

Social Networks in Movement.
Time, interaction and interethnic spaces
in Central Eastern Europe

Edited by
Davide Torsello and Melinda Pappová

NOSTRA TEMPORA, 8.

General Editor: Károly Tóth



Forum Minority Research Institute
Šamorín, Slovakia

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Forum Minority Research Institute
Lilium Aurum
Šamorín - Dunajská Streda
2003

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ISBN 80-8062-179-9

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Acknowledgements

This book was conceived after the workshop “Social networks in movement”, held in Galanta on October 6, 2001. The organization and sponsoring of the workshop, as well as the publication of this work has been realized thanks to the generous support and precious scientific and technical help of the Forum Minority Research Institute.

Károly Tóth, director of the Forum Institute is the first person to whom we turned for the organisation of the workshop. The choice was extremely positive; we thank him and all the staff of the Forum for their unlimited assistance and encouragement towards the completion of this volume.

We are grateful to Prof. Christian Giordano, Prof. Claire Wallace, Dr. Longina Jakubowska and Dr. Frances Pine who chaired the workshop sessions and enriched with their presence the scientific contribution of the workshop. We are glad that the event provided to some participants an occasion to taste the local reality of a less known region in central Europe.

Although the way to the completion of the book has been longer than expected, we confide that the outcome meets well all expectations. We wish to thank Sándor Bondor for his translation work on chapters 7 and 8. Chapters 3, 5, 6 and Appendix 2 and 3 have been translated by the editor, Melinda Pappová. A special thanks to Juliana Krajčírová, Patty Gray, Deema Kaneff, Frances Pine and John Eidson for their precious comments and polishing of the language.

Studying networks nowadays. On the utility of a notion

Christian Giordano

The book *Friends of Friends. Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions* by Jeremy Boissevain was first published in the now distant 1974. At the time it had a widespread impact in the field of social anthropology (Anglo-Saxon and beyond) especially amongst researchers who were then interested in Europe's peripheral regions. Resuming in a more empirically cogent way some interesting and important ideas developed by F.G. Bailey in his *Stratagems and Spoils: A Social Anthropology of Politics* (published in 1969) and other subsequent publications (Bailey 1971, 1973), in this work the author endeavoured to formulate a new approach to social analysis based upon the notion of *network*.

If we examine the theoretic assumptions inherent to Boissevain's project more in detail, we can detect quite a radical criticism to some basic concepts that have won fame to the functionalist perspective of British anthropology and the structural-functionalist paradigm in American sociology (cf. Talcot Parsons and Robert K. Merton). More specifically, we might add that Boissevain (just as Bailey himself besides some eminent representatives of the *Manchester school* including Victor Turner, J. Clyde Mitchell, and John A. Barnes) at the time carried out a close examination of established and so to speak almost *sacred* notions as *institution*, *structure* and *corporate group*, which in social anthropology had been popularised even by two such founding fathers as Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown.

Carrying out researches in the Mediterranean area (mainly Malta and Sicily), Boissevain had become aware that these basic notions were not fully adequate for an analysis of these societies (Boissevain and Mitchell 1973). In fact, at least under two aspects these concepts were found quite wanting.

The first point that needs to be stressed is undoubtedly their inflexibility and static nature. By working only with notions such as the above-mentioned, one always ends up considering the society as a highly integrated and lasting system, thus barring one's chance to conceptualise mutations, tensions and conflicts within a group (Boissevain 1974: 9 fn.). On the other hand, through these analytical tools the individuals of a collective are essentially *confined* within an unchanging, as well as ineluctable, *iron cage* and can only act in conformity with the norms created by the system. However, this is clearly a myth that reduces human action to something genuinely ideal and therefore non-existent in empirical reality (Boissevain 1974: 18). Boissevain's rebuttal to the functionalist and structural-functionalist paradigm criticises the unrealistic abstraction by which these social sciences have described and interpreted social action in the societies they studied. At the same time, explicitly following Frederik Barth (Barth 1966: 5), he stresses the need for both a processual and pragmatic approach by which social anthropologists may investigate how social forms are produced (Boissevain, 1974: 19). Obviously, this can also be understood as a criticism to Émile Durkheim's *sociologism* and a clear though implicit reference to Georg Simmel's formal sociology besides Leopold von Wiese's *science of social relations* - the well-known *Beziehungslehre* - can be perceived.

The second point concerns the individual's nature as a social actor. If functionalists assume that people act essentially according to settled, learned, accepted, and sanctioned rules of behaviour, according to Boissevain and his associates theoretically men are above all *transactional animals* who permanently evaluate what is *good* or *bad* for them and act accordingly (Boissevain 1974: 6). The members of a society therefore are not robots who are unable to judge their circumstances. They should rather be regarded as consciously moral beings on the one hand, and as skilled situation manipulators on the other: i.e. as expert *administrators* of their own resources (Boissevain 1974: 8). We can already detect the clear proximity with theoretic perspectives such as George Herbert Mead's *social behaviorism*, Herbert Blumer's *sym-*

bolic interactionism, Harold Garfinkel's *ethnomethodology* and, *last but not least*, Erving Goffman's seminal ideas.

These two aspects bring to light the dissent with the then predominant functionalism and structural-functionalism and voice the need for complementary notions to somewhat correct the deficiencies of these two perspectives by stressing the active role of the individual in diverse social contexts. This is mainly the reason why the author of *Friends of Friends* strongly upholds the advantage of two notions: namely, *interaction* and above all *network*. Thus, social analysis related to the latter term is not only a mere empirical issue of data gathering but also a fresh theoretic approach that stresses both the dynamics and processes of social phenomena and the intentionality and malleability of human actions (Sanjek 1996: 396).

Until now, after the initial reactions to Boissevain's suggestions, there were not many theoretic or empirical studies on *networks*, at least in the field of social anthropology (Sanjek 1996: 397). Though the project did not fall totally on deaf ears, it was never part of the anthropological *main stream*. The reasons underlying this decades-long indifference are many and should be reviewed. In the first place, we must note that a *network analysis* calls for a diligent and persevering field research, besides the contextualisation and constant comparison with ethnographic data acquired through other means of social research. Moreover, we should recall that until recently the interpretation of results was linked to the use of data processing systems that were hardly available and/or familiar to anthropologists. In my opinion, there are also less *empirical* reasons especially in the 1980s and 1990s that explain (but do not justify) anthropology's lack of interest for the study of *networks*. I believe that over the last twenty years anthropology in general and particularly social anthropology have tried to prove, rightly or not, the ethic value of human behaviour even by adducing ethnographic data gathered directly on the field. Given this emphasis on the moral dimension within the social sphere, obviously enough the transactionalist approach in which the notion of *network* is grounded becomes inappropriate and

awkward; in other words, it is no longer *anthropologically correct*. Regarding the social actor as a manipulator, as if he were a *Machiavelli of everyday life*, becomes a repugnant way of conceiving social reality.

These last observations seem to be backed above all by two indications that I think should not be underestimated. Concerning the first indication, we should recall that from the mid 1980s, maybe due to the so-called *crisis of anthropological representations* as well as the *postmodernist turning-point*, there has been a growing loss of interest in the systematic study of patronage relations, of the various forms of coalition (dyadic and polyadic), and of conflict within groups with strongly personalised internal relations (factionalism). However, this has led to leaving aside the themes for which the notion of *network* had been particularly useful. On the one hand, we can concur with the criticisms to these studies – for example with Michael Herzfeld's (Herzfeld 1992: 17 fn.) – which have undoubtedly concentrated researches too unilaterally on societies of specific regions, such as the Mediterranean area or Latin America. This has created an artificial divide and a fictitious boundary between *they, those who can organise themselves only through the practice of patronage* (thus implying corrupt), and *we, who know more virtuous forms of organisation* (thus more highly developed and civilised). On the other hand, we can reasonably wonder why anthropologists, instead of merely mentioning a vague critique to the implicit ethnocentrism of many studies on European peripheries, have not broadened the field of this type of research to the societies they come from, meaning the ones of reflexive modernity. But then they would have unveiled an inappropriate reality because through *network analysis* they might have discovered that patronage, highly personalised coalitions, and factionalism are quite widespread and definitely not unheard-of phenomena even in Switzerland, Holland, Germany, or Sweden. In my opinion, this is one of the great missed opportunities of our discipline.

The terminological change is the second indication. At the very same above-mentioned time, self reflexive analysis imposed, rightly or not, a zealous critical revision of many

notions that by now had supposedly unacceptable connotations for anthropology. The iconoclast fury in our discipline has thus ridden the *main stream* of terms regarded as classical and has substituted them with other concepts with strong moral connotations such as *civil society*, *trust*, *social capital*, *citizenship*, *good governance*, etc. Obviously, nobody can and wishes to challenge the legitimacy and importance of such a restatement of the terminological apparatus. Moreover, these concepts are now part of a common parlance both in global organisations and local institutions. However, as Don Kalb aptly pointed out, we should recall that the new notions, acquired from other disciplines such as social philosophy and political science, are *concrete abstractions* that should not be reified and should constantly undergo the examination of empirical evidence (Kalb 2002: 322). The anthropologist's duty is to empirically verify the true aspects of such *concrete abstractions* since, for example, not all associations or NGOs are expressions of *civil society*. It would not be surprising to discover that they conceal patronage cliques, religious fundamentalist factions, coalitions of extremist politicians or unscrupulous profiteer, if not criminal gangs. *Network analysis* can prove useful, if not indispensable, particularly in view of the empirical verification of these *concrete abstractions*.

We welcome this collection of essays that helps to update the notion of *network* in the specific social context of Central and East Europe. Especially in these societies, in which the personalisation of social relations traditionally represents one of the chief elements in building trustworthy relations amongst individuals, *network analysis* is itself very helpful. Furthermore, we should bear in mind that this region of Europe has been undergoing a phase of accelerated transformation over the past twelve years in which old structures, inherited from the socialist past, have indeed been abolished by law, but have not completely disappeared. In the meantime, new structures, mainly imported from the Occident, have not been consolidated yet, for reasons we cannot delve into here. In this very fluid reality with little in common with what unilinear transition experts expected, in which informal

transactions besides direct and primary interactions, i.e. *face to face* relations, take on a vitally important significance for the actors themselves in the management of daily problems, the in-depth empirical study and systematic analysis of the rise, structure, modification, break up, and re-formation of *networks* is definitely an adequate research strategy with very promising theoretic implications. Therefore, given its history and its several present problems, Central and East Europe represents the congenial context to reintroduce a way of dynamically reflecting upon society that was set aside too abruptly. We hope this book may be a small but major step towards a fresh outlook and revaluation of such a valid notion as *network* in which theoretic efficacy and empirical usefulness are perfectly combined.

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Social networks and social capital

Claire Wallace

Social networks have long been a source of study in sociology, but have enjoyed recent interest as a result of the discussions about social capital. Social capital could be said to be the investment in social networks, investment that can bring returns in terms of reducing risk (Wallace, Schmulyar and Bezir 1999), improving health (Wilkinson 1996) assisting economic growth (Knack and Keefer 1997), and political stability (through encouraging trust) (Putnam 2000), reducing crime and even improving education results (Coleman 1988). Social capital is therefore seen as an important element of economic development and the World Bank have devoted a whole website to discussions about it.

Social capital is really about social networking. In the words of Nan Lin, social capital is: "...investment in social relations with expected returns... Individuals engage in interaction and networking in order to produce profits" (Lin 2001:6).

He goes on to argue that social capital is effective because it provides information to market actors, it can be used to influence other actors, it provides a form of social credentials promoting trust and it can operate as a form of social psychological reinforcement.

This view of social networks is a highly instrumental one. The assumption is that people make rationalistic decisions about investing in friends in the same way that they do in investing in stocks and shares: to reap long term dividends. Undoubtedly, some social networks are created and maintained in this way but this ignores the fact that there might also be other sorts of reasons for creating and maintaining social networks. It also assumes that the benefits can only be positive.

However, social capital is used in a number of different senses in the literature. Following Putnam (1994), social cap-

ital is defined as a cultural phenomenon, denoting the extent of civic mindedness of members of a society, the level and nature of social norms promoting collective action and the degree of trust in social institutions (Putnam 1994). He began his work by trying to explain the difference in economic and political development between Northern and Southern Italy. A rather crude reduction of this argument is that: Northern Italy had choral societies and football clubs which enhanced public participation; Southern Italy did not. In other words, social capital is a public good resulting from individual actions. However, it still rests upon social networking which can be enhanced by joining an organisation. In the definition of Nan Lin and others, by contrast, social capital refers more to the investment in social networks by individuals. In the work of Bourdieu, this can be converted into either cultural capital, real wealth or “symbolic capital” in terms of social status and social cohesion (Bourdieu 1983). In the tradition of Coleman (1988) social capital is understood as the sum of the individual’s relational capital, or in other words, the density of social networks governed by norms of reciprocity and reputational enforcement mechanisms (Coleman 1988).

In both interpretations, social capital facilitates economic exchange. In Putnam’s interpretation, social capital promotes the provision of collective goods, including third party contract reinforcement through the state, facilitates the exchange of information and thereby promotes an increasingly complex division of labour - I label this “formal social capital”. In Coleman’s/Bourdieu/Lin’s interpretation, norms of reciprocity and reputational reinforcement mechanisms allow partners to an economic transaction to overcome problems of opportunism and uncertainty. Social networks reduce transaction costs even in the absence of formal contract enforcement mechanisms - what I have termed “informal social capital”.

The two kinds of social capital can be summarized in the chart below. Here, I show some of the contrasts between the two concepts. In the case of formal social capital, this is the property of society and social institutions and is related to

the public good. In the case of informal social capital, this is related to personal networks and relates more to individual, personal goods. Formal social capital can be multiplied and enhanced by encouraging public participation in civil society (in the example of Putnam by participation in football clubs and choral associations), whilst in the case of informal social capital it can be enhanced through investment in social contacts which may be of use to the individual. Both Coleman and Putnam tend to elide the difference between the two in a rather romanticised ideal of social capital as something which builds on personal networks to enhance public institutions. Hence, for these authors, informal social capital and formal social capital reinforce one another in the creation of public good, although the mechanisms by which this happens are far from clear.

Formal social capital is related to universalistic norms, often legally enforced and a more open and “extended trust”, whilst informal social capital is related more to a particularistic form of social organisation and “ascribed trust” based upon personal relations (Raiser 2002).

In his more recent work, Putnam addresses the apparent incompatibility between the two types of capital (Putnam 2002). He defines “bonding social capital” (or informal in our terminology) on the one hand, which involves the close social links between people who look after each other and therefore reinforce a closed community. On the other hand there is “bridging social capital” which makes links between different groups and is facilitated by civic participation.

formal social capital	informal social capital
Putnam	Bourdieu, Coleman
public institutions, trust and public participation	personal networks
related to public good	related to personal good
universalistic	particularistic
achieved trust	ascribed trust
bridging social capital	bonding social capital

In our view the two kinds of social capital might co-exist, but do not necessarily complement one another. Thus, informal social capital exists in the form of informal networks of friends and relatives, whilst formal social capital can simultaneously exist in terms of the participation in civil associations and public action. The role which the two may play depends upon the nature of the political and economic system generally. Where civil society is underdeveloped, where there are no football clubs, bowling clubs and choral association to which to belong, then informal social capital may take on an enhanced role. However, reliance on informal social capital, not subject to universalistic public rules and regulations but rather to particularistic and ascriptive loyalties, could in fact undermine trust in formal public institutions and corrode their functions through corruption and “tunnelling” out of their resources for private ends. Informal social capital is also associated with mafia-type organisations. The development of civil society through public participation in a variety of institutions (including football clubs and choral associations) could help to control and limit the scope of ascriptive and private loyalties.

The role of social capital in transitional societies

The instance of the transition from central planning to a market economy is a particularly important one in which to examine the operation of these different kinds of social capital. This transition is fundamentally a process of accelerated institutional change. Both formal and informal institutions need to adapt to the requirements of market transactions. For democracy to work (in Putnam’s memorable phrase) people must participate in institutions which regulate society – from Trades Unions and professional associations to political parties. For the market economy to work, there needs to be information and trust in market transactions – trust that if someone buys goods from you they will also eventually pay you. Where this cannot be guaranteed by formal institutions of law (because they are not yet developed or are imperfect-

ly operating), informal institutions such as social networks can provide some insulation from risk.

This wholesale institutional transformation also affects the role and nature of informal institutions during the transition. Economic uncertainty is high during the initial phase of restructuring and the abolition of bureaucratic co-ordination temporarily increases transaction costs for market participants. Hence, there is a large scope for co-ordination of economic exchange through informal institutions, including enterprise networks or "informal social capital" (Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer 1994; Kolankiewicz 1996). Many of the studies of privatisation and transition to a market society emphasise that the form of capitalism to emerge in Eastern and Central Europe was constructed through the way in which existing networks and social relations were used to privatise and control resources (Smith and Pickles 1998). In other words, the transition is shaped through existing and adapted informal institutions such as social networks which are "path dependent" (Stark 1996). For these reasons, the transitions in Eastern Europe did not work in the way that economists' models had predicted.

It is already a well established fact that people in Eastern and Central Europe have very little trust in public institutions (apart from the Church). This is as much a product of their experiences of the transition from Communism as their experiences of Communism itself. Nor do they join associations and therefore enhance formal social capital (Wallace, Spanning and Haerpfer 2000). Where people help one another it is not through formal organisations, such as the Red Cross, but rather through informal networks of self-help. The strength of these informal institutions and networks has helped to buffer people against some of the worst difficulties of the transition. However, evidence suggests that social networks are breaking down and people becoming more isolated in the market society, at the very time when they most need contacts to help them pull through or to consolidate their positions in the new social order.

Social capital in the form of networks were well established under the former communist system as a way of obtaining resources in the form of reciprocal favours or "blat" (Ledeneva 1998). Indeed in an economy where many forms of exchange were not monetarised, blat becomes even more important. Ledeneva argues that the politics of blat have been breaking down in the course of transition. Yet, social networks have been likewise important for the privatisation of property and the consolidation of elites in the newly emerging social structures. In the circumstances where formal institutions are not reliable or not appropriate for the new market relations (as is the case in many CIS countries), social networks can operate as an alternative market institution regulating exchange and information. In a range of recent studies, this kind of social capital has been shown to be important in the privatization of resources in Eastern and Central European countries and in the way in which capitalism has developed utilising existing or new social networks (Szelenyi and Szelenyi 1995; Kolankiewicz 1996; Dinello 1998). This is what Sik has more precisely called "network capital" (Sik 1994).

Other circumstances where networks clearly operate as informal institutions to assist communication flows and provide practical assistance to network members is in the context of migration where information flows even across large distances provide information for migrants and potential migrants, as illustrated in the analysis of the letters of the Polish peasants in the USA by Thomas and Znaniecki (1958) in the early years of the last century. Without these sources of information, migration is unlikely to take place at all, no matter how poor or populous the population of one country is in relation to another. This helps to explain why certain countries and certain communities provide migrants, whilst others in the same situation do not. For example, why Poles are likely to migrate and Czechs are not (IOM 1998) or why Ukrainians are likely to migrate whilst Belarusians are not. In the contemporary period, the Polish communities in Western Europe continue to provide an active network diaspora,

encouraging migration amongst their compatriots and this situation is now developing amongst Ukrainians. Whilst Ukrainian illegal workers used to work mainly in the neighbouring countries during the 1990s, (as described by Drbohlav 1996 and Uherek and Plochová, this volume) they have now increasingly appeared in Portugal and Italy in the last years. The sudden insurgence of so many Ukrainians (previously unknown in these regions) in the informal labour market can best be accounted for by the networks and informal migration institutions (such as recruitment agents) which can help to establish migration systems between sending and receiving countries (Patsurko 2002).

Despite the increasing work on social networks and social capital, a number of problems remain. What is less often discussed is how these social networks operate – or indeed what a social network is. Granovetter made an early and important contribution in his discussions of the importance of “weak ties” in finding a job (Granovetter 1974). The analytical importance of strong ties vis-à-vis weak ties of reciprocity is something which is lacking and sociologists, economists and political scientists do not tend to analyse this. A more anthropological approach is needed here perhaps.

Although social capital is normally seen as a good thing, a way of promoting social cohesion, we need to understand the way in which social networks work in order to see if this is really the case. For example, social networks can be a way of reinforcing existing social inequalities. Many feminists have argued that it is through such “old boys clubs” that men have been able to keep resources for themselves and exclude women from public positions. At the other social pole, unemployed people are likely to lose their social networks when they cannot afford to participate in the normal social interaction required to maintain such contacts (Jahoda 1982).

Furthermore, some would argue that the “social network” in the form of a set of meshed links, like a spider web, as they are usually conceived, is an inappropriate metaphor. In fact people have “personal communities” which are often not

overlapping at all, they do not necessarily link up and these personal communities provide support and reinforcement independent of any instrumental investments. In other words, most people do not develop friendships primarily in order to profit, as Lin implies, but rather because they like to be with the other people who have something in common with themselves. This “investment” will even cost them time and money rather than win them these advantages. Pahl (2000) argues that these personal communities are becoming more important for social support in the context of modern western societies where family and kin relations have become more fragmented and traditional communities have broken down.

This leads us to ask: what is the quality of ties in different social networks? Are they intense ties of mutual obligation or of a rather distant loyalty, such as to a school or a University? In my own study of how cross border traders establish social ties in a situation of potential risk and uncertainty, these ties often took the form of patron-client relations as traders sought to enhance their security by regularly providing a known border guard with presents, money or other favours (see Wallace, Shmulyar and Bedzir 1999)

An important critical commentary is provided by Portes (1994). He points out that social networks do not necessarily operate in an efficient way – the ties of obligation may force one to take on a rather useless employee or to choose a bad business partner over a good one. Seen in another way, it can be a form of nepotism, corruption or “cronyism”. The studies of Evers and Schrader (1994) in South East Asia have pointed to a “trader’s dilemma” whereby using the benefits of social capital provided by the clan or ethnic group also means an obligation to support the members of the extended family or ethnic group. So traders are unable to accumulate capital for their economic activities – they have to give it all away to dependent relatives. He argues that at a certain point, in order to operate in a rationalistic market-oriented way, traders must distance themselves from these multiple ties of obligation.

Another problem is that social networks (like the metaphor) are usually seen as rather static and fixed instead of dynamic and changing. Indeed links can be revived or forgotten, depending upon circumstances, they may turn from face-to-face into electronic communication or vice versa and they could stay at the level of electronic communication without the actors ever physically interacting. Information and Communication Technology has helped to transform the character of social networks. However, the opening of the borders to Eastern Europe also helped many old networks to be revived or new ones to be established.

The nature of social interaction and associational life has also been changing. People are perhaps more likely to join a chat room than a bowling club or to mobilise for a demonstration through a set of loose connections (as is the case with the anti-globalisation demonstrations) rather than joining a political party. Social action and social participation can take a variety of different forms in the "network society" (Castells 1996). Loosely connected centres of action provide the possibility for flexible and changing types of engagement. Under these circumstances, Al-Qaeda could be seen as a form of political participation through global networking par excellence.

Conclusion

Despite these problems, the issue of social capital continues to attract heated debate and social networks become not only a topic of sociological interest, but an issue of public policy. As I have pointed out above, social capital depends upon different kinds of social networks, some of which can be positive and some negative in their effects. There remain however, many unanswered questions and unresearched assumptions in the whole discussion.

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Introduction

This book collects the contributions to the workshop “Social Networks in Movement”, held in Galanta (Slovakia) on October 6th, 2001. The central idea of the workshop was to bring together scholars from different countries to share views and research results on one common theme, the post-socialist question. As we thought and still think that dealing with postsocialism remains a fruitful approach for analysing the features of Central Eastern Europe’s post-1989 transformation, the choice of Slovakia as the hosting country of the workshop was not random.

The history of Slovakia, due to its geographical position, “in the heart of Europe” as some local tourist pamphlets like to emphasize, is inextricably linked to that of the whole central Eastern Europe. It is a young country which was for centuries part of Hungary and the Habsburg monarchy, it was constituted as part of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 and gained independence after the peaceful split with the Czech Republic in 1993. It is of no surprise, then, that this country exemplifies some of the features that have historically distinguished Central Eastern European countries: ethnic mobility, frequent geo-political changes, interethnic turbulence and the development of nationalist discourses. As the contributions in this volume testify, some of these features have not been eradicated by the over forty years of socialism. Rather, the discussions raised in the workshop suggested that current discourses about time, space and the configuration of interpersonal relations often assume powerful emotional connotations that endanger the objectivity required by scholarship (see Pine, this volume).

The Galanta workshop had two aims. The first was to bring together scholars from different countries and here preference was given to local (Central and Eastern European) scholars. The workshop was held in four languages (English, Hungarian, Slovak and Czech) with simultaneous interpreta-

tion so to allow liberty of expression in the researchers' own tongues.

The second aim was to provide an occasion for sharing research experiences from academic and non-academic research institutions. The result was extremely positive. Scholars from four Central Eastern European countries (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia), three western European countries (UK, Switzerland and Germany) and the US participated in the event. The intense discussions managed to heat the cool atmosphere of the Galanta's Renaissance Palace cellar, where the workshop was held.

Galanta is a small agrarian town (about 18,000 inhabitants) situated in southwestern Slovakia, about 50 km from Bratislava, 90 km from Vienna and 120 from Budapest. The town is situated in the heart of one of the most fertile regions of the country, where agriculture and light industries were extensively developed during the 1960-1970s. It is also known internationally, thanks to the composer Zoltán Kodály, who spent his childhood in the small town and commemorated those years in his famous composition "Galanta Dance". The town functioned as the operative base of the Forum Institute for Social Research (now moved to Šamorín and renamed Forum Institute for Minority Research). After intense and fruitful colloquia with its director, Károly Tóth, the idea of the workshop took shape and was eventually realised thanks to the Institute's generous support and collaboration.

Social networks in movement

The theme around which the workshop gathered its contributions was the analysis of social networks framed within the dynamics of their temporal and spatial mutations. Today social networks have re-acquired analytical importance in the anthropological investigation after the decline of the topic in the past two decades (Giordano, this volume). The main reason for this renewed scholarly interest in patterns of social interaction is that the events that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall have produced dramatic and profound changes

leading individuals to develop multiple strategies in order to cope with the uncertainty of the present. In a general panorama of transformation, institutional restructuring and the forthcoming accession to the EU it is not surprising if the importance of webs of networks that tie individuals or groups of individuals is recognised. Networks are seen as one possible response to the overall transformation. Thus, for instance, the relationship between people and formal institutions is increasingly and significantly determined by the role of personal ties (acquaintances, friends and relatives). This may point to the dominance of informal over formal channels of social interaction (see Böröcz 2000).

Several studies emphasise that in order to understand the present paths of the postsocialist countries one needs to pay adequate attention to the processes through which actors recombine their knowledge, connections and networks within the changed institutional panorama (see for instance Grabher and Stark 1997; Ledeneva 1998). One recent demonstration of this trend is the strength of interest of the World Bank Group in strategies and patterns of accumulation of "social capital", seen as the important prerequisite for democracy and market economy (Paldam and Svendsen 2000). The "recipe" that some economists proposed for the development of Central Eastern European countries was the complete dismissal of the "legacies of the past", i.e. the remains of the socialist informal institutional system (such as secondary or "grey" economic forms, informal and clientelistic networks and political cliques) and the establishment of "healthy" social networks grounded in democratic environments.

However, optimistic expectations had often been disappointed because of the complexity and ambiguity of the transformation paths followed by the postsocialist countries. The insecurity of the present time, political and economic instability, the weakness of the new political and social institutions, inequalities at all levels of the social world and the widening economic gap not only between "west" and "east" but also within the "east" itself are only some of the factors

that contribute to hamper the smoothness of the transition (Hann 2002). One of the most natural escape routes for people experiencing postsocialism seems to be those ties that concretely bind individuals to their fellows providing avenues of solidarity, mutuality and trust. Personal and affinal ties constitute in most cases the ultimate resource on which people can count when the rapidity and pervasiveness of social change have deeply permeated even the most basic of the social units, the family, making precarious the bases for its subsistence and reproduction.

The notion of social networks can be applied fruitfully to understand present problems and dilemmas in Central Eastern Europe by analysing networks as institutions “in movement” both in time and space and not as static patterns of interaction. There are two reasons for this. First, when people structure their answers and strategies to cope with the present they “read into their past” and draw useful lessons and experiences as they seek the best from their life. Second, the frequency and force of the geo-political transformations that have characterized this half of Europe in the course of the 20th century, has instilled in people a particular sense of “belonging” to a place, a region, a country or a group of countries. This sense is not comparable to that of any other social and cultural context and as such bears the complexity of its originality. By shedding lights on the meaning and function that human networks assume with regard to time and space it becomes possible to portray the postsocialist transformation as a dynamic and multi-faceted process and not simply as an evolutionary stage of human society from state socialism to market capitalism.

The intention of this book is to provide an original contribution to the study of social networks and their span in time and space. The main argument arising from the collection of works is that the space(s) and time(s) in which social networks are constructed in postsocialist societies vary as actors adapt and face the instability of times. One way to understand the complexity of the postsocialist transformation is to consider the manner in which people perceive their

social environment. Space and time are brought together by local actors as they make sense, in times of profound change, of their shifting ethnic and interethnic spaces (Tóth, Árendás, Uherek and Plochová, this volume), as they construct and deconstruct boundaries (Szarka, Liszka, this volume), build and re-build processes of identification (Árendás, Muršič, this volume), adapt to enlarging contexts of action (Kappus, Weinerová, this volume), decide to trust and/or not to trust people and institutions (Caldwell, Torsello, this volume) and conceptualise their social interaction in terms of emotional and/or rational attachment to their home place (Svašek, this volume). The fluidity that emerges out of the analysis of the postsocialist world is a result of people's efforts to control instability of time (frequent social and political changes) and space (reconfiguration of borders and boundaries). The observers' attempts to analyse the changing realities and make this knowledge intelligible to international academic circles acquire meaning when this fluidity is taken into account and contextualized.

One lesson that can be learned from this book is that the transformation of one half of the European continent is an ongoing process which grounds its complexity on the historical features of the countries concerned. The resilience of past practices and ideas should not merely be rejected as burdensome, or as hampering the transition to democracy and "civil society". By studying the changing value and functions of networks as they become recombined in time and space the reader gains a different view of the postsocialist world. This is an environment in constant change where, as in any other social context, change is introduced from "above" and mediated from "below" to be adapted to the range of everyday strategies and choices. The specificity of postsocialism is that the interweaving of these strategies and choices often has its grounds in practices that were, in the former regime, mainly kept at merely informal and underground levels. Therefore, as long as the influence of past (socialist) ideas and practices is felt by actors in their pres-

ent lives, it makes still sense to deal with “postsocialism” as a framework of social analysis.

Structure of the book

The volume is divided into four sections on the basis of common themes and problems within the treatment of social networks. The prefaces introduce the problem from two different viewpoints. Giordano demonstrates that anthropological focus on social networks has been profoundly shaped by the theoretical developments in the discipline with the zenith in the late 1960s and the nadir in the mid-1980s. Wallace, in the second preface, agrees with Giordano that the analysis of social networks can provide a fruitful approach to the understanding of postsocialist societies after, as she points out, adequate attention is paid to the nature and functioning of networks in society.

Section One deals expressively with history and the way in which networks and patterns of social interaction change and demonstrate continuity over time and space.

In Chapter One Árendás deals with the resettlement process of Hungarian families from Slovakia to Hungary in the years following the end of World War Two. The incoming settlers were in the peculiar situation of being accommodated in houses where the original owners (ethnic Germans) were still resident. The author points out that no serious conflict arose between the two groups because they shared the similar fate of being settlers on a foreign land. On the other hand, the networks between resettled Hungarians and local Hungarians were much weaker. The chapter explains the different degrees of social interaction focusing on the problem of the use of memory as an element creating identity.

Chapter Two proposes a space-temporal approach to trust in a southern Slovakian village. Trust and mistrust are strategically constructed by villagers in the course of their everyday interaction with different social institutions. The family and the community are the spatial layers within which

trust operates to tie people together and create occasions of organised collective action. Torsello makes use of the notion of “mistrust” to identify patterns of interaction in which networks, ties and the confrontation with village institutions are regulated. People make strategic use of ideas of trust and mistrust in order to deal with the uncertainty and instability of present times.

Chapter Three presents a classical ethnographic account of one historical region in southern Slovakia. Danter focuses on the economic practices that have characterised the region of Kisalföld (Podunajská Nížina) in pre-socialist times. History is used by the author to reconstruct practices of economic action and of villagers’ relations to local and translocal markets. The chapter reveals that this region was historically extremely active in market-oriented agriculture thanks to its geographical location on trade routes linking Budapest and Vienna. Because of this favoured position, villagers had been able to structure their strategies and to gain prestige not only in their community but also in the whole region.

Chapter Four deals with the historical analysis of the settlement of one village in Slovenia after the end of the Second World War. Muršič pays attention to the dynamics through which village-level relations developed and were transformed under the influence of historical changes. In particular, the involvement of young actors in the local avenues of leisure activities such as dances, sport and above all music is considered as expression of the attempt to maintain active channels of public culture. The changes following the end of socialism are interpreted by the author in critical terms as capitalism and the re-establishment of property rights endanger the existence of these channels and the occasions of social interactions among young dwellers.

Section Two deals with the problem of ethnicity and with the spaces in which interethnic relations are constructed and maintained. The four papers of this section all deal with the problem of identifying these spaces and giving them a significance within the practices of local actors.

Chapter Five introduces a case study situated in south-western Slovakia. Tóth analyses the assimilation process of one village, where the ethnic Hungarians constitute the majority of its inhabitants. The use of language constitutes the main indicator of the assimilation process which is carefully mapped by the author through statistics and interviews in the community. The chapter emphasises how ethnic assimilation can result from diverse factors which range from housing policies, villagers' choices in terms of education and aging.

Chapter Six extends the findings of Chapter Five to the macro-level of analysis including the whole linguistic and ethnic border region between Hungarians and Slovaks in Slovakia. Szarka identifies the dynamics through which ethnic identity processes are constructed by those who influence public opinion and are later included in the ground-level cognitive processes. The author points out that language borders are increasingly mobile and it would be a mistake to identify them as conventional ethnic borders. Observation of local reality suggests that it is in the very realm of single communities, in the everyday social interaction and even within single households that ethnic differentiation becomes evident on the basis of language use.

In Chapter Seven Liszka demonstrates that it is highly problematic to circumscribe a geo-historical region, such as that ethnographically termed as Mátyusföld, in southwestern Slovakia (the region including the case studies of Tóth, Torsello, Danter and partly Árendás). Drawing on historical and ethnographic literature, the author suggests that ethnographic boundaries are valid analytical constructions only when they leave space to critical questioning of their cultural and historical features.

Chapter Eight analyses the institutional frameworks within which ethnic networks were established in the border region between Italy, Croatia and Slovenia. The large historical presence of ethnic Italians in this area has called for state and international organisations' intervention on the issue of minority rights. Kappus demonstrates that the Italian community in this region, whose borders were established only

after the fall of socialism, presents a certain degree of cohesion which is not affected by the geographical delimitation of space. However, the impact of different state and EU policies on Slovenia and Croatia finds expression in different and contradictory way of conceiving the nation groups.

Section Three adds a new dimension to the issues outlined above. Social interaction and migration are the main themes of the papers included in this section with two dominant focuses: the Roma in Slovakia and historical processes of ethnic migration in Central Eastern Europe.

Szép (Chapter Nine) and Weinerová (Chapter Ten) give accounts of the complexity of the Roma problem from two different, but complementary, standpoints. Szép deals with the problem taking an approach "from above". The author describes the measures taken in the last five years by the Slovak state in response to international attention focused on Slovak Roma due to their migration waves as asylum seekers to Western Europe.

On the other hand, Weinerová analyses the problem of Roma migrations "from below", dealing with the economic and social reasons that lead Romanies to seek asylum out of Slovakia. In the chapter she points out that behind the harsh critics of the international press on the issue, there is a dramatic reality of impoverishment, exploitation through usury and life at the margins of society that leads segments of the Roma populations to seek asylum abroad.

Uherek and Plochová (Chapter Eleven) introduce the phenomenon of contemporary "voluntary migration" taking place in the past decade between postsocialist countries (Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan and other CIS states) towards the Czech Republic. The chapter compares the situation of two different cases of migration. In the first, the Czech state demonstrated efforts to assist the adaptation and integration process of the incoming group which brought about positive results. In the second case the state intervention is absent. This, along with other factors characteristic of the migrating group,

leaves the incoming group in relative isolation within the hosting communities.

In Chapter Twelve Svašek presents her ethnographic material on Vesnice, a western Bohemian village where the changes brought about by de-collectivisation and the restitution of ownership rights profoundly affected the social map of the village. Changing relations of power and interpersonal networks are shaped in the everyday interplay between different actors: villagers, the village mayor, a Dutch investor and the Sudeten Germans, expelled from the community in the aftermath of World War Two. The chapter emphasises the role of emotional attitudes to ownership in the dynamics of village-level power relations and in the interweaving of the actors' different sets of interest.

Caldwell (Chapter Thirteen) provides insights into the organization structure of a food aid program (soup kitchen) in Moscow. The author analyses the functioning of informal networks within an urban environment increasingly characterized by discriminative discourse on race. It is by bringing together European and African aid workers with local (Russian) aid receivers that relationships of trust and solidarity are instituted and they extend beyond the sphere of the aid program.

The **Appendix** illustrates a rather different, but nonetheless important, approach to the treatment of postsocialist societies. This section contains project presentations, and descriptions of the tasks of local scholars in research institutes (Klenovics and Šutaj) and in one regional historical archive (Nováková). These contributions provide the reader with a rare opportunity for understanding the ways in which access to local knowledge is mediated to the open public, and the problems and directives that lead researches in the field of social science at national and international levels.

Finally, the volume ends with an **Epilogue** by Pine, who elegantly portrays the intellectual environment within which the Galanta workshop took place and the challenges that such event posed to scholars and local people.

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Time and social networks

1. Identities in change: Integration strategies of resettled Hungarians from Czechoslovakia to Hird (southwestern Hungary)

Árendás Zsuzsanna



Introduction

The aim of this study¹ is to analyse the accommodation and integration strategies of a resettled ethnic group of Hungarians from the county of Galanta, deported from former Czechoslovakia, to Hird (a village 5 kilometres from Pécs, southwestern Hungary) in the spring of 1947. The study is based on anthropological fieldwork (narrative interviews and participant observation), conducted between September 1998 and February 1999.

The analysis is organized around three questions: 1. the internal relationships among the resettled group in Hird, 2. their relationships with fellow-villagers in Hird (“native Hungarians” and Germans), 3. their connections with their native village in Slovakia and its present inhabitants. My intention is to describe and analyse these relationships, their dynamics in space and time, and the differences among the various generations of resettled people.

In the first instance, a review of some anthropological and social theories discussing questions of group identity and group-level dynamics (e.g. integration, assimilation, etc.) seems appropriate. Following this, the internal relations of the resettled group are discussed, their “interethnic” relations within the village of Hird, and their ties toward the native land. Finally, in a brief summary, the main conclusions of the study are presented.

Methodology

The data collection was based on the methods of cultural anthropology. The choice of field was determined both by objective and subjective circumstances. The village of Hird is situated close to Pécs (Hungary), on a city bus-line. The journey from Pécs takes approximately 20 minutes. This was an important factor in my decision to study this village, so to be able to reach the field easily, and thus regularly.

The other main reason for my choice was that some families from my native village in Slovakia (Matúškovo²) were

resettled in Hird, so I knew about this field long before my actual research would have started. Despite that I have never been to Hird before, and I did not have any personal contacts there. What I supposed (and hoped for) was that perhaps the resettled families would not treat me as a complete “foreigner”, and personal relationships would be established more easily on the basis of the “common homeland”. My fieldwork experiences proved these hopes to be correct³.

My first visit to Hird was in September 1998 when I met my key informant V.L., who was of great help during all my fieldwork⁴. He arranged meetings with his fellow-villagers, introduced me to resettled families and provided background information, thus helping me to orient myself in the local social set-up. My regular visits to Hird lasted until December 1998. In the very final stage of the fieldwork, I returned to the village a few times for additional information during January 1999.

In the “native village” (in Matúškovo) I did not carry out such a well-structured and systematic fieldwork as in Hird. It functioned only as a “second field”, where I was interested only in one aspect of the ethnic experience, namely in the relationship towards displaced relatives and friends living now in Hungary. Accordingly, their accounts were focused only on this limited topic, and not on the whole story of the resettlement of Hungarians. I collected personal accounts, life-stories and family histories. My writing also includes some of my earlier experiences and information obtained in some informal situations, which I also included for the sake of a more detailed and complete analysis.

Conversations with my informants were partly oriented interviews made according to a previously constructed questionnaire, partly free discussions in which after some planned opening questions a free conversation followed. In principle, the style of interview, the way of conversation largely depended on my partners personal characteristics and on the situation. I tried to choose my informants to get as many approaches and interpretations as possible- thus I spoke with

people from different generations, age groups, professions, family status, etc.

In Hird one can distinguish between two generations of resettled Hungarians from Slovakia (previously Czechoslovakia), and within each of these generations two different age groups. I call the “old first-generation” those who arrived to Hird as adults, married, with children (usually above age 30). The “younger first generation” will be those who were resettled from their home village in their childhood or as youngsters, and still have lot of personal memories and emotional ties to the “homeland”. I call the “second generation” the children of the first generation, and those who arrived to Hird in their early childhood (approximately under age of 5), and accordingly, they have no, or very few personal experiences from their land of origin. They only know it from others’ accounts or from later “home visits” in the 1970s and 1980s.

These categories were established during my fieldwork with the agreement from my informants, based upon their own self-classifications, personal narratives and evaluations. A “third generation” as such does not exist in Hird. This “would-be group” does not have those experiences or background knowledge that would distinguish them from their other peers in Hird or connect them to “homeland” relatives. One can say, that the resettled identity disappears with this generation, and that they are fully integrated in the new environment.

The picture is rather different on the “other side”, in the native village. The resettlement can be traced back only in narratives of a limited circle of people. Reasons are various. Very few peers of the “old first generation” stayed in Matúškovo: most of them were displaced from the village, deported formerly to the Czech part of the country, or from those who had the chance to stay, many had died already. I received most of the information from contemporaries of the “younger first generation” (today they are 60-70 years old). They attended school together with those now living in Hird, and they spoke to me about friendships, loves, rivalries, fam-

ily relations, festivities, etc. About these interviews it can be stated that individuals who stayed in the native village (in this case Matúškovo) emotionally were not so deeply involved as those who had to leave. It is quite simple and understandable: resettled persons lost not only relatives, but also the familiar social and economic environment, the native village, their way of life, everyday practices, and so on. In the case of inhabitants of Matúškovo, these experiences are much "lighter" (though I would not dare to deny their long-lasting importance), characteristically they are more episodic, usually organized around the very act of the resettlement, then a long time-gap and memories from much later times followed, connected to the home-visits of the meanwhile re-categorized "Hungarian relatives".

What is not in this study...

My research was focused on the integration of displaced people from former Czechoslovakia in their new environment and their maintenance of relationships with their "homeland" (both the place and people living there), however, the full interethnic situation would require further detailed research. Further work would be useful in the other two "native villages" (Mostová and Horné Saliby⁵) from where some inhabitants of present Hird also came. A description of the interethnic relations within Hird would be more precise in presenting the interpretations of the "aboriginal Hungarians" (as they are called in the village) and the Germans, thus investigating the ethnic borders from "the other side" as well.

It would be also useful to compare the situation in Hird with some other ethnically similar villages in Hungary (e.g. on Alföld), or with ethnically more "homogeneous" villages (e.g. Bikal in Baranya county), in the sense that their resettled inhabitants came from only one village. In this way several other questions could be raised, such as: how the economic and environmental factors influence the social and ethnic integration; whether a compact, resettled community set in a new environment stays homogeneous or chooses a way of

individual integration as it happened in Hird, and so on. Nevertheless, answering such questions is beyond the scope of this study. My intention was merely to grasp one aspect of this rather complex ethnic and kinship setting, from an insider point of view of the resettled Hungarians in Hird. From this position I proceeded further, moving “outwards”, widening the scope of research along their ethnic and neighbourhood-based ties. The analysis is based on their narratives and interpretations, taking their angle of perspective - thus it is far from being “objective”. During the writing process, when describing their multiple identity-formation processes I added my own thoughts, interpretations, and observations to the text.

Approaches of group, identity, and memory

The aim of this theoretical part is to find answers to questions like what makes the topic of ethnic identity and belonging so actual in our present days, why it is the focus of both the public and scientific interest; in what sense it is reasonable to speak about cultural and/or ethnic identity; what these terms actually mean; how their semantics changed in the ethnological and anthropological discourses of the last decades.

Most present-day social sciences agree upon a general definition of personal and social identity saying that it is a collection of personal experiences and social practices. The aim of this research is to find answers to how and under what circumstances these social practices are experienced; how people define themselves and others. Identity and social representations are inseparable; they are social creations thus collective constructions.

The notion of “identity” in the social sciences does not represent a neutral equality as e.g. in the fields of natural sciences. It is a more positioned, relative phenomena. Since the 1960s “identity” has become a widespread term, based on E. Erikson’s “health model”. Erikson described a social-psychological construction where the origins, the “roots” play the

central role, and their loss can cause identity crisis (1994: 56). Erikson's followers widened the model for social groups, saving from his theory the ethical classification of identity (considering the origins, the roots as positive values).

From the 1960s across Europe, there was a general ethnic revival reacting against social alienation caused by accelerated centralization and modernization. Public attention turned towards local, ethnic cultures and the cultural heritage. The same period can be also characterized as the period of the revival of ethnic politics, placing the case of ethnic minorities into the centre of national discourses.

Despite expectations, modernization did not bring about a decrease of ethnic differences and homogenisation, but the opposite; the revitalization of ethnic ties, and the birth of new ethnic awareness in the case of second and third generation people. The ethnic networks became revitalized, often providing a solution for everyday problems, so they carried practical value. On the level of ideologies a new type of politics emerged, an ethnic one.

Summarising the definitions on ethnic identity, it can be stated that they crystallize around two main standpoints (Feischmidt 1997: 14):

(1) We can speak about an essentialist or primordialistic approach, treating ethnic identity as a category standing out of any social or historical pre-determinations, concerning the ethnic substance. Essentialists see history as a continuous process, glossing over some experiences and conceptions through time and cultures.

(2) The other approach is usually referred as constructivist, stating that the essentialist arguments are ahistorical. Constructivists do not put stress on the content of the category (ethnic), but emphasize its construction. When they speak about identity, they deal with the production and organization of social differences, with different "naming processes" in the society with its political, power mechanisms.

While the essentialist models have in mind a static concept of culture which concerns all members of a group via their birth or inheritance, the constructivist model focuses on

culture- making processes, and seizes culture in its state of constant change.

Stuart Hall (1997) distinguishes three types of identity concept: (a) the subject of Enlightenment, (b) the sociological subject, and (c) the subject of post-modernity.

The subject of Enlightenment has a stable centre; it is a consistent individuum. It has an inside core existing from the moment of birth; it develops together with the individual while in essence it stays unchanged. The sociological subject is embedded in the complexity of the modern world, it does not have a stable inside core, but it is formulated throughout relationships, and connections with the outside world. In sociology, symbolic interactionists (first of all G. H. Mead and C. H. Cooley) worked out the interactive model of the individual and the environment. They "waved in" the individual into the society.

According to the experiences of the end of this century, the subject falls into pieces; we cannot speak about a central core, but the subject is made up of more, sometimes conflicting, identities. At the same time, the process of identification is becoming endless, often even problematic. The post-modern subject does not have a fixed, (in time) continuous identity. Identity becomes a "mobile holiday": it is formulated and changed according to the representations and calls of our surrounding cultural systems (Hall 1987).

Some scientific approaches try to seize ethnic identity on the level of individual strategies. They see it in terms of individual interests, in the development of personal power and strategies. It is obvious that such an interpretation of the phenomena would be too one-sided without considering the surrounding social mechanisms. Perhaps it is a more acceptable statement that there are norms, values, practices which become collective representations. Ethnicity is not a static social entity, it is more a process in time. Its exact appearance is a station on the way of adaptation to the new environment; the final station of adaptation is total assimilation.

The Barthian model

Fredric Barth borrows the foundations of his approach (Barth 1969) partly from the "corporate group theory" of Anglo-Saxon social anthropology, partly from Goffmann's interactionist model. In his main statements he elaborates that ethnic identity is a necessary factor of social organization. The cultural differences experienced in the society are organized through/inside ethnic identity. As a social phenomenon, it is group-dependent. Because Barth talks about social processes and organizations, the stress is not on the cultural content but on the circumstances (motivations, means) of boundary-making.

The boundary-maintaining processes need special interactions between different groups. According to the Barthian interpretation, ethnic identity is not a cultural "sign", a category; instead, it is formed and reformed under actual economic and social influences, thus it is situation-dependent. Belonging to an ethnic group is a matter of constant outside and inside reconciliation, thus ethnic identity is based on classifications and self-classifications. The cultural differences between two groups have a border-making function, they appear as points of refraction on a society-wide cultural continuum.

Although this approach has not been called "constructivist" when it was formulated (the term itself was born later), the model became the forerunner of the post-modern perspectives in cultural anthropology. This theory required a rethinking of not just the concept of ethnicity but also of the concept of culture itself.

Barth (1996) discusses the processes of social identity formulations on three levels of organization. At the micro-level he describes individual experiences and actions. The individual creates his/her social identity during certain community actions and in some decision-making situations by accepting certain models and refusing others. We can speak about ethnicity at this level if the two groups are in daily contact with each other, the differences become represented and borders are created at the same time.

At the meso-level, Barth analyses community-making, organizing processes and subjects. The ethnic difference forms the basis of these activities and their actions, and organizations reproduce them. There are several theories to explain which social factors are the primary causes of ethnic separation. These are limited resources (human-ecological approaches), the hegemony of some social groups or some political elite striving for power. At the macro-level, global and state discourses form the category of identity. Social acceptance, integration and advance of an individual belonging to a given group are drawn between rights and prohibitions.

Identity and memory: history or stories?

Summarizing the ideas about identity and memory, one can state that they are not objects we think about, instead we think with them, and this provides an interpretive framework. Identity and memory are historic constructions and as such they get a concrete form, a physical appearance. Commemorations are also signs of any kind of consensus between individual and group- memory.

The issue of memory became a “hot topic” in Central Europe after the change of political regimes. In these situations, alternative histories emerged and different group-memories appeared on the grounds of a new civil sphere. The centralist absoluteness of memory and history became replaced by the plurality and multiplicity of approaches. At the same time, the new setting made necessary the reconciliation between different group-memories and identities, a constant recycling and rethinking in the society.

