

# Hungarians in Contemporary Ukraine: Identities and Representations

Vil S. Bakirov

Alexandr I. Kizilov<sup>1</sup>

Kseniya Kizilova

V. N. Karazin Kharkov National University, Kharkov, Ukraine

**Hungarians in Contemporary Ukraine: Identities and Representations.** The paper deals with Hungarians in Ukraine as one of the most active ethnic minorities in Ukraine. Ethnic composition of the population of Ukraine and historical peculiarities of its formation are considered. Process of minorities' activation in the circumstances of post-soviet transformations is described. The particular features of the ethnic minorities study in Ukraine are represented on the example of the results of the Hungarian ethnic minority study within the framework of the international research project ENRI-East "Interplay of European, national and regional identities: nations between the states along the new borders of the European Union." The features of interaction between different forms of identity in the minds of Ukrainian Hungarians are analyzed; the ethnic, regional and European identities of Ukrainian Hungarians are described; differentiating factors of Hungarian ethnic identity are distinguished; the hierarchy and the peculiarities of satisfaction of cultural needs of ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine are described; the involvement of Ukrainian Hungarians into the political life in Ukraine and the cohesion of this ethnic group are studied.

**Key words:** ethnic, minority group, identity, regional identity, European identity, the Hungarian ethnic minority in Ukraine, trust, native language, organization membership

**Maďari v súčasnej Ukrajine: identity a zastúpenia.** Štúdia sa zaoberá Maďarmi žijúcimi v Ukrajine, ktorí tvoria jednu z najaktívnejších etnických menšín v tejto krajine. Etnické zloženie ukrajinskej populácie a historické dôvody jej formovania sú súčasťou článku. Autori popisujú procesy menšinovej aktivizácie v podmienkach post-sovietskej transformácie. Špecifické oblasti štúdia etnických menšín v Ukrajine sú prezentované na vzorke výsledkov výskumu Maďarskej menšiny v rámci medzinárodného projektu ENRI-East "Interplay of European, national and regional identities: nations between the states along the new borders of the European Union." Autori analyzujú interakcie medzi rôznymi formami identity ukrajinských Maďarov: etnické, regionálne a európske. Z tohto hľadiska rozlišujeme diferenčné factory Maďarskej etnickej identity, hierarchiu a špecifiká kultúrnych požiadaviek ako aj zapojenie ukrajinských Maďarov do politického života a ich etnickú kohéziu.

**Kľúčové slová:** etnikum, menšina, identita, regionálna identita, európska identita, Maďarská menšina v Ukrajine, dôvera, materinský jazyk, organizačné členstvo

The territory of Ukraine territory is inhabited by many different ethnic groups, forming numerous ethnic minorities. According to the Ukrainian population census, Ukraine is home for representatives of 130 nationalities. Representatives of ethnic minorities in total comprise 22 % of the Ukrainian population. The most numerous ethnic minority are Russians (17 % of Ukraine's population), followed in decreasing order of their numbers by

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<sup>1</sup> Address: Alexandr I. Kizilov East-Ukrainian Foundation for Social Research, Svobody square 6, office 335-336, Kharkiv 61022, Ukraine.

Belarusians, Moldovans, Crimean Tatars, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Romanians, Poles, Jews etc. However, the share of each of these minority groups (of course, except Russians) does not exceed 1 % of the total population of Ukraine.

Despite its ethnic diversity, Ukraine lacks a number of problems specific to the national life of other post-soviet countries – there is no mass labor immigration, no process of ethnic expansion and there is a total absence of armed ethnic conflicts. However, there are regional problems of development of traditional ethnic groups in Ukraine – living in compact Crimean Tatars, Ruthenians, Romanians, Moldovans, Bulgarians and Hungarians are among them. Currently, there are several diasporas in Ukraine formed by national and foreign policy of the Soviet Union and as a result of the USSR collapse, for example, Koreans, Vietnamese and Meskhetian Turks from the Caucasus. In addition, Ukraine has traditionally provided services in the field of higher education to citizens of other countries (Syria, Lebanon, Nigeria, China, etc.).

Western Ukrainian region is a special one in the described circumstances. Its territory has complex political and cultural history, characterized by constant migration and frequent changes of government entities. Thus, during the last hundred and fifty years the subordination of Russia, Austria-Hungary, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Soviet Union, Germany was set on this land and also own local states were proclaimed here (West-Ukrainian People Republic, Ukrainian People Republic). Within it the modern Ukrainian statehood is not the longest historical period in the development of western Ukraine. Thus, we can say that the history of the region forms the image of the modern Ukrainian state as a transient formation among local population. So, in the surroundings of West-Ukrainian intellectuals' community the discussions on the formation of their own, Western-Ukrainian state, the enhanced autonomy in the territories or on emigration prospects are continually ongoing. Similar debates are conducted in the media of some ethnic minorities in Ukraine. Ukrainian discourse of "autonomy", "separation" and "migration" and similar discourse among ethnic minorities are complement and interdependent to each other. These discussions are supported by extremely high levels of migration of different types in western Ukraine. So, owing to the peculiarities of historical development western Ukraine is inhabited by many different ethnic groups, forming numerous ethnic minorities.

In the context of the global world processes and trends, in Ukraine the cross-border ethnic minorities, whose so-called "mother nations" have already joined the European Union, become the subjects of concern to the scholars. Ethnic minority of Hungarians especially attracts the sociologists' interest. Ethnic Hungarians have a weighty number in the western Ukraine, and are among the groups that are the most active in public life as well. Ukrainian

Hungarians live in the special areas with the cross-border provision. This minority, whose "mother nation" became member of the European Union, supports the Western vector of development of Ukraine, and to some extent is a potential source of instability in Eastern Europe affecting the migratory mood in Ukraine and infringing on territorial integrity and unitary structure of Ukraine in the areas of their compact settlement.

