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Discrimination in the Labour Market

Hungarians in Transylvania

The Hungarian community in Romania live in scattered over a large area then our country. They live in significantly different conditions. Three regions can be distinguished based on ethnic structure: Székely Land is home to almost half of the Hungarian population in Romania the only Transylvanian region where the majority population is Hungarian. One quarter of the Hungarian population in Romania lives in the Partium borderlane. The Romanian –Hungarian relation is much less asymmetric as in other areas of Transylvania. The standads of language use is more balanced. The third region is an interethnic zone which spreads from Máramaros, Kolozs County and Maros County through Southern Transylvania and Bánság which is not part of the Székely Land. In this area the Hungarian population live in minority and in scattered position. (Kiss Barna 2013)

Presence of several nationalities can be experienced in Romania. The relationship between the Romanian and Hungarian population and the tension arising from this relationship often leads to ethnic conflicts. In this study primarily we focus on those disagreements which runs between Hungarian and Romanian people also between person and within organisations. The conflict burst out either because of historyc or our current situations but the incompatible interests alone are not enough to survive these conflicts. The disagreements can only turn people againts each other when human values are includede. People believes in values, their faith defines their identiy. Members of different political, ideological and religious groups differ from each other, view, attitude so conflict occurs. Historical and Social conflicts can change the organisational cultures. The same organisational affiliation does not exclude the possibility of different interests because behind all of these may have different values, views and ideologies. (Csepeli 2001:278-279; Pongrácz,2010; Vehrer 1997)

In this study we examine the opportunities and situation of Hungarian people on the Romanian labor market we also highlight the emerging difficulties. The topic is actual in this studied region, news of Romanian-Hungarian conflicts are appearing in the press and media daily. For example a recently published job advertisement said: "We are looking for a sales woman in our jewellery store. Preferably good looking, young person with work experience, Hungarian nationality is not accepted." (<http://kitekinto.hu>) The advertisement not only discriminates againts nationality but also againts age. Based on many similar examples it is very difficult for the Hungarians to live on thier homeland as minority community while they care for their identity and mother tongie.

Questionnaire based on research

During our research based on the Hungarian people,s situation on the Romanian labor market we were seeking answers on what kind of difficulties the interviewed people have to

face during work or what conflicts would they have with colleagues from other nationalities.

We were also curious that the unfavorable prospects and the Romanian–Hungarian conflicts voiced by the press are really present in everyday life or is it just a misconception by the media.

Accordingly we formulated the following hypothesis:

- We assumed that the Transylvanian Hungarian employees have a preference for jobs where people speak Hungarian and managers also fellow workers were Hungarian nationality.
- We assumed that the Transylvanian Hungarian employees already experienced discrimination in the workplace because of their nationality.
- We assumed that the workplace conflicts most often break out because of language difficulties.

165 people filled out our online questionnaire, 50,3% men, 49,7% women. Almost all ages takes part in the sample. The youngest respondents 15, while the eldest 70 years old. The average age of the respondents 35 years.

Figure 1 Respondents' gender

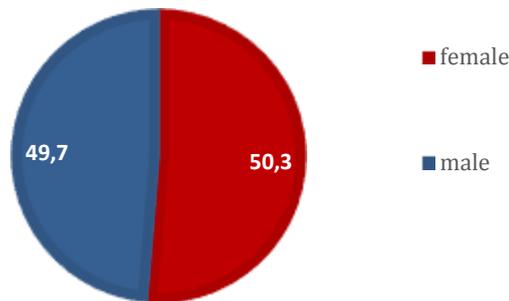
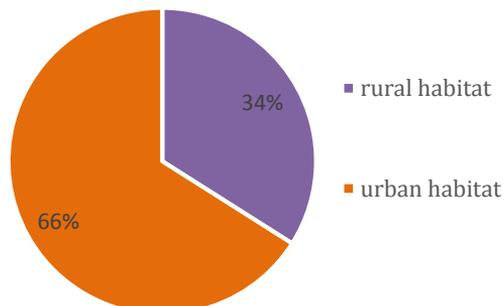


Figure 2 Residence of respondents



In the wider sense of 16 counties of Transylvania replies were received from 12 counties. Most respondents came from Hargita County, followed by Maros, Kovásza, Arad, Kolozs, Temes, Bihar, Szatmár, Hunyad, Szeben and Brassó Counties. There were no response from 3 counties (Fehér, Szilágy, Máramaros).

