

McGILL UNIVERSITY

THE SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT OF HUNGARIAN
REFUGEES IN MONTREAL

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ABSTRACT

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by

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This thesis is concerned with the analysis of some factors pertinent to the social adjustment in Montreal of fifty Hungarian refugees. The thesis is a by-product of a larger study conducted by three psychiatrists and the present writer in 1961.

The study seeks to determine some of the factors that help or hinder the immigrant or refugee in his social adjustment to the host-country. The scope is limited to the exploration of a few major questions, e.g., language ability, employment and economic situation, and social and cultural adjustment. The project is limited by the small number of subjects and by the selection of questions from the original larger schedule.

It was found that young people have less difficulty in adjusting to the new environment than older immigrants, and that a substantial number of married women do not work outside the home in spite of low family income.

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I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. A.B. Kerenyi, Dr. E.K. Koranyi and Dr. G.J. Sarwer-Foner for permitting me to use the material collected by me for their study in 1961, and to Professor Eva Younge for her supervision, advice and most valuable help to me in writing this paper.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to establish the following: accepting the assumption that the immigrant is facing certain difficulties in his initial adjustment to a new country, culture and society, this writer is interested in finding out who the people are who have less, and who are those who have more difficulty, and what some of the factors are that either help or hinder the immigrant in overcoming these difficulties.

The writer's interest in this subject derives, in part, from her participation in a larger research project. In the spring of 1961 a group of three psychiatrists, Dr. A.B. Kerenyi, Dr. E.K. Koranyi and Dr. G.J. Sarwer-Foner planned and conducted a study¹ of fifty Hungarian refugees, half of whom were known patients of the Psychiatric Department of the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal. They enlisted the services of the present writer to interview the fifty subjects. This study was the third in a series. The authors had been studying psychiatric problems of an initially unselected sample of the Hungarian immigrants who came to Canada following the 1956 Hungarian revolution.

¹A.B. Kerenyi, E.K. Koranyi, Judith Gellert and G.J. Sarwer-Foner. "On Adaptive Difficulties of some Hungarian Immigrants", Proceedings of the Third World Congress of Psychiatry (Canada 1961), pp. 1203-1207.

In addition to these a certain number of earlier Hungarian immigrants to Canada were seen by two of the authors,² who had examined the majority of all Hungarian psychiatric patients in the Montreal area between 1956 and 1961. An initial sample of fifty-three patients was studied from 1957 to 1958, and a larger group of 178 patients between 1958 and 1961. These immigrants were divided into three categories: 1) those who came to Canada before World War II, 2) those who came after World War II, and 3) those who came after the Hungarian revolution of 1956.

The third study, which was published in 1961,³ involved a comparison between a group of twenty-five patients and a "control" group of twenty-five non-patients. Some of the results of this last-mentioned study were presented at the Third World Congress of Psychiatry in Montreal in 1961. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the stages and the modes of acculturation⁴ achieved by the subjects, all of whom had come to Canada after the Hungarian revolution of 1956.

Many tentative findings about the acculturation process and the adjustment of these Hungarians in Montreal had been reached by the authors in their previous studies, but this third study was their first attempt to compare the responses to questions pertaining to acculturation of a group of patients with those of a group of non-patients.

²Dr. Kerenyi and Dr. Koranyi.

³Supra, p.1.

⁴Acculturation, in the sense used here, refers to those processes whereby the culture of a group of Hungarian immigrants was modified as a result of contact with Canadian culture, specifically in the form existing in Montreal.

The main assumption underlying their third study was that the presence of mental illness may have an effect on the processes of acculturation. Therefore, one half of the sample included twenty-five persons with diagnosed mental illness. The other half of the sample were twenty-five "control" cases or persons who were not known to have suffered from, or to have been treated for mental or emotional illness. However, fifteen persons in the "control" group had been clients of a private social agency, but they had not remained dependent on this agency after they became established in Canada.

Some of the findings from this experiment were that both patients and controls have become adjusted to life in the new country. It was found that the differences in adaptability between the two groups are such as could be attributed to the patients' greater interpersonal difficulties and that these relate to their illnesses. Both groups appreciated Canada's standard of living, its relative freedom from government interference, its high degree of personal liberty, its tolerance for individuality, the religious freedom and the liberty given to minority groups to maintain a group identity during the processes of becoming Canadians. There was an interesting difference between the two groups as to the degree of satisfaction with their social and cultural life in Canada. It seems that the patients tend to be less satisfied with their own social life in Canada, while the controls show a tendency to be less satisfied with Canadian cultural life. It would appear that the main differences in response between the two

groups can be attributed to the mental illness factor of those who are patients at the Jewish General Hospital. These somewhat negative findings have led the present writer to search for personal or social factors that may help to explain differences in immigrant adjustment.

The writer is particularly concerned with the social and cultural aspects of the study, and she will examine the interview data from a primarily sociological point of view. This will involve consideration of the personal characteristics of the newcomers as well as the social processes of adjustment after arrival in Canada. Although this writer recognizes that the fact of mental illness in the sample should not be ignored, she feels that for her present purposes it would not be necessary or helpful to maintain the original research design, which divides the sample into "patient" and "control" groups.

The interviews conducted as basis of the original study sought answers to questions which would show the degree of acculturation achieved by the subject. However, this study was mainly aimed at finding out whether people who are or have been suffering from a psychiatric illness show responses that are different from those of people who are not known to have suffered such an illness. For the purpose of this writer, however, it is not so much the difference between "patients" and "non-patients" that will be examined. This writer is primarily interested in establishing the following: If there are various difficulties to be faced by the immigrant in his initial adjustment to a new country, culture and society, who are the people who have less, and who are those who have more

difficulties. It is the contention of this writer that human beings make various types and varying degrees of responses to a new and different or strange environment. The accumulation of these responses - and the gradual changes which people undergo or fail to undergo, may be termed acculturation, assimilation or social adjustment processes. The distinction between any two of these processes seems to be of little importance for our present purpose. This contention is supported by many writers, who have examined the nature of the process the immigrant has to undergo.

This writer feels that one can safely say the following: everyone who leaves behind him the "known" will suffer a sense of loss. The "known" is the environment in which he has lived until the day of his departure. The physical environment of city or village, street, house or apartment, familiar surroundings and other well-known places, - the cultural environment of language, customs, ways of conduct and behaviour, values and moral ideas, - the economic environment of his job, the worth of money and the things this money can or cannot buy, - the social and emotional environment of family and friends, and fond or sad memories, - all these are left behind and in exchange the immigrant has to hold on to his hopes and aspirations for the future. These hopes are many times not based on reality, but are dreams or projections, produced by his need to rationalize why he has left his own country.

Without conscious awareness the immigrant has long ago identified with his own culture and his first response to the

new environment is more often than not a severe shock. The houses look different, the food certainly has a different taste, the people behave in a different way, in short, everything is strange. And, as if this were not bad enough, these "natives" take it for granted that their way is the "right" way and at their best they are rather apathetic in their response to the immigrant. When the immigrant finds apathy instead of sympathetic acceptance, protest and, simultaneously, a feeling of "let-down" are aroused in him. He feels devaluated, because without the security of the "tribe" he has belonged to and identified with, he is now a very lonely individual who is fighting for his own personal goals in a strange and different world.

In 1962 the present writer received the permission of the three psychiatrists to use the material collected during the fifty interviews for a master's thesis in Social Work at McGill University. She would like to examine the interview material placed at her disposal to see whether this process of adjusting, of having to "start from scratch", is equally difficult for everybody, or whether there are differences. It is the writer's contention that there are some differences and that some of them are associated with the immigrant's age and sex.

The writer's reason for choosing this topic for her thesis is partly her own personal involvement. She herself came to this country in 1957 as part of the same group of approximately 30,000 Hungarian refugees, to which the subjects of this study also belong.⁵ The writer herself experienced generally similar

⁵In 1957 a total of 29,825 Hungarian refugees were granted landing in Canada. (Report of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Montreal Branch).

circumstances. She, too, had to undergo the processes of adjustment which the new situation in Canada demanded, and her memories of the first years in this country are still fresh. This personal involvement, understandably, exposes the study to various biases on the writer's part. But, on the other hand, it has given her at least three great advantages: 1) she speaks the Hungarian language, 2) she had many immigrant experiences which are similar to those of the subjects of the present study, and 3) she had, in the course of her work and professional training, acquired certain interviewing skills. These three assets had enabled the writer to serve Hungarian clients at the family agency, where she has been employed as a social worker in training since December, 1957. This work experience and her knowledge of the language put the writer in a "strategic position" for the part she was to undertake in the larger research project conducted by the three psychiatrists in 1961. The writer's earlier contacts with Hungarian clients at the agency also enabled her to locate suitable "control" subjects for the psychiatrists' project.

These three advantages of language, similar life experiences and social case work skills made it easy for the writer and those interviewed by her to establish rapport quickly for research purposes. By these means she has been able to collect first-hand research materials from Hungarian immigrants in Montreal. Some of the persons interviewed had been former clients of the writer in her capacity as case worker at a social agency. It was a rewarding experience to discover that particularly those persons who had at one time been clients responded extremely cooperatively when the writer asked them to submit to research interviews.

For the purpose of the original 1961 study, a comprehensive and fairly detailed schedule was designed by the three authors and with assistance from the present writer. One could question the validity of asking the immigrants themselves about how they feel about the accepting country and about their own attitudes towards it, for the purpose of determining the degree of acculturation they have achieved. However, the writer feels that the immigrants themselves are the best source of information about how they view the processes of adjustment, even if their attitudes are biased. It is the opinion of this writer that, although the processes of acculturation involve a complex series of interactions between the immigrant and the new culture, the bulk of the "adjusting" has to be done by the immigrant. It is, therefore, felt that there is great value in learning about the immigrants' subjective responses, however biased and projective they may be.

The same principle applies to the reasons for asking questions of the subjects which lead them to make comparisons between their life in the past, in the home country, and their present life. If we accept the premise that it is the immigrant who has to do most of the "adjusting", it is obvious that there is great value in asking him how he himself feels about it.

As mentioned above, the design of the larger study, of which this thesis is a by-product, involved a group of twenty-five Hungarian patients who were, or had been, treated (hospitalized or as clinic patients) at the Psychiatric Department of the Jewish General Hospital, and a "control" group of twenty-five Hungarians who were not known to have suffered from any psychiatric illness. The patients were selected for this

study out of a relatively small group of patients, whose only characteristics they had in common were, that they had left Hungary after the 1956 revolution, that they lived in Montreal in 1961 and that they were patients at the Psychiatric Department of the Jewish General Hospital. They were, in fact, selected because they were readily accessible for research. They include persons of both sexes and their ages range from 19 to 67 years. Diagnostically, sixteen of these patients were psychoneurotic, five were borderline states and four were psychotic. These diagnostic findings, however, were not known to the present writer when she interviewed the patients and the diagnosis itself is not a part of the interview materials. This writer had no factual knowledge of their illness, physical or mental, except in a very few cases which were previously known to her personally or professionally.

