ELTE
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Identities, Ideologies, and Representations in Post-Transition Hungary

MÁRIA HELLER
BORBÁLA KRIZA (EDS)

EÖTVÖS UNIVERSITY PRESS
EÖTVÖS LORÁND UNIVERSITY

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3.
IN STATU NASCENDI – THE CHALLENGES OF ROMA IDENTITY BUILDING IN EUROPE

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CONSTRAINTS AND ACCOMMODATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this study I examine opportunities for movement and mobility in a social space – namely the small villages of South-West Hungary – which is generally characterized as vulnerable, immobile and suffering from extreme poverty. I will demonstrate social differences that, even in the world of the villages and the limited opportunities there, make some people more likely than others to get by and to gain access to material and symbolic goods. Among these differences I will emphasize those that are created by social discourses on ethnic background or within the categories of ethnicity and race. I will argue that identity strategies related to "Gypsiness" are related to mostly the social and economic situation of those in question, as well as their responses to structural constraint in the given social space. At the same time I will emphasize how social status is defined by more than just the results of access to economic goods. This is especially visible concerning people who consider themselves Gypsy, or of Gypsy origin, or Boyash or Roma and who are active in the labour market but cannot gain social recognition.[1]

According to Bourdieu, the position occupied in social space forms those expectations and efforts toward which socially embedded individuals orient their actions. These expectations and efforts, along with the actors' subjective interpretations of self, together form the foundation of individual strategies. (BOURDIEU 1991: 175, 166–168; Bourdieu 1990) Interpretation of self in this approach cannot be separated from the position held in social space, which is defined by all the

[1] I made use of household data collected from four micro-regions in a research program entitled "Az aprófalvak és aprófalusiak esélyegyenlőségéért" [Equal opportunities for microvillages and their residents] (Hungarian Academy of Sciences [MTA] Regional Research Center 2005–2007, directed by Katalin Kovács). The completion of the research phase and the writing of the study were supported by a Bolyai Research Scholarship.

quantity and composition of all available economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. Referring to her use of the Bourdieu paradigm to study mobility strategies of Turks in Germany, and interpreting their social exclusion, Ayse Caglar found that in terms of economic capital there is little difference between Turkish and German workers. Further, there is an increasing level of segmentation observable within groups of Turks in Germany. However, they suffer a disadvantage in terms of level of education, which is synonymous with cultural capital, and in symbolic capital (CAGLAR 1995).

Unlike Caglar, rather making use of the traditions of socio-anthropology in this area, I will treat ethnicity as a symbolic resource that is formulated mostly in discourses and categorization struggles that tackle groups and are articulated from within and without. Difference, which is oft referred to in discourse, has a particularly strong effect when the differentiating characteristic – in this case, being Gypsy – as a unique lifestyle rooted in strong habits with a different set of values is in the process of falling to oblivion. In terms of the symbolic dimension, I concentrate on two approaches. First, I examine the opportunities to access power through formal channels and institutions. Second, using the same logic, I look at discourses that create the category of "Gypsy"/"Roma" and the social reality and relations connected to it. I will describe the alternatives of relationships between economic strategies, social position and ethnic identification using a Weberian ideal type approach.

It is well known that the structure of small villages, especially when paired with peripheral location, is the bed of the most severe poverty in Hungary. Further, the proportion of those belonging to the Roma minority living in this condition of persistent extreme poverty is high above national average. For this reason it is understandable that the literature centres on three characteristics and their tight interrelations: disadvantages according to settlement type, marginality in a social sense, and the characteristics of cultural minority status.[2] Researchers, however, pay little attention to cases that go beyond complete deprivation, i.e., they neglect the aspects that are indicative of possibilities of active life strategies of any type – like opposition or negotiation in the conditions of poverty. I will attempt to do the latter in this study: besides mapping out the characteristics of poverty, I will examine the possibilities of achievement based on the acceptance of constraints or the opportunities of resistance.

It is important to note that my findings do not apply to all small villages, but only to one type. The villages in this study are ethnically mixed: social status and ethnic characteristics do not necessarily match, given that among those who identify themselves as Gypsy/Roma we find families following different

[2] For a summary, see: KOVÁCS 2008; KISS 2008; VÁRADI 2007; SZUHAY 2007.

economic strategies with varying degrees of success. On the one hand, the poorest are not necessarily and not exclusively Roma. On the other hand, the villages contain many people and families who are marginalized and helpless for other reasons. Thus, I will attempt to use a point of view and conceptual framework that acknowledges that the boundaries of ethnic "majority" and "minority" are not always clear and stable. Thus we will be better positioned to interpret transitions between groups.

In this study I would like to continue the train of thought that began in Hungary in the past few years on village-dwelling Roma/ and their inner stratification. This school of thought also deals with the forms of segregation and opportunities for integration. Hungarian sociological literature describes ethnic ghettos in small villages with two concepts taken from the international literature. The first is the idea of rural "underclass" (SZELÉNYI & LADÁNYI 2001; 2004), which emphasizes that the residents of the ghettos are torn away from the whole of society, and they are positioned outside, or "under" the class structure and thus form a group that is under society. The other concept is the "caste type integration" into the low classes of a class structure. This refers to cases of strict categorization into the lowest, most poorly positioned groups, when in the case of emergence of new opportunities in the rural labour market, Gypsies able to mobilize themselves manage to get into the lowest segment of society (VIRÁG 2010). Michael Stewart explicitly argues against the first approach and implicitly against the second when he turns attention away from "structural vulnerability" and "the culture of want" and focuses on the significance of "own resources" and the fact that independent (and I might add, ethnic) mobility strategies are possible by using special resources (STEWART 2002; 1997). In the studied villages my experiences showed that the cultural interpretation of own resources was far from clear, especially in comparison to closed, traditional minority communities. However, there is no doubt that against the compulsion in the economic dimension, we must assume the possibility of active attitudes, as well. Further, social membership and social status are also influenced by resources that can be interpreted as being derived from beyond economic capital.

Other researchers have also observed counter-segregation processes and approached them using the term social integration. According to Durst, in the case of North-Eastern villages she studied, this is manifested in the "peasantization" of the Roma, i.e. the adoption of production and consumption patterns that are represented by the peasantry. The comparison of Judit Durst's two villages – "Lápos" and "Bordó" – unveils mechanisms that on the one hand contributed to the formation of ethnic enclaves, yet on the other hand produced "integrated", "peasant Gypsies" (DURST 2008; DURST 2001). In another village with a 60% proportion of Roma, Szuhay also identified opportunities of integration via

"peasantization" taking place in three stages: through accessing farmland, buying residential property in the centre of the village (outside the slum), and buying vineyards and wine cellars. According to Szuhay this mobility can be described within class – and not ethnic – structure. There are, however, consequences for the management of ethnicity, given that economic ascension and becoming part of the peasantry are paired with a process of ethnic consciousness (SZUHAY 2007: 97; SZUHAY 1993).

2. MIGRATION AND MOBILITY IN RURAL PERIPHERIES

One of the characteristics accompanying the modernization of Hungarian society – much as in the modernization of other European societies – is that the smallest municipalities at great distances from urban or industrial centres, unable to keep pace with agricultural economic structures transformed several times over the past century, have lost their economic function. At the same time, while they cannot provide job opportunities or income, they are still home to tens of thousands of people. As a result of their "loss of function", Hungarian small villages have infrastructure that lags far behind the national norm. Long-founded institutions – like schools and doctors' offices – are closed or merged, and the past few decades have seen the level of rail and bus services decline in most areas. Migration out of villages began with the persecution of kulaks, increased during collectivization, and slowed down, yet persisted over the next decades according to the needs of industrialization. The wealthier moved out, while the poor stayed and were joined by new waves of poor families (JUHÁSZ 2006: 206). A large proportion of those who moved into villages were from Roma slums that in 1961 and 1975 were designated for destruction as "unfit for residence" in party decrees (KERTESI & KÉZDI 1998: 299–312). In the years after the regime change low real estate prices allowed to unemployed industrial workers and pensioners with income challenges to move into such villages (VIRÁG 2008). These processes unfolded as follows in two villages in this study.

