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The Western Hungarian diaspora and some demographic and social characteristics of their organisations

Abstract

The paper analyses the main historical migration processes which contributed to the forming of Hungarian diaspora communities in Western Europe, in America, and in Australia since of the middle of 19th century. Analysing the demographic and the organizational aspects of Western Hungarian diaspora communities is seems to be important because there are only few social and demographic research in the field, and the lack of sociological informations and (self)-knowledges often gives way of a certain ethnical activism.

Hungarian diaspora in the west exist since the second half of the 19th c. Though information is available about Hungarians emigrating in earlier centuries and eras too, communities to be described as diaspora were appearing by the 1870 when the migration movements of modern times had reached Hungary too. The present paper is going to investigate the migration processes that resulted in the forming of Hungarian communities outside the Carpathian Basin and the demographic and social characteristics of these communities.

The most important sources of the development and maintenance of the western diaspora communities of Hungarians were the mass emigration peaking in the years before the outbreak of World War I. Later it was the reproduction of those of Hungarian origin on the one hand and the later arrivals of refugees and/or emigrants on the other that kept them alive. The last great mass arrival was in 1956 as the outcome of the historical events but there were many who emigrated during the era of state Socialism and also after the change of regime.

Table 1. Overseas Hungarian emigrants between 1871 and 1913

	Data of the USA Immigration Office	Data of the seaports	Data of the Hungarian Statistical Office
1871-1879	5 597	7 682	-
1880-1889	115 252	164 119	-
1890-1899	235 895	261 444	-
1900-1909	1 094 116	1 171 758	854 584
1910-1913	410 480	433 230	315 498
TOTAL 1871-1913	1 861 340	2 038 233	-
TOTAL 1900-1913	1 504 596	1 604 988	1 170 082

Source: *Puskás 1982. 443-446.*¹

Between 1871 and 1913 there were about 2 million Hungarian citizens emigrating overseas mainly for economic reasons. The number peaked in the first decade of the 20th c. when about 1 million emigrants were registered by various sources, then by 1914 further 500 000 had left Hungary. In this mass emigration period $\frac{3}{4}$ of the emigrants were men, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of them 20–49 years of age, the generation fit for work, those above 50 years did not reach 3%. Naturally not all of them were Hungarian nationals. The proportion of Hungarians was 26,3%, Slovaks to a similar proportion, Croats 16,6% and Germans 15%.

Though in the earliest, end of 19th c., period of the emigration the role of merchants, artisans and miners was important, when it gained mass magnitude, persons from the agrarian sphere became dominant, this is why public opinion and also scientific literature has been talking about peasant exodus.

Emigration did not mean a one-way movement at the turn of the 19-20th c, partly because the emigrant themselves considered it as transitory movement partly because the home authorities recognizing the demographic and social hazards started action for resettlement and as a third feature the economic situation of the receiving country, too, influenced the possibility of settling down. Thanks to

¹ The data have been processed on from the ones in the *Függelék* [appendix] of Puskás, Julianna *Kivándorló magyarok az Egyesült Államokban 1880-1940* [Hungarian emigrants in the USA 1880-1940] (Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest 1982).

these effects about a quarter of those emigrated between 1899 and 1913 returned to Hungary, according to the data of Hungarian statistics.²

During and after the WW1 the conditions of international migration changed and the USA being the prime target for emigrants tightened its emigration policy through various legislations, quotas according to origin tried to keep down migration from Europe. Because of these changes the number of Hungarian immigrants to the USA remained below 50 000 persons. The US restriction increased interest in Canada as target where about 25-30 000 emigrants arrived, mainly from the agrarian sphere of Hungary. Parallel to these movements, South American states, first of all Brazil and Argentina received Hungarian emigrants who were also mainly employed in farming.

Between the two wars changes in the route of emigrants can be noticed not only in its direction towards overseas but also in the changing tendencies within Europe too. In the 1920s it was France and Belgium, in the '30s Germany became the major target of emigration. It is true in these cases the two-way traffic was even more frequent than in those of the USA. Between the two wars migration lessened but with the multiplication of the target countries, the geographical, spatial distribution of the Hungarian diaspora communities grew and the newcomers after WW2 and 1956 joined them.