The writer conducted her research interviews with the patients in the Out-Patient Department of the Jewish General Hospital. But special appointments were made for this purpose and the research did not interfere with the patients' regular visits to the psychiatric clinic. In one exception a home visit was made.

The twenty-five persons in the control group included some former clients of the writer in her capacity of case worker at a social agency and also some personal acquaintances of either the writer or the two Hungarian psychiatrists who designed the larger study. Some of these interviews were also conducted in the Jewish General Hospital, but others were held in the

respondents' own homes or at their places of employment. Again, the only common characteristics of this control group were that these people had come to Canada from Hungary after October, 1956, that they were residing in Montreal at the time of the study and that they were not patients at a psychiatric clinic nor receiving private psychiatric services. Those among them who had previously been clients of a social agency had all been in need of concrete services in the immediate post-immigration period, and their case work-contact had not been of a psychiatric nature. None of them remained dependent agency cases after they became established in Canada and their cases had been closed with the agency before the time of the study. Some, however, were still recipients of public financial assistance.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the present writer plans to examine the sociological aspects pertaining to the adjustment of the immigrant. The writer is interested in examining, whether and how sex and age, employment and income, language facilities, previous life experience and present attitudes and opinions influence the process of acculturation. What expectations do people have on coming to a country which is so very different from their homeland? And are some of their expectations fulfilled? What are their reasons for leaving the country of their birth?

In a study concerned with personal experiences, the responses that voice opinions, attitudes and personal preferences are, of course, bound to be highly subjective. While one recognizes this element of subjectivity, one may still

find the answers useful, because they help to reveal the personality of the respondent. Again, one cannot disregard the factor of mental illness, which may have affected the responses in some way. There is, however, no reason to suspect subjectivity, or rather, bias, in all responses, although the questions asked refer to the personal experiences, attitudes and opinions of the given individual. Many of the questions asked were factual, such as those that refer to age, employment, financial situation, recreation, etc. The answers that refer to concrete characteristics or situations can be considered as fairly objective.

As pointed out above, both groups of Hungarians in the sample were chosen because they were readily available. Both groups are very heterogeneous in nature, as to sex and age, but their social and economic background, before immigration, is mostly middle-class and lower-middle-class.

The two halves of the sample are not matched, except in terms of the two criteria of post 1956 immigration from Hungary, and residence in Montreal in 1961. There is a larger proportion of middle-aged female subjects in the patients' group, than in the control group. On the other hand, there is a larger proportion of younger men in the control group than in the patient group. These demographic differences put severe limits on comparisons of either age or sex groups. The small size of each group in the sample is, of course, also one further limitation of this study. This factor has contributed to the writer's decision to combine the two groups and compare the data as to age and sex difference within the total group.

It should also be mentioned here, that due to the compartmentalisation of social and even medical services along religious lines in the Province of Quebec, the facilities of the Jewish General Hospital and the Jewish family agency are used mainly by Jewish patients or clients. This explains the uneven religious distribution of the sample, in which forty-five out of fifty subjects were Jewish, one was Protestant and four were Roman Catholics. This writer feels that this fact gives a certain cultural colouring to the background of most of the subjects, regardless of their experiences as immigrants.

For the purpose of this thesis the following topics, as derived from the schedule, will be considered: 1) the subjects' ability to speak English or French, 2) the subjects' satisfaction with their employment, 3) the subjects' satisfaction with their financial situation, 4) the subjects' opinion about the people and social customs of Canada, and their feelings regarding their own social life in Montreal, 5) the subjects' satisfaction with their cultural life in Canada.

The writer also feels the need to elaborate on some theoretical concepts underlying the problems of the immigrant's adjustment and to attempt to draw a tentative comparison between the emotional background of the immigrant and that of the refugee, who is less well prepared for immigration.

The writer also plans to present some pertinent historical and cultural material, which will give background explanatory to the circumstances prior to and leading up to the Hungarian revolution and the following mass exodus of refugees.

The designers of the original, larger study decided to explore the responses of their subjects on a conscious level. The questions were designed to elicit conscious and, in greater part, subjective answers. Most of these questions ask for an answer as to the satisfaction of the subjects with various facets of their life in Canada. Most of these "satisfaction" questions were tabulated on a four-point scale, the four answer-possibilities being: 1) no, 2) somewhat, 3) quite and 4) very. This writer felt, however, that a tabulation, which would give only two responses, namely "yes" and "no" would be more suitable, since the sample is small and also more meaningful for the purpose of this paper.

Being psychiatrists, the designers of the original study were understandably interested in comparing the responses of the "patient" group with those from the "control" group. It was found, however, that with the exception of the responses pertaining to the subjects' satisfaction with their social and cultural life,⁶ there was no significant difference in the responses of the two groups. In response to the other questions pertaining to their satisfaction and happiness in Canada, the difference in patient and control responses was insignificant.

In view of these findings, which suggest that the nature of the response is not necessarily determined by the degree of the subject's mental health, this writer decided on a different method of comparison, namely, on a division of the sample as to sex and age. Since the sample is small, the writer

⁶ Supra, p.3.

divided it into only two age groups: those under 44 years of age and those from 45 to 84 years. In later pages the two groups will be referred to as the "younger" and the "older" age groups, respectively.

CHAPTER II

SOME THEORETICAL CONCEPTS UNDERLYING THE ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS OF THE IMMIGRANT OR REFUGEE

1. The Meaning of the Acculturation Process.

Acculturation is not an end-result, but a process. Acculturation in its general sense refers to those processes, whereby the culture of a society or an individual is modified as the result of contact with the culture of one or more other societies.¹ Migration of any kind, (from village to city or vice-versa, from country to country or continent to continent) necessitates that the person who emigrates undergo these processes to some extent, in some form, although there are of course many variables. If the immigrant wants to make the best of his life in the alien society he enters, he has to try to adjust to this society as well as he possibly can.

People have the need to be accepted by those around them. Therefore, in order to gain acceptance, they will go a far way in trying to conform, within their own culture, family and peer-group. This is part of the socialization process every human being undergoes from early childhood on. As a result of this

¹John Gillin and Victor Raimy. "Acculturation and Personality", American Sociological Review, Vol. 5, No.3. (1940), p.371.

process, however, the adult person has become set in his ways and his values and standards have become, more or less, firmly established. When, at this stage in his life, he is transplanted into a culture that differs from the one he was raised in, he may find it more difficult to adjust to the new culture than children or young people do.

This worker agrees with Borrie,² when he says that about the concept of acculturation - as also with other concepts in anthropology and sociology - there is still some degree of doctrinal or methodological haziness, even though this does not seriously affect the substance of what it includes. Thus, the term, "cultural absorption" used by some writers covers what others call "assimilation"; others, again, use acculturation to mean "cultural fusion". The precise meaning is debatable. Thus there is still no final definition of the fundamental concept of acculturation. It was first systematically formulated by Redfield, Linton and Herscovits in the following terms: "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups."

The writer feels that the process of acculturation can really be viewed from at least two points: 1) the immigrant's viewpoint and 2) that of the accepting society to which the immigrant is acculturating. Obviously, this makes it almost impossible to arrive at completely objective criteria, that would spell out the process is completed, that is, when the given immigrant has been acculturated. For example: assuming that Mr.X. has been properly absorbed by the new community; he has a job and a house; he gets along with his neighbours and co-workers; he manages the language of the new country enough to get along; he conforms in his dress and social behaviour; he keeps the laws of

²W.D. Borrie et al. The Cultural Integration of Immigrants, (Paris: UNESCO, 1959), p.231.

the new country, he acquires its citizenship, he is no thorn in anybody's eyes - - but he himself is continuously reminiscing nostalgically of the "old" country, where "everything was really better". Is Mr. X. properly acculturated?

Let us take a look at Mr. Y., who is exuberant in his acceptance of the people and customs of the new country. To him everything is better here; he certainly likes it and he does not yearn for his homeland. But he speaks the language badly and with a strong accent; he looks "foreign" and he is discriminated against by the people in his everyday environment because of this. Is Mr. Y. properly acculturated?

As will be shown in later chapters, for the purpose of this paper it is the opinions of the immigrants, their feelings about the host country, that are the basic data. The writer is interested to find out what the immigrants themselves feel as they are going through the process of adjustment.

2. The Nature of the Adjustment Process and its Stages.

The adjustment or acculturation process is a very long one. It is probably not completed in the first generation of immigrants. The process commences probably long before the person begins his travels to a new location. From the day when the idea to leave the home country and settle somewhere else is first born, subtle changes in attitude occur. To begin with, let us ask: how is the idea to emigrate³ born? With the exception of people with inherent restlessness and an urge for constant change, the human animal tends to seek the security of the known

³We understand by emigrating, when a person leaves his country with the intention of settling somewhere else. Migration refers to movement within one's own country. Immigration refers to the processes of entering and permanently settling in a country other than one's homeland.

circumstances of life, to which he has become accustomed. Therefore, the reason for the wish to emigrate elsewhere is usually some kind of discontent or dissatisfaction with existing conditions. These may be, and often are, of a financial nature and sometimes the reasons are interpersonal. The new country seems to offer better conditions and becomes increasingly desirable. Under optimal conditions, the prospective immigrant will make thorough inquiries and will receive accurate information about the country of his choice. However, even when this is done, which does not happen too frequently, it will not prevent the future immigrant from establishing a somewhat distorted image of the new country. On the contrary: the more desirable the new country is to the person, the more will he want to believe that it will actually conform to his dreams and expectations of its perfection. Therefore, it is inevitable that he suffer some measure of shock and disappointment when he finally arrives, even if this is mitigated by his reception by relatives, friends or countrymen. If the immigrant has had no or little preparation, the shock at finding that "everything here is different" will be proportionally greater.

Let us now look at the new immigrant after his arrival. What are his first needs? How and where does he embark on this long trip, the process of his adjustment to a new life in a new country? Obviously his first need is for economic adjustment. He needs a job in order to earn his living, and he needs a place to live. He has to learn, literally, how to get around. He has to learn how to shop for his everyday needs. At this point,

knowledge of the new country's language will be his greatest asset. Unfortunately, more often he lacks this knowledge, and this is his greatest liability and handicap. It seems, however, that even people who speak the language of the host country perfectly because it is their own mother tongue as well, encounter considerable difficulties. Everything is really "different". Cars drive on the wrong side of the road, stores are organized differently, working-hours and conditions differ from those he was used to in his homeland.

The immigrant also knows that he himself is very much an unknown entity to the people of the new society, and in his unconscious efforts to defend himself, he projects his own feelings of distrust and insecurity on to his new environment.

