Conditions of Minorities

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Identity and Diaspora Discourse

*Is not the silence of my people
the night preceding the feast?*

Hölderin

There is great need for a conceptual-theoretical analysis with respect to diaspora, which would reveal the dilemmas in connection to the scientific treatment of issues related to life in a diaspora. For I am increasingly certain that the more the various fora of public life discussed diaspora the more ambiguous the definition of diaspora and the scientific tasks related to it has become.

From the point of view of the community, diaspora is an issue of national strategy.[1] Naturally, the dimension of politics exerts an influence, what is more, can even determine the professional and scientific treatment of the diaspora issue. As a consequence of the primacy of politics, the diaspora question is present not as a professional but as a political problem in public life. Attention is paid not to the phenomenon and the process, the main features of which are believed to be known, but to moral dimension and responsibility: who does and what with respect to diaspora. It is necessary and a must to discuss general and local problems, central and local tasks, and exemplary behaviour at specific locations. In these cases, the moral dimension is important indeed. However, all this needs to be structured into a coherent and comprehensive programme based on the knowledge of a professionally grounded vision of the future, the imperatives of institutional development, and the ethnic adaptation processes. Therefore, I perceive confusion not only on the level of minority communities, but also on higher levels when considering that, after ten years of an increasingly serious attention paid at diaspora, no analyses have been prepared as yet that could serve as a basis for the elaboration of a vision of the future, and the roles of the various players have not been defined either. Casting is usually attempted within professional circles. Time that has been so lavishly wasted cannot justify that today theoretical considerations are disregarded and that the various levels of politics reject the approach, which would establish three structured tasks with respect to the diaspora. These tasks

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[1] The Jewish diaspora had a fundamentally different meaning from the meaning of Hungarian diaspora. The national strategy of Romanian governments, as indicated by the events of the 19th and 20th centuries, has been expansive. It has not taken note of the breaking off of ethnic elements and blocks, and the existence of the diaspora either. The actual understanding of the problem – consider the case of the Romanians in the Timoc Valley – is yet to take place. (West) German national strategy went through a change at the turn of the 1970s and 80s: it renounced the ethnic presence it had East Central Europe for so long, and relegated the issue into historic past by way of attracting the surviving German diaspora to settle in Germany.

are: diaspora research, the elaboration of a diaspora strategy, and the safeguarding of the diaspora. Increasing attention paid at the third task is to be welcomed. Nevertheless, this cannot happen at the expense of the other two.

László Vetési has already presented a work with which he intended to set forth a strategy (Vetési 2000). It is a work of staggering strength; its suggestions are appropriate and its outlook is broad. Besides being a competent voice in social sciences, the author is a pastor, so the moral approach to the topic is not surprising. The aim of the writing is clearly perceivable: it is to make people realise that there is a problem and make them act before it would be too late. The work of Vetési has an important role in the elaboration of a diaspora strategy. Furthermore, it points out that scientific dilemmas should be separated from those of strategy, and both should be treated separately from the establishment of short- and long-term political-social roles and tasks (Bodó 2000).

Defining the Diaspora

Analysis is to start out with a definition. Nándor Bárdi has established 6 criteria, all of which are acceptable, to be observed during the definition and description of the concept of diaspora.[2] These criteria (domain, origin, location, size, level of institutionalisation, marked problems) define a framework for diaspora definition on the basis of external characteristics. No comprehensive interpretation is possible without the consideration of the changes of the meaning of the concept of diaspora (Ilyés 2000), and the real problem of this approach is that it fails to highlight these aspects. However, it does help us establish what actually diaspora and the process of diasporisation are.

Diaspora is a medium and diasporisation is a process that enhances assimilation, including language change, the abandonment of culture or ethnic adaptation. Due to its ethnic configuration, life in a diaspora produces a way of socialisation and social relationships that do not allow one to live a full life as a social being. For the familiarity and natural character of relations that connect one to an ethnic community cease as soon as one steps out into a community of different culture.

I believe that diaspora and diasporisation are to be treated separately. In the case when, thanks to natural circumstances and the benevolence of history, cultural and political borders coincide, no diaspora develops. As long as linguistic borders do not coincide with state frontiers, diaspora will exist. When, in the case of less fortunate peoples, political borders go through significant changes, diasporisation is inevitable. Perhaps we do not even have to mention examples to illustrate how much forced settlements, removals, population exchange, and emigration contributed to the irreversibility of the course of history. In connection to the

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[2] Bárdi gave his presentation at the Conference on the diaspora of the Carpathian Basin in Nagydobrony (Velika Dobrony) in the autumn of 2001. The conference proceedings are under publication.

process of diasporisation, one is rather inclined to disregard the situation itself, the existing network of connections, the opportunities and system of relations, and include the vision of the future, as it is perceived on the basis of the process, into one's value judgement and self-assessment. Diasporisation fills the situation with direct political contents; the individual does not react and relate to the situation, but drifts with the happenings. This process, therefore, influences or even determines one's way of living.