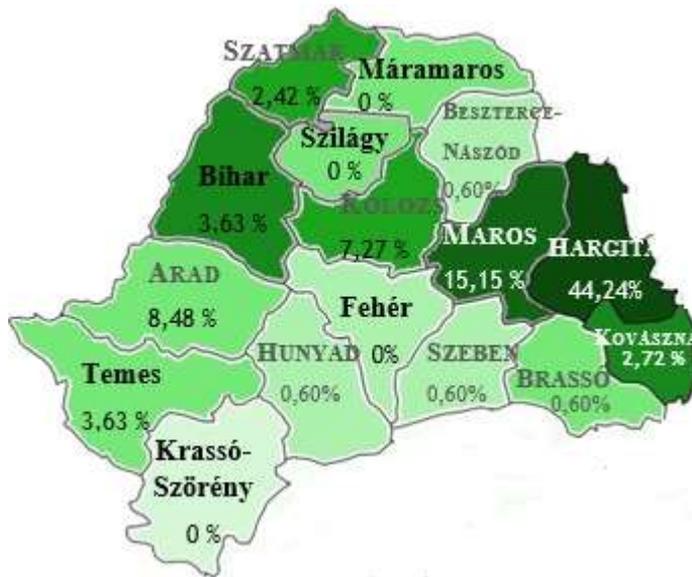


Figure 3 Residential division

Language use in school

100% of respondents have completed primary education of which 94,5% were studying Hungarian, 1,2% Romanian, 4,2% a mix of both, Romanian and Hungarian.

46,1% of participants in the questionnaire completed secondary education of which 75% were studied in their native language. 86,7% of the respondents also studied in grammar school which they completed in Hungarian. Technical school have been completed by 26,1%, 62,8% of them completed in Hungarian. 43,6% of respondents completed university, of which 50% completed in Hungarian, 33,3% in Romanian and 16,7% learned a mix of both languages.

It is clear from the chart that the higher qualification the person wish to obtain it is harder to take part in mother tongue education. While in primary school almost everyone has an opportunity to learn in Hungarian until to obtain a higher education, there only half of the respondents had the chance.

