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A "Stranger" Researching Narratives in Southern Slovakia: Hungarian Minority Research by an Anthropologist Who Is Not "At Home"

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Abstract. This paper considers methodological questions regarding cultural/social anthropological research in multiethnic fields. Specifically, I attempt to reconsider the possibility of anthropological research by a "stranger" based on a research that I—a Japanese anthropologist—conducted in southern Slovakia. Anthropology originally developed as the study of other cultures; in some European countries, however, most anthropological research is conducted by anthropologists who are "at home". For Slovak and Hungarian researchers, the Hungarian minority has been a common research target; therefore, many inhabitants, both ethnic Hungarians and Slovaks, have already experienced social research as subjects. Some interviewees get use to present a narrative expressing how they think about a certain topic. This research condition points to a fundamental question in the interviews of anthropological research. In this paper, therefore, my research experience is described to analyze reflexively my research position in the field.

In fact, it is difficult to theoretically define the boundary between "at home" and "stranger"; the difference depends on the context of each study. Anthropologists need to interpret their narratives by considering the results of participant observation and reflexivity in the research. "Stranger" anthropologists might have the advantage of noticing informants' reflexivity in their narratives. This discussion can, in turn, become part of an ongoing process by which inhabitants' interactions with researchers create new master narratives in the field.

Keywords: anthropology at home, minority, reflexivity, narrative, stranger

Introduction: the position of ethnographic research by a foreigner

Ethnic Hungarians make up the largest minority group in Slovakia, accounting for almost 8.5%[1] (2011) of the country's total population. Most Hungarians live in southern Slovakia. This is because they have mostly remained in the same region since the period when the current territories of Slovakia and Hungary were ruled as a single country. The ethnic issue concerning Hungarian minorities is well known in Slovakia.[2] The mass media have spread various kinds of information regarding "ethnic conflict" between Slovaks and ethnic Hungarians. Political debates regarding language laws, nationality laws, and other minority-related concerns have frequently arisen.[3] The Hedvig Malina (Hedviga Malinová) incident, which transformed from a claim of violence to an ethno-political affair, has remained a controversy in Slovakia since 2006. The unveiling ceremony for a statue of Hungarian king St. Stephen (István) in Komárno nearly became a diplomatic issue in 2009.

I have conducted field research in southern Slovakia as a Japanese anthropologist who speaks Slovak.[4] Most ethnic Hungarian and Slovak informants emphasize their peaceful multiethnic community life in southern Slovakia despite frequently reported incidents of ethnic tension between Slovaks and Hungarians (Kambara 2015a, 2015b). While we can respect these realities described by informants, we should be more sensitive to their narratives reflecting the research surroundings. Most informants understand why researchers are interested in minority issues; they know that foreign researchers tend to believe some ethnic conflicts exist. In fact, the Hungarian minority has been a common research target in Slovakia; therefore, they have already experienced social research as subjects. As such, they might be bored with the outsider perception of "ethnic conflict" and therefore might not talk about their real everyday lives. In my own research, the visible foreignness of a non-European researcher might give locals the impression of being "interviewed

1 The data for the national census of the Slovak Republic is available on the official website of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/home – last visit on January 26, 2017).

2 I have published another paper that addresses in greater detail the situation of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia following the 1990s (Kambara 2014a).

3 I have published another paper that addresses in greater detail the Hungarian language issues in Slovakia (Kambara 2014b).

4 I did not speak Hungarian when I started this research in 2013 because my research career as a cultural anthropologist began with fieldwork in a Slovakian area in 2005. Since 2017, I have begun to use Hungarian in my field research. Therefore, my research language for this project was mainly Slovak, with supplementary English and Hungarian. My lack of skill in Hungarian was not a serious problem in interviews because most ethnic Hungarian community elites are bilingual. In terms of the issue with respect to participant observation, I address it in a later section of this paper.

by a stranger." This paper will therefore deal with the methodological question of cultural/social anthropological research in multiethnic fields. Specifically, I aim to reconsider the possibility of anthropological research by a "stranger" through my own research experience in southern Slovakia.

This research concern is tricky for anthropologists since cultural anthropology originally developed as the study of other cultures, especially those in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and South America. However, many anthropologists have also conducted research in their own countries. This style of anthropology has been called "anthropology at home" in methodological discussions since the 1980s–1990s (Jackson 1987a, Peirano 1998). Especially in Europe, many countries have traditions of ethnology and folklore research that investigates the culture of their own citizens; this continues to be a foundation of the current cultural anthropology in such countries (Schippers 1995; Hann 1987, 2007; Hann, Sárkány, and Skalník 2005). Therefore, the cultural anthropology of Europe has mainly comprised European anthropologists researching topics directly related to their own countries. Foreign cultural anthropologists are relatively marginalized among domestic scholars in Europe. Moreover, social research on current issues is pursued not only by cultural anthropologists but also by sociologists, political scientists, linguists, and educators. Such scholars conduct qualitative and quantitative research on domestic issues, including minority issues. Therefore, it is necessary for European cultural anthropology in particular to rethink the possibility of research by strangers.

In this paper, I examine the possibility of research by foreign anthropologists in terms of the following: 1) a researcher's foreignness as compared with the "anthropology at home" argument at the methodological level, 2) external influence on minority research, and 3) reflexivity based on informants' previous experiences of social research. To analyze my own research position in the field, I attempt to describe my research experience reflexively, including interactions with informants.

Narrative to a stranger?

Since 2013, I have conducted research in cities with a relatively high density of ethnic Hungarians.[5] Most of my fieldwork has been carried out alone, as this is typical of anthropological research. However, since I joined an interdisciplinary research project as a cultural anthropologist, I have also worked with other Japanese

5 I conducted research mainly in Dunajská Streda (Dunaszerdahely) and Komárno (Komárom). I also held interviews in other cities throughout southern Slovakia: Štúrovo (Párkány), Šamorín (Somorja), Rožnova (Roznyó), Kráľovský Chlmec (Királyhelmec), Košice (Kassa), and Bratislava (Pozsony).

scholars on interviews with important political figures.[6] The main purpose of the project has been to investigate Slovak–Hungarian ethnic symbiosis from historical, political, socio-pedagogical, religious-historical, and anthropological perspectives.

Some interviews were conducted quite officially. However, there are no significant differences in the main directions of narratives between individual interviews conducted alone and collective official interviews. These interviews showed me that there are several patterns of master narratives among the locals, which included the locals that were Hungarian-Slovak bilinguals as well as Slovak monolinguals. General examples of these master narratives include the following (Frič 1995; Kambara 2015a, 2015b):

– We live here peacefully—only politicians/extremists cause ethnic conflict.
– Common locals do not think about their ethnicity in everyday life. Therefore, ethnic conflicts do not arise.
– It is true that some Slovaks do not like Hungarians, but they do not live here.
– We were born in Slovakia and have lived together with Slovaks for a long time.

As mentioned earlier, in the interviews, local residents generally emphasized their peaceful lives in southern Slovakia. Of course, inhabitants are aware of the political arguments and the instances of ethnic tension. Many ethnic Hungarians have suffered from their collective memory of life under the Beneš decrees (Beňušková 2010, Šutaj 2015). Hate messages and vandalism in public places, including on the Internet, have been reported as well (Jablonický 2009, Orosz 2012). Although there are many causes provoking the image of "ethnic conflict", locals still told me of their peaceful everyday lives. The first narrative ("We live here peacefully—only politicians/extremists cause ethnic conflict.") is typically used to explain the contradiction between their peaceful lives and the reported ethnic conflicts. In my previous research, I considered the function of this peaceful discourse: they are not describing the facts of the community but are creating a community composed of those who can share in the peaceful narrative (Kambara 2015b).[7] In other words, they simply do not regard those who want to cause trouble as community members; they maintain peace in the communities with those who believe in peace.

6 My research includes 21 interviews I conducted myself, participant observations with small, informal interviews in local places, and 11 collective interviews held with some of my non-anthropologist colleagues, of whom half speak Slovak and half Hungarian.

7 I have added some explanation of this topic since the article (Kambara 2015b) is published only in Japanese. In that paper, important data included the practices of anti-Hungarian Slovaks (but not political activists) in southern Slovakia, in contrast to the Hungarian (and multiethnic) community. Usually, they have no communication with ethnic Hungarians. It is interesting that they also never complain about ethnic Hungarians in front of Slovaks who have family or friendship connections with the ethnic Hungarian community. This is because they want to avoid conflicts in their Slovak community. I concluded that the peaceful narrative is fragile but is still supported by such careful communications.

In this paper, however, I consider another possible factor in their responses: they want to reflexively present an ideal multiethnic community to a foreign researcher. Locals sometimes mentioned complaints about people belonging to other ethnic groups; however, they carefully explained that it did not come from their neighbors in the same community. For example: "I have many good Slovak friends, but some who are not southern Slovaks are intolerant of ethnic Hungarians when we make grammatical mistakes. They want us to speak perfect Slovak."

Some interviewees talked about people who engage in ethnic harassment, judging such people as being politically agitated and uneducated. They also explain that the political agitators come from outside of southern Slovakia (both Slovakia and Hungary). Obviously, the interview setting influences an interviewee's choice of words. Indeed, the mayor of an ethnic Hungarian-majority city spoke to me about previous interview experiences and admitted that interview conditions necessarily influence his responses: "Once, a member of the Venice Commission came here to hear about the Beneš decrees and the lived experiences of Hungarian speakers. At that time, a staff member from the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also sitting with them. I think this was not good a condition for an interview about minority issues."[8]

That might be an extreme case, but our interviewees might have also regarded us as a foreign delegation. Our interviewees could choose what and how they answered. It could be the case that respondents would tell us the truth but not provide full answers to our questions. In particular, minority elites or community leaders tend to be accustomed to speaking in official interviews.

Such anthropological methodological questions have been discussed for a long time. This is why anthropologists not only depend on interviews but also perform participant observation in their fieldwork. In his influential book on ethnographic research, *The Professional Stranger*, Agar (1996) suggests that an anthropologist should maintain a stranger's perspective in field research in order to analyze practices. However, he does not define the parameters of what constitutes a "stranger" (Agar 1996). Generally, the disadvantages of anthropologists "at home" as well as of native anthropologists have been more widely discussed. Such researchers tend to lose sight of cultural differences in their home field (Kempny 2012: 43). Sometimes their gender, religion, ethnicity, or social status can become a serious obstacle in their fieldwork; such researchers are easily embedded in the cultural and political context of the field (Jahan 2014). Nevertheless, they have also advantages, such as not needing to learn a new language or set of customs, as well as more opportunities to conserve financial resources for their research (Jackson 1987b: 8). Meanwhile, foreign researchers can face disadvantages as

8 Interview with the mayor of a city in southern Slovakia on September 12, 2013.

anthropologists, even though they are often regarded as unbiased.[9] Foreign researchers risk misinterpreting the meanings of local behaviors and are not necessarily objective when they live with informants in the community through their fieldwork.

Although the term "anthropology at home" has been widely used in cultural anthropology, the definition of "at home" is not fixed. Usually, it simply refers to researching within one's national territory. Research subjects can include both majority and minority cultures. For example, much of Brazilian anthropology could be called anthropology at home, though it includes plentiful studies of indigenous people (Peirano 1998). Norwegian anthropology also includes studies of Sami and migrants (Eriksen 2009). Generally, Roma people and non-European migrant communities are common research targets in European anthropology at home. In these cases, the researchers could very well be strangers at home.

In addition, the term "native" complicates the meaning of "at home." This is due to the crossing of two different contexts: the tradition of European ethnology and the emergence of native anthropologists from non-Western postcolonial countries. Some anthropologists emphasize the term "native anthropologist", usually in specific cases where non-Western researchers studying at Western universities study their home countries. However, other researchers use the term "at home" in the same situation (Jahan 2014, Mughal 2015). British-Polish anthropologist Kempny defined herself as a Polish native when she conducted research in a Polish community in Northern Ireland (Kempny 2012). She used the term "native" because the Polish community in Northern Ireland was not her home. Her definition of "native anthropologist" is distinct from the postcolonial sense. The concepts of "at home" and "native" are both too broad in the contemporary globalized world for a researcher to conclusively align himself or herself as such. At the theoretical level, it is difficult to define the concept of "at home" as opposed to a "stranger" in anthropological research. However, in the case of southern Slovakia, at the methodological level, a "stranger" could be distinguished as a non-Slovak and non-Hungarian foreigner. Hungarian minority anthropologists could be regarded as natives. However, it is difficult to judge the boundary of an ethnic Hungarian researcher since some Slovak and Hungarian scholars have backgrounds as Hungarian minorities in Slovakia.

A simple way to examine differences in informants' reactions is to compare research results obtained by foreign and domestic researchers. The abovementioned peaceful narratives do not only appear in my research. In fact, previous qualitative studies have also characterized local communities as having peaceful, multicultural everyday experiences. Such authors are not only Slovaks and Hungarians (Botíková, Navrátil, Őllös, and Végh 1994; Frič 1993; Lukácsová and Kusá

9 Actually, our previous research results (Ieda 2014, Ieda and Nagayo 2015) are understood as an objective approach in the book review of a Hungarian journal (Gyelik 2016: 165).

1995; Macháček, Heinrich, and Alekseeva 2011) but also researchers from other countries (Ellen 2003, Torsello 2003). In particular, only the research of Botíková et al. (1994) mentions some conflicts between Slovak and Hungarian inhabitants in the community. That project involved collaboration between ethnic Hungarian and ethnic Slovak researchers; thus, they might have been able to easily obtain such stories from locals. Yet, that is not enough to determine whether the results might have been influenced by the researchers’ ethnicities. I did not obtain similar results in ethnographic research on Hungarian minorities in Slovakia. The Hungarian minority research institute *Fórum* publishes the social science journal *Fórum Társadalomtudományi Szemle* and the ethnographic journal *Acta Ethnologica Danubiana*. The former journal often covers minority issues but mainly from the perspectives of political science, history, minority education, and sociology using quantitative research. The latter focuses on the culture of everyday life among ethnic Hungarians but not always in relation to current ethnic relationships.[10]

Considering such diversity in researchers’ interests, researcher collaboration has strong potential for approaching reality in the field, as with the ethnographic research of Botíková et al. (1994). Similarly, American sociologist Brubaker studied the Hungarian minority in Romania and described the lives of ordinary people without ethnic conflicts under the salience of ethnopolitics (Brubaker, Feischmidt, Fox, and Grancea 2006). Brubaker’s ethnographic research was conducted in collaboration with researchers who included ethnic Hungarians and Romanians from Transylvania. Here, there is still the possibility of discussing research on Hungarian minorities from the perspective of a stranger. The authors made an effort to analyze ethnicity in everyday life through not only dialogues with informants but also through discussions with his co-authors (Brubaker et al. 2006: xvii). Even if opportunities for collaboration in research are limited by financial or organizational constraints, this can be overcome by researchers’ intensive efforts to discuss social phenomena among those whom the topics concern.

Influences in Hungarian minority research

As mentioned in the previous section, Hungarian minority researchers, including anthropologists and ethnologists, have published many studies. However, their focuses have been slightly different from interethnic relationships. The closest works I can identify are Árendás (2011) and Liszka (2003). The former one focuses on the hybridity of minority identity, while the latter one on the historical transformation of folk culture in southern Slovakia. It is understandable that

10 Hungarian minority researchers have also published many ethnographies, but not all of these deal with actual interethnic relationships (e.g. Liszka 2003, Juhász 2005, Keményfi 2002).

some research interests cannot be shared between strangers and researchers "at home". This is because foreign anthropologists sometimes describe phenomena that are too natural or common for them to discern new findings. In addition, we should also consider that the minority issue itself is located in a certain political context as an actual problem. Some topics are quite sensitive to study, especially when the researchers themselves are involved in the problem.

Greek-Jewish anthropologist Kravva, who studied Jews in Greece, explained the difficulties of neutral descriptions within the wider political context of Jews (Kravva 2003). Academic inquiry into national cultural origin sometimes connects with another type of politics. Cotoi (2013) highlighted the example of the small ethnic/religious minority group *Csangos* in Eastern Romania, which is involved in the cultural politics of Hungary, Romania, and the church; it is difficult to clearly define this group as either ethnic Hungarian or ethnic Romanian. Hungarian minorities could sense a risk of being involved in political conflicts based on their research results on contemporary multiethnic communities.