The mobilization of ethnic groups after the collapse of the Soviet Union is among the factors responsible for actualization of study of ethnic groups in Ukraine. Because the development of democracy, expansion of civil rights and liberties which are typical in the post-Soviet countries is an important condition for mainstreaming the needs of local communities in self-expression, identity and protection of their rights. Verbalization of problems of ethnic communities in the Soviet Union was impossible, and the collapse of the Union was accompanied by a series of escalating of suspended conflicts. Inter-ethnic relations in Western Ukraine have no elements of conflict and open hostility, yet the study of the positions and orientations of national minorities in the region has special significance. Such an analysis will facilitate the formation of the conception of extent and nature of the consolidation of the Ukrainian state. It can be assumed that the position and orientation of national minorities will be able to point to the further integration prospects of Ukraine – either their vector, or the possibilities of their implementation, because there are no interstate associations which would be interested in admitting to their membership the unconsolidated, problematic society – a society of unsolved problems on macro-level of social relationships.

The multiplicity of ethnic minorities, as well as the density of their presence in the ethnic map of Ukraine is a unique range for a sociological research. At the same time, such diversity and such a solidity of ethnic minorities leads to the fact that researchers have to focus on the most pressing issues. In this view researchers are now paying their particular attention to "conflict communities", to the relationship between the national majority and minorities that do not just have the potential for conflict, but are on the stage of some "small escalation" of differences. In this sense, special attention is paid to the Crimean's (Tatars and Karaites) and Roma. A large number of studies on ethnic issues have been carried out in the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) which have been studying the level of xenophobia within ethnic groups in Ukraine (since 1994) by means of the Bogardus social distance scale, the index of social distance having been measured for the Ukrainians, Russians, Belarusians, Jews, Americans, Canadians, Poles, Germans, Romanians, Africans, Roma people, and French.

Some more interesting investigations worth mentioning here are such as *Ukrainian Society: Social Monitoring. 1992 – 2010* (the Institute of Sociology

of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine); the Lvov-Donetsk research program fulfilled by a team from Lvov in 1994, 1999, 2004; project program under the title “*Various identities in modern Ukraine: Can they overcome the division into East and West?*” carried out in 2010 on the bases of Franko Lvov National University and the University of Michigan (USA); the 2003 opinion poll of ethnic groups in Ukraine fulfilled under the head of Professor Volodymyr Yevtukh (Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National university) and Professor Vicky Hesley (the University of Iowa, USA); *Regions of Ukraine: Dynamics, Movements, and Policy* research program ;joint project of the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences “*National and Civic Identities and Tolerance: Russian and Ukrainian Experience during the Transitional Period*”; Razumkov Center analytic report *The Autonomous Republic of Crimea: People, Problems, Prospects*”; *Social transformations in the Frontier Area – Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova* research project. Their results present certain possibilities to find out the vector of orientation of the population in the ethnically marked areas to answer some issues dealing with the structuring of ethnic and political processes: how the population shapes its attitude towards the idea of building of the nation-state in Ukraine; how the regions (via the opinion of their population) link their destiny with an independent state or orientate themselves to some other neighboring countries; how they take the possibilities of Ukraine’s membership in the EU and NATO structures. Concerning the study of Hungarians living in Ukraine the study “Dynamics of the relationship between ethnic groups of Transcarpathia” (1995 – 1998) is worth mentioning. The study was conducted by the Department of social problems in the Carpathian region of the Institute of Sociology of the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences. The research was conducted to study a variety of ethnic groups in Transcarpathia. Besides Hungarians also Romanians, Slovaks, Germans, Ukrainians, Russian Jews, Roma and Ruthenian ethnic minorities were studied. The contribution of Ukrainian researchers (I. Migovich, I. Ganchak and L. Poti) is noteworthy talking on the study of the Hungarian community living in Ukraine. Particularly in the center of their attention was the Hungarian national minority in the social and political life of Transcarpathia. They described Hungarians’ participation in political parties and national and cultural associations representing the interests of ethnic Hungarians in the parliamentary elections. We should also pay special attention to the monograph, written by L. Loiko. This book tells us about the ethnic and national civic organizations that exist in Ukraine. Particular emphasis is placed on how do Hungarian ethnic civic organizations affect the election results in the territories densely populated by Hungarians.

Among the studies and projects dealing with the situation with ethnic minorities in the modern world, there is an international research project ENRI-EAST "Interplay of European, National and Regional Identities: Nations between States along the New Eastern Borders of the European Union". The aim of this project is connected with a detailed study of the problems of formation and interaction of social and ethnic identities of groups belonging to national minorities in Eastern Europe, their social well-being, cultural and ethnic identity, social and political integration. The project is a comparative interdisciplinary study, which brings together sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists to explain the ethno-social trends in Eastern Europe. The international project involves more than 50 social scientists and experts from seven EU countries and three countries of the CIS. In Ukraine, the project is implemented by sociologists of East-Ukrainian Foundation for Social Research (Kharkov) together with Kharkiv National University after V. N. Karazin. Geography of the project covers the Carpathian region, Eastern Europe, Baltic region and Germany. The object of research in the project is connected with specific nations and their ethnic groups living on different sides of the eastern border of the European Union. The research regards 12 ethnic minority groups: Slovaks in Hungary, Hungarians in Slovakia, Russian in Latvia, Poles in Belarus, Russian in Lithuania, Poles in Lithuania, Belarusians in Lithuania, Poland, Ukrainians and Belarusians in Poland, Lithuanians in Russia (Kaliningrad area) and Hungarians and Poles in Ukraine. Within the framework of the project, different methods of sociological research were applied. In Ukraine mass survey, a series of biographical and expert interviews with the representatives of Hungarian and Polish ethnic minorities were conducted. During the mass survey by a standardized face-to-face interview technique 400 Poles and 400 Hungarians were surveyed in the places of their most high densely residence in Ukraine. Biographical interviews were held with 12 Poles and 13 Hungarians, and expert interviews were conducted with 8 leaders of ethnic organizations in various fields and government officials of various levels.

