

Spaces of Faith: Changes of Rural Saxon Ambient from Transylvania

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Abstract

Transylvanian Saxon villages are going through complex changes. The gap generated by the Saxon exodus is compensated by other ethnic group's migration. The latter are occupying abandoned Saxon houses. The social shifts between the ethnic groups are triggering a transformation process of the built fabric. Along with the ethnic changes of the population in the Saxon villages, the households and the houses are also being transformed. The paper studies the way the ambient of the houses is metamorphosing. There is a mediation process between the living space and the dweller. Their influence on each other is bidirectional. The inhabitants with their own set of beliefs create an ambient of their own with their particular influence. The strong ambient of the Saxon house contains within the memory of previous owners suggesting a certain way of living and being. The house carries further a set of values that is fused in different ways. At conscious and unconscious levels some are adopted and some are denied by the new inhabitant. In this process, the new dwellers are themselves influenced. They let themselves be changed by the place, while creating a new one with a coherent sense of place. The result is as a hybrid space of old and new values with a unique ambient. The dweller develops a unique cultural identity influenced by and also influencing the ambient he is living in. The paper also tracks the meaning and the bilateral impact of the tangible and intangible changes that occur both to the built and to the human factor.

Rezumat

Patrimoniul arhitectural rural săsesc din Transilvania este subiectul unor schimbări complexe. Lipsa generată de exodul sașilor este compensată de migrația populației de alte etnii. Aceștia locuiesc casele lăsate în urmă. Schimbările sociale între grupurile etnice determină un proces de transformare a fondului construit. Gospodăriile și casele reflectă aceste schimbările populației din satele săsești. Studiul urmărește transformările din caselor săsești. Casele prind din nou viață prin noii locuitori, iar între cele două părți, mediul construit și ființa umană, se desfășoară un proces de mediere. Influența între cele două instanțe este bidirecțională. Locuitorii contribuie la ambientul spațiului prin imprimarea propriului mod de a fi, de a gândi. Ceea ce este particular este influența prin memoria ambientală, transmiterea un mod de viață exprimat prin spațiu. Valorile spațiului

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sunt transmise, iar noii locatari le adoptă în mod propriu împreună cu locul, transformându-l într-un loc personal, familiar, dar păstrând memoria locuitorilor anteriori. În acest proces schimbarea este bilaterală: ambientală, prin influențele fizice pe care spațiul le adoptă, și umană, locuitorul fiind el însuși transformat. Rezultatul este un mediu hibrid de valori vechi și noi. Interacțiunea între identități culturale diferite prin instanțe prezente sau absente conturează un ambient unic al spațiului, iar în plan secundar o identitate culturală nou formată pe care acesta se mulează.

Keywords: Saxon Villages, residential, ambient, ethnicity, hybridization.

1. Context

A few rooms in Gârbova Citadel still conserve items of Saxons culture portraying traditional village life – living, cooking and crafting. In the living room there are traditional clothing, furniture (bed, stove, traditional built-in pantry) and many photos over the years expressing customs of the community. One particular photo draws attention reflecting a particular custom back in 1973-1975 (fig.1). Faschingul/ Fastnacht sau Foosnicht[7] is a custom different for each village, community and ethnographic area.[26] In Gârbova this custom is part of “Cârnilaj” celebrating the beginning of the Great Lent (“Postul Mare” and “Lăsata secului”). Before Christmas and Easter a feast is organized in the neighborhood's father house and a carnival.[15]The picture expresses the reason for the mayor discontent. That year, Saxons from Gârbova chose to disguise as gypsies. They put on colorful clothes, covered a wagon and paraded on village's street. The custom illustrates not only the fact that Saxons and Gypsies cohabitated, but also a certain social hierarchy, each ethnicity playing a role. A carnival is an opportunity to disguise by dressing up as something different, as the opposite. Nowadays, Roma are populating Saxon Villages, living in Saxon houses. Moreover, some of them are embodying Saxon cultural identity.



Figure 1. Faschnicht in Gârbova, Alba County.

