Internal Diaspora – Assimilation – Formation of the Internal Diaspora

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Abstract. The expression 'internal diaspora' is a current term of our days for Hungarian minorities living in Central-Eastern Europe. There is no exact definition for the term. The definitions there exist contain a series of flexible (i.e., imprecise) elements. It is easy also because common people have experiences related to the internal diaspora and also interpretations of it. Some are not first hand experiences, but literary ones, e.g., reports on the linguistic extremities (the Csangos, for example). Usually the term is associated with a certain situation characterized by several disadvantages, and it is used with comments on social equity and morality in an associative or demanding tone, but always with an intention for "improvement". The present study is an attempt to compare assimilation in diasporas and internal diasporas and to describe the social psychology of the formation of internal diasporas.

Keywords: diaspora, internal diaspora, identity, assimilation, assimilational situation, melting pot

The expression 'internal diaspora'[1] is a highly fashionable term of our days. We use and abuse it. And it is easy to do so since there is no exact definition for the term. The definitions there exist contain a series of flexible (i.e., imprecise) elements. It is easy also because common people have experiences related to the internal diaspora and also interpretations of it. Some are not first hand experiences, but literary ones, e.g., reports on the linguistic extremities (the Csangos, for example). Usually the term is associated with a certain situation

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[1] The terms 'local diaspora' and 'ethnic diaspora' are used by some researchers to describe the same phenomenon. We opt for the variant 'internal diaspora'.

characterized by several disadvantages, and it is used with comments on social equity and morality in an associative or demanding tone, but always with an intention for "improvement".

And yet, there is no scientific standpoint even regarding the basic terms related to this phenomenon; specialized scientific texts hardly use it. Diaspora is different – that is a point of interest with sociologists, politologists, anthropologists and psychologists at the same time. But the diaspora, the existence and essence of integrated, migrating ethnic groups formed as a consequence of the movement of people from a nation or group away from their own country, is something different. Internal diaspora ('szórvány' as Hungarians call it) is (was) formed as a consequence of historical processes (new circumstances caused by cataclysms, borders that have been moved). In the case of the members of internal diasporas events that caused their minority status just happen(ed), while being member of a diaspora is a matter of personal choice even in cases when there was a political pressure that caused it. Internal diaspora is the phenomenon of living in the same place despite of a changed political and ethnical medium. Internal diaspora means undertaking continuity. The question is: for how long? For how long can people undertake to live in an internal diaspora? How long will (can) an internal diaspora hold on? On what terms can an internal diaspora continue, be kept alive?

Those who think this is an unimportant issue on the table of national politics, being a matter that regards only (small) communities living at the linguistic extremities, are utterly mistaken. Internal diasporas made up of members of a nation are the boundaries of that nation. And since the phenomenon of internal diaspora is a non-static one and the formation of internal diasporas is a process, the conclusions are quite obvious: the linguistic and national borders are constantly moving along with the movement of the internal diasporas belonging to that nation. The question arises: is there any nation without internal diasporas? It is a question that ought to be asked despite the fact that no other European nation except Hungarians has a term for that phenomenon.

For one hundred years now, since American writer Israel Zangwill formulated (in 1908) the concept and metaphor of the melting pot, the diaspora has been a leading topic of social sciences. It took half a century to become obvious that no matter how good natured the discourse on that concept was it was still a social dead end. Ever since, assimilation is an important topic not only of social psychology, but also of political philosophy. The topic has several points of interest: what kind of changes do worldwide migrations induce within the host society, how long can newly comes identify themselves as foreigners – what

kind of relational strategies and social systems result from the state of "being an outsider within"?

If some of the European nations – mainly the Germans – did not find it necessary to present a specific life situation and a political issue to public discourse and to the sciences by dealing with the term of internal diaspora, that does not mean the topic should be a menial one for Hungarian social scientists as well. Still, this is the case. For contemporary discourse on the topic of internal diasporas can be called everything – moral, social, political – but scientific. Although Milton Gordon's classical theory on assimilation was followed by a series of new and highly regarded theories, there is no general theory of the formation of internal diasporas – i.e., of the assimilation in internal diasporas – until this very day.

Therefore the present study is an attempt to compare assimilation in diasporas and internal diasporas and to describe the social psychology of the formation of internal diasporas.

Diaspora and internal diaspora

Rogers Brubaker, an American sociologist familiar also with the situation of the internal diasporas in the countries neighbouring Hungary, has recently written an important roundup article on diasporas (Brubaker 2005). The article shows that even the greatest minds of nationalism theory, social psychology and anthropology (A. Cohen, J. Clifford, B. Anderson, G. Baumann, W. Connor, St. Hall) tackled this subject, which thus gains a more and more complex meaning and interpretation. That is not surprising at all given the fact that we live in a world of increasing migration, where it is important to find out whether the state of diaspora will come to an end, whether there is such a thing as "perfect" integration.

