

WORKSHOP

PEASANT ETHNIC MIGRATION FROM A POST-COMMUNIST SOCIETY TO ANOTHER – The Case of the Csángó Migrants from Moldavia (Romania) to Hungary

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Abstract: The object of this essay is to understand how the ethnic Csángó's migratory process develops since the fall of the Romanian communist regime. To do so, we will first present an overview of the major processes that affected the Csángó's culture, identity and way of life: the building of the Romanian nation-state and the communist modernization of Romania. Starting from a theoretical proposal based on an ecological model of migration, we expose the importance that culture and social networks of exchange have in the migratory process of this group.

Keywords: ethnicity, identity, worker migration, social networks.

WHO ARE THE CSÁNGÓS?

The Csángós are an ancient ethnic group from Romania who live in a few villages in the region of Moldavia along the Oituz, Trotus/Tatras, Tazlau/Tazlo and the Siret/Szeret rivers (Benda 2002), among them are Pustiana/Pusztina, Klézse/Cleja, Somosa/Somska and a few urban centers such as Bacau and Onyest (Bartha 1998). They are “one of the most enigmatic minorities in Europe – a relic of the Middle Ages – since they conserve traditional agriculture methods, beliefs, mythology and the most archaic dialect of the Hungarian language” (Bohus 2005: 10). “Beyond the maximum figure of 260,000 which corresponds only to the Catholic population of the area, only 60,000 to 70,000 people speak today the Csángó dialect. In the most recent official survey, just fewer than 3,000 people identified themselves as Csángós (Isohookana-Asunmaa 2001: 5).

**THE BUILDING OF THE NATION *VERSUS* CONTINUITY
OF ETHNICITY IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES: CSÁNGÓ
ETHNIC IDENTITY**

Before describing the phenomenon of migration of this ethnic group we would like to present two processes that affected their culture, identity and way of life. The first of these was the building of the Romanian nation-state, to which the Csángós were integrated. The second was the industrialization process undertaken by the communist regime.

Since the Csángós live east of the Carpathians they played no part in the historical movements which took place in the first half of the 19th century when the modern nation of Hungary was formed (such as the reforms of the language, political and cultural movements of the “Era of Reform” and the 1848 War of Independence). Because of this, the most important factors for their integration neither to Hungary, nor to Romania were absent (Bohus 2005: 13).

Because no ecclesiastic or secular elite of intellectuals or institutions arose in Moldavia to promote the building of a nation based on its culture, values and myths, it was the Catholic Church that guided the people in respect to ways of life and world view. The Church became the center of their cosmology. Religion and language were factors of cohesion for Csángó communities (Benda 2002: 33).

On the other hand the Csángós “sense of ethnic identity” did not include the acquisition of a Hungarian “national consciousness”. The formation of their identity was similar to that of other minorities in the Balkans and Eastern Europe. Geographic distance from Hungarian ethnic majority groups such as Magyars and Székelys, the lack of literacy in their own language, the absence of an intellectual class of their own, the social stigma due to having an ethnic identity and the influence of the Church are factors that contributed to the formation of a different identity containing elements of the two “national cultures”. The former explains the fact that among the Csángós no clear national consciousness emerged. Because of this, Kápaló considers that the term “ethnicity” is most appropriate for defining this minority group which identifies itself by sharing ethno-cultural and linguistic qualities and characteristics permitting an autonomous expression of their identity. Likewise, the relationships which they have established with neighboring groups, especially with the Romanian majority, constitute a relevant aspect of the confirmation of their identity. (Kápaló 1996: 13)

The concept of ethnic frontiers developed by Barth (1976) is retaken by Kápaló (Ibid.) to demonstrate that the Csángós constituted a “differentiated ethnic unit”. The limits which define them are not found in the cultural qualities they share with Hungarians or Romanians, but with the inter-group relationships characterized by an uneven balance of power in their neighbors’ favor and the ethnic stigmatization on the part of the Romanian community where they live, as well as the differences they feel from the Hungarian nation. That is to say the degree to which they organize as an ethnic unit is conditioned by local circumstances. Furthermore, their neighbors identify them as a different ethnicity while they self-identify as CSÁNGÓS.

THE NATION

The Csángós are Romanian citizens and as such they are inserted in the Romanian nation. To understand that, it is necessary to explain the process by which the Romanian state was built over an extensive territory populated by a great mass of peasants who spoke the Romanian tongue and followed the orthodox religion. Nationalism was the dominant ideology. In this territory were also found various ancient ethnic communities such as Saxons (Germans), Hungarian-Magyars, Jews, Gypsies and Csángó communities of Moldavia.

At the end of the 19th century, the princedoms of Moldavia and Wallachia were integrated in what is known as Old Romania. In 1918, after the constitution of Great Romania parts of Bucovina (Austro-Hungarian Empire), Transylvania (Hungary) and Bessarabia (Russia) were incorporated. The phrase “It is the State that makes the nation and not the nation that makes the State” (Hobsbawm 1991: 53) is quite illustrative of the state-directed integration of the Romanian nation. Already in the mid 19th century a homogenization of “Romanian national culture” had been initiated. The state in Old Romania introduced compulsory military service and Romanian was made the national language. This was reinforced by the introduction of a hegemonic educational system with Romanian language and culture as its base (Livezeanu 1995). In the decades following the founding of the modern Romanian state a great number of elementary schools were set up throughout the whole nation. In Csángó villages Romanian was introduced as the official language by imposing it on schools and by forbidding the use of Hungarian in public places, such as churches. Though schools were built in the entire country, the educational system was very limited in Csángó towns (Bohus 2005: 16). Since they were not taught to read or write in their own language, low levels of literacy were found. Because of this transmission of the Csángó language was left to the women who remained in the villages and kept up the language as part of their “intimate culture” at home. The assimilation project included the substitution of Csángó-Hungarian last names by Romanian ones (Vincze 2002: 53–59; Tánczos 2002: 125–138).

