

**OLD – NEW STRATEGIES:
TRADITIONAL PEASANT FARMING IN MOLDOVA¹**

by

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SUMMARY

There is an increasing interest for articles and studies dealing with the lives and traditions of Moldva Chango communities however, very few studies deal with economic and social analyses of Moldva Chango communities. Our research, begun in 1997, mainly utilizes anthropological methods (observation, interviews and resource analysis), as Moldva Changos do not trust foreign people asking them questions; their original peasant-like distrust is made even stronger by their minority status. Official data are not available about this community. The economic conditions and survival strategies of the Moldva Changos show characteristics of ancient and pre-modern times. There are very few areas remaining in the Central European region where self-sufficient peasant farming could be examined in its full form as well as in the case of the Moldva Changos. Some forms of self-sufficiency are still characteristic of it, but this form of self-sufficient farming is in crisis. The self-sufficient system not only uses up stores of families, but also shows ‘creases’ that makes its feasibility questionable.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study deals with certain assets of the Moldva Changos' economic strategies. Moldva Changos are a group of Hungarian-speaking people, of mainly Roman-Catholic religion and Szekely descent, living beyond the Carpathian Mountains near the Tatos and Szeret rivers (Balassa, 1989, Kiszely, 1992, Gunda, 1994). Professional opinion concerning the name of this group of people is not uniform; they are called Chango-Hungarians, Moldva Hungarians and Moldva Chango-Hungarians. The noun "chango" is believed to have originated from the verb "chang", meaning, "to wander" (Balassa, 1989 et. al.).

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As indicated above, the Moldva Changos cannot be considered a homogenous group of people. They arrived at their present habitation from different directions and at different times. Some theories state that they are a group of Hungarians who stayed outside the Carpathian basin around the time of the foundation of the Hungarian State. However, existing archeological findings do not indicate a continuous presence in the area and question the theory that they migrated from the East (Fodor, 1993).

The earliest groups of the Moldva Changos migrated to Moldva from early medieval Hungary. Hussite refugees followed them in the 15th century. In the course of the 16th to the 18th centuries, groups of people from the Erdely arrived. These had been forced out of the area either by economic forces or by the devastation of the battle of Madefalva (Benda, 1993).

There are approximately 240,000 Roman Catholics in Moldva, the eastern region of Romania. Since people of Romanian descent are Orthodox Catholics almost without exception, it is very probable that these 240,000 Roman Catholics are Chango Hungarians. As a result of assimilation, only a fragment of this population speaks Hungarian. According to research (Tanczos, 1999) in the examined 85 villages there are more than 50,000 people speaking the Hungarian language there at present.

Chatolics and Hungarian speaking population in Moldva and in Changó villages

Year	Population in Moldva (100%)	Ratio of chatolics (%)	Ratio of Hungarians (%)	Ratio of Hungarians among Chatolics (%)
1859	1 325 406	4,0	2,9	71,6
1930	2 433 596	4,5	1,0	21,7
1941	2 769 380	0,3	-	-
1966	3 391 400	0,14	-	-
1977	3 763 221	0,09	-	-
1992 ²	4 079 046	5,9	0,08	0,08
	Population in Chango Villages	Ratio of chatolics (%)	Ratio of Hungarian speakers (%)	Ratio of Hungarian speakers among Chatolics (%)
1992 ³	103 543	60,1	48,7	81,0

Source: Tanczos, 1999

There is an increasing interest for articles and studies dealing with the lives and traditions of Moldva Chango communities, and a relatively great number of writings deal with their popular culture, which has very ancient elements (Halasz, 1993, Pozsony, 1999). Many research their customs, prayers and a number of other assets of their culture (Tanczos, 1996). However, very few studies deal with economic and social analyses of Moldva Chango communities.

² Official census return

The researcher's job is made more difficult by the isolation of the Moldva Changos, their mental and geographical distance from the Carpathian basin and the political events of the past few decades. As Halasz puts it, visitors, disregarding the collection and processing of research data, believed that their most important task was to examine the conditions of Changos, as their isolation and backwardness was so striking and shocking (Halasz, 1994).