It is more and more difficult to answer the basic question due to the fact that the concept gains ever new meanings. Referring back to the literature of the field, Brubaker mentions besides the classical ethnic diasporas also the Yankee, white and liberal diasporas. The author quotes a relatively new analysis, according to the findings of which the concept of diaspora has 45 different meanings in the discourse of the various humanities and social sciences. The interpretations of the term have come up with diasporic consciousness, diasporic identity, diasporic nationalism, diasporic networks, diasporic culture, diasporic

religion – and so on[2]. This is hardly surprising if we take into consideration what the movements and networks of our globalized world are. And this kind of examples will take us directly to the question: if every kind of difference constitutes a diaspora, what is diaspora in fact? Seeing the various situations that correlate with this term, one could expect also what Brubaker is warning against, i.e., although the example of the Jewish people is basic to analyzing the term of diaspora, this model is quite limited and unfit for the interpretation of a series of new situations.

Since the 1960s a prestigious international professional journal has been dedicated to the topic: *Diaspora – a Journal of Transnational Studies*. It would be well worth reviewing some of the articles presented here as a proof of the variety of the contemporary literature on diaspora. But I will refrain from that for now and I will only mention a comment regarding the existence of the journal: the mobilization potential of the diasporas is growing into a timely topic of today's politics. Social movements of the present day show that migrants find it more important to represent and maintain the elements that differentiate them from the host society than to be accepted and to integrate into the host society as fully as possible. B. Anderson opines even that in many cases diaspora can be interpreted as "long term" nationalism (Anderson 1998) – which, once accepted, will take us into a new dimension.

In his article Brubaker asks: how can we define diaspora, what are its *defining elements*? He names three of them: territorial dispersion, an orientation towards the native country and preservation of boundaries. I will not discuss territorial dispersion – that is quite obvious. As for the orientation to the native country, it can imply the actual, physically existing country or an imaginary and idealized entity. The goal is to cherish and protect the collective memory of the native country, regardless of whether this also means a living cultural relationship or not. The third element shows that members of the diaspora wish to preserve and maintain their original identity, which is different from that of the host society, they wish to resist assimilation by the host society. Most assumptions and dilemmas regard the modalities in which the various communities interpret the limits that protect their separate identity and the

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[2]Here is a quotation enumerating the concepts: "There is the adjective 'diasporist', designating a stance or position in a field of debate or struggle. And there are the adjectives 'diasporic' and 'diasporan', which designate an attribute or modality – as in diasporic citizenship, diasporic consciousness, diasporic identity, diasporic imagination, diasporic nationalism, diasporic networks, diasporic culture, diasporic religion, or even the diasporic self (to enumerate only some of the most common conceptual pairings found in recent academic articles)."

elements these limits are made up of. And yet we have to ask also what the features that turn these walls into porous, permeable entities are? How long can this state last? What will be the result of such an attitude considering the world-wide migration processes going on today?

Due to the discourse on the topic of diaspora, the term gained multiple meanings. Theoretical writings use the concept with various meanings in various contexts. It can refer to an actual community, in an abstract sense to a state of being, it can also name a process (diasporization, dediasporization) and a specialization (diasporology – diaspora research).

Brubaker refers in his article also to the situation of the Hungarians, bringing it as an example, a particular case when diaspora was created not by the migration of the (members of the) community, but by the redefinition of the borders[3]. This takes us to what I have mentioned before: although Brubaker was a professor at the Central European University in Budapest and thus had the chance to gain a personal experience on the difference in meaning between diaspora and internal diaspora, he does not consider it important to mention in the English context he communicates in that the two situations differ in more than their initial cause and that there are further differences between the two life situations, which also define the different characteristics of the situations.

I will continue now by reviewing the interpretations of the Hungarian authors regarding the concept of internal diaspora. Naturally, these authors do not compare diaspora and internal diaspora, for them the difference is so obvious that they do not even make any references to the diaspora. Let us see some of the classical definitions. The first one who ought to be quoted on this subject is Ödön Nagy. "Internal diaspora is the smaller or larger community or settlement of our brothers and sisters belonging to the same nation which came into being in the midst of people belonging to other nations or outside the centers of the compact Hungarian communities living in Romania, or which was preserved in territories that in some historical time used to be Hungarian territories. One of the defining elements in the meaning of internal diaspora is the idea of dispersion both territorially and at the level of community life and another, stronger defining element is that *communities defined as internal diasporas do not function as organic parts of the Hungarian community because of their reduced number and lack of organization*". (Nagy 1938)

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[3]"Diasporas have been seen to result from the migration of borders over people, and not simply from that of people over borders. Hungarians, Russians and other ethno-national communities separated by a political frontier from their putative national homelands have been conceptualized as diasporas in this manner."

