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Family and Society in North-Western Transylvania (2nd Half of the 19th Century – Beginning of the 20th Century). General framework: concepts, methods and approaches¹

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Abstract. *In the latter half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, in north-western Transylvania there was a traditional rural society, except for some urban centres and their neighbouring areas (the urban character is also proved by the analysis of the marital behaviour). The village was a world of constraints and standards to which all individuals belonging to the group had to conform. Social deviances of any nature were considered with scepticism, while moral and religious perceptions were defining social and societal norms at the time. The community strictly controlled the family through different “rituals” of interference in its internal affairs. Due to its feature as a fundamental social group, the family has different characteristics specific to the community under external influence. From the perspective of such an approach, any major change on the level of the society is able to influence the family either directly or indirectly. The study of society shows different means of family expression entailed by the framework and norms specific to that particular society. Thus, the family is the “micro” expression of society. However, on the other hand, the family generates the social order and the consensus within society due to its biological and socialising functions. It is the one providing the transmission of society’s norms and values. Such a situation entitles us to divide the main features of the corresponding societal type after a family survey. Beyond the sociological perspective of a research on the society-family relationship (primary social group), we intend to make a quantitative and qualitative analysis on family and behavioural mechanisms generated by the effects of the external influence of the society. The relationship family – community was deep. It could not be perceived through a fragmented and segmented analysis. From the perspective of the family, the community was the general framework providing the “pattern”. On the other hand, the community finds its emotions and sensitivity in the crucial moments of family life.*

Key words: *community, family, society, historical demography, marriage, confession, ethnicity*

The historical-demographic approach of family in their relationship with society with different transitory societal or community typologies is a complex initiative that needs a methodological approach including peripheral elements as well, besides a deep analysis on the central defining elements.

Due to its feature as a fundamental social group, the family has different characteristics specific to the community under external influence. From the perspective of such an approach, any major change on the level of the society is able to influence the family either directly or indirectly. The study of society shows different means of family expression entailed by the framework and norms specific to that particular society. Thus, the family is the “micro” expression of society. However, on the other hand, the family generates the social order and the consensus within society due to its biological and socialising functions. It is the one providing the transmission of society’s norms and values. Such a situation entitles us to divide the main features of the corresponding societal type after a family survey. Beyond the sociological perspective of a research on the society-family relationship (primary social group), we intend to make a quantitative and qualitative analysis on family and behavioural mechanisms generated by the effects of the external influence of the society.

In the latter half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, in north-western Transylvania² there was a traditional rural society, except for some urban centres and their neighbouring areas (the urban character is also proved by the analysis of the marital behaviour). The village was a world of constraints and standards to which all individuals belonging to the group had to conform. Social deviances of any nature were considered with scepticism, while moral and religious perceptions were defining social and societal norms at the time. The community strictly controlled the family through different “rituals” of interference in its internal affairs. It was precisely these “side-slips” that were to be avoided. In this sense, there was a whole attitude and behaviour range meant to prevent the appearance of such situations. Thus, the community regulated the whole mechanism that ensured the respect for social order and norms through constraints and determinisms. The major events in the family life, such as baptism, marriage (including the prenuptial relations of the partners) and funerals were strictly supervised by the community. The relationship family – community was deep. It could not be perceived through a fragmented and segmented analysis. From the perspective of the family, the community

¹ The paper *Family and Society in North-Western Transylvania (2nd Half of the 19th Century – Beginning of the 20th Century). General framework: concepts, methods and approaches* was published in *Analele Universității din Oradea, Fascicula Istorie*, 2008, p. 105-128.

² Transylvania in a large sense: intra-Carpathian Transylvania, the Banat, Crisana and Maramures.. Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Românii și maghiarii în secolele IX-XIV. Geneza statului medieval în Transilvania*, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Fundația Culturală Română, Cluj-Napoca, 1996, pp. 8-10; Voicu Bodocan, *Etnie, confesiune și comportament electoral în Transilvania. Studiu geografic*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, p. 8

was the general framework providing the “pattern”. On the other hand, the community finds its emotions and sensitivity in the crucial moments of family life³.

The *historical demography* and other sciences, such as anthropology or history of mentalities, by directly or collaterally approaching the family, often make references to the three important moments in the individual’s life: birth, marriage and death. These events, as retraced by demographers through an analysis of the civil status parish registers, are landmarks for the study of the family and of the community as well. The relationship family – community was deep and could not be perceived through a fragmentary and segmented analysis. From the perspective of the family, the community was the general framework providing the “pattern”. On the other hand, the community found its emotions and sensitivity in the crucial moments of family life. Through its imposing presence, the community gave the impression of a strict control over the expression of the family on the occasion of events, such as baptism, marriage or funerals.

Due to the nature of the information sources, the structure and the methodology, our research on family and society is undoubtedly a historical demography survey. But we cannot omit the highly social dimension of our survey. It is for this reason that such an initiative including the image of the community, mental and the social determinisms imposed a debate on the demography of the social in its historical dimension.

Demography appears as a science involved in the knowledge of human community, of the specific phenomena and demographic processes with the aim of knowing the laws determining the evolution of its number⁴, structure and evolution by establishing the place and correlations deriving from the quality of the population as a part of the general socio-economic system⁵. If birth, marriage, divorce and decease are demographic events, while birth rate, married life, divorce rate and mortality are demographic phenomena, then their social expression is able to condition, and is conditioned, by the population community structure. The demographic image of a population is thus completed through the social statuses and roles of individuals or social groups. As an independent subject matter in the field of social sciences, historical demography was established in the post-war period and developed under both demography and history.

