical periods. FC Rapid București is a Romanian football club established a century ago by the rail workers union.

The first chapter gives a general introduction to Romanian football, its appearance, development, and importance in Romanian society. By the 19th century, football had become a popular leisure activity in the West, mostly among the elite. Students studying in the West, after returning home, spread this fashionable activity to present-day Romanian areas, especially in Transylvania, which was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The spread of foot-

ball led to the appearance of new communities, with the first football clubs and teams being established in Romania in the early 20th century. Most of the clubs of the time were founded by foreigners, but with the outbreak of the First World War they left the country, causing a decline in the quality of football and an uncertain period had begun. The post-war period was characterized by confusion: no tools, no good professionals, no resources, but enthusiasm. After the unification in 1918, the sporting scene was also united, and the conflict between the capital and Transylvania was reflected in football. The violence and rivalry that characterized the period of the war were further symbolically expressed in football, where the human body and its efforts are spectacularly presented to the spectator. There were different types of fans at that time, some who were aware of the rules and the way the game was played, but mostly the opposite was common among those who were interested. The introduction of gymnastics education in schools brought about a change in the way sport is perceived and in society's attitudes. With the spread of a new mentality, caused by the gradual integration of football into everyday life, it is no longer seen as a silly game of running around. Football becomes a symbol of political and economic life, a symbol of competition between nations. In the period between the two world wars, footballers became as much an idol as actors, and football became a common leisure activity, similar to theatre and cinema. The movement of the footballers, the control over their bodies, and the dynamism of the game all attracted people, making them inspirational idols for all ages, and entrepreneurs soon started to see it as an opportunity to make a profit. The fans have found a medium to express their identity because loyalty to a team is also a reflection of their political, economic, and social situation. Football's popularity at the time was reflected in the numbers: while in 1933 there were 380 registered clubs, by 1944 there were 456.

In the second chapter, the author presents the period between the two world wars because he considers that to understand the reasons behind the formation of Rapid, the reader needs to know about the social, economic, cultural, and political situation in Romania from these years. Without this knowledge, it is impossible to understand the phenomenon of rapids that later developed; therefore, the author focuses on the historical context in the next chapters too. The Giulești railway team was formed after the First World War in 1923, under the name CFR București, but in 1937, the team was renamed Rapid. By then, the team was no longer made up primarily of railway workers, but of professional players, with whom they became one of the most important football teams in the country, alongside Venus and Ripensia – according to the author, this is why they decided to choose a name that represents their style of play and their ambition to succeed, even though they feared that this could lead to the team losing its railway identity. The book also tells us that they played in purple uniforms for the first twelve years until they got their cherry red and white uniforms from Vienna. However, because of the propaganda of permanence and the long past, the purple uniforms have faded from the fans' memories, and there is even a version that the red uniforms were first sewn from the curtains of trains. The core of the supporters were railwaymen and workers from the Giulești district, but there were also many fans from Transylvania, where the football players were partly from. The team had been characterized by financial instability, especially in the early years, between the two world wars, but this was also true for most other teams in Romania at the time. Most of the players in Rapid had a main job, and only a few professional footballers could be paid,

who were joining the team in the late 1930s. To survive, they organized many friendly matches, sometimes several a week, in different parts of the country, where the main aim was to entertain the spectators, the desire for that spectacularism also determined their playing styles. At first, the team had a problem with a lack of collective spirit and cohesion, so in the 1930s for the early development of players, they started a junior team, and they began to work with professional trainers from Hungary and Austria. They also bought professional footballers, including Gyula Baratky, who became one of the idols of the era. With the new players, the team had also been restructured, so it is no surprise that they changed their name as it was no longer a team only of workers from Giulești.

In the period between the two world wars, the team achieved success after success and managed to survive World War II. Between 1934 and 1942, they won the Romanian Cup seven times but failed to win the championship, even if they were closer to it. The team also succeeded abroad, in 1940 they were allowed to play for the Central European Cup for the second time, this time going straight to the final, which they were to play against the Hungarian Ferencváros, but due to the outbreak of World War II, this did not happen. For the public at the time, this was a very important achievement, as they were the first team in Romanian football history to reach the finals of international competition. After the outbreak of World War II, a difficult period began, several teams disappeared and Rapid had financial difficulties, but they continued their activities. During the war, football proved to be a therapeutic activity for all those who played, watched, or talked about it. However, the war escalated inter-national tensions and nationalist sentiment. according to memories, Rapid kept its multicultural character, speaking in different languages, like Romanian, Hungarian, German, and French, which shows how ethnically and religiously diverse was the team.