So far, most research on the Moldva Changos has disregarded the economic activities of this group of people, which may include collecting, animal husbandry, horticulture and marketing, and paid little attention to fishing, land cultivation, grape and vine production. Research concentrated on more detailed sociographic, sociological, social-ethnographic and cultural ecologic data is also missing from the palette (Halasz, 1994, 1996⁴, Benedek, 1997).

Research focused on the economic circumstances and survival strategies of the Moldva Changos has scientific importance beyond its practical use:

- The economic conditions and survival strategies of the Moldva Changos show characteristics of ancient and pre-modern times. There are very few areas remaining in the Central European region where self-sufficient peasant farming could be examined in its full form as well as in the case of the Moldva Changos.
- However, as shown in our study, this self-sufficient peasant farming is in a critical situation. The crisis is similar to the one present among the peasants of the Hungary of the 1930's narrated by Erdei (1980). It is connected to the fact that the peasant lifestyle is no longer feasible, but there are significant forces working against the process of urbanization and civilization.
- Despite the presence of these difficulties, Moldva Chango villages managed to accept some of the masses of unemployed people from the urban-industrial environment in the early 1990's and provided the 'new-peasant' families with methods of survival. However, we believe that the system of self-sufficiency not only uses up the stored means of the families, but also shows deficiencies that renders its long-term feasibility questionable.

Our research, begun in 1997, mainly utilizes anthropological methods (observation, interviews and resource analysis), as Moldva Changos do not trust people 'wearing pants' asking them questions. Their original peasant-like distrust is made even stronger by their minority status; Romanian authorities still do not acknowledge Changos as an ethnic minority. For this reason, making these people answer many pages of questionnaires seems to be a very difficult task to complete. The distrust of the people is understandable

³ Based on research of Vilmos Tánzos (Tánzos, 1999)

based on their experiences in the past decades and centuries, enough to remind us of the fact that they are still not acknowledged as a minority in Romania.

As opposed to questioning strangers, they are used to strangers with ethnographic interests, who take photos every now and then. It is very important to gain and maintain their trust, as in the closed village communities, news of strangers spreads very quickly and distrust may prevent the researcher from acquiring any useful information.

The interviews were made in six villages – Klezse, Somoska, Kulsorekecsin, Bogdanfalva and Lujzi Kalugar. We were assisted in choosing the subjects of the interviews by Hungarian researchers who have great experience in Moldva. We were focused on finding those people in every village who have extensive knowledge of the lives of the villages and are involved in forming that life, too. In most cases, these were well-to-do farmers and leaders of the villages' economic and communal life. It was very important to make references in searching for people to be interviewed, as those who made the suggestions became our references.

In such conditions, we have disregarded the idea of making questionnaires for some time. Instead, we plan to conduct a questionnaire research among the Chango laborers working in Hungary. The task will not be easy even then, as the majority of Changos are illegal aliens and laborers in Hungary. The present study is based mostly on the 17 interviews and resource analyses made in the above-mentioned villages between 1997 and 1999.

2. THE ECONOMIC METHODS OF CHANGOS

According to historical resources (e.g. Mikecs, 1941), the production methods and procedures of the Moldva Changos have not changed during the past hundred years. This traditional farming system was slightly influenced by the overactive industrialization of the 1970's and 1980's, but due to family members (mostly women), Changos have always remained farmers. The very poor food supplies and low wages characteristic of Romania are the reasons for maintaining their relations connected to farming, while lack of money and 'part-time' farming account for the fact that Changos were unable to make their farming methods more intensive. The Western-European method of modernization (concentration of land in the hands of farmers, mechanization) was made impossible by collective ownership.

⁴ Among the more than 1300 studies, articles and books collected in a bibliography by Halasz in 1996, a little more than a dozen deal with the economic and financial circumstances of the Changos.