Alongside of the need to establish the basic necessities for his new existence, the immigrant also has to learn to abide by the legal systems of the new country. He often feels, justly or not, that he is a second-class resident until he acquires his citizenship papers. If he breaks the law, he may even be deported.

The writer feels that the immigrant's emotional, psychological and social adjustment are all interrelated with his economic and legal adjustments. It seems impossible to really separate these factors from each other. If the newcomer makes good economically, if he is able to master the language and learn the ways of the new country, he may more easily adjust socially and emotionally as well. On the other hand, if he is able to make friends and to accept the new country and its different ways emotionally, his opportunities for economic adjustment may increase.

Much has been written about the factors that may favour the immigrant's adjustment. The writer tends to agree with Dr. Brepohl⁴, who says that

the process of acculturation is favoured most by the intelligence, flexibility and capacity to adapt himself of the immigrant and by the tolerant, accepting attitude of the receiving society.

It is the opinion of this writer, that if any or all of these factors are missing, the process is made infinitely more painful and slow and, in some cases, impossible. The age factor of the immigrant is very important and so is, of course, his level of education, and his transferable skills. Another determining factor is whether there is a need for him, industrially and economically, in the host country, or whether his presence there is regarded as a burden.

3. The Contrast Between Immigrants and Refugees.

How does the refugee differ from the ordinary, peace-time immigrant? Whereas the immigrant, after more or less contemplation of the step he is about to take, decides to leave his home country and to settle in another country of his choice, the refugee is forced, by powers and events beyond his own control, to flee his homeland and find refuge wherever he will be accepted. The refugee does not have the advantage of the process of slow uprooting that the immigrant undergoes under ordinary circumstances. He very often has little choice as to the country he will settle in. He may be either much older than the average immigrant or much younger. It is not a slow process of consideration of his own that has uprooted him, but war or political upheaval has prompted him to flee overnight. He is, in most cases, penniless, and he

⁴W. Brepohl et al, "Adjustment of Refugees to their New Environment" (R.E.M.P. Bulletin, Vol.3, The Hague, 1955)p.12.

still suffers, and may continue to do so for a long time, from the trauma experienced during the events which led to his being expelled or forced into flight. All these factors are against him in his initial attempts to adjust to his new country.

The refugee does, however, have assets which the ordinary immigrant may not have. One such asset is the fact that he cannot go back to his homeland. He is here to stay and he has to prove himself, to himself and the world. He has to make the best of his life in his new country, at all costs. Therefore, his motivation is very high. The writer's opinion here is supported by Dr. Brepohl,⁵ when he says that

for many of the refugees, the experience of distress and misery, by reducing them to their own resources and rousing the fundamental forces of their spiritual existence, has even enhanced their personalities. The loss of material comfort, property and cultural life taught them, how questionable, how limited all organizations and institutions of life are and made them independent of social forms. This attitude is without conflict, because this type of expellee is determined to prove his worth to the indigenous population by dint of his own capacities and work.

The refugee, when he comes to the country of asylum, is not only out for more money or a better life. He knows that, but for his coming here, he may have had no life at all.

Meanwhile, besides this basic and strong motivation, the factors of his personality and background, on one hand, and the attitude of the receiving society towards him, on the other hand, are as important determinants to his successful adjustment as in the case of the peace-time immigrant.

⁵Brepohl, op.cit., p.20.

There is, however, one more psychological factor that can hinder the refugee's adjustment. This occurs in cases when the person feels that, because of his suffering and deprivation, the world owes him something or everything, as restitution for the hardships he has endured. If this factor is present, the refugee's attitude will be unrealistic and he will not be able to accept that he himself has to build his new life, in order to make up for what he has lost. Such an attitude will understandably meet with disapproval on part of the host-society, even if they are of good will and have some understanding for the terrible experiences the refugee has had.

In this chapter the writer has attempted to indicate in generalized terms some of the factors involved in the processes of adjustment which the immigrant and the refugee have to undergo, and some of the problems they may encounter in the course of these processes. These theoretical considerations also apply to the Hungarian refugees of the 1956 revolution who emigrated to Canada.

CHAPTER III

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE BACKGROUND OF THE HUNGARIAN REFUGEE OF THE POSTREVOLUTIONARY PERIOD (after 1956)

As it was pointed out in the psychiatric study¹ of the fifty Hungarian refugees, on a conscious level the most frequent reason given for leaving Hungary after the revolution was "political". This writer thinks that most of the approximately 200,000 people who left Hungary in this period would have given this reason. This, however, does not mean that all these people were actually politically persecuted and in danger, although some certainly were. However, the political climate and circumstances in Hungary from 1948 to 1956 had certainly affected everybody in some way. It had become very difficult to own land or a business, even a very small one. Peasants who had owned even very small farms had been forced into collectives and they disliked this maybe even more than the owners of small stores or shops, who had been forced to join cooperatives in the cities. Although this may seem to be an economic rather than a political factor, we have to realize that without the political circumstances it would never have come about. The majority of people who had always been employed by private employers resented

¹Kerenyi et al. op.cit., p.1.

their change of status to employees of what, in the last analysis, amounted to: the state. In the course of eight years a vast machinery of bureaucrats had emerged which, although in fact inefficient as far as production goes, was very efficient in subordinating and bullying the employees into a condition of frightened submission and general mistrust, that bordered on the paranoic state. Elfan Rees² points out that the person who lives in communist countries has learned to live by subterfuge; he has often been required to disown his nearest kin and he is always in danger of being disowned himself. In Hungary, for example, one great psychological burden which the people had to bear, was the difference between opinions expressed in public and those heard at home.

Another factor, which this writer holds to be important, was the total restriction of travel to foreign countries. This regulation had been in force for years, even to countries within the soviet bloc. This writer is fully aware that a great proportion of the 200,000 refugees may never have travelled or even desired to travel under ordinary circumstances, as it would have been economically impossible, and emotionally and intellectually not within reach of most people. Nevertheless, the forbidden fruit becomes desirable, even to those who would not crave it, if it were readily accessible.

When the border to Austria opened during the summer preceding the revolution and the minefields and barbed-wire fences disappeared, there were a few government-sponsored tours to Vienna. But they were open only to the "privileged", such as newsmen, actors, artists and some people in high economic or

²Elfan Rees, We Strangers and Afraid (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1959), p.20.

government positions. When these people returned with stories of the wonders they had experienced in the free world, which wonders were mainly in terms of the availability of consumer goods and the free political atmosphere of a democratic country, the general craving for a trip to Vienna, at least, increased. Many people now received first or second-hand information of what life on the other side of the iron curtain was like, and this life became very desirable to many.

When the Hungarian revolution was crushed in November, 1956, and it became certain that the goals of the revolution would not be attained, the disillusionment of the masses and the individuals was tremendous. Hungary's capital, Budapest, was once more in ruins and heavily occupied by foreign soldiers. Many people had to flee the country because of their actual participation in the revolution. Many others, who had in some way suffered under the communist regime of the past eight years, felt that they could not face life under similar circumstances any longer. Others went merely because their neighbours or friends or relatives went. In short, the desire to escape had, to a certain extent, become a mass psychosis.

As might be imagined, some people left their homeland mainly because "the grass seemed greener, so very much greener on the other side of the fence" and there was also a certain proportion of the undesirable, criminal element that took the welcome opportunity to escape from justice. This occurred when the revolutionaries opened the prisons to free political prisoners and along with them many criminal prisoners had been liberated as well.

But it should be made clear here that the majority of those who left Hungary immediately after the 1956 revolution were ordinary people from all walks of life and among them were old, middle-aged and young people. They included family groups, unattached people, lonely adolescents and children, all of whom had "had enough": they wanted to start a new life, in freedom. Many had tried to escape through the barbed-wire fence before, and they had been caught and imprisoned. Many had suffered persecution of either a religious or political nature. Many had been persecuted by the Germans and their Hungarian collaborators before and during World War II, and they discovered to their dismay and disappointment that they were the wrong "cadres" under the communists as well. Many had been imprisoned, or someone close to them had been. In some way they all had been affected and they had welcomed the revolution, even if they had not actively participated in it.

Now they came, by the thousands and ten thousands, through the wintry nights, over fields and through streams, bringing with them only such possessions as they could carry, and many had not even that much. Radio "Free Europe", to which they had been listening throughout the days and weeks before they left their homes, had promised them everything. These appeals told the Hungarians that "they were the heroes of the revolution". They were assured that they would have no wants, as soon as they reached the first Austrian outpost. Everything would be taken care of. The free world was expecting them with arms wide open.

Let us now briefly consider the emotional climate these refugees found themselves in. In the previous chapter the writer has discussed the problems the ordinary peace-time immigrant faces in the process of his adjustment to the accepting culture. How much greater must those difficulties be when there has been as little psychological and economic preparation for this enormous change as was the case for most of the Hungarian refugees of 1956-57? The emotions that had propelled 200,000 people from their homes had mainly been of negative types. These refugees knew what they did not want. But did they know what they did want? And if they knew, how much of their wishful thinking was attainable and how did their phantasies compare with the reality they would find?

Some disappointment might have been experienced by these people quite early in their endeavour towards final settlement. Jules Witcover³ says

that the refugees did not always comprehend the circumstances whereby they had to be "accepted" for immigration by selection teams of the receiving countries. They had made the crossing into Austria in the firm belief that the West was waiting with open arms to embrace them after their courageous flight to freedom. When they learned that there were certain restrictions and formalities tied to the welcome, it was natural that some would feel a measure of disillusionment. Yet most of them bore this feeling stoically in these first stages of resettlement.

This writer feels that the average Hungarian refugee of 1956-57 had many handicaps. But in all fairness it must be said that he had also many advantages, even if he were not aware of

³Jules Witcover, "The Role of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration in the Resettlement of the Hungarian Refugees, 1956-57", R.E.M.P. Bulletin, Vol.6, No.1, (March, 1958), p.9.

them at the time. He could not know that virtually never before had so many countries accepted immigrants en masse with so few restrictions. Never before had governments so readily accepted financial responsibilities for their transport, resettlement and initial support. In many cases they were helped for as long as twelve months and they were asked nothing in return, except that the newcomer should not break the laws of the host country.

Meanwhile, their handicaps were many and varied. Only a small proportion of the refugees spoke English, yet the overwhelming proportion chose to resettle in an English-speaking country. Many people did not have transferable skills, and they found that they had to take employment which was poorly paid and of low social status. Most people had virtually no preparation, either psychological or financial, for the very different world they would be living in. Even those, who had been staunchly anti-communist, would suddenly find themselves yearning for the economic security that had been provided by a country that has no unemployment problem, and which has a very efficient universal medical insurance plan. On the other hand, they certainly welcomed the freedom to express their opinion and the virtual non-existence of government interference into their private lives. But when they were also expected to feel free to find a job, or a place to live, they were bewildered by what they felt to be a "lack of organization" in the receiving country.