Relationships

Hird is a village 5 kilometres from Pécs, extending on both sides of the motorway to Budapest. Hird does not have independent local authorities and it belongs to the Pécs town administration. It has approximately 2,000 inhabitants, but the number is constantly increasing due to those new incom-

ers who build their houses in the new part (Újtelep) of the village. The two parts of the village (Újtelep and Régi falu) differ both in architecture and demographic structure. A direct bus connection to the town of Pécs provides a quick and easy connection between the village and the town. Many villagers work in Pécs and their children go to school there.

The investigation of interpersonal and group-relations is set into a historical framework, starting from the resettlements in 1947/48, proceeding through the era of state socialism and arriving finally to the years of the post-socialist reform economy and social changes. Although the analysis follows a chronological line, so that it can be considered a historical writing, it is based on personal narratives -closer to oral history-, my intention is to “read” those ethnic borders which divide (and also connect) the resettled people from Czechoslovakia (often referred to as “Upper Hungarians” /*felvidéki* in Hungarian), the “native villagers” of Hird (referred to as “the Hungarians”), and the native Germans (“the Schwabs”).

As Frederick Barth underlines (1996), cultural/ interethnic borders are never rigid, they change both in time and space, and they are highly situation-dependent. It means that when we speak about detecting such borders, we analyse interethnic situations.

I classify the studied situations according to the classic dichotomy of informal/formal and private/public.

Three main layers (spheres) of ethnic contacts have to be distinguished: 1. village level, 2. internal group relations, and 3. beyond-village level (relations towards homeland). Scanning through situations of the above-indicated layers, the analysis looks for cases where ethnic separation causes the break of cultural continuum between the coexisting cultural/ ethnic groups in Hird.

Level I-II: Internal group relations and interethnic relations. The Old village (“Régi falu”)

The part called “Old village” was the original settlement of Hird until the late 1950s. When the resettlement program

affected the village, the German inhabitants were deported from here and the Hungarians from Czechoslovakia were settled into their houses.

The resettlements of ethnic Hungarians from Czechoslovakia, from villages in the area of Galanta took place during spring 1947. People from Matúškovo were resettled to Hungary in April 1947. Hungarian families from two other villages, Mostová and Horné Saliby were transported to Hird during this period as well.

All these families were agricultural workers, having their own land holdings in the native village. The majority were small or medium-sized landowners (*kisgazda* in Hungarian). A few of them (approximately 4-5 farmers per village) were big landowners (*nagygazda*); among them some small merchants (shopkeepers and innkeepers) could be found. Their holdings did not exceed 15 Hungarian *holds* (about 7 ha).

From an economic point of view, one has to note that, according to the Hungarian-Czechoslovak government agreement, the resettled Hungarians were not entitled to more than 15 Hungarian *holds* of land in their new village. As most of them did not own more than this land in their original village, there was no sense of economic deprivation. This fact significantly influenced their perceptions and later accounts of their displacement.

The first transport from Matúškovo departed in April 1947, followed by another one in May of the same year. The latter was a “mixed transport” (as the villagers called it) with families from a few neighbouring villages in the Galanta area, who were left out from previous waves of deportation for various reasons.

Narratives of resettled families, their first impressions in Hungary, events at the Pécs railway station, their arrival to Hird, all play a central role in their life stories, as cornerstones of their further personal destinies.

Due to the asynchronicity between the deportation of Germans out from Hird and the settling-in of Hungarians (the former process was slower than the latter), resettled Hungarian families arrived to the village while the Schwabs

were still in their houses. So it meant that two family nuclei, the old inhabitants and the resettled, had to cope with the situation of living under the same roof for a few months. This lasted until the Germans were finally deported to Germany or moved within Hird, into houses of relatives. One would expect serious conflicts between these families, induced from obvious emotional reasons, but in fact such conflicts did not happen. They tried to cooperate within harsh circumstances, and did not turn their anger against each other. The similarities in their situation (being both under resettlement), made them accept and help each other. Today there are still friendships and personal contacts in the village dating back to this period.

The New village (“Újtelep”)

Constructions of the new part of the village started in the mid-1950s. In the beginning, all the builders were displaced Germans, who needed new homes. They were the first in the village who had the necessary financial means for starting new constructions.

The Hungarians from Czechoslovakia appeared in this new part of the village only during the 1960s, coming from surrounding villages to move closer to their relatives in Hird, or moving in Hird for economic reasons (its vicinity to workplaces in Pécs). They bought houses from local “settlers” (*telepesek*, a pejorative term for Hungarians who came from other counties of Hungary) who had come in the course of internal settlement campaigns after 1945. They were landless, poor families, without much experience of independent, self-sufficient farming- thus both the Czechoslovak Hungarian and German families considered them as “inferior”. Because of this low prestige and the unsuccessful agricultural collectivisation of the earlier years, most of them left the village.

The Hungarians arriving from Czechoslovakia received the land of the German families in the village, and started farming almost immediately. According to their accounts, the first two years (1947-48) were relatively successful and some

supplementary activities (marketing, and “black business”, such as buying milk and wine in the village and selling it in the town at a considerable profit) provided them with a normal standard of living. Their economic situation changed in the beginning of 1950s, when the agricultural delivery obligations (*beszolgáltatás*) started, putting a heavy burden on each family living from agriculture. During this period, the Germans who found a place in the rapidly growing industry became better-off than the families stuck to land and farming. In the Hungarians this caused a feeling of economic deprivation, and in such a situation jealousy.

The house: informal/private sphere

Although the living together of families from the two, “exchanged” ethnic groups happened to be a non-voluntary encounter, this fact did not cause deep conflicts in everyday life. Paradoxically, friendships and good personal relations emerged from this period. The interdependence and difficult conditions encouraged them to accept each other and cooperate. The Hungarians offered working possibilities to the Germans at harvest time. Also they (the Upper Hungarians) did not claim German properties in most cases (e.g. furniture, personal objects in the houses), to which legally they were entitled. A certain level of trust developed between these families coming from the two ethnic groups, and in exchange, the Germans shared with the newcomer Hungarians their local knowledge and networks (e.g. information about black market activities, agricultural experiences). This early sympathy might be explained by the meeting of two very similar value systems, where hard physical work and the increase of material wealth stayed on top of the list.

The church: formal/public sphere

In the very first period after settlement, the Sunday church provided an occasion for meeting each other. Both the natives (“Old Hungarians” and Germans) and the newcomers

were Roman Catholics. The time before and after these collective religious activities provided occasions of social interaction, and people used them as such. However, these meetings did not bring about mixing from the very first time- the order of sitting in the church (partly preserved until now) reflected an ethnic division: the Germans sitting on the right side of the church, Hungarians on the left.

The pub: informal/public sphere

My early hypothesis was that if there was an ethnic separation in the beginning, it was certainly reflected in the most important place of village public life, in the pub. This was not proved during my fieldwork and could not have been found in narratives about the “early times” either. There were no separate pubs for the Germans, Hungarians and Hungarians from Czechoslovakia in the village. Men went to the same places, without any preferences based on ethnic terms, and there were no conflicts because of this mixing.

The workplace: formal/public sphere

As it has already been discussed, before collectivisation, while the Germans established a living in industry, the newcomer Hungarians became involved in agriculture through the lands received as a compensation for their left-behind property in the native village. When the collectivisation of agriculture finally started in Hird the Hungarians lost these lands and “escaped” to industry, following the German way of economic survival. There were good working opportunities in Pécs and in the nearby mines of the Mecsek hills. In Hird itself, a cement and a hemp-factory were established in the 1950s. Common workplaces resulted in friendships, and not surprisingly, various informal situations (factory balls, trips) brought people together more than any other “classic” village situation (interactions in a village shop, church, etc).

The socialist regime encouraged the integration of Hungarians from Czechoslovakia, assimilating them to new

living conditions and homogenizing the mixed population. Industrialization resulted in a fast integration of the individual (and not of the resettled as a group) who was required to choose an appropriate and well-paid occupation.

This development affected not only the Hungarians from Czechoslovakia, but also the Germans. Eventually, a radical linguistic change took place within these families, forced by indirect political pressure, as being a German was an “unfortunate” identity in a post-war socialist Hungary, an identity which was better not to be displayed in public or to preserve at all.

The native Hungarian- resettled Hungarian relationship can be best characterized as “neutral”, devoid of any particular sympathy or conflicts. This was supported in narratives from both groups. During the period of the population exchange, especially in the time of the newcomers’ arrival, there was rivalry between these groups, but shortly after the natives realized that their property and status in the village was not endangered by these changes, all potentials for conflict disappeared.

The Hungarians from Czechoslovakia, according to their accounts, felt closer to the Germans in Hird, because of their similar historical destiny (minority status) and the actual situation (resettlement), because of their interdependence in the early times of living under the same roof, and because of their similar value systems.

Level III: External relations

Home visits

The first legal visits to Czechoslovakia took place after 1956, when the resettled Hungarians received travel permission and passports. Members of the “old first generation” were the first visitors; they had the strongest urge to see their village and the relatives they left behind. From the interviews it turns out that these visits were full of emotion on both sides, and were a significant event for the whole native village community. The visitors delivered letters from those who could

not travel, brought and took packages, provided information about other relatives and former neighbours living in Hungary. They usually stayed in Matúškovo for several weeks. These stays had a character of a "pilgrimage", where these people revisited all their relatives who stayed in the village, and the places of their memory (the old family house, some symbolic parts of the village as the church, the graveyard, the brook called Sárd, the village pub, etc.).

The "younger first generation" started its visits a bit later, in the 1960s. They were also emotionally driven, but because their adulthood had connected them already to their "new home", Hird, their ties to Matúškovo were qualitatively different from those of the "older first generation". It was a certain nostalgia that made them call Matúškovo "home", and travel to the lost world of a distant, but unquestionably important childhood.

The "unavoidable" exchange of presents between families living on the two sides of the Czechoslovak-Hungarian border and the "systematic" shopping trips started with this generation, in the mentioned period of the 1960s. Presents had a double function: they symbolized family connections and strengthened them in a ritual way, but at the same time they had an important economic function. Due to the "shortage-economies" of both these socialist countries, there was a whole list of products that could be obtained only on one side, or at a much better price. Exchange of presents attempted to balance these shortages and inequalities of supply.

Visits by the second generation were unquestionably of economic motivation. In their case the drive was not emotional, emerging from childhood memories, or from any personal memories at all. Their visits were often connected with some other tourist destinations and occasions (e.g. a labour union trip to the High Tatras).

Regarding the length and frequency of these visits, they became gradually shorter and more rare. In the beginning, resettled family members from Hird visited Matúškovo for each important holiday, especially in spring and summer, for

the most significant family celebrations (weddings, anniversaries, burials), and village events (the village festival, *búcsú*). Afterwards, relationships became reduced to irregular and very short visits (one every 2-3 years, and 1-2 days per visit).

In the case of the first generation, a double attachment can be observed through their usage of the term “home”. They entitle both places- their old and the new place of living- with this word, making a slight distinction by using two different words: *haza* and *otthon*. These are used in the meaning of „We are at home” (*Otthon vagyunk*), and “We go home” (*Haza megyünk*). This dual attachment is so strong that the family members of the first generation people (wife/husband, children), use the term “haza” in their narrative when they refer to Matúškovo, even if they have never been to Matúškovo.

After the post-1989 political and economic changes in the region, economic motivation to visit Slovakia ceased. Shortages of goods disappeared in both countries; there were no significant differences which could have been equalized through such trips anymore.

The “old first generation” has almost disappeared on both sides; the remaining members are elderly, unable to travel or to keep family contacts in any other way. The “younger first generation”, though irregularly, still make short visits to the village. Their age is also a significant factor in the weakening of these relationships. Even if they manage to visit “home”, they often mention in their conversations about these trips that they felt it was difficult to find a “common language” with the younger generations living in Matúškovo, and there are always fewer and fewer people to visit. About the second generation it can be clearly stated that they lost the primary, economic motivation after 1989, and there is not (and never has been) enough emotional motivation.

Visits from the native village to Hird

Some relatives from Czechoslovakia visited Hird for the first time in autumn 1948 and at the beginning of 1949 illegally, sneaking on trains that still transported people to Hungary.

Families left in Slovakia had no information about resettled relatives for several months, there was a huge uncertainty and worry among people. The lack of information and anxiety caused some people to take the risk and travel illegally. Because members of the same family and fellow-villagers were scattered in different Hungarian settlements, these first visits lasted many weeks until all relatives and friends could be found, or at least satisfactory information gained about them. These were large round-trips in Hungary, from the Hungarian Plain (Alföld, eastern Hungary) down to Baranya county (southern Hungary). These first "messengers" carried letters and packages and made sure that resettled family members arrived into satisfactory living conditions.

In the 1950s Hungarians in Czechoslovakia lived under strict political, legal restrictions. Being deprived of their citizenship (as a result of the Beneš decrees), they could not get a passport. Thus they were not able to travel anywhere abroad. After almost a decade, the situation started to improve slowly. It became possible for them to cross the border - but with many obstacles. They had to apply for a visa at the Hungarian Embassy in Prague, which was an almost unattainable administrative task for many of these poor peasant families. Moreover, in Czechoslovakia it was extremely difficult to change Hungarian currency, thus the financial background of these travels was unsolved as well.

In the 1960s and 1970s following the political and economic consolidation of Czechoslovakia, the number of visits to Hungarian relatives increased radically. As in the case of early illegal trips, these were also long round-trips in Hungary, aiming to visit all relatives and to check their living conditions. These trips lasted for a few weeks, during which time children brought with the families attended even the local

schools at the place of their visit (there are several accounts on this in Hird).

These first legal, long-lasting round-trips were not followed by further ones. As it was explained in many narratives, it was satisfactory to see the relatives in their new homes, the first worries and curiosities were gone for ever. Stories explained that further travel was difficult due to the lack of money to travel, lack of time, and some other obstacles.

For the resettled families, visits to Matúškovo were visits to the native land, “home”, while for visitors from Matúškovo, Hird was just one interesting destination to see and leave. For them Hird did not have a symbolic value, it was not a place of remembering as Matúškovo was for their relatives. Nevertheless, relatives living in Czechoslovakia did have incentives for visiting Hungary. They were mainly economic reasons (shopping). The “second economy” of Hungary (*maszek*) produced some “objects of desire”, useful, fancy, fashionable products which were not available in Czechoslovakia at that time. They visited Hungary to purchase goods as fashion clothing, pullovers, kitchen equipment, and some “typical Hungarian” food-products (paprika powder, spirits, wine, Hungarian salami, etc.) which beside their usefulness carried a particular symbolic meaning of “Hungarianness” for these ethnic Hungarians from Slovakia. Again at the level of symbolic meanings, these visits meant unforgettable trips to Hungary, to “the mother country” for all ethnic Hungarians. On the way to Hird they often stopped by at some tourist places such as Budapest or Esztergom.

After the postsocialist economic and political changes and the opening up of the western borders, other destinations apart from Hungary opened up. Today, when Hungarians from Slovakia visit Hungary, the targets are some tourist attractions (Balaton, Budapest, some cultural festivals) and mainly places close to the border such as Győr and Komárom.

Summary

Due to the Czechoslovak-Hungarian population exchange program between 1947-48, several ethnic Hungarians from

Southern Slovakia were resettled in Hungary by forced population transports. Some of the Hungarian families from Galanta district, Matúškovo, Mostová and Horné Saliby villages were resettled to Baranya county (Southern Hungary), into Hird, a village inhabited by Hungarians and ethnic Germans (Schwabs). The analysis follows the integration of 11 Hungarian families displaced from Czechoslovakia to the village community of Hird, and their sustained kin-relations and friendships with the community of origins left behind in Slovakia. The main objective of the study was to discover those interethnic settings in Hird and between homeland community- resettled community and to discover certain dynamics between those two systems.

Resettled families from Slovakia chose the individual way of integration into their new environment. A dilemma between a complete segregation and a smooth integration never really appeared in such a form. After a relatively short period following the deportation marked by strong personal grievances and longing for the home environment, a process of integration started. Several decisive factors determined choices of individual strategy for integration. (1) The resettled group of ethnic Hungarians from Slovakia came from a minority status, that is why one cannot speak of a classic immigrant situation in their case. (2) Settlers arrived in a Hungarian speaking environment where no linguistic obstacles stood in their way of social integration. (3) Cultural, social and economic differences between the group of resettled Hungarians and the "native villagers" (Germans and Hungarians) were negligible, i.e. such differences did not form a basis of persistent group distinctions, providing neither a basis for ethnic conflicts or violence, nor wide ethnic gaps. (4) There was no religious distinction as both the newly arrived "Upperland Hungarians" and the old villagers from Hird were Roman Catholics.

Historical experiences of injustice (due to their deportation) in the case of Hungarians from Czechoslovakia, the political and legal deprivations of the 1945-1947 period strongly influenced the resettlers' integration into the new environment. During socialism, they realized that their new

situation in the mother country (Hungary) meant an improvement in their lives both in terms of social status and in economic circumstances. The geographical position of Hird (next to the Baranya country centre, Pécs) and the rapid socialist industrialization provided them with suitable work and stable incomes.

Among resettled Hungarians from Slovakia a stable and long-term solidarity, "groupness" did not take shape for several contingent reasons. They never formed a one village-community before the resettlings (as happened in the case of some other communities from Czechoslovakia), but were collected from various, often rivalry neighbouring villages in the Galanta district. The unstable, "fluid situation" of the early times in Hird, the sharp competition for "survival" (finding the best living conditions, enough land, or appropriate financial compensation for the property left behind at home) did not bring the resettled Hungarians under "the same shelter". A "puffer effect" of collective defence did not emerge either, as far as there was no "real" danger from the "outside" (i.e. from "native groups") to protect themselves as a group. Instead, industrialisation brought together members of various groups and origins, developing a common platform for everyday cooperation, or at least neutral living together.

During the political-economic transformations of the post-1989 era, the social background of these family relationships changed radically. Markets and provisions of the two countries became somewhat equalized, thus financially motivated trips, so-called "shopping-tourism" disappeared. The resettled families are unable to sustain close family contacts with their home villages anymore. Most attempts at contact became reduced to an occasional exchange of postcards, greetings, short telephone calls for special occasions (anniversaries, Christmas, etc.) and rare family reunions, mostly taking place at funerals, as the final occasion for the dissolving of family ties.

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- ¹ This study is a shortened, translated version of MA thesis written at the Ethnology Department, Pécs University, 1999.
- ² *Matúškovo* is the Slovak name of a village in South Slovakia which was originally inhabited by almost only Hungarians. Its name in Hungarian is *Taksony*. As the result of the Beneš decrees issued in the period after the end of the Second World War a large part of the village's Hungarian population was forced to leave their land and houses and to resettle in Hungary. The deported population was replaced by Slovak families coming from several parts of Hungary.
- ³ The researcher's personality is an essential part of the investigation. Although it is a commonplace, my visits to Hird made me realize that a speech-situation, an interview has a truth-value, it is trustworthy if both "sides" "play with open cards". I did not want to hide my origin (coming from Matúškovo) during the interviews in Hird and it produced a special field-situation. My own identity had both positive and negative effects on my work. It was an advantage, as far as people in Hird welcomed me as an "ambassador of the faraway homeland" (as they said in an interview), with friendship and human openness. People from Matúškovo established a common ground for further informal talks and remembering. They trusted me. They shared their sorrows, pride with me, told me about their economic achievements, and successes of private life. On the other hand,

because of my origins, the informants felt uneasy to talk about their weakening relationships with homeland relatives. Sometimes they tried to prove just the opposite, somehow to fulfil my quasi- expectations in which they believed. They often hesitated to recall the negative experiences of home visits, their disillusionment when being there after long years of daydreaming, the raising disinterest to maintain these connections on the homeland relatives' side. During my work I tried to establish human relationships first of all. I tried to be open in return for openness. According to their needs and interests I delivered news from "home", took and brought messages, greetings between relatives, informed them about the situation in Slovakia. For most of them the very encounter with someone from the "homeland" was a very special and joyful event, almost identical to a visit of a long-ago unseen relative.

⁴ Hereby I would like to thank him, and to all of my informants, both in Hungary and Slovakia, who made this research possible.

⁵ *Mostová* (In Hungarian *Hidaskürt*) and *Horné Saliby* (In Hungarian *Felsőszeli*) are situated in the same district (*Galanta* district) where also *Matúškovo* lies.

2. Managing instability: Trust, social relations and the strategic use of ideas and practices in a southern Slovakian village

Davide Torsello



Introduction

The main argument of this paper is that in their decisions people attempt to control the uncertainty of the present time by creating and managing instability. Instability means that they manipulate ideas and acts in a way that to an external observer demonstrate high degrees of inconsistency and ambivalence. What is said is often not replicated or even contradicted in practice and what is done does not always correspond to moral or ethic principles referred to by actors as underpinning social action. The ambiguity inherent in social practices relates to the strategic use that villagers make of trust and mistrust in their interaction with individuals and with

institutions. Trust creates relations of reciprocity and obligations in the trustee. On the other hand, mistrust imposes constant checks upon the second party which balance the pursuit of personal goals with emotionally and morally grounded patterns of social behaviour.

The notion of “amoral familism” introduced by Banfield to describe a mountain community of southern Italy in the post-war period (Banfield 1958), and recently adopted by a number of scholars to describe the postsocialist realities, constitutes the theoretical framework of this chapter. In his famous account of the village of Montegrano, Banfield describes a reality dominated by “backwardness”, economic stagnation, lack of political and civic action and deep mistrust. The author bases his argument on what he calls “amoral familism”, according to which individuals are unable to reach levels of collective action because they are concerned merely for their personal and family interests. In his words, Montegrano’s inhabitants act to “maximise the material, short-run advantage of the nuclear family, assuming that others will do the same” (1958: 85).

A number of factors underly Banfield’s amoral familistic ethos: 1) amoral familism makes it difficult to achieve collective action and organization; 2) social and economic conditions characterized by amoral familism will favour a “regime which will maintain order with a strong hand”; 3) there is no connection between abstract political principles and concrete behaviour in everyday life; 4) because leadership is refused and distrusted, no one will take the initiative to outline a course of action or persuade others to do so; 5) collective gains are desirable only if one is likely to share them; 6) whatever group is in power is self-serving and corrupt (1958: 85-104).

These points raise several questions about the validity of Banfield’s approach and its applicability to the postsocialist context (Sztompka 1999; Misztal 2001). This chapter will provide possible answers to several questions: how can history account for the present attitudes of people towards trust? How does trust operate to achieve goals in the long

run? If “amoral familism” is dominant, how can collective action successfully be stimulated by democracy and implementation of institutional reforms? Does interpersonal mistrust not leave any space for the smooth functioning of institutions? If the state is mistrusted, who is in charge of bringing in innovation and development?

The paper is structured in two parts. The first part examines the issue of how people assign trust to certain institutions and social clusters in and outside the village sphere. A general view of trust is outlined with reference to quantitative data. The second part deals with the observation of practices. The family and the village constitute the three spheres in which social relations are articulated in the everyday world.

The fieldwork on which this paper is based was conducted in Királyfa between May 2000 and September 2001. Királyfa is a village inhabited by 1533 persons, 83 percent of whom Hungarians and about 15 percent Slovaks (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic 2001). The village is situated on the western bank of the Váh river in one of the most fertile regions of southwestern Slovakia (see Danter, Tóth, Liszka this volume).

Trust in social institutions: a quantitative view

After over one year of living in Királyfa¹, intrigued by the fact that people's actions often did not follow the cognitive criteria which shaped these, I recalled an Italian proverb: *Tra il dire e il fare c'è di mezzo il mare* (“Between the saying and doing there is the sea”). This suggested to me that understanding the social features of a community may be a process which goes much further than simply listening to people's stories and opinions about their living reality in their everyday lives.

For example, people's open mistrust of the agricultural cooperative is not matched by their interactions with it. People resort to the cooperative in their everyday life, even when other solutions are possible. They choose to do so according to a series of motives which eventually lead them

to recognize that the cooperative is necessary for their everyday life. This, however, does not prevent them, unequivocally, from running the cooperative down when they talk about it. What does this attitude conceal? Is it merely a sign of the uncertainty of the present, of profound discontent with the postsocialist change or simply a legacy of the socialist past?

Villagers maintain that the postsocialist transformation has meant that it is increasingly difficult to trust people. Even those who criticize what life was like under the former regime are often willing to admit that today it is harder to rely on people than it was before. As one informant observed:

After socialism people started turning against each other. They were afraid, I think, of what was going to change. But this doesn't explain why they've become like wolves to each other. One reason can be that people are busier making money and trying to be successful now, whereas before nobody cared. I'm not saying things were better before, but people were more human and you can note this every day. Do you know how many times things get stolen here in the village? Anything that isn't chained can be lost. This is new; it wasn't like this in socialist times. Now do you wonder that nobody is ready to trust even their family members?

(Gábor, b. 1952)

The pessimism of these words seems to have confirmation in a finding of the survey which I undertook on a random sample of a hundred households. To the question: "Do you think that after 1989 it is possible to 1) trust people more; 2) trust people in the same way; 3) trust people less than before", out of a total of 100 respondents only 2 chose the first option, 22 the second and 76 maintained that people are less trustworthy than before 1989.

One of the possible explanations for the open mistrust may be the villagers' worsened economic conditions. Indeed, some of the villagers recognize that their economic situation has worsened after 1989, but many of them also say that things have improved and are optimistic about the future. Data gathered in the household survey reflect people's views of their personal economic condition and the degree of satis-

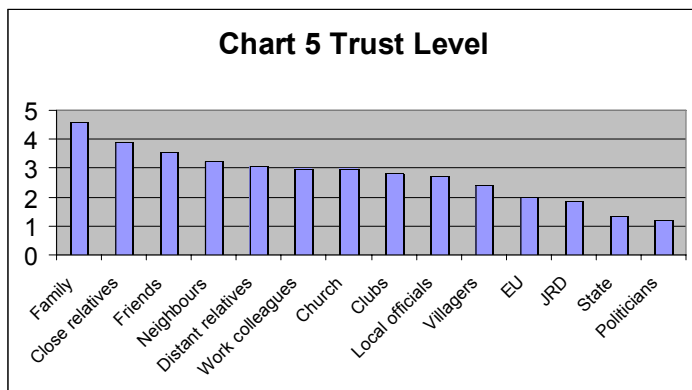
faction with their present family economic situation. The first question was: "Do you think that after 1989 your economic condition has improved or worsened?" Only 10 percent indicated they saw signs of slight improvement, whereas 22 percent said it worsened little, 40 percent that it worsened a lot and 27 percent that it did not change. On the other hand, the second question asked: "Are you satisfied with your present family economic situation?" The answers were divided between 55 percent satisfied (4 percent very much, 51 percent more or less satisfied) and 43 percent not satisfied (32 percent not satisfied, 11 percent very unsatisfied).

These data do not clearly indicate why people show inconsistency in their practices and ideas, but they suggest that, generally speaking, worsened economic conditions are not the main source of generalized mistrust because most people are relatively satisfied with their family's economic situation. The difference between the two sets of answers indicates that what in principle is seen as a pessimistic view of the transformation may turn into a realistically less negative picture when considering the overall family situation. Some informants commented on the two questions, saying: "Well, we should not complain too much, after all we are free today and there is always a future to come, which depends more or less on our choices". Even among those who attribute the present uncertainty and economic distress to the fall of socialism, there were no indications that postsocialism has not brought anything good at all for them. All of them were ready to accept the idea that personal freedom and the very possibility to "work for the future" (*a jövőért dolgozni*) were, nonetheless, the best achievements of the transformation.

In spite of these veins of optimism for the future, however, mistrust and suspicion still dominate public life and this fact becomes manifest as soon as one starts living in the community. Before examining the problem of how mistrust influences everyday social relations within and outside the community, I would like to provide some more quantitative evidence on the use of trust in defining people's interaction with social institutions.

In order to test the different degrees of trust towards formal institutions and informal clusters in villagers' everyday social life (such as neighbours, close and distant relatives, work colleagues and friends), a scale of trust from 0 (the lowest value) to 5 (the highest value) was chosen to evaluate their position towards these categories.

Chart 5 gives a picture of the average level of trust that one hundred randomly-chosen villagers (64 male and 36 female) formulated in relation to 14 different categories. These include: family, close relatives, distant relatives, neighbours, friends, villagers, work colleagues, the church, local officials,² politicians, the agricultural cooperative, village social and cultural clubs, the state and the EU. The highest mean level of trust was obtained by the *family*³ with 4.56, followed by the category *close relatives* (3.86) and *friends* (3.54). The *cooperative* (JRD) (1.87), the *state* (1.35) and finally *politicians* (1.19) occupied the lower end of the spectrum. Mid-range positions were occupied by *work colleagues* (2.98) and *social and cultural clubs* (2.79). On the other hand, *villagers* scored rather poorly with 2.42. Finally, the trust level for *local officials* reached 2.7, much greater than that of the *cooperative*.



Source: Household questionnaire survey

Two conclusions can be drawn from these data. First, opinions about trust depend on the degree of interaction between peo-

ple and institutions: as a general rule, the more frequent the interaction the higher the trust. People distinguish three distinct clusters of trustworthiness. The first cluster, composed of family, relatives, friends, neighbours and distant relatives (all average levels above 3), is the closest to people, the one to which trust relations can be ascribed as vital components of the everyday social life. People have enduring experiences of interaction with members of these categories, therefore trust is continuously re-vitalised by everyday encounters. The second group relates to more or less "neutral" items (trust level between 2 and 3) which include villagers and local officials, but excludes the cooperative. People have fewer occasions for everyday interaction with local officers, producing less positive levels of trust. The category of "villagers" is more problematic. One informant commented: "If I have to judge them as a whole, without giving people names and faces, I'd say that I don't trust them" (Antal, b. 1926). There is a relatively low degree of trust towards "villagers" when this group is taken as not containing relatives and friends. The last group (politicians, the state and the EU), is the most distant and abstract for villagers. The lowest scores in term of generalized trust suggest that villagers feel that abstract entities with which they have very little interaction are far less trustworthy. The state is the most indicative of this trend since respondents seemingly expressed a negative vision of its governing bodies (political parties and legal institutions).⁴

The second point is that, as the question about trustworthiness after 1989 suggests, there is a general tendency towards low rather than high levels of trust. This is also supported by the fact that, if value 3 is taken as the middle level between 0 and 5, 9 categories out of 14 had trust levels falling below average.

Thirdly, among institutions people share higher degrees of trust towards those with which the village has a stronger identification. The comparison between the levels for the cooperative and local officials on the one hand, and the church and social and cultural clubs on the other gives an idea of this distinction. Villagers do not express high levels of trust vis-à-vis

the former two institutions because the cooperative has ceased to be a village institution and the local officers are often criticized for their political choices. In contrast, the church and local cultural and social clubs (see below) enhance the collective life of the community and foster a stronger sense of identification.

The remaining question is on what grounds is generalized mistrust in individuals and *vis-à-vis* particular institutions constructed. The following section considers interpersonal relations among family members.

Between mistrust and expectations: patterns of kin interaction

The survey results describe a situation in which generalized trust towards institutions (except the Catholic church) is comparatively low. In addition, there is a remarkably low level of trust in other villagers as a whole. The situation is inverted in the case of family members, close relatives and friends, the three categories with the highest trust scores. From these quantitative findings one could suggest that Banfield's amoral familism informs village level social relations, though with a less "radical" character. The core of Banfield's argument is that the origin of amoral familism lies in the social structure of Montegrano. Village families are mainly nuclear, and scattered in a semi-urban pattern of settlement typical for the southern Italian agro-town (see Blok 2001). This implies that neighbours are often non-relatives and thus the degree of door-to-door daily kin interaction is strongly influenced by the spatial distance of households.

In Királyfa, neighbours are often relatives and this can be demonstrated by the small difference in trust level between these two groups (3.86 and 3.25, respectively). However, village families are nuclear too, and as in Banfield's case, apart from the circle of family and friends, there are low levels of trust in the community as a whole and in institutions.

Analysts of postsocialist societies tend to maintain that, as the quantitative findings presented suggest, there is a low

degree of trust in institutions, counterbalanced by the tendency to privilege close circles and intimate relations (family, kin and friends) (Sztompka 1999; Misztal 2001). This is seen as a form of continuity with socialist practices that emphasized the gap between public and private spheres, reducing individual action to a kind of “performative act” taking place at two opposing levels: the public level, characterized by often false and deceitful behaviour, and the private one, where people behaved genuinely. Because of this, expectations and obligations among family members and friends can become extremely burdensome on social actors, simply because there are no or few other ways to convey such trust elsewhere.

The quantitative data above confirm the position of the family and kinship as the ultimate depository of personal trust in present times. Since the state has lost its overall encompassing role that distinguished the socialist regime, village members stress the importance of the family as the “sole source” of help, reliability and security. However, because of the crucial social role of the family in creating and maintaining trustworthiness, being a member of a large kin group may also have its drawbacks. One informant described the role of kinship in these terms:

The family is a double-edged weapon: when it's large there are so many advantages. You can count on people when you need help and you'll get it. They've got your same blood after all. But then there is so much weight in the obligations, which at times are even bigger than the advantages themselves. You are never sure of what this or that other relative may think; all you can do is guess that you acted or spoke in the most appropriate way.

(Dániel, b. 1968)

Dániel comes from a well-reputed village family and has one married sister living in the village and one brother in the town. His wife's family also resides in the village. At the time of this remark, Dániel invited me for a drink with some of his male friends. We were on the second floor of the Culture House,

where a December meeting and party organized by the Hungarian Cultural Association was being held (see below). In the main hall the atmosphere seemed one of celebration, even though not much noise and laughter was coming from the tables. Dániel explained to me that he often felt embarrassed at these events, because etiquette expected him to be with his relatives. This is why a quick escape with friends for a toast was a good opportunity to talk in a more relaxed atmosphere. I asked him if the excessive formality in family relations was not just a matter of the event and of being in the eyes of the whole community. "You know", he said, "it is always like this. You have to behave properly in public and at home. Do you think that I can go to my uncle and tell him openly what I think of him? No way! No matter where you are, things are the same. It is the family and you have to respect it".

Rigidity of etiquette in kinship relations may be a function of two factors. There is the fear of gossip, which shapes interpersonal relations and forms of behaviour properly defining what is "adequate" and what not for the community's standards. On the other hand, obligations between family members and expectations of behaviour are structured both emotionally and instrumentally.⁵ Relatives are potential helpers, therefore one needs to be on good terms with them. This constitutes one of the most basic considerations on which trust is built among affine. However, personal emotions count too. It is hard to imagine someone relying on another relative with whom there is a feud lasting for decades, not only because interaction has been broken, but also because there is the constant fear of retaliation, which makes the act of trusting useless, unless a second kind of relationship (usually friendship) mediates the distance between relatives. Trust shapes interpersonal relations between kin members on the basis of several factors. These can include the frequency of encounters between members, their spatial distance, the existence or absence of disagreements among them, the power relations dominating the group and the social and economic roles of the individuals.

Because of the variety of these factors, and the constant effort to strike a balance between interest-oriented and emotional patterns of behaviour, trust is not necessarily absolute in the relationship between kin members.

Family and village relations

Apart from everyday encounters, there are a number of special occasions in which villagers meet and share common experiences. The cultural and social clubs provide one venue for such occasions.

Today, a number of clubs are active in the village. Among them, the Csemadok (Hungarian Cultural Association of Czechoslovakia) most frequently promotes public events such as festivals, concerts, theatre performances and lectures on themes related to Hungarian culture. The Csemadok was founded in Czechoslovakia in 1949 and it enjoyed a relative freedom throughout the socialist period with sometimes generous state funding. Under socialism, this institution sponsored numerous public events in the community including theatre performances, balls, Hungarian cultural festivals and the Children's Day (1st of June). Villagers recall those days with nostalgia, stating that Királyfa was known in the region for its intense cultural activity and on more than one occasion the Culture House was so full that the police had to intervene to avoid problems.

Immediately after 1989 the Csemadok activity temporarily diminished due to the policies of the first Mečiar cabinet which were unfriendly towards the minorities. However, soon after 1998 the organization enjoyed a new flourishing under the increased political weight of the Hungarian coalition.

Those events which mark the annual and seasonal calendar of the village are of great importance to the whole community. The celebration of St. Stephen is a newly established event that is already in its fourth year. The Csemadok, with the help of the municipal office and other village clubs such as the Pensioners' Club, the Hunters' Club and the Fishermen's Club, sponsors the evening event. The program

combines the formal assembly of the Csemadok with leisure activities such as a banquet, a lottery, a concert, a theatre performance and the final discotheque. The first part of the event is reserved for members, even though the security guards would not object to anyone who wanted to enter. The second part is open to anyone who purchases a ticket. The following is an extract from my field notes.

27/12/2000. The atmosphere is warm and vivacious outside the Culture House. Cars and bikes are parked everywhere; it is chilly but there are so many young people around that one wonders where they come from. A band made up by high school students has come from Galanta to play and sing. There are three boys and five girls. They are all dressed quite elegantly. They are cheaper than a professional band, says Laci, and they are quite good. The hall is adorned with great care, with Christmas tree branches and coloured balls on the walls, coloured lamps and candles on the tables, even nice tablecloths! Everyone is elegantly dressed.

Most of the attendants are young people, but there is a certain rigidity at the tables. They also admit it. Laci is busy with his large family table and he has no time for me. Gábor arrives only later with his girlfriend. They have no family table and they sit with me: “the table of the lonelies”, one jokes. Two friends of Nóra are invited from the village of Deáki. They swear they have never seen such a big event. [Deáki (Diakovce) is three times as big as Királyfa]. After the formal opening speech by the old Csemadok president, the new one is appointed. A simple cold meal (peppers, bread, ham and sausage) follows. Then the lottery. Everybody seems more relaxed now that the alcohol has started circulating. I have to leave the table and join the other men for a drink. “This is where the real fun starts”, they say.

On the second floor there is a small kiosk. They all drink rum or *pálinka*. “Wine is for the family time”. They seem more relaxed and ready to joke. “You will see”, says Laci, “the real *buli* [party] starts now”.

When I go back downstairs, the school girls are still singing Hungarian pop songs. 10.30 pm: the performance starts. A village group called *Féktelenek* ("breakless") performs a series of humoristic sketches. Some of them I know from a popular Hungarian TV cabaret program. They all play with double-senses, misunderstandings and often very heavy sexual jokes. People laugh a lot. Some of them know these jokes already and they anticipate them at their own tables. Some people are drunk, but they behave well. No shouting or other forms of noise.

The rigid family tables are finally starting to dissolve. Young people go outside for smokes, upstairs for drinks or to joke around. The music starts (12 am); the old people leave. We all dance and sing.

The atmosphere on St Stephen's night is dominated by two concurrent elements: the organized participation and grouping according to family and kin membership and the gathering of friends and acquaintances. The latter is more spontaneous than the former, but the two are hardly extricable. Many young villagers took part in the evening together with their families and in this case they were clearly divided between remaining seated in an orderly manner at their tables and going outside or upstairs to join their friends. During the formal part of the event and the banquet all participants were seated at their tables. This was the most "tense" moment, when the speeches reminded the attendants of the formalities of the evening and when being with one's own family meant behaving in a proper way. Afterwards, the music and the first effects of the alcohol marked the beginning of the second part, when less formal behaviour was allowed. The most interesting aspect of the celebration was the way in which fun and proper behaviour intermingled and became disentangled throughout the event. All participants seemed concerned about their behaviour as they were required to perform on an open stage, before the eyes of the village. The large family tables constituted extremely close and intimate clusters and the fact that very few moved from

these tables to join or chat with others during the formal part of the event demonstrates that there was little space for socialization outside the kin sphere. This was a time when proper behaviour and family cohesion had to be manifest.

Villagers commented positively on the success of the event and the very news that I had participated reinforced my position in the village. Trying to provoke some comment on the families who attended the evening, I asked my hostess why certain families were so compact at the celebration and others not, or were even absent. She replied:

You know, not all like to show themselves at such occasions. I'm too old for it, but we used to go there in the past. Now it's only the big families who go there, those who give their support to the association. It's not money; I'm also a member and pay the fees. They're those who need to be on the front stage. They've nothing to hide in their past. They're all very respected families.

Intrigued by the idea of what she meant by "respected families", I asked further. She explained:

These are all village families who once had or now have a good position. They are not richer than you and me. They are simply trusted and respected because people know who they are or who they were in the village before. One of them was a rich peasant, another is the clerk, and another owns the noodle factory. People trust them because they have done something for the village.

Generalized trust may be constructed in different ways when the sphere of social interaction enlarges beyond the family. Social reputation, status and the family's economic condition are factors which, being subject to historical change, determine social evaluation of individual personalities. The concomitance of these factors (or values) leads villagers to trust certain people more than others, especially when they are seen as contributing to the public good of the community (such as the noodle factory owner). This creates the split between the two positions at the festival, the village

members with large kin networks and the “lonely”. Like trust among family members, the act of trusting (and respecting) these personalities brings about a number of expectations and obligations. Those sitting at the large tables had to behave properly; they would not talk loudly even when drunk and would not leave the table before the music started. These forms of behaviour constituted part of their obligations towards the public. On the other hand, those from the “lonely table” were not surprised by this behaviour. It is in a way expected. This explains why some avoid participation, especially in the formal part of the evening. However, many do not have this choice since it would be bad behaviour for them not to join their families. Belonging to these tables entails a set of duties that goes beyond the position of the individual, but which defines his/her social evaluation in light of his/her kinship sphere. In this sense, trust acquires the shape of a bilateral action which needs to be implemented by particular rituals (such as respecting the family etiquette) sanctioning the position of the individual within the family and of the family within the village.

Community action

After the local social and cultural clubs, the second institution to which people attribute comparatively high levels of trust is the church. Although it is undeniable that when asked about the trust they have in the church they thought about the Roman Catholic Church as a formal institution (the village is 98 percent Catholic), respondents had in mind the local representatives of these institutions.

Religious practices have seen a renaissance in the village since 1989. Even during the late socialist period (1980s) there was a certain *lassaiz-faire* attitude towards religious practices in Slovakia, especially in rural areas. Local priests have always played important (and often contradictory) roles in these communities and their position was often determined by two concomitant factors: their relationship to the party and the state ideology, on the one hand, and their rela-

tion to the ethnic problem on the other. Villagers' stories vividly portray those priests who gave all their human efforts for the sake of the community and who were eventually chased by the state. One priest in particular, Tamás, was active during the early 1960s. He was a young priest who came to Királyfa from a neighbouring parish. He did not remain in service for long, but he is remembered affectionately by most villagers.

Tamás was a good guy. He was one of us. He never tried to build any distance— he was seen in the pub to drink with the workers and then he helped those who had problems. Unfortunately he was inconvenient to somebody else. He could not last long; he was too active in the village and he knew it. But he did not care. This is why the whole village had faith in him. Then one day the town police came and took him away. There was a crowd in the village main square to bid him farewell. He just said: “Don’t be sad. Someone better than me will come”. But this didn’t happen.

The old woman who, unwilling to reveal her name, told me this story had to stop to dry the tears in her eyes. She confessed to me that, with the help of two other village women, she had gone more than once to visit Tamás in the monastery where he remained until his death. This happened during socialism.

The present priest is also extremely active in spite of his 81 years of age. Because of the lack of Hungarian priests, he administers the service in two parishes, Királyfa and the neighbouring village of Hosszúfalu, which does not have its own priest. In Királyfa masses are said only in Hungarian. The figure of the priest is highly respected and trusted in the community, especially for his personal involvement in social clubs (mainly the scouts), public events and religious festivals such as the village festival⁶ (19th of November) and the Corpus Christi Day (May) procession.

The ceremony of Corpus Christi Day starts in the morning; the church is already crowded a half an hour before the start.⁷ There are different social groups that play their own

roles in the celebration: the priest, the altar boys, the group of elderly men, the young girls, the group of elderly women and the villagers. The first ritual takes place outside, in front of the entrance. Here the priest, surrounded by the altar boys and the elderly men, passes the cross around a large white and red candle. This will be put on the altar and used intermittently for the year to come. The blessing of the candle follows and then the purification with incense. After the mass the procession (*körmenet*) starts. The young girls in white dress go ahead, covering the road with colourful rose petals, followed by the priest and his altar boys. They hold a green and golden canopy, under which the priest stands with the golden crucifix in his hands. After him the group of elderly men follow, bearing the three paraphernalia which portray the symbol of the village, the image of St. Elisabeth (the patron saint) and the symbols of the crafts. The scouts follow with their own flags, one of which is the Hungarian flag, the village crest and their association symbol. The group of elderly women have no symbols; they sing and pray accompanying the remainder of the procession. The first attendants are the mayor (who joined the procession but not the mass), the clerk and members of the Pensioners' Club. As a rule elderly villagers should go before the younger ones in the row, but this order is not strictly followed.

The procession first circles the church, then it crosses the village according to a pre-determined pattern. The procession makes four stops at four point where altars have erected, symbolizing the four cardinal points. Each altar contains a sacred image of Christ and the Madonna, with a red carpet leading to the inside where four big candles stand. Because the position of the altars is not fixed – they can be moved some hundred meters but they mainly stay on the same roads each year, the care dedicated to building and decorating them is shared by villagers in turn. Men from the Pensioners' Club and some from the village unemployed, led by the vice-mayor, build the altars and women decorate them. The house which is situated behind the altar provides flowers and the sacred picture; candles and external decorations are

provided by neighbours in the row of houses near the altar. As the altars are moved each year along the same street, responsibility for the flowers and picture inside is taken in turn by different houses.

At the time of this ceremony (2001) approximately two hundred people participated in the mass and many more joined the procession or watched it from their houses. However, those family members whose houses were close to the altars did not dare peep out of their gates. They were watching from behind the window and waited for the procession to move back out into the street. Also, four persons, dressed in suits and neckties, stood at the village's two entrances to prevent any car from getting onto the main road.

The social meaning of the procession is demonstrated by two factors: the degree of social interaction and the process of identification. Long and careful preparations are made by the groups who take part in the ceremony. From the scouts to the elderly women, all of them meet before the event to plan and then undertake preparations. The erection of the altars is a long process that takes the two days preceding the procession and which requires the joint work of the women from the neighbourhood and the men responsible for building them as well as procuring the tree branches. In this way, the event is an important occasion for interaction among villagers, as well as delegation of and compliance with tasks and mutual help.

The event also provides a means of identification for the whole community. Villagers proudly emphasize that, in spite of the many historical changes, the village has always succeeded in reproducing its own "collective face". One informant put it in these terms:

I know, people say a lot of bad things about village relations today. It is partly our fault, partly the fault of history. I can't deny that there have been many negative episodes within the community after which some people still avoid each other. But when it comes to organizing something together, gathering collective efforts, people get together and cooperate. I'm proud of this. It's sufficient if you come to one of the many

events that the Csemadok sponsors or to one religious festival in the village to see how many people are there. There are always occasions in which old grudges are put aside.

(András, b. 1930)

The Corpus Christi event creates for the community an occasion in which collectively concerted action is conceived as the most significant expression of Királyfa's self-identification. As Banfield postulates, no occasion of public action such as this religious festival should exist if villagers are dominated by a widespread sense of reciprocal mistrust. All the careful preparations and efforts put into it make the event a worthy collective asset to show off to its participants (there are no outsiders who come to assist). The festival, apart from its religious implications and the real belief that drives people to act collectively, is a moment of community identity, which is less constructed in the process of confrontation between "insiders" and "outsiders" than among villagers themselves. The difference between this and the civil event on St. Stephen's Day is that in the former there is no clear sign of family "corporate" behaviour, i.e. people do not take part or organize the event within the close circle of their families. Their actions are rather spontaneous and coordinated through their membership in the village's social clubs and age groups. The restraint dictated by the status of families is annulled in an event that, having a religious basis, serves to strengthen collective patterns of behaviour and prove to villagers that such patterns are factual and real even in spite of difficult times.

Conclusion

Trust and mistrust are useful tools for describing how people structure their actions and share their ideas about the social world. The nature of trust, which creates a tie of dependency between two parties sharing some common aim, entails both an accent on interest and instrumentality and produces a set of mutual expectations and obligations for the two sides. These are defined on the basis of collective principles and

norms of behaviour within the community. In this point resides the strength of Banfield's (1958) approach that allowed his work to remain influential in spite of its shortcomings. The ethos that allegedly lead Montegrano's people in their daily struggle to survive and make the best of their "backwardness" is grounded in the crucial importance, recognized by actors, of dealing with patterns of social interaction. Widespread mistrust in persons and institutions is one of the responses that villagers create in the course of their everyday existence in conditions of "poverty" and economic distress. Trust is at stake in everyday aspects of the social life of individuals because the scarcity of economic means leads them to stick to social interaction as the main channel through which the survival of the family can be assured. There is, in this situation, no space for "blind" and absolute trust, because its (social and economic) benefits are absent from the life of individuals. On the other hand, mistrust operates to build obligations between actors, not as a form of apathy or inactivity, but as an active way of dealing with uncertainty and general conditions of scarcity. This attitude is exemplified in Királyfa's case on two different levels. On one level, people say and do different things. Ambiguity is created and reproduced in the course of everyday practices and permeates all spheres of social action (from the family to the state). Following the paradigm proposed by Grabher and Stark (1997), it can be maintained that ambiguity is intentional and strategic, because it helps diversify the scope and aims of action.

On a second level, in contrast to what Banfield (1958) postulates, outspoken mistrust does not necessarily entail the absence of patterns of collective action and the creation of intermediary forms of associations. The case of Királyfa illustrates that, even though people seem to indicate mistrust as one of the most tangible problems and features of the postsocialist transformation, the kind and degree of their involvement in (civil and religious) collective life and the ambiguity of their choices suggest that there is no such thing as a "creeping" amoral familism. As in the case of Montegrano,

but in different tones, the instability that came as a product of the historical (postsocialist) transformation has deeply affected the manner in which villagers build their social confrontation. On the one hand, the pace of the overall changes instills in people a strong concern for how social relations are shaped in the village. This depends on the fact that interpersonal relations and social ties are seen as vital assets both in the village and outside. As a result, villagers seem rather cautious in the process of daily interaction and, even in the case of family and kinship relations, unconditional trust seems to be lacking. On the other hand, people's ideas may not coincide with their practices simply because they deliberately choose to do so in order to keep open venues of choices and to create reciprocal expectations and obligations. This brings villagers to the point in which patterns of behaviour need to be strictly regulated by norms of reciprocity in order to avoid the worst outcome, i.e. the elimination of any social relation. Mistrust therefore provides scope for these obligations because it is not accompanied by practices in which no relation takes place among individuals. In this sense, mistrust becomes strategic, just like the fact of doing one thing and saying something different.

