

ABSTRACT: The title of my PhD dissertation is „The Contemporary Structure of Identity of the Hungarian Community from Teius, Alba county”. The most important question during the research was „what does that mean to be Hungarian in Teius, in the 21st century”. The structure of identity was identified by studying the self-image of the local Hungarian community, but also through the attitudes regarding their cultural representation or the stance to use their native language. In order to understand the general attitude of the Hungarians relating their identity, one also has to note the high importance of the Hungarian churches through the religious service, but also through the symbolism attached to the spirit of the church and its buildings. The conjoint Hungarian-Romanian history has its positive and also negative connotations, which has an effect on both the Hungarian and Romanian culture and identity, thus neither the conflictual can be neglected. On the basis of differences between national perceptions of historical events may cause social standoff, even if these are not features of the everyday routine. This, along with the economic necessities result in migration to Western Europe and national acculturation. As the need of reorganizing the Hungarian community in Teius is accentually present throughout the dissertation, I also suggested a method of revitalization.

Teius (in Hungarian Tövis, in German Dreikirchen) is a town in Alba county, has approximately 6700 inhabitants (in 2011). Nowadays the number of the Hungarians are around 200 which is 3-3,5% of the total. The Hungarian community has two churches. One is first mentioned in the 13th century, which is now owned by the reformed church, but also in present days it's usually referred as „plébániatemplom” (in English „church with parish”). The other one is the Roman Catholic church, which is often referred in Romanian „costeiu” (in English „castle church”), in Hungarian „kastélytemplom” or „Hunyadi's church”, alluding János Hunyadi, who had it built. The German name of the town (Dreikirchen, in English „three churches”) clearly refers to three important houses of God. Besides the reformed and the Roman Catholic church, the third one is the Greek Catholic, also of historical importance, built in the 16th century, presumably used to be the seat of the bishop of the Romanian reformed community. It's clearly seen that in Teius all communities have their historic presence. In the 19th century Teius became railroad center, as the most important node of railway junction in Transylvania was built, which – also Teius as industrial town – kept its importance till the end of the 20th century. The town is found near the A10 highway and national road DN1, latter one having always been a high importance road between Alba Iulia, Aiud and Cluj.

During the research I had to be in regard to anonymity. As the community is small, monograms are not able to fully hide the informants, thus I decided to create codes for each of them, but from which the most important details still turn out, such as sex, age and religious affiliation.

The main goal and the most important outcome of the dissertation is the specification of the main effects on the identity construction. The basis of the identity is the self-image, which determines the relation of the individual with his/her own community, but also with the society in Teius. During the centuries-old Hungarian-Romanian coexistence in some situations some limits have been set. Consequently, in the conditions in the diaspora a stereotyped behavior evolved, which means the everyday living adjusted to these limits. It's important to note that the context of these limits can be real or imagined. A real framework refers to existing limits, beyond which objectively cannot live one's own national identity, for example because of legal frames or the social reality. An imagined framework is when the real frameworks are extended to domains, where the community actually doesn't have any experiences. Interestingly, between Hungarian self-image and the assessment of Romanian informants about Hungarians there's a contrast, as self-image is more derogatory than the majority's opinion about the local Hungarians. This contrast has its role in the existence of imagined frameworks of identity, as a person or a community tend to think it cannot do something, while the majority would not oppose it – or it cannot be said with absolute certainty. In order to have the most accurate information, during the collection of data I strived to have as little external impulses as possible. After the analysis I found that Hungarians are set before Romanians both by Hungarian and Romanian informants, as Hungarians are called more „accurate”, more „civilized” and more „efficient”. We can say that in case of an ideological conflict, different informations would have come out.

Hungarians in Teius use only a few of their possibilities to show their identity, cultural specificity. This situation results in an identity can be called hidden, i.e. exists, but can't be seen from the outside, because one's own identity is considered to be source of conflicts (see again imagined frameworks). For outsiders Hungarian community can be seen only in line with religious activities, which are different from the Romanian ones (buildings, date of masses). On the whole, during the interviews Hungarians listed symbols, which certainly won't cause any conflicts. Many times are mentioned the kürtős kalács (chimney cake), but also gulyás leves (goulash), tárkony (tarragon), or őrölt paprika (ground pepper) which are considered to be part of the Transylvanian Hungarian culture.

Generally, identity and local culture in the Hungarian diaspora is so specific that it's considered an independent, third identity, obviously with resemblances with the Hungarian identity in Hungary and in Transylvania, where Hungarians form majority. Because of this situation local Hungarian identity is often called neither Hungarian, neither Romanian, but „Hungarian from Teius”. As example I cite here a person from the neighbouring town, Oiejdea, who didn't want

to say a word in Hungarian. Yet, after a few minutes started speaking, saying in Hungarian the he doesn't speak Hungarian but „Oiejdean” (referring to the dialect used in that town).