Even after the initial handicaps had been overcome, the newcomer would still find himself to be a stranger in a strange land. Culturally even those people who had not been very

sophisticated would miss the opera, the concerts and the theatres, which had been available in their country at little cost. They easily forgot that this availability had been due to a tradition of long standing and they became very critical of not finding the same facilities in their new country. They found themselves socially isolated from the "natives" of the host country by their ignorance of its major languages. Meanwhile, the immigrants' own feelings of caution and slight mistrust towards the unknown contributed to their difficulties.

This chapter has attempted to give a social and psychological orientation to the backgrounds of the Hungarian refugees of 1956-57. Their homeland situation has been outlined in broad generalities. However, it will be shown in later chapters that some of these generalities can be applied to an analysis of the circumstances and the problems of the fifty Hungarians who are the main concern of this study.

CHAPTER IV

LANGUAGE, EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

In the preceding chapter the writer has given some orientation to the general background of the Hungarian refugees and to some of the difficulties the typical refugee has to face when he becomes an immigrant. The writer will now turn to an examination of some of the responses she received from the fifty immigrants who were the subjects of the original larger study. This and the next chapter will deal with a description and an analysis of the responses to certain questions which have relevance for the social adjustment process. They have been selected by the writer from the detailed questionnaire that had been designed for the original study.

This chapter will deal with three of these basic topics, namely, the immigrant's knowledge of the host country's two official languages, his employment situation and his income. In the analysis of these three questions the sex and age of the subjects will be considered as variables whose influence on the immigrants' adjustment is assumed to be important.

The reason for selecting these three topics as factors of primary importance to the social adjustment of the immigrant is obvious. Common sense alone will tell us that, unless the immigrant is a wealthy person, still in possession and command

of his riches, the first necessity is to find a job as a means to an income. In addition to his skills and general willingness to work, the immigrant also needs to know, or if he does not, to learn the language commonly spoken in the accepting community. Without language skills he will not understand instructions on the job, and he himself will not be understood by his employers or co-workers. The exception to this occurs when the immigrant is employed by a member of his own ethnic group.

The writer realizes that a great number of newcomers do find employment without having even rudimentary knowledge of the host country's language. However, such employment will, with very few exceptions, be limited to the area of unskilled labour, even for people who otherwise could qualify for skilled or professional work. Although such a job may provide enough income for the most necessary expenses, it cannot, by its very nature, be either remunerative or emotionally satisfying.

Before turning to the examination of the subjects' responses, it should be mentioned that one of the fifty persons in the original sample is excluded from the study.¹ Therefore, all tables show the responses of only forty-nine subjects. From now on the writer will refer to them as "immigrants", not as "refugees". The reason for this change is that, at the time of the interviews, the subjects regarded themselves as immigrants rather than refugees.²

¹The writer disqualified one, as this person had left Hungary immediately after the Second World War and had spent twelve years in another western country before coming to Canada.

²As shown in the original study, only five subjects stated that they would return to Hungary if the political situation there changed.

The writer is fully aware that the topic of language-adjustment is much broader, both in scope and depth, than appears from the way it is approached and presented in this study. Limited by the given areas in the questionnaire, the following aspects will be explored in this chapter: 1) the familiarity of the immigrant with either English or French before his immigration; 2) the subject's ability to speak either of these two languages at the time of the interviews; 3) the language-preference of the respondent.

Let us now examine how many of the subjects had been familiar with either of the two major languages commonly spoken in Montreal. As table I shows, a total of forty-one spoke neither English nor French before they left Hungary. However, most of them had at least some knowledge of German.

TABLE I.

Question 57. Did you speak English in Hungary? French?
Any other language?

Item	Spoke English	Spoke French	Spoke Other
Male Total	20	20	20
Yes	4	4	17
No	16	16	3
Female Total	29	29	29
Yes	4	4	26
No	25	25	3

Two or three years after their arrival in Canada, at the time the interviews were conducted, the majority of both women and men had learned some English. Meanwhile, almost one-third of the women still do not speak English, while only one-tenth of

the men are still in this situation. Why do the women lag behind the men in learning English?

TABLE II.

Question 55. Do you speak English? French?

Item	Speaks English	Speaks French
Male Total	20	20
Yes	18	7
No	2	13
Female Total	29	29
Yes	21	5
No	8	24

The need and motivation to learn English appears to be less compelling for middle-aged housewives, whose contact with the host country is confined to shopping and to the use of public transportation.³ Such a person can "get by" fairly comfortably by showing a slip of paper with the address of her destination to the bus driver. In Montreal there is ready access to self-service stores or to supermarkets, where all goods have prices marked and where packages have pictures of the product inside. An immigrant can manage shopping with very few spoken words. She may sometimes frequent one of several Hungarian food stores in the city, and this principle applies also to other goods. Such a person will probably seek a Hungarian-speaking doctor when she is ill, a Hungarian-speaking lawyer when she has a legal problem, and her social life remains mainly within the Hungarian community. In short, a woman with minimal or no

³ It will be shown later on in this chapter that many of the women in this sample are not in outside employment. See table IV.

knowledge of the local language may still be able to use certain basic services in a large city such as Montreal. This writer thinks that, apart from the obvious preference for shopping where one's native language is understood, there may also be the feeling of greater trust in shopkeepers whom one knows to have come from a background similar to one's own. But social contacts with the native-born or long-term residents will tend, of course, to be peripheral.

It should be pointed out here that there is a tendency among immigrants in general to cluster in areas where earlier immigrants of their own ethnic group have already established themselves and built their institutions.

There may also be the possibility of finding employment within one's own ethnic group. For a person who has great difficulty in learning the new language, this certainly is an important factor. In any case there is the invisible bond of similar memories, a sense of belonging, a greater hope for mutual understanding and some sort of solidarity.

It appears that this existence of ethnic subgroups of immigrants within the large urban community is a common occurrence in countries which have a large influx of immigrants of different ethnic origins. This clustering of people of common or similar cultures is recognized by Borrie⁴ in his statement that

there are several factors which favour ethnic segregation as a normal ecological pattern of settlement of immigrants in all parts of the world. These include such cultural forces as the tendency on the part of the immigrants to congregate around their own churches, schools, clubs and shops, - the linguistic factor, and the fact that the concentration of people belonging to one ethnic group offers opportunities for employment in establishments run by members of the group.

⁴Borrie, op.cit., p.178.

This statement seems to apply also to a city like Montreal where even the two dominant host populations of French or Anglo-Saxon origin have long lived in separate areas near members of their own linguistic groups.

It is, of course, of great help to the new immigrant to find a group of compatriots with whom he can communicate in his mother tongue. But from the point of long-term adjustment to the accepting country, with its institutions and culture, there remains the desirability, if not the absolute necessity, for him to become as fluent as possible in the "native" language. This task is difficult if the person has had no previous knowledge of the language at all.

As shown earlier in this chapter, less than one-fifth of our sample had spoken English or French before immigration. One could ask: How is it, that in a group of forty-nine people, only eight had chosen to learn English or French as a second language, when forty-three in the same group spoke some other foreign language? The answer, in the opinion of this writer, is that until after World War II German was the second major language spoken and taught as a compulsory subject in Hungary's secondary schools. Even after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1919, Hungary remained, politically, economically and culturally, a region which was dominated by German-language interests.

Since the end of World War II, Hungary was forced by Russian military occupation to become a sphere of interest in the political, economic and cultural sense, of the Soviet Union.

The new, communist government of Hungary embarked on a scientifically designed campaign, which it enforced with all its power, to promote the products of the Russian culture, including language, literature, theatre, films, etc.. In fact, the Russian language displaced the German tongue as a second compulsory language in Hungarian schools.

At this point, however, the writer would like to give some thought to the decided disadvantage the adult Hungarian faces in learning any foreign language. The difficulty derives from the fact that the Hungarian language is related to only one other European language, namely, that of the Finns.⁵ But even this relationship is not a close one; it could not be compared to the similarities between Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, for instance. There are approximately five hundred Hungarian words, mainly pertaining to hunting, fishing, family and other very basic functions, where the relationship with Finnish can be traced, but even here only by trained linguists. Hungarian has much less similarity with either English or French, although there are exceptions, as in the case of words which derive from Latin. Even these words, however, would be pronounced in ways peculiar to Hungarian and may not be recognized by persons who speak French or English. The fact that Hungarian is a phonetic language, whereas English or French are not, makes for further difficulty.

Another question was asked to establish which language the subjects spoke by preference at the time of the study.

⁵The Hungarians or Magyars originally belonged to the Finn-Ugor nomad tribe, which had started to wander westward from the Ural mountains in the sixth century, A.D. Around 900 A.D. the tribe split, with the Finns turning northward and eventually settling in what is today Finland. The Magyars, after their defeat in 955 in the Battle of Lechfeld, settled in the territory known as the Danube Basin.

TABLE III.

Question 58. What language do you speak now by preference?

Item	Total	Language Preference			Other
		English	Hungarian	No Preference	
Sex					
Total	49	16	28	1	4
Male	20	9	8	1	2
Female	29	7	20	0	2
Age (years)					
Total	49	16	28	1	4
15-44	29	14	13	1	1
45-84	20	2	15	0	3

The responses to this question showed that, although four-fifths of the total sample had acquired some command of English,⁶ only one-third of the total sample preferred to speak English at the time of the study. It was also found that only one-quarter of the female sample preferred to speak English as against almost one-half of the male sample.

All but two of the sixteen persons who preferred to speak English are in the younger age group. There is evidence that the factor of young age influences the immigrants' attitudes towards learning and using a new language. An opposite trend is noted if we look at the older age group.

It is well known that, apart from motivation to learn, the age of the learner is a factor in learning a new language. The older the person the more difficulty he is likely to have.

This writer has met a number of middle-aged or elderly persons who had good motivation for learning English or French after their arrival in Canada. These persons had come to under-

⁶ See table II.

stand English quite well and perhaps even to read English. Yet such people sometimes show a quite strong psychological "block" against speaking English. The fear of not saying the right word in the right way can be quite overwhelming.

It will be shown later on in this chapter that the majority of the female sample are middle-aged housewives who are not working for pay. The writer suggests that this situational factor may reduce both opportunity and motivation to learn the language.

It seems that the three factors of 1) female sex, 2) middle-or old-age, and 3) not being in outside employment combine as negative influences against learning a new language. The responses from the men show that, although most of these people had not spoken any English before their arrival, the majority was able to communicate in English two or three years later, when they were interviewed for this study. Yet they did not yet prefer to do this, unless it was absolutely necessary.