The Romanian government utilized the support of the Catholic Church to assimilate the Csángós, as Hungarian-speaking priests were replaced with Romanian speaking ones. Their participation was crucial in achieving the linguistic and part of their mythical assimilation as some traditional Csángó saints were abolished. Paradoxically, however, the strong identification of Csángós with the Catholic faith influenced the retention of their own identity. The Church pushed them to be Romanians but did not allow them to become Orthodox, and so the Csángós maintained their Catholic identity. Of their two principal identifying characteristics they retained religion but not always the language. This explains why some Csángó villages stopped speaking their language and became Romanian-speaking Catholics.

THE MODERNIZATION PROCESS DURING THE COMMUNIST YEARS

After the First World War, Great Romania arose of which Moldavia was a part. The Csángós, along with most Romanians, remained peasants organized in small rural communities with a traditional way of life and a specific culture. Their society retained the small family unit as the basic brick of social and economic organization. Traditional agriculture remained the basic form of subsistence and they still occupied a low social position which subjected them to exploitation by other classes (Slujukic 2001: 173–174). It was not until the mid-twentieth century that their social structure began to experience changes as remote communities were reached by the modernization process which increasingly incorporated part of the population into a working class.

Beginning with the institution of the communist system in 1948, the primarily agricultural Romanian society began the tumultuous process of modernization. The communist system faced the traditional realities of small, fragmented property, of subsistence production and primitive and obsolete technologies. With the intention of creating a modern agricultural system to use as a base for the industrialization that the nation needed, reform was carried out through the expropriation of large properties, their redistribution and the collectivization of peasants' land (Ibid: 182–183). Planned economy transformed rural areas and their towns into Agricultural Production Cooperatives (APC), private property was abolished and land commons (forests and pastures) were retained as such. Families continued farming the lands that had been theirs, but the harvests were centralized and redistributed among them all. Instead of the whole of their product, only a part determined by the Central Committee went back to the peasants. The rest was taken by the state and distributed in other parts of the country.

In the first half of the 1970s, cooperatives were merged with large agro-industrial companies as suppliers of raw materials. Simultaneously, both private peasant agriculture and the peasantry as a social class were suppressed (Ibid:186).

In this regime, the Csángós were consigned to the lowest economic position and they were marginalized from the power structure and the state's bureaucratic apparatus. The directors of the collectives had to be members of the communist party and they generally had a higher level of education than that of the rest of the community. The authority was vested in a Central Committee made up by a *secretary* and securitate policeman, both usually Rumanians. It should be pointed out that this group had greater power and prestige due to pervasive nationalism.

In this way, the urban centers were turned into industrial zones. Despite strong restrictive policies, a rural-urban migratory flow was generated by new generations which had to leave their villages to incorporate themselves into industrial centers since collective farms could not absorb them (Stanculescu et. al. 2001: 11). Migrants were recruited as workers, although many adolescents continued studying at the technical schools which the state had established. In the area we are interested in, the zones of Bacau and Onyest, not only industries but also some oil fields had been opened. Thus, the standards of living began to diverge between the countryside and the city. The rural

population decreased between 1977 and 1990 from 56 to 46% (Ibid). A great number of Csángó men left to go work in industrial cities and in factories far from their villages, in a strongly Romanian environment which fomented the change of identity.

Nationalism, policies which segregated minorities and forced modernization implemented by the regime, profoundly changed the Csángó communities. Gradually other ways of life emerged: a new class of agrarian workers and rural-urban migratory flows. Nevertheless, these changes lasted until the end of the communist regime when the national economy was again privatized.

THEORIES OF MIGRATION

Two major approaches to the migration problem have been dominant in the field of sociology; 1) *historical and functional structuralism* and 2) the *modernization* approach represented mainly by North American sociologists. The structuralist approach emphasizes aspects of social change. This has been particularly applied in the framework of Latin America's economic dependence on power centers. In Latin America the pattern of dependence between nations tends to be duplicated within each Latin American country; Thus, large cities represent secondary centers of domination with respect to the countryside and it is a symptom of the imbalance that has been introduced into the traditional economic structure of the region by a process of industrialization (Arango 2003; Arizpe 1978; Castles and Miller 1993; Herrera 2006; Adler-Lomnitz 1977; Muñoz et al. 1972)

Against this large-scale backdrop of historical development of socioeconomic structures one can find a number of studies concerned with the motivations of migrants, construction of typologies and models, social mobility, social problem analysis, acculturation and the problems of decision-making and adaptation to the urban environment. These studies have become collectively known in Latin America as the "modernization" school. Most research is centered on the individual as the unit of analysis. This approach is reflected in the use of variables such as attitude, motivations, aspirations and similar psychological concepts.

In 1993, Massey et. al., wrote a review paper covering the last decades of theoretical developments: "At present there is no single, coherent theory of international migration, only a fragmented set of theories that have developed in isolation from one another, sometimes but not always by disciplinary boundaries. Current, patterns, and trends in immigration, however, suggest that a full understanding of contemporary migratory processes will not be achieved by relying on the tool of one discipline alone or by focusing on a single level of analysis. Rather, their complex, multifaceted nature requires a sophisticated theory that incorporates a variety of perspectives, levels and assumptions" (Ibid, 1993: 432).

He continues by analyzing different contemporary theories of international migration comparing and constructing the different conceptual frameworks to reveal areas of logical inconsistency and substantive disagreement. "In undertaking this exercise we seek to provide a sound basis for evaluating the models empirically and to lay the groundwork for constructing an accurate and comprehensive theory of

international migration...” (Ibid: 432). Among the theories discussed, we find neoclassical economics at the macro and micro levels which simply putting it relates international migration to geographical differences in supply and demand for labor. While neoclassical economics micro theories relate to individual choice, individual rational actors decide to migrate as a result of benefit calculation (Ibid: 433–434).

