A FEW COMMENTS ON IDENTITY AND CULTURE OF ONE ETHNIC MINORITY IN CENTRAL EUROPE

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Abstract

Central Europe is an ethnically, religiously, geographically, politically and economically diverse area, which is reflected in its great cultural diversity. Slovaks as a nation with their own state, as well as minorities in Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Croatia, are a unique ethno-cultural entity and a part of the Central European multicultural and multi-ethnic system. These communities are the mirror of general and specific influences that have so far been reflected in their unique identity and culture from the post-Ottoman Empire period in the first half of the 18th century, through the national revival in the second half of the 19th century and the 'reformatting' of Europe in the first half of the 20th century, to the euro-unionization and globalization trends at the turn of the millennium.

Keywords: culture, identity, minority, lowlands, Slovaks

1. Introduction

The nation is an important ethnic, cultural, social and still political and economic unit. A collective past is most often constructed, interpreted and perceived by national history/national culture history. The emergence, formation, decay and extinction of nations or their parts is therefore not only a traditional subject of the research of several sciences of man, culture and society, but also the subject of the lay public. The ethnical diversity of Europe, constituted in states established on the national principle, together with the legitimation and institutionalization of national minorities and ethnic groups, are its characteristic feature and unique, albeit (sometimes painful) result of humanism in its most striking form.

Slovaks living outside of Slovakia are part of the Slovak nation. Their culture (as a way of life as well as the values that they maintain and create) is a part of the Slovak culture, as well as that part of Slovak culture which is no longer linked to the geographic space of Slovakia. At the same time, they, as

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members of national minorities, are citizens of the countries where they were born, where they have lived for generations, where their ancestors lived and where their real home is. Their culture is an integral part of the culture of those states. Their cultural identity is shaped by belonging to national culture, regional culture (often made by other ethnical cultures), as well as by belonging to a culture of majority, to European culture and to the world culture, in broadest contexts.

Slovaks, who live south of Slovakia, still live in numerous enclaves, even in the diasporically persistent groups formed by individuals or families. According to the governmental institution of the Slovak Republic, the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad, the present state in the observation area is following: (country, year, number): Croatia, 2001, 4712; Hungary, 2001, 17963 (estimate 110000); Romania, 2002, 17199; Serbia, 2002, 59021 [*Počty a odhady 2017*, http://www.uszz.sk/sk/pocty-a-odhady]. According to censuses in individual countries, the situation in 2011 was following (country, number): Croatia, 4753 [*Population by ethnicity, by towns/municipalities, 2011 Census*, http://www.dzs. hr/Eng/censuses/census2011/results/htm/E01_01_04/E01_01_04_zup16.html]; Hungary, 35208 [*National data 2017*, https://www.ksh.hu/?lang=en]; Romania, 13654 [*Populatia dupa etnie la recensamintele*, http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/ RPL2002INS/vol4/tabele/t1.pdf]; Serbia, 52750 [*РЕЗУЛТАТИ ПОПИСА СТАНОВНИШТВА, ДОМАЋИНСТАВА И СТАНОВА У РЕПУБЛИЦИ СРПСКОЈ 2013 ГОДИНЕ,* децембар 2016, p. 14 http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ ObjavljenePublikacije/Popis2011/Nacionalna%20pripadnost-Ethnicity.pdf].

Their presence in Hungary, Serbia, Croatia and Romania results mainly from the post-Ottoman stage of the development of Austria-Hungary Empire and consequently from the effects of the formation of 'Europe of 20st century' - consisting of the national states (including two world wars, repatriation, emigration and re-emigration), and at present also the project of a '*new*' Europe of the 21st century - a multicultural, globalized, corporate, increasingly denationalized, delocalized and increasingly weaker of states and indigenous peoples. These Slovaks (as well as many other present minorities) have been living and losing for generations - assimilating under the influence of the historical turbulence of the Central European area - in the stream of '*big*' geopolitical ideological, economic and technological trends, in the winds of national strategies and mood, but also in pranks and vibrations of endogenous development and relationships with the immediate surrounding environment.