The paper grasps ongoing changes in the Saxon rural space. This changes are triggered by two main social events: Saxon exodus and Roma repopulation. The focus is the relationship between Saxon built environment and the new inhabitants. As a paradox, nomadic, chaotic people embody a completely different nature, ordered, calm, still, clean. Transylvanian Saxon rural landscape is

going through a contemporary colonization.

Setting up a colony is originally associated with settlement and cultivation. The occupation of new territory was linked with the desire to leave behind old habits and restrictions in order to establish a new and better order. The colony was “*the focus of a new world, in which the old world would be rejuvenated*”, and “*might have been seen as current longing for another world, a heterotopic space, as Foucault calls it*”. [10]

Saxon ethnicity was the third largest minority in Romania for more than eight centuries [8]. German ethnics colonized Transylvania, developed a specific culture and shaped their own habitat. In the XIIth century Transylvania was colonized by Germanic people in several steps. First groups of colonists came in the XIIth century invited by the Hungarian Crown. They were expected to contribute to the commonwealth through an advanced agriculture and especially through better protection of the borders. [5]

The immigrant social layers were generally represented by poor peasants, no longer able to compete in the transition process towards large agrarian territories economy system; low and middle nobility, ruined after the development of exchange economy system; urban population that did not obtain earlier rights and freedom. [17] The colonizers were named “Flandreses”, “Theutonici” and “Saxones”. Even if the german colonizers aren't “Saxons”, this name was given from outside. In the saxon dialect, the word “*Sessen*” is the term for “*resident*” or “*naturalized*”. [17]

The exodus of German population was a unique phenomenon. The mass migration was divided in three main waves. After Transylvania was annexed to Hungary in 1867 the process of magyarization started. The Saxons lost a big part of their common belongings. A profound economic crisis affected Saxon cities. This generated a big wave of emigration: 10% of the 200.000 Saxons left to U.S.A and Romania. [9] In interbelic and postbelic period more than one hundred thousand of Saxons were enrolled in the German army or deported for forced labour in the Soviet Union [8] (14.000 people died because harsh conditions). In 1944-1945 after the Saxons from the northern Transylvania were salvaged by Germany, Romanian authorities colonized 2.156 Romanian families in the settlements abandoned by Saxons. After 1990's, together with the Saxon emigration, the houses that were sold or distributed to other locals. [9] After the World War they were encouraged by the German Republic to migrate. Between 1962 and 1989 a number of 200.000 Saxons left the country to Germany (RFG) under a Romanian – German Agreement. Later, after 1990 saxon migration was motivated by the pursuit of better life conditions. Since 1992 the population of German ethnics in Romania decreased without migration. In the first two years 160.000 people left Romania. [9] In the coming years, until 1999, the German population decreased from 200 000 to 17 000. [8] Houses that were built and lived by Saxons are now inhabited by Romanians and Gypsies.

2. Introduction

Saxons developed a strong cultural identity during the millennium as they inhabited Transylvania transforming the space into a place. Nowadays, Transylvania remains the home (“*heimat*”) of the departed Saxons, being “*a place related with happy memories*” [14]. The population of the villages, almost entirely replaced by Romanians and Rroma “*have understandably started to put their identity mark, values and ways of living by changing their homesteads*” [14], in the attempts to appropriate the spaces and transform it into their home.

Cultural identity is a superior rank of civilization and culture assuming an awareness of culture belonging. The culture consists in knowledge, experience, through mystique, intuitive,

subconsciously. Cultural identity means the existing collectivity. Considering that culture is a sum of all mankind artistic manifestation, the seven arts, traditions, legends and religion. Identity is singular, unique, special, characteristic, particular. *“Identity involves an acknowledged pluralism, so subjective to the collectivity”*. [16] *“The place is the main identity support”* [16]. It expresses a lived experience and it's filled of individual and collective memory, creates emotions, implies stability, is heterogeneous and has *“convenient”* forms. Local identity of a group expresses itself in places common to the group and collective experiences.

