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"STATIC MIGRATION" RESHAPING ETHNIC IDENTITIES IN THE PROCESSES OF GLOCALIZATION

Ildikó HORTOBÁGYI[1]

Abstract: *In a world which is currently undergoing new processes of socio-economic and geo-political realignment not only migration but also continuous adaptation to the changing local environment leads people to develop multiple identities. Considering as a starting point the on-going mutations characteristic of well functioning multicultural and multilingual western societies, my paper examines the shifts that occur in asserting one's ethnic identity without physically leaving the region. The paper, based on an interdisciplinary comparative approach, aims to investigate socio-economic and communication factors related to trade and travel that influence the cultural perception of the self in an intercultural community.*

Key words: *multiple identities, intercultural, multicultural, cosmopolitan.*

1. Introduction

This paper is part of a large-scale research which aims to confirm the hypothesis that Hungary – similar to other Central and Eastern European countries – is gradually (re-)developing multicultural awareness, which subsequently entails higher visibility and a more open identity assertion within the different ethnic groups present in contemporary society. This may seem to be a most ambitious and daring enterprise, as choosing relevant items for a short paper has proved to be a most difficult task. In view of the latest unfolding events related to minority issues in the region, it seemed quite challenging to start examining similar situations throughout Europe in general, and Hungary's neighbouring countries in particular. Consequently the paper intends to highlight some Hungarian aspects involving the concept of multiple identities and visibility of minorities in Hungary.

The paper begins with a brief justification of the title, which will hopefully legitimize the ardent need to start a conscious development of minority awareness and understanding at all societal levels. The second part lists the most current factors which facilitate the creation and subsequently the open assertion of multiple identities. The third part tackles the role of foreign companies in reducing the process of otherization, whereas the fourth one wishes to illustrate how international and more specifically interregional student mobility can be beneficial to the development of an intercultural environment.

[1] University of Pannonia, Veszprém, Hungary.

2. How can migration be static?

In a world which is currently undergoing new processes of socio-economic and geo-political realignment not only migration but also continuous adaptation to the changing local environment leads people to develop plural identities (Hortobágyi 271). Therefore I have opted for the two terms – though logically and mutually excluding each other – to highlight from a different angle the benefits of trade and travel, two of the most important components of globalization. In line with the benchmark concepts of present-day research focusing on the role of travel and trade in developing a cosmopolitan identity, I define as "static" the non-mobile members of the society who are spending most of their lives in one particular place, i.e. within the borders of a specific country or region. Meanwhile "migration" refers to the concept of trade and business, and also relates to commodified elements of the hyperlinked global world which are appropriated and translated into local contexts. In the European Union the rapid growth of electronic communication and the emergence of English as a lingua franca provide Europeans with easy access to the cultural and literary heritage of a large array of nations. Although many citizens are beginning to experience different cultures at first hand, many social and cultural concepts often remain unknown outside national borders (Anderman 6). Consequently an important element of static migration is the presence of high quality translations and voices that speak across cultural borders.

Data of a March 2010 opinion poll (TÁRKI online) on the willingness of Hungarians to travel and work abroad for a shorter or longer period of time suggests that a relatively high percentage of the Hungarian population would be ready to live and work in a foreign country. (The average percentage – 12-14 % – can be considered high in relation to the monolingual and apparently monocultural texture of the country.) In reality most people acquire intercultural competence through the elements of glocalized culture transmitted among others by the presence of inter- and multinational companies, which quite often level off minority differences in a society.

Year	Short-term %	Long-term %	Immigration	Migration potential
1993	4	3	1	6
1994	4	3	1	5
1997	4	3	2	6
2001	9	7	3	10
2002	8	6	3	10
2003	9	6	3	12
2005	13	6	3	14
2006	6	6	4	7
2008	11	11	6	16
2010	7	8	5	13

Source: TÁRKI Monitor and Omnibusz database, 1993 - 2010 (January)

At this point it is worth quoting the words of a second generation Hungarian-Polish young man in his early twenties: "I think that globalization helps minorities to adopt and to show their own culture to others. The minorities also adopt elements of global popular culture, just like the people of the foreign country they live in. This process, namely that both cultures adopt the same elements from a third party, brings the two cultures together." It is also important to note that ethnic and racial minorities, who – from the 1990s onwards have been referred to as cultural minorities – are encouraged to share their cultural difference with the mainstream. Nowadays a tendency towards being proud of being different is also discernible. Nevertheless there is more to one's identity than a photo in the identity card or a social security number. Thus it is difficult to define exactly whether identity is "what the public sees or the

inner self. Some would argue that virtual identity is a truer reflection of self than someone's image in the real world." (Chan 123)

As mentioned before, traditionally a monocultural and monolingual country, currently the Hungarian society is undergoing processes through which the cultural minorities are becoming more visible. Several factors that have contributed to this phenomenon are outlined below.