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- ¹ In Slovak Kráľová nad Váhom. I conducted fieldwork in the village as part of my PhD research program at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale.
- ² These include the village mayor, the vice-mayor, the two accountants and the two clerks who all work in the municipal office.
- ³ This is intended here as the complex of people residing in one household and their offspring who do not reside in the household.
- ⁴ However, people seem to emphasize the importance of their relation to the state even though they do not identify this with specific personalities as they did during socialism. The state has become an increasingly abstract entity. To the question "In your opinion, who do you think could help improve your economic situation?" 74 percent of respondents indicated the state. However, when I asked them who could help the village to improve its present conditions, there was little indication that politicians or local officials could do anything at all. Mistrust pervades the sphere of individual-institution interactions and it appears that this tendency is particularly strong when it is not possible to personalize institutions.
- ⁵ Colby (1967) states that mistrust is one of the reasons for the proliferation of complex etiquette in Mesoamerican Indian cultures. He maintains that etiquette brings in a certain amount of social control in situations where trust must be established. Etiquette reduces anxiety because it structures behaviour in a predictable way for the purpose of establishing what he defines as social exchange.
- ⁶ The village festival (*búcsú*), a semi-religious event common to all the communities of the region is held on the 19th of November. It is still one of the most important collective events in the community. Held on the day of St. Elisabeth, this custom was never abandoned, even under socialism. The day, marked by a morning religious function, provides an occasion for non-village relatives to visit Királyfa. Village families prepare special food (duck meat and different sorts of cakes) in quantities that can be shared by guests and even taken home upon their return. Families and their relatives remain together all day and the village organizes entertainment for children (a fun-fair) and adults as well as an evening cultural show.

- ⁷ During socialism this event was forbidden. However, the priest Tamás re-introduced it in the early 1960s. Villagers simply made their procession around the church, within its perimeter and along the church road, thus avoiding crossing the village. People emphasize that in spite of the prohibition to perform this event in public, the church was always full on this occasion.

3. Traditional economic life in the northern part of the Danube Lowland¹

Izabella Danter



If we examine the results of the Hungarian ethnographic research in Slovakia achieved so far, we see that while some fields, such as folk customs, national costumes, folk dance or folk music, have been sufficiently described, documentation of the traditional peasant economic life seems to be wanting. In the previous decades, apart from the publication of few short descriptions and general overviews related to the theme, only a few ethnographers from Slovakia and Hungary have published extensive research on the subject.² Their studies appeared mainly in Slovakian publications.

In the second half of the eighties, Magda Fehérváryné Nagy carried out an extensive survey on peasant economic life in Kolárovo. The results of her research were published in 1998 in an independent volume (*Lifestyle and tradition*) of

the series of the Ethnographic Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Research was also undertaken within the framework of a project called "Changes in lifestyle and traditional culture in Hungary in the 19-20th centuries", which was published under the title: *Peasant economic life in the first half of the 20th century- example from Kolárovo*. This study examines the organisation and production structure of peasant farms from a production-consumption viewpoint. According to the study, "...the peasant farm is not an unchanging unit, but it is a productive, consumer and a community-creating unit, of longer or shorter duration, and it is working and constantly changing within diverse external and internal conditions in time and space"³ (Fehérváryné 1988: 15). Therefore, the functions of the farm have to be continuously followed from the farm's foundation to its cessation. By understanding the productivity and relations of production of individual farms, we can define the degree of capitalisation of the peasant farm within the community as well as the social manifestations of the transformation process. The degree of effectiveness of the peasant farm is defined by the relation between its principal branches, agriculture and husbandry. However, at the same time, a good integration of secondary activities (such as gathering, fishing, hunting, bee-keeping, silviculture, carriage, nutrition, barter) into the two main economic sections has also an important role.

On the basis of the results achieved so far, Hungarian ethnography characterised roughly four types of Hungarian peasant farms, which can be subdivided into smaller, local types. The specialised literature describes the following types: the Alföld farms, where corn-producing (cereal growing) is joined with extensive husbandry; South-Alföld and Kiskunság farms, which base their activity on gardening; farms in the zone of Eger-Gyöngyös-Tokaj and of the vicinity of Balaton based on viniculture; farms in Northern-Középhegység, Transylvania and Bakony, where crop-producing is subordinated to husbandry and where other activities play a significant role, such as lime- and coal-burning, carriage, seasonal work etc. (Szabó-Földes 1979).

The long-term research project that I would like to present here aims to define the types of peasant farms that are characteristic of the northern part of the Danube Lowland. The inventor and leader of this ethnographic research project was in the beginning Magda Fehérváryné Nagy, ethnographic researcher of the Danube Museum in Komárno (Slovakia). The project's realisation was also helped by the fact that until 1990, within the network of museums in Slovakia, the Danube Museum in Komárno had the official task of the methodological supervision over museums in Southwest Slovakia. A team of ethnographers and museum researchers of South-Slovakian museums, who co-operated closely together, was also a prerequisite for the successful realisation of the planned project. Several external researchers took part in the project in the course of the work. The aim of our research was to define the single themes belonging to the subject of traditional economic life and within this to describe characteristic work technologies and instruments. Researchers examined the situation typical for the first half of the 20th century in selected peasant communities, which differed from each other in their character, while research focus was placed on the relation of production and consumption.⁴ Our survey started in 1987 and its first field site was Kolárovo⁵. The results were published in 1992 in an independent volume (*Gúta Hagymányos Gazdálkodása* 1992).

Kolárovo, a small rural town, lies at the junction of the Small-Danube and Váh rivers. It covers a vast land of which approximately one third lies on the southern side and two thirds on the northern side of the Small Danube. The development of peasant farms in Kolárovo was greatly influenced by the gradual increase of detached farmsteads (*tanya* in Hungarian). This process also had its effects on the land, which constituted the base of the peasant farms, on the work force and on draught animal force necessary for the cultivation, as well as on work instruments and placement of house sites in the village. Thus, in Kolárovo we found village farms, detached farmsteads and combined farms which in the examined period (i.e. the first half of the 20th century) could be

divided into three categories according to their production division and production mode: 1. Subsistence peasant farms where agriculture and husbandry were in equal balance, 2. Subsistence peasant farms where husbandry was prevalent, 3. Production-oriented peasant farms where grain-growing was prevalent.

Farmers in Kolárovo saw the productivity of their farm in terms of land size: "...the peasantry's thirst for land was above everything else, and not only farm mechanisation or house building, but also nutrition and dress were subordinated to it" (Gúta ...1992: 167).

The second field site of the research studying the traditional economic life of the Danube Lowland was Leľa⁶. Results of this study were published in 1994, as the eight volume of the series *Népismereti Könyvtár*. Leľa, a small village, is located in the north-eastern corner of the Danube Lowland, in the valley of the lower flow of the Ipeľ River. The results of this research differed from the Kolárovo example. In the examined period, Leľa's population was 500 and two thirds of its land were not used as arable land but there were forests, meadows used as pasture, vine and vegetable gardens. Around one third of Leľa's population could make a living from the land. The main aim of families working on farms was to gain sufficient food for the whole year. Farms involved both agriculture and husbandry and were all tied to the market. However, this did not mean large-scale production of a specific product, it meant rather a way of complementing the income of peasants by selling small portions of diverse agricultural products. The main part of their income was not spent on the purchase of more land but on the purchase of highly appreciated folk costumes: "In the scale of values in the village principal standard was the richness of folk dresses" (*Leléd Hagymányos Gazdálkodása* 1994: 163).

The third field site was Trhová Hradská⁷. Fieldwork started here in the first half of 1990s and is not yet completed.

In the fourth stage of our research project the traditional economic life of two big villages neighbouring Kolárovo to the north, Vlčany and Neded⁸, was examined. These two villages

grew into each other in recent decades and each has a population around 4,000. In the examined period (first half of the 20th century) two thirds of the population was Reformed and one third Roman Catholic. Both communities had developed on the eastern side of the Váh river, while in the case of Neded the cadastral land also overreached on the western side. The wet, often-flooded land of the villages was influenced not only by the Váh river but also by two other smaller rivers, the Dudváh and the Čierna Voda. Among agricultural products, other than cereals, potato was an important product. On the hilly parts of the land villagers gradually started to grow plants which were more labour-intensive but at the same time more profitable. These were onions, carrots, parsley, early potato and on suitable soil, cabbage. Through the exchange of these vegetables they obtained grain and necessary cash. Already in the mid 19th century these two villages were famous for their vegetables. Elek Fényes characterised Vičany in the following way: "They intensively trade with cabbage, which is extremely famous, then with onions, carrots and other garden vegetables. They keep cattle as well as horses" (Fényes 1856, II: 6). Moreover, we can read the followings about Neded: "Its land is extensive and fertile: abounding with grain, oats, barley, millet, maize, hay, reeds and so on. It has plenty of pastures and so they keep numerous cattle, horses and sheep. They trade with cabbages, onion and other vegetables in the same way as people from Vičany do" (Fényes 1856, II: 135). Along both sides of the Váh river there was a long strip of land excellent for gardening, running from the village of Zemné⁹ to Vičany. Here the soil was frequently and richly manured and cabbage-growing only occasionally alternated other vegetables (e.g. carrot, onion) for few years. "A hundred cabbages from this land had always cost one *forint* more than what a hundred cabbages from other lands had cost" (Fényes 1837, II: 258). The characteristics of this vegetable-growing land have never been sufficiently explored, however, there are plenty of descriptions in the ethnographic literature. Among so called "village-mocking" poems, superstitions and folk customs describing popu-

lar life in the village (collected and edited by József Bakos) we can also read this: “Even children say in Farkasd¹⁰: Buy carrots, parsley, onions!” (Bakos 1942: 32-33). Another poem mocks the Vlčany people:

In the church in Farkasd,
Even the priest says:
Buy carrots,
parsley, onions!
(Gágyor 1986: 73)

In Neded the carrot used to have a role in wedding customs: a stamp was carved from a carrot, then used to close the letter that was handed over to the groom by young males disguised as women, in order to buy out, symbolically, the wedding-guests. The groom “paid”, for opening the blocked road, wine and money (Bakos 1942: 42).

József Gágyor, in his village-mocking poems collected in the region of Mátyusföld¹¹, mentions that inhabitants of neighbouring villages used to call people from Vlčany “onion people”, while people from Neded were called “cabbage people”. A cabbage flower can also be found in the village crest of Neded.

Vlčany figures as a research field site in both the Hungarian and Slovakian ethnographic atlases and therefore, the characteristics of its traditional economic life have been mapped, too. In 1956, Tamás Hofer carried out ethnographic research in Neded during his survey of the types and spreading of Hungarian garden settlements (Hofer 1960: 331-349). According to military maps from the 19th century, the village lay on the western bank of the Váh, while its gardens were situated on the eastern bank. On the village side, there were vast community pastures, big cabbage fields and hayfields; on the eastern side, where the gardens lay, large cabbage fields and hayfields could be found. The overwhelming part of the arable land was also situated here, on the eastern side. Sheep-folds served for housing animals (mainly cows and horses) through the cold winter period. In the first half of the 20th century, intensive husbandry characterised both Neded and Vlčany. Pasturing husbandry was gradually pushed into

the background, first in Vľčany, where pastures were few. On grazing grounds in Neded, villagers also accepted animals from other villages, thus also from Vľčany. Vegetable growing and the extremely expanded marketing, carriage and goods exchange had a great influence on husbandry. As a consequence, horse-raising in particular grew significantly. Those, who in Vľčany and in Neded had at least one hectare of land, could live off of vegetable growing. Those who “moved a lot”, i.e. were very active in trade attending local markets, were well off. “When everyone will stay at home in Neded and Vľčany, that will mean the end of the world,” people used to say. Until the 1950s, apart from big landholders possessing thirty or more *holds*¹², all members of the different economic groups (small-holders with two horses, poor farmers with only one horse, tenants and the bag-trading destitute), used to attend the markets and barter. This activity went on through the whole year, except in the coldest winter days and in the busy periods, such as during spring sowing, harvesting or threshing. This trading and bartering activity spread not only over the northern part of the Danube Lowland and the Danube region reaching Budapest, but also, to a lesser extent, over the Transdanubian region, from Győr to lower Bakony (in Hungary). The most frequented market places were naturally towns and villages of northern part of the Danube Lowland and of the Danubian region, from Komárno to Budapest. Because of the lack of roads and the bad conditions of those existing, until 1918 it was more convenient to travel on the Váh river, sailing on small ships or barges. In the beginning of the 20th century, the number of barges in Vľčany ranged from thirty to fifty, in Neded it reached eighty. The so-called barge-trading was also popular. Its direction was the region along the Danube and the Váh, where it supplied settlements with vegetables within a 4-5 km distance from the riverside.

Eight researchers took part in the survey in Vľčany and Neded. The results of this research were presented in October 23, 2001 in Neded and we hope to publish the collected material soon.

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¹ *Podunajská Nížina* in Slovak, *Kisalföld* in Hungarian.

² I mention here only some of the names: Marietta Boros, Ema Drábiková, Mihály Görcsös, Eleonóra Sándor.

³ Quotation used in the text are all translated by M. Pappová.

⁴ This is the list of researchers and their particular fields of interest: Endre Nagy studied geographical names and land use, Béla Angyal did research on husbandry, Ilona Gudmon on agriculture, Izabella Danter on abusive economy, Ida Gaál, Eleonóra Sándor and Éva Beke on fruit/vegetable-farming and wine-growing, Lídia Varga on popular nutrition and finally, József Liszka and Beňo Molnár studied the problem of barter.

⁵ *Gúta* in Hungarian.

⁶ *Leléd* in Hungarian.

⁷ *Vásárút* in Hungarian.

⁸ *Farkasd* and *Negyed* in Hungarian.

⁹ *Szímő* in Hungarian.

¹⁰ *Farkasd* is the Hungarian name of Vlčany. The cited words were told in Hungarian in the original.

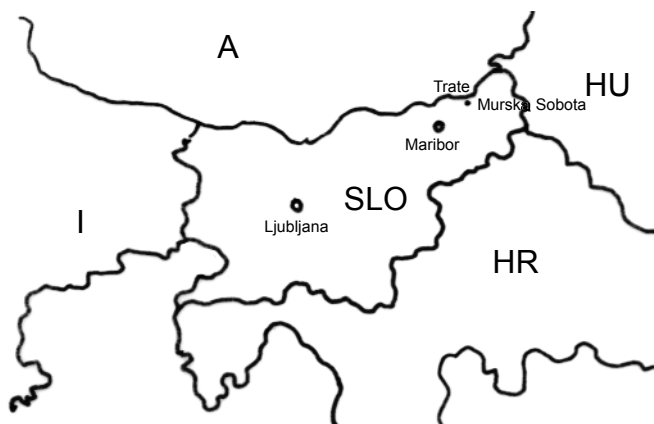
- ¹¹ Hungarian name indicating a region situated on the northern side of the Small Danube river. For a more precise definition of the region in question see József Liska in this volume.
- ¹² One cadastral *hold* corresponds to 0.414 ha.

4. Destinies of the post-war colonists in the village of Trate: Unintended phenomena in the appropriation of public spaces

Rajko Muršič

»Takšen drek v moji glavi
sem bolj na robu a ne zapiram oči
sem za domovino sem za sistem
a sploh ne razumem toliko stvari.«
Butli

[Such shit in my head
I'm more at the edge, but won't close my eyes
I'm for my country, I'm for the system
But don't understand so many things.]



Introduction

It is impossible to understand the present without consideration of the past, but it is also misleading to consider the

future in terms of a destiny determined by the past. If there were no socialist revolution, there would be no specific present in Eastern Europe. However, the future of this part of the world is in no way determined by its socialist experience. If we are trying to comprehend the turbulence of the recent period in this part of the world, we have to consider the specific ontology of the long-term, middle-term and short-term past. Their disjunctive “presence” is not only a matter of profound interpretations or the “actual” scope of their impact. In the public sphere, it is also the result of various kinds of analysis and comparison.

The “real” events have happened in the past, but there is no single “objective” past in the present. We always have to deal with many historical interpretations derived from it. Furthermore, the past is itself plural: as much as it is experienced, it differs as much as different personal experiences. Every agency has his/her/its own past.

If we use the term history as the overall category describing our past, we can easily miss unrecorded, unnoticed and solipsist experiential facets of everyday life and individual life (hi)stories, as well as historically unrecorded or forgotten remains of ancient times present in habitus. Although our perceptual apparatus (including senses of taste, see Bourdieu 1984) is shaped socially, perception is experienced individually. Therefore, it is not entirely solipsist (as early Wittgenstein has warned – see 1976). It is essentially individual. That is why it is sometimes good to individualise both, the past and history.

Post-socialism is our reality, and we should neither simplify nor mystify it (I expressed my views on “transition” in Muršič 1999). The case I will present here is typical in some ways but atypical in others. The village of Trate, in which I have been doing fieldwork between 1993 and 1998, witnessed changes throughout the 20th century. Between 1901 and 2001, the villagers lived in five different countries and experienced four different political systems (including Nazi occupation/annexation and Yugoslav socialism); they were involved in several waves of emigration, immigration, expul-

sion and colonisation; almost the entire population was replaced at least twice and the villagers faced modernisation and other radical economic changes as well.

Trate was transformed from an almost entirely agricultural village into a typical village that represents the Slovene urban-rural continuum (on the term see Ravbar 1989). Last but not least, the village hosted the legendary Slovene alternative rock club and several local punk rock groups. The latter was in fact the reason of my interest in the village. The development of a local "scene" in such a village was a natural experiment reflecting general processes of "globalisation" in one particular location.

Although I visited the village – and its famous youth/rock club – for the first time in the middle eighties I did fieldwork much later, in the post-socialist nineties. Can the localised fieldwork experience bring some new light to the specificity of post-socialism? Definitely, although my observations would hardly prove any substantial impact of the political change on the everyday life of the villagers, especially not with regard to younger villagers living their everyday life in the eternal present (these observations confirm the experiences of an observer of the Russian youth in the nineties – see Markovitz 2000).

The only immediately recognisable breaks were connected to public life, beginning with the closing of the village club in 1994, employment problems and regressive changes in the Slovene ideoscape (on the term see Appadurai 1990) in general. I will describe them in more detail later.

Naturally, there were other, more favourable changes as well, starting with basic political, individual freedoms and civil rights, improvement of the conditions of everyday life and individual living standard with availability of new commodities, equipment and materials. In contrast to the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, political and economic changes in Slovenia were neither rapid nor radical, but rather evolutionary and gradual. Transformation was slow and is even now not yet fully completed, especially concerning the privatisation of the banks, insurance companies and some major

industrial facilities. After all, Yugoslav socialism had itself introduced many elements of the market economy and private initiative in the sixties, however restricted this development may have been.

Another distinctive feature of the Slovene (or, more generally, Yugoslav) transformation and the fall of communism was the dissolution of the federal state and the following descent into war. This was perhaps the only rapid change experienced in Slovenia. Therefore, it is rather difficult to distinguish between the end of socialism and the dissolution of the former federal state (on that point see Muršič 2000a).

The village of Trate in the turbulent twentieth century

Trate is a village in northeast Slovenia, at the border with Austria. It is situated on the small hills above the southern banks of the river Mura which forms the border between the two countries. The region was colonised in the Middle Ages, when the castle Upper Mureck was built on the hill above the river. On the northern bank of the river Mura, the borough Mureck (Cmurek) became a local trade, traffic and administrative centre. Since the late Middle Ages it had been settled mostly by a German speaking population. The region was a part of the Styrian Dukedom (Land), integrated in the Habsburg Monarchy for more than a millennium. The village of Trate happened to become the southernmost village with a German speaking population in Styria. Although many townspeople in the southern part of Styria used the German language in everyday communication, and many villagers north of the present-day border between the Slovene and the Austrian part of Styria spoke Slovene, Trate was located exactly at the boundary between the Slovene and German speaking population of Styria. In the nineteenth century, the majority of the nearly 400 villagers of Trate (German *Wiesenbach*) spoke German language, while in the neighbouring village, Zgornja Velka, the villagers spoke Slovene (see, e. g., Krempf 1845; Krones 1879; Specijalni 1893; Beg

1905; Gawalowski 1914; Mell and Pirchegger 1914; Janisch 1979, 1980; Grafenauer 1994).

After a relatively peaceful first decade of the twentieth century, with only some latent conflicts provoked by the attempts of the recently emerged German- and Slovene-speaking elites from the area to impose general education either in the German or Slovene language, the First World War ended with the disappearance of the Austrian/Hungarian Monarchy. In the region, many new states and borders emerged.

The northern border between what remained of the Austrian part of the Habsburg monarchy and the new Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (preceded for two months in October and November 1918 by the State of the Slovenes, Croats and Serbs) was finally determined in the Treaty in St. Germain in 1920. The new border at the river Mura (German *Mur*) cut the borough Cmurek (German *Mureck*) from its southern surroundings, and, of course, broke the ties between relatives and inhabitants on both sides, affecting the German and Slovene speaking population the same way. Until 1923, the villagers from Trate still went to the parochial Catholic church across the river in Cmurek, but later they were incorporated into the parish Marija Snežna in Zgornja Velka. Communications and contacts across the river remained lively, but the state border was a new, crucial fact.

Some German-speaking people of the region became anxious because of the newly established South-Slav state, especially regarding military service in the "Serbian" army. With the uncertain economic and political situation, the anxiety grew. Therefore, some German-speaking farmers sold their property and moved to Austria or Germany. People from Prekmurje, the nearby region which was annexed to Slovenia (The Kingdom) after the WWI from the Hungarian part of the empire, bought the property and began to resettle the region. In Trate, some eight families (from 50 altogether) sold their property in the twenties and thirties.

Nevertheless, the majority of German-speaking farmers remained in the village of Trate and the surrounding area. In

the thirties, they gradually began to accept and support the Nazi ideology, massively joining the organisation *Kulturbund* (which was illegal till the late 1940). This organisation actually paved the way for German (and Austrian) occupation of the Yugoslav Kingdom in April 1941. After 1938, they openly started to provoke local Slovene inhabitants and representatives of the state with demonstrations in favour of Adolf Hitler and his growing Reich. Such demonstrations (called *Aufmarsch*) were turned into violent riots in the village of Trate only a few days before Yugoslavia was attacked and occupied.

In 1941, the local Nazis drew up lists of people who were to be expelled to Croatia and Bosnia. From Trate these were the farmers (with all their families) who had moved to the village after WWI from Prekmurje, as well as some local intellectuals and members of the elite (for example a wealthy miller, a local priest and teachers). Their property was confiscated in the name of the German Reich and settled with people loyal to the Reich. From the village of Trate, 26 people (seven families) were expelled. In 1945, they returned to their homes. Soon after, those who sympathised with the Nazis suffered the same fate.

Building of the new world: Post-war colonisation and its unintended consequences

In January and February 1946, all members of the *Kulturbund*, i. e. mainly those Styrians who were recognised as the so-called *Volksdeutsche*, were expelled, together with their dependent children. Their property was confiscated in accordance with the act of reparations, which had been adopted during the war by the Slovene and Yugoslav partisan-led government. At the same time, within some hours or days, the same property was resettled by the new “colonists” (as they were officially called) from various parts of Slovenia.

Austria and Germany were obliged to accept the expelled people and provide them material assistance for their new start. It was a part of the international agreements and contracts between the occupying and occupied countries regard-

ing war reparations. Thus, some of the expelled members of the *Kulturbund* started anew with even better conditions in their new country. For example one of my informants explained that his relatives were so satisfied with their situation in Austria that they prayed for Tito's good fortune in their gratefulness. But not all of them were that lucky.

The position of the new colonists in the village of Trate was not favourable at all. They were given no more than 5 ha of property; they were obliged to work as farmers and were not allowed to take jobs in industry. It is obvious that this amount of property could not provide a substantial income. Therefore, they were expected to establish and join a new socialist agricultural co-operative. It is important to note, however, that land reform of this sort was not common in the socialist Yugoslavia. As a matter of fact, the socialist government did not try to confiscate all the farmers' property to establish larger co-operative ("communal") farms. Instead, it set limits on the size of individually owned properties. The implemented limitation on property ownership was 10 ha (plus no more than 20 ha of forests) which was, of course, quite small. The result was obvious: the process of rapid reduction of the number of people employed in agriculture (and the simultaneous industrialisation).

Only for a short period of time (between the late forties and early fifties), and only voluntarily were some co-operative farms established. Among them was the co-operative farm (*zadruga*) in Trate, established in 1949. Most of those who joined the farm were new colonists. After two years, many families left the co-operative, and the experiment finally came to a conclusion in 1954 (more on the destiny of the co-operative and colonists in Muršič 2000b: 370-377, 394-396).

In the late fifties many colonists returned the property back to the state or sold it. Only a few of them remained on their new farms and even most of these, eventually, found jobs in industry. Contrary to the pre-war agricultural settlers from Prekmurje, these people were not born as farmers. They were servants, bailiffs or people without any property, working occasionally for their landlords on fields or in vineyards. It was

difficult for them to adjust to the new situation. Only a few of the forty colonist families that settled in Trate in 1946 still live there today, and only one of the colonists in Trate still works as a farmer (even he was employed in a factory until his retirement). The majority of them moved to town to find work. Some of them simply did not have any luck – alcohol was a major problem which some of these families had to face.

In the post-war period, the shape of the village changed constantly. Many villagers found jobs either in the paper mill factory Paloma, in Sladki Vrh, or in the industrial town of Maribor. Others found work across the border in Austria. Some people moved out, other moved in. Among the newcomers were agricultural workers employed in the large agricultural economy (Kmetijska zadruha Lokavec-Trate, later incorporated in Agrokombinat Lenart). Some of them were highly educated agronomists. These agronomists and some police officers took up residence in apartments in the Upper Castle. Near the bridge over the river Mura, border administrative workers settled. Furthermore, in the sixties, two blocks were built across the road near the Lower Castle for employees in the asylum (psychiatric hospital) which was located in the building of the old castle. With the arrival of some other newcomers who built their houses in a typical suburban style, the professional and social structure of the village changed significantly.

The everyday life under socialism was not at all depressing or tragic. On the contrary, a new (socialist) public life was introduced to the village. Daily life improved progressively and radically. Gradually, the village received electricity, modern roads, water supply and other infrastructural necessities. With a better education, the younger generations were in a position to shape their own worlds with local cultural and leisure activities. The unintended new era had indeed begun: the era of popular culture (by “popular culture” I mean culture mediated by mass media) in the rural-urban continuum of the northeast Slovenia resulting from the gradual suburbanisation of the countryside.

Socialising differences based on the judgements of taste

What was important for the village in the second half of the century were venues of the newly emerged local “public culture”, i.e. public places where people – especially youth – would meet, communicate, socialise and participate in common activities. There were two castles in the village inherited from the feudal era. Both offered enough space for public activities.

In April, 1948, young women who belonged to the village branch of a women organisation (the so-called Anti-Fascist Women's Front) reconstructed and adapted the existing reception room in the Upper Castle. It functioned as a public hall for organising local leisure and cultural activities. The so-called Communal House (*Zadružni dom*) soon became the centre of the new village public culture. The village youth organised educational lectures, public celebrations, dance parties and theatre shows. Thus, in the fifties, extraordinarily lively and attractive amateur theatre scene developed in Trate and in the surrounding villages. Occasionally, in the venue of *Zadružni dom*, they also organised public consumption of radio, and later television programmes (the Slovene national television started to broadcast in 1958). Therefore, the emerging village “public culture” was essentially shaped both by post-war popular culture and by the “official” cultural policy of the authorities, which were striving to “improve” the general level of local culture. It can be said that the majority of villagers who grew up in the late forties and the early fifties, was socialised in quite a different “society” than their parents. Their leisure-time activities provided an opportunity to establish close ties with other individuals from their peer-group. These close relations – resulting in generational networks – still play an important role in the life of the village. They were important in the eighties, when community members decided to build a common water system and persuaded other villagers to join, or even more recently, when they organised celebrations within the framework of the local pensioners’ organisation.

In the late fifties, when the first post-war generation had reached maturity, the “Communal House” slowly sank into oblivion. As far as individual living standards were concerned, the most profound changes were initiated with the electrification of the village between 1955 and 1964. Among the first electric devices people purchased for their homes were radio receivers.

Slovene popular music of that time completely changed the musical taste of the younger generation(s). Almost immediately, they started to play music they heard on radio. It was a Slovene version of Alpine polka music, literally called “folk-entertainment” music (*narodno-zabavna glasba* in Slovene). The “*Ansambel bratov Avsenik*” which started to perform in 1953, became the most influential group – not only in Slovenia, but also in Germany, where they sold several million records under the name “Die Originale Oberkreiner Quintet” (on the group see Sivec 1999). The first such group in this region was “*Veseli fantje s Trate*” (The Joyful Fellows from Trate) who started to perform in local pubs and venues around 1958.

In the mid-sixties, this new generation – which was obviously enthusiastic about “folk-entertainment” – established a new public house in the village of Trate. This time they named it simply the “Youth Club” (*Klub mladih*). It was partly a result of the official policy of the socialist youth organisation in the early sixties. The village youth who ran the club was predominantly oriented toward leisure activities (organising dance parties and sport events). Some of them still played the above mentioned Slovene ethno-pop music with accordions, trumpets and guitars. But they also bought a gramophone and played popular Croatian, Italian and British pop songs (occasionally they would even play some records by the Beatles or the Rolling Stones). Needless to say, individuals from this generation still communicate and co-operate with each other – after all, they held the leading positions in the village in the nineties. Without the common experience of socialisation and shared preferences in taste, as well as in their basic world-view, they could have not found consensus

so easily. At the local level it was clear that the differences in taste were far from being unimportant (on the differences of taste and “class” see Bourdieu 1984).

The same story of decline occurred again in the seventies, when the local youth club ceased to operate. The generation, which led the venue in the sixties, grew up, got jobs, married, and, subsequently, lost interest in meeting in the club.

After a few years, however, it reappeared once more. In November 1979, the following generation of the local youth established a new club. This time it was named “*Mladinski klub Trate*” (The Youth Club of Trate) and, later, became the famous Disco Trate. In the eighties, the club became widely known, thanks to its radical punk orientation.

In the early eighties, the well-known local punk scene emerged in Trate with five punk rock groups, which started to rehearse in the club. Within the framework of the local branch of the socialist youth organisation they regularly organised concerts and parties. It is important to add that younger women played a major role in the club. In 1986 and 1987, when people from the leading Slovene weekly, *Mladina*, regularly visited *Disco Fotogrupa M Trate*, the local venue became nationally known and important.

First punk rock groups in the area were established in 1979, in the villages of Trate and Selnica ob Muri (*Butli* and *Masakr*). In 1984, after they split up, the leading group from the scene in Trate, CZD (*Center za dehumanizacijo* – Centre for Dehumanisation), was established. The group is still active. Moreover, it became one of the legendary Slovene underground punk rock groups, regularly touring in Austria and Germany (on the group see Muršič 1995).

As might be expected, the scene in Trate declined in the early nineties. This time, the inevitable generation gap was not the only cause of its disappearance. The venue was closed due to its privatisation. In February 1994, the building of the mill was given back to the heirs of the pre-war owner. Denationalisation, as the process of the restitution of the nationalised property to the pre-war owners was known, final-

ly brought to an end not only socialism, but its unique (post)socialist “public culture” as well.

And this brings us into the seemingly turbulent last decade of the century. Trate is now a part of the typical north-east Slovene scenery within the urban-rural continuum, with well-designed, clean and neatly arranged suburban private houses. The most visible characteristics of the surroundings are the freshly mown lawns at the front of the private houses. CZD’s song entitled “*Pokozlane Trate*” (Vomiting Trate/Vomited lawns) throws an ironic light on the emerging small-townish Europeanism.

People in Trate were anxious about the changes following the fall of socialism and the economic crisis in the late eighties and the early nineties. Some of them searched for jobs in Austria or found other ways of earning some money. Generally, the situation is not too dismal, although the village is facing the problem of ageing and depopulation. If the paper mill, Paloma, in the neighbouring community of Sladki Vrh goes bankrupt, the fate of the people around Trate would become uncertain.

Thankfully, this is not the end of the story. The semi-rural area near the border is a place with a highly developed alternative culture. The mature scene – led by the middle-age rockers, with the support of some younger people – simply moved to another venue in the village of Ceršak, some 10 km from Trate. Under the leadership of a member of CZD, Dušan Hedl, they established a genuine cultural centre in a private house near the border.

Eternal underground: A new public culture and private initiative

The alternative rock scene in Trate came to an end when the venue in the old mill was given back to the pre-war owners. The Act of Denationalisation, passed in 1991, was among the typical counter-revolutionary acts with which a new post-communist elite was made. Its members were heirs of those individuals whose property was confiscated or nationalised after WWII. The policy of giving the pre-war property back to

its former owners “in kind”, not in shares, caused new social injustice. The youth and rock club in Trate was not the only victim of this “denationalisation”.

Alternative and local public culture had to adjust to the new situation – or to disappear. The first apparent problem for alternative culture was the finding of venues. In the nineties, vital civil society movements of the eighties had lost their meaning. However, the struggles of alternative movements continued. In two main cities of Slovenia, Ljubljana and Maribor, rebellious youth occupied empty army barracks. These “squats”, which were occupied in 1994, are now centres of a new Slovene alternative culture. Some youth clubs and other venues survived and continue to struggle against the dominant system – now commercialised capitalism – within the so-called “liberated territories”.

The alternative culture thus faces the new rules of the market, often existing and producing under awful conditions.

In smaller towns and villages in Slovenia, the situation is sometimes favourable and sometimes quite unfavourable. The scene in Ceršak is becoming more and more important. In a reconstructed private house, the members of CZD built a club and a gallery, made a recording studio and equipped an office for the cultural institutions which were established in accordance with the new legislation: the society “*Zid na meji*” (The Wall at the Frontier) and the private non-profit organisation “*Subkulturni azil*” (Subculture Asylum) with the record label Front Rock and the publishing house Frontier. It seems that private initiatives of this kind can also aid in the preservation of resisting alternatives to capitalism. We shall see.

Local alternative scenes were inevitable unintended consequences of the socialist project. It is more or less obvious that also capitalism initiates its own unintended phenomena. Capitalism is perhaps the most efficient political and economic system so far, but that does not mean that it cannot devolve into new forms of hegemony and usurpation.

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Interethnic spaces

5. A village on the ethnic periphery. The case of Dlhá nad Váhom, southern Slovakia.¹

Károly Tóth



Introduction

The present study attempts to identify what forms of natural assimilation are present on the ethnic periphery². Apart from external factors and influences, what are the causes for the slow, but definite change of language/ culture/ nation, which is usually defined as natural assimilation?

This type of assimilation does normally not attract the attention of the public. The term indicates an autonomous process, in contrast to forcible assimilation, which occurs as

a result of external forces of power acting upon a given community in a defenceless position. The community, Dlhá nad Váhom³, which I would like to describe in this paper, without considering the broader social and political environment, is not in the situation of "power defencelessness". Its local leaders have never been so "Hungarian orientated" as in the last decade; in more than one electoral period the municipality was composed of persons with Hungarian nationality (during the last decade the representatives of the municipal office were members of the Hungarian parties). Moreover, it has a Hungarian school (to be more precise, its Hungarian school has been reestablished), the village has a Hungarian priest, etc. The political climate, apart from a couple of years, has been very positive.

In spite of all this, the process of natural assimilation has begun and has been continuing for some years now. According to some, this process cannot be resisted.

Why do local inhabitants think that the ethnic structure of their village is changing to a noticeable extent in their everyday? Somewhere in the depths, landslide-like processes are taking place that are changing even the lives of the "strongest Hungarian" families.

Or are the community's members solely witnessing a natural process? Is it only our intensified sensibility that makes us experience the formation of a multicultural community as the loss of our own ethnic identity? The Hungarian population in Slovakia demographically is at its lowest level in many years. Although recently the village's population has shown a slight increase, it is the proportion of the nationalities within the community that is changing.

My survey sought answers to these questions and even if I did not find clear answers to all the problems, I achieved very instructive results which might indicate long-term impacts.

The results of the national census in 2001 lend a sad actuality to this study. The proportion of Hungarians in Slovakia has fallen from 10,7% to 9,7%. This means a decrease by almost 47,000 Hungarians. The population

decrease of the Galanta and Šaľa districts (Dlhá nad Váhom belongs to the Šaľa district) is around 4% on a national level.⁴ It seems clear that the population decrease is mainly caused by assimilation. A more accurate analysis of this phenomenon will be possible only after obtaining precise local data.

The present study can contribute to an understanding of the local and general processes of population decrease.

The aim of the study

An ethnic and linguistic survey of Dlhá nad Váhom took place in December 2000, within the framework of the international research project, *Language border at the turn of the millennium*, organised by the Minority Studies Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Kisebbségkutató Intézet MTA, Budapest) and the Forum Minority Research Institute (Slovakia).⁵ The aim of the research was to examine the “meaning of the ethnic and/or language border among the Hungarian and the neighbouring populations” on a micro-level. The leading question was: how do the ethnic micro-processes influence the ethnic borders marked out by the official statistical data? The research was planned on two levels: on the regional and on the local level.

In our region the research was undertaken on the local level. We filled in questionnaires and analysed the data received in the following three villages: Veľká Mača (Galanta district), Kráľová nad Váhom⁶ and Dlhá nad Váhom (Šaľa district).

The research was based on questionnaires; we did not address our questions to the inhabitants but to a committee. With the help of this committee we sought to examine language use of the families and their choice of language of instruction⁷. The data received were then compared with the statistical numbers in order to complement the picture that the statistical data indicated.

The five-member committee was comprised of the local representatives from the village who were well acquainted with the community's reality.

The questionnaire method was complemented by a couple of interviews as a control for our conclusions.⁸

With our survey we intended to grasp those processes which remained hidden in the background and through which the roots of the assimilation processes could be revealed.

The questions of the data form related to individual households following the house numbers in the village. I asked for the number of household members, their first language (mother tongue), language use within and outside the house and the choice of language of instruction. We divided the data obtained into sections (these sections were: grandparents, parents, children of pre-school age, of elementary school age, of secondary school age, other) (see Table 1).

Table 1: Structure of data form

House number						
Total number of persons						
First language (mother tongue)	Grandparents	Parents	Preschool age children	Elementary school age children	Secondary school age children	Other
Hungarian						
Slovak						
Mixed						
Other						
Language use						
Within the house						
Public						
Choice of language of instruction	Kindergarten	Element. school	High school	Technical school	Industrial/trade school	University
Hungarian						
Slovak						

The category “Other” included one-member households with completed education, over age 18. This category was added additionally to the questionnaire, since a significant part of the population did not fall into the already existing categories. Similarly, the “University” category was also added later.

In both cases I made a second survey in the beginning of January 2001.

In the case of the first language, the “Mixed” category proved to be unnecessary, as the three categories, “Hungarian”, “Slovak” and “Other” fully covered the eventual answers.

Language use “Within the House” refers to the use of this or that language in private, i.e. in the household. “Public” language use refers to use in streets, shops, church, municipal offices and so on. Language use in the workplace was not considered since information on this was difficult to obtain.

During the analyses I regarded a family as fully Hungarian or fully Slovak if the family demonstrated a Hungarian or a Slovak picture regarding all three categories: first language, language use and choice of language of instruction. If a deviation appeared in any of these categories, I qualified the family as a “Mixed family”. The only exception was the choice of university, since in the examined period there were no Hungarian universities in (Czecho)Slovakia.

As it appears from the questionnaire, we did not ask about the nationality (ethnicity) of the persons. It would not have been correct as we based our research on indirect data, i.e. on the opinions of the committee.⁹ We wanted to know solely that information which was evident for an external observer or which was generally known in the village. Compilation of the data forms took place in December 2000; the additional questioning and specifying took place in the first days of January.

The answers were recorded on printed sheets and then analysed on a computer.

In our survey we examined 427 building plots (house numbers).¹⁰ We found 330 houses in the village; the number of inhabited houses, i.e. the number of households, was 278. We recorded the data of 878 persons.

Analysis of the questionnaires occurred in January-March, 2001.

Table 2: Number of population and inhabited houses in the village

Year	2000 (official data)	2000 Dec. (survey)
Population	883	878
Number of inhabited houses	285	278

Table 2 is indicative of the accuracy of our survey. The first column presents the official summarised data of the municipal office from 2000; the data in the second column show the results of my survey. Thus, our research can be considered precise regarding both the size of the population and the number of households.

The questionnaires were filled in the basis of the unanimous opinion of the committee members. It should be noted, that the members were well acquainted with almost all households, and, in case of disputes, they found an agreement without delay.¹¹

Description of the village

Dlhá nad Váhom lies on the left bank of the Váh river, between Veča (part of the nearest town, Šaľa) and the village of Šoporňa. The population of this small village oscillates between 800 and 1100 inhabitants. Except for the period immediately after the Second World War, the proportion of Hungarians closely followed the changes of the general population. This is demonstrated in Graph 1.

Graph 1: Change in the Hungarian population and in the overall population of Dlhá nad Váhom in the period between 1910 and 2000

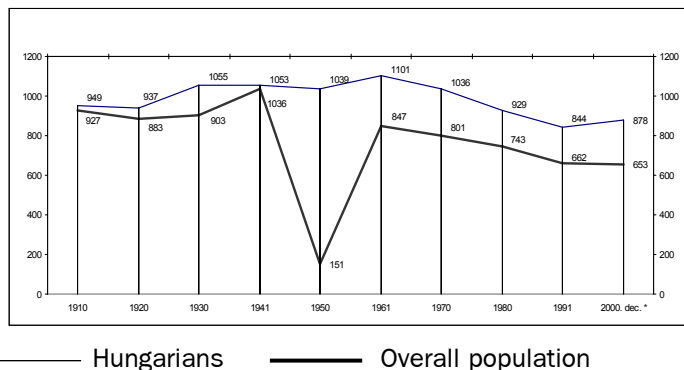


Table 3: Slovaks and other (non-Hungarian) nationalities in the village

Year	1919	1930	1941	1991	2000. Dec.*
Population	959	1055	1053	844	878
Slovaks	12	135	15	173	218
Other	16	12	11	9	7

*These data do not indicate the nationality of the persons but their use of language (data collected during our survey).

Unfortunately, the national census data from the years 1950, 1961, 1970 and 1980 only report the size of the overall population and the proportion of Hungarians. However, the difference between the two numbers does not equal the number of Slovaks since it omits the presence of other nationalities. For this reason, it is very difficult to have a precise view of the population changes from the statistical data, in particular with regard to the proportion of Slovaks and of other nationalities. We can only state with certainty that the first significant change in the ethnic structure of the community occurred in the 1920s. This is peculiar, since the villagers do not recollect any memory of persons settling in the village, or of the arrival of any foreign, outsider officials. The probable explanation for this phenomenon can be that many inhabitants declared Slovak nationality. This is proved also by the fact that in the census after 1938 (when the village was re-annexed to Hungary; census data from 1941) the proportion of Hungarians in the village almost precisely returns to the previous state. In the decades after the “Re-Slovakisation”¹², the proportion of the Slovaks in the village presumably stabilised above the level of the 1920s.

In the years after the end of the Second World War, the population number was not affected by resettlements, deportations and exchange of population, since the entire village Re-Slovakised and no family was resettled within the framework of the population exchange project. There were two or three families who ran away from the village; however, they did so mainly because they possessed Hungarian citizenship.

The ethnic structure of the village became stabilised in the 1980s and 1990s, and up to the present days it shows the same picture with small divergences.

The proportion of other nationalities in the village is very small. In the period before the Second World War, 16 persons of other nationalities lived in the village; these were mainly families of Jewish nationality. Only one Jewish family (2 persons) returned to the village from the war. Presently, persons of other nationalities (German, Czech, Ukrainian, etc.) come to the village only through marriages.

It is peculiar that the village has no residents of Roma nationality. They did not live here either in the past. It is even more interesting if we consider that in nearby Veča (only 2 km distant from the village) Roma lived in a separate quarter and their settlement actively continued during the 1980s. They occasionally came to Dlhá nad Váhom to beg or to play music, but they never settled there. This can explain why today the mass migration of the Roma population is avoiding the village, as they normally prefer to settle down in places where a Roma community already exists or where Roma families live. The only memory of Roma living in the village refers to a family in the beginning of the 1940s, but as the villagers say, they too “were wandering Roma” and they “soon left”.

Regarding the denominational composition, the village’s population is predominantly Roman Catholic. In 1991, 743 persons declared themselves Roman Catholic; the number of persons with no faith exceeded the number of Protestants (25 being the former, 12 the latter) and 62 persons were of unknown denomination. The only church in the village is Catholic, built in the 19th century. It has always had a priest, living in the vicarage near the village’s school. The mass is conducted in Hungarian.

The village has a Hungarian and a Slovak elementary school with classes from the first to the fourth grade. In 2000 the Hungarian school had 20 pupils; the Slovak school had 10 pupils. There is a kindergarten as well.

In the past, the majority of the population worked in the local agricultural cooperative. The cooperative still exists;

however, the number of private agricultural enterprises is also increasing. In the beginning of the 1960s, a large chemical factory, called DUSLO, was built near to the village. Today, it employs around 4500 people from the nearby towns and villages. With regard to employment, the DUSLO and the district town, Šaľa has a significant role. Because of its vicinity it also provides the community with the necessary infrastructures (medical, post, train, etc.).

In 2000, there were around 78 unemployed persons in the village.

Impressions, opinions

According to the committee's evaluation, in the recent period (particularly in the 1990s), the village has witnessed significant changes. The ethnic composition of the community has been changing.

When searching for the causes of this change the committee members mentioned first of all large-scale immigration, out-migration of the intelligentsia¹³ and social insecurities.

In September 2000, at the parents' request, a Slovak class was opened in the then solely Hungarian kindergarten, for which there was no precedent. This happened in spite of the fact that the presence of the Slovak parties and cultural organisations in the village is insignificant. True, at the same time the activity of the Hungarian cultural organisations was also inexistent. The committee found this situation desperate and the members waited with much expectation for the results of the latest census.

The results of our survey only partly support these presumptions. In spite of the measurable assimilative processes, the overall image of the village is still showing a Hungarian picture (with regard to the ethnic structure, use of language and the choice of language of instruction, it is still a Hungarian community). However, in the course of our survey we observed tendencies that indicate that in a ten years time radical changes in the ethnic structure of the communi-

ty may occur. These tendencies are already measurable in the present if we consider official declarations of nationality.

Age structure

The proportion of Hungarians in the village at the time of our survey compared to the data from 1991 fell from 78,44% to 74,37%, while the overall population increased from 844 to 883. The proportion of Slovaks grew from 20,50% to 24,83% and the proportion of other nationalities practically did not change. It has to be added that we deducted the person's nationality from his/her use of language and this can differ from what he/she declares as his/her nationality in the census.

It has to be said, as well, that in some cases the committee was unsure in deciding the nationality of the person in question. This happened particularly in cases of ethnically mixed marriages and of young people. In their opinion, marriage or the family's network of friends are decisive factors in determining which direction a family or its branch will move towards regarding its nationality in the future. The answers in these cases sounded like: "...it depends on whether he marries a Slovak or a Hungarian girl", "who knows where he will end up later..." etc.

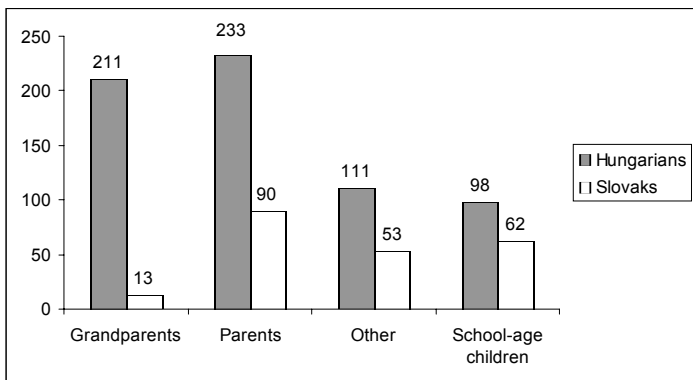
From Table 4 it is evident that the population of the village is divided between those whose first language is Hungarian and those whose first language is Slovak (75%: 25%). No child in the category "Other" (other than Hungarian or Slovak first language) is carrying on his/her parents' first language.

The age structure of the Hungarian-speaking population and of the Slovak-speaking population is completely different and it indicates that the Hungarian-speaking group makes up an ageing population (see Grandparents). The proportion of Slovak-speaking parents is significant, and the proportion of Slovak-speaking young people (school age) is rather high.

Table 4: The village's population according to first language and age group

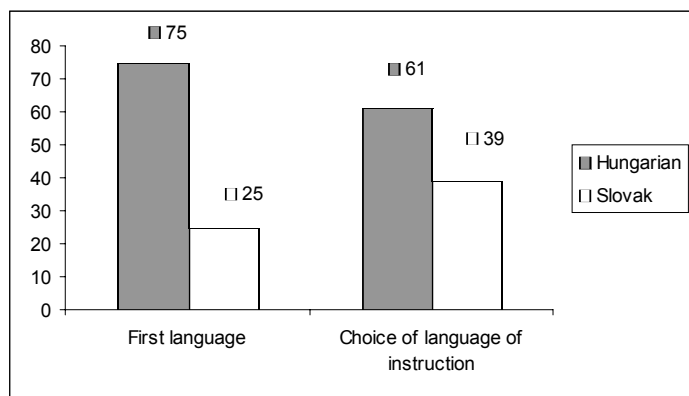
		%
Population total	878	100,00
<i>Hungarian as first language</i>	653	74,37
Grandparents	211	32,31
Parents	233	35,68
Pre-school age	29	4,44
Elementary school age	40	6,13
Secondary school age	29	4,44
Other	111	17,00
<i>Slovak as first language</i>	218	24,83
Grandparents	13	5,96
Parents	90	41,28
Pre-school age	19	8,72
Elementary school age	26	11,93
Secondary school age	17	7,80
Other	53	24,31
<i>Other</i>	7	0,80
Grandparents	2	28,57
Parents	5	71,43
Pre-school age	0	0,00
Elementary school age	0	0,00
Secondary school age	0	0,00
Other	0	0,00

Graph 2: Age structure of Hungarians and Slovaks and the proportion between them



The phenomenon of ageing will be an evident sign of natural assimilation at the moment when the ethnic structure of the next generation will demonstrate significant changes to the advantage of the Slovak-speaking population. And this is our case.

Graph 3: Proportion between first language and choice of education language in the case of Hungarians and Slovaks (%)



While the proportion between the two groups using Hungarian or Slovak as their first language is 75 to 25, the proportion regarding the choice of language of instruction shows a significant difference: 61 to 39. In other words, a part of the Hungarian group opts for the Slovak schools when choosing the language of instruction for their children.

