



STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS  
BABEȘ-BOLYAI



# SOCIOLOGIA

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1/2007

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**UNIVERSITATIS BABEȘ – BOLYAI**  
**SOCIOLOGIA**

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## MASS MEDIA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE SOCIALIZING PROCESS

DAN CHIRIBUCA

**RESUMÉ. L'influence des mass-média sur le processus de socialisation.** Les mass-média représentent un aspect spécial de la socialisation, parce que les enfants et les adolescents ont la possibilité de sélectionner de divers contenus, en fonction de leurs personnalités.

Nous analysons les relations entre les mass-média et les agents traditionnels de socialisation: la famille et l'école. Les sources documentaires sont des enquêtes sociologiques de 2004 et 2005.

In developed countries, children allocate more time to media consumption than to any other leisure time activities, except for sleep (de Haan and Huysmans, 2004). Mass media represents, at least judging from the perspective of quantity (time dedicated to consumption) one of contemporary children's and adolescents' major socializing agencies. It is also a special agency, because as opposed to other socializing agencies, in the case of the media, the socializing subjects are in control and decide on the important parts of the content transmitted. While the traditional socializing agencies, the family and the school, encourage adolescents to accept behaviour, attitudes, beliefs and values oriented toward the preservation of the current social order and the reproduction of the existing cultural models, as concerns mass media, socializing in fact becomes to a large extent self-socializing, in the sense that adolescents can choose the contents they consider most adequate to cater for their preferences, interests and personalities (Arnett, 1995). Thus, individuals can control a significant part of the process of their development as social persons.

To what extent does the shift of control over communicational situations from the institutional socializing agents to the socializing subjects influence the reproduction of social organization, development of personal identities or the functioning of social control agencies? How does this shift influence the roles of the family and school in the socializing process?

The answers depend on the paradigms we use to define the socializing process, communication, the media and the relation between the media and its audience, especially children and adolescents.

As concerns communication, one of the most frequently cited approaches equates the process to the transmission of information, operationalised in a linear model Emitter – Message – Channel – Receiver. According to this model, communication is an intentional process, conditioned by the participants' conscientious

involvement. Although very important in the panoply of communication paradigms, this informational model first promoted by Shannon and Weaver ignores a few essential characteristics of communication. The first aspect pertains to what makes up the central axiom of both the Palo Alto School, and the essence of the semiotic perspective: communication does not depend on intentionality, because everything is a sign and thus we communicate even when we do not intend to do so. The semiotic approaches extend the area of legitimate circumscriptions, postulating that the entire world is nothing but “text” for the simple reason that everything is a bearer of meaning. For semioticians, the producer of text, the emitter in the mechanistic paradigm, becomes irrelevant. The key elements are the text and the reader, because meaning is generated by the interaction between them. The second aspect relates to the fact that in human communication, a significant part of the messages do not pursue informational ends. We tell those we love that they are beautiful not in order to mitigate their aesthetic uncertainties, but in order to provide tokens of affection. In this case, it is not the information we transmit that is important, but the relationship mediated by the communication by means of the message. And for this reason, the distinction between information and meaning is paramount. Information is *transmitted* and it entails an unbalance doubled by acceptance. Meaning is *generated* and it involves participation.

Focusing on the transmission of information is the premise of a positivist approach. The linear flow of communication can be segmented and it allows sequential analysis. Dependence is linear and causal, and messages can be evaluated by relating them to an objective reality. In relation with the socializing process, the mechanical model of transmitting information is complementary to the structural-functionalist approaches, according to which socializing is a process of learning a role through which individuals adopt prescribed models of life which define both the goals they pursue, and the means they accept for achieving them (Zerilli, 2007). Objectification of values and norms which are external as related to individuals in messages transmitted to them during the socializing process leads to the individuals’ integration in the patterns of interaction making up the major institutions of society. Individuals are simply passive receivers of the social influence. For this perspective, the individuals’ potential freedom to choose the socializing contents is a major break from the socializing process whose minimal effect is in redefining the mechanisms of learning social roles.

Focusing on significance and meaning is the major attribute of the phenomenological perspectives on communication. This is seen as a ritual, emphasizing elements such as mutuality, and reciprocity of perceptions. Meanings are equally desirable and legitimate. The point is how they are generated, not their validity in relation to an objective reality. A relevant definition was proposed by Rogers (1986), who identified communication as a “process in which the participants create and share information to reach mutual understanding”. For the socializing phenomenon, this circumscription of communication is complementary to the paradigm of symbolic

interaction which emphasizes the individual's active role in the socializing process. The essence of socializing lies in the emergence of the self concept in the context of social relations mediated by mutually shared symbols (Zerilli, 2007). Emphasis shifts from the axiological and normative contents institutionally transmitted to individuals to the evaluation and selection process which underlies the internalization of others' attitudes and values. From the perspective of the interactionist paradigm, the adolescents' possible control over socializing contents disseminated by the media is rendered relative by the role and influence exerted by the other socializing agents (the family, school, peer group, etc. ) both on the selection of content, and on defining the interpretation grids. From the perspective of the relationship between the mass media and adolescents, it is important that such a theoretical circumscription is too little interested in media consumption behaviour, and in the impact of the contents distributed by the media on the adolescents' social integration, and it places the study of the social context of media consumption in the centre of investigations. The fundamental idea of such approaches is that the significance of media texts results from the codes used for reading, which are determined by previous cultural expertise and by the social context in which the reading takes place. Taking into account the social context as a determining factor of building meaning makes possible the shift from the micro level to the macro level through focusing on the social frameworks that filter reading. At the macro level, the contexts of using the media may contribute also to the explanation of the influence socializing has on a large number of individuals' adjustment to the requirements of living together. One example is the way in which the informational use of the media interacts with the community context in the influence exerted on civic participation. Data from survey carried out in the US have showed that among very young Americans, use of the Internet for sharing information influences trust in people and civic participation to a larger extent than use of print or radio-television for the same purposes (Dhavan, 2001).

On the other hand, watching television, using the computer and the Internet involve less physical activity and limit direct social interactions (Kraut et al, 1998). Nie and Erbring (2000) have found that the more hours spent online, the less the time allocated to direct interactions and the more reduced participation in events that take place outside of the home. Their conclusion is that the Internet leads to less strong relations between the individual and their social environment. The validity of this conclusion is conditioned, however, by ignoring the fact that communication via the new media technologies generates new forms of social interaction. While television can be associated to a process of social isolation, use of the new media (computer, the Internet, mobile telephony) by children and adolescents means new opportunities for games, communication, social support and learning.

As concerns mass media, there are at least three determinants which contribute to the fundamental restructuring of its relation to the public, in general, and to the changes in the patters of media consumption among adolescents. These are the increased accessibility of media equipment and individualized consumption,

diversification of media both in form and content, and the enhanced autonomy of the audience in relation to the content producing agencies.

The enhanced accessibility of media equipment, doubled by the development of new communication technologies have led to the shift from some traditionally collective consumer practices to individual practices (Livingstone, 1999). At present, the process aims especially at television consumption. In 2005, over 50% of the 10-14 year olds and over 60% of the adolescents (15-18 years) had a television set in their room<sup>1</sup>. Individualization is a result of technological progress (portable new media technology) and a consequence of transforming social practices to adjust to the changes in technology<sup>2</sup>.

The second change lies in the fact that means of mass communication are less and less for the “masses”. There are several dimensions that contribute to the emergence of this situation. On the one hand, mass media is far from being a homogeneous category, the term being used for a wide variety of products and content: CDs with classical music, but also hip-hop, the Harry Potter books and films, but also James Joyce’s books or the Bergman films, political analysis magazines, academic treatises and porn sites. Beyond the structural diversity, the new technologies have made it possible to have reduced scale communication, focusing on specialised audiences. These are in contrast with the traditional means of the “mass” media: national journals or magazines, television channels for a compact, homogeneous, undifferentiated national audience. On the other hand, both the “old” media (newspapers, radios, television) and the “new” one (computer-mediated communication, the Internet, mobile telephony) have become more diverse and they continue to diversify their forms and contents. The phenomenon is simultaneously ambivalent and multidimensional: specialization and specification of content is doubled by homogenization and unification.

Extreme segmentation made possible by the development of new communication technologies is doubled by the re-definition of the relation between the media and its audience. The Internet allows accessing information in a relatively independent way from the institutionalized press agencies. Passive audience is changing into an active audience both in relation to the content broadcast, and in relation to the agencies that produce the content. Increased institutionalization of production and distribution of media messages is doubled by an individualization and personalization of the production and distribution of these contents. The audience has turned into audiences, and the consumer can always become a producer-author. In 2004, the major awards of the London film festival went to an autobiographic documentary whose costs of production amounted to 218 USD. At present, there are blog authors with bigger daily audiences than national televisions or newspapers.

One of the radical effects of the new communication technologies (the Internet, mobile telephony) is the reconfiguration of some fundamental structuring

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<sup>1</sup> CURS survey – Students’ exposure to radio and television programmes (2005)

dimensions of the social space: public-private, work-spare time, home-work, physical space-social space, masculine-feminine, etc. Previously defined by some distinct boundaries, these dimensions are now increasingly overlapping, and their limits are blurred. Changes are so recent that some of the social practices and norms associated to them are not yet completely clear. As concerns the process of children's and adolescents' socializing, the electronic media allows for the unification of the previously distinct social spheres. As a result of new patters of information broadcast on television, childhood and adulthood are "blurred". Television, and more recently the Internet, brings children and adults in social situations which in the past were distinct, and allow children access to aspects of the social world which were previously hidden from them or made difficult to access. Television allows children to be "present", - socially, if not physically – in the adults' "interactions". By unifying social spheres which used to be separate, the media wipes away the boundary separating public and private space, thus breaking the traditional link between the physical and the social space. Using the Goffman metaphor, Meyrovitz borrows the idea of the "backstage" and "stage" to illustrate the passage from a private (backstage) behaviour to a (stage) behaviour exposed to the public by means of the media. Thanks to the media, groups which used to be isolated are not separated any longer, and aspects of the group identity which used to depend on physical places or direct interaction and the experiences provided by them are now permanently under the influence of the electronic media (Meyrovitz, 1985).

As a result of these changes, the media has become one of the major factors in modelling gender representations, choosing jobs, and cultural consumption practices, forming stereotypes, or configuring roles in the family. The importance of this influence is however debatable. One major aspect concerns the assumption of the homogeneity of social models promoted by the media. This is supported by both the representatives of the Frankfurt school, and more recently by the culturalist approaches (Gerbner et al, 1994, Kellner, 1995), but it is brought into the forefront by recent processes of diversification and segmentation of the production agencies and contents, and also by individualisation of consumption.

Accepting the homogeneity of the social models shown by the media and a unitary normative-axiological background equals postulating a media whose socializing influence is in line with that exerted by the family and the school. On the other hand, the diversity of content, even doubled by the heterogeneity of role models, does not directly entail liberation of the individual from normative regulations imposed by institutional agents. Undoubtedly, we can state that the media is in competition with the family and the school in manipulating the adolescents' aspirations, their self image and self-confidence. Depending on the legitimacy and the desirability of cultural practices, adolescents are distributed in status quos which benefit from a positive or negative social image. In Bourdieu's model, the influences of agencies which participate in the primary socialization are cumulative. Bourdieu emphasizes that the patterns established in the family make up the foundation on which the school

experience is structured, and these together structure all the subsequent experiences including reception of cultural products (Bourdieu: 1984). For Bourdieu, all school does is amplify and multiply the manifestation of some opportunities predefined by the social background (the family). The media operates as a catalyst and facilitator of this amplifying role and therefore it contributes to a larger extent to the reproduction of inequalities than to their reduction. Another argument for this perspective is provided by the fact that the increased availability of communication technologies (television, computer-mediated communication, mobile telephony, the Internet) does not directly mean the disappearance of disparities in access (Chan, 2006). The Internet, for instance, can have an important effect in reducing inequalities, as a result of cheaper access to information, and increased opportunities for people with low income to enhance their human capital and thus improve their opportunities of success in life (Di Maggio et al, 2001). On the other hand, those of a better socio-economic standing have more rapid and easier access to the benefits of new technologies, which at least in the first phase would lead to wider gaps. Although the rapid spread of consumption should reduce the gap, a series of recent studies have shown that inequalities in accessing informational services (telephony, cable, etc.) tend to persist in time as opposed to the inequalities in accessing information equipment (radio, television, video, DVD, computer, etc) which tend to reach a limit of saturation relatively rapidly (Di Maggio et al, 2001). The difference can be put down to the type of cost, which is recurrent in the first case and one-off in the second.

As concerns Romania, a survey carried out by CURS in 2005 confirms, in a rather predictable manner, the existence of a gap between the socio-demographic categories as concerns access to Internet services or individualized television consumption. Over a quarter of the adolescents in the sample, aged 15-18 years, had Internet connection at home in 2005, and their distribution was unequal in relation to variables such as socio-economic status of the family (evaluated by the father's occupation), residence<sup>3</sup>, income of the household, and the adolescent's gender.

**Table 1.****Adolescents' access to television and the Internet**

	Socio-economic status			Residence		Income		Gender	
	low	average	high	urban	rural	< 1400 RON	> 1400 RON	F	M
Have television in their room (%)	64	65	64	66	54	63	70	60	68
Have Internet connection at home (%)	15	30	55	29	12	22	52	24	30

As concerns the existence of televisions in the households, the share of adolescents who have a television set in their room is influenced by the type of

<sup>3</sup> There is a direct relation between the size of localities and the number of Internet connections.

residence, the family's income and the adolescents' gender, but differences are much smaller in this respect. In urban areas there are more colour televisions, more households with at least two television sets, more households connected to cable (85% versus 36% in rural)<sup>4</sup>. The fact that boys more often have personal computers in their room than girls (the latter more frequently have books), coupled with unequal access to the Internet, and the larger share of televisions in the rooms inhabited by boys suggest that apart from the structural determinants of differentiated access, the differences are due to the perpetuation of some gender related stereotypes.

On the other hand, even a possible equalization of access cumulated with the diversity of role models does not validate automatically a model of socializing in which the individual becomes his or her own socializing agent.

According to the socio-cognitive theory of mass communication, role models chosen by the individual are influenced by a process of selective observation (Bandura, 2001). As mentioned above, a major change brought about by new communication technologies is the change of the relation between the behaviour patterns accessible in the close environment and those shown in the inaccessible physical and social spaces. The number and diversity of role models which the individual is exposed to has exploded once with the extension of the media agencies. Thus, selectiveness has become a fundamental attribute of observational learning. The family, the school, and peer groups are the major agencies which compete with the media not only as providers of educational contents, but also as agencies which influence selection. The data made available by the survey (CURS - 2005) allow us to do an indirect and approximate evaluation of this influence.

Over half of the adolescents watch TV alone, and one quarter of the rest would prefer to watch TV alone (Table 2). It is relevant to point out that 30% of the total number of adolescents in the 2005 sample prefers to watch TV with friends.

**Table 2.**

**The context in which adolescents watch television programmes (%)**

	Alone	With mother	With father	With both parents	With some other family	With all the family	With friends
Watch ...	54	5	1	7	14	12	6
Prefer to watch ...	44	3	1	3	8	7	30
Do not watch alone and prefer to watch ...	27	5	2	6	13	13	30

<sup>4</sup> MMT Survey - 2004

The apparent dominating influence of the peer group is confirmed by the fact that the persons with whom adolescents talk about the viewed content are friends and schoolmates (Table 3).

**Table 3.****Discussion partners on the topic of TV programmes watched (%)**

	family	teachers	school mates	friends	Someone else	Do not discuss
Who they often discuss TV programmes with.	11	0	14	63	1	11

The data also confirm the existence of a direct influence of the context of viewing on the content watched, at least in the case of peer group. In comparison with the entire population of adolescents in the sample, and with those who watch TV mostly alone and with family, adolescents who watch TV with colleagues or friends watch news, cultural shows, contests, films and documentaries, entertainment less frequently, and they never watch religious shows (Table 4). It is important to point out, however, that despite the fact that peer group is the second option as concerns preferred co-viewers (the first is alone), only 6% of the total number of adolescents in the sample normally watch TV with friends.

The causality between the context of viewing and the content watched is supported also by the fact that an enhanced control of adolescents upon the decisions as to what to watch is associated with a higher level of consumption of programs which are not recommended or forbidden for the respective age group (Table 5). The presence of the family in the viewing context is a strong inhibiting factor of consumption of such programs. The relation is direct and statistically significant.

**Table 4.****Watching TV shows depending on the context of viewing (alone, family, peer group) %**

TV shows usually watched (rather)	Usually watches television ... (%)			
	alone	With family	Colleagues, friends	Total sample
news	54	56	44	55
debates, talk-shows	18	16	14	17
surveys, reports	13	15	12	14
Religious shows	3	6	0	4
Cultural shows	9	11	4	9
Scientific shows	22	22	22	22
Contests	32	36	24	33
Sports shows	40	37	37	38
Films	63	64	51	63

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Series	33	40	26	36
Social programmes	4	6	2	5
Soaps	25	37	30	30
Documentaries	38	36	26	37
Cartoons	27	31	27	29
Shows for children, adolescents	16	21	19	18
Musical shows	40	43	41	41
Entertainment, comedies	50	47	40	49

Another essential variable in the configuration of the socializing effect exerted by the media is the manner in which adolescents perceive the media agencies and especially television as an educational agency or a source of entertainment. This definition directly influences the selection of viewed content and it structures the interpretation grids used in decoding it. An educational programme which is received in an entertainment grid will have a different and probably more reduced effect than an entertainment program “read” in an educational grid.

**Table 5.**

**Watching programmes which are forbidden /not recommended**

	Usually watches TV ... (%)			
	alone	family	colleagues, friends	Total sample
<b>When a show is on which is not allowed/recommended for your age group</b>				
I watch it, without hiding	71	54	73	64
I watch it but in hiding	9	7	7	8
I talk to my parents and watch it if they let me do so	4	14	7	8
I don't watch it	14	23	12	17

**Table 6.**

**Reason for watching television programmes (%)**

	information, to learn new things	Entertainment, fund	Out of boredom	Other reason	DK/NA
Watches TV for...	34	34	23	2	7

The major reason for television consumption among Romanian adolescents is entertainment, next to habit and the wish to avoid boredom (Table 7).

**Table 7.**  
**Reason for watching television programmes by age, residence and income(%)**

	Age				Residence		Income	
	15	16	17	18	urban	rural	< 1400 RON	> 1400 RON
Information, to learn new things	28	39	32	38	34	33	33	37
Entertainment, fun	42	31	33	29	32	44	36	26
As a habit, to avoid boredom	20	24	26	24	25	16	23	30

The more formal education a person has had, evaluated through the number of years of schooling, the more frequent the statement that consumption is for informational-educational purposes rather than entertainment. For adolescents in rural areas, the consumption determined by the need for entertainment is significantly more frequently mentioned than by adolescents in the urban areas, the latter stating to a larger extent than their peers in the rural areas that boredom is their major reason for watching television. A significant influence on the relationship between adolescents and television is exerted by the economic status of the family; consumption motivated by the need for entertainment is higher among adolescents in low income families. A higher education, urban residence and higher income are variables that influence educationally motivated television consumption.<sup>5</sup>

Although the data available do not allow for the univocal validation of any of the major theories regarding the socializing influence of the media, they confirm once again that its influence depends on the structural and cultural frameworks which define the social context of consumption. The emergence of new media redefines the relationship between the production agencies and the audience, and it exerts a major influence on the relationship between the individuals who make up the audiences and the social space to which they belong; however, the increased accessibility of communication technologies and individualization of consumption have led, at least thus far, neither to closing the gap as concerns access, nor to the emergence of independent patterns of consumption in relation to the in-group.

<sup>5</sup> As these are data from a survey, and therefore they reflect the respondents' opinions concerning their behaviour, it would be haphazard to state that television is an educational agency for urban adolescents with higher education, coming from families with a high socio-economic status, and an entertainment agency for rural adolescents with incomplete schooling, or coming from families with a lower socio-economic standing. We can state that the socializing impact of television is potentially different between the two groups and it is influenced by the manner in which they self-define their motivation for television consumption.

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## THE FORMATION PROCESS OF THE ROMA ELITE IN CLUJ

RÉKA GEAMBAȘU

**RÉSUMÉ.** **La formation de l'élite romanichelle à Cluj.** L'étude offre une description et une compréhension de la formation d'un groupe de leaders dans la ville de Cluj. L'article étudie la manière dont le processus de sélection et recrutement se manifeste en ce domaine à l'aide d'interviews avec les membres de l'élite politique et économique romanichelle. L'analyse s'axe sur la présentation de la formation du processus de l'élite romanichelle en Cluj du point de vue du développement institutionnel. L'auteur a utilisé la méthode d'analyse narrative de réseau pour reconstituer les facteurs et pour identifier les acteurs qui ont joué un rôle majeur dans les changements politiques après 1989. L'étude construit une typologie de l'élite romanichelle, basée sur l'accès de chaque groupe au pouvoir politique et ressources économiques. Les quelques groupes d'élite romanichelle qui existent à un moment donné pendant la transformation post-socialiste – ont utilisées des formes différentes du capital pendant leur essai d'atteindre l'influence politique. Pendant leur discours, les membres de l'élite romanichelle définissent leurs propres rôles sociaux et politiques à l'aide de termes comme «traducteurs», «interface», termes qui ont été créés par l'élite majoritaire pour être capable d'établir des canaux de communication entre les leaders politiques dominants et les membres des communautés romanichelles. À travers ce processus, les leaders politiques de Roumanie ont été ceux qui ont contrôlé le processus de recrutement de l'élite romanichelle. La meilleure voie de comprendre les actions et stratégies déployées par les membres de l'élite romanichelle est en utilisant le terme de «l'entreprise ethnique».

### Introduction

The elite of the Romanian Roma – that is active in political and non-profit organizations – similarly to the other dominant or ethnical minority elites – can not construct its role-definition and legitimacy on a counter-elite past, and gain legitimacy based on this. Under counter-elite, we mean a group of people who formulate a discourse based on cultural values that are different from those of the majority group.

The Roma elite do not only constitute a minority by number: it has only a marginal influence on political decisions, and thus on the transition process that started after 1989. According to Schaefer (1998), those groups can be considered minorities that are underprivileged in terms of distribution of power. A community can be defined as a minority, if it is – collectively – 1. underprivileged by the majority group, 2. has some specific physical or cultural characteristics, 3. individuals don't join on a voluntary basis, 4. endogamy is treated as a norm within the group, or 5. group members are aware that they are subordinated to another

group. Besides being minor in number, subordinated groups are also considered those, whose members have less power above their own lives than the members of the dominant group. The members of the minority do not dispose of the same share in goods and resources – considered valuable in the community – as their proportion in the society. (Schaefer, 1998: 2-5).

The Roma in Romania – and in general in Central and Eastern Europe – match all the criteria above and are thus considered a minority. The Roma population is the most deprived, most marginalized population in the country that also has limited access to resources.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the fact that – according to census data collected in 1992 and 2002 – the Roma constitute the second largest minority in Romania,<sup>2</sup> they could not send a deputy to the Parliament following the elections. One deputy of the Roma is present in the Parliament because according to the Constitution, all minorities have the right to one representative.

In this study, we analyze a specific aspect of the elite-formation<sup>3</sup> in the Romanian post-communist society, and namely the recruitment processes and the functioning of the Roma elite in Cluj. The context of the analysis is defined by the particularities of the economic and political transition of this period. One of these particularities is that there are no politicians who gained legitimacy based on their “dissident” past, i.e. that they have opposed the dictatorship in any way – those few who have opposed, have only a marginal position in the system. Another characteristic is that the communist elite of the past assumes responsibilities in the transition process. The processes through which the Roma population from ‘secret socialist problem’ becomes an ethnic minority are, also particular.

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<sup>1</sup> According to a research conducted in 1992 (Zamfir–Zamfir, 1993), 80% of the Roma population is unskilled, 45% of those above 16 years of age are unemployed, and 44% of the men, and 59% of the women are illiterate. According to the same study (Zamfir–Zamfir, 1993), 16% of the whole population of Romania lives below the survival margin (i.e. they can not satisfy their primary needs: do not have the necessary resources to purchase basic food), which also describes 63% of the Roma. Other studies – using quantitative research methods – get to the same conclusion that it is 3.5 times more likely for the individual to be poor in case he/she is of Roma origin, and their consumption is 40% lower than it is in the case of the whole population (Teșliuc, 1999: 244).

<sup>2</sup> There are 409,723 people in Romania who declare themselves Roma – according to the last processed census data from 1992 –, which constitutes 1.8% of the total population and makes the Roma the second largest ethnic group. Concerning the number of the Roma population in Romania there are many estimates and the results are debated. Some Roma leaders say the real number is somewhere between 3-5 million. The calculations of the Roma Ethnic Union in Romania seem to be more realistic: according to them, 2.5 million people of Roma origin live in the country, which constitutes 10% of the total population. Other observers estimate lower numbers (between 1 and 1.5 million). Based on 1992 research data, the authors (Elena and Cătălin Zamfir) estimate the number of those of Roma ethnicity who live a traditional life, at about 1,010,000 (Pons, 1997:7).

<sup>3</sup> We consider elites all those social groups that dispose of the monopoly of authority and power, and that carry out different levels of – economic, social, political, cultural, ideological, etc. – repression/dominance (Málnai, 1996).

In our research, we have conducted 21 interviews. In the selection of the people we have interviewed, we have followed the snowball-method: our first interviewees were well-known politicians, and leaders of civil institutions. During data collection, using the snowball-method, we advanced along the inner reference lines of the elite, based on how they identify each other. This is also how we verified our definition of the elite in an institutional approach.

### **The Romanian context of the formation of the ethnic minority elite**

The elite taking responsibility in the transition process of the post-communist societies is not only apparent on the level of the dominant groups of the society, but also various – ethnic, national, cultural, gender, sexual etc. – minority groups take part in the transition process.

During the socialist regime, the *homogenizing, uniformizing* ambitions defined the main dimensions of the national party's policies. Being 'different' in the socialist rhetoric meant 'deviant', and denoted an individual who rejected to be a member of the 'faceless crowd' and thus tried to back out from 'building the socialism'. The project of 'building socialism' was only possible, if racial, gender, ethnic, or even local or any other differences were disregarded, and in this context all those, who have striven for the acknowledgement of any private rights or ethnic identity, were considered traitor or resistant (Kligman, 2000:43).

In the period after the 1989 revolution, political parties and non-governmental organizations appeared that stood for previously inexistent social groups and fought for their rights (the Democratic Alliance of the Hungarians in Romania for instance, or the Social Dialogue Group that issues the periodical called 22, and also all other – conservationist, art-relic protecting, human rights etc. – NGOs). Those individuals, who define themselves as ethnic minorities, can also be mentioned here, they perform specific activities and due to their particular culture they pursue specific interests, for instance non-governmental, non-profit organizations that stand for certain minority goals and interests.

In the context of democratization, the group that defines itself as the Roma elite in Romania, appears.

### **The Roma community in Romania**

The Roma population is the largest ethnic minority in Central-Eastern Europe. Their position in the region is marginalized: they do not dispose of financial-social-political resources (cf. Bárány, 1994:3, 23). The collective deprivation and marginal status of the Roma is historically defined (cf. Achim, 2001), their marginal position can be traced back to their appearance in Eastern Europe (from both social and financial point of view).

The Roma social category is characterized and shaped by labeling and stigmatization; it can be best described by Lucassen's (1991) *imposed ethnicity* term. Belonging to this group is not a question of self-definition, but the

consequence of stigmatization and exclusion activity of the groups in power – the content of this ethnic identity is defined by the majority. Those not of Roma ethnicity, the members of the majority group identify themselves as being different from the Roma, according to physical, real or imagined anthropological features. At the same time, the criteria of social status is also used in this definition (cf. Csepeli–Örkény–Székelyi, 1999:31). Poverty is a group-defining characteristic that also strengthens ethnical limits (cf. Barth, 1969). Poor people are considered Roma even if they are not, or if they do not consider themselves Roma.

One important finding of this study is that the elite of the Roma community, its position and role is defined from outside the group.

### **Recruiting and role-definition of the Roma elite. Hypotheses**

The legitimating strategy of the Roma elite is dual: it is “directed downwards” i.e. it is directed towards the members of the Roma community; or ‘directed outwards’ i.e. directed towards the majority of the society. When using the latter strategy, the Roma elite appears as a legitimate partner of the central/majority elite. (In what follows we are going to use the term ‘majority elite’ when we refer to the non-Roma elite.)

The ethnical group and nationalism in modern times – as Paul Brass’ (1991) model shows us – is the result of that specific interaction that appears between the modern, multi-national, centralized state and the elite of the non-dominant group living on the periphery of the society. There is a specific relationship between the state and the elite representing the minority group, which is defined by the interests and goals of the elite. The competition and the interactions between the two groups form a process that in fact creates the ethnic minority by choosing the cultural features that become important in defining the criteria for belonging to that certain group, and also sets the limits of the ethnic minority.

Ethnic identities in this sense (i.e. the opposite of primordial, essentialist approach) can be defined as a process, which evolves in the way described above.

The elites of a given cultural group compete for the limited resources and for power. In this competition, the cultural values and habits of the ethnic group turn into political resources and, at the same time, into reference points for the members of the community that can be regarded in order to maintain the inner cohesion and identity of the group (Brass, 1991:15).

The choice of cultural features and giving them emblematic meaning is an arbitrary action, and is defined by the fact that the elite groups want to strengthen their inner cohesion, and to emphasize the differences from other groups so they take into account all those opinions that strengthen the cohesion, the identity and the opposition with other groups. The ethnic group follows a path towards their formation as a political party or towards becoming a nation, that its elite gains legitimacy and strengthens its position within the group and mostly against the governing elite (Brass, 1991:16-17).

The formation process of the Roma elite in Romania and the formation of the Roma ethnic group as an ethnic political community – a group with recognized rights within the Romanian political system – represents a specific case that can not be found in Brass' elite-competition model. The effort of the non-dominant elite for the state to recognize them as representatives of a group is not a one-way process, and it does not only cover the strategies the minority elite uses – i.e. for the group to appear unified and having certain particularities. In this process, the state itself is a shaping factor, and not only a passive observer. In the relationship between the minority elite and the state, the latter is the one that regulates the way the elite is 'named', 'appointed', 'labeled'; the state as representative of the dominant group decides who is accepted as "discussion partner", or declared "enemy". We assumed that in the recruitment of the Roma elite, it is a determining factor who is recognized as representative of the Roma by the state. This can be caused by the absence of the legitimacy coming "from below", within the community – none of the parties representing the Roma minority has ever been elected to enter the Parliament. All elite circles of the Romanian Roma community that appear on the stage try to gain legitimacy both from the state and from their own community using different strategies. All of them try to get into positions that could provide them with financial and symbolic capital, and power. They further try to transform their own community into a "self-conscious political entity" (Brass, 1991:36-37), and to improve their status (i.e. their well-being, civil rights and chances in education). Because the Roma community does not have useful internal resources that could be mobilized in this direction, the various elite-circles compete for obtaining higher shares of the resources provided by the state. At the same time, the Roma minority can not expect any financial support from the "parent state", as we can see in Brubaker's (2000:287-303) triangle-model. Roma politicians expect to gain their legitimacy from their 'partner-status' with the politicians of Romanian ethnicity, i.e. if the Romanian politicians accept them. Emphasizing this appears in a central place in the interviews.

The recruiting of the Roma elite with the contribution of the state has many characteristics. One of these characteristics derives from the approach that Brubaker calls "groupism": the dominant elite in Romania considers the Roma community a unitary, homogenous group that has precise limits. This is why unity and coherence are expected at the level of political representation. But the Roma elite in its formation process and in the way it functions – as far as it has an opportunity to stay out of the control of the dominant elite (this case study from Cluj is an example of this) shows and reproduces the heterogeneity and segmented nature of the Roma communities in Romania, fact that is shown by the plurality of their political formations, interests and goals.

Another characteristic derives from the control the dominant elite imposes over them, i.e. the process during which the Roma elite does not control the channels of mobility and the hierarchy of positions that are available for the Roma.

Similarly, the definition of “belonging to the Roma community” and thus setting the limits of the ethnic community, also fall under the authority of the dominant elite. This phenomenon can be observed at Roma NGOs, where the support they receive is mostly intended (by the supporting agencies) to be used for projects not representing a major problem within the community.<sup>4</sup>

### **The formation process of the Roma elite in Romania**

Those presenting themselves as the representatives of the Roma – and the politicians who gain legitimacy based on this strategy – appeared in public shortly after the change of regimes in 1989. These people were not members of the same political formation; they started as founders of different organizations. When they met, they started to act as representatives of different organizations and did not intend to establish a common organization, as the Hungarians and Germans did. This is the reason the Roma elite does not follow a collective strategy as representatives of a unitary field, but it is made of atomized, segmented groups, that only have the name ‘Roma’ in common, attached to them by outside observers. An important group that has representatives on a national level is the group that calls itself ‘musician gypsies’. They define their identity mainly along cultural dimensions, but they take part in Roma political parties as well.

### **The Roma elite in Cluj**

The Roma elite in Cluj is divided into many groups, but they certainly overlap when we look at their staff. According to the established organizations and the values they promote, more groups can be identified. Those who appear in public and participate in political procedures are particularly the representatives of political parties and NGOs<sup>5</sup>.

The students studying at the “Roma places” of the Babeş-Bolyai University<sup>6</sup>, who’s activities are mostly connected to NGOs, are considered another group of the Roma elite.

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<sup>4</sup> There are a total of 519 NGOs or political organizations in Romania that are mostly operated by Roma, and deal especially with Roma issues since 1990. In the 10 years following the change of regimes, the above mentioned 519 organizations ran a total of 1013 projects that’s sole or majority beneficiaries were the Roma. The number and intensity of these programs has changed considerably in the last 10 years: the number of projects increased from 19 in 1990 to almost 300 in 2000. Most of the organizations dealing with the Roma were funded and are operated in Bucureşti and Cluj, and almost half of the 519 organizations focus their activities to Transilvania.

<sup>5</sup> You can find the *Center for Documentation and Information on Minorities in Europe – Southeast Europe (CEDIME-SE). Minorities in Southeast Europe. Roma of Romania.* at [www.greekhelsinki.gr](http://www.greekhelsinki.gr). This document contains the list and addresses of cultural foundations and political parties founded by the Roma.

<sup>6</sup> Some specializations on the Babeş-Bolyai University have supplemented the number of places with some for students of Roma origin.

If we view the elite from the point of view of the community and not from an institutional point of view, then all those can be treated as part of the elite who are considered as such by the Roma community. This third group is in fact the business and the local elite, the people who are considered (traditional) leaders (opinion-leaders) by their communities, but do not seek prestige in politics. The present study is concerned about the political and NGO elite.

### **The formation process of the political and non-governmental organizations in Cluj**

In Cluj there are about 29 “Roma” NGOs and one political party (the Roma Party), but these data are not accurate: according to our experience on field, we can say that there are more registered political parties and more of them are active (some with minor interruptions) since the time of their registration.

We try to present the formation process of the Roma elite in Cluj along the institutional background – and using the method of narrative network-analysis – that played a major role in the political changes after 1989. We can distinguish between two aspects of democratization: the formation and the transformation of the democratic institutional system and the political behavior/attitudes, which is the ‘essence’ of the former. The first one is on the level of the social structure (the ‘hardware’), and the latter the political culture, the patterns of political actions that run the institutional system (‘the software’).