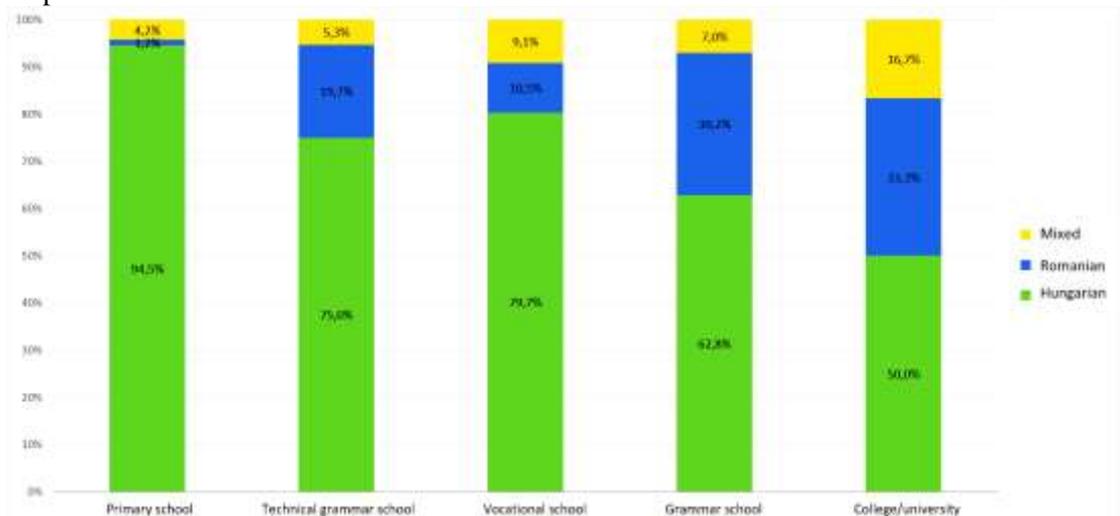


Figure 4 Language use in school

Nationality, Mother Tongue, Romanian Language Use

We were interested in our research that whether the respondents feel a nationality commitment a sense of affiliation. From the answers can be stated that a person other than everyone declared themselves Hungarian, so 99,4% of the respondents proved their Hungarian identity. The other element of the identity is the mother tongue. The majority of respondents are Hungarian mother tongue while 2 people (1,2%) did not answer this question.

9,1% of respondents fluently speaks Romanian they are on a native level, 18,8% speak perfect, 38,2% speak good Romanian but can feel an accent, 26,1% can make themselves understood, 7,3% can only be understood in certain cases but with difficulties, 1 person absolutely not speak the country,s language.

The respondents in a narrow family circle speak Hungarian; only two people speak mainly Romanian based on the pattern. In the case of groups of friends still the Hungarian language is the most used (89,1%), however, in the workplace more than half of the respondents said they speak Hungarian. In stores now they have less possibility to use the mother language (48,5%), and even less chance in the offices. So the Hungarians in Transylvania can only use their mother language in a narrow spread of society in families and circle of friends. Only in Székelyland could be shown that the respondents can communicate in Hungarian in all 5 areas, for this only 14,5% of respondents have a chance.

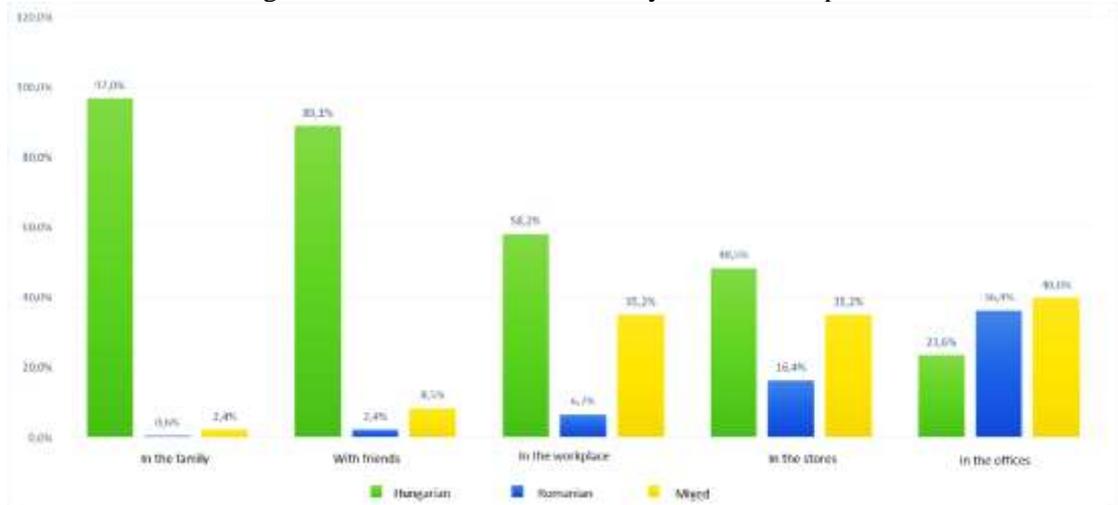


Figure 5 Romanian Language use

Factors influencing choice for job

On a five scale of factors affecting the choice for job the most important is the work atmosphere (4,3), followed closely by the payment and professional development (4,2). Also plays a role the creativity (4,1) the self-reliance (4,0) and the career possibilities (3,8). Job proximity and language used in workplace does not play an important role based on the answers. On the last place stands the ethnic of manager and staff (2,5).