3. Factors influencing identity assertion

From a historical perspective, in the early centuries of the young nation (9th century), Hungary used to be fairly multicultural. Suffice to remember the first king's teachings to his son on the power of a multinational country. In Saint Stephen's Admonitions to his Son Emeric Admonition 6 stresses the role of foreigners (the king actually refers to them as guests) in the country: "Because a country using only one language and having only one custom is weak and frail."

Historically Hungary has always been home to various nations until the end of World War I when the country became a nation-state. The process of cultural levelling continued markedly after World War II following massive population dislocation which led to almost total assimilation by the 1960s. In comparison to this era, currently in Hungary people of different ethnic backgrounds are asserting their identities more openly. This process is also facilitated by the legal background provided by Act LXXVII of 1993 on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities and Act CLXXIX of 2011 on the Rights of Minorities according to which, in view of the historical co-existence of the Hungarian majority with national and ethnic minorities, the Hungarian Parliament by creating the act guarantees all the rights of persons belonging to minorities as Hungarian citizens and their communities, ensuring not only their human rights, but also political rights that enable them to promote the preservation of their national or ethnic identities. The aim of this Act is to establish the institutional basis necessary to ensure that citizens can lead the lives as members of minorities in compliance with "the provisions of the international documents created in the interest of the protection of minorities with Hungary's active participation, with special regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of the United Nations Organization, the work performed within the framework of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Copenhagen Document, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of the European Council and the enforcement of the provisions of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of Minorities". (Act CLXXIX of 2011, *Preamble*). In order to understand the new multicultural texture of Hungary, it is important to elicit that "all ethnic groups resident in Hungary for at least one century are minorities which are in a numerical minority amongst the population of the State, are distinguished from the rest of the population by their own language, culture and traditions and manifest a sense of collective affiliation that is aimed at the preservation of these and at the expression and protection of the interests of their historically established communities." (1§ paragraph 1). As such thirteen national groups – Armenian, Bulgarian, Croatian, German, Greek, Polish, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Serb, Slovak, Slovenian and Ukrainian – are defined as national groups native in

Hungary. On the basis of the 2001 national census, 442 738 people (4% of the population) declared themselves as belonging to one of the national or ethnic minorities. Nevertheless estimates would raise this percentage as high as 8-10%. To these historical ethnic groups add all other foreign citizens who in the past two decades have opted to settle down in Hungary temporarily or permanently. According to 2001 Census database, a decade earlier 782,270 people asserted affiliation to a different minority. The latest national census was carried out in 2011, the results are expected in the summer of 2012.

Like most modern societies in the world, Hungary is also affected by and affecting aspects of globalization, both in socio-economic and in cultural domains. New cultural behaviours and multiple identities develop as a result of:

- multinational companies (foreign people managing/working together with mainstream Hungarians) and joint enterprises along the borders;
- the spread of multicultural/ multilingual media (internet, music, movies in original, documentaries from neighbouring countries, aspects covered by the umbrella term of text migration);
- tourism.

For a better understanding of the process and the tendencies, data related to foreigners in Hungary have been analyzed in comparison with some neighbouring countries. To illustrate this I have chosen the following dimensions:

- Inflows of asylum seekers (1992-2007/ in thousands): a steep increase can be seen from 0.9 in 1992 through a visible boom from 0.7 to 7.4 in 1998 to reach 9.6 thousand in 2001, then a levelling off around a yearly average of 1.9 thousand.