The next three chapters cover the period of state socialism. This is the period in which the phenomenon of rapidism intensified and acquired its essential dissent-like particular identity, as a kind of double reaction to state socialism and the dominant character of the new political system. According to the author, the communist regime took away the opportunity for Rapid to become the best team in the country's history, but if it had turned out differently, the phenomenon of rapidism could not have been developed. For the regime, the sport was of special importance for ideological education and the desired international success. Based on the literature used by the author, the difference between the West and the East in terms of sport is that while in the West sport is for *anyone*, in the East it is for *everybody.* So the difference is between free choice and obligation, for the socialist bloc, the obligation was propagated as a tool for preserving health, but in fact, it was used for ideological education. As Rapid was identified as a railway team, in the early years the communists tried to use it as a tool to increase the popularity of the regime. The regime changed the names of the teams, Rapid was renamed first to CFR București and then Locomotiva București, as were the other railway teams in the country, which better reflected the ideological vision of the political power. Rapidism was also defined by the fact that the communist regime established two teams, Dinamo and Steaua, as they are known today, who were allowed to start in the first division straight away, while other teams of the time were eliminated one after the other because of the instability. This destroyed the idea of equality, and an increasing number of frustrated and disappointed workers in a difficult socio-political situation joined Rapid's supporters. Thus, even though the supporters were

essentially from the working class, rapidism became an anti-regime movement, a choice against the system, rapidism gave people hope, it promoted diversity and freedom. This phenomenon was largely concentrated in the urban areas, where these railway and industrial workers lived in large numbers, as a result of forced urbanization. In the quarters–flats neighborhoods–football was played from dawn to dusk, children taking their love and commitment to the team from their fathers. During this time the team played sometimes in the first and sometimes in the second division, there were years of success and years of weakness, but the supporters did not leave the team, as the successes achieved so far kept their enthusiasm alive during the difficult times, but in 1967 they finally managed to win the title of the championship.

The author also occasionally mentions the national and international successes of the club's other sports disciplines, which was compensation for football supporters, when the football team did not perform well. For Rapid's supporters, spectacular playing was very important, which was one of the team's characteristics at the time. The supporters created symbols and rituals, often with ironic and anti-establishment chants, caricatures, and poems to covertly express their feelings. They also had informal leaders who organized the community. Under the communist regime of Ceaușescu, the supporters' base began to function like a clan, where they solved their problems within the community, isolated from the rest of society, using the contact networks provided by the community, for example, if someone needed a hairdresser or a doctor, they would go to a Rapid supporter. These networks extended all over the country, as they had the opportunity to get to know each other during the matches. This phenomenon is illustrated by a quote from one of the author's interviewees. "*We trusted each other because we saw each other match after match and it was natural that we would help each other. Rapid's supporters came from all backgrounds and that was an advantage.*" (p. 207). The stadium is an important space where supporters can feel relatively free, where they can freely choose who to cheer for, and where they can release pent-up tension and put aside everyday difficulties.

The seventh chapter describes the losses suffered in the revolution, and the last two chapters focus on the events of the post-communist period and the eternal problems of rapidism. In the street riots of 1989, several players from the football team and the club lost their lives. Despite the tragic losses, the revolution gave supporters grounds for optimism, as the team would have the possibility to achieve success in a free market environment, independent of a totalitarian system. Rapid became a brand in free market conditions, and because of its market potential, the team was quickly founded by a businessman, George Copos, who took over the financing of the team. He is one of the autochthonous elites who quickly became rich and politically influential after the regime change. But with the transition to capitalism, profit orientation has become the primary concern, and even in this "free market" system, their survival is not guaranteed. The 2008 global economic crisis also hit Rapid's top management, and from then, the team entered into a period of uncertainty, accumulating debts of €50 million by 2013, before going into liquidation in 2015. They were reorganized later in that year, but straight back into the fifth division, they only returned to the first division in 2021. However, the team flourished after the revolution until 2008, when it seemed that they finally managed to break out. They won the championship twice, the Romanian Cup four times, and in 2006, they achieved one of their biggest international successes since the Second World War in the UEFA Cup. Now they still play again in the Romanian top league.