The activity of the elite of the Roma community in Cluj after the change of regimes meant mainly establishing the institutional system. The phases of this process were identified by the people we have interviewed, who have also emphasized the important factors, providing us with a special interpretation of the process:

- *“When did you start your political activity?”*
- *Right after the revolution many people of Roma ethnicity have contacted me to establish something. First there was the ULDR (Uniunea Liber-Democrată a Romilor din România – the Democratic Union of the Roma in Romania), the offices were here, by the market, on Tipografiei Street, it was called the Democratic Union of the Roma.*
- *What other initiatives do you know about?*
- *They have talked to us, to go to Bucharest, to establish, to join... So, first I rejected the offer, I did not join.” (A. 51 years old, politician, and president of an NGO)*
  
- *“I initiated the first organization, the first one that was established on a national level. Already in 1989, around the 29<sup>th</sup> December, two days before new year, we met in this house, at this table, 5 people, and we established the first organization. So, already in 1989, right after*

*Ceaușescu died, 4 days after that, we decided that we will write the statutes, and establish an organization, and already on the 7<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> of January, I'm not sure, we established the first national organization the League of the Roma (Liga Rromilor).*

- *And who were the people who initiated this?*
- *Me, G., who has died, C, who was master at Clujana, he worked there as a master, in the carpentry department, maintenance, and was the boss of a whole Romanian department, and another gentleman, some H., I don't remember his name any more. These were the initiators, these five people, who formed the group to establish this organization.*
- *Where did you get the house, the official residence from?*
- *From the Mayor's Office. In 1990, until I was at the League of the Roma, the first organization was the National Salvation Front (Frontul Salvării Naționale). We were part of this administrative structure, we belonged to the Prefecture, I was working in the Minority Committee. [...] At that moment, when the ULDR was founded, 3 people were elected, to represent the Roma on a national level as regular members of the CPUN. I was one of these three people elected in the CPUN.<sup>7</sup> ULDR existed until 1996. It has dissolved after the elections in 1996, because we realized that the Roma have more organizations and we can not reach that threshold to get into the Parliament.*
- *Why? Were there any other parties?*
- *Yes, meanwhile the Roma Party (Partida Romilor) was founded that had its headquarters in Bucharest. Those from Bucharest have been the founders: Răducanu Gheorghe, Nicolae Gheorghe, Mădălin Voicu, in that period those musicians were also members, the Roma musician elite, F.O. So they founded the Roma Party organization on a national level. In 1996, they obtained, I don't know how, the majority of the votes in the country, as they used to say. But the others... So, there were more organizations, not only the Roma Party, because in the meantime, from 1990 to '96, more Roma organizations were founded in the counties. And in '96 more organizations participated in the elections. Of course, the votes were distributed among them, and none of them was able to reach the threshold, I don't know how much that was 5% or 7%, and they had to nominate one person to represent the Roma in the Parliament. Them*

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<sup>7</sup> CPUN (Consiliul Provizoriu de Uniune Națională; Temporary Council for National Unity) was the temporary Parliament in Romania between December 1989 and the first free elections in 1990. The political organizations of the national minorities – Hungarian, Roma, German, etc. – had formal representatives in this temporary legislative institution.

*being in Bucharest, because the centralized votes all went to Bucharest, they had more votes than the other organizations, then, the person nominated was from their organization: Răducanu. He was the first representative in the Parliament. And when we saw that the organization has a representative in the Parliament, we thought maybe it would be better to dissolve, if all organizations would dissolve, members and leaders, and we should participate in the elections together.” (B., 50 years old, President of the Roma Party in Cluj)*

- *“In ‘89-90, we founded the first political organization, The Democratic Union of the Roma in Romania (Uniunea Democratică a Romilor din România). There was a sociologist, Nicolae Gheorghe, he was dealing with the minorities in Bucharest. He came and helped. We have already had our ideas and agreement in Cluj county. In Cluj county there was the Democratic League of the Roma in Romania, Mr. B was one of the initiators. He started to do this thing, then we went to Bucharest, we agreed upon things and made it all legally. [...] After legalizing it, they contacted us from Bucharest, a sociologist, also of Roma origin, like us, and he said,»come, let’s do something on a central level«, because it has already started in Vâlcea, and there was a lawyer, who founded the first organization, at the same time with us. And we met in Bucharest. We got to an agreement, we negotiated, and we wrote an initiation document, and founded the General Union of the Roma in Romania (Uniunea Generală a Romilor din România). Another president came, and the president from Vâlcea came, Bobu, the lawyer, and from Bucharest came that Gheorghe, I don’t remember his name any more. We contacted Cioabă as well, the older one, who has died, he helped, and we collaborated.” (C. 47 years old, officer of the Roma Party)*

After the events of December 1989, the first formal structure appeared that provided a background for Roma representation of interest, their appearance in public, and expression of their ethnic identity.

The first important public appearance of Roma politicians in Cluj that appears in most of the narrations, was the meeting held in the Railroad Club (in Cluj) on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1990: the legitimacy of the leaders elected at this meeting and the legitimacy of the whole political activity based on this meeting comes from the ‘approval’ of the majority elite. As we have already mentioned, Roma politicians expect to gain legitimacy from the Romanian politicians (from the fact that the latter accept them as partners or not, and in what role), and not from ‘below’, from the people whom they represent. Emphasizing this gains a major role in the narrations. People emphasize their memberships in FSN, CPUN, and the positions the politicians of Romanian ethnicity assign them.

The Roma political parties in Cluj were first shaped by a small and well-identifiable group, but this process – not taking into account the control and guidance from Bucharest – was mostly driven by inertia: we can not identify – not even on a local level – any coherent strategies that could have made the Roma representation efficient. At the beginning, political organizations were connected to a previously existent network of the Bufnița-group. However, the members of this group were not able to adapt to the newly developed circumstances, which lead to the dissolution of the group.

The Roma civil sector in Cluj (as a group of NGOs) appeared relatively late: most of the NGOs were established around 1996-97. The appearance of these organizations is connected to those Roma politicians who on the one hand disposed of the capital necessary to start such an organization, and on the other hand were motivated enough to do so, because of the frustration caused by their political activities. They were the ones who started their political career in one of the political parties, but for whom the shortage of resources and the closure of the channels of upward mobility for the Roma became clear shortly after they started.

- *“How did you get to this organization?”*
- *When I was at the Christian Democratic Party (Partidul Creştin-Democrat al Romilor-GR), they came from this organization, saying they needed someone to do the fieldwork, to be the liaison between the foundation and the Roma community (RO: facilitator comunitar). [...]*
- *Why didn't you stay at the party?*
- *I was the president in Cluj between 1990-1991, but it was impossible to talk to them. I said: »if I can't make you understand that you can't solve anything with this, with doing this passport-business, we should rather collect membership fees, let's organize ourselves, and we'll be able to make money on the long run«. Then a conflict broke out, those from the Bufnița were there, they only wanted themselves and each other for president, and there were those who were educated: masters or with high school degree. These Bufnița-group people did not know anything about politics, but still, if you learned, you knew how to talk to the authorities and what to do. And I said, if they don't let those people do something who have some education, then I'll leave. And I left.*
- *For how long have you worked at that organization?*
- *Until 1997, I've learned a lot, and I was doing what I liked to do.*
- *Why did you leave that organization?*
- *Well, I did not leave, the organization left the country, and they did not need me any more. But before they left, they told the employees that if any*

*of them wanted to start a foundation, they would help by providing infrastructure. I had a friend, he is Hungarian, studied law, but I knew too what to do. The X organization gave us a computer, a desk, a cabinet, that was just enough to start...*” (D., 41 years old, NGO president)

- *“How did you found the organization?”*
- *It was very difficult, but we were mainly influenced by what we have seen on the field, until I was in the politic field. There was a need for something concrete. You can't just go and lie to them, it is politics, politics, but you don't give them anything, or give them two bags of rags. And everywhere I've been, in the communities, I asked them what their would need. I knew there were lots of problems, but which were the most important, what preoccupied them. “This and this” everyone told me. And I've put these down, and said,»let's establish an organization.«And we have founded it, it was very difficult, from our own money. And even before that, my son had studied in Bucharest, and the organization from Bucharest had helped them, and he knew that this and that had to be done.* (A. 51 years old, politician, and NGO leader)

The frustration of those previously working in politics is not only of financial origin, but it is also caused by the exclusion from power. All the Roma parties active in that period had financial problems: the financial support from the state was not enough to satisfy their needs, it did not make all the political activities possible. In every organization only a few employees were paid, mostly those who did not have any other income. The ‘passport-business’ of some members of the Roma parties appears in all the interviews, but this is an illegal activity, sanctioned by the authorities, which provides marginal resources, and an activity that only involved a few people: given the distrust, and the limits of the ‘market’, it wasn’t possible for everyone to take part in this. Thus, those individuals, who did not belong to the close network of the initiators, were not able to join this activity. This had negative effects both on those individuals who were stuck outside the network losing large amounts of money, and on the whole organization that was incapable of mobilizing its employees on its own purpose. Individuals not taking part in illegal activities were not able to gain neither financial capital, nor intellectual, nor political capital.

Meanwhile, they were able to develop a network of relationships, gain political, administrative and bureaucratic knowledge that has enabled them to start their own NGOs. During their political activity that was unsuccessful on its own, they had to face the mainstream of political institutions, notice and interiorize the expectations of these institutions regarding the ‘Roma problem’, the way they handle this question, or have learned the definitions the majority political elite has previously developed.

## **The typology of the Roma elite in Cluj**

### ***1. The initiators – possessors of network and cultural capital***

The group of initiators is of specific nature: on a local level, those who had a common background and thus common value system developed the first institutional system. One important subgroup mentioned as reference point in the interviews was the Bufnița-group.

The recruiting and the selection of the Roma elite – that is the first movement of the development of political and civil organizations – presume the ownership of more forms of capital at the same time.

#### *The Bufnița-group*

The institutional background formed in December 1989–January 1990 is connected to a small group of 5-6 people. The socio-professional profile of this group and of those joining them in the next few months had special characteristics. Three types of capital can be considered as criteria of recruiting in this first step of development of the Roma political structure, i.e. the social, the institutionalized (those that gain objectivity in positions, titles, more precisely in the completed level of education) and connected to this, the incorporated cultural capital. These two aspects, the two forms of capital together contributed to the selection process and strengthened each other. The incorporated cultural capital, i.e. the special knowledge they disposed of, paid a smaller role in this phase.

The common past of socialization and the value system connected to this can be traced back to the period before 1989. The first political institutions in Cluj were based on personal networks of childhood friends. All of them were born and grew up in the so-called Bufnița-district (meaning *owl*). The name of this place does not appear in any of the archives or records in Cluj. The name itself resembles the nicknames – in fact stigmas – given today to the ‘Roma ghettos’, such as ‘Little Dallas’ or ‘Dallas’ in Cluj, ‘Texas’, ‘Ghaza’ in Bălan, ‘Congo’ in Sibiu, ‘Brazil’ in Nușfalău, or ‘Katanga’ in Târgu Mureș. In the recollections of the people I interviewed, most of those living in the Bufnița district were Roma, and their families originated from the villages around Cluj. In 1963, to the order of the local government, all the houses of this district were demolished and the families were moved into one-family social apartments spread out in many parts of the city, mainly on the periphery.

The location from their childhood, the Bufnița district – physical place and social place at the same time –, where the school that was exclusively for the Roma, and the whole physical environment creates a common socialization background that results in interiorizing common values and norms, integration into the society by accepting the roles this latter one establishes.

The advantages of belonging to this group have been activated in two phases and produced a usable network capital. Concerning that the members of the network did not strengthen their relationships before 1989, they did not make up different institutionalizing rituals (traditionally, the Gypsy Ball has been the only

event that during communism the Roma could use to express their ethnic identity), i.e. before 1989 connections broke up. In spite of this, following the revolution, relationships could have been activated, and became social capital.

Education as cultural capital was of the same intensity but functioned as a recruiting criterion only built on the former one.

- *“Who appointed you?”*
- *“On behalf of the League B. and G. was there, they are from the Bufnița-group as well, and then we decided, because someone had to represent the organization, and I was master, however it was, I had a degree, middle-school degree. And I was nominated in the first phase, and then we held a meeting, we have talked to the people, and they agreed.”* (C. 47 years old, representative of the Roma Party)

The status of those who established the first organization was practically the same, and many similarities can be recognized in their life events: they are first-generation residents, skilled workers, for whom both moving to the city and their skills represented a way of intergenerational upward mobility.

The individuals recruited in the first phase of the elite-formation, the life events of this group of initiators contain many similar elements. Their social mobility can be traced back to the 60's: as a result of the structural transformation, they were able to step out of those positions that were assigned to them by the majority as being “traditional Roma activities”. In this period, this was mainly realized by compulsory education. Structural mobility, education, i.e. upward mobility and status-improvement – as it can be seen in the interviews – became a desired walk of life in the families that did not dispose of traditional, social, symbolic, or economic capital resulting from traditional activities.

The members of the Bufnița group originate from integrated Roma families, and in addition, they had the type of knowledge without which orientation in the Romanian administrative and political field was impossible.

Among those who have developed the first political structures were also people who held offices in the communist party, or any other state-affiliated organization, even if this did not mean political activity. Their appointment was a result of the high positions they held in their professions –, which supplied them with the routine that later was proved to be necessary in the politic-administrative field.

## ***2. The group of high-school or university degree-holders***

None of those people who had lived in the city and had university or theoretical high school degrees took part in the first phase of political movements of the Roma in Cluj.

The people that have university degree are separated from the ones with lower degrees, and this separation is widely felt within the Roma elite in Cluj. Despite the fact that the active members of the Roma elite – either in political, or in

the civil sector – form a network where maintaining a connection also involves leisure-time activities (the coffee-house where they regularly meet is also a place of negotiations and informal arrangements, is an integral part of their remembrances), the members of the elite that have university education do not take part in these activities. Staying apart constantly is a group-forming activity renewed by them with staying apart, which is also a norm as it is an expectation towards the members that have university degree. The Gypsy Balls both before and after 1989 constituted an important field for strengthening network relationships, and at the same time they were an important factor of socialization (for the atomized members “*dispersed in blocks of flats*” – A. 51 years old), but no individual with university degree has participated in any of these events.

The elite working in the established institutional political structures did not want to gain legitimacy from ‘below’, from the people they represented, but they did use a strategy to make the majority political elite accept them. Thus, they have directed their campaigns ‘outward’, not ‘downward’: they have tried to strengthen their legitimacy by integrating people who have university degree:

- *“When did you start your political activity?”*
- *Sometime in the 90’s... This is a difficult question! I want to erase that period from my life.*
- *Did you take part in that meeting in the CFR (Railroad) Club?*
- *No, I wasn’t there but my brother was there, and when he came home, he said,»everyone is talking about you there, why don’t you come?«. I said»I’m not going, I don’t wanna go...«, and I regret I did not listen to my instincts at that time.*
- *What do you think, who knew you at that time?*
- *Well, to be honest, I think only the lashed dogs did not know me at that time. I was pretty well known thanks to the sports, many people knew me. And then, to my brother’s prompting and even more people came, and said»come, come, good had started there, there are people, and after all you are an engineer, they treat you differently...«*
- *What was your political activity composed of?*
- *The party was called PDCR, Partidul Democrat-Creştin al Romilor<sup>8</sup> ... Only one party should have been established, but everyone wanted to be a leader. At that time, in 1990 the gypsies had better opportunities to solve their problems, to put some people into different positions, to have representatives. These were opportunities the Government*

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<sup>8</sup> The Christian-Democratic Party of the Roma

*offered to improve the cooperation among groups with different ethnical background, on different institutional levels. In fact I said, »all right, every group should have it's own leaders, because their culture is different as well, but if we are going to do something, or for the elections, we need to get organized, united.« But they don't understand. And they are in the same situation even now, and on the top of that they didn't want this in Bucharest either, they don't want anyone else to take their positions. And I had to represent them, they sent me, saying »you should go, you go«, I think because I was an engineer.» (F. 43 years old, representative of one of the Roma parties)*

- *When they saw me, they said »that's it, this is good, he has education«. At that time very few people had school, nowadays there are students. The police-commander called me and I said »Sir, I don't want to take part in this, I want to help them, but...« He says »no, no, because you...«. And well, they elected me, C., J., K., who was an engineer at Electrometalul, and another one who is now in America, that also had high school degree, and a woman, we chose her, because she finished high school and had baccalaureate degree. They gave us a place of residence, the commander, when he saw that we were educated people, he gave us something in their building, at the Prefecture, room nr. 13.» (E. 55 years old, leader of an NGO, past president of one of the Roma parties)*

Those who had university degree were aware of the strategy they have been following in order to start a political career. It became obvious that education, cultural capital was easily convertible into political capital, prestige, or in general into goods that became available in the political field. In spite of this, individual decisions were only slightly influenced by capital-conversion. Their political activity – and this is true in the case of the educated Roma as well – depended on their integration into professional structures. In other words, there was only a slight possibility that people who are well off both professionally, and financially (in terms of income and appreciation of their work) would step into the political field. In this respect – in my opinion – there are major organizational differences between the Hungarian, the Roma and the Romanian political life activities and the way they become professionalized. While for the Hungarian and Romanian politicians their activity is profitable both symbolically and financially – and thus it represents an important channel of upward mobility – this is not valid in case of Roma politicians. According to my experience, integration into the political field was a necessity for those who, at the time of their entry into the political field, were integrated at least at a minimal level into the occupational structure, but who disposed of such cultural or network capital that made the start of a political career

possible. The Roma political organizations disposed of limited resources from the very beginning: they did not get any support from either the state (lack of support from voters), or the financial elite (lack of financial return). This can explain the fact that the members of the parties who disposed of large people networks mainly used these networks in support of illegal activities.

For the Roma – according to this case study realized in Cluj – political activity in itself did not mean a channel of upward mobility. It did not mean an opportunity for them to extend their networks, or to accumulate cultural or financial capital.

The political sphere in this case determined the chances of becoming a member of the elite and general channels of upward mobility. For those, who started to move upward in the field of politics, there were three main scenarios that became available afterwards: 1. staying in the political sphere, 2. activity in NGOs, and 3. withdrawal. The options were strongly influenced by their supplies of different types of capital. Withdrawal was the desired method for those who were successful in extending their capital in their professions. For those not able to convert their cultural capital and professional experience but disposed of network capital or experience in the administrative field, NGOs became an achievable option. Political activity, because of the limited resources, was not suitable for accumulating capital that could have been used outside the political field<sup>9</sup>: the power associated with the positions in this field, and the prestige capital was limited by the party and lost its value in the interpersonal relationships that ran across borders.

The three scenarios available for political participants are complemented with another scenario, which I'm going to call the strategy of the "afternoon politician" further on. Part of the people who have kept their positions obtained in the hierarchy of their main activity, have kept their positions in the parties in spite of the limited resources. They were hoping that both the wider political context and the upcoming elections made such an effect on the structure of the Roma political sphere that the positions and capital owned in this field became usable even outside the party on other markets. This strategy was acceptable for many of those who were at the same time active in the NGO field. I assume this is one reason for the lack of success – measurable with the number of votes obtained during elections – and namely the obstacles in front of the professionalization, and one of the reasons is the lack of motivation to invest into political activity.

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<sup>9</sup> Bourdieu defines the concept of "field" as follows: it is "the successful monopole of those who pursue an activity professionally" (quoted by Pokol, 1999:318), "the structural place of positions" that on the one hand have general rules, and on the other hand specific rules valid only under these conditions, and where struggle is for power defined under specific values. Each field limits the value of that specific kind of capital: for instance academic positions and titles have value and can only be converted in the academic field.

### 3. Roma NGOs

Recruiting of the elite of Roma NGOs is not limited by the scenarios described above: they are not only recruited from the political field. The formal elite of the NGOs was recruited based on the criterion of cultural capital. Degrees and the amount of knowledge accumulated did not by themselves provide competitiveness for elite positions in the NGO field. The Roma civil sphere in Cluj can be best described with the terms of Weber, i.e. social relationships are inward-oriented and thus closed for outside. Its “[...] meaning and validity limits or establishes certain criteria for the participation” (Weber, 1987:68). Setting these limits has mainly rational reasons: limited resources and the type of the available elite-positions makes it necessary to establish certain informal but widely known criteria for selection that are defined by the members of the network that initially developed and took charge in that particular field. In other words: cultural capital is necessary but not sufficient for joining this field, and individuals need a kind of network capital that supplies the specific values, socialization, the internalization of their common rules. These selection mechanisms are latent and constitute the common knowledge of the members of the field, although these members try to gain legitimacy based on the cultural capital they dispose of and that was gained formally by getting a university degree. The success and effectiveness of the strategy to gain legitimacy is supported by the fact that in spite of the inner differentiation of the Roma elite in Cluj there is consensus regarding the category of the “legitimate elite” (by identifying it with the NGO elite).<sup>10</sup>

The field of NGOs is technically the only field that can be used in other social fields by the Roma elite from Cluj, it is the only field that makes accumulating economic, symbolic, prestige or network capital possible. This field can thus develop a path for the participants where the upward mobility is a real possibility for individuals. Upward mobility can mostly be attributed to the available resources at the disposal of the organizations’ leaders.

Students or people who have obtained their degree in the past two years form a special group within the NGO elite. The positive discrimination policy supporting the university-level education of the Roma helps young people with university degree who, during their school-years manage to interiorize *role-definitions* and *expectations* of the NGO elite, become members of the elite. According to my observations, a large part of these students come from integrated families belonging to the middle-class and has a social-demographic background that both financially and in the expected career plans makes obtaining a university degree possible.

However, cultural capital, i.e. the degree obtained is not enough by itself for entering the civil sphere. Professional socialization that is connected to university education (i.e. professional practice, learning the values and norms of the specific field that occurs during school-years), also, students can obtain or mobilize their network capital that is necessary when obtaining a position in the civil field.

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<sup>10</sup> One of the goals of the Resource Center for Roma Communities is to promote and support the development of a Roma elite, there are specific programs designed under this “elite formation” label.

### **The functioning of the Roma elite in Cluj. Some conclusions.**

In the first part of the formation period of the Roma elite in Cluj, the *Bușnița-group* has been the hard core of the network: its members were skilled workers who were integrated into the professional hierarchy of the majority, and were capable of orientation both in the life-world of the majority and in the traditional Roma society. The members of the group were part of individual mobility channels before the change of regimes that made them capable of becoming part of the elite after 1989 by possessing the necessary capital. This group of the elite did not have any power, did not dispose of any resources that could have been managed or distributed in the period before 1989, thus, it was not an elite-group. The amount of cultural-, network- and financial capital that put them into favorable positions in the context of the marginalized Roma population, made it also possible for them to monopolize and control the processes of political organization at the beginning of the democratization process. They were only partly able to maintain the positions and power they obtained. Those individuals, who did not dispose of cultural capital necessary to enter the civil sector, have continued their political activity out of necessity. The lack of resources of the political field – with the simultaneous strengthening of the civil sphere – has become an acute problem and thus the political actors and the elite working in this field have gradually lost their ‘effective’ power of decision-making and resource-distribution.

As the Roma political parties have lost their prestige, the *Bușnița-group* being a determining factor for the initiators, has simultaneously become marginalized in different elite-networks regarding their power and financial capital. The members of the *Bușnița-group* have not disappeared from the groups of the Roma political elite in Cluj. This first group of initiators that can be considered the ideal type of community self-organization (i.e. a type of network organization coming from below) remained an informal reference group that became dysfunctional when the central political elite has taken over the job of regulating the elite-formation and elite-selection mechanisms, but is still present in formal political positions. The active members of the *Bușnița-group* are now officials of the Roma political party. Local processes of the elite-formation lost their importance when the central political power established those local positions where – as Brass (1991) says – the ‘collaborating’ elite got into power, but this process has not fully empowered the state-elite to control local processes of the elite-formation. The local elite of the Roma is formed of different groups and the whole field is made of loose networks of these groups. There does not exist a defined set of characteristics for legitimacy, and the field is not integrated, creating in some way ‘conditions before politics’. The loss of power the *Bușnița-group* suffered – besides the control of the state – can be attributed to the fact that this elite can not use publicity in order to obtain their goals, they have no strategies developed in order to promote their interests, and have no developed procedures for obtaining authority.

Roma NGOs, the actors of the political sphere can be described with the term: 'ethnic entrepreneur'. The term appears at Barth, who says that this role of the entrepreneur within ethnic politics is that 'leaders who aim at mobilizing ethnic groups to take part in community activities are pursuing political entrepreneurship' (Barth, 1996:4-5). This is about a mobilization procedure that is not a direct expression of the cultural ideology of the group, and neither of their will. The term "ethnic entrepreneur" is used after Barth, as it was defined in the study *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* from 1969 and that redefines the term of ethnicity. Ethnic identity is a case of group definition, the social organization of cultural differences. In other words, during the analysis of ethnicity, the cultural elements and particularities are not as important as the creation of borders, contrasting the terms *us* and *them* based on cultural particularities of each of the groups. It is a social process that through membership and exclusion, self-definition and characterization of "the other", constantly re-defines and strengthens the borders between certain ethnic groups.

The way the actors of the NGOs accept and re-produce points of view, strengthen certain '*us and them*' dichotomies, and the way they emphasize elements from the culture of the group they represent – in order to strengthen the opposition and also the inner cohesion of the ethnic group – makes these people ethnic entrepreneurs. Also, taking up an elite position in the civil sphere means at the same time obtaining control over a large amount of financial capital when accepting the rules defined by the majority politicians, thus emphasizing the character of entrepreneurship.

The Roma elite in Cluj (and also the Roma elite on a national level) can not be described in the pyramid-models characteristic to power-systems. According to both Brass (1991) and Brubaker (2001) the functioning of this elite can only be understood within a field-model, in a structure where the actors are not in vertical, but in horizontal relationships. In this field, the place of the actors is mainly defined by the state, providing them with resources, such as positions to take up in the administration.

Those members of the Roma elite that are recognized and accepted as partners for negotiation by the majority politicians, are in fact those holding an elite position in the Roma NGO field. The Roma NGO field – according to the present study – is a subsystem integrated into the Romanian civil society. The system of positions (including the methods of financing it's functioning) that those Roma ethno-political entrepreneurs who became part of the NGO elite can take, are also defined by the majority political elite in order to establish a mediating agency between the majority and a marginalized ethnic group considered to be problematic. The population this agency has to mediate towards is considered homogenous by the majority (this phenomena is called "groupism" by Brubaker). The positive discrimination policy in university-level education can also be considered a way through which the Romanian political sphere helps in building a Roma elite that is effective in the NGO field and that is capable of representing and

validating the “Roma question” defined by the majority, towards the Roma community. In this sense, the formation process of the Roma elite is not simultaneous with the same process of the majority, and neither autonomous, because this system was established on a rational basis by the majority and not under the control of the Roma elite.

Regarding social mobility of the Roma ethno-politic entrepreneurs we can say that it does not appear as the mobility of a parallel society, i.e. within its own hierarchical structure, and neither does it follow the path of the norms and accepted forms of capital as defined by the Roma community, but the channels of mobility are established by the majority.

Those appointed by the central power to hold positions on a local or on a national level, function as mediators, and at the same time they represent the control of the dominant politics over a minority. The goals established by the Romanian elite are “translated” to the Roma ethnic community by the mediators, and thus the definition of “specific Roma problems” becomes a task for the dominant elite. When the state accepts certain Roma people as negotiating partners, in order to control them – to stay at our example of Cluj –, it does not take into consideration the negotiation processes within the specific community, a process through which local initiators who got into power as a result of community participation protect their positions. For those currently holding positions in the Roma party that have no real power in their hands, the “Roma Strategy” developed by the government represents the next point where they may be able to step up by applying to positions established within public institutions and by controlling the process of recruiting.

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## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AT BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY<sup>1</sup>

ANIKÓ V. HORVÁTH

**RÉSUMÉ. Action affirmative à l'Université Babeș-Bolyai.** Le model roumain de l'action affirmative pour la jeunesse romanichelle dans l'éducation supérieure, fait qui a poursuivi le lancement des politiques d'anti-discrimination aux Etats-Unis. Ce programme a été unique en Europe de l'Est dans les années 1991-1992 et il est unique même maintenant quand cet article est écrit. Le fait d'avoir places séparées pour les membres des minorités aux universités de rang en Europe est assez rare. Voire même aux Etats-Unis, ce model d'action affirmative a été fini de deux décennies est substitué avec plusieurs pratiques différentes qui ont eu comme but la diminution de la discrimination du passé. Néanmoins, malgré les études extensives des américaines sur ces programmes de quota, avec quatorze années en avant, le gouvernement de la Roumanie a décidé de commencer un programme de anti-discrimination pour les jeunes romanichels. Malgré le fait que le programme existe depuis quatorze années, il n'y a pas eu d'études compréhensives concernant les participants du passé ou du présent, ni d'études internes aux universités menées par les universités eux-mêmes. Le but de cet étude est de remplir – au moins partiellement – ce fosse. Le but de cet étude est de collecter, analyser et mettre en contexte les dates démographiques de base des étudiants romanichels de ce programme. En addition, quelques caractéristiques d'éducation de base de ces étudiants romanichels sont discutées aussi.

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<sup>1</sup> This study is based on a part of the research conducted between March and May, 2005 for the master thesis of the present writer at the Nationalism Studies Department of the Central European University. Financial support for the research came from a Student Research Grant of the same department. The research and this study would not have been possible without the valuable help of Rea Silvia Pop, Dan Doghi, Radu Lacatus, Michael Flaxman, former and present members of the Student Organization Romano Suno, and the administrative staff of Babeș-Bolyai University. I also want to thank my advisors, Professor Dr. András Kovács and Professor Dr. Michael Stewart, for their continuous support and guidance, as well as for their patience. Further, I am very grateful for clarifying comments and advice during the thesis seminars of Professor Dr. Mária Kovács and Professor Dr. Rogers Brubaker.

### **Brief history of the Romanian affirmative program<sup>2</sup>**

For the 1992-1993 academic year the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, owing to the initiative of Romanian and Roma intellectuals, allocated ten seats for Roma students in the Department of Social Work at Bucharest University. The Roma students applying for these seats had to take the regular admissions exam, but, for the ten allocated seats, they were admitted even if they did not attain the entry-level grades of the other students.<sup>3</sup> There was also a special requirement these students had to fulfill in order to be allowed to apply for the ten allocated seats: They had to prove their ‘Romany-ness’ by attaching a ‘Roma Identity Certificate’ to their application papers. This certificate could be issued by any officially registered Roma organization, NGO or political party. There were no specific guidelines or criteria for how these certificates would be issued. The students, after their admission to the Department of Social Work, participated in the very same academic groups and programs as all other students.

The consecutive renaming of the program led one to believe that from the program’s beginning the nature of the policy was highly debated in the Ministry of Education and Research: First they used the term ‘positive discrimination’, then changed it to ‘affirmative action’, and then introduced the descriptive “temporary advantages in the admission of young Roma to higher education institutions on special seats allocated on a ‘minimal admission criteria’ basis”. Now the program is called “higher education for the Roma at state universities”.<sup>4</sup> However, looking at it from the outside, it seems that the essence of the program has never changed. From the beginning it has been an affirmative action program for young Roma with eased admission criteria to highly competitive public university departments, with

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<sup>2</sup> Although the original intention of the author of this study was to give a more detailed account on the history that preceded this governmental policy – including the grounds on which claims were made; the basis of its acceptance and launch on the governmental level, etc. – there was limited information available on the Internet and in the libraries of the Central European University and Babes-Bolyai University. The only way to collect more information about the period leading up to the program would have been to travel to Bucharest and contact present and former administrators from the Ministry of Education and Research. Unfortunately, financial and time constraints made such an option impossible.

<sup>3</sup> However, it must be added that this preferential treatment does not automatically result in lower entry grades for the Roma students. For example, the research conducted at Babes-Bolyai University showed that students applying for the special allocated Roma seats quite often had as good or even higher admission grades than many of the students applying for the regular university seats. In any event, it can be said – at least in the case of the Roma students at Babes-Bolyai University – that this special provision of the Ministry of Education made higher education possible for many young Roma who otherwise could not attend a university.

<sup>4</sup> Gheorghe Sarau, Modelul românesc. Scurt istoric al inițiativelor și al țințelor strategice privind învățământul pentru romi întreprinse de MECT și de ONG-uri în perioada 1990 – 2002. (The Romanian Model: A Short History of the Initiatives and Strategic Goals in Roma Education of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research and of Nongovernmental Organizations between 1990 and 2002.), <<http://www.edu.ro/download/actderrom.pdf>> (accessed on 2 October 2006)

a certain number of guaranteed seats, and a certification process to determine who the 'Real Roma' students were. Nevertheless, the program was implemented without any overt resistance on the part of the general public, and it not only continues until today, but has grown each year to include more departments and more public universities.

During its first five years, the affirmative action program was extended beyond Bucharest to departments of social work at three other major public universities in Cluj Napoca, Iasi and Timisoara. The number of seats allocated by the Ministry of Education and Research for Roma students during the five years was approximately 175, 30 to 40 seats each year. In 1998, the number of seats available for Roma was further increased to 149 then 170 in 1999, 373 in 2001, 397 in 2002, 422 in 2003, and 399 in 2004. The number of participating public universities widened as well: 9 in 1998, 11 in 2000, 23 in 2001, 29 in 2002, 37 in 2003, and 48 in 2004.<sup>5</sup>

### **The research**

The research for this study was undertaken by the present writer and a research assistant at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj Napoca, Romania, between March and May, 2005.

There was almost no data on the implementation of the affirmative action policy at Babes-Bolyai University or on the participating Roma students, and this made it necessary for this researcher to look to the basic demographic and educational characteristics of present and former Roma students enrolled in the program. The database processed during the statistical analysis was created from standardized departmental records of Babes-Bolyai University which contained some very limited demographic and educational data on all 90 Roma students enrolled under the affirmative action program in the academic year 2004/2005. An analysis of educational and family background proved to be impossible in most cases owing to a complete lack of data.

Although the original intention was to create a database on all Roma students who went through the program since it began in 1997, this could not be done because files of former students had already been archived and could not be accessed. Consequently, all the data used in this research is representative only for the Roma students who were admitted to the university between 1999 and 2004, and who are still enrolled at one of the university's departments. The collected data has been processed in SPSS, and is presented mainly in the form of frequency tables. Only four cross tabulations have been made in an effort to detect possible connections among different variables.

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<sup>5</sup> Gheorghe Sarau, The success of the Romanian model in Roma education and in teaching Romani as a mother tongue, <[http://www.edu.ro/invrrom\\_b1e.htm](http://www.edu.ro/invrrom_b1e.htm)> (accessed on 3 October 2006)

The initial intention was to collect data on the Roma students who either dropped out or were expelled from individual departments. However, inquiry revealed that the departments do not record this kind of information about their student population. In order to have some reasonable approximation of this type of data, tables resulting from simple mathematical calculations were created by this writer using the statistics published in the university's statistical yearbooks on the whole student population, including Roma, Romanian and Hungarian students. A detailed explanation as how the dropout rates and number of expelled students were calculated will follow in the relevant section of this study.

Three types of other research methods – focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation – were used during field work to supplement the collected statistical data and to help to interpret the trends observed.

### **Demographic characteristics of Roma students**

Standard university departmental records usually have the following demographic information on their Roma students: Name (gender can usually be deduced from this); address (place of origin can be deduced from this); and ID number (gender and date of birth can be deduced from this). All this information was processed and will be discussed below. Some, but not all departments keep records of family background as well. In cases where the students' file contained data on family background, this information was always recorded. However, because of the small number of cases, statistically significant conclusions on family background could not be made.

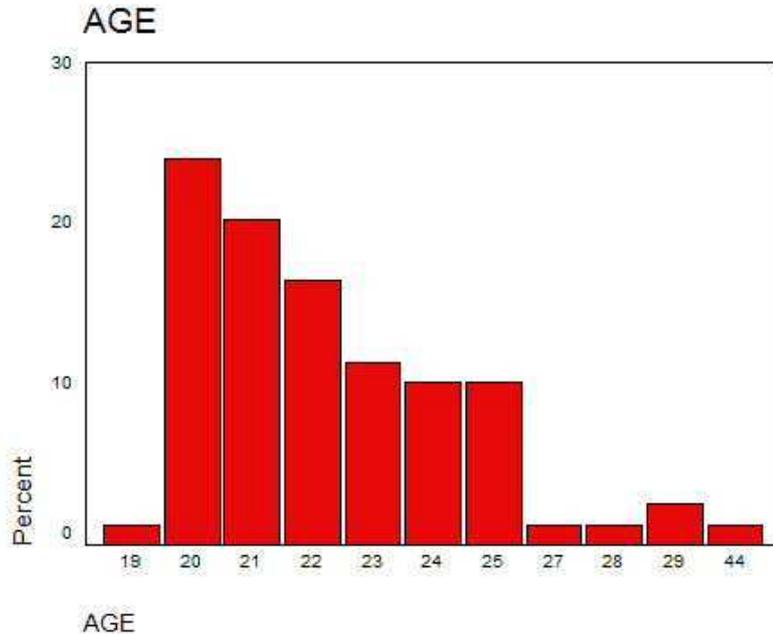
#### *Age*

Out of the total of 90 Roma students, data on age was available for 79 students (87.8%), and was missing for 11 students (12.2%). The majority of these students (93.7%) are between 19 and 25 years of age.<sup>6</sup>

Graph 1 shows that there is a negative correlation between the age and number of Roma students at Babes-Bolyai University. That is, as Roma students get older, their number gradually decreases in the university.

