# PARADIGMS

# Politics, Nationalism, and Parliamentarianism Romanian Representatives in the Budapest Parliament (1861–1918)

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The group of Romanian representatives in the Budapest Parliament between 1861 and 1918 can be divided into three distinct generations, through strict chronological references to important events in Hungarian history.

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URING THE second half of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century, the Romanian nation under Habsburg domination experienced a whole range of changes. These transformations had a profound impact on the national elite. The traditional role of the clergy, as national leaders, was gradually assumed by the secular elite, comprised essentially of lawyers and great landowners. According to their personal convictions and interests, these members of the elite embraced the ideas and programs of the different political orientations and trends of this period, acting in accordance with these notions in order to achieve the national Romanian desiderata.1

The timeframe under discussion includes two distinct periods—from a political and administrative perspective—in the history of Transylvania, Banat, and Eastern Hungary, regions

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with a preponderantly Romanian population. The decisions made by the Court in Vienna in the early 1860s made possible the restoration of the autonomy of the Habsburg Empire's provinces. A direct consequence of these decisions was the recognition of the Great Principality of Transylvania, while the Timiş Banat became part of Hungary. This status quo was maintained throughout the entire liberal period (1860–1867).² The failure of the monarchy's internal policies persuaded the emperor and his councillors to seek solutions in order to avoid the aggravation of the crisis. The signing of the Compromise (The Settlement, *Ausgleich*) led to the division of the empire into two distinct areas, both under the authority of the same emperor, but with separate governments and parliaments.³ As a consequence of the new political and administrative realities, the Great Principality of Transylvania lost its autonomy and became a part of Hungary. The Romanians in this province would thus be subjected to the authority of the Hungarian government for more than half a century (1867–1918).⁴

The present study aims to analyze the composition of the group of Romanian representatives who were active in the Budapest Parliament (Pest Parliament, until 1873). Taking into account the political situation of the Romanian-in-habited regions, for the parliamentary cycle of 1861 through 1865, only those representatives from Banat and Eastern Hungary will be included in the analysis. After 1865 all Romanian representatives, including those from Transylvania, will be the object of our analysis.

The two main political orientations which divided the national Romanian leadership were activism and passivism. The supporters of activism believed that, regardless of the political context, the involvement of the national Romanian leaders in the political life of the monarchy constituted the most viable solution in order to accomplish the nation's goals. Passivism was manifest as a Romanian political trend only after 1867. In the context of the transformations occasioned by the Ausgleich, a part of the national leadership reasoned that the most appropriate way of protesting against the newly-established political and administrative realities was to refrain from participating in the electoral process and in parliamentary life. Although it has been previously held in Romanian historiography that, until the beginning of 20th century, passivism was the dominant orientation within the national movement, this view should be carefully re-evaluated and nuanced. Activism was a significantly more complex political option, as it encouraged participation in parliamentary life. Within the activist trend, one may encounter Romanian leaders who opted for a wide array of political orientations, ranging from the so-called "national-activism" to the Hungarian opposition parties, and to governmental activism. As all of these orientations sought the betterment and the development of the Romanian nation, regardless of their particularities, we argue that they can all be included in the Romanian national movement. Consequently, the activist trend came to include a considerable number of remarkable supporters and representatives during the entire period in question, and constituted a political option that was at least as significant as passivism.<sup>5</sup>

The diversity of the Romanian leadership's political orientations can also be observed in the variety of political parties to which they adhered during the electoral campaigns. Referring firstly to the parties that assumed a strictly national character, some defining aspects should be mentioned. These parties were constituted shortly after the signing of the Ausgleich, and reflected the general European trends manifest during the second half of the 19th century. In February 1869, during the Timisoara Conference, the National Party of the Romanians from Banat and Hungary (NPRBH) was constituted, and adopted an activist political program. The Miercurea (near Sibiu) Conference (March 1869) saw the establishment of the National Party of the Romanians from Transylvania (NPRT), which adhered to passivism. Thus, we notice that the political organisation of the Romanians depended on geographical factors, while the adoption of different political orientations can be somewhat accounted for by the different political and electoral realities in the two regions. Realising that a common action of the two national parties would increase the chances of defending the rights of the Romanians in Hungary and of obtaining new prerogatives, the NPRBH and the NPRT merged during the National Conference in Sibiu of May 1881. The program of the new political formation—the Romanian National Party from Transylvania, Banat, and Hungary (RNP)—provided for the adoption of a hybrid political tactic—the constituencies in Banat and Hungary would support activism, while those in Transylvania would be passivist. Only in 1887, as a result of the electoral failures of the candidates in Banat and Eastern Hungary, was passivism officially adopted. This constituted the RNP's political tactic until 1905, when activism was revived and participation in the political and electoral life of Hungary resumed.6