“Home becomes the symbols of selves or cultures.” [23] Home is seen as private, safe and familiar place defined also by a sense of distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy that it offers. *“Home”*, as a cultural concept that implies notions as intimacy, comfort and security, is receptive to change. Western concept of *“home”* is linked with acquiring a feeling of belonging in a world of alienation. Homes are part of an enduring process of construction, negotiation and redefinition. The narrative of home is shaped by the pursuit to achieve a past – present continuity, transitions in personal life histories and forming social identities, but also by less tangible realm of emotions, memories, tastes, textures. In case of migration and colonization, home and belonging force themselves in different kinds of places like the case of Saxon villages from Transylvania that are recolonized by Romanians and Rroma. The illusion of a natural and self-evident place and culture relation was disrupted. [20]

There are four qualities regarding home and human attachment like: *home non-home dialectic, the expansion of home and distance, home and life cycle and dynamics of attachment.*

“In the dialectical relationship between home and non-home, the farther from home the better individuals will know their home [...] home is incorporated into new frameworks of understanding and new context of evaluation and identification.”

Expansion of home goes beyond the domestic familiar house and the core meaning for rootedness that embeds temporal, cultural and psychological connotations. *“Rootedness ties an individual or a group of individuals to one or more specific place-people-time points of reference, and prevents individual growth.”* And it *“is directly related to creation of collective home”*. [20]

“With time, family and community ties are established, elaborated and lived through to become the frameworks on which numerous behavioral, cognitive, and affective routines are superimposed.” [23] These ties that represent the framework for affective routines are developing on two parallel levels: social and space, two dimensions: cultural and architectural.

“The creation of a home as a compound product of many acts, thoughts, and feelings as well as symbol-laden spaces and relationships occurs through the personalization of the context that is partly chosen voluntarily and partly imposed by external circumstances.” [23]

3. Saxon Ambient Changes

Saxon village are known as villages with fortified churches (fig.2).

“Are characterized by a specific land-use system, settlement pattern and organization of the family farmstead that have been preserved since the late Middle Ages. They are dominated by their fortified churches, which illustrate building styles from the 13th to the 16th century.” [27]

Saxon villages are compact settlements with a recognizable silhouette dominated by the fortified church and its tower. In the solid mass, there are carved out public spaces created with the human

scale proportions. The center public square underlines the community life importance. Its shape is determined by public buildings as school, city hall, citadel. The villages are longitudinal, following a main road or a river, or radial-concentric where the terrain allowed it. The street network is a reticular structure adapted to the terrain and to specific natural elements integrated in the village – a river, a mountain or a valley. Secondary streets ramify out of main streets that lead to the main square. The houses facades are oriented towards the street, together with the built fences create a compact and opaque line. The repetitive fronts have a rhythmic sequence, the street facades of the houses following the same geometric rules. The households express the Saxon order and rigor. Behind the house build near the street, the annexes are aligned in the back, while farmstead is perpendicular on the telescopic annexes. The transversal farmstead separates the courtyard and the orchard or vegetable garden. The Saxon house is a volumetric and functional typology. The house is developed on three stories: basement, ground floor and attic. The basement and attic are used for storage, while the ground floor for family activities. Usually composed of three rooms, the ground floor had a big room rarely used, a room for daily routine and a middle room with the stove. The house volume is a parallelepiped with the steep singled roof, an entrance volume being added in some cases.



Figure 2. Prejmer Village – Braşov County

3.1 Saxon houses

Before 1989, Saxon properties were confiscated or abandoned, in the early 1990's were sold at low prices, later in the 1990 the Saxons kept their properties, bought them back, entrusted them to neighbors, relatives or friends for maintenance.[14] In Gârbova, Alba county, Romanians bought Saxon houses, and then sold the properties to Roma inhabitants. In Agârbiciu, Sibiu county, Saxons either sold their houses to Rroma villagers, either Rroma ethnics bought the properties from state ownership. In other villages the municipality assigned empty houses to homeless Rroma, they were sheltered through placement. Other houses were rented to workers employed in the local industries.