2. Story of settlement

Although the Slovak inhabitants of northern cities of Hungary were, of course, also present to some extent in other parts of their country (kingdom/monarchy) they, just like all other ethnic groups, were not considered as compact ethnical communities/localities. What was considered important was

their subjective, religious, estates and regional affiliation. After the national revival, Slovaks established as an ethnic community and after the breakdown of Hungary, they established as a national minority. The colonization of Low land was controlled and massive process. The resettlement process within the Austro-Hungarian Empire was not focused only on Slovaks but on all ethnicities. Target locations were not inhabited by ethnically homogeneous groups. Several European ethnicities and religions, languages and regional cultures, social strata and socio-professional groups encountered, in some localities. (Today's multiethnicity and multiculturalism of the Central European space originated also from these processes.)

This colonization and migration process had been on-going since the turn of the 17th and 18th century, until the end of the 19th century [1]. It was run by landowners and administrators (church, nobility, and army) and recruiting agents – impopulators (surveyors of settlement). Sometimes it was supported and subsidized by the state, sometimes, and to a much lesser extent, it was spontaneous and illegal (escapes of servants for the sake of better life). Botík defines the three general stages of this colonization:

1. from the territory of Slovakia to the territory of Hungary;
2. from the territory of Slovakia and Hungary to the territory of Croatia, Serbia and Romania;
3. from the territory of Hungary and Serbia to the territory of Bulgaria [1, p. 181].

It is also possible to identify specific stages in the territories of individual states, or, more specifically, former administrative units. Papuček - Balážová distinguish three stages in the colonization of the territory of Hungary by settlers from the territory of Slovakia:

1. 1690-1711 - the natural removal of the servants from Nitra, Nógrád, Hont and Abov County into areas as the first liberated from the Ottoman´s occupation in the northern parts of today's Hungary (Transdanubia, Pilis Mountains, the Hungarian parts of Nógrád, Pest and Zemplén County).
2. 1711-1740 – Landowners colonization - controlled transfer of servants to the liberated territories of the nobility owners, from the Slovak regions west of the river Hron to Transdanubia and the space between the Danube and Tisa.
3. 1740-1790 - the establishment of new and the settlement of existing settlements by Slovaks from the same source areas [2].

According to Babiak, the settlement of the territory of today's Serbia (especially the autonomy of Vojvodina) is part of the general colonization wave, which began after 1740. In the first phase of this wave, until 1790, the Báčka region was inhabited by settlers from the upper-Hungarian mountain range (Nógrád, Hont, Liptov, Zvolen, Nitra County). In the next phase, at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, the Slovaks from Slovakia and the Báčka region came to the Banat region. In the following stage, in the second half of the 19th century and at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, they settled in the Srijem region [3].

In the territory of today's Croatia, especially Slavonia - the area between the Sava and Drava rivers, the first Slovaks came from Orava and Kysuce region at the end of the 18th century (Martin-Našice), but more massively in the second half of the 19th century (Markovec, Jelisavec, Josipovec), and last Slovaks came at the beginning of the 20th century [4].

The migration of the Slovaks to the territory of Romania took place in the second half of the 18th and in the first half of the 19th century. In the first stream to the Arad-Banat region, Slovak colonists came from the territory of Hungary (as the secondary and tertiary colonization). In the next stream, at the turn of the 18th and 19th century, the Slovaks from the Counties of Gemer, Šariš, Zemplín, Orava, Kysuce and the surroundings of Zvolen came to the Bihor-Salaj County, Satmar-Maramaroš area and Bukovina region. Some of them moved to Bulgaria at the turn of the 19th and 20th century [5].

The following stages and currents consist of not only the movements of the inhabitants of the territory of present-day Slovakia to the south, but also the cascading movement of the descendants of these colonists further south. They represent their migrations, sometimes completely out of place, from the territory of Slovakia and their mother nation. Their results are settlements established in the 20th century or other settlement of Slovak localities existing from previous colonization waves. This is mainly the transfer of inhabitants from mountainous areas to lowlands, from populated to less populous, from poor to richer. For this reason, today's Slovak communities are not diversified from the point of view, knowledge of origin, cultural traditions, religion, and so on. Emigration (to Western Europe, Overseas and Australia in the 20th Century) and repatriation to Czechoslovakia (1946-1948) are also important factors of later development, when some Slovak locations were weakened by a significant part [6].