Of course, Ödön Nagy analyzes the issue as a Transylvanian, and even if he does not explain it, it is quite obvious that he considers the state of internal diaspora a particular case of minority life. He assumes there is a compact mass of Hungarians (he uses a different expression) and regards internal diaspora as an opposite of that, something that differs from the compact mass. An important element in his definition is the reference to the lack of organization, which is probably meant to refer to the institutional background, or rather to the lack of such a background. He then continues to define internal diaspora in detail and goes on as follows: "Members of internal diasporas do not position themselves according to the focus of the main ethnic group, as iron powder finding the magnetic field lines, but function outside of the main lines of the main ethnic group and thus take no part in the nation-building process of this latter. They are nothing but a virtual number, a disorganized mass within the body of the ethnic community, which constitutes a burden to the nation; they do not have any consequent relationship with the body of the nation and its culture, and they can be regarded as a channel letting thousands of members of the ethnic group leak out from the body of the nation into the powerful stream of another nation every year."

My own definition of the internal diaspora is: "The essence of the internal diaspora can be rendered properly by a *politological* interpretation, i.e., that the internal diaspora is a state of daily decisions (Bodó 2005). This situation is present also when the member of an internal diaspora does not think of it, does not care for it, since it functions in each of their conscious and involuntary decisions from the language they use to the life partner they choose, from the friends they make to the workplaces they select. The background and context of each decision is the fact that members of internal diasporas cannot live as completely free social beings for they do not benefit from the natural feeling of being among those of their own kind, for they are being surrounded by members of another ethnic group living there in a compact mass – they are under constant pressure. And that is the reason why the internal diaspora becomes a medium which favours assimilation. And also this is the context where the process of formation of local communities ending in taking up the language of the majority as main language, in leaving behind their own culture or even in ethnic adaptation becomes important. One cannot eliminate this constant urge for alignment from the lives of people. And these are circumstances which ought to be taken into consideration also by researchers of the field and internal diaspora attendants." (Bodó 2007)

So if we want to make progresses in describing internal diasporas, we need to study assimilation. How can assimilation processes of internal diasporas be

described (or formation of internal diasporas, if we want to use a more friendly term), do they have any particular features and if so, what are these?

Assimilation

The *Cambridge Dictionary* gives three synonyms for the term *to assimilate*: *to take in; to fit into* and *to become similar*. These three terms are a clear sign that in the English world-view there is no difference between the active and passive nuances of the process of assimilation. The English term contains also the Latin and German approaches. Or, to put it more precisely, English applied the conclusions of German philosophical tradition to the descriptive meaning of the Latin term. But despite of all appearances the situation is far from being so unambiguous, there is a great deal of confusion in what assimilation means, which shows also in the usage of the term in modern social sciences.

Assimilation is a contradictory term: we think we know what assimilation means and yet its theoretical frame changes over time. There are an increasing number of signs that the classic interpretation of the term is in need of a revision. A general interpretation of assimilation would usually be that it is an ability of an ethnic majority to take in and to form into its own image another community of different culture (and language) living in the same area and having a minority status. There are also cases when the minority forms the majority into its own image – as it happened in some of the formerly Saxon Transylvanian villages when the Gipsies constituting the majority took over many of the features of the traditional Saxon culture of the minority, (Biczó 2004: 19) but these are usually the exception.

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* (Marshall 1998) assimilation can be conventionally interpreted as a subordinate community taking over the values of the dominant community and thus integrating into the latter. More recent interpretations (Yinger 1994; Alba and Lee 1997) state that integration does not necessarily mean disappearance of the ethnic differences and boundaries, but besides taking over the general values of the host culture the minority community can maintain its particular, differentiating values.

Assimilation is a particular process of socialization and individualization, a type of identification when the individual does not interiorize (build into his own personality) simply an attitude, a value, a behavioral culture etc., but also the emotional, intellectual, volitional, cultural, political etc. values of another nation. This means he parallelly draws away from his former national identity, which is already built into his personality and constituted his former

self (Gordon 1964, Horowitz 1975). He draws away, not breaks up with everything specific to his former national identity. Human personality is not a board which can be simply wiped clean of all the signs and formulas formerly written onto it so that these could be replaced with new interests, evaluations and values specific to the conscience, emotional and voluntary patterns of another nation. Despite of this fact we need to speak of the highly controversial term of assimilation of the national features so difficult to describe in scientific terms, but still unquestionably present. The parallel process of dissimilation, i.e., "taking off" the former national identity and assimilation, i.e., taking over the new values is a great intellectual, voluntary and emotional performance, some even call it a second birth.

One of the classic figures of assimilation research, Milton Gordon expresses that this process can be described with three terms with very similar meaning: *assimilation, acculturation and incorporation.* All three describe the process when persons with various cultural backgrounds come into contact and during this contact form a context for a common cultural life (Gordon 1964). Sociologists prefer to call the process assimilation, while anthropologists rather use the term acculturation.

Assimilation as a state and consequence takes place in the case when a member/members of a "foreign" or minority culture take over the language, customs and values of the host culture. In this context *acculturation* means *cultural assimilation* and defines the opportunities gained by the assimilated person as a consequence of the assimilation as social (structural) integration. Describing acculturation as a solely cultural process can lead to misinterpretations since such a description would suggest that cultural integration can take place also as a process independent of the social network.

Assimilation *integrates*, it contains all the social and cultural changes characterized by accommodation, adaptation to and acceptance of the dominant culture. Acculturation is both a social and cultural event for the concept of culture implies the society which legitimizes it and confers it its meaning. Sociocultural changes defined by the terms assimilation and acculturation have an independent relationship. If we want to interpret them we could say acculturation is a special aspect of assimilation.