Massey continues discussing the new trend known as the “new economics of migrations”, as one challenging many of the assumptions of the neoclassical theory. A key insight of this new approach is that migration decisions are not made by isolated individual actors but by larger units of related people, typically families or households in which people act collectively not only to maximize expected income, but also to minimize risks associated with the variety of market fails (Ibid: 439).

On the whole, however, it seems that the three views address themselves not only to different levels of analysis but are all related to the economic aspects of migration: Whereas the historical structuralists discuss the macro social factors involved in the origins of large-scale migration process, modernizationists study the migration problem at the scale of the individual migrant and the new economics adds other propositions than those emanating from the previous ones such as family, households and other culturally defined units of production and consumption.

The theoretical model growing out of the “new economics” of migration yields a set of propositions and hypotheses from those emanating from the neoclassical theory. Family, households, or other culturally defined units of production and consumption are the appropriate units of analysis for migration research, not the autonomous individual. A wage differential is not a necessary condition for international migration to occur; households may have strong incentives to diversify risks to transnational movements.

A different view known as the “world system theory” started by Wallerstein (1974) does not talk about the dualism of the labor market within particular national economics, but to the structure of the world market that has developed since the 16th century. In this scheme the penetration of capitalist economic relations into peripheral non-capitalist societies creates a mobile population that is prone to migrate. International migration ultimately has little to do with wage rates or employment differentials between countries; it follows from the dynamics of market creation and the structure of the global economy.

Finally, Massey talks about the perpetuation of international movements through networks, the development of migrant-supporting institutions, the process of cumulative causation and the development of a culture of migration (Ibid: 451–452). He concludes that the various explanations proposed by the different theories are not necessarily contradictory: “rather than adopting the narrow argument of theoretical exclusivity they adopt the broader position that causal processes relevant to international migration might operate on multiple levels simultaneously, and that sorting out which of the explanations are useful is an empirical and not only a logical task. Each model must be considered on its own terms and its leading tenets examined carefully to derive testable propositions.”(Ibid: 455) In this sense Herrera (2006) in his book on theoretical perspectives on the study of migration asserts that even today scholars studying migration have not achieved a systematic organization of their

knowledge. On the contrary, clear tendencies exist in doing isolated research. "...studies on migration...are influenced by a current of epistemological pragmatism not so much interested in the formulation and search of theoretical contributions of general use, but the sum of fragments and statistical correlations without any previously determined ends...the theoretical instrumental fragmentarily taken from different schools of thought, have not had as an end to construct a general theory of migration" (2006: 201–202) [the author's translation].

NETWORK THEORY

From the anthropological literature network analysis appeared several decades before the new economic migration theories. Social networks present intermediary social structures, such as groups, quasi-groups and social networks (Mitchell 1969; Adler-Lomnitz 1977; Wolfe 1970). This approach, applied to migration, aimed two kinds of results: 1) providing a better understanding of the social mechanisms that promote and facilitate the migration process; and 2) bridging the gulf between macro (historical structuralist) and micro levels of analysis (modernizationists) by providing an intermediary level of analysis. "Individuals do not make decisions in a vacuum or as abstract members of a socio economic category, but as a result of their interaction with others ...the concept of social network represents a microstructure, a middle range level of abstraction situated between the large scale social structure and the individual" (Wolfe 1970: 227). In his paper Massey also conceives network theory as important: "migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin ...network connections constitute a form of social capital that people can draw upon to gain access to foreign employment" (Massey et al. 1993: 448). Here we are dealing with social capital disconnected to the socio-cultural systems of origin and destination (Castles and Miller 1993; Herrera 2006).

Social networks stand out as being the primordial base for the development of the migratory process. For example, both in the stages of transfer and adaptation, the existence and the formation of social networks constitutes an inseparable element of the creation and flow of migratory movements in contemporary societies. Besides the intrinsic importance of networks in migration, methodologically speaking, their study give us essential advantages for studying complex phenomena such as the one we are dealing with. The study of social networks in migration allows us to understand the mechanisms joining macro-social variables and individual motives, placing the focus on the social interactions by observing an intermediate place between the social structure and the individual (Adler-Lomnitz 1977: 48–58). Our analytical stance is interested in the ways by which social groups develop mechanisms of adaptation incorporated into their social relationships to achieve survival as a group changes its environment.

THE ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF THE MIGRATION PROCESS

In accordance with ideas developed in previous works, Adler-Lomnitz has proposed to analyze the migratory phenomenon as a process of geographical movements by human populations from one ecological niche to another. The analysis of migration through the perspective of human ecology is concerned with the study of the process of spatial-temporal adaptations by human societies to specific environments. These processes are found embedded in a complex system of physical, economic, political, social and cultural factors which make up the human ecological system (ecosystem) of a determined region. (Adler-Lomnitz 1977: 38–40)

We do not intend to propose a theory of migration, but rather a conceptual framework and a methodology that may be useful in describing the migration process through the inclusion of data from different disciplines and analysis of different levels of generality. Human ecology is a branch of anthropology that deals with the adaptation of human societies to the natural environment. Every population has to adapt to its physical environment in its attempt to fit biological needs to specific requirements of the ecological niche it happens to occupy. In addition every social group is a culture bearer. As such it must develop adaptive mechanisms that become incorporated in its set of social relations to ensure the survival of the group by means of orderly, regular, and predictable patterns of competition and cooperation. Economy, culture, and social structure are important parts of the ecological system in a human population (Cohen 1968: 1–2).