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<sup>6</sup> It can be realistically assumed that in terms of age there are no major differences among Roma, Romanian and Hungarian students.



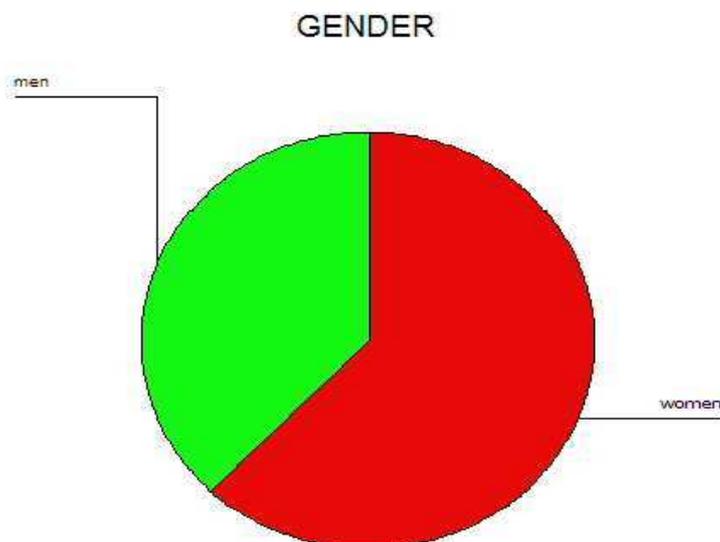
Legend: Valid 79, Missing 11, Total 90

**Graph 1. Age of Roma students**

The most likely explanation is that beginning with academic year 1998-99, and each year thereafter, the Ministry of Education and Research increased the number of allocated seats for Roma students at Babes-Bolyai University. It can be assumed that this correlation then is mainly attributable to an outside, independent factor, namely policy decisions made by individuals working in the ministry. To a much more limited degree, the dropout and expulsion of certain Roma students may be a contributing internal factor that explains some of these results. Nonetheless, based on the data available at departments, no conclusions can be drawn on a possible correlation between age and university dropout or expulsion.

***Gender***

Out of the total of 90 Roma students presently enrolled at Babes-Bolyai University there are 62.2% women and 37.8% men (see Graph 2).



Legend: Valid 90, Missing 0, Total 90

**Graph 2. Gender of Roma students**

In academic year 2003/2004 of the total student population of Babes-Bolyai University 66.25% were women and 33.74% were men.<sup>7</sup> Thus, no significant difference can be seen in terms of gender distribution between the Roma students and the general student population.

The most interesting aspect of this statistic on gender distribution of Roma students is that Roma women are over represented in the total Roma student population. This data strongly contradicts the popular belief, which is still prevalent in Romanian public discourse, that in most cases Roma women are not allowed to pursue higher education because in Roma families women are forcibly kept in traditional roles. This data is not sufficient to make the general statement that in terms of access to higher education Roma women are no longer discriminated against by their families and communities. But, based on the data collected at Babes-Bolyai University it can be stated that among the young Roma applying to Babes-Bolyai University, Roma women have achieved at least a measure of equity in their pursuit of higher education.

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<sup>7</sup> Universitatea Babes-Bolyai in cifre si repere statistice, 2004 (Babes-Bolyai University in Numbers and Statistics, 2004). Cluj Napoca: Universitatea Babes-Bolyai, 2004

***Municipality of origin – type of municipality***

In order to find out whether there were any discernible trends concerning the municipality from which Roma students are more likely to come, Romanian municipalities were divided in five categories based on the administrative map of the country: “village” (comuna), “town” (oras), “city” (municipiu), “county seat” (municipiu de resedinta de judet), and “country capital” (capitala).<sup>8</sup> After establishing these categories, each Roma student’s municipality of origin was coded accordingly. The findings are summarized in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.****Municipality of origin – type of municipality**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Village ("comuna")	20	22.2	22.2	22.2
	Town ("oras")	23	25.6	25.6	47.8
	City ("municipiu")	15	16.7	16.7	64.4
	County seat ("municipiu de resedinta de judet")	30	33.3	33.3	97.8
	Country capital ("capitala")	1	1.1	1.1	98.9
	missing	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

The underlying assumption was that in county seats prospective students would have greater access to information about higher educational choices and that this would correlate positively with decisions to apply to university. The statistical analysis refuted part of the original hypothesis, namely that the number of Roma students coming from county seats would be higher than those coming from other

<sup>8</sup> Since English definitions might not match the exact meanings of Romanian terms, a brief definition of each term, as it is used in this paper, is needed: “Village” (comuna) - the smallest municipal unit that exists in Romania, most often without basic administrative offices and a high school; “Town” (oras) - provides more administrative offices than a village but often without a high school, or has only one school for each age category; “City” (municipiu) – describes a municipality which might be quite large, have some level of all administrative functions, but not having the most important schools, theaters, libraries, archives and administrative entities; “County seat” (municipiu de resedinta de judet) – this is the most important and well developed municipality within a county, most resources of the county (important schools, theaters, libraries, archives and administrative offices) are centralized here; “Country capital” (capitala, Bucuresti) – this refers to Bucharest, the capital of Romania.

places. The cumulative percent of the Roma students coming from other places than county seats was significantly higher (64.5%) than those coming from county seats (33.3%). There was not enough data on the ways students make their decisions about pursuing higher education to formulate any new hypotheses.

**Table 2.**

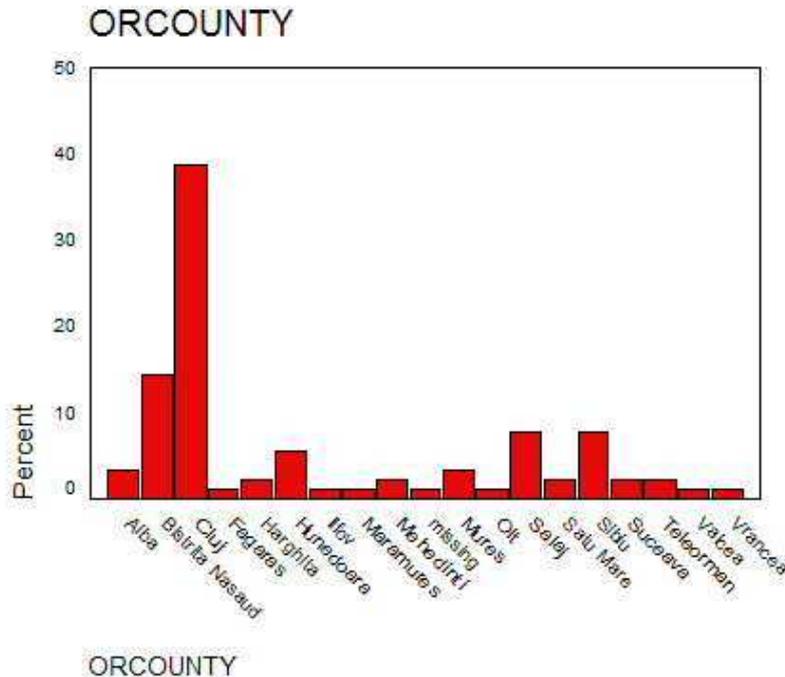
**Gender and type of municipality (Cross tabulation)**

			TYPE OF MUNICIPALITY					Total	
			Village	Town	City	County seat	Country capital		missing
GENDER	women	Count	12	17	9	18	0	0	56
		% within GENDER	21.4	30.4	16.1	32.1	-	-	100.0
		% within TYPE OF MUNICIPALITY	60.0	73.9	60.0	60.0	-	-	62.2
		% of Total	13.3	18.9	10.0	20.0	-	-	62.2
	men	Count	8	6	6	12	1	1	34
		% within GENDER	23.5	17.6	17.6	35.3	2.9	2.9	100.0
		% within TYPE OF MUNICIPALITY	40.0	26.1	40.0	40.0	100.0	100.0	37.8
		% of Total	8.9	6.7	6.7	13.3	1.1	1.1	37.8
Total	Count	20	23	15	30	1	1	90	
	% within GENDER	22.2	25.6	16.7	33.3	1.1	1.1	100.0	
	% within TYPE OF MUNICIPALITY	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
	% of Total	22.2	25.6	16.7	33.3	1.1	1.1	100.0	

Another interesting aspect of the data surfaced when a cross tabulation was made between gender and municipality of the Roma students. As Table 2 below reveals, there are no significant differences between the municipality from which Roma men and women come to Babes-Bolyai University, with the exception of one case emphasized in bold: 30.4% of the Roma women come from towns, while only 17.6% of the Roma men come to university from towns. In the data available to this writer no explanation could be found to explain this difference.

**Place of residency – county**

Cluj is both the county in which Babes-Bolyai University is located and the county of residency of a significant percentage of enrolled Roma students (38.9%). As can be seen in Graph 3, Cluj County together with four other counties – Bistrita Nasaud (14.4%), Salaj (7.8%), Sibiu (7.8%), and Hunedoara (5.6%) – provides the majority (74.5%) of the Roma student population enrolled at Babes-Bolyai. Two of these counties – Salaj and Bistrita-Nasaud – border on Cluj County. The other two counties – Hunedoara and Sibiu - do not have common administrative borders with Cluj, but they are in close geographic proximity to it.



Legend: Valid 90, Missing 0, Total 90  
**Graph 3. County of residence of Roma students**

Babes-Bolyai University does not have any published statistics on the counties of residency of its general student population which could be used for comparison purposes. However, the chief administrative person responsible for admissions at Babes-Bolyai<sup>9</sup> stated during an interview for this research that regional representation of the general student population is similar to the data presented in this research. The administrator also said that Cluj, Bistrita Nasaud, Hunedoara, Sibiu, and Salaj counties are among the university's 'target' counties, meaning that the university regularly advertises its educational programs in all high schools in these counties, and that professors and students of the university visit many of the high schools in these counties in order to publicize their departments. This information in part explains why Roma coming from these counties are over-represented in the general Roma student population.

Economic considerations might also influence the educational choices made by Roma families. It is always less expensive to support children if they live in geographic proximity to their county of origin (food can be more easily provided, weekends can be spent at home, during examination periods it is easier and less expensive for the student to move back home, etc.) This factor, very probably, also contributes to the residential patterns observed among Roma students.<sup>10</sup>

There is another interesting aspect in the data about the relationship between the county of residency of Roma students and choosing Babes-Bolyai University when pursuing higher education. As noted above, even though Harghita, Bihor, and Mures are also informational targets of Babes-Bolyai and in geographic proximity to Cluj, Roma students coming from these three counties are significantly under represented in the general Roma student population. A preliminary hypothesis, tested in a later chapter of this study, is that Roma from counties where a significant number of them speak Hungarian or Romany as their first language<sup>11</sup> do not, for whatever reason, apply to Babes-Bolyai University.

### *Family background*

Since the departments at Babes-Bolyai University have only limited data available on family background of Roma students, this section was the most difficult to summarize and interpret. From standard departmental records there is data on the parents of 14 Roma students. From the four Roma students presently

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<sup>9</sup> Interview conducted in May, 2005, with Professor Dr. Laszlo Nagy, vice-rector of the university in charge of – among others – the admission of the Roma students to Babes-Bolyai University.

<sup>10</sup> It is reasonable to assume that the weight of these kinds of economic considerations is equally important for non-Roma families when they make educational choices with their children.

<sup>11</sup> According to the 2002 Romanian Census the majority of the Roma residing in Harghita, Bihor and Mures counties have Hungarian or Romany as their mother tongue and not Romanian

enrolled at Babes-Bolyai who participated in interviews with this writer,<sup>12</sup> data on two was already recorded by their departments. For the other two, data was collected during the interview. Consequently, out of the total of 90 students presently enrolled at Babes-Bolyai University, and included in this research, there are 16 Roma students about whom family background is known. In addition, data on four Roma students who had already graduated was recorded during interviews.

Among the total of eight (present and former) Roma students who participated in semi-structured interviews, seven indicated that they have (or had) brothers, sisters or other close relatives at Babes-Bolyai University. They also indicated that all these relatives had very similar family background to their own. Based on this data, it can be said that there is first hand, reliable data on 28 students (including brothers and sisters) who went through the affirmative action program, and there is indirect (but reliable) data coming from Roma student narratives on at least 15 more. This total of 43 Roma students is still not enough for statistical generalizations and conclusions, but it is enough to identify at least a few important trends in the family background of Roma students.

### *Parents' occupation*

Based on the data collected it can be said that most fathers (24) work in blue collar jobs, mainly as industrial workers (e.g. locksmith, caster, miner, unskilled labor, etc.). Only two of the students participating in interviews mentioned that their parents were merchants, a traditional Roma occupation. Data showed that the fathers of four students are deceased. There are five pensioners and six unemployed fathers. Only one student has a father who is an engineer and another student has a father working in a white-collar administrative job.

Most mothers are housewives (30); five of them work in blue collar jobs (factory or agricultural workers); one of them is pensioner; two are unemployed; three work in administrative positions; one is a midwife; and one used to be a model at the University of Fine Arts in Cluj Napoca but now works as a cleaning lady at the same institution.

Most students indicated that their families have serious and ongoing financial difficulties. A few of them said that although they are not presently needy, their families have always been 'on the edge'.

Based on this it can be preliminarily concluded that a significant percentage of the Roma students entering university are the first generation in their families to pursue a university degree. It is apparent from the data that there is almost no variety among the types of occupations to be found in Roma families. Almost all parents – if they find work outside the household – are employed in

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<sup>12</sup> Semi-structured interviews were conducted in May 2005 with eight Roma students who entered Babes-Bolyai University on seats allocated for the Roma by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research.

hard, low income and low social status jobs. Considering the financial resources these families have, supporting one, and often two or three of their children at university represents a great financial burden and immense personal sacrifice. Research results make it clear that – contrary to the general belief that Roma do not value education – in the cases presented here there is a huge commitment on the part of Roma parents to secure a decent future for their children. Although there are no statistics on the family background of Romanian and Hungarian students, it can be reasonably assumed that there is a much wider variety and range in the parents' employment histories, and financial status.

### *Financial information*

During the eight semi-structured interviews, students were asked how their parents/families managed to make ends meet. Most students replied that their parents take extra jobs in the black market; go abroad to do seasonal jobs; have agricultural land around their house where they produce food for the family; or, if they don't own/have access to land, they do agricultural work for non-Roma for which they receive different food products in return.

Another source of income for Roma students, besides family support, is scholarships paid by the university or by some nonprofit organizations, for example the Open Society Institute. In order to receive such a scholarship students have to fulfill all their academic requirements. And, since many of the students to whom this researcher spoke had postponed exams, this seemed not to be a steady source of income for many of them. There is another problem with the scholarships paid by Babes-Bolyai University: Romanian, Hungarian and German students have separate quotas for fellowships (each 'study line' receives a certain number of merit, study and financial aid scholarships). In contrast, Roma students do not have separate quotas. Depending upon the language in which they continue their studies (most commonly in Romanian) they have to compete for fellowships with the students of that (ethnic) group. Given that a much higher number of students compete for the same limited number of fellowships, the chances that a student will receive financial support from the university are much lower.

Another trend was discovered, common mainly among Roma men studying at Babes-Bolyai University: Many of them have to take jobs not only to support themselves but also to support their parents and siblings. Based on the narratives of these present and former male students, they usually have to go to work because their families need money. Even though they are trying to earn a degree they are often expected to support their aging and/or ill parents and their younger brothers/sisters who are back home or, in some cases, even study at the same university. Since these young Roma men must earn money, they usually have to accept any jobs they can get. Consequently, many of these men to whom this researcher spoke worked in low skilled and underpaid jobs (locksmith, miner,

seasonal and agricultural worker, etc.). A few of them managed to find better jobs, for example working as a police officer or in an administrative position. Only one of them worked in his academic field (social work) during the time he was a student.

Some Roma women work as well during their years at university. However, it seems that here there is a major difference between young Roma men and women. While Roma men often have to work, most Roma women choose to work. If the women do not want to take a job, or they cannot find a job, they know there is no family expectation for them to earn money. This aspect of free choice is very much reflected in the types of jobs Roma women students take: Among those with whom this writer spoke, the few women that had jobs worked in their academic or a related field (social work, nonprofit organizations, mass media, etc.). Based on these findings, and contrary to widely held assumptions, a hypothesis can be formulated that if young Roma women manage to enter university, their life situation is actually easier than that of young Roma men because their families have fewer expectations and demands for them.

### **Educational characteristics**

Standard university departmental records usually have the following educational information on their Roma students:

- Name of high school where the student graduated – type of high school can be deduced from this;
- Year of admission to university – if combined with date of birth, the entry age of the student can be calculated;
- The academic year in which the student enrolled;<sup>13</sup>
- Academic standing – whether or not all academic requirements for the present and previous years have been completed;<sup>14</sup>
- Some departments record the following data as well: GPA at university admissions; GPA in high school; GPA of the high school graduation exam (baccalaureate). However, because there was so little data on academic and high school performance, this type of data was not processed for the purpose of this study.

In all cases where there was sufficient educational data to allow for generalizations, the data was processed and analyzed.

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<sup>13</sup> Academic year I – freshman; academic year II – sophomore; academic year III – junior; academic year IV – senior.

<sup>14</sup> The terms the university administration uses to differentiate between categories are: “integral student standing” – the student fulfilled all academic requirements; “incomplete student standing” – the student did not fulfill some of his/her academic requirements, but did fulfill enough to move on to the next academic year; “expelled student” – the student did not fulfill any or most of his/her academic requirements, consequently he/she was expelled; “reenrolled student” – the student, once expelled, reenrolled to the university, usually returning to the same academic year from which he/she was expelled; “academic status” – student either has a tuition waiver, or pays tuition.

**Field of study**

In the academic year 2004/2005 at Babes-Bolyai University there were 20 different faculties offering 46 specializations. Ten of those faculties had seats allocated for Roma students in 18 different specializations.<sup>15</sup> Table 3 below, on the field of study of Roma students, reflects the frequencies and the proportional distribution of the Roma students among different faculties.

**Table 3.****Field of study of Roma students -faculties**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1. Faculty of Biology and Geology	4	4,4	4.4	4.4
	2. Faculty of Economics	30	33.3	33.3	37.8
	3. Faculty of European Studies	2	2.2	2.2	40.0
	4. Faculty of Environmental Sciences	1	1.1	1.1	41.1
	5. Faculty of Geography	1	1.1	1.1	42.2
	6. Faculty of History and Philosophy	1	1.1	1.1	43.3
	7. Faculty of Sociology and Social Work	26	28.9	28.9	72.2
	8. Faculty of Psychology and Education Science	9	10.0	10.0	82.2
	9. Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration	9	10.0	10.0	92.2
	10. Faculty of Physical Education and Sports	7	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

<sup>15</sup> Data comes from an official document received from vice-rector Laszlo Nagy about the distribution of the academic seats among the departments of the university and among the different language study lines (Romanian, Hungarian, German) for the academic year 2005. The document also contains data about the ways Roma seats were allocated to the departments.

#### AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AT BABES-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY

Since only 30 seats are allocated yearly for Roma students at Babes-Bolyai University by the Ministry of Education and Research, and distributed among faculties by the university's admissions office, there is no reason to process the data for an indication of specific preferences and interests of the Roma students. It is assumed here that they apply to the departments where (the most) seats are available.

Several Roma students indicated during the semi-structured interviews that they did not know, based on the name of the academic department to which they were applied, exactly what the specialty of the department was. As one of the students at the Department of Social Work put it: "I only knew that I wanted very much to go to university and study. So, I checked out the limited options the university offered, and choose the one which seemed to be the closest match to my interests. I applied, was accepted, and only later – after being student for a while – realized what I was going to be as a 'grown up' graduate. And, actually I feel lucky, because without knowing it, the Department of Social Work was a perfect choice for me." While this story has a happy ending, others do not. Because of the way the system works, several Roma students said during interviews that their (uninformed) choice had been a mismatch, and they were considering continuing their graduate studies in another field which was closer to their interests.

The present data might have led to a more interesting conclusion if there had also been data to indicate in which departments there had been an over-application of Roma students. This could have reflected some preferences among these students. But neither the university or individual departments record data of this kind. The only (anecdotal) information available on this aspect of the application process came from the university's vice-rector responsible for the admissions. He stated that he is the person who follows the application and admissions process, and if he sees that in some departments seats are not filled, while others are oversubscribed, he immediately redistributes the seats among departments. But, he had made no record of the specifics of his redistribution. Also, it was not clear to this interviewer whether or not he took into consideration the interests of particular students.

However, when a cross tabulation for faculty and gender was made, an interesting trend was revealed: There was a strong correlation between gender and choice of discipline/specialty. It may be assumed that this is one of the significant factors influencing choice of academic field. In Table 4 the significant differences between the academic choices of women and men are stressed in bold.

In the field of economics and sports men are highly over-represented (economics: 41.2%; sports: 17.6%) compared to women (economics: 28.6%; sports: 1.8%). In contrast, women are over-represented in the fields of social work (32.1% women compared to 23.5% men), and psychology and educational sciences (14.3% women, 2.9% men).

**Table 4.**

**Gender and Faculty (Cross tabulation)**

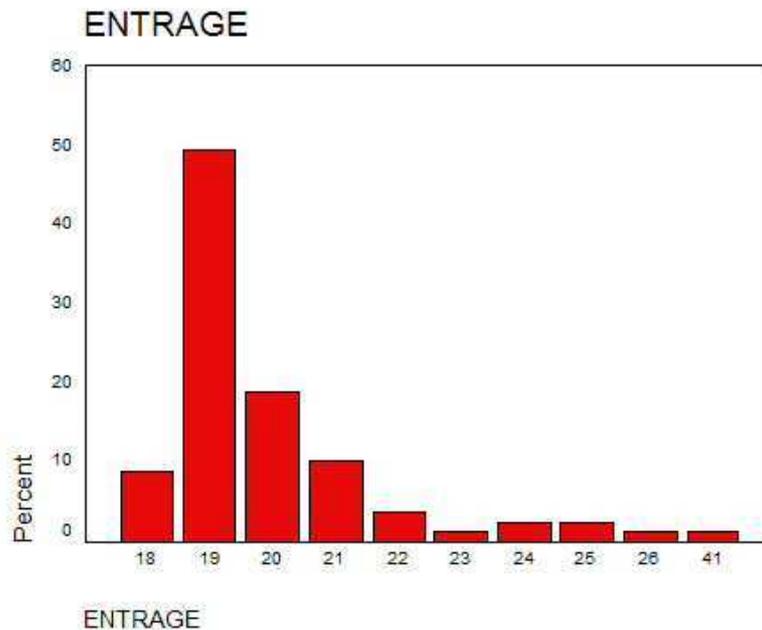
		FACULTY										Total	
		Biology and Geology	Economics	European Studies	Environmental Sciences	Geography	History and Philosophy	Sociology, Social Work	Psychology, Education Science	Political Science, Public Administration	Physical Education, Sports		
GENDER	women	Count	4	16	1	0	1	1	18	8	6	1	56
		% within GENDER	7.1	28.6	1.8	-	1.8	1.8	32.1	14.3	10.7	1.8	100.0
		% within FACULTY	100.0	53.3	50.0	-	100.0	100.0	69.2	88.9	66.7	14.3	62.2
		% of Total	4.4	17.8	1.1	-	1.1	1.1	20.0	8.9	6.7	1.1	62.2
	men	Count		14	1	1	0	0	8	1	3	6	34
		% within GENDER		41.2	2.9	2.9	-	-	23.5	2.9	8.8	17.6	100.0
		% within FACULTY		46.7	50.0	100.0	-	-	30.8	11.1	33.3	85.7	37.8
		% of Total		15.6	1.1	1.1	-	-	8.9	1.1	3.3	6.7	37.8
Total	Count	4	30	2	1	1	1	26	9	9	7	90	
	% within GENDER	4.4	33.3	2.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	28.9	10.0	10.0	7.8	100.0	
	% within FACULTY	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
	% of Total	4.4	33.3	2.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	28.9	10.0	10.0	7.8	100.0	

Comparing data with that of the general student population (from the statistical reports of the university) it can be said that the above correlation is not characteristic only of Roma students. This strong correlation between gender and

choice of academic field is present in the general student population at Babes-Bolyai University (and presumably at other universities) as well.<sup>16</sup>

**Entry age**

Entry age was calculated by deducting the year of birth from the year of admission to the university (e.g. Entry year = 2004, Year of birth 1985, Entry age = EY–YoB = 2004-1985 = 19). Graph 5 shows that the majority of Roma students (77.2%) enter university at the age of 18, 19 or 20, either right after high school graduation, or after a one year break. Another 15% of Roma students are admitted to university at the age of 21, 22 or 23. Only 7.6% of the students are age 24 or above when applying for admission.



Legend: Valid 79, Missing 11, Total 90  
**Graph 5. Entry age of Roma**

<sup>16</sup> It needs to be noted that a whole research field is built on the long history of disproportional representation of women and men in certain academic fields and work. For a long time one of the most prevalent explanations for this gender disparity was that women were over-represented and succeeded in those endeavors from which men withdrew. These fields, this explanation continues, then loose their high social and economic status. In order to confirm or refute such an elaborate hypothesis much more data and research would be needed. Based on the data available no such (or similar) conclusions can be made.

According to the vice-rector, the majority of the general student population enters university right after high school graduation, at the age of 18, 19 or 20. This mostly likely indicates that there are no significant differences between Roma and non-Roma students regarding their age of entry. However, there are no University statistics on the exact percentages for the entry age of the non-Roma student population.

**Table 5.**

**Gender and Entry age (Cross tabulation)**

		ENTRY AGE										Total	
		18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	41		
GENDER	women	Count	6	25	10	4	2	0	0	1	0	1	49
		% within GENDER	12.2	51.0	20.4	8.2	4.1	-	-	2.0	-	2.0	100.0
		% within ENTRY AGE	85.7	64.1	66.7	50.0	66.7	-	-	50.0	-	100.0	62.0
		% of Total	7.6	31.6	12.7	5.1	2.5	-	-	1.3	-	1.3	62.0
	men	Count	1	14	5	4	1	1	2	1	1	0	30
		% within GENDER	3.3	46.7	16.7	13.3	3.3	3.3	6.7	3.3	3.3	-	100.0
		% within ENTRY AGE	14.3	35.9	33.3	50.0	33.3	100.0	100.0	50.0	100.0	-	38.0
		% of Total	1.3	17.7	6.3	5.1	1.3	1.3	2.5	1.3	1.3	-	38.0
Total	Count	7	39	15	8	3	1	2	2	1	1	79	
	% within GENDER	8.9	49.4	19.0	10.1	3.8	1.3	2.5	2.5	1.3	1.3	100.0	
	% within ENTRY AGE	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
	% of Total	8.9	49.4	19.0	10.1	3.8	1.3	2.5	2.5	1.3	1.3	100.0	

When a cross tabulation was made for entry age and gender, an interesting tendency was revealed. There seems to be a negative correlation between the number of Roma women entering university and the age of these women. That is, as Roma women advance in age they are less and less likely to apply to university. Table 5 highlights the significant data.

These results led to the formulation of a preliminary hypothesis: If Roma women enter university in the same year that they graduate, or shortly thereafter, their families and community are significantly more supportive of their pursuit of higher education. If, on the other hand, Roma women have not started university shortly after high school graduation, pressure from their families, peers, communities, and society for them to conform to traditional roles of (Roma) women, grows with the passage of time. This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that a higher number of Roma men (as compared to Roma women) do start university in their late twenties. However, because there is insufficient relevant data, this hypothesis cannot be confirmed or refuted.

### **Language of study**

According to the statistical report published by Babes-Bolyai University in 2004,<sup>17</sup> in academic year 2003/2004 there were 108 Roma students studying at the university. Of these 108, 107 were enrolled in the Romanian study line and undertook their studies in the Romanian language. One Roma student was enrolled in the Hungarian study line and continued his/her studies in Hungarian. In an attempt to explain this striking difference in Roma enrollment, data collected by the university as well as by sources outside the university was analyzed:

- 1) It was known by this researcher that a significant proportion of the Roma population in Romania speaks Hungarian or Romany as their first language.
- 2) From data already processed from the eight primary target counties of Babes-Bolyai University (Cluj, Salaj, Bistrita-Nasaud, Hunedoara, Sibiu, Mures, Harghita, Bihor), it was already known that Roma communities are represented in the general Roma student population from five of those counties (Cluj, Salaj, Bistrita-Nasaud, Hunedoara, Sibiu), while Roma communities from the other three counties (Mures, Bihor, Harghita) are barely represented.
- 3) It was also known that Mures, Bihor, and Harghita have a quite significant Hungarian and/or Romany speaking Roma population.

Based on the above it was assumed that the difference might be related to demographic and language characteristics of the Roma living in these eight counties. To verify whether or not any significant differences existed between Roma living in these counties, data from the 2002 Romanian Census<sup>18</sup> was collected and summarized in Table 6 below.

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<sup>17</sup> Universitatea Babes-Bolyai in cifre si repere statistice, 2004 (Babes-Bolyai University in Numbers and Statistics, 2004). Cluj Napoca: Universitatea Babes-Bolyai, 2004

<sup>18</sup> Romanian Census 2002 <[www.recensamant.ro/](http://www.recensamant.ro/)> (accessed 8 October 2006)

**Table 6.**

**Number and percentages of Roma by their first language**

County	Number of Roma in the county	Roma in the overall population of the county (%)	Speaks Romany (Frequency)	Speaks Romany (%)	Speaks Romanian (Frequency)	Speaks Romanian (%)	Speaks Hungarian (Frequency)	Speaks Hungarian (%)
Mures	40,425	7	22,205	54.9	14,126	34	4,081	10
Bihor	30,089	5	18,022	59.8	6,720	22.3	5,295	17.5
Harghita	3,835	1.2	1,119	29.1	496	12.9	2,219	57.86
Bistrita - Nasaud	11,155	3.6	3,779	33.8	7,314	65.56	57	0.51
Salaj	12,544	5.1	6,554	52.24	5,596	44.6	393	3.13
Cluj	19,834	2.8	9,220	46.4	10,233	51.59	368	1.85
Sibiu	17,125	3.6	3,750	21.89	13,323	77.7	24	0.14
Hunedoara	6,823	1.4	1,375	20.15	5,397	79.1	48	0.7

Source: 2002 Romanian Census

Data in Table 6 shows that the major difference among the eight counties is the percentage of Roma who speak Romanian as their first language in the overall Roma population of their respective counties. Namely, in the five counties from which the majority of the Roma students came to Babes-Bolyai University (Cluj, Salaj, Bistrita-Nasaud, Hunedoara, Sibiu) the percentage of Romanian speaking Roma is much higher (well above fifty percent, except Salaj, where is 44.6%) than in the three counties from which Roma do not come to Babes-Bolyai University (Romanian speaking Roma in these counties is below 35%).

Given these results, several preliminary hypotheses could be constructed as to why Romany and Hungarian speaking Roma are less likely to apply to Babes-Bolyai University. These hypotheses need to include factors such as the level of assimilation of different Roma communities; the relationship between speaking the Romany language and the salience of traditional values in a community; (possible) major societal trends such as increased social and economic marginalization of Roma among the Hungarian minority; (possible) weaker economic conditions in these three counties; and differences in average years and methods of schooling of Roma in these counties. Again, there is insufficient data to further pursue this line of inquiry.

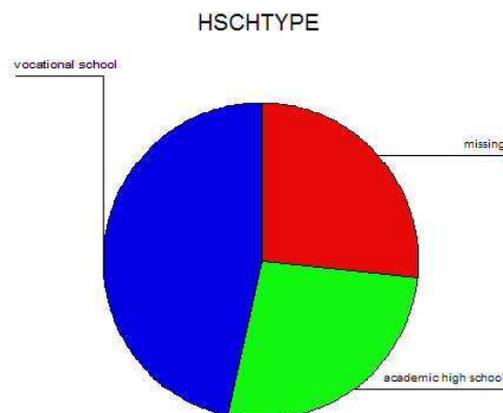
Nonetheless, there is one more additional hypothesis that could partly explain the differences in the data presented above. Namely, since many Hungarian and Romanian students enter Babes-Bolyai University from these three counties, but only a few Romanian, Romany or Hungarian speaking Roma enroll, it might be assumed that there are major differences in these counties in the way the university advertises Romanian and Hungarian seats as opposed to Roma seats.

## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AT BABES-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY

Based on the data available and the interview conducted with the Babes-Bolyai admissions officer, there does indeed seem to be one major difference. The Ministry of Education and Research – as far as can be verified – did not put any constraints on the language in which these Roma students have to study at public universities. The only requirement was that it had to be one of the educational languages of the respective university. This means that, hypothetically, a Roma student at Babes-Bolyai University can choose from three languages – Romanian, Hungarian or German – and enroll in one of these three study lines. But, it is tacitly assumed by the university administration that these Roma seats should be allocated to the Romanian study line. Therefore, the university does not specifically advertise that Roma students can study in any of the university's languages. Thus, it can be assumed that many Hungarian and Romany speaking Roma do not apply for these seats since they assume that they need to study in Romanian, and they might feel that they will not be able to fulfill the academic requirements in Romanian.

### Type of high school

Data on the type of the high school from which Roma students graduated was available for 66 students and missing for 24. In the case of the 66 students, the standard departmental records contained the exact name and type of school (e.g. academic high school; or industrial, agricultural, economic, etc. high school). During the coding, the major aspect which was considered to be important was whether or not the school where the Roma student graduated prepared students for a craft. Consequently, only two categories were constructed, that of the 'academic high school' (specializing in preparing students for higher education, and not to start working in a trade) and that of 'vocational school' (trains students in a craft; and gives them some 'academic' background as well). The results of data processing can be seen on Graph 6.



Legend: Valid 66, Missing 24, Total 90

**Graph 6. Type of high school**

If the students with missing data are excluded, then 63.63% of the students graduated from some type of vocational school, and the remaining 36.36% came from an academic high school. It is hypothesized that this huge disparity can be attributed to two major factors.

1) Historically, in Romania, there are fewer academic high schools than vocational schools. The entry exams to most of the academic high schools are very competitive. This most often results in the pattern where, generally speaking, a positive correlation between social status and school performance appears. It can be assumed, therefore, that only a few Roma students are able to gain entry to these elite schools. This hypothesis is strengthened by what we have learned from the most recent practices of affirmative action policy of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research. The Ministry now implements an admission procedure for Roma children in most of these highly selective academic high schools. It is modeled along the same lines as its university quota system: a certain number of seats have been allocated for Roma students at the academic high schools.

2) In addition to being more difficult for Roma students to enter academic high schools, more Roma families may be making a conscious decision to send their children to vocational schools. Because, for the past four or five (or even more) decades, it was almost impossible for Roma youth to pursue academic careers, it can be assumed that Roma families tended to pursue those opportunities where they were least likely to be dead-ended. Sending their children to vocational high school became the best of the options open to them. Graduating from a vocational school saved their children from the fate of having to become part of the unskilled labor force or, worse, being unemployed or becoming part of the 'underground economy'.

This second hypothesis became even more relevant when, after making a cross tabulation for gender and high school type, it turned out that Roma women are significantly over represented (53.6% Roma women compared to 33.5% Roma men) among those young Roma who graduated from a vocational school.

In Table 7 the significant differences are highlighted in bold. Graph 7 makes the difference visible.

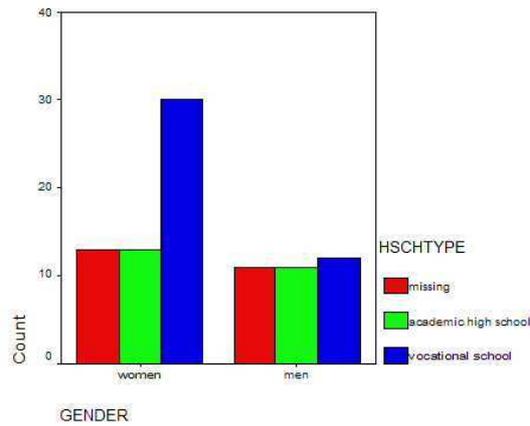
When a cross tabulation was made for entry age and gender, an interesting tendency was revealed. There seems to be a negative correlation between the number of Roma women entering university and the age of these women. That is, as Roma women advance in age they are less and less likely to apply to university. Table 5 highlights the significant data.

