

Thesis of the PhD Dissertation

**RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC INTERMARRIAGES
IN THREE SETTLEMENTS OF CSÍK-COUNTY**

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In the present thesis I aim at examining the strategies of choosing marital partners in the last 150 years, and of those used in the present by two socio-culturally different ethnic groups: the Romanian and Hungarian, as well as at highlighting connections of ethnical and denominational endogamy. I have also focused on influences made on marital preferences by the larger or smaller ethnogeographical surroundings and by the minority or majority life within a certain settlement, as well as on identity of persons living in denominationally or ethnic mixed marriages, on the way how the elements of ethnical identity are structured and on mechanisms they are transmitted to children in mixed families.

I summarize in my thesis the results of a survey made in three settlements in Ciuc region - two of them with a Hungarian majority (Sâncraia-Ciuc and Sândominic) and one with Romanian majority (Voslobeni). Before the analyses of the studies of case I present the ethnodemographic characteristics of their larger area-Ciuc region, their changes made in the last 150 years, I digress on mixed marriages, on questions of canonical law regarding ritual changes. Within the studies of case I present marital relationship in the last 150 years based on Civil and Canonical Registers, I deal in a separate chapter with the Hungarian-Romanian marriages, and in another chapter with the results of interviews made with people living in mixed marriages.

In this thesis I engage to analyse ethnical and denomination endogamy (made up to this moment only from demographic and ethnographic approach), with the help of quantitative and qualitative methods. I took as a starting point in the fact that these marriages are a phenomenon defined both structurally and socio-culturally: they are structural as they can be described by means of the statistics and they are socio-cultural as they speak about scale of values, identity, group-cohesion, more precisely about the degree in which it is important confession and nationality in choosing a marital partner.

The quantitative data used as starting point was provided by the results of Census, by Nominai Catalogues regarding nationality, mother tongue and confession.

Besides the above mentioned source, another important legal resource consisted of the public, but still not published data of the Romanian Bureau of Statistics, which present the number of mixed marriages in 1992 and in 2002. The marital data of the Civil Registers were available from 1895. Besides the above mentioned legal resources, the Marital Registers of the Church have supplied important information about mixed marriages. In the last case I tried to study the present and former Registers of each confession.

In the second phase of my research, the qualitative study had a priority. The results can less be analysed in quantitative way, but they present deeper and more nuanced information. The research is mostly based on relationship created with people, which made possible an empiric research from anthropological point of view. From the applied methods the cooperative observation and interviews gained a main role.

From all types of interviews, I gave priority to semistructured or unstructured interviews. My questions were mostly open ones, regarding to three main themes:

1. questions regarding language attitudes and use of language. From those the most important are: use of language in childhood, within the family, in the village, the language used in different situations, in which language were they educated, the extent of using two languages, reading habits.

2. questions regarding ethnical identity: the declared nationality, in case it was two of them I asked to elucidate in what degree is the link with one and the other nationality. What does it mean to be Romanian or Hungarian, by what is influenced mostly, in their opinion, the question of ethnical identity. I have repeated the same question with controlled answers, giving them the following answering possibilities: mother tongue, family, tradition, culture, school, origin,

religion. In case of parents I asked them if they give a great importance to choosing the name for their children, in this regards, I also put the question for children if they agree with the choice their parents had made, (name by Romanian or Hungarian names) and which culture can they identify with.

3. question regarding religion: I asked what confession he/she is, if he is religious (going to church, praying), If religion is important in ethnical identity.

In case of unstructured interview I have spoken freely with my partners. The non- formal Interviews gave me the opportunity to build a deeper relationship with my speaking partner, thus these interviews became real deep ones towards the end of my research.

Depending on the number of persons which took place in the interviews, I made individual and group interviews, as well, I presume, that in individual interviews, the subject's message reflects his own truth. The group interviews, thus, can have a role of control as well as, I had the opportunity to measure the authenticity of individual truths. It also had a controlling role those conversations made with the key-persons of a village: the representants of the church, physicians, teachers.

To the hypothesis of the research we can draw the following conclusions:

I presumed, that in the last 150 years the criterias in the local customs regarding mixed marriages have reflected the conditions of political power. This hypothesis has been partly proved and partly showed a more nuanced picture regarding the reflection of political supremacy in local conditions.

In the Hungarian villages where Romanian people were settled, even if the community has not approved mixed marriages, we can find Romanian and Hungarian mixed marriages.

In Voslebeni with a Romanian population in majority, marital relations were open with the surrounding Hungarian villages till the end of the 2nd World War, while nowadays with this community it is more important the nationality criteria

than the religious one in choosing marital partners, due to the transilvanian nationalist movements, to the activity of Astra etc.

I presumed, that in those settlements, where the Greek Catholics of Romanian origin had their own church and confessional leader, the number of mixed marriages is lower, than in areas lacking it. The hypothesis proved to be true only for the first six decades of the 19th century, while in the following period we can find mixed marriages at the same number in Sandominic and Sâncrai-Ciuc, as well.

I have also worked with the hypothesis, that there is a connection between the rate of mixed marriages and the speed of diculturazition of Romanian community.

I can only partially prove my hypothesis. The loss of culture, in terms of native language started in the same time in the two villages, and it was finished to the end of the 20th century. The process of losing religious culture happened in different rhythm in the two settlements.

In Sâncrai-Ciuc, the mixed marriages brought with them ritual changes as well, while in Sandominic, although the number of mixed marriages is increasing, the Greek Catholics keep their rite.

At the beginning of my research I presumed, that the ethnodemographic characteristics of the smaller (local) region influences mixed families and especially the ethnic identity of those children on a higher level, than the larger surrounding (country). By studying collaterally the studies of case in the three villages, I drew the conclusion, that following the cultural models of the local majority community is common with persons living in mixed marriages.

Separating the ethnic identity from that of the native language made further interpretations easier. Analysing language attitudes within families I have got a picture of how the prestige of the two languages determine the use of them, and how they influence the identity of the children. I have divided families in two

groups: those using one language, and those speaking two languages. The prestige of the two languages can be tracked upon only in mixed families, where pronouncing affiliation to one or the other culture is in a kind of balance. The dominance of one language is influenced by the dominant local language as well as by "dominancy in the family".

We can conclude, that descendents from one-languaged families do not strife with identity problems, except for one, they don't question what nationality they belong to. For children growing up in two-languaged families, the problem of identity is influenced by the use of language within the family, by "the parents' dominancy in the family", by psychological relationship in the family as well as by environment, friendship, school. Among conditions influencing their ethnic identity we have to mention partner-choice as well. It turned out as this factor being the only one which can bring about a greater change in language and ethnic identity.