Recently, Brubaker has written a study on the problem of assimilation. According to this, the primary meaning of assimilation viewed from a general and abstract perspective is increasing resemblance and correspondence. Not sameness, but resemblance. To assimilate (as an intransitive verb) means to *become* alike, which leaves us with assimilation as a process of becoming alike, forming to be alike and treating alike. From an organic point of view, to assimilate

means "to turn something into an entity having the same pattern as the agent's own nature, [...] to incorporate into a system, to integrate" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). In this respect assimilation means complete incorporation. In the case of the general and abstract meaning the process was more important than the result and that allowed degrees of assimilation. Assimilation in that respect meant *a direction for the change taking place* and not a certain *degree of similarity*. The "forming to be alike" meaning of the verb "to assimilate" refers to the state policy and programs of forced assimilation, to political goals and programs which set as a target to assimilate people against their own will[4].

For a long time now one of the key concepts of public speech and current politics is differentialism, the need for differences as opposed to universalism. This aspect, which marks the beginning of an era, was formulated by two well-known researchers of ethnicity, Nathan Glazer and Patrick Moynihan. In 1963 they put on paper a sentence that was going to become a classic in the field: "The main characteristic of a melting pot is its non-existence." (Glazer-Moynihan 1963) Immigrants of the 1970s, 1980s and of the beginning of the 1990s were faced with a new, liberal policy which admitted cultural differences (the policy of differentiation). Today pluralism has become a conventional concept. The situation turned so much in favour of differentialism that Glazer thought it was time to ask: "Is Assimilation Dead?" (Glazer 1993) But it seems that the liberal policy of differentialism, which was too keen on emphasizing differences, according to some, became outworn by the end of the 1990s and the demand for assimilation was in favour again. In Brubaker's opinion the cause for such a return was that the political attitude concentrating on pluralism became so strong that it threatened the existence of the host society, taking it to the edge of total disintegration. That is the reason for his statement that today we are witnessing "the return of assimilation"[5].

In a broad sense (becoming alike, imitation, acceptance, realization: quasi-assimilation (Biczó 2004)) assimilation and the history of its effects show the high complexity of the matter, due to which the problem of assimilation is not only a phenomenological question, but concerns also hermeneutics and the ethics of values and ought to be analyzed from those perspectives as well. However, I will refrain from that.

In conclusion, we could say that for the individual or the group living in a foreign culture *five strategies are possible*, all of which will result in an identity

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[4]See: Brubaker, Rogers: The return of assimilation? Changing perspectives on immigration and its sequels in France, Germany and the United States. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 24. vol. 2001. July. (Hungarian translation: Az asszimiláció visszatérése? In *Regio* 2002 no.1)

[5]See: Brubaker, op.cit.

of different components. In the case of *assimilation* the individual or the group will lose his original cultural features and will identify himself only by the features of the majority. In case of *double bonds* the individual or group will keep his original culture and will take over the culture of the host society as well, having in his identity elements from both the majority and the minority culture, one completing the other. As opposing assimilation the *dissociative strategy* can appear as well, in which case the individual or group will mainly define himself by the features of the minority culture. The essence of the *marginal strategy* is that the individual or group does not define himself either by the majority or the minority features, instead he will select a category of different type (i.e., his profession) to define himself. These four strategies can in fact be defined as positive identities for they are based on the definition of what one is. The fifth strategy can be defined also as a negative identity, in this case the individual is unable to identify himself with any dimension and goes through a "*long-lasting identity crisis*" (Erős 1998). The background for such instances is usually that the elements composing an individual's identity are not compatible and result in cognitive dissonance. If the dissonance can be solved, the individual will choose one of the positive strategies mentioned above. If not, the result is a long-lasting disharmony.

The assimilational situation – in general and in the internal diasporas

Before analyzing the assimilational situation I want to reflect to a generally valid issue. In the former subchapter I have mentioned Brubaker's much quoted article which talks about the return, i.e., the approval of assimilation. The reason for that is a fear in the host societies that plurality would lead to segmentation. And in this line takes there place also the rehabilitation of the concept of assimilation as we can well observe, its first component being that assimilation is raised to the status of an operation, it is its instrumentality that is emphasized. This is an attempt to counterweight the former concept of assimilation referring to those who see assimilation as an ideology. However, it is important to note that instrumentality presupposes a goal: actions lead by certain interests. Assimilation is an instrument of the majority society in its attempt to achieve its (secret) goal (hardly ever mentioned in the social discourse): i.e., stability. The minority society has a different view on this. In the case of the minority the goal – i.e., assimilational integration conferring stability – is related to the evaluation of a situation, i.e., in what circumstances do

courses of mobilization become accessible. Assimilation in the internal diasporas is therefore a reaction, an answer to a certain political and social situation implying both majority and minority components and both an individual and a group level. The fact that opportunities of social success are preconditioned by belonging to a certain group of people (identity) – for accepting assimilation means just that – opposes the ideals of both freedom and equality. Thus, rehabilitation of assimilation contrasts the basic values of our era.