	92	94	96	98	00	01	03-07
Czech Republic	0.9	1.2	2.2	4.1	8.8	18.0	n.d.
Hungary	0.9	0.4	0.7	7.4	7.8	9.6	1.9
Romania	0.8	n.d.	0.6	1.2	1.4	2.4	0.5
Slovak Republic	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.5	1.5	8.4	0.2

Source: Geddes 2003, OECD 2003 (Yilmaz 241), Schöderköping Process 2003-2007

- Inflows of foreign population (1990-2000/ in thousands): It is interesting to remark that in 1990, following the changing of the political regime, 37.2 thousand people entered Hungary, the main gates of entry having been the inflow of "co-ethnic" return migrants and their dependent family members, followed in subsequent years by temporary and long-term labour migration, family reunion and family formation and the inflow of asylum seekers. (From 1994 onwards this number has stabilized around 12 thousand people per year.)

	90	92	94	96	98	00
Czech Republic	0.9	1.2	2.2	7.4	7.9	4.2
Hungary	37.2	15.1	12.8	12.8	12.3	n.d

Source: Geddes 2003 (Yilmaz 242)

- Foreign and foreign-born population (2005): In Hungary foreign people represented 1.4 % of the population, while foreign-born ones 3.1, relatively lower than in contiguous neighbouring Central European countries. (According to estimates at the moment there are 170-180 thousand foreigners in the country.)

	Foreign nationals	Foreign-born nationals		
	in 1,000	% (2005)	in 1,000	% (2005)
Czech Republic	254	2.5	453	4.4
Hungary	142	1.4	316	3.1
Romania	26	0.1	103	0.6
Slovak Republic	22	0.4	124	2.3

Source: Foreign-born population: OECD Data Base, Eurostat, national sources; (Yilmaz 242)

In addition to the existing ethnic and national minorities, in Hungary there are slowly increasing Western-European, American, Latin American and Asian communities. If we wished to position Hungary into one of the two major societal patterns, we might affirm that in the past few years Hungary seems to have been displaying elements both of an intercultural society, where minorities and foreigners are expected to fully assimilate (both socio-culturally and linguistically, e.g. like in France or Germany) and a multicultural society, which allows minority groups to live in an environment relatively different from the mainstream (where the state provides minority education, collective rights, civic facilities, the best examples for such societies being the United Kingdom and the United States of America).

In order to assist the emergence of conscious intercultural awareness acquiring media literacy should be listed among the educational priorities of the young generation. When decoding media messages proper background knowledge is imperative. According to the results of an opinion poll conducted in March 2010 (Népszava Online), Hungarians – at least statistically – show visible signs of xenophobia. 25% of the interviewed would refuse foreigners' entry, 57% would consider it and only 10% would welcome them into the country. Signs of mutual avoidance can also be discovered among the immigrant groups. Generally speaking all entrants reported willingness to accept Hungarians as friends. Nevertheless, while most Ukrainians and Turks would not mind allowing Hungarians to join their families, the Chinese and the Vietnamese have proved to be more reserved in this respect: 4 % of the interviewed Chinese wouldn't like Hungarians to live in their close neighbourhood, and only 13 % of the Vietnamese would definitely accept Hungarians as close neighbours. Only 50 % of the Arabic population would allow Hungarians to become family members, but the remaining 50 % would definitely accept them as close friends.

These apparently incoherent and inconsistent aspects of mapping intercultural competence in isolated situations clearly show that in discussing issues related to identity assertion the range of reference is extremely wide, therefore our reflection on a relatively specific aspect might bear strange fruit.

4. Foreign companies and multiple identities

In what follows the paper outlines the findings of research related to the role of foreign companies on the one hand in reshaping cultural identity, on the other hand in attenuating the process of stereotyping and otherization. Far from covering all foreign companies investing in Hungary, the 'Multinational Companies in Hungary 2010 CD-ROM' contained data on 4,080 senior executive contacts at 1,350 leading U.S., European and Asian multinational companies across 34 industry sectors in Hungary.