Language use

When examining the use of language, our aim was to understand in what ways language use in a domestic environment (in the family and household) differs from language use in public (on the street, in shops, in official affairs etc.). The questionnaire sheet enabled the grouping of received data on the basis of age so as to make the comparison of the resulting numbers possible. Table 5 shows what the domestic and the public language use is like in the individual age groups and in the entire population.

Table 5: Indicators of language use

Use of language	Grand-parents		Parents		Pre-school age		Element. school age		Secondary school age		Alone living adults		Total	
		%		%		%		%		%		%		%
<i>Within house</i>	223	%	328	%	47	%	66	%	44	%	163	%	871	100,00
Hungarian	203	91,03	217	66,16	29	61,70	43	65,15	34	77,27	111	68,10	637	73,13
Slovak	18	8,07	99	30,18	15	31,91	22	33,33	9	20,45	51	31,29	214	24,57
Mixed	2	0,90	12	3,66	3	6,38	1	1,52	1	2,27	1	0,61	20	2,30
<i>Public</i>	221	%	328	%	46	%	66	%	45	%	163	%	869	100,00
Hungarian	203	91,86	231	70,43	31	67,39	45	68,18	36	80,00	116	71,17	662	76,18
Slovak	14	6,33	78	23,78	12	26,09	19	28,79	9	20,00	43	26,38	175	20,14
Mixed	4	1,81	19	5,79	3	6,52	2	3,03	0	0,00	4	2,45	32	3,68

As the above data demonstrate the community has still a strong Hungarian character. This is proved also by the fact that approximately the same number of people use the Hungarian language both at home and in public (the same thing cannot be said in the case of towns). This relates to the fact that the social life of the village still requires knowledge of the Hungarian language. However, it can also be explained by the fact that the Hungarian speakers are relatively old, i.e. there is no other possibility to communicate with them or the Hungarian language is the easier communication form.

It is very difficult to define the assimilation process on the basis of language use. The use of language presumably serves solely as a means for social contact both in the domestic and public sphere, and at this level it bears no character of identity expression.

Therefore, the interpretation of these data has to be done very cautiously. A precise evaluation of these data would only be possible if similar surveys would have been done previously.

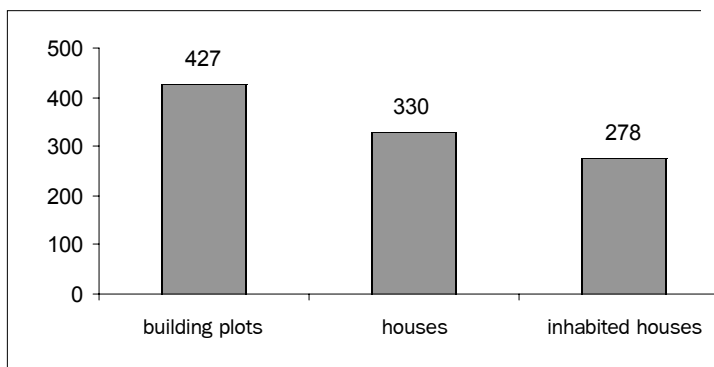
However, with regard to language use it has to be mentioned that significant differences can be observed today compared to the situation twenty years ago. According to the interviewed persons, once (before the 1980s) it was unthinkable that a Slovak-speaking bride, or a person of another nationality who settled down in the village, would not immediately learn Hungarian. This is even more evident in the case of mixed marriages. Today the situation has radically changed: even in the case of a Slovak-speaking bride marry-

ing into a big Hungarian-speaking family, it is the family who adjusts itself to the bride with regard to the language used in the family. This means that knowledge of the Hungarian language has ceased to be a requirement, even though basic communication skills in Hungarian are commonly expected. At the same time, children's and grandchildren's language use and in particular the choice of language for their education is much more determined by the presence of the "married-in stranger" than it used to be.

"Empty houses"

If someone walks through the village today, he sees a flourishing, industrious and developing village. The municipal office does everything for providing the community with all the necessary services, such as gas, water and sewer. The inhabitants create new "streets" with their newly build or reconstructed houses. The outside observer does not normally notice that, in spite of this, only 278 from the overall 330 habitable houses are occupied (84%) (see Graph 4).

Graph 4: Proportion of building plots, houses and inhabited houses



This is obviously not a unique case; presumably in a large part of the region's villages the situation is similar irrespective of the ethnic structure of the community. Indeed, the problem is not interesting as a phenomenon, but it is interesting for its inner structure.

The principal aim of our survey was not to examine the inhabited and uninhabited houses. However, as we analysed the questionnaires, our attention was attracted by a peculiar phenomenon which we sought to interpret afterwards.

The problem of the houses is related to the above-mentioned phenomenon of extensive ageing. In our analysis we had the possibility to demonstrate the proportion of grandparents and parents living alone and to compare these numbers with the number of inhabited houses.

The results of our comparison are surprising: nearly 39% of the inhabited houses are populated by grandparents or parents living alone (i.e. without their descendants) and of these, 71% (27,7% in all) are grandparents (Table 6). This is a surprising result. A significant part of the village's houses and building plots is today for sale and this tendency will become only stronger in the following years.

Table 6: Proportion of persons living alone in the house

	Number	%
Inhabited houses	278	100,00
Grandparents living alone „A”	77	27,70
Parents living alone „B”	31	11,15
Total „C” (C=A+B)	108	38,85

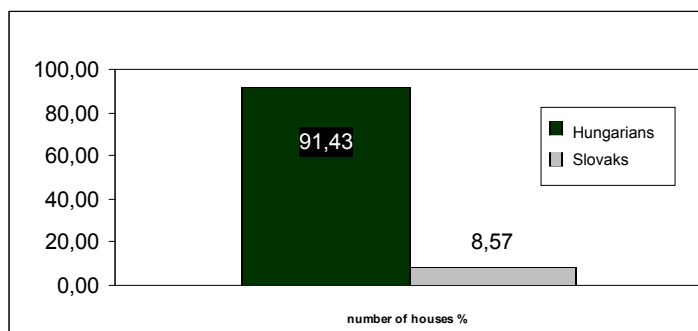
Dlhá nad Váhom lies on the ethnic periphery, in the neighbourhood of a developing, rather rich small town (Šaľa) with a population that is primarily Slovak-speaking. The purchase of building plots is threatening the village, as the town is expanding in its direction. The proportion of empty houses and houses inhabited by lone grandparents and parents reaches 50%. Considering present market prices this could provoke an earthquake-like wave of incoming population into the village, which can be held back only by similar situations

in nearby villages, by the moderate demand or by the over-supply of apartments/ houses.

There is great fear on the part of local authorities since they have no means to influence a potential process of this kind.

The ethnic relevance of the phenomenon is important as well, as can be seen on Graph 6:

Graph 6: Proportion of Hungarian and Slovak parents and grandparents living alone in the house



The proportion of Slovak-speaking and of Hungarian-speaking parents and grandparents living alone is 10:1. This means that the eventual settlers¹⁴ would take exclusively the place of the Hungarian-speaking population. Obviously, this could have significant influence on the community life and could intensify the assimilation processes. For an accurate evaluation we should know the age-structure of the population and this was not the subject of our survey. We can only assess that a similar process may take place in 10-20 years time.

This process will certainly radically change not only the ethnic composition of the community but also its present life

and development. The mass appearance of "strangers", be they Slovaks or Hungarians, can transform the community economically, culturally, socially and ethnically, for which the community is not prepared. We should also know the inheritance patterns among grandparents and parents, i.e. in what way inalienable property is inherited. Most children, when grown, live on their own, thus they are not in need of their parents' (grandparents') house. They may only need a building site or house for their children (the grandchildren), which is not a negligible fact, either.

On the other hand, it is a rather common custom that in the case of more than one heir the heirs prefer to sell the house or the building site in order to pay the siblings' parts by dividing the obtained sum. This behaviour is often justified by the financial conditions of the family. In other words, in order to be able to pay the siblings from the heritage, the heirs prefer selling the house or the building site to taking the house into possession and then financially compensating the siblings.

Undoubtedly, market considerations play the most important role in this case. It means that in order to obtain the highest profit the family sells the house as quickly as possible with no regards for whom the purchaser should be. This is a comprehensible viewpoint, after all. The only question is in what way these behavioural patterns will influence the social life and the ethnic structure of the community.

Mixed marriages and birth-rate

The high proportion of inter-ethnically mixed marriages is another indicator of the advanced stage of natural assimilation in Dlhá nad Váhom. True, the proportion of "Hungarian" marriages (where both husband and wife are ethnic Hungarians) is still over 50%, but also the proportion of "Mixed" marriages surpasses 31% (see Table 7).

Experience shows that mixed marriages in the long-term do not bring about "healthy" and maybe desirable bilingualism or biculturalism; on the contrary they often result in the

rapid abandonment of Hungarian identity, taking place in the course of one generation. Mixed marriages are also the driving forces for assimilation processes (such as the suppression of the Hungarian language in domestic use, the choice of Slovak as the language of instruction in the school, etc.).

Since all of this occurs “within the family”, the environment (family members in this case) is much more tolerant towards the whole process. For an outside observer this process of gradual language change becomes visible only years later, for example at the time of choosing the language in which children will be educated. At this moment the process is already irreversible. In this context it does not appear to be a distortion if the local people see and perceive mixed and Slovak marriages as the same category. If we compare the proportion of Hungarian marriages with the proportion of mixed and Slovak marriages, the result is nearly 50% to 50% (see Table 7).

Table 7: Division of marriages

Marriages	Number	%
Number of marriages	142	100,00
Both spouses are Hungarian	76	53,52
Both spouses are Slovak	21	14,79
Mixed marriages	45	31,69
Mixed and Slovak marriages together	66	46,48

Similar conclusions can be drawn from the examination of the ethnic structure of the households. I indicated earlier that I used a very strict system of criteria in separating Hungarian households from Slovak households. If all members of the household were ethnic Hungarians, with an everyday use of the Hungarian language and with Hungarian as the language for their children’s education, I categorised the family as a Hungarian household. If all members were ethnic Slovaks with everyday use of the Slovak language and with Slovak as the chosen language of instruction, I categorised it as a Slovak household. If any of the members showed a diver-

gence from any of these criteria I considered the whole household a mixed household (Table 8).

Table 8: Ethnic structure of households

Households	Number	%
Total	278	100,00
Hungarian	188	67,63
Slovak	20	7,19
Mixed	70	25,18

If we deduct those households which are inhabited by a single Hungarian-speaking person from the total number of the Hungarian households ($188-96=92$ and we do similarly in the case of the Slovak households ($20-9=11$) we obtain a more realistic picture. The proportion numbers alter significantly (Table 9).

Table 9: The ethnic structure of households without "one-member households"

Households	Number	%
Total	173	100,00
Hungarian	92	53,18
Slovak	11	6,36
Mixed	70	40,46

Thus, if we sum the Slovak and mixed marriages (81), the proportion between this category and the Hungarian households turns out to be 46% to 53%.

The increasing number of persons choosing Slovak as the language of instruction for their children's education (described above) here becomes clear. However, the most striking influence of mixed marriages is indicated by the parental request for a Slovak class in the local kindergarten (occurred in 2000).

In addition to this wish and the following opening of a Slovak class, the proportion of children in kindergarten and in grades 1-4 of the elementary school is remarkable, too (Table 10).

Table 10: Ethnic structure of children attending the village kindergarten and the schools¹⁵

	Number of children	%
Hungarian kindergarten	18	62,06
Slovak kindergarten	11	37,94
Hungarian school (I.-IV. grades)	20	66,66
Slovak school (I.-IV.)	10	33,33

I mentioned above that back in the 1970s it was common in the village that Slovaks who married into the village had to learn Hungarian if they wanted to adapt to the community. Today the situation is reversed: even the offspring of the strongest Hungarian families are forced onto an assimilation path if they live in mixed marriages. They usually maintain their mother tongue only in interaction with their parents. However, with their own children they only rarely do in the same way. In most of the cases their children's first language is Slovak. In this sense mixed marriages mean mixed language use and ultimately, within a couple of years, it also means a complete change of language. If to this trend we add the village's low birth-rate (which has stagnated for many years) and the high death rate¹⁶, as the result of the ageing process, the above described tendencies seem irreversible.

“We were brought by the stork, they by the train”

There is a saying in the village, not said aloud very often, though well known by everyone. It belongs to the category of harmless and jovial everyday nationalism; it says: “We were brought by the stork, they by the train”. It is obvious that the word “they” stands for immigrant Slovaks, expressing the simple fact that “we” were born here and “they” “only” came here.

Changes in the last decades seem more and more to disprove of saying. In this village on the ethnic periphery we are witnessing a process that involves nearly all components of natural assimilation (ageing, ethnically-mixed marriages, depopulation, families without descendants, and employment

outside the community). During the analysis of our survey we did not find an answer to the question to what degree this process could be considered healthy and natural. Were we witnessing the formation of a multicultural community, or observing the reality of the assimilation and decrease of the Hungarian population (which is a general tendency currently) on the micro-level in the everyday life of a community?

On the basis of the present survey it is very difficult to demonstrate, to measure and to assess those influences that nationalistic efforts (which are often elevated to the level of state politics, see for example language law) and fears, as a reaction to these nationalistic efforts, have on the behavioural patterns of individuals, families and households. Our survey did not examine the reaction of parents to those challenges that employment outside the local ethnic environment necessarily brings along. To what extent do these often negative experiences, which often leave deep psychic marks on a person, motivate the choosing of the Slovak school or the decision to change his/her own culture?

We only grasped the momentary ethnic picture of Dlhá nad Váhom village and the phenomena which are hidden in the background and which, in our view, can have or do have an assimilation influence within the community.

Summary

In terms of language use and the number of households that can be considered Hungarian, the village as a whole still shows the picture of a traditional small village with the Hungarian population as a majority. However, when analysing the data obtained it becomes clear that: the village's Hungarian population is extremely aged; it mainly consists of one-member families; the community has a low birth rate and a nearly three times higher death rate. Moreover, the high number of families with two children and the tendency towards a large-scale settling-in characterise the community. Therefore, intensive immigration, whose signs are noticeable already in present days, can be expected in the near future.

As for the choice of the language of instruction the picture is shifting towards the Slovak kindergarten and school. Slovak, as the language of instruction, is chosen by more persons than what the language use would seem to justify. This indicates that in a significant number of families there is a language and culture change taking place for a longer period now, which is proved also by the high number of ethnically-mixed marriages. Moreover, the identity strengthening institutes which could also give support to the community are completely missing in the village and cultural activity ceased ten years ago.

This survey demonstrates that it is not sufficient to fight against aggressive assimilation. An effective minority protection has to be also aimed at slowing down and stopping the processes of natural assimilation. Apparently more extensive research is needed in order to disclose the motifs and the elements of natural assimilation. Protection from natural assimilation, so called “positive discrimination” (i.e. laws that help a minority group to maintain its identity or its rights), is necessary to maintain the linguistic, cultural and human values of a minority. The results of the last census only underline this and, at the same time, they indicate that positive discrimination has to be formed at a state level since it is beyond the power of a small village, such as Dlhá nad Váhom.

¹ The Hungarian version of the article was published in the periodical of FORUM Institute for Social Studies, *Szemle*, vol. III 2001.

² For an accurate description of the ethnic periphery see László Szarka, this volume.

³ *Hosszúfalu* in Hungarian.

⁴ This is an approximate number calculated by the author himself. Exact results according to the published data are not available since in 1991 the district of Galanta was divided in two: Galanta district and Šaľa district. Some villages were taken out of the Galanta district and annexed to the Senec district. Similarly, from the Nitra district, three villages were annexed to the Šaľa district. Regarding the decrease of the population the districts can be divided into three categories. If we consider the population

decrease of all districts as 100% (this means around 44,000 persons in the South Slovakian districts), then the districts which demonstrate a decrease of over 10% of the population are the following: Nové Zámky (14,6%), Galanta (Šafa) (around 11%) and Levice (10,5%). In the second category are the districts with a 5-10% decrease (Bratislava city (8,7%), Komárno (8,7%), Rožňava (8%), Trebišov (6,9%), Nitra (6,2%) and Lučenec (6,2%), while all the other districts show a population decrease below 5% with an average of 4%.

According to some, the rapid decrease of Hungarian population can be partly explained by the presumption that a numerous part of the large Roma population in Central and eastern Slovakia declared Roma nationality in the recent census while in the past censuses they allegedly declared Hungarian nationality. In this context it is noteworthy that the Central Slovakian districts' population decrease remains below the average. Thus, the data from the 2001 census prove that the reason for the drastic decrease of the proportion of the Hungarian population is not the fact that a big part of the population declared Roma nationality. Moreover, I venture to say that also the grave decrease in the Hungarian population in West Slovakia has little to do with the moderate growth of the Roma population.

⁵ The project was lead by László Szarka and Róbert Keményfi.

⁶ Hungarian equivalents: Velká Mača *Nagymácséd*, Kráľová nad Váhom *Vágkirályfa*.

⁷ The families can choose between the Slovak or the Hungarian language for their children's school education.

⁸ The interviews were conducted by Zsuzsanna Árendás.

⁹ From a methodological point of view our approach - we did not ask the persons directly, instead we addressed our questions to a committee- might be objectionable. However, our aim was to obtain information on the community that could not be gained in any other way. The objectivity was to be secured by the common consent of the committee.

¹⁰ In reality the number of building sites is slightly lower, since some of the sites possess more house numbers, depending on whether in the future a house (or more houses) can be built on the site.

¹¹ Here I would like to express my compliments to each member of the committee, in particular to the mayor, Róbert Izsóf, who was of great help to me during the whole process of field data collecting.

- ¹² Involuntary change of nationality referred to as “Re-Slovakisation”. In the years of 1945-47 according to the decrees issued by the Czechoslovak President Beneš, so called “Re-Slovakisation commissions” were created throughout the Hungarian-populated southern Slovakia with the purpose of implementing forced acceptance of Slovak nationality. By December 1947, over 300,000 Hungarians were recognised as Slovak nationals by these committees. The “Re-Slovakised” Hungarians by submitting their application to the committee tried to avoid their expulsion to Hungary or the confiscation of their properties, which they were subject to according to the Beneš decrees.
- ¹³ According to the data of the municipal office since 1945, 55 persons of Hungarian nationality (born in the village or originating from the village) gained university degrees. Of this number, 26 live now in the village, the rest have moved out. Two are deceased.
- ¹⁴ A large part of the new incomers, coming from the town (Šaľa) where the majority of the population is Slovak, would be naturally Slovak-speaking.
- ¹⁵ Source: survey of the municipal office
- ¹⁶ Source: survey of the municipal office

	1999	2000
Number of births	4	6
Number of deaths	11	15

6. Border region or contact zone.

Ethnic and ethno-social processes in small regions between the Hungarian-Slovak language and state border

László Szarka



Border and identity. The Hungarian-Slovak state border, language border and contact zone

For researchers studying ethnic processes, minority communities and the phenomena of identity, the inseparable interweaving of space and community is a primary experience encountered on the field. What belongs to this subject? Among others are the local linkage and characteristics, local language usage, communication and social patterns, local patriotism and solidarity. And naturally, the so-called “local knowledge” which is an expression of the local spirituality

and which is often framed into a defined program. There are examples when movements of provincialism and regionalism sprout out from similar programs, based on condensed ideological images.

The unaccountable other particulars observable on the field, the emotional attachment that the researcher experiences during interviews and techniques of symbolical and power definitions of space demonstrate that field and identity, space and community identity represent indissoluble unities.

In the followings, with the help of some demographic data I would like to show the differences between the living spaces of the Hungarian minority in rural and urban environment. According to the 1991 census, of the overall 2.7 millions of the Hungarian ethnic minority living in countries neighbouring Hungary, almost sixty per cent lives in 1,410 communities with a majority of Hungarian speaking population. In Transylvania the number of urban centres where the majority of population is of Hungarian nationality, is eighteen; in Slovakia this number is thirteen, in Vojvodina (Serbia) nine and in Transcarpathian Ukraine it is only two. Thus, of the total number of 344 urban centres where ethnic Hungarian live, only 42 have a majority Hungarian population. Besides, at a closer look at these communities we find significant regional differences between the majority and minority settlement structures.

The number of communities and persons living in non-majority Hungarian communities is steadily increasing. On the one hand, this is related to the fact that in big and middle-sized towns the ethnic and linguistic space loss is an irreversible process (with the only exception of small and middle-sized towns in Székelyföld¹ in Transylvania, Csallóköz² in Slovakia and Bodrogköz). On the other hand, in the last decades, the Hungarian population rate of villages in ethnic contact zones and in always larger regions with scattered distribution of minority population has been also speedily dropping.

Moreover, the intensive demographic growth of Romany communities in Central Eastern Europe and their segregation

observable within numerous communities have stimulated great changes, too³.

The seven Hungarian minority communities⁴ as the so far passive subjects of the local state and regional policies had only a very limited power to initiate significant and positive changes in the regional and settlement development policy.

Within these circumstances, the high population rate of towns and big-settlements in Vojvodina (72.9%) can count as the starting point for serious development projects the same way as the small-settlement structure of the Hungarian villages in Slovenia can count.⁵

Among the sociological statistical data which relate to the spatial location and which have an influence on individual and group ethnic identity I would like to mention the religious indicators. Whereas a generally high-speed atheisation is typical for the region, ten years ago the average of atheists among the Hungarian minority was only 5.6 per cent (in Transylvania: 0.3%, in Slovakia: 19.5%).

Within the identity factors of the Hungarian ethnic minority and of local communities (families and persons constituting this minority), generally the dominant motives are those which at the given moment are considered as particularly important by the elite of the minority society (be it at local or state level), and which are eventually celebrated, demonstrated or defended by them. Among these, the Hungarian historical memories of the local community or region, the statues, tombs, monuments and museums of its important personalities figurate as the most frequent spatial "identity-producing" factors. These factors "work" without particular intellectual influence as well, especially if they are included and in the last decade they were- into the educational programme of local Hungarian education institutes.

The most important tie between space and national-ethnic identity is, naturally, the language. The locally spoken language, its contact variations, which distinguish one community from the other and which make it different from the language used in Hungary, represent the most significant difference. Beside this, the distinguished style of speakers coming

from Hungary, which misses all features of dialects, the monolingualism of non-Hungarian persons living in bilingual zones, the by-law-imposed bilingualism at official occasions, figure all as the linguistic demonstrators of a complex space-identity system.

Local traditions always have their interethnic and ethnic-centred reference-system: national or religious celebrations, rites and memorial events all call for taking up a position from the side of the non-Hungarian majority population as well. In most of the cases, however, this entails a passive non-attendance from their side.

In this context the symbolical space-occupying events, programs and traditions all aiming at defining, defending or re-conquering ethnic and cultural borders are very important spatial elements of the Hungarian minority identity.

Behind the great social changes of the last decade, ambiguous, but at the same time, radical economic changes are also present; every segment of the economic life previously supervised by the state, i.e. production, labour market, sale, market, investment, all have been removed from state control. Apart from compensation, reprivatisation and privatisation, "wild privatisation", bankruptcy, big rate sale-offs and conscious disorganising efforts, positive processes have also appeared: private small and family enterprises, local and community budget management, regional thinking and development projects, etc.

These factors can speed up the generation-change processes and the internal and external immigration within the Hungarian minority societies. The urbanisation based on the socialist model has proved inefficient; fortunately, radical systematisation and settlement reorganising plans have only been partly realised. The majority of Central Eastern European villages remained at a very low level of urbanisation, which according to Western European norms corresponds to the situation of thirty-forty years ago. Town-structures had been estranged from local traditions and community needs by inhabitable falanster-sites. These precedents typical of the entire Central Eastern Europe will also affect

local and regional urbanistic, reorganisation and consolidation development projects in the following decade. Before the assimilation scenery - log house quarters disappearing from big and small towns - it is important to study and to record the data relating to the identity creating and identity dissolving processes of socialist urbanisation.

How do these and similar spatial processes influence the identity of Hungarian minority communities? Which of the two models will define the ethnic processes in the following years and following decades: the acculturation model- and within it integration and twofold identity forms fostered by bilingual and bi-cultural environment- or the bipolar assimilation process leading towards marginalisation?

Are life situations of minorities always necessarily borderline cases loaded with tensions? Do the transformation of border regions, which all belonged to peripheries once, and the takeover of power by ethnic space- and identity- structures, show the end of over-regulation and unidirectional character of identity-creating processes?

Indeed, the village as a minority living space still bears characteristics which distinguish it from the town. These characteristics are ambivalent: the "swept away" villages of Dezső Szabó⁶ can be drawn on the map of Hungarian minorities in the same way as those villages which *have* the force to keep their ethnic identity. Today we know that this holding force comes not solely from the village itself. The village with its delicate social, spiritual and historical network is able to reproduce and reinforce this identity; or, on the contrary, the changing and radically transformed peasant society, and later the commuting, "outworking" village communities, which at the present forcedly switched to agricultural entrepreneurs (or in a worse case to unemployment), transform and push this identity into the background. Towns, in particular the centres of regions with Hungarian majority in Southern Slovakia, such as Šamorín, Dunajská Streda, Komárno, Šahy and Rožňava could be identity-keeping and identity-strengthening centres of Hungarian communities to the same extent or even better (due to advantages deriving from their position) as today the village is.

The Hungarian-Slovak border as a research subject

On both sides of the 679 km long Hungarian-Slovak state border we find cultural and economic small regions, influence spheres around towns and market districts which are geographically, historically, ethnographically and ethnically very close to one another, and which once belonged to the same administration government.

There is an often heard phrase in Hungary: Hungary, at least in the ethnic sense of the word, is adjoining itself: on the opposite side of its borders there are communities inhabited by the same population, by the Hungarians. This statement contains much truth but in present days it is also becoming more and more distant from reality.

Below, I would like to describe some ideas about the historical creation and the ethnic peculiarities of this contact zone between the state border and the language border and about the mediatory and contact-creating role of the local Hungarian and non-Hungarian population. In the last decades, intensive changes of ethnic character were taking place in these regions. These changes are continuing even in present days. I would like to introduce one element of these changes and through it to draw consequences regarding the ethnic background of the dynamism and particular contact-creating potential hidden in this border region.

I intend to briefly analyse the ethnically mixed contact zone in the Southern Slovakian border regions. The state border between Czechoslovakia and Hungary was defined in 1918-1919 and finally ratified in 1920. In the past eight decades, the regions, divided by the state border, developed particular characteristics. On the one hand, the zones on the two sides of the border differ from each other; on the other hand, compared with the internal zones of the countries which include them, they have peripheral features. The once centrally located and important regions, such as Esztergom, Nógrád, Gömör and Abaúj-Torna, now divided by the state border, have been gradually degraded to peripheries on both

sides, with regard to their economy, transport system and social and cultural life.

On the Czechoslovak side the interested regions fell behind in the sphere of transport network, regional development and investments. Every seven-eight years the administration underwent reorganisation. This situation was also a result of ethnic differentiation. After the collectivisation in the fifties, a mass of population (from its big part ethnic Hungarians) gushed from villages to towns. However, it was only in the 1960s that these towns became capable to accept and gradually assimilate these masses.

On the Hungarian side of the border, similar changes were caused by the big number of missing towns that found themselves on the Slovak side, by roads leading to “nowhere”, by missed or delayed investments due to the lack of commercial and industrial centres.

Thus, in the past eight decades, on both sides of the state border the trauma of the separation was replaced by the experience of “failure”, i.e. by a peripheral existence, due to *common historical and foreign political reasons on the one hand, and to diverse economic and home politics factors, on the other hand.*

As the consequence of decades-long strict restrictions on border crossing and contact keeping, it was not possible to counterbalance the disadvantages of the peripheral state either with transit or with intensive border-crossing contacts.

The Hungarian-Slovak language border

The language border starts under Bratislava in the western edge of Csallóköz, dividing even today – with interruptions⁷ – the Hungarian from the Slovak language zone for a length of 450 km. Over centuries this language border underwent numerous alterations. However, it is only in Slovakia and in the Transcarpathian Ukraine that the Hungarian language border, as a linguistic geographical phenomenon, has remained so extended and so clearly definable.

In the past, we recognised three types of language borders: the Hungarian language border in Slovakia belonged throughout the centuries to the *sharp language border type*, as its Mátyusföld⁸ section still demonstrates.

In some places we could also find *striped language border types*, when in a not too broad north-southern stripe villages with Hungarian majority and villages with Slovak majority lay one next to the other (e.g. on short sections of Tekov/*Bars*, Nógrád and Gömör). Since the 1960s onward, the third type, the *blurred language border type*, became increasingly typical of the region. Extensive parts gradually turned to regions inhabited with population of mixed languages, partly due to the local population becoming bilingual, and partly due to the new incomers, i.e. inhabitants moving into the region from other parts of Slovakia, counterbalancing the local ethnic situation. Particularly in the Nógrád-Gömör river valleys, the language border makes several sharp turns following the geographical shapes of the valleys.

The most important spatial characteristic of Hungarian-Slovak interethnic relations is the formation of the language border. This occurred in the time following the arrival of the Hungarians in the Carpathian basin and the Mongol (Tatar) invasion. In spite of the fact that the language border went through numerous changes in the past, the ethnic structure of towns in Upper-Hungary has been shaped independently from this language border. The permanent character of the language border was, however, indicated by the ethnic divisional line which ran at times to the north and at other times to the south of the line made by the towns Bratislava-Senec-Nitra-Levice-Rimavská Sobota-Rožňava-Košice-Velké Kapušany-Ungvár. As a popular saying says: "You find the language border where the *Miatyánk* finishes and the *Otče náš* starts."⁹

Before proceeding to the next argument, I would like to cite the definition of Štefan Šutaj on the Slovak-Hungarian state and language border¹⁰:

"The present state borders (...) are not the result of ethnic processes, but rather the result of political decisions

taken by the Great Powers after the First and the Second World Wars, who first of all had the ethnic, economic and strategic-political development of Central Europe in sight."

With regard to the language border, Šutaj's definition is less clear:

If we speak about an ethnic (language) border, we have to interpret it as an auxiliary term which helps in the registration of the changes occurred in the ethnic structure of the Southern Slovakian region. We cannot speak about an 'ethnic border' as such, since the major part of communities in this region is ethnically not pure. It is rather a zone where two ethnic groups, two languages, live one next to the other.

(Šutaj 2001: 241)

Šutaj's views on the Hungarian-Slovak border issue are significant in many regards. His description of the formation of the state border lacking any emotional and ideological connotations is rather unique in the Czechoslovak, Czech or Slovak specialised literature. His observations on the language border are significant, as well. The term "language border" has always served as an auxiliary term to facilitate the definition and description of several ethnic spaces, regions. However, the ethnic or language border has its real competence and significance. In the Central Eastern European zone, over centuries, communities have always been differentiated on the base of ethnic and cultural belonging. True, language borders can never be considered as clear dividing lines, since this would mean a total segregation between two nationalities that live together or next to each other.

According to the data of the 1991 Czechoslovak census, in many regions the dividing lines between communities with Hungarian majority and communities with Slovak majority bear the characteristics of the stripe language border type. However, analysing the data of Galanta, Levice and Rožňava districts and comparing the spatial location of communities with Hungarian majority, we understand that even in present times it is possible to draw a clear boundary which divides the Hungarian from the Slovak majority region (to the north of this boundary the rate of the Hungarian population in com-

munities falls under one per cent). From the Hungarian point of view, thus, we can define the language boundary in the following way: proceeding northwards from the Hungarian-Slovak state border villages and towns with a majority of Hungarian speaking population (over fifty, eighty and even above ninety five per cent) come as first. Within this zone, there are islands of Slovak majority population. Proceeding northward, approaching the language border, a growing number of ethnically mixed communities follow, inhabited by a majority of Slovak population. The language border is constituted by the chain of those villages and towns whose inhabitants are from 95 to 100 percent Slovaks; passing this line no communities with Hungarian majority or with ethnically mixed population can be found.

This, however, does not contradict the observation according to which the actual language borders are more and more to be searched inside communities, within single families. The number of those families (within the Hungarian population in Slovakia) for whom a particular kind of instinctive bilingualism constitutes their mother tongue, is increasing. In their cases, the language border needs to be repeatedly redefined in their everyday practices, when it is the language user alone who decides for this or that language depending on the situation and suitability.

Indeed, the Hungarian population of Slovakia with its administratively hardly unificable (east-west) location is a folk living in valleys (except for the two largest compact zones, the Medzibodrogie (*Bodrogköz* in Hungarian) and Žitný Ostrov (*Csallóköz*). These valleys¹¹ have always been important factors in the settlement organising and have significantly affected the influence-spheres of towns, the marking of transport routes as well as the formation of the language border.

When measuring the assimilation processes along the language border we must also consider those factors which influenced the ethnic space in the twentieth century: the settling and administration policy of Czechoslovakia in the period between the two world wars; the changes that occurred in the situation of the Jewish population which in the past used to belong to the Hungarian speaking group; the holocaust and

the huge losses on lives following the WWII; the consequences of the population exchange and resettlement in 1947-48; the gradual marginalisation of the Hungarian population of the two big towns, Bratislava and Košice. In the years of communism these were: the ethnic metamorphosis of small towns of South-Slovakia together with the expansion of individual and social bilingualism, the assimilation policy of the state which resulted in the creation of ethnically mixed regions and which failed to ensure tolerance there. Finally, in the last decades, the expansion of the Roma population with its ambivalent national identity and frequent language change appeared as an important factor influencing the assimilation processes.

The Hungarian-Slovak ethnic and cultural contact zone showed significant positive changes in the last decade: the small regions divided by the state border for eight decades and thus destined for a periphery state are now growing into real dynamic regions. Therefore, there is seemingly a chance that in the time when Central European states will enter the EU, the mass-psychological conditions for border elimination, similar to those in Western Europe, will be created. At the same time, the data of the 2001 census, i.e. the decrease of the Hungarian population by 50,000 people and the dramatic unemployment rates of the Levice, Veľký Krtíš, Rimavská Sobota and Rožňava districts indicate that these border regions will continue to suffer the background processes burdensome with ethnic and social tensions and potential conflicts.

Reference

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¹ The name, Székelyföld, indicates the eastern part of Transylvania in Romania, inhabited mostly by ethnic Hungarians.

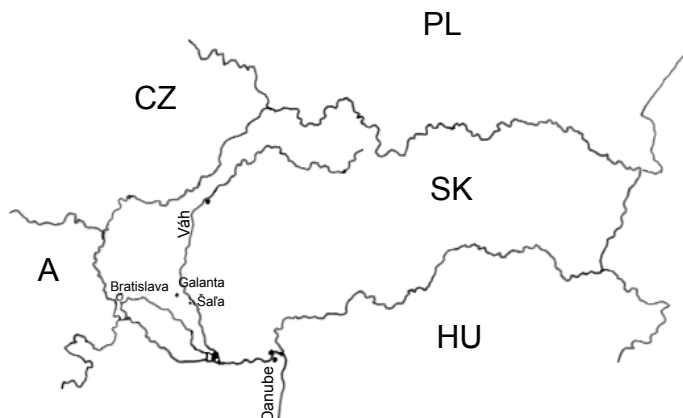
- ² Csallóköz (in Slovak: *Žitný ostrov*) is the island formed by two branches of the Danube which separate first below Bratislava to reunite only at Komárno. It is called also the granary of Slovakia.
- ³ The Roma segregation process became particularly intense in the regions along the state borders which in the last eighty years lost their significance and their natural town centers. Due to backward infrastructure, lack of employment possibilities, and strict controls common in the border regions, the Hungarian and Slovak population gradually moved to more distant towns and the remaining population suffered ageing. Romanies have slowly replaced the original ethnic communities. During the last decade this process became evident especially in the Gömör region.
- ⁴ These are: Hungarian communities in South Slovakia, in Transcarpathian Ukraine, in Transylvania, in Serbia (Vojvodina), in Croatia, in Slovenia (Mura region) and in Austria (Burgenland). I omit the Hungarian minority living presently on the territory of the Czech Republic: because of its particular historical, social and economic circumstances among which it came to exist it belongs to the most recent Hungarian diaspora-communities and thus to a particular category of minorities.
- ⁵ The seventy per cent of the Hungarian minority in Slovenia (Mura region) lives in villages with less than one thousand inhabitants.
- ⁶ Dezső Szabó's emblematic work, *The swept away village*, was published in May 1919, in a critical period of the dissolution of the historical multi-national Hungary. In this period the government of the Hungarian Soviet Republic (*Tanácsköztársaság*) announced a military resistance against the Czechoslovak and Romanian territorial conquests.
- ⁷ Today the northern Hungarian-Slovak language border is interrupted in the Selmec valley at the following villages: Plastovce (*Palást* in Hungarian), Ipeľské Úlany (*Ipolyfödémes*), Vinica (*Ipolynyék*), Čebovce (*Csáb*), Opatovská Nová Ves (*Apátújfalú*), Batorova (*Bátorfalú*), Nenince (*Lukanyénye*). It continues then crossing two-three villages (Slovenské Darmoty/ *Tótygarmat*, Záhorce/ *Erdőszelestyén*) where it becomes identical with the actual state border. East of Rožňava (*Rozsnyó*) at villages Krasnohorské Podhradie (*Krasznahorkaváralja*), Drnava (*Dernő*) and Borka (*Barka*), the language border ends in the valley of Bodva. From here it runs through Háj (*Áj*) and Turnianske Podhradie (*Torna*) villages, up to Jasov (*Jászó*), then it turns again south and arrives to the state border at Moldava nad Bodvou (*Szepesi*) and Cecejevce (*Csécs*) villages. The second interruption of the language border occurs in the Hernad valley,

passing Cestice (*Szeszta*), Velká Ida (*Nagy Ida*) and Kechnec (*Kenyhec*) villages.

- ⁸ The name, Mátyusföld, is used in the Hungarian ethnography to indicate the region lying on the northern side of the Small Danube (Slovakia). For a more precise definition of the region see Lízka, this volume.
- ⁹ The initial words of the *Pater Noster*, in Hungarian *Miatyánk* and in Slovak *Otče náš*.
- ¹⁰ Štefan Šutaj is the director of the Institute for Social Studies of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice. See his article in this volume.
- ¹¹ For example in the region of *Mátyusföld* these are the valleys of the Dudvák, Váh, Žitva and Nitra rivers.

7. Between cultural and geographical borders. Denomination of the Mátyusföld region

József Liszka



Mátyusföld¹ is a geo-historical region that lies in the south-west of Slovakia. Its precise circumscription, however, is problematic since local people, historians, and ethnographers define the boundaries of the region using different criteria. In the following, I will try to analyse the particular opinions concerning the circumscription of the region, then provide certain guidelines that make these views treatable from an ethnographic point of view.

To my knowledge, the term Mátyusföld appeared for the first time in a Hungarian text of a 16th century poem entitled *Az zsidó és magyar nemzetről* ("On the Jewish and Hungarian nation") by András Farkas.

*...Magyarokat adá török markába,
Kik ah Sarlóközből, ah bő Mátyus földéből,
Szalából, Somogyból, ah Szerém földéről,
Ah széles alföldről sok népet elhajtának.*²

(In Szilády 1880: 20)

This, however, provides no information on the location and size of the Mátyusföld region. A passage in the foreword to Szenci Molnár Albert's Hungarian-Latin Dictionary, in which the author gives some autobiographical facts, brings us closer to the answer. The illustrious writer, while telling the history of his family, explains that his great-grandfather, coming from Transylvania, "married a daughter of a noble family from the village Vága in Mátyusföld" (Szenci Molnár 1993: 439).

Both sources speak about the land of a person called Mátyus. According to a widespread belief, the man behind this name is Máté Csák, the petty monarch of Trencsén (*Trenčín* in Slovak) living in the 14th century, and the term Mátyusföld refers to a region formerly ruled by him.³ There is, however, no consensus among scholars on the precise location and size of these estates. Tivadar Botka for example, who wrote Máté Csák's biography at the end of the 19th century, writes of Mátyusföld as "a little country within a big country", and based on a 15th century source he gives a list of counties that belonged to Mátyusföld: "...Árva, Liptó, Turócz, Zólyom, Trencsín, Nyitra, Bars, Hont, Nógrád, and the parts of Pozsony, Komárom, and Esztergom counties north of Danube. So, this was the land of Mátyus originally, which, as I have mentioned, could be considered as a little country" (Botka 1873: 60). Elsewhere he writes:

Later, since the middle of the 17th century, historical and geographical works indicate that several regions formerly belonging to the Mátyusföld region were forgotten to be parts of it, which made the Mátyusföld region smaller and smaller. For example, Kálnoky, while marching through the Nógrád and Hont counties with Rákóczy's army, regarded his troops as having arrived to Mátyusföld only when they reached the fortress of Léva. He also noted in his diary that the border of Mátyusföld lay at Léva, in Bars.⁴

(Botka 1873: 61)

Hereafter Botka, concerning the survival of this vernacularism, relies on Gergely Czuczor's definition. But, if we take a

look at the original Czuczor's text, we find that it does not coincide with Botka's view:

Mátyusföld [...] is the region originally ruled by the famous Máté Csák of Trencsén at the beginning of 14th century, and includes the area spreading along the Váh River from Trencsén to Komárom and the areas lying on the right side of the Hron River. Hungarians living outside Csallóköz, in Pozsony county, and those in Lower-Nitra county, Udvard district of Komárom county, and Párkány district of Esztergom county still regard themselves as people of Mátyusföld. The people of Csallóköz, in most of the cases, consider the region between the Nádszeg or Érsekújvár branch of the Danube and Váh River as the Mátyusföld region.⁵

(Czuczor–Fogarasi 1862-74: IV, 144)

Here, Edit Fél's finding, made during her fieldwork conducted in Marcelháza (*Marcelová* in Slovak) in 1943, must be mentioned. According to her, inhabitants of Marcelháza did not regard themselves as people of Mátyusföld. Those living in Mátyusföld called them "Palóc", but they did not feel to be "Palóc", either. Who Edit Fél or the people of Marcelháza regard as natives of Mátyusföld is, however, not presented in the paper.

The linguist, Gyula Zolnai, who shares Gergely Czuczor's view, when mapping the dialects of Mátyusföld, chose Pozsony and Párkány as respectively the eastern- and westernmost parts of the region (Zolnai 1891: 2). However, he did not manage to prove the linguistic unity of the region. The problem is further complicated by Vilebald Danczi's view who, while presenting the dialectal peculiarities of Kürt (*Strekov*) village, writes that "the village is situated in Mátyusföld, so it belongs to the Palóc dialect area" (Danci 1939: 7). In contrast to this, János Mohos, the scrivener of the neighbouring village of Kisújfalu (*Nová Vieska*), in his answer to a place-name collector, Frigyes Pesti's questionnaire in 1860, adds the following remark: "Mátyusföldre – includes towns and villages along the Váh River from its head to its entry into the Danube. The region was named after Máté of Trencsén whom this land formerly belonged to" (Pesty Frigyes Helynévtára: undated).

Similarly, in Kőbölkút (*Gbelce*), the village next to Kisújfalu, there were similar views concerning the location of Mátyusföld: it was a region lying somewhere westward, around Galánta (*Galanta*) and Vágsellye (*Šala*).

In a 16th century tithe record, Mária Jeršová attempts to circumscribe the region on the basis of a toponym list, *Proventus decimarum districtus Mathvsfelde anni 1545*. According to this, the eastern border of Mátyusföld does not extend to the left-bank of the Váh River. The record gives thirty-eight toponyms one third of which is still inhabited by ethnic Hungarians. The villages Szenc (*Senec*), Diószeg (*Sládkovičovo*), Cseklész (*Bernolákovo*), and Boldogfa (*Boldog*) represent the western border of ethnic Hungarian Mátyusföld, while its southern and eastern borders lie at Kismácséd (*Malá Mača*), Nagymácséd (*Veľká Mača*), Taksony (*Matúškovo*), Felső-Szeli (*Horné Saliby*), Alsó-Szeli (*Dolné Saliby*), Nádszeg (*Trstice*), and (Pozsony) Vezekény (*Vozokany*) (Jeršová 1947: 406-407). Gyula Kristó also agrees with the results of the data presented by Jeršová (Kristó 1973: 36-37).

György Lőrinczi, in his historical novelette about the life of the Hungarian King Hunyadi Mátyás, circumscribes Mátyusföld in the same way: “Mátyus földje is part of Hungary that spreads north of Komárom and the Váh-Danube River to the Carpathian Mountains. Once all of this belonged to Máté Csák of Trencsén. It is named after him.” (Lőrinczy undated: 11). According to this, the Váh River forms the region’s eastern border. This view, however, is contradicted by the author himself, when in his book *King Matthias*, moving from Baromlak (close to Érsekújvár) to Neszmély (at the right-bank of the Danube), says:

It will be a splendid ride all along the land of Mátyus! [...] Anyhow, even now we are in the land of Mátyus, since Baromlak is part of it as well. It is a beauteous land, Fridolin! You will see yourself. Shall we go to Neszmély then?

(Lőrinczy undated: 25)

Later, the writer draws the King's way through Mátyusföld, from Perbete (*Pribeta*) to Dunaradvány (*Radvaň nad Dunajom*) via Komáromszentpéter (*Dolný Peter*) (Lőrinczy undated: 25). Géza Kúr, who dealt with the region during his research on the administration of the Reformed Church, states that: "Beside the area lying from Komárom and the Váh-Danube River to the Little Carpathians, Mátyusföld includes even the neighbourhood of Érsekújvár reaching Párkány, and it is called 'Desertum Ujvár alias Mátyusföldre'" (Kúr 1993: 32).

Later on, the area of Mátyusföld defined by the literature continued to shrink. In 1953, the resolution⁵ of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences concerning József Bakos's work, *Mátyusföldi gyermekjátékok* ("Children's plays") reads:

The term *Mátyusföldre* is not a widely accepted geographical term: it is known by historical geography as Máté Csák's former "kingdom". This region, since it includes Trencsén county as well, has a majority of Slovak population. During the inter-war years, however, the ethnic Hungarians of Czechoslovakia changed the meaning of the term excluding the western part of the area and adding the neighbouring Kis-Alföld⁶, east of the original Mátyusföld region. In this way the term started to be used as indicating an area inhabited in majority by ethnic Hungarians.

(Határozat 1953: 275)

On the other hand, Sándor Vájlók, towards the end of 1930s writes the following:

Mátyusföld is a geographical term referring to the area lying south of the Szenc–Nagyfedémes–Nagymácséd [*Senec-Velké Úlfany-Velká Mača*] line, between the Small Danube and Váh Rivers. In the south, the region ends at Gúta [*Kolárovo*], which is already in Csallóköz, at the huge meadowlands of Negyed [*Neded*], the hay-scent of which wanders far away. In this area there are 61 villages and towns, resembling an acute angle turned upside down. The 61 localities have 111,635 inhabitants altogether...

(Vájlók 1939: 91)

In contrast to research based on historical data, the ethnographic approach defines Mátyusföld as a wider region.

Margit Méry (and some other minority Hungarian scholars of Slovakia, such as József Bakos and András Takács) draws the eastern border of the region east of the Váh River. Among these views, from ethnographical point of view, the most acceptable one is that of Margit Méry, who draws the eastern border of the region at the valley of the Žitva River (Podolák 1957: 534; Méryová 1988: 62).⁷

In any case, it seems that some ethnographically defined regions surprisingly coincide with the western border of the part of the former Ottoman Empire lying north of the Danube River. The thorough investigation of this, however, belongs to the research topics of the future.

Having considered all this, we still cannot clearly define the boundaries of the Mátyusföld region. From a historical point of view, it is probable that the Small Danube, Little Carpathians, and the Váh River form respectively the southern, western, and eastern borders of the region. The northern boundary, from ethnic Hungarian point of view is defined by the Slovak-Hungarian linguistic border. The region itself spreads northwards into the Slovak linguistic area, and in the Slovak literature appears as “Matúšova zem” (*Land of Matúš*), but neither the Slovaks living there know this name, nor the Slovak ethnographers use it as a name of a region (Méryová 1988).

It is also hard to answer whether the linguistic border within Mátyusföld is a cultural border as well. For the last centuries the linguistic border has been moving southward; while the geographic border of the Kis-Alföld region lies north of this line. This question requires further research. We can only form a preliminary assumption, according to which the linguistic and cultural borders of the region do not coincide. However, the northern part of the Mátyusföld region, regardless of the linguistic situation, is a completely different cultural environment, since geographically it does not belong to the Kis-Alföld region. If we accept the linguistic circumscription of the Palóc dialectal area, according to which it lies within the Szenc-Cegléd-Kassa⁸ triangle, we also have to deal with dialectal borders further dividing the Mátyusföld region. There

is no information on the relationship of the dialectal breakdown of the region and its reflections in the folk culture.

Within the Mátyusföld region, it is difficult to identify sub-regions although residents of Mátyusföld are aware of their existence. Historically, we know some sub-regions; the “Vízköz” expression, for example, has disappeared from common usage. It first appeared in *Canonica Visitatio* in 1634 (Püspöki 1989: 181). According to 19th century sources, the Vízköz region lay on a land circumscribed by the Čierna Voda, Dudváh and Small Danube Rivers. As stated by other sources:

According to the popular approach, the land embraced by the Small Danube, Dudváh, and Váh Rivers is called “Vízköz”. This area, lying in the north-western⁹ part of Mátyusföld, already bears Palóc dialectal features. That is the reason why it is regarded as the westernmost part of the extensive Palóc dialectical region.

(Danter, Gudmon and Csík 1995: 55;
c.f. Danajka 1993: 13)

Summary

1. Since Mátyusföld received its name after Máté Csák, the petty monarch of the 14th century, it is obvious to base the circumscription of the region on historical sources. According to this approach, the region is bordered by the Small Danube on the south, the Váh River on the east, the Little Carpathians on the west, and an imaginary line above Trenčín on the north. As for its population, there are ethnic Hungarians in the south, Slovaks in the north, and some Germans living scattered in the western corner of the region, around Bratislava and Sládkovičovo.
2. The local Hungarian language in many cases includes also the territory enclosed by the Váh and Hron Rivers. In contrast to this, Slovaks do not consider this area to be a part of the Mátyusföld region. At the same time, in the Slovak language the name Mátyusföld is not a living geographical

term. This view has been adopted by several ethnographers.

3. There are ethnographic views that circumscribe the Mátyusföld region in a different way. According to these, the eastern border of the region lies somewhere between the Nitra and Žitva Rivers. In spite of this, in my opinion, we should circumscribe the Mátyusföld region using the narrow definition given by the historical approach in the same way as in the case of our other geo-historical regions such as Csallóköz, Bodroghöz, Tápióság, etc. It is a commonplace that the single ethnographic phenomena cannot be isolated by drawing sharp geographical borders. In this way, for example, the Danube, Small Danube, and Váh-Danube Rivers as borders of the Csallóköz region do not coincide with the cultural borders. So why do we expect this to happen in the case of the Mátyusföld region then?

