Divergent Strategies of Living and the Ethnic Dimensions of Value Systems. The Case of Tövishát[1]

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Abstract. The article focuses on the characteristics of cohabitation of Romanian and Hungarian communities in the area of Tövishát. In connection to the Hungarian and international literature on ethnicity it analyzes the process of setting up ethnic boundaries in terms of Romanian and Hungarian communities. In the article we argue that the almost three hundred years of cohabitation did not result in a loss of culture in neither of the parties, even though there are significant differences in terms of culture, language and ethnic-national identities. On the other hand, the article examines the problem of divergent strategies of life among the Hungarian and Romanian communities after the end of the socialist era, and the question of their parallelism with the ethnic dimensions of value systems.
The article uses the "familism" paradigm to analyze the strategy of Hungarians locking themselves up in the ethnic, religious and cultural traditions.

Keywords: practice of cohabitation, subsistence strategies, value system, "familism" paradigm.

Introduction

The current article is based on a research carried out in the Szilágyság (Dealurile Majei) historical region of Transylvania between 2009 and 2012. The aim of the cultural anthropological research was to analyze the long-term cohabitation of communities of mixed ethnic origin (Romanian and Hungarian).

By taking a look at the data on the ethnic ratio of the three villages in the Tövishát region situated in the Szilágyság, it becomes obvious that since the

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repopulation of the villages in the 18th century all three settlements have had a population of mixed ethnic origin (Romanian – Hungarian). Data on the exact ratio of ethnic groups in the villages have been available from the mid 19th century (Varga 2010). According to these data, the Romanian / Hungarian ratio of the villages in focus—Bősháza (Biuşa), Monó (Manău) and Völcsök (Ulciug)—has not changed significantly for 150 years (see Table 1, 2 and 3).

Table 1. *The ethnic groups in Bősháza between 1850–2002*

Year	Population	Romanian population	Hungarian population	Romanian population in %	Hungarian population in %
1850	461	221	238	47.9	51.6
1869	691	310	381	44.9	53.7
1880	629	285	316	46.9	51.8
1890	616	303	302	49.2	49.0
1900	683	292	390	42.8	57,1
1910	701	277	424	39.5	60.5
1920	708	319	372	45.1	52.5
1930	705	319	381	45.2	54.0
1941	709	297	411	41.9	58.0
1966	773	348	424	45.0	54.9
1977	746	315	431	42.2	57.8
1992	651	218	433	33.5	66.5
2002	592	196	396	33.1	66.9

Source: Varga (2010)

Table 2. *The ethnic groups in Monó between 1850–1992*

Year	Population	Romanian population	Hungarian population	Romanian population in %	Hungarian population in %
1850	827	379	441	45.8	55.2
1880	729	335	388	45.9	55.1
1890	865	402	463	46.5	53.5
1900	905	438	467	48.4	51.6
1910	1023	502	517	49.0	51.0
1920	930	473	434	50.1	49.9
1930	995	473	497	47.5	52.5
1941	1139	507	627	44.5	55.5
1966	1188	549	639	46.2	53.8
1977	1271	563	708	44.3	55.7
1992	1179	497	682	42.1	57.9

Source: Varga (2010)

Table 3. *The ethnic groups in Völcsök between 1850–2002*

Year	Population	Romanian population	Hungarian population	Romanian population in %	Hungarian population in %
1850	298	109	189	36.6	63.4
1869	618	205	413	33.2	66.8
1880	593	185	381	32.2	66.1
1890	654	202	431	30.9	65.9
1900	781	273	508	35.0	65.0
1910	851	299	552	35.1	64.9
1920	869	310	548	35.7	63.1
1930	867	300	563	34.6	64.9
1941	950	248	702	26.1	73.9
1966	1121	412	709	36.8	63.2
1977	1155	402	751	34.8	65.0
1992	1072	350	722	31.7	68.3
2002	1035	340	782	32.7	67.3

Source:Varga (2010)

The anthropological literature refers to this phenomenon as a situation of *ethnic balance* (Biczó 2008, 281–285). In the case of ethnic balance models, even if we take the currently growing number of mixed marriages into account, the associations between communities preserving their linguistic, cultural and religious traditions cannot be analyzed in the framework of assimilative and/or acculturation discourses (Biczó 2010, 105).