We have used several categories of *documentary sources* in our survey. We have the information on the population in north-western Romania due to the ecclesiastic notes (in the parish records or reports and the bishopric notes); on the other hand, we have the information provided by the Austrian and Austro-Hungarian state. This information is completed by references made by several researchers and others that approach directly or tangentially the issue of the population structure and demographic phenomena in the region. The sources of information should be regarded and analysed carefully, as they do not directly respond to our questions. The ecclesiastic information gives a relatively clear image of the family and society. On the other hand, the information has to be analysed carefully; if possible, the items should be compared with other pieces of information coming from other sources, as most of the times it refers only to the parishioners of that particular confession; last but not least, we can notice a certain subjectivism when registering the data. Undoubtedly, the most important information is due to the ecclesiastic sources. The church records are the only ones that can provide an image of the rural family, at least for the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The church notes⁶ that are fundamental sources for our research can be divided into two categories: 1. the annual parish civil status records and reports; 2. funds of church authorities, notes and minutes written down by bishops. If we analyse the few official censuses carried out by the Austrian and the Austro-Hungarian states for a while, we will try to show the demographic aspects and their development. In our opinion, we consider that this would avoid the shortcomings involved by the research of church funds (these funds – we refer to the civil

³ Pierre Chauu, *Civilizația Europei clasice*, vol. I, Editura Meridiane, București, 1989, p. 222

⁴ Traian Rotariu (coord.), *Demografice și sociologia populației. Fenomene demografice*, Polirom, Iași, 2003, p. 14

⁵ V. Sora, I. Hristache, C. Mihăescu, *Demografice și statistică socială*, Editura Economică, București, 1996, p. 20

⁶ Referring to the space and time we envisage, we have the bishopric funds within the A.N-D.J. BH, respectively :

- *Fondul Episcopiei Ortodoxe Oradea (Oradea Orthodox Bishopric Fund)*, where we find information referring to matrimonial cases, marriage and divorce (dos.: 3637/1852, 39/1854, 43/1857, 44/1858, 46/1859, 50/1860-1863, 52/1866, 56/1869, 103/1875-1881, 104/1875-1878, etc.); demographic situation and movement of population (dos.: 47/1860, 168/1884, 187-188/1886, 193/1887, 201/1888, 204/1888, 210-211/1889, 217-218/1890, 270/1897-1902, 289/1900, 295/1901, etc.); illegitimate marriages (dos.: 56/1869); children and school (dos.: 48/1860, 79/1872, 92/1875, 116/1878, 138/1880-1881, etc.); establishing a foster home (dos.: 201/1888); etc.

- *Fondul Episcopiei Greco-Catolice Oradea (Oradea Greek-Catholic Bishopric Fund)*, where we find information referring to: divorce (dos.: 510-521, 541-552, 563-565, 1290, etc.); concubinage (dos.: 521, etc.); widowers and orphans (dos.: 1289/1850-1870, etc.); etc.

- *Fondul Episcopiei Romano-Catolice Oradea (Oradea Roman-Catholic Bishopric Fund)*, where we find information referring to: concubinage and preventing concubinage (dos.: 346/1854-1885, 387/1765-1887, etc.); dispenses, mixed marriages, engagements (dos.: 373/1856-1886, 379/1756-1881, 720-768/1850-1900, 2368-2397, 2449-2481, etc.); matrimonial processes, divorces, incest (dos.: 387/1765-1887, 801/1847-1849, 2368-2397, 2523/1857-1886, 2542/1868-1889, etc.); funerals (dos.: 411-413, etc.); etc.

status records mainly – are often incomplete and subjective; many of them were lost⁷, and so on); at the same time, this will make it possible to place in a general demographic context all the population belonging to the localities in the area.

Methodologically, the first phase of our research consisted of the preparation of the documents investigation strategy, as expected. This material referring to the inhabitants in north-western Romania in the latter half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century was kept in the National Archives in Oradea and Satu Mare due to the parish notes (we have the parish civil status records and the annual reports of the parishes, as well as other funds of the bishoprics) and other information provided by the official statistics of the time.

In our research, we consider the fact that we approach the area of ecclesiastic entities, as most of our sources for the 19th century belong to the church. This imposes a stress on the confession and its importance. Besides confession, an aspect that we wish to underline is ethn^{ie}⁸. However, the documents we have do not allow us to exactly establish the ethnicity of the inhabitants in the area. Even if we want to stress ethn^{ie} only, we will not be able to do so, as not even the official censuses in the 19th century use nationality as a variable, the only element being mother tongue.

The parish civil status records or reports facilitate the establishment of ethnic identity of a person to a smaller extent; the main criterion to classify population was confession. In the last case, by establishing a relation between ethn^{ie} and confession, there is a greater error risk in our research. The ecclesiastic documents are the only ones allowing us to make a research of the phenomenon in the sense we have in mind.

It is important to see the topic through the marital process, mixed inter-confessional or interethnic marriages. This is much easier to analyse in the ecclesiastic documents; thus we can establish a connection (obviously from this point of view) between ethn^{ie} and confession, or between confession and ethn^{ie}.

The ethno-confessional and socio-professional aspects bring to the foreground certain constraints on making a mixed family (we have considered, as mentioned above, mixed inter-confessional marriages and hence we will deduce the interethnic ones). These constraints have their origin in the family, Church and community. At the same time, we have to consider the fact that we refer to the area of a mainly rural area. This is a traditional environment; here the social constraints are powerful and a mixed marriage is difficult to be accepted.

If we research the parish records⁹, we cannot avoid thinking at the possibility to look into the information by following certain techniques and methods. At a first stage of our research, we only make a non-nominative analysis; we centralise practically information gathered from records depending on the nature and topic of the research. By using such a methodology, we get highly important information on a general level referring to the three demographic events in the life of humankind. At the same time, we discover different demographic behaviours, social trends, ethno-confessional determinisms, and so on, tightly related to one of the registered events (baptism, marriage, and decease). For instance, in the case of the baptised, we discover information on religion, social condition, parents' residence, on the legitimacy of birth, etc; in case of the married couple, we get information such as: place of birth (important to see the spatial mobility, the area of partner selection), youth religion, previous civil status, age at marriage, etc.; in case of the dead: age (hence life hope), cause of death, occupation (important to see the phenomenon of mortality depending on the type of occupation), etc.

Another research method we resorted to involves the drawing up of a nominal chart for each individual from birth (baptism), then marriage and finally decease, death. In this case we get a lot of information referring to the origins, features, manner of living, ethno-religious profile, mobility, health, and other aspects in people's life. We thus make a history of the individual. In this case, the information on the family he lived in is just sketchy. We know the parents (no brothers in any case), some information on the partner (in case of marriage) and that is about all.

