

RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF ETHNIC AND NATIONAL MINORITIES

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Plan of Institutional Development Concerning the 2011-2015 Activities of the Research Institute of Ethnic and National Minorities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

In the last decade, Central and Eastern European societies have undergone significant changes in framework of European integration and due to challenges of globalization. These social changes affected profoundly the identity formation, geographical location, political and legal position, and mobilization strategies and structures of the region's minorities. Since the political changes of 1989, it has become clear that the 'descriptive' discourse does not remedy the malfunctioning of social structures; identity, in particular its national and ethnic components, persistently exercise significant influence on social structures, despite a varying degree of latency. It has become obvious that the question of minorities shall be approached from the perspective of integration, i.e. from the angle of social structure, focusing on conflicts and anomies as well as harmonies and co-developments in majority-minority relations. Studying complex social structures requires interdisciplinary methodology, comparative approaches, and the balance of qualitative and quantitative methods – which is facilitated by the pluri-disciplinary background of our research fellows.

The following research tasks are closely related to the institute: identity formation in the framework of EU integration; the influence of modifying forms of sovereignty on the legal, political, and economical situation of minorities; the influence of cultural models and patterns on social-economical development; migratory trends; the integration of third country nationals in Hungary; post 1920 governmental nationality-policies and minority mobilizations and autonomies; the sociological characteristics of minority elites; comparative historical study of deportations; the role of churches and minority-constituting ideologies.

In addition, the institute lays special emphasis on studying the social integration of Roma in Hungary. Although patterns of social disadvantages, lower educational and labour market participation rates can be found in wider social layers, undoubtedly Roma face such social challenges increasingly. Social policies cannot neglect the ethnic component since, on one hand it is source of communal cohesion; on the other hand the majority society categorizes a group on the basis of visible ethnic signs. The social integration of Roma can only be successful as a group strategy - despite various successful individual cases -, that should be facilitated by external factors and the internal tendencies of modernization. The institute is undertaking several complementary researches on the topic, and also launches a new complex research project.

Studying the relation of identity and modernity is similarly important. The topic is being studied, first: by an international comparative research covering nine European counties; second: a quantitative research on the identity-components of Hungarian citizens is being undertaken; third: the nationality-discourses of Hungarian citizens and minority Hungarians are being analyzed; fourth: the identity formation of Calvinist Hungarians in Voivodina is studied. These four research projects are going to be completed in the time frame of this plan.

In addition, colleagues are launching a related three-year-long research project on the regional identities in Zobor in Nyitra county, and Tovishat in Szilagysag.

Researches on the legal position and mobilization of minorities include the study of the minority self-government elections, and the analysis of the principle and practices of autonomy in international law. Two new related researches are going to be launched. One studies the role of minority political parties in the parliaments of Bulgaria, Serbia, Slovakia and Romania, as well as their internal democracy and international roles. The other research aims at creating a database on the legal situation of minorities living in the Carpathian basin that would provide the basis for further comparative research.

In the period 2011-2015 the institute is launching a book series on the history of Hungarian minorities and minorities living in Hungary. In the case of minorities living in Hungary, primary historical research has to be undertaken, except for the German minority. The Hungarian minorities are better researched, some historical studies have been published, but archival research is required on specific periods and topics.

The institute continues the research on the immigrants living in Hungary with relentless impetus. Beside the study of naturalization strategies, and the integration of minorities, the colleagues are going to study migration from Hungary to Western Europe.

The Jewish studies focus on: Hebrew codex fragments, Hebrew and Yiddish literature, the history of Yiddish culture, a Hebrew sourcebook, the history of Hungarian Jewry.

Research on the Hungarian American diaspora is going to receive less attention.

In order to accomplish our objectives, the institute needs to develop its IT structure, replace the file and web servers, upgrade the desktop PCs, printers, scanners and software. In the medium term, the institute intends to develop our homepage into a dynamic, even more user-friendly site that would comprise databases. The core budget can finance only partly these developments, that is why are intend to apply for additional grants.