On the other hand, some specific topics—such as minority education and the language choices of inhabitants—are studied quite well by other disciplines, even though those topics are political enough to relate to minority rights (Dolník and Pilecký 2012, Győriová-Baková 2015, Lampl 2015, Tóth 2003, Vajda 2010). Social research on minorities is relevant to their actual problems in Slovakia and useful for improving their condition. The *Fórum* institute, established by ethnic Hungarians as an NGO, is a center for minority research and also provides opportunities for collaboration on policy-making based on their research results.

In addition, applied anthropology, which emphasizes social engagements in the field, is also becoming influential in Europe. Norwegian anthropology is closely linked to public engagement within Norwegian society (Eriksen 2009, Howell 2010). In Slovakia, this still has not spread completely. British anthropologist Okely, who studies Roma in Europe, remarked that Roma studies are inevitably connected with political commitment since the Roma is a matter of social inclusion (Okely 1987: 2015). The highly social concerns regarding research on Roma should be evaluated as applied anthropology, but Okely also notes that such debates also marginalize anthropological research on Roma (Okely 2015: 350). If cultural anthropologists engage more actively with social matters, their roles may become close to those of policy designers who manage practical details. Many European anthropologists are also concerned about how research fundraising would influence the direction of anthropology (Papataxiarchis 2015, Gregory 2015, Miller 2015, Okely 2015). If this tendency is strengthened, only subjects that anthropologists can approach as actual social problems (e.g. migrants, other ethnic or religious minorities, gender, or regional development) can be pursued to continue their studies. Nevertheless, other subjects are also essential for deeply understanding a social phenomenon such as culture.

These issues regarding anthropology at home can promote diversity in research interests among local and foreign researchers in Europe. This is because it is difficult for domestic anthropologists to ignore the demands of their own countries. Current diversity in research interests can reflect the differing perceptions between Hungarian minorities and others. The possibility exists for a stranger anthropologist to relativize or rethink the issues as a culture within these contexts from another position.

Reflexivity in research

Most anthropologists avoid directly asking about interviewees' identities because, based on postmodern ethnicity discourse, we understand the difficulties of distilling the nature of ethnic identity from informants' narratives (e.g. Brubaker 2004). However, ethnic identification is a common topic in social research, and it is an important question in the national census, which can count the number of Hungarian minorities. People can answer this question by using the corresponding information. As discussed earlier, various kinds of qualitative and quantitative social research has been conducted by mainly domestic researchers in southern Slovakia. This means that a large part of the Hungarian minority has had the experience of being a research subject. Such experiences have formed their unconscious perceptions of themselves.

A discussion of identity spontaneously occurred during a collective interview, which was conducted as a roundtable discussion with local ethnic Hungarians (teachers, a doctor, a historical researcher, and a local government worker). The following discussion[11] was prompted by a question from my Japanese colleagues:

> A: We should have ethnic consciousness and pride. We speak Slovak and understand Slovak without a problem. Many students successfully study in high schools and universities in Slovakia. However, some ethnic Hungarians have such disappointing experiences that when we do not know something about Slovakia or cannot explain ourselves in Slovak, Slovaks criticize us, saying, "Why do you not know it in Slovak? You were born in Slovakia, you should know it." We are not Slovaks, and Slovak is not our mother tongue. We should be proud of our education as a Hungarian minority in order to not be too hesitant in Slovakia.

11 This discussion occurred on September 7, 2016. The excerpted dialog was in Slovak, except the parts of A, who spoke in Hungarian, while B translated it into Slovak. A is a teacher in a local school, B is a historian at the research institute who helped organize this discussion, C is a doctor, and SN (Susumu Nagayo) and TN (Tatsuya Nakazawa) are Japanese colleagues of mine.

S. N.: Is it possible to imagine a dual or mixed Slovak-Hungarian identity?

B: Yes… It is possible, we understand it…, but….

T. N.: According to my survey (Nakazawa 2012, 2014, 2015), many ethnic Hungarian students identified their identity as being "Hungarians in Slovakia" or mixed "Slovak-Hungarians". What do you think about that? Do you think this is an exceptional case for university students?

B: ….I understand it, but it is difficult to explain…. Once, I also explained the same thing to another Slovak professor…. I can also say "Hungarian in Slovakia", of course, because both cultures are similar, and we have lived together with Slovaks for a long time. Also, we feel a difference from Hungarians from Hungary. We are more tolerant and more patient because we always feel some pressure as a minority.

(…)

S. N.: How do you think about European identity? Both Slovaks and Hungarians are members of the European Union. Don't you think that European identity becomes an option for a solution to manage identity problems?

C: Citizenship and ethnic identity are different…. Ethnic identity does not change. Even it is impossible for me to have a dual identity.

S. N.: You speak Slovak fluently, but you do not regard yourself as having a dual identity?

B: That is why I say I am a Hungarian in Slovakia. My spirit is made up of what I inherited from my family. Slovakia as a state is important for us because we live here. But Hungarian identity is also important for us.

There are two remaining points in this discussion. The first concerns the difficulty the interviewees had explaining their own identity; the second concerns minorities' reflexive reactions to research. In this discussion, some attendees did not answer questions directly. My colleague directed questions to *A* and *C*, but *B* answered instead because the others were embarrassed. *A* talked eagerly about the necessity of minority education as a teacher but did not answer questions about her identity. The nature of their identities was not easily conveyed by the term "dual identity" or mixed "Slovak-Hungarians". *B* eventually chose to

use the expression "Hungarians in Slovakia", and she seemed satisfied with her explanation.

Minorities' reflexivity, as I indicated in my second point, is also important in this case. *B* discussed her ethnic identity in place of other attendees and remarked that she had already explained it for another minority research project. (I imagine she only wanted to say this to express the difficulty of describing minority identity.) Many minority elites have likely had similar experiences. Social research not only investigates people but also gives them an opportunity to present a narrative expressing how they think about a certain topic. In other words, locals usually do not have opportunities to verbalize their concept of identity in everyday life. The provisional expression "Hungarians in Slovakia" can therefore be understood as a compromised selection from a vocabulary developed through the experience of being research subjects.

However, it is questionable whether such an identity narrative is effective in the community. The current community is not a holistic or organic monolith. Research on minority groups involves the paradox that ethnic boundaries have never been defined, especially in the margins of their community. Some researchers have already noticed this ambiguity in the boundary of the Hungarian minority. A. Gergely (2014) insists that the Hungarian minority was politicized and that the cultural meaning of "minority" has been weakened under the processes of globalization and Europeanization. Árendás (2011) notes the hybridity of identity between Slovaks and Hungarians in cases of ethnically mixed-marriage families. These studies describe the contemporary reality of minority communities from a new perspective, which local inhabitants themselves may find difficult to generalize.

For anthropologists, informants' narratives are only part of the reality in the field since people cannot always articulate their experiences and feelings. To account for this, anthropologists frequently interpret locals' actual practices through participant observation. In my research, the effectiveness of participant observation was limited because of my inability to understand Hungarian. This is a limitation of the paper; however, I attempted to conduct in-depth interviews so as to gain the fullest possible understanding of their practices. For my main informants among community elites, I asked for details about their careers and workplaces, their cultural or political activities, the personal backgrounds of their current positions, and so on. Those data were useful for understanding the details of their peaceful lives. Meanwhile, many ordinary people also showed unconcern for ethnicity. The narrative in which minorities were not interested in their own identities was confusing because it was hard to ignore the objective phenomena of ethnic tension. Weakened identity, as noted by A. Gergely (2014) and Árendás (2011), is hard for people to express. Researchers are often blind to the difference between what they are able to understand and what interviewees want to convey. The discourse on

peaceful community life and unconcern for ethnicity also reveal the existence of their agency in reacting to minority research. This could reflect a resistance by the minority against the notion that they should express their identity to strangers. In this case, "strangers" are those who come from outside of the Hungarian minority community, including Slovaks and Hungarians not from southern Slovakia.

Conclusions

In this paper, I have aimed to rethink the possibility of anthropological research by a "stranger". In the field of cultural anthropology, it should be obvious that research involves understanding a culture by relativizing it from another cultural viewpoint. However, this assumption is not effective in a field in which anthropologists at home are the majority, as it is the case in Central Europe. Theoretically, as I have argued, the boundary between "home" and "stranger" is losing its effectiveness, especially in the case of minority research. Aside from the researcher's position in field research, cultural anthropologists should consider reflexivity based on the influence of informants' previous experiences as subjects. "Stranger" anthropologists may have an advantage here because they tend to carefully examine the context of each phenomenon. Foreign viewpoints have the potential to collaborate with local researchers.

The capacity to describe cultural reality is one distinguished advantage of cultural anthropology. However, such ambiguous details are hardly shared among inhabitants' narratives. The discourse of a peaceful community life and the unawareness of ethnic identity reflect parts of minorities' realities, but these are too simplistic. Anthropologists need to interpret these narratives considering the results of participant observation and reflexivity in the research. This discussion, in turn, will become part of an ongoing process by which inhabitants' interactions with researchers create new master narratives among ethnic Hungarians.

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Additions to the Migration of Szekler Youth[1]—an Overview of Statistical Data and Existing Literature

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Abstract. This paper aims to summarize the migration processes affecting Szeklerland based on the available official statistical data and the main results of the sociological and anthropological studies regarding the region. Emigration has been present in Szeklerland for more than 150 years. Measuring the extent of international migration—because of the significant illegal migration—is always problematic. The recording of migration in Romanian statistical data is clearly deficient. In estimating the extent of emigration, the most accurate are the international data. In the light of these, migrants of the two Szekler counties (Harghita and Covasna) can be put to approximately 12–15% of the population (62,000–85,000 people). The influence of migrants upon the emitting society is very significant: among secondary-school graduates from Sfântu Gheorghe (the biggest Szekler city), 58% have at least one person in the family with migration experience or staying abroad at the moment of the survey. Almost half of the migrant family members left for work. The most relevant destination countries are Hungary, Germany, Austria, Italy, England, and the USA. At the end of 2014, almost three quarters (72%) of secondary-school graduates from Sfântu Gheorghe were planning to emigrate in the near future. The causes and the consequences of migration in Szeklerland are multiple—they can be described with a combination of economic, incomplete, and transnational migration theories. And they can be completed with the concept of socialization deficit and the sense of personal deficiency it causes, which seems to be the primary motor of migration in Szeklerland.

Keywords: migration, Szeklerland, statistics, youth

1 The original, more extended version of this review was completed in 2015 as part of the „Székelyföld fejlesztésének és fenntarthatósági tényezőinek vizsgálata” [Study concerning the Factors of Development and Sustainability of Szeklerland] project of the Hungarian Research Institute for National Strategy in Budapest.

Introduction

Migration is a social process that affects the everyday life and the future of local population and communities of both the receiving and the emitting regions. It has been a well-known notion for a long time that Szeklerland[2] has been an emitting region for more than 150 years. Several waves of emigration are known during the last one and a half centuries with different destinations: from the mid-19th century to 1901 to Romania, at the beginning of the century, to the US,[3] between the two world wars, to Romanian towns across the Carpathians, after the Vienna Award, to towns in Hungary,[4] after collectivization, to the new towns, after 1985, mainly to Hungary and some Western European countries (Oláh 1996a).[5] After the fall of the communist regime, entirely new possibilities opened up for migration: on the level of the whole country, there was an increase and in the meanwhile a transformation of the rate and main parameters of emigration. This is why the region has been a very exciting terrain for studying migration.

In the last decade, as many sociologists point it out (ex. Castles & Miller 2009), humanity has reached a new era of migration. By now, at least 3 percent of the world's population can be counted as a migrant. Ravenstein's first and second classic laws of migration (Ravenstein 1885)—according to which migration processes develop gradually, following the logic of geographic proximity—seem to be overthrown (the development of technology, migration culture, development of migrant networks,[6] and cumulative causation[7] greatly contributed to these changes). This can be observed in both the increasing degree of migration from Szeklerland and the destination countries of the emigrants: instead of the so-called bumper-zone countries (between East and West) that were the

2 A smaller region of Romania including mainly Harghita and Covasna counties, where the majority of the inhabitants use Hungarian as their mother tongue.

3 Between 1901 and 1913, a number of 6,753 people from the Szekler counties settled permanently in the US (Venczel 1993—qtd. in Oláh 1996a: 15–36).

4 In the summer of 1989 in Hungary, 14,000 refugees (almost all of them Hungarians) were registered (Csepeli & Závecz 1991—qtd. in Oláh 1996a).

5 In 1980, a number of 2,864, in 1989, as many as 14,864 Romanian citizens asked for asylum in western countries (Horváth 2009)—based on data by UNHCR Asylum Applications in Industrialized Countries 1980–1999, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees—Population Data Unit.

6 According to Charles Tilly, migrant networks are such chains of interpersonal relationships that develop between migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination countries through family relations, friendships and links towards original, releasing societies (Massey et al. 2001). These increase the probability of international movement because they reduce the risk and cost of migration and increase the prospective benefits of the move. Migrant networks reach more and more layers of the releasing society and make the probability of an increase of migration bigger.

7 A good description of this can be found in the work of Massey and his coworkers (Massey et al. 2001).

main targets in the past, in the last decade, there has been an accentuated shift towards more distant countries of the continent, most importantly Germany, Italy, and England. Over time, the group of people attempting migration has also changed: while in the beginning Romanian migrants used to be highly trained, with a degree, coming from an urban background, and aged 30–45, in the last 15 years (after 2002), most of them tend to be unprofessional young people (aged 15–29) with a rural background (Horváth 2009). In the meanwhile, long-term migration was replaced by short-term relocation aiming at studying or working abroad, and the ethnic aspect of migration gave place to the economic one (Horváth 2004). All these confirm Ravenstein's fifth (larger number of rural migrants than urban ones) and eleventh law of migration (Ravenstein 1885), according to which migration is primarily caused by economic reasons. On the other hand, migration becomes more diverse compared to previous stages, the number of female migrants grows, and more social categories get involved (Horváth & Anghel 2009).

The present study is an attempt to describe the emigrants of Szeklerland, youth in the first place,[8] based on the official statistical data and the results of existing sociological and anthropological studies, keeping an eye on Romanian migratory trends on the country level, too. The questions I am trying to find an answer to are, for example: what is the approximate number of the people who emigrated from the Harghita-Covasna region based on incomplete and sometimes contradictory official statistical data and survey results? Is it the urban or the rural area, women or men, the older or younger age-group that produces most emigrants? Is it long-term or short-term (shorter than one year) migration that is more representative of the region? Which are the destination countries most appealing to the ones leaving the Szekler counties? Comparing to the numbers for the entire country, are Szekler migration rates higher or lower? What is the motivation for emigration?

The study consists of three sections: first, Romanian migration trends are sketched that draw the setting for the migration processes in the region; secondly, the available official statistical data are analyzed, evaluated, and iterated to the region in view; thirdly, an attempt is made to obtain the main results of the sociological and anthropological studies regarding the region. The study is concluded with a short summary.

Emigrational trends in post-communist Romania

For analyzing and understanding migration in Szeklerland, a sketch of the national migration trends is indispensable for the country that includes this

8 The most recent surveys used in the study target this age-group.

region. A discussion of migration theories would also be very important, but quantitative restrictions make it impossible to outline the theoretical approaches that were abundantly discussed by many;[9] so, only the necessary references will be made here.

The emigrational trends from Romania after 1989 will be summarized based on the report on the country's migration by Iris Alexe and his co-authors (Alexe et al. 2012). They divide the years passed since the fall of the regime into six stages according to the changes of migration patterns. Between 1990 and 1993, migration was mainly asylum seeking for ethnic (mostly Germans and Hungarians) and political reasons. Between 1993 and 1996, more moderate, shorter-term migration was the typical case (mainly because of Western-European restrictions)—during this period, most of the Hungarians worked informally in Hungary, the Romanians had many migrant workers in Turkey and Israel, and, in the meanwhile, there was a constant circular migration to France and Germany. At the beginning of the '90s, working abroad affected about 5% of the population (Sandu et al. 2006—qtd. in Bodó 2009a). Between 1997 and 2001, migration towards Western Europe increased (the one towards non-EU countries decreased) and new target countries appeared such as Italy, Spain, and the USA (this latter to a much smaller degree). By that time, migration had already been going on according to long-term, well-prepared strategies, most people getting there illegally; however, Italy and Germany start to develop legal recruiting policies. At this stage, the destination country typically becomes the natural residence, and migrants assimilate to the majority society. From 2002, the restrictive visa regime to European countries is lifted, which makes travelling abroad easier and reduces the risk and the cost of migration. As a result, between 2002 and 2007, emigration increases, the typical case continues to be long-term migration and the object is to settle down. More western countries, above all Spain and Italy, make legal long-term stay possible. This is when the rural and eastern regions of Romania join in massively to migration. Working abroad starts to affect large masses; approximately a quarter of the population is involved in this process (Sandu et al. 2006—qtd in Bodó 2009a).