According to Husserl, the relationship between the self and its environment can be described by the term "lifeworld" (Husserl 1984). Self-definition and personal decisions of the self are conditioned in this lifeworld. The lifeworld has various levels – cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic dimensions, in other words –, all of which can become the subject of the (sub)process of assimilation. The assimilant does not intend to take over another culture, but he simply acknowledges that in certain social situations taking over that other culture gives access to new courses in society.

The assimilant has an affirmative response to the situation for the response is formed under the influence of a certain community and political program, even if the existence and the characteristics of this program are partly hidden by sociocultural and political factors. Assimilation – just as the lifeworld – is an intersubjective issue, the process is triggered in both cases by environmental changes. The individual reacts to the contradiction between the initial features of his lifeworld regarded as natural and the – usually obscure and unclarified – perspectives of the future, defining his future actions by giving a series of iterative answers. Although his decision is made individually, it is not independent of the community. The basis for the community features of individual responses is that people realize that the same situation is applicable to others as well (Heller 1997). The points of reference here are the "I" ("us") and "you" ("you"- pl.), still the opposition is not between the assimilator and the assimilant, but the lifeworld defining the initial identity of the assimilant and the interpretation of the new (changed) situation in terms of the individual.

A defining element of the assimilational situation is the foreigner who "arrived yesterday and will stay for long" as Simmel's classic definition puts it (Simmel 1908). However, the question arises: Who is the foreigner in the case of internal diasporas? But this is not the place to discuss this aspect.

Classical tracts view assimilation as a negative phenomenon, as a process during which an initial value is lost. This is so only if the outcome of the process can be described as: A + B + C = A, i.e., if the dominant group (A) integrates minorities so that they leave behind their own values and behavioral

patterns and take over those of the majority (Schaeffer 1989)[6]. Specialized literature defines two methods of assimilation: forced assimilation and voluntary assimilation[7]. I am inclined to argue with that.

There is a question that cannot be avoided: can taking over of values be voluntary? What does it mean "by their own free will" in sentences like minority groups take over values of the majority by their own free will? I cannot regard this as a voluntary action. Voluntarity implies an unrestricted decision. I would call it voluntarity that I become part of a peer group as a teenager or that I choose something to spend my spare time on – all variants are equivalent, so the choice made by the individual shows a preference. I cannot apply this situation to assimilation. For example, when a youth living in the countryside has to enroll in the local school, which teaches members of the majority in the language of the majority, because his family does not have enough money to have him enrolled in the minority school in the town or at a considerable distance from his home, this is a decision made *under the pressure of social structures* and it initiates a process. This is also a kind of constraint, a kind of forced assimilation for the decision is not voluntary but forced in this direction by circumstances. In the program the individual sets for his life there is no such step as interim reprogramming of identity elements – and if this still happens, it means there is a circumstance that triggered it.

In the case of an internal diaspora there are no voluntary decisions regarding the course of one's life for structures of the local society, the institutional frame of the minority and the less wide opportunities, which never reach the level of the opportunities offered by the majority society, will always limit the possibilities for decisions[8].

In general we can speak of Boas' cultural relativism, we can accept that no culture has an absolute set of criteria that could be the basis for qualifying the actions of another culture as "beneficial" or "harmful". The members of every culture can judge their actions by the system of values of their own

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[6]Research on assimilation defines four basic types according to viewpoints like whether the assimilator or the assimilant community has the numerical majority, or who is the assimilator, the local community or the foreign one. In the case of the internal diaspora only the type discussed in the paper is valid. Even if it is more numerous, internal diaspora can only be an isolated community, and viewed from a higher level, that of microregion, this isolation no longer constitutes an opprotunity for social success.

[7]See G. Coltescu (ed.) Szótár plurális társadalmaknak (The Dictionary for Pluralistic Societies), headword: assimilation, http://tarstudszotar. adatbank.transindex.ro/?szo=106, downloaded on 7 February 2009.

[8]The restricted circle of opportunities for the minority is not a politically planned state of facts – it simply derives from the situation.

culture for members of each culture are both agents and observants in that culture. At the same time equivalence of cultures at a theoretical level does not automatically lead to a social equivalence between a dominant and subordinate culture. Compared to the minority, the majority has very different possibilities to live according to its own culture and preserve the values of its culture, to have a heritage. Assimilation is mainly the matter of this lack of balance and sometimes this is not a political matter, but an issue related rather to the institutional structure of a given society.

The subjectivity and free will of the individual is a basic feature and a precondition for assimilation to take place. For the individual "the other" is present on the problem horizon. In the course of communication various elements fit together, various elements are in contact and thus overlap occurs. It cannot be in any different way for willingness to cooperate is a precondition for having a social life. Differences have to be acknowledged and accepted. The ideal of society as sociocultural community lies within the differences (Dilthey 1974). Viewed as such, society can be understood as the intentional community of individuals who cooperate led by the experience of having in common some of their goals, plans and opportunities. Free will refers to the theoretical possibility of accepting differences – and yet individual decisions are not made "by free will". It is never incidental whose goals are the same and whose differ. This is always rooted in some action of the self-appreciation conditioning applied to "the other".