Drávacsehi[3] is a dead-end village by the Southern border of Baranya county. In the middle of the 19th century its population was around 700 and made up mostly of Calvinists. By the turn of the century the total population was around 400, and incoming Catholics made up a significant proportion.

[3] See my more extensive study on this village in the volume on the research results (FEISCHMIDT 2008).

The first significant wave of new settlers reached the village in the late 1920s and early 1930s, when large families from the Hungarian Plains were settled into crofts built for them on the edge of the village. The second significant wave of settlers reached the village when nearby "Gypsy slums" (cigánytelep) were razed, about four decades after the previous wave.[4] Until the beginning of the 1960s only one Roma family lived in the village. Between 1965 and 1975, when the nearby "Gypsy slum" of Gordisa was razed[5], the Council of Drávacsehi – which was entrusted with the coordination of the elimination of the "Gypsy slum" – purchased the empty houses in Drávacsehi and sold them cheaply or mortgaged them to the Gypsy families that wished to move in.[6] According to the village chronicles ten newly arrived families lived in the village in 1974, and their proportion of the total population was estimated at 20%.

Smaller yet significant settlement waves also came through spontaneous migration arising from exodus from Yugoslavia after World War II and half a century later during the Yugoslav wars. Since the regime change the village has become a residential destination for impoverished families from nearby cities (Pécs, Siklós or Harkány) and richer villages.

The other village in the study, Szenyér, is also in the South Trans-Danubian region, in the hills of Somogy county. It has a very different history. It only became similar to Drávacsehi, which borders on the Ormánság region, at the end of the 20th century. Szenyér had a city rank in the 15th century, and was known nationwide for its livestock, its livestock export business, and its high esteem among horse traders. At the end of the 19th century the population of the village was strongly divided. Local memory has it that the centre was populated by middling peasants, while the surrounding pusztas[7] housed servants working on the estate of the Chapter of Esztergom. This situation changed significantly with the land reform of 1919. The former servants were granted 1,5–3 acres of land and space for a house. The pusztas were only completely eliminated under the next land reform, in 1945, when a new settlement wave was induced. Between 1870 and 1910 the population of the village continuously grew (from 850 in 1870 to 1046 in 1910). After a decline during the First World War the population began

[4] On the relations of migration and ethnicity in the light of movement arising from the razing of Gypsy settlements, see VIRÁG 2008.

[5] In the 1960s Baranya county contained 170 Gypsy colonies of various sizes. Of these, the worst residential conditions were in Gordisa, where in 1961–62 175 people lived in 35 houses, 31 of which were shacks (MÁRFI 2005)

[6] This was part of a national action plan, the goal of which was to liquidate village edge Gypsy slums and to move Gypsies into villages. For more on this topic, see Tünde Virág's study (2008). Another group of those originating from Gordisa were settled into houses in Drávapalkonya or the village of Gordisa.

[7] Puszta: farmstead in the middle of big agricultural properties housing servants of the landowner.

to grow again. Oppression of the kulaks did not affect the village. Indeed, local smallholders formed their own collective on their own initiative in 1952. This collective was dissolved in 1957 when a state-organized collective was established. As a result, the mid-peasant incomes collapsed overnight, and outward migration quickly ensued. *"We had a real mass exodus here"* – remembers one of the descendents of the peasants. Though most of the smallholders by this time had established an alternate base. They sent their children to schools and universities in Budapest, Pécs and Kaposvár. Most of the outward migrants were educated, and others followed them. The population of the village fell by half between 1949 and 1979, and this tendency persisted until the regime change – albeit at a slow pace. The decline in population, as elsewhere, led to the decline of local infrastructure. The last local institution to close was the school, which was shut down in 1998. Outward migration has slowed down considerably in the last decade.

A residential area lies beside a fishing pond near the village. Until the 1970s families that spoke Boyash and claimed to be Vlach Gypsy inhabited it, living in adobe and mud huts. The community was traditionally subservient to the village: the men worked cleaning the stalls of the peasants and tending animals, while the women did day work (harvesting, collecting, cleaning) and sometimes went into the village to beg. But – as evidenced in local recollections – any other kind of relation between the fishing pond Roma population and the Szenyér smallholders was inconceivable. An elderly peasant lady remembers:

> "The Gypsies did not go the Hungarian taverns. They were not allowed into the village. (...) Only when the law in the old system demanded that the Gypsies assimilate to the Hungarians, then you had to allow them to buy houses in the village. The Council was forced to buy houses for the Gypsies."

Houses that had stood empty since migration out of the village were gradually occupied by Gypsy families, first in the outer streets, and eventually in the village centre, as well. But news of the very cheap or in some cases free properties spread afar and attracted other families into the village. At the end of the 1980s several Transylvanian families settled here, while since the regime change a new phenomenon occurred, with increasing poor urban families (Ajka, Budapest, Tatabánya) and single persons moving in. In the hope of a cheaper lifestyle they purchased houses in the village. Some of the incoming migrants – for example the Transylvanians – moved onward as soon as possible, while others – who are seen as even more deprived than the Gypsies *("Hungarians living the nomad lifestyle are less cultured than even the Gypsies")* have no opportunity to do so. Westerners have also appeared in the village: four houses were purchased by German citizens, but only two elderly couples and an artist stay in the village with any regularity.

The past twenty years have also seen Gypsy families of the "Kolompár" group move into the community. The male adults of these three families became factory workers, like the majority of the local Boyash Gypsies. But as a "second job" they deal in commerce (mostly with horse trading, but also dealing in pork and automobiles), because of this, some of the Boyash, who follow the peasant-proletarian pattern, reject these families.

The arrival of Roma families led to conflicts in both villages between the peasants who feared for their positions and the ambitious Roma people/Gypsies. Most of the cases described in the literature show that when the number of incoming Roma families reaches a critical level, the outward migration of the peasants increases and then is likely soon exhausted. This is how ghetto villages form, the textbook examples being Csenyéte or Alsószentmárton. (HAVAS 1999; LADÁNYI & SZELÉNYI 2004; VIRÁG 2010) The cases we studied are interesting because the processes that unfolded here are not as clear and did not lead to such extreme results. The two villages, as is typical for small villages, began to decline in population and erode. But then the outward migration stopped, and incoming migration became more significant. The more or less spontaneous population exchange processes have significantly defined the present outlook of both villages. At the same time, the Roma population is characteristically not segregated residentially in either village. This is so either because such segregation never existed in the first place – as in Drávacsehi, where during the slum liquidation, the incoming Roma families accessed homes in various parts of the village – or because spatial-social segregation gradually eroded – as in Szenyér, where the fishing pond Gypsies at first purchased homes at the edge of the village, and then moved to the village centre as part of their upward mobility paths.

As a result of immigration, and foremost the newest social migration, the social structure of these municipalities were transformed and began to acquire new social functions. In Drávacsehi in 2001 26 people, (about 10% of the population of 250), and in 2006 a somewhat higher number of 34 people pre-registered for the Minority Self-Government elections, declaring themselves Roma. The local leader of the Gypsy Minority Self-Government claims that a much higher proportion of the local population (40%) is Gypsy. Most of them had Boyash Gypsy grandparents living in the Gypsy settlement, but their parents became factory or agricultural workers, while a minority's parents speaking Lovari were migrating skilled workers (e.g., grinders, bell makers, showmen).