The migratory process is analyzed in three stages: A) *Disequilibrium*: In this phase we study the disturbances to the original ecosystem and their effects on different regional and occupational sectors. Disequilibrium is studied in two parts: 1) factors of expulsion or rejection (push) and 2) factors of attraction (pull). B) *Transfer*: refers to the study of mobilization of human groups and their transfer from one ecological niche to another, and C) *Stabilization*: The stage of stabilization involves the return to the state of ecological balance that is an adaptation of the migrant group to its new ecological niche (Adler-Lomnitz 1977: 29). Stabilization takes place in three phases as follows:

1. As a migrant is incorporated in its new ecological niche a sequence of adaptive processes is triggered. This process depends largely on the mode of integration (from assimilation to rejection) achieved by the migrant in the new milieu.

2. Interaction: The migration process brings changes in the new ecological niche: social and ethnic conflict, marginalization, introduction of new technologies and so on. These changes are not limited to the human component of the ecosystem but may refer to alteration of the environment, new patterns of land views, changes in residential patterns, the saturation of the services and facilities.

3. Feedback: The migration process affects the original ecological niche of migrants, not merely by depleting it but also by modifying the imbalance that originated the process. If the new ecological niche is satisfactory from the standpoint of survival and development of the migrant group, these pieces of information may reinforce the incentive for new groups to migrate. On the other hand, the economic contributions from successful migrants may channel new resources in to the original

ecological niche and thus help stabilize the situation at least temporarily (Adler-Lomnitz Ibid: 38–40).

In this paper we will apply this ecological model to the case study of Csángó migration to the EU.

CSÁNGÓ MIGRATION TO HUNGARY AFTER THE FALL OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME

The fieldwork for this study was done by Adler-Lomnitz from January to July 2003, in Budapest. Her intention was to study the informal economy of a post-communist country. After discussing it with different academicians, she began to follow two paths: on one side, the process of privatization of state industries and the informal transactions involved on it (Adler-Lomnitz and Sheinbaum 2004), and on the other, the study of Romanian Csángó migrants working in the informal sector. During her stay in Hungary and my trip to Moldavia (Romania) she interviewed around 35 Cs, she visited some of their homes, interviewed other people that had had contact with them and finally she visited the area and the village where most of her interviewees had come from. She also searched for literature in English and French, as her knowledge of Hungarian was nil.

STAGE OF IMBALANCE AT THE PLACE OF ORIGIN

In order to relate the ecological model with the analysis of Csángós' ethnic migration from Moldavia (Romania) to Hungary, it is necessary to describe why Romania has developed into one of the Eastern European nations that has sent most migrants to Western Europe since the fall of communism in 1989 (Lazaroiu 2003). We shall see how economic crisis, political changes and ethnic discrimination of the Csángó population are factors of the imbalance that has encouraged people to migrate.

“Ethnic factors have also been instrumental in bringing numerous immigrants into the region. Owing to the post-1945 boundary changes and other political factors, many people find themselves as minorities in their own homelands and were thus highly motivated to emigrated. Until 1990 they were effectively prevented from moving to their “titular motherlands” ...the case of Romanians of Hungarian origin who migrated in large numbers to Hungary in 1989 and 1990, also suggest the existence of decisive push factors such as deplorable and deteriorating living conditions and a highly unstable political situation.” (Okólski 2004: 51)

More than a decade before the fall of the communist regime, the Romanian economy was already showing signs of stagnation and crisis. The policies taken by the government then, accentuated rather than eliminated these problems generating a strong impact and a great social discontentment in the population (Marcu 2003: 6). At

the fall of communism and during transition the economic crisis intensified. After 15 years of privatization as a strategy to revitalize the economy, the results were far from satisfactory due first of all to the difficulties in attracting foreign investment and to the lack of a coherent strategy for privatization (Stanculescu et. al. 2001: 9). The population's standard of living continued falling with an inflation at 160%, unemployment at 11.8% in 1992, and a steep increase in poverty was evident. In the mid-1990s, 8% of the Rumanian population lived below the poverty line, and by 1998 that figure was at 12%. In rural zones the figure rose to 16% (Ibid, 2001: 10; Rosu 2002: 9).

During transition the economic changes generated a process of de-industrialization and a significant return to subsistence farming (Ibid, 2001: 8). Like it did in other developing countries, this process was characterized by a rapid privatization of public industries, bankruptcy of companies, flexible work, low quality jobs or underemployment and high rates of unemployment.

In the Romanian countryside peasant cooperatives were spontaneously dismantled by the agricultural workers and their land were distributed among the original owners. The political parties that appeared, declared themselves to be against cooperatives, and in 1991 the Romanian government formalized that action and promoted a law that terminated all collective structures and began the distribution of land among the former members of the cooperatives. A dual system emerged: an agrarian sector of small subsistence-oriented properties (60%) entirely disconnected from the market, and a sector of agricultural producers oriented towards the market and agro-business. Therefore, the majority of the Romanian countryside returned to subsistence and low productivity agriculture (Slujukic 2001: 201). In 1990 once the collectives were eliminated, many men who had been recruited to work in new industrial endeavors, returned to their villages to work in agriculture, turning the countryside into a place of attraction, which was an unprecedented change.

The urban-rural migration went from 3.5% in 1990 to 28.4% of total migration in 1998 (Stanculescu et al. 2001: 11). Nevertheless, the countryside was not able to absorb the old migrants, which resulted in an increase of unemployment, poverty and informality both in urban areas and in the countryside. These led young people (men and women) to seek employment opportunities outside the country. In this context we find that young Csángós opted first of all to seek their fortunes in Hungary, a country which in their imagination represented a "return to home". In this way, together with the "flexibilization" of borders, a new migratory process began.