By the end of WW2 there were more than 11 million displaced persons in Europe of whom about 8 million were repatriated by the summer of 1947 but there were about 1,5 million who did not wish to return to their country of origin. IRO working under the aegis of UNO coordinated the settlement of more than a million displaced persons between July 1947 and end of 1951 who were waiting in Austrian camps to be able to start a new existence in an over-seas country. According to IRO's data there were 17 000 Hungarians accepted in the USA, about 3500 in France. Between 1946 and 1955 there were about 16 500 former Hungarian citizens registered in Canada; in Australia about 14 500 Hungarian post-war emigrants were registered; according to various estimates there were about

² In reality the number of home comers could be higher. The US authorities registered out-going migration between 1908 and 1913 and that would make about 40% for those who returned from the US.

10 000 Hungarians settled in South America and 5000 in the Scandinavian countries.³ There were economic and political aspects specified by some countries as conditions of the reception: the US had the strictest political control and saw to it that no one compromised by the Hungarian Arrow Party or fascist activities should enter the country; other countries were motivated by the needs of their labour markets and accordingly accepted persons with specific skills. 20% of the displaced persons were of Jewish origin whose majority moved to Palestine and later the newly created Jewish state.

The period between 1949 and 1956 could be regarded as characterized by ‘migration lull’⁴ due to the Communist takeover and the following administrative restriction; during the period there were only some 2500 persons to legally leave Hungary. After this short period there were about 250 000 persons fleeing the country causing considerable demographic loss;⁵ on the other hand it provided the most important addition to the organizations of the western diaspora communities. The previous emigrants had already created their organizations: societies, churches, youth organizations, etc. but their existence on the long run depended on the masses of newcomers. In addition the 1956 people created their own organizations too.

The exodus caused by the events of 1956 did not stop and there were about 3–6000 persons per year to leave the country till the change of regime. Between 1960 and 1989 there were about 130 000 person emigrating, legally or illegally. The official Hungarian data indicate that when the number of legal and illegal emigrants was more or less near each other in the ‘60s and ‘70s, in the last decade of the state socialist illegal departures were proportionally higher. (cf. *Table 2.*)

³ For details cf. Puskás, Julianna: *Migráció Kelet-Közép-Európában a 19. és 20. században. Regio*, 1991/4, [Migration in east Central Europe in the 19th and 20th cc.] and Szántó, Miklós: *Magyarok Amerikában*. Gondolat, Budapest, 1984. 106–108. p. [Hungarians in America].

⁴ The term was created by P.P. Tóth: A nemzetközi vándormozgalom szerepe a népességfejlődésben. [The role of international migration the development of population] In: Faragó Tamás – Óri Péter (szerk.): *Történeti demográfiai évkönyv, 2001*. Budapest, KSH NKI. p. 327–343. p.335. [Yearbook of historical demography].

⁵ Habcsek László – Illés Sándor: Az 1956-os kivándorlás népességi hatásai. *Statisztikai Szemle*. 85. évf. 2. 157-172. [the demographic consequences of the 1956 emigrations].

Table 2. Proportion of legal and illegal emigrants between 1947 and 1989

	Emigrants		
	legal	illegal	TOTAL
1947-1955	2 553	n.d.	2 553
1956-1962	20 703	193 835	214 538
1963-1979	36 713	40 725	77 438
1980-1989	14 931	30 266	45 197
Összesen	74 900	264 826	339 726

Source: Tóth 2001, p. 336

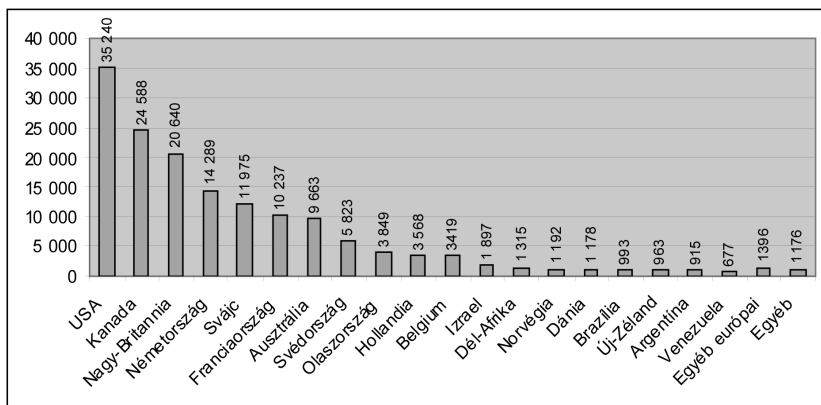
There was a short lull following the change of regimes but the flow of westward emigration did not stop; in addition Hungary became a transit country as many foreign citizens – partly Hungarian nationals of the neighbouring countries – moved on, the impact of which could be assessed only from the registrations of the receiving countries. According to the 2008 official Hungarian data 359 persons emigrated, the immigration data of the western countries registered 26 661 Hungarian citizens, 70% of them in Germany.