The individual in a diaspora, since he lives in a context, in which certain significant elements of his identity differ from that of the majority community, joins the life of the local community not with the ease that a culturally coherent context could have ensured; the unity, which is automatically there in other cases, is missing here. The lack of common foundations causes problems of interpretation and relation. Consequently, the individual does not (and cannot) receive those direct experiences and impulses from the community, which help one relate to others and establish a network of relations. Because of the scarcity of relationships and the disparities in interpretation, being different becomes manifest in the pressure exerted by society, the tackling of which requires one to become aware of this. Furthermore, politics is always present and makes its influence felt, even if no specific discriminative measures have been taken. The political environment influences primarily the shaping of the social prestige of languages and cultures,[3] which means that it influences the reflexive process of ones acceptance of his dissimilitude.

In the case a natural relationship does exist, the issue of language change does not even occur. If it does, assimilation and the abandonment of one's culture do not take place because of the context. Diaspora is a context that develops an unstable awareness of one's group, makes one unsure of his relationships with the community, and triggers and enhances linguistic and cultural change. In a diaspora, the influences of the environment overwrite the naturalness of relations in one's mother tongue. Stereotypes, interpretation models, and attitudes of another linguistic and cultural community become more important, which triggers an identity change: the other, culturally dominant community will determine one's relationships and life in society. This happens not from one day to another but as a process; a feature that needs to be stressed. Consequently, diaspora entails a cumulatively disadvantageous situation with respect to the external characteristics and conditions that would be essential in the preservation of the characteristics of the individual and the group as well. Therefore, assimilation is not just one of the problems we focus on during the analysis of diaspora theory, but the problem itself.

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[3] In most of the countries of "in-between" Europe, the dislike and discrediting of minority culture and traditions were included in official politics and, in certain respects, they are present even today. Schoolbooks designed for the majority do not offer documentation on the historic and cultural presence of minorities. Furthermore, the image of the minority as projected by media and schoolbooks is disparaging. The ultimate goal is the subordination of the minority in its various relationships. See: *História,* 1989/9-10; *Kisebbségkép a tömegtájékoztatásban,* Regio, Budapest, 1993.

Assimilation is present not only in the diaspora. However, in that case the changes can take place without the individual noticing the process at all. He lives on in the community and, once the change becomes manifest, he notices the outcome of the process only. Language change may seem "natural" in the diaspora. Yet, it is not self-evident that, due to external factors, the harmony of individual and collective identity should disappear, and that the informal impulses and formal framework of community life induce the individual to this shift.

The diaspora is a minority situation but not every minority situation means life in a diaspora. Where is the dividing line, and when and on the basis of what features can we talk about diaspora? I call diaspora the context, in which, or until which, the above-mentioned process of linguistic and cultural change can seem natural (in fact, it can never be regarded as completely natural). No comprehensive research has been carried out that could have revealed the process of diasporisation in function of settlement types, size, and local institutionalisation, and would have indicated as to what extent these factors were responsible for the evolving situation. We do have partial results thanks to local research, but these are accidental and rarely attached to a research programme that would look beyond the existing situation, and map the process as well.

It is more of an accepted than a proven thesis that there are different kinds of diaspora. No wonder, therefore, that no generally accepted typology has been compiled. Typologisation based on external features could be important because it could offer a basis for the planning of objectives and measures that aim at the management of the situation.[4] The examination of external factors is an integral part of diaspora research. At the same time, relatively few or, in certain areas, surveys have been carried out that could reveal the ethnic configuration and the change or modification of linguistic borders. Yet, the dividing line between diaspora and minority could be drawn exactly on the basis of the criteria system established by these surveys. Still, it remains a question what practical considerations or interests, besides theoretical hesitation, are there to delay the start of comprehensive research.

Individual and/or Community

I am aware that, instead of a theoretical discussion, many would prefer to see this issue approached starting out from various possibilities for the management of the

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[4] Nándor Bárdi talked about ecclesiastic and denominational as well as national and ethnic diaspora. In the case of the first, the extent of the role of the church in society is an important factor. The role of the church has been increasing during the process of the change of the regime, and this can be an important factor in the slowing down of diasporisation. However, in the case of certain diaspora, even the pastors of the Calvinist Church accept that they should preach in the language of the majority when the local community is not proficient enough in its mother tongue. The next step is when Romanian becomes the language of children's programmes. This phenomenon has been present in the Roman Catholic Church even longer.

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situation and social techniques. Yet, I would like to touch upon what a full ex-
perience of one's life as a social being means, and whether and in what sense we
can talk about the self-establishing mechanisms of the individual and/or
communities. Furthermore, a theoretical perspective is never purely theoretical. In
our case, it is of key importance whether and in what ways a minority individual,
who lives in a cumulatively disadvantageous situation, can conduct his personal
life. In other words, how can he exercise self-interpretation that would help him
avoid situations, in which he would be forced to give up something that he would
not have given up in another context.