Finally, let me make an additional remark. The reason why ethnographers extend the eastern border of Mátyusföld to the Hron River is, in my opinion, that the population east of the Hron River can be more or less rightfully regarded, from an ethnographic point of view, as Palóc people. On the other hand, the region lying east of the Hron (between the Váh and Hron Rivers), does not have a particular ethnographic denomination. This is not uncommon in the Hungarian linguistic area, therefore it is not necessary to solve the problem by extending the neighbouring region to the unnamed area. Personally, I call the region in question simply as the area between the Váh and Hron Rivers. At the same time, it is important to be aware of the fact that to draw a sharp line of cultural borders is possible neither in this place, that is, in the area between the Váh and Hron Rivers, nor in other places.

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- ¹ Literally *Land of Matthias*.
- ² The Hungarians were given over to Turks/ Who rounded up lots of people from Sarlóköz, and the mellow Mátyus föld (land of Mátyus)/ From Szala, Somogy, and Szerém/ And the wide Hungarian Plain (translated by Sándor Bondor).
- ³ Occasionally the term Mátyusföld is connected to the Hungarian King Matthias. This is obviously a misinterpretation or a folk-etymology.
- ⁴ Today *Levice* in Slovakia.
- ⁵ Slovak denominations of mentioned toponyms: *Trenčín* (Trencsén), *Komárno* (Komárom), *Bratislava* (Pozsony), *Štúrovo* (Párkány), *Nádszeg* (Trstice), *Nové Zámky* (Újvár).
- ⁵ The then cultural politics of Hungary proclaimed the collection *Mátyusföldi gyermekjátékok* by József Bakos to be “harmful”, since it harmed the neighbouring nations, mainly Slovaks in their pride. For this reason, it had Bakos’s book (published as the 7th volume of New Hungarian Collection of Folk-Poetry, and as a source material represented a considerable value) pulped (*Határozat...1953*).
- ⁶ *Podunajská nížina* in Slovak, for a detailed description see Danter this volume.
- ⁷ Ethnographic atlases such as the *Magyar néprajzi atlasz* or the *Etnografický atlas Slovenska* do not provide any guidelines concerning the circumscription of the Mátyusföld region (Barabás 1987-1992, Kovačevićová 1990).
- ⁸ *Senec* and *Košice*, are towns in Slovakia, *Cegléd* in Hungary.
- ⁹ It is obviously a mistake. The authors must have meant the south-eastern part.

8. Stable networks in changing states? Borders, networks and community management in the northern Adriatic Istrian Peninsula

Elke Kappus



Introduction

Social networks, defined in a very general manner as “communication channels” holding communities together “from within” (Deutsch 1966: 98), can be seen as the “skeleton” around which communities are shaped, structured and experienced. Hence, they are an interesting concept in the study of collective identities, complementary to Frederic Barth’s often quoted “ethnic boundaries” (Barth 1968), which define communities “from without”. In fact, these two concepts seem to be intrinsically intertwined and it is hard to imagine how group boundaries could change without changing networks, how new social networks could avoid drawing new

boundaries, and how either of these changes would leave any group identity unaffected. This paper will discuss the relation between networks and boundaries and their influence on community management and on the construction of collective identities in relation to the Italian community in the Northern Adriatic Istrian peninsula, which was divided in 1991 between the Yugoslav successor states of Slovenia and Croatia. I will investigate how the institutional networks of the Italian community were affected by the new political border and discuss the strategies that the representatives of the Istro-Italian community adopted in their attempt to maintain “stable networks” despite the “changing boundaries”. The paper focuses on the political structures and institutional restraints in which the networks of the Istro-Italian community were and are re-organised. I will stress the necessity to study and analyse collective identities in the overarching political and institutional contexts in which they are embedded and by which they are confined.

Changing States

In the last Yugoslav census, published in 1991, approximately 18,500 of the Istrian peninsula's total population of 334,000 declared themselves to be Italians. The Istro-Italian community was organised in twenty-one local associations, which understood - as did schools and kindergardens and other institutions - the regulations of the culturally largely independent Republics of Slovenia and Croatia. Furthermore, the Istro-Italian communities, associated in the *Unione Italiana*² at Rijeka/ Fiume, hold a radio station, a TV channel (both in Koper/Capodistria), a theatre (in Rijeka/ Fiume), a publishing house (in Rijeka/ Fiume) and a historical research centre (in Rovinj/ Rovigno). Those common institutions spanned their network across the administrative border between the Slovene and Croatian Republics and shaped the “space” inside the Yugoslav state (Image 1), in which the Istro-Italians have re-constructed and developed a vivid com-

munity life ever since the region's integration into the Yugoslav state in 1954.

With the independence of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991, Istria was split. The new international border severed a group of about 3,000 Italians in Slovenia from approximately 15,000 Italians in Croatia. While the radio and television stations were located in Slovenia, the majority of other Italian institutions were in Croatia. As the *Unione Italiana* - being registered and headquartered in Croatia - was not recognised in Slovenia, the representation of the Istro-Italian community's interests vis-à-vis the Slovene state was mandated to the *CAN-costiera*, a network of the three coastal "*comunità auto-gestite nazionali*" which had previously functioned as a representative organ inside the Slovene Republic. The *Unione Italiana*, which had represented the Istro-Italian community vis-à-vis Yugoslavia, continued its work in the new Croatian state (Image 2). Both representative bodies had one common aim: to maintain the unitarian character of the Italian national group across and despite the new border. The maintenance of the common networks and institutions was seen as a prerequisite for the community's survival and as a necessary precondition for further democratic development in the region.

Already during the run up to independence, Slovenia and Croatia had committed themselves to co-financing the common Istro-Italian institutions as well as to facilitating border-crossing cooperation between the two parts of the Istro-Italian community. Furthermore, both the Slovene and the Croatian constitutions guaranteed minority rights and representation in the National Assembly. While, however, Slovenia acknowledged the bilingual character of the three coastal *communes* - independently of the demographic strength of the Italian community, Croatia granted bilingual status only to those *regions* where language-groups made up more than 50%, a percentage which the Istro-Italian community did not reach (Ara 1995: 55).

Changing networks

Recognising the rights of the Istro-Italian community on different levels of the new state-architecture, the minority and language politics of Slovenia and Croatia prescribed the strategies and policies of the Istro-Italian representative bodies: while the *CAN-costiera* in Slovenia acted from a *local* level in order to consolidate the community's institutional position, the *Unione Italiana* intervened on a *regional* level in order to improve the national status of the community. That explains why the representatives of the Istro-Italian community in the two states followed increasingly different strategies in order to accomplish their common aim of maintaining the unitarian character of the community.

In Croatia, the *Unione Italiana* joined forces with the *Istrian Democratic Assembly* (IDA) in protest against the nationalising and centralising policies of Tudjman's authoritarian regime. Together they defended the specific regional, multi-cultural and border-crossing "*Istrianità*" and demanded recognition for the bilingual status of the peninsula. The enormous success of the Istrian movement – the IDA gained a regional majority in Croatia's national elections in 1993, 1995 as well as in 1997 - gave political authority to the multi-cultural regional civic society and strengthened the position of the Istro-Italian community's request for unity and recognition.

In Slovenia, the movement found no comparable support. In the new mental geography of many Slovene citizens, Slovenia was already in "Europe" while war-torn Croatia was still considered part of the "Balkans" from which Slovenia had successfully separated. Distancing itself from its past and from its South, Slovenia referred to "its" part of the peninsula more and more often as *primorsk*, and for many *primorski*, Istria was perceived as residing beyond the border, in Croatia, with which one had only little to share for the moment. Mobilising people for the common regional cause was further rendered difficult by the still absent regionalisation of Slovenia: the state simply did not provide an institu-

tional framework to address regional issues and concerns. While the Istrian question turned into a common political interest in Croatian Istria, in Slovenia references to *Istrianità* remained restricted to various “autochthonous” Istrian groups and mostly to members of the Italian community itself. In their request for border-crossing “unity” the Istro-Italians in Slovenia could not count on the support of the *Primorsk* majority. Furthermore, more and more voices inside the Italian community itself asked for recognition of the political status quo and for the integration of the Italian national group into the pluralist Slovene society.

Under such circumstances, the mere commitment of Slovenia and Croatia to co-finance the common Istro-Italian institutions was hardly enough to maintain the unity of the Istro-Italian community. Faced with two profoundly different political, economic, social as well as institutional realities², it was increasingly difficult to develop common policies and projects which would secure the Istro-Italians unity “from within”. The national group seemed to develop increasingly into a community which was united by its culture, its language and its past, but separated not only by a state border, but also by different life-worlds in the present and different expectations for the future. In fact, the Istro-Italian community seemed to turn into two Italian minority groups in two different states.

Changing strategies

If the Istro-Italians are still considered as one border-crossing community (and not as two more or less closely co-operating national minorities), it is also - if not mainly - due to an “additional” network which was established in the aftermath of 1991: that between the Istro-Italian community and the Italian state. By recognising the Rijeka/ Fiume based *Unione Italiana* as the only official representative organ in the new dialogue between minority and “home land”, Italy addressed its national minority as a unity, despite the region’s political division. The financial and organisational support given by the

Italian state provided a means to redress economic differences between the local communities in Slovenia and Croatia, assured common activities and projects and secured the launch of new initiatives³. Furthermore this support induced the local Italian communities in Slovenia to “re-connect” themselves to the *Unione Italiana*.

Re-integrating the Istro-Italian communities in Slovenia and Croatia, the Italian network re-created an institutional cross-border space, which corresponded largely with the one that the Istro-Italians occupied in Yugoslavia (Image 3). Due to this institutional arrangement of supplementary and overlapping networks with Croatia, Slovenia and Italy, the Istro-Italian representatives managed the challenge of maintaining “stable networks” around which the community was shaped, structured and experienced – despite “changing states”. The polycentric networking not only allowed the Istro-Italian community to maintain its “unified” character, but also strengthened the community itself: the number of local associations in Istria has more than doubled and the Italian community has increased its membership significantly.

Stable networks in changing contexts

Cooperation across and beyond ethnic as well as national boundaries was a typical feature of the Istro-Italian as much as of the entire Istrian community already before the peninsula’s separation. Until 1991, however, minority protection was considered the “internal affair” of sovereign states – although sanctioned by international treaties and carefully observed by kin states. Official contacts between the Istro-Italian community and Italy had been treated as “foreign policy” and were cautiously channelled and mediated via Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade. The new institutional arrangements of the Istro-Italian community, instead, created an entirely new kind of transnational space. Touching sensitively the border between national “internal” and international “external” policy, the transnational networks could not be considered an exclusively “internal” question of the national

group, but implicated the re-definition of the entire "relational nexus" of kin state, host state and national group (Brubaker 1996: 58).

Legitimising networks

This re-definition was framed by the political changes which occurred after 1991 on a national as well as international level. While the direct links between the Italian community in Slovenia and Italy were indeed directly sanctioned by the new Slovene constitution⁴, the institutional engagement in Istria was also legitimated with reference to international law. As the treatment of the Istro-Italian community did not conform in all respects with the treaty of Osimo⁵, the Italian state was – according to some interpretations – allowed, if not obliged, to act as the advocate of the minority on occasions when its survival and unity was at stake (ISTRID 1993). Furthermore, the new institutional relations between Italy and its minority corresponded entirely with European policy recommendations, according to which "kin states also play a role in the protection and preservation of their kin-minorities, aiming at ensuring that their genuine linguistic and cultural links remain strong" (ECD 10/2001). Common engagement for national minorities is thought, in fact, to foster even closer relations and co-operation among neighbouring states, a feature which is "nowadays unanimously considered as a precondition for peace and stability in Europe" (ECD 10/2001). In this European realm, the joint engagement of Italy, Slovenia and Croatia in Istria appeared as an exemplary model for the "new" Europe. The institutional solution of overlapping networks seemed to mediate the Slovene and Croatian right to national sovereignty with the Istro-Italian request for cultural "self-determination". The region seemed to approach a European ideal, where national groups, kin- and host-states – interconnected by balanced relations - are imagined as equal partners in the common European project for peace and stability.

Interpreting networks

The European ideal of partnership and balanced relations between states and minorities was, however, not the only way to interpret the new institutional set-up of the Istro-Italian community; throughout the 20th century, these relations were characterised by conflict and contention. Slovenes and Croats were subjects of forced assimilation policies under Italy between the 1920s and the 1940s (Ammende 1931: 471); Italians experienced discrimination and exclusion when the region was - depending on different interpretations - "occupied" or "liberated" by Tito's partisan groups in 1945 (Colummi and Ferrari 1980). National (as well as ideological) rivalry regarding the question to which state Istria and its inhabitants should belong turned the "Trieste question" into an international affair which was settled only in 1954 after long and tenacious negotiations⁶. Although the chapter of Italo-Yugoslav debate over the region was - at least officially - settled with the agreements on the Yugoslav-Italian borders in 1974, the long history of conflict and contention has defined the memories of the Istrians - of those who stayed as well as those who left either under fascist or under socialist rule.

The memories of the past, still strong in the present, have been further revived in the years after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, when national claims were re-formulated by political agents in all three states involved in the region. The Italian right wing political movements claimed an autonomous but Italian Istria, the Slovene right called for a Slovene Istria - autonomous or not - and the Croatian right "cautioned the Istrians against the 'appetite' of the Serb, Italian or Slovene hordes", claiming also the Slovene part of the peninsula as Croat (Manzin 1997: 8f.). In short, in the aftermath of 1991, irredentist and nationalist discourses regarding Istria were as present as the Europeanist one. Accordingly, it was not a matter of reason but of perspective and conviction whether the new networks and new Italian policies were to be interpreted along nationalist or along Europeanist lines. In Europeanist discourse, the Italian commitment appeared as a helping

hand for the Istro-Italian community's cultural development in the frame of good neighbourly relations with Slovenia and Croatia. Yet, the very same engagement could also be interpreted as a revival of irredentist policies and as an interference in the internal affairs of the new sovereign states. The reverence to the purely "cultural" nature of the Italian engagement towards "its" minority - as well as of the minority's orientation towards "its" kin state - could not necessarily calm preoccupations and fears: past nationalist and irredentist claims in the region were also formulated in cultural terms, making it difficult to clearly distinguish between a political and a cultural involvement in the present.

Contextualising networks

The place accorded to the minority in the new "relational nexus" depended entirely on which of the two interpretations one chose. If Italy was interpreted as an agent of Europe, the minority appeared as a "bridge" between the nations and the states. If, however, Italy was seen as a nationalising state with irredentist desires, the Istro-Italian community turned into the forefront of Italian interests. Accordingly, the position of the Istro-Italian community in their host-countries was entirely dependent on the public opinion and interpretation of Italian policy in Slovenia and Croatia.

While in Croatian Istria, the Italian commitment was seen as support in the common Croat-Italian request for further democratisation and Europeanisation of the region, many of my informants in Slovene Istria saw the active Italian interest in "its" minority - although it was sanctioned by the constitution - with increasing suspicion. The Italian blockage of Slovene entry in the EU on account of unresolved questions regarding the property of Istrian-exiles in the mid 1990s was seen by many as a clear - and definite - indication of national claims triumphing over common European interests in Italian policy towards Slovenia. The new Italian citizenship law, which consented citizenship to Italians beyond the state borders was interpreted as a clear encroachment into the internal

affairs of their new state, especially as the Slovene law did not foresee the possibility of double citizenship. The list of irritations that Italian policies created in Slovenia shall not be continued here. What is more important, is to stress that each of the policies described could be interpreted differently: Italian citizenship law, for example, was not designed *for* the Istro-Italian community and even less *against* the Slovene or Croatian state, but generally for Italian migrants all over the world; the Italian request of property restitution was part of a common European and international discourse on retroactive justice as the basis for a future democratic Europe and so on. Although many other interpretations of political acts and facts could be imagined, the region's past favoured some over others and strongly influenced many observers on the local, regional and national level on how to regard Italy as well as the Italian community in Istria.

Especially in Slovenia, the Istro-Italians were increasingly trapped between the demand to maintain regional unity (i.e. the programme of the *Unione Italiana* as well as that of the Italian state) and the request to merge into a pluralist Slovene society (i.e. the programme of the *CAN* as well as that of the Slovene state). On the one hand, the Slovene Italians enjoyed extensive minority rights, which have been considered "exemplary" by many European observers. On the other hand, it was especially the national group in Slovenia which depended on Istro-Italian unity: with only 3000 Italians, many of them elderly, it was nearly impossible to maintain all the minority's institutions, the representation vis-à-vis the Slovene political parties, as well as towards the Slovene, Croatian and Italian state. Without professionals coming from Croatia and potentially also from Italy, a member of the community told me "we have to force every Italian to work for the minority – and that is neither what we understand by democracy nor what we wish for the quality of the Italian institutions". Nevertheless, the insistence on the Italian and/or Istrian link defined them as potential outsiders in the larger Slovene context. "They should start to think as Italo-Slovenes." - I was told – "The Slovene state has given the

Italian minority whatever it could, now they have to decide: either they take the offer to be part of this society or they leave it". Those two positions - regional unity vs. integration into a pluralist society - did not only mark the latently conflictual line between the Slovene society and "its" minority, but they also cut right through the Istro-Italian community in Slovenia itself, as at times strained relations between the *CAN* and the *Unione Italiana* show. The "dilemma" of the Italians in Slovenia caused not only their potential marginalisation in the Slovene national society, but also the internal fragmentation of the Istro-Italian community itself.

The overlapping networks were expected - in the spirit of the European ideal - to allow the Istro-Italians to maintain their regional community despite the new national frontiers and to gain relative autonomy from its respective host-states. The "old" national interpretation of the "new" situation, however, make them even more dependent on inter-state relations (Image 4) on which they - not being recognised as international actors - have little influence. This might explain why the representatives of the Italian community searched increasingly to build up yet another network which links them directly with the European Union itself: as a Euroregion. With direct support from Brussels, so I was told, the Istro-Italian community could finally take its future into its own hands. The direct link to (and direct financial assistance from) European institutions would allow them to break the stand-off with nationalising states by "de-nationalising" the common Istro-Italian institutions and "Europeanising" the community itself (Image 5).

Many ways into Europe?

The European Union seems in fact the common target of all institutional actors - national, regional, ethnic - in Istria. The Istro-Italian community is striving for integration in the European Union, which is seen as the best umbrella for ensuring the maintenance and development of the community's cultural specificity. The Istrian movement sees in the

European Union a forum which recognises and valorises the multi-cultural and multi-national character of the region's inhabitants. The Croatian state is investing remarkable efforts in accommodating European requests in order to achieve integration, which is seen as necessary for the country's economic and political future; Slovenia has already accommodated European requests and will be integrated into the Union in 2004.

Each of those "candidates for Europe", whose networks overlap and co-exist in Istria, seem to follow, however, their own logic as to which way best leads to Europe. The network which links the Istro-Italian community to Italy follows an *ethno-national* principle, according to which "shared nationhood" makes a state responsible not only for its own citizens but also for ethnic co-nationals living in other states (Brubaker 1996: 67). The Istrian network refers to *regional* and *multi-cultural* principles, defining the Istrian society as based on common territory and shared culture beyond ethno-national boundaries. The networks which link the Istro-Italian community with their host-states contain *civic* components, according to which the national group is part of the state in which it resides.⁷ Each of those networks produces institutional ties, but contradictory and contesting conceptions of what the national group is or should be, to whom it does or should owe loyalty and to whom it does or should belong.

Although the integration of the entire peninsula in the European Union is still a project for the future⁸, the case of the Istro-Italian community invites reflection as to which networks and principles of belonging to Europe are featured today in the planning for tomorrow. If the Istro-Italian community in Istria seems "trapped" today in the web of nationalising discourses and policies of nation-states, it might be trapped tomorrow in the web of conflicting conceptions of Europe. While alternative discourses - Europe of regions vs. Europe of nations; Europe of cultural communities vs. Europe of civic societies to name only some - co-exist quietly in European programs and debates, the Istrian case reminds us that they might create antagonistic and conflictual scenarios

where they meet on the ground. Furthermore, the Istrian case points out that social networks, i.e. those "communication channels" which hold communities together "from within" (Deutsch 1966: 98) are embedded and confined by alternative regional, national as well as international institutional settings. To reflect on the "boundaries" imposed by these contexts might in fact indicate new perspectives on how collective identities - in Istria and elsewhere - are constructed, maintained and changed.

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¹ The *Unione Italiana* is the heir to the former *Unione degli Italiani d'Istria, Fiume e Dalmazia* which, as the name suggests, represented all Italian communities in the former Yugoslavia and which was reformed in the democratisation process at the end of the 80s.

² See also Knežević 1998; Nikočević 1999; Brumen 2000.

³ For example C.I.P.O (Centro per l'Informatica, la Programmazione e l'Orientamento); A.I.P.I (Associazione Imprenditori Privati Italiani); PIETAS IULIA (Società di Studi e Ricerche per la Valorizzazione della Cultura Istro-veneta) and others. For the activities of the *Unione Italiana* see also "Statuto Unione Italiana" at the web site: <http://www.cipo.hr/>.

⁴ The new Slovene constitution explicitly sanctioned the right of national minorities "to foster relations with their nation(s) of origin and the respective countries" (Art 64). Furthermore, Slovene as well as Croatian law foresee the possibility of creating direct relations to "their" external national communities (Slovene Constitution Art. 5, Croatian Constitution Art. 10), attributing to Italy a certain right to engage in direct relations to "its" Italian community in Istria, based on the general idea of reciprocity.

⁵ In 1975, the treaty of Osimo closed the long-disputed border question between Italy and Yugoslavia, by also sanctioning the treatment of the Italian minority in parts of Istria. Changes in the treatment of the minority - some of the community's representatives argued - would eventually invalidate the entire treatment and re-open international negotiations between Italy and the two ex-Yugoslav states.

⁶ While Southern Istria was integrated into Yugoslavia immediately after World War II, its northern areas were part of the "Free Territory of Trieste" which was established under international law. While Zone A of the territory (Trieste) was administered by

Allied forces, Zone B (Northern Istria) remained under Yugoslav administration until the project was abandoned in 1954.

⁷ Despite these *civic* components in the relations between Slovenia and Croatia towards the minorities within their nation-state, both states are clearly based on a ethno-national principle, which they also apply towards “their” co-nationals abroad.

⁸ Today, the border between Slovenia and Croatia, which divides the Istro-Italian community as well as the Istrian region as such, coincides increasingly with the Schengen-defined external borders of Europe, creating new difficulties for the “unity” of the Istro-Italians, in regional, national and European terms.

Image 1 - Istro-Italian network in Yugoslavia



Image 2: Istro-Italian networks in Slovenia and Croatia



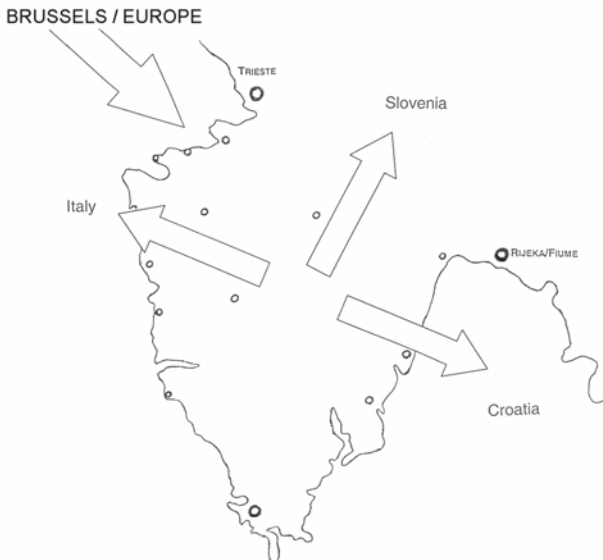
Image 3: Istro-Italian networks in Slovenia, Croatia and with Italy



Image 4: Istro-Italian community "in between" states



Image 5: Istria-Italian community "in" Europe



Interaction, migration and change

9. Some aspects of the Roma migration from Slovakia

Attila Szép

When Mikuláš Dzurinda's new government took office in 1998, the foreign affairs became one of the most successful areas of the Slovak government policy. The aim of the government program was to win back the trust of the key western countries, the member countries of NATO and EU, and of the international community in general. In 1999 and 2000, while carrying on its NATO and EU oriented activities, the Slovak Government managed to achieve some of its concrete integration targets, such as the OECD membership. It successfully continued its EU accession process, as well. NATO member countries greatly appreciated the Slovak government's attitude towards the Kosovo crisis. The Slovak Government could rely on a well-established and predictable internal politics and in this way create the essential condition for developing a fruitful foreign policy. Dzurinda's cabinet tried to reduce the deficit of democracy and of democratic functioning of political institutions that characterised Vladimír Mečiar's government. The only problem causing serious international tension was the exodus of Slovak Roma asylum seekers into some of the EU countries and the subsequent introduction of visa requirement on Slovak citizens (Bruncko and Lukáč 2000). The aim of this article is to outline the political attitudes towards the Roma minority in Slovakia in terms of its migration, with some comments on the reflections of the problem in the media.

Until the waves of Roma migration in the period between 1997-1999, the Slovak political and social elite regarded the Roma question as a problem of rather marginal character. The state programme documents or the declared political intentions did not speak about the Roma question; the pre-

election campaigns did not focus on the problem to a significant extent (see Nekvapil et al 1989). Still, in spite of the fact that the political environment was overwhelmed with problems of transformation and the creation of a functioning democratic system, some important documents were adopted, which significantly improved the conditions for solving the problems of Roma communities. With the first of these documents, adopted in 1991, the Romas were for the first time granted a national minority status, which represented a significant step forward concerning their position within the Slovak society, and established the basic preconditions for their cultural and social development. It was, at the same time, a signal that the new political elite treated the problem of Roma minority not only as a social problem (of a marginalised group), but understood it as a problem with its political and cultural dimensions that has its human rights aspects as well. Documents issued in 1996 and 1997 represented a certain return to the approach based on the understanding of the Roma question through its social dimension. At that time, the problems of the Roma community and their resolution were certainly not at the centre of the political discourse. The ruling political parties (including the one that represented the interests of the Hungarian national minority), in spite of their declared intention to solve the Roma question, did not manage to convert their programmes into the actual political agenda. There were several factors in the background of this incapacity:

The Roma political subjects were unable to exert sufficient pressure on the majority parties to implement concrete measures and, in the first place, to address more concentrated political activities. To achieve this, they would have needed the support of the Romas themselves as well as a certain cultural and institutional background. No parliamentary elections, since 1989, have brought any significant results for the Roma political subjects.

It was an extremely urgent and complicated issue that was further complicated by a considerable social distance between Slovakia's Roma and non-Roma population. In other

words, the delicacy of the problem made the political parties reluctant to deal with it since it could have endangered their popularity among the majority of population. Concerning the Romas' low level of organisation and involvement in political issues as well as the weakness of their political subjects of that time, there was no real possibility of gaining political benefits from the support of the Roma minority.

Thus, the problems of the Roma minority were not central issues of the pre-election campaigns. The migration waves of 1997 and 1999 and the subsequent international complications, however, changed this situation. The political elite was forced to take up a position and put forward a plan for solving the problem. Besides political declarations, the overall approach to the Roma question changed. The discourses became more concerned with the issue and this resulted in the delineation of different viewpoints within the political elite. Three distinct attitudes took shape. Part of the political parties preferred a systematic and thorough approach to the given problem. Some parties, exploiting the social distance and the prevailing negative attitudes of Slovakia's majority population towards the Romas, launched a nationalistic or a more sophisticated populist argumentation. The parties of the third group were satisfied with open emphasis on the importance of observing the law, mainly on the part of the Romas (Vašečka 2000).

According to experts, the public debate on migration of Romas resulted in the formation of several distinct approaches to the problem. The first standpoint attributed the migration of Romas to their economical motivation. According to it, there was a clearly identifiable interest of the migrants in using and abusing the asylum system of the target countries for seeking incomes. The experts argued that the existing legislation of Slovak Republic granted the rights to all citizens belonging to national minorities to a sufficient degree, so there were no legal grounds (discrimination on the basis of race or nationality) for the migration of Romas.

Most of the media attention was focused on a single aspect of the problem according to which the migration rep-

resented a threat to Slovakia's major foreign affairs objective – the integration into transatlantic and European structures.

The representatives of the second viewpoint (“technocratic”) accused the government of not adopting measures able to prevent the migration of Roma. The criticism, in the first place, was levelled at Pál Csáky, the Vice-Premier for Human Rights, National Minorities, and Regional Development and at Vincent Danihel, the Government Commissioner for Solving the Problems of Roma minority. This criticism concerned the incompetence and ineffectiveness of institutions and organisations that were responsible for the solution of the problem.

Some criticism of the policy of EU countries appeared as well pointing out its deceitful approach and the alleged contradiction between their declared and actually implemented principles.

The main argumentation of the representatives of Roma minority was based on the defence of their migrants, and justified the migration by the existence of either open or hidden racism and discrimination. After all, even the experts confirmed the complexity of the problem and the existence of a distance between the majority and the Roma population, admitting the possibility of a hidden discrimination against Roma in the fields of education, labour market, and health care.

The Slovak Government used every endeavour to present various viewpoints on an international level and to communicate with the international institutions. The aim of this was to prove that the reason for the migration of Roma asylum-seekers should not be attributed to their discrimination. In order to prevent the deterioration of the image of this young democracy at the international level, the diplomatic activities of the Slovak Government aimed at demonstrating that the Government was seriously concerned about the solution of the Roma question.

The measures of Slovak Government implemented at the level of internal affairs should be greatly appreciated as well. The cabinet elaborated and adopted the *Strategy of the Government of Slovak Republic for Solving the Problems of*

Roma Minority [Stratégia vlády SR na riešenie problémov rómskej menšiny] (1999), which represents a good basis for resolving this highly pressing problem.

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10. From East to West: The Roma migration from Slovakia

Renata Weinerová

Although Roma asylum seekers are almost universally dismissed by Western governments as economic migrants, research studies reveal that their predominant motivations stem from the sharp deterioration in their social relations with other groups within society. (Will Guy 2001: 4)

Mass emigration of Roma from Slovakia to the countries of Western Europe became a serious political problem for Slovakia with its entry to the EU. Discussions about what had been a politically undesirable topic at the turn of the 21st century became more open and more serious, dispelling the taboo surrounding Roma community settlements. This topic has been addressed by many studies, both by government and non-government bodies, by scientists from Slovakia as well as other European lands, including studies by the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the World Bank. Through this article, I would like to contribute to the discussion regarding Roma migration from Slovakia. It is based on material gathered during fieldwork in the Czech Republic and also on my views on this issue. Understandably, it reflects this viewpoint to a certain extent. Field studies have been carried out in the territory of the Czech Republic together with Zdeněk Uherek in 2001. Considering that both countries (Slovakia and the Czech Republic) shared a common history for decades and the migration of Slovak and Czech Roma shows a number of similar characteristics, I hope that this contribution will bring new momentum to Slovak and Czech Roma studies.

Methodological approaches

On the issue of the migration of Slovak Roma, we tapped information mainly from field studies that we carried out

among asylum applicants in Czech settlement facilities of the Ministry of the Interior. We held interviews with the employees of these facilities and with the Slovak Roma who were placed here. In cooperation with members of the Interdepartmental Commission for the affairs of the Roma community, Government Office of the Czech Republic and mainly with the employees of the Ministry for Regional Development, we discovered places with a high concentration of Roma who arrived from Slovakia, and we carried out investigations in the chosen districts (Prague 5, Prague West, Sokolov and Ústí nad Labem). At the same time, we contacted non-governmental organizations engaged in Roma migration (People in Need, International Organization for Migrations, UNHCR in Prague), and with their assistance, we were able to further elaborate the data.

For the analysis of the situation in Slovakia as a source country of migration, we primarily used the lessons and experiences in publications and materials that had been previously produced by government and non-governmental organizations or by scientists in Slovakia and elsewhere in the world. We also took much information from the Czech press. A telling witness on the situation in Slovakia is also provided by the Roma quarterly *Romano nevo lil* published in Slovakia. At the same time, we observed experiences gained within the Slovak settlements in the 1980s and 1990s.

Migration of Slovak Roma after 1989

Within the professional public, it is not very well known that the first wave of immigration of Slovak Roma in post-communist Europe took place before 1993 within the territorial framework of the Czechoslovak Federal State. In the years 1990–1992, it was mainly immigrants from the areas of eastern Slovakia who came to the Czech lands. Prompted by reports of the impending division of Czechoslovakia, they came to stay with relatives who were already long-term residents in the Czech lands. It can be said that it was the last wave of the internal chain of migration which was taking place

within Czechoslovakia from the year 1945 and during which almost 100,000 people immigrated to the Czech lands from Slovakia. The legality of the stay of newcomers during the period 1990–1992 on the territory of the Czech Republic was questioned by the newly passed act on state citizenship, which has been, following severe criticism from abroad, amended several times.¹ This law, however, also negatively affected Roma with Slovak nationality who were living on Czech territory on a long term basis within the Czechoslovak federation.

Qualified estimates suggested that since 1st July 1994, approximately 100,000 Roma of Slovak nationality living in the Czech Republic have been relegated to “foreigner status”. This problem has become a sore point in the life of many Roma families. To this day, discussions still continue over who is principally to blame for the desolate situation of thousands of Czech Roma of Slovak nationality who, after the split-up of the federation, remained on the territory of the Czech Republic illegally and without any legal status whatsoever (Miklušáková 1999: 267-270).

The second immigration wave of Slovak Roma started in the year 1997, with a mass immigration to the states of Western Europe. The first immigration wave of this period flooded Great Britain. The migration of Roma from Slovakia quickly became for many European states such a problem that most of them considered it necessary to introduce a visa obligation. In August 1998, Great Britain introduced a visa obligation for Slovakia, followed by Ireland, and then in July 1999 Finland and Norway imposed them as well, joined four months later by Denmark. In November 1999, the Finns and Norwegians lifted these restrictions but shortly after, in January 2000, the Finns reintroduced them again. In addition, the Belgian government reintroduced the visa obligation in April 2000. Problems that the Slovak Republic had to resolve in conjunction with the emigration of their Roma were extensively covered by the press. From the news in the Czech press it was clear that the Slovak government was trying to

belittle the subjective statements of Roma about the reasons for their emigration (they stated first of all political reasons, such as racism and neo-Nazism). In response, the Slovak government accused Roma of abusing the right of political asylum.²

Similarly, in many west-European countries there were, in conjunction with the Roma migration, hysterical media campaigns accompanied with racist pronouncement by government officials. Belgium seems to be a typical example.

In Belgium, the racist feelings resulted in the expulsion of a group of Slovak Roma from the country in October 1999 (Cahn and Vermeersch 2000: 71). The first Slovak asylum applicants arrived in Belgium already in the year 1998. At the end of the year, their number increased to 500 and they were concentrated in the cities of Gent and Tirlemont. In October 1999, they were expelled from the country and in front of the camp, where Slovak Roma were concentrated for repatriation, demonstrations took place in support of them. Belgian citizens were eventually dispersed with water cannons. In another case, a group of 74 Roma refugees from Slovakia were expelled from the country after four days of being held in custody. These asylum applicants were expelled from the country without having been given the opportunity to conclude the asylum procedures at the last instance of the Belgium asylum system: the state council (Conseil d'Etat, Raad van State). In this way, the procedural asylum law was violated. Belgian citizens protested against the undemocratic procedure applied by the Belgian Ministry of the Interior against this group of Slovak Roma. Slovak journalists commented ironically on the expulsion of Roma from Belgium and the demonstration of Belgian citizens to support the rights of Roma refugees from Slovakia that followed: "It seems that to this day, nobody informed them about how well part of this minority lives in Slovakia from the Belgian support".³

Based on these and similar citizen and media reactions on both sides of the former iron curtain, a question arises: what are the differences between anti-Roma attitudes within individual European countries – between those that are devel-

oped and those that are going through a transformation process? It seems that on the level of the media, there is almost none. The attitude of the east-European media did become, under the pressure of impending EU membership, significantly democratic. On the other hand, it still often interprets Roma emigration as high treason, ethno-tourism or ingratitude of the minority towards the majority society. These attitudes prevail especially in Slovakia. The west-European media, when speaking about Roma asylum applicants, use a surprisingly racist tone and a bigger bias than when speaking about asylum applicants from other European or non-European countries. It then seems that "such exceptionally hostile perceptions are based on the popular belief that Roma are not just ethnically distinct from other groups but in a special category of their own" (Guy 2001: 4). This attitude towards Roma as an absolutely exceptional entity may be seen in all European countries, whether these are in Western or Eastern Europe.

Demographic indicators of Roma in Slovakia

Slovakia traditionally represented within Czechoslovakia a territory with the highest concentration of Roma inhabitants. The number of Roma in post-war Czechoslovakia significantly increased: in the course of the years 1945 through 1991, it increased from 97,000 to 411,000 (Srb 1993: 283). At the same time, the number of Roma migrating from Slovakia to the Czech lands also increased. This territorial movement, whose beginnings were in the first postwar years, increased most in the sixties, seventies and especially the eighties of the 20th century. That is why we record a lower numerical increase of Roma in Slovakia than in the Czech lands. The following table shows an increasing trend in the numbers of Roma population in the Czech lands when compared with Slovakia.⁴

Table 1. Increase in numbers of Roma in the Czech lands and in Slovakia in the period of 1945 – 1991

	Czech Republic	Slovak Republic
1945	1 000	96 000
1947	16 752	84 438
1966	56 519	165 006
1967	59 467	164 526
1968	61 085	165 382
1970	60 279	159 275
1980	101 193	203 405
1981	112 192	208 217
1982	115 877	213 026
1983	120 784	219 180
1984	124 899	224 694
1985	132 167	229 782
1986	136 812	235 169
1987	140 915	242 053
1988	143 071	247 755
1989	145 738	253 943
1991	151 000	260 000

According to the last census held in the Slovak Republic (as at 26 May 2001), there were 89,920 Roma living in Slovakia, constituting 1.7% of the entire population.

This information does not, however, reflect the low social status of Roma citizens in the Slovak society. Roma prefer to hide themselves in the cloak of Slovak or Hungarian national identity, which brings about fewer problems in relations with the authorities than declaring Roma nationality. It is more than clear that the media campaign spread by the Roma quarterly *Romano nevo l'il*⁶, which as a result should have strengthened national consciousness and Roma-ness (*romipen*) among the Slovak Roma, was unsuccessful. Official estimations from 1995 speak of approximately 480,000 to 520,000 Roma living in Slovakia, which represents 9-10% of the Slovak population of the Slovak Republic (Pluim 2001:6).

Politics and Slovak Roma

Several policies with regard to Slovak or Czechoslovak Roma were tried under the previous regime. There was a programme of assimilation (which meant bereaving Roma of

their identity), a policy of integration (which meant replacing Roma identity with that of a "citizen of the Roma origin"), and a program of forced settlement and regulation of the population curve by sterilizing Roma women, which was realized especially in Slovakia.

During the period under the communist regime, a new social stratification of Roma in Slovakia took place. Imrich Vašečka, in his study for IOM (International Organization for Migration) (Vašečka I. 2000), explains that the Roma population started to become integrated into the newly emerging socialist structure according to new rules. Isolated population of Roma settlements started to communicate with the outside world. These Roma who left Roma settlements, either voluntarily or under pressure, overcame the territorial and social isolation and took advantage of the new chances of the world of institutions and organizations opened to them. To put it simply, Roma started to be divided into urban Roma who enjoyed higher prestige and rural Roma enjoying lower prestige. The internal hierarchization of Roma according to family principles and local rules started to intermingle with new differentiations. The nuclear family more and more often became the basic organizational unit replacing the extended family and thus making their situation similar to the majority population.

The Roma population started to be socially differentiated as a whole. It may be said that different strata came into existence: a small Roma intelligentsia, a middle class⁶, and a large, absolutely poor group of Slovak Roma living in often inhuman conditions prevailing in Roma settlements. A problem particular for Slovakia is the terrible housing conditions of many Roma who still live in the so-called "osady", exclusively Roma communities which resemble slums. An estimated one-quarter of Roma in Slovakia live in settlements, many of which are in the poorer eastern regions of the country.⁷

On the international level, the notion of a "Roma middle class" has become, to a considerable measure, misleading. In both governmental and non-governmental materials, it has been often stated that the core of the Roma emigration into

Western Europe is represented by the so-called Roma middle class. The materials, however, do not specify in a more detailed way that in fact this is the former “socialist” Roma middle class which was, as a result of what happened after the year 1989, *de facto* pauperized to the level of the poorest groups. These are groups of literate but unqualified persons.

There are indications that negative perceptions of Roma are worsening and that relations between Roma and non-Roma have been deteriorating during the past ten years. There are a number of possible explanations for this, including the declining social status of Roma, growing unemployment and increasing dependency on social benefits (Kužel 2002). Negative stereotypes are also reinforced by geographic separation, and the limited contact between Roma and non-Roma.⁸ A British expert on the issues of Roma in Central Europe, Will Guy, compares the current position of Slovak Roma to the former situation of black inhabitants of South Africa. He summarized his impressions from his last visit to Slovakia as follows: “The same settlements, poverty, segregation which I saw when I was in these settlements in late sixties. In fact the only substantial thing that has changed is the fact that today they do not even have the work they used to have under communism.”⁹

The Canadian social anthropologist David Z. Scheffel, who has been carrying out applied field research in the east-Slovak settlement of Svinia since 1993, described the social situation in the Roma settlement as follows:

I do not want to apply this to the whole Slovakia, circumstances are different, but the level of spite which exists at Svinia, that's something one cannot imagine. Roma at Svinia represent for the locals kind of a subjugated nation. It is a nation consisting of people they consider to be half animals. And what shocked me there the most is the everyday relationship of these communities. Really, I call it apartheid. I cannot imagine a bigger apartheid than what exists right there. There are total barriers built up between two communities and there is almost no communication between them. The only communication which exists, is a negative commu-

nication when they call each other names or steal something from each other or do some other similar mischief.

(Scheffel 2001: 71)

Another burden, in addition to the oppressive unemployment, is the fact that Roma, as rent dodgers, are often being moved from the so-called “dispersion” to “low-category flats for rent dodgers”. This happens mainly in east-Slovak cities where Roma colonies isolated from both the territorial and social point of view are coming into existence. Together with the aggravating social conditions in the nineties it is even possible to see the return of the impoverished urban Roma back to the settlements.

Because of the desperate social/economic situation, frustrated Roma from the former Roma middle class felt they had no prospect in Slovakia whatsoever. Slovak Roma started to spontaneously or in an organized way emigrate to the West-European states including the Czech Republic.

The spontaneous emigration concerns above all the urban Roma, those who lost their original social status of the so-called Roma middle class. This type of emigration is more and more often interpreted in the non-governmental spheres (Klímová 2000: 4) as a developed strategy of Roma individuals who are motivated first of all economically. In our research we also encountered persons whose life was under threat (most often these are persons persecuted by an unspecified mafia or usurers) who are looking for asylum, if only a temporary one.

Usury

The managed emigration of Slovak Roma is usually organized by so-called “Roma usurers”, called “*úžerníci*” in Slovakia. They started to abuse the unbearable social situation of their Roma fellow citizens, especially in the settlements but also in the cities, exploiting them in an illegal way.¹⁰

According to the information provided by the Slovak press¹¹, Roma usurers in Slovakia lend money to impoverished Roma for 50% monthly interest. The debts grow to exor-

bitant figures, and the debtors do not manage to pay interest on interest. The most insolvent Roma become the victims of the so-called ethno-business. The practice is usually such that the Roma are involuntarily moved by usurers to an airport in Prague or Budapest and are provided with flight tickets to any west-European country where Roma get higher social benefits than in Slovakia and thus can pay more to the usurers. Since the asylum law does not permit applicants to leave the country in which the asylum is applied for, Slovak Roma, on their way back to their home country, were regularly (intentionally) losing their passport since they needed to avoid having their passport marked with a Slovak stamp. That is why they usually applied for new passports in Slovakia to travel back to the target country with an unused document – to continue receiving social benefits or to stay in touch with relatives living in the asylum centers abroad. The travels between their original place of residence and the target country was usually made in a taxi which, together with the fact that they were receiving social benefits also in the place of their residence, was not perceived well both by the local authorities and by the local population.

The media descriptions of the usury practices of Roma in Slovakia present Slovak Roma as immoral citizens who are at the border or beyond the border of legality. Slovak journalists, however, do not comment on the real roots of the problem. A Czech anthropologist, Stanislav Kužel (2000: 151-153) thoroughly analyzes the problem of usury in Slovakia. He points out above all the “hidden economy of Roma segregation as a communist heritage” from which, after the year 1989, the “hidden economy of segregation as an economy of disinterest” has evolved. Kužel in his study analyzes on a detailed basis the mechanism of where the Roma poverty stems from, the poverty which is, together with a decrease in social income, always accompanied by falling into debts in pawnshops and further leads to an increase in intra-ethnic clientship system (usury). For many Roma families in tenement houses it is a disaster already when arrears in rent of over 5,000 crowns arise. Due to their functional illiteracy,

they are not able to save up to pay for it and they get into debts either with Roma usurers or with pawnshops, which levy interest of at least 17% a month, and thus they wind up in a chronic dependency. Many Roma families resolve the decrease in their income by selling flats and withdrawing "back" to the country settlements where their relatives live, where they live in illegal but, from the operational point of view, cheaper shacks.¹² If, in Slovakia, the usury interest amounts from 17% to 50%, in the Czech lands, specifically in Ústí nad Labem, they amount to 100%. Our researches show that the anonymous urban milieu makes possible the increasing of interest to exorbitant amounts.

At the start of the new millennium, the phenomenon of usury became a serious social problem not only in Slovakia, but also in the Czech Republic.¹³ In 2002 in the Czech Republic, first reports began to reach the public showing that the problem of "usury" was not only an intra-community Roma issue.¹⁴ In several Czech districts, private non-Roma money lenders appeared, (for example, the company "Past Finance" in Hodonin), which began to provide loans with interest rates as high as 130%. The loan conditions were never transparent.

In relation to this, it is necessary to touch upon the fact that in the Czech Republic, specifically in Ústí nad Labem and Ostrava, the fight against usury is successfully being waged with the aid of state organs working in criminal proceedings despite the difficulty of gaining testimonies of eyewitnesses. This is because the victims of usury are, namely, drastically frightened, and, therefore, they fear for their own safety and the course and speed of the proceedings.

The problem of usury in the Czech Republic has been followed long-term and investigation of the individual cases is supported by the association "People in Need" and the UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) in Prague.¹⁵ The attempt developed by the UNHCR in Prague to prevent the development of new victims of usury is interesting. It involves a project known as the Social Emergency Fund, which was begun in June 2001 in two towns afflicted most by usury, specifically Ústí nad Labem and Ostrava. The project was founded on the

principle of solidarity and should financially support threatened persons and their families through interest free loans. It is aimed at persons who find themselves at the borders of poverty, and, without assistance, could fall to the bottom of the social network and become easy prey for usurers. Unfortunately, the Czech state is currently unable to ensure the transformation of the "Social Emergency Fund" into a local self-administrative system and thus the demise of the project is imminent in the future.¹⁶

Characteristics of Roma migration in Slovakia

Slovakia is first of all a country of origin of Roma migrants. So far, it has not become the migration target country; however, it belongs to transit countries. The territory of the Slovak state serves as a part of the migration bridge between Bulgaria and Poland as well as between Romania and the Czech Republic. While the first migration bridge serves first of all the "entrepreneurial" activities of Bulgarian Roma, the other represents the route for groups of Romanian Roma who unsuccessfully strive to obtain an asylum in Germany.¹⁷ Romanian Roma usually end up in Czech asylum establishments, from which they try to get behind the Czech/German border.

Motives of Slovak Roma to migrate

In Slovakia, we have not carried out any special investigations directed at clarifying the motives of Slovak Roma to migrate. In literature (Vašecká I. 2000; Pluim 2001; Poverty... 2002) the reasons most often cited as the motives of Slovak Roma to migrate are racial discrimination and social economic factors. From the view of the research that we carried out among Roma asylum seekers from Slovakia in the Czech Republic, we can confirm the reasons mentioned above. At the same time, however, we recorded primarily an increased occurrence of motives associated with serious conflicts in the area of interpersonal relations. During field studies, we met

with migrants fleeing extortion, debt collection or closer non-specified mafias. Even though respondents did not speak directly about usury, from their reactions it was noticeable that they fell into the clutches of cruel extortionists who would not hesitate to use gross physical pressure on persons who refused to fulfill their financial demands. Usurers enrich themselves mostly due to the lack of information and helplessness of their victims. When deciding whether or not to migrate, our respondents were often under the pressure of such persons.

The motives of Slovak Roma to migrate are generally a combination of reasons. Social economic factors and racial discrimination are combined with acts of compulsion from the various speculators who take advantage of the unsatisfying life situations of Slovak Roma. In such cases, Slovak Roma migration takes on for the outside observer the character of so-called ethnotourism, as the Slovak media has infamously dubbed this tendency. The real causes of Slovak Roma migration, however, are more complicated, and it is necessary to analyze them carefully. Studies performed by Imrich and Michal Vašecka have brought a detailed analysis of the motivation of Slovak Roma to migrate (Vašecka I. 2000; Vašecka M. 2000).

Emigration of Slovak Roma into the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is one of the countries that can be classified both as a country of origin and as a receiving state. In the period between 1 January 2000 and 15 December 2000 there was a total of 723 Slovak asylum seekers registered (Pluim 2001: 28-29). Slovak asylum seekers started to arrive as early as in 1994 but until 31 December 1999 these mostly involved claims by Slovak asylum seekers already living in the Czech Republic.

The turning point in the numbers of Roma refugees from Slovakia to the Czech lands was the year 1999. The explanation seems to be the fact that most of the west-European countries (Great Britain, Ireland, Finland, Norway, and

Denmark) introduced a visa obligation for Slovakia in the years 1998–1999. Czech asylum establishments were relatively easily accessible and since the year 2000, they even made the residence procedures easier. Roma asylum applicants could freely travel within the Czech Republic and were not limited in their contacts with their country of origin by their absence of travelling documents since the Czech/Slovak border can be crossed with only an ID card. According to an unnamed source, 650 Roma from Slovakia asked for political asylum in the year 1999. These applicants stated a Slovak or Hungarian nationality. None of the applicants complied with the conditions for being granted political asylum.

Following in-depth research by the Czech government with regard to arrivals in 2000, the following details became available. Most of the 723 asylum seekers came with their families; there were only 48 individual applications. A very high percentage (43%) concerned children up to the age of 15. On the other hand, only 9% of the applicants fell into the group aged 41–60. The division male/female is roughly equal, which is normally not the case with other asylum seekers. Another remarkable feature was that Roma nationality was stated only by a small number of applicants (54 cases), whereas 72% of the applicants stated the Slovak nationality. Most of the applicants come from the towns in the district of Michalovce, the Slovak Republic, with an intention to apply for the asylum. Some of the asylum seekers had already applied before in various countries, such as Hungary, Switzerland and Germany.