The economic crisis that started in Romania in the second half of the 1980's selected poorly educated migrant laborers from the urban, industrial workplaces. A majority of the former workers retreated to village farming 'full-time', and as a result of privatization were given small plots of 1 to 3 hectares.

The Chango population forced out of urban workplaces by economic and social changes tries to carry out new strategies of survival in the villages. The old-new strategy of traditional peasant farming cannot provide everyone a decent (but not wealthy) living. Within the traditional farming system, special informal and currency systems have been created and recalled, while the unnecessary workforce is forced out of the system.

2. 1. Traditional peasant farming

According to Mendras, traditional peasant society can be characterized by three basic assets; self-sufficiency, cultural homogeneity and social diversity. Within this, self-sufficiency may be described in demographic, economic and social areas.

In accordance with the following American authors, the above three areas are completely connected and intermingled: "... *the household, the community, and the economy were tightly bound up with one another. The local economy was not something that could be isolated from society. Rather, the economy was embedded in the social relations of the farm household and the rural community*" (Gillespie, Lyson, Harper, 1994).

The academic literature on the Moldva Changos is focused mainly on the abundant ethnographic, language and cultural traditions, and does not mention the ancient economic institutions that are found only in restricted areas of Europe. For this reason, in our study the major characteristics of the economic institutions of the Changos are compared with the findings of overviews of traditional peasant societies.

Our starting point is supported by Redfield's remark: "there is something universal in peasant society and culture. It is a form of human community that has similar characteristics in every part of the world" (as quoted by Macfarlane, 1993). According to a Hungarian sociologist, Erdei (1980), this is due to a characteristic system of peasant norms and values, which are the following:

- constant moral urge for physical labor and self-exploitation,
- strong connection to the earth, 'earth-hunger',
- the way to financial development is an increase in labor and a decrease in consumption of goods,
- restriction on spending one's cash,

- not conscious and rational aiming at increase, but efforts made for the sake of increase within the peasant culture and society (increasing the amount of land and livestock).

The same characteristics are mentioned by Van Der Muelen (1993) when he writes the following about the farmers of a present-day vine producer village: *"We can rightly speak of low-input farming here. The point is not to produce as much as possible of one single cash crop, but to balance the available labor throughout the year and maximize internal supplies (between farm activities as well as between farm and family)."*

The wide range of products (diversity) and the universal utilization of the workforce make self-sufficiency possible, as Cancian puts it (1989), and in harder times the peasant can retreat from the wider society; the market. What Cancian believes to be a defensive reaction, Redfield considers as a given characteristic of peasant societies, namely, that peasants are scared of the market. Popkin (1979) debates this statement, stating that peasants, "like all rationally thinking people" would be happy to go out to the market and even risk things for the sake of the desired gain.

The example of the Moldva Changos is not sufficient to prove any of these theories. The very high rate of inflation makes it irrational to buy certain resources and products necessary for commercial farming.

Further characteristics of peasant farms are described by Chaianov (1989). He states that the size and profile of family farms fits the number of family members and workforce capacities with more or less efficiency. Chaianov's model cannot be applied to the farms of the Moldva Changos, as resources are available only to a restricted extent. The expansion or decrease of farming would be possible in only two ways, either by increasing the size of the land belonging to the farm (extensive development), or by making farming methods more intensive.⁵ The former would require available land, the latter, capital and professional knowledge.