Of Szenyér's 317 residents 77 claimed to be part of the Gypsy community, where 42 associate with Gypsy cultural values and traditions, 52 claim Boyash or Romanes as their mother tongue, out of which 39 use these languages with family and friends. The president of the local Gypsy Minority Self-Government estimates that 60% of the village's residents are Roma. They consider themselves

Vlach Gypsies as opposed to Boyash, even though many more of them speak archaic Romanian (more so than in Drávacsehi). Here, as in Drávacsehi, one extended family, made of several nuclear families, deals in commerce and speaks Lovari.

3. CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

It is well known that small villages in the geographic periphery are the dwelling places of people in the worst position in the labour market. Being born in such a village brings the highest risk of poverty, and residents are disadvantaged by lacking social contacts and being socially excluded. In regions with small villages – although the severity of this varies from region to region – the biggest issue is the lack or scarcity of legal jobs on the labour market. The past actors of the local economy have disappeared, and the effects of regional centres and cities do not reach these distant settlements, which are further handicapped by being difficult to travel in and out of. Employers, should they be looking for labour at all, find only low educated labour that has been depressed by long-term unemployment. As a consequence we encounter so-called new poverty – where people are dependent on low-level, instable, occasional work and irregular income, as well as being dependent on the social benefits system. Such poverty is often ethnicized (VÁRADI 2007: 77). As we have mentioned, the villages we studied are not only characterized by persistent poverty and exclusion – which negatively affect non-Gypsies, as well as a significant portion of Gypsies – but also by the appearance of new economic opportunities which can provide a new direction for life paths, with new goals and life strategies becoming possible. Thus the question arises: how do social relations change when new jobs become available and certain goods become accessible, and how interpretations of the category of Gypsy, and origin, are rethought.

The two villages in this study – like most Hungarian villages – were characterized by full employment before the regime change. In both cases the local agricultural collective and factories in nearby cities provided work for those in the labour sector. After the regime change the companies in the work centres – to which the villagers commuted to earn their income – went bankrupt, and large-scale unemployment appeared in both villages. It took a few years for new actors to appear in the two local economies, thanks to which unemployment began to decline. Job opportunities – especially in the grey (semi-legal) economy – began to grow.

The data we collected in 43 households in Drávacsehi shows that there are about 1,5 times more inactive and long-term unemployed people than there are people with regular work and income (in which we included both registered and non-registered income). In Szenyér the 2001 census indicated that the number of legally employed people was somewhat higher (46 people), but the proportion of inactive people was about the same as above, while the number of unemployed was 20. The number in the last group rose by 2006: the municipal government at this time recorded 40 unemployed persons. The number of inactive earners was much lower (34) than those who were fully dependent on support (117).

In Drávacsehi, among those with regular employment and income, most worked in health tourism in Harkány and in the service sector that was related to it. The majority of them were women. Among men, most worked in the construction industry, some worked far away (they would commute once per week). A significant part of those working in agriculture did so as day workers in the vineyards of Villány or Nagyharsány, or they did seasonal work abroad. These worker categories contain people of both Roma and non-Roma descent, but not in the same proportion. Those with higher levels of education, social recognition and jobs with security (in government offices, border guards, shopkeepers), or who had income derived from owning land were exclusively "non-Roma", or as the locals would say, were all "Magyar". In the 'census' we carried out, among those identifying themselves as Roma, 22 were inactive or on support and 9 had regular income. Among the peasants there were 35 inactive people and 25 who had regular income.

Most of those in Szenyér who had work were in industry, including men and women, members of the majority and Roma. Those with occasional work in agriculture worked for an entrepreneur in the neighbouring village. The role of family plots or vegetable gardens was more important in Szenyér than Drávacsehi. The peasants and part of the Roma valued the concept of a well-kept garden, whereby an unkempt garden was seen as shameful. When I asked a Roma woman whether it was worth it these days to do gardening, she responded that it was only natural. *"Everyone has one, for villagers this is the norm."* A Boyash woman from a village in Zala county who had married into Szenyér was proud that in her family even the parents had livestock, raising pigs, cows and horses for sale (they did not grow the feed but purchased it). When the family moved to Kaposvár her father began to work as a labourer in the sugar plant, while her mother was a housewife, but they continued to raise animals for sale. *"They saved up and worked hard. If they had one forint they would soon turn it into two"* – said the woman of Roma background while proudly expressing peasant clichés. Her attitude toward work, consumption, family planning and raising children, is guided by this value system and the long-term planning related to it. Regular or permanent employment is

a worthy investment only in this perspective. Those who, on the contrary expect significantly higher income from employment as compared to unemployment benefits, will easily reach the conclusion that regular work is not worth it. The difference between social aid and minimum wage – which is the maximum that the Szenyér workers earn for line production work in the local factories – was actually very low in 2007. Similarly, registered seasonal agricultural work would lead to monthly earnings of about 60-80 thousand forints[8]. Employment was a value for those who included it as part of a long-term life strategy, or as an important pillar of their identity, as was the case for Károly B. The foundation of his self-respect and self-identity, even more so than his being a Kolompár Gypsy, is that "*I've never been on welfare.*" He had in the past lost or left his job, but after one or two months he always found a new one. "*There are people here who think work stinks. And I still say: if you want to work, you'll find work. If you don't want to work... a job can be sitting right in front of you, you won't find it.*" – claims Károly's wife, who is very proud that her husband has two qualifications (as a tile installer and as a forklift operator), and proud of her garden and home, which she maintains while raising three children.

Long-term calculative thinking contains more elements than just the relationship to work: it also contains certain consumption patterns and strategies. Margit, a Boyash woman, expressed the following on child rearing: "*They should, at least become like we are. Able to wisely spend the little money they have, on good things, not stupid things. They should be respectable, and not steal.*" She went on to praise the school where it became possible for her daughters to learn to swim and play the piano. Margit has four daughters and can speak at length on the birth of the little ones (twins) despite the fact – as she claims – that they are not "believers in big families." All their family members and relatives were also against it. In Szenyér the oldest generation often had six or seven children. One generation later, this was still the case for the Roma. Today's generation of parents shows reproductive restraint, and in this aspect there is no difference between Boyash and Kolompár Gypsies, between Roma and non-Roma. There is, however, a difference between local residents and immigrants. Among the latter, there are two families with five and six children. Drávacsehi is different only in terms of its past, given that here even the oldest generation of peasants was under the influence of the birth-restraining norm of the Ormánság region. Among the Roma the generation of parents grew up in large families, whereas many of today's youth are only children. The three extended families in the village – including Boyash Gypsy, "Magyar" and "mixed" families – are seen as deviants.

[8] In 2007 one Euro was worth 250 forints.

In the above I attempted to show how the relation to work and thoughts on livelihood are related to other elements of lifestyle and views of the future and child rearing. Considering these factors together, I found four types of economic strategies and lifestyle habits in the two villages:

(a) those living from day to day;
(b) those with short-term perspectives;
(c) those hoping for mobility, and;
(d) those who have successfully been mobile.

Later I will discuss how these economic and lifestyle patterns are related to Gypsy/Roma background and the individual's subjective relation to that background. Here I would only like to anticipate that there are correlations, but there are no clear matches. I will consider possible answers through identity types after describing and considering other factors.