The writer also gave some consideration to the length of time the subjects had spent in Canada. A short stay of one or two years in a new country may not be long enough to give sufficient opportunity to learn a new language with enough proficiency to make the learner feel able to state a preference for the new language. In looking at the dates of arrival to Canada, it was found that thirty-nine subjects or four-fifths of the total sample, had landed in Canada between December, 1956 and December 1957. Four subjects arrived in 1958 and six in 1959. The reader will remember that approximately one-third

of the total sample professed a preference for speaking English. Only two persons in this group had arrived after December, 1957 and they belong to the younger group. It appears, then, that although the length of residence has to be considered, a young age is a more important influence in learning a new language well enough to give it preference within a few years. In addition to the factors discussed here, however, one has to be aware of the immigrant's opportunity for and his motivation, incentive and general attitudes towards learning, regardless of his age, sex or the time spent in the country.

In summary, the writer would like to say this: based on the research data given by this sample, it seems that young people adjust themselves more readily than do older people to the learning and the use of a new language. Men, who are in much greater contact with the host society through their employment have both a greater need and a greater opportunity to acquire language skills than do housewives who are not employed outside the home.

We shall now turn to the questions of employment and income. Again, the scope of this section is limited by the design of the questionnaire. The data at our disposal pertain to the kind of occupation now held by the subjects in Canada and that formerly held in Hungary, their satisfaction with their present jobs and with their income, and to how much this income is. In addition, there also are statements about the subjects' former income in Hungary, but as a comparison of the present and former income is virtually impossible, because of the vast

difference between the two currencies and their purchasing power, these data have not been used in this analysis.

As outlined above, the subjects were required to give both subjective and objective data. The questions: "Are you content with your employment?" and "Are you content with your economic status?" were designed to elicit general responses. The question establishing the weekly income of the individual or family was answered, as far as this writer could determine, objectively and factually.

In comparing the responses to the questions about employment with those pertaining to economic status there appears to be a somewhat startling difference. A much greater proportion of the sample is satisfied with their employment (almost twice the number of those who are not content) than with their economic status (approximately one-third of the total sample). Meanwhile, we must remember that two-fifths of the total sample are married women, who are not employed.

Let us first look at the question pertaining to satisfaction with employment. In this particular sample it seems evident that it is not the income alone that necessarily determines whether the immigrant is satisfied with his or her job. What other factors are there that can help or hinder the newcomer to feel satisfied in the employment situation? As we are here dealing with a sample of fairly recent immigrants, it was felt that in having to give a subjective response the subject may, unconsciously at least, be comparing his present situation and work-status with those he formerly held in the

home country. If this comparison is in favour of the new situation, the response is likely to be positive. If the new situation is not too greatly different from the old one, the person may experience less difficulties and the response may still be positive. If the reality-situation corresponds with the immigrant's present expectations, he may also be content. If, however, his expectations have not been met by the reality-situation, he may have great difficulties, indeed, in accepting it. It is but logical that severely lowered work-status will contribute to feelings of dissatisfaction and unhappiness, even if the present occupation as such is not a degrading one.

As table IV shows, half of the employed male group have expressed satisfaction with their work in Canada. On closer examination of individual responses, it was found that

TABLE IV

Question 30. Are you content with your employment?

Sex & Age	Degree of contentment			
	Total	Yes	No	Not employed
Total both sexes	49	19	11	19
Male total	20	9	9	2
15-44	15	8	7	0
45-84	5	1	2	2
Female total	29	10	2	17
15-44	14	4	1	9
45-84	15	6	1	8

the largest proportion, namely one-half of the total male sample had been employed by others in Hungary and they are now in employment in Canada. But several of these men had to make

major adjustments to work of lower status than they knew at home. A former textile engineer, for example, who has a university degree, is now working as a knitter in a factory. A former store manager is now employed as a night watchman. Among those who had expressed satisfaction with their work in Canada are two men who had been self-employed in Hungary, and they are now again self-employed in Canada. Four others have not experienced a major change, because they are still at work in their old trade or profession. Two others are now attending university while they work part-time, and they hope to reach a higher status. Interestingly enough, only two men are unemployed. One is eighty years old and this factor alone explains his status. The other, a former dentist, suffers from an incurable and progressive mental illness.

When we turn now to the dissatisfied group, we find three men who were students (university or high school) before immigration. They are now in rather menial employment, and they feel frustrated because they are not able to continue or conclude their studies in Canada.

Turning now to the smaller group of women who do work outside the home in Canada, we find that ten out of twelve had been employed in Hungary as well, and only two had not been employed outside the home in Hungary.

As table IV shows, more than half of the total female immigrants are not in outside employment in Canada. Seven of these are not experiencing any status change since they were housewives in Hungary also. But ten of them had worked before

immigration, some of them in their own or in their husbands' business. What compels them to stay at home now when, as will be shown, according to their responses, they are not satisfied with their families' economic situation? One-half of those who worked before immigration do not have paid work in Canada. Why?

There may be several reasons.

In the postwar era in Hungary private enterprise had been almost completely abolished. It was still possible, but very difficult to maintain even a family of two persons on one legally acquired income. If there were children or a dependent parent, it was worse. Therefore, an ever-increasing number of married women went to work. This change was made comparatively easy by two important factors: 1) almost every occupational field had become accessible to women, in labour, management, trade or learned professions. From doctors to bus drivers, from government workers to tractor mechanics, there is hardly any field left where women workers are not accepted and made welcome; 2) provisions are made for the very adequate day care of children, from earliest infancy on. There are many and well-run creches, day nurseries and programmes for after-school care of children. These facilities are either free or very inexpensive.

In Montreal the situation for married women with children is very different. It is not easy to find such child-care facilities here. Those that are available are relatively costly, when we consider the average earnings of a non-professional woman worker. Earnings in a factory or store

average between \$30.00 and \$40.00 per week, before deductions and cost of the worker's transportation, and the day nursery costs anywhere from \$5.00 to \$15.00 per week, but sometimes more. If a school bus service also has to be used for the child's transportation, and if a woman happens to have two or more small children, she obviously cannot even consider outside work.

This writer was rather surprised, however, at the large proportion of non-employed women in this sample, as she felt that for the average immigrant family it is a realistically difficult task to start a completely new life in economic terms, as well as otherwise. For refugees, most of whom arrived in Canada penniless, with hardly any luggage at all, but surely without even the most necessary household effects, this would be even more difficult. In fact, it would seem to be a fairly natural trend for married women to work, at least in the first years of settlement, in order to help with the establishment of a new home.

In this sample the opposite trend is found, and it may be due to illness. Lack of transferable skill, which could be used in socially not degrading work may be another factor. Then, as outlined above, it may be the lack of proper facilities for children or the wish of the mother to remain at home with her young children. This latter reason can have one more component: it is much less acceptable or encouraged in Canada that a mother of young children go to work than it is in Hungary today.

The writer now would like to turn to the question of the subjects' satisfaction, or rather, as table V shows, degree of contentment with their economic status. During the interview, the interviewer asked explicitly: "Do you feel you make enough money?" As mentioned earlier, two-thirds of the total sample were discontent, they felt they did not have enough or they could just manage by living on a strict budget.

TABLE V.

Question 31. Are you content with your economic status?

Sex and Age	Degree of contentment		
	Total	Yes	No
Total both sexes	49	16	33
Male total	20	8	12
15-44	15	6	9
45-84	5	2	3
Female total	29	8	21
15-44	14	4	10
45-84	15	4	11

More than two-thirds of the female sample are dissatisfied with their economic situation, but most of these do not work to achieve a higher family income. The writer has elaborated on this point earlier.

In order to understand better why such a great proportion of the sample are dissatisfied with their income, the writer correlated the subjective responses with the factual data given about the subjects' actual weekly income. As table VI shows, the majority of those who are content with their income are actually in the highest income bracket of \$80.00 or more per week. Those whose response was negative, in spite of their being in the

highest category, are elderly people, who live with their grown children who maintain them. In these cases it is felt that the

TABLE VI.

A Correlation of Actual Income With
the Subjects' Contentment With
Their Economic Situation

Weekly income (per family, if not single)	Degree of contentment						
	Total	Yes			No		
		Sub- total	Married	Single	Sub- total	Married*	Single
Total	49	16	13	3	33	26	7
\$80.00 and over	17	11	10	1	6	6	
\$70.00 to \$79.00	3				3	2	1
\$60.00 to \$69.00	5	2	2		3	3	
\$50.00 to \$59.00	4	1		1	3	2	1
\$40.00 to \$49.00	7				7	5	2
\$30.00 to \$39.00	4				4	2	2
Public assistance	9	2	1	1	7	6	1

*or living with adult children.

dissatisfaction is more with having to be dependent on their children and not having an income of their own, rather than an expression of actual hardship.

In examining the questions about economic status, this writer felt that the data obtained are obscured by a serious omission in the questionnaire. No question was asked about the number of dependents in a family. We only know whether the subject interviewed is single, married, divorced or widowed. The number of dependent children may, in part, explain the frequency in unfavourable responses. It does, obviously, make a difference whether a family of two or a family of four have to live on the same income.

The findings arrived at in this chapter are the following.

1. A surprisingly large number of women are not employed. One reason for this may be that a great proportion of the female sample is, at the time of the interviews, suffering from some mental or emotional illness.
2. Those subjects who are satisfied with their employment have not experienced the trauma of a degrading work situation, but do as well or better than in the home country.
3. The dissatisfaction with income seems to be, in most cases, realistic, as the income of those who are discontent is not sufficient for their needs. A few exceptions are those older people who are dependent on their adult children and who resent this dependency.
4. The findings drawn from the data on income are, at best, only tentative, as we do not know the size of the families in question.
5. A relatively large proportion, namely, one-fifth of the total sample, is maintained by public assistance. Besides having thus to manage on a very low income, these subjects also suffer a serious status loss by not being able to maintain themselves.

In short, it seems that young people have less difficulty in adjusting to the new language than older people. A large proportion of women in the sample do not work outside their home and we may speculate that they are those persons who use the new language very little, if at all. It also seems that satisfaction with employment does not necessarily coincide with a satisfactory income.

CHAPTER V.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

In the previous chapter the writer has tried to deal with three basic factors of adjustment: language, employment and income. Obviously, to have a job, an income and a place to live are of primary importance to everybody in our society, and this applies to the new immigrant as well as to others in a given community. However, we do not live by bread alone. Even bread and butter do not fulfill all of our wishes and wants. People have also a great need for social intercourse and for cultural satisfaction.

The planners of the original study felt that, in order to discover whether immigrants found satisfaction for these needs, certain questions pertaining to the social and cultural adjustment of the subjects should be included in the questionnaire. The subjects were asked to answer the two following questions (35 and 36): "Are you content with your social life?" and "Are you content with your cultural life?" The main implications attached to the term "social life" were these: "Do you get together, often enough to satisfy you, with the kind of people you like, under circumstances which you find pleasant and enjoyable?" There was, however, no need for the interviewer to elaborate on the meaning of the question, as the subjects

readily understood what was meant.