On its own side, the nationalistic policies of the Romanian state continued. Discrimination and rejection by Romanian authorities was another push factor in the Csángó case. Those who openly expressed their ethnic identity were harassed and persecuted by the police and functionaries of national security (Vincze 2002: 71). Many informants said that the secret police (securitate) interrogated family members and entered homes to see if they listened to Hungarian radio. Some families at this time began sending their children to study in Transylvania and then to Hungary out of fear of persecution by the Romanian police. Many of them, students and professionals, settled finally in Hungary. The majority of migrants interviewed expressed that their migration was fundamentally motivated: to obtain work since the family property was

not big enough to satisfy their needs and those of their new families. Most of them mentioned also the linguistic discrimination they had experienced. According to an urban Csángó from Onyesti, Csángós left their villages for three reasons: “for a sense of adventure, to earn money to construct or modernize their homes and professionals like himself to progress in their profession as in the villages there were no possibilities.” And he added that Gypsies migrated to steal. He complained that abroad people thought that all Romanians were gypsies and thieves, he also added that there was no work in Romania and that the economy of peasant subsistence did not allow them to earn money to buy articles such as radios, TV, modern clothing, Coca Cola, etc. “There is a lot to buy with cash and no place to earn money. Since the borders were opened at the death of Ceausescu, people started to leave the country to work. That is why there are so many Romanians working abroad.”

FACTORS OF ATTRACTION

After 1990, with the lifting of obstacles imposed during the communist regime, Romanian migration to Europe diversified into: *migration for good*, ethnic migration, student mobility, temporary labor migration, business migration and transitory migration from ex-communist countries towards the west. Among the migratory flows towards the exterior, labor migration stands out as the principal motive that led Romanians to leave their country. Hungary, Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Israel became important places of attraction (Stanculescu et al. 2001). The closeness to Hungary and to Moldavia and the relative ease to travel back allowed migrants to become what Okólski (2004: 44) termed as *incomplete migration*, meaning irregularity of status in the country of destination and maintenance of steady contacts with people and home. The existence of networks formed during the repatriation policies of Germans and Jews during the communist regime and networks created by the Catholic Church and by founding members of the FIDESZ party facilitated migrants’ decision to transfer to Hungary, Germany, Israel, and later on to European Catholic countries. Such was the case of Saxon migrants from communities such as Sibiu, Brasov and Timis to Germany. Israel received Romanian Jews and Romanian guest workers (incomplete migrants) from the east and southeast of the country, especially from Moldavia, and France received people from the northeast, especially the inhabitants of the counties of Maramures (Lazaroiu 2003).

In the specific case of ethnic Csángós, the major destination is Hungary, but also Israel, Italy and Spain. During the fieldwork carried out in Hungary and Romania by Adler-Lomnitz in 2003, it was observable that ethnic identity and the culture of the Csángós had played a preponderant role in their decision to migrate there.

A second factor stimulating migration was the formation and activities of Hungarian social organizations. During Ceausescu’s regime, Domokos Pál Péter, a Székely professor of ethnography, in 1985, did a study on the fringe of Csángó villages which spoke Hungarian (found between the Prut and Seret rivers) describing their customs, habits and language. Some students from Budapest, later on active in the formation of the FIDESZ party, had read Domokos’ study and they went out to see

these villages years before the fall of the communist regime. In Pustiana/Pusztina they met people with whom they kept in contact when they returned to Hungary. Eventually, a woman from Pustiana/Pusztina married one of these students and became one of the first Csángós to arrive in Hungary before transition and she helped people of her village to migrate and settle in Budapest. Thus was created one of the first Csángó networks in Hungary.

In 1998, a shift in Hungarian national politics that was favorable to Csángó migration occurred. FIDESZ won the elections in Hungary. They supported cultural policies aimed to discover and preserve Hungarian groups settled outside the country; among them Csángós. This period (1998–2002) was favorable to the process of popularization of Csángós culture in Hungary. The government established a department of Hungarian minorities abroad within the Ministry of Culture which financed several festivals of Csángó music and folklore, and organized events to show the culture of this ethnic group. The majority of migrants settled in Budapest and interviewed by Adler-Lomnitz arrived during that period.

Csángó identity was another factor of attraction. Although they were marginalized from Hungary's process of nation-building, they paradoxically symbolize the origins of Hungarian identity, as they were considered original migrants from the East who remained on the road to Hungarian final settlement. This case is similar to that of Mexico's indigenous populations which occupy a low place in the social stratification and yet symbolically represent the origins of the nation (Friedlander 1975).

Insofar as the factors leading to Csángós' temporary labor migration to Israel is concerned, the antecedents are found in the former existence of various villages of Romanian Jews in Moldavia between the Middle Ages and the Second World War, the time when the majority of the Jewish population was exterminated. After the war, Ceausescu's government allowed the remaining population to migrate to Israel in exchange for a per-person payment. Thus, when Israel required temporary labor for construction work in the 70s and 90s, Israeli engineers of Romanian background began to hire workers from Moldavia, some Csángós among them. The relationships they established lasted and became permanent bridges between certain Csángó villages and the Israeli labor market.

The migration of Csángós to Italy came about through a connection existing since the communist years between Italy and Moldavia, the place where most of Romanian shoe and textile industries were situated. With the collapse of centralized economy these businesses fell until Italian capital was invested in the region to take advantage of the cheap labor and high technical qualifications of the workers. Thanks to the establishment of Italian businesses, little by little social networks were formed, linking the regions of Moldavia and Italy and facilitating future migrations to that country. That migration was encouraged by relationships established through organizations associated to the Catholic Church.

TRANSFER

As we have seen in the specific case of Pustiana/Pusztina, the young woman who married a Hungarian and settled in that country, helped her relatives and friends to cross the border and join her in Budapest. When the borders were loosened, most migrants with Romanian passports got tourist visas and so they went by train to Budapest. When they would return on vacation to their town, their friends would receive them to hear about their experiences. They often asked for more details or even if they could help them to migrate. Upon returning to Hungary, the migrants would find out with their boss if there was any work for their friends and if there was a place where they could live. Depending on the degree of trust/closeness, migrants began to arrive at the homes of friends and relatives, sometimes unannounced.