The options of the Romanian leaders were however not limited to the above-mentioned parties—they frequently opted to support the programs of Hungarian political formations. The political parties in Hungary experienced considerable instability during the entire dualist period, caused by numerous scissions and changes of position on the Budapest parliamentary stage. However, the Hungarian opposition comprised parties that can generally be included either in the moderate or the radical trends. During most of the period in question, the governing party in Hungary was the Hungarian Liberal Party (Szabadelvű Párt). These parties continually sought to attract supporters from among the Romanian leadership, especially those who had activist views. The main result of this was the existence, throughout the period in question, of a powerful group of Romanian pro-government representatives.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of their political orientations, the Romanian representatives in the Budapest Parliament were some

of the most influential Romanian personalities (with the exception of the high Greek-Catholic and Greek-Orthodox clergy) within the decision-making structures in Budapest.

Between 1860 and 1918, the supreme legislative body in Budapest went through 15 parliamentary cycles. The duration of the longest legislature was of almost 9 years, between 1910 and 1918, while the briefest only lasted between 1905 and 1906. During the 1860s, the parliamentary cycles lasted 4 years. Once the dualist system was established, the duration of the legislatures was set to 3 years, and from 1887 to 5 years.

Between 1861 and 1918 parliamentary elections were held in accordance with the provisions of Law V of 1848 and subsequently, according to Law XXXII of 1874. Although a series of laws meant to expand voting rights—Law XV of 1899, Law XIV of 1913, and Law XVII of 1918—were adopted, the electoral standards in Hungary remained far behind those of its neighbouring countries. The Hungarian electoral legislation that applied in Transylvania had different provisions than those in force in the rest of Hungary. Their restrictive character (especially the higher income threshold required) made it so that the Romanians in Banat and Eastern Hungary could express their political opinions more adequately than their brethren in Transylvania.<sup>8</sup>

During the 15 legislatures, 132 Romanian representatives were elected. The total number of seats won amounted to 276, of which only 16 were invalidated. The majority of these situations happened before 1881, almost half of them being the result of the representatives' decisions to renounce their mandates: Andrei Mocsonyi (Mocioni) in 1861, David Urs de Margina and Ioan Aldulean in 1866, Ioan Raţiu in 1868, Ioan Antonelli in 1869, Vasile Buteanu in 1872, Ilie Măcelariu and Iosif Hodoş in 1873, Alexandru Mocsonyi in 1874. All of the abovementioned political leaders, with the exception of Vasile Buteanu, Iosif Hodoş, Alexandru Mocsonyi and Andrei Mocsonyi, came from Transylvania. Many of them had powerful passivist beliefs, but were elected on account of their popularity with Romanian voters.

From the total number of valid mandates, 195 were complete, while 65 were partial. The most frequent causes of partial mandates were the appointments to offices incompatible with a parliamentary seat (especially in the county civil service, to institutions of higher education or high positions within the hierarchy of the Romanian churches), deaths, and the assumption of the mandate during the parliamentary cycle. As far as the number of mandates per legislature is concerned, between 1861 and 1881 this was considerably higher than in 1881–1918. During the former interval the representatives averaged 26 mandates/legislature, while during the latter this number only stood at 13.33 mandates/legislature. The explanation of this remarkable difference resides in the 1881

decision of the RNP leaders to keep out of the electoral and parliamentary life in Hungary through the adoption of passivism.