In my article, I examine the main characteristics of cohabitation of the different ethnic groups. By drawing on the Hungarian and international literature on ethnicity I analyze the process of creating ethnic boundaries in the given locality. I also point out the factors responsible for the fact that, even after 300 years of intensive cohabitation, these communities—being different in terms of religion, language, culture and ethnic-national identity—have not experienced the loss of culture. My paper also focuses on the possible correlation between the divergent strategies of living, observed during our fieldwork, and the ethnic dimensions of value systems (Andrásfalvy 1975, 105–113).

The concept of subsistence strategy is being applied primarily by Hungarian Roma research (Szuhay 1999, 139–163), studying first of all rural Roma communities. New research brings new dimensions into the Hungarian investigation of subsistence strategies by involving other ethnic groups in the survey living in a given community next to the Roma, and by extending the rural focus of previous analyses to ethnic groups in urban communities. As subsistence strategy is a concept much broader than income generation and economic strategy, I will use that term hereinafter. Subsistence strategy is a plan, a concept, some

action algorithm aimed at finding a way of ensuring the livelihood of a family under the given circumstances. Its elements include income generation activities same as plans for cost-rationalization, and transforming the consumption structure, re-structuring the family division of labour and reshuffling the basic values (Bánlaky and Kevy 1999, 32).

Description of the local model of cohabitation

The practice of cohabitation is influenced by several factors. According to our study, there are three main factors influencing cohabitation in Tövishát. First, we focus on the problem of minority – majority relation. It is of extreme importance that in all three researched communities the ratio of Romanians is significantly smaller than that of the other ethnic groups' taken together. We have to take a look into the exact ratio of Hungarians in the local mixed population. While their ratio takes up almost 70% in Völcsök and Bősháza, the Hungarians in Monó form a 60% majority.

It is also important to emphasize that spatial segregation, that was probably present at the beginning of their cohabitation, is not an issue anymore. As a result, everyday interactions between neighbours are quite common between the Hungarian and Romanian families. The third factor being of interest is that the religion is definitely parallel to one's ethnic origin. Romanians are Orthodox and Hungarians are Calvinists.

In the case of Neo-protestant denominations appearing after the regime change (Pentecostals, Jehovah's witnesses, Millenarians) the religious identities do not have an ethnic dimension. It is also true that in these cases the religious identity becomes a lot more important part of one's self-definition than the ethnic origin.

In the autochthon bipolar communities in focus, the ethnic balance situation is a statistically documented condition in which the proportion of different ethnic groups within the population does not extend a fluctuation of 15% for the last 150 years. The location of ethnic households is mixed, the lives of the families do not show significant differences, but the linguistic, religious and cultural boundaries remain unchanged (Biczó 2010, 106–107).

While the balance of cohabitation seems static for an outsider, it is obvious that the cohabitation of Romanians and Hungarians is based on constant and dynamic adaptations to the "others." Adaptation is carried out in accordance with local traditions, in accordance with ethnic identities (Biczó 2008, 281–286).

"You have to speak Romanian, have to respect Romanians, have to co-operate with them but you don't have to mix with them" – says one of our informants from Bősháza, summarizing the behavioural strategies of the local Hungarians.

Albeit the attitude toward the "other" ethnic culture is based on tolerance, the ethnic, religious and cultural boundaries between the two ethnic groups are quite

rigid. A good example of this is that mixed marriages were absolutely prohibited up to the time of the regime change in 1989. After the revolution, mixed marriages became more and more common but, for the time being, did not change the balance. In order to avoid "mingling" the two ethnic groups occupied completely different spaces in terms of work and entertainment in the past. Nowadays these "spaces" do not have ethnic characteristics.

When describing the practices of cohabitation in the Tövishát region it seems to be useful to refer to the deep analysis of the Romanian – Hungarian interethnic relations of Szeklerland, even though the nature of these relations is different (Gagyi 1996).