During their first month in the quarantine camp in Vyšší Lhoty in northern Moravia, Roma asylum seekers are usually contacted by IOM workers, who hold interviews with them and try to find solutions to the issues which motivated the asylum applicants to migrate so that they could be resolved in their country of origin. If the political asylum applicant decides to return to the country of origin, they try to make this return easier for him by covering the travel expenses and by making a contribution for the first two weeks of their stay in the country of origin.¹⁸ Due to the fact that usually nothing has

changed in the place of the original residence of a Roma emigrant, Slovak Roma decide (or are forced by usurers) to make another emigration attempt.

Even though conditions for illegal border crossing between Slovakia and the Czech Republic have been tightened since 1 January 2002 with the use of a passport being required, the border crossings continue. We do not have precise information from our field studies in the Czech Republic. However, it is clear that Slovak Roma continue to wander in the direction of the Czech Republic with disregard for the problems they must overcome as foreigners in the Czech lands.¹⁹ Illegal residence by Roma with Slovak state citizenship can end in administrative deportation back to the land of origin, which usually does not happen because long-term illegal residence of these people is difficult to prove.

Conclusion

Due to the long-term foreign-policy targets of the Slovak Republic (joining the EU) the mass migration of Roma has become a serious political problem.

The Slovak government has responded to the departures of Slovak Roma to the EU countries on the level of declarations and on the level of measures. On the declarative level, and without knowledge of the internal regularities of the life of the Roma community, these departures have pejoratively been called *ethno-tourism*.²⁰ It has been repeatedly stated that Roma behave in an irresponsible manner and that they pay no regard to the good name of Slovakia.

On the level of measures, however, it is clear that the Slovak government pays much attention to the issue. It passed a number of conceptual measures and is trying to achieve a situation whereby even lower levers of the state administration accept this approach. With the ratification of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages in June 2001, Slovakia is now party to all major international minority rights instruments. Indeed, the European Commission has recognized progress in the area of protection of

minority rights, although noting “a gap between policy formulation and implementation on the ground”²¹ and a lack of practical improvements in the daily life of minorities – notably Roma (Monitoring the EU Accession Process 2001: 431).

At the same time, the activities of both Roma and non-Roma NGO's have significantly expanded and they are getting closer to each other. As far as we know, these endeavours are more or less futile and especially in the environment of Slovak countryside they encounter the cultural/social limits of the local community. The cliché of development programs which are usually based on an idea that problems of Roma settlements have to be addressed inside the settlements themselves, separately from the “white” community, hampers the successful implementation of measures through the so-called ethnic emancipation of Roma settlers. The development programs which are founded exclusively on ethnic principles usually do not meet their purpose and are a reason for ethnic conflicts. The strategy of development programmes should be focused on a parallel citizen emancipation of ethnically different population components (Kužel 2000: 144).

It seems that the co-existence of the Roma minority with the rest of the population in Slovakia has become a true challenge for the entire society.

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¹ For more details about reactions to the formulation of act No. 40/1993 on acquisition and termination of state citizenship of the Czech Republic both among the Czech and Roma see manuscript of the study by Zdeněk Uherek "The Czech Republic and Roma Migration after 1989" (2001), Miklušáková 1999: 267-270, Weinerová 1994: 6-7.

² See: "The government will send a special airplane for Roma returning from Finland (Slovakia)" in: *Metro*, 9 July 1999. "The government warns Roma from ethno-tourism (Slovakia)" in: *Metro*, 1 July 1999. "Hundreds of Slovak Roma will have to leave Belgium" in: *Metro*, 30 September 1999. "Britain strongly warns Roma (The British Home Office does not exclude the reintroduction of the visa obligation)" in: *Metro*, 21 October 1999.

³ See: "Usury clan in the background", *Moment* 14 April 2000.

There are cases when Roma families received social support payments both in the country of origin and in the destination country. From the point of view of the majority population, this approach sounds clearly immoral. However, in a number of cases this appeared to the Roma as the only possibility to improve their living conditions.

- ⁴ The increase in migration took place after the application of government decree No. 502/65 which put into the practice a policy of steady "diffusion" of Roma from places of large concentration. As a result of the plan to liquidate settlements and to diffuse Roma from places where they were concentrated in large numbers, there was a chain migration of Slovak Roma to the Czech lands whereby above all Czech cities absorbed a demographic increase in the Roma population from East Slovakia. (Romové v České Republice 1999: 175).
- ⁵ Romano nevo ľil (Roma New Paper) is an independent cultural-social newspaper of Roma in Slovakia. Number 468 of the year 2001 was focused on the issues of the census of people, houses and flats in the Slovak Republic in the year 2001. This number consisted of articles aiming to remove the concerns of Roma about losing Slovak citizenship by declaring Roma nationality. The newspaper included a number of interviews with popular Roma personalities or Romologists who voluntarily and proudly declared their Roma nationality. For example the well-known Czech Romologist, Milena Hübschmannová in one of her articles argued why she had adopted the Roma nationality.
- ⁶ It was not a real "middle" class. From the point of view of the overall differentiation of the society, Roma and non-Roma, this was still part of the lower class of the society. From this point of view, a part of the real middle class under socialism was only represented by a small group of Roma intelligentsia. The lowest Roma class, the inhabitants of Roma settlements, moved and still move on the very social seabed, sometimes even lower than that.
- ⁷ Settlements vary significantly based upon geographic location and the level of ethnic segregation. Some settlements have their roots in policies adopted during the Second World War and early socialist period, which required Roma to move outside of towns. The population of Roma in settlements has been growing in the past decade, as many Roma have returned to settlements because of the availability of cheaper housing. The level of poverty in a Roma settlement seems to be closely connected to the level of ethnic integration and segregation.

- ⁸ See: "Segregation in Eastern Slovakia": Hornak 2000 ("Porovnání segregace dvou romských osád na východním Slovensku"). Thesis, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Plzeň.
- ⁹ See: "Expert: Roma's life is worse" ("Expert: Romům se žije hůř"), in: MF Dnes, 8 September 2001, p. 1, 8.
- ¹⁰ According to the information published in the Roma press, the usury practices were known already in the year 1995. Only in the year 2001, cases of some usurers from Ústí nad Labem were passed on to the prosecutor. In: "It was known that usurers existed." Romano kurko 11 May 2001: 8. For further details concerning the usury issues, see below articles: Vojtěch Lavička, "Rom Romestar na čorla? ("A Roma won't rob a Roma?") In: Amaro Gendalos, 5/5, May 2001, 14-16; Jana Kolářková, Loans and usury (legal consulting) In: Amaro gendalos, 5/5, May 2001, 17; Soňa Kalejová, Fight against usury In: Amaro gendalos, 5/4, April 2001, 3; Roman Křištof, Usury (commentary) In: Amaro gendalos, 5/4, April 2001, 12.
- ¹¹ See: Usury clan in the background, Moment, 14 April 2000.
- ¹² Kužel 2000: 152.
- ¹³ An employee of the commission for the prevention of criminality of the Ministry of the Interior, Radek Jiránek reveals that in the Czech Republic, thousands have been afflicted by the problem of usury, possibly tens of thousands. Exact data is not available. The police in the 2001 report listed only a small number of registered and reported cases of usury. However, estimates of social workers in the field, Roma themselves and Roma counsellors confirm that usury occurs in every community where the environment is appropriate. In: <http://www.infoservis.net/tema.php3?cid=1015433326>
- ¹⁴ Information taken mainly from the Seminar of Roma Counselors in Velké Karlovice in the Vsetín region, which took place on 28-30 April 2002. The event was organized by the Council of the Czech Government for the affairs of the Roma community.
- ¹⁵ The association People in Need on the problem of poverty and usury regularly posts information on its website: <http://www.infoservis.net/tema>
- ¹⁶ Information from a discussion at a meeting of the UNHCR in Prague on 13 May 2002.
- ¹⁷ The migration movements of Roma to Germany started in the early 1990s, the first big group of asylum seekers being from Romania. Approximately 60,000 Romanian Roma sought political asylum in Germany in the period 1990-1995. As a reaction

to general migratory movements, since 1993 Germany has decided to make a number of amendments in its legislation. Furthermore, Germany has concluded a repatriation agreement with Romania and there are various return programmes in co-operation with different countries (Pluim 2001: 30).

¹⁸ Field researches by Zdeněk Uherek and Renata Weinerová (2001).

¹⁹ For more information on the life style of Slovak Roma in the Czech lands see the manuscript of the study by Zdeněk Uherek "The Czech Republic and Roma Migration after 1989" (2001).

²⁰ For example, a quotation from an article published in the *Metro* daily of 1 July 1999: 2.

²¹ " In conjunction with applications of hundreds of Roma for an asylum in Finland, the Slovak government, through its vice-premier for minorities and human rights, addressed the Roma citizens not to yield to "inappropriate practices and initiatives of irresponsible individuals who see a business in this form of ethno-tourism". In the government's opinion, no Slovak citizen has a reason to emigrate for political or national reasons. "The Finnish authorities have not granted an asylum in even a single case", points out the spokesman of the vice-premier, Pál Csáky.

²² European Commission, 2000 Regular Report on Slovakia's Progress Towards Accession, 8 November 2000, pp. 21-22.

11. Migration from the former Soviet Union to the Czech Republic: Comparing the cases of re-settlers from areas affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, Kazakhstan and labour migration from Subcarpathian Ukraine¹

Zdeněk Uherek – Kateřina Plochová

Besides migration between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, migration from the CIS states represents the most numerous and most diverse migration flow to the Czech Republic. The strongest immigrant flow comes from Ukraine, followed by that from Russia; but there are also newcomers from Byelorussia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Georgia, Moldavia and other CIS states. The consequences of this immigration have led to considerable changes in the labour market and the community relations in the Czech Republic.

In this paper we will concentrate on two different migration groups: the first is composed almost exclusively of temporary labour migrants from Ukraine to the Czech Republic,² and the second is composed of so called re-settlers – people who form well bounded communities from the former Soviet Union. Members of these communities, often descendants of earlier immigrants to the Ukrainian countryside from the Czech Lands in the 19th century, have permanently resettled in the Czech Lands and are showing a strong desire to integrate themselves fully into Czech society.³ The aim of this paper is to compare the aforementioned groups and to suggest what factors prevent the risks of migration flows.

Labour Migration from the Ukraine after 1989

For inhabitants of the post-communist Czech Republic, labour migration from Ukraine is a new phenomenon. During the

1918—1939 interwar period, when Subcarpathian Ukraine was a part of Czechoslovakia, people from this region used opportunities to earn money in the Czech Lands. A significant number of political immigrants from the newly established Soviet Union also found shelter there. But by the 1990s, this experience had been forgotten by many Czech citizens. The communist government of Czechoslovakia employed foreign workers after World War II, but these individuals were brought in first from Bulgaria in the 1950s and then later from Cuba and Vietnam (a still important source country of immigrants to the Czech Republic). Ukrainians began spontaneously migrating for economic reasons again only at the beginning of 1990, when employers began valuing them as a cheap and undemanding work force. During the first half of the 1990s, we observed that demand for such workers was increasing. In 1993, there were 7,745 legal Ukrainian guest workers in the Czech Republic while in 1995, there were 26,748 people. In 1996, the number of Ukrainian legal guest workers peaked: 42,056 working permits were issued for Ukraine. Owing to an economic slump and increasingly negative attitudes among Czechs about foreign migration, the number of Ukrainian workers decreased in the following year. First of all, since 1997, the number of work permits decreased starkly, and this trend continued afterwards (see Appendix). Nevertheless, the decrease of working force as a whole was not so dramatic compared to the drop of work permits. In reality, there are many Ukrainian illegal workers in the Czech Republic, and the black market of Ukrainian labourers has become a stable element of the Czech labour market. Also, the number of Ukrainians who hold trade licences is continually increasing. It can be argued that a part of the guest workers – originally owners of work permits – changed their strategy and became tradesmen, often again in manual professions. At the end of 2000 there were 21,402 Ukrainian tradesmen in the Czech Republic (Horáková 2001: 215, 217; Appendix).

The period between 1990 and 1996 has been described by many informants in Subcarpathian Ukraine as a golden

age for the labour force. Frontiers were easily penetrable, offers for labour were numerous, and competition in the labour market was only emerging. Many people from Subcarpathian Ukraine took only their passports, as they could stay legally in the Czech Lands for three months, and looked for temporary illegal work with minimal risks. Some of them subsequently found accommodation and legal work offers and so began arranging long term, and ultimately permanent, residence for themselves and for their families.

Data indicate that the Czech Republic was most open to aliens in both long-term and permanent migration between 1995 and 1998. At that time, we noticed the largest increase of immigrants on the basis of permanent and long-term migration (see table 1), while the number of work permits issued for people from abroad culminated in 1996. In a comparison of the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia, "by far the largest number of work permits were granted in the Czech Republic" (Wallace and Stola 2001: 30).

Table 1. Numbers of aliens with long-term sojourns

Year	Permanent sojourns	Long-term sojourns	Total figures
1990	27204	7695	35198
1991	28457	9204	38002
1992	29145	20428	49957
1993	31072	46070	77668
1994	32468	71230	104352
1995	38557	120060	159207
1996	45837	152767	199152
1997	56281	153516	210311
1998	63919	155836	220187
1999	66754	162108	228862
2000	66891	134060	200951

Subsequently, a decrease in the number of legal workers from Ukraine in 1996 - 1997 was caused by economic problems in the Czech Republic and by the gradual changes in its

policy versus the CIS countries. During the second half of the 1990s, a prevailing view among the Czech public was that criminality had increased in the country due to, first, the presence of foreign nationals and, second, people from the former Soviet Union.

The tendency to regulate strictly the migration flow to the Czech Republic culminated in 2000, when visas requirements were introduced for citizens of CIS countries. In 2000, a new law was also passed concerning residence permits for aliens (326/1999 Sb.). Nevertheless, in the Czech Republic in December 2000, there were 201,000 aliens who had migration permits for visas longer than three months. This figure was six times more than in 1990 (Populační vývoj...2001: 69).⁴

Nevertheless, the number of aliens in the Czech Republic was caused not only by the situation in the Czech labour market, but also by developments in the transmitting countries. For instance, in Ukraine, many people chose migration as a way of solving their economic problems. Thus migration increased considerably.

Labour migration from Ukraine has a strong tradition, in particular in Western Ukraine, where the temporary migration of male workers, primarily to Russia, for various types of casual manual work was already a well-established pattern before 1990 (Bedzir 2001: 208). In 1994, for the first time, emigration exceeded immigration with migration losses amounting to 143,200 persons (CIS Migration Report 1996: 126).

An increasing tendency to migrate from Ukraine to other states, as well as increasing obstacles erected by receiving states (such as the introduction of visas), has modified Ukrainians' forms of migration. For instance the years 2000 and 2001 were characterized by numerous abuses of asylum procedures in the Czech Republic by members of the CIS labour force. The reason for this was that asylum seekers could receive work permits without any obstacles. Consequently, while the number of foreign workers showed a slight decrease, the number of refugees and asylum seekers

showed a sharp increase. The latter were often from the states of the former Soviet Union where people were not physically threatened and human rights violated. In 1990, there were two asylum seekers from Ukraine in Czechoslovakia and none from Russia. In 2000, there were 1,145 asylum seekers from Ukraine, and 623 from Russia in the Czech Republic. In 2001, the number of Ukrainian asylum seekers in the Czech Republic reached 4,416, while those for Russia numbered 644 people. Asylum-seekers also came from Moldavia and other states of the former Soviet Union. In 2001, most asylum seekers in the Czech Republic were from Ukraine (see table 2). On February 1, 2002, the Czech government countered the misuse of asylum procedures by labour migrants with an amendment to the Czech asylum laws. The law now claims that work permits will not be issued to asylum seekers earlier than one year after they have submitted their petitions for asylum in the Czech Republic.

Table 2. The number of asylum seekers (The former Soviet Republics)

Country	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total
Armenia	-	4	163	733	160	60	55	42	78	34	274	1021	2624
Azerbaijan	-	5	-	18	-	4	-	5	8	10	9	89	148
Byelorussia	-	5	-	7	1	-	6	18	20	44	193	437	731
Georgia	-	8	12	15	27	7	13	2	17	10	103	1290	1504
Kazakhstan	-	1	7	1	-	4	5	2	13	23	103	131	290
Kyrgyzstan	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	6	52	48	110
Latvia	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	2	3	2	5	9	27
Lithuania	-	-	-	-	2	4	4	-	2	2	10	24	48
Moldavia	-	-	9	2	9	7	8	30	33	98	784	2459	3439
Russia	-	67	80	21	28	44	50	34	61	245	623	644	1897
The Former Soviet Union ⁵	95	287	4	5	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	401
Tajikistan	-	-	3	-	-	1	1	6	7	2	3	6	29
Turkmenistan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	6	4	12
Ukraine	2	61	36	30	34	43	36	50	43	94	1145	4416	5990
Uzbekistan	-	-	1	3	-	-	1	-	1	9	7	34	56
Total number of asylum seekers in the CR	1602	2226	841	2207	1187	1417	2211	2109	4085	7220	8788	18087	51980

Source: Ministry of Interior.

Re-settlers from Ukraine and some other CIS states

We are using the term “re-settler” to indicate a specific group of immigrants from Ukraine (Zhitomir county), Byelorussia, Russia and Kazakhstan: families with at least one member of Czech origin or who have ancestors who came from the Czech Lands in the 19th century to Tsarist Russia or later. These people had decided to move permanently to the Czech Republic with their families and so asked the Czech government to assist their migration. Consequently, they were resettled with assistance from the Czech State and various Czech non-governmental organisations.

Migrants from Zhitomir county and Byelorussia were known as “ecological migrants.” They had asked the Czech government for help owing to high radioactivity levels in their regions of origin following the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The Czech government assisted them by providing accommodation and work in the Czech Lands during 1991 – 1993 (more details in: Valášková, Uherek and Brouček 1997). After their resettlement, these migrants also received permanent residency permits. Today, many hold Czech citizenship.

A group from Kazakhstan had also asked the Czech government for help. Because members of this group had perceived themselves to be politically and economically oppressed in the new Kazakh State, they wanted to move to the Czech Republic (more details in: Uherek, Valášková and Kužel 1999).⁶ With the assistance of a Czech NGO, “Man in Need,” this group migrated to the Czech Republic in the years between 1994 and 2001.

Although these groups from Ukraine, Byelorussia, Russia and Kazakhstan number only about 3,000 people, they are significant because they offer a good example of a successful integration policy with governmental assistance. In a sense, these groups could be described as unproblematic. On the other hand, at the same time, the above-mentioned temporary labour migration from Ukraine has its drawbacks. Although it brings in a workforce, it also may encourage crime

by fostering interpersonal conflicts and ties to established Mafia groups.⁷

Where are the differences between these types of migration and why does it show different effects? Drawing from summer research in Subcarpathian Ukraine, we now offer the following preliminary results:

1. Motivation for migration

All of the above groups had abandoned their homes, but only the re-settlers decided to move with their families to the Czech Republic for permanent residency. These persons wanted to improve their living conditions in their new country. At the same time, most persons from Subcarpathian Ukraine had abandoned their homes in order to improve their living conditions in Ukraine. They were not searching for better living conditions in the Czech Republic but instead wanted to make some money there. These individuals did not come with families but were either alone or with small groups of relatives, friends, or colleagues – no more than five or six people. Many lived in lodging houses, often with two to ten people per room; while others lived in temporary shelters near their workplaces. Such workers often arrived without exact notions of what they would do or how much they would earn. They generally received approximately one U.S. dollar per working hour and typically possessed only short-term visas for the Czech Republic. Consequently, these persons do not *live* but only *work*; some even demanded to work 10 to 16 working hours per day, as well as on Saturdays and Sundays, in order to utilise fully their available time for work.

In some cases, husbands arrived with their wives and were able to create for themselves a semblance of a family life. Usually, however, workers' children remained in Ukraine and lived with their grandparents or other relatives. Based on our interviews, we conclude that guest workers do not know the laws of the target countries and are not interested in the local cultural and political environment because their only concern is working. Nevertheless, one should recognise that

guest workers have had some personal experiences with people in the Czech Republic, and so, on average, know more about the Czech Republic than the average Czech knows about Ukraine.

Compared to these guest workers, re-settlers are not so closely associated with their jobs and are less focused on earning money. Because they are accompanied by their families, they cannot devote so much time to work and thus have more time for social and cultural life and for learning something about the environment surrounding them. In addition, they not only want to earn money, but they also want to spend it on housing, furnishings, and cars. They also visit their children's schools. This means that these individuals have richer social contacts than the guest workers on all social levels. As such they are valuable local resources not only because they provide a steady labour pool, but also because they are potential customers, neighbours, and parents. They can cover the entire spectrum of social contacts within all age groups. Children have their friends at school, and elderly pensioners have contacts with their senior counterparts. These families can thus be strongly associated with local society quite soon and are thus protected from the effects of disorganisation.

Re-settlers' social position provides them more possibilities to integrate themselves into the majority society and thus avoid marginalisation.⁸ By contrast, temporary workers are more vulnerable to social isolation.

2. Networking in migratory groups

The arrival of resettlement groups from areas afflicted by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and from Kazakhstan preceded a broad networking activity. In 1990, Czechs from Kiev (members of this group recently established a *Czech-Slovak J. A. Comenius Cultural Enlightenment Society*) began negotiating with the President of the Czechoslovak Republic about resettlement. In 1990, the initiators of this negotiation were few in number and had to convince their relatives that reset-

tlement was the best solution for solving their problems. All the families in Mala Zubovszczina and Malinovka – villages with descendants of Czech immigrants – had to sell their property, prepare themselves for travel, choose among the possibilities of accommodation in the Czech Republic, and then finally moved. Before travelling, they learned the Czech language, and their children went to a summer camp in the Czech Republic (more details in Dluhošová 1992). Shortly after arriving in the Czech Republic, these re-settlers began cooperating with the organisation for migrants to the Czech Republic from Ukraine after World War II - the *Union of Czechs from Volhynia and Their Friends*.⁹ They established a new branch of this organisation – a *Committee of Czechs from the Chernobyl Area*. Members of this branch discussed problems facing new re-settlers with the Czech government, the Czech Parliament and the mass media. Hence members of this immigrant group had strong mutual ties and were able to defend themselves against perceptions in the Czech public that they were engaging in suspicious behaviour. They succeeded in pushing Parliament to make an exception and grant them Czech citizenship without a five-year waiting period. The media also created good images of the well-bounded group.

Immigrants from Kazakhstan also created before their arrival a special organisation that facilitated resettlement by teaching Czech language and creating positive images of the group.

By contrast, guest workers lack structured organisation, tribunes, image-makers, and support organisations. Public image of these people is created only occasionally by the Czech mass media and only after an eventful incident. They are typically in the working-age, do not speak Czech, and do not have flats and houses in the Czech Republic, do not bring children or elderly relatives with them and it seems to wider public that they also do not have needs and demands. To the general Czech public, such individuals appear strange and are thus stereotyped as either unqualified and poor manual workers, or as “criminals”. None of them addresses their

problems to the government, Parliament or the general public; they turn only to a few Czech NGOs.

Generally speaking, foreign workers from Ukraine do not create an institutionalised network that could support them or operate on their behalf. It seems to us that this is a limitation either on the side of Czech institutions or of foreign workers.

3. Arrival with governmental or Mafia assistance

Immigrants from the Chernobyl region as well as the other above-mentioned re-settlers requested assistance from the Czech government because they knew how difficult it was for common people from the East to resettle in a foreign country. In the Czech Republic this is nearly impossible without the help of a third person. Government support had prevented the re-settlers from receiving any assistance from other people.

But what possibilities are available to Ukrainian migrant labourers? These individuals usually live in their home country in villages with poor conditions and lack the experience of dealing with official institutions. It is too complicated and expensive for them to find a job in the Czech Republic with all the visa, travel and accommodation costs. Also, it is quite a risky procedure for such single workers because in many cases they had been object of robberies.

The second alternative is to ask a special organisation for mediation. In Subcarpathian Ukraine there operate many Ukrainian mediators, so-called “clients”, who advertise possibilities for arranging work. These “clients” go to a village where they offer to arrange visas for workers, guarantee them accommodation in the Czech Republic, and organise their transport, all without any payment up front. The workers pay the mediators only after they have made their money. The “clients” in fact do fulfil their promises. Nevertheless, when guest workers arrive in the Czech Republic, they usually do not know where they will be received; sometimes they do not even know what their income will be. Everything is mediated

through the "client." The guest workers are quite safe although the "client" keeps a part of their money, and they are, in a sense, the mediator's slaves.

Two or three buses per week go back and forth to the Czech Republic from Mukachevo, Uzhgorod, Tyachiv, and Yasinya; there is a daily bus connection to Lvov and two daily trains to Central Ukraine. Guest workers can choose to take a regular bus and risk the possibility that it might be controlled by the local Mafia, whereupon every person will have to pay a 200 U.S. dollar transit fee; or they can also choose to take a "safe bus," which is more expensive but carries fewer risks. For their part, Czech employers are not concerned with how their workers arrive. For them, it is often most convenient to be in contact with only one responsible person. Also, the government regulates only the number of immigrants. Thus, a lack of interest in migration flows has left a space for both businessmen with a labour force and for powerful organisations that prey on labour migration.

A high municipal officer in the Ukrainian town of Tyachiv told us: "We have no problems with the Mafia here. This is a little region with small towns. Everyone knows each other. The Ukrainian Mafia operates either in your country or in Poland because your police thinks that if Ukrainians do something to other Ukrainians there, it is their own business. The Mafia can do there what it wants."¹⁰ In our opinion, this is a somewhat high-flown idea because the core of the above mentioned criminal structures reside in Ukraine. However, this indicates the weak point in the attitude of local authorities in both countries.

4. Unqualified labour force composed of university-educated migrants

In one small Subcarpathian town, we met the director of a local hospital who told us that he had worked three times in the Czech Republic between 1994 and 1996. The man had gone there every year for either two or three months at a time and worked in the Czech town of Liberec as an unqualified

worker. In Ukraine he was an ordinary physician but his salary was so low that he spent his regular vacation every year, plus a wageless vacation, working in the Czech Republic. No one knew that he was a physician in Liberec. Only when someone was injured at work and he was able to help him would his co-workers acknowledge that he was a doctor. Following the research of Dušan Drbohlav and his team, 55% of Ukrainian guest workers in the Czech Republic are secondary school graduates and 27% university graduates (Drbohlav et al 1999: 26). According to his research data, 70% of the workers did unqualified work, 10% of qualified forces were bricklayers, and 20% worked in very different professions (Drbohlav et al 1999: 20).

We discovered similar results during our study of the resettlement groups from Zhitomir County, Byelorussia and Kazakhstan. Reasons for this include the demand in Czech lands for unqualified labour, the lack of language skills among such newcomers, and the fact that Ukrainian university diplomas are not accepted for many professions in the Czech Republic.

Some re-settlers from Zhitomir County, Byelorussia and Kazakhstan have been successful, and some of them now hold qualified jobs. We have observed that they were usually able to find better jobs two to three years after their arrival in the Czech Republic, although many of them will never return to their previous professions.

Usually, however, guest workers have limited opportunities. They can receive work permits only for vacant work places that are of no interest to native residents. Nevertheless, those who have also regularly worked in the Czech Republic usually do not try to get qualified jobs. Commuting does not stimulate people from Ukraine to strive for qualified jobs: they do not prepare themselves for jobs in their homes, do not learn the language, and do not pursue job offers. Work in the Czech Republic is not perceived as a possibility for new experiences and to increase work qualifications; it is only a temporary financial solution.

Conclusion

When discussing the integration of Muslims into Dutch society, Han Entzinger distinguished three different models of dealing with migrants in Europe. The first one pointed to a "guest-work model" that emphasised the role of migrants in the labour market. The presence of these migrants in the host-state is seen as temporary, and there is no real need to incorporate them into society.¹¹ The second model is the assimilation model. In this model, immigrants should be incorporated into the receiving society as quickly as possible, according to conditions set by receiving society.¹² The third model is that of ethnic minorities¹³ (Entzinger 1994: 19-20).

It is apparent that we have been discussing in this article the first two models in extremely pure forms. Ukrainian labour migration represents the guest worker model, while resettlement illustrates the assimilation one. The second one seems to be safer for both society and the immigrants. Nevertheless, state assistance is both demanding and expensive; it is effective only for a strictly limited number of people. At the same time, the assimilation model can be applied successfully only to people who want to be assimilated, which is not the case with temporary workers.

In the first half of the 1990s, work migration acquired new forms in the Czech Republic. These forms arose spontaneously on the basis of individual unorganised temporary labour migration. State institutions as well as private employers have searched only for strategies on how to behave in new conditions. Illegal work, unsafe conditions for guest workers and organised crime appear to be serious, long-term problems.

The second half of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s saw increases in restriction measures for spontaneous migration and in strict efforts to regulate the flow of the working force to the Czech Labour market. The result was an accelerating institutionalisation of the structures of the working force flow.

After the introduction of the visa duty, spontaneous work migrations have become so expensive and complicated that very few families can do it. Working migration has become the domain of specialised firms that feed the labour market with unqualified working force. In addition, the protection of Czech workers in the labour market has prompted changes in which individual workers from abroad appear like traders (holders of trade licence) (for more information see: Horáková 2001).

Whereas in the first half of the 1990s kinship ties played an important role in the process of selecting work possibilities, in the late 1990s, contacts were developed according to professional, dehumanised connections and on a purely economic basis. The institutionalisation of migration produced powerful organisations that could be more dangerous than the otherwise loosely controlled spontaneous migration of individuals.

The CIS countries' workforces in the Czech labour market will not enjoy the same conditions as those enjoyed by native residents, for a long time. Nevertheless, the case of re-settlers from the Chernobyl area and from Kazakhstan shows us that the government's active politics can protect immigrants from people who prey on migration. Labour migrants lack information, language ability, and sufficient networking; and in fact, neither guest workers nor their counterparts in the Czech Republic have invented suitable tools for gradual improvements. This is difficult because of the rapid exchange of people. Nevertheless, the challenge for the work of NGOs in the Czech Lands and in Ukraine is explicit.

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Appendix

Employment of foreigners in Czech Republic (the five largest cases of source countries from 1995 to 31st December 2000)

YEAR	Country of Origin	Number of Holders of Valid Work Permit ¹⁴	Foreign Holders of Valid Trade Licence	Total
1995	Slovakia	59323	2,949	62272
	Ukraine	26748	809	27557
	Poland	12071	329	12400
	Vietnam	399	7,693	8092
	Germany	1462	605	2067
1996	Slovakia	72244	5879	78123
	Ukraine	42056	2670	44726
	Vietnam	202	18165	18327
	Poland	12843	679	13522
	Germany	1457	1244	2701
1997	Slovakia	69723	7571	77294
	Ukraine	25166	8696	33862
	Vietnam	119	24744	24863
	Poland	13665	909	14574
	Bulgaria	3322	672	3994
1998	Slovakia	61320	6248	67568
	Ukraine	19255	9942	29197
	Vietnam	50	15454	15504
	Poland	9941	874	10815
	Bulgaria	2721	734	3455
1999	Slovakia	53154	6649	59803
	Ukraine	16646	19521	36167
	Vietnam	62	18938	19000
	Poland	6880	1033	7913
	Bulgaria	1657	1104	2761
2000	Slovakia	63567	6670	70237
	Ukraine	15753	21402	37155
	Vietnam	75	19307	19382

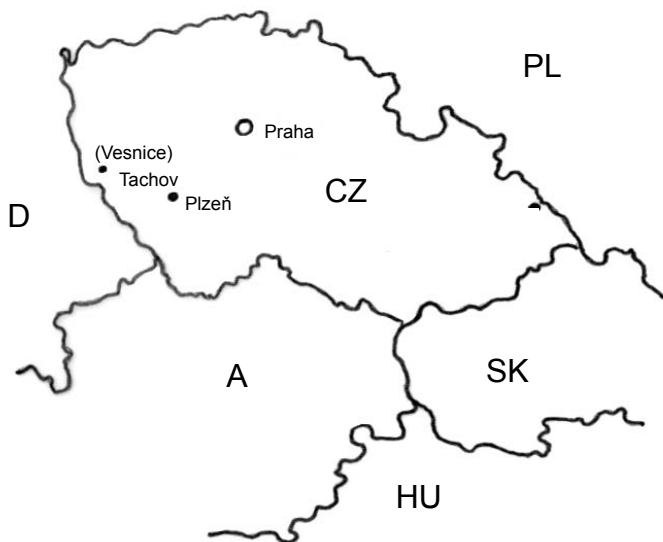
Source: State Statistical Institute, Prague

¹ This paper was written within the framework of the grant-funded project S9058101 of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.

- ² We studied members of this group in Subcarpathian Ukraine in 2001, in their places of origin and in places of permanent residency.
- ³ We studied separate waves of this resettlement from 1991 in their former places of residence and then, after their resettlement, their process of adjustment in the new Czech environment.
- ⁴ Although the new law 326/1999 Sb. changed the terminology, we are using here terms that permit comparison to the situation before 2000.
- ⁵ The item includes asylum seekers with the former Soviet Union passports.
- ⁶ Some Czechs from Kazakhstan moved to Russia just at the beginning of the 1990s. When those who were descendants of Czech migrants launched the process of resettlement to the Czech Republic, they joined it and resettled too.
- ⁷ The word "Mafia" has no connection to groups composed on the kinship basis. In Eastern Europe and Asian states of the former Soviet Union the term simply indicates groups of organised crime – that is, groups characterized by the mutual interdependence of their members, solidarity and remorseless rules (see also: Finckenauer 2001).
- ⁸ According to our field data, integration into the majority society is most successful among school-aged children, economically active people (at work), and believers (by force of church communities).
- ⁹ From 1945 to 1947 nearly 40,000 people of Czech origin, including descendants of 19th century Czech immigrants to Ukraine, resettled in Czechoslovakia. These people originated from the Volhynia region in Ukraine and thus were called Volhynian Czechs. Their organisation united people of the same origin and cultural and regional interests (more information about Volhynian Czechs in: Vaculík 1981; Valášková, Uherek and Brouček 1997; Vaculík 1997-1998).
- ¹⁰ Interview from August 2, 2001.
- ¹¹ According to Entzinger, Germany, Austria and Switzerland are the most apparent examples of the model.
- ¹² A classical example is France.
- ¹³ According to Entzinger, it is typical for Scandinavian and Benelux countries as well as the United Kingdom.
- ¹⁴ Includes Slovak citizens registered by Job Centres (Slovak citizens do not need work permits).

12. Property, power, and emotions. Social dynamics in a Bohemian village¹

Maruška Svašek



Property: Subjects, objects, and emotions

In the past eleven years, one of the major political issues in post-socialist Europe has been the privatisation and restitution of former state-owned property. Several anthropologists, who all regard ownership as a multi-dimensional socio-cultural phenomenon, have explored this process in a number of different countries.² Chris Hann (1998: 34), for example, noted that:

A concern with property relations requires investigations into the total distributions of rights and entitlements within society, of material things and of knowledge and symbols. It

requires examination of practical outcomes as well as ideals and moral discourses, and an appreciation of historical processes, both short-term and long-term.

Katherine Verdery (1998: 161) has similarly claimed that property should be analysed “in terms of the whole system of social, cultural, and political relations, rather than through more narrowly legalistic notions such as ‘rights’ and ‘claims’”. Ownership not only constitutes subject-object relationships between owners and their possessions but also shapes specific connections between different social actors. In other words, property relations are dynamic social relations between people with regard to rights over certain “things” (cf. Hoebel 1966; Hann 1998).

The wider, socio-historical and contextual approach to ownership has generated a number of revealing analyses of the ways in which the lives of individuals, families, and ethnic groups have been part of and affected by changing property relations in post-1990 Eastern Europe. To my knowledge, however, none of the authors have explicitly incorporated a focus on emotions in their theoretical perspective.³ By contrast, this paper argues that an anthropological perspective on ownership must *necessarily* include a theoretical focus on emotional dynamics. Without such a focus, the complexities of property-related behaviour cannot be fully understood (cf. Svašek 2000b, 2001; Leutloff 2002; Zerilli 2002).

Emotions play a crucial role in most areas of social life, as noted by an increasing number of anthropologists who have focused on the social, cultural, and political dimensions of emotions in the past three decades (cf. Lutz and White 1986; Svašek 2002).⁴ In post-socialist Eastern and Central Europe in particular, the rapidly transforming socio-economic and political conditions have generated strong feelings of euphoria, hope, disillusionment, disappointment, jealousy and hatred (cf. Creed 1998; Verdery 1998; Svašek 2000a, 2000b; Müller 2002; Skrbiš 2002). These same feelings have also been evoked in response to and as part of changing property relations (cf. Leutloff 2002; Svašek 2002; Zerilli 2002).

It is not surprising that property-related discourses are often highly emotional. "Having" and "being" are dialectically related processes, and human beings actively relate to their social and material surroundings to create a sense of individual and social self. Consequently, various forms of real or imagined ownership can be central to processes of self-perception. Daniel Miller (1987: 121), who introduced the concept of "personal property" as an alternative to the more narrow, legalistic term of "private property", noted that "personal property assumes a genuinely self-productive relationship between persons and things".

This paper argues that personal and collective ownership must be regarded as two-way processes in which "being" and "having" are closely interconnected, and in which subjects and objects are mutually constitutive. Objects of real or imagined ownership may become emotionally-loaded signifiers of personal and collective identities. The management of real or imagined property is often an inherent feature of identity politics. In this context, "management" must be understood as a wide category of different forms of subject-object involvement which may range from the down-to-earth practicalities of financial management to wishful imagination and wild fantasy.

The analysis looks at the various ways in which different social actors in a small village in the district of Tachov have used emotional subject-object discourses to construct images of self, and to justify specific property-related behaviour. It demonstrates that emotions, as powerful discourses and narrative performances, and as social forces which motivate action, have played an important role in the shaping and perception of ownership relations.

The village – which I shall call "Vesnice" – is regarded as a social arena in which different actors have been involved in struggles for property and the right to use public space. The main interest groups are firstly, former Sudeten German inhabitants who were expelled from the village to Germany after the Second World War and who have visited their home village on an annual basis. Secondly, the social democratic mayor and his supporters, and thirdly, a Dutch entrepreneur

who has bought large plots of land and numerous buildings in the village, and who has established a pheasant shoot with the help of a British gamekeeper. To reach their goal – the actual or symbolic appropriation of property and space – the three groups have all used emotionally powerful narratives and actions.

The research setting

Vesnice is a small West Bohemian village situated close to the German border in the former Sudetenland. It was established in 1666 during the Habsburg Empire by ethnic Germans who cultivated the land and exploited the forest. For a period of almost three centuries, the village community remained ethnically German.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the inhabitants began to regard themselves as “Sudeten Germans”. As with all the other Sudeten Germans living in the Bohemian, Moravian, and Silesian border areas, they created a strong sense of “rootedness” and “closeness” to the land (cf. Svašek 2001). Their ideology of blood and soil became more outspoken during the first two decades following the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918, when the tensions between Czechs and Sudeten Germans increased, particularly as Hitler came to the political fore in neighbouring Germany. In 1938 most Sudeten Germans, including the inhabitants of Vesnice, welcomed the incorporation of the Sudetenland by Nazi Germany.

The 1945 Potsdam Agreement stipulated that ethnic Germans from all over Central and Eastern Europe should be expelled from the area and “return” to Germany. In the case of Czechoslovakia the Sudeten Germans’ citizenship rights were annulled by the post-war government between May and October 1945, and most of their property was confiscated. During the next two years, over three million Sudeten Germans were expelled to Germany and Austria, and were forced to leave their homes and belongings behind.⁵

This extremely traumatic experience soon generated the emotionally and politically powerful discourse of *die verlorene Heimat* (the lost homeland) (cf. Svašek 2000a, 2002). The *Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft*, the biggest organisation of Sudeten German expellees with its seat in Munich, defined the confiscated land as “stolen property”, and politicised their claims to the old homeland by demanding *Heimatrecht*, the right to return to “home” and to repossess their personal and collective belongings (cf. Hamperl 1996; Staněk 1991; Svašek 1999).

Immediately after the war, the Czechoslovak government introduced a policy to re-populate its border areas, and the abandoned Sudeten German houses (those which had not been destroyed in revenge attacks) were occupied by Czechs, Volhynia Czech, Slovaks, Roma, and others. The most obvious signs of the Sudeten German past, such as German sign boards, were removed, and all cities, towns, and villages were officially renamed or only referred to by their Czech names.

During the rapidly unfolding Cold War, the border with West-Germany and Austria was transformed into one of the most heavily guarded sections of the Iron Curtain. Numerous border villages were blown up for security reasons, and villages like Vesnice – situated only four kilometres from the border with Eastern Bavaria – were never fully re-occupied. Situated in a remote, peripheral corner of the Eastern bloc, many houses remained empty and were eventually destroyed.⁶

In 1950, a number of Ruthenian families from Northern Romania moved to the village of Vesnice.⁷ They occupied some of the houses along the main road, worked in the state-owned forest and in the newly established collective farm. Most of the other houses were knocked down or slowly deteriorated. Over the years, in particular during the more liberal periods when the rigorous, state-controlled politico-economic system relaxed, the new villagers were able to buy the houses in which they lived from the Czechoslovak state, and some used their large gardens to cultivate fruit and vegetables for their own use.

I first visited Vesnice in the summer of 1991 as my family had bought a house there from one of the Ruthenian inhab-

itants.⁸ By now, almost all the houses were privately owned, and being mostly small-holdings the villagers depended in part on subsistence farming. The state farm was in the process of decollectivisation.

By the time we arrived, the majority of the villagers still consisted of Ruthenians and their children. Other inhabitants included Czechs and a Slovak. The Soviet officers and soldiers who had been based in the village during the Cold War had already been demobilised and returned home. A typically 1960s-style apartment block which had previously housed the officers and their families was now occupied by the villagers, and the barracks had been turned into a home for physically and mentally handicapped children. Nearby there was also a now unused military radar post which was owned by the Czech Ministry of Defence. The village also included a number of larger buildings which had been built by the Sudeten Germans. The church, originally Roman Catholic, was now used by the Orthodox Ruthenians, and was reasonably well looked after. By contrast, the school, the parsonage, and the shop had been empty for many years, and were in a state of disrepair.

When I first visited Vesnice, I was working on another project which was totally unrelated to the history of the Czech borderland. Yet over the following period of five years, I became increasingly interested in the village and its post-1989 transformation. Between September 1996 and August 1998, I used the village as a base for a research project which mainly dealt with identity formation in the Bohemian-Bavarian border area in the light of political, economic and social changes. I slowly realised that “ownership” was one of the key issues which occupied the villagers.

Lost property: the politics of nostalgia

From the perspective of changing ownership, it is interesting to examine the attempts by the expellees from Vesnice to maintain a connection with their “lost” village. Their case, however, was not an isolated one. Since their expulsion, many expellees

from all over the Sudetenland have actively engaged themselves with their pre-expulsion past, and have expressed strong feelings for their old *Heimat*. These feelings – a combination of sadness, grief, love, pride, and nostalgia – have been triggered by emotional memories which have been actively evoked and managed, for example through a continuous production of nostalgic poems, novels, and *Heimatbücher*.

The Sudeten German case suggests that emotions can be regarded as powerful narratives and performances which – when directed at property – reinforce particular subject-object discourses. As Lila Abu-Lughod and Catherine Lutz noted, “emotion gets its meaning and force from its location and performance in the public realm of discourse” (1990: 7). The emotional expellee discourse of “stolen property” and the related politics of nostalgia engender a particular image of ownership which portrays the expellee community as a collective undivided whole, and naturalizes their connection to their old *Heimat*. The feelings of loss, anger, and nostalgia clearly reinforce the expellees’ image of themselves as the rightful owners of their ancestral home.

Diasporic homeland discourses are often politicised and highly moralistic, producing claims to both property and identity (Skrbiš 2002). They tend to produce a cultural logic in which the object *is* the subject and *vice versa*. Dominant Sudeten German property and identity narratives have similarly produced an emotional subject-object ideology which equalizes being and having, and collapses the distinction between present (actual) and past (imagined) property. The *object* of ownership, the homeland as lost property, is presented as an inherent part of the owning *subject*. In other words, the lost homeland is perceived as the core of their collective being.

Lost property and symbolic appropriation

Not surprisingly, after the abolition of compulsory visa requirements in 1990, the Sudeten German expellees displayed an increased interest in their *Heimat*, and many visit-

ed their places of birth for the first time in forty years. The visits were highly emotional occasions during which the expellees reconstituted themselves as a village community as they remembered and re-experienced feelings of loss, fear, and anger.⁹ At least five expellees from Vesnice recounted how they had burst into tears when they had first seen their old family houses. In many cases they had only found groups of trees with the remains of old foundations or simply an empty field. One of the Ruthenian inhabitants of the village said: "They cried, they all cried. They searched the ruins and cried."

Property, in this context, must clearly be defined as a subject-object relation which is inherently emotional. As family homes, the houses had been important environments in which personal and family identities had been constituted. As with the school, the parsonage, and the church, the family homes had been central to their sense of personal and collective self.

As noted earlier, the call by the *Sudetendeutsche landsmannschaft* for *Heimatrecht* demanded that the Sudeten Germans should be given back their property, thus enabling them to restore their "damaged" subject-object relationship. The expellees from Vesnice, however, did not believe that they would ever return to the village as actual owners.¹⁰ As a matter of fact, they were not even attracted by the idea of returning. They had started new lives in Germany, their children and grandchildren who had been born after the expulsion often regarded themselves as local Bavarians, and the village itself was in a depressingly poor state.

Consequently, the expellees from Vesnice did not seek to *legally* reclaim their old property from the Czech state. Instead, they began to *symbolically* reappropriate specific social spaces in the village that still had a particularly strong emotional value. From 1993 onwards, they held commemorative services in front of the war memorials and in the church. They also renovated the memorial which commemorated victims of the First World War, and cleaned some of the still existing graves.

Emotions, in this regard, can be conceptualised as social forces which motivate specific object-focused activities.

Nostalgia and other emotions indeed moved the expellees to organise annual visits to their place of birth which, subsequently, enabled them to “feel good” in their old village. Evidently, everything needed to be organised beforehand, and this demonstrates that emotional forces do not simply overpower individuals, but that individuals, as social beings, also aim to actively manage emotional dynamics.

To realise their plan to hold religious services and ceremonies in the villages, the expellees created and used personal and religious networks. Gerhard Schwartz, one of the expellees who lived in Bärnau, a Bavarian village situated only ten kilometres from Vesnice, told me that he had befriended one of the Orthodox Ruthenian families who lived in Vesnice.

The expellees strengthened their connections with the local Orthodox priest, and with a German Catholic priest who were willing to lend their “official support”. The priests, who by their presence seemed to legitimize the Sudeten German presence in the village, were receptive to the emotional discourse of sudden loss and nostalgia, and translated it into a religious message of love and reconciliation.

To the Sudeten Germans, being able to spend some time together in the village and remember their “collective” past, was emotionally rewarding, although also somewhat confusing. “Especially the first time when we were back in the church, me and my sisters, we all cried”, said one of the expellees in 1997. “I got many childhood memories, but today the village is of course very different from how it was so many years ago. That was hard, but at the same time, it made things easier”. She had felt a sense of relief during that first visit because she could now accept that the clock could no longer be turned back, and that she would not even want to return. She noted that the act of symbolic reappropriation had had a healing effect on what was still painful (cf. Svašek 2000b).¹¹

Changing ownership: property as long-term investment

It is interesting to compare the nostalgic and moralistic subject-object discourse of the expellees from Vesnice with capi-

talist property claims by foreigners who had no previous connection with the Czech Republic.

In general, the changed economic climate in post-socialist Eastern and Central Europe had attracted the interest of numerous Western investors, in particular of Germans and Austrians. To avoid selling off the “family silver”, the Czechoslovak government passed a law prohibiting the sale of land and real estate to foreigners. It was, however, easy enough to circumvent this hurdle by establishing a firm with a Czech director (*jednatel*). Such companies were officially Czech, and were therefore allowed to buy property.¹²

The villagers of Vesnice were suddenly confronted by exactly such a “Czech” company which had actually been set up by the Dutch entrepreneur Pieter Hulshoff. Unlike the Sudeten Germans, he had no personal connection to the village, no painful memories of lost property, and was not interested in symbolic appropriation. He simply wanted to buy buildings and land, and establish a pheasant shoot and a hunting lodge.

When Hulshoff turned his attention to Vesnice, he had already a considerable amount of entrepreneurial experience in post-socialist Czechoslovakia. Shortly after the Velvet Revolution, he had bought and privatised an old state farm in a village only fifteen kilometres south of Vesnice, together with a befriended Dutch farmer. He knew how hard it was to get things organised and deal with the local authorities, but this did not discourage him. “Once I have my teeth in something, I won’t let go”, he said a number of times, and stressed that he could only hold out and take financial risks because he ran a successful company and owned an estate in the Netherlands.

It would be wrong to imagine the Sudeten German relationship with the village as “purely emotional”, and Hulshoff’s attitude as “purely rational”. The latter was not “just” looking for investment and long-term financial gain. He was also driven by a strong desire to establish a pheasant shoot and a quasi-estate. Hunting had been one of his life-long passions.

To realise his dream, the Dutchman needed to buy buildings which could be turned into living space for himself and his family, a game-keeper, and the future members of his hunting lodge. Two buildings in Vesnice which could easily be transformed into comfortable living spaces were the old Sudeten German school and the parsonage. Hulshoff managed to purchase them from the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church within a year.¹³

Buying land as a source of frustration

While the purchase of the school and the parsonage had been relatively easy, acquiring the thousands of hectares of land the Dutchman needed for the shoot, was to prove far more difficult. The fields around Vesnice were still owned by the Czech state, having been collectivised under Communism, and had been assigned to a state farm which was eventually privatised in 1992. The new private owners of the farm which was run by director Jan Nový, were not yet allowed to buy the fields they worked due to the slow transformation of land ownership, as well as their own lack of capital. Instead, the farm rented the fields from the national government body which officially oversees the lease, restitution, and the sale of state-owned land, known as the *Pozemkový fond*.

Hulshoff contacted Nový, and proposed buying the land on the basis of the restitution claims which he had already purchased.¹⁴ In return Nový would be given a lease contract for a period of twenty years. Nový agreed to the idea because it meant he would no longer need to fear the sudden loss of land were it bought by developers or simply somebody who did not wish to lease it to him. Hulshoff, as the lessor, had first right to purchase the land thanks to the rules of the *Pozemkový fond*. This right, by means of various legal contracts was to be assigned to Hulshoff.