Based on this data, it was possible to formulate a question for further inquiry: Why are Roma women overrepresented in vocational high schools? A possible working hypothesis is that families consider the 'fate' of Roma women to depend even more on being trained in a craft than that of Roma men. A further factor/hypothesis could be that this data mirrors the differences in school performance among Roma men and women. It is also possible that Roma men need to take up a job much earlier than Roma women do, and, as a consequence, less Roma men are able to receive a high school graduation diploma than Roma women. However, there is no data to confirm or refute any of these hypotheses.

**Table 7.**

**Gender and high school type (Cross tabulation)**

		HIGH SCHOOL TYPE			Total	
		missing	academic high school	vocational school		
GENDER	women	Count	13	13	30	56
		% within GENDER	23.2	23.2	53.6	100.0
		% within HSCHTYPE	54.2	54.2	71.4	62.2
		% of Total	14.4	14.4	33.3	62.2
	men	Count	11	11	12	34
		% within GENDER	32.4	32.4	35.3	100.0
		% within HSCHTYPE	45.8	45.8	28.6	37.8
		% of Total	12.2	12.2	13.3	37.8
Total	Count	24	24	42	90	
	% within GENDER	26.7	26.7	46.7	100.0	
	% within HSCHTYPE	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
	% of Total	26.7	26.7	46.7	100.0	



Legend: Valid 66, Missing 24, Total 90  
**Graph 7. Gender \* High School Type (Cross tab.)**

**Dropout rates and number of expelled Roma students. Comparison among Roma, Romanian and Hungarian students.<sup>19</sup>**

This subchapter is concerned with defining the numbers of students who decide to leave (dropout) or who are expelled from the university versus the numbers who successfully complete their studies to a specified point in their academic careers. Because no university records currently exist that provide sufficient statistical data of this type, the numbers used here are the result of mathematical calculations of this writer. These calculations are based on extrapolations made after compositing/integrating existing, incomplete university data on the ethnic composition of students by calendar and academic year (Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, Senior<sup>20</sup>). What little data that does exist is published in the statistical reports of the university from 1996 to 2002. For 2003 and 2004 these same statistical reports no longer included that data. Consequently, numbers of students who either dropped out or were expelled could only be calculated for the years 1996 through 2002. Since university statistics have no indication as to what caused the departure of the ‘missing’ students, the calculations presented here can make no distinction between dropout and expulsion rates.

Dropout and expulsion rates were computed as follows: It was assumed that in the regular academic process a student starts in one calendar year as a freshman, continues to the next academic year as a sophomore, becomes a junior in year three, and finally, in the fourth academic year graduates as a senior. The total numbers of Roma, Romanian, and Hungarian freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors were disaggregated for academic years 1996/1997, 1997/1998, 1998/1999, 1999/2000, 2000/2001, 2001/2002, and published in the university’s statistical reports. So, if data said that in the academic year 1996/1997 there were 29 Roma freshmen, and in the academic year 1997/1998 there were 29 Roma sophomores, it was assumed that all Roma freshmen has continued their university studies. If data said that in academic year 1996/1997 there were 29 Roma freshmen and in academic year 1997/1998 there were only 23 Roma sophomores, it was assumed that something happened to six Roma freshmen, and because of that they did not continue to the next academic year.

Two questions then followed: What happened to these six Roma freshmen? and, Why are they no longer found in the statistical record? Three possible explanations are offered:

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<sup>19</sup> **Dropout** – those students who – for whatever reason – make a decision to quit university, or at least to leave the departments where they had been originally enrolled. **Expelled/Expulsion** – refers to those students who are asked to leave the university for failure to meet the university’s academic or behavioral standards.

<sup>20</sup> Freshman – student in his first academic year; Sophomore – student in his second academic year; Junior – student in his third academic year; Senior – student in his fourth (and usually last) academic year.

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1) They had to repeat their freshman year. Since the credit system was introduced at Babes-Bolyai in 1996 this is the least likely explanation. Even so, they should still be found in the statistical record, adding to number totals in the following academic year.

2) They interrupted their studies for medical, economic or other reasons – for example going abroad as exchange students – but planned to continue their studies sometime in the future. This case does not directly concern these calculations, since even if they did not appear one year, they would still add to the totals when they returned.

3) They chose to leave (drop out) for whatever reason or were expelled by the university administration. This is the most likely explanation in those cases when the tables below indicate a decrease in the number of students over the period of years under examination. Consequently, ‘missing’ (decrease in numbers) or ‘extra’ (increase in numbers) students were computed for each academic and calendar year, as well as for each ethnic group. In the tables below a comparison was made among the three ethnic groups.

Statistics for dropouts and expulsions could not be calculated for the senior year because Babes-Bolyai statistics do not contain data on how many students complete their senior year, and how many of them pass their final comprehensive exam and graduate.

The method used by this writer for computing dropouts and expulsions has at least three major limitations:

1) University statistics might not be completely accurate or reliable. As experienced during data collection for this paper, how much information and what information one gets about students is largely dependent on who is asked. However, since the same data pool is being used to compare dropout rates for Roma, Romanian, and Hungarian students, it is reasonable to assume that any anomalies in university data are evenly spread across the entire population under study.

2) In any particular academic year the number of students repeating the previous year may be higher or equal to the number of those who fail in that year. In such cases this method of calculating dropout/expulsion rates does not provide needed clarity, or permit finer distinctions to be made. In short, data collection by the university was not designed with the need for this type or level of statistical analysis in mind. A hypothetical example may help to explain: Assume that in 1999 there are ten students in their first (freshman) academic year and ten students in their second (sophomore) academic year. Now further assume that five of those first year students fail, and only five of them continue as sophomores, and five of the second year (sophomore) students also fail, so five of them will repeat their second (sophomore) year. Because of the way the university has collected and recorded its data, it makes it appear as if none of the first year students failed because the number of second year students remains at a constant ten.

3) Despite vast differences in the number of Roma students as compared to the number of Romanian and Hungarian students, for the sake of making a comparison between Roma and non-Roma students, dropout and expulsion rates were given as percentages in the tables below. To compute percentages, since the total number of cases found in the data is so small, might be questionable and potentially misleading.

With all the above limitations built into any analysis, the choice was made to attempt the calculations on dropout/expulsion rates for Roma students anyway. Not to do so would have meant possibly overlooking/missing important/significant trends.

The statistical analysis was processed in Excel. Because of the unwieldy length of the complete analysis, the tables presented here summarize the salient findings with the computed dropout/expulsion rates for Roma, Romanian and Hungarian students, by both calendar year and academic year. The raw data used for calculations can be found in the annual statistical reports of the Babes-Bolyai University. Table 8 shows how many freshmen did and did not move on to their sophomore year.

**Table 8.**  
**Dropout/expulsion rates among Roma, Romanian and Hungarian freshmen**

Academic Year	Dropout Roma (Nr)	Dropout Roma (%)	Dropout R (Nr)	Dropout R (%)	Dropout H (Nr)	Dropout H (%)
1996/1997	-	-	-	-	-	-
1997/1998	-1	-14.28	+373	+13.24	-54	-9.8
1998/1999	-1	-7.69	+97	+2.94	-22	-3.4
1999/2000	-7	-21.21	-561	-10.70	-79	-7.9
2000/2001	0	0	-700	-12.56	-148	-11.6
2001/2002	-6	-20.68	-819	-13.48	-265	-19.05
2002/2003	-	-	-	-	-	-
2003/2004	-	-	-	-	-	-

Legend: “+” increase, “-“ decrease in the number of students

Table 9 shows that how many sophomores did and did not move on to their junior year.

**Table 9.**  
**Dropout/expulsion rates among Roma, Romanian and Hungarian sophomores**

Academic Year	Dropout Roma (Nr)	Dropout Roma (%)	Dropout R (Nr)	Dropout R (%)	Dropout H (Nr)	Dropout H (%)
1996/1997	-	-	-	-	-	-
1997/1998	-1	-20	+70	+2.54	-49	-10.1
1998/1999	-1	-16.6	-74	-2.32	-41	-8.2
1999/2000	-3	-25	-63	-1.85	-53	-8.4
2000/2001	-4	-15.38	-240	-5.12	-28	-3%
2001/2002	-16	-37.2	-219	-2.64	-53	-4.7
2002/2003	-	-	-	-	-	-
2003/2004	-	-	-	-	-	-

Legend: “+” increase, “-“ decrease in the number of students

Table 10 shows that how many juniors did and did not move on to their senior year.

**Table 10.**  
**Dropout/Expulsion Rates among Roma, Romanian and Hungarian juniors**

Academic Year	Dropout Roma (Nr)	Dropout Roma (%)	Dropout R (Nr)	Dropout R (%)	Dropout H (Nr)	Dropout H (%)
1996/1997	-	-	-	-	-	-
1997/1998	0	0	105	-4.15	-28	-6.5
1998/1999	-1	-25	89	-3.15	-75	-17.2
1999/2000	+1	+20	218	-6.9	+8	+1.7
2000/2001	0	0	332	-9.9	-81	-14.1
2001/2002	-6	-27.27	495	-11.14	-204	-23.1
2002/2003	-	-	-	-	-	-
2003/2004	-	-	-	-	-	-

Legend: "+" increase, "-" decrease in the number of students

Tables reveal that there are years when there is no decrease or a slight increase in the number of Roma, Romanian, and Hungarian students. In these cases it can be assumed that A) students who had interrupted their studies for example, medical reasons or study abroad, reenrolled in the university; B) previously expelled students reenrolled in the department to continue their studies at the same grade level (in the case of re-enrollment, students lose their tuition waiver and have to pay taxes in order to continue school.); C) the number of students repeating the previous year may be higher than the number of those who failed in that year.

From 1997 through 1999, there was a dramatic increase in the number of the Romanian students beginning their freshman year. This is most likely attributable to the fact that these were the years when the Ministry of Education and Research introduced stricter rules for the functioning of private universities with the result that a few of these private universities were closed down. So that students enrolled in these private universities did not abandon their studies, public universities worked out a point system and a fee structure which allowed these students to enroll at public universities. It is assumed here that this, in part, explains the increase in the number of Romanian students.

From the data above it is evident that the dropout/expulsion rate is highest among Roma students, followed by Hungarian, and then Romanian students. Based on data collected during field research, the preliminary hypothesis could be formulated that there may be an even bigger (hidden) difference in dropout/expulsion rates between Roma and non-Roma. What the tables can't reveal – because the raw data is either not specific enough or nonexistent – is that for non-Roma students, dropping out often means only that they are pursuing other fields of study at other departments of Babes-Bolyai University or at other universities/institutions of higher learning. For the Roma, however, any interruption of their

studies is far more likely to result in abandoning all aspirations for higher education. Given their lower economic status (relative to non-Roma), even those Roma who wish to reenroll at Babes-Bolyai University or other institutions find tuition costs to be a much heavier burden for the students and their families. That having been said, a small number of Roma do manage to reenroll. Among the 90 students presently enrolled at Babes-Bolyai University there are four reenrolled Roma.

The two major reasons behind the dropout of Roma students, as constructed from Roma student narratives and interviews with administrative personnel met during the data collection process, are 1) lack of economic resources (some students – mainly men – need to work in time-consuming, often unhealthy and difficult blue collar jobs in order to support themselves and their families back home); and related to this lack of resources, 2) educational requirements are so demanding that to have to work leaves insufficient time to devote to study.

In order to have a clearer picture of the overall academic performance of Roma, Romanian and Hungarian students it would be necessary to know how many of the students starting university actually graduate. Unfortunately, departments do not keep records that would allow for this level of statistical analysis.

### **Summary of findings**

An important result of this research and study is that from the very sparse university records that exist on the Roma students a database has been created and some of the findings have been interpreted/contextualized. This makes it possible for other researchers to build on the existing data, formulate new hypotheses, and collect further data to test these hypotheses.

A short summary of some of the important findings:

- The data shows that Roma women are overrepresented in the Roma student population. This indicates that, contrary to general beliefs, among the young Roma applying to Babes-Bolyai University, Roma women have achieved at least a measure of equity in their pursuit of higher education.
- Contrary to widely held assumptions, if young Roma women manage to enter university, their life situation is actually easier than that of young Roma men because their families seem to have fewer expectations and economic demands for them.
- If young Roma women do not enter university immediately after their high school graduation, their chances of entering university correlate negatively with their age. The preliminary hypothesis was formulated that if Roma women enter university in the same year that they graduate, or shortly thereafter, their families and community are significantly more supportive of their pursuit of higher education. If, on the other hand, Roma women have not started university shortly after high school graduation, pressure from their families, peers, communities, and society for them to conform to traditional roles of (Roma) women, grows with the passage of time.

Other important patterns that emerged:

- There are no Hungarian speaking Roma at the Babes-Bolyai University.
- The majority of Roma students studied graduated from vocational schools.
- Drop out/expulsion rates are higher among Roma students.

Further, and likely the most important result of this present research is that it strongly indicates that the affirmative action policy has created a previously nonexistent opportunity for upward mobility for Roma youth. Although there has been much criticism of affirmative action policies and quota systems all over the world, statistical analysis at Babes-Bolyai University showed that – in this case at least – the number of Roma enrolling in public universities increased significantly.

In addition, both the semi-structured interviews and the statistical data have shown that young members of the Roma community have been successful in academia. This, in turn, has created new role models for the children of that community. Combining the data coming from statistical analysis and the semi-structured interviews it became clear that brothers, sisters, and cousins often apply and enroll to the same university (many times even to the same department). This indicates that Roma peers and family members who have or had already been enrolled at Babes-Bolyai University strongly encourage and/or pressure the ‘youngsters’ to follow them on this path to upward mobility.

Nevertheless, it also needs to be mentioned that during focus group interviews many of these young Roma university graduates indicated that often they are not hired in positions that correspond to their education and new status. As a reason/explanation they named discrimination against Roma in the Romanian employment market, but without further research this statement could not be refuted or validated by present writer. However, although the findings of the semi-structured interviews were not presented in detail in this study, for a balanced reporting it also needs to be mentioned that these interviews made it clear that the Romanian affirmative action policy is failing to fulfill its larger goal, that of redressing present and past social and economic injustices.

## O PERSPECTIVĂ ASUPRA DEZVOLTĂRII RURALE. DOUĂ STUDII DE CAZ.

FLORENȚA LOZINSKY

### **ABSTRACT. A perspective on rural development. Two case studies.**

In the nowadays context of socio-economical and cultural transformations and in the actual framework of the changes of mentality that take place in rural or urban Romanian communities, we aim at realizing a comprehensive analysis of the empirically observed reality of two communities found in the area of influence of the city of Cluj-Napoca.

The case of the communities of Mociu and Florești reveal the differences between the rural area and the peri-urban area, offering, thus, ambivalent perceptions of their development. While the rural community has oriented its way of being towards the reconfiguration of a traditional type of economy - in which the first place is usually taken by an economy of subsistence - and towards the mentality of the social actors who do not accept major social changes, the peri-urban community places its stake on its own urban aspirations and on the politics of local administration which is favorable to its development.

Thus, the community of Mociu is left with the nostalgia of tradition, whereas the community of Florești embodies the past and present urbanization.

În contextul actual al schimbărilor socio-economice, culturale, mentalitare care au loc la nivelul comunităților românești, rurale sau urbane, investigarea acestora poate aduce un spor epistemologic cercetării sociologice în conturarea problematicii dezvoltării rurale. În studiul de față ne propunem să realizăm o analiză comprehensivă a realității surprinse empiric<sup>1</sup>, în care un loc aparte îl va ocupa tematica dezvoltării rurale prin care urmărim să surprindem existența unui echilibru între nevoia de conservare a spațiului rural, a tuturor dimensiunilor acestuia, și „tendința de «modernizare» a vieții rurale”<sup>2</sup>. Discursul se va axa pe marcarea drumului parcurs de comunități de la tradițional la modern, întrucât una din principalele caracteristici ale modernității sociale, mai precis ritmul accelerat al dezvoltării presupune „legitimarea mai presus de toate a schimbării, iar nu a stărnării sociale, ce rămâne o caracteristică majoră a noii modernități”<sup>3</sup> de astăzi. Deși se consideră că tradiția și modernitatea sunt

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<sup>1</sup> Unitățile administrative Mociu și Florești au fost investigate în perioada 2003, respectiv 2005-2006, utilizând metode de cercetare calitative (interviul semistructurat), dar și metode cantitative (date din PUG-2004 și fișa localităților – 1990-2006).

<sup>2</sup> P. I. Otiman, *Dezvoltarea rurală în România*, Timișoara, Edit. Agroprint, 1997, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> A. Roth, *Modernitate și modernizare socială*, Iași, Edit. Polirom, 2002, p. 59.

noțiuni complementare, asupra relației dintre acestea planează două perspective diferite. Într-o primă perspectivă acestea ar descrie realități sociale opuse, ce se circumscriu „teoriilor modernizării a căror asumție centrală este că pe măsură ce o societate se dezvoltă, lumea tradițională este erodată de forța instituțiilor, atitudinilor și valorilor moderne. Cea de-a doua perspectivă, susține că tradiția și modernitatea definesc realități ce coexistă într-o societate dată. [...] Cercetări realizate începând cu anii '70 au arătat că instituțiile/structura modernității au produs mai degrabă reconfigurarea tradiționalității decât disoluția sa”<sup>4</sup>. Demersul nostru sociologic asupra unităților sociale alese plasează relația tradițional-modern în a doua perspectivă, în care tradiționalitatea se reconfigurează în funcție de contextul local.

Premisa de la care se pleacă este aceea că deși, „orașul este prin excelență un spațiu al modernității sub toate aspectele acesteia (infrastructuri, instituții, practici sociale și stiluri de viață, valori), iar satul reprezintă un model arhetipal al tradiționalității”<sup>5</sup>, distanța fizică dintre oraș și anumite comunități rurale, influențează transferul funcțional al elementelor modernității dinspre urban spre rural/periurban, fapt ce contribuie la dezvoltarea/stagnarea spațiului rural.

Au fost abordate două comunități, Mociu și Florești, aflate sub aria de influență a municipiului Cluj-Napoca ce exercită asemeni altor mari orașe ale țării „o puternică influență zonală”<sup>6</sup>. Relația dintre comuna Mociu și centrul administrativ al județului Cluj este una disfuncțională datorită poziționării geografice nefavorabile, la 40 km față de municipiul Cluj-Napoca, iar în comuna Florești aflată la doar 5 km de același centru urban există o dezvoltare funcțională datorită proximității urbane. Comuna Mociu, aflată în partea de SE a județului Cluj, se învecinează spre nord cu teritoriul comunelor Geaca și Palatca, la est cu hotarul comunei Cămăraș, la sud se află comunele Sărmașu și Frata, iar spre vest comunele Suatu și Căianu. În componența comunei intră un număr de nouă sate: Mociu – centru de comună, Boteni, Chesău, Crișeni, Falca, Ghirișu-Român, Roșieni, Turmași și Zoreni de Vale. Teritoriul comunei este străbătut pe o distanță de 13 km de DN16. Situată în partea vestică a municipiului Cluj-Napoca, comuna Florești are următorii vecini: la nord comuna Baci, la vest comuna Gilău, iar la sud comunele Săvădisla și Ciurila. În structura administrativă a comunei Florești se regăsesc satele Florești - centru, Luna de Sus și Tăuți. Tranzitarea localității Florești, pe o distanță de 8,3 km, se realizează prin intermediul DN 1.

În viziunea lui B. Zani analiza comunităților reprezintă un proces în cadrul căruia membrii acestora „devin conștienți de propriile condiții, nevoi și limite, precum și de resursele de care dispun”<sup>7</sup>, ei fiind în măsură să confere un anume sens datelor care îi

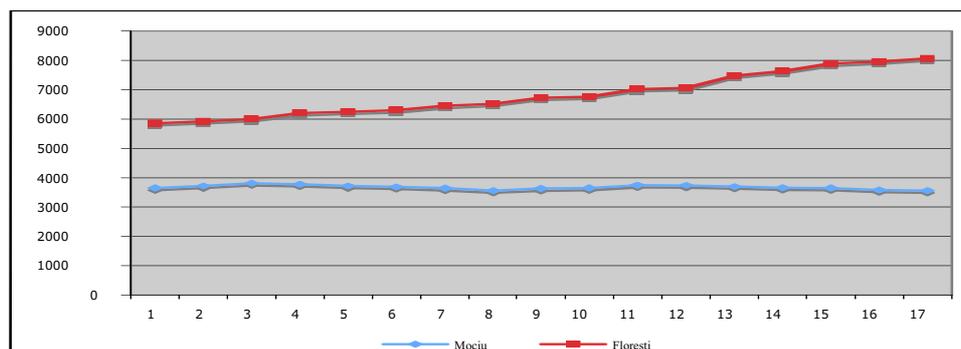
<sup>4</sup> D. Chiribucă, *Tranziția postcomunistă și reconstrucția modernității în România*, Cluj-Napoca, Edit. Dacia, Eikon, 2004, p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 95.

<sup>6</sup> Tr. Rotariu, V. S. Dîncu, *Funcțiile municipiului Cluj-Napoca în teritoriu*, în *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai*, seria Sociologia, an XL-XLI, nr. 1995-1996, p. 4.

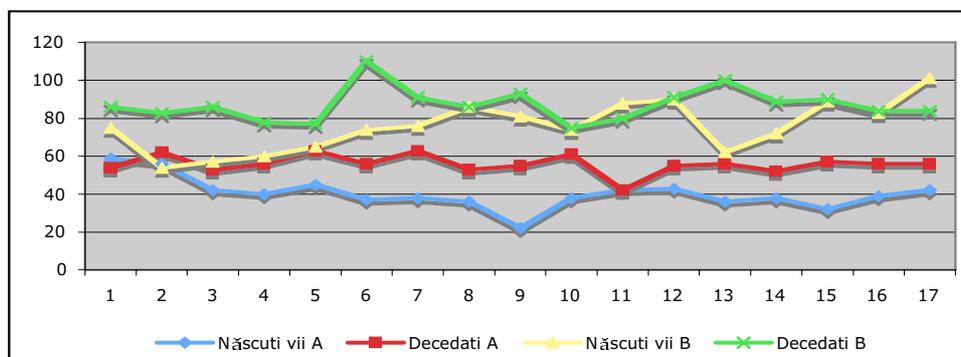
<sup>7</sup> B. Zani, A. Palmonari (coord.), *Manual de psihologia comunității*, Iași, Edit. Polirom, 2003, p. 85.

definesc ca și comunitate. În prim plan conturăm un *profil demografic*<sup>8</sup> al unităților administrative investigate, prin care se va evidenția structura și dinamica populației, cu ajutorul datelor din fișele localităților (1990-2006), ce determină modificarea în timp a nevoilor membrilor comunității legate de habitat, servicii publice și locuri de muncă.



**Figura 1.** Dinamica populației stabile în comunele Mociu și Florești (1990-2006).

Profilul demografic al comunei Mociu descrie o populație „încremenită” parcă în timp, datorită dinamicii insesizabil de lentă, coraborată cu lipsa unei generații de schimb și a sporului migratoriu negativ.

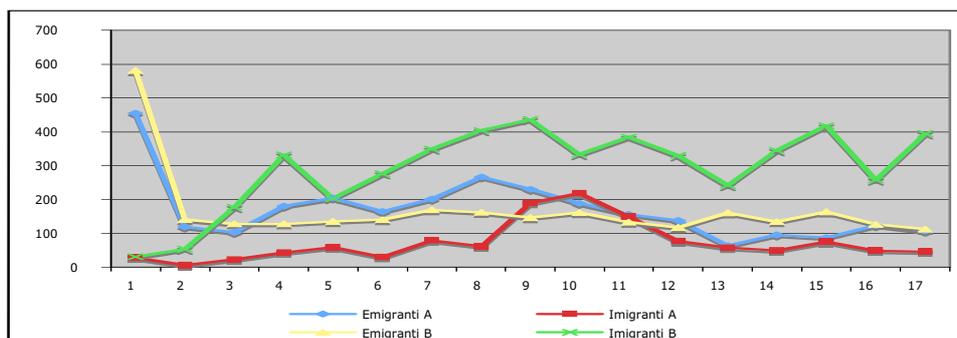


**Figura 2.** Dinamica sporului natural, perioada 1990-2006.  
(A= Mociu, B= Florești).

La polul opus, comunitatea floreșteană se află de un timp în plin proces de dezvoltare și urbanizare accelerată, fapt anunțat de creșterea anuală constantă a populației, de sporul natural pozitiv înregistrat după 1999 și de sporul migratoriu pozitiv, toate acestea sugerând dinamica activă a populației, excepție face anul doar anul 1990 când se deschid porțile marilor orașe, și o bună parte a populației se stabilește în

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 86.

urban. Numărul mare a emigranților în străinătate a contribuit la creșterea spectaculoasă a abonamentelor la telefonie fixă în ambele comunități, iar prin intermediul acestora distanțele<sup>9</sup> dintre „aici” și „acolo” nu se mai percep.



**Figura 3.** Migrație și imigrație, perioada 1990-2006.  
(A= Mociu, B= Florești).

În cadrul comunităților noastre „mediul construit de om” are o importanță aparte pentru că acesta este cel care restructurează relațiile dintre vecini, noii veniți și băștinași și în același timp trasează strategiile de dezvoltare ale comunei.

Mociu resimte o determinare negativă asupra dezvoltării imobiliare, a sectorului rezidențial, datorită distanței mari dintre metropolă (Cluj-Napoca) și comunitatea locală (Mociu), precum și migrației în Occident a unor potențiali dezvoltatori locali.

*Tabelul nr.1* Echiparea teritoriului comunei Mociu cu locuințe din fonduri private

Anul	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Locuințe	1398	1329	1373	1455	1464	1467	1469	1470	1473
Suprafața locuibilă-mp	-	38837	40428	43333	43583	43886	43968	44008	44095

(Sursa: INS Cluj-Napoca – Fișa localității)

*Tabelul nr.2* Echiparea teritoriului comunei Florești cu locuințe din fonduri private

Anul	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Locuințe	1811	1921	2303	2467	2478	2492	2514	2577	2911
Suprafața locuibilă-mp	-	70370	87539	106517	107998	109999	112229	120057	140496

(Sursa: INS Cluj-Napoca – Fișa localității)

<sup>9</sup> Vezi Fl. Stăvărache, *Configurații mentale în două comunități din Câmpia Transilvaniei*, în M. Pascaru (coord.), *Catalyse. Cunoaștere, participare și dezvoltare în spațiul comunitar*, Cluj-Napoca, Edit. Argonaut, 2005, p. 199-200.

Fondul locativ privat floreștean a cunoscut în intervalul 1990-2006 o creștere anuală constantă, iar începând cu anul 2006 înregistrăm un adevărat boom al pieței rezidențiale prin demararea proiectului de construcție a unui important centru comercial pe teritoriul comunei. Boom-ul din 2006 al sectorului imobiliar se răsfrânge în 2007 asupra populației stabile din unitatea administrativă investigată, datorită finalizării locuințelor individuale sau colective începute cu 1-2 ani în urmă.

Analiza structurii forței de muncă a comunei Mociu ne dezvăluie o comunitate total inactivă, întrucât forța de muncă se regăsește cu precădere angajată în sectorul servicii, urmat de sectorul agricol, iar ponderea sectorului industrial putem considera că este aproximativ zero. Comuna Florești aflată în plin proces de dezvoltare are foarte bine reprezentat sectorul industrial, în special datorită numărului mare a celor angajați în construcții, în plan secund se află sectorul servicii și apoi lucrătorii agricoli. Atât mocenii, cât și floreștenii sunt crescători de animale, în special bovine și suine și mai puțin de ovine și păsări – categorii ce au cunoscut scăderi importante.

Problemele care ne interesează din punct de vedere sociologic și a configurării dezvoltărilor specifice în cele două comunități sunt agricultura, lipsa pieței de desfacere aferentă produselor agricole și animaliere, implicațiile fenomenului migrator asupra actorilor sociali și a gospodăriei acestora, transformările pieței funciare și dezvoltarea unor funcții în cadrul comunităților, discrepanțele dintre habitat și praxis-ul urban, identificarea tradiționalității și modernității, precum și felul în care, cel puțin în Florești, modernizarea a generat noi tipuri de comportamente (individualism și toleranță).

Agricultura care se practică în Mociu este percepută de actorii sociali ca având mai multe înțelesuri și conotații: de subzistență, de „sâmbăta”, de „rușine”, de delăsare prin părăsirea terenurilor agricole, dezinteres față de utilizarea eficientă a terenului agricol. Floreștenii aflați sub influența puternică a centrului urban se văd nevoiți să își restrângă activitățile agricole și să accepte pe teritoriul lor desfășurarea de activități alternative, concretizate în apariția unor firme de profiluri diferite.

Redobândirea proprietății sau punerea în posesie în România, după 1989, a însemnat în fapt stagnarea economiei agrare, și chiar un declin al acesteia, fapt observat și în comunitățile investigate, astfel, cel care se ocupă cu practicarea agriculturii „aceiași om, are teren poate în 5-6-10 parcele și el în loc să lucreze încontinuu la aceeași tarla într-o zi, mult timp îl pierde cu deplasatu și atunci...productivitatea scade foarte mult” (L.T.). La Mociu se poate vorbi de o agricultură de subzistență pentru că aici din cauza lipsei mijloacelor materiale se cultivă unele soiuri de plante care nu sunt așa de productive, compromițându-se viitoarele culturi agricole, și chiar se adaptează suprafețele cultivate „cât consideră că îi necesară pentru ei” (L.T.), la capitalul material al fiecărei gospodării. Consecința o reprezintă distrugerea unei verigi a agriculturii eficiente și anume baza de recepție întrucât „producătorii particulari depozitează fie mult, fie puțin la ei în gospodărie, nu predau nici măcar un kg în baza de recepție” (H.M.), compromițându-se astfel calitatea semințelor, datorită condițiilor improprii de depozitare în gospodării

a producției agricole. Și în Florești întâlnim percepții similare despre evoluția agriculturii, aceasta este considerată „la ora actuală ca cea mai dezorganizată și mai neeconomică formă care a existat vreodată” (C.E.D.). Din păcate, în prezent asistăm la o reactivare a vechii mentalități țărănești, în care accentul cade cu precădere pe proprietatea asupra pământului, ce se substituie „ideii tradiționale de avere”<sup>10</sup> a omului rural din trecut, și nu pe exploatarea eficientă a acestuia. Astăzi, termenii părăsire și ineficiență descriu într-un tablou sumbru ruralitatea tradițională, ea având un mod aparte de a se raporta la pământ „multă lume a părăsit pământul, deci nu mai au putere economică de a-l lucra și a obține recolte așa cum ar fi trebuit” (P.M.), „agricultură dezordonată în majoritatea cazurilor [...], sunt încă suprafețe mari nelucrate” (H.M.), sau vorbim de „o agricultură pe terenuri mici [...], fărâmițate și asta nu va da randament niciodată” (S.L.).

Sociologul G. Em. Marica remarcă faptul că, țăranul își investea toți banii în achiziționarea de teren, „de aceea, proprietatea mai mare, dar mai neproductivă, era mai valoroasă decât cea mică și productivă. Așa se explică și faptul că se vede adesea la țară până astăzi pământ nelucrat [...]. Țăranul muncește numai atât din ogorul său, cât îi trebuie pentru acoperirea nevoilor, nu urmărește să câștige sau să facă o afacere rentabilă din agricultură”<sup>11</sup>. Afirmația de mai sus rămâne valabilă chiar și astăzi pentru comunitățile investigate de către noi. Astfel, în Florești „trebuie încă ținut de pământ [...] îl lucrăm așa cum putem, ba pe bani, ba în arendă [...] «îl ținem ca să nu-l prăpădim», cum se spune să nu-l vindem...dacă ne trebuie avem din ce face bani” (A.V.), iar în Mociu se recunoaște că pământul „nu l-am lăsat în părăsire, îl lucrăm, dar tot salariul nostru merge pe lucrările agricole, avem un pic mai mult decât să zicem că ne-am permite” (P.M.), pentru că „l-a fiecare i-a trebuit pământul lui «că-mi trebuie mie pământu meu». Și acuma o luat pământu lui și nu-i în stare de el să-l lucre, *unu că-i bătrân, doi că n-are utilaje și trei că așa-i situația*” (H.M.). Chiar și inginerii agronomi condamna modul de sfârtecarea a terenului agricol, sub comandă politică, asemeni pieselor unui puzzle, fără ca actorii sociali să ia în calcul ziua de mâine, ei și-au făcut un scop din recuperarea proprietății fără a deține mijloacele necesare pentru desfășurarea unei agriculturi eficiente. „Retrocedarea pământului foștilor membrii cooperatori, nu este un câștig pentru agricultură. A fost, însă, un câștig politic, pentru cei aflați la putere, pentru că au mizat pe simțul de proprietate al țăranului, care a muncit și a trăit apăsător de gândul că statul comunist i-a luat pământul și că – în noile condiții politice – e «musai» să îl recupereze, fără a conștientiza ce implicații are acest fapt”<sup>12</sup>.

O altă conotație a agriculturii dată de către membrii comunităților face referire la ziua săptămânii în care proprietatea agricolă este lucrată de către aceștia.

<sup>10</sup> George Em. Marica, *Satul ca structură psihică și socială. Curs de Sociologie rurală*, ed. a 2-a, Cluj-Napoca, Edit. Argonaut, 2004, p. 153.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 149.

<sup>12</sup> I. Ciorca, *Cum ne integrăm?* Dialog cu Traian Chișluca, în „Duminica”, 2006, f.n., p. 2.

Astfel, dacă cei din Mociu desfășoară o *agricultură de sâmbăta*, floreștenii practică *agricultura după terminarea programului zilnic de muncă oficial*. „Urbanii” de azi revin în Mociu pe sfârșit de săptămână ca să-și lucreze terenurile, iar pentru ei acest fapt este o datorie nescrisă „vin foarte mulți să-și ajute părinții, sau chiar au rămas ei moștenitori. Au primit pământul părinților lor și vin la sfârșitul săptămânii. Chiar la început noi spuneam *agricultură de sâmbăta*. Când ploua se făcea *agricultură de sâmbăta* [...] pentru că ei nu puteau să-și desfășoare activitatea” (P.M.). Rurbanii din Florești își alocă timp pentru muncile agricole în general după ce termină ziua de muncă oficială, întrucât ei au „casă pe pământ” și fiind de ai locului sunt obligați moral față de „vechea comunitate” să-și lucreze terenul. Comunitatea este cea care atribuie celor veniți din afara ei, să lucreze pământul sau să devină rezidenți în localitate, etichete sociale, „caduci” sau „vinituri”, care urmăresc să pună în evidență lipsa unor calități a noilor veniți, cum ar fi seriozitatea și stabilitatea.

*Agricultura de rușine* reprezintă o nuanțare a sensului care-i revine agriculturii de subzistență și este descrisă de intervievați astfel: „cum putem și numa cu soluții de compromis. Deci nu facem o *agricultură modernă* [...] o facem întâmplătoare mai mult. Și foarte multă lume lucrează pământu numai ca să iasă din rușine, să nu rămână terenu nelucrat [...], *agricultură de rușine facem* [...] io îmi lucrez pământu numa ca să nu fiu arătat cu degetu că sânt un leneș și mi-am lăsat ogoru nelucrat” (S.S.P.). Marea majoritate a celor din Mociu practică o *agricultură de subzistență*, din care se poate trăi, dar nu se poate câștiga.