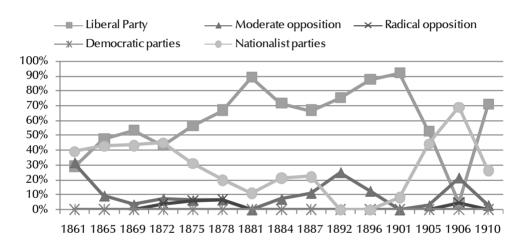
The group of Romanian representatives in the Budapest Parliament between 1861 and 1918 can be divided into three distinct generations, through strict chronological references to important events in Hungarian history (Table 1). The first generation comprises those representatives born between 1800 and 1831, who took part in the revolutionary events of 1848–1849 and were active when the Ausgleich was signed. The members of this generation obtained 41% of the total of Romanian parliamentary seats, and constituted 41% of the total number of Romanian representatives. Numerous members of this generation, such as Vincențiu Babeș, Andrei Mocsonyi, and Alexandru Roman, played significant roles not only on a national level, but also in Hungarian politics. The second generation comprises those who were born between 1831 and 1860, who were active during the implementation of dualism, during the entire period of liberal government, and took part in the debates regarding the major reforms necessary in Transleithania. Although it obtained a percentage of mandates similar to the first generation (41%), the percentage of M.P.s of the second generation is somewhat lower (36%). Some of the most significant members of this generation were Partenie Cosma, Iosif Gall, Teodor Mihali, Petru Mihályi, Alexandru Mocsonyi, George Pop de Băsești, and George Szerb. The third generation is the least represented, both in terms of seats won (12%), as well as in terms of the percentage of M.P.s (14%). The members of this generation were born after 1861 and were active especially during the crisis of the Budapest regime. A part of them obtained parliamentary mandates as a result of the decisions made by the RNP's leaders in 1905, to renounce passivism and to become involved in the political life of Hungary. This generation comprised key Romanian political characters that subsequently contributed to the realisation of the Great Union of 1918: Iuliu Maniu, Ștefan Cicio-Pop, Vasile Goldis, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, and Aurel Vlad. Among the Romanian M.P.s with pro-governmental orientations born after 1861, one of the most interesting characters was Constantin Burdia. A significant aspect of this analysis is the ratio between the number of MPs and the number of mandates per generation. The most stable generation is the second, which also has the longest-lasting representatives: Petru Mihályi, Vasile Jurca, Ioan Ciocan, Vasile Negrea, George Szerb etc. Moreover, most of the 20 M.P.s who won mandates prior to 1861-1918 were part of the first generation, with the exception of Lazăr Petco, who belonged to the second generation. A significant percentage of them came from Transylvania, where they had participated either in the Cluj Diet of 1848 (Alexandru Bohățiel), or in the Sibiu (1863–1864) and/or Cluj Diets (1865): Ioan Raţiu, Ioan Aldulean (vicepresident of the Sibiu Diet), Alexandru Lazăr, Ioan Puscariu etc.9

Table 1. M.P.s and mandates by generation

	1 <sup>st</sup> generation	%	2 <sup>nd</sup> generation	%	3 <sup>rd</sup> generation	%	Unidentified	%
M.P.s	54	41	48	36	18	14	12	9
Mandates	114	41	112	41	33	12	17	6

Although the average number of terms per representative is 2.10, the number of mandates obtained by each representative varied from one to no less than 12. The most mandates were won by Petru Mihályi, who during his entire career represented the constituencies of Vişeu and Şugatag in Maramureş county. A considerable number of mandates were also won by George Szerb (9), Alexandru Roman (7), Vasile Negrea, Traian Doda, Ioan Ciocan, Vincenţiu Babeş (all of whom gained 6 mandates), Gellért Véghső, Nicolae Şerban, Ioan Misici, George Ioanovici (with 5 mandates). Among the Romanian representatives who participated in the decisions of the Budapest Parliament for at least a third of the legislatures between 1861 and 1918, the majority opted to support the political programs of Hungarian parties (80% of the aforementioned representatives' mandates).