From this it can be concluded that there is no conflict between the different of nationalities that would affect they lives in the workplace.

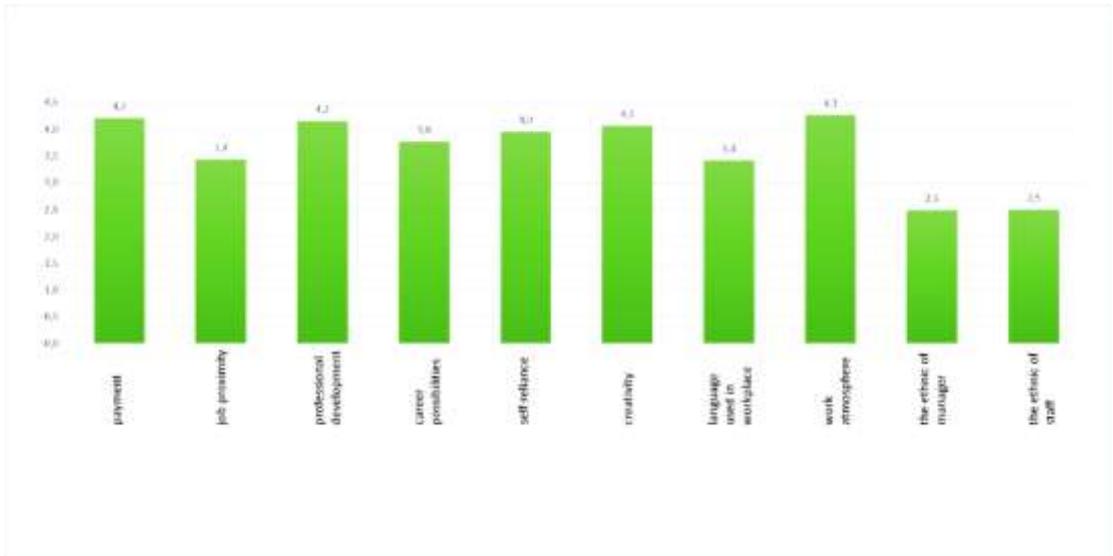


Figure 6 Factors influencing choice for job

Nationalities at workplace organization

67,3% of respondents' manager or employer is Hungarian nationality, 25,2% Romanian, 4,4% German, 0,6% Danish, 0,6% Korean, 1,3% Italian and 0,6% Austrian.

In 66,7% of the organisations the proportion of Hungarians exceeds 50%, in 8,5% they have a share of 50% while in 24,8% their proportion is lower than 50%. Predominantly the proportion of Hungarians within the company is lower in areas where they live scattered.

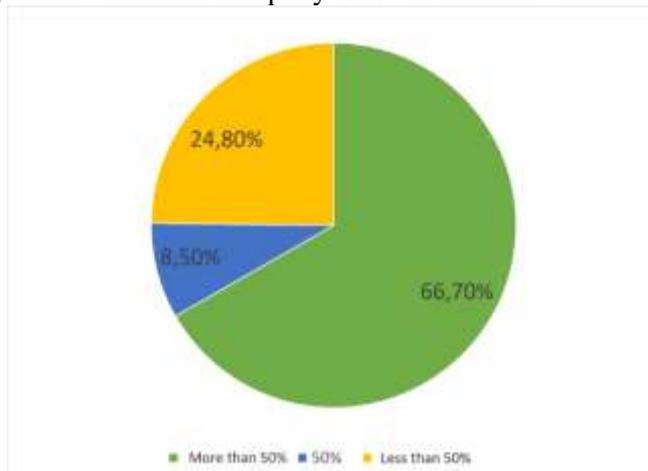


Figure 7 Rate of Hungarians within organisations

Forms of discrimination

Our research focus is on to how much the Transylvanian Hungarian workers are affected with negative discrimination on the Romanian labour market. More than half of respondents (55,8%) suffered discrimination because of their nationality. As regards to access to work 38,2% of the respondents had met a job advertisement that was exclusionary towards the Hungarians. 25,5% already has felt that because of their nationality they did not get the job. In case of employment 30,3% experienced the difference compared with

other ethnic colleagues. In regards the salaries the least experienced different treatment (13.9%). During redundancies also less people experienced discrimination (15,8%), but in case of promotion 27,3% of respondents said that the nationality was more important than the performance. From the answers therefore it can be concluded that the human resource management in all areas concerning discrimination against the Hungarians in Transylvania but this widely varies.