The most complex method is families' nominal research¹⁰. In this case, marriage is the starting point of our survey. It is followed by the birth of each child, then death. In this way, we can draw up a history of the family; we rediscover different social behaviours of the family at different times, either good or bad. We follow the family at the time of their children's birth, as well as at the painful moment when they bury prematurely dead children. Such a survey facilitates the understanding of family behaviour when children reached adulthood

⁷ Philippe Ariès, Georges Duby (coord.), *Istoria vieții private*, vol. VII, Editura Meridiane, București, 1997, p. 5

⁸ Nicolae Bocșan, *Ideea de națiune la românii din Transilvania și Banat - Secolul al XIX-lea*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 1997, p. 130

⁹ Sorina Paula Bolovan, *Demografia: metodă de reconstituire a familiei. Considerații istorice și istoriografice privind demografia istorică*, in Ionuț Costea, Valentin Orga (coord.), *Familie și societate*, Editura Clusium, Cluj-Napoca, 1999, p. 35

¹⁰ Their origin lies in both the processing of some model-charts as suggested by the French demographers L. Henry and M. Fleury, and in the personal construction, depending on the nature and specifics of the available documents.

and they were “chased” from home. Such a methodology assumes a huge endeavour; a simple lack of synchronisation of information, many times vague and with gaps, is a question mark in reconstructing the family and implicitly the research we carry out.

When analysing these methods, we can see the efficiency and, why not, the inefficiency of each of them. The attempt to use at different moments of our research all the three methods, may provide more from a methodological point of view and respond to our desiderata to reconstruct the family, their social behaviours at different times of life, to discover the collective mental concerning the family.

Beyond this research on the civil status records, we should resort to other documentary sources too and implicitly to a more complex methodology. From the methodological point of view, when dividing the material, we considered the fact that censuses had been carried out (organised by the state) and these years were witness-pillars in our investigation, as they provided a better knowledge on the ethno-confessional realities (and not only). We also have the bishopric schemata. For these years, we have statistics concerning the structure of the population in point of confession, ethnically and from a socio-professional point of view as well. All these supported us in building a background for different familial and individual behaviours and to correlate information coming from ecclesiastic sources and more.

In our investigation on the family the main stress was laid on the survey and analysis of different marital behaviours. Through different constraints and determinisms entailed by the *possibility to choose*, marriage is highly relevant in establishing behavioural laws (if they ever existed!). The dimension of the marital market corroborated with the ethno-confessional and socio-professional realities provided the particularities of the marital phenomenon. The specificity was introduced by local and regional expressions. Local traditions and customs proved to have a moulding force from this point of view. The analysis of the “choice” mechanism is highly important; all through the research process, it proved to be difficult, but very fruitful¹¹.

On the other hand, the research on birth and death, far from providing the individual, or the family, with the chance of “choosing”, were extremely useful in tracing the outline of the “place” where the family lived. A family with “several” children (who were born and died shortly after) shaken by the daily needs expressed at each step of the research terrible realities through the drama they lived. Such a reality, when people died often, discovered an exposed and exhausted society. This “exhaustion” was most of the times “embezzled” through the high birth rate. This life picture defined as the “traditional demographic model” reveals the place of the woman, of the man, of the family in society. The family seeks for refuge in the community by socialising and establishing tight relationships beyond the family relations. Seeking for balance and refuge, the community imposes on the family models to follow, norms and regulations that everybody had to respect. Thus, the community found its expression in the family, while the family found solidarity in the community. Such a reality that we suggest is difficult to approach only in figures. Starting from here, our research assumes, besides the methodology specific to historical demography, whose contribution has proved to be very useful, methodologies specific to connected subject matters relating to the common research area. We mainly refer to other subject matters whose concerns relate to the family and the individual (anthropology, sociology, mentality and imaginary history, and so on).

Referring to the *lay and ecclesiastic legal framework*, we support the need for a flexible approach of the topic. The logic of this foray consists of the visualisation of the legal framework – rigid and impregnated with an obvious moralising discourse – on the one hand, and the image of conformism and means of adaptation of the individual, on the other hand. We have to underline that a separate survey of the lay law from the religious one would be void due to the tight cooperation between the State and the Church in the field. The State often acknowledged the matrimonial norms established by the Church¹². This relation seems to alter towards the end of the 19th century, when the State managed to impose on the Church to respect the general civil framework. However, we cannot speak of a change in the content; it is more a change of the form in which this matter was shown. The Church and the State still had a relatively close position. In fact, if we compare the canonical texts of the Church with the normative acts of the State, we can notice, at least in the latter half of the 19th century, a mutual influence concerning legislation referring to family life. From another point of view, the legal framework serving as basis and legal landmark for the functioning of the family as an institution underwent significant changes at the modern epoch. The marriage, as a basis of the family institution, was managed by the Church for centuries. At modern epoch however, it turned more and more under the control of the State. From this point of view, the 19th century was the time of a tight relation between the State and the Church from the point of view of family life management. The State acknowledged to the Church the right to be in charge with marrying people, with separating from bed and meal, with the divorce according to the canons of each

¹¹ Gheorghe Şişeştean, *Etnie, confesiune și căsătorie în nord-vestul Transilvaniei*, Editura Caiete Silvane, Zalău, 2002, p. 8

¹² Sorina Paula Bolovan, *Familia în satul românesc din Transilvania. A doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea și începutul secolului XX* (hereinafter *Familia în satul românesc...*), Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Fundația Culturală Română, Cluj-Napoca, 1999, p. 62

confession. The State had the right to supervise the civil and military status, the relationship between the spouses, the inheritance, the tutelage, the issue of bringing up the children, the means of living of the spouses¹³ and many more. The Church acknowledged the involvement of the State in the major demographic issues of the individual's life.

As time went by, the State became more and more complex, while the legislation became more and more "lay". It is true that the lay law borrowed, whether they wanted it or not, precepts and norms belonging to the church law. The modern State became lay, its institutions becoming better organised. In this context, the family proved to be one wealth of modern society, and the State had to be directly involved in its management. The frail dualism State-Church concerning family law had to suffer by imposing lay laws compelling to make all important moments in life official from a lay point of view. Beyond these regulations to which the clergy, irrespective of their confession, were highly hostile, we cannot admit the theory according to which at the time there was a clash in the cooperation between the State and the ecclesiastic institutions. The Church found the means to adapt to the new situation, while the State needed their involvement and influence on the health of the family life. The involvement of the State in the marital issues, in managing issues relating to bringing up children became a logical need. This interference of the State in the "exclusive competences" of the Church was influenced by the "shock of modernity"¹⁴, by establishing behavioural premises within society. The marital laws elaborated in 1894 were the most complex laws regulating the political-church relations in the marital field in the latter half of the 19th century. Due to their clarity, they managed to put an end to the misunderstandings between the lay and clerical authorities. Moreover, they put an end to the dispute between different confessions to the advantage of the State. The civil law very clearly expressed in favour of the family and children's interests. They were all made to better supervise the education of the individual in a moral family on which the Church had to have an influence.