În Mociu, activitatea economică este privită cu *dezinteres* chiar și de către cei care înainte vreme luau teren în arendă „Am zis că pe banii ăia mai bine îmi cumpăr făină albă și facem pâine în cuptor aicea la țară” (A.A.), astăzi mai mult ca oricând se încurajează consumul și nu producția. O situație identică întâlnim și în Florești „Nu mai iau teren să-l lucru pentru că mie nu-mi convine să-mi dea un sfert din recoltă, că nu se merită, dacă socotești că trebuie să sapi de 3 ori, să te duci la plivit, la toate, mai bine cumperi, nu mai trebuie să te duci la sapă... îmi ajunge cât lucrez aici [la serviciu] și mă duc acasă, «ce să mă mai duc la sapă!» Nu s-o meritat, nu era rentabil să iau pământ” (A.A.).

O nouă percepție ce diferențiază și mentalitar cele două comunități vizează munca pământului, astfel dacă în Mociu se face o *agricultură „de rușine”*, în Florești la momentul actual persoanele care încă își lucrează terenurile eficient sunt compătimate, pentru că acum bani se fac din vânzarea terenurilor și nu prin cultivarea acestora, fapt care se întâmplă tot mai rar astăzi. O posibilă soluție pentru agricultura din Mociu ar fi înființarea unei asociații, dar bătrânii resping această idee „Nu să simte tare nevoia unei asociații aci. S-ar putea, după ce generația asta ajungem pã marginea prăpastiei [...] cred că vor trebui făcute asociații. În 4-5 ani, încă atâta mai merge, încă mai putem noi mișca” (S.S.P.). Nu există mai mult interes față de *agricultură* nici din partea tinerilor din Florești pentru că acum „nu le mai trebuie nimic numa servicii, nu le trebuie *agricultura* și nici la animale, nu prea. Tăt batrânii mai țin care trăiesc, tinerii nu să bagă tare pã lucru” (O.I.).

Cauzele care au contribuit la declinul agriculturii în Mociu sunt îmbătrânirea populației și scăderea puterii economice a gospodăriilor. Și în Florești agricultura își va diminua importanța în cadrul economiei comunei datorită invaziei clujenilor și a existenței unei presiuni politice asupra terenurilor, în special a pășunilor comunale. „Cetățenilor din Florești le-am spus «voi nu mai aveți posibilitate să ieșiți să munciți la câmp, voi trebuie să stați acasă»” (I.B.) pentru a crește animale că furaje „are piața, dar lui nu-i convine să meargă [să-și lucreze terenul s.n.] că el își cheltuie pensia să meargă și nu culege atâta cât cheltuie, dar vin de la Timișoara care vând aproape gratis, vin de la Mociu [cu fân de vânzare]” (I.B.). Valorificarea producției cât și aprovizionarea gospodăriei mocene se face pe piața sau de la târgul local, dar pentru ei este mai rentabil să-și valorifice producția agricolă prin propriile animale. Floreștenii aprovizionează piața locală a urbanului, ei fiind buni negustori atât înainte de revoluție, cât și după acesta. Dar, în același timp au preluat praxis-ul urban, devenind și consumatori ai marilor lanțuri de magazine locale.

Modernizarea lentă, urmată de un declin al comunității din Mociu sunt rezultatul dispariției unor instituții, cum ar fi percepția rurală, băncile comerciale, modificarea dimensiunilor instituțiilor existente, de exemplu fostul spitalul este astăzi centru medico-social și dispune de 35 de paturi față de 110 câte erau în 1971. Alte instituții sau servicii care le găsim aici sunt poșta, farmacia și servicii de telefonie digitală. Și învățământul înregistrează un anume regres prin dispariția școlii profesionale agricole și rămânerii liceul doar cu câteva clase. Administrația locală din Mociu speră într-o modernizare mai accelerată a comunei, datorită faptului că a fost o bună perioadă de timp centru de plasă și există aprobare din partea administrației centrale pentru introducerea gazului metan gaz, apoi urmează aducțiunea apei în sistem centralizat pentru toate localitățile din zona, „să schimbă imediat, când intră apa mai mult decât gazu” (S.S.P.). Mocenii se autopercep ca: „naturali, di la țară” (S.S.P.), dar în același timp le este greu să păstreze tradițiile pentru că: „vine tăvălugu modernismului peste noi” (S.S.P.) obiectele casnice au fost înlocuite cu cele cumpărate din comerț. Tradiționalitatea mocenilor se mai păstrează prin dansuri și practicarea obiceiurilor de Crăciun. Realitatea în Mociu se poate concluziona astfel: „viața merge înainte, și tot ce-i vechi dispare” (S.S.P.).

Cele două comunități se confruntă cu fenomenul migrației, iar exodul tinerilor reprezintă o schimbare socială cu implicații la nivel comunitar. Dacă în Mociu există o structură demografică nefavorabilă dezvoltării sale, în Florești ritmul alert al modernizării a determinat anumite modificări ale comportamentului celor în vârstă prin acceptarea vânzării terenurilor „cum pică, cum îl dau. Mi-e greu să-l lucru” (O.D.).

Bunăstarea materială este adusă fie de munca în străinătate, care este privită ca un fapt normal, fie de munca asiduă desfășurată în propria gospodărie: „să meargă să lucreze, dacă le trăbe bani [...] să meargă să alerge după bani” (S.S.P.), iar cei care au revenit acasă sunt percepuți de comunitate altfel: „Să observă imediat pă ăștia. Cum vin, parcă-s căpăciți puțin, să observă și de câte ori merge la

prăvălie, trece drumu după bunuri, cum îi îmbrăcat, cum ș-o vopsât casa” (S.S.P.). Banii dacă-i ai te fac să te simți bine oriunde „pentru mine Spania, Italia, Turcia îi aicea. Io lucrez și pământ, am și o mică fermă, am și tractor, am și servicii, am și copii, pentru mine Spania îi aicea, dar lucrez de dimineața și până seara și pot să zic non-stop. Dacă nu ai bani în ziua de astăzi fie orice domeniu ești legat de mâini și de picioare” (H.M.). Și în Florești unii membrii ai comunității care lucrează încă în agricultură merg pe profit „M-am gândit să am tot timpul cel puțin 3-4 microsectoare de activitate: produc lapte, carne, legume și în limita posibilităților fac și prestări de servicii” (C.E.D.). Cei care nu se descurcă spre exemplu în Mociu sunt săraci pentru că „nu au teren „n-are nimica, da-s și puturoși asemenea oameni. Dacă ești harnic mergi și lucră la pământ și-ți faci porumb, îți faci floare de soare, ai ulei, îți iei un porc, că musai să faci astea lucruri dacă ești la țară” (A.A.).

La nivelul comunității mocene identificăm funcția agricolă ca dominantă, întrucât în ansamblu „majoritatea locuitorilor se ocupă de agricultură și cu zootehnia” (H.M.), pe când cei din Florești urmăresc dezvoltarea agroindustrială, accentuând și funcțiile rezidențială și economică „În primul rând îi de locuit și în al doilea rând îi de afaceri” (S.C.). Floreștenii care se ocupă cu creșterea animalelor nu le poate fi contestat „dreptul lui de om, pământean de al nostru” (V.I.) în favoarea aceluia care vor să construiască aici și care sunt deja toleranți. De pe paginile de internet ale comunelor, aflăm că administrația locală din Mociu mizează pe funcția agricolă, pe când cea din Florești se orientează spre activități alternative, altele decât agricultura și cu precădere pe dezvoltarea funcției de cazare. În aceste condiții, funcția agricolă va intra în declin. Mocenii sunt conștienți că nu se pot dezvolta decât cu ajutorul agriculturii, datorită distanței și influenței destul de slabe a urbanului asupra comunității. În Florești există o dezvoltare accelerată, chiar haotică am putea susține noi atâta vreme cât administrația locală dă autorizații de construcție pe bandă rulantă, aproape la oricine, excepție face industria poluantă care nu este acceptată pe teritoriul comunei. Funcția agricolă a Floreștiului se află în decădere. Ca urmare a invaziei masive a clujenilor prețul terenurilor a crescut foarte mult, iar proprietarii prin vânzarea lor scot aceste terenuri de pe piața agricolă, contribuind în acest mod la conturarea funcției rezidențiale a comunității. Această dezvoltare imobiliară ne aduce în atenție și disfuncționalitățile ce apar în cadrul comunității noastre: agricultură pe enclave în prezent, urmând ca în perioada următoare terenurile agricole să nu mai fie accesibile pentru cei care vor și pot să lucreze eficient terenul agricol, datorită reconfigurărilor teritoriale și a noii infrastructuri ce nu i-a luat în calcul pe producătorii agricoli.

Lipsa modernizării la nivelul infrastructurii împiedică vânzarea terenurilor în Mociu „De cumpărat nu are cine-l cumpăra, chiar dacă a apărut Lg. 54/1997 cu privire la circulația liberă a terenului, prea puține cazuri am avut până acuma de solicitări de cumpărare de teren, de oferte de vânzare sau de cumpărare de teren în extravilanul localităților. Problema e că cele mai multe terenuri nelucrate sunt la periferia comunei să spun așa. Distanțele de la centru de comună sunt mari,

drumurile impracticabile pe timp de ploii, oricât de mici ar fi ele, și nu riscă nimeni să cumpere” (S.L.). Dorința mocenilor ar fi ca valoarea terenurilor să crească. O piedică în calea celor care vor să construiască în Mociu o constituie distanța de la care trebuie aduse materialele de construcție „Îi foarte greu să construiești un adăpost, o casă respectiv în zonă, începând de la balast, piatră, nu mai vorbesc de materialul lemnos, cărămidă, toate trebuie aduse din alte părți, de la distanțe mari, ori transportul este extraordinar de costisitor” (S.L.).

La polul opus funcția rezidențială a Floreștiului se dezvoltă datorită proximității orașului, acest fapt i-a atras pe oameni să se stabilească aici pentru că „nu-i așa de aglomerație ca și-n oraș, și asta-i un avantaj, îi ceva mai liniștit, bine așa mai la margine, nu chiar la șosea” (P.P.) O consecință a dezvoltării funcției rezidențiale o constituie enclavizarea comunității fapt ce determină o disoluție la nivelul spiritului comunitar, întrucât pentru noii veniți Floreștiul înseamnă doar rezidență : „Nu are nici o legătură cu viața mea socială. Nu reprezintă absolut nimic, doar un drum care mă duce spre casă. Floreștiul ca și localitate nu mă interesează, doar zona în care locuiesc,... Pentru mine Floreștiul n-o să fie niciodată mai mult decât o comună de la marginea Clujului” sau doar „localitatea care urmează după Cluj” (G.D.). Gestionarea timpului individual este influențată nemijlocit de habitat, pentru unii actori sociali Floreștiul reprezintă doar locul de rezidență, viața lor socială desfășurându-se în altă parte „Aici doar vin, dorm și plec” (G.D.). Se conturează astfel, viitoarea funcție de cazare a Floreștiului ce reprezintă o „comunitate rural-urbane de tip dormitor”<sup>13</sup>.

În general floreștenii investesc capitalul material în construcții noi, mașini sau afaceri modeste, pe care unii și le-au deschis cu bani aduși din străinătate sau împrumutați de la bancă „că o știu sigur că le merge, că nu mai este așa ceva” (P.P.). În relațiile cu vecinii dezvoltarea creează invidie, un prim semn al individualismului „pur și simplu o fost persoane cu care m-am înțeles bine și am vorbit în fiecare zi și mă rog, și de când am deschis afacerea nici nu mai vin, pur și simplu “de ce câștig mai mult ca ea?” (P.P.) Vânzarea terenurilor în Florești a dus la modificarea bunăstării personale: „cine are bani se vede cât de cât că, omul care are bani ori își reface casa, ori își cumpără dacă o avut Dacie, acum nu-și mai ia Dacie își cumpără o mașină străină mai bună, ...ori își cumpără alte căsi” (K.D.). Există și o rulare a capitalului material pentru obținerea de noi venituri „De câte ori am avut un ban adunat, fie că mi-am dezvoltat septelul, fie mi-am cumpărat terenuri și am dezvoltat această afacere în paralel cu serviciul” (C.E.D.). Cei care dețin teren pot să-l transforme oricând în capital material „de fapt majoritatea floreștenilor au terenuri pe care dacă se află într-un impas financiar vând un teren și imediat reușesc să ajungă la o stare materială bună” (A.D.M.). Acești bani obținuți fără prea mare efort de către floreșteni se și duc la fel de ușor în investiții ce vizează îmbunătățirea nivelului de trai: „în amenajarea locuințelor, își pun geamuri,

<sup>13</sup> I. Mihăilescu, *Sociologie generală*, Iași, Edit. Polirom, 2003, p. 278.

uși din termopan, își cumpără aparatură casnică, își schimbă acoperișul de la casă, își fac anexe, își cumpără mașină” (A.D.M.). Banii se investesc în confortul individual „în probleme de rezolvat casa: acoperiș, casă nouă, la copil casă, instalație de încălzire centrală, mobilă” (O.D.).

În momentul în care se autoidentifică, actorii sociali din Florești se percep într-o dublă ipostază. Ei se consideră în același timp și rurali și urbani, comunicând o ambivalență a modului lor de a fi: „aicea la Florești este greu de spus, suntem un fel de urbani-rurali și rurali-urbani ceva de genul ăsta” (A.D.M.). În cadrul comunității Florești coexistă atât elemente ale unui mod de viață specific ruralului cât și urbanului „Sunt care au căruțe, cai, pământ, unii lucrează la patron că sunt foarte multe firme deschise în Florești, unii în oraș” (A.A.). Apar discrepanțe între habitat și praxis, astfel se apreciază locuința din periurban, pentru că spațiul individual conferă satisfacții „locuința îmi oferă un confort, deci în momentul în care intru aici mă simt bine” (G.D.). Prin migrarea din urban în Florești se încearcă păstrarea standardului de viață, astfel blocul este înlocuit cu un altul, „consider că stau la bloc și îi ok”, iar faptul că tot mai mulți urbani se mută aici „acuma toată lumea trage spre Florești, am văzut foarte multe vile făcute aici”, îi întărește convingerea respondentului (C.T.) că a făcut o alegere bună și îl ajută să treacă peste mirosurile care apar uneori vara, de la fermele de pui. Se importă comportamente tipic urbane în Florești în ceea ce privește consumul de alimente și educația, copiii vor merge la școală în oraș. Autoidentificare în funcție de locul de origine și profesie „nu mă simt ca fiind de aicea din Florești, înclin mai mult înspre urban pentru că îmi petrec foarte mult timp în oraș și atunci e și normal să trag înspre urban” (C.T.). În ceea ce privește autoidentificarea după ocupații și profesii există o ambivalență în cazul aceluiași actori sociali: „deci țaran, am o vacă și pământul pe care-l mai lucrăm, deci jumătate îs muncitor (s-a școlit la oraș pentru meserie) și jumătate îs țaran” (O.D.).

În ciuda numărului mare de nou veniți în Florești „autohtonii intenționează să țină la terenurile lor, la tradițiile lor [...] În Florești, cu toate că este foarte aproape de Cluj-Napoca, există încă o mentalitate rurală și oamenii se ajută între ei, dar cu toate acestea ei trebuie să se adapteze la schimbările care vin din afara comunității locale, cum sunt noii veniți care își vor aduce și ei un aport la schimbările care vor survensi în mentalul colectiv al celor din Florești” (A.D.M.). Condițiile de locuit actuale îi fac pe floreșteni să se considere urbani „nivelul de trai o fost cum o fost, dar acuma îi ridicat la nivelul orașului pot să zic, avem toate condițiile încălzire centrală la majoritatea, apă curentă, gaz metan, lumină”(O.D.). Deși Floreștiul este apreciat din punct de vedere al noii estetici urbane, atunci când e vorba de educația copiilor localitatea nu mai este apreciată, apar diferențe între habitus “nu-i tăt una orașul cu mărginimea” și praxis-ul rural „eu mă gândesc că am rămas tăt aceea” (K.D.). Se importă praxisul urban în consumul individual, „din oraș îmi fac cumpărăturile și îmi aduc totul din oraș”( G.D.), sau „mergem în oraș odată pe săptămână și facem cumpărăturile mai mari pe o săptămână pentru toată

familia din Kaufland, Billa, Cora, în general de la magazinele astea mai mari, dar în rest așa pâine, alimente sau știu io ce de aici din Florești ne aprovizionăm” (K.D.).

Ar putea deveni urbani și cu numele sub presiunea politicului, dar cu toate acestea ei nu au o gândire de perspectivă, deși acceptă această realitate: expansiunea urbanului „Clujul n-are unde să se extindă” (O.D.) ei sunt de accord cu acesta atâta timp cât nu le este amenințată autoritatea în luarea deciziilor pentru că „noi floreștenii am prefera să nu fim înghițiți în hotarele municipiului Cluj-Napoca, în sensul de a deveni un cartier al municipiului Cluj-Napoca, pentru că am regresa din punct de vedere material” (A.D.M.).

Ca actori sociali, încă rurali, dar cu aspirații urbane au un comportament între individualism și toleranță „suntem toleranți și ne împrietenim unul cu altu” (S.C.), sau „sunt familii care or vinit din Cluj, chiar deasupra și sub mine stau, «bună-ziuă, bună-ziuă», atâta [...] trei familii sunt care or vinit, au vândut în Cluj, or luat în Florești. Cu ăia nu ne înțelegem, adică nu avem nici o relație în afară de «bună-ziuă, bună-ziuă»” (A.A.). Distanțele sociale care apar vin din partea „clujenilor” stabiliți în Florești. Aceștia „cum vin din Cluj se țin așa mai domni, și apăi nu poate omul să vorbească, că poate nici nu le convine, «că poate ăștia îs țărani» sau «dă-i în pace că-s de la țară», îs mai reci” (A.A.).

Diversele aspecte analizate, din câteva date cantitative, dar mai ales din interviurile – de aici perspectiva calitativă – realizate în cele două comunități, în 2005 și 2006 impun următoarele concluzii: după 1990, comunitatea din Mociu și-a orientat modul de a exista prin reconfigurarea unei forme tradiționale de economie, în prim plan fiind economia de subzistență, și menținerea unei mentalități a actorilor sociali care nu acceptă schimbări sociale majore. Soluțiile de compromis, inaccesibilitatea tehnicii moderne și anumite tipuri de dependențe (economice, financiare, timp acordat agriculturii) conturează praxis-ul abordat de moceni. În Florești se mizează pe aspirații urbane și pe politica administrației locale favorabilă urbanizării și modernizării. Prima comunitate a rămas cu nostalgia tradiției, iar cea de a doua reprezintă întruchiparea urbanizării active. Cei din Florești au avantaje datorate proximității cu orașul, astfel „serviciul le-a fost mai aproape, terenurile din zonă mai scumpe, și din punct de vedere financiar oamenii sunt implicit mai bogați și, și-au trimis cu ușurință copii la școli, mai mult decât poate cei din localități mai îndepărtate” (A.D.M.).

În esență, avem relevate două tipuri de manifestare comunitară, ambele cu propriile funcționalități raportate la urbanizare și dezvoltare, dar și la tradiții în care rolul actorilor sociali este minim, reperul principal fiind distanța geografică dintre urban și rural, comunitatea Florești configurând un spațiu periurban, iar comunitatea Mociu, un rural încă profund.

**IMPOVERISHMENT AND THE RISE OF THE NEW URBAN POOR  
IN ROMANIA  
SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF COPING WITH POVERTY:  
SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF THE NEW POOR**

**Case Study in Romania**

**LÁSZLÓ PÉTER**

**RÉSUMÉ. Devenir pauvre et la naissance du nouveau pauvre urbain en Roumanie.** Après 1989 la structure économique a changé radicalement. Il a apparu un stratum nouveau et très visible dû au déclin de quelques secteurs économiques: les 'losers' urbains de transition. L'industrie minière et l'industrie lourde ont représenté les entreprises les plus problématiques en Roumanie. C'est pour ça que les ouvriers de ces deux industries représentent un pourcentage considérable parmi 'le nouveau pauvre urbain'. L'article présent est une image sociologique du contexte social et des stratégies de survivre vues avec les yeux du nouveau pauvre urbain. Ces stratégies de survivre seront tracées et modelées. Les stratégies présentées – expériences de travail du passé, réseaux sociales, rôles, ressources d'information et symboliques et possibilités structurales – peuvent être de bons outils analytiques pour décrire et comprendre le mécanisme des actions individuelles et celui des décisions concernant les conséquences des transformations sociales radicales.

**Introduction**

Since December 1989<sup>1</sup> the social context in Romania has radically changed and unanticipated problems suddenly appeared. The initial stage of the political transition can be characterized as problematic, as a result of the emerging adverse conflicts of interest. The structural transformation of the economy led to inflation, economic recession, and unemployment. The real wages drastically fell and the living standards rapidly deteriorated, the purchasing power fell – poverty steadily grew.<sup>2</sup> Macro-economical processes (privatization of the state-owned firms, their reorganization, division, and the emergence of competition conditions) were

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<sup>1</sup> We use December 1989 as a reference point out of conventional reasons – literature and public opinion both consider this date the turning point. But this “before 1989 – after 1989” divide can be misleading for many reasons. The processes discussed in this study, the emergence of competition conditions and risk society – marked by liberalization of prices, privatization, development of market relationships and by the increasing importance of unemployment – didn't necessarily start at this time.

unfavorable for many: there are “*losers of the transition period*” in the Romanian society (see: Ferge, 1996; Emigh–Szelényi, 2001). The vagueness of economic policies and the slowness of the structural transformation (at least until 1997) contributed to the polarization of the population. A considerable number of social groups have been excluded, and became deprived (Molnar, 1999; Szelényi et al., 2001; Pop–Teşliuc, 2001). The social exclusion of the losers of the transition constantly grew and thus the category of the *new poor* has appeared (Andorka, 1997; Emigh–Szelényi, 2001; Tarkowska, 2001; Spéder, 2002).

Two of the above mentioned characteristics have to be emphasized, that are of utmost importance from this study’s point of view: in the transition process both the *social system* and the principles of the individual *life-world* have changed. On the one hand (market-, labor-force-market-, and political), *competition* became universal in the social system, gaining a regulatory function. On the other hand, on the level of the *life-world*, individuals became constantly exposed to *risk* during their activities: they are forced to make their decisions under constantly changing circumstances, and take responsibility for the possible negative outcome. From the point of view of this study the two most important results of the social transition are *competition* and *risk* - both of them became universal in this period.

### **Methods and techniques**

The subject of the present study constitutes the survival life-strategies of the new poor. Our paper is based on 6 ‘grass roots level’ community studies carried out in cities and neighborhoods facing poverty due to the change of local economic context during year 2002. The adopted approach is phenomenological in sense that the described strategies are mainly viewed and interpreted from the actors’ point of view and personal experiences. The main question is the following: *What kind of life strategies does the new poor use depending on the resources at their disposal?* We’ve conducted 79 formal in-depth interviews mostly with heads of the households (defined by the members of the households themselves) and other adult members of the family; but many valuable data produced via informal discussions with our subjects in their natural environment were also thoughtfully used. We have conducted interviews with those people who at the time we carried out our research were living in the sites (thus, our study does not deal with foreign workers, a topic that has extensive literature). During the interviews we intended to get data on working trajectories, past and present situation evaluation, and resource gathering practices and techniques, and networks. We used a semi structured and open-ended guide. The average time of interviews is one and a half hour (the shortest interview is 55 minutes and the longest one is 6 hours). The interviews were conducted in the interviewee’s native language (Romanian and Hungarian). We used a snowball sampling method in order to select the respondents. Pre-interviews and follow-up questions were also conducted. The interviewees were

urban residents, between age of 21 and 67, never employed, unemployed, laid off or early retired - both males and females. The interviews were conducted in their native language respectively in Romanian (59 persons, 63%) and Hungarian (29 persons, 37%). The subjects were low or middle level educated, over 80% have rural backgrounds and worked for the extracting and heavy industries and (excepting Cluj and Targu Mures) they live in former mono industrial areas. Our respondents were poor both regarding objective and subjective criteria. During the selection (nevertheless we got to them by snowball technique) we applied a short screener questionnaire. The researched sites are the following Transylvanian urban settlements: Cluj, Targu-Mures, Turda, Petrosani, Zalau, and Balan. We also used the method of participant observation, mostly in the everyday life context.

### **Social context, changes, and risks**

After the regime change, life strategies started to be developed by individuals – on the level of the *individual life-world* – and not on the level of the *system* (i.e. *social milieu*) as it used to be before 1989. Before December 1989, possible life strategies were strictly regulated and ‘prescribed’ by the social system, while after 1989 this became the ‘competence’ of every individual, it got transferred to private life. Before 1989 the system ‘prescribed’ the possible strategies and provided the necessary resources for the goals to be reached (jobs, apartments, social services), in exchange, the individual accepted a passive role and did not put up any resistance. Life strategies that had to be followed were ‘given’ by the system. This did not always mean the description of a precise way of life, but some possible ways to prosperity were delimited. The system prohibited some individual strategies in a predictable way and defined individual ways of life by these prohibitions, because people learned how to find the system’s weaknesses and outwit the rules (such as: stealing from Cooperatives, obtaining specific kinds of food, using materials of the factories for personal reasons, etc.). These strategies did not ensure freedom for the individual, on the contrary, they meant the outwitting of the system and a way to get on. Thus, we don’t think that the system was capable of defining and controlling all possible social actions and life strategies. People were able to shape their surroundings and circumstances even in hard times, under control. Life strategies – and lives in general – followed by most people were closely related to the regime. For instance, employment was compulsory, those who chose not to work were not entitled to any social services (Hunya et al., 1990); teachers who left their jobs (assigned to them by the state) in the first three years after their start, were not allowed to continue their profession, and were excluded from any further education.

Following the changes in 1989, the era of the above mentioned prescribed paths came to an end and under the general conditions of competition and risk, individuals had to find their own ways to get on. People had to quickly adapt to the changing environment, to make decisions on their own, without the ‘protective’

surveillance of the regime. Thus, in what follows, we will analyze the surviving-adaptation strategies along the concepts of: competition, risk, system/regime, life-world, respectively in the context of transition.

In what follows, we will briefly present how the new poor (and implicitly the new poverty) appeared in Romania, and will analyze the main survival strategies. These strategies can be divided into two main categories, complemented with those called *atypical*. To the first category belong those that we have called '*passive strategies*'. We will describe how those typical, extremely deprived people, who have access to very limited network relationships use this strategy. The point here is that they must reorganize their scarce resources; their structure of expenses (consumption, and thus also their way of life) has transformed. Generally their average situation has worsened not only compared to that before 1989, but also in the last few years – mostly prior to loss their jobs. To the other group belong those strategies that we have called '*active strategies*'. The main difference between this and the first category is that the people who belong to this second category pursue *special activities* in order to increase their resources and incomes. In both cases we are going to describe how individual social-economic status and the strategies used influence personal – network – relationships, and the role these relationships play in individual survival methods.

As a result of the transformation new participants, relationships, and processes appear in the social system (Genov, 1999), factors that are able to influence individual lives: people – irrespectively of the social classes or groups they belong to – may lose their social status, e.g., there is the risk of losing one's job. Under these conditions, individuals lose the 'protected' status they used to have under the previous regime and while the possibility of upward mobility increases, downward mobility represents a higher and higher risk (Beck, 1996). In other words: risk factors become universal, they influence everyone in the same way, and lead to social inequality.<sup>3</sup> The structure of the labor-market has also changed and started to work following strictly market-principles (cf.: Berevoiescu et al., 1999). Class- and group-defined identity-definitions disappeared: poverty and unemployment lost their class-character, and became an individual destiny. Thus, the recruitment basis of poverty increased (cf.: Spéder, 2002). Change and instability – characteristics of the *system* and of individual *life-worlds* – pose a risk to all members of the society. For instance, if there's no demand for some special skills or competences on the market, regardless of the social status and class-relations of the employee, the risk of downward mobility appears. Due to technological improvement, some skills and competences lost their value – which led to unemployment and poverty. For instance, demand for the skills of those working in production – miners, colliers – decreased, as a result, this category was more exposed to the risk of impoverishment, and unemployment rates were usually higher.

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<sup>3</sup> About poverty rates after 1989 see footnote nr.3. The variation in social inequalities measured by the GINI-index: 1989: 0.210; 1995: 0.308; 1996: 0.298; 1997: 0.284; 1998: 0.301 (Pop, 2001:29).

### The urban *new poor* and the way they manage

Which social categories were mostly affected by impoverishment? Who are the ‘new poor’? Following the change of regimes, a new type of poverty appeared in the region, which differs from the types already known: in its dimensions, place, depth, dynamics and the ways of life of the poor. One of its most important characteristics is that it is caused by structural changes: individuals grow poor *regardless* of their will, orientation, skills, or previous financial situation, i.e. in the newly defined conditions they have little chance to influence their own destinies to their advantage<sup>4</sup>.

The stratum of the *new poor* consists typically of those impoverished in the post-communist period, those who were most at risk: the extremely underprivileged (large families living in villages, first generation townspeople, people living in mono-industrial cities, the unemployed, the retired, those living only off salaries, children, and single-parent families). From socio-cultural and demographic point of view, young people, people unemployed for a long time, large families, uneducated leaders of households, and those living in industrial cities are over-represented in this stratum (cf. Tarkowska, 2001). Thus, this kind of poverty is concentrated mainly to cities, and is segregated within them (Pásztor, 2002). Their number is satiated around 8% (World Bank, 2002), but most of them are in persistent poverty (for more than 3 consecutive years) a considerable part are facing hunger.

The structural transformation of the economy and the emergence of risk-society altered the nature of poverty and produced the *new poverty*. The term *new poverty* first appeared in Western Europe in the 1980’s (Silver, 1996), but at that time specialists attributed different meanings to it, there wasn’t a generally agreed upon definition (idem.). For instance, the term *exclusion* has been used in France, but in Great Britain besides *exclusion* – and of American influence – the term *underclass* was used. The term *new poverty* became popular after the change of regimes in Eastern Europe, and its meaning can be better described when comparing to *traditional* or *old poverty*.

Traditional poverty is a characteristic of modern class-societies. From this point of view, the socialist countries did not differ from western, capitalistic societies (Spéder, 2002). Traditional poverty was determined by education-level and class relations: lower education, unskilled industrial or agricultural employment insured lower wages, and thus generated traditional (also said as *old*) poverty (these categories were over-represented among the poor). Following the structural changes in the economic sector, demands on the labor-market have been altered: instead of the market’s inner differentiation – the position one holds in the labor market –, its selection mechanisms gained higher importance, which determines who is able to stay and who is forced to leave the labor market. Those stuck outside – for whose

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<sup>4</sup> The economic factors on the basis of new poverty were the following: the winding-up of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the decrease of the GDP, the decrease of real wages, inflation, structural transformation (Tarkowska, 2001).

skills and knowledge there is no demand – grow poor easily and have no chance of getting back into the labor market: they are submerged in long-lasting poverty. They are the *new poor*, who have lost their previous positions: like the miners in the Jiu Valley, unskilled heavy industry-workers and uneducated young people looking for their first jobs. Where are they?

Nevertheless, the new urban poverty has unequal distribution; this phenomenon is present mostly in big cities and so-called *disadvantageous areas*. This is usually an isolated mono-industrial zone - mostly an ‘artificial’ or ‘made’ small size town, a quasi-urban settlement: generally the immediate surroundings of a factory or mine with the strictly necessary infrastructure and public institutions.

The ideal type of the ‘made town’ is the following: it was settled up in the sixties, with limited resources (even during communism), bad geographical position (especially in case of mining), hardly approachable, sometimes without railway and usually far from main roads. These structural aspects are emphasized by the ‘made’ nature (Abraham, 1987), which is completed by the way and nature of the work carried out by the inhabitants: they are miners or engaged in some heavy industrial plant. This phenomenon is not singular in Romania, but the results after the economic restructuring were spectacular. The settlements have many counterparts in the former socialist countries, even in western urban settlements. The typical mono-industrial town can be compared with Zory, Wodzislaw, Glogow, Lubin, Tichy (coal extraction) in Poland, Tatabánya, Komló (copper mine) in Hungary, or Dunaújváros, Ózd in Hungary and Stalowa Wola in Poland (steel industry). Other similar cities were constructed in the sixties: Kedzierzyn, Police in Poland and Kazincbarcika, Tiszaújváros in Hungary (chemical industry) (for further information on Central and East European mono-industrial towns see Merlin, 1991:92). After the reorganization of extracting and heavy industry (in some cases simply by shutting down the mines and plants) and laid off the workers (mostly according to the Emergency Ordinances of Romanian Government, Nr. 17, 19, 22) these limited structural resources and possibilities produced some acute problems, including extreme forms of poverty – a new urban poverty. A considerable part of the new poor lost their jobs – they ‘quitted’, accepting the terms imposed by the Emergency Ordinances No. 19 and 22 (1997) and they were compensated with (and right after that spent) some money – they became not only the ‘undeserved poor’, but (sometimes) also a distinct social group labeled as ‘ordinances’. Rapidly the term became a strong stigma.

In 1998 some mono-industrial zones were officially declared by the Government disadvantageous area because of the following aspects: it has a productive mono-industrial structure, which, in the activity of the area, mobilizes more than 50% of the working population, it is a mining area where the staff was laid off, in a proportion of 25% through collective dismissal; collective dismissals have been made as a result of the liquidation, reorganization, and privatization of some sales agents, who affected more than 25% of the number of the local employees and the rate of unemployment is above the national average. Respectively,

the area is isolated, lacks means of communication and the infrastructure is poorly developed. There were 25 such disadvantageous areas on the whole territory of Romania (Region Balan, Region Brad, Region Valea Jiului, Region Albeni, Region Schela, Region Motru – Rovinari, Region Stei – Nucet, Region Borod-Suncuius-Dobresti-Vadu Crisului, Region Apuseni, Region Popest-Derna-Alesd, Region Rosia Montana, Region Bocsa, Region Moldova Noua-Anina, Region Ip, Region Hida-Surduc-Jibou, Region Sarvasag-Chiejd-Bobota, Region Baia Mare, Region Borsa-Viseu, Region Filipesti, Region Ceptura, Region Comanesti, Region Bucovina, Region Baraolt, Region Altan-Tepe, Region Rodna).

Before describing the life strategies of the *new poor* we should first define what we mean by surviving life-strategies (cf.: Moen–Wethington, 1992). *Life strategy* means rational planning of future life-events, their succession, and their order of preference (Grolier, 1999). Two dimensions can be delimited within: that of private- and that of professional-public life, and life strategies can be viewed as a level that tries to combine the two dimensions together. Some important events (such as marriages, education, choices of career) require some kind of planning, these are also connected to people's biological and social age, life-cycle, possibilities, capabilities and depend on the resources one is able to use to achieve one's goals (types of capital, network relations).

It has to be mentioned that it is hard to establish connection-relationships between people's actions and their motivations, which is caused by a general methodological problem<sup>5</sup> we should now disregard: one problem would be that narrations always account for past events as facts (although these are rather opinions and interpretations), and the second that life-strategies are presented as consequences (although in reality they are part of a complex process). Most sociological analyses (see: Elder, 1974) regard life strategies as tools people use to interpret and handle social changes, risks, and consequences. At the same time economists are interested in revealing the basis of household decisions and try to understand how households maximize their profit<sup>6</sup> (e.g. Schultz, 1974, In: Moen–Wethington, 1992).

Survival strategies are hard to define. Methodologically they have to be placed in social and historical context (see *transition* and *risk* at the beginning of this study), which requires the analytical description of strategies and connecting the level of the life-world to the system-level. By life strategy Tilly (1987) means rules that determine the behavior of families and family members; rules that are considered tools of the households' rational calculations. In implementing life strategies (using them as tools to achieve one's goals) people (the members of the

<sup>5</sup> It is a methodological problem that past events doesn't appear as facts in narrations, but as opinions.

In the stories told, people 'interpret the past' and 'anticipate the future' (Magyari, 1990). From the perspective of the present, they are able to attach new reasons to their previous actions, or interpret some of their past actions as 'strategies'.

