



# Additions to the Migration of Szekler Youth<sup>1</sup>— an Overview of Statistical Data and Existing Literature

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

**Keywords:** migration, Szeklerland, statistics, youth

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

## Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Emigrational trends in post-communist Romania**

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

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<sup>8</sup> The most recent surveys used in the study target this age-group.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Migration in Szeklerland according to statistical data**

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

### **Romanian migration in international statistics**

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

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

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

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

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

13 Source: EUROSTAT (online data code: migr\_pop1ctz).

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

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

Source: Eurostat,<sup>14</sup> INS TEMPO database, compiled by the author

## Migration according to census data in Romania

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

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

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

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

### *Long-term residence abroad*

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

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

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

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

### *Temporary residence abroad*

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

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

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

## **Migration from Szeklerland in the light of sociological and anthropological research**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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