The term "cultural life" related specifically to the fine arts such as literature, theatre, music, etc., and the subjects' inclination towards making use of these cultural facilities. In other words, in the context of the present project, as well as in the original study, the concept "culture" is not applied in its anthropological sense. Instead, it is used specifically in the sense of enjoyment of the fine arts.

An additional reason for asking the question about cultural satisfactions relates to the background of the majority of the subjects. Most of these people had belonged to the middle class in Hungarian society, and they had lived all their lives in a big city, which had century-old and well-established cultural traditions. This situation will be elaborated on at a later point in this chapter.

The assumptions underlying these two questions were 1) that the subjects had lived in a specific urban society, in which social intercourse is less structured and takes place in a different setting than is the case in Montreal, and 2) that before immigration the subjects had used the cultural facilities which exist in abundance in the city in which they had lived. It was further assumed that there might be a certain degree of dissatisfaction with new conditions which were different from those the subjects had been accustomed to at home.

During the interview process, and while writing this chapter, this writer feels that it is not enough to examine merely the scaled responses to the above-mentioned questions.

She felt that the responses to the question "Are you content with your social life?" would take on more meaning if they could be related to the subjects' own words of expressing their liking or disliking of Canadian people or their social customs. She also felt that the responses to the question on cultural satisfaction could be better understood, if one knew what satisfactions the subjects had been accustomed to in their old country. Certain spontaneous remarks, which the writer also recorded during the interviews, are therefore used to illustrate how the immigrants felt about their new cultural situation.

But let us first examine some of the general meanings of the responses pertaining to satisfaction with social life. This writer considers that social adjustment is very much a two-way process. For some time the acculturation of the immigrant may be seen in terms of whether and how he assimilates to, and, if the process is successful, how he is absorbed by the accepting culture or society.

One writer sees the process in these terms: "The end product of assimilation has frequently been conceived as a situation of complete conformity - at all social and cultural levels - with the society of the receiving area."¹ This would be a one-way process, with the immigrant doing all the assimilating. This writer contends, however, that acculturation, in any meaningful sense, cannot be achieved this way. It has to be a process of social interchange and social interaction and willingness to be open-minded by both parties in the process.

¹Borrie, op.cit., p.99.

However, just as the job of assimilating or acculturating cannot be left to the immigrant alone, so the end product of the process cannot be achieved just by the receiving society being open-minded and accepting of the immigrant. Just as this two-way process of cultural interaction would be difficult if the receiving society has a rigid, non-accepting attitude, so it would be difficult if the immigrant himself has a cautious, mistrusting attitude and is prejudiced against the new culture by his previous experience and ideas.

It must be recognized, of course, that for all of us it is very difficult "to shed the skin" we have acquired during the many years we have spent in the process of integration with our own culture. From the day a person is born until well on in his youth and adulthood, he will be shaped by his family's ways, which in turn are shaped by the extended family tradition and subcultures, and in fact by much of the general culture to which the person belongs.² The finished product of this process is now suddenly confronted by a new and different set of values and customs. He cannot afford, however, nor has he the opportunity, to spend another twenty years in slow learning, within the protective confines of his family. He is expected to learn fast and to "grow up overnight" so to speak. This learning process is much easier for young people than for older ones. The latter, perhaps rightfully, consider themselves as having completed their "schooling" long ago, and some of them feel they have more or less successfully graduated from the "school of life".

Let us now consider that social customs and behaviour

²L.J. Stone and Joseph Church, Childhood and Adolescence (New York: Random House, 1957), p.96.

differ in many ways in Hungary as compared with those in Canada. Hungarians are brought up in a different way and they are taught to believe, as people in every culture are, that theirs is the right way. Therefore, even to the more sophisticated, it is a shock, when one suddenly encounters very different behaviour, new customs and other ethnic characteristics, and vaguely senses somehow, that one may be expected to conform to all these new phenomena. Hungarians have been described many times as being exuberant, lively, full of "temperament". This writer dislikes generalizations, but she has to admit that there are noticeable differences between Hungarians and Canadians in behaviour, in the tone of voice and in the quality of their gestures. An observer needs only to go into any of the Hungarian restaurants in Montreal, for instance, and compare the quality of sound with that of a typical Canadian eating place. English-speaking Canadians of British origin are of more subdued, more reserved behaviour in public eating places, than are the Hungarians. This very reserve, which one may encounter in other situations as well, is sometimes interpreted by immigrants as coldness, disinterest and dislike, if not hostility towards strangers.

With these orientations in mind, the writer will now attempt to examine some of the possible reasons for the considerable number of unsatisfied responses to the questions pertaining to social and cultural life. In the original study, the research workers were interested to get the spontaneous responses to these two questions. We have to recognize, therefore, the subjective quality of what the subjects stated, both

in their formal responses and in their added comments. It seems that discontent with both social and cultural life was substantial. Only one-third of the total group felt that they had a satisfying social life in Montreal and at least one-fourth of this group said, in response to a later question, that their social contacts were exclusively with other Hungarians. The

TABLE VII.

Question 35. Are you content with your social life?

Sex and Age	Degree of contentment		
	Total	Yes	No
Total both sexes	49	17	32
Male total	20	8	12
15-44	15	6	9
45-84	5	2	3
Female total	29	9	20
15-44	14	3	11
45-84	15	6	9

discontent with their cultural life in Montreal is even greater. Not much more than one-quarter of them are satisfied, and half of these are in the older age-group. There is a general slowing down in the average person who is getting older. At fifty or sixty years of age, neither body nor mind tend to be so active as they are at twenty or thirty years of age. One does not so easily stay up until early in the morning for the sake of a party, and one is perhaps a little less easily motivated to go out to the theatre or concert.

In the case of the older immigrant, there is the additional factor that the "displacement shock" is greater than it

is for the younger immigrant. By "displacement shock" the writer is referring to the emotional trauma of a person's experience, when he is transferred suddenly into an environment, both physical and cultural, which is different from the one he had been accustomed to. The older the person at the time of immigration, the longer is the time span spent in his original cultural environment. It may, therefore, be possible to speculate that there is a slight note of resignation in the statement of the older immigrant, when he says he is satisfied. He may not have quite the same need for the various types of cultural satisfactions discussed earlier as do the younger persons. He has already slowed down in his general demands of life. Besides, he probably needs a relatively greater proportion of his energy in adapting daily to his new environment.

Borrie³ says, that the essence of cultural integration lies in a society's ability to remove the stresses of a cultural and psychological character to which both the immigrant and the receiving society are exposed. The removal of these barriers is a two-way process: the receiving society must adopt favourable attitudes toward newcomers, if it is to succeed in attracting immigrants to its cultural milieu, and the immigrants, in their turn, must make efforts to overcome language barriers, as well as ideological and religious differences before they can extend their participation in the social life of the receiving society. In this study we do not have any data on the attitudes of the receiving society. We do have, however, some expressions

³Borrie, op.cit., p.169.

of feelings of the immigrants about the people of Canada and about their social customs.

In the original study two sets of questions were designed as part of the questionnaire, in order to elicit responses of liking or disliking. Question 46 asks: "What do you dislike in Canada?" It then lists certain selected items in this order: food, clothes, people, social customs, climate, medical care, lack of free education, unemployment and "others". Following the question about social customs, the subjects were asked to specify what custom they disliked, if any. They were also asked to give the reason for each of their dislikes. The writer selected the responses to the questions about dislike of people and social customs, because she assumes that these feelings are of great importance in the social adjustment of the subjects. A feeling of dislike for certain people will make it difficult for anyone to reach out towards more satisfying social interchange with these persons. This feeling of dislike does not have to be rational or based on experience. In fact, it may often be the exact opposite, e.g., an irrational emotional response.

The interviewer asked specifically whether the subjects disliked "Canadians" and, if so, why. As the responses will show, some of the subjects had had very little contact with Canadians in the first two or three years they had lived here. Some disliked only the French-Canadians, and we may speculate here that at least one reason for this feeling lies in the subjects' inability and apparent disinterest in learning to

speak French.⁴

TABLE VIII.

Question 46.c. Do you dislike people in Canada?

Sex and Age	Total	Yes	No
Total both sexes	49	21	28
Male total	20	7	13
15-44	15	5	10
45-84	5	2	3
Female total	29	14	15
15-44	14	4	10
45-84	15	10	5

The responses to the question whether the subjects dislike the Canadian people show that approximately two-fifths of the group dislike them; the majority of these respondents are in the older age group. The writer feels that the reason for this dislike is the much greater social isolation of the older people, which is related to their language difficulties and to the fact that attitudes and values become more inflexible with advancing age. The younger the person is, the more pliable and flexible, and the less set he is likely to be in his attitudes, prejudices and beliefs.

During the interviews for the original study, the writer also asked the subjects to give their reasons for disliking the Canadian people. Some of the reasons they mentioned for their dislike of people in Canada are quoted here. It should be noted that the writer has omitted responses which are obviously paranoic. There are only a few of these and they occur only

⁴Supra, Chapter IV, p.33, table II.

among the subjects who were patients at the psychiatric clinic at the time of the interview.

Meanwhile, these immigrants expressed their views of Canadians, as follows:

"They are stupid; they are not friendly; they are cold.
 I don't like the French people.
 I don't know many, but some people here have bad manners; people here don't greet each other as Hungarians do.⁵
 I dislike the French only, they are very immoral.
 People here are disinterested.
 It's difficult to become friendly with them.
 They are not friendly.
 People here are hard, selfish, concerned only with themselves; forget about others.
 People accept you only if you have money.
 I dislike mainly the French.
 People are all out for a dollar.
 People change here and the dollar is too important.
 They think that they know everything better.
 I could not yet find people who would suit my cultural requirements.
 They live in such good circumstances, they should not be so withdrawn, cold, rigid and disinterested in other people.
 Canadians separate themselves.
 They are running after the dollar."

These and similar responses run throughout the negative part of the sample. But let us take a look at some of the positive responses:

"I can only be grateful to this country for accepting me.
 There are good and bad people everywhere.
 I don't like to generalize.
 I have nothing against them. I don't discriminate.
 They have goodwill, but they are not outgoing; they are stiff, withdrawn and don't care much for the next person.
 I had a very good experience with Canadians when I arrived here.
 I would like to be able to speak to them.
 I like them, because they are decent.
 I like them, but they are different."

⁵Writer's remark: It was very difficult to learn not to shake hands.

They are better than people in Hungary and they are good to squirrels.
 I accept them.
 They are less restrained, but indifferent.
 I prefer the English to the French.
 I live in a completely Hungarian environment.⁶
 They give people who want to get ahead a chance.
 They don't interfere, but they don't care either.
 They are relatively free, and free of prejudices.
 They are more democratic, more consistent in their beliefs, but on a low cultural level.
 I can speak freely here, don't have to be afraid of people."