Since the last major resources of the western Hungarian diaspora were the 1956 refugees, let us analyse the main elements of the wave of migrants. After the 1956 events the refugees left Hungary via Yugoslavia and Austria. For the first half of 1957 the Austrian and Yugoslavian authorities for internal affairs estimated 193 885 persons in total (170 704 and 19 181 respectively). *Ungarischer Flüchtlingshilfdienst* registered 183 667 refugees between 1st of November 1956 and the 30th of June 1958⁶; the majority arrived in November and December 1956, in the first half of 1958 there were only 394 arrivals. About 10% of the refugees remained in Austria, about 6% returned to Hungary, the remaining 84% left for other western countries. 80% of

⁶ Soós Katalin: 1956-os magyar menekültek a statisztikai adatok tükrében. *Levéltári Szemle* 2002/3.pp. 56–60.[Hungarian refugees and the data of statistics]. Cseresyés Ferenc: Ötvenhatosok menekülése Ausztriába és Ausztrián át. *Múltunk*, 1998/1. 42–70.

them settled down mainly in seven countries: USA (22,7%), Canada (15,9), United Kingdom (13,3%), Germany (9,2%), Switzerland (7,7%), France (6,6%), Australia (6,2). Besides these countries other European and Latin-American countries, Israel and South Africa, too, accepted Hungarian migrants.⁷ (*Figure 1.*)

Figure 1. Hungarian citizens departing from Austria between the 1st of November 1956. and the 30th of June 1958. according to target countries



Source: Soós 2002.

USA, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland, France, Australia, Sweden, Italy, The Netherlands, Belgium, Israel, South Africa, Norway, Denmark, Brazil, New Zealand, Argentina, Venezuela, Other European, Other

After October 1956 about 20 000 Hungarians were in refugee camps in Yugoslavia, most of them came at the beginning of 1957 when the Hungarian authorities had hermetically closed the Hungarian – Austrian border, thus the main escape route remained toward Yugoslavia. There were about 2000 persons who returned to Hungary,

⁷ In many cases the target country was another one (usually the USA) but if they were left out the quotas offered by the countries, they emigrated to another one as the first step.

500 settled down there the rest migrated further west (to France, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, New Zealand, Canada and Austria).⁸

There are detailed data about 80% of the emigrants (151 731 persons) collected by the Hungarian Central Office of Statistics.⁹ It can be stated that more than half of the refugees were from the capital, Budapest, 30% from Transdanubia; 2/3 were men and about the same proportion were townspeople. According to age more than half were under 25 year of age, and a contemporary Hungarian account remarks that about 20% of the men of military age of 19-20 years “defected”, the use the term of the period. 2/3 of the persons departing illegally were breadwinners and within this group 2/3 worked as non-agricultural manual workers, ¼ white-collar workers and only 7% were agricultural workers. The white-collar workers were employed as intellectuals; engineers were in the majority (indeed 10% of the country’s engineers left). Half of those being dependent were pupils, about 3200 of them university students that meant more than 11% of the total number of students in Hungary at the time.¹⁰

All in all it can be stated that after October 1956 young urban men of working age left the country in masses that was tempting for the labour market of the receiving western countries’. It was no mere coincidence either, that the major motivation of the refugees was the possibility of a better quality of life, the real political consideration was less important.

While the people that left Hungary are fairly accurately documented sometimes by several sources, it is difficult to estimate the number of Hungarians living abroad at present, with only few exceptions. First of all who is Hungarian? Persons who emigrated from Hungary after the war were most probably Hungarians – unless

⁸ Hidas I. Péter: Magyar menekültek Jugoszláviában, útban Kanadába. *Múltunk*, 1997/3. pp. 172–182. [Hungarian refugees to Canada via Yugoslavia]

⁹ *KSH jelentés az 1956-os disszidálásról*. REGIO, 1991/4 [Report on the 1956 emigration].

