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## **MEZO- AND MICRO ETHNIC SPACES OF THE HISTORIC SATHMAR**

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MAIN FINDINGS OF THE DOCTORAL (PhD) THESIS

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## **I. Introduction**

The former Sathmar County is a historic region, by this time situated on the periphery of three countries (Hungary, Romania and the Ukraine). The extraordinary mixing of the population with different ethnic and religious background gives its unique character: from the 18th century five significant denominations and seven considerable ethnicities formed the religious-ethnic pattern. At the same time it is not just unique, but typical as well: „...if one only get acquainted with this county from the big Hungary, can conceptualize clear idea about the whole one” (Bársony I. 190..).

Consequently, on the one hand the research of Sathmar is lead us up to the special Sathmar county while on the other hand such typical ethnic processes have taken place here, which are nearly related to other occurrences have passed off in the region and fits to the macro-level processes.

## **II. Aims of the research**

In my dissertation I make an effort to reveal the ethnic structure of the historic region, Sathmar. The research has more spatial level: it starts with the mezo-level and finishes with the micro-level. One of the main aims is the analysis of the ethnic processes; therefore the historical dimension is considerable, mainly in the first analyzing unit of the paper. This general image that has been taken shape before became schematized in the second part. The elaboration of these parts is based on statistical data and other historical sources (e.g. gazetteers). The research of the micro-level (as a matter of fact this means the research of settlements) significantly tinges the previous results and gives a more precise understanding of both the official statistical data and the interethnic relations.

Among the main targets of the dissertation the followings are the most important ones:

- Presentation of the changes of the population structure and the demographic characteristics; outlining of the settling process of certain ethnic groups. From this point of view a particularly important period is the last 130 years (the era of the regular population censuses), when the changing ethnic structure of Sathmar is based on detailed data. It was also an aim to put denote numbers – or at least magnitude – at every important shift in population structure (e.g. wars, migrations, demographic changes).

- The ethnic pattern has been researched by using mathematical–statistical methods and exploring the correlation between the ethnic identity and the spatial ethnic structure.
- The main target of the micro-level research is to create a statistical database, which helps to present the current ethnic, religious, usage, spatial structure in different settlements. Other important data can also be collected in field works (e.g. the number of the inhabitants without an explicit identity).
- The final aim of a micro-level research with ethnic geographical approach is to reveal the spatial position of the ethnic groups, the possible segregation and to draw ethnic maps.
- A supplementary objective is the cognition of the number of the population classified as Roma both in mezo- and micro-level. In additionally the research deals with their spatial and social position, their demographic features and interethnic relations.

### **III. Premises of the research**

The dissertation is essentially realized with the methods of the ethnic geography. The methodological, historical overview of this discipline, which was revived in the 1980s in Hungary, has already accomplished. In the macro- and mezo-level it is mostly related to the works of Károly Kocsis (Kocsis K. 1996; Kocsis, K. – Tátrai, P. 2006; Tátrai P. 2007), while Róbert Keményfi summarized the history of this scholarship in micro-level (Keményfi R. 1996, 2004; Tátrai P. 2006). The fundamental concepts were defined by György Farkas (2002. 12-24).

All the three department field of the ethnic geography can be reckoned as the antecedent of this work. Among them the macro-regional, general analyzing method – related mostly to Károly Kocsis – appeared earliest. Particularly his studies about Transylvania have been utilized in this paper (e.g. Kocsis K. 1997; Kocsis K. et al. 2006). The connection of the mezo- and microlevel and the integration of the ethnographical methods appeared in Keményfi's works the first time (Keményfi R. 1998; 2004), which influenced significantly present dissertation. Related to the micro-level it is necessary to underline the activity of István Hoóz, whose methods in the ethnic research of settlements was an important premise for Keményfi and for the author as well (see Hoóz I. 1985). Latter did a survey in the Nitra district in Slovakia, which was quite similar to the present work (Tátrai P. 2003). It is

important to emphasize the role of György Farkas and Zsolt Bottlik who adapted the methods of regional geography. The most of their research way was applicable for Sathmar County too (Farkas Gy. 2002; Bottlik Zs. 2001).

#### **IV. Applied methods**

The dissertation verges on more disciplines so it adopts their means and methods. To every territorial level different methods has been used.

The ethnic pattern of the researched area is multipolar and mosaic-like. The historical analysis and the ethnic maps of different dates are not sufficient enough therefore certain means – in our days rather used by regional geography – are adopted to make the spatial ethnic structure comprehensible. Among these mathematical-statistical methods the potential model and the spatial autocorrelation gives the best results.

Researching the mezo-level more, so far just partly applied methods have been tested. One of them is the language boundary specified by the command of language. Up to this point the comparison of some category of the population census (mother tongue, nationality) has been utilized only in macro-level (e.g. Kocsis K. 2003; Varga E. Á. 2002), but present work gives its detailed analysis. Another issue relating to this is the usage of the electoral results and its cross-checks with the census data on the level of settlements.

The method of the field work in the selected settlements is the so-called community/objective classification. Its first application was after the Hungarian census in 1980 in Baranya County. In this method the nationality data of the given settlements are estimated by informants who know well the local relations and inhabitants (Hoóz I. 1985). That was the base of Keményfi's research in the Slovak part of the historic Gömör and Kishont County (Keményfi R. 1998).