From 2007, after joining the EU, emigration increases again and staying abroad becomes more and more formal and legal.[10] Generally, the intention is long-term migration; however, under favorable conditions, the majority would return to Romania. As a result of the economic crisis, the number of new emigrants is reduced (in 2009, much less people got a residence permit); at the same time, the recession[11] leading to high rates of unemployment did not

9 E.g. Massey et al. (2001), Sík (2012), Anghel and Horváth (2009), etc.

10 This regularization process can be well observed in Eurostat data, too. Thus, compared to 2006, the number of Romanian migrants living in the EU-27 area in 2007 is almost triple.

11 The effect of the economic crisis can best be measured on the remittances, which, compared to

convince too many to return home. Thus, in the following years, the number of Romanian citizens living in emigration remains high.

Migration in Szeklerland according to statistical data

The statistical data referring to migration will be discussed in two subsections according to the available sources and their relevance. First, a general picture of Romanian migrants is formed based on international data and, above all, the Eurostat database, and then the situation of short- and long-term migrants from Romania and from the two Szekler counties is sketched according to the final results of the 2011 census.

Romanian migration in international statistics

According to the Eurostat estimate of 2012, 6.6% (approx. 33 million) of the EU-27 population is of foreign citizenship, and 9.4% were born abroad.[12] It is well-known, however, that data concerning international migration are rarely accurate. This is clearly illustrated in the differences between the data in *Table 1*, which summarize, on the one hand, long-term (longer than one year) legal migration recorded by Eurostat and, on the other hand, permanent migration (officially registered permanent residence abroad) recorded by INS (i.e. Institutul Național de Statistică/National Institute of Statistics, Tempo time series). The discrepancy between the two official statistical data is too big to presume that so many return to the country. Thus, the opinion of Romanian migration experts (e.g. Horváth 2004, Kiss 2013) that the Romanian National Institute of Statistics records less than 10% of external migration seems well founded. International statistical data regarding migration is much more reliable.

The most important data source in a country is the census. If we look at the year 2011, we can see that the final census data from Romania keep record of 1,113,269 emigrants (short- and long-term). However, according to international databases (data and reports from different member countries), Eurostat estimates a number of 2,321,558 Romanian migrants living in EU-27 countries,[13] which is a little more than double the Romanian record.

In 2010, the World Bank estimated the number of Romanian migrants to 2.8 million (14–15% of the country's population), 57% of which is concentrated in Spain and Italy, but more than 100,000 are estimated to have migrated to Germany, Israel, Hungary, and the USA as well (Alexe et al. 2012).

2008, by 2010 had decreased by 42% (Alexe et al. 2012).

12 Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, 31/2012 and Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, 34/2011.

13 Source: EUROSTAT (online data code: migr_pop1ctz).

Table 1. *Long-term migrants leaving/entering Romania per year*

	EUROSTAT			INS TEMPO		
	Emigrants	**Immigrants**	**Net migration loss or gain**	**Emigrants**	**Immigrants**	**Net migration loss or gain**
2008	302,796	138,929	-163,867	8,739	10,030	1,291
2009	246,626	135,844	-110,782	10,211	8,606	-1,605
2010	197,985	149,885	-48,100	7,906	7,059	-847
2011	195,551	147,685	-47,866	18,307	15,538	-2,769
2012	170,186	167,266	-2,920	18,001	21,684	3,683
2013	161,755	153,646	-8,109	19,056	23,897	4,841
2014	172,871	136,035	-36,836	11,251	36,644	25,393

Source: Eurostat,[14] INS TEMPO database, compiled by the author

Migration according to census data in Romania

Except for the last census, the data concerning migration from the data collections of the previous censuses are very hard to obtain. Some data are to be found from the 2002 census in the study of Dumitru Sandu and his co-authors (Sandu et al. 2004), who figure 361,310 people in the category of temporary (for a period shorter than 12 months) external migrants. In the introduction of the report on the results of the 2002 census,[15] the National Institute of Statistics mentions 159,000 as the number of long-term migrants. According to Vasile Ghețău, external (temporary) migration, which was not registered at the 2002 census, can be estimated to 700,000 people; so, adding the officially registered 128,000, we get a number of 828,000 migrants in 2002 (Ghețău 2007). By 2006, Dumitru Sandu estimates the number of existing Romanian migrants to 2.5 million (Sandu 2006—qtd. in Horváth 2009).

In lack of migration data concerning the different counties in previous years, further on, we will analyze the final data provided by the 2011 census (this was the first census in Romania conducted according to EU norms). Two summarizing charts offer information about the situation of Romanian migration: there are data lists for the different counties by age-group, sex, and destination country for both long-term (longer than one year) and temporary migration.

14 http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&pcode=tps00177&language=enandhttp://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&pcode=tps00176&language=en.

15 http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/RPL2002INS/vol1/cuvvol1.pdf, pp. XI. (going abroad).

Long-term residence abroad

The 2011 census registered a number of 727,540 people (4.6 times the number from 2002) from Romania and 8,822 people from the two Szekler counties as staying abroad for more than one year.

To estimate the extent of long-term migration from the Szekler counties, the ratio of migrants related to total population was calculated by age-groups. From the three regions in view, this ratio was the highest for Romania (3.6%), followed by Covasna County (2.6%) and Harghita County (1.1%). The data for the two counties and for Romania divided to age-groups show that on a country level (16.6%) and in Covasna County (19.4%) most long-term migrants are between the ages of 20 and 29, while in Harghita County most of them (21.0%) are aged 30–34. Data also show that in 2011 almost one third of the migrants from Romania, Covasna and Harghita counties were aged 25–34.

Differences are much more significant between both the two counties and Romania if we look at the destination countries of long-term migrants: while Hungary is the destination for nearly every second (43.2%) migrant from Harghita County, it is the destination of only almost every third (29.3%) from Covasna County. In 2011, most long-term migrants from Romania (46.9%) and Covasna County (38.7%) were settled in Italy, while this ratio is much lower in Harghita County (18.7%). Spain and France are much less appealing destinations for the two Szekler counties than they are for Romania. Germany, on the other hand, is a more popular destination for the Harghita and Covasna regions.

In the case of long-term migrants, there is no significant difference between the two sexes. Rural–urban differences are published by the National Institute of Statistics only for the entire country: 54% of long-term migrants come from an urban background.

Temporary residence abroad

The 2011 census registered a number of 385,729 people from Romania and 12,612 people from the two Szekler counties as short-term migrants (staying abroad for less than one year). If we add the long-term migrants, we get a total number of 21,441 migrants for the two counties. Comparing long-term and temporary residences abroad, we find that in Romania temporary migration is little more than half (52%) of long-term migration, while for Harghita County this ratio is reversed: temporary migrants outnumber more than twice (2.08 times) those who settle down permanently. For Covasna County, there is no significant difference between the two data. Looking at the most endangered age-group, those between the ages of 25 and 29, data show that in Harghita County every tenth, while in Covasna County 15 out of 100 emigrate. For Romania, the number is 13.9 out of 100.

The division of age-groups is similar to long-term migration: in this category, the majority (43–49%) are aged 25–39, too. On the country level, there is no significant difference between short-term and long-term migration concerning the destination countries. For Harghita County, in the case of temporary residence, the numbers are 8.5% higher for Hungary, 5.9% higher for Germany, and much lower for Italy and Spain than in the case of long-term residence. For Covasna County, almost half of the temporary migrants stayed in Hungary, 16.5% in Italy, and 14.5% in Germany at the time of the 2011 census.

In the case of short-term migrants, men slightly outnumber women in all three territories. There is significant difference between urban and rural areas: almost two-thirds (65.2%) of temporary migrants come from a rural background.

Migration from Szeklerland in the light of sociological and anthropological research

In this subsection, researches referring to Transylvania will only be mentioned, and two studies specifically referring to young people from Szeklerland will be discussed in detail.

After 1989, many data collections were made that tangentially contained topics related to migration and the migration potential of Szeklerland; however, they lacked uniformity of theoretical background, methodology, and territorial limitations—so, they are difficult to compare. Many detailed summaries can be found of these.[16]

The most significant researches of the last 25 years: studies of labor migration conducted by WAC[17] in 1990; ELTE–UNESCO Minority Studies Kárpát projekt 1997–2000 and Kárpát Panel 2007–2012; data collections of the Balázs Ferenc Institute (BFI) in 1997, 1999, 2000, and 2001; Etnobarométer 2000, 2001, and 2002; migration study by TÁRKI–BFI 2001; data collections of the Nemzeti Ifjúságkutató Intézet in 2001, 2008, and 2013; a countrywide research in 2003 conducted by CCRIT on the commission of the DAHR (Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania); data collection in Harghita County and Sfântu Gheorghe as part of the SEEMIG project in 2014. Besides these, a number of smaller, local, less formal researches have been made that will not be dealt with in this study.

Further on, we will present only the results of the survey conducted in Sfântu Gheorghe in 2014 as part of the SEEMIG project and then briefly summarize the migration patterns observed through anthropological research and the motivation lying beneath them.

16 Tamás Kiss & Zsombor Csata 2004, Zoltán A. Biró & Julianna Bodó 2008, Julianna Bodó 2009a,b, etc.

17 WAC: a research institute seated in Miercurea Ciuc—Center for Regional and Anthropological Research (in Hungarian: KAM).

The results of the survey conducted in Sfântu Gheorghe as part of the SEEMIG project

SEEMIG is a strategic project realized as part of the South-East Europe Transnational Cooperation Program with co-financing from the European Union—it analyzed long-term demographic and migration processes as well as the human resources in South-East Europe between 2012 and 2014 in terms of the labor market and national and regional economy. During the project, two large surveys were made in Sfântu Gheorghe and at the level of Harghita County in the fall of 2014. The results of the survey realized between October 10 and 22, 2014 involving all secondary-school graduates[18] will be summarized based on the report written by Gyöngyvér Bálint and Andrea Sólyom (Bálint & Sólyom 2014).

According to the results, 43.2% of secondary-school graduates do not plan to start work after finishing school but plan some form of further education, and another one third (56.8% of the ones planning to start work) wants to work abroad immediately after finishing school. Most of the remaining 147 people considering to start work in the region plan to work in Sfântu Gheorghe (50 people), Braşov (27 people), and other settlements in the region (24 people).

Looking at different ethnic groups, we find that more Hungarian youngsters (35.5%) would choose to work abroad than Romanian ones (22.6%). The destination countries are above all Germany, England, and Hungary.

Correlating destination countries for work migration to ethnic groups, we find that almost one fifth of Hungarian youngsters (18.0%) still consider Hungary, but most would rather find work in Germany (39.6%) and England (22.3%). The question referring to the duration of the work abroad was answered by an additional 10% of the students, which shows that even if not immediately after graduation but their medium-term plans for the future include work abroad (thus, the number of students considering temporary work abroad can be estimated to 40–45%). Almost one third of these people would work abroad for less than a year, 40% for a few years, 10% between 5 and 10 years, and 15% would permanently stay abroad. While there is no significant difference regarding sexes, youngsters with a better social background (financial situation, education, economic status) plan temporary work within the country or abroad in smaller proportion than rural youngsters with a poorer social background (Bálint & Sólyom 2014).

72.5% of secondary-school graduates from Sfântu Gheorghe consider settling down abroad definitively in the future. This does not correlate with either the sex or type of secondary-school graduates and not even with the parents' financial status. Contrary to the tendency in the case of labor migration, more urban Romanian youngsters plan to settle down abroad than rural Hungarian

18 Out of 746 graduates, 642 gave valid answers; so, the measure of the analyzed sample is 642 people.

ones. The higher education of the mother increases the intention to settle down abroad. Almost one third of those considering foreign settling are motivated to emigrate by better living conditions and higher wages. A further fifth of students (21.4%) mentioned workplaces as motivation (they think they have better possibilities to find employment in their profession), 12.6% talk of better possibilities for progress, and 10.4% would emigrate because it is better out there. The unattractive environment (8.8%) and the other attractions of a foreign country (mentality, independence, new culture, new opportunities, learning possibilities, etc.) were mentioned by 15% as a reason for emigration. The main argument against emigration was a strong attachment to friends, family, and motherland (this was less characteristic of Romanian ethnics, among whom many see better opportunities in other parts of the country).

Migration being already embedded into the region is shown by the fact that 58% of the students involved in the inquiry have at least one person in the family who has already had migratory experience or was staying abroad at the moment of the inquiry (2 people in the case of 24.1%, 3 people in the case of 9.5%, and 4 in the case of 5%). This ratio is much higher for Hungarian families than for Romanian ones (62.9% vs. 47.0%), and among the departed ones women slightly outnumber men. Among family members who have migrated, almost half moved abroad for work, 41.1% settled down definitively, migration for learning purposes is below 5%, and the remaining 5.6% emigrated for other reasons. The average age for migrant family members is 38.2 years, the medium duration of stay is 11.8 years (mostly young and long-term migrants), and the most important destination countries are Hungary, Germany, Austria, Italy, England, and the USA.

Results of studies realized with the methods of cultural anthropology and the deeper reasons of migration

In making a resume of the results of the several studies realized with the methodology of cultural anthropology specifically aimed at the Szeklerland region (hundreds of interviews, case-studies, and constant attending observation made in the 17 years following the fall of the communist regime), we have made use, above all, of the synthesis made by Julianna Bodó (Bodó 2009a).

As mentioned in the *Introduction*, labor migration is not a new phenomenon is Szeklerland; so, the new possibilities (crossing borders) created by the change of regime did not mean a new model but the continuation of an already existing one (distant parts of the country represented the new world, too, in case of previous migrations). After 1989, the mass of seasonal labor migrants from Szeklerland mostly aimed at Hungary and consisted of middle-aged people; later, this turned

around almost entirely in favor of the younger generation (the same can be observed at the country level).

Understanding the reasons for migration is not an easy task. According to Julianna Bodó (Bodó 2009a: 120), seasonal work and the complex and changing characteristic of migrating practices in Szeklerland cannot entirely be described with the migration approaches of systematic, relatively stable structures presented by Massey et al., who mostly have an economic motivation.[19] As we can read in an earlier study by Zoltán Biró A., it is valid for migration in Szeklerland in general that although the number of the people choosing to leave is significant within the communities, we cannot speak of the community's migration but of a sum of individual/family migrations (Biró 1994: 24). That is why the reasons for migration can only be understood through observing the individual, family, microeconomic, and local social background. In this respect, the choice to migrate is an endeavor not aiming at improving one's financial status but at keeping or gaining a local social status (Oláh 1996b).

Julianna Bodó and István Horváth (Horváth 2004) also emphasize that the migration for Hungarians from Transylvania, besides the mentioned international theories, can also be approached via the concept of "incomplete migration", according to which people working abroad leave the decision of where to settle down definitively up in the air for a long time (they maintain the possibility of both moving abroad definitively and returning home). It is not the many factual differences that count when the decision is made but how the migrants can conciliate the new life with the life at home and how they can accommodate to the foreign world (Bodó 2009a).

Another useful complementary theoretical approach for understanding migration is the theory of transnational migration. The essence of the theory is that migrants have transnational connections crossing borders which link them to both the emitting and the receiving societies (Schiller–Basch–Blanc-Szanton 1997, Portes 1997, Hannerz 2002, Faist 2002, Kennedy–Roudometof 2002, Vertovec 2002, Sandu 2005—qtd. in Bodó 2009a: 120). This amphibiousness is called temporary

19 According to the synthesis by Massey et al. (2001), emigration can start for many reasons: a wish for individual income (neoclassical microeconomics), ambition for spreading the household income risks (new economics of migration), the recruiting programs serving the employers' demand for cheap workforce (dual markets for wage labor), the confinement of individual farming in periphery regions owing to market expansion (world systems approach), or a combination of these factors. At the same time, it is important to highlight that even though the listed reasons continue to incline people towards migration, the new conditions created as a result of migration become operating factors as well. Such factors are the developing of migrant networks, building institutions that facilitate moving between nations, and the social effect of the transformation of work in receiving countries. As a joint effect of these changes, the probability that migration will persist grows. This process is called cumulative causation, and it greatly contributes to the subsistence of migration in time and space (Bálint 2004).

exit by Zoltán A. Biró (Biró 1996) and circular migration by Dumitru Sandu (Sandu 2000).