From the employees' perspective, the general attitude towards these companies is that in an unstable economic situation all workplaces are to be credited (even if sometimes, owing to a totally different company culture, the workers have a hard time adjusting to the requirements). The closer the cultural dimensions between the owner of the inter- or multinational company and the host country, the faster the process of acculturation. On the one hand in this process the host cultures are also adaptive and evolve over time in response to forces that can affect society. One can equally notice changes in behaviours, but the meanings and

assumptions behind these behaviours are rooted in stable cultural values. This stability is a natural consequence of contiguous countries where people live in close vicinity to each other (Steers 65). From this observation we may argue that Austrian and German companies (often founded or transferred by former Hungarian-born minorities or their descendants) prefer settling in a German-speaking minority area where they can offer not only employment but also a new cultural environment. The interviewed Hungarian minorities definitely think that employment often leads to higher living standards, which subsequently allows for a more visible identity avowal. Responding to new society dynamics in the process of co-creation, all minorities should opt for marketing their specific values. In the past the most marketed and mediatized minorities had been the German and the Austrian, as the kin states having originated these cultures in Hungary had been viewed as belonging to the highly prestigious Western civilization. Fortunately, with the fall of the iron curtain and in the wake of the 2004 and 2007 EU enlargement, Hungary and its neighbours have regained their former prestige.

Fruitful intercultural cooperations are observable all along the frontiers, best exemplified by cross-border socio-economic relations often materializing in the form of SMEs (for instance in the south-western part of Hungary such joint ventures are simultaneously established in Austria, Hungary and Slovenia, or in the south eastern part in Hungary, Romania and Serbia, not to forget the north east with parallel ventures in Hungary, Romania and the Ukraine). These relations are equally supported by European instruments, such as the Cross Border Cooperation (CBC), a key priority of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which aims to reinforce cooperation between member states and partner countries all along the external borders of the European Union.

Another seminal example of cross-border cooperation, meant to facilitate the emergence of multiple identities and to strengthen the already existing ones, is the Hungary-Romania Cross Border Cooperation programme 2007-2013. This project, a concertation of diverse socio-economic and geo-political challenges, had clearly recognized that border territories have a multicultural texture, which lends itself to regular cross-border interactions of local communities and offers solid grounds for promoting the integrated development of the area. In addition to the shared multicultural traditions, the border areas have complementary strengths, which could be exploited through more pro-active co-ordination joint businesses.

Moreover, the revival of tourism industry in the mid-1990s led people belonging to minority groups to visibly re-assert multiple identities in order to properly cater for the needs of co-ethnic tourists.

In addition to the long-standing minorities, we have to consider among others the role of Asian people in reshaping cultural awareness in Hungary. Leading Japanese and South Korean corporations have introduced their company cultures in the provinces, where the population is less aware of the hidden multicultural tissue of the society. In this respect the capital has always been a cosmopolitan city with a higher level of tolerance and empathy towards minorities and immigrants. According to research findings in the environs of the town Dunaújváros, where the South Korean owned Hankook Tire Hungary Ltd was set up, not only Asian but also other

minorities (e.g. the Transylvanian Hungarians and Romanians) started to consciously contemplate their social milieu with culturally conditioned eyes. Similar cultural dimensions may be "a useful shortcut for gaining conceptual entry into general cultural trends" (Steers 66) across two neighbouring countries, but they cannot always substitute a more systematic in-depth experience, when the local majority can gain hands-on experience of minority culture almost in their backyards.

Another group worth mentioning in this context is the relatively large Chinese community in Hungary, whose members are mainly employed in Chinese owned SMEs. If we wish to understand their cultural standing, it is worth remembering Markus Hansen's theory of the "third generation return to ethnicity". In the case of Chinese people in Hungary this return has begun already in the second generation. In the attempt to rid themselves of the negative stereotype according to which "Made in China" commodities mean inherent low quality, most parents would like to educate their children simultaneously in both cultures and languages, some even wishing to send them to China for schooling at an older age. (A Chinese-Hungarian dual language primary school has been operating in Budapest since 2004.)

Another community which has also become more visible in the past decade is the Turkish one, whose members include immigrants or descendants of immigrants from the Ottoman Empire as well as from contemporary Turkey. Additionally Turkish people can equally come from neighbouring countries which once used to be part of the Ottoman Empire and still have a Turkish speaking population who claim Turkish identity or cultural heritage. Considering that from a language typology point of view Hungarian and Turkish are both agglutinating languages which display a visible similarity in grammatical structure coupled with a considerable amount of Turkish origin words in the Hungarian lexis, the members of the Turkish community acculturate more easily to the new environment. Consequently in only two decades popular Turkish catering chains, restaurants and cafés have been gradually woven into the traditional national tissue. Moreover a significant increase in both commercial and cultural cooperation between the two nation-states materializes in high quality consumer goods (from food to high tech equipment) to music and dance performances.