One of the most important theoretical-methodological findings by Zoltán Biró A. is that in the Szeklerland the Romanian-Hungarian, Romanian-Gypsy relations are characterized by legal/administrative asymmetry. Romanians have a higher status, while the minority ethnic group has a lower one (Biró 1996). According to Biró this should lead to a majority-minority relation characterized by constant conflicts. "On the level of everyday interactions between Romanians and Hungarians or Romanians and Gypsies the asymmetry originating in the majority's legal/administrative power simply cannot be observed or can only be observed occasionally. Moreover, in Szeklerland the asymmetry of Romanian-Hungarian relations is reversed. This reversed asymmetry is a mental/symbolic construction in which the Hungarians are 'up' and Romanians are 'down'" (Biró 1996, 246). The cohabitation practices in Tövishát are different from the ones in Szeklerland. As a result of centuries of living together, symmetry characterizes the relations between the Romanians and Hungarians in the settlements in focus. This symmetry influences the perception of the other ethnic groups together with each and every aspect of cohabitation.

According to Zoltán Biró A., when researching the Szeklerland region, we have to review the role of asymmetrical relations determined by administration/law. In his view, the asymmetry in power does exist in Romanian-Hungarian and Romanian-Gypsy relations, but this legal/administrative asymmetry does not play a role in interethnic relations as important as it would be assumable. He concludes that everyday relations are not shaped by the power asymmetry, but attain their social meaning through other relations (Biró 1996, 258). This conclusion can be applied to the cohabitation practices of the Tövishát region as well.

Nevertheless, Hungarians of the Tövishát region do not construct a mental/symbolic "up" position for themselves. In Szeklerland the mental/symbolic asymmetry favouring the Hungarian community helps Hungarians compensate the legal/administrative dependence on Romanians. As a result of the centuries of cohabitation, this phenomenon is completely unknown in the Tövishát region.

In Zoltán Biró A.'s view, the reason for the successful reversion of power relations based on mental/symbolic means is that the Szeklerland region has not

had irreversible modernization processes (Biró 1996, 258). For that very reason, the ethnic race condition analyzed by several researchers did not arise in Szeklerland. Theories on the formation of ethnic conflicts refer to modernization as a process creating conflicts. Without strong modernization processes the legal/administrative asymmetry does not emerge, moreover, it turns around. The mental/symbolic process turning the legal/administrative asymmetry helps the given ethnic groups live through the situation and creates stable interethnic relations as well (Biró 1996, 258) by defining the interactions (Biró 1996, 274). In the case of the villages in the Tövishát region we find stable interethnic relations, but legal/administrative asymmetry or its turning into a mental/symbolic asymmetry cannot be observed.

According to Zoltán Biró A., the structuring power of the mental/symbolic sphere lies in the fact that it helps to distinguish between ethnic groups, it helps the members keep away from the others, to occupy "their own space" (Biró 1996, 274). The space of ethnic groups, local ethnic communities, ethnic families and households is markedly different (Barth 1969). Such differentiation usually has its own physical aspect. As we have already pointed out, spatial separation was probably present in the Tövishát region at the beginning of cohabitation, but today the ethnic groups do not occupy different spaces. We have to note though that, because of the mental/symbolic differences of the two ethnic groups, the boundaries are much stronger than the physical ones (Biró 1996, 259). The practice of keeping mental/symbolic distance is elaborated, complex and successful in the Tövishát region, even if the members of the two ethnic groups live close to each other in the physical sense, which, due to the intensive Romanian-Hungarian neighbour relations, is quite common there.

Keeping ethnic distance is possible in the settlements in focus because an additional factor is given to the already existing mental/symbolic differentiation. Both ethnic groups realize their complementary role, their interdependence. Based on his research in Szeklerland, Biró describes this phenomenon as follows: "The parties stand apart but recognize the existence of the other, mutually agree on the spaces and social functions of the other. In the 'up-down relation' the group of down position may (and usually does) experience mental/symbolic degradation but it is rare that it has to deal with closing out, with violence or annihilation, etc. In this still traditional and common practice the person coming from the different ethnic group is usually not part of one's own life, he/she is always the foreign, the different who can only occupy a space at the edge of one's life. Cooperation is possible, sometimes necessary, but the other cannot shape one's life, cannot be an integral part of it. Therefore, mixed marriages are rare" (Biró 1996, 259–260).