Another typical characteristic in Szeklerland that causes growth in the migration of the young is the fact that families and institutions fail to efficiently prepare youngsters for adult life. This group of phenomena is summarized by Julianna Bodó as a socialization deficit (Bodó 2009a); it involves households totally lacking economic assets and the mentality of a globalized market economy (families do not realize what they should or should have prepared their children for), turning away from educational institutions (lower educational level that reduce the possibilities for individual subsistence), and the poor institutionalization of local employment (informal employment,[20] low wages, lack of bigger production units in the region, etc.). What makes things worse is that young people sense this deficit as individual fallback and personal deficiency. This does not exclude the importance of the material aspect from the migration process or even moving definitively; however, we must see that in the rapport between the migrants and the region the need of the former for a regularization of the rapport is the essential factor (Bodó 2009a: 125).

All this shows that the nature, extent, and main characteristics of migration have changed much in Szeklerland as well as in the whole country. Based on the two big qualitative surveys made by the researchers at WAC between 1994 and 1995 (illegal work in Hungary) and 2005 and 2007 (the free movement before joining the EU but after the abrogation of the restrictive visa regime), several comprehensive analyses were made by Julianna Bodó about the changing of labor migration processes in the region (Biró & Bodó 2008, 2009; Bodó 2008a, 2009b). The two sets of interviews show that while in the 90s the home and the foreign world are completely separated and the sole object of migration is strengthening the social position at home, ten years later, there is no total seclusion from the foreign world anymore but the dual bindings described in the transnational migration model are valid instead. This growing flexibility and the process of connection and adaptation to both environments are also confirmed by a series of interviews made only with young people in 2009 (Biró & Bodó 2009).

From the anthropological data collections on migration made in Szeklerland after joining the EU, only a few have been published so far. Ágnes Blága, for example, offers a glimpse into the newest form (research from 2011) of seasonal labor migration towards Western Europe (Germany). Based on the survey complemented with attending observation, the author summarizes the characteristics of this type of migration as: a fixed duration of work, regularity secured by the networks, a secure income, low-intensity communications with the homeland, the classic case of isolated labor migrant (Blága 2014: 153). The

20 A detailed description can be found in Gyöngyvér Bálint (2011): Foglalkoztatási stratégiák Hargita megyében [Employment Strategies in Harghita County] (Scientia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2011).

observed migrant group developed through friendships and family relations had been operating for 11 years and lasted owing to regularity. The author attributes an important role to the network and connections capital (network migration), the processes of cumulative causation described by Massey et al. (2001), the common ethnicity (following Brubaker), and above all the connections based on trust (following Coleman). The main motivator for migration on the individual level is economic rationality; however, in the case of seasonal work, there is a strong pulling power of the receiving country as well. As a whole, seasonal labor migrants live in the receiving country as foreigners. They do not try to integrate into the local society; they rather develop a temporary lifestyle with a lower comfort level than at home (because it is rational to do so); the goal is to minimize expenses and return home with as much profit as possible (Blága 2014).

In this way, the transnational migration (living two lives, parallel lifestyles) that characterized the previous period seems to give place again (at least in the case of a part of the migrants) to a complete isolation of the foreign world and the home, and we are facing an old-new form of labor-migration.

Summary

Migration to other countries has been present in Szeklerland for more than 150 years. Measuring the extent of international migration is always problematic due to the significant illegal migration. The recording of migration in Romanian statistical data is clearly deficient: annual official data record only 10% of legal migration registered in international statistics (officially, only 12,275 people emigrated from the two Szekler counties between 1991 and 2011), and there are no reliable data or estimations for the two counties regarding the number of migrants for the pre-2011 census period.

Data of the 2011 census show that for Szeklerland the number of short-term (less than 1 year) migrants is higher than the country average, and the number of long-term ones is lower. In the two counties, a total number of 21,441 migrants were recorded at the census (4.12% of the population), and among the migrants the age-group of 20–39 was most intensively represented. In the case of long-term migration, the main destination country for Covasna County is Italy, while for Harghita County it continues to be Hungary. For short-term labor migration, the most popular destination countries are Hungary, Italy, and Germany for both counties, and almost two-thirds (65.2%) of temporary migrants come from a rural background. In both cases of migration, there are no significant differences between the two sexes.

In estimating the extent of emigration, the most accurate are international data; according to these, a little more than double of the Romanian migrants recorded at the 2011 census (5.5% of population) live in EU countries only. The World

Bank estimated 15% of Romanian population as migrant for the year 2010. In the light of these data, the migrants of the two Szekler counties can also be put to approximately 12–15% of the population (62,000–85,000 people).

The influence of migrants upon the emitting society is very significant: among secondary-school graduates from Sfântu Gheorghe, 58% have at least one person in the family with migration experience or staying abroad at the moment of the survey. This number is much higher for Hungarian students than for Romanian ones (63 vs. 47%; the low levels of knowledge of Romanian language among Hungarians must have a huge role in this because it limits their possibilities in finding work in the country), and almost half of the migrant family members have left for work. The most important destination countries for the ones who have already migrated are Hungary, Germany, Austria, Italy, England, and the USA. Almost three-quarters (72%) of students plan to emigrate in the near future, mainly to Germany, England, Hungary, and the USA. The causes and the consequences (settling abroad or returning home) of migration in Szeklerland are diverse—they can be described with a combination of economic (higher wages and better work possibilities abroad), incomplete (coming home depends on how well the migrant can integrate into the foreign society), and transnational (a strong attachment to both the emitting and receiving communities) migration theories. And they can be completed with the concept of socialization deficit (low levels of education, no knowledge of the language, limited work possibilities in the region, and lack of guiding or counselling for the youth) and the sense of personal deficiency it causes, which seems to be the primary motor of migration in Szeklerland.

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An "Alien" or a Stranger Indeed?

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Abstract: With respect to the current migration crisis in Europe, the term "alien" is generally identified with the Arab or Muslim (for many people: Arab = Muslim) communities. The article contains an analysis of the origins, history, and effects of this phenomenon, illustrated with the example of the Arabs in Poland – a country where both of those communities are small, where there are few immigrants as a rule, and which is not directly impacted by the refugee crisis. In general, there were no negative experiences in Polish–Arabic relations, but—due to the lack of knowledge and personal interactions with members of the Arab (Muslim) diaspora—many Poles perceive them as aliens. Why are they aliens? When did they start being aliens? And if they have always been aliens, then are they aliens indeed?
In the paper, I will present an analysis of the way members of the Arab diaspora are perceived as aliens and their sense of alienness in Poland. The analysis is based on the field study of this community, with emphasis on the differences between the Arab migration to Poland/Eastern European countries and their migration to other European states. Additionally, a new theory of inclusion of an alien will be presented along with proposals concerning how to "tame" an alien for the sake of a common, conflict-free existence—because "alien" often simply means the unknown and/or the unwanted to be known.

Keywords: alien, Poland, Europe, the Arab diaspora

Introduction

In spite of its multicultural past, since War World II, contemporary Poland has been a homogenous state with the absolute domination of a mainstream population, where the level of emigration is higher than immigration. Consequently, the ethnic and religious minorities and a number of immigrants constitute a small percentage of society in Poland. According to the data of The World Factbook (2015), Poland is 134th in the world when it comes to the absolute number of

immigrants (-0.40 migrants/1,000 population). Poland is also one of the countries of the European Union that has refused to accept refugees (Kacprzak 2016).

Although not affecting Poland directly, the European migrant crisis has deepened the Islamophobic and Anti-Arab atmosphere in Poland, and "an alien" is generally identified with the Arabic or Muslim community. It is so because the uncontrolled wave of immigrants and refugees predominantly comprises inhabitants of Muslim or Arab countries, and negative occurrences related to it are featured in the media. As a result, many myths, exaggerations, and stereotypes of the Arab community, which mostly mirror those foreign experiences where the Arab diaspora is numerous, circulate among the Poles. Due to lack of knowledge and personal interactions with members of the Arab (Muslim) diaspora, many Poles do not perceive them objectively, and Arabs are very often considered aliens.

The aim of this paper is to reflect on the reason why this is happening in Poland:

1) where the Arab diaspora amounts to approximately 10,000–12,000 people (Switat 2015), there is one person of Arab descent per approx. 3,208 inhabitants, and the number of Arabs is much lower compared to the numerosity of the Arab diaspora in Germany, France, or Great Britain (oscillating in hundreds of thousands);
2) while there are generally no negative experiences with this community in Poland (Górak-Sosnowska 2014) as it is in the Western countries (some of the representatives have been residing in Poland for about 40 years) or with the Arab countries. From the beginning of their independence, the Poles helped build the infrastructure and economy in the Arab world (Piotrowski 1989: 5–9). In turn, Arab influences are visible in Polish culture, including science, art, literature, and the Polish language (Skowron-Nalborczyk: 82–83).

Finally, the subject of this paper is: Arabs in Poland—have they been aliens since forever, and are they really aliens?

Researching into the Arab diaspora in Poland

This article is based on the results obtained during fieldwork conducted from May 2013 to March 2014. A hundred representatives of the Arab community in Poland and (to compare) a hundred Poles were examined using the snowball sampling technique. The research was conducted in twelve Polish cities (where the biggest Polish-Arabic organizations operate), and it is based on a triangulation method (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 2001: 222–223), meaning the parallel usage of a couple of research techniques (i.e. individual in-depth interviewing, expert interviews, and questionnaires).

The representatives of the Arab community were recruited according to their date of arrival in Poland. The Arabs who arrived most recently can be considered a "new" diaspora (50 respondents, marked ND in the text), whereas those who came before 1989 (contractual date, which is the symbol of Polish transition and the diametrical change of Arab–Polish relations) and stayed in Poland create an "old" diaspora (50 respondents, marked OD). Three groups surfaced from amongst the Polish respondents: the favorable Poles (FP), the unfavorable Poles (UP), and the undecided Poles (UDP), that is those who replied "hard to say" to the question "Are you favorably disposed to the Arab community in Poland?". Most of the respondents, about two-thirds, declared to be favorably disposed towards the Arabs, while there were a few of those who declared to be unfavorably disposed towards them (Switat 2015). "Undecided" Poles are not against any individuals of Arab descent, but they are against large groups: "Individually—when it comes to each person—yes, as a community I am very afraid of them, and I am afraid of the expansion" (UDP11). This article contains only selected research results (they relate only to the examined representatives of both communities); the complete study over the Arab diaspora in Poland will be soon published.

The Arab/Muslim as alien in Europe—the origin of the concept

The Poles perceive Arabs as physically and culturally aliens mainly because of their differences in relation to the Polish society. Also, their appearance usually reveals their alien origin (phenotypic difference); so, there are also ethnically visible differences (Modood 2014: 18). Their darker skin exposes them; they are often described as black or dirty. These terms have their origin in the Middle Ages. As for the image of the inhabitants of Arab countries (including Muslims), medieval Christianity, among others, kept on providing examples of stigmatizing attitudes, and the stereotype of a black man as the devil has survived, in a modified form, into the modern times (Sobecki 2013: 66–67).

Many people look at culture mainly through the prism of language, values, and religion, seeing immigrants from outside Europe as definitely different; this predominantly concerns the Muslims. The fear of this religion had existed since the medieval crusades, and in recent years it has been increased by the fear of terrorism despite the fact that only a very small minority of Muslims actually supports radical ideologies. Consequently, the hostility towards Islam and Muslims, called Islamophobia, has lately become quite widespread (Castles and Miller 2011: 322).

In addition, the contact between Europeans and “primitive” peoples during the first trips overseas resulted in the image of a world with an unmoved order of cultures, where white Europeans occupy the highest place, above the people of Asia and Africa. This belief was propagated by the greatest minds, such as David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Voltaire, or John Locke, and it also served as the basis of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution (Scheffer 2010: 326–333). This opinion indicates ethnocentrism, namely distrust towards people not belonging to a particular culture, combined with a tendency to judge other people’s cultures in terms of one’s own culture. People from other cultures are regarded as aliens, barbarians, or mentally and morally inferior beings (Giddens 2010: 277). It is worth mentioning that they were assumed as “primitive” people, while according to e.g. Jacek Głuski (1973: 3) European knights, upon arriving in the Arab-Muslim Empire during the Crusades, encountered a high culture and high level of knowledge.

The Arab/Muslim as alien through the history of Arab–Polish relations

Western Europeans were faster and were the first in the exploration of the Arab world; there were not many expeditions of Polish travelers from the Middle Ages up to the 19th century; they mostly went on pilgrimages, to acquire Arab horses, because of political emigration, or were motivated by romanticism and orientalism (Bystroń 1929, Reychman 1972). Due to the infrequency of direct Polish–Arab contacts, the perception of the residents of Arab countries by the Poles is mainly the result of transferring the Western rhetoric (although Western–Arab contacts have completely different specifics and history, as they are consequences of, e.g. colonization, bringing guest workers/*Gastarbeiters*, economic migration, or exile; none of these issues concern the Polish–Arab relations).

In *Orientalism* by Edward W. Said, published in 1970s, the author stated that orientalism is a European ideological creation which imposed stereotypical perceptions of the Orient, especially of Islam, that are still in existence. He drew attention to the fact that the “[t]he Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity, a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences” (Said 1991: 23). To confirm Said’s arguments, there are, for instance, accounts of Polish travelers, including a 19th-century Egyptologist, Józef Sękowski, who criticized orientalists for promoting lies about the Arab population, according to which they were wild peoples, while some of the nomadic tribes knew writing, books, literature, and art (Reychman 1972: 128). Almost at the same time, Wacław Rzewuski wrote about

the naturalness, freedom, and simplicity of the Arab life, one that is full of virtues and spontaneity, arguing that the colorful tales of debauchery in harems are only products of the European imagination (Reychman 1972: 111).

Not counting the individual Arab travelers who arrived to Poland in the Middle Ages, the first numerous group of Arabs in Poland were the Arab students, who started to come to Polish universities in the late 1950s. Poland, like other countries of the Eastern Bloc, responded to the UN call to provide educational assistance to developing countries, the so-called Third World countries, including the Middle East and the North African states, by commencing staff training under the terms of full scholarship granted by the Polish government. More intergovernmental agreements were signed in the following years, resulting in a steady increase in the number of students (Gasztold-Seń 2012: 41, Chilczuk 2001); e.g. an estimated total number of students and PhD students from the Arab countries in 1987/88 academic year was over 2.5 thousand (Piotrowski 1989: 53–56). Some of these students married Polish women after graduation and remained in the country, creating the “old” Arab diaspora in Poland. They are mainly doctors, engineers, or entrepreneurs, so some kind of an intellectual elite, well-educated and integrated, that knows Polish, works among the native population, and has a higher social status.

Such Polish–Arab marriages are an example of creating double-ethnic families. This is the strongest indicator of overcoming cultural, psychological, and social distance between the members of the host society and immigrants, proving the integration. This type of marriage is considered a connection that exceeds the basic principles—which the group considers to be important for their consistency and, often, even for their existence. Therefore, this is a kind of infraction of the group’s boundaries that separate what is one’s “own” from what is “alien” (Waldis 2006, Winiarska 2011: 73).

In People’s Poland, the perception and treatment of migrants by the Polish society was dichotomous. On the one hand, they were considered bearers of pathological phenomena; the dislike of them and the distrust of the “aliens”, an undesirable element in the country, were noticeable. On the other hand, there was an attitude of understanding towards their situation. Polish people saw foreigners as a way of repaying their moral debt to other nations that helped their compatriots abroad (Chodubski 1997: 31–32).

Perceiving Arabs in Polish sociological researches

The history of creating the image of Arabs in the consciousness of the Poles is very interesting as it is a relatively brief one. The “Arab problem” did not exist and did not arouse the interest of sociologists until the late 1960s. For example, in 1966, Jerzy Szacki studied the attitude of the Poles towards other races and

nations, but he did not even try to check their attitude towards the Arabs (Szacki 1969). In a 1988 study, an Arab was an "unknown alien" for the majority of the Poles; an "alien" with whom there was very little or no contact and about whom their knowledge was limited (Nowicka 1990: 30). It was known that such a group existed, but it did not function in the consciousness of the Polish society. Jan Nawrocki presumed that the image of Arabs became less amorphous only in the late 1960s, in connection with the events in the Middle East and the accompanying propaganda. The researchers concluded that the respondents felt a deep aversion, and probably fear, towards this group. An Arab was perceived by the Poles as a stranger, angry, and dangerous (Nawrocki 1990: 118–124). Also, different research regarding the Poles' attitude to other nations presents Arabs as the most disliked nation in Poland (Jasińska-Kania 1988, Jasińska-Kania 1992, Public Opinion Research Center 2002–2012). It is worth mentioning that Arabs do not fit the definition of a nation used in the poll, as the name "Arabs" refers to inhabitants of 22 countries.