Their place in the local community was mostly filled with Slovaks from less developed mountain areas or members of the majority or other minorities. That is why today, in many localities with Slovak settlement, we find relatively heterogeneous communities, made up of descendants of families who came directly from the territory of Slovakia, as well as families from settlements inhabited by the following colonization stages and streams. An example is the secondary colonization of the Békéscsaba and Sarvas Slovaks who founded the Slovak Komlóš (Tótkomlós) in 1746. Other settlers from these localities established Nyíregyháza in 1754 [2].

Besides the records in the church registers of individual parish offices (books/registers of born, married, deceased), this is evidenced by surnames, different narrative variants (sometimes within one Slovak community), elements of traditional culture, local mythology and collective memory of the population.

The establishing and settlement of villages by the Slovaks was in some cases more complicated than at first glance, which completely copied and denounced the (not only ethnic) genesis of the whole European space. In addition, the present state, culture and identity of these communities increasingly explains not the arrival of the first Slovaks (who are mentioned the most), but the consequent, rather the two-way migrations of people and the diffusions of

cultures. This is how three hundred year coexistence of Slovak immigrants and their descendants with new neighbours, in different, rarely unrecognized conditions began. The diversity that we can see in today's comparisons is the result of their own uniqueness and endogenous development, as well as the different successive development lines in the new states determined by cultural, social, administrative, and political-economic specificities at local, regional and state levels.

3. Lower Land

In connection with the ethnogenesis of Slovak communities living south of the border of contemporary Slovakia, the definition of the Lower Land is a very important methodological, interpretative and terminological issue. The Lower Land is generally a specific cultural-historical and geographical area in the Carpathian Basin, especially in the Danube and Tisza. Historically from the Middle Ages, this term defined the central part of Hungary. After the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, its political significance ceased to exist [7]. During the political formation of the Central European region, the territory of the Lower Lands was occupied by the newly established states - Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia at the end of the first half of the 20th century.

From the cultural-historical point of view *"below the Slovak Lower Land we understand the Slovak enclaves (settlements, municipalities and agrarian towns) that were created during the 18th century and some during the 19th century just south of the famous Budapest-Miskolc-Sátoraljaújhely line, especially in so-called the Békés-Cantonese region, Báčka, Sriem and Banát"* [7]. From a culture-geographical point of view, it is lowland defined by the Carpathian Basin, with typical temperate climate, good hydrological conditions, extremely high soil quality, minimal geomorphological division or lowland homogeneity [8-10]. By this definition it includes all the lowland areas of the southern territory of western and central Slovakia, the '*lowland*' of Hungary, the autonomy of Vojvodina in Serbia, the region of Slavonia in Croatia and the Romanian part of Banat. This geographic character neither includes the mountainous areas of the Romanian Bihor, nor the mountainous areas of Hungary, which are located in the Carpathian basin (e.g. Pilis and Gerece Mountains or Transdanubia). Similarly, from the point of view of cultural ecology and the definition of the Lower Land as a 'white bread culture', the Lower Land can be considered as only the lowlands of the area.

From the ethnological point of view, we consider the whole territory south of the border of Slovakia inhabited by Slovaks in the framework of the colonization process of the 18th-20th centuries, when we include the areas of the Slovak-Hungarian affiliation; the lowland area of present-day Hungary - in the intersection of the Danube and Tisza, Trans-Danube (the territory on the right bank of the Danube), Zatisie (territory on the left bank of the Tisza).

The narrowest definition is determined by the identification of local Slovaks as lowlanders. The fact is, as a historical and cultural-geographic area, the concept of the Lower Land in the awareness, language and culture of its inhabitants has continued to this day ('*our Lowland Pea*', '*we Lowland Slovaks*', '*we Dolnozemci - lowlanders*', '*here in the Lower Land*', etc.). Only Slovaks from the Békés-Cantonese region (Békescsaba, Tótkomlós, Sarvas and others) are definitely considered to be lowlanders as well as those from the Arad region (Nadlac) and the Romanian part of Banat. Until the breakdown of Hungary in 1918, the Lowland Slovaks (from the Békés-Cantonese and the Arad-Banát region) lived within a single state unit. Although since then they are citizens of Hungary and Romania, they are geographically, historically, consanguine and culturally much closer than, for example, with the Bihor or Pilis Slovaks.