The starting point of the family is *marriage*. It is the moment when the most important social group of society is established. The community celebrates through marriage the victory over time and in this way human sensitivity is getting closer to the "intended perfection"¹⁵. By means of different regulating mechanisms, the community is deeply involved in the life of the individuals at marriage, at the wedding. Starting with this reality, marriage has become in this research the reference point to which we related the whole debate started on the relationship community – family. The two are taught and prepared to accept the hierarchies assuring the community order. At each marriage, the defining elements of the interpersonal relationships required by the community are repeated not only to the two people involved, but to the rest of the community. It was in the family that all behaviour norms relating to the community were to be implemented. At the time analysed by us, the families of young people did no longer fully control the act of marriage. If previously marriage had been decided exclusively by the families of the spouses, when feelings were on the second place, the youth had the opportunity to choose themselves on their partner. Despite this radical change in mentality, the community still had the means to control the act of making a new family. This control was more obvious in the country, where the features of a traditional existence were more powerful; it was seen least in the city, where relations between the family (usually nuclear) and the community were built on different norms.

If we approach marriage from the point of view of the confessional and ethnic conditioning, we get to an analysis of the mixed marriages phenomenon. In fact, the analysis of the ethno-confessional and socio-professional determinisms and of other types of community or individual conditions can be easily carried out in the case of mixed marriages. The central point of our research is the analysis of Romanians', Hungarians', and Germans' marital behaviours without ignoring the image of this phenomenon at other populations in the area.

We suggest to begin with the analysis of the marital behaviour at different religious communities, then to get a general picture of the marital phenomenon at the whole population in the area. This survey on the marital phenomenon is made up of two great parts: one referring to the analysis of the marital strategies and the other made up of different marital determinisms and the factors able to condition the accomplishment of a marriage.

The analysis of the marital strategies was carried out through a parallel study of the marital behaviour of different religious communities in the area. The ethnic and confessional diversity of the population imposes a communication and interference of different ethno-confessional communities. As these communities lived together, it was natural that this "cooperation" should be visible in case of marriage. Mixed marriage acquires in

¹³ Cecilia Cârja, Ion Cârja, *Biserica Unită, dreptul matrimonial și modernitatea în Transilvania (a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea și începutul secolului XX)*. Schiță pentru o posibilă analiză de caz: căsătoriile mixte, in Corneliu Pădurean, Ioan Bolovan (coord.), *Căsătoriile mixte în Transilvania. Secolul al XIX-lea și începutul secolului XX*, Editura Universității „Aurel Vlaicu”, Arad, 2005, p. 35

¹⁴ André Burguière, François Lebrun, *Le prêtre, le prince et la famille*, in André Burguière, Christiane Klapish-Zuber, Martine Segalen, Françoise Zonabend (coord.) *Histoire de la famille*, vol. III, *Le choc des modernités*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1986, pp. 138-141

¹⁵ Pierre Chaunu, *op.cit.*, p. 222

this context the form of an innate multiculturalism out of the need to live together. The “social barriers” completed the ethnic and confessional differences¹⁶. These social conditionings seem to be much more powerful when it comes to an individual living in an ethnically and confessionally mixed community. In time, ethnic and confessional determinisms dilute under the modernity and personal emancipation urges. The State, more and more powerful in time, imposed itself through a lay law that promoted a new perception on the mixed marriages.

In the latter half of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century in the region, there was a traditional rural society, except for certain urban centres and their neighbouring areas (the urban feature is proved also by the analysis of the marital behaviour). It was a world of constraints and standards to which all individuals belonging to the group had to conform. Social deviances of any kind were regarded with scepticism. Social, moral and religious precepts were a very important issue at the time.

After a research on the time of the year when marriages were organised, we can see a main void during the Easter fast and a second one during the Christmas fast. Besides religious events, field labour also influenced the choice of the date settled for marriage. There were two periods preferred for marriages: January – February and October – November. A second period would be in the latter half of spring (May – June). The three periods are separated by months when few marriages took place: 1. March-April – time when there was the Easter fast and the beginning of the agricultural season; 2. Summer months and the beginning of autumn – during the agricultural season; 3. December – fast month. A different behaviour may be noticed in the Protestant parishes, where constraints were more of a community nature (where there were mixed inter-confessional communities, out of respect for other confessions, they did not organise weddings during fasting periods). The maximal periods in the months of February and November are not so evident in the Protestant communities.

There is a consistent constraint expressed as a sort of censorship from the community and even the church. Both ecclesiastic authorities of the youth getting married had to be consulted and “convinced”.

A marriage amongst youth belonging to the Greek-Catholic and Orthodox confessions was considered almost normal in certain communities. This can be explained by the fact that few parishioners could grasp the differences between the two confessions. At the same time, we have the ethnical aspect. Ethnic could not be separated in this case from confession, as both Greek-Catholics and Orthodox in the area are mostly of Romanian ethnic. These elements should be considered especially since we considered a mainly rural area, where customs “laws” are superposed over the official ones.

On the other hand, in the mixed Greek-Catholic and Roman-Catholic communities, inter-confessional marriages are easier accepted on the “official” level. This is due to the fact that both confessions are under the same hierarchic authority, that is, the Holy See. In the Greek-Catholic communities, there was a low level of mixed marriages. Most marriages at the time were carried out between partners coming from within the locality, or from neighbouring localities and very seldom from far localities. In this latest case, most youngsters were looking for partners belonging to the same confession¹⁷. It was not the reserve, but the fact that most of them had no opportunity to get in contact with individuals from outside the locality, or with individuals resident far from their village. So, we can also consider this impediment of the restricted area from where the marital selection was made as a constraint of the time.

Another aspect that should be kept in mind is the aspiration to a certain social status. We could see that most mixed marriages with partners from another place had a socio-professional motivation, as one of the partners wanted the other’s social status.

An important constraint, or, on the contrary, a strong determination against a mixed inter-confessional family came from the families. There are several cases when the parents opposed to such marriages. The boys were deprived of the right to inheritance; then, there was the notion of “immoral girl” in the eyes of the community and hence the pressure exerted over the family and then on the youngsters. Last but not least, the need to belong to a joint family with parents made young people respect the decisions imposed upon them. To separate from the family, to “turn the village against you”, was a serious fact, considering that people had to support one another.