After the revolution, the field of football cheering also expanded, and liberated. After that, anyone is free to sing about anything, and slogans and banners are not restricted anymore. This, in turn, is a breeding ground for racism, which the author also discusses in the last chapter. The supporters identify symbolic heroes in the footballers, whereas previously the only heroes were Ceaușescu and his wife. The footballers become even more idolized public figures, role models for children, whose every move is carefully analyzed. There is also a generational change among fans, who have less time to go to matches, many of them cheer from their armchairs, in front of the TV, and the author also mentions the problem of the massive emigration which has also affected the active supporters. Community organization is also changing, with the internet taking the place of supporters' magazines, which has advantages but also disadvantages, as the possibility of non-physical communication encourages people, leaving room for insults. New ways to show support and sympathy for the team, such as graffiti, rap songs, and the use of the preferred team colors in house painting have become very common. Ultras or football hooligans first emerged among Rapid supporters in the country They tend to parade with offensive banners and get into conflicts with rival supporters. Another common cause of conflict is that rival supporters often call Rapid supporters with racist insults. There have been several conflicts where, for example, supporters of two historically rival teams, Dinamo and Steaua, called Rapid supporters Romas, although they say this is not directed towards the Roma minority but is a way of ridiculing Rapid supporters. This is based on the fact that the working-class neighborhood of Giulești has a high proportion of Roma ethnicity, who are identified mockingly with Rapid supporters by rivals. This was also present under the communist regime, but then racism was considered a non-existent problem, which meant that minorities could be insulted without any sanction. The author also devotes a few pages to the situation of female players and supporters, how football is becoming more popular among women, and how Rapid even has a female ultras, the Granata Girls.

After reading this informative and really interesting book, we can say for sure that it is a comprehensive, thorough research work that exhaustively describes the rise and fall periods of Rapid, the development and evolution of the rooting phenomenon, and the different historical periods whose social, economic, political and cultural characteristics have had a significant influence on the phenomenon and the team. The book also has the advantage that, although rapidism is primarily football-related, it also covers the other activities of the sports club and its successes, as well as the problem of racism and the feminist aspects of the phenomenon, although the author discusses the last two briefly.

Also, I would have read more about the evolution of the minority issue within the team and the phenomenon of rapidism over the years. The book is recommended not only for fans and football followers or professionals who deal with the topic but also for those who want to better understand the reasons behind the phenomena, as well as for lay people and skeptics who may find a new perspective by reading the book.

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Richard Tinca

Nadia in the Shadow of the Romanian Securitate

Stejărel Olaru (2021). *Nadia și Securitatea.* EpicHistory

https://www.edituraepica.ro/produs/nadia-si-securitatea/

Nadia is a Romanian national symbol and common treasure. The world-class female gymnast symbolizing perfection, who was the first to receive a perfect score at the Olympics, mesmerized the world in the shadow of the Romanian secret service and the dictatorial regime led by Ceaușescu. Her sporting excellence and fame served as a legitimization tool for the state apparatus, which aimed to present itself in a positive light to the Western democratic countries. Stejărel Olaru, a Romanian political scientist and historian, and an expert on Romanian secret service documents has long been examining the CNSAS archive (e.g. here the archives of the former repressive secret service or police known as Securitate).

The author presents Nadia's life path based on the Securitate documents with sufficient objectivity and research rigor. It is commendable that the researcher refrains from disclosing information about the gymnast's private life, instead emphasizing Nadia Comaneci's career as a top athlete The book, which consists of seven chapters, explains the complete life path of a female athlete in detail. However, it provides an insight into Romania in the 1970s and 1980s. Although the book is about Nadia, the text reflects on Romania and its social realities, particularly on the constructed reality created by the Securitate. It can be an exciting and painful read for those interested in and curious about how the regime exploited and sacrificed the life of a young gymnast for its purposes.