¹⁰ Várallyay Gyula knows about a grater number. According to him the contemporary statistics and report would ass up to 6000 to 8000 student refugees. Várallyay Gyula: „*Tanulmányúton*”. *Az emigráns magyar diákmozgalom 1956-ban*. Századvég, 56-os Intézet, Budapest, 1992. p.57. [Students’ movement in emigration].

the person decided to assimilate voluntarily and quickly.¹¹ But the definition of the native country does not offer enough information: there are Hungarians emigrating from the neighbouring countries too, however, the receiving countries register them according to their citizenship. Mother tongue could also be an important criterion but there are several definitions of mother tongue in various countries and there sometimes no question asked about the mother tongue. E.g. in the USA there is no question about the mother tongue only about the language spoken at home in the census after 1980; the answer given to such a question cannot be definitive it can happen that though the persons mother tongue is Hungarian but for reasons, e.g. because of mixed marriage they do not use it at home. The ethnic data collection has other obstacles too, the descendants of earlier Hungarian emigrants cannot always speak the language but 'in their soul', 'in their hearts', they 'feel' Hungarian. The methods of census questioning can have further influence on the evaluation of the size of an ethnic group. It has been pointed out in the USA and in Australia that the example given on the questionnaire meant as a help can influence the answer. And there is also the problem of ethnic concealment that can also distort ethnic data collection.¹²

In spite of all the vagueness there is still information about the number and order of the Hungarians living in the western world. (*Tables 3.-5.*). On the one hand there are various specialist estimates – not always well documented – and on the other, there are detailed official data in certain countries. The specially immigration interested countries as the USA, Canada, Australia can provide with detailed data (*Table 3.*) and in some South American and European countries the number of Hungarians can be estimated by the country of provenance and/or date of immigration as well as religion.

¹¹ It exists, there is the tops:’ hardly arrived he one or two years ago and cannot speak Hungarian anymore’.

¹² Tóth, Pál Péter: Magyarok a nagyvilágban. *Kisebbségkutatás* 2001/4. [Hungarians in the wide world].

Table 3. Inhabitants of Hungarian nationality or origin in the USA, Canada and Australia (Census data)

Country	Census year	Of Hungarian origin Total	Language spoken at home: Hungarian
USA	1980	1 776 902	178 995
USA	1990	1 582 302	147 902
USA	2000	1 398 724	117 975
USA ¹³	2006	1 563 081	n.d.
Canada	2001	267 255	23 685
Canada	2006	315 510	21 905
Australia	2001	62 507	24 485
Australia	2006	67 625	21 565

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Special Tabulation PHC-T43; U. S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 Special Tabulations CPH-L-149; U. S. Census Bureau, Ancestry of the Population by State: 1980 (Supplementary Report PC80-S1-10).; Canada: Immigration and Citizenship Highlight Tables, 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97-557-XWE2006002. and Catalogue Number 97-562-XCB2006012.; Australia: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Table: 20680-u16-Australia and Table:20680-c37c-Australia.

In the USA there live about 1 500 000 persons of Hungarian origin, but it does not mean that we can count with a Hungarian population of that size. The census following 1980 asks about *ancestry* but it is not about the mother tongue but the language used at home. Thus between 1980 and 2000 those speaking Hungarian at home represent only about 8-10% of the population of Hungarian origin. In 1970 was the last time when the language spoken in childhood was inquired about (and not the ethnic ancestors). In 1970 about 447 000

¹³ American Community Survey (ACS) 2006. On the characteristics of the ACS data collecting cf. Pakot, Levente: A 2000. évi amerikai népszámlálás jellegzetességei és kihatása az amerikai magyarok számbavételére [characteristics of the ACS data collecting and its impact of the taking account of Hungarian-Americans]. In Papp Z. Attila (ed.) *Beszédből világ. Elemzések, adatok amerikai magyarokról*. Magyar Külügyi Intézet, Budapest, 2008.

Hungarians registered and analyses carried out on different bases gave it as 421 000, i.e. representing only 6% difference.¹⁴ It can be interpreted that around 1980 23,6% of those of Hungarian origin had Hungarian as their mother tongue and if this number is projected over the 2000 census data about 330 000 could be the estimated number of Hungarian speakers in the USA (not counting the loss caused by assimilation).

In Canada it is not only ethnic origin but various language uses are also inquired about, e.g. the mother tongue and the language spoken at home. In 2006 315 510 informants mentioned Hungarian ancestors of whom 88 685 (28%) had only Hungarian ones, the others were born in mixed marriages. Those of Hungarian ancestry 76 595 (24%) had Hungarian as their mother tongue and only 20 905 (7%) used it at home; the proportions in 2001 were 28,8% and 8,8% respectively.