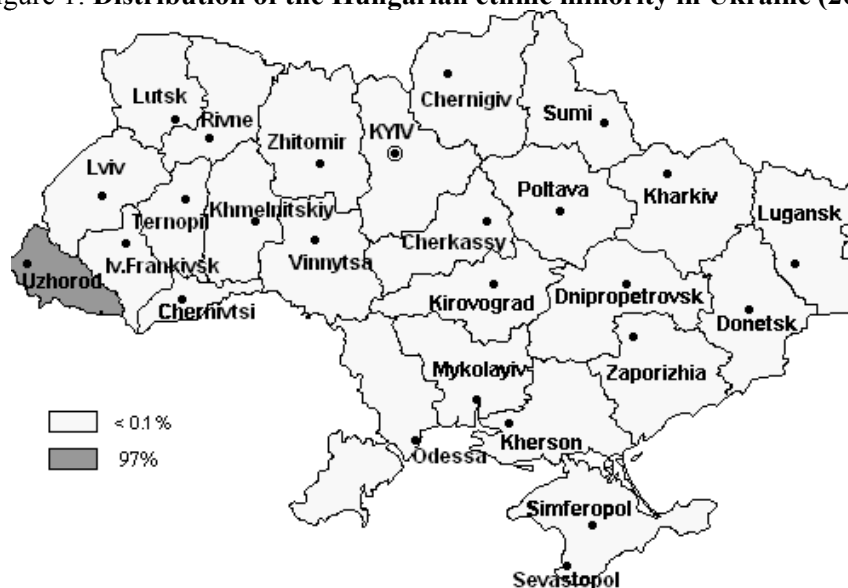
The aim of this paper is to analyze the nature of the relationship of Hungarians inside their community and with the national majority, describe the components of their ethnic identity, and determine the possible effects of cohesion of this ethnic minority in the context of further development of Ukraine and its western regions.

### Brief demographic and geographical overview

The Hungarian minority in Ukraine numbers 156,600 people according to the Ukrainian census of 2001<sup>2</sup>. That is approximately 0.32 % of the whole population of Ukraine.

The Hungarian ethnic minority in the Ukraine settles almost exclusively in one region only: Zakarpatska Oblast' (with the center in Uzhgorod). 151,000 (97 %) out of the 156,600 Hungarians in Ukraine live in this region that is bordering to Hungary. The minority constitutes about 12 % of the total population there. In those districts of Zakarpatska Oblast' that are most populated with the Hungarians, their density could rise up to 75 % of the whole population. According to 2001 Census data, there are ethnic Hungarian communities in Lvov, Kyiv, Ivano-Frankovsk, Kharkov and Odessa regions, but they number a few hundred persons only.

Figure 1: Distribution of the Hungarian ethnic minority in Ukraine (2001)

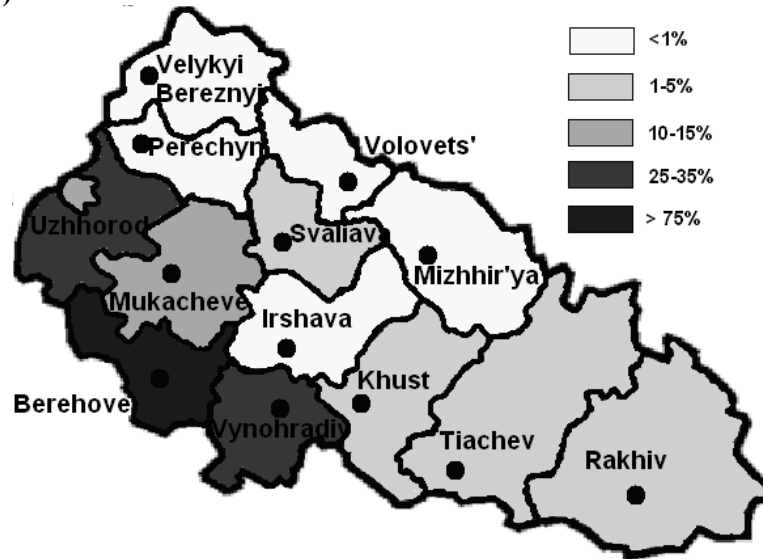


Isolated ethnic Hungarian communities inhabit the Upper-Tisza region. Ethnic Hungarians live in scattered communities in the valleys of the Upper-Borzsa (Bilke, Irshava), the Upper-Latorca (Svalyava), and the Upper-Ung (Perechin, Velikiy Berezhnyi). However, 84 % of the Hungarian population is concentrated in a 20-km strip along the Hungarian border. According to the official data, 90 % of all persons of Hungarian ethnicity of Zakarpatska Oblast'

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/>

live in four districts (rayons) – in the Berehove (36 %), Uzhhorod (22 %), Mukacheve(13 %) and Vinohradiv (20 %) districts. Most Hungarians live in river valleys, and in flatlands suitable for farming. They usually reside in sparsely populated villages. Among the larger towns, Berehove is the only one in which Hungarians constitute a majority.

Figure 2: Hungarian ethnic minority in Zakarpatska Oblast' of Ukraine (2001)



Describing the features of settlement of Hungarians in Ukraine, their level of urbanization should be taken into account. According to the All-Ukrainian census, most Hungarians (65 %) in Zakarpatska Oblast' live in villages and only one thirds (35 %) of them constitute urban population. Urban Hungarian population: 53,598 ethnic Hungarians (Uzhhorod – 8,000; Mukacheve – 7,000; Berehove – 12,800; Vinohradiv – 3,171; Tachiv – 2,640; Rahiv – 1,282; Hust – 1,759; Chop – 3,659; Irshava – 107; Svalyava – 322). For the Hungarians, who live in compact villages, where from 50 % up to 100 % of the population is Hungarian, culture of the titular nation is less important, while preserving their own traditions, lifestyle, language and identity, and the union on this basis becomes not so difficult. Thus, for objective reasons – due to its settlement structure and to a lesser degree of interaction with the titular nation the Hungarian ethnic group is less integrated into the Ukrainian society. Features of settlement of ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine largely cause the possibilities of forming networks of direct contacts, which in classical sociological theory are important base of the processes of group cohesion.