(a) Those living from day to day

While discussing the Northern Hungarian village ghetto of Lápos, Judit Durst speaks of what, in the footsteps of Michael Stewart, she calls a "present-oriented disposition", while Formoso calls this "pretentious provision" (DURST 2008). This disposition exists in the two communities in our study. However, while in many studies on Gypsy communities this is found to be an exclusive attitude, in Drávacsehi and Szenyér it is held by only a fraction of the population. A few households can be categorized as such, including both minority and majority -the latter struggle with deviance and various forms of disadvantage (alcoholism, illness, lowered mental capacity). Both villages contain a group of houses or area that the locals consider a ghetto, the dwelling place of the poorest extended family. But similarly vulnerable people live scattered in other parts of both villages. The defining characteristic of their lifestyle is their concurrent helplessness in natural and social terms. In the summer they do better, given that most of their food can be gathered (mushrooms, forest berries), but from late fall to early spring they hardly vegetate, often suffering from cold. Their children have one hot meal per day at school. They only receive those types of social aid that are distributed nearly automatically. When they gain income they spend it immediately, and much of it to satiate their two addictions (smoking and drinking). Living from day to day means a complete lack of saving and planning. It is this aspect of the disposition that makes it impossible to have long-term relations with schools or places of work.

Those "living from day to day" are often recent arrivals that have no extra-familial connections in the village. They are not even offered workfare. A few of

them, however, are long-time residents. Their situation is somewhat better, given that thanks to their social embedding they have remained within the social aid system. They are, however, quite dependent on those who control their relation with the system. Regarding Lápos, Durst writes that the earlier patron – client relationship that typified peasant – Gypsy relations has been transformed so that the large number of peasant patrons has been replaced by the singular person of the mayor, who provide work to those on workfare, supervises labour, and rewards and punishes by deciding who will participate in the workfare programme the next month. In the villages I studied the mayors behaved in a similar fashion, building similar relations. Both mayors complained about people who were unreliable and undisciplined labourers who, if they could (and they could) would avoid when distributing workfare jobs.

(b) Those with short-term perspectives

The middle generation in both villages had stable employment under the previous regime, they were generally unskilled or low-qualified labourers. They became unemployed when the regime change occurred and have been unable to stand up on their own two feet since. There is a new generation, made up of those in their twenties, who never had secure employment and think they never will. The lucky among the older of the two generations managed to register as disabled pensioners, and thus they receive aid consistently. Others receive regular social aid – and it takes a great deal of effort to remain in the system – and also work in the grey economy. Men work in forestry or construction, while women work in vineyards and orchards doing manual labour, and sometimes getting called in to harvest for the local producers. Those who get regular day work over 7–8 months can reach an income level of 60–80 thousand forints per month. There are only a few who are so persistent. Many only accept such work when the family encounters a large expense or must make an unexpected payment. The most stable element of the families' income is social aid, which entails dependence constraining risk-acceptance and dependence on workfare, on local leaders who decide about being entitled for benefits of the social welfare system, and on the state which indirectly guarantees the social transfers.

Social aid, workfare and pay for irregular work comprise a calculable sum of income (equalling minimum wage[9], which is 50–60 thousand forints per month). This makes possible a very poor but stable lifestyle. Such stability is paired with short-term thinking: they can meet the demands of daily consumption, and by undertaking big efforts – e.g., day work or taking on credit – they can make bigger investments (winter heating, schooling in the fall, home renovations). Work,

[9] In 2007.

however, even for those who have labour qualifications, has not become part of self-image, identity, or self-evaluation, or long-term unemployment has stripped these roles from the concept of work. (In some cases nostalgia over previous factory workplaces and relationships with colleagues was an important element of the life story.) Women, who seldom leave the village to work, spend a great deal of time together, and this offers them defence and security. In many cases, when they do day labour, they do so together. They do not harbour ambitions about breaking out of their situation, nor do they think that their children will do so. In both villages this strategy is most common among the members (or descendants) of those Boyash families that moved in from the Gypsy settlement or the fishing pond. They have the strongest system of mutual aid within the group, but at the same time the extended families have the ability to control people. They are characterized by a lack of external relations, and spatial and social immobility are interrelated in their case.

(c) Those hoping for mobility

The concept of "Gypsy work" exists in both villages. This refers to work that is of low status, low pay, and in many instances dirty. Those who do this kind of work are usually aware of this, and often think that it is better than vegetating for months, or helplessness arising from feelings of insecurity or living on social aid or irregular income. But they do not accept such labour in terms of short-term economic interests. Earlier we mentioned that secure work – even if it is cleaning or tending to swine – offers some people livelihood, self-respect and social status. When once in Szenyér I asked respondents to help me access Gypsies who most "thrive", I was always sent to people who have had steady jobs over several years. It was among this group that I met two people who were elected to the town council, and who over 10–15 years achieved social recognition and built support. (The situation in Drávacsehi is much different, for various reasons.)

People belonging to this group live in old but renovated houses, with modern conveniences (open kitchen, dining room and living room). A large portion of their secure income – which is between 120 and 150 thousand forints net per month, per family – goes toward educating their secondary school-aged children. A family in Szenyér, for example, which lived of swine tending and a seamstress' salary, spent an average of 100.000 forints per month. Of this, 50.000 was spent on dormitories and clothing for their two schoolchildren. Their daughter is nineteen years old. *"She's not working; she's studying!"* the parents emphasize. She attends a vocational school teaching for the chemical industry. Their son is sixteen and attends a vocational secondary school in Nagykanizsa, studying woodwork. Both children chose their own schools, but the parents encouraged them to continue their studies. They would not like for the children to return

to the village after graduation. *"God forbid! After school I'm going to send my daughter abroad, automatically, let her get out of the country. And then we'll see about my son."*

The jobs filled by the women and men of Drávacsehi and Szenyér who wish to have stable employment are at the bottom of the labour market hierarchy. It is the secondary segment of a divided labour market, in which there are no opportunities for advancement, and ten to fifteen years of work are rewarded by being able to merely keep the job. The reason the members of this group cling to their jobs at this cost is that work for them is not just a means to meet material needs, but is a way of marking social status and position.

(d) Examples of successful mobility

One of the successful paths of social mobility is the conversion of goods into cultural capital, as seen among those with full-time jobs. In Drávacsehi over the past twenty years *four young people graduated from higher education*, each of whom with worker parents who had "integrated" or "hoped for mobility", and each of whom had at least one Roma parent. (The way that 'being Roma' was experienced in these families will be discussed in the next chapter.)

There are, however, other modes of mobility, for example those which utilize the collection of social capital. Tamás and Viola's rise began in the 1970s and though it seemed to stall after the regime change it fortunately regained momentum around the millennium. Tamás spent fifteen years in the vineyards under the state socialist system and gained knowledge and confidence enough to start his own small business. The large company that took over the state vineyard hires the untrained, unemployed and mostly Gypsy people Tamás refers through his small company. For the workers he and his business have become a bridge from their position of exclusion from the labour market to possible work at agricultural companies. This relationship, however, is quite contradictory. Due to low pay and long-term exclusion the workers are unreliable: they are at times loyal, yet at times they rebel through their absence. For employers, the role of such intermediary companies is to minimize the risk inherent in the low level of training and low motivation of the workforce. This is how they guarantee that despite low wages they can sustain production and increase profit.

István O. is the mayor of Szenyér. He began as the leader of a minority NGO, then of the Minority Self-Government, but early on he felt that the separate paths of the Roma by organising independent institutions would not be fruitful. All their events and all their donor campaigns target not just the Roma but also the non-Roma of the village. His willingness to integrate has no doubt increased his popularity among non-Roma villagers and helped his chances in becoming deputy mayor, then in running for mayor. Thus, the Minority Self-Government

and civic association served as stepping-stones toward positions of higher social and material recognition.