3.2 Ethnic changes

Ethnic hierarchies have shifted. Romanians are the majority, and Rroma are minority, but more populous than they used to be. New inhabitants struggle to appropriate the space in a way that is meaningful to their own cultural values and the practical challenges facing in everyday life. *“The typical Romanian and Rroma inhabitants of Saxon Villages react reaffirming their own cultural identity, expressing their own wants and needs.”* Wants are negotiable, needs are fundamental. Exerting identity is a fundamental human need.[11]

In Claudia Câmpeanu’s paper it is observed the relationship between the three ethnic groups in a village from Transylvania during Crown Day. The fest, Kronenfest is a traditional Saxon celebration organized by the Saxon community. Saxons are at the center of the festivities. There is peculiarity at the fest. Two of the dancers don't identify nor are recognized as Saxons. One boy is three quarters Romanian and one quarter Saxon, and was chosen to execute the most prestigious part of the celebration. One of the female dancers is Roma. The celebration is a *“rehearsal for the local symbolic order, mirroring the increasing and normalized dominance of Romanian population as well as the recent opportunities and obstacles in the transformation of the status of the local Roma.”*[4] Rroma implication in the festivity, either standing aside and watching, children involved in the games, young people dancing *“force the rest of the village to acknowledge their presence and human dignity.”*[4]

3.3 Ethnic differences



Figure 3. Saxon stable houses



Figure 4. Gypsy mobile housing

Rroma, known as people without a state migrated in Europe at the dawn of European Renaissance looking for home after the fall of Oriental Crusader states and Rise of Islam. In 1416, Emperor Sigismund grants Rroma freedom to travel across Europe. A life without a state led to creating survival strategies that were different from those developed by a stable culture and to nomadisation of Rroma organizational culture, adapting to the type of influence required for survival. *“Rroma have their own spiritual geography, one entirely different to ours.”*[1]

Lucian Blaga notices that in Transylvania there are two architectural directions: Romanian and **Saxons**. It is clear that these two models are antagonistic because of the strong cultural differences. The Saxon houses express the geometric rigorous spirit of the Saxons: introverted, categorical, well organized, methodical. The houses are reduced to essential: need, use and practical. Romanians houses have *“a lot of useless things”* in their households. This uselessness uncovers a certain artistic spirit not present in saxon houses. Saxons are born engineers, they impose their order to nature. Romanians are open, instinctual, superstitious, they adapt to nature. The Romanian is a fatalist, but he confides in the unpredictable and in outside world organization, hence he won't try to

change the order of things. Geometry is essential to Saxons but for Romanians is a peripheral ornament. In comparison with the Saxon order, Romanian architecture strikes you as disorder, which is actually a different order – life order.[3]

Saxons are defined by their community life. Their individuality is subordinated to the community. During his journey in Transylvania in 1868, writer Charles Boner observes:

”Saxon villagers have something conventional, ceremonious and constrained, something practiced that became their second nature. They all express the same tranquility and rigid uniformity in their behavior. Interacting with Saxons is an experience of excessive formality. They comply with the will of the community, they do not take decisions. They lack spontaneity of will and feeling.”[5]

*”For **Rroma**, life in this world, meant atonement for a sin. Known also as nomad population or singing people, Rroma is defined by his attitude to his own vulnerability. Rroma cultural unity is a continuous trend for adaptation, for existence, for survival. Roma are trapped in a continuous temptation to compensate for their psychological deficit, which is interpreted as inferiority or weakness, through an excess of techniques to survive. This leads to overcompensation, the individual and the community are wasted away in the continuous re-adaptation of its personality.”*[13]

Both Blaga and Boner point out the lack of liberty and spontaneity in the **Saxon** community. But also their character as ordered, serious, honest, steady, family oriented and diligent people. Rroma, on the other hand, distinguish themselves as nomadic, laud, passionate, deceptive, inactive, artists and cluttered. Between the two cultures one can identify certain resemblance. The respect, care and hierarchy in the family, as well as the roles of the women and men are clearly stated in Saxon and Rroma community. The taste for strong colours, also integrated in the Saxon traditional clothing, symbols, legends and myths is also a convergent element.