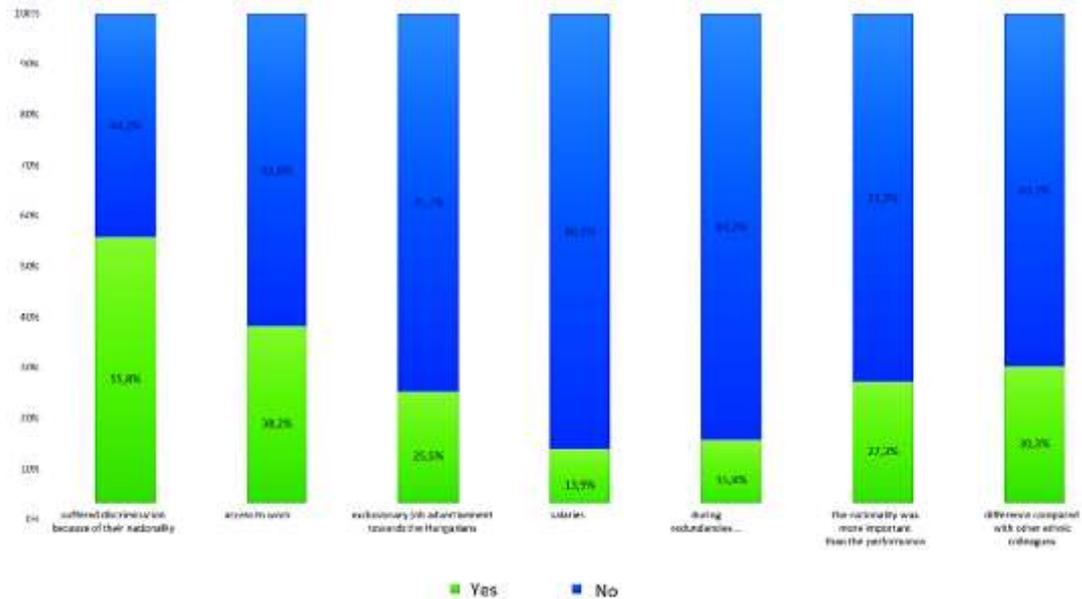


Figure 8 Affecting discrimination against Hungarians

57% of respondents do not agree that in Romania only those can succeed who completed part of their studies in Romanian. In the sample slightly more than half of the participants (53,8%) believes that the Romanian colleagues are generally unfriendly against those Hungarians who are unfamiliar with the Romanian language. 58,2% of respondents believes that the Romanian workers have better opportunity in their career than the Hungarians.

To the statement that it is difficult for a Hungarian nationality to get a leadership position, the answers were very different. Almost the same those proportion who agree (40%) and those who do not agree (42,4%) with this statement. 20% of participants in the sample agreed that the Romanians have priority and benefit when receiving bonus. According to about half of the respondents (49,7%) this is not typical. Also 49,7% respondents believe that in case of challenges they do not distinguish between Romanians and Hungarians. According to about one-third of respondents the rate of challenges is uneven.

The biggest agreement was when we asked the Romanians and Hungarians about their cooperation: if they need to work at work on a common project together, how well they can handle the cultural differences, can they put aside their cultural prejudices.

According to 68,5% respondents they can work well together in the case of teamwork despite the fact that they represent different cultures and belong to other ethnic. They are not colliding with each other in case of a solution of a common task. They well able to cooperate with each other. The primary aim of both parties to successfully solve the task.