Let me point out here the observation I have made in connection to the debate
so important for the Hungarians in Transylvania, which has implicitly or explicitly
recurred since the 1930s. This observation concerns the existence-paradox
thesis of Sándor Makkai who arrived at the conclusion (that had personal
consequences in his case) that minority existence was unjust to any person. His
"it cannot be" thesis had its precedents. As early as 1931, he pointed out that
"Twelve years of minority lot and existence must have been enough to perceive
the following duty: *Hungarians in Transylvania should revise the basic problems of
their life*. The Hungarians in Transylvania have to *take those factors into account*
that entered their life in a decisive manner. The Hungarians in Transylvania, in
order to stay alive, have to see the truth of *life* and obediently adapt to this truth
(Makkai 1998:56)." Notwithstanding the validity of the warning of Makkai, I do not
agree with the latter conclusion fully. Although the debate has not been concluded
(Cseke 1995), I have not encountered a clarification I deem important, for it direct-
ly affects the diaspora. Here, I am not concerned with the "how we can" answers
and interpretations that can be established in connection to the minority's
consciousness of being a loser (Bodó 2001). Instead, I would like tall call attention
to the fact that the problem with the Makkai thesis is that it is too general. For there
are minority situations that do not force the individual to face the "it is not possible"
dilemma (it is enough to mention the various autonomies and their long tradition in
Switzerland). Yet, this thesis cannot be fully rejected either.

Makkai formulated a problem not present in the life of every person of minority
status; it is not a general problem he defined. However, there exists one social cat-
egory in which his remark is correct, and it is the diaspora. The interpretation of
Makkai is fitting for the diaspora situation, for it is unjust indeed.[5] It will certainly
remain impossible to avoid the moral dilemma of Sándor Makkai with respect to
indigenous diaspora.

Since the categories of individual and social identity lay at the crossroads of
several branches of science and trends of research, the analytical treatment of the
subject calls for at least an outline on the interpretation models established by the
various branches of science (social psychology, sociology, political science, and
social philosophy) and their relations to each other. It is to be established whether

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[5] Naturally, this does not refer to diaspora formed by those who choose migration voluntarily.

an integrative framework can be developed or not. I would like to remark that the concept of identity has been for some time considered an integrative category, which could offer a particular approach to the examination of social processes (Pataki 1982:9).

Behaviourist social psychology formulated the generally accepted principle that the self is in continuous development; it does not exist from the very beginning, at the time of birth, but develops in the course of social experiences and activity. Accordingly, it develops as a result of its relationship with the entire process and the persons participating in the process (Mead 1973:173). According to another principle of social psychology, it is always a certain proportion of the self, which is a comprehensive structure, that plays a role in interpersonal communication. It is social experience that determines which part and what proportion of the self this is. Various selves reply to various social influences. As Mead remarks, multiple personality is normal in a certain sense. Therefore, a situation may develop when a person acts in a way or says something, but thinks quite differently of these things.

In Western-type societies we can usually encounter homogeneous selves, but these too can be broken down to parts (Mead 1973:184). The homogeneity and structure of the complete self reflects the homogeneity of the whole social process: the homogeneous self is a reflection of the social process. Mead calls the social group or organised community that endows the self with its homogeneity the "general other", the attitude of which is the attitude of the whole community. A person who seeks to develop his self has to go beyond taking over of attitude that others demonstrate in his respect. He would have to adopt also attitudes connected to collective social activities or series of activities.

We can talk about the differentiation of living spaces and the end of universality of social life not only with respect to national minorities. These phenomena are concomitant to modern life. The revolution in communications brought about another phase of differentiation, which goes beyond modernity. The pluralism of values and norms that accompanies the existence of alternative cultures leads to the relativisation of values. The person finds himself alone when it comes to making decisions, and leans increasingly on his emotions. In this case, the individual has no problems with the players of social space, only the rules and the framework make him unsure of himself. For a person who belongs to a diaspora, even the identity of the players triggers decision-making: whom will that person accept as his partners? For it is only in the case of part of his surroundings that the general recognition of conventional values based on the universality of opinions can be realised. The self-image that develops within the family does not correspond any more with the image projected towards the community, and the individual needs to resolve the conflict that stems from the existence of these two images. It is to be noted that this conflict is not a direct consequence of the fragmentation of social life. The new situations, which evolve as a result of differentiation, do not question the general acceptance of values related to the common language. However, for national minorities, it is exactly the existence of the collective linguistic-cultural basis that becomes

problematic. Therefore, the unity of the "general other" is disrupted as well. In the case of minority diaspora, the foundations of the communication between the "general other" and the individual are questioned: a unity between the self and the community/social group can be conceived only within a common linguistic and cultural context.

In diaspora, harmony is disrupted even between two, otherwise relatively easily separable dimensions of national belonging: first, identity acts as a source of fundamentally positive feelings and second, it becomes subject to reflexivity, due to the questions and doubts that arise because the context acts in a way as to reduce the identity's emotional foundations. Spontaneous national identity thus gradually moves towards reflected national identity, while the knowledge on the community and the nation, that is, "easy knowledge", shifts towards "difficult knowledge" through typification, probabilities, attitudes, interpretations, values, and assessments (Csepeli 1992). The mastery of "difficult knowledge" requires education and training. This kind of knowledge is present in a relatively small layer of society. It is the intellectuals who possess and, at the same time, become consumers of the "difficult knowledge" on a nation. In a diaspora even spontaneous identity becomes intermittent and the use of the language difficult and sporadic. National (ethnic symbols) are devalued or become unintelligible (and they are consumed no more), even though these symbols, which have evolved through the interaction of culturally different groups, remain effective only as long as they carry a meaning for those who have lived among them in the course of that interactions (Fejős 1993). This is the "it cannot be" state of Makkai when identity change, assimilation takes place.