In Australia too the question is about ancestry, the informants can give two ancestors. The options combined gave the result that in 2001 62 507 informants mentioned Hungarian ancestors, in 2006 the number was 67 625. Concerning the language – similar to that in the USA – it is not the mother tongue but the language used in the family is asked about. In 2001 39% (24 485) of the Hungarian descendants, in 2006 somewhat less 32% (21 565) used Hungarian in their homes.

In connection to these three countries that count as immigration targets it is important to notice that of persons of Hungarian ancestry the proportion of those stating Hungarian as their mother tongue and the ones who were using Hungarian at home is about the same in the USA and Canada, while in Australia the proportion of Hungarian speakers at home is considerably higher. It indicates that in Australia the ethnically homogeneous marriages may be more frequent thus delaying assimilation.

¹⁴ Fejős Zoltán: Magyarok az Egyesült Államokban az 1980-as években. (Demográfia, társadalmi adatok, fogalmi problémák). In: *Magyarsághutató 1988. a magyarsághutató Intézet Évkönyve*, Budapest, 1988. pp.177–216. [Hungarians in the US in the 1980s. Demography, social data, conceptual problems.]

Table 4. Estimate of Hungarians living in Latin-American countries

	Borbándi, 1996	MVSZ, 2000	HTMH, 2006	IPUMS
Mexico	100	300	n.d.	n.d.
Costa Rica	n.d.	1 100	n.d.	n.d.
Venezuela	5 000	4 500	4-5000	2 600
Brazil	60 000	70 000	5-10 000	14 000
Peru	150	2 000	n.d.	n.d.
Chile	2-3000	2 000	n.d.	1 115
Uruguay	5 000	3 500	4-5000	n.d.
Argentina	40 000	40 000	20-30 000	12 000
Paraguay	150	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
Columbia	150	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
TOTAL	112 450-113 450	123 400	33 000-50 000	

Table 5. Estimate of Hungarians living in European countries outside the Carpathian Basin

	Borbándi, 1996	MVSZ, 2000	HTMH, 2006
Austria	60 000	40-45 000	40 000
Belgium	10-15000	14-15 000	5-6000
Cyprus	n.d.	n.d.	2-300
Czech Republic	n.d.	20 000	19-20 000
Denmark	2 000	4 000	2-4 000
Estonia	n.d.	n.d.	150
France	50 000	40-45 000	15-19 000
Finnland	n.d.	n.d.	1 000
Greece ¹⁵	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
The Netherlands	10 000	11-12 000	8-10 000
Latvia	n.d.	n.d.	300
Lithuania	n.d.	n.d.	120
Poland	n.d.	n.d.	500
Luxemburg	n.d.	n.d.	2-300
Great Britain	25 000	25-30 000	25-30 000
Germany	62 000	120 000	120-160 000
Norway	3 000	4 000	3 000
Italy	10 000	9-10 000	n.d.
Portugal	n.d.	2 000	n.d.
Spain	200	n.d.	n.d.
Switzerland	20 000	18-20 000	20-25 000
Sweden	25 000	25-27 000	30-35 000
TOTAL	277 000-282 000	332 000-354 000	289 470-354 670

The comparison of the data concerning Europe and South America¹⁶ coming from various sources give the result that in certain countries (especially in those where the census does not provide

¹⁵ There are several thousand Hungarians living in Greece. According to the 2001 IPUMS-database about 1300 of them were born in Hungary and about 500 are Hungarian citizens.

¹⁶ There are other estimates too: Károly Kocsis estimates the number of Hungarians in European countries outside the Carpathian Basin (Austria included) to 270 000 persons; in the Latin American countries to 100 000. (Kocsis, Károly and Kocsis-Hodosi Eszter: *Hungarian Minorities in the Carpathian Basin. A study in Ethnic Geography*. Matthias Corvinus Publishing, Toronto-Buffalo 1995. p. 13.)

details of ethnic, national provenance) there are considerable differences between the various estimates. It is South America, in Brazil and Argentina the two countries with the largest Hungarian communities, where the differences are the more conspicuous (*Table 4.*) In Western Europe it is Germany, France, Belgium and Sweden where the data seem to match the least. (*Table 5.*)