Presentation of the results of own research of the Arab diaspora in Poland

However, the majority of Polish respondents have a generalized and universalized image of the Arab diaspora; not much has changed with regard to the perception of Arabs since the research on the distance the Poles have towards different nations, which was conducted in 1988 by the Public Opinion Research Center and published as a book edited by Ewa Nowicka (1990). The Arabs and the Arab culture continue to induce a lot of negative connotations; their perception is largely pejorative and stereotyped, and members of the Arab diaspora talked about a frequent feeling of being treated as second-class (citizens). They are still perceived as strangers, evil, or dangerous, and confused with residents of other countries. Thus, despite the passage of years, the level of knowledge about the Arab diaspora and the distance level towards its members have not changed generally—to paraphrase Znaniecki (1990: 282), strangers remain completely unknown precisely because they are strangers.

Examined Poles towards Arab diaspora (as in any other case) generally exhibit three attitudes: sympathy, antipathy, or impassivity—means from xenophile to xenophobia or other cases of negative social mechanisms related to their perceived "otherness" and "differentness"; besides racism, these are: social distance, prejudice, discrimination, stigmatization, marginalization, exclusion, xenophobia, intolerance, and stereotyping. As a consequence of prejudice, members of the Arab diaspora sometimes become victims of antilocution, that

is a verbal expression of prejudice, avoidance, discrimination, and physical attacks (Allport 1954: 14–15) and hate speech (mostly Arabs-Muslims, who also experience cases of anti-Islamic racism, Islamophobia). In creating Arabophobia and Islamophobia, myths about Arabs and Islam are extremely harmful, reinforced by media reports on extreme cases on the subject of the functioning of both communities in the Western countries, although Islam in Poland or the Arab diaspora in Poland are not the same as those in the West of which the Poles are afraid of (Switat 2015). In addition, as research shows, the issues of inflow and integration of immigrants have been largely politicized; politicians use the fear of strangers to create a politically resounding problem, which is popular in the media and relatively easy to control and which is why "moral panic" is used to analyze the discourse on immigrants in the Western countries (Garosi 2002). According to Zygmunt Bauman, in this discourse, immigrants are alien, "human leftovers", dehumanized *homini sacri*—singled out as allegedly guilty of destabilizing the familiar world of host societies (Bauman 2016).

In the case of Polish–Arab relations, there is a cultural contact (mutual perceptions of the two interacting groups) accompanied by adapting difficulties experienced by the host society as well as the immigrants. Alienation is at the core of the mutual attitudes—subjected/subjective (meant as felt towards the other) and reflected/reflective (involves assigning a sense of alienation towards a subject to the other). Furthermore, in the context of the cultural contact, attention should be paid to the category of cognitive readiness as a desire to get to know a foreign culture and having an interest in it, being open to diversity. Lack of cognitive readiness leads to a psychological and social distance. This form of benevolent interest is the bedrock of building an understanding of the alien, excluding—or, at least in a small way, weakening—the sense of alienation and associated negative emotions: revulsion, disgust, fear, or surprise (Nowicka 2011: 11–14). It confirms the opinion of one Arab respondent: "each Pole who does not know Arabs or Arabic countries directly fears hearing the word 'Arab' because they associate Arabs with barbarism, fun and love for women, that is all what they know about Arabs" (ND17).

According to the contact hypothesis by Allport (1954), this contact between the members of two groups could lead to a decrease in the prejudice between them. As Margaret K. (Omar) Nydell (2001: 121) says, "the more frequent and the closer contacts with the Arabs, the sooner a man abandons stereotypes". A similar correlation could be observed when researching the Arab diaspora in Poland: its members usually gain by closer acquaintances—many of the Arab respondents emphasized that although the Poles initially treated them with reserve, they often changed their attitude, to a favorable one, after getting to know them. This can be accompanied by a process that can be called a theory of "including an alien". Each person has a specific set of individuals treated as familiar and a collection

of individuals treated as strangers; upon meeting an individual from the set of strangers, there is a transference of only that one individual from the stranger set to the familiar set, without changing the attitude toward the entire set of strangers.

In light of this theory, the Poles have imagined a collection of strangers titled "Arabs", which is viewed in a rather negative way, but upon getting to know one of the Arabs personally they change their attitude to a favorable one only towards this single Arab, transferring him/her from the collection of strangers to the familiar set but—characteristically—without simultaneous change in their attitudes or opinions about the general, unspecified set of "Arabs". The following dichotomy is subsequently revealed: "our" Arab friend is good, while the "other" Arabs remain bad. This was seen in the responses given by the Poles and during the selection of the respondents (referred by the members of the diaspora), although they knew particular Arabs and they had good opinions about them. When answering general questions about members of the Arab diaspora, they were negative, especially when discussing the characteristics of this community, mixed marriages, stereotypes, and their authenticity.

Familiarity/strangeness is therefore relative and secondarily dependent on other characteristics, e.g. cultural or ethnic. A stereotype is a subconscious general construct that is not directly affected by the cognition of an individual that belongs to the product of schematic thinking. Considering the fact that familiarity and strangeness are two distinct sets of feeling, an individual from the set of foreign individuals is gradually moving to the "familiar" set having been met personally, but the feelings toward this foreign group to which the individual belongs to generally do not change. This has been observed among the surveyed Poles who have, e.g. Arab friends, colleagues, or family members; they like and respect only this one particular Arab, but they are able to speak badly and stereotypically about other, generalized Arabs, excluding this representative of the Arab diaspora, whom they personally know, from those negative opinions—the distance felt toward him/her disappears. Similarly, Arabs asked questions, such as *if Arabs like/are…*, often replied with "they", not "we Arabs", highlighting the gap between the rest of the community, treating the Arab diaspora as a foreign collection. Familiarity and strangeness therefore have certain contractual borders. They are subjective and talked about only when some other group is considered familiar. Besides, it is also relative: the same person may be familiar at some point and then foreign at another. Otherness turns into alienness only when there are emotions and attitudes combined with the perceived otherness (Nowicka and Majewska 1993: 20–21).

Znaniecki (1931: 208) claimed that alienation happens only when there are interactions between people (groups)—it is a function of contacts. Different emotional circuits between groups considering themselves as alien may lead to the isolation and avoidance of contacts. It can escalate into aversion to a

foreign group (fortified antagonism) or symptoms of active aggression (provocative antagonism). Provocative antagonism is visible towards the Arab diaspora in Poland. Despite the diversity of attitudes amongst the Poles in terms of accepting the Arab community in Poland (the favorable, the unfavorable, and the undecided), respondents from all groups noticed a very important problem the members of the Arab diaspora in Poland face, which is the reluctance displayed by the Polish society expressed with an unfriendly treatment and negative attitudes (including direct attacks) in the everyday life. On the other hand, there are social initiatives against the violence towards foreigners, including campaigns promoting the familiarity of "aliens" propagated in the social media, bearing the hashtag #biją Naszych ["they beat ours"]: our friends, our neighbors, and our common guests (Klimowicz 2016).

Just as members of the Arab diaspora argue that kindness and other positive attitudes of the host society help them to integrate, the Poles, in the context of integration, also expect positive behavior from migrant populations (respect for the Polish law and Polish culture, adapting to social norms and peaceful merging into the society). Therefore, mutual positive interactions and attitudes of both surveyed communities facilitate the process of integration. On the one hand, such positive attitudes enhance the integration of the immigrant population; on the other hand, they facilitate the acceptance of the integrated immigrant population by the host society.

A spiral of antagonism between the host society and the immigrants follows: unfavorable attitude (including discrimination, prejudice) of the host community can indirectly increase the level of frustration among immigrants and, as a result, increase their negative behavior (e.g. an increase in crime). On the other hand, negative behaviors of immigrants cause an increase in unfavorability and other negative attitudes of the local population towards immigrants.

Thus, according to the respondents, the treatment of migrants affects their integration:

> An Arab integrates completely when he has a job here and is treated with respect, it's the best way [to integrate—M.S.]; but integration can't be restricted. When there's racism (…), it restricts integration because when a person has a job and everything, then he subconsciously and naturally integrates, which is sometimes restricted when somebody reminds you that you're not a Pole or something racist, which gives one a reason to wonder about integration (OD19).

Such an unconscious focus on someone's origin hinders integration—at least according to Tamotsu Shibutani and Kian M. Kwan (1965), whose approach was based on Herbert Mead's interactionism. These two scholars found that the way a

person is treated in a given society does not depend on who that person is but on how that person is perceived. Individuals are subject to categorization and have certain traits and behaviors ascribed to them. As a result of this process, a social distance arises, not in the sense of a physical distance between groups but rather as a subjective state of nearness felt by the individuals. According to this concept, reducing the distance leads to structural assimilation.

The aforementioned opinion corresponds with Amin Maalouf's thesis (2002: 51), according to which the more immigrants feel that their original culture's tradition is respected in their new country, the less they feel hated, intimidated, and discriminated against because of their different identity; the more they are open to the new country's cultural opportunities, the less they cling to their separateness. This theory is confirmed by the German Marshall Fund (2009) survey on trends of immigration: 36% of respondents in six EU countries (especially in Italy and France) believe that discrimination of immigrants is more of an obstacle to their integration than the lack of willingness to integrate on the part of the immigrants themselves.

Favorable relations with immigrants can bring tangible benefits because they motivate integration and prevent immigration pathologies which spoil the image of the entire community. As indicated by the interviewees' statements about a generalized treatment (collective identity), in the case of the Arab diaspora, there is an effect of homogeneity of the foreign group, consisting in the fact that members of the group are seen as similar to one another, and no attention is paid to the internal diversity of this group (Aronson 2001: 138–139), while this group is recognized as homogeneously pejorative. According to Zygmunt Bauman (2000: 126), an "alien" is "devoid of individuality and uniqueness". In effect, collective responsibility is applied to them—the whole community is blamed for the acts of individuals from this community. For this reason, the members of the Arab diaspora call on greater objectivity and not using the collective identity towards them because people are different and, according to Paul Scheffer (2010: 427), people should be judged on their (individual) merits.

As for the identity of the Arab diaspora, Arab respondents conformingly renounce the collective Arab identity for a national identity. Arabs, although homogeneous in the name, are in fact heterogeneous. According to many authors, the idea that all residents of the Middle East are "Arabs" is a hurtful and untrue simplification (Gadowska et al. 2014: 105). After all, every Arab country, despite some common cultural or religious factors, has a different history, different problems, different interests, and a different ethnic composition. Thus, it would be like generalizing all Europeans and not noticing that there is a difference between being German, French, or Polish; similarly, in the Arab world, the situation of Egyptians, Palestinians, or Saudis is incomparable. It confirms Tariqa

Modood's (2014: 121) theory that an ethnic group (like Arabs) is a social, not natural, being.

On the other hand, some of the surveyed Poles did not generalize the members of the Arab diaspora (as some Arab respondents indicated), therefore assuming that the most appropriate attitude in their everyday life is evaluating a human being according to his/her individual behavior, not on the basis of his/her origin or imposed affiliation.

The Polish respondents mention various sources of information on the Arab community and culture that have influenced their opinions: television, the Internet, newspapers, books, personal contacts, or work. When it comes to the favorably disposed towards the Arab community, personal contacts are at the basis of their opinions, while the Internet is of secondary importance. The opposite is true as far as the unfavorably disposed are concerned, with the Internet being of primary importance. Thus, opinions are formed either on the basis of general information or through the prism of personal experience.

It should be noted that some Polish respondents: have never personally met a person of Arab descent, do not meet them in private, never visited Arab countries, incorrectly define Arab countries (apart from the correct ones, about 30 other countries were mentioned), do not know the Arab culture, meet members of the Arab community in passing (on a street, in a store, in a restaurant, etc.), or do not know any Polish-Arab marriages. Despite all of that, they still speak of this community extensively, which confirms Perry R. Hinton's view (2013) that stereotypes endure because of limited knowledge.

Since most Polish respondents do not know directly the Arab community residing in their country, it can be said that their opinions of the community were formed on the basis of indirect or general information regarding the Arab community. No research has ever been conducted into the Arab diaspora in Poland before; its members are individuals scattered throughout the country. Those who have blended into the Polish community are mostly part of Polish families, workplaces, or businesses.

Many of the Polish respondents incorrectly believe that every Arab is a Muslim and that every Muslim is an Arab. Consequently, an image of an Arab is based on images of many different nationalities. When asked to name Arab countries, Polish respondents—apart from a couple of correct answers—also mention Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, and Tajikistan, that is Muslim countries, not Arab countries. It is also possible that they think Arabs inhabit the aforementioned countries. For instance, when answering the question "have you ever been to an Arab country?", one person replied "yes, I've been [three times—M.S.] to Turkey" (UP7). In my research, the majority of Arabs were Muslim, but there are also Christians, atheists, or Druzes, and their level of religiousness varies.

In Poland, Muslims are not only Arabs but also citizens of Asian or European countries as well as Poles (the Tatars and converts). According to different statistics, there are thirty to forty thousand Muslims in Poland, meaning that they constitute about 0.1% of the Polish population. Thus, Islamophobia (Górak-Sosnowska 2014) or Arabophobia and a negative attitude towards immigrants can be called "migrational hypochondria" in Poland; an unfounded, exaggerated fear that has no basis in the actual social situation and that probably comes from observing Western countries with a large number of immigrants and Muslims (including the migrant crisis). In Poland, as in other European countries, they are based on perception of imagined, not real Muslim communities. According to the Ipsos MORI study, "Perceptions are not reality: Things the world gets wrong", carried out in 2014 in 14 European countries on a sample of 11,527 people, the perceived proportion of Muslims in Europe is much higher than the actual one—sometimes, it is approx. 5 times higher than in reality (Wojtalik 2015).

Although small in number, this phenotypically dissimilar part of Polish population encounters attitudes of extreme animosity or obsessive hostility towards the so-called "others" or "different" (Sobecki 2013: 66). Seeing them as aliens does not end with the acquisition of Polish citizenship: "The Poles still treat me like a stranger" (OD12); "When they ask me about my citizenship at the office and I say that I am Polish, it is strange, they can't wrap their heads around it. It is not only about the Arabs but about other immigrants as well, even the British or the Italians, even though these cultures are similar to the Polish culture" (OD39).

These statements illustrate the theory of Chavez (2008: 68), who, referring to the concept of "imagined communities" by Benedict Anderson (1991), stated that the full integration of immigrants into the host society is not only based on changes concerning the migrants but also on whether the host society is ready to "imagine" migrants of this category (undocumented, in Chavez's case) as members of its own community.

Considering the citizenship issues, one of the surveyed members of the Arab diaspora recommended a way to combat alienation—introducing a law on citizenship instead of the legal division of society into citizens and foreigners.

> There is no modern Act on Foreigners and in general there should not be one because if you single out the foreigners you always treat them separately, and the Act on Citizenship regulates issues of citizenship for all—natives and foreigners; it is a citizenship, instead of we are the Poles and we are citizens by the rule and birth, and they are always foreigners or aliens. There was an action a few years ago in Katowice codenamed "alien"; it was to control the foreigners, whether they have legal residence or not, but the name itself was negative, not called, for example, legalization, the law, help, integration,

> not: "alien". There was a film titled "Alien", where the monster from outer space came and ate people, the same here—this stranger, you need to control him, because he is bad, not good; such mentality is alive among the officials and the Polish authorities (OD21).

Strangeness, according to Simmel (1975) is equivalent to a foreign origin; so, it is not an individualizing characteristic but a feature common to all foreigners (potential or real); aliens are therefore not foreign individuals but a certain category of people of a general character. And this respondent noticed that words describing people from outside of Poland in the Polish language have a subconscious and negatively associated content: the word "foreign" suggests a foreign territorial unit, an "alien", which is—according to etymology—related to the birth and the place of permanent residence of an alien land (Nowicka-Rusek 2012: 322).