When someone migrates, they do so knowing that some friend or relative is waiting for them at the destination. They had to have “an address” ready to provide them with a place to stay and, if possible, to help them in obtaining employment. Furthermore, when the economic situation of the new arrival is unfavorable, money loans are commonly offered by their countrymen. Another possibility presents itself when the people who wish to migrate go to the church in their town to get contacts that may help them on their arrival in Hungary. All these networks help migrants to move to their place of destination.

In general Csángós who migrate for work do so legally, obtaining tourist visas which allow them to cross the border and remain in the new country until they obtain a worker permit. These permits are difficult to obtain however, and so migrants become illegal as soon as they begin to develop some economic activity. Others migrate illegally, avoiding migration checkpoints or getting false papers. Although these forms of migration have been more or less common with the Csángós, the majority of them today would prefer to obtain legal residence permits to avoid deportation and so to insure greater economic stability and security in their lives. Nevertheless, aside from people who have more education and have permanently settled in Hungary, the majority of migrants who work in the informal sector build their houses in the villages, they practice circular migration and state their intention of returning to their hometowns. One interviewee says that in Hungary “one works as hard as in his village in Moldavia, but if one wants to build a house one does not earn enough, and so they migrate to make money and build it” (a case for incomplete migration).

STABILIZATION STAGE: SETTLING

The number of Csángós in Budapest, according to various informants, fluctuates between 3000 and 5000 people. As was explained before, single migrants, or those who did not bring their families, install themselves in places occupied by those who came before. In some cases these residences may house between 10 to 15 people, and if a new person arrives and there is no room, another similar place is recommended to them. “Here they gather together in the church, at friends’ houses and they always think of returning to their town”.

In a second stage, the migrants who have acquired a permanent and better paid job return to their villages for their wives and children if they have them, and they rent modest residences. Such is the case of a couple (33 to 35 year-old) who live in a slum with a central patio surrounded by four rooms. The couple rents two of them, the third is rented by a single Csángó who was about to return to his town in Moldavia to get married and he planned on bringing his young bride to live with him there. In the last room a Hungarian family lives. In the first case, the woman was the first to migrate, arrived at a church to work as a cook for a priest. She still works there. Later on the man arrived and they got married and have two children. The husband worked as an electrician in several places until a Csángó countryman took him to a factory to work and got him a working permit good for one year. That way he worked for eight years. Later on he went to Italy for two months as a temporary worker in a workshop that repaired antique furniture. He returned to Budapest because he missed his family. Today he works for a small Hungarian businessman who installs sound systems for parties. The couple owns a Honda van and they bought a piece of land in their hometown in Moldavia where their parents live and where they plan to retire. This same interviewee said that the Csángós help each other get work, housing, and deal with emergencies. For example, a friend of the family died recently in an accident and he went to claim the body. He says that all his friends are Csángós because “when you are young is when you make friends. One man cannot have more than three or four close friends and these are made in childhood and can be trusted”. He says he has good work companions who are not Csángós “but true friends are always Csángós”. When asked if he considered himself Romanian or Hungarian, he said definitely that he was a Csángó.

THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

According to Portes and Haller definitions of the informal economy centered on four paradoxes: “the social underpinnings of the informal economy; its ambiguous relationship with state regulations, its elusiveness and its functionality for the economy and political institutions that it supposedly undermines” (2005: 403–425). Feige (as quoted by Portes and Haller Ibid: 404) sees that the proper scope of the term informal sector encompasses “those actions of economic agents that fail to adhere to the established institutional rules or are denied their protection”(Feige 1990: 990). He proposes taxonomy based on the institutional rules that go unobserved by particular economic activities under the umbrella term underground economy. He distinguishes four sub-forms: 1) *Illegal economy* which includes the production and distribution of legally prohibited goods and services which Castells and Portes (1989) name criminal economy, distinguishing it from the informal economy whose product is legal but its distribution is not. 2) *The unreported economy* consisting of actions that circumvent or evade established fiscal rules as codified in the tax code. 3) *The unrecorded economy* and 4) *the informal economy* which comprise economic activities that bypass the cost of and are excluded from the protection of laws and administrative rules covering “property relationships, commercial licensing, labor contracts, torts, financial credit,

and social security systems” (Feige 1990: 992). Castells and Portes (1989) distinguished three categories: formal, informal and illegal activities. On the other hand Sik defines the informal economy as unregistered because it emphasizes “the invisibility of the transactions for statisticians and economists” (Sik 1995: 9). The working definition of the unregistered economy includes all transactions not registered by the state authority, or economic activities and transactions which take place outside the state sector that is legal versus illegal. In the time of socialism these activities were known as “second economy”. The volume of the unregistered economy in the eighties was large but had not been really quantified, although by 1992 it reached about 27% of the official GDP (Tóth and Sik 2002: 219).

We will use this definition related to bypassing legal regulations to deal with Csángós migrants in Hungary, as we did not find in our fieldwork Csángós involved in criminal activities. Most informants insisted on not being confused with Gypsies who occupy the lowest level in Hungarian society. Most Csángós work in construction and other informal employment, earning lower wages than the native workers, and having no social security. In Budapest there is a place where foreign or informal workers go to offer their services. This is “Moscow Square” where labor recruiters and workers in need of a job go (Sik 2002: 231–241). Nevertheless, according to an informer, only the Csángó who cannot get work through their countrymen go there, as they prefer to find work through some relative, friend or countryman. Sik found in “Moscow Square” that the proportion of ethnic Hungarians from Romania (which may include some Csángós) was only about 10% vs. Gypsies of about 16% (Ibid: 238).

The Csángó migration is of a temporary-labor type since most people interviewed coincided in that the main objective of their migration was to get temporary jobs which would allow them to improve their and their families’ standard of living. Once this objective is reached, many of them state that they prefer to return to their original communities and not to remain in the absorbing countries.