As mentioned before, a strong pressure against achieving a mixed marriage came from the church. Both parishes to which the youngsters belonged had to be consulted. In order to have a religious marriage, they needed an engagement exemption from the archpriest (they came weeks, even months late, there were situations

¹⁶ Corneliu Pădurean, *Căsătoriile mixte confesional în unele localități din județul Arad în secolul al XIX-lea*, in Corneliu Pădurean, Ioan Bolovan (coord.), *op.cit.*, p. 171

¹⁷ At Sunciușul de Beiuș, out of the 90 marriages with partners from other localities, only 17 are mixed in 1856-1910 (National Archives, Bihor County Directorate, *Collection of Civil Status Records*, dos. 1197, f. 25-33; 1200, f. 1-14). At Vadu Crișului, in 1860-1880, out of the 102 marriages involving people from other localities, only 3 were mixed (*Ibidem*, dos. 1381, f. 162-176; 1382, f. 41-51). In the same period, at Tarcea, out of the 77 marriages, only 5 were inter-confessional (*Ibidem*, dos. 1221, f. 35-44). More examples are available.

when the marriages were not accepted, so there would be no exemption). They had to pay a large amount for the exemption, so that many youngsters could not afford to pay for it; this was often solved by clandestine “wild” marriage¹⁸. However, both the State and the Church wished to stop this phenomenon, so they took steps in this area.

Social mentality on the level of the community, family, church, or school, was not accepted and they did not want to disturb it. The Romanians (both Orthodox and Greek-Catholics), mostly farmers, depended on the land, so their mobility was very limited. The Romanian villages, as well as others, were closed societies. Here were preserved all the norms of traditional life. The customs were intact. We can state that this “barrier” preserved the Romanian ethnics, their school and church.

We have to mention that at the time, the issue of mixed marriages generated several debates amongst the representatives of different confessions. By adopting the Austrian general Civil code (1853) and the marriage law, they tried to regulate the issue of mixed marriages. Through the laws adopted in 1894 and the establishment of civil status offices belonging to the State, they sought to put an end to the divergences amongst confessions by imposing State control over this phenomenon. Obviously, such a context influenced to a certain extent the evolution of marital strategies.

Marriage was considered a fundamental, sacred, divine, non-recurring act, a sacrament, just like birth and death. Marriage was granted such a value precisely to defend family life from human whims, from heathen religious influences, so that the family might keep its economic, social, and cultural role.

By analysing the confessional structure of mixed marriages carried out in the area studied by this survey, we can see a strong relation in two directions:

- The first one is the spiritual affinity between the Roman-Catholics and the Greek-Catholics. No less than 40.32% (3,376 cases) of the mixed marriages discovered during our survey were concluded between partners belonging to the two Catholic confessions.
- The second is the ethnic and spiritual affinity of the Orthodox and the Greek-Catholics. Out of the total number of mixed marriages, 2,518 marriages representing 30.07% were GC-O. The high rate of this kind of marriages was mainly due to national and traditional confessional affinities (several Romanians – parishioners of both confessions – could not perceive the differences between the two Romanian confessions).

These were followed by GC-CH marriages (13.75% - 1,151 cases) atypical due to the “distance” between the two confessions, but that could be explained by the high rate of the two confessional communities (majority at least in the north of the region). The presence in the same area of the two great communities made them “communicate”. This phenomenon was accentuated by the “tighter link” between the Protestants and the Hungarian Greek-Catholic community existing in several localities in the area. Considered somehow normal (most of the parishioners belonging to the two confessions were Hungarian) the RC-CH marriages were the next preference expressed at the time (655 cases representing 7.82%).

Ethnicity also proved to be a determining factor in the development of the marriage. The phenomenon of preserving ethnical identity is obvious in the case of both *Romanian* confessions. When choosing their partners from another confession, the young Greek-Catholics chose a partner of Orthodox confession to an extent of 42.95%. On the other hand, young Orthodox chose the Greek-Catholic option to an extent of 40.12%. Thus, the option of a Romanian partner was the first after their own confession in the case of both communities. As far as the *Hungarians* were concerned, ethnic determinism is as obvious, although not to the same extent. An ethnic affinity between the Roman-Catholics and the Protestants may be noticed in several areas we have investigated. This affinity that we are about to discuss is brought to the foreground when one of the communities was in minority as compared to a third confession (usually Romanian). The strong preservation of national identity may be noticed in the case of the *Slovak communities* in the area of the Barcau valley. It was the same ethnic determinism that brought together the Evangelical *Germans* to the Roman-Catholic ones. Due to dispersion and the strong Hungarisation process the Roman-Catholic Swabians were subject to, the preservation of ethnic identity through marriage was less possible. This was mainly due to the small number of communities of the kind; they were also subject to consanguinity. Nevertheless, in several Swabian localities in the area of Satu Mare or at Palota (Santandrei commune), there were features of a marital behaviour that supported the survival of some isolated communities.

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, this world was traditional; there were few professional options, most of the inhabitants being involved in agriculture. As a consequence, when speaking about socio-professional determinism in choosing a marriage partner, we have to consider that most young people that were getting married had rural professions. On the other hand, the socio-professional component was more active in the urban area and in environments dominated by the Roman-Catholic, or Protestant, population. Despite the small number of options, we believe that socio-professional determinism was

¹⁸ Sorina Paula Bolovan, *Familia în satul românesc...*, p. 71; p. 85

still very important. The social and professional status undoubtedly played an important role in achieving and settling a family. A large-scale survey of the phenomenon has led to the conclusion that where there were better socio-professional options, their determinism over marriage could be very important.

As far as civil status was concerned, socio-professional determinism proved to be very important in several cases. Most marriages were concluded between partners getting married for the first time. The relations between the two factors acting upon marriage may be identified when debating the case of marriages involving widowers or divorcees. When a widow/widower wished to marry again, they had to take into consideration the mental context, as well as the reaction of the community. In several villages, the status of a widow/widower was considered as inferior; therefore, there were several constraints to getting married again. The first reaction was to find a widow/widower partner. However, most times there were other determining factors: size of the marital market (in small villages, where they could easily reach the consanguinity realm, as it was in several cases we analysed, widows/widowers could get married easier), the widow/widower's material and socio-professional situation, religion, ethnics, age, number of children from the previous marriage, the different perception concerning the two sexes (widows or women getting married later than usual had smaller options than men), and so on. All these are susceptible to condition, or favour, a new marriage. If we analyse marriage from the point of view of civil status and age, we may draw the conclusion that in most villages, widows/widowers usually got married to younger people. This phenomenon was more obvious amongst men, but it could be seen amongst women, too. An older widow with a good material situation (inherited from the late partner with whom she managed to gather a certain wealth) married a much younger partner, usually unmarried, coming from a poor family. This is the image depicted by several archives. Not all widows/widowers had the "opportunity" of a good material situation. These had to accept the existing options.