As Zoltán Biró A. points it out in his study, this cultural pattern does not generate conflicts in itself, because the "other," the "foreign"—that can cause conflicts—does not become part of one's life, does not enter one's circles. If it is possible, the separation is also physical, if not, the mental/symbolic tools of

separation are applied. In Szeklerland these tools tend to be successful, even nowadays, in the sense that everyday interactions are defined by this mental/symbolic asymmetry (Biró 1996, 259–260).

Similarly to Szeklerland, in the Tövishát region the restoration of ethnic boundaries following the regime change is part of a more complex, general process aiming to restore the family and/or local ways of life. It is an effort to return to a way of life that was characteristic in this region before the forced collective farming. The process includes factors like self-sustaining farming, community norms over family norms, peasant type norms of financing, learning and family life, etc. (Biró 1996, 261–262).

If we wish to focus on ethnic relations characteristic to a given region we shall move from the common process of creating ethnic boundaries and analyze not only differences. According to Eriksen, the mutual recognition ad strengthening of demarcation, the so called dichotomization is a crucial notion in interethnic relations (Eriksen 1993). Emphasizing differences is not possible if there is no mutual recognition. The parties not only show their differences but also accept them as bases of recognition. It means that by showing differences they emphasize derivations. At the same time, there are differences that are not emphasized. The parties regard these as facts and use them to recognize and "complement" the other. They have an implicit consensus on the occupation of fundamental territories which are created in a way that the actual territories of the groups do not overlap. This process does not mean that certain divisions of roles and labour or even cooperation do not exist there (Biró 1996, 275–276).

Several studies pointed out that the actual differences may vary according to the nature of the relations. Without doubt, it depends on the practical forms and rate of complementarity, on the rate and nature of the recognition of the "other" (Biró 1996, 276).

Interethnic relations are not characterized by conflicts in their nature. When researching a given interethnic relations, it is essential to analyze the actual levels and forms of complementarity. The levels and forms of implicit complementarity influence the chances of conflicts in an interethnic relation, and also signify the possibility of preventing or solving conflicts. In the settlements of the Tövishát region the actual levels and forms of complementarities are deeply rooted in the everyday practices (Biró 1996, 276).

The politics of mutual courtesies

The local cohabitation of different ethnic groups is based on mutual respect, acceptance and non-conflicting relations. The necessity of cohabitation created techniques of mutual acceptance and adaptation. Harald Eidheim uses the notion "dichotomization" when referring to the mutual distancing of different

ethnic groups (Eidheim 1969, 39–57). A different form of ethnic interactions is the so called complementarity. In this case differences are communicated within the ethnicity; the existence of differences is regarded as a fact and handled as advantages. While dichotomization is a process of "us" and "them," complementarity is a process in which "us" and "you" are present (Eidheim 1969, 39–57; Eriksen 2008, 46–48). As we have already pointed out, the local model of cohabitation falls into this category. Therefore there are no ethnic conflicts in the settlements of focus. The everyday interactions of the two ethnic groups do not reflect tensions on the base of ethnic origin.

The pragmatic and symbolic components of the politics of mutual courtesies observable in all aspects of interactions are effective. The interactions between the different ethnic groups are based on mutual acceptance and respect, showed through forms of greetings, neighbour relations and shared celebrations. The politics of courtesies is strengthened by the local religious leaders who have a leading role in its enforcement.

A very good example of interethnic solidarity is the example of Völcsök, where—in the case of unexpected loss or damage—the population of the village starts collecting donations for the family in loss or offers help in the form of labour, regardless of ethnic origin.

Divergent strategies of living

Besides the relative stability of ethnic proportions, the graphs showing the ethnic proportions of the villages reveal another characteristic. By focusing on the data from the last thirty years we can see that the Romanian population of the villages is slowly decreasing. We shall not conclude that it is a result of assimilation processes. The slow decrease of the Romanian population is due to migration. Migration became an important issue after the political changes in 1989, but the process itself has started at the late socialist times. Romanians tended to move from the local rural society and settle in cities more likely than their Hungarian neighbours.

The current strategies of living depend on the conditions determining the local economic and social relations, but also on global influences appearing after the revolution of 1989. Therefore, when analyzing divergent strategies of living, we have to take a look at the two aspects: the local and the global influences.