The existence of a flexible identity, which is able to preserve the essence despite the superficial changes, is not merely a theoretical question. Does identity have a root that can serve as a solid background and moral commitment throughout the changes? Several answers have been given to these important questions. Social psychology seems to be reluctant to accept either the existence of a rigid, ideologically construed identity, or that of a liquid, ever-changing and adapting identity (Pataki 1982: 315). Furthermore, it is necessary to distinguish identity and consciousness. Through identification, we recognise who those are whose ideas, emotions, interests are similar to ours. Consciousness is a defined pattern of political views and orientations of actions that derive from this similarity. Experimental research indicates that the question of consciousness and the various collective ideologies that serve the explanation of a situation greatly influence the evolution of one's identification with the group. We can talk about identification constraints in the case of disadvantaged groups. The internal dynamics of society and its nature can further intensify these constraints.

Public Life and Pattern Following

What degree of consciousness can be expected in general on the part of the members of a community? In what cases or situations can (enhanced) conscious-

ness be expected? Naturally, these questions can be formulated not only with respect to the diaspora. In theory, the answer is simple: the more varied, articulate the roles within a society/community are, the more consciousness is in the foreground. However, the continuously present unbalance between private and public life not only triggers theoretical attention, but makes us unsure as well. The multifold character of the subject matter is the first and foremost reason of this. The character of public spaces has changed; traditional public life has been surrounded by walls, which, naturally, retuned the character of relationships. While the public sphere is steadily extending and its character is becoming more and more comprehensive, the spheres of expressions in public life become more fragmented. It would be a rather interesting professional challenge to overview how, to use the expression of Sennett, the "geography" of public life (Sennett 1998:31) has evolved. However, what we all perceive is the fact that modernity has taken down the once strong wall that had separated the private and public spheres. Experiences gained in the company of strangers, "external elements", became essential in the development of the self by the mid 20th century. This led to the crisis of public life,[6] the causes of which included social and psychological circumstances, for example the drifting of the private approach toward public approach, and the self-defence of the private sphere through secrecy.

L. Trilling, by establishing the "boundless self", draws a dividing line between automatic sincerity and the authenticity of the statement. Thereby he indicates that the demand for authenticity with respect to the feelings demonstrated in front of another person wipes out the distinction between the public and private spheres. D. Riesman describes the influence that this change has on society in his work *The Lonely Crowd* (Riesman 1973), which has set off debates and elicited various interpretations. His basic proposition is that American and Western European societies are on their way of losing their internal control and becoming externally controlled societies. Although this proposition of Riesman is now usually rejected, he was the one to establish the social psychological language of the discussion with respect to this problem.

What does the ability of a community to define itself depend on and what is the extent of this ability? The ability of self-establishment in itself is not enough. The authentic depiction of characteristics is necessary as well, following which the question of resources needed for the realisation emerges. Beyond the general question, that is, how social life can be examined on the basis of personal feelings, special problems arise in a minority/diaspora situation: what changes and challenges do we regard as ours following the disruption of the homogeneity of the "general other"; and what sphere are the personality searches, so natural in the modern age, limited to (these define the direction of one's endeavours of self-realisation).

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[6] Vienna is a professionally interesting and important place in this respect, see: Jacques Le Rider: *Modernitatea vieneză și crizele identității*, Ed. Univ. Cuza, Iași, 1995.

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In diaspora, identity disorder may easily become permanent as ethnicity, which characterises the linguistic and cultural community, comes into conflict with modernisation. Three factors are to be taken into account in the process of self-establishment: tradition, that is, the aspect of relevance; the social norm that indicates the desirable, socially expected behaviour; and the question of behaviour control that concerns objectivation, one of the functions of which is the control of the genetic-biological programme. Maybe the social norm is the most puzzling and least explained aspect, which is in part due to its multifold character. If the question of normativity is scarcely explained in general, this is even more so with respect to diaspora.

What self-assessing mechanisms are at work in the diaspora and what kind of collective selection can take place in it? Even the forms of the most clearly effective tradition – customs and rites that create particular formations of consciousness of values – are heterogeneous. They are rarely relevant with respect to the decisions of everyday life and their interpretation is ambiguous. The threefold articulation of normative objectivations entails soft traditions, hard legal regulation, and the moral norms between these two (Pataki 1988: 169). Besides these, there is a series of further normative, prescriptive formations, such as conventions, the etiquette, fashion, various rules, etc., the systemisation of which is problematic. For this reason, Pataki emphasizes the essential elements of social normativity: desirability, regulation, and some form of a regulation. The above-mentioned elements of normativity take the collective subject for granted. It appears as the bearer of these acts. This subject is closely connected to the way public opinion operates.

Many doubts have been revealed with respect to the coercive nature of public opinion as well. Although it works well in politics, it is always a question who will become the representative of the collective subject with respect to social relation-ships.