<sup>6</sup> See the representatives of the NHE (New Household Economy); by household we mean those living in the same apartment/house, who cook and eat together, and have common budget.

household together, or the leader of the household) use their previous knowledge and respond to everyday-life challenges. In other words: life strategies are part of the community's cultural patterns, they are learned during socialization process. Individuals use their previous knowledge and skills, when following their goals. Life-strategies, according to Tilly (1987) consist of 'recipes' of cultural origin, acts of position-recognition, decision and choice, implementations of the decisions, and consequences. According to this, survival-strategies are highly rational social actions governed by the actors' interests, and oriented towards success. In the present study, we examine surviving life-strategies in connection to the households' economic activities. Thus, surviving life-strategies are meant to consolidate a household's financial situation, and to maximize the resources a household owns. We consider *survival life-strategies* all those actions that household members do to improve their financial situation. In this, members of the households face restrictions from the social structure (available resources and possibilities), and this is why life strategies describe both processes of the *life-world*, and processes on the system-level (Moen–Wethington, 1992). To give an example, if a female member of a household gets a job (which is a micro-level action that belongs to the *life-world*), that is influenced by women's general position on the labor market, and also by that job's appreciation in a given culture. A decision made within the family (for the woman to get a job) on the level of the system is determined by the distribution of the social roles between genders, by the structure of the labor market (e.g. if there is any demand for heavy manual work, that can only be performed by men), and by migration (if there are any immigrant workers on the same labor market). In life strategy-decisions made within the family (*life-world*), the possible goals and legitimate resources that can be used to achieve the goals (system) should be harmonized. If we accept that life-strategies are the aggregate of household decisions (Moch, 1987), that the number of the achievable strategies is limited, and that people take these limitations into account (i.e. they don't follow unachievable goals), then this is how micro- and macro-levels connect to each other.

In our research we interpreted life-strategies as answers/reactions to the environmental challenges and risks (this is how we assured their continuity). We operationalized surviving strategies along three main dimensions:

1. Changes in the households' necessity-structures.
2. Changes in their consumption.
3. Changes in their financial resources.

We used in deed 'occurred' events (such as: changes in the labor patterns of the family – the woman gets a job, and they increase the craft production) as the indicators of these three dimensions. We interpreted the empirical results (from the observation and interviews) along three theoretical models: the structural answers, the rational choice and walk-of-life approach-model (Moen–Wethington, 1992). The determining factors of the survival life-strategies used by the new poor can only be interpreted in the context of the events of the era before 1989. The declared

purpose of the socialist regime was to establish a homogenous society based on equality, where social classes disappear. In implementing this, they formulated the following goals: eliminating unemployment, giving full consumer subsidy and providing free health care, and finally ensuring relatively high wages.

The state and state-owned companies undertook important responsibilities in the transformation process by ensuring life-long employment, apartment-allocation, free child-care, education and health-care, offering leisure-time activities (Rominska– Zimmy, 1997). This process was perceived as an improvement in living conditions especially for first-generation townspeople, even if these social benefits were partial and contradictory.

Our results revealed that social structures of the socialist regime influence current life strategies in a much higher rate than we had expected. This can be explained by the fact that most of these individuals were socialized before the change of regimes, and thus, their behavior was only explainable and operable under those conditions. Individuals interpret their current situation following “old codes”, and act according to them, so, the model that coordinates social actions does not fully correspond to the expectations arisen in the last twelve years. This doesn’t mean that cultural codes have not been changed, but rather that individuals’ actions are governed by mental structures that are not valid any more (such as social-services and secure employment), they interpret their current situation, react to challenges and risks based on experiences from the past regime. Also, when developing their survival strategies, people still use the conditions before 1989 as reference point. The perceived relative equality, equal distribution of goods, secure jobs and thus “manageable” lives account for the mentality of the impoverished population. These structures from the past regime are the ones that define people’s life strategies, even more than current circumstances, which are perceived as wrong-headed and unfair.<sup>7</sup>

Survival life-strategies are strongly related to households’ career perspectives. These perspectives are determined by: *their previous experience*, *their subjective perception of the situation*, and finally the third dimension of *their current interpretation of the situation*. Let’s have a closer look upon these.

*Previous experience.* In the recollections of the *new poor* we have interviewed about their everyday life in the past regime, financial problems are either completely missing, or seem to have lost their importance (long lines in front of the shops, cold apartments, power-outages, food-shortages, political indoctrinations, and the personal cult of the president). To the contrary, they find their lives before 1989 much better when looking back from today. Two elements appear systematically: one is the system of social allowances (allocated apartments, secure jobs and wages) that gave the sense

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<sup>7</sup> According to a survey conducted in 2002 46% of the adult population is not satisfied with their present circumstances, 32% are neutral, 45% thought that their situation has worsened comparing to the year before, and 31% said their situation will worsen in the following year. 58% also said that Romania was not going into the right direction (this is usually between 45-60%). Source: www.mmt.ro

of security, and the other is (strongly related to the first one) the sense of permanence and calculability which both seemed to have been lost after 1989.

*Subjective perception.* Both above-mentioned changes have been told and interpreted in a financial context: getting an industrial job and an apartment in the city meant for these people an improvement of their living-standards this is why they emphasize the financial dimensions of it (Hunya et al., 1990, Rominska–Zimmy, 1997) and don't mention the political dimensions (i.e. the field of political activity, which was impossible in that environment).

Concerning the *interpretation of the situation*, the interpretations of past and present are constructed along the following coordinates: the income-levels (lease-work wages), the households' standards of living, and finally the interpretation and the perceived causes of their personal situation.

These three coordinates are connected to each other; now, we are going to examine them one-by-one. The *new poor* we interviewed interpret their situation only in financial terms, and typical problems of the middle-class (such as: religious freedom, the right for strike, sexual freedom), don't come into account. This may be connected to the fact that people interpreted their situation before 1989 only on financial basis. In the evaluation of their possibilities the amount of their cash-earnings and the purchasing power are the most important factors. The importance of non-cash earnings (services provided on their own cost, product-allowances, discounts) are of far lesser importance than we have expected, and the amount of cash people dispose of is the most important factor in their point of view.

The second element of the interpretation of their own situation, which is closely connected to the first one (the income-level) is the standard of living of the household, more specifically, their subjective well-being. On well being they mean the consumption-level, and mainly the amount of food they can buy (and the difficulties of acquisition). Leisure-time activities (such as movie theaters, theaters, sweet-shops) that require spending money are very rarely present among people's activities.

Another element of the situation-interpretation constitutes the reasons people give when evaluating their situation (i.e. the explanation why the household's situation has worsened. People interpret their current situation the way they have interpreted it before 1989: the reasons - explaining their impoverishment and present situation - are attributed to external factors, that are independent of the individuals' actions and goals – it cannot be controlled, and belong to the social system, and not to the level of the individual (e.g.: “*they don't give us jobs, we can't do anything*”, “*we go to the Council every day to get a job, but so far we didn't get anything*” - quotes). They see the main cause of their current situation in the surrounding society, in the deficiencies of the system: there are no jobs, politicians are disinterested, fact that is proven by their situation, i.e. they became impoverished following the structural transformation. (Once again, the survival strategies of the *new poor* are based on one of the following processes: changes in the households' necessities, changes in the consumption-patterns, and changes in their financial resources).

One major group of the households is trying to manage by using only the resources they (the members) dispose of, while others – besides regrouping their current resources – try to supplement these with new ones. In fact, the first group is trying to *stabilize the household's financial situation by reducing consumption*, and the second group is attempting to mobilize new resources as well. We have called these *passive* and *active survival life-strategies* even though they both require social actions. We use the active-passive dichotomy to mark the differences in the interactions of the household with its surroundings, namely the presence or absence of these interactions. Of course there are some strategies “in-between” – we are going to call it *atypical*. We will focus mostly on the former two.

We should further explain the difference between active and passive strategies: the two survival strategies – ideal types – can be described along three dimensions: the households' willingness to assume risks, the orientation of their goals, and the time frame of their plans. In the next chapter we are going to describe active strategies in detail, and compared to these, passive strategies are easily distinguishable. Active and passive strategies are compared in the following table:

When saying that people are rational actors, we mean that they develop life-strategies that best meet their household's needs. According to one categorization of the decision situations, there is a difference between contextually relevant and irrelevant states of environment, and therefore between the complete and incomplete knowledge of the consequences one's action may have (Elster, 2000). Decision situations differ in the amount of information people possess in the moment they make the decision. Decisions are uncertain and risky under all circumstances, because it's impossible to possess all the information about one given problem, but still, decisions and choices can be characterized by people's attitudes towards risk: this attitude can be positive and negative, i.e. the willingness to assume risks can be high (risk-lover) or low (risk-avoider). Risk-avoiders are all those decision-makers, who prefer certainty above risky alternatives that promise the same turnout (Szántó, 1999). If the preference of the decision-maker is the high-risk alternative, then he can be considered risk loving (*idem.*). In the table above, the willingness to assume risk is high for *active* strategies and low for *passive* strategies, where actors want to minimize the costs of the possible outcomes of their decisions. The two strategies differ in their orientation as well: *active* strategies aim to improve the situation of the household, while *passive* strategies are considered means of survival. Also, the time frame is wider in the case of *active* strategies: it comprises the near future, whereas *passive* strategies are only concerned about the present. Mainly retired elderly people choose passive strategies, by those who are close to retirement, and large families with only one parent. Typical passive strategy actions are the following: enduring, shrinking of budget, mounting counters, early retirement, getting support from aid agencies, or NGOs, getting food from the kitchen of restaurants, or from the slaughter-house, getting loans and even losing their house/apartment for not being able to pay it back, checking into nursery-homes, or even going to prison.

Table 1.

## The ideal types of Surviving Strategies (SS)

Survival strategy	Active	Passive	Atypical
The “core” of SS	Changes in their financial resources	Changes in their consumption.	Situational, mixed
Willingness to assume risks	High, “risk-loving”	Low, “risk-avoider”	Depending on concrete situation ranging from low to high
The orientation of the goals	Improving the situation	Surviving	Maintaining the present situation
The time-frame of the plans	Short-term, or medium-term	Present (from hand to mouth)	Present
The disposable resources	Limited financial resources, personal experience	Lack of financial resources, few strong ties	Mixed and changing
Reliable networks	Limited personal contacts (heterogynous including hierarchy), weak ties	Few personal contacts with poor peer (exclusively homogeneous, reciprocal) strong ties	Personal, mostly with those in similar situation but some weak ties too
The status of main actor	The head of the family	All family members are involved	Changing in function of context, involving more than one member of family
Associates	Mainly neighbors and peers, sometimes relatives	Mainly no associates, irregularly relatives	Altering

In decision-situations the head of the household can be fully or partially informed about the possible outcome and consequences of his/her decision. If one is only partially informed, or makes any mistake in the evaluation of the household’s needs, then success is uncertain, and his/her self-confidence is shaken. Families that consist mainly of retired and elderly members are less willing to take any risks, this is the reason they try to satisfy their needs using only the limited resources they dispose of. Their needs are confined mainly to basic food, medicines, and the “utilities” (water, gas, power, and sometimes the phone-bill<sup>8</sup>).

<sup>8</sup> These utility costs are called ‘common costs’ in Romania, because part of them (water, heat, etc, but not the phone line) are paid together by the people living in the same flat.

Quote from an interview: *“And then we paid that, and thank God we bought that water-meter and got over that too. I can’t say... we are not in debt any more. We pay for that separately. And we don’t have to pay for the hot water, because we’ve got that coal-ticket<sup>9</sup>, and if everything else is turned off, heat and everything, then I think it covers the costs. (When did you have the heat turned off?) Last year. But there’s a stove in the kitchen. The living room is very cold in wintertime; we’ve got a radiator in there. And there’s that little stove in the kitchen.”*

**Table 2.**  
**The typical forms and empirical characteristics of passive surviving strategies (PSS)**

Passive SS	Doing nothing	Reorganizing their expenses	Optimizing the cost of utilities	Early retirement	Other forms
<b>Actors</b>	Aged, retired	Aged, retired, single-parents	Close to retirement, and the “better off” aged	Middle age with some health problems	Incidental
<b>Actions</b>	No particular action	Decreasing the outlays	Rationalizing the cost of utilities	Waiting, or in some cases bribing	Irregular, collateral to other ASS
<b>Costs</b>	-	Low material costs	Relatively high material costs	High material cost	No cost or low material costs
<b>Result</b>	-	-	Lower regular expenses	Constant income	Some material outcome
<b>Examples</b>	Enduring	Shrinking of budgeted	Mounting heat and/or water counters, stop heating	Early (or illegal) pensioning	Agency support, procuring food

Decisions depend on each other: they are interrelated financially, because all needs must be met using the same amount of money. So, if for instance a household decides to get a water-meter, than they will have to renounce to something else (usually to some kind of food), and reorganize their expenses<sup>10</sup>. Retired people and single-parent families resort to passive strategies because these

<sup>9</sup> Coal-ticket = expression of Romanian origin, it means heat-allowance.

<sup>10</sup> Those living in apartments, who get a water-meter, can measure their own consumption and pay for it separately, which can be more reliable and more advantageous than paying the divided amount calculated for all apartments.

pose a much lesser risk than active strategies, and achievements depend on their own actions. To give an example, if a household of retired people decides to get a water-meter<sup>11</sup>, they buy the product with the amount of money they dispose of (occasionally: loans), and for a set time they reorganize their other expenses. In this equation, the main factor is the certainty of the situation: that the success depends on their actions. For instance they renounce to heat, and don't assume any risks that could raise their sense of insecurity.

*(“... we know it's not going to be easy, but we are going to starve it out”).*  
*“We had the water-meter mounted... in October, in winter, we borrowed some money. But we had to have this done, because there had been a pipe-breakage in the courtyard, and everybody had to have it mounted. We borrowed 3 800 000 Lei. That wasn't easy at all! We are the only ones that know that, but we have paid it back honestly. But nobody, the bank, or anyone... where I could have gone, that in winter... like others... to get some gas money, or I don't know what kind of money, I didn't ask anyone, and I... did not go to beg anyone for help. No. I did it, with my hands. I've never asked anyone for 5 Bani<sup>12</sup> in my whole life! Never.”*

These passive strategies are limited, because the financial resources are usually of fixed amounts (cf. Elster, 1968). Passive survival strategies are mostly defined by the relationship between the household and its wider surroundings. Belonging to different social groups also means holding different social roles. Most of the retired people and single-parent families are less willing to participate, and to take up social roles: the *new poor* are members of fewer social groups, they have fewer roles, i.e. they keep in touch only with a limited number of people, their networks are limited, and – what is most important to us – they are bound to place. Their modest financial situation (by limiting the possibility of traveling) localizes their people-networks including only their immediate neighbors.

*(Do your relatives help you in any way?) No, because I usually don't go to anyone, I don't ask for help, and if I'm in need, I go to my mom. I have a friend: she lives close to us, she is the other one I go to sometimes, we've been classmates, we've also worked together, if anything bothers me, I go to talk to her, and if she feels bad, then she comes to me... What can I do?”*

In the case of the *new poor* the local social networks (and indirectly their passive survival strategies) are not only limited by their financial situation, but also by the financial situation of their parental families and by the growing social disintegration of the *new poor*. About their financial situation we still have to mention that the *new poor* cannot afford the material and symbolic costs of maintaining social networks. Extensive social networks can only be maintained by

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<sup>11</sup> After an estimate of the director, about half of the customers of the Heating Company are older people.

<sup>12</sup> Bani = Romanian currency.

constantly investing into them (both material and symbolic capital). Interactions have to be constantly renewed, which besides material expenses (food, drinks, presents, etc.) requires symbolic capital. In the absence of capital, extensive personal networks have been ruined, and new ones couldn't be established for the same reason. Without hospitality and gifts, the frequency and intensity of the interactions have decreased which have further influenced and decreased the amount of spare-time spent together and folded up the system of reciprocal obligations. This means that the *new poor* do not dispose of a wide network of relations and (mainly relational) capital, which could be used when developing their survival strategies.

Regarding the social position of the *new poor*, we think that a significant part of the households impoverished after the change of regimes got behind the 'main stream' of the society: they disintegrated, i.e. lost their social bonds. Indicators of social disintegration are: the loss of personal networks, quick impoverishment, and long periods of unemployment. Gans (1988) says that "the disintegration of the society occurs when the administration, the economical system, and other important institutions lose their legitimacy, when people lose their trust in the rules that governed their social lives, and deny their traditions". Social disintegration has many levels (from the complete break-up of the society, atomization, to the disintegration of some specific social groups – for instance minority groups). We use the term *social disintegration* of Gans, where it means that after the change of regimes, socially integrative mechanisms have disappeared and the *new poor* have lost most of their personal relationships. This made the situation of the individuals more difficult or even impossible: life under old rules became uncertain and incalculable (Ferge, 1991). We have modeled social disintegration – the lag from the main stream of the society and the transformation of the nature of personal relationships – after Gans (1988) along the following dimensions: segregation, unemployment, the decrease or disappearance of social networks, and solidarity.

Losing the job (or changing jobs because of promotion or moving off) entails the transformation of relationships with previous co-workers: it influences the frequency and intensity of the relationships. Relationships loosen if they were only impersonal collegial relationships, and there were no informal ties besides the formal ones. If there were no emotional ties between them that could have been strengthened by spare-time activities, then breaking up is necessary. But our case is different. The people we have interviewed told us that beside workplace-relationships, they had other activities together as well. These were not only activities made possible by the physical nearness (like going out to a drink after getting off work), but also other free-time activities because of the emotional connection. These relationships shouldn't have necessarily ended when they lost their jobs.

These relationships have been ended as a consequence of their losing their jobs, and this is interpreted as a loss and is accompanied by a feeling, which can be best described, as "*I don't belong anywhere*". Past co-workers are mentioned repeatedly

not only as formal officials, but mainly as friends, with whom they had many experiences. The reason for losing friendships is attributed to factors outside of their control: “*the company was closed*”, “*we got laid off*”, etc. They expressed their will to maintain these friendships, but they also say they cannot afford it: “*...we don't have enough money for that*”.

We considered segregation as an objective indicator of social disintegration, which means the separation in space of groups with different social status (Jencks, 1991). But segregation doesn't only mean social inequality, but also stronger groups' (those disposing of more resources) pressure over weaker groups in the struggle for the limited resources (Ferge, 1991). Under the Romanian conditions segregation has already started (see Péter, 2000; Szelényi et al., 2001, Pásztor, 2001), mainly in industrial cities. As slums appear, poverty gets concentrated in the same places (idem.), and *new poor* will most likely have *new poor* neighbors. Following social and residence segregation, previous personal networks change considerably, they become local. The process of social disintegration is strengthened by unemployment; especially long-lasting periods of unemployment have a stronger disintegrating effect (Ferge, 1991). Besides the unemployed, certain other groups are over-represented in this population as well: just like those retired early, the unskilled, and those having little or no education. They have a worsening chance to get back on the labor market. As a consequence of market-development, the structure of the labor-market and the demand for labor has radically changed. The cause of social disintegration is of structural nature. There is no correspondence between the nature and the logic of labor-demand and the knowledge and skills the *new poor* can offer: there is no demand for the activities the *new poor* are capable of doing and were doing before the change of regimes, and they, for objective reasons (such as: their education-level, and their inflexibility, because they were used to being taken care of by the system), can not undertake responsibilities there's a demand for. The process of disintegration – when specific social groups drop behind the main stream of the society – manifests its effects in the *life-world* of the *new poor*. The people we have interviewed use their personal networks they had before the change of regimes, as a point of reference: they compare their current relationships to the ones they had before. Concerning people-networks, some specific elements can be recognized in the interviews: people account for the change in the frequency and intensity of social interactions, change in reciprocal-relationships, and change in the circle of partners.

The relationships of the *new poor* are most frequently limited to their immediate neighborhood. Those using passive survival strategies told us that as a result of their impoverishment, the number of their social interactions decreased, they can only expect help from a few partners, and they themselves can't afford to help others any more.

*“Oh, friends are those, whom you help, but when you need them, they don't help you. Nobody comes any more. In the past, about 20-30 years ago, yes, there were true friends. They have helped each other. But now, if it was about*

*money, nobody would help. It's different than before: »come, let's celebrate my wife's (birth) day«. Now, even if you go to a relative, you can stay one, two, or three days – or a week –, but then you have to leave, because first of all, you're ashamed, and secondly, because they can't afford it either. Wouldn't it bother you if you'd think you'd take advantage of them?»*

Changes in people-networks can not be described without describing some aspects of the socialist regime, and this is especially because the people we have interviewed strongly connect their present situation to their former living conditions, although the change in their networks has started after 1989-90. In their interpretation, their relationships before the change of regimes were based on resemblance and voluntary reciprocity. By “resemblance” they mean the absence of the currently perceived inequalities, and the likeness of people's social status: because almost everyone has had a job and regular income, they say they were able to maintain and invest into their networks, which were reorganized but not hindered by objective factors.

*“We went to the market together after work – money did not matter – to have a drink together. We had that much that we could go to the sweetshop with some friends, or we could go on a trip. You've had a job, it was possible.”*

Their regular income could assure their investing into personal relationships and networks. The presence of long lasting workplace relationships was also important. Personal (informal) relationships, workplace relationships could be strengthened during spare-time activities. In their reminiscences trips made together, visits to each other's places, May-day celebrations, Miners'-day celebrations (in some areas) meant opportunities to mutually renew their relationships, and their sense of belonging to a network. When unemployment appeared, previous “resemblance” has suddenly disappeared: social inequalities became visible. Unemployed people have gradually lost their former friends from their workplace, because they could not afford investing into maintaining weaker social ties.

*“Since I'm on the dole, I can't go with them anywhere, I have to stay home and wait, because I don't have money to spend for talking. I don't have money for that, not even for cigarettes...”*

Another indicator of the disintegration of impoverished communities beside the absence of *free-time activities* is the *relative absence of cooperative actions* (such as for example: wood-cutting – in Bălan –, watching soccer championships together on portable TV-sets in the woods, oil-extrusion, or distilling brandy.

*“Formerly we went together into the forest to gather woods; we cut them out together, dragged them through the woods, and put them up on the trailer. Then, we have cut them into pieces here in the court. One of us brought the hammer, the other the lid, we've cut them into pieces and put them into the storage. We have watched each other's lumber. Now you can't go, the forester is going to catch you; they returned the forests to their former owners, and then, if you'd bring any now, they would report you to the authorities, because you'd have, and others wouldn't.”*

In our opinion impoverished communities have not disintegrated completely, they did not become atomized. People have lost part of their social relationships, mainly the weaker ones, but at the same time they have established new relationships in their neighborhoods, mostly with people who are in similar situation. If we model the relationship between the individual and its surroundings as concentric circles, where the individual is in the center, then we can distinguish among three types of relationships. We categorized these relationships according to the partner's position in the individual's *life-world* (their distance from the individual). The relationships of the individual are as follows: relatives, neighbors, and co-workers. The closer the partner is to the individual, the more intensive and more frequent the social relationship is: most of the people maintain the closest relationships with their relatives. This is true for the Romanian adult population as well (Berevoiescu, 1999).

The relationships of the *new poor* have changed considerably. For the unemployed, workplace relationships constituted the outermost of the concentric circles, and this level has lost its importance. Losing their jobs resulted in the decrease or even ceases of previous relationships; decrease of the time spent together and of the intensity and frequency of the interactions. We also think that the meaning of "distance", and the "closeness of the partner" have been re-evaluated, i.e. what it means to be close to someone and maintain relationships in social terms. At the same time, closeness is defined more in territorial and less in kinship terms, because in everyday life neighbors become more important than relationships with relatives (here, by relatives we don't mean spouses and children, but further relatives on both sides). So, the redefinition of social distance was followed by the reevaluation of neighbor-relationships. This doesn't mean that relationships with relatives disappear, but only that neighborhood relationships strengthen. In fact, in everyday life, neighbors (who are usually in the same financial situation) depend on each other: neighborhood relationships can be established cost-free because of their nearness, unlike those that require travel and that are limited by their financial situation. Relationships with relatives don't disappear, they remain one of the most important networks of relations, but they become complemented with reciprocal neighborhood relationships (defined by the physical proximity).

*"There's a neighbor, a woman on the second floor. She told me to go to her, whenever I need something, whenever I cook... (...) My siblings don't talk to me, because my husband isn't like us, I have an older sister, she's got money and everything. I've been to the market, there, in Gheorgheni, that market, and my brother-in-law gave me half liters of oil, two packs of cigarettes, and a pouch of coffee. And my sister took them out of my hands. She said that if he made that many children, than he should be able to support his family. (...) She doesn't talk to me, but she has money and everything. What should I do?"*

We can ask, what kinship relations mean in this context of revaluated neighborhood relationships. From a pragmatic point of view, there are only functional relations and no kinship-relations (Duneier, 1992). If functional relationships are important for the individuals (i.e. they depend on them, it's a way of surviving for them), they are going to complement their kinship-based relationships with strong and functional ones, which also have emotional aspects. After Duneier (1992), we have called these new relationships between neighbors "*alternative substitute ties*". Alternative substitute ties develop between neighbors, and have reciprocal help at their basis. They take up roles that are usually filled by relatives, members of the family. These relationships usually exceed reciprocal help, and gain emotional character. Helping each other out with shopping, sharing mushrooms collected in the woods, and cooking them together, helping out with the chores are not only occasional help, but also mean that they care for each other. These alternative substitute ties cut through the limits among the households: familiar spheres interfere, and households become connected not only functionally, but also emotionally. By cooking together, these people partially unite their households, and establish quasi-kinship-relationships, which become accentuated, when a person of alternative substitute status inherits the other's possessions after his/her death. The institution of inheritance is based on kinship relationships in all societies. The person, who inherits along an alternative substitute tie, becomes formally a relative of the former owner, and this relationship is also emotional, and is expressed in the stories told about them.

*"I get along really well with this neighbor (she's much older than I am), this Mrs. D., she helps me a lot. And we help each other wherever possible; I take out the garbage, go and do the shopping for her, and take it home for her."*

*"Here's this neighbor. She still helps me. I gave my house to her son. Until I'm alive, it's mine. But when I die, it's his."*

Besides physical nearness, alternative substitute ties are based on the previously mentioned "resemblance": people on both sides of these ties are of similar social positions. Alternative substitute ties are tight: people meet often and on a regular basis, they take part in activities necessary for surviving. This is why we said earlier, that despite disintegration, individuals are not atomized. They can rely on social network – unfortunately composed by poor (usually two, but a maximum of six-seven) individuals of similar social status, and these networks are usually closed (it is hard to become a member) because of the limited resources, i.e. the *new poor* are not able to maintain larger networks. The ties between the members of these networks are tight. Concerning passive survival strategies, we can say that besides the income of the households, these are also determined by the possibilities of traveling, and by the availability of strong networks of family and/or neighborhood ties. On the basis of passive strategies stand locality, and the strong reciprocal relationships between the members of the network.

Another category constitutes those households that follow what we have called *active survival strategies*: these households not only regroup their resources, but also try to supplement them with new ones. We have identified the following main active strategies (in everyday life these appear mixed).

The woman holds a '*short-skirt job*' (the woman gets a job where short skirt is the typical wear, such as: waitress, bartender, etc.), the roles in the family are inversed in this case: the woman is working in the black- or gray economy, where short-skirt jobs are easier to find – this sometimes means illegal jobs, or very low-paying jobs. The employer hires them for minimum wage, and thus pays lower taxes and health insurance costs. At the same time the husband – who is unemployed – is doing the chores.

Household necessities revive and strengthen rural relationships (people start farming in the provinces or on land around city limits to produce food). This is the case of those who own land in the provinces or at the city limits (they have “got land back”). This kind of work very rarely means growing rich, or ensuring living necessities, because participants are mostly elderly people who are not familiar with market conditions, don't dispose of wide personal networks, and don't usually have the necessary tools and devices for farming. We are going to call it *defensive traditionalism*.

The members of the household convert to another religion – they do this out of financial reasons and join a neo-protestant denomination, where possibilities of reciprocal help are more likely. The new religion also provides strong moral support, and new members become honest followers, the financial-moral support is not separated in their minds, so, the conversion doesn't only mean cold-hearted calculation, but also recognition of the doctrines. They are the *faith switchers*.

The household is forced to move: they sell their home, buy a cheaper one, and live off the amount of money that comes from the difference in price. This is the so-called *obligate residence mobility*.

The head of the household, and/or the members of the family become engaged in collection of marginal resources, mainly pickings. They are the *collectors*.

The household sells part of their personal possessions, e.g.: old furniture, clothing received from aid organizations, tools, other belongings. They present the *occasional vendors*.

Further, there is other typical strategies were identified: One member of the household gets a job as housekeeper, which includes: taking care of children, housekeeping, shopping for elderly people or some are forced to take seasonal jobs in the country, or abroad (picking fruit, collecting escargots, harvesting); become day-laborer (mainly in construction), or utilize marginal resources (collecting and redeeming illegal goods, smuggling, burning CDs, illegal transport, etc.). Renting out part of the house/apartment they live in is also representative. Finally, we have to mention those activities like prostitution or organizing dogfights, which are illegal.

**Table 3.**  
**The typical forms and empirical characteristics of main active surviving strategies (ASS)**

Active SS	“Short skirt job”	“Defensive traditionalism”	“Faith switch”	“Occasional vending”	“Residence mobility”
<b>Actors</b>	Young and middle age woman	Middle aged and aged, with rural background	Very poor households, mainly Roma	Middle age with some health problems	Highly indebted households
<b>Actions</b>	Working full time, part time work, regularly illegal	Growing vegetables, rising animals	Adopting new religion	Waiting, or in some cases bribing	Selling the flat
<b>Costs</b>	Low material costs, but high time and energy costs, conflicts at home	Middle material costs	Middle cost, taking time, information, recommendation	Low material cost	Low material cost, but knowledge necessary
<b>Result</b>	Low wages	Food for own consumption	Material benefits and cultural reintegration	Constant income	Consistent material outcome
<b>Examples</b>	Bartender, salesclerk, janitor, waitress	Raising animals and harvesting basic vegetables behind the blocks or at provenance village	Becoming neo-protestant	Selling material goods considered not necessary any more (books, furniture, etc.)	Moving out of city or in smaller flat

A common element in the above listed survival strategies is that people mostly use weak ties of their personal networks, whereas passive strategies are based only on relatives and neighbors, where ties are stronger (Granovetter, 1982). Ties in these relations are strong –they are informal, kinship-based, locally connected –, thus networks become denser: hubs are closer to each other. Contrary to this, ties among coworkers and acquaintances are weaker, they are formal and impersonal, and thus less dense, because they involve more people who sometimes don’t even know each other personally – hubs are further away from each other. But networks of weak ties are more extensive, which is favorable for the appearance of active survival strategies. If there is a large network of weak ties, people are more likely to use active strategies (see: Granovetter, 1982), because they have better chances to mobilize resources from outside of the household.

Unlike strong ties, the maintenance of weak ties requires time, energy and mainly financial investment, which cause financial insecurity and risky decisions (Granovetter, 1982). Households that have limited financial resources utilize mainly their strong ties, i.e. they base their strategies on strong reciprocal relations.

They are not able to assume financial insecurity, and do not risk to invest into the weak ties of their network. On the contrary, they prefer closer relationships, where closer means closer in space as well. Households that dispose of a certain level of financial resources – further research is necessary to determine this level – take financial risk, and try to increase their income along weak ties. Regarding their social position, these are mainly those families, where one of the parents has an income that is considered secure (this can be unemployment relief, salary, severance-pay, etc.), or where at least one of the members is not restricted to staying at home for a certain reason (such as taking care of children in the case of single-parent families, or taking care of the other sick parent where necessary). Now let's look at the most important active survival strategies.

One of the most common strategies is the '*short-skirt job*', answering to the demands of the service sector. By "short-skirt job", we mean work performed mostly by women in grocery stores, shops, pubs, fast-foods (in busy streets, or city markets) - where the typical wear of the employees is the short skirt. Food service or sales jobs are not attractive, and, although mainly women perform these jobs, their prestige is low even among them. According to the women we have interviewed, the standing required by these positions is tiring and unpleasant in any season: "*working here in the wintertime, in minus 10 degrees, and in the summer in 40 degrees, is not easy*". The fact that the job is performed outside, and not inside of a building, in an open and not in a closed space, accentuates the low prestige it has. Nevertheless, supplies are high, because actors are skeptic about their abilities to find better jobs. Sales and food-service jobs are taken quickly, and there are young applicants who have just finished school and don't want to (or are not able to) continue their studies; their presence increases pressure, and worsens the chances of older applicants. Information about job openings is transmitted through informal channels: none of the people we have interviewed has found his/her job through the Department of Labor. It is important to emphasize that in the demand for "short-skirt job" education does not appear as a capital: higher education-level does not guarantee getting a better job, fact that legitimates those who are forced to take these jobs:

*"...I know someone who has university degree; she is working on the other market. She has absolutely no advantages comparing to me..."*

The term '*short-skirt job*' is a metaphor that comprises all the meanings the actors associate with these kinds of jobs. Below we will see that the term doesn't only cover jobs for women, as the word '*skirt*' would suggest, but more jobs can be identified in the field. This life-strategy is mostly present in smaller cities, and in mono-industrial areas, i.e. where the poverty rate is higher<sup>13</sup>. The reason '*short-skirt jobs*' are so common nowadays is the irrational urbanization and industrialization policy of the previous regime: the governing principle was the one factory-one city concept, i.e.

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<sup>13</sup> We've seen this in the Jill Valley, in Turda and Balan, but it also appears in Cluj especially among former industrial workers who have worked in industrial centers that were reorganized after 1989.

cities were developed around factories, which, under the conditions of market-economy became useless, worthless, and the city around it found itself in social crisis.

Short-skirt jobs' are taken in the household of those, who have lost their previous jobs during the reorganization process. The strategy is defined by the new demand on the labor-market. Thus, there is a higher demand in the third sector (recent development of the service sector and failure of the industrial economy has caused the increase in the demand), specifically in commerce and services.<sup>14</sup>

In disadvantageous regions, the highest demand for labor is in the category of short-skirt jobs described above. This is related to the legal status of these mono-industrial regions: all companies established here are exempt from taxes. The essence of the strategy is that in those households where the husband has lost his job, the adults switch roles; i.e. because the demand on the labor-market is mainly for women, men stay at home and try to do the chores. Women take low-paying and even illegal jobs such as sales person or food server (on markets, in shops, in restaurants, bars, etc.). Employment-terms for short-skirt jobs are usually short, employers take advantage of their legal status and hire women only for short periods of time (one-two-three months), because this is the time-limit for 'probation'<sup>15</sup>. After the 'probation' period has ended, the employer usually lays off the employee referring to the shortages in the inventory caused by him/her. Because the system is of cyclic nature, actually the same employees change places in the labor market, 'migrating' from one employer to another, keeping up the system, which ensures their living. Constant insecurity and change of employers result in the short-term nature of these jobs (naturally, the employer does not pay social security taxes, temporary jobs are not counted towards retirement, and employers are not obliged to employ them any longer). The people-network these individuals dispose of is of very high value when looking for 'short-skirt jobs', because getting into this rotational system is ensured by these. Also, references the employers can offer to each other of their employees are important for the applicants. Age and looks are other two important factors in this equation.

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<sup>14</sup> Data was collected from [www.piata-az.ro](http://www.piata-az.ro), which comprises advertisements from the Cluj region. Analyzing the demand, the profile of the ideal employee contains the following elements: a). For white-collar jobs: the applicant has completed higher education (university degree), is young, maximum 35-40 years old, has previous experience, (in case of men) completed military service is an advantage, owns a car (optional, but it is an advantage), has good communication skills, knows to handle computers, speaks foreign languages, is good-looking. It is also an advantage to be in good physical condition (to be healthy), to be loyal to the company, reliable, and willing to work overtime; b). For blue-collar jobs: the ideal applicant should be maximum 35-40 years old, skilled worker, or with experience in the domain, owns category B drivers' license, has completed military service, is of high carrying capacity, can perform well in more assignments at the same time, and is reliable; c). For 'short-skirt' jobs: the ideal applicant should be young or mature woman, having graduated from high-school, maximum 35-40 years old, good-looking, reliable, ready to work 10 hour shifts, with good communication skills, willing to work for less than the minimum wage (including illegal work) – this category includes jobs like: sales person in a grocery store, in a shop, on the market, waiter/waitress, bartender, etc. These are what we call "short-skirt jobs".

<sup>15</sup> The time-period taking place between the start of employment and the conclusion of the contract.