An unequivocal interdisciplinary uniform definition of the precise borders of the Lower Land is not possible because its understanding is different. In the context of the present work, the Lower Land is Bekes-Cantonese and the Arad-Banat region are part of a wider area of study south of the border of Slovakia, defined by localities with Slovak settlement. Their identity and culture for generations have existed for their own lives outside the maternal nation as part of the ethnically diverse mosaic of the Central European countries and the Balkans and the whole of Europe.

4. Identity

Identity in the broadest philosophical sense means sameness, the property of what is identical/consistent, even in a different way perceived or called. From the psychological point of view, by acquiring an identity, an individual advises on the type of entity with which he/she identifies or feels himself/herself or is part of it [11]. Identity is the result of identification - the process of self-creation according to another pattern. An individual acquires the characteristics of another person/group and displays similar behaviour [12]. Fay fundamentally denies 'I' only as an atomistically understood elementary, encapsulated entity. Identification is an interactive and social process. It consists of self-identification (awareness of separation from a different one) and separation by others [13]. Social identity through a common culture (way of life and thinking) creates identity as one of the results of this process. There is nothing in a person/group that would predetermine his identity from the inside. It has not programmed its content; on the contrary, it is maximally open and flexible to its environment and meaning, valid in the environment of its existence [V. Bačová, *Problém identity v sociálnej psychológii*, in *10 rokov KVSBK*, 2000]. Socio-psychological theory is based on the fact that mind and personality are not part of human equipment but are constructed during life through the socio-cultural process. From the socio-psychological point of view, which is the most effective tool for researching communities and small communities existing as primary groups, the identity is *what you can say you are.* What you are creating on the basis that they will tell you *what you can be* [V. Bačová, *Problém identity v sociálnej*

psychológii, in *10 rokov KVSBK*, 2000]. A person has as many identities as number of groups he/she feels to be a member of. According to symbolic interactionism, identities are hierarchically arranged. A complex, essentially abstract and unchangeable identity is composed of a number of partial specific identities (by membership in groups). Therefore, in a particular identification process, not all identities, but only some or one, do not always appear. Therefore, identity may appear ambiguous, variable, multi-coloured, and multi-lingual. It depends on the specific identification situation as it is needed/the person/group should identify. Individual and collective identities are in a mutually conditioned relationship, although the society/group is not, from a sociological point of view, irreducible to an individual, and vice versa, it is not a sum of individuals.

The dynamics and diversity of socio-cultural phenomena of individuals and groups is the reason why, in trying to understand the complex way of life (and) of ethnic minorities, it is necessary to analyse identity in all its important contexts and forms. In order to understand the ethnic identity that appears to be primary in the context of ethnic minorities, it is necessary to deal with various factors, phenomena, determinants that are associated not only manifestly but also latently, sometimes being revealed only by deconstruction, deduction or induction. In the minority, ethnic group formation can provide individuals with more effective fulfilment of their goals through political, federal, social and cultural life. Sometimes, for example, in an ethnically homogeneous environment, they do not have another real possibility [14, 15].

5. Culture

Individual identities are expressed in symbols whose meanings are part of a culture, and their knowledge is a consequence of the condition of both learning ('learning' the culture of one's own group) and cultures (accepting cultural elements and complexes from other cultures). The person who knows the culture (as a way of life and thinking) knows also the individual symbols on which to identify individual identities and thus the respective groups.

5.1. Local identity and culture

Local identity is an expression of belonging to a locality and a local society. It tells not only the place of birth, residence, residence, but also the most varied characteristics of the locality and the local society (in the form of facts or stereotypes and myths).

5.1.1. Example 1

Nadlac (7185 inhabitants/3150 Slovaks) is the town in Romania, in Arad County, on the border with Hungary, the most important centre of the Slovaks in Romania, the lowland character of agricultural big production - growing of

thermophilous cereals and forage, pig breeding, meat production focusing on pork and specific sausage, production of compound mixtures, and production of spirits. 'Nadlačan' - as the inhabitant of the town, also means Slovak, Lutheran, a farmer, realizing cultural traditions of Slovak origin, actively using a superlative variant of the Slovak language, etc. This is despite the fact that for today's Nadlac there is a high ethnic and religious diversity (multi-ethnic, multi-confessional), somewhat different socio-professional stratification (non-labour, emigration) and cultural homogenization (globalization, Eurounion), extinction of cultural traditions, or preservation of selected ethnic elements and their realization without an ethnic principle. There are also Nadlakans who live in Nadlac, who do not even correspond to any of their characteristic features, apart from their local affiliation, even their majority.