In the years leading up to the fall of communism, many Romanian citizens left the country due to political oppression, poverty, and food shortages in addition to seeking a better life. The first part of this empirically inductive logic book tells the story of the Olympic champion's escape from Romania. In the months leading up to the December 1989 revolution, Nadia, accompanied by a few unknown individuals and with the help and guidance of a boyar, arrives in Hungary and then travels to the United States. Upon introducing pluralism, she is greeted by a horde of journalists, but she speaks succinctly and metaphorically. It is noteworthy that the athlete's defection had a strong political dimension, as it resulted in significant prestige loss for Nicolae Ceaușescu, the Romanian dictator referred to as pro-Western. Moreover, the situation was further exacerbated by the stubborn rumors circulating among the population that Nadia Comăneci had a close relationship with Nicu, the youngest son of the Ceaușescu couple, presumably at the latter's initiative.

In the second chapter of the book, the author introduces Nadia Comăneci's journey from the beginning of her gymnastics career to her remarkable victory in Montreal. Nadia was born in Onesti, Bacau County, a town that suffered from significant infrastructural shortcomings and exponential population growth due to migration and resettlement. In socialist, Eastern European countries, sports were often used as a propagandistic tool during the Cold War, creating a new athlete ideal explicitly modeled on the Soviet Union. Athletes were expected to

receive a Marxist-Leninist education and promote socialism, brotherhood, and peaceful coexistence among member countries. These factors contributed to the creation of the athlete model that Nadia and other gymnasts were expected to embody.

The construction of the sports complex in Onesti/Ónfalva before 1989 named Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, inaugurated in 1968, was made possible with the intervention of a few teachers and students. With the increase in sports opportunities in the small town, a Hungarian-speaking Béla Károlyi and his wife Márta settled in Onesti. Among the first students of the athletic academy was Nadia Comăneci, who was taught gymnastics by Márta Károlyi and Valeriu Munteanu. Following her remarkable success, her later coach Béla Károlyi denied the contribution of others to the young athlete's professional development, attributing her success solely to himself and his wife. The Romanian secret service followed Béla Károlyi's career through surveillance bugs and informants, praising his professional dedication and criticizing his human qualities. Even though the communist state apparatus and the Securitate were aware of his harsh training methods, they did not take any action against him, which can be explained by his considerable success and great dedication. After poor results in her first competition, Nadia achieved considerable success at both national and international levels, introducing the country to the sporting establishment of Onesti.

From 1975 onwards, although she was young, Nadia was placed in the senior group, giving her access to international competitions. Due to political pressure from Béla Károlyi, the young gymnast was delegated to the International Gymnastics Championships in the south of Norway, and she won first place there. At just 14 years old, she was dubbed the discovery and star of gymnastics by the international press. The athlete and her coach, now in the limelight, made qualifying for the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal their top priority. It was a coincidence that Béla Károlyi, a gymnastics teacher, was entrusted with the task of putting together the team for the next Olympic Games. After the election of the communist regime, it became clear that Nadia Comăneci would travel to Canada's second-largest city to compete in the Olympics in the summer of 1976. Despite poor accommodation conditions, the Romanian national team trained hard to achieve victory. It soon became clear to everyone that there was fierce competition between Romania and the Soviet Union in the field of gymnastics. The Romanian team in rhythmic gymnastics was only a few points behind, so the team from the Soviet Union won this part of the group competition.

In the individual competition, Nadia Comăneci made history by scoring top 10 at the Olympic Games for the first time. She was precise, measured, and fast, focusing on every step and every exercise, winning the adoration of every spectator. After this brilliant victory, Romania stands out among the other communist member states. It is seen in a positive light by democratic countries, legitimizing the totalitarian regime led by Ceaușescu. After the Olympic Games, many fans and journalists waited at Bucharest airport for the champions to return home. For her outstanding success, the regime awarded Nadia Comănecie, then only 14 years old, the Order of Hero of Socialist Labour. In the communist public spirit of Romania, paying homage to one person was inseparable from the political context of the country. Thus, in the minds of society, Nadia's sensational victory was linked to the legitimacy of the dictatorial regime that had created and paved the way to success. The achievement was the success of both

Nadia and the Ceaușescu couple. "Yes, Nadia symbolized perfection, but Ceaușescu was a genius" (p. 87).