Life strategies in the villages of the Tövishát region

There are only a few families in the villages of focus with only one source of income. The families usually have two-three different sources of income. If we look at the primary source of income, we can form certain categories, as follows:

a) *Income from permanent employment.* Income primarily comes from employment. Commuting employees, family entrepreneurships and local employees fall into this category. Most of them are engaged in farming.

b) *Pension.* The base of living is coming from state or disability pension. With a few exceptions, pensioners practice farming on the level of the nuclear and extended family.

c) *Farming.* For 12 extended families in the three settlements the primary source of income comes from farming. The elderly members of the family also have state pensions, while the younger generation works in cultivation and/or stock farming exclusively.

d) *Employment abroad.* A growing number of the villagers work abroad.

István Kinda's findings are valid in terms of the farmers of the settlements in the Tövishát region: "The attachment of the locals to traditional values and life forms cannot be regarded as a conscious or romantic decision. More likely it is due to the fact that there are no other alternatives, that the locals are used to such strategies. The researched communities would gladly get rid of the 'old way' which is centered on surviving. They would accept very narrow possibilities, if only they could" (Kinda 2011).

The notion of "forced strategies" signifies the process of reorganization coming after 1989. After the urbanization and industrialization experienced during socialism, the rural Romanian population experienced a shift toward agriculture. The settlements in the Tövishát region, together with the rest of rural Romanian communities, were unprepared to get their land back, to re-privatization. Due to the mass layoffs and unfavourable macroeconomic processes, a large number of people chose to turn to the family based farming. Traditional farming techniques with out of date tools and equipments were barely enough to sustain the families. Yet hundreds of families were forced to make this decision in order to survive, to provide.

The opinion-shapers, the leading figures of the liquidation of collective farms were those farmers who were forced to give in their lands thirty years ago.

In some families we can observe the parallel existence of farmer and entrepreneur behaviours and attitudes. These families tend to take minimal risks and stick to old strategies and cheap equipments. Therefore they cannot be regarded as western-type entrepreneurs, more like farmer-entrepreneurs with some financial and crop capital.

In one third of the families in the settlements of focus, the primary source of income comes from state or disability pension. Usually, the elderly join the family in farming. Cultivation of the land is usually carried out by the extended family. Widows/widowers and elderly couples living without the support of their children rent their lands to local farmers in exchange for products. Selling the land is not an option; the ownership shall not be handed over.

The redistribution of lands started after the regime change in 1990, ending in 1991. The structure recreated the pre-collectivization status. Even though there was a possibility of concentrating lands in order to have a more effective farming system, the landowners did not agree on it. Everyone wanted their former land back (Peti 2004). By regaining the ownership rights the farmers not only got their lands back, but also their right to farming. As a result, "not only a strong mental-emotional re-compensation took place but it become possible to regain the status of a certain family based operation of the household" (Biró 2006, 11–12). Even though socialism strengthened the nostalgia toward individual, family based farms, as a result of which the farmers insisted on having their exact properties back, the now independent farmers did not have modern equipment to cultivate the lands, nor did they have the financial means to modernize. Therefore they hoped that their own labour force will somehow compensate them for the lack of the above mentioned aspects (Miklós 2009).

The farms, different in sizes and capacities, failed to exercise a significant market position. In consequence, the settlements of the Tövishát region could not integrate to the social division of labour. These small farms only have one positive effect on the Romanian society: these family based farms provide employment to the rural population that would otherwise be unemployed. We have to note that it is likely that as soon as the opportunity arises, these people, and even more so the younger generation would leave the land and the farms behind. Among the younger generation farming is not a desired way of life. In the case of unsuccessful attempts to try several other alternatives (employment in Hungary, employment in the private sector), they usually return to the family farms. They do not tend to stop seeking for other possibilities, but they only do it in a way that does not endanger the operation of the farm anymore.

In the time after the regime change, because of the closing down of plants and factories, several families had to face the fact that they are out of options. We cannot really talk about "returning to peasantry" but it is true that the families of the Tövishát region had to return to farming.

There are no significant differences between the economic model followed by Hungarians and Romanians in the Tövishát region. On the other hand, the divergences between strategies of living are there.

There are two main types of farms in the Tövishát region: 1. family based farms; being different in size, the common characteristic of these farms is that they are cultivated in the form of full-time employment; and 2. part-time farms where, beside the income coming from agriculture, the families have other, secondary income as well. The main reason for the existence of the farm is making life "cheaper."