5.1.2. Example 2

Butín (463 inhabitants/380 Slovaks) is the small village in Romania, in historical province Banat, 7 km from the border with Serbia, the lowland character, wheat, maize, new soybean, poultry, pig and cattle breeding. Older women in Butin are at first glance distinguished by clothing and headgear for two groups. The first group is dressed in black, brown or dark blue garments with minimal adornment and on the head wears a towel in the same dark colours. The second group uses more colourful clothing in distinctive colours (green, cyclamen, purple, red and pink) with flowered decoration and wearing a coloured blooming scarf on the head. The first group is the 'Ancient Lutheran Butincians', whose Slovak ancestors, along with the German Lutherans colonized the Lower Land and settled this originally Orthodox Romanian settlement at the beginning of the 19th century. In new streets, they built houses in the centre, the church and the school. As part of the repatriation in 1946-1948, approximately a quarter of local Slovaks volunteered to 'return' to Czechoslovakia. German Butincans were expelled after the World War II as members of a defeated nation. 'Vacancies' started here due to the collectivization of agriculture in Romania in the 2nd half of the 20th century, which created new jobs in rural areas. Now is filled not only with Romanian immigrants from nearby villages, but also with Catholics from the remote but much poorer Bihor-Salaj region. Thus, during the 60's and 90's, alongside the Lutheran 'Oldbutincans', the Catholic 'Branch' of the Slovaks - 'Bihorcov', emerged in Butin, who immediately established themselves in the much better conditions they had at home. With higher fertility, activity and viability, they revitalized the entire Slovak community in Butín, for their needs they bought and reconstructed the originally German Lutheran Church. During the period of democratization, Eurounization and liberalization at the turn of the millennium, they began to do business. They, respectively their offspring, are the biggest entrepreneurs in the region. Those Butian Slovak women in the blooming scarves are 'Bihorans'.

5.2. Ethnic identity

Ethnic identity is an expression of belonging to ethnic collectivity [16-18]. Identity – Slovak - carries other characteristics and stereotypes. In the area surveyed, the Lowland Slovak also means to be a Lutheran. However, a Catholic or a member of other reformed churches if he/she is from the northern part of Western and Central Hungary, or several other Slovak Catholic 'islands' may be identified as Slovaks. A person is a farmer (maybe even a miner if he/she is from Bihor (Romania) or Transdanubia (Hungary), or craftsman, worker or nurse, if it is from a location near the city). The Slovak is the one who uses the Slovak language (or only knows it, and it may not be good at all, but it is considered Slovak because ancestors were Slovaks) [19-21]. Slovaks realize Slovak traditions (but in fact they also realize those global and majority ones too). The relation to ethnic collectivity defines the concept of ethnicity. It can have different intensity, quality, and speech. It does not have to do with a clear ethnic identity/identity/awareness but with a dual identity. As part of the present research, the Slovaks do not have the same relation to 'Slovakness'. Some have a Slovak flag hanging over a sofa in the living room or over a bed in the bedroom, listening to Slovak broadcasts of national media and Slovak media, using the Slovak language as the main communication in home environment, etc., others have none of that.

5.3. Confessional identity

Confessional identity expresses belonging to religion and the religious community [22-30]. A Lutheran in the research environment, especially in Vojvodina, Slavonia and the Lower Danube, is probably a Slovak. It can also be a German or, exceptionally, a member of the majority or other minorities. The Lutherans is a relatively rich farmer who has been making his fortune for generations. He/she lives in the same way as the interior of the Lutheran church is arranged and decorated. Research into the communities of the Slovaks in Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Croatia proves that if the ethnic and religious identities are minor (different from the majority), they are mutually supportive and so closely related that they are merging.