The toxic and destructive relationship between Nadia Comăneci and Béla Károlyi reached its climax in 1977, which led to a complete break in their relationship. Her abusive pedagogical methods and abusive behavior forced the young gymnast to flee from training, intending to end her career as a professional gymnast. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, the coach published a memorandum in which he admitted his wrongdoing. However, he tried to explain it all away as the price of success. The Securitate had clear evidence to support the gymnasts' allegations, but the Romanian secret service did not want to dismiss him. The socialist government praised Béla Károlyi for developing a gymnastics team that excelled on the international stage, despite poor conditions and conditions. Moreover, it would have caused a major scandal and loss of prestige for the country and the sports complex in Ionfalva. This would have been because the coach's constant abuse had been made public. Not least, the late decision of the Romanian socialist regime could be justified by Béla's considerable and diversified political capital. Nadia's mother, Ștefania Comăneci, who learned of the situation from her daughter, proved to be a relevant player in the abuse story. Ștefania wanted to speak out against the coach to the highest state institutions, but Béla's extensive political network prevented her from doing so. Yet, the coach says that the mother was trying to change the situation out of self-interest, as she was receiving a relatively small financial reward for her daughter's success. Despite the situation that arose, the gymnastics competitions continued, and Nadia again performed well. Of particular significance was the International Gymnastics Championships in Prague. Unfair judging decisions by the nation's dictator resulted in the Romanian athletic delegation withdrawing from the competition and returning home. The judges' decisions in favor of the Soviet gymnasts and the Romanian delegation's reaction to them had a significant political dimension, reflecting the deterioration of diplomatic relations.

Nadia settles in the capital and starts working with a new personal trainer, Gheorghe Condovici. His main objective was to restore the young gymnast's mental and physical health. He appeared as an educated and precise individual. The Securitate continued to map Nadia's daily life through bugs and cameras, as well as information from people close to her. Her freedom was similarly restricted, with restrictions on the routes she could take home and on her leisure activities. In this way, the secret service sought to manipulate her relationships to make her single. The adolescent gymnast's first love, a male member of the gymnastics team, was moved out of the capital after seeing the harmonious relationship. Several reports in the Western press claim that Nadia had attempted suicide, but she partially denies these allegations. In her book, she explains that the constant persecution led her to drink a glass of disinfectant to draw attention to herself. Several foreigners wanted to make a film about Nadia's eventful life, but Romanian state officials refused their requests.

Despite the rejection, the film was released, portraying the young athlete as a victim of the communist regime and the coach. As a result of the stressful mental state, Nadia's success was interrupted, with increasingly poor results. In the meantime, the Károlyi family and Géza Pozsár's political intercession is seen as a political intervention to launch a new sports complex in Deva, where they work as coaches. At first, the sportsmen liked Béla, but later he again behaved aggressively with the students. Achieving huge success with the team in Deva, the

number of students increased, gaining a remarkable reputation. After meeting and talking to Béla Károlyi Nadia Comăneci, the gymnast decides to return to her former coach and move to Devea. Her decision was largely influenced by the lack of head and professionalism in the women's gymnastics team. Following the return, the relationship between the two changes and shows a relevant development. He pays special attention to his former student, scheduling special training sessions for her, which helps Nadia to return to the limelight. The aim was to fully prepare for the Moscow Olympics, as the political context meant that they had to start from a disadvantageous position. In 1980, the Romanian national team was greeted by fans in Moscow with whistles and obscene language. Nadia achieved a perfect score in the first round of the competition, but a mistake in the next round of the game put her at the bottom of the rankings. The judges showed certain favoritism towards the Soviet players, making it impossible for the Romanian gymnast to improve her ranking. After the Olympic Games, the Károlyi couple lost a great deal of political influence, and this was the reason why they did not return to the country after a competition in 1981. The Romanian state sentenced Béla Károlyi and his wife Marta Károlyi to seven years in prison for treason, as well as the choreographer of the gymnastics team and the most loyal informer of the secret service, Géza Pozsár. For several reasons, the administration did not want the case to become a scandal. First, because the refugees were members of a minority ethnic group, they could have accused Romania of chauvinism. On the other hand, the trainers who remained in the United States had been accepted, so they would have feared bad diplomatic relations by attacking them. Their most salient fear, on the other hand, was that the Károlyi family owned several important so-called state secrets, which could have done emphatic damage to the regime. Despite their fears, they wanted to persuade the Károlyi family to return to Romania by letter, which they forwarded to the United States Sports Federation and the family personally.