Assimilation theories

The first theoretical approaches to assimilation corresponded to the theoretical frame shaped by the metaphor of the melting pot, created by the internationalist Israel Zangwill (in his drama of 1908), and the ideology based on it. One of the first theoreticians of the field was Robert E. Park, who gave up journalism to become a sociologist. He created his "marginal man" theory in order to interpret the situation of people living at the border of two cultures. The theory studies the innovative patterns the foreigner who has just become part of a community uses to solve his conflicts with the host community (Stichweh 1993). The *assimilation model* created by him was for a long time a paradigm in the study of immigrant adaptation. Park stated that contact between people of various cultures leads to adaptation through competition and conflict, and results in assimilation. Assimilation means losing the former ethnic and cultural identity and thus fully integrating into the host society. This approach

states that assimilation supposes also a so-called process of *acculturation* in the course of which the immigrants change culture, i.e., they integrate into the host culture, and that is the price of adaptation. Park viewed assimilation as a linear process and considered it an inevitable consequence of the immigration of groups of various ethnic background – although in different cases it would happen in different rhythms and with different difficulty (Park 1928).

Park's theory of marginality was further developed by Robert K. Merton, who published in 1938 a hypothesis studying what happens when cultural conflict of groups and individuals becomes permanent due to the fact that the dominant culture refuses to integrate certain groups or persons. According to Merton's findings, "frozen marginality" is rooted in the discrepancy between cultural offers and the structural impossibility of accomplishing these, which results in anomia and deviance (Merton 1980).

While Merton draws the attention upon dangers, for the leading members of the famous Chicago school "the successful adaptation of immigrant groups to the host society" is a basic issue. I quoted the statement of A. W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole because in this context "successful" can be applied both to the individual/the group and the American society. This bipolarity based on an ideology is very interesting and it made a theory out of the opinion of those who stated that the future of American ethnic groups is limited since immigrants are integrated by the Anglo-Saxon Protestant cultural ethos[9]. We need to observe the complexity of this model for the idea and view of Americanization does not propose merely integration into the host society, but it is an option for a social model which proved successful all over the world[10]. In American textbooks the American lifestyle is presented as "the right to life, freedom and the pursuit of happiness"[11].

Milton M. Gordon has written his classic book, *Assimilation in American Life* (1964), under the influence of this view. According to Gordon, both individual and group assimilation has certain phases and these are as follows:

- acculturation
- structural assimilation
- marital assimilation

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[9]See: Warner, W. Lloyd & Srole, Leo (1945): *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups*, Yale University Press.

[10]In our days the interpretation of the phenomenon of Americanization underwent serious changes in the context and under the influence of globalization studies.

[11]See: Tóth Tamás (1996): Vulgármodernizmus és posztmodernizmus végletei között (Between Two Extremes: Vulgar Modernism and Post-modernism), In: *Lukács és a modernitás*, edited by Szabó Tibor, Szeged: A Szegedi Lukács Kör Kiadása, pp. 27-62.

- identification assimilation
- attitude reception assimilation
- behavior reception assimilation
- civic assimilation.

The Gordon model is one of the most frequently quoted assimilation models up to this day. It is a basis for comparison for nearly every later theoretical approach. The question arises whether this is a valid statement in view of the fact that the basic idea of this model has been controversial from the very beginning. I have mentioned earlier that Glazer and Moynihan questioned the validity of the melting pot theory already in 1963, one year before Gordon presented his theory, while three decades later Glazer was the one who wrote about assimilation that it was dead.

The key concept of the Gordon theory is acculturation. Several scientists attempted to define acculturation. I consider Kim's interpretation to be one of the most important definitions for he broadens the concept allowing social elements to become part of the process beside the cultural ones, an innovation that changes the division to stages of the process. According to Kim, the process of acculturation begins with the identification of the defining symbols of the host society. Then the immigrant familiarizes with these and projects them upon the values of his initial culture during the process of reception. So the process of acculturation is based on communication and it implies a continuous contact and interaction between the immigrant and his social and cultural environment (Kim 1985: 378).

At the end of the 1980s Gibson suggests using *integration* instead of assimilation (Gibson 1988) since, according to him, in the course of the majority-minority relationship accommodation settles in after the stages of contact and competition, and the process never reaches the phase of assimilation. This implies an *additive bicultural strategy* in the course of which the minority group participates to the (political) life of the majority society by also maintaining the values, the linguistic, religious and cultural traditions of his own group.

Hutnik (1991) deals with assimilation viewing it within the relationship of the majority and minority. He introduces the concept of *dissociative strategy* as a counterpoint to Gibson's term. Dissociative strategy means that the minority fully maintains its own culture totally disregarding the majority culture. In the process of acculturation the identity of the individual is made up equally of elements specific to the minority and majority culture. If neither cultural element dominates and the individual describes himself using none of these dimensions, we call it marginal strategy.