The aspiration for self-sufficiency is present among peasant craftsmen, too. Products (ceramics, wood products, etc.) are not exchanged at the market (see informality). In the 1940's and 1950's, self-sufficiency was present in its full form in Chango communities: *"The coach was made by Istvan and Sandor and Sandor Istvan. He made the coach (...) He made an axe, a handle, a handle for the hoe and scythe, and wheels for the coach, a chest, and yoke. It's not his profession, but he can do these things. He can make coats and hats. Now he does not make them because there is nothing to make it from. Now they make it by machines, but he did it with his hands. He did everything. He had to do it so that he could live. We learned*

⁵ For analyses of the increase of land or intensification of farming methods see Tibor Toth: *Opposition or mutuality* (Gyorsulo Ido). Budapest. Magveto Kiado. 1980.

from poverty.⁶ Today, they are forced to buy or exchange certain goods (see barter). As Benedek (1997) writes: *"The household and economy are not divorced for a moment. It is characteristic of Chango farming to observe the idea of self-sufficiency, if not to such an imperative extent as in the case of the farmer-society in Szekefold.*

2.2. The restrictions on the development of the farm

The first and most important restriction is the lack of land. The sites situated on the sides of smaller mountains or hills can be divided into two categories. The soils of the sites situated in valleys and at the feet of mountains provide more advantageous conditions than those on top of hills and mountains. Furthermore, the small 1- to 3-hectare sites are not in one body of land: *"The lands are scattered. I, for instance, have two hectares from my parents. I also have land on the hill. We say that the best sites are those on the hills. They are in the Szeret valley, they are good lands, with very little artificial fertilizer everything grows there. I also have land on the mountain, around the Harompatak, at Potyul and Bercteteje. These are poor lands, the soil is red, it is just mud, and corn does not grow there."*— As told by one of our interview subjects.⁷ The amount of cultivable land and that of the best lands was further decreased by the creation of a water plant near the Szeret River.

In the villages' lands situated in the valleys, the most important crop has been corn for centuries. On the smaller lands scattered around the mountainsides they grow grapes, while in the gardens around the houses some vegetables and spices and on the clear areas on the mountains' plums and other fruits contribute to the variety of products.

Based on the corn-producing monoculture we could think that this is a market-oriented specialization in the case of the Moldva Changos. However, corn (puj) reaches the market very rarely, as it is one of the most important human nutrients as well. Just like a hundred years ago, they make puliszka (cooked corn flour) from it. One of our interview subjects told us secretly that he sometimes steals some ground corn for sick veal calves so that they can get better, but his wife cannot know what he does. According to Benedek: *"it cannot be animal food"* and he continues: *"corn is labor and time extensive, but apart from plowing, there*

⁶ Budo Mihalyne, Iker Marika (1921), Ketris, quoted by Gazda Jozsef, 1980.

⁷ D.A., Klezse

is no need for animal or machine labor, every workphase can be one by hand, and it provides a great amount of food, its stem, if collected in time is more nutritious than hay."

A further characteristic of farming is the low level of mechanization. The most striking sign of this is the lack of transportation vehicles. Changos feel the need for machines, but cannot pay for machine work. Moreover, it is not only the work of machines they cannot pay for, if they have to pay, they would rather leave part of their land uncultivated.

The most important power provider is cattle. This is universal, as it has no great needs and is multi-functional: it provides milk, does work on the fields and is utilized in transportation also. "This is the best species for us because we can use it for work. Do you understand? We not only want milk... You can ride a horse and go to the forest for wood for the winter, but if you have a cow, you can plow and go to the forest too."⁸ These fossilized elements create a delicate balance.

One of the most problematic elements of the present holistic farming system is the kind of cattle used, very well suited for hard work, but poor milk producers. The question of why they do not change to a better-milking kind is inevitable. If they were to start using a kind that has better characteristics in the above area, feeding methods would also have to be changed. The animals should be given fodder (corn), which requires a great deal of work and money to produce. The increased amount of milk produced in this way would not be of great use, as, since there are no local consumers willing to pay for it, they would have to transport the milk to the towns. In addition, it must be taken into consideration that a species that produces more milk could not be used to work in the fields. As we have seen, the utilization of machine-power has difficulties too. If instead of cattle they used horses to plow the fields, they would need bigger barns and better quality fodder. The new species would require new kinds of knowledge, which may be new, even to farmers that are more well to do. The examples could be continued and the circles further closed.