Both Saxons and Rroma are organized in guilds that state their craftsmanship. The most important Saxon guilds in XIV century are bakers, fellmongers, weavers, tailors, blacksmiths, masons, stove builders, girdle manufacturers, goldsmiths and carpenters. Guilds appearance is due to a development stage. Saxon guilds resemble the western European ones, but reflect Transylvanian social situation.[17] Rroma are divided in fourteen guilds, depending on their handicraft: bear trainers, brooms and brushes craftsmen, coppersmiths, blacksmiths, wooden spoons forks craftsmen, farriers, tinsmiths, locksmiths craftsmen, musicians, vendors, florists, witches, boot shoemaker, laborers. [22]

Back in the days, Rroma served Saxons and lived at the periphery in poor houses. Nowadays they are living in their master's houses. A concept similar to the Saxon houses inhabited by Rroma, are Castello's:

”Ostracized in 1944, hardened by communism, schooled by the free market, after 1989 their accumulations of wealth allowed them to take revenge on history. They built themselves houses that imitated those in whose shadow their ancestors served: the master's manor houses. Vengeance through astonishing and exceeding.” [13]

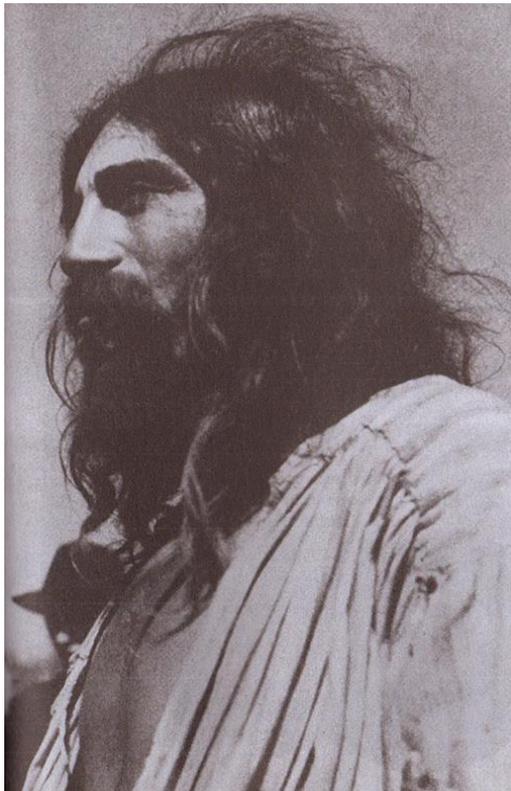


Figure 5. Gypsy man



Figure 6. Saxon young family

3.4 Hybridization

There are several layers that overlap. Saxons houses re-inhabited by Roma carry the spirit of the previous owner through objects, household organization, tools, seeming like they left into another world. The Saxon spirit is still trapped in the house, haunting the ones that inhabited it. Journalist Simon Jenkins observes:



Figure 7. Saxon House interior, Cristian, SB.

Figure 8. Saxon type farmstead, Criș, BV.

“To the new inhabitants of these villages, the vanished Saxons represent an alien culture. But their ghosts flit round buildings that in most cases are unaltered since being converted from wood to stone in the 17th century. They are like the hill-station residences of British India, holding its genius loci in absentia. Ghosts linger too in the countryside roundabout”[25]

Rroma are showing respect for the original owner, keeping the master-servant hierarchy, even if the master is absent. All Rroma living in Saxon houses that we interacted with stated that they didn't change anything of what they found in the house. They exhibited a specific respect and appreciation of the space, and implicitly, of the previous owner feeling the Saxon presence. They were still acting as servants. When Saxons came visiting they moved in the smaller house, allowing the visitors to stay in the big, clean house. The current owners are referring to the ghost of the house when they are interacting with departed Saxons that temporarily return to their former homes.