Dahrendorf differentiates three types of socially expected roles in one of his earlier works: the muss/must, soll/be, and kann/can expectations (Dahrendorf 1959). The moral norms, the etiquette, and the conventions are ones that will never have to be transformed into legal texts. Given that normative pluralism prevails in modern society, we are to expect normative relativity. In these cases public opinion has no effect. It is not clear who can authentically represent popular opinion. In theory, the dilemma can be overcome with the introduction of the competent, referential public opinion. The individual chooses the public opinion reference point and aligns himself according to that, be it a political movement, a generation, a local community, or a subculture.

However, not even general public opinion seems to work in the diaspora: it does not exist, or it does not exert an influence. The options the individual faces are the following: he breaks with the social space that could establish a framework and govern the choices of individual roles. Another option occurs when this space is not manifest and, therefore, becomes symbolic and, before long, imperceptible.

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Furthermore, in a diaspora it is exactly the internal cohesion, the solidarity that vanishes, which otherwise could form the basis of the referential public opinion.

According to the picture, which evolves on the basis of what has been said, the diaspora is a marginal case, an exception to the endeavours that act with the rigidity of theory. Let us try once again and, this time, choose another theoretical framework in conformity of our goals.

Niklas Luhman understands relationships, connections, and dependencies under social system that rationally and mutually infer each other (Luhman 1980). Accordingly, every individual is in connection with his environment. The novelty of Luhman's theory is the indication of the dividing line between external and internal space. In his opinion two qualities exist: the system and its environment, and the dividing line runs between them. Social systems are differentiated and complex: any component can be connected to any other. The main problem with social systems is that they are highly complex. This complexity has to be reduced. According to Luhman, there exist islands the complexity of which is lower than their social environment. Yet, a further question is how these islands react to the influences coming from the environment. Luhman, based on an example in biology, introduces the concept of "self-organisation"[7]. For him, this indicates the self-reproducing and self-conserving ability of social systems. That is, it establishes the independence of the systems, while indicates their openness as well. In the interpretation of Luhman, self-organisation (autopoiesis) means not closedness but the ability of the system to react to external influences in a way that secures its continued existence.

Our conclusion on the basis of Luhman's model is that a diaspora is unable to reproduce itself. It is unable to preserve itself. It is unable to produce those elements of ethnic identity, through which the community could secure its existence in conformity with its ethnic identity. External intervention, institutions, and certain population movements (that could strengthen the community ethnically) are required for a community to continue to exist. A diaspora, which breaks off the block and lacks the institutions that draw on outside sources, liquidates itself.

How can we categorise the minority individual who lives in a diaspora and shifts identity? Can we say that he is a well-behaved citizen who has adapted to actual political-social circumstances without criticism. Should we then consider him a compliant citizen? According to Gramsci, the demand for the acceptance of group norms and the inclination for conformism are universal (Gramsci 1970). Professional literature stresses the importance of this in the case of two fields: politics and the youth. Since the political connection of diaspora existence in undeniable, it is to be considered interesting that no research has begun on the connections of diaspora and conformity. For this reason, I would only like to allude to this subject matter and indicate that in so far as conformism is to be interpreted as self-denial,

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[7] The biologist Maturana introduced the concept of self-organisation – autopoiesis, an essential characteristic of living systems.

as the acceptance of external forces instead of internal ones, then this pertains to the diaspora (as well). Furthermore, it is undeniable that the individual may seem a conformist in many cases, when he only conceals his conviction because he is afraid of taking up his independence openly. The individual is hiding. However, while conformism in general serves continuity and non-conformism is considered an exception, in the case of the diaspora the result of the concealment is the inability of the community to formulate openly what exactly that community is like. It vanishes, which equals to its termination.

In the case of conformity, we face a peculiar form of conviction and adaptation. In the diaspora, we can encounter lack of conviction, that is, adaptation comes about not because of some powerful positive influence, but because of the lack of it. It is another question that conformism is usually not simply adaptation, but alignment, or, even more so, compliance and resignation (Karikó 1995). It does not matter in this case, whether this shift is sincere or not. The result would be important but we have no relevant data. No matter why the ethnic shift occurred, the accepting party does take note of one's being different and reception is never complete in the case of the person who makes the shift.

Civil Ideal and Diaspora

The structure of the consciousness of one's identity changes in a diaspora: the consciousness of one's origins takes the place of operative values and identification patterns; instead of identity, we see a consciousness of one's origins. This shift of roles entails a profound change. The consciousness of one's origins that replaces identity as the interpretative framework is only one of the many components of identity. We encounter reduction when the individual structures his attachment morally: he acknowledges his ascendants. This consciousness of one's origins is unable to substitute the influence that values and patterns have in a minority context.