Analyzing the characteristics of settlement of Hungarians in Ukraine, comparing Hungarian and Polish (another ethnic group that was studied in Ukraine within the framework of ENRI-East project) ethnic groups, experts reveal the processes of preservation of their ethnic identity by the Hungarians and point out trends of assimilation of Poles in Ukraine.

The head of the Polish Scientific Society of Zhitomir, a scientist of Polish origin, S.V. Rudnitsky: *"That is a fact of dispersed residence, the fact that they are located in the Ukrainian environment, they feel comfortable that they are not allocated from the environment. Well, here, among these factors. For Hungarians, that is a little different because they live in Transcarpathia, so, the relative amount of 90 percent or 98 living in Transcarpathia that is such a group living compactly. For Ukrainian Poles, because they live in such a dispersive way, that doesn't have such a value here. Simultaneously, they do not differ... in their appearance..."*

A former MP, who participated in writing the legislation on national minorities, M. Toth: *"If we're talking about the Hungarian community, I must say that most of it is not integrated. If I were asked about the Poles, then I would say that they are more likely – yes. They are rather Ukrainians than Poles. Hungarians – no, they are not integrated. Hungarians are probably one of the most non-integrated minorities".*

Former Minister for Nationalities and Migration of Ukraine, the former head of the Ukrainian State Committee on Nationalities and Migration, V.B. Evtukh: *"Features may be in that the proximity of cultures, ethno-cultural, psychological distance, well, let's say, ethno-cultural distance is much smaller between Ukrainian and Russians and Poles than, I say ... between Hungarians and Ukrainian".*

The age structure of the ethnic Hungarian minority in Ukraine in general is similar to the age structure of the Ukrainian population. Young Hungarians in Ukraine retain their ethnic identity, while the young Poles, for example, are increasingly being assimilated into Ukrainian society. This indicates a greater stability and self-perpetuation of the Hungarian ethnic group in Ukraine. It is important to note that young people are more mobile and more active as a group capable to protect its interests. In this connection, we can speak of the age structure as a factor of mobilization and solidarity of ethnic groups.

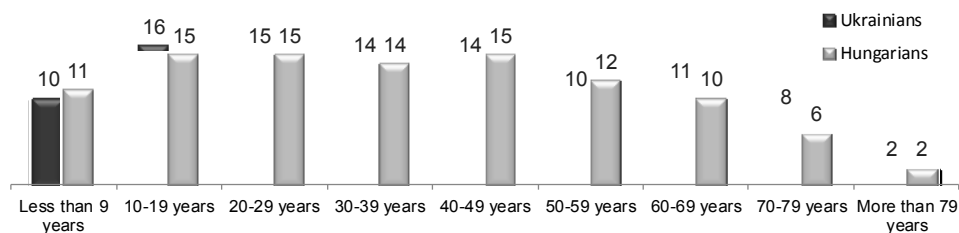
### **Brief history of Hungarians in Ukraine**

Hungarians have been living on the territory of modern Ukraine since IX A.D. After IX A.D. there were two other big waves of migration: in the second half of XIII century (after the Tatar-Mongol invasion) and in the second half of XVI century (when Hungary had wars with Turk-Osman Empire). The territory where Hungarians have been living is now called Zakarpatska Oblast' (or Transcarpathia). In different historical times Zakarpatska Oblast' had various names: «Carpathian Rus», «Hungarian Rus'», «Podkarpatska Rus'», «Carpathian Ukraine», «Transcarpathian Ukraine». The history of Transcarpathia is a constituent part of the Ukrainian history. In spite of this



fact, it has a number of peculiarities, which influenced economic as well as political and ethnic development of the region. Occupying an important geographic position on the southern slopes of the Ukrainian Carpathians, Transcarpathia, since ancient times, has been, so to say, «a ties bridge» between Northern and Southern, Eastern and Western Europe. Not only the ways of connection intersected here but also the political conceptions of European and especially East-European history ran at this place.

Figure 3: Age Structure of Ukrainians and Hungarians (%)



Array: the whole population of Ukrainians in Ukraine N=37541693

Array: the whole population of Hungarians in Ukraine N=156566

Talking about Hungarians living in Ukraine we should say that Transcarpathia was a part of Kingdom of Hungary (first part since IX century), a constituent part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, until the latter demise at the end of World War I. After the defeat of the remaining Hungarian armies in 1919, the Paris Peace Conference concluded the Treaty of Trianon that awarded Transcarpathia to the newly formed Czechoslovakia as Subcarpathian Rus, one of the four main regions of that new state, the others being Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia. During the World War II German occupation of Czechoslovakia, the southern part of the region was awarded to Hungary under the First Vienna Award in 1938. The remaining portion was constituted as an autonomous region of the short-lived Second Czechoslovak Republic. After the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia on March 15, 1939 and the Slovak declaration of an independent state, Ruthenia declared its independence (Republic of Carpatho-Ukraine) but it was immediately occupied and later annexed by Hungary. When the Soviet Army crossed the pre-1938 borders of Czechoslovakia in 1944, Soviet authorities refused to allow Czechoslovak governmental officials to resume control over the region, and in June 1945, President Edvard Beneš formally signed a treaty ceding this area to the Soviet Union. It was then incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR. After the break-up of the Soviet Union, it became part of independent Ukraine as Zakarpatska Oblast.