This tendency can be also observed when one takes into consideration the entire group of Romanian representatives for the period in question. The majority of mandates were won by the candidates who ran on the lists of the Hungarian ruling party. 60% of the mandates of the Romanian representatives were won after running on the lists of the Deák Party, the Liberal Party (the result of the 1875 merger between the Deák Party and the Center-Left Party) and the National Labor Party. As far as the affiliation of the Romanian representatives to the political programs of the abovementioned parties is concerned, a constant evolution may be observed until 1905, reflected in the number of mandates earned (Graph 1). If in 1861 only 29% of the Romanian M.P.s adhered to this political orientation, between the parliamentary cycles of 1881–1884 and 1901–1905, the supporters of the liberal Hungarian trend gradually came to dominate the body of M.P.s, reaching approx. 89%, respectively 92%. The regress recorded by the liberal trend in the preferences of the Romanian representatives was caused by the profound crisis experienced by the Liberal Party at the middle of the first decade of the 20th century, which ultimately led to its dissolution. In the 1906 elections, a part of the Romanian representatives with liberal views decided to end their political careers. Those who chose to continue their parliamentary activity turned towards the former opposition parties that governed as part of a majority coalition. Therefore, even during the 1906–1910 legislature, a notable percentage (approximately 26%) of the Romanian representatives believed that the most adequate solution during the Hungarian political crisis was the adoption of the governing parties' political programs. The same considerations formed the basis of the political re-positioning of the majority of Romanian M.P.s who won seats in the 1910 elections. Once the National Labor Party was established—headed by the former liberal leader István Tisza—and formed the government, some Romanian political leaders again changed their orientation and embraced the new party's program. The pragmatism and efficiency of this decision were reflected in the composition of the group of Romanian representatives who were active during the last legislature of the dualist period—over 70% of them were supporters of the National Labor Party.



Graph 1. Statistics of election results (1861–1918)

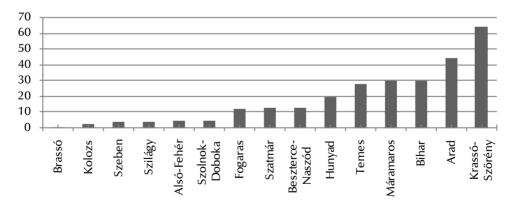
The analysis of the same aspect regarding the political options of the Romanian representatives while factoring in their respective generations points to similar conclusions (Table 2). Thus the pro-governmental options were dominant in the preferences of the Romanian M.P.s during the first two generations. 49.6% of the members of the first generation ran on the lists of the Hungarian governing party, while only 8.8% opted for the programs of the moderate opposition. The fact that in 1887 activism was adopted as a political tactic by many of the Romanian leaders was the main reason why the national parties enjoyed a high percentage of adherents in the first generation (41.7%). Despite a relative diversification of political options among the representatives of the second generation, the pro-governmental trend consolidated its dominant position (approx. 67%), especially to the detriment of the national parties (approx. 21%). The Hungarian opposition parties managed to attract a low number of Romanian

M.P.s from the second generation (8%—moderate opposition, 4%—radical opposition). The situation changed considerably during the third generation. The political crisis experienced by the Liberal Party in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the rise of the opposition parties, and especially the adoption of activism by the RNP's leaders caused a reversal of the Romanian representatives' political orientations at the time of the third generation. 30% continued to support the liberal program, 15% adhered to the moderate opposition, while the majority (55%) ran on the lists of the RNP. It must be stated that the supporters of the pro-governmental trend still reached almost 45% during the third generation, owing to the fact that the majority of those who had opted for the moderate opposition did so because it had assumed power in 1906–1910.

	Liberal Party	Moderate opposition	Radical opposition	Nationalities' parties
1 <sup>st</sup> generation	49.6%	8.8%	0.0%	41.7%
2 <sup>nd</sup> generation	66.8%	7.9%	4.0%	21.3%
3 <sup>rd</sup> generation	30.3%	15.2%	0.0%	54.5%
Unidentified	52.9%	14.7%	0.0%	32.4%

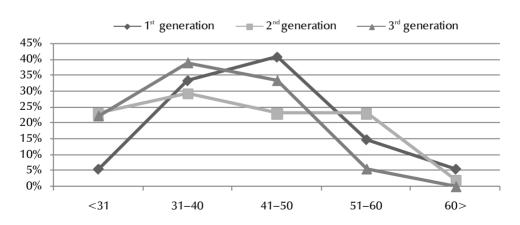
Table 2. Political options by Generation





From the perspective of the geographic distribution, <sup>10</sup> the activist current was most frequently supported in the counties of Banat and Eastern Hungary (Graph 2). Of the 276 Romanian mandates, 33% were obtained in Banat, 43% in the counties of Eastern Hungary, and only 24% in Transylvania. A particular situation was encountered in Caraş-Severin county, where the supporters of the activ-

