

Mapping the core and periphery applied to a choronym (the case of Székely Land)

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Abstract: A cultural region could be only a choronym in the common knowledge. This choronym is applied with different intensity to different geographic locations. In the core a lot of criterion is present, in periphery they may be missing. The cultural criteria can be transformed to Boolean indicators, so we can understand the phenomenon as a 3D statistical surface.

We analyze the case of Székely Land. The Székelys are a subgroup of Hungarians, who use the Hungarian language; they live in Romania. The Székely seats were administrative regions from approx. 1300 until 1876: in Hungary, later in Transylvania and in the Habsburg Empire. After the dissolution of the seats, the area of the former seats was part of Austria–Hungary and after 1918 (mostly) of Romania. Since 1876 several administrative reorganizations touched the region. The Székely population at censuses professes itself ethnically and linguistically as Hungarian. The choronym is applied to a cultural region, where a set of similar characteristics occurs all over this region, but the boundaries of these characteristics are different. The perception of Székely Land has adapted to these administrative or ethnographic–linguistic factors, its former historical borders became fading.

The author compiled 6 criteria (2 historic, 2 administrative and 2 linguistic one) to define the core and periphery of the area to which is applied this choronym. The paper summarizes the local intensity of these criteria on choropleth map, this thematic map shows the core and periphery of the area applied to the choronym of Székely Land.

Keywords: cultural region, statistical surface, choropleth map, Romania, Székelyföld.

1. Introduction

A choronym of a cultural region is applied with different intensity to the different geographic locations, it has own core and periphery. Our questions are the followings: How has been changing the meaning of a choronym during history? How has been modifying its area caused by the influences of factors? How can be mapped the core and periphery defined by factors? For demonstrations we analyze the case of Székely Land (Romania).

2. Mapping the core and periphery applied to a choronym

2.1 The cultural regions, their choronyms

There are two types of region: functional and structural one. The parts of the functional (e.g. administrative) region are functionally related to each other. In structural (e.g. cultural) region a set of similar characteristics occurs all over the region. For example, the cultural region may be defined by a set of cultural criteria, such as common historical consciousness, language or dialect. (Jordan, 2005a)

At best, the cultural region is at the same time a functional region; in this case the cultural region is formal. Otherwise the cultural region is perceptual; in this case there could be no coincidence between the cultural region and a functional region. If the cultural region is only perceptual, then it is not so present in reality, it is only a choronym in common knowledge. Several senses of choronym evolve: different sciences define it in different ways, in individual mental spaces its extension and content may vary from person to person. While an administrative region has clear-cut borders – a cultural region has no defined borders. The choronym is applied with different intensity to the different geographic locations, it has own core and periphery. In the core a significant number of criteria (factors) are present, in periphery they may be missing; there is a gradual transition to the other cultural region. (Jordan, 2005b)

2.2 Mapping the choronym

Usually, this choronym is rarely written on maps, it is a type of name of an areal feature without defined border (such as parts of seas and oceans); the name is curved, the areal feature (to which it refers) is not delimited (Kadmon, 2000: 256–259). Sometimes the perceptual

area applied to choronym is surveyed using mental maps (e.g. Bláha–Paus, 2015); but another mapping method is used in this paper.

The cultural criteria which define the cultural region can be transformed to Boolean indicators – which can be true or false (e.g. Murphy–Jordan–Bychkov, 2009: 7–11). So we can understand the phenomenon as a three-dimensional statistical surface: its geographic location is marked by x and y dimension, the z-value is the quantity of the indicators which are true (Tyner, 2014: 134, 160). This volume phenomenon can be represented on a choropleth map.

3. Székely Land

3.1 Introduction

The Székelys (or Szeklers) are a subgroup of Hungarians (Magyars), who use a dialect of Hungarian language; they live mostly in Eastern Carpathians, in Romania. The Hungarian endonym 'Székelyföld' is a frequently used, well-known choronym in Hungarian language. Its Romanian endonym is 'Ținutul Secuiesc', the traditional German exonym is 'Szeklerland', which is used sometimes in English too. Its recent English exonym is Székely Land (used e.g. by English travel books). In each language, each culture the choronym has different meaning.

3.2 Historical factors

The Székely seats (beside the Saxon seats) were special administrative regions during almost six centuries (from approx. 1300 until 1876): in the medieval Hungary, in the early modern period in Principality of Transylvania and finally in the Habsburg Empire (and Austria–Hungary). During these centuries five Székely seats developed: Csík, Háromszék, Maros, Udvarhely and west of them, Aranyos. In Austria–Hungary the Székely seats were dissolved in 1876, and four counties (so-called "Székely" counties) were established: Csík, Háromszék, Maros-Torda and Udvarhely. (Köpeczi, 1990; Egyed, 2016) (see Figure 1)