## Language and identity

Describing ethnic identity of polled Hungarians, we should note that the most part (72 %) of them consider themselves being Ukrainian Hungarians – members of the Hungarian ethnic minority in Ukraine. Only few (13 %) of the studied Hungarians think about themselves as “pure” Hungarians and almost the same part (15 %) of respondents said that most likely they are Ukrainians with Hungarians descent.

Native language and proficiency in it is an important component of ethnic identity of Hungarians. For example, 78 % of Hungarians believe that it is very important to speak Hungarian to be a true Hungarian.

Figure 4: **Distribution of respondents’ answers to the question: “How do you think, what is important to be truly Hungarian?” (%)**



Data array: all the Hungarians polled in Ukraine (N=400)

Linguistically Hungarians are a rather closed and isolated group in the Ukrainian society. Among Hungarians surveyed in Ukraine, almost all (98 %) know the Hungarian language, while only two-thirds (63 %) of respondents can speak Ukrainian. The vast majority (75 %) of Hungarians use the Hungarian language more often at home and communicate in it with their family. Ukrainian as a language of home usage is used only by 5 % of Hungarians. Other respondents talk a mixture of their and the Ukrainian language. However, Hungarian language has neither state language status in Ukraine, nor regional language status in Zakarpatska Oblast’.

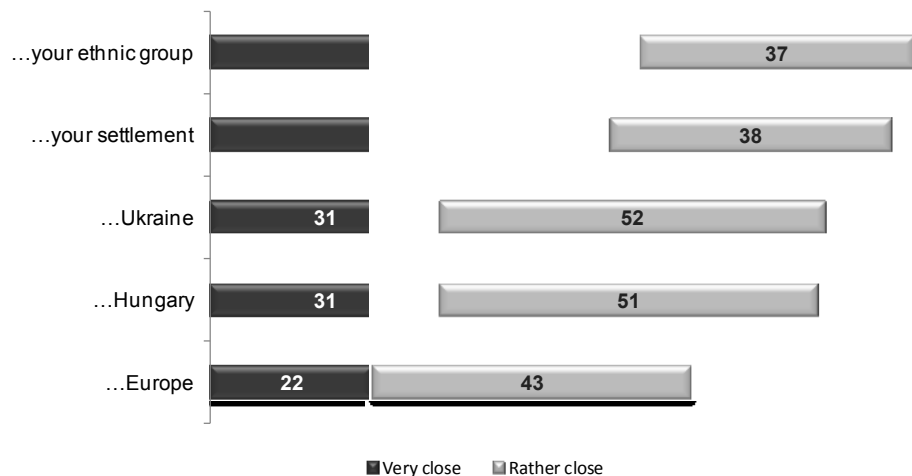
Similar peculiarities in the knowledge of languages and their using is explained by a rather short duration of the common history of Hungarians and Ukraine, especially by the resettlement of the representatives of these ethnic groups in the Ukrainian lands, the specifics of the language systems, because of which the Ukrainian language is easier to study for the Russians, Byelorussians, Poles, but not for Hungarians. Features of the resettlement of Hungarians in Ukraine significantly reduce the need for studying the Ukrainian language and constrict the range of its applications in everyday life. In densely populated by Hungarians areas there is a network of childcare facilities, schools and universities with the Hungarian language of teaching, newspapers are publishing, television and radio are broadcasting in the Hungarian language, developing amateur performances, and street names, signs and posters are duplicated in the Hungarian language.

### **Self-identification and regional identity**

The important place in the complex of identity related and identity defining factors is occupied by the feeling of closeness to any social group, community or society, unification with it. In the situation with ethnic minorities it is interesting to compare the force of the connection and the community related representation of its members with the group as a whole, the country of origin and the country of mother nation. For the Ukrainian Hungarians the connection with their ethnic group occupies the different place in this hierarchy being a signpost of the group solidarity. Hungarian people presume that the place of their living and their ethnic minority are very close social institutions (for 58 %). The country where the mother nation is living is «very close» only to one third of the Hungarians (31 %). Elder Hungarians feel closer to Hungary than young people do. The respondents living in the regions where the density of the Hungarians is more than 30 % feel closer to Hungary. As the country of living Ukraine became very close only one third of the Hungarians (31 %). It should be added that the signpost is changing according the respondents' age: young Hungarians feel less close to Ukraine than those who had lived there for many years. The Hungarians living in the regions of their high density (up to 30 %) feel very close to Ukraine. Europe remains the most distant social institution for the questioned Hungarians: every fifth Hungarian (22 %) assume his closeness to Europe. It may be connected with a not so favorable image of the European Union for the Hungarians. Thus, one half (50 %) of the questioned Hungarians consider that Ukraine would apparently lose from being a member of the EU. For example, another ethnic minority group – the Polish – is influenced by high spirits towards Ukrainian membership in the European Union: the overwhelming majority (78 %) is convinced that Ukraine will benefit from being a member of the EU.

So, we could underline that the Hungarians in Ukraine remain a rather closed and united ethnic group: they do not feel very close neither to Ukraine nor to Hungary and they are focused on their ethnic group and the region of their living. Thereby we can say that ethnic and regional identities dominate in the Hungarian structure of identity. It should also be added that elder and adult Hungarians feel a stronger closeness to all the social institutions. So we may say that young Ukrainian Hungarians are not completely formed as a stable system of identity being in search and hesitation.