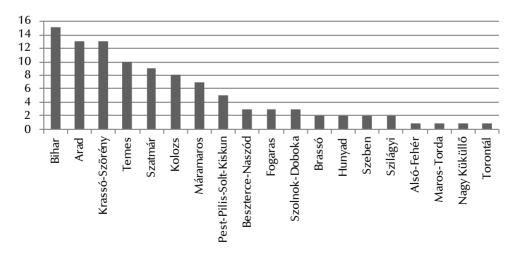
ist trend obtained 23.1% of the Romanian mandates. It should be stated that half of the Transylvanian mandates were obtained in the counties neighbouring Banat and Eastern Hungary (Bistrita-Năsăud, Hunedoara), where the activist ideas could spread more easily.<sup>11</sup> Another analysis criterion was the median age of the Romanian M.P.s' initial parliamentary experience. From the perspective of the three generations, a constant drop in the average age for the first mandate can be observed. If, in the case of the first generation, this age averaged 44.2 years, the members of the second generation averaged only 40.8 years, while the representatives from the third generation averaged 38.1 years (Graph 3). The higher median age in the case of the first generation can be explained by the fact that a part of the representatives born between 1800 and 1830 began their political careers at an early age, during the revolutionary events of 1848–1849. Despite this, it should be taken into account that, after 1849 and until the early 1860s, the Romanian political leaders did not have a chance to activate in legislative bodies. Thus, the generation that came to the fore in 1848–1849 was constantly active after the Diets of Pest (1861–1865) and Sibiu (1863–1864), and until the last decade of the 19th century. The opposite situation is encountered in the case of the third generation, and can be explained by the shorter period during which the representatives could gain the necessary political experience for this type of career. Furthermore, the fact that the representatives of the final generation gained their seats at a median age of less than 40 years may also indicate a greater degree of professionalization among parliamentary representatives.



Graph 3. Age of accession to Parliament by Generation

In what concerns the M.P.s' geographical origin,<sup>12</sup> we notice that they came from no less than 19 Hungarian counties (Graph 4). Of the 101 representatives for whom we have identified a precise birthplace, more than half (50.5%) origi-

nated in the counties of Bihor, Arad, Caraş-Severin and Timiş. Closely related to the criterion of origin is that of geographical extraction. The 101 representatives in question obtained a total of 233 mandates. Of these, approx. 60% were won in their home counties, while the rest were won in other regions. This data leads us to a series of preliminary conclusions. Firstly, the counties where the activist trend was best represented from the perspective of mandates won are those that gave the largest number of deputies. Consequently, the original political environment (in which the future political leaders had their formative experiences, until adolescence) and the family political traditions were essential factors in the shaping of subsequent political options. Even if the majority of mandates were won in the home county, only a relative stability of mandates can be observed. This was caused by the relatively high number of mandates obtained in other counties. The situation may also be explained by the fact that almost half of the parliamentary mandates in the case of representatives who ran in counties other than their original ones were obtained in neighbouring counties. Only in an extremely low number of cases did representatives win mandates in more than one county. This situation may lead us to believe that, through their activity, the Romanian M.P.s represented firstly the interests of local communities, defined at the most by the county limits. Moreover, the safety offered by an electorate that had repeatedly demonstrated its fidelity made the representatives avoid running in other counties. Additionally, the political parties preferred to give their support in the elections to candidates who were influential on a local level, thus reducing the risks of electoral failure.



Graph 4. Mandate distribution by home county

Another significant aspect in this analysis is the educational background of the Romanian representatives (Table 3). Most of them were graduates of law schools (64.5%), a fact which supports Victor Karady's theory<sup>13</sup> of the "nation of lawyers" regarding 19th century Hungary. Analysing the percentage of lawvers within each generation we notice that, although considerable fluctuations existed, the option of the Romanian political elite in Hungary for a juridical career was dominant, and contrasted with the affinity for other professions. The noticeable decrease in the percentage of lawyers within the third generation can be explained precisely by the diversification of the professional options of the Romanian student body, increasingly attracted to other domains such as the humanities or medicine and pharmacy. Also, two fields experienced a constant regress in the educational preferences of the Romanian representatives. While in the first generation the graduates of theological studies represented 18.2% of the total number of M.P.s, their percentage dropped in the second generation to 15.2%, and reached 11.1% during the third generation. This phenomenon is in accordance with the transformations occurred within the national movement, where the representatives of the secular elite gradually assumed the traditional role previously held by the clerical elite, as the nation's political representatives. Moreover, once certain personalities who had gained fame during the final years of the military border system (Baron David Urs de Margina, General Traian Doda) retired from politics, the graduates of military schools gradually disappeared from the foreground of Romanian political life. The place of theologians and army officers was gradually assumed by the graduates of humanities and medicine and pharmacy. While, during the first two generations, the aforementioned domains were peripheral from the perspective of the M.P.s' educational interests, during the third generation they experienced considerable progress.