Some complex aspects of static migration can be illustrated by additional examples. Nowadays people usually consult Wikipedia if they wish to get basic information in a relatively short time. Accordingly Apostag is referred to as a small village south-east of Budapest inhabited by roughly 2,100 people in majority (99.3%) Hungarians. Visiting the settlement nevertheless one can discover a first generation Chinese greengrocer and his family, highly respected in the community, an American owned car-part factory (with its specific company culture) which meets the needs of local employment, and a world famous synagogue revisited by former Jewish inhabitants, their descendants and also by tourists. Thus we can argue that the people living in this area, which is traditionally seen and thought as monocultural and monolingual, must have gradually and unconsciously internalized various representations of the different foreign cultures and their glocalised elements. As we can see, the process is slow and the new reality is far from being either exploited for multicultural ends or properly mediatized. Even the local interviewed person needed some external

drive (the research task) to contextualize the multicultural reality of her neighbourhood.

HARIBO, the famous German jelly sweets factory, provides another example for illustrating the role of companies in facilitating re-assertion of multiple identities. Originally founded in 1920 by Hans Riegel, in Bonn, HARIBO runs one of its largest factories in Europe only 5 kilometres from Veszprém at the outskirts of a village called Nemesvámos, which is situated in an area where all towns and larger settlements have German minority self-governments. This means that in a region densely inhabited by German minorities, a German factory definitely helps re-evaluate local identity patterns. As a result, besides the traditional minority events (folkloric festivals, traditional clothing and cuisine, dialectal bilingualism in the older generation), currently the local primary school has launched a call for application for teachers of German as a second language, who will be teaching several curricular subjects in German.

5. International student mobility

In view of the changes that have lately occurred in the demographic texture of Hungary, European student mobility can be an important step in developing intercultural competence consciously and gradually. The eight-year experience I have gained in this field (1998-2006) clearly supported an earlier hypothesis that students from Central and Eastern Europe would apply for Erasmus and Leonardo mobility financing as soon as their countries became eligible to join EU mobility programmes. In first place students from the former Eastern bloc chose Western countries for student exchange or internship. At the end of the 1990s the number of Western European students opting for this part of Europe was quite low. By the middle of the 2000s a certain balance could be observed, and from 2004 onwards an interregional mobility process started to develop. From my personal experience I can illustrate cases when students in economics, international relations or arts have chosen neighbouring countries for Erasmus exchange. In certain instances the outgoing students were themselves members of a national minority thus, in order to understand the roots of their multiple identity, they have chosen to travel to their kin countries or cultures of origin. As for the incoming students, in the 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 academic years the University of Pannonia in Veszprém has welcomed students from Central and Eastern European countries as well, namely from the Czech Republic, Croatia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey. Research also proves that in all instances not only the incoming students (Migration) but also their close environment (Static) experience different elements and levels of cultural shock and undergo different adaptation stages.

Conclusion

All the above examples underlie the increasing diversification of the Hungarian society and call for a conscious action plan for building awareness, empathy and solidarity. In the post-modern period, the nation-states have come under increasing pressure, yet the state continues to function as playing a key role in the organization of social life. In the process of accelerated globalization, with the process of time-space compression which affects people around the world, a restructuring of societal institutions among which the education systems has to be reconsidered (Horner 135).

As a summary I may conclude that improved socio-economic prosperity leading to the cultural and social rise of ethnic people is not necessarily conducive to cultural invisibility. If in a multicultural society there are specific commodified cultural elements (ranging from specific company culture to art and fashion), non-mobile members of ethnic communities tend to assert more openly their cultural identity, whereas people belonging to the mainstream majority develop multiple or even cosmopolitan identities. Building on knowledge and strategies derived from experience in U.S. minority studies, in the framework of the comparative study that has exploited Central and Eastern European realities, my findings have proved the hypothesis that multinational companies play a major role in reshaping people's cultural identity, whereas international and mainly interregional student mobility contribute to a different local perception of ethnic belonging.

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