For most people agriculture in the Tövishát region is not a real alternative for financial success. Most of the members of the local society follow traditional

farming suitable for self-sustenance. Market oriented behavior is not common. Even though they do not fail to work hard, it is mostly true that farmers do not have profit in these villages (Oláh 2004, 30).

Based on the interviews on economic strategies the economic practices of Romanians and Hungarians do not differ. Nevertheless, there are significant differences in terms of the equipments used. Romanian farmers do not use as much machinery, only a few Romanian families own tractors. Most of the Hungarian families have tractors and other equipment (plough, harrow, etc.). In Völcsök, for example, the 6 harvesters are all owned by Hungarians.

There are no significant differences in terms of structure of labour between the Romanian and the Hungarian households. The role of mutual help has decreased but it still has a very important role in cultivation. Even though the connections within the extended family loosened, the unit still works on the basis of mutual interactions, as a community with certain economic and social focus. Cole calls the form coordinating the benefits of urban and rural living in the socialist Romania an extended household unit (Cole 1981). It was an important relation correcting the inequality of politics. Through the member employed in the city the family had a higher status and the other members were able to benefit from it. At the same time, the parents who did not move from their rural homes were able to provide their urban children with goods not available in the cities. Beside the economic cooperation, the social cooperation was also important (Turai 2003). This practice was common in the Tövishát region as well. We have to note though that a higher number of Romanians moved to cities. The organization of labour is based on ethnicity. It is mainly organized within the family, and does not tend to cross over the ethnic boundaries.

The capitalist, profit-oriented attitude is not part of the Hungarians' mentality in the Tövishát region. The influence of modernization is not considerable, as a result of which traditional values are significant even today.

Since only a few families have a stable income from farming, and the employment opportunities in Szilágycseh, Zilah and Nagybánya were reduced after 1989, the importance of working abroad has increased.

The sociological literature in Romania (e.g., Bodó 1996; Csata and Kiss 2003; Gödri 2004; Horváth 2002; Horváth 2003; Sandu 2005, etc.) emphasizes that the migration of Hungarians from Romania shall only be interpreted in Romanian context. The reason for migration is the extreme economic difficulties experienced because of the slow process of transition in the country (Csata and Kiss 2003, 10).

The migration potential of the Hungarians in the Tövishát region cannot be interpreted outside the context of Romanian economy, neither outside the ethnic dimension of it (Csata and Kiss 2003, 11).

In the researched communities, the Romanians mostly choose Western European countries of employment, migrating mainly to Italy and Spain. Even

though many of them asked for their lands back, they did not create market-oriented farms. These farms are not well-equipped in terms of machines and have little products. On the other hand, Hungarians try to equip their farms with machinery and try to increase the productivity of their farms.

In our research we focused on the divergent strategies of living and the migration pattern of Bősháza in detail. In the following, I am going to focus on the characteristics common in all three settlements.

1. *Differences in terms of the nature and reason of migration.* The migration of Romanians was there even before the regime change. Several of them moved to nearby cities for employment. During socialism, Hungarians found employment in cities as well, but instead of moving from the village they became commuters. The difference between the migration pattern of Romanians and Hungarians after 1989 is that the migration of Romanians tends to be permanent. In the case of Romanians migration is followed by moving the whole family abroad. In the case of Hungarians employment in a different country is only temporary, lasting for a couple of years. There are differences in the reason for migration between the two ethnic groups. Romanians seek for employment abroad in order to establish their existence there, while Hungarians only want to collect some money to establish a life in Romania.

2. *Generational differences in migration.* There are significant differences between the two ethnic groups in terms of the age group willing to migrate. While middle-aged and/or elderly Romanians are willing to migrate with their whole families, Hungarians of the same age groups do not consider migration. It is a common practice in Romanian families that only the oldest members of the household remain in the village. In Hungarian families members who are less than thirty years old are most likely to seek employment abroad. After a few years they return to the village.

3. *Differences in terms of the experience of migration.* The fact that Hungarians from the Tövishát region mostly have negative migration experiences results in a decreasing willingness to migrate. On the other hand, most of the Romanians regard their migration as a success, which in turn strengthens the willingness to migrate.