SOCIAL ADAPTATION

Something which was repeated in nearly every interview was the fact that the Csángós kept social relations mainly among themselves, they all reaffirmed their Csángó identity and their desire to emigrate was to “leave the village, survive, make a family, have children and at the same time build their house in their village so as to return one day”.

In Budapest, through the Church and groups organized by Csángó students, many social opportunities were offered. Among them, folk dance groups; groups gathering to go to mass and prepare their typical dishes in someone’s apartment including the church; private parties and night/weekend schools to learn to read and write Hungarian. Young Hungarians of both sexes came to some of these events, especially those where there was dancing and the study of folklore.

A young Hungarian woman spoke to us of a young intellectual Csángó who was the coordinator of an organization helping Csángó migrants in Hungary to complete their education, by teaching them to read and write modern Hungarian. She also told me that

during the FIDESZ government there arose interest in Hungarian ethnic groups living in other countries. She was able to organize a language school (where she teaches) and have its foreign students recognized and give them Hungarian student visas. The young Hungarian professor met a young Csángó man with whom she became engaged to marry. He was a carpenter who worked in a small construction firm but “he was paid very little”. His family was peasants living in their village in Moldavia. The father held a steady job at the railroad which gave him access to social security and a small pension. The couple had eight children, four males and four females. The eldest son is the most educated in the family, he is a Hungarian resident, studies at the university, and will soon be graduating. He married a Székely woman from Transylvania. The second daughter is a nun at a convent in Slovakia. Another married sister lives in Ireland where she had a baby. She and her husband are trying to get permanent visas as Romanian refugees. The other brother is our informer’s boyfriend and the youngest brother is in the countryside helping his parents, although, while working in Budapest he bought furniture-making machines which he rents in his village in Moldavia. There is also a younger sister who is a waitress and cleans a church in Budapest on Sundays.

At one of the parties we met one of the cultural organizers, a percussionist musician. He told that through his musical group he had traveled through almost all of Europe. They play all kinds of music, even Gypsy songs. He says that there are Csángós in Greece, Italy, Spain and around 40 in Portugal. He said that he did not know any Csángó who had left their village to work abroad other than through contacts. That when someone would go to Portugal, he/she would ask his/her boss if there was any work for a relative. Once a job was found, that person would call the potential migrant (they all have cell phones) who at his/her would be housed and taken to work. This musician claims that the Csángós have a reputation for being honest and good workers, unlike other groups of Romanian laborers.

Some single migrants (not many) may get married to Hungarian women. Most of them, however, try to find a Csángó girlfriend in Hungary or at home, where in one of the return trips they might get married. As a matter of fact, the groom of the Hungarian young teacher we mentioned above was planning a big wedding feast back in his village.

The Csángós together with other migrants fulfill labor needs in Europe by supplying a labor force that industrialized societies lack more and more. What we observed in Hungary is that the Csángós worked mainly in the construction industry and most of the women in domestic services. Slowly they would enter the industrial sector of the economy, however, due to their *incomplete migrant* or *circular migrant* status, most of them are not yet fully assimilated into the country of destination.

EFFECTS ON THE PLACE OF ORIGIN

Despite the lack of reliable statistics on the flows of money that migrants bring back to their countries through unofficial means, the Romanian National Bank reported that in 2002, at least 1.2 billion dollars entered the country through official channels. Considering unregistered incomes, Romanian economists estimate the

volume of incoming money from abroad to be approximately 2 billion dollars a year, an amount greater than the total annual foreign investment (Lazaroiu 2003:14).

The effects of migration of temporary workers on the home communities are not only economic; there is also an observable transfer of knowledge. Most workers employed in construction have had to learn new skills on managing technology, tools/equipment, and procedures.

The new knowledge is transferred by migrants through introducing “new ideas” about the style and equipment of houses and constructions, a fact that has generated new needs in villages and a demand for specialized skills acquired by the worker. For this reason they are called upon by other Csángós and even by Romanians to build or improve their houses. “Little by little these workers have earned a reputation among the people of their villages and even among Romanians from neighboring towns for having the knowledge necessary to build ‘modern houses’ or improve on existing ones” (Bohus 2005: 26).

The intention of the Csángós is to earn as much money as possible as laborers (to a much lesser degree as businessmen) (Bohus Ibid), but they still do not know how to invest it productively, as they retain the consumption patterns from days of socialism, spending on consumer goods that are often costly. In other words, in Europe they work for employers as laborers *producing* capital and in their villages they become *consumers* of goods from developed countries.

According to Bohus (Ibid.) there does not exist among Csángó migrants a culture of earning money through business, since until this new phenomenon of migration appeared there was no capital invested in their villages and there was no money to spend. Some workers upon their return or visits to the village, invested in things such as a tractor to rent to peasants in the village, an ice cream machine, or a small store. Sometimes they sold agricultural products in nearby towns. Nevertheless, the sale of their products was very complicated due to transportation, storage and other organizational factors, as well as because of the lack of knowledge of market strategies. In spite of that, they occasionally sell their products in stores or markets in neighboring towns, earning barely enough to live on. Usually there is no reliable demand for different goods and services, especially in the more isolated villages. Migrants bring to the village luxury items which not only improve their standard of living, but it demonstrates their wealth to other inhabitants of the village and obtains social prestige.

In the city, migrants are learning to open bank accounts and even to buy gold “they have stopped keeping their money under the mattress”, but these actions, according to Bohus often lack any economic rationality as they may lose money selling the gold below market value or below the original buying price. “In fact, few of them have a long-term perspective” (Bohus 2005: 21–23).

An interesting observation is that among Csángó migrant workers from Gimes, where collectivization under communism was incomplete and individual agriculture was maintained, upon their periodic return to the village, they often invested in tools and technology that enable them to increase productivity in their land.