The nature and type of ethnic conflict

In the following questions, we concentrated on examining conflicts between majority and minority nation. In general, (69,1%) of respondents don't detect conflicts between ethnics in the work place. In this background, of course it may consist that the proportion of Hungarians is high within organisation, as well as majority of employers is also Hungarian nationality. Where there is conflicts between ethnics (30,9%) there worth to look at the nature of these clashes.

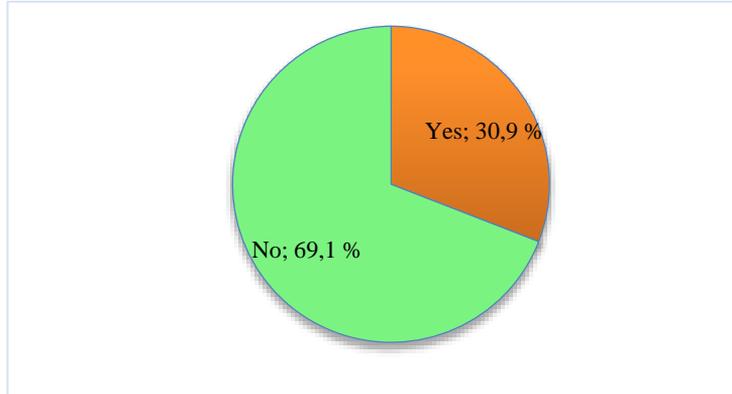


Figure 9 Workplace conflicts between ethnics

52,9% respondents already experienced work conflict because of their origin, they had oral argument most often. Followed by various disagreements (13,7%), then in the case of 9,8% of respondents, argument can happen, moreover these cases so much aggravated that 9,8% of the cases became a fight. However, none of them have court cases. It is noteworthy that 17,6% of respondents did not answer this question.