The age of the partners also conditioned most marriages, as expected. The average age at marriage was often very different in the case of "accidental" marriages that were strongly influenced by other determining factors amongst which the socio-professional one. Old age, usually associated with widowhood, could impose certain barriers against marriage/remarriage. A good material situation associated with a socio-professional status superior to the majority of the community were determinisms able to overcome any physical, or social, "handicaps".

An analysis on *birth and death rate, or natural growth*, is able to provide information on the impact demographic phenomena had upon family. A world where death rate was very high and where family would react through a high birth rate was undoubtedly influenced by the demographic flow. On the one hand, the need to survive and the migratory flow (generated by several socio-economic, cultural-mental, etc., factors amongst which the need to overcome the consanguinity realm through marriage) led to alterations of the population structure. On the other hand, they all introduced different family reactions and behaviours. Our historiography has mentioned several times the great number of children born in the Romanian area. If we look into the structure of the family, we can see that there were few families with more than 3 children. Where were children born then? The civil status records (Death record) tell us where. There were several children born in the families in the area, but most of them did not reach teen age. Such a demographic "pattern" characterised by high birth and death rates specific to traditional societies led to a low, almost inexistent, natural growth.

Against the background of the economic changes at the end of the 19th century, a phenomenon associated with industrialisation, urbanisation and medical evolution, new deep behaviour mutations appeared. Women emancipated, their position and status acquired a new form. Against the background of the erosion of behaviour and traditional mentalities, the family changed too and led to the appearance of new forms and patterns. The significant decrease of death rate towards the beginning of the 20th century corroborated with the whole series of changes mentioned above generated a family behaviour whose main effect would be the decrease of the number of children. The reduction of the number of children associated with the social and economic changes led to mental mutations having as effect a great appreciation of the child. Life acquired more and more value. Thus, human sensitivity had new means of expression.

The approach of birth rate from the perspective of the family was carried out in a complex family reconstruction survey in several places chosen for the survey. Our aims and objectives are to establish, beside birth rate, the possible connections between collective mental and the act of birth, conception, birth range, mother's age, the number of children in a family, interval between births, and so on. On the other hand, the phenomenon of birth rate (typical of the number of living newborns in a community in time and space¹⁹) can be explained and underlined through a survey on some localities (parishes – as the documents we analysed are of ecclesiastic origin) much more expanded and making reference to documents and statistics concerning births in the region – mainly counties of Bihor and Satmar – (information from Magyar official source).

Natural movement of population was influenced not only by the great birth rate, but also by death rate. Our survey on death and death rate as we intend it to be is structured as a research getting close to classical

¹⁹ Virgil Sora, Ilie Hristache, Mircea Paul Despa, *Demografie*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1983, p. 155

historical demography without neglecting the particularities and individualities of the phenomenon. We are interested in the general trend, as well as in the specific shades. Starting with this point, we have tried to convey death rate on the regional level, as well as the death event in several families we reconstructed during this research. Beyond the perspective of figures, the row of deceases has to be regarded not only statistically. Death causes not only a mathematical change of the community dimension; it also causes deep sensitivities. Behind the raw figures there were pains and suffering hard to bear by the others most of the times. Life and death, love and despair of most of them, either rich or poor, is the picture of a real “story” painted in the memory of these lines of figures and names that fade away as time goes by. Everything changed quickly in a world where many were born and many died. However, each individual that was in pain bore a hope, a success and also the lack of power, an end broken from the daily life of the family. The life of a man who lived, was loved and loved, touched and felt things just like us is identified in each number. A purely statistic approach of death rate is thus insufficient and devoid of essence. Beyond each dying person there was a life. Behind, there were families and people with whom the deceased had meals, laughed, cried, and worked together night and day. We are troubled by the drama behind their past.

Life hope at birth, or life average, was closely connected to the death phenomenon and structure. Major death crises in certain years greatly reduced life hope in the area we analysed. The great death rate irrespective the age groups led to a considerable decrease of the average age of population. Despite all remainders of the old demographic system, the positive evolution in the last decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century contributed to the strengthening of the progresses in this direction. In point of life hope, we could see a real positive revolution not only in the area, but in the whole region. We notice the shocking age distribution in all six parishes approached (although there are significant differences between the age structure of deceases from case to case). The number of children dying in the first year of life and the infantile death rate (calculated as a ratio between the number of children dying before they reach the age of 1 and the number of living children born that year) corroborated with the high rate of deceases at children aged 1-5 underlines a “domination of the young age groups” in our analysis. Children were more exposed to the pressure of internal and external factors causing death. They were the most vulnerable in front of death in all communities and in all seasons.

In our debate on the cause of death two trends are outlined right from the beginning: the first showing the devastating effects of epidemics, when several families in a village, or even region, lose some of their members; the second shows particulars cases, family deceases that cause traumata in the family, just like the cases of epidemics. Without claiming to have mentioned all causes of death at the time, whether accidental or natural, our research intends to be an attempt to outline a picture concerning the health of the population and the degree of medical system development. We also intend to depict the image of this society where most individuals died at an early age.

Irrespective of the society typology, *divorce, concubinage, and illegitimacy* (no matter their way of manifestation) were forms of social deviance leading to the dilution of family image and precepts. We do not discuss here a dilution of the traditional precepts on the family, as someone might misunderstand; it is an erosion of the idea of family in general. The “family” began to acquire other forms than the “official” ones. Concubinage was everywhere, no matter how we might call it. Paradoxically, concubinage was not only the result of personal emancipation, in which case young people estranged from traditional precepts that were under the influence of religious norms and values and got engaged in “dangerous and shameful relationships”. Such a theory is not fully supported in the rural environment, although it existed from the urban perspective (here, while modernity imposed, the alteration of religious norms led to such relationships). It was not out of emancipation or lack of education, of ignorance of law or wish to do something illegal that the peasant separated from his wife and got another one (getting wedded in front of his fellows) without the formalities needed for divorce and remarriage. Community was everything to him. He did not deliberately break the law; it was not out of ignorance. To him, it was enough to solve any situation according to the old customs handed down from generation to generation, as he did not consider it necessary to introduce some changes. Such perceptions, according to which certain types of concubinage had “almost official” forms, were supported in different behaviours and mental attitudes of the traditional rural communities.