It is interesting to note that even some of the positive responses are qualified by the feeling that the Canadian people are disinterested, aloof, "Don't care". The writer feels that the above responses illustrate to a considerable extent the relatively high degree of the subjects' discontent with their social life. There is the feeling of caution, of not quite daring to approach, and a fear of possible rejection. There is also evident a high degree of projection. Elfan Rees⁷ says, in her delightful volume with the telling title "We Strangers and Afraid", that a short time ago she met a Hungarian refugee couple in a country of second asylum. She continues:

"They told me that they were thankful to this country because they had work, they had a roof over their heads, and they were able to earn their own living. I asked them if they were happy. They hesitated and then said 'No . . .'" It became clear that what they resented was that they were condemned to live an isolated life, that they had no contact with their neighbours, that they did not feel that they had been accepted in a community."⁸

The responses quoted here are very similar in emotional tone to

⁶This response is frequent in the older age group.

⁷Rees, op. cit., p.195.

⁸Ibid.

the responses of the subjects of this study. But is it really so, that immigrants are just not accepted by the people of the country? Is this feeling not, partly at least, a projection on the part of the immigrant, who, because of a very different life-experience, himself rejects the new country, its people and customs, but is unable to consciously admit these feelings?

If we now turn to the consideration of customs, it is clear that some of the writer's assumptions are born out by the evidence from the interviews. A large proportion of the total sample voiced their dislike of Canadian social customs. One-

TABLE IX.

Question 46.d. Do you dislike social customs in Canada?

Sex and Age	Total	Yes	No
Total both sexes	49	24	25
Male total	20	12	8
15-44	15	11	4
45-84	5	1	4
Female total	29	12	17
15-44	14	5	9
45-84	15	7	8

half of the group stated their dislike and then gave specific examples of what customs they particularly disliked. Most of the responses were in the younger age-group and this may be due to the fact that the younger people have more opportunity than the older people to learn about Canadian ways. They work, they have learned to speak either the English or French language, and they have a better chance for social contacts

with Canadians. Their responses suggest that they do not dislike these people, but they do take issue with some of their customs.

Let us take a look at what some of the subjects of this study had to say about Canadian social customs. Which are the customs they dislike? They voice their opinions as follows:

"Girls start dating and smoking very young.⁹
 Gossip and competition.
 People don't care much for each other; they are more selfish.
 Social life here is connected with the Church.
 Everybody is in a rush all the time.
 People are not polite in general, not considerate.
 You have to belong to one specific religious group or church.
 Children are not brought up well.
 Children have no respect for parents.
 People have no manners; they are loud, have no consideration for sex or age.
 Freedom of teenagers is too great.
 No satisfactory social life for teenage girls.
 You have to stand at parties.
 Children are not trained well.
 Single people have no way of meeting single people of the opposite sex under socially acceptable circumstances.
 There are no sidewalk cafes.
 There is no social life in the European sense.
 People drink in secret and call it a good time.¹⁰
 People don't give their seats to older people in the bus.
 Difference in upbringing and mentality.
 Change of values in general is strange.
 Children do not greet their elders.
 Neighbours are not friendly with each other.
 I do not socialize with Canadians; am not aware of any special social customs.
 I dislike that children are playing with guns.
 I can't answer the question; have no social experience with Canadians.
 They give cheques instead of presents at weddings, etc."

⁹This from a twenty-six year old single man.

¹⁰A thirty-one year old student of political science in his last year at McGill.

We see in the above responses that the subjects spontaneously mentioned those social customs and characteristics, about which they felt there are differences from their own background and life experiences.

The upbringing of children, which is one of the nuclear problems and activities in every family, does grow into an objective difficulty if the family encounters significant changes in their values. It is true that children in Hungary, and perhaps most of Central Europe are raised very differently from those in Canada. This writer is in no position to make judgments, but would only like to indicate some of the differences. Hungarian children are taught to be obedient and respectful to their elders. There are certain forms of greeting and addressing an older person, parents included, which children are expected to adhere to.

The curriculum in the primary and secondary schools is much heavier than it is in Canada, and discipline is enforced with considerable rigidity. Young teenagers don't smoke (or if they do, they do it in secrecy) and don't date. The school is a place for study and the church for religious exercise. Neither of these institutions is a social club with dance parties. Children do not have as much freedom, in any sense, as they enjoy here. This writer remembers her amazement, when she saw, during her first winter in Canada, how toddlers would throw themselves playfully into snow and slush in their beautiful snowsuits, with their laughing mothers standing by in obvious approval.

We know what a difficult and rebellious period adolescence is for most families. How much more difficult does this become for the immigrant family in Montreal when the adolescent has become an accepted member of the new peer group, with its new and, to the family, strange values? The need of the adolescent to belong to a peer group is even greater than that of the person in middle childhood, because the peer group no longer views itself as a childhood society, but as a new kind of adult society and the kind that will rule the future.¹¹

This problem becomes more accentuated in the immigrant family, because the immigrant child or adolescent is exposed to the new culture, its values and customs, very quickly. He spends his day in school, among his contemporaries and with his teachers, who are either natural products of the new culture or they have adjusted to it.

The adolescent's own values and beliefs have not yet been firmly established. His needs to conform to his friends is sometimes greater than that to conform to his family. He learns the new language very quickly and he speaks it without accent. His store of memories, including the memories of former friendships, is much smaller than that of his parents. He looks forward, because he does not have much to look back to.

His parents, on the other hand, are much slower to seek membership in new groups. They don't have the same pressing need to form a new "society of the future". In the first few

¹¹Stone and Church, op. cit., p.281.

years of settlement they also have less time; their primary task is to establish themselves in stable jobs and with secure incomes. The mothers, unless they work, do not even have as much contact with the receiving society as their husbands do. They have lost most of their friends from their "old" life, unless these friends also immigrated to the same place. They are not as quick as their children in making new acquaintances. Therefore, we see that for a variety of reasons, the immigrant parents are up against - not only their own rebellious offspring - but the native peer group, to which their children, naturally, want to belong.

In summary, the writer would like to say that social adjustment in the first years of immigration seems to be hampered by the following five factors:

1. The immigrant has been molded in certain ways by the values and standards acquired from his own and different background and life experience. Erich Fromm says that the understanding of man's psyche must be based on the analysis of man's needs stemming from the conditions of his existence. These are the need for relatedness, the need for transcendence, the need for rootedness, the need for identity and the need for a frame of orientation.¹²

The uprooting experience of flight and immigration makes it very difficult, if not, at least temporarily, impossible for an immigrant, such as the persons in this sample, to satisfy some of these needs. His frame of reference

¹²S. Calvin Hall and Gardner Lindzey, Theories of Personality (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. 1957), p.128.

to the world around him may not be valid any more, totally, or in part. He has been uprooted, in a sometimes brutally traumatic way. His personal identity had been developed in a particular way according to the requirements of his society. Now he is called upon to reshape his identity to some extent, to suit different requirements of an alien culture.

2. The refugee or the new immigrant often has little or no knowledge of the new culture and of the society he moves into. Instead of factual knowledge he has his own phantasies of "what it will be like" and the reality he then finds does not conform to his dream-image. He may have had some information from relatives or friends already living in the country of his choice. But this information may be coloured by the personal experiences of these people, and it may not apply to the situation the newcomer will actually find himself in. It is a fact, however, that the immigrant is more influenced by these personal sources of information than by theoretical considerations.¹³

3. Most people in the accepting society are also likely to lack knowledge and understanding of the immigrants' cultural background. The "native" may not even quite know, where that obscure little European homeland is located on a map, just as all the knowledge the immigrant may have of Canada may be based on having seen some of Hollywood's products about the "North".

¹³D. Kirk and E. Huyck, "Overseas Migration from Europe Since World War II", American Sociological Review, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1954, p.455.

4. The immigrant may have a cautious, somewhat mistrusting attitude towards the receiving society. He soon finds out that he is different. Because of this he fears rejection, where he fundamentally desires acceptance. For the adult the experience of being expelled or forced into flight from his accustomed environment somehow resembles the situation of the child who experiences parental rejection. The homeland has rejected the refugee or, conversely, the refugee felt forced to reject his homeland. At the same time he does not lose his need for "parental love", e.g., acceptance by his new country. He finds himself in an anxiety-producing situation.

Karen Horney¹⁴ postulates that the insecure, anxious child develops various strategies by which to cope with his feelings of isolation and helplessness. He may become hostile or overly submissive or he may develop an unrealistic, idealized picture of himself in order to compensate for his feelings of inferiority. This writer sees some similarity between this theory and the complicated and subconscious mechanisms the immigrant is employing in his initial encounters with the new society.

5. The immigrant fears rejection. In order to reduce his anxiety, he defends himself by projecting these feelings onto the receiving society. He says to himself: "They may not like me." This is transformed into: "I don't like them."

Freud¹⁵ postulated that one of the major tasks imposed

¹⁴Hall and Lindsey, op. cit., p.132.

¹⁵C.S. Hall, A Primer of Freudian Psychology, (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1954), p.85.

upon the ego is that of dealing with the threats and dangers that beset the person and arouse anxiety. He called one of the methods employed in this task of the ego's self defence: projection. Projection¹⁶ is a method by which the person can try to alleviate his anxiety by attributing its causation to the external world. The internal danger from the id or the superego, which is difficult for the ego to handle, is changed by the person's mechanism of projection, into an external danger, which is easier for the ego to deal with.

Murray¹⁷ distinguishes between two principal types of projection. "Complementary projection" refers to the subjects' tendency to perceive or understand his environment in such a manner as to make it congruent with or justify his needs, affects and impulses. "Supplementary projection" refers to the process by which the subject endows objects or persons with attributes which he himself possesses and which are usually unacceptable to him.

Based on these theories we may speculate that the immigrant who feels "different" but is not able to accept this feeling, will prefer to see accentuated differences in the people of his new country and their customs. He can then safely "dislike" them, because they have become dislikeable instead of himself.

The writer is now turning to an examination of the subjects' responses to the question relating to their cultural

¹⁶Hall, op.cit., p.89.

¹⁷Hall and Lindsey, op.cit., p.196.

life, with a consideration of the variables of age and sex.

TABLE X.

Question 36. Are you content with your cultural life?

Sex and Age	Degree of contentment		
	Total	Yes	No
Total both sexes	49	14	35
Male total	20	5	15
15-44	15	3	12
45-84	5	2	3
Female total	29	9	20
15-44	14	4	10
45-84	15	5	10

Almost three-quarters of the total group said that they were discontent. Two-thirds of them were younger people. Dissatisfaction was higher in the male group than in the female group.

The writer is attempting to relate these responses to the answers given to Question 38 in the questionnaire, in which the subjects were asked whether they go to any theatrical plays. Only five subjects had been to "some" or a few English plays; four had seen some French theatre and seven had gone to see a few available Hungarian language productions. This is in sharp contrast to the answers given to question 45: "What were your recreations in Hungary?" Three-fifths of the sample listed as their main recreation: theatre, opera and concerts, to which they had been often. There were also many remarks about missing (in Canada) the coffeehouse, "the espresso" as a recreational and social centre.