Kurt Lewin, who thought it was unavoidable that those from lower status groups – while they try to identify with the values of higher status groups – devalue their group of origin, pointed out that crossing boundaries is rarely without problem. This may be mostly because membership in both the group being left behind and the group being aimed at is unsure. The "successful" try to avoid this uncertainty through strengthening their "loose bonds" i.e relations with the non-Roma, indicating movement "out" of the group of origin and toward socially "upward" groups (GRANOVETTER 1973). This can be done by meeting the expectations of the direct (majority) environment, and by gaining goods that are recognized as symbols of membership in the wished category.

However, meeting such expectations comes at a cost. The strengthening of "loose bonds" is concurrent with the loosening of those ties that formerly served as the basis of community solidarity: i.e., the familial and local connections within which being Gypsy had a positive value. The successful individuals, however, especially when they have direct control over resources, have a new set of connections emerging around them. These connections are organized according to the logic of the economic and social environment and place the upwardly mobile or successful people of Roma origin in patron-like positions. Their clients are close or distant relations, neighbours and fellow villagers who to an extent are able to meet the expectations of the majority society. For example, they can be entrusted with day labour or workfare, the distribution of which is the responsibility of the entrepreneurs and leaders mentioned above.

4. CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SOCIAL-SYMBOLIC DIMENSION

While in the previous section I emphasized an attempt to understand livelihood and mobility strategies from the perspective of accessing economic goods, in the following section I will consider symbolic resources and modes of access to them. I start from Pierre Bourdieu's assertion that the extent of social capital held by the individual on the one hand depends on the extent of their network of connections that can actually be mobilized, and on the size of the (economic, cultural or symbolic) capital of those he/she has a relationship with on the other. I examine two forms of social relations: those that connect people of Roma/Gypsy origin with each other and those that integrate the Roma into the non-Roma social

environment and keep connections alive within this social web through various relation forms.

János Ladányi and Iván Szelényi studied a village about the same size as the two we studied, but one which was much more deprived, it being a Romungro community in North Hungary where one of the factors of the group's helplessness the authors mention is the loss of their traditional culture and their inability to speak the Gypsy tongue. Instead of having a unique – ethnic – cultural tradition to define their existence, their lives are marked by poverty and a "culture of need" (LADÁNYI & SZELÉNYI 2001; 2004). Arguing against them, Michael Stewart claims that an ill chosen set of concepts and researchers' perspective do not allow for Ladányi and Szelényi to notice the cultural reserves held by the Gypsies of Csenyéte. He recommends that minority or ethnic culture be considered a community resource (STEWART 2002). While I share Stewart's position, I must state that in the villages I studied we can observe strong processes of acculturation or assimilation. Acknowledging this, my position is that the disappearance of "traditional culture" does not lead to the dissolution of group borders. In both villages I observed the concurrent development of two phenomena: on one hand the blurring of ethnic boundaries between people in the same social position, namely the very poor "Gypsies" and "non-Gypsies". On the other hand, the meaning of the category "Gypsy" and its social consequences were defined by the majority discourse which was in large part in an outsider position and fed on the racist public speech of the wider social environment. At the local level this mode of speech connected to grievances that arose from the liquidation of the "colour barrier" and the system of ethnic segregation in the village and also to the value system conflict between those who had nothing, those who lived from day to day and those who thought in the long-term and had relatively stable positions in the labour market.

4.1 Culture as a resource, and the lack thereof

Those cultural resources that give difference in a positive content and offer security and self-respect in a moral and psychological sense are articulated in two dimensions: the first is a particular disposition, or a set of practices expressed in cultural signs derived from it, that are acquired by members of a community through socialization, practices they find natural, i.e., they do not act consciously, but by using them they recognize themselves as members of a community. The other is made of symbolic and ritualistic representations that are created and shown in order to create a community. Ethnic organizations and institutions present most of these representations.

Language belongs to the first category. The eldest generation of those identifying themselves as Gypsy in both villages understands and speaks the Boyash language, and a degree of their intimacy is tied to this language use. In Drávacsehi women now in their sixties and seventies (there are five such women in the village) use Boyash, or Băjash (its Argyelán dialect) to communicate within the family and with others of their generation. Those who are in their forties and fifties gained some knowledge of Boyash in their childhood when hearing grandparents and parents speaking. They retain this knowledge today, as seen when conversations in Hungarian switch to Boyash or begin to incorporate Boyash words or partial sentences into the Hungarian speech. Among today's youth there is not one who speaks Boyash: for them, communication within the family or with age cohorts is strictly in Hungarian.

The situation is somewhat different in Szenyér, where in the last census 39 people claimed that communication in their families was in Boyash or Romani. Those large families that moved in from the fishing pond and where several generations live together or in close proximity, Boyash is used to this day for daily communication. Those, however, who have for decades more or less continuously commuted outside the village to work, are no longer regular Boyash speakers. This latter group is chastised by the former, who say that the latter knew the language well 20–30 years ago, but now they will not speak Boyash to them or to their own children.

The status-marking role of language switching is even more evident among Lovari speakers who identify with their "wandering tradesmen" or "handyman" ancestors. Those families in Drávacsehi that I above described as having long-term economic strategies, and even more so those who can be deemed successful in the short term, do not speak Lovari, although family members in their fifties still understand it and claim they could speak it. Lovari is the language spoken among adults in the large family in Szenyér, in which there are three adult men. They, however, speak mostly Hungarian to their children.

Regarding the culture of material goods – manifest in the equipping of homes, decorations, and dress – I observed no ethno-specific differences between Roma and non-Roma of similar social status and material situation. (Only one "Kolompár" Lovari-speaking family had a noticeably differently decorated home, with strong and loud coloured decorations, many colourful plastic flowers, Virgin Mary statues and gold-plated wall decorations.) On the contrary, social differences and their expression in objects and consumer goods could well be detected. The move of Gypsies into the middle class is a process that is emphasized by the mayor of Szenyér. He sees expressions of attempt of certain Gypsy families compared to others to catch up to *"majority society"* by equipping their homes with modern amenities, and by the number of television sets per family. We

can hardly find institutionalized or informally organized ritualistic or symbolic representations in Szenyér, and they do not exist at all in Drávacsehi. The Minority Self-Government does, however, have a representative function, which I will discuss later.

4.2 Constraints and opportunities created by institutions

Among those dealing with Roma studies, there is a unique and well-defined group represented by researchers who think that "Gypsy" is a category that is deeply embedded in the fabric of society and its power relations. Naturally, all ethnic groups or communities are defined by relations and by difference, be they to the majority (in cases of societies organized according to the principles of the nation-state) or to neighbouring and similarly organized ethnic groups (in the case of pluralist societies), and they exist through the collective will to keep distance from other groups. "Gypsy" is to a large degree a product of outer categorization that on the one hand wants to put under supervision groups that are in some way deviant (e.g., immigrants, criminals), and on the other wants to keep integration from becoming too deep, being careful to preserve them in the secondary segment of the divided labour market as a reserve which can be utilized in times of economic expansion. (STEWART 2009; JENKINS 2005) Important actors in outer categorization include the local institutions of public administration and politics, which beyond symbolic politics use tools of administration to distribute resources to some, while blocking access to resources for others.