3.5 Behavior hybridization

In European culture the *“body-soul”* binom survived as a basic rule of master-slave type in opposition with *“non-domesticated”* cultures that maintained the *“level of corporality and affect”*. Rroma culture, born outside the European rationalism *“has continued to exhibit the psychological wounds of the soul”*[13], as a dynamic between the soul, which is *“intimate”* and the body, which is *“public”*. As publicist Vasile Ionescu affirms, a recovery of the body self *“intimacy”* would be possible by recovering from the *“shipwreck of human dignity”*. Until this happens, life in a Saxon house, as living in giant palaces, is *“an illusory victory over Evil”*. [13]

Ana is Rroma and lives in a Saxon House. She is retired and lives in Agârbiciu with her family. Their home is a Saxon house bought from the city hall in 1983. Her Godmother was Saxon. Every year in August, one week Saxons come to Transylvania to celebrate Kronenfest. Ana hosts the previous owners of the household and the neighbor across the street. *“We do our best for them to feel good. The children move to their in-laws, we move in the small house.”* She remembers that in her childhood, everybody was involved in Saxon customs. In school, they used to dance traditional

Saxon dances like Polka. Ana says: “I felt very bad when they left! I felt very good among them!” referring to Saxon exodus and life in Saxon communities. In her household live three generations and seven people. The larger house is divided in two and has two separate entrances. The smaller house is for her son's family. Coming from another Saxon Village, she appreciates the Saxon house, the layout, the large street, the greenery, the quietness, the big walled fences.

As the hybrid families, Rroma-Saxon marriages that formed over the years, both ethnic parts have to play double roles. (fig. 9) They play both the role of the other's spouse and the role of the member of its own ethnic group. The role embodying is happening also when Rroma are inhabiting Saxon houses. They are playing the role of the Saxon house inhabitant, but also the role of a Rroma community member. The house is still part of the Saxon architecture heritage, but its new role is as dwelling for Rroma families.



Figure 9. Mixed Saxon-Gypsy family

3.6 Space Hybridization

Rroma as nomads live their life spontaneously and do not worry about tomorrow. Saxons are settled and provident. The contrast between the two cultures is expressed through **architecture**. Saxon steadiness and durable architecture is contrasting with Rroma nomadism and their ephemeral housing. On one hand Saxons built individual solid households using lasting materials. The household itself resembles the fortified citadel ready to host and defend its inhabitants. Family and community spaces are clearly delineated, both being equally important in the village life. On the opposite, the Rroma house is temporary, built easy, quick with light, ephemeral materials. Spaces in a Rroma settlement or booth (“*șatră*”) are ambiguous, the only family space being the house or the tent that is temporary shelter and sleeping area. All activities, family and community, happen outside the shelter.

The “*nomads*” would travel in an “*ambulatory*” type starting with the beginning of spring until late autumn. They settled at the periphery of a village, market town or city. The covered wagon served as home during the day, while the tent fulfills the same function by night. They use to move from settlement to settlement and set up their camp just for a few days. Their groups were made up of 10-15 wagons accompanied by 40-50 interrelated people. Sometimes the groups were smaller, or they joined to form larger groups. Invisibility or maintaining low visibility would have been important for gypsy groups, as they would travel on less-trodden paths having high mobility, settled at the outskirts of the villages close to forests. Today they traded the invisibility with the highly visible buildings, but maintain the invisibility on the inside of the dwelling. Moreover, adopting the

majority type of dwelling, risking losing their individuality, they become invisible.[19] In this respect the Saxon dwelling offers them invisibility by similarity, the caravan sense of community and protection and intimacy behind the walled fence.

Both Saxons and Roma are expressing their sense of community or group belonging through architecture. Housing harmonic shapes within the same community are addressing imperative belonging needs. Saxon's village linked facades, vivid colored facades and tinsel shining roofs of Roma Castello's are both housing imprinted gestures[24] that prove both ethnicity's need of community belonging.