Restitution, however, was a slow and painful process. As Hulshoff noted with irritation: "My restitution claims have been with the *Pozemkový fond* for seven years (...) But sim-

ply nothing happens. Nothing at all.” As noted before, his frustration and anger made him even more determined to persevere. This again shows how emotions can be conceptualised as a driving force which empower people to take action in specific social contexts.

Hulshoff’s case also demonstrates that people actively manage emotions, and attempt to change other people’s emotional states to attain certain goals. The Dutchman tried to create good relationships with key figures in the privatisation process, such as with one of the regional directors of the *Pozemkový fond*, by taking them out for lunches. He also admitted to having threatened some “hopeless” local bureaucrats by telling them that he would contact their bosses in Prague and ensure that they were fired. “Nice words don’t work in this country,” he said. “The only thing that has any effect is fear.”

Justifying the right to buy “stolen property”

The Dutchman knew that the village had once belonged to the Sudeten Germans. Each year, he was directly confronted with this fact when the expellees held their annual ritual in the square between the school and the parsonage, and knocked on his door to ask if they could take a look inside.

“We had whole crowds in our house”, he told me. “They pointed out the class rooms where they used to sit. Well, we are always very friendly to them.” When I asked him whether anyone had ever accused him of living in “stolen property”, he said: “Yes they did. They are actually always friendly, but once I had a discussion with some of those Germans, and they told me that everything had been stolen from them.”

Hulshoff, however, did not feel any guilt whatsoever, and fervently approved of the post-war mass expulsion:

I told them: “I don’t agree with you. As a German community you lived in Czechoslovakia so you were Czechs (meaning Czechoslovak citizens). Subsequently, you chose to support an aggressive state. The fact that you were punished for that...well, such things have happened throughout history. If

you would have won [the war], you would have owned the whole of Czechoslovakia. Unfortunately you lost... and now the buildings are mine!"

He clearly disagreed with the Sudeten German claim for *Heimatrecht*, and by accusing them of supporting the Third Reich, he justified his ownership of their confiscated properties. He noted, however, that he did understand their feelings of nostalgia, and did not mind their annual commemorative services in front of his doorstep. Evidently, his "liberal" attitude was in line with his own interests. He wanted to avoid unnecessary tensions, and, after all, the Sudeten Germans were just engaged in symbolic appropriation. They did not intend to buy property in the village, and therefore, he did not see them as economic competitors.

Emotional dynamics: anger and resentment

As noted before, property relations are dynamic relations between different social actors. As the shoot began to function and Hulshoff started to buy more houses and claim more land, many villagers began to feel uneasy. Hulshoff's presence started having an impact on day-to-day life in the village. On the one hand, those who worked for him (as builders, cleaners, housekeepers, assistants to the new British gamekeeper, and beaters) or who sold property to him, benefited financially from his presence. On the other hand, many, in particular those who did not benefit, saw him as a crude profiteer.

Petr Hedrlin who had lived in Vesnice since the nineteen-seventies, argued that Hulshoff's presence had led to increasing economic inequality and the return of the old estate system. He said: "As happened after the thirty-year war under the domination of the Habsburg aristocrats the Czech lands will soon be controlled by rich foreigners, and once again we'll have a *panství*. History is repeating itself."

It is telling that he used the term *panství*, which links the concepts of "estate", "serfdom", "domination", "power", and "nobility". The image of an estate visited by members of

a powerful aristocracy was reinforced when the future king of the Netherlands, Prince Willem Alexander, came to shoot pheasants in Vesnice in 1999. He was an acquaintance of Hulshoff's brother, a banker, and although the crown prince's presence was "secret", the whole village soon knew about it.

In Hedrlin's view, the capitalist free market ideology and its approach to ownership formed the centre of the problem:

The question is: "who owns the means of production?" We are now being transformed into a developing country. We will work hard but somebody else will export our products, and God knows who will get the profits. Whichever way you turn it, capitalism is relentless. The only criterion is profit. Evidently, we haven't been prepared for that, and the governments which came to power after 1989 have not shown much interest in our region. By selling out through privatisation we have survived the last decade, and may possibly further survive but the situation will only become worse.

Hedrlin felt threatened by the fact that more and more houses and plots of land in and around Vesnice were falling into the hands of one powerful foreigner. "We're becoming strangers in our own house", he noted, and admitted that he felt threatened. "I used to think that this was my home, but now we're confronted with something we never wanted to be confronted with."

Gossip as a form of resistance

One way in which the villagers criticized the changing property relations in the village and expressed their resentment towards Hulshoff was through gossip. Elsewhere, I argued that gossip is a communicative practice which both shapes and is shaped by changing power relations, and helps people to make emotional judgements and respond to rapid change (cf Svašek 1997: 115; see also Müller 2002). To most of the villagers in Vesnice, the transformation from state-socialism to democracy meant economic insecurity, changing working conditions, and the confrontation with new socio-economic hierarchies. Gossip provided a subjective, emotional account

of these experiences in relatively fixed narrative structures in which the rich intruder Hulshoff was simply “the bad guy”. The stories portrayed him as somebody who made huge profits from his hunting lodge while his employees only earned average Czech wages. They also accused him of being a burglar and a drugs dealer, and reported his “crimes” to the police.

Hulshoff, called the stories “absolutely absurd” and argued that the rumour-mongers were basically driven by envy.

Capitalist ownership and notions of “patronage”

The villagers did not just protest against the disappearance of “communal (i.e. state) ownership”. They also objected to some of the ways in which the Dutchman handled his private property. Some people complained that his pheasants ruined their gardens, and covered the graves in the cemetery with excrement.

In Hulshoff’s view, the best way to respond to anger and objections was by subsidizing a number of communal projects. He explained that “patronage” was common practice to estate owners:

In our family, we always had country estates. Having an estate means owning a larger plot of land, and that brings with it social obligations. Normally you do that in consultation with the people who live there. So the first thing I did was to waterproof the town hall. Secondly we renovated the chapel by the graveyard. And then, much against my wishes, we financed a new stretch of asphalt. A gravelled road would have been much more picturesque.

Through his “help” to the village, Hulshoff clearly intended to construct an image of himself as a willing, caring “patron” who should be welcomed instead of envied. A number of villagers I spoke with indeed appreciated his concern. Hulshoff, however, was disappointed that his actions did not stop the gossip and the “antics”.

Several villagers interpreted the Dutchman's "good deeds" in a different way. One of them remarked: "Well, the guy is so rich... he's just being strategically nice. In the end he is the one who profits and we are the ones who lose". Hulshoff objected by saying that the villagers had no idea of his expenses. So far, the shoot had yet to turn a profit. Evidently, he was in a position to take such financial risks. He also admitted that he expected his money to be well spent.

The Dutchman justified his presence in the village as a new owner through a specific subject-object discourse which was based on a mixture of capitalist, perceived "aristocratic", and kinship values. Firstly, he clearly approved of the functioning of the free-market economy, and regarded buying property in postsocialist Europe as a fundamental right. In his view, life should be enjoyed, and money should be (at least partly) used for that purpose. Secondly, in numerous cases, his ownership directly influenced the life and self-perception of other villagers. Hulshoff tried to "pacify" them through "good deeds" which he defined as an inherent component of large private ownership. Thirdly, he regarded his property as private property which would eventually be inherited by his children.

The Social-Democratic view: The village as a growing community

Unlike some of the villagers, the mayor Jan Veselý, who had himself sold a house to the Dutchman, did not disapprove of Hulshoff's presence in the village. He stressed that it was financially advantageous to the community as a whole, and accepted Hulshoff's claim to "patronage".

I am not against Hulshoff's firm. He actually contributes to the village. He gives us, the community, certain gifts. He renovated the chapel, he paid 70.000 crowns for an urban study, so...I don't have problems with him. A few villagers do. His neighbour and a few other families do. My view is that we are a democratic country which is in a process of privatisation. Any investor is welcome as long as he sticks to the laws.

The mayor, a Social-Democrat, accepted a capitalist notion of ownership, and did not mind that Czech property fell into foreign hands. He did, however, also believe in shared community rights, and noted that the dynamics of capitalist ownership complicated the introduction of a socio-economic policy which would support the village as a collective. The village community badly needed to enlarge its budget. The roads were in a terrible state, only half of the village was connected to the sewage system, young people needed housing, and the children had nowhere to play. According to Veselý, the best route to take was to build new houses and increase the number of inhabitants attracting young people to the village.

Building new houses was restricted because of a nearby fresh water reservoir. Some of the restrictions would be lifted after the completion of the sewage system for which the mayor had secured funding. This meant that once the *Pozemkový Fond* would sell the plots of land which were still state-owned, more houses could be built, and the village could grow. Young families would most likely not have enough money to build new houses, so Veselý looked for other possibilities.

The only large unoccupied building in the village was the old military base that had been used during the Cold War as a radar station. The mayor came up with the plan to turn the building into flats and a children's clubhouse. He thought that the future inhabitants would be willing to pay half of the reconstruction costs. A bank could provide a low-interest loan, which would be paid back in instalments in the form of monthly rent.

The base was still owned by the Ministry of National Defence, but it no longer served any purpose, and in 2000 the Ministry put it on the market for 5,800,000 crowns.¹⁵ This was still far too much for the village community, and Veselý who was a member of the ČSSD (the ruling social democratic party) used his party contacts to get in touch with the Minister. With a triumphant smile, he recounted:

When the Minister announced that the ministry wanted to get rid of most of its properties because they cost too much

money, I travelled (to Prague) to visit him, and simply used his words. And he personally told me – I have two witnesses, two parliament members who can back me up – that he would give the base to us for free.

As part of his perceived “socialist-democratic view of ownership”, the mayor thus accepted responsibility for the well-being of the village as a community. Like Hulshoff, he used personal networks in the bureaucratic jungle of Czech politics to realise his plans. Yet his political views were based on the notion of communal rights, and not on the paternalistic idea of individual patronage.

The future of the village according to the Dutchman

Hulshoff ridiculed the plan, and called it “unrealistic”. More important, it went against his image of the village as a picturesque backdrop to his estate. In his words:

These people should not try to turn the village into an economically prosperous community. This is simply a very beautiful environment in which people should live who can afford to keep a pretty house in a good state of repair, and who won't make a mess and establish factories, breaker's yards, and similar crap. I don't find it necessary for people to live here, and I don't see the purpose. Young people should move to places where they can be educated and find jobs. So the military base...well, you know, nothing will come of it.

The Dutchman justified his view through emotional rhetoric which depicted himself as a neat and nature-conscientious person who “knew better” than the irresponsible locals what was best for the environment.

Hedrlin was rather shocked when he heard about Hulshoff's plans, and said that the villagers felt threatened. “If he wants that, he'll have to move us. So there, we have arrived at the problem. Is this our home or Mr. Hushoff's home? I talked about it earlier, there is an increasing feeling that we are threatened.”

Mixed feelings in the village

The above should not give the wrong impression that all villagers regarded Hulshoff as a dangerous threat. To get a better understanding of the contradictory feelings Hulshoff's activities evoked among and possibly also within distinct villagers, it is interesting to focus on the opinions of members of the Příhoda family.

Honza and Jiřina Příhoda had moved to Vesnice in the nineteen-seventies. Jiřina had two sons from an earlier marriage, and together, the couple had two daughters born in 1988 and 1993. Having worked on the state farm until its privatisation in 1992, they decided to use their acquired skills and try their luck in private farming. The couple bought five milking cows which they kept in a small stable behind the house, and rented the adjacent field from the *Pozemkový fond*.

Honza dreamt of expanding his business but found out that he was restricted by strict environmental regulations which did not allow him to build bigger stables. The few cows he had did not provide enough income, and he was forced to take on another job as a road worker. A heavy drinker, he frequently cursed and lamented his fate. Not surprisingly, when Hulshoff entered the scene and managed to set up his hunting lodge in a relatively short period of time, Honza became even more bitter and cynical. Jiřina's oldest son Petr was also irritated by Hulshoff's increasing presence in the village.

Jiřina, by contrast, reacted quite differently to Hulshoff's presence. She argued that she did not really mind him buying property in the village. At least he was repairing the school building, and his shoot might create some jobs for the villagers. Her perception was partly affected by the fact that her marriage with Honza was on the verge of breaking down. Some months later, she planned to move out, and was desperately looking for a place to live and a job to secure her financial independence.

I knew Jiřina quite well, and knew that she had been trying to find employment in Tachov. Yet unemployment was on

the rise, and being in her forties, Jiřina was greatly disadvantaged. When I got to know that Hulshoff was looking for a cook/housekeeper, I recommended her to him. Jiřina did not only get the job, she also moved into one of the houses recently bought by Hulshoff. The house, which had belonged to the mayor, was damp and in a bad state. Hulshoff did not use it because he planned to knock it down and build a bigger house on the spot. Yet to Jiřina and three of her children, it was good enough as a temporary solution. On the whole, she was satisfied, and liked her employer, his wife and their children. She had a particularly good relationship with Hulshoff's wife, who was learning Czech and who taught her a few words of English.

Ironically, in 1998, Hulshoff also employed Jiřina's eldest son Petr. Like his father, he had worked as a road worker, but he was dying to do something else. Even though – as noted earlier – he was sceptical of Hulshoff's presence and disliked the idea of a foreigner "taking over" the village, he accepted the job all the same. He did, however, not show as much enthusiasm for the pheasants as the British gamekeeper, his Czech right-hand man, and some other employees. After a few years, he was advised by the gamekeeper to look for other employment and found another job as a forest worker.

Conclusion

While interpreting and recording particular emotions expressed by individuals or groups is bound to be an inexact science, perhaps akin to attempts by literary critics to interpret a piece of prose or poetry, what can factually be recorded is an emotional discourse i.e. a person's self-professed state of being which he or she believes to be "emotional".

Biologists, psychologists and other scholars have sought to objectively "measure" emotions as physical or cognitive processes based on the highly limiting definition of emotions as biological or intrapsychic phenomena (cf. Svašek 2002). By contrast, this paper has defined emotions as narrative performances which are often used by individuals and social

groups to construct particular images of their own individual and collective selves. The analysis thus regarded "emotion" as an inherently social process, even though emotions are often experienced by individuals as highly personal embodied feelings, and may help to create a strong sense of individual self.

In addition to emotions, this paper also focused on identity as generated by different emotional subject-object discourses which have arisen in the Czech Republic as a result of postsocialist transformations. It showed how three conflicting narratives of ownership produced by the expellees, the Dutch entrepreneur, and the Social Democrat mayor and his supporters, reinforced distinct moral, legal, and political arguments concerning personal and collective ownership.

Firstly, the expellee discourse of identity was based on the notion of a strong emotional connection of blood and soil in which subject and object merged into one single unit. Yet, as the analysis showed, almost none of the former inhabitants of Vesnice, even though they suffered from painful memories and feelings of loss and nostalgia, sided with the political aims of the *Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft* for *Heimatrecht*.

The expellees from Vesnice played out their emotional discourse in the context of annual, religious ceremonies. With the help of local priests, they managed to symbolically appropriate the village within the socio-religious discourse of acceptance and reconciliation which served to contradict the political message of the *Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft*.

When the new inhabitants of Vesnice were confronted with rapidly changing property relations after the introduction of a free market system in 1990, they reacted emotionally to foreign investors who sought to buy up land and real estate in the region. Some criticised the capitalist ideology of ownership because it did not give enough rights to the village as a collective unit, and thereby undermined their strong sense of identity and personal responsibility to the community which had been fiercely propagated by the Communists even if seldom adhered to. Others felt that their personal space was

being invaded by a foreigner who had no moral right to own Czech property, and to transform village life according to his own ideas. The mayor, who supported social democratic ideals of "social justice for all", sought to generate an emotional discourse among other villagers of resentment and depression with political ambitions of his own.

The Dutch investor used a discourse of capitalism, environmentalism, and patricianesque sentiments. He profited from the weak Czech economy, and thanks to his capital and business acumen was able to transform himself into a transnational estate owner, partly by slowly finding his way within the Czech bureaucratic system. As he spent an increasing amount of time and energy on the development of his estate, he also developed an emotional discourse to describe the whole process. This discourse served by contrast to strengthen his own identity as a worldly wise benevolent benefactor who helped to create a happy village.

In conclusion, the analysis has shown that specific emotional discourses and practices have been inherent in the rapidly transforming property relations in the post-Cold War Czech-German border area. The experience of having lost possessions, and the prospect of losing or gaining property generated strong emotional discourses as people sought to ground a sense of personal and collective identity by relating in particular ways to their social and material surroundings.

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¹ I would like to thank Justin l'Anson-Sparks for his helpful comments.

² Katherine Verdery, for example, analysed the distribution of property and power in Transylvania's decollectivisation, and David G. Anderson examined modes of land appropriation and privatisation in Arctic Siberia. Gerald Creed looked at the effects of privatisation and land restitution on the lives of Bulgarian villagers, and Deema Kaneff examined rural transformation and changing ownership patterns also in Bulgaria (Verdery 1998; Anderson 1998; Creed 1998; Kaneff 1996).

³ This is rather surprising, especially because some of them have clearly alluded to the emotional dimensions of changing ownership. Katherine Verdery, for example, hinted at the emotional involvement of Transylvanian stakeholders in cases of contested ownership. Similarly, David G. Anderson (1998: 65), who defined property as "a way of knowing", referred to the emotional reactions of his informants to changing property relations in Siberia. He did, for example, refer to the angry response of a brigadier to a newcomer family, and to the "aggressiveness" of the property claims made by the latter (Anderson 1998: 80-1).

- ⁴ As with “memory”, “emotion” has wrongly been regarded as an interior process which takes place within individuals’ minds and bodies. Since the 1980s, anthropologists and some psychologists have stressed the social nature of memory and emotional dynamics. Brian Parkinson (1995: 169), for example, suggested that “the central function of many emotional states is social”. He further noted that “although [most psychological] theories may provide a relatively comprehensive analysis of individual emotion, they are still limited by their inattention to the social dimension which is crucial to many instances of emotion as it occurs during everyday life” (Parkinson 1995: 146).
- ⁵ The Sudeten German expulsion began as soon as the war ended, a few months before the signing of the Potsdam Agreement. The mass expulsions took almost two years to complete. During the first six months, a period also known as the “wild expulsion” (*wilde Austreibung*), tens of thousands were terrorised and brutally killed in a spirit of revenge (cf. Hamperl 1996; Staněk 1991).
- ⁶ A comparison of the numbers of inhabitants before and after the Sudeten German expulsion demonstrates the extent to which the village was affected. At the time of their expulsion, over one thousand Sudeten Germans had lived in Vesnice. Today the village houses only about two hundred inhabitants, eighty percent less than before.
- ⁷ After the war, the Czechoslovak government invited Czechs and Slovaks who lived in Hungary, Romania, the Soviet Union, and other East European countries to resettle in the areas. The Ruthenians took the opportunity to move to Czechoslovakia lured by nationalist propaganda.
- ⁸ Being a Czech refugee who had left his home country for the Netherlands in 1948, my father had decided to buy a second home in his country of origin after the 1989 Velvet Revolution.
- ⁹ For a discussion of the distinction between the concepts of “remembered” and “re-experienced” emotions, see Svašek 2000b.
- ¹⁰ After the Cold War, politically-active Sudeten Germans had hoped that their demands would finally be met. They had taken their case to the American Senate and the European courts whose members both decided not to support the claim.
- ¹¹ On the day of the annual service, the presence of the expellees in Vesnice was undeniable. Their shiny cars were parked all over the village (which consisted of one main road), and their voices could be heard as they walked from one end of the village to the

other. Over the years, they also left more permanent marks on the village by restoring the old war memorial and doing up the few remaining Sudeten German graves.

¹² Inhabitants from the Czech border area both welcomed and feared the strength of the German economy. Some profited by working across the border for *Deutschmarks*, and by selling products to German customers.

¹³ The school was owned by the Orthodox Church, and the parsonage by the Catholic Church. Within a year, Hulshoff managed to buy both buildings, respectively for 600,000 and 250,000 crowns (about 12,000 and 5000 pounds). He clearly profited from the weakness of the Czech economy, also by hiring cheap Czech and Ukrainian labourers to renovate the buildings.

¹⁴ As part of the democratisation process, the Czechoslovak government had designed a law to grant former land owners or their descendants the right to reclaim previously owned land which had been nationalised or collectivised. People who did not want to reclaim land, either because their plot was too small to make it profitable or because they now lived in cities, sold their restitution rights to third parties. Various entrepreneurs such as Hulshoff bought as many restitutions claims as they needed to start particular projects.

¹⁵ In 1997, the official (but highly unrealistic) value of the base was still 15 million crowns.

13. Race and social relations: Crossing borders in a Moscow food aid program

Melissa L. Caldwell

In the decade that has passed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian citizens have struggled to articulate for themselves what it means to be Russian in an increasingly globalized world. Among these efforts has been a surge of nationalist discourses that juxtapose Russianness to an imagined "Other." Although "the West" has traditionally been Russia's ideological "Other," particularly during the Soviet period (Kelly 1998), new post-Soviet discourses about these negotiations include racially oriented themes that contrast Russianness with "blackness."¹ This racialized "Othering" has taken multiple forms: political and economic disenfranchisement of Jews and people from the Caucasus, including military action against Chechens; jokes about the presumed incivility and backwardness of black Africans reprinted in popular newspapers and circulated in public discourse (see also Patico 2001b and Pesmen 2000); and, most virulently, the spread of racist organizations and the rise in violent crimes perpetrated against people of color.

It is against this backdrop of racial tensions in Russia that I want to examine how differences can be moderated through the logic of trust and intimacy that characterizes Russian social relations. Themes of friendship, mutual trust, and mutual responsibility are the idioms through which Russians frame their social and economic interactions with each other, a feature that has been described by Alena Ledeneva (1998), Jennifer Patico (2001a), Dale Pesmen (2000), and Michele Rivkin-Fish (2002), among others. Because these studies examine these practices primarily in the context of relations among Russians, my task in this essay is to shift the focus of analysis by looking at the ways in which Russians also

invoke them to frame their interactions with non-Russians. As I will describe, the ways in which Russians navigate and manage racial and national differences are especially revealing instances of the broader significance and applicability of mutual trust and solidarity. Specifically, I will address the relationships that have been forged between Russian recipients and African volunteers in a food aid community in Moscow. Drawing from a case study of the Christian Church of Moscow food aid program, I describe how the daily interactions among members of this group have shifted participants' perceptions of each other as unfamiliar and exotic "Others" into reciprocal relationships of friendship and shared membership in a common social group.² I argue that through the ideologies and practices of mutual assistance that structure the interactions between recipients and volunteers in this food aid program, black Africans are incorporated into the local community around this program as insiders to be trusted and protected.

The material that informs this essay comes from ethnographic fieldwork that I conducted in Moscow, Russia, between 1997 and 2002.³ My primary field site was the Christian Church of Moscow (CCM) soup kitchen program, a community that comprised 1500 Muscovite recipients and approximately 300 volunteers and other members of the CCM congregation, as well as other aid workers and local officials in Moscow.⁴ For the past ten years, the CCM program has worked closely with local social welfare officials and other regional government administrators to serve elderly pensioners, invalids, and other low-income Muscovites in four different parts of the city. Although volunteers include several Russian welfare activists, as well as North American and European expatriates, most are African students and refugees. The nine directors of the soup kitchens are all African. Five days a week, these volunteers serve meals, clean tables, and socialize with recipients. Because the CCM program draws together Russian, European, and African volunteers, officials, and recipients into a dynamic and collaborative community of mutual support, it is a valuable site for

exploring questions of informal exchange and social relations.

The relationships that have developed between volunteers and recipients are unintended results of the CCM congregation's relief efforts. Current legal restrictions on the presence and role of foreign religious communities in Russia have curtailed the extent to which members of foreign denominations can meet and practice their faith. Although the CCM congregation is to some extent exempt from these limitations because it is sponsored by the embassy of a Western country, church members carefully maintain good relations with local officials by vowing not to proselytize in Moscow and not to conduct services or other events in Russian. In particular, church staff has endeavored to separate the day-to-day operations of the soup kitchens from the interests and general business of the congregation. The success of the CCM food aid program depends on the ability of the congregation to distance itself from the rest of Moscow society. Thus, even as CCM staff praise the relationships that have developed between volunteers and recipients, they do not actively facilitate them.

Before proceeding further in this essay, I must offer a qualification. It is not my intent to initiate a discussion that would lead readers to conclude that I am arguing that racism is a universal feature of Russian culture; nor do I mean to suggest that all Russians are racist or condone discrimination against minorities. At the same time, I do not want to minimize the experiences of Africans and other minorities in Russia. During the period that I have conducted research in this food aid community (1997-2002), many African members have endured horrendous attacks. Close friends have been stabbed, beaten, threatened, and have suffered permanent disabilities such as recurring headaches, partial blindness, and loss of teeth, among other injuries.

Even though such actions do not represent the beliefs of all Russians, racist and nationalist views have attracted a growing number of followers in recent years; and public attacks against dark-skinned individuals have increased.⁵ On

several occasions I have found myself sharing subway cars with young men reading white supremacist literature; and once, while sitting on a park bench with a friend, a young man sat down nearby and, in the course of a conversation with us, casually remarked that he had nothing against "skinheads." I also discovered to my great dismay that the bucolic neighborhood in which I lived in 1997-1998 was widely known in Moscow as one of the meeting places for members of a neo-Nazi organization. On weekends, members of this organization, dressed in paramilitary clothing, gathered near the metro station and distributed anti-Semitic materials. Thus I would not dispute that racially motivated violence in Russia is problematic. Nevertheless, in this paper, I want to focus on the issue of race as a particularly evocative point of reference for understanding the extent to which Russian social practices are reciprocal and inclusionary and can efface social divisions based on racial and other differences.

Exchange: Trust and the Other

Relationships that blend social and economic transactions have long been a recognizable and essential way of life in Russia and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Shlapentokh 1989; Verdery 1996; Ledeneva 1998; Wedel 1998; Berdahl 1999; Pesmen 2000; Caldwell in press). In many ways, the official economy in these regions has survived largely because of the prevalence and strength of informal connections and bargaining in the private sphere. In the Russian case, ordinary citizens cultivated a variety of cooperative survival strategies to compensate for shortages created by the socialist state's industrial and financial practices. Through collective practices such as shopping with friends and relatives, saving places for each other in queues, barter, and cultivating personal relationships with shop clerks and other individuals with potential access and influence (see also Ledeneva 1998; Fitzpatrick 1999:54-66), Russian consumers generated interpersonal relations that were simultaneously social and economic.

The instrumental nature of these relations was obscured by their reformulation in Russian discourse as aspects of “friendship” and mutual assistance (Ledeneva 1998; Pesmen 2000). Yet this ideology of intimacy was not simply an illusion: relatives, friends, acquaintances, colleagues, and neighbors were, in fact, the very persons with whom Russians shared and exchanged goods, information, assistance, and other resources. Thus participation within an exchange network denoted more than the parameters of one’s access to resources; it also demarcated one’s membership in a collective social group of assistance – a community of people linked by acts of support. In linguistic terms, Russians distinguish between those individuals who belong to the same social and economic group as “*nash*” (ours) and those who are outsiders as “*ne nash*” (not ours).⁶ The successful articulation and enforcement of this simultaneously symbolic and practical demarcation of insiders versus outsiders depends on an ethic of trust and mutual responsibility among participants, so that transactors perceive both their exchange partners and the partners of their partners, as well as the very commodities and services that circulate through these personal relationships, as being reliable and safe (Pesmen 2000; Caldwell 2002). Consequently, Russians have preferred to deal with individuals who are either friends or “friends of friends” (Shlapentokh 1989) and approach strangers with caution.

More recently in Moscow and elsewhere in Russia these distinctions between trustworthy insiders and distrusted outsiders, or between “*nash*” and “*ne nash*” persons, have played out within a schema of social differentiation that emphasizes perceived racial and ethnic differences. This social differentiation and ranking of individuals according to presumed physical, biological, and innate differences has long been an important component of the project of nation-building in Russia (Bromley 1974; Hirsch 1997; Khazanov 1997; Tolz 1998; Goluboff 2001). In particular, “blood” (*krov*) has been a central idiom in Russian discourse for the determination and transmission of racial, ethnic, and nation-

al differences (Boym 1994:85; Ries 1997:152-154). During the Soviet period this diversity was officially recognized and institutionally managed through the "nationality" designation that appeared in Soviet citizens' internal passports, as well as through the forced integration of minority groups. Quotas ensured the equitable distribution of different populations in universities, government agencies, the military, and the workplace; and various state-sponsored initiatives were enacted to preserve and celebrate the many ethnicities represented among the Soviet populace. At the same time, educational and cultural programs sponsored foreign students, from African and Asian countries in particular, to come to the Soviet Union to study, typically with the implicit goal of retaining influence among countries that were sympathetic to the Soviet Union (see McClellan 1993). Thus, in many ways, Soviet Russia was a multiethnic and multicultural entity, even as that diversity was carefully cultivated and managed from the top.

Today, however, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the subsequent financial crises that have affected the region, official policies regarding racial and ethnic diversity and tolerance have increasingly diverged with popular views about difference. For Muscovites who are worried about the weakening of an essential Russian nation through the influx of foreign products, ideologies, and people, non-white outsiders have become convenient scapegoats (Lemon 1995; Ries 1997).⁷ Popular views hold Jews, Roma, people from the Caucasus regions, Asians, and Africans responsible for problems ranging from the dissolution of a pure Russian "blood" to the corruption of Russia's economy (Rainsford 2001; Ward 1994).⁸ Similarly, the Muscovite director of one of the cafeterias contracted to provide foodservices for the CCM soup kitchens articulated her grievances against the program in racial terms. When CCM staff caught the woman engaging in illegal business transactions and threatened to conclude their dealings with her, she vowed to retaliate by spreading rumors throughout the larger aid community in Moscow about the unethical and corrupt activities of the

"African-American mafia" that worked for the CCM. In Moscow more generally, such simmering racial tensions have only been exacerbated by the political and military struggles between Russia and Chechnya and by popular suspicion that Chechen agents are responsible for several recent bombings in Moscow (see also Lemon 2000).

In Russian discourse, non-white Others are reduced to a cultural construction of "blackness" that homogenizes a range of skin colors, nationalities, and citizenships into the generic appellation "black" (*chernyi*).⁹ While riding an intercity train from Moscow, I witnessed a fight that broke out when one youth with a fair complexion called another youth with slightly darker features "black" and then viciously pummeled him, even as the second young man insisted that he was not "black" and attempted to show his attacker the notation in his passport that identified him as "Russian." On another occasion, while waiting almost an hour for a friend outside a metro station in Moscow, I watched while three policemen stopped every dark-skinned man who walked past and demanded to see their documents.

In the commercial sphere these concerns have been translated into distrust of dark-skinned traders and their goods (see also Humphrey 1999). Muscovites advised against buying produce from dark-skinned merchants; and in 1998, Moscow newspapers published warnings that watermelons from Azerbaijan were tainted. Azeri vendors at the market near my Moscow apartment in 1998 reported that they were harassed by the police more than their fair-skinned counterparts. On one occasion while I was making a purchase, I observed a policeman approach one of the Azeri women manning the booth and scold her for leaving a pile of trash along the sidewalk. Although the woman protested that the broken boxes and smashed vegetables had been left by a Russian woman who operated a stand nearby, the policeman threatened her with legal action and then demanded a "payment" (i.e., a bribe) to compensate for the alleged violation. In several parts of Moscow, neo-Nazi sympathizers have rampaged through local markets, vandalizing stalls run by

merchants with darker skin coloring or attacking dark-skinned customers.¹⁰ In addition, observers have criticized local police officials who conduct raids on marketplaces in order to flush out criminals and other individuals who lack proper legal regulation papers for unfairly targeting dark-skinned persons (Filipov 1999).

Africans who live in Moscow and elsewhere in Russia report similar experiences. Within the CCM soup kitchen community, most African volunteers have personal stories of being refused employment or service in shops because of their skin color, or of being subjected to unwarranted raids of their dormitory rooms or apartments by members of the local police. Even more distressing is the frequency with which Africans in Moscow have been violently assaulted. The director of one soup kitchen was picked up and detained by policemen who refused to recognize his official documents from the United Nations Committee on Refugees that indicated his official status as a refugee in Russia and guaranteed him protection. Another soup kitchen director suffered a beating that required several stitches in his head, while yet another director missed several weeks of work at the soup kitchen after he and his wife were stabbed.¹¹

Race and the Other in the CCM soup kitchens

Within the CCM soup kitchens such overt violence is missing, although participants acknowledge that other, more subtle, discriminatory practices have periodically occurred in the day-to-day operations of the program. CCM staff and volunteers report that when the soup kitchens first opened in the early 1990s, many Muscovite recipients approached African volunteers with a mixture of curiosity and suspicion. Recipients claimed that they had never before met or even seen a black person until they attended the soup kitchen. More recently, at the opening of another branch of the soup kitchen, I watched as two recipients stared for several minutes at the two directors and then debated between themselves whether the two men were in fact "blacks." Volunteers and recipients alike

recalled how during the first few months of operation, inquisitive recipients touched the skin and hair of African volunteers in order to determine what "blackness" felt like. Others recalled asking questions about volunteers' home countries and cultures. One recipient reflected that at first she did not know what to think of African persons, but that she had learned that they were just like Russians and other "good-hearted" people. "They may have black hands," she said, "but they have white hearts."

More problematic than these explorations of interest and curiosity, however, are more overt acts of racialized essentialism. CCM volunteers and staff note that in the early days of the program, many recipients refused to accept food that was served by African volunteers, preferring instead to serve themselves or to wait for white Russian, North American, or European helpers to bring their meals. In a cultural setting that celebrates acts of hospitality as a marker of closeness and trust between individuals, CCM recipients' refusals to accept meals from black volunteers were striking rebuffs to possibilities for sociality and intimacy between Muscovite recipients and African volunteers. This problem became so acute that the white American CCM minister finally issued an ultimatum: either recipients would accept food from black volunteers, or they would not be served. Volunteers remembered that most recipients subsequently changed their practices accordingly, although a small contingent elected to forfeit their eligibility and left the program altogether. Several volunteers observed, however, that some recipients continued to demonstrate their discomfort in more indirect ways, such as refusing to accept meals directly from the hands of African volunteers, or by touching as small a piece of the ticket as possible.¹²

Even more revealing, however, is that tactics of "Othering" such as these are not limited to those performed by Russians against Africans, but have also been performed by African volunteers and directed against Russian recipients. A past director of the CCM program remarked that he had reprimanded African volunteers who refused to serve Russian

recipients for analogous reasons grounded in stereotypes about Russian culture. During my fieldwork, a frequent topic of conversation among volunteers, both African and North American, was the “uncivilized” mentality and lifestyle of Muscovites.

Nevertheless, although these mutually constituted acts of “Othering” have the potential to disrupt the organizational structure and overall success of the CCM soup kitchen program, they are exceptions to the ways in which social relations between recipients and volunteers have evolved. Over the ten years that the CCM soup kitchens have been in operation, recipients and volunteers have, through their daily interactions, constructed reciprocal relationships built on mutual understanding and trust. As a result, a sense of social solidarity has emerged from these contacts, so that volunteers and recipients see each other as members of a shared community with common interests and needs. In the following section I examine the benefits that volunteers and recipients receive through their participation in soup kitchen activities and how these resources foster a sense of social cohesion.

Fostering a social community

African volunteers identify several reasons to explain why they offer their time and services to the soup kitchen program. On a material level, the CCM program offers volunteers a free meal after the serving period has ended. Although this remuneration is available to all volunteers, regardless of nationality, CCM church staff acknowledge that their primary intent is to supplement the minimal resources of African volunteers; and, in fact, few non-African volunteers take advantage of the free meals. Moreover, those African volunteers who serve most consistently and reliably receive additional benefits such as transportation passes or eligibility for periodic supplemental food packages offered by the church. Nevertheless, although these material benefits are certainly important incentives, it is inaccurate to conclude that African vol-

unteers are dependent on them. Some volunteers choose not to take advantage of the free meals, while others claim that they view them as opportunities to socialize with friends. More importantly, when I have specifically asked African volunteers to describe why they assist at the soup kitchens, most never mention these material factors but instead offer more abstract and ideological explanations. Some individuals identify their voluntarism as an expression of a personal sense of moral responsibility to help other people. For others, particularly those who receive student stipends from the Russian government, it is an opportunity to articulate their gratitude to the Russian state for educational assistance. Finally, other volunteers have reflected that their spiritual faith as Christians has motivated them to help others. Nevertheless, neither spirituality nor membership in the CCM congregation is prerequisites for volunteering or for receiving assistance; and in fact several African volunteers belong to other churches in Moscow.

Yet despite the divergent reasons articulated by volunteers to explain their efforts, most point to the sense of community that emerges from their daily social interactions in the CCM soup kitchens as the most important factor in their continued participation in the program. This emphasis on the benefits derived from membership in a social group is similarly echoed by Russian recipients in the CCM program. At a fundamental level, the community that emerges from the CCM soup kitchens is oriented to addressing practical needs that go beyond the meals that are served in the soup kitchen and the compensation provided to volunteers. In many ways, the role of the church has receded into a secondary position as volunteers and recipients have cultivated an alternative community based on common interests and mutual assistance. Together volunteers and recipients help each other by sharing information about sale items at markets and local stores and by assisting each other with shopping and other tasks. Recipients have helped volunteers rent apartments or spare rooms at reasonable rates from friends and relatives; in turn, volunteers have referred their friends and classmates

to recipients who have rooms to rent or items to sell. Likewise, recipients have turned to volunteers for help in dealing with problems ranging from home repairs to troublesome tenants who are not connected to the CCM program. Recipients who have come to see African CCM volunteers, and the directors in particular, as their advocates in the food aid process ask for their guidance in negotiating other bureaucratic channels of Russia's welfare system. At the same time, recipients have used their local contacts to provide volunteers with needed legal and medical assistance.

More significantly, because Russian exchange practices fuse economic transactions with social interactions, recipients and volunteers also come together to share important social occasions with each other. The collective observance of events such as birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, and funerals attests to the level of intimacy shared by recipients and volunteers. For instance, after Olivia, a volunteer from Sudan, successfully defended her master's thesis, several soup kitchen recipients, volunteers, and cafeteria employees spontaneously arranged a party for her. To prepare for the birthdays of soup kitchen directors, recipients donate money and appoint a representative to buy presents, flowers, and champagne for the celebrants. Similarly, every year on her birthday, Aleksandra Petrovna, a long-time recipient and activist for the soup kitchen, hosts a party to which she invites her closest friends, including several African volunteers and directors. On another occasion, after one of the soup kitchen directors died unexpectedly, CCM staff organized a special memorial service for recipients to express their grief.

For some participants, these relationships offer not just friendships, but also substitute families. Vera is a 75-year-old retired artist whose cheerful personality and delicious home-made pastries have endeared her to the volunteers. She has become particularly close with the directors of the soup kitchen she attends, two young men from Ethiopia. During her husband's illness, the two young men visited her at home; after her husband died, they joined her at his funeral and at

the yearly anniversary of his death. The two men each talk about Vera affectionately and do their best to watch out for her. One director has helped her secure unofficial part-time employment that will not compromise her welfare benefits, while the other calls on her periodically to see if she needs anything. These feelings are mutual, as evidenced by the fact that Vera keeps photographs of the two men, as well as several other former volunteers, in her bookcase, next to pictures of her relatives and her beloved husband.

Similarly, Aleksandra Petrovna carries in her pocketbook a small photograph album filled with pictures of her "children" – the African directors and volunteers from the CCM soup kitchen she attends.¹³ When she shows this album to acquaintances, Aleksandra Petrovna describes the individuals in the pictures as her "sons," "nephews," or "grandsons." In turn, when these volunteers talk about Aleksandra Petrovna, they refer to her as their "mother" or "grandmother." In the toasts at one of her birthday parties, several volunteers emphasized the deep respect and affection they felt for her by specifically calling her their "Mother." One young man claims that he telephones Aleksandra Petrovna when he is lonely and needs to feel loved, while others turn to her to ask for advice or to share their good news – sometimes before they tell anyone else, including their family members or close friends. Several volunteers who have left Russia and returned to their homes in Africa periodically telephone Aleksandra Petrovna to chat.

Although among Russians the use of kinship terms does not necessarily denote familiarity or even respect, but can be used as social markers of address for strangers (see Pesmen 2000), the consistent employment of such titles between CCM recipients and volunteers, coupled with professions of emotional attachment, indicates that they carry different meanings within the context of the soup kitchens. In particular, the inclusion of endearments, diminutives, nicknames, and possessive pronouns, as well as the use of the informal form of "you" (*ty*), suggest intimate and affectionate relations between individuals. For instance, Marina, another recipient,

greeted Matthew, a volunteer from Nigeria, with a warm embrace and introduces him to others as “my black child.” Alan, a volunteer from Sierra Leone, commented that he identified strongly with particular recipients whom he saw as substitute grandparents; while Daniel, from Sudan, explained that he enjoyed volunteering at the soup kitchen because it was a way to help his Russian friends. He reflected that recipients are “like family, and they know me.” Steven, a student from Liberia, explained that he had not seen his family, whom he missed greatly, in several years; by going to the soup kitchen and visiting with recipients, he felt closer to his own family, particularly his grandmother.

Concluding remarks: “Inside” the soup kitchen

Through simultaneously economic and social interactions such as those described above, CCM recipients and volunteers have cooperatively cultivated a dynamic social group of mutual support and affection. In so doing, members of this community classify themselves and each other as “*nash*”, or as the “insiders”, with respect to other Muscovites who are outside the program. It is this sense of belonging that endows members with both a sense of responsibility to each other and a dependence on one another. These inclusionary tactics have emerged most vividly when Russians affiliated with the CCM program have assisted African volunteers in dealing with personal problems. In one case, the local government administrator whose office was responsible for sending potential recipients to the CCM program offered his assistance to several African volunteers who were experiencing legal troubles. The administrator later justified his overture on the grounds that he was simply helping people who, by virtue of their previous acts of assistance to his constituents, had become part of the larger community under his purview. At other times, in actions that potentially carry more public and political resonance, recipients have defended African volunteers against racially charged insults and other acts of harassment made by Muscovites who are not part of

the CCM program. Consequently, many African volunteers note that despite the discrimination they have faced in Moscow, they have found the relationships that they have forged through CCM soup kitchens a source of safety and comfort.

Through the acts of trust and interaction that accompany daily encounters in the soup kitchen, CCM participants have created a unique community that bridges racial differences. Members of this community see each other as partners, friends, and even family; and they rely on each other for both economic security and social companionship. As a result, the CCM soup kitchens have evolved into a social group in which the focus has shifted from unequal relationships between volunteers and recipients toward a cohesive community founded on the coordination of a comprehensive system of durable and reliable social relations linking recipients, volunteers, and their respective extended exchange networks. More importantly, even as attitudes and practices directed at dark-skinned persons continue to spread among certain subgroups of the population in Russia, within the CCM soup kitchens Africans and Russians, among others, can continue to come together and find a safe haven where they share a common sense of belonging and sentiment. Thus, in keeping with the logic of "friendship" as the model for exchange relations, recipients and volunteers alike have come to view their interactions with each other not exclusively in terms of the volunteer—recipient paradigm, but rather in terms of an equal partnership between members of a unified community.

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- ¹ John Russell has described (1992) how contemporary Japanese marketing trends invoke representations of blackness to situate Japanese identity vis-à-vis the West, while Susan Terrio has detailed (2000) how the French chocolate industry from the 19th century to the present has similarly used images of black Africans to cultivate and market particular identities, lifestyles, and values associated with their products.
- ² I describe this community and the practices of social exchange that shape it more fully elsewhere (Caldwell in press).
- ³ The bulk of the research was conducted between November 1997 and October 1998, with subsequent research trips in summer 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002. I have also remained in contact with several informants through electronic mail correspondence.
- ⁴ I have used a pseudonym for this community.
- ⁵ In addition, personal accounts of such attacks also suggest growing public tolerance for – or at least attempts to turn a blind eye toward – such acts. For more information on these trends, see Klomegah 1997; Shulyakovskaya 1998; Filipov 1999; Kamara 2001; Rainsford 2001.
- ⁶ Although Russians also distinguish between insiders and outsiders with the terms "svoi" (one's own) and "chuzhoi" (foreign) (Stepanov 1997: 492; Pesmen 2000: 165), I rarely encountered this distinction in my fieldwork. Instead, the "nash"/"ne nash" distinction appeared frequently in both popular and official discourse (see also Humphrey 1995; Pesmen 2000; Caldwell 2002).

- ⁷ See Verdery 1993 for a description of these practices elsewhere in Eastern Europe.
- ⁸ See Goscilo 1995 for a discussion of these attitudes in the 1970s.
- ⁹ Alaina Lemon has described (1995, 2000) these racialized essentialisms from the ethnographic perspective of Roma in Russia.
- ¹⁰ In May 1998, an American Marine of African-American heritage was severely beaten by a group of neo-Nazis while shopping at an outdoor compact disk market in Moscow (see also Shulyakovskaya 1998).
- ¹¹ Racialized attacks have become so pervasive in Moscow that it is on an almost weekly basis that members of the CCM congregation report violent acts perpetrated against them or their friends. In response to the frequency and brutality of these incidents, CCM staff have begun working closely with local and national authorities to publicize this problem and to influence authorities to prevent future incidents.
- ¹² Because these practices preceded any sense of familiarity or intimacy between recipients and volunteers, I do not see them as part of the money-avoidance techniques described by Lemon 1998 or Pesmen 2000.
- ¹³ Aleksandra Petrovna keeps photographs of her two biological sons at home but not in the album she carries with her.

Appendixes

Appendix 1

Research on the ethnic problematic at the Institute for Social Studies of the Slovak Academy of Sciences

Štefan Šutaj

The Institute for Social Sciences in Košice has been working within the network of social science institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. The Institute was established in 1975. In 2000, it celebrated its 25th anniversary. On that occasion, a monothematic volume of the Institute's papers was published under the title *Man and Society*.¹ This volume contains detailed information on the Institute's research interest fields.

The Institute for Social Sciences at the SAV² is a multidisciplinary institute with two large interest spheres. The first relates to social psychology and concentrates on the socio-psychological study of the problems of interpersonal interaction, with an accent on questions about the regulation of social behaviour, social norms and interpersonal aggression. The second field of interest concerns historical research on modern Slovakian history, with a focus on the period following World War II. Both spheres of research share a focus on the study of ethnic minority groups and on interdisciplinary research on macro-social phenomena, ethnic minorities, social and ethnic identities.

The changes that followed 1989 affected the Institute's activities greatly. On the one hand, the number of employees has rapidly decreased. On the other hand, work efficiency, overall productivity and the number of publications have increased. The quality of these publications has also improved. Moreover, the overall changes influenced the inter-

nal structure of the Institute. The sociology department ceased to exist as a consequence of problems internal to this discipline: for instance, age and qualification structures, experience and scientific erudition, and results in publication activity. The tasks of this department were partly assumed by the department of social psychology. Nevertheless, the Institute has succeeded, particularly in the recent period, in continuing the tradition of using sociological approaches in the latest research on ethnic questions.

Presently at the Institute there are suitable conditions for the development of two scientific disciplines: historiography and social psychology. Most of the researchers are trained at the Institute or at other departments of these disciplines at the Prešov University (Slovakia).

The shaping of our research interests depends on the actuality and the utility of eventual results in scientific research from the viewpoint of scientific disciplines and of social sciences, as well as on the requirements of social practice. Our present themes are: problems of social change after 1989, problems of personal and group (i.e., political, religious, ethnical) realisation, conflict resolution and population movements (migration and emigration in both past and present). These themes are timely both from a scientific research viewpoint and in light of current events in Europe. Moreover, they are also timely from a pragmatic-commercial perspective. Because the state today is unable to provide the Institute with sufficient financial means to ensure research activities, researchers must apply for external funds. Research on ethnic processes and relations and on problems of ethnic minorities, the areas in which the Institute makes efforts to build its reputation at home and abroad, is considered especially important. These fields have attracted, and continue to attract, interest in Europe, especially with regard to Slovakia.

Research on Central Europe more generally, and on Slovakia more specifically, enables us to continue developing further international cooperation, as well as to prepare international research projects. In addition to our established

partners, including foreign institutes in Budapest, Prague and Kiev, we would like to expand our cooperative efforts with other universities and research institutes both at home (especially with Prešov University and the University of P.J. Šafárik) and abroad (for example, Masaryk University in Brno, Charles University in Prague and Silesian University in Opava). We consider it extremely important to establish and re-establish, as well as to intensify our co-operation with institutions in West-European countries (in particular in England, France, Germany, Austria, and Belgium).

For the fourth year the Institute has published an electronic interdisciplinary journal, *Man and Society*, which presents results of research conducted by our staff. The journal also dedicates space to other social science disciplines.³

The Institute conducts research on ethnic problems – both general questions of national relations, as well as issues of single ethnic groups who currently live within the borders of Slovakia.⁴ In the early 1990s, the general definition of the minorities issue was characteristic of our research interests. Several research projects were undertaken within the framework of grant projects: for instance, “Minority ethnic communities in Slovakia in the processes of social transformation”⁵ and “Development of ethnic minority communities in Slovakia between 1918-1990,”⁶ both of which financed by the VEGA agency. In 1995, two more projects were launched under the titles “Development of ethnic minorities after the World War II and interethnic relations in Slovakia”⁷ and “Intergenerational memory as a mediator for forming new identities in the process of transformation of the Slovak society”.⁸ These projects included a number of significant events: our Institute co-organised the conference “Nation and State” in Maribor, in February 1992 and the second meeting of the Slovak- Hungarian Forum in Bratislava, in March 1992.

In 1994, we co-organised with the Historical Institute at SAV, L’Institute d’histoire du Temps of Paris and Le Centre Francaise de Recherche en Sciences Sociales of Prague the final workshop of the research project “History and memory of the Second World War in Bohemia, Slovakia, France and in

countries of Central Europe.” The workshop took place in November 1994, in Stará Lesná (Slovakia) and lectures were held on themes of national problems. The same year, in co-operation with the Department of Jewish culture at the Slovak National Museum, we organised an international seminar, “Košice and the deportation of Jews in 1994.”

In 1995, in co-operation with Columbia University of New York, the Institute held a workshop in Levoča (Slovakia), under the title “Teaching about nationalism: Issues and resources.” In 1995 and 1996, two seminars in Zlatá Idka (Slovakia), titled “Historical memory and identity,” included participation by Institute members.

In October 1999, an international scientific conference was held in Stará Lesná under the title “Language and education of ethnic minorities in Slovakia and in countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the second half of the 20th century.” The conference was organised in co-operation with the Foundation of F. Ebert. In 2002, our Institute was responsible for organising the meeting of the Slovak-Czech committee of historians in Košice, on the following theme: “Hungarians in Czechoslovakia and the Czech-Slovak relations.”