Gordon's one-dimensional model is more and more criticized for there is an increasing number of researchers who warn that an individual can become part of several cultures parallelly. Others criticize the concept of assimilation because it indirectly implies that the assimilant had a problem with the culture he was born into. The latest researches show that individuals are capable of joining in the cultural life of the dominant society and maintaining their own values at the same time and yet do not become marginalized (Berry, 1992; LaFromboise et al, 1993). What means that acculturation should be distinguished in its professional and casual meaning as well from assimilation, which is frequently its result, and also from *dissimilation*, which is the opposite of assimilation. In the process of acculturation the initial cultures are often preserved (sometimes as subcultures).

The concept of "middleman minority" is a minority/migrant strategy proposed by Blalock (1967: 79-84) and Bonacich (1972). Merton's *theory of social exchange* can be viewed as its precedent (first issue: 1949). According to this theory, individuals have contacts, transactions that are profitable to them. In this light members of a minority are considered to strive to lessen the disadvantages of their ethnic identity. Another precedent to this theory is the interpretation of Alfred Schütz (Stichweh 1993). He considers every culture as an impenetrable universe and as such suggests that the problem of minority/foreigner *marginality* is not rooted in the cultural conflict, but in the incomparability of the two cultures. According to Schütz, the orientation crisis of the foreigner is caused by some kind of structural and situational constraint, and by analyzing this situation he came up with the term "middleman minorities".

The concept of "middleman minorities" denominates migrants who, based on cross boundary ethnical networks, build up institutionalized positions in certain well-defined areas of the economy between the higher and lower social strata and stay out of the hierarchy due to their foreigner status. In these cases the orientation of the minority, i.e., their constant and strong connection to their native country and its economic life, is of the utmost importance.

The 1990s is a period of revival for assimilation research. In this period important questions and several categories of Gordon's model were analyzed.

The theory of *segmented assimilation* offered a theoretical answer to the migration waves of the 1970s. In that period immigrants were coming from (mainly Asian) countries and societies so different from the American society that they did not integrate into it despite of the considerable influence of the WASP (white – Anglo-Saxon – Protestant) society. These immigrants are the fastest growing segment of the population, they have considerably

changed the social composition, culture and policy of several great American cities. At present in the USA there live over 30 million people who were born in another country. Only in the period between the last two censuses (1990 – 2000) there arrived 11,2 million grown ups and their children which is 70% of the population growth. According to the latest estimates, there are over 60 million people of foreign origin (from the first and second generation) in the USA, which is 24% of the entire population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003). And what is more important: the immigration tendency continues to remain high.

A. Portes and M. Zhou (1993) identified three – segmented – adaptation patterns: straight-line, upward and downward spiral adaptation. Downward spiral adaptation means *cultural dissonance* and conflict, the immigrant marginalizes and creates a subculture. Other authors call the patterns differently, but interpret them in the same way (Wight 2005). Thus the three models are: 1) transition to the WASP main stream, the WASP society, 2) selective acculturation – individuals connect to majority culture, but continue to value their initial ethnic community and 3) *dissonant acculturation* – transition to a native minority "lower class". The first model is the "straight-line" assimilation, which is considered to have a high level human capital. I have already mentioned the advantages of the second model. In the case of the third model it is often signalled that the Gordon model does not work at all. The danger of this is the reason why many authors put down their vote for the second model. They see it as the only way tensions and conflicts entailing acculturation can be avoided (Portes, Rumbaut 2001: 313). In their opinion, it is mutually beneficial if minorities belong to strong cohesion communities and are still open to the culture of the majority.

Adherence to the native culture and the wish to preserve the initial culture in the case of second generation immigrants lead to the rethinking of the former theories. Acculturation is viewed more and more as a bidimensional construction. Some people consider it possible also to have multidimensional adherence. At the same time, the term acculturation is increasingly associated with that of enculturation (Rogler, Cortes & Malgady 1994). Enculturation means that the individual takes over and interiorizes the culture surrounding him through its objects, customs, models of action, behavioral patterns, styles of communication, the lexical aspect of the language, information, value and interest relations of the environment, through the medium of his immediate environment, his activities and actions in the course of socialization processes. During this process of enculturation the individual grows into a mature personality. In this respect enculturation is a kind of "growing into" the culture,

becoming a man of culture, it is the most comprehensive learning process, which helps people acquire basic abilities which are absolutely necessary for every individual in every society. It is a more general term than socialization, it renders individuals fit to integrate into the current society.