5.3.1. Example 1

Selenča (2996 inhabitants/2652 Slovaks) is a village in Serbia, in Vojvodina, region Báčka, with extraordinary quality of land for the cultivation of thermophilous crops (wheat, maize, hops, new soy), pig and poultry breeding, production of compound feeds, food industry, processing of fruit for beverages. One group of Slovaks in Selenča has a Catholic hanging in the kitchen, the second Lutheran calendar. The Catholic Slovaks live here in the part of the unofficially called Catholic, Lutheran in the 'Lutheran Region'. The line that intersects the village into two parts according to the credentials of the home

identifies exactly. At the beginning of the second half of the 20th century, religious endogamy was also practiced in the framework of ethnic endogamy as a rule of choice for a married partner. Selenča is the only village of 34 villages with Slovak settlements, where Slovaks of the Catholic faith also live. However, during the second half of the 20th century, religious endogamy (under the influence of socialist ideology and modernization) ceased to exist. Since the 1980s, it has also been weakening ethnicity, which has led to the assimilation of local Slovaks over the next few generations.

5.4. Socio-professional identity

Socio-professional identity expresses belonging to the socio-professional group (the profession and the resulting social status). The lower land culture is an agrarian culture ('white bread', wheat and corn, pigs, sausages and ham, sheep's and cow's milk, fruit brandy, wine). Farmers of all socioeconomic levels (from landowners, hosts, small farmers, to workers and wizards) are complemented by handicrafts and industry primarily focused on the realization of agriculture and processing of products (from wheelers to tire service, from horse breeders to car mechanics and mechanics of agricultural machinery, from wheat and harvesters to harvesters). However, the identities that are linked to mining, forestry, transport, iron, chemical, automotive and other industries, administration, health, commerce, services are also an integral part of the wider territorial dimension (including mountain and less fertile areas of the Slovak populated area) etc. Non-landing specifics characterize individual communities depending on their location, geographic conditions, and links to centres. In poor, isolated and less developed areas, assimilation pressures are smaller, and Slovak communities continue to have a stronger link to ethnic traditions. It might seem that the situation is opposite in the rich, economically developed localities near the centres, especially the main cities (for example, the Slovak settlements Vojlovica, Šára, Boľovce). Vojlovica (5015 inhabitants/833 Slovaks) is in Serbia, in autonomy Vojvodina, district of the town Pančevo, 45 km from Belgrade, near to Danube River, agrarian community surrounded by industry (refinery, nitrogen factory, petrochemical enterprise, glass factory, air factory). Šára (approximately 4500/1157 Slovaks) is from 1966 part of the city of Dabas (14578 inhabitants), in Hungary, 45 km south of the capital, originally a village with the majority of Slovak settlements, wheat, maize, pig breeding, rearing of vegetables flowers, breeding chicken for sale in markets in Budapest. Economically strong enclave of inhabitants of Slovak origin lives in Dabas-Sári. Boľovce (4094 inhabitants/1001 Slovaks) is a village in Serbia, near Belgrade area, suburban section, 30km from the capital, on the left bank of the Sava River, agriculture, works in Belgrade (services, administration, crafts, industry).

However, the Slovak communities have other cultural, social, educational and institutional opportunities that may result in an enclave of reproduction and the intergenerational transfer of ethnicity [31, 32]. While in small, isolated communities the possibilities of national existence are limited by the low

number of members and institutions, in urban settings, national education (at all levels from pre-school to university), as well as cultural and social national institutions can develop.

5.5. Cultural identity

Cultural identity is an expression of belonging to culture. The question of defining cultural identity is a question of defining culture [33]. In the context of European minorities, the culture of majority (national cultures) and the culture of minorities (primarily defined by ethnic cultural traditions and artistic production of minorities) are at the forefront. It combines their concept of European culture (Christian-humanistic-romantic model) and, increasingly, global cultures (especially as phenomena of Euro-American civilization/Western culture and new media). In the Central European area, minority cultures are still associated predominantly with 'traditional' minorities, which are also the studied communities of the Slovaks. A culture through which all individuals identify and represent themselves as members of ethnic minorities, consists of cultural traditions, particularly those of the calendar and family cycles. Since in their process form, there are also actors, other than cultural identity, expressing other identities (e.g. local, regional, socio-professional, etc.) in the variants determined by local, ethnic, religious and socio-professional environmental parameters [34-36].