To describe exactly identity of the Hungarians in Teius, in my doctoral dissertation I use the term „többs kötődés” (multiple bondage), because the Hungarian identity – as a consequence of the demographic situation in the town – is more permissive with the Romanian culture. Practically, in Teius the Hungarian culture takes over more elements of the Romanian culture than it's seen in case of areas with Hungarian majority. As a consequence, the local Hungarian identity can be called also situative, which means that the show-up identity depends on the ethnic composition of the surroundings. Thus, identity is assumed optionally, depending on the social and economic realities. During this procedure the identity of a person is not changing, one can witness the Hungarians' special adaptation.

Since the Hungarians' identity is felt separate from the collective Hungarian identity, the community feels remoteness and weakness. The Hungarian community in Teius is withdrawn from the sphere of national politics. Generally speaking, a few representatives of the diaspora are in public positions (political organizers, intellectuals) in favour of an area or of a local community, so one person is in charge for the whole community and not the community itself. For the Hungarians in Teius a middle level self-organization would be possible, as the community has the capacity either to form dance groups, choirs, or to organize cultural, literary events. Private level is where the personal role of preserving cultural traditions is emphasized, and which proves to be dominant when researching of the community's activities.

Apparently, this situation affects negatively the efforts for reorganization, but also the community's cultural and linguistic representation. The Hungarian identity in Teius is also a private identity, for two reasons. First, the Hungarian community exists by personal efforts aiming to preserve their identity, as collective activities are infrequently to see. Second, the identity is hardly to be observed from outside, it stays between the walls of the houses. All this means that active representation, when a community shows itself by activities, is rather weak. By contrast, the passive representation is more vigorous, as in Teius there's more buildings (churches, parishes, Rozsa house, cultural center) or more or less abstract factors (religions, Veres district, some physical and virtual spaces) which by themselves represent Hungarian culture. The passive representation – mostly in connection with buildings – can have also a reflexive aspect: they provide a favorable atmosphere for living the Hungarian identity, in their proximity a braver usage of the typical marks of the Hungarian culture is clearly visible.

Native language is the most important and most frequently used mark of the national culture of Hungarians. The linguistic socialisation has the most chance to end up in stabile language usage

if coincides with the development of the communicative competences. In the mixed families it often seems to be more comfortable to use the society's lingua franca, which is the Romanian language. A person's emotional relation to a language will not develop if the language is not in use, even if it is the part of the person's cultural heritage. Typically, linguistic acculturation ends at adulthood, when the unused language will have also ideological – negative – connotations. The same situation as with ethnic assimilation: the conflicts resulting in assimilation become ideological at the adulthood, simultaneously with the appearance of national consciousness. Because identity is partly based on narratives national ideologies, it's difficult to change and cultural differences may affect friendships of more decades. I have named this phenomenon deactivated conflicts, which come forth occasionally, after certain root causes. Deactivated conflicts flash light also on the possible situativity of a person, who after the same root cause always react the same. This phenomenon may result in a sort of predictability, which is also the basis of the already mentioned stereotyped behaviour.

The role of the churches in formation of the identity of a community is unavoidable. In Teius ecumenical cooperation is exemplary. In spite of that, there's a boundary between the two Hungarian religions, the reformed church and the roman catholic respectively. In the past, one had to respect these boundaries, crossing of which a person risked intraethnic conflicts. Also in present days the presence of this phenomenon can be felt, which I have named „sacred demarcation line”. The roman catholic worshippers keep their identity „inside” the religion, which means that their identity can be considered primarily religious. On the other hand, at the reformed church the national narrative is more independent of the church and the identity is more modern. According to what I have described, neither worshippers of the reformed church doesn't use many modern symbols (for example Hungarian flag, national colors), but worshippers are more conscious about these symbols.

I have always been attent during my research to the place of origin of the informants. I found that there's no significant difference between the attitudes of true-born inhabitants of Teius and those moved in from other parts of Transylvania, even from areas with Hungarian majority. Before my research, as hypothesis, I expected people from Northern Transylvania to have a more stabile identity, but this has not been proven. From this perspective, the most important is the personal approach, which is not evidently bound to the place of origin.

Regarding the model of the community's reorganization, one has to be aware of the significant differences between the diasporal communities, which don't make possible a universal strategy for revitalization. Primarily, there must be an organizer alongside each community, where – as the first step – the organizer must understand the Hungarians' perception of the local reality,

after which it's possible to draw a conclusion regarding the possibilities and limits. As the second step, the recommendations can be formed by the organizer. The third step is the recommendations will be either accepted or rejected by the community. This discussion may become the fund of the communication between the organizer and the community, which can lead to the deep and thorough understanding of one another. The fourth step is the approval, when the details of implementation and the infrastructural possibilities can be set.

As for the conclusions, I believe that my PhD dissertation can contribute also to the potential of the actual leaders of the Hungarian community in Teius, calling their attention to some details that may not be a matter of course. Likewise I hope – and believe – that I manage to contribute to understand a diasporal community's motivations: I submit my PhD thesis hoping that it may become the basis of a revitalization strategy of the Hungarian diaspora in Transylvania, but also of the Romanian diaspora in Serbia or in the Republic of Moldova.

KEYWORDS: identity, minority, teius, tövis, diaspora, self-image, native language, religion, reformed church, roman catholic church

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