For the Latin American countries we can make our own estimates by the help of census databases.¹⁷ Our estimation presupposes four sources for the Hungarians living in these countries: those born in Hungary; those coming from the neighbouring states of Hungary; the children of the two groups. Based on the census question about the birth country and number of living offspring the number of persons coming from Hungary and that of their children can easily be established. Those coming from the countries surrounding Hungary religion that can indicate their being Hungarians if the birth country was Romania, Yugoslavia/Serbia or the former Soviet Union/Ukraine: Roman Catholics and Protestants are most probably Hungarian. Those persons coming from former Czechoslovakia (Slovakia) cannot be estimated by religion because there is no difference among Hungarians and the majority population, thus 50% minority Hungarians will be reckoned (which may not be correct, but the data have been over estimated on purpose). The proportion of Hungarians established by the above method will than be extended to the productivity of the persons coming from the countries in question. Since religion is not among the questions asked in the latest Argentinean census, the proportion of Hungarian nationals coming from the Carpathian Basin will be reckoned with the help of the data obtained in Brazil. Naturally this kind of reckoning has its drawbacks since it is arguable whether the children born to Hungarian mothers have remained Hungarian or are they still alive or have remained in the country of the census. Also the third and fourth generation Hungarians are also left out, i.e. the offspring of those already born abroad, who may still have preserved their Hungarian identity in some forms.

¹⁷ The basis is the database Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) of Minnesota Population Center (MPC). (Minnesota Population Center. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2009.). thanks to MPC and the countries that provided us with their databases.

With the help of the reckoning it was found that about 12 000 potentially Hungarian persons (first and second generation) could live in Argentina, 14 5000 in Brazil and in Chile and Venezuela the number may somewhat be less than the known estimates but proportionally similar. It has to be noted that the Argentinean value seems acceptable as there have been estimates with similar results,¹⁸ and in the case of Brazil our estimate is near to the value given by HTMH (see *Tables 4. and 5.*).

In France there were about 10 000 persons who were born in Hungary but obtained French citizenship or permission to reside according to the data of the 1999 census;¹⁹ if the ration of birth, as well as Hungarians arrived from other countries of the Carpathian Basin and their progeny, about 20 000 Hungarian nationals could be reckoned with in France.

The data from Germany indicate a kind of dynamic growth compared with the 1996 data. That could be plausible, since as has already pointed out above, 70% of Hungarians living and legally registered in Western Europe (about 19 000 persons) had settled down in Germany according to the 2008 data. If this 19 000 is added to the 1996 data together with the stipulated number of their offspring as well as minority Hungarians from the neighbouring countries, that would total to 100 000 persons at least – near to the estimated 120 000 given by the Association of Hungarians in Germany (BUOD).

There are two reliable sources for Belgium: firstly there were about 3500 persons emigrated to Belgium after the 1956 events, and secondly the 2006 official Belgian data mention 2000 Hungarians staying in the country. Thus 7-8000 Hungarians can be estimated for Belgium.

The Swedish sources mentioned 25–30 000 Hungarians in Sweden based on official statistics that may represent the maximum number.²⁰ In 2002 there were 13 935 persons born in Hungary and 13 956 already born in Sweden from Hungarian ancestors. Based

¹⁸ According to Kósa, László 10 000 persons in 1980, Balázs, Dénes 15.000 persons. Cf.: Kósa, László (ed.): *A magyarságtudomány kézikönyve*. Budapest, 1990. and Balázs, Dénes: *Argentína, Uruguay*. Budapest, Panoráma Útikönyvek sorozat, 1988. [Handbook of Hungarian studies].

¹⁹ Also in the 2006 report of HTMH.

²⁰ *Statistika Centralbyrån (SCB) Befolkningsstatistik del 3*, 2002. pp. 20, 70, 74.

on these two data the number of persons of Hungarian origin can be estimated at about 28 000 but if the number of those who were born in the Hungarian communities outside Hungary first of all from Transylvania is added to it the number becomes considerably higher (in 2002 there were 12 172 persons registered coming from Romania of whom 6 808 emigrated in the 1980s and many of them could have been Hungarians. Unfortunately it cannot be established what proportion of the 12 000 emigrants from Romania, about 2000 from Ukraine, and about 75 000 from the former Yugoslavia were Hungarian nationals. Even if their number is estimated at a minimum level, the persons with Hungarian attachment could be estimated at about 35 000 persons.

Though it will not be discussed in detail but there are Hungarians, persons of Hungarian origin or coming from Hungary living in other countries, on other continents too. The sources cited above estimated that in Israel there are about 200–250 000 persons coming from Hungary and the surrounding countries who know Hungarian; in Africa and Asia too there are about 10 000 and 300 000 Hungarians respectively. It is possible that the data for Israel are also estimated numbers. According to the IPUMS database the 1972 census registered about 51 000 persons, the one in 1983 only about 23 000 persons who were born in Hungary.²¹ The two censuses asked over 15 years informants what language they used in everyday communication,²² in 1972 there were 21 000 persons mentioning the Hungarian language, in 1983 only 15 000 persons. The case in Israel is special because the population with Hungarian attachments did not consider themselves immigrants but home comers to their new situation and the younger generation speaks Hebrew.