As these events illustrate, since the second half of the 1990s, one aspect of our grant projects has been increasingly oriented towards the problems of single ethnic groups.

The Roma research

The only previous independent project that focused on general aspects of the Roma problem was an interdisciplinary project conducted in 1987-1991: “Present tendencies in the development of types of Gypsy families and the problem of their integration into the structures of society.” Results from this unique, and so far never repeated, research, which was based on interdisciplinary empirical field research and other research methods, were collected and published in several articles, research papers from conferences and special materials produced for governmental groups (Bacová 1989,

1990). An independent interdisciplinary research team composed by seven to ten Institute members was involved in the project. Unfortunately, the team was constrained by the rapid loss of employees during the research period. This was because most members of the team were young persons at the start of their careers and who left their positions either because of the actuality, or because of fear of eventual financial cuts. The research team ceased to exist (in 1989, the Institute's staff was at 46; presently there are about 20 members).

Research on the Roma subject was ensured within the framework of various other grant projects studying ethnic minorities in Slovakia. These included, for example, the projects of VEGA: "Policy towards national and ethnic minorities in Slovakia between 1945-1954" and "Inter-generational memory as a mediator for forming new identities in the process of transformation of the Slovak society." Presently, the Roma research has been conducted within the framework of the project "Roma in Slovakia in the period from the Theresian reforms to the present." The leader of this two-member team is Anna Jurová. The researchers' interests are not limited to the historical aspects of the problem, since in many areas "historical" interest shifts towards present problems. Instead, particular attention is paid to events in the 1990s, to the current situation, to consulting, expertise and review activities.

The results of these projects have been presented primarily at scientific and other workshops and conferences, such as those sponsored by the Foundation of F. Eberth, UNICEF, the Institute of Indology at the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University in Prague, the Institute for Modern History of the Academy of Sciences in Prague; to a lesser degree they have also been used in practical life. Lectures were organised for Roma activists (within the framework of the KESAJ foundation and the Society of Women without Differences of Nationality), for students of secondary schools in Košice, for the Roma Youth Summer School and so on. The Institute also monitors media articles published in both the Roma and the

local press (Bacová 1992; Jurová 1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999).

Hungarian minority in Slovakia - Slovak minority in Hungary

Presently, our Institute has two partners in Hungary. The first, the Research Institute of Slovaks in Hungary, located in Békéscsaba, initiated a joint research project, "Survey of the Slovak intelligentsia in Hungary." This sociological survey, implemented in 1998-1999, focused on ethnic identity of persons belonging to the Slovak intelligentsia in Hungary, as well as on perceptions of position and other aspects of ethnic and social life among members of the Slovak minority in Hungary.

The survey was conducted in every region where Slovaks live. The research sample consisted of 408 respondents, and the results will be included in a joint final report.⁹ A companion publication that will present the overall results is expected to be published by the end of 2002.¹⁰ Another project in which Institute researchers¹¹ have participated is the "Survey of the Slovak family in Hungary."

In 2001, our Institute signed a cooperation agreement with the Institute for Ethnic Research, MAV¹², in Budapest; the survey of the Slovak family has been conducted in close collaboration with their research group. This survey was initiated by the Slovak Research Institute in Békéscsaba as a continuation of an earlier project investigating ethnic identity of Slovak intelligentsia in Hungary. The newly established Institute for Ethnic Research in Budapest expressed interest in enlarging this survey to include families belonging to other minority groups in Hungary.

Understanding the present state and perspectives for the development of ethnic consciousness among ethnically homogenous and heterogeneous families required deeper insight into the phenomenon of ethnicity. A study of the social and demographic parameters of families proved very helpful, since data about the structure of families also illuminated internal social differences on the level of ethnicity and shed light onto processes of assimilation. The following institutes

participated in this research project: the Institute for Social Sciences, SAV, in Košice; the Slovak Research Institute in Békéscsaba, Hungary; the Institute for Ethnic Research, MAV, in Budapest; and the Slavic, Germanic, Croatian and Bulgarian Institutes at the ELTE University in Budapest. The overall objective was to reveal mechanisms of preservation, change and reproduction of ethnic identities in German, Croatian, Slovak and Bulgarian families living in Hungary.

This interdisciplinary, sociologic-socio-psychological study was characterized by applied field research. The survey was conducted across the entire country, in those counties where German, Croatian, Slovak and Bulgarian ethnic minorities had their majorities. Because of the multiple topics of inquiry in these investigations, the project consisted of four relatively independent surveys that used identical methodologies. The subjects of the study were the intergenerational coherences related to the identity of ethnically homogeneous and heterogeneous families living in Hungary on both an individual level (i.e. family members) and on a group level (i.e. the family as a social unit). The main aim of this research was to study aspects of ethnic identity among German, Croatian, Slovak and Bulgarian families living in conditions of social transformation.

The topics of our survey included: social and demographic structures of German, Croatian, Slovak and Bulgarian families; ethnic identity of family members in present times and the intergenerational identity changes; ethnic awakening activities and ethno-cultural orientation of single families; inter-marriage relations, networks of relatives, and intergenerational relations and their influence on the strengthening and development of ethnic identity; and the migration of families as well as the effects of this migration on the state of ethnic identity. The survey sample consisted of 650 respondents who were divided into four subgroups: 200 German, 200 Croatian, 200 Slovak and 50 Bulgarian families (the lower number of this last group is due to the smaller representation of ethnic Bulgarians in Hungary). By the end of

2001, the first partial results were completed (Homišínová 2001a, 2001b).

The research conducted on the Hungarian ethnic minority in Slovakia relates, but is not restricted, primarily to its history. Among the most significant projects are the following: a historical socio-psychological study on the descendants of "Re-Slovakised"¹³ persons and a socio-psycho-historical survey conducted on a sample of teachers belonging to the Slovak and the Hungarian nationalities (Zelová et al 1992; Bacová and Šutaj 1993).

In regard to historical themes, our interests concerned, first of all, questions of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia after 1945, with particular emphasis on schools, deportation of Hungarians to Czech lands, "Re-Slovakisation", population migration and statistics (including their impact on the present), and current problems in Slovak-Hungarian relations (Gabzdilová 1991, 1997, 1999a; Šutaj 1993a, 1993b, 1995, 1997; Gabzdilová and Homišínová 1994; Molnár and Šutaj 1997). In November 1995, in cooperation with the Historical Institute of SAV in Bratislava, a workshop of the Slovak-Hungarian committee of historians, titled "The role of churches in the development of nations" was held in Košice.

The Ruthenian/Ukrainian minority

Our Institute also devotes particular attention to the problems of the Ruthenian/Ukrainian minority¹⁴ in Slovakia. In this area, an intensive cooperative project was initiated with the Centrum Etnosociologiji ta Etnopolityki Institut Sociologiji NANU Kyjiv (National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kiev).

Historical research has been conducted within the framework of VEGA grant projects. In addition to these historical aspects, the long-term decrease of the Ruthenian/Ukrainian population is another focus of our analysis. We have the following explanations for this decrease: fears that after the annexation of Zakarpatska (Subcarpathian Ukraine) by the ex-Soviet Union, the problem of north-eastern Slovakia will be solved in a similar way; and the various consequences of the

post-February 1948 political and social changes that negatively influenced the national identity of the Ruthenian/Ukrainian minority (e.g., collectivisation of agriculture, forced Catholicisation, Ukrainian assimilation and struggles against the so-called Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists).

The assimilation process occurred mainly in towns where new work possibilities arose, and in relation to the influence of Slovak and Czech mass media. Other factors played important roles in this process, too: the similarity of the Slavic dialects spoken by Ruthenians/Ukrainians and Slovaks in east Slovakia; similarities of religion (the Greek Catholic faith is equally diffused among Slovaks and among Ruthenians/Ukrainians); and the increasing number of interethnic marriages in which the Slovak language became the main means of communication.

The emergence of self-identification processes among Ruthenians/Ukrainians after 1989 brought about the growth or the re-establishment of some factors that stood for various ethnic orientations (i.e. Ukrainian, Ruthenian and Carpathian-Russian). The post-1989 euphoria was replaced by disputes about ethnic orientation and about the representation of minorities in society (Gajdoš 1989, 1997; Gajdoš and Konečný 1994; Konečný 1994; Gajdoš et al 1999).

In October 1995, an international workshop took place in Stará Lesná under the title, "Inter-ethnic relations in Slovakia and Ukraine". This workshop paved the way for future international comparative studies on this subject. The inter-governmental Slovak-Ukrainian committee for the problems of ethnic minorities and for educational, cultural and research relations initiated a project that our Institute joined: "Ukrainians/Ruthenians in Slovakia and Slovaks in Ukraine." The project enjoyed both ideological and financial support from the Slovak Ministry of Culture. During the preparation stage we also used results from our previous research project, "Ethnic minorities in Slovakia and the migration processes in the years 1945-1960."¹⁵ The research team consisted of historians, social psychologists and sociologists. The aim of the project was to provide insights into the problems of the

position of Ruthenians/Ukrainians in Slovakia in the present and in the past. The final scope of the project was a sociological historical study, which was concluded in 2000.

The sample for the survey was composed of 400 Ruthenians/Ukrainians (with a proportional representation of both ethnic orientations) and 400 Slovaks. In order to gain comparative and more complex insights, we divided the sample into four subgroups:

Ukrainian subgroup (200 respondents);

Ruthenian subgroup (200 respondents);

Subgroup of Slovaks coming from the ethnically mixed region of north-eastern Slovakia – the “direct contact population” (200 respondents);

Subgroup of Slovaks coming from a relatively homogenous Slovak environment – the “indirect contact population” (200 respondents).

The localities included in this study were selected according to administrative divisions that were valid in 1991, the year of the national census. In north-eastern Slovakia these constituted mixed regions of both rural and urban character chosen for the high proportion of the Ruthenian/Ukrainian population. Collection of data took place in June-September 2000 in 41 districts from all eight regions of Slovakia. Students from universities in Košice, Prešov and Bratislava were chosen to fill in the questionnaires. The study was designed as a sociological, socio-psychological and historical inquiry that used methods characteristic of all three scientific disciplines. The study was conducted through questionnaires, interviews, and analyses of historical and modern documents.

The subject of this research was the legal, political and cultural positions of the Slovak population in Ukraine and of the Ruthenians (Ukrainians) in Slovakia, as well as inter-ethnic relations within the process of the transformation of social systems. Accordingly, we were concerned with the following principal indicators of identity: language use, education, culture, state of legal consciousness, relatedness to the mother nation and questions of ethnic, religious and cultural

differentiation. In addition, our aim was to clarify some of the sources of tension and reciprocal recrimination as well as to understand the extent of tolerance, not only towards the majority of the population. With regard to the revival of a movement to acknowledge Ruthenians as an independent nation, which in the last decade has been shown not to have a merely episodic character, it is very important to understand the present relations and trends inside the ethnic group. The results of the study were published in an independent monograph (Gajdoš et al 2001).

The German minority

Another independent grant project of the Institute is the "German minority in Slovakia after 1918, reflex of the geopolitical, economic and social changes in the historical memory of its members". Although there was no precedent in the Institute for such a project, we achieved interesting results also in this historically orientated subject (Olejník 1996, 1998, 1999; Gabzdilová 1999b).

Despite having an insufficient number of research assistants, the Institute continues to participate in numerous research projects.¹⁶ Our library is also not sufficiently supplied: it lacks both a documentation and an editing centre. Only one or two researchers can be assigned to the study of one minority group. A broader interdisciplinary aspect is missing, too. Under the present conditions, opportunities to increase the number of research staff – for example, by sociologists, anthropologists, demographers, specialists on political geography, linguists, philosophers or economists – remains, unfortunately, only an illusion.

The Institute must seek to win new research members beyond state budget possibilities. As a state institution, the Institute's possibilities to apply for grants from groups from the third sector (i.e. foundations), which provide support principally to non-governmental organisations, are limited. In spite of this situation, we remain optimistic about the future

of the Social Institute for Social Sciences SAV. We have at our disposal the potential of experienced specialists, and that is a valuable resource that enables us to present ambitious projects of high quality.

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¹ See its web site: www.saske.sk/cas/4-99/index

² Official abbreviation for the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

³ The aspiration to publish the journal in a printed form has been hampered by a lack of funding.

- ⁴ From the numerous publications published after 1993 on this theme, the most significant are: Bacová and Šutaj 1994; Gabzdilová 1994, 1998; Zelová et al 1994; Bacová 1996; Bacová and Kusá 1997; Gajdoš and Matula 1997; Olejník and Gabzdilová 1998; Šutaj and Olejník 1998.
- ⁵ Responsible researcher for this project was A. Zelová.
- ⁶ Responsible researcher: Š. Šutaj
- ⁷ Responsible researcher in the beginning: Š.Šutaj, later M. Gajdoš
- ⁸ Responsible researcher: V. Bacová
- ⁹ Led by M. Homišinová
- ¹⁰ Portions of the results are published in the works of Homišinová: Homišinová 1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d, 2000e, 2000f.
- ¹¹ F. Baumgartner and M. Homišinová
- ¹² Abbreviation for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.
- ¹³ The “Re-Slovakisation” was the campaign of change of nationality promoted by the Czechoslovak government during the years 1946 –1948. A number of citizens, mainly ethnic Hungarians, decided to give up their nationality and declare Slovak nationality for fear of possible repressive measures enacted by Czechoslovakian authorities.
- ¹⁴ In the regions of eastern Slovakia a part of inhabitants proclaim to be Ruthenians and a part Ukrainians. It is a case of complex process of ethnic self-identification, which manifested itself in various historical periods in the change of ethnic adherence. It is our conviction, that this community is of one ethnic origin, and, consequently, we are using the term Ruthenians/Ukrainians.
- ¹⁵ This project had been financed by the VEGA grant agency.
- ¹⁶ Researchers themselves collect empirical materials, compile questionnaires, and enter data; in other words, they do the manual work that could have been done by assistants.

Appendix 2

The District State Archive in Šaľa and regional research

Veronika Nováková

The history of the District State Archive in Šaľa, like that of the other district archives in Slovakia, dates back to the 1950s. In Slovakia archives extend back to the Middle Age, however we can only speak about an institutional archival system after the year 1950. The oldest archives on the territory of modern Slovakia were the so-called autonomous archives, town archives, county archives and church archives. Each of them basically had been preserving the archival documents of its originator. In the 18th and 19th century, at the beginning of the historical research, the autonomous and the church archives became objects of historical research. Whereas in Europe the history of the institutions of archives as centres of historical research begins in the first half of the 19th century, on the territory of Slovakia it is only in the early 20th century that we find an organised network of archives independent on their originators.

The Czechoslovak centralised system of archives adopted the model of the former Soviet Union. Later, particularly regarding the analyses of archival documents and the definition of the roles of archives, it sought a theoretical support in the French archival traditions. As in the Soviet Union, the entire system of the Czechoslovak archives was subordinated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The events after 1989 did not bring significant changes to the centralised system, although the law on archives was amended in December 1991. This brought only slight changes to the structure of the archives; the word “state” has been removed.

The institution of state archives was laid down by the governmental decree no. 29 in 1954. The state regional archives established after this have been working in an unchanged form since then. From the network of the state central archives today only two exist (under changed names): the Slovak National Archive in Bratislava (Slovenský národný archív) and the State Central Mining Archive in Banská Štiavnica (Štátny ústredný banský archív). The latter is a unique institution in Central Europe. It collects all documents from the mining areas, regardless of which part of Slovakia the material originates. The beginnings of the district archives have to be located at the level of the authorities of the regional state administration, i.e. the district national councils (*okresný národný výbor*). By 1953, they were subordinated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In 1960, following the reorganisation of the state administration, some districts were abolished and thus the competence of district archives changed too. Only the archives belonging to the newly established district councils had been maintained. The first real legalisation of the archives was issued in 1975 with Law 149.

The present District State Archive in the district town of Šaľa operated according to this law until 1996, when it was subordinated to the District Council of Galanta town.¹ Since 1960, it has been collecting and preserving documents originated in areas of Galanta, Šaľa and Sereď districts and, since 1964, also of Dunajská Streda, Čalovo and Šamorín districts. After the closing down of the district archive in Dunajská Streda in 1964, the Archive took over the role of preserving the documents of the former town archive of Šamorín. This is constituted by medieval material dating back to 1340. In present, the District State Archive in Šaľa is preserving 4 km of archival material, originating from 567 sources.

The Archive in Šaľa has the largest territorial competence among the district archives in Slovakia. Its most important role is the collection and preservation of documents and their handing down to the future generations. At the same time, the analyses and the preparation of materials to public access is also among the basic tasks of the Archive. Another

role of the Archive concerns the control and the supervision of the sources producing archival documents; it also approves of the discarding of documents from all institutes and organisations on the territory of Galanta, Šaľa and Dunajská Streda districts.

Since 1974, the Archive has been located in the building of the old Jesuit college and residence, later rebuilt as a castle.² Only since moving to this building has accessibility of the documents to the wider public become possible. Among the principal archival sources of the Archive, apart from the town archives mentioned above (Šamorín and Sered'), we find the archival documents of state institutions established after the foundation of Czechoslovakia in 1918. The richest source of information regarding the history of the region in the period between the two wars is the material of the District Council of Šaľa. The district councils were organs of state administration; the district board of representatives, which was an autonomous, electoral office, worked there as well. The district council had a wide range of competences. In the early times of Czechoslovakia it dealt with security, cultural, economic and other fields. The archival documents originating in its offices can be used for any research purpose in the social sciences. The material of the District Council in the town of Šamorín from the period 1923-1938 has also been preserved in a good state and it provides rich data on the villages in the Šamorín district. Fewer archival documents have been preserved in the District Council in Galanta (1923-1938) and in the District Council in Dunajská Streda. In the first case the damage was caused by the events of the Second World War; in the latter by human carelessness. Rich information and data can be obtained from the sources of the district councils after 1945. They belong to the most frequently searched archival data, providing a picture of post-war Czechoslovakia, of the country's political orientation and aims. These documents reflect social changes since a large part of the material deals with the state's interference into institutions of private property (among others, they document

the persecution of peasants and small entrepreneurs following socialist collectivisation and nationalisation).

In 1990, the Archive took over the material of District Committees of the Slovak Communist Party in Galanta and Dunajská Streda. They complement in interesting ways the documents of the state authorities and at the same time, they reveal the tight links which existed between the party and the organs of the state administration during the socialist period. In 2000, we started with the analyses and the preparation of these materials for wider public access. Presently, the researcher has an unlimited access to the materials originating in the period up to the year 1969. Since at the offices of the committee of the Communist Party documents were regularly discarded, the amount of preserved materials varies from district to district. For example, the most complete material comes from the district of Dunajská Streda due to the reluctance of their employees to discard documents.

The most valuable documents regarding regional history are included in the sources of the notary's offices from the first half of 19th century to 1945 and in the sources of the village municipal offices from 1945 to 1990. These materials reflect the social, cultural and sport activities of the communities in that period. Documents of the school inspectorates and schools also offer interesting information regarding the history of local schools. For space restrictions in our archive, we only keep archival material from the schools of the Dunajská Streda district. The Archive preserves the written material of various clubs, societies, and associations as well as of individuals.³

Author of our most valuable private archival material is Jozef Sellyei Miskovics, a peasant writer who lived in Šaľa in the interwar period. He recorded legends handed down orally from generation to generation in the region. His short-stories reflect the life and popular customs of the Šaľa area in the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century.

This source was donated to the Archive by the writer's family. Some of Miskovics' short-stories, so far almost

unknown to the wider public, had been published in the 1950s.

The District State Archive in Šaľa also offers historians a collection of regional publications, starting from the end of the 19th century. Thanks to the support of the Hungarian Ministry of Cultural Heritage we have successfully recorded a part of the regional press from the 19th century on microfilms. Researchers have access to the collection of postcards as well as photographs which capture moments of life in the region in the period from the last years of the 19th century to the present.

Like in other archives in Slovakia, any interested person, be a Slovak or a foreign citizen, has free access to the material preserved in the Archive. Those who use our facilities are mostly historians of regional history, students, and sometimes history teachers. Archival documents can be examined in the study rooms in Šaľa or in its detached laboratory in Luči na Ostrove. Basic information regarding the archival material can be obtained from the inventories. Those interested also have access to the archival library which is focused on regional history and archival science. The study room of the Archive is open every day from 8.00 to 15.00. Reproduction of documents, whose physical state allows this, is undertaken within the limits of the technical facilities. According to the present law in Slovakia, only documents older than 30 years are accessible to the public and among these only materials which do not contain personal data.

However, it needs to be noted that a new archival law is being prepared and after its approval Slovakia should be ranked immediately after Sweden regarding free access to the archival documents. According to this law all material that does not include personal data should become accessible to the public and the 30 years limit period should be abolished.

The District State Archive in Šaľa presently has ten employees, of whom four have a university degree and five have completed specialised archival education. From 1994, the Archive has organised regularly scheduled thematic exhibitions from the collected documents⁴ and since 1998 we

have also co-organised international conferences. From 1990, the Archive has been also fulfilling a part of the state administration's task, since it provides citizens with copies of archival documents which they use to claim their rights and to demand rehabilitation or restitution of property.

The Archive also co-operates with municipal offices in the area of historical analyses. In recent years our staff acted as co-authors of monographs or smaller publications on the history of Galanta, Šaľa, Kajal, Dolné Saliby, Sered', Trstice and so on. Presently, we are preparing the history of the towns of Šaľa, Sládkovičovo and Vlčany. Among the most successful publications is the overview of historical seals of towns and villages of the Galanta and Šaľa region, which contributed to the revival of the historical symbols of the municipalities in the region.⁵

Unfortunately, our work is hampered by the insufficient technical equipment which stays even behind the Central European average. We lack not only microfilm lines but also modern cameras, computers and internet connection. Therefore, we hope that our conditions will improve after the approval of the new law on state archives.

¹ The town of Šaľa administratively belonged then to the Galanta district.

² Among our serious problems is the insufficient space in our premises. This should be solved by a reconstruction of the main building of the archive in Šaľa, the above mentioned castle, which is a historical cultural protected building, and by a reconstruction of another building in Luči na Ostrove which, too, is a castle from the 18th century.

³ One of the most precious ones is the material of the Kasíno Club, which, as a cultural club, significantly influenced the cultural life of Dunajská Streda and Šaľa districts.

⁴ We normally exhibit the originals of the archival material only in our premises. For exhibitions that we organise at the request of villages and towns on their premises we mainly use copies.

⁵ Municipal heraldic symbols, seals and flags have been reintroduced in Slovakia in 1990.

Appendix 3

The Forum Minority Research Institute

Andrea Lelovics

The Forum Institute, successor to the Forum Foundation and the Katedra Foundation, transformed itself into a non-profit organisation in December 1996. The thinking behind the establishment of Forum Minority Research Institute was to provide proper institutional basis for social science research dealing with ethnic Hungarian and other minorities of Slovakia.

The Institute has actively engaged in the work of Slovak non-profit sector. As the most important of these activities, Forum Minority Research Institute took part in the civil campaign called OK '98, within which it organised the parallel counting of the votes in south of Slovakia during the 1998 parliamentary elections.

The most important field of the Institute's activities, however, is the research and documentation of minority cultures. To pursue this goal, Forum Minority Research Institute called on ethnic Hungarian social science centres to participate in its programs. The Ethnic Hungarian Ethnological Association, the Bibliotheca Hungarica, and the Civitas Foundation joined Forum Minority Research Institute with their programs and library resources.

By 1998, Forum Minority Research Institute had become an organisation with far-reaching connections, high-level organisational skills, respectable professional background; an institute that is capable of ensuring continuous operation.

It had also become clear that the individual professional tasks and activities performed within the non-profit sector had to be organisationally separated within the Institute. Therefore, the Forum Information Centre, dealing primarily with civil training and other services provided for civil sector,

and the Forum Regional Development Centre (formerly the Forum Institute for Public Affairs), dealing with regional development, strategic development, and nation-wide civil campaigns, separated from Forum Institute for Social Studies.

Since 1999, the individual units have operated as a consortium, an association of institutes. The activities of the three units have supplemented each other in the fields of research and documentation, civil training and regional development, and in assuming specific public roles.

This kind of structural framework and division of tasks has proved to be effective, and has determined the work and strategy of Forum Institute.

In 2002, Forum Institute moved its centre to Šamorín. The fields of activities of the three units had further crystallised, so had their names. These are as follows:

Forum Minority Research Institute deals mainly with the research of ethnic minorities living in Slovakia, documentation of minority cultures, establishment and development of specialised libraries and databases, professional training, and transfer of knowledge.

Forum Information Centre specialises in a training of civil organisations, provision of information, consultative assistance, and other related services.

Forum Regional Development Centre takes part in NATO and EU campaigns as well as other campaigns significantly influencing the development of Slovakia's civil sector. Recently, it has become more and more engaged in programs related to the concrete micro-regions; in fact, it is now its main field of activity.

Forum Minority Research Institute

The mission of the Forum Minority Research Institute is to provide high quality research of minorities in Slovakia and to document their culture, written and non-written records.

The Institute realises its activities in its Library, in the research centres and through its education programs.

LIBRARY AND DOCUMENTATION IN THE INSTITUTE

The library of the Institute consists of three libraries:

1. Bibliotheca Hungarica

The library and archives of the Forum Minority Research Institute provides the institutional background for collecting and scientific digesting of materials related to ethnic Hungarians living in Slovakia. Its primary aim is to develop a research centre that, with its information and documentation, can facilitate all kinds of ethnic Hungarian related research.

Bibliotheca Hungarica continuously collects and processes Hungarian print media and other documents released in Slovakia or elsewhere. The new acquisition in 2002 was 1500 volumes, the half of which were published in Slovakia. The library acquired 39 items in its CD-ROM collection too.

Librarians of Bibliotheca Hungarica continuously work on the computerised processing of the collection's bibliographical data. There is detailed inventory, listing the items of the archive that helps the research workers. By the end of 2002 the librarians bibliographically processed 6,483 Hungarian publications released in Slovakia. The entire Bibliotheca Hungarica collection amounts to more than 12,000 volumes.

The library has compiled the repertory comprising 1,809 bibliographical data on the first ten years (1992-2001) of Kalligram, a Hungarian review on literature and arts, published in Slovakia. It also produced a bibliography of the Bibliotheca Hungarica's periodicals published in former Czechoslovakia or in Slovakia; this bibliography gives data on 250 publications.

The archives section Bibliotheca Hungarica has managed to systematise the documents from the record office of the ethnic Hungarian political movement Együttélés (1989-98). This detailed inventory covers the whole collection of documents (10 meters long pack of document, filling 22 archive boxes). Besides, the collection of documents found at the chaplaincy of reformed church in Šamorín was digested. The

collection – 12 packs of documents from the beginning of 17th century to the 1850s, which are interesting from a historical, as well as church-historical viewpoints – is systematised into a register giving 160 detailed descriptions. The processing of the central archives of the cultural heritage organisation of ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia, called Csemadok, is in progress.

The archives of the daily *Új Szó* have been deposited in the archives section, where now the whole collection of *Új Szó* issues can be found from its beginning up to this day.

Bibliotheca Hungarica maintains contacts with other Hungarian libraries, museums, and cultural institutes in Slovakia. It is a co-organiser of professional meetings of Hungarian librarians in Slovakia, the last of which was held within the Kármán Days event in Lučenec, in March 2002. Besides, it is the co-organiser of educational quizzes for secondary school students, and of an annual conference of local historians, the last of which, held in April 2002, commemorated 200th anniversary of Lajos Kossuth's birth.

2. Bibliotheca Interethnica

The mission of the library is to provide a professional background for the study of national minorities for those interested in Slovakia and abroad. This way, the library would like to rationalise the dialogue between the majority and the minorities.

Bibliotheca Interethnica continues the work of the International Library on Ethnic Minority Issues. It collects Slovak and foreign specialised literature on ethnic and national minority issues; information, data and literature on national and ethnic minorities in Slovakia, except the Hungarians in Slovakia.

It now comprises of 1,100 volumes altogether.

3. Bibliotheca Ethnologica

Bibliotheca Ethnologica is the library of the Ethnological Centre of Forum Minority Research Institute in Komárno. It

consists of an ethnographic library, a general Hungarian ethnographic database and the Archives of Sacred Memorials.

RESEARCH CENTRES OF THE INSTITUTE:

1. Centre for Interethnic Researches

Almost 15 percent of all inhabitants of Slovakia belong to national and ethnic minorities. In spite of this fact there is no institution providing complex research on these minorities.

According to the questionnaires used in the official census in 2001 there are 11 national and ethnic minorities in Slovakia. The most populous of them are the Hungarians and the Roma. The position of the Ukrainians, Ruthenians, Germans, Jews, Czechs, Moravians, Croatians and Poles is also significant from the cultural point of view. A new research area in this field is constituted by the immigrant minorities.

The research activities of the Centre for Interethnic Researches concentrates on minority research in general and on the research of smaller ethnic and national minorities in Slovakia. The programmes of the Centre aim the research of topics such as theoretical background of ethnic and national minorities in modern states, legal context of ethnic and national minority rights, interethnic relations and national and ethnic minorities and security policy.

2. Centre for Social Research and Documentation of Hungarians in Slovakia

According to figures of the last census returns released on 26 April 2001, there are 520,528 ethnic Hungarians living in South Slovakia; this accounts for 9.7 percent of Slovakia's population.

Priority in the *Centre for Social Research and Documentation of Hungarians in Slovakia* in the years 2000-2005 is given to the research of Hungarians in Slovakia in the years 1990-2005. The outcomes of the research will be pub-

lished in a series of publications titled "*Magyarok Szlovákiában 1990-2005*" [*Hungarians in Slovakia 1990-2005*].

Main fields of the long-term research programme are:

Institutions and organisations

It is aimed to realise a detailed analysis of the ongoing changes that have taken place within the organisations of Hungarians in Slovakia. This is the area that can influence the preserving of the identity, it is main indicator of the society's capability of self-organisation, and it is a sign of well-organised social life. Since this is a wide-ranging problem, it is necessary to divide the organisations influencing the life of Hungarians in Slovakia into several groups (cultural institutions, institutions dealing with protection of rights, publishing houses and media, and educational institutions).

Property-related structure of Hungarians in Slovakia

Another, less palpable change has taken place in the social and property-related structure of the ethnic Hungarian community. The new situation in property rights relationships caused that the whole structure of the community has altered. This is another research area of the Institute.

Political structure of Hungarians in Slovakia

The political culture of ethnic Hungarians has also experienced some distinct changes. With the start of the political pluralism, Central Europe developed a fairly unique minority pluralism, with all its attributes, that is, dissimilar political trends, various party political philosophies and attitudes, different foreign policy orientations, various value systems, etc.

Legal status of Hungarians in Slovakia

Legal status of Hungarians in Slovakia has also significantly changed. On one hand, the rights of an individual have been fulfilled, on the other, due to the appearance of nationalistic efforts, the space for the fulfilment of collective rights (e.g. usage of minority languages) has contracted. At the same

time, the process of the integration in transatlantic structures forced the Slovak political elite to face completely new challenges. The adopted and/or ratified international agreements are interpreted in various ways, which influences the situation of ethnic Hungarians of Slovakia to a great extent. For this reason it is necessary to pay particular attention to the legal status of the Hungarian minority.

National identity of Hungarians in Slovakia

The national identity of ethnic Hungarians has considerably changed as well. After 1989, the ethnic Hungarian community of Slovakia started to openly identify itself as part of the Hungarian nation. It was, however, in contrast with the political status quo. This resulted in various definitions concerning the status of the ethnic Hungarians, some of which influenced the whole Hungarian community of the Carpathian basin. The minority interpretations of the nation represent a field of research that has not been devoted any attention to. Nor has been analysed the relationship of the identity and the value system; these two are sometimes in harmony, sometimes they are not.

Minority culture and education

It is important to divide the traditional understanding of minority culture and education into two groups. In literature, music, and arts, those values should be discovered that emerged during this period. Further, we should analyse the development of folk (popular) culture integrating such customs and objects that were not typical for the traditional folk/peasant culture of the previous period.

Economic situation in South Slovakia

The question of economics represents a special problem. Restitution, privatisation, and other changes caused the emergence of a new social class even among ethnic Hungarians, which was absolutely unexpected. To gain an insight into the whole process, it is necessary to analyse the regions and their economic indices, since these two factors are measurable only at this level.

Other research areas

Of course, other viewpoints can appear during the research as well; these will have to be taken into consideration too. For this reason, the structure established on the basis of priorities can be changed. The numerous partial questions can enrich, as well as change the plan.

3. Roma Research Centre

Mission of the Roma Research Centre is to contribute to the better information of the Slovak society about Roma in Slovakia; with publication of research outcomes and facts about the life and culture of Roma the Centre aims to weaken prejudices and signs of nationalism. The Centre aims in this way to contribute to the building of tolerant and open society in the Slovak Republic.

Aim of the Centre for the years 2003-2006 are: to summarise and systematise information and knowledge on Roma in Slovakia; to realise research programs and projects on Roma in Slovakia (youth, identity, social situation); to establish an effective network of Slovak and international experts and organisations realising research on Roma and so to ensure the information flow and establishment of partnerships among them.

DATABASES MANAGED BY THE FORUM MINORITY RESEARCH CENTRE

The Forum Minority Research Institute started to develop its Internet databases in 2000. The aim was to create a database that follows the changes in demographic, economic, social, and minority-related data of Slovakia's settlements from 1918 up to this day.

The idea is based on the concept according to which each recordable data can be allocated to a certain settlement and a certain date. Then these data can be, at the relevant levels of administrative regions, summed up, compared, or evaluated.

Processing and chronological arrangement of data concerning Slovakia's 2,800 settlements resulted in a system of relevant data, at micro-regional (associations of individual settlements), regional (public administration units: county, district, etc.), and national levels, enabling us to carry out a temporal or spatial comparison, or other analysis of these data.

The significant changes that have taken place within the settlements for the past 80 years necessitated an introduction of numerous variables. These changes included the changes of settlements' names, their place within public administration, their administrative merger or de-merger, etc. In order to follow all these changes within 2,800 settlements, it was necessary to use as much as 30,000 variables, the encoding of which is still in progress.

The encoding of the changes of settlements is in compliance with the relevant legal regulations.

The database, that is, the list of settlements together with all the related data, when completed, is going to be of great value, since it allows research workers to follow all the changes in the development of settlements. At the same time, collection and processing the particular statistical data of each settlement was also started (population, economic figures, etc.), as well as other specific information obtainable only at the level of a particular settlement (monuments, institutions, municipality, publications, etc.).

At present, 26 various databases are being either established or developed.

Partner institutions of the Forum Minority Research Centre are:

CELODIN – Central European Local Development Information Network

Central European University, Budapest

Comenius University, Faculty of Political Science, Bratislava

COMIR – Consortium of Minority Resources

ELTE, UNESCO Minority Studies Department, Budapest

Forum Information Centre, Šamorín

Forum Public Policy Institute, Šamorín
 Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute for the Study of
 Ethnic-National Minorities, Budapest
 Institute for Public Affairs, Bratislava
 Márai Sándor Foundation, Dunajská Streda
 OSF – Open Society Foundation, Bratislava
 OSI – Open Society Institute, LGI, Budapest
 Selye János University Centre, Komárno
 Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute for Social Sciences,
 Košice
 Teleki László Institute, Budapest
 University of Nitra, Faculty of Political Science and European
 Studies, Nitra

Publications of Forum Minority Research Centre

The research results of the Forum Minority Research Institute are published in the following publications:

Acta Ethnologica Danubiana, the yearbook of the Ethnological Centre, issued in Hungarian, Slovak and other languages (English, German)

Chronology book series

Fontes book series

Fórum Társadalomtudományi Szemle (Forum Social Science Review), Hungarian scientific periodical in Slovakia

Interethnica series

Local and Regional Monographs series

Miscellanea Bibliothecae Hungaricae book series

Nostra Tempora book series

Notitia Historico-Ethnologica book series

Publications 1996-2002

Fontes series

Editor: Sándor Varga

Fedinec, Csilla (2003), *A kárpátaljai magyarság a források tükrében 1918–1944.* (Documents of Hungarians in Sub-Carpathia 1918–1944.) Fontes 1, Fórum inštitút,

Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (320 p.) (in Hungarian).

- Angyal, Béla (2003), *A csehszlovákiai magyar pártpolitika dokumentumokban 1918–1938*. (Documents of Hungarian Political Party Policies in Czechoslovakia 1918–1938.) Fontes 2, Fórum inštitút, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (340 p.) (in Hungarian).
- Végh, László (2004), *Az ötvenes évek*. (The Fifties.) Fontes 3, Fórum inštitút, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (300 p.) (in Hungarian).

Local and Regional Monograph series

Editor: József Liszka

- Viga, Gyula (2000) (ed.), *Kisgéres*. (Malý Horeš.) Lokális és regionális monográfiák 1, Fórum inštitút, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (320 p.) (in Hungarian).
- Juhász, Ilona L. (2002), *Rudna I. Temetkezési szokások és a temetőkultúra változásai a 20. században*. (Rudna I. Funerals in the 20th century.) Lokális és regionális monográfiák 2, Fórum inštitút, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (450 p.) (in Hungarian).
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Miscellanea Bibliothecae Hungaricae series

Editor: László Végh

- Juhász, Ilona L. (1998) (ed.), *Szlovákiai magyar néprajzi bibliográfia (1987–1988)*. (Hungarian Ethnographic Bibliography in Slovakia 1987–1988.) Miscellanea Bibliothecae Hungaricae 1. Fórum inštitút, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (144 p.) (in Hungarian, Slovak and German).

- Juhász, Ilona L. (1999) (ed.), *Szlovákiai magyar néprajzi bibliográfia (1989–1990)*. (Hungarian Ethnographic Bibliography in Slovakia 1989-1990.) *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Hungaricae* 2. Fórum intézet, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (160 p.) (in Hungarian, Slovak and German).
- Juhász, Ilona L. (2000) (ed.), *Szlovákiai magyar néprajzi bibliográfia (1991–1992)*. (Hungarian Ethnographic Bibliography in Slovakia 1991-1992.) *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Hungaricae* 3. Fórum intézet, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (218 p.) (in Hungarian, Slovak and German).
- Juhász, Ilona L. (2000) (ed.), *Szlovákiai magyar néprajzi bibliográfia (1993–1994)*. (Hungarian Ethnographic Bibliography in Slovakia 1993-1994.) *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Hungaricae* 4. Fórum intézet, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (240 p.) (in Hungarian, Slovak and German).
- Végh, László (ed.), *A Bibliotheca Hungarica (cseh)szlovákiai magyar könyvgyűjteményének bibliográfiája (1918–2000). I–II kötet*. (Bibliography of the Bibliotheca Hungarica's Collection of Hungarian Books in (Czecho)Slovakia - 1918-2000, Volume I-II.) *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Hungaricae* 5–6. Fórum intézet, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (818 p.) (in Hungarian).

Nostra Tempora series

Editor: Károly Tóth

- Petőcz, Kálmán (1998), *Választások és felosztások. A demokratikus választási rendszerek alapjai. Közigazgatási felosztások Szlovákia területén*. (Elections and Divisions in Slovakia.) *Nostra Tempora* 1, Fórum intézet, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (218 p.) (in Hungarian).
- Lampl, Zsuzsanna (1999), *Vállalkozások és vállalkozók 1989 után*. (Enterprises and Entrepreneurs after 1989.) *Nostra Tempora* 2, Fórum intézet, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (128 p.) (in Hungarian).

- Tóth, Károly (2001) (ed.), *Ezredforduló. A tudomány jelene és jövője a kisebbségben élő közösségek életében c. konferencia előadásai – 2000. december 7.* (Turn of the Millenium. Presentations of the Millenary Conference held on December 7th, 2000.) Nostra Tempora 3, Fórum inštitút, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (280 p.) (in Hungarian).
- Novák, Veronika (2001) (ed.), *Migrácia.* (Migration.) Nostra Tempora 4, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (194 p.) (in Slovak).
- Novák, Veronika (2001) (ed.), *Migráció a Kisalföldön. A Vágsellyén 2000 szeptember 10-én megtartott konferencia előadásai.* (Migration in Kisalföld. Presentations from the conference organised in September 2000 in Šaľa.) Nostra Tempora 5, Fórum inštitút, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (204 p.) (in Hungarian).
- Angyal, Béla (2002), *Érdekvédelem és önszerveződés. Fejezetek a csehszlovákiai magyar pártpolitika történetéből 1918–1938.* (Safeguarding of Interests and Self-organisation. Chapters from the History of Hungarian Political Parties in Czechoslovakia 1918–1938.) Nostra Tempora 6, Fórum inštitút, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (346 p.) (in Hungarian).
- Fedinec, Csilla (2002), *A kárpátaljai magyarság történeti kronológiája 1918–1944.* (Chronology of History of Hungarians in Sub-Carpathia 1918–1944.) Nostra Tempora 7, Fórum inštitút, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (320 p.) (in Hungarian).
- Lampl, Zsuzsanna (2002), *A szlovákiai magyarok étkezési szokásai.* (Eating Habits of Hungarians in Slovakia.) Nostra Tempora 8, Fórum inštitút, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (190 p.) (in Hungarian).
- Popély, Árpád (2003), *A csehszlovákiai magyarság történeti kronológiája 1944–1993.* (Chronology of History of Hungarians in Czechoslovakia 1944–1993.) Nostra

Tempora 9, Fórum inštitút, Spoločenskovedný ústav,
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Notitia Historico-Ethnologica series

Editor: József Liszka

Liszka, József (1998) (ed.), *Szolgálatban. Folklorisztikai tanulmányok a 70 esztendő's Ág Tibor tiszteletére.* (On Duty. Folkloristic essays in honour of the seventy-year-old Tibor Ág.) Notitia Historico-Ethnologica 1. Fórum inštitút, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (132 p.) (in Hungarian).

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Editor: József Liszka

Bodnár, Mónika (2002), *Etnikai és felekezeti viszonyok a Felső-Bódva völgyében a 20. században.* (Ethnic and Religious Conditions in the Upper Bódva-Valley.) Interethnica 1. Fórum inštitút, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Dunajská Streda: Lilium Aurum (300 p.) (in Hungarian).

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- Botík, Ján (2001), *Slovenskí Chorváti*. (Slovak Croatians.) Fórum inštitút, Spoločenskovedný ústav, Bratislava: Lúč (400 p.) (in Slovak).
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Acta Ethnologica Danubiana – Yearbook of the Ethnological Centre**Editor: József Liszka**

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Epilogue

Frances Pine

Social networks, as the title of this volume suggests, extend across both place and time. In that sense, they are concerned with space, with movement in space, and with those particular and curious points where different groups, peoples, histories and cultures intersect or are contiguous. The relevance and usefulness of the concept have been comprehensively discussed by Profs Giordano and Wallace in the Preface, as has its history and recent application, and there is no need to elaborate on these issues here. Rather, in this Epilogue I would like to consider very briefly what the choice of subjects covered by these papers implies, and what we can learn from it. The papers were first presented at a workshop in a small town in Slovakia. For me it was a fascinating and quite exciting meeting, because it brought together anthropologists and other social scientists from several of the former socialist countries, and they outnumbered their colleagues from western universities. Not only the papers, but the ways in which the papers were presented, the languages used or not used, the problem (in both a practical and a political sense) of translation, and the discussions, often heated, which ensued, all gave clear indications of the strengths on which central and eastern European social scientists can draw, and the challenges which they have to face.

First, the papers all address some aspect of social relations, as they are constructed and change over time, at the interstices of interethnic space, and/or with the fluidity of movement. In this region of central eastern Europe, where the conference took place and in which most of the papers were situated, these three themes are particularly evocative. Here borders have shifted historically, and people, sometimes indeed entire communities, have been moved with them, or have chosen or been forced to move across them. It

has also been a region where borders of empires have been fiercely fought over and jealously guarded. In terms of Slovakia specifically, the picture most non Slovaks have of the country is likely to contain images of the poor and backward half of the nation of Czechoslovakia during the communist period. Since the early 1990s, the country has been better known as the site of deeply problematic interethnic conflicts between Roma and non-Roma and the resultant Roma migrations to the United Kingdom and Canada which drew the attention of the international community of human rights specialists, journalists and social scientists. This is clearly a partial and distorted picture which fails to take account of a far more complex and cosmopolitan past.

This intricate mosaic of past and present, comprising extremes of power and powerlessness and poverty and grandeur, is not just the stuff of popular dreams and lay images of eastern and central Europe; rather, it also forms the backdrop against which many social scientists work and most of the chapters in this volume have been written. Further, the chapters reflect both the current focus in applied social science on issues such as ethnic conflict, human rights, and transnational migration, and the linked but more theoretical emphasis on issues such as structure and agency, loss and trauma, place, space and emotion, and trust. For the anthropology of postsocialism, as indeed for the postsocialist world itself, these problems and preoccupations which dominated the writings of social scientists in the last decade of the millennium had particular pertinence. As the central European countries extricated themselves from the Soviet sphere of power and influence, simultaneously facing the unravelling of boundaries and institutions ensured by the apparatus of the strong centralised state, the vexed questions of identity, borders and nation took on new significance. At some times and in some places these conflicts were more symbolic; at other times, in other places, quite terribly real. Where the great theorists of nationalism in the 1980s and early 90s, such as Gellner and Hobsbawm, had confidently anticipated the decline of European nationalism by the end of

the twentieth century, we were suddenly faced not with its demise but with its remarkably vigorous revival (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1991, 1992; Verdery 1993). As the political borders which separated the east from the west became more open and penetrable, temporary and long term migration from the former socialist countries increased massively. As formerly federated nation states separated amicably or were wrenched apart by civil wars, certain categories of people found themselves transported away from their homes, moved between countries, or "sent back" to countries to which they felt they did not belong (see Stewart 1993; Uherek and Plochová, Kappus, Weinerová this volume).

This is not to imply that there were no movements of people, and no interethnic and international tensions, during the socialist period. There were, of course. But they tended to take different forms, often hidden by the discipline of the intrusive and directive socialist state. Thus, many of the most problematic aspects of postsocialism should be seen not necessarily as something new, but as changing, and certainly far more visible, responses to older issues. On the other hand, it is important to remember, of course, that some of the problems are new, and are very specific responses to the conditions created by the economic restructuring and resultant social uncertainties which marked the first decade after the fall of communism. Finally, and this point cannot be made too often or too strongly, most of the problems and conflicts which are discussed in this volume and elsewhere in the postsocialist literature (Bridger and Pine 1998; Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Hann 2002), are neither confined to the countries of eastern and central Europe, nor the product solely of socialism and its decline. Many are in fact far more symptomatic of global capitalism; this raises the question, which is being asked with increasing frequency by social scientists working in these regions, whether postsocialism is any longer a relevant analytic concept at all. Katherine Verdery, for one, has recently made a persuasive argument for abandoning the term altogether in favour of more politically and geographically encompassing, and less dichotomous, categorisations

such as “postcoldwar” or postcolonial (Verdery 2002). And it is worth noting that the neither title of the present volume, nor that of any individual chapter, refers to postsocialism.

This conference, then, was about central eastern Europe in the late twentieth century certainly; but it was also about historical antecedents, about deeper roots extending into the socialist period and further back. Indeed history is a formative current running just below the surface in nearly all of the chapters, as well as being visible and specifically addressed in several (Torsello, Svašek, Muršič). So, perhaps it would be fair to say that from the title of the volume to the content of each contribution, the first major theme addressed is history, or its linked and equally complicated sibling, time and the problem of temporality.

The next theme is space, and particularly the contested spaces where ethnic differences and other cultural markers of identity and difference are made explicit.

From space, the focus of the volume shifts to movement itself, particularly migration from east to west. Here we are forcibly reminded that the Czech Republic is “the west” to the former Soviet Union’s east (Uherek and Plochová), while at the same time Slovakia (and no doubt the Czech Republic as well) is the east for Roma migrating to western Europe and North America (Weinerová). This focus of space and movement shows us clearly the politicisation of space and, referring back to the previous themes, its temporal nature. Places, like ethnic identities, are relationally defined; in other words, the political and cultural meanings ascribed to them are formed and reformed in relation to those of other, different places. This is an old point, which has long been made by anthropologists (see Barth 1969) but it has particular salience throughout contemporary eastern central Europe. Secondly, the political and cultural nature of specific, bounded places shifts not only over time, but also according to temporal context. Obviously, being Hungarian during the Hapsburg Empire meant something quite different from being an ethnic Hungarian in Czechoslovakia during the socialist period, and both of these something different again from

being an ethnic Hungarian who now has at least some formally recognised rights to social citizenship in Hungary but who is a full citizen of, and resident in, Slovakia. But we must also assume, I think, that at certain critical moments and in certain contexts (i.e. outside a strictly chronological order) being a Hungarian in Slovakia will matter, and will be either emphasised or disguised, while at other times it will be irrelevant. Part of the challenge facing the anthropologist and other social scientists is to make sense of these local practices, and to show how they alter or modify more legalistic definitions of citizenship regimes and rights, or of exclusion and inclusion.

This leads us to the final point I want to make about these papers. They are concerned with change and history, with the problem of time, and with movement and contextual identities. But many of them also have a robust practicality to them. In other words, the authors are not concerned only with the development of new concepts and discourses, but also with the ways in which human agency operates on the ground, in the 'real' world. They show, with concrete ethnography, the significance of race for social networks and food distribution at times of acute shortage (Caldwell), the practical implications of trusting or mistrusting in a small village (Torsello), or the importance of strategies of integration or acculturation in situations of interethnic tension (Árendás). And, in the final section, the papers tie together some of the links between the academic management and organisation of knowledge – the reproduction of knowledge practices – in institutions such as archives and university departments, and the research problematics and practices which these both generate and respond to in times of acute social and political change (Šutaj, Nováková, Lelovics).

Ultimately, what this volume of papers does is take us on a journey which begins in the realm of theory, and travels through a particular landscape and time: eastern central Europe and its regional and global networks, in the decade after the end communism (but taking into account the cumulative effect of varied and often conflicting pasts). On the way,

as good travellers and explorers do, the authors sketch out for us particular narratives and landscapes. Overall, these combine to provide us with some greater insight into both local knowledge and practice, and the institutional and policy-generating structures which at times constrain and at times are subverted by local agency.

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Davide Torsello, Melinda Pappová
SOCIAL NETWORKS IN MOVEMENT.
TIME, INTERACTION AND INTERETHNIC SPACES
IN CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPE

NOSTRA TEMPORA 8

First edition

General editor: Károly Tóth

Cover: Gábor Matús

Production: Kalligram Typography, Nové Zámky

Published by: Lilium Aurum, Dunajská Streda

Print: Expressprint, Bánovce nad Bebravou

Dunajská Streda, 2003

ISBN 80-8062-179-9