According to Znaniecki (1931), to talk about the perception of someone as "foreign/strange", there must be a social contact [interaction—M.S.] and a disagreement as to the meaning of the same values. He thought that the human subject is experienced by the human body as a stranger always and only when there is a social contact between them, based on separate systems of values. Members of the Arab diaspora are suspected of such a dissimilarity of values, but it turned out that many of the respondents shared the same civic, ethical, and individual values as the surveyed Poles. In many cases, they also had a similar attitude toward the Polish society, including issues like migration policy, integration, citizenship, and migration. The members of the "old" diaspora, who fully blended with the Polish environment and adapted to the Polish surroundings, especially emphasized this. Because of that, they got to know both communities and found that there was a convergence of opinions between the Arabs and the Poles. There are also common elements in Polish and Arab cultures and similarities between the Polish and Arab society (e.g. hospitality, strong family ties, the love of children, respect for elders, etc.). Thus, it turns out that the "alien" members of the Arab diaspora in Poland are not so "alien" after all.

Conclusions

In conclusion, an alien is just an unknown—it is enough to meet him/her, and he/she becomes familiar. It is confirmed by Ewa Nowicka's view (2011: 35) that "a stranger is always the one who is accused of otherness or whose otherness is known, while all that is unknown, or not precisely known, is what is alleged to be other". According to Zygmunt Bauman (1995: 81–82), a stranger is this unplanned, unexpected Third, about whom we know little; therefore, according

to most of the participants, knowledge and education are keys to accepting the "other" and to fighting the mechanisms triggering racist behavior.

As Edyta Pindel (2014, 9) claims, "by helping foreigners, we help ourselves to build our daily living environment, of which they are also members. So, if we leave them alone, it is highly probable that once marked as 'foreign', they will remain aliens not only in the interactive but also in the personal sphere; and this will be palpable to us as far as the quality of our daily existence is concerned, which, looking ahead, will be inevitably becoming more and more multicultural. Therefore (…), we have to learn this multicultural society and allow the inclusion of foreigners into the dominant culture, in the role of active subjects**".**

According to Zygmunt Bauman (2016: 127–128), conversation is the best way to an agreement and, thus, to coexistence that is mutually solidary, peaceful, and beneficial; and there is no viable alternative to this solution. In turn, Amin Maalouf (2002, 2011) connects the strangeness to the identity crisis, as a crisis of the modern world, resulting not only from the conflict between the West and the East, where, in his opinion, both sides have erred, but from their almost simultaneously exhausted potential. The crisis of identity is a struggle between tradition and globalization, and the hope for survival, peace, and salvation—he claims—is in a culture whose values will open the door for looking at the other as not only "foreign" but as a "partner" who lives in the same world, next to us. And they will finally open the door for a conversation as equals…

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Hijab(istas)—as Fashion Phenomenon. A Review

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Abstract. In the present article, I am shortly reviewing some aspects which can be regarded as important in considering the hijab a fashion phenomenon. The social media provides us with various images in which the hijab is presented as a form of fashionable accessory, it is adapted to various modern outfits. The literature on such fashionable takes of the hijab assesses that they can be interpreted as statement messages about women's empowerment. On the other hand, such adaptations also speak about the emergence of various subcultures about Muslim youth, which in accordance with the global sameness of youth are using social media in order to send messages and connect with each other. After a brief presentation on the role of bottom-up diffusion of fashion innovations, I am reviewing, *grosso modo*, two representations of the hijab: the hijab as a religious symbol and the hijab as a (fashion) manifesto about women's empowerment.

Keywords: hijab, fashion, subculture, manifesto

Introduction

The different cultural and religious background seems to underline the different size model, style, and also color and material of the hijab, i.e. khimar (according to the Qur'anic religious command women being required to cover their head). According to ethnicity and culture, region or tribe, Muslim women's veil appears in a large variety of styles and denominations, encapsulated in certain cultural frames: *'abaya* in Arabia, *chador in Iran*; *burqa in Afghanistan; niqab in Muslim India* or *purdah in Muslim Pakistan*; *kerudung in Malaysia and Indonesia; buibui in East Africa*; a bigger scarf over the head in Western countries, largely named "hijab".[1] The interplay between culture and religion

1 https://www.al-islam.org/hijab-muslim-womens-dress-islamic-or-cultural-sayyid-muhammad-rizvi/muslim-culture-style-hijab.

also gives place to the making of the fashion history and style dynamics of the hijab.

The literature as well as a simple scrolling on social media platforms (i.e. Instagram, Facebook, and blogs) show many hashtags[2] incorporating the hijab in fashion-related images and narratives. Through such attitudes and practices, young Muslim women living mostly in Western cultural contexts (but even their peers living in traditional Muslim societies) show their cool, fashionable take on hijab by integrating it with modern, fashionable clothes and brands. Obviously, such consumerist and creative adaptations of the hijab have a diverse motivational base and can be read both in terms of the "laicization" of the veil[3] and as a manifesto of young Muslim women in terms of their independence. In this latter sense, the literature speaks even about the emergence of various hijab-fashion subcultures among young Muslim women (cf. generation M).[4]

The growing street-style and digital presence of generation M determines a phenomenon of imitation (i.e. fashion diffusion), and so we are facing a situation when subcultural and street-style takes on hijab become inspirations for the creations of high-fashion houses (e.g. Dolce & Gabbana[5] in 2016) as well. Whichever would be the reason of presenting high-fashion collections which incorporate the veil (e.g. appealing to Muslim population, manifesting against stereotypes and stigmatization), such situations are examples for the so-called bottom-up diffusion of fashion, when the ideas of high-fashion creators are rooted in the practices coming from popular culture.

Following a brief presentation on the role of bottom-up diffusion of fashion innovations, I am going to juxtapose, *grosso modo*, two representations of hijab—the former insisting on the hijab as a religious symbol and the second taking it as a manifesto and integrating it into fashionable (life)styles. The last part will discuss further this phenomenon of adaptation and the possible emergence of hijab-related subcultures.

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2 For instance, Instagram revealed 1,688,179 public posts having attached #hijabista (last count on June 4, 2017).

3 And in this sense, such practices can be considered arguments against Barnard's (1996/2002) opinion that traditional, religious dresses and uniforms can be considered solely as clothes and they cannot be referred as fashion.

4 The definition given by Janmohamed (2016) to young Muslim women living in global cities who try to connect traditional Muslim and modern values and spread their ideas through social media.

5 The Vogue presented the collection like this: "The garments, while engineered for modesty, have all the flair of any other Dolce & Gabbana collection—a little jewel-encrusted lemon here, some black lace trim there—and are styled alongside the label's cocktail jewelry, oversize sunglasses, and patterned bags in a lookbook shoot. To Muslim women with a taste for luxury fashion, this collection is an exciting development" (Yotka, 2016 in Vogue, January 5, 2016 – http://www.vogue.com/article/dolce-gabbana-hijab-abaya-collection).

Fashion and fashion diffusion

Fashion can be defined in multiple ways depending on which aspects of the phenomenon are accentuated.[6] Out of the many approaches of fashion, Miller's (2005) viewpoint is particularly useful and appealing to me as far as it captures both the macro- and micro-level of the phenomenon. Thus, fashion can refer both to specific (trendy) clothes of a specific era, season, place, or group and to the public presentation of the self with the help of clothes, i.e. to identity construction. It follows that individuals rarely dress in an isolated manner, and dress is a less personal thing than it might seem: in their clothing choices, individuals rely on personal role models, bear in mind their affiliation and distinction needs to and from certain groups, can provide more or less radical messages about their preferences, etc.[7]

Fashion is a dynamic phenomenon because it suffers frequent changes depending on cultural, social, economic, political, and aesthetic contexts; fashion trends emerge, get adopted or not, and finally are disappearing (Kim et al. 2014). Fashion changes in relationship to social institutions, power relations, etc. Thus, in the postmodern society, fashion is more democratic as it was in the course of early modern times; there are different styles with specific publics which co-exist and the agreements about fashion standards are more flexible than ever (Crane 2012). Consequently, in the late modern societies, fashion dissemination occurs not only/not necessarily from high-fashion houses (i.e. elites) towards non-elites but also from the street towards elites, in the sense that role models from popular culture corresponding to specific cultural niches, and thus having their specific public, can launch and spread specific fashion styles (Crane 2012).

As a consequence, postmodern approaches of fashion speak about a reverse diffusion, i.e. about a bottom-up diffusion of fashion, which means that no matter what is the socio-economic background of the individuals, they can give rise to new styles, which then can be adopted by peer-groups, then by larger and larger masses and, eventually, by high-fashion houses as well. Subcultures are highly illustrative in this sense: youth, artists as well as different minority groups can create their specific clothing styles either in order to protest or simply in order to individualize and distinct themselves from the masses (cf. Crane 1999). Such dynamic, bottom-up processes of fashion diffusion became widespread not only due to the wide process of globalization but also due to the instrumental help of the so-called "electronic fashion worlds" (cf. Crane 1999), i.e. social media,

6 For instance, Crane (2012) contends that fashion can be seen as a form of material culture which includes clothing and bodily decoration; as signifier, i.e. a language in which different styles have the function of signs; as art and business of fashion creation, communication, and distribution; as instrument of social differentiation and mobility.

7 In this respect, fashion subcultures are illustrative: through the power of dress and rituals, subordinated groups are expressing their ideas about society, challenge the values of the majority, of specific eras, etc. and are providing new approaches concerning social order (Hebdige 1979).

which serves as a repository and sharing platform for both street style fashion icons and personal takes on fashion.

Being cool in hijab

In the contexts of these postmodern bottom-up diffusions of fashion, it is always interesting to see what happens to the traditional clothing styles of specific groups, i.e. ethnic or religious communities. In this respect, to what extent globalization *per se*, consumer culture, liquid modernity, youth subcultures, but also nowadays' turbulent times in terms of terrorist attacks, the problematic nature of assimilation and discrimination, contradictory attitudes towards migration, etc. influence the wearing of the hijab in non-Muslim contexts represent exciting questions.

Hijab is a Muslim veil whose roots can be traced back to ancient Mesopotamia, where veiling was the symbol of nobility. Later on, the veil got religious meanings, being assimilated to the teaching of the Qur'an and considered the symbol of modesty (Bartowski and Read 2003). Non-Muslim common sense often interprets the hijab as a symbol of Muslim identity and reads it in terms of gender inequality and women's oppression (Williams and Vaschi 2007). The literature on hijab presents two opposing views: oppression and liberation. The first perspective goes hand in hand with the common sense and sees the hijab as the visual representation of patriarchal dominance and oppression (Papanek 1973); accordingly, wearing the hijab results in the victimization of Muslim women especially by outsiders, i.e. by exponents of other cultures (Alvi et al. 2003).

The other perspective sees the wearing of the hijab as a manifestation of independence and empowerment (Alvi et al. 2003). Muslim women, particularly those who live in secular Western societies, do not necessarily associate it with Islam religiosity; for them, the choice of wearing the hijab and adapting it to various non-religious contexts and clothing styles can have various motivations[8] and represents a complex act of identity construction (Williams and Vashi 2007).

8 The literature contends that through wearing the hijab Muslim women are creating a kind of individual, intimate, and cultural space around them (Bartowski and Read 2003, Williams and Vaschi 2007). Being placed in Western contexts, the hijab can be read also as a subcultural attitude because it often challenges the reactions of the dominant culture and thus serves also as a manifesto against prejudice. Such rebellious attitudes can be also found in those kinds of motivation which assess that the hijab can be worn by young women in spite of the fact that their family does not impose it. Thus, by taking a more conservative attitude in terms of outfits, young women may try to escape other types of pressures on the part of their families, e.g. marriage. The motivation for wearing the hijab can also be a critical attitude towards globalization and towards the objectification of women in global culture (Williams and Vaschi 2007). Other reasons for wearing the veil include civic duties like raising awareness about Islam and fighting stereotypes concerning the Muslim community (Zine 2001). The hijab can also serve aspirations in terms of career and upward social mobility (Bartowski and Read 2003).

Thus, the hijab as a clothing item specific to Muslim women can be considered a fashion instrument through which they express both their need of affiliation and differentiation to and from certain groups (e.g. the Muslim community and the outsider society).[9] Obviously, as far as the hijab is considered by Western society as a religious symbol and, consequently, as something dangerous on secularism (Wallach Scott 2007), the dominant society can exhibit various forms of hostile reactions towards the veil, which can reach their peak in the official banning of the veil in public spaces (e.g. the case of France)[10] based on the argument that such measures promote integration (Walach Scott 2007).[11]

As far as the wearing of the hijab and the ways in which it is worn can have various motivations and associated benefits and risks, contemporary literature sees the hijab not only as a community-level action attached to religious affiliation but considers it also in terms of individual agency. Thus, Tarlo (2007) contends that in the context of multicultural, global cities, the hijab becomes the symbol of visibility and manifestations of particular values which go well beyond asserting one's religion and ethnicity. By incorporating it in diverse outfits, the hijab can serve various individual purposes, and individuals decide whether to adopt, adapt, or abandon (Williams and Vaschi 2007) the hijab depending on their status and aspirations. Almila (20016) contends in the same line that in Western contexts the hijab has different ways of wearing, which all can manifest a woman's specific attitude towards fashion and society in general. By researching Muslim women in Finland, the author found three kinds of attitudes in this sense labeled as fashion, anti-fashion, and non-fashion. All these attitudes depend on women's social position: lower class women with conservative values employ the hijab as a strategy of anti-fashion

9 In any case, both the acts of wearing and abandoning the hijab are acts of courage because as members of minority groups women have to take into account both the reactions of the minority and of the dominant society (Almila 2016). From this perspective, modernist approaches of the hijab by young Muslim women, i.e. the integration of the veil in consumerist lifestyles, can provoke different reactions from the part of their Muslim community and from the part of their non-Muslim peers and non-Muslim society in general. That is, hostile reactions towards wearing, abandoning, or adapting the veil does not come solely from non-Muslim people. In the context of global consumer culture (and in the context of living in more or less secular non-Muslim countries), wearing the hijab can be interpreted both in terms of demonstrations of difference and in terms of taking the risk of being discriminated by the majority. The literature contends, indeed, that such kind of discrimination can result in two types of strategies in non-Muslim contexts: one of these is to take off the hijab—and that was observed in the context of post-9/11 events when the Muslim population was stigmatized as a whole: women abandoned the hijab because of fear (Badr 2004). On the other hand, many Muslim women who had not worn hijab before the attacks started to wear it after the attacks in order to manifest against the stigmatization.

10 Seen from this angle, the case is similar to societies' reactions towards subcultures as far as the hijab becomes a catalyst for moral panic and labeling (cf. Hebdige 1979).

11 The author contends that in spite of the slogan of promoting integration such prohibitions are expressing French and other dominant cultures' failure in integration and in dealing with difference.

or non-fashion and wear it in a traditional form, in combination with other non-fashionable clothes, while those with carrier aspirations use it as a fashionable object and combine it with trendy garments in such a way that the appearance of these women replicates the fashion style of western middle-class women (cf. Williams and Vaschi 2007).

Wearing the hijab in innovative forms, mostly by combining it with high or fast fashion items, is an example for cultural hybridization (Ritzer 1993/2004) and also speaks about the visual translation of class through the veil: by wearing it in certain ways, women speak both about their ethnicity and status aspirations in education, career, etc. (Appleford 2013—qtd by Almila 2016).

In this context, the case of the hijabistas[12] becomes particularly interesting. Such women can be described as young middle-class members who wear the veil in fashionable forms and make this stance visible on social media (Beta 2014). Thus, via the Internet, these women can form virtual communities linked together through hashtags. In their posts, the hijab becomes a symbol of the modern Muslim woman who cares about fashion and—despite illustrating the omnipresence of consumer culture—who is also illustrative for the ways in which the hijab can become a form of empowerment, a fashion statement which speaks about women's aspiration. Hijabistas give a different meaning to the hijab: it is not the symbol of modesty (as it was once perceived) anymore but that of the ways in which women can speak about themselves with the help of fashion (Beta 2014), an instrument of reconciling different values of Muslim and modern culture.

Analyzing the case of these young Muslim women, the literature speaks about a "new veiling movement" or about a young subculture among Muslim women, called Mipsters (Kuriata 2016), which is illustrative not only for the fashionable takes on veiling (i.e. laicization of the hijab) but also for the incorporation of the veil in garments which are specific for different subcultures (e.g. punk). Through such adaptations, Mipsters are practising not only a so-called "covered chic" (Kuriata 2016) but are also using the language of fashion to show specific identities and to resist stereotypes (Alvi 2013); they want "both to affiliate to their Muslim communities and to outreach across wider society" (Janmohamed 2016: 13–14) with various messages. The cases of Niqua Bitch[13] and Princess Hijab[14] are edgy but also illustrative in this respect (cf. Moors 2011), and both

12 The term is a combination between hijab and fashionista, making also reference to Instagram. The literature uses various denominations for young Muslim women who share their fashionable wearing of the hijab on social media platforms: e.g. hijabers, hijabistas, Mipsters, etc.