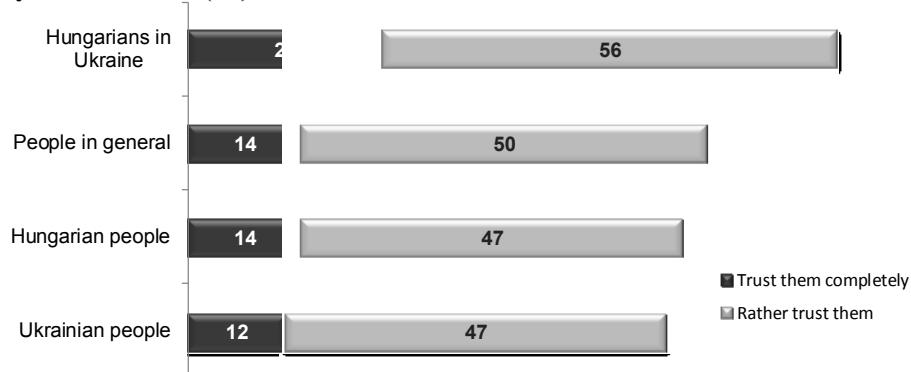
Figure 5: **Distribution of respondents answers to the question: “How close do you feel to...?” (%)**



Data array: all the Hungarians polled in Ukraine (N=400)

One of the manifestations of the unity of the ethnic group characterizing its integration into the society and its binding force is a level of trust of the ethnic group to its members, the mother nation and the nation living inside the country as well as to people as a whole. The Hungarians as a community not so well integrated into the Ukrainian society is more united inside and reserved. Hungarian people are more oriented on their community and do not trust much the Ukrainian people as well as the Hungarian people and people as a whole. The Hungarians are a more united and less open community: they are less disposed to trust other people and the level of trust of the Hungarians towards the members of their ethnic group is 20 % higher than their trust to other people – Ukrainian and Hungarian. For example, the Polish are more open and trustful than the Hungarians; they consider themselves as a certain community with specific relationships and bonds less often.

Figure 6: **Distribution of respondents answers to the question: “How much do you trust ...?” (%)**



Data array: all the Hungarians polled in Ukraine (N=400)

If we characterize the Hungarian integration in the Ukrainian social system we should underline that the level of integration is not so high, the Hungarians remain separated. The Hungarian minority is more orientated on the preservation of their identity in Ukraine and it possesses all necessary reasons for it.

The former popular deputy responsible for the legislative basis on national minorities, M. M. Tovt said: *«...if we investigate the situation in Hungarian villages we could say that the Hungarian group is still separated till now. In the rural locality there were almost no mixed cities and villages: the village could be either Hungarian, or non-Hungarian».*

The president of the Hungarian cultural community in the region of Zakarpacie, «The party of the Hungarians in Ukraine», Kovach M. M. remarks: *«...while we preserve our identity ...in a certain way, it makes our total integration in the system impossible. That is the situation at the moment. This system will provoke the reverse reaction. At the biological level as well as at the level of public sub consciousness those who will produce this reaction will not even realize that they do so but at least it will work. The stage of twenty-two or twenty-three years in this domain... gives me the right to affirm it as an empiric fact... a foreign element».*

Life of an ethnic minority in the territory of any state makes a particularly relevant consideration of inter-ethnic relations and tolerance. In our case of great interest is the "social distance" that exists between Hungarians and the titular nation, as well as the other ethnic minorities in Ukraine (biggest ones – Russians and Belarusians). It allows us in some approximation to judge the extent to which ethnic minorities are ready to integrate into the Ukrainian society, or, conversely, are consolidated as a group. To measure this, we used a scale similar to the Bogardus social distance scale, developed in 1925 by the American social psychologist and has since been regularly used in ethnic

studies. Despite the fact that we used the scale in a form different from that proposed by Bogardus, it allows us to estimate fairly accurately the degree of tolerance of Hungarians living in Ukraine towards the representatives of the titular nation and other ethnic minorities. Based on the collected data we can conclude that the social distance "from the Hungarians to representatives of other nationalities" is longer than "from the Hungarians to the representatives of their ethnic group" (for example, for Poles in Ukraine these distances do not differ essentially). In our case, it is indicative that only 2/3 (66 %) of the Hungarians would feel positive about having a Ukrainian as a family member. It should be noted that for the Hungarians, among the members of the Slavic nations, most socially "close" are the Ukrainians, then, according to the reduction of social distance, follow Russians and Belarusians.

From our point of view, an indirect indicator of the actual integration of Hungarians in to the Ukrainian society is the ethnicity of friends of representatives of these ethnic minorities. As evidenced by the results of the survey, friends of Hungarians (in contrast to the friends of the Poles) are characterized by greater ethnic homogeneity – most their friends are members of the same ethnic group, more exactly, – Hungarians in Ukraine (57 %).

**Table 1: Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question: "We all have different relationships with one another. I'm going to name you some types of relationships. Please tell me for each one of them if you would accept the relationships with persons coming from different ethnic groups. So how would you feel about having a member of the following...?" (%) (part of positive answers)**

		Hungarians	Ukrainians	Russians	Belarusians
1	as a family member?	99	66	57	54
2	as a friend?	99	90	81	75
3	as a neighbor on your street?	99	92	85	78
4	as a working colleague?	99	92	85	79
5	as one living in the same settlement?	99	93	87	80

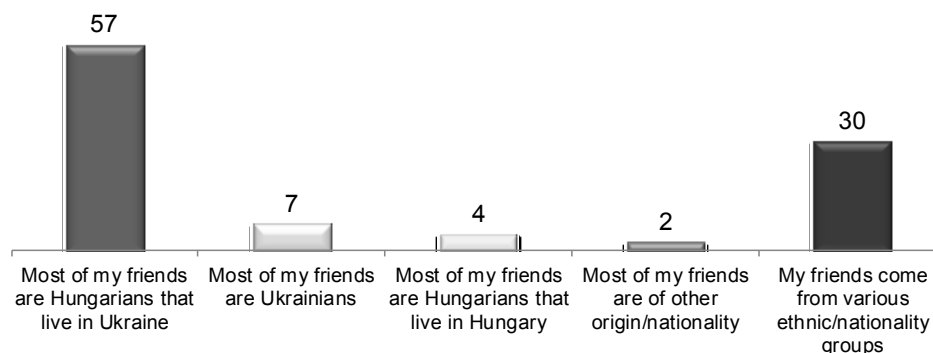
Data array: all the Hungarians polled in Ukraine (N=400)

### **Cultural needs realization**

The indirect signpost of the level of solidarity of ethnic minorities may be perceived as the grade of actuality of the possible realization of their cultural and linguistic needs. If we analyze the received data, we may see that all the

needs for the possible realization are of a great interest for the Ukrainian Hungarians. The possible realization of the needs connected with the utilization of a language stands aside. So the overwhelming majority (85 %) of respondents deems it very important to use Hungarian daily for reading newspapers and magazines (61 %), teaching their children at school in Hungarian (52 %).