Looking at the map of the Bánság presented by László Sebők, we can perceive how much this statement corresponds to reality. Let me refer to the typology of Bárdi once again: I will regard a settlement as diaspora when the proportion of the minority population is below 10 percent. In the Bánság (Banat) and Temes (Timis) county there are 82 local governments, with a Hungarian population in 75 of these settlements. With the exception of two small cities and 6-7 villages, all qualify as diaspora. Although the Hungarian population is above 10 percent, even the two small cities can be considered diaspora because of the circumstances of Hungarian education and institutions. When we look at education in the mother tongue, we can perceive serious problems everywhere except in Temesvár (Timisoara) and two villages. In the majority of these settlements, in some 65 of them, there are only a few dozen Hungarians. Therefore, not only administrative institutions are missing but also ecclesiastic ones: the priest arrives for service once or twice a month. The spiritual leader, on whom much could depend in

connection to the shaping of identity, does not live the life of the small group (we cannot even talk about community); he does not have a responsibility or role with respect to the locals. Educational institutions are out of the question,[8] so the local Hungarians (and the same is true for Germans and Serbs) in these settlements are left without a spiritual leader.

Can we talk about complete abandonment? Here, we encounter a paradox: while virtual institutions transform the system of relations in politics, various professions, and NGOs and influence all fields of life, their introduction has not yet occurred with respect to the above-mentioned problems. Yet, these could provide the only realistic solution to them. Networks, information and service systems based on computer technology and communication systems integrate into the everyday life of professional groups, and create living and dynamic structures, but have not made it into the field, where they could produce a real break-through.

With respect to schools, we can perceive the difference between consciousness of origins and acknowledged identity in so far as in Transylvania the Hungarians in Temes county are the ones to enrol their children in Romanian schools in greatest numbers: 76 percent of these school-age children study in Romanian schools. However, it is interesting to note that these Hungarians voted according to their origins at the parliamentary elections, that is, to the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ), in proportions corresponding to their proportion among the Hungarians in Transylvania. Another remark we can make in connection to schools is that children often lack religious education as well. Religious education takes place at schools, where, however, there are hardly any examples of occasions when the Orthodox teachers invite other denominations. We can therefore conclude that the path leads toward majority culture even with respect to religious life.

The conclusion we can draw so far is that the mother tongue and the inherited culture becomes a private matter of the individual in a diaspora. No or little help comes from the state or the church. It is a mistake, however, to think that I discard the diaspora. It is strategy that requires clear wording and the indication of whom we can and have to turn to during the planning of the preservation of the diaspora.

It is a general phenomenon today that increasingly more questions, tasks, and cases are left to the citizen.[9] To put it differently: the citizen feels it in connection to more and more fields that he can and has to act. We can perceive an increasing self-protection of societies both in the West and the East, the reason of which is, according to András A. Gergely, the loss of an organic character and the excessive strengthening of the role of the state (A. Gergely 1991). I shall not venture to follow through even the most important remarks as regards the "law of survival of civil

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[8] In villages of 200–300 inhabitants only one combined class of grades 1–4 operates. When also Romanians live in a village (even if in proportions much smaller than Hungarians), Romanian becomes the language of teaching. [Magyarszentmárton (Sinmartinu Maghiar), Keresztes (Cruceni)].

[9] As the saying goes: politics is such an important business that it cannot be entrusted to politicians only.

society" but I cannot bypass the question as to whether the omnipresent civil ideal can help at all or provide a solution with respect to the diaspora?

From a theoretical point of view, it is not the revival of the concept of the civil ideal after 250 years that put us on our guard but the fact that everybody and everywhere uses it as a cure to every problem. As an example, it is enough to mention that I encountered studies on the business partnerships that flourished in the 1970s, which considered these formations as forms of resistance under the flag of the civil ideal, opposing the society of those times. These studies regarded the sphere of private entrepreneurship as a part of civil society, and interpreted the economic initiatives of the Hungary of the 70s on the basis of the category of the civil ideal.

Adam Seligman writes in part funnily and in part with annoyance: "Today... civil society is used in so many contexts and with so many meanings... that one just expects to encounter an article on Civil Society and the Carburettor of Explosive Engines. (Seligman 1997:14)" Here, we refer not to the role of civil society that contributes to pluralism and serves as a prerequisite of democracy, but to the intellectual contents that form the essence of civil existence: the dialectics, full of tension, of private and public. The existence of a person interpreted as a moral being is the result of the long process, in the course of which personality developed. Personality, to refer to Max Weber, can be derived from the religious paradigm connected to reformation; its existence was then confirmed by the declaration of human and civil rights.

Seligman points out that today's East Central Europe exemplifies the problems that derive from the modern application of the civil society concept. While, in the West, people complain about the disappearance of community involvement, in the part of Europe where democracy is a new phenomenon, people attempt the creation of an autonomous public space under the flag of civil society (Seligman 1997:22). At the same time, civil society has a role in realpolitik, and gains significance not in the theoretical description of the processes but in the organisation of society. Several social and environmental movements draw upon the conceptual tools of the civil society with an ideological purpose. The main themes connected to the civil sphere are human rights, the intangibility of the private sphere, and freedom of conscience. These attempt not simply to transform the relations between state and civilians but to rethink the theoretical framework of these relations.

The issue of civil rights in the Eastern part of Europe and the North-western Balkans comes to the forefront not with respect the relation between definition and contents but because of the discrepancy between the concepts of fairness and social solidarity, which has made the civil ideal motivational and also interpretative framework of social movements. There is a warning in the remark of Lipset: where rights – primarily political and economic rights – are restricted, there strong movements will arise (Lipset 1983).