Traditional peasant farming has been a means to ensure a balanced relationship with the environment for a long time. Increasing population and available resources pose a great threat to the ecological balance of the area.

It is interesting to think about the authenticity of the basis for our accepting the collective efforts of local communities toward a maintenance of homogeneity, if at the same time we see no traces of efforts on the part of these communities to establish at least a primitive regulation system for the utilization of collectively owned natural resources such as pastures, forests, waters and air.

⁸ D. A., Klezse

According to custom, the amount of cultivated lands increases by decreasing the area of forests. At first, pastures were enlarged by the decrease of forest areas, while later these areas were taken over by new houses, which increased the areas of villages. Pastures situated near the villages often overlap the spines of smaller hills. These are not the pastures⁹ usual in Erdely, but the unattended extensions of areas that are of very little agricultural use. “*Grazing has virtually no regulation system... Grazing fields for sheep are not separated from fields for cattle, the herds roam the land to and fro, grazing is not divided into phases and thus promotes erosion and makes the renewal of grass impossible.*” says Benedek (1997) about this problem of the farming system. This “management” of grass fields is not satisfactory and feasible even with the present number of animals.

2.3. Informality

Mutual help has played an important role in traditional peasant farming. The mutual exchange of labor had a basic role and central place in satisfying everyday needs. This was even more so in times when labor was much-required (Gillespie, Lyson and Harper 1994). These relationships served to connect family, neighborhood and settlement communities.

Informality plays an important role in the most modern market economies as well. According to a research conducted by Jensen et. al. (1995) in Pennsylvania, more than 50% of the population there participates in informal activities. Similar results were found in a Hungarian research as well (Brown, Kulcsar, 1998). However, In traditional peasant farming informality plays an organic role in farming. While in developed countries informality is a means of mutual help and acquisition of supplementary income, it is a strategy of survival in the case of the Moldva Changos.

The following forms of exchange without the use of currency are distinguished by Levitan and Feldman (1991):

- exchange of goods without the use of money (barter),
- non-economic relations between households,
- use of money at below-market value.

As opposed to many politicians and analysts, who pointed out the role of the “informal sector” in the establishment and maintenance of social relations and networks, or emphasized its negative effects on taxation and financial policies, the above authors introduce the economic importance of self-sufficient

⁹ There are usually no pastures near Moldva Chango villages; animals’ fodder is provided mostly by weeds and corn stems.

systems. Similarly to the conclusions of Gillespie, Lyson and Harper (1994), they state that despite the fact that poorer layers of society also participate in informal economy, it provides real benefits for those who have land, work-power and capital. Informality helps the above to overcome financial or other kinds of difficulties and increase the productivity of the economy. In our point of view, informal relations are of great significance inasmuch as they help peasant farms keep their transaction costs low.

In Moldva Chango villages, barter is a common means of exchange. If somebody works as a day laborer, he is paid immediately after the day's work is done, or his days are counted and he gets the help back later. Labor can be counted in brandy. The cost of a day's work may be as much as two liters of brandy. People may also work for agricultural products, flour, wheat, barley or beans.

The colors of informality may be experienced on a number of levels. Hospitality is almost considered to be compulsory. Neighbors, girlfriends and relatives are involved in helping new mothers and their babies. Greater religious and family holidays are celebrated within the community.

Barter was common in the traditional Chango economy as well. Different pottery products were paid for by the amount of goods they could keep. Involving the market in this process is difficult even today: "*... the gypsy comes and brings some buckets and says: fill these with beans twice. I look at my wife and tell her: this is stupid, you understand? I can go to the town and buy the buckets there. Then the gypsy says: but then take the beans to the town and sell them there. I say: all right, I won't go to town with just one sack of beans.*"¹⁰

In Moldva, informality reaches the level of an illegal economy at times. For instance, they do not pay for wood in all cases. Sometimes they make a deal with the forester, and they pay for part of the wood. "*Everybody brings wood out of the forest, you can pay for it if you like*"¹¹. The case is similar with fishing. In the reservoir of the Szeret River, people with no fishing permit fish and sell fish cheap. Sometimes one can buy gasoline cheap.