In the above it was attempted to estimate the ‘potential’ number of Hungarians in the various countries. But it would need further research in order to find out whether the Hungarian person, or person of Hungarian origin is an effective member of the diaspora

²¹ Unfortunately the 1995 census did not give the number of those who were born in Hungary but probably it would have been below the number given in 1983. The average age of those born in Hungary was 57,8 years, of those who used the Hungarian language in everyday communication was 66,5 years in 1983.

²² ‘What language do you use daily?’ The question was not included in the 1995 census questionnaire.

community. The research in the USA and Argentina has found that about 5-10% of the Hungarians participate in any kind of Hungarian social activity and it seems that the proportion is not higher than 10-15% elsewhere either.²³ The least information is available about the so-called worker diaspora and the less successful emigrants, i.e. about those who were at the edge of the local Hungarian community or the receiving society and lowering their potential ability to enforce their interest and/or participating in organized institutions.

There is a great variety of organisations and of many types especially that every larger group of emigrants set up their special social life. Already in the 1880s there were land a hand institutions in the US that served as insurance offices for immigrant workers in case of accident and illness. The associations published newspapers and to enhance community life there were dances and other events were organized. After the change of regime in Hungary the western community life underwent a kind of post-emigration development and started taking up the function of maintenance of Hungarian ethnic culture.

Since it is the Church and the scout movement that are the most important organizations in the maintenance of the Hungarian culture and identity in present day western diaspora there follows a short survey of these institutions. It does not mean that there are no other organisations²⁴ or that their importance should be neglected e.g. cultural, intellectual, political and lobby organisations extending from the press to the progressively widening internet-communities.²⁵

The church communities were organized since the end of the 19th c. too, though the majority of the emigrants were Catholics it was the Protestant community that organised their community sooner. The first Hungarian ecclesiastical community was founded in Cleveland in 1890, but the first church building of the Hungarian Reformed

²³ HTMH mentions 10% for South America, and at other places the activity shows similar proportions. Borbándi found similar tendencies in Denmark and in other countries too. Borbándi 1996, p.68.

²⁴ there are about 700 organizations in the USA. Cf.: Papp Z. Attila: *Beszédből világ. Elemzések, adatok amerikai magyarokról*. Magyar Külügyi Intézet, Budapest, 2008 [a world of speech. Analyse, data on Hungarians in America]. Also: (<http://www.mti.hu/magyarsag/szervezetek/>)

²⁵ Kovács, Ilona. Borbándi.

Church was consecrated in Pittsburgh in 1893. The congregations of the Reformed Church were connected to the German branch and later that was the source of Americanisation, too. The wish for independence grew in the Hungarian communities and the connection to the Reformed Church in Hungary but it was somewhat thwarted by reasons of existence since the ministers received their salaries from the German Reformed Church. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the American Presbyterian Church of Scottish origin also established Hungarian parishes.²⁶ At present there are two major Protestant denominations collecting the Hungarian church communities *Hungarian Reformed Church in America* independent of the American diocese and the autonomous *Calvin Synod* as part of the *United Church of Christ*. The former has 34 the latter 28 congregations. There are several Hungarian congregations in Canada (at 12 places) and Australia (8 places) but in Argentina, Brazil and western European countries too e.g. Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Great Britain, France.

The establishment of communities within the Roman Catholic Church was more difficult because of its universal and hierarchical structure. The end of the century was the time of the organisation of church communities thus there were about than hundred communities by the beginning of the 20th c., however, the number decreased later and now there are 22-29 Roman Catholic communities known and not all of them have services in Hungarian.²⁷ There are ecclesiastical communities belonging to the Roman Catholic Church in Canada (18 churches), Australia (6 churches) but there are Catholic parishes, missions and monastic communities in Western European and South American countries too.

It is worth mentioning the increasing interest among Hungarians toward the Baptist Church. In North America the congregations are

²⁶ Várdy, Béla Op.cit. pp. 295 – 299.