In the book's final chapter, Nadia describes her daily life since retiring from professional sports. At the end of the book, she repeatedly touches on her escape from the country, framing the book. After the flight of the Károlyi family and the athlete's retirement, it seemed pointless to follow the gymnast's life, but the Securitate planted bugs in her new apartment. A break in the surveillance dossier occurred when the Ceaușescu couple became involved in a relationship with their son Nicu. Nadia denies the allegations, saying that the two were merely colleagues. The Romanian dictator liked and appreciated the Romanian gymnast, but his wife did not like him. Elena's decision prompted the Romanian Secret Service to mobilize the retired athlete on weekdays, restricting her access to the border. Despite this, Nadia was selected to be part of the Romanian team delegation to the '84 Olympics in Los Angeles. She was able to travel with the national team to the United States. According to the book, Nadia's escape was precise and deliberate, as the Secret Service had no idea of her intentions. Outlining the details of the escape story, Stejărel Olaru dispels conspiracy theories that foreign organizations had supported the young athlete.

In summary, Nadia si Securitatea (Nadia and the Securitate), authored by Stejărel Olaru, is a credible and comprehensive account of Nadia Comăneci's career and life as a professional athlete. The special feature of the book is that it presents the athlete along the lines of Secret Service documentation. We can see how the communist regime victimized a successful child.

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Valér Veres

Nation and Migration in Europe – Review

Csepeli, György, Örkény, Antal (2021): *Nation and Migration: How Citizens In Europe Are Coping with Xenophobia*. Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 224 p.

The book is part of a rich body of work by Csepeli and Örkény, employing a sociological approach to national consciousness, national ideologies and nationalism. This volume represents their second major work, yet it stands as the first comprehensive, separate volume examining the relationship between national identity and xenophobia from a European perspective, while also attempting to classify the national identifications of peoples in European countries into typologies. This book links the national problem with the issue of migration. As the authors point out in the introduction to the volume, the concepts of nationality and migration were not linked in the 1970s, and the nation, along with national identity, was not a significant topic of sociological or social psychological research. Since then, partly because of the intensification of migration processes, but also because of other phenomena, the problem of nationality and xenophobia have become central issues in European societies, bringing the link with migration to the forefront.

Drawing on the experience of their own work, the authors argue that national identity has a broad, public emotional foundation in sociological or social psychological terms, upon which elements of attitudes, values and knowledge are built akin to a pyramid (Csepeli–Örkény 2021. p. 15). Placed at the top of the pyramid are the ideological elements of national identity, which are developed and maintained by the elite, the power group in society. The thesis of the hierarchical construction of national identity has been previously presented in earlier works, mostly elaborated in the volume "Nemzet által homályosan" (Csepeli 1992).

The research perspective of the authors initially focused on Hungary, before extending it to surrounding countries and the 1995 ISSP survey was used as a basis for examining the issue of national identity in a European context.

The range of research questions explored in this volume is broader, with particular emphasis on the following:

Firstly, building on the concepts of István Bibó and J. Szűcs (1983), they attempt to demonstrate the divergence in the national problem along three different historical regions of Europe – a divergence that persists to the present day. Using newly collected data, they also seek to provide empirical evidence of the dichotomy between the cultural nation and the civic nation, a distinction that has been extensively examined and discussed in the literature. This is followed by a research effort to explore new manifestations of xenophobia, highlighting their primary connection to migration, which is also a key research topic of this volume. To conceptualize this, they adopt the GFE theory (Zick et al. 2008), which posits that manifest prejudice and discrimination are explained by the hypothesized existence of general affective and cognitive patterns that predispose groups to potential conflicts (ibid. 18).