Table 3. Academic qualifications by Generation

	Medicine,						
	Law	Theology	Military	Humanities	Pharmacy	Drop-out	Unidentified
1 <sup>st</sup>	64.5%	18.2%	1.9%	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%	1.9%
generation							
2 <sup>nd</sup>	73.6%	15.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	2.1%
generation							
3 <sup>rd</sup> generation	61.1%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	11.1%
Unidentified	33.3%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Closely linked to the criterion of education is that of the socio-professional provenance of the Romanian representatives in the Budapest parliament (Table 4).

The analysis of the career paths taken by the Romanian M.P.s before they had obtained their mandate points to two leading socio-professional categories: civil servants and members of the liberal professions. The data obtained indicate that the two categories passed through different, inversely proportional phases. The category of civil servants from the administration and the justice system dominated in the first generation of representatives, but continually regressed, thus allowing the affirmation of those coming from the liberal professions, who gained the majority in the second generation and dominated the third.

	Administration, justice, diplomacy	Army	Church	Liberal professions	Landowners	Unidentified
1 <sup>st</sup> generation	47.2%	4.6%	13.0%	25.9%	7.4%	1.9%
2 <sup>nd</sup> generation	36.5%	3.1%	11.1%	40.6%	6.6%	2.1%
3 <sup>rd</sup> generation	15.7%	4.6%	5.6%	69.4%	4.6%	0.0%
Unidentified	41 7%	0.0%	8 3%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%

Table 4. Socio-professional distribution by generation

The fact that the percentage of members of the liberal professions reached 69.4% during the third generation, while that of civil servants dropped to only 15.7%, was a direct consequence of the political shifts of the first decade of the 20th century. The Romanian representatives with pro-governmental views mostly came from the ranks of the civil servants from justice and the administration. The parliamentary mandate generally represented the crowning achievement of a lengthy career, during which all of the stages in the civil service hierarchy had been completed. The governing party thus ensured that it had the support of a representative who had proven his fidelity towards the state during a lengthy period of time, but also offered a stimulus to the local Romanian elite in order to recruit it in the Hungarian civil service. Once activism was adopted by the RNP, the group of Romanian representatives experienced a great transformation in regard to its political options. The drop in the number of pro-governmental representatives and the rise of RNP-affiliated M.P.s caused a decrease in the number of those recruited from among the civil servants and a rise in the number of members of the liberal professions. Moreover, it would have been impossible for an RNP candidate to be a member of the administrative or judiciary civil service, both devoted to the Budapest government, as the RNP program was an oppositional one, which disagreed with the actions of the executive.

The percentage of those who held ecclesiastical offices before obtaining their mandate follows the regressive trend noticeable in the case of theology graduates, and was a part of the gradual replacement of the ecclesiastical elite with

a secular elite as the nation's political representatives. Also, the relatively low percentage of representatives who owned large landed estates is not in the least surprising. This situation reflects the fact that very few great landlords existed among the Romanian nation in Hungary.

HE DIFFERENT aspects of our analysis lead us to the conclusion that the composition of the body of Romanian representatives reflects the Hungarian governments' constant tendency to attract important elements from the Romanian political leadership. As supporters of the activist trend, the Romanian representatives in the Budapest Parliament were especially attuned to the political program of the Hungarian governments, thus answering to the availability manifested by the Hungarian central authorities to collaborate with the moderate representatives of the Romanian nation.

#### **Notes**

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#### **Abstract**

Politics, Nationalism, and Parliamentarianism: Romanian Representatives in the Budapest Parliament (1861–1918)

After 1860, the national movement of the Romanians in the territories under Habsburg domination was influenced by the changes experienced at a political and administrative level. Its leadership witnessed a whole range of transformations. Among the Romanian national leaders, the representatives who were active in the Budapest Parliament constituted the most significant category in regard to the influence gained and the available means of political action. The present study aims to conduct a detailed analysis of the group of Romanian political representatives between 1861 and 1918 in order to ensure a more accurate understanding of their political orientations and their parliamentary actions.

## **Keywords**

Austria-Hungary, national movement, parliamentary representatives, parliamentarianism, political orientations, electoral geography