3. A FEW ASPECTS OF THE USE OF MONEY

3.1. The flow of money out of the economy

Moldva Chango families cannot tie the young to their homeland by offering sensible work options. However, young people do not wish to participate in work, either. This brings into our minds Venczel's

¹⁰ D. A. Klezse

¹¹ SZ. M. Kulsorekecsin

(1998) remark on the Erdely areas in the beginning of the century, concerning the problem of “excess population”. He said that the farming methods of the area are the main reasons why people leave Erdely.

In the case of the Moldva Changos, in addition to the methods of farming, the Romanian economic changes were also very influential as far as employment conditions were concerned. The crisis in the transformation of the economy forced the majority of the village working class out of the industry of towns, while with the dismissal of agricultural co-operatives the means of local employment also ceased. The system of scattered small farms created after 1989 cannot employ the entire labor power offered by the young generations despite its labor-intensive nature. At the same time, the opening of the borders made migrant labor in other countries possible. People between 18 and 25 years of age go to Israel, Italy, Hungary and Germany to work.

This kind of work offers the only significant means of income. The acquired income however, does not become capital at home. It is often spent on luxury (according to local standards), but is almost never used to make farming more efficient. It is mostly spent to achieve two goals: purchase long-term consumer goods (color television, VCR, satellite dish, perhaps a used car), or build a house and establish a new farm. There are live traditions that require the young husband to have his own house: “*A young man has to have a house, if he does not, he goes to Hungary, makes money and buys one.*”¹²

A similar occurrence is reported by Bodo (1996), from the Erdely. According to his findings, the local community only accepts migrant labor if it serves the needs of a traditional way of living and farming. A change in lifestyle may cause the individual to be forced to the periphery of his community. In Moldva, such change does not necessarily have the same consequences, but it is not looked upon kindly: “*What matters is that you are not too proud.*”¹³ In Benedek’s (1997) opinion, they look at the income acquired by migrant labor as temporary and consider changing the traditional way of living and farming methods insensible.

The above facts show great similarity to Foster’s theory on the “image of restricted goods” (Norman, 1977), which states that an increase in the economy may be brought about only by the repression of other members of the economy. In their research in a small Hungarian community, Fel and Hofer (1997) used Foster’s theory to supply explanation for the fact that the community’s resources were expanded only to a limited extent in the course of time. One’s financial situation could not be improved by successful enterprises; it was much more determined by the financial situation one inherited. Characteristically, poor people were able to rise above their poverty mainly through migrant labor.

¹² K. P. Klezse

¹³ SZ. M. Kulsorekecsin

3. 2. The functions of money among the Moldva Changos

Money has been excluded from circulation in traditional peasant society. It was not considered a means of investment. Culmination of capital was present in the form of animals and products. This form of capital was not “dead” since it could be used in a number of ways (e.g. milk, wool, young animals) (Fel, Hofer, 1997).

In the economic structure of the Moldva Changos, the different roles of money are given different levels of importance. They use money in their formal relations, but with the total exclusion of the state and its monetary system. On the level of household and informal communities, the use of money is virtually unknown.

The role of money in Chango communities is modified. Its most important role is as a unit of accounting, while its least significant meaning is its capacity to preserve value. It is present as a means of payment, but its role is very often taken over by other goods (brandy, wine, and beans).

Money is a necessary and at the same time “useless” device in Chango villages. Its function as a value preserver is lost due to the high rate of inflation, and the fact that investments are very rare (there is little free land, the number of animals can be increased only by a limited extent).

Agricultural products, animals and land can be used to preserve value more efficiently than money. Cash has to be spent on goods that are capable of proliferating¹⁴. This way of thinking seems to trust in an unlimited supply of natural resources, as opposed to money, which cannot be stored for long. Based on our findings so far, we believe that the lack of market and market-oriented production is at once due to and resulting in inflation, a lack of investment opportunities, and avoidance of money.