Perhaps the most important research question of the book is how attitudes toward other groups, shaped by migration experiences, vary across different European regions following Szűcs' categorization. In Western Europe, where there's sustained everyday interaction with immigrants, the cognitive argumentative power of 'otherness' is necessarily weak. In Eastern Europe, however, the fears generated by – in the authors' words – 'populist politics and media dominated by the central political will demonise and disperse the presence of migrants' (i.m. 20)

The volume has four major chapters. The first chapter (The Rise of Nations: Modernity and Nations Coming into Existence) is a theoretical chapter. While some elements of this framework have already been explored in Hungarian in the authors' previous works, the conceptualization presented here may introduce new elements to English-speaking readers. There are separate subchapters on the three historical regions of Europe, discussing about social entropy, ethnonational minorities in modernity, and ethnopolitics and globalization. The chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the interrelationships between these concepts and can serve as a valuable educational resource.

The second chapter (National Identity in Europe: The Knowledge Base of National Identity) is built upon a synthesis of theoretical and empirical findings. Drawing from previous papers (Csepeli 1992, 1997, Csepeli and Prazsák 2015, Csepeli and Örkény 2018, Hunyady 1998) and recent research, the chapter presents the variations in the social construction of knowledge about the nation and national identities in Europe.

An interesting feature of the first part of the chapter is that it uses an 18th-century Styrian tourist guide for a historical analysis of stereotypes which reveals 'surprisingly' accurate portrayals of different European nations. The authors, linking previous research findings from the Carpathian Basin (Csepeli, Örkény and Székelyi 2000) with the historical stereotypes mentioned above, observed that stereotypes of national and ethnic groups align along an east-west axis. Groups living in the "East" are perceived as less competent but morally more solid, whereas those in the "West" are seen as highly competent but morally weaker.

In the third chapter (Attitudes toward Immigrants in Europe: The European Crisis and Xenophobia), the authors tested the aforementioned GFE syndrome of Zick et al. (2008) to explore the connections between xenophobia, national identification and prejudice. In doing so, they seek to answer some of the research questions formulated earlier, which we will revisit later.

In the fourth and final chapter (Migration, New Minorities, and the Social Integration of Migrant Groups), the issue of migration is examined from a sociological perspective. The chapter begins by reviewing the recent history of the phenomenon, followed by an account of existing types and global trends. The results of several empirical studies are also presented in the volume, from a comparative perspective.

A library of literature addressing the issues raised has been produced over the past decades, offering a plethora of theoretical and empirical models. The theoretical explanatory concepts and empirical models featured in this volume are the outcome of a deliberate selection process. However, efforts have been made to use models that allow empirical comparisons between countries with an older migration history and those in Central and Eastern Europe.

In a brief summary of the volume, the authors present their conclusions and answers to the research questions. Without presenting them exhaustively – as the aim is to 'tease' the reader – we highlight a few ideas that the authors have found important to summarize. They point out that nationalism has considerable potential in European countries, noting an increase as one moves from West to East. Regarding xenophobia, they observe a decline on average between 1995 and 2013. However, in Western Europe, it started from a lower starting point, while in Central and Eastern Europe higher levels of xenophobia remained at relatively high levels despite the downward trend.

In the context of migration and the national problem, the authors argue that the emergence of new minorities due to the migration processes in the last century has altered the potential for inter-group conflict in some countries. The new Muslim minorities from outside Europe have introduced new elements into the pattern of group-focused enemy images (GFEs) that were common in Europe. Along with fear and anxiety, the migration experience has further shaped the perception of a causal link between terrorism and Muslim identity. Additionally, migratory pressures have emerged unevenly across the eastern and western halves of Europe. Paradoxically, in Eastern European countries, where new minorities resulting from immigration have not emerged, levels of xenophobia have reached unprecedented heights. Furthermore, both in the West and the East, right-wing radicalism and populism have exploited the negative anti-minority sentiments and fear-based political opportunities presented by the emergence of the new immigrant minorities.

We can only recommend this volume to all those who wish to explore in depth any of the issues raised, or even to think further the examination of these problems and seeking potential solutions.

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