With entrance of Romania into the European Community the whole migrant situation will probably change in both ways: the legal status of migrants and the effects of migration on the society of origin.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this study we have focused on the migration process of Csángó Hungarian-Romanians to Hungary, and somewhat to other European nations. In the short fieldwork we did, it was impossible to identify the effects that this migration has had on the country of destination. We can, however, deduce what the role of Romanian migration has been in the European Community since it makes up for an important part of the new class of temporary workers which has permitted the great development of Europe into a second world power. We have also described what until recently has been the effect of migration on its place of origin, that is the towns and villages of Moldavia.

The fieldwork upon which this study was based followed the theoretical model proposed by Adler-Lomnitz (1977) which we have called “the ecological model of migration”. In accordance with this model, we begun by describing the political and economic imbalance that started before the fall of the communist regime in Romania, and how this led Csángó communities to join the migratory flows to Hungary and to the European Union. At the same time, linguistic and ethnic discrimination that Csángós suffered and which subjected them for centuries encouraged young people to migrate, taking advantage to the changes produce by the change of the political conditions of both countries involved in the process. Among the reasons they chose to first of all migrate to Hungary was not only its vicinity but also the fact that Hungary was a Hungarian speaking Catholic society, idealized by the Csángós as ‘home’.

The second stage of the model refers to the actual migratory movement which occurred almost on an individual basis supported mainly by the social networks of migrants and by the relative ease that they had in obtaining tourist visas, work, and housing in their new society, as well as by a symbolic acceptance by the Hungarian community of the primordial role of the Csángós in Hungarian nationality.

We also described some of the difficulties that migrants felt because of not identifying fully with the Hungarian culture upon reaching it. This caused them to realize that though they did not identify with Romania’s culture, they did not identify entirely with Hungary’s either. This conclusion is one of the principal ones of our study.

Finally, we described in brief the effects that the Csángós’ migration has had on the communities of origin. The increased standards of living through construction of modern housing, the introduction of cars, television, refrigerators and Western forms of dressing for the young people, as well as more money to improve their nutrition as some of them. From being working class producers in the places of destination, upon returning to their places of origin they became consumers of merchandize produced in the places of destination. We also noticed a greater interest in the education of their children, preparing, therefore, the countryside to be part of the European Community.

THE PROBLEM OF IDENTITY

It is important to stress again the effect that migration has had on the migrants insofar as their ethnic and national identities were concerned. As did our Romanian and Hungarian colleagues, we wondered what nationality the Csángós studied identified, with. From the former descriptions we see that the ethnic identity of the Csángó migrants is maintained from within the group, through the wide social networks that feed them. This is also how we observe the role played by student organizations, the Church and the Hungarian government.

Despite this, Csángós do not seem to have a strong national identity: they do not identify themselves either as Romanian or Hungarian. Nevertheless, when they travel abroad they do so with Romanian passports and are treated as such. The negotiations that the Romanian state realizes with the European Community and its neighboring countries will determine the treatment that Csángó migrants will receive in their future migratory movements. This means they cannot ignore the fact that they are Romanian. We can thus say that Romanian citizenship – seen as part of Csángó migratory process – acquires an instrumental connotation since it is the only one which is recognized. Therefore we can talk about a ‘flexible’ national identity. It is also increasingly important for them to get education that allows them to read and write or to continue learning the skills necessary to their work. Here features the education that the Romanian state has provided and which has been useful to them.

On another hand, Hungarian-speaking migrants would have a tendency to think of themselves as Hungarian, especially during those moments when the Hungarian nationalistic movements identified them as the primordial Hungarians, those who left Asia and never reached Hungary. Upon reaching that country however, Csángó migrants feel themselves different. Their language turns out to being an archaic dialect and they are far from being able to read and write Hungarian, since it is not taught in their Romanian schools. Some customs also feel different, and the Csángós miss the landscapes of Moldavia. This is why, in order to enter the Hungarian labor market successfully, they must learn the official Hungarian language.

It is quite significant that the Catholic Church, which at one point supported the Romanian state by introducing Romanian into Catholic rituals and consequently into education, today in Hungary helps affirm the Hungarian identity of the Csángós. It offers the migrants residential, social and ritual support and help with work. Today the Church is as important in affirming the Hungarian-Csángó identity in Romania as it was in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries.

Because of this, we conclude that Csángós who come from the area where Hungarian has been preserved as the private language have acquired a flexible national identity. The testimony given by the interviewed teacher reflects this situation since “the Csángós are flexible both insofar as where to live and with whom to identify, they have no clear ideology about who they are or on how to act in accordance to a nationality...” their identity is to be Csángó.

The identity of Csángós is reinforced by the attachment to their home town if we take into consideration that their basic social unit is the family and the village. The fact of having a house in their community allows them to maintain their identity through

this tie to their roots. We see that upon leaving for Europe or Israel to work their village and house turn into their ‘promised land’. When the Csángós leave their communities they take with them their traditions, customs, beliefs and sociability, indispensable elements for recreating their identity in their host countries.

If this is the first way the Csángós have tried to reinforce their ethnic identity it is not the last, since there are groups of university people in Hungary who are also concerned with conserving the language and the Hungarian traces of their culture. Still, the efforts by ethnologists and linguists to recover the culture and language of the Csángós are directed towards demonstrating that they make part of the Hungarian nation, as is expressed in the testimony of a Hungarian student who, when working on a linguistic study on Pustiana/Pusztina said that “national identity does not interest the Csángós in their daily lives and in Hungary those who study the Csángós are Hungarian linguists and ethnologists who are interested in showing that the Csángós are Hungarian. To the people themselves, being Catholic is more important and they are uninterested in the nationalistic part, which they choose according to which is more convenient”.

Some of the testimonies from Csángós in Budapest stated that language and religion, plus social closeness and trust, defined to a great degree their formation of transnational social networks laying bridges to the destination points and serving as the base for labor strategies of the migrants.

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