It is well known that there is little activity in English-language theatres in Montreal. There are some professionally staged shows, occasionally imported from New York, but they are few and far between. Tickets must be bought well in advance. There are a few very small theatre groups formed and most of the performers are amateurs. Theatre performances, more often than not, take place in churches, synagogues, school auditoriums and the immigrant may not even know about them, because his thinking and his expectations have been conditioned by the existence of full-time repertory-playing companies in public places built and used for this specific purpose.

It was discussed in the previous chapter that the subjects of this study have chosen to learn English rather than French. Because of this preference or choice, the several active French theatre groups in Montreal, in fact all other available products and manifestations of the French-Canadian culture, cannot serve to satisfy the subjects' cultural needs.

In view of the pronounced cultural dissatisfaction in this sample, one could of course question the choice these people made between learning English or French. There may be several reasons for this choice, but no data are available. This writer, however, who is familiar with the group, speculates that some of these reasons may be the following: 1) it seems to be easier to learn English than French; 2) even in Montreal it seems to be more important to speak English, which is required in most job situations; 3) the great majority of this sample is Jewish. Therefore, there may have been a tendency to learn

the language which is primarily spoken by other Jewish people here.

Let us now look at the field of musical entertainment in Montreal. There is no permanent opera and at best only annual or semi-annual performances by outside companies. Concert tickets are difficult to get and, relative to the immigrants' income, expensive. Again, the immigrant may not yet be alert to the existence of musical performances in places where he does not expect them to be. To him concerts belong in the concert hall and he may not even pay attention to announcements in the press and radio pertaining to such events as are held in a church, a park, etc.

Let us now take a look at the cultural milieu of Budapest, in which most of this study's subjects have lived before immigration and where they have developed their tastes and values. Budapest has two opera houses with a total seating capacity of approximately four thousand persons per evening. Both houses provide a year-round, varied and extensive repertory. In addition, there are three major symphonic orchestras which play during a twelve-months season. There are about twenty theatres, most of which also play all year. They encompass everything a theatre-goer may wish for, from classical and modern drama to the lighter forms of theatrical art. All this is available simultaneously and it is all subsidized by the state. The most expensive ticket for the opera is the equivalent of a dollar.

Most of these facilities have existed for a very long time;

They were established when Hungary was still part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The highly sophisticated cultural and artistic climate that came into being could not be destroyed even by two world wars and by successive changes of a political nature.

The present regime in Hungary has made good use of the existing tradition, and it has added to the facilities. Very conscious and successful measures are taken to bring good music and theatre to the masses of the people who have not had access to these forms of cultural enjoyment before. Although this writer is aware of the underlying political reasons for this, the end result, for whatever reason, is that in a short ten years, the masses of the working and low-middle class have grown accustomed to and appreciative of the fine arts. This applies even more to the children and young people than to the adults.

Elfan Rees¹⁸ says that as communist countries have been paying increasing attention to the education of their youth, they have also provided extensive cultural and recreational facilities for them. With a very definite purpose, these young people have been made accustomed to much more entertainment than seems normal in their countries of asylum.

These factors, namely, the existence of more than adequate facilities at low prices, and the process of conditioning these people have been exposed to, can help to explain the subjects' disillusionment with Montreal's cultural facilities. An additional factor is the class culture of the majority of

¹⁸Rees, op. cit., p. 21.

this sample which, in Hungary, belonged to the lower-middle and middle class. Hungarian middle-class people would take advantage of available cultural opportunities and would easily become accustomed to doing so. The absence of these cultural-recreational outlets would be felt with pain, disappointment and sometimes outright dismay. There would be no understanding for this absence in a country that is so infinitely more wealthy than Hungary has ever been. The high technological development and the easy and matter-of-fact availability to the working classes of cars, frigidaire and washing machines on the one hand, and the relative unavailability of the cultural facilities described in this chapter on the other hand, may give the immigrant the impression that the people of Canada are concerned with the material comforts of a technologically affluent society, and have little interest in or desire for anything beyond this.

The writer would like to point out again that, when she speaks about cultural facilities, in the context discussed in this chapter, she was referring to the manifestations and products of the fine arts, primarily music and theatre.

In summary, the writer would like to say this: in reality there is less theatrical and musical culture available in Montreal than in Budapest. What is available may be above the economic ability of an immigrant in his first years of adjustment, and it may also be unknown to him until he learns of the channels of information and becomes more accepting of facilities that exist, but are different from what he was used to. The element of projection is still present, however,

inasmuch as there is a tendency to generalize: "all Canadians are uncultured - there is no culture here - it does not exist".

The writer feels that the evidence presented in this chapter bears out, to considerable extent, the assumptions underlying the questions about social and cultural satisfaction. As the questionnaire was designed by people (two of the psychiatrists and this writer) who themselves had made the transition from the Hungarian cultural environment to that of Montreal, it can be assumed that the implication in asking these questions had been that immigrants in their first few years of settlement would encounter some, and often considerable disappointment in these two areas.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The writer has examined some of the factors she believed to be of significance to the overall adjustment of the subjects of this study. Let us now explore how these separate factors of language-ability, employment, income, and social and cultural adjustment, relate to the subjects' own feelings of whether or not they are happy in Canada. The writer here assumes that a person's own feeling of happiness with a given situation gives some indication of his own estimate of his adjustment to this situation.

Let us first see how the subjects responded to the very general question of whether they are happy in Canada. The

TABLE XI.

Question 29. Are you happy in Canada?

Item	Degree of happiness		
	Total	Yes	No
Sex and Age			
Total both sexes	49	30	19
Male total	20	13	7
15-44	15	10	5
45-84	5	3	2
Female total	29	17	12
15-44	14	9	5
45-84	15	8	7

figures in table XI suggest that three-fifths of the total sample feel happy here. Meanwhile, almost twice as many men are happy in Canada compared to the men who are not happy. But there is a tendency towards less satisfaction in the female group. However, when one compares the younger age groups with the group of older people one finds that almost two-thirds of the younger group responded positively, but only slightly more than one-half of the older group did so. This would seem to bear out the writer's assumption that young people have less difficulty than elderly people in adjusting to a new environment.

In the preceding chapters, other evidence has been presented to show how the factor of age influences the adjustment of immigrants to new cultures. The writer believes that older people can and do retain their ability to learn and to live a relatively active and happy life. However, in fifty or more years a life pattern has usually been firmly established. If this pattern is disturbed in a way as traumatic as the uprooting experiences of flight and immigration, the results can be very painful.

Many writers have been concerned with the problems of the elderly. Helen Taft¹ lists three external pressures common to older people: "1) failing health, 2) economic problems and 3) isolation." She goes on to say that "the frustration of older people is accentuated by finding that ways of dealing with life which have worked for sixty or more years are no longer satisfactory". How much more accentuated become the

¹Helen Taft, "Serving the Older Person: A Multiple Approach by the Family Agency" (Casework Service) Social Casework, Vol. XXXV, No.7, (July, 1954), p.299.

problems of the older person who is an immigrant in a country where language, attitudes, values and social customs differ widely from those he has become accustomed to throughout a lifetime?

The older immigrant's chances of finding satisfactory employment which will make him economically independent are not very good. He may have to accept public assistance or he may have to depend financially on his children. In either of these two dependency situations he may feel that he has become degraded, worthless and a burden to his family or society.

The evidence from our sample points to the probability of the older immigrant remaining isolated from the host society. Because of his greater difficulty in acquiring new language skills he may tend to associate with members of his own ethnic group only. His chances of becoming integrated into the new culture to any meaningful extent are small. He remains a person who will constantly look back into the past, without having the comfort of the familiar environment around him.

Younger people, whose patterns and memories of past experiences are less firmly entrenched have lesser handicaps. By reason of their age alone, they still look into the future. They hope and expect that their present difficulties will be only temporary.

Let us now ask the following question: how, if at all, do the several aspects of social adjustment explored in this paper influence the immigrant in his total adjustment to the new country?

The writer has assumed that the ability to speak a common language of the new community is a favourable influence in the social adjustment and therewith also to a feeling of greater happiness. It seems that, although four-fifths of the total sample are able to speak some English, only three-fifths of the subjects state that they are happy in Canada. As mentioned earlier, two-thirds of the young people responded favourably to the question concerning their happiness in Canada, as compared with only one-half of the older age group. The writer wonders whether there is a relationship between the language-ability of these younger people and their feelings of greater happiness with their new country, especially since the preference for speaking English is found almost entirely in the younger group. It is, however, also possible that it is the age factor that influences both aspects independently from each other.

Turning to the employment situation, we find that almost two-thirds of those subjects who are in outside employment are satisfied. We may speculate that a feeling of satisfaction with the work a person does may contribute considerably to his general feeling of happiness.

When we examine the subjects' economic situation, where we find a great proportion of discontent based, partly at least, on the reality factor of insufficient income, we may come to the following conclusion: a considerable number of our subjects, in spite of their unsatisfactory financial situation, are happy in Canada. We may speculate that one reason for this may be found

in the immigrants' appreciation of personal and political freedom, which they have found in Canada.

When we now turn to the subjects' social and cultural adjustment, we again find that approximately three-fifths of the total sample are dissatisfied with both their social and their cultural life in Canada. Here we find that the feeling of discontent is greater in the younger age group than in the older group. It seems that in spite of this it is this same group of younger people, who feels happy in Canada. This may support the writer's assumption that younger people, even if they do not feel satisfied with certain aspects of their life, still find it easier to contain these feelings of discontent. They may be regarding those aspects as temporary difficulties, which they will be able to solve or rectify in the future. They feel that they have a future in their new country to which they can look forward. Even their discontent with some aspects of their lives will not deter them from building this future for themselves and their children.

APPENDIX

LIST OF QUESTIONS¹

Question

- 3. Age
- 5. Sex
- 6. Religion
- 10. Marital status
- 12. Occupation now
- 13. Occupation in Hungary
- 15. Income now
- 23. Date of arrival to Canada
- 24. Reason for leaving Hungary:
 - a. political
 - b. economic
 - c. family
 - d. religious persecution
 - e. other
- 29. Are you happy in Canada
- 30. Are you content with your employment?
- 31. Are you content with your economic status?
(Do you make enough money?)
- 35. Are you content with your social life?
- 36. Are you content with your cultural life?
- 38. Do you go to plays?
 - English
 - French
 - Hungarian

¹The questions were selected from the schedule of the psychiatric study. The original numbering was retained.

Question

45. What were your recreations in Hungary?
46. What do you dislike in Canada?
- c. people
 - d. social customs
47. What do you like in Canada
- a. people
48. If situation changed in Hungary, would you go back?
55. Do you speak English?
57. Did you speak English in Hungary?
French?
other language?
58. What language do you speak now by preference?

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