Drávacsehi is similar to other small villages in that it does not have its own church, civic associations or school, and the municipal government and political struggles (for positions on the local council) are the only platform for local public life. The first free election after the regime change was won by a person from a local Calvinist landowner family, who had moved back from the nearby town, Pécs. He held the position for twelve years. The 2002 election was won by a woman who had already served as deputy mayor, who descended from grandparents from this village, but whose time spent in the village was due to her business interests. She was re-elected in 2006. "Public life" in the village has been dominated by the personal struggle between these two strong figures. The representatives of the approximately 30% Gypsy population cannot get a word in edgewise given the domination of the two leaders. A Gypsy Minority Self-Government has been in operation in the village since 1994, but it has no independent initiatives, and its budget (provided by the municipal government) is spent on operations costs and hosting a couple of events every year. They lend their name to the municipal government when it applies for project funding, and in return they receive a small office and a librarian's position that is filled by the

president of the minority self-government. This cooptation has put the minority government in the position of silent partner, despite the very critical rhetoric of the minority leaders. It is important to note that while the socially and politically active Roma participate in this so-called "small local self-government", an organization that has no power or influence, the "big local self-government", i.e., the town council, has no representatives of Roma or Gypsy descent. Being locked out of public life or practicing exclusively in a political space where they lack resources and opportunities - is unequivocally a further devaluation of Gypsy origin and points in the direction of marginalization. This is corroborated by the fact that those Drávacsehi residents of Roma origin who are successful in terms of work or education – undoubtedly dominated by majority norms – do not support the minority self-government.

The situation in Szenyér developed somewhat differently. The 2002 elections were won by the former postman, and István O. (discussed above) became deputy mayor. After the unexpected death of the mayor he took over the position, and in 2006 he won the position of mayor with wide support. The current council of five contains three Roma. These councillors entered public life thanks to the recognition they gained as members of the minority self-government. An important role in operating the municipal government is filled by a young woman educated and experienced in public administration and accounting, who oversees office management duties. She is the descendent of Szenyér peasants. Like many of her generation, she moved to a nearby city. She certainly could have become mayor, but she does not harbour such ambitions.

Despite limited resources and a lack of prestige, the Gypsy Minority Self-Government (GMSG) offered a new opportunity for collective action in both villages. In Drávacsehi the GMSG has been organizing St. Nicholas Day celebrations for three years and also arranges an annual bus excursion. To start, the target group for both was just Gypsies, but over time they began to invite all the residents of the village. The municipal government covers part of the bus trip cost, and non-Gypsies participated in the last two trips. Their latest initiative, a dinner for pensioners, targeted all elderly persons and pensioners in the village. The organizers of these programmes are Gypsy families who are also active in the GMSG. Nonetheless, such events have a very low, or hardly noticeable, ethnic character. In Szenyér the GMSG took over the organization of the village spring fete, which had been dormant for years. Activities include a cook-off, and music and festivities all day. In 2007, 200–210 people took part – Roma and "*members of the majority society*" alike, according to the mayor. The minority self-government is also active in organizing a summer camp for "*poor and Roma children*" within a regional and national programme. Every year 6–8 children are able to spend some time at Lake Balaton. The Roma mayor has more plans for children: he plans to

initiate education in the Boyash language in the nearby school. He claims that this would be beneficial to the children and to those families that no longer pass on the language. Further, it would be good for the village as it would significantly increase the level of public education funding provided to the village by the state.

4.3 Constraints and opportunities embedded in social relations

In the past in both villages, the relationship between Gypsies and peasants was marked by segregation, grievances and conflicts. The Gypsies that lived by the fishing pond near Szenyér went to nearby villages to harvest, collect and pick grapes. However, unlike in other villages, stable patron-client relations did not develop and were not handed down from generation to generation. Elderly peasants cannot recall their parents or grandparents having their "own Gypsies" or clients.[10] (This is likely because most day work was done by non-Roma servants who lived in the surrounding fields and who eventually moved to the edge of the village.) Even the rare meetings of the groups were rife with conflict. Women going back to the slum from the village were harassed. Some of the elderly recall that this was the reason they only travelled in groups. Some have bad memories of the police, because they beat Roma in public if they decided they were guilty of something. Once a Roma was blamed for a fire that burned down a shack. Another time the police turned a blind eye to the villagers' lynching of a Roma man who went into the tavern (it was forbidden for Roma to step inside the tavern).

Most of the conflicts, however, ensued after the system of segregation was dismantled. The peasants complained – and still complain – that the state supported the Gypsies' move into the towns, thus providing "the last (symbolic) twist of the knife" into peasant pride. Over the past few years the conflicts – especially in Szenyér – have centred on illegal squatting and trespasses against private property. Recent events and discourse on them have created a true psychosis. People are afraid to leave their homes unsupervised. Elderly peasant women and elderly persons who moved to the village from the city are the most afraid.

At the same time: examining the daily lives of those in Szenyér and Drávacsehi, we find examples of cooperation. There exist relations between Roma and non-Roma men and women of the same generation that are "bridge-like" between the ethnic groups (they are rooted in childhood neighbourly relations and common

[10] The godparent institution described by Judit Durst in Bordó does not exist in our two villages, with one exception. It, however, is church-based, not economically. Ildikó Sz., the daughter of the local gardener and the local Presbyterian minister became godmother to several Roma children, because the minister strictly insisted that all godparents be confirmed, and she was one of few in the village who had undergone confirmation.

school experiences) and they are considered as exemplary, though rare. The reason for this is not that friendships did not develop between Gypsies and Gadjo/peasants, but mainly because friendships do not develop at all.[11] The basis of solidarity and mutual aid – beyond the family – is neighbourly relations. Neighbours usually help each other even if one is Gypsy and the other one is not. In Drávacsehi, particularly intense relations developed between mothers of young children living in proximity to one another: these families lacked grandparents to assist them, while the husbands worked afar, leaving the women to raise the children themselves. In Szenyér, the old peasant women living in the central street and who are afraid of the Gypsies living on the edge of the village praised their next-door neighbours who assist them in times of illness or when it is too cold to leave the house.

Vera Messing examined relations between poor non-Roma and Roma families based on two national representative samples. She found that the proportion of Roma living in full relational networks among Boyash in villages in Baranya county was three times that for urbanized Roma or those Roma living in villages in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county. Thus, while there is no difference in social embeddedness between the urbanized environment and the communities in Borsod, the frequency of cooperation between poor Roma and non-Roma households in Baranya diverges from the other two environments. She uncovered an even more conspicuous difference when examining the category of those with the fewest relations pointing outward: the proportion of those in Baranya villages living in a "vacuum" is only half of what it is in the two other environments (MESSING 2006: 45). Messing's suppositions are confirmed in the two villages I studied. When the current middle-aged and elderly generations of Gypsies in Drávacsehi and Szenyér came into regular contact with the peasants living in the village, most of whom had become commuting industrial workers, the earlier hierarchical relationship became a supporter-helper relationship instead. The common labour market situation led to a significant equalization of status and similarity in lifestyle between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. This began to dismantle the long-standing and until then unquestionable rules of endogamy within village relations.

Naturally, when studying ghettoized Lápos, but Borsod county as well – where Gypsy residential groups are a true minority – Judit Durst hardly found "mixed marriages". In the villages I studied there were six marriages per village that could

[11] In a much wider context, Vera Messing and the international research project she referred to came to a similar conclusion: networks of connections that eroded under state socialism were totally destroyed during the transition to a market economy. She also wrote of the bridging relations between Roma and non-Roma poor families (MESSING 2006).

be categorized as interethnic. In opposition to rules of endogamy that existed for centuries, a middle position came into existence in both villages, creating a category where it was much easier to toy with identity. This does not mean that these marriages do not create tension in their environments. In Drávacsehi it is the currently middle-aged who recall cases of the breaking of family ties and disowning. This hardly occurred among the young, especially not when the Gypsy half of the marriage was of a stale family background, who accepts a poor and lonely, abandoned non-Gypsy partner. Many divorced or widowed men and women who raise their children alone have found one another in a way that is acceptable to the majority. In Szenyér, where I encountered the same number of interethnic partnerships, the social judgment of these marriages is different from Drávacsehi. On the one hand the oldest mixed couples are now in their thirties, so we can say that the rules of endogamy loosened one generation later. On the other hand the non-Roma partner is an immigrant to the village and is looked upon with scorn by many.