Restrictions characterise the basic experience of minorities. Even if rights exist *de jure*, their *de facto* assertion is rather limited. While, with respect to the majority, the civil ideal is about the realisation of the natural prerequisite – a share from the

social legacy – of the civil status, in a minority context this issue becomes loaded with opposition. The objective is not the forcing of the acknowledgement of certain rights under the banner of social fairness, but the transformation, the redrafting of the operation of society in a way as to realise the political-economic conditions of one's belonging to a community. With respect to minorities, the problem is not that individual rights should be respected but the lack of a criteria system for the development and acknowledgement of their collective identity.

We have two questions to answer. First, can the redrafting of the general problem amongst local circumstances bring something into the system that would make the management of the situation feasible? Second, we encounter the dilemma whether or not there is a local elite stratum that is able and willing to give preference to collective as opposed to individual development?

The redrafting of the general problem at the local level personifies and, therefore, entails much more specific expectations of roles. Accordingly, the answer is yes to the first question. Experience reveals that there is an elite in every community that is (would be) able to accomplish the given task. The question is, really, one of motivation: does this elite want to commit itself to a minority role? According a survey we carried out in the diaspora of the cities and villages of the Bánság in 1998, the local elite does not want to be Hungarian elite, but strives for the status of a general elite. The economic elite systematically bypasses the Hungarian political elite in the establishment of its relationships. Therefore, no direct relations, natural communication, and interdependence develop on the local level between the various, that is, political, economic, and cultural elites. While the political and cultural elite are connected to the ethnic community, the economic elite rarely (Bodó 2002). In lack of a united elite, the civil path toward the assertion of interests does not lead anywhere.[10] There exist certain programmes. Among these the VÖCSÖK programme of 1998 supported by the RMDSZ branch in Temes county, or the establishment of virtual local governments. These aimed at the selection of persons within a community who would be able and willing to perform the political representation of the minority. Among the some two dozen participants, nobody assumed such tasks following the end of the programmes.

Hungarian communities in Voivodina and Transcarpathia become increasingly homogeneous. They are unable to produce their own elite, their leaders who would not only overview and interpret the processes but stand up for the minority

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[10] Zsombolya (Jimbolia) in Temes county has a symbolic meaning: in 2000, a Hungarian was elected mayor in a city, where only 17 percent of the population is Hungarian. At this same place, the Hungarian school is about to be closed, and local teachers are the "best" examples as to how unimportant it is to hold on to education in one's mother tongue. The repeated over and over: they want quality education for their children and, therefore, enrol them in Romanian education. The mayor who won at the election is among those entrepreneurs, who can afford to send his children after the 5th grade to Temesvár, to a school where the language of teaching is Hungarian. This might be the beginning of the development of a new model, that promises a positive change: that the economic elite may in fact assume a leading role within the ethnic community.

actively. This is true in the case of diaspora in general. A diaspora is usually unable to produce an elite, and the experience of the years of political transformation has proven this vividly. The promising young people leave and settle at places where their personal development encounters fewer factors of uncertainty.

The general moral load – a new responsibility and solidarity – behind the civil ideal does not appear as a separate factor with respect to the diaspora. Here, the objective is the establishment of the autonomous and self-regulating public space. The influence of the civil ideal can become more marked when the intention of self-realisation turns into a more generally acknowledged demand for autonomy. Until then, we will have to content ourselves with an incomplete society incapable of normal functioning. We again reach the conclusion that local initiatives, even if they become manifest, wither in lack of external motivation and support.[11]

Status and Law

Hungarian minority policy seeks to help Hungarian diaspora, which, with the exception of a short period, has meant helping the diaspora to survive in their home-state. The Act on Hungarians living in neighbouring states, adopted in 2001 (also referred to as Benefit Law or Status Law), stated that it was conceived "in order to ensure the well being of Hungarians living in neighbouring states in their home-state, to promote their ties to Hungary, to support their Hungarian identity and their links to the Hungarian cultural heritage as expression of their belonging to the Hungarian nation."

Several studies were written about the legal status of the parts of the nation beyond the borders in the preparatory phase of the Benefit Law.[12] Issues concerning legal regulation can be divided into two groups. First, what legal framework could describe the paradigm of the new (contractual) national structure (Borbély 2001)? Second, what questions of codification and legal technique emerged during the drafting of the text of the act (Varga 2001). I included the question as to how does European/international law handle the problem of responsibility for national minorities living outside the mother country in the first group.

Judit Tóth calls Hungarian legal regulation with respect to non-Hungarian citizens of Hungarian nationality diaspora law (Tóth 1999), which, naturally refers not only to the groups and communities we defined as diaspora above. It is interesting to consider in what way it is possible to record ethnic attachment in legal terms. Yet, a more important question concerns the tendentious character of

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[11] In 2001, the RMDSZ branch in Temes county initiated a civil development programme: it helped the establishment of local societies and their registration even financially to make the inhabitants of the area realise that they could and should involve external resources in community projects.