The husbands staying at home while wives are working also ensure the effectiveness of these strategies. Actors are: the workingwomen, and on the other side the employers and the unemployed who are mostly (middle-aged) men. It is an interesting aspect, that the system besides employers is based on the effective contribution of the husbands. By this, we refer to the attitudes developed on the basis of the work ethic of the working class. In their work-culture, the value of women and their work is very low (Willis, 2000) because of the large differences in functionality. The prestige of female labor is also very low comparing to male-labor, and the latter always denotes 'heavy physical' work. In work-culture, men's jobs besides being difficult (they require energy, firmness, and determination), also bear sexual attributes (idem.). In speech, attitude, movements, the show-off of physical strength (muscles, moving heavy objects, etc.) is considered an expression of highly valued masculinity. All these constantly represent the man-woman relationship, they remind of the structure of power (Willis, 2000). The man owns the woman, has power above her, even to decide about her. Being unemployed established a new kind of relationship between men and women, because they (men) "got stuck in the household", doing a job that has always been depreciated as being done by women, who were subordinated to them.

*"We now live off one salary. I get... I can say I get here a pretty good salary; comparing to others I get a pretty good one. We divide it here and there, because we can't do anything else. He's doing everything at home: he cooks, does the laundry, well, if he's at home, there's nothing we can do. It's not easy for me either, because I'm not that young any more, to change jobs and professions. And working in a production-line is not easy, I can't say it is, no... If I'm at home, I do it too, but he's the one who does most, laundry, cooking, cleaning, not that I don't do it, but he does it most. He's changed..."*

But switching gender roles is mostly illusory. Women, besides 'short-skirt' work also have to do the chores, and are thus subject to double burden, which causes conflicts continuously. The man adheres to the patriarchal model he was socialized to even under the new conditions because that's how he can keep his identity unchanged. Both chores and "short-skirt" work are of low prestige in their view (despite ensuring the survival of the household). The "short-skirt" is a visual element of patriarchal relationships that appears in the social space. The short skirt represents the low social status of female labor, and it is disconnected from the person who wears it: it denotes the unappreciated work, and gives legitimacy to the low wages and bad working conditions. 'Short-skirt' work is interpreted in the same way by employers and dependants: by men; fact that keeps the system working. The sexist remarks regarding 'short skirt', the stories told in presence of women about sexual experiences are the signs of post-legitimizing mechanisms. These remarks, although they speak about the women who wear the skirts, also tell us something about the men who tell them: they have identity-strengthening, stress-reducing and also post-legitimizing effect (they explain why men don't take the available jobs in the textile industry for example).

*“It is very difficult, to tell you the truth (...). My husband is not working, sometimes, if he gets some work, he goes as a day laborer. But this is very little; his social security does not cover the bus tickets either. (...) I don't get paid too much either, that's only enough to buy bread. And he doesn't help me at all with the chores, he's gone with his friends all day, he says he's looking for a job, but I don't know, where he is. Sometimes he brings home some money, but most of the time he doesn't. And then he's hungry, and you need to find something for him, (...) and the kids are hungry too. Cleaning up and doing the laundry is only my job, I can hardly manage to do it.”*

A considerable part of the urban population in Romania is first-generation resident, who has moved into cities in the 1970s and 1980s during the industrialization period. The strategy called *defensive traditionalism* is characteristic mainly of these people. The essence of the strategy is that out of financial reasons, people mobilize or reestablish their relationships with relatives living in the villages they originate from. This strategy is not new in the sense that first-generation residents have never detached completely from the environment they were from: these networks represented the main source of obtaining the necessary food even before 1989. This strategy now bears two forms: in one of them the members of the household have two homes and spend most of their time with farming (mainly the weekdays) in their villages of origin. They only come back to the city on the weekends: *“we live in two places; we spend a lot of time there”*. They produce most of the food they consume. The members of these households are inactive from the point of view of the formal economy; they are retired or unemployed, and own land. In the other form of *defensive traditionalism*, the relationship of the individual with the people living in villages is less intensive: it is temporary, only part of the food consumed by the household is coming from this source, and it only supplements the food purchased in the city. The members of these households are mostly active, or their resources in villages are limited: *“my mother got only a very small piece of land back, and there are my brothers and sisters, they need it too”*. One further subcategory of this strategy also needs to be mentioned. This one can be found in cities, but the type of the work performed puts it together with the above strategies. So, these strategies are of agricultural nature: people farm a piece of land or grow animals in the middle of the city, near the apartment-flats. This strategy has also developed during the past regime and is a characteristic of first-generation residents. The use of the “occupied” land is obviously illegal, but the authorities, despite all health concerns, tolerate it. Village-city connections are thus mainly based on networks, and activate the kinship-based relationships. Regarding their purpose, these relationships help acquiring the necessary food supplies a family needs. These are not strategies of the post-socialist period: they have existed even before 1989 and were practiced by first-generation residents and those having relatives in rural areas.

*“You’ve got the work in the village as well, and everything, but it’s different, it’s different, if you’ve got a small garden, some animals, I don’t know. Okay that you have to invest first, because you have to. It does not return in the first year, to say... not (it does not return as much) as much as you’ve expected, but... in the second year it’s different, because if you have, let’s say you’ve got eight chicken out of ten, it’s different, let’s say, you bring five of them to the city, you sell them, and you can buy bread, and of the remainder, you can buy I don’t know what... you buy again... so this is how... I think... It seems to me that you can manage.”*

Such calculations are characteristic of this group of people, where the conclusion is that if one has resources to begin with, than life is ‘manageable’. Seasonal work, the use of marginal resources (collecting paper and metal, picking forest fruits, gathering escargots and turning them in to centers) and seasonal work abroad are important life strategies, but are of temporary nature (defined by the seasons), and thus are used cyclically. These strategies complement the household’s food supplies. Basic food (potatoes, beans) are purchased or exchanged during the harvest in the autumn. Personal networks are of high importance here as well, especially when considering that one can receive information about “where to go” along weak ties.

*“There is, you can go pick fruits up here at the Palócsai, at the top of the Gheorgheni district, (...) wherever a child goes, they get advantage of him or her, I was there as an adult two or three years ago. They have high demands, of course they do, for example to pick those twelve baskets of cherries, or sour cherries, if you don’t have it, than the next day you can’t go, because they don’t hire you, you’re day-laborer, of course they don’t pay you per day, and you can’t bring any home, maybe a kilo, but only if they let you and you’re smart, ‘cause I, poor, don’t get off and bring a basket home, (...) but I’ve seen that someone took the basket and left on the other side, because he’d known the place and knew what to do. (...) I’ve worked the whole month once, and I’m telling you, three years ago I’ve got 8 thousand lei for the whole month.”*

Another life strategy is the *obligate residence mobility*: since 1997, when the Emergency Ordinances No. 17, 19, and 22 took effect and the structural transformation of the economy became more visible, new groups of unemployed people appeared, called the “ordonanța”<sup>16</sup> group. This is a strategy that typically appears in cities, applies only to those living in apartment-flats, and presupposes a working real estate market. Because of the high utility costs in apartment-flats, the unemployed – but not only them – sell their apartments and move to another district in the same city, to smaller neighboring cities, or back to the village they originate from. In case the household cannot pay the utility bills with the accumulated amounts, but they own the apartment, to avoid foreclosure, they sell their apartment and buy a cheaper one (usually in a worse district). From the money gained they pay their debt, and cover daily expenses. Sometimes they are forced to sell their homes and move again.

<sup>16</sup> Ordonanța = Romanian word, means Emergency Statutory Order.

*“... we haven't always lived here. We've lived in the Grigorescu, but we had to sell the apartment, then on the Aranyos Street, then we had to come here... I don't know what happens next.”*

In case of Cluj, the neighboring city of Turda is one of the target cities where these people can buy cheaper apartments (see also: Pásztor, 2002).

Collecting industrial waste and turning them in is also a typical survival strategy in industrial cities and big cities (in Bălan, Cluj, Turda and Petrosani in almost the same forms). It is considered a job for men, and it is situated on the border of legal and illegal. There are two main actors: the person who collects the industrial waste and the one who pays for them, but the attitude of the authorities is important as well. The term is mainly used to denote metal waste, but some people gather paper, glass, pieces of concrete, or plastic (it is a getting in example that one of the people we have interviewed, identified his job as *'cartonagiu'*, or one that gathers cardboard). These activities are illegal, but there is a tacit contract between the actors and the authorities. The waste is the property of the industrial unit, but out of financial reasons, they don't use them. The company, together with the authorities – as is the case in Bălan and partially in Turda as well, where the representatives of the industrial unit are also members of the City Council – tolerates gathering waste, but sets certain limits to it. In other words, the authorities informally set the limits of specific territories, where gathering is 'allowed': usually around inactive industrial units, or in mining towns, around defecators, or spoil-banks. The 'agreement' about the limits of these territories is beneficial for both parts, because they make possible the survival for many, while they don't cost anything for the authorities. *“...we know where we can go, where they don't bundle us out, and you can get pretty well.”* (One can make about 45-55000 lei on an average day – approximately \$1.5.) In case these territorial-limits are violated, formal sanctions are carried into effect: *“I have received the paper from the court. I was sentenced to three years, but I've only done the same as before, but they caught me at the Wetter<sup>17</sup>.”* This practice is specific to those called *collectors*.

A specific life strategy is conversion, converting to another religion. It means leaving the traditional church, and joining a neo-protestant one. Conversion doesn't only have financial reasons, but we now only try to describe the ones that had financial reasons. The reasons mentioned were: *“they have helped me with medicines, and sometimes I get money as well”*, or *“brothers and sisters bring me food, and don't leave me alone, and in the winter they bring clothing, too”*. They have also mentioned the integrating function of the society besides the financial motives: *“...now I belong somewhere too”*. This strategy is used constantly, which means that the process has more stages. Despite the fact that conversion is different for each church (i.e. recruitment, and the ritual/ceremony of joining) we can identify some main stages of the process. In the first stage, a member of the church monitors the “applicant” and then formally advises the old members for the new

<sup>17</sup> The name of one shaft of the mine in Balan.

one to join. If the community accepts the advice, the applicant is subject to a probation period, and if he/she passes, he can become a full member. Getting financial support is only available for full members. For the churches mentioned, the *new poor* – who convert religion mainly out of financial reasons, but the need for social integration is also to be mentioned – represent a main recruitment basis. They are the *faith switchers*.

### Conclusion

To sum up: following the change of regime, the economic transition, and the market transition the *new poor* and *the new poverty* appeared. The impoverished population tries to adapt to the new circumstances, and develops survival life-strategies depending on the financial resources and people-networks they dispose of. The deprived use mostly passive survival strategies, and rely on small but strong personal networks. Besides relatives, the importance of neighbors and the use of *alternative substitute ties* (that establish new forms of *new relative* relationships) are constantly growing. When evaluating their own situation, the new poor feel they are unwarranted, they are treated unfairly, have no perspective, and define their situation along patterns they were socialized to in the past regime. Those *new poor* households that dispose of slightly better resources tend to use active strategies and rely on weaker social ties.

Following the changes that took place in 1989, the strategies – developed and offered by the system – lost their validity, and the new system does not offer life-strategies, they have to be developed by the individual on the level of the *life-world*. The most important of these strategies are the “*short-skirt job*”, the “*defensive traditionalism*” the “*faith switcher*”, the “*occasional vending*” the “*residence mobility*” beside the “*day-labor*” (and working abroad, that was not described in this study) and other atypical forms. The survival strategies presented are ideal types: in everyday world, they can take many forms and they usually appear mixed.

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## FERTILITY DECLINE AND ETHNICITY IN TRANSYLVANIA AFTER 1989

VALÉR VERES

### **RÉSUMÉ. Le déclin de la fertilité et ethnicité en Transylvanie après 1989.**

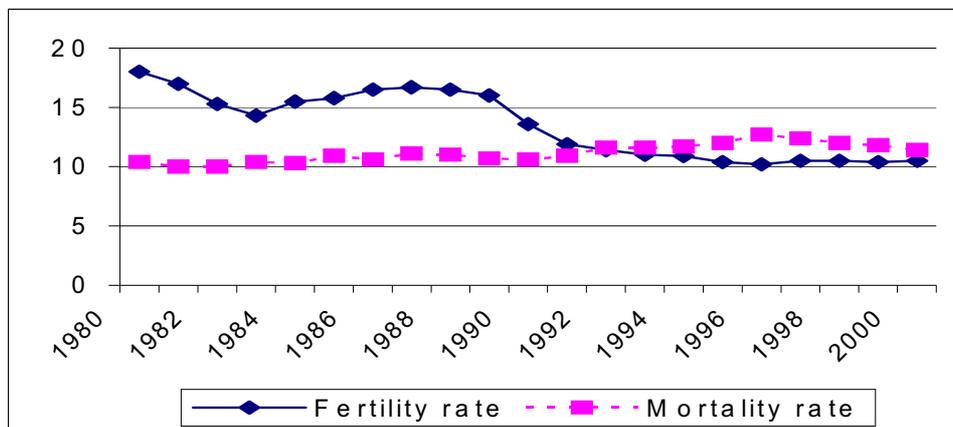
L'étude analyse les changements de la fertilité et la croissance naturelle en Transylvanie. Deux tendances sont analysées de la période 1989 – 2004. La première concerne le rôle des politiques natales et d'avortion de la période communiste de Roumanie, puis, après le changement du régime en 1989, la transition socio-économique dans les variations de la croissance naturelle en Transylvanie. La seconde tendance concerne les différences de fertilité dans les régions de Transylvanie qui peuvent être notées dès la fin de le 19-ème siècle en Transylvanie. Nous avons aussi analysé le rôle de la composition ethnique sur la fertilité qui est toujours lié à cette tendance, et la qualité des dates statistiques vitales concernant l'ethnicité et la correction des méthodes. Les résultats montrent que le nombre de naissances dans la période finale du régime communiste était haut en Roumanie dû aux pressions gouvernementales, ce qui est similaire aux tendances de fertilité en Roumanie. Les changements après le changement du régime politique en 1989 ont stoppé les politiques mentionnées et, par conséquent, le déclin en fertilité et en croissance naturelle a été spectaculaire d'une année à l'autre. En concernant le déclin en fertilité après 1989, nous pouvons être d'accord seulement partiellement avec J. Rychtarikova, qui considère que le déclin de la fertilité dans l'Europe d'Est après 1989 est dû a la crise socio-économique. Dans les départements de l'Ouest de la Roumanie ce déclin est dû aux décisions consciencieuses parce que en 1990 le changement n'a pas eu des effets négatifs assez spectaculaires, malgré le fait que la fertilité a baissé pendant la période entière.

### **General trends on fertility in Romania and Transylvania**

In Romania since 1991 started an intense process of fertility decline (see Graph 1). In the context of the international demographic tendencies, we tried to explain the changes by means of Van de Kaa's (1987, 1988) theory of the second demographic transition, especially in North-Western part of the country, called Transylvania. However, as J. Rychtarikova (1999) asserts based on Czech and other Eastern European data, the changes can be rather attributed to the economic transition than to the demographic transition. We can observe regional differences in fertility, increase of the average first marriage age and the age of the first child born which can be connected with the starting of the second European demographic transition, but these changes manifest in conditions more like in Southern Europe: the marriage rates and the legitimate childbearing rates remain high. In Romania,

due to the costs of the social-political transition and as a result of the ambiguous reforms at the beginning of the 1990s, the emigration had a serious impact on the population of the country.

The decline of the fertility rates can be continuously followed in Romania in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This decline had continued since 1980, but from 1984 to 1989, as a last upheaval of the paternalist politics of the Ceaușescu regime, it slightly increased. After 1989, especially between 1990 and 1992 the spectacular decrease of births can be noticed as a result of abolishing the prohibition of abortion, the appearance of birth control pills and the new, insecure social-economic circumstances.



**Graph 1. The gross fertility and mortality rates in Romania between 1980-2000**

As a whole, the variation of the Transylvanian natural demographic indicators follows the country's average, therefore, in the following we shall examine the fertility and mortality rates from different Transylvanian counties in the examined period as compared to the countrywide tendencies.

In the following, by Transylvania we designate the population of the following 16 counties: Alba, Arad, Bihor, Bistrița-Năsăud, Brașov, Caraș-Severin, Cluj, Covasna, Harghita, Hunedoara, Maramureș, Mureș, Satu-Mare, Sălaj, Sibiu, Timiș.

We can affirm that Romania, and subsequently the Transylvanian population of Transylvania fits in the South- and East European demographic transition model (Andorka, 1987. 41–42.). In Transylvania the mortality rate had had a decreasing tendency since 1875, however the number of births had diminished relatively slightly before 1910. A substantive change occurred after 1915-20, when the birth rate started to constantly decrease (see figure no. 2). According to the natural trends the last phase of transition period would have finished around 1965, and

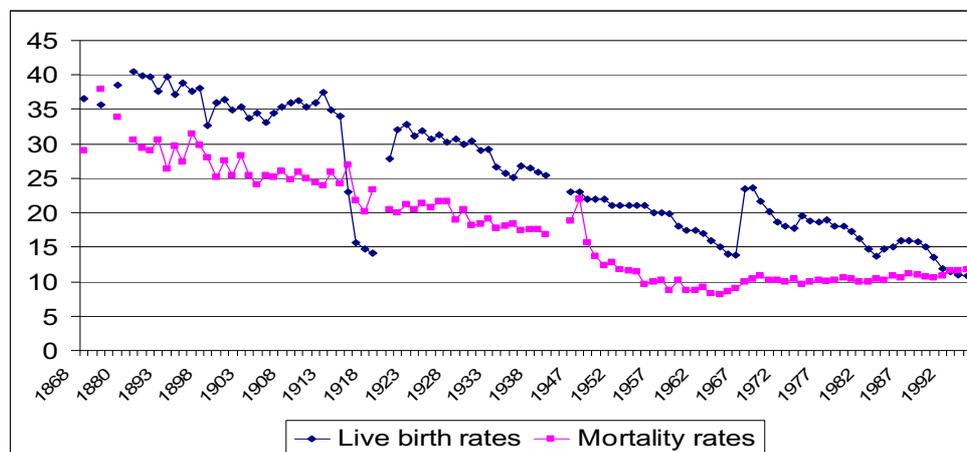
after this period the number of population should stagnate or start to diminish. (see Graph 2). However, with the dictatorial demographic policy of that period, which meant mainly the strict prohibition of the abortions, the classical demographically transition in Romania – so thus in Transylvania – went on practically up to 1991.

Not only the ‘first’ transition couldn’t finish sooner, but as a consequence, the phenomenon of the second demographic transition, described by Van de Kaa (1987), couldn’t be completed through the obtrusive and narrow-minded demographic policy of the Ceausescu regime. According to Gail Kligman’s evaluation, the Romanian demographic policy of the period 1966–1989 can be divided in three phases: 1966–1973, 1974–1983 and 1984–1989.

It is typical of the whole Ceausescu regime that the abortion and also the birth control pills were prohibited and used as a tool through those laws and strategies which encroached in the intimate life of citizens. The communist political system approached ambivalently the gender role of women. In spite of the strict prohibition regarding abortions, which was punished with 1-3 years imprisonment according to the Decree 1966/770, after 1968 the number of births decreased significantly, as the value system and lifestyle of the majority of the population didn’t favor the type of family with many children. Substantially the demographic transition came to the end in 1965, and the value system didn’t change.

At the beginning of the second phase, in 1974, when Ceausescu reached his full powers, there was a big campaign in order to increase the childbirths. Also some social benefits were given for families with many children.

In order to control the implementation of the abortion-law, a strong apparatus: ‘the abortion-committees’ was created and centralized. A ‘concession’ was introduced: the age limit for the abortions was modified from 45 to 40. According to Kligman this happened because at the forthcoming International Population Congress Romania wanted to show that we fall in the line with to the international trends. The impact of this disposition disappeared in the next three-four years, and in 1984 new changes were introduced in the control of births. In this period the life-conditions became very hard, because the lack of subsistence products procuring food supplies was one of the most difficult tasks to accomplish. The abortion was again very strictly controlled, the age limit was increased to 45 year. Besides this, one could ask for abortion only after 5 children instead of 4. The official discourse didn’t judge children born out of wedlock and became more tolerant with minor mothers. It was possible to finish the school while pregnant or with children, which was not allowed before – points Kligman. At the same time she shows that the pro-natalist social benefits, like the child-care allowance were behind the other socialist countries (Kligman, 2000: 79–80.).



**Graph 2. Crude live birth and mortality rate in Transylvania (1867–1992)**

New tendencies have appeared in Romania and Transylvania on the field of childbearing and the fertility behavior since 2000. One of the changes is the increasing rate of children born out of wedlock, which we will examine in international context (see Annex 1). This also can be interpreted in the frame of the theory of the second demographic transition, as a change in the system of values regarding the family. It can be observed that in 1970 the proportion of out of wedlock live born children is under 10% for most of the countries, and there are a few, especially North- European or socialist countries with a slightly higher values (Sweden, 18, Estonia 14, Austria 12,8, Denmark 11, Yugoslavia 11,7 percents). In the next ten years, these values are increasing everywhere, in many cases by near 40. In 2001 in Romania, as well as in Ireland, Portugal and Spain, Bulgaria the more than the quarter of the births are out of wedlock. In Romania in 2001 this value reaches 26.7% and it has a growing tendency. In the same time, the average age of mother at the first birth became higher, from 22,9 years from 1996 to 24,3 in 2003, which also means that the couples postpone the date of childbearing during the lifetime.

### **Territorial differences on fertility in Transylvania**

Comparing the fertility data of European countries, Coale (1969) found that – according to provinces, respectively counties – four regions can be identified where the fertility was low even between 1870 and 1900 in the different provinces. These four regions belonged to the Habsburg Monarchy, out of which two belonged to the Transylvanian territory examined by us: Banat and Southern Transylvania. The counties of Arad, Timis and Caras-Severin, respectively Brasov and Sibiu are situated today on this territory. In the following, we will examine the relationship between the

fertility in these counties and the surrounding regions from a hundred year's perspective. These counties were the most developed from both an economic and cultural point of view as compared to other territories of Romania, but on the territory of the Habsburg Empire there were even more developed regions (where the fertility was also low), such as Vienna and its surroundings, the Czech state or Sylezia. However, fertility was still comparatively high there. Many consider that one of the main reasons of the early fertility decline is the demographic behavior of the German population. This is, however, not unequivocal in itself, because on the one hand, only a minority of the population was German speaking in the two regions, and on the other hand fertility was still relatively high in Germany and Austria. However, according to religious data, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the fertility of the Transylvanian Germans (Sachsen) was already much lower than that of the Romanians and Hungarians, yet the fertility of the Romanians from Banat and Southern Transylvania was as low as that of the Germans living next to them.

At the beginning of the 1980's, the lowest fertility data were also registered in Arad county from Banat (12.8 per thousand), and than the other counties from the enumerated ones followed. Yet, we can notice that the Southern Transylvanian counties that are presently situated in the center of the country (Brasov and Sibiu) have fertility indicators that are similar to the 18 per thousand countrywide average, or only slightly different. This change has two significant reasons. On the one hand, the majority of the German speaking Saxons emigrated in the 1970-ies and there was a significant immigration from the surrounding counties in both counties, while between 1960-1980, and to a lesser degree even after, in Brasov also from the Moldavian counties with a higher fertility rate. Part of the immigrants were Roma, whose fertility is more than double than the country's average. Counties from Banat have therefore retained the traditional low fertility behaviour in Romania. It is well-known that until 1989 abortion, the selling of birth control pills, and the use of birth control methods were all prohibited in Romania. Moreover, disseminating modern family planning and pregnancy preventing information was also prohibited. As a result, fertility was unnaturally high in Romania. Relatively many 'non-desired' children were born, and thus the number of abandoned children increased, which unnaturally swelled the orphanages. The variation of the fertility data in the country and in the Transylvanian counties reflect very well the demographic effects of the political regime change from December 1989. In one year, up to 1990, the value of the brut national fertility rates had declined with 2.4 per thousand, while according to counties, this decline was between 1.2 and 3.2 in Transylvania. The lowest decline was registered in the counties from Banat (Timis, Caras-Severin and Arad) and in Cluj county which already had a low fertility, while the decline in the counties with a high fertility was greater; the regional differences did not disappear, they only became smaller. The Eastern Transylvanian counties Bistrița-Năsăud, Maramures, Covasna and Harghita, respectively two Northern Transylvanian counties with an overwhelmingly rural population – Satu Mare and Salaj – had the highest

fertility, there the about 17-18 per thousand brut fertility rates declined to an average of 14-15 per thousand. The fertility decline had continued throughout the 1990-ies, in most counties it reached the critical point in 1995-1996. By 2000 the values of fertility were between 9-12 per thousand in Transylvania. The reasons of this can be classified into two groups. On the one hand, after the regime change the living standard of the significant part of the population had decreased, because although services and the supply of goods had significantly improved, the purchasing power had decreased, the national GDP had also significantly decreased in the 1990-ies as compared to the 1989 value. These processes had also an effect on the willingness to have children, on the one hand by not having as many children as people wanted, on the other hand, by postponing having children. This has also triggered postponing the date of marriage in the case of a part of young people, but because the phenomena is strata specific, the average marriage age has been postponed with only 1-2 years in Transylvanian counties and slightly lower on the national level.

**Table 1.****The crude live birth rates in Transylvanian counties between 1980-2003**

<b>County</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2003</b>
Alba	17,7	15,7	15,9	13,5	10	9,9	9,0
Arad	12,8	12,7	13,4	11,4	9,5	9,8	9,1
Bihor	16,7	14,9	15,1	13,2	10,9	10,9	10,3
Bistrița-Năsăud	21,7	19,2	18,4	16,3	12,6	12,2	11,4
Brașov	17,1	14,2	14	12	8,6	9,2	9,8
Caraș-Severin	15,2	13,9	13,8	12,2	9,5	9	9,2
Cluj	17,1	13,9	13,8	12,4	8,8	8,8	8,3
Covasna	20,8	17,3	17,8	14,6	10,3	11,6	10,9
Harghita	19,3	15,9	16	13,7	10,7	10,9	10,5
Hunedoara	16,1	15	15,6	13,2	9,7	11,5	8,3
Maramureș	20,7	18,5	17,9	15,8	12,1	11,2	10,2
Mureș	17,9	14,7	15,8	13,7	10,2	11,2	10,6
Satu-Mare	19	17,1	17,3	15,1	10,6	10,8	10,6
Sălaj	17,9	16,8	17,2	14,8	11,4	11,4	10,3
Sibiu	18,5	15,4	15,1	12,6	10,2	10,4	10,4
Timiș	14,4	13,3	13,2	12	9,3	9,3	9,1
<b>Romania</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15,8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13,6</b>	<b>10,4</b>	<b>10,5</b>	<b>9,8</b>

On the other hand, the reason can be traced back to the availability of modern birth control methods, to the legalization of abortion and the appearance of modern family planning centers since 1990, and in parallel, to the spread of the modern family planning information as a result of free press and the free flow of

information. The effects of the second group of reasons outline the characteristics of D.J. Van de Kaa's second demographic transition, yet the effect of the two groups of reasons cannot be separated. J. Rychtarikova asserts that the decline of the Eastern European fertility can be best explained by the decline of the living standard and it cannot be related to the second demographic transition. In her opinion, the symptoms suggest a crisis behaviour rather than conscious choice (Rychtarikova, 1999). In my opinion, this is true only in part. Northern European tendencies cannot be found, because Central and Eastern Europe rather resembled Germany and Southern Europe even during the first demographic transition, therefore the changes cannot be so spectacular nowadays either, as for in example in Benelux, the Scandinavian states and France. In these counties mortality rates are well above the national average and the average in other Transylvanian counties, with almost 15 per thousand, while the national average is 10 per thousand. At the same time, based on the indicators of the age specific mortality we can notice that the rate of the brut infant mortality is the lowest in these counties from Banat (in Timis is 22 per thousand, as compared to the national 37 per thousand). The reason of high mortality is the age structure of the relatively aged population. Fertility indicators have declined almost to half in Romania, from 18 per thousand to 10.5 per thousand. The intensity of the decline was similar in the Transylvanian counties with a higher fertility, while in the counties from Banat the brut fertility rate is about 9 per thousand in 2000. The decline was lower as in the other counties in the whole period, although Arad and Timis counties are still among the counties with the lowest fertility rate.

Analyzing the natural increase rate for every 5 years, between 1980-2000 (see Annex 2), we can see that after the regime change in 1989 the rata declined very much in one year, while by 1992 the national natural increase rate became negative. In parallel, it also became negative in most Transylvanian counties. In the counties from Banat with a low fertility, however, it had already been negative or around zero even before 1989.

The negative increase reached its peak in 1995-1996 in most of the counties, from then on in the counties with a higher fertility it became positive again or it was around zero in 2000 (Annex).

The regional differences in natality were also researched by C. Mureşan (1999). By dividing the territory of the country into four bigger regions, by means of the event history analysis and using the variables age, sex, region and time, he showed that between 1989-1996 the correlation between fertility and the age of fertile women differentiates Transylvanians from all the other regions. The value of the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has reached a lower level than the replacement level, in Transylvania also by the mid 1990-ies. According to the data published in 2001 we can see the variations of female fertility and total fertility according to counties in 2000.

**Table 2.**  
**Total Fertility Rates and the Index of Economic Development**  
**in Transylvanian counties, 2000**

County	TFR	IED
Braşov	1,1	0,67
Sibiu	1,2	0,51
Alba	1,3	0,36
Covasna	1,4	0,64
Harghita	1,3	0,54
Mureş	1,4	0,47
Arad	1,3	0,49
Timiş	1,2	0,55
Caraş-S	1,2	0,41
Hunedoara	1,1	0,46
Bihor	1,4	0,49
Cluj	1,1	0,69
Bistriţa-N	1,5	0,27
Maramureş	1,4	0,41
Satu-Mare	1,3	0,31
Sălaj	1,5	0,37
<b>România</b>	<b>1,3</b>	<b>*</b>

$$r = -0,54, p = 0,02$$

On the whole, the values are very low. The highest TFR values were registered in those counties which were the most fertile in 1989: Bistriţa–Năsăud, Maramureş, Sălaj, Covasna.

In what follows, we test the following hypothesis: if we calculate the correlation between TFR and the indices calculated and based on the different indicators of the economic-social development, then the value of the correlation coefficient will be negative.

The index of the economic development is a relative value between 0 and 1, which contains the following indicators:

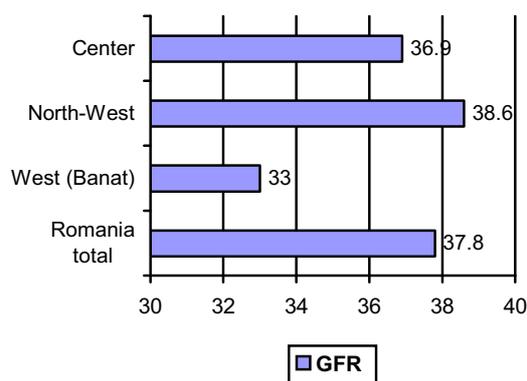
1. Economic and income indicators: GDP per capita (USD); net average income of the active population.
2. Indicators showing the level of agricultural development: agricultural production per 1 ha of agricultural land (calculated in RO Lei), the number of tractors per 1000 ha of agricultural land, the number of tractors in private property per 1000 ha of private cultivated agricultural land.

3. Indicators regarding the structure of the economy and the level of activity: the proportion of those who are employed in services from the total active population; the proportion of the PIB produced by services; the unemployment rate.
4. Infrastructure development indicators: the number of beds in hospitals per 1000 inhabitants; the proportion of households which have bathrooms in rural areas, as compared to urban areas.
5. Indicators of social development: the proportion of those with at least secondary education, the infant mortality rate.

We used the value of each indicator between 0 and 1. The infant mortality rate and the unemployment rate were included with negative sign, reversed. As a result, the economic-social level of development of counties with a value closer to 1 is higher, while the lower values show underdevelopment.

Indeed,  $R=-0.54$ , which means that in those counties where the value of TFR is higher, usually the social-economic level of development is lower than in counties where the value of TFR is lower. Based on this, we can assert that the reasons of the fertility decline in Transylvania are not primarily of an economic crisis origin, they can be attributed also to social factors, like value system reasons which manifest themselves through conscious choice. Naturally, the very low fertility level in the whole country is partially determined by the economic situation as compared to 1990, but the territorial differences also indicate the non-economic determination of the phenomena, which is exactly the essence of the second demographic transition defined by Van de Kaa (D.J. Van de Kaa, 1987).

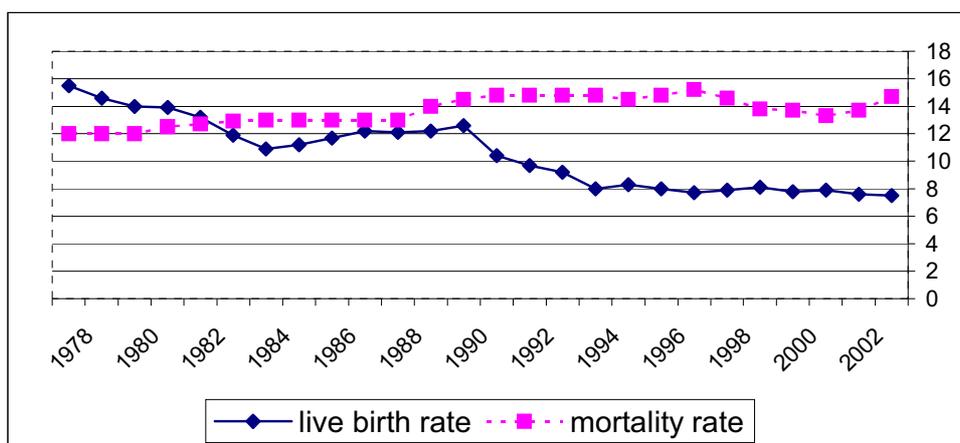
We analyzed the fertility differences according to the 3 development regions from Transylvania. In the West (Banat) region the GFR is 33, and in Center is 36,9 per thousand, both is lower than the average value of Romania, 37,8. Only in the North-West region, which means the Northern part of Transylvania, the GFR is slightly higher, 38,6, than the national average. However, this rate should be about 60 per thousand for the simple reproduction of the population.



**Graph 3. General Fertility Rate (GFR) by Transylvanian Development Regions from Romania, 2001**

### Fertility of ethnic Hungarians from Transylvania

According to the statistical data, the natural increase among ethnic Hungarians from Transylvania became negative with 10 years earlier than in Romania, around in 1982.



**Graph 4. The crude live birth and mortality rates of ethnic Hungarians from Romania**

Source: Statistical Institute of Romania. The mortality rates before 1990 are estimated, based on National values.

We can ask, why? As we saw earlier, the Ceausescu's regime birth-control and pro-natalist policy assured the positive natural increase on national level, but in some Transylvanian counties and among ethnic Hungarians from Transylvania after 1982 this policy didn't had enough effect. After the 1989 political change the dictatorial pro-natalist policy ended, and the natality started to decrease substantially (see figure no 4).

The consequences of childbearing disposition decrease are that the number of ethnic Hungarian as well as the Romanian population have been decreasing. Using the official vital statistics data from Romania in ethnic distribution, we analyze the territorial disparities and the age-specific specificities of Hungarian fertility from Transylvania. According to the vital statistics centralized by the Romanian Statistical Institute, between 1992 and 2002 the Hungarian live births decreased from 14 837 to around 9000, this process had contributed to the ageing process of the population.