In the present case, money is necessary for connecting to social and economic life. Newer consumer goods occur in nearby towns and television. Newspapers and experiences in foreign countries force the Moldva Changos to buy these. Paying taxes, which means belonging to an official civil life, also depends on money. A mainly self-sufficient farm can get money only with great difficulty.

¹⁴ A farmer told us the desirable way of money-use as follows: “*My father told me not to do politics. The second thing is that I should not get money from the bank. If you get money from the bank, how much do you get? You ask for ten thousand and they give you only eight. He told me not to store money, I should ask for products because they grow. If you cannot pay in products, go to the man you owe and ask him if he can wait another month until the product ripens. He can wait a month or he will not be able to have children. What if he cannot wait? What did my father teach me? I should go to another man, a good friend and ask him to give me the product, until mine gets ripe. You give the man what you owe, even if not in time, but you did, because if you do not, people will not believe you any more.*” (SZ. M. Kulsorekecsin)

With the exception of money, everything can be produced or substituted for by other available goods. The system contains so little money, which comes so rarely, that people sometimes ask for money for helping their friends out. If that cannot be done, they are content with labor or other presents in exchange.

The lack of money has great effects on the development of commerce in the land of the Changos. Some young people coming home from abroad start out with commercial enterprises. The main direction of their attempts was opening tobacco, liquor and convenience stores. In the last half-decade these brought reliable profits, as tobacco, liquor and bread have to be paid for by money.

For the Moldva Changos, money is mostly a means of accounting. Products' value in Lej is usually taken into consideration at barter and product exchanges.

4. CONCLUSION

The Romanian economic crisis, which started in the second half of the 1980's, forced uneducated, migrant laborer villagers first from industrial town workplaces. A majority of the workers returned to the old strategies of farming, trying to carry out an old-new survival plan.

The economic and farming strategies of the Moldva Changos resemble ancient, pre-modern times, but differ from these at the same time. Some forms of self-sufficiency are still characteristic of it, but this form of self-sufficient farming is in crisis. The self-sufficient system not only uses up stores of families, but also shows 'creases' that makes its feasibility questionable.

The first and most important hindering factor is a lack of cultivable lands. We find small 1 to 3 hectare fields supporting an increasing population. A further characteristic of the farming system is the low level of mechanization. Traditional peasant farming has succeeded in providing a balanced relationship with the environment. An increasing population and decrease in resources threaten the ecological balance of the area.

The Moldva Chango's form of farming with its extended historical background has visibly reached its limits of feasibility. It cannot provide every member of the system with a living, its harmony with the environment is threatened, and it cannot produce extensive or intensive growth.

The scattered farms cannot use the workforce offered by young people, despite the fact that farming is labor intensive. However, the opening of the borders makes migrant labor possible. This form of work is

the only significant means of living, but the income acquired by it does not become capital at home. Money almost never serves the purpose of making farming more effective.

Money has a less important role in everyday life. They use money in formal relations, but to the almost complete exclusion of the state and its monetary system. Use of money is not present on the level of household and community interactions. In Chango communities, the role of money is altered. It serves mostly as a means of accounting and least as a value-preserver due to the high rate of inflation.

In this situation, we may ask what kind of development can be expected in Chango villages. Is it possible that the Chango way of self-sufficient farming –at a time of reviving pre-modern economic forms and crisis of the Fordian society- can survive as a quasi post-modern form, and establish a flexible economic system based on family farming and meeting the demands of the era?

During the course of our investigation, we found that the survival strategies of the Chango families have developed in an unfeasible direction. There are many factors that hinder development. The community is not prepared for the spread of globalization and the increasing importance of the market on the level of money-use (capital), or human resources (human capital). The adapted traditional farming methods have their limits in the lack of natural resources and their ecological unfeasibility. In order to ensure their economic and social survival, the Moldva Changos will have to change, or at least alter, their strategies.