The *"hunger for identity, irreverence for what went before and authority, but an active mimetic spirit, anti-cultural phenomenon"*[1] is driving hybridization and adaptation of both villagers and space. Between Saxon environment and Roma communities that come in contact with it there is an exchange of values, cultural and architectural. The style of construction used in Roma neighborhood situated at the periphery of Bunești village resembles the typical and original Saxon houses, visible in the tools and manner of building.[12]

The new inhabitants have adapted the space for their needs, but still the spaces preserve Saxon elements. The new dwellers are being educated through space and objects that transmit the way Saxons lived. Consequently, there are two types of transformation: the new villagers through space and the space through the new villagers.

3.6.1 Housing

The motivations of housing are determinant, habitudes and liberties. The Saxon house is already shaped according to determinants - climate, site, biological and defense needs, materials and technology, economic reasoning, standards. Most of this motivations are unchanged. Owner change triggers shifts in habitudes motivations. Roma dwellers are shaping their new homes according to their cultural context, religion, society. Habitudes, social and cultural factors, are tradition system reference, *"memory in the act"*. It needs a long time in order to settle. The house educates a certain behavior. Moreover, to live is an action that can't be thought, it is learned through living. Social organization, family structure, living earning, relationships are expressed in the built fabric. Way of living is synonym with way of being. [24]



Figure 10. Memory layering in a Saxon House.

3.6.2 Roles of Architecture

Migrating, occupy settlements and inhabiting houses built by others is a form of colonization. There are neither good nor bad colonists: there are colonialists[21], it is in the logic or in the value exchange processes. Displacement can be one-way abolition, than a metaphoric interaction. [10] On the other hand, “*human identity presupposes the identity of the place*”, and implies to “*take part*”, “*share asset of common values*”[18] and build a new identity of a place and human.

Architecture and ethnic changes are in a significant relationship. Looking beyond the surface of the context contributes to its understanding. Seeking for meaning through “*topo-analysis*”[10] is “*as a search for and interpretation of traces of otherness*”[10]. The “*roles of architecture as receptacle, instrument, and as staging of displacement*”[10] in social and cultural change of colonization are projected in the built environment.

Architecture acts as a *receptacle* in a colonisation process, it “*can be seen as a medium that manifests social and cultural change that occur in conditions of displacement*”[10]. Cultural and ethnic evolutions leave their traces on architecture. Rroma population transitions not only from another location, but also changes the place hierarchical (from periphery to the center) and living style. Saxon house received the new inhabitants and adopted their differences by modifying its space.

Architecture is an *instrument*, as an “*instigator of cultural change*”. It acts as a “*spatial tool for the regulation of behavior and the disciplining of the body*”[10]. The new inhabitants embody their new house. They are influenced by collective memory of the Saxon community and memory of the house owner. The built fabric is transmitting information about the way of living and being of previous inhabitants which can be perceived as an adaptation guide for the new dwellers.

In the role as *stage for change*, architecture receives transformation from new dwellers that imprint their own identity. A “*process of negotiation between old way of life, which is forever disrupted, and the new patterns of behavior which still suffers from immaturity and incompleteness*” is the starting point in identity construction. “*Identity is a process rather than a fact: it is open to transformation and multiple interpretations.*”[10]. The Saxon villages are the scenery for the spectacle of social change. In the play of displacement there are actors and spectators, each interpreting its own story, story told by the changing architecture.

3.6.3 Heterotypic space

The heterotopic spaces of Foucault, the mirror, the crisis, the changing, juxtaposed and the heterochronies, are suggestive for the rural Saxon ambient. The mirror is “*a placeless place*” where “*I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface*”[6]. Saxon house is a mirror for displaced Rroma. They see themselves in a place that is not there anymore. This place – the Saxon home – is a memory. The real and ideal image of the home gives visibility to the self and contributes to the reconstitution of the self in one’s place.[6] The house cognition through senses, culture, symbolic and ideal perception contributes to housing psychology. The mirror is the ideal, euphoric image of the house – wellbeing and harmony. It is a recreation of something we are not able to create in real life. [24]

Saxon houses are *crisis* heterotopias for the Rroma inhabitants. The house is a sacred place, a place of purification, where the family reconnects through its beliefs, and also there is an individual connection with the family and with the self. The empty houses fulfilled the need for shelter and housing, a crisis (the German exodus) became the solution for a problem (Rroma homelessness and housing deficit).