4. *Differences in terms of the destination of migration.* From the early 1990s the Hungarians of the Tövishát region migrated to Hungary seeking for employment. It was followed by establishing common routes to Canada, France, Spain and Italy, mainly taken by Romanians (Csata and Kiss 2003, 23). Hungarian migration plans are not influenced by the Romanian community.

As we have seen, local Hungarians did have a tendency to seek for employment abroad in the decade following the collapse of the socialist regime. Nevertheless, there are significant differences between the migration of Hungarians and Romanians. The conclusion of sociological research is true: ethnicity, as cultural

and symbolic capital, influences the intensity of migration and the destination of migration (Horváth 2002, 32).

The following components have an important role in creating divergent migration practices among the two ethnic groups. These components complement and strengthen each other.

1. *Differences in family structure, division of labour and use of income in Hungarian and Romanian families.* The formerly dominant three-generation households are still common among the Hungarians of the Tövishát region (Turai 2004). The three-generation household has a unique economic strategy: the elders work on the family farm, their children work in nearby cities (Zilah, Nagybánya, Szilágycseh). The two families live in separate houses but in one household. Agricultural work is carried out together. The families have separated spaces and the generations have different ways of life. Financial unity is partial, but agricultural products are utilized together. The incomes of the elders and their children are not perfectly separated.

We do not find similar symbiotic relationships in Romanian families and households. Labour and income are separated.

2. *Differences in social networks in the two ethnic communities.* The network capital of Hungarian families in the Tövishát region comes from kinship. Kinship serves as the base of the division of labour, of solidarity and of help. Most of the Hungarians remain in the local community; therefore they are attached to the local society, to the neighbouring Hungarian villages. Kinship, being present in the local Hungarian communities of the Tövishát region, is an important factor working against migration. The interpersonal network of Romanian families is much more extended and reaches over the boundaries of local communities. Therefore, their migration potential is also much higher.

3. *Differences in the relationships toward tradition and norms.* The differences in the level of attachment to traditions among Romanians and Hungarians are best described by taking a look at the different attitudes toward farming as the base of subsistence. Farming used to be the dominant form of living in the lives of both ethnic groups in the Tövishát region. By today this has changed. While the aspirations of Romanians are mostly driving them away from agriculture and farmer life, Hungarians are still bound by these traditions. In their attitudes and norms, at least among the elders, the traditional peasant type of life is still there. One of the direct reasons for low migration potential among the Hungarians of the Tövishát region is their strong attachment to norms transmitted by traditions. As we have already suggested, in the villages of the Tövishát region farming is done by elders. Not so among the Hungarians. In Hungarian families farming provides the primary source of food. The role of families did change, households are not as closely connected as they were before the Second World War, but they still function as economic units (Turai 2004).

The most important components responsible for the low migration potential among the Hungarians in the Tövishát region are the existence of farming, the attachment to religious traditions, and the responsibility for elderly parents.

The ethnic differences in migration potential suggest that there are radical differences in the relations toward tradition. These are the results of divergent value systems. We may conclude that general values are responsible for the differences between the willingness to remain home or migrate abroad (I only mention here some works out of the extensive literature: Kósa 1990; Szelényi 1992; Csite 1997; Fejős 1998; Niedermüller 2005; Niedermüller 2008), Romanians who have pragmatic-competitive values move abroad, while Hungarians with community oriented, tolerant, Catholic conservative values stay home (Csata and Kiss 2003, 17; Csata, Dobos 2001). To put it more simply: Hungarians in the villages of focus closet themselves in ethnic, religious and cultural traditions.

Theoretical reflections

In order to conceptualize the process of changes following the collapse of the regime, we have to find a consistent framework of notions by which we can describe the social processes and the long term local ethnic cohabitation models. It is important to explain the relation of existing theories to the interpretations used for analyzing peasant cultures (Kotics 2011).

In the following, I refer to some of the meta-narratives used by researchers to analyze rural societies after the collapse of socialism. There are several narratives in the scientific discourse, the weight of which differ. In our point of view the theories of gentrification and of elimination of peasantry are of importance. Besides, as an alternative interpretational framework, we can also turn to the theories of acculturation and re-peasantry. We have to note though that the notion of the latter is not elaborate enough. Some of the international literature on rural communities can also be applied (Csite 1998).