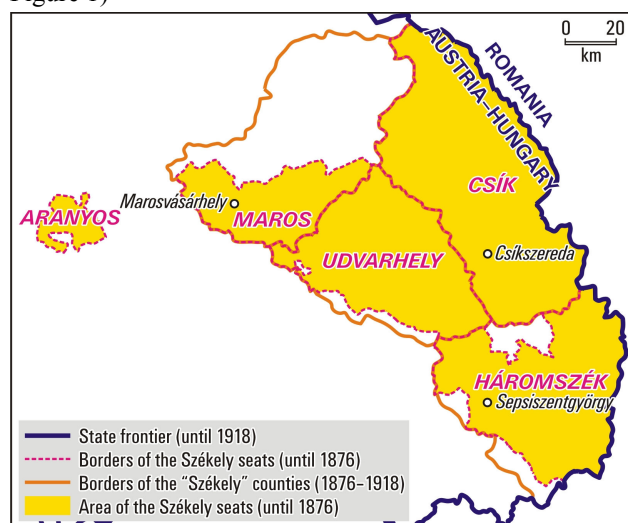


Figure 1. The Székely names and borders of the Székely seats and the county borders in Austria–Hungary (1876).

3.3 Administrative factors

Since 1876 several administrative reorganizations touched the region. At state level in 1918 the whole area (Transylvania) was transferred from Hungary to Romania. It belonged to Romania between the two world wars, but between 1940 and 1944 Hungary got back the largest part of the Székely Land. Since the end of the Second World War it is part of Romania. (see Figure 2)

In the 20th century the borders of minor administrative units (counties, regions) changed very frequently, eight times. The borders of the four Austro–Hungarian counties were changed a little bit (in 1925, 1929, 1940 and 1944), but these counties survived until 1950 (their Romanian names were Ciuc, Mureș, Odorhei and Trei Scaune). Between 1952 and 1968 here was a Magyar autonomous region (its shape and name changed in 1960). Since 1968 the historical Székely Land takes up at about two and half Romanian counties: Harghita, Covasna and the central part of Mureș. Simplified, these two (or three) counties are considered as Székely Land (Köpeczi, 1990; Egyed, 2016) (see Figure 2)

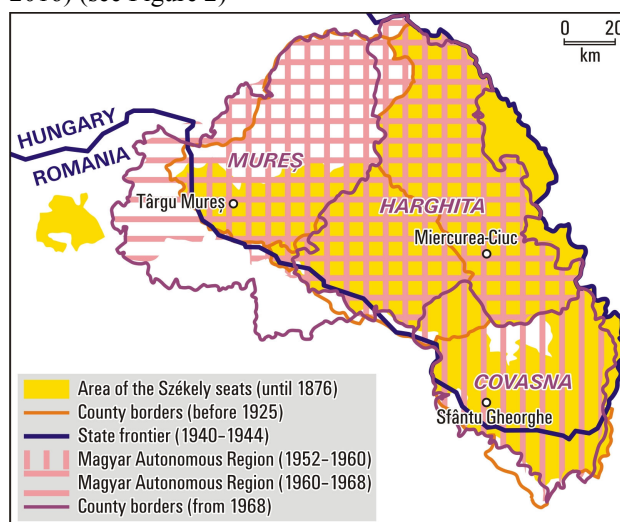


Figure 2. Administrative reorganizations after 1918: counties and regions in Romania.

3.4 Ethnographic–linguistic factors

The Székely population at censuses professes itself ethnically Magyar (Hungarian) and linguistically as Hungarian. According to the last Romanian census (2011), in Harghita and Covasna counties the Hungarians (Magyars) are in majority (with 83 respective 72%), in Mureș their proportion is 36%. (see Figure 3)

The sociological researches prove that in these three counties the primary identity of the Magyar population is Transylvanian and/or Hungarian, and only their second or third identity is being Székely. (Veres, 2012)

The location of the isogloss on the western boundary of the Székely dialect area differs from the boundary of the ethnographical Székely Land (which is manifested by several ethnographical phenomena). (Borsos–Magyar, 2011; Murádin, 1980) (see Figure 3)

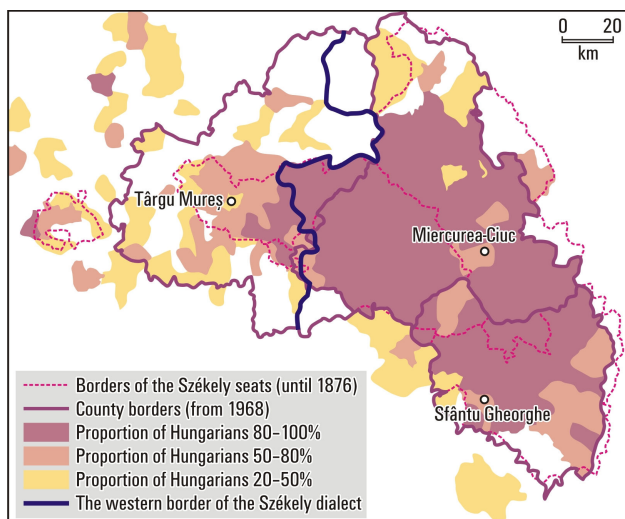


Figure 3. The proportion of Hungarians according to the Romanian census (2011) and the isogloss on the western border of the Székely dialect.