Ethnic transformation is related with the *function change*. Even though the house remains the family space, the way a family functions is transposed over the space. Therefore, beyond the ethnic dimension, the change of people inhabiting a space is already a change of the way a place functions. Change of ownership implies not only change of its ethnicity, but also its status and its occupation. „*The house and habitat are the answer for a way of life*” [24], therefore the space engages in another routine and molds around the dweller's behavior and habits.

The Saxon houses are the *juxtaposition* of different spaces in a single real place. The Roma home and the home of the Saxon Ghost are over imposing upon the material house. Ways of living and uses of space are layering on the memory of the place. The house is exhibiting local and foreign habitudes, familiar and foreign ways of living that are known or embraced. This is the case of colonisation when people bring their own habits and then develop and borrow new ones in the new environment.[24]

The Saxon House is embodying *heterochronies*, heterotopias linked with slices of time. It embeds “*loss of life, and its quasi eternity in which her permanent lot is dissolution and disappearance*” of its past. It is a palimpsest “*accumulating everything*”. “*The will to enclose in one place all times*” is visible in the attempt to resuscitate the past, but also to grasp the present. There is a need for “*perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place*” that “*belongs to our modernity*”. [6]

“*Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing, that both isolates them and makes them penetrable.*” [6] The Saxon households were built with brick fences in order to protect and keep the family life private and away from the public eyes. Today these spaces are opened up by people that have opposite values. It has different levels of permeability and also mystery. Discovering a Saxon household is a process of disclosing and unpeeling the meaning of Saxon individual and family life. Germanic ethnics were opaque to the exchange of values, but their heritage is porous and is “*taking part*” to social changes.

“*They unfold between two extreme poles: they create a space of illusion that exposes every real space*” or to “*create other, another real space, as perfect [...] as ours is messy, ill constructed or jumbled*”, the heterotopia of illusion and of compensation. Rural Saxon Transylvania is a space of illusion and compensation having the idyllic medieval image of Germanic colonized space, its actually an ethnically disputed space. Displacement of its original inhabitants is compensated by other dwellers and counterbalances their needs.

4. Conclusions

Historians think that sedentary men are at the basis of civilization and the nomadic man is considered barbarian, wilderness man and the enemy of the civilization. Jaques Attali questions the supremacy of the sedentary man and considers that man is a nomad by nature.[2] In Transylvanian space, initially considered sedentary man, German colonizers become nomads migrating towards territories that offer better live conditions, while, guided by same reasoning, acknowledged nomads Roma prove to be more sedentary by inhabiting lasting Saxon houses. Roma ensure the continuity of Saxon cultural heritage in Transylvanian space.

Both colonizers, nomadic and sedentary in their own way, Saxons and Roma are cohabiting negotiating space of memory, of heritage and of identity through absent or present instances. Displaced from the periphery or other regions, Roma inhabitants of Saxon villages are themselves “*naturalized*” or “*adapted*” to their adoptive lands. They are the new “*Sessen*”, the Saxon ambient

being a palimpsest of values. Saxon house, one of the country's most important ethnicity's heritage restores its way of being in its absence. Even if it's considered a valuable architectural heritage it's maintaining the housing function. It is still able to house and be inhabited. Therefore the Saxon house has two main functions – heritage and house.

Approached from the sustainability point of view, the study grasps the way man is adapting to the space and the space is shaping to the inhabitant. What are the lessons from this enquiry, from this reality that we live in and that transmits specific information? What is the relationship between home and personality in the case of Rroma repopulation? The Rroma are sustainable because they reuse and recycle, while Saxons keep, order, preserve in order to ensure durability. Houses are adaptable to needs regardless the frame and convertible. Also personalities are convertible to different space characteristics. There is a limit to the space adaptation that shouldn't go beyond loss of values. Respect for the memory, historic values and family are perpetuated values in creating home. The new dwellers manifest respect for the memory of those who lived before. This respect is reflected in the way they adapt to their new homes and the way they adapt the house to their needs.

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