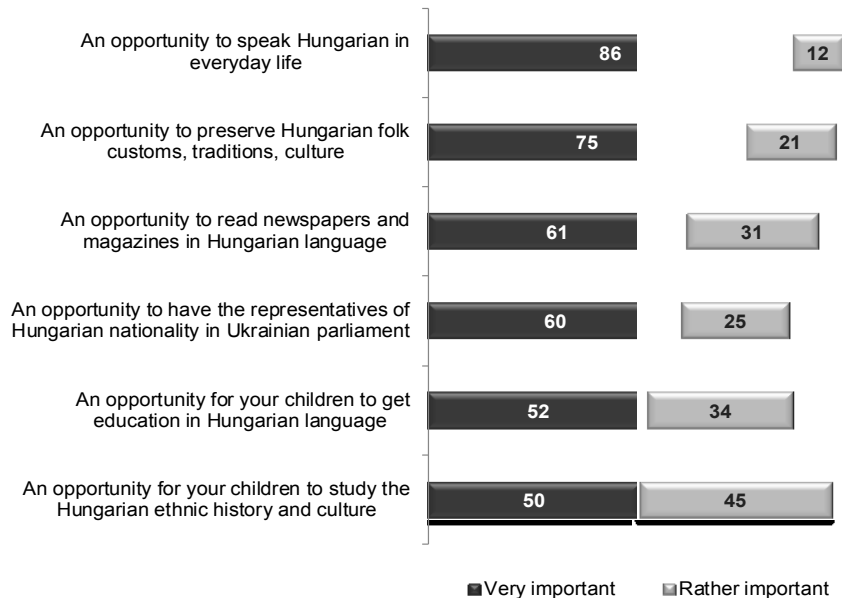
Figure 7: **Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question: "Which statement describes your friends the most?" (%)**



Data array: all the Hungarians polled in Ukraine (N=400)

According to the expert data, the problem of the language and education as a derivative part is a very important one unifying the Hungarians in the modern Ukraine. This conclusion may be drawn from biographical and expert interviews. Almost all the experts of the Hungarian diaspora note that its most representatives are ignorant of the official language which creates great difficulties in obtaining the education and further comfortable coexistence and self-realization in the Ukrainian society. The whole network of schools is created in Ukraine in the places of compact living of Hungarian people. Besides there is the Hungarian faculty in the national university of Uzhgorod and the pedagogical university of Beregovo where the education is in Hungarian. All these institutions are mostly financed by Hungary although all these measures do not provide the complete adaptation and comfort coexistence of the representatives of the Hungarian national minority in Ukraine furthermore.

**Figure 8: Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question: "To what degree is it important for you...?"**



Data array: all the Hungarians polled in Ukraine (N=400)

The chairman of the forum of Hungarian organizations in the region of Zakarpacie, G.Y.Kinch: *«I remember when I entered the institute during my first lectures I did not know the difference between full stop and dash. I did not know it because we finished the Hungarian school. So we were not taught that much. A good thing is that I studied and could distinguish them afterwards. Everybody is not capable of it. You see? Everybody does not pass. It is better to go working. Why do we need those problems? Why should I save Hungarians and save the world? You see? It's better to go and sell cigarettes and gasoline and to earn more than here, in the city council. The whole generation grew in such a way. Since 90s the whole generation knowing only how to sell cigarettes and gasoline grew up. It is horrible».*

The problem of language limits substantially the possibilities of building a career and status promotion the representatives of the Hungarian diaspora in Ukraine.

The chairman of the forum of Hungarian organizations in the region of Zakarpacie, G.Y.Kinch: *«I am going to tell you an example. Before I came here I had worked in a society. I posted the announce in a newspaper that we sought young people to work. Several young people who have already finished the university and the high school came to us. They could type on the computer and knew how to manage ECDL, they also passed international computer programs knowing all kinds of computer programs*



and communications very well. The only thing they did not know was Ukrainian. I could not employ them».

It leads to an incomplete representativeness of the Hungarian national minority in the Ukrainian elite.

The president of the Hungarian cultural community in the region of Zakarpacie, «The party of the Hungarians in Ukraine», Kovach M. M.: *«We are not represented in high education and accordingly in nomenclature. It means that we represent less students, doctors, lawyers and officials in percentage. We are not talking about ... It is quite logic. The language is quite different from the official one. That's why those who possessed certain knowledge according to the normative standards cannot pass only because of the ignorance of the official language. Less people are can get high education thereby. Thus there are less leading and intellectual posts ...».*

Usually scarce and even total ignorance of the Ukrainian language and all the derivatives, unite the Ukrainian Hungarians and create the fundamental basis for consolidation and support of the representatives of their ethnic group. The same reasons interfere the integration into Ukrainian reality.

The chairman of the forum of Hungarian organizations in the region of Zakarpacie, G.Y.Kinch: *"We solve our problems ourselves. If we need to translate the school tests, then we do it. If we need any Manuals, here we have already done two tranches, tranche from Europe and we do Manuals for Hungarian national schools in Ukraine. We are doing everything ourselves. We find money, print, distribute, children begin to learn ... once again I should say that the Hungarians save themselves, try to save".*

We can also pay attention at the need of political representation of interests of ethnic groups: nearly two-thirds (60 %) Hungarians would like it very much to have a representative in parliament, among the Poles the number of such people is less (36 %).