²⁷ Mustos, István: Magyar nyelvű szolgálat és oktatás az amerikai magyar katolikus egyházakban. In: Nagy – Papp i.m. 65–67. [Services and teaching in Hungarian in the Hungarian Catholic Churches] and Miklósházy, Attila SJ: *A tengeren túli emigráns magyar katolikus egyházi közösségek rövid története Észak- és Dél-Amerikában, valamint Ausztráliában*. Toronto, 2005. pp. 13-68. [The short history of Hungarian Catholic church communities in North and South America and Australia]

organized by the Society of Hungarian Baptist Congregation in North America that invites its members three times a year. Officially there are 10 congregations officially; and there are Hungarian congregations in Melbourne, Australia, too.²⁸

Churches play an important role in the maintenance of the ethnic/national identity of the diaspora and it is to understand that the challenges of assimilation appear most acutely in this sphere. Not only the replacement of priests and ministers (especially in the case of Catholic Church) is endangered but because of the decreasing number of Hungarians the maintenance of the congregation itself too. In ecclesiastical circles the question also arises what is the task of the church – to promote religious belief or to cultivate Hungarian identity.

The spreading of the Hungarian scout movement started in 1945 when the Hungarian Scout Association, founded in 1912, was revived in Austrian and German refugee camps, and their work was assisted by the Teleki Pál Scout Team organized in 1946. The organisation went on among the émigrés in America, Australia and Western Europe. In Hungary the movement was absorbed into the pioneer movement in 1948 and the Team changed its name to *Hungarian Scout Federation in Exile*, and since 1989 to *Hungarian Scout Federation in Exteris*. In the USA it was Gábor Bodnár and his team who started the movement and the centre of the Scout Federation has settled in Garfield NJ. In the following decades it continuously gained momentum and now there are about 70 troops with 4000 odd members. Tradition has it that the largest number was reached in the 1980s with 6200 scouts in 84 troops. The greatest challenge is that the statutes order only such members to accept who speak Hungarian. Thus with the decrease of Hungarians it is difficult to recruit young people with adequate knowledge of the Hungarian language.

Among the Hungarian diaspora Churches and the Scout movement are running Sunday schools but there are other civil organisations too that oversee Hungarian schools. There are 26 Hungarian schools in the USA and 15 in Germany but there are other schools too – mainly Sunday schools - in other countries. In Canada there is a Hungarian secondary school in Toronto, and public school/class are

²⁸ www.evangeliumhirnok.net

also known about, e.g. in Bankstown, Australia there is a Hungarian class with final exam candidates. Sometimes the Hungarian Sunday schools also run crèches and kindergartens.

The greatest problem the schools operated by churches or civil organisations have to face is the difficulty of recruiting well qualified teachers. Sometimes the appropriate school material is also lacking that can only partially be made up by contributions from Hungary. There is still aversion against schoolbooks from Hungary and frequently they have not been properly adapted to local needs. It is also important to establish how these schools, mainly teaching during the weekends, contribute to the social assimilation in the wider sense and how they could help the young people in their studies not in the Hungarian language. There is information about positive examples because in some countries the Hungarian teaching language is officially accepted, e.g. Germany there is accredited Hungarian education and in California too, credits can be obtained for the knowledge of Hungarian in secondary schools.

The most important question regarding the whole western organisational world is whether the various organisations are able to cooperate with one another, even whether they know about each other at all. Though there are organisations based on the principle of collective upkeep (churches, and the scout movement are especially meant to be umbrella organisations) in other institutions networking counts as a novelty. Schools offer an example: e.g. the society of teachers of Hungarian schools in Northern America, but the societies for representation of interests too. In 2001 the association of the Hungarian organizations in Western Europe was founded, the members being the national Hungarian organizations of the UK, Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Norway, Switzerland and Sweden. In 2004 the association of the Hungarian organizations in South America was founded with the participation of Argentina, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Venezuela and Brazil.

The major interest of these umbrella organisations is the upkeep and maintenance of the Hungarian language and culture. It is especially important because the most imminent danger for the western diaspora is assimilation. That was already indicated by the demographic data described above; and the individual of Hungarian origin

is always exposed to it at a daily basis in the western world, as there are many factors to counter act the attraction of the mother country, the maintenance of the Hungarian language and culture in a linguistically different world. However, in spite of the frequently contradictory and seemingly contingent character, the framework of the Hungarian organizations has been preserved for decades that offered everybody the possibility of keeping their identity in an organized way. The Hungarian organised world has fulfilled the idea of civil society. The Hungarians in the western world were able to create their own organisations built on solidarity and voluntariness, and maintain them by their own moral and financial sources thus setting an example, an alternative for the etatist civil organizations of the Hungarians living in the Carpathian Basin.