4.4 The Gypsy as difference in social discourse

In both villages I first encountered the Gypsy category in majority i.e., non-Gypsy discourse, when residents tried to alert me to the process they called "Gypsification". The "Gypsies" in this discourse were the embodiment of a value system opposite to "their own" or peasant values, but in a more general sense the term refers to moral decay, poverty, and devastation.

> "Magyars don't come here. When we die, that's it." In ten years in Drávacsehi "everything will be all Gypsy; there will be no proper Hungarian people here, it'll be pure Gypsy. (...) It will be bad because they steal, they even steal from each other."

The unwillingness to tend to gardens and the dilapidation of lands are also presented in this causality:

> "In Drávacsehi everyone has a garden, and the soil is good, but the people don't like to work or tend to the land. The village is fifty percent populated by "Brazilians", and there are mixed marriages too. There is a small fraction that does workfare, but they're never satisfied; they don't like to work. They're from the edge of the village, they are a bum nation, the three brides, and Marcsi, they are always cursing. The women don't like to work... They get aid from the Hungarian state." (...) "In ten years there will be crazy poverty here; the better-off will leave, and only Gypsies will remain, who will buy all the abandoned old houses with state money."

The focal point of discourse on the moral dimension of ethnic difference is theft, where thieves are assumed to be "Gypsy". The speaker in this instance is the former mayor of one of the villages:

> "They steal the grapes off the vine. There are stories like this, where the farmer is working on one end of the land, while the Gypsies are stealing on the other end. These Gypsies don't tend their plots, because they don't have the money to plough, to buy fertilizer, they don't even tend to their vegetable gardens. (...) Nothing matters to them."

Some differentiate between "our Gypsies", or the locals, and strangers, and thieves who sneak in are considered part of the latter group. A young woman, when speaking of why she does not allow her daughters to play with her Roma classmates or visit them, began as follows: *"There is always trouble with the Gypsies, (...) Even in school, all the trouble is with the Gypsies."* Not allowing children to play with neighbours, paying extra attention to the Gypsy children during school hygiene inspections, emphasizing skin colour, making children stand at the back of the line in physical education classes and seating children at the edge of the class photo are all practices that brand the prejudices of the majority into the bodies (or the perception of the social position of those bodies) of the minority children through socialization. A young man from a mixed family, who emphasized that his family does not differentiate and claimed that it was an irrelevant aspect of his youth, remembered his stigmatization in school as his first experience of ‚differentiation, which he has difficulty interpreting to this day:

> "My only memory, I think it was my headmaster, who taught literature, made a remark... He was talking about Turks, and said that Gábor would fit in well with the Turks. And he went on to say that the reason is that his skin is a bit darker. And I had to wonder about it then."

We could list more examples with many quotes that place want, deviance and abnormality in the centre of the discourse. This is the social discourse that turns the category of "Gypsy" into a stigma. It is a stigma related to power, given that the speakers do not present the category only when alone or in their informal environment, but turn to it even in their official capacities. The quotes presented above were directly from mayors, teachers, nurses, shopkeepers, foremen and managers, or from those concerned. In Drávacsehi we encountered a phenomenon where people of higher status and better material position were much more overtly aggressive in debasing Roma and using stigmatizing language and categories. But this discourse contains even more strength by the fact that people who consider themselves to be of Gypsy origin use the same speech when trying

to differentiate themselves and their families from the "real Gypsies". This is the phenomenon that Bourdieu calls symbolic violence, which he describes through the example of male dominance (BOURDIEU 1990).

When describing symbolic violence Bourdieu did not see any opportunity for its victims to individually actively react to the degrading image formed of them.[12] When people of Roma background from Drávacsehi and Szenyér, while being interviewed by strangers who are friendly to them, explain what it means to them to by Gypsy, in most cases they discuss grievances and offences. In a group interview, the members of which were leaders of the Minority Self-Government and male members of respected Roma families, the participants emphasized two experiences. The first was *discrimination*, which they encountered foremost in the labour market. The second was *shame*, which is essentially the interiorized form of the former. These men, who are in the thirties and forties and for the most part have jobs, interpret discrimination as a collective attribute that cannot be changed. In Drávacsehi the leader of the minority saw the effects of discrimination as strongest. He stated: *"racism... will never end"*.

I also regularly encountered stigmatizing speech, where the degrading image of the Gypsies was internalized by those of Gypsy origin themselves. One mother, who was complaining that her daughter, who took great care of her beautiful hair, was made to stand in front of her class by the school nurse. She emphasized her grievance by saying that her daughter had to stand with "those lice-infested Gypsies" (she said in a scornful and serious tone) and her hair was inspected in the same messy way. To further explain, she spoke about her family: *"I'm not trying to be pompous, but ask anyone in the village about my family, and they will tell you, there has never been a police officer knocking here at our door. The most they can say that we are a proud family"*.

The stigmatizing majority discourse is also used when trying to differentiate people or families considered Gypsy from one another, i.e., when creating differences among Gypsies, especially when the speaker's goal is to prop him/herself up. When a large family from Harkány moved into an abandoned house in Drávacsehi (which the municipal government of Harkány purchased for the family), this style of speech spread through the village and was used by long-term residents of the village of both Roma and peasant origin. In Szenyér the speech of the Boyash concerning the Kolompár Gypsies is a match for the stigmatizing discourse used by the majority.

[12] Regarding struggles in the regions he is somewhat more optimistic than when discussing male dominance, but he can only envision overturning symbolic power relations through collective struggles. (Stigma brings into play uprising against stigma. This begins with the public proclamation of the stigma, which becomes a marker – according to the *black is beautiful* paradigm – and ends with the institutionalization (as social and economic effects) of the stigmatized group (BOURDIEU 1991).

"They fight about everything, they are pompous. You keep a safe distance from them, whether you are Gypsy or Magyar. They are quick to become aggressive. When the children fight then they protect their own and go after the other kids."

We often hear Roma of higher status, with steady jobs and consolidated residences using the markers of "real Gypsy" and "dirty Gypsy" to refer to those who have not risen like they had. A young man from a mixed family emotionally reported this phenomenon whereby he heard his Gypsy mother often use these degrading comments: he did not know at the time that he was of Gypsy origin himself.

Above we made mention of keeping silent, but there is a clearer and more determined form of everyday resistance, which connects the self-identity category of Gypsy with the loud and hot-spirited responses to recognized injustices. The following passage took place in the context of debates on workfare. The young lady said that she had an argument with the mayor because she thought the mayor was being unfair to her husband. In the heat of the argument she began to scream and swear. After the fact she described herself as having "behaved like a Gypsy".

"If a Gypsy talks with a peasant, I can talk nicely and normally. But if they wind me up and I know I'm right and the other person is lying, then I can speak in a very nasty way. If I need to, I'll slap them across the mouth. Human voice, animal behaviour, that is the Gypsy style" – she claimed.

Others have written widely on how Gypsiness as difference functions, and how various difference (re)constructions function within speech situations in which experiences of differentiation are shared (HORVÁTH 2009). In difference-constructing situations in a village in Borsod she saw themes of skin colour, cleanliness and hunger as definitive. Besides recognizing discursive compulsion, Horváth also emphasizes renewal opportunities that are expressed in such interactions. Humour is such an example in which the analyst sees an opportunity for the Gypsy category (or its synonyms) to have its offensive and degrading contents "challenged". There were daily examples of this in communication in Drávacsehi and Szenyér, especially among the young and young adults. When, for example, jokingly someone said about him/herself or someone else "they didn't get that skin colour by sun-tanning", they on one hand quote racism discourse that operated with phenotype markers, and on the other hand turn its meaning inside-out, or at least express a serious doubt about the validity of the expression.