13 NiqaBitch was a demonstration in 2010 against France's ban on wearing the hijab in public spaces and included two young women, wearing hot pants and niquab and thus creating a provocative outfit. They walked dressed like this on the streets of Paris and uploaded the video of their walk on the YouTube channel. The history of this civic action can be documented also from the blog of the NiqaBitches (http://niqabitch-blog.tumblr.com/).

14 Princess Hijab is an anonymous street artist working in Paris who paints hijabs on the faces of advertising figures from the Paris metro. Her actions are called hijabisations.

are representing provocative adaptations of the hijab in order to raise awareness about dominant societies' intolerant attitudes towards Muslims.

Final remarks

As far as fashion and identity are impossible to separate, fashion through its symbolism and its direct and indirect effects becomes an important indicator of personal and cultural identification. The transnational cultural and religious disseminations of different styles gave fashion an added value in terms of cultural and religious messages. In this respect the hijab-related fashion shows the different ethnographic components of various cultures and also a reflection on current socio-economic phenomena. The growing interest towards Muslims and in general towards Eastern cultures is visible in the designs of high-fashion houses, but, vice versa, we are also witnessing the incorporation of Western garments and styles in the clothing of Muslims. Nowadays, to wear a hijab does not indicate solely the religious affiliation but also social status, affiliation to various subgroups, and a kind of distinctive manifesto.

It can be concluded that by taking more or less radical adaptation on the hijab and sharing their fashion posts on social media, generation M women speak not only about the omnipresence of the consumption culture but are also providing messages—with help of the language of fashion—on Muslim female's fashion and civic consciousness. While being fashionable in hijab illustrates the democratic nature of fashion in the era of postmodernity, being edgy and provocative in hijab (e.g. Mipsters) can be considered a form of resistance (Ameli and Merali 2006) which challenges the tolerance of both Muslim and non-Muslim cultures. Whether we are speaking about softer or harder adaptations, both cases are illustrative for the power of fashion language in the case of a clothing item which is often regarded as traditional, oppressive, and incapable of change.

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The Griever as a Stranger. A Discussion

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Abstract. The study is, in fact, an interpretation alternative that tries to identify a griever as a stranger in a previously familiar medium. This may refer to an inner strangeness when the griever discovers a kind of strangeness in his or her relationship with himself or herself that questions his or her earlier identity or a feeling of strangeness in relation to friends and acquaintances. In the systematization of the feeling of strangeness in relation to others, I used Schütz's "homecomer" model of a returning veteran as a starting point. This approach brings us closer to understanding the difficulties of relating to grievers.

Keywords: grief, stranger, homecomer, social relationships, posttraumatic growth

Introduction

"A stranger is a friend I haven't met yet"—says Marge Deton in Dan Buettner's TED presentation.[1] In my study, I am searching for an answer to the opposite situation: can a griever become a stranger among his or her friends?

The rationale is that the identification of the griever as a stranger may be a suitable narrative to understand the difficulties of relating to grievers. At the same time, this approach may be an opportunity to improve the daily interactions of grievers; in case the formerly known individual suddenly appears as out of ordinary, in this new situation, it will become necessary to develop a new kind of approach. In this sense, based on this experiment of interpretation, new solutions may be developed to an old problem (the isolation experienced by a significant part of grievers), which take into account the special difficulties of grievers as a vulnerable group.[2]

1 https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_buettner_how_to_live_to_be_100.

2 According to Pilling's (2012) research results, the period of mourning is a vulnerable state in which certain somatic and mental complaints appear more frequently.

In answering the central question of the study, it is necessary to first clarify the notions of "griever" and "stranger". This is followed by the presentation of the griever's strangeness, which is closed by a summary.

The definitions of "griever" and "stranger"

Grief is a well-known concept; we all went through grief in some form or another,[3] and yet it is difficult to define the term. Not even in specialized literature is there a complete agreement regarding the use of the concept.

When defining grief, the majority of definitions highlight the reactions that follow the loss of a beloved person: Freud (1917), Parkes (1988—quoted by Vizinger 2010), Polcz (1997), or Makai (2012). Another group of authors approach the definition of grief in a broader sense, as types of reaction to a stressful life situation (Lindemann 1998), a very significant value (Verena Kast 1999), a trauma (Németh 2000), a loss (Pilling 2012), or a life change (James & Friedman 2011—quoted by Sarungi & Herke Dahlgren 2012).

Based upon the above, we can affirm that several kinds of losses (such as losing a job, losing the idealistic image of a healthy child when a handicapped child is born, losing a beloved person because of a move to another continent, divorce, etc.) can trigger a reaction of grief. Out of all of these, usually the death of a beloved relative causes the most intense reaction.[4] From this starting point, in our study, we will use the concept of grief as the variety of reactions and behavior patterns following the death of a beloved person[5] (or a pre-shadowed death)[6]; the griever is the person who goes through grief.

The other question is what the concept of stranger means. Who counts as a stranger? Somebody who speaks a different language, belongs to another culture or another group, has a different set of beliefs, or is simply different? Being a stranger might mean a different religion or a different language or physical strangeness; at the same time, we may experience the stranger within us as well (Czirkos 2011). Descriptions of the concept of strangeness prove that the essence of the notion of a stranger is impossible to define; as Nyírő (2005) remarks, the studies included in *The Stranger—Variations from Simmel To Derrida* (*Idegen – Variációk Simmeltől Derridáig*—Biczó 2004) are an ample proof of this fact.

3 According to Viorst (1986), we begin our life with a loss, as we lose the safety of the womb.

4 Relying on the results of research, Magdolna Singer claims that losing a spouse through divorce involves even more suffering than a loss through death (Singer 2010).

5 To me, life begins with conception; therefore, the loss of a fetus via spontaneous or induced abortion is included in this category.

6 The appearance of the possibility of death (such as an incurable tumor detected in a relative) may trigger feelings of grief identical to an actual death. In literature, this is called anticipatory grief (Lindemann 1998).

There is, however, a consensus in the fact that we cannot talk about a unified approach to this issue, as the outstanding German phenomenologist Bernhard Waldenfels puts it (Waldenfels 2004: 110).

In approaching strangeness, Waldenfels' approach has offered me a starting point. According to Waldenfels, strangeness is not limited to the strangeness of other cultures (Waldenfels 2004: 116); at the same time, strangeness is always defined by the here and now. This means that even a grieving friend may trigger an experience of strangeness. Besides, I can experience a friend as a stranger if I am the one who grieves, if that friend has never had to cope with a similar loss. In Waldenfels' words, a threshold divides the stranger from the eternal selfhood; at the same time, we can never stand on both sides of the threshold (Waldenfels 1996). Being a stranger is always the result of a simultaneous delimitation and exclusion; therefore, it cannot be disguised from the point of view of an impartial third party. To conclude, the stranger does not exist as such, and we can speak only about different forms of strangeness (Waldenfels 1996). Distance and unapproachability, in fact, are also a part of strangeness, meaning that the stranger is defined as being in another place, as a person who is never entirely in his or her place (Waldenfels 1996).

Strangeness linked to grief

Strangeness does not start outside of us, but within us; this phenomenon is the so-called intra-subjectivity (Waldenfels 1996). In the relationships with others, but also in the relationship with my own self, I can discover a stranger-like quality that questions my self-identity (Tengelyi 1998). One of the examples of this phenomenon is the griever discovering negative feelings within himself or herself that are difficult to accept as part of his or her identity. For example, anger can be a powerful presence during the course of grief; grievers search for someone to blame, someone who is responsible for the death that has occurred. The target of anger can be the healthcare personnel, the doctor, and the deceased or the griever can even blame himself or herself for the death of a relative (Kast 1999). Anger can also be manifested against God because he allowed or did not prevent death (Pilling 2012).[7] Besides anger, another example is unpredictable irritability (Lindemann 1988) or hatred and envy towards mothers and babies in the case of women who suffered perinatal loss (Singer 2008); such reactions are also a natural part of the course of grief.

In the relationship with the Other, in my opinion, the griever is similar to Schütz's "homecomer"[8] (Schütz 2004) who feels that he or she has arrived among

7 I have often experienced these when counselling grievers.

8 A typical example is that of the homecoming veteran's, but it can also be the traveler returning from abroad, the immigrant returning to his or her native country, or the youth who made a good living in a foreign country and now returns to settle down in his or her hometown (Schütz 2004).

strangers as long as "the goddess does not disperse the fog lingering around him or her" (Schütz 2004: 80). According to Schütz (2004), the homecomer—in this case, the griever—expects to come back to a well-known environment; however, we will see that this is not the case: the griever, on the one hand, loses the sense of "homeyness", and, on the other hand, a distance is created in his or her social relationships. At the same time, it becomes difficult to restore social relationships, and actually the griever himself or herself also changes. Hereinafter, I will go into more details regarding these aspects.

The loss of sense of homeyness means the uncertainty of everyday self-explanatory concepts, as nowadays the habits and traditions that helped the griever in enduring the pain and reorganizing life have been partly lost or have become void of their meaning (Buda 1997, Polcz 1997, Pilling 2012, Singer 2010).[9] These traditions and customs used to provide the griever with community support, on the one hand, and serve as a pattern of behavior helping the griever to pursue daily life, on the other hand. Earlier, knowledge to aid the processing of grieving was passed on by one generation to the other, but today we can mostly learn it from books, literature, and courses (Polcz 2005). Therefore, there is no canonized knowledge that would serve as a guide after the loss of a loved one. Instead, a number of new habits are emerging, such as virtual candle lighting, mourning rooms, creation of memorial webpages, conversion of social network profile pages to memorial sites, etc., which all offer new ways of processing grieving. Thus, the old proven tools have weakened, and the newly emerging rites have not yet spread and become accepted by entire local communities. As a result, the griever may easily lose the feeling of "homeyness".

As a result of grieving, a distance may form in relationships as well.[10] Relationships involve a common horizon, on which the common orientation and the objects of relevance are situated (Schütz 2004). However, a change occurs in this respect if a person leaves his or her home and moves to a different social dimension. Along with a change of the environment, different things become important for the two persons in a relationship (Schütz 2004: 85). A similar situation may also be observed in the relationships between the griever and his or her environment. In the changed situation, the griever does not necessarily find formerly important things—that is, things that used to be important before the occurrence of the loss—still important. (The range may include anything and everything from dilemmas on the lines of "where should we go on the weekend?"

9 These processes are described by the authors mainly in the Hungarian context, but similar processes occur in our region as well, mainly in urban environments. Rural settlements have retained more traditions, such as prayer (among the Catholic population), wake (among the Reformed community), or the burial feast (a community meal), but these have also become formalized. The tendency of institutionalization (Polcz 2005) is evident in our region as well.

10 Several authors have mentioned the difficulties of maintaining a loving relationship with others—e.g. Lindemann (1988).

to problems at the workplace.) As a result of the changes in the griever's priorities, the common orientation disappears. This change in the reference system therefore changes the degree of "reliable knowledge" regarding the other person and the relationship (Schütz 2004).

The restoration of a relationship broken due to grieving is difficult because the mourners' environment cannot directly experience the griever's feelings after the loss. Grief is always unique, just as every relationship is unique (Sarungi & Herke Dahlgren 2012). The Other may possess knowledge about grief, may read about it, may watch movies related to it, but all these are stereotypes of grief and not the griever's individual and unique experiences, as described by Schütz (2004) in relation to the experiences of a soldier on the battlefield. According to Schütz, no proof exists that situations presented as typical are also relevant for an absent member of an own group. Moreover, when such a person goes home and starts talking, he or she is surprised to realize that those who remained at home do not understand the uniqueness of his or her individual experiences; instead, they try to isolate familiar elements in what they hear, and attach these to previously shaped types.

The griever can have a similar experience; it needs to be mentioned, however, that these so-called "known types" are not of a unified character either. In the literature on grief, not only the definitions of grief show a wide range of variety but also the distinguishing of the various stages of a typical grieving process. The initial models distinguished three stages: the phase of the emotional shock, the phase of developing awareness, and the phase of recovery and restitution (Engel 1964, Averill 1968—quoted by Pilling 2012). Better-known models, such as Kübler-Ross (1988) or Kast (1999), distinguish five stages. Kübler-Ross (1988) developed these stages based upon conversations with dying persons, and the stages refer to the journey towards death; nevertheless, in specialized literature, they are regarded as phases of grief. János Pilling (2012) adds anticipatory[11] grief to the five phases he has defined.

The majority of experts studying grief agree that the news of having lost a beloved person is experienced as a shock by most people. Instead of a state of shock, Alaine Polcz (2005) uses the expression of "facing"; according to her, shock is simply a kind of reaction, whereas a meeting can also be a quiet and helpful acceptance, especially if the ritual of dying has prepared us to face it.[12] According to the above, it is obvious that the models do not only differ in the number of stages but also in the designation of stages and their content (in the

11 Anticipatory grief is when mourning begins before the death occurs. This usually makes it easier to endure the actual occurrence of death, but occasionally it may make the processing of grief more difficult if there is a strong bond between the dying and the grieving person (Zisook 1995—qtd. in Pilling 2012).

12 During conversations with grievers, I often saw silent acceptance, especially in anticipatory mourning.

Hungarian context, cf. Polcz 2005 and Pilling 2012). Beyond the division of the stages of grief, there are also authors who deny the existence of phases and call the attention on the uniqueness of the grieving process (Friedman 2008—qtd. in Sarungi & Herke Dahlgren 2012).

The multi-faceted character of the typical grief phases accepted in literature signifies the discrepancy between the so-called "typical" and the uniqueness experienced by grievers. This, according to Schütz (2004), is one of the greatest obstacles in the way of restoring broken relationships; the complexity of the issue is even more accentuated if we take into consideration the reactions of grief that differ from the usual,[13] disenfranchised grief[14] or gender differences in processing grief (Cook 1988).

A person experiencing grief may also change as his or her previous experiences are re-evaluated and given a new interpretation in the light of the newly acquired experiences (Schütz 2004). In the literature on grief, this phenomenon is called posttraumatic growth, signifying a positive change that occurs as a result of a struggle in a very stressful life situation (Tedeschi & Calhoun 1996).[15] Posttraumatic growth can be manifested in various forms such as placing a higher value on life, experiencing more significant relationships, the increase of inner strength, the change of priorities, and richer existential and spiritual life (Tedeschi & Calhoun 2004). The authors acknowledge the possible negative consequences involved in such a life-style, but they also draw attention to the positive changes resulting from stressful life situations. Growth does not only mean a change that occurs as a direct consequence of a trauma but also the result of the spiritual battle following the trauma. In this sense, posttraumatic growth does not only mean a return to a previous state but also growth that represents a deep and lasting change for many (Tedeschi & Calhoun 2004).

13 In order to avoid stigmatization, in accordance with Wolfet's (1991) suggestion, these reactions are commonly referred to as complicated grief, but the meaning of the notion is still controversial (cited in Pilling 2012). Deviation from the typical can be grasped in the duration of mourning (chronic mourning) and the intensity of emotions (minimizing, hypertrophic mourning).

14 In the case of disenfranchised grief, society does not consider grief a legitimate one (Doka 2002—qtd. in Attig 2004). This may be due to the nature of the relationship when the deceased and the survivor are not connected by a traditional relationship (e.g. homosexual relationship, extramarital relationship), but it may also include the loss in case of denial of the significance of the loss (e.g. abortion, perinatal mortality, death of a prison inmate, etc.). The notion of disenfranchised grief may also refer to grievers when the ability of certain groups for grieving (such as children, the elderly, persons with mental disabilities) is not acknowledged (Doka 1989—qtd. in Attig 2004). In his later work, Doka (2002) defines two more categories to which the term disenfranchised can be applied: one of these is the circumstances of death (e.g. suicide, death by stigmatized illnesses, executions, etc.) and the other is the way in which people grieve if the process is in conflict with the community's expectations (qtd. in Attig 2004).

15 Painfully beautiful examples of posttraumatic personality development following perinatal loss can be found in Singer's (2009) study.