Special attention is needed for the interpretation of R. Alba and V. Nee, who propose a new theoretical frame and undertake to reformulate the entire assimilation theory (Alba, Nee 1997). They sustain that Gordon's theory had its merits, but it still has to be revised from the above mentioned points of view and several others. They build their analysis on the ethnic stratification theory of Shibutani and Kwan. The ethnic competition of the various groups goes on at different levels and channels, this is the basis for stratification. Communication has several strata as well, an individual and a group level, and in this latter case there is also stratification within and outside the group – which influences in every case the integration process. The main conclusion to be formulated based on this model is that even ethnic groups who were very hostile at the beginning learnt how to cohabit (Shibutani, Kwan 1965)[12]. The main thesis of Alba and Nee is that assimilation implies the disappearance of the ethnic differences and ethnicity, while these differences continue to exist. In the model they propose the various minority groups enter the majority institutions taking with them their former links and the culture of their community. At the same time, according to the Alba–Nee theory, the process of inclusion is incremental, i.e., the process gets stronger and quicker as it proceeds (Alba, Nee 2003).

Last but not least, I will quote the theory of Milton Yinger. According to his interpretation, the measure of assimilation in a certain environment can be defined by the intensity of four connected subprocesses (Yinger 1994). The four subprocesses are (cultural) acculturation, (psychological) identification, (structural) integration and (biological) interbreeding.

Acculturation is a process that appears when two or more groups come into contact and leads to an increased cultural similarity. The process affects to a greater degree the smaller and weaker groups or the immigrants, but it has an effect on all the interacting groups.

During the process of psychological identification individuals originating from different groups may think they are part of the same society, a new society that has grown out of the intermingling of the initial societies of the individuals participating in the process. These various processes have a cause-

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[12]I did not mention further elements of the theory of Shibutani and Kwan, e.g., that assimilation has a social and settlement dimension.

effect relationship with acculturation, integration and interbreeding, but they are separated from these from an analytical point of view. Changes in identification are not going only one way, they are not part of a one-way process headed toward a greater and increasingly integrating group. Both for the self and the other it is very important to distinguish between the levels of the conscious and the involuntary identification. It may so happen that the two levels do not correspond to each other, and this will become obvious precisely through the changes in circumstances.

Yinger means by integration the process of structural assimilation, during which people coming from two or more formerly distinguished lower level social units arrive to the level of common interactions. These interactions can be quite varied depending on concrete situations, e.g., from relatively impersonal relationships in the economic and political institutions to very personal relationships like good neighbours, friends or spouses. During these changes integration can occur at various times.

The formation of internal diasporas and assimilation

The overview of the specialized literature shows that the issue of internal diaspora is a specifically Hungarian issue. Despite this fact it is still surprising that in other Central and Eastern-European languages no specific term has formed to distinguish internal diaspora from diaspora. Especially that there is no nation in this area which does not have internal diasporas. In the case of Romanians there are nearly nothing but internal diasporas: in Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria and the Ukraine at least. Of course, the Moldavian Republic, which is an independent state, is another issue. So if a culture does not produce a specific concept to name a certain phenomenon, the reason for that lies within the world-view of that culture: it means the members of that culture do not regard that situation as a specific one (i.e., different from the diaspora, in this case) or that the entire situation is unimportant as far as they are concerned. It is demonstrated that the Hungarian, Romanian and German policy for minorities views the same problem very differently, emphasizing different matters (Bodó 2004: 178-186).

The subject of internal diaspora has been continually present in the Hungarian specialized literature of the past fifteen years. The issue was discussed at numerous conferences, at professional forums organized by universities and academic research institutions, by NGO institutions and sometimes even by political parties. In the past several years a number of volumes have been

published in the field; several publications of the Research Institute of Ethnic and National Minorities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences appeared in a separate series dedicated to the problem of internal diasporas.

I needed to mention these first because it is not clear to this very day whether the professional world wishes to distinguish between internal diaspora and diaspora or not. I want to quote two authors in this respect.

Györgyi Bindorffer is one of the well-known identity researchers of Hungary. I would draw attention upon her volumes on the Germans of Hungary, especially the one entitled *Kettős identitás* (Double identity) (2001). This volume contains the results of a research conducted on the ethnic identity components of the German community living in a small settlement (Dunabogdány, of approx. 3000 inhabitants, three quarters of which are Swabians) and the theoretical part on which the research was based. This volume is one of those I use frequently in my work for it is a good basis for comparison and a professionally reliable source of information. Despite this fact – or maybe precisely because of it – a question keeps arising in my mind: why does the author use as a theoretical basis for her work Gordon's assimilation model? Does this mean that Györgyi Bindorffer does not think it necessary to distinguish between internal diaspora and diaspora? Does she think integration at the level of internal diasporas and of diasporas are processes that can be dealt with using the same theoretical frame?

Gábor Biczó has published important studies on the research of both the internal diaspora and the diaspora (Biczó 2004, 2007). The practical and research part of his study in the field of assimilation research examines a Transylvanian internal diaspora. Half of the research report published in one volume is theory on the subject and I think it is one of the best summaries of the Hungarian assimilation literature. However this author does not think it necessary to distinguish between the assimilation in the diaspora and the theoretical frame of the internal diasporas either.

My opinion differs from that of these two excellent researchers, an attitude I have preserved during my entire study. I am compelled to state also that the theory of internal diasporas has not been born up to this day. I consider this a serious theoretical challenge and, as a continuation of the present study, I intend to create a model in order to trace the theory of the process of formation of internal diasporas.

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