3.5 The maps representing the choronym

With the dissolution of the Székely seats, the choronym of Székely Land has moved from reality to common knowledge. The choronym is applied to a cultural region, where a set of similar characteristics occurs all over this region, but the boundaries of these characteristics are different. The perception of Székely Land has adapted to these administrative or ethnographic–linguistic factors, its former historical borders became fading. When it was an administrative region, it was represented continuously with clear-cut borders on the maps. The toponyms of the Székely seats were written first time on the map of Lazarus (1528), their borders were represented first time on the map of Cantelli da Vignola (1686). The first administrative maps of the seats and the first map with the title of Székely Land are manuscript maps round 1700 (Hevenesi, 1699; Lakatos, 1702). (see Figure 4)



Figure 4. Detail from a map which represents the administrative region of the Székely seats. (Cantelli da Vignola, 1686)

Since it is a cultural region, it is only a choronym, rarely represented on the maps, without borders, so the area's shape is unmarked. After the seats were dissolved (1876), the choronym has been written (without borders) only in certain periods, on few Hungarian maps (the most relevant are ÁTI, 1934; Fodor–Kováts, 1991). We can mention from this period just three detailed maps with the

title of Székely Land (all of them were published in Hungary): (HTI, 1942; Ábel–Cartographia, 1998; Gizi Map, 2006). On the greatest part of the maps the choronym is omitted. (see Figure 5)

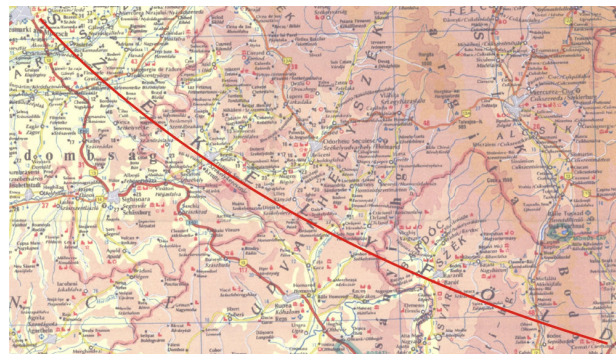


Figure 5. Detail from a map which represents the choronym of Székely Land. We highlighted with red line the curved name referred to the not delimited areal feature. (Fodor–Kováts, 1991)

4. Conclusions

The author compiled 6 criteria (2 historic, 2 administrative and 2 linguistic one) to define the core and periphery of the area to which is applied this choronym. The criteria are the followings:

- Between approx. 1300 and 1876 the settlement was situated in the Székely seats. During these almost six centuries the frontiers of the Székely seats were nearly unchanged; this is considered as the former functional region of Székely Land.
- Between 1876 and 1950 the settlement was situated in one of the following counties: Csík (later Ciuc), Háromszék (later Trei Scaune), Maros-Torda (later Mureș), Udvarhely (later Odorhei). After dissolving the Székely seats these counties were the more stable administrative units; between 1876 and 1918 the cultural region of Székely Land was adapted to these administrative borders.
- Since 1968 the settlement is situated in one of the following two counties: Covasna, Harghita. Nowadays these are the two counties of Romania, where the majority of the population is Hungarian. Sometimes, simplified, in narrow sense, these two counties are considered as Székely Land.
- Since 1968 the settlement is situated in one of the following three counties: Covasna, Harghita, Mureș. Nowadays these are the three counties of Romania, which could be corresponded to the former administrative units of Székely Land. Sometimes, simplified, in a large sense, these three counties are considered as Székely Land.
- According to the last Romanian census (2011) in the settlement the majority of the population professes itself as Hungarian (Magyar).
- The settlement is situated in the Székely dialect area of the Hungarian language.

In the followings we summarize the local intensity of these criteria on a choropleth map, this thematic map

shows the core and periphery of the area applied to the choronym of Székely Land. (Figure 6)

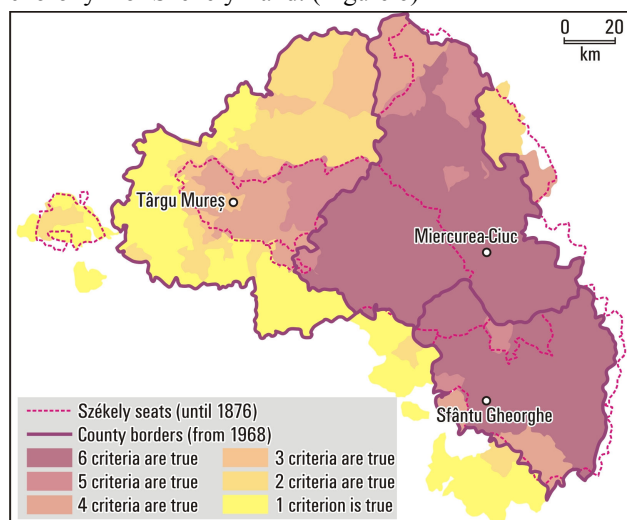


Figure 6. The quantity of the true criteria: the local intensity of the area applied to the choronym of Székely Land.

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