Conclusions

The main question of the study focuses on the grievers' sense of strangeness. This, on the one hand, may mean inner strangeness when the griever discovers a kind of strangeness in his or her relationship with himself or herself that questions his or her earlier identity or, as Montaigne (2001) states it: the griever becomes the strangest to himself or herself in the intimacy of self-observation (qtd. in Schlesier 2004: 41).

On the other hand, the notion may represent a feeling of strangeness towards friends and acquaintances as well, the understanding of which is facilitated by the "homecomer" model developed by Schütz. Based on this, it can be said that losing a loved one may mean that some of the everyday, self-explanatory knowledge suddenly becomes insufficient; therefore, new patterns and practices become necessary, and as a result the griever may lose the sense of homeyness. In addition, the griever's social relations change, as the change in the priorities of the griever involves the dissolution of the common reference system. The changed relationship will be difficult to restore, the greatest obstacle being the experienced uniqueness and the typical in-between break. As a result of grieving, the griever himself or herself may also change. This distancing hides the mourner behind a "strange mask" (Schütz 2004: 85). This way, the griever may become a stranger in his or her own surroundings.

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Book Review

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Eastern-European Transnational Families as Agents of Social Change: Discursive Facets of Gender, Migration, and Childhood as Constructed Reality

Viorela Ducu and Áron Telegdi-Csetri: Managing "Difference" in Eastern-European Transnational Families
Frankfurt am Main: PL Academic Research—Peter Lang GmbH, 2016

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The edition of an interdisciplinary volume centered on actual subjects and written by senior and assistant researchers from disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, social work, political philosophy, gender studies, criminology, and international human rights is always welcome. On the global context, a series of contemporary phenomena generated by the constitution and spread of transnational families is taking place and is generating various political, economic, and psycho-social effects on macro-, mezzo-, and micro-social levels. Transnational families are representing what we call social change and, on the other hand, such families are generating various social changes, i.e. relevant transformations which affect the structure and function of the social organization of groups and communities in the medium or in the long term (Boudon 1982/2006).

Even if statistical data and surveys provide a relatively clear image on the state and evolution of transnational families and adjacent phenomena, we can hardly affirm that the complexity of this particular social organization can be revealed solely on the basis of quantitative data and statistical analyses. Thus, the quantitative picture can be well completed by more nuanced and deeper qualitative analyses. The present volume can be integrated in the line of these latter qualitative approaches. Edited by Viorela Ducu and Áron Telegdi-Csetri, the volume titled "Managing 'Difference' in Eastern-European Transnational Families" is the result of a series of conjugated efforts made by the authors within the context of a research grant supported by the Romanian National Authority

for Scientific Research and Innovation and hosted by the Centre for Population Studies, Babeş–Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. Consequently, the volume has an empirical coherence, and its objectives are well contoured right from the beginning so that we can read a qualitative treaty on various facets of the contemporary European transnational family.

The case of the transnational family is approached through some pressing problems which are currently setting the agenda both for public authorities and social research. Thus, themes like external migration and its adjacent phenomena (i.e. adaptation, integration, discrimination, segregation, assimilation, return migration, human/citizen/worker rights, and especially children rights), the preservation of identity in the context of socio-cultural differentiation and globalization (i.e. religion, native vs. foreign language, traditions, transnational communication, preserving or developing social capital and social networks), gender role adjustment in transnational contexts (emancipation, egalitarian capital, gender roles, migrants by gender/feminization of migration), transnational criminality (human trafficking, sexual exploitation/prostitution, smuggling), etc. are developed through studies which bring explanatory-theoretical (i.e. analytical) and applicative approaches to the field.

As a process of reflection and individual disposition, change implies the choice of a model, decision-making, and action; the effects of changes are frequently critical for the existing social equilibria. On the individual level, transformations are dependent on the psychosocial context and on the perceptions of those social groups with whom individuals interact; usually, change presupposes the restructuring of the existing social relations and that of socio-cultural environments (Nisbet 1969/1992).

When discussing in the introductory chapter (Transnational Difference—Cosmopolitan Meaning, 13–23) the concept of difference from the title of the volume, its editors, Áron Telegdi-Csetri and Viorela Ducu, show that the studies of the books aimed to identify the "practices of difference, strategies of coping and emancipation, new gender roles and social actors" and, in this sense, the "units of research" are a "feedback for academia" (Id.: 13) in the multi-sensory frontier zone of Eastern Europe, in which a handful of historical and political developments of post-Second World War decades bring "problematically new identities into the bloodstream of an envisaged European society" (Id.: 14). In Europe, there are massive flows of political and post-war emigration from former Yugoslav regions, global economic crisis and West European labor market attraction for Eastern European workforces, followed by political and economic measures to regulate the mass immigration phenomenon and, finally, the Syrian war struggle towards the refugee crisis develops by "raising fences and ending the presumably cosmopolitan politics" of many European countries (Id.: 14).

The articles of the entire volume indicate that social research on transnationality looks at the "differences" which occurred in the family in the context of globalization. The studies show that Eastern Europe is a space of differences in many aspects: historical appurtenance (East vs. West), religion (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Islamic), unequal economic development, different times of EU and Schengen integration, etc., and all "these differences are translated into variations in the freedom of movement, residence, employment, access to welfare, citizenship facilitation, inter-country adoption, etc." (Id.: 15).

On the level of public opinion and mass media, the traditional family and parenthood are seen in a pessimistic way; social change and untraditional families, cultural diversity, and partially the whole migration phenomenon are seen as factors which determine the weakening of the classic family (such transformations can be labeled as world revolution—Goode 1970). In the contemporary world, we are witnessing forms of experiencing and explorations in order to achieve a new form of familial equilibrium both in terms of marriage and alternative marriage and in the form of parent–child relationship. At the same time, new values, attitudes, and behaviors are emerging in the configurations of familial relations, and—in this contexts—the study of the transnational family is legitimated as an important research subject.

The sections of the volume provide a triangle on the vast analysis of the differences which are manifest in the transnational European family: Transnational Families in a Gendered Perspective; Couples within the Context of Migration; Challenges of Transnationalism towards Childhood.

Constructed from a gendered perspective, the article "Partitioned Paternity: Models of Cross-Border Fathering in Ukrainian Transnational Families" (Alissa Tolstokorova 2016: 27–41) offers a deep view on cross-border paternity and paternal care, identifying several types of "responsible fathering" among Ukrainian migrant men: check-paying fathers (high degree of paternal responsibility), re-emerging fathers (moderate degree), and "waning fathers" (low degree). The "male perspective" in transnational family appears as a welcome issue given the fact that Ukrainian men's migration is a wide-spread phenomenon across international mobility of Eastern European citizens pushed away from their countries (and often from their families) by economic factors: males represent over two-thirds of all Ukrainians working abroad, around half of whom have dependent children. The transnational family is seen as a *modernized model* of family ties due to transnational migration and global network society. The multi-staged field research (interviews and focus groups with 43 migrants and their family members, with 23 experts from various domains, and non-participant observation) underlines the rise of the "new fathers" cohort (Cotrane & Allen 1994—qtd. in Tolstokorova 2016, reviewed volume), "performing their paternity

roles across borders" (Id.: 36) according to the identified models of paternity already described.

In the chapter "How Family and Emotional Ties Are Used as Coercive Instruments by the Exploiters on the Romanian Feminine Migration. The Study Case of Italy" (pp. 43–62), Rafaela Hilario Pascoal and Adina Nicoleta Erica Schwartz offer a focused (qualitative) understanding of multiple relations between the children left behind and human trafficking, the role of family in human trafficking, and the coercive instrument of motherhood in the exploitation of labor as a criminal practice in Italy. Using a mixed methodology (content analysis, participant observation, and interviews) and collaborating with several associations from Italy and Romania, the authors were able to develop a complex case study in which the picture of exploitation of Romanian female workers (employed in the domestic sector under conditions of low salary and extensive working hours – up to 16 hours per day – as *badanti*, agriculture laborers in isolation and disrespect, physically and/or emotionally abused, sometimes sexually exploited and harassed or forced into begging) took place. Added to the extreme (economic, social, and psychological) *vulnerability* of these women, there is the use of children as coercive instruments in exploitation (despite that sexual exploitation in work relations is a less visible phenomenon). Furthermore, as the analysis shows, the migration process of these women has left three generations exposed to human trafficking (the mothers, second generation: the children left behind, and third generation who are perpetuating an absent motherhood role (Id.: 59).

"The Issue of Emancipation in the Case of Romanian Migrant Women" (pp. 63–75) signed by Anca Raluca Aştilean exposes a feministic approach on female emancipation and gender empowerment in the migration context, which is seen as an individual process of gender-role transformation. The qualitative investigation consisting in the collection of data from 40 migrant women (from three Romanian villages, three Romanian towns, London—UK, and Mons—Belgium) covers various themes: "breadwinners", "the responsibility of childcare", "professional emancipation", and "love and home". The results show the many ways in which the migration decision and life as a migrant (couples) can change a woman's life, social status, and perspective from a "culture of male control" to gender equality and female emancipation (Id.: 74).

The next article (Armela Xhaho and Erka Çaro: "Gendered Work–Family Balance in Migration: Albanian Migrants in Greece", pp. 77–93) follows the same line of gender-related issues in the case of Albanian parents after their migration to Greece. Work–family balance is an issue of challenge especially in the case of migrant working parents and manifests itself at many levels: the gendered negotiation of work and family conflicts, pressure on migrating mothers, ethnicity, lack of social and extended family support, economic struggles of migrant families, and so on. Studying the biographies of 42 Albanian migrants,

the analysis has pointed out changes in gender power position, extracting diverse models of re-constructing the "hegemonic mothering" life model and "deconstructing gender ideologies of mothering" of Albanian migrant women. "Care gap" (i.e. the double need of economic survival and motherhood) and "double burden" (i.e. reproductive and productive labor) are also analyzed in a qualitative manner. Differences are "mapping out (…) in terms of sacrifices, negotiations and dilemmas of working parents in balancing work and family" ("good worker" and "good parent") and also looking for masculine and feminine roles perpetuated by gendered parenthood care (Id.: 78).

The next three studies placed special focus on couples within the context of migration, shedding light on the main differences through multiple levels of comparison and categories of analysis:

In the chapter titled "Egalitarian Capital Gained in Norway or Brought from Poland? Experiences of Migration and Gender Equality among Polish Couples in Norway" (pp. 97–112), Magdalena Żadkowska and Tomasz Szlendak investigate the family life of Polish couples in Poland (more traditional family attitudes) and Norway (more egalitarian ones), searching for different degrees of "egalitarian capital" (values and practices of researched couples) encouraged by the differences in the social system, work places, labor climate, and social patterns of these two countries.

In "Global Migration and Intermarriage in Chinese-Hungarian Context" (pp. 113–130), Nóra Kovács offers a social-anthropological view on tensions and challenges due to the different socio-cultural backgrounds of a couple formed of a Hungarian woman and a Chinese man who have been together for thirty years: the spouses' representations of marriage, family, and love may serve as a case study in understanding transnationality in intimate relationships and couple life (as mixed marriage). The study also aims at offering a large anthropological picture of "locations, social networks, and discourse and symbol system affecting migrants' lives" (Id.: 118–119), while using literature review and several comprehensive interviews concerning Chinese-Hungarian mixed couples. The data analysis scrutinizes the narrative process and its interpersonal context, indicating the multiple factors involved in these relationships' dynamics (Id.: 120–123).

Viorela Ducu and Iulia Hosu in their chapter "Bi-National Couples with a Romanian Partner in the European Context" (pp. 131–148) are presenting an exploratory approach to understanding the degree of importance of the native country's cultural heritage (religion, language, education, and tradition) among bi-national couples. The research is based on a qualitative analysis of 10 interviews (individuals and couples) with Romanian citizens living in the UK and Belgium. This approach is preceded by the synthesis of statistical data on the international migration of Romanian citizens coming in different waves and their correspondent cohort characteristics. Variables such as country of origin and host

country, degree of social acceptance, the national or binational practices (language of the families, name and citizenship of the children, religion as differences appear) are taken into account in this qualitative study. As a conceptual novelty, the three strategies of language use in a binational couple proposed by S. Gaspar (2010, qtd. in Ducu & Hosu 2016, reviewed volume)—assimilation, binationality, and peripatetic—are completed with a fourth option, i.e. neutral (the practice of the use of a third language in the family). The study discusses the evolution of social acceptance of Romanian migrants into the new society (reduction in negative perceptions towards them), the role of pragmatic vs. emotional factors in decision-making processes concerning the family, and the sensitive issue of raising and educating the children of the binational couples in a (new) foreign country.

In connection with the above mentioned themes and chapters, we can enter into a discussion on transnational couples from the perspective of Gary Becker's marriage market theory (1991). This theory, starting from the concept of social exchange, uses the concept of capital (financial, erotic, symbolic, etc.) and refers to marriage as a form of capital exchange, a form of socio-cultural process of permanent selection. The factors which enable the process of selection (physical proximity, rational choice, cultural, social, and psychological compatibility, etc.) conjugate themselves in such a way that similarities and differences create, after all, a so-called multiple homogamy, especially in terms of values, attitudes, and personality patterns (Hogg & Cooper 2007). This phenomenon of selection, called also multi-criteria homogamy (Ilut 2005) is salient in the context of contemporary Europe, where homogamy criteria, such as race, ethnicity, or religion, are more nuanced, and the whole process of partner selection and the transformations of the family life become flexible, which then has several consequences on the life of the family (e.g. raising and educating the children in mixed, transnational families—see also Benokraitis 2005).

In terms of such challenges, Georgiana Cristina Rentea and Laura-Elena Rotărescu, in their chapter titled "Yesterday's Children, Today's Youth: the Experiences of Children Left Behind by Romanian Migrant Parents" (pp. 151–170) explore the challenging experiences of those children (from several Romanian villages) who lack the presence of one or both of their parents and the ways in which "the evolution of family relationships, individual and family life plans" (p. 151) take shape in these contexts. The authors try to figure out the involved actors' main strategies of adaptation and coping with this phenomenon of absent parents. A series of literature findings regarding these experiences (e.g. the emergent meaning of concepts and phenomena such as the constitution of gender in migrants' transnational households, the gender of the missing parent, and their effects on children's development) are discussed in this small-scale qualitative study, which surely opens the way to future analytical developments and interpretations. The

research subjects were seven young people from Romania (19–22 years old), who had migrant parents. The results shows that the pivotal reason of the parents' migration in order to work abroad, accompanied by leaving their children at home, is the financial constraints of their family and that the young subjects are aware of their parents' sacrifice and forthcoming material advantages. The subjects are aware of the negative emotional and social implications (feelings of loneliness, neglect and abandonment, lower level of interest in school performance, poor relationships with the family members remained at home, etc.) of their decisions. Indeed, the time right after leaving and the many years after the parent's absence (especially when the absent parent was the mother, despite the compensatory role of technological communication between parent and child) are recalled as a sacrifice. Among the perceived advantages of this life strategy, we can mention: higher income, better living conditions, family welfare, money spent on the children's education, school results, financial independence, and good job prospects. The future life plans of the young interviewed tend to be oriented towards good education at home in order to obtain a good (well-paid) job in Romania.

Bojan Petrovic in his essay "Intercountry Adoption: Human Rights Perspective" (pp. 171–185) casts light on the tensions between the legal framework of intercountry adoption and the particular contexts (legal, sociological, and psychological) on which the formal rules should be applied. Regarding the contexts where intercountry adoptions are prohibited by law, Bojan Petrovic concludes that "Intercountry adoption should be partly solving the problem (…) providing an opportunity for children to grow up in a family" and "the international community has a positive obligation (…) to take steps to raise awareness in every state of the status and position of these children (…) institution of adoption should have the unconditional support" (Id.: 183).

The nuanced way of analyzing the information coming from various sources through various methods (interviews, observation) is ensured by the qualitative research design so that the readers get access to a shared, constructed reality. Due to their contextual and expressive nature, qualitative studies have the value of transgressing real or projected social spaces as they are (re)presented in the subjects' minds and memories. Thus, such studies can offer a perspective in connection with the ways in which subjects experience reality (first-hand perspective—see also Liamputtong 2008). Obviously, besides the qualitative approach, the values of the volume "Managing *Difference* in Eastern-European Transnational Families" is given also by the mentioning of the quantitative background of the researched phenomena, and such framework facilitates openness and comparison. From here, I assume, it is only one step towards more advanced transdisciplinary, multimethod approaches and, finally, towards applicative, policy-centered research.

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