5. IDENTITY CONSTRUCTIONS AMONG GROUPS OF PEOPLE CONSIDERED GYPSY, LIVING IN SMALL VILLAGE PERIPHERY AREAS

This study has considered ethnic differences embedded in social relations in two small villages. These villages in many ways have developed much like the rest of the small villages in South Transdanubia: first they underwent population decline and self-liquidation, and then they were resettled by migrants and the poor. This more or less spontaneous population transfer has left its mark on the image and structure of both villages. Groups of largely Boyash Gypsies from nearby became neighbours with groups of "peasants"/"non-Roma" having drifted in from both far away and nearby. Nevertheless, unlike most other small villages, the residential segregation of the Roma population, i.e., the ethnic ghettoization of the village did not ensue here. It is clear, however, that these two villages with their full mixed populations (Roma and non-Roma, long-time residents and recent immigrants) lag far behind Hungary's more prosperous settlements: they became economic and social enclaves. At the time of our field study there was a limited but still significant number of employers, enough to ensure that the livelihood and consumption patterns of late socialism were able to survive, although for a much smaller group of people. Regarding access to economic goods and the relationship to work, I identified four strategies (which I described above): the totally helpless who live from day to day, those with short-term perspectives, those hoping for mobility, and those successful in upward or outward mobility.

To conclude and summarize, I would like to return to the question that was formulated at the beginning of the paper: what do these social patterns (that define economic strategies) have to do with ethnicity or with the social organization of cultural differences? In the introduction I stated that the defining economic and lifestyle patterns are characteristically not a complete fit with ethnicity in these two villages. With regards to Roma/Gypsy identity, those symbolic resources that root membership in a unique culture or recognized community are deficient, as seen in the loss of original language, acculturation, and vulnerability to majority discourse and its inherent component: prejudices. In a cultural sense there is no adoptable or viable "Gypsy/Roma alternative", not even in the village where a man of Roma origin went as far as becoming mayor. True, it is not just a Roma alternative that does not exist: there is no Drávacsehi or Szenyér alternative either for those born here and wish for a rise in social status or just respectable membership in society. The Roma mayor not only does not teach his children to speak Boyash, but is even building a new house in a bigger village a few kilometres away to which his family's successful members already moved (those who serve as role models to him). In a developed stage of acculturation the minority associations

cannot change the situation. Institutions like Minority Self-Government are essentially left without resources and functions and actually stall the careers of those seeking prestige and advancement through the institution.

Residential segregation is not characteristic because the number of truly isolated families is relatively low compared to the entire population of the village. There is a significant number of people in the group I characterized as having short-term perspectives (who have more or less steady work and income) for whom common workplaces and neighbourly relations have made movement between the "Gypsy" and "non-Gypsy" lifeworlds quite natural. In this relationship mixed marriages, or partnerships between those of Roma and non-Roma background, which are increasingly common in both villages, play a significant mediating role. Despite local ties and relationships, public speech reproduces the "Gypsy" category as the last remnant of the social image of feudal Hungary which assumes that Gypsies are a group of deviants without social membership. This discourse procuring the memory of local conflicts and grievances is strengthened by the recent nation-wide racist speech mode. This is the social setting in which people of various social statuses and following various economic strategies(re) evaluate their own Gypsy origin and social ties. I made up the four characteristic types of identity construction by interpreting the correlation between origin and economic strategy and (actual and desired) social position.[13]

Based on the above, the first group of Gypsies in the two villages is made of (1) those who relate to their Gypsy identity as taken for granted, with *a secure yet unreflected complex sense of identity*, because not only does it demark ethnic membership, but it also expresses the relationship with the surrounding society, given that as a Gypsy he/she is preordained to be socially excluded. People in this category are either not, or are just marginally or sporadically, in touch with the labour market and the institutions of majority society (school, health care and social aid systems). As a result they easily fall afoul of the law. The lifestyle is characterized by the economic and consumption patterns of living from day to day (as discussed above). Internally, in most cases, they form a network or community with strong ties.

The second group is that made up of (2) those who are *integrated and assimilated*, who are called "nice Gypsies" by others and by themselves. They make every effort to identify with the majority and to integrate into those structural positions defined by the majority. Their ethnic belonging decreases their chances of attaining the desired social status. For this reason they try and distance

[13] An important reference point for the typology is the set of minority responses to discrimination found in social-psychological studies: withdrawal, resigned acceptance, verbal and physical confrontation. (NEMÉNYI 2007)

themselves from shameful and stigmatizing "Gypsiness", although they do not deny it altogether. They often emphasize that "they are Gypsies too", but they are unlike the "real Gypsies". Only the elderly hold onto the practice of their unique cultural heritage, while some signs of this are also evident among the middle-aged. But as the current adults make no effort to pass on the culture to the young, the newest generation will forget these traits.

Behind the economic and lifestyle patters directed at mobility of the Gypsies in both villages there lie many kinds of relationships to ethnic cultural heritage. To characterize the most marked differences I differentiate between those who integrate *(see above)* and the third group, who (3) *hide* their heritage.[14] The former group does not emphasize their Gypsy origin, as it may be an obstacle to their social ambitions, but they do not deny it. The latter group hides its origin, and one of their most important ambitions is to wipe all signs of Gypsy origin from their life- and family histories. We observed this kind of active "identity work" mostly among those who had partly "integrated" but, for some reason – usually because of injuries caused by the non-Gypsy environment – had their mobility stalled. Beyond using the discourse of grievance toward non-Gypsies and the discourse of stigmatization toward Gypsies, the denial of origin was evident in radical decisions, like changing a "Gypsy" family name, or using plastic surgery to be rid of "Gypsy attributes".

The common thread in the three strategies outlined above is that not one of them questions or opposes the hegemony of the majority and its structural order. The fourth category is composed of (4) *rebels*, those who are trying to change the structure and not their individual relationship to it. A clear difference between them and the silent or hiding people is that in this group there is discussion about Gypsiness, which attempts to increase the value of the category of Gypsy/Roma, though it focuses not on the unconsidered rehabilitation of local, "obvious" Gypsiness, but instead constructs a new Roma identity which is ideological and politicized. Furthermore, it incorporates urban or even distant – transnational – cultural patterns (e.g., ethnic music, rap music) related to "spaces of freedom". Some of the rebels have low status on the labour market paired with an identity struggle of re-evaluation of ethnic categories. They are the "ethnic entrepreneurs" with the biggest interest in reforming the system. The other group of rebels is composed of the children of the "hiding" parents, whose social mobility was successful. Having attained a higher social position they managed to rework the

[14] Patrick Williams, who studies the role of economic activities, spoke of invisibility as the key characteristic of the Kalderash Gypsies in Paris. Invisibility is the goal, while hiding is the means to reach the goal.

ethnic category that represents their origin, so that it has become acceptable for them.

Finally: the analysis of the discourses in both villages between people considered Gypsy and the majority has shown that the "outside" view held by the majority society of Gypsies reflects a unified, monolithic, subjugated class, while from "within" we see a stratified society split along fault lines, with a pluralism of meanings and relations to them. At the same time I identified processes that loosened ethnic boundaries and made transition easier: from "within" I identified hiding and attempts to integrate with the outside world, while from without I found that borders are weakened by those structural processes that equalize social differences between Gypsies and non-Gypsies and are geared toward connecting people of different ethnic background but with identical social status.

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