It has been pretty difficult to make an analysis of the divorce and the act of getting divorced. Most of the church sources proved to have several gaps. Even the statistic information from the state was of ecclesiastic origin, as the ecclesiastic matrimonial courts of law were the only institutions that had the right to make decisions concerning these divorces. As seen in the reports on mixed marriages, many of the parish notes on divorcees were either lost, or deteriorated, in time. The research of the archives materials preserved thanks to the parish records (several duplicates) give us the opportunity to identify the main issues faced by the Romanian villages concerning divorce and the act of getting divorced. We can divide our research into two directions: 1. an encompassing one through which we make a quantitative analysis of the phenomenon in the counties of Bihor and Satmar (also observing the particularities in the seats of the counties); in this way, we try to calculate the gross divorce rate (calculated as the number of divorces per 1000 inhabitants); 2. A case study on the Greek-

Catholic parishes of the Oradea eparchy is focused mainly on a qualitative analysis without ignoring the quantitative one.

As a last solution and personal liberation from the unhappiness and torture of an unaccomplished marriage, divorce was present and requested by several Greek-Catholics in the diocese of Oradea. Not all who got over public shame succeeded in their endeavours. It was difficult to get a divorce, several papers (for these papers, the Romanian peasant had always felt repulsion and fear) and formalities were needed before and after the trial. By making all these processes difficult, the Greek-Catholic Church tried to limit the number of divorce cases (which contributed to discouraging the separation attempts coming from other families); on the other hand, they preached the need to preserve the dogmata and sacrament of marriage. The aims of the Church were not always reached. It is true that the public character of the reconciliation sessions during which the two were compelled to make a detailed presentation of personal failures, their fights and fiascos, then the perspective of long and costly trials taking place far away, in the city, in an unfamiliar environment, they were all meant to discourage the divorce attempt in the unhappy mind of the partner. There were many cases (and here, the failure of the Church, implicitly the Uniate one, was complete) when, discouraged by the difficult and expensive ecclesiastic divorce procedures, they “willingly” chose to separate, without going on the long way of the official divorce. This was one of the core mentalities of the Romanian peasant: he did not have to rush the decisions, but he did not change his mind; it was him who could decide to separate, so what was the use of interfering with the gentlemen. He married in front of the community²⁰, so it was in front of the same community that he separated (it was enough to willingly separate, and the village knew about it before it happened).

As a phenomenon with broad and significant implications in the community life and in the social life of the individuals, concubinage had several forms whose significance should be determined, at least at that epoch. In the process of defining concubinage at the time, we have to make some specifications useful for our research and from the perspective of attempting to draw up a typology of them.

- To begin with, concubinage was the relationship of two unmarried people living together illegally, for a shorter or a longer period of time. More often than not, this kind of concubinage had its origin in sincere love relationship between two people that got neither their parents’ blessing, nor their material support. Such a relationship was supposed to be legal once they got a certain socio-material status. Their living together was thus a fragment of “marriage” and of their official “family” life.
- From this assertion, we can see that a motivation of concubinage was generalized poverty (not only of young repudiates “awaiting” better times to make their relationship official). In such a situation, due to poverty, even older people could get involved in a concubinage relationship. As we could see in the documents (concubinage was prolonged forever), they did not expect welfare to make their relationship legal. Such a theory on the origin of concubinage in poverty as recorded by some priests at the time (although we consider that the term poverty acquired new connotations in their expression) is partly supported by archives documents²¹. This relationship originating in poverty could not be explained by a cohabitation of tens of years unless there was another motivation associated to another context besides poverty. “Poverty” is not invoked only in the context of young people devoid of parents’ support; it also existed amongst those supported by their families, who had no money to officiate their marriage. Moreover, poverty was, according to priests’ reports, enough to live in concubinage, as it was because of it that a family could not be properly supported. Most of those involved in such relationships lived such a life for years and they had children (that they managed to bring up). From this point of view, poverty as a motivation sounded more like an excuse (maybe coming from the priest to justify the situation in the parish), who was pressing them to get married. However, poverty (which was noticed by priests) associated to other circumstances, proved to be a factor that favoured concubinage.
- The failure in a relationship ending in a divorce (“by their own will”) led most of the times to concubinage. A remarriage in such conditions was not possible due to old tied relationships. In general, these concubinages appeared while the official relationship was not yet ended (period of agony) after some extra-conjugal affairs.
- The death of the partner associated to some mentalities unfavourable to widowers’ marriages to which the community mostly tolerated their “companionship” (illegal, of course) with another widower led most of the times to concubinage. This kind of concubinage was favoured when they had old children (most of the times already married with children), as they did not mean to spoil their inheritance. Such relations were mutually accepted by the family.
- As far as brief relationships were concerned, they were disapproved of by the community. Generally, these relationships involved individuals considered immoral who often changed their partners.

²⁰ Sorina Paula Bolovan, *Familia în satul românesc...*, p. 181; P. Evdokimov, *Taina iubirii. Sfințenia unirii conjugale în lumina tradiției ortodoxe*, Editura Christiana, București, 1994, p. 256

²¹ A se vedea Sorina Paula Bolovan, *Familia în satul românesc...*, pp. 182-184

- Another type of concubinage was the one involving individuals who were forbidden to get married. We think here first of military law defence. In this somehow intricate matter we identify two different situations: a. The case of the military or retired soldiers who chose to live in concubinage, as they were defended to get married; b. The case of the young people under 22 who got “settled” (several times with wedding, thus acquiring the acceptance of the family and community) only after turning 23; yet they were not allowed to get married as they had not participated to all three ballots. In this category, without military impediments, we can place “marriages” between the under-aged with the blessing of their parents. As they needed an exemption, they could not be legalised.
- There is also the case of “marriages” and “families” born within the community (yet illegal). In several villages in the area and not only, two young people got married in front of their families and the village, and they even had a traditional wedding; yet, they did not go to the priest or, as required later on, to the town hall. In front of the community, they were married²². They ate, worked and slept together. However, most of them made marriage official when they had children that were to be baptised.
- Finally, without claiming that we have exhausted all types, the Church continued to consider as “concubine” any conjugal relationship that had not their blessing. This was perpetuated after 1895, when religious marriage became facultative, once lay marriage was introduced. The so-called “civil marriage” concluded with good faith but lacking religious marriage belonged to the same concubinage category.