[12] Perhaps the most complete list of works in connection to the Status Law and related issues has been compiled by Zoltán Varannai and Zoltán Kántor. It will be published in the volume *A státustörvény: dokumentumok, tanulmányok, publicisztika* [The Status Law: Documents, Studies, Articles], edited by Zoltán Kántor and published by Teleki László Foundation (2002).

Conditions of Minorities

the legal drafting of the responsibility for national minorities living outside the mother country.

Although interesting and particular questions arise in connection to the diaspora because of the Status Law – to what extent can such a law reach the diaspora, can the certificate of primarily symbolic character enhance dissimilation amongst a decreasing general interest in ethnic features –, what is truly interesting is not the law itself but the theoretical model that forms the basis of codification and the reception of the law.

The principle present in Hungarian minority policy can be perceived in the Act of 1993 on the protection of minorities in Hungary. The government sought to draft a law that would reflect exemplary minority policies in terms of international standards, and has an effect on neighbouring countries and their minority policies. The Hungarian model grants power to the elected bodies of the minorities (Bíró 1995:17), so that they would be able to advocate the particular interests of the minorities, even with respect to state institutions, should this be necessary. The Hungarian legal system recognised the existence of collective rights. In connection to collective rights, the Venice Commission defines four groups of countries in a 1994 document: a) one that recognises collective rights, b) one that includes certain aspects of collective subjectivity into its legal system, c) one that recognises individual rights but accepts the existence of autonomies as well, d) one that recognises only individual rights (Kovács 1996:175). The Commission put Hungary into category a) and Romania into category d).

The Venice Commission issued its position on the benefits provided by mother countries for the protection of minorities living beyond its borders in October 2001. Since the document analyses national legal systems, it deals only with countries, in which regulation exists in this respect at all (in chronological order: Austria, Slovakia, Romania, Russia, Bulgaria, Italy, Hungary) (Venice Committee 2001). We can perceive considerable differences according to the character and scope of these documents. Furthermore, these laws do not necessarily reflect the main features of the policies that deal with national minorities abroad. For these two reasons, it may be interesting to look at the following typology. On the basis of the events of the past decades in Europe, the following models can be identified with respect to nationality policies:

- the German model: relative-centred, the aim is the unification of the members of the nation; it accepts and promotes migration into the mother country;
- Romanian model: territory-centred, the aim is the unification of all territories, where parts of the nation live; even though this objective is not asserted, it is not denied either;
- Hungarian model: identity-centred, the aim is the preservation of the Hungarian identity of Hungarians who live in historically predetermined home-states today.

Looking at the question from the perspective of the European integration process, the Hungarian model comes closest to the philosophy of the united Europe. Strangely,

Romania became the best example of the German model, since some 300,000 Germans migrated back into Germany from there under the flag of the "coincidence" of the German and Romanian models.

While the German and Romanian models are in harmony, the Romanian and Hungarian model are (in part) mutually exclusive. On this basis, the reception of the Status Law was predictable; and this reception is decisive with respect to the situation and the future of the diaspora. Romania, which does not recognise collective rights and managed to transform successfully the ethnic aspect of Dobrudja in only fifty years (Iordachi 2001). Moreover, almost 1 million Germans have disappeared from Romania leaving only their memory behind. Accordingly, Romania was expected to receive the Status Law irritably and to reject it. That this happed indeed was no surprise, since the Law openly declared that it sought to establish and promote structures that would facilitate the preservation of the identity of national communities beyond the borders.[13]

Although a Romanian-Hungarian agreement has been concluded with respect to the Status Law, it is interesting to examine what the circles close to the Romanian government think the objective of this law is (which minorities perceive as a moral and financial source of the preservation of identity). According to the 2001/8 publication of the Institute for Communication Analysis that prepares internal analyses for the government in Bucharest, the introduction of the Hungarian certificate is an instrument that entails the establishment of a pressure group within Romanian political life. Its direct objective is to artificially increase the number of the Hungarians, while the long-term objectives are: the autonomy of Transylvania, control over Romanian politics, and the establishment of Hungarian statehood within the borders of another state. The structure, which operates based on the model of the ethnic Dyas, is the administrative colonisation of Romanian with the help of Hungarian foundations (Bursa 2001).

There are differences in the reception of the Status Law from one Hungarian community to another as well: there are significant differences not only according to countries (there is a greater interest in obtaining Hungarian certificates in Transcarpathia than in Transylvania), but also according to the block or diaspora character of the communities. Applications submitted for the Hungarian certificate in January–February 2002 were 30 percent less in Temes county (diaspora) than the Transylvanian average. The question arises, therefore, as to how effective a unified approach, which disregards the differences between national minorities beyond the borders, can be in tackling this problem? The spirit of the law would require the different treatment of Hungarian blocks and diaspora beyond the borders (since they cannot reproduce ethnicity to the same extent) if we are to expect similar results from legal regulation everywhere.

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[13] The Hungarian–Romanian agreement of December 2001 related to the Status Law resolved the basic conflict. However, by the abolition of the institution of the certificate for the relatives, the agreement violates one's right to a freely chosen identity, which, however, the drafters of the Hungarian Status Law had recognised.