Solving of emerging issues by political means, according to most experts, is an indicator of strength, organization, consolidation, and according to the most ambitious estimates indicates the viability of a national minority to survive in an alien culture.

The head of the Polish Scientific Society of Zhitomir, a scientist of Polish origin, S.V.Rudnitsky: *"Political representation gives more opportunities and more practice in order to realize the vested interests. Surely, there are national groups that do not grow up to this. For example, the Poles".*

The president of the Hungarian cultural community in the region of Zakarpacie, «The party of the Hungarians in Ukraine», Kovach M.M.: *"Well, it can be considered an indicator. If there is the one who would answer your question, that politics does not matter, that he is not engaged into politics, then it is the end for this group. This is not the nation. This is ethnic businessman who has the ability in some public funds something to grab on the pretext that he is still young".*

## **Local civil organizations and interest representation**

In Ukraine there is a number of Hungarian NGOs. Thus, the Hungarian Democratic Federation in Ukraine is the only registered Hungarian organization comprised 135 ethnic Hungarians associations of Transcarpathia, Lvov and Kiev, offering multidirectional activities (primarily cultural and professional). The objectives of this organization are the general legal representation and protection of the interests of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine, as well as coordination of activities of the organizations within the Federation.

Based on the collected data, we can note that among the Hungarians a large part of respondents are members of public organizations, however, they show not so much activity in functioning of these organizations. The study examined membership in organizations of various kinds: religious (church), ethnic (Hungarian ethnic societies), vocational (trade union), political (political parties), as well as belonging to the so-called "leisure organizations" (sports, art, musical or educational orientation). It should be noted that ethnic composition of public organizations is homogeneous. Hungarians notice that almost in all organizations where they participate, most members are Hungarians. Moreover, such a characterization is valid not only for such organizations like church or ethnic communities that, in principle, is logical, but for all other organizations. This situation brings us to the question about the features of settlement of Hungarians in Ukraine. Due to the fact that Hungarians are living in a compact way (there are villages where all the inhabitants are Hungarians), members of voluntary organizations such as associations, generally tied to the territory, will also be Hungarians. Active cooperation in various spheres of life with their own ethnic group, from our point of view, contributes to the consolidation of ethnic minorities. As if there is interaction at the level of communication, then, if the need arises, a transition to a higher level, the interaction at the level of joint activities aimed at upholding the general interest is possible.

The only volunteer organization, represented in the questionnaire, which noted a stable low level of membership, is a political party. From our point of view, this fact evidenced not only about the low political participation of Hungarians, but also says that membership in political parties is not considered as an effective mean to defend the political interests. It should be noted that this situation is not unique for the Hungarian minority in Ukraine, and is very widespread in Ukraine as a whole. Moreover, Hungarians in Ukraine are among the most politically active groups. In general, the Hungarians are more politically active, compared with the Poles. According to the results of the survey, Ukrainian Hungarians have two registered political parties in the Ministry of Justice: The Democratic Party of Hungarians of Ukraine (DPUU) and KMKS "The Party of Hungarians of Ukraine" (abbreviation KMKS in Hungarian means "Society of the Hungarian culture of Transcarpathia" – Karpataljai Magyar Kulturális Szövetseg). It should be noted that, unlike the Hungarians, no other ethnic minorities have their own political parties. In view of densely populated, the Hungarians have an absolute majority in local government in some settlements and territorial units, such as the city of Beregovo and the Beregovo district. Hungarians in Ukraine are the only ethnic minority group in the Ukrainian state, which has achieved

placement of Hungarian national flags at government buildings in the localities where they live in compact.

## Conclusions

In the structure of identity of Hungarians in Ukraine regional or local identity as well as their ethnic identity plays a big role. Hungarians feel close to their native lands, their community and more seldom identify themselves as being a part of Ukraine, its nation and culture. Ukrainian Hungarians often join to achieve common goals and solve their problems by applying various methods, primarily political. Hungarian national minority, using the language of experts, feels alien element in the Ukraine. Hungarians in Ukraine have developed a closed, autonomous way of being. They are settled fairly compact, that provides a high frequency of interpersonal contacts within the community. The main factor of solidarity of Hungarians is their language. The language barrier in many respects is the main obstacle for Hungarians integration into Ukrainian society. Both the Ukrainian and Russian language could not become native to most of them, and that is why the Hungarians have a range of assimilation and adaptation problems. Study of the Ukrainian language by Hungarians is complicated by both objective factors (significant differences between the Ukrainian and Hungarian languages, a relatively short period of interaction of Hungarians and Ukrainians in historical terms) and the policies pursued by the Ukrainian State in the sphere of education. According to experts-Hungarians, the teaching of Ukrainian language in Hungarian schools should be implemented according to a special program similar to programs of foreign language teaching in Ukrainian schools. Study of the Ukrainian language by the Hungarian students as a foreign language would be more effective and would increase the proportion of Hungarian students in Ukrainian universities. Increasing of the share of Hungarians with higher education would increase their involvement in the economic, political and other spheres of public life in Ukraine, greater integration into Ukrainian society.

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**Prof. Vil S. Bakirov** – Doctor of Social Sciences, professor, corresponding member of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Rector of V.N.Karazin Kharkov National University, President of the Sociological Association of Ukraine, President of the East-Ukrainian Foundation for social research.

**Dr. Alexandr I. Kizilov** – PhD in Social Sciences, professor, Head of the Department of Methods of sociological research, Director of Social and Humanitarian Research Institute of V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Executive director of the East-Ukrainian Foundation for social research.

**Kizilova Kseniya** – PhD student of the Department of Applied sociology of V. N. Karazin Kharkiv national university, researcher of the East-Ukrainian Foundation for Social Research.

Professor Vil S. Bakirov  
 Dr. Alexandr Kizilov  
 Kseniya Kizilova  
 V.N.Karazin Kharkiv National University  
 Svobody square 6, office 335-336  
 Kharkiv 61022

Ukraine