Having this typology, we identify several categories of concubinage. From the perspective of our survey, not all these concubinages were forms of expressing family corrosion. As we may see from the typology mentioned above, in several situations, concubinage was a means of getting “settled” (with the acceptance of the community). Thus, we cannot speak of family corrosion (as we may say in the case of abandoning one’s home by one of the spouses, who then lived in concubinage); it is more the “erosion” of the shape of the family. This is the corrosion of the traditional concepts regarding family. They all had different forms accepted by the traditional community. So, what kind of moral precepts are we talking about? Undoubtedly, the Church as an institution and the “Holy Sacrament” as a dogma, as well as the family as a basic social nucleus and cell, were deeply influenced by this process of corrosion and dilution. The Church, as we mentioned before, had to suffer not only from inside by parishioners’ estranging from its norms, but also by the involvement of the State, by imposing a new lay law that later prevailed over the ecclesiastic one.

Due to the analysis we carried out on concubinage, we identify three categories of rural districts: 1. Rural districts with a high rate of concubinage (Holod, Mako, Oradea and Simand); 2. Rural districts with a medium rate of concubinage (Barcau, Beius, Crisul Repede, Sebis and Supuru de Jos); 3. Rural districts with a low rate of concubinage (Ardud, Carei, Eriu, Leta Mare, Lunca, Madaras, Someseni, Siria and Vasad). Apart from these, in most rural districts there was a great number of cases of concubinage (often in the neighbourhood), or some when there was no such case. The local demographic and socio-economic reality, collective mentality, the influence of certain internal or external factors, the personality of the priest, etc., were able to trace down some trends and patterns of the phenomenon.

A certain relevance on the presence and spreading of concubinage (hence we can see the lack of information erroneously sent by the priests to the bishopric) is represented by the illegitimate births. It is true, not all illegitimate children were born as a result of such relationships. Some of them were the result of accidental relationships between an unmarried girl, or a widow, with a man, without living together. Then, we also have to consider the couples living in concubinage; they got married immediately after having a baby (declared as illegitimate by the priest; but his family became legitimate, as it was not reported as concubinage).

Illegitimate birth was one of the most obvious means of expressing the erosion of the values and principles represented by the family. On the other hand, if divorce led to the complete dissolution of the family, while concubinage was only a partial form of family, the illegitimate birth could bring stability and the beginning of a real family, with children and parents. The newborn’s parents were most of the times compelled to make their relationship official in the context of baptism. The children born in such families that had a house, land, parents-in-law, were half-normal to the community (as all the others) despite the fact that the priest considered them illegitimate because the parents had not have a religious marriage. As we mentioned before, not all illegitimate children were the result of enduring relationships (even concubinage) between two partners. In the new context, the birth of a child did no longer represent the beginning of a “family”; it was rather an element of erosion and dissolution. Illegitimate births in such a process of erosion and dissolution of family values had often convergent forms, depending on the specifics of the community and on each relationship. The complexity of the phenomenon increased when introducing the notion of personal emancipation, particularly women’s emancipation. In such a situation, illegitimate birth was possible, normal and not always blameful. The interference of the community in the personal life was fading away, as the individual acquired more and more independence in its relation to the community and to the relatives.

²² Nicolae Iorga, *Neamul românesc în Ardeal și Țara Ungurească*, vol. II, Editura Minerva, București, 1906, p. 603

In the city, emancipation was even more evident when analysing the extremely widespread phenomenon of births' illegitimacy, including the rural environment. In a conservative and traditional world, where moral values and religious precepts were very strong, this kind of illegitimate births were in clear contrast with the structure of this type of society.

From the relationship of the family with the community were born *mentalities, roles and social statuses*. The family, its formation, the relationships between man, woman, children and relatives, as well as the relationships with the rest of the community were filtered by the "village gossip". The need for a strong solidarity that was necessary in the unfriendly conditions at the time compelled the individuals to accept the cohabitation with other members of the family (including the extended one²³) and with the rest of the community. More often than not, the individual behaviour acquired the expression of the collective behaviour. Such an influence of the community was obvious in the traditional rural societies. However, in time, it became progressively diluted under the pressure of modernity. The State intervened too and imposed regulated and different norms for the family life.

We can see that there were deep changes as the area integrated to an economic circuit that would lead to imposing new mutations in several economic sectors. The economic development and the dissemination of non-agricultural activities associated to urban development whose influence went growing brought about alterations in the family relations. Then, there were mutations in the relationship between the family, the domestic group and the household resources²⁴. These changes were not obvious in all localities in the region: some of them were still anchored in the traditional as the new managed to penetrate more difficultly, while major changes on the level of the collective mental could not be perceived on a short span of time. Nevertheless, under the influence of modernity, society influenced the family not only in point of form, but also insofar as its role and functions were concerned. Mentalities changed together with the form and nature of society. Family was no longer big; it did no longer accept the interference of the relatives and even less that of the community. Changes were more visible in the city; however, once the social, cultural and economic changes, they became obvious in the countryside too. The nuclear family was the new family model where interference from the outside was insignificant. As they evolved to a modern society, one can see that there was a limitation of the social role of the family, as this role was taken over by other institutions in several fields (market, State, school, and so on). Family did no longer dominate social life. However, even in modern times, family still remained a fundamental social institution with a core role: socialisation, protection, consumption, reproduction. One can see the reduction of the size of the family by restraining the number of a couple's children and by quasi-generalisation of the nuclear family. Small families were more apt for the social mutations that modernity involved. The reduction of the size of the family brought about important changes in lifestyle, in family behaviours²⁵. Another important effect of modernity was related to matrimonial mobility, to the decrease of parental authority of the clan in general, and the growth of the role of the individual in deciding the moment of marriage and on the partner. Due to the transfer of these functions of the family to other social institutions, the economic and political reasons of marriage started to lose importance. Although the reasons relating to wealth played a less important role, the similitude of the socio-cultural statuses of the spouses was still dominant in making couples.

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²³ Some authors have an individual need concerning the origin and existential real reason of the enlarged family that, besides the family as such, comprise the whole family on several levels and generations. For further details, see Florin Valeriu Mureșan, *Satul Românesc din nord-estul Transilvaniei la mijlocul secolului al XVIII-lea*, Institutul Cultural Român, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 205

²⁴ Jack Goody, Jack Goody, *La famille en Europe* (French edition translated by Jean-Pierre Bardon and preface by Jacques Le Goff), Polirom, Paris, 2001, p. 103

²⁵ See Georgeta Ghebreă, *Regim social-politic și viață privată (familia și politica familială în România)*, chapter 1.1.3. *Tradițional și modern în sfera familiei* (this paper is also available on the following website: <http://www.unibuc.ro/eBooks/StiintePOL/ralu/1-1-3.htm>)

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