The number and the proportion of the ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania, according to the last two censuses is the following:

**Table 3.**  
**The number and the proportion of Hungarians in Transylvanian countries**

County	Total population 1992	The number of ethnic Hungarians 1992	The proportion of ethnic Hungarians, 1992	The number of ethnic Hungarians 2002	The proportion of ethnic Hungarians 2002	Difference in percents 1992-2002
Alba	413919	24765	6	20682	5,4	-16,49
Arad	487617	61011	12,5	49000	10	-19,69
Bihor	638863	181703	28,4	155554	25,9	-14,39
Bistrița-Năsăud	326820	21098	6,5	18394	5,9	-12,82
Brașov	643261	63558	9,9	51470	8,7	-19,02
Caraș-Severin	376347	7876	2,1	5859	1,8	-25,61
Cluj	736301	146186	19,9	122131	17,3	-16,46
Covasna	233256	175502	75,2	164055	73,8	-6,52
Harghita	348335	295104	84,7	275841	84,6	-6,53
Hunedoara	547950	33849	6,2	25321	5,2	-25,19
Maramureș	540099	54902	10,2	46250	9,1	-15,76
Mureș	610053	252651	41,4	227673	39,3	-9,89
Satu-Mare	400789	140392	35,0	129998	35,2	-7,40
Sălaj	266797	63151	23,7	57312	23,1	-9,25
Sibiu	452873	19309	4,3	15478	3,7	-19,84
Timiș	700033	62866	9	51421	7,6	-18,21
Total Transilvania	7723313	1603923	20,8	1416439	18,3	-11,69

**Table 4.**  
**General Fertility Rates (Romania and Transylvanian Hungarians), 1992 – 2002**

Year	Live births for 1000 women between 15-49 years age (GFR)	
	Tr. Hungarians	Romania
1992	38,0	46,6
...		
1996	34,0	39,9
1997	34,3	40,6
1998	34,9	40,6
1999	33,4	40,2
2000	33,7	40,3
2001	32,4	37,8
2002	30,8	37,9

For the cross-controlling method we analyzed the age composition of the number of ethnic Hungarians from Transylvania by the counties. We found that in the counties where the ethnic Hungarians represents not more than 20 percent, the number of the registered live births by the Hungarian women were significantly lower, in average with 30 percent, than the number of the related age-specific Hungarian population which was born in that year, according to the 2002 Census. In these counties we corrigated the number of the Hungarian mother's births. Ghetau (2004) mentioned also that the vital statistics under-registered the ethnic Hungarian live births between 1992 – 2002.

The General and Total Fertility Rates of ethnic Hungarians between 1992-2002 were lower than the Romanian's values both from Transylvania and on the country level. In 1992 the Hungarian GFR was 38, since the Romanian's was 46,6 per thousand. In 2002 the GFR of Hungarians was only 30, and on the country level 37,9 per thousand, also very low. In comparison the GFR from Hungary was around 37 per thousand in that time.

Analyzing in regional perspective, the differences in ethnic Hungarian women's' fertility is relatively high. The lowest values were found in 2002 in Southern Transylvania and in the Western part (Banat): 25 per thousand. In Eastern Transylvania (Covasna/Harghita counties) the GFR is much higher, even higher than the country level, around 40 per thousand. Near the border with Hungary, in the North-Western part of Transylvania the GFR of Hungarians was about 34, almost reaching the average of ethnic Romanians from Transylvania.

**Table 5.**

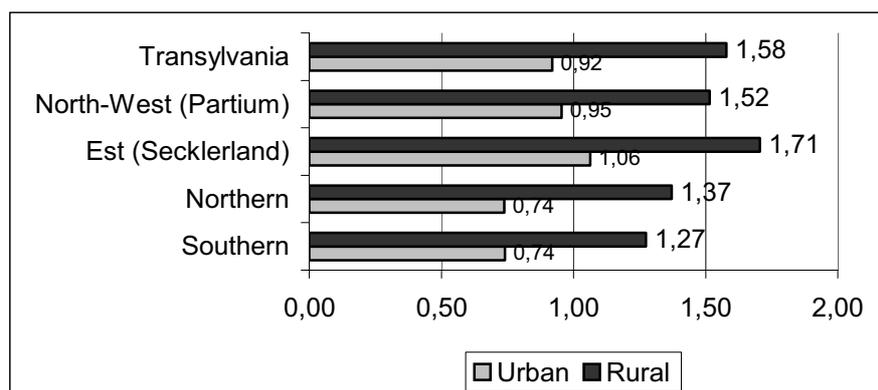
**General Fertility Rates (corrigated values with 2002 census cohort data) of Hungarians from Transylvania by settlement type and geographical region**

Region	1997			2002		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
Southern Transylvania	24,65	20,69	34,73	25,33	21,16	36,42
Northern Transylvania	28,47	23,79	39,65	26,32	21,10	39,20
Eastern Trans. (Secklerland)	40,57	30,14	51,48	39,37	30,39	48,71
Western Transylvania (Partium)	36,17	26,44	47,75	34,62	27,28	43,29
Total Hungarians from Trans.	35,45	26,45	47,69	34,19	26,28	45,10

In 2002 The Total Fertility Rate in Romania was 1,33 per 1 woman, among ethnic Hungarians from Transylvania was 1,21. But we can observe major differences according to the settlement type: in rural area the TFR was 1,58, in urban area only

FERTILITY DECLINE AND ETHNICITY IN TRANSYLVANIA AFTER 1989

0,92. We can observe these major differences in all of the regions. While on the country level the urban population represents about 53 percent, in Southern Transylvania almost 70 percent of Hungarians live in urban areas, while in Eastern Transylvania (Secklerland) only 40 percent live in towns.



**Graph 5. General Fertility Rates (corrugated values with 2002 census cohort data) of Hungarians from Transylvania by settlement type and geographical region 2002**

According to 1992 and 2002 census data we can measure the number of the live births per thousand women (children ever born), in age groups and according to ethnicity (Table 6).

**Table 6.**  
**The children ever born in Romania in ethnic distribution by mother's age groups in 1992 and 2002**

The mother's age	Live births per 1000 women				
	1992	Romanians	Hungarians	Roma (Gipsy)	Total
15-19		59	56	361	67
20-24		631	582	1607	646
25-29		1488	1428	3001	1513
30-34		1941	1883	3743	1967
35-39		2119	2051	4002	2140
40-44		2274	2172	4034	2286
45-49		2348	2136	3873	2343
50-54		2288	2060	3742	2281
55-59		2203	1987	3648	2197

<b>Average values</b>	<b>1798</b>	<b>1708</b>	<b>2700</b>	<b>1802</b>
<b>2002</b>				
15-19	44,4	42,6	293,7	53,4
20-24	373,9	342,4	1200,4	398,6
25-29	937,0	909,5	2035,7	967,2
30-34	1397,4	1421,3	2817,6	1430,7
35-39	1837,2	1823,5	3707,7	1878,8
40-44	2070,4	2026,0	4034,8	2105,0
45-49	2149,8	2088,8	4091,7	2175,7
50-54	2264,3	2170,4	3979,2	2278,7
55-59	2323,4	2124,9	3873,8	2320,4
<b>Average values</b>	<b>1633,8</b>	<b>1610,0</b>	<b>2454,0</b>	<b>1647,0</b>

Although the fertility of ethnic Romanians is higher than for ethnic Hungarians in all age groups, the difference between them is relatively small and constant, between four and eight percent. We can observe a significant difference between ethnic Roma and the majority (Romanians and Hungarians) in all age groups. But even in case of Roma population, the average decreased significantly from 2700 to 2454 children per 1000 women between 1992 and 2002. We can observe important changes according to age group: for the 1000 Roma women between 25-29 years age the average number of the children was 3001, to 2002 this number decreased significantly, with 33%, to 2035 children. This process shows as that in case of Roma population we can observe the process of shifting childbearing to late ages, and also a fertility decline process.

According to 1992 and 2002 censuses data, the ethnic Hungarian population is more aged than the Romanian population. The difference between younger age groups under 14 is about four percent (see appendix no. 2). The proportion of the 20–35 age groups are higher with 5 percent among Romanians than among Hungarians. There are 2-3 percent more Hungarians in the age groups between 40 and 60 years. The percentage of all Hungarians who are above age 60 is about four points higher than the percentage over age 60 in the total population. (see appendix no. 4)

According to the territorial point of view, there are major differences in age structure. In Eastern Transylvania (CV, Hr, MS) the population is even younger than the national average. In Northern and Western Transylvania the population structure is moderately aged. In the Southern and Western part of Transylvania the ethnic Hungarians have a very aged population structure, especially in Timis county, where the age-tree has the “mushroom” form: The number of the 0 – 10 cohorts is with four times smaller than the average number of the cohorts between 60 and 70 years age. In these counties the local ethnic Romanian population is also aged, but this fact is not evident on the county population level, because the age structure of

Timis county's population was improved by the inter-county immigration, whose extent reached the 35% of the population in Timis and Brasov, and it represented more than half of the fertile population in the 1980-ies (Veres, 1996:148).

### **Conclusions**

Analyzing the regional differences in fertility decline in Romania between 1980-2000 we can draw the following conclusions. Similarly to the Romanian fertility tendencies, in the last part of the Communist period, due to governmental pressure the number of births was also kept high in Transylvanian counties. The changes that had occurred as a consequence of the political change in December 1989 ceased the above mentioned population policies and the regress of fertility and natural increase was spectacular from one year to the other. The fertility of the counties from Banat and Southern Transylvania - where fertility is traditionally low - has come close to the other Transylvanian counties, while in Brasov and Timis counties, due to the great inter-county migration, this low fertility is not characteristic any more. As regarding the reasons of the fertility decline after 1989, we can only partially agree with J. Rychtarikova, who considers that the fertility decline in Eastern Europe after 1989 can be attributed to the social-economic crisis. In the Western counties of Romania this decline is due to conscious choices, because in 1990 the change had not have so spectacular negative effects, although fertility rates declined the most in the whole period. The increase of illegitimate fertility, and the postponing process of the first birth, after 1995 show us the changes in family value system. Furthermore, in those Transylvanian counties where the economic development indicators are worse at the end of the 1990-ies, at the same time fertility rates are higher (see Bistrița-Năsăud, Sălaj, Maramures, Hunedoara counties) than in Timis and Arad counties which are economically better situated, and not vice versa.

The differences between the fertility of Romanians and Hungarians from Transylvania fit into the structure of Transylvanian regional differences. The fertility of the Hungarians and Romanians in a given county is similar in urban as well as in rural areas, but the proportion of the urban population with very low fertility is different among the Romanians and Hungarians in certain counties. Yet, because among Hungarians the aging process is more advanced, the pace of the negative natural increase is faster than among Romanians who live in majority. The question of the disappearance of Hungarians arises, provided that the international migration does not become dramatic. The fertility of Roma population is much higher than the rest of the population, but we can observe a significant decrease and to shift later the childbearing in case of Roma women younger than 30 years in 2002.

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**Annex**

**1. The proportion of the children out of wedlock in certain countries, 1970 – 2001**

Country	Children out of wedlock (%)						TFR
	1970	1980	1990	1999	2000	2001	2001
Australia	8.3	12.4	21.9	29.1	..	..	..
Austria	12.8	17.8	23.6	30.5	31.3	33.1	1.31
Belgium	2.8	4.1	11.6	..	..	..	1.56
Bulgaria	9.4	11.0	12.4	35.1	38.4	42.0	1.24
Czech Republic	5.4	5.6	8.6	20.6	21.8	23.5	1.14
Denmark	11.0	33.2	46.4	44.9	44.6	44.6	1.74
USA	10.7	18.4	28.0	33.0	33.2	..	2.03
Estonia	14.1	18.3	27.1	54.0	54.5	56.2	1.34
Byelorussia	7.3	6.4	8.5	17.8	18.6	20.5	1.27
Finland	5.8	13.1	25.2	38.7	39.2	39.5	1.73
France	6.8	11.4	30.1	41.7	42.6	..	1.90
Greece	1.1	1.5	2.2	3.9	..	..	1.30
Netherlands	2.1	4.1	11.4	22.7	24.9	27.2	1.71
Croatia	5.4	5.1	7.0	8.2	9.0	9.4	1.38
Ireland	2.7	5.0	14.6	30.9	31.8	31.2	1.97
Israel	0.7	1.0	1.6	..	..	..	2.89
Japan	0.9	0.8	1.1	..	..	..	1.33
Yugoslavia	11.7	10.1	12.7	20.2	20.4	..	..
Poland	5.0	4.7	6.2	11.7	12.1	13.1	1.29
Latvia	11.4	12.5	16.9	39.1	40.3	42.1	1.21
Lithuania	3.7	4.6	7.0	19.8	22.6	25.4	1.30
Luxemburg	4.0	6.0	12.9	18.6	22.1	22.3	1.66
Hungary	5.4	7.1	13.1	28.0	29.0	30.3	1.31
United Kingdom	8.0	11.5	27.9	38.8	39.5	40.1	1.63
Germany	7.2	11.9	15.3	22.1	23.4	..	1.42

## VALÉR VERES

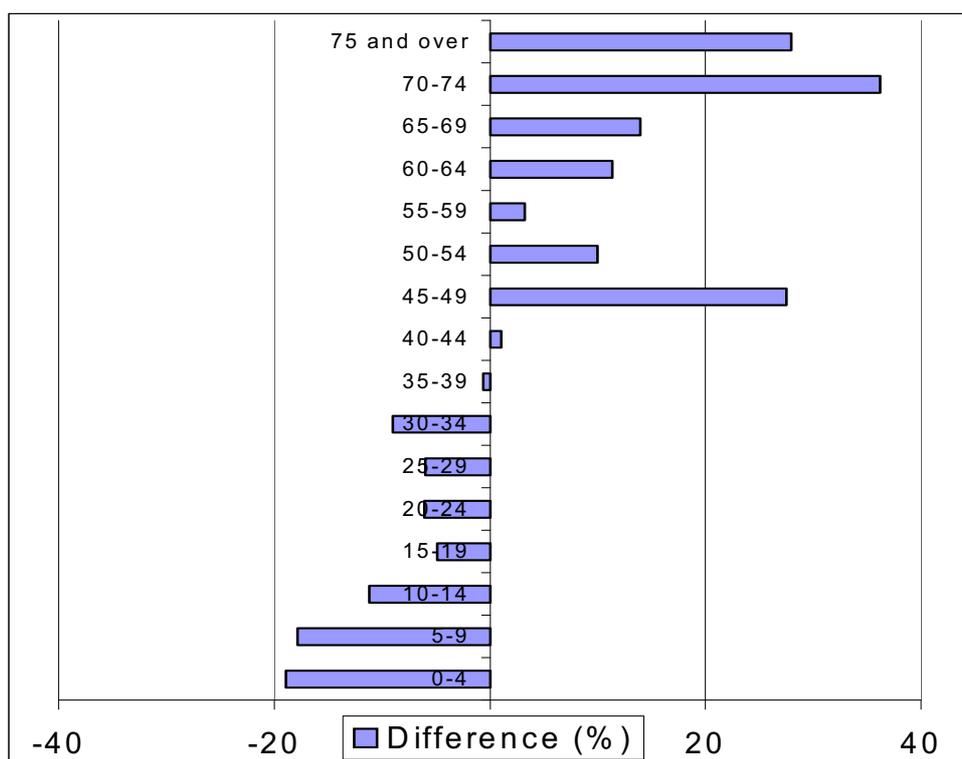
Norway	6.9	14.5	38.6	49.1	49.6	<b>49.7</b>	1.78
Italy	2.2	4.3	6.5	9.2	9.7	..	1.20
Russia	10.8	10.8	14.6	27.9	28.0	28.8	1.25
Portugal	7.3	9.2	14.7	20.8	22.2	23.8	1.46
<b>Romania</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>26.7</b>	1.24
Spain	1.4	3.9	9.6	16.3	17.7	..	1.26
Switzerland	3.8	4.7	6.1	10.0	10.7	11.4	1.41
Sweden	18.4	39.7	47.0	55.3	55.3	<b>55.5</b>	1.57
Slovakia	6.2	5.7	7.6	16.9	18.3	19.8	1.20
Slovenia	8.5	13.1	24.5	35.4	37.1	39.4	1.21
Turkey	..	2.9	4.5	..	..	..	2.51
Ukraine	9.2	8.8	11.2	17.4	..	18.0	1.10

Source: Demographic Yearbooks, UNO, Hungary, Romania, 2000—2005

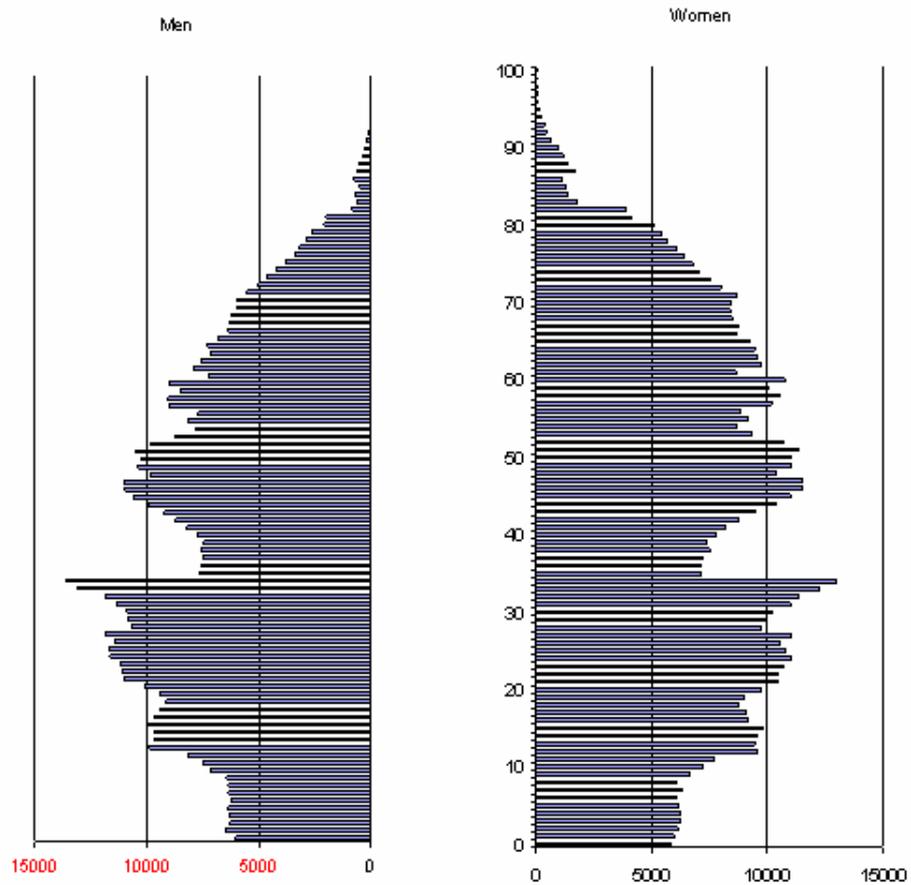
### 2. Natural increase rates in Transylvanian counties, 1980 – 2000

County	1980	1985	1989	1990	1995	2000
Alba	6,4	4,8	5,1	2,5	-2,4	-1,7
Arad	-2,1	-2,1	-1,4	-3,1	-5,6	-4
Bihor	4	2,4	2,2	0,5	0,8	-2,2
Bistrița-Năsăud	11,5	9,4	8,6	6,7	2,6	2,3
Brașov	8,5	5,7	5,3	3,7	-0,9	0
Caraș-Severin	2,2	1,4	1,3	-0,3	-3,8	-3,8
Cluj	6,5	3	2,8	1,5	-3,2	-3,2
Covasna	9,8	6,6	7,4	4,3	-0,6	1,2
Harghita	8,9	5,2	5,7	3,6	-1,2	0
Hunedoara	5,5	4,2	4,7	3	-2,3	0,1
Maramureș	11,1	9,2	8,3	6,1	1,3	0,4
Mureș	7,3	3,5	5	2,8	-2,2	-0,2
Satu-Mare	7,6	5,3	5,7	3,7	-2,9	-2
Sălaj	5,7	5,3	5,3	2,5	-2,5	-1,4
Sibiu	8,6	6	5,6	3,5	-0,2	0,5
Timiș	1,4	0,3	0,6	0,3	-3,2	-2
<b>Romania</b>	<b>7,6</b>	<b>5,4</b>	<b>5,3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-1,6</b>	<b>-0,9</b>

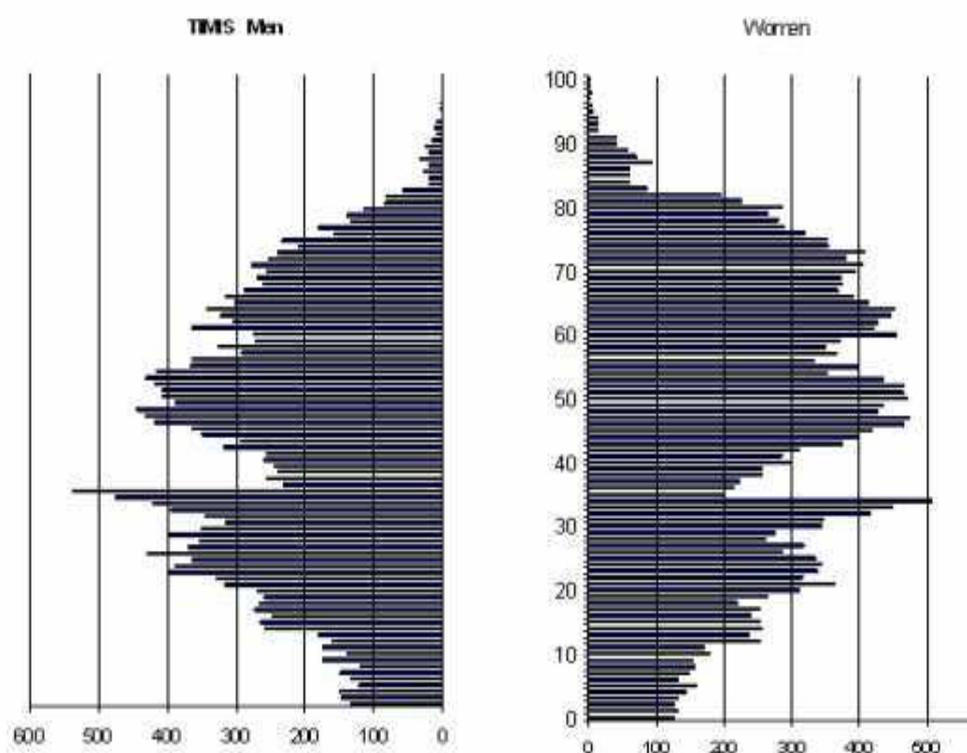
**2. Age structure differences between ethnic Hungarians and the total population from Romania (1992, 2002)**



#### 4. The age tree of Hungarians from Transylvania 2002



**5. Age tree of Hungarians from Timis county (western part), 2002**



## RECENZII

**Zsuzsa Gille, *From the Cult of Waste to the Trash Heap of History. The Politics of Waste in Socialist and Postsocialist Hungary*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007.**

Zsuzsa Gille is a Hungarian émigré, living in the US since 1988. She left Hungary as a promising youngster at the end of the socialist epoch, so that she had the opportunity to take first-hand experiences on both the socialist and capitalist systems. Important for the theme of the present book is her direct involvement within the activities of the well-known Danube Circle (Duna-kör), the environmental movement developed against the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam project on the Danube, the movement which is considered to have a decisive, at least indirect impact on regime change in Hungary. Gille now is a well-known environmental sociologist in the USA, teaching at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign, being almost the sole theorist of the specific topic of waste-policy in post-socialist contexts, particularly in Hungary. She is the author of a number of articles which consider the role and impact of the EU on environmental transition/modernization in the Central and Eastern European region (e.g. Gille, 2000, 2002, 2005).

Which is particularly powerful in Gille's writings is the fact that she takes very much into account the role of the time-scale when approaching general environmental or more specific waste related issues within the region. That is: if the majority of authors when dealing with the role of the EU, usually consider its effects, if any, since the accession, in better cases since regime-change, Gille explores very profoundly the linkages between state-socialism and today's

phenomena. Such an approach is very carefully managed within her writings, meaning that facts, no matter if they are characteristics for the socialist or the post-1990 period, are impartially measured, discussed, analyzed. As a consequence, her writings are free of 'EU-phory', full of calm, sometimes of skepticism, and frequently of humor, situational comic (!). Such a perspective is favored on the one hand by a kind of intuitive phenomenology (as far as she had the opportunity to directly experience the situations), on the other hand by the fact that she widely uses the perspective of the ethnomethodology, being interested not only in macro-social phenomena, but also in how the social and its various micro-social configurations have experienced and are actually experiencing the environmental politics, respectively its impacts, results, and shortcomings.

The present book follows the same perspective. The author considers her book primarily as an ethnography, which is however understood not only in terms of method (various types of field research, participatory observations, etc.), but also in terms of epistemology: the history of waste becomes understandable solely through the eyes of the social, respectively the waste reflects the social, after all becomes *the social*. The book comprises a huge number of micro- and macro-level representations of waste, according to social, cultural, and political contexts, interests, capabilities, etc., so that I think the most suitable term for describing the analysis is that of *cultural history of waste* within the socialist and post-socialist contexts. Gille's focus is specifically directed towards the Hungarian case, albeit the perspectives and examples developed serve (of course, with some amendments) as a useful framework for

understanding the essence of especially socialist type waste-regimes, respectively the hows and whys of post-1990 evolutions related to waste-policy.

One of the main, as well as redundant topic of macro-level oriented environmental sociology is the comparison, in terms of production inputs and outputs, between capitalist and socialist systems. Various texts which have been realized on this regard tend to locate the capitalist system as a superior to the socialist one: production processes are far more efficient, resulted by-products (i.e. waste) are fewer, as a consequence, capitalist systems are cleaner (cf. ecological modernization), compared to socialist systems which are based on out-dated technology, leaving behind mountains of by-products. Zsuzsa Gille dedicates two primary chapters for such discussions. By asking the question 'Was state socialism wasteful?', the author provides a number of arguments which support the idea that such comparisons may be risky based on the facts that 'measures of wastefulness and environmental damage are difficult to operationalize', more than this, such measurements would not be meaningful 'without an adequate analysis of the roots of wastefulness and its victims' (p. 210), there are always specific ideologies, discourses, and practices which are more complicated than the above mentioned simple hierarchy. As a consequence, the major goal of the analysis is to move 'Toward a social theory of waste' within socialist and post-socialist contexts through a number of *sui generis* case-studies and comprehensive (longitudinal) analysis.

First and foremost waste becomes a differently experienced category for the author: Gille herself has experienced (the role of intuitive phenomenology) that while within state-socialism waste is something visible, tangible, collectable, and re-usable (cf. waste fetishism), within the capitalist

US waste loses all these patterns: i.e. while the waste is usually 'metallic' within state socialism, it turns to be 'invisible', chemical, in any case something dangerous within the US. Concerning its origin, waste is the result of inefficient production processes, respectively inefficient landfilling, incineration, and re-using activities (cf. economics of shortage – Kornai, 1980) within the state-socialism, meanwhile within capitalism waste turns to be the result of over-production. From here appears, that these two systems, based on their specificities presuppose two essentially different waste-regimes, with specific production, representation, and politics of waste, so that simplistic hierarchies of which system is more environmentally friendly become nonsense otherwise systemic specificities are neglected.

Waste becomes place, thing, and time for Gille. Place is about the fact that waste-dumps are marginalized to the periphery; thing is about the hybrid character of waste, understood in the sense that waste is in the same time material and human, it is a thing produced by the society; from here the time pattern: in different times, societies have different materials, which then are replaceable into specific waste-models. Following the Hungarian case, the author considers three major periods, associated with specific waste-regimes, corresponding in fact to the three specific parts of the book: discipline and recycle (1948-1974) characterized by the 'metallic waste regime', reform and reduce (1975-1984) characterized by the 'efficiency regime', respectively its limits; privatize and incinerate (1985-present), corresponding to the capitalist-type 'chemical model' or regime.

The first epoch corresponds to 'metallic socialism', being characterized by discipline and re-use, activities which are taken place inside the so called MÉH (the acronym for the By-product and Waste Utilization Company) and Gazda-movement

(waste collection movement initiated by Gazda Géza, a representative worker within the Mátyás Rákosi Steel Works). Metaphors are evident: MÉH in Hungarian means ‘bee’, an insect considered to be hardworking; Gazda means ‘caretaker’, while the steel works synthesizes the essence of this regime: waste-collection becomes a hardworking, ritual activity, the ‘voluntary’ participants of the well-organized, pacifist movement finally end to ‘donate’ collected wastes (primarily metallic) to the Party, since after all ‘Collect iron and metal, you defend peace with this, too!’ (*Gyűjtsd a vasat és a fémet, ezzel is a békét véded!* – in Hungarian).

Through such well-organized and controlled collection-activities ‘metallic socialism’ becomes able to realize the brain-washing of the politically doubtful, weak (cf. waste) human-material as well, who finally recycle him/herself as well. At a first sight, on this regard the socialist waste-regime overloads the capitalist type efficiency-model, albeit the reality is different: the well-organized façade of ‘metallic socialism’ has generated a veritable ‘cult of waste’, which on longer term has resulted in waste-hypertrophy, i.e. the continuously activating collection-campaigns, waste-delivery quotas, etc. were ‘explicit motivation for increased waste generation’ (p. 83), meanwhile the system has lacked the necessary capacities for re-use. The accumulation of metals and other recyclable materials then was soon followed by the accumulation of non-recyclable wastes, associated with the growing chemical industry. Chemical wastes compared to metal wastes which “in general, could indeed be reused over and over again, and even if they were left to rust they did not constitute a significant source of air or water pollution” posed a much more “thorny problem” which called for two specific activities: a much more rigorous focus on source reduction and facilities for save waste treatment and dumping (p. 91).

Such evolutions from one model to another are presented through the case-study of the Budapest Chemical Works: the metallic socialism had to recognize its limits in dealing with newer kind of waste, as far as the ethos of discipline was not sufficient to deal with chemical by-products. Thus, the ‘reform and reuse’ phase (1975-1984) of the socialist waste-policy was accompanied by the successive relocation of the ‘cult of waste’ by the ‘efficiency model’. Within this model, of course, partially due to macro-economic evolutions of the ‘70s, waste becomes to be more than ideology, it turns to get monetary value (cf. the monetized concept of waste) and waste policy tends to decentralize itself from party and state control, i.e. “instead of centrally calculated waste quotas, enterprises were now free to decide which wastes they wanted to reuse, sell, treat, or dump, and they were able to be motivated by (...) financial incentives” (p. 118). Such model represents in fact a kind of socialist type ecological modernization, as far as waste management is approached through economic incentives.

Further problems associated with this efficiency model start to appear from the middle ‘80s, associated with the continuing development of chemical industry and, implicitly, with the fact that the former ‘reform and reduce’ model could not, in fact, considerably reduce the amount of generated waste which thus (as far as compared to metals is not suitable for reuse) has to be dumped somewhere and somehow. From here a veritable Babylon begins, starting with chemical processes aiming to transform some by-products to another one considered to be more re-usable than the former, continuing with transferring responsibilities from one company to the other, and ending up with the sole possibility, that of taking the waste outside the companies, somewhere can be efficiently hide.

## RECENZII

The case study is that of the village called Garé, where the Budapest Chemical Works intend to build a waste-dump in order to externalize the chemical byproducts. Such a 'chemical model' illustrates in fact those problems which were and actually are continuing to be associated with capitalist-type, primarily chemical waste, wherein hazardous, chemical wastes are frequently dumped through externalization into small, weak, marginalized communities (cf. environmental racism). The example of Garé thus stands as a specific example on this regard: the rural (Roma) community is weak in terms of economic and participatory capacities, so for the village the chemical waste-dump seems to represent the hope for a better livelihood (cf. building a castle out of shit), as far as the rural budget is going to get some incentives for letting wastes in. Ecological colonization is evident: the waste dump is built up by a Western company, and successively appear those aspects associated with the chemical model which question the so called European waste-hierarchy: waste prevention is going to be overloaded by dumping in uncontrolled, albeit invisible (since they are hidden in marginalized areas) waste-dumps.

By the time of the European accession there are a number of non-EU-conform waste dumps within the country, which have to be complied, standardized to the European norms. It happens however that through the process of Europeanisation the practice of waste-politics tends much more to reflect a so called 'Garéfication' than Europeanisation: waste prevention is continuing to be over classed by waste landfilling. Landfills however need certain places, and in this process the 'benefactor' EU clashes with 'stupid' local communities who do not want to be dumping sites for frequently foreign-capital and urban-based waste-producing agents. Thus, environmental transition or

Europeanisation, understood as the cleaning-up and standardization of the old, socialist type environmental practices, reflects much more the glocalization than Europeanisation of practices: waste-management is driven by profit-oriented economical agents, the state is nearly out-of the process, those who fight are the economic capital and the small community. The feeling of periphery remains and "culture, morality, ideologies, economic interests, social inequalities, and power struggles permeate" (p. 212) the Europeanized concept of waste-management as well.

Answering the fact which system (i.e. capitalist or socialist) is the most wasteful, respectively environmentally friendly can hardly be answered: while for socialist system waste is the result of the production which can be corrected through rationalization of production and consumption, for capitalist system waste management presupposes the role of the market. For Gille none of these approaches are correct, so that an alternative should be envisaged, that is the combination thereof, coupled with participatory approaches wherein citizens are able to effectively participate in deliberating.

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**LAURA NISTOR**

**Jacobijn Olthoff, *A Dream Denied. Teenage Girls in Migrant Popular Neighbourhoods, Lima, Peru*, Amsterdam: Dutch University Press, Latin America Research Series, 2006**

The publication of this book corresponds to a growing interest in research with young people, research which only recently considered the study of girls as an academic purpose in itself. Following feminist incentives to focus on issues related to girls, there are now studies on specific topics like: (in)equity in education, domestic work and teenage pregnancy. What this book brings as a main contribution, is its comprehensive approach of the lives of girls, in regard with a full range of issues: the family life, parenting, schooling, popular youth culture, life goals, sexuality, pregnancy, maternity, poverty and migration.

The main questions this research explores were hardly touched upon in the previous literature. The book is concerned with the position of teenage girls growing up in migrant poor communities, with regard to the intergenerational transfer of aspirations, constraints and poverty: "how do [girls] construct their own lives and futures in interaction with [this context]? Are they hopeful for the future or are they more concerned with and immersed in their day-to-day hardships?" [p.24].

*A Dream Denied. Teenage Girls in Migrant Popular Neighbourhoods, Lima, Peru* is based on an ethnographic research with girls between 14 and 18, the first generation of a migrant population from the rural to urban periphery of Lima. By using a triangulation of research methods which included interviews, participant observation, but also more innovative projective techniques, the author explores both the actual conditions girls live in, and the strategies they develop in order to make their life circumstances liveable and also motivating.

On the one hand, the book explores the intricate way in which structural constraints given by poverty, migration, unemployment, influence parents' relation with their daughters. On the other hand, the research demonstrates that girls are not passive in this process. They are active actors, capable to make sense of their world and to challenge, to a certain extent, the existing norms, to limit parents' power of control and to make the reality tolerable.

One of the main thesis Jacobijn Olthoff is sustaining through coherent argumentation is that although controversial, the theory of the culture of poverty is able to explain the situation of the people who 20-30 years ago, migrated from villages, to Lima, with the hope of making a better future for their families. Culture of poverty can explain, for example, the migrant families focus on the short term goals, or the paradoxical coexistence of the dream toward a middle class profession and the practical constraints and personal choices which prevent girls from achieving it. Under these circumstances, dreaming becomes one of the surviving strategies, adolescent girls employ.

*A Dream Denied. Teenage Girls in Migrant Popular Neighbourhoods, Lima, Peru* is a PhD thesis. It includes theoretical approaches at the very place they are needed in order to explain a certain phenomenon. In this way, the author avoids (re)creating the divide between the "theories" and the social practices. Throughout the book, theories are put to work, are helpful to illuminate, for example, the difference between girls' statements and their actions, to deconstruct the ways parents' control over their daughters, to uncover the rationales for coping with pregnancy and motherhood. The book incorporates in a perfectly balanced way, theories, observed practices, the "voices" of participants and the voice of the author.

## RECENZII

Written in a friendly and sensitive style, the book gives a perfect sense of the situations and dilemmas teenage girls from *pueblo joven* (the new village) experience. The research incorporates their knowledge by using refined distinctions between concepts (like those between *amigo especial* and *boyfriend*). Throughout the book, Jacobijn Olthoff has the professional capacity to read people's practices through theories, while being considerate to girls' experiences, warm and responsive.

The final message is rather pessimistic. While considering different types of exclusion and marginalisation embedded in the social and economic life of Lima, the structural constraints which keep migrant people out of a quality education, a formal labour market and a reliable system of social assistance, there is not much place

for envisioning a decent future for these young girls. Jacobijn Olthoff demonstrates a great command of sociological debates, a profound understanding of the circumstances from migrant popular neighbourhoods and the larger socio-economic context. All these allow her to re-think the controversies surrounding the theory on the culture of poverty and to sustain its contribution in understanding why people like those from *pueblo joven* can not break the cycle of poverty. For the time being, their possibilities for social mobility continue to be denied and passed on to the following generations.

**MARIA – CARMEN PANTEA**