There are several theories focusing on being locked into local ethnic, religious and cultural traditions. Here I will only refer to some of the most important ones.

Among the meta-narratives applied for analyzing the changes of rural societies, the ones on gentrification and modernization are the most elaborate. The application of these seems to be questionable in our research, therefore we have to find another theory. Some theories argue that the phenomenon shall be described along the lines of social networks and social capital (Lengyel and Szántó 1988; Orbán and Szántó 2005). From the current research on social capital, the researches of Robert Putnam and Michael Woolcock are worth mentioning here. They differentiate three forms of social capital, bonding, linking and bridging (Putnam 2000; Woolcock 2001). Bonding capital is based on trust, reciprocity and solidarity, and it is relatively closed. Linking and bridging capitals work toward

social advancement and mobility. The different capitals have different functions. Bonding relations, in the family, among friends and neighbours, function as safety nets. The balance of the capitals is important in terms of a person's social network. The predominance of bonding capital may restrict the forming and/or maintenance of linking and bridging relations (Messing 2006, 37).

The network model describes the social structure as the network of junctions and ties. The application of Granovetter's now pragmatic model of strong and weak ties seems to be plausible (Granovetter 1991, 371–400). In some cases the strong ties are important: risks and uncertainty strengthens the importance of strong ties. Strong solidarity though makes it possible for the person to take risks. In the lack of additional sources, in times of economic crises the family is the safest harbour against the unfavourable outside conditions (Angelusz and Tardos 1998, 241). Some researchers argue that, in times of increasing unemployment, crises and economic difficulties following the collapse of the socialist regimes, the protecting ties (mainly family and kinship ties) had an extremely important role in the individuals' lives (Angelusz and Tardos 1998, 237).

The familism paradigm reappearing in the national and international discourses on post-socialist changes also emphasizes the central role of the family. The model was firstly used by Edward Banfield for describing a South Italian mountain community after the Second World War (Banfield 1958, quoted by Torsello 2004). Current research points out that familism is an ideology and a social status as well (Dupcsik and Tóth 2008, 309). The notion of familism can be applied for the description of societies that have a low level of general trust and in which, as a result, family ties are the only relations proved to be trustworthy (Dupcsik and Tóth 2008, 309). In this view, familism as social status does not originate from the immanent family ties and family friendly attitudes, but from the relative strength of these ties. Additional social relations are weak, rare and mostly forced, the participants experience constant distrust and the society faces the permanent risk of destabilization (Dupcsik and Tóth 2008, 309).

The post-socialist Romanian society inherited a unique system of traditions of less and less but still significant influence. Familism based on strong family ties is present together with the familism present because of the deficit in general social trust (Dupcsik and Tóth 2008, 435).

Several studies point out that in Central and Eastern Europe the general trust in institutions and in interpersonal relations is low (Torsello 2004, 103). This phenomenon is usually explained as the result of the changes in 1989: post-socialist transformation and general uncertainty (Utasi 2002). Scholars of post-socialist societies agree that the distrust toward institutions is balanced by the privilege of trust toward family, friends and relatives (Torsello 2004, 103). Nowadays the only sphere expressing personal trust is the family. Since the state lost its socialist character, the family became the only source of help, trust

and safety for the rural population (Torsello 2004, 111). Davide Torsello points out that several anthropological studies show that the collapse of the socialist regime resulted in cutting off solidarity and social cooperation and in decreased community interactions (Torsello 2004, 112). In a study of a mountain community in South Poland, Frances Pine points out that most of the villagers ensconced themselves in their houses after 1989. According to her understanding, this phenomenon is due to the collapse of socialist farming. In the past, the role of women as economic providers and reproductive players in the society was strong. Nowadays, with the household being the place for everyday struggle for survival, the role of family is stronger, solidarity and cooperation among the members of the family are more important (Torsello 2004, 112).

The theory of familism has changed: it regards the revaluation of family ties as a rational adaptation strategy applied in times of instability in the post-socialist countries. In my view, the notion of familism can successfully be applied when talking about divergent strategies of life, ethnicity and locking up in ethnic, religious and cultural traditions in the local Hungarian communities of the Tövishát region.

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