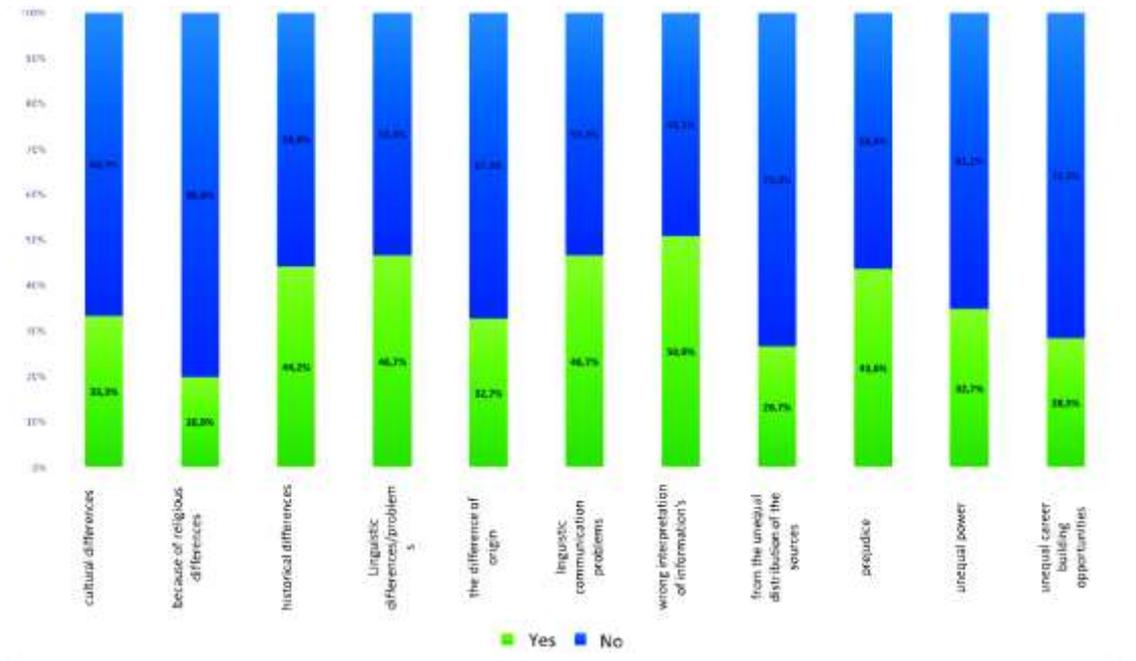


Figure 10 Conflicts grouping by root causes

In ascending order, can be stated that the 20% of respondents least experienced conflict at work because of religious differences. In Transylvania, the religious diversity exists since centuries (Catholics, Reformed, Lutherans, Unitarians, Orthodox, Jews), and along with this the religious tolerance established. Followed by the clashes comes from the unequal distribution of the sources (26,7%), then the unequal career building opportunities (28,5%). Due to the unequal power (32,7%), the difference of origin (32,7%) and the cultural differences (33,3%) one in three persons have experienced conflict. The prejudice occurred in a much higher proportion (43,6%), and the historical differences (44,2%), the linguistic communication problems (46,7%), and presumably this results the wrong interpretation of information's (50,9%) drives to a conflict which occurs within the workplace due to different ethnics.

Comparison of research findings with hypothesis

Our first assumption that it's important for Hungarian workers in Transylvania that their colleagues and leaders be Hungarian nationality is not confirmed. Although according to respondents the work atmosphere is the most important- on a five -point scale, this stands on 4,3 position -, the leader and colleagues' nationality stands on the last position on this scale (2,5). So, choosing a job not at all influencing factor that they need to work together with Romanians or Hungarians. According to most of the respondents Romanians and Hungarians can well work together in a team work (68,5%). Moreover, between the Romanians and Hungarians there is no conflict due to the fact that which nation they belong to. In case there would be many conflict because of their different origin, the Hungarians would prefer those jobs where they can only work with Hungarians.

Our second assumption, whereby the Hungarian workers in Transylvania experienced discrimination because of their nationality it's confirmed. More than half of respondents (55,8%) agreed with this. The discrimination which results from ethnic situation reflects from all areas of labour force. In the texts of vacancy adverts (38,2%) experienced exclusion, (25,5%) didn't get a job. In the case of career opportunities, the Romanian has better possibilities than the Hungarians (58,2%), also it is harder for Hungarians to get a leader position (40%). In the case of impeach (29,1%), as well rewards and bonuses (20%) in smaller proportion but discrimination happens.

Our third assumption, whereby the source of conflicts in the workplaces may happen mainly because of lack of language skills is confirmed. According to (53,9%) of respondents the Romanians usually behave unfriendly with those Hungarians who haven't got a good Romanian language knowledge. Conflicts in workplace according to respondents, are mostly risen due to language difficulties (46,7%), communication problems (46,7%) and wrong interpretation of information.

Summary

Because of significant identity, the Hungarian minority group in Romani dissociates from the majority, they not assimilated, they rather strive to preserve their tradition and habits. Therefore, the cultural differences are still present, as well the conflicts due to the difference of origin, but the most typical conflicts are arising from Historical and native reasons.

Considering conflicts within the country the most prominent are between the majority and minority groups. These conflicts are filled with emotional charge, which are often rooted in the past. The parents eternalized their memories, grievances and their prejudice to their children too, so the frozen conflicts continuously exists. Those who remained in their home land in Transylvania have to face yet a number of difficulties. They are disadvantaged in the labour market. Because of their nationality they experience discrimination.

Disadvantages arising from minority status – such as the fact that they have less opportunities for career advancement, they not get a leader position so easy-lead to a conflict potential in the world of work too.

People in Transylvania often suffered from spiritual fractures of the storms of History. These spiritual traumas are present even if the individual is not personally took part in the historic conflicts, because the collective memory of culture perserved it. Because we are powerless to change the past historical times, we must accept the situation and we must stive for peaceful co-existence next to each other. To do so, it is necessary to get to know and accept each other. Hungarians in Transylvania are significant number to the Romanian minorities, nonetheless they not receive sufficient attention in the action by the state minority policy.

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