In the territory of the historic Sathmar data collection involved not only the information related to ethnicity in a narrow sense but the command and usage of languages, the pick out of the school, the religious structure and the interethnic relations (e.g. mixed marriages) have also been investigated.

#### **V. Results and conclusions**

1. The number and ethnic composition of the population is primarily influenced by the demographic characteristics of the nationalities. Extreme shifts in the ethnic distribution

are generally caused by changes in power structure, which originate principally from wartime events (wars during the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, changes in state power during the 20<sup>th</sup> century).

2. It was proved that the ethnic composition of population changed more than the spatial distribution of ethnic groups, because the real changes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century took place in urban spaces. The range of the Hungarian language has not been modified for centuries; only Hungarians in the eastern mining towns became diaspora. On the contrary the range of the Romanian language reached the physical border by our days.
3. In the researched territory there are two opposite effects in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: the homogenization – which can be observed both side of the border and it is always favourable to the state-creating nation – and the diversification, which mainly means the growth of the Roma community (8-9% of the total population).
4. On the basis of the present tendencies further growing of the Roma population is expected, which finally may lead to the evolution of a cohesive Roma ethnic territory. This process can go hand in hand with the decreasing rate of Hungarians, while in the Kővár-district it can eventuates in areas inhabited by Romanians. In the near future with the improving economic situation of Romania the extent of migration and working abroad will probably decrease, which can modify the ethnic structure. As there are no significant differences between the demographic features of Hungarians and Romanians in the region, thus the present ethnic rates will not shift substantially in the immediate future.
5. The field work both underpinned and modified the above mentioned results. On the one hand the dynamic increase of the number and the share of the estimated Roma population are proved. The quantifying of the letter was one of the most important findings of the dissertation. On the other hand the ethno-religious results of the local surveys are quite similar to the data of the last population census. Another important outcome was the better understanding of the interethnic relation of certain ethnic groups (primarily in Hungarian-German/Swabian and Hungarian-Romanian context).
6. Generally the inner space of multi-ethnic settlements is not segregated – except the separation of the Roma. Some characteristics are observable in the residential order inside the settlements: the old, central part of villages is mostly dominated by Hungarians/Swabians, while housing estates are mainly inhabited by Romanians and Gipsies used to live in the peripheries. In some settlements partly segregated situation can be found (e.g. Hrip, Lăpușel). The separation in symbolic meaning is a common phenomenon: in several cases living in the vicinity of a church, which is rated as own

‘national Church’ is typical (e.g. Lăpușel), as well as burying separately by denominations. In the researched territory the only real ethnic based residential separation (excluding the segregation of the Roma) can be observed in Viile Apiei.

7. In the researched multiethnic towns and cities it is proved, that although there is no absolute ethnic based separation among Romanians and Hungarians, but in every city/town there exists quarters dominated by Hungarians. These are those parts of the settlements, where they have been living for at least hundred years. In those cities/towns, where Romanians practically settled next to Hungarians (Satu Mare, Baia Mare, Baia Sprie and partly Cavnic), it is a common feature, that Hungarians live in old, low-built and central parts. At the same time in these settlements the surroundings of the new, administrative centres are inhabited by Romanians in most cases. Among the other nationalities the residential separation of Roma is partly observable.
8. According to the literature and my personal research some regularity can be laid down about the evolution, maintaining and termination of the ethnic based residential separation. A decided difference can be seen according to nationality (e.g. the case of Roma population). The classification by Zoltán Ilyés applied to diaspora researching (autochton-allochton, rural-urban; Ilyés Z. 2005) is also useful in modelling the spatial separation.

*Table 1: Main characteristics of the ethnic based residential separation in the Romanian part of Sathmar*

		Village	Town or City
<b>Date of forming of separation</b>		Dates back long-ago	Newly formed
<b>Cause of forming of separation</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different profession</li> <li>Cultural distance</li> <li>Different time of settling down</li> <li>Fear of being threatened, ethnic tension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forced urbanization</li> <li>Different time of settling down</li> <li>Fear of being threatened, ethnic tension</li> </ul>
<b>Term of separation</b>		Longer	Shorter
<b>Geographical features of separation</b>		The grade of separation increases from west to east, except the Roma	
<b>Types of separation</b>	<i>Partial</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only one nationality (Roma)</li> <li>Only denominational</li> <li>Only in certain quarters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only one nationality (Roma)</li> <li>Only denominational</li> <li>Only in certain quarters</li> </ul>
	<i>Absolute</i>	Occurrent	Not typical
<b>Spatial features of separation</b>	<i>Hungarian or Swabian</i>	Centre, edge of centre	Centre, edge of centre
	<i>Romanian</i>	Along outer parts of main roads, edge of centre [centre – if they are the first settlers]	Outskirts, new, administrative centre
	<i>Roma</i>	Roma ghetto, periphery	Partial separation, periphery
<b>Cause of termination of separation</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dissolution of the rural community, setting up of sovkhoz</li> <li>Change of ethnic composition</li> <li>Mixed marriages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic-social changes</li> <li>Change of ethnic composition</li> <li>Mixed marriages, assimilation</li> </ul>

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