Although it is possible to construct/design an example, a representative form of Slovak weddings, funerals or walking with a beehive or Easter dresser, for Lower Land Slovaks, few will generally be valid for all communities. Because not all communities approach their implementation equally, they have different economic, personal, spatial and other conditions, experience and reasons. Therefore, the cultural identity of individual Slovak minorities currently draws the most from local culture (including non-cultural elements), ethnic culture (including culture from the territory of Slovakia), state culture (as a part of acupuncture and assimilation), European (within the framework of Eurounization) and global (Americanization, McDonaldization). Cultural identity is largely shaped by cultural heritage. "*In the history of Lower Danube, culture and art belong to the strongest support of national identity. ... in addition to religious and religious life, education and cultivation of customs and traditions, individual forms of art were and are emblems, as well as showcases of the national life of the Lower Land Slovaks.*" [37]

5.5.1. Example 1

Soľany (1554 inhabitants/72 Slovaks) is a village in Croatia, in Slavonia area, Croatia part of Srijem region, good soil quality, thermophilous crop production, forests and forestry. If you come to see the rehearsals of the Slovak folklore ensemble in Soľany, you will see children and young people dancing Slovak folk dances and singing Slovak folk songs. During the breaks you will

hear them communicate in Slovak, or Croatian, or at least in both languages. You will see the same thing on the rehearsals of the local Croatian folklore ensemble in the 'Croatian variant'. The part of the children and youth of the Slovak-Croatian village of Soľany is a member of both local folklore ensembles. The reason for the selection is not exclusively the ethnicity of the member (or his/her parents), but also the group of friends and the personal preference of the ensemble (according to the repertoire, the quality, the functioning of the file they love). In children and youth from mixed marriages, the ethnic principle cannot even be applied because many people are clearly not ethnically identifiable/do not/are not able to see a relevant reason. It is a civic identity (ethnicity) and an ethnic origin. The original community of Slovak Catholic and Lutheran settlers has been permanently completing the immigration of their spouses (predominantly women) from the Slovak Lutheran Vojvodina communities since their arrival. Predominant ethnic and religious endogamy favoured inter-minor contacts and the emergence of locally mixed but Slovak Lutheran marriages. The preference of religious endogamy as opposed to ethnicity in the Catholic environment of the Slovak Salonika, and the practice of the same religion together with the Croatian Catholic majority, has led to the emergence of religiously homogeneous but ethnically mixed marriages. This has accelerated the ethnic assimilation of this part of the Slovak community. The linguistic affinity of the Croatian and Slovak language and the same beliefs removes ethnic boundaries. The descendants of Slovak Catholics are now reported to the Slovaks today to a much smaller extent than those of the Lutheran, even though they control the Slovak language and have Slovak origin. The Slovak Salonica are 'those' Lutheran Solanicans because they have 'their church' (the Lutheran faithfulness is permanently only in the Slovak language in the Slovakian lowland environment, except for Hungary).

6. Conclusion

Europe is a socio-cultural space with a specifically organized dynamic. This dynamic is historically based on ethnicity, as a collective form of compatriality. Unlike Africa or the Middle East, where the primary organizational principle still dominates tribal and religious nationalism, or the states of North America whose society is organized on civil (de-nationalized and de-confessionalized) nationalism, the European society is still defined by the originally ethnic nationalism has developed into national (as state-building) civic nationalism, along with the establishment of ethnic minorities. This is the real reason why it is not possible to apply simplified and globally, perhaps somewhere else successful, intercultural, interethnic and inter-confessional strategies across this systemic diversity. It is clear from the research that the relatively seamless coexistence of ethnically, religiously and culturally diverse groups with the preservation of their culture and identity is possible in Europe [38]. It is even a specific feature of Europe and European thinking, as is evident from some examples in the present work. However, the use of appropriate

strategies, adherence to procedures, and respecting the systemic nature of these processes are indispensable. It is equally evident that if other procedures are used, it is possible to very successfully ethnically, religiously and culturally homogenize at first glance the incompatible ethnic collectivity, which is evidenced by other examples and 'stories' present in